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HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • JANUARY 2020



Laurel Pattenden, CHRISTMAS, Watercolor

MUSIC ON CHRISTMAS MORNING

*Music I love—but never strain
Could kindle raptures so divine,
So grief assuage, so conquer pain,
And rouse this pensive heart of mine—
As that we hear on Christmas morn,
Upon the wintry breezes borne.*

*Though Darkness still her empire keep,
And hours must pass, ere morning break;
From troubled dreams, or slumbers deep,
That music kindly bids us wake:
It calls us, with an angel's voice,
To wake, and worship, and rejoice;*

*To greet with joy the glorious morn,
Which angels welcomed long ago,
When our redeeming Lord was born,
To bring the light of Heaven below;
The Powers of Darkness to dispel,
And rescue Earth from Death and Hell...*

Anne Bronte

Medical assistance in dying: facing the theological challenge



Bishops Michael Hopkins (far left) and Greg Kerr-Wilson, Dr. Gary Badcock and Dr. Theo Boer at Huron University College

By Dr. Gary D. Badcock

On November 29-30, a theological consultation on “medical assistance in dying” (MAiD) for Canadian Anglicans was held at Huron University College, under the auspices of Huron’s Centre for Public Theology, and with the generous support of the Anglican Foundation.

The participants included: Dr. Theo Boer from the Netherlands, Dr. Eric Beresford (Diocese of Toronto), Dr. Lizette Larson-Miller (Huron University), bishop-elect Todd Townshend (Huron), bishops Greg Kerr-Wilson (Calgary) and Dr. Michael Hawkins (Saskatchewan), Eitel Lindenburger (Capacity Assessor), Prof. Trudo Lemmens (University of Toronto), Rev. Aigah Attagutsiak (Diocese of Ottawa), Bob Tees, (Spiritual Care Chaplain), and John Guido (L’Arche Canada).

MAiD in Canada stems from events in February 2015, when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in the case Carter v. Canada that the long-standing Criminal Code prohibition of physician-assisted suicide was a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Canadian government was given a short window by the

Court to set an appropriate legal framework for medical euthanasia in place. Following a rather brief period of fourteen months of consultation — in which the churches, among others, were heard and frequently ignored — Parliament passed legislation permitting “medical assistance in dying,” or MAiD (Bill C-14), which received Royal Assent in the summer 2016.

The developing story of MAiD in Canada has been marked by rapid change, the implications of which are as yet unclear. Considerable pressures have been brought to bear on government over the past three years for a relaxation of the regulations surrounding the practice. This has come from special interest groups but also from individual patients through the courts, culminating in the recent Truchon judgment in Quebec, which struck down as unconstitutional the provision that the death should be reasonably “foreseeable.” In the recent Federal election, both the Liberal Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party committed to a relaxation of current restrictions surrounding MAiD, and presumably, we can expect legislation in the new Parliament. Not all is straightforward in

the MAiD debate. Palliative Care specialists are, for instance, often hostile to the practice, insisting that there are better ways to die with dignity than through euthanasia. Some cases have been contested in the courts. There is also the precedent of more longstanding European practices of medical euthanasia in jurisdictions such as Holland and Belgium, where there is evidence of a “slippery slope,” even where the medical grounds cited are far from compelling.

In the midst of this stands the Church, most obviously in its pastoral role in caring for the dying and the grieving — but also for the caregiver, the physician, the legislator and the citizen too. How do we respond?

For this we need to have thoughtful theological resources available. While our society works at suicide prevention among young people and First Nations groups, for example, we find ourselves also assisting in the suicides of thousands of people a year.

Is this a contradiction, or is it a coherent and responsible option in today’s world? In its witness to the world about God’s love in Jesus Christ, and about the reflection of that love in the fulfilment of our duties to one another, what do we need to be saying and doing in these matters?

Dr. Gary D. Badcock is Peache Professor of Divinity at Huron University College and a founder member of Huron’s Centre for Public Theology.

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RECONCILING CIRCLE

Treaties Recognition Week

By Ven. Tim Dobbin

Treaties Recognition Week is probably one of the best kept secrets in Ontario.

Back in 2016, the Provincial Government enacted legislation designating the first full week in November as Treaties Recognition Week. Its purpose is to honour the importance of treaties and to help students and residents of Ontario learn more about treaty rights and relationships.

The ‘Reconciling Circle’ is an

ecumenical group from Brantford, Hamilton and Cambridge seeking to respond to TRC Call to Action #59 in our local context.

The Circle also heeds the call of the former Primate’s Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice to ‘join together in a common movement to foster and contribute to reconciliation’ through the practices of prayer, learning, building relationship and taking action.

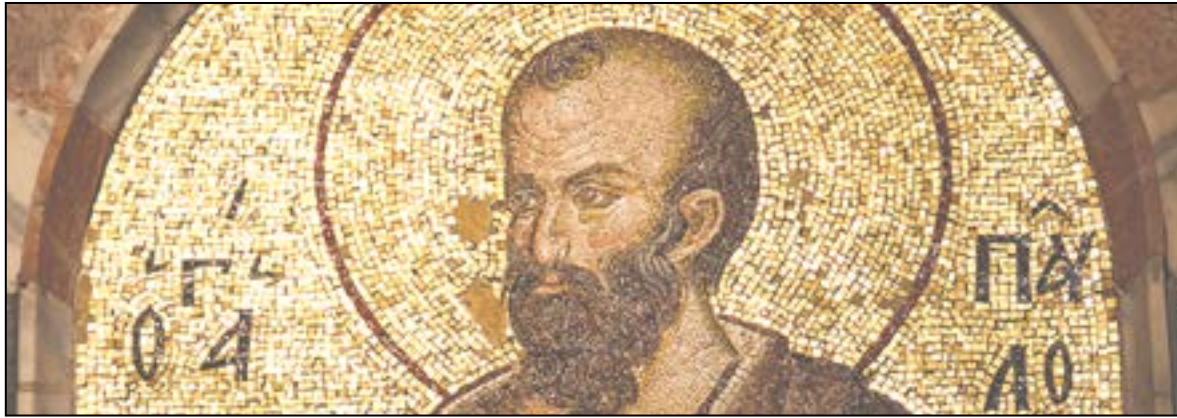
See RECONCILING CIRCLE, p. 4

May God give us more than we deserve!

Grace to You, and Peace!
To the church of God that is in Huron, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.



**REV. CANON
TODD
TOWNSHEND
BISHOP-ELECT**



A familiar greeting, don't you think?

At the beginning of eucharistic celebrations we begin with a similar greeting, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

This greeting is based on the greeting St. Paul uses in his letters to the churches and it is a major variation of the usual greetings of his time. He is not just saying hello, he is wishing them—giving them—the grace and peace of Christ. It seems like nothing, just an old-fashioned way to say hello, but it is not nothing. It is how Paul, and we, say one of the most important things we can say to one another, in the Christian faith.

Grace and peace be with you. Grace to you, and peace.

On Oct. 26 when our electoral synod chose me to serve as bishop, it was for me another experience of God's grace and an opportunity to step into Christ's peace.

I am grateful to everyone who was there that day, to everyone who prayed us through it near and far, to all of the candidates, to Archbishop Anne and the electoral procedures committee who led us through the work.

I'm in a transition, as we all are. Maybe your life is shifting in significant ways, too. I'm praying for all of you and I want my first word to be like Paul's word in his scriptural letters, grace and peace.

May God be gracious to you. May God be better to you, than you deserve.

That's not easy to say. We've been nurtured, and reared, and taught, that the fundamental principle in life is that everybody gets what she or he deserves. No more, no less. You get what you deserve. It seems the fair thing. And yet in these holy letters, Paul follows his master Jesus by saying, may God give you more and more and more than you deserve. More of the gifts and benefits that come from God! Some of us deserve the good things that come our way, most of us do not. Nor do we really deserve the bad things that come our way most of the time. This is not the point, it's bigger than

that.

The gift we have been given is God's own self. God reaches out to you and gives you what you need—Jesus. God's Word and Spirit are with us and there is no way to see that as something we deserve, it is simply the gift that makes us alive and the gift that makes us "church".

If I were running the world, I wouldn't do it this way. But I'm not running the world. I'm not running anything. Except for maybe in one way: I'm running, with you, to catch up to the Risen One who is alive in the world and going ahead of us in everything we do. I'm running to catch up to Jesus and the wind of the Spirit who is unleashing this grace and peace everywhere we turn.

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany: Jesus' call for us to change

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

By Rev. Steve Green

We have journeyed through the seasons of Advent, which bears a new liturgical year, with new thoughts, new expectations and with new reasons to celebrate the First and Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour.

We have celebrated the birth of our Lord and Saviour. With the Christmastide, we were and are summoned to a God who comes to us and intimately understands us. Today, like the Magi, we come bearing our gifts. We come as well with new hurts, new heartaches, new concerns, struggles and new obstacles.

The season of Epiphany calls us to the manifestation of Jesus. An appearance that speaks again and again through our Holy Scriptures on Jesus' intentionality, His call for us to change, be changed and assured that He is The Way, The Truth and The Life! Amidst His Word, Will and Kingdom,

we live in a world where the busy-ness of life, work, family, friends and bills inundate us. We are in the throes of a new year, yet we are still welcomed into the Ever-loving and Ever-living grace, love, mercy, power and presence of a King who serves and sacrifices!

Most assuredly, we must deep dive into the readings that proclaim and profess Jesus' unveiling. Jesus calls and comes to us. We must come to Him. We must arrive, in our beautiful spaces and places of music, merriment and ministry, with the hopeful expectations that Jesus is the Great I AM.

We come with our hurts and habits; Jesus assures us His holiness and wholeness (Ephesians 4:24). We come with fatigue and moments of fault; Jesus comforts us with His faithfulness and friendship (John 15:12-17). We come discouraged of the things we did and did not do; Jesus hold us and speaks deliverance (Psalm 34:4, 2 Corinth 10:3-4). We



are to come as we are and He will come, each and every time bearing His peace, comfort, strength and forgiveness.

As we walk in His faithfulness and salvation, let us come with the extravagant hope of our Lord and Saviour. Let us

enter our churches, His holy presence, our lives with the awesome expectations that we serve and worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Gift of God, Emmanuel.

Rev. Steve Green is AFP Huron Executive.

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Euthanasia should never be a default decision

HCN with Dr. Theo Boer, the Dutch theologian and the professor of health care ethics, at the MAiD consultations for Canadian Anglicans in London, Ontario

Legalization of euthanasia is an outcome of a democratic process that we should respect but having medically assisted dying legalized does not mean that the moral discussions should stop.

This is one of the main take-aways from a two-day theological consultation on medical assisted dying for Canadian Anglicans organized by Huron's Centre for Public Theology (November 29-30) and certainly the key component in the presentations of one of its most distinguished protagonists Dr. Theo Boer.

The Dutch theologian and the professor of health care ethics shared his views on medical assisted dying which includes ten years of studying euthanasia cases in the Netherlands where he was a member of the Euthanasia Review Committee. This involvement gives him a unique perspective to weigh in on moral consequences of the euthanasia law:

"All too often a legal arrangement is the end of a moral discussion and the legal arrangement establishes new norms where we tend to forget that the law is a result of weighing different values. My point is that with euthanasia we should always be aware that this is never an easy decision, not even for those who are for it."

Changing the fabric of our society

Dr. Boer warns that legalizing euthanasia has become one of those decisions which could potentially change the very fabric of our society. In his own words, we live in a culture in which death has become "a solution to any unbearable suffering."

"Euthanasia is becoming a default way to die, rather than a last resort", he says pointing to the increase in the number of euthanasia cases in the Netherlands that he followed and studied as a member of the Euthanasia Review Committee from 2005 to 2014.

During the first years the numbers have been steady and the reasons why people would have euthanasia were limited to terminally ill patients. But after



Medical assisted dying is a topic that requires constant discussions: Dr. Theo Boer

a couple of years, the increase in euthanasia cases was evident – in the end they tripled reaching close to 7,000 per year (plus a considerable grey zone) despite robust safeguards that the Dutch law on euthanasia contained. According to his research, the reasons why people opted for medically assisted dying also expanded and this has led him to believe "that euthanasia is very hard to contain."

"What I have seen is that supply of euthanasia, as I call it, will create its demand. From an exception, from the last resort to prevent a terrible death, euthanasia has become the last resort to prevent a terrible life", says Dr. Boer.

Explaining the process in more details he warns that a country like the Netherlands needs only a couple of years "to become used to the whole idea of an orchestrated death." Once that has happened, says Dr. Boer, the process of normalization occurs, "where people think that death becomes a project."

"Not only as a Christian, but also as a secular thinker, I believe that it is dangerous to see death as something that is in our hands. Even for secular people, there are certain things that happen to you, because if they don't happen to you, it's humans deciding who lives and who dies, and I'd rather have nature deciding about it", concludes Dr. Boer.

The Canadian process: too short for a good discussion

For the participants of the consultation it was certainly interesting to see where the

Canadian law on euthanasia stands when compared with the decades of the Dutch involvement with this contentious issue.

In his two presentations on November 30, Dr. Theo Boer reminded his audience that the Dutch process was quite long and that it included several decades of debate within the Dutch Christian (Protestant) community. In comparison, the Canadian process of legalizing euthanasia "has been very short and has been very politicized."

Dr. Boer mentions the recent (September 2019) ruling of the Quebec Superior Court which states that restricting medically assisted dying only to people who have terminal illness is unconstitutional.

"As much as I respect the court in Quebec – that's one judge who decides that euthanasia should be available to all categories of patients", says Dr. Boer arguing that the process was further politicized by the Prime Minister's decision not to appeal the ruling.

"Any government should be poised to defend its own laws. The government, in my opinion, should have appealed to the Supreme Court and if the Supreme Court would have said yes, then it's a different matter", explains Dr. Boer.

Consequently, says Dr. Boer, in a very short period of time euthanasia has not only become legal in Canada but it has been extended to chronic patients and will be to people with advanced dementia. This clearly shows that "a couple of years is way too short for a good, thorough discussion."

Is euthanasia a patient's right?

Dr. Boer also comments on the position of physicians and other medical professionals. In the Netherlands, says Dr. Boer, they already feel "undue and growing pressure to do euthanasia".

"In Holland, officially it's still the physician who makes a decision – of course, upon the patient's request – but what the physicians become increasingly critical of is that patients

We live in a culture in which death is a solution to any unbearable suffering.

- Dr. Theo Boer

How to reach a decision?

"I can imagine that we incidentally would condone a euthanasia decision but never as a default and never ever as a decision that goes without a moral unease", says Dr. Boer.

This difficult decision, in Dr. Boer's opinion, should be reached by "weighing on one hand a patient's autonomy and compassion and on the other hand that life is worthy of protection and that we should not be killing without a very, very good reason."

Understanding fully what this balance implies means recognizing the context of different values we need to consider when reaching the decision to end one's life: the value we find in natural death; the value in learning how to cope with our vulnerabilities and difficulties; and the value of hope in human life.

presuppose that euthanasia is their right and that performing euthanasia is the doctors' duty", says Dr. Boer.

Despite the increased pressure from patients, doctors in Holland are still able to make their own decision: a doctor is free to do it or not to do it; a doctor is free to refer it to a willing colleague or not to refer it.

This, again, calls for a comparison with the Canadian position, where the doctor who refuses to perform euthanasia has duty to refer it to a willing colleague.

"Why would you have duty to do this if you think that euthanasia is wrong? How can you be obliged to refer to somebody else to do what in your eyes is a wrongness?", asks Dr. Boer.

Euthanasia and palliative care

Another question that has been raised in the London discussions was if legalizing euthanasia could influence the quality of palliative care.

As a country which has first introduced the law on euthanasia, the Netherlands has received so much outside criticism "that we have done our utmost to make sure that the level of palliative care would become better and better."

However, says Dr. Boer, there are some indications that the quality of palliative care could be in jeopardy in the future.

"One of my friends, a physician who regularly euthanizes his patients, says that if he got a cancer he would prefer to be taken into a non-Dutch hospital, because he knows that in other countries they would do anything to make him comfortable whereas in Dutch hospitals the availability of euthanasia may discourage us from seeking the best care", says Dr. Boer.

He also knows of a patient whose insurance company on two occasions indicated that it would not pay for a life-saving medicine, and then recommended her to request

euthanasia. And although in the Netherlands people, including politicians, are very much against such mechanisms that would favour euthanasia over palliative care his opinion is that "euthanasia would never be good for a country like US."

Church and euthanasia

As for the Church and its position, the Dutch theologian agrees that the Church should respect the fact that there is a secular law that allows euthanasia, but he also insists that within the law the Church has the right to act within its own values. The Church, says Dr. Boer, should stress hope and community and should very much support palliative care.

"The public task of the Church should be to stress the fact that euthanasia is never a one-dimensional decision.

The Church should remind the country that it is at best the outcome of a conflict of values or a conflict of duties", elaborates Dr. Boer. As soon as a society thinks that euthanasia is a one-dimensional decision, in which there is only patient's autonomy, the Church needs to indicate that there are moral values, such as that the active and intentional killing of a human person remains a last resort, that vulnerable people should be protected, and that palliative care should be better.

His final message brings us back again to the necessity of the constant discussions in the matter of terminating one's life before its natural end:

"Keep talking and do not forget that we as Christians believe that the world is one world, that the world is God's world, and if something goes wrong in these discussions, we have to say, be careful, something is happening that should not be happening. And we should never forget that being vulnerable does not include only terminally ill, people with chronic pain or with psychiatric issues and dementia. We are all vulnerable."

Davor Milicevic

Canadian statistics on euthanasia 2016-2018

According to Health Canada's latest report which covers the period down to the Fall of 2018, the numbers of patients receiving MAiD have more than doubled annually since the legislation was introduced, with a total of nearly 7,000 deaths down to October 2018 reported. MAiD is often occurring in people's homes (42%), at a rate only slightly below the hospitals (44%).

Patients requesting MAiD are spread across age groups; though the average age of people requesting MAiD is 72, deaths are reported from age 18. The single largest medical circumstance reported is Cancer (64%), with Heart and Lung (16%) and Neurodegenerative conditions (11%) making up most of the remaining cases.

Reconciling Circle: we are all treaty people



Rev. Ros Elm is the Diocesan Animator for Reconciliation and Indigenous Ministry

Two hundred years of Christ Church, Amherstburg...



Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, at the service in Amherstburg on December 1, 2019

Christ Church, Amherstburg celebrated its 200th anniversary on Sunday, December 1.

With Archbishop Linda Nicholls leading worship, Christ Church rang in the liturgical new year with Advent and gathered to acknowledge the long history of the community and to commit to a bright future.

Rev. Hana Scorrar

We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of Residential Schools, and why apologies to former Residential School Students, their families, and communities were necessary.

(TRC Call to Action #59)

From page 1

The Circle's aim is to raise awareness amongst non-Indigenous people of issues facing Indigenous communities through education and constructive dialogue. Its ultimate goal is to build a framework for reconciliation through understanding and valuing aspects of our respective cultures. Its focus is on developing and promoting initiatives during Treaties Recognition Week.

This year, the Circle collaborated with Music for the Spirit to host 'Resurgence', a public forum at the Community Hall at Ohsweken, Six Nations of the Grand River, on Sunday November 3. Music for the Spirit is a youth led community initiative coordinated by Richelle Miller (MFTS). It is a holistic arts and culture programming which involves traditional teachings, social dance and contemporary meaning-making through music and the visual arts. Accompanying Music for the Spirit was Archbishop Mark MacDonald who spoke on the importance of indigenous spirituality as a means of restoring indige-

nous identity. Refreshments followed, including delicious corn soup.

On Tuesday November 5, St John's Lutheran Church in Hamilton hosted the Kairos Blanket Exercise.

The following evening, the Reconciling Circle collaborated with a Brantford-based group Friends and Neighbours of Save the Evidence Campaign to host a public lecture at Wilfred Laurier University by Dr. David MacDonald on his recent book, *The sleeping giant awakens: genocide, Indian residential schools and the challenge of conciliation*.

Faith Lutheran and St. Mark's, Brantford, co-hosted a screening of the documentary recently released by the national Church, *Doctrine of discovery: stolen lands, strong hearts* on Thursday November 7. Rev. Rosalyn Elm, the Diocese's recently appointed part-time Animator for Reconciliation and Indigenous Ministry facilitated a lively and insightful discussion afterwards. St. John's Lutheran in Hamilton also screened the documentary the following evening.

The Circle is especially grateful for the ways in which these

events are helping us move beyond learning about relations. By God's grace, bridges of relationship are forming evidenced by the increasing numbers of indigenous sisters and brothers participating in the initiatives.

We often hear that when it comes to reconciliation, non-indigenous and indigenous folk don't know where to start. Whilst Treaties Recognition Week continues to travel under the radar for many in this province, it does provide an opportunity for each of us to learn more about the various treaties, and the rights and responsibilities contained therein. It can be an early step in understanding and appreciating that we are all treaty people, called to walk together.

For more info visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/reconcilingcircle/>

<https://www.reconcilingcircle.com>

Ven. Tim Dobbin is the Archdeacon of Brant/Norfolk and rector at St. Mark's, Brantford

Photos: Tim Dobbin and Peter Mogk

... and 75 years of St. George's, Goderich



In 1834, thirty-three years before Confederation, Rev. Robert Francis Campbell arrived in Goderich with his wife and four daughters to begin a ministry which continues today at St. George's Anglican Church. Services then were held in a log school house, and later a barn, before the first church was built in 1843.

The church stood proudly overlooking Lake Huron for 36 years. A week following the consecration of a debt free church by Bishop Isaac Hellmuth, the church burned. The present church at the corner of North Street and Nelson Street was built in 1880.

In celebration of its 185 year history of ministry, two days of events were planned for the weekend of September 7 and 8. When the doors opened for a tour and Open House of the church on Saturday, visitors were greeted with an array of displays. A power point presentation highlighted the messages portrayed in the murals painted in 1930, but rarely recognized due to their location. A desk donated by the family and originally belonging to Bishop Benjamin Cronyn was featured. Slates from the church roof, which had been painted by local artists and promoted as a fundraiser at an Art Gala to help cover the cost of a new roof in 2010, were on display.

Of interest was an Autograph Quilt made in 1944 as a fundraiser by the St. Andrew's Ward Guild. Members of the church and community paid ten cents to have their name embroidered on the quilt. All 362 names have now been recorded. The quilt remained in the Scruton/Carroll family until recently when it was donated back to the church. It will be given to the Huron County Museum.

On display in the former chapel were the pictures of all the previous rectors of St. George's Church. Scrapbooks and photo albums were open for visitors to browse through...

By celebrating 185 years of continuous parish life, the importance of the church in the narrative of the town of Goderich and county of Huron, is remembered. As our rector, The Venerable Kim Van Allen said of its 185 years of service, "We can see its impact when we look at its history, but it is still happening now."

Eleanor Smith



Music for the Spirit is a youth led community initiative

The reason for the Season



My love for St. James, Paris began almost 80 years ago. Our family attended St. James and I was in the junior choir. A picture of my brother and I in our church outfits is still on my bedroom wall.

Due to the death of my mother, we moved from Paris and in 1954 I married my beautiful wife, Joan, and we recently celebrated our 65th anniversary.

Just prior to our 50th anniversary, St. Stephen's Church in Brantford closed and we were on the search for another

church. I suggested that we go to St. James in Paris as I had enjoyed it so much when I was a boy. My wife agreed and we were warmly welcomed by Father Bob Schroeder and MANY parishioners.

Thirteen years ago, I suggested to Joan that we invite our entire family to a Sunday 10:30 service. Our entire family (about 15 then) came. Then I suggested to Joan that we invite them all again on the first Sunday in December each year and call it "The Reason for the Season".

The idea caught on and we will celebrate year 13 this year and there are almost 2 dozen of us now.

We have a great day with family; church in the morning followed by lunch in the parish hall. We retire to our home to socialize some more and we give our family all their Christmas gifts to take home with them.

I suggest that other families adopt our "Reason for the Season" idea.

Ken Simmons, St. James Church, Paris Ontario.

Tuesday mornings at St. James' in St. Mary's

Tuesday mornings at St. James' in St. Mary's you will find 20 to 35 people gathered in the parish hall. They meet to make prayer blankets, milk bag blankets and just to socialize. They are a mixed group with some from St. James but many not. Joy fills the air.

As able, people donate money for the coffee and treats. Half of this money is put aside for PWRDF. Over the last two years, enough has been raised to purchase three farms!



Rev. Jenny, Arlene Callendar, PWRDF representative, Wayne Norris, parish treasurer, and Liz Jeffrey, organizer.

Two stories from Chatham



Ron Hunter and CK Police Services Rep.

Human Trafficking Go Bags

Ron Hunter from Christ Church in Chatham recently presented 24 "Go Bags" for rescued victims of human trafficking to the Chatham-Kent Police Dept. and the O.P.P. Both departments were very grateful to receive the backpacks. Parishioners donated all items for the backpacks and the Go Bags will be an ongoing outreach project for Christ Church in Chatham.

CK Remembers Vigil

The response to the third annual Vigil was once again overwhelming. Individuals from every walk of life in the community volunteered to stand vigil at the Cenotaph for four days leading up to Remembrance Day to honour the men and women who sacrificed so much for our country and our freedom. The Vigil was held from 7 am until 10 pm every day beginning Thursday, November 7th and continued through the weekend leading up to the Remembrance Day service held on Monday, November 11th. This annual event is co-sponsored by Christ Church Chatham and Branch 642 Royal Canadian Legion with support from Revera Retirement Homes in Ridgeway and Blenheim.

Deborah Carrall, Parish Coordinator at Christ Church, Chatham

Alpha at the Inn



Trinity, Sarnia

The twelve-week journey through Alpha is over. The score of participants met at the Inn of the Good Shepherd, Sarnia on September 12 and in the course of the next 12 weeks they were treated with excellent volunteer prepared meals; they watched documentary style videos and talked.

This was the second time Alpha was hosted at the Inn of the Good Shepard – prior to that it was hosted five times at Trinity Anglican Church – with a simple goal: reaching out into

the community and hoping to engage with a new crowd.

Alpha starts from the premise that guests are either curious about the Christian faith, or their lives have reached a precipice of despair, or are simply looking for something deeper than the superficial satisfaction of consumption, or the transient delights of hedonism. There is no prequalification, wherever you are is good.

We were a mix of middle-class churchy folk and patrons of the food bank and soup kitchen, but met as equals

in the body of Christ. Each brought their story of hope and of loss, of joy and sadness, of loneliness and friendship. Money and materialism are no guide to dealing with the storms of life. The videos spoke of the worldwide experience of Jesus Christ in people's lives; we heard from academics and experts, from clergy and on-the-street interviews, from the destitute barely clinging to life, and from the successful struggling to find purpose. Most of all, we talked and shared and explored and prayed a little.

Some dropped away, it always happens. Some had an epiphany, finally found the truth for which they had been searching. For me it was an affirmation of an inner conviction, and a journey outside my comfort zone. Alpha is not a course, there is no graduation certificate. Some only attended the last session, but will watch for the repeat next year, or sample the videos on You Tube. As the name implies, it is a beginning. The small group format spawns friendships and commitments, what happens next is up to you. And God.

Mike Tanner, Trinity Anglican, Sarnia

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

Consider your duty as a Mother of the Earth



wonder but not without death as well as life. A system in balance ... until He created us.

He may have given us "dominion: over his creation, but I doubt that he is happy with our garbage and pollution. Microplastics in every sea creature. Toxins accumulating in our bodies. Mother Nature has been good to us. It is time that we helped her out. It is time that we became Earth Mothers.

Women have a great deal of control over the running of their households. We buy most of the groceries and products. We bring into our homes the stuff that becomes garbage or recyclables, depending on our choices. As Earth Mothers, we can choose to buy products in biodegradable or recyclable packaging. Earth Mothers can set up convenient recycling and re-using processes for their families. Many municipalities have blue box and green bin programs. Learn the rules for your municipality on what can go in your blue box. Make a practice of using your green bin and yard waste bags. Divert as much as possible from the garbage. Make a plan to gradually increase the recycling in your home. Make a list – check it twice – of "do-ables" for your home and yard ... and family. Be practical. Take small steps. Whittle away at that list. Get your family involved. Talk about what you need to do together.

Consider your duty as a Mother of the Earth. Each of us must take on a role in preserving our environment. What can you do? What are you willing to do? What can you do at home or at work or at church? Environmental issues exist in each facet of our lives. It could be choosing biodegradable coffee filters, cosmetics in recyclable containers or personal hygiene

products friendly to the environment. You had good intentions when you bought that juicer – make use of it. Eat healthier foods. Use those recipes you have collected to make things tastier. We have the tools at hand. Use them. Act on those good intentions. The world needs each of us to be an Earth Mother. God needs us to be. Start now. Practice good environmental stewardship. We need to do this. We need to take responsibility. We need to do what we can to restore paradise ... for our children and for our children's children.

God continues to do his part. After all, know that beneath the snow and ice, the seeds and roots are dormant but ready to burst forth in Spring. It is a wonder that things that appear to be frozen solid are still alive; things that seem dead, can be revived. It's late but not too late. God's plan. A mystery, maybe, but isn't it marvelous? We can be a part of that. Let's try.

Bonnie G. Rees, President
ACW Diocesan Council



In Memory

London Deanery
St. Paul's Cathedral
Amy Scott

Upcoming A.C.W. 2020 Annual Meeting & Conference (more info to follow)

Bishop's Friends - Essex Deanery



Essex Deanery celebrated a wintery Bishop's Friends at the Sportsman's Club in Amherstburg. Guests enjoyed a delicious feast of appetizers, a silent auction, and many Christmas-themed bad jokes.

Archbishop Linda Nicholls was in attendance and taught us the very important differences between the Primate of Canada and a primate.

Text and photo:
Rev. Hana Scorrar



SAVE the DATE: March 6-8th 2020

CALLING all Cursillistas to Mount Mary Retreat Centre, Ancaster to RECHARGE yourself

Key note speaker: the Rev. Dr. Lizette Larson-Millar, Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Huron University College

- *reconnect to what fuels your spiritual journey
- *participate in worship and singing
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- *enjoy fine meals and snacks
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PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS



Photo: M.J. Idzerda

Rev. Deacon Shirely Doney with Archbishop Colin R. Johnson, November 30, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Ontario.

Ordinations

Ms. Shirley Doney was ordained a Deacon at a service of Ordination held on the Feast of the Saint Andrew the Apostle, on Saturday, November 30th at the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, London. Shirley was titled Deacon with Special Responsibility for Outreach, Church of the Epiphany, Woodstock.

The Reverend Hana Scorrar was ordained a Priest at a service of Ordination held on the Commemoration of Clement of Alexandria, Thursday, December 5th at St. James (Westminster), London.

Rest in Peace

Mr. Ron Humphreys died peacefully on November 24, survived by his daughter, the Ven. Jane Humphreys, son-in-law, the Rev'd Gordon Maitland and their family.

Visitation was held at 10am on Saturday, November 30 at Cresmount Funeral Home, 322 Fennell Ave. E., Hamilton and the service was held at 11am.

Mrs. Shirley Peck, the wife of The Right Reverend Jack Peck died on November 4. The Funeral Liturgy was held on Thursday, November 7 at

11am at St. Mary's, (Walker-ville), 1983 Mary's Gate, Windsor.

The Reverend Elizabeth (Liz) Chaplin died on October 30th. Liz was ordained a deacon in November 2002 and served as a deacon at St. John's, Leamington until her retirement in 2015.

Visitation took place at the Reid Funeral Home & Reception Centre, 14 Russell Street, Leamington on Sunday from 2-5 and 7-9 pm. The funeral liturgy was held at the funeral home on Monday, November 4, 2019 at 11 am.

Consecration of the 14th Bishop of Huron

St. Paul's Cathedral, London
Saturday, January 25, 2020

Letters to the editor

Worshipping too small a god

(December edition - D. Milicevic: *Having no religion in Canada*; S. Brouillard-Coyle: *I am "Trans Enough"*)

In this edition of the Huron Church News, I see a connection between your article on page 5 and Sydney Brouillard-Coyle's on page 8. To me both point to our worshipping too small a god.

Sydney's discussion about trans and pronouns speaks to moving beyond the traditional genders. Yours about religious "nones" speaks to a growing religious wasteland.

The connection for me is the Anglican Church's dogged insistence on worshipping using centuries old language for God as He/he. God is not a He/he/or even a She/she. God is not a glorified "us" - a being. God is the ground of being.

We are created in God's image and God is unknowable. Jesus the Christ is the gracious incarnation of our Cosmic Creator who is Spirit, who is Love, who is Truth. Humanity's problems are just far too dangerous, complex and immense for any church to worship a too small god and expect to be relevant - it just won't cut it.

John Ridout MAMS (Regis College), St. Thomas the Apostle Anglican Church, Cambridge ON

The elephant in the room

(*Having no religion in Canada*)
Your piece on the research of Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme in the current Huron Church News is the most interesting I've read about this subject

in a long time. In fact since Reginald Bibby's research of about twenty years ago. Of what she had to say, her recommendation that we study what people are as opposed to what they aren't, struck me as the most insightful.

The growing number of 'nones' has serious implications for many churches, the Anglican Church in particular, with its aging population. The elephant in the room.

I'd like to see less emphasis on religion and more on spirituality when discussing this topic. (...)

It's unfortunate that Ms. Wilkins-Laflamme's presentation was limited to Anglican editors. Thoughtful Anglicans everywhere would benefit from it.

Doug Field, St. John's, Tillsonburg ON

Very well said, Keith Nethery!

(October edition - Rev. Canon Keith Nethery: *Are we done or are we just getting started?*)

To ALL readers - including lay reader's, Deacons, Priests, Bishops, etc., etc. If you haven't read Keith Nethery's column in the October issue of the HCN, and even if you already have, please go back and read it again.

If everyone thought like that, the Anglican Church wouldn't be in the problem it is today - in fact, our congregations would swell 100 fold.

Don't just contemplate on his ideas, put them into action. PDQ!! Thank you Keith. Very well said!!

Barbara Dow

God calls us to transforming discipleship for the sake of the world. Come learn more!

Open to everyone, **Renison Institute of Ministry's** courses and events offer participants supportive and interactive learning experiences led by passionate and knowledgeable instructors. Saturdays at Renison!

Upcoming courses

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starting Jan. 11, 2020 with Mr. Jeremy Frost

Wisdom of the Saints—How shall we then live? Glean answers to that question from a (very personal) selection of sayings and texts from within the Christian tradition.

starting Jan. 18, 2020 with Rev'd Dr. Patrick Patterson

Great Literature of Asian Religions—Respond to primary texts from some of the major religious traditions of South and East Asia.

starting Jan. 18, 2020 with Mr. Jeremy Frost

New Testament as Story—Examine the role the New Testament played in establishing the dominance of the written word in our culture.

starting Jan. 18, 2020 with Dr. Davor Milicevic; note new start date

Course cost: \$250.00

Upcoming events

Check the website or call for information about upcoming one-day workshops including Creating Space with Daily Prayer; Prophetic Voices: Israel's prophets and the struggle for justice, and more!

Workshop cost: \$20.00 (individual rate), \$50.00 (congregational rate)

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Good News from HCC!



Happy New Year!

While the camp sleeps under a cover of snow, very dedicated volunteers plan, dream and work to prepare for the upcoming camp season.

By the time you read this we will be beginning to hire our summer staff. It is always such an exciting time! Did you know that most of our team have grown up at the camp? They can't wait to get back to HCC to develop skills and experience that will contribute to their continued education and future life adventures.

Online registration opens January 20, 2020 at 6pm. Go to www.huronchurchcamp.ca

Please consider registering as soon as possible as it will help us in planning our programs, especially those with limited enrolment - Leader in Training and Senior Camp. This year we are adding a few exciting incentives - an early bird discount and a discount for signing up with a friend. Please check the website for details.

Our theme this summer is Joy and Wonder. We are looking forward to exploring God's gifts to us in creation as we marvel at the starry night sky, splash and swim in Lake Huron and walk along its sandy shores and sing and dance and play and pray with friends both old and new.

Keep watching for more updates! Don't forget to check out our website and if you have any questions please contact us at 519-434-6893 x 217 or huronchurchcamp@gmail.com

Rev. Gerry Adam

Open House

Curious about Programs for You at Huron?

Save the Date!

Join Us and Learn More

Saturday, March 14, 2020

- ✓ Learn about our degrees (Bachelor's, Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Arts in Theology)
- ✓ Learn about our Licentiate in Theology certificate and our non-credit offerings
- ✓ Meet our faculty and students
- ✓ Part-time vs. Full-time
- ✓ Your questions
- ✓ Tour Huron, and more!

Register for More Details

Faculty of Theology
Huron@Western, London, ON
Huronatwestern.ca/theology-open-house
srice@uwu.ca; 519.438.7224, x289



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to Transforming Discipleship for the Sake of the World

Upcoming Courses

Your Choice: first day of a class for a sampling (audit), all meetings of a course (non-credit), or all meetings of a course (for credit toward LTh program)

Islam for Christian Leaders

with Dr. Mahmoud Haddara

—Five Oaks Retreat Centre, Paris; Jan. 18, 2020; 10 am – 4:30 pm

Praying with the Mystics: Modern Mystics

with Dr. Helen Butlin

—St. Aidan's Church, London; Jan. 18; Feb. 8, Mar. 7, 2020; 9 am-3:30 pm

Praying with the Mystics: Ancient Mystics

with Dr. Helen Butlin

—St. Aidan's Church, London; Mar. 21, 28, Apr. 4, 2020; 9 am – 3:30 pm

Spiritual Retreat

—Five Oaks Retreat Centre, Paris; July 5 evening to July 7, 2020 noon (accomm. cost tba)

Cost: Your choice: \$75 for audit first day of course, \$150 for audit of all of a course's meetings, or \$300 for all a course's meetings for credit toward LTh.

To Register or for More Details

Rev. Janet Anstead
Coordinator of Continuing Education & Non-degree Programs
Huron @ Western, London, ON
www.huronuc.ca/lth
jmanstead@rogers.com or 226.268.2003

Huron and Renison University College work in partnership to provide courses for the Licentiate in Theology (LTh) program.



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How to stay connected: adopt a program in Amazonia

By Stephanie Donaldson

In March of 2014 when Bishop Bob Bennett established our covenant with The Diocese of Amazonia it was to be about relationships and a union of equals. Since 2014 we have not lost our focus.

This relationship has seen two bishops in Huron and soon to be a third, with the consecration of bishop-elect Rev. Canon Dr. Todd Townshend. In Amazonia we have known two bishops, Right Rev. Saulo Barros, first bishop of the newly created diocese, and Bishop Marinez R Santos Bassotto. Today our mission remains a coming together of equals to love and support one another.

There are different ways that we, here in Huron, can all contribute to this.

One way is to include our sisters and brothers in Amazonia in our intercessory prayer. That



Staying in touch: Ven. Tim Dobbin and Rev. Jenny Sharp with their friends in Amazonia

is a powerful connectedness.

Another, if you are on Facebook, like their facebook page: diocese anglicana da amazonia, to introduce yourselves and comment on their posts, connecting yourselves to the rhythm of their life as they share it. They love hearing from us.

With this Companion Diocese relationship money is not the primary focus but when they are trying to fund projects it helps. Many of their clergy are non-stipendry, money is tight,

so very tight. They do so much good with so little and take great joy in all that they do.

Currently the Diocese of Amazonia has three ambitious projects on the go.

The congregation in Icoaraci has been running a music program for children and youth. This keeps the young people off of the streets and give them a skill that they can take pride in. For the past ten years these faithful people have been meeting in each other's homes.

They saved up their money and bought a property. They are currently building a multi-purpose facility that will be suitable for worship and also have space for the very successful music program. St. Mark's Church in Brantford has taken on this project and would welcome other partners to join them in adopting Icoaraci.

A second project in Ulianapolis is a Before and After School Program which currently meets in the church. This program offers the children a snack - a meal that many of these children desperately need. They have outgrown the space and are building a new facility which includes an office for the priest complete with a cot to sleep on. This avoids having to put the priest up in a costly hotel as Ulianapolis is an eight hour drive from Belem.

The third project takes place at St. Luke' Church in Belem: a

sports program for youth who live in a very bad district. These young people lack things to keep them off of the streets and very often turn to crime.

Huron congregations, parishes, regional ministries or deaneries could partner to take on a project. This will create partnerships with Amazonia and right here at home. We will then truly be in relationship with one another both domestically and abroad.

Please contact Rev. Jenny Sharp and myself, as co-chairs of the Companion Diocese Committee, with your thoughts and ideas. We will then dialogue with Bishop Marinez to make sure that our unbridled enthusiasm is truly meeting their needs and concerns.

We welcome all that you want to bring to us and can be reached by email: jennysharp@diohuron.org and juniper@hay.net .

Students of context

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

When you read the word "context", what comes to mind?

According to the Oxford dictionary context is "the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood." We have all experienced context in our everyday activities. For example, if we decide to visit the grocery store on a Saturday afternoon, we are more likely to find it busier than it would be on a Monday evening at 8pm. The timing of our visit is part of the context and explains what we encounter when there. This kind of context we grasp easily.

What however, of the context of the Church in 2020? It



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.

comes as no surprise to anyone that the Church is operating these days in a context that is quite different from that of our parents and grandparents. While the central role of the Church remains the same, directed by God to be the hands and feet of God at work in the world in all that we are and do, we do this in the context of a society where involvement with Church, or the pursuit of faith



for many is not a top priority. While at first this can be quite challenging, requiring us in the Church to adapt as we go, it can also provide us with extraordinary opportunities to be students of our context, directed by God's Spirit to understand in a new and fresh way, what lives in the hearts and minds of those around us, and how God's love and the truth of the Gospel continues to speak to

humanity in the midst of different contexts.

To be students of context however, takes time and attention, as we intentionally and prayerfully give ourselves to going out into our neighbourhoods and getting to know those around us. As is frequently the case, God, already at work, goes out before us, to show us the way, inviting us to join in that work. Reflecting theologically, that is connecting scripture and our interpretation of it to our everyday life and experiences, is central in our studies, and is at the heart of all the Education for Ministry groups in the diocese. So, we take up this task to which we have all been called, to stay awake to our context, perpetual students, learning and growing as we go.

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

Rev. Canon Val Kenyon is EfM Animator in Huron.



AFC awards \$520,000 in November 2019 grant cycle

Thanks to donors, AFC reached its goal of \$1,000,000 in disbursements to support ministry in Canada!

The Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) has announced \$520,000 in funding to support new projects across Canada in its November cycle of awards. AFC's board of directors met in Toronto on November 20-21, 2019 to review its strategic road map and begin to chart a new course for 2020-2023, in addition to awarding grants to over 40 applicants.

"At a time when it is possible to feel discouraged about current statistics about the future of the Anglican Church of Canada, AFC's Board of Directors is inspired to receive applications from all across the country for

project proposals that will build up faith communities," says the Rev. Canon Dr. Judy Rois, AFC's executive director. "I am encouraged by the resilience of Canadian Anglicans whose small buds of faith are springing up in imaginative and diverse ways to enhance ministry," she said.

In addition to infrastructure and restoration disbursements of \$318,000, AFC provided \$146,000 for innovative ministry projects, and \$47,750 for theological education bursaries. Additionally, AFC reached its goal for 2019 of giving away its \$100,000th dollar from the Kids Helping Kids Fund to support

before-school breakfast programs, after-school homework clubs, choir camps and hospice care for children. "When we support and nurture our children, we inspire cartwheels in their hearts."—Fred Rogers

From coast to coast to coast, the donations of Canadian Anglicans are making it possible to fund ministry of all kinds: educational resources for children and youth, theological education, musical composition, art installations, creative liturgies reflecting new realities of worshippers, and summer camps for young refugees to Canada.



What could we do better: challenging ourselves in a new year

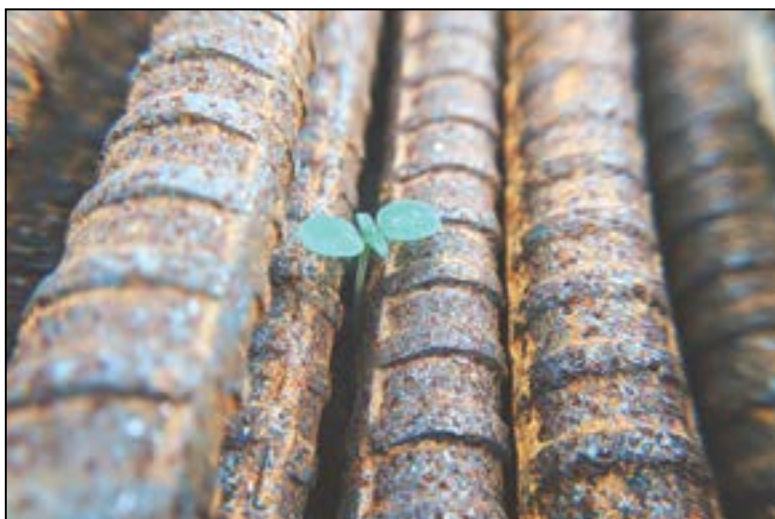
By Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle

As we enter into a new year, in fact, a new decade, space is created for us to challenge ourselves, to consider what we could and perhaps should do better.

New Year's resolutions are common and often take the form of a commitment to lose weight, give up problematic habits or simply be healthier. How often do we include in our self-reflection consideration about how we might be better disciples? What would it look like to establish resolutions for ourselves that invite us into new ways of living out our faith? To what extent could we use the Marks of Mission as a framework from which to challenge ourselves in 2020?

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom: How often do we talk about our faith with others? Some would say that religion and politics are two topics that should not be raised in polite conversation. While religion does provide some tools for living our faith, faith itself is an expression of our relationship with God which exists within and beyond religion. Faith is in our encounter with the Divine in a sunrise or sunset. Faith is seeing God

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



Faris Mohammed/Unsplash

in the face of others. Faith is found in those moments of struggle, grief and anxiety along with those moments of joy, grace and peace for which we can give thanks to God. How might we choose to share these moments with others this year?

To teach, baptise and nurture new believers: I have heard many parents lament that church is not a priority in the lives of their children and their grandchildren are not being baptised. What might it look like to share our faith in other

ways? How can we teach about God by example and witness? What books or movies might we share with others that could invite a conversation about faith? What moments in the Christian calendar might we observe together in creative ways that acknowledge God ongoing presence in this world? What more can we commit to do to better learn about God ourselves so that we can then share this with others?

To respond to human need by loving service: Needs surround us. There are those who

are lonely and long for a visit; those who live in poverty who long to have enough; those who are marginalised who long to feel accepted by the wider community; those who live in fear and long for safety. There are people in need all around us. What actions might we commit to do to lovingly respond to these needs this year?

To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation: There is much about life that isn't fair. Companies put profits before people. Governments balance budgets sometimes at the expense of those who are vulnerable. We prioritise the interests of some over the needs of others. Life isn't fair in ways that fail to respect the dignity of every human being. It has become easier to be aware of these injustices. As we are challenged by people's stories, how do we respond? To what extent have we participated in petitions, awareness raising, protests, letter writing, social media advocacy and the multitude of other ways now available in which to challenge and invite change? What commitments can we make for 2020 to engage in advocacy alongside those who are marginalised?

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth: God's creation is beautiful. When God created everything had its place and its purpose. Have you had the opportunity to truly appreciate the wonder of a native garden and the incredible diversity it brings? Have you seen the devastation of human waste on beaches and in waterways? The contrast is striking. What commitments could you make in 2020 to reduce waste, promote sustainable practices and nurture the beauty of what God intended?

As we move into 2020, we are gifted with an invitation to reflect and resolve. What resolutions will you make? To what extent will these resolutions be an expression of a desire to be a better disciple of Jesus? How will you hold yourself accountable in the days, weeks, and months to come? Let us pray that, inspired by Emmanuel, God with us as experienced in the wonder and joy of the Christmas season we may continually seek to be examples of God's loving presence in our commitments for the coming year and beyond. Amen.

Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle is the Social and Ecological Justice Huron chair.

chrisbrouillardcoyle@diohuron.org

"Hollowing out": why Church matters

By Ven. Graham Bland

Lament in our Church troubles my soul ... it's about our numerical decline and loss of ground.

It's troubling because it only partially describes our predicament ... It does not propose reasons except 'factors beyond our control', demographic or cultural. But are there factors we can control?

On November 15, former US ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, spoke of a "hollowing out" of the US State Department, because of a loss of clarity about why diplomacy matters.

"Hollowing out" echoes our lament about empty churches. Perhaps we are hollowing out because we have lost clarity, too, about why church matters?

This is a question the brothers of the Society of St. John the Evangelist are inviting this coming Lent. It's a good question.

Doesn't church matter because "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it"? (Psalm 24) Aren't we here to serve the earth by embodying the astounding word and reality



Ulash Borah/Unsplash

of God's Love? Isn't that why church matters?

Recently, I asked Rev. Rosalyn Elm how settlers can make amends for land they took – by more than land acknowledgements. She said, "Give it back, how 'bout'?"

Ouch! I took her seriously and considered long-term leases on the land. Then she

admitted, "I was just messing with you." She went on, "Even if we acquire land back (it's not ours by the way) it would not make whole our people who have lost so much. Spiritually and philosophically the church represents being made new...a new creation. New life from the dead. Gesture upon gesture, we have to find new ways of being

Generous living for the new creation is not about giving a lot, or even a proportion of all that has been entrusted to us ... Generosity is about giving only what doesn't belong to us ... which is all we are and have!

together, working and living brand new..."

Amen! That applies on so many levels.

The Church, in this fractured world, is a living reminder of God's new creation.

Church matters because it:

- 1) is an agent of renewal in the world;
- 2) searches out God's will – in study, prayer, respectful speaking and listening;
- 3) stands with courage for what God's Love is doing in the world, over against all that threatens Love;
- 4) offers the life-renewing Way of Jesus to the world.

Get some people together – maybe your family over Sunday dinner – and talk about this: Church Matters because ...

That may lead you to decisions about how you will live out your calling. Those deci-

sions could mark the end of the "hollowing out" and a renewed "fullness of life" for the Church.

Why say all this in a "Stewardship" article? Well, it's because church matters. Because church matters, because God's new creation matters, we will give ourselves generously to it – the time, gifts and money that have been entrusted to us.

Generous living for the new creation is not about giving a lot, or even a proportion of all that has been entrusted to us ... Generosity is about giving only what doesn't belong to us ... which is all we are and have!

To give yourself is to be fully human. To give yourself is simply the way to live.

The Ven. Graham Bland is the Chair of Stewardship Committee and Archdeacon of Saugeens.

Reaping and sowing: are we truly in charge?



AS I SEE IT

REV. JIM INNES



Coley Christine/Unsplash

It's late October, and I can't help but enjoy the splashes of red and orange as I drive the backroads to my parish. I have also noticed the tall, flawlessly-even, height of yellowing corn stalks as well as the bounty of soybean hanging substantially beneath their withered-leaves. It's undoubtedly that time of year when the familiar words 'we reap what we sow' are visually explicit.

'We reap what we sow' is a saying most commonly used to emphasize that there are predictable consequences to our actions. Notably, and

most simplistically, if we plant a 'good' seed, we will reap a 'good' harvest, and if we plant a 'bad' seed, we will reap a 'bad' harvest.

In the farming world, where the reaping and sowing metaphor is taken from, there are so many uncontrollable post-sowing variables that seed has undergone much genetic experimentation. And this research is not just about developing resili-

ence to Mother Nature's many uncertainties, but an attempt to improve the sowing vs. reaping balance; such that sowing a particular hybrid seed can now harvest more than ever.

Despite all attempts to control the variables, once we have sown the seed, anything can happen. The painstaking chore of the sowing of good seed doesn't necessarily mean that there will be a harvestable crop. Not even the ebb and flow of the growing season is predictable. Spring is coming earlier, and the freeze of winter is less intense. All of which affect change in many life cycle events.

Every farmer knows the trouble in predicting the outcome of a harvest. And the uncertainty implicit in nature can be discouragingly uncontrollable. It must be said, that to be a successful farmer is to become more resilient than the seed they sow.

And to confuse matters more, even when there is a good harvest, we can't be ever sure there is a need for it. Which, unfortunately, is an issue facing some Canadian farmers this year. They have grown a generous bounty of soybean but, have lost their top market in China, and are competing with a surplus bean in the US. Soy Canada's executive director, Ron Davidson, asks, "It's got to move and if it can't move, what are we going to do? Dump it in the St. Lawrence?"

As I see it, when it comes to the common usage of the saying 'we reap what we sow,' I have great difficulty. I don't believe it is necessarily true. And it can be untrue in a very unfair manner.

Saying all that, I do like the implications inherent in how the Bible uses the sowing and reaping metaphor in Galatians 6, "the one who sows to please

the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

The implications here are not so much on a predictable outcome, but on the intentions of the sower. If we sow in good faith and don't give up, we will eventually reap something positive. The emphasis is on "not becoming weary." And Hope comes in accepting that the harvest (in this case, a rewarding harvest) may not be what we expect, or within the time we expect it. Still, eventually, the 'good' energy we put into sowing, in the most effective way we know, will, in some way and in some manner, have a sustaining payoff.

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

jiminnes@diohuron.org

A new beginning



A VIEW FROM THE BACK PEW

REV. CANON CHRISTOPHER B. J. PRATT

In the waning days of summer each year, I get a notice that it is time to order my calendar for the coming year. I suspect that it will come as no surprise to those who know me, that I still use a paper calendar to set the framework of my life.

My collection of calendars, (you guessed it... I have never thrown one away), stretches back through my four decades of ordained ministry. Each notation, as I take a moment to review them, generates memories of people, places and

moments in ministry that cover a range of emotion.

The calendar is printed in the Great Britain. For many years the maroon colour has remained unchanged. In gold leaf lettering the words, "The Parson's Pocket Book" have been another constant. The only element which changes on the cover, are the numbers which identify the year.

Within the book, the Seasons of the Church Year are clearly defined. Saints' Days are given their place and are marked with bold lettering. What our own Prayer Book identifies as "lesser commemorations" are still noted, but in much finer print.

When I was involved in active parish priestly ministry, I would take a moment and place my new calendar on the altar. My prayer was very reflective of a new Incumbent's prayer which

is offered from the midst of the congregation, invoking God's blessing on the anticipated (and unanticipated) experience of ministry in the year ahead.

I have shared this story at different times and places. It seems right to do so in this January edition of the Huron Church News because 2020 marks a time of new beginnings for our Diocesan Family. New episcopal leadership will offer us the opportunity to experience shared ministry in new ways, and yet....

One of the features of my paper calendar is its unchanging notation of the rhythmic pattern of the Church Year. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Trinity Seasons will continue to shape our shared devotional life. Saints' Days and the stories of other faithful servants of our Lord will

provide us with the opportunity to reflect on the faithful witness of individuals whose experience of life in their own day and age has much to teach us.

The pattern of the Church year may appear to some to be out of synch with the calendars used by others. Yet the pattern of devotion which is outlined provides a constancy and many teaching moments.

As you think about each Season of the Church year, each day when the witness of a Saint is highlighted, each day when a person of faith is commemorated, pause for a moment. Find out what the story is behind the devotional act of observance and commemoration. I have every confidence that those stories will enhance your experience of worship and may renew your own experience of faith.

In 2001 the Diocese of Huron

had a devotional focus of a prayer which was used on a regular basis across the Diocese, which had been written as a part of an experience called, "Vision 2001". The words which began that prayer call us to faithfully use the Divine gift of each new day of our own calendars.

*God of our yesterdays,
God of today,
God of our tomorrows,
You call each generation to be renewed
in faith, hope and love...*

May those words be true in your life and mine in the year ahead.

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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Free Wi-Fi access in your church – plenty of reasons to provide it



MEDIA BYTES

REV. MARTY LEVESQUE

When I meet someone for coffee I rarely meet at Tim Horton's. I normally search out a locally owned coffee shop rather than a chain.

There are a few reasons for this. One, I prefer to support a local small business; and two, they often have free Wi-Fi that

is marketable better than Tim Horton's.

Whether it is a coffee shop, on the train or at the hockey game, I am always in search of free Wi-Fi so as not to use up all my data on my cell phone plan. Free Wi-Fi means I can linger for a bit before or after my meeting and perhaps have a muffin or second cup of coffee and catch up on the day's headlines. It also means that I can give the coffee shop a good Yelp, Google or Facebook review while I am relaxing.

Free Wi-Fi is not something we normally think to advertised or provide at our church-

es. After all, we don't want people glued to their phones during the service or worse, during the sermon. We might even wish they would sit quietly and reflectively before or after the service praying.

Yet free Wi-Fi also gives the opportunity for the quick review on Yelp, Google or Facebook, which can drive more seekers to your door. It may mean that someone shares an Instagram story of their morning visit that inspires friends to come back to their faith. It may also mean a simple status update that is shared and liked and seen by hundreds.

In our rush to create spaces that are intentionally reflective and unplugged, we can also miss the opportunity to provide the tools for those that come to share their faith and their experience of our churches. And while we want people engaged in intentional prayer, we also want them to share all that God is doing in their lives. And free accessible Wi-Fi gives them that chance in the moment.

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"The Good Death": who should be in charge?



**MOSTLY ABOUT
RELIGION**

**REV. CANON
KEITH
NETHERY**

Elsewhere in this edition of the Huron Church News, you will find a story by my friend Davor Milicevic about a Huron at Western theological conference titled, "Medical Assistance in Dying: A Theological Consultation for Canadian Anglicans."

It was a most stimulating discussion coming from a variety of perspectives and I extend my thanks to Huron for organizing such a wonderful discussion. I am saddened that the conference didn't receive the attendance it richly deserved, but it did end up being an intensely busy weekend in our Diocese.

In fact, I was unable to attend the Friday session, however I have heard the Rev. Dr. Lizette Larson speak on the subject before and I have read articles by Canon Dr. Eric Beresford on this timely topic as well.

My deep thanks to Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson of Calgary and Bishop Michael Michael Hawkins of Saskatchewan for their deep, respectful, reasoned and broad discussion of the many facets that can be part of the much needed conversations that we need to have as Anglicans and Canadians on a topic that will only grow more front and center as time goes on.

Professor Trudo Lemmens did an admirable job on the legal and political implications of Medical Assistance in Dying as we move forward in this



country. I found that Bob Tees, a Spiritual Bereavement Clinician from Hamilton brought tremendous first person experience on the experience of Medical Assistance in Dying, not only for the person using this legal avenue, but for the family and friends that make the journey as well.

Hands down, however, for me: Dutch theologian and scholar, the Rev. Theo Boer was the "star" if you will of this show. Those who read this column regularly, will know that I have been present twice as a person quite close to me opted for Medical Assistance in Dying. While I am far from wanting to give blanket permission for all to access this medical assistance, I believe that there is a place for this in our society. Both bishops, while sounding strong concerns and speaking more against than for; where clear that there is a place for this in our world. They confirmed strongly, and I share this, that as Christians, we are never allowed to abandon anyone in their time of greatest need, regardless of our own thoughts about what is happening.

It was into this frame work that Theo Boer first walked us through the now 50 year relationship of Euthanasia (the title he used) to the people of

Holland. He took us step by step through the process in which Euthanasia became legal and how it has changed Dutch society as to how they see death and related issues. He provided some valuable statistical information as to how the practice of Euthanasia has grown, with cases tripling between 2002 and 2019. It lead Professor Boer to remark, "We now live in a culture in which death is a solution to any unbearable suffering." He went on to suggest that being dependent on someone else for on going care and meaninglessness in life are the two strongest reasons why people seek Euthanasia. That was startling to me, as neither of those criteria are part of the legislation in Canada, nor would I want to see either of those reasons become prominent in this country. It was somewhat chilling when Rev. Boer stated, "Euthanasia has now become a default way to die in Holland, rather than a last resort."

In his second presentation, the concluding address of the conference, the Professor turned his attention to more theological and personal observations. In effect, he was giving us a clear understanding of what happened in Holland, so we would be able to engage people more widely in this country to see what could possibly happen here should our laws be broadened.

Professor Boer has been engaged by the Christian Reformed Church in Holland to write a report in 2021 that he will title "The Good Death." He expanded on some of the things that he is currently considering for this major report. Some of what he said next, was somewhat unsettling. However, it

also convinced me, that as a Christian and someone who believes there is a limited role in Canadian society for Medical Assistance in Dying, that I am obligated to participate in widespread education to ensure a proper understanding can be shared.

Professor Boer shared statistics that made me cringe. A significant percentage of people in the Dutch Euthanasia process were asked about eternal life and most said it was about reuniting; with family and friends and even pets. But God was barely ever mentioned in the conversation. He says that indicates that we need a theology that all can be involved in as we together learn.

Rev. Boer says he sees a shift from life being a Divine Gift of God, to something that I can do what I want with. That cannot be the place from which discussion starts, but rather we must find a way back to people seeing life as from God.

His treatment of Moral Pluralism, as opposed to Subjectiveism, as opposed to Asolutism was a moment that brought great clarity for me. He said Absolutism means there is only "one" right way. That can still divide, because some will say one way and that is in favour and others will demand one way only and that is against. Subjectiveism, Professor Boer outlines as, there are no wrong answers. Moral Pluralism, which he feels is the way forward, posits that while it is not always clear what might be the way forward, there is more than one good option. He fleshed that out by saying, "While there may be multiple good options, there are still always wrong answers as well."

Professor Boer concluded with some good advice for the Church as to how to discuss Medical Assistance in Dying in public debate. He says it is key that we remind people that human autonomy is not the "king" in this debate and that God's will must be front and center. However, he says it will not work to promote only one value, but rather the key to discussion is openness to multiple positions to advance discussion to find the best fit for all of society. That means that first and foremost we must engage people of faith and people of no faith and to come to understand the reasons for all the positions that various people might wish to bring into the discussion, rather than trying to shut down all talk that isn't pointed to one single conclusion.

He asked us to be very careful in what data and statistics we might try to bring into our discussions. Only "uncontested" empirical data should be used. If we use personal generalizations and posit our thoughts as proven facts, the discussion will not advance. However, he did add that, in discussing Medical Assistance in Dying from a faith perspective, we would be wise to presume in favour of life and not allow killing to seem to be normalized in a way he sees it happening in Holland.

His final word was that the faith community must continue to talk, both with those of faith and those outside. Our selling point is that God is in charge and we need to journey to understand what that means together.

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It's January, again...



**LAUREL
PATTENDEN**



L. Pattenden. Birch Bark (detail)

The Christmas of 2018, I gifted myself a poetry book called "a Nature Poem for Every Day of the Year" (ed. by Jane McMorland Hunter). What attracted me to this book was the colourful cover not necessarily the poems inside.

However, the book did provide a wide range of poets and poems. The book provided a daily poem for the appropriate month and season. It granted structure and routine at the breakfast table.

I faithfully read the assigned poem daily and only missed a few along the way. So by the

year's end I will have read more than three hundred nature poems. So I began to think about what to do for the 2020.

In the meantime, while finishing the poetry book, I read "The Reading Life" by C.S. Lewis. I was amazed at how much he read but more so by how much he re-read. Lewis would read and re-read multiple times his favourite books. Not just once or twice but maybe ten or more times in order to truly know the book. Incredible really.

Many of us may re-read

some books but not that often. We prefer to "get through" our piles. Just to create a new pile of books. We like to see some progress in the number of bestsellers we can comment on. We don't like to waste time beginning a book again for a re-read. In a way it takes humility to begin a book again. It's like admitting to ourselves we didn't get it all the first time through.

I believe it was St. Benedict who wrote "Always we begin again" in life. These words, I believe, are not words of

frustration like one step forward and two back, but about beginning again in positive anticipation. Like Lewis encouraging us to go further and further into a book and author by re-reading.

Our spiritual journey with Christ is like Benedict's "always we begin again" and Lewis' "re-reading". The journey ebbs and flows and many times we forget what started us on this spiritual path in the first place. We can certainly get lost and lose our sight. It isn't about reaching some "goal", it's all about being with God. We are allowed to begin again. Perhaps pause for a re-read.

As written previously, it takes humility to begin again. To realize that we didn't get it all the first time around. Humility to know it may take many "agains" for each of us as we live through our years.

We don't lose anything by beginning again. God is with us as much in our beginnings as He is with us anywhere else we might be. No matter how many beginnings we may have Divine love is always present.

All our beginnings are different just as we begin again "another January". January is a natural month for beginning again. A good time to re-read. This January I will begin again the same poetry book I will have just finished.

This January I will begin again to learn about a life free in Christ. This January we can re-read our story and find it new. This January we can begin again and again to feel the grace we have received over and over.

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