

“This is Ida, I have a prayer concern”

THE REVEREND HOLLIS HISCOCK

For over 50 years in two parishes, Ida Glancie has been a leader of the prayer chain ministry. A ministry based partly on the New Testament letter of James (5:16), which urged the early Christians to “pray for each other so that you may be healed”.

Ida and Hollis spoke about her Prayer Chain journey.

Hollis: When, why, and how did you get started with the Prayer Chain Ministry?

Ida: When I joined St. Phillip's Parish, Burlington in 1965, we had just moved from Quebec to Ontario. There was a prayer request box available for parishioners to write down their concerns or requests.

A group of people, probably members of the Worship Committee, would pray for the concerns in private. I was not a part of that group.

Then the setup changed to a list at the back of the church showing dates, who requested the concern, and what they needed prayers for.

In the mid to late 1970s, the Prayer Chain was introduced and somehow, I got to run it. This was a telephone ministry only, and members were required to keep the requests confidential.

All requests were called in to me, and I would then pass them to each captain of the chain. There were usually four chains and two to three members on each chain.

The captains would call the next person on their chain and so on. The Prayer Chain continued until St. Phillips closed in 2007.

Although I had not yet joined another church, I was still getting calls. I felt that as long as the need was there, I would continue running the chain.

Hollis: What happened when you joined a new church in Burlington?

Ida: I joined St. John's Nelson in 2008. There was no active prayer chain there at that time. I approached our rector at the time, Bahman Kalantari, about continuing this ministry, and he approved of it.

Hollis: What kept you going, especially during difficult times?

Ida: The need to keep going was obvious; there was always someone needing prayers, and I believe strongly in the power of prayer.

Hollis: How does the Prayer Chain work today?

Ida: There are four chains with two or three members on each chain, resulting in 12 to 15 people

three are gathered in His name.

Hollis: COVID paralyzed the whole world for years; how did the Prayer Chain respond under extreme circumstances?

Ida: During the pandemic, when we could not get together in person, I suggested that the members of the prayer chain could help to keep us connected. I asked, and they agreed, so I gave each member a list of 8 to 10 people to call from the parish



Organizer Ida Glancie telephones the Prayer Chain Captains, who in turn contact their members about prayer requests and concerns. She also includes suggestions such as, praying for courage, thanksgivings, healing and good results.

Photo: contributed by Hollis Hiscock

praying for that one concern.

Parish members can join by calling me, and I will add them to a chain. The chain operates only through the parish, and requests can be for family members or friends.

Permission needs to be given to go on the prayer chain, and we pray for the concern for two weeks.

Hollis: Can you give us an example from your personal experience?

Ida: When I was in the hospital on four particular occasions, I felt very calm and relaxed mainly because all the members of the prayer chain, family and others were praying for me. God always listens when two or

Synod 2026

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

God's renewed mission as we move from recovery to renewed financial stability. We'll also receive the 2025 auditor's report, appoint auditors for the present fiscal year, and consider a few changes to the canons.

This year, our Synod will also elect representatives for the upcoming Provincial Synod, which will be held in Kingston, Ontario, in the fall of 2027. The election of regional representatives to Synod Council is also on the agenda. Both elections will be conducted using an online voting platform.

All the reports and resolutions for the Synod will be posted at <https://niagaraanglican.ca/synod/synod-2026>.

In the coming weeks, please

also hold the members of Synod in your prayers as they discern how best to engage with matters on our agenda, seeking in all things to faithfully equip our diocese to pass the faith of Jesus Christ which we have inherited from generation to generation.

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



Delegates vote at the 2024 synod.

Photo: Diocese of Niagara files



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The Reverend Hollis Hiscock is a former Editor of the Niagara Anglican, living in Burlington).

Justice and Outreach Events

Human Trafficking Justice Education Forum

Out of the shadows and into the light, this engaging seminar will teach us how slavery and human trafficking are still modern-day issues here in St. Catharines. Learn tips and strategies to educate your community and how to get referrals to services and organizations into others' hands. This engaging community event will feature knowledge and know-how from some of the region's leading organizations on the

issue, including Crimestoppers Niagara, Restoration House, and Niagara Police. Pastors, teachers, health workers, and educators... come and learn how to make the world safer for youth!

TIME: Saturday, October 24th, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
PLACE: St. John's Anglican Church, 80 Main Street in Port Dalhousie
WHO SHOULD ATTEND? All of those who want to make the world a better place through

anti-trafficking efforts!

CONTACT: For questions, reach out to Deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca

This is an Ecumenical event and open to people of all faiths.

To register, scan the QR code or visit niagaraanglican.ca



The Season of Creation with Climate Justice Niagara

Climate Justice Niagara is hosting our annual Season of Creation gathering on Wednesday, September 26th from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at the Church of the Incarnation, 1240 old Abbey Lane, Oakville, Ontario.

This gathering is designed for the parish facilitators, but is open to anyone with an interest in the climate crisis and the Season of Creation. It will be an engaging gathering with guest speaker Andrea Rowe, chief plant lover, Halton Gardens, and groundskeeper at Church of the Incarnation, Oakville. Andrea will share information connected to her unique blend of

business acumen, technical skill, and environmental passion.

Determined to create a healthier environment for her two young children, she chose to pivot her career toward climate-conscious garden design. Volunteering in local schools sparked her interest in grassroots environmental action, eventually leading her to work with local non-profit organizations, helping schools, faith-based organizations, and homeowners across Halton to implement nature-based solutions for climate resilience.

Andrea has built strong working relationships across the public and non-profit sectors,

including with local governments, community foundations, and academic institutions. Known for being knowledgeable, trusted, and deeply connected, Andrea brings a passionate, community-driven approach to every project—creating outdoor spaces that are as beneficial to the environment as they are enjoyable for people.

To register, scan the QR code or visit niagaraanglican.ca



Photo: Unsplash/Jonas Allert

Living Water

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

river that flows with God's love. Rivers do not exist for themselves. They give life to every place they touch. So, the Church does its job when it takes God's love, kindness, justice, and hope out into the world where we live.

This idea is very clear in the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Water is the start of the journey. When we are baptized, we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. We become part of his body. Are called to be part of God's plan. The symbol of Immersion in Living Water is not about being renewed as individuals but about being called to serve.

Jesus talks about this in his meeting with the woman at the well. He says that the water he gives will satisfy our thirst and will be like a spring that gives us eternal life. The living water that Christ gives is never still. It flows out from the people who believe in him and becomes acts of love, kindness and service. Being a Christian is not about getting God's love but about letting that love flow out from us.

The last part of the Bible talks about this image again. In the book of Revelation, the River of Life flows from God's throne through the city of God. On the banks of this river is a tree that heals the nations. The Bible starts in a garden that God takes care of and ends with a world that God's River gives life to. The Church's job is to be a sign of this world that is coming.

This idea also shapes how the Anglican Church thinks about the world. We are called to take care of the earth and keep it safe. This is not only about being kind to the environment. It is about being who we are as Christians and being part of God's plan to make things right. When we protect rivers, take care of water, reduce waste and help communities that are hurt by the way we treat the earth, we are showing the world what God is like.

Ezekiel's river started as a stream flowing out from the Temple. God often starts his work in several ways: a faithful group of people, a shared prayer, a fixed relationship, a local act of taking care of the earth, a community gathered to read the Bible and take part in the Lord's Supper. When we give these things to God, they can become ways for God's love to renew the world.

May this Season of Creation fill us again with the living water of Christ. May our churches become rivers of hope, bringing healing where there is hurt, renewal where there is tiredness and signs of God's love wherever the river of God's love flows.

Author's note: This reflection was written during the author's work of translating the 2026 Season of Creation Resource Book into Malayalam, an experience that deepened his meditation on the theme "Living Water."



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The Harvest is Plentiful: Why Commissioned Lay Missioners Matter

THE REVEREND CANON DR. IAN MOBSBY

One of the greatest privileges of my ministry as the community missionary over the past year has been accompanying the discernment, formation, and commissioning of a new and first generation of volunteer commissioned lay missionaries within the Anglican diocese of Niagara. Looking back, I can honestly say that this has been the most hopeful and life-giving aspect of my work. It has renewed my confidence that the Holy Spirit continues to call ordinary Christians into extraordinary participation in the *Missio Dei*. Where mission is understood in terms of restoration. Restoring all things back into relationship with the Triune God.

The Anglican Church stands at a significant moment in its history. Across our diocese we long to see our parishes renewed, not simply by attracting those who already have some connection with church, but by learning again how to participate in God’s mission among those who have long since left Christian communities and those who have never had any meaningful experience of the Church at all. Many people today carry deep misun-

derstandings, painful memories or negative stereotypes about Christianity. Others simply regard the Church as irrelevant to the questions and longings of contemporary life.

Such people are not reached primarily through programmes or publicity. They are reached through relationships.

For too long much of our energy has understandably been focused on what might be called the “bridgeable”, those who remain open to attending a traditional church service or responding to familiar invitations. This remains an important ministry. Yet the vast majority of our neighbours now belong to what missiologists increasingly describe as the “unbridgeable”: people for whom the cultural, emotional, and spiritual distance from church has become so great that they are unlikely ever to walk through our doors unless Christians first learn to cross the threshold into their lives outside church buildings, engaged in local parish neighbourhoods.

Contextual mission begins precisely here.

It asks us first to listen before speaking; to become students of our neighbourhoods before attempting to change them; to



Photo: Unsplash/Headway

recognize where God is already at work beyond the walls of our churches; and to cultivate relationships of trust that make the Gospel visible long before it is articulated in words. This kind of mission cannot simply be added as another parish programme. It requires people who are deeply rooted in prayer, emotionally mature, curious about others, and willing to spend time building authentic relationships within their local communities.

This is why, for me, commissioned lay missionaries are becoming strategically important to the future of our diocese.

My hope is not simply to appoint volunteers with another title. We hope that every commissioned lay missionary becomes a catalyst for

helping a parish rediscover its neighbourhood relationally. They encourage congregations to move from maintaining church life to participating more intentionally in God’s life already unfolding within their communities. They help parishes notice where loneliness, isolation, spiritual hunger, and spiritual need already exist, and then accompany local people in ways that are incarnational, relational, and deeply attentive.

This is not about creating another committee. It is about nurturing missional disciples who can help cultivate a missional imagination throughout the whole parish.

Over the past year our formation programme has intentionally embraced a praxis-based approach to learning. Rather than simply studying mission in theory, participants are learning by engaging in contextual mission, reflecting theologically on their experience, receiving supervision, mentoring in collaboration with the parish rector and clergy, and returning again into practice with greater wisdom and confidence. This rhythm of action and prayerful reflection echoes the pattern of discipleship we see throughout the Gospels, where Jesus forms his followers not simply by teaching them but by sending them.

The result has been deeply encouraging. I have watched individuals grow in confidence, theological depth, spiritual maturity, and practical wisdom. They have become more attentive listeners, more discerning practitioners, and more courageous witnesses to Christ’s love within their own communities. Their generosity, humility, and commitment have continually inspired me.

The challenge, however, remains significant.

Jesus’ words remain as true today as when he first spoke them: “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.”

(Matthew 9:37)

The opportunities for contextual mission across the diocese are immense. Every parish sits within a unique mission field rich with relationships waiting to be formed and stories waiting to be heard. Yet we need more labourers. We need Christians whose faith is deep enough to move beyond maintaining church structures and who are passionate about joining God’s mission in the neighbourhood beyond the colonialist focus of getting more people ‘in’. We need people with emotional intelligence, humility, resilience, theological imagination, and the interpersonal gifts necessary to build genuine relationships across difference. We need women and men who recognize that mission is less about having the right answers and more about faithfully accompanying people as they discover God’s presence already at work in their lives.

My hope is that many more lay Anglicans across the diocese will prayerfully consider whether God might be calling them into this vocation. Not everyone is called to ordained ministry, but every baptized Christian is called to participate in some role concerning God’s mission. For some, becoming a commissioned lay missionary may be precisely the way in which that calling can be recognized, nurtured and fully deployed in collaboration with the rector and the wider diocese.

As I reflect on the past year, I feel profound gratitude. It has been a joy to accompany such gifted and faithful people. Their courage, generosity, and commitment have continually reminded me that the future of the Church will not be secured simply through better strategies or more efficient structures, through ensuring that we just have ordained priests, but rather, through communities of disciples willing to leave familiar ground, listen deeply, love generously and join Christ where he is already present in the life of the world.

That, surely, is the heart of contextual mission. And it is why commissioned lay missionaries are not simply an optional addition to diocesan life, but in my view, an essential part of how we faithfully participate in God’s renewing mission in Niagara today.



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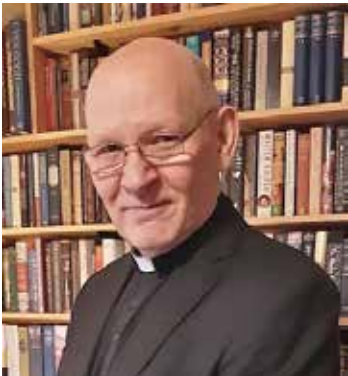
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Politics and Generosity



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

Prayer breakfasts are in many ways strange, contrived creations. Prayer is supposed to be a constant feature of religious life, not meant for public display, and hardly the stuff of a morning meal. Still, they're part of the state diary now at all sorts of administrative levels. They began in the US in the 1940s, became politically legitimized a decade later when President Eisenhower attended, and ten years after that made their way to Ottawa.

It was at that Ottawa version earlier this year that the Prime Minister, as well as other party

and religious leaders, gathered to celebrate the theme of "You are not alone." Mark Carney, an observant Roman Catholic, said, "God gave us His Son, which was an act of generosity," stressed the importance of political generosity, and spoke of Christian values and their vital place in Canadian life and government.

Entirely predictably, critics objected to what was said, emphasized church and state separation, and warned of the dangers of religious belief infecting the body politic. Which is ironic on numerous levels. First, the separation of church and state is in fact a Christian concept. Second, the secular body politic is hardly in a healthy condition. Third, as the British historian Tom Holland (not to be confused with the actor who plays Spider-Man!) has demonstrated quite brilliantly in his books, ideas of progress, equality, and care for the weak and poor are ideals that didn't authentically exist until the rise of Christianity.

Of course, numerous

Christians have failed in all this or behaved appallingly and still do, but this is contrary to Christian teaching. Contrast that with pre-Christian societies and read what they believed. The Romans didn't enslave and torture in defiance of any accepted theology but precisely because it wasn't forbidden, and was in many ways encouraged. The accepted notion was that the gods favoured and gave glory to the powerful and victorious and gave them the right to abuse and exploit.

When we listen to the screaming excesses of the ironically pagan creed known as Christian nationalism and its various hatreds, it's difficult to remember that Jesus gave us the beatitudes, the narrative that turns the world upside down, that he told the wealthy to give away their treasure, and taught that the central command of the faith was to love God and love others as ourselves. It's that simple, and that incredibly difficult.

There were fine words and sentiments at the Ottawa

prayer breakfast, and a splendidly refreshing coming together of political opponents. But will this call for generosity have any staying power? Will it make any difference? There was a time, not only in Canada, when we assumed a certain decorum and respect in our political class, but I'm not entirely convinced that this is still the case. There's a surface camaraderie for sure, but when elections are raging, and power is up for grabs, there's been an exponential decline in standards, to the point where those politicians who honestly do respect their opponents tend to stand out. And in case anybody is wondering, the problems are with every party and every ideology.

In the US, Britain, and many European countries, the centre ground hasn't held, polarized opposites often appear to hate each other, and some of the comments made would have been impossible a few years ago, let alone a generation. In fact, it can be deeply depressing watching how people who ask to govern us and make laws

behave on a daily basis. Mark Carney, as a Christian, is calling for a generosity of spirit, and that requires a leap of empathy and self-criticism. Do I think he's being genuine? Yes, I believe that he is. I certainly hope that he is. Do, however, remember that any politician convinced that they have all of the answers will find it incredibly difficult to see truth or pure motives in people on the other side of the floor. While the quotation has never been fully documented, CS Lewis—author of the *Narnia* stories and the book *Mere Christianity*—is thought to have said, "the closest I am to God is when I'm with another person." Is that something that a politician, Christian or not, could say when arguing and disagreeing? Leaving religion aside, do our representatives, do any of us, see the precious, see the unique, see the sheer humanity in those with whom we disagree? Good God, I hope so.

A Taste of Taizé at St. Paul's Caledonia

THE REVEREND DEACON NANCY MCBRIDE

As many readers of the Niagara Anglican will know, Taizé worship is a quiet, candlelit meditation and reflection, based on singing simple, repetitive chants, listening to scripture, with periods of prayer and total silence.

This style of worship began in 1940 at the beginning of World War II, when Roger Schultz-Marsauche (also known as Brother Roger) invited people to seek safety in the village of Taizé in Burgundy, France. He established a community where refugees would be safe. He designed an ecumenical service for the community. The village of Taizé is a popular pilgrimage site for young people in particular. Through the years, the movement has spread throughout the world. Brother Roger died a tragic death in 2005. His legacy lives on.

My personal interest in Taizé began during the COVID pandemic, when, out of necessity, I spent a lot of time on my own. I joined a centring prayer group and practised on my own.

When the Caledonia



Presbyterian Church, under the direction of Pastor Janice Doyle, began to offer a Taizé service to the community, I joined a group of my friends and attended on a regular basis. These services are offered once a month. After one service, our little group wondered if we could offer a similar service, also once a month. Last January, after some research and a lot of discussion, we launched a monthly Taizé service at Saint Paul's under my leadership.

In the darkened church, we light as many candles as we can find flat surfaces to hold. Near some of the candles, we place framed traditional icons; the colours literally glow in the candlelight.

Our strategy is simple. We open in silence, with breath prayers to calm our hearts and minds. A rotation of prayer, scripture (a psalm or a New

Testament reading), with music leading into a period of silence, is repeated twice more. We close with brief intercessions and a sending hymn. As we started, we end in silence and leave without speaking so that those who wish can continue to pray. The service is projected on a screen using PowerPoint, for the convenience of the participants.

With our chancel and sanctuary at the east end of the church, we were able to proceed in relative darkness until the summer solstice, when we initially planned to take a break for the summer. One of our members suggested that she would like to experience a meditation on a stained-glass window. In July, the sun streamed brilliantly through the Ascension window in the west wall of the church. This 100-year-old window was the perfect centrepiece, allowing us to embrace its story, the colours and shapes, and also its heritage. As light permits, we plan to study all eight windows in the church in the same way.

This type of service is not unique to us, with Taizé services offered at Christ Church Cathedral and at the Church of



the Resurrection in Hamilton.

If you are searching for an opportunity to reflect quietly

in God's presence, I encourage you to take advantage of a Taizé service near you.





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50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood

THE REVEREND CANON DR. MARGARET MURRAY

The Diocese of Niagara was among the first four dioceses in Canada to ordain women to the priesthood. The decision was eight years in the making, beginning at Lambeth in 1968. Mary Mills, later among the first six women ordained as priests, became the first woman deacon in 1969. By 1971, the Anglican Consultative Committee said bishops could ordain women with diocesan and provincial synod consent. Over the next five years, the matter was considered by two General Synods, studied in dioceses and parishes, discussed with interdenominational colleagues, and carefully examined by the Canadian House of Bishops. Eventually, it was agreed there was no overwhelming objection to the ordinations.

Fun fact: The ordination services in Huron and Niagara began at 7 pm, and those in Cariboo and New Westminster began at 4 pm. With time-zone differences, six women were ordained priests almost simultaneously, moving the Church toward priestly ministry in both familiar and

new ways.

In the Diocese of Huron: The Rev. Mary Mills

In the Diocese of Cariboo: The Rev. Patricia Reed

In the Diocese of New Westminster: The Rev. Elspeth Alley and The Rev. Virginia Bryant

In the Diocese of Niagara: The Rev. Mary Lucas and The Rev. Beverly Shanley

Preaching that afternoon in Cariboo, Archbishop Ted Scott urged the Church not to model female priests on men, but to let them “widen and expand our understanding of priesthood.” More than a decade later, when I was ordained, role models for women priests were still scarce—imagine what it was like for the first six! Some continued in existing ministries with new sacramental responsibilities; others were just beginning. In Niagara, The Rev. Mary Lucas continued her curacy at Grace Church, St. Catharines, celebrating the Eucharist for the first time on December 1st. The Rev. Beverly Shanley became the first woman priest to have her own parish at St. George’s, Lowville, and St. John’s, Nassagaweya.

Fast forward:

In Niagara, our experience of women in priestly ministry is well rooted, nourishing and blessing the Church in many ways. To celebrate this milestone anniversary, we need your involvement!

- We are looking for photos of women priests over the years. Please check parish and family albums for images we can share, including the parish, priest’s name, and approximate year. Scanned photos can be sent to 50thordinationanniversary@gmail.com. We would also love to collect stories from women priests and from all who have experienced their ministry.
- Women Called to the Table: 50 Years of Priestly Ministry—a panel discussion moderated by Bishop Susan Bell, is planned for Tuesday, October 27, 2026, at 7 pm at the Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton. It will share stories and hopes for ordained ministry. All are welcome.
- Diocesan Anniversary Service—a service of thanksgiving is planned for Sunday, November 29, 2026, at 4 pm at Christ’s Church Cathedral.

All are welcome to celebrate women’s priestly ministry in Niagara—past, present and future.

- National Anniversary Event—The Diocese of Islands and Inlets is hosting a national anniversary event on November 24–25 in Victoria, BC. Details and registration are available on the event webpage and Facebook: <https://bc.anglican.ca/events/50-years-of-the-priesting-of-women/2026-11-23>

Let’s celebrate 50 yrs of the Priesting of Women in the ACC!

After the historic 1976 ordination, both Niagara women priests were interviewed by the *Niagara Anglican*, the *Canadian Churchman* and the *Hamilton Spectator*. In the context of these interviews, Bev Shanley observed that women are as intelligent as men and their role in life is not secondary. But women priested will be different from men priested and they will complement each other and make a different priesthood.



Canon Margaret Murray

Has the evolution of priesthood been shaped by the presence of women priests?

This anniversary celebration is not about individuals or about women priests apart from male colleagues. Nor can we celebrate one order of ministry like the priesthood without recognizing its interdependence with the prophetic servant ministry of deacons and the myriad ministries of the laity. Rather than hierarchical images, perhaps our orders of ministry are like layers of puff pastry in a delicious dessert. Each layer of ministry is essential, has its place and complements the others in the fullness of ministry needed within a missional Church.

St. John's Stewarttown Celebrates a Faithful Legacy

The pews at St. John's Anglican Church, Stewarttown, were full once again on Sunday, June 28, 2026, as former parishioners returned from near and far to celebrate the parish's final service.

While the congregation gathered to say goodbye to a beloved church home, they also gave thanks for nearly two centuries of faithful ministry that will continue to live on in the lives it shaped.

Will Ross, warden at St. John's, recalled a very different time in the parish's history.

"I remember 60 years ago the church was full every Sunday," he said. "It had a choir and people who arrived late had a hard time finding a place to sit. There was a weekly games night for local children and several other regular events."

As many churches have experienced, St. John's gradually changed as the surrounding community changed.

"People moved away, children grew up, and people started to have other things to do on Sunday," Ross reflected. In its final years, only a handful



of parishioners gathered for weekly worship, making it increasingly difficult to sustain the parish.

Yet on its final Sunday, the church was filled once more.

"Many of the people who used to live nearby had travelled long distances to be there," Ross said. "They all had good memories of Stewarttown Church and how it had been a positive influence on their lives. The church is closed, but it will still be remembered."

Founded in 1834, St. John's served the Stewarttown community for nearly two centu-

ries. It was one of the earliest churches in the Halton Hills community, and over generations, it was a place where people gathered to worship, celebrate baptisms and marriages, mourn loved ones, and grow in faith.

Jeff Ward, archdeacon of Trafalgar, was the preacher for the closing service, "Standing with the people of St. John's, Stewarttown, for their final service was both a profound privilege and a deeply moving experience," he shared.

"As we gathered for this final act of worship, I was

struck by the extraordinary faithfulness of those who have carried this parish through its many seasons," Ward said. "We gave thanks for clergy, wardens, musicians, volunteers, families, and countless parishioners whose quiet devotion became the foundation of this community."

Ward acknowledged the grief of saying goodbye but reminded those gathered that the Church's mission extends beyond any one building.

"The closing of a beloved parish is never easy. Yet I was reminded of the wisdom of Ecclesiastes: "For everything there is a season." The ending of

a parish is not a failure but the faithful completion of a chapter in God's ongoing story."

"The Gospel reminded us that Christ never called us simply to preserve buildings," Ward continued. "Christ calls us to make disciples, to love our neighbours, and to carry hope into the world. Buildings shelter the Church's ministry, but they have never contained it. The true Church lives in God's people, as it did in Stewarttown."

Audrius Sarka, who served as the parish's final incumbent, said he will remember the people of St. John's for their

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My Experience of Joining the Rainbow Kings and Queens

TUNDE BRIAN

Oladipupo Babatunde Abdullah, also known as Abdul, who publishes under Tunde Brian, is a Nigerian-born writer who is seeking asylum in Canada because of his sexual orientation as pan-sexual. Homosexuality is highly criminalized in Nigeria, with federal laws punishing same-sex sexual acts with up to 14 years in prison or, in some parts, death by stoning. The Rainbow Kings and Queens formed in the Diocese of Niagara to support 2SLGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees from countries in Africa with similar legislation. They meet monthly in Christ's Church Cathedral, forming community and learning about life in Canada as part of the 2SLGBTQI+ community. Abdul was asked to write about his experience of joining the Rainbow King and Queens since moving to Canada in April 2026. At the time of writing, he was living in a Hamilton shelter.

I had been reluctant, perhaps out of fear, to learn about this LGBTQ community of Africans whose lingua franca is unity and love: Rainbow Kings and Queens, RKQ. Persuaded and convinced, I painstakingly trav-

elled with a compatriot some fifteen kilometres to Christ's Church Cathedral for our first meeting in June.

Everyone was euphoric with the forthcoming Toronto Pride happening just 2 weeks later. Unbeknownst to this writer, preparation was underway to get every member of RKQ a unified, branded T-shirt for the event.

My encounter with Deirdre Pike is one of rather fortunate coincidence. She was a master at working with the large group, handing the matching T-shirts to everyone in the room according to their various orders and requests. One of the Rainbow Queens, having realized the shirt she got appeared bigger than her initial request, did not even need the minutest plea or patronage of this shepherd. She had it replaced instantly. Soon, nearly everyone in the room was clad in this rainbow-dyed T-shirt. RAINBOW KINGS AND QUEENS, the letters read boldly on this writer's chest. Pike had gifted the writer a piece of the rainbow tie-dyed fabric, being a newcomer, a first-timer, and having had no prior knowledge of the preparation. An unprecedented but memorable gesture that will stay with me for a long time. Grinning from ear



Rainbow Kings and Queens celebrate Pride.

Photo: contributed by Deirdre Pike

to ear, all the memories of that encounter were captured in still images.

The next encounter was just as bright, but this time our leader appeared near the train station. There was no fanfare in her arrival, yet her presence was enough to reassure everyone that the journey ahead would be one travelled together. She greeted familiar faces with warm embraces and welcomed new ones with the same sincerity. There were no strangers in her flock. Before long, we boarded the train bound for Toronto with Pike travelling alongside us fellow queers, sharing conversations, laughter, and quiet moments that made the distance seem shorter than it truly was.

Upon arriving at Union

Station, another gesture, simple in appearance but profound in meaning, unfolded. Before the celebrations even began, Pike again acted like a shepherd, making sure everyone of us was fed. At Tim Hortons, she patiently asked each person for their own preferred order. There was no assumption that one meal suited all, nor was anyone overlooked. Each customized order was remembered and received with care. It was not merely breakfast or lunch; it was dignity served in a paper bag and a warm cup. A medium-sized hot chocolate and a plain croissant were enough to make my palate jump. To some, it may have appeared insignificant. To this writer, it was yet another expression of a leader who understood that people flourish

when they know they matter. Then came the walk into the city, where the pride colours filled the sky like a flock of lorikeets. Streets transformed into rivers of rainbow banners, music echoed from every direction, and thousands of people celebrated not simply an event but the freedom to exist without apology. The writer had seen crowds before, but never one united by such openness and freedom. There was laughter without restraint, affection without fear, and joy without permission.

This group of nearly two dozen was gently guided through the festivities, ensuring no one was left behind. Pike explained what many of the symbols represented, introduced familiar faces such as former Member of Provincial Parliament and the first Black and Queer woman, Jill Andrew, and made space for conversations that, perhaps unknowingly, were beginning to heal wounds that years of rejection had carved. For someone who had travelled across continents carrying invisible burdens, this was more than attendance at a festival. It was an awakening for this alien in a new, peaceful world.

All Saints' Church Ridgeway celebrates 100 years

ANNE LEVY-WARD

It started as a hole in the ground—and it celebrated its 100th birthday in the same place.

When All Saints' Anglican Church in Ridgeway first opened its doors in 1926, it was completely below grade. It wasn't until 1958 that the "top" (the main floor) was added. At that point, the original space became the church hall. Appropriately, that hall was the site of the church's centennial banquet on Saturday, May 23.

Anglicans were worshipping in Ridgeway before the Great War of 1914 to 1918, where and when they could. But the dust from that worldwide cataclysm had to settle before they could think about building their own church. It was a long and sometimes fraught process. Mrs. Ellen F. Brewster, a local Anglican land-owner, donated two building lots. She withheld her final go-ahead, however,



From left: parishioners Zubin Austin, Scott Hilborn, Anita Horton, Robyn Horton and Cameron Arenburg.

Photos: contributed by Anne Levy-Ward

until she was certain that a church would be built. In the meantime, the Rev. Canon Smith held services in a room at the Women's Institute in 1924 and 1925.

Mrs. Brewster named the parish All Saints' because she thought it better to name it after all of them than to choose just one. (Or so the story goes.) She lived long enough to attend services in the new church when her health permitted. The

Right Rev. Derwyn T. Owen, Bishop of Niagara, laid the cornerstone on October 9, 1926, assisted by clergy from Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Buffalo. Mrs. Brewster's was the first funeral held at the church, the following April.

Special guests both political and divine joined 70 parishioners at the centenary banquet.

Niagara South MP Fred Davies brought greetings from



Bishop Susan Bell spoke at the celebration

Ottawa, and added his praise: "For 100 years, this church has stood as a beacon of faith, fellowship and service, bringing generations together in worship and community spirit. As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, we give thanks for the past century of blessings and look forward with hope to continuing God's work for generations to come."

On what was her first visit to All Saints' Ridgeway, the Right

Rev. Dr. Susan Bell, Bishop of Niagara, captured the moment: "A centenary is a moment when time becomes visible."

She paid tribute to the Rev. Dan Bennett, All Saints' rector: "The best thing that a parish priest can do is to let people know that they are loved by God. We're so glad that you're here, and I'm pretty sure Jesus is glad you're here."

The bishop both recalled the past and anticipated the future: "All Saints' has always said yes to Jesus. That 'yes' is not finished. The shape of what's coming is already visible if you know where to look. One hundred years ago, the founders of All Saints' Church could not have imagined you. But they built anyway, as an act of faith. Today, we are building for people we don't know yet. Let's not look just at how far we've come – let's look at how far we can go."

The Tree That Is Still Growing

THE REVEREND STEWART CAROLAN-EVANS

At St. John's, Burlington, we are planning to paint a large, leafless maple tree on the back wall of the nave. At first hearing, that may not sound like the most obvious way to brighten a church. Most parishes, after all, spend considerable effort avoiding bare branches and unfinished work. Yet that is precisely the point. The tree will begin empty, but it will not remain that way. Rising approximately fourteen feet above the existing wooden panelling, its branches will gradually receive individual wooden maple leaves, each bearing the name of a member of St John's. There will eventually be space for about two hundred. What begins as a bare outline will slowly fill out, becoming a visible expression of a living and growing community.

The idea grew from a simple conviction: a church is not merely a building people attend, but a living community in which names, lives, gifts, and stories become part of something larger than themselves. We use the word "belonging" often in church life, and rightly so, but belonging can remain abstract. A name on a leaf makes it visible.

No single leaf makes a tree, yet every leaf changes it. Each one represents a person whose prayers, presence, service, humour, grief, generosity, and faith have become part of the shared life of the parish. The tree is not intended primarily as a memorial. It is a celebration of the people whom God has gathered here now, though there may occasionally be leaves added in memory of loved ones.

Beneath the tree will be the words from Revelation 22:2: "The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Revelation ends not with humanity escaping the world, but with God renewing it. A river of life flows through the holy city, the tree of life bears fruit, and its leaves bring healing. It is one of scripture's great visions of restoration: creation made whole, divisions overcome, and God dwelling among God's people. That matters because the names on our leaves are not simply declarations that we belong to St John's. They are also reminders that belonging has a purpose. The Church is gathered in order to be sent. We are called not only to enjoy community, but to become part of God's healing work in the world: through worship, service, welcome, forgiveness, justice, and care.

Naturally, turning the vision into reality has been slightly less straightforward than imagining it. Two artists who had hoped to paint the tree have had to withdraw. One, quite reasonably, was nervous about working at height. Our first challenge has therefore been finding an artist who shares the vision and is also on speaking terms with a scaffold. There is something rather appropriate about this. The tree is meant to speak of growth, and growth is rarely neat. Parish life develops through trial, patience, changed plans, and the willingness to begin again. The work of God is often less like unveiling a finished masterpiece and more like tending something whose final shape we cannot yet see.

That may be especially important for churches today. Across our Diocese, parishes live with very real concerns about attendance, finances, buildings, volunteers, and the future. We measure carefully, and we must. Budgets and statistics matter. But they do not tell the whole story. A parish cannot be fully described by a spreadsheet. Behind every number is a name, and behind every name is a life: someone who has found friendship, offered prayer, carried grief, served quietly, discovered faith, or helped



This painting in another church will be the the template to be used when painting the tree on the wall.

Photo: contributed by Stewart Carolan-Evans

another person feel less alone. There are conversations over coffee, meals delivered, children welcomed, funerals shared, questions explored, and small kindnesses that will never appear in an annual report. The tree will not solve the practical challenges of church life, but it may help us see that life more truthfully.

St John's is still growing. Not always quickly, not always predictably, and certainly not without setbacks, but growing nonetheless. New people arrive. Existing members discover new gifts. Relationships deepen. The community changes. The branches make room.

For now, the tree exists chiefly in imagination. Its branches are bare, its leaves have not yet been cut, and the right artist has still to be found. Perhaps that too is fitting. The Church is always unfinished. God is still adding names, unfolding gifts, and bringing life where bare branches once seemed to be the whole story. Over the years, we hope our Revelation tree will grow not only in leaves, but in meaning. And perhaps it will remind everyone who enters that we have been gathered not simply to belong to one another but, by God's grace, to become part of the healing of the nations.

St. John's Stewarttown Celebrates a Faithful Legacy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

quiet faithfulness.

"Being with the people of St. John's in these final years has been a quiet blessing," he said. "What I will remember most is their kindness, their steadiness, and the way they cared for one another without fuss or fanfare."

Although the parish's ministry at Stewarttown has come to an end, Sarka believes its influence will continue.

"St. John's has shaped so many lives over so many years, and that goodness doesn't end with the closing of the building," he said. "I'm simply grateful for the trust they showed me, for the stories and the laughter we shared, and for the way God's grace has quietly lived in this place. I believe what was planted here will keep growing in ways only God can see."



At the service of thanksgiving Jeff Ward, archdeacon of Trafalgar, preached; giving thanks for the faithful ministry of St. John's.

Ward concluded, "As we commended St. John's into God's loving care, I found myself filled with gratitude more than sadness. The ministry of this remarkable parish has been

completed with faithfulness. Its witness now lives on in the people whose lives were shaped here, and in the enduring mission of Christ, who continues to lead the Church into every new



Photos: Emily Hill

season with hope" The final service marked the end of one chapter in the life of St. John's, but those gathered left with a shared conviction that its legacy is found not only

in the historic church building, but in the generations of faithful people whose lives were shaped by its ministry.

Formed by Prayer, Sent in Love:

NSML to Debut New Course for Fall 2026 Term

HANNAH KELLER

The Niagara School for Missional Leadership (NSML) will launch a new course this fall to help students cultivate a deeper, more sustainable life of prayer. Resting in God, Moving in Love: Developing a Deeper & Missional Prayer Life invites participants to explore practices rooted in Anglican spirituality that nurture both personal discipleship and participation in God's mission.

The course will be taught by two experienced teacher-practitioners: Ian Mobsby and Monica Romig Green. Together, they bring a wealth of experience in spiritual formation, contemplative practice, and missional



Course co-instructor, The Reverend Canon Ian Mobsby

leadership. Ian is well known to the NSML community, having previously taught courses on contemplative spirituality and meaningful engagement with our neighbours. His ministry combines theological depth with practical wisdom, helping Christians discover how prayer can shape a faithful and missional way of life. Joining NSML as an instructor for the first time, Monica is a spiritual director, teacher, and retreat leader whose ministry is marked by creativity, attentiveness, and a deep commitment to helping people encounter Christ in everyday life.

To help prospective students learn more about the course, both instructors recently sat down with NSML coordinator Hannah Keller to discuss the vision behind the course and what students can expect from the experience.

Hannah Keller: Ian, could you share a bit about what inspired this new course?

Ian Mobsby: This course builds on a course that Canon Christyn Perkons had previously developed and

taught. This new course has a renewed focus on helping people develop a healthy and spiritually enriching rhythm of prayer.

HK: Monica, this course invites beginners into a deeper prayer life. How would you encourage someone who feels unsure or intimidated by prayer?

Monica Romig Green: I would say to them that our prayer life begins with God, not ourselves, so if you are drawn to this course but feel unsure or intimidated, I'd encourage them to trust that God is the one leading them to explore this deeper life of prayer. I would also say that no matter how long people have been



Course co-instructor, The Reverend Monica Romig Green

praying, in many ways, we are all beginners at prayer! There are always ways to pray that will be new to us, and exploring and trying things out is the best way to discover the best kinds and rhythm of prayer for who you are.

HK: How does an active, renewed prayer life connect to wider participation in God's mission?

IM: Prayer is the DNA of the spiritual traditions of the Anglican Church. We remember that our Book of Common Prayer grew out of the monastic prayer and worship traditions of monks, nuns, and friars. These were taken by the reformers as a basis to develop a prayer life for the average person in the context of a parish church.

Prayer has always been understood as encountering God, which is a form of relationship where we learn to receive the love of God, which then motivates us to be part of God's loving action in the world. Sometimes this is called prayerful action or contemplative action. So having a deep prayer life helps develop

an active and deep relationship with God, which then helps us to join in God's vision of restoration for our world and our churches.

HK: So, what can students expect in a typical class? How do you create a space that feels both safe and engaging?

MRG: A typical class will include some teaching to get everyone on the same page, a guided prayer practice for everyone to try together, and then space to talk about their experiences in small groups with others. There is also "homework," which is prayer practices to try out in your day-to-day life and a journal to record how these practices are affecting your relationship with God, yourself, others and creation. Our hope is that by making this class a place for everyone to try out new things together and allowing space for honest feedback, everyone will feel welcomed, safe, and engaged.

HK: You say that the course will include practices like reflective journaling and praying the Daily Office. Why do you think these are so powerful for everyday spiritual growth?

MRG: The spiritual practices that we will offer, which include reflective journaling and praying the Daily Office along with others, are powerful for everyday spiritual growth because they are tools to help us engage regularly, honestly, and deeply in our relationship with God and others. They are containers that help direct our attention back to the one who is love and who loves us beyond what we can think or imagine. It is not the practices that change us; it is God who changes and grows us within the context of our relationship. Anything that connects us relationally with God and others will powerfully affect our spiritual growth.

HK: Why do you think a course like this is important in our current world?

IM: It's not easy to be a Christian participating in God's loving mission in such a complex world, and I don't think it's possible to be a Christian long-term without an active and deep prayer and

spiritual life. It's essential for our wellbeing and resilience; otherwise, our hearts and minds are dominated by anxiety rather than the love of God.

HK: What is one thing you hope that students will take away from this course?

IM: I hope that students will be excited and energized about their prayer & spiritual lives and possibly learn some new resources that create a deep sense of being loved by God, rather than feeling fatigued or worn out by an impoverished sense of a prayer life.

MRG: That an appreciation for how prayer—particularly within the context of the Anglican church—is an

accessible daily gift to help reconnect us to God in Christ, to help us constantly abide in God's love, which allows that love to flow into and through us, animating all we do in our lives and in the world. It is both a solid bedrock and a lively spring of living water, and I hope our students experience this and begin to establish a rhythm of it for their lives.

Resting in God, Moving in Love will run online from October 19-December 7, 2026, on Monday evenings from 5:30 pm-7:30 pm EST. To register for courses, visit www.nsm.ca. For questions about NSML, course offerings, syllabi, or registration support, please contact Hannah Keller by emailing registrar@nsm.ca.





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In other words

The Fear of the Lord: What the Rat and the Mole Teach Us



JOHN BOWEN

Perhaps the most important question a human being can ask is, “What is God like?”

This came to me recently when an atheist friend said, “Well, if it turns out that I’m wrong and there is a God, I guess I will just shrug and say, “Hey, God, I did my best, and I was basically a good guy, so I hope you let me in.” It’s a cute approach, and I’ve heard it from atheist friends before. This most recent occasion, however, made me feel uncomfortable, because I realized that underlying the comment is a certain image of what God is like.

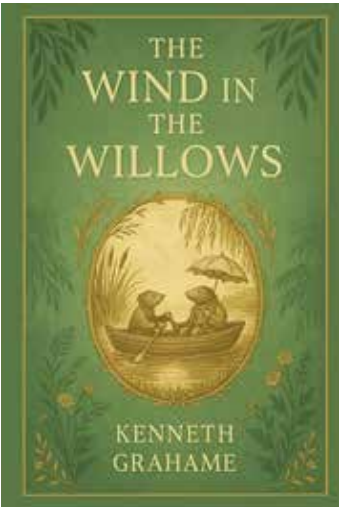
Perhaps God is like a gentle old grandfather who indulges his grandchildren’s every whim? (I am a good example of this.) Perhaps God is a super-intelligent, middle-class being rather like us, and as tolerant of

human shortcomings as we try to be—only more so? You can see how the atheist’s preconceptions about God shape what he hopes will be his approach to God—and God’s response to him—on the last day.

But what if he is wrong? The traditional Christian belief is neither the fond, foolish old grandfather, nor the tolerant, middle-class Canadian who is just a smarter version of ourselves. There is a phrase repeated many times in the Bible that should give us pause when we think of God. That phrase is “the fear of the Lord,” which occurs nearly a hundred times in the Bible.

The most usual way to explain this is to say that it just means respect for God, and that’s not a bad beginning. But it’s not enough. After all, I try to respect other human beings. I acknowledge that their value to God is precisely the same as mine. I acknowledge that their role in this world is no less important than my own. Obviously, respect is a good thing, since it creates the potential for a relationship—but in itself it does not create a relationship.

So that cannot be what is meant by “the fear of the



Lord”—merely allowing space in our lives for God to exist—allowing God to get on with his business while we get on with ours. Respect may be a good foundation for love, but this hardly counts as loving the Lord your God “with all your heart and soul, mind and strength.” That’s a lot stronger than simple respect.

Of course, we don’t want to go to the extreme of saying that we fear God because God is all-powerful: God gets mad at evil, and unless we give up on sin, God will punish us, so we better fear him and shape up. That’s hardly a basis for love, either.

Is there another way to think about this? I think there is, and it is to be found in a surprising place—a children’s story.

Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* was a much-loved staple of my childhood reading—and I still have the battered old hardback version I was weaned on, which once belonged to my mother, and which she also loved.

There is a chapter in there—it’s called “The Piper at the Gates of Dawn”—which I used to find puzzling as a child. Apparently, adults have also found it puzzling because I have come across more recent editions which have the temerity to omit it! But to me, puzzling simply means we need to take time to think about it—not that we ignore it.

In this chapter, the Rat and the Mole are helping to look for Portly, a lost baby otter. They row up and down the river, searching all night with no success. Then at dawn, as the sun is rising behind a mist, they hear a faint music. “Such music,” says Rat, “I never dreamed of, and the call in it is stronger even than the music is sweet! Row on, Mole, row! For the music and the call must be for us.” They come across an island in the river, and realize this is where the mysterious music is coming from. “This,” says Rat, “is the place of my song-dream, the place the music

played to me. ... Here, in this holy place, here if anywhere, surely we shall find Him!”

They approach cautiously and, to their amazement, find the baby otter, safe and sleeping—between the hooves of the great god Pan, who has been summoning them by playing his pan pipes. How do they react?

“Rat!” Mole found breath to whisper, shaking. “Are you afraid?”

“Afraid?” murmured the Rat, his eyes shining with unutterable love. “Afraid! Of HIM? O, never, never! And yet—and yet—O, Mole, I am afraid!”

Then the two animals, crouching to the earth, bowed their heads and did worship.

Kenneth Grahame understood something about what God is really like. He understood what is meant by the fear of the Lord, what it feels like, why it is irresistible when we grasp something of what God is truly like. It is not the terror of a violent God, but neither is it merely the respect we offer to another human being. God is beyond all that—and maybe such a reality can be conveyed only by poetic fiction like Graham’s. “The fear of the Lord” is a gift.

Climate Justice Niagara

How does your garden grow?

SUE CARSON

Since 2022, Climate Justice Niagara has been recognizing the gardens that our parishes are carefully maintaining around the diocese. Certificates have been created and presented to over 20 parishes, and we know there are many more that we don’t know about.

Please contact Deirdre, Sue, or Bruce if you would like to tell us about your church garden. We are especially reaching out to those who have created rain, pollinator, or vegetable gardens. And there is a special certificate for a children’s garden.

Once we have learned about the hard work that gardeners have been doing at your parish, we will arrange for a member of Climate Justice Niagara to visit one Sunday to recognize and thank them.

Taking care of the earth and following the 5th Mark of Mission needs to be recognized, so please contact one of us so that we can start the process of acknowledging the amazing work that is carried out at your parish.

- Sue Carson: d.carson@sympatico.ca
- Deirdre Pike, diocesan justice and outreach program consultant: deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca
- Bruce Mackenzie, chair: climatejustice@niagaraanglican.ca



Above: Checking the tomato plants in the garden at St. Michael’s Hamilton



Left: Showing off the raised garden bed at St. Aiden’s Oakville.

Queenston Quilts in Pews:

Celebrating Artistry and Preserving History at St. Saviour’s

JANE RUSCH

This October, St. Saviour – The Brock Memorial Church in Queenston will welcome visitors to Queenston Quilts in Pews, a vibrant showcase of quilted artistry set within one of Niagara’s most historically significant Anglican churches. The event “celebrates the artistry of local makers while raising vital funds to preserve our Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake designated heritage church”, bringing together creativity, community, and stewardship in a single uplifting weekend.

A Church Steeped in Heritage

St. Saviour’s is more than a picturesque parish church—it is a living monument to Niagara’s past. Dedicated in 1879 to honour Major General Sir Isaac Brock, the church “stands as a symbol of resilience, remembrance, and community spirit”. Its roots reach back to the late 18th century, when the first worshipping community formed in Queenston. The permanent church, built in the mid 19th century and later renamed St. Saviour – The Brock Memorial Church, has been lovingly maintained by generations of parishioners “for the benefit of neighbours and visitors”.

The church is also home to a remarkable collection of stained-glass windows, each reflecting deep ties to local history. Among them, the Brock Memorial Window, installed in 1881, is especially striking. Gifted by the York Pioneer and Historical Society, it honours the York Volunteers who fought under Brock at Queenston Heights. Its “intricate details—from the Brock coat of arms to the banners, cannons, and provincial shields—make it one of St. Saviour’s most striking tributes to courage and history.”

Funds raised through the exhibit directly support the

ongoing preservation of this treasured site, ensuring its beauty and legacy endure for future generations.

Featuring the Quilted Works of the Fabrigettes

At the heart of the exhibit are the Fabrigettes—seven talented quiltmakers from the Niagara region who will present an extraordinary collection of 70 quilts inside the church. They are “passionate about their craft and welcome the opportunity to demonstrate the quilts that they will be exhibiting,” offering visitors a rare chance to experience the breadth and brilliance of their work.

Among the featured pieces is *Like A Girl*, a modern, award-winning quilt “bursting with confidence, precision, and unapologetic energy”. Celebrated for its bold lettering and empowering message, the quilt captured the Judges’ Choice Award at QuiltCon 2020 and continues to inspire viewers with its call to rethink what it means to “do anything like a girl”.

Another highlight is *Wowza*, a bold improv style quilt collaboratively created by five current members of the Fabrigettes between 2024 and 2025. This “vibrant work captures the spontaneity, trust, and creative chemistry that define the group” and will serve as one of the centrepiece displays of the exhibit.

Visitors can learn more about each quilter and explore the stories behind their work by scanning the event’s QR code, which links to the Fabrigettes’ full collection of artist bios.



The Brock memorial window is an integral part of the history of the parish.

More to Enjoy

This two-day exhibit also features a craft and vendor sale in the church hall, plus a Saturday-morning bake sale. Tickets are \$5 at the door, or five for \$20 during early-bird sales from August 20 to September 25. Come see Queenston Quilts in Pews — a breathtaking feast for the eyes that you truly won’t want to miss.

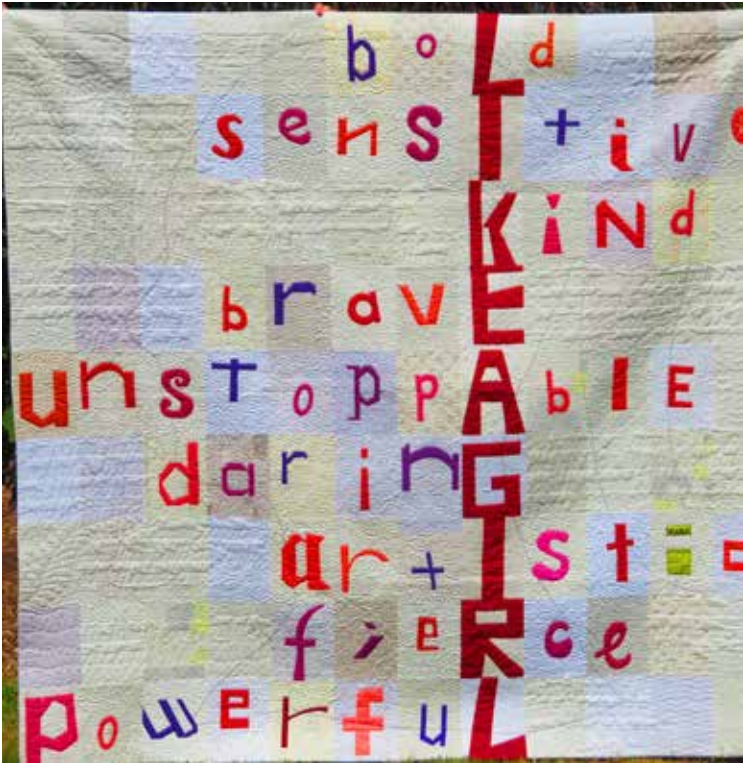
Event Details

Friday, October 2 – 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. Saturday, October 3 – 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. St. Saviour’s Church & Hall 12 Princess Street, Queenston, ON www.StSavioursQueenston.ca/queenston-quilts-in-pews-exhibit



Wowza, a quilt by five members of the Fabrigettes quilting group in the region, will be on display during the show.

Photos: contributed by Jane Rusch



Like a Girl, an award-winning quilt, will be among the featured pieces. Quilters: Stephanie Baisley*, Lorna Costantini*, Jennifer Dyck, Effie Faubert, Dorothy Holdenmeyer*, Heather Salter, Tara McInerney*. * Marked names are current members of the Fabrigettes that will be exhibiting at the show.

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

- November – September 21
- December – October 15
- January – November 19

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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Jesus Said That?

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

What Keeps You From Your Great Commission?



Photo: Unsplash/Aarón Blanco Tejedor

THE REVEREND DR. JUDITH PAULSEN

AND JESUS CAME AND SAID TO THEM, “ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME. GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND TEACHING THEM TO OBEY EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. AND REMEMBER I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE END OF THE AGE. MATTHEW 28:18-20

Toward the end of Matthew’s Gospel, there exists a famous teaching of Jesus about a central purpose of the church. In it, he also spells out three related tasks included in that purpose. These were: to go and make disciples, to baptize, & to teach. That sounds simple enough, doesn’t it?

As Anglicans, we’re not bad at the second task, baptizing. After all, crafting beautiful liturgies and administering sacraments are two of our strengths. We’re also not too bad at the third task of teaching, although we sometimes assume that people already know the basics of Christianity, which is increasingly not the case. But it’s really the first task mentioned in the Great Commission that we Anglicans have the most trouble with: go and make

disciples.

This first task reminds me a little of an e-mail I once received. The email directed me to “log into your Portico account and proceed with the steps for registration”. There were several problems with this directive. I didn’t have a Portico account, I didn’t know what a Portico account was, and I had no idea how to get a Portico account. And if I did manage to get one, I was pretty sure that logging in was trickier than it sounded. In other words, there was information missing!

I think that many Christians feel like this about The Great Commission’s directive to “Go and make disciples”. Is that all the information we get, Jesus? Yes, it sounds simple enough. But how exactly does one do this?

How do we make disciples of people that wouldn’t dream of coming into a church? How do we make disciples of people who are suspicious of institutions in general, and of the Church in particular?

How do we make disciples of people caught on a treadmill of such hectic lives that they barely have time to talk to their spouse and kids about who is going where and doing what, let alone talk about the existence of God, who Jesus is, or whether they can know the love of God for themselves?

How do we make disciples of people who don’t have any

interest whatsoever in being disciples? History is full of examples of the wreckage that has come from coercive and manipulative conversions.

“Lord! There seems to be some information missing here!”

Now, add to this situation the fact that for the past several hundred years ‘making disciples’ was something we Anglicans thought happened in far-off places. We could rely on immigration and our privileged position in Canadian society to keep our churches comfortably full. We didn’t need to ‘go and make disciples’. Did we? People came to us.

Well, of course, all of that has changed.

But there is something that hasn’t changed; the good news of God’s love for this tired, broken old world, and for our tired, broken old selves. As churches empty and competing spiritualities arise, we find ourselves again hearing Jesus’ command to ‘go and make disciples, baptizing and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you’. How can we respond to this in our present context?

Here are a few suggestions to help you join in the Commission that Jesus has given all of us.

1. Begin by praying. Ask God to show you the people in your life who need a word of hope and ask him to give you the right words to say at the right time.

2. Next, listen and learn. Who are the people in your neighbourhood? What stories shape their view of the world and themselves? How might the good news of God speak to their challenges, questions, and longings? And if you don’t yet know many non-Christians, join a book club, a Tai Chi class, a running group, a climbing gym, or a photography club. Invite a colleague or a neighbour to meet for a coffee. Build authentic relationships with people outside the church.
3. Then, let them know, by your words and deeds, your allegiance as a follower of Jesus. What is the evidence in your life that you follow a different Lord, and a way of life that is life-giving? Let people in your life know why Jesus is worth following. Look for practical ways to love people. Let them know that you’ll be praying for them. Share honestly about why you pray, read Scripture, and worship. Let them know what you find most compelling about Jesus. Reflect on times when your faith made a difference in your life and the moments when you were especially aware of God’s comfort, correction, or peace. Be ready to share those stories. People are much more ready to hear them than we assume. Making disciples today hap-

pens the same way it has always happened: by God calling people to himself and by Christians sharing the faith with those people. And although not everyone who hears about Jesus may become disciples, some will, and they will be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and begin to learn how to live the life of a Christian.

The Great Commission is for all of us. And while we may feel that Jesus was a little short on instructions, let’s remember that we can ask him for his guidance. Let’s also remember the most important part of this scripture, the promise that, in all his vast authority, power, and grace, Jesus himself will be right alongside us in this mission, even to the end of the age.

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