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# HURON CHURCH NEWS

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



## Ephemeral gifts and everlasting grace

We have to be able to see what we have been given, writes Laurel Pattenden in her column discussing the concept of ephemeral art – the short-lived gifts of nature at the beginning of the fall used for creative expression.

The search for the adequate material is crucial here: "We have to be able to stroll, intuitively about, looking for the chosen pieces for our art". But, as the artist observes, it also makes us go inside ourselves so that we can be open to this everyday beauty that surrounds us.

"There is holiness in this beauty. There is grace in this beauty", says Laurel, noting that this year it may be more difficult to see the Holy in front of us: "Focusing on the Grace that we have received may take more mindful intent."

Gradual opening of our church buildings for worship made Bishop Todd think back "to the half-year of COVID that has been":

"I am more grateful for the church, this Anglican church in particular, than I ever have been", writes the bishop pointing out that this kind of thanksgiving is central to who we are and what we do. This seems more important today than ever, now when we have been collectively reminded of the ephemeral nature of our physical existence.

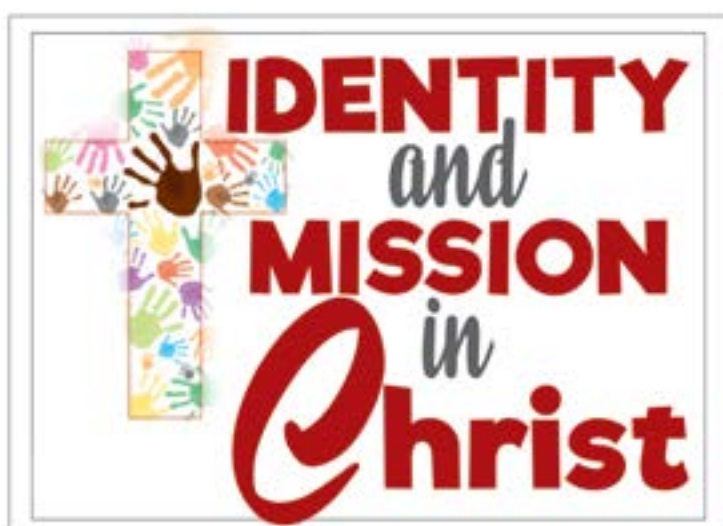
We are the ones whom God has drawn together in this time and place to share in the gospel, says Bishop Todd. Something to think about while we slowly and cautiously return to our pews. And something to be thankful for: "The God who has begun a good work in us will bring it to completion."

**Laurel Pattenden,  
The nest of acorns  
(Ephemeral art)**

**Bishop Todd: 'I thank my God every time I remember you...'  
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Page 12**

## 180<sup>th</sup> SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF HURON



SEPTEMBER 26, 2020

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**Holy God,  
hear us as we hold up before you  
this Diocesan Synod gathering.**

**Be with us in our yearning  
to chart a course together,  
inspired by the presence  
of your Spirit.**

**Give insight and courage  
to our Bishop, all of our leaders,  
and to each one of us,  
as we move forward  
with your blessing.**

**For all we do,  
we do in your glory,  
in Jesus' name. AMEN**

**Page 7:  
An Entirely New Way  
of Doing Synod**

## Church in a bag

Sunday school bags are delivered to homes weekly. Each bag contains a lectionary-based bible verse, a story and a craft.

This is how one of the deaneries in Huron is trying to keep school-aged children connected with their church during the pandemic. Recognizing that parents with Sunday school-aged children might also stay away from church until Sunday school reopens poses a challenge for many parishes. But it also provides an opportunity for mission and evangelism and deepening people's connections to their various churches.

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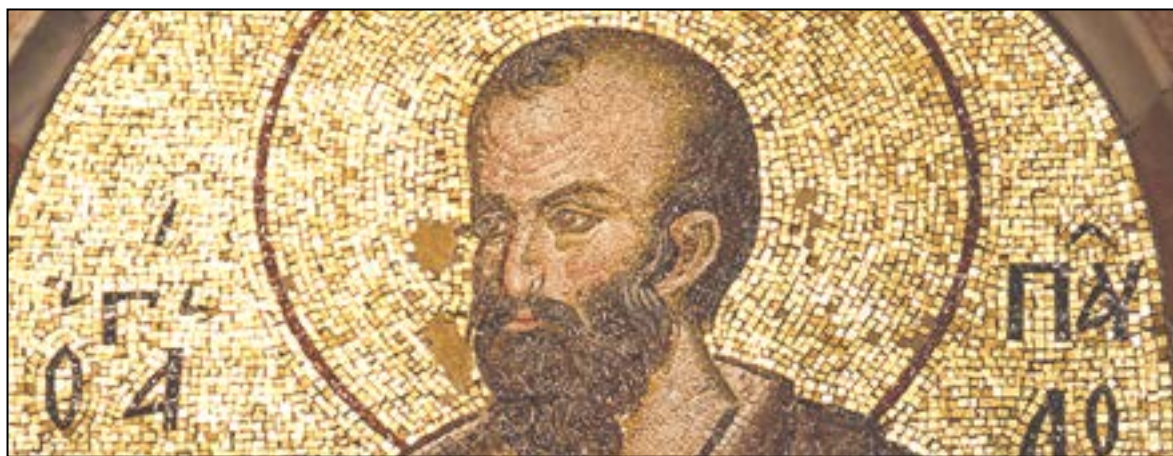
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# "I thank my God every time I remember you..."

Beginning on September 20, the lectionary gives us four Sundays in a row where we hear from the letter of Paul to the Philippians. I'm glad because I've always really loved this letter, and today, it is encouragement for me.



**BISHOP  
TODD  
TOWNSHEND**



Apostle Paul (detail), Chora Church, Istanbul (The Karyie mosque from August 2020)

*I thank my God every time I remember you,  
constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you,  
because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.  
I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you  
will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*

*Philippians 1:3-6*

As I write this, it's late summer and we are looking forward to the cautious, gradual opening of our church buildings for worship and the other central activities of our life together. I am also thinking back to the half-year of COVID that has been.

Paul's words remind me that his letter to the community in Philippi was written to bridge the distance between them. In those days, a letter was the next best thing to being there. Much of Paul's ministry was by mail—out of necessity—and we are far richer for it. It has become scripture for us.

I'm also noticing that, after a greeting, Paul begins with

thanksgiving. In one of the most beautiful but simple verses in the whole bible, he says to them, "I thank my God every time I remember you..."

That is central to who we are and what we do. It is also my own sentiment every time I remember all of you. I am more grateful for the church, this Anglican church in particular, than I ever have been. We are the ones whom God

has drawn together in this time and place to share in the gospel. So many of the leaders and elders of our churches have taken such good care of us over these six months, sometimes with letters, sometimes phone calls, sometimes with tangible help, sometimes electronic worship opportunities, but always in prayer. I thank my God for every one of them.

The God who has begun a good work in us will bring it to completion. There are so many opportunities in our near and distant future.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will be with you through this difficult time and that we may find our hearts thankful even in the midst of it.

May the grace and peace of Christ be with you all.

+Todd

## Pandemic and prayer: gratitude and thanksgiving

By Rev. Kimberly Myer

Our world as we have known it is changing. We are learning patience as we stand in long lines waiting to get in or to get out of different stores and venues.

Some people are becoming anxious while others are finding peace and quiet. There are upheavals around the globe, and there are stories of people reaching out and helping others. In addition to all of this, there are justice issues to be faced as we live through this time of pandemic.

This is the time that we have been called to as Christians to raise our voices in prayer for what is happening around the world, and in our own communities. We have been called to also listen carefully for the answer as to what our role should be. I know my prayers have become more on the side of gratitude / thanksgiving for all the front line workers, the government and for the safety of my flock and my family.

Gratitude and thanksgiving are important in our prayer lives. Gratitude's definition according to Google dictionary, is "the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return

### ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER



kindness. "Thanksgiving" means, according to the same dictionary, "the expression of gratitude, especially to God."

This is not to ignore the fact that there are some reading this article who may not feel gratitude or thankfulness right now. They are struggling with finances, their job, mental illness, whether to send their children back to school, home-schooling or broken relationships. This is where our faith becomes the strongest when we face these trials. Please keep praying and know there are

many praying with you and for you. Jesus never promised us sunshine and happiness all the time, although he did promise to walk with us through the difficult times. Don't quit; you will get through this.

With that said, even if you are not struggling, I am wondering how many like myself found more time to spend in prayer as we were kept safe in our homes? To spend the time in our Bibles, devotions, finding time to meditate pray and to watch or listen to Sunday services? I hope you

have taken the time to listen to Bishop Todd's homilies on Genesis; they are fabulous and can be found on the Diocesan webpage.

Now we are beginning to return to work and to more activities. How do we hold on to that prayer time with God and not allow other concerns to take over that time?

Take the time to make it a priority. If you have a busy schedule, there are always little breaks in the day when you can spend it in conversation with our Lord and Saviour. Driving is one of my favourite times, as well as when I am standing in line at the grocery store; it is finding the time, and not pushing the Lord to the back burner. It has never been clearer that we need the Lord now more than ever.

By way of resources, if you are more comfortable with prayers that are already written you can, of course, use the Book of Alternative Services, Book of Common Prayer or a publication I enjoy, *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim: A Personal Manual for Prayer and Ritual* by Edward Hays.

Rev. Kimberly Myer is an AFP Huron executive member and the rector of St. Stephen's and Church of the Redeemer, Oldcastle.

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### Editor

Davor Milicevic  
huronchurchnews@gmail.com  
519-434-6893, ext. 251  
c/o Huron Church House  
190 Queens Ave.  
London, ON  
N6A 6H7

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The Right Reverend  
Todd Townshend  
Bishop of Huron  
Diocese of Huron  
Huron Church House  
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# Proud Anglicans of Huron: Virtual workshops reflection

A total of four workshops on allyship and the place of queer and trans\* identities within the church were offered online on August 22 and August 29 by the newly-formed Proud Anglicans of Huron.

The workshops attracted participants from across the diocese and the Anglican Church of Canada but also individuals from other denominations of Christianity.

**Queer and Trans\* 101**, offered on August 22, provided an overview of terminology relating to sexuality, gender identity, and gender expression. The workshop “debunked” many myths and stereotypes that often perpetrated against gender and sexual minorities, and addressed the importance of using gender-inclusive language



in our daily lives.

**Active Allies**, held on the same day, was designed for those seeking to become better allies to members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Participants had opportunities to examine their privilege, biases, and assumptions as well as to discuss how allies could best respond to a variety of difficult

situations faced by queer and trans\* community members in everyday life.

**Creating Affirming Churches** addressed the need for churches to consider how administration, communications and media, physical space, social context, and worship, liturgy and sacraments play a role in the inclusiveness of our churches. Participants were offered the opportunity to explore a variety of scenarios that can occur within churches, and left with tools to create and assist their congregations to become active, affirming allies.

**Queer and Trans\* People of Faith** addressed the biblical “lobber passages” that are typically used against those in the queer community, providing a theological context and back-

ground to avoid misinterpretations. It also left participants with the opportunity to discuss affirming Bible passages and the need for deeper, more understanding conversations that are truly inclusive.

The workshops were based on resources that the Proud Anglicans of Huron reviewed when they first came together, including the “Respect for the LGBTQ2S+ Study Guide”. These were the materials that they had planned to use during the 2019 Justice Camp, which have now been distributed across the country virtually in light of the cancellation of Justice Camp.

Since many places are now exploring options for virtual workshops and education, a decision was made to offer a se-

ries of online workshops which were planned by a subcommittee of four people: Sydney Brouillard-Coyle, Irene Moore Davis, Jordan Sandrock, and Hana Scorrar.

Great presenters, helpful discussion facilitators, and genuinely engaged participants - all this led to quality learning experiences for everyone. Lively discussions took place in each of these workshops, and participants were able to pick up information and tools to put to immediate use in their parishes, schools, workplaces, or communities.

If you are interested in accessing any of the virtual resources following this workshops series, please email us, at: proudanglicanshuron@gmail.com

*Proud Anglicans of Huron*

## "Church in a Bag": Sunday school bags delivered to six churches in the Deanery of Waterloo

With the beginning of the new school year, the Deanery of Waterloo started *Hello Church: Church in a Bag* program addressing the needs of Sunday school children and their parents.

As we adjust to life in the pandemic, it has become clear that social distancing requirements will most likely keep many of our Sunday Schools closed for the coming year.

Recognizing that parents with Sunday school-aged children might also stay away from church until Sunday school reopens poses a challenge for many parishes. But it also provides an opportunity for mission and evangelism and deepening people's



**With almost 100 bags created and delivered each week, the Deanery of Waterloo tries to bring the church to the homes of the faithful in this time of pandemic**

connections to their various churches.

With six churches participating with almost 100 bags created and delivered each week,

the deanery looks to continue to innovate in this time of pandemic to bring the church to the homes of the faithful.

As a recipient of this program, Kelli Tigert says “it has made my daughter feel so loved as part of our church family to receive her bag and she is so excited for the next ones to come. Such a truly amazing and thoughtful idea.”

Just like meal kits that are delivered to the door, Sunday school bags are delivered each week, maintaining that connection with parents and kids and demonstrating the kind of outrageous love of Christ. Each bag contains a lectionary-based bible verse, a story

and a craft. Everything needed for the Sunday school lesson is in the bag. Everything is supplied.

As a bonus, Hello Church provides 15-30 minutes of non-screen time activity for parents during the week. Knowing that Zoom fatigue is weighing heavy on parents, the program is designed to be offline and to add in discipleship and formation.

While the pandemic and the Amber Stage guidelines pose many challenges to returning to church it also has provided an opportunity for mission, discipleship and evangelism.

*Rev. Marty Levesque, rector of All Saints, Waterloo*

## The Saugeens-Ulianópolis “Little Anglicans” school project

Following Bishop Marinez Bassotto's visit to the Deanery of the Saugeens in September of 2018, our congregations in the north had a feeling that God had more in store for our relationship with our sisters and brothers in the Diocese of Amazonia.

How might we, as a grouping of congregations, be able to participate in a shared ministry project that could allow for us to better learn from a Brazilian congregation and perhaps even support them in their missional efforts?

During his visit with us, Father Claudio Miranda articulated a vision for the Divino Salvador congregation in Ulianópolis. His mission church has been reaching out to children in their urban community by offering an after-school program called “Little Anglicans”.

This program supports young



**Guests from Amazonia during their visit to Huron in September 2018**

parents, many of whom work 12-14 hour shifts without many days off in their week, by providing a safe, educational environment for their children. This outreach is serving one of the poorest suburbs of a city that, as a whole, struggles with high rates of poverty. In responding to this need, the greatest challenge of the Divino

Salvador congregation wasn't finding willing volunteers to teach the children, but rather having enough space to seat them in their modest church building. Their dream was to have the physical resources to accommodate 100 children including a small overnight space to host Fr. Claudio during his visits from Belem.

Hearing this dream articulated so passionately by Fr. Claudio inspired the Deanery of the Saugeens to do a little dreaming of our own! In further conversations with Bishop Marinez and other members of the Companion Diocese committee we were advised that \$15,000 (CAD) would allow for the construction of a new hall to house the “Little Anglicans” school program. With this as our starting goal we began to think of creative ways to share stories with the Divino Salvador congregants over the next three years of our Diocesan relationship while also fundraising to complete the building project.

Throughout the process we also wondered: could we fund this immediately? That way we could enjoy three years of hearing how the school program could blossom in their new space. Thinking outside of the

box, St. George's, The Parish of the Blue Mountains approached the Diocese of Huron regarding a \$15,000 loan on behalf of the Deanery of the Saugeens. This loan would allow for the funds to be immediately transferred to Amazonia for the construction to begin as soon as the Covid-19 pandemic context would safely allow.

The Deanery of the Saugeens is now delighted to announce that, thanks to our Grants and Loans Committee, our proposal has been accepted and the funds have now been wired to Amazonia! We now look forward to journeying with the Divino Salvador congregation as they make their missional dream into a reality.

*Rev. Grayhame Bowcott, rector of St. George's, The Parish of The Blue Mountains, Deanery of the Saugeens*

# "Surely the Lord is in this place.."

## Excerpts from a chaplain's diary

By Rev. Andreas Thiel

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded across our country in the early months of 2020, we began to hear numerous reports of coronavirus outbreaks in Long Term Care facilities.

Residents were succumbing to the virus at alarming rates and those of us who served as chaplains to these communities grew increasingly apprehensive. There was so much that we still did not fully understand about this deadly virus. But if the news reports were to be believed, every single Long Term Care facility was at risk; residents were at risk; staff members were at risk; we ourselves were at risk. The following reflections offer snapshots of the situation as it unfolded in my place of chaplaincy, Huron Lodge, in Windsor Ontario.

### March 17

I'm sitting at a computer station in the administrative wing. The usually placid atmosphere has been punctuated by a flurry of activity, as various administrators attend meetings in the boardroom.

I begin my shift by carefully reviewing the status of the 220 residents, as posted in nursing notes. There I will learn who might be most in need of my attention on this particular day.

The strain has been increasing in this place over the past week. Numerous memos (and revised memos) are shared among staff, reminding everyone of the importance of hand-washing. Regularly-scheduled recreational programs are reduced. (Note: as I review the entry I made in my desk diary for this particular day, the notation reminds of the urgency of those early weeks: Everything cancelled at Huron Lodge.)

I am in the final two weeks of my chaplaincy; the last day of my two-year contract will fall on March 31. I should be glad and relieved. But the more I consider the situation unfolding around me, it becomes clear that there is absolutely no way I could even consider stepping away.



Rev. Andreas at Huron Lodge, Windsor

The tension among staff is palpable. The usually vivacious administrator appears more strained these days. I know for a fact that she is working around the clock. The residents who are cognitively aware are just that: aware that something isn't quite right. They have experienced flu outbreaks in the past, but they sense that this is something different. Everyone seems to want to talk about "the virus".

I send an email to Bishop Todd: "I need to stay on as chaplain. May I have your blessing?" His immediate answer is just what I need to hear. A blessing. A prayer. A word of heartfelt encouragement.

March 31 would come and go, allowing me the privilege of accompanying my Huron Lodge family through whatever was coming in the coming months. My final day wouldn't arrive until June 16. But there was much to do in the meantime.

### Mid-April

#### "Marilyn"

I'm on the third floor, making my rounds. Common areas are

strangely empty. Residents, for the most part, are spending the days alone, in their rooms.

A brief visit with the nurse on duty brings me up to date on someone's condition. The nurse adds, "It's sad to see them just 'shutting down'".

Huron Lodge has done a remarkable job of hiring extra staff, and working to facilitate contact with the outside world, particularly with family members, who are now unable to pay personal visits. Through the use of electronic tablets, residents are able to participate in "virtual visits" by way of Face Time or Skype. Every effort is made to connect them with loved ones. Even so, there are some residents for whom this is too difficult. They are missing the routine of in-person family visits. They are missing the stimulation of regular recreational programming. They are missing their periods of socializing.

I make my way to the room of an elderly resident, a life-long Anglican whom I've ministered to regularly. Once I arrive at her side, the nurse's words become that much more

**In the midst of attending to the situation at hand, we often miss the fact that God is present at our side. In the recalling and reflecting, however, truth has a way of surfacing: yes, the Lord was present!**

concrete. Marilyn appears to be shutting down. She is quiet and withdrawn. Needless to say, it is not an easy visit, but I can see a certain brightening in her eyes after we speak for several minutes. The conversation (albeit a stilted one) seems to be doing her some good. Is that a gentle laugh that I hear from her? A flicker in her eyes as she hears a familiar prayer?

Leaving Marilyn's room, I can't help wondering how long our time of connection will linger in her memory..

### Mid-May

#### "John"

He was a WWII veteran.

A rather private individual, John could often be found with an open book in his lap, or strolling somewhere on his own.

John was as vulnerable as any of the other residents at Huron Lodge, but COVID-19 was about to teach me how this virus can impact a person's life in the most unexpected way. It began with a health crisis. John was in distress one day, and an ambulance was called. But during a pandemic, a routine trip to the hospital is anything but routine. John was admitted for medical care, and then was informed that he would be quarantined for 14 days, as a pre-cautionary measure. This was in accord with the health protocols in place across the province.

After his eventual return to Huron Lodge, I met up with John and we spoke about his recent experience. We met on the outdoor pathway, and John

was showing off his new vehicle: a beautiful, black electric scooter. His grinning face told the whole story: thrilled to be home; thrilled to have this new toy; thrilled to be out of quarantine. John said that he never again wanted to endure the isolation of quarantine... even if it was for needed medical attention. "Oh no" he said, "I'm not going through that again. Never. I'm staying right here!"

John would die a few short weeks after our encounter, at home, at Huron Lodge. There had been another crisis. An ambulance could have been called, but wasn't. The prospect of another 14-day quarantine proved to be too difficult for John to even consider.

### June 16

My last day as chaplain. A time for celebration and gratitude, and a day full of good-byes.

The anxieties of mid-March have been transformed into a way of life that's beginning to have more of a feeling of normality. And yet, COVID-19 is still a menacing presence in the world.

How will I look back on these difficult days and weeks and months? In the Book of Genesis, we find these words, spoken by Jacob: 'Surely the Lord is in this place - and I did not know it!' (Gen. 28:16). How true! In the midst of attending to the situation at hand, we often miss the fact that God is present at our side. In the recalling and reflecting, however, truth has a way of surfacing: yes, the Lord was present!

Chaplaincy has shown me, again and again, how God accompanies us in all our human interactions, and I'm deeply thankful to know that at Huron Lodge, the moments of care were sanctified by the Lord's presence. This knowledge has become clearer to me, and I am forever thankful for the ministry that I was granted.

Rev. Andreas Thiel is the rector of St. Matthew's, Windsor.

(Note: Names and precise details have been altered, to maintain the confidentiality of residents.)



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# "Little girl, I say to you, arise"

By: Amanda Jackman

**O**k. I'm going to say it. This pandemic SUCKS! I would use stronger language, but this being a Christian publication, I will refrain.

I'm not sure how you are feeling, but I'm worn out. I think being honest is valuable in a time of crisis, as it can help you understand how you are coping – and what you may need to carry on.

First, a little background on me. I am a regular church-goer, and very active in my parish. I am the volunteer communication coordinator at Holy Trinity in Lucan and my full-time job is in health care where I work as a communication consultant. I'm also a full-time mom of two young children, and a self-admitted germaphobe, control freak and "Type A" personality.

At my work I have been exclusively working on the pandemic and have been in crisis-mode since January. I lost eight pounds in March due to stress, and gained it all back with my favourite new food group – potato chips. I've lost hair, my skin has gone bonkers and my reoccurring back spasm won't quit.

When I began working on COVID-19 the map of the world only had two impacted countries painted in bright caution-red. Now, well over a half a year later – almost the entire globe is red. I have to admit it's sad, scary and daunting.

I, like many others grapple with decisions around sending my children to school, attending church, and trying to live somewhat normally as I watch the numbers creep up across the province and the world. I worry about my safety and the



**Amanda Jackman, Volunteer Communication Coordinator, wearing her mask at Holy Trinity in Lucan.**

safety of my loved ones. I feel helpless, nervous and tired.

So where does one go from here? I would consider myself a realist but if I'm being honest I'm a bit of a pessimist. If you are a more positive thinker than me – you already have a leg up. The other day I was reminded I wasn't doing a good job of listening to my favorite saying: Let Go, Let God. And I have to admit – I'm not.

I pondered for a few days on what to focus on in this editorial. What could I possibly say to help others reflect on their journey during COVID-19? Would it be about being good to yourself, asking for help, leaning on others? Would it be about taking it one day at a time, not taking anything for granted, finding strength in faith, resting, shutting off the news, not panicking when things seem dire?

As many people do, they look toward their faith in difficult times and I did just that, and you know what? It didn't help. Maybe you have had a similar experience. I said so many

prayers to end this pandemic quickly. I gave up in June, when we hit the six-month mark. I was missing my family and friends, social interactions, hugs, being at work, church, feeling secure in our health care system, and I was damn tired of being afraid.

As the Province opens up and people adjust to a "more familiar" way of living, I'm having trouble shifting out of the place I have built for myself, where I stay away from people and situations as best I can. I didn't step foot in a store for four months. My first foray into a grocery store was harder than I expected.

Perhaps I sound extreme to you. I know many people who aren't really bothered by this global situation – they are enjoying doing things, almost as normal. I often long to be that person just for a day, just for a break. Or perhaps I don't sound extreme to you. Perhaps your concerns aren't too far from my own. Maybe you have different fears, but can relate.

When I was going through

an especially trying time, I mentioned my exhaustion to a friend who is also a boxing coach. He immediately texted back, "YOU'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO TAKE THE EIGHT COUNT!" I honestly had no idea what he was talking about. So, I looked it up and discovered a mandatory eight count (also called protection count) is a to shelter boxers from unnecessary damage. The referee gives boxers a short count to take a moment to regain their senses and assess if they are ready to get back to the fight. The eight count was first used in a title match in the early 60s. Boxer, Floyd Patterson said, "The eight-count helped me, those extra few seconds gave my head a chance to clear." And after getting knocked down twice during that fight in 1961, Patterson knocked out his opponent in the sixth round – to a victory.

I once participated in a diocesan workshop and the Bishop, now Primate, Linda Nicholls reflected on how to reach people. Something she said really hit home. "It's ok to not have all the answers," she told us. During this pandemic, that is something we all need to recognize. We may not have answers. So how do we continue to live as productively as possible when feeling overwhelmed?

In a recent conversation with my Reverend, Matt Martin, I mentioned feeling rather weak, that I was experiencing lost motivation, lack of energy to exercise, not eating properly, and joked about my official new food group of deep-fried potatoes. Rev. Matt dropped an interesting thought-nugget, as he often does. During my personal pity-party about needing

to find my strength again, he simply said, "commit to health first, strength will follow."

And so, I spent some time thinking about that. I realized that maybe my journey right now isn't at all about finding strength (which I have beating myself up about not having). I realized I needed a healthier mind-set. And it dawned on me – it's about courage.

Getting through this pandemic takes courage. We are all fighting. We are all in the ring battling the impact of the virus on our wellbeing, along with a myriad of other personal issues that don't go away just because of a pandemic. I finally realized all I needed was to be brave.

Maybe being brave is simply getting out of bed, or heading to work, or calling a friend, or grocery shopping, or sending your kids to school with no answers or assurances.

Gokham Saki, a two-time fighting champion said, "I don't know how I'm going to win. I just know I'm not going to lose." Maybe that's the perspective we all need – I'm not sure how I'm going to get through this. I just know I will.

In Mark (5:35) when Jairus' is told his daughter is dead, Jesus says, "Do not fear, only believe." And he goes to her and says, "Talitha cumi" or "Little girl, I say to you, arise."

And she does. Jesus gave her a miraculous eight count. A moment to rest - and to get up again.

During this pandemic that is all we are asked to do. To be brave when we can, to keep getting up – and to trust in ourselves that you can get through this.

"Rise up. Take Courage. And do it." (Ezra 10:4)

## "I'm Coming Out" – A Celebration of National Coming Out Day

By Sydney Brouillard-Coyle

**O**ur world has a beautiful diversity. Throughout creation, we can see God's hand at play – in sunrise and sunset; in rivers, marshes, streams and oceans; and in the duck-billed platypus, which defies any attempt of a human-created "binary". Every bird, fish, animal, and human has been lovingly created by the One who is more than we can ask or imagine.

Every year on October 11<sup>th</sup>, the world celebrates "National Coming Out Day". This day is a celebration for those who are "out" and those who have just "come out" as queer and/or trans\*. Coming out is a life-long process as we explore our understandings of gender and



sexuality. It starts with coming out to ourselves – recognizing who we are, who we've been created to be, and learning how we can authentically live as ourselves.

Over the years, I've gone by many different terms for my sexuality – lesbian, pansexual, demisexual, gay, and now the all-encompassing "queer". For

**I urge you to celebrate with your queer and trans\* friends and parishioners. Honour their journeys; hear their stories; lift up the voices of queer and trans\* people within your community...**

me, "queer" leaves space for the grey (or the rainbow) – those who are in the middle who don't need to be specific about who it is that we are attracted to. Queer is an all-encompassing umbrella term that doesn't require further explanation. I am proud to be queer.

As an openly non-binary person, I navigate daily challenges: assumptions about my gender based on my appearance, people using incorrect pronouns for me, and dealing with dysphoria around my

public perception. This is something that many people in the trans\* community continue to face, making moments like "National Coming Out Day" even more important. Having the public visibility of role models and being able to celebrate who we are is crucial – even life-saving. More importantly, having the language to describe how we feel helps to create a sense of community so that we know we aren't alone.

For this National Coming Out Day, I urge you to cel-

brate with your queer and trans\* friends and parishioners. Honour their journeys; hear their stories; lift up the voices of queer and trans\* people within your community so that no one feels forced to stay in the closet.

National Coming Out Day is a time to celebrate all of the duck-billed platypuses of the world; the rainbow that comes after the rain; the sunrise and sunset; and the beautiful queer and trans\* people who live in our congregations and our families.

Celebrate God's hand through the diversity of our world – celebrate National Coming Out Day.

Sydney Brouillard-Coyle (ney/nem) is the Co-Chair of the Proud Anglicans of Huron.

## ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

# Trusting your shepherd

**T**hrough the Bible the human race is referred to as God's sheep.

In the New Testament, Jesus is known as "The Good Shepherd" and we are His flock. King David was a shepherd, and the son of a shepherd. He was also known as the "Shepherd Kind". David's statement was confirmed by Jesus as God incarnate on earth when He emphatically declared, "I am the Lord Shepherd".

Under one man's care sheep would struggle, starve and suffer endless hardship. In another man's care they would contentedly flourish and thrive.

If the Lord is my shepherd, I should know and understand something of His ability. We are basically bound to admit His ownership of us is legitimate. He brought us into being, and no one is better able to understand or care for us. "The Good Shepherd" lays down His life and sheds His blood. We belong to Him because He bought us at an incredible price – His life.

The behaviour in people is similar in many ways to sheep. Our mob instincts, fears, stubbornness, stupidity and habits are important parallels. One uncaring shepherd's flock is always weak, thin, plagued by parasites and disease. The uncaring shepherd's land is neglected, and he gives no time for his flock. They fall prey to rustlers, cougars, and dogs. They drink muddy water, gnaw on brown grass, and lack salt and minerals to fend off illness from poor pastures.

The good shepherd sees to the needs of



his sheep with green grass, fresh water, safety, shade, or shelters from storms. He rises early checking the flock to see if they are fit and on their feet. He can tell if they need special attention or are ill. He checks during the day to make sure all is well. He protects them at night, and is ready to protect his flock in the event of trouble just as God watches over us as we sleep and bears our burdens. "The Shepherd" spares no pain for His sheep's welfare. God is always working to ensure we will benefit from His care.

Yet Christians are disconnected with His control and are dissatisfied, thinking the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. People all over the world that have never known what it is like to belong to "The Good Shepherd" and

suffer sin under Satan. People reject and refuse Christ's claim on them for fear of His control.

There is nothing like the presence of Christ to overcome the panic, fear, and terror of the unknown. The unexpected produces the greatest panic. It is often we have the impulse to run from cruel and horror circumstances. Then we realize that Christ is there and things are under His control. It is this assurance that He is aware of our dilemma and is deeply involved with us.

Sheep fear cruel competition, rivalry and tension within the flock. The society of every animal group has an order of dominance. Chickens have a "pecking order", cattle have "horning order", sheep have "butting order". An older ewe will claim dominance and headbutt others away from prime grazing. This is how sheep establish their exact positions in the flock, by butting and thrusting at those around or below them. There is friction because of self-assertion, rivalry, tension and competition for status. Continuous jealousy and conflict can be very detrimental. The sheep become discontented, tense, edgy and restless. They lose weight and become irritable. When the shepherd come into view the rivalries are forgotten and the fighting stops. The presence of the shepherd makes the difference.

This is a picture of the struggles in human society for status in a competition to "keep up with the Joneses". There is a struggle for self-recognition and self-assertion. We quarrel and compete

to get ahead, and people are hurt in the process. This is where deep discontent and heated rivalry are born.

On earth the "Great Shepherd" said, "The first will be last and the last will be first". A shepherd has compassion for the poor and weak sheep that are butted by more aggressive domineering sheep.

Wouldn't you rather have the affection of God than have a prominent place in society? "Blessed are the merciful for they shall be shown mercy" (Matthew, 5: 7).

When sheep are thirsty they become restless and search for water. Thirsty souls can only be satisfied when their thirst for a spiritual life is quenched. In spiritual terminology "to drink" means "to believe", "to accept" or "to take in".

People, like sheep, will drink from dirty pools. Humans try to satisfy their thirst for fulfillment. God invites us to be led by His own spirit, and by His spirit we would be satisfied and refreshed as sheep are led by their shepherd to be also satisfied and refreshed.

Dealing with our old self, the Master must take us in hand to apply the cutting edge of His word in our lives. We kick and struggle and may get wounded, but what a relief and pleasure when it is over! The shepherd of our souls set things right. Though we may find it unpleasant, it is for our good. When we put our faith and trust in God's very capable hands, we won't go astray and will receive many blessings.

*Barbara Jackson, President*



### Announcing a new name and a new look for our beloved camp!

A small group of our council members has worked throughout the past year to consider ways in which we can draw our circle wider still.

If a picture is worth a thousand words here are a few that come to mind as we present our new logo! Camp Huron - a wondrous place!

Beneath a deep blue starry sky a wooden cabin sits gently on the land by the wavy waters of Lake Huron amongst fir trees that seem to whisper, "welcome home".

Peek through its tiny window - just imagine the people, possibilities and adventures waiting for you!

FROM LAKE HURON WITH LOVE:



SUMMER 2020

OUR STORY GOES ON...

# An entirely **NEW WAY** of doing Synod



**Virtual Synod: The nave of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Ontario will be empty on September 26**

As we all know since the arrival of Covid-19 a great many events and ways of being have had to be adjusted in our lives, in our parishes and of course in our Diocese.

Unable to gather as a group at our usual time in May for our Diocesan Synod, the Bishop, Church House staff and Synod Organizational committee over the last number of months have been hard at work putting together an entirely new way of doing Synod for 2020.

On September 26, 2020 delegates to Synod will be gathering either virtually using the "Zoom webinar" technology or in one of four physical locations (or "hubs") conveniently located across the Diocese. Connecting in this way

will allow us to hear from our Bishop on a number of topics, receive some updates on different aspects of diocesan life, and "see" one another all while getting some much-needed work done in a way that is safe and respectful for Synod participants.

While there are some limitations when using the Zoom technology as feedback from such a large group can be difficult to process, the Bishop is committed to receiving questions and comments from delegates and will be sure that both are received and answered in a timely manner following the Synod.

Although it is true that this is a Synod like none we have had before, at its heart lies the intent that has been at the core

of every other Synod that has gone before. We gather as a diocesan family of faith to be reminded of who we are as followers of Jesus, to worship, to pray and to hear and be inspired by what God is doing in our midst, considering how we each are or might be participating in God's work in the world around us.

The Synod will take place on Saturday, September 26 from 10am to 4pm and will be live-streamed for observers and also recorded and posted to the website for later viewing by all.

Your prayers are appreciated in support of this Synod gathering.

*Rev. Canon Val Kenyon and David Embury, secretaries of Synod*

Almighty and everliving God,  
source of all wisdom and understanding,  
be present with those who take counsel in Huron  
for the renewal and mission of your Church.  
Teach us in all things to seek first your honour and glory.  
Guide us to perceive what is right,  
and grant us both the courage to pursue it  
and the grace to accomplish it,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

## PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

### Rest in Peace

David Brown, the son of The Reverend Larry and Sue Brown, died suddenly on August 2. May David rest in peace and rise in glory.

Ms. Dawn Idenden, sister-in-law of the Rev'd Canon Nick Wells died on August 5. May Dawn rest in peace and rise in glory.

Colleen (Brock) Heckendorn died on August 5. She was the mother of Archdeacon Kim Van Allen (with Dale, Dana, Nicholas, Greta, Gillian, Maggie June) and Kim's four brothers (Kevin,

Duane, Brock, Shaun Heckendorn) and wife of the late Howard Heckendorn.

Colleen was a member of St. Judes, London and the former Church of St. Alban the Martyr, London where she sang in the choir, was a greeter and secret sister. She was a life-long Anglican raised in Kitchener, member of St. John's, and attended Havergal College in high school.

She had been in University Hospital, London since the end of March. May she rest in peace and rise in glory!

## The Anglican Foundation of Canada launches "Foundation Forward" Podcast

The Anglican Foundation of Canada is pleased to announce the launch of Foundation Forward, a new podcast about generosity created by Executive Director Canon Judy Rois in response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

Hosted by Toronto Musician and Media professional Christopher Dawes, Foundation Forward explores the idea of generosity as a way of seeing the world, of giving thanks for blessings and of helping those in need. Each 7-10 minute episode features the thoughts and experiences of a prominent Canadian with a unique take on the subject.

Dawes says of the series, "Foundation Forward will feature diverse voices and a wide range of angles on the topic of generosity: we think it will offer encouragement and inspiration to listeners like you and me to think and act generously – not as a duty or obligation, but as a joyful response to God's bounty, and a way to make a real difference in the world." The first episode featuring Canon Judy Rois is now live; episodes featuring Brian Pearson, Michael Coren, Douglas Graydon and others will drop on the first Monday of the month beginning September 7, 2020.

Monthly episodes are available at [anglicanfoundation.org/podcasts](http://anglicanfoundation.org/podcasts), or can be streamed, downloaded or subscribed to on Apple/Google Podcasts, Spotify,

SoundCloud, Pocket Casts and other podcast outlets. Podcasts are completely free, and easy to listen to on any smartphone, computer, tablet or other Internet-connected device.

For further information: [foundation@anglicanfoundation.org](mailto:foundation@anglicanfoundation.org).

(AFC Press release, August 14, 2020)

### Correction

Due to an editorial error in the article "Give the best you have, and it will never be enough" written by Rev. Hilton Gomes (September 2020), Hotel-Dieu Grace Healthcare in Windsor was marked as a long-term care facility when it is actually a healthcare facility.

We apologize for the mistake.

# Let's start talking about church growth again!

Any contemporary text in theology, church history, pastoral care, or even liturgy, likely opens with a few paragraphs that attempt to quickly sum up the state of the Church today. Leaving the 'hows' and the 'whys' for others to answer, few would disagree with the statement that 'things have changed' for the Church in the last few decades.



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

The most significant marker of this change has been the decline of Canadian Church membership – the fading away of congregations that were seemingly vibrant and hopeful just a decade or two ago. Anglicans in Huron know the story of 'here today, gone tomorrow' all too well.

Between the years of 2007-2017 Huron witnessed the disappearance of **more than fifty congregations**. Each of these was a mission light that has gone out in our Diocese. For some Anglicans this has



meant having to move from one congregation to another. For others this has meant that Anglican ministry in an entire community or region has altogether ceased.

In my search for growth and vibrancy in our Diocese I had to begin by confronting the difficult truths of our context that we don't like talking about because they cause us to face our organization's fears and vulnerabilities. Statistics that show that between the years 2007-2017 Huron's membership declined by 15,771

baptized members, with 5,037 fewer worshippers on Sunday, seeing 10,846 fewer participants for Easter celebrations and witnessing the disappearance of 2,346 children who had previously been learning God's story through Sunday ministries. Trends that document that 85% of congregations in Huron were marked by membership decline in that decade, while roughly 10% were holding steady.

*(Statistics taken from Huron's 2007-2017 Annual Statistical returns)*

Some in our Church find consolation in these changing times knowing that most Anglican dioceses in Canada are in the same boat together – that widespread membership trends of decline are being experienced across the country. Researchers Brian Clarke and Stuart MacDonald have calculated that the annual decline of national Anglican membership to be roughly 22,700 members per year!

How should Anglicans respond to these rapid changes in our Church? Changes that threaten the future of our ministries, our congregations, our seminaries and perhaps even the future of Anglicanism in Canada?

Well, this is my take on things: perhaps we should start by better understanding the statistics that we aren't talking about these days! What about the 5-8% of congregations in Huron that are bucking the trend? What are they doing differently and why aren't we hearing more about them?

In the last decade of membership decline in Huron there have been congregations who have been thriving, experiencing growth in their ministries, an influx of volunteer vitality

and, in some cases, membership increases. More often than not their stories have gone untold, drowned out by the many other challenges facing our Church today.

Did you know that in our sister Diocese of Toronto 25% of congregations have been growing in comparison of the same decade? What might they be able to reveal to us about the places where vibrancy and growth are still a reality for Anglicans in our country? Let's start talking about church growth again! And let's start with the stories of congregations in our own neighbourhoods.

Next month's article will continue by digging into the theological reasons why every congregation should be perking up to listen to this important topic. For in order to counter the 'Anglican lament' that is shuttering churches every year in this diocese, we need to rediscover the motivation that inspires us to buck the trend.

*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.*

## Worldly misconceptions and faithful responsibilities

By Rev. Matthew Kieswetter

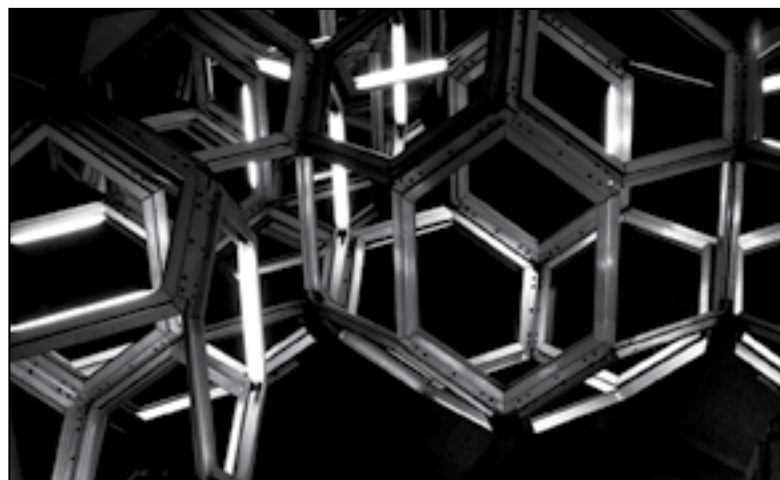
Relatively early on in the pandemic, a local Bible chapel lobbied the government to reopen. The news coverage didn't interest me much, but what did catch my attention was a related conversation thread on a popular message board website.

Many of the comments dripped with vitriol, cynicism, and suspicion. They want to reopen so that they can collect money... Pay taxes, THEN talk to us about reopening... Let them reopen, get sick, and allow natural selection to weed them out.

Our liberal values (both secular and theological) often lead us to assume that we're an appreciated, tolerated voice among other voices. This discussion thread clarified for me that not everyone holds communities of faith in high regard. What does this message board nastiness say to us as we reflect on the theme of Christian stewardship?

Firstly, we must understand that there are misconceptions about our faith and our churches. The commenters had no clue that pre-authorized donations have been possible for some time. (That's a procedural misconception. The broader

giving



one is that all churches are scandal-ridden bastions of the values of the Religious Right.)

The message board writers also held to a very transactional view of church life. But in reality we operate differently than a country club or a marketplace. Jesus's demonstration in the Temple, and Luther's writings against the medieval practice of indulgences, make this clear. No, instead, we give as we are able, in a spirit of thanksgiving to our extravagantly generous God. We receive from God's

goodness, and from the various ministries of our churches, but not as reward for paying our fees. Oftentimes it is those on the periphery of the parish, or those without much to give, who are attended to most closely. The generosity of others makes this outreach possible.

There are occasional signs of hope regarding the relationship between the Church and the wider world. I recently heard comedian Marc Maron, on his podcast, mention that he had come to the realization that

**The pandemic has affected our routines and finances. Nevertheless, we will gather — when safe — and we will then disperse into the world, and do that often hidden work of being yeast, salt, and radiance.**

much of the important charitable deeds that preserve the very existence our society are done by kind-hearted religious people. Perhaps they are old fashioned and unsophisticated, he said. But they also quietly do good work that most others would rather avoid.

Not everyone is as open-minded and articulate as Maron, however. Others would like to see us make way for more Best Buys, pot shops, and condos. The pandemic has affected our routines and finances. Nevertheless, we will gather — when safe — and we will then disperse into the world, and do that often hidden work of being yeast, salt, and radiance.

In a situation of ignorance and impertinence, both in some expressions of Christianity, and in the secular (especially online) culture, we are called to support the ministries of the Church that proclaim the gospel message of love and life. Ours is a subversive, counter-cultural message that should

not be taken for granted. It will not just 'happen' without us and our spiritual disciplines of offering back to God our time, talent, and treasure.

*Rev. Matthew Kieswetter is a member of Huron Stewardship Committee.*





# How many viewers do you have: making sense of the numbers

By Rev. Marty Levesque

As churches have rushed online many have been surprised at the number of views for worship services.



**MEDIA  
BYTES**

**REV. MARTY  
LEVESQUE**

Churches that used to boast 50-75 in attendance on Sunday Morning now have hundreds of views from a live stream or an uploaded video. And it would seem that we are reaching and connecting with more people than ever before and many are celebrating.



I don't want to be the one to deflate all the accomplishments of our churches and their online efforts. Yet to make sense of the number of views and all the data from digital platforms, there are some best practices.

First is to separate out the number of unique viewers from total views.

This is easily done on YouTube, whose analytics will tell you precisely the number of unique views. This doesn't separate out the number of times an individual may re-watch a service, but it does give you a precise number of unique individuals engaging with your content.

Facebook does not provide unique viewer numbers, unfortunately. But Facebook does provide the peak live viewers data during a live event, as well as 3-second viewers, 10-second viewers and 1-minute viewers. You might have 133 3-second viewers, 84 10-second viewers and 50 1-minute viewers. Of the three numbers, the best to use for your data is the 1-minute viewers' number as it reflects better the number of people who watched the service versus those who scrolled past on their feed.

Another data point to consider is your email analytics.

Mailchimp provides wonderful analytics. You can see how many people opened a specific email and compare those results to your average open rate. It also provides which links were clicked on

and who your top subscribers are. This provides great data in analyzing how many opened the order of service for any given Sunday.

Together using multiple data points I am able to better ascertain:

a) which type of content is most effective in reaching beyond the church walls, and  
b) who many people I am effectively reaching.

This helps me better tailor my online offerings to meet the needs of those who are watching but also have an eye to broadening the reach of the Kingdom of God.

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

[martylevesque@diohuron.org](mailto:martylevesque@diohuron.org)

# Pandemic ponders: little nudges that kept the mission of Christ alive

By Shirley Sewell

I wonder if nudges are a form of coaching? During these pandemic times, we have had plenty of time to meditate and ponder happenings in our world and in the life of the church.

For me, those little nudges, which I have become very familiar with, have indeed been a form of coaching. Church friends sometimes ask me how I know I got a nudge. Well, here is an example. When a message came out from Perry and Paul that Davor was looking for an article for the October Huron Church News, my computer printed the answer "I'm on it!" I laughed and walked away. Then I got thinking... oh no! Another nudge! And suddenly, all these thoughts were in my mind about what has happened locally during these shut-down times that were little nudges to keep the mission of Christ alive and thriving during times of need. Here are few that happened that I really feel were coaching opportunities.

During our very first on-line service, I got a text from a person who is very near and dear to our parish. He was inquiring how I was doing, never mentioning that he had lost all his income as the world seemed to come to a stop. After church in my easy chair, I thought, how can I help out. So, I sent an message out to our parish wondering if anyone would like to contribute towards a monetary gift for someone we loved who was in need, but would never ask for help. Suddenly, e-transfer was in place with our treasurer and money was pouring in. That nudge to me turned into a "coaching opportunity"



while the church doors were closed.

Then, a pattern for a cloth mask appeared on Facebook. As I looked at it, I thought, what a wonderful way to use up the mounds of material stored in our parish hall. I am far from a seamstress, but I am known for sharing my nudge with others. I passed along the pattern but received no takers at first. Masks were a contentious topic then, as now. However, when our elderly parishioners started needing a mask to go to appointments etc. I suggested we (being them!) start making masks for our own members and offer them if anyone wanted one. The result - over 1000 free masks have been distributed some even going to fire fighters in London. Then donations started to come to the church. Elastic was provided by a skating club who couldn't use their supply for the regular carnival costumes. Although our parish does not do regular fundraising, the coffers here are much healthier because of these donated masks. Was this nudge a coaching opportunity? Yes I think so, and one that God has definitely been part of.

On our local Facebook page, someone had suggested we have a "Little Free Food Cupboard" in the village. We had



Benjamin Davies/Unsplash

talked and talked about it, but nothing had ever materialized. I failed to mention that a group of our parishioners started to walk 2 km around the village every day since March. We have regular walkers as well as drop ins. And do we talk! So I steered the conversation towards a food cupboard. Someone in the village built and provided free of charge a fabulous cupboard. Someone else provided the accessible space. The food poured in and we don't even know from where. Someone even called and donated frozen chickens and pork. We had over five hundred dollars donated in gift cards. The cupboard is still always full (even with masks), and the community is at work. Now that gardens are flourishing there is even a table of fresh produce. A little nudge, a little talking, a little work, but a big payoff. Was God a part of this? We certainly think so.

Also in our community, there is a respiratory technologist who was deeply touched by patients she was working with who had to suffer alone. Suddenly a pattern appeared for knitted hearts. A call went out to the local stitchers group to make pairs of hearts. Each set

of hearts was carefully labelled with the date they were bagged. Then they were dropped off on the doorstep for the technologist to distribute. Many heartfelt thanks started to pour in. Families on two sides of a wall were able to hold their hearts and feel the love between them. A local nursing home called and wondered if a pair of hearts could be made for each of their residents since in person visits were not possible. On each side of a windowpane, hearts were cradled by loved ones. Was God at work again? We tend to think so.

And then there is our cemetery. Since we couldn't have our regular memorial service, we still sent out a letter to keep the connection going between family members and our church. While we were walking, a villager who was off work stopped us one day and asked if we would mind if he painted the cemetery fence. Well it wasn't long until the paint and brushes were purchased, and the work began. Now we have beautiful pictures to include in next year's letter. But the nudges of us all continued. The bushes were all trimmed at the parish hall and church. Our painter noticed a windowsill

had rotted. Now we have all the wooden rotting sills replaced and covered by a local carpenter.

During one of those walks, we also noticed the eaves-troughs needed cleaning and leaf gutter installed. Done! In our walking discussions we often reflect on all that has happened here. We know and visit with so many more villagers as we do our daily walk. Probably far more has taken place than would have occurred had a pandemic not slowed us down and made us listen to God's nudges.

Finally, I have to include our priests Dr. Justin Comber and Dr. Lisa Wang. So many nudges have evolved from their weekly sermons and teaching events, that we are almost through the Christian Foundations document, the Doctrine of Discovery discussions, and have learned many new ways to pray. It has almost come to the point where people say, "Oh no, not another nudge!"

Coaching does not have to involve a large group at a three hour event. It can merely be the following through of nudges that God sends our way. We could all be a coach. The definition of a coach is someone who teaches, directs or prompts. I am thoroughly convinced that God is doing just that through nudges he sends our way. God has indeed been our coach and many doors have opened that wouldn't have been had not a pandemic arrived.

So, the next time you have a burning feeling to do something, think - is God coaching me through a nudge to act?

*Shirley Sewell is one of the Huron congregational coaches.*

# The wisdom of creation: what can we learn from nature?

By Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle

The altered pace of life we have been experiencing can be viewed as an invitation to do things differently.

As many of the regular activities of summer were not as readily available to us, some have chosen to garden, take walks in neighbourhoods and parks and generally explore their areas in ways that don't necessarily involve shopping and crowds. For some, this has led to moments of realisation about the world around us. There are photos of deer, foxes, coyotes and more in urban spaces that have been shared on social media. Some acknowledge the wonderful sounds of nature: birds chirping, bees buzzing and stridulation of cicadas (at least, according to Google, that is what it is called). These experiences can be nourishing.

With this kind of heightened awareness, I have frequently surveyed my yard. In doing so, I have noticed the Japanese maple – a staple in urban gardening because its red leaves and characteristic branches provide a nice contrast of colour in the summer and character in the winter. This dwarf tree was in our backyard when we bought the house. Around our yard there are maple and oak trees, a blue spruce and a variety of other plants. A large ash tree provides shade for the dwarf Japanese maple.

Wildlife watching on our back porch, we can see lots of birds, butterflies and bees

## SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



## What distractions prevent us from seeing the wisdom and beauty inherent in our world and its inhabitants?



Juvenile goldfinch on grey-headed coneflowers

around the yard. Interestingly, however, these native species almost never land on the Japanese maple. In fact, over time, I have noticed that, while it offers a certain aesthetic beauty for us, and, of course, helps convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, it seems to have very little wildlife value, at least in our backyard.

The experience of gardening with native species has certainly opened my eyes to the wisdom

of creation. Every plant, every insect, every bird and animal have a place in the circle of life. We can contribute to maintaining that balance when we use our spaces to provide what God has planted in our region. While many use bird feeders to attract song birds, we have learned there are native plants which do the same thing. There is wisdom accessible to us if we are humble enough to seek

it and look beyond our own ideals.

The same can be said about our relationships with each other. There is wisdom, there are stories that need to be told, need to be heard. What are missing when we focus on the aesthetics familiar to us instead of opening ourselves to what may feel different, awkward, perhaps even challenging our worldview? And yet, what

might be gained when we take the time to notice, to listen, and to embrace in, perhaps, new ways?

Jesus said: "Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbour, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye', while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbour's eye." (Mt 7:3-5)

What are the logs in our eyes? What distractions prevent us from seeing the wisdom and beauty inherent in our world and its inhabitants? What do we need to do to remove these and embrace the richness and grace all around?

I removed the Japanese maple and planted a similarly characteristic native bush – ninebark. The plant has flowers for pollinators, berries for birds and interesting leaves and bark for humans. I still have more work to do, more to understand about God's Creation and God's children. I remain humble and curious to what I might learn.

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

chrisbrouillardcoyle@diohuron.org

# Intentional discipleship

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

"The best decision anyone can ever make, at any point in life, in any circumstances, whoever they are, wherever they are, is to become a disciple of Jesus Christ."

Archbishop of Canterbury  
Justin Welby



## Education for Ministry may well be the very tool you need next. As you read this, it is still not too late to be a part of an EfM program.

**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.**

ing ecumenical matters. (To learn more about the Anglican Consultative Council please visit: <https://www.anglican-communication.org/structures/instruments-of-communication/acc.aspx>)

Out of the Anglican Consultative Council meetings held in 2016 came the current focus across the Anglican Communion on Intentional Discipleship. What is the definition of discipleship? Discipleship at its core is about transformation, a process directed by God's Spirit in our lives aiming to equip Christians to live their every-

day lives as followers of Jesus Christ, following Jesus example and teaching. It is about putting faith into practice and training other believers to do the same. It is about mentoring and encouraging believers so that their faith has an impact on the world around them.

While from our earliest days within the church, whether in our corporate worship or private study, learning about and following the examples of Jesus have been at the centre of who we are as Christians. Our faith journey, however, is not one that we take alone for at various

phases and stages of our life's journey, we need different resources and supports in this ongoing work of transformation.

Education for Ministry may well be the very tool you need next. From the EfM Canada website we learn that EfM participants meet "in small groups for study and practice to aid them in discovering and nurturing their call to Christian service. EfM helps the faithful encounter the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition and bring it into conversation with their experiences of the world as they study, worship, and engage in theological reflection together. Participants take what they

learn about scripture, church history, theology, inter-faith studies and ethics into their own lives and hearts, in order to support them in living out a vibrant baptismal ministry in the church and in the world."

As you read this, it is still not too late to be a part of an Education for Ministry (EfM) program. If you are interested in journeying with a group committed to growing in their faith and in their knowledge of their faith, don't hesitate, please be in touch with either Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or myself Val Kenyon at [EFM@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:EFM@huron.anglican.ca).

Rev. Canon Val Kenyon is EfM Animator in Huron.

# Life's constant forward movement

A few weeks ago, I was walking along an asphalt pathway scattered with erupting cracks. These mini-craters exposed weeds and grass that had broken through.



AS I SEE IT

REV. JIM  
INNES

This phenomenon is nothing new for those with paved driveways. Nonetheless, the impressive number of outbreaks along that narrow winding trail was such a peculiar sight, that I stopped and took pictures.

The asphalt was a good two inches deep and well-traveled. Its depth would have blocked the sun and rain from feeding anything under it, and, you'd think, been too much weight for any plant life to bust out. Yet, for whatever reason, life was able to grind its way



through that heavy solidified petroleum.

Was it because of persistence? Or was there some greater potency at work, something systemically engaged and needing that plant life to find the light of day? By this, I'm asking, is there some other influence, some additional energy, driving this almost impossible feat of wildlife?

Whatever the rationale, it does seem (to me) that Mother Nature, as she wants to flourish,

**New growth will not be stopped, even by our own limitations and self-doubts. At all times, new life is trying to find ways to burst forth around us (and from within us).**

or needs to thrive, cannot be held back.

Life, wanting shape and form, has a mind of its own, and no circumstance can prevent its forward movement. As I see it, the image of plant life breaking free from asphalt is an expression of Hope, hope that life is always at work breaking free of limitations.

This Hope breathes potential into every circumstance, every hardship, every endeavor. All struggles, most notably our personal ones, can eventually, though never too soon, become 'life and light.' As the prophet Isaiah declared, "your light will break out like the dawn, and your healing will speedily spring forth."

Such potential is but a matter of faith. For those of the Christian-Judaeo tradition (and

most religious traditions), this is a faith in God's power (or whatever deity is celebrated). For others (and likely most religious-minded), this faith may rest in appreciation that there is unstoppable energy all around us. And, it wants to create.

I came across an advertisement from a company selling repairs to cracked driveways. The ad described how new growth takes place at the tips of plant roots. And, as this the root system develops, these tips, seek out a means for expansion (like cracks already present in the pavement).

Despite the underlying irony of this ad (the company's business was intentional about stopping new growth), it nevertheless led us to an innate truth. Hardship deepens our rootedness.

Hardship creates resiliency, and shapes the way we view the world. From a new vantage point, we are then able to respond afresh to its ever-changing challenges. The parable (from Luke 5:36-39) that you can't put new wine in old wineskins (because it can't handle the expansion) describes how we must move beyond the brittleness of our old ways so that new life has space to expand and mature, and eventually lead to even newer life (and our need to let go again in an evolutionary forward movement).

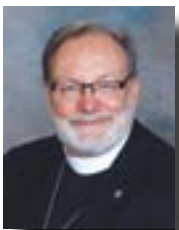
New growth will not be stopped, even by our own limitations and self-doubts. At all times, new life is trying to find ways to burst forth around us (and from within us). It is as Isaiah prophesied, "And you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail."

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

[jiminnes@diohuron.org](mailto:jiminnes@diohuron.org)

# Respect the dignity of every human being

The strap had been wrapped tightly around the bronze statue. One person did not have enough strength to make it budge from its pedestal. A group of individuals reached out and with a shared resolve strained to topple the figure whose image had been a central feature of the public square for years.



A VIEW FROM  
THE BACK PEW

REV. CANON  
CHRISTOPHER  
B. J. PRATT

The efforts of the group began to have an impact. The statue swayed and slowly began to tilt towards those who sought to pull it down. Finally, with a solemn descent, the figure of Canada's first Prime Minister fell to the ground and, released by the impact, the decapitated head rolled away, resting on its own, only to be kicked, like a soccer ball across the wet pavement.

This is a searing image of an act seen in recent days when figures of history are being viewed as a focus for community action and protest. In different parts of our global village, statues and images of individuals whose lives and whose work is being examined through the lens of contemporary sensitivities, have been



pulled down as judgmental acts of condemnation.

"The evil that men do lives after them.... The good is oft interred with their bones"

(Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene 2)

In the midst of the turmoil of our times in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I have found that there is much value to be drawn from the words of a famous playwright and poet of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. William Shakespeare reflected, more than once, on the way in which human beings place themselves in judgement over each other. As individuals or in dealing with different cultural identities, the relationships he identifies in his dramatic works are often thick with tension. Time and time again, those engaged in conflict fail to appreciate the human value of their antagonist.

"I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, heal'd by the same means, warm'd and cool'd by

the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?...."

(The Merchant of Venice, Act 3, Scene 1)

As he presented the profound cultural and religious divides of his day, Shakespeare leads us to reflect on the moments when we have fallen into the judgmental trap and not sought to "serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?" (Baptismal Covenant)

St. John's Gospel contains the story of a belligerent crowd, who were eager to entrap Jesus by presenting him with an individual who had broken the Law of Moses. The penalty was extreme. The crowd was prepared to carry out the expected sentence of stoning without any hesitation or remorse. When presented with the vitriolic anger of the crowd, Jesus presented a response which caused them to stop in their tracks. The individual who was without sin was given the opportunity to cast the first stone. One

can only imagine the sound of rocks and stones falling to the ground in the silence which followed and the shuffling of feet as the crowd melted away.

As October melds into November, the world around us will be urging us to succumb to the traditions surrounding All Hallows Eve. For people of faith, the Feast of All Saints and the Feast of All Souls provides an opportunity to give thanks to God for the life, work and witness of those individuals, who, in days gone by, sought to bear faithful witness to our Lord. My suspicion is that not everyone to whom we ascribe the title of "Saint" got it right, all the time. Yet we pause to remember those who have gone before us and whose witness and legacy is something that we may be able to build upon in our own day and age.

In a world where anger is being expressed in so many ways, former President Barack Obama reflected: "The world is messy, there are ambiguities. People who do really good stuff have flaws... there is a sense that the way of making change is to be as judgmental as possible about other people and that's enough. That's not activism. That's not bringing about change. If all you're doing is casting stones, you're probably not going to get that far. That's easy to do."

In our own Anglican devotional experience, "The Reconciliation of a Penitent", the

prayer of the penitent is to the point: "Most merciful God, have mercy upon me, in your compassion forgive my sins, both known and unknown, things done and left undone (especially...)"

Before any words of Absolution or a Declaration of Forgiveness are heard, this simple and direct exchange takes place:

*Priest:* Do you turn again to Christ?

*Penitent:* I turn to Christ.

*Priest:* Do you forgive the sins of those who have sinned against you?

*Penitent:* I forgive them.

(BAS page 168)

Before more statues of the figures of history are toppled, I believe that people of faith need to encourage those with valid calls for justice to reflect on the whole life story of the individuals whose figures are being torn from the centre of the public square. Their stories may be complicated and not always easy to reconcile with the impact that their actions have had over the years, but as people of faith we all need to live up to our Baptismal Covenant, not only to "strive for Justice", but also to "respect the dignity of every human being", past and present.

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

[chrispratt@diohuron.org](mailto:chrispratt@diohuron.org)

# Holiness and grace of ephemeral art

Autumn has a way of shouting "Glory!" as we drive along country roads or walk down the sidewalks of our neighbourhoods.



LAUREL  
PATTENDEN

Every tree, in the country or urban setting, is decked out in yellows, golds and reds. You don't have to go far to see the beauty. Acorns crunch under our feet and maple keys spin down with the wind.

This is the perfect time (and perhaps the easiest time) to practice some ephemeral art. Ephemeral art is art made with short-lived materials and only lasts for a short amount of time. It is a form of temporary art that time has a way of dismantling. It can symbolize transition in our lives.



Laurel Pattenden, Woman at the well

Perhaps you have gone for a hike on a trail, a walk down a city sidewalk, or a sandy beach and seen where someone has arranged pinecones,

leaves, sticks, bird feathers or grasses into a unique design. That is ephemeral art. Art that is vulnerable to the wind and rain.

Ephemeral art is affordable to all of us because it is free. Everything you need has been given to you. The acorns under the oak tree in the park. The pinecones along a trail. Leaves that blow without boundaries to be pick up. Flower petals in our gardens. Just look around and see the potential in the autumn glory.

However, there is one catch. We have to be able to see what we have been given. We have to be able to stroll intuitively about, looking for the chosen pieces for our art. It makes us go inside ourselves and to be open to this everyday beauty that surrounds us. There is holiness in this beauty. There is grace in this beauty.

This year it may be more difficult to see the Holy in front of us. Focusing on the Grace that we have received may take more mindful intent. The shadow of the Pandemic does make it harder to acknowledge the present beauty and abundance that we have been given. It is harder to be in the present

and shout our gratitude for the wonders of life that abound before us. So what can we do?

Just as ephemeral art is temporary and transitional so is the pandemic. We need to turn to what is permanent, perpetual and immortal.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills--from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

So, we turn to God. God who is everlastingly persistent in creating grace and beauty. Whether we are in the midst of a pandemic or not. God's grace and holiness is not temporary. It cannot be blown away by the wind nor eroded by the rains.

Like ephemeral art, God's permanent grace and holy love is free, we just have to open our eyes and abide in it. We need to remember that God, unlike our art and the pandemic, is not ephemeral!

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

## Using our problem solving skills (The evils of technology, episode 236)

This column started life as a daily spiritual reflection for the folks at St. James Westminster in London. It was a somewhat tongue in cheek poke at myself for being a technophobe, but with the twist that I made somewhat of a connection to COVID-19 and how we have needed to be agile to face the many changes that the pandemic has brought.



**MOSTLY ABOUT  
RELIGION**

**REV. CANON  
KEITH  
NETHERY**

Over time, I began to see a slightly different focus, which puts me in less a technophobe persona, but with a wider look at the impacts of COVID-19. Anytime a tongue is planted firmly in cheek, it is likely to be a reach, however there are always lessons to be learned. So, as I was saying to the folks from St. James in August...

It won't surprise you much when I confess that I am not a big fan of GPS. I often ride with people who use it and see its value, but that hasn't led me to open the app on my phone to help me find my way. I will always tout the one time (and one time only) that GPS told the driver of the car I was riding in to make an immediate U-turn while on a six lane roadway, as my flimsy reason



to avoid using this much loved transportation help.

This past summer, I travelled to a wedding on a farm not far from Kitchener-Waterloo. On the way there, with time as a compelling factor, the driver used their GPS with me reluctantly reading the directions so I didn't have to listen to the annoying voice. I was somewhat impressed when we were steered around construction (as least we assume it was construction that directed the techno gadget to kick us off the 401 and down a couple of back roads, only to rejoin the traffic chaos a few minutes later). We arrived, with time to spare and enjoyed a wonderful, but rather warm and humid ceremony.

I suggested that I could direct us home cross country as I live in north London, which means a long and winding road from the 401 north once you return to the Forest City. It had been a year or two since I had been on the spiders' web of rural blacktop that takes one the back way from KW to London.

After one turn and a short drive, we found ourselves in a small town that I had visited

before, but just once. Wanting to make a turn, I was somewhat miffed that the main intersection was closed for construction, so we rolled on, looking for a right turn. We found one shortly and I recognized the name of the road and my chest swelled with travel charting pride. My thought was soon confirmed as we made a turn and crossed over the 401 and I felt sure we were good to go. A curve and a corner I didn't recognize and we were soon about to roll onto gravel. Guess we should have made that corner. A U-turn and only a slight delay. On second look the corner was obviously a new construct, so no wonder I didn't recognize it. I was certain we were headed the right way, but not so certain I recognized the countryside around us. A short drive, a stoplight ahead and there it was: that glorious and beautiful sign that said Oxford Road 8. An exuberance gushed that we would turn here and be swiftly and quickly closing on London. The next half hour was uncomplicated. A late remembrance that we needed to make a main street turn in a

small town and a new stop sign in another burg. To misquote Tom Petty, "We were runnin' down a dream!" When we hit the Embro Road I was sitting pretty. Until that nasty sign that said the road to Thorndale was closed due to construction. No problems, there was another road just down the way. Number, uh, hmm, don't remember but I'll recognize it. And I did! And five minutes later another doomsday orange construction sign proclaiming "road closed for construction." As we turned left, I knew that the only way now was to go back to Highway 2 and cruise the beautiful village of Thamesford, before twisting and turning up through the suburbs to get me home.

So, I obviously didn't bother to look at my watch, because there was no way I was admitting that my inept direction making was the cause of a longer than need be trip home. But hey, it was much more scenic than checking out the side of endless transports on the 401 and/or wondering why yet another person feels the need to cruise at 140 plus. We had enjoyed a lovely tour with no speeding cars or finger pointing pilots frustrated by the tepid nature of the drivers around them. It was a stress releasing cruise through the beauty of God's nature. Well, that's what I told myself and my driver. At least one of us didn't seem to be buying it!

In the original reflection, I concluded with a treatise of

how finding my way home was like navigating COVID 19, and how new issues were turning up around every corner. And then admitting that I should embrace technology, but recognizing that my wicked navigational skills were perfect for working through a pandemic.

So now that I have had another month or more to contemplate all this, I have a new plan to make my point, while I continue to hide from all that is contemporary technology. The last six plus months has proven that we need to be flexible and agile. COVID 19 has forced us to change directions many times and in many ways. While technology is a wonderful thing, when we rely on it exclusively, our thinking on our feet skills can be diminished. This pandemic has certainly caused me to make extensive use of the problem solving skills encased in my cranium. Without this ability to think nimbly, think outside the box, the eternity that was a summer of COVID 19, would have seemed more deeply entrenched in goo!

It's either that, or I just like being a curmudgeon. Second time in a week I've had to look up how to spell the word, because I somehow managed to turn off the spell check on this confounded machine and can't get it turned back on. The evils of technology!!

*Rev. Canon Keith Nethery is the rector at St. James' Westminster, London.*

*keithnethery@diohuron.org*