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# HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • DECEMBER 2025

## Being responsible, joyful stewards of God's generosity



The nave of St. Paul's Cathedral on October 25, 2025: 87 clergy and 137 lay delegates represented all Huron churches at 186th Synod of the Diocese of Huron. Within hours on the night of October 24-25, the nave was transformed from a place of worship to a business meeting venue.

SYNOD PHOTOS in this issue: Charlotte Poolton (Opening Service); Rebekah Lemon (Synod Session)

### SYNOD POPULAR REPORT

At 7:30 PM, on Friday, October 24, 2025, the 186<sup>th</sup> Synod began. The Cathedral Church of St. Paul's was filled with song as many gathered to share in the Holy Eucharist where Rt. Rev. Dr. Todd Townshend, the Bishop of Huron, officiated and preached at the opening service.

Our four new territorial archdeacons were collated surrounded by the members of their archdeaconries and Bishop Todd bestowed the Order of Huron on Dorothy Patterson and Pamela Fulton.

At our opening Synod Service \$16,144.75 was collected in support of the work of Alongside Hope (formerly PWRDF).

After the service there was a lovely reception in Cronyn Hall where those who attended shared in a time of fellowship

October 25, the conference for the 186<sup>th</sup> Synod began. The Call to Order sounded, and all delegates, guests and observers were welcomed, and quorum was declared with 87 clergy and 137 lay delegates registered for Synod.

Bishop Todd Townshend delivered his sixth Charge to Synod "Stewards of The Gift". He reminded those in attendance of where we have been and where we are heading as a diocese with a short summary of his previous charges to Synod: *Remember who we are and what we do* (2020); *Live in community by yielding to the life of the Spirit* (2021); *Expect to meet the Risen Jesus along the way* (2022); *Be ready to sing the Lord's song in a strange new land* (2023); *Continually turn to the God of Grace* (2024); *Cultivate a life of faithful stewardship and generosity* (2025).

Bishop Todd shared that this year's charge is to focus on stewardship—and to do this by focusing first on "the gift".

He encouraged us to make the next twelve months a cultivation of a life of stewardship and generosity in community. He reminded Synod that we don't encourage generosity and stewardship in order to sustain the church; we sustain the church so that we can preach generosity and stewardship for the sake of the world that God so loves.

▶ PAGE 4-5: BISHOP'S CHARGE

▶ PAGE 3: POPULAR REPORT (continued)

## Meaford and Cripplegate churches enter a covenant of prayer



Rev. Brendon Bedford, holding the signed covenant after Sunday service on November 2, with the churchwardens of Christ Church, Meaford (L-R Garry Minielly, Brendon Bedford, Jean Richardson, Bill Alcock)  
(Photo: The Rev. Canon Kevin Bothwell)

A LAST-MINUTE FOLLOW UP to our October story about Christ Church, Meaford memorial windows: Christ Church, Meaford and St. Giles', Cripplegate (London, UK) have entered a covenant of prayer and partnership as of November 2.

The two communities signed the covenant agreement, to pray for each other and build a relationship, in the midst of their All Saints' Sunday services.

This agreement came out of Christ Church holding the only known piece of pre-WWII glass from St. Giles', and Christ Church rector's visit to St. Giles' to gift them with a piece of glass sourced from the Meaford church.

The memorial windows in Meaford consist of six panels made from hundreds of shards of stained-glass pieces blown out of over 100 churches in the UK and Europe during Nazi bombing, St. Giles', Cripplegate being one of them.

### Advent Activities 2025

Support a cause that supports the health of the earth

Tape some money on a vending machine

- Read Luke 1:39-45
- Read Luke 2:1-20
- Read Luke 3:1-6
- Read Luke 3:7-18
- Read Luke 21:25-36
- Watch a film version of the Gospels, like The Chosen
- Study the life of Jesus written by scholars

Go an entire day without criticizing anyone

Listen more; talk less

Be kind to unkind people

Listen for God's voice in music. Set aside time and place to hear the Holy Spirit. Pray for every neighbour on your street.

Write a gratitude note to a friend or family member and hide it in their pocket.

Give a treat to a community helper

Write a list of who and what you are thankful for this year

Smile and thank someone who serves you

Take a shut-in to lunch. Read to a child.

Reflect and record how much joy this Advent season has brought you

Prepared by Gaelle McKnight, Diocese of Fredericton



# Stewards of The Gift



On October 24 & 25, we gathered at St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, Ontario,  
for the 186<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Huron.  
We give thanks for every conversation, every act of service, and every heart  
committed to God’s work.



SYNOD  
2025  
SPONSORS



THANK  
YOU!



”  
... we don’t encourage generosity  
and stewardship in order to sustain  
the church; we sustain the church so  
that we can preach generosity and  
stewardship...

- Bishop Todd Townshend



## HURON CHURCH NEWS

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# Synod 2025 Popular Report

## FROM PAGE 1

Bishop Todd also expressed that the continued existence of the church is important, essential, so that a powerful, transformative gift can be given: how to live human life in right relation to one another, to other creatures, to possessions, and most importantly, to God. We want to be responsible, joyful stewards of God's generosity. We are stewards not just of money, or land, or budgets and buildings.

We are the people God will use to counter the greed and scarcity, to transform and reconcile peoples and communities, and to live and share in the abundant life that God intends for all people, all of creation. We are the stewards of the promise of Jesus and his resurrection life.

In an era of rampant consumerism, unbridled greed, and increasing income inequality outside our doors, and across the globe, God's gift of the message regrading generosity, abundance and faithful stewardship is a unique and beautiful opportunity. When we meet this opportunity well, the goodness of God wells up within us and overflows to the benefit of the broader community and world.

Following the Bishop's charge to Synod the Financial Report was shared by Rev. Diana Boland, Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee and Jacqueline Davison, Director of Finance. They shared the good news that thirteen ministries of the diocese received grants from the Huron Development Fund in 2024.

Also, good news is the fact that the Review Engagements by KPMG for 2020 and 2021 have been completed and were received by Synod. Synod passed a motion to engage a new auditor, Graham Scott Enns LLP as auditor for the 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 fiscal years. An audit plan has been proposed that would see all audits up to date by the 2026 Synod.

The 2024 year-end figures show a deficit of \$284,000 of which \$132,490 is directly related to a shortfall in apportionment. Ms. Davison expressed appreciation to those parishes who went the extra mile, paying above their assigned apportionment. Without those extra mile gifts, the deficit would have been higher. The Rev. Boland also reported on the work of the Apportionment Task Force which will continue into 2026.

Ven. Rosalyn Elm, Archdeacon for Reconciliation and Indigenous Ministry and Rev. Hana Scorrar, Indigenous Ministries Missioner, shared how they, along with their Ministry Team, participate in the ministry of the Church in their communities and how they do church outside of Sunday Mornings.

Using the Church to engage in community learning, events and doing ministries that provides a wider access to the Gospel and God in a more accessible way that feels safe, welcomed and heard and meeting people where they are at in a more comfortable way. They shared there has been amazing growth in their communities by engaging this way. They are also working with ecumenical partners, particularly in Oneida and Chippewa and are grateful for the opportunities that this engagement is happening. Archdeacon Ros shared with Synod that healing is one of the oldest languages of faith, long before the Church named sacrament and she encouraged us to enter into a relationship with the gifts given to us.

Synod resolved to review Canon 12 and bring back any recommendations to Synod

2026. Synod also amended the Constitution and Canon 31; changing the definition of youth so that the minimum age is reflected by the year of birth rather than the time of election. and increasing the maximum age so that it reflects the General and Provincial rules.

Other changes include, updating the language regarding quorum requirements for both Synod and electoral synods and cleaning up defining timing of meetings and Annual financial Returns from Deanery Councils.

Synod also confirmed the elections of the Deanery Councils of the nominations to membership of the Diocesan Council for the coming Synodical year of 2025-2026.

Presentations were made under the three pillars of the Diocesan Plan: Returning to Grace.

Jane Townshend, on behalf of the Huron Refugee Committee shared how they share their gifts to become a more just church. Rev. Jordan Murray brought news to Synod regarding a re-booting of the Proud Anglicans movement in Huron as part of encouraging the church to be a more inclusive and diverse. And a report

from Libi Clifford and Rev. Canon Dr. Valerie Kenyon brought information to Synod on how Education for Ministry (EfM) is encouraging us to be a more learning church.

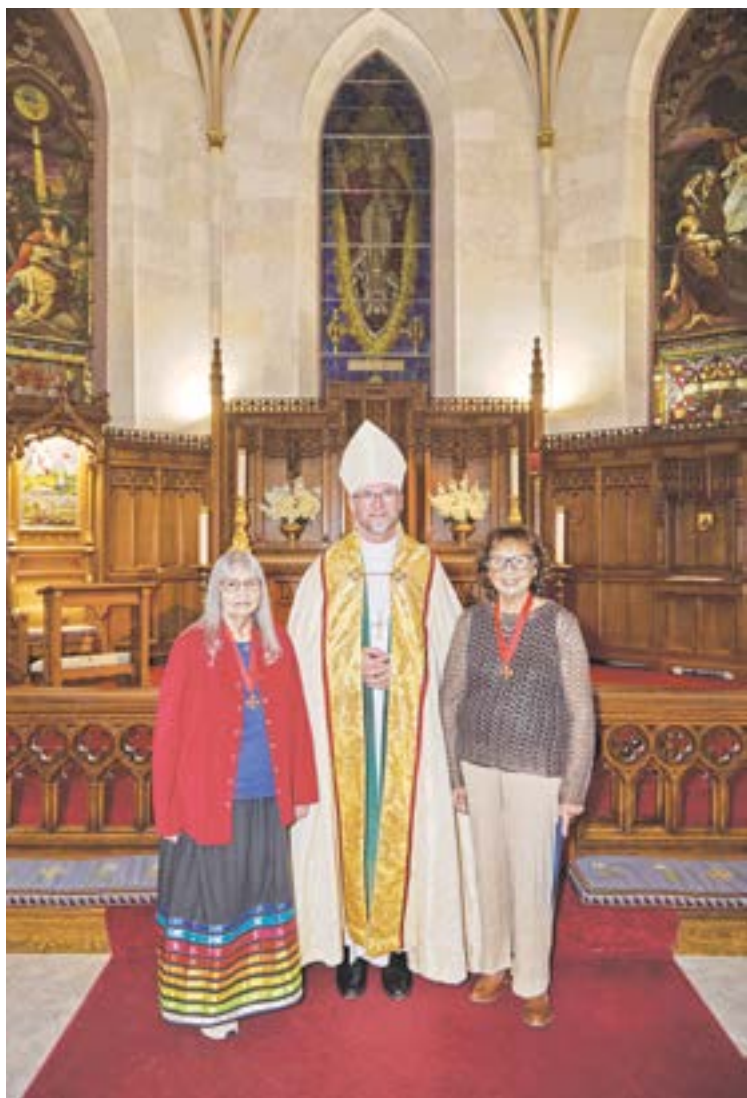
Greetings were also brought to Synod by the three affiliate colleges: Rev. Dr. Jen Boyes-Garbin from Canterbury College in Windsor, Dr. Dan Smith, Huron University College in London and Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry, Renison University College in Waterloo.

There was time given to remember the closed church buildings this past year. Afterwards, Alongside Hope and Camp Huron gave presentations regarding their ministry. The College of Deacons also shared that Synod's generosity raised \$6749.74 to assist the students at our affiliate college through the chaplains and at Paul's Place at St. Paul's Cathedral.

A video presentation was shared highlighting clergy who had retired this past year to thank them for all their contributions.

Thankfulness was shared around those who made this year's Synod possible, and at 4:20 PM, the meeting for the 186th Synod was adjourned.

## In Focus



Bishop Todd bestowed the Order of Huron on Pamela Fulton (left) and Dorothy Patterson.

## Diocesan Archives at a new location (and with a new name)

In the fall of 2026, Diocesan Archives will open at a new location – St. Paul's Cathedral in London – and with a new name.

This is the main takeaway from the Archives Relocation Working Group presentation at Synod that announced creation of *The Reverend Canon Dr. J. Douglas Leighton Archives of the Diocese of Huron*.

Dr. Leighton, who died in 2022, was a well-respected priest and scholar with a passion for things historical, particularly our Church and our diocesan heritage. He was Professor of History at Huron College and also served as Diocesan Canon Historian. Leighton was instrumental in bringing papers, records and significant artifacts to the College and the subsequent creation of the Archives itself.

The Archives is currently situated at Huron University College. The Archives' move was initiated in 2024 when it was announced that the 50-year partnership with the College had come to an end. The Diocese managed to prolong the moving date until August 2026. In the meantime, the Working Group have been looking for a permanent solution, finally opting for the Cathedral.

The Leighton Archives will occupy three spaces within St. Paul's. Archives **public spaces** will take over three adjacent rooms on the second floor that formerly served as offices and storage for the Daily Bread food program. This section of the Archives will feature a small reception area, archivist's office, a public reading room for in-house visitors, and workroom for processing material, which will also have a smaller annex that will house digitization equipment and serve to quarantine new acquisitions.

Across the hall on the second floor, a room that back in the day was a children's worship

space will become a **storage area** – a secure room required for archival supplies, for material awaiting cataloguing, and for content from the collection that is being used by researchers and other Archives visitors.

**The Vault**, containing all of Archives' catalogued material, will be situated in the space below the Cathedral sanctuary formerly used as choir rehearsal space and score library. The room will be insulated and sealed. It will have all the necessary environmental controls, security and communications systems. All fixtures currently holding archival catalogued collections, flat storage and microfilm cabinets will relocate into the Vault.

There are a couple of important dates for parishes to note. **Friday, December 19**, is the last day for accepting new deposits from churches until the Archives re-opens in the fall. Parishes should hold on to their material until then and consult the Archives' Information for Churches page on the diocesan website for details about safe handling and storage of their material until the Archives reopens.

The second significant date is **Thursday, April 30 next year** when the Huron location closes permanently.

We will do our best to keep up with phone and e-mail enquiries as the move progresses, but there will necessarily be periods during which access to records will be curtailed. We also will make every attempt to keep you informed of progress along the way, so stay tuned.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Reverend Canon Dr. J. Douglas Leighton Archives of the Diocese of Huron next fall. In the meantime, we are happy to answer any questions. Just give us a shout via e-mail at [leightonarchives@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:leightonarchives@huron.anglican.ca)



# Stewards of the Gift: Bishop's Charge to Synod

By Bishop Todd Townshend

**L**AST YEAR in this moment, I gave you a four word summary of the “bishop’s charge”: stay close to Jesus. *Turning to Grace* means to stay close to Jesus. The Risen Christ, Jesus, is present and active and moving in our midst and in the world around us and, as we recognize that movement, we go with the flow of grace wherever we find it.

So, we stay close to it. Stay attuned to it. It makes for a wonderful, meaningful life, being part of a community of disciples. Thanks be to God for this life we share in our church.

Keeping with patterns I’ve used in previous Synods, we’ll take a look at three key resource areas and then to speak a bit about a focus for the next year.

Three key resource areas: People, Property, and Planning.

## 1. People:

Every baptized person has a vocation—it comes from God through your baptism—and together we are the church. The ministry of all baptized people continues to be the most important resource to be developed in the church. This Synod has a focus on stewardship because that is the response of a disciple. Stewardship is the response of the disciple to the flow of gifts from God—making us stewards of God’s grace. We rightly have a focus on becoming a learning church, a just church, a diverse church—but we cannot forget that beneath it all, the foundation of it all, is the reality that our whole life revolves around this one crucial thing: our response to the gifts of God. Our stewardship of the gift.

This is a massive time of change. Sometimes the change seems to be happening in slow motion. It takes years to see the realities and come to know the contours of the new terrain we enter. Yet, compared to the eras of stability in Christian history, things are actually changing very quickly. We live in a much different worlds than our grandparents lived in. Some things are very different now. And some things are exactly the same. The gift is the same. It is new every morning, but it comes from the same source and it has the same end. God, the Holy Trinity.

With these same gifts, still being poured out, extravagantly given by God, we continually seek to be good stewards of our human resources for this time. In this



generation, we are celebrating elders—listening to them. And, at the same time, we are combining this with the work of renewing leadership by recognizing and calling out new gifts for service and new responsibilities within our network of parishes.

Last evening at the opening worship service of Synod, we celebrated two women who are Indigenous elders and faithful servants of Jesus. We commissioned four Territorial/Area Archdeacons who will share episcopate (oversight and support) with me as your Bishop. These six people are signs to us of the goodness of God. Each unique in their own gifting and each giving of themselves for our common good. I am very grateful for them and those who have served before them. Just as I am grateful for every one of you.

This diocese consists of about 140 active parish communities, some of which have several locations and congregations. There is no diocese in Canada that has a higher bishop-to-congregation ratio. (140:1. The next highest would be about 100:1 and a mid-sized diocese would be 30:1 or 40:1.) That changes how you go about things. For us, the challenge is being good stewards of so many good gifts! Without these area archdeacons, I would not have the capacity to accomplish all of the work I am to do—it would be impossible to do well or effectively. It would be poor stewardship. With them, however, and with ALL the other regional and parish leaders, nourished by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, this network of churches called Huron thrives and

grows in its faithfulness. We thrive—and will continue to thrive and grow in new ways—as we follow the flow of grace. It requires courage and involves hard work. Some of work is repair, mending, healing. Some of it is cultivating, nourishing, guiding. Some of is correcting, or re-setting, or reorganizing, but most of it is simply connecting these wonderful communities together in Christ. I’m deeply honoured to be part of it.

I found a word recently that I want to learn more about. It is an Anishinaabe word. It may be a way to describe the work we do together in this time. I don’t think we have anything in English that does the same thing so I hope we can share this word and its meaning for a while. The root word is *Aanikaw*. *Aanikaw* refers to the act of binding or joining. Root words go with other word-meanings to create another word. *Aanikoobijagan* is the word for “great-grandparent” or “ancestor”. But it is also the word for “great-grandchild” or “descendant”. So, the word used to describe the person three generations before you and three generations after you is the same word. It connects seven generations, including you. (see “Becoming Kin”, Patty Krawec, 2022, p.150) With this word in mind, we can see threads that connect us with three generations before us - and three generations after us, binding us all together. Then we look to those around us, knowing that we are bound together in Christ, and we see that we are part of a strong web of people, mutual relationships, life-giving connections.

We can also see that we can think backward and forward at the same time. This is one of the ways that God holds the world together. We are all kin. Our work is to join and connect people, so that we recognize our God-given kinship. Our work is about joining and connecting people, one to another and all to God in Christ.

## 2. The second key resource area is Property:

Land and property are gifts too. Resources. We receive them as an inheritance. They are contested resources, in some cases. It is not always clear that these resources came into our hands without having been taken away from others, often generations ago. It is not always clear that, if not for the church’s massive societal influence in years gone by, some of these lands and properties would never have come into our “possession”. So, it is very important that we steward these resources in the most truthful, generous, and healing way that we can. In many cases, Anglicans in Huron are faithful in this challenge. We cherish our “church homes”, we are good stewards of them, but we don’t cling to them when the time is right to let go and pass them along. As a diocese, we continue to take seriously the stewardship challenge and opportunity of our inherited land and property.

With the help of some resources and consultants, we have developed several major projects and we have initiated several more. We see some church lands being redeveloped and reused: for housing, for community hubs, for places where the arts can be devel-

oped and performed, and for service to those in most need. The space we are in right now (St. Paul’s Cathedral, London) is a good example. Spaces are being reimagined, and partnerships are being formed.

I don’t need to look far in my calendar to see some other examples. Tomorrow afternoon I will join the people of Florence and others in Kent to deconsecrate the old church building. They have, in their own words, “given up their beautiful, historic, neo-gothic, ruinously expensive church building in order to be a church that is the people.” They still have a beautiful hall across the road where they worship and do significant outreach. And they meet in other places where they can grow spiritually. This is a small community that is learning, they are looking outside of themselves, and they are open to change. They are a model for a new way to look at rural ministry.

The following Sunday, I will join the people of St. James, Ingersoll for a consecration. For more than 190 years the people of St. James have been the Anglican presence in Ingersoll witnessing to the goodness of God in Christ. Long before the pandemic they moved on from their very large stone church to consolidate resources, and they have been gathering since then in temporary rented space. They have now renovated a large downtown storefront building for their new home. While supported by very faithful clergy, this has been led by a remarkable group of lay people who know that their life together is crucial for the town of Ingersoll.

This will not be the first consecration service I’ve been honored to lead. All Saints Waterloo, in large urban environment, had the vision to redevelop their property to incorporate the Sidewalk Centre to serve their neighbourhood. Over at Holy Saviour, Waterloo, a different kind of redevelopment has been carried out with fantastic results. We are changing how we use our church buildings.

The Diocese of Huron and Holy Trinity St. Stephen’s Memorial, London, are entering into a “joint venture” relationship with an organization that will rebuild their site with a new structure in which the church will operate and in which people will find much-needed new homes.

Several of the churches in Sarnia are consolidating their gifts in a new way. They have come through a year of discernment and have chosen to repurpose two of the church





Delegates voting at Synod 2025

**Our diocese is marshalling gifts and resources in strategic and creative ways, and this is challenging but really important work. Thank you to all who are courageously and faithfully undertaking this task. We are consolidating, tending and tilling, pruning and growing, and it is good.**

sites, one for affordable housing, and come together into the downtown church site. We are on the verge of choosing a new name for this new parish community.

I could go on. Our diocese is marshalling gifts and resources in strategic and creative ways, and this is challenging but really important work. Thank you to all who are courageously and faithfully undertaking this task. We are consolidating, tending and tilling, pruning and growing, and it is good.

**3. The third area of focus for resources is Planning:**

Of course, last year we launched our Diocesan Plan, “Turning to Grace” which was developed from the wisdom and love of this diocese. I am gratified to see all the creative ways in which the vision and language in the plan has come alive in your communities—each in its own unique way. There will be some presenta-

tions later in Synod that will give glimpses into some of the ways this is happening, so I won’t say too much about the plan here—except to say that it is ongoing, seems to be generating good stuff, and we will keep assessing a supporting as much as possible.

So, finally, what will be “the charge” for you to go home with this year?

Here are the “short form” summaries of the charge from the past six years.

1. Remember who we are and what we do (2020)
2. Live in community by yielding to the life of the Spirit (2021)
3. Expect to meet the Risen Jesus along the way (2022)
4. Be ready to sing the Lord’s song in a strange new land (2023)
5. Continually turn to the God of Grace (2024)
6. Cultivate a life of faithful stewardship and generosity (2025)

This year’s charge is to focus on stewardship—and to do this by focussing first on “the gift”. I am encouraging you to make the next twelve months a cultivation of a life of stewardship and generosity in community—to develop a comprehensive year-round stewardship plan for engagement. There are so many great resources to support you and guide you in this and we be eager to provide them to you. Some congregations are doing this quite well and we can learn from them. Some are in a lull and stewardship has lost its place at the centre of who we are and what we do. Others have never really tried it in a comprehensive way. I am here to learn from you and to help you.

Just to get us started on this, here is a key thought adapted from the opening of the book, “Generosity, Stewardship and Abundance” (Lovett Weems Jr., and Ann Michel). “Sustaining our faith

institutions is critically important work but it is not an end in itself. God’s purpose in calling us to lives of faithful stewardship and generosity isn’t merely to sustain the church. In fact, it’s the other way around.” We sustain the church so that lives of faith and generosity can be made possible.

The continued existence of the church is important, essential, so that a powerful, transformative gift can be given: how to live human life in right relation to one another, to other creatures, to possessions, and most importantly, to God. We want to be responsible, joyful stewards of God’s generosity. We are stewards not just of money, or land, or budgets and buildings. We are the people God will use to counter the greed and scarcity, to transform and reconcile peoples and communities, and to live and share in the abundant life that

God intends for all people, all of creation. We are the stewards of the promise of Jesus and his resurrection life.

In an era of rampant consumerism, unbridled greed, and increasing income inequality outside our doors, and across the globe, God’s gift of the message regading generosity, abundance and faithful stewardship is a unique and beautiful opportunity. When we meet this opportunity well, the goodness of God wells up within us and overflows to the benefit of the broader community and world. In short, we don’t encourage generosity and stewardship in order to sustain the church, we sustain the church so that we can preach generosity and stewardship for the sake of the world that God so loves. It is an urgent and compelling and exciting call.

+ Todd

# I've been blessed all my life: Faith Witness at Synod

PAMELA  
FULTON



I WAS a very young child when my mother and father started to teach me about the Creator. No matter how far back I remember, I always knew the Creator was with me.

My mom’s family have been Anglicans for generations and were always active in the church. Like most churches when I was young, a lot of people of all ages attended. This is where I learned so much about life and people.

We attended church every Sunday possible. My dad taught Sunday School when he was available, mostly in the winter when the ice wasn’t safe to walk across to go to the states for work. He worked seven days a week.

I enjoyed being in church because I liked hearing different sounds, like kids whispers, a few louder than others... A baby’s cry, a strong voice... In

the choir some voices blending so beautifully and some standing out with their own style... Great sounds!

At a young age, I got to know how different people are. But this was learning about just life experiences.

One man who was in our choir had epilepsy and when he would have a seizure he would lay down beside his seat for a little while. Then when he felt better, he would get back into his seat and start singing. My parents explained to me what he had just experienced and I understood. Sometimes I would see him out in the community having an episode and I knew he would be fine. He had his own home, a garden and pigs, I always enjoyed seeing him tending to them. I knew he was a strong man and he just kept going and doing the things he loved. I always enjoyed seeing what everyone

did in their lives, taking care of their children, the land and nature.

My mom is Chippewa and my dad Potawatomi; both are tribes of the Ojibway Nation. They taught me about my culture and spirituality. But they didn’t present it as my culture; what we had learned was just plain living. When we started hearing of the Seven Grandfather teachings and listed them, we knew this is how they taught us to live. They were instilled in us as life teachings. Humility, Bravery, Honesty, wisdom, Truth, Respect and Love — that is part of my spirituality and that is how I live my life.

I was in hospital and read all of my Children’s bible. I felt like I didn’t have to fear things that could hurt me and I had comfort. It’s the way our parents taught us about Creator God, Jesus and about creation — that we get through life

with Creator’s help and guidance. It is how our culture and the Anglican Church ways don’t conflict. If you are living as a Christian, following the teachings Jesus gave us, it is the same as how we live.

Our parish hall was a large separate building where the whole community took part in church activities: Band Council events and family get togethers/special occasions. Our church men, women and children all took part in some planning, volunteering and as helpers to do whatever needed to be done. This is how I know being part of the church and in my community was what I enjoyed the most.

Now I volunteer in different ways and try to bridge communities.

I’ve been blessed all my life!

*Pamela Fulton is a parishioner of St. John the Baptist, Walpole Island.*



# The story of our parish: Seventy years of living faith

On December 4, 1955, the first regular service was held at Glenwood School in Windsor, across from a newly purchased lot on Norfolk Street where St. Mathew's Anglican Church was about to be built. Seventy years on, St. Matthew's remains a crucial part of the wider community.

**By Rev. Gilles Haché**

In the aftermath of World War II, during the mid-1940s, many plots of land—including those surrounding the Roseland Golf Course—were developed into residential neighborhoods. On November 20, 1949, Bishop George N. Luxton announced the creation of a new parish: St. James Church in Roseland.

The parish grew rapidly, and by 1954, permission was granted to launch an Anglican Sunday School annex at Glenwood Public School. In 1955, due to high enrollment at Glenwood and overcrowding at St. James, the decision was made to establish a second Anglican worship site. The purchase of a lot on Norfolk Street across Glenwood School, and the first regular Sunday service held at the school on December 4, 1955, marked the conception of the new church. On February 12, 1956, a meeting was held to organize what would become St. Matthew's Church.

Seventy years ago, a seed of faith was planted. St. Matthew's began as a gathering of believers committed to following Christ, being formed by Scripture, and serving others with compassion. Today, we continue the legacy of those who trusted in God's promises, who did not rely on their own understanding, but acknowledged Him in all their ways—and He made their paths straight (Proverbs 3:5–6).

Our mission statement: "We are called to share God's love by welcoming and caring for



our community" is not merely a slogan—although adopted in 2014, it has been a vocation lived daily since 1955, in every gesture, every prayer, every shared meal.

**A Foundation Built on Faith**

The construction of the church on Norfolk Street was the fruit of a collective vision, carried by founding families whose faith and generosity laid the groundwork for all we are today. We give thanks for the Stanley, Goldspink, Palin, Grieves, Jemison, Loney, Finnie, Jones, Snelling, Heath, Postovit, Garswood, Youngson, Lefcombe, and Braidford families, as well as the rest of the founding families—pillars of faith who walked in the ways of the Lord (Psalm 119:33), passed on wisdom (2 Timothy 3:17), and responded to Christ's call with mercy and mission (Matthew 9:9–13).

We also give thanks to God for all the clergy who have served this community with

devotion and love. Their leadership, pastoral care, and liturgical guidance have allowed St. Matthew's to flourish. We remember those who came before us and honour those who continue to serve today: The Reverend Grant Darling (1956–1961, 5 years); The Reverend Donald Munro (1961–1968, 7 years); The Reverend Ray Farrell (1968–1970, 2 years); The Reverend Canon William Millman (1971–1993, 22 years); The Reverend Canon Stephen Harnadek (1993–2012, 18 years); The Most Reverend Bishop Jack Peck, Interim Priest (2012–2013); The Reverend Andreas Thiel (2013–2023, 10 years).

We also express our gratitude to the deacons whose ministry has enriched parish life and extended our mission beyond the church walls: The Reverend John McAvoy (1996–1999); The Reverend Cathy MacKendrick (1996–2025); The Reverend Robert Chandler (2003–2012); The Reverend Glenda

Fisher, ordained November 28, 2013, in partnership with St. Matthew's since March 3, 2019.

**A Living and Prayerful Community**

Each Sunday, the faithful gather to celebrate their faith, uplifted by a vibrant choir and nourishing liturgy. But the life of St. Matthew's extends far beyond the walls of the building we call church. It is a community that breathes solidarity, joy, and compassion — being CHURCH in the world and bringing the gospel to those in need through many outreach ministries.

The Marlborough School Breakfast Program nourishes children and strengthens community ties, while Ministry at the Southwest Detention Center, active since 2017, offers comfort and hope to incarcerated individuals.

Food for the Hungry, in partnership with local food banks, supports families in need. Hiatius House, a vital resource for families facing domestic violence, also receives our ongoing support.

Soup Luncheons — moments of fellowship and sharing open to all — with free will donations supports Alongside Hope and the Ministry of the Council of the North. The Adopt-a-Family initiative, organized by the Children's Aid Society, offers tangible support at Christmas.

The Angel Tree program has been led at St. Matthew's by our deacon, the Reverend Glenda Fisher, in collaboration with Prison Fellowship Canada. The Rector's Free

Community Christmas and Thanksgiving Dinners have also been offered to the wider community. The Community Breakfasts, organized by our wardens and deputy wardens, bring neighbours and friends together over a good meal; TNT Gatherings, our monthly social meet-up every first Friday at a local restaurant, fosters connection and joy.

**St. Matthew's: A Mission That Continues**

Today, under the leadership of our wardens, deputy wardens, and a Pastoral Council in partnership with our clergy, St. Matthew's continues its commitment to justice, reconciliation, and neighbourly love. We are not frozen in a dream of the past, but fully engaged in the reality of today's world. Our vocation is alive, dynamic, and outward-facing: we seek to meet people where they are, to listen to their needs, and to be a Church that shines far beyond its walls.

We believe God calls us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13–14), bearers of hope in a world that needs it so deeply. With faith, courage, and compassion, we look to the future, confident that the path ahead will be as rich in blessings as the seventy years that have come before.

*Rev. Gilles Haché is the Rector of St. Matthew's, Windsor, and Chaplain to Lay Readers.*

*(Based on historical information from St. Mathew's Church archives)*

## PARISH SNIPPETS



Back to busy Fall routine: St. George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener

St. George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener had a busy startup Fall with a "Back to Routine" BBQ, Men's Breakfast, Ladies Lunch and our Dragon Flyer edition during the Season of Creation.

Mary Ann Millar

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# A moment of grace, and the beginning of a new way of life

We continue our reflections on ordination with Rev. Gerard Phillips' story. Gerard was ordained deacon in June this year, along with Allison Agius, Tianna Gocan, Maya-Mele Okazaki, and Janet Ternes. By the time you read this article, all of them will have been ordained priests in the Diocese of Huron.

**By Rev. Gerard Martin Phillips**

ON TUESDAY, June 10, 2025, the night before my ordination to the diaconate, I felt a mix of excitement, nervousness, and peace. It was a day I had long anticipated — a moment that had lived in my heart for years.

That evening, at Holy Family Retreat Center in Oxley, I found myself surrounded by a calm that felt like a divine embrace. As we walked the Stations of the Cross, something extraordinary happened. Small, soft balls of fur were gently falling from the trees — not unlike snow — and they reminded me of blessings from above, signs of grace descending upon us. The quiet serenity of that moment seemed to whisper: everything will be alright.

The next morning, after saying goodbye and offering each other words of encouragement, I set out for the two-hour drive to London for the ordination rehearsal. I was almost in awe — not just of the day itself, but of the sacredness it carried. The drive became a space of reflection and prayer, a kind of personal pilgrimage, preparing my heart for what was to come.

Later that afternoon, as we gathered in the small courtyard outside St. James Westminster, Bishop Todd welcomed us with gentle wisdom. He reminded us that we might forget a detail from rehearsal — and that was okay. What mattered was simply to enter the moment, to be fully present in the liturgy.

That advice stayed with me throughout the evening. I did my best to truly listen to the homily, to absorb the words and enter the music that had been so carefully chosen for the occasion. There was a deep sense that this was not just a

ceremony — it was a turning point, a moment of grace, and the beginning of a new way of life.

What made the evening even more meaningful was the presence of so many people who had been part of my journey. It was a joy to have family members — sisters, cousins — mentors, friends, and many congregants from All Saints' Anglican there to witness and support this son of the soil. Each person, in their own way, offered congratulations and the reassurance of their prayers. Their presence spoke volumes — a quiet, powerful testimony to the truth that it takes a village to raise a person. In that sacred space, it felt as though the whole city — and even the world — was there with me, lifting me up in love and faith.

At the end of the evening, it was hard to contain the emotions I felt. There were official photos, people offering cards, warm words, and gentle hugs — each one saying, “You did it.” And still, I found myself asking, Was this really all for me?

It felt like everything had come together in a way only God could orchestrate. The hymns — “Here I Am, Lord,” “Gift of Finest Wheat,” and “Let Streams of Living Justice” — all fell into place, as though God was gently but clearly leading me into this new ministry of service. There was a deep sense of peace and joy, as if a huge weight had been lifted — and freedom had taken its place.

In that moment, I knew: after this anointing, God was sending me out — to be a deacon to God's people, to proclaim the Good News, and to serve with love, humility, and joy.

*Rev. Gerard Martin Phillips is Priest Assistant to the Rector of All Saints, Windsor.*



Rev. Gerard Martin Phillips at the Service of Ordination, June 10, 2025.  
Photo: Charlotte Poolton

## PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

**Appointments**

Bishop Townshend appointed the Venerable Dr Rick Jones as the Interim Priest-in-charge of Trinity, Simcoe, effective 1 January 2026.

From 1 November through 31 December 2025, the Bishop has appointed the Venerable Dr Jim Sutton to serve in this role.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Canon Keith Nethery as the Interim Priest-in-charge of the Parish of the Holy Spirit, Seaforth; St. Paul's-Trinity, Wingham; and Trinity, Blyth, effective 1 November 2025.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Patrick Martin as the Rector of Old St. Paul's, Woodstock; St. John's, Eastwood; Christ Church, Oxford Centre; and St. Paul's, Princeton, effective 1 November 2025.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Thomas Stradwick as the Rector of St. John's, Tillsonburg, effective 1 November 2025. Tom is currently the Incumbent of St. Peter's on the Rock, Kirkland Lake, and the Incumbent of St Mark's, Iroquois Falls (Diocese of Moosonee).

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Gilles Haché as the Chaplain to Lay Readers, effective 1 October 2025.

Bishop Townshend announced that the Reverend Diana Boland, having successfully completed her curacy, has now been appointed the Vicar of St. James', St. Marys, St. Paul's, Stratford, St. Stephen's, Stratford, and St. James', Stratford, with primary responsibility for St. James', St. Marys, effective 5 October 2025.

**Inductions**

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, the Venerable Amanda Longmoore inducted the Reverend Patty Dobbs Luxton as the Rector of St. John's, Strathroy, on Sunday, 16 November at 4:00 p.m. The preacher was the Reverend Canon Christopher (“Kit”) Greaves (Diocese of Toronto).

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, the Venerable Dr Stephen McClatchie inducted the Venerable Matthew Kieswetter as the Rector of St. James', Paris, on the Feast of the Reign of Christ, Sunday, 23 November. The preacher was the Reverend Canon Bob Schroeder.

**Retirement**

The Reverend Canon Steve Harnadek concluded his post-retirement appointment as Associate Priest of the new parish in Sarnia at the end of October 2025.

We thank him for his ministry and wish him well in his actual retirement.

**Rest in Peace**

David Wearne died on 20 October 2025. David was the father of the Reverend Brian Wearne.

Please remember Colleen, Patrice, Brian, and the rest of David's family and friends in your prayers.

Maura Costa Gomes, died on October 21, in Brazil. Maura was the mother of the Reverend Hilton Gomes, Rector of the Church of the Redeemer, Colchester North; St. Stephen's, Oldcastle; and Trinity, Cottam.

Please remember Hilton, Sandy, and the rest of Maura's family and friends in your prayers. Please pray as well for safe travel for Hilton and Sandy in their travels to and from Brazil.

Gordon Mouck, died on 14 October 2025. Gordon was the

spouse of the Reverend Victoria Mouck.

Gordon's funeral was at the Church of the Epiphany, Kingsville, on Tuesday, 21 October followed by burial in the cemetery and a reception in the Parish Hall.

Please remember Victoria, Don, the late Ron, Angel, and the rest of Gordon's family and friends in your prayers. The full obituary may be found below.

The Reverend Blair Dixon, died early Sunday morning, 13 October 2025. Blair was ordained deacon and priest in the Diocese of Ottawa in 1965 and 1966. In 1977, he came on the strength of Huron to serve as the Director of the Huron Church Camp and as an assistant at St. James Westminster, London. From September 1980 until his departure for the Diocese of Qu'Appelle in May 1991, Blair was the Rector of Christ Church, London and a hospital chaplain. From 1983 through 1983 he was the Regional Dean of Wellington.

Please remember his children Lisa, Lance, and Beau and the rest of Blair's family and friends in your prayers. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

**Archbishop of Canterbury-Designate**

Bishop Townshend joined with our Primate, Archbishop Shane Parker, and the rest of Anglican Church of Canada in rejoicing at the appointment of the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mulhally DBC, as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury.

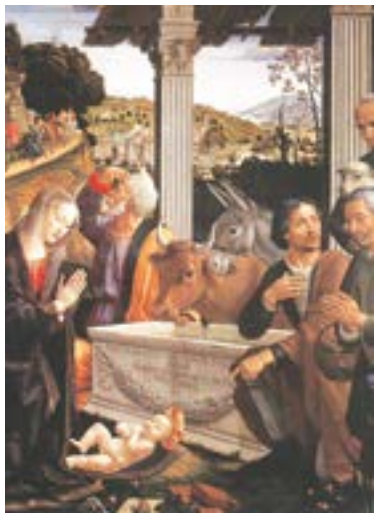
The Archbishop-Designate will legally assume the role at the end of January 2026 and will be installed as the Bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury in March 2026.

Parishes may wish to add “Archbishop of Canterbury-Designate Sarah” to the list of bishops for whom we pray.





# Looking for God's presence in unexpected places



**The birth of Christ reminds us that learning and ministry begin in humility — in a manger, not a palace.**

*“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.”*  
John 1:14

**By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon**

**A**S WE APPROACH Christmas and the turning of the year, the story of God’s coming to us in Jesus invites us to pause and wonder.

This pausing and wondering are central to our time in all of our Education for Ministry (EfM) weekly gatherings. We explore what our faith looks like as it becomes real in our daily lives. Just how do our ideas about God relate to our experience? How does learning lead to and influence our actions; and just how do all the stories, ancient and new, shape who we are and who we are becoming?



**Education for Ministry is spiritual, theological, liturgical, and practical formation for lay people. EfM is about integrating faith and life, and communicating our faith to others.**

Christmas, in many ways, is the heart of that exploration: God choosing to dwell among us, in the ordinary rhythms of human life.

The birth of Christ reminds us that learning and ministry begin in humility — in a manger, not a palace. It also invites us to look for God’s presence in unexpected places: in the classroom, around the kitchen table, or in the small acts of care we offer one another. EfM provides space for this kind of discovery —

where reflection and conversation help us see how faith continues to take flesh in our world today.

As well, as the New Year begins, EfM challenges us to renewal. It calls us not only to learn more about God, but to live more with God — to bring our questions, hopes, and doubts to the table, trusting that all of it can lead to deeper understanding and faithful action.

So, as we sing the familiar carols, light candles and

make resolutions, may we remember that who we are becoming as disciples of Jesus is not a one-time event but a lifelong journey. Christ’s birth is a promise that God is with us — Emmanuel — guiding our learning, renewing our spirits, and calling each of us to minister in the world with hope, courage, and joy.

Why not be bold in 2026 and make looking into an EfM group part of your new year? If you’re curious about Education for Ministry or thinking about joining a group in the coming year, we’d love to welcome you! If you need more information, please just reach out to, Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or me Val Kenyon at [EFM@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:EFM@huron.anglican.ca)

*Rev. Canon Dr. Val Kenyon is EfM Animator in Huron. [EFM@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:EFM@huron.anglican.ca)*

## 'We do it together!' (Even when we go from here)

*The kingdom of God is something we do; not a place to which we go. (Rufus Jones, “Blessed Community”, Essential Writings, 2001)*

**W**HEN WE PRAY the Lord’s Prayer, I wonder if we really grasp that it is a call to action, not a wish to get someplace. In the words of Rufus Jones, in praying for such a kingdom to come, we are praying for a family-fellowship. We are living to do God’s will.

I confess that I have been wondering if the twelve weeks that I have been gifted at Transitional Care in Kensington Village to heal and rehab my broken leg is perhaps meant to be a reminder for me that the kingdom of God is something we do. Is it possible that life as a leader in the church could, at times, dull the senses and narrow the range of vision?

I don’t mean to diminish the importance of Parish and Diocesan Councils, Finance Committee, Worship Teams etc. but meeting people in their suffering in these last seven weeks has allowed me to reconnect with the very intimate and pastoral work of being a priest. Might God be present in my suffering and in the suffering of other patients who share this space? Could I be coming to learn more of what it means to be community in this institution replete with broken bones and aching hearts? Here in this space, what doing ‘the kingdom’ looks like gets clearer each day



**Rosina and Kevin.**  
**Rosina will soon be 103, but she never gives up.**



**It’s JUST KEVIN**

**V. REV. KEVIN GEORGE**

I find myself giving or receiving from another.

“The reverence and gratefulness in which we give and take are signs of true community,” says Eberhard Arnold. He insists that “the secret that makes us all brothers and sisters is that we both give and receive service - all members serve one another. No one can do without the other. Each one lives for the others, and all live together for the one united body.” (Charles E. Moore, *Called to Community: The Life Jesus Wants for His People*, 2001)

Here in Kensington, some of us have hands we can use, some of us feet. Some can walk, some cannot. We are all very keenly aware of the many members of the human body. Collectively we are helping one another along this road to healing. My time here has

taught me a great deal about what it is like to be surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. It took me a few days to figure out that I have no need to isolate myself here. There is no need for any of us to suffer alone.

Joan Chittister writes: “One of the major dimensions of suffering is this experience of loneliness that accompanies it, the feeling of being in orbit, without anchors, with no idea of where to go next, with no companions to carry us over. Then, it is a matter of standing still as a fox at the edge of the forest and waiting for life to take another turn. Only then can we begin to build a new world of our own design. Only then do we have options.” (Joan Chittister and Rowan Williams, *Uncommon Gratitude: Alleluia for All That Is*, 2010)

Once I looked about me here, I realized I was not alone at all. Sitting still allowed me to see the Incarnate One present himself. As sure as Jesus showed up as an infant child in a feed trough, he is present in a one-hundred and two year old Italian woman named Rosina — the little Rose.

As her name suggests, Rosina is cheerful, kindly, and gracious. Her life story, too long to recount here, is one of faith, strength and determination. But I will share one story of how she has impacted my life.

I sat in my room one day having put off physiotherapy. I was trying hard to be alone in my suffering. Just an hour earlier, I prayed “your kingdom come.” I had forgotten it was something we are to do. Then out in the corridor I could hear our dutiful and caring therapist Jhan cheering on Rosina. I heard Rosina counting out her squats, “22, 23, 24....25! Alleluia!” Great cheers and laughter. She will soon be 103. She’s relentless.

I left my room, made my way to the corridor and began my exercises. Together, we counted now. In the days that followed we formed a bond. I, inspired by her, and she, thankful for me. Along with her loving daughter Nancy, we have reflected together on how God has looked after us from generation to generation.

One day, Rosina named the joy that comes from us being brought together at this time; from her generation, to Nancy’s generation, to my generation, right to our young therapist Jhan’s generation. “It’s a from generation to generation,” she declared with her Italian accent. Indeed community is built from the giving and receiving between the great cloud of witnesses — from the time of the infant Jesus, to now.

On the day of writing, I visited Rosina in her room. She wasn’t up for physio. But she has relayed to me how thankful she has been for our newfound kinship.

*“I’m a no gonna forgetta you. Even when we go froma here!”*

I told her how much she has taught me and inspired me, and assured her that I will see her when we leave here. She jumped up (did I mention this woman has a fractured pelvis?), gave me a hug, kissed me on both cheeks, “Thank you, Bellissimo!”

I was touched. I made my way to Jhan for physio. I counted away at each painful movement. Fifteen minutes in, I looked up to see Rosina, all five feet of her, coming toward us. She sat next to me. “*Ima gonna try,*” she said.

When we were done, she told me that when she was in the room, she did not feel that she could exercise. But when she is with me, she is strengthened to get it done. I smiled and told her that I felt the same way about her.

*“See,” she said, “we do it together!”*

Yes, together Rosina — me, you, Nancy, Catherinanne, Jhan, my table mates Don, Hugh, and Lorrie, all our fellow patients, and the staff of nurses and PSWs, along with the Incarnate Christ in each of us.

*Very Rev. Dr. Kevin George is Rector of St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, and Dean of Huron. [kevingeorge@diohuron.org](mailto:kevingeorge@diohuron.org)*



# With Jesus in our hearts: Transforming our spaces into mangers

**By Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle**

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)*

THE STORY is familiar. The image is regularly depicted in beautiful, sanitised ways.

Around the world people gather on Christmas Eve and sing about sleeping in heavenly peace. It is as though somehow by the presence of this newborn child the scene becomes transformed into something so sacred and holy that the animals and their byproducts are not an issue. You might even think that a manger is somehow an ideal setting for a child to be born. Those who do, should spend some time in a barn.

The story is familiar. Still, despite what the music, art, Christmas cards, pageants and movies suggest, there is value in recognising the message that 'there is no place for them in the inn' means that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus are pushed aside. They aren't given the dignity of a place to inhabit

## SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



### As we walk through this Advent season – how can we better pay attention to the invisible people?

that is normative. They are offered little more than what is left over – a space that might provide a bit of warmth and security, but at the cost of their dignity and comfort. Mary's pregnancy doesn't provide any advantages. And yet, we can infer that there are those who assume Mary and Joseph should feel lucky to get a roof over their heads. After all, beggars can't be choosers.

There is value in hearing this truth in this story because it can invite us to reflect on all of the ways we repeat this act with people today. How many people today are pushed aside? How many are not given the dignity of a place to inhabit that is normative? How many are offered little more than what is left over? How many do not get any advantages based on their

circumstances? How many are told they should feel lucky to have whatever they have regardless of its quality?

Some two thousand years after Mary gave birth to her firstborn son in humble circumstances there are still individuals whom the world pushes aside and tries to make invisible. How many have heard or seen via social media complaints about the amount of space and resources taken up by refugees and migrants by people who have little understanding or compassion for the journeys these individuals have undertaken? How many demand that people living in poverty, especially those who are unhoused, should be forced to be out of sight, leading to the dismantling of encampments? How many support legislation that promotes the erasure of diversity, equity, and inclusion particularly in relation to gender identities? How many ignore the harsh inequities of Reserves simply because these are out of sight?

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)*

The story plays out in different ways, but the realities of being pushed aside, having ones needs devalued, and being made invisible continue for far too many individuals. This is why we continue to need to hear this story again and again paying attention to details. God, in Jesus, comes into the world on the margins. God meets God's beloved children in those places of invisibility. In so doing God makes visible what is otherwise invisible and invites us to do the same.

As we walk through this Advent season – how can we better pay attention to the invisible people? What more can we do to make visible that which the world has sought to make invisible? How might we participate in the transformation of God with us this year?

May we not only make a place for Jesus in our hearts this season but transform our spaces into mangers that truly welcome and include those whom the world would prefer to push aside so that the Marys, Josephs, and Jesuses of today know that God continues to be with us transforming hearts and our world. Amen.

Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle is a co-chair of SEJH.



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# And you remembered my name!

ON SUNDAY, at the communion rail, in my church of St. George's, The Blue Mountains, as the members of the congregation received the bread and the wine, each familiar with this ritual act that is at the heart of our Anglican faith and practice, a young woman, new to our patterns of worship, hesitantly made her way to the front of the church.

I watched as she watched others, as some stood, others knelt at the rail, and she decided to kneel beside them. As the person on her left and right extended their hands to receive the host, so she did the same, following in their example.

When it came time to share the body of Christ with her, I spoke the familiar words: "The body of Christ, broken in love for you," but before saying this, I spoke her name.

Her reaction was immediate. Among a crowd of unfamiliar Christians, this young woman was not expecting to hear her name. In what was only her second visit to our particular church, she was not expecting to be named in the vulnerable act of the Holy Eucharist.

Her eyes flashed wide, and a smile broke out on her face, as she responded: "Amen." And, my hope of hopes was that in that moment she might



GROWING  
BEYOND THE  
DOORS  
REV. CANON  
GRAYHAME  
BOWCOTT

**In a society where it is easy to go unrecognized, unnamed, and without belonging, some people are seeking a community of faith to call home.**

experience a sense of being known, of belonging, among a family of Christians that seeks to make a home for her.

Some of my parishioners think that I have the gift of remembering names. I don't. To be honest, I'm not very good at remembering them at all. But, what I do know, is how important our names are to our identity and our sense of belonging within a faith community.

What most people won't know about me, (and now I am revealing it to all reading this article), is that after each church service on Sunday, as we are shaking hands and exchanging a comment or two, one of my intentions is

to see if there is anyone that I don't know in that lineup. Like the young, unknown woman visiting our church the previous Sunday. I am quick to ask for someone's name, and after hearing it, I will keep saying it in the back of my mind until I have the chance to run to my office. Then, I immediately write down the person's name and a description of them that I can't possibly forget and stick it on a sticky note on the wall of my vestry table.

Most people don't get a chance to see my collage of names and descriptions, out of sight, where others won't know my system of remembrance (my cheat list)! This list exists for the express pur-

pose of naming newcomers in moments when they are not expecting to be remembered.

Over the last decade of my ministry in the Blue Mountains, we have seen so many people come and go. Looking out on our pews, I can close my eyes and picture the members that are no longer with us. I can remember where they used to sit before they moved away or passed into God's care. However, those pews are not necessarily empty, but are now filled with new members, many who are seeking to be known and loved within our community.

When I follow up with new members as to what keeps

them coming back every Sunday, there is a common response among them: "You remembered my name."

Who are the "namekeepers" in your church or congregation? Who is being tasked to recognize and welcome those who might be nervous to step through the doors? The ministry of first impressions is one that can be powerful and effective. It can lead to long-lasting relationships of commitment and trust, or, if neglected, can be one of the biggest missed opportunities of helping someone find the sense of belonging that they are looking for.

In a society where it is easy to go unrecognized, unnamed, and without belonging, some people are seeking a community of faith to call home. In their most vulnerable moments of first steps and first visits, the power of being named and remembered should never be taken for granted.

*Rev. Canon Dr. Grayhame Bowcott is passionate about fostering congregational relationships and sharing our Anglican vocation with others. He serves as Rector of St. George's, The Parish of The Blue Mountains, and as Program Director for the Licentiate in Theology program at Huron University.*  
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# 'We need to be the peace that we wish to experience'

I WAS DRIVING through the trailer park where I had just gotten a trailer and was confronted for going too fast.

It wasn't speed demon fast, nor even close, but on this day, it was more than this neighbor trailer-owner was comfortable with. In a very menacing way, he approached me about the issue, or perhaps better put, approached me with his anger. His request to slow down was reasonable, but his manner was not.

It caught me off guard. The confrontation was a surprise, and I realized that this guy lives just four trailers away, so we'll be nearby all summer. Wanting to keep things friendly, I decided to swing by his trailer to apologize for speeding and offered a handshake. He didn't seem very interested in the apology, but I guess only time will tell how things turn out in this small trailer park where I'm the new face.

His initial approach made me cautious. I responded to him not with calm acceptance of his concerns, but with abrupt aggression to push him back a bit. I nearly let my emotions get the better of me. And as I sat with a feeling of a little guilt about that, I began to think about the reasons



As I SEE It  
REV. JIM INNES

behind people's intimidating behaviour, including my own instinctive need to 'raise the drawbridge' in the face of a challenge.

Is it instinctual self-protective behaviour and therefore naturally provoked? Or is it a combination of that and learned behaviour stemming from past experiences with power and aggression? The temptation to psychologize this is present, but I'd rather this article simply invite

## The destructive and violent act of crucifixion is transformed (by Jesus's deliberate choice of response) into an opportunity for reconciliation.

reflection on the choices we make within the communities we engage with. Because how we engage in challenging situations can be constructive or destructive.

You cannot dismiss the idea that interpersonal communication relies on our instinctive responses, as well as on influences from past experiences, and community dynamics. As I see it, the most significant variable is not changing who we are but shifting the way we

want things to be around us. I will fall back on a familiar quote: "We need to be the peace that we wish to experience."

Every social engagement has the potential for constructive or destructive interactions. Aggression generally provokes more aggression, and patience, kindness, empathy, and forgiveness usually elicit a more positive response. Granted, some individuals, no matter how much warmth is shown,

cannot be stabilized because of their negative energy; however, we have the power in every statement and response to shape the environment we want to live in, both externally and internally. And when we make mistakes and react negatively, there is almost always a way to regain control and turn the situation around for the better.

In my ministry, I have often preached that one of the most powerful statements in scripture was made by Jesus as he hung crucified on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" This tender request sparks a creative energy within the horrific reality of the situation. The destructive and violent act of crucifixion is transformed (by Jesus's deliberate choice of response) into an opportunity for reconciliation.

Over the years, I've only caught glimpses of how Jesus remained so centered in God's love for him. And it is my aim in writing this article to reflect on my hope to become as comparatively responsive as he was.

Rev. Jim Innes is the rector of St. John's, Grand Bend with St. Anne's, Port Franks. [jiminnes@diohuron.org](mailto:jiminnes@diohuron.org)

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# In the bleak midwinter... (More than a personal story)

"IT WAS A DARK and stormy night " Snoopy, sitting on the roof of his doghouse in front of a typewriter tapping the beginning of his story is an inspiration for me as I write my monthly submissions for the Huron Church News. I think of the series of images created by Charles Schulz of Snoopy handing over his efforts for Linus to read. Linus offers his review by saying, "Your new novel has a very exciting beginning." Then, as he walks away, he adds, "Good Luck with the second sentence!"

2025 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peanuts cartoon saga. Over the years the adventures of Charlie Brown and all the other characters have each had their moments of offering words of wisdom and sage advice. In 1965, over ten million copies of a book entitled, "The Gospel According to Peanuts" were sold. The author reflected on the statements of faith that had been woven into the cartoon narrative by the creative genius of Charles Schulz.

During the Christmas season a viewing of the TV programme, "A Charlie Brown's Christmas" has become an annual family tradition in many households. Linus standing on stage offering the Christmas



Photo: Charlotte Poolton



**A VIEW FROM THE BACK PEW**  
**REV. CANON CHRISTOPHER B. J. PRATT**

Story found in the Gospel of St Luke may not feel earth shattering in 2025, but it was a significant media event in 1965. It was a dark and stormy night... in Fredericton, New Brunswick on December 14, 1980. Even in the midst of Maritime winter conditions, Christ Church Cathedral was full. On that night, I knelt before my Diocesan Bishop and felt the weight of many hands as colleagues in ministry reached

out to affirm their support and offer their blessing, as I responded to a vocational call to Priesthood. Any person who has experienced that moment is aware of the indelible, lifelong identity which comes with Ordination. December 14 has been a key date in my paper calendar over the years. It was the date on which my father was ordained and the two of us shared that date with the bishop who ordained me, Archbishop Harold Nutter. Every year, until his death, either in person or by phone, the Archbishop and I made a connection. We spoke about life, family and ministry. It was a way in which we noted the special nature of the date in our lives.

No matter where in the calendar year an anniversary occurs, there is no doubt that moments of significance are the touchstone of memory. Colleagues in ordained ministry will, no doubt, recall not only a moment, but also the people who played essential parts in the journey that led to that moment. In an age when so many of us are interested in the story of our own family, there is also a sense in which the act of the laying on of hands in the Ordination service generates its own genealogy. Those who share the identity of Anglican priesthood include: Aidan, in whose life and ministry the Gospel was proclaimed; George Herbert, a priest and poet; Phillips Brooks, preacher and hymn writer; Barbara Brown Taylor, preacher, teacher and author; Nick Wells, priest and historian; Florence Li Tim Oi, groundbreaking faithful servant; Herbert O'Driscoll, priest, pastor and preacher; Roz Elm, an articulate voice of reconciliation; Cuthbert Pratt, offering a radio ministry that went beyond the four walls of his parish; Christopher Pratt, a story still being written. Through the path of apostolic succession, the clerical family tree is rooted in the lives of the disciples who walked with

Jesus. Over the years, at their best, those who have been called to priestly ministry have sought to discover how to serve the Lord in their own generation. The amazing thing about ministry in the name of Jesus, is that it is not exclusive to the priesthood. Everyone who has been baptized is also called to ministry. The Body of Christ is alive in the world through the faithful people who discover each and every day ways in which they may use their God given gifts to bring God's Love and God's Peace into God's World. During the Christmas Season I am always drawn to the insight offered by Christina Rossetti. Her hymn, "In the Bleak Mid-Winter" contains these words: *What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise man, I would do my part. Yet what I can I give Him. Give Him my heart.* May those words be true in your life and mine and may this be a truly Blessed Christmas Season for us all. Rev. Canon Christopher B. J. Pratt has retired from full-time parish ministry but continues to offer priestly ministry in the Diocese. [chrisspratt@diohuron.org](mailto:chrisspratt@diohuron.org)

## A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Loving and gracious God,

As the winter months stir within our hearts, the feeling of coming together, we gather in gratitude for the gift of Christmas. The gift of your son, Jesus Christ, coming to earth to be with us and the anticipation of his coming again. Thank you for the wonder of this season; its lights, its laughter, Christmas carols, Christmas cookies and mostly the time spent with our loved ones.

In this time of togetherness, we remember those who are far from family and friends, those who have no family and are alone this Christmas season. May compassion fill our hearts, guiding us to share kindness with neighbours and strangers alike.

Bless our homes with peace, our tables with plenty, and our spirits with hope and joy. We pray for those facing hardship, loneliness, death or sorrow. May your comfort and strength be with them, bringing light to their darkness and love to their lives.

Remind us what the true meaning of Christmas is. When love came down and enveloped us. Help us to share that love with all whom we meet. Inspire us to be generous, giving not only gifts but also forgiveness, understanding, and care. May we share the spirit of Christmas in all that we do and with everyone we meet.

We offer this prayer with thankful hearts,  
Trusting in your grace and mercy.  
Amen.

Rev. Kimberly Myer, the Diocese of Huron's AFP Representative and Rector of St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Leamington.



Do you see what I see? A star, a star, dancing in the night, with a tail as big as a kite!

Christmas greetings and blessings from Camp Huron

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