

Friends break down wall

Motion supports harm reduction



Volunteers buoy seafarers

# The Anglican

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO

A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL

www.toronto.anglican.ca

JANUARY 2025

## Five large services planned

BY STUART MANN

**BISHOP** Andrew Asbil is encouraging Anglicans to attend one – or more – of the five large worship gatherings planned around the diocese in 2025. “It’s an opportunity for our community to come together and pray and sing and rejoice as followers of Jesus Christ,” he says.

The gatherings will be held in each region of the diocese so that people can easily get to them. The services will be held on March 22 at 2 p.m. at St. James Cathedral, on March 29 at 2 p.m. at Trinity, Streetsville, on May 31 at 2 p.m. at All Saints, Whitby, on Sept. 27 at 2 p.m. at St. James, Orillia and on Oct. 25 at 2 p.m. at St. Paul, Bloor Street.

“The services are on Saturday afternoons, and the hope is that we’ll fill each place,” says Bishop Asbil. “We have the leadership of the bishops but also preachers who are homegrown members of the diocese, and the music will be local as well as diocesan and diverse.”

He says the services are a way for Anglicans to “create connective tissue again” after the Covid years. “We’re in a new season, and what we’ve been learning over the last number of years, especially in and coming out of Covid, is that we are much stronger together, that we’ve learned how to do some new things together. This is a chance for us to get to know one another in a more intimate setting, and also see that we are more than the sum of our parts.”

He’s looking forward to gathering and worshipping together. “Most of us leave large diocesan worship services feeling empowered, rejuvenated and joyful, and to have five of them over the course of 2025 is exciting. People can go to all of them if they want or choose one. Parishes can bring a busload or carload or folks can come individually. It’s a way to get to know people

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### COLD COMFORT

A statue of the late Al Waxman, star of the 1970s TV sitcom *King of Kensington*, stands near an encampment of unhoused people in Bellevue Square Park in Kensington Market, Toronto. Some of the occupants lived in an encampment outside nearby St. Stephen in-the-Fields church until the City of Toronto removed part of it just over a year ago. See the Rev. Canon Maggie Helwig’s column on Page 5. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

## Priest receives high honour

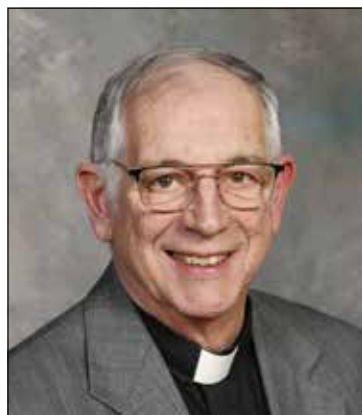
Communicator provided expertise to Communion

BY STUART MANN

**ARCHDEACON** Paul Fehely has held a lot of positions in the Church over the years, from parish priest to principal secretary to the Primate. But one role has remained constant: communicator.

In honour of his communications work in the Anglican Communion, Archdeacon Fehely, incumbent of St. Michael and All Angels, Toronto, has been awarded the Cross of St. Augustine, the second-highest international award for service within Anglicanism.

Lambeth Palace conferred the award on Archdeacon Fehely in November for his “outstanding and



Archdeacon Paul Fehely

effective love, knowledge, wisdom and dedication to communicating

the gospel in the Anglican Church worldwide.”

Archdeacon Fehely says it is a “great privilege” to receive the award. Looking back on his efforts over nearly 50 years, he says, “It was an opportunity to do what God had asked me to do using the gifts that God has shared with me.”

As a seminary student in the mid-1970s, Archdeacon Fehely felt that the Church needed to explore new ways of reaching people. “We had been very oriented towards the pew and people coming to us, and I began to realize, as did many others, that there was a whole world that we weren’t reaching – often younger people but not exclusively.

And the communications world, which at that point was mainly radio, television and the press, was a new way to do that, a way that we could open some doors for people to come and be part of community.”

In the early 1980s, he was a founder of and participant in “Godshow” on CFRB, at that time one of the country’s biggest radio stations. The show was lively and informative, offering different perspectives on faith and religion. One of the people he interviewed was the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie.

Archdeacon Fehely hosted

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# Work took communicator around world

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more than 40 episodes of “Anglicans in the Eighties,” a cable TV program that presented the Christian faith in an intelligent and creative way. Archbishop Ted Scott, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, was also involved in the show.

While serving as a parish priest, Archdeacon Feheley was part of many communications initiatives at the diocesan level, including the Visibility Task Force in 1998 and the Communications Board, which had oversight of *The Anglican*.

His communications work at the international level began while he was serving as principal secretary to the Primate, a position he held from 2004 to 2020. He was part of the communications team at two Lambeth Conferences and assisted with the installation of the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in 2013. He helped with communications at several Primates’ Meetings and the last six Anglican Consultative Council meetings. He assisted the Anglican Communion Office with communications committees and hiring staff.

His communications work took him all over the world and put him in many different situations, from holding daily press briefings at the 2008 Lambeth Conference to advising Archbishops of Canter-

bury Rowan Williams and Justin Welby on important stories of the day. “I’ve done a variety of things in the Communion, and each time it was a very special, very privileged occasion because you’re interacting with other Anglicans from around the world, and any opportunity to do that always contributes to your growth as a Christian person,” he says.

In its citation, Lambeth Palace said Archdeacon Feheley “has given outstanding service to the Anglican Communion as a Canadian pioneer of Church communications. He has been a valued communications staff member to all of the instruments of Communion over 15 years and has worked consistently as a bridge-builder during times of significant stress in the Anglican Communion through his faithful, humble, prayerful ministry as a disciple of Jesus Christ.”

Created in 1965 by Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey, the Cross of St. Augustine is awarded to members of the Anglican Communion who have made significant contributions to the life of the worldwide Communion or to a particular autonomous church within Anglicanism. It is also awarded to members of other traditions who have made a conspicuous contribution to ecumenism.



Anglicans and United Church members hold a prayer vigil on the lawn of St. James, Sutton in November. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PARISH OF GEORGINA

# Vigils bring light in challenging times

## Churches pray, reach out together

BY THE REV. NANCY GLOVER

On a cold, damp November evening a small group of faithful community members met to pray for peace – peace in our community and peace in the world.

For 35 years, members of eight Sutton-area churches have met for ecumenical worship services up to four times a year. In the fall, part of the group, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, closed its doors, prompting us to make a more concerted effort to work together as our churches struggle to remain open. All of our churches cope with low attendance, increasing financial strain and aging congregations.

The world and the community are hurting. The number of individuals served at the Georgina

Food Pantry has increased by 90 per cent since 2022. Rents and property taxes have skyrocketed. More people are living rough or in substandard housing every day. Recently, there has been an increase in violent crimes. Sutton needs God’s healing presence.

The Rev. Kristy Hunter, minister of the United Church, and myself, the deacon of the Parish of Georgina, met this past summer to discuss how we could further support one another’s ministries. We discovered that our congregations are deeply rooted in prayer, including long-running prayer chains.

Following the success of a joint prayer vigil in October 2023, at the outbreak of war in the Holy Land, we decided to offer monthly community prayer vigils on a variety

of themes, beginning with food and housing insecurity, in October 2024. In addition to meeting to pray, participants collected mitts, hats and food to be distributed through community agencies.

The second prayer vigil, focusing on peace, was held in November. Toys were collected for the community’s local Christmas drive. The third prayer vigil, planned for Dec. 16, would focus on children and their rights.

The Community Candlelight Prayer Vigils are held the third Monday of the month on the greenspace of St. James, Sutton and are presented by Sutton’s local United churches (Knox United, Virginia United) and Anglican churches (St. James, St. George’s). Everyone is welcome.

# Large services planned this year

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from other parishes, a chance to sing together again.”

The services are part of the Season of Spiritual Renewal, an initiative that seeks to renew the spiritual lives of Anglicans in the diocese. The season is one of Cast the Net’s 20 calls to the diocese, which were unanimously endorsed by Synod in 2023.

More information about the regional worship services in 2025 will be published in *The Anglican* and posted on the season’s web page, [www.toronto.anglican.ca/spiritualrenewal](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/spiritualrenewal), as it becomes available.

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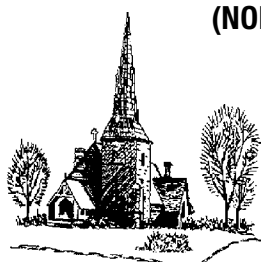
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# Longtime friends break down wall

## Dialogue brings Palestinian, Jew closer together

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

Church of the Redeemer, Bloor St. was the venue for a fascinating conversation on Nov. 6 between Raja Khouri, a Palestinian, and Dr. Jeffrey Wilkinson, a Jew. At the invitation of the Bishop's Committee on Interfaith Ministry, the two men shared insights from their 17-year friendship and from their co-authored book, *The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know About Each Other*.

Mr. Khouri is a human rights and inclusion consultant, founding president of the Canadian Arab Institute and co-founder of the Canadian Arab-Jewish Leadership Dialogue Group, among other pursuits. His work brought him in contact with Jewish colleagues, whose shared interest in human rights helped them find common ground. He decided to start talking to Zionists – people who subscribe to a political ideology that advocates for a Jewish homeland in Israel – to learn from people with whom he disagrees.

"I became determined to continue the learning process, and to do that I continue to talk to Zionists. Seventeen years later, it hasn't stopped," he said.

Mr. Wilkinson, an American Jew who lives in Guelph, works actively in the Jewish community and beyond on issues related to trauma and the Israel-Palestine struggle. His path to the conversation came through his doctoral studies in education and a deep desire to learn.

"The most important question that I think anyone can ever ask is, 'What don't I know?' That is the moment of propelling yourself into a space that is both foreign and delicious and welcoming," he told the audience.

### Histories rooted in trauma

As the conversation unfolded, the authors emphasized the similarities between Jews and Palestinians.

"Jews and Arabs lived side by side for centuries in the Middle East and Palestine. Both Jews and Arabs are Semites. There's a lot of commonality in the language, in the way of life, in what's important," said Mr. Khouri.

Despite those similarities, Jewish and Palestinian communities rarely interact, even among the diaspora in countries like Canada.

"We don't talk to each other, we don't learn from each other, in many ways even like or trust each other," said Mr. Wilkinson.

The two communities also both have recent experiences of trauma that offer crucial insights into the conflict between them. But there is a stark disparity in the Western world's awareness of each community's story, they said. A show of hands by audience members revealed that only one person had known about the Nakba ("catastrophe" in Arabic) before reading *The Wall Between*, while every person in the room had heard of the Holocaust.

"One of our key jobs is to talk in thoughtful, open ways about the two stories, and maybe even more particularly about the story you know less," said Mr. Wilkinson.

The Nakba, they explained, refers to the



Dr. Jeffrey Wilkinson and Raja Khouri (centre) stand with members of the Bishop's Committee on Interfaith Ministry, from left the Rev. Canon Philip Hobson, the Rev. Julie Meakin, Norah Bolton, ODT, Hilary Keachie, the Rev. Canon John Hill and the Rev. Jeff Nowers. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BISHOP'S COMMITTEE ON INTERFAITH MINISTRY

mass displacement of Palestinians during the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. From 1947-49, 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes and sent off as refugees to Arab countries that didn't welcome them. They have never been allowed to return. Some 400-500 Arab villages were destroyed permanently to prevent Palestinians from returning. Since then, Palestinians have been scattered all over the world, while those who remain in the Holy Land are confined to small areas, often under Israeli control.

"For Palestinians, the Nakba continues today. It is reminded of in every daily experience of oppression, loss of land, loss of housing, loss of freedom, killing," said Mr. Wilkinson. "If you understand the Jewish experience, very similar to our very long history of nomadic displacement."

Mr. Khouri stated plainly that he fully accepts the right of the Jewish people to live in a home where they can feel safe, both physically and culturally. "The problem is that they chose my bedroom, and I still can't go back to it. The other problem is that they blamed me, that I did not accept that they chose my bedroom," he said.

The authors were clear not to draw direct comparisons between the events of the Holocaust and the Nakba, but they underscored the long-lasting effects felt by both communities. That history of trauma, they said, is essential to understanding the reactions to the events of Oct. 7, 2023, and its aftermath.

As a Palestinian, Mr. Khouri recognized that the reaction of Jewish communities to Oct. 7 was rooted in their traumatic past.

"I realized that to Jews, these weren't 1,200 Israelis that were killed; these were 1,200 Jews. It's another attack on Jews. Trauma kicks in," he said. "The feeling of the Holocaust comes back."

The resulting war has been likewise re-traumatizing for Palestinians in the diaspora, as they witness the people of Gaza driven from one unsafe place to another.

"These images that we see in colour on our phones these days remind me of grainy black-and-white photographs of the Nakba," said Mr. Khouri.

### Anti-Semitism weaponized

The discussion shifted to consider the complexities of anti-Semitism and the tension between condemning hatred and fostering honest critique of oppression. Rising anti-Semitism hurts both Jews and Palestinians, the authors explained.

For Jews, anti-Semitism is a permanent threat. "It is the past relived in the

present, promised in the future," said Mr. Wilkinson.

While critical of Israel's actions, Mr. Khouri was unequivocal in his condemnation of anti-Semitism. "I take a very strong stand against anti-Semitism. Jew-hatred is utterly unacceptable to me," he said.

He also cautioned against the historical pattern of using anti-Semitism to silence and discredit the Palestinian narrative. In the past 20 years, the argument that anti-Zionism is the same as anti-Semitism has repeatedly surfaced. This, said Mr. Khouri, is political stance that serves only to confuse the issue and hurt the fight against true anti-Semitism.

"Zionism is a country with a government with nuclear weapons, with one of the most advanced armies in the world, supported by the United States, oppressing another people," he said. "As a Palestinian, clearly I cannot be for Zionism the way it has manifested itself."

For his part, Mr. Wilkinson bristled against the idea of calling every criticism of the state of Israel anti-Semitic. "That's demeaning to me as a Jew. That's saying that I am such a victim that you can't talk about a country that I might have political feelings about without targeting my identity," he said.

### Truth & reconciliation

Inevitably, the conversation turned to what the future might hold for Jews and Palestinians, and the deeper foundations necessary for a lasting peace in the region. Mr. Khouri and Mr. Wilkinson suggested that what is ultimately needed is not simply a peace deal with requirements in place for a two-state solution. That kind of solution, they said, can never be possible without a commitment to truth and reconciliation that acknowledges the wrongs that have been done.

"It's willingness and it's recognition by Israel and the larger Jewish world that we have done harm, and that we need to look into the eyes of our fellow Semites and say we're sorry," said Mr. Wilkinson.

The message at the centre of their work is that winning must be an experience fully shared by both Jews and Palestinians.

"I don't feel the safety and freedom that Israel provides in my heart, because it was done on his back. That's not freedom," said Mr. Wilkinson. "What makes me free is the assurance that rights are at the centre of our moral compass. Not my rights or his rights, but our rights."

Mr. Khouri echoed that longing for real justice. "It's not a big piece of land, but

there's room for everybody in it once they actually decide to share it equally," he said.

### A Canadian response

In answering questions from audience members, Mr. Khouri and Mr. Wilkinson addressed how Canadians can respond to the conflict between Jews and Palestinians. Despite the Israeli narrative historically dominating the conversation in Western countries, they said, Canadians must strive to see the humanity of both sides equally.

"It took us decades to wake up to what South Africa was doing and take a strong stand against it. I hope it wouldn't take that long to do the same for Palestine," said Mr. Khouri.

Their advice to Christians in particular was simple: ask yourself what Jesus would do.

"Who has the power, who's misusing the power, who needs a leg up, who needs support, who needs help, who needs justice, and follow that lens. Not who's right, but what's just," said Mr. Wilkinson.

They also encouraged the audience not to accept statements that over-simplify the situation or dismiss the actions or concerns of one side.

"If we want to understand, we take a step back and we say, 'What is behind this statement?'" said Mr. Wilkinson.

And perhaps most importantly, they both urged audience members to dismantle the walls that separate them from those with whom they disagree – just as they did – through dialogue rather than debate.

"Hopefully through understanding each other, you're able to find some common ground. The most important point in dialogue is trusting that the other person is telling you what they genuinely feel, and not just using propaganda or tropes to prove they're right and you're wrong," said Mr. Khouri.

That common ground has been the foundation of a friendship that's lasted for 17 years and counting.

"I didn't enter my deeper relationship with Rajah as a Jew to a Palestinian, but as two men who like hummus and an occasional beverage," said Mr. Wilkinson. "I think all of us who have dismantled a wall, who've deconstructed a wall, can tell stories of being richer and fuller because we did that."

The full conversation between Mr. Khouri and Mr. Wilkinson is available on the diocese's YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/tordio135](http://www.youtube.com/tordio135).



The supervised consumption site in Kensington Market, Toronto is one of 10 that will be closed by the provincial government by the end of March. The move will result in more public drug use, overdoses and fatalities, say opponents. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

## Vestry motion supports harm reduction services

BY ELIN GOULDEN

On Oct. 1, 2018, a group of activists, front-line workers and church members placed 1,265 wooden crosses on the lawn in front of the provincial legislature at Queen's Park. Each cross represented a life lost to opioid overdose in Ontario in the previous year. The demonstration urged the provincial government to permit the continued operation and expansion of supervised consumption sites in the province.

Six years and a pandemic later, the need is greater than ever. Since 2016, the overdose crisis has claimed the lives of more than 26,000 Ontarians, surpassing the number of people in the province who have died from COVID-19. On average, this is more than seven deaths every day. And this number would be still higher if not for the tireless work of the 25 supervised consumption sites across the province.

Supervised consumption sites, or SCS, operate from a harm reduction approach, with the primary goal of keeping people alive and avoiding overdose deaths. While these sites do not supply illicit drugs, they allow people to use previously obtained illicit drugs under the supervision of registered nurses, nurse practitioners and peer support workers. They provide sterile supplies and overdose prevention and management, as well as low-barrier access to other health and social support services. Since March 2020 these sites have reversed more than 22,000 overdoses – each one a life saved – while no deaths have been reported in any of the SCS since they were opened. A study in *The Lancet* even found that overdose mortality decreased by 67 per cent in Toronto neighbourhoods with supervised consumption sites, while neighbourhoods without these sites showed no such decreases.

Yet last August, the provincial government announced a ban on supervised consumption sites within 200 metres of schools and childcare centres. On Nov. 18, the province introduced Bill 223, which, in addition to implementing this geographic ban, prohibits municipalities or any other organizations from starting up new sites. As a result, 10 sites are slated to close by March 31, five of which are in Toronto and five in other

communities outside our diocese. Another Toronto SCS, the Moss Park site on Sherbourne Street, will also close, as the location is subject to redevelopment, and a move to a new location would count as a “new” site under the ban.

The provincial government has claimed that these sites must be closed to protect children and families from increased crime, but it has not cited any data other than anecdotal evidence to support these claims. Analysis of nine years of Toronto Police Service data tells a different story – that the rates of homicide, assault and robbery have decreased to a modest but significant degree in neighbourhoods with SCS since the sites were opened, compared to neighbourhoods without sites. Rates of break-and-enter initially increased in all neighbourhoods after sites were opened before declining in both neighbourhoods with sites and those without them.

The fact remains that supervised consumption sites are located in areas where there is already a high incidence of drug use. Closing the sites will not result in an end to drug use; rather, it will result in more public drug use, more discarded needles and other drug paraphernalia, and more overdoses – and fatalities – in public spaces, from parks and sidewalks to coffee shop restrooms. This is a far cry from the “safer streets” the province hopes to achieve. In addition, by providing naloxone and oxygen promptly to people experiencing overdoses, safe consumption sites reduce the strain on first responders and emergency services. Without these sites, response times for emergency medical services will only increase. This puts all Ontarians in danger.

The province has announced its intention to invest some \$378 million to open 19 Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) hubs across the province. Investment in supportive housing and treatment options is always welcome, but the scale of this investment is still far below what is needed to meet the need. Moreover, HART hubs will be excluded from offering harm reduction services and even needle exchange programs, established medical practices that have been proven to reduce mortality not only from drug use but also from HIV, hepatitis C and other blood-borne diseases

and infections.

Harm reduction is not the antithesis of treatment for substance abuse but part of a full continuum of care. Supervised consumption sites provide a non-judgemental place where people who use drugs can be met where they are, with dignity, compassion and care, whether or not they are ready or able to seek treatment. They serve those who have the greatest barriers to accessing health care, supportive housing and, yes, addictions treatment. Across Ontario, such sites have already made more than 530,000 service referrals, including to housing, case management and substance use treatment services. Moreover, they offer a sense of community that can help people stabilize and rebuild their lives.

Vancouver-based physician Gabor Maté points out, “No human being is ever beyond redemption. The possibility of renewal exists so long as life exists. How to support that possibility in others and in ourselves is the ultimate question.”

As Christians, we too affirm that no human being is beyond redemption, and we look for the opportunity to support that possibility in others as well as in ourselves. Supporting safe consumption services in our communities, along with increased access to housing and treatment options, is one of the ways we can meet the complex needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

This winter, the members of the Social Justice and Advocacy Committee encourage parishes in our diocese to consider our social justice vestry motion in support of harm reduction services in Ontario. We encourage parishes to look at the evidence in support of safe consumption sites. But beyond this, we encourage Anglicans across our diocese to consider how Jesus met those on the margins of society with compassion and respect, how he is close to the suffering and the broken-hearted, and how in him we are all given new life and new chances. May we take every opportunity to extend his compassion, respect and grace to all our neighbours.

*Elin Goulden is the diocese's Social Justice and Advocacy consultant. The social justice vestry motion is available at [www.toronto.anglican.ca/vestry-motion](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/vestry-motion).*



### TheAnglican

The Anglican is published under the authority of the Bishop of Toronto and the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto. Opinions expressed in The Anglican are not necessarily those of the editor or the publisher.

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**Circulation:** For all circulation inquiries, including address changes, new subscriptions and cancellations, call the Circulation Department at 416-924-9199, ext. 259/245, or email [circulation@national.anglican.ca](mailto:circulation@national.anglican.ca). You can also make changes online: visit [www.anglicanjournal.com](http://www.anglicanjournal.com) and click Subscription Centre.

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# There is nowhere to go



BY THE REV. CANON  
MAGGIE HELWIG

This column will be published in January, but as I write, it is just about one year since the City of Toronto

partially evicted the encampment in our churchyard (which was, as we all learned, not church property but a transportation right-of-way). Two people have continued to live in the tiny area that is actually church property, and a few others have come and gone. Half of the churchyard is now, and has been for a year, blocked off by an eight-foot metal fence surrounding a mass of concrete blocks, something that makes it very hard for us, as a parish, to present a welcoming face to the neighbourhood. We have asked the city over and over to consider taking down the fence, which attracts garbage dumping and is a safety hazard, as well as being unsightly, but so far it has refused, even though on the night that it was put up, I was told that it would be there “for the weekend.” Some people have set up tents on the other half of the yard – there is a large tent housing three people there as we write – but they have been anxious about what the city might do, knowing now that the church doesn’t own the land, and sometimes don’t stay long.

As for the people who left the churchyard, nearly all are still living in encampments. I know of one person who went to a shelter-hotel the night of the eviction, and seems to be thriving there, but most of the others are in Bellevue Square Park, or Clarence Square, or down by the lakeshore. We visit them as much as we can, and they visit us at our Friday night drop-in; we try to retain those relationships. Some of them have been evicted from other encampments several times since leaving the churchyard. In most cases, their mental and physical health has deteriorated. And at the same time, the provincial government is well on the way to closing both of the nearby safe consumption sites, meaning that we will find more bodies in our yard, more bodies in our stairwell, more deaths we were unable to prevent.



An encampment of unhoused people in Bellevue Square Park in Kensington Market, Toronto. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

There is nowhere to go. In a particularly depressing exercise in cognitive dissonance, Gord Tanner, the head of Toronto Shelter and Support Services, recently presented the city’s winter plan, admitting openly that it would not be anything close to sufficient to meet the obvious need, but also saying that it would include city workers going out to “encourage people to shelter indoors.” Why, in this crisis, the city persists in rhetoric that blames vulnerable people for failing to go to an “indoors” that doesn’t exist is something I still cannot understand.

The City of Toronto has been better than many. They are creating some new supportive housing – not nearly enough, but probably as much as they can without more assistance from other levels of government. Mayor Chow did not sign, and openly criticized, the letter sent to Doug Ford by 12 other Ontario mayors, demanding that the notwithstanding clause be used to suspend the Charter rights of homeless people and empower these mayors to “move encampment residents along.” (Along to where, we must wonder; perhaps medically assisted death?)

But right now – and although it has been an exceptionally, indeed frighteningly, mild November, it will surely be cold by

the time you read this – there is nowhere to go. During the warmer weather, we worked with the two people on church property, and others with whom we have close relationships, to sort out some of their longstanding legal issues, connect them with primary care and help them attend hospital appointments. But during the coldest months, our focus is mostly on just trying to keep people from freezing. Giving out blankets, gloves, handwarmers, hot food, hot coffee – the small things we can do.

Last year, when the city put out a request for spaces to offer themselves as emergency warming centres, we submitted an application, along with a number of other Anglican churches. And along with a number of other Anglican churches, we were turned down, without an explanation. The diocese wrote to Gord Tanner asking for an explanation and received a reply saying that they had examined the sites and decided against them, and that Gord Tanner was not happy that people were sleeping outside St. Stephen’s and Holy Trinity, still with no explanation as to why we, and others, were not suitable for indoor warming centres. This year, no request was openly issued.

And in the great world around us all,

we see the predications coming true that when the climate emergency truly arrived, when the floods and fires and food shortages became undeniable, people would turn to hatred and exclusion and choose authoritarian governments in the belief that this would save them. Terrified people are searching for targets – trans people, immigrants, “drug addicts,” the chronically homeless, whoever seems easy to exclude. In a time like this, that ancient and absolute instruction to love your neighbour is more radical than ever. We must train ourselves in that love when it is hardest, not a love that centres on people whom we may love easily. Because everyone is your neighbour. And we must love most of all our unchosen neighbours – our strange, unruly, foreign, frightening neighbours. The person lying unresponsive in a ditch, and the heretical outsider who pulls them out. Never what we want, and never what is easy. But the neighbour, finally, whose presence can save us too.

*The Rev. Canon Maggie Helwig is the incumbent of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields, Toronto. Canon Helwig’s book, *Encampment: Resistance, Grace, and an Unhoused Community*, will be published by Coach House Books in May.*

# A new year offers new beginnings



BY MURRAY MACADAM

The practice of making New Year’s resolutions is anything but recent. In fact, it goes back over 3,000 years to the ancient Babylonians,

who set new year pledges (later known as resolutions) that were intertwined with religion, mythology, power and socio-economic values.

There is, of course, no difference between Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. However, there is something about the start of a new year that gives us the feeling of a fresh start and a new beginning. Setting and achieving goals can give us a sense of control over our lives and activate hope for a better life.

Common resolutions include self-improvement goals such as losing weight, perhaps by exercising more often or quitting smoking or drinking. Many Christians resolve to read the bible more often.

Our goals for the New Year can both include what we want for ourselves and

what we seek for the world – how we can put the central biblical command to “love your neighbour” into action.

Scripture affirms the value of even small actions: “Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward” (Matthew 10:42). Matthew 25 says that what we do for the imprisoned, the sick, the lonely, the destitute, we do for God. We either visit them and walk with them in their life journey – which means that we see their humanity – or we don’t. The choice is ours. But how we act matters. We can only affect so much, but we must do what we can. We have choices to make.

The message of Matthew 25 resonates with me because a few months ago I spent nearly a month in hospital after a bad fall led to two fractures. That injury and its repercussions involved the worst experience of my life. One thing that sustained me during this difficult time were the people who came to visit me, including a few from my church, who usually arrived with tasty food and good coffee. Their

actions may seem modest, but they meant so much to me.

Many of us, including me, have spent much time during the past year “thinking big.” That is, thinking about major issues such as the climate crisis, growing numbers of Canadians reliant on foodbank handouts, a worsening housing crisis, rampant loneliness, and a divisive mood in our body politic. Perhaps as we think about the year ahead, this is a time for “thinking small” as much as “thinking big.” Rather than being overwhelmed by the world’s big picture, we can focus on things we can do in our own lives.

Something else that can guide our decision-making about resolutions, before zeroing in on any specific ones, is to ask ourselves a few basic questions. What do I really care about? How do I want to use my time? What do I feel God is calling me to do? The answers can help point the way ahead for us.

Rather than specific resolutions, you may wish to focus on a word that can help guide your actions in the coming year. It might be “yes”: yes, I will be willing to

take on those projects I’ve been avoiding. Or “hope,” pledging to look for signs of hope and reflect a hopeful spirit rather than being caught up in the negative spirit that is common in society these days. These are just examples. There may be another word, such as surrender, fun, nature or something else that speaks to you.

When asked about New Year’s resolutions, some people respond with the answer, “I don’t make them anymore because I found that I never kept them.” On one level, that response is understandable. No one wants to live with a sense of failure. But maybe there’s a way around this dilemma. Why not develop and discuss your goals with a close friend or your spouse? Agree that you’ll check in with each other a few times in the coming year around your goals. That mutual support can make a big difference.

What will you seek to achieve in the coming year?

*Murray MacAdam is a member of All Saints, Peterborough.*

# Commit to being a star this year



BY THE REV. PAIGE SOUTER

**T**he beginning of the season of Epiphany is a signal for many families that it is time to take down the Christmas tree. I am always curious

whether families place a star or an angel at the top of their tree. Since I was a child, a star has always adorned the top of my family's tree. It's probably the reason that every year during Epiphany, as I dwell in the story of the Magi, my imagination is always drawn to the star.

The Magi fix their gaze on the star illuminating the night sky and they are led to Jesus. In my heart, that star is an agent of the divine, an active participant urging the Magi forward through the darkness. I can imagine that as they travelled, these men experienced a range of emotions – excitement and anticipation, and perhaps anxiety.

When they arrive in Bethlehem, the Magi pay homage to Jesus, and they are filled with peace and joy and gratitude. They give tribute to an infant whose life and ministry would offer the world an alternative way of life. As an agent of God, the star illuminates the way to new life.

This Epiphany season is the perfect time for us to reflect on the followers of Jesus serving as the star, as agents of God illuminating a different path for the world to follow, an alternative path that the world desperately needs.

We are living in a difficult and challenging time in history. Our communities are facing a complex web of interconnected crises: homelessness, addictions, food insecurity and poor access to healthcare, to name just a few. Layered on top of these crises are decreasing environmental protections, extreme weather and the climate crisis. And add an additional layer of war, increasing hate and the largest refugee crisis and displacement of people the world has ever faced.

In his recent article "Calling a Different World into Being," Walter Brueggemann describes this moment as a world living in "fear, scarcity, hostility, revenge and violence" that leaves us exhausted and always needing to be on alert and on guard.

Many people are afraid of what the future holds. Many people have lost confidence in the ability and willingness



As the followers of Jesus, we can be agents of God illuminating a different path for the world to follow, says author. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

of political and government institutions to enact policies and programs that will make people's lives better and heal the planet. You may be one of those people. And while Christians are not immune to fear, we are called not to let it control us. As Jesus commands us – be not afraid.

Be not afraid because we know there is an alternative way. Be not afraid so that we can be the star that leads the world to the way – to a culture of care grounded in Christ. A culture in which we care for people who are marginalized, for victims of violence and hatred, and for a planet in peril. A culture in which it is safe to bring one's worries and lamentations. A culture in which hope, real hope, is the cornerstone.

Real hope, Christian hope, deep and abiding hope, is grounded in our relationship with Jesus. It is hard and gritty and it does not make the hard stuff go away, but it gives us courage, as followers of Jesus, to persevere as we do the work we are called to do – to live in communion with creation, to feed the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to welcome the stranger, to give clothing to the naked, to heal the sick and visit those in prison, to love our neighbours and our enemies. This is the alternative way that Jesus commands us to choose.

This is our daily choice – a choice to live in God's reality in which all of creation is loved and cared for and in which abundant hope is real. It is a choice not to

be complicit in a culture of destruction, exploitation, violence and hatred. It is the choice the Magi make after their time with Jesus. Rather than follow the path home offered by Herod, they heed the warning and choose a different path. They choose to not be complicit and used as instruments of Herod's destruction.

The planet needs the followers of Jesus to be the star. As you place your Christmas tree in a box or at the curb, commit to being a star and an agent of God's care in the world.

*The Rev. Paige Souter is the assistant curate at Church of the Redeemer, Bloor St. and co-chair of the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care.*

## Renovations to Sisterhood's guest house hit bump



BY THE REV. CANON SISTER  
CONSTANCE JOANNA GEFVERT

**I**n August, we were thrilled to announce that we had met our goal of \$6.3 million for the renewal of our guest house,

having raised even more than that (\$6.4 million). That includes \$2 million from the Sisterhood's endowment fund.

We were sailing along on a river of joy and thanksgiving until we discovered in October that there was an urgent need to replace the guest house's heating system, which we had planned only to upgrade.

The initial scope of work for the renovations included individual heating, ventilation and air conditioning units that guests could control themselves, as well as individual controls for the perimeter heat-

ing (radiators that are fed by the boiler in cold weather). It was determined that the boiler would be workable for several more years.

During the demolition phase, however, it was discovered that the pipes feeding the radiators were too old and rusted to be able to add valves for individual controls, and the radiators themselves were rusted out in many places and no longer efficient.

At the most recent owner-architect-contractor meeting, it was noted that if we are ever going to replace the 68-year-old heating pipes and radiators, it would have to be now before any further work is done in framing. Additional demolition will be necessary, as will additional asbestos abatement. We have received some indication that this is going to be a very expensive project that will likely involve

several hundreds of thousands of dollars if we go ahead, but we cannot know the actual cost until architectural plans are drawn up for a new heating system and until the contractor has then priced the work.

At this point, our board of directors has authorized only the expenditure for the architectural plans. Once we have received the actual cost, we will then have to decide whether to go ahead.

However, not to go ahead with the heating system replacement means that the "new" guest house will not meet two of our major goals. One (which our guests bring up repeatedly) is to give our guests individual control over the heat in their rooms. The other is our need for a more efficient, economical and environmentally friendly system.

If we decide to go ahead, it will also

mean a two- to three-month delay in opening the guest house (and the additional cost of the contractors for a longer period is part of what drives the cost up).

We will need to make a final decision before the end of the 2024, and we will keep you posted through our website and email news updates.

We thank you for the amazing generosity that has allowed us to get this far. We would love to hear from you if you think you could help with this additional major expense. If you, or others you know, could consider a further donation, please be in touch with me, Sr. Connie, at [cj@ssjd.ca](mailto:cj@ssjd.ca).

*Sister Constance Joanna Gefvert is the co-chair of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine's capital campaign. This article originally appeared in the SSJD's fall publication.*

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## IN MOTION

### Appointments

- The Rev. Jillian Ruch, Chaplain, Havergal College, Sept. 1, 2024.
- The Rev. Matthew McMillan, Incumbent, St. Peter, Cobourg, Nov. 1, 2024.
- The Rev. Renate Kok, Interim Priest-in-Charge, St. Thomas a Becket (Erin Mills South), Nov. 11, 2024.
- The Rev. Dr. James (Jim) Leatch, Assistant Curate, St. John the Baptist (Dixie), Nov. 21, 2024.
- The Rev. Pam Trondson, Incumbent, Holy Trinity, Trinity Square, Dec. 1, 2024.

### Vacant Incumbencies

Clergy from outside the diocese with the permission of their

bishop may apply through the Diocesan Executive Assistant, Canon Mary Conliffe.

### Bishop's Direct Appointment Process

- (receiving names):
- Parish of Campbellford, Hastings and Roseneath
- St. John, York Mills (associate priest)
- Parish of Fenelon Falls and Coboconk
- St. Paul, Uxbridge
- St. Mark, Midland

### Parish Selection Committee Process

First Phase - (not yet receiving names):

- Christ Church, Brampton
- St. George on-the-Hill

Second Phase - (receiving

names via Bishop):

- N/A

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names):

- Christ Church, Deer Park

### Celebration of New Ministry

- The Rev. John Runza, Priest-in-Charge, St. John the Baptist, Lakefield, Jan. 25, 11 a.m.

### Deaths

- The Rev. William Montgomery died on Oct. 31, 2024. Ordained deacon in 1996 and priest in 1997, he served as assistant curate of St. Peter, Cobourg, and incumbent of St. Luke, Peterborough. After retiring in 2004, he served as honorary assistant of the Parish of Ida and Omeme, and interim

priest-in-charge of the Parish of Cavan Manvers, Christ Church, Campbellford, St. Alban, Peterborough, Hastings and Roseneath, and St. John, Ida. His funeral was held on Nov. 13, 2024 at St. John, Ida.

- The Rev. Canon James Kiddell died on Nov. 11, 2024. Ordained deacon in 1961 and priest in 1962, he served as assistant curate of St. Andrew, Scarborough and incumbent of Trinity Church, Colborne, St. Stephen, Downsview, St. Matthias, Etobicoke, and St. Luke, Peterborough. After retiring in 1997, he moved to British Columbia (Kelowna) and served in various interim appointments. His funeral was held Nov. 15, 2024 at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Kelowna, BC.

- The Rev. Canon John Wilton died on Nov. 12, 2024. Ordained deacon in 1987 and priest in 1988, he served as assistant curate of St. James Cathedral, incumbent of St. Joseph of Nazareth, Bramalea and St. George on Yonge, regional dean, canon pastor, priest-in-charge of St. Augustine of Canterbury, and interim priest-in-charge of St. George on-the-Hill. After retiring in 2014, he served as interim priest-in-charge of St. George-the-Martyr, Parkdale, Christ Church, Bolton, St. Matthew the Apostle, Oriole, St. Cyprian, and as honorary assistant of St. Matthew the Apostle, Oriole. His funeral was held on Nov. 22, 2024 at St. Matthew the Apostle, Oriole.

## CANADA BRIEFS

### Metropolitan steps down

KELOWNA - Archbishop Lynne McNaughton has stepped down as Metropolitan of British Columbia and Yukon to focus more fully on her responsibilities as Bishop of Kootenay. A special election for a new provincial Metropolitan is expected to take place on Jan. 18.

### Wycliffe College hires new principal

TORONTO - Kristen Deede Johnson will be the next principal of Wycliffe College. She will start on July 1, succeeding the current principal, Bishop Stephan Andrews, who will retire on June 30. Dr. Johnson is currently the dean and vice president of academic affairs at



Western Theological Seminary, an evangelical and ecumenical seminary in Holland, Michigan, as well as a professor of educational ministries and leadership. "I am delighted that God has called Dr. Kristen Deede Johnson to serve as the next principal of Wycliffe College," said Carol Boettcher, Wycliffe College's board chair. "She brings a proven track record in academic leadership and demonstrates a genuine passion and commitment to theological education. Dr. Johnson is

willing to take bold, purposeful action grounded in careful consideration and prayer."

Founded in 1877, Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto is a graduate school of theology that prepares students for lives of practical ministry and theological scholarship.

### Poppies blanket church grounds

HAMILTON - More than 5,000

hand-knitted and crocheted poppies cascaded over the fences, railings, gardens and limestone walls of St. John's Anglican Church in Ancaster in early November. The installation, a tribute to Remembrance Day, was led by church congregant Babs Dawson, who had long dreamed of establishing the annual tradition.

Inspired by the 2014 Tower of London art installation by artist Paul Cummins, which displayed 888,000 ceramic poppies to honour each Commonwealth soldier who died in the First World War, Ms. Dawson began her project in January 2023. She called on fellow congregants who knit and crochet, and was delighted when 12 to 15 participants turned up to the first Wednesday meeting.

Together, the group set to work crafting poppies, which were later attached to deer netting to create a flowing effect over the church grounds. This display marks the second year of the installation at St. John's, growing from 3,000 poppies in 2023 to over 5,000 in 2024, thanks in part to contributions from

friends and family as far away as the U.K.

Similar displays were also featured at St. John's churches in Niagara Falls and Elora. Each display received approval from the Royal Canadian Legion in Ottawa.

*The Hamilton Spectator*

### Blankets, caps sent to the North

ST. JOHN'S - In the winter of 2023, the women of Holy Trinity Church, Grand Falls Windsor, in the Diocese of Central Newfoundland, accepted the challenge of focusing on a healthy body, mind and spirit by knitting, crocheting and quilting 30 baby blankets for newborns in the northern Canada. The completed blankets were blessed in the fall of 2024 by the Rev. Cindy Graham at a communion service, then sent to the North. Along with the blankets were many caps for newborns, which were knitted by Mrs. Douglass Frampton, a woman from the same congregation who is 92.

## LOOKING AHEAD

To submit items for Looking Ahead, email editor@toronto.anglican.ca. The deadline for the February issue is Jan. 2. Parishes can also promote their events on the diocese's website Calendar at www.toronto.anglican.ca.

JAN. 6 - Holy Communion for Epiphany (BCP) at 6 p.m., followed by a light supper, then at 7 p.m. Debbie Cowling presents an illustrated feature

talk about her recent visit to Edinburgh and Glasgow. In-person at St. Olave, Bloor Street West and Windermere Avenue. JAN. 26 - Rock Eucharist, 7 p.m., Church of the Redeemer, Bloor Street and Avenue Road. JAN. 26 - Choral Evensong (BCP) at 4 p.m. followed at 4:45 p.m. by The Song-Book of Anna of Cologne. Around 1500 AD, the Beguine nun Anna cherished a pocket-sized song-book full of devotional texts, popular tunes and Gregorian chant. Singer and medieval fiddler Katherine Hill presents the book's history and performs some of its Latin and German songs. At St. Olave, Bloor Street West and Windermere Avenue.

## PRAYER CYCLE

### FOR JANUARY

1. The Members of the Order of the Diocese of Toronto
2. Epiphany and St. Mark, Parkdale
3. St. Anne, Toronto
4. St. George by the Grange
5. Parkdale-West Toronto Deanery
6. St. Hilda, Fairbank
7. St. Martin in-the-Fields
8. St. Mary and St. Martha
9. St. Mary Magdalene
10. St. Matthias, Bellwoods
11. St. Michael and All Angels
12. The Territorial Archdeacons and Canon Administrator of the Diocese
13. St. Olave, Swansea
14. St. Paul, Runnymede
15. St. Stephen in-the-Fields
16. St. Thomas, Huron Street
17. Bishop's Committee on Discipleship
18. Canadian Council of Churches
19. Holland Deanery
20. All Saints, King City
21. Christ Church, Holland Landing

22. Christ Church, Kettleby
23. Christ Church, Roches Point
24. Parish of Georgina
25. Ecumenical Officer - the Rev. Canon Philip Hobson
26. The Cast the Net strategic vision for the Diocese of Toronto

27. Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Toronto (CJDT)
28. St. James the Apostle, Sharon
29. St. Mary Magdalene, Schomberg
30. St. Paul, Newmarket
31. Trinity Church, Aurora

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Volunteers with Christmas bags full of items for seafarers. PHOTO BY THE REV. JUDITH ALLTREE

## Our volunteers are our heroes



BY THE REV. JUDITH ALLTREE

Volunteering is an integral part of Canadian culture. Approximately 41 per cent of all Canadians formally volunteer their time with one organization or another. The total could be as high as 86 per cent, as people volunteer informally without belonging to one organization but spread their time and talents around to a variety of them.

It was previously assumed that of the 41 per cent, about 99 per cent were retirees over the age of 60 or 65, but things are changing. Trends are evolving alongside changing priorities and lifestyles, with youth and young adults now being the majority of volunteers in many capacities, the most popular being volunteering with animals, community projects, sports, hospitals and “green” projects.

It is a trend we have noticed at the Mission to Seafarers. Anyone with teenagers knows that students are required to have logged volunteer hours before they can graduate – a huge and important

step forward from when my generation were teenagers. And do they ever take this seriously! The volunteers we have had at our mission stations are engaged. They want to know what seafarers do, they show up on time and stay late. They participate and encourage their friends to help as well. Youth and young adults want to volunteer with an organization that will challenge them, and the mission has provided those challenges.

At one small southern Ontario university, volunteering with an international mission such as ours is a course requirement. This means six months as a volunteer and a written paper on the specific area the volunteer worked in, and lessons learned. The first year of this course requirement was so successful that the university added it as a work/learning component for all of its international studies programs. (This is not a seminary. We can't seem to get volunteers from seminaries for some reason.)

Volunteers of all ages are the backbone of most charitable organizations, and the Mission to Seafarers is no different. COVID-19 ended the participation of a lot of seniors for obvious reasons – not always

the fear of disease, but the fear of the unknown. Only three senior volunteers who were with us prior to the pandemic have remained. It's been a rough few years, but we are hopeful that as a younger, more resilient and more adventurous group of volunteers has been finding its way to the mission, our volunteer bank will grow once again.

But as I write, this is the time of year when the volunteers come forward after working at home for months: the knitting and sewing volunteers. As I write, it's the season of Advent, and we are busy collecting up homemade knitwear and quilts, along with boxes of toothpaste and shampoo, body wash and more, all of which will find their way into our Christmas ditty bags, which we begin giving to seafarers on St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6. Why this day? Because St. Nicholas is the patron saint of seafarers!

It's a joy to catch up with all the many people who spend hours of their own time throughout the year making beautiful warm things for people they have never met, and we bless each and every one of them for their work and contributions to the lives of the seafarers we serve. As

much as the folks who work in our mission centres, these folks are volunteers for the mission. Everything counts.

Our mission services end when the last ship leaves Lake Ontario before the lake freezes, or at least when the Welland Canal closes for maintenance (this year on Jan. 5). Our services begin again at the end of March when the St. Lawrence thaws and the ships can move freely again between Montreal and Thunder Bay on “Highway H20.” During this hiatus, we spend time in training courses, preparing our mission centres for the arrival of the next group of seafarers, and praying that volunteers will answer the call to help us!

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer with the Mission to Seafarers Southern Ontario and learning how to be a volunteer or ship visitor at our Oshawa mission (the Terry Finlay Seafarers Centre) or as a ship visitor in Toronto, please contact me at [glutenfreepriest@gmail.com](mailto:glutenfreepriest@gmail.com).

*The Rev. Judith Alltree is the executive director of the Mission to Seafarers Southern Ontario, a ministry supported by Anglicans.*

## BRIEFLY

### Conference explores missional imagination

Do you feel a personal calling to mission that doesn't seem to align with traditional approaches in the Church? Do you sense God inviting the Church to explore more creative approaches to mission but feel uncertain about the steps to take? The Missional Imagination Conference on Jan. 30 and Feb. 1 aims to equip lay and ordained Christians to understand and engage with the need for imaginative and sustainable mission within the Church.

Over a Thursday evening and a full Saturday online, the conference will include brief TED-style talks, discussion panels and group activities, led by a diverse array of practiced missionaries, theologians and faith leaders from across Canada. For more information, visit [www.toronto.anglican.ca](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca).

### First Black heritage service celebrated

To mark the 30th anniversary of the diocese's first Black heritage service, St. James Cathedral will host a special diocesan Eucharistic celebration on Feb. 23 at 4:30 p.m. It will reprise some of the experiences of the first celebration.

All members of the diocese are invited to attend. The first diocesan service celebrating the Black heritage of the Church was held on Feb. 25, 1996 at the cathedral. The service was memorable for its colour, music and energy. The Rev. Dr. Kortright Davis gave the sermon.

### Sisterhood seeks Companion applicants

In September 2025, the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine will begin the ninth year of its Companions Program, an opportunity for women aged 21 and up to join the Sisters for 10 months as either a residential or an online companion.

Residential companions live alongside the Sisters, worshipping, building community, learning from a healthy traditional community and developing spiritual disciplines that they carry into their future lives. Online companions explore being “monastics in the world” within the framework of work, studies or family life. Meeting through Zoom, they build community among themselves and with the Sisterhood, learn how to apply monastic values in their daily lives, and cultivate spiritual practices. Applications open Jan. 1 and close May 15. For more information, visit the Sisterhood's website, [www.ssjd.ca](http://www.ssjd.ca) or contact Shannon Epp at [companions@ssjd.ca](mailto:companions@ssjd.ca).

## Correction

In the October issue of *The Anglican*, prayer #8 of the Prayers Through the Ages resource was incorrectly attributed. It should have been attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola, c. 1491–1556. *The Anglican* regrets the error.

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