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NIAGARA ANGLICAN

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

A section of the Anglican Journal



JUNE 2026

This Is My Body: Hope in a Time of Division



THE REVEREND CANON PENNY ANDERSON

The queer and trans people in my circle of friends will tell you it feels like things are getting worse right now, not better.

I'm sure your media feeds are like ours, flooded with loud conservative political and religious voices repeating messages about traditional values, safety and security, and free speech. Especially when these loud voices are amplifying inaccurate or fabricated information about trans athletes, or healthcare for trans youth, they are creating a permission structure for pundits and politicians to chip away at the fundamental rights of queer and trans people.

This isn't happening only in the United States. On December 10, 2025, the Government of Alberta invoked the notwithstanding clause to shield three

of its laws from court challenges. Those three laws police the names and pronouns children and youth are allowed to use at school, ban transgender girls from participating in amateur sport, and deny medically-necessary healthcare for trans and gender diverse youth.

Yes, it feels like things are getting worse right now, not better.

There are no simple solutions to the complex problems we're facing in 2026. But the politics of division isn't working. The way of exclusion and violence is unacceptable.

The current social and politi-

See HOPE Page 2



The Reverend Deacon Sheila Plant (left) with Bishop Susan Bell and The Reverend Canon Penny Anderson at the 2025 Pride Mass.

Photo: William Pleydon

Marking World Refugee Day

THE VENERABLE BILL MOUS

It's a day for which I wish there was no need to observe; however, the importance of marking World Refugee Day grows by the year as war and violence flourish.

It's a day that invites our remembrance of, reflection on, and response to the ongoing refugee crisis. In doing so, we honour refugees around the globe, celebrating the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution.

It's a day, for us as Christians, to prayerfully consider God's invitation and call to love our neighbours and to welcome the stranger, called to life and compelled to love such as we are.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner



for Refugees, the number of refugees worldwide rose to 42.5 million people, a number that has doubled in the last decade. More than two-thirds of refugees come from five countries: Afghanistan, Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine, and South Sudan.

Over the last year, parishes and community groups across our diocese continued to

sponsor refugees from around the world, providing essential orientation and care for newcomers as they are resettled and welcomed to Canada. And blessings abound, abundantly, both for those we welcome and those involved in the welcoming.

The stories of those we welcome to the villages, towns and cities of our diocese are so moving: families reunited after years of separation; essential health care provided to renew one's lease on life; freedom and dignity restored to flourish as the beloved child of God they were created to be.

Our diocese undertakes this ministry as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. We're one of 15 Anglican SAHs in

Canada, supported by Alongside Hope, which brings us together for mutual support and collective advocacy.

Recent changes to Canada's refugee resettlement policies have significantly reduced the number of refugees we are able to welcome, including through private sponsorship, but we remain committed, buoyed by hope and with hearts filled with compassion. Together, Anglicans in Canada welcomed more than 1100 refugees to Canada last year, from 17 different countries.

As with all ministries of the Church, this work happens because of the passion and incredible faithfulness of the people, parishes, and missions of the communities we serve. In addition, there is a team of dedicated volunteers and staff who help support this

diocesan ministry, helping us live into our responsibilities as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder.

I hope you'll join with Anglicans across Canada on June 20, World Refugee Day, to pray for refugees, as well as asylum seekers and others who are displaced from their hometowns, but who remain within their country of origin. And pray too for peace, living into God's sacred vision of a world where there is no more war, conflict, or persecution, but where all of humanity flourishes in love and with dignity.

If you are interested in learning more about this work, donating towards our refugee sponsorship ministry, or exploring a refugee sponsorship with your parish, please email refugees@niagaraanglican.ca.

Seen and Unseen: Learning from Invisible Disabilities

THE REVEREND CANON DR. DAVID ANDERSON

This article grows out of a note I received from a Niagara Anglican reader who wondered whether, in our diocesan work on disability and belonging, we might overlook those whose disabilities are not visible. Their question stayed with me — not only because it is pastorally important, but because I have personal experience of invisible disability within my own family. As I support a beloved family member living with an unseen condition, I have learned how unpredictable symptoms can be, how fatigue and cognitive challenges often go unnoticed, and how heavy the emotional and spiritual toll of being “invisibly unwell” can become. That experience has opened my eyes to how easily invisible disabilities can be overlooked — and how deeply they call for compassion, flexibility, and understanding.

One of the central insights of disability theology is that disability is not always visible. Many people live with conditions that cannot be seen at a glance: chronic pain, mental health challenges, autoimmune disorders, neurodivergence, sensory processing differences, fatigue that comes and goes, or cognitive conditions that shape daily life in ways others may never notice. Invisible disabilities remind the church that we do not know the fullness of another person's story. They invite us into a deeper kind of attentiveness — a way of seeing shaped not by appearances but by compassion.

Disability theology begins with the risen Christ who shows his wounds to the disciples. They recognize him not by his strength, but by the marks of vulnerability he does not hide. Yet even in this moment, something important happens: the disciples do not see until Jesus reveals himself. Their sight is limited. Their understanding is partial. Their assumptions get in the way. Invisible disabilities ask the church to acknowledge the same truth about ourselves. We do not see everything. We do not know everything. We cannot assume we know the weight another person is carrying. The Disabled God invites us to move through the world with humility — to recognize that what is unseen



Photo: Unsplash/Camille Buisson

may be just as real, just as holy, and just as deserving of compassionate care as what is visible.

Invisible disabilities often come with invisible wounds: the exhaustion of masking symptoms, the fear of not being believed, the shame of needing rest in a culture that prizes productivity, the grief of losing abilities no one else knew you had, and the loneliness of carrying pain that others cannot see. These are not private struggles. They are part of the life of every parish. The reader who wrote to me shared her own painful experience of this. Years ago, she was asked not to bring her child to church because some found his behaviour disruptive. His disability was invisible, and so was the hurt that followed. Her story is a reminder that unseen disabilities can be met with unseen wounds — and that the church must do better. And because these disabilities are unseen, the church can unintentionally make life harder by assuming everyone can stand, kneel, concentrate, socialize, tolerate noise, or participate at the same pace. Invisible disabilities remind us that uniform expectations are not the same as welcome.

When disability is invisible, hospitality must become spacious. It means creating a church culture where rest is honoured, flexibility is normal, and participation has many

forms. It means resisting the urge to interpret behaviour, recognizing that someone who seems withdrawn may be overwhelmed, someone who leaves early may be managing pain, and someone who avoids conversation may be navigating sensory overload. Invisible disabilities teach us to replace assumptions with curiosity and judgment with grace.

Supporting a family member with an invisible disability has changed the way I see the Body of Christ. Their unpredictable symptoms, their unseen fatigue and cognitive challenges, and the emotional and spiritual weight they carry have taught me that so much of people's suffering is held quietly. And if this is true in one household, it is certainly true in every parish. Invisible disabilities call the church to a deeper hospitality — one shaped not by assumptions about what people can do, but by a willingness to make room for the realities we cannot see. This is the hospitality of the Disabled God: a way of being together that honours vulnerability, listens with compassion, and welcomes each person as they are, trusting that Christ is already present in what is hidden as much as in what is seen.

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Hope in a Time of Division

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cal landscape has been front of mind for the team's planning for this year's diocesan Pride Mass. We see the consequences of the permission structure created by those divisive voices in our media feeds. We hear our queer and trans friends expressing their longing for a community that is responsive to the cries for justice arising all around us. Quite simply, we want to know that God hasn't forgotten us.

The planning team chose Jesus' words, “this is my body,” as the theme for our Pride celebration this year. “This is my body,” will be familiar to Anglicans because these words form one of the high points in the Eucharistic Prayers, which we hear when we attend church week by week. Without losing the connection to the Eucharist, the team also takes a page from Paul, who thinks about the church as a body with many parts with Christ as its head (1 Corinthians 12.12-27). So, those gathering at this year's Fiercely Loved, allies and 2S&LGBTQIA+ people together, we will all hear a proclamation where Jesus says of us, “This is my body.” Or possibly, “You are my body.”

By God's grace, we embody Christ's presence in the world. For me, and hopefully for all of us, this is a source of hope in

light of our current social and political landscape. Because loud conservative political and religious voices are going to say all kinds of things about queer and trans people in their media feeds, but none of the things they say can dilute the grace that enables me, enables us, to embody Christ's presence in the world.

At this year's diocesan Pride Mass, we will celebrate the ways all of us living in diverse and different bodies, some of us living in queer bodies, are empowered by God's grace to join God's work in the world.

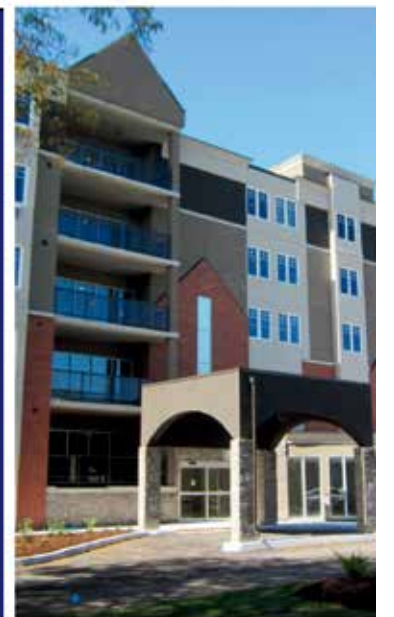
This just may be the church's super-power, where members of a genuinely diverse community each find their place in a common mission. Because all of us are called to take part in shaping resilient, inclusive communities that embody God's reordered new society (the Gospels call this new order the Kingdom of God), which Jesus begins raising up through his life and teaching.

I hope I'll see you at the Pride celebration we're calling “Fiercely Loved: This Is My Body.” We gather in person at Christ's Church Cathedral and on the diocesan livestreams on June 7th at 4:00 pm.



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A Letter from the Editor

Who Is Not Here?



DANI LEITIS

“Who is not here, who should be here?” Bishop Susan posed this question during our diocesan anti-racism training in April. She asks us to look around our communities and notice not just who is present—but who is missing, and why.

As we mark Pride Month, National Indigenous History Month, and World Refugee Day, many of the articles in this issue reflect on inclusion. But inclusion is more than something we name in June—it is something we practise—in our churches, our programs, and our everyday

interactions.

Lately, I’ve been hearing a common refrain from people in my life—especially those who are queer and trans, racialized, or living with visible and invisible disabilities: things don’t feel like they’re getting better. They feel harder. Less safe.

A friend of mine, queer and autistic, left a community that described itself as inclusive after experiencing sensory distress in a class. When they asked for small, reasonable accommodations, they were told no. They were made to feel like the problem. What could have been a simple act of care by letting them step out without explanation, offering a heads-up in the future about the trigger, or allowing them to attend a program at a different time, became a reason for exclusion.

Others I know have faced different barriers. One person was advised to remove their photo from job applications because

employers might make assumptions about their background. Another shared that colleagues in hiring roles were openly dismissing candidates based on where they were perceived to be from. A trans artist I know saw their work cut short before it had a chance to find its audience, after receiving less support than others from the start.

These experiences may look different, but they carry the same message: *you don’t quite belong here.*

And yet, these are often the very people who bring deep compassion, creativity, and faith into our communities.

So again, the question: who is not here, who should be here?

If we are serious about following Jesus and our baptismal calls—about loving our neighbours, seeking justice, and upholding the dignity of every person—then creating safe, inclusive spaces is not optional. It is *urgent.*

That work doesn’t always

begin with large programs. Sometimes it looks like small, intentional choices. Sometimes it’s being present, attending the diocesan Pride service, or the Trans Day of Remembrance Vigil. It could mean making space for someone to step out and return without drawing attention, offering a quiet or sensory-friendly area, or even a sensory-friendly service.

Spend time examining how we welcome newcomers, participate in anti-racism training to learn how to identify racism, and address it. Familiarize yourself with unconscious bias and microaggressions through the training to recognize when you may have caused unintentional harm. Notice whose voices are missing from leadership and decision-making. It means listening—really listening—when someone tells us what they need to feel safe and valued.

We may not be able to meet every need perfectly. But we can be communities that are willing to learn, to adapt, and to try.

Because the Church should be a place where people don’t have to ask if they belong—they know they do.

For information on training available for anti-racism, microaggressions, and unconscious bias, or information on learning more about Indigenous history, and 2S-LGBTQIA+ inclusion, please contact Deirdre Pike, justice and outreach program consultant at Deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca

For information about disability inclusion, please contact Canon David Anderson, chair of the Disability Theology Committee, Kristen Jackson-Dockeray, children, youth, and family ministry coordinator, at cyfmcoordinator@niagaraanglican.ca, or Shannon MacKenzie, human resources coordinator at Shannon. mackenzie@niagaraanglican.ca.

To offer refugee sponsorship support, please contact Archdeacon Bill Mous at refugees@niagaraanglican.ca.

From Baptism to Action: Earth Day Faith in Motion

DEIRDRE PIKE

A Climate Justice Niagara webinar invited Anglicans to see creation care not as an abstract ideal, but as a shared calling rooted in baptism and lived out in many different ways.

Just two days after speaking to our diocese about the call to care for creation, Michael Van Dusen, a deacon in the Diocese of Toronto, was arrested again for peaceful protest. It’s not the kind of follow-up most webinar speakers have.

But then again, this was not a typical Earth Day conversation.

On April 22, Climate Justice Niagara hosted an Earth Day webinar that brought together Anglicans from across the region for a conversation grounded not only in climate

concern but in faith. The evening began with a Liturgy of the Word focused on creation, led by members of the CJN steering committee, grounding the gathering in scripture, prayer, and a shared commitment to “hope and act with creation.”

At the heart of the evening was Van Dusen’s presentation on eco-spirituality and climate justice. Drawing a distinction between science, economics, and faith, he noted that while data and financial arguments have not always led to meaningful political change, faith has the power to move people toward action. Climate change, he reminded participants, is not only an environmental issue, but it is also a moral one.

Central to that moral call is baptism.

The promises we make, “to strive for justice and peace and to respect the dignity of every human being,” extend beyond human relationships to include all of creation. Caring for the Earth is not an optional

expression of faith. It is part of our covenant.

And yet, the scale of the crisis can feel overwhelming.

Van Dusen named that reality directly, encouraging participants not to retreat, but to recognize that “there’s a role for everyone.”

“There’s a role for everyone.”

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The Reverend Deacon Michael Van Dusen, speaker at the webinar, was later arrested for peaceful protesting.

Photo: theanglican.ca



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Summer Fiction for Faith Formation



THE REVEREND MONICA ROMIG GREEN

Summer is nearly upon us! And who doesn't love to crack open a good book on a warm, summer day? One of the things I love about faith formation is that there are so many influences that can help shape and grow our faith, including the arts and literature.

As Anglicans, our theology is deeply incarnational, seeing God at work within the world instead of apart from it. Reading fiction is a wonderful way to help us grow in seeing

God's grace and redemption in unexpected places, even in the face of moral complexity and questions. Studies have shown that reading literary fiction also increases our capacity for empathy, as we engage in the perspective of people who are different from us. Finally, reading fiction can be a wonderful way to enter deep, sacred spaces where doubt, faith, failure, and beauty dwell together within faith.

In anticipation of the lazy days of summer, I have been collecting recommendations for fiction books that people from across the diocese self-report to have helped form their faith. These suggestions come from friends and colleagues, as well as from folks who responded openly or via email to my query on the diocesan Facebook page.

Before you dive into one of these books, I propose that you find out a bit more about it to determine if it is something

you'd enjoy. Please note that I have not read all of these books (only a few, to be honest!), nor is this list exhaustive of what was recommended to me. It is simply a broad sampling of suggestions, which I hope will spark your imagination and encourage you to choose some summer reading this year that is not only engaging but also helps deepen your faith.

Christian Fiction and Allegory

- *The Book of Longings*, by Sue Monk Kidd
- *Hinds Feet on High Places*, by Hannah Hurnard
- *Joshua*, by Joseph F. Girzone
- *The Last Battle*, by C.S. Lewis
- *Peace Like a River*, by Leif Enger
- *Son of Laughter*, by Frederick Buechner



Classical Fiction

- *The Brothers Karamazov*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- *East of Eden*, by John Steinbeck
- *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe
- *The Well of Loneliness*, by Radclyffe Hall



Mystery and Suspense

- *Beautiful Mystery*, by Louise Penny
- *Conclave*, by Robert Harris
- *People of the Book*, by Geraldine Brooks



Literary Fiction

- *Fight Night*, by Miriam Toews

- *The End of the Affair*, by Graham Greene
- *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson
- *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, by Margaret Craven
- *Illuminations: A Novel of Hildegard von Bingen*, by Mary Sharratt
- *Jayber Crow*, by Wendell Berry
- *Prodigal Summer*, by Barbara Kingsolver



Dark Fantasy

- *Comfort Me with Apples*, by Catherynne M. Valente
- *Future Home of the Living God*, by Louise Erdrich
- *The Stand*, by Stephen King



Giving Thanks for Creation Through the Year

THE REVEREND ANDREW RAMPTON

At General Synod in 2025, the Anglican Church of Canada adopted the Feast of the Creator, adding it to our liturgical calendar on 1 September each year. This is part of a widespread ecumenical project, seeking to offer another opportunity for Christians to connect God's act of creation and sustaining of all life with their own faith. This shared feast unites us across many ecclesial borders and addresses the growing concern for climate change and its effects around the world.

In the conversations that I was part of regarding this new feast, I asked how it would connect to our ancient—if underused in modern day—Anglican cycle of creation celebrations. I was surprised to learn how many people were unaware of these traditions, or who had heard of them but had not had the opportunity to participate in them. Rogation, Lammas Day, and Harvest Thanksgiving are a trio of celebrations of our relationship with the natural world which may deserve renewed attention in the twenty-first century.

Many Canadian Anglicans have heard of Rogation Day (or days) but may not have had the opportunity to participate



Photo: Unsplash/Tobias Weinhold

in the traditions associated with this time. Rogation takes its name from the Latin verb *rogare*, to ask or request. Held at the beginning of planting season, Rogation liturgies were an opportunity to formally ask God for good weather, abundant harvests, and deliverance from calamities such as drought and flood.

Traditionally, Rogation is marked as the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day. In practice, the time of observance is flexible depending on what the local growing season looks like. The service often included a celebration of the Eucharist and a procession around the parish bounds, singing litanies and hymns of praise, blessing seeds, fields, and equipment along the way. The procession was also a practical opportunity to take care of spring details like checking fences that needed

mending before animals were moved to pasture, and so on.

Rogation is an opportunity to remember and give thanks for the abundance of the previous year's harvest. It is also an opportunity to remind ourselves of our dependence on God's loving generosity. After all, we might scatter the seeds, but it is God who sends rain and sun to make them grow into the crops we share. Rogation, whenever you observe it, is a great time to bless seeds, plants, gardens, fields, and tools, to invite the community to a plant sale or work in a community garden, and to plan spring cleanup events in the neighbourhood.

Lammas Day is probably the least well-known of these three celebrations, even though it appears in our BCP calendar on August 1. The name, Lammas, is a combination of the Anglo-Saxon word meaning

"loaf mass". The day was a celebration of thanksgiving using the first bread made from the earliest wheat harvests. The tradition of the congregation baking bread from the new wheat crop and bringing it to church to be offered to God for blessing diminished greatly during the Reformation, but some communities in the Anglican Communion have revived it more recently.

Depending on your local growing season, August 1 may not be the ideal time for a Lammas Day celebration, but it is easily moved to an appropriate time to celebrate the first fruits of the harvest. It would also make for a great opportunity to host a summer fair, a parish picnic, and to hold educational events around local, native plants, especially edible ones!

Harvest Thanksgiving is familiar to most Canadians because it was enshrined in our civic calendar in 1879. This celebration focuses on gratitude for the abundance God has provided in the year's harvest. All has been safely gathered in, and we have provisions for the coming winter.

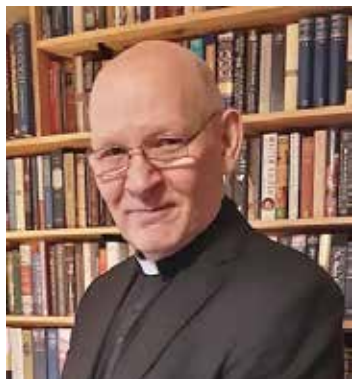
There is also, of course, profound gratitude that the work of harvest is done! Many of us do not perform the physical labour of harvesting much of our own food these

days, but Harvest Thanksgiving would be an ideal time to remember and give thanks for those who do. All of the farmers, migrant farmworkers, seafarers, and other labourers around the world who make the abundance of food in our supermarkets and on our tables possible.

Harvest Thanksgiving is a wonderful opportunity for all kinds of community gatherings. Who doesn't love to gather in fellowship over food and drink? Invite the neighbourhood to a community feast, encourage community elders and experienced cooks and bakers to share treasured recipes with younger generations, write a communal litany of gratitude, or pair your expressions of thanksgiving with collections for a foodbank or the Migrant Farmworkers Mission.

We should rightly celebrate the ecumenical achievement that is the new Feast of the Creator. We should also remind ourselves of these ancient and distinctively Anglican ways of engaging with the created world of which God has made us stewards. We would do well to spend more time all year long giving thanks for the goodness of God's creation, for the world that sustains us, and to rejoice and praise the God who entrusts the care of this good creation to us.

Before It Was Ordinary: Tyndale's Radical Bible



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

Taking something for granted is, I suppose, a sign of success. In this case, it would be reading the Bible in the vernacular. And to prove the point, this year marks the 500th anniversary of William Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament, and I'm not sure how many people would particularly care. They should, of course, for cultural and political as well as theological reasons.

Tyndale was born in 1494 in Gloucestershire, graduated from Oxford in 1512, and was ordained three years later. He's come under the influence of early reformers, Lollards as they were known, and serving as a priest in Lincolnshire and Cambridge in eastern England, where these new ideas were especially strong, sharpened his evangelical tendencies. The Bible used by the church at the time was the St. Jerome's Vulgate, a competent if flawed translation in a language

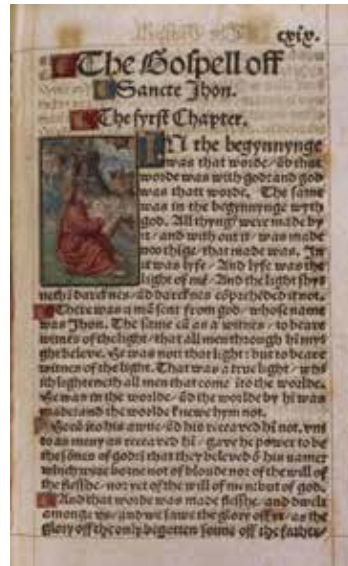
not understood by the vast majority of people. There was an English version, translated by John Wycliffe in the late 14th-century, but its language was overly refined, outdated, and considered heretical.

The impetus for change came from continental Europe. In 1516, Erasmus published "Novum Instrumentum omne," which contained the first published Greek New Testament and a new Latin translation. Two more editions would appear in the next six years. It was this translation that Martin Luther used for his German version of the New Testament.

Tyndale was one of many young intellectuals intrigued by events abroad. A vernacular Bible was only part of the new thinking, of course, usually accompanied by an aggressive questioning of church authority. Once scripture could be read and understood by every Christian, why should the institutional church assume such influence over teachings and doctrine? Where were nuns and monks in the Gospels, why were clergy celibate, and was there a Biblical foundation for religious hierarchy and authority? More significantly, are we saved by faith alone, and is the celebration of the eucharist an important but symbolic act rather than the literal miracle of transubstantiation taught by

the church?

Tyndale was able to speculate on all this and work on his translation while serving as chaplain to Sir John Walsh in Little Sodbury Manor in Gloucestershire, where he was protected, and partly because his work was not widely known.



The first page of St. John's Gospel from Tyndale's translation

Photo: Wikipedia

Translating scripture wasn't strictly illegal but did require the approval of a bishop, and if Tyndale was to reach a larger audience, he needed such episcopal support. He approached the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, widely respected as a moderate, a humanist, and a friend of scholarship. Tunstall refused, however, and because of his approach, Tyndale and his work were now known, and not in the way he'd hoped. In 1524, he

fled to what is now Germany, to Wittenberg, where Martin Luther lived and taught.

He completed his translation of the New Testament and travelled to Cologne to have it printed. Cologne was Roman Catholic, not safe, and news of what Tyndale intended soon leaked. He was forced to flee once again, and it was in Antwerp in 1526 that the translation was eventually printed, and where he would translate some books of the Old Testament and also write theological pamphlets.

In the following years, Tyndale's reputation grew, and so did opposition to his activities. He was betrayed, arrested and spent a year in prison. In 1536, Tyndale was executed, not specifically for his Bible translation but for the crime of heresy. It was the English government that was behind his fate. Before being strangled and then burned at the stake, it is claimed that he prayed, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes." Henry's eyes remained firmly closed, alas, and one of the reasons he wanted Tyndale silenced was because the reformer had opposed the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, condemning it as unscriptural. The ironies are numerous.

Nothing that Henry ever wrote had much of an impact on posterity, but one of his royal successors, James

I, commissioned a Bible translation that became one of the most influential books of all time. Around 80% of the Authorized Version's New Testament is based on Tyndale. "Salt of the earth", "A law unto themselves", "Filthy lucre", "Signs of the times", "The powers that be", "Eat, drink, and be merry", "Wolf in sheep's clothing", and so many more are all Tyndale.

He famously said, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy who drives a plough to know more of the scriptures than you do." It may sound archaic today, but the repercussions of what the man achieved are enormous. The shape of the English language, the notion of equality through knowledge of scripture that was so fundamentally influential in Protestant culture, helped to shape the Puritan movement that won the English Civil War, established a republic, and eventually led to a constitutional monarchy. The British and, to an extent, Canadian left, traditionally said to owe more to Methodism than Marxism, can trace its roots back to an individual interpretation of the Bible. And the United States would become, like it or not, a Protestant superpower, based on citizens and their Bibles. I wonder if Tyndale would have imagined it?

Earth Day Faith in Motion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Drawing on examples such as the regeneration of Tommy Thompson Park and the preservation of Ontario's Greenbelt, Michael pointed to what he called "hope in action," evidence that change is possible when people act together with purpose and persistence.

Following Van Dusen, Sue Carson, past chair of Climate Justice Niagara, grounded that message in lived, local experience. Drawing on years of participation in climate rallies across Hamilton and beyond, she reminded participants that engagement does not have to look the same for everyone.

Not everyone has to go to jail. Some hold signs. Some show up faithfully at rallies. Some write letters, speak with neighbours, or support others who are able to take on more



visible roles. All of it matters. All of it contributes.

Together, their voices made space for a broader understanding of faithful action, one that honours both courage and capacity.

Participants then moved into small group discussions, reflecting on their own values, their comfort levels, and the wisdom they hope to pass on to future generations. Some spoke of advocacy and public witness. Others named quieter, local actions. All were affirmed as meaningful.

The evening also included a moment of celebration for Don Brown, who recently

marked his 100th birthday and continues to advocate for climate action through Elders for Climate Sanity. His witness, spanning decades, also resulted in an arrest in Dundas for the same effort as Van Dusen. This offered a powerful reminder that this work is both urgent and enduring.

The webinar concluded with prayers of gratitude and blessing, sending participants back into their communities not with all the answers, but with a renewed sense of purpose.

Earth Day may be marked once a year, but the promise we live out is daily.

Photo: Unsplash/Aaron Burden

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Support Canterbury Hills Camp in Third Say Yes! to Kids Campaign

MICHELLE HAUSER

The Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) is pleased to announce that Canterbury Hills Camp, a beloved ministry of the Diocese of Niagara, has launched its third Say Yes! to Kids campaign.

For more than 65 years, Canterbury Hills Camp has offered children and youth a place to discover friendship, adventure, faith, and belonging in the beauty of the Dundas Valley. Generations of young people have experienced the joy of camp life, meaningful community, and the confidence that grows through outdoor learning and shared experiences.

Since joining Say Yes! to Kids, Canterbury Hills Camp has raised more than \$10,000 through the generosity of donors who believe in the life-changing impact of faith-based camp ministry.

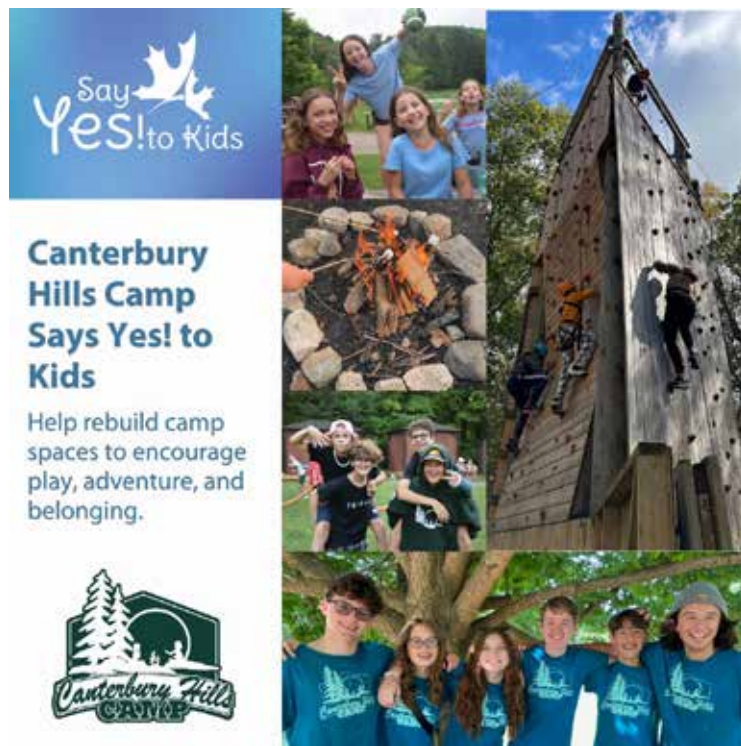
This year's campaign hopes to raise \$10,000 to help renew and strengthen the camp experience for a new generation of campers by funding practical improvements that directly support daily programming. Funds raised will help replace the aging NORC (New Outdoor Recreation Centre) shed, add a new Day Camp equipment space, install durable storage

shelving, and purchase games and activity equipment used by campers throughout the summer.

For churches and supporters across Niagara, this is a timely opportunity to make a mean-

ingful difference close to home.

Set aside Sunday, June 14, as a special opportunity to highlight Canterbury Hills Camp in your parish and missions and take up an offering in support of the campaign. The diocese has



ingful difference close to home.

How Niagara Churches Can Help Right Now

Parishes, clergy, and church leaders are encouraged to rally around Canterbury Hills Camp in the weeks ahead. Here are several ways your congregation can help:

Celebrate a Say Yes! to Kids

sent parishes and missions a link to the AFC resources, which include a downloadable liturgy, bulletin inserts, a poster, and offertory envelopes that churches can order.

Parishes and missions are also welcome to invite Canterbury Hills staff to participate in worship services. Contact Zya Aspden, the

programs and partnerships administrator for Canterbury Hills, for more information by emailing camp@canterburyhills.ca.

Make a Gift from Your Parish Outreach Budget

Many congregations support youth ministry through local mission and outreach giving. A special gift to Canterbury Hills Camp is a direct investment in young people across the Diocese of Niagara.

Spread the Word

Include information about the campaign in your parish newsletter, bulletin, website, and social media channels. Every share helps extend the invitation to give.

Camp ministry changes lives. It gives children and youth a chance to grow in confidence, build friendships, experience Christian community, and create memories that last a lifetime. It also nurtures future leaders, with Canterbury Hills employing dozens of young people each summer and offering leadership development opportunities for older youth.

At a time when families are seeking safe, meaningful, and affordable opportunities for their children, support from Niagara Anglicans has never mattered more.

Now is the moment when churches and faithful supporters can have the greatest impact. Together, we can ensure that Canterbury Hills Camp continues to welcome children and youth for generations to come.

Three Ways to Give

- Make a secure gift online at: www.tinyurl.com/sytkchc
- Give by Cheque. Mail your donation to: Anglican Foundation of Canada, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2. Please write Canterbury Hills Camp in the memo line.
- Donations may also be sent directly to the Diocese of Niagara, 252 James Street North, Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3, with Canterbury Hills Camp in the memo line.

Thank you for saying yes to Canterbury Hills Camp!

For more information about the Say Yes! to Kids campaign for Canterbury Hills Camp, please contact Michelle Hauser, AFC's development and Communications Officer and national campaign coordinator: mhauser@anglicanfoundation.org, or by phone/text at 613-305-8876.

St. David's Marks Earth Day with Worship, Witness, and Creation Care

THE REVEREND DR. PRAKASH JUSTSTELLA WILFRED

St. David's Anglican Church, Welland, observed Earth Day with prayerful and practical attention during its recent Climate Justice Sunday worship, joining the wider call of the Diocese of Niagara to deepen our shared commitment to the care of Creation. The service led by Archdeacon Terry Holub, rector, had a clear Earth Sunday emphasis, inviting the congregation to reflect on the sacred responsibility of caring for God's earth.

As the priest associate at St. David's, I was invited to deliver the sermon, drawing the congregation into a deeper spiritual understanding of creation care as part of Christian discipleship. The homily reflected on the Emmaus journey and connected Christ's resurrection life with the care of Creation. The sermon reminded worshippers



The gardening team at St. David's.

Photo: Contributed by Prakash Juststella Wilfred

that the risen Christ is made known not only in word and sacrament, but also in the ordinary and living world around us. Creation was presented not merely as a resource to be used, but as God's gift to be cherished, protected, and handed on with reverence. The congregation was encouraged to see care for the earth not as a political option

or secondary concern, but as a spiritual calling rooted in gratitude, stewardship, and hope.

Special appreciation was also given to the faithful parishioners of St. David's, who lovingly maintain the church grounds and garden, and have received various appreciations in the last couple of decades. Their quiet and devoted work, sometimes

kneeling, bending, and even crawling on the earth to tend the garden beds, was reflected upon as a moving expression of sacred care. Their ministry was described as both practical and prayerful: a touching witness that to kneel upon the earth in love and responsibility is itself a holy act.

Following the service, the congregation gathered for an informative and inspiring presentation led by Mr. Gary R Bowron, a member of Climate Justice Niagara. He spoke about the urgent need for ecological awareness, faithful environmental action, and the role local communities can play in responding to the climate crisis. His presentation helped the congregation connect global environmental concerns with everyday Christian responsibility, encouraging people to take small but meaningful steps in their homes, churches, and communities. The session also served as an invitation to the

parish to respond to the Diocese of Niagara's call to greater ecological concern and action.

Members of the congregation were encouraged to see creation care as an important part of the Church's public witness, and to embrace a lifestyle of responsibility, justice, and hope for future generations. The church promptly displayed the message "Earth- God's Precious Gift" on its digital board, thoughtfully inviting the community to reflect on the sacred responsibility of caring for Creation and raising awareness about the significance of observing Earth Day and Climate Justice Sunday. St. David's Earth Day observance was a meaningful reminder that worship and action belong together. In prayer, preaching, and practical reflection, the parish renewed its commitment to honour the Creator by caring for Creation.

Warm Hands at the Harbour:

Seeing Seafarers in Hamilton

DEIRDRE PIKE

A local knitting ministry at St. James, Dundas, is offering warmth, dignity, and connection to seafarers who often remain unseen just beyond our shoreline.

During the pandemic, I started a short video series called Just Friday, a way of bringing voice to the good work quietly happening across our diocese. One week, that led me to the Mission to Seafarers. I remember thinking at the time: how did I not know about this?

I'd always been drawn to take notice of the ships in the harbour, yet I'd never thought much about the workers on board.

Through that first conversation with Judith Altree, I began to understand that Hamilton's port is not just a place of industry, but a point of arrival for thousands of seafarers each year. Seafarers spend months at sea, far from home and with limited ability to step freely onto land, even when docked.

Once that Just Friday video was shared, Sue Carson from Saint James, Dundas, had the same realization I did, but she took it a step further, shaping a small but powerful response. Parishioners began knitting

toques, mittens, scarves, exactly what is needed when crews arrive from warmer climates into a Southern Ontario winter. Over time, those items have been gathered and delivered into the hands of Dan Phannenhour, chaplain, who brings them directly to ships in port.

It is easy to underestimate what a pair of mittens can mean. But when you have been at sea for months, it becomes something more than practical. It becomes a gesture of recognition.

Recently, I had the chance to sit down with Alicia Hamming Navarrete, program manager (part-time) of The Mission to Seafarers Southern Ontario. Hamming Navarrete brings 15 years of missionary experience in Nicaragua, where she met her husband and raised her children before returning to Canada just ahead of the pandemic.

This work was not something she expected, but it has clearly taken hold. The Mission to Seafarers, she says, is "a ministry of hospitality where no seafarer is left behind... a place that aims to show seafarers that they are not alone and are deeply valued."

Hamming Navarrete says, "Each year, over 500 ships arrive at the Port of Hamilton... Every ship is crewed by 15 to 25



Photo: hopaports.ca

seafarers who often work long hours and go without setting foot on shore for months. This can be isolating."

That isolation is something Phannenhour encounters regularly as he boards ships with bags of chocolate, brochures, and other treats, offering conversation, care, and connection. Sometimes, that connection changes everything.

Hamming Navarrete shares the story of a young seafarer who had been at sea for close to nine months without seeing his family. The strain had taken a toll. What made the difference was simple but profound: a listening ear, a small care package, and access to Wi-Fi so

he could see his family again. "John's smile was priceless after seeing his family," she writes—a reminder that even the smallest gestures can restore hope.

Hamilton's port itself is also in a moment of change. Currently, a bulk port—handling materials like grain and fuel—new investments may soon introduce large-scale container shipping. This could significantly expand the port's role in global trade.

What that will mean for seafarers remains to be seen, but whether ships carry grain or containers, one thing does not change: behind every shipment is a crew. And their need for care, connection, and

dignity does not diminish with efficiency.

That is where this quiet, faithful ministry continues to matter.

It turns out you don't have to cross an ocean to take part in a global ministry. Sometimes, it begins with a ball of wool, a pair of needles, and the simple decision to see someone you may never meet, but who will feel the warmth all the same.

If you would like to join this effort, please reach out to Alicia Hamming Navarrete, Program Manager, The Mission to Seafarers Southern Ontario, at getinvolved@mtssso.org or visit mtssso.org.

A Sign of Light and Love at Incarnation

MICHELLE HAUSER

A new digital sign at The Church of the Incarnation in Oakville is already helping the parish share hope, welcome, and invitation more visibly with the surrounding community.

Installed in March 2026 with support from an \$8,000 grant from the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC), the project has transformed the parish's ability to communicate with neighbours passing along Dorval Drive and Old Abbey Lane. Tucked within a wooded setting, Incarnation had long faced the challenge of being present in the community while remaining largely unseen from the road. The new sign has changed that reality.

Canon Sue-Ann Ward, Rector of The Church of the Incarnation, described the sign as "a visible and welcoming presence," adding that it has "transformed our ability to communicate with the wider



Photo: Contributed by Michelle Hauser

community."

The sign carries rotating messages shaped around five themes: invitation, identity, hope and encouragement, action and care, and humour. Parish leaders say this rhythm allows the sign to become more than a source of announcements.

"In practice, this has allowed the sign to function as a form of 'mini-sermon' ministry.

Messages are brief, accessible, and, we hope, deeply resonant," explains Ward.

The impact has already been tangible. Two new families shared that the messages on the sign positively influenced their decision to attend worship at Incarnation. Parishioners have also heard encouraging feedback from friends and neighbours who have commented on the warmth,

relevance, and hopefulness of the messages.

The project has also had an unexpected internal effect. Developing messages for the sign has become a creative and collaborative spiritual practice within the congregation, inviting reflection on how to communicate the Good News in everyday language. The parish says the sign has strengthened its sense of shared ministry and deepened connections with local community partners.

Scott Brubaker, Executive

Director of the Anglican Foundation of Canada, says, "We are deeply grateful to AFC members and supporters across Canada whose generosity makes grants like this possible. Their faithful support is helping local churches share hope, strengthen community connections, and make Christ's love more visible in communities across Canada."

To learn more about Anglican Foundation of Canada grants, visit anglicanfoundation.org.

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Contemplation in Chaos

**THE REVEREND CANON
STUART PIKE**

There's a term for what I believe many, if not most, of the world's population have been experiencing for well over a year, but even more acutely during this last year. A pandemic starting in 2020 might have kicked-started the process for many, but since then, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the terrorist attack in Israel and the brutal genocide in Palestine, with the ripple effects of antisemitism and more related violence, have greatly deepened the experience. The attack on immigrants, the poor, school children, the sick and other marginalized people south of the border has ratcheted up the tension. And more recently, the overt acts of war on sovereign states, assassination, bombing of innocents and threats of genocide as a geo-political tool ... the list goes on. It feels like chaos! And even if few of us have directly experienced physical violence against ourselves or our family, we have been wounded in another way. Other writers and experts I've read have referred to this experience as "moral injury." It's ubiquitous, and it affects us all in ways most of us do not understand. It can lead to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, which, in turn, can start to affect all other aspects of our lives. It can numb us into inaction. We are injured!

The world has experienced this before, though perhaps it hasn't been this widespread since the Second World War and all of the following results through the Cold War. The world was remixed and subdi-

vided then by borders which didn't make sense and didn't ultimately work.

Thirty-six years ago, for my thirtieth birthday, I did a grand, though frugal, tour through Europe with a Eurail ticket in my hand and couch-surfing with friends and family from England to Geneva to Sevilla and returning to celebrate my actual birthday in Paris, the city of my birth. I went on to visit friends in Hamburg and Berlin. The most incredible extended event had been happening in Berlin during the previous half-year. The Berlin Wall was falling! It was being dismantled piece by piece. Shards of it, decorated with the graffiti of decades, made their way around the world as travellers took the mementos home to remember this historic event, including the colourful piece, which I keep in my office. The word of the year on the street in Berlin was "unglaublich," which means "unbelievable!" The wall had stood for almost 30 years. It was a symbol of the Cold War, and its dismantling marked the collapse of the Soviet Union. But more archetypal than that, it stood as a symbol of the division which has marred the human condition from the time of Cain and Abel, the tower of Babel (the division of the world into linguistic groups), nation-states at war, and so much more.

A wonderful thing happened over the last decade of the Berlin Wall. Paint was splashed and spilled on the West Berlin side: colours of all kinds with simple words or beautiful images. Most of it was in resistance to the wall itself and the division of humans

that it represented. When the wall came down, some of the art was saved, including the piece in this photo I took, which was preserved and displayed at Checkpoint Charlie, the famous crossing between East and West Berlin. I took the photo just before I entered East Berlin. Through a crack in the wall, a hand offers a rose to someone on the other side. They cannot even see each other, but the giver simply trusts that there is someone to receive. Both hands have restraining bonds which inhibit. But despite the solidity of the concrete wall draped with barbed wire, a human gesture of compassion and solidarity transcends the reality and the dove of peace witnesses it all.

Pentecost, which we just celebrated, marks the breaking down of barriers. The language barrier of the Tower of Babel is transcended by the apostles miraculously speaking all the languages of the world. Christians, as people of the Pentecost, are to be those who break down divisions and barriers of all kinds. While many powerful people around the world are building more walls, both figuratively and literally, ours is the task to resist with acts of compassion which transcend all barriers.

So, what can one do when experiencing moral injury? I highly recommend the practice of contemplation. Try Centering Prayer or Christian Meditation, not as a way to isolate yourself from humanity, but as a way to immerse yourself in the ground of all being, which connects all people, and indeed all of creation. And then return from your contemplation with



A painting on a portion of the Berlin Wall, portraying trust, compassion and solidarity.

Photo: Contributed by Stuart Pike

renewed energy and compassion to do acts of peaceful resistance against the power of division, selfishness and hatred. In the midst of the symbols of concrete walls and barbed wire, let yours be the hand which thrusts the rose of compassion and peace to the other who is bound on the other side. Know

you are not alone, but join with others in the resistance with acts of love and compassion, with community building and courage. Never cease praying for the least, the lost, the bullied and the oppressed. Ultimately, the walls of division will fall. Be one of those who break them down.

Blandina's Call

NANCY J. COOMBS

For though she was an insignificant, weak, and despised woman, she was clothed with the great and invincible athlete Christ,"

—Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, c.260-340AD).
Blandina was an enslaved woman martyred in Lyon, France, 177AD..

Silence screeches as
Coiled fate meets strength
In humbled glory, a steady duet

Lord, give me words. You speak:
A Christian woman am I.
No evil is done among us!
The die is cast.
So be it ...
On a stake, bloody tears baptize anew.
We witness, amazed.

You beam through screams, adorned by Christ—He was there first. Sicut Christus, pro Christo

Suffering servantess.

Eternity claims you.

Worthless dress to Rome perhaps

But no price can match in love

Your wordless sermon

Ostracized no more—mother, sister, heroine

Bulwark of faith, memories remain

Tattered crown of immortality

Shimmers in a nest of simplicity

Bound martyrs overrule Gaul

Outstretched arms gathering all

Blandina, we got your call

The Anglican Church of Canada Marks June 2 to commemorate Martyrs of Lyons: Blandina and her Companions

In other words

Is “Evangelical Anglican” an oxymoron?

**JOHN BOWEN**

To call someone a fascist is not exactly a compliment. In recent years, the word evangelical has begun to have the same kind of resonance. If I tell you that my Christian faith was formed in Evangelical Anglican churches, I suspect you will assume that I gave up my evangelicalism decades ago and have since adopted a more enlightened, even progressive, approach to the faith.

However, life is seldom that black and white and, in my case, it certainly hasn't been that simple. Let me tell you why. To me, the word evangelical means something much warmer and more positive than it does for many North Americans. The reason is primarily that the word Evangelical has (at least in the past) meant something

quite different in Britain from what it means in North America.

Part of the reason is historical. Over here, we tend to divide churches into two groups: mainline, which are generally liberal and progressive in doctrine and social values; and evangelical, which are, well, the opposite. In Britain, however, for reasons of history, churches are not categorized that way. Non-Anglican churches there are called nonconformist, because they did not “conform” to the pattern and discipline of the national church. Indeed, until 1870, only Anglicans were admitted to the universities!

This means that the distinction between Anglican and nonconformist churches leaves the word evangelical up for grabs, available to be adopted by churches of every and any denomination, including Anglican, but also Baptist, or even Roman Catholic. This creates a radically different reality. In North America, to say “evangelical Anglican” is almost to utter an oxymoron. If you are Anglican, you're not Evangelical, and if you're Evangelical, you can't possibly be Anglican.

However, the roots of

Anglicanism were strongly what we would now call evangelical. (You can check the old Prayer Book, by which I mean, 1662, not 1962!) The Anglican priest who was unofficially the leader of Evangelical Anglicanism for over fifty years was John Stott, rector of All Souls, Langham Place, in the heart of London. He gave the simplest and, I think, the most helpful definition of evangelical: “Evangelicals,” he said, “are Bible people, and they are Gospel people.” I can identify with that.

Firstly, evangelicals understand that Christians live out of the story of the Bible—the story of a created world gone wrong, of a God who intervenes in history to put things right, centrally through the coming of Jesus, and of a God who will intervene at the end of time to complete the work. And secondly, to say that Evangelicals are Gospel people is to say that what God has done in Jesus Christ is actually good news for everybody. If that's what Evangelical is, then I'm content to be an Evangelical.

You may ask, but how did that influence you? Didn't it make you very right wing in your politics, and very conservative in your social attitudes?

Are you not racist, homophobic, legalistic, and all those other negative things we associate with the word Evangelical? Not at all. You must be thinking of someone else . . . that other kind of evangelical.

Here are a dozen of the most important things I learned in Evangelical (mainly Anglican) circles:

- To read and understand the Bible for myself
- To think about the integration of my intellectual life and my faith
- To think of my life as a life of service to God and my fellow human beings
- To assume that I should tithe all my income
- To pray out loud with others
- To articulate my faith in spite of fear
- To see Christian faith as a coherent whole, as a worldview
- To feel empowered as a lay leader
- To appreciate people of other denominations, and the priority of our shared faith
- That Christians can be good scientists and thoughtful Christians
- That evangelism can be respectful and gentle, yet winsome and persuasive

• Christian scholars can engage on equal terms with aggressive atheists.

Could I have learned those things in other church contexts? Maybe. But I didn't. Not that it was perfect, of course. There was a streak of fundamentalism that had to be grown out of. There was a vacuum where social justice was concerned, which needed to be filled. There was an arrogant intolerance of tradition and ritual that needed to be balanced out. But those things, I would like to think, came with time, broader experience, and slow maturing.

The Anglican Church boasts about being a big umbrella, with lots of room for embracing different perspectives on Christian faith. Thus, over the years, I have learned to appreciate things about traditions other than my own—Anglo-Catholic, charismatic, mystical, liberal—but that kind of Evangelical Anglicanism will always be deep in my bones, and on the whole I am grateful.

The fire of Evangelicalism flourishes best, I believe, in the Anglican fireplace.

St. Aidan's 2026 E-Waste Collection Day

THE REVEREND FRAN WALLACE

St. Aidan's in Oakville held an annual e-waste collection event on Saturday, April 25th, in recognition of Earth Week.

This was the 5th annual event for the church and continues to attract residents from all areas who brought in their no longer used, needed or obsolete electronic items for responsible recycling by our partner—Halton Electronic Recycling.

Lianne and Phil Guglielmi and Mehdi were the church team for the event, along with Anthony Legrano from Halton Electronic Recycling. A very cool, rainy and blustery day did not deter the team nor the 25 or so residents who came by and dropped off their items.

A variety of items were collected, including computers, monitors, laptops, printers, cell phones, TVs and many other



Photo: Contributed by Fran Wallace

electronic items. Most were nonfunctional, but many were functional, and some were very unique! All the items will be sorted and broken down for recycling of the various components.

Many items will be re-purposed and donated for a variety of applications in the community as well. For example, several of the cell phones collected will be given new life by Anthony and donated to Support House, which is a group that helps vulnerable people in Halton, who will distribute them to clients in need. Also, a large screen TV that

was brought in will be checked, cleaned up and donated to a retirement home for someone in need.

The parish collected approximately 1,000 pounds (454 kg) of material for recycling and estimates that over 6,000 pounds (2.7 tonnes) have been collected in total over the last five years. This demonstrates how a small event like this at St Aidan's can get big results, which can impact the very real issues we have with waste.

Big thanks to everyone who supported, and we look forward to another great event next year.

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Unmasked and Beloved:

Welcoming Neurodivergent People into Church Life

KRISTEN JACKSON-DOCKERAY

There was a moment at church camp when everything shifted for my son, Jackson.

It didn't feel dramatic at first. Just a video sent to my phone, it was grainy (camp internet), a little loud, and full of movement.

Jackson was at the front of the room, holding a microphone, leading karaoke.

He was singing. Dancing. Surrounded by other kids who were laughing and joining in.

And there he was, completely himself.

I watched it repeatedly as messy tears streamed down my face. Not because it was extraordinary in the way the world defines extraordinary, but because of how rare it felt. How holy.

Because this is not always how the world meets my son. This is not always how the Church meets him.

Jackson is autistic. And like many neurodivergent people, he has learned, quietly and carefully, how to shape himself to fit the expectations around him. When to sit still. When to speak. When to make eye contact. When to hold it all



Photo: Unsplash/Marija Zaric

together.

But at camp, something was different.

Here, he didn't have to work so hard to belong.

He was given leadership, trusted with his voice, invited not just to participate, but to contribute: to lead, to speak, to show us something true about God.

And in that space, he began to unmask, becoming fully, freely himself.

I wonder if that is where theology begins, not in the abstract, but in a camp chapel, a moment where we see, with teary-eyed clarity, what it

means to be human and held in the love of God.

Neurodivergent is an umbrella term for people whose brains function, learn, and process differently from what our culture has decided is "normal." But for many, this is not simply a diagnosis. It is identity. It is the lens through which they experience the world, relationships, and God.

Too often, belonging has been quietly defined in narrower ways: sit still, speak on cue, follow along. But belonging is something wilder and more tender than that: it is the freedom to be fully known

in your body, to bring your questions and your noise and your quiet, to take up space without apology, and to trust there is room for you here.

A theology of disability inclusion invites us to notice this. Gently, honestly. It invites us to ask: who have we built our communities for? And who has been left at the edges?

The truth is, the Body of Christ has never been about uniformity. The Apostle Paul reminds us that the body does not consist of one member, but of many and that those parts we might be tempted to overlook are indispensable (1 Corinthians 12). Not optional. Not secondary. Indispensable.

What if we believed that? What if neurodivergent ways of being are not problems to solve, but gifts to receive? What if the Church is not complete without them?

This shifts everything.

Inclusion is no longer about making space at the margins. It becomes about recognizing that the centre is already wider than we imagined. That belonging is not something we grant, but something we uncover.

And yes, there are practical ways we live this out. We can offer information in multiple

formats. Create predictable rhythms. Make room for movement, for quiet, for stepping out and returning. We can welcome sensory supports without question.

But the deeper invitation is this:

To listen.

To learn.

To be changed.

To ask whose voices are shaping our life together and whose are missing.

Because when Jackson stood at the front of that room at church camp, microphone in hand, leading a room full of kids in song and laughter, he was not simply being included.

He was teaching me, teaching us about the kingdom of God that we might have missed if we were not paying attention.

Perhaps becoming a neuroinclusive church is not about becoming something new, but about remembering something ancient and true:

That every person bears the image of God.

That every voice matters.

That the Church is most fully itself when all can bring their whole selves: unmasked, beloved, and free into the life of the Body.

Ecumenical Relations: The King and the Pope

THE REVEREND CANON DR. SHARYN HALL

In October 2025, King Charles and Queen Camilla went to visit Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican in Rome. It was an opportunity to join the Pope to celebrate the Catholic Church's 2025 Jubilee Year. The King and Queen were accompanied by the Archbishop of York, the Most Rev. Stephen Cottrell. This was actually the second visit of the King and Queen in 2025. In April, they had travelled to Italy for a state visit and a private visit with Pope Francis, who was very ill and died just a few days after the visit. King Charles, as the Prince of Wales, had previously visited the Vatican five times to strengthen relations between the Vatican and the Church of England.

The King and Queen arrived at the Rome airport on the evening of October 22 and were welcomed by the UK Ambassador to the Holy See, Christopher Trott, and several

representatives of the Vatican.

The next morning, they were driven through St. Peter's Square to the San Damaso Courtyard, the ceremonial entrance to the Apostolic Palace, where they were welcomed by several more papal officials.

A guard of honour was provided by the Swiss Guards, one of the oldest European military forces, having been created by Pope Julius II in 1506. Pope Leo received the King and Queen in his library for a meeting and for an exchange of gifts. There, the King met again Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Holy See's Secretary of State, who in May 2023 became the first papal representative to attend the coronation of a British monarch at Westminster Abbey in nearly 500 years.

Meanwhile, the Queen was escorted to see the Pauline Chapel, where cardinals traditionally assemble before entering a conclave to elect a new pope. The chapel houses Michelangelo's last two frescoes



Photo: Ben Dance / FCDO—via Wikipedia

—The Conversion of Saul (St. Paul) and The Crucifixion of St. Peter.

The King and Queen and the Pope, sitting below Michelangelo's Last Judgement, took part in a special ecumenical service in the Sistine Chapel, which focused on the theme, 'Care for Creation', reflecting Pope Leo's and the King's concern for the environment. This was a significant milestone in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Church of England, being the first time since Henry VIII broke with Rome in the 16th century that a Pope and a British monarch had prayed together in public.

"O God, make speed to save us," the Pope recited to start

the midday service, before the Archbishop of York replied, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power." The service was conducted in Latin and English. Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, was present in the Sistine Chapel for the service. He said, "The Sistine Chapel is a remarkable setting, but this was an even more remarkable moment, and it underlines the determination of King Charles to honour faith and encourage intense co-operation, not just for the good of the two churches, but for a deeper appreciation that religious faith is not a problem, but a resource we must use creatively and

positively."

After the service, the King and the Pope joined a meeting on sustainability, reflecting the King's work over many decades on climate and nature, and also Pope Leo's recognition of these issues. Together, they spoke with leaders who have been working with the Sustainable Markets Initiative, which the King founded as the Prince of Wales. The King and the Pope exchanged gifts of trees to be planted in their respective church gardens.

Referring to the King's prayers with the Pope, Cardinal James Harvey said, "It is no longer unusual for a British sovereign to meet the Bishop of Rome, and today saw a new step along the road to reconciliation." The historic nature of the joint prayer service in the Sistine Chapel "cannot be underestimated," he added. Before leaving, the King and Queen paused by a 12th-century mosaic of Pope Adrian, to date the only British Pope.

Three Years, One Journey: Voices from YLTP

LAST MONTH, WE BEGAN SHARING REFLECTIONS FROM YOUTH WHO PARTICIPATED IN THEIR LAST YEAR OF THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (YLTP). IN THIS ISSUE, WE CONTINUE THAT JOURNEY, OFFERING TWO MORE PERSPECTIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS AS THEY LOOK BACK ON THEIR EXPERIENCE AND AHEAD TO WHAT COMES NEXT.

Becoming Comfortable with the Uncomfortable, by Kateri Fage

My name is Kateri Fage, and I am a member of Saint George's Parish in Guelph. My three years at YLTP have been filled with laughter, leadership, friendship, and countless new experiences. When I was first introduced to the program, I honestly did not know what to expect. I felt uncertain about stepping into something so unfamiliar, but I was encouraged to give it a try. Looking back now, I am incredibly grateful that I did.

During my time at YLTP, I have grown not only in my faith but also in my understanding of myself and my role within the Church. The program opened my eyes to the many leadership opportunities within our diocese and helped me see how I can contribute in meaningful ways.

One of the most important lessons I learned was how to become comfortable with being uncomfortable. At first, being placed in unfamiliar or challenging situations felt intimidating, but over time, I began to see these moments as opportunities for growth. Through these experiences, I built resilience and developed a stronger sense of confidence in myself. I also learned how to handle failure in a healthy and constructive way. Instead of fearing mistakes, I began to see them as part of the learning process. This mindset has had a lasting impact on my daily life, encouraging me to take risks, try new things, and step outside of my comfort zone. YLTP provided a supportive environment

where I could develop these qualities through engaging workshops, group activities, and meaningful discussions.

One experience that particularly stood out to me was a workshop led by Bishop Susan. Her words left a lasting impression on me and shifted my perspective on the impact of the Anglican Church in the world. She spoke about the challenges and conflicts she has faced in her journey and how she overcame them with strength and faith. Her honesty and wisdom helped me better understand how we are all connected through our shared beliefs, and it inspired me to think about how I can make a difference in my own community.

While the lessons and workshops were incredibly valuable, what truly made YLTP special for me was the people. Through this program, I had the opportunity to connect with individuals from across the diocese. These friendships became one of the most meaningful parts of my experience. We built a sense of community that made every day enjoyable and continued when we left camp.

Some of my favourite memories include sitting around the campfire, participating in socials, and even the simple moments, like walking to our cabins. These experiences brought us closer together and created memories that I will cherish for years to come.

An Opportunity to Fly, by Genevieve Howard

My time at YLTP was amazing! It was a time filled with so much breakthrough, support, laughter, peace, friendship, bonding, connections, love, and of course, faith. In March, I arrived back at YLTP after a whole year of having been away, but as soon as I got there, I was already making myself at home again. My year group and I reconnected almost instantly, with the familiarity of everyday friends.

As YLTP went on, there was

just this unquenchable feeling of freedom and of being accepted and welcomed. During YLTP, I got to challenge myself by climbing the rock wall and rappelling down. I was scared to rappel. I had to go off the top backwards, and that wall was about the height of a telephone pole. I had decided before I went up that I would try because I believed that I would have so much fun once I had made that leap of faith. Anyway, when I was ready to go off the top, sure enough, the task of stepping off backwards from that height was too much for me. My friends and leaders helped me through. I still had



YLTP 2026 group photo with Bishop Susan, centre.

Photo: Dani Leitis

to be brave, but they made it easier. They understood my fear, and they slackened the ropes just enough so I could get into a position that was more comfortable for me. I am happy to report I successfully rappelled down, and was glad I did. After all, I don't like missing "an opportunity to fly" (that's what I call it). Now, I feel like I'm free and flying after I've gotten over jumping off a height, because I know God's got me.

I know one of the reasons I will miss YLTP is the amazing place it's in. Over the three years I went there, I always got to go out into nature. Canterbury Hills is a fantastic display of God's creation and how we are a part of it. I never stopped being amazed. In year one, I remember we went on a hike around the forest, and in year two, I remember seeing the amazing waterfalls of the area (I was attached to those waterfalls). This year, we got to go on

a hike that went just off the Bruce Trail. On that hike, I got a chance to connect with a leader. The conversation we ended up having helped me work through some stress I had been under, and it helped show me how much I matter. Midway through the hike, we came to the most amazing lookout point. There was an escarpment all around us, and the millions of snowflakes in the air were falling over the trees and land spread out wide beneath us. I hope I can go back there someday. I think YLTP really helped me find the peace and strength God gives us all through nature.

I can see how much I've

asked me to play something. I turned beet red and tried to hide my face while I played one of the shortest, simplest songs I knew. I got more comfortable in year two. I hadn't brought my guitar that time, but our evening campfire leader couldn't be there. The youth had to lead each other in song. I took an opportunity to lead a song for everyone. On the last day of YLTP in year two, we all wrote anonymous blessings for each other. One of my blessings said, "I hope that you keep singing and spreading your talent. You truly are an amazing singer". I still hold those blessings close. This year at YLTP, I brought my guitar again, and I'm so glad I did. I discovered that I can lead and inspire others with the music and art God gave me the talent to make, and I'm not afraid anymore.

In my very first year group meeting of year three, I brought my guitar out as an item that represents me (we all had to bring an item that represented us). I said I was an instrument, and I needed God to help play me in order to produce good music. I started strumming while people were talking, and that inspired the thought that I use my musical talents to help lead vespers and the Eucharist during YLTP. I wasn't ever quite as good at being an organized, taking charge leader, but now I understand that I am a very strong leader when it comes to expressing myself. I just had to find the courage to do it.

I know I will miss YLTP. The memory of the hugs from my friends as I was leaving after year three, and looking back to see them waving, will always be precious. I can't wait to see them again. Thank you, YLTP family!

grown in faith over my years at YLTP. When I first came, even though I knew I was a Christian, I still had so much to discover about what that meant. I knew God loved me (sort of), but I had yet to get to know Him better. I am still getting to know Him each day, but I am so glad that He has blessed me with even knowing as much as I already know about Him. He is amazing. Each year that I came back, I could look back and see that I was a different person in the stages of faith each time. I grew a lot in between YLTP, but YLTP was a huge burst of extra breakthroughs each year, with guest speakers, discussions, and peaceful vespers.

Something I will take with me from YLTP is my courage. I was so shy at first. In year one, I brought my guitar, but I was so shy about playing it in front of people. When my cabin members saw it, they got excited and

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

October – August 24
November – September 21
December – October 15

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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Lessons from the Early Years at St. George's



THE REVEREND CANON MARTHA TATARNIC

"I THANK MY GOD EVERY TIME I REMEMBER YOU. IN ALL MY PRAYERS FOR ALL OF YOU, I ALWAYS PRAY WITH JOY". (PHILIPPIANS 1:3-4)

I received pivotal advice from various people in my first two years serving at St. George's in St. Catharines, but the most important piece came from someone whom I didn't know. I had arranged to see an elderly woman in our congregation for a home visit. A few days before the visit was to take place, I received an email from her son, who lived out of town. It was supportive and kind, but also straight-shooting. He told me that his mother didn't approve of having a woman rector and didn't like the changes that I was making in the congregation. He understood that I would be tempted to go into this visit ready to defend myself, my position, and my leadership decisions, but he warned me that doing so would accomplish nothing. "I know my mother," he said. He advised listening instead and affirming her feelings as much as possible.

It was a hard and surprising email to receive and one that left me feeling unmoored. I had been in parish ministry for ten years at that time and had had a great deal of success with my words. I lived and led by the assumption that if things were

just explained clearly enough, everyone would get on board. I had spent a lot of time in those early months at St. George's using my words as thoughtfully and clearly as possible. It was hard to hear so blatantly that I was disliked for my gender, and it felt particularly unsettling to go into this visit knowing this information but essentially disarmed from addressing it.

It ended up being the best advice I have ever received in ministry—which is saying something, because helpful insight and wisdom have been offered to me in abundance. I had tea with this parishioner, I nodded and affirmed, and I kept my explanations on mute. She never had another complaint about the ordination of women, and we went on to have a close and meaningful pastoral relationship.



Canon Tatarnic has been part of the life of St. George's St. Catharines for 13 years.

Photos: Niagara Anglican files

I started at St. George's in 2012 as a whirlwind. It's not that I didn't know and believe the advice, "try not to change anything of consequence in the first year." This was a historic church, steeped in tradition, the oldest in town. They had a long and successful past, not one that suggested that change was the order of the day.

However, I was very aware of being the first woman to serve as rector of St. George's. My age and my gender were

constant talking points. More importantly, I was suffering from a massive case of Imposter Syndrome. I felt supremely unequipped for the job, and I was hyper aware of the expectations that were bearing down on me from a variety of places, especially in my own imagination. "A leader leads," raced as a mantra through my overactive brain, and in response, I applied myself to the task of looking like I knew where we all needed to be going. By nature, I am good at generating ideas and putting those ideas into action, but those tendencies were jacked up to turbo speed when I started in this new role.

That one visit and intervention was part of a long list of difficulties and opposition that I faced at the beginning. In those early years,

I held my breath every time I opened my email because I never knew when I was going to get an explosive, angry message about some decision that someone vehemently disagreed with. I was beleaguered with doubt about whether I had properly heard God's call when I thought I was being asked to go to St. George's. There were similar fears in pockets of the congregation, wondering if they had gotten it wrong with picking me, too. This new

ministry wasn't initially looking like it was obviously destined to be a long or happy one.

Which is why it feels so remarkable to reflect on reaching my twelve-year anniversary of serving this parish. There have been ups and downs, but serving St. George's has unequivocally been one of the great gifts of my life. My faith has been deepened more times than I can count by the people of this community. This has been a place of friendship, service, learning and growing, not just for me, but for my whole family. Together, our church has done some incredible things in our care for one another, in our witness of faith, in our service to and with the city of St. Catharines and beyond.

It wasn't just that one email intervention that made the difference. There were a lot of respected leaders of the church, including but not limited to Archdeacon Marion Vincett, and Mavis and Bishop Walter Asbil, who gave me the benefit of the doubt at every turn and publicly supported me whenever possible. There were wardens and staff and other ministry leaders who sat around various kitchen tables with me as we considered how to navigate parishioners' anxieties about change. We made some strategic decisions out of those conversations, but the more important thing that happened in each of those circles was that I left realizing that I wasn't in this alone.

There were other pieces of advice too. It was Marion who suggested to me that I do an energy audit and make sure that I was putting as much time and attention as possible into ministering to the good energy of the parish, rather than merely attending to the areas of upset. There was a

long conversation over sushi in Aurora with Canon Dawn Davis. I went to her expecting insight on how to think about church systems, organizational structures, and communication strategies, but instead she told me to find more time for prayer and to devote as much attention as I possibly could to centering in my relationship with God.

I think back on the past twelve years with so much love and gratitude for this church and for the opportunity to serve it. But my gratitude is underwritten by a profound awareness of how this could have been a much different story.

It is this story because of the people who helped me, because I didn't know everything, and others knew something I didn't know, because we can have our feelings and get off to rocky starts with one another, and true friendship can still blossom, and a real hard-earned love can prevail.

It is this story because people can change. I can change. We can change. Community doesn't have to be perfect to be good.

It is this story because the health and wellness and fruitfulness of a faith community is about so much more than just having the right kind of strong charismatic leader, and is all about every member of the Body having an important role to play in how people are supported, wisdom is discerned, change is navigated, and faithfulness is embodied.

If I ever need a few reminders about how Jesus was onto something, these last twelve years provide ample reference points. It really is true that we don't know a thing about God's love without one another. And it is also true, thank God, that we're not defined by the ways we get lost but by how grace finds us.

Thought-Provoking Study at St. Luke's Smithville

DAVID HUFFMAN

At St. Luke's Smithville, the Lenten season this year became more than just a time of giving up chocolates and sweets. In the weeks leading up to Easter, St. Luke's Smithville went on a thought-provoking Lenten Journey into the past. For five (5) weeks, a group of parishioners, led by Canon Eleanor Clitheroe, rector, sat in on a weekly Zoom-style

presentation on the life and teachings of Julian of Norwich (c. 1342–c. 1416). Her real name is unknown, as she suppressed her personal identity, choosing to be known by the church where she occupied a small, attached cell for most of her adult life as an anchoress.

This Zoom presentation was hosted by Regis College, Toronto. The study proved to be more than just a sit-and-listen type of presentation. After each

session, Clitheroe led the group through a detailed 'Question and Answer' review of what was presented on that day. By the depth of the questions and the struggle for answers, it was obvious that the presentation had struck a chord with the attendees.

Simply put, Julian, as a young woman thirty years of age, became extremely ill and was confined to her deathbed. It was here that she claimed to have a

series of visions of the painful crucifixion of Jesus. Now, 'Near Death Experiences' are not rare. A quick search of YouTube will result in dozens of NDE encounters. What makes Julian of Norwich unique is what Julian did after her visions. She became a prominent mystic and spiritual counsellor known for her Revelations of Divine Love, the first surviving book in English written by a woman.

A prominent quote from her

writings, 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well,' has the potential to bring great comfort to those who are struggling or are in distress.

She is remembered as a significant spiritual figure whose writings focused on divine love and compassion during a period of plague and social unrest.