

**Chancellor Burns  
to retire**

**Clergy take  
mini-sabbaticals**



**Ping pong relay  
helps those in need**

# The Anglican

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO

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## FIRST LIGHT

Caedance Stanley practices lighting the first candle on the Advent wreath as other members of Church of the Resurrection's youth group look on. A candle will be lit each week during Advent at the Toronto church, followed by the lighting of the middle candle on Christmas Eve. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

BY BISHOP KEVIN ROBERTSON

# O come, let us adore him



**A**s a kid, I remember sitting down in mid-November each year to write two Christmas lists. The first was for Santa, to be sent away to his North Pole address (postal code: HOH OHO). The second was for my family. The latter would get put up on the refrigerator door with a fridge magnet for the next six weeks, alongside similar wish lists from my twin sister and two brothers. Each of us would return to those lists many times throughout December as we planned out what gifts we would find for each other.

Thus began my understanding of Christmas as a time when we both give and receive. I looked forward to the gifts under the tree with my name on the tag, but I also looked forward to the reaction of my siblings and parents when they opened the gifts that I had carefully chosen and wrapped for

them.

Christmas as a time of giving and receiving is embedded in our understanding of the celebration. At this time of year, we remind ourselves, "It's better to give than to receive" and we talk about "the joy of giving." The practice of giving and receiving gifts at Christmas also helps us to be more generous and compassionate with others. Just as we are mindful of the many blessings we have received, we also remember those who are less fortunate. Christmas is a "season of giving" in which we share what we have with others. If you haven't done so already this season, I would urge you to be generous in support of your parish as well as charitable organizations in your community – especially this year when life is so difficult for so many. For Christians, this spirit of giving is inspired by the most important gift we have received: Jesus, the Christ, born for us in a manger in Bethlehem all

Continued on Page 4

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**AN ADVENT STORY - SEE PAGE 12**

# New platform helps students, seniors with housing struggles

## Students do basic tasks in exchange for an affordable room

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

**IMAGINE** trying to find somewhere to live 12,500 km away, in a city you've never been to. You find an online listing, pay an entire year's worth of rent, and finally arrive in Toronto or Barrie or Sault Ste. Marie only to discover that you're sharing a dingy basement with four other students and no fire exits. Or, perhaps worse still, that the apartment in question was never available to rent at all.

It's an increasingly common scenario in Ontario's housing market, and one that a parishioner at Little Trinity in Toronto is hoping to help alleviate. Rylan Kinnon has launched RoomEaze, a platform that will use technology to simultaneously help two diverse groups with their housing struggles: post-secondary students – especially international students – who need safe and affordable housing; and seniors who want to safely and affordably age at home.

Working in the post-secondary sector for the past 10 years in government, as a consultant and with related technology companies, Mr. Kinnon has had conversations with student leaders across Ontario. "All of them had housing as a top priority. And all of them particularly identified the challenges that international students face from

a housing perspective," he says.

At a time when safe and affordable housing has become increasingly difficult to find, many international students have housing budgets as low as \$350-\$500 a month. "It can get you a basement apartment where what should have been a one-bedroom unit has been converted into five bedrooms, there's no fire safety and there's limited heating and cooling. I don't think that should be acceptable," says Mr. Kinnon.

Meanwhile, a 2017 report from the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis found that there are more than 5 million spare bedrooms in Ontario. A majority of seniors are over-housed, meaning they have more space than they want or need, but they may be unable to downsize or reluctant to leave their homes. A poll conducted in 2021 found that 89 per cent of seniors in Ontario planned to stay in their homes for as long as possible, particularly considering COVID-related deaths in seniors' residences.

Aware of these facts, Mr. Kinnon started to think about models that have been piloted in Europe, the U.S. and Canada that see post-secondary students living with seniors. In exchange for more affordable rental rates, students agree to help with certain tasks around the house for up to seven hours a week. Responsibilities

could include grocery shopping, basic meal prep, snow shovelling or raking leaves. All expectations are clearly stated beforehand in a written agreement signed by both the senior and the student.

"These models have been proven to have really positive health and social outcomes," says Mr. Kinnon. "If seniors had someone in the home who could help them, it could be the difference between staying in their home, in a community they know and the space that they know, versus having to move into assisted living."

For students, the most obvious benefit is access to a home where they can feel safe and welcome. But beyond a roof over their head, Mr. Kinnon says living with a local senior can help international students transition more successfully to life in Canada, especially coming from cultures where multi-generational living is the norm.

"Students have so much they can learn from a senior, and a senior has so much wisdom to impart," he says. "There's huge opportunities for these beautiful relationships to take place, where a student and a senior support each other, and that student feels more connected to Canada than they would if they had found some other approach to housing."

While this kind of living arrange-



Rylan Kinnon, founder of RoomEaze, says Anglicans can show their faith by putting their spare bedrooms to good use. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROOMEAZE

ment isn't a new concept, Mr. Kinnon hopes to use technology to help make the process as seamless as possible. Everything will be channelled through the RoomEaze platform, which has been designed to be user friendly for seniors. "We've tried to design it in such a way that it's as intuitive as possible. That's the starting point," he says. "One of the things COVID has driven is a better understanding of technology among seniors."

For those who may not be comfortable navigating the site themselves, his team is looking at ways they can help seniors set up accounts, or even provide access for seniors' adult children who may want to be part of the process.

When they sign up, seniors and students will create profiles that are used to match them with potentially compatible partners. Once a senior and a student have matched, talked and decided they want to try living together, they'll sign a housing agreement in the platform that lays out any house rules and the specific tasks the student will help with. RoomEaze will also take care of validating people's identities and running criminal background checks when they sign up.

Mr. Kinnon says he knows issues

will arise when any two people live together, so RoomEaze will initiate check-ins with both students and seniors at regular intervals to make sure everyone is happy with how things are going. "If any issues arise in the relationship, we're going to follow up with a phone call. We'll aim to mediate any challenges that come up," he says. "We hope we can catch challenges early and make sure we can resolve them."

As things get going, the team is looking at more ways of matching compatible seniors and students. "We'll continually be improving the algorithm so we'll be able to match better and also potentially identify traits or characteristics that might lead to tension and make sure we match people as effectively as possible," he says.

They're also looking at matching students based on their area of study with seniors who worked in that field. This could provide opportunities for mentorship, a perspective on what it's like to work in the field and potentially a champion with contacts and connections in the industry.

Mr. Kinnon is reaching out to Anglican communities not only because there are seniors among

Continued on Page 3

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# Chancellor Clare Burns to retire

## Lawyer brought expertise, humour to job

BY STUART MANN

**CHANCELLOR** Clare Burns has travelled around the diocese so much that she could probably write a food guide about it. “I can tell you where you can get the best jerk chicken at a church meeting, where to get the best scones, the best cheese plates. But I’m never going to give the details because I love all my friends and I don’t want to get in trouble with them,” she says wryly.

As she prepares to retire as the diocese’s chancellor on Dec. 31, she looks back on the last 20 years with deep fondness, especially for the bishops, clergy, laity and staff of the diocese. “I have learned so much in this role. It has improved my life in ways I never could have thought of.”

Chancellor Burns, a member of St. Paul, Bloor Street, became a vice-chancellor of the diocese in 2002 and chancellor in 2014. The chancellor is the chief canon lawyer of the diocese and gives advice to the diocesan bishop. Chancellor Burns served under three diocesan bishops – the late Archbishop Terence Finlay, Archbishop Colin John-



Chancellor Clare Burns

son and Bishop Andrew Asbil, all of whom she describes as men of great faith.

Despite giving hundreds of hours a year to the job on a volunteer basis, she says it was “totally worthwhile,” even during the difficult times. “We’ve had some hard times with a pandemic, we’ve had to amalgamate some parishes, and we’ve had problems with buildings. But all of those things have taught me that the strength of the Church is its people. If there is a problem, people with good hearts and a good Christian attitude will get in a room together and figure it out.”

Chancellor Burns served on Synod Council and at Synod. She chaired the Compensation Working Group for the Synod Office, the Risk and Governance Committee, the Constitution and Canons Committee, and the Nominating Committee for episcopal elections.

Her work touched on almost every aspect of the diocese, from parish building projects to episcopal elections. The experiences have left her grateful and humble. “I’ve been rewarded with so many moments that I didn’t see coming, moments that have strengthened my faith. They came at unexpected times like being at Trinity, Streetsville when it was reconsecrated and what a joyful experience that was; but I’ve also sat in meetings with people who are in really hard situations where they’ve shown

amazing grace under pressure and you’ve just felt the Spirit in the room, and you don’t get that in a secular volunteer job.”

Canon Brian Armstrong, a vice-chancellor of the diocese who has worked with her over the years, says Chancellor Burns has been “a solid, authoritative and highly respected voice in the councils of the Church. When she spoke, people listened because they knew that her advice reflected both her many years’ experience as vice-chancellor and chancellor and her deep and abiding love for the Church.”

Bishop Asbil says her advice and expertise have been invaluable to him over the past four years of his episcopacy. “One of the great things that Clare has been able to do for me is create a line of continuity of leadership in the diocese from Terry Finlay to Colin to now,” he says. “She brings with her a long narrative of decisions and important matters over time.”

He also spoke of her many qualities, including her sense of humour. “She knows how to contain anxiety, especially when there have been points of conflict and change, and how to use the canons to enhance ministry. She also has brought humour that is disarming, enlivening and permission-giving – for a whole Church to be able to sometimes not take itself too seriously, and at the same time be able to name what’s so important. It’s one of her greatest gifts.”

Chancellor Burns says one of the highlights of her tenure has been meeting and working with lay volunteers across the diocese. “One of my favourite things is the annual

Bishop’s Levee and the presentation of the Order of the Diocese of Toronto, because it’s these people, who in quieter ways than many of us, have made an enormous contribution to the Church.”

She has also enjoyed working with the staff at the Synod Office. “Very few people in the diocese understand how hard the staff at 135 Adelaide work and how complicated their jobs are. It’s been a huge pleasure for me to work with everybody there.”

After 20 years in the job, she says it’s time to move on to new opportunities. She is a vice-chancellor of the Anglican Church of Canada and looks forward to devoting more time to that. “The roles of chancellor and vice-chancellor require renewal, and I think 20 years is a good place to renew it. There are different opportunities and different kinds of challenges and rewards, and I think it’s time for someone else to help out in Toronto.”

She will be succeeded by Marg Creal, a member of Church of the Redeemer, Bloor St. and a former crown attorney who is currently the chair of the province’s Consent and Capacity Board.

“Marg is going to be terrific,” says Chancellor Burns. “She knows the Church. The diocese is going to be in good hands.”

Bishop Asbil echoed her words. “I will miss Clare terribly, and we’re excited about Marg coming on as our new chancellor. She brings wonderful gifts, and we have a host of vice-chancellors as well who bring such gifts to the endeavour of being the Church.”

# Rooms for students

Continued from Page 2

their members, but because he hopes people will be inspired by their faith, just as he is. “My parents have always said I’m very justice-motivated, generally. Especially when I think about the call to feed the hungry and house the homeless and take care of folks,” he says. “What a beautiful way to show to someone what your faith means, to provide an affordable room in a safe, caring environment where you also can demonstrate that you do live your life differently.”

He’s started attending clericus meetings in the diocese to speak with clergy about RoomEaze. He hopes that if several seniors in the same community decide to open their homes, they could provide support to each other as they navigate their new relationships.

He acknowledges that this kind of arrangement isn’t a good fit for everyone, but he encourages seniors to think about whether hosting a student could improve their lives at the same time as helping someone else. “If you have a space in your home, if you have a bedroom that is being used for storage, just think about the value that that room could provide to someone else,” he says. “It’s there, it has no one in it, and it can provide warmth and shelter for someone who needs it. And we at RoomEaze will be alongside for the journey.”

Anyone who wants to learn more about RoomEaze can visit [www.roumeaze.info](http://www.roumeaze.info) or email Mr. Kinnon directly at [rylan@roumeaze.ca](mailto:rylan@roumeaze.ca).



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# Bishop reflects on Advent

New series explores hope, peace, joy, love

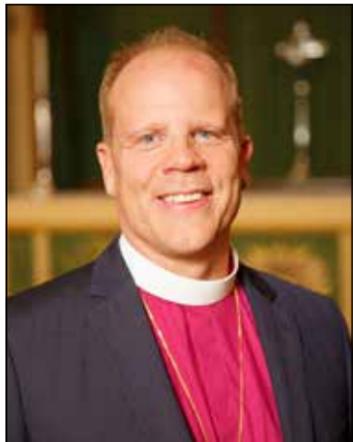
**BISHOP** Andrew Asbil is inviting Anglicans to journey with him through Advent in a new four-part video series.

“Over the next four weeks, I want to explore with you the four traditional themes of Advent: hope, peace, joy and love,” he says. “These are the true gifts of Advent as we anticipate the birth of our Saviour, and I invite you to examine with me, in your own heart and with your small group, what each of these themes means for you.”

The series, called Light One Candle: Advent Reflections with Bishop Andrew Asbil, is available on the diocese’s YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/user/tordio135](http://www.youtube.com/user/tordio135). It can be watched at any time. Each video is about 20 minutes long.

“While I will be speaking to you about my own experiences, there will be times in the recordings when you can pause and consider for yourselves the very questions that I am pondering this Advent too,” says Bishop Asbil.

Along the way, Bishop Asbil will be lighting an Advent wreath, and he invites viewers to do the same if they have one. “The Advent wreath



Videos with Bishop Andrew Asbil include reflections, prayers and a lighting of the Advent wreath each week. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON

is a tradition from our siblings in the Lutheran Church, who since the 16th century have shaped evergreen boughs – the foliage that never wilts or falls – into circles, the symbol of eternity, with no beginning or ending, and attached candles to mark the weeks until Christmas. It is a simple and powerful way to watch the light grow and illuminate our darkness, just as the light of Christ comes to light the world.”

The series includes prayers and a blessing by Bishop Asbil at the end of each segment.

The videos were shot at St. John the Baptist, Norway in Toronto and produced by the Diocese of Toronto.

Staff



## Adoration grounds us in the mystery of God

Continued from Page 1

those years ago.

As important as the giving and receiving is this season, I want to suggest another way for us to celebrate Christmas. And that is by simple adoration: “O come, let us adore him” is the refrain in one of the favourite Christmas carols. So, what does it mean to

adore Christ? Well, there is nothing busy or frenetic or transactional about adoration. We don’t have to search for it at the shopping mall or wait for it to arrive on the porch by Amazon. It’s not wrapped up under the tree or cooked alongside the Christmas turkey.

Rather, the act of adoration slows us down and helps us to focus on the essence of Christmas. Very simply, adoration is an attitude of profound love and reverence. To adore something or someone means to fix the gaze of our heart and soul on something so precious that it exceeds everything else. For followers of Jesus, adoration means basking in the glory of what God has done for us. At Christmas, we adore Christ by seeking to take in the mystery of the Incarnation – that God loved the world so much that God sent his only Son for the salvation of the world. (John 3:16)

Adoration is more passive than active. But make no mistake – adoration changes us! To acknowledge with such love what God has done can move us away from ingratitude and self-centredness and open us to the wonderful possibilities of the world around. The adoration of Christ can reinvigorate us for the work of the gospel and transform our

lives anew in Christ’s service. The Canadian Anglican writer J.I. Packer once wrote, “The life of true holiness is rooted in the soil of awed adoration.”

So how do we cultivate the soil of awed adoration? Many things can prompt a spirit of adoration from within us. For me, it’s helpful to find a quiet place where I can sit with a particular image or prayer or piece of scripture. Adoration also stirs within me when I’m out walking in the beauty of creation or plugged into some of my favourite music. It may also be helpful to step out of the rush of this season for a time, to tune out the many distractions, and give our whole attention to the contemplation of the majesty of God. Wherever adoration takes us, it ideally grounds us in the great mystery of God, and in God’s amazing love for us in Jesus Christ.

After a couple of years of more muted celebrations due to the pandemic, many of us are more than ready to return to some more familiar patterns of celebrating this season. As we go about the hurrying and scurrying once again this year, may we take time to slow down, step back and adore Christ. For in Christ we have life in all its fullness. Merry Christmas!

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A community of 254 congregations in 210 parishes covering 26,000 square kilometers. Of the nearly 5 million people who live within the diocesan boundaries, 376,000 claim to be affiliated with the Anglican Church, with about 80,000 people identified on the parish rolls. The diocese is home to many ethnic and language-based congregations, including African, Caribbean, Chinese, Filipino, French, Hispanic, Japanese, and Tamil. The City of Toronto has a large population of aboriginal peoples.

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# We must be at this sharp edge



BY THE REV. CANON MAGGIE HELWIG

There has probably never been a time in the last few decades that there has not been one or two people living in the yard at St. Stephen-in-the-Fields. Here, in the heart of the downtown west, in a small pocket of deep poverty surrounded by affluence, we have worked hard to be a space that is open to our community – vulnerable, undefended, a space that, as far as we are able, reflects the vulnerable love of the God who came in a breakable human body. But the intensity of need has never been so great.

The intersection of pandemic illness, an economy more and more polarized between extreme wealth and extreme poverty, a massive shelter and housing crisis, a breakdown in social solidarity, and the growing effects of climate change, crash over us all like waves, but most of all over those who are made marginal in our system – Indigenous people who carry the generational trauma of Residential Schools and the Sixties Scoop, racialized people, people who are ill or weak or unable to cope with a viciously competitive society, people for whom one piece of bad luck can turn into an avalanche. Parks are increasingly policed since last year's wave of violent evictions, many park areas are fenced off, and anyone trying to find space there is evicted rapidly. Shelters are more and more overcrowded, often dangerous, and, simply, almost always full. Our volunteers have spent the last months, even in the depths of winter, phoning Central Intake, trying to find beds for some of our drop-in participants, and being told that their best option was to wait outside the Streets to Homes office on Peter Street, in case a chair in the lobby opened up at



The encampment outside St. Stephen-in-the-Fields, Toronto. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

some point during the night.

So when tents began to gather in our yard, as other encampments were dismantled by City workers, there was never any question that we would allow people to stay, that we would offer them food and what services we could, that we would learn from them their names and their stories, stories of suffering and survival, of pain and faith and work and fragile hope, of their attempts to live and build in a world that makes no room.

Though the decision was obvious, and everyone in our congregation has been supportive without hesitation, I can't pretend that it has always been easy. We have had to network with a multitude of service agencies, organize harm-reduction supplies, deal with arrangements for garbage collection and mail delivery, provide first aid and connections to medi-

cal care, help with mental health crises, and manage neighbours who are uncomfortable or angry. It has called on all the resources of our staff and key volunteer leadership. It has meant giving up any attempt to maintain our community garden this year. And, perhaps most of all, it has meant that we must live, every day, every time we walk through the yard, with the heartbreaking knowledge that some of our most vulnerable community members are living in tents, in the rain, in the wind, trying to figure out how to carry on basic tasks like laundry, to manage sometimes serious medical conditions, to lead as dignified a life as anyone can while encamped in a churchyard for lack of better options.

But, in a complicated world, our calling has rarely been so clear. If the Church is to be, in our day, the body of Christ, of the

Word who "pitched his tent among us," as the literal translation of the first chapter of John says, then we must be at this sharp edge; we must witness, accompany, live out in our own bodies the tasks of healing and feeding, and of speaking out for a better way of living together. St. Lawrence famously took a Roman prefect, hoping to confiscate gold, into the churchyard, showed him the poor and sick and hungry gathered there, and announced, "These are the treasures of the church." And so they are.

I am writing this in late October. Recently, the City informed us that our yard is not, in fact, church property, but a transport right-of-way and a "City asset," and that, therefore, the people we have come to know here may be evicted, even if the church itself is committed to giving them a safe space until they have an acceptable alternative. We do not know what will happen, while shelter hotels close down just as the weather gets colder. By the time you read this, there may no longer be people living in the yard at St. Stephen's. Perhaps – unlikely as this hope seems – everyone will find safe and dignified accommodation suitable for their needs, and if that is the case, we will be one step closer to honouring God in all of God's children. Perhaps, even if this doesn't happen, some kind of temporary indoor shelter will be available, and everyone will get through this winter as they can.

But if the people living in our yard are compelled to leave, are evicted by civic authority and its powers of coercion, it will be without our consent, and over our voices of protest. Until we are no longer able, we will be the last safe place.

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

## How does the Baptismal Covenant inform our stewardship?



Practicing stewardship intimately ties us to who we are as a Christian people. Stewardship is an expression of faith. It is not simply the Church's way of raising money; rather, it is a

spiritual discipline that encompasses our very being as Christians. It is a radical departure from our secular understanding of charity, where we give to an external need. Instead, as stewards, we are motivated to give because it is something we internally need to do; it is intrinsic to our very understanding of what it means to be fully human.

The practice of stewardship manifests itself in our daily lives through the Baptismal Covenant. In the Rite of Baptism, we profess our faith and reply affirmatively to the following statements:

- Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
- Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent, and return to the Lord?
- Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

### THE STEWARD

By PETER MISIASZEK

- Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?
- Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

The commitment we make at baptism is not merely a statement of belief but is also a call to action. It recalls the teaching: "Suppose there are siblings who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, 'God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!' if you don't give them the necessities of life? So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead" (James 2:15-17).

In the breaking of bread and sharing of fellowship with one another, we recognize the temporal needs of our faith community. Our response is to ensure that our parish has the human and financial resources necessary to support vibrant ministry – ensuring a sound physical structure, strong and capable volunteer

leadership, outreach programs, Christian education, hospitality, youth ministry and music – in addition to providing all parish staff, including clergy, with equitable and fair compensation for their work. The practice and teaching of stewardship education becomes vital to help us understand why we give joyfully.

We resist evil by inclining our hearts to follow God's commandments and to be examples of Christ in our world today. In thought, word and action we seek justice, practice tolerance, and celebrate the diversity that is found within our Church and society. It means reaching out to those who are different from us and making them feel welcome at the table of Christ.

The good news as found in holy scripture guides and nourishes us on our faith journey. The way we live gives testimony to our belief that our God is a God of salvation and mercy. We are mindful of the need to feed the hungry, give drink to those who thirst, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit those imprisoned (Matthew 26: 35-36). As stewards, we live to give hope to others.

Loving our neighbour as ourselves acknowledges that we have a responsibility beyond our own interests. In his Sermon

on the Mount, Jesus challenges his followers to become "other" centred. We are a Christian community endowed with many wonderful blessings. In gratitude, our faith obliges us to share what we have received with those less fortunate and those on the margins of society.

As we strive for justice and peace among all peoples, we seek to create the world as Christ himself envisioned it: a world where people freely give without expecting anything in return and give in abundance because of the joy that is experienced in giving. In living the life of a joyful steward, we can then proclaim that "there is more happiness in giving than in receiving" (Acts 20:35).

Our vocation as Christians is that we give freely and in great generosity "for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Recognizing that God gave us everything we have in trust, we, in turn, share the gifts that we have been given. As we prepare for the birth of the Christ-child, may we be especially generous, recognizing the transformative power that giving has on all of God's people.

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

# Anglicans explore social justice issues

## Reconciliation, housing part of discussions

BY MURRAY MacADAM

Nearly 100 Anglicans from across the diocese, as well as a few from as far as British Columbia, learned and shared ideas on how to live out the call to reconciliation at the diocese's Outreach and Advocacy Conference, held online on Oct. 29. The conference theme was "Pointing our Feet toward Right Relationship." While Indigenous issues were highlighted, workshops were also held on housing and food issues, justice for low-income workers, disability concerns and prison issues.

Bishop Riscylla Shaw, suffragan bishop of the diocese, put forth bold challenges in a keynote address, while also praising participants for their commitment. Bishop Shaw, who is Métis, has served on the national church's Jubilee Commission, created to propose a just funding base for the Indigenous Anglican Church. It produced a powerful video called *Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts*.

"Many of you are engaged in building right relationship, in learning how to walk alongside rather than on top of our neighbours," Bishop Shaw said. "This is deeply important work. There are a lot of hurt people in our churches. We're all on the journey." She noted that Jesus often used the term *diakonos*, referring to acting as a servant to God and to one another.

She affirmed the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu's support for *ubuntu*, the idea that a person's humanity is inextricably linked to another person's humanity. "How do we help others see that they are created in the image of God? How do we raise up people who are suffering? We're a lot like the rainbow people of God. We are co-creators of our future together. We have plenty of opportunities to work with our neighbours to create a better world," said Bishop Shaw. She also encouraged participants to do political advocacy and consider running for office. "Be the change you want to see in the world."

She noted that a surge of action in the Church around Indigenous issues is a sign of hope and said the Church as an institution is working hard to establish right relationships. At the same time, An-



Dawn Maracle

glicans need to continue to respond with grace, even if they're tired. One way to do that, she said, is to focus on recommendations 71-76 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, which involve how faith communities can foster reconciliation.

Another challenge is that work for reconciliation is often thwarted by "the tyranny of no more budget" for this work. "Some things have to be put first," she said. "Do we prioritize buildings over people?"

A lively question period followed Bishop Shaw's address. In response to a question about lack of public awareness about the Church's work towards reconciliation, she replied, "Don't hide your light under a bushel! We Anglicans are good at hiding our light under a bushel." She likened reconciliation work to being like water seeping into cracks, slowly having an impact.

In her hard-hitting workshop on confronting Canada's colonial legacies, Dawn Maracle opened by saying that land acknowledgements, which have become common at events, can be an empty gesture, but if done well can serve as a meaningful act of understanding and reconciliation. Ms. Maracle is a Mohawk educator and activist who also serves as interim Animator for Indigenous Justice with the national Anglican Church. She outlined a history of Canada's relations with Indigenous people, and how treaties are nation-to-nation agreements. "Trea-



Bishop Riscylla Shaw

ties are sacred and are to be renewed."

She also noted that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 affirmed that Indigenous people own their own lands, yet the British North America Act of 1867 put "Indians and lands reserved for Indians" under the control of the federal government. When that happened, Indigenous people lost rights and control over their lands, which has had a huge impact on their lives. "It marked a massive shift from a nation-to-nation relationship to the assumption of power over Indigenous people," she said.

Unjust conditions for First Nations continue to this day, she noted. While army emergency response teams can drill wells to provide drinking water within 24 hours for people in other countries affected by earthquakes and disasters, some Indigenous communities in Canada have been waiting for clean drinking water for up to 80 years. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledged that providing clean water to First Nations would be a priority for his government after it assumed power in 2015, yet dozens of reserves still don't have safe water.

A workshop on housing and homelessness issues led by Shane Watson of St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope discussed how simply providing housing is not enough. People also need to have a sense of home. It's important to consult the experts, those with lived experience of homelessness, in this effort. Mr. Watson is a member of Habitat for Humanity Northumberland's Tiny Homes project

and works with a community organization called the Green Wood Coalition, which is inspired by a radically inclusive model of caring.

"We're talking about a crisis," he said, referring to the fact that more than 100 people are known to be homeless in Northumberland County, and that there's a \$10 per hour gap between the minimum wage and the income needed to afford a typical \$1,500 per month rent. He used the metaphor of a fire department to describe the situation, saying that we call 911 if there's a fire, but many homeless people feel that if they call authorities about their situation, no one answers. One person told him, "You get so discouraged at being turned away that there's this feeling there's no room for you." Other workshop participants said they witness the impact of the housing crisis in their communities. Danielle Terbenche, a therapist, sees people whose mental health has suffered from being forced to live in stressful family settings instead of in their own homes. A woman from Wasaga Beach said local residents are paying up to \$1,500 monthly for a motel room with only a hot plate to cook on because they can't afford both first and last month's rent for an apartment.

The purpose of this work is not just housing but home, said Mr. Watson. "Home is where you belong, where you're an individual person." He cited the well-known biblical tale of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24), in which the father welcomes home his long-lost son, as an example of this sense of belonging that comes when we're home.

The Tiny Homes initiative and a related program, Northumberland Sleeping Cabins, involve providing people with a safe, secure place of their own, as well as a sense of community through measures to provide some control over the mini-village of homes. The homes cost from \$6,000-\$15,000, are heated and insulated. Because they are less than 100 square feet in size, they don't require a building permit. Tiny Homes programs are being launched in other Ontario communities, including Peterborough.

Mr. Watson emphasized that persistence is vitally important in work to counter homelessness. Our faith can help sustain us, he said, citing Hebrews 12:1-2: "Let us run with perseverance the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

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

## Youth can show the way, says workshop leader

BY MURRAY MacADAM

A workshop at the Outreach and Advocacy Conference led by Shelagh McGlynn, youth animator for the Anglican Church of Canada, flipped on its head the standard way that Anglicans generally think about youth ministry.

"Young people are leading the way on a number of things, on climate issues, Indigenous issues," said Ms. McGlynn. "Young people are in a place to lead us. They know this stuff. How do we walk alongside youth in that work?"

She noted that climate activist Greta Thunberg and American congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, both young, have said that if you're over 40, you need



Shelagh McGlynn

younger mentors in your life. And if you're under 40, you need to share your experiences in your life. She encouraged Anglicans to connect with young people and find out what they're thinking.

One way to do that is by learning about the

issues and reading novels such as *The Marrow Thieves* by Métis author Cherie Dimaline.

A youth group leader at the workshop echoed the point that young people are already active on social justice issues but often don't think that the Church cares about the issues that young people care

about.

Ms. McGlynn pointed to planning for the next Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering, slated for next August in Waterloo as an example of how the Church can improve its work with Indigenous youth. It's always been difficult to involve Indigenous youth in this event, which attracts several hundred young Anglicans and Lutherans from across Canada. However, thanks to a generous donation from the Anglican Foundation, funds will be available to support participation by young Indigenous participants at the next CLAY conference. "I'm really excited about that," said Ms. McGlynn. Conference plans include a visit to the nearby First Nations community of Six Nations, near Brantford, Ont. The Ven-

Val Kerr, an Indigenous elder and Archdeacon for Truth, Reconciliation and Indigenous Ministry in the Diocese of Niagara, is helping to plan the conference.

Ms. McGlynn put forth a number of action ideas that Anglicans could consider: listening to the voices of youth; encouraging action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action; and reviewing the 270 recommendations of the report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and then acting on them. Other activities a parish could take include showing the film *Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts* or showing *Indian Horse*, another excellent film about a residential school experience, and using the film's study guide.

# Clergy find rest and renewal on mini-sabbaticals

## Program helps leaders recharge after strain of the pandemic

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

Clergy in the Diocese of Toronto are starting to take some much-deserved rest after two and a half years of pandemic, thanks in part to a project initiated by the College of Bishops.

The mini-sabbatical program was announced in a letter to the diocese from Bishop Andrew Asbil on June 24. "Pastoring congregations and maintaining community through the pandemic took a significant toll on the mental, physical and spiritual health of our clergy. The College of Bishops believes that every cleric – priest and deacon – is in need of a Sabbath rest," he wrote.

Every cleric currently serving in an appointment in the diocese who worked a minimum of 12 months between March 2020 and June 2022 is entitled to 10 days of paid sabbatical, including one Sunday. The days must be taken when the liturgical colour is green (during "ordinary time") before Aug. 31, 2023. Clergy have the option of taking all 10 days at once or dividing them up.

The Rev. Canon Susan Climo, incumbent of Holy Spirit of Peace in Mississauga, may have been one of the first to apply for a mini-sabbatical when she decided to take some days of rest in August. "I tried to think of various things that would feed me and tried to do a little bit of each thing," she says. "I appreciated what the bishops said about it being different for everybody – that there is no one-size-fits-all for what the mini-sabbatical will be able to offer people."

She spent a day at a spa to take care of her body and two more resting at home to refresh and revitalize herself. She also invited a close friend to visit, wanting to respond to the sense of isolation she'd felt during the pandemic. They spent a day at St. John's Convent, joining the Sisters for mid-day Eucharist and taking the opportunity to walk the labyrinth. "I'd been raving about it to him for years and I wanted to share it with him," says Canon Climo. "We talked a bit about what our experience of the past couple years had been like for us, about our hopes for the future and what we had learned from the time we had spent in pandemic."

On the Sunday morning, she decided to visit her home Lutheran parish, reuniting with people she'd known for years and being a participant in worship

rather than leading it herself. "It's nice to be able to lose myself completely in that moment of worship; it's a real gift that I received," she says.

The lay leaders at Holy Spirit of Peace enthusiastically supported Canon Climo in taking her mini-sabbatical. They decided to use the morning prayer rite provided by the diocese, including a pre-recorded sermon from Bishop Asbil. "They actually quite appreciated the opportunity and relished the chance to lead worship," says Canon Climo. "It just models beautifully the fact that liturgy is the work of the people, and there's no reason why members of the parish cannot be key actors in leading worship and crafting worship."

As she and her parish move from one phase of the pandemic to a new reality, she says she greatly appreciated the opportunity to rest. "I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that I was both physically and mentally drained by the years of COVID-19," she says. "It's not like it was a week or two; it was a long haul. It really did tax me in so many different ways."

Some clerics, like the Rev. Maria Nightingale, have decided to travel during their mini-sabbaticals. Ms. Nightingale, the associate priest at St. Peter, Erindale, decided to use her 10 days in early October to walk the Camino Nova Scotia, a week-long pilgrimage organized by the Atlantic School of Theology. She and nine other pilgrims walked 110 kilometres from Grand-Pré to Annapolis Royal, N.S.

"It was absolutely marvellous. I was really grateful that the bishops came up with this program, because otherwise I wouldn't have been able to entertain doing this pilgrimage. I'd been wanting to go on pilgrimage for about five years," she says. "There's a lot of stuff that's been going on, and I was getting to the point of feeling just exhausted. This was a really good time of renewal."

Like Canon Climo, she says she's glad that the program is open to any kind of sabbatical experience a cleric might need. "For me, walking in nature has been the way I've kind of survived the pandemic. That's my way of recharging, of praying, of meditating," she says. "I did not take my computer with me, I didn't check my email, I wasn't reporting on Facebook what I did every day. It was a complete time apart."

Her most profound revelation came on the last day of the pilgrimage. She recalls



The Rev. Maria Nightingale at the end of her pilgrimage on the Camino Nova Scotia. Below, fog up ahead on the path. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE REV. MARIA NIGHTINGALE.

that she started her experience sure that God would give her clarity about the next steps in her ministry. "The last day of walking, it was extremely foggy in the morning. You couldn't see five metres ahead of you," she says.

Though initially disappointed to miss what was supposed to be the most beautiful part of the pilgrimage, she decided to incorporate the fog into her reflections as she walked. "I realized that the fact that I didn't have any more clarity about what's next didn't matter, that the fact that it was foggy and I couldn't see the path didn't matter. I just needed to trust that the path was there, that I had the instructions that I needed, and that eventually the fog would clear. When I didn't have to be anxious about when the fog was going to clear, I could focus on the beauty of what was up close in front of me."

The fog on the trail did, in fact, clear, and Ms. Nightingale says she's carrying that lesson into her ministry as she jumps back into parish life and deadlines.

Canon Climo also hopes to bring aspects of her mini-sabbatical into her ongoing ministry. "That's always the challenge, making these once-in-a-lifetime experiences last beyond their expiration date. I think probably the one that will be the most manageable for me is to remember the tremendous resource that we have in the convent here in the diocese," she says. "Just that separation, that entering into the rhythm of their life there and their prayer and their silence is restorative for me."

She says she hopes her colleagues will make plans for their mini-sabbaticals before too long. "I realize how hard it is for many clerics to see their way clear. There just seem to be so many things – the to-do list keeps getting longer and longer," she says. "I would encourage them to be brave and to start the conversation with their leaders. I certainly hope they will find that there is great support."

Ms. Nightingale echoes that idea. "If you don't look after yourself and take



that time to rest and renew, it will be more detrimental to your parish than just continuing to slog along," she says. "We are in a different place than we were two and a half years ago, and we need the strength to keep going and to figure out how to keep going during this time."

For her part, Canon Climo planned to use the rest of her sabbatical days in November to visit the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Cambridge, Mass., something she's always wanted to do. "I love the rhythm of monastic life. I love the regularity of prayer, and I think that's what will be a highlight for me," she says. "I don't need to accomplish anything while I'm there other than to be restored. I'm sure that the Spirit will lead me in the direction I need to go to have that happen."

More details about the mini-sabbatical program, including the morning prayer rite and a sermon from Bishop Asbil, can be found on the Clergy Leaves page of the diocesan website, [www.toronto.anglican.ca](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca).



Photo adapted from Fizkes/Shutterstock

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# I have been able to meet so many people

Sister Doreen McGuff is a member of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine.

The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine is a contemporary expression of the religious life for women within the Anglican Church of Canada. We were founded in Toronto in 1884. We are a prayer-and-gospel centred monastic community, bound together by the call to a vowed life in intentional community. Nurtured by our founding vision of prayer, community and service, we are open and responsive to the needs of the Church and the contemporary world, continually seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our life and ministry.

Called to be a sign of Christ, the Sisterhood witnesses to the power of God's reconciling and forgiving love through the gospel imperatives of prayer, hospitality, spiritual direction, ministering to those in need, working for justice and peace, reverence for the whole creation, and promoting unity, healing and wholeness. Through our prayer and spirituality, outreach to others, pastoral and spiritual care, community life and stewardship, we are celebrating 138 years of prayer, love and service.

**Having entered the Community in 1965, I have had a variety of jobs in nearly every area of our life.** At present I am the director of western and overseas Associates and also fundraising. I am also on the Reverend Mother's council.

**The Associates are men and women who have joined us as part of our extended family following Jesus in a life of love, prayer and service.** Keeping in touch with these committed men and women, lay and ordained, as they seek to deepen their spiritual life through following a rule of life, is for me a blessing and a joy. I write individual and general



Sister Doreen McGuff

letters, prepare quiet days for Associates, and share weekly reflections with them and on our website. COVID-19 provided a challenge of learning to use Zoom to reach out, and it gave me, and continues to give me, the opportunity to reach out to many more Associates than ever before. I have been able to meet so many people and have seen how this opportunity enables folks from across western Canada (Manitoba to British Columbia), the western United States and overseas to share together and meet each other. It has been a means of deepening bonds across the distances.

**The best thing about being a Sister is being able to answer the call to give my whole self to God in prayer and service**

**within this intentional community of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, which I love and which is my joy.** The most challenging thing about being a Sister is living within this intentional community of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, which I love and which is my joy, and learning to live together with differences

**My father, Bruce, and my mother, Winne, were born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba.** My father worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway, and so he was moved around quite a bit. I was born in Verdun, Quebec during World War Two. We moved nearly every four to five years, first to Winnipeg, then Calgary, then Medicine Hat and finally to Vancouver,

where I went to university.

**What led me to become a Sister with SSJD?** When I was about eight years old, the family living in Calgary, our parish church of St. Barnabas invited a Sister to speak to the Sunday School class. What I saw and heard was someone who had given their whole life to God, and that made a profound impression upon me. I told my parents that I knew what I wanted to be, someone who gave their whole life to God! I really only knew the mystery of that, not what it really meant, until we moved to Medicine Hat and in high school. Our parish church of St. Barnabas, being involved in Guides and then Rangers, and surrounded by wonderful role models and Associates of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, I began to understand that giving my whole life to God might be a call to the religious life. I had my own dreams as well – to teach school, to marry and have children, and so was involved in many activities throughout high school and university, but always there was this inner call to give my whole life to God. After graduating from university in May 1965, I visited the convent in Toronto for the first time and knew that I had come home to the place where I could answer God's call to give my whole life to God.

**Five years from now, I would really like to be doing much the same as I am doing now – a life of prayer and service within this community in whatever way God seems to be calling me and us.** Here is my greatest joy!

**I have many favourite passages, but I think that at present my most favourite are Luke 1:28, 30 and 37 in The Message translation of scripture.** I believe that we, throughout our lives, are confronted with many annunciation events; God has surprises for us throughout our lives.

## Handmade items go a long way to combat 'sea blindness'



BY THE REV. JUDITH ALLTREE

It is ironic that as I write this article, I am sailing past a long line of cargo ships anchored in the southern waters of British Columbia between Vancouver Island and Vancouver harbour, and from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Burrard Inlet. Some of the ships have been sitting at anchor for weeks on end, waiting for space to open up at Vancouver's docks that would allow them to discharge their cargo, the stuff of our dreams.

We have recently finished our first Mission to Seafarers Canada in-person conference in three and a half years, during which we shared information on how much our world – and the world of the seafarers we serve – has changed. We noted that because of COVID-19, the term "supply chain" and its effect on humanity officially brought seafarers to the attention of many in the world. However, seafarers have somehow dropped out of our consciousness while the supply chain

remains front and centre. We call that "sea blindness."

Now it's Christmas time. For us at the Canadian Missions to Seafarers, our concern is less with the supply chain and more with the seafarers and what we can do to help them at this extremely stressful time of the year. Some are entering a third year with limited, if any, shore leave and contract extensions that have kept them away from their families for many extra months. Others face the horrors of a war at home and not knowing where their families are. We are faced with bringing some semblance of Christmas into the hearts and lives of these brave men and women, no matter what their faith or culture.

Seafarers count on us to bring Christmas spirit on board each year, and it's never been more important than it is now. We deliver hundreds of "Ditty Bags" to the arriving ships; they are filled with a variety of treats, but none are more welcome than the hand-knitted goods such as hats, scarves, mittens and bunk-sized quilts and afghans that find their way into

every bag.

It's not the items themselves that the seafarers appreciate the most but the act behind them. As one seafarer explained to me, it is the fact that a complete stranger took up knitting needles (or a sewing machine or crochet hook) and made a gift for another complete stranger. There is time and love in each item, an expression of hope that is profound. Think of it this way: the craftsperson doesn't have an image in mind of what the seafarer looks like; they just make the item to be received. And likewise for the seafarer: they don't have any idea who the craftsperson is, or what she or he looks like, but they are thrilled to be the recipient of the gift.

The source of all this is generosity, given and received, without any expectation on either side. These particular craftspeople spend 12 months of the year knitting, creating and setting aside each item, and when they run out of room around the end of October, I get a call asking when they can make their delivery. Hundreds of items – all handmade, all cherished. And after they deliver these items, these won-

derful craftspeople start all over again. Sounds like what Jesus needs all of us to be doing.

On our packing day, a group of volunteers gathers to pack up the 800 or so bags filled with all kinds of toiletries, sweets, notepads, pens, card games and at least one handmade item. That goes on the top of the bag and is the first thing the seafarers see when they open them. When they wrap their scarves around their necks, or pull the toque over their ears, the smile that splits their faces is priceless, let me tell you. A thumbs-up lets us know that the gift is a hit – and will continue to be on every cold day.

To the dozens of knitters and craftspeople across Canada that the Mission is blessed to have supporting our ministry, please accept the collective thanks of both us at the Mission and the seafarers whom you bless with your gifts, your time and your unconditional love.

*The Rev. Judith Alltree is the executive director of the Mission to Seafarers Southern Ontario.*

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# Church becomes hub for migrant workers

Ecumenical ministry provides hot meals, clothing

BY NAOMI RACZ

THROUGH generous community and church donations, the Migrant Worker Ministry provides clothing, hot meals and other items to the agricultural workers who come to Durham Region each year to work in the apple orchards, greenhouses and on family farms. The region welcomes 2,000 to 3,000 workers each year.

The workers begin arriving in January, mainly from Mexico as well as the Caribbean, and the numbers swell in May and June. In previous years, the Rev. Augusto Núñez, the incumbent of St. Saviour, Orono, would deliver meals, non-perishable foods and clothing to the farms, sometimes working late into the night to reach all the farms. However, the number of farms and workers served by the ministry continues to grow each year.

“We just keep growing in regards to numbers,” says Mr. Núñez. “Either I get invited because people know me and tell me there are some migrant workers in this farm, or sometimes the fellows move from working in one farm and end up in another. I continue to be in touch with them through Facebook, text messages, phone calls or WhatsApp. They let me know where they are, and when I arrive at a new farm, I meet other workers who are interested in the ministry.”



In 2022, the ministry served about 350 men. To continue growing and ensure the ministry is sustainable in the long term, Mr. Núñez's vision has been to turn St. Saviour's into a “hub.” The church has started to offer drive-through hot meals once a month, where workers come to St. Saviour's to collect their meal instead of having them delivered to the farms. The meals are cooked at the church, and partners working with the ministry take turns to prepare them. On average, the ministry provides about 70 hot meals each month, and Mr. Núñez tries to ensure that each month a farm is selected to receive the meals so that everyone is taken care of. The hub also provides donated clothing and other items.

In addition to helping the workers with practical needs, Mr. Núñez is available to discuss any pastoral concerns with them. He invites them to join the Sunday service at

St. Saviour's. The service is bilingual, with parts of the liturgy and sermon translated into Spanish.

Before the pandemic, Mr. Núñez organized large monthly gatherings for workers from different farms to come together, eat and play sports. The gatherings stopped during the pandemic and have yet to be revived, but Mr. Núñez continues to visit the farms and has been able to join the workers for their own celebrations, such as Mexican Independence Day. As the ministry moves towards being a hub for the workers, it will provide additional opportunities for the men to meet and socialize.

The ministry is also growing in terms of the number of parishes that want to support it — and not just Anglican parishes but also United, Presbyterian and Evangelical churches. Other partners have also come on board, including ADRA (Adventist Development and



Clockwise from above: a volunteer prepares hot meals in the basement of St. Saviour, Orono; the Rev. Augusto Nunez (centre in white shirt) with migrant workers, volunteers and local clergy; migrant workers check out donations of clothing at the church. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE REV. AUGUSTO NUNEZ

Relief Agency), which sponsored one of the hot meals.

ADRA has proved a useful connection, as Mr. Núñez hopes that next year the ministry will provide the workers with access to a doctor, who will be available once or twice a month. Through their relief network, ADRA is supporting the ministry in finding a doctor. This idea was partly inspired by the Diocese of Niagara's Migrant Farmworkers Project, led by the Rev. Antonio Illas.

The workers themselves continue to express their gratitude for the ministry. “Usually, at the end of the season, I collect testimonies from them and they express their thanks to the ministry and the

partners for remembering them,” says Mr. Núñez. “They're far from home and it's nice for a group of people to remember them and offer them a sense of community. Some of the workers are on small family farms that can be isolated.

“We can see how the Lord is using us to pray for them and to encourage them,” he adds. “That's, at the bottom line, what our work is: to bring Christ's love to them, to be the hands and feet of Jesus. That's what he has told us to be and that's our mission in this ministry.”

Naomi Racz is a freelance writer and is the editor of *Faith Tides*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Islands and Inlets, British Columbia.

## Nativity pageant returns in film, concerts



Actors perform in the film version of *The Christmas Story* outside Holy Trinity, Trinity Square. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY

THE Christmas Story is returning to Holy Trinity, Trinity Square this Advent and Christmas in a pandemic-sensitive format. Following some research and discussions, organizers decided not to re-launch the full theatrical production with a cast just yet but are offering a combination of experiences for Christmas Story audiences.

There will be three concerts that bring back the live readings and gorgeous music of the 85-year-old Toronto tradition. Professional singers, whose voices in past years were only heard from the church's choir loft at the back of the nave, will now be onstage.

The concerts will take place on Dec. 10 and Dec. 17 at 2 p.m. and Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. at Holy Trinity,

located behind the Eaton Centre. For audiences that want a more visual experience, the 2020 “Pandemic Pageant” film will be screened in the Holy Trinity nave on Dec. 9 and Dec. 16 at 7 p.m., to be watched in person. The film will also be available online from Dec. 1 through Jan. 7.

The suggested donation for all

events will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

Other churches across Canada — and beyond — are invited to host a group screening of the “Pandemic Pageant” film in their communities. Holy Trinity will be able to provide access to a download of a high-resolution file. Interested churches are encouraged to reach out to The Christmas Story at: [christmasstory@holyltrinity.to](mailto:christmasstory@holyltrinity.to).

“The ongoing uncertainty around the pandemic and a looming winter wave is the reason the Christmas Story committee decided against the full production this year,” says Susan Watson, director of The Christmas Story.

“We heard through the grapevine that the Stratford Festival and Broadway had very challenging theatre seasons with both actors and tech crew off sick, resulting in cancelled shows. With this arrangement, we can share The Christmas Story experience widely, but also respond easily to any potential

restrictions.”

For more details on how to view *The Christmas Story* online, or to reserve seating for one of the film screenings or concerts, visit The

Christmas Story website at [www.thechristmasstory.ca/](http://www.thechristmasstory.ca/) or phone: 416-598-4521 Ext. 301.

Submitted by *The Christmas Story*

*The Christmas Story*  
Since 1938 at the Church of the Holy Trinity.

Film screening: Dec. 9 & 16  
Words & music: Dec. 10, 17 & 23

To reserve online, or for more info visit:

[thechristmasstory.ca](http://thechristmasstory.ca)

OR CALL: 416.598.4521 x301

**Church's ping pong relay breaks target**

St. Christopher, Richmond Hill hosted its fifth annual Ping Pong Relay on Sept. 24 to raise funds for FaithWorks' 16 charitable organizations. Despite the pandemic lockdown, the church's Ping Pong Relays carried on virtually via Zoom during the last two years. With the gradual re-opening, the relay this year was a hybrid model, with 26 people attending in person and five on Zoom. To add to the fun, organizers split participants into women's and men's teams, each with their cheering slogans. It was a fierce but friendly competition in four categories of ingenious ping pong games. We challenged each other with different tricks and encouraged them by financial sponsorship; the higher the scores, the higher the donation. Raising funds was important but having tons of fun and fellowship with each other was the best of all. We raised more than \$6,000 on the day of the event. Including the amount we asked for sponsorship before the day, the total was \$35,870. God once again did amazing work through St. Christopher's 2022 Ping Pong Relay. Praise be to God!

*Submitted by the Rev. Canon Dr. Philip Der*



Participants in St. Christopher, Richmond Hill's Ping Pong Relay gather for a photo. The event raised \$35,870 for FaithWorks. PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. CHRISTOPHER, RICHMOND HILL

**Food bank recognized for helping those in need**

Nov. 28 marked the fourth anniversary of the Avenue Road Food Bank's opening day in 2018. With support from the Church of the Messiah and generous donors, the volunteer team has been providing hospitality and nourishing food once a week to Toronto residents who face food insecurity due to rising costs, unaffordable housing, poverty, unemployment or mental or physical health challenges. An increasing number of immigrants and refugees are coming to our doors.

When the pandemic lockdown started in March 2020, the food bank leadership, in cooperation with the church leadership, made the decision to remain open so that guests would not go hungry. The shopping and market model changed to a hamper handed out at the church door or by delivery. While other food banks were forced to close, the Avenue Road Food Bank continued to stay open until this March, when it converted back to the shopping and market model, and we welcomed our guests back into the church building.

Throughout these challenges, our volunteers remained loyal, hard-working and dedicated. Our guests tell us that they value not just the food they receive but also the kindness and respect they are shown. We greet them by name, we listen to their stories, we share hospitality by giving them water, sandwiches and sweets as they wait in line to enter our market, located in the nave of the church.



Volunteers with the Avenue Road Food Bank hold a plaque from the Daily Bread Food Bank recognizing their efforts. From left are Racquel Wellington, Liz Gilbert and Patricio Andres Veliz. At right, guests line up outside the food bank. PHOTOS COURTESY OF AVENUE ROAD FOOD BANK

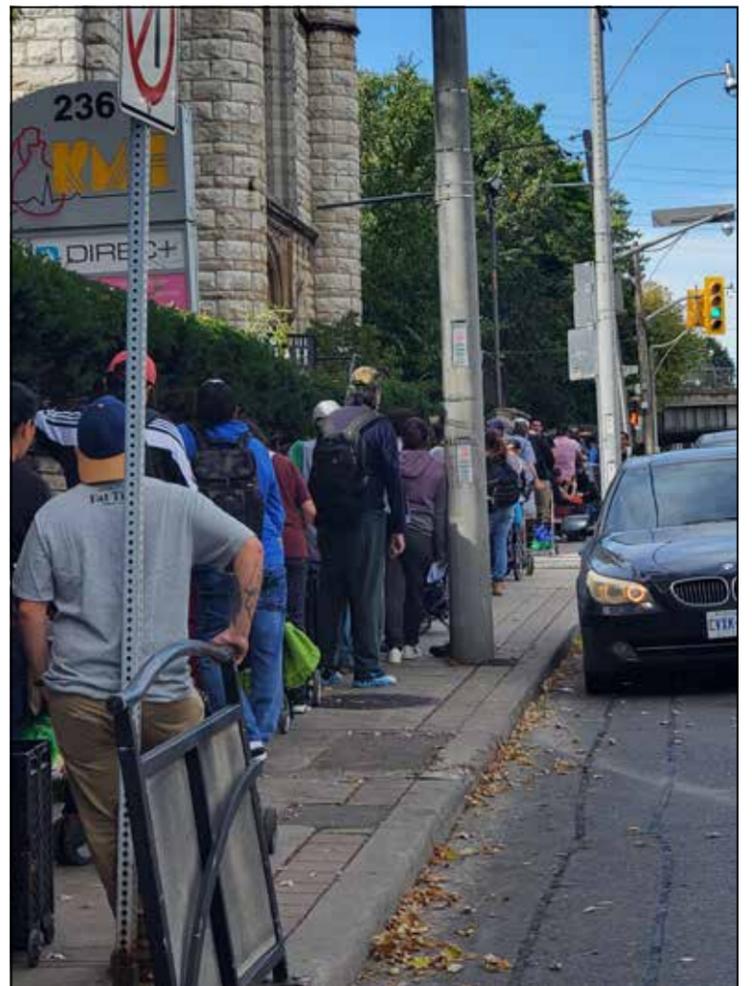
We are currently seeing more than 300 households at our doors, with new registrations every week.

The Daily Bread Food Bank, one of our partners, nominated the Avenue Road Food Bank as a finalist for its 2022 Outstanding Food Program Award, as part of its Best in Class Awards. This award "recognizes a community food agency in Toronto that has made significant efforts to implement best practices to provide services to clients with choice, dignity, and respect. The Outstanding Food Program embodies inclusivity with a volunteer cohort reflecting the community they serve, and actively creates a welcoming and supportive

environment for clients."

The Avenue Road Food Bank has also been recognized for its contribution to the local community, in its attempts to ease the burdens of its guests. It received the Annex Association's 2022 Community Builder Award "for the exceptional dedication of its staff and volunteers in safely ensuring no one in our community had to go hungry during the pandemic." The office of Jessica Bell, MPP, University-Rosedale, gave the Avenue Road Food Bank her 2022 Community Leadership Award "for working to improve the lives of those in our community."

*Submitted by Liz Gilbert*



**FURRY FRIENDS**

The Rev. Megan Jull, incumbent of St. Augustine of Canterbury, Toronto, cuddles with guinea pig Squeaks at the church's Blessing of Animals service on Oct. 2 while her daughter Abby receives a kiss from puppy Rudy. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY

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**PRAYER CYCLE**

**FOR DECEMBER**

1. Philip Aziz HIV/AIDS Hospice - a FaithWorks ministry
2. Epiphany and St. Mark, Parkdale
3. Order of the Holy Cross Priory
4. Project Ploughshares - the peace institute of the Canadian Council of Churches
5. St. Anne, Toronto
6. FaithWorks shelters for women and children at risk
7. St. Chad
8. St. George by the Grange
9. St. Hilda, Fairbank
10. Anti-Bias Anti-Racism Committee and Trainers of the Diocese
11. Parkdale - Toronto West Deanery
12. St. John, West Toronto
13. St. Martin in-the-Fields
14. St. Mary and St. Martha

15. St. Mary Magdalene
16. St. Matthias, Bellwoods
17. St. Michael and All Angels
18. The Anglican Church Women (ACW) - Enid Corbett, Diocesan President
19. St. Olave, Swansea
20. St. Paul, Runnymede
21. St. Stephen-in-the-Fields
22. St. Thomas, Huron Street
23. Bishop's Committee on Discipleship
24. Children's Ministry in the Diocese

25. Christmas Day
26. The Community of Deacons (Archdeacon Kyn Barker)
27. Chaplains to the Retired Clergy
28. The Children's Ministry Network
29. The Staff of the Synod Office
30. The Archives Department of the Synod Office
31. The Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of the Diocese

**IN APPRECIATION**

The Church of the Nativity, Malvern, holds an Emergency Services Appreciation service with police, firefighters, paramedics and local politicians in attendance on Oct. 30. Clockwise from above: children of the church prepare to sing; the Rev. Amiroid Lazard, incumbent of Nativity, greets a first responder after the service; Superintendent Greg Watts of the Toronto Police Service speaks to the congregation and gives his thanks. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON

**IN MOTION**

**Appointments**

- The Rev. Maria Ling, Associate Priest, Grace Church on-the-Hill, Oct. 3.
- The Rt. Rev. Philip Poole, Priest-in-Charge, Trinity Church, Aurora, Oct. 15.
- The Rev. Matt McMillan, Priest-in-Charge, St. Peter, Cobourg, Dec. 1.
- The Rev. Pam Trondson, Priest-in-Charge, Holy Trinity, Trinity Square, Dec. 1.
- The Rev. Daniel Graves, Theologian in Residence and Associate Priest, Trinity Church, Aurora, Dec. 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):
- Havergal College Chaplain
- Christ the King
- St. Timothy, North Toronto
- Christ Church, Bolton
- Grace Church, Scarborough
- St. George, Haliburton

**Parish Selection Committee Process**

First Phase - (not yet receiving

names):

- St. John the Baptist, Oak Ridges
- St. Aidan, Toronto
- St. George Memorial, Oshawa

**Second Phase** - (receiving names via Area Bishop):

- Holy Trinity, Thornhill

**Third Phase** - (no longer receiving names):

- St. Peter, Erindale

**Celebrations of New Ministry**

- The Rev. Dr. Evan Silcox, Incumbent, Church of the Incarnation, Jan. 22 at 10 a.m.

**Deaths**

- The Rev. Beverly Hall died on Aug. 26. Ordained deacon in 1984 and priest in 1985, she served as assistant curate of St. Mary, Richmond Hill, incumbent of St. Christopher on the Heights, priest-in-charge of the Parish of Craighurst, Midhurst & Minesing, interim priest-in-charge of the Parish of Hastings, incumbent of St. Peter on-the-Rock, Stony Lake, and priest-in-charge of St. Matthew and St. Aidan, Buckhorn. She served on various bishop's committees, was chaplain of Baycrest Hospital, and a board member of the Canadian Anglican Fellowship of Prayer.

A family graveside interment was held on Oct. 12 at Queensville Cemetery.

- The Rev. David Williams died on Oct. 18. Ordained deacon in 1965 and priest in 1966, he served as assistant curate of St. Hilda, Fairbank and St. Peter, Oshawa, and incumbent of the Parish of Cannington and St. Giles, Barrie. Before retiring in 1991, he assisted at the Parish of Mono, held several interim positions and was honorary assistant of the Parish of Innisfil. He returned to school and earned a BA in 1995 at the University of Waterloo. His funeral was held at St. Margaret, Barrie on Nov. 12.
- The Rev. Canon Brother Christian (George) Swayne, OHC, died on Oct. 25. Ordained deacon in 1958 and priest in 1959 in the Diocese of Ontario, he resided in the Diocese of Toronto as a Brother of the Order of the Holy Cross, at the Priory on High Park Avenue. In 2001, he was named an honorary canon of St. James Cathedral for his ministry in the Diocese of Toronto of pastoral care, spiritual direction, interim coverage and membership on two Bishop's Committees, Healing and Doctrine & Worship. His funeral was held at St. John, West Toronto on Nov. 1.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

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

**Bazaars, potlucks**

- DEC. 1-17** - Online Christmas Silent Auction, Holy Trinity, Guildwood, www.trinityguildwood.org.
- DEC. 3** - Christmas Bazaar with clothing, crafts, bake table and more, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Christ Church, Scarborough Village, 155 Markham Rd., Scarborough.
- DEC. 4** - The feast of St. Nicholas service and potluck celebration, 10:30 a.m., guest preacher the Rev. Canon Brad Lennon, Holy Trinity, Guildwood, 85 Livingston Rd., Toronto. St. Nicholas will make a special visit to greet young people as well as remind them that Christmas is coming.

**Concerts, film**

- DEC. 1-JAN. 7** - The film "The Christmas Story - A Pandemic Pageant" will be available for streaming in your home. Visit www.thechristmasstory.ca for details. Suggested donation is \$10.
- DEC. 9 & 16** - A community screening of "The Christmas Story - A Pandemic Pageant" at 7 p.m., Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Square, Toronto. For reservations, visit: www.thechristmasstory.ca or phone: 416-598-4521 Ext. 301. Suggested donations: adults \$10, children \$5.
- DEC. 10, 17 & 23** - "The Words and Music of The Christmas Story." Enjoy the readings and music of this much-loved Christmas tradition. The singers who are normally in the choir loft will be onstage. Saturdays at 2 p.m., Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. For reservations, visit: www.thechristmasstory.ca or phone: 416-598-4521, ext. 301. Suggested donation: adults, \$10, children, \$5.
- DEC. 18** - The Wonder of Christmas Concert, 4 p.m., in-person and live-streamed, featuring Jackson Welchner, Jennifer Burford, Evan Desulnier, and Tim Francom, Holy Trinity, Guildwood, 85 Livingston Rd., Toronto and www.trinityguildwood.org. Proceeds to support PWRDF.

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# The Advent Police

## A Mr. Perkins Story

BY THE REV. DANIEL GRAVES

Mr. Perkins, the rector of Christ Church Hampton's Corners, used to be a card-carrying member of the Advent police. The Advent police are those self-righteous, self-appointed guardians of Advent who seek to ensure that no Christmas parties are held, no "Merry Christmases" are uttered, no hall shall be decked or holly hung, no carols sung, until Christmas is literally upon us, at least in the Church.

Out there in the world it is a battle already lost. The Advent police are powerless against the consumerist forces of capitalism when, immediately following Hallowe'en, carols start being heard in malls and store windows are decorated. But in the Church, the Advent police still have real power, especially if they are the rector of a parish. When the first sign of giving way to the sin of early celebration begins to rear its ugly head, the Advent police begin their self-righteous admonishments and superciliously explain the purpose of "Advent waiting."

"Advent is a time of preparation, of anticipation," they explain to the faithful members of the altar guild on the first Sunday of Advent, who simply want to make the church look nice with some fresh cedar garlands. This unwelcome catechesis goes something like this: "So much of the world gives in to instant gratification, but we as the Church must not! It is a spiritual discipline to wait, as the rest of the pagan world is already celebrating the birth of a child they do not believe in, we are waiting in anticipation for his coming!" The look of saddened and frustrated faces does nothing to sway the Advent police. The Advent police are a heartless and hardened bunch. No tidings of comfort and joy, no peace on earth or good will to men must ever be proclaimed in Advent. They explain that traditionally Advent was something of a mini-Lent. We ought not to be celebrating, but considering our sinfulness, repenting, as John the Baptist directs us, lest we find ourselves fleeing from the wrath that is to come. We must be readying our lamps like the wise virgins. We must be preparing for the coming of the bridegroom. While the rest of the world is getting excited, we ought to solemnly reflect on things like the last judgement.

Our friend Mr. Perkins was an ardent defender of this policy, so much so that in addition to the elimination of the Gloria in Excelsis, he also banned the use of "Alleluia" as one does in Lent. Somewhere along the line, in utter devotion to Advent solemnity, he fell under the mistaken impression that this was required of the faithful.

This all fell apart one year for Mr. Perkins one Sunday in Advent in the early years of his ministry. The service had ended with the favourite Advent hymn, "Lo, he comes with clouds descending, once for favoured sinners slain." The word "Hallelujah" is used no fewer than seven times in that hymn. Having forbidden the use of the word during Advent

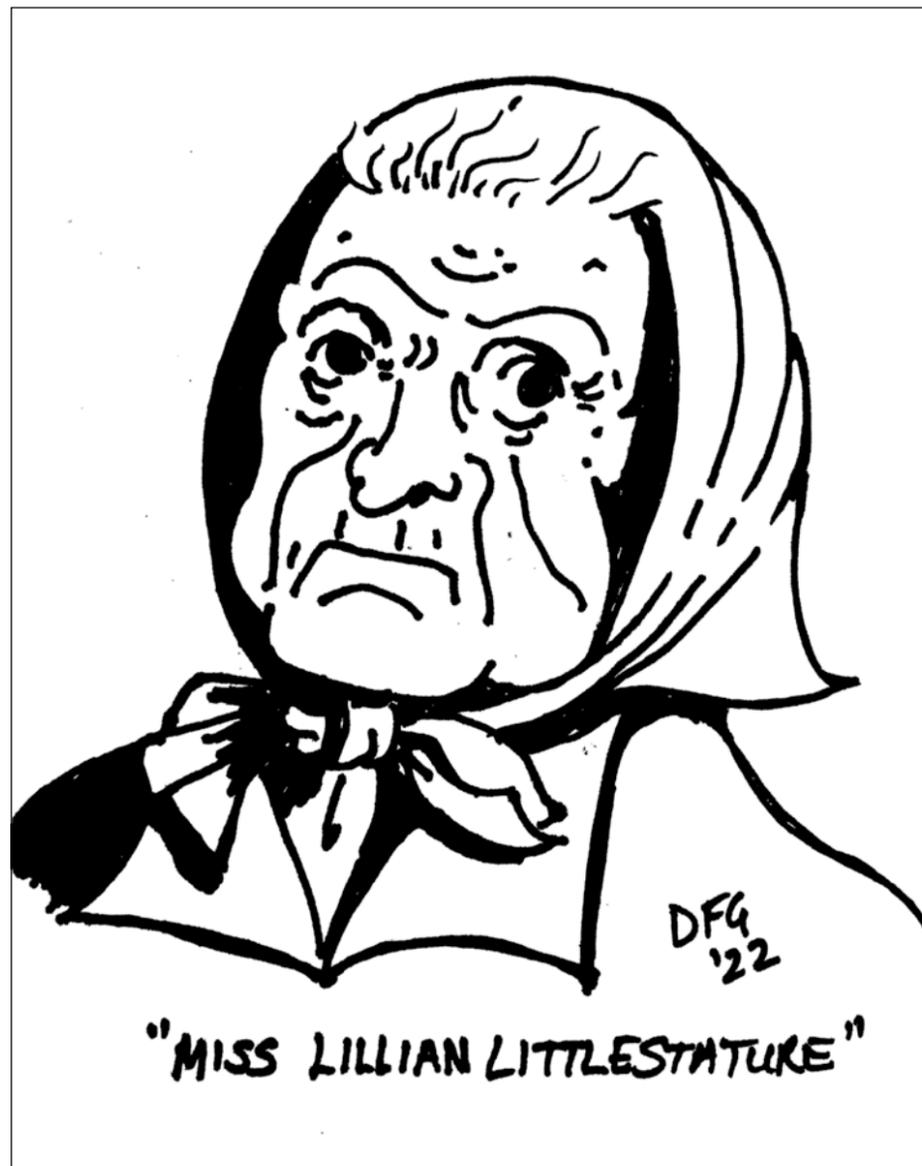
and replaced the Gloria with the Kyrie, he had preached vociferously on waiting and preparing and holding back on Christmas until Christmas Eve. As the little line of people exited his tiny parish church, Miss Lillian Littlestature, a spinster of 92, looked up at him and asked him quizzically, "Mr. Perkins, if we aren't allowed to say 'alleluia' how come we get to sing it in the hymn?" Mr. Perkins was stymied. He had been singing the hymn lustily and with good courage, as John Wesley might have said, and had forgotten himself all the while. This was one of those rare occasions in which he was speechless on a matter of theology. He tried for an answer but could not find one. He simply did not know what to say.

After the service, he hurried back to his study and counted up the number of times "Hallelujah" was used in the hymn. Yes, seven times. Then he went through the Advent section in the hymn book and realized just how many Advent hymns included alleluias. Was he wrong all these years? It couldn't be. He held a Master of Divinity from Trinity College. Surely, he knew what he was doing with respect to liturgical planning. But there it was, in black and white, in the sung tradition of the Church, again and again, alleluias in Advent. Celebration in Advent. In his own mind, and amongst all of his colleagues, at least the ones he respected, Advent was a time of deep reverence, solemnity, preparation and waiting, not celebration. Now, he was questioning everything he held sacred, his liturgical world had been turned upside down. What was he to do? Was he a fraud? That night he could not sleep as he pondered these things over and over again in his heart and mind. What had he gotten wrong?

Monday was his day off, and although he was sleep deprived, he drove into the neighbouring town for a trip to the mall. (In those days, Hampton's Corners had not yet quite acquired that status of having a mall, although I am now told that there are several big box stores on the outskirts of town.) He hated trips to the mall. It felt to him like a trip into pagan territory. But Mr. Perkins had nephews and nieces to buy presents for, as well for his mother and for his brother and sister. Mr. Perkins took heart, stirred up his courage, and faced the inevitable and discouraging duty of Christmas shopping.

After some time of walking around the mall aimlessly, looking in store windows, he finally steeled himself for the task, and after a couple of hours his arms were full of packages and bags, and Mr. Perkins found himself feeling pretty satisfied about how well he had done with his Christmas shopping. He decided he should stop at the Tim Hortons in the food court and have a cup of coffee as a reward for his efforts. And so he did. Mr. Perkins placed his parcels and bags on the table and floor, breathed a sigh of relief, and began to take drink his coffee. Over the loudspeaker he could hear Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney...

Busy sidewalks, city sidewalks



dressed in holiday style  
in the air there's a feeling of Christmas.  
Hear the snow crunch, see the kids  
bunch, this is Santa's big day  
And above all this bustle you hear...  
Silver bells, silver bells,  
It's Christmas time in the city...

Mr. Perkins found himself humming along, and finally, quietly singing the lyrics. His heart was warmed and he felt satisfied.

Then suddenly, he felt horrified. He was enjoying Christmas, and it was only December 13th. It was still Advent! In this consumerist frenzy, he had been led astray! He had let himself slip into the joy of the season that was reserved only for Christmas Eve and the twelve days that followed. Here he was, in this temple of pagan consumerism, enjoying Christmas! What had he done?

But then he looked around and saw the faces of the shoppers, and he realized that Bing and Rosemary were right, in the air there was a feeling of Christmas. Then, in the distance, he heard the silver bells of the Sally Ann kettle ringer. People were happy, excited, both anticipating and celebrating at one and the same time. Then, over the PA system, he heard Perry Como sing, "Hark the Herald Angels sing, Glory to the newborn King." And for the first time, he realized that Advent was really something of a show, not a bad show, perhaps even a necessary show, but it was a show, a piece of theatre. It is not ultimately what is real. What is real is that two thousand years ago, a babe was born to us. And so, Christ has come, and while it is true we await his coming

again in glory on the last day, and while it is true we wait for him to be born again in our hearts, the hearts of all, he has actually come. The waiting is over, and it has been over for a long time. The time to celebrate is now.

Here, in the profane setting of the food court of the mall, drinking his "Timmy's," Mr. Perkins realized for the first time that Advent is simply a sacred drama in which we ritually re-enact the waiting – a waiting that points to a sacred truth: Christ has come. We can both celebrate and anticipate at one and the same time. The faces of the people said it all. From the elderly woman placing a folded bill in the Sally Ann kettle to the little child skipping along, licking his candy cane. In the air there was a feeling of Christmas, and it was really quite wonderful.

It was on that Monday in Advent, many years ago, that Mr. Perkins turned in his membership card as an officer of the Advent police. Never again was he anxious about singing alleluias in Advent, and while he did hold back on the use of the Gloria in Excelsis till Christmas Eve, in subsequent years he permitted the tree to go up in the church, and yes, even to be lit. He allowed poinsettias to sneak their way into the chancel in mid-December. He allowed carols during the pageant on Advent IV, and when participants filed out of church on that last Sunday of Advent and wished him a "Merry Christmas," he wished them a Merry Christmas back.

*The Rev. Daniel Graves is Theologian in Residence and Associate Priest at Trinity Church, Aurora.*



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