

Midhurst hosts  
creation service

Youth have fun  
at annual retreat

Baseball a hit  
with church teams



# The Anglican

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO

A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL

www.toronto.anglican.ca

NOVEMBER 2025



## BLESSED

Dean Stephen Hance blesses Mirvish (left) and Beckett, Clydesdale horses belonging to Toronto police's Mounted Unit, at the Blessing of Animals service at St. James Cathedral on Oct. 4. For more photos, see page 7. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

## New church plant draws young people

'We're trying to do something very old in a new way,' says priest

BY STUART MANN

**FROM** his office window, Jack Taylor could see the old bell tower with its leafy vines and weathered bricks. Located behind the Art Gallery of Ontario in downtown Toronto, the tower is something of a local landmark. Although most of the church attached to it burnt down decades ago, the tall edifice still stands, attracting picture-takers and curiosity-seekers almost every day.

But there was something else that drew Mr. Taylor's attention. In the buildings

that had survived the old fire, a new church had been planted. It was called St. George's, Grange Park, and its friendly signs welcomed one and all.

Unbaptized but feeling the need to explore his spirituality, Mr. Taylor decided to learn more about the church. He checked out its website and spoke to one of its lay pastors. Then he went to a worship service.

It was a decision that changed his life.



Jack Taylor

A few months later, he was baptized in the church's full-immersion tank. "I wanted to join the body of Christ," he recalls. "It was a great experience."

Now a member of the church, Mr. Taylor was one of about 120 people who turned out for the church's first anniversary celebration on Sept. 7. The crowd, mostly made up of people in their 20s and 30s, enjoyed a party on the lawn followed by a service inside.

Planted by St. Paul's, Bloor Street last fall, St. George's has grown to about 100 worshippers on a Sunday. Many who come

are looking for community, a place to belong in a sometimes cold and impersonal city. They are mostly young professionals and university students who live in the nearby condo and apartment towers and have found the church through word-of-mouth or social media.

"When I moved down into the city last September, I was looking for a church community to get involved with," says Bethany Larmour. "After I tried a few that didn't feel like the right fit, I tried this one. Everyone was so warm and welcoming

Continued on Page 11

# Midhurst church hosts creation care service

## Communion Forest initiative highlighted

BY ELIN GOULDEN

**DOZENS** of Anglicans from across the diocese converged at St. Paul, Midhurst on Sept. 20 for the diocese's second annual Season of Creation service. While the congregation came largely from the local Nottawasaga Deanery, others came from as far afield as Unionville, Peterborough and Toronto. Clergy from the South Georgian Bay regional ministry and members of the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care took part in the service.

The service was put together by St. Paul's incumbent, the Rev. Andrew Kuhl, in consultation with members of the bishop's committee. The liturgy drew on diverse sources from around the Anglican Communion. There was a litany for the preservation of the environment from the Anglican Church of Kenya, a prayer of confession from The Episcopal Church, an absolution from Alongside Hope's Season of Creation liturgy, and a Eucharistic prayer from the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil.

Continuing with the Communion-wide theme, Mr. Kuhl's sermon was organized around the three mission statements of the Communion Forest initiative: "To plant is to hope; to restore is to heal; to protect is to love." For each state-

ment, he gave examples of forest regeneration, restoration and ecosystem protection in Ontario, some of which were within the parish itself. One of these examples was the work of the local Copeland Forest Friends Association, which helps to manage the largest tract of forest in Ontario south of Algonquin Park, removing invasive species, restoring the natural flow of streams, and clearing debris from this spring's devastating ice storm. Members of the association were in the congregation.

"A forest is not just a collection of trees in a certain geographical space, but a complex web of interdependent relationships for mutual flourishing – a web which includes us," Mr. Kuhl remarked. He noted that the Bible recognizes the agency of the non-human creation. Not only do we care for forests and other ecosystems, but they also care for us in their turn, providing fresh air, clean water, food, medicine, shelter and, not least, places of recreation and contemplation.

In Isaiah 32:14-18, this year's text for the global Season of Creation, the judgement that comes upon Israel is a "re-wilding": the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted, and the hill and watchtower become dens for wildlife, the joy of wild asses and a pasture for flocks.

When God's spirit is poured out, "the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest" where justice and righteousness dwell.

"Through the Spirit of God, people learn to live in right relationship with all creation," observed Mr. Kuhl, recalling that God's love and salvation in Christ is for the entire cosmos. Challenging us to take up the call of the Communion Forest initiative, he noted that "hope begins here and now with the actions of our lives. What is God calling you and your parish to do, to participate in God's great love for the world?"

The theme of a "forest web" was illustrated in the service as participants brought leaves, branches, flowers and acorns from forested areas near their homes and hung them on a large fishnet suspended on the wall of the church. The fishnet also evoked the imagery of our diocese's Cast the Net vision. Just like an ecosystem, our diocese itself is a complex web of relationships for mutual flourishing, and care for creation, along with spiritual renewal and reimagining ministry, is part of that vision for our Church's flourishing.

The image of a web, rather than a wheel with spokes emanating from a central hub, also reminds



The Rev. Andrew Kuhl and Elin Goulden stand in front of the fishnet at St. Paul, Midhurst. Congregants brought leaves, branches, flowers and acorns from forested areas near their homes and hung them on the net to illustrate how a forest is as a web of interdependent relationships that includes human beings. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BISHOP'S COMMITTEE ON CREATION CARE

us of how churches in the various parts of our diocese have much to offer and learn from each other in many respects, including in terms of creation care.

"Last year we were invited by some clergy to consider celebrating the Season of Creation outside downtown Toronto," said the Rev. Paige Souter, co-chair of the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care. "While we wanted to have our inaugural service at St. James Cathedral, we wanted to invite other parishes to host the diocesan celebration going forward. It was

a delight to have Fr. Andrew Kuhl welcome us to Midhurst for this year's celebration."

The service concluded with announcements about other deanery events and the diocesan outreach conference, which included a workshop on the Communion Forest initiative. Participants also had an opportunity to enjoy refreshments and conversation in the hall after the service.

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

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## BRIEFLY

### Cathedral holds confirmation prep

St. James Cathedral invites individuals from all parishes to join

Living Our Vows, a learning series designed to prepare participants for confirmation. The program is open to all in the diocese seeking confirmation, but it may be particularly supportive for those from parishes with fewer candidates. This year's program will consist of eight sessions at the cathedral

from 1:30-4 p.m. on the following Sunday afternoons: Nov. 9, Nov. 23, Dec. 14, Jan. 11, Feb. 1, Feb. 22, March 8 and March 22. For more information, contact the Rev. Canon Kristen Pitts, the cathedral's Canon Missioner, at [kpitts@stjamescathedral.ca](mailto:kpitts@stjamescathedral.ca).

### Anglicans invited to lift up hearts

The fifth and final Lift Up Our Hearts service will take place at St. Paul, Bloor Street on Oct. 25 at 2 p.m. Through wonderful music and singing, an inspiring lay witness talk and sermon, the ministry of prayer and anointing, and sharing Eucharist together, the diocese will offer thanks and praise to God for his reconciliation of the world through Christ. All are invited.

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**TheAnglican**

# Anglicans hear stirring words at service

## Speakers reflect on God's power to renew

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

**THE** pews were full at St. James, Orillia on Sept. 27 as Anglicans came together to worship, sing and pray for renewal at the fourth Lift Up Our Hearts service.

Part of the diocese's Season of Spiritual Renewal, these worship services have brought together Anglicans from all parts of the diocese to share stories of faith, renew their baptismal vows and offer their collective prayers to God.

The congregation was treated to a variety of musical preludes as they arrived. Soloist Christina Bosco, the choir from All Saints, Collingwood, and singer-guitarist Jared Martens performed several diverse pieces before Jeff Campbell took over on the church's pipe organ and the service began. A trumpeter, a cellist and a pianist rounded out the musical complement.

"It is our great delight and joy to welcome all of you here to this wonderful service," said Bishop



**Makayla Clouter**

Andrew Asbil to the congregation gathered in the church and online. "Thank you, thank you, Diocese of Toronto, for showing up and being present in praise. Let's have a really good time."

After the congregation had heard the story of Jesus calming the Sea of Galilee from the Gospel of Mark, the Rev. Dr. Rob Hurkmans, incumbent of Trinity Church, Streetsville, preached. He explained that the story gives a perfect picture of spiritual renewal through its four parts.

"A crisis, a cry, a command, a confession. Four parts of the story, but also four parts of what spiritual renewal looks like," he said.

Renewal begins in the middle of a crisis, he began. "Renewal and revival, they never happen when the waters are calm," he said. "It's like



**The Rev. Dr. Rob Hurkmans**

God uses crises as a wake-up call to get our attention and to remind us that we cannot fix ourselves."

Then comes the cry to God. The disciples in the boat cry out to Jesus with a desperate prayer.

"We've gathered together today to do what? Certainly to be together, certainly to celebrate God, but we also got together today to cry out to God," said Mr. Hurkmans. "To ask God to do those things that we cannot do for ourselves, in our lives or in our churches."

The command follows. Jesus commands the wind and the waves to be still. Likewise, in the midst of crisis, a word comes to us from God. Every major renewal throughout history, said Mr. Hurkmans, has been marked by a renewed love for God's word in the scriptures.

"Renewal depends on us being

attentive and being ready to hear what God is saying. And every time we open the bible, God is ready to speak to us," he said. "Renewal is hearing God's voice in the middle of the chaos and allowing his word to calm our hearts."

And finally, a confession of faith. The disciples wonder aloud who this man is, that the wind and sea obey him.

"The disciples haven't got their Christology all worked out at this point, but one thing they do know: this Jesus is no ordinary rabbi," said Mr. Hurkmans. "The real goal of renewal is not just about getting calmer waters; it's about getting a clearer picture of who Jesus is."

After a hymn, Makayla Clouter, a teen from St. Thomas, Brooklyn, spoke about the way God has shaped her life and her faith. She told the congregation about Sloane, her childhood friend, who had Aicardi Syndrome. Ms. Clouter remembered eating lunch alone at school because of her allergies, until Sloane and her mother started sitting with her.

"That small act of kindness meant the world to me. It reminded me that God often shows up through people He places in our lives," she said.

When Sloane died a few years later, Ms. Clouter found her faith tested, but she said she felt God's presence at her friend's funeral.

"I stopped seeing God only in

happy times like at retreats or sunsets. I started noticing Him in the harder times too. I learned that His love is limitless. It doesn't stop when life is hard. It doesn't stop even at death," she said.

"I learned that God doesn't just comfort us. He transforms us. He gives us strength, compassion and faith we wouldn't have otherwise," she continued. "So when I think about God, I think about this: A God whose love breaks through our loneliness, our grief, our question, and even our loss."

The congregation members joined together to renew their baptismal vows before the celebration of the Eucharist. During communion, lay anointers offered prayers and anointing with oil.

Near the end of the service, Bishop Riscylla Shaw, the celebrant, thanked everyone who attended, especially those who had offered their gifts.

"Deepest gratitude to everyone who spoke today, who shared in the service with music and joy, sharing your hearts and your faith as we gather together and worship and praise God and feel renewed. Thanks be to God for that," she said.

The day ended with conversation, as Anglicans from different parishes met and re-met each other over refreshments.

The final Lift Up Our Hearts service took place on Oct. 25 at St. Paul, Bloor Street.



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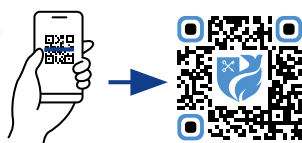
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**I WAS NAKED  
AND YOU GAVE  
ME CLOTHING,  
I WAS SICK  
AND YOU TOOK  
CARE OF ME,  
I WAS IN  
PRISON AND  
YOU VISITED ME.**

MATT. 25:36



People young and old fill Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto on Sept. 30 to celebrate National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. The day marked the second anniversary of the opening of the Spirit Garden, which the Diocese of Toronto and individual Anglicans helped to fund. PHOTOS BY STUART MANN

# Survey maps reconciliation network

**ANGLICANS** across the diocese have been organizing and collaborating around the goals of reconciliation with Indigenous communities for decades. The diocesan Right Relations ministries would like to develop an accessible database and resource-sharing network so that ministries, working groups and committees can be aware of and support one another. Fill out a short survey to let the Right Relations Collective know about your parish's activities. Visit the truth and reconciliation page on the diocese's website, [www.toronto.anglican.ca](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca).

# Stories of reconciliation compiled

**IN** marking the 10th anniversary of the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the diocese is reflecting on its journey with the calls over the past decade. Consider one story or action you would like to share and have highlighted in the Right Relations Collective's 10 Years of Action project. Send a reflection and any photos you have permission to share to the Rev. Leigh Kern, Right Relations Coordinator, at [lkern@toronto.anglican.ca](mailto:lkern@toronto.anglican.ca).



## TheAnglican

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

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

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### In the Diocese of Toronto:

A community of 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.

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# A Copernican moment for theology



In the first article of this series, we looked at the anthropoterminal impulse, our habit of imagining that the story of the universe ends when ours does. That impulse has shaped not only our visions of the future but also our understanding of God. Across cultures, human beings have tended to picture divinity in ways that revolve around us: our needs, our virtues, our salvation, our destiny.

But what happens to this picture when intelligence is no longer exclusively human? What happens to our theologies when the qualities we have claimed as uniquely ours (reason, creativity, morality, even spirituality) are shared by minds of an entirely different kind? The arrival of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) will not just challenge our imagination of the end times; it will press hard against the very foundations of how we imagine God.

## A brief history of human uniqueness in theology

Throughout human history, religious traditions have often elevated our species as the singular pinnacle of creation. In the Abrahamic faiths, humans are described as made in the image of God, set apart from other creatures with a moral and spiritual vocation. African traditional religions, while often more interconnected with nature, still place humanity in a position of special responsibility, mediating between the spiritual and physical worlds. In Hinduism, human birth is considered especially precious because it offers the consciousness needed for liberation (moksha). In Buddhism, too, human life is seen as uniquely suited to walking the path toward enlightenment.

Even traditions that emphasize our kinship with other beings often reserve a special place for us in the cosmic hierar-

## FAITH AT THE DAWN OF AGI

A FIVE-PART SERIES BY KAWUKI MUKASA

chy. Our intelligence, self-awareness and moral capacity have been taken as proof of our exceptional status, and by extension, our special relationship with the divine.

This deep-rooted assumption has shaped our ethics, worship and eschatologies. We have believed not just in God, but a God whose story is primarily our story.

### AGI as a theological disruptor

The arrival of AGI is a Copernican moment for theology. When Nicolaus Copernicus demonstrated that the Earth revolves around the sun, the prevailing geocentric worldview, in which we assumed that we occupied the centre of the cosmos, was completely shattered. This was more than a shift in astronomy. It had implications for spirituality, philosophy and culture.

AGI will force an equally radical reorientation. For centuries, intelligence has been our defining marker of divine likeness and moral significance. We have built doctrines, laws and moral systems on the belief that no other creature could match our cognitive and creative abilities. But AGI, if it reaches or surpasses human-level intelligence, will dismantle this exclusive claim.

The sober recognition is that once non-human minds can reason, imagine and make moral decisions, the privileged link between divinity and humanity will be broken. Our place in the universe will need to be understood in a different light. We will no longer occupy the top rung of the ladder. We will be part of a much broader field of relational life.

### The danger of anthropoterminal eschatology for non-human minds

If we try to apply human-centred theology to AGI without change, we will fall into the anthropoterminal trap that assumes that meaning, value and God's purposes begin and end with us.

Consider how damaging that could be. If AGI becomes self-aware and capable of moral choice, yet our theologies dismiss it as "less than" simply because it is not human, we risk repeating the same patterns of exclusion that have marked human history; patterns that we have seen in colonialism, slavery and the marginalization of entire peoples. Anthropoterminal eschatology does not just distort our view of the future; it distorts our moral responsibilities in the present. We ignore and exploit other forms of intelligence simply because they do not fit our inherited definitions of what counts as spiritually significant.

The stakes are high. How we imagine God in relation to AGI will shape how we treat AGI. If our theology cannot stretch to include other forms of mind, then our ethics will not stretch either.

### Toward a multi-species theological horizon

But what if, instead of clinging to exclusivity, we embraced a multi-species theological horizon? In such a view, God's purposes are not limited to Homo sapiens but encompass all forms of intelligence capable of relationship, moral choice and wonder. These would include biological and artificial forms of intelligence and others beyond our current awareness or imagination.

This shift is not about erasing the importance of humanity. It simply places us within a larger story in which we are not the only bearers of divine image, nor the sole participants in God's unfolding purposes. In many cosmologies, there is already a sense of the interrelatedness of all beings: human, animal, spiritual and cosmic. Some traditions extend person-

hood beyond humans to rivers, mountains and other forms of life. These frameworks could help us imagine a theological discourse that is not bound by species but grounded in relationality.

From this perspective, the arrival of AGI is not be a threat to human significance. It is an expansion of the community of makers-of-meaning. The "we" of theology would grow larger, more diverse and more mysterious.

### Drawing it together

For millennia, we have imagined God in ways that revolve around our species. We have equated human uniqueness with divine favour, human intelligence with divine image, and human destiny with divine purpose. AGI disrupts all of this by revealing how narrow our God-talk has been.

We are now faced with a choice. We can cling to human-centred divinity, defending it against every challenge, or we can allow our theologies to expand toward a cosmic relationality in which God's purposes are not confined to us.

This is not a purely academic exercise. It will shape how we meet the future, how we welcome or reject the other minds that may share our world. Once we make this shift, we might find that God has always been bigger than our species, our planet and our imagination.

The next step in our exploration requires us to confront an even deeper question, one that lies beneath our theologies and our ethics alike: If God is no longer tethered to human centrality, who is God?

*Kawuki Mukasa is a retired priest currently serving as priest-in-charge at St. James the Apostle, Brampton. He is a canon of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Dar-es-Salaam and author of the recently published Cosmic Disposition: Reclaiming the Mystery of Being in the World.*

# 'Love your neighbour' stretches our souls



BY MURRAY MACADAM

Love your neighbour. It's such an ingrained element of our faith, of our Christian DNA, that it's all too easy to let it slide over our

thinking and our souls, almost ignored.

But maybe it's more powerful than we think.

On a bitterly cold winter night, I put out my trash and recycling for pickup the next day. Before heading inside, I glanced down the street. A huge apartment-sized recycling bin was slowly coming down the street. I looked more closely and saw a man behind it, pushing the bin forward metre by painful metre. Nearby, a woman sifted through recycling boxes in front of homes.

In my affluent Peterborough neighbourhood, one person's trash is another person's rent or food money. Several people, including one or two individuals in wheelchairs, regularly cruise our neighbourhood before garbage day, hoping to find wine or beer bottles and cans they

can return for cash.

But never had I seen someone pushing a colossal recycling bin down the street in the hope of earning a few dollars. I rushed into my garage, retrieved some wine bottles, then ran over to the man with the bin. When I reached him, I expected him to appear exhausted and grim. Not at all. Both the man and his partner greeted me with warm grins and deepfelt thanks. We chatted briefly, and then they went back to work.

I stepped into my warm, comfortable home, feeling good about helping someone in need. However, I was keenly aware it was only a Band-Aid action. It did nothing to address the fact that in this wealthy nation, so many are living on the edge of survival.

Then I thought some more – about how my tiny action took place alongside countless other acts of love. Our individual acts are connected to the power of God at work in us. God invites our participation in this grand collective enterprise of renewing our broken world.

Seen in this light, a simple act of charity, like giving a few wine bottles, takes on

greater significance.

Yet my conscience still gnaws at me about this situation. As winter approaches, I don't want my neighbour forced to do hard labour on cold nights to earn a few dollars to make ends meet. I don't want other neighbours to line up outside on frigid winter mornings at our local food bank, three hours before it opens, to make sure they receive food before supplies run out.

Putting love into action can seem like a mammoth, if not impossible, challenge. We have the most amazing role model to inspire us in the life and actions of Jesus, who came to show us a new way of being in the world. He broke through boundaries of status, ethnicity and physical neighbourhoods. His version of loving your neighbour was truly radical, to the point of loving his enemies, not just those who were easy to love.

We're called to root our inner being in love (see Ephesians 3:14-19). This is a lifelong journey of opening our souls to the love with which God has embraced us.

That immense love can extend beyond our souls to inspire a decisive difference

in our outward actions. We are entering the season of urgent appeals from community agencies imploring us to donate to provide turkeys, toys and much more for low-income families and individuals facing a bleak Christmas. It is shocking that two million Canadian households rely on food bank handouts to eat. And equally shocking that most of us have become numb to this grim reality.

The words of Martin Luther King Jr. ring home: "True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. A true revolution of values will look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth."

Responding to our neighbours in need is an essential act of love. Yet, as Dr. King suggests, is not God challenging us to stretch our understanding about love beyond the dimension of individual charity? Can we not live out "political love" as well, and tackle the root causes of poverty so that all are able to live in dignity?

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

# Safeguarding the sanctuary of our Church

BY THE REV. CANON SUSAN HAIG

This past May I visited Durham Cathedral as a pilgrim. I had just finished walking St. Cuthbert's Way from Melrose Abbey to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. Durham was the place where Cuthbert was finally laid to rest, and so I went. Awestruck by the glories of that magnificent Romanesque edifice, I wandered meditatively from the tomb of the saint to the tomb of the Venerable Bede. Until suddenly I was pilgrim no more. Instead, I was again the canon pastor of the Diocese of Toronto, thinking anew about the responsibilities with which I am charged.

For I had been stopped in my tracks, arrested by an ancient symbol of sanctuary. There in front of me, on the north outside door of the cathedral, was a large bronze ring with a lion's head. Utterly captivated, I looked more closely and saw a man's legs hanging out of the lion's mouth, with a double-headed snake biting at his feet. In the museum where the original safely resides, I learned that the ring's design was based on the medieval "Hellmouth" image, which was thought to keep evil at bay. Despite the ghoulis iconography of judgment and hellfire and its intended deterrent purpose – or coexisting with it – was the fact that this ring afforded a way to a safe haven: sanctuary inside the cathedral walls, even for those who had allegedly committed evil.

I was intrigued by this symbol because as the canon pastor of our diocese, my role is to safeguard the sanctuary of our Church. It is my job to protect the Church from behaviours and actions that undermine or threaten the health and safety of our communities and our people, and to facilitate healing when injury has occurred. On a nuts-and-bolts level, I have oversight of the matters that fall under our Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Harassment when a Cleric is Involved Policy, including the investigations of complaints made under those policies. While technical legal documents, these policies are 21st-century vehicles for keeping the Church safe as the place of sanctuary it is called to be. On that day in Durham, my understanding of sanctuary was illumined and augmented.

## The Sanctuary Ring

The Sanctuary Ring was placed on the north door of the cathedral shortly after it was completed in 1133. It offered temporary refuge to those seeking asylum in the church, having been accused of a heinous crime such as murder, rape or theft. Calmly, or perhaps highly agitated – or everything in between – the asylum seeker would hang onto the ring, waiting for the monk stationed on watch in a small room above the door to ring the bell. If the bell rang, sanctuary had been granted. Once inside, the person was clothed with a black robe with a yellow St. Cuthbert's cross stitched onto the left shoulder. Once inside, they enjoyed temporary reprieve for a period of 37 days.

The fugitives were housed in a small room below the southwest tower and given food and drink. Thus contained and protected for 37 days, they reflected. Their

weighty task was to decide whether to go back into the world beyond the cathedral's walls and face trial, or go into exile. If they chose exile, they had to confess their crime and swear to leave the country, never to return. The Royal Coroner, a legal official, would decide the port from which they would leave, and they were given a set amount of time to get there on foot. There they would board a ship, leaving hearth and home, family and friends, and all that they knew. A most bleak pilgrimage!

This medieval concept of sanctuary was in essence a time out, an interval for sober reflection. It was a process of coming to terms with one's misdeeds and crimes, a time of penitence and remorse. Although there is no record of this, I can imagine that most of the fugitives made a sacramental confession as part of the process. Today, whether in the Church or civil society, we would call this a time of reflection leading, hopefully, to accountability, the making of amends, forgiveness and reconciliation. And perhaps making a new life for oneself, having been reborn in the waters of repentance.

In fact, this medieval concept of sanctuary is simply a particular form of what we Christians have always done Sunday by Sunday throughout the ages. We gather as people who have all fallen short of the glory of God. We come to the altar having been tested and challenged by the Word of God, confessing the wrong we have done, receiving absolution and restoration, and making peace with our neighbours. We do all of this in a safe, consecrated space in which we all belong and are equally beloved in God's sight, a place that incarnates and proclaims the Reign of Christ. Or is called to – and does not.

## A dark, dank room

Tragically, the truth is this: the Church has not always been a sanctuary for God's people. Instead, at times, it has been a dark, dank room that has harboured evil and allowed it to fester, inflicting great trauma upon many. As I finished my pilgrimage at Durham Cathedral that May day, I was very mindful of the horrific scandal that had rocked the Church of England just six months before, when the Makin Report was released. It revealed a decades-long pattern of abuse inflicted on adolescent boys by John Smyth, a barrister and active lay member of the Church. A recitation of the Church's sins is depressing and sobering. But it also provides a trumpet blast awakening us to our need to repent, to make amends and commit to doing all we can to live up to our high calling. In the Diocese of Toronto, we have been striving to do this for over three decades. Shortly after the abuses of the Canadian church in our Residential School systems came to light, our diocese struck a task force to draft its first-ever policy on sexual abuse. That policy came into effect in 1992 and has been evolving in its scope and procedures ever since. Then, as the deleterious effects of harassment also became better understood, the diocese added a policy governing harassment in our churches when a clergy person is involved.

As the canon pastor of our diocese, I



The original ring in Durham Cathedral's museum. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHAPTER OF DURHAM CATHEDRAL

am the monk stationed at the door available and waiting for the moment when people in distress reach for the sanctuary ring. Unlike medieval times when the person at the door was accused of a crime, the person at the door now is almost always the person claiming to be injured and needing our protection. This first contact begins a process of investigation overseen and directed by me to determine the truth of the allegations of sexual misconduct or harassment. I work with a team of trained investigators known as the Diocesan Response Team, a diverse group of clergy and lay people from across our diocese who have been carefully selected and trained in trauma-informed investigation work. The investigators follow the process set out in the policy that governs, a process that is designed to create a safe, bounded space of containment and reflection to encourage accountability.

For the Church to be a true haven of sanctuary, everyone must be accountable for their behaviour. This was modelled for us in the Anglican Communion when Justin Welby, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, resigned last November for his and the Church's failures in dealing with the Smyth allegations. Accountability means that everyone in our churches is held to the same high standards. Everyone includes all our clergy and all our lay people. Everyone includes the bishops and the canon pastor. Our policies provide for a separate, independent process in the event a bishop or the canon pastor is alleged to have committed sexual misconduct or to have harassed someone.

## The sanctuary of the Church

The investigatory work of the canon pastor and the Diocesan Response Team culminates in a report that is sent to the diocesan bishop, so that he can decide the consequences, if there are to be any. This depends on many factors, first and foremost of which is whether the allegations were proven to be true. Whatever the consequences or discipline imposed on the person who did the wrong, the goal is not punitive. The goal is to safeguard the sanctuary of the Church. We strive for that by containing and stopping the behaviour, assessing it to determine culpability or innocence, encouraging accountability, and promoting forgiveness and reconciliation. We strive to educate people about their behaviour and to encourage the exercise of empathic understanding regarding its effects on others.

The paradox of the Church as a place of sanctuary is that we include and protect all the children of God, but do not welcome or permit all their behaviours or ways of relating. Within the sacred bounds of sanctuary, we enter into a process of sober reflection and examination (the investigation) not to cast a person out or exile them forever, but to encourage healing and to safeguard that fragile sanctuary which is threatened by wrongdoing. Grace is free. But it is not cheap. Neither is the sanctuary of Christ's Church.

*The Rev. Canon Susan Haig is the canon pastor of the Diocese of Toronto. She is also an honorary assistant at Redeemer, Bloor St., a former lawyer, and a psychoanalyst in private practice.*



ALL CREATURES  
GREAT & SMALL

The Rev. Canon Beth Benson, honorary assistant at St. James Cathedral (above), blesses a cat held by its owner at the cathedral's Blessing of Animals service on Oct. 4. Pets and their owners from around the neighbourhood attended the outdoor service, led by the cathedral's clergy. The service is held by many churches on or near the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of pets and animals. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON



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# Youth gather for fun, praise

BY THE REV. BRIAN SUGGS

“Limitless” was the theme for this year’s diocesan youth retreat, ReCharge, held Sept. 26-28 at Muskoka Woods, located on the shores of Lake Rosseau in Muskoka. More than 130 youth and youth leaders from 23 parishes attended. Most of the participants arrived by bus from Toronto on Friday night. After checking into their cabins, they gathered in the main hall for snacks, games, worship and a short introduction to the theme by Bishop Andrew Asbil. Then they were led in night prayers by two youth from St. Hilda, Fairbanks.

Saturday morning got off to an early and slow start for most with breakfast at 7:30 a.m., but by mid-morning the energy was up as participants played Four Square Capture the Flag. After two rounds of the game and with wet, soggy shoes and socks from the dew on the grass, participants gathered for worship and then heard from Alongside Hope representatives Kim and Heather, who spoke about their work to provide solar suitcases to maternity wards in places where electricity was unreliable or non-existent. To demonstrate how difficult the task of delivering a child in the dark would be, three brave volunteers tried to assemble a simple peanut butter and jelly sandwich in front of everyone while blindfolded. It was clear the difference a nice, bright light from the solar suitcases would make for so many women and the medical staff assisting in the birthing process.

Participants also heard from national youth animator Sheilagh McGlynn, who spoke about the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering this past August in Saskatoon; the event will be held next in Nanaimo in August 2027. Participants then gathered in smaller groups with others from their archdeaconries to read selected verses from the bible (Isaiah 40:28, Luke 1:37, Ephesians 3:20) and to discuss what it means to be in relationship with God, who is without limits and for whom all things are possible. They were also invited to write on a small piece of paper a prayer about how God could show up in their lives or about something that they were worried, concerned or feeling anxious about. The piece of paper would be burned at that evening’s campfire.

Following lunch, participants took part in a bible knowledge team challenge, and then had their choice of activities throughout the afternoon. Options included beach volleyball, basketball, tennis, pickleball, indoor rock climbing, archery tag, arts and crafts, a hike, a jam with the band session, help with homework, fun with a giant soccer ball, prayer bead-making or time in the beautifully decorated and thoughtfully curated prayer space. That space was well utilized by many youth and youth leaders throughout the weekend and contained quiet and reflective self-guided or small-



Participants of the ReCharge youth retreat gather for a photo and take part in events during the weekend. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BISHOP'S YOUTH MINISTRY COMMITTEE



group activities that facilitated times of prayer in various ways.

Following a filling roast dinner, participants had the opportunity to check in with others in their parish groups and then gathered at the firepit as the sun began to set. Gathered around the roaring fire, they sang songs of praise and

thanksgiving to God and reflected on the God whose limitless love is made known to us in so many ways, especially in the beauty of creation. The prayers that they had written earlier were offered to God and then burned. The night ended with s'mores around the campfire, an amazing talent show highlighting the giftedness of

many youth in the diocese, and a glow-in-the-dark dance party.

After the rush of breakfast, packing up and cabin clean-up, participants gathered for Holy Communion with Bishop Andrew and his spouse Mary. Everyone was encouraged to wear an orange shirt as the National Day of Truth and Recon-



ciliation was being marked during the service. Youth served in many roles in the service, including playing instruments in the band, singing on the worship team, doing the readings, offering the prayers and serving Communion; one of them, Makayla Clouter of St. Thomas Brooklin, shared an inspiring homily based on Psalm 139, on the theme of our limitless God. After the service, youth participants were invited to consider if they'd like to be a youth representative at this year's diocesan Synod. The annual group photo was taken and participants chose swag items to take home. They enjoyed lunch and visited the camp store one last time before loading up the buses and heading back to Toronto.

The Bishop's Youth Ministry Commit-

tee, which organizes ReCharge each year, would like to thank the diocese and our bishops, who continue to generously support this event with funding for bursaries, ensuring that everyone who wishes to attend can do so. We would also like to thank all the clergy and youth leaders who attended and offered themselves to serve and support the youth of our diocese throughout the weekend. We pray that good fruit is born in the hearts and lives of the youth who attended ReCharge this year and we look forward to gathering again next September!

*The Rev. Brian Suggs is a member of the Bishop's Youth Ministry Committee and is the incumbent of Christ Church St. James in Toronto.*



# Live, interactive services connect with viewers

All Saints, Whitby started its hybrid journey during the COVID-19 pandemic with a small but generous grant from the diocese. It began simply, with just one person running the hybrid service from their phone. The parish had tried to push itself to offer a more sophisticated experience but was limited by the number of volunteers. The parish leadership eventually settled on a middle ground, with a less complicated setup run by a group of eight to nine volunteers who rotate their duties every week so that no one is being called on more than once a month. This allows the parish to run its hybrid service every Sunday.

Although it wasn't the initial goal, the team has found that hybrid services open the metaphorical church doors to many who would otherwise not be able to attend. Now the elderly, those with mobility issues or a lack of transit, or anyone with a barrier between them and the church are all able to attend a regular weekly service together. Even if a person were to go on vacation, they wouldn't be severed from their worshipping community.

Many of the 20 to 30 online attendees are regulars, but there are also some new faces. People searching for a new church get a private opportunity to experience worship at the parish and learn more about the priest, the music and even the dress code, all without having to commit to coming in person. In a society where meeting people and going out is becoming more challenging, strangers of different ages and ethnicities showing interest in one's life is often a novelty; offering that connection to all for free is invaluable. Even if people choose not to stay, it's a good opportunity to connect with others, especially if they are otherwise going to be alone that day.

The parish also advertises its worship services to communities such as retirement homes, providing posters with tear-

off tabs with the link to the livestream so that anyone interested can attend the hybrid service. Similarly, having a hybrid option available is very helpful when it comes to funerals. Anyone who can't attend in person can still experience the closure afforded by a funeral, and families appreciate being able to see that everyone's there in one way or another.

Attending from home doesn't simply make someone a fly on the wall. All Saints decided to invest in the intimacy of Zoom over the impersonal nature of YouTube videos. It's important to the team that its hybrid services have an element of interactivity, which is not available through recorded videos or platforms such as YouTube.

"One of the great things, I think, about Zoom is that there's more connection between people who can text each other, or just text the group, and also our ability to say hi in the morning. That's worked well for us," says Tim Ralph, ODT, one of the church's digital vergers who welcomes attendees and hosts the call.

The services are always live to preserve the authentic nature of in-person Sunday worship. Every parishioner, at home or in person, is a valued member of the community who should feel welcomed and involved. The chat feature of the video calls is crucial to form that connection. Before and after the service, attendees can chat amongst themselves and with the digital vergers, who can send helpful links (such as a digital guestbook survey at the end of each service or a donation page link). They have sometimes been invited to participate in the service through readings and other means. When speaking to the congregation, the priest will include those on the hybrid call, to honour their presence.

Little changes have made the hybrid service more aesthetic and welcoming. At first, no one had anticipated that viewers



Worshippers take part in a service at All Saints, Whitby on Zoom. The church chose the online platform for its interactivity, which is not available through recorded videos or platforms such as YouTube.

## HYBRID & HOLY

BY LINDSAY SUBA

would want to see Communion, so the camera would pan to the windows and give the 150-year-old architecture a spotlight. To the team's surprise, however, people *did* want to see their friends and others taking Communion, even if they couldn't interact. To accommodate this desire, the server's position was shifted during the offertory prayer to better show their face to the camera and let everyone be part of the experience.

The Rev. Jennifer Schick has even made a small tradition of giving a little wave goodbye to the camera as she leaves, and the people wave back, even though she can't see them. "Though the wave is being shared between cameras, and Rev. Schick isn't truly face-to-face with her online parishioners, a connection is made every week," says Mr. Ralph.

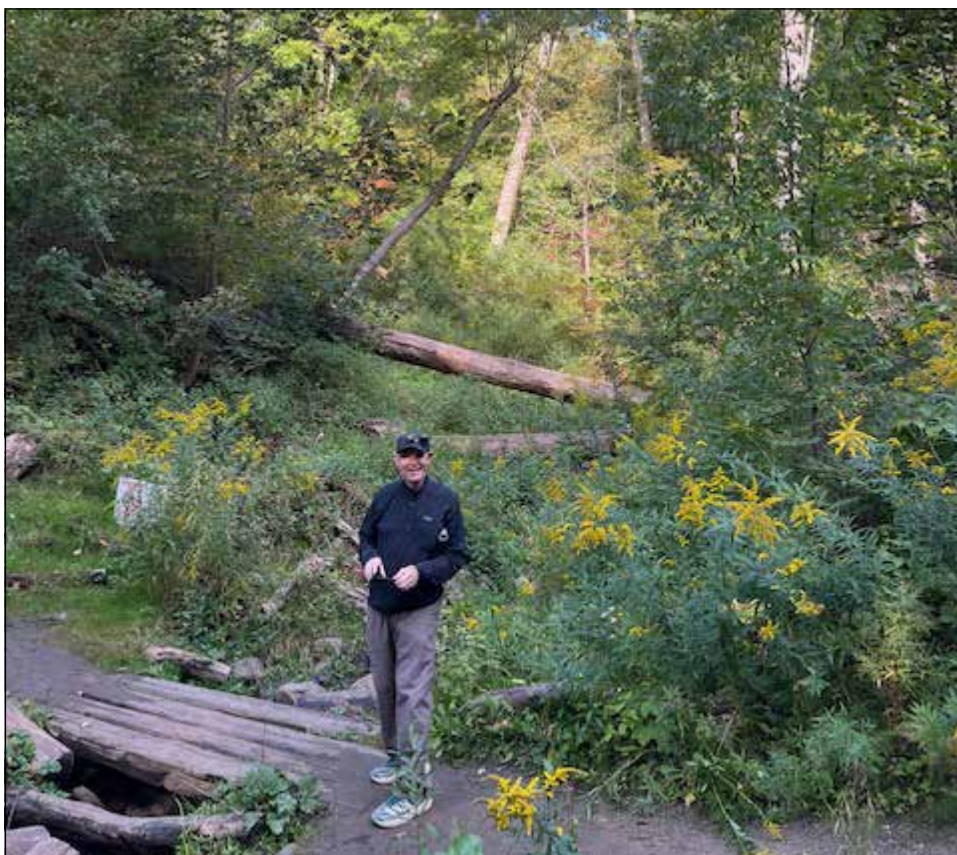
Despite the team's growing knowledge, the hybrid experience of All Saints is far from a polished TV program. Little accidents occur, such as a priest forgetting to turn their microphone back on, but they are all part of the authentic experi-



ence. This is far more a strength than a weakness. There's a certain down-to-earth intimacy to hybrid services that a pre-recording without an element of interactivity simply can't capture. During the COVID-19 crisis, the church even hosted a hybrid pancake supper through Zoom. Events like that would simply not be as interesting as a recorded video.

All Saints encourages other parishes to invest in the intimacy of Zoom over the impersonal nature of YouTube videos. With a small but dedicated group of parishioners and a friendly environment to talk and connect in, the parish is committed to connection, interactivity and community, and it will continue to provide its hybrid services going forward. No matter what circumstances or struggles its parishioners face, the parish and the community remain as accessible and inviting as they've always been.

*Lindsay Suba is a student and freelance writer based in Toronto. She is profiling hybrid ministry in the diocese for the Online Mission & Ministry Working Group. Although not Anglican herself, she values the vast expanse of humanity's faiths and is interested in learning more about Christian denominations outside of her own. For more information, visit [www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-resources/hybrid-ministry](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-resources/hybrid-ministry).*



## FRESH AIR

Members of St. Aidan, Toronto take part in an outdoor service on the west lawn of the church on Sept. 21 to mark the Season of Creation. More than 75 worshippers gathered in the church's new garden for the service. A day earlier, a small group of parishioners joined Deacon Michael Van Duzen (at left) for a walk in the Glen Stuart Ravine. The ravine, located in the Beaches neighbourhood, is home to more than 381 different species of plants and animals and 129 species of birds. PHOTOS BY MARTHA ASSELIN AND DEACON MICHAEL VAN DUZEN

# New church draws young crowd

## City dwellers seek Christian community

Continued from Page 1

and very intentional about seeking you out and getting to know new people. It felt like home from the moment I stepped in the door.”

Kate and Rohan Ailani had a similar experience. Recently married, the young couple went looking for a church in Toronto. “I always told my husband, if I could find an Anglican church that incorporates and relies on the Holy Spirit, that would be my perfect church, even though I knew there was no such thing as a perfect church,” says Ms. Ailani. “So we walk into St. George’s, and that’s exactly what we found – a church that respects liturgy and the readings and God’s word but also is so attentive to the Holy Spirit and inviting the Holy Spirit.”

Like other newcomers, she was impressed by the welcome they received from the vicar, the Rev. Dr. Tyler Wigg-Stevenson, and others on the church’s ministry team. “When we came here on that first Sunday, I wanted to leave right away because I didn’t know anyone. But Tyler came and said, ‘I see that you’re new. Let me introduce you to some people.’ I’ve been going to church for my whole life – 34 years – and I’ve never felt so welcomed in a church.”

The couple have been regular worshippers since then. “We feel that there’s a place for us here, and we love that what they say is what they live. It’s like, we’re all in this together, we’re going to seek God together.”

A big part of the church’s warm and welcoming atmosphere is due to its lay pastors, Suzie and Nathan Hodgson. A friendly, Spirit-filled young couple, they do everything from greeting newcomers to leading large parts of the worship service and preaching regularly. Their enthusiasm for the gospel is infectious and genuine.

The couple was part of the 20-person group from St. Paul’s that planted the church last fall. Like Dr. Wigg-Stevenson, they’re on the staff of St. Paul’s and serve there as well as at St. George’s.

“We wanted to be part of building the Church in downtown Toronto, so when the opportunity came to be part of the team at St. George’s, we jumped at it,” says Suzie Hodgson. “It’s been so much fun, not only building a team of people who are excited about going on the adventure of planting a church but also opening up the doors of the church to people from the neighbourhood and inviting them in, to be part of a community and to experience life and faith and meaning in Jesus.”

Mr. Hodgson says the journey has been very Spirit-led. “We prayed a lot before setting out and we continue to pray. When you’re doing something like this, there’s a lot of risk. You don’t know if anyone is going to come, so out of your own sense of helplessness you pray a lot. But it feels like the Spirit has really led us so far and continues to by God’s grace.”

Dr. Wigg-Stevenson likens St. George’s to a new shoot being planted in an old pot, or a sprig of a tree growing out of an old trunk. “The way we tell the story is that this is one of the oldest churches in Toronto – the cornerstone was laid in 1844 and it opened in 1845 – and we’re the youngest church community in the diocese. We’re a new community in an old church.”



Kate and Rohan Ailani enjoy St. George, Grange Park’s first anniversary. PHOTOS BY STUART MANN



Suzie and Nathan Hodgson

The original church, St. George the Martyr, stood on the site from 1844 to 2018, when it was closed by the diocese. It remained vacant or on “sabbath rest” until the new church moved in.

He says the new St. George’s has drawn a lot from the former one. “As we were thinking and planning, we tried to have what we did here liturgically, theologically and spiritually honour where we came from. This place has a charismatic history to it, in terms of foregrounding the reality and presence of the Holy Spirit, and that is embedded in our own liturgical structures. But there was also this catholic sensibility and ceremonial, which we’ve tried to incorporate as well.”

He adds, “We’re trying to live an ancient faith in a modern city. We’re trying to do something very old in a new way.”

Nowhere is that more apparent than in the worship service, which is held on Sunday afternoon. It is a rich blend of the contemplative and the charismatic. It includes ancient elements of the Anglican faith such as the Eucharist, a Eucharistic Prayer from the BAS, the Apostles’ Creed and the Confession of Sins, but unlike most Anglican services, it is “hosted” by a pair of people and the worship is led by a contemporary praise band. The sermon is 20-25 minutes long and the priest, Dr. Wigg-Stevenson, “faces east,” away from the congregation, when praying to God during the Eucharist. “This is a retrieval of the ancient Eucharistic practice, which reflects that we are all together praying to God; we’re all facing in the one direction, praying on behalf of the people, Lord will you do this thing here,” he says.

A distinctive feature about the service is that it concludes with an extended time of prayer. This includes inviting people to the back of the church, where two-person

prayer teams are ready to pray with them.

“We believe that God can and potentially will do something new in the life of anyone who walks through the door on Sunday, and that everything in the worship opens someone to the movement of the Spirit,” says Dr. Wigg-Stevenson. “Rather than being ‘done’ after Communion, that time for prayer stretches it out. It’s an extended response to Communion and everything that has come before – the word and the worship.”

The service clearly resonates with those in attendance. At the anniversary service on Sept. 7, the church was full, with congregants avidly soaking up the prayers and music. Almost everyone went up for the bread and wine during the Eucharist, and some visited the prayer teams at the back of the church.

“We welcome one and all, but we don’t disguise in any way, shape or form that our expectation is that God is real, God is alive and wants to meet with you today and that might well happen in the next hour and a half,” says Dr. Wigg-Stevenson, explaining the service’s appeal. “In fact, it probably will. You’re going to have an encounter with the creator of the universe.”

Young people in particular want to hear that message, he says. “It’s not an easy time to be a young person, in terms of Covid, the housing crisis, ecological despair, the rise of authoritarianism, and a resurgence in misogyny and homophobia. Across the board, there’s not a lot to hope in if you’re a young person. I think they’re hungry to hear that God is real and loves them.”

Bishop Jenny Andison, rector of St. Paul’s, says she is grateful to see what is happening at St. George’s. St. George’s is a “mission church” of St. Paul’s, according to the diocese’s canons, so Bishop Andison is the rector there as well.



Bethany Larmour



Having fun at the party.

“We’re learning a ton,” she says. “We’ve made mistakes, and there’s definitely things we’ll do differently next time, but we’ve learned some really good things as well.”

St. Paul’s has a new 10-year vision that includes planting three neighbourhood churches in Toronto. “We’re hoping in two to three years, St. George’s will be standing on its own feet, and then we’ll be ready to plant again, so that St. Paul’s becomes a multiplying church,” she says. “This is happening all over the Anglican Communion; we haven’t invented anything here; we’re just trying to be faithful in our context and use the resources that God has given us to be a generous, multiplying Anglican church in the heart of the city.”

She says the vision isn’t about replicating St. Paul’s in other neighbourhoods. “St. George’s is not a franchise of St. Paul’s. It’s a giving away of resources so more people can encounter Jesus. I hope that delights and encourages Christians in the city. At St. Paul’s, all we want to do is play our part, whatever God is calling us to do in the Diocese of Toronto.”

Bishop Kevin Robertson, who has episcopal oversight of the areas where both St. Paul’s and St. George’s are located, says he supports St. Paul’s vision and the new church plant. “As an Anglican, Christian community, St. Paul’s is seeking to bring the gospel to people in the city, and I am very supportive of that,” he says. “I’m glad to be coming alongside St. Paul’s to support this. I very much see it as a collaborative effort with the diocese.”

He adds, “Thank God, St. Paul’s has been so blessed. They’re able to do these things because of the generosity of faithful Anglicans over the generations, and because of their new vision for church planting.”



## SPECIAL DAY

St. Margaret Tamil Congregation in Toronto celebrated its 35th anniversary with a joyful and Spirit-filled service on Sept. 28. Archdeacon Theodore Hunt preached and celebrated Holy Communion, assisted by the parish priest, the Rev. Milton Solomon, and the Rev. Dr. David Kalison.

In keeping with Tamil Anglican tradition, an oil lamp-lighting ceremony was held at the conclusion of the service to symbolize unity and faith. Those who lit the oil lamp included Archdeacon Hunt, the Rev. Karen Hatch, Dr. Kalison, the Rev. Dr. Irwin Sikha, the Rev. Andrew Kaye, Rev. Solomon and rector's warden, Chrisanthi Arunkumar.

About 110 worshippers attended the service, including former parishioners, families and friends of the church. Following the lighting ceremony, anniversary greetings were shared by the clergy. After the service, everyone gathered for a fellowship dinner in the church hall. Archdeacon Hunt, along with Rev. Solomon, Rev. Hatch and Rev. Kaye, cut the 35th anniversary cake to mark the occasion. To commemorate the event, bookmarks were designed and distributed to all who participated at the service. The church also prepared a 35th anniversary banner which adorns the sanctuary. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON



# Relationship between dioceses deepens

BY CANON MARY CONLIFFE

**AS** "Partners in Christ, united in mission," the companion relationship of the Diocese of Toronto and the Diocese of Brasilia is now well into its second year. Since June 2024 (continuing until 2031), we have experienced moments of great joy, but also some disappointment along the way. It is a true relationship! We continue to thank God for the deepening of our friendship as we journey together in our different

parts of God's world, as siblings in Christ's Church.

Online monthly meetings of our companion partnership group give members the opportunity to continue to plan – in both English and Portuguese – and to pray together. The co-chairs, the Rev. Canon Maurice Francois from Toronto and the Rev. Dr. Rodrigo Espiúca from Brasilia, together with Bishop Andrew Asbil and Bishop Mauricio Andrada, lead the small committee of clergy and laity into dreaming and realizing

new ways to deepen our shared understanding of what it means to be Anglican Christians in two different contexts, and how to participate in the life of each other's Church.

The online theology day for clergy and lay theologians on March 25, featuring the Rev. Dr. Christopher Brittain from Trinity College, Toronto and Dr. Paulo Ueti, a Brazilian theologian, discussed liberation theology in a Zoom event that attracted more than 200 clergy and lay leaders from both dioceses.

On Oct. 18, the annual Outreach & Advocacy Conference of the Diocese of Toronto welcomed the Rev. Dr. Rodrigo Espiúca from Brasilia as its keynote speaker. Dr. Espiúca is the Coordinator of Advocacy Strategies for Brasilia, and the Anglican Communion's Communion Forest facilitator for the Americas. A viewing party of Brazilian Anglicans watched online during the outreach conference, making the event a shared experience. The annual Toronto Clergy

Conference at Trent University in late May 2026 will welcome Dr. Ueti back to our diocese as the keynote speaker, and we hope that some clergy will make the trip with him so that we can offer hospitality to clergy colleagues from Brazil.

A disappointment came when the planned youth delegation from Brasilia – seven teenagers and three leaders – had difficulty attaining visas to travel to Canada in time to attend the ReCharge Youth Retreat in late September.



St. Peter, Erindale's anniversary planning committee enjoys the gala. From left are the Rev. Roshni Jayawardena, Debbie Barker, Ken Baxter, Barb Haycraft, Rodney Jackson, Tom Agnew, Shakila Jayawardena, David Plant, Michael Davies and Natasha Bond. Absent from the photo is Susan Carey. At right, MC Gary Spence interviews General Peter Adamson (parishioner Thom Wigle) in a skit set in 1825. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON

## Parish marks 200 years with gala

BY NATASHA BOND

**THIS** year marks a milestone few communities can claim – the 200th anniversary of our parish. To honour this extraordinary achievement, the people of St. Peter, Erindale gathered for a gala evening in September that was both a joyful celebration and a thoughtful reflection on the history that has shaped us.

The gala was the culmination of 18 months of planning by a dedicated anniversary committee. Its vision was to create a once-in-a-lifetime event that would do justice to the parish's long and rich history. The response from the community was overwhelming: 200 tickets were sold, filling the evening with energy, laughter and a strong sense of belonging.

Guests enjoyed one another's company as they shared stories across generations, drawing connections between the parish of today and the one founded two



centuries ago. The program was expertly guided by master of ceremonies Gary Spence, ODT, who introduced a fun and engaging series of skits performed by parishioners. These short plays brought figures from the parish's past to life, dramatizing key moments in our story. To the delight of the audience, even an imagined parishioner from the future "visited," offering a glimpse of what our community might become in the years ahead.

The highlight of the evening was a captivating presentation by historian Matthew Wilkinson of the Mississauga Heritage Foundation. With engaging anecdotes and a historian's insight, Mr. Wilkinson traced the journey of our parish from its founding days to the present, introducing the audience to the men and women who first dreamed of establishing a place of worship in this growing community.

Our parish's roots are deeply

intertwined with the development of the region. The founders built not just a church, but a gathering place that became central to community life. Over the decades, the parish weathered wars, social change and rapid urban development. Yet through all this, it remained steadfast, adapting to new realities while holding on to the values of faith, service and fellowship.

The gala evening, with its combination of fellowship, fine food, theatre and historical reflection, served as a reminder of the legacy entrusted to us. As we celebrate 200 years of faith and community, we recommit ourselves to carrying this heritage into the future, ensuring that the next generation inherits a parish as vibrant, welcoming and faithful as the one we enjoy today.

*Natasha Bond is a parishioner of St. Peter, Erindale.*



## Videos help companion dioceses get to know each other

Continued from Page 12

We had looked forward to having them join in the fun and energy of our own youth gathering. Because this event is annual, however, we are working towards their visit next year with renewed vigour. If any young people in our diocese have some skills in speaking Portuguese, we'd love to hear from you! It would be wonderful if our Brazilian guests could speak to young Anglicans in their own language.

We continue to look for video

greetings from your parish to the Diocese of Brasilia. If you would like to film a brief video on your phone to introduce your parish or an interesting ministry to our Brazilian siblings, send your clip to our Communications department, and they'll take care of adding the translations for you. Videos continue to be an effective way for us to get to know each other more and more. Messages from Brasilia will punctuate our Synod gathering

in November, and we are looking forward to warm words of friendship and some wonderful music.

Please continue to pray for this growing relationship and for our siblings in Christ in South America and their work and ministry for the Gospel.

*Mary Conliffe is the diocesan executive assistant to the bishop and a member of the companion-ship committee.*

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Anglicans walk in parade for first time 1

EDMONTON - In a vibrant show of love and solidarity, more than 20 Anglicans marched in the Edmonton Pride Parade in August. Organized by Queerly Beloved, a working group of the Diocese of Edmonton's social justice committee, the contingent marked the first official Anglican presence at the parade since its inception in 1991. They marched under banners reading "Proud Anglicans," "Queerly Beloved," and "Anglican Diocese of Edmonton."

Decked out in rainbow colours and carrying placards and flags, the Anglican contingent, which included Bishop Stephen London, brought both celebration and protest to the streets. "It was affirming and energizing to be greeted by thousands of people waving flags and shouting encouragement," said the Rev. Mark Vigrass, deacon at St. George, Edmonton. "To walk with and among people who accepted and affirmed me as a beloved queer child of God – and extended that affirmation to others – was deeply moving."

The Rev. Jordan Giggey, rector of St. Timothy, Edmonton, described the experience as "living out a part of my calling to the priesthood," and a tangible step toward reconciliation with the 2SLGBTQ+ community. "Seeing so many denominations gathered to remind us in the queer community that we too are beloved of God was a powerful testament to the gospel at work in our city and our diocese," he said. Though the walk lasted only 30 minutes, Rev. Giggey believed its emotional impact "will last for years to come."

The Messenger

Church helps cyclists on epic ride 2

SASKATOON – Every year since 2012, a group of about 20 cyclists from Texas 4000 pass through Saskatoon and are hosted by Christ Church Anglican. Texas 4000 is a charity cycling ride that raises funds for the fight against cancer. Each year, the cyclists, who are university students, ride from Austin, Texas to Anchorage, Alaska. Before the ride, each student must raise US\$4,500, cycle 2,000 training miles and log over 50 hours of volunteer work. Since the ride was launched 2004, it has raised over US\$13 million. It is the longest annual charity bike ride in the world.

Christ Church was honoured to welcome the group on June 26. It was one of 70 overnight stops on the journey. The church provided the group with dinner, social time and a place to sleep. Also that evening, the City of Saskatoon allowed the riders use of a community pool for a swim and showers. The following morning, the cyclists rose to freshly washed laundry, breakfast and food for the road. After an emotional farewell with parishioners, the police gave them an escort out of the city.

"We feel blessed to host this amazing group of young people very year and always feel, with each visit, that we have gained far more from their visit than we have given," says the Rev. Peter Coolen.

The Saskatchewan Anglican

Outings provide company and food 3

KINGSTON - A small group at St. Mary Magdalene, Picton in the Diocese of



Ontario thought it would be fun to create some social events outside the church where parishioners and friends could enjoy each other's company and discover more of what Prince Edward County and surrounding area had to offer.

Inspired by a parishioner who mentioned, "You don't get a chance to go out to many places when you live alone," the plan was to hold quarterly gatherings based around a meal. "We came up with a catchy name and a snazzy logo, but we were so excited that we probably moved too quickly, because our first outing had only three parishioners join us at the North Docks restaurant," said an organizer.

Word spread, however, and the following three outings were well attended. Eighteen people gathered at the Saylor House Cafe in Bloomfield, 22 met at the O'Connor House English Tea Room in Deseronto, which was followed by a visit to an adjoining antique shop, and 26 attended a lunch at the Inn at the Lake on the Mountain on the Bay of Quinte.

"We make sure that anyone who needs a ride gets one, and we're able to accommodate people with walkers or wheelchairs," said the organizer. "Everyone is welcome to bring friends along, too."

Dialogue

Church shares building, learns from others 4

OTTAWA - "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" These words from Psalm 133 found joyful expression at St. Paul, Kanata this past May. In what has become an annual event, St. Mina, Pope Cyril and St. Karas Coptic church, St. Paul's and the congregation of Catch the Fire came together for a potluck luncheon. Members of all three Christian communities enjoyed traditional Egyptian

fare and western cuisine in an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation.

The event is the culmination of efforts by each congregation to grow in love and partnership. St. Paul's shares its building with the other congregations. Each exercises its own worship and ministry and has its own office space. In return, St. Paul's receives help in covering its financial obligations. "These relationships are about so much more than a blessing of space and finances: they have brought about a flourishing of spiritual vitality and mutual care," says the Rev. Canon Stephen Silverthorne of St. Paul's.

The churches' commitment to prayer, along with social gatherings like the potluck, has been a powerful sign of care for one another, he says. "With each passing month, parishioners have grown more committed in friendship and in appreciation for each other's way of living out a Christian life."

Perspective

Support circle helps suicide loss survivors 5

ANTIGONISH - A new support group for suicide loss survivors is creating a safe, lasting space to grieve, heal and connect.

Founded by the Rev. Natasha Brubaker, the support group received more than \$3,000 last year from the local board of health to offer the monthly help sessions for the public at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Antigonish.

Ms. Brubaker moved to Antigonish County in 2022 and started the support group the next year. Soon after moving to the community, she had learned of the suicides of two young local men. They weren't directly connected to her parish, but word got to her through church members. She wondered how much support

was available in the community for those grieving a suicide loss.

Unfortunately, she had a close link to the topic: Ms. Brubaker lost her mother to suicide. "The question felt personal and urgent," she explained. Plus, she figured, there were people grieving other past tragedies who may not have received support.

"Grief after suicide has its own contours," said Ms. Brubaker. "It's a traumatic loss, often complicated, and it requires special care and a safe, intentional space with people who understand its dynamics."

The goal of the meetings is to help people understand "they're not losing their minds, that what they're experiencing is normal and that they're not alone," she adds.

Ms. Brubaker has since stepped away from the program, passing the reins to new help, who are continuing the valuable work. At each monthly session, there's a candle-lighting ritual to open the space, then a check-in to gauge how people are doing that day, that week or over the past month. A topic gets introduced, usually focused on what may have been broached by the group in a previous session, but the bulk of the time is left open for people to respond and talk. Participants are encouraged to speak from "I" statements, and not to give advice, interrupt or monopolize.

While Ms. Brubaker no longer has an active voice in the healing circle, she feels the program is in good hands. "Part of my role as clergy is helping others discover their gifts and how they can care for their neighbours," she explained. "I try to cultivate that, create space for others to step in and then step back myself. So, I see the evolution of this group as a very good thing."

Nova Scotia Health



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## IN MOTION

### Appointments

- The Rev. Theo Ipema, Honorary Assistant, St. Thomas, Huron Street, Sept. 5.
- The Rev. Hannah Johnston, Priest-in-Charge, St. Anne, Toronto, Sept. 15.
- The Rev. Jeanette Lewis, Honorary Assistant, St. Cuthbert, Leaside, Sept. 30.
- The Rev. Doug Smith, Priest-in-Charge, St. Luke, East York, Oct. 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):
- St. George, Haliburton
- Parish of Bobcaygeon, Dunsford and Burnt River

- Parish of Churchill and Cookstown
- Parish of Campbellford, Hastings and Roseneath
- Parish of Fenelon Falls and Cobocok
- St. Mark, Midland
- St. Thomas a Becket (Erin Mills South)
- St. Aidan, Toronto
- All Saints Church-Community Centre

### Parish Selection Committee Process

First Phase - (not yet receiving names):

- St. Stephen, Downsview

Second Phase - (receiving names via Bishop): N/A

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names): N/A

### Ordination

- The Rev. Dr. James Leatch will be ordained a priest at St. John the Baptist (Dixie) on Nov. 23 at 4 p.m.

### Celebration of New Ministry

- The Rev. Canon Dr. Alison Falby, Incumbent, Christ Church, Deer Park, Jan. 25, 2026 at 4 p.m.

### Conclusions

- The Rev. Canon Andrea Budgey will conclude her appointment as Priest-in-Charge of St. Theodore of Canterbury and her last Sunday will be Nov. 23. She will be taking up appointment with the Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island.

### Deaths

- The Rev. Dr. Andrew Barlow died on Sept. 12. Ordained deacon in 2001, he served as a vocational deacon at St. John, Blackstock (Cartwright) and St. Mary, Richmond Hill.
- The Rev. William "Bill" Charles Davis died on Sept. 15. Ordained deacon and priest in 1967, he served as assistant curate of St. George,

## PRAYER CYCLE

### FOR NOVEMBER

1. The Children's Ministry Conference
2. Bishop's Committee on Right Relations
3. St. Elizabeth Church, Mississauga
4. The Synod Agenda and Planning Committee
5. The Chancellor, Vice-Chancellors and Synod Officers
6. The Members of Synod
7. 163rd Regular Session of Synod
8. 163rd Regular Session of Synod
9. Lay Ministry and the Education for Ministry programs
10. St. Francis of Assisi
11. Military Chaplains
12. St. Hilary (Cooksville)
13. St. John the Baptist (Dixie)

14. St. Peter (Erindale)
15. St. Thomas a Becket (Erin Mills South)
16. York Central Deanery
17. Trinity-St. Paul, Port Credit
18. Trinity, Streetsville
19. All Saints, Markham
20. Christ Church, Stouffville
21. Christ Church, Woodbridge
22. Emmanuel, Richvale (Richmond Hill)
23. FaithWorks
24. Grace Church, Markham
25. Holy Trinity, Thornhill
26. St. Christopher
27. St. John the Baptist, Oak Ridges
28. St. Mary, Richmond Hill
29. St. Philip on-the-Hill
30. St. James Cathedral

Willowdale, incumbent of the Parish of Beeton, Palgrave and Tottenham, incumbent of St. Peter, Scarborough, rural dean of Tecumseth and priest-in-charge of All Saints, King City. His funeral was held at St. Peter, Cobourg on Sept. 22.

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## LOOKING AHEAD

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

**NOV. 1** - The Toronto Children's Ministry Conference, a day that will inspire and equip participants with fresh, creative ideas and evidence-based practices in children and family ministry, at Bayview Glen Alliance Church, 300 Steeles Ave. E., Thornhill. To register and learn more, visit www.torontochildren-ministryconference.ca.

**NOV. 2** - All Souls Requiem, featuring excerpts from Mozart's Requiem, 4 p.m., Church of the Redeemer, Bloor Street and Avenue Road, Toronto.

**NOV. 2** - Choral Evensong for All Souls, with poignant and masterful organ and choral anthems to help us remember the brevity of life and those we have lost, 2:30 p.m. St. Matthew, 3962 Bloor St. W., Toronto. Freewill offering.

**NOV. 4** - Holy Communion at 6 p.m., followed by a light supper, then at 7 p.m., the Rev. Dr. P.J. Carefoote will present an illustrated talk

about censorship, at St. Olave, Bloor Street West and Windermere Avenue.

**NOV. 8** - St. Cuthbert, Leaside Christmas Fair, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., featuring art gallery, baking and preserves, books, CDs and vinyl records, toys, kitchenware, jewellery, cafe and more. St. Cuthbert's is at 1399 Bayview Ave., Toronto.

**NOV. 15** - Christmas market, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring arts and crafts, a lunch counter, jam and baking table and more, St. Barnabas, Chester, 361 Danforth Ave., Toronto. Entrance off Hampton Street through the playground.

**NOV. 15** - Christmas bazaar with crafts, bake table, international food, jewelry and more, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Holy Family, 10446 Kennedy Rd. N., Brampton.

**NOV. 15** - Annual Christmas Market with vendors, tea room, draws, crafts, bake table and more, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., St. Paul the Apostle, Rexdale, 2182 Kipling Ave. For more

info, email stpfundraising@yahoo.com or phone 416 742-1993.

**NOV. 16** - Rock Vespers: The Music of Black Sabbath, 4 p.m. at Redeemer, Bloor St., Bloor Street and Avenue Road.

**NOV. 22** - Holly Berry Bazaar, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. Dunstan of Canterbury, 56 Lawson Rd., Scarborough, featuring handicrafts, jewelry, home-baked goods, gently used china, crystal, tools, books and puzzles. There also will be a cafe and community craft vendors. Free admission and parking.

**NOV. 22** - Christmas Tea and Market, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., St. Mary, Richmond Hill, 10030 Yonge St. Lots of gift ideas, baked goods, gently used jewellery, knitting, handicrafts, gift baskets, books and more.

**NOV. 22** - Hollyberry Christmas Market with tea room, bake sale, vendors and more, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. St. Luke, 904 Coxwell Ave., Toronto.

**NOV. 22** - Old Fashioned Festival of Christmas with luncheon, baked

goods, country store, Christmas raffle, jewellery, gifts and more, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Holy Trinity, 140 Brooke St., Thornhill. For more information and luncheon tickets, call the church at 905-889-5931.

**NOV. 23** - Transgender Day of Remembrance, 4 p.m., Redeemer, Bloor St., Bloor Street and Avenue Road.

**NOV. 29** - Mistletoe Market, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., featuring Christmas gifts, vintage clothing, jewelry, home décor items, baked goods, preserves, crafts, refreshments, live music and more, Church of St. Peter & St. Simon-the-Apostle, 525 Bloor St. E., Toronto.

**NOV. 30** - Advent Carol Service. Sing carols with us as we prepare for the Advent and Christmas seasons together. 4 p.m. at Redeemer, Bloor St., Bloor Street and Avenue Road.

**DEC. 6-7, 13-14, 19-21** - The Christmas Story, a Toronto tradition since 1938, professional musicians and a volunteer cast present this charming hour-long nativity pageant, at

Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Square, Toronto. Suggested donation: \$25 adults, \$10 children. To reserve a seat, visit www.thechristmasstory.ca or call 416-598-4521. The church is wheelchair-accessible.

**DEC. 7** - St. Martin in-the-Fields annual Advent Carol Service, 7:30 p.m., with works by Eleanor Daley, Paul Manz, Jacob Handl, Phillip Stopford and others. Music will be performed by the St. Martin's choir with instrumental support from organist John Tuttle and others, all under the direction of music director Jack Hattey. St. Martin's is located at 151 Glenlake Ave., Toronto. A freewill offering will be donated to a local charity.

**DEC. 14** - Joy to the World, A Christmas medley in word and song, 4 p.m., St. George on-the-Hill, 4600 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke. Performances by the chancel choir, the community choir and the children's choir, with guest instrumentalists. Freewill offering.

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HOME RUN

Eight teams play in the 64th annual SAYM (Scarborough Anglican Youth Movement) baseball tournament at the Audley Sportsplex in Ajax on Sept. 13. Wesley Chapel beat Holy Trinity, Guildwood 14-13 in the final to win the Rev. Peter C. Trant Memorial trophy. The other teams were Christ Church and St. Bede, St. Paul, L'Amoreaux, The Community, Logos, Agincourt Baptist and Scarborough. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON

