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HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • DECEMBER 2018



Laurel Pattenden, WAITING, Mixed media, 2017

Advent and the forgotten art of waiting: the Word will emerge from silence

Our liturgical calendar begins with Advent in late November or early December when we long for Christ to come again and bring God's kingdom into its fullness.

Our longing is for God's kingdom to come – as we pray daily in the Lord's Prayer. We hold before us the end to which we are heading at the beginning of every liturgical year.

Then the birth of Jesus: a first step in a long journey showing us how to live as we wait for that hope to be realized. The beginning of the promises yet to be fulfilled.

There is more to come!

(Bishop Linda's message, page 2)

I'm glad that You were not born at the inn.

... How did You know the manger was best? No diversions. No security. No noise. No blinking lights. Secluded space for Mary and Joseph. An open door. Quiet to enable us to hear Your gentle cries.

How did You know?

(I'm glad that You were not born at the inn, page 12)

Know thy neighbour: reaching out to the lonely

Back in January, St. Matthew's in South Windsor opened its door to the newcomers from China offering ESL classes to the parents of the high school students who came to study in Canada. The program was selected to receive Diocesan Jubilee Grant.

By Rev. Andreas Thiel

Many people will recall the diocesan initiative of several years ago, 'Who Is My Neighbour?' The St. Matthew's community in South Windsor felt the thrust of that particular question in a most unexpected way this past year. And it all began with a "cold call"...

In January 2018, a stranger walked through the doors of St. Matthew's, just after our main Sunday service. He asked to speak with the pastor, and after I introduced myself, he explained the reason for his visit.

The gentleman happened to be a local real estate agent, and he thought that we would be interested in learning that over the past few years, an increasing number of area homes were being bought or rented by people who had come to Canada from China. Their reason for emigrating was simple: so that their children could benefit from a Canadian high school education. And not just any high school: through careful research from their homes in China, they had determined that Vincent

Massey High School (located across the street from St. Matthew's) offered some of the highest quality education in the province.

As the realtor spoke, it became clear that families who go to such great lengths to provide exceptional learning experiences for their children may in fact pay a steep price for doing so.

In this case, the price being paid was one of isolation. While their children attended school during the days, the parents – often with minimal English language skills – kept to themselves. In a foreign land, in an unfamiliar culture, for many, this had turned into a somewhat lonely existence.

Out of this conversation came a simple question: would the people of St. Matthew's consider providing help to these newcomers to our neighbourhood?

The word 'Yes' came out before we could even give it any thought. Among our parishioners, we knew we had people who were skilled in education: we had at least one retired ESL teacher; we had people who had a flair for providing hospitality.

The weekly sessions of English as a Second Language program at St. Matthew's, Windsor last two hours, averaging 18 learners and up to six instructors. On Thursday mornings the church hall rings with chatter and laughter.



Photo: Gordon Drake

Armed with those resources, we opened the doors of St. Matthew's to our very first English as a Second Language class in Easter week! The weekly sessions (two hours, averaging 18 learners with up to six instructors) involve large group interaction, small group study, conversation and fellowship.

On Thursday mornings, our church hall rings with chatter and laughter, and in a very short period, a unique community has begun to emerge. Members of this new community are quick to help out at any parish-wide event. And a few have even requested regular bible study. All of this, because

a mysterious visitor dared to come through our doors on a snowy January Sunday, for the purpose of helping us to better understand just who our neighbours are.

For more on Huron's Jubilee Grant stories See Page 5

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Keeping our hope fixed on what is yet to come

There is such excitement at New Year celebrations as a new year begins with the hope that somehow this year will be different or better!



**BISHOP
LINDA
NICHOLLS**

A new beginning will make a difference and we will be able to make the changes we long for in ourselves, our families or our communities. So we raise a glass of champagne at midnight on December 31st and look at January 1st with expectation.

But the Church has already had its new year by then! Our liturgical calendar begins with Advent in late November or early December when we long for Christ to come again and bring God's kingdom into its fullness. Our longing is for God's kingdom to come – as we pray daily in the Lord's Prayer. We hold before us the end to which we are heading at the beginning of every liturgical year. Then the birth of Jesus is a first step in a long

journey showing us how to live as we wait for that hope to be realized. Sometimes we seem to make Christmas the whole point when it is simply the beginning of the promises yet to be fulfilled. There is more to come!

So we are called to keep our hope fixed on what is yet to come – God's kingdom of peace and justice in which God will live in our midst and all will know God intimately (Revelation 21). To live in that kingdom – we need to practice now! We need to learn how to live in peace with justice for all people and that is a task that needs daily practice because neither we nor our neighbours are perfect!

At the moment the loudest voices around us shout out simplistic solutions to the complexities of life that are not peaceful or just. Blame for human difficulties is poured onto anyone who is different from 'us'; scapegoats are found on every corner and justice is what is good for 'me'. That is as true inside church life as outside it.

Jesus demonstrated a willingness to listen to those whom others would have silenced - a woman at the well; blind man; a tax collector; a Gentile; a woman presumed



to be a sinner. He stopped and listened with respect through the lens of the law in love; giving of himself to them sharing a meal; asking what was needed; offering healing; inviting conversation; forgiving sin. They were transformed by his gifts. His responses stepped beyond the letter of the law or the expedient solution and sought what was good, fair, just and life-giving. The Good Samaritan practiced this gift when he stopped to help. It is too easy to walk away, when

our baptismal call is rather to enter into relationships and give more.

As we enter into Advent 2018, a new year of growing in faith in Christ, let our resolution be to keep learning how to live with one another in ways that mirror Jesus. Then we will continue to build our capacity and readiness for God's kingdom and see glimpses of it in our midst as our eyes are fixed on what is still to come.

+ Linda

Stop for just a moment and observe: Silence is full of answers

By Rev. Val Kenyon

I have heard that often those who live next to train tracks can, with time, become so accustomed to its noise, that they no longer hear the train as it passes.

How is it that certain experiences can become just part of the background noise in our lives, so familiar that we no longer hear or see them?

In particular as we enter this season of Advent, a season through which we have passed many times, how do we stay awake to the wonder that is Advent and to all the 'rumblings' this season strives to stir within us? While the answer will not be the same for everyone, during this time when we are called to prepare ourselves for the celebration of God's most incredible gift to humanity in the coming of Jesus, what if we were to train our attention, to focus afresh, if even just for a moment? What if by way of Advent devotional this year, we were to cultivate within our day some moments for simple practices, even if just in one-minute segments, a one-minute spirituality for our age?

What if as we hurry out of our homes to get all those er-

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER



Tom Gainor, Unsplash

rands done, what if we stopped for just a moment to observe something in nature, to stop and really see it, just for a moment, noting the sight and the scent of the season and in that moment allowing ourselves to become aware of the gift of God's creation to us, and to be thankful?

What if in a moment of worry (we all have lots of those), instead of allowing ourselves to rush to worse case scenarios, what if in that moment, for just a moment, we take a deep breath ... and remind ourselves that God is with us and with

those we love, present in each and every moment, allowing ourselves to experience that assurance even if just for the moment?

What if as we dash around in our cars whenever we come to a red light, we allowed that moment to be a time where we stop to consider those things in our lives that we would like to give over to God, those things that do not serve us but rather weigh upon us down, often preventing us from moving forward?

What if every time you met someone, or shook someone's

hand over the next four weeks you intentionally remembered that that person, standing before you at that very moment, was created in the image of God, and contained something of God's light in them?

What if as you rise (albeit with great difficulty some times) to the buzzing of your alarm each morning, what if you were to say with the psalmist, "This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it!"?

What if embracing the Gospel message to 'be awake' this season, what if we did just that?

What if we intentionally gave ourselves to entering into what is in effect a time of prayer, even if just for the moment, a prayer that reconnects us, refreshes us, and revives us? And while these kind of practices can be beneficial far beyond Advent what if we were to give ourselves these moments, how different might this season be for us, how different might we be as we allow God's Spirit to work in and through us as we await the coming of the Christ child to Bethlehem, as we await the coming the Christ child to our hearts?

Rev. Val Kenyon is AFP diocesan representative.

Keep on keeping on at St. Mark's, London

St. Mark's fight for survival in this last year has been filled with hard work and determination – never with fear. For people on Wilton Avenue moments of uncertainty – not knowing what is next for this community – are washed away by commitment to do what it takes to succeed.

By Helen Booth

Low attendance numbers, minimal givings, limited programming – that was reality at St. Mark's, London in October 2017, when a town hall meeting was held at the church to set the tone for its future.

A year later, it is still not known what their future holds, but at that meeting parishioners did not discuss about giving up and simply staying the course. The parish as a whole made the decision to pray like it all depends on God and work like it all depends on them. And we went to work.

Our goal: a youth centered church

The goal is to become a place for the youth in our community – a welcoming and accepting place. A family and youth centred church, where children are welcome and youth are accepted for who they are. A place families can come to worship and to share in community.

Probably the simplest and most effective thing we did was reaching out for help from Church House. St. Mark's has received unbelievable support and guidance from many people within the diocese in many forms – from answering questions to presenting topics at our church.

We take every chance possible to learn, to gain knowledge and to network. When the diocese offers workshops such as wardens' and treasurers' workshop – we attend. In addition to the information we learned, we soon realized our situation is not unique and we are not alone. We have had members travel to Quebec for a stewardship conference, also

last October – and the information and knowledge that was gained was valuable.

Fundraising: the number of people, not the dollars raised

St. Mark's has a treasurer who is not afraid to say, "We cannot afford to do that". And it has wardens who freely discuss the financial situation. Our church is looked after by volunteers from cleaning and yard maintenance to building repairs. We are mindful of Bishop Linda's criteria: Pay your apportionment, your clergy and your bills while maintaining a balanced budget.

When it comes to fundraising, we do not concentrate on the dollars raised rather the number of people we reach and on developing connections.

Our first event, held on December 10 last year – The Legendary Patsy Cline Show Starring Amberley Beatty – was to show our parishioners we can do this. Now when an event is suggested, we do not ask "can we do it", rather "how well can we do it."

In 1908 we started as a mission church of St. Matthew's in a store front on the South East corner of Dundas and Hale. In 1910 we moved across the street to a newly built church on the North West corner. In 1964 the church relocated to the current location.

So we understand a building is just that – a building. St. Mark's is a great church because of the people who gather together to worship and serve God not because of the building or property.

After a year of various events we are starting to see our guests forming connections with us. We are asked about our next event; we hear how enjoyable the evening was, and we are getting to be known by name. St. Mark's is blessed with many friends and families who donate their time and talents to help make all of our events fantastic.

We have numerous family friendly events throughout the year: movie nights, concerts and Halloween parties. We host one wine and cheese night for the adults each year. We are now hosting Vacation Bible School in August each year.

We have a youth group (11 to 16), as well as a young adult group (16 to 22). Both groups are driven by the interests and needs of the members. When we moved to one service at 9:30AM all of the kids stopped coming to service so we started the youth group to stay connected. And from the youth group the young adult group formed.

Grants and gifts

We have been rewarded one of the diocesan Jubilee Grants for our technology program – The Bridge to Building Youth & Seniors Relationships. We are matching young high school students with seniors in our area. The youth are teaching the seniors about today's technology, and as the program runs its course, the seniors will be teaching the youth topics that are of interest to both: woodworking, sewing or painting.

Currently we are working with the local board of education to arrange for students to earn their community hours while helping us deliver the



Halloween party at St. Mark's on Wilton Ave.

program. In addition to the funding, we have received gifts in valuable equipment and service from families and friends.

Back in April 2018, we received a grant from East London Optimist to deliver a program we designed to our youth and their family called "Money and Food Smarts". We started our own food cupboard to help support our youth and families.

Most recently, we received a gift from the diocesan golf tournament to purchase supplies for the young adult group. We are also using the money for games and different activities which will help us to become a place the youth want to spend time in. It will be members of the young adult group who will be helping with game selections.

And this just in: St. Mark's has been selected by Group Ministry Resources to host a FunShop Training Day. There are 275 FunShop events across Canada and the US, only three in Ontario! The big day for St. Mark's is May 4, 2019.

Building relationship with other churches

We have opened our community building to our neighbour – Trinity United Church – to better serve our community. Our worship space and church celebrations are shared with Tabernacle of God Worship Ministry. We are just starting to work with the Egerton Baptist Church and their youth ministry. We are now involved with Argyle Community Association, Basic Needs Argyle and Churches Together London.

Do we know what our future holds or where we will be? No, but we do know we will end up exactly where God wants us to be. And in the meantime, we will keep on keeping on.

Helen Booth is a parishioner of St. Mark's, London.



Sharing creation stories: the cornerstone of bridge building

Rev. Canon Rob Lemon

On October 17 the Deanery of Essex welcomed Rev. Rosalyn Elm, priest-in-charge at Six Nations parishes, Rev. Tom Patterson from St. James, Stratford, and Hanna Scorrar from Christ Church, Amherstburg at St. Mark's-by-the-Lake church in Tecumseh.

These folks, who are connected to Bridge Builders in our diocese, came to share with us some insights about creation stories from indigenous tradition and the biblical tradition. We were encouraged at Synod, back in May, to learn more about indigenous and biblical creation stories and we've found in the Deanery of Essex that the best way to do any of this type of learning is together, through deanery events.

Rosalyn shared the stories of both traditions. She mostly concentrated on the indigenous



Rev. Rosalyn Elm at St. James' Church, Stratford on November 2

stories because that was the least familiar to the rest of the community that had gathered.

Her telling of the stories was rich and engaging and she was diligent about offering context and insights that could be gleaned from the stories.

That evening, we learned about substantial differences between the creation stories that each of the traditions told but we also focused on common ethical and moral demands that were placed on humanity by the stories. The stories of both traditions called humanity to community, to respect and dignity, to celebrating and sharing the abundance of creation. The way that calling was conveyed was substantially different, but the call was similar across the two traditions.

Rosalyn invited us to participate in creation and to live into

the moral and ethical demands of that participation. She and Tom urged us to build relationships with First Nations communities, to spend time with each other, to know each other, to seek what is best for each other, and to build a common people in which the rich blessings of creation are available, celebrated, protected, and shared by all.

The evening was fruitful and the participants deeply appreciated the opportunity to learn and grow through these Bridge Builders' ministry.

Rev. Elm continued her sharing of creation stories throughout our diocese. On November 2, she led a workshop on creation stories organized at St. James', Stratford.

Rev. Canon Rob Lemon is the rector of St. Mark's-by-the-Lake, Tecumseh and the regional dean of Essex.

Taking the Gospel to people outside the church

“Learning our story and sharing our story” was the title of a workshop offered at Church of the Epiphany in Kingsville on October 20, by Shawn Branch, the Parish Development Officer for the Diocese of Fredericton.

Shawn came highly recommended by Bishop Linda and, on that recommendation, the Deanery of Essex invited him to come and help equip us to be faithful witnesses.

To start the day, Shawn had us acknowledge our fears around evangelism and the changing reality of the church. He suggested that the church has operated for a very long time on a method best exemplified by the famous quote from the movie *Field of Dreams*, “Build it and they will come.”

“That’s not happening anymore, people aren’t coming to us,” he said.

The conclusion that was drawn was that God’s people have to take the Gospel to people outside the church, the church has to go to them.



Shawn Branch speaking at Church of Epiphany, Kingsville

Shawn spent the rest of the day helping the people of the deanery to first figure out what the story of God in their lives was.

He invited the participants to recognise the times and places where God had touched their lives, because God is not an abstract idea or distant deity, but an intimate and personal reality in our lives.

He quickly summarised the story of the scriptures highlighting God’s love for human-

ity, our rejection of God, and God’s continuing efforts to reach us and live with us.

Shawn shared the story of his life, talking about how God had sought him out and touched his life and why he believes what he believes and why he chooses to serve God.

He said that he would never tell the whole story to someone in one go, but he tells bits and pieces of the story to others where his story and their stories connect so that he can help

them see where God is working in their lives.

Shawn gave everyone a few minutes and asked them to figure out something to say, in thirty seconds or less, to a person that asked the question, “Why do you believe this stuff?” in relation to their faith. He suggested choosing one part of the story of their life where they recognised God and using that as the core of their response.

This method of storytelling was something that the participants found gentle and accessible. One person said, “I always thought of evangelism as going door to door, or going to another country and proselytizing, but this is actually doable.”

Towards the end of the day, Shawn said to the group, “This is not a church growth strategy, this is for growing the Kingdom of God.” It may result in people coming to the church, but it is not an instantaneous fix. Shawn likened it to planting seeds in people’s lives and encouraged everyone to take the time for re-

lationships, for connecting with others, for spending time with people, because that’s where the opportunities to share the story will come from.

He said that we miss a lot of opportunities to share the good news of God because we get into the mode of existing where we always rush and don’t take the time connect and talk. When we do take the time and do share the story, we are just planting seeds and we rely on God to give the growth that will turn those seeds into fruitful faith.

Evangelism, sharing the story of the good news of God’s love, is central to our identity as the church. Shawn encouraged us to engage in that sharing through the stories of our own lives. It is a gentle and accessible approach that is very doable.

This workshop has helped equip us to be faithful witnesses to God’s love in the world and for that we are thankful.

Rev. Canon Rob Lemon, the regional dean of Essex

Simcoe causes a stir in Ottawa

From an effort to protect religious freedoms to making Parliament more accessible: an unusual story of a petition from Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Simcoe.

A petition sent to Canadian Parliament last October from an Anglican church in the Diocese of Huron may end up having much wider political consequences than initially aimed for.

The parishioners of Holy Trinity, Simcoe sent a petition through their MP Diane Finley objecting to Clause 14 in Bill C-51, which would remove the protections for religious freedoms.

Wanting to make it easier for some of his elderly parishioners to read and sign the petition, Rev. Paul Sherwood, the rector of Holy Trinity, enlarged the text and printed it on ledger-size paper (11”x17”).

As is the normal practice, Ms. Finley sent the petition to the Clerk of Petitions to be certified, but it was rejected because it was not “on paper of the usual size.” The Simcoe MP then raised this issue with the Speaker of the House of Commons during a Point of Order and she received unanimous consent from the members to table the original pe-

tion, despite its size.

The parishioners of Holy Trinity have been successful in their demands to protect religious freedoms: Clause 14 was eventually removed from Bill C-51.

As for the issue of the size of the submitted document, the Simcoe MP was told that, according to the rules, petitions could only be accepted on paper that was 8-1/2x11” or 8-1/2x14” (letter or legal size). The question of the “proper size” for a petition was forwarded to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It was discussed once and then – deferred indefinitely.

But a year later Rev. Sherwood’s enlarged print contributed to another twist in this procedural drama on the Parliament Hill.

Hoping to spur the Standing Committee into action, Ms. Finley, who herself spent two years legally blind and another two years with significant mobility issues, attempted to table a second petition in October this year,

again on ledger-size paper. It too was rejected by the Clerk’s Office because of its dimensions. This time, the format of the petition matched its substance: the petition called for the government to change the rules to allow petitions to be printed on paper large enough to accommodate those with impaired vision.

This second petition was signed by almost 200 MPs and senators. It was signed by members of all the Senate caucuses and members of all parties but Liberals in the House of Commons.

In the last week of October, the Simcoe MP rose again on a Point of Order and provided a carefully researched history of the traditions around petitions and their importance in the democratic process. The Speaker has taken it under advisement and will report his decision back to the House of Commons.

If Ms. Finley’s plea is to be successful, the Simcoe Anglicans will win a double reward for their efforts.

Catch the Spirit: Windsor-Essex for Huron Church Camp



The Deanery of Essex organized a fundraising dinner in support of Huron Church Camp on October 24.

More than 80 people gathered at Coopers Hawk winery in Harrow. They enjoyed some delicious food and

wine, some music and fellowship and lots of fun while learning more about Huron Church Camp.

Close to \$7,000.00 was raised to support the camp and more donations are expected.

Christmas Blessings from Huron Church Camp!

visit www.huronchurchcamp.ca for information about our 2019 season

St. John the Evangelist, London: Creative freedom in a sacred space

By Ilona Bevan

What if you could enter a church in the quiet of a morning, or the still of an evening and instead of taking a seat in a familiar (or unfamiliar) pew or chair, you explored?

Would you walk closer to an object or stained-glass window that caught your eye? Would you walk inside that small chapel you've been curious about for months? Maybe

touch the wood engravings or feel the stone structures?

What if you saw clay, canvas, paper, beads, yarn, paints, crayons, pencils, markers, and glue laying out on tables especially for your use, would it aid you in creative contemplation?

Founding the St. John's Creativity Centre is one attempt to provide such a space for anyone who might find it helpful.

Opened in July, 2018, at the historic site of St. John the Evangelist Church in North

Central London, the Creativity Centre strives to create the space and time to participate in creative activities that renew and refresh the soul.

The Centre offers book studies for adults that include creative activities each week, short camps and retreats for kids, and drop-ins for all ages. Whenever possible, the worship space or the natural beauty trees and flowers in the churchyard are used as the setting for creative activities. All programs provide at least some unstructured opportunities to explore and respond with materials provided.

Thanks to the generous support of the Diocese's Jubilee Grant, received in the spring of this year, the creative group of people at St. John the Evangelist has been able to offer three different types of programs focused on using sacred space and creativity to help nourish the soul:

One-time events, called "Creative Drop-ins" are almost usually free, casual, require no preregistration and last about 1.5-2.5 hours.

"The Artist's Rule" participants created their own "Book of Hours" with short poems marking the times of day for prayer.



Activities range from Yoga, to music, to art, to candle-making and floral design.

The 12-week "Adult Book Study" provides a balance between discussing an inspirational work (on the topic of using creativity for devotional purposes) and actual studio/creative worktime.

Finally, **short programs**, like Mini-Monk Summer Camp in August, have been designed specifically for children.

The Centre has only been open for four months, but it has already shown what a powerful impact having space and time for creativity, in the context of spiritual practice, discovery, or exploration, can have.

We have seen people's faith exploration deepen. People new to church have been welcomed into this space and today they are comfortable and eager to help and assist in the delivery of its programs. New friendships have been formed, and lots of creative art pieces go home as a reminder of the joy the Holy Spirit can bring to us through the work of our hands.

Ilona Bevan is a member of St. John the Evangelist Creative Centre team.

To learn more visit:
www.stjohnscreativitycentre.ca

REACH OUT TO US:
stjohnscreativitycentre@outlook.com



Ali, Beverly, Ilona, Heather, and Eileen in the chapel during the closing Eucharist that ended St. John's summer/fall book study.

Good Samaritans from Windsor

From page 1

There are obvious biblical resonances to our recent experience here at St. Matthew's: showing hospitality to the sojourner – reaching out to the lonely; noticing those who live on the boundaries of society; and perhaps the most obvious of all, that well-known parable as found in Luke's gospel, the "good Samaritan."

Each of these examples would suggest that those who do the reaching out are somehow at an advantage, and that the recipients gain something as a result. However, these past several months have taught us that the dynamics of human relationships transcend this view.

In our reaching out, we have found that others have reached out to us. In ministering to others, we ourselves have been ministered to. As we reflect on that reality, we begin to see that the term "neighbour" applies

to us all, and that the flow of God's grace knows no boundaries.

This past spring, we were delighted to learn that this fledgling initiative had been selected to receive a diocesan Jubilee Grant. The funds have enabled us to purchase dedicated equipment and resources to keep our program functioning. We appreciate the financial assistance, and we love every minute of witnessing how the Jubilee Grant supports this "new thing" in our midst.

God has blessed this church family with an unexpected new focus, and has provided us with the precious opportunity of reaching out in a way that responds to the unique needs of our neighbourhood. For this realization, we can only say, "Thanks be to God!"

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



A church family blessed with an unexpected focus: St. Matthew's rector and parishioners with their neighbours.

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ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

Unto us a child is born

Advent – the arrival of a notable person, thing or event. Of all the babies born in any given year, does anyone stand out?

Was infant Jesus remarkable in any way? We often romanticize the event. Yet, what is the reality? What was young Mary thinking and feeling that night?

The Annunciation was a remarkable event foretelling the birth of Jesus. John the Baptist's birth had been foretold earlier. Mary and Elizabeth were chosen women. Angel Gabriel brought the great news to both Mary and Zachariah, husband of Elizabeth. When the women each became pregnant, just as their heavenly visitor predicted, what in the world did they think?

Each had her own concerns: Mary, not yet married and virginal; Elizabeth, married for so many years and unable to conceive. Both women of faith accepted the will of God. Nonetheless, surely they wondered what would happen next.

For many years they raised their children without event. Did Elizabeth have any idea of John's future? Was he unremarkable as a young man? Did she have hopes that a longed for child, announced by an angel, would have a brilliant future? And Mary, a virgin and pregnant – Was there any consternation in her community? What did she think when her child was born, with all the remarkable things happening around her and then the flight to Egypt? Surely she knew that this was indeed a special child.

We have little information about John's birth,

infancy and childhood. For Jesus, we have the stories of shepherds and wise men; a need to flee Bethlehem for Egypt – this time due to an angelic visit to Joseph via a dream; and a 12 year old Jesus teaching in the temple. Few details of his first 30 years or so, and then, suddenly, His Ministry began. John, too, was older when he became known within the region – a voice crying in the wilderness.

Two remarkable and faithful women, facing challenges we cannot imagine. One who faced a lifetime of being barren and what all that meant back then, before rejoicing at the miracle of a most surprising pregnancy. The other, experiencing a disconnected series of uncommon occurrences centred around her blessed child.

Children who changed the world; whose ideas transformed our world; whose teaching of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love are the centre of our faith; all of which we celebrate during the Season of Advent. This is the beginning of a new year in Christ. Remember what one child can do, with a little help from his cousin. And remember the remarkable women who stood by their bewildering children. Motherhood has its challenges.

But, so does living our faith in an increasingly secular world. Take the time this Advent to embrace Hope, to be at Peace, to see the Joy in God's creation and to Love God, Love yourself and Love your neighbour.

Bonnie Rees, ACW president

Learning more about Monica Place

An enjoyable afternoon was spent at Grace Anglican Church, West Lorne, Tuesday, October 16.

After a potluck lunch at noon, Jennifer Breaton, director of Monica Place, gave an informative talk about Monica Place and answered questions posed by fourteen members and Rev. Canon Nick Wells.

This event was an opportunity to learn about Monica Place and give gifts for the little ones at Monica Place before conducting business and celebrating Eucharist.

Judy Anderson, Delaware Deanery ACW president



Jennifer Breaton, director of Monica Place, with her adorable daughter Grace

Meet your Council



Susan Winlaw. Susan was born in Woodstock and attended the historic Old St. Paul's Anglican Church.

Five generations of women from her family have attended that church and she feels wrapped in love each time she can attend one of their services.

She really enjoyed growing up Anglican, of finally being old enough to sit across the church on her own with the children of the Sunday School, watching her mom Dorthea and her sister Joanne being part of the choir and her brother acting as a server to the ministers of the congregation and especially attending the youth group as a teen. It was a heady time in the 50's and 60's with a packed church at most services. There were so many women involved in church activities that there were five or six different ACW groups who met at different days and evenings of the week.

Then came university and a career at Sears Canada that lasted 42 years in Toronto, Oshawa and back to Toronto.

She married in 1975 and with husband Alex Law as writer, she edited and published two automotive books and six themed movie review guide books.

Early retirement with knee issues brought Susan back to the hood in Oxford County and she thanks God every day that Alex suggested they could maybe look for houses close to her family.

Susan joined the ACW group at St. James' in Ingersoll as soon as they arrived in town. She is currently treasurer for that group, the Oxford Deanery representative to the Diocesan Council and has just taken on the role of the education representative on Council.



Patricia Allison. Born and raised in Nottinghamshire, Patsy trained as a Drama and Music teacher at a Church of England College, where she met her husband.

They married in 1968, and one year later they both took jobs in Northern Alberta, living and teaching in small schools on remote reserves for a number of years before returning to university to take advanced degrees.

In 1977 they moved to Ontario to work at Western University, primarily teaching and researching educational administration, law, and private and independent education.

Patricia retired in 2009 to concentrate on her work in the church, and was ordained a vocational deacon in 2012. Her husband retired from the university in 2014, and they have both continued with professional consultation, writing and research.

They have two sons, two grandsons and two granddaughters, and live in a very old house in the country with a houseful of rescued cats (currently numbering five).

Patsy has held the Bishop's appointment as Chaplain to the ACW since 2014, and has loved every minute of it!

Why come to a Quiet Day?

On Wednesday, Oct. 17, a group of thirty-two women from different parishes met at Christ Church Colchester for the Annual Essex Deanery Quiet Day.

The event was led by Archdeacon of Essex Jane Humphreys who started by asking a simple question: Why come to a Quiet Day?

After listening to some answers, Archdeacon Humphreys gave four of her reflections.



She felt that, first, the day was an opportunity to get away from our daily life and to listen to God.

Secondly, she emphasized our need for each other in fellowship where we were comfortable to share our thoughts, to renew our friendships and to support each other in any way.

As Anglican Church women, we also came together to sing and worship together, with Peggy's musical help. We prayed for our whole Church and our ministries in it, whether it was making pies, outreach and visiting the sick.

Finally, the Archdeacon said that by sharing our prayers and stories, we deepen our personal faith.

To make this point, the Archdeacon suggested a time of silent prayer during which we could offer up our praise to God, just enjoy being with Him or ask for guidance. This quiet time was our time to realize our need for a relationship with God in a personal way.

This practice was also a wonderful opportunity to think of women who have encouraged us in our faith.

It was a lovely way to end our annual quiet time together. We can look forward to more times like this in future.

Jane Buttery, Southern Trinity; St Andrew's ACW member

Photo: Essex Deanery ACW members at Christ Church, Colchester.

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Appointments

Bishop Nicholls appointed the Rev'd Michael DeKay as Vicar of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, effective October 1, 2018. Vicar Michael was previously an Associate Priest at St. Paul's.

Ordination to the Diaconate

The Bishop of Huron announces that Mr. David Hyatt will be called to the Diaconate at a service of Ordination to be held on the Commemoration of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra on Thursday, December 6, 2018 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. Upon ordination, David will be appointed as Deacon Assistant, Grace Church, Brantford.

Youth Ministry Appointments

Bishop Nicholls gives thanks to the Rev'd Sharla Malliff for serving as Youth Chaplain in our Diocese since 2011, as she leaves that role to take on new responsibilities on the National Planning Committee for CLAY.

Bishop Nicholls appoints the Rev'd Patty Dobbs Luxton and Ms. Cynthia Connell who (along with The Rev'd Steve Greene) share the responsibilities as Youth Chaplains effective September 1, 2018.

Deconsecration Service

A Service of Thanksgiving and Deconsecration of Bishop Cronyn Memorial Church, 442 William Street, London was held on Wednesday, November 7 at 7:00 pm. Music was provided by Dr. Angus Sinclair and choir. Bishop Linda Nicholls officiated.

Collation of Archdeacon – Waterloo Deanery

A Service of Evening Prayer and the Collation of the Venerable Megan Collings-Moore as Archdeacon of Waterloo, took place on Tuesday, November 13 at 7:00 pm at Renison University College. The Rev'd Canon Dr. Wendy Fletcher was the preacher.

Rest in Peace

Kris Rathbone (wife of Canon Paul Rathbone, Diocesan Director of Finance) died on Sunday, October 14, 2018. The Funeral service was held on October 23 at St. Paul's Cathedral Church, London. The Very Rev'd Paul Millward, Dean and Rector of St. Paul's Cathedral, was the officiant.

Noreen Kramer, mother of the Reverend Luanne MacPherson died on October 16, 2018. A Celebration

of Life service was held at St. John's Anglican Church, Cambridge, on October 20th. The Rev'd Stephen Berryman was the officiant. Noreen was a lifelong member of St. John's, the financial secretary and a board member for many years. She was a Synod representative and worked at the Deanery level as well.

The Rev'd Margaret (Peg) Wheeler (nee Pheysey) died peacefully October 29 (predeceased by her husband Les), at the age of 96 years. Peg was ordained a deacon on May 1, 1984 and priested December 8, 1984. She served the Parish of the Bruce Peninsula and the Parish of St. Peter's, Tyrconnell with the Church of the Nativity, Dutton, St. Stephen's, Burwell Park and Grace Church, West Lorne before her retirement in February 1993. Peg is survived by 8 children, 27 grandchildren and over 40 great grandchildren. The funeral service took place on Friday November 2 at Trinity Anglican Church, Warton.

Sandra, sister-in-law of the Rev'd Bonnie Rayner died Friday, November 2. Funeral arrangements were unavailable at the time of this publication.

Bishop's Friends at Renison



On Tuesday evening, October 23, individuals representing parishes from across the Deanery of Waterloo gathered for dinner with Bishop Nicholls which was held at Renison University College.

The event was co-ordinated by Jeff Ford from the Church of the Holy Saviour, Waterloo and Karrie Cornies from Renison. A reception preceded an excellent meal with a silent auction raising funds for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. Several youth attended with their registration covered by Renison University College.

After dinner Archdeacon Peter Townshend and the Reverend Canon Christopher Pratt spoke of how they had been aware of the prayerful and practical support

of the Diocesan Family through gifts that they received from the Bishop's Discretionary Fund as the Townshends recovered from floods during their time in the Parish of Leamington and the Pratt family faced the challenges of putting their lives back together

er after a devastating fire in the Rectory of Saint George's, Owen Sound.

Bishop Nicholls spoke about the call for the Diocesan Family to engage in a dialog with the First Nation communities who are an integral part of the Diocese. She also reflected on the opportunity which exists across the Diocese for congregations to break out of their isolationist mindset and explore shared ministry in the areas of social justice, shared educational experiences, shared worship opportunities and discover the benefits and blessing of mutual support and interdependence which is at the heart of our Anglican identity.

Rev. Canon Christopher
B. J. Pratt



New faces at Bishop's Friends at Renison

Former Anglican priest guilty of sexual abuse of minors

On Tuesday, November 6, David Norton was found guilty by a Superior Court judge in London, Ontario on three counts of indecent assault and one count of sexual assault against minors.

The charges involve incidents that happened in the late 1970s, and early 1980s, when Norton served as Anglican priest at Chipewas of the Thames First Nation. Earlier this year, Norton was sen-

tenced to four years in prison for another act of sexual interference against a child which took place in the 1990s.

"We sincerely hope that the end of these trials will mark the beginning of a healing process for those who have been hurt", reads the statement issued by the Diocese of Huron on November 6.

"The Diocese is holding them in prayer and continue to pray for

healing for the entire Huron family whose members feel deeply disappointed and betrayed by Mr. Norton's actions. These actions go against the most profound principles of Church and the very essence of our faith and the Diocese of Huron is glad that justice has been served."

David Norton relinquished his exercise of ministry as an Anglican priest on May 2, 2016.

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4 Saturdays, starting: Jan. 26, 2019

Instructor: Rev'd Dr. Patrick Patterson

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4 Saturdays, starting: Feb. 9, 2019

Instructor: Rev'd Rosalyn Elm

For more information or to register:

uwaterloo.ca/cape/register 519-884-4404 ext. 28659



Diocese of Huron Discernment Dinners

London Deanery:
St. Jude's Church, London
February 20, 2019
at 6:00 pm

To register and for more info contact:
jmclaughlin@huron.anglican.ca

LEARN ABOUT WAYS TO SERVE GOD

Provincial Synod elects new Metropolitan of Ontario



The Most Reverend Anne Germond, Archbishop of Algomas and Metropolitan of Ontario

Bishop Anne Germond of the Diocese of Algoma was elected as Ontario's new Metropolitan at the recent session of Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario held in Ottawa from October 9 to October 12.

The election took place after Archbishop Colin Johnson announced his intention to retire earlier this year.

Provincial Synod is held every three years. The Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario covers most of the geographical province of Ontario and parts of Quebec. It

consists of the following Anglican dioceses: Algoma, Huron, Moosonee, Niagara, Ontario, Ottawa and Toronto.

New officers were also elected for the next triennium at Provincial Synod.

Archdeacon Tanya Phibbs of Huron was elected as the Honorary Clerical Secretary of Provincial Synod; Ms. Haroldine Burchart (Diocese of Ontario) as Honorary Lay Secretary and Ms. Laura Walton to a second term as Prolocutor.

For Huron Mr. David Embury

and Dean Paul Millward will join Bishop Linda Nicholls as members of the Provincial Executive Council.



Supporting lives two at a time

"I never had to worry, my son had everything he needed and more. Because of the amazing support I received from the staff at Monica Place, I graduated from high school and am now attending Conestoga College to be a registered nurse."

- Krista, 18

Are you downsizing?

Are you moving?

Are you decluttering?

Are you cleaning out cupboards?

**Remember
Monica Place**

The ministry of archives: The Anglican Diocesan Archivists Conference

By John Lutman

For the first time, the Verschoyle Phillip Cronyn Memorial Archives (Diocese of Huron Archives) had the privilege of hosting the bi-annual Anglican Diocesan Archivist Conference, held at Huron University College on October 26-27, 2018.

The 13 archivists who participated represented dioceses across Canada – from the Diocese of New Westminster and the Provincial Synod of BC & Yukon in the west to the Diocese of Nova Scotia in the east, anchored by the General Synod Archives in Toronto.

The overall theme of the Conference that became more obvious as our discussions progressed is that archivists' mission is indeed a ministry, a "Ministry of Archives". As they gather, preserve, arrange and describe, and make available the records created by the parishes, the archivists proclaim the word

of God as voiced by the documents which provide evidence of the work of clergy and laity alike. Their knowledge of this is reflected in their enthusiasm as people and dedication as archivists.

Not all dioceses have canons that specifically address the responsibility of parishes to transfer older records to their diocesan archive. The archive, therefore, must work closely with the parishes to ensure that the records are stored properly and to encourage the parishes, nonetheless, to deposit the said same records with the archives for reasons of security and access. From the comments of the archivists present, it was obvious that the Diocese of Huron's archive is an object of envy and a model for other dioceses to follow.

Every time the archivists meet the most useful agenda item proves to be the initial Round Table Check-in where each ar-

chivist provides a report on the challenges and accomplishments since their last meeting.

The message that has been heard consistently was the alarm raised by the shortage of future growth space.

Diocese of Huron Archives is located at Huron University College, Western University, London, Ontario.

The shortage is in part caused by the unexpected number of church closures, a phenomena not exclusively the property of the Diocese of Huron.



Calls to Action centred on indigenous issues, viz. decolonizing of cataloguing descriptions; contributing to missing children national lists; and compiling indigenous clergy lists. Another agenda item on the second day related to litigation records, viz. what are we doing with them; what can we do with them; and what is their retention value.

The archivists enjoyed tours of the Diocese of Huron Archives, Western Archives and Huron University College as well as the concluding presentation by John Lutman and MJ Idzerda on the photographic survey of

Diocese of Huron churches.

On the Friday night, participants were invited by the Canadian Church Historical Society to attend their annual general meeting held at Windermere Manor. The Diocese of Huron and its archivist are members of the Canadian Church Historical Society.

The conference participants parted Saturday night after a hearty dinner, secure in understanding the issues they face and in their fellowship as Anglican archivists.

John Lutman is archivist for the Diocese of Huron.

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The day I spoke with Rebecca: serving our senior citizens

By Rev. Andreas Thiel

Two afternoons every week, I take a short drive to our local long-term care facility. On these occasions, I put my day-to-day parish responsibilities aside, for the purpose of serving as chaplain to this community of (mostly) senior citizens.

Now into my fourth month on the job, I have learned to accept the sights and sounds of this place, and am slowly beginning to understand how I might serve a community which has a frustrating way of changing in character and composition, with the inevitable arrival or departure of residents.

I am learning; I am growing in understanding. As it happens, however, I am still struck speechless by those seemingly random encounters which remind me of the dimensions of life and of human interaction that transcend the ordinary.

Such as the day I spoke with Rebecca.

Rebecca had recently moved from one unit to another. She and I had met a few months ago, but I had every reason to believe that she remembered nothing of our first meeting.

Physically frail, I caught sight of her – and she of me – as she slowly wheeled herself around a corner. Across the distance of about twenty feet, I called out her name, and waved. Her

face brightened with a smile (of recognition?).

I approached her, crouched down beside her, and re-introduced myself. Her vagueness didn't trouble me; I've seen it far too often in my other visits with residents. Instead, I began the process of listening. I listened as Rebecca spoke, as she began to navigate a mental circle around having lost her way.

"I'm lost", she said, shaking her head sadly, wondering how on earth she'd ever find her way back.

And so, this one-sided conversation continued. Each time she seemed to pick up a new thought, the idea of being lost returned, clouding her expression. It was into this cloud that I found the courage to speak.

"Rebecca, you've just reminded me of the words of a very well-known song." She remained silent, and I knew she was waiting for me to continue.

"There's a song that talks about being lost: 'I once was lost, but now am found.'" And with that, our little conference – she in her chair, and I crouched beside her – seemed to shift to a slightly slower pace. She raised her hand ever so tentatively, and brought it to rest on my cheek, with a tenderness that I could not have imagined or predicted. It was as if she had just been given a gift so precious, so meaningful, so full of beauty.

She did not speak. Could it be that this gesture was the only thing that could come anywhere close to expressing her gratitude?

After several moments, I said, "Rebecca, I like those words; they remind me that whenever I feel lost, God knows where I am. God has found me."

Silence.

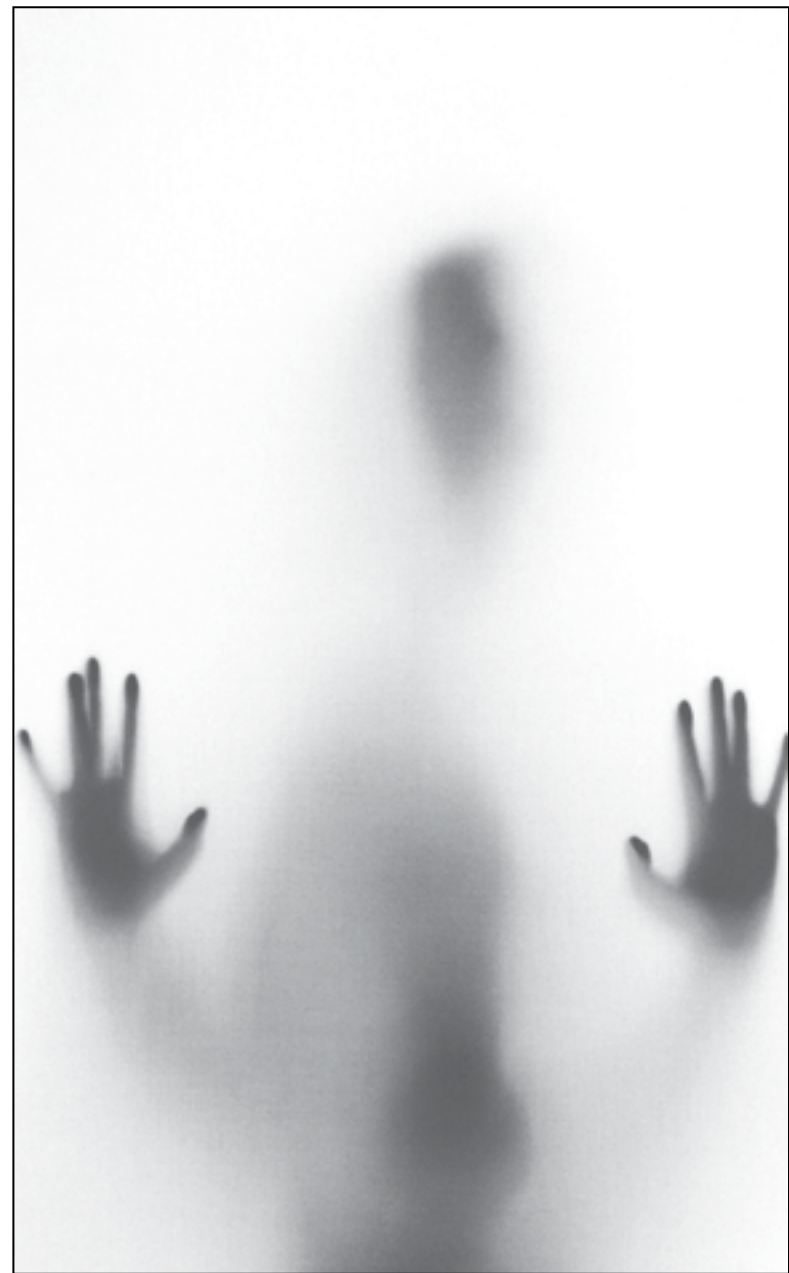
I will never know how that message was perceived within her. I will never know if what I told her gave her any lasting sense of peace or security. I will never know if she had the capacity of recalling that special encounter throughout the remaining hours of that particular day. But I do know – without a doubt

– that this moment was God's gift to us both. I, the Chaplain, was made aware once again of the timeless truth of the human condition, and was simultaneously given the opportunity to respond to that truth with a higher and more glorious truth, by declaring a word of grace. And she, the long-term care resident, was drawn into an encounter which momentarily took her to another place... another space.

Rebecca and I may need to repeat this scenario. She may once again need to hear me assure her of her being found.

Then again, so might I.

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



Stefano Pollio, Unsplash

Does God keep count?

By Rev. Raymond Hodgson

In one episode of The Big Bang Theory a character states, "I don't object to the concept of a deity, but I'm baffled by the notion of one that takes attendance."

This is obviously being used for laughs, but there's an element of truth that underlies the best humour. We could also express bafflement at the idea that God keeps track of our tithes and offerings. The thought of a Heavenly Accountant is, quite frankly, rather terrifying (apologies to all the accountants reading this).

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. (Luke 2:1, NRSV)

Everybody needed to be registered, counted, and taxed. That was the purpose of counting everyone in the Empire – to make sure that everyone paid their taxes.

We know this way of keeping count because the world around us uses this way of keeping count: this is what the world values.

giving



Jesus also talks about counting, but he talks about it in a very different way. Ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine, one hun... where's that last sheep? That other coin? The son who strayed?

And there are so many other stories that don't fit our expectations as again, and again, and again we are told that counting in the Kingdom of God is different. And wonderful.

Wonderful, because a small seed becomes a large bush, a small amount of yeast leavens a whole batch of bread, and let's not forget the impact of a

candle burning in the darkness. Wonderful, because God takes what we gather and does more than we can ask or imagine. Wonderful, because this is God redeeming the world.

It is easy, especially when preparing budgets and financial statements and reports, to lose sight of this. It is easy to focus on deficits and declines. It is easy to focus on the ninety-nine and forget about the one who isn't there: that is, after all, how the world works.

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the

world might be saved through him. (John 3:17)

The author of Luke tells of the Emperor's registration to show how God redeems even the most powerful forces of the world: using that registration to make sure that Jesus is born exactly where God intended. The Gospels tell of how God redeems the Emperor's cross with an empty tomb – robbing it of its power of life and death. And in between these events we have the teaching and example of Jesus about that alternative Kingdom of God, how God counts, and who God values.

Our budgets, financial statements, and reports aren't just numbers – they represent our values and they speak to our allegiance to the Kingdom of God. Connecting these numbers to the Marks of Mission, to lives being transformed, to mourners being comforted, and all the other things your parish does speaks to who we are and whose we are.

Yes, God does count. In a sense, God does take attendance. It is the ways in which God's counting is so different

from the Emperor's, and the values that those differences demonstrate, that both redeem us and lead us into the Kingdom of God.

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

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Advent Calendar 2018

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



As we move into contemplation of the Gospel of Luke in Year C of our lectionary cycle, this year's calendar explores the themes presented in Mary's Magnificat. We hope the suggestions offered here provide food for thought as we journey through Advent.

On behalf of Social and Ecological Justice Huron, we pray that you will have a blessed Christmas! May our journey to the manger contribute to new life in us!

Prepared by Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle,
the Social & Ecological Justice Huron co-chair

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Dec. 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Read Lk 1:46-49 This week, you are encouraged to reflect on and pray about the ways in which you have been blessed. | Were you born in a hospital or other safe environment? Pray for those countries where upwards of 1 in 10 infants die at birth. | Was your family able to provide for your needs as an infant and toddler? Pray for those countries where children have more than a 1 in 10 chance of not seeing their 5th birthday? | Were you able to go to school? Pray for those who, because of income, gender, disability, or location have limited education opportunities. | How many times did you move during your school years? Pray for those for whom instability makes it hard to learn and maintain relationships. | At what point did you get a job that was key to sustaining a household? Pray for those who work at a young age to support their family. | Were you able to access postsecondary education? Pray for those who have limited access to such opportunities. |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| Read Lk 1:50-51 This week, reflect on your pride and its impact on how you view and treat others. | Do you believe hard work leads to success? Ask God to forgive the times when you have failed to see the barriers some people confront. | Do you believe where you are born determines your worth? Pray for those whose feel the need to flee their homeland in search of safety and security. | Do you believe that you deserve all that you have? Pray for those who 'deserve' to have nothing. | Do you believe that you do enough to help those in need? Pray for those who are not reached by our efforts. | Do you have expectations for how people should behave based on gender or appearance? Pray for those who defy normal. | Have you ever made assumptions about an entire group of people without getting to know any one person in that group? Ask God to forgive our arrogance and prejudice. |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| Read Lk 1:52-53 This week, reflect on the ways you are rich and powerful. | Which do you focus on more: a good deal on a product or ensuring that those who contribute to its production are fairly treated? | Which do you focus on more: being right or being loving? | Which do you focus on more: convenience or caring for the environment? | Which do you focus on more: the cost of things like hydro for you or protecting the future from the consequences of our consumption? | Which do you focus on more: impressing people with your wealth or living simply so others may simply live? | Which do you focus on more: keeping taxes low or making sure all people have access to the services they need? |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | <h3>May you have a blessed Christmas!</h3> | | | |
| Read Lk 1:54-55 As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Saviour, let us reflect on the ways in which we seek to begin again. | Why do you celebrate Christmas? What is most important to you this night? How has this changed over the years? | What will you carry from this Advent journey into the days that follow? How will you proclaim through your life the Good News of Jesus' birth? | | | | |

Making a podcast: repackaging the long-form radio show

Everything old is new again. Fads once forgotten are repackaged. And in a world of 280 character tweets, short articles and sound bites, the long-form radio show is



MEDIA BYTES
REV. MARTY LEVESQUE

making a comeback. Now granted, we have given this long-form radio show a new

name and that is a "podcast". A podcast is an episodic digital download of an audio file. They are generally thematic, can be as short as 10 minutes to as long as 90 minutes. You can listen to back episodes, binge listen to a series or subscribe to a podcast and it will automatically download to your devices when a new episode is released. Here are a few tips for making a good podcast. **Consistency.** If your podcast is a weekly show, make sure it drops on the same day each week. **Theme.** Whatever the topic of your podcast, make sure you

stick to your theme. It is the reason people are listening. **Equipment.** Invest in quality equipment and software. Your show needs to be well produced if you want people to keep coming back. **Audience.** An audience is built through mentions and cross-pollination. Having guests on from similarly themed shows can help build your audience. **Host(s).** The single host version needs to weave a narrative to engage listeners, while the two hosts version can play off of each other like "the straight man and colour commentator" trope.

Engage. Have a means for your listeners to engage with you. Facebook and Twitter are perfect avenues for feedback and continuing the discussion. Recently Kevin George, rector of St Aiden's, London, and Rob Henderson, rector of the Parish of Holy Trinity-St Stephen's Memorial launched a podcast, "The Vicars' Crossing". This is a good example of a podcast done well. There is a consistent theme, Church and the Public Square, it is well produced both in terms of audio, intro music and has been synchronized with other social

media platforms and artwork, and they use "the two hosts" format. I'll let you decide who is Ron MacLean and who is Don Cherry. I would recommend adding this podcast to weekly listening. You can find information on it at: facebook.com/vicarscrossing; [@vicarscrossing](https://twitter.com/vicarscrossing) on Twitter and of course on iTunes for download. *Rev. Marty Levesque is the diocesan social media officer and rector of All Saints' in Waterloo.* marty.r.levesque@gmail.com

Unsuccessful healing

Many times, relational individual, couple and family therapy are a bust. Doesn't work. Also, too often,



AS I SEE IT

REV. JIM INNES



Bekir Donmez, Unsplash

self-help books (and such), though full of good advice, fail to make life any better. Even at times, prayer and meditation seem unsuccessful at bringing about some peace in our mind.

This may be because past 'trauma' gets in the way. One of the best definitions for trauma comes from the Center for Action and Contemplation: "Trauma is the experience of being powerless to establish a boundary between our self and that which is about to inflict, or is already inflicting, serious harm or even death."

The only thing I would add to this definition, is that the serious harm mentioned does not have to be all that serious. Harm is harm, and we automatically react in our bodies and minds to any threat. Granted, the more serious the harm is perceived as being, the greater the traumatic experience inside us. And the more often it has occurred, or is occurring, the deeper it may sit within us (to the point where it

becomes notable by our choices in self-management).

For example, according to studies, people who suffer from mental disorders and substance abuse issues are more likely to have a history of trauma. Thus, argues NCBI (a division of the U.S. National Library of Medicine), "Foremost, a behavioral health service provider must recognize the prevalence of trauma and its possible role in an individual's emotional, behavioral, cognitive, spiritual, and/or physical development, presentation, and well-being".

Not accounting for possible trauma, and simply focusing on the presenting problem, can do more harm than good. "Even the most standard behavioral health practices can retraumatize an individual exposed to prior traumatic experiences if the provider implements them without recognizing or considering that they may do harm" (NCBI).

For example, a couple may enter therapy asking to com-

municate better. They complain that they fight way too often. After several sessions of focusing on communication techniques, the same cycle of destructive interaction continues and, at times, even escalates, because they are not yet ready to engage in the intimacy created by the communication techniques. It is not the method they lack, but an understanding of the projections arising in each of them as they enter into intimacy with a significant other.

The same fate is had for individuals seeking help with personal issues like anxiety and anger management. Unless the trauma is first addressed, success, at best, is limited. And failure can lead to increasing shame... and that can lead to deeper trouble.

Much can be said about trauma management. But one thing I would like to point out is that our bodies absorb and hold distress (past and present). And any trauma treat-

ment must include more than a simple cognitive approach. "What's happening in the body continuously changes the brain. The flip side of this relationship is that the brain, in response, also directs and changes the body... If trauma has adversely affected either one, you've got to find a means of healing that incorporates both brain and body. You can't fix one without fixing the other" (The Neuro-psychotherapist, a professional e-publication).

As I see it, and as I have experienced it, it may not be the present circumstance that we need help managing. Struggles may easily be the result of the weight we carry in our hearts and minds. And, I venture to suggest, that in some cases, addressing these, may be all that is needed to put a wrong situation on the right track.

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The art of listening: seeking the kernel of truth

A few days ago (by the time you get to read this it will be a few weeks) I changed the start of my daily prayer ritual.



MOSTLY ABOUT RELIGION

REV. CANON KEITH NETHERY

To my traditional opening of "Holy God, Holy and Mighty One, in whom we live and move and have our being", I have added: "I pray for all those who I will meet today, that I might listen to them, that I might hear them, that I might learn from them."

Now, you may well be saying, "This is the best thing you could think to write about?" However, while I freely admit that I stumbled into it, I think it is an important change given the way our world seems to be headed.

Nobody listens to anybody anymore! Some will say that is a gross over exaggeration. But I think not. I'm not sure when it happened. I think that the shift in media from a limited number of sources - that more or less followed the same rules - to a free for all of types of media, more interested in opinion than facts, is perhaps the most significant factor.

I remember sitting at my computer several months back, writing and rewriting a Facebook post because I was going to be flying in the face of opinion being expressed in the comments. I tried several ways to soften my thoughts, to make them more thought provoking while still gentle. I tried adding some source material, but none of it worked. I knew that if I pushed "post" that I would immediately become "the" target. And so, I simply hit delete.

This is not the only time that I have felt this way. So often, I ask myself, "Is it worth it to get into this argument?"

Now, those who know me, I love a passionate discussion. One of my great joys is to sit down with someone and have a frank discussion about things we know we have different opinions on. But always, always, I am trying to interact, to share points and hear counter points. I want to exit the conversation, not as a winner or loser, but rather knowing that I had expressed my thoughts in a clear and concise way and, more importantly, that I am sure I have heard the other and understood what they wanted me to learn.

I'm currently reading Tom Wright's book, "Simply Jesus." (You will read more about this in next month's column.) The part I read this morning, and in part the motivation for this writing, was a passage that required deep, deep listening to understand.

Wright was clear that people listened to Jesus, that is something that people naturally did when they were in His pres-

ence. Yes, there were those who didn't want to hear and most often they walked away. But for those who were open to the Spirit, listening to Jesus was mind opening.

It seems to me that our society is somewhat at a crossroads. We need to decide if it is more important to speak and less important to listen; or the other way around.

I must admit, sadly, that since a very young age, I have been much better equipped for the talking part, than the listening part. But in just a few days of intentionally committing myself to listen to people I meet, to try and learn from them the truth that they have to offer, whether it's in line to get a coffee or in the depths of a study; I'm finding a new openness to listening and learning.

Each day, I tire more and more of the endless partisan arguments made over issues big and small. I recognize my own leanings in those discussions and I'm trying to become a

listener who seeks the kernel of truth, while ignoring the cloud of chaff blowing in my face. I'm not very good at it yet. But I'm trying. And I'm wishing, and in fact praying, that I can be part of bringing back civilized discussion through a willingness to listen, deeply and with care.

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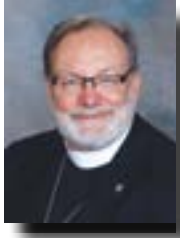
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The love which transcends the barriers of time and distance

Years ago, families tended to live close to each other, or even in the same house. The people who were a part of that family circle were always expected to be around.



**A VIEW FROM
THE BACK PEW**
**REV. CANON
CHRISTOPHER
B. J. PRATT**

Love and affection found a way of being expressed, but there was a simple reality, because of the circumstances which I have described, which contributed to the expectation that the parents, grandparents, sister, brother or other family member was always going to be there. There was a relationship which might be taken for granted. Generational change has shifted to the point where that kind of physical family closeness is rarer now than in times past.

Getting family together (and here I speak from the reality of my own life experience), is a challenge! When she travelled from her home, my Mother used to cross an international border to visit her grandsons. She used to tell her friends in Philadelphia that her son and his family lived, "in the Far North of Canada..." (We were living in Windsor at the time... think about it!)



Rawpixels, Unsplash

Distance can be a challenge. Time can be a challenge too. Calendars must be consulted and co-ordinated. Priorities need to be established being mindful of work demands and extended family traditions. Often lengthy journeys over fair distances need to be faced.

It is not easy at any time of the year. It is a significant challenge when travel takes place during the often hazardous seasonal weather which we face during the end of the calendar year. It is a good thing that we have a Christmas Season, where the celebration of the Incarnation is offered for a full twelve days! If we ensure that the family circles around a dinner table at some point during the Season, it is a good thing.

We are drawn together because of our family identity. We are connected to each other in deep and profound ways. We are bound together by the love we have for each other and the

need that we have to be in each other's presence. It is that love which transcends the barriers of time and distance.

The motivation behind all our scurrying around looking for the right present, is that we are seeking to express our love in a meaningful way

Throughout the Christmas season we are reminded of essential elements of our faith. "God so loved the world, that God gave..." (John 3:16) is a verse which reminds us of what lies at the heart of the Christmas story. Divine Love is being expressed.

The motivation behind all our scurrying around looking for the right present, is that we are seeking to express our love

in a meaningful way, a way that will be understood by the person who receives that thoughtful gift that we wrap up with care. Jesus is the expression of God's Love being offered to us, wrapped up in an image and in a way, we, as human beings can begin to comprehend.

Every gift given, is a gift received. Another essential experience of the Christmas Season is that moment when a gift is held for the first time. There may be a moment given over to admire the care with which the present has been wrapped, but that moment usually does not last too long! Sometimes the gift is unwrapped with delicacy. Sometimes the gift is unwrapped with wild abandon. No matter what the chosen process is, there comes that moment when the gift given is seen, for the first time.

And then, especially if the gift giver is in the room, there is a moment of thankfulness. Appreciation for the newly unwrapped gift varies. A third pair of socks may not get the same reaction as a hand knit work of art. Yet the gift itself, when it is fully appreciated, reflects the Sacramental definition of being, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." (BCP page 550). It is a means by which the gift giver demonstrates, in that moment, the love they have for the person who is receiving the gift.

Saying, "Thank you", has undergone a change for some people. There was a time when

Christmas Day began a short period of time allowed to write Thank You notes and prepare them for mailing. Phone calls became a viable option, then social media made connections far more immediate. How do you offer your thanks as you receive gifts?

As you observe all the days of the Christmas Season this year look around you. Look at your life, your world, your family, your friends. Look beyond your "stuff". Look for the signs of God's Love being given expression and which touch you in unique ways. As you see those gifts of God's Love, as you value and appreciate those gifts, think about how your life may be lived empowered and directed by an attitude of gratitude.

A gift of Divine Love given in the person of Jesus motivates us all to engage in a journey bringing us to gather around the Table of Our Lord, this Christmas Season. As we share worship with others who are drawn to this special celebration, we receive that Divine gift with open hands and open hearts. Our thanksgiving is expressed through words and actions of loving service which we, as people of faith, have the opportunity to offer every day of our lives.

May this be a truly Blessed Christmas Season for us all.

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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I'm glad You were not born at the inn...

For when I go to large cities I get attracted to all the stores along the main streets. Nifty specialty stores and art stores that I do not see in my normal day. The traffic scooting



**LAUREL
PATTENDEN**

by so quickly. Cars honking. Neon signs blinking so bright it is hard to believe it is late at night. I might have gotten distracted and never made my way to the inn.

I'm glad You were not born at the inn.

The sidewalks would have been crowded and bustling. The pubs alluring me for a friendly drink and some jovial conversation. I would have met someone who knew someone who knew someone I knew. Our conversation would have gone late into the night. I might have gotten detained and never made it to the inn.

I'm glad You were not born at the inn.

Cities are not friendly anymore to my kind. They would know I had no fixed address by my clothes, my smell and the lice in my hair. Authorities would ask where I came from or where I belonged. If I answered I belonged to the streets I would be escorted out of the area. I might not have been allowed to get to the inn.

I'm glad You were not born at the inn.

I would have been in such a hurry to see You that I came straight from work. Rushing in through the door in great excitement. The concierge would probably stop me. Look me up and down. See the grease and dirt upon my clothes, the excitement in my eyes and ask why I came. I would tell him about the singing angels. I might not have been allowed any further.

I'm glad You were not born at the inn.

I would have had to ask for your room number. The desk clerk would have ask me "Who are you?". How could I answer

that knowing I was going to see You! Saying I was no one special would probably keep me from You. I might have been denied Your room number.

I'm glad You were not born at the inn.

The inn itself is so full of galas and shows. These would have drawn my attention to see such entertaining views that I had never seen before. The crowds would be all poshly dressed up for their evening out. I would have been captivated looking at all the sparkling people. Listening to the overwhelmingly loud entertainment would have deafened my ears. I might not have been able to hear Your gentle cries.

I'm glad You were not born at the inn.

The rooms at inns are so tiny. There would have only been room for You and Mary and Joseph. The room door would have been closed because of the fire regulations. And the loud hallways would have disturbed Your sleep and Mary's. I might not have had the courage to knock at the closed door.

I'm glad that You were not

born at the inn.

How did You know the manger was best? No diversions. No security. No noise. No blinking lights. Secluded space for Mary and Joseph. An open door. Quiet to enable us to hear

Your gentle cries. How did You know?

I'm glad that You were not born at the inn.

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

