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HURON CHURCH NEWS

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Hoping for more sponsored refugees to arrive in 2021

In 2020, 18 refugee families (30 individuals) whose sponsorship was submitted by the Huron Refugee Committee have arrived in Canada. Travel restrictions imposed because of COVID-19 prevented many others to get their visas to come to their new home.



Only those who were issued visas before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic managed to come to Canada in 2020. Among them was a Burmese Karen family who waited for more than ten years to land on Canadian soil. One of the children had a heart condition that required a surgery before she would be cleared to fly to Canada. Read the Moo Ku Paw story on page 3.

The Huron Refugee Committee has been hard at work preparing for its 2021 refugee sponsorships.

In 2020, the Huron Refugee Committee submitted sponsorship applications to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for 137 individuals or 66 families.

Thus far, since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, the arrivals have been those who were "caught at the last minute" with visas issued but no travel arrangements.

We have also welcomed several minors who have joined their families. All the arrivals have gone well with two weeks of quarantine arranged. Guidelines for quarantine have been followed and we have several more individuals in "the wings." The total arrivals for 2020 was 18 families or 30 individuals.

Due to a very generous donation from a neighbourhood

group, the Diocese has been able to fund the sponsorship of a family of eight, (parents and six children,) who are Syrian refugees in Lebanon. They include two children with medical issues. The Refugee Committee of the parish of St. Michael and All Angels, London, will be welcoming and settling them.

The Committee is very grateful for this opportunity. It is to be hoped that soon after interviews are commenced again, they will be in process.

With the support of people across the Diocese of Huron and our dedicated volunteers, refugee sponsorship remains an active and integral ministry of our Church. Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

Monica Snow and Kyle Gascho, members of the Huron Refugee Committee.

A Story with a Heart:
See page 3

Black Christian voices coming from Cambridge, Ontario

Twenty-eight days of February have seen twenty-eight portraits of black Christians brought in an online presentation



Black Christian Voices series presented by Rev. Steve Greene:
From Tertullian and Hagar, to Anne Marie Becraft and Manche Masemola, to Peter Fenty and Desmond Tutu

By Rev. Steve Greene

Another February — another opportunity to hear the voices that have been muted for a long time!

Amidst the cold chill and the frosty ground, we have been given the opportunity to learn the names of Blacks who have contributed to the world. Be it Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler in the field of medicine. Be it Phillis Wheatley and Toni Morrison in the field of literature. Be it Julian Abele in the field of architecture.

The list is long and rich, yet how often have we thought of the Christians who have come from different countries within the continent of Africa? How often have we thought of the West Indies and the many lives and sub-cultures that have been set aside, ostracized and discounted (ie. West Indian

For centuries, the vision, voice and the inclusion of the Black body has historically been set to a simple footnote or passed over and relegated to a "minor" voice in the Canon of the Old and New Covenants.

Domestic Scheme).

It is time we pay attention to the muted voices and unseen faces who have made an indelible mark in the Scriptures. There is a litany of men and women who have formed our faith, defended the faith, taught and formed the next generation to "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

Throughout the month of February, with the support of the churches in Cambridge I serve, St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Luke's, I had a chance to

present Christian heroes.

We are gifted with stories to read, research and delve into the annals of Church History, Christianity and The Holy Scriptures. We are given the beautiful opportunity to receive the light by some impressive and incomparable people who have helped The Body of Christ heal from the many hurts and brokenness, hold onto the promises of God's redeeming love and hear the voice of the One who suffers with the marginalized.

See Page 4

It starts with a self-sacrificing hospitality...

Those who attended Synod in September or read reports in the Huron Church News since, will know that I've been speaking about four overarching priorities that will give focus to our mission and ministry over the next few years.



**BISHOP
TODD
TOWNSHEND**

As we try to shift the centre of gravity in every congregation from operations to renewal and new creation, I believe we will better reveal the marks of Christian mission by becoming a more: learning church, just church, diverse church, "new" church.

Of those four categories, I have heard feedback that the least understood area relates to what I mean by "a more diverse church."

The church has an opportunity to a give powerful witness to society by thinking and speaking about what diversity actually means in light of the



Gospel. A starting point for this (admittedly huge) topic is found in our part of creation—in the natural world itself. There is an inherent diversity in God's creation. However, looking at the many tragic conflicts of human existence, one might observe that "we seem to be living in a world at war with its own diversity."

Beyond and exceeding what we can learn by looking at the natural world is the Revelation found in the scriptures and in Christian theological traditions. It's not an "anything goes" embrace of every possibility but, instead, we find that there is a wideness to God's design, God's hospitality, and God's mercy.

What I'm suggesting is that in addition to our wonderful inherited religious and cultural

traditions it may be time to raise our eyes to the horizon to see if the global Anglican world has other traditions that may be incorporated into our life. This is crucial contextual work in an ever-changing and diversifying Southwestern Ontario.

At one level, this may be nothing more than adding a little variety to a stale pattern of language, speech, music, and art—it may allow the Good News to be heard afresh! At a deeper level, this is a summons to seriously question some of our assumptions about "difference" and to redraw boundaries of what is "us". We need to be alert to how Jesus defines "us".

I've heard it said that, globally, there about ten basic patterns to authentic Anglican life—ten "forms" of Anglican-

ism. We know about three of them. Some of us just know one. This call to a more diverse church is a call to make some space for difference. To make space for someone else's authentic way of being Anglican.

It starts with a self-sacrificing hospitality. It opens room for God to speak and heal and love. It stretches us and makes our lives larger. In the end, I believe that we will find that we really didn't have to leave anything important behind. We will have gained whole new worlds.

This may sound like a bit of dreaming in the middle of a pandemic that has us stuck in various kinds of isolation. If so, it's a dream that keeps me living in hope.

+Todd

Celtic Daily Prayer: I cannot speak unless You loose my tongue

By Rev. Elise Chambers

Prayer can be comforting. Prayer can be difficult. Prayer can enable us. Prayer can remind us.

Having a regular prayer life is so important and is unique to each of us. I pray at various times throughout the day. Sometimes I pray from my heart; sometimes I look to others' writings. This is often when I am struggling with something.

This past year has been difficult – the pandemic has put to light the many ways that we are oblivious to those near us and those around the world. My prayer life is more important to me now than ever.

One of my favorite 'go to' devotionals is "Celtic Daily Prayer". I share with you one of my favorite sections:

*I cannot speak,
unless You loose my tongue;
I only stammer,
and I speak uncertainly;
but if You touch my mouth,
my Lord,
Then I will sing the story
of Your wonders.*

*Teach me to hear that story,
through each person,
to cradle a sense of wonder
in their life,
to honour the hard-earned wisdom*

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

*of their sufferings,
to waken their joy
that the King of all Kings
stoops down
to wash their feet,
and looking up
into their face says,
'I know, I understand.'*

*This world has become
a world of broken dreams
where dreamers are hard to find
and friends are few.*

*Lord, be the gatherer of our
dreams.*

*You set the countless stars in place,
and found room for each of them
to shine.*

*You listen to us in Your heav-
en-bright hall.*

*Open our mouths to tell our tales
of wonder.*

*Teach us again the greatest story ever:
the One who made the worlds
became a little helpless child,
then grew to be a carpenter
with deep, far-seeing eyes.*

*In time, the Carpenter began to
travel,*

*in every village challenging the
people*

to leave behind their selfish ways,

*be washed in living water,
and let God be their King.*

*The ordinary people crowded
round Him,
frightened to miss
a word that He was speaking,
bringing their friends, their chil-
dren,*

*all the sick and tired,
so everyone could meet Him,
everyone be touched and given life.*

*Some religious people were embar-
rassed
-they did not like the company He
kept,
and never knew just what He
would do next.*

*He said:
'How dare you wrap God up
in good behaviour,
and tell the poor that they
should be like you?*

*How can you live at ease
with riches and success,
while those I love go hungry
and are oppressed?*

*It really is for such a time as this
that I was given breath.'*

*His words were dangerous,
not safe or tidy.*

In secret His opponents said:



*'It surely would be better that
one person die.'*

*'I think that would be better,
if He could.'*

*Expediency would be the very
death of him.*

*He died because they thought it
might be good.*

*You died that we might be forgiv-
en,*

*Lord; but that was not the end.
You plundered death,
And made its jailhouse shudder
-strode into life
to meet your startled friends.*

*I have a dream
that all the world will meet You,
and know you Jesus,
in Your living power,
that someday soon
all people everywhere will hear
Your story,
and hear it in a way they under-
stand.*

*I cannot speak,
Unless You loose my tongue;
I only stammer,
and I speak uncertainly;
but if You touch my mouth,
my Lord,
then I will sing the story
of Your wonders.*

(From "Prayers about becom-
ing a voice for those who have
no voice")

Rev'd Elise Chambers is an AFP
executive and the rector of the
Parish of Southern Trinity.

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A story with a heart: Moo Ku Paw's long journey to Canada

By Jane Townshend

For more than ten long years, the family of Moo Saw waited for any sign of hope that their lives would change and their children could finally plan a future. And then, in the middle of a pandemic, that hope arrived. They received their tickets to come to Canada as Burmese Karen refugees and then newcomers once they landed on Canadian soil. Hope was finally theirs!

It was a very long ten years with at least three other flights arranged but then at the last minute cancelled because of health concerns. The last denial came in August 2018. Moo Saw's eldest daughter, who was 12 at the time, had a heart condition.

The hope was that we could get her here and then get her the surgery that she needed. Plans were even in place. The little girl, Moo Ku Paw, was to travel with a medical escort who would monitor her but when she went for the final check up, she was deemed too fragile to travel.

The feeling from the flurry of emails between the family here, the Leamington Area Ecumenical Refugee Committee (LAERC, their sponsoring group), and us was of sheer sadness for this family. Next came the reality of the choice the government gave us: we could drop the case and give up our hope for them to come or find another way.

Elizabeth Walton (who was chairperson of the Huron Refugee Committee when the application went in) would not let that happen. At that point, she had waited eight years for the family and had periodically quietly reminded the government of this family and kept them in the line.

The next thing we heard was that the only hope was that



Ten years of waiting, a heart surgery, and two weeks of quarantine: Moo Ku Paw on the porch of her Canadian home.

Moo Ku Paw could get heart surgery in Thailand and that would allow her to come to Canada after she healed. The cost was \$10,000 and a decision had to be made within 48 hours. That was the hope that we needed.

The family overseas sent a heart wrenching video of Moo Ku Paw dancing in their shelter in Thailand trying to convince anyone out there that her life was worth saving. As chairperson, I see many photos of the consequences of war as people plead for sponsorship, but this clip brought me to tears as this child knew that she was both the problem and the hope as she looked in the camera and showed she was still worthy.

The next day, after a conversation with Archdeacon Tanya

Phibbs and Bishop Linda (now Archbishop Linda), the Diocese of Huron put out a special appeal which lasted less than four hours. I think it was the shortest appeal ever and one that actually had to be cut off. We had surpassed our \$10,000! The surgery in Thailand was a success.

Fast forward two years and Moo Ku Paw, her mother, father three siblings and her grandma and grandpa stepped off the plane in Windsor Ontario on October 15. They were greeted, distantly, by Wilma Lamb-Stewart (chair of LAERC and a member of the United Church), and a family member who lives in Leamington.

LAERC, of which St. John's Anglican is a member, had been busy preparing for this moment for the past three

weeks. During COVID-19, very few newcomers are being allowed into Canada, but since the family already had their flight cancelled just as the first lockdown in Canada occurred, they have been allowed to enter Canada with a strict quarantine in place.

There were no hugs or touching. People could only hug with empty arms and wave. Taxi vans were ordered so that the family could sit in the back seat of the vans with two metres between the drivers, behind plexiglass. The family here and Wilma traveled behind in a vehicle.

For two weeks the Moo Saws stayed in the house of family members while the family here moved into a bed and breakfast. It was not easy getting food to and from the family but with the determination of LAERC's amazing volunteers and the Karen community in Leamington the family emerged out of their quarantine healthy.

Moo Ku Paw has since seen a paediatrician and received a good report. She now will head to London for further tests, but she looks very healthy and strong. Your monies will help her and her family to make these trips.

Wilma Lamb-Stewart is amazed by the community response in Leamington. People who have heard of the family have offered many things. LAERC has rented a large house so that they can all stay together and they don't have to be separated.

Back in November, the younger children Kue Moo Wah, Cher Ku Say and Ku Moo Hser started school for the first time. There will be lots of challenges but the family is surrounded by love and support of their family, the Karen community and their new LAERC family.

Elizabeth Walton has now seen her last case arrive and you can tell that this family holds a very special place in her heart. She is looking forward to the big party when the pandemic is over!

In her last email Wilma wrote:

"The Leamington Karen Community has welcomed the new family via phone calls, providing all the food during the quarantine time and they are looking forward to introducing them to things like Point Pelee National Park, Colasanti's, Theisen's Apples and other local places to enjoy, when we have this pandemic and restrictions behind us.

When the kids get home from school, they quietly take out their crayons and paper and make a picture and have some rice and fruit to eat. The whole house feels warm and safe and quiet. Good food smells waft from the kitchen no matter when you go there. All the adults take care of the children and cook.

The adults have learned to use the kitchen stove, are amazed at the wonders of a fridge, and enjoy how easy and fast it is to get clean clothes with their washer and dryer. They're learning about how to hang up clothes, and the joys of visiting with friends left behind in the refugee camp in Thailand, with internet.

Since the family came out of quarantine, we have been blessed with record-setting warm weather and sunny days. A nice introduction to life in Canada. When winter arrives, there will be a whole new world to learn about.

Thank you, Huron, for turning hope into a reality!"

Jane Townshend is the Chairperson of the Diocese of Huron Refugee Committee.



Finally in their new home: Moo Ku Paw and her family members in their Leamington house on November 2, 2020. The Leamington Area Ecumenical Refugee Committee rented a large house so that they can all stay together.

'The funds were raised within 24 hours - exactly what I was expecting'

When people ask me what I love about my job, one of the things I tell them is that I get to help make the world a better place. One of the ways I do that is through the support I give to our Refugee Committee. During the four years I have worked at Huron Church House, I have met newly-arrived refugees who are nervous, but eager to begin their new lives in the safety of Canada. I have met children who are wide-eyed at their first glimpse of snow.

Two years ago, our Refugee Committee was presented with a challenge... a refugee family with a child who required surgery before she would be cleared to travel to Canada. The timeline was incredibly tight, and frankly, I doubt that the Canadian government thought it would be possible for the Refugee Committee to raise the necessary funds to pay for the surgery in time.

An email appeal was sent out to the Diocese on August 23, 2018, and the people of Huron answered the call. My phone was constantly ringing with people calling to make donations, and I responded to many voice mails from people who had called whilst I was on the line with another donor. The necessary funds, and then some, were raised within 24 hours. To call the response heart-warming would be an understatement. Was I surprised by the quick response to the appeal, and the generosity of the people of the Diocese of Huron? In a word, no. It was exactly what I was expecting.

Flash-forward to October 2020... It was my last day of work before leaving for my vacation. I received an email from Jane, telling me that the Ku Paw family had arrived, and that some of the funds that had been raised in that appeal would be needed to help prepare and sanitize the house that they would be living in. What wonderful news with which to start my vacation!

"Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine."

Terri Ellison, Huron Church House

'I know a change gonna come...'

From Page 1

I wanted to initiate this ministry rooted in our Bishop's charge because we are called "to be a new, learning, diverse and just church."

We can only know and understand the "other voice" by walking beside them, actively listening, celebrating in their moments of joy and crying in their moments of grief and despair.

The Bible teaches and looks to the multiethnic fellowship within the people of God (Acts 2:1-13).

Unfortunately, for centuries, the vision, voice and the inclusion of the Black body has historically been set to a simple footnote or passed over and relegated to a "minor" voice in the Canon of the Old



February 5 featured Mahalia Jackson on Rev. Steve's "Black Christian Voices". Known as the "Queen of Gospel", Mahalia was a prominent theologian and the encourager to Dr. King to preach the "I Have A Dream" sermon on the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

and New Covenants (ie. Hagar, Manasseh and Ephraim, Zipporah, Simon of Cyrene and the Ethiopian eunuch).

I was taught that Jesus hears and holds the people of ethnicity (Revelation 7:9-10) and John highlights the richness of diver-

sity and that the very diversity of cultures and peoples is the manifestation of God's glory.

I have been taught (thanks Mom and Granny) that the Holy One's eschatological and everlasting vision for the reconciliation of all things requires my blackness and my daughter's First Nations' identity (for example).

I have been taught that colour-blindness ("I don't see your colour Steve") is "sub-biblical". It falls short of the glory of God and the fundamental lie that Christianity is "the white man's religion" is historically wrong, vehemently sinful and has poisoned the hearts and minds of many black people who hunger food from the Bread of Life!

I was honoured to present

twenty-eight (28) pivotal and critical people. Many you may know, some you will not and others who will help us deepen our ecclesial interpretation, historical and theological framework to faithfully walk into a better and hope-filled future!

Thank you all for being part of this incredible journey and I hope the names and stories of Josephine Bakhita, Rev. Absalom Jones, Amma Syncletica and many, many others will help us walk together.

This journey will help us listen to each others' stories and faithfully serve one another, profess the Good News and bear our Lord's fruits for the world to see and receive.

Rev. Steve Greene is the rector of . St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Luke's churches, Cambridge.

Stewardship also means letting go

By Rev. Raymond Hodgson

Stewardship homilies/articles/workshops can be unpleasant experiences for the writer/presenter. There are times when I'm convinced that I can hear an audible sigh whenever stewardship is mentioned. What now, what more, how am I not doing/giving enough? This isn't about that, so relax.

Stewardship isn't always, or even mostly, about more. There are times when it is supposed to be about different; there are times when it is supposed to be about less. And the more that I think and pray about where this time of pandemic has led us, the more I am convinced that this is precisely one of those times.

More is not always better. One of the important aspects of Sabbath is that it takes us out of the need to be productive, and helps us to recognize our value as separate from our ability to do work. Our true value is con-



nected to our relationship with God — not making, not doing, not earning.

Programs and activities have a way of taking on lives of their own. "We have the X Dinner every year during October, and the Y Bazaar in November, and the Z Tea each January..." — insert your own names and activities, and I think that you'll be able to identify a pattern of activities that has shaped our parish lives. And these have been wonderful events and have built relationships and

meaning into our communities.

Not having been able to follow that pattern for a full year allows us a special opportunity to ask if these activities still serve God's People and God's Mission in this time. What does not always get considered in our all too frantic efforts to maintain these traditions (do it three times, and "we've always done it that way" becomes our mantra) is that sometimes God calls us to set things down. Instead of "who's going to organize the bazaar?" it becomes

Stewardship isn't always, or even mostly, about more. There are times when it is supposed to be about different; there are times when it is supposed to be about less.

"who decides not to have a bazaar?" and "what are we going to do instead?" Sometimes good stewardship means redirecting the time, effort, and resources towards new things, new ministries, new ways of serving.

For everything there is a season... (Ecclesiastes 3)

In the midst of the grief and the anxiety, there is also anticipation. I am curious about what new things will arise when we give ourselves permission to respond faithfully with the things that God has entrusted to us without carrying the burden of "we've always done it that way". Because now we haven't. Maybe the X Dinner becomes meals for shut-ins

and the Y Bazaar becomes lap blankets for dialysis patients, while the Z Tea remains what it always has been. Or some other combination of old and new arises. All wonderful ways for the community to gather and share and serve.

We don't know where God is calling us next. But I am confident that God continues to call us to use our time, talents, and treasure in new and creative ways. I'm looking forward to what comes next.

Rev. Raymond Hodgson is a member of the Diocesan Stewardship Committee and the rector of St. Bartholomew's, Sarnia.

London Deanery: a successful Advent outreach effort during the pandemic

Anglican churches in London and surrounding area raised almost \$35,000 for InDwell to help providing affordable housing with on-site support

By Rev. Patricia Allison

In 2020, the London Deanery committed to providing a study series in Advent every year, with a focused outreach project attached to it.

The outreach project for Advent 2020 was to raise money for InDwell, a group which is doing great work in London to help address the problem of providing affordable homes, with on-site support, for those

who are traditionally hard to house. At the end of the process, the Deanery had collected a little under \$35,000 to send to InDwell, making this first Advent program a great success.

It is important that the project is not just about fund-raising; it also includes an opportunity for members of parishes, and anyone else who is interested, to participate in discussions, to hear a renowned speaker, and to dig deeply into issues of faith

and the living of the Christian life. There were a total of 196 registrations, which, allowing for those instances where there was more than one person, gave a total of more like 220 people participating in the series. Not all of them were in the London area, and this, of course, is one of the great advantages of a video-based series: participants from other deaneries, other dioceses, and even other countries are able to join in.

The speaker, Nadia Bolz-Weber, is a widely-published Lutheran pastor and theologian, with an energetic and sometimes controversial style. Conversations were lively and far-reaching. In the final session, representatives from InDwell made a presentation about their work, and the practical steps that can be taken to help those who are hard to house.

With this success behind them, the Deanery is commit-

ted to offering at least two video-conference sessions every year, including both Advent and Lent, and the Advent sessions will focus on awareness of, and fund-raising for a specific local charity.

Watch for more successes in the future!

Rev. Patricia Allison is the rector at St. George's, Middlesex Centre, Deanery of London.

'I wasn't always like this...'

By Rev. Andrew Wilson

A month ago, someone with all they owned was waiting by the church quietly. They had heard about our Wednesday meal, and waited quietly and patiently for four o'clock to come around.

Deacon Debbie had spoken to him, I was elsewhere that day. I received an email from Alissa alerting the two of us to the person.

A word about Alissa. Our work as a community on the problem of homelessness in Leamington determined we needed a coordinator, so South Essex Community Council on everyone's behalf, made a successful application for a Trillium grant for one year's salary. She is fabulous and hit the ground running, pulling together all the pieces we, the churches and town, had collected.

A neighbour who had spoken to her learned about the work going on, and sent her a photo of our new friend – and Alissa sent it to us. This opened a wonderful conversation with the neighbour.

The next day, our friend was in a tent on our lawn. I'll correct that to half a tent – the modern two-piece design you may be familiar with is mesh on top with a cover over that, except the cover was missing and a too small tarp was substituted. Wind and rain made a mess of it.



"Not in my backyard". The problem is still a problem, you just no longer have to see it: Leamington, Ontario, 2021

As with our last friend (see HCC for that story), I moved him to the shed and all groups came together to find (non-existent) housing. The OPP and workers checked on their welfare. I was so moved by their care and compassion for his wellbeing.

I tried the local MPP office, and I received more compassion as she made calls to the same people as we had, for someone who is unreliable in a degree you may not fathom. Despite the ability to feed, clothe and secure drugs (sorry, this is the truth), they cannot turn up or stay in one place to talk to the nurse practitioner or housing coordinator. As before, we could offer our shed which is warmer and off the ground so we could try help change this situation.

While services are available, they are difficult to navigate. Loss of identification, movement and the location of services, especially in a small town makes this difficult. The homeless are mistrusting, having been let down many times and treated badly.

Depending on where you are, you may be expected to move an hour or more from your hometown, away from the people you know, the territory you understand. I picture a movie scene we have all seen – it's dark, strange people coming out of darker doorways. There is not single number to call to get into a place, onto assistance if needed, and so on. I cannot imagine how difficult this is to navigate if you are scared, struggling with mental health or on substances. I will

say, the agents work very, very hard and constantly follow up – the housing agent came by today, but our friend was not here, so he called me to leave a message. We are all trying. I do not give justice to all the people who are working together to make changes, and to simply help people where they are.

So, what can you do? If your area has services you know of, call them. Warm clothing, socks, and hats, can openers, pull top cans, even just a large triple-triple will make their day! What I learned – time and day is a problem: I bought a clock for the window so people can give access. I learned we need to keep bottled water in the food cupboard we installed outside. Travel mugs and bottles are good too. Talk to your local police – they carry things in their cars as they check up on people. I learned there is nowhere to go to the bathroom or wash your hands.

Much of this is worse now with the lockdown. Public restrooms are mostly a thing of the past, or are closed.

Feel free to talk to local business owners about who they see and what they perceive is needed, recognize their concerns but remember God's children.

This is what Alissa did and she learned a lot quickly. Contact your MPP and MP, the only thing lacking is "political

will and money" (I quote a homelessness symposium from two years ago.)

I can also quote more than one politician (or neighbour) who ask, "why can't they just move." Read that is NIMBY ("Not in my backyard") as the problem is still a problem, you just no longer have to see it. God sees it. It is okay to talk to the person, ask them how they are, what their name is. They are so often invisible unless someone wants them to move along. Ultimately, these are children of God – children in an unbelievably bad place.

I wanted to tell you more of our friends' story, but I think I have enough from simply talking. I wanted to include a picture, but one of the workers said how offensive that was, how someone took a photograph of someone at their lowest point. My response was: is this not our lowest point? So, instead of a close up of the person, I include their picture being "in our backyard", literally. And, as a reminder, one sentence I heard from our friend, the person at their lowest point: "I wasn't always like this, you know."

I was hungry, and you fed me, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. That is our calling. That is the first step.

Rev. Andrew Wilson is the rector of St. John the Evangelist, Leamington.



Welcome to wonder!



Swim and walk along the beautiful Lake Huron shore. Run across grassy fields. Hide and play amongst the trees. Marvel at the starry night sky. Bask in the golden light of a sunset. Fall in love with creation and be inspired to take care of Earth, our island home. Stand shoulder to shoulder with friends both old and new, feet planted on the ground of this most beautiful place, arms outstretched around the world!

Camp is waiting for you to join the fun!

Online registration is open www.camphuron.ca

Plans for our 75th season are underway. As long-time members of the Ontario Camps Association we are blessed to have camp professionals from the province working tirelessly with government and health officials in order to create a road map for the safe re-opening of overnight summer camps in 2021. We are very hopeful that we will once again gather at the camp this summer. We will continue to build our programs around worship, formation and the raising up of caring and compassionate leaders as we immerse campers in the wonder and beauty of God's creation.

For more information, please call Director, Rev'd Canon Gerry Adam 519-434-6893 ext 217 or email contact@camphuron.ca

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

Walking with Jesus during His 40 days of trials

At the time this article is written our church doors are once again closed. Unfortunately, we will be unable to worship and celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus in church. In this uncertain time, we may possibly be deprived of celebrating a second Easter in church as well as walking through Lent together.

I was deeply disturbed and upset when Premier Ford closed church doors claiming churches are nonessential. It makes me wonder if he is a Christian or a believer. At this time of the Covid-19 it is crucial that we be able to worship in unity to support each other. Now more than ever. So many people are experiencing Covid-19 depression and we need the fellowship of support.

Yes, we can pray to our Lord individually, but we are missing the fellowship and unity which



is so obviously absent. We can fast and deny ourselves of food and other things we love as a sacrifice to the Lord, but it is not the same as when we do it together to lift the spirits of each other. I pray won't have to

be denied celebrating a second consecutive Easter together.

We may possibly have to walk through Lent without the spiritual guidance we would normally have, but doing so could also strengthen our

faith. We obviously need our faith nowhere than ever. Ash Wednesday is on February 17th and Easter is on April 4th 2021. May we walk with Jesus during His 40 days of trials, fasting and temptations by Satan. May we be granted His strength, endurance, love, peace, hope and joy. May we always remember the pain He suffered and the blood He shed. He suffered death, His sacrifice of His life for us sinners to be forgiven.

Can you imagine the emotional torture Jesus went through prior to His crucifixion? I believe we would have broken and given into Satan.

Could we have suffered the pain of being nailed to the cross? An emphatic NO comes to my mind.

We don't have that kind of physical or emotional strength. Jesus gave up His life to erase our sins and He was resurrected to prove God's power and

love for His only Son and us as well.

We cannot begin to fathom the depth of God's love for us. We may think we doubt we are wrong. Could we regularly and continually keep forgiving those who habitually hurt or harm us or mentally physically? Maybe we could to a point. Could we completely forget and forgive without holding a grudge and remembering the past hurt? Have you submitted your will to God as Jesus did? He was tormented and prayed to have His crucifixion removed, but He also said, "Father, your will be done not mine".

Look how God rewarded Him! May you receive God's blessing this Easter. May He keep you healthy and safe.

PRAISE GOD!

Barbara Jackson, ACW
Diocesan Council President

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

Due to the continuing spread of COVID 19, the 24th April 2021 A.C.W. Annual Conference by "ZOOM"

The A.C.W. Executive will continue to review the COVID concerns and will consider a need of a further postponement.

We thank all the women in our churches for their prayers and consideration in these trying time.

Letters to the Editor

"My Valentine: Freedoms built on the lives of those who came before me", Huron Church News, February 2021, p. 5

I would like to express my appreciation for Br. Markides eloquent description of a simple yet significant day spent together with family, and his acknowledgment of the courage of all those who fought (and often suffered) to bring us to this time of recognition of the innate equality of love that knows no barriers.

It is truly a balm for those of us who have and still struggle to bring to light the acceptance and even celebration of our relationships both in society and in the church. As someone who witnessed firsthand the heartbreak of GS 2019, I am refreshed by this sincere and delightful article re-affirming the validity, and yes holiness, of all our lives and loves.

Mark Davies, B.Th., M.A., C.A.L.L. (he, him, his), Windsor, ON

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Retirement

Bishop Townshend accepted the request of The Reverend Canon Sue Paulton to retire, effective December 31, 2020.

Canon Sue was ordained a deacon November 8, 1998 and a priest May 27, 2004. She served the parishes of St. David's, Windsor, Church of the Ascension, Windsor; St. Luke-in-the-Fields, Windsor, St. Barnabas' Church, Windsor, St. Mark's, Windsor, St. David and St. Mark's, Windsor and St. Andrew's, LaSalle. Canon Sue also served on the Bishop's Chaplain Committee, the Parish Education Committee, the Deacons' Board, the Corporation of Canterbury College and as a Congregational Coach and as the Regional Dean of Essex. She was named a Canon of the Cathedral on May 27, 2012. Canon Sue will be honoured with the other retirees at Synod.

Bishop Townshend accepted the request of The Venerable Megan Collings-Moore to retire as the Chaplain, Renison University College, as Anglican Chaplain to the University of Waterloo and Sir Wilfred Laurier University and as the Incumbent of St. Bede's Chapel, effective September 30, 2021.

Archdeacon Megan was ordained a deacon on November 20, 1998 and priested June 22, 1999. She served the parishes of All Saints', Woodstock and Epiphany, Woodstock before being appointed to Renison College. Archdeacon Megan has served on the Diocesan Council, the Children's Festival Committee, the Diocesan Sub-Council, the Evangelism Resource group, the Nominating Committee, the Postulancy Board, the Renewal Committee, the Bishop's Clergy Conference Planning Committee and Monica's Place Board. She has served as the Regional Dean of Oxford and was named a Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral in May 2007. On October 1, 2018, she was appointed the Archdeacon of Waterloo.

Bishop Todd is pleased that Archdeacon Megan has agreed to continue as the Archdeacon of Waterloo.

Appointments

Bishop Todd Townshend appointed The Reverend Ryan Boivin, formerly of the Diocese of Ottawa, as rector of the parishes of St. Andrew's, LaSalle and St. David's and St. Mark's, Windsor effective February 1, 2021.

DIOCRESE OF HURON

181th SYNOD

MAY 16-17, 2021

Live streamed service from
St. Paul's Cathedral

(Sunday morning, May 16)

and online participation

(May 16 & 17)

Choose to Challenge: International Women's Day

By Ven. Tanya Phibbs

Can you imagine the Bible without Esther, or the Virgin Mary, or Mary Magdalene?

Without Esther's willingness to challenge Haman and his power, the Jewish race would have been killed in a mass genocide. Without the Virgin Mary's willingness to accepting a daunting commission from Gabriel, who would have borne the Christ? Without Mary Magdalene's willingness to see the Risen One, the disciples may have never known the truth of the resurrection.

International Women's Day, held annually on March 8th, started over 100 years ago to press for women's rights to work, to vote, to hold public office and to end discrimination. The International Day of Women gained further momentum after a fire in the New York garment district killed over 140 women. This devastating loss re-energized calls for not only safer working conditions but for justice and equality for women. Since that time much progress has been made but there is still much to do.

One continuing challenge is that much of the progress to date has primarily assisted straight, cisgender women. (A cisgender person is one whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth.) Other women suffer increased discrimination due to race, disability, religion, gender identity or sexual identity. The intertwining of these various forms of oppression has been given named intersectionality.



Intersectionality is the complex and cumulative way that the effects of different forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, classism, socioeconomic status, ableism) combine, overlap and intersect.

The term intersectionality was first used by scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s. Understanding intersectionality includes recognizing that women with disabilities are 25 percent more likely to live in poverty than men with disabilities (who in turn are more likely than able-bodied men to live in poverty). It means that for women of colour in Canada, there is a pay gap within the pay gap. This pay gap is further increased for Indigenous women who in 2010 in Canada earned 46% of the earnings of a non-racialized man. Transgender women are further discriminated against in terms of finding employment and are

disproportionately at risk of being abused or killed. They are also more likely to have their health care needs go unmet.

As Christians, we are called to be a part of the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God — a kingdom of justice, of equality, of safety. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners." (Isaiah 61:1, NRSV)

How do we begin to bring about God's kingdom?

- We listen to the most marginalized voices in society and hold space for them to use their voices at every level. We learn about other people's experiences that we are less familiar with (e.g. in terms of ethnicity, race, sexuality, etc.) and we educate ourselves.

Women with disabilities are 25 percent more likely to live in poverty than men with disabilities (who in turn are more likely than able-bodied men to live in poverty). It means that for women of colour in Canada, there is a pay gap within the pay gap. This pay gap is further increased for Indigenous women who in 2010 in Canada earned 46% of the earnings of a non-racialized man.

- We understand that not everyone's experience is the same as ours or the people we know best. We accept that each person is the expert on their own experience.

- Remember that it is not the role of the oppressed to educate everyone else. There is information available, let's seek it out. One good place to start learning about intersectionality is Kimberle Crenshaw's TED talk. https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality

- We challenge people who use sexist expressions or other derogatory language. We use our voices and reach to be political on personal levels.

- We check our privilege. We challenge the existing structures both around us and within each of us that give power to one group over another on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race or ability. We

challenge our own thinking and behavior.

- We support organizations that promote equal rights. We use our privilege to give voice to others who lack the same privilege.

The theme of this year's International Women's Day is Choose to Challenge. Let us choose to challenge every form of discrimination that prevents any person from living out the fullness of their creation in the image of God. Let us choose to challenge those in our lives who speak hurtful words to or about others. Let us choose to challenge ourselves to understand those whose experiences are different than our own. Let us choose to be a part of bringing forth the kingdom of God.

"I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own." (Audre Lorde)

Ven. Tanya Phibbs (she/her) is the Archdeacon of Huron and a member of Proud Anglicans of Huron.

Facts and Resources:

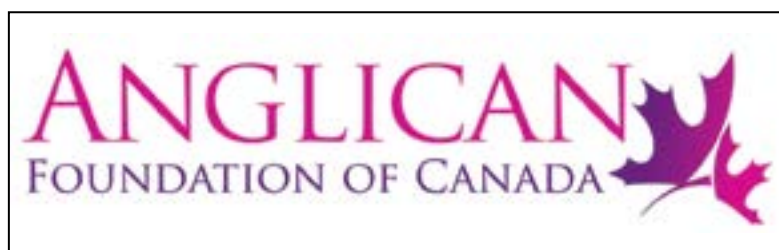
- <https://nwlc.org/blog/women-with-disabilities-still-struggling-to-escape-poverty/>
- <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/for-women-of-colour-theres-a-gap-within-the-pay-gap/>
- <http://transpulse-project.ca/research/health-care-availability-quality-and-unmet-need-a-comparison-of-transgender-and-cisgender-residents-of-ontario-canada/>

AFC thanks donors for overwhelming response to annual fundraising effort

The spirit of generosity remains high among Canadian Anglicans as the Anglican Foundation of Canada thanks donors from coast to coast to coast for an overwhelming response to its annual fundraising effort, expected to total more than \$165,000, representing a 9% increase over last year.

"From the beginning of the pandemic we knew we must continue to do everything in our power to financially support parishes and faith communities across the country," says Judy Rois, Executive Director, Anglican Foundation of Canada. "We acknowledged the difficulties people might be facing and asked those of our donors who were able to give to continue to do so. We asked those who were in a position to give a little bit more to give as they felt called."

The result was an unprecedented outpouring of support.



"I am overwhelmed by how our donor community came together," says Rois, "and in spite of the challenges we will continue to face in 2021, it gives me courage and hope that with the strength of our supporters, AFC will be able to fund ministry that matters throughout this global health crisis and beyond."

While AFC's 2020 grant disbursements were lower than in previous years, due to a conservative approach taken during a volatile and uncertain financial environment, Rois says AFC's ability to fund for impact notwithstanding the economic dis-

ruption is owing to "more than six decades of generosity: past and present."

"In 2020, more than any other year, I have seen the power of legacy in action," says Rois, "In addition to those who gave generously this year, people who are no longer with us were still with us in spirit, helping AFC to carry out its mission, investing over \$550,000 across the Canadian church through grants to more than 130 applicants."

Canon Rois has a message of hope for churches who find themselves struggling financially in the wake of COVID-19.

"Many churches will be tempted to turn to survival mode in the months ahead," she says. "Some may even put community-focused ministry and mission on hold." Rois says AFC wants to continue to do its part to prevent this from happening.

"Every gift we have received this year has reminded me of the richness of God's economy,"

says Rois, "and every gift, of every size, has reminded me that with a spirit of generosity and continued creativity, Canadian Anglicans, working through this Foundation, can still mobilize to meet many of the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of people in our communities."

- From the AFC Press release, January 25, 2021

COVID-19 AND CHURCH CLOSURES/REOPENINGS

FOR REGULAR UPDATES GO TO OUR COVID-19 HUB

<https://diohuron.org/covid-19-resource-hub/>

Being visible: We are the children of Heaven's creation

By Sydney Brouillard-Coyle

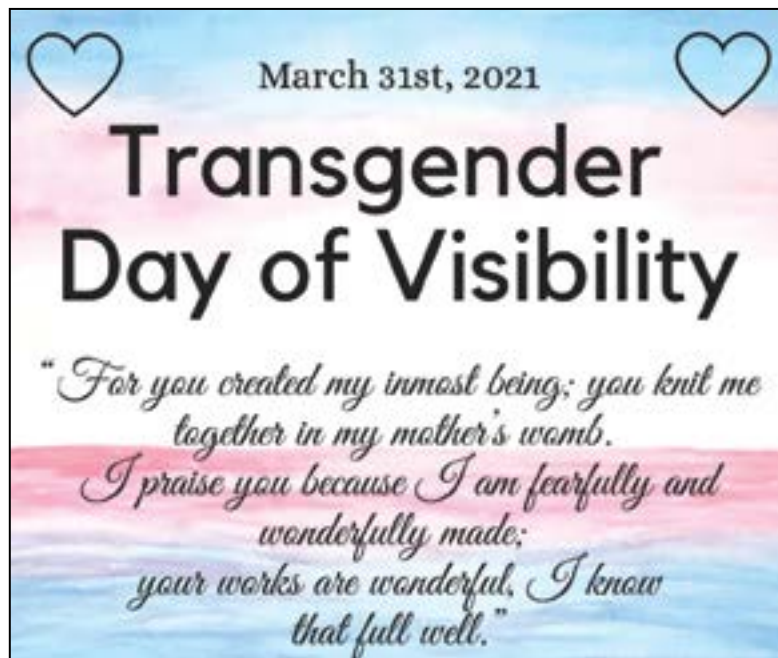
"More than we can ask or imagine, more than we can ever dare to dream, we are the children of heaven's creation, God's own beloved, each called by name. More than we will ever imagine, more than we will ever understand; we are sent to walk with compassion, to live out God's love by heart and by hand. More than we can ask or imagine, more than we could ever desire; out of the dust God's building a kingdom, like wine from the press, like bread from the fire." (More Than We Can Ask or Imagine; Common Praise, 86).

As a music director, hymns have always held a very special place in my heart, and I don't just pick up the book to sing – I listen to the lyrics and what God is telling me through them.

One of my favourite hymns from the Common Praise is 'More Than We Can Ask or Imagine'. The chorus is beautiful with its "Glory to God", "Glory we sing", "Glory on earth", and so on. But the verses, as short as they are, have so much to say.

"God's own beloved, each called by name." This we know – that God has created and called each of us by name. The name that God has created for us may not be known to us right away. "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." (Psalm 139, v. 13-14). God has always known who we are, because God is the one who created each of us, and knew that we were beautiful. "We are the children of heaven's creation."

"We are sent to walk with compassion, to live out God's love by heart and by hand." We



know that Jesus came to earth to teach us what the meaning of love truly is. Jesus died on the cross so that all might know that they are loved unconditionally and fully by the One who Created all.

More than that, Jesus calls us to follow that example – to love so fully and unconditionally that all might understand and receive the Gospel of Love through us.

"Out of the dust, God's building a kingdom, like wine from the press, like bread from the fire." It can be easy, in moments of difficulty, to ask ourselves: "where is God?" At times, it can feel as though we have been abandoned. But God is still creating through us. God gave us wheat, but not bread; and grapes, but not wine; so that together, we may share with God in the act of creation. For God is more than we could ever ask or imagine; thus, those created in the image and likeness of God are more than we could ask or imagine. Together, we are sharing in the act of creation and celebration of the diversity of humankind.

Every year on March 31st, we celebrate the Transgender Day

of Visibility, a day dedicated to celebrating trans people and raising awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide. This day is essential, because with more visibility comes more understanding.

I first learned what transgender meant when I was 14 years old. I was hanging out with my best friend, E, and made a comment about something that another friend, R, had said in class. I had used "she" pronouns in reference to my friend R; my friend E immediately corrected me by saying: "actually, R uses they/them pronouns". A year later, one of my friends from grade school came out as a trans male, and received the support that he needed to change his name and begin the process of medical transition.

Accompanying both of my friends on their journeys provided me the opportunity to explore, for the first time, how I viewed my own gender. Knowing that I was in a safe space at my school, and surrounded by affirming friends and family, I came out as trans at the age of 17. I used different terms and pronouns as I explored

what being trans meant to me. I currently use the term "non-binary", which means that I don't identify as either a man or a woman. I also discovered ney/nem/nir pronouns one year ago; similar to they/them/their pronouns, except with an "n" that stands for neutral. I practiced online with these new pronouns until I felt confident with them, before coming out (again) with my new pronouns on the Transgender Day of Visibility in 2020.

I am privileged in many ways – to be surrounded by supportive and loving family and friends, to have had a safe school where I could explore my identity, and to have the resources that I need as I am exploring what transition means to me. I work at Windsor-Essex Transgender and Allied Support as a Peer Mentor, supporting clients who are nonbinary, genderqueer, and those who are questioning from ages 6 through 40. It is very fulfilling work, as I am able to support my trans siblings so that none of them have to experience being transgender and navigating transitioning – whatever that may look like for them – alone.

As Anglicans, we are called to respond to human need with loving service. And yet, our denomination has far too often erased the voices of transgender individuals. Trans people have been alienated from God's table, made to feel as though we are second-class citizens, and have had our very identities and existence questioned and frowned upon. We have been told that we are sinners, that we are going to hell, and that there is no place for us at the table of God.

But God is still working through us – the transgender community – to share love with the world and with the church. God has created us exactly as we are, and knows that we are

beautiful, we are valid, and loves each and every one of us as our authentic selves. God is urging the church to listen to the stories of those who have been erased; to love unconditionally just as Jesus taught, and to work to be active allies for all of God's children. We have perpetrated much spiritual trauma to the transgender community. It is time for us to begin the process of reconciliation, so that all of God's beloved children can feel welcome at the table of the One who created us.

In honour of this year's Transgender Day of Visibility, let us pray:

O God, whom no image can encompass, no definition encircle, and yet who meets us in the gentle touch of love, the beauty of a butterfly's wing, and the laughter of children; help us move beyond our attempts to limit You, intellectualize You, or to eliminate You from all that is earthy, sensuous, and vibrant, so that we may greet You in every particle in this spectacular universe which You are creating. Amen.

Sydney Brouillard-Coyle (ney/nem/nir) is co-chair of Proud Anglicans of Huron and music director at St. Paul's Anglican Church. Ney were the diocesan youth delegate to General Synod 2019, and serves as a consultant to Faith, Worship & Ministry on developing Trans* Liturgies.





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'A burning heart, on fire for God'

By Caroline Sharp

"The Christian life has three spiritual temperatures: a burning heart, on fire for God, a cold heart, and a lukewarm heart. The lukewarm Christian is comfortable, complacent, and does not realize his need. If he were cold, at least he would feel it!"

Beale, G., Mounce, R., and Mulholland, M. (2009). The Transformation Study Bible. Revelation (commentary). Colorado Springs. 2159.

I am not a cradle Anglican. I grew up Roman Catholic, left church as a teen and began a spiritual pilgrimage, only to return to a Christian Reformed church many years later.

I came to the Anglican church after I met my husband and started going to his church. I found that Anglicanism offers the best of both worlds and what you find at one parish, you will find something completely different at another. It was, however, at the Christian Reformed church that something was ignited within me and got me started on my path towards priesthood (and I'm not there yet but I persist). The passage above was one that stood out for me.

When we fall into the rhythm of things, we sometimes make the mistake of complacency or we take things for granted. My short time as a missionary will forever remind me that everything I have is from God and that I must be thankful for it whether it be the clothing I wear or the food I eat, the roof over my head, the ability I have to speak, see and walk, etc. This has also given me a "burning heart, on fire for God." This burning heart has lifted me higher than I

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



"So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth."

St. John writes to the church in Laodicea.

could ever have imagined and has shaped my worldview and the actions I take to strive for fairness and justice. I have been called to be the hands, feet, and voice of God in this world. As such, I cannot afford to be lukewarm.

Maybe you've heard it somewhere before, perhaps in a sermon - these three temperatures refer to water. Hot water is useful for many things, as is cold water. But lukewarm water is useless and is a breeding ground for bacteria and dangerous germs that make people ill or lead to death.

Yes, complacency can be bad! You might find lukewarmness in institutional settings with groups of people who have been doing the "same old" for too long. We can no longer keep doing everything the way we've always done it before, this gets stale, this closes churches!

We need to ignite the fire of the Holy Spirit within us and act on those things in which

God has made us passionate about. This is the true heart of ministry. This is why I became a member of Social and Ecological Justice Huron (SEJH), and this is why we have introduced a series of conversations that will take place in 2021. Our "Conversations with ..." is a series of workshops to help us engage with a multitude of voices within the context of faith.

There are social justice issues that remain problematic such as how people with disabilities can be excluded from worshiping and participating in the community of the church, or how certain people are discriminated against (i.e. people of colour, indigenous people, 2SLGBTQ+) or feel judged within the confines of church walls.

Many of us have witnessed this uncomfortable urge to shut out someone who doesn't fit in a preconceived box. It was why I left church in the first place. I felt judged, and it didn't

help that the God I grew up with was a God of wrath and punishment whom I would never be good enough for. I often wonder how visitors (and in some cases current parishioners) in our churches see us, and pray that they don't feel judged or have been made to feel that they are less deserving of God's love.

My own passions lie mostly in environmental issues and spiritual development. It would bring me great joy if everyone loved Creation and held strong personal bonds with God like I do.

Along my spiritual journey, I have been discovering how tightly connected many social justice issues really are! For example, environmental issues do not stand alone amongst other social justice issues. Our lack of concern for all things "green" affects all human beings! The pollution caused by manufacturing companies around the world have caused clean water to become undrinkable. You might be surprised to learn that watertoday.ca lists 74 boil water advisories in Ontario with most of them being on reservations. Some of the advisories have been on this list since 1995 (Neskantaga First Nation) which is also around the same time that the last residential school was closed. How might this affect Truth and Reconciliation efforts (a Conversations with Truth and Reconciliation coming this spring)? "Fast Fashion" is a growing trend despite the fact that these clothes are often made in poor countries where workers get a pittance and they work in dangerous conditions. The dyes and other chemicals used in the clothing industry run out into the rivers and the people living downstream no longer have clean drinking water and

they get sick. My heart is on fire when I hear stories like this. I believe that the other members of SEJH also have hearts on fire and act on their social justice passions to try and make a difference. We also want to share these passions with you.

Our first *Conversations with...* series regarded people with disabilities and how we must make changes to our language, attitudes, and physical space to be inclusive to them. We looked at the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and how it desperately needs to be taught to all staff and volunteer within the church. If nothing else, this conversation has at least got people thinking about how they can do better to make their church more inclusive. Our second *Conversations with...* was in February on 2SLGBTQ+. It provided an opportunity to hear stories from the 2SLGBTQ+ perspective, especially as they relate to faith. Please join us in future *Conversations with...* and let's keep putting our heads together so we can move in a positive and lovingly forward manner in addressing these social justice issues.

Upcoming conversations include Creation, poverty, people of colour, truth and reconciliation, women's rights, etc. Keep an eye out in your emails for upcoming dates or follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Social-and-Ecological-Justice-Huron-108315993854435>).

Our next session is Conversations with Creation on March 13. All conversations are scheduled for 10am to 11:30am. Please email SEJH@diohuron.org to register.

Caroline Sharp is a tri-chair of SEJH.

Are you ready for Back to Church Sunday?

The pandemic has demonstrated the value of social media and communication in general.



MEDIA BYTES

REV. MARTY LEVESQUE

During this past year, yes I said a year, we have learned that we cannot just put a message in a bulletin or announce it on Sunday morning anymore. Instead, we have adopted multiple platforms to communicate with parishioners.



Depending on the specific needs of individual parishes these tools have ranged from snail mail, phone trees, email blast using tools like Mailchimp, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, YouTube worship services, revamped websites, live streams, apps for smartphones and more. In short, these tools have been a godsend. They have allowed us the ability to maintain our communities while we are stay-

ing at home to flatten the curve and save lives.

But as vaccines begin to be rolled out with the government targeting September for population vaccination, we need to start thinking about how we shift and refocus those tools to begin looking outward after they have served us so well looking inward.

Simply put, Back to Church Sunday in 2021 may be the most important day in the

The world is starving for community, events to attend, people to see and activities to engage. Our fall ramp up this year will be the most important of our generation.

calendar. Not just for drawing back together our own communities, but for active evangelism.

The world is starving for community, events to attend, people to see and activities to engage. Our fall ramp up this year will be the most important of our generation.

There is an incredible opportunity that awaits us this year to offer events, social gatherings and of course in-person wor-

ship in the name of bringing people to Christ. To that end, we must start planning now and give some thought of how we will take all these new tools and turn them outward so that we can invite our mission fields and build community.

Rev. Marty Levesque is the diocesan social media officer and rector of All Saints' in Waterloo.

martylevesque@diohuron.org

The risk of reinventing our relational practices

So far in this column, I have been sharing a little of the theology and my personal research in the areas of congregational growth and evangelism.



**GROWING
BEYOND THE
DOORS**
**REV. GRAYHAME
BOWCOTT**

This month I would like to start putting theory into practice by sharing one example of how a single congregation explored changing up their routines and habits for the purpose of seeking new relationships beyond the doors of their church building.

My home parish of St. George's, The Blue Mountains, is a congregation that has been benefitting from population growth over the last decade with residents of the Toronto area retiring to Georgian Bay but at a commutable distance to keep one foot in the big city. Each year we see a surge of new families moving to our community resulting in our school doubling in size and the construction of thousands of new homes scheduled for the years ahead.

It has taken some time for my own congregation to realize the potential of new relationships that are just beyond our doorstep. Sometimes there are



Shrove Tuesday at the Blue Mountain

even tensions between life-long residents of Clarksburg and Thornbury and the flood of Torontonians that are quickly changing the small town feel of our community.

One question that I have been having my congregation reflect on is this: how well do we know our neighbours? The truth is, we are blessed to have new neighbours (not all communities do!) and this places the onus on us to reach out to them and share what we, as Christians and Anglicans, are all about!

With the intention of seeking out new relationships, I give credit to my congregation for taking a risk in attempting something new. The experiment: how might we reinvent a declining annual Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner (which the men of the parish had been

hosting in the same routine for years) into an event that allowed for us to share our St. George's identity with newcomers to the community. Our tagline: "Caring for others because God cares for us all!"

You've likely heard the saying before: be careful what you pray for, because you just might get it!

With this thought in mind, our Parish Council made the decision to try a new venue for Shrove Tuesday. Instead of inviting guests to our church, we decided that we would leave the building and instead host the event in a community venue – The Blue Mountains Recreation Centre. The added advantage was that this new venue could accommodate hundreds more than our parish hall, but there was a risk – what if no one showed up?

Instead of going it alone, which was the St. George's tradition up until last year, we tried something new and invited the Town of The Blue Mountains Fire Department to join us. With this partnership we picked a mutual cause to demonstrate how both of our organizations cared for others: we decided that all donations raised would go towards responding to the catastrophic bushfires that have left their mark on the Australian people, wildlife and landscape.

Then we invited all of our community service groups. We invited all the local churches. We asked our local grocery store, Thornbury Foodland, to support us. We organized our volunteers, we prepared pancakes and sausages for hundreds. But would it all work out?

It took roughly sixty volunteers to pull off the event, but the positive energy of trying something new was contagious. St. George's volunteers worked and laughed beside local fire firefighters. New relationships were kindled, directly resulting in one new family joining our congregation! The result: 550+ guests between the 4:30 p.m. opening and the 7:00 p.m. close. Through the generosity of our Blue Mountains community our fire fighter's boots were filled with donations.

Was it worth it to take a risk? It was possible that the event could have flopped!

I would argue, and I think my congregation would now

join me in saying: if Christian hospitality and the desire to form new relationships is at the heart of your cause, the event will always be worth it!

We also quickly discovered that there was a second benefit to reinventing an old practice of ministry: when we hosted our ministry beyond the doors of our church more local residents were inclined to join us and the resulting generosity produced a total revenue in excess of \$7,400. This, in turn, was donated through the PWRDF in support of the Australian bush fire relief efforts.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

This experience has taught us that sometimes it is helpful to take a new look at old ways of doing ministry. What might be the benefits of changing up some old routines in hopes of engaging our new neighbours around us?

The defining success of this initiative was not necessarily in raising money for a good cause, but rather that we reached out to make some new relationships and raised the profile of our congregation as a caring/serving community in the eyes of many in The Blue Mountains!

Rev. Dr. Grayhame Bowcott is passionate about fostering congregational relationships and sharing our Anglican vocation with others. He serves as rector of St. George's, The Parish of The Blue Mountains.

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Knowing our story and deepening our identity

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

Several years ago, like many others these days, I participated in a test to learn more about the components of my cultural background.

While I had some ideas, of course, from stories told to me by family over the years, I was curious about just what the test would reveal. The advertisement suggested that I could, "discover the places, history and cultures that shaped who [I am] today – using just [my] DNA."

While I do not pretend to understand either the precise science behind these kinds of tests, or to be truthful even the accuracy and validity of such testing, my interest in my family's history was a driving force. While I had a general understanding of who I was and where I had come from, I wanted to know more about my roots. I wanted to know more about my story, and I suppose more about my particular piece of that story.



Education for Ministry is spiritual, theological, liturgical, and practical formation for laypeople. EfM is about integrating faith and life, and communicating our faith to others.

In many different ways today, local parishes, and indeed, the Church as a whole are being compelled to also revisit and reexamine our story, made particularly important as most of us are grappling with change of all kinds. Leaders in both secular and sacred spheres tell us that in times of great change it is a recommended practice (though perhaps not always a welcomed one) to reflect back on and renew connections to the underlying principles and narratives that have formed us. In our case, as we revisit these connections to founding principles and narratives, we

encounter or perhaps re-encounter details of our Christian story that if given space can support and inform us as we adapt to change. Knowing our story has never been more important.

We can read in *Participating in God's Mission* by Van Gelder and Zscheile, that as we encounter and listen to Scripture and to the stories and wisdom of the Christian tradition, we are supported in the practices of discipleship and discernment, and our understanding of our story is enriched as we engage in such ancient Christian practices as Sabbath,

As the Old and New Testaments are studied details of their context and peoples are explored in detail as well as the story of the Church and the lives of those who have gone before us.

prayer, service, hospitality and reconciliation. We engage with these practices, not just as church programs but instead as a way of life in relationship with the neighbourhoods in which we find ourselves. Van Gelder and Zscheile go on to say that if we organize church life around engaging Scripture as a living narrative it will provide a whole new orientation for making sense out of our life and the world.

This in turn will go a long way toward deepening identity. As we allow Scripture to respond to the different situations in our lives, the story of what it is to be a follower of Jesus is clarified.

While we have many different occasions in our lives

together that encourage and support this engagement with Scripture, Education for Ministry offers one more. Throughout the different years as the Old and New Testaments are studied details of their context and peoples are explored in detail as well as the story of the Church and the lives of those who have gone before us.

If you are interested in learning more about Education for Ministry, please contact Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or myself Val Kenyon at EFM@huron.anglican.ca

Rev. Dr. Canon Val Kenyon is EfM Animator in Huron.

Counting our blessings: Justice begins on the inside

In the last few weeks, the Christian church has been celebrating the season of Epiphany.



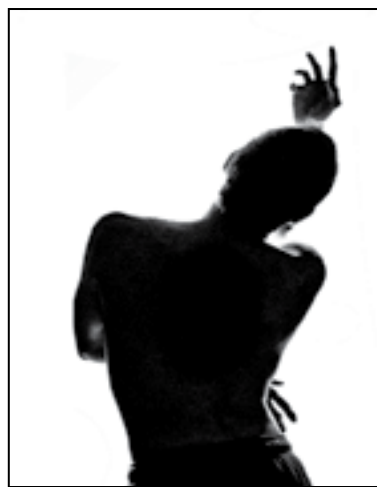
AS I SEE IT

REV. JIM
INNES

In Churchland, this means celebrating God's Grace as given to us through her Son Jesus. And how that Son's ministry (best described as his personhood) attracted followers and spread out and beyond its Jewish roots.

For Christians today, this can be a time to reflect on the remarkable ways that God has extended Grace to us. Pastorally speaking, it is a time to count our blessings and give thanks for the ways we have matured in faith.

Maturing in faith is best de-



scribed as becoming the truth of Spirit that lies within us, the reality that we are children of God, meant to live in peace and love. This maturing is a process often associated with insight, healing, and forgiveness (given and received).

Let me speak a bit about this healing process. And, I will reference it as the healing of our past wounds. Generally speaking, these wounds are internal sources of pain and confusion created by 'dark' and

horrific external experiences. I use the word 'dark' to express all the crazy crap our communities and culture can cough up at our doorstep!

Some of the most optimistic, and usually, but not always, those with limited self-awareness, call these wounds our 'holy brokenness.' They argue that wounds develop character. Hmm...in principle, and looking backward from a safe distance, I can cautiously agree. But, there is more to this woundedness than merely the path to wholeness. There are suffering and injustice!

In speaking of suffering and injustice, I will take a tiny, momentary sidestep from my focus on inner psychology/spirituality. I wish to point out that there are appalling social atrocities that affect each of us. In my experience, these are climate justice, the refugee crisis, racial prejudice, discrimination on sexual orientation, income gaps, violence, hunger, and homelessness (including

those who can't afford a decent space).

These issues demand our attention. However, as I see it, to attend to them, we must first be in a place of sufficient Grace. And not just Grace that has blessed us with resilience, but Grace that lifts us from our own sluggish swim in the cesspool of self-absorption, or, as some might argue self-protection. It is a soggy, sloppy sink-pit that I, all too regularly, fall into myself. And that's because talking about atrocities is not the same activity as seeking to do something about them.

Cesspools are a complex mix of hurt, trauma, disappointment, and ignorance. This composite of 'stuff' (wounds) cannot be quickly explained nor quickly unraveled. They have an inventive approach to becoming integrated into our lifestyles. And once they become unwittingly (or perhaps not so unwittingly) fused into our daily choices, they become compounded.

Release from this bog of stinking mud is begun through self-evaluation and introspection. Traditional counseling may assist well at this point. However, the ongoing work is more of a prayerful journey. And, by prayerfulness, I mean inviting Spirit (or a loving power greater than our own) to remove the damming influence of well-integrated and destructive life choices.

Through reflection, prayer, and gradual change, this journey is about all we can do to right the injustices we know belabor our communal life. Over time, with patience and affirming support, our choices flow from increased compassion. And though we may not become full-on martyrs for a cause, we will, at least, become people who shape our world one relationship at a time.

Rev. Jim Innes is the rector of the Regional Ministry of South Huron.

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Facing the challenges of the moment

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

(1 Corinthians 15: 55)

For more than a year, few people have experienced life without also experiencing a sense of loss.



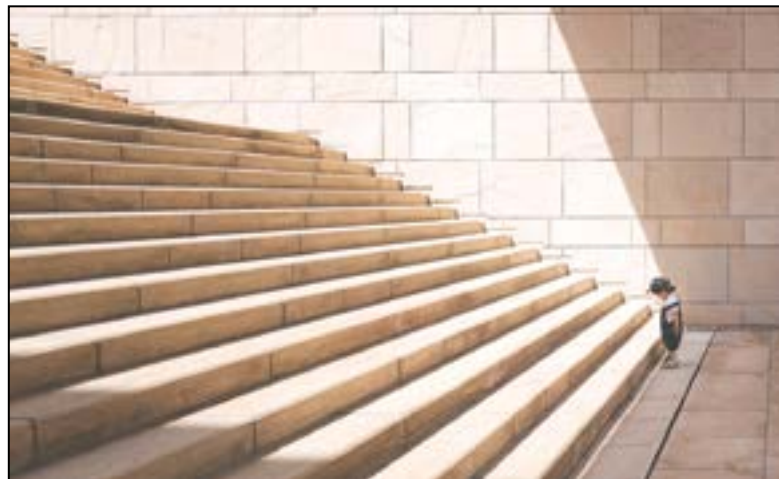
A VIEW FROM
THE BACK PEW

REV. CANON
CHRISTOPHER
B. J. PRATT

The obituary pages each day are filled with stories of individuals who have engaged fully with life and have sought to make the most of the gift of each day. Whether or not they have been infected with the COVID virus, their lives have ended, and the story of their lives are told by those who are living in the deep reality of grief.

We have had much to grieve. The death of family members, friends, and those whose lives have touched ours in one way or another is an ongoing "normal" reality of life. Most people do not like to talk about death. It is a conversation that brings us face to face with our own mortality.

During these "COVID times", the numbers which are on our television screen each night only seem to grow larger. Each number represents a profound



Unsplash

loss in a family, a circle of friends and in the wider community.

For those fortunate enough not to be directly impacted with the death of a human family member, the loss of other elements of life may have their own significant effect and impact. We all try to live with the loss of an opportunity to travel, not being able to be with family members who live in another community (a reality which is devastating for grandparents), the disruption of the freedom to carry out a pattern of life that used to be lived and which is remembered with fondness, all these... and more.

"The world breaks everyone and afterward some are strong at the broken places." These dire words from Ernest Hemingway's work "Farewell To Arms" may make sense to some who are struggling through days filled with emotions of grief and loss. As I write this article on a day

given over to engaging Canadians in a conversation about mental health, the concept of brokenness is an inescapable reality for many. The growing darkness, which many people are dealing with, often in solitude, feels like a heavy weight, which is only getting heavier. Solitude becomes, in itself, a burden.

Yet even as many find the reality of solitude, peace and an endless quiet to be a burden, there are those for whom these days are a blessed relief. Others are kept at a distance, forced conventional conversation becomes unnecessary and a new pace of life devoid of rushing around fulfilling the demands of a crowded calendar, dashing from commitment to the next scheduled commitment is welcomed like a long lost, almost forgotten, friend. The challenge of dealing with the emotion of grief may be faced differently from the perspective of solitude.

If, as Kubler-Ross suggested in her 1969 work "Death and Dying", we go through many stages as we live through the reality of the experience of grieving, then surely we are not in an irretrievable position. She posited a pathway of emotion as we grieve. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance all have their place in her theory of grief. They do not always follow neatly, one after the other, but they do have their place. Each of us has a similar, yet, at the same time, a unique path forward as we deal with death and grief.

Within the context of a funeral service those who are grieving may hear the words of prayer being offered:

We pray for ourselves, who are severely tested by this death, that we do not try to minimize this loss, or seek refuge from it in words alone, and also that we do not brood over it so that it overwhelms us and isolates us from others. (BAS pg. 603)

This year, Sunday, March 28, is Palm Sunday, when we begin our devotional journey through Holy Week and stand as witnesses at the foot of the Cross.

For observers who do not know the story, from all outward appearances... death wins.

Being people of faith, our reality is that perceived outcome is not the case. The sorrow, grief, bewilderment, and pain felt by the followers of Jesus was very real as his body was taken down from the Cross and placed into a tomb. They soon were able to grow into an

awareness of the victory of the Resurrection.

A simple reality for people of faith in Jesus, is the belief that we do not journey through life alone. We are given the gift of life to experience with all of its joys, its pain, its beauty and its sorrows. People who touch our life fill our days with love and laughter, as well as distress and sorrow. Living in these uncertain times and having to face each day realizing that there is much that is happening around us over which we have little or no control, we may find it to be a struggle to express the faith that we claim.

While the totality of God can never be caught up within a net of words, sometimes simple words help us to make sense of that which is at the heart of our faith. You may wish to consider these words as a daily devotion as you face the challenges of the moment.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, help me.

Loving God, I place myself in your hands.

Holy God, I believe in you.

I trust you.

I love you.

(BAS page 561)

Stay safe and be well.

Rev. Canon Christopher B. J. Pratt has retired from full time parish ministry, but continues to offer priestly ministry in the Diocese of Huron.

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Be sure to do it the right way... Archie's way

The Venerable Archie Skirving died on Christmas Eve. He served God's Church for sixty years, more than forty in the Diocese of Huron.

The Venerable Archie Skirving died on December 24 about 8:30 in the evening.



MOSTLY ABOUT RELIGION
REV. CANON KEITH NETHERY

Archie served the Diocese of Huron as a priest for more than 40 years and was most proud that he lived to celebrate 60 years as a priest in God's church.

It seems to me that it is appropriate that God and Archie chose Christmas Eve, just about the time the Christmas Eve service, if we could have had one, would have ended, for his departure from this life to experience all that is to come.

There are many who are more qualified than I to write a story about Archie. Until the last three years when I became his Rector, our paths didn't cross with frequency. He had retired from active ministry before I returned from the wilds of Alberta to take up priestly ministry in this diocese.



Under normal circumstances, St. James Westminster would have been full for Archie's funeral. Thanks to the pandemic, there were less than ten of us who gathered for a fitting tribute. It was in the stories told in this intimate service that I think we can find "the story" of Archie.

First and foremost, he planned the service. Once he had received the diagnosis that his time on this earth was coming to an end, Archie called me to the apartment to give me the outline of his service. Being Archie, he planned for just about every circumstance – with options dependant on who and how many could be in attendance. He chose the readings, and as those who knew Archie will surmise, they were chosen for a reason, they tied together if you looked deeply enough and they were a combination of the normal funeral readings and more original choices. He had options for the music to fit the possible pandemic restric-

tions. Along the margins of the handwritten page, a list of do's and don'ts for me to follow and I did! He looked me straight in the eye when he said, "Be sure to do it the right way!" That was Archie's way. He wanted the liturgy of his service done properly. And I did my best.

Some stories that were told on a Wednesday in late December. Bishop Todd Townshend graciously accepted an invitation to preach. He told a story that spoke on so many levels. It spoke of Archie, of his friendships, his way of doing things. But it was also a snapshot of ministry in a different time. Todd was newly ordained and visiting a parish member at St. Joseph's hospital on a Friday afternoon. As he passed the cafeteria, he saw Archie and several colleagues having coffee. Archie spotted him and of course invited him to join. It was a regular gathering as clergy came together to check the listing of Anglicans in hospital. Todd remembers being honoured when Archie and the others invited him to join them any time.

I shared about our first meeting, an important event for me, probably less so for Archie. In 1996, in early May, I was ordained priest in God's

Church by the Rt. Rev. Barry Curtis in the Diocese of Calgary. I celebrated the Eucharist for the first time in my parish in Medicine Hat that weekend and then boarded a plane for Ontario to preside at the Eucharist the next Saturday, in St. James Westminster, London, at my sisters wedding. I had heard the legend of Archie. I was still wet behind the ears, just ordained and would have the added nerves of all my family in attendance. Archie gave the rookie a few "moments." For example, he pointed out that the hangings and vestments were new and expensive and that I had best not spill anything. And then he smiled! But what I remember more than anything was that I felt loved and supported by him every step of that day. His pastoral heart was most evident.

I had the chance to say thank you for this just two years ago. Archie asked if he could be Celebrant for the Eucharist on a Sunday in January of 2019, with his son Rob, the Bishop of East Carolina, as preacher. It would be just after Archie marked the 60th anniversary of his ordination as a priest. My answer was quick and sincere: yes! On that January Sunday, I sat off to

the side in the Sanctuary and watched Archie. I did exactly what he asked me to do and gave him full control of everything else.

It was my way of saying thank you for his welcome more than 20 years earlier. I know that Archie was fulfilled by that day.

As death drew closer, I visited Archie more frequently. Each visit was a story telling extravaganza. Of course Archie won, he had more and better stories than I could generate. But more importantly, I again saw that look of fulfillment on his face. It was another step on the journey, to remember the people, places and events of his ministry. He simply needed someone to listen and I had the privilege of being that someone.

Archie Skirving loved deeply. He gave so very much for this Diocese, for the people of Huron. I offer this reflection so that those who knew him well can remember, and those in ministry who didn't have the chance to know Archie, will know of his pastoral heart.

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It's March, go and fly a kite

The association of March and wind has been with us since elementary school.



LAUREL PATTENDEN

Arts and crafts would always involve kites in some way. Looking back, I can't think of a worse time to be out flying kites in southwestern Ontario. Frozen ground or mushy mud. Snow covered or rain soaked. Plus, lots of wind usually cold.

Do you remember Evel Knievel? Well, he said, "I love the feeling of the fresh air on my face and the wind blowing through my hair". Was he ever in the Huron Diocese, during March, flying a kite? Granted we do have plenty of fresh air. Hats are the usual attire unless you can brave having red, frozen ears that will probably ache later. Carting around pockets filled with facial tissue for our drippy noses. Unless it is a lamb of a March. Where did that saying come from? In like a lion and/out like a



Laurel Pattenden. Go Fly a Kite

lamb. Let me know if you have an answer to that. Anyways, March and its winds.

At night, through our slightly opened bedroom window, the wind chimes (cathedral tones, of course) sound the weather changes. The gentle breezes create a calming tune and fierce winds tangle the chimes into a knot. In a way we are like the chimes reacting to the presence

and power of the wind.

Many people in the world have not experienced snow, monsoon rains or desert heat but we have all felt wind on our face. In a way it makes us feel alive. Evel Knievel had that right. Years ago, while working in Long Term Care, I was transporting a gentleman (pushing his wheelchair) from his room to the awaiting ambulance to

be taken to the hospital. The family had chosen the hospital for end-of-life care.

The day was sunny with a pleasant breeze. The EMS crew were going to load him into the van and then go into the office for the paper work. Thinking it was such a nice day I suggested they do the paper work first. Then quickly I pushed the gentleman out into the sun and the breeze. We walked as long as we could until the crew was back standing at the ambulance, patiently waiting. I don't know if they were peeved or not at me. I do remember saying to them that this would be last time the resident would feel the wind on his face. They seemed to pause and let a little more time pass. Then he was placed in the van.

The novelist E.M. Forster wrote: "What is the good of your stars and trees, your sunrise and wind, if they do not enter into our daily lives?". Since the beginning of primordial or old growth forests the sound of wind in trees has not changed. Whether we first heard the wind passing in the trees while sitting in our stroller or recently walking in the park. It's sound is ingrained in us. Even though the sound

of wind hasn't changed it does come in a variety of intensity and meaning. I find strong winds can be unsettling and fresh breezes renewing.

I like to think of wind as the breath of God and Spirit. The wind of God blowing over the earth (Genesis 1:1,2) even before light! Genesis 2 mentions God's breath as the breath of life. Jesus breathed on the disciples (John 20:22) before the mighty sound of wind arrived on Pentecost (Acts 2:2).

This March, can you imagine the swirling winds as the breath of God? Can you imagine them entering into you as Spirit? Is the breath of Life renewing you? Is it in your lungs and heart? Is it in your very soul? While the March winds blow around you take time to fill and renew with the breath of God. Maybe we will feel lighter than a kite!

Remembering my walk with the resident I think my hope was for him to feel alive. To remember. I have no way of knowing one way or another. My prayer for him on that day and us today is to feel the breath of God in our hearts.

Laurel is retired and likes to spend her time in her art studio.