



WHAT TO DO WHEN LIFE THROWS US OFF BALANCE?

When we lose our grounding, we spin, grasp, lash out, or shut down.

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PARISH NURSE MINISTRY CAN ENHANCE THE LIFE OF A PARISH

Pastoral Care Committee at St. Hilda's-St. Luke's Church, St. Thomas.

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RESPONDING TO HUMAN NEED

What does it look like to measure our support? Numbers don't tell the whole story.

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HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • FEBRUARY 2026

An unexpected mystery from the Archives: How old is our newspaper really?

Diocesan Archives discovery sheds a new light on the history of Huron Church News, just in time for our annual appeal.



A WRONG MESSAGE – Christmas Greetings in February issue – but above all a WRONG YEAR! We present you with a mystery that needs to be explored further!

Huron Archivist, Dez Nacario, recently informed us of a discovery that showcases the importance of the work done at the Archives – of caring for historical artefacts and careful curation of relevant diocesan documents.

Here is her account of uncovering a copy of Huron Church News that predates what we consider to be the official launch of our diocesan newspaper:

"IN THE FEBRUARY 2025 issue of Huron Church News, the 75th anniversary of the publication was celebrated and a photo of the front page of Volume 1, Number 1 published May 1950 was prominently displayed. While the commemorative article highlighted the pivotal role that Huron Church News has played in chronicling the events of our Diocese, one fact may have been incorrect: the true age of Huron Church News.

Over the summer of 2025, Tammy Crocker from St. George's, Goderich volunteered at the V. P. Cronyn Memorial Archives for one week to work with Diocesan Archivist Dez Nacario. Together, they reviewed the materials being transferred from St. George's and worked to arrange and describe the collection.

Among the newspaper articles related to the church was a copy of Huron Church News published December 1945, almost a full five years prior to what had been marked as the official start of the publication.

The front cover lists this edition as Volume 1, Number 3, prompting even more questions about the true date of the original first printing of the paper.

Assuming it originated as a monthly publication, Volume 1, Number 1 would have been published in October 1945 in an entirely different global climate than 1950. May 1950 would see the earlier days of the Rt. Rev. George Luxton as he worked to rapidly grow the Diocese in a time when the Anglican Church was

prosperous. In contrast, Fall 1945 would have been led by the Most Rev. Charles Seager as Huron joined the world in recovering from World War II. Although it is only a five year difference, the concerns and priorities of our Diocese would have evolved greatly by the start of the new decade and would no doubt be reflected in the articles in Huron Church News.

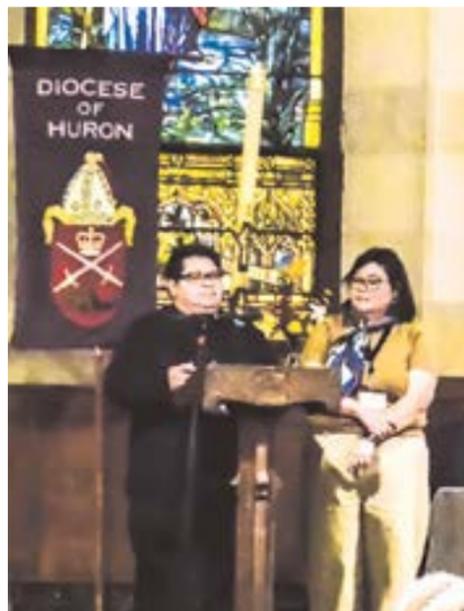
There have been few questions answered about the true age of Huron Church News and more questions raised. When was Volume 1, Number 1 truly printed? Why did the numbering start over again in 1950? Do other churches still have copies of the paper prior to 1950 hidden away?"

Answering the questions raised by our Archivist will certainly contribute to better understanding of our own past. And, as general wisdom has it, it just may help us a notch in figuring out our way forward. Thus, we appeal to all our readers, and to all Huron churches: Revisit your hidden places, and help us locate the first ever printed copy of Huron Church News.

◀ Huron Church News, Volume 1, Number 3, December 1945

▶ PAGE 12: HURON CHURCH NEWS APPEAL

Huron Indigenous Ministry: The miracles occurring around you

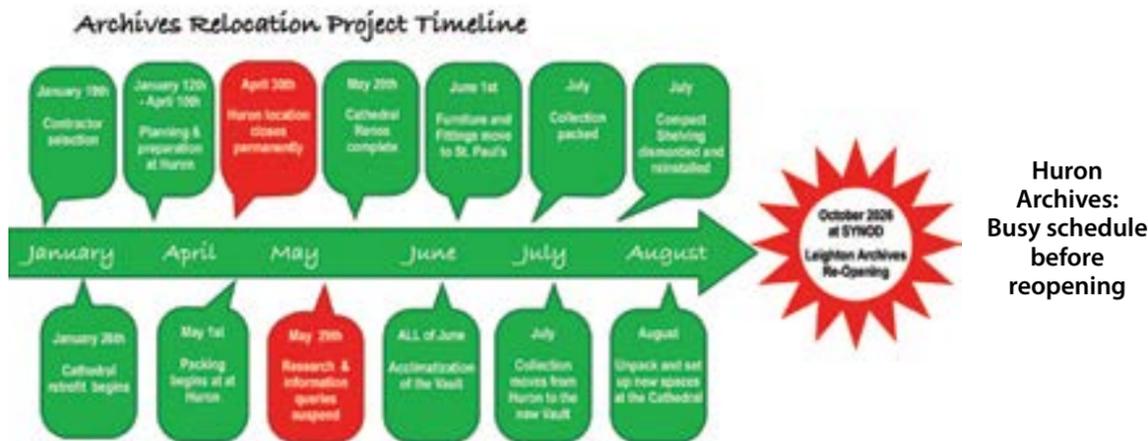


STORIES THAT SPEAK TO EVERYONE:

At Huron Synod, back in October, Ven. Rosalyn Elm and Rev. Hana Scorrar talked about Indigenous Ministries in the Diocese. Their presentation resonates deeply with all Huron churches and addresses their own ministries questions and needs.

▶ PAGE 4-5: HEALING IS ONE OF OUR OLDEST LANGUAGES OF FAITH (INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES AT HURON SYNOD)

Relocating the reservoir of our corporate memory

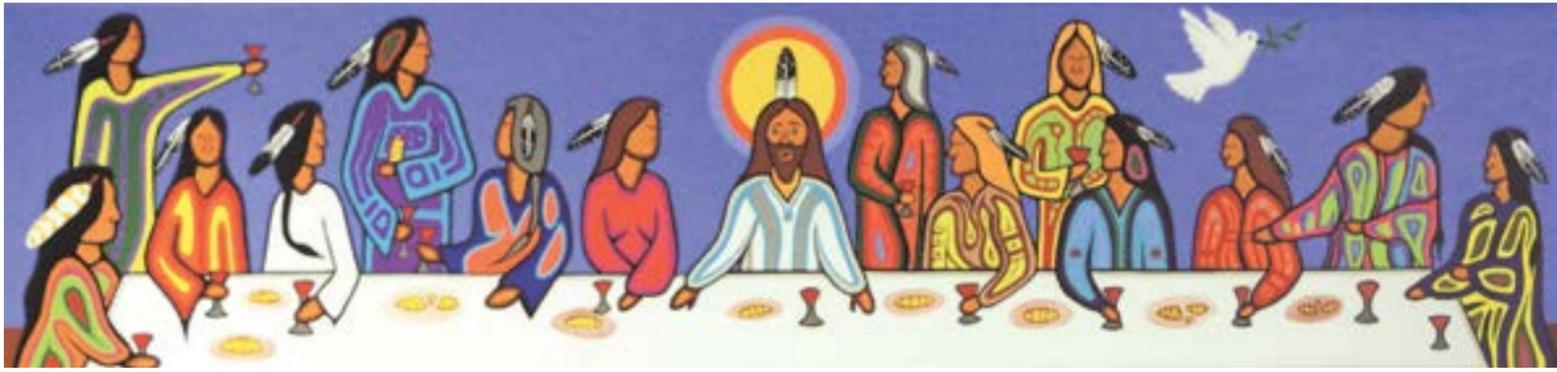


Huron Archives: Busy schedule before reopening

The Diocese of Huron Archives is steward and storehouse of historically significant artifacts, important papers and valued documents of the Diocese. It preserves the record of our collective past, serves our present information needs and safe-holds material for our future generations.

For almost 50 years, the Archives has been located at Huron University College, but how did it come to take up residence there and why is it leaving now?

▶ PAGE 6: HOW DID THE ARCHIVES COME TO HURON UNIVERSITY AND WHY IS IT LEAVING?

Jeffrey Red George. *The Original Chief and Council*

A man of a humble heart

Remembering the Reverend Canon Laverne Jacobs

There's a saying amongst my people: The great gift of the God of love is love. The great gift of the Son of God is restoration, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The great gift of the Holy Spirit is peace. The great gift that we can offer in return as people is a humble heart. We recognize you, Laverne, as a man of a humble heart.

- Archbishop Don Tamihere, The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

(A Portrait of Laverne Jacobs, *A Gentle Warrior*. Online video tribute to Canon Laverne Jacobs, 2023. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoPL-VRx-4Ng>)

THE DIOCESE of Huron, the Anglican Church of Canada – and the entire Anglican Communion – lost one of its greats: The Rev. Canon Laverne Jacobs died on December 11, 2025.

Baptized and raised in the United Church, Laverne felt his calling to be in the Anglican Church. Bishop of Huron David Ragg ordained him a deacon on 1 May 1974 and made him a priest on May 8, 1975.



Canon Laverne served as the assistant curate at All Saints Windsor for a year before becoming the incumbent of St. John the Baptist, Walpole Island in 1975. After five years in the role, he was appointed Rector of Christ Church, Forest, and St. John's, Kettle Point. In 1983 he became Regional Dean of Lambton.

In 1987, Canon Laverne took a leave of absence from the Diocese of Huron to serve the wider Anglican Church of Canada as the Native Ministries Coordinator in the General Synod Office in Toronto.

He returned to Huron in 1996 to a shared ministry as the Rector of St. John the Baptist, Walpole Island, and the United Church Walpole Island Pastoral Charge. He was named a Canon of St.

Paul's Cathedral on 30 November 2000.

Canon Laverne took another leave from Huron in 2002 to serve the United Church of Canada as its first Program Officer (later Coordinator) for Aboriginal Ministries. While in that role, from May 2003 he was an honorary assistant at St. John the Baptist, Walpole Island. He retired from active ministry on 1 January 2010 but continued to offer supply ministry to both the Anglican and United Churches on Walpole Island.

A member of Walpole Island First Nation, Jacobs served as native ministries coordinator for the Anglican Church of Canada and later as the United Church of Canada's first native ministries coordinator. He was one of 21 signatories of the 1994 Covenant in which Indigenous Anglicans called for a self-determining community within the Anglican Church of Canada. Jacobs played a leading role in national gatherings that urged the Church to acknowledge and to come to grips with its role in the residential school system. The long and painful process culminated in the 1993 apology

by then-primate Archbishop Michael Peers.

In a statement given to the Anglican Journal, National Indigenous Archbishop Chris Harper acknowledge Jacobs as a true icon for the entire generation of Anglican clergy in Canada: "He was there at the very beginning just to see the Indigenous ministries from its liftoff and from its very onset and concept ... He was that landmark that everybody saw."

Bishop Todd Townshend presided at Jacobs' funeral service on December 17 at Walpole Island United Church. In his statement to the Journal Bishop Todd recognized that Laverne's ministry had a great impact on the Diocese of Huron:

"His pastoral and leadership gifts were in balance at all times and his love came with strong action. He had a God-given gift for bringing people together and for speaking the truth in love. I am personally grateful for his strong, quiet guidance, and generous service to the very end."

Please remember Lynn, Mary, Cynthia, and Charles and the rest of Canon Laverne's family and friends in your prayers..

Looking towards Lent

By Susan Johnson

AS CHRISTIANS, we embrace prayer as an essential and ongoing part of our lives every day.

Certainly, we pray in church on Sundays, but don't we also ask for God's care for our family members as they head off for work or school or vacation? For ourselves as we start something new and unfamiliar, for healing from illness or injury? Do we find ourselves praying for whom-ever is needing that emergency vehicle rushing by? As we pass by a hospice, a few words of prayer for the person coming to the end of life, for the family preparing to say goodbye?

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

How or why did we come to this "habit"? Perhaps we grew up in a church-attending family; maybe we've returned to worship after some years of absence; maybe we're drawn to church for the first time and we're following the example of others.

We are approaching Lent. In this short time ahead of Ash Wednesday, we can plan what we will do during these Lenten weeks. Often we give up something: chocolate or sweet desserts, that coffee we pick up



on the way to work. Another approach is to take on something. Could we take on a new way to pray during Lent? Do it differently than at other times? Or do we need a permanent addition to our prayers?

Intercessory prayer, praying for others, comes more easily to me, but do I put enough time into praise and thanksgiving, for gratitude to God for the life I have, for God's help and forgiveness? I think not. A good new habit to develop as I ponder how Lent

will be for me this year. Will you find something new as well?

Almighty and everlasting God, your despise nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our brokenness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

— Collect for Ash Wednesday, BAS page 281

Susan Johnson is an AFP Executive Member.

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Editor

Davor Milicevic
huronchurchnews@gmail.com
519-434-6893, ext. 251
c/o Huron Church House
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London, ON
N6A 6H7

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Angela Rush
huronchurch.ads@gmail.com
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The Right Reverend
Todd Townshend
Bishop of Huron
Diocese of Huron
Huron Church House
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Parish Nurse Ministry can enhance the life of a parish

By Janette Byrne

PARISH NURSES are Registered Nurses who care for the mind, body and soul of the parishioners in their church following the example of Christ and the Gospels.

The duties of the parish nurse are tailored to fit the needs of their congregation and communities. Some of their responsibilities might include health education, personal health counselling, liaison to community health resources, coordination of volunteers and integrator of faith and healing.

Listening and being attentive is how we learn the needs of our parish. For example, at St. Hilda's St. Luke's a questionnaire started this process of listening. Health education was a major request which prompted the development of the Speaker Series. The past three years we have covered end-of-life issues, mental and social health issues including homelessness.

During the Depression presentation, one of our parishioners felt safe to stand up and express their lived experience with depression to the entire group. This would not have happened otherwise.

This year the Speaker Series will explore chronic diseases.



St. Hilda's-St. Luke's Church, St. Thomas

In addition, we hold Blood Pressure Clinics once a month. In October following the service, we partner with Yurek's pharmacy to facilitate a Flu Shot Sunday providing flu and covid shots to those who wish to be vaccinated.

This makes the parish a safer place for worship and for gathering. The parish also enjoy lunch following the Flu Shot Clinic which deepens their fellowship and relationships. Bulletin boards and announcements in the church bulletin are also used to promote health education.

Another identified topic of interest was Grief and Bereavement support. In response, an eight-week Grief and Bereave-

ment Support Group was developed. This program has evolved into an ongoing group that continues to meet on their own monthly beyond the formal program.

Spiritual care is a core duty of the parish nurse. Parish nurses connect with parishioners formally and informally. We visit those who come to church, those in hospital and in long term care, those who are homebound. This is where we walk alongside the parishioner listening to each person's needs, issues, concerns and fears.

It is also time for us to assist them by networking with community resources, counselling them to enhance their

health, connecting them to the minister upon request, and praying with them. For instance, partnering with the March of Dimes to get funding to replace a battery for a scooter, facilitating the completion a Power of Attorney document for health, providing transportation to a doctor's appointment and providing advice on how to get connected to and to prepare their questions for Home and Health Community Supports.

At St. Hilda's St. Luke's our Pastoral Care Committee meets every two months, coordinate visits, review parishioner's needs and supports each other.

Recently we have received spiritual care education from our minister. This education is very helpful and is ongoing. MAID is a polarizing treatment that causes people to feel isolated, fearful and embarrassed. Supporting parishioners and their families through this process while maintaining trust and support is a delicate undertaking. It requires education.

One of the topics that was covered in our Speaker Series on End-of-Life was MAID. This information, support from our minister, Parish Nurse, Pastoral Care Committee and congregation provided a safe and

supportive environment for the person and their family to participate in our worship services and feel free to ask their questions and talk about their concerns at any time. Our parish supported them during the illness, the death, the funeral service and beyond in their bereavement process.

It is an honour and privilege to accompany the parishioners as a Parish Nurse. By advertising the sessions on the parish sign, the wider community was welcomed to participate. In this way, the parish became a safe place for those who share common concerns. Finally, the Parish Nurse Ministry partnered with local health care professionals to address sensitive issues. Our hope is that the Parish Nurse Ministry helps to make God's Kingdom become more real in our area.

For more information about the Parish Nursing events ongoing at St. Hilda's St. Luke's please visit: <https://hildasite3.weebly.com/from-the-desk-of-the-parish-nurse.html>

If you are interested in learning more about Parish Nursing or the training required, please visit the CAPNM website: www.capnm.ca.

Janette Byrne is the Parish Nurse at St. Hilda's St. Luke's Church in St. Thomas.

COME AND MEET PARISH NURSES FROM ALL OVER CANADA!

Parish Nurses representing the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United and Evangelical Lutheran faith communities in Elgin and Middlesex counties have organized the Canadian Parish Nurse Ministry (CAPNM) Biannual conference in conjunction with the (CAPNM) Board of Directors.

Mental Health in Ministry: Faith in Action

Bi-Annual CAPNM Conference
APRIL 24-26, 2026

Best Western Stoneridge Inn
Colonel Talbot Road
London, Ontario

This conference is for anyone involved in ministry or passionate about supporting mental health and wellness initiatives within their faith community

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BRYANA RUSSELL, MATS
Director, Engagement, Interim Director, Development, Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries



JENNIFER BOWEN, MDIV RCFT, RP
Executive Director, SHALEM Mental Health Network



ANGELA TOWNEND, MSW, RSW
Toldo Research Chair/Human Formation Counselor, St. Peter's Seminary

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- There is still time to get the Early Bird rate!
- There will be a special presentation by our own Reverend Stephen Yeo at St. Paul's Cathedral to experience the new labyrinth which is included in the conference.
- The committee is inviting anyone in your parish: Ministers of the Church, Pastoral Care Committee members, Registered Nurses and interested parishioners to the conference, come and meet Parish Nurses from all over Canada.

- Every Parish Nurse's work looks slightly different depending on their church, their needs and their community. We are looking forward to meeting you!

- For more information ie. registration, trifold brochure, hotel bookings, please visit <https://www.capnm.ca/events/2026-conference/>

Angels & Bells for seniors in Kitchener



St. George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener shared the Christmas Spirit with Winston Park Seniors through the annual Angel Tree and the Bells of Christmas gave Joy and Hope to our friends in need.

- 35 Angels gifts supporting three youth from KW Family & Children's Services, a family of 3, a family of 6, and one young adult with special needs.
- 30 grocery vouchers; \$1,300 to support the two families and young adult
- 41 gifts for the Bells for Christmas to Winston Park

We thank everyone for their generosity to our neighbourhood friends!

Mary Ann Millar

'Healing is one of our oldest languages of faith'

Indigenous Ministry presentation at 186th Synod of the Diocese of Huron: Ven. Rosalyn Kantlaht'ant Elm and Rev. Hana Scorrar

By Ven. Rosalyn
Kantlaht'ant Elm

IT IS TIME for us to describe the ways in which ministry is changing in our context, to pay attention to how we are rebuilding in pastoral ways and in liturgical ways. It may not look the same for you, but this is something we must do to serve our people.

If we can describe these ways in which ministry is changing for us, I think we will be a lot better off.

One of the things that we do talk about across Turtle Island in Indigenous ministries – something that was a big part of our Sacred Circle or our General Synod – was the idea of resurgence. Resurgence in our Indigenous ways of knowing and being ways of identifying ourselves by our environment, whether it is mountains, whether it is the big waters, whether it is forests, whether it is tundra, whether it is ice and snow.

To describe our resurgence, we have made many more idioms around our governance structure. We have come to understand that the idioms of Anglican polity are changing, and we are witnessing that here especially in Indigenous ministries. When I say “vestry” in our Indigenous communities, the idea of vestry looks very different from the idea of vestry that you might know in the various parishes across this diocese. And that's okay. But the ability to describe it is so important to our mission in ministry plan.

Creating relationships, creating new ways of doing ministry doesn't happen overnight. It's slow. And one of my laments to my colleagues is that I have no idea what's happening. All I can do is observe it. All I can do is make note of it. I'm not really sure what to do. I am looking for wisdom.



Ven. Rosalyn Elm (left) and Rev. Hana Scorrar during Indigenous Ministry presentation in St. Paul's Cathedral, October 25, 2025.

Photo: Rebekah Lemon

Our call to you as indigenous ministries, that you can glean of the learnings that we present, is to be able to describe your ministries. Because this isn't just for us. This is happening to you.

Both lay ministers, deacons and priests are experiencing the need for healing, the need for confession and absolution; that we witness the revelation that is happening in their hearts and in their minds.

We do it scared. Sometimes we're not prepared. We don't always possess the perfect knowledge or the right words to say. But we do it because we have this calling, this vocation of serving others, to just describe what we do, to talk about what we do with each other, with our parishioners so that they might go out too. It will change the way that we live in our discipleship. That is our call to you to describe the miracles occurring around you.

One of the things that we are moving towards is having a mission field, because we have a ministry team that is not paid but goes on and off, on and off and rubber banding throughout. We have also helpers that are coming in taking up here and there here and there here and there. So, it's not a parish structure in the same way that you might know. Instead, it is a mission field.

And I know mission is a bad word, but Hannah is always here to change that definition. Speaking of changing definitions, in the way that we do ministry, what we are moving away from is the idea of conversion and into the idea of revelation. Not to say that conversion is not important. I'm not saying that at all. But instead for our context, in order for things to change, Jesus reveals himself to the people,

and we are there for the care to be the hands and feet. They have received a revelation of some sort. They know that in their hearts. We see it on their faces. So we are there to serve that revelation. And whatever happens next is of course the Spirit's work and not ours.

Last night we witnessed the idea of medicines as sacrament as Bishop Todd gave his reflection on bestowing the medicines to the deaneries. In many ways what has to happen is that you give the medicines to us. The church has to give the medicine to us for that healing. There is another way around. We are giving the medicines to you for your healing, for your understanding.

In our many conversations, we talked of these things. Healing is one of our oldest languages of faith. Long before

the church named sacrament, Indigenous peoples have already recognized the world, the earth itself as sacred. The land, the waters, the fish, the animals, they are teachers. Waters are healers. Plants are relatives. They are bringing these gifts to life. So, to receive medicine then is not merely to take something from the earth, but to enter a relationship with it. In that relationship, grace becomes tangible.

For us as Anglicans, sacrament is an outward invisible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The waters of baptism, the bread and wine of Eucharist – elements through which God's invisible love becomes manifest.

But what if we looked at these a little wider? What if we could see these sacraments as medicines, as healing? And we do, because they sustain and heal us – material signs through which God's creative and restorative power is made known. So, when our beekeepers or our pipe carriers create medicine bundles, or even when our nurses and doctors offer vaccine, when a family gathers around a parishioner or an elder with healing words, or with tea or with herb – these are the moments in which grace becomes embodied. Healing is not a biological process. It is a spiritual communion between the Creator and Creation. So the

medicines are not venerated in this way, but they are carriers of this divine generosity. They remind us that creation is not an inert matter but instead it is living, carrying on the prayers, carrying the prayers, carrying the healing messages, mediating the presence of God.

Our scripture tells us that healing and holiness are inseparable. Jesus' ministry is filled with healing and restoration. Blood, saliva, hands, breath. These acts are sacramental. He uses these materials to restore relationship and reveal divine compassion. God's healing power is not confined to walls, not confined to flagons, not confined to picks, not confined by anything. It flows like rivers, flows like roots and through human hands. For us as Indigenous people, for Indigenous Anglicans, or rather Indigenous people who are Anglican, this innovation of looking at medicines as sacraments is not something new. For us, it's a going back and remembering; it's a return to the truth of the land and earth as our first altar, Jesus as our first body given by a woman.

Today, medicine as a sacrament is also a call to justice. If this land is a carrier of grace, then to poison it is to desecrate divine healing. It has become our theological pain. So, together when we receive medicine, whether it is through Eucharist and ceremony, or ceremony with hospital care sustenance, we are invited to do so with a sacred, with a reverence to give thanks, to remember that healing is not a private transaction but a shared act. Our Creator moves through earth and body through prayer and science through ancient ceremony and modern care.

Ven. Rosalyn Kantlaht'ant Elm is Archdeacon for Reconciliation and Indigenous Ministry in the Diocese of Huron.



We are counting the sleeps until summer, our 80th anniversary!

Online registration opens on February 26, 2026!

<https://camphuron.ca/>



"Sharing stories that illustrate what is important to us and what should be important to yourselves."
Photo: Rebekah Lemon

As you have probably heard us talk about year after year, we are a little bit different in terms of our makeup of our indigenous ministries. We do have church on Sunday, but a lot of the work that we do really is not taking place at church on Sundays, and that is a particularly true this year. A lot of our things are really in people's houses.

A lot of our communities have experienced a significant amount of spiritual violence and religious trauma. And Sunday morning church is not necessarily the first stop on their journey back to church with us. And I would wager a guess that there are probably good chunks of the communities that you serve that are possibly not in your churches for the same reason. Sunday morning church isn't a place where they are necessarily going to feel safe, where they are going to feel welcome, where they are going to feel heard. But – and this is the great thing – all those other ways in which we can enact church, even in sacramental ways, the ways that fall outside the Sunday morning, are really where we are seeing the most amount of movement.

We have guests that come in from our traditional teachings and our cultural events that show up. We had one man mention when we came to do traditional drum making with us that he never thought he would step foot in a church, but he is here with us, making a drum, and he is here getting to be fully himself in his indignity and participating with our church in a way that he just never thought was possible.

The work that is more than stools and choirs, bells and smells

By Rev. Hana Scorrar

WE HAVE OFTEN in the church argued over what is the most important sacrament that we offer people. What is the entry into Christian life – Eucharist or Baptism? And I think for us the answer is neither, for a few reasons.

I will share with you a couple stories that illustrate why this is so important to us and why it should be important to yourselves as well.

When I first started volunteering in seminary at Zion, we – Ros and I – were doing Vacation Bible School and we had this young man who kept going into the sanctuary and he would always want to go over to the baptismal font. I finally followed him in one day and I asked him if he wanted to know a little bit about what was going on here.

He asked me, "Do I need to get baptized?" And I said, "Well, why would you ask me that? Do you want to be baptized?" And he said to me, "I think I need to be baptized because I'm native." And I said,

"Tell me a little bit more about what you're saying here."

"Well, isn't that what baptism is for? So that you can be washed clean? And if I'm native, then I need to be washed clean from that. I need to find a way to not be native anymore. Being baptized will make me more like the church."

I have had people come to my door at the church scared to come in because the last time they were at a church they were told they were not welcome because of the way that they were dressed, because of the tattoos on their arms, because of their hair color. They weren't welcome at the Lord's table because they weren't good enough for a Eucharist the way that they were coming to us.

So when we talk about the kind of healing that we do, the sacramental healing that we do, what we're really talking about is the one sacrament that we can offer to people that does not have a barrier of whether or not you have a sponsor, or whether or not the person that you love is an

appropriate person to marry, or whether or not you've been baptized, or whether or not you participate in our communities. The one true sacrament that we can offer everyone that walks through our door is confession. and absolution. We can offer them healing. And it's something that doesn't require a fancy chalice and paten. It doesn't require a baptismal font. It doesn't require anything but a listening ear and an open heart.

I have taken confession in a taco restaurant from someone who told me if they don't confess, they're going to go home and kill themselves. I have done it walking in the woods. I did it a couple of weeks ago in the CAA tow truck that came to pick me up when my battery died. It is the thing that we can offer the world in a way that is beyond any words or rituals that we can offer. It gets really down to the heart of who we are as people and who we are as Christians. The ability to look at another person in pain and offer love compassion, grace, maybe a glimpse of hope.

When Jesus healed, he used the things of creation. He used mud, he used touch, he used breath, he used words. His healing actions were not magic but communion, God's love made tangible in the materials of the world. And indigenous peoples have always known this truth that the land itself is an altar. It is a table that is open and the medicines are its sacraments.

So, when we talk about healing, we are not just talking about a therapeutic gospel that is helping folks make peace with an inequitable world. We are talking about a disruptive, liberative gospel that is helping them heal broken hearts; that is helping them give voice to the unfairness and injustice of their world; that is helping them find a way to live and thrive even when living and thriving does not seem possible.

A lot of these stories are quite emotional. They weigh very heavily on both of us at times, but we offer them to you because we know that there are probably a lot of

people that you have talked to in the same way. I'm sure that if you asked any person in here with a collar, they would tell you some of these same stories that they have dealt with. And I think we underestimate the importance of what we do when we offer those prayers. Even just the silence of holding somebody.

We like to think the work that we do needs stools and choirs and bells and smells. The work that we're doing every single day, giving people a reason to hope, giving people a reason to keep going, that is the work of this church and it's our most important duty.

Rev. Hana Scorrar is
Indigenous Ministries
Missioner in the Diocese of
Huron.

*Edited and adapted for
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website.*

Source:
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How did the Archives come to Huron University and why is it leaving?

By Tom Adam

For close to 50 years, the Archives has enjoyed a collaborative partnership with Huron University College. How did it come to take up residence there and why is it leaving now?

Before the mid-1970's, we did not have a designated space to house archival material for the Diocese of Huron. A Committee on Historical Records had been in existence since 1927; however all the important artifacts and papers remained the responsibility of individual parishes, scattered all across Southwestern Ontario.

In 1976, fearing the loss of our corporate history, the Reverend Dr. Douglas Leighton, clergyman, respected scholar and professor of history at Huron College, made arrangements to collect Diocesan archival material from far and wide and bring it together in the College library, simply to ensure its preservation and guarantee proper storage of the fragile and valuable materials. Subsequently, he began a campaign to create an official Diocesan Archives.

At Synod the following year the Archives was officially established and a collaborative partnership was forged with the College to provide space for it. All the collected documents, artifacts and records were housed in the Huron Library, where they remained for almost twenty years.

Then in 1994, the space at the College directly below the Chapel became available for conversion to a suitable repository for Diocesan archival material. Renovations to these rooms funded by the Diocese, furnished appropriate space to safely store our collections in a temperature- and humidity-stable environment. Space was also provided to efficiently



Compact shelving unit at the Archives can be manually manipulated to move ranges of shelves along tracks permanently installed in the floor. Shifting the shelving carriages creates temporary aisle access into the collection.

process new accessions and to offer in-house archival services to our parishes across the Diocese.

That year the Verschoyle Phillip Cronyn Memorial Archives officially opened. Our efforts in creating the Archives and our contribution to the wider archival community were officially recognized by the Archives Association of Ontario in 1996 when the new Cronyn Archives was awarded the Association's first Institutional Award.

The majority of our collection is housed on about 60 m² (600 ft²) of high-density compact storage, a unit about 16 m. (50 ft) long that can be manually manipulated to move ranges of shelves along tracks permanently installed in the floor. Shifting the shelving carriages creates temporary aisle access into the collection that can be repositioned wherever is necessary.

Additional material and artifacts fill several flat storage map cabinets and static shelving along with cabinets for microfilmed records. Together these elements comprise our collections "Vault." A public Reading Room and welcome area for in-house researchers, a work area for staff and volunteers to process new material

and office space for the Diocesan Archivist complete the arrangement of rooms in the Cronyn Archives.

Recent growth and expansion at the College brought with it a severe lack of space. University Administration let us know in summer 2024 that our space was immediately needed for other purposes and our collaborative partnership necessarily would be terminated.

Realizing it would take time to get all the ducks in a row to find a new location, ready the space and orchestrate the actual move, we were able to negotiate extensions to our leasing arrangement until the end of August 2026, at which time we must return empty rooms to Huron. It sounded far-off, but given the complexity of the project ahead of us, we needed to get to it right away. Bishop Todd struck a small working group and we started our work in October 2024.

Find out more about the Archives Relocation Working Group and its rather circuitous road to selecting St Paul's Cathedral as the Archives' new home in the next issue of Huron Church News.

Tom Adam is Chair of the Archives Relocation Working Group.

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Appointments

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Michael DeKay as the Regional Dean of London, effective 1 January 2026.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Ver-mell Stevens as the Regional Dean of Oxford, effective 7 December 2025.

Inductions

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, the Venerable Matthew Kieswetter inducted the Reverend Tom Stradwick as the Rector of St. John's, Tillsonburg, on Sunday, 11 January 2026. The preacher was the Reverend Canon Diane McIlroy.

Retirement

Bishop Townshend has accepted the request of the Reverend Glenda Fisher to retire from her ministry as deacon with special responsibilities for outreach ministry at St. Matthew's, Windsor, effective 28 December 2025.

After many years of service as a Clinical Social Worker in Windsor, Glenda was ordained to the diaconate on 28 November 2013. She began her outreach ministry at All Saint's, Windsor, before moving to St. Matthew's in 2018. Glenda has been a member of the Diocesan Safe Church Committee as well as of the College of Deacons.

We thank God for Glenda's ministry and wish her well in retirement.

Rest in Peace

The Reverend Dr James Horne, died on Saturday, 20 December.

James was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Luxton on 15 May 1958 and was priested by him on 18 May 1959. He served for a time as deacon-in-charge of Lion's Head and Cape Chin before

taking a leave of absence to study for the doctorate in philosophy that he earned from Columbia University. In June 1960, he was appointed Assistant Curate of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener and became the chaplain of St. Bede's Chapel at Renison College in August 1963.

From 1 September 1966, he was officially on leave from the Diocese of Huron until his retirement in March 1998. Throughout his academic career teaching philosophy and world religions at Renison College and the University of Waterloo, James continued to serve the church in a non-stipendiary capacity.

The funeral service was held at St. George's of Forest Hill Anglican Church, Kitchener, on Monday, 29 December. The Bishop of Huron officiated.

Please remember his sons, Malcolm and Douglas, and the rest of James' family and friends in your prayers.

The Reverend Canon Laverne Jacobs, died on 11 December 2025.

Please remember Lynn, Mary, Cynthia, and Charles and the rest of Canon Laverne's family and friends in your prayers.

The funeral service for Canon Laverne Jacobs was held at the United Church on Walpole Island, on Wednesday, 17 December 2025. Bishop Townshend officiated.

(More about Canon Jacobs' life on page 2 of this issue.)

Announcement

Bishop Townshend gives thanks to God for the safe arrival of Winifred Ruth McDougall-Heeny, daughter of the Reverend Allie McDougall and Mr. Davis Whittington-Heeny and a sister to Margot, on 2 December 2025.

Huron leads the country in AFC's 2025 Community Ministry grants

By Michelle Hauser

The Diocese of Huron is home to six of the twelve ministries funded through the Anglican Foundation of Canada's (AFC) 2025 Request for Proposals: Community Ministry Partnerships—more than any other diocese in the country.

With projects spanning youth leadership, seniors' support, mental wellness, community arts, and multi-partner outreach hubs, Huron's collaborative spirit made it a standout during this year's national grant cycle.

"These proposals from Huron showed a deep attentiveness to the needs of their communities," says Dr. Scott

Brubacher, Executive Director of AFC.

"What set them apart was not just the number of applications, but the quality of the partnerships behind them—parishes working with musicians, frontline agencies, mental-health practitioners, youth networks, and local service groups. It is the kind of ministry that begins with listening, and that's where the strongest community work always starts. I also want to acknowledge the remarkable work of our Diocesan Representative, Diane Dance, whose outreach and encouragement played a key role in raising awareness about this RFP across Huron."

Through the RFP process,

AFC awarded more than \$80,000 to ministries across Canada—releasing additional funds beyond the original \$50,000 envelope due to the strength of the applications. Huron received \$47,500 of that total, supporting:

- The SideWalk Centre at All Saints, Waterloo
- Creek-top Choral Sessions at Grace Church, Brantford
- Hats & Mats at St. George's, Goderich
- Seniors' digital literacy at St. Mark's-by-the-Lake, Tecumseh
- Recovery and neighbourhood wellness at St. Mark's, London
- Intergenerational community gatherings at St. Matthew's, Florence.

Diane Dance, AFC's Diocesan Representative for Huron, says she is deeply encouraged by the response from parishes across the region:

"Huron has always had a strong heart for community ministry, but this year's RFP took that commitment to a new level. Our parishes showed enormous creativity and courage in naming the needs around them and building partnerships to meet those needs. I'm incredibly proud that Huron led the country in this work."

In addition to the RFP, several Huron students received support through AFC's 2025 bursaries, which provided \$65,000 nationwide to 31 re-

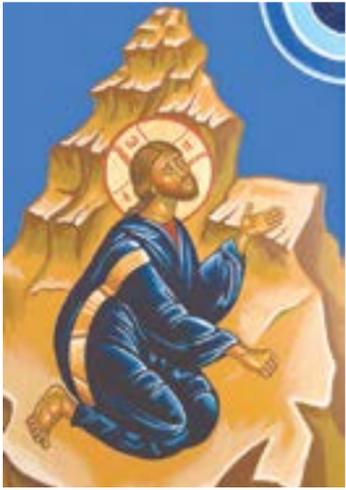
ipients discerning calls to ministry, pursuing theological studies, or serving in Indigenous, lay, and diaconal formation programs.

Across Canada, AFC's Q4 grants supported more than 30 ministries, including large-scale capital projects, diocesan system upgrades, youth formation, community wellness, and climate education.

Huron's strong representation in two of these categories reflects the diocese's ongoing investment in community partnerships and leadership development.

Michelle Hauser is Development & Communications Officer for the AFC.

Forty days well spent: Season of Lent



Lent invites us to notice the wilderness places within and around us, that we might enter them with courage and curiosity.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

— Psalm 51:10

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

WHILE the season of Lent offers us many opportunities, an important aspect of the season, is an invitation into a time of honest reflection—some moments to slow down, listen deeply, and pay attention to the patterns that shape our lives.

From an Education for Ministry (EfM) perspective, this journey is not simply about giving something up or adding an extra spiritual task. It is about engaging intentionally with who we are and who we are becoming in our study, our stories, and our sense of service to the world.



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.

EfM encourages us to look at life through scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Lent naturally draws these threads together. In scripture, we walk with Jesus into the wilderness, where he confronts temptation, identity, and purpose. Tradition offers practices—fasting, prayer, repentance, and generosity—that help clear away noise so we can hear God's voice more clearly. Reason invites us to examine the assumptions that



guide our choices, noticing where we resist change and where God may be calling us to growth. Experience grounds us, reminding us that formation takes place through the real joys, wounds, questions, and relationships that shape our days.

In EfM, theological reflection teaches us to ask where God is present in everything, what God is calling into being, and how we might participate in it all. Lent asks

the same questions. It invites us to notice the wilderness places within and around us, that we might enter them with courage and curiosity.

Ultimately, Lent is not about becoming someone different for forty days; it is about becoming more fully ourselves in God's presence. As we study, pray, reflect, and walk alongside one another, we discover again that formation is a lifelong journey—and Lent offers a sacred space into which we strive to take the next faithful step.

If you want to learn more about Education for Ministry please contact Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or myself Val Kenyon at EFM@huron.anglican.ca

Rev. Canon Dr. Val Kenyon is EfM Animator in Huron. EFM@huron.anglican.ca

God enters into all human suffering with full solidarity

WE ARE in one of those years. The years when Easter falls early. Not the earliest, which would be March 22, but early enough at April 5.

What that means in Churchland is we are barely done with the Christmas Season and the Feast of Candlemas when Ash Wednesday is upon us; this year falling on February 18. The nature of submission dates for this publication means that as I write this column for you to read just ahead of Lent, the music behind me is reminding me of the Incarnation-of-God-With-Us; Emmanuel. "Shepherds, in the fields abiding, Watching o'er your flocks by night, God with man is now residing, Yonder shines the infant light!"

As you prepare for Lenten fasting, and entering into a journey towards Good Friday, these words of the beloved Christmas hymn may seem inconsequential with Ash Wednesday just around the corner. What seems a little disconnected is anything but.

One of my favourite Lenten books is Brian Zahnd's *The Wood Between the Worlds: A Poetic Theology of the Cross*, IVP, 2024. If you are searching for a book to challenge you through this Lenten season, I commend it to your reading. In it, Zahnd writes:

"If left to our own assumptions and projections, we will imagine God as unreachably aloof and horribly violent... But the lifeless body of Christ upon a tree shatters our illu-



It's JUST KEVIN

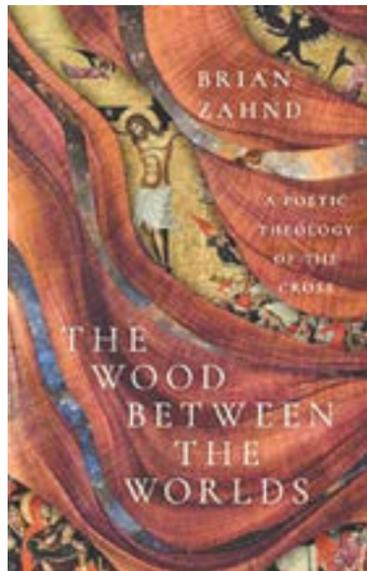
V. REV. KEVIN GEORGE

God uses the folly of the cross to shame the wisdom of the philosophers.

sions. At last we have a true image of God. It is a shocking and perhaps unsettling image of God, but it is a true image—the true image." (*Brian Zahnd, The Wood Between the Worlds: A Poetic Theology of the Cross, Downers Grove, 2024*)

In the Christmas hymns we sing of God as "in flesh appearing." It cannot be fleshier than the shocking and scandalous image of God, beaten and lifeless on the tree. This assertion of Zahnd's that this is the true *Imago Dei* may be hard for some. But make no mistake, this scandalous image is Good News. That God incarnates as a vulnerable infant, chooses to live the life of a servant, depends on the generosity of others, and extends hospitality to all others throughout his life, and then endures the Passion and crucifixion is affirmation of what the Kingdom of God is all about This God-Upon-The-Cross is the same 'God in flesh appearing.'

It no doubt sounds outrageous — because it is out-



rageous! God is audacious enough to be God-With-Us in defeat. "The cross is both the substance and the symbol of folly, weakness, death, defeat, and abject humiliation. But [remember] Paul argues that God uses the folly of the cross to shame the wisdom of the philosophers, that God makes use of the nothings and nobodies of the world to confound the powers that be." (*John Caputo, The Folly of God: A Theology of the Unconditional, Salem, 2026*) Jesus empties himself, born in human likeness, and humbles himself even to death upon the cross.

This should allow us permission to not only embrace our own vulnerability, our own weakness and our own fear, but to also place ourselves, our souls and bodies, our prayers and our efforts adjacent to those who suffer. Where are the broken bodies

of our day? Have we eyes to see Jesus in the lifeless body of a child in Gaza? Can we feel the longing of the dad who is forced to sit on the cold hillside on the outskirts of Kiev wondering how his little girl is managing without him? Have we ears to hear the cry of Jesus in the desperate young transgendered person who has been so emotionally and physically abused that they want it to be finished? This God who chooses the folly of the Cross is asking me if I can recognize his corpus on the cross in the more than fifty corpses lifted off the streets of my city in the past twelve months?

"The Word was made flesh. And dwelt among us!" "God has pitched a tent in the world... in the arts and sciences, in ethical and political life, where the world is busy making the Kingdom of God come true... in the sacrament of the world. The so-called secular world is the realization of the kingdom of God, not its obliteration." (*Caputo*)

So this Lent, let's not cloister. Have we the courage to do as God has done? Can we lean in? Instead of retreating from 'the word.' Let us instead see Lent as Walter Brueggemann who referred to this season as "the great departure from the greedy, anxious antineighbourliness of our economy, a great departure from our exclusionary politics that fears the other, a great departure from self-indulgent consumerism that devours creation. And then an arrival in a new neighbourhood, because it is a gift

to be simple, it is a gift to be free; it is a gift to come down where we ought to be." (*Walter Brueggemann, A Way Other Than Our Own: Devotions for Lent, Louisville, 2007*)

As God has entered into all human suffering with full solidarity, let us depart from the greed, consumption, divisiveness, and rage that seems to hold us hostage, and enter instead into the neighbourhoods so in need of kindness, love, and justice. God is not aloof. God is not far away. God hangs on the gallows with all who suffer. Every step we take towards the suffering of another, the closer God becomes. Let us work to make a neighbourhood, a community, a church, that will be marked by simplicity, love, kindness, and mercy; a neighbourhood guided by the principles of shared life and of generosity.

So, this Lent, we can give up chocolate and beer if we must. At the same time, I am praying we might embrace the foolishness of the cross; that we take up the cross. It will mean something different for each of us no doubt. But each of us has within our reach the opportunity to help another know that God has drawn near, to reassure them that God does not cause their suffering but is in solidarity with them in their pain — and as God is in solidarity with them, so are we.

Very Rev. Dr. Kevin George is Rector of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and Dean of Huron. kevingeorge@diohuron.org

Responding to human need: Numbers don't tell the whole story

By Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle

THE SOCIAL MEDIA post highlighted a reflection from Martha, a 74-year-old recently retired ER nurse.

She shares how she had attended a Career Day at a local High School where a tech entrepreneur was on her left and a corporate lawyer on her right making her story drastically different. She didn't talk about making that first million, big offices, or stock options. Instead, she talked about walking down an empty hall listening for the ventilator and praying for a stranger's lungs to expand one more time.

She talked about the holy silence that falls over a room when a doctor calls the time of death. She talked about washing the body of a homeless veteran with the same tenderness as a king because he was a human being deserving dignity. She talked about fear, and compassion, and grief, and exhaustion. She talked about seeing the invisible people and valuing what they bring to this world. She talked about making a difference and helping people.

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



Matt Collamer/Unsplash

The story is intentionally designed to tug at our heart-strings and remind us that there are other priorities in this world. It even included a letter from a student who had attended that day. Years later, he had become an EMT. He was no longer ashamed that his father is a janitor. He recognises that everyone has value and he 'gets it'. Martha concludes her reflection with a plea. Don't ask young people where they are going to university. Ask who are they going to help and tell those who show up for others that we are proud of them.

This advice has relevance for Churches too. During

vestry season it is easy to get overly fixated on numbers. We spend a lot of time looking at numbers in our budgets and numbers of people in the pews. This is, after all, what we submit to the diocese. But these numbers don't necessarily tell the whole story. What would it look like to measure how many people we show up for, how many we help? We do this in so many creative ways that are important and truly reflective of how we are serving God and the Gospel.

There are churches with food banks, clothing cupboards, and meal programs. Many keep track of how many people use these programs,

how many are fed and clothed. Why not include this metric in our annual reporting not only in our vestry reports but in the statistics we submit to the diocese as a reminder to each other that this is a vital part of who we are as people of faith?

There are congregations who offer items that bring comfort and support to others like prayer quilts, fidget blankets, and knitted or crocheted items. How many of these have been distributed? How many other donations of items, resources, or money have been made to support the needs of those beyond our congregations throughout the year? What would it look like to expect to share that information with the diocese as part of our annual reporting?

There are congregations who actively advocate alongside marginalised groups, helping provide visibility, safety, and support as needed. They create vital safe spaces for groups to gather in meaningful, purposeful ways. This is helpful too and can be measured and reported highlighting how many people across the diocese congregations show up for, and how many have experiences of us that make a difference for them. Reporting

this information reminds us how important this work is for all of us.

Our Marks of Mission include responding to human need with loving service and transforming unjust structures of society, challenging violence of every kind and pursuing peace and reconciliation. These are helping tasks. What does it look like for us to reflect on how we, as churches, help others as we engage in our vestry work and report that work to the diocese? What does it look like to measure our helping? What does it look like to make helping part of our goals as congregations and as a diocese each year?

As we engage in our annual vestry conversations this year, may we look beyond the standards of people in pews and dollars on plates and challenge ourselves to honestly and compassionately reflect on how many people we help, to what extent we make a difference beyond our pews. Through this reflection may the Spirit inspire our priorities and practices for the coming year not only in our congregations but in this diocese as a whole.

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




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But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well - Matthew 6:33

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Deep roots, new shoots: Diakonia and the ministry of the baptized

AS PART of my academic studies at Huron University, I had the express privilege of designing a new Licentiate in Theology course, (at the request of bishops across Canada), to unpack the history, theology, practice and vocation of diaconal ministry.

In this task, I saw myself as a curator of voices and stories, gathering together perspectives from the Early Church, the relatively silent Medieval Church (when diaconal ministry almost disappeared), and the inspired witness of contemporary deacons, many of whom are actively serving in the Anglican Church of Canada. These stories and perspectives were then shared with a group of twenty-six diaconal students, including diaconal aspirants, postulants, ordinands, and a handful of deacons who were excited to be part of the first course of its kind in our program.

The theological concept of diakonia is often misunderstood in today's church to narrowly mean the work that ordained deacons do. From their origins in the Early church, deacons have always been doers of the Word of God, often serving in places of ministry where others were hesitant to go: among the poor and sick, caring for orphans and widows, advocating for



Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully joins diaconal students from across Canada to share the work of General Synod in restoring the Diaconate for the Canadian Church.



**GROWING BEYOND THE DOORS
REV. CANON GRAYHAME BOWCOTT**

the voiceless or marginalized, and building bridges between the worshipping congregation and those beyond the walls of the Church.

However, one of the most important aspects of diakonia (leadership through service to others), is the fact that it is not reserved for deacons alone. In fact, diakonia belongs to the ministry of all the baptized in the Church.

A foundational document in the restoration of the diaconal

ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada is the Iona Report, which explains how deacons, while acting as "Icons of Christ's Service in the Church", are not ever supposed to be the only doers of this beautiful ministry. Instead, they are called to inspire the fullness of the ministry of all baptized members to join them in ministries of service, healing and justice.

In my own congregation, I have begun to think of my two diaconal postulants as spiritual oaks – trees whose roots are embedded in the communities that they serve. One of them has her ear to the prayerful heartbeat of the needs of the parish (the sick, the shut-ins, the many who request confidential prayers in times of du-

ress). My other postulant has become embedded in the outreach work of the neighbourhood (listening to the needs of those financially challenged, hearing the struggles of both young families and seniors).

Both of these soon-to-be deacons serve in ways that accomplish much work and ministry. However, what I am noticing, one year into the practice of their ministry, is that they are stirring up both awareness and excitement for diakonia -the serving work of all the baptized. The deep roots of their commitment to this service are causing green shoots of support, faithfulness and generosity to pop up, both within, and outside of the membership of our parish.

One of the wonderful gifts of our LTh course together, was to hear leaders such as The Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully, Director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry for the General Synod of the ACoC, speak about the ongoing work to revitalize diaconal ministry across Canada. Dr. Scully is passionate about how deacons are the missional catalysts for the Church of the future, because they call all the baptized to exercise their own ministry of service, vastly expanding the abilities of deacons or priests alone.

Tomorrow's Church needs to recognize our deep need

for diaconal ministry in every congregation and parish, not just to have ordained people to "do" ministry, but for the roots of their faithfulness and service to embed themselves into the communities God is calling us to serve, and awaken the call for congregations to become diaconal – to live for the purpose of serving the needs beyond their doors, as Christ calls us to live and serve.

Should you know of anyone within your congregation who is interested in learning or exploring more about diaconal theology, or the ministry of deacons, I encourage you to reach out to me, or to the Diocese of Huron, to unlock possibilities of further education or vocational discernment.

For everyone else, please pray for the vision of a deacon in every congregation in this Diocese. The Church is ever in need of strong roots producing green shoots of diakonia in all the places God is calling us to serve.

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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What to do when life throws us off balance?

AROUND 605 BCE, when Babylon conquered Jerusalem, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered that promising young men from Israel's nobility be taken from their homes to Babylon to serve in the royal court. Daniel was one of them, suddenly displaced and thrown into a new culture.

Trained in Babylonian language and literature, Daniel soon gained a reputation for wisdom, integrity, and faithful service. Under King Darius, he rose to such prominence that the king planned to set him over the entire kingdom; a remarkable stability after so many upheavals.

But jealous officials, unable to find any corruption in his work, decided to target Daniel's deepest loyalty—his faith. They persuaded Darius to issue a decree that for thirty days no one could pray to any god or person except the king, on pain of being thrown into a den of lions. Though it was presented as a way to prove loyalty to the king, it was a trap for Daniel, since everyone knew about his daily prayers.

Once again, Daniel's world lurched. Confronted with a law that violated his conscience, he refused to hide. Instead, fully aware of the risk, he continued to open his window toward Jerusalem and pray three times a day, just as he had always done.

The officials were watching. They caught him praying and



Janosch Diggelmann/Unsplash



As I See It

REV. JIM INNES

We can feel devastated by the emotional stress. Even when our minds tell us to step back and not react, another part of us wants to jump in, fix things, and get back to a sense of safety, and to do it right now!

reported him to Darius, reminding the king that, under their system, once a law was signed, it could not be taken back. Though Darius valued Daniel, he felt trapped by his own decision and reluctantly ordered him to be thrown into the lions' den, hoping that Daniel's God would protect him.

At dawn, the king hurried to the den and called out to Daniel. To his astonishment, Daniel answered. God had protected him; he emerged unharmed, having stood firm

in faith even as everything around him shifted.

In life, when things fall apart (as they did for Daniel), it can be hard to keep our balance. We can feel devastated by the emotional stress. Even when our minds tell us to step back and not react, another part of us wants to jump in, fix things, and get back to a sense of safety, and to do it right now!

When life gets messy and confusing, we can (quite quickly) lose sight of what matters most to us. And,

unfortunately, in terrifying moments, react self-destructively.

Like Daniel, we need something that keeps us steady when life suddenly shifts—an anchor that holds us to what matters most. An anchor is any simple, steady practice that helps us pause, breathe, and stay connected to our truth (a task that requires another article to explain fully).

For Daniel, that anchor was regular prayer. For each of us, it might look different,

but the idea is the same: we need something solid we can return to so that when life throws us off balance, we're not controlled only by fear or pushed around by whatever is happening in that moment.

And yet, beneath all our talk of anchors is a raw, human reality: when we lose our grounding, everything inside can feel like it's falling apart. We spin, grasp, lash out, or shut down. Relationships strain, hope fades, and even faith can feel far away. It's in that free fall that we recognize our deep need for something stronger than our fear to hold us fast.

Rev. Jim Innes is the rector of St. John's, Grand Bend with St. Anne's, Port Franks.

imines@diohuron.org

The Companions Program September 2026 – June 2027

The residential Companions program is an immersive opportunity to experience a contemporary monastic community rooted in the Benedictine tradition. It is open to women aged 21 and up regardless of Christian denomination.

Companions live, work, and pray alongside the sisters, learning from them but also sharing each companion's own gifts with the sisters and their ministries. They will:

- Learn to cultivate peaceful and creative ways of living in a diverse intentional community
- Appreciate silence and solitude as well as community and service for a healthy life
- Put down deep roots of spiritual intimacy with God and each other
- Develop a personal path to ongoing spiritual growth



Application start & end (both programs):
January 1, 2026 – May 1, 2026



Open to women of all Christian expressions, **Companions Online** is an opportunity to become "monastics in the world," living a Benedictine rhythm of prayer, work, study, and recreation. Online Companions learn to develop practices that support and nurture their spiritual life from the comfort of their homes.

They meet regularly for classes and discussion groups, and commit to times of personal prayer at home. They share in book studies, participate in online worship and sometimes screen a film relevant to spiritual growth and self-understanding. Online Companions also develop spiritual disciplines that follow the liturgical year.

Cost:
Residential Companions: sugg. \$150/month.
Companions Online: sugg. \$100/month.
If cost is a hindrance, assistance is available.

To learn more about either program, or to apply, email:
Canon Sr. Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, SSJD, at
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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING HURON CHURCH NEWS

'The ones who walk with me will not stumble in the darkness'

December 2025 has been a difficult time to be aware of the content of the news circulating in our global village.

As I write these words the world is still reverberating from the sounds of gunfire on Bondi Beach, Australia, as members of the Jewish community who had gathered in that setting to celebrate the Feast of Hanukkah became victims of violence.

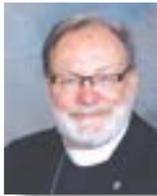
Earlier in the month, the community of Montreal paused to remember the violence which ended the lives of fourteen women who were the focus of an attack on St. Nicholas Day in 1989. As a memorial which was accessible to the entire community, this year fourteen searchlights were pointed up over the city, their bright white lights were in contrast as they broke through the black night sky. As I have followed Philosopher's Walk on the grounds of the University of Toronto, I have paused to note the growth of the small grove of fourteen trees which were planted as a memorial and as signs of life in the face of violent death.

When individuals violently strike out, generating pain and loss, they impact communities and families. Family violence has deprived the world of continuing to benefit from the creative talent of Rob and Michele Reiner. Far away from the Hollywood spotlight there are families that face violence in some form as a daily reality.

In the midst of news cycles which convey the tragic impact of violence at a very local and personal level, the



Oscar Keys/Unsplash



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

sabre-rattling language used by individuals who wield power at a national and international level is disquieting. As parents and grandparents, as concerned citizens and as people of faith, our own levels of anxiety rise as we see the hopes that we have for future generations, to live in and explore a peaceful world, be challenged.

In St. Mark's Gospel, Jesus offers a direct response to our concerns.

And when you shall hear of wars and stories of war breaking out, do not fear, for all this must happen before the end will come. There will be tribal wars, and nations will make war against other nations. Food will be scarce, and the earth will shake in many places - but this is only the beginning of the time of sorrow, like a woman feeling the pains of birth. You must stay ready and be alert!

(Mark 13: 7-9)

Time after time, we are called by our Lord not to be

afraid. Living in a world that is in distress challenges us to place our focus on what we may do to stand up to what we perceive to be generating the dark turmoil around us.

After the shootings on Bondi Beach, the Governor General of Australia, and after having engaged in a consultation with the Jewish community, the Governor General reached out to all Australians and asked them to light a candle as a message of solidarity with those who had been the focus of violence. A simple request. A simple act of support. A simple declaration of national solidarity against violence.

In the Region of Waterloo, the public lighting of the candles of the Hanukkah Menorah that stands in the community square took place with the presence of extra security. The lighting of candles is offered in remembrance of an historic struggle for political and religious freedom. Hanukkah is a Festival of Light.

In stark contrast to the episodes of dark violence that I have referenced (and who knows what will happen between the time that I write this article and the moment that you will read it), during the month of February, we come

to a time in the year when individuals try to determine a meaningful way to express a message of Love.

In the world in which we live, chocolates, roses and special cards seem to be sufficient when it comes to conveying that message of love on a one-to-one basis. Traditionally, at its heart, in the witness of a Christian martyr named Valentine, we find a message of the light of love shining through the darkness of the world around him. In one of the stories which is told, as a priest, Valentine offered the sacrament of a Christian marriage to young lovers, which meant that the man was not available for service in the Emperor's army. This disruption in the pattern of conscription led to Valentine's incarceration and, eventually, because he refused to renounce his faith in Jesus, to his martyrdom. It is Valentine's message of sharing God's Love in God's World and with each other, that we treasure and remember.

We look around us for signs of hope, and for messages which indicate a vision for the future which we may translate into reality in our own lives. Few people perhaps, look to our present political lead-

ership for a message which stirs our hearts. In the not too distant past, as he dealt with the challenges of a cancer diagnosis and faced his own impending death, Jack Layton, a former leader of the NDP, wrote a letter to Canadians which concluded:

"My friends, Love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be Hopeful, Loving and Optimistic. And we'll change the world."

(August 20, 2011)

Whether it is seen in the power of searchlights or in flickering candlelight the message remains the same. It is a message which, as people of faith, we know well. The Gospel of St John frequently references the contrast between darkness and light. Jesus declares:

I am the Light shining on this dark World. The ones who walk with me will not stumble in the darkness, but will have the light that give them life.

(John 8:12)

In these days it is a good thing to be reminded that we are called to let the light of our faith shine in the darkness, so that through our words and actions, whatever they may be, that God's Love and God's Peace will become a reality in God's World. May that be true in your life and mine.

Rev. Canon Christopher B. J. Pratt has retired from full-time parish ministry but continues to offer priestly ministry in the Diocese. chrispratt@diohuron.org

* Note: The quotations for the Gospels are taken from "Walking the Good Road" First Nations Version (FNV)

Mission over marketing: Church and social media in 2026

IN 2026, the broad shift in church social media will continue to be a move from broadcasting (talking at people) to discipleship (walking with people).

This means moving away from simply advertising events towards building a digital front porch where community happens.

Here are the key ways these trends are reshaping church life more broadly:

1. The Shift from Broadcast to Engagement.

For decades, churches have employed a "broadcast" mindset, using radio, TV, or newsletters to disseminate a message or advertise events. In 2026, people expect two-way engagement. Social media is no longer just a digital billboard. It's a place where



**MEDIA
BYTES**

**REV. MARTY
LEVESQUE**

people ask questions, request prayer, and participate in the life of the church mid-week.

2. Authenticity Over Aesthetics

The era of the "perfect church" with high-gloss graphics and stage lighting is fading in favour of "Imperfect by Design" content. As AI-generated content floods the internet, people are hungry for what is real and human. Photos and videos that look like they were taken by a parishioner on an iPhone

It's all about using your tools not to look cool, but to ensure that the lonely, the searching, and the grieving in your community can actually find you in the digital noise.

often perform better because they feel "real" and trustworthy.

3. AI as a Co-Pilot, Not a Pilot.

AI adoption in churches is reaching over 90%, but the trend is toward ethical and transparent use. AI is being used to "buy back time" for pastors and wardens so they can focus on people instead of paperwork. AI tools are used to transcribe vestry meetings, generate social media captions from sermons, or translate

newsletters into other languages to reach a more diverse local community. The "rule" for 2026 is: Use AI for efficiency, but never for empathy.

4. Social SEO (Search Engine Optimization): The New Phone Book

People are no longer just searching Google; they are searching TikTok and Instagram for terms like "church near me" or "support for grief in Waterloo". Write captions that act as "Social SEO" keywords. Instead of a poetic

title like "The Light Shines," a post for your Blue Christmas service would be captioned: "Struggling with grief this Christmas in Waterloo? Join our Blue Christmas service at All Saints..." This ensures the post appears when someone in your local area searches for grief support through their social media platforms.

In summary, the trend for churches is Mission over Marketing. It's about using these tools not to look cool, but to ensure that the lonely, the searching, and the grieving in your community can actually find you in the digital noise.

Rev. Marty Levesque is the rector of All Saints' in Waterloo. He served as diocesan social media officer.

martylevesque@diohuron.org

HURON CHURCH NEWS



WE MAY BE FIVE YEARS OLDER AFTER ALL!

One would assume that being around for so long comes with some sense of wisdom. For us, it simply means recognizing that history of our newspaper is a product of your desire to read our stories. This is why we still keep going on, and this is why we continue in printed format.

In the year 2025 we covered the events that were transformative for the Diocese and the Anglican Church of Canada. In June, Huron hosted General Synod. Pictures and comments that came out of this event are truly historic: the election and installation of the new Primate; adopting the Six Pathways for Change as a document that should reshape Anglican community in Canada...

We continued to follow the ways in which the Diocese has embraced the vision of A NEW, LEARNING CHURCH, the one that wants to be MORE JUST, and MORE DIVERSE. We brought you the stories from our local communities where this vision gets truly tested and implemented – from short photo essays documenting parish outreach projects to in-depth reporting illustrating the work of diocesan ministries.

Several of our featured stories with personal intonation caught your attention. With Rev. Brendon Bredford we undertook *A Journey of Broken Glass* which led us from Huron to England and from our present time to the horrors of WW2 only to speak powerfully to the hope we find in God's ability to bring about new life even in the moments of the ultimate destruction. Two articles written by Bil Elders (April and October) reminded us in a humorous way that our lives can be deeply intertwined with the life of the church. Helen Booth's account of her life (March 2025) showed us how church can become one's home, literally. And our June issue we dedicated to Bishop Bob Bennett, celebrating a life inseparable from the life of this Diocese.

We sincerely hope that you like our stories. Your financial support indicates, very strongly, that this is the case. We said it earlier, and we will say it again: your relationship with your newspaper has been most honest even when it comes to its financial backing. Huron Church News has been financed by its readers; we depend almost solely on your support. With your donations we cover the costs of production and mailing cost. With your help, we will be here as long as you find it beneficial.

It is an honour to be in a position to count on your support once again.

With gratitude,

Davor Milicevic,
Editor

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