

Bishop going to St. Paul's

Cabaret chases blues away



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The Anglican

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

By BISHOP KEVIN ROBERTSON

God is with us

What would Christmas be without traditions? For some families, Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without decorating the tree together, or hanging the mistletoe in the front hall, or leaving two cookies and a glass of milk by the fireplace for Santa.

As a Church, we also have traditions that we observe "religiously" every year: some parishes host a Christmas fair, or begin Advent with a Service of Lessons and Carols, or collect donations to make Christmas hampers for those in need. It all culminates in the great traditions of Christmas Eve, when we witness the antics of little angels and shepherds at the pageant. Then, after receiving Christmas Communion, we dim the lights to sing by candlelight. Maybe there's even a gentle snowfall as we step out into the crisp night air – just like the cover of a Christmas card. Many of us love traditions, and we have some wonderful ones around Christmas.

This year, Christmas is going to look a lot different. The ongoing pandemic is forcing us to celebrate in new ways. It will mean adapting some traditions and foregoing others. I know how hard it is to imagine that we won't be singing carols in a packed church this year. I recently heard someone quip that the only appropriate carol for this Christmas will be "Silent Night!"

Over the coming weeks, I invite you to remake some Christmas traditions to fit with our changed world. I know parishes that are planning outdoor carol-singing on the church steps, ensuring, of course, that everyone is masked and physically distanced. I know of another parish that is planning a multi-generational Zoom pag-



LIGHT OF HOPE

Leah Cyril practices lighting the Advent wreath with her brothers Tarun (centre) and Varun at St. Bede's in Toronto. A candle will be lit each week during Advent, followed by the lighting of the middle candle on Christmas Eve. Advent starts on Dec. 1. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

ent where the story of Jesus' birth will be retold in the familiar way, but with a virtual twist. At a time of year when many people struggle with sadness and grief, are there new ways to reach out to those who are hurting and isolated among us?

However you adapt your Christmas traditions, I encourage you to get creative, not only to keep Jesus at the heart of our celebration, but also as a way of being reminded that the timeless truths of the Christmas story transcend the ebb and flow of our lives, even the crisis of a global pandemic. We rejoice at the birth of our Saviour whether the time is favourable or not. We celebrate the birth in time of the timeless Son of God through all the changing scenes of life.

This year, I am particularly reminded of the poem, "First Coming", by Madeleine L'Engle. She reminds us that God did not wait until the world was right or ready before coming among us:

*He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.
He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine. He did not wait
till hearts were pure. In joy he came
to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.*

*To a world like ours, of anguished shame
he came, and his Light would not go out.
He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made*

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Bishop Andison going to St. Paul's

'I have loved being a suffragan bishop'



Bishop Jenny Andison

2006 to 2013. She will succeed the Rev. Canon Dr. Barry Parker, who is retiring.

"I made this decision with a strong sense of hope for the future to which our Heavenly Father is calling me and the people of St. Paul's, but also with gravity and genuine sorrow for what I must lay down as a result," she wrote. "It is an immense privilege to serve as a bishop in Christ's holy, catholic Church. I have loved being a suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Toronto, and it has been (and continues to be) such a joy to share in gospel ministry with the College of Bishops and all of you in York-Credit Valley."

She will continue in her current office until the end of February

St. Paul's, the largest Anglican church in Canada, undertook an extensive international search for a new rector before selecting Bishop Andison, who was an associate priest at the church from

and plans to complete a number of projects and to set in place a transition plan so that the episcopal area can continue to flourish.

"I am profoundly grateful for having had the opportunity to work and worship with you as your area bishop over the past four years," she wrote. "Thank you for the prayerful support and gracious encouragement that you have given me, showing me the face of Jesus. My hope is that I have provided the same to you in equal measure. In my new capacity, I look forward to our paths crossing as your colleague in ministry and a fellow disciple of Jesus Christ, as we continue to labour together for the diocese as a whole, for the global Anglican Communion, and above all, for Christ's kingdom."

Bishop Andrew Asbil, the diocesan bishop, said he was delighted with the appointment. In a letter to the people of St. Paul's, he wrote, "After ably and happily serving as suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Toronto and area bishop of York-Credit Valley for almost four years, she has responded willingly to this call from God and the parish

to become your incumbent and spiritual leader for an exciting new chapter in your life and ministry."

Writing on behalf of himself and Bishop Kevin Robertson, the area bishop of York-Scarborough, in which St. Paul's is located, he wrote, "We look forward to working with our sister in Christ, Bishop Jenny, and the people of the parish of St Paul's in the years to come – sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, making disciples and worshipping the Triune God in spirit and in truth."

In a pastoral letter to the diocese on Sept. 16, Bishop Asbil wrote about the future of episcopal leadership in the diocese, given that Bishop Andison is moving to St. Paul's and Bishop Peter Fenty, the area bishop of York-Simcoe, is retiring at the end of November.

Several months ago, in anticipation of Bishop Fenty's retirement, he created the Episcopal Leadership Working Group (ELWG). "The College of Bishops system of episcopal leadership in the Diocese of Toronto has been in place for 40 years, and I felt it was time to review whether it makes sense to continue to have four suffragan

bishops, deployed to regions of the diocese as area bishops, in addition to a diocesan bishop," he wrote. "Our system is unique in the Anglican Communion. How do other dioceses, of similar size and complexity, organize themselves? What can we learn from them?"

The ELWG has been meeting regularly and researching other models and considering possible adaptations to the diocese's system, he wrote. "I had given the group a deadline of Ash Wednesday 2021 to make their report and – despite these recent developments – I do not want to curtail or rush their work. I look forward to hearing from them in February 2021 as planned, at which time I will consider their recommendations and share with the diocese a way forward."

In the meantime, he assured the diocese, and in particular the areas of York-Simcoe and York-Credit Valley, that the College of Bishops is committed to caring for every parish. "Over the coming weeks, we will develop a plan for adequate episcopal coverage in every area, ready to implement as transitions occur."

BY STUART MANN

BISHOP Jenny Andison, the area bishop of York-Credit Valley, will be the next rector of St. Paul, Bloor Street, effective Feb. 28, 2021.

In a letter to the people of York-Credit Valley on Sept. 13, the day her appointment was announced, she wrote, "Although I will be stepping down as the area bishop of York-Credit Valley, I will – like other bishops who serve in non-jurisdictional ministries as theologians, heads of seminaries, deans of cathedrals, or at the Communion Office – remain a bishop and will continue to live out my consecration vows in this new ministry context."

The light and peace that shone from the manger continues to shine

Continued from Page 1

Flesh the Maker of the stars was born. We cannot wait till the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice, for to share our grief, to touch

our pain, He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

In this strange and uncertain time, in a world that seems unsteady and does not mesh, may we dare to proclaim once again that God so loved the world that

He sent his only Son.

Of all the names that are used to describe Jesus in the Bible, one of my favourites is "Emmanuel". We hear that word a lot at Christmas because that's how the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14). "Emmanuel" does not mean

"God *was* with us." It means "God *is* with us." The light and peace that shone from the manger so many years ago continues to shine. Christmas is an invitation to allow the Christ-child to be born into our hearts anew. With all the uncertainty around us and within, the reminder that

God is with us is perhaps the greatest gift we can receive.

I look forward to celebrating with you as we make new traditions for a time such as this. May the peace of the Christ-child be with you, and may the timeless message of God's love fill the world with joy. Merry Christmas!

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Cabaret brings ray of hope

Night of singing, music dispels gloom

BY STUART MANN

At the end of a gloomy week in October due to COVID-19, the Bishop's Company provided a ray of warmth and hope. Instead of its usual fundraising dinner, it broadcast a cabaret featuring some of the diocese's most entertaining performers.

The online event, which had about 575 viewers, raised \$70,000 through corporate sponsorship and individual giving. The money will support clergy in need and fund scholarships and other important causes.

After COVID-19 restrictions made the traditional in-person dinner impossible, the Bishop's Company had to come up with another plan, says Peter Misiaszek, the diocese's director of Stewardship Development.

"People were feeling blue with COVID-19 hanging over them, so we wondered if there was another way we could bring people together and involve the diocese as much as possible," he says. "That's when the idea of a cabaret was born."

After reaching out to the bishops and others, he came up with a list of 12 performers, both clergy and lay, from across the diocese. They pre-recorded their acts, and then all the segments were put together to form the cabaret. The set-list included theatre, worship and praise music, jazz, contemporary and classical favourites, and vocal performances.

In addition to the music and entertainment, the evening included remarks by Archbishop Linda Nicholls, who is the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and Bishop Andrew Asbil. Dean Stephen Vail of St. James Cathedral was the MC for the night and the Rev. Canon Nicola Skinner of Grace Church, Markham spoke about how the funds raised by the Bishop's Company helped a clergy family.

After Bishop Asbil and Dean Vail welcomed viewers, the entertainment started off with two songs by the Rev. Ken McClure of St. George, Haliburton, who sang lightheartedly about the Bishops of Toronto down through the ages and the 39 Articles of Religion. He was followed by the musical group Wine Before Breakfast and jazz guitarist Nathan Hiltz.

Before the next trio of performers started, Canon Skinner spoke about how the Bishop's Company helped to cover the funeral costs of the late Rev. Sheilagh Ashworth, a well-known priest of the diocese who died this past summer from cancer, leaving two young daughters.

"It was an incredible help to her daughters and family in a very, very difficult time," she said. "It is generous gestures such as these in times of crisis that offer great comfort to family and friends. The decision of the Bishop's Company



The Rev. Kenneth Korsah



The Rev. Anish Matthew George



Cormac Joy



Rachel Mahon



Nathan Richards



The Rev. Ken McClure



Sarah Misiaszek



Wine Before Breakfast



Sandra Campbell



St. Bede Gospel Choir

to cover Sheilagh's costs was also a moving and wonderful tribute to the acts of compassion and generosity that Sheilagh extended to so many in her lifetime. She was a light of Christ in the world."

The next trio of performers included the St. Bede's Praise Band, the Rev. Kenneth Korsah and the Seraphic Voices and the Rev. Anish Matthew George and his son Aneason of the Church of South India, who played harmonicas.

After their performances, Archbishop Nicholls spoke about her first year as Primate and gave some examples of how Anglicans across Canada have responded positively to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Human beings are creative and resilient and capable of more than we often imagine," she said. "We will get through this together. Despite the rampant individualism of our time, epitomized unfortunately in the refusal by some to wear a

mask or social distance, we have recognized our need of one another and the need to connect virtually, across time and space and physically across a room or garden and acknowledge we share this time together. We have also realized afresh that we are profoundly inter-connected and our very lives depend on those we often acknowledge the least, both in respect and economically."

She reflected on the early Church and how the disciples responded after the death of Jesus. "I expect the disciples felt the same after the death of Jesus – powerful forces ranged against them and an uncertain future. But once they had experienced the reality of the resurrection, once they had been touched by the power of the Holy Spirit, that small band of disciples found hope at every turn in the face of imprisonment, opposition, beatings, and ridicule and changed

the world. The faithfulness of God is the touchstone that defeats even death itself." (For her full address, see Page 4 of this issue of The Anglican.)

After Archbishop Nicholls' remarks, the entertainment continued with an organ recital by Rachel Mahon, a former member of Grace Church on-the-Hill in Toronto who is now the music director of Coventry Cathedral in England, singer and musician Sarah Misiaszek of Christ Memorial Church, Oshawa, and the duet of Gareth and Maggie Anderson of St. James, Orillia, who performed a medley of songs.

The final trio included singer Cormac Joy, who is the youth coordinator of Trent-Durham, Nathan Richards, a mainstay of the diocese's annual Black Heritage Service, who played the flute and sang, and Sandra Campbell of the Toronto Urban Native Ministry, who sang and drummed.

Near the end of the evening, the recipients of three scholarships were announced. Matthew Jeffrey Bowman from Trinity College and the Rev. Tyler Wigg-Stevenson from Wycliffe College received The George & Eileen Carey Award, which is awarded to Anglican scholars pursuing post-graduate theological studies. Wilson Akinwale of Wycliffe College and Li Fen Nicola Zhang of Trinity College received The Terence & Alice Jean Finlay Bursary, given to two students who are engaged in studies that celebrate and enhance an understanding of the diversity of the Church. Susan Smandych received The Kirubai Scholarship, awarded to a Trinity College divinity student with an area of specialization in liturgy and worship.

In his closing remarks, Bishop Asbil thanked the performers and viewers for a wonderful evening.

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Nathan Hiltz

'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee'

Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, delivered these remarks at the Bishop's Company's online cabaret on Oct. 16.

BY ARCHBISHOP LINDA NICHOLLS

When I was invited to be the speaker for this event, I had visions of the past dinners I had attended during my ministry in the Diocese of Toronto: the chaos and noise of Holy Trinity, Trinity Square as people mingled, laughed, and enjoyed refreshments; the silent auctions in the lobby of the Marriott Hotel; and the enormous ballroom filled with tables of Anglicans and friends from across the diocese, gathered to support the ministry of the Bishop's Company over food, wine and conversation. Little did I know I would instead be recording my remarks in the small chapel at 135 Adelaide Street in the middle of a global pandemic! This is certainly a sign of our times. Our expectations have been upended, as if we have all been tossed into the vortex of a hurricane and nothing is the same nor will it be again.

My personal "hurricane" has been the experience of the past year of being elected as Primate, leaving a ministry in a new diocese I had grown to love, living in airport waiting rooms as I travelled Canada and the world, and seeking to digest new responsibilities. Then confined to home with no idea how to be a Primate who did not travel to meet the Church across the country. I have learned how to connect on Zoom, to conduct meetings remotely, to video-record sermons and talks in my living room, and do Facebook live! I am also learning how to live in ambiguity and uncertainty every day.

Each of you has a similar story to tell of the normal routines of your work, family and church lives suddenly brought to a complete halt by COVID-19. Families are figuring out home or online schooling. Workplaces are learning how to meet on Zoom and work from home. We live in isolation from family members and fear for the elderly or immunocompromised. Businesses are unsure of their survival, and we all experience the losses of community, special events, sports, arts and entertainment.

We have been devastated by the rapidity with which the interconnected systems of our economic and social worlds could collapse, even as we are grateful to live in a country where government supports have cushioned the fall and sought to address health needs.

Now – six months later – the immediacy of the hurricane is over. The chaos and devastation are being assessed. We have learned new daily routines. We carry masks in our pockets, purses and cars. We step farther apart when someone approaches. We check with friends and family about if, when and how we can meet, as we have different tolerance levels for contact. The future is still uncertain as the financial realities have not yet fully reached us. In-person worship has restarted, but it is not the same – seated apart, masked, no singing permitted, communion in one kind only and no coffee hour! Hardly the experience of Christian community we long for.

The hurricane also exposed cracks in our social structures that must be addressed: inequities in expectations of those lowest on the economic ladder who provide essential services to all. Racial inequities that cannot be ignored any longer.

It would be easy to sink into a state of depression at the enormity of the challenges we face, the continuing risks, the slowness of progress added to the continuing depressing global news of recurrences of the virus and natural disasters.

I can hear you murmur, "Well, this is cer-



Archbishop Linda Nicholls greets guests after her installation as Primate at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver in 2019. Photo by Geoff Howe/General Synod Communications.

tainly not an uplifting talk! Surely we need something more."

We do, for this is the Bishop's Company Cabaret: a company of people in the name of Christ committed to the great commandment, "Love God and love neighbour as self," and committed to the gospel message that is always one of hope.

Tonight I want to point to a few images of hope and promise that have helped me remember that we are resilient and to where I see Anglicans drawing on that resilience and our faith as encouragement to all of us for the long road ahead.

I live in London, Ont., a city that has a vision for keeping green spaces and walkways in the midst of all areas. Near my home is such a walkway through the woods between backyards – a gravel path and boardwalk – that at the beginning of the pandemic still crunched with snow and ice. At the beginning of the lockdown, I quickly realized I needed to walk every day. I needed to smell fresh air to be in touch with God's creation and with the timeless rhythms of the seasons and their capacity to renew themselves every year. On these walks, I began to see surprising messages – hand-painted rocks with messages of encouragement: you are loved; stay strong; breathe. I saw Easter eggs, ladybugs and beetles – even Spiderman! Small birdhouses were hung on the trees. The neighbours I never saw were leaving messages of hope: you are not alone; we are in this together.

I saw the same signs of encouragement among friends, family, churches and staff, through emails, phone calls and Zoom gatherings. We may have lost coffee hour at church, but Zoom coffee hours popped up where people could gather, encourage and offer prayers. A friend reported regular concerts given by someone in the same building from their balcony; people gathered in the parking lot below, or on their balconies listening, clapping and cheering. Signs in windows or banging pots proclaimed support for frontline workers. There were drive-by birthday celebrations and lawn signs for graduates.

Though stopped from gathering in person, people found other ways to encourage and be present. Due to missing graduation ceremonies, an Anglican Youth Program in Vancouver delivered graduation gift bags to graduates with gifts and a mini cap! Bishop Mary Irwin-Gibson in Montreal delivered the graduation certificates to Master of Divinity grads at Montreal Diocesan College by placing the certificate tubes in the crook of her crozier and handing it to them on an outdoor

staircase! Huron Church Camp – knowing it would have no regular camps in the summer – made its space available to families wanting to come for a day picnic – a chance to get away from home and enjoy the outdoors! Other camps created online opportunities to engage. Confirmation classes and youth groups met online, sometimes even with the Primate!

I love to sing, and I sing in a community choir that is now cancelled for at least another year. We cannot sing in church together, either. For me, the harmony of an orchestra or choir or any combination of instruments is a symbol of the kind of community we seek to create where the gifts of each are needed in order to create the whole.

We are different and individual but part of the same body, and when all are honoured, recognized and can contribute to something greater, then each part is created for the good of all. So to see choirs and orchestras come together online and find a way to create music that is greater than each part is a sign of hope. It is not easy. You cannot play together online, as the signal delay plays havoc with coordination. Each member must listen to a track of one or more other parts and play with them while recording themselves, and then each part must be then coordinated together to produce the whole. A lot of work done by many. Whether it was the Toronto Symphony Orchestra or a high school choir or a professional chamber ensemble or someone spoofing a well-known song with new lyrics, people have brought music to life to share online, creating beauty and lifting the human spirit.

Human beings are creative and resilient and capable of more than we often imagine. We will get through this together. Despite the rampant individualism of our time (epitomized unfortunately in the refusal by some to wear a mask or social distance) we have recognized our need of one another and the need to connect virtually, across time and space and physically across a room or garden, and acknowledge we share this time together. We have also realized afresh that we are profoundly interconnected and our very lives depend on those we often acknowledge the least, both in respect and economically.

The signs of hope I have pointed to are not big. They are moments in time, ephemeral and small tokens of the capacity for human beings to see beyond the pain and struggle now and emphasize the most important values.

The other forces around us remain powerful and destructive. The virus is still strong.

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Perhaps we can rise to this moment

BY THE REV. MAGGIE HELWIG

Nights in Advent are dark and very long. In a drafty old church in Kensington Market, people sit below the dim stained glass, six feet apart, eating from cardboard containers, while the parish deacon, in gown and mask, circulates with news and conversation, and two of us in the kitchen prepare meals for the next morning, washing our chapped hands over and over. With liturgy now largely on-line, the building's role is to shelter, to feed, to hold within its walls a space for the lost. A cave in the rocks, a tent on the fields of hope. Waiting for the kingdom.

For some of us, the Christmas we anticipate will be the strangest we have ever known, without most of our usual practices of community and worship, without carols or choirs, without the ability to visit parents, grandparents, siblings. But for some, it will be very much like any other Christmas, alone, outside of the celebrations, or maybe part, willingly or unwillingly, of the unchosen spare festivities of the nearest shelter or respite centre.

Despite a brief sense of social solidarity, despite all the signs saying, "We're all in this together," the pandemic has in fact worsened existing inequalities at all levels. Large corporations have seen their profits skyrocket, while small independent businesses collapse. The building of pipelines on Indigenous land has been rapidly designated an "essential service." The bulk of the increased burden of childcare and unpaid domestic labour has fallen on women. The burden of high-risk, poorly compensated work, and the inevitable



A sculpture of a panhandler with the wounds of Christ sits outside St. Stephen in the Fields, Toronto. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

illness and death, has fallen mostly on racialized people. It is possible to look at the maps, week by week, and see the virus migrate from the lakefront condos of Toronto to the struggling northwestern suburbs; while in the meantime, homeless people have largely taken the situation into their own hands and set up encampments in parks and green spaces around the city, so that they can maintain limited and safer social bubbles. The spring lockdown has been described, brutally but not without some truth, as "middle-class people hiding while poor people brought them things."

And yet, out on the roads at the height of the first wave, along with those given no real choice – the warehouse workers, PSWs, cleaners, couriers, and retail clerks – there were also the riders of the People's Pantry and the Bike Brigade,

delivering free food from Mississauga to Scarborough and beyond. There were, and still are, the staff and volunteers of those drop-ins and food banks that have stayed open: the Anishnawbe Health Bus doing mobile testing for the most vulnerable; the Encampment Support Network bringing supplies and care to the people living in tents. A band of ragged Magi, following a beacon of hope. And in their own homes, the Sewing Army, making thousands of free masks, scrub caps and gowns, including most of those now being worn by the volunteers at my own parish's drop-in and meal programs.

And, as well, the data analysts, the investigative journalists, and the tireless activists and advocates who have ensured that this crisis has been an opportunity to make visible the chasms of inequity in

our society, rather than papering them over – who keep drawing attention to those few central things such as stable indoor shelter, access to handwashing, safe employment conditions and paid sick leave, and to the vulnerability created in our whole society when some members are deprived of these.

In the long nights of Advent, we remember that we are waiting for one who came to us in isolation and displacement, who lived in obscurity, who was tortured and executed finally by the powers of the day. And if Christ's presence and Christ's kingdom breaks in fragments into our reality now, it is in these obscure and hidden acts by the small people of the world, in the heart of empire or out on the fringes. And it is in the work of those who can learn the lessons of the tents and the bicycles and the darkness, and articulate them, over and over if necessary, to our contemporary powers. Much of what the Church might normally do, we cannot do now. But perhaps we can rise to this moment.

There are days when I am afraid that "building back better" is too extreme a hope, and that the very best we might manage, if we all insist hard enough and long enough, is building back something not greatly worse. But Advent is a promise. That the arc of time will turn, that the light which has been born will be born once more, maybe in strange hidden places we never expected. That perhaps we can still learn to love each other and our endangered earth, to share more justly, to demand a new vision.

The Rev. Maggie Helwig is the incumbent of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields, Toronto.

Consider this year-end stewardship checklist



It has been a tumultuous year. Despite its wild uncertainty, 2020 – the year of the pandemic – will go down as one that forced many of us to reimagine how we do church and to adapt to that new reality. In

the Stewardship office, this resulted in a pivot from the annual Bishop's Company fundraising dinner to an online cabaret. The latter, a free event that was open to everyone, allowed us to showcase talent from across the diocese.

We also placed renewed emphasis on Pre-Authorized Giving and introduced a new giving resource in the form of a QR Code. The level of generosity was unparalleled. We received more online gifts in April of this year than all last year. People want to help; they have a need to give thanks and be generous.

The pandemic gives us permission to try new things – largely online. It has emphasized the importance of maintaining and building relationships, staying connected with one another and continuing to being a faithful Christian witness in uncertain times. As the year comes to an end, it is an opportune time to re-evaluate what we did in our parishes and consider how we remain vigilant in promoting generosity and supporting ministry.

I invite you to consider, and challenge you to adopt, the following ways we can continue to support stewardship and encourage discipleship:

Stay in contact with parishioners. Many of our members are particularly vulnerable to the risks of COVID-19 be-

THE STEWARD

BY PETER MISIASZEK

cause of age or illness. They need to know that they are being prayed for and are valued and loved by our church communities. Call them if you can. They want to hear from you.

Maintain a web presence. Even though we can worship as a community, many choose to stay away. If you do not have a website, parishioners will lose a sense of belonging. At worse, they may drift away and never return.

Develop some sort of online worship. The service of Holy Communion is the lifeblood of our Christian experience. Many of us crave the fellowship and solemn experience that participation in church brings. If we do not fill that void, how are we maintaining a Christian presence and responding to the worship needs of our congregants?

Ask all your congregants to continue supporting ministry. It is a great joy to know that most parishes are sustaining their operations. However, our clergy are working twice as hard as during normal times while dealing with the stress that each one of us is experiencing. The work of the Church continues, but in different ways. The Church still needs your support.

Make your giving regular, reliable and real. If you can, switch to a first-fruits electronic form of giving like e-transfer or Pre-Authorized Remittance. This will help ensure a steady stream of revenue for your parish and help alleviate

the stress that parish leaders feel regarding money woes.

Consider some sort of virtual special event. Community building is still important. Churches are experimenting with online kitchen parties, pageants, potluck dinners and cabarets. Do the same. No one expects perfection, though they will appreciate the effort.

Thank, thank, thank. Gratitude for generosity is always welcome. Send thank-you notes to donors and non-donors alike. Thank and invite prayers, acts of kindness, and financial generosity.

Pivot. COVID-19 is our reality. Use this time as permission to try new things and be creative. Perhaps that means introducing new giving vehicles like QR codes, text-to-give or using CanadaHelps.

Ask for a gift of encouragement. The pandemic has precipitated renewed interest in wills and will preparation. We know that only five per cent of churchgoers include their parish in their end-of-life planning. There is no better time than right now to encourage members of our congregations to consider leaving to their church in their wills.

COVID-19 has forced us to fast-forward and modernize the way we do ministry, stay connected with one another, engage with our community through outreach, celebrate, give and worship. It may seem like a long way off, but the pandemic will come to an end at some point. Will your church emerge stronger from the experience?

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

Hope gives us strength

Continued from Page 4

We do not yet have a vaccine. Those who are angry and disbelieving readily create havoc. Economic forces remain uncertain.

I expect the disciples felt the same after the death of Jesus – powerful forces ranged against them and an uncertain future. But once they had experienced the reality of the resurrection, once they had been touched by the power of the Holy Spirit, that small band of disciples found hope at every turn in the face of imprisonment, opposition, beatings, and ridicule and changed the world. The faithfulness of God is the touchstone that defeats even death itself.

When I finished university and prepared to travel to India to teach, a friend gave me a locket with a scripture verse I have never forgotten. The locket has disappeared in the mists of time but the verse remains in my heart: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." It is a part of Deuteronomy 31:8 as Joshua faced the challenge of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land: "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

I pray that the small signs of hope around us in the resilience of the human spirit in community and God's promise to be with us whatever lies ahead, will give us strength to build the community of grace, mercy and justice God longs to see and keeps us hopeful every day.

Thank you.

LABYRINTH FOR ALL

Youth at St. Joseph of Nazareth in Brampton stand beside a labyrinth they helped to build on the church's property on Sept. 4-5. Designed by parishioner Sarah Layman, the labyrinth is available for members of the church and the wider community to use at any time. PHOTO BY JANE PEKAR



OUTSIDE ART

Youth at St. Barnabas, Chester on Danforth Avenue in Toronto work on a mural (left), which was later installed outside the church (above), along with two others. The murals, consisting of individual squares, illustrate what the church means to members of the congregation and others associated with it. Youth and adults designed the squares. The project was led by local artist Janet Read. A dedication ceremony was held on Oct. 25, with remarks by Peter Tabuns, MPP for Toronto Danforth, and Paula Fletcher, city councillor for the Danforth. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ST. BARNABAS, CHESTER



FRESH AIR

Penny Nutbrown (above right) of St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope reads to children during the church's outdoor Sunday School in October. Parents attended with their children and everyone was masked and physically distanced. Activities included building bee houses, creating mini worm composters to take home, making leaf garlands and build-your-own bugs with twigs and corrugated cardboard. Participants also put up a bee house for solitary bees wishing to winter over at St John's. PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, PORT HOPE

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Church finds way for show to go on

Christmas story goes online

FOR 59 consecutive years, St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope, presented The Christmas Story in the church. Parishioners and members of the wider community looked forward to the annual retelling of the familiar narrative, complete with angels, shepherds and wise men, all following the star to a stable in Bethlehem.

But with COVID-19 this year, the congregation and community have had to get creative in how to live up to the old maxim, "the show must go on."

This holiday season, St. John's will present the 60th edition of The Christmas Story as a series of five short films that blend scenes from the script with videos and photographs from past productions, reminiscences from past and recent cast members and crew, and testimonials from community members about what The Christmas Story has meant to them.

The first two films in the series will be released during Advent,

followed by the pivotal Nativity scene on Christmas Eve, another film during Christmas week and the final installment on Epiphany, when the kings reach Bethlehem. The videos will be posted on the St. John's website and on YouTube.

"We are not only going to tell the story as we usually would, but we're also going to invite people to share what the Christmas Story has meant to them, their past involvement, share old photos and things like that," says Shane Watson, a member of the congregation and chair of the Church Advisory Board.

Scenes of The Christmas Story will be performed and recorded by people in the same social bubbles. Footage will be sent to the editing team and integrated with archival materials to create each of the five episodes.

"The cool thing about The Christmas Story this year is that we're really going to be bringing it outside of the four walls of the church," says Mr. Watson.

PRAYER CYCLE

FOR DECEMBER

1. The Rt. Rev. Peter Fenty
2. The Founders and Benefactors of the Diocese of Toronto
3. The Anglican Foundation
4. The Diocese of Toronto Foundation
5. Mission to Seafarers
6. Project Ploughshares - the peace institute of the Canadian Council of Churches
7. All Saints, Peterborough
8. Christ Church, Campbellford
9. Christ Church, Norwood
10. Christ Church, Omeme
11. Parish of Belmont
12. St. George, Hastings
13. Peterborough Deanery
14. St. George-the-Martyr, Apsley
15. St. James, Emily
16. St. James, Roseneath
17. St. John the Baptist, Lakefield
18. St. John the Evangelist, Havelock
19. St. John the Evangelist, Peterborough
20. Anglican Church Women (Enid Corbett, Diocesan President)
21. St. John, Ida
22. St. Luke, Peterborough
23. St. Matthew and St. Aidan, Buckhorn
24. St. Michael, Westwood
25. Christmas Day

26. St. Peter on-the-Rock, Stony Lake
27. The Members of the Order of the Diocese of Toronto
28. St. Stephen, Ghandos
29. St. Thomas, Millbrook
30. The Chapel of Christ Church, Lakefield
31. The Archives Department at the Synod Office

IN MOTION

Appointments

- The Rev. Canon Beth Benson, Honorary Assistant, St. James Cathedral, Oct. 4.
- The Most Rev. Colin Johnson, Interim Priest-in-Charge, St. Mary Magdalene, Oct. 4.
- The Rev. Molly Finlay, Priest-in-Charge, St. John the Baptist, Norway, Nov. 23.
- The Rt. Rev. Jenny Andison, Incumbent, St. Paul, Bloor Street, Feb. 28, 2021.
- The Rev. David Bryan Hoopes, OHC, Interim Priest-in-Charge, St. John, West Toronto, Oct. 19.
- The Rev. Gloria Master, Interim Priest-in-Charge, St. Paul, Lindsay, Nov. 2.
- The Rev. Douglas Michael, Regional Dean of Nottawasaga Deanery, Dec. 1.

Ordinations

- The Rev. Sherri Golisky was ordained a priest at St. Cuthbert, Leaside on Oct. 18.
- The Rev. Robert James Townshend was ordained a vocational deacon at St. Peter, Erindale on Oct. 18.
- The Rev. Michael Perry was ordained a priest at St. Peter and St. Simon the Apostle, Toronto on Nov. 1.
- The Rev. Maria Ling was ordained a priest at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto on Nov. 15.

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):
- Maple Church Plant, St. Ste-

Pastoral Counsellor Registered Psychotherapist



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phen (contact York-Simcoe Office)

- Parish of Fenelon Falls (contact Trent-Durham Office)

First Phase - (not yet receiving names):

- St. Matthew the Apostle, Oriole
- St. Nicholas, Birch Cliff

Second Phase - (receiving names via Area Bishop):

- St. John, York Mills
- St. Joseph of Nazareth, Bramalea
- St. Paul, Lindsay
- St. Paul on-the-Hill, Pickering
- Trinity, Streetsville

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names):

- N/A

Retirement

- The Rev. Dr. Warren Leibovitch has retired. His last Sunday at St. Paul, Lindsay was Oct. 25.

Death

- The Rev. Robert (Bob) Sinclair died on Oct. 20. He was ordained deacon in 1960 and priest in 1961 in the Diocese of Toronto. He served as curate of Epiphany, Scarborough and then in the parishes of Hastings & Roseneath, and Mono. He was active in prison ministry, serving as chaplain in the Don Jail in the late 1970s. Although canonically resident in the Diocese of Niagara in

Cabaret goes online

Continued from Page 3

"As you can see, we have much in the way of diversity and musical interest," he said. "It is my hope that this evening has brought you joy and encouragement. While we are unable to be together in person, we can none the less gather, celebrate, and give to an important diocesan ministry."

He paid tribute to Bishop Peter Fenty, the area bishop of York-Simcoe, who is retiring at the end of November. "Peter has been a friend, mentor, and coach to many of us. A passionate advocate for minori-

ties and the poor, he is known for his powerful preaching and wise counsel. Peter, we will miss your prophetic wisdom and voice of reason. We will miss your playful humour and delight for mischief. We will miss your pastoral heart, and deeper still we will miss the love, passion, and hope that you live out each day for the sake of the gospel. Thank you, my friend. You will be missed."

To watch the cabaret, visit the diocese's YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/user/tordio135>.

LOOKING AHEAD

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

DEC. 6 - The Feast of St. Nicholas service and celebration, 10:30 a.m., guest preacher Bishop Andrew Asbil, Holy Trinity, Guildwood, 85 Livingston Rd., Toronto. St. Nicholas will make a special visit to greet children and youth as well as remind them that Christmas is coming.

DEC. 18 - Virtual Christmas Showcase with songwriters, singers and musicians, Holy Trinity, Guildwood, 85 Livingston Rd., Toronto.



Your friends at *The Anglican* wish you a blessed Advent & Christmas.

Conference affirms value of everyone

Workshops seek to tear down barriers

BY MURRAY MacADAM

"NO one is disposable" was the theme of the diocese's outreach conference, held Oct. 24. The conference underscored that message by tackling the feeling of exclusion that is felt by many people. The annual gathering, which has been held every year since 2003, took place online and drew more than 100 people from across the diocese.

In a hard-hitting keynote address, Bishop Peter Fenty, the area bishop of York-Simcoe, highlighted the theme and raised the issue of racism amongst Anglicans. He noted that the Apostle Paul provided a vivid image of the Church as the body of Christ in a famous passage from the Book of Corinthians (I Corinthians 12:12-27). God is showing us that the body needs the unique contributions of all its parts, including the weaker parts.

Similarly, in God's economy there is room for everyone. "Our Lord always showed particular concern for 'the least,' such as widows and orphans," said Bishop Fenty. "The whole body is weakened if any part is lost. The same is true of the Church. It requires all of us to honour the other."

Bishop Fenty noted that there are diverse communities in our midst, and that diversity should be celebrated. That includes valuing and welcoming people who are marginalized and those with disabilities. "We must put our own house in order. We cannot ask others to do what we are not willing to do. Do you believe no one is disposable? What is life like in your parish? Do you engage with people who are very different from you? Do you even see them?"

When a participant asked the bishop how he responds when asked why an organization like Black Anglicans of Canada is needed, he said the question is "an insult," similar to how he feels when people say they don't see colour when speaking with people of colour. "You are saying you don't see me," he said.

He said he has been monitored in stores as a possible shoplifter, an experience echoed by the Rev.

Canon Dr. Stephen Fields, the incumbent of Holy Trinity, Thornhill.

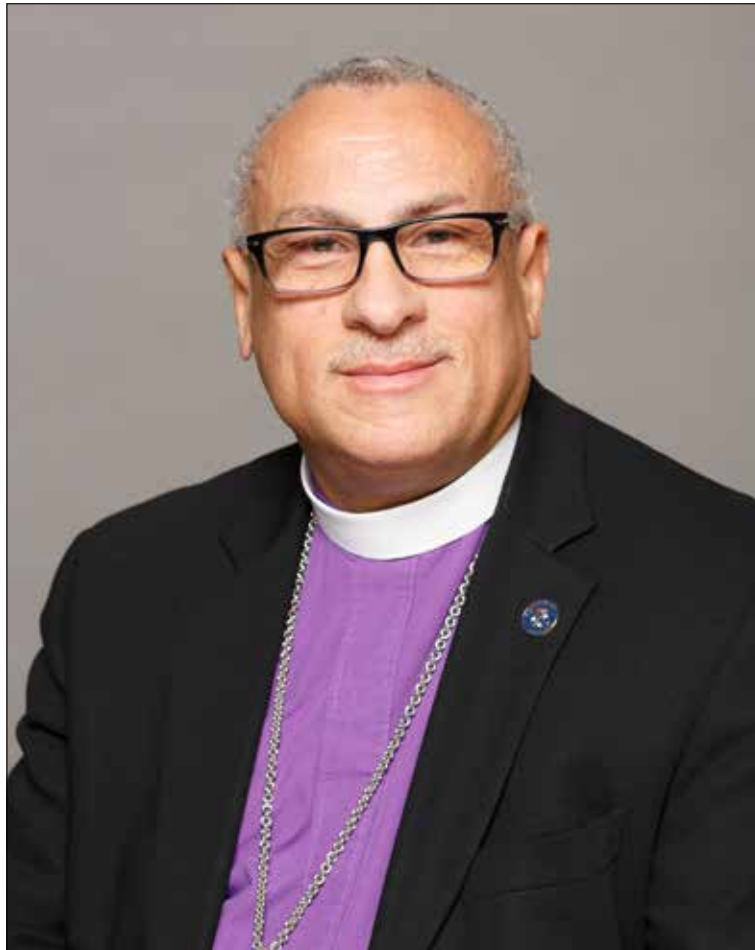
A workshop on housing as restorative justice made the issue of inclusion real by focusing on the challenges that former inmates face in finding housing and in being accepted back into society. Restorative justice approaches crime in a way that focuses on who has been hurt by crime, how relationships have been broken and how they can be made right.

Workshop co-leader Eileen Henderson from Restorative Justice Housing Ontario (RJHO) noted that restorative justice is based on the value that "a person is worth more than the sum total of their worst offences." She related the tragic story of "Peter" (not his real name) who was approaching release after serving a long sentence. He'd burned bridges with the people he'd known before imprisonment. As his release date approached, he became extremely anxious. After he was told he'd have to live in a shelter, he killed himself.

The story of "Don," however, showed how a restorative justice approach can turn a person's life around. After being imprisoned in the United States on drug offences, Don was living in a crowded dorm, at risk of getting COVID-19. Supporters in Canada were able to get him on an airplane home and rent an apartment for him. "We can make a difference," said RJHO board member Jim Harbell.

Yet a lack of affordable housing prevents many from reintegrating back into the community successfully. About 3,000 of the estimated 10,000 people released from prison each year in the Greater Toronto Area try to rebuild their lives without a stable place to live. Studies have shown that former inmates with stable and supportive housing are far less likely to reoffend than those without such housing. One person that RJHO helped had been forced to live in a storage locker, since he had nowhere else to go.

Lack of decent affordable housing was also a focus of a workshop called Washing Your Hands: Vulnerable Neighbours in a Time of Covid, led by the Rev. Canon Brad Smith of



Bishop Peter Fenty

St. John the Evangelist, Peterborough. After a local shelter closed, some homeless people began living in tents in a park adjacent to the parish. Mr. Smith allowed some of them to pitch their tents on church property and formed relationships with them. Not everyone welcomed his approach. "I took a lot of heat", admitted Mr. Smith, both from Peterborough residents and from parishioners worried that the tents would damage the grass on the church's property.

His stance of welcome to the homeless was motivated, he said, both by the gospel as well as by a political strategy to raise the issue of homelessness in a city with Canada's lowest vacancy rate. "The invisible (homeless people) had to be made visible or nothing would be done," he said. His boldness paid off: governments at all levels quickly began working together and in 2019 Peterborough found housing for 275 people on affordable housing waiting lists.

Keeping safe from COVID-19 is difficult for homeless people, noted Mr. Smith, mentioning that the

simple act of washing one's hands is a challenge without a home and when public washrooms are often closed.

Researcher Laura Cattari told a workshop on the basic income proposal that the widely-used Canada Emergency Recovery Benefit (CERB) to benefit people made jobless by the pandemic has proven that the idea that governments can't take decisive action is "dead wrong." She applauded the 41 Anglican and Lutheran bishops who wrote a joint letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last May, urging his government to immediately implement a basic income.

Other workshops highlighted the needs of disabled and marginalized people, anti-racism work, and ministry with Indigenous people.

As part of a closing reflection, Elin Goulden, the diocese's Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant, discussed the story of the Good Samaritan. She noted that the Samaritans would have been treated as disposable in biblical times, yet perhaps because of his experience of exclusion, the Good Samaritan is



The Rev. Brad Smith



Laura Cattari



Eileen Henderson

moved to help the injured man lying on the road. "We are all connected," she said. "We are all part of one body." The conference wrapped up with a powerful litany encouraging participants to work to tear down the barriers dividing us.

Murray MacAdam is a member of St. John the Evangelist, Peterborough.



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