

A new fund
for new ideas

Journeying with
memory loss



Services seek
to lift up hearts

The Anglican

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO

A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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MARCH 2025

FaithWorks campaign tops goal

Givings strong despite
disruptive mail strike

BY STUART MANN

DESPITE a mail strike before Christmas, the diocese's 2024 FaithWorks campaign not only met its goal but surpassed it, raising \$1.55 million for people in need in Ontario, across Canada and around the world.

"Each year, it takes the combined efforts, passion and generosity of volunteers, clergy, parishes, foundations, corporate sponsors and the wider community to be successful in supporting the needs of the marginalized people we serve," said Bishop Andrew Asbil in a letter to the diocese. "Thank you, thank you, thank you for supporting the everyday ministries that change the lives of the most vulnerable among us."

About 85 per cent of parishes in the diocese participated in the appeal, raising \$870,000. Corporate donors and foundations gave \$400,000 while individuals gave \$231,000, mostly through online giving. The rest came from legacy gifts and interest. The goal was \$1.5 million.

FaithWorks, the diocese's annual outreach appeal, funds Anglican-affiliated ministries that care for unhoused people, former prisoners, newcomers and refugees, at-risk women, children and youth, Indigenous people and those impacted by HIV-AIDS. Since its inception in 1997, the appeal has raised \$41 million.

Janice Hodgson, ODT, chair of the FaithWorks Allocation Committee, says she is thrilled with the 2024 result. "What with not knowing how things would turn out because of the postal strike, I think it's absolutely wonderful. Every January we hold our breath, wondering if we're going to meet the target, so it's great to see our

parishes coming together to meet the goal."

The mail strike put a dent in the campaign's direct mail solicitation, but donors gave in other ways to make up the shortfall, says Peter Misiaszek, the director of the diocese's Stewardship Development department.

"While the strike did have some impact on people who would normally give by cheque, we had a significant uptick in people who went online and made their donations that way," he says.

Since the pandemic, FaithWorks has diversified its communications and ways to give. Through its bi-weekly newsletter, Faithlines, and its website and QR code, donors are no longer as dependent on the mail as they once were, he says. "There's been a real change in the way people are giving, and they're actually giving more."

Ms. Hodgson says the 2024 result is very satisfying because it comes at a time when the ministries are experiencing a dramatic increase in need. "Everyone wants to help. That's who we are as Anglicans: we see the need and we help out."

Some of the highlights of the 2024 campaign include: 71 parishes raised more than they did in 2023; St. Christopher, Richmond Hill raised nearly \$40,000 through its annual ping pong relay; five new corporate donors joined the campaign; and giving by individuals was the highest ever.

The goal for the 2025 campaign is \$1.5 million. A generous donor has provided a \$100,000 matching challenge grant for all new and increased donations. That means that for every dollar raised over last year's amount by an individual or parish, FaithWorks will receive an extra dollar.

For more information about the



The companionship's logo depicts the Diocese of Toronto's dove springing from the Diocese of Brasilia's Ipe tree.

Companionship blossoms

Dioceses plan joint initiatives
as partnership enters second year

BY CANON MARY CONLIFFE

MEMBERS of the Diocese of Toronto may want to learn a little Portuguese over the coming six years, and this is a great phrase to start with: "Parceiros em Cristo, unidos na missão." It means "Partners in Christ, united in mission," and you'll see it on the new logo for the partnership between the Diocese of Toronto and the Diocese of Brasilia – a relationship that officially commenced in June 2024 and will continue until spring 2031. It perfectly describes what we hope will be a true companionship between Anglicans in two different parts of the world, sibling members of the

family of the Anglican Communion.

Together with his wife Mary, Bishop Andrew Asbil visited the Cathedral Da Ressurreicao in the capital city of Brasilia last June, and with great joy in the context of the Eucharist signed the companionship covenant and agreement with Bishop Mauricio Andrade. Together the two bishops planted a ceremonial tree in the cathedral garden in honour of this growing friendship.

Since that time, a small group of clergy and laypeople from both dioceses has been meeting online monthly to discuss how we can deepen the relationship and learn from each other as we engage in

mission in our own contexts. Meetings are held in both languages – English and Portuguese – and are framed in prayer. The co-chairs, the Rev. Canon Maurice Francois from Toronto and the Rev. Dr. Rodrigo Espiuca from Brasilia, translate the conversations for the other members of the committee, and minutes and other materials are produced in both languages.

The Toronto members, including Bishop Asbil, the Rev. Pam Trondson, Maria Clara de Sena, Dave Kraus and me, participate in planning for future events, develop communication strategies and engage in dedicated conversations

Continued on Page 14

ACW's new president brings enthusiasm

Walking in half marathons, volunteering keeps her busy

BY STUART MANN

AFTER completing her treatment for breast cancer, Janice Hodgson, ODT, decided to walk.

"As far as I was concerned, I was full of toxins, so I thought, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to walk," she recalls.

That was 20 years ago, and Ms. Hodgson is still walking. She has completed 11 half marathons (23 km each) and plans to hike the Camino de Santiago, Europe's famed pilgrimage route, within the next two years.

Ms. Hodgson, a member of St. James, Sharon, is the new president of the Diocesan Anglican Church Women. She succeeds Enid Corbett, ODT, who stepped down last year.

In addition to energy and enthusiasm, Ms. Hodgson brings a wealth of experience to her new role. "I'm a lifelong volunteer," she says. "I started as a candy striper in



Janice Hodgson

the hospital and haven't stopped."

Over the years, she has volunteered for several organizations, including the Red Cross, Inn from the Cold, Girl Guides of Canada

and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (formerly the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry). She is currently the rector's warden at her church, the treasurer of the parish's ACW and the chair of the diocese's FaithWorks Allocation Committee. She also runs a clothing depot and food closet at St. James.

"I'm a chunker," she explains with a smile. "I chunk out my time. I do so much of this, then so much of that. I'm hoping it keeps me young!"

On a serious note, she says her volunteer work has brought her face to face with the needs of the community, both in the parish and beyond. "Before I started volunteering at Inn from the Cold, I didn't see the homelessness. But once I started working there, I saw it. Sometimes you need to see something before you believe it exists."

She has been running the clothing depot and food closet at St. James for the past 10 years and says

the need has never been greater. "There's just so much need out there. We're always getting new people."

That's where the ACW comes in, she says. At the parish, archdeaconry and diocesan levels, women are volunteering, raising funds, providing food and clothing, and reaching out to others in the community.

"We go out and help everybody," she says. "We also come back and talk about it and get more people involved. We're all out there volunteering, helping, and spreading the word about the need that is out there."

The Diocesan ACW is currently focused on helping communities that are dealing with food insecurity. It has provided each archdeaconry in the diocese with \$1,000 to help alleviate the problem. It also gives money to the Council of the North. As president of the Diocesan

ACW, Ms. Hodgson is a member of the Lewis Garnsworthy Trust Committee, part of the Anglican Foundation of Canada.

Of course, it's not all work, she adds. The ACW at all levels of the Church provides women with plenty of opportunity for socializing, from parish potlucks to the diocesan annual general meeting, which will be held this year on April 26 on Zoom.

She says her first year as president has been an eye-opener. "It's been a big learning curve, but it's been really good meeting all the ladies at the different gatherings, both in-person and on Zoom."

One of the things she'd like to see is more women joining the ACW. Although its numbers have declined over the years, it's still a vital part of the Church, she says. "We're a great group of people who love the Church and want to see it thrive."

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BRIEFLY

Bishop plans sabbath leave

With the concurrence of the diocese's chancellor, Bishop Andrew Asbil will be taking a sabbath leave from May 5 to Sept. 2. This is Bishop Asbil's seventh year as Bishop of Toronto and his first sabbath leave since 2011. During his time away, he intends to walk the St. Cuthbert's

Way pilgrimage route in the U.K., to visit family in Germany and to take a course at the Anglican Centre in Rome. He will also enjoy time for rest and rejuvenation. He will interrupt his sabbatical briefly at the end of June to participate in General Synod and to chair the Synod Council planning meeting for November's diocesan Synod. While Bishop Asbil is away, Bishop Riscylla Shaw and Bishop Kevin Robertson will lead the diocese in turn, assisted by other commissar-

ies during their summer vacations. These commissaries and their dates will be announced in due course.

Cathedral hosts Bob Marley Mass

A new Bob Marley Mass, composed by the Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields, vicar of St. James Cathedral, will be celebrated on March 16 at 4:30 p.m. at the cathedral as it observes the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21. The service, including the Eucharistic Prayer, the prayers of the people, the prayers over the gifts and after communion, was inspired by the theological perspectives and lyrics of the reggae superstar, says Canon Fields. The music for the service, which includes seven of Mr. Marley's iconic songs, will be led by a Toronto reggae band. The homily, to be delivered by the vicar, will be a reflection on the theology of Bob Marley. There will also be a response by Dr. Brainerd Blyden-Taylor, artistic director of the Nathaniel Dett Chorale, who will reflect on the way Mr. Marley's music continues to speak to the body, mind, soul and aspirations of the oppressed and underprivileged. All are invited.

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New fund helps churches try new things

Grants available

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

THE Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation is launching a new fund that its board hopes will encourage parishes to try new things and take a few risks along the way. The New and Emerging Ministries Fund will begin awarding grants in 2025 to parishes and ministries in the Diocese of Toronto that are experimenting in finding new ways to connect with those outside the Church.

“We mean programs that support the mission of the future Church and support parishes who are adapting to thrive in the years ahead,” says Mary Lynne Stewart, executive director of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation. “We’re seeking to equip and sup-

port leaders who are willing to learn by taking risks, experimenting and finding new ways to connect with those outside of the Church.”

The committee that oversees the new fund has intentionally set broad criteria for applications, seeking proposals that address a need not currently being met by another community group or agency. Projects may be focused on stewardship development, transformational worship, technology for worship, marketing existing ministries, or another area.

“It’s whatever in your church that hasn’t been able to be addressed by regular programming. Maybe someone wants to start a new youth ministry, and they need to equip a certain room so that it’s adapted for



The Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation is eager to hear ideas from parishes.

young people,” says Ms. Stewart. “It can even be a joint partnership with another parish.”

The foundation has set aside \$30,000 for grants in 2025. Parishes and ministries can apply for up to \$5,000 with no need for matching funding, or up to \$15,000 if they can demonstrate other sources of funding. Parishes can apply for further grants in subsequent years, but priority will be given to applicants that haven’t received a grant in the last five years.

Grants won’t be awarded to individuals and aren’t available to cover the cost of church organs or other

musical instruments; to install or repair stained glass windows; for operating budgets, bridge financing or salaried positions; or for travel expenses to attend events.

The board has set quarterly deadlines of Jan. 30, April 30, July 30 and Oct. 30 each year, after which a committee will meet to review applications. There isn’t a set format for applications, but Ms. Stewart says the committee will be looking for a thoughtful plan, a budget and projected outcomes.

Parishes that receive grants will also be asked to submit a report after they complete their project,

evaluating its results based on what they had hoped to achieve.

Ms. Stewart says she thinks this new fund aligns well with Cast the Net, the diocese’s strategic vision, and may help parishes respond to some of its 20 calls.

“I think it fits right in, because really what Cast the Net is all about is trying to expand the community,” she says. “There’s already some innovative programs going on within the diocese, so maybe really look outside your own parish to see what’s going on.”

She says she hopes the fund will continue for at least five to 10 years, and hopefully longer. While the foundation is concentrating on awarding its first grants, eventually it will also start soliciting donations to add to the available funds.

As she looks toward the first round of applications, Ms. Stewart says she is eager to see the ideas that parishes come up with.

“It’s an exciting time to really see what will come out of this,” she says. “I think we can be a wonderful partner in new and emerging ministries.”

For more information on the New and Emerging Ministries Fund, visit the foundation’s website at www.toronto.anglican.ca/foundation or email adtf@toronto.anglican.ca.

BRIEFLY

Diocese hires new secretary of Synod

Canon Laura Walton is the diocese’s new secretary of Synod, providing corporate governance and event planning expertise for the diocese, Synod and its committees. She started on Feb. 3 and succeeds Pamela Boisvert, who has become a property resources consultant in the diocese’s Property Resources department.

Canon Walton, a member of Holy Trinity, Clearview, will continue in her role as the Canon Administrator for the diocese’s North archdeaconry. She has volunteered in the diocese for more than 20 years, assisting both large and rural parishes. She is also the prolocutor for the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario.

“She brings extensive corporate and board-related knowledge and experience to this role in addition to her extensive insight into the Anglican Church,” said the dio-

cese in making the announcement. “Her understanding of canonical obligations, diocesan policies and her ability to understand complex governance structures are some of the many strengths that she will bring to this role.”

Consider donating rebates, says diocese

The Ontario government is in the process of distributing \$200 rebates to every Ontario taxpayer and \$200 for every child in eligible families, describing the rebates as a response to the cost-of-living crisis. For those who are struggling to make ends meet, these funds will be welcome. The diocese is encouraging those who can to consider donating these funds to an initiative that helps vulnerable people in Ontario. This could include a local parish outreach ministry, the FaithWorks campaign, a community land trust seeking to preserve affordable housing, a food bank dealing with unprecedented demand or another organization working in your community.



Farmer Mariluz Suarez of ECLOF, Colombia

Our name has changed. Our work stays the same.

PWRDF is now Alongside Hope

After two years of discernment and consultation, PWRDF’s members* have approved a new name. Alongside Hope emphasizes themes of partnership, accompaniment, community and teamwork that have always exemplified the way we work.

With its tagline – Anglicans and partners working for change in Canada and around the world – Alongside Hope honours the legacy of PWRDF as an agency of the Anglican Church of Canada, and it will carry us forward into the future.

As we walk alongside our partners and many supporters, listening and sharing with one another, we embrace and embody the hope of a truly just, healthy and peaceful world.



Scan the QR code to view a video about our new name and read our list of Frequently Asked Questions, or visit pwrdf.org/our-new-name.

* The PWRDF Board of Directors, Diocesan Representatives and Youth Council comprise the voting membership.

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SUMMER CHAPLAIN

ANGLICAN PARISH OF GEORGINA

www.parishofgeorgina.org

The Anglican Parish of Georgina is now accepting applications for its 10-week Summer Outreach Chaplaincy position commencing late June 2025. The candidate should have strong interpersonal skills for working with people of all ages. The primary focus of the chaplaincy is a Ministry of Presence at Historic St. George’s Church adjacent to Sibbald Point Provincial Park on Lake Simcoe. The ideal candidate will be a self-motivated individual with an interest in theological interpretation and historical buildings. Weekend work is essential, and your own transportation is required. Accommodations are NOT provided. For more information contact Deacon Nancy at nancy@parishofgeorgina.org

Please apply in writing before April 1, 2025 to:
Outreach Committee, Parish of Georgina, P.O. Box 88,
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Be renewed in the Spirit

This is the College of Bishops' pastoral letter to vestries, to be read or circulated on the Sunday of the parish's annual vestry meeting.

Beloved siblings in Christ, In this Season of Spiritual Renewal, the Diocese of Toronto is exhibiting a burgeoning health and vitality that inspires us daily. To God be the glory! As your bishops, as we travel around to visit our parishes, we have witnessed the Holy Spirit engaging in marvelous ways with people, groups and ministries right across this diocese – from Mississauga to Minden, from Cobourg to Collingwood. The Season of Spiritual Renewal, this invitation to spiritual growth, has been enthusiastically received in so many ways, including the sharing of prayer resources, participation in online workshops and our bishops' Advent study online. We are also looking forward to *#LiveLent: God's Story, Our Story*, a daily Lenten resource with a helpful guide for small group use.

We are excited that the next phase in this Season of Spiritual Renewal is called "Lift Up Our Hearts." Over the coming year, large worship services will take place across the diocese on five Saturday afternoons at 2 p.m. Each celebration of the Eucharist will feature excellent music, moving testimony and preachers from within our own diocese, each with their own unique approach to spiritual renewal. We hope you will plan to join us for one or more of these marvelous gatherings. Come on your own, bring a friend or hire a bus! We will see you there:

- **March 22 – St. James Cathedral (preacher: the Rev. Molly Finlay)**
- **March 29 – Trinity Church, Streetsville (preacher: the Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas)**
- **May 31 – All Saints, Whitby (preacher: the Rev. Gerlyn Henry)**
- **September 27 – St. James, Orillia (preacher: the Rev. Dr. Rob Hurkmans)**
- **October 25 – St. Paul's, Bloor Street (preacher: the Rev. Dr. Alvarado Adderley)**

The call to spiritual renewal, however, was just the first of 20 Calls articulated in the Cast the Net strategic vision adopted by Synod and the diocese in 2023. Over the coming year, you will hear us repeatedly emphasizing the need for each congregation to review and consider all of the 20 Calls and then choose which two or three your parish will focus on. As you gather today for Vestry, this could be the perfect opportunity to start considering the question. A small group – the Netminders – has prepared resources to help you, which you can find on the Cast the



Bishop Andrew Asbil



Bishop Riscylla Shaw



Bishop Kevin Robertson

Net web page on the diocese's website, www.toronto.anglican.ca. While it's important to remember that no congregation could possibly answer all 20 Calls, we strongly believe that each congregation can consider two or three. Leading up to our diocesan Synod in November, we hope that every parish will be able to identify which of the Calls they are living into.

We are pleased to welcome our new Executive Director, Varun Balendra, ODT. A familiar face around the diocese, Varun has served in many volunteer capacities over the years, and we look forward to working together in this new capacity. By the time of our diocesan Synod on Friday, Nov. 7 and Saturday, Nov. 8, we expect that we will be introducing a new Secretary of Synod and a new full-time Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisor, whose primary focus areas will be supporting the work of the Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism (ABAR) and other DEI training, and supporting individuals and parishes to grow, build community, educate and engage.

Some other new faces at Synod may include guests from the Diocese of Brasilia. This past June, at the Cathedral Church of the Resurrection in the city of Brasilia, the two diocesan bishops of Brasilia and Toronto signed the covenant that brings our two dioceses into a companion relationship. Since the signing of our agreement, a small representative group from each diocese has been meeting monthly – in both Portuguese and English – to pray together and to plan events. For example, clergy from both dioceses will gather online for a joint study day on liberation theology on March 25. In the fall, a youth delegation from Brasilia will join our own youth at the Re-Charge youth retreat at Muskoka Woods camp. And we anticipate sending a delegation from Toronto to Brasilia in 2026. We have even developed a shared logo for our relationship that combines elements of each of our own logos: our Diocese of Toronto dove springing from their Ipe Tree. You can expect to hear more about this companion partnership as we enter into the second year of it.

Closer to home, the partnerships within our own diocese continue to flourish. When we speak of casting the net, we are referring

to the supportive, creative and collaborative ministry that occurs in each deanery and regionalization, between parishes and congregations, amongst church neighbours and colleagues. We are grateful to our hardworking and devout clergy and our dedicated lay leaders, especially churchwardens, treasurers, administrators, musicians and the countless church staff and parish volunteers who are Christ's hands and feet of ministry in our communities. We are so grateful for all of your faithful work in our parishes and beyond.

We have embarked on a feasibility study to discern if this is the right time for the diocese to conduct a major financial campaign. Over the next six months, M&M International, a Toronto-based fundraising firm, will listen to parishes large and small, soliciting feedback on a case for support. It is proposed that if a campaign does go forward, the majority of funds raised will remain in the parishes, with a smaller portion supporting the 20 Calls at the diocesan level. Your feedback and commitment will make the difference as we look into this additional way of working together.

Lastly, we want to encourage each Vestry meeting to consider this year's social justice motion: "Protecting and Expanding Harm Reduction in Ontario." The Church has a role to play in calling on government for responsible actions in caring for our most vulnerable neighbours, to ensure life-saving protections for those experiencing addictions and other challenges. Please consider how your parish can speak up, and out, for those who require advocacy. As we anticipate going to the polls in the coming year – federally and provincially – let us remember our baptismal promises as we cast our ballots, choosing candidates who align with our values. And let us pray for them.

For it is in praying that we are drawn ever deeper into relationship with the Triune God and become more attentive to the will of our Heavenly Creator. In this Season of Spiritual Renewal, we ask every reader of this letter to commit more deeply to a life of prayer, that it may infuse your every day with Grace as you witness to the Love of Christ in your life and to the world.

In your prayers, please pray for all three of us, your College of Bishops, both in your personal daily devotions as well as your parish's weekly intercessions. Know that we are praying for you too, giving thanks for our common life together across our wonderful diocesan family.

Yours faithfully in Christ Jesus,

Bishop Andrew Asbil
Bishop Riscylla Shaw
Bishop Kevin Robertson



The Anglican

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In the Diocese of Toronto:
A community of 254 congregations in 210 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, and Tamil. The City of Toronto has a large population of aboriginal peoples.

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The Rt. Rev. Riscylla Shaw and
The Rt. Rev. Kevin Robertson

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It is wrong

One hundred and sixty faith leaders, including bishops Andrew Asbil, Riscylla Shaw and Kevin Robertson, sent this letter to Premier Doug Ford in January, urging him to stop proposed Highway 413 and the removal of bike lanes in Toronto. The letter has been edited for length.

Dear Premier Ford,

As more than 160 faith leaders representing diverse traditions, including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and Unitarian, we write to express our deep concern about the Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act (Bill 212) and its harmful impacts on Ontario communities and on creation as a whole.

Our faiths share a moral imperative to provide caring stewardship of the Earth that we

hold sacred. We are compelled to speak out when decisions threaten the integrity of our environment and the well-being of present and future generations.

This act threatens the environment, public safety, food production and First Nations. It will divert significant financial resources from healthcare, housing and education where they are desperately needed. As well, it will increase carbon emissions when the province must urgently reduce them. It is morally and ethically wrong.

We strenuously object to the Ontario government's lack of consultation before passing the legislation, to the government's dismissal of relevant research that contradicts the purported rationale of the legislation, and to the prevention of future legal action by those harmed by the bill.

By expediting construction of Highway 413 and removing bike lanes, this act prior-

itizes short-term economic interests over long-term sustainability. Experts agree that removing bike lanes will not reduce traffic congestion but will, instead, make roads less safe, putting the lives of cyclists and pedestrians at risk. The government's actions contravene essential efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce personal vehicle use, and protect biodiversity, which are critical to addressing the climate crisis. Additionally, its circumvention of Indigenous rights undermines our collective duty to honour the stewardship of the land by its original caretakers.

We ask you to stop implementation. We ask you to re-consider both the process and advisability of Highway 413, and to allow the continued expansion of active transportation that offers clean, affordable opportunities to get around, and in so doing, advance justice, sustainability and care for creation.

Journeying with memory loss

BY THE REV. CANON LUCY REID

According to Baycrest Health Sciences in Toronto, around half a million Canadians aged 65 and over have mild cognitive impairment (MCI). Ten to 20 per cent of those will develop dementia. And currently there are some 772,000 Canadians living with dementia. As the Baby Boomers age these numbers will climb, and more and more of us will find ourselves either living with MCI/dementia or supporting someone who does. For my husband David and me this has been a challenging journey, but, like many travellers, we have discovered gifts and grace along the way.

This is how it all started.

David: I have long been a commuting cyclist. I had an inbuilt compass: I always intuitively knew which way I was going. But then, one day, pausing at a four-way junction, I had to stop. I went through this junction three or more times a week, but on that day I stopped, feet down, unable to remember which way to go. I looked for the sun to get my bearings, then I could carry on, shaken and confused by this. I felt as if I had been mugged.

I had noticed some other worrying signs, such as forgotten conversations, difficulty multi-tasking and diminished awareness of time, so David saw his family doctor, who referred him to a neurologist, who ultimately referred him to the Toronto Memory Program. David's MCI was confirmed, and we were given information about its symptoms and how to manage it. There is as yet no cure, but David was given the opportunity to participate in a clinical trial aimed at slowing any progression. And he is assessed every three or four months to monitor his condition. So far it remains stable, but living with cognitive impairment is frustrating.

David: Without a reliable memory I lose track of myself. Most of us need to remember what is coming next. We have a memory of having done this before. With a failed memory, trying to do something that was recently familiar may mean you have no idea how to do it now. Memory loss is often a complete deletion, and it makes me feel helpless. I have to do it from scratch, and that is hard work. Asking someone to explain yet again, "How do you do this?" feels shameful.

While I am grateful for the mild in David's MCI, I am all too aware that as I step in to manage many of the details of daily life now, I can easily overstep and thus disable or infantilize David. So I need to practice more patience, more gentleness, less taking of control. We were colleagues in ministry for more than 40 years, as well as marriage partners, and just as we had to learn to navigate each other's different



The Rev. Canon Lucy Reid and the Rev. Canon David Howells kayaking. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

styles and goals over those years, and weave in our parenting of three children, so our challenge now is to work together to navigate this disability gracefully and with trust that the Spirit will give us the gifts we need in the years ahead.

David: I do not trust myself to lead worship alone now. I need us to do it together. Preaching works well, as I have total control and a text that I wrote. Sometimes I think to myself, "I know I can lead a full Sunday service in church." But another part of me quietly says, "Actually, no, you can't anymore." And this fills me with grief.

There is no way of knowing what the future holds. David carries the gene associated with Alzheimer's disease, and his mother died with dementia, but neither of those factors means he will inevitably deteriorate. The clinical trial gives us hope, as does his steady cognitive scoring so far. He is more careful with what he eats and drinks and is taking a natural supplement that our younger son is adamant can make a positive difference. But we do not know. And at times David has spoken of his desire to choose an "off ramp" if the prognosis becomes darker.

David: Cognitive impairment is an ongoing condition, and not a good one. It feels as if someone has hacked my mind. In the long run I have little hope. Not only do I want to spare my family and friends from watching me deteriorate, I do not want to experience it myself. But meanwhile I will carry on and trust the Holy Spirit's gentle hand at my shoulder. And I know She will have a gentle hand on my family's hearts as I leave. Since my teens I have tried to be a disciple of Jesus. I have trusted Jesus so far in life. I will follow him willingly into death.

For now, we are both learning to live in the sacrament of the present moment and not to get ahead of the grace, as a wise spiritual director of mine used to say. We are cherishing the simple things and living quieter lives. Extravagant vacations and lengthy trips for their own sake are not necessary and would add an unwanted layer of confusion and disorientation for David. But time spent with family and close friends is priceless, and we are continuing to make memories, even if they fade.

Sharing this journey with others in the same circumstances has been particularly

helpful. They understand about the frustration and impatience. They know that sometimes there is comedy, and sometimes there is an upwelling of grief. They recognize the fatigue and the fears. In small, informal support groups, we have been able to share experiences, resources and way markers.

Ultimately, we are all learning to face our own and our loved ones' mortality. We live, we age, we surrender our health and independence, and we die. This is the normal trajectory of human life, not a rude interruption or malfunction. And at some point, we might realize, as a friend of mine put it, "They're calling our row." I picture us all, one by one, making our way out of our pews and down the aisle towards the altar for communion. Some of us will be limping and holding onto others' arms; some of us will go swiftly and eagerly; some will need encouragement. But we are not alone, and we move towards a banquet.

The Rev. Canon Lucy Reid and the Rev. Canon David Howells are retired priests from the Diocese of Toronto, now living in Guelph, Ontario.



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The roots of sustainability run deep

BY MELODIE NG

Perhaps it's midday as you read this – so I'll ask you: Have you had lunch?

It's a question my colleague Anélia often asks me while we're working at Common Table Farm. Anélia knows I have a habit of working without taking enough breaks. I appreciate how they watch out for me with that simple question. Sustainability is woven into the day when we remind each other that we're creatures who need care. We aren't robots, and we don't need to be martyrs. Sustainability isn't just a buzz word – it's within the fabric of community.

As an urban farmer, I have a compelling reason to love winter: it's the precious time of year when I can rest. We've seen milder winters in Toronto because of climate change, but this year felt like a real winter again. In a capitalist society of endless productivity, taking a moment to gaze at snow feels like giving yourself permission to take a breath. If only our work cycles had more latitude! Might sustainability be within easier reach if we could allow ourselves more of that slower-paced time that we all seem to crave?

Inevitably, winter ends and spring peeks up through the brown mulch and melting slush. The push toward planting season comes swiftly, and the pace quickens. Our farm's upcoming season will be exciting, as one of our long-term dreams comes true: we'll be installing a new greenhouse, thanks to the generosity of the Meighen Family Foundation!

If you've been tracking our little farm, you may remember that last year was tough. The excessive rains caused a lot of



The Common Table Farm comes alive again last summer after its winter rest. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

issues – the saddest story being the loss of our tomatoes to blight. With a new greenhouse, heat-loving crops will benefit from shelter and extra heat. We are hopeful that yields will improve for our most popular crops, meaning that more produce will reach residents of Flemingdon Park.

A new greenhouse will require lots of learning with the ins and outs of greenhouse management. It will also serve as a unique educational space for youth attending workshops and our summer intensive. I'll be honest: I'm not the courageous type when it comes to facing a new logistical challenge. Feeling green to farm management, anxiety is quick to creep in. All the details that need to be tracked in a season can be overwhelming, and my perfectionism frets about messing things up. It's easy to look ahead and begin to dread the coming oven-hot days when the weeds are taking over and there's too much to do.

All this worry leads me to reflect on what keeps me here, committed to our farm's work. What sustains me? Last

season's harvest open house stands out. Strangers and old friends alike came to visit. It was joyful to see folks sitting at the picnic tables, enjoying the afternoon autumn sun. Our summer staff – Flemingdon Park youth busy with their young lives – volunteered their Saturday to come back and help. One of our volunteers drove downtown to pick up a musician who was playing at our event. Sustainability is possible when many pitch in. It's a gift when we can gather with the purpose of communal celebration. The open house was a satisfying day that reminded me of why the farm matters.

Trying to survive year to year as a charity is an uphill battle. But as I witness community pitching in, I learn that the roots of sustainability run deep. The word sustainability comes from older words that mean “give support to,” “keep from falling or sinking,” “hold up” and “withstand, endure without failing or yielding.” While the life of our farm is tenuous, a web of contributions holds us up. Donors and foundations support the work of

feeding community with locally grown food. We are kept from sinking – from the overwhelming task list, from discouragement – by those who come alongside with their ready hands. Strangers become friends as we pull bindweed and pack peppers. We can withstand without yielding because of the enthusiasm brought by teachers and curious students. We endure because wonderful volunteers create a place of welcome. I keep upright because all those who are drawn to this farm bring a spirit of generosity, the bees included. I can withstand anxiety and burnout because my co-worker wisely asks if I've had lunch.

What sustains you? What web are you part of? In looking out for each other this coming season, we grow deeper roots of sustainability. That's when beautiful things can happen.

Melodie Ng is the Common Table's farm manager. To learn more about Common Table Farm or to support its ministry, visit www.flemingdonparkministry.com.

Perhaps we have a worldview problem

BY KAREN TURNER

As Christians deeply concerned about the climate crisis that we as a human species have created, members of the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care want to contribute to the increasingly obvious call to the Church to develop what we're calling “creation-informed, Christ-centred discipleship.”

Our scriptures are steeped in an understanding of human creatures as part of creation. The writers of both the Old and New Testaments were, by and large, people connected to the land. They understood human beings not as separate from, and superior to, the wider web of life, but as part of an inter-connected, inter-dependent creation. They understood that human beings are called by the Creator to be caretakers, even servants, of our non-human relations with whom we share this exquisite planet.

However, for centuries the western Church in particular has lost a sense of that sacred connection. Our theology and liturgy have focused almost entirely on the human relationship to God, and we have seen the rest of the created order as outside that relationship, and more like the backdrop, the scenery on the stage,

while the real story, the human one, played out over the centuries.

So, for discipleship to be “creation-informed,” we need to recover an understanding of ourselves as part of creation, mortal, vulnerable and entirely dependent on the wider Earth community for our very life, with a calling to understand and care for our non-human kin.

Jesus is our example. His ministry was local, among the people and places where he lived and worked. He spent time in the wilderness where he was formed for ministry and where he went often to pray. He drew teachings about our relationship with God with closely observed parables about seeds and growth, lilies and ravens, and cycles of planting and harvest, how trees grow and how they flourish, and how the wind behaves. His great miracle of feeding the multitudes showed that God's creation can provide an abundance for all people; his act was a challenge to the environmentally destructive practices of the empire.

As followers of Jesus, we need to ask: what is the calling of the Church in the face of the climate crisis? Our baptismal covenant calls us to “strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth.” This is clearly a call to a

creation-informed discipleship. Jesus taught us to be servants of one another. Can we imagine a discipleship of servanthood in our relationship with the whole of creation?

What if we saw clearly, to the core of each of our beings, that we belong to God, and the children of God and God's creation belong to each other, are kin with each other.

Is it possible we have a worldview problem? Perhaps you're already thinking that to make this shift in the consciousness of our western Church – in our worldview – will not be easy. And you'd be right! Worldviews are very hard to change, because they are unconscious and mostly unexamined.

In the Diocese of Toronto, the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care supports parishes that are learning through liturgy, education, experience and reflection to see ourselves differently and practice creation-informed, Christ-centred discipleship. Understanding ourselves as connected to the rest of the non-human creation will hopefully lead us to begin to live out God's intention for a peaceful Earth community in which all flourish. What might that look like?

- It could mean learning to think of

ourselves, our place in the world and our discipleship not only as from a specific city, province or country, but also as from a watershed, a landscape or a geographical region shared with specific non-human creatures and unique landmarks.

- It could mean beginning to use creation-informed content in liturgy and prayers.
- It could mean initiating the observance of the Season of Creation into the life of the congregation.
- It could mean worshipping outdoors on occasion; initiating a regular “hiking church” experience; creating a pollinator garden on the church property; or joining in with a local community garden as a church community.
- It would definitely mean learning to read the scriptures through a creation-informed lens.
- It could lead us to become advocates who speak for the earth and for the creatures when they and their habitats are threatened.

Karen Turner has served on the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care since 2021 and is a member of the Creation Matters team at Church of the Redeemer, Bloor St.

The choice is before us

This article has been adapted from the diocese's pre-budget submission to the Ontario government, which can be found at www.toronto.anglican.ca/sjac.

BY ELIN GOULDEN

Today, Ontario is at a crossroads. We face political and economic uncertainty both at home and internationally. Climate-related disasters are increasing in number and severity. Our communities are already facing deepening crises of poverty, precarious housing and homelessness, while the opioid overdose crisis continues to ravage lives, and we are unlikely to meet even our modest climate action targets. All these things leave us increasingly vulnerable to the challenges ahead.

At the time of this writing, we are on the brink of an early provincial election, which will likely be held before you read this. But regardless of who is in power at Queen's Park, we are still called to love our neighbours as ourselves, to strive for justice and peace, respecting the dignity of every human being, and to safeguard the integrity of God's creation. Our advocacy continues to reflect these baptismal calls.

Poverty reduction

More than one million Ontarians relied on food banks last year – up 25 per cent from the previous year and 86 per cent since 2019-20. A report from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) found that an estimated 81,515 Ontarians experienced “known homelessness” in 2024, a 51 per cent increase since 2016. Chronic homelessness has tripled since 2016, now accounting for more than half of those experiencing homelessness in Ontario. Worse, the emergency services designed to help those who fall through the cracks – whether food banks or municipalities – are themselves struggling to keep up with demand.

Social assistance rates

Social assistance is intended to provide support to people who have no other options. The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is intended to support people whose disabilities prevent them from working full-time, while Ontario Works (OW) is meant to help those in crisis to rebuild their lives. Yet both ODSP and OW rates fall well beneath the poverty line, trapping recipients in poverty. In particular, OW rates have been frozen since September 2018, while the cost of living in Ontario has gone up more than 20 per cent in that time. Though the minimum wage and other provincial income supports have been indexed to inflation, OW rates and earnings thresholds have remained stagnant, eroding the value of these benefits. A single individual on OW cannot afford to rent a bachelor apartment anywhere in Ontario, much less secure food, clothing and transportation. Moreover, the division between “basic needs” and “housing” benefits means that a person on social assistance who becomes homeless loses the “housing” component of the benefit, making it more difficult to escape from homelessness. Instead of being helped to get on their feet, social assistance recipients are pushed into ever deeper poverty, contributing to rising homelessness, hunger and demand for social and health services. We urge the provincial government to bring both OW and ODSP rates into alignment with the poverty line, to index OW rates and earnings thresholds to inflation, and



Without robust investment in social housing, unsheltered homelessness will not go away, says author. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

to combine the basic needs and housing components of social assistance into one flat rate.

Decent work

Having a job should keep people out of poverty, yet a quarter of households accessing food banks in Ontario this past year had employment as their primary source of income, double the percentage before the pandemic. While the minimum wage is indexed yearly, it is still \$2.30 to \$8.80 per hour lower than a living wage, depending on the community. Moreover, to afford the average rent for a currently listed apartment in Ontario, a minimum wage worker would have to work 106 hours a week. We urge the government to gradually raise the minimum wage to the median living wage in Ontario, and thereafter index it to inflation.

Ontario also continues to lack paid sick leave. For low-wage and precariously employed workers, this can all too often lead to financial hardship, as they must go to work sick or forfeit a day's pay. Going to work sick has negative public health impacts and can also worsen health conditions for the employee, leading to potential medical complications, possible job loss and a greater burden on our health-care system. We urge the government to require employers to provide employees with 10 paid sick days annually.

These recommendations would cost the government little but would save public funds in terms of health care costs, while reducing the housing benefits required to bridge the gap between high rents and the low incomes of many workers.

Rent control

Another policy intervention that could save public funds and prevent homelessness is to close rent control loopholes, such as the exemption on units built or converted after Nov. 15, 2018, vacancy decontrol, and above-guideline rent increases. Taken together, these loopholes result in asking rents increasing at a rate far higher than inflation, not to mention tenants' incomes. This causes Ontario to lose affordable housing units faster than we can create them and increases housing precarity among tenant households. Already, more than 260,000 households in Ontario spend 50 per cent or more of their income on shelter costs. In Toronto, one in five food bank users spends 100 per cent of their income on housing.

In 2024, 70 per cent of parishes in our diocese supported a motion calling for the closing of rent control loopholes in Ontario. Our diocese has endorsed the Fair Rent Ontario campaign, along with Feed Ontario, the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario and many other organizations. We urge the province to extend rent controls to units built or converted since 2018; end vacancy decontrol; and limit above-guideline increases.

Social housing

Along with stronger rent controls, we also need robust investments in social housing. The market cannot provide sufficient housing for low-income tenants and people exiting homelessness, nor is it sufficient to create more emergency shelter. While shelter capacity in Ontario increased by 34 per cent from 2019 to 2024, chronic homelessness has grown by 138 per cent as people become trapped in the system without housing to go to. Unsurprisingly, unsheltered homelessness has exploded in communities across the province, creating friction between encampment dwellers, municipalities and residents who want to use public spaces for recreation. However, without housing options available, unsheltered homelessness will not go away. Indeed, the AMO report warns that without significant intervention, homelessness in Ontario could more than triple in the next decade, particularly under an economic downturn.

Criminalizing people in encampments tramples on human rights and dignity while failing to resolve the underlying issue. Moreover, incarceration is much more expensive than housing. Making robust and sustained investments to create transitional, supportive and rent-gear-to-income housing is ultimately more cost-effective, while making our communities safer, boosting economic productivity and treating people with dignity.

Overdose prevention

The overdose crisis claims the lives of seven Ontarians every day. The death toll would be even higher but for the heroic work of staff at supervised consumption sites, who reversed more than 21,000 overdoses between March 2020 and January 2024. These sites save lives and promote public health, not only by reversing overdoses but also by reducing public drug use and needle litter, and reducing the transmission of HIV, hepatitis C and

other blood-borne diseases and infections. They also take the strain off our already burdened emergency services. We urge the province to maintain supervised consumption sites and indeed to expand them where needed, together with enhanced access to addictions treatment, as part of a continuum of care for those who use drugs and the public health and safety of all Ontarians.

Climate change

Climate change is already being felt in the increased number and severity of wildfires, flooding, droughts and heatwaves. The 2023 Provincial Climate Change Impact Assessment warns of elevated risks to Ontario's food production, infrastructure, businesses, communities and ecosystems. Yet Ontario's carbon emissions rose from 148.5 megatons in 2020 to 157 in 2022, making it increasingly unlikely that the province will achieve its target of 144 megatons by 2030.

Road transportation already accounted for the largest contribution (40.9 per cent) to Ontario's carbon emissions in 2022. If the province moves ahead with the addition of Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass, the removal of bike lanes and restrictions on municipalities seeking to create new bike lane infrastructure, Ontario's carbon emissions will grow even higher. The mega-highway projects will also pave over some of Ontario's best farmland, exacerbate urban sprawl and lead to higher levels of air pollution, without easing traffic congestion long term. The cost of these projects could be better spent on improving public transportation for the benefit of all Ontarians.

The province's energy production is also moving us father from our climate action goals, with gas-fired power projected to account for 25 per cent of Ontario's electricity supply in 2030, up from 4 per cent in 2017. Investing in renewable energy sources and storage would reduce carbon emissions, while being cheaper and safer than nuclear energy.

The choice is before us. Trusting in God, empowered by the Spirit, may we keep working and advocating for the building up of our people and communities so that we may be strong, cohesive and resilient to face the challenges ahead.

Elin Goulden is the diocese's Social Justice and Advocacy consultant.

What is spiritual renewal, anyway?



BY THE VERY REV.
DR. STEPHEN HANCE

As we look to the year that lies ahead, we know that we will be well immersed into our Season of Spiritual Renewal. But what is spiritual renewal, anyway? What is it that we are working and praying towards, and how would we know if we got there? And what habits or practices would help us along the way?

These are big questions that we need to give some proper thought to, but as I think about it, I am convinced that there are at least three characteristics that will mark out a church that is experiencing spiritual renewal.

The first is this: a renewed church will be Jesus-centred.

I've been in the Church a long time, and perhaps so have you. And I have noticed that there are all sorts of things that churches can get focused on. In the main, they are good things. We can get focused on our music and liturgy, making sure they are the very best they can be. We can get focused on the causes of social justice in the world, showing our faith in practical action in the manner of President Jimmy Carter and his work with Habitat for Humanity. We can get focused on our buildings, caring for them well so we can pass them on to the next generation in good order. I repeat, these are all good things, not to be neglected. But while these things should flow out of our Jesus focus, sometimes they can become an alternative to it. Occasionally I have heard it said that it's as if Jesus has left the building, and we were so busy with other things that we didn't notice.

The Church is primarily the body of people called together around the person of Jesus and our faith in him, not just as an inspiring example or a great moral teacher, but as the second person of the Trinity, the incarnation of God, the Lord and Saviour and Redeemer. A renewed church puts Jesus at the centre. When we gather for worship, it's to worship Jesus. When we do mission, it's to point people towards Jesus. When we study the bible, it's to know Jesus, and when we preach, we preach Christ and him crucified.

The second characteristic of a renewed church is a real, deep experience of community. Not just friendliness. Real community, in which we take the risk to know other people and to be known by them, not covering up our struggles and failures, but sharing them and supporting one another in them. This takes time and a willingness to be vulnerable. It takes a refusal to allow gossip or backbiting or resentment into our midst. When relationships go wrong, as they do, it takes the humility to say, "I'm sorry. Please forgive me." And the grace to forgive.

So much of what passes for community in the Church is less than this. We offer a smile and a polite "How are you?" and we think that's it, and it's better than nothing, but it isn't community yet. But we are wired for community, made to flourish there. And so is everyone else. Friends, there is an epidemic of loneliness in the western world today. A church that genuinely builds community will find people queuing to get in.

The third characteristic of a renewed church I want to talk about is ministry; specifically, every-member ministry. When I was a parish incumbent, we would hold newcomers' lunches, and I would always say, "In a new church, people want



Signs of spiritual renewal in the diocese: children take part in a worship service at All Saints, Markham; Anglicans walk in the Pride parade in Barrie; a singer performs at St. Bede in Toronto.

to know who the ministry team is. In this church, it's all of us. Everyone has a part to play." I think that's biblical. The priesthood of all believers. The gifts of the Holy Spirit poured out on all of us. Yet, sadly, in most churches there are a small number of exhausted people doing all the work and a much larger number of people coming along for the ride.

Friends, don't be a passenger in God's Church. Think about how you can contribute. If you're not sure what gifts you have to offer, ask someone else: "What gifts or abilities do you see in me that I could use to serve God and others?" Whoever you are, God has called you to be part of the ministry team.

Three characteristics of a renewed church. Jesus-centred. Community. Every member a minister. But how realistic is that? Do these churches even exist?

They do. I know from experience. My first experience of ministry was leading a youth group in my Anglican parish in Salisbury, England, when I was still a teenager myself. By the grace of God, we had a period of a year or two when all of these things fell into place. Real and deep community. Passionate prayer and worship of Jesus. Everyone with a part to play. And new people coming to faith in Christ and joining us all the time. You could call it a purple patch or a high-water mark. I call it a move of the Holy Spirit. When you have tasted this, you don't forget it. I sometimes think I have spent the last 40 years looking to experience that again.

This Season of Spiritual Renewal is an



invitation to all of us to seek the renewal of God's Church in this place. While renewal is always a gift of God's grace, there are habits and practices we can cultivate that position us to receive this gift. Heartfelt daily prayer, with others but also on our own. Study and meditation on the scriptures. Generosity, hospitality and service. Being part of a small group.

As you think about your resolutions and priorities for 2025, I want to encourage you to think about how you might build some of these habits into your life more fully in the coming year. The workshops that Judy and Jacqui have been organizing will give you tools to make progress on all of these things and more.

Don't try everything all at once. Choose one or two areas of focus. Learn all you can about them and then put into practice what you learn.

And then pray. Pray fervently. Pray that the Holy Spirit would renew us, individually and together. Pray that this renewed Church would reveal Jesus to our city and diocese. Pray that it would draw many to faith in him. And pray that in it God would be glorified.

Amen.

The Very Rev. Dr. Stephen Hance is the Dean of Toronto and rector of St. James Cathedral. He preached this sermon at Evensong on New Year's Day.

Large services seek to lift up hearts

Preachers excited

BY STUART MANN

FEELING a bit overwhelmed by things? Looking to refresh your spiritual life?

If so, consider going to one – or both – of the two large diocesan worship celebrations planned for this month. The first will be held on March 22 at 2 p.m. at St. James Cathedral and the second will be held on March 29 at 2 p.m. at Trinity Church, Streetsville.

The Eucharistic services are the first of five that will be held around the diocese this year as part of the Season of Spiritual Renewal. The theme of the services is “Lift Up Our Hearts.”

Each service will include music, preaching, a lay witness talk, an opportunity for prayer and anointing, and a celebration of the Eucharist. They will be followed by receptions that will offer food and time to reconnect with friends from other parishes.

The Rev. Molly Finlay, incumbent of St. John the Baptist, Norway, will preach at the service



The Rev. Molly Finlay

at St. James Cathedral and the Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas, incumbent of St. Paul on-the-Hill, Pickering, will preach at the service at Trinity Church. Both are excited about the events.

“The purpose of the services is to provide a time of renewal and revitalization for the people of God in the Diocese of Toronto, and I think that is going to be a wonderful thing for all of us, both clergy and laity,” says Rev. Finlay.

“I’m looking forward to gathering together as a diocese to



The Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas

worship God, to give thanks for God’s faithful provision in the past and to look forward to God’s faithful provision for our Church in the future,” says Canon Douglas.

Both are hoping that the services will lift up the hearts of Anglicans.

“I think so many of us are caught up in the day-to-day work of parish life or our jobs or our family commitments and we can start running on empty, and this provides us with a time away to be together and experience

God’s renewal,” says Rev. Finlay.

“I’m hoping that people will leave encouraged and hopeful about God’s faithfulness to the Body of Christ, and also that we can be faithful to God’s call to us as a Church, no matter our parish’s circumstances,” says Canon Douglas.

Although neither has preached at a diocesan service before, they are both looking forward to it.

“I’m at a regular-sized church that by the grace of God is experiencing renewal, and my prayer is that it will be a sign of hopefulness and encouragement for others,” says Rev. Finlay. “Witnessing what I’ve seen here at St. John’s, I’m really encouraged about the Church.”

“I used to serve in Brampton and Mississauga, and I’m looking forward to seeing some familiar faces and being back in that part of the diocese again,” says Canon Douglas. “I’m really looking forward to it. I love the theme and have great confidence in all the clergy and lay people who’ve been leading the Season of Spiritual Renewal.”

The other three services will be held at 2 p.m. on May 31 at All Saints, Whitby (the Rev. Gerlyn Henry preaching), 2 p.m. on

Sept. 27 at St. James, Orillia (the Rev. Dr. Rob Hurkmans preaching) and at 2 p.m. on Oct. 25 at St. Paul, Bloor Street (the Rev. Dr. Alvarado Adderley preaching). More information about those services will be published in future issues of *The Anglican*.

Bishop Andrew Asbil, Bishop Riscylla Shaw and Bishop Kevin Robertson encourage all Anglicans to attend at least one of the services. “We hope you will plan to join us for one or more of these marvelous gatherings,” they write in their pastoral letter to vestries. “Come on your own, bring a friend, or hire a bus! We will see you there!”

The Season of Spiritual Renewal is one of 20 calls to the diocese that were unanimously approved by Synod in 2023. The calls are part of the diocese’s strategic vision, Cast the Net, which was created after two years of consultations involving more than 1,000 clergy and laity. To help refresh the spiritual lives of Anglicans, the season offers numerous resources and workshops for both clergy and laity. To learn more about the Season of Spiritual Renewal, visit the diocese’s website, www.toronto.anglican.ca.

Wonderful worship a sign and symptom of renewal



BY THE REV. CANON DR. JUDY PAULSEN

THE scriptures teach that there are few things as wonderful as people gathering

for vibrant and passionate worship of God. Such stories are peppered throughout the bible. Miriam leads the freed Israelites in singing and dancing on the banks of the Red Sea. David writes and sings psalms that are collected and woven into worship as his fellow Jews pour their hearts out to God. Ezra witnesses the Hebrews, returned from exile in Baylon, begin to weep as they hear God’s word read aloud once again in Jerusalem. The first Christians are astonished as the Holy Spirit fills both Gentile and Jewish disciples of Jesus as they worship together. Human beings, it seems, have been created to know God and worship him! But how is worship connected to our spiritual renewal?

Ultimately, spiritual renewal is a mysterious and life-giving work of the Holy Spirit. It isn’t something we can manage or produce ourselves. However, we know that renewal has strong links to several key correlates: widespread prayer for renewal, a robust grounding in scripture, a strong commitment to worship, and a love for sharing the faith. In other words, worship is inextricably linked to spiritual

renewal. It is both a factor in and a symptom of us being renewed in our love for Christ.

To this end, excitement is building for people of all ages, and from right across our diocese, to come together to worship God through wonderful music, inspiring preaching and joyful lay-witness talks at five distinct Eucharistic services. These services will also include an opportunity for people to receive the ancient ministry of prayer and anointing. Our worship will be followed by receptions that will offer both delicious food and plenty of time to reconnect with friends from other parishes. Churches across the diocese are already planning carpooling and bussing to enable everyone to participate in one or more of these gatherings.

All five worship services will be held on Saturday afternoons at 2 p.m. to enable as many people as possible to join in lifting up our hearts together to the Living God. The first gathering will take place at St. James Cathedral on March 22, and the second will be held at Trinity Church, Streetsville on March 29. These two Lenten services will have a focus on repentance as we humble ourselves before God in worship, seeking to know and love him more deeply.

The other three services will take place on May 31 at All Saints, Whitby, Sept. 27 at St. James, Orillia, and Oct. 25 at St. Paul, Bloor Street in Toronto.

The service at All Saints, Whitby, taking place near Pentecost, will have a joyous focus on the Holy Spirit at work in God’s people. The two fall services, taking place during the season of reconciliation, will have a celebratory focus on God’s reconciliation of the world through God’s Son. I can’t wait to see what God does across our diocese as we come together in these various seasons to offer ourselves and our churches in worship.

Please pray for the members of the planning group who have been busy preparing for these diocese-wide services. This group is led by Major the Rev. Dr. Michael Peterson and includes the Rev. Canon Greg Carpenter and Ian Koiter. By February this group will include two more members who will oversee technology and hospitality requirements for the services.

And by all means, plan now to come and join in as many of these gatherings as possible. My prayer is that God’s rich blessing will be poured out on all gathered and that, as missiologist and Bishop Lesslie Newbigin (Church of South India) once said, the Church will be a sign, foretaste and instrument of God’s Kingdom.

Finally, let’s call to mind John 4:23. This verse reminds us that God loves it when his people gather to worship him “in spirit and in truth,” and that he “is seeking such people to worship him.” So, let’s put our normal

schedules aside for just five Saturdays and plan to join in these wonderful services. Let’s come together to lift up our hearts as we worship the God who has and is reconciling the world to himself

through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Canon Dr. Judy Paulsen is the coordinator of the diocese’s Season of Spiritual Renewal.

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Anglicans take part in 'The Way of the Cross in the Opioid Epidemic,' a walk hosted by All Saints Church-Community Centre in downtown Toronto in 2019. Prayers were said at 14 locations where people had died from opioid-related overdoses. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

Eight minutes

Emergency leaves volunteers questioning plan to close sites

Ontario is in the midst of a deadly overdose crisis, which claims an average of seven lives every day. The accounts that follow were written by two volunteers at St. Stephen in-the-Fields, Toronto, who reversed an overdose behind the church. The diocese's social justice vestry motion for 2025 urges the Province of Ontario to reverse the planned closure of safe consumption sites in Ontario, and to lift the ban on the creation of new sites, to expand life-saving harm reduction services to Ontarians. Without supervised consumption sites, the number of fatal overdoses will only grow.

Cera's story

Compared to the constant rush of guests that we'd had visit us until a few weeks beforehand, this particular Sunday at St. Stephen in-the-Fields' weekly breakfast program felt calm. There was time to catch up with regulars, sharing one another's grand plans should we win the \$80 million lotto jackpot that had yet to be claimed. Would an apartment in Rome do, or should the imaginary winnings be spent on gaining solitude on the far-off island of Skellig Michael?

Some new faces had appeared in the encampment outside the church, which had recently been under greater scrutiny from the city due to an accumulation of residents' belongings that had been placed to block wind in the cold. As the parish hall began to quiet, Tucker and I had the chance to get some fresh air and introduce ourselves to the new neighbours while checking in with long-term residents. Taking orders for triple-triple coffees and sharing a chocolate bar found in the church kitchen, all seemed well.

Suddenly B, the youngest of the current encampment residents, called us over, his

face panicked. "Someone needs your help over there – he overdosed," he said, pointing to the narrow path tucked between the church and the neighbouring fence. We ran over to the figure who was lying face down in the mud.

I arrived first and was horrified to see that the individual, who I initially mistook for another encampment resident, was deathly pale. I crouched down beside him and tried to turn him onto his back, immediately thinking that our chances of reviving him were slim. His lips were blue, and his body provided no response to my efforts to rouse him. My right arm was in a cast past my elbow, causing me to mentally assess what I was physically capable of doing to assist Tucker, who had joined me with naloxone. CPR? No. Filling syringes with naloxone? Unlikely.

Tucker was checking for a pulse as I asked B for help filling the first syringe. Tucker administered the first nasal dose – the first of four doses before firefighters would arrive to take over the response. We waited with bated breath to see if the naloxone would reverse the overdose. After a minute and half, B passed the syringe to Tucker, and he administered the second dose while I was calling 911. It looked like the person had a nasal infection, so we hoped the injected naloxone would work better. We waited.

After a minute or two, the man took a rattly, choking breath, though his eyes did not open, and his lips and nails remained tinted blue. Feeling tentative relief, we rolled him into recovery position before administering another dose of naloxone. As I waited on hold with 911, the thought crossed my mind that this situation was only going to become more frequent should the Ontario government's Bill 223 – The Community Care and Recovery Act – be enacted. Tucker

and I had received significant amounts of training on how to respond to an overdose. Once 10 of the province's 17 supervised consumption sites (SCSs) were forced to close, how many others would be required to be in our position? In addition to the obvious consequence of a devastating increase in the loss of life of some of our society's most marginalized and vulnerable members, and the accompanying demand for already thinly stretched emergency response resources – as predicted by the government's own internal reports – there would also be an increased need for community members to provide lifesaving care for one another.

It took eight minutes from the first dose of naloxone for medical personnel to arrive on scene. While the gentleman we supported ended up recovering from his near-death experience, what would have happened if we hadn't had been there? Or if we carried only the standard two-dose naloxone kit provided by pharmacies? Or if B hadn't seen his limp body in the cold, dark passage on the other side of some raised stairs? We were only maybe 10 meters away, but we were oblivious to the crisis until it was almost too late.

These are the sorts of questions that have been weighing on my mind. In the days that followed, I replayed the image of the man's lifeless body frequently, recalling just how convinced I was that it was too late to save him. When I was alone, I wanted to be with others. But when with others who didn't consciously engage in spaces where there was the potential for someone to overdose, all I wanted to do was be alone. I was angry and sad and scared. That's not to say that I wasn't proud of how we'd handled the situation. I was, and I feel much more confident to respond to an overdose in the future.

But the awareness that the successful outcome was as much a result of luck as it was preparedness terrified me.

In its most basic form, community care consists of individuals recognizing one another as equal human beings who are understood to be holders of basic human rights. These rights include the rights to life, liberty and security of the person, as outlined in section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. While the Government of Ontario may not currently have this understanding of care, Ontarians can choose to demonstrate care for one another. This can take form in many ways, including by carrying naloxone, supporting unhoused neighbours and notifying political representatives that you support evidence-based harm reduction policies.

We are in the midst of several colliding crises. Regardless of our differences in lifestyle, we have no choice but to live together, ideally with some sense of harmony. Do you have the skills and supplies to maintain the life of a neighbour who has overdosed for eight minutes? How would you respond if you couldn't? These are the questions one should be asking themselves as we enter an era in which drug users' access to healthcare becomes even more limited. Choosing to side with the oppressed and vulnerable is difficult and necessary. There will be days where it seems like the weight of the uphill battle is too heavy. But what other choice do we really have?

Tucker's story

The first time I responded to an overdose, the person came to with one dose of nasal naloxone. This time, we required two doses to get some consistent breathing back, three for them to no longer ap-

Continued on Page 11

I am now a free person



BY GWEDHEN NICHOLAS

My decision to participate in the Companions Program run by the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine has been the best thing I could have done. I am currently participating in a second year of the program. Last June, when my cohort was set to complete the 2023/24 program, the Sisters found they had no applications for next year, whereupon my cohort unanimously agreed we would like to continue together for another year. I have found these years to be both inspiring and interesting, and I have grown immensely.

The program is led by supportive, encouraging and knowledgeable women of whom I have become very fond. Shannon Epp coordinates, while the Rev. Sue House, Sister Elizabeth, Sister Constance Joanna and various guests have taught us much. I think the other Companions would agree with me when I write of what a great program it is. Since the pandemic, it has been offered online as well as in person, which has been such a blessing. I care for my mother, so I could not have taken part at the convent.

This program has been the consummation of an awakening and healing for me, which began about 20 years ago. At that time, I was filled with shame and guilt and was very shut down and barely spoke or participated in life. Gradually over the years, through much journaling prayer, retreats at the convent, the support and love of family, friends and my church family, and psychiatric/medicinal help, I



Icons at St. John's Convent of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

have become a different person. I would not, however, have become the confident, happy, guilt- and shame-free person I am without this little community that has been formed over the last couple of years.

In the past, I rarely spoke in a group setting, not because I was shy, but because my thoughts did not flow. I was very frustrated, because I could feel within myself that I had good thoughts to share, and I longed to share them. I wanted to have meaningful conversations with others, but the words would just not come, and the inward chains that held me mute continued to bind me.

At the beginning of the program in 2023, I still found it quite hard to share

with the others what I was feeling and thinking, and I had to make a real effort to communicate. Everyone was very kind, patient and supportive, and I found myself at ease in a very real way. The time given to me to articulate my ideas soon gave me a newfound confidence and filled me with joy. My thoughts and ideas began to spring into my mind and out of my mouth with no constraint. This is the result of the Saturday afternoon classes and the end-of-class Vespers, which we all take turns leading. I cannot stress strongly enough how much being a Companion has benefited me in this regard.

I am now a free person, able to be myself not only with this community, but

also in day-to-day life. I no longer feel like a child who must look up to even those quite younger than myself. I no longer feel inferior, the result of life experiences. I can now laugh and enjoy the great pleasure of sharing myself with others, both for their sake as well as my own. I am finally able to give instead of continually being given to. What an enormous joy and privilege. I am able to look after my mother in a way that would have been impossible just a couple of years ago. The freedom is immense.

Another aspect of the program is that we each meet individually once a month with the coordinator, Shannon. She is a wonderful person, full of enthusiasm and interest. I look forward eagerly to my times with her, as she is a kindred spirit. We discuss how things are going in our lives, and if there are things to discuss concerning the program, the opportunity is there.

I have enjoyed coming to know both my fellow Companions and those who have led us. I have come to love and respect them all. Each one has her own unique and special personality, thought process and experience to bring to the classes and monthly meetings, where we share how things are going and join in prayer. I have learned a lot from each one. I hope that after June, when this experience sadly comes to a close, we will all stay in touch. It would be lovely to continue meeting once a month, for example. The members of my cohort are truly my companions now, and I pray that this may continue. I hope also that the 2025/26 cohort may find the Companions Program as challenging and life changing as I have.

Doubt can lead to action



BY MURRAY MACADAM

Lord, I believe – help my unbelief.”

This is the prayer Mother Teresa spoke during her 50-year period of dryness with God, a dryness that went unknown to others except for her spiritual director. Public knowledge of doubting faith wasn't offered until after her death.

Mother Teresa didn't want to publicize her struggle with doubt and disbelief, for understandable reasons. She was the face of a Christian ministry that was saving lives. She would have been keenly aware that doubt is not seen in a positive light by many Christians.

But I am grateful that her testimony of faith in question can be shared with us today, because to some extent many of us experience this same feeling at some point – maybe only for a short time, maybe for longer than we would ever care to admit.

When I first heard about Mother Teresa's struggle with her faith, I was shocked. I simply assumed that someone as devout as her – someone made a saint by the Roman Catholic Church – would have a rock-solid faith in God, and in His presence in our lives.

My response reflected a common belief that doubt is a kind of failing, even though the original disciples were not confident about what to do after the resurrection. The gospels tell us that they hear the

news that Jesus has risen from the dead and don't respond with soaring faith but instead lock themselves into a room because they are afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus is standing there among them. “Peace be with you,” he says. He shows them the wounds in his hands and his side. They are filled with joy. Jesus tells them, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” (John 20:19-21)

Jesus invites those who have followed him most closely for the past three years to step out of a place of fear, incredulity or disbelief and into a place of peace, joy and confidence.

However, Thomas, one of the disciples, isn't there with the group on that first Easter Sunday. He doesn't get his chance to see the risen Christ. And because of this, he is about to get a nickname that people still use today, calling him “Doubting Thomas.”

Thomas does not believe until Jesus appears before him and Thomas plunges his hands into Jesus' broken flesh (John 20:24-29). Through that direct experience, Thomas is transformed. His intriguing story of incredulity and inquiry can also help us understand the way in which God responds to us in our doubts and fears.

Jesus replies to Thomas: “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.” Because some of us are conditioned to see doubt as negative, we interpret Jesus' words to Thomas as a rebuke. However, Jesus is simply stating a fact: Thomas saw and believed.

That demonstration of the power of

direct experience can give us food for thought. I must confess that after more than half a century of social activism, I sometimes feel pessimistic about the impact I've made. The course of the world, with its serious woes, seems much the same as when I was young. Have I, and others, really made any difference?

But then I think about Thomas and how his direct experience with the Risen One made an enormous impact.

That underscores for me the value of taking action, no matter how small. Canada is poised on the brink of a federal election. It would be all too easy to accede to the prevailing mood of pessimism regarding politicians and the political process. To let the forces of doubt gain the upper hand. But the example of Thomas reminds us that when we take action, transformation can occur. Our hearts and our souls can experience rebirth. That has strengthened my resolve to work with others to raise creation care issues during the election campaign in my community.

In the midst of doubt, of disbelief, of waning hope and troubling thoughts, God is there with us, inviting us to sink our hands into the woundedness of this world. When we do so, we don't merely improve the lives of our neighbours and the state of creation; we ourselves are transformed. We're renewed and come to have hope that a different kind of world is indeed possible. We too can experience resurrection.

Murray MacAdam is a member of All Saints, Peterborough.

The wait is stressful

Continued from Page 10

pear hypoxic, and four for them to regain consciousness.

That pause and wait between doses – that, for me, is the stressful part. During the first one, you can hope for a quick response. As that doesn't work, the thoughts of wanting oxygen for the person, and people who can do more, come to mind.

Thinking on it afterwards, I reflect that through my volunteering I have access to people to talk to afterward, and that this isn't my usual day. The people who work at supervised consumption sites, I hope,

have access to supports through work, along with professional distance. But B and others don't have supports, and these are their neighbours – possibly strangers, possibly friends. With the closure of SCSs I expect there to be an increase in overdoses outside, where it will be other residents or the public that needs to respond. And that's a better outcome; the other is that people are found too late.

Learn more about this year's social justice vestry motion at www.toronto.anglican.ca/vestry-motion.



DIOCESAN-WIDE PLANNING FEASIBILITY STUDY

Cast and Gather, Raise and Send



Have your say!

CAST THE NET

Have your say!

Anglicans invited to give feedback on case for support

OUR diocese is vibrant and diverse – 195 parishes, each with unique gifts, needs, communities and ideas for growth and ministry. Over the past two years, more than 1,000 ordained and lay leaders shared their ideas and needs through the Cast the Net visioning process. Twenty calls to action emerged, reflecting where we believe the Holy Spirit is leading us as a diocesan community. Our responses to these calls will look different in every parish and person. How do you want to live them out? And what resources will best support you – today, in five years, in 10 years?

To explore these questions, we are taking the critical next step of a diocesan-wide Planning Feasibility Study to prayerfully discern our collective readiness for a potential fundraising campaign that will serve and strengthen parishes with important investments to support God's future through our many diverse ministries.

All voices matter in this study. Share your candid feedback on a Preliminary Case for Support that puts parishes first and reflects the unique needs and shared aspirations across our diocese.

- A significant portion of total funds raised – a minimum of 60 cents on every dollar – will remain with the parish that raised them. A flexible sharing formula will enable parishes with extenuating needs to retain additional funds.

- Every parish will be encouraged to craft a Parish Case for Support,

using the campaign as an opportunity to raise funds for their own priorities and aspirations.

- A percentage of funds raised towards diocesan-wide priorities identified during Cast the Net is planned to be accessible to parishes via granting programs.

- Parishes will receive hands-on support to build a Mission Action Plan, train volunteers, create communications and more, helping to build capacity and raise up leaders during and beyond the campaign
- Often, parishes will see a 2-3% increase in their regular givings as a result of undertaking a campaign, connecting personally with parishioners and communicating the parish's vision for the future.

Whether you are a member of the clergy, laity, church leadership or taking your first steps in your walk with Christ, your unique perspective is important to discerning God's future for our diocese.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Step 1: Review the Preliminary Case for Support

A Case for Support outlines the areas of financial need for a potential future fundraising campaign. A preliminary draft has been put together by the Planning Feasibility Study Committee. Your feedback will help shape the Preliminary Case for Support to reflect the most pressing areas of need across our diocesan community. Review the Preliminary Case for Support here: www.toronto.anglican.ca/

ONLINE OPEN FORUMS

March 19, 2025

- Live on Zoom
12:30 – 1:30pm

March 27, 2025

- Live on Zoom
7:00 – 8:00pm

April 2, 2025

- Live on Zoom
1:00 – 2:00pm

IN-PERSON OPEN FORUMS

South Archdeaconry

- St. Paul, Bloor Street
227 Bloor St. E.,
Toronto, ON M4W 3Y3
March 11, 2025 | 6:00 – 8:30pm

- St. Nicholas, Birch Cliff

1512 Kingston Rd.,
Scarborough, ON M1N 1R7
March 29, 2025 | 9:30am –
12:00pm

West Archdeaconry

- St. John the Baptist, Dixie
719 Dundas St. E.,
Mississauga, ON L4Y 2B5
March 1, 2025 | 9:30 – 11:30am

North Archdeaconry

- St. Margaret, Barrie
161 Hanmer St. W.,
Barrie, ON L4N 7S1
March 15, 2025 | 9:30am –
12:00pm

East Archdeaconry

- St. Peter, Cobourg
240 College St.,
Cobourg, ON K9A 3V2
March 22, 2025 | 10:00 –
11:30am

Central Archdeaconry

- St. Andrew, Scarborough
115 St Andrews Rd.,
Scarborough, ON M1P 4N2
March 22, 2025 | 10:00am –
12:00pm

about-us/cast-the-net/diocesan-wide-planning-feasibility-study.

Step 2: Attend an open forum to share your thoughts

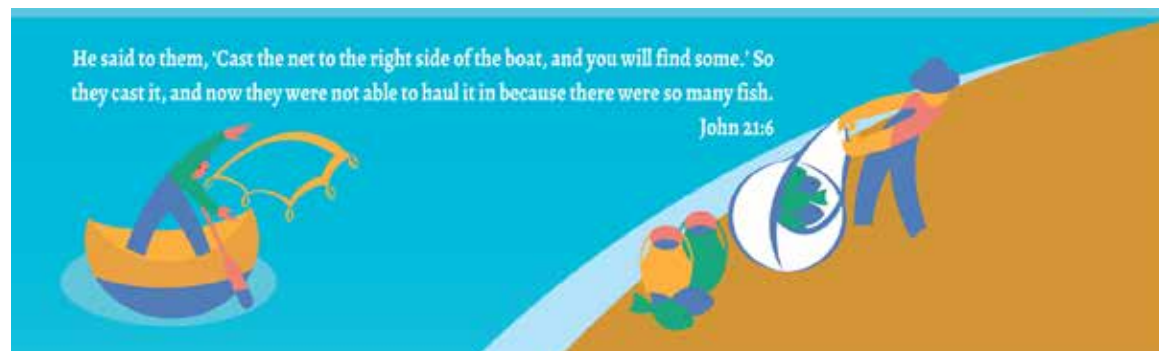
We will be hosting in-person and virtual open forums to walk through the Preliminary Case for Support and hear your unique perspectives. Your honest opinions will

help shape a potential campaign that supports our diocese in all its diversity. These forums are open to all Anglicans in the Diocese of Toronto. They will be facilitated by M&M International, a third-party consulting agency, and feedback can be shared confidentially.

This is the time to **cast** our nets deeper. To **gather** input on a plan

that will **raise** up parishes and **send** out followers of Christ to serve the world God loves.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, together we can weave a net of support across the diocese, so that every parish is spiritually and financially empowered to thrive and remain a vibrant centre of faith and community for generations to come.





Participants in last year's festival enjoy cricket, food and fellowship. This summer's festival will include a special ceremony marking its 10th anniversary. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON

Festival turning 10

Annual cricket day celebrates decade of joy this summer

BY RANIL MENDIS, ODT

ON July 12, the Anglican Church Cricket Festival (ACCF) will mark a major milestone as it celebrates its 10th anniversary at Creditview Sandalwood Park in Brampton. What started as a friendly cricket match between two Anglican parishes has grown into a vibrant festival of faith, fellowship and sport, bringing together young and old, church and unchurched, skilled cricketers and enthusiastic amateurs, all sharing in the joy of the game and the spirit of community.

This festival is not just about runs and wickets; it is about breaking barriers, building relationships and strengthening bonds among diverse congregations in the GTA. This year's event promises to be extra special, with an official ceremony from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., where church leaders, local dignitaries and special guests will reflect on

the festival's growth.

The inaugural event in 2016 was a simple yet significant match between St. Thomas à Becket, Erin Mills South and St. Peter, Erindale. Inspired by the overwhelming enthusiasm, the festival expanded rapidly, welcoming new teams from Anglican parishes across the GTA.

Over the years, ACCF has garnered recognition from church and government leaders alike, with increasing participation and community engagement. The ninth edition in 2024 saw over 150 participants and nine teams, including St. James the Apostle, Brampton; St. Bede, Toronto; St. Joseph of Nazareth, Bramalea; St. Jude, Bramalea North; St. Thomas à Becket, Erin Mills South; Holy Family, Heart Lake, Brampton; Westney Heights Baptist Church; CSI Church, Toronto; and the "Clergy & Friends" cricket team led by the Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields.

Esteemed guests such as Bishop Andrew Asbil, Bishop Kevin Robertson, Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown and Charmaine Williams, Ontario's associate minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity (and a parishioner of St. Joseph of Nazareth), were also in attendance, highlighting the festival's growing significance.

The ACCF's 10th anniversary is a testament to the power of sport in building Christian fellowship. Whether you're a seasoned cricketer, a first-time player or a spectator cheering from the sidelines, we invite you to be part of this special celebration. Gather your parish team, bring your family and friends and join us for a day filled with cricket, camaraderie and Christ-centered joy.

For more details or to get involved, contact Ranil Mendis, ODT, at rmendis1@gmail.com.

THE STEWARD

BY PETER MISIASZEK

Giving in church is changing



It's easier than ever to give. When I came to the Diocese of Toronto in 2003, the most common way to give was by cheque. Credit

cards came in a distant second. From time to time, we received a gift of stock. The electronic age has turned the way we give on its head, and churches – perhaps remarkably – are at the fore of leading that change.

Can you remember a time when sidespeople passed the collection plate and it was filled mostly with loose change and the odd \$2 bill? For many of us, that was the normative way folks would give to ministry and operations. That was also before the Church got serious about teaching stewardship, generosity and giving, and grounding our message in scripture. In the last three decades, a flurry of workbooks, workshops, manuals, programs, campaign outlines and conferences have informed people's understanding of why and how we give.

Most recently there has been significant interest in "tap to give." This is a credit card giving option where the donor "taps" a pre-set gift amount, usually in the \$5-\$20 range. You might have seen unsupervised tap stations for the Salvation Army at the entrance of your local grocery store. It's exactly the same thing. The diocese launched a pilot project for this giving option in five parishes just before Christmas, and there appears to be interest – particularly in parishes that promote its use (in the order of service, for example) and in those churches that have a youngish demographic.

We have explored other methods of giving as well, with varying success. During the pandemic, when we transitioned to an online cabaret in lieu of a Bishop's Company Dinner, we introduced a quick response or QR code to viewers. A QR code is a

two-dimensional matrix barcode that you scan with the camera function of a smartphone that subsequently opens an application whereby you donate. The QR code proved popular during the event and over the next two years, but it has waned in popularity since. Even though all our stewardship stationery has the code on it, donors who give by credit card have gone back to making gifts online.

The pandemic also led to an increased use of pre-authorized remittance (PAR) and e-transfers as a way of making donations automatically. As offertory envelope use has declined, donors have embraced PAR for its convenience and the assurance that their gift is received. Using PAR ensures that a monthly donation goes to the ministry of the church even if you are not always present in church. More than 40 per cent of givers in the diocese use PAR, representing over 60 per cent of all offertory revenue. Twelve parishes boast that at least 75 per cent of their givers use PAR.

The great benefit of all these methods is they offer the donor a choice in how to give. They also provide the church and charities with ways of securing gifts more efficiently and confidentially. One of the great benefits I appreciate with online giving is that tax receipts are generated automatically. This positively impacts donor relations and helps streamline record keeping.

We still rely on tried-and-true methods of giving like cash and cheque. But if you have neither of those handy (and for many of us that is often the case), new ways to give are available. Part of the motivation can be explained by changing demographics and the nature of commerce. I'd like to believe that our diligence in promoting generosity has also had something to do with the shift.

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

BRIEFLY

AURA seeks board members

AURA, the Anglican United Refugee Alliance, is looking for new board members for 2025-2027. AURA is a Canadian charitable organization assisting in the private sponsorship and resettlement of refugees. Its mission is to provide support and expertise to groups involved in refugee sponsorship

and resettlement. It empowers and enables communities to welcome refugees. "We see all Canadians working together to help support and guide refugees as they make new lives here in Canada," says Stan Squires.

Applications are encouraged from candidates with diverse backgrounds and experience. Board member responsibilities include regularly attending monthly board meetings. Submit a letter of interest and resume to Mr. Squires at stan_squires@hotmail.com.

Recycle The Anglican.  GIVE IT TO A FRIEND.

Sunday suppers fill local need 1

BROCKVILLE - At a time of growing food insecurity, Brockville churches continue to work together to make the Lord's Day one of food and fellowship.

"The Brockville churches' Sunday supper program is one of the places where a person experiencing hunger and homelessness can find a warm meal and fellowship," said the Rev. Canon Michael Read of St. Lawrence Anglican Church.

The program is a shared venture of the town's Anglican, United, Presbyterian, Baptist and Wesleyan churches. Every Sunday, the churches take turns providing a free supper to all who come.

"We are more and more conscious that people need this dinner," said Canon Read. "We've gone from 50 or 60 people to 150 to 200 people, depending on the Sunday. It has become one of the most direct ministries of outreach to the community that we have."

The Sunday suppers grew out of the need to help members of the community who experience food insecurity through the weekend, he said. The program marked its 17th anniversary in February. *Brockville Recorder and Times*

Cathedral begins to reinvent itself 2

LONDON, ONT. - A new year is bringing a new look for London's historic St. Paul's Cathedral. Construction crews removed more than 250 wooden pews from it in January, kicking off an ambitious multi-year plan to reinvent the cathedral as part church, part creative arts incubator. It comes as the Diocese of Huron faces declining attendance and officials with the cathedral examine the building's future role in the community.

The objective is to enhance the cathedral for use as a holy place, while opening it up to new possibilities and providing financial security for the future, said Dean Kevin George. "We believe God is at work in the creatives in this city, so, to be able to bring creatives into the space who want to perform and express themselves with their music, for instance," he said. "We want to be able to, yes, increase some revenue, but more than that, we want to be good stewards of the space."

A main component will see the historic cathedral area turned into a 700-seat, multi-use space for church services as



well as conferences and performances. It's this work that's beginning first. Into the spring, crews will reinforce the floor to handle the weight of movable seating, install air conditioning and improve ventilation.

A new accessible ramp will be added and existing tile flooring removed. New hardwood floors will be installed, covering existing hardwood underneath the pews, which is believed to be original. A labyrinth may also be added. The pews themselves will be replaced with durable oak plywood chairs that can be stacked and wheeled in and out of storage.

The main cathedral work is expected to cost more than \$1 million, with about half covered by the diocese, Dean George said. The rest will come from fundraising. It's unclear what the larger, complex-wide plans will cost.

The work is set to last until May and services will be held in adjoining Cronyn Hall until then.

The clock is ticking. The cathedral is hosting the Anglican Church of Canada's triennial Synod meeting in June, during which a new Primate will be elected.

CBC News

City honours Anglican ministry 3

OTTAWA - Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe proclaimed November 2024 Belong Ottawa Month, honouring the Anglican ministry that has provided decades of care and service to people in need.

Belong Ottawa, which has three locations in the city, was celebrating the 70th anniversary of Centre 454, the 41st anniversary of St. Luke's Table and the 40th anniversary of The Well. All three offer compassionate care to vulnerable people who struggle with issues such as poverty, homelessness, mental health and addictions.

"Congratulations on achieving this incredible moment," the mayor said. "Seventy years of Belong Ottawa helping the most vulnerable people in our community. That really is remarkable."

Bishop Shane Parker thanked Mayor Sutcliffe for the honour and for his and the city's support. Many years ago, the Anglicans who started what has now become Belong Ottawa "looked around them and saw other human beings who were experiencing distress or marginalization or poverty. And they saw it with their eyes and then they felt it in their

hearts, and then they chose to act," the bishop said. *Perspective*

Clothesline helps people in winter 4

ST. ANDREWS - For the last few winters, Paula Ross has been taking blankets to the homeless population in Saint John, New Brunswick. But the Charlotte County resident knew the needs in her own communities were also pressing.

"We really need something here," she said. "St. George, St. Andrews - it hits close to home."

She contacted the mayor of the town of St. Andrews, Brad Henderson, with an idea: a clothesline holding plastic zipper bags with items that could help marginalized and needy people cope with winter. The mayor thought it was a great idea, but the question then became location. He suggested she contact Archdeacon John Matheson, rector of the parish of St. Andrews.

Approvals in order, the clothesline is now installed on the lawn between the parish hall and All Saints Anglican Church on King Street, just a block from busy Water Street where everyone who needs something can easily access it.

"Single parents, community college students, exchange students, seniors - it's there for everyone," she said.

She started with hats, mittens, scarves and hand warmers, adding empty bags and clothespins so that anyone with donations could hang them on the line. The bags are important because they keep everything dry, she said.

The clothesline is accessible 24 hours a day, and if people want anonymity, they need only wait until supper time when it gets dark.

Within the first few days of the clothesline being installed, she noticed someone pinned a jacket, though Archdeacon Matheson agrees that larger items can be stored in the hall to keep them out of the weather. She also noticed someone had bagged and pinned a woman's shirt, hand towels and a blanket.

It's clear others have already joined her efforts to make the winter season a bit more bearable for those least able to afford it. "As soon as there's an empty spot, it's filled," she said. "The word is getting out. It's gone a bit crazy." Television stations have already visited to broadcast stories about the clothesline.

The New Brunswick Anglican

Theology day, youth visit planned

Continued from Page 1

around a subject of mutual learning. In October, for example, both dioceses took time to describe their organizational and governance structures, including their staffing complements and departments. In December, Elin Goulden, Toronto's social justice and advocacy consultant, and Dr. Espiuca, who works in advocacy, human and environmental rights for the Diocese of Brasilia, described their various social justice initiatives. Both noted the congruencies in their work. In the coming months, the committee looks forward to bringing together more pairs of ministry partners, such as youth leaders, to discuss areas of common interest and concern, as well as opportunities for cooperation.

There are several exciting joint initiatives being planned for 2025.

The first is an online theology day for clergy and lay theologians on March 25, when the Rev. Dr. Christopher Brittain from Trinity College, Toronto and Dr. Paulo Ueti, a Brazilian theologian, will discuss liberation theology in a simultaneous-translation Zoom call. Later this year we hope to facilitate a pulpit exchange visit of the two deans so that St. James Cathedral can welcome the Very Rev. Tatiana Ribeiro to Toronto, and Dean Stephen Hance can preach in Brasilia. In September, we plan to welcome a small delegation of Brazilian youth to visit around our diocese and participate in the ReCharge Youth Retreat at Muskoka Woods. We hope that they teach our youth to Samba! We are also looking ahead to sending a delegation from our own diocese to visit Brasilia in 2026. In

the meantime, the technology exists for us to virtually "attend" parts of each other's Synods - Brasilia's is in June and ours is in November.

As we get to know each other better, you will start to see very short videos on social media describing parishes and ministries in both dioceses. Bishop Andrew and Bishop Mauricio have already started sending happy greetings with subtitled translations to the other's diocese, which you can view on Facebook and Instagram. If you too would like to take a short, simple video greeting on your cell phone, maybe of your congregation (maybe outside in the snow?) or to show an interesting ministry or outreach project, please feel free to send your clip to our Communications department at editor@toronto.anglican.ca, and they'll

take care of adding the translations.

In April, you will see Bishop Mauricio Andrade and the clergy and parishes of the Diocese of Brasilia listed by name in our diocesan cycle of prayer. The Diocese of Brasilia will be praying for us also. But we hope that you remember this new and growing relationship in your intercessions all year long. Please add the Diocese of Brasilia to your prayer list. And here is a prayer that was crafted by the companionship committee that we all can use - and practice our Portuguese!

Prayer of Christian Solidarity
God of communion, we praise You for the solidarity that unites clergy and laity in the dioceses of Brasilia and Toronto. Fill us with Your Spirit of unity, that we may work together in harmony and love. May

the sharing of our gifts strengthen the mission You have entrusted to us, proclaiming Your hope to the world. Guide us in each step, that our unity may be a living testimony of Your transforming grace. In the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Solidariedade Cristã

Deus de comunhão, Te louvamos pela solidariedade que une clero e laicato nas Dioceses de Brasília e de Toronto. Enche-nos com Teu Espírito de unidade, para que trabalhemos juntos em harmonia e amor. Que a partilha de nossos dons fortaleça a missão que nos confiaste, proclamando a Tua esperança ao mundo. Guia-nos em cada passo, para que nossa união seja um testemunho vivo da Tua graça transformadora. Em nome de Jesus, nosso Senhor. Amém.

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IN MOTION

Appointments

- The Rev. Dr. Greg Gilson, Interim Priest-in-Charge, Evangelists, New Tecumseth, Jan. 14.
- The Rev. Alexandra Stone, Priest-in-Charge, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Matthias, Bellwoods, Jan. 15.
- The Rev. Dr. PJ Carefoote, Associate Priest, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Matthias, Bellwoods, Jan. 15.
- Major the Rev. Dr. Michael Peterson, Priest-in-Charge within the South Georgian Bay Regional Ministry for Good Shepherd, Stayner, Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach, and St. Luke, Creemore, concurrent with Incumbent of All Saints, Collingwood, Jan. 20.
- The Rev. Kristen Tossell Pitts (Diocese of Washington), Canon Missioner, St. James Cathedral, April 27.

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
- Parish of Fenelon Falls and Coboconk
- St. Paul, Uxbridge
- St. Mark, Midland
- St. John, York Mills - Associate Priest

- St. John, Willowdale
- Parish of Penetanguishene and Waubaushene

Parish Selection Committee Process

First Phase - (not yet receiving names):

- N/A

Second Phase - (receiving names via Bishop):

- St. George on-the-Hill

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names):

- Christ Church, Brampton

Other Process

- Huronia Regional Ministry (Associate Priest). Contact Bishop Riscylla Shaw.
- Trinity College Humphrys Chaplain. Contact Canon Mary Conliffe.

Celebrations of New Ministry

- The Rev. Susan Spicer, Priest-in-Charge, St. Luke, Peterborough, March 1 at 11 a.m.

Retirements

- The Rev. Canon Kit Greaves last Sunday at Christ Memorial Church, Oshawa will be May 25.

Ordinations

- The Rev. Matthew Waterman was ordained a Priest at St. James Cathedral on Feb. 2.
- The Rev. Oliver Lim was ordained a Priest at Grace Church, Markham on Feb. 22.



CHRISTIAN UNITY

Christian leaders from the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, the Salvation Army, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Maronite Catholic Church, the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church, the Armenian Orthodox Apostolic Church and the Canadian Council of Churches participate in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service in Woodbridge in January. The service was organized by the Greater Toronto Area Christian Council of Churches, and the theme was, "Do you believe?" based on Jesus' question to Martha after Jesus has raised her brother Lazarus from the dead. For the first time, a Pentecostal congregation hosted the service, which was held in the auditorium of a Christian high school in Woodbridge. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREATER TORONTO AREA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

PRAYER CYCLE

FOR MARCH

1. St. Margaret, Barrie
2. Bishop Andrew Asbil, Diocesan Bishop
3. All Churchwardens and Treasurers
4. The Synod Council
5. Ash Wednesday
6. South Georgian Bay Regionalization
7. Diocesan Volunteer Corps
8. The Anglican Church Women (ACW) -

Janice Hodgson, Diocesan President

9. Nottawasaga Deanery
10. Barrie Regionalization
11. St. Paul, Innisfil
12. St. Paul, Midhurst
13. St. Thomas, Shanty Bay
14. Trinity Church, Barrie
15. All Saints, Kingsway
16. Etobicoke-Humber Deanery
17. Atonement, Alderwood
18. Christ Church St. James
19. Christ the King
20. Church of South India (CSI), Toronto

21. The Prayer Book Society
22. The Season of Spiritual Renewal
23. The Diocesan Volunteer Corps
24. San Lorenzo-Dufferin
25. St. George on-the-Hill
26. St. Joseph's Anglican Church
27. St. Margaret, New Toronto
28. St. Matthew, Islington
29. The Season of Spiritual Renewal
30. The Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario (Metropolitan: Archbishop Anne Germond)
31. St. Matthias, Etobicoke

MARCH 22 - Lift Up Our Hearts, a special service of spiritual renewal for all Anglicans in the diocese, 2 p.m., St. James Cathedral, Church and King streets, Toronto. The Rev. Molly Finlay to preach.

MARCH 29 - Lift Up Our Hearts, a special service of spiritual renewal for all Anglicans in the diocese, 2 p.m., Trinity Church, Streetsville. The Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas to preach.

MARCH 30 - Choral Evensong (BCP) at 4 p.m., followed at 4:45 p.m. by Bruckner 200, as we continue our year-long celebration of composer

Anton Bruckner's bicentenary with an illustrated music feature presented by Jeremy Tingle, St. Olave's music director, in person at St. Olave, Bloor Street West and Windermere Avenue.

APRIL 12 - Healey Willan Singers, 8 p.m., Conrad Gold on organ, Ron Cheung conducting, St. Martin in-the-Fields, 151 Glenlake Ave., Toronto. Tickets available at the door: \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors and students. Cash only.

APRIL 26 - Diocesan Anglican Church Women's annual general meeting, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with special guest

Ji-Sook Kyun, lead spiritual health practitioner and pastoral counselor in spiritual care for Lakeridge Health. The theme of the day will be "Ministering with Compassion." Registration information will be posted on the diocese's website, toronto.anglican.ca, by April 1. For further information, phone 416-363-0018 and leave a message or email acw@toronto.anglican.ca.

MAY 31 - Lift Up Our Hearts, a special service of spiritual renewal for all Anglicans in the diocese, 2 p.m., All Saints, Whitby. The Rev. Gerlyn Henry to preach.

LOOKING AHEAD

To submit items for Looking Ahead, email editor@toronto.anglican.ca. The deadline for the April issue is Mar. 1. Parishes can also promote their events on the diocese's website Calendar at www.toronto.anglican.ca.

MARCH 2 - Rock Eucharist: The Music of The Rolling Stones, 7 p.m., Church of the Redeemer, Bloor Street and Avenue Road, Toronto.

MARCH 4 - Pancake Supper on Shrove Tuesday, 5-7 p.m., in the upper hall of St. Barnabas, Chester, Danforth Avenue and Hampton Avenue, Toronto. Adults, \$6, children under 12, \$3.

MARCH 5 - Ash Wednesday Exploration Day, 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., St. James Cathedral, King and Church streets, Toronto. Children and youth ages 6-18 in the Diocese of Toronto are warmly invited to Ash Wednesday Exploration Day as we explore the theme, "Experience Spiritual Renewal As We Walk in the Steps of Jesus to the Cross." We will explore the cathedral, play group games, do some crafts, meet with the bishop and worship together. For more

details, contact Karyne Whalen at kwhalen@stjamescathedral.ca or visit stjamescathedral.ca/explorationday.

MARCH 11 TO APRIL 8 - Evening Prayer (BCP) at 6 p.m., followed by a light supper, then at 7 p.m., artist Elizabeth Jackson Hall and the Rev. Canon Rob Mitchell present Grace in Every Stroke, a five-part weekly Lenten series about how to engage in prayer through calligraphy, in person at St. Olave, Bloor Street West and Windermere Avenue. For more details, call 416-769-5686 or visit stolaves.ca.

MARCH 14 - World Day of Prayer service followed by light refreshments, 2 p.m., St. Cuthbert, Leaside, 1399 Bayview Ave., south of Davisville Avenue. This year's service is written by the women of the Cook Islands on the theme, "I made you wonderful."

MARCH 16 - Bob Marley Mass, 4:30 p.m., St. James Cathedral, in observation of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The music for the service, which includes seven of Mr. Marley's iconic songs, will be led by a Toronto reggae band.

MARCH 22 - Voices Chamber Choir, 8 p.m., with Conrad Gold on piano and organ and Ron Cheung conducting, St. Martin in-the-Fields, 151 Glenlake Ave., Toronto. Tickets available at the door: \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors/students. Cash only.



LIFT UP OUR HEARTS

Saturday afternoons at 2 p.m.

**MARCH
22**

St. James Cathedral

The Rev. Molly Finlay, preacher

**MARCH
29**

Trinity Church Streetsville

The Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas, preacher

**MAY
31**

All Saints, Whitby

The Rev. Gerlyn Henry, preacher

**SEPT
27**

St. James, Orillia

The Rev. Dr. Rob Hurkmans, preacher

**OCT
25**

St. Paul's Bloor Street

The Rev. Dr. Alvarado Adderley, preacher

Come together as the Diocese of Toronto to **worship God** in wonderful music, inspirational preaching and the witness of God's people.

