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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

MAY 2026

OPEN Our Locked Doors

A Pentecost Message

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Each year, as the days lengthen and the world around us breathes again into fullness, Pentecost arrives—not as an anniversary, but as a living summons. The wind blows where it will. The flame rests where it chooses. And the Spirit of God, who hovered over the waters at the beginning of all things, continues to hover over us, over this diocese, over every gathered community in our diocese.

I find myself returning, this year especially, to that upper room in Jerusalem. The disciples were not on a stage. They were behind a locked door—frightened, uncertain, grieving the shape of a world that had been cracked open but not yet remade. Does that sound familiar? I suspect it might. Many of us know the locked rooms of our own lives: the places where hope has grown thin, where the path forward is obscured, where the courage to step out has not yet come.

And yet. Into that very room—locked, fearful, ordinary—the Holy Spirit came. Not because the room

was worthy nor because the people in it had figured everything out. The Spirit came because God is faithful. Because the promise made at Easter does not wait for us to be ready.

In the Diocese of Niagara, we are a community of many rooms. We gather in century stone churches, in contemporary spaces, in small towns where everyone knows each other's names and in neighbourhoods where anonymity is the norm. We carry different histories, different wounds, different gifts. But the Spirit is no respecter of the size of our buildings or the length of our pews. The same fire that fell on Jerusalem falls on us—all of us. The same breath that stirred those first disciples and gave them the courage they needed, stirs us still.

What I want to say to you this Pentecost is this: the Spirit is already at work among you. I see it in the ways our congregations have turned outward—toward the hungry, the isolated, the newcomer still learning the shape of this country. I see it in the difficult, holy conversations we are

learning to have with one another across difference. I see it in the young people who ask hard questions and refuse easy answers, which is, I think, very much a sign of the Spirit's presence.

Pentecost is not a memory. It is a mandate. We are called, each of us, to carry the fire of God's love into the places we inhabit — our families, our workplaces, our streets, our politics. This is not always comfortable work. The Spirit, as the scriptures remind us, does not simply offer consolation. The Spirit also convicts, disrupts, and sends. Being people of Pentecost means being willing to be sent.

So let us open our locked doors. Let us receive once more the gift that has been poured out for us so lavishly, so extravagantly, so freely.

And let us go—in the power of that same Spirit—into the beautiful, broken, beloved world that God refuses to stop loving.

Come, Holy Spirit. Come.

Yours in the fellowship of the Spirit,
The Right Reverend Dr. Susan Bell
Bishop of Niagara



Photo: Istock/Photo82

All Are Invited:

Annual Bishop's Company Dinner Opens to the Wider Community

For the first time, Bishop Susan is extending an open invitation to all for the Annual Bishop's Company Dinner. This is an evening that has long been a cherished gathering for members, and now welcomes the wider diocesan community to share in its spirit of fellowship, generosity, and celebration.

This year's dinner will take place on Thursday, May 28, 2026, at Carmen's Event Centre in Hamilton. The evening will feature a reception with entertainment, a silent auction in support of the Bishop's Company Endowment Fund, and a special conversation

between Archbishop Shane Parker, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and Bishop Susan Bell.

While the dinner has traditionally been reserved for members of the Bishop's Company and their guests, this new approach reflects a growing desire to broaden participation and invite more people into the life and mission this ministry supports. Tickets for non-members will be available beginning May 1 at a cost of \$175.

Parishes are also invited to reserve a table for the evening at a cost of \$1,000, seating eight people. This provides a wonder-

ful way for parish communities to gather, support the Bishop's Company, and enjoy the evening together.

The Bishop's Company plays a vital role in supporting the bishop's pastoral ministry, enabling compassionate and confidential responses to urgent needs within the diocese and beyond. Through its endowment fund, the Bishop can assist clergy, licensed lay workers, and others facing extraordinary circumstances, ranging from medical needs to times of financial crisis or personal hardship.

Becoming a member of the Bishop's Company offers both a

deeper connection to this work and several unique benefits. For \$275 (\$500 for couples), members receive a complimentary ticket(s) with premium seating at the annual dinner, early access to reserve complimentary tickets and purchase additional guest tickets for \$100 each. Membership also includes special recognition at the dinner, a charitable tax receipt, a copy of the bishop's annual address, an annual snapshot of how your contributions have helped, and a special prayer card.

Those attending the dinner as non-members will experience the same elegant evening, com-

plete with fine dining, engaging conversation, and opportunities to support the silent auction, while also learning more about how they might become more involved in the future.

Rooted in a history that stretches back to 1951, the Bishop's Company continues to embody the Church's call to care for one another as a family in Christ. This year's dinner offers a meaningful opportunity not only to gather in community but also to participate in a shared ministry of compassion and support.

All are warmly invited.

Three Years, One Journey:

How YLTP Shapes Young Leaders

Each year, the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) brings together youth from across the diocese for a transformative four-day residential experience focused on leadership development, community building, and faith formation. Set against the beautiful backdrop of Canterbury Hills Camp, participants explore their faith, discover their gifts, and learn to lead with courage, compassion, and confidence.

This year, the program was facilitated by Donna Ellis with the support of Synod staff Hannah Keller, NSML coordinator & governance administrator, Emily Hill, parish development missionary, and Kristen Jackson-Dockeray, the new diocesan children, youth, and family missional coordinator. With 18 youth in attendance this year, the team was also supported by an army of volunteers and speakers providing the youth with leadership skills, spiritual practices, and worship experiences.

Youth explored, with David Anderson, the YLTP chaplain, "The Overarching Story of God," which framed the entire YLTP experience. It breaks down the Bible into 5 "chapters": Creation, Fracture/Fall, Israel/People of God, Jesus/The Church, and New Creation/The Story Yet to Come.

Participants heard from alumni Paige Keller, who spoke about the governance structure of the Anglican church, her experiences as a youth delegate at the Provincial Synod, and her role with the Council of General Synod.

The youth participated in the high ropes with Adventureworks, heard from Alyssa Zilney, program manager for Act 5, a Hamilton-based Christian community for young adults, and explored Wild Church with Rebecca Vendetti, licensed lay missionary at St. James in Dundas. They spent time on an outdoor prayer walk with Sharon Miller, camp director for Canterbury Hills and a workshop with Adedayo Olomodosi, who used a familiar pop-culture context to share similarities between Jesus & superheroes and how we can be our own heroes as Christians.

Bishop Susan also joined them on Tuesday for a time of prayer, reflection and questions. It was a deep and meaningful conversation about leadership and hope in a fractured world, and a discussion about the global Church.



Bishop Susan speaks with YLTP participants

Photo: Dani Leitis



Campfire is always popular at YLTP.

Photo: Hannah Keller

Bishop Susan encouraged youth to step into the ministries they feel called to and not to take no for an answer.

Throughout the next two editions of the Niagara Anglican, we will share the stories of YLTP from the perspectives of some third-year youth as they reflect on their final year and look forward to their futures in faithful leadership roles.

Learning to Lead, Growing in Faith

By Elena Costa

Hello everyone, my name is Elena and I have recently completed my third year in the YLTP program. This year, my group had the pleasure of planning and running a social for participants to enjoy, as well as our week-ending Eucharist. Some meaningful moments from this year for me would have to be our Eucharist, both social events and our prayer hike. We were fortunate to go on a hike as a group and see some great views.

As I completed each year, I was always excited to come back and see our amazing leaders as well as the best friends I made while at camp. It never mattered what year group everyone was in because we

all got along and made friends with each other. As I went year to year, I learned new ways to be a helpful team player as well as lead groups through activities and struggles. I use these skills in my daily life at school for group work and leading school activities.

As I have left YLTP, I hope to carry these skills with me for the rest of my life. I hope I can bring these wonderful leadership skills into my future career. I hope to keep the amazing friendships I've made for many years to come.

Leading with Faith, Shaped by Community

By John Mous

This March Break, I continued YLTP, the incredible program the diocese offers as a Year 3. This year, I had so much fun planning socials, campfires, and, of course, the ending Eucharist. As a Year 3, you get to plan so much more, and it highlights how much you've grown over the 3-year program. We also had so many great workshops, where we learned about different prayers, how the church is run, and how to connect with God through nature. Looking back to Year 1, I'm so grateful for the YLTP program and how

much it's improved my leadership and faith.

One of the most meaningful moments I had this year was us all bonding around the campfire, surrounded by a peaceful night. We were roasting marshmallows, and I was chatting with Donna Ellis (coordinator for YLTP). As I looked up to the beautiful starry sky, I felt so close to God, surrounded by a wonderful Anglican community.

Overall, I'd say my favourite moment was in Year 1 when we did a quiet prayer activity at night, with many stations around the camp. It was so peaceful, and it sparked my faith in a way it hadn't ignited before.

Every year, I wanted to come back because of what an opportunity it is to form forever friends and a beautiful, close-knit community. Of course, we also learn so much and grow our faith, but the community for me is one of the best take-aways from YLTP.

So many of the learnings from YLTP I brought into my everyday life. From the experience in planning activities to the stunning prayers Bishop Susan gave us, so many things from YLTP are applicable to everyday life. For me, I think communication and collaboration skills were the main skills

I used from YLTP. Working in groups is not always easy to do, but every year I have gotten better at it and apply those skills to group projects, extracurriculars, or volunteering.

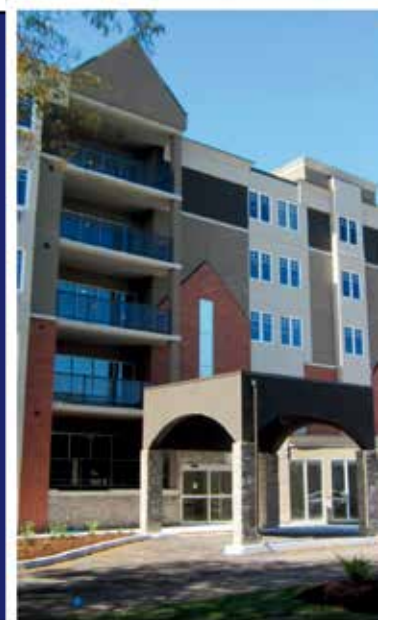
YLTP inspired me to take leadership in my school as well. I'm currently one of two Student Senators for my school, where we meet bimonthly to bring forward the concerns of the student body to the board level. Without the experience from YLTP, I don't know if I would have applied, let alone gotten the role.

I hope the way my faith blossomed each year in YLTP stays with me forever. I'm sure everyone says this, but it truly is a fantastic program. Every day you enhance your faith in a way you might not experience in everyday life, and I could feel it growing each year. I also hope the bonds I formed with people stay with me. Not just with my fellow participants, but also my bonds with the incredible volunteers, like Donna, Steff, Nesta, and so many more. Hopefully, we will reunite in the future, and even if we don't have a planned reunion, I know our paths will cross. God works in mysterious ways after all.



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Jesus Said That?

A series exploring some surprising things he said about sharing the faith

Welcoming Kids, Welcoming Jesus

THE REVEREND DR. JUDY PAULSEN

“WHOEVER WELCOMES ONE SUCH CHILD IN MY NAME WELCOMES ME” (MARK 9:37)

We are a society that tends to value children for what we hope they will be and do. Parents, grandparents, and teachers look forward to kids becoming “productive members of society”, and “successful and well-adjusted adults”. While such aspirations for our children are perfectly normal, this can mean we become overly fixated on children in terms of their future. Although most of us value children deeply, so much of what we do as a society, perhaps without realizing it, becomes focused on their future value.

Jesus had a different approach to children. He valued them, in the moment, exactly as they were. When his disciples decided that Jesus was far too busy to be bothered with some children brought by their mothers for a blessing, Jesus chastised the disciples. He told them, in no uncertain terms, that they needed to welcome children, in his name, and that when they did so, they welcomed Him.

What could ‘welcoming kids in the name of Jesus’ look like on the ground in our churches? Surely, we already welcome children. Right?

A number of years ago, I had a conversation with someone who told me that her recently ordained pastor had started a ministry among skateboarders. Some leaders in his church had started to complain that this ministry, which took up several hours each week, was not “generating any new givings”. For those leaders, it seemed that welcoming children was less important than recruiting more potential donors.

It’s so easy for the church to get turned completely upside



Photo: Unsplash/Danique Godwin

down in its thinking, isn’t it? Sometimes we don’t recognize when we are not actually doing what Jesus commanded us to do. The members of that church could be saying, “Thank God! We’ve got ourselves a pastor who can connect with skateboarders. Now, how can we direct some of our budget to make sure this key ministry continues?”

To welcome children, in Jesus’ name, means we welcome and minister to them on behalf of Jesus. Sharing the faith with them is one of the most important tasks of the Church, for both their sake, but also for ours. Just as in Jesus’ day, children often teach us things about faith as we share the faith with them.

Toddlers are often amazed by God’s creation, noticing little things that we completely overlook, like the movement of ants on the sidewalk. School-aged kids often display a wild and wonderful courage and thirst for adventure. Teenagers often question things we accept grudgingly as ‘normal’ and often make life-long commitments to faith.

What lessons might the kids in the neighbourhoods surrounding our churches have to teach us? And how might we share answers to some of the spiritual questions and longings that they have?

One of the moms at a Messy Church once told me that her three-year-old asked her, “Does God live on the clouds like the Care Bears?” Imagine, such a little guy wondering about the nature of God.

A seven-year-old girl, whose parents were both afflicted with serious epilepsy, once asked me, “Doesn’t God like my mommy and daddy?” Imagine a little girl carrying around such a profound question about human suffering.

Trigger warning: mentions self-harm.

A fourteen-year-old, who had been engaging in self-harm, once asked, “How can we know God is real when we can’t see him?” Teenagers are often the boldest at naming the questions humanity has long grappled with.

Each child comes bearing gifts; passions, and perspectives that can enrich us, even as we

share the good news of God’s unstoppable love for them and for the world. Now you might be thinking, well, this is sort of a ‘motherhood and apple pie’ issue, isn’t it? What church doesn’t welcome children? It doesn’t cost anything to be welcoming.

The fact is, though, that truly welcoming children does come with a cost.

- The cost of putting up with a little playful noise, or even an occasional unholy racket, during worship.
- The cost of offering a summer choir camp, an after-school reading club, or a Family Day event for the neighbourhood.
- The cost of being distracted as an 18-month-old breaks free from their parent and does laps around the altar.
- The cost of not knowing what on earth to do with the odd wafer chewed and then spat out during Communion.
- The cost of waiting patiently as a child haltingly reads one of the Scripture passages.
- The cost of filling some backpacks with school supplies.
- The cost of removing a pew and putting down some floor mats, to create a quiet play area so toddlers can be present for worship with their parents.
- The cost of installing change tables in the washrooms.
- The cost of bags of Easter

eggs that kids from the neighbourhood search for on the church lawn.

- The cost of parents sitting on the edge of their seats as their child says something completely off-the-wall during the kids’ focus.
- The cost of putting together colouring kits that little ones can use during the sermon.
- The cost of putting up with the pandemonium of kids playing tambourines, shakers, or triangles during the final hymn.

To welcome children, in Jesus’ name, will always come with a cost. But these ought to be costs that we are most excited to pay. Because Jesus told us that when we welcome one new baby, toddler, child, or teen, in his name, we welcome Him.

What an amazing thing! What a Gospel-centered way to view the kids that come through our doors, and the kids our churches can serve in our surrounding neighbourhoods!

Your church may not be called to offer a ministry to skateboarders, but you are definitely called to ask God to show you the children that your church should be welcoming. Then, get busy planning, funding, and working to build yourselves into a church that offers children the extravagant welcome that Jesus offers us all.



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CALLED TO LIFE
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The Disabled God and the Wounds We Carry Together

THE REVEREND CANON DR. DAVID ANDERSON

As we come to the end of the Easter season, I keep returning to one of Jesus' resurrection appearances — the moment when he stands among the disciples, shows them his wounds, and says, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). It is a scene that holds together resurrection, vulnerability, and mission in a single breath. And it prepares us for Pentecost, when the Spirit will empower this wounded community to become the Body of Christ in the world.

The risen Christ stands among his friends as the Wounded One, bearing in his resurrected flesh the marks of violence and vulnerability. He does not conceal them. He leads with them. This is the starting point of disability theology.

The theologian Nancy Eiesland famously named this image "the Disabled God." When Jesus appears to the disciples, he does not present a perfected body. Instead, he reveals a God who has taken disability

into God's own life — not as a temporary condition to be overcome, but as part of the divine identity. This is not a God who stands apart from human fragility, but one who carries it.

Many of us assume that healing means "getting back to normal." We imagine resurrection as the undoing of weakness, the restoration of strength, the return to a body that works "properly." But the Gospel tells a different story. The risen Christ is not "fixed." His wounds become the very means by which he is known. They are not erased; they are glorified. Disability, then, is not a deviation from the image of God. It is a place where God's life is revealed.

If Christ's wounds are part of his resurrected identity, what does that mean for the church — the Body of Christ? It means our wounds, too, are part of who we are.

Every parish carries its own scars: griefs that linger because there is an empty pew where someone used to sit; bodies that have changed and no longer move with the ease they once

did; abilities that have diminished, leaving once familiar ministries harder to sustain; stories that have shaped us in ways

"The Spirit empowers this Body—fragile, limited, beloved—to continue the mission of the Wounded Christ."

we did not choose. And we also carry the deeper wounds of the church's past — moments when the church caused harm instead of healing. These, too, are part of our shared woundedness.

We often treat these wounds as liabilities. But the Disabled God invites us to see even the wounds in our corporate body as places of encounter. The church is not called to be a community of the perfect or unbroken. We are called to be a community that tells the truth about our lives—and finds Christ already present in the places we would rather hide.

When we take the wounded body of Christ seriously, we

begin to see bodies bearing disability not as objects of ministry but as teachers of the Gospel. Christians who live with disability reveal the limits of our assumptions about "normalcy" and "strength." They show us what interdependence looks like, what honesty looks like, what embodied prayer looks like. They remind us that the Christian life is not about self-sufficiency but about belonging to one another.

After showing his wounds to disciples locked behind doors in fear, Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And then, immediately, "he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22). This is not incidental. It is the shape of Christian mission.

The Spirit does not descend on a flawless community. The Spirit comes to a group still afraid, still uncertain, still carrying their own wounds. The Spirit empowers this Body—fragile, limited, humbled, beloved—to continue the mission of the Wounded Christ. Pentecost is not the triumph of the strong. It is the sending of

the vulnerable, breathed upon by the Spirit who makes courage possible.

A missional church shaped by the Disabled God becomes a community that leads with honesty; a people who meet others in their wounds; a body that practises interdependence; a companion to the neighbourhood, not a saviour of it. Mission becomes less about what we bring and more about what we discover—Christ already present in the lives and bodies of our neighbours.

The risen Christ invites us to recognize him not by perfection, but by love made visible in vulnerability. Perhaps this is our calling, too: to be a church that does not hide its scars, but discovers Christ in them—and is sent into the world in the same way he was sent, not in strength, but in love, and not alone, but in the power of the Spirit.

David Anderson is the rector of St. Jude's Church, Oakville. He can be reached at anderson@stjudeschurch.net

Across a Divided Border: A Bridge of Song

ROBERT EVERETT

On a Sunday afternoon, February 15, St. Paul's Fort Erie hosted an event that was unlikely for so many reasons. A 50-voice gospel choir and praise band from Buffalo crossed the border to fill the sanctuary and nave with music, love and respect. Aside from the organizational leaders from St. Paul's and Buffalo churches, it brought together 200 people in the sanctuary who would have otherwise not met.

The Harriet Tubman Choir was especially formed for this event from 18 churches across Buffalo. They sang with an exhilarating energy and disarming sincerity. Their contagious enthusiasm is a testament to their faith, a faith that sustained their ancestors in their fight against slavery in their country. The choir's short trip across the Peace Bridge retraced the final steps of the Underground Railway.

As part of a British colony where slavery had been abolished, the citizens of Fort Erie welcomed men, women and children to a land of freedom. They fled bondage, exploitation, beatings and sexual assault. To



The Harriet Tubman Choir, formed from 18 churches across Buffalo, performs at St. Paul's Ft. Erie.

Photo: Contributed by Robert Everett

be sure, there were many acts of kindness to provide transit, to lend a hand, or to prepare a meal; however, it needs to be said that their reception was far from ideal. The colony already had a history of 200 years of slavery, and the pervading

racist attitudes and practices sharply limited Black people's opportunities.

Nevertheless, that afternoon, L. Nathan Hare, a Black historian, generously spoke at length about what Upper Canada did. He found humour in Canada's

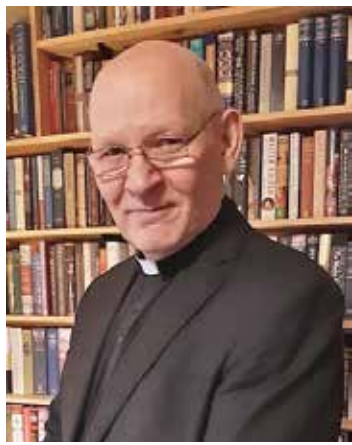
history. But he was nearly in tears when he was shown a \$10 bill with Viola Desmond's face on it during the concert. "Canada put a Black woman's face on your currency?" he asked. He stayed away from entering the fray of current

politics but did say, "Our community has been living under ICE our entire lives".

The Gospel Hour event was a "written on a paper napkin" idea, or more precisely, a text that started with "Maybe this is a stupid idea..." But it unfolded in a way that reaffirmed the power of an invitation. Bessie Patterson, the choir director, was honoured and thrilled to receive the invitation to bring a Gospel Choir to St. Paul's. "This was a simple idea that turned into an inspirational experience where we could show how much we valued one another. They thanked us for the humble invitation, and we showed our love and admiration," recounts organizer Rob Everett.

They assembled, sang praise and then astounded all 150 of us in attendance. As Julia mentioned, "It moved me deeply. I got lost in the music." Sharon, another audience member, experienced first-hand how "God's message through music is inspiring and uplifting. The love they exude is contagious and reaffirming." There was dancing, clapping, and bebopping to the music. All present felt invigorated.

“Didn’t You Use to Be Michael Coren?”



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

“Excuse me, may I ask you a question?” says a middle-aged man sitting at the next table in the pub. “Don’t want to be rude, but you’re wearing a clerical collar. Didn’t you use to be Michael Coren?” Good question, because sometimes I’m not entirely sure.

The days of hosting television and radio shows ended more than a decade ago. I still write columns and books, but they generally concern Christianity and discuss where the Gospel essence of forgiveness and love meets the body politic. My main work, my vocation, is, of course, as an Anglican priest. I was ordained almost

seven years ago, and on that terrifying but completing day took an oath “to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.”

I’ve tried to document some of this in a recent book, *Diary of a Lowborn Cleric*, an attempt to open a window through which people might see and understand what we do, however long we’ve been on this journey. Frankly, we could do with some favourable exposure.

I was raised to speak my mind and welcome others doing the same. That matters when you’re a priest because the days of assumed deference are generally long gone. Not always, though. On one trip to England, I noticed that groups of young, fairly rowdy men were friendly, even affectionate, when they saw the collar.

“Oi, father, you alright, buy you a drink mate.” I tried to do my benign appreciation look, but it probably just looked like I had gas. I asked a priest friend what this was all about. “Oh”, he said, “that’s common. You’d be amazed at how many of them have been in prison or the army. The only person they see with compassion is the chaplain.

They never lose that respect.”

Then there’s the surreal. Priests spend a lot of time in hospitals, and on one visit, someone shouted that I’d stolen his sausages. I said I hadn’t, but would be happy to find him some food. He became increasingly convinced and then stood up to reveal that he’d removed his pyjamas. A nurse calmed him and then reassured me. “Was it the sausages?” I said it was. “Don’t worry. Last week, he

to present Jesus, pull back the curtain, and then get out of the way.

That’s especially true when dealing with pain, loss, and death. Listen rather than speak, be there rather than be clever, and allow God the space and time. When I started out, I would drive home and sometimes cry in the car. So much grief. The man who apologized to me in his last few moments because he was taking up my

impeccable.

Yet how to do this job, how to preach love, hope, and faith when the world looks so grim and sepulchral? Old hatreds considered long exorcised, given new and obscene life, hideous bullies silencing careful diplomats, war and violence made more grotesquely capable by the abuse of science and technology, and in my ministry, a regular experience of poverty, homelessness, and injustice. In other words, the repeated triumph of all that Jesus preached against.

It’s because and not in spite of this that the church and its people have more relevance and significance than ever. We’re not supposed to go with the flow, even though that’s happened more times than I like to remember. “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting,” said GK Chesterton, “It has been found difficult; and left untried.” He wrote that more than a century ago.

“Didn’t you use to be Michael Coren?” Still am, but occasionally, through reliance on God and a commitment to the beatitudes, this lowborn cleric might be doing something right.

As a person, I’m broken, flawed, weak. As someone who has agreed to Christ’s command to follow him, I can symbolize something impeccable.

accused a rabbi of walking off with his cheese.”

And the sublime—presiding at the altar and sharing the Eucharist. It’s a gloriously unique blessing and something no priest should ever find habitual or routine. I was physically shaking the first time I took a service, and while that sharpness of emotion has evolved, I still feel so inadequate. It’s not about me, of course, and the priest is a conduit. Here and in every other situation, my role is

time, the children who didn’t arrive at their father’s bedside in time to say goodbye, the teen suicide, the sudden cold isolation of a woman who lost her spouse after so many decades and could only stare in fear and incredulity.

I don’t know if I do any good, and I’m not sure it’s the right question. As a person, I’m broken, flawed, weak. As someone who has agreed to Christ’s command to follow him, I can symbolize something

Teatime as a Sacred Ceremony

THE REVEREND DEACON SHEILA PLANT

“DRINKING TEA CAN BE A NOURISHING RITUAL THAT BRINGS INNER PEACE TO YOUR BODY, MIND, AND SOUL.”

I’m sure I’m not alone when I say that the first thing I do when I get home from shopping, meetings, or any other event is to put the kettle on. Sometimes before I’ve taken off my coat! It doesn’t matter the outside the temperature whether it be hot or cold there is always time for tea. During these troubling and unsettling times in our world, a cup of tea often helps to calm us. I know that there are many out there who cannot abide a cup of tea but for those of you who love tea, this is for you.

We know that coffee may be the power beverage that gets us revved up in the morning and fuels us when we’re burning the midnight oil, but tea is the drink we turn to when we want to relax and be refreshed at the same time. Black, green, white, herbal, hot, or ice cold, tea is more than a soothing beverage,

age. It can be a ritual, a cultural experience, and even a spiritual practice. I did learn one day that herbal tea and all its flavours is not actually real tea, but most teas come from the leaves of the tea plant.

The reverence for tea has inspired ceremony in many



Photo: Unsplash/Vero Manrique

cultures. From the spirituality of Chanoyu, the Japanese way of preparing and serving tea, to the sharing of Maté in Latin America, tea rituals are for celebration, ceremony, and relationship bonding. In China, tea rituals are part of many wedding ceremonies with the bride and groom serving their elder relatives in a show of respect and gratitude. The Chinese art of drinking and serving tea has been a source of inspiration for poetry and song.

The Russian custom of “chaepitie” has inspired a unique style of teapots, caddies, teacups, and cozies. The samovar, a special brewing device, has become the symbol of the Russian tea ceremony and an object of art in its own right. Iced tea, popular in the U.S., as well as other parts of the world, is a modern ritual bringing cool relief on a sweltering summer day.

In some Asian cultures, teatime with a friend can turn into a simple ceremony by preparing your tea with the intention of offering nourishment and good wishes to the other person. When you are seated together, rather than drinking your tea right away, look at one another and express your gratitude and appreciation for your friendship. When you pour the tea, again intend it as an offering. Drink your tea slowly, savoring its flavor and aroma. Let its warmth or its coolness soothe your body. When you are finished drinking your tea, thank your friend for taking part in this nourishing ritual with you. We don’t all follow this particular cultural experi-

ence, but we are always willing to share a cup of tea with a friend. Whether savoured in the presence of another or tasted alone, the custom of drinking tea provides a soothing pause in our hectic world. Drinking tea



can be a daily ritual that brings inner calm and clarity to the body, mind, and soul.



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All Saints, Dain City Closes After Faithful Season of Discernment

AFTER MORE THAN 80 YEARS OF FAITHFUL MINISTRY, THE PARISH OF ALL SAINTS, DAIN CITY (WELLAND), IS CONCLUDING ITS MINISTRY.

FOLLOWING A VESTRY MOTION RECOMMENDING VOLUNTARY DISESTABLISHMENT, AND WITH THE ASSENT OF THE BISHOP, THE PARISH WAS FORMALLY DISESTABLISHED ON SUNDAY, APRIL 19, WITH ITS FINAL SERVICE PRESIDED OVER BY BISHOP SUSAN BELL. THIS MOMENT COMES NOT AS A SUDDEN ENDING, BUT AS THE CULMINATION OF A LONG AND PRAYERFUL JOURNEY OF DISCERNMENT. IT WAS A JOURNEY MARKED BY HONESTY, COURAGE, AND DEEP LOVE FOR THE COMMUNITY ALL SAINTS HAS SERVED FOR GENERATIONS.

EVEN AS THIS CHAPTER DRAWS TO A CLOSE, THE LEGACY OF ALL SAINTS IS ONE THAT SYNOD COUNCIL HAS NAMED AND CELEBRATED: A WITNESS TO THE GOSPEL EXPRESSED IN CARE FOR NEIGHBOURS, STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION, AND THE NURTURING OF DISCIPLES ACROSS DECADES OF MINISTRY.

BELOW ARE SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY OF ALL SAINTS:

In my role as Parish Development Missioner, I was invited to share with the people of All Saints, Dain City, as they entered a time of discernment about their future. A year ago, we reflected together on the parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:6-9), and the call to tend the soil faithfully for one more season. The people of this parish took that work seriously. Like the gardener in the parable, they have been careful and faithful stewards of what was entrusted to them. Week by week, they gathered for worship, sustained the life of the parish, cared for one another, and worked diligently to keep the church present in the community. Many of them have quite literally been gardeners as well, nurturing the community gardens on the church grounds, where signs of new life return each year through patient and hopeful labour.

In the end, their decision to disestablish is not a defeat, but a faithful acknowledgement of the season that has come. Like all Christian life, All Saints' story is held within the pattern of death and resurrection, and we trust that the good work God began there will continue in new ways. As the people of All Saints move into new parish homes, they carry with them the spirit that has marked this community — steadfast, hopeful, and confident that with each new season, God will bring new life.

Emily Hill
Parish Development Missioner

As the Archdeacon of Brock and Rector of the neighbouring parish of St David's Welland, I have had the great privilege of witnessing the extraordinary ways in which the faithful and dedicated people of All Saints

Dain City have touched the hearts of countless people. For over eighty years, they have stood as witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by welcoming so

a lasting legacy in the lives of so many who have been shaped by the witness and ministry of All Saints. And so while this

have long lived in the hearts and minds of the parishioners, lay and ordained leaders of this congregation who have faith-

on what it is to be a loving and faithful Christian community. I will always remember the times we spent together during worship services, parish meetings, planning for the opening of your community garden or simply enjoying time together during social gatherings and parish celebrations. To the wardens and to my dear friend, the Reverend Canon Nirmal Mendis, your tireless work in upholding the people of this wonderful community has inspired me in ways I cannot fully express. You have been extraordinary servants. May God bless you all as you journey towards a hopeful future, knowing that we are all so grateful and appreciative for your many years of faithful and devoted service.

Yours in Christ
The Venerable Terry Holub

Our feelings about All Saints, Dain City, closing are certainly mixed. We are saddened that circumstances have forced this, but I am also looking forward to joining another, hopefully, fuller congregation.

The people from All Saints have been extensions of our own families. We have shared our celebrations and heart-breaks as well, families growing then shrinking as we lose loved ones.

When the Fundraising Committee was formed, we put on many events—many pasta dinners, golf tournaments, fish fries, flea markets, bazaars, auctions, trivia nights, purse bingos, penny sales, vendor markets, kids' fairs and community gardens with the help of Dain City Community Garden Committee. All these events brought the Dain City community together, and we appreciated all the sup-

many to participate in worship and fellowship. Together, they have celebrated baptisms, weddings, and commended many to God's eternal care, thus leaving

moment in time may mark a conclusion to the parish's institutional life, it does not mark an end to the faith, devotion, and Christian witness that

fully served the people of Dain City for over eight decades.

To each of you, I extend my deepest thanks for all that you have done in shining a light



Above: The Garden Committee showing off plans for their community garden;

Below: A place for rest in the completed community garden Photos: Contributed by All Saints



All Saints, Dain City Concludes Ministry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6



Parishioners preparing meat pies (above) and cabbage rolls (below) for fundraisers.



port they gave the church.

After being lifetime members from Baptism, going to Sunday School and later teaching, Confirmation, getting married and parenting our children, joining the Ladies Guild until it faded, we have always been active. Of all these, our fondest memories are of the Ladies Guild. We were a very busy group with all the usual activities, but the best was the camaraderie that we shared. We helped each other solve problems, talents, child-rearing issues, personal issues, failed recipes, etc. This lovely group of women helped us to become the people that we are today.

We truly hope that there will be some contact with our church family in the future.

Kathy Porcaro & Betty Totten

I am H. S. Dhillon from Punjab, India and presently live in Dain City, Welland. By the year 2022, I started visiting All Saints Church, Dain City, and that changed my life. This is only due to the teaching and ways of explaining the thoughts of Christ by our beloved Rev. Nirmal Mendis, a very kind and deeply devoted soul. I have regard and love for him. But it is so sad that the church is going to close soon. I will always miss your kindness and teaching. Gardening is my hobby. After joining Dain City Community Garden, it became great fun to meet so many good people and work as a community.

I want to thank all of the people at All Saints for the wonderful lunch put on last Sunday. Thank you for including my family; they also had a

lovely time.

When I came to All Saints almost 8 years ago, I was so overwhelmed with the kindness and welcome from not only the choir, Nirmal, Kathy and the wardens but from the people in the pews.

I was made to feel at home right away and looked forward to each week to be part of this outstanding community.

Growing up, I heard many stories from my aunt (Alice Skinner) and her husband about the church and coming from a large Roman Catholic church, it was hard to understand the close community that made All Saints the parish it is. I often chuckle to myself, thinking what they would say knowing that I have now had the pleasure of experiencing what they often talked about at All Saints.

The upcoming closing of All Saints is very sad for me, and I cannot imagine what it will be like for many of you who have spent most, if not all, of your lives in this parish. I pray that God will help all of you through this difficult time.

I would have liked to have continued with all of you every Sunday until April 19, but the position at St. James, St. Brendan needed filling. I am confident my daughters will carry the music ministry in my absence.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your faith-filled community and for all the support you have given me over the last few years, and thank you for the generous lunch and gift you gave me.

Ken Parr
Organist

AS THE PEOPLE OF ALL SAINTS PREPARE TO MARK THIS FINAL CHAPTER TOGETHER, THE WIDER DIOCESAN COMMUNITY JOINS IN GIVING THANKS FOR MORE THAN EIGHT DECADES OF FAITHFUL WITNESS, FOR LIVES SHAPED IN FAITH, AND FOR A PARISH THAT HAS QUIETLY AND STEADFASTLY SERVED CHRIST IN ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

SYNOD COUNCIL HAS COM-MENDED THESE DISCIPLES TO THE PARISHES THEY WILL NOW JOIN, TRUSTING THAT THE SAME SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY, FELLOWSHIP, AND CARE THAT DEFINED ALL SAINTS WILL CONTINUE TO BEAR FRUIT IN NEW COMMUNITIES.

Thirteen Years, Twice

NIRMAL MENDIS, ALL SAINTS CHURCH, DAIN CITY

In a so-called Third World nation—
A poor parish of rice farmers
Beside abandoned homes,
And abandoned fields
Left silent by internal war.
Still, the stipend came on time,
A modest rupee sum from the diocese,
Enough to keep the church doors open,
Year after patient year.

Thirteen later years of ordination
In a so-called First World nation—
Among kind and gentle people
In a parish poor in its own way,
Carrying a decade of worry
About how to pay their bills,
How to guide the affairs
Of a church inherited by a few.

Plans were shaped with
The outside, unchurched community,
Their mission charts, ideas, and steps,
While new neighbours entered the pews—
People with little to give,
And no sense of our quiet struggles.
Had we pots of dollars
Passed down from grandmothers and grandfathers,
As some of our neighbouring parishes had,
We could have gone further,
Even though we were few.

Yet together we discerned
That the doors must close.
A question rose:
“What can the centre do for us?”
And the reply was plain:
“No pot of cash here.”

But once, in that Third World place,
A small stream of rupees from the centre
Was enough to keep the doors open.

So now I stand between two worlds—
One of rupees, one of dollars,
Both filled with hope,
Both filled with pain.
I wonder what God asks of us:
To keep shaping an emerging church,
Brick by quiet brick—
Or to lift our eyes beyond our doors
And finally see

An emerging One World.



Climate Justice Niagara

Meet Your Climate Justice Facilitators – Part 2

BRUCE MACKENZIE

The work of Climate Justice Niagara (CJN) is supported by over 50 Climate Justice facilitators in parishes across the Diocese. In the coming months, we will introduce you to a few of these wonderful volunteers who do so much for the planet and for their churches.

Rosemary Horsewood, Christ Church, Flamborough

Rosemary notes that “My mother taught me to recycle

approached by Sue Carson to become a Climate Justice Niagara (CJN) facilitator, hoping that ‘the power of more’ would help me to grow and learn more about climate justice and to share my knowledge with others in an even more meaningful way.”

As one of the earliest facilitators to be appointed in the diocese, Rosemary says that her role has changed over the last 15 years. “It made me want to broaden my role so that everyone might become

to the Association of Dundas Churches, an ecumenical environmental group. “We have been involved in local rallies and environmental education sessions, representing the local churches all joining together to show that as Christians, we do care about the environment.”

The support of CJN has been helpful for the parish in achieving its environmental goals.

CJN helped the parish to track its greenhouse gas emissions through its involvement in the Diocese of Niagara parish energy audit. Rosemary also says that “I have attended most of the Diocese climate justice workshops and have found that through learning and networking, I have been greatly encouraged to move our parish forward with the goal of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 10% by 2050.” In May 2012, Christ Church was awarded a Bronze-level accreditation

Rosemary notes that “At CCF, we remain as committed as our budget will allow us to be. It will always be a work in progress, as nothing is static in a Church building. The impacts of climate change are being felt, and this is making everyone realize we have to continue to do whatever we can to protect our environment at the church

and at home.”

Brenda Lane, St. John’s, Jordan

Brenda has been the facilitator at St. John’s for about four years. She says that she originally took on the position, “because I am known as the ‘green’ person in the parish, and no one else stepped forward.”

She notes that Greening Niagara, as it was first called, and then Climate Justice

use and how to reduce it. The parish also conducted a tree inventory as part of the diocese’s Communion Forest initiative, which included an assessment of the health of the church’s existing trees.

When asked what has been the greatest impact you and your parish have made to the environment over the years, she notes that “we recently were added to the Town of Lincoln Smart water metre program. This told us we had a leak underground going through the cemetery. We were able to fix it by thinking ‘outside of the box’ and installing a cistern in the church basement. We also had a new roof put on the gym in 2024, and a new roof will be installed on the rest of the parish hall soon - weather permitting - which should help with heating.”



Brenda Lane

Niagara, assisted the parish in conducting an energy audit as part of the CJN initiative that included a review of the church’s energy use. The parish also sought accreditation through the CJN Accreditation program and was awarded a Bronze certificate. The process included, among other things, looking at the church’s plastic

To learn more about Climate Justice Niagara, visit <https://niagaraanglican.ca/climate-justice>. Parishes ready to take action and appoint a Climate Justice Facilitator can contact both Deirdre Pike, justice and outreach program consultant at Deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca and Bruce MacKenzie, chair of Climate Justice Niagara at climatejustice@niagaraanglican.ca.



Sue Carson (right) presents a garden certificate to Rosemary Horsewood (left) and the Rev. Canon Dr. Barry Randle (middle, now retired).

Photos: Contributed by Bruce Mackenzie

from a young age, by having a compost heap in our garden, and when recycling started in the 1960’s I would take our cans and bottles to a local recycling depot. These things stuck with me and in my church life. I was only too delighted when I was

aware that churches do care for creation.” “At Christ Church,” she notes, “we acknowledge global events such as Earth Day, Earth Hour, and World Water Day, and we pray weekly to preserve the planet.” Rosemary has found support belonging

Greg Tweney Installed as Chancellor of Provincial Synod

Canon Greg Tweney, chancellor of the Diocese of Niagara, has been appointed Chancellor of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario. His installation took place on March 25 during Morning Prayer at the opening of Provincial Council, marking a significant moment in the life of the province and its connection to the wider Anglican Communion.

A lifelong resident within the Niagara region, Greg brings decades of legal experience as Crown Counsel with the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, alongside faithful service in the Church, including as vice-chancellor of both the Diocese and, more recently, the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario. At his installation, Archbishop Anne Germond, metropolitan for the province, offered thanks for his “wise, faith-filled counsel and dedicated leadership,” noting the appointment as a day of celebration for the Church.

Greg will continue to serve as Niagara chancellor, concurrent with this appointment.



Canon Greg Tweney poses with Archbishop Anne Germond after his installation.

Photo: Mark Hauser

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In other words

Why Niceness Is Not the Point

**JOHN BOWEN**

My friend Ross Lockhart is Professor of Mission Studies at the Vancouver School of Theology. He tells a story of asking a group of Canadian main-line Protestants in a workshop, “Who can tell me in your own words, ‘What is the gospel?’” Several answers were suggested about good news, Jesus, and God’s love for the world, but the one that sticks out came from a longtime churchgoer who

said—sincerely and without any sense of discomfort—“Well, I believe the gospel simply takes nice Canadians and makes them nicer!”

No. The point of evangelism is to help people put their faith in Christ. But doesn’t faith in Christ make you a nicer person, so that in the end it amounts to the same thing? No again.

C.S.Lewis discusses this at length in *Mere Christianity*. He says, imagine a professing Christian who is grumpy and short-tempered. Let’s call him Alfred (since it begins with A). Compare him with a non-Christian, who is charming, generous, and kind. Let’s call her Beatrice (B). Surely Beatrice, the kind unbeliever, is more acceptable to God than grumpy Christian Alfred? Indeed, isn’t Alfred being somewhat hypocritical? Aren’t Christians meant to be nice—even nicer than those

who don’t share their faith?

Lewis’s argument is that we don’t know where these two people began. It is quite possible that Alfred, because of his difficult childhood, bad digestion, or disappointing life experiences, has actually made a great deal of progress in the Christian life from where he began. Maybe God is very pleased with this progress, although (obviously) God is not done with him yet. On the other hand, Beatrice may be that way simply because of her natural gifts, a healthy upbringing and a successful lifestyle. So, in fact, Alfred has made much progress in the spiritual life, whereas Beatrice may not even have started.

In any case, says Lewis, this is still not the point. The invitation of Jesus, which is also the invitation of the gospel, is not an invitation to niceness. Many words can describe Jesus—com-

passionate, wise, inclusive. But to be honest, he’s not always nice. If you were a Pharisee talking about Jesus, “nice” is certainly not one of the words that would pass your lips. No, his invitation is simply to follow him. It is an invitation to put our lives into his hands, and to play our part in the work he is doing in the world, that work he called “the kingdom.”

Thus, my nice neighbour may be very generous in using her snowblower to clear everybody’s sidewalk in the winter. God bless her! I, for one, appreciate it hugely. However, if she became a follower of Jesus, who knows what might happen? That kindness would be developed and enhanced, and Jesus might call her to exercise those gifts of a generous heart as a counsellor in a lonely, northern community, or as a community health worker

somewhere in Africa. What’s the difference? The difference is who is in charge of her life.

You will sometimes hear it said that the essence of sin is self-centredness. I have come to feel that that is a dangerous half-truth. After all, my snow-blowing neighbour is not self-centred. Indeed, she gives her life to serving others. So if that’s what sin means, then no, of course, she is not sinful. But I have to come to feel that there is a better word than self-centred to describe sin, and it is the word self-directed. Who is in charge of our lives?

That’s why niceness is not the point. Putting our lives in the hands of Jesus and at the service of his gospel is what Christianity is all about.

So You Are Compelled to Love (But Don’t Know How to Do It)

SUSIE KIM

Our diocesan vision statement “Called to Life and Compelled to Love” points us to an always beautiful but often fraught path of walking alongside God in His hope for the world, Jesus in His embodiment of this reality, and the Spirit in Her guidance for action. All this is a bit abstract though, isn’t it? So I wanted to offer a humble list of the practical, actionable ways that I’ve been compelled to love, and you might be too. They’re simple things you can put into practice—but not always easy! Pick one, or two, and try to incorporate them into your daily life, trusting that they’ll bear fruit—though not always quickly!

I’ve divided this into three sections. But you’ll find that they all feed into each other. The more you love others, the more you will love yourself and God; the more you love God, the more you will love others and yourself; and the more you love yourself, the more you will love God and others. Three for the price of one, as one might say.

Love of Others

Learn people’s names: the baristas at the coffee shop you go to on the weekends, those neighbours you keep seeing

while you walk the dog, the cashier at your pharmacy, the bus driver that does your route every day. People will notice you’ve noticed them.

Break bread: order a pizza, throw some store-bought dressing on some leafy greens, and invite some friends (or acquaintances that may become friends?) to share it with you. Hospitality doesn’t have to be complicated or elaborate.

Ask follow-up questions: cultivate a posture of curiosity rather than of assumption. What did they mean when they used that word that could mean a few different things? Why did they do the thing they just described doing? How did they come to the conclusion they just shared? All of these questions are just ways of getting to the bottom of how God made them. Which is, of course, fearfully and wonderfully.

Love of God

Listen to Him: read the Bible. I’m serious. Even if it’s just reading your favourite Psalm through once a day, something is better than nothing, and the Psalms are much better than just about anything. One of the most loving things you can do for anyone is listen to them, and it’s no exception with God.

Do for the least: you know



Photo: Pexels/Peter Denovo

that parable. What we do for the least of us is what we do for God. Yes, this means for the economically marginalized, but it also means for that really awkward person at the party no one is talking to.

Ask your priest to take your confession: did you know there’s a liturgy in the *Book of Alternative Services* for The Reconciliation of a Penitent? Did you know your priests love doing pastoral work that isn’t vestry meetings? We’re always fighting with God each in our particular ways. Go make up with Him.

Love of Self

Let yourself be silent and still: get acquainted with who you are in the absence of words and actions. Take just 5 minutes out of every day to settle into being the being that God made you to be. Set a timer on your phone, and truly, just sit there. No internet, no other people, no tasks.

Notice joy: when do you most appreciate the gift of being alive? Is it when you are walking in nature? When you are wandering around a bustling city with a friend? When you are watching TV with your cat

in your lap? Cultivate more of these moments.

Know thyself: look clear-eyed at all the parts of yourself that you try not to notice. How you never quite know what to say to someone who’s suffering. The way you keep interrupting people in conversations. The mustard all over your face when you’re eating a sandwich. Know that God loves all of this about you.

For more from Susie visit www.substack.com/@susiekim3

Sent for the Sake of the World: Forming Commissioned Lay Missioners for Missions and Mixed Ecology Parishes

THE REVEREND CANON DR. IAN MOBSBY

In our rapidly changing cultural landscape, where many no longer identify with church or have quietly drifted away from it, the need for new forms of mission has never been more urgent. The Anglican Diocese of Niagara is being invited—perhaps even compelled—to rediscover its identity as a sent (Apostolos) people. At the heart of this renewal is the growing and vital role of Commissioned Lay Missioners (CLMs).

CLMs are ordinary members of our parish worshipping communities who increasingly sense an extraordinary calling: a vocation to step beyond the gathered church and engage intentionally with those who are not yet part of it. These are people who care deeply about their local neighbourhoods, who notice those on the margins of church life, and who long to see new forms of Christian community emerge in ways that are meaningful, relational, and contextually grounded.

This ministry is critical for a post-Christendom relevant Church. We are no longer in a society where people naturally come to church; instead, we are being called to go—to listen, to serve, to build relationships, and to cultivate new expressions of ecclesial life among those who would not otherwise encounter the Gospel. CLMs are beginning to play a key role in helping parishes and diocesan missions develop what is often called a “mixed ecology” local church: a landscape where inherited



forms of parish life exist alongside new, contextual, and missional communities.

Importantly, this is a voluntary role. Yet it is far from peripheral. It represents one of the growing number of lay vocations that are essential for equipping the Church for the realities of the 21st century. The future of mission cannot rest solely on ordained leadership; it must be shared, collaborative, and deeply rooted in the gifts and callings of the whole people of God.

This is now the second year in which the diocese is intentionally supporting the discernment and formation of CLMs. We are seeking those who are not only passionate about mission but are also willing to be formed—to learn, to reflect, and to step out in faith. Central to this formation is the two-year NSML Certificate in Missional Practice. This is not simply a course, but an orthopraxis-focused journey that integrates

learning with lived experience. Participants engage in mission within their local contexts while reflecting theologically on what they are discovering.

The fruit of this approach is already becoming visible. From our first cohort, several new initiatives are beginning to take shape within parishes and diocesan missions. These emerging projects are rooted in local contexts and are beginning to connect with those who have had little or no prior engagement with Christianity or the Church. While still early, the signs are encouraging: relationships are starting, communities are beginning to form, and new possibilities for ecclesial life are being imagined. This is, we believe, an exciting and hopeful development.

As we look ahead, we are seeking to form a new learning cohort of potential CLMs for 2026. This is where we need your help. Within your parish, there may already be indi-

viduals who carry this calling or inclination—people who are attentive to their community, open to the Holy Spirit, and willing to take the risk to step into something new. It may be someone who quietly serves, someone who asks thoughtful questions about mission, or someone who has a heart for those beyond the church's walls.

Do you recognize someone like this? It may even be you!!

If so, we invite you to begin a conversation. Speak with your parish rector or licensed missioner. Alternatively, you are welcome to get in touch directly with me, Ian Mobsby, at the diocesan offices.

The process begins with an application form, supported by the sponsorship of a parish rector or licensed missioner. This leads into a discernment panel, where together we listen for God's calling. Those who are

affirmed will begin the NSML Certificate in Missional Practice at the end of September. The course runs on one weekday evening per month, making it accessible alongside existing commitments.

This is an invitation to be part of something both ancient and new: the Church's enduring call to mission, expressed in fresh and creative ways for our time. Commissioned Lay Missioners are not an optional extra; they are a vital part of how we respond faithfully to the world as it is today.

The question is simple: who is God already calling—and are we ready to respond?

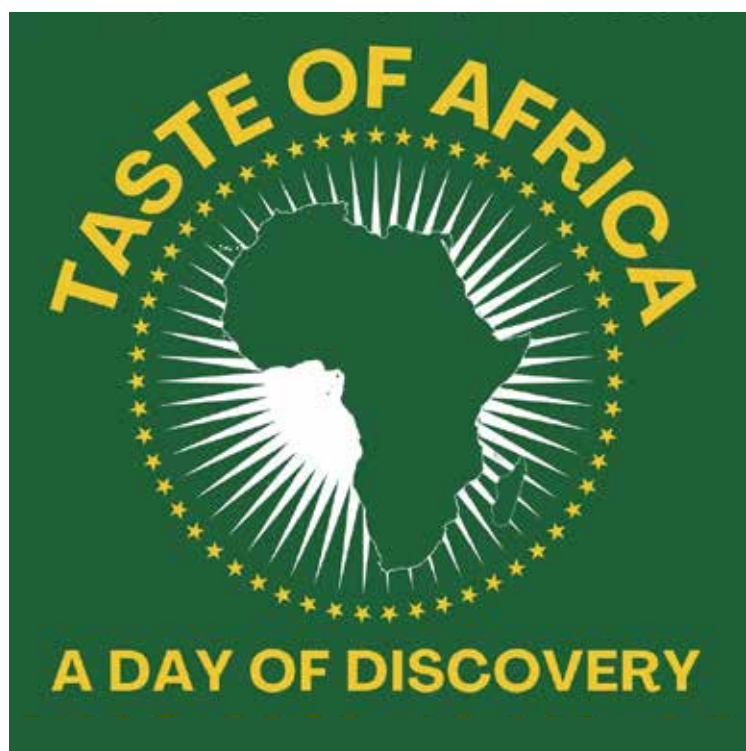
For an application pack and copies of the information leaflet, please reach out to Jane Wyse by emailing jane.wyse@niagaraanglican.ca or Ian Mobsby at ian.mobsby@niagaraanglican.ca.



Thank you to everyone who braved the cold Sunday, February 8 and came out for St. John's Ancaster's celebration of SouperBowl Sunday. Thank you also to all who contributed to the soup drive. In total they broke last year's total and collected 1,788 pounds of soup! Malcolm McEachern, Bob Patterson, Canon Joseph Asselin, rector, and Canon Richard Dentinger, honorary assistant then delivered it all to Andrew Matthews, social services manager of St. Matt's for distribution to those in need.

Photo: Contributed by St. John's Ancaster

Taste of Africa Celebrates Newcomers to Canada



This African festival will be held on May 30, 2026 at St. James Church, Dundas. We shall be celebrating newcomers from the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda. Passports are \$25 for a family, \$10 for an adult, \$5 for a child, available at the door (good for the entire day). You can look forward to music, dancing, drumming, learning to braid hair, a beading class, and a fashion show, all included in the passport. Food from each of these countries will be available to purchase. This is a come-and-go event so we look forward to greeting you at any time on Saturday, May 30th from 10

a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Proceeds from this event will enable St. James Church to continue its work in

the community and beyond. We look forward to meeting many people on this special day.



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Meet Kristen Jackson-Dockeray

Introducing the new CYFM Coordinator

In March, our diocese welcomed a new Children, Youth, and Family Missional Coordinator, Kristen Jackson-Dockeray. After Kristen had a chance to settle in for a month and meet some of the leaders and youth at the annual Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP), our editor sat down with Kristen to get to know her better.

Dani Leitis: (DL) Hi Kristen! Thank you for taking the time to share with us today. Would you like to introduce yourself and tell us about your role with the diocese?

Kristen Jackson-Dockeray (KJ): Yeah, so my name is Kristen, and I'm the children, youth, family, and missional coordinator. So, as I begin to understand that role, it looks like connecting with the parishes in the diocese to understand what's going well for them with children, youth and families, what are some of the hard roadblocks, and to create a space where we can learn together, what it looks like to form children in the faith.

DL: Can you share a little bit of your background with us and what led you to this ministry?

KJ: So, I come from many years of many different experiences and spaces working with children and youth. Previously, I worked at a camp for kids who are neurodivergent. I worked with a different denomination, for children, youth ministry, for probably 15 years. Previous to that, I was a teacher in a special education classroom. So, my life has revolved around working with kids in many different settings. That's kind of my work history...

I think what has drawn me into this space is a continuation of work with kids in a faith

space, in particular. There's nothing better than when I'm working with kids, and there's an "Aha!" moment. It's one of my favourite moments with kids. Full stop across the gambit. If you are teaching a kid to read, and one day they don't know how to read a word, and the next day suddenly they do, and it's like this beautiful "Aha!" moment. It's my favourite moment. Having those "aha" moments with kids about God, it's just such a beautiful space to be in. Jesus is pretty clear that children are an example of faith for us. It's in those "aha" moments for me that it becomes quite clear that these kids have so much to teach us about what faith looks like and what following Jesus looks like.

That's what drew me to work in this space. I'm particularly drawn to the Anglican Church because of its history and tradition, and also the space of inclusion that it offers.

DL: After a month in, what do you feel you would like to bring to the children, youth, and family ministry?

KJ: Well, a month in it's hard to say exactly yet, but I think what has hit me most often as I've gone to different parishes, and as I experienced YLTP as well, is the space of welcome that is set out in communities. That has felt very intentional to me, so that has been something that I've thought, "wow, this is such a beautiful gift that the church offers to its neighbours." That seems like a huge strength in this space. So that feels like a place where I'm thinking about how do we keep on offering that gift? I think the piece that I'm excited to dig into and grow is my own learning about Anglicanism. Some of the other pieces that I'm really excited for are some of the projects I'm doing, like Confirmation

projects and the curriculum for YLTP, and making it so that that faith element, in both of those spaces, becomes really clear. I'm excited to help children, youth, and families together, to really know what it looks like to live and experience Jesus, live that out in their lives, and what it looks like to lead from that space of strength.

DL: So, you are the Children, Youth, and Family Missional Coordinator. How does the family come into play with that?

KJ: What I always think about with children and youth is, children show up at church an hour, maybe two hours a week if they have a youth group, and they live the rest of their lives with family. I know, and research shows, that it is in the family that faith is formed, and it is a crucial piece. Part of this role, for me and not just for me, but a crucial part of any children and youth programming is how to help parents to be comfortable or feel equipped to form faith in their children. Because parents are the ones that kids look up to, they're the ones that spend all of the time with them, and that's who their God image is. So, I know with my own children, the key piece in their faith formation is the small moments of reflection, like, "Where do you think God was at in that story?" "You had a hard day at school, where did you see God?" or "Where did you need God to show up for you?" Having those conversations helps them to recognize that God is in everything, not just at church on Sundays, but actually at work in the world, and in their lives quite intimately. So, children and youth are obviously a key part of my role, but disconnected from family would be... nonsensical. It just wouldn't work!



DL: You've highlighted a history with a lot of experience in neurodivergence. Do you think this is an area of ministry where there is a significant need?

KJ: I think the Church has, in the world, a really important place to talk about neurodivergence for a variety of different reasons. I think there's more and more acceptance around kids who are neurodivergent and kids with disabilities, but I think the world is still pretty hard for those kids and for the families that support them. I think what the Church has an opportunity to offer—and I hope that it's a place where we can dig in more—is recognizing that these kids are made in the image of God. That's such a huge, huge, theological statement, I suppose, but I think it really matters that these kids are not mistakes. These kids actually belong in the Church; we need them in the Church because they teach us more about what it looks like, and what God looks like. I think that is an incredibly important element, and it looks like the Anglican Church of Canada, in particular, is starting to move in that direction with the Disability Theology Committee, and I think it's fair. It needs to be done, and I think it's past time. So much work needs to

be done. I think it's a beautiful space, it's not just how do we welcome people into the community who are neurodivergent, who have disabilities, but how do we release and harness their gifts for the kingdom of God in this place, because without them, we are actually not full-some as a church.

DL: Is there anything else you want people to know about you or your role?

KJ: I really want people to know, I'm on a journey right now of learning. I would love to have any moment of connection. Even if you don't think it's a big deal, I want to be—please invite me—into those spaces. I want to learn from you, and I love coming alongside people and having those "aha!" moments where it feels impossible, or it feels like we can't do this, and we come together and find our way through the wilderness. It feels like just the most exciting times, and it's one of my favourite things to do, so I would really love it if people would connect and reach out to me.

Kristen works with the diocese on a half-time basis and can be reached by emailing cyfmcoordinator@niagaraanglican.ca or kristen.jackson-dockeray@niagaraanglican.ca.

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

September – July 27
October – August 24
November – September 21

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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“For Nothing Is Impossible With God”

An early Reflection on the Installation of the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury

ON MARCH 25TH, ARCHBISHOP SARAH MULLALLY WAS FORMALLY INSTALLED AS THE 106TH ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY AT CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL ON THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION. ARCHBISHOP SARAH IS THE FIRST WOMAN TO HOLD THE OFFICE OF ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY IN ITS 1,400-YEAR HISTORY. THE SERVICE MARKED THE START OF HER PUBLIC MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE WORLDWIDE ANGLICAN COMMUNION. MORE THAN 2,000 PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD ATTENDED THE INSTALLATION, INCLUDING BISHOP SUSAN BELL, CO-CHAIR OF THE ANGLICAN-METHODIST INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE, AND OUR PRIMATE, ARCHBISHOP SHANE PARKER.

FOLLOWING THIS HISTORICAL MOMENT, BISHOP SUSAN TOOK SOME TIME TO REFLECT ON THE EXPERIENCE.

I was not prepared. I thought I was. I had attended great services before, had sat in Canterbury Cathedral like countless of the faithful before me and felt the weight of centuries settle around me like a cloak. But yesterday undid me, quietly and completely, in ways I am still trying to name.

Let me begin with the Africa Six. Their presence was not incidental. It was deeply intentional. To see the new Archbishop of Canterbury flanked on both sides by her episcopal sisters from the Global South—their churches vast, their faith forged in circumstances that would humble most of us—seated at the heart of an installation that the cynics had already written off as a moment of fracture was a profound experience. And yet there they were. Something in the cathedral shifted. The Communion was **not** broken. It was being re-membered: the same, but different. And to enjoy the presence and leadership of Dean David Monteith—a gay and partnered priest-colleague leading the installation was another sign of longed-for change. These were

two sure-footed corrections to the narratives of division and disaster that we often hear about the church, and they were gratefully received by those present.

And then the children's examination. I did not expect to feel so moved by a liturgical formality, but Archbishop Sarah Mullally's answers were so simple, so undefended, so rooted in Jesus—not in institution, not in office, not even in vocation in the grand ecclesiastical sense, but in the person of Christ—that the foundation was immediately laid for something different.

Children: “How do you come among us and with what confidence?”

The Archbishop: “I come knowing nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified and in weakness and fear and in much trembling.”

Children: “Let us then humble ourselves before God and together seek his mercy and strength.”

And the Archbishop leaned into it. A woman who has held the hands of the dying, who trained nurses, who knows what it is to be human and



afraid and held by Love—she stood there and told the truth. In a cathedral full of mitre and cope and ancient gesture, the most powerful thing present was her humility.

And the appointment itself. Let us not rush past the miracle of it. A woman. The 106th successor to Archbishop Cranmer, to Archbishop Temple, to Archbishop Runcie, to Archbishop Williams! I do not think we have fully absorbed what has happened. It's the kind of thing you tell your grandchildren about—not because it was merely historic, but because it was holy.

It was the Feast of the Annunciation. Mary's feast day. And all day I kept hearing her voice: nothing is impossible with God. The Annunciation hung over everything—that moment when the world pivoted, when something utterly new entered history, not through power but through

willingness. A woman saying yes. The Word taking flesh.

I do wonder if the organizers knew, quite consciously, all the emotional and theological dots they were connecting. Perhaps not entirely. But the Holy Spirit did. The service was more than the sum of its parts. Far more.

Outside, the crowds, the cheers when her name was announced and deep, spontaneous, unorchestrated joy was the answer that echoed around that vast cathedral. I have heard those sounds at coronations, and I have heard them at football and hockey games, but yesterday the sound was different—it was the sound of people recognizing something true.

A new identity was born. Not only for an Archbishop, but for a Communion through women—their promise, their fecundity, their faithful and extraordinary ministry—something is coming to birth. We do not yet know its full shape, but the potential is

remarkable.

Undoubtedly, as our (retired) Archbishop Linda prayed so wisely and compassionately when we gathered early on the morning of the Installation with Archbishop Sarah and other women bishops, there will be expectations placed on Archbishop Sarah that are impossible to fulfill. There will be those who project their pain and fear onto her. Yet, if she continues to find her identity in Christ, she will be able to carry this ministry with God's help, and ours.

But now—now is the time for rejoicing.

May God who has given Archbishop Sarah this ministry, give her the grace, the strength, wisdom—and protection—to perform it.

Thanks be to God.

*The Right Reverend Susan Bell
Bishop of Niagara*

St. John's Introduces Free Seniors Program

Local Experts Share Guidance on Safety, Health, and Well-Being

FELICIA VAN DYK

St. John's Church in Hamilton is excited to introduce Stronger Together: Seniors Safety & Connection Program, a free and welcoming workshop series created to support older adults and their families. The sessions offer down-to-earth guidance on scam prevention, health, and overall well-being, to help seniors feel confident, informed, and cared for. Made possible in part by the Martin Fund

at the Hamilton Community Foundation, the program brings together trusted voices from Hamilton Police Services, RBC, mental health professionals, and local community partners who are eager to share practical tools and encouragement. Each gathering includes refreshments to spark conversation, build friendships, and reduce isolation.

For more than a hundred years, St. John's has been woven into the heart of the Kirkendall

neighbourhood, and this program reflects the church's ongoing commitment to hospitality and community care. We continue to welcome people from all backgrounds and experiences, and we hope that by spreading the word, seniors, particularly those who may feel vulnerable or disconnected, can join us and benefit from the support these workshops offer.

Workshops will be held on April 30, May 14, June 11, and June 18 from 10 a.m. to 11:30

a.m. in the St. John's Sanctuary. The space is accessible. To RSVP or request details, please contact Felicia Van Dyk at vandyk.felicia@gmail.com. More workshops will be launched in the fall.

St. John's hopes this series will not only serve local seniors but also inspire Anglican churches across the region to look closely at the needs within their own neighbourhoods, explore community partnerships, and make use of the



Photo: Pexels/Kampus

many resources and gifts available both inside and outside church walls. Through genuine relationship building, collaboration, and care, anything is possible, and we can follow Jesus in meaningful and practical ways, work that is both challenging and joyful.