

Embracing our diversity

The Anglican



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Bishop goes on the road

Vision, discussions part of parish hall meetings

BY STUART MANN

IT was fitting that Bishop Colin Johnson held his first parish hall meeting of 2007 at St. Paul's, Bloor Street, a church which has undergone a massive renovation and expansion.

In a wide-ranging discussion on Jan. 10, Bishop Johnson talked about creating a "capacious" Anglican Church in which there is lots of space for people from all walks of life to hear and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ.

He said that the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Toronto is not only capable of doing this, but it is already happening in many parishes and ministries. "I have this huge sense of excitement about what is going in the life of the church today," he said. "There's a real sense of hope and joy and celebration."

He said the church already has the tools – and the purpose – to grow numerically and spiritually.

"We're in a very privileged position," he said. "We have enormous resources. We have people who are committed, educated, passionate. We have a story of faith and faithfulness that is second to none. We have, to put it in the crassest terms, a commodity that is well worth offering and we need not be ashamed of it at all."

He encouraged Anglicans to become "assistants with God's spirit" in building up the church so that it can "proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ for everyone so they can join in."

Helen Robinson, a member of St. Paul's, Bloor Street, said she was motivated by the bishop's vision. "I think he's trying to stretch us and take us beyond our borders, which is great," she said. "At St. Paul's, we've been really stretched over the past four years to get to this point, but once you see your vision turn into reality, it's absolutely amazing. I think that's



Bishop Colin Johnson shares a happy moment with clergy and laity at his first parish hall meeting at St. Paul's, Bloor Street. 'I have this huge sense of excitement about what is going on in the life of the church today,' he said.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

where the bishop is trying to take us as a diocese – just a little bit further than where we are."

The clergy and laity in attendance, many from churches in downtown Toronto, talked about where they saw signs of hope and promise in their parishes. Peggy Needham, a member of St. Peter's, Carlton Street, said she's stopped worrying about trying to attract new members to her Bible study – with joyful results. "I'm so

grateful now for small groups," she said. "People who are in our Bible study are really happy to be there. There's an abundance of sharing."

Bishop Johnson said that while he is not blind to the challenges facing the church, there is much to celebrate and share with others.

"We have a message that is life-giving to give to people," he said. "I've seen that when we do that,

their lives are changed. People open up and there is a sense of renewed life. We actually make a difference in our world. People are looking for good news, for those stories about people whose lives have been transformed. We are to be bearers of good news."

He talked about the ministry priorities of the diocese, which were approved by synod in November 2005. They are: to be welcoming

Continued on Page 6

Book gives churches advice on growth

BY NANCY DEVINE

WARD McCance hopes his new book, *Parish Works*, will enable parishes to grow efficiently and effectively and look outward into their communities.

Mr. McCance, who is a member of St. Peter's, Cobourg, and has served on the diocese's Treasury Board, has seen a number of parishes over the years struggle financially as well as spiritually. Working with these parishes, he helped them find better ways to take care of not only their buildings, but also one another.

"When you visit these churches and speak to the leadership, inevitably you find that financial concerns are only the tip of the iceberg," says Mr. McCance, a project manager at IBM for more than 30 years and one of the founders of FaithWorks, the diocese's annual appeal.

He says that by applying a number of the same best practices that businesses use in project management, development and marketing, churches can make the most of the resources they have.

Continued on Page 2

Service celebrates black heritage

THE 12th annual Black Heritage Service, one of the largest and most dynamic church events of the year, will be held at 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 25 at St. Paul's, 227 Bloor St. E., Toronto. All are invited.

Bishop Patrick Yu will be the chief celebrant. The preacher will be the Very Rev. Jacob French, the superintendent minister of Canada Mission Circuit of The Methodist Church of Ghana and the minister-in-charge, Ghana Methodist Church of Toronto.

The theme of the service is "Ghanaian Linkages to Our Heritage: We Are One," in honour of the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence on March 5. A workshop on this subject is planned with the consul-general of Ghana in attendance.



Pauline Blunt of St. Stephen's, Downsview, enjoys last year's Black Heritage Service.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

Parishes show support at deconsecration

BY HENRIETA PAUKOV

MORE than 100 people attended a service of deconsecration at St. Gabriel in Richmond Hill on Dec. 31, in an impressive show of support from nearby parishes. "People from every neighbouring parish — Stouffville, Markham, Unionville, Maple — showed up," says Dave Robinson, lead consultant of congregational development for the diocese. "It was quite phenomenal. It really is about the catholicity of the church, the fact that we are not congregationalists, we are part of a larger whole. And so when there was a group that needed to be supported through a difficult decision, they were there."

The congregation had been dwindling in numbers over the past years, says Bishop George Elliott of York-Simcoe. "We began a process about a year and a half ago that led to the vestry's decision to disestablish the parish," he says. "It's never easy but every-

body's convinced that this is the right thing to do, and we have been guided by the Holy Spirit in the midst of all this."

Martin Francis, who was warden at St. Gabriel's, says that the disestablishment of the parish means that former parishioners can now "concentrate on the business of being the church, instead of just looking after the buildings. I mean, the church is not about the building. We've had finite resources in terms of people and in terms of money for quite a while, and we've been having to direct our energies just to the upkeep of the building."

A plan is in place for the pastoral care of people that St. Gabriel's has been ministering to, including shut-ins and the sick, says Mr. Robinson. "Other local parishes have all taken up individuals; nobody's going to be left."

Mr. Francis says that most St. Gabriel's parishioners have made up their minds as to which church-

es they are going to attend and are looking forward to doing that. "Some people are still going to be going through a period of looking around to see where they fit and where they belong," he says. "From my point of view, I am now glad that this has happened. I can begin my new life with my family at St. John the Baptist just up the road. There was never any doubt that that's where we were going to go. We felt for a long time that we were looking forward to going there, once, obviously, our business at St. Gabriel's had finished."

St. Gabriel's was planted in the 1950s, when the area was bustling with new development and families moving in from Toronto. "They had a really vigorous ministry with young families in the neighbourhood," says Mr. Robinson. "It was a real community hub, and it also had an important ministry to children. Even to this day there's a daycare and a Montessori school that are part of

the church complex."

Many moving moments accompanied the deconsecration service, including the reading of a poem written for the occasion by parishioner Joan Cameron. "The service flowed out of the service of consecration, so prayers were said at the lectern, at the font, at the pulpit, and at the altar, celebrating the ministry that had flowed out of those symbols of our worship life together," says Mr. Robinson. "The diocesan ACW provided a gorgeous reception afterward, there were pictures, there was a sense that this place had come to an end but there was a lot of really good stuff that had gone on. I was talking to one woman who is now a parishioner at Aurora and she was just amazed: there was her confirmation picture from the 1960s on the wall."

Mr. Francis also describes the service as a positive occasion. "In the end, I think everybody felt very content and peaceful around

the whole thing. I think it was a very nicely done service, it was done with sensitivity, and I think the congregation appreciated that."

"I think we can now concentrate on things we are supposed to be concentrating on," he adds, "spreading the Gospel, letting people know what we believe in, and sharing the good news."

Growth in churches

Continued from Page 2

"There's often a kind of knee-jerk reaction where people think they have to re-invent the wheel, (but) the problem is that sometimes they will come up with square wheels," he says. "There was no book out there about how to leverage opportunities for growth in churches, so I approached the Anglican Book Centre's publishing arm, and they agreed to work with me on the book."

Parish Works contains both tips and templates designed to help parish leaders work methodically through opportunities and challenges so that they can run effective internal and external programs. Templates are provided on a CD which can be downloaded and printed out. While it is slanted toward Anglican Church practices, Mr. McCance hopes churches from other Christian denominations will be able to use the book as well. The book can be purchased online at www.anglicanbookcentre.com or at the retail outlet in early March.

"It is aimed at both clergy and laity, and while priests are not specially required to manage budgets, I think it would be helpful if they had some training in how to better enable the lay leadership, so I hope the book might find its way into courses at Trinity and Wycliffe (colleges)," he says. "Priests have to be aware of the problems that can confront them and be ready to respond quickly to those challenges."

The book provides plans for how churches can remain healthy and viable. "You can't do everything all at once," he says. "You have to look at the heart of the problems first. But *Parish Works* will provide a battle plan to illustrate what should be in place in order to move forward one year at a time. The book encourages continuous improvement, even if a parish thinks it is where it should be. You can't sit on your laurels."

He knows the advice and tips in *Parish Works* are effective. When he goes back and visits the parishes he first met when they were in trouble, he says there is positive change. "Their numbers are up, and they are growing in both numbers and spiritual depth — and they have committed leaders who are following the roadmap."

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INTERVIEW

Jazz pianist Oscar Peterson credits his musical gifts to God. A lifelong Anglican, first in Montreal and now at St. Peter's, Erindale, he recently spoke to *The Anglican*.

His music a gift from God

TA: Tell us about your faith journey. How did you come to be a Christian, and an Anglican?

OP: My parents brought me up as Anglican in Montreal. I remember the Reverend Coombs. Oh, I admired and respected him. I remember when I was going to the States on my first tour and he said, "I expect you to enjoy yourself and to do the right thing." He knew the challenges I would face in the jazz scene when I didn't. Reverend Coombs, he had an aura – there was warmth, understanding and respect.

TA: How did you maintain your faith on the road?

OP: To tell the truth, I never did go to church while I was on the road, except for a baptism or wedding or major gathering. My mother was adamant about being a Christian. She was as active as she could be, given Dad's schedule. She told me, "I want the same son to come back to me that is leaving home today (to New York in his teens)." She knew just enough to be leery of my leaving, but didn't know the scene I was going into. Even when I wasn't in church, I would always say a little prayer before I went on stage. Sometimes it was, "Please Lord, don't let any of my listeners be armed!"

I had people who influenced my faith on the road, like Ella Fitzgerald. I had her records and admired her. Then one day I was her accompanist. She was a religious lady. She had a tough life. We would pray together.

The greatest influence I had was Norman Granz. He was a friend, mentor, businessman. He had a big heart. He was special. He was a Russian Jew. He set a standard for the behavior of the performers. He took care of



Oscar Peterson says Ella Fitzgerald was one of the people who influenced his faith while he was on the road. 'She was a religious lady. She had a tough life. We would pray together.'

PHOTO BY EDWARD GAJDEL

all of us and made sure the performers were well paid, even if it meant he did without.

TA: How has your faith helped you through the good times and bad times in your life?

OP: I've lost a lot of friends and family. My brother Fred was a teenager when he died. I believe if Fred were alive, I wouldn't be playing now, because he was such a good pianist. He was the greatest. He died of tuberculosis. Dad was a railway porter and we had some tough times. We paid our dues. When Fred died, I took it very hard. It didn't turn me against God; if anything, it brought me closer.

Now I still say my prayers every night. I pray for the welfare of my loved ones, and I thank the Lord for giving me the strength and assurance to get me back on the stage after my stroke (13 years ago), and for seeing me through the early years. Then I thank God for helping me to get over some of the hurts of the past and I ask for forgiveness.

My mom said to find a way to say your prayers every night and God will see you through. And it served me through those early years. Racial tensions were running high, but God never let me down.

TA: Has your faith influenced your music? If so, how?

OP: God has given me the greatest gift, my music. It really is a gift from God. When I go on stage, the only thing I think about is the music. It's all I know at that moment. What I like about jazz is that it lets me make a statement about how I feel at that moment. When the choir (of St. Peter's) sang the Hymn to Freedom, it was wonderful because my music became an offering to God. I was really moved.

TA: What are you doing now?

OP: A lot of writing and composition. It's another form of expression and creativity. I can take time to go back over what I've done and go back and fix my mistakes – not like the rest of life!

I love photography, so I'm studying a bit of it. My idol is Henri Cartier-Bresson. The way he sees life is an expression of honesty. There is a prayer, "O Lord, give me the gift to see myself as others see me" and Henri does that.

My number one priority is to remain being the person my mother wanted me to be.

Bishop going to Uganda

On mission to 'build bridges'

BY THE REV. DR. ISAAC KAWUKI MUKASA

ALMOST two years since their visit to South Africa, Bishop Colin and Ellen Johnson will once again be going to Africa, this time to visit the Church of Uganda. With nearly eight million members, the Church of the Province of Uganda is the third largest in the Anglican Communion, next to the churches of England and Nigeria. Its history includes periods of persecution (in the 1880s and 1970s) and a world-renowned revival movement from the 1930s to the 1950s. During Idi Amin's repression and the civil war that followed his ouster, the Church of Uganda provided refuge to tens of thousands of internally displaced people. More recently, the church has been at the frontline of the war against AIDS.

The Anglican Church of Canada has had a long and mutually satisfying relationship with the Church of Uganda. Canadian missionaries have been going to Uganda for many decades and engaging in a wide range of ministries there. In the last decade or so there has been a growing number of missionaries from the Church of Uganda serving in the Anglican Church of Canada.

At a time of tension within the worldwide Anglican Communion, the Johnsons' visit to Uganda may turn out to be of great significance. The leaders of the Church of Uganda have been outspoken on the issues that divide the Communion. Three years ago, Archbishop Henry Orombi announced the severing of relations with churches in North America, including the Anglican Church of Canada. In view of all this, the Johnsons' visit is truly a daring act of love.

Thankfully, in the 10 days the Johnsons will be in Uganda, March 5-15, they will be welcomed in at least six dioceses, including the largest three. This will indeed be a bridge-building mission.

There's a saying in Uganda: "Akwana akira ayomba." A rough translation would be something like: "Fostering friendship beats making enemies." The sense of the original statement is that making enemies may require one to simply do nothing. Fostering friendship, however, requires one to invest time and commitment. There is no shortage of leaders today, in the worldwide Anglican Communion, whom we can count on to stand for "the truth." What we need more of, though, are leaders who will dare to build bridges.

'Missionary bishop' dies at 99

Presided over church during turbulent times

THE Rt. Rev. George Snell, Bishop of Toronto from 1966 to 1972, died on Dec. 26 in his 100th year. He was buried from St. James' Cathedral on Dec. 30.

Bishop Snell was born in Toronto in 1907. After graduating from high school he attended Trinity College in Toronto and Oxford University in England. During his time in England he married Esther, with whom he was to share the next 64 years.

Bishop Snell was ordained to the priesthood in 1932 and served his curacy at St. Michael and All Angels, Toronto. After a short period of time as the rector of St.

Mark's, Port Hope, he returned to St. Michael and All Angels as its rector. He served as Dean of Calgary before moving back to Toronto to become the rector of St. Clement's, Eglinton.

He was consecrated bishop in the Diocese of Toronto on Jan. 25, 1956. In 1959, he was elected coadjutor bishop in succession to Bishop Frederick Wilkinson and became the eighth Bishop of Toronto in 1966. He retired in 1972.

As bishop, he taught classes at a theological night school which he founded to assist older candidates for the priesthood. He also presided over the founding of 50

new parishes in the diocese – averaging one a month – during the population boom of the 1950s.

The current Bishop of Toronto, Colin Johnson, said Bishop Snell provided leadership during a time of great change in the church and society. "Bishop Snell presided over the church in one of its most turbulent times as it was transforming from an ancient world view to a contemporary world view. He contributed enormously to the well-being of the church in creative ways. He was a real missionary bishop."

After his retirement, Bishop Snell preached in many churches



Bishop George Snell

across Canada and immersed himself in the study of the Gospel of St. John. He also compiled his "labour of love," a book which traces the life of Christ as depicted on postage stamps from all over the world, complemented by passages from scripture and literature.

A capacious church



Capacious. It is an adjective that dictionaries define as “having plenty of room, ample, commodious, roomy, spacious.”

What a lovely word, capacious is! But it is a word that seems not to be commonly used anymore. Pity. It has been aptly used to describe the Anglican Church as we have received it – ample, commodious, roomy, spacious.

Most of us will be more familiar with a related word, “capacity.”

“Building capacity” is a buzz phrase in the jargon of leadership development consultants, management change specialists, and social planners.

For an individual, I think capacity-building means the slow physical process of improving the lungs to maximize oxygen intake, boosting the stamina of the heart and building up the muscles by exercise and discipline. Or building mental and experiential capacity by learning well the skills step by step to take on the next level of studies or responsibility.

Organizations build capacity, too. Through vision, planning, recruiting, training, supporting, evaluating and rewarding they build up the knowledge, skills, resources, and processes that enable the organization to increase its ability to achieve its goals.

So what does this have to do with us and diversity?

What is our capacity in the church to welcome others who are different from us?

This is not only a question about being hospitable to a guest, although that is the first level of welcome. It is more about being family with relatives that you may or may not particularly like or “relate” to.

It is actually at the heart of our mission and based in our theology.

How we relate to the “other” that we meet in a stranger, a newcomer, or even a long-

BISHOP'S DIARY

BY BISHOP COLIN JOHNSON

time friend about whom we have just discovered some new surprising side, says a lot about how we relate to the One who is wholly (holy) Other – God. And vice versa.

While we are created in the image of God and bear God's image in us, however tarnished it may be, we are not God, and yet we are invited into a relationship with the “Other” so profound that it changes our lives. The consistent message of Scripture and the experience of the saints is that the “Other” often comes to us disguised in the person of the “other” – another human being who shows up in front of us or beside us.

God who is revealed to us as Trinity is intrinsically diverse: as the Athanasian Creed puts it, the Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Father; the Spirit is neither Father nor the Son, and yet there are not three gods but only One God. The dynamic diversity does not undermine or contradict the essential unity of God united in love and purpose. And this diversity is built into the structure of the universe. It is enriching rather than threatening. It is what St. Paul speaks about in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, and is picked up later in Ephesians.

And so our church must reflect a diversity of gifts that arise from God's gift to us of very different people.

The Anglican Church in the Diocese of Toronto is becoming more diverse: in racial and cultural background; in theological expression and spirituality; in liturgical practice and public witness. What is God teaching us here? What are we learning from this? Are we becoming more capable to pray more deeply, to speak our faith in new circumstances, to minister to others with greater understanding?

There are continued pressures at home

and abroad that would narrow that range to more comfortable levels. Certainly there are limits to what can be comprehended within the ambit of “Anglican” but I, for one, am not willing to close that ongoing debate prematurely, and without significant discernment about what God is calling us to become for his sake. Part of our traditional witness as a branch of the church has been to be broadly inclusive rather than strictly defined.

“Enlarge the site of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left.” (Isaiah 54:2)

Isaiah speaks to a people who have been oppressed and exiled, who are depressed and in danger of losing hope. He holds before them a vision of what God is doing that will require them to rethink their situation and their purpose. He plants the seed of hope.

Are we growing more able, building capacity, to incorporate the gifts of diverse people? Are we becoming more able, building capacity, to listen to what God is doing in others' lives? Are we building capacity to wonder and enjoy and delight in God and the richness of God's creation? Are we building capacity to hope, which someone has called the “oxygen of the human spirit?”

Capacious.

Its antonyms are “tight, small, narrow, restricted.”

“Capacious” is so much more like the God I read about in prophets and poetry of Scripture and see revealed in Jesus Christ.

Which description is going to mark our church life?

I believe that we are being called in faithfulness to be a capacious church because in spite of the difficulties and uncertainties and messiness that allows, it best represents our tradition, our historic witness and our distinctive contribution as Anglicans to the Christian faith.



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In the Diocese of Toronto:

A community of 285 congregations in 217 parishes covering 26,000 square kilometers. Of the nearly 5 million people who live within the diocesan boundaries, 376,000 claim to be affiliated with the Anglican Church, with about 80,000 people identified on the parish rolls. The diocese is home to many ethnic and language-based congregations, including African, Caribbean, Chinese, Filipino, French, Hispanic, Japanese, Korean and Tamil. The City of Toronto has the largest population of aboriginal peoples in the country.

The Bishop of Toronto:

The Rt. Rev. Colin Johnson

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God's light shines in the darkness



Arise, shine, for your light has come; the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”

These inspirational words from Isaiah were written to the people of Israel on their return to Jerusalem after years of captivity in Babylon. Finally, God's promises to them were being fulfilled. A new future filled with hope was ready to unfold. God's light had indeed shone.

It all sounds so wonderful. However, there was a problem – a big problem. The land to which they had returned lay in ruin. The temple had been destroyed. The walls that had once protected the city lay toppled. The city's buildings were rubble. The land was dry and desolate. So much for God's promises of a new beginning.

“Arise, shine, for your light has come; the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”

As I reflected on this reality, I was reminded of the latest VISA ads. The ads portray situations where every need is met with no effort on the part of the individual. You then hear these words, “If life were like that, you wouldn't need VISA!” Unfortunately, life is not like that. Isaiah speaks of God's promises to Israel and indeed to all of humankind. God's light has shone in our midst. Our midst, though, is not some ideal utopia, but rather the nitty-gritty circumstances – always messier than we would like – of our ordinary and extraordinary human condition. It is into this that God's glory has risen upon you.

BISHOP'S OPINION

BY BISHOP GEORGE ELLIOTT

Two incidents have brought this home to me over the past week. On Dec. 26, after a brief struggle with a virulent strain of pneumonia, my mother died in her 86th year. It was quite unexpected. She had been living in her own home, leading a very independent life, apart from limitations due to macular degeneration. At first the landscape of my life was similar to that of ruined Jerusalem which confronted the returning exiles. Where was God in the midst of all of this?

“Arise, shine, for your light has come; the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”

It did not take long before that light began to shine. The hospital chaplain, Maryann Somerville, met all the family in Mom's room and offered prayer and words of consolation and hope that poured over me like a balm. As one who is usually offering those words, it was a profound blessing to sit and be at the receiving end. The same was true at the funeral service, as Michael Bedford-Jones led us through the liturgy and ministered to me and all my family with words of comfort and hope. It seems, in my experience, that it is at the darkest times in my life that God's light shines forth brightly. I am then able to see beyond the ruin and desolation to the new Jerusalem God has in store for us all.

“Arise, shine, for your light has come; the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”

Creating a strong community

**EDITOR'S
CORNER**

BY STUART MANN

An amazing sight

I was late getting to the church. As I raced up the steps, I thought, "I'm just a few minutes late. I've never been here before. No one will notice." I was wrong.

As I opened the door and slipped in, I found myself in the embarrassing position of standing right beside the choir. They had evidently decided to begin the service by singing a hymn (beautifully) at the back of the church. Most of the congregation had turned to look at them and were listening intently. Fortunately the whole place was dark, lit only by candles, saving me from complete embarrassment.

As the choir returned to its usual spot and the lights came on, I picked my way through a thicket of knees and legs to an empty spot in a pew. As the service resumed, I realized that in my haste to become anonymous I had forgotten to pick up a bulletin and a prayer book at the back of the church. I mumbled through a few prayers. I'll just have to muddle through, I thought. No way I'm going back there again.

In fact, I didn't have to. The man beside me, seeing my predicament, went back and returned with a book and a bulletin. He handed them to me, smiling.

Now that's a welcome, I thought. Armed with the proper material, I was able to relax and look around. The church was packed. Everyone was listening keenly to the first reading.

As I watched and listened, I felt that something was wrong. Different. I couldn't quite figure it out. Then it hit me: almost everyone around me was in their 20s, 30s or 40s. This wasn't a youth service, or a special service for young families. It was just a regular 11 o'clock Sunday service. The reader was also in her 20s or 30s, and so was most of the choir. They were wearing jeans, sweaters, a few scarves. Everyone just sort of came as they were.

Broadening my view, I saw that people of all ages and backgrounds were here. Young, old, middle-aged, babies, handicapped, rich, poor – they all sat and stood together in one enormous hodgepodge of diversity. It was an amazing sight and a very uplifting experience.

As I travel around the diocese, I see quite a few churches that are similar to the one above. They may not be as large, but they certainly are as diverse.

Back in November 2005, our synod decided to make "celebrating our diversity" one of the main priorities for our diocese and our parishes. As you'll see in these pages, we're well on the way to doing that.

GUEST COLUMN

BY CLAUDETTE TAYLOR

the same economic status, the same physical stamina or the same sexual orientation. What do we do? Should we have a process where we encourage people to conform to the generally accepted status? Or should we engage in dialogue where we leave our preconceived ideas of "how things should be done" outside the room and allow the spirit of Pentecost to wash through that room? We know that honest dialogue will not and cannot be easy. After all, as humans we will do what we do best – make mistakes. But if we engage in face-to-face dialogue and give ourselves to the wonderful God who created different trees, different shapes of mountains and different lakes, we will be able to agree to disagree lovingly.

I am delighted that in recent years the Diocese of Toronto is engaging in this type of conversation. We need to work on liturgy which reflects all of our people. We need to look at the composition of our clergy and lay leaders and embrace a culture where our entire Anglican community is represented at

all levels. It should not matter if we worship in rural parishes or in urban, wealthy parishes or struggling ones. Our communities need to reach out to each other to build bridges of faith, hope and charity.

A sign painted in a mall near my home has the following quotes: "The family is one of nature's masterpieces." Another quote reads, "A family: a social unit where the father is concerned with parking space, the children with outer space and the mother with closet space." We may laugh at this definition of a family unit, but there is a lot of truth here. The family unit is made up of individuals who share a common story and history, but each person in the unit may approach the story from a different angle. What makes a family strong is when it engages in meaningful conversations with each member, respectfully acknowledging conflict and differences and working towards creating an environment which is more humane and holy.

Claudette Taylor is a member of Epiphany and St. Mark, Parkdale, and is the co-chair of No Longer Strangers, a group which facilitates multicultural mission and ministry in the diocese.

Can we break down walls?

GUEST COLUMN

BY DEO MORENO

It is important to understand and accept that not everyone is ready to embrace diversity. Our biases and prejudices are deeply rooted within us. From the moment we are born, we learn about ourselves, our environment, and the world around us. Families, friends, peers, books, teachers, idols and others influence us about what is right and wrong. They shape how we view things and how we respond to them.

Some biases are good because they allow us to assume something without needing proof; otherwise, we would have to start each new experience by learning all about it. We can bring our past experience to bear on present situations.

Where these biases become destructive is when we prejudge others in a negative way. If we allow our biases to shade our perception of what people are capable of, then they become harmful. If we do this when we are in a position of power or privilege, it can lead to real harm to others.

During the past year, I have led a workshop for clergy that deals with diversity. I am currently developing another workshop for laity. I have found that simply giving a workshop will not erase our biases. Indeed, even the best training will not erase most of our deeply rooted beliefs. Training can only help us to become aware of them so that we can make a conscious effort to change.

Embracing diversity is a journey because it requires change, and not everyone is ready for that. It is important to recognize that there are barriers to truly embracing diversity. They are:

- The desire to maintain power and privilege.
- The security of our own cultural walls.
- Structures and habits of communication which are conditioned by our culture.

Before we can embrace diversity, we need to be grounded in these Biblical principles:

- That God intended to create a diverse world, and that God calls us to leave the familiar and journey into the unknown.
- That the life and teachings of Jesus demonstrate a ministry of inclusion of diverse peoples. Jesus calls us to join his ministry of inclusion.
- That God sends the Holy Spirit to dwell both within us and among us, drawing in all of our human diversity so that we might learn the fullness of God's creation.

People are diverse in a lot of ways: age, ethnicity, nationality, religion and socio-economic status. Embracing all these things requires us to go beyond merely tolerating them – we need to actually accept them into

our life, community and society. To accept them, we must understand that others have specific needs such as spiritual formation in their own language, settlement issues, and economic difficulties. Newcomers must not be relegated to simply be "takers" or recipients of ministry. They must be invited to share as well, based upon gifts, talents, resources. They must become partners in ministry.

We need to build a capacity in our hearts to change. We must be ready to deal with changes, because when we welcome new people, we also welcome new ideas, new talents, new challenges, new styles of worship and even a new smell coming from the kitchen.

The key question is simple: is our faith strong enough to break down the walls that we humans create – the walls of nation, blood, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, geography, history and class? Can our church soar above these social barriers and become God's children, living lives of love and service in God's family as one, joyous people?

God has made us full of differences; when our differences get too much, as they always do, the answer is not to diminish the difference but to love one another.

Deo Moreno is the diocese's consultant for diversity.

Letters

End of Catholic New Times

It was with great sadness that I learned of the end of the publication of *Catholic New Times*. A monthly Toronto journal, it began in 1976 and continued for 30 years. It was in many ways a consequence of Vatican II, and it

expressed the fruits of that council in renewed interest in issues of social justice and in ecumenism. Articles were published on such issues as HIV/AIDS and city slum conditions, and it gave great support to James Loney during and after his imprisonment by Iraqi insurgents. The paper supported the ordination of women and the acceptance of married clergy. It was ecumenical, and several articles were by Anglicans.

Why did it fold? It was apparently purely for financial reasons.

But perhaps a significant factor was a big decline in bulk subscriptions to parishes. There are indications that the conservatism of the present Vatican had worked through diocesan bishops into local parishes. *Catholic New Times* will be sorely missed, and we hope and pray that its readers will find a new venue for their beliefs.

The Rev. Canon
Gerald Loweth,
Richmond Hill

**The columns
Through a Christian
Lens, A Question
of Faith, Lay
Reader in Training
and Beyond Youth
Group will return
next month.**

St. Paul's gives warm welcome

Laity feel empowered

BY NANCY DEVINE

On any given Sunday morning, there is a palpable joy in the air at St. Paul's, L'Amoreaux, in Scarborough. The church, located at the corner of Finch and Warden avenues in the city's east end, strives to be both a welcoming and engaging community within a community.

In the early 1970s, the development committee decided to rebuild the church and include a seniors' housing complex to create safe and affordable housing for seniors, regardless of race, religion or socio-economic status.

Leela Emerson and her husband Stanley found a home there, as well as a chance to continue their involvement in the Anglican Church, which began in their native Sri Lanka.

The couple arrived in Canada in February, 1991, at the height of a cold Canadian winter. "I looked out from the airplane window, and I thought 'My goodness what a country to be living in.' We had never seen snow before. But it is a wonderful country and we are so thankful to God for bringing us here."

"When we came to live here, we were delighted to be able to come to church without having to put on our boots and coats," she says. "We found a friendly, good church, and we felt at home right away."

Over the course of her time at St. Paul's, she has been involved



Members of St. Paul, L'Amoreaux enjoy a fundraising dinner to send 11 people from their church on a mission trip to Kenya. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

with the church's newcomers' program and the distribution of the church flowers in the seniors' building following the service.

"I'm taking a little time off at the moment," she says. "But I love going to services. I always come away with a good message."

Donald St. Kitts is a native of Guyana who started coming to St. Paul's when his mother lived next door in the St. Paul's Centre. He stayed because he found a caring community that ministered to his family's needs when his mother died.

He is involved in many aspects of parish life, from reading the lessons, to being a member of synod for the past three years. Currently, he leads a mid-week Bible study group for seniors.

"This congregation is a cross-

section of all nationalities," he says. "It is also very friendly. We don't look at colour or education or anything like that. We look at how we honour God and respect each other, and assist each other in daily life."

And some of them are willing to reach half-way around the world to do it.

In July, 11 members from St. Paul's will be part of a 92-member team from the diocese who will go on a short-term mission trip to Kenya. The interdenominational team is comprised of medical professionals, clergy and others who will be involved in medical clinics, education projects and community renewal efforts.

"We have been very fortunate to have had a priest here who acknowledged the gifts of the laity," says Leonard Leader, a long-time parishioner and a member of Diocesan Council. "It is so empowering to have that. I have been to churches where that is not the case, and I know what we have is unique."

Among the programs at St. Paul's is an adult education series following the 9:15 a.m. family

worship service. The ever-changing rota of topics has included an introduction to the basic beliefs of Christianity to examining the war on terror in a biblical context. Throughout the week, the church's calendar is filled with activities from a Bible study and worship service in Cantonese to a mid-week fellowship for young adults.

"I think Sundays are my favourite part of the week here," says the Rev. Dr. Dean Mercer, incumbent. "There is vitality and a willingness to try new things. It is always a buoyant experience. There is a real devotion here, and a keen response to Bible study as both a chance to learn but also to meet together."

He's aiming to have average Sunday attendance up to about 400 from the current 300. It's not about the numbers, he adds, it is about including more people in what is going on in the parish. A newly established junior choir is helping a lot, he notes.

"We're seeing significant growth in children and youth ministries because they are coming to the choir, and they are getting involved."

Church supports mother, daughter

BY NANCY DEVINE

Wenny Wu came from China a little over a year ago. As she struggled to establish a new life in a new country, she looked for a place to practice English and learn more about Canadian culture.

She found the Immigrant Support Program at St. Paul's.

The group meets on Saturdays at 7 p.m. for a service of evening prayer followed by a meeting which can include guest speakers or special events. There is also a job-finding club, English as a Second Language classes and a friendship program where a mentor from the church community commits to help a new Canadian ease into life here.

"I came here in November (2005). Someone told me that church was a good way to meet people," says Ms. Wu.

Last August, Ms. Wu was reunited with her daughter, Cherry, who came from China to live with her. Her mother's new community was a source of confusion for the 13-year-old.

"She told me that she would never believe in Jesus," she says. "In China, we never go to church. But I told her to join the choir so that she could meet the other children in her school. At first, she didn't like it. But everyone was so kind and friendly to her. After two weeks, she told me she wanted to be baptized because she really believed in Jesus."

Now, mother and daughter are active in not only the newcomers groups, but also the parish.

Want to learn more?

One of the best places to learn about helping your church embrace diversity is the diocese's website, www.toronto.anglican.ca. Click on "Diversity" on the front page and you will find the following:

- a prayer for diversity;
- resources for multicultural mission and ministry;
- resources to help your parish celebrate Pentecost Sunday;
- Bishop Colin Johnson's charge to synod in November 2005;
- information on diversity in action and how to get involved in diocesan groups.

The diocese's consultant on diversity, Deo Moreno, is available to speak to your church group or answer any questions you have. You can reach him at (416) 363-6021 or 1-800-668-8932, ext. 230 or email dmoreno@toronto.anglican.ca.

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Bishop on the road

Continued from Page 1

and hospitable; to celebrate our diversity and eliminate those things which get in the way; and to advocate in the areas of child poverty, homelessness and HIV/AIDS. He also spoke about how the diocese's resources and governance structures are being re-configured to create and sustain healthy, vibrant parishes and ministries.

Evadne Wilkinson of St. Paul's, Bloor Street, said she liked what she heard at the gathering. "I think the bishop is going to move the church forward here in the Diocese of Toronto and really bring people together and bring healing, and I'm looking forward

to being a part of that," she said.

Four more meetings are planned. All are invited to attend. The purpose of the meetings is for Bishop Johnson to talk with Anglicans about how the diocese can continue to build communities of hope and compassion, and how to build healthy, sustainable parishes.

The next meetings are:

- Feb. 7, 7-9 p.m., Grace Church, 19 Parkway Ave., Markham.
- Feb. 11, 2:30-4:30 p.m., St. Luke, 566 Armour Rd., Peterborough.
- March 20, 7 p.m., St. Paul, 45 Russell St. W., Lindsay
- March 25, 2-4 p.m., St. James, 58 Peter St., N., Orillia.

Liturgy attracts all ages

Drama, crafts part of service

BY HENRIETA PAUKOV

You might think it would be difficult to get the kids out of bed early on a Sunday morning to go to church.

The parents at All Saints, Kingsway, seem to have no such troubles. The neighbourhood around the church is only just waking up on this November Sunday morning, but the silence surrounding the Gothic-style building belies the pandemonium in progress in the church basement.

Families settle down at tables set up around the room's perimeter. Kids chase each other. Moms and Dads juggle cups of orange juice in one hand while cradling their babies with another. Crayons and colourful papers cover the tables. Someone is playing the piano in the corner. An altar has been set up in the middle of the room.

Dawn Mercer, the parish's Christian education coordinator, is upstairs, greeting visitors and directing them down to the basement. She explains to them that this service – All Saints' monthly all-age liturgy – is a little different from regular services.

"What happens in this service is that tables are set around in the hall downstairs and people pick up coffee, muffins, and fruit, and then join their table," she says. "The order of service is a placemat at the table. The service begins like a regular liturgy and then the readings and the Gospel are enacted either dramatically, or using some kind of hands-on activity for everyone at the table to participate in. We come together in two large circles for the Eucharist. Whoever is at your table is your group for that particular day."

She says that when she explains the concept of an all-age liturgy to visitors, some choose to come back to the more traditional service at 11 o'clock. "It's a level of informality that they are not comfortable with, and that's fine," she says. "As long as people know, that's all that's important. I tell you, the people who like this service really like it. They really want to be here – particularly families, although there are older folks who really enjoy it. I wouldn't say that it's for everybody."

The service is both lively and relaxed. It's FaithWorks Sunday



Teenagers at All Saints, Kingsway's all-age liturgy perform a skit about making soup to which everyone contributes what little they have.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

and the kids put on a skit about making a pot of soup to which everyone contributes what little they have. Parishioners laugh as the young performers walk up one by one to deliver their lines and place various vegetables in the pot. Because it also happens to be the Feast of Christ the King, everyone joins in making paper crowns out of the materials on the tables. When it comes time to sing again, some adults and kids stand up wearing the crown they have made.

Constance Kendall, the youth ministry associate who coordinates the service, says one of the things she likes about the all-age liturgy is that though it is designed with youngsters in mind, it doesn't lose any of the elements of a regular service. "The music is upbeat, but you still have your welcome, your opening prayer, your readings, the gospel message,

prayers of the people, confession, everything," she says. "Because there are preschoolers as well as adults, we try to make the language as simple as possible."

The Rev. Canon Andrew Sheldon, the incumbent, who arrived at All Saints last summer, says the service has been a learning experience for him. He would like to add a storytelling component and would also like to see the all-age liturgy moved upstairs to the sanctuary. "I'm happy to have this experience down here," he says, "but the one question I have is why do we feel like we need to come to a church basement before we get children and youth involved? Why can't we bring them upstairs and do it there?"

The service takes hours of preparation by young and old, from shopping for groceries to rehearsing the dramatic presen-

tation. The result of everyone's hard work is the joyful noise emanating from All Saints early on a Sunday morning. Everyone looks forward to different aspects of the service.

"For the very young kids, it would be the crafts," says Ms. Kendall. "They always look forward to whatever the craft is going to be. I think the young people look forward to doing the drama, because they are actively involved in planning that. And I think the joy for the adults and the older folks is being able to sit and share in the service with the younger people. The babies are there, the younger kids are there, the teenagers are there. They are actually getting to sit around the table as a family – young and old, worshipping, singing, and just having a wonderful time together."

An inconvenient beauty

My nephew asked for a hamster from Santa this past Christmas. Not to be outdone, his older brother asked for a lizard. Actually, upon my first introduction to this new member of the family over the holidays, I was told that its proper name is a gecko.

Whatever the real name of this little reptile may be, it just doesn't seem to make for a very good pet. You see, Earl, my nephew's gecko, doesn't move. It just clings motionless to the artificial rock wall like it has some deep neurosis.

Mind you, hamsters aren't the most rational pets, either. Proceeding to the next bedroom, I witnessed Sam, the hamster, inexplicably and uncontrollably running circles in his cage.

There seemed to be little concern on the part of my nephew as he too looked on, so I decided to ponder the peculiar behavior of these new family members alone. It was in this moment, strange as it seems, I found myself also contemplating the challenge of making a culturally diverse church work. I mean, imagine one day my one nephew waking up with the mischievous idea of putting Sam the hamster into the same cage as his brother's gecko. The gecko, quite frankly, would be stunned. At the same time, the hamster would be more than a little troubled to suddenly find himself in an environment that was not at all suited for the way of life he was wired for. The serene tropical surroundings and bold rock surfaces of the gecko's cage would be completely incomprehensible to this furry ball of energy whose world was created (by the considerate hands of my nephew's older sister) to bounce off, run into,

GUEST COLUMN

BY THE REV. LANCE DIXON

and jump on. How would the hamster adapt to the gecko's world? How *could* he adapt to this new world? After all, they are what they are.

But it's not that way for humans. While the problems and challenges of adapting to a world of many cultures are vastly more complex, there is one critical point in our favour: we are what *we* are. We are the same creatures who happen to have been shaped by different "artificial walls" of land, desert, sea and continent, over a very long time. The cultural differences that now confront us by living side by side are in no way irreconcilable. Jesus opened the eyes of the world to the deeper bonds of affection that God had woven between human beings. In Christ, Paul said, there is in the deepest level of our being no such thing as "Jew or Greek," for we are all one in him. I believe God has a dream that one day the people of the earth will live as reconciled people. And when I skip to the end of the story of redemption, and read over the book of Revelation, I am reminded that God is quite confident this will happen, one day.

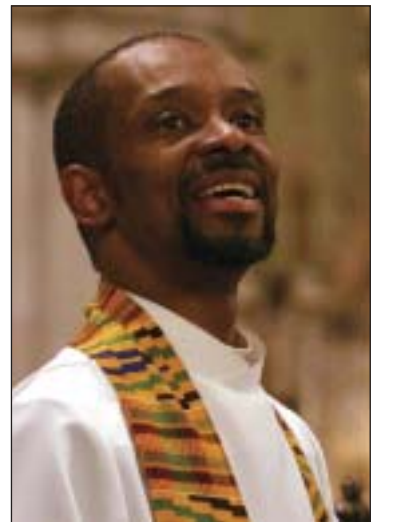
How, then, do we get there? Above all, the vision for building reconciled communities needs to shape all aspects of our daily life of worship, evangelism, and service. God calls us to honour the best of what humankind has developed in our various cultures, and use it to the benefit of

all. Here at Trinity, Streetsville, we are learning from some very gifted Christians, who are recent immigrants to Canada, how Bible study groups take on a whole new life in communities in different parts of the world. We continue to dedicate the majority of our social outreach resources to global issues as our way of showing concern for all God's people. Our rector welcomes visiting preachers from around the world to share a vision of the Kingdom from their own experience. While we have an annual cultural celebration weekend in January, we recognize that we need to do better in shaping all our parish social events to reflect the cultural diversity of our congregation. God is not honored by our token efforts to be inclusive. We are challenged to consider how everything we do, from worship to Bible study to potlucks, reflect an ongoing desire for reconciliation among God's people.

It takes hard work, embarrassing mistakes, letting go of what is familiar and at times embracing uncertainty. But Christ's love for the stranger, the neighbor, as well as the enemy, compels us to follow this less traveled road. If we are to be faithful to God's vision of all the nations joined together in worship at the throne of eternal grace, then it is best we understand the inconvenient beauty of diversity and embrace it for all it's worth.

Now, if only I can explain this to my nephew's lizard – I mean gecko.

The Rev. Lance Dixon is the associate priest at Trinity, Streetsville.



**Our
life
together**

**By
Michael
Hudson**





Bridging the gap

Adults, youth, children grow together

E-mail keeps teens connected

When the Rev. Millie Hope arrived at St. Martin's, Bay Ridges in Pickering, the average server was 13 years old. During her time with the parish, all of them have grown older and gone off to university or jobs away from home, but she wanted to keep in touch.

"Almost all of them were off to university or college – or at least were moving away from St. Martin's. At the same time, e-mail was a good way to keep in touch," she says. Her young cyber-flock is spread across the country, from Nova Scotia to the western provinces. "We e-mail back and forth, some more than others, but we want them to know the parish is still thinking about them."

To make the process more efficient, Ms. Hope creates one generic e-mail message, but she also includes a personal section in each one. Sometimes, the students will write back, especially if they are having a tough time. She tries to be encouraging and to bridge the gap between home and away.

"Every now and then I might

mention to their parents that I've heard from one of them, but that can be tricky, since some of them don't write home that often," she says. "St. Martin's is very much a family-oriented place, and these young people are part of our family even though they can't be with us each Sunday. We want them to know they are thought of and it's important to keep in touch. When they come back for special occasions, they have a sense that they are coming home, which is nice."

– Nancy Devine

Youth invite parishioners to foodbank

During Advent at St. Philip's, Etobicoke, members of our youth group invited parishioners to join them at the Weston Food Bank to sort foods and prepare hampers for needy folks in the community. On a Sunday night in November, our youth group prepared and served dinner to senior members of our parish to get to know each other and discuss

ways of doing ministry together.

In addition to mentoring kids in our confirmation class, adults in our parish work with teenagers at our annual Christmas Fair, whose proceeds are given to support FaithWorks ministries.

Recently, parishioners of mixed ages put together a special Sunday morning children's program called Pirates of the Galilean that used characters and themes from the popular movie, Pirates of the Caribbean, to teach children and adults about the values of Jesus.

– The Rev. Al Budzin

Passport leads to learning

About three times a year, the Sunday School at St. Paul's on-the-Hill, Pickering, holds a Prayer Passport Day. This is when we invite members of our congregation to talk about their lives or ministries with the children and youth. The guests are assigned a space, and the kids, aged 4-18, rotate through each room. They listen to the adults, ask questions, and, most importantly, have an opportunity to

pray for them.

Every two or three months, our children and youth "Take Over the Church." They greet, read, prepare drama or teach the congregation a new worship song. We all pitch in to help the children, especially our nursery-aged kids who like to roam. The readers or intercessors are mentored by some of the more experienced members of the congregation. Parents of little ones are encouraged not to worry about their little ones roaming up the aisle, as someone will watch over them. This is such a blessing to the children, reinforcing their place in the body of Christ, as well as building their self-confidence in group situations. The adults are blessed by the ministry of the children, and have a chance to be child-like themselves.

Our latest initiative is to designate prayer partners for every child and youth who attends our church. The partners are the adults in the congregation. The partners will pray and have an opportunity to meet their prayer recipients in the New Year.

– Tanya Lamb and
the Rev. Canon Kim Beard

Christmas and Easter feature informal family eucharists. The Easter liturgy concludes with the gathering and sharing of several hundred Easter eggs which decorate the church. Last spring, the Sunday School prepared a mystery play for the congregation. The play celebrated the wonder of God's creation. This year there is word of a sequel – Noah's Ark. All the children are involved in one way or another, either performing in the play or singing with the newly formed youth choir.

Most Sunday mornings, we sing our more traditional hymns in the initial parts of the liturgy and then sing more contemporary music when the children join us during the offertory. Children sit at the front of the church to see and share in the worship. As the officiant, I love to hear their voices chime in with the "Amens" as well as in the eucharistic responses. It is a joy to hear them as they take their place as the people of God.

– The Rev. Canon John Read

Pantomime brings adults, youth together

Where will you find more than 50 Anglicans, from age six and up, working together to bring family entertainment to their community? At Christ Church, Stouffville, that's where. Our annual English pantomime has been a tradition for 14 years.

English pantomime, an offshoot of Victorian music hall, tells a children's fairy tale accompanied by song, dance and

Sunday School sparks activity

We started a Sunday School at Grace Church, Markham, in 2004 and are delighted to see about 50 children regularly. The key to having lively intergenerational activities is our enthusiastic and dedicated coordinator. The next essential component is the group of dedicated teachers.

Mary G. Griffith, B.A., M.B.A., L.L.B.

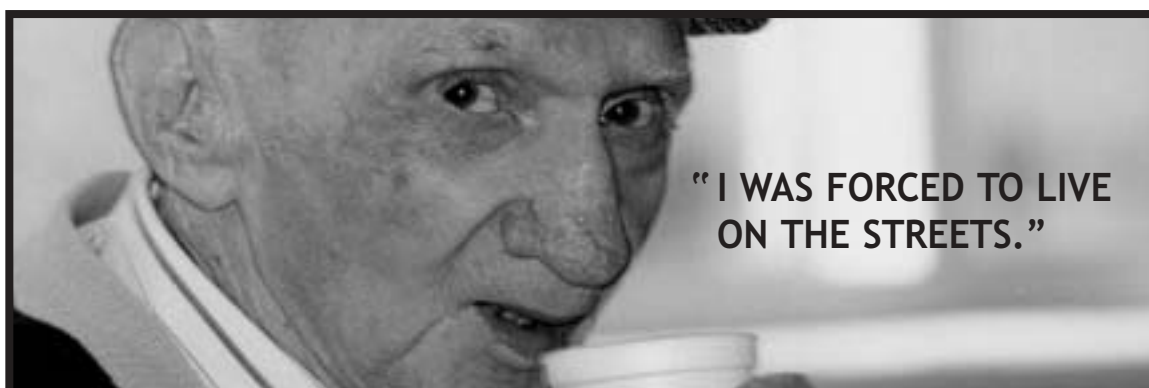
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people) and the rest of us who ranged in age from 40 to 70s. We even had parents and grandparents attend with the children. What a wonderful time of learning on both sides of the table!

Our discussions around the table gave us "older" folks a really good glimpse into the world of our youth today. We had no idea what their day-to-day life is like, particularly how they struggle to be active and visible Christians. It made us stop and rethink some of our attitudes and ideals.

We are always talking about including young people as full participants in our church, but we never seem to achieve this. This study has given us a terrific springboard to keep this momentum going in our church. I know each of us who attended this study is more open and willing to work toward truly including our young people in everything we do, not just certain aspects of church life

— Carol Brunton

Adults, pre-teens and teens are being trained on how to use the new audio-visual equipment for worship services. The training itself is being done by one of our young adults who is also on our parish council.

The Sunday School has several teens who are teaching the younger children. Post-confirmation teenagers are encouraged to get involved as class assistants to help them develop their leadership skills.

— The Rev. Warren Leibovitch

Pageant, mission bridge gap

One of the blessings of Christian community is the opportunity for the very young and very old – and everyone in between! – to be together in meaningful ways. The church truly is one of the few places where people of all ages gather on a regular basis. While it is not always easy to integrate those of different generations, there certainly are opportunities to do exactly that. St. Bride's, Clarkson, has always sought to make bridging the generation gap a high priority.

Christmas 2005 was an excellent example of an intergenerational event at our church. Beginning in October, we started preparation for the annual Christmas pageant. This pageant was different, however, in that it involved more than 40 actors ranging in age from nine months to 75 years. The roles were shared and the musical pieces were performed by both the children's choir and Selahbration, an octet of adult women in the parish. Beyond the enjoyment of telling the Christmas story in a fresh way, the pageant brought everyone together week by week for rehearsals. The preparation, performance and wrap-up party were a fun demonstration of

different generations working together.

During Lent, 2006, we planned another event that was meant to cross generational lines. Our 40 Days of Purpose Parish Mission focused every member of the church on a common theme. The weekly theme was preached about on Sunday mornings, while the Good News Club (aka the Sunday School) focused on the same theme during their lesson. The youth group discussed the theme at their Friday night meeting, and families were encouraged to pray and learn together during those 40 days. In the end, we had a Celebration Sunday that brought all of the young people and adults together in a service of worship.

More recently, we have started a scrap-booking group which meets on Saturday mornings. The purpose of the group is twofold: to have fun but also to reach out to those who don't belong to the church by inviting them to work at their hobby with others. The group has just started and is made up almost exclusively of women at this point, but it represents good intergenerational evangelism. The participants are mothers, grandmothers, children and teens who all want to collect and organize photographs and stories creatively. Great conversations occur over the craft tables as younger people and older work side by side.

While these are a few examples of intergenerational ministry at St. Bride's, the real intergenerational connection happens in worship as we gather week by week to hear God's word and to pray and sing together. As we worship, we are united as God's family, young and old, in this place.

— The Rev. Stephen Peake

Course opens eyes to young lives

Over the past eight weeks, St. Theodore of Canterbury, Toronto, has embarked on a journey of faith that it has never done before, but are certain to do again. It all began when our incumbent, the Rev. Claire Goodrich Dyer, announced that she would be presenting the eight-week "Via Media" program as the basis for the confirmation classes. She requested that anyone interested in "What it means to be an Anglican" attend. The purpose of opening it up to the whole congregation was to instill in the confirmation candidates the idea that Christian education is not just in preparation for confirmation, but an ongoing journey through life.

Throughout the eight weeks, we maintained a core group of 15 people of all ages. We had five confirmation candidates (all young

Kids interviewed for Christmas service

Teenagers at St. Margaret's, Barrie, assist with readings and prayers and help with music. Some have been trained to assist with the chalice and bread on Sundays. They have also preached, sharing their faith stories at the main Sunday service. Our young people occasionally help the greeting teams before the service, giving out bulletins and welcoming visitors.

This Christmas Eve, there was a special family service led by a group consisting of recently confirmed teenagers, some adults, and even a six-year-old! Some teens videotaped "interviews" with the younger children in the Sunday School on "what Christmas means to them." The video was shown at the service.

humour. The entire cast is comprised of the young people from Christ Church (with one adult exception) while other parishioners take on such roles as directing, script writing and stage management. There are four performances open to the public at the end of February, including a special presentation at a nearby senior citizens' community.

The comradeship that has evolved among the participants has been nothing short of amazing – older youth getting to know and help the younger ones; and adults becoming inspirational and approachable mentors for the youth. The young people are given an opportunity to blossom in new and often unexpected ways within a warm and caring, God-centered environment. In turn, the adults have gained respect for the intelligence and ability of the next generation.

— The Rev. Canon Rob Shields

Rock & roll accompanies Lenten journey

BY HENRIETA PAUKOV

The Rev. Beverley Williams and her teenage daughter may be a generation apart, but they share a passion for two things: music and Jesus Christ. Ms. Williams, assistant curate at St. Thomas, Brooklin, is hoping that these two common passions will bring together other adults and teenagers in a Lenten course she is planning for late February, which will use the music of U2 to explore questions of faith.

"We are going to be listening to U2 music, looking at their lyrics, and watching DVD concert footage, and picking stuff out of that and looking at some of the things they speak about," she explains. "What does it mean when you say, as a devoted disciple of Christ, 'I still haven't found what I'm looking for?' What does that mean and how does that feel? So we are going to be struggling with some of that stuff."

She says the music of U2 reflects the Christian faith of lead singer Bono and the other band members, with scriptural references in the lyrics, and also "messages of struggle, what it means to be a disciple in our times, what it means to really work through some of our struggles." Bono had an Irish Catholic father and a Protestant mother, and grew up in Dublin. "He has a real issue with church politics, yet he has such a profound and deep faith, which started when he was about 16, after his mom died a couple of years earlier," says Ms. Williams. "He uses his celebrity to voice the Gospel in a way that we can see it as social justice and a love of humanity."

She believes that this message will appeal to both the teenagers and the adults in the Lenten class. "There are people as old as I am who have been fans for 20 years who have known about this and who are aware of it, and every time a new CD is released we just get excited about songs

called Grace and Yahweh and Crumbs Under the Table," she says. "And then there is the younger generation, who have not travelled the whole way with the group and aren't aware, but they can button onto certain aspects of the music, as well as the social justice perspective."

"I would think that this will work because music reaches so many people on so many levels. I mean, the teens live through their iPods and through their music, and we as adults have an appreciation for different types of music. God speaks to us on so many levels, and I truly believe one of those levels is music. So I think it will reach all generations. Now, it may reach each individual person in a different way, but it will reach, and God will use that to speak to everyone there regardless of their age."

The course participants will work in small groups, with adults and teens mixed together, and there will be a special focus for the youth who are going to be

confirmed at the Easter Vigil. Ms. Williams points out that the presentations will be very affordable for the parish, as she already owns the music and the concert footage on DVD. She will only need to rent some eight-foot by eight-foot projection screens. With regard to technology, she says that the younger generation expects excellence. "They expect things to be tech-savvy because they are tech-savvy." The rest of the parish is as excited as she is about the course. "I've even had older people in the parish – 60 and 70-years-olds – say to me: 'I'm so proud to be part of a parish that is trying something new.'"

Though unique, the Lenten course is only one of many ways that the growing parish involves its youth. "We had a turkey supper on Sunday and they served dinner to more than 270 people," says Ms. Williams. "The youngest server was 10 years old and it went up to 18 years old – about 15 kids were there serving dinner. The youth group has been

put to task on certain things, such as when something needs to be painted and that sort of stuff, but I think they are starting to feel that they want to give more, that they don't just want to do this. So I've been working with them. We are going to have a 30-hour fast, we are going to do a Matrix night, looking at the Matrix movies and talking about things in those movies, and we are encouraging a group of musically gifted young people to start their own contemporary Christian rock music group. Drama is another thing that we have talked about involving in the liturgy."

Ms. Williams is excited about the good things that may come out of having enthusiastic young people in the Lenten class. "Maybe there will be someone who will be part of this group who sees the passion and the light of Christ in that young person who wants to make a difference, and maybe it will light a fire in them too."

Decal says a lot about Redeemer

‘Gay positive’ parish welcomes one and all

BY STUART MANN

One of the first things a visitor notices about the Church of the Redeemer in downtown Toronto is the little rainbow-coloured sticker on the church’s sign. Despite the beautiful stone building and the traffic whizzing past and the pedestrians loaded down with shopping bags, it is this tiny decal that catches one’s attention.

The sticker has had a hard time surviving there. Shortly after the congregation put it up in 2002, someone scratched it off. Every Friday night it was destroyed, and every Saturday morning it was replaced. This went on for several weeks, until finally the sticker was placed at the top of the sign, out of arm’s reach. It has remained there ever since.

It’s a small detail, but it says a lot about Redeemer. The rainbow decal is the well-known flag of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, the transgendered and their supporters. By putting it on their sign – and keeping it there – the church is signaling to the world that they are welcomed, safe and supported there.

That attitude has not only attracted a large number of gays and lesbians, but also heterosexuals, many of whom are newcomers looking for a spiritual home. “My journey in coming here was finding a welcoming place where I could live and grow and find a large number in my own age group who are a mixture of straight, gay and lesbian, and who are welcomed unconditionally,” says Clayton Grassick, 33, who has been attending the

church for less than two years.

On most Sundays the church is full. Singles, couples, families, children, teens, seniors – they are all represented here. Indeed, the church is planning another renovation to accommodate the growth.

It wasn’t always this way. When Abigail Young and her partner, Catherine Emerson, arrived here in 1980, the church was facing closure. The congregation had dwindled to a handful of souls. They wanted to keep the church open and were prepared to welcome one and all – and try new things – in an effort to do so.

“Nobody cared one way or the other about the fact that there were two women who clearly were living together and thought of each other as a family coming to their church,” says Ms. Young. “If anybody thought, ‘Do they or don’t they,’ nobody asked and they didn’t seem to care.”

As the decade progressed and the congregation grew, some members were struck by AIDS. “The congregation rallied around the choir members and other parishioners who found themselves ill,” she says. “I think that was a real transforming experience.”

During the early days of the AIDS pandemic, there was a lot of nervousness about drinking from the common cup. Many people didn’t understand how the virus was transmitted or if it was safe to use the chalice.

The Rev. Canon Ansley Tucker, who was the incumbent at the time, made sure that the celebrant always drank the wine that was left in the cup after communion, to show there was



Abigail Young joins the Rev. Andrew Asbil and his three daughters, Hanna, Bridget and Sophie, on the steps of the Church of the Redeemer after a Sunday service. Behind them is the sign with the rainbow-coloured decal.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

nothing to fear. “She wanted people to see that she was not afraid and there was no reason for us to be afraid to consume the wine,” recalls Ms. Young. “Because she was highly respected and we knew she had been a registered nurse before becoming a priest, that made an impression on us.”

As time went on, the congregation continued to grow and became increasingly diverse. It became known as a “gay positive” parish and took part in Toronto’s annual Pride parade. On the Sunday morning of Pride Week, it put a rainbow frontal on the altar, a tradition it keeps to this day. Lesbian and gay parents have had their children baptized in the church.

In 2002, shortly after the arrival of its new incumbent, the Rev. Andrew Asbil, the church decided to put the rainbow sticker on its sign.

It wasn’t a decision made lightly. The church’s advisory board felt it was the right thing to do, but wanted to get more feedback from the parish. Over three weeks, meetings were held after the Sunday morning services. All were invited to attend.

“After all that discussion, in the end we felt it really was the right thing for us to do,” says Mr. Asbil. “We were saying publicly, ‘This is who we are.’”

David Townsend, who joined the church in 1998, says the discussions were just as important as the decision. “It’s incredibly

important to me that not only did we put a rainbow flag decal on our sign out front, but that we went through an involved and intentional process of parish discussion leading up to a concerted decision to do that,” he says.

“The whole parish had a chance to reflect together about issues, not only about sexual diversity in some sort of narrow euphemistic sense, but to reflect about the diversity of human sexuality that gets buried in a lot of church talk.”

Ms. Young had some trepidation about putting up the decal. “I was a little worried about the church becoming too self-consciously gay-positive, because I never wanted to be welcomed as a homosexual; I just wanted to be welcomed. Catherine and I both wanted a church home where we could feel like a family. I didn’t want to go to ‘the gay church.’ It seemed like it might turn out to be exclusive, even though it was meant to be inclusive.”

As it turned out, the church carried on much as it had before, with all groups represented and growing. “I don’t know how we managed that, but we did,” she says. “We just seem to be a church where lots of different people feel welcomed.”

The discussions in 2002 paved the way for another important decision the following year. In the weeks leading up to the diocese’s synod in 2003 – a synod in which same-sex blessings were

to be discussed – church members voted at a vestry meeting to support same-sex blessings and become a “local option” church.

“I asked the parish to give our lay and clergy synod members a real sense of where we were as a parish,” says Mr. Asbil. “We needed to know at this point in our history what we were about.”

Meetings were held after the 9:30 and 11:15 services for four weeks, culminating in the vestry meeting. The vote was 106-7 with one abstention.

Importantly, the vote was taken with a show of hands rather than a secret ballot. “By showing our hands, we were showing that we had the courage to live together, to respect our differences, and to work toward reconciliation. If we did a secret ballot, we ran the risk of alienation and disenfranchisement.

“When the vote was finished, there was a real sense that we had accomplished something,” he recalls. “A person told me that I was putting the Redeemer at risk – that in the silence we had agreement, but when you say it out loud, maybe you’re not going to agree. I said, I guess we are, but there comes a time when you have to do risky things, and you have to be able to make a stand as a community and trust in the grace of God.”

Synod voted to defer any decision on same-sex blessings until after General Synod met in June of this year. Despite that, Mr. Asbil says Redeemer turned an important corner in its history. “There’s no going back. We’re not going back to Egypt. We’re going to move in a new direction. Once you place some of those benchmarks for yourself, there’s a real sense of humility and trust, and it also raises the expectations of the community.”

On a Sunday morning, with the church full and the congregation listening intently to the readings and the Gospel, one senses that Redeemer does indeed know where it’s going and is confident about its place in the wider church.

‘A sense of God guiding the way’

It’s pretty clear the Rev. Andrew Asbil loves serving the diverse community of Redeemer.

“The diversity of God’s gift for me has been a parish that has at least 30 per cent gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered (GLBT). If I didn’t have that GLBT here, I’d be up the creek. They’re my board chairs, financial analysts, choristers. They preach, read, lead Bible studies and Sunday School. You name it, they’re

doing it. Some have children. When we do marriage preparation, I invite gay and lesbian couples to join us. Never has (a straight couple) said they can’t be a part of that. In fact, it is just the opposite. One gay couple that had attended a marriage preparation course had been together for 32 years before they decided to get married. The straight couples in the group wanted to know how they managed to do that.

“Another thing I’ve learned from members of our gay and lesbian community is that despite how unwelcoming our church as a whole has been to them, their sense of communion with God is so rich and deep that no church will stand in the way of that relationship. And when they do find a community that supports them to be, like Abigail said, just one of many, there’s a sense of the spirit of God guiding the way. I have yet to meet a gay or lesbian

person who just walks in the door and says, ‘I thought I’d just hang out with you Christians today.’ There is a real sense of being drawn through the door. A lot of straight folks have expressed the same thing – a real sense of being attracted to a community that would have the chutzpah and the courage to be able to draw a line in the sand and say, ‘This is who we are. It’s revealed to us – is God-inspired.’”

Young Anglican honoured

Ashley Barrie, a 16-year-old Anglican, was the recipient of the 2006 Christian Service Award, presented by the Havelock Christian Ministerial Association to a high school student who shows "Christian character and action" in the community. She is a member of Christ Church, Norwood.

Ms. Barrie used a painful experience in her own life to help others. When she was bullied at school, she received support from the Rural Outreach Centre, a FaithWorks ministry in Buckhorn which offers help to families in crisis and women facing abuse. In turn, she created an abuse awareness poster as a class project and donated it to the Rural Outreach Centre to use as an awareness tool. She also spoke at the centre's Ecumenical Week Without Violence service, giving her testimony and inspiring other young people to speak out about violence and abuse. "She spoke extremely well, with compassion, hope and truth," says Deacon Cathy Stone, executive director of the Rural Outreach Centre. "After the service some of the younger children approached her about their own problems with bullying. I think she is an excellent role model and very brave."

Music, art benefit orphans

St. George, Allandale, held an "Art for AIDS" benefit concert and art sale on World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, raising over \$3,000 for Mchinji Home of Hope, an orphanage in Malawi, Africa.

The concert, organized by Carol Hardy, music director at St. George's, featured vocalists Jane Black and MacKenzie Gallinger, organists Marilyn Reesor and Chris Bohdanowicz, clarinetist Susan Connolly, violinist Sherrie Powell, pianists Kathy Kuehl, Sandra Ruttan and Barbara Shotlander, guitarists Gary Gontier and Joe Abbott, The Barrie Saxophone Quartet, and flutist Carol Hardy. A highlight of the evening was the song Promises, written by Deborah Leon. Jane Graves, a retired school teacher who volunteers six months at a time at the orphanage, shared some of her experiences. Art was sold during intermission. The concert ended with the joyous singing and playing of O Come All Ye Faithful.

St. John, Weston, marks anniversary

St. John, Weston, marked its 150th anniversary in 2006, culminating with a service with guest celebrant Bishop Colin Johnson on Nov. 5. St. John's began ministry in Weston in 1856, when the Rev. William Arthur Johnston gathered together an Anglican Church fellowship for worship and prayer in a local home. He eventually built the "Chapel of Ease," which served a dual purpose as a gathering place for Anglican worship and a private boys' school.

Through the years, St. John's has responded to the developing and changing community of Weston, welcoming parishioners from around the world, including



Clockwise from above: The Ghanian Anglican Choir of St. John, Weston, sings at the parish's 150th anniversary service; Ken McMillan and Rachel Penny play Joseph and Mary in Holy Trinity, Trinity Square's performance of the Christmas Story; Carol Hardy, music director at St. George, Allandale, plays flute at the "Art for AIDS" benefit concert she helped organize; Sarah McKinnon gives a talk at Christ Church, Deer Park, about artistic representations of the nativity during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance.

PHOTOS BY MAJOR THE REV. NIGEL SHAW, PETER COLLERAN AND MICHAEL HUDSON



a growing Ghanian congregation. The parish serves a weekly community supper, offers a "Kid's Klub" for neighborhood children, and holds various events for seniors.

Christmas tradition 69 years old

Celebrating its 69th season, the Christmas Story at Holy Trinity, Trinity Square, enjoyed enthusiastic crowds again this past Christmas. This nativity pageant was first staged at Holy Trinity in 1938 and began at St. Martin's in the Fields, London, England, in 1928. Queen Elizabeth and her sister Margaret were taken to see it when they were little girls.

From the dramatic lighting, rousing organ music and carols sung by an unseen choir, to the magnificent cast of angels, shepherds, kings and pages and a baby Jesus, this year's show kept the attention of young and old from

beginning to end. The beautiful setting of the 159-year-old Church of the Holy Trinity brought its own special charm to the show.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this Toronto tradition, contact the Christmas Story at christmasstory@holymtrinitytoronto.org.

Nativity images examined

On Dec. 5, Christ Church, Deer Park, hosted a talk with Sarah McKinnon, Ph.D., entitled "O Holy Night: Representations of the Nativity in Medieval and Renaissance Art." Ms. McKinnon is currently the Vice President, Academic, at the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto. She is a sought-after lecturer in late medieval art and architecture, and a curator of exhibitions of Canadian and European art.

Ms. McKinnon gave an illustrated lecture on works from the



13th to 16th centuries, created by artists like Giotto, da Vinci, and el Greco, including frescoes, book paintings, relief sculptures, painted altar panels, and oils on canvas.

"While Ms. McKinnon explained that we would likely be in 'familiar Christmas card territory,' in fact, we entered into a discussion where the theme travelled beyond the traditional Christmas card," says Greg Carpenter, theological intern at the parish. "The chosen pieces spoke of the account of Jesus' birth from the Gospel of Luke, incorporating apocryphal stories and popular legends. We heard of the development of the treatment of space, depth and dimension, and the attempts by artists to capture realism and naturalism. The evening provided moments of reflection to accompany our Advent journey to the heart of Christmas."

Parish marks Heritage Day

On Feb. 18, at 2 p.m., St. Mary's, Richmond Hill, will celebrate National Heritage Day, which falls on the third Monday in February. Cameron Knight, a local history librarian from the Richmond Hill Public Library, will present an illustrated talk on the history of church spires, focusing on the construction and restoration of St. Mary's own chapel spire. Displays will include materials from the Archives Collection of St. Mary's and the Local History Room. Afternoon tea will follow. Everyone is welcome. St. Mary's invites other faith communities in Richmond Hill to share materials from their archives. Contact Norman McMullen at (905) 883-0984.

Just two per cent would make a difference

THE STEWARD

BY PETER MISIASZEK

It's my job to talk about stewardship, so it won't surprise many readers that Anglicans often say to me that all the church talks about is money. This may explain why I also hear clergy say they are reluctant to preach about the stewardship of treasure! The statements have a familiar ring:

"The stewardship committee is having another pledge drive."

"They want me to give another loonie or toonie."

"Givings are down this year, so they want more."

And of course, "Are we having another bake sale?"

It's time to set the record straight: we probably don't talk about money enough. Or to be more precise, we don't speak about it in its proper context, so it appears that we talk about it too much.

As Christians, when we talk about giv-

ing or sharing the gifts that God has given to us, it ought to be done in the context of our ministry together. All this talk about tithing or sacrificial giving is not meant to portray the church as money-grubbing. It's not about the money. It's about being so passionate about God and people that we want to act as a conduit between God's love and gifts and the world.

All we have is ours only by the grace and generosity of God. We are to be generous with others as God has been generous with us. We are to share. When we give to our churches, we can create better liturgies, children's programming, music, outreach, ministries of welcome, volunteer development, building improvements, and we can amplify the good deeds and good work of our clergy. The money is used to build up God's kingdom here on earth.

Jesus spoke more about money and what we turn into false gods than anything else in scripture. So it should not surprise us to hear the same themes woven into our sermons on a fairly regular basis. The story of the widow's mite, for example, isn't just a warm and fuzzy parable Jesus

taught to make us feel good. Instead, the very foundation of giving and sharing is embedded in this narrative. The widow gave away all she had. She had so much faith in God that she was able to give it all away. That's a pretty high bar to set.

The widow, in her poverty, knew something that many of us take for granted – it's all God's in the first place. Hopefully, when we talk about stewardship, giving and sharing, we are trying to remind ourselves of the importance of being generous, precisely because that is what Jesus taught. Asking for an hour's pay each week in the offertory, or even a proportionate gift of five per cent of your family's gross income, doesn't sound impossible or too generous when we measure it against the widow's example.

Despite all we joyfully receive by God's grace, our giving standards in our diocese are among the lowest of the mainline Protestant churches. Last year, the average annual gift in our offertory across the diocese was a scant 1.12 per cent of gross family incomes. And yet we know from studying our most vibrant and healthy

parishes that givings closer to two per cent are necessary to support the ministry of our church. That's right, just two per cent!

With two per cent, many parishes could cover all their operating expenses and fund new and diverse ministry. The goal is quite clear: an hour's gross pay, each and every week, from each and every one of our givers.

The New Year is upon us and for many churches it is an exciting time to lay the foundation for new ministry. For others, a quiet prayer is said in the hopes of making it through the next 12 months without the furnace breaking down or the roof leaking. We can and should expect the talk about money to begin any Sunday now. Let's remember, if we all gave one hour's pay each week every week, we would hear far more rejoicing and far less pleading. And a few more prayers would be answered.

Peter Misiaszek is the diocese's director of Stewardship Development.

LOOKING AHEAD

Items for Looking Ahead should be emailed to hpaukov@toronto.anglican.ca. The deadline for the April 2007 issue is March 1.

Services

FEB. 4 – The Rev. Lance Dixon is the guest preacher at the 11 a.m. service at St. Michael and All Angels, 611 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, as the parish continues the celebration of its 100th anniversary. Call (416) 653-3593.

FEB. 11 – Join the parishioners at St. Theodore of Canterbury, 111 Cactus Ave., Toronto, at the 10:30 a.m. Eucharist as they celebrate Black History Month. Call (416) 222-2461.

FEB. 18 – "Anniversary Sunday" at St. Luke (Dixie South), 1513 Dixie Rd., Mississauga. Bishop Michael Bedford-Jones, area bishop of Trent-Durham, will be the guest speaker at the 10:30 a.m. service. Call (905) 278-1811 or email stlukes@eol.ca. Watch for more events at www.stlukemississauga.org.

FEB. 25 – Choral evensong for the first Sunday in Lent at St. Olave, Swansea, 360 Windermere Ave., Toronto, at 4 p.m. Light refreshments and a short talk will follow. Margaret Roze will speak about the impact of the new Romania-Europe relationship on St. Olave's orphanage in Romania. For more details, call (416) 769-5686.

Conferences

FEB. 17 – The annual Katharine B. Hockin Award dinner, sponsored by the Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministries, will be held at the Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. The award this year goes to the Rev. Dr. Muriel Carter for her contribution to global cross-cultural mission and ministry. For more information, contact the forum director at director@ccforum.ca.

APR. 27-29 – AWARE conference at Geneva Park near Orillia. All women are welcome. Deepen your

relationship with God, enjoy workshops and small groups, discover your personal gifts and learn how to use them, and experience creative corporate worship. The fee is \$250 if paid in full before Feb. 15. For more information and registration, visit www.awareconference.org or call the registrar, Valerie Wilson at (905) 428-0295.

MAY 4-6 – AWARE Elim Lodge is a weekend that offers an excellent speaker, small group discussion, and inspiring music with time for solitude, fun and fellowship. The speaker is the Rev. Judy Paulsen, incumbent of Christ Memorial, Oshawa, and the chaplain is the Rev. Ruth Knapp from St. Mark's, Midland. Music will be provided by Catherine Hawley and her group. The contact is Linda Finigan at (905) 668-4969 or blfinigan@rogers.com. Registration forms are available at www.geocities.com/awarepeterborough/.

Movies and Drama

FEB. 17 – Variety Night at St. Michael and All Angels, 611 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, as the parish continues the celebration of its 100th anniversary. Call (416) 653-3593.

FEB. 18 – St. Mary's, Richmond Hill, 10030 Yonge St., celebrates National Heritage Day, at 2 p.m. A local history librarian from the Richmond Hill Public Library will present an illustrated talk on the history of church spires, focusing on the construction and restoration of St. Mary's own chapel spire. Displays will include materials from the Archives Collection of St. Mary's and the Local History Room. Afternoon tea will follow. Everyone is welcome. Contact Norman McMullen at (905) 883-0984.

FEB. 25 – Freelance Rhythm, a dance and music group of African youth, will perform at St. Philip-the-Apostle, 201 Caribou Rd., Toronto, after the 10 a.m. service. For more information, call Robin Pacific at (416) 994-9980.

MAR. 24 – The Real Inspector



RHYTHM & MOTION

Freelance Rhythm, a dance and music group of African youth, will perform at St. Philip-the-Apostle in Toronto on Feb. 25, after the 10 a.m. service. The performance is the first in a series called The Caribou Art Project, a year-long celebration of art expressing themes of social justice tied into the worship and liturgy of St. Philip's. "We want this project to be truly a parish family affair," says artist Robin Pacific, St. Philip's parishioner and the creative force behind the project. "With some performances, the parishioners will be the focus and artists' material for their piece. With other artists, we will be the worshipping setting where the art work will be premiered." The church is located at 201 Caribou Rd., Toronto.

Hound performed by St. John's Seasoned Players at 7:30 p.m. A Tom Stoppard "whodunit" set in an old English Country manor. Tickets \$15 at Ticketmaster, (416) 872-1111 or www.ticketmaster.ca, or in person at the Toronto Centre for the Arts box office, 5040 Yonge St., Toronto.

MAR. 24 & 25 – Beauty and the Beast performed by the St. John's Youth Players at 2 p.m. For the whole family! Tickets \$15 for adults and \$12 for children at Ticketmaster, (416) 872-1111 or www.ticketmaster.ca, or in person at the Toronto Centre for the Arts box office, 5040 Yonge St., Toronto.

MAY 19 – The St. Thomas Poetry Series launches Poetry as Liturgy: An Anthology by Canadian Poets, at St. Thomas', 383 Huron St., Toronto, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, email dkent@centennialcollege.ca, or visit www.stthomas.on.ca.

Music

FEB. 10 – The Church of the Ascension, Don Mills, 33 Overland Dr., presents "In Tune with Heaven - Organ Music of the Anglican Tradition," with organist Aaron Tan and commentator Chris Dawes. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for students and seniors. Email ascensiontix@gmail.com or call (416) 757-9400.

FEB. 17 – The University of Toronto Gospel Choir celebrates African-Canadian heritage in honour of Black History Month at St. Thomas', 383 Huron St., Toronto. The concert starts at 3 p.m.; tickets will be on sale at the door, or after the 9:30 and 11 a.m. services at St. Thomas'. Call (416) 944-3547.

FEB. 18 – A Sunday afternoon organ recital at St. John's Convent, home of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine. Hear Tom Fitches on the new Hal Gober tracker-action organ. The recital begins at 4:15 p.m. and is followed by evensong at 5 p.m. and a talking Sunday supper. Free-will offering.

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June 2007
Deadline May 1/07

Vestries asked to endorse housing resolution

BY MURRAY MACADAM

VESTRY meetings across the diocese are being invited to act in solidarity with poorly housed and homeless people by passing a resolution suggested by Bishop Col-in Johnson.

Bishop Johnson's letter to parishes about upcoming vestry meetings urges them to include a motion saying, "This vestry urges the provincial government to make affordable and supportive housing a high priority in the 2007

provincial budget."

The resolution does not ask parishes to endorse specific solutions or budgetary proposals. Rather, the goal is simply to let the Ontario legislature and the government know that there is widespread support for making affordable housing a high priority in the budget.

"There's a special need for supportive housing for the most vulnerable," adds Terry McCullum, executive director of LOFT Community Services and a member of the diocese's Housing Advocacy Subcommittee. "So many people who need special supports are

just not getting housing that can enable them to live in dignity."

Adds Archdeacon Gordon Finney, another subcommittee member: "This is a non-partisan effort. We're not blaming any one party for the housing shortage. We all need to play our part and work with government towards solutions. If parish vestries pass these motions, it will signal to government that there's widespread public support to allocate more funding for affordable and supportive housing."

The provincial government is seeking public input as it prepares its 2007 budget, expected

this spring. Currently 122,000 families and single people are on waiting lists for affordable housing across Ontario.

The resolutions will be forwarded to government representatives. Petitions to support more affordable and supportive housing will also be promoted by Anglicans in local parishes.

To learn more about this effort and to get involved, contact Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant Murray MacAdam, mmacadam@toronto.anglican.ca.

Help poor in budget, says bishop

BISHOP Philip Poole urged Ontario Finance Minister Greg Sorbara to take steps to help those left on the margins of society in the government's next budget, due next spring.

Speaking to Mr. Sorbara at a Dec. 11 consultation in Mississauga, Bishop Poole expressed thanks for steps the government has taken to improve life for low-income people since it assumed office in 2003. However, he expressed disappointment that some key promises made when the government assumed office over three years ago have still not been met. Ending the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement, which denies families on social assistance roughly \$120 per child each month, was cited as a major example.

"We Anglicans see the people affected by poverty, and we help them as best we can - through our foodbanks, lunch programs, Out of the Cold programs, and numerous other charitable efforts," Bishop Poole told Mr. Sorbara. "But charity isn't enough. We need to tackle the root causes of poverty and homelessness. One in six kids in Ontario is growing up in poverty - 443,000 children. This is a scandal, in our affluent province."

Mr. Sorbara replied that "increasing child poverty is emerging as a major issue in the province of Ontario."

The meeting was held as part of a series of consultations with the public held by the government as part of its budget planning process.

- PRAYER CYCLE**
- FOR MARCH
1. Christ Church, Omemee
 2. St. Alban's, Peterborough
 3. St. Barnabas, Peterborough
 4. Peterborough Deanery
 5. St. George's, Hastings
 6. St. George's, Peterborough
 7. St. George-the-Martyr, Apsley
 8. St. James, Emily
 9. St. James, Roseneath
 10. St. John's, Emily
 11. Beverly Lodge (LOFT Community Services)
 12. St. John's, Ida
 13. St. John the Baptist, Lakefield
 14. St. John's, Peterborough
 15. St. Luke's, Peterborough
 16. St. Matthew's and St. Aidan's, Buckhorn
 17. St. Michael, Westwood
 25. Ingles House (LOFT Community Services)
 26. All Saints, Collingwood
 27. Christ Church, Banda
 28. Christ Church, Batteau
 29. Good Shepherd, Staynor
 30. Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach
 31. Church of the Redeemer, Duntroon

- IN MOTION**
- Appointments**
- The Rev. Canon Tim Foley, Honorary Assistant at St. John, Port Hope.
 - The Rev. Millie Hope, Regional Dean, Oshawa Deanery, Dec. 1.
 - The Rev. Sharon Melvin, Interim Priest-in-Charge of St. Matthew, Oshawa, Dec. 1.
 - The Rev. Bruce Barnett-Cowan concluded his appointment as Priest-in-Charge of St. Matthew, First Avenue, on Dec. 31.
 - The Rev. Ajit John, Priest-in-Charge of St. Matthew, First Avenue, Jan. 1.
 - The Rev. Stephen Shaw, Honorary Assistant at St. Matthew, First Avenue, Jan. 1.
 - The Very Rev. Peter Marshall

- (Worcester), Interim Priest-in-Charge, All Saints, Peterborough, Jan. 1.
 - The Rev. Diana McHardy, Interim Priest-in-Charge, St. Paul, Coulson's Hill, Jan. 14.
 - The Rev. Dr. John Stephenson, Incumbent of St. Timothy, Agincourt, Feb. 14.
- Vacant Incumbencies**
Clergy from outside the diocese with the permission of their bishop may apply through the Ven. Peter Fenty.
- First Phase - Parish Selection Committee in Formation**
(not yet receiving names):
- Parish of Colborne-Grafton
 - St. Matthew, Oshawa
 - St. James, Caledon East
 - Messiah, Toronto
 - Holy Trinity, Guildwood

- St. Andrew, Alliston
- Second Phase - Parish Selection Committee Receiving Names** (via Area Bishop):
- Trinity, Barrie - Associate Priest (York-Simcoe)
 - Christ Church, Campbellford (Trent-Durham)
 - Parish of Ida & Omemee (Trent-Durham)
 - St. John, York Mills (York-Scarborough)
- Third Phase - Parish Selection Committee Interviewing** (via Area Bishop):
- All Saints, Peterborough
- Deaths**
- Bishop George Snell. See article on page 3.

Deacon works with rural women in need

Deacon Cathy Stone was looking for a bed for one of her clients at the Rural Outreach Centre (ROC) in Buckhorn. The woman and her teenage son had been victims of domestic abuse, which had left the mother on disability and the son with permanent ear damage. Ms. Stone was trying to help them furnish their apartment when she received a call from a man who had seen signs about ROC near the highway. His grandmother had recently died and left behind a Craftmatic adjustable bed that he wanted to donate to the shelter.

"Not just a bed, but a Craftmatic bed!" says Ms. Stone, executive director of ROC, which operates out of St. Matthew-St. Aidan's church and provides assistance to rural families in need and to women who have been victims of domestic violence. "That to me was an example of God providing more than we expect or imagine."

This serene trust in God's generosity certainly was not always part of Ms. Stone's workday. In the late 1980s, she was living a different life, working alongside her husband in the executive recruitment business in Toronto. Then the couple moved to the country. "I had an epiphany," she explains. "I felt spiritually starved, and I decided to go back to church. I noticed that there was a little Anglican church in Buckhorn and I thought, well, I was raised, baptized, confirmed and married in the Anglican Church, so maybe I'll just try that again. I went in, and there weren't very many people in the little country church, but they were very kind, and somehow I felt a sense of coming home."

"I just felt that something was slowly happening in my soul. As I went along, I started doing more things in the church. I was a warden for a while, and a reader, but what I really wanted was to do something beyond the church doors, because I felt that the calling that Christ calls us to is: 'Whatever you do for the least of mine.' That's what love is all about. Worship is important but it's not true worship if we are not showing it in our lives. There was a passion inside me, and I thought: 'I need a mission, but God, what mission is it? What should I do?'"

Then the YWCA in Peterborough got a grant to do outreach work in the area and approached St. Matthew-St. Aidan's, along with other organizations, about the issue of rural women suffering from domestic violence. The YWCA was receiving telephone calls from abused women, but found that they were reluctant to come into shelters in the city. The parish decided to build a shelter in its basement, and Ms. Stone found the mission she had been looking for. The shelter has helped more than 200 families since it opened in 2002.

"We have two rooms that have been really nicely finished," says

OUR LIVES

BY HENRIETA PAUKOV

Our Lives features inspiring stories of the clergy and laypeople among us. This month, The Anglican talks to Deacon Cathy Stone of the Rural Outreach Centre in Buckhorn.

Ms. Stone. "We painted the walls yellow and put up some nice pictures. We tried to get a feeling of contentment in the room. That's the best we can do. Women come in and see us, they can make calls from the shelter, and they are not gone from the house for a long time like they would be if they had to go in the city. We can help them with all the steps they need to take one by one, without the abuser knowing what's going on. They can get counseling."

Ms. Stone says rural women face unique challenges when dealing with domestic violence, especially due to the isolation of many homes. "If there is a lot of yelling and screaming, the chances of someone hearing you are very slim," she says. "Feelings of desperation, loneliness and isolation are intensified when you are out here, especially in the winter months. Just imagine trying to escape from an



Deacon Cathy Stone

abusive situation with nothing on but your nightgown. There's snow everywhere past your knees and you are trying to run out to a highway road to get somebody's attention."

The shelter also helps people who find themselves in dire straits economically. Many move out to the country to take advantage of cheaper rents without realizing that the dwelling they have rented is a cottage that is not winter-proof. Others are in need in the aftermath of an abusive situation in the household.

"Once the abuser leaves the household, the family has to find a way to survive without that income," explains Ms. Stone.

"Most of them end up going on social assistance because the baby bonus doesn't cut it. Once they go on social assistance,

there's the drawback on that. So they call us because they don't know where to turn. They have no money, there's no food, the bills have to be paid in order to stay in the housing they have, which is usually pretty mediocre. So we just go to work. We set them up with things like food and clothing, and then we take them to Peterborough to link them up with government services. We supply the transportation, because 9 out of 10 of them don't have a car."

Building awareness about violence is another important part of ROC's work. "Every fall we do a big ecumenical service," says Ms. Stone. "It's geared toward the young people because we figure that's where our hope is."

Ms. Stone took another step on her faith journey in 2005, when she was ordained as a deacon. She says that the role of deacons is to help the church look beyond the church walls. "A diaconal ministry would be something like a foodbank or a shelter or visiting the elderly,

something that a lay person could do," she says. "The only difference is that as a deacon you have been ordained and you have made a vow to the church and to your bishop. So where a layperson could say, 'I'm fed up with this, I'm not doing this anymore,' you as a deacon have made a promise to God and a promise to the church. It's not an easy road to go, but it is extremely rewarding and I've met some wonderful people in the church as a result."

She says she does not miss her previous career. "I've had to cut back on a lot of the material things and all that kind of stuff, but it can never replace what I have gained spiritually, just that feeling of well-being and being where I'm supposed to be. I guess I'm a late-bloomer or maybe God was just trying to hit me over the head and I wasn't listening. I get a great joy out of my work, and I just love people and I love the clients that we have. I could not do it if I didn't have Christ in my life."

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