

Church creates content for soul

20 calls to action help parish plan



Lost war diary leads to book

The Anglican

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DAZZLING

The Diocesan Dancers perform at St. James Cathedral in February. The service celebrated the 30th anniversary of the first diocesan Black heritage service, held at the cathedral in 1996. For story and more photos, see Page 3. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

This Eastertide, I give thanks to God for you



BY BISHOP RISCYLLA SHAW

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Some of the profound joys of my episcopal ministry are meeting, greeting (and eating!), listening and learning my way around the diocese and beyond. Now in my ninth year, I have been refreshed and energized by the blessing of taking a three-month sabbath leave last year.

Being on sabbath leave was about listening with the ears of my heart. Coming out of relationships built during our Sacred Circles in Canada and the Lambeth Conference, the first of three key chapters in my journey began in June 2024

with a pilgrimage of visiting and study to Aotearoa/New Zealand, where I was welcomed with such a generous hospitality that it changed my understanding of the word.

This important friendship and solidarity with the Māori peoples has been developed and strengthened over many years, with delegations of Māori coming to be honoured guests and speakers at our Sacred Circles, and numbers of Canadian Indigenous siblings traveling on pilgrimages of learning and sharing to Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In our road to self-determination in the Canadian Indigenous Anglican Church, our Māori siblings have encouraged us that though the shared settler-colonial/Indigenous way is hard, in the long run,

it is more fruitful to walk together on this good road than to divide off and go separate ways, recognizing that collectively we form the Anglican Church of Canada.

In our connections together we begin to see the face of God. As we think about it, cross-cultural relationships are all around us. I traveled across the world to visit with, learn from and strengthen our bonds of friendship with our Māori siblings. It was a blessing beyond measure. It reminded me that listening is deeper than hearing. As part of the local reconciliation work that is taking place, there is a reclaiming of the Māori language as the spoken and written word. We know that language communicates culture, and that the worldview of a person is communicated through their words, phrases, dress,

facial expressions and more, so when I was immersed in an environment where I didn't speak the language, I found myself considering the art, craft and science of listening and learning.

This experience resonated for me. It was not the first time I found myself in an environment where I didn't speak the language or know the culture. It called to mind my profound experience of engagement at the World Council of Churches gathering in Karlsruhe in 2022, where there were so many Christians gathered to worship, celebrate solidarity and work together for justice and peace, as our expression of faith in our triune God: Father, Son Jesus and Holy Spirit.

There was something important about

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Church creates content for the soul

Project seeks to lead people to Christ

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

WOULD Jesus be on Instagram? St. Peter, Erindale thinks so – and with a new year-long project about to begin, the parish is enhancing its social media presence to engage, inspire and invite people into a deeper connection with faith.

“Social Media for the Soul” is an initiative that aims to build a sustainable model of creating engaging and effective social media content that leads people to Christ. The plan involves identifying target audiences, developing content, and building and interacting with communities on various social media platforms, all led by a freelance professional and supported by a team of volunteers.

The project will be funded in part by a \$40,000 Cast and Learn grant from the diocese. Launched in 2023 as part of the Cast the Net visioning process, Cast and Learn provides one-time grants to parishes wanting to innovate, learn and grow as they reach out to people who aren't currently connected to the Church. St. Peter's will supplement the grant with \$40,000 of its own funds to cover costs related to equipment,

software and paid ads.

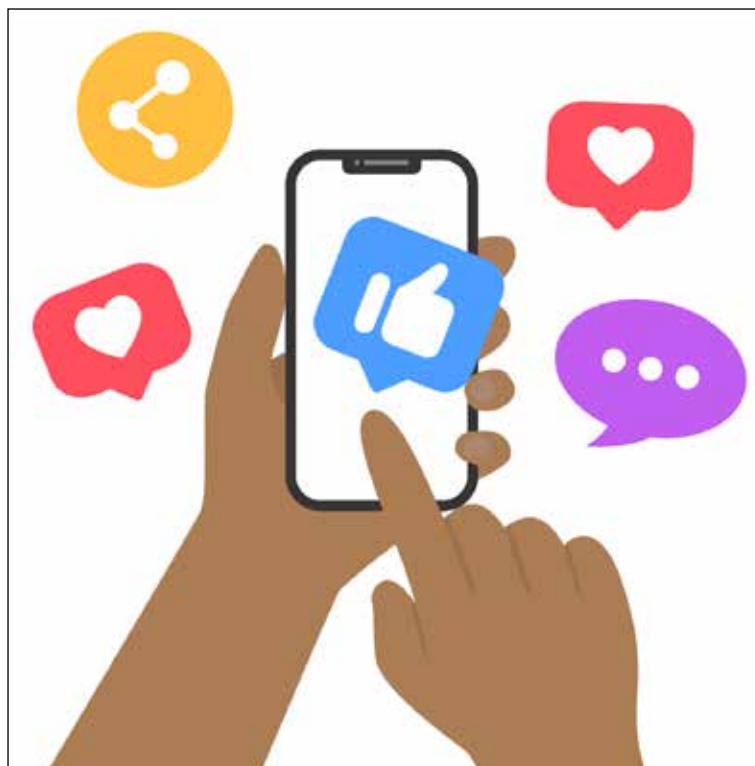
Natasha Bond, a churchwarden, communications strategist and longtime member of the parish, is leading “Social Media for the Soul” alongside an existing communications committee. She says now is the perfect time to enhance St. Peter's existing efforts online.

“I think if Christ came today, he'd be a number one influencer on all platforms. Back in biblical times, he stood up on the mountain and everyone followed him. This is our mountain,” she says. “It's Cast the Net, and I want to put us on the 'net' properly.”

Like many other churches, St. Peter's has been present online for years. With an active Facebook page, a reliable website and weekly hybrid worship services, the parish community is already comfortable with the idea of technology. The idea now, says Ms. Bond, is to make its efforts more consistent and strategic.

“We don't have a dedicated staff member who can strategically think about what we post,” she says.

To that end, her first step is to hire a freelance social media expert for one year who will set up the



St. Peter, Erindale has been present online for years, but now it plans to make its efforts more consistent and strategic.

structures, templates and training the parish needs to carry its social media presence forward. She envisions that person building categories of posts that can be used as models for future content. These could include testimonies from members of St. Peter's; ministry moments that share the details, highlights and outcomes of church events; clips from sermons, bible studies, podcasts and books; quotes

and memes; and interactive challenges, questions and polls.

The freelancer will create a content calendar based on the categories of posts and adjust it as the year progresses and the team learns more about what works best for its goals and audiences.

“The idea is to build that framework so it's sustainable,” she says. “I would hope that within a year we're all experts somewhere.”

The parish also plans to spend some money on paid ads on Facebook and Instagram. Changes to the platforms' algorithms in recent years have lowered the organic or free exposure most pages receive, making it more important to promote or boost content to make sure it's being seen by followers and other targeted audiences.

“It's not enough to just put it up there and they will come,” says Ms. Bond. “Ultimately, you want to be able to make sure you get it in front of the right people.”

The “right people” will include both members of St. Peter's, who the team hopes will engage more deeply with the parish and their faith, and members of the surrounding community who are looking for hope, meaning and purpose in their lives. Ms. Bond says her motivation is less about growing St. Peter's numerically and more about helping people in their relationship with Christ.

“I think ultimately the goal of everyone working on this project is to find ways to have people engage more with St. Peter's, but with an ultimate goal of helping them experience God in the way that God meant them to experience Him,” says Ms. Bond. “If, after engaging with this experience, they go to a different church, even if it's not a different Anglican church, that's okay.”

Measuring the project's success will involve establishing a baseline of the parish's current levels of reach and engagement on social media and charting any changes over the year. In addition to tracking the numbers provided by Facebook and Instagram's built-in analytics, the team will conduct brief surveys and interviews, compile case studies and assess comments and reviews to get a sense of people's attitude toward the parish.

The team hopes its model, and the lessons it learns along the way, will help other Anglican parishes who are looking to enhance their social media engagement.

“I think every parish has an opportunity to do more online, do more on social media,” says Ms. Bond. “It might look a little different for each parish, though.”

As St. Peter's prepares to celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2025, Ms. Bond says she hopes “Social Media for the Soul” will be one more step toward a future where the parish remains a place of faith and belonging in Mississauga.

“It starts as a campaign,” she says, “but it needs to become a way of life.”

GRANTS AVAILABLE
to Qualifying Parishes and Diocesan Organizations

Grants are available from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation to support ongoing proposals for new and innovative ways to make connections with people who are not currently involved with their Parishes through the New and Emerging Ministries Fund.

These grants aim to foster outreach programs, community engagement, and various creative initiatives to reach the wider community, that inspire new connections and strengthen the church's presence.

For further information, contact the Foundation Office:
adtf@toronto.anglican.ca 416-505-6537.

Application deadlines are
April 30th, July 31st and October 31st.

THE FOUNDATION
Anglican Diocese of Toronto

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Service celebrates ‘watershed moment’

BY STUART MANN

THE warm, vibrant sounds of West Africa and the Caribbean filled St. James Cathedral on Feb. 23 as the diocese celebrated the 30th anniversary of the first diocesan Black heritage service, held at the cathedral in 1996.

The St. Paul’s L’Amoreaux Steel Band serenaded the congregation before the service, taking people’s minds off the chilly weather outside. The procession up the main aisle included the joyous Ghanaian Anglican Church Choir & Drummers. The Diocesan Dancers, choreographed by Constance Kendall, ODT, added grace and beauty to the proceedings.

Standing on the chancel steps, Bishop Andrew Asbil welcomed the congregation and those watching the livestream at home. He said the service in 1996, also held in February, gave birth to many Black heritage celebrations in parishes across the diocese “as we celebrate the contributions, leadership and giftedness of the Black community.”

He said the 30th anniversary service was a chance “to celebrate where we have come from, but also to be reminded of the road ahead of us, and to deepen that call to diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging. We have a road to go to blot out anti-Black racism and bias. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, God has placed us here as coworkers and agents of transfiguration. We work with God to transfigure injustice into justice. This is our call as a diocese, and we are so deeply moved that you are here today.”

After the bishop’s welcome, the congregation sang the Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” The first and second readings and the gospel reading, Luke 4:16-21, spoke of deliverance, inclusion and liberation.

In his homily, the Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields, vicar and sub-dean of the cathedral, fondly recalled the 1996 service, which he helped to organize. “Thirty years ago, we gathered in this cathedral to celebrate what was a watershed moment in the life of our diocese,” he said. “We came together to worship, celebrate and affirm our place as Black people in the Anglican Church – our Church. It was an evening that I will never forget.”

He spoke of the “energy, colour and vitality” that filled the cathedral on that occasion, and the size of the overflowing congregation. “I will not forget that we had to close the doors of the cathedral lest we violated the fire code. I will not forget the dancers who danced then and who danced today, 30 years later, one with her daughter.”

He asked those in the congregation who had attended the 1996 service to stand up, and about 25 people did, receiving a warm round of applause.

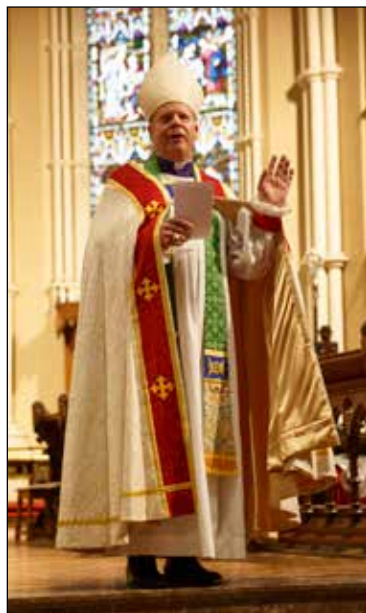
He said he would never forget the sermon given by the Rev. Canon Dr. Kortright Davis, professor of theology at Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, DC. “He reminded us that Black people know how to suffer; that we know what it means to serve,



The Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields gives the homily.



Wendy Jones (centre) and drummers.



Bishop Andrew Asbil welcomes the congregation.



Members of the Ghanaian Anglican Church Choir sing.



Constance Kendall, ODT



Mother and daughter dancers receive applause.

to share, to struggle and, despite all of this, that we know how to sing, for our forebears ‘had to sing to put strength and meaning in their lives.’”

He commended the work of individuals and Black Anglicans of Canada, a national group, but said much work remains. “For many of us, and those who care to admit it, the journey has been a struggle, indeed a challenge. There have been moments of progress and moments of resistance, times of hope and times of frustration. Yet, through it all, we have remained steadfast, knowing that our work is not in vain.”

To keep lifting up Black voices and celebrating Black culture and community, Black Anglicans must continue to speak truth to power and to speak about power, he said. Allies of the Black community must listen, learn and act, he said. “The Church must be willing to hear the truth, confront its history and embrace the work of reconciliation, and to show that it is not a reflection of the world’s divisions but a true sign of the reign of God.”

He urged the congregation to advocate for Black leadership, to celebrate Black spirituality and progress, and to educate through “learning, unlearning and fostering

meaningful dialogue that equips all members of the Church to engage in the work of justice and reconciliation.”

The service ended with a rousing version of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.”



GRANTS AVAILABLE

Assistance for Theology Students

Grants available to provide financial assistance to students, particularly postulants or those aspiring for Ordination to the priesthood in the Anglican church of Canada, pursuing studies in Family and Children Ministry through the Family and Children Bursary Fund.

The fund aims to support students demonstrating a commitment to enhancing the spiritual well-being of families and children within their communities. These financial grants are intended to ease the burden of tuition fees and provide resources for those dedicated to this vital ministry.

For further information, contact the Foundation Office:
 atdf@toronto.anglican.ca 416-505-6537.

Application deadline is July 31st.



Looking back for a new direction

BY THE REV. LEIGH KERN

The Diocese of Toronto has redistributed more than \$100,000 in the past year to Indigenous communities from the sale of land, with another round of funding scheduled this spring. In 2021, Bishop Andrew Asbil published a letter to Synod about Motion 12, which called for the establishment of a Reconciliation Land Tithe: “This motion is born out of what many feel is a stirring of the Holy Spirit in our Church: a call to tithe to Indigenous communities 10 per cent of funds from the sale of diocesan real estate.”

Other dioceses have also committed to a 10 per cent tithe, while the Province of the Northern Lights (formerly the Province of Rupert’s Land) passed a motion in 2024 pledging 50 per cent of revenue from land sales to Indigenous communities. A spirit of repentance, renewal and return is indeed blowing across the land.

In his support of Motion 12, Bishop Asbil emphasized our need to examine the concept of property theologically and historically: how did the Diocese of Toronto acquire land?

In 1763, King George III’s royal proclamation asserted English dominion and sovereignty over the Great Lakes basin and much of Turtle Island (North America). Indigenous nations were under his “dominion” and only the Crown was to sell Indigenous lands. The Independent Special Interlocutor’s *Executive Summary: Final Report on the Missing and Disappeared Indigenous Children and Unmarked Burials in Canada*, states that:

“The majority of lands in Canada are owned and managed by government. The concept of ‘Crown land’ comes from 11th century British law that asserts that only the Crown could properly own lands. [In Canada,] less than 11 per cent of land is in private hands, 41 per cent is federal Crown land, and another 48 per cent is provincial Crown land. These Crown lands generate govern-

ment income through surface and subsurface rights to the mineral, energy, forest and water resources leased to private enterprises... [Crown lands as a concept] upholds the Doctrine of Discovery, and currently there is no Canadian legal pathway to resume full jurisdiction and governance authority over Indigenous lands.”

Under this framework, Indigenous nations were divided and confined to small reserve lands, which are ultimately controlled by the Crown. The concept of Crown land overriding Indigenous sovereignty has been rejected by the Anishinabek Nation, who have called for “Land Back,” which they describe as “a movement by Indigenous peoples all over Turtle Island to reclaim stolen lands and have their inherent jurisdiction recognized.”

The Crown justified ongoing colonization and land theft on Turtle Island through an emphasis on Christianization. This was expressed in the 1791 Constitutional Act, which privileged the Church of England over other denominations and granted it one-seventh of all Crown lands, known as the Clergy Reserves. The Clergy Reserves were used to build parishes and rectories, while others were leased and sold to settlers, with profits held by the Church of England in Upper Canada. Settlers were encouraged to clear-cut the lands, once teeming with biodiversity. Profits from the sale of Clergy Reserves continue to generate profits that fund parishes in the Diocese of Toronto. The Clergy Reserve system demonstrates the economic privilege of the Diocese of Toronto built on the displacement of Indigenous nations.

Indigenous nations, including the Anishinabek nations that signed treaties with settlers (the Williams treaties and the treaties of Toronto), did not consider this a land “surrender” but a sacred commitment to sharing and hospitality. This came up against English ideas of private property and racism. For example, in 1796 a group of soldiers of

the Queen’s York Rangers attempted to rape family members of Chief Wabakinine who were camped near St. Lawrence Market, where they sold salmon. Chief Wabakinine was a signatory of the first of the Toronto treaties. The settlers beat Chief Wabakinine and his wife to death. Despite the lobbying and outrage of the Mississaugas and Anishinabek nations, settlers in power, who were overwhelmingly members of the Church of England, would not prosecute the offenders. As Reclaiming Power and Place, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People demonstrated in 2019, gender-based violence, denial of Indigenous sovereignty, the breaking of treaties and land dispossession continue to be interconnected forces.

As Indigenous peoples were violently displaced from their territories, the Anglican Church expanded and participated in the denial of Indigenous sovereignty and genocide of Indigenous nations. Our wealth and land holdings are rooted in a history and ongoing presence of occupation that seeks to place Indigenous sovereignty as a struggle somewhere far away – not under our very feet. Anglicans across the diocese are committed to meaningfully addressing this imbalance of power and wealth, taking steps to reckon with our historic privilege.

Repentance means a turning around or a change of direction: how can our examination of our past inform a new path forward? In this Season of Spiritual Renewal, what fruits worthy of repentance might be born from our recognition of our spiritual obligations and responsibilities on this land? As we examine our relationship to property and the future of the Reconciliation Land Tithe, the Anishinabek nation has called for Land Back; how might the Church respond?

The Rev. Leigh Kern is the diocese’s Right Relations Coordinator.



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The Anglican Church

In the Anglican Communion:

A global community of 70 million Anglicans in 64,000 congregations in 164 countries.

Archbishop of Canterbury:

Lambeth Palace,
London, England SE1 7JU.

In Canada:

A community of about 600,000 members in 30 dioceses, stretching from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland and north to the Arctic Ocean.

Acting Primate:

The Most Rev. Anne Germond,
Church House, 80 Hayden St.
Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2 Tel: 416-924-9192

National Indigenous Archbishop

The Most Rev. Christopher Harper
Church House, 80 Hayden St.
Toronto, ON, M4Y 3G2 Tel: 416-924-9192

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 Indigenous peoples.

Bishop of Toronto:

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil

Suffragan Bishops:

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

The Diocese of Toronto:

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Racial justice starts right here



BY ANDRE LYN, ODT

We are the people of God and we want to believe we’re way beyond issues like a lack of equal representation, racial inequity in decision-making or concerns of basic cultural safety. Yet we all know that our diocesan structure was built on the foundations of colonization, and thus, the idea of unequivocal racial harmony is false. For example, at a recent gathering of Synod, candidates were called forward for election to one of our most powerful diocesan decision-making groups, and of 32 candidates, 30 were White. In a diocese as richly diverse as ours, this is an alarming lack of representation. Many stories have arisen from Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) members of our community who didn’t apply for positions of power, simply because of the colour of their skin. Folks, this doesn’t mean that White people are bad, but blind spots can be enormous. We cannot assume that the experience of our White members is the same experience for our BIPOC members, and it is way past time to wake up to that fact.

The Bishop’s Committee on Intercultural Ministry reports to Bishop Andrew Asbil with a renewed mandate to take action that will bring our diocese to new horizons in racial equality. We’ve worked hard to ensure that our committee membership reflects the wide diversity of our diocese, and we

continually seek new representation. We’ve taken a deep dive into the experiences of our members and clergy, and we’ve helped create and test material for training in anti-racism; worked with congregations of many ethnic origins; produced a module on anti-racism for Momentum training; given presentations and workshops at the parish level; offered support at the scene of a hate crime (committed at a Toronto parish); and we continue to consult with the College of Bishops in its desire to ensure that the diocesan reality reflects our press releases.

And there’s excellent news! We’re happy to report some giant strides forward. Along with the Anti-Black Anti-Racism (ABAR) Pod group, we submitted a petition to the College of Bishops and executive staff requesting urgent action on three major issues:

1) That the diocese hire a full-time, qualified Diversity, Equity and Inclusion staff member. This will be a person skilled in working with issues of anti-racism, human rights and equality, to ensure that we comply with government regulations and to establish protocol for dealing with issues that arise within our diocese.

2) To launch an ongoing mandatory anti-racism training program for staff, clergy and lay workers similar to our Sexual Misconduct Policy program, ensuring awareness of racial justice issues from the hierarchy to the grass roots level of our diocese.

3) To begin collecting race-based data that would hold us accountable in crucial

matters of equity such as recruitment, employment opportunities and remuneration (something that many corporations in Canada have had in place for some time) to protect our members and to ensure equitable treatment.

We’re delighted and grateful to tell you that these three requests were taken seriously by the diocese and are now in process. First, the diocese has published a job description for the full-time position requested, and it’s now in the process of hiring. Second, the ongoing mandatory anti-racism training is included in the new hire’s job description. Third, the collection and disaggregation of race-based data is listed under the major responsibilities of the new full-time staff member.

The arc of justice can be long and slow indeed, but it does bend towards justice.

In the December 2024 issue of the *Anglican Journal*, journalist Sean Frankling wrote an article titled “Primate’s commission calls Church to dismantle racism, boost diversity at meetings.” The hope is to address the racism and colonization built into our governance and remove logistical barriers that keep many of our members from taking part at the General Synod level. Bishop Peter Fenty responded, “Do we acknowledge the reality of systemic racism in our own dioceses? Until that work is done, it seems to me that [General Synod] is engaging in futile work.” Our committee heartily agrees with Bishop Fenty’s assessment that

Continued on Page 6

Are you being called to ordained ministry?



BY THE REV. CANON
LISA NEWLAND

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.’”

(Matthew 9:37)

Each year, Vocations Sunday falls on the fourth Sunday of Easter, or Good Shepherd Sunday. That means this year Vocations Sunday is on May 11. Churches across denominations, including many of our own throughout the Anglican Communion, keep this Sunday as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations with an intentional focus on prayer, asking God to raise up people to serve in ordained ministry (both deacons and priests), as well as in the religious life.

All of us, as the baptized people of God, are called to live out our faith by knowing Christ and making Christ known as Saviour and Lord, and to share in the renewing of his world. All of us have gifts we are called to use to build up the Body of Christ and to imitate the love and life of Jesus in our relationships with each other and all those we encounter back out in the world. For some, that call is one to ordained ministry.

As a young teenager, I began to sense a call from God to the priesthood. It was not something I would have ever imagined for my life or thought myself up to the task of, even though I’d grown up in the Church and was actively involved. For several years I kept that “tugging” feeling to myself, but it just wouldn’t go away. And from time to time, those in my home parish, without knowing I was sensing this call, would sometimes ask me questions like, “have you ever thought of becoming a priest?” While I wasn’t ready to answer “yes” at the time, with their continued support and affirmation I eventually found the courage to speak with my parish priest and begin the process of testing and discerning God’s call in my life. This year marks the 20th anniversary of my ordination, and it has been one of the greatest privileges and joys of my life to serve with and among God’s people in this way.

I share this story to encourage others who might be wrestling with such a sense of call to reach out and speak to someone



A priest is ordained in the Diocese of Toronto. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

about it – maybe a trusted parishioner or your parish priest – and to encourage the rest of us to pay attention to who the Spirit is calling us to notice in our congregations that might possess gifts for ordained ministry. Maybe we might ask them the same question: “Have you ever thought of becoming a priest (or deacon)?”

The role of the faith community is central to discerning a vocation to ordained ministry. While the call originates with God and is personal, it is also communal, something that needs to be prayerfully discerned and affirmed by both the individual and the wider Church. I have not only experienced this firsthand as an integral part of my own journey towards ordination, but also on the other side by discerning others’ sense of call to the priesthood as a member of the Postulancy Committee. Made up of both lay and ordained members, the Postulancy Committee has the privilege and responsibility of walking with those who believe they are called by God to be a priest, generally over a two-year period, with continuous discernment taking place, includ-

ing feedback from different parts of the Church throughout the process. Canon Mary Conliffe is the point of contact for the Postulancy Committee, and she would be delighted to have a conversation with you if you are considering a call to the priesthood. There is also a process for those considering a call to be a deacon. The Venerable Kyn Barker is the contact person for further inquiries regarding ordination to the diaconate.

In Matthew 9:37, Jesus tells his disciples “to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.” It comes after Jesus has been out to all the towns and cities, preaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of God’s kingdom and curing many who were sick. As he looks at the crowds that have gathered, Matthew tells us Jesus had compassion for them because they were “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” It’s then that Jesus tells his disciples to ask God to send more labourers, others who will also see the vast need he sees and partner with him in his liberating, life-affirming, life-giving

and life-restoring mission.

As we continue to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection throughout the Easter season, may we each listen for the voice of our Good Shepherd who knows, loves and calls each of us by name. And following his command, may we pray to the Lord to send out more labourers into his harvest, especially those called to holy orders. For the harvest is plentiful indeed.

A Prayer for Vocations Sunday:
God our Father, Lord of all the world, through your Son you have called us into the fellowship of your universal Church: hear our prayer for your faithful people that in their vocation and ministry each may be an instrument of your love, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(From Growing vocations everywhere | The Church of England)

The Rev. Canon Lisa Newland is the incumbent of Christ Church, Stouffville and the coordinator of the diocese’s Postulancy Committee.

On sustaining hope and action in uncertain times



BY ELIN GOULDEN

“I can’t believe the news today/I can’t close my eyes/and make it go away...”

More than 40 years ago, in the midst of the Troubles in Northern

Ireland, the Irish band U2 opened the song “Sunday Bloody Sunday” with these words. In these opening months of 2025, their lament holds more resonance than ever. The media shows us rising greed, callousness and aggression, while the sufferings of the poor and vulnerable are not merely unheeded but, in many ways, exacerbated by the actions of those with wealth and power. On top of this, institutions and alliances we have long relied on are being called into question.

In such a climate, it can be challenging to follow the daily news. It is easy to feel despair and tempting to retreat into any place where we might feel we have some control. Those of us with relative privilege may, to some degree, be able to insulate ourselves from the world. But at what cost?

As followers of Jesus, we are called to love our neighbours as ourselves, to serve the world God loves. We cannot close our eyes to the harms and injustices experienced by our neighbours and the Earth. At the same time, we cannot let ourselves be whipped into a frenzy of anger, fear and outrage. Nor can we let ourselves be crushed by a paralyzing weight of dread. Neither of these reactions can sustain the pursuit of love and justice to which God calls us.

The Rev. Madeleine Urion, a priest in

the Diocese of Edmonton, writes: “I’m beginning to recognize how I do not have capacity to sustain the outrage, the fear and the anger I see daily.” Instead, she recalls the words of her then six-year-old son, facing a time of great transition: “When I get to school, I open my heart, and I keep it open no matter what comes at it.” It is that open heart, that courage to be vulnerable, compassionate and loving, that keeps us connected to our own humanity, to each other, and above all, to God.

We cultivate this openness of heart in two ways: prayer and practice.

First, prayer is essential. Jesus sustained his ministry by frequently withdrawing to deserted places to pray. In daily prayer and meditation upon scripture, we come to understand ourselves as deeply loved and sustained by God. We

find our identity rooted in God, not in our wealth or status, how influential we are in our workplaces or how many people “like” us on social media. This helps us to cultivate a sense of security, humility and authenticity instead of reactivity and defensiveness when we feel ourselves under threat.

From such a place, we are more able to open ourselves up to those around us. We can meet our neighbours with compassion, offering them dignity and respect. We can come to recognize and honour the diverse gifts of each person, resisting the forces that dehumanize God’s people and isolate us from each other. We can even cultivate love for our enemies, recognizing that our struggle is not against flesh-and-blood human beings but against the spiritual forces of

Continued on Page 6

I came to a different place of peace

Continued from Page 1

not understanding the words yet being a participant in the sacred teaching: I knew when I was welcome, I could feel that I was included, and even without the obvious competencies, I was invited to be a part of the community. And that feeling makes the difference.

As the first witnesses in our Easter story, we hear about the women in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24: “Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and the other women, in returning from the empty tomb, told the eleven and all the rest, but they did not understand.” Over and over again, we hear about the blocked ears of the disciples and the crowds; how Jesus taught them, told them what to expect, healed them and worked miracles in front of their very eyes, yet they did not understand. Though it was surely a source of frustration, it was not an impediment to relationship. Jesus did not give up on them, even though they did not always believe or understand. They were included anyway, like we are, in the priesthood of all believers. To quote John Lewis, “If not us, then who?”

In our human experience, there is a long tradition of having the truth in plain sight and not being able to see it... yet we continue to play a role in the unfolding of the divine reality as agents in God’s creative process.

As I became more skilled at listening in ways that aligned with my other senses – with my eyes, the ears of my heart, my un-



Bishop Riscylla Shaw (above, second from right) with friends in New Zealand. At right, a traditional Maori greeting. PHOTOS COURTESY OF BISHOP SHAW

derstanding – I came to a different place of peace: watching the learning take place before my eyes, knowing that not all of it was for me or about me, and observing the constraints of listening in a familiar language, which often leads me to make assumptions that limit possibility. That was liberating, actually.

This Eastertide and always, I am giving thanks to God for you, for your faithful witness, for your strength, courage and wisdom as we work together, building relationships of hope, trust and unity. We are in changing and challenging times, in our world and in our Church. We are the hands of the risen Christ: let us always look for hope, stepping into our call to love like Jesus, to be generous, creative and kind.

Peace and love!



Practical action connects us to each other, Earth

Continued from Page 5

evil, as the Epistle to the Ephesians tells us. While we stand up against hatred and injustice, we can, like Jesus, refuse to wield the weapons of hatred against our adversaries.

This is not easy. Our natural impulses to wall ourselves off from whatever and whoever we perceive as a threat, or to lash out in response, are constantly being stoked, often for gain. We need to return to prayer again and again, to ground us in our connection with God, to ask for that open heart, for the fruit of the Spirit to be grown in us.

We might adopt a habit of praying for divine protection and guidance before we read the news or open up social media, as suggested in a blog by Rabbi Irwin Keller. Rabbi Keller also suggests praying after reading the news, asking for wisdom and discernment on what one “might do for peace, for justice, for the wholeness of our planet, or for the betterment of my community.”

This brings us to the second point: embodying our faith in practical action. This

is important in several ways. It gets us out of our heads – and screens! – and into the material world. Cooking and serving meals, making up harm reduction or relief kits, tending a garden, making art, taking someone to an appointment, picking up litter – all these things not only show love in a tangible way, but they are grounding for us who do them, connecting us to each other and the Earth. These acts may seem insignificant in the face of great evil, but God can multiply these small but concrete acts, just as he multiplied the loaves and fishes brought forward by one young boy to feed the multitudes.

“In a world bent on chaos, practicing the fruit of the Spirit becomes an act of defiance and hope,” says African American author Jemar Tisby. In the midst of anger, fear or uncertainty, let us seek God in prayer, and then do the next compassionate thing.

Elin Goulden is the diocese’s social justice and advocacy consultant.

Racial justice starts with you and me

Continued from Page 4

the work must begin at the local level in each diocese. Your feeling welcome and safe doesn’t guarantee the same for your neighbour.

Friends, Jesus dismantled our barriers, insisting that everyone belongs. Everyone. Yes, racial justice starts right here

with you and me.

Andre Lyn, ODT and Donna Scantlebury are the co-chairs of the Bishop’s Committee on Intercultural Ministry. For more information, email intercultural.ministry@toronto.anglican.ca.

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St. Paul, Bloor Street holds an ecumenical prayer night in January, drawing 600 people. PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. PAUL, BLOOR STREET

Calls help church plan future

Staff team considers what to start – and stop

BY STUART MANN

FOR St. Paul, Bloor Street, the diocese's 20 calls to action couldn't have come at a better time. After emerging from the pandemic, the church was trying to discern where God was leading it.

"We had said to ourselves, and I said it a lot, we're not trying to build back the old St. Paul's, because it's gone," recalls Bishop Jenny Andison, rector of St. Paul's. "Covid was a once-in-a-century event and God had disrupted the normal course of ministry, and we needed to take the opportunity to ask ourselves where God was leading us. We weren't going to build back better; we were going to build new."

The church started a strategic planning and visioning process,

and then along came the diocese's strategic plan, Cast the Net, and its 20 calls to action. The calls, which were endorsed by Synod in 2023, encourage Anglicans to renew their spiritual lives, to seek justice for all, to support faithful and fruitful ministry, and to live and work as the body of Christ, each connected to the whole and each valued for their unique gifts.

"It was perfect timing, to see where we could come alongside where our bishops were leading us," says Bishop Andison. "Being a bishop myself, I believe in episcopal leadership of our diocese, and I thought, okay, let's pay attention to where our bishops are wanting us to go."

The staff team at St. Paul's sat down with the calls and began

to discern which ones spoke to them. "The good thing was, we could find ourselves in the calls," says Bishop Andison. "We went through them and said, where do the calls fit with what we're currently doing that we're going to keep doing? Some calls didn't speak as loudly to us at St. Paul's but there were a number that did, and we were like, oh yes, we can get behind this one, and this one is really good, too."

The calls also helped the team think about what they needed to stop doing. "Just because we did something before the pandemic didn't mean we needed to keep doing it," says Bishop Andison. "It gave us the opportunity to have that discussion and pray into that. Are there things, God, that we used

to do that you're not calling us to do anymore? Having the calls to action during our strategic planning process gave us a lens to do that with. If we're doing stuff that doesn't find itself anywhere under the Cast the Net vision, why are we doing it? It was a pruning exercise, and it was helpful."

After prayerful discernment, the church chose calls 1, 2, 4, 10 and 15. Call 1 is to enter into a Season of Spiritual Renewal to deepen personal and collective discipleship; Call 2 is to reinvigorate and recommit to children's, youth, family and intergenerational ministries; Call 4 is to recognize and act on opportunities to participate in God's healing work in the world; Call 10 is to better reflect the diversity of our communities in both congregations

and clergy; and Call 15 is to introduce and use new ways to measure and nurture congregational health and effectiveness.

"Those were the calls that really fit with who we currently are and, maybe more importantly, where we feel God is calling us to in the future," says Bishop Andison.

Since then, the church has developed a vision, mission and values statement that helps to guide its life, aligned with the Cast the Net vision.

And the calls are coming to life at St. Paul's. The church is putting a lot of resources into prayer gatherings, with surprising results. After doing a "prayer audit" of the congregation, it found that while there were resources for personal prayer such as its Daily Prayer Guide, and people prayed during the Sunday liturgies and in small groups, there weren't opportunities for medium-size groups to come together and pray for the future of the Church.

"We thought that was a gaping hole in our congregation, so we hosted our first Kingdom Come prayer night last summer, and 75 people came," says Bishop Andison. "That was amazing, for an hour and a half of prayer. Then we thought, why are we not praying with the local churches? So, we had an ecumenical gathering this past January and 600 people came. It was unbelievable."

She keeps a printed copy of the church's mission, vision and values on her desk and refers to it almost every day, especially when important decisions need to be made. In this way, the calls have become an important part of the church's decision-making process. "They sharpened our intentionality on certain areas of ministry. In the hustle and bustle of running a church, it's easy to forget those things."

She encourages other churches to choose a couple of calls that feel right for them. "What two or three calls are you uniquely positioned to fulfil, that will give life? It may be things you're already doing, and you want to say, you know what, this is a medium priority now but we're going to make it a top priority. And also, what two or three things do we need to stop doing – that aren't drawing people to Jesus? The calls kind of give you permission to start doing that."

Which calls are right for your church?

With Synod coming up in November, parishes are being asked to embrace one or two of the following 20 calls. The calls were approved by Synod in 2023 as part of the diocese's strategic plan, Cast the Net.

A Renewing Spirituality

We are renewed daily in our spiritual lives and share our faith with others. In that spirit, all parts of the Diocese of Toronto are called to:

1. Enter into a Season of Spiritual Renewal to deepen personal and collective discipleship.

2. Reinvigorate and recommit to children's, youth, family and intergenerational ministries.

3. Share and use resources to en-

liven worship, faith formation, spiritual practice and evangelism.

Inspiring Faith in Action

We seek justice for all, walk alongside those in need, and respond with loving service and prophetic advocacy. In that spirit, all parts of the diocese are called to:

4. Recognize and act on opportunities to participate in God's healing work in the world.

5. Make explicit connections between following Jesus and working for justice and peace.

6. Strengthen Indigenous ministry; engage non-Indigenous Anglicans in reconciliation work.

7. Take, sustain and communicate actions that promote diversity,

equity, inclusion and anti-racism.

Reimagining Ministry

We support and encourage faithful and fruitful ministry by all who serve the life of the church. In that spirit, all parts of the diocese are called to:

8. Intensify advocacy and action in response to the climate crisis.

9. Actively embrace collaboration among congregations and innovation in new forms of ministry.

10. Better reflect the diversity of our communities in both congregations and clergy.

11. Understand the changing needs of lay leaders in congregations and support them in their work.

12. Continue and enhance support

for all ordained people.

13. Enable and celebrate the work of ministries focused on service in the world.

14. Rethink clergy discernment, formation, and deployment for the church of the future.

15. Introduce and use new ways to measure and nurture congregational health and effectiveness.

Transforming Diocesan Culture

We live and work as the Body of Christ, each member connected to the whole, and each valued for their unique gifts. In that spirit, all parts of the diocese are called to:

16. Cultivate an understanding of the diocese as a dynamic net of shared relationships.

17. Continue assessing recent diocesan leadership changes and adjust as necessary.

18. Adopt an integrated, theologically informed approach to property management.

19. Ensure follow-through on this report, including implementation methods and metrics.

20. Invest in the vision with existing and new resources, using sound Christian stewardship principles.

For more information on the 20 Calls, including a discussion guide, visit www.toronto.anglican.ca/castthenet.

Volumes tell rich history of 'Smoky Tom's'

Stories, pictures engage senses

Kent, David A. (ed.) *Household of God: A Parish History of St. Thomas's Church, Toronto. [Volume One: 1874-1993.]* St. Thomas's Church, 1993. ISBN 0969780206. 546 pp.

Kent, David A., and Kennedy, Patricia A. (eds.) *Household of God: A Parish History of St. Thomas's Church, Toronto. [Volume Two: 1993-2024.]* St. Thomas's Church, 2024. ISBN 9781928095118. 450pp.

BY GIDEON STRAUSS

For years, the atmospheric photograph of the Palm Sunday procession that accompanied John Bentley Mays's article in *The Globe and Mail* has adorned a wall in my home. It captures the drama of the procession on that day, in which Willem Hart was thurifer, Neil Hoult and Caleb Reynolds were acolytes, and my daughter Sarah was boat girl. From time to time, folks have queried the context of the photo, wondering what kind of play Sarah was in and what kind of smoke the producer used. 'The drama of salvation,' I would always explain, 'and the sweet smell of home.'

These reminiscences of the Rev. Canon Susan Haig, a sometime parishioner of St. Thomas, Huron Street, published in the second volume of this history (p. 345), expresses perfectly the character of the parish nicknamed "Smoky Tom's." As a newcomer to the parish at the beginning of 2025, I was delighted to discover that I could read an up-to-date history to get to know the people among whom – and the place and practices within which – I am now worshipping. The drama of the liturgy and the smell of the incense I had already encountered in the Epiphany celebrations that were my first experiences of the church as a parishioner. The drama of parish life remains to be discovered, and the nearly 1,000 pages of this history have proven to be a most helpful introduction.

The two volumes are similarly structured, starting with accounts of the incumbent priests, the church building and its furnishings and equipment, the liturgy and music, guilds and groups, education and outreach, and concluding with essays, tributes and myriad reminiscences. The essays included are marvelously thought-provoking, particularly on the liturgy and music, the art and architecture, and the demographics of the parish. The editors, David Kent and Patricia Kennedy for both volumes and with Hugh Anson-Cartwright for the first, must be commended for the evident care and competence with which they brought together the work of so many people. Both volumes are handsomely designed, generously illustrated (in both colour and black and white), and soundly printed and bound as hardcover books.

I enthusiastically recommend this work as a whole to church historians both professional and amateur (because this history is both a rich resource for research and an admirable exemplar for emulation), to fellow Anglicans around the world (because the story of St.

Thomas's is inspiring and encouraging in its demonstration of the providence of God affording the faithfulness of particular people in a particular place following particular—in this case, Prayer Book Catholic—practices), and to my present and future fellow parishioners of St. Thomas's (because we cannot forge our future without understanding our past). In taking up this reading you will be following the example of the Rev. Nathan Humphrey, who begins his introduction to the second volume by mentioning that "one of the first things I did after accepting the call to be the eighth rector of St. Thomas's ... was to go online and buy a used copy of [the first volume of] *Household of God*."

Any reading of this history would be well-accompanied by visits to the church building and participation in at least a high mass, an evensong service, and a feast that includes a procession. As this history describes and explains, St. Thomas's is a parish centered on incarnational reality, to such an extent that the relationships between the aesthetic reality of the building and its furnishings, the dramatic reality of the liturgical practices performed in that building, and the personal reality of priests and laity all are inextricably woven together, ultimately because of their common central focus on the reality of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This is a church that engages worshippers' every sense, including taste in the eucharist, smell in the incense, sight in the furnishings and vestments, touch in the pews and kneelers, and certainly not least, hearing in the marvelous music. The evolution of "the St. Thomas's sound" is described and explained across the two volumes and situated within the evolution of the liturgical tradition of the parish.

The ways in which the Eden Smith building both provides a home to the people and practices of the parish and is itself expressive of the spiritual reality of the parish's faith shows forth on very nearly every page of the two volumes. The baptistry – described by the art critic John Bentley Mays as "perhaps the most beautiful small room in Toronto" in his 1995 *Globe* article – allows for the making of poignant connections between the Christian sacraments of initiation, family love, and the horrors of war. The triptych above the altar in the Lady Chapel memorializes the formative influences of Father Roper, who put the parish on the liturgical path along which we continue to travel, and Mother Hannah Coome, the founder of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine. The carved wooden figures in the reredos behind the high altar illustrate the spiritual ecosystem of the parish, with the figure of St. Thomas (as a carpenter) at the centre surrounded, for example, by St. James (representing the diocesan cathedral and mother church of the parish), St. Augustine of Canterbury (representing the worldwide Anglican communion), St. Cyprian (representing a parish birthed from St. Thomas's), and St. John (representing the historical re-

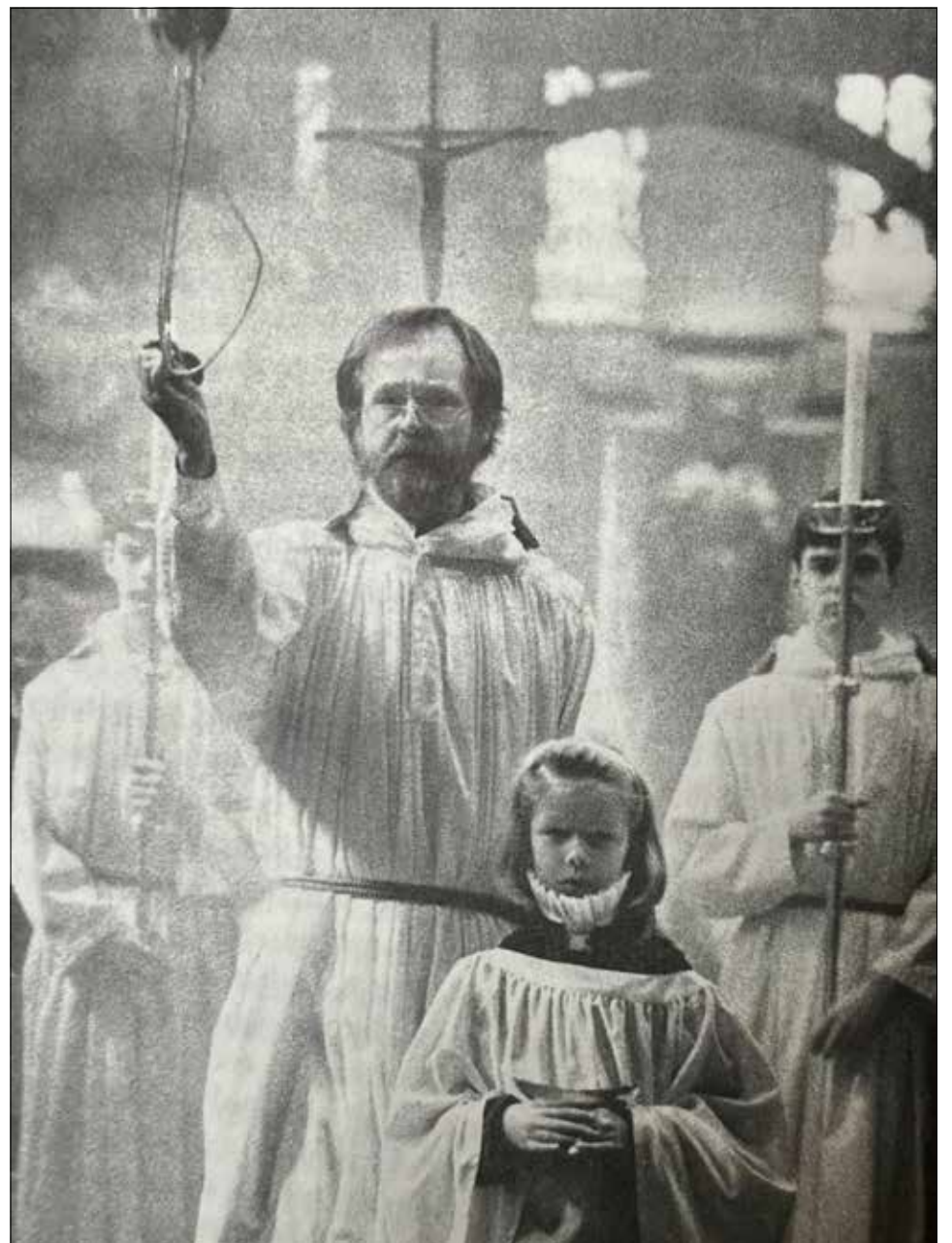
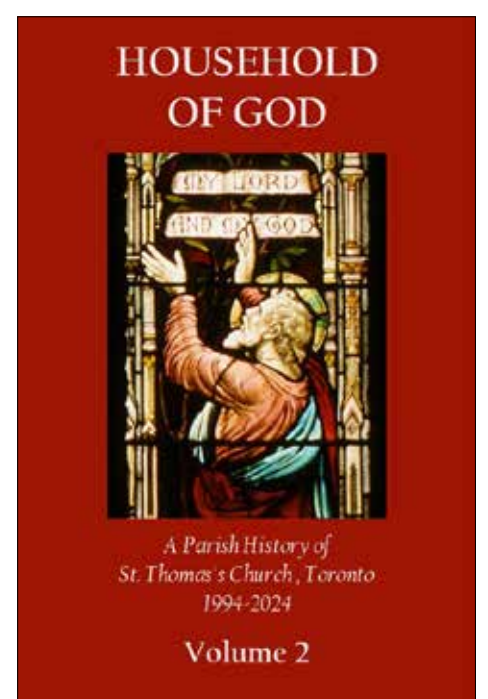


Photo from volume one shows crucifer Willem Hart and 'boat girl' Sarah Whitmore. At right, the cover of volume two. PHOTO BY TIBOR KOLLEY, *THE GLOBE AND MAIL*



lationship of St. Thomas's with both the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine and the Society of St. John the Evangelist).

The stories of the priests and people of the parish help the reader understand why the Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan in her reminiscences, included in the first volume, could call St. Thomas's "a prototype of a parish," and why the Rev. Canon David Harrison in his reminiscences, included in the second volume, can observe that "St. Thomas's asks much of its people." The colour illustrations and written descriptions in both volumes provide a glimpse of the incarnational materiality of the faith practices of this community as expressed in our incense, silver, vestments, altar cloths, and in the faithful service of our Acolytes Guild and Altar Guild.

The vernacular domestic coziness and richly symbolic furnishings of the present building of St. Thomas's (opened in 1893) represent for me the way in which Christians *dwell* in the world. I was surprised to learn from this history that the first, wooden building of the parish represents the way in which Christians *journey* in the world. That building was cut in two, mounted on rollers, and drawn by horses from Bathurst Street to Sussex Avenue in Toronto in 1882, which resulted in amused church folk calling it "the peripatetic church." The journey was re-enacted in a liturgical procession on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels in 1974, the centenary of the founding of the parish.

The 1893 brick Arts & Crafts church designed by parishioner Eden Smith to replace the original wooden church was itself intended to be replaced in phases over time by a grander stone structure,

but the "temporary" church has endured for 130 years.

The wooden "peripatetic church" of 1882 and the brick "temporary church" of 1893 that has turned out to be the permanent (yet ever-changing) home for this community together represent the creative tension inherent in the Christian life. This creative tension is encapsulated in the traditional Benedictine vows of stability, obedience, and conversion of life that the Prayer Book tradition of Anglicanism has claimed as its birthright and charism. In this regard, St. Thomas's yesterday, today, and tomorrow, is indeed the "prototype of a parish."

Gideon Strauss is a parishioner at St. Thomas's Huron Street and a postulant for admission to the Anglican Dominican order. He teaches philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

'The old familiar hymns' stir memories

Book explores family ties to church during war

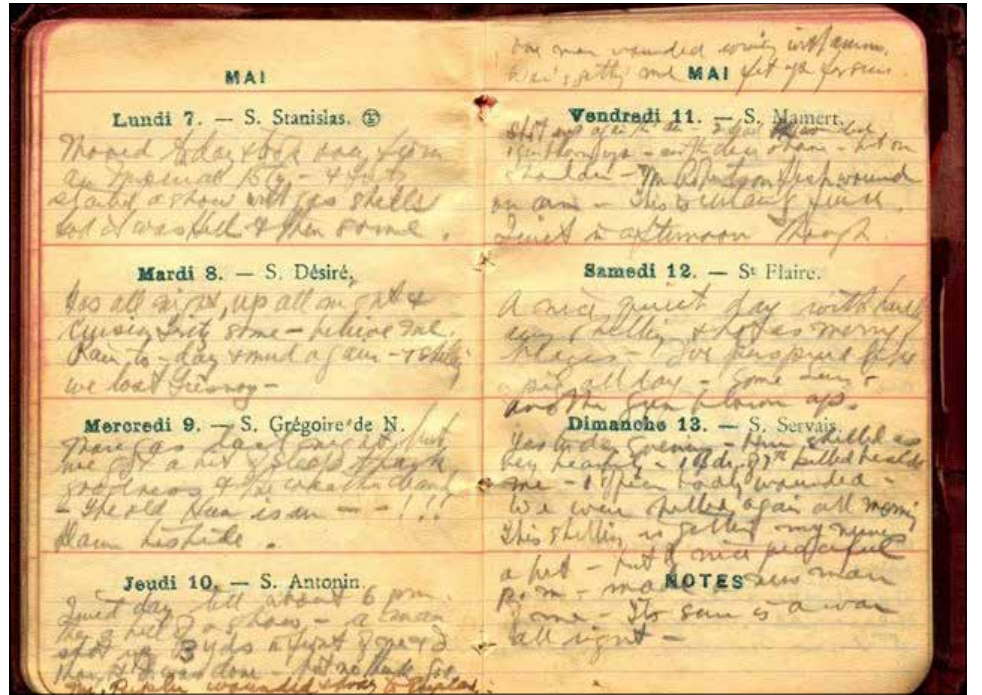
BY MARIANNE GOODFELLOW

On Friday, April 6, 1917, a young artillery officer wrote in his little pocket diary, "Suddenly realized today was Good Friday & I expect all at home are going to church this evening – what I wouldn't give to be there." The lieutenant was Warren Skey, and his church was St. Anne's on Gladstone Avenue in Toronto, across from the chocolate factory. He wrote this note on the eve of the now famous Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Warren was my great uncle, and I discovered his small, faded diary some years ago in the bottom of a portable wooden writing box that my father had passed on to me. The diary was long forgotten, lost really, as often happens to such fragile links to the past—letters and other memorabilia stored away in trunks and desks and attics for seeming safe keeping. These connections to the past are important and indeed valuable, and if I had not found Warren's diary, I would never have been able to come to know, at least a little, both Warren and his father – my great-grandfather, the Rev. Canon Lawrence Skey, once upon a time the rector of St. Anne's, a church he made quite famous as he oversaw the construction of the Byzantine Revival building in the early 1900s.

As I transcribed Warren's diary and struggled to make sense of his often-illegible handwriting, military abbreviations, and names and places that meant nothing to me, I realized that there were stories that I could tell drawing on his day-by-day entries. There is the story of Warren himself, a gunner in the 48th Howitzer Battery of the 2nd Brigade of the Canadian Field Artillery. He was not quite 22 when he arrived in France and almost immediately found himself in "charge of guns" (there were six howitzers in his battery, all horse-drawn). Warren also soon found himself confronted with the reality of war: "Believe me, it's damn hard to see those fellows dying & feel so powerless to stop it." It was not only the men he saw wounded or dead, but also the horses.

Integral to an artillery brigade in World War I were the thousands and thousands of horses and mules, a reality not always covered in depth in books on the war yet expressed in an understated way by Warren, who always enjoyed being with the horses away from the guns at the wagon lines or taking them to the watering places. He knew firsthand, however, the inherent dangers and threat of death the equines with their drivers faced as they took ammunition to the gunpits near the front under cover of nighttime darkness. Warren was "packing ammunition to the guns" through November at Passchendaele, where his efforts to rescue both men and pack horses from that hell earned him the Military Cross. "Thank the Lord & am O.K.," he wrote, then put



Lieut. Warren Skey and the diary that he kept during the First World War. PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARIANNE GOODFELLOW AND LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA



Officers of the 48th Howitzer Battery, CFA, June 1918. Lieut. Skey is seated third from the left.



The Rev. Canon Lawrence Skey

his diary away for good.

The title of my book is *Horses, Howitzers, and Hymns*. I have explained very briefly why horses and howitzers, but what of the hymns? Church was important to Warren, and he was always disappointed when he realized that another Sunday had passed him by; there were no Sundays "when in action for there is too much work to do." But on April 29 he wrote: "Oh! What a day! warm as June – a perfect Sunday – but no church – the bands playing the old familiar hymns made me long for old St. Anne's again – I think that the only things that make me homesick are those old familiar hymns." I wish I knew what they may have been.

Church services were but one of the many responsibilities of military chaplains who served in the war, whether in ambulances and hospitals or in the trenches and gunpits. They said prayers for the dying and wrote letters home to the families of the dead. Warren's father had to do this too when he was in France as a chaplain through the last year of the war. In his letter, Chaplain Skey would

explain that he also had a son at the front and so understood a parent's sorrow. It was perhaps a stroke of luck that he was nearby when one of his own parishioners died, so he conducted the funeral service himself in the Sucrierie Cemetery.

Warren and his father had hoped to spend time together fishing when on leave, but it was month after month of battles—Arras, Amiens, Cambrai. The Rev. Skey was in London when the armistice was declared and back at St. Anne's in December 1918; Warren returned six months later. Somewhere between 700 and 800 parishioners had originally enlisted, and the church was fierce in its support of the war, so understandably there were celebrations in the parish hall; but not everyone came home. On Sunday, Nov. 14, 1920, two solemn services were held for the unveiling of the memorial window and bronze tablet on the north wall of the church. The Rev. Skey, now a canon, officiated at the morning service, and his friend Canon F.G. Scott, the almost legendary military chaplain, at the evening service. The names of

all 84 men engraved on the tablet were read aloud one by one, the congregation standing, the music and hymns specially chosen. Most of these men are buried or commemorated on monuments overseas, but a few rest in Toronto Prospect Cemetery, never having recovered from their wounds, among them Warren's friend Henry Chedzey.

In writing Warren's story, I was very conscious that I never knew him or my great-grandparents. I was also conscious that I had read something that Warren most likely never thought would become the essence of a book. I hope, as I wrote in the epilogue, that I have not stepped too intrusively into their lives, nor those of others within. It has been an honour to know them all.

Dr. Marianne Goodfellow is an honorary adjunct professor in the College of the Humanities at Carleton University. Her book, Horses, Howitzers, and Hymns: The Story of Lieut. Skey, MC, and His Father in the Great War, is available from major booksellers.



KIND HEARTS

Anglican churches take part in The Coldest Night of the Year walks in February to raise funds for local charities. At left, the team from Trinity, Bradford – from left, the Rev. Dana Dickson, Meghan White, Klara White, Billy White, Ellen Cotton and baby Alice, and Bill White – walk in Newmarket, raising \$4,430 for Inn From the Cold, an organization that assists unhoused and at-risk people. Above, youth from St. Mary Magdalene take part in the walk in Toronto, helping to raise \$3,275 for Sistering, a neighbourhood centre that supports women in need. PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRINITY, BRADFORD AND ST. MARY MAGDALENE

Grant helps youth band flourish

Program nurtures musicians, connections to worship

CHRIST Memorial Church, Oshawa is the latest recipient of the Douglas C. Cowling Bursary, receiving a \$5,000 grant to continue its youth band program, a vibrant initiative that allows young people to express their faith through music while developing their talents.

With a focus on the opportunities and challenges facing the Anglican Church, the Cowling Bursary provides essential support for programs that engage people of all ages in meaningful worship experiences. It was established by friends and family of the late Douglas Cowling, ODT, a musician, writer and scholar who shared his enthusiasm for accessible music and liturgical experimentation with parishes throughout the diocese and beyond. Mr. Cowling died in 2017.

According to its members, Christ Church's youth band isn't just about music; it's about community, faith and mentorship. For many participants, the band has been a transformative experience. Fortune, a member of the group, shares:

"Youth group and the band have shown me how many fun ways

there are to serve the Lord, from singing to gathering together to discuss His glory. As the bible says, 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' Whether we're singing, playing drums, or simply spending time together, we know He is with us."

Another participant, Bright, reflects on his personal growth:

"I gained so much from the youth band—I learned to play the guitar and improved my drumming. I feel so lucky to have Kirk in my life. Even in difficult times, he always finds a way to make it to band practice. His dedication has inspired me to keep going and keep learning."

Thanks to the support of the Cowling Bursary, this program continues to nurture young musicians and strengthen their connection to worship – one note at a time.

For more information about the Douglas C. Cowling Bursary and to learn how to apply, visit the Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation's web page at www.toronto.anglican.ca/foundation.

Staff



SPECIAL DAY

St. Barnabas, Chester celebrates Black History Month on Feb. 9 with a special service of spirituals, prayer and reflection, followed by a coffee hour catered by members of the Black community. Each Sunday in February, the congregation learned about a notable Canadian Black leader, such as William Peyton Hubbard, Toronto's first Black politician and an Anglican who was elected alderman in 1894 and served until 1914. He lived in the parish on Broadview Avenue from 1908 until his death in 1935, and a local park is named after him. The church also ran profiles of Bishop Peter Fenty, Viola Desmond and the Rev. Blair Dixon in its Sunday bulletin. PHOTOS BY THE REV. LOUISE DIGHTAM

TO PLACE AN AD CALL 905.833.6200 OR EMAIL ANGLICAN@CHURCHADVERTISING.CA

IN MOTION

Appointments

- The Rev. Canon Judy Herron-Graham, Honorary Assistant, St. Paul on-the-Hill, Pickering, Feb. 10.
- The Rev. Ginie Wong, Associate Priest, All Saints, Kingsway, Feb. 12.
- The Rev. Theo Ipema, Associate Priest, St. Thomas, Huron Street, Feb. 16.
- The Rev. Diane Heekyong Lee, Priest-in-Charge, St. Matthew, Oshawa and St. Peter, Oshawa, March 1.
- The Rev. Sooraj Paulose Thomas (Diocese of Kerela), Priest-in-Charge, Church of South India, Toronto, May 1.
- Sister Elizabeth Ann Eckert, Reverend Mother of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, May 6.
- The Rev. Canon Dr. Alison Falby, Incumbent, Christ

Church, Deer Park, Sept. 1.

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
- Parish of Penetanguishene and Waubaushene

Parish Selection Committee Process

First Phase - (not yet receiving names):

• N/A

Second Phase - (receiving names via Bishop):

- Parish of Churchill and Cookstown

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names):

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

Other Process

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

Retirement

- Sister Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas's last day as Reverend Mother of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine will be May 5.

THE STEWARD

BY PETER MISIASZEK

Going to church is good for you



For my last several columns, I have focused on some interesting changes and trends in the Church that have been acceler-

ated by the pandemic. We have witnessed a profound emergence of online worship as a vehicle of liturgical connection and engagement. Electronic giving use, in the form of tap-to-give, text-to-give, QR codes and e-transfers, has become ubiquitous. Websites serve as essential ministry hubs. Current, updated websites are vital as seekers "window shop" for church communities.

Despite these positive developments, many congregations continue to experience a decline in attendance, giving, volunteer recruitment and community engagement. While much of this was underway long before the pandemic struck in 2020, in some communities this trend has accelerated. Indeed, parishes that did not adapt quickly to the impact of social distancing and lockdowns have had a challenging time rebuilding.

Regrettably, the pandemic abruptly changed people's pattern of social interaction, including worship attendance. The negative impact of these changes is profound. *The Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health* and *The Canadian Geriatrics Journal* both report that feelings of loneliness and isolation were especially pronounced during the pandemic, with more than two thirds of women over the age of 65 being negatively affected. Given that, you would expect a run on church attendance, yet many churches report stubborn growth numbers, especially in rural communities.

I know the Church as an institution has gotten a bad rap in the last few years. As Christians we have been fed a constant news reel of examples of abuse, neglect and lack of respect. These are, sadly, real causes for concern. Church leaders, and especially women in authority, have experienced real hurt. Despite this trend, our Church remains a beacon of hope for a broken and lonely world. And going to church CAN be good for you.

Putting aside the obvious

and well-founded criticism, we should promote church attendance and membership not just because it allows us to connect with the Divine. It can also have a transformative impact on our daily lives.

Some ways in which going to church can be beneficial include: an increased sense of purpose and meaning in life; greater emotional and social support; increased feelings of belonging and community; reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation; improved mental and emotional well-being; and increased feelings of hope and optimism.

Of course, our intention is not to turn church into a country club or alternative service organization. We are first and foremost a house of worship where we give thanks to God and participate in God's grand mission for creation.

Still, church attendees regularly experience a host of quantifiable health benefits according to the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University. The report concludes that "religious service attendance is associated with greater longevity, less depression, less suicide, less smoking, less substance abuse, better cancer and cardiovascular disease survival, less divorce, greater social support, greater meaning in life, greater life satisfaction, more volunteering and greater civic engagement." Compared to those who do not attend church, suicide rates are a staggering 84 per cent lower among church attendees. Study after study concludes that going to church is a good thing.

Science alone will not convince people that having faith improves your lot in life. But the evidence does indicate that despite its shortcomings – it is composed of human beings, after all – church and faith and religion have a positive impact on one's overall disposition and outlook.

Now that the pandemic is in the rearview mirror (for good, I hope), be a good neighbour, a good steward and invite others to church. It might just improve your health and perspective at the same time.

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

PRAYER CYCLE

FOR APRIL

1. St. Paul the Apostle, Rexdale
2. St. Philip, Etobicoke
3. St. Stephen, Downsview
4. Christ Church, Deer Park
5. The Community of Deacons (Archdeacon Kyn Barker)
6. Eglinton Deanery
7. Grace Church on-the-Hill
8. Church of the Messiah
9. St. Augustine of Canterbury
10. St. Clement, Eglinton

11. St. Cuthbert, Leaside

12. St. John, York Mills

13. Palm Sunday

14. Holy Week

15. Holy Week

16. Holy Week

17. Holy Week

18. Holy Week

19. Holy week

20. Easter Day

21. St. Timothy, North Toronto

22. Transfiguration

23. Parish Administrators and Parish Secretaries

24. AURA - The Anglican United Refugee Alliance

25. St. George, Grafton

26. The Anglican Church Women (ACW) - Janice Hodgson, Diocesan President

27. Durham & Northumberland Deanery

28. St. George, Newcastle

29. The Chapel of St. George, Gore's Landing

30. St. John, Bowmanville

LOOKING AHEAD

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

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 13 - Bach Vespers, 7 p.m., Church of the Redeemer, Bloor Street and Avenue Road, Toronto.

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 counsellor in spiritual care for Lakeridge Health. The theme of the day will be "Ministering with Compassion." An invitation with the registration link will be emailed to each church by April 1. 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.

APRIL 27 - Yeshu Satsang Toronto, an evening of Indian devotional music, 6 p.m., Church of the Redeemer, Bloor Street and Avenue Road, Toronto.

MAY 2 & 3 - Monks' Cell, a dining experience fundraiser, at St. Theodore of Canterbury, 111 Cactus Ave., Toronto. Dine on open-hearth charcoal-grilled steak or chicken served by costumed wait staff in a setting reminiscent of a medieval dining hall. Licensed. Order your meat preference and wine with your reservation. \$50 per person. Wine selection \$15 per bottle. Reservations open April 6 online at monkscell@hotmail.com or call 647-393-1391. The Monks' Cell will be open on May 2 from 6-10 p.m. and on May 3 from 5-10 p.m.

MAY 4 - Musicfest 2025, a concert with handbells, chimes, band and soloists, 3 p.m., St. John, York Mills, 19 Don Ridge Dr., Toronto. Fully accessible with free parking or an uphill walk from the York Mills subway station. Admission is free, however a freewill offering will be collected for charities, including Sleeping Children Around the World. For more information, call 416-225-6611 or visit www.SJYM.ca.

MAY 10 - Welsh Male Voice Choir, 3-5 p.m., Church of Our Saviour, 1 Laurentide Dr., Don Mills. Advance tickets, \$40; at the door, \$45. For tickets, contact the church during office hours at 416-385-1805, Tuesdays and Fridays, noon to 4 p.m., or text Elizabeth Liness at 905-621-9205.

MAY 31 - Lift Up Our Hearts, a spe-

"Come away...and rest a while..." Mark 6:31

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cial service of spiritual renewal for all Anglicans in the diocese, 2 p.m., All Saints, Whitby. The Rev. Gerlyn Henry to preach. The service will

include music, a lay witness talk, an opportunity for prayer and anointing and a reception with delicious food afterwards.



The Rev. Augusto Nunez and migrant workers from Mexico have their picture taken after a bilingual service at St. Saviour, Orono. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MIGRANT WORKER MINISTRY

Church welcomes first migrant workers

Men thank ministry for support as cost of basic items rise

BY THE REV. AUGUSTO NUNEZ

In January, some of our agricultural migrant workers, in particular the ones that work in greenhouses, arrived in Canada from Mexico. To welcome them, St. Saviour, Orono held a very special bilingual Sunday service. Indeed, one can say that it feels like a family reunion, since we have known quite a few of them for many years, and their presence in our worship community brings extra joy to our services.

In preparation for their arrival, we assembled welcome bags containing hygiene products and snacks. Last year, we distributed around 500 welcome bags, and this year we expect to distribute many more. Many of the workers, especially those who have been coming

for years, are surprised to see how inflation has increased the costs of everyday items. In addition, some have also shared that their wages are impacted by the low Canadian dollar. With tariffs looming, there is the potential for life to get even more difficult.

In their own words, we hear how impactful the Migrant Worker Ministry has been:

“My name is Cortés Ayala and I work at Algoma Orchards, which is dedicated to everything related to apples. We thank Father Augusto and all the people who support us with the pantry items, winter clothes, shoes, backpacks and everything else. Thank you and God bless you” - *Alejandro Cortés Ayala, Algoma Orchards*

“My name is Oscar and I am

from the state of Veracruz, Mexico. Thanks to the parish, Father Ted (McCollum) and Father Augusto for the church services that we are invited to attend when possible. In the services, we thank God for protecting us at work and for taking care of our families. Thank you very much for all the attention and support you give us.” - *Oscar Sanchez, Good Year Farm*

“My name is Ricardo Johnson and I am from the Watson Farm. Pastor and team, you do wonderful, good work! God bless you and your team, and I hope and trust in the Lord that He will continue to bless you and your team, to guide you, to protect you, to lead you, and to direct! God bless you, sir.” - *Ricardo Johnson, Watson Farm*

There is no doubt that these

workers are a vulnerable population that our Church and community are reaching out to, thanks to our diocesan focus on mission and outreach. This reflects our shared responsibility to care for all individuals in our parishes and diocese, as well as to extend our outreach beyond our church buildings.

We are delighted to welcome our migrant worker brothers and friends as they return to Canada.

The Migrant Worker Ministry gladly welcomes in-kind donations and financial support through your FaithWorks contributions.

The Rev. Augusto Nunez is the incumbent of St. Saviour, Orono and director of the Migrant Worker Ministry that serves migrant farm workers in Durham Region and Northumberland County.

The Anglican Church Cricket Festival 2025

A space through cricket for the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of young and old, churched and unchurched, skilled cricketers and enthusiastic amateurs!

Come join your fellow Anglicans across the GTA for a day of cricket lovely cricket! Meet new friends, enjoy food, fun and fellowship. All are welcome.

Date: July 12, 2025
 Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm (Official ceremony 9:00 am - 9:30 am)
 Location: Creditview Sandalwood Sports Complex, 10530 Creditview Rd, Brampton, ON L7A 0G2

For more information contact:
 Ranil Mendis - rmendis1@gmail.com | Peter Marshall - judipeter@hotmail.com

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