



CARING FOR OUR INVISIBLE NEIGHBOUR

London Deanery churches and the problem of homelessness

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HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • MARCH 2023



Laurel Pattenden, THE BIRDS OF THE AIR, Ink, 2022

Learning in Lent: the gift of the deepened faith

Lent – a season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Ultimately, as Bishop Todd notes – along with the central celebration of Paschal Mystery that follows – a season of spiritual opportunity. Thus the encouragement for all Huron parishes to deepen their ministries of faith-formation during this season.

This process is “a way for individuals and families to plunge into the language and culture of the church”. It is, as Rev. Lisa Wang states, “the joy of knowing and being known.” This is why “learning is always most fruitful when we learn as a community; when we come together in conversation, prayer, and reflection”.

Look around you and learn. Look around you and ask questions. Answers are already there...

‘Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?’

Matthew 6:26

▶ Page 2: Renewing of life in the wonderful mystery of God



Learning in faith is more about formation than information. We are shaped spiritually as we grow. We cherish the joy of discovery and seek deepening fascination with the scriptures and Christian traditions.

– Bishop Todd: A Learning Church

A time to learn: the joy of knowing and being known

Coming to know God, and growing deeper in that relationship, is not something we were meant to do in isolation

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

—Hebrews 10:24-25

By Rev. Lisa Wang

When I speak to church leaders, both clergy and laity, they often say that their

organizational responsibilities make them feel busy and tired. They also say that certain other things bring them life and re-energize them.

One of those things is learning. This doesn't surprise me because the kind of learning they're talking about isn't simply about information. It's about deepening a relationship.

In relationships, we experience the joy of knowing

and being known, but this only happens if we make time for them. We don't “know” people after meeting them just once. We come to know people over time — even a lifetime.

Coming to know God, and growing deeper in that relationship, brings us joy and life, and inspires us to follow the way of Jesus. This is not something we were meant to do in isolation. Learning

is always most fruitful when we learn as a community; when we come together in conversation, prayer, and reflection; when we listen to one another, learn from one another, and love one another.

It's in the community of faith that we learn how to be followers of Jesus.

▶ Page 5: It's all about coming together...



Mission first, kitchen later! All Saints' Waterloo had its first mobile food truck hamper day

All Saints' Waterloo new church building will feature a huge, 500 square feet kitchen to serve the church's weekly food distribution program.

For now, the kitchen exists only as a blueprint. But that did not prevent parishioners to help those in need.

On February 1 — the coldest day yet this win-

ter — All Saints' had their first mobile food truck hamper day.

This is how they are doing the program before it moves into the new church.

▶ Page 4: 'If you feed them, they will come..!'



HURON CHURCH NEWS

Volume 73, Number 3

Submissions

Huron Church News welcomes news articles, commentaries, photographs and story ideas. Publication is at the discretion of the editor.

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Deadline

Wednesday, March 1
for the April edition

Subscriptions

To subscribe, unsubscribe, change address or name, report a delivery problem, contact:
Circulation Department
1-866-924-9192, ext. 245 or 259
Fax: 416-925-8811
Email: circulation@national.anglican.ca
Via Web: www.anglicanjournal.com/subscribe

Individual suggested donation:
\$15 per year in Canada.
\$23 in U.S. and overseas.

Advertising

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905-630-0390

Huron Church News shall not be liable for damage arising out of errors in advertisements. Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by the Huron Church News or the Anglican Church.

Publisher

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190 Queens Avenue
London, Ontario N6A 6H7
Phone: 519-434-6893

Huron Church News is published by the Diocese of Huron as a section of the Anglican Journal. Approximate circulation 3,500

Printer

Printed and mailed by
Webnews Printing
North York, Ontario

This newspaper is printed on partially recycled paper using vegetable-based inks.

Renewing of life in the wonderful mystery of God

The season of Lent is often taken as an opportunity to grow more deeply into a life of faith.

As the liturgy for Ash Wednesday puts it, Lent leads us to the central celebrations of Easter, as “we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery.” (BAS p. 281)

The “Paschal Mystery” is everything that pertains to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is the core of our faith, the only thing that ultimately matters—it is the process of dying and rising, death and new life.

We see this all around us and in our own lives. God can make us new in this life. God wants to breathe life into every kind of deadness. So, we delight in this season of spiritual opportunity.

To make the most of this opportunity, I am encourag-



BISHOP
TODD
TOWNSHEND

ing all parishes to establish or deepen their ministries of faith-formation. Together with worship, it is the central activity of the church. The ancient catechumenate, beginning in the stories of the bible (Acts, Galatians, etc.), has always been a way for individuals and families to plunge into the language and culture of the church—which is to plunge oneself into baptism and a life in Christ.

A “catechumen” is a person who receives instruction in the Christian way in order to be baptized. The rest of life is a “mystagogy”, a renewing and deepening of life in the wonderful mystery of God.

This is not a mystery in the sense that the way in unknowable. The way is well

The purpose of any kind of catechumenate is to give us — those coming to baptism or those who are already living a baptismal life — a thoroughly supportive and encouraging environment.

known, but the God with whom we engage is mysterious—never fully known. So, within this creative tension, all Christians come to be more mature disciples, living in faith. The purpose of any kind of catechumenate is to give us — those coming to baptism or those who are already living a baptismal life — a thoroughly supportive and encouraging environment.

There are many ways to provide this environment. I will be eager to hear, over the years, all the ways you’ve found. There are people who are trained and experienced in these ways right here in our diocese—they are ready to help.

There are also fantastic resources like “The Way of

Love” (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love/>) and “Revive” (<https://revive.forwardmovement.org>) which can be used by anyone in our church. Resources to support this central work are being made available to you—even now!

When we come to Easter this year, I pray that your faith will have undergone some kind of “reawakening” or “rekindling”. Each Christian finds that faith can ebb and flow with different seasons and circumstances of life.

I encourage you to ask in your prayers for the gift of a deepened faith. I will be praying for this, too.

Blessings of the season.
+ Todd

Lent: Taking one more step on our journey to Christ

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

Psalm 62:5

By Rev. Ann Webber

It is Lent. Again. Lent is a time of repentance and preparation. We acknowledge that we have not lived our lives as God would have us live them. Lent is a time when we try to take one extra breath, take one more step on our journey to Christ.

There is a lot about the Christian journey that can feel like failure. Lent can bring those fears into focus for some. We take up Lenten devotions, and then we forget them. We commit to putting money aside, and then an expense comes up.

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER



Prayer can be a safeguard against those kinds of fears taking over. Even if all the praying we can manage today is holding onto the kitchen counter and looking up to the heavens in frustration.

When we come to pray, bringing whatever fears, frustrations, hopes and dreams may be cluttering up our minds, we can offer them up to God. We say yes to God’s invitation to

There is a lot about the Christian journey that can feel like failure. Lent can bring those fears into focus for some.

share our lives. Even if it’s not perfect. Even if it’s not what we intended. God has promised to be there with us, giving us hope when the road ahead looks uncertain, and the promises we made in baptism feel too big.

God Bless you in your Lenten journey.

Rev. Ann Webber is an AFP Executive and the Assistant Curate at St. Hilda’s&St. Luke’s in St. Thomas and Trinity, Aylmer.

Caring for our invisible neighbour



Church of the Ascension, January 28: Informative and passionate presentations, informal discussions, sharing a meal similar to what is provided by food programs to the homeless.

“I put on my bullet proof vest; and headed off to work”.

That was the surprising comment made by Rev. Sarah Armstrong as she described her time in Toronto working with survivors of sex trafficking.

Sarah's remarks opened a very informative roundtable about homelessness co-hosted by two London churches – Ascension and St. Mark's – on Saturday, January 28. What followed were the stories from Jenna and Erica about serving our youth living rough – how they travel around the city trying to find individuals for various reasons; and how those who have aged out of foster care are quickly being groomed by sex traffickers.

To hear from our panel of guests it sounds like the situa-

tion is hopeless and that there is little that we can do to make a difference or change it for the better.

That was until we started conversations with various people, moving table to table, and realized there is hope, and what we are all doing is making London a better place.

Many of the churches in the Deanery of London are delivering a wide range of outreach, support programs and just a safe place to land. We heard from every part of this deanery about Shoe Drives, Food Cupboards, fruit trees being planted and so much more.

We heard from speakers from Ascension (Steve Holmes), the Diocese of Huron (Rev. Sarah Armstrong), the Middlesex-London Health Unit (Jena), Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Erica), and St. Paul's Social Services (Barb

Symington), who talked about not only homelessness but also the related issues of addiction, mental health, and food security in our city.

We also had a chance for informal discussion afterward. And we shared a meal similar to what is provided by food programs to the homeless.

It was well attended, with about 70 people from Anglican, Christian Reformed and United churches as well as the Unitarian Fellowship. A big thank-you to those who shared their experience.

We, the parishes of Ascension and St. Mark's, are looking forward to working together on more projects and making the Anglican Church presence known once again in the east side of London.

Sandra Coulson and Helen Booth

Photos: Donna Thompson

“Justice is “to make right”, at its simplest level, but acting justly is anything but simple. Very often, we fail to make things right. We seek God's justice so that we may live in right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation.

– Bishop Todd: A Just Church

London Deanery comes together for housing solutions

By Julie Ryan

As individuals, we have limited impact. Together, we can make meaningful change. This is the message that the London Deanery has demonstrated through a three-year Advent campaign to support solutions to homelessness.

Parishes in the London Deanery have contributed nearly \$100,000 to Indwell, a Christian charity that creates supportive, affordable housing communities across Ontario. Their gifts will support the 140 people currently housed by Indwell in London, as well as the development of new housing.

Indwell has just opened Embassy Commons, located in London's Old East Village, offering 72 apartment homes. As tenants get settled into their new homes, they have

access to onsite supports, such as nursing and medication support, addictions counselling, and food security support.

“In the Deanery of London as parishes come together to support the important work of Indwell, the collective impact of collaboration is unmistakable,” said Rev. Canon Dr. Valerie Kenyon, Regional Dean. “In the months and years ahead, we look forward to an ongoing deepening of our relationship and support of Indwell, its program and its people.”

“We know that supportive housing is a solution to homelessness, one that offers a permanent home where people can thrive,” said Jeff Neven, CEO of Indwell. “These solutions can't happen without the community coming together in love and generosity, and that's exactly what the Lon-

don Deanery churches have offered. This is Good News! Together we are working out and living out Jesus' call to love our neighbour.”

Indwell's next London project is a partnership with five other non-profit housing developers, the Vision SoHo Alliance.

The Alliance has purchased the grounds of the former Victoria Hospital site on South Street. Indwell plans to create 138 deeply affordable apartment homes in the two remaining hospital buildings on the site – the Health Services Building and the War Memorial Children's Hospital.

Indwell's five partners will each build a new apartment building. In all, 680 mixed-rent units will be developed.

Julie Ryan is Community Engagement Coordinator at Indwell.



The London Deanery's three-year campaign is contributing to affordable, supportive housing projects like this one at the former Health Services Building of Victoria Hospital, which will be converted into 96 new apartment homes.

'If you feed them, they will come..'

All Saints' Waterloo new 500 square foot kitchen provides space and facilities for All Saints' new weekly food distribution program that is part of the Community Food Assistance Network in the Region of Waterloo.

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
John 6:35

By Rev. Marty Levesque

The heartbeat of so many houses emanate from the kitchen. The same is true for many Anglican congregations.

The old joke is if you feed them, they will come. So always make sure there is some food at each event, even if it is just muffins and coffee. Clergy are taught this in seminary. Well, maybe not formally, but it is sage advice. This makes the kitchen one of the most important rooms in any church.

All Saints Waterloo new church and community center's kitchen will meet this internal need but also is purpose built to serve the neighbourhood.

This 500 square foot kitchen provides space and facilities for All Saints' new weekly food distribution program that is part of the Community Food Assistance Network in the Region of Waterloo.

Each week, dozens of households will pass through the kitchen picking up fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food items. Healthy produce, frozen protein and non-perishables will be available weekly for those in need.

This program is launching now ahead of the completion of the new construction and All Saints will be mak-

ing use of the Region of Waterloo's mobile food pantry for now. Once construction is complete this program will transition seamlessly into the community center with all the necessary fridge and freezer storage capabilities.

The kitchen will also support collective cooking classes for new Canada's and supports larger catered events, whether that be a funeral reception, wedding reception or as an event space.

All Saints' continues to dialogue with community partners about other uses for the kitchen and how best we can continue to serve the mission field.

Rev. Marty Levesque is the rector of All Saints', Waterloo.



From collective cooking classes to serving community food assistance network: the blueprint of All Saints' new kitchen

I can't hear the preacher: Church acoustics 2

Let the wise also hear and gain in learning.
[Proverbs 1:5a]

By Rev. Paul Wooley

A number of times I have been called to help with church sound systems that were performing poorly. In many cases the most obvious problem was improper positioning of loudspeakers.

Interestingly, many times these were new systems that represented a serious financial investment, and which were installed by alleged experts. More than once, the speakers were not very high and were in fact aimed at the side walls. Luckily these situations were an easy fix, as the speakers merely had to be relocated and properly aimed.

As I stated in a previous article, you are always 'fighting with' the acoustics of the room. Improper speaker installation will certainly 'excite' the most undesirable acoustic properties, making sound and speech unintelligible.

Following are some basic problems with speaker system placement.

A – No line of sight

If anyone in the congregation cannot see a speaker, they won't hear it. Remember that we want to hear direct sound and not reflected sound, and since sound doesn't bend around corners

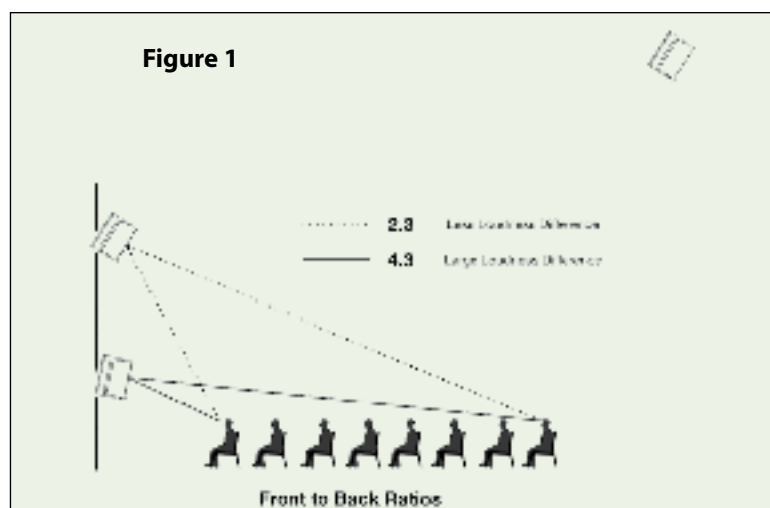
there must be a direct path between the speaker and the ears of the person listening.

B – Speakers are too low

How high should your speakers be? Generally higher than you might think. Often as high as you can get them.

This helps to minimize the difference in sound level between the front and the back of the seating areas.

Sometimes you will find speakers mounted on wall barely above the heads of the congregation. This results in the sound volume being too loud at the front and too soft at the back of the seating area. This is described as the front to back ratio. In a perfect world, the distance between the speaker to the front row and the back row would be the same. But with this concept in mind we can attempt to minimize the difference in these two distances. See figure 1.

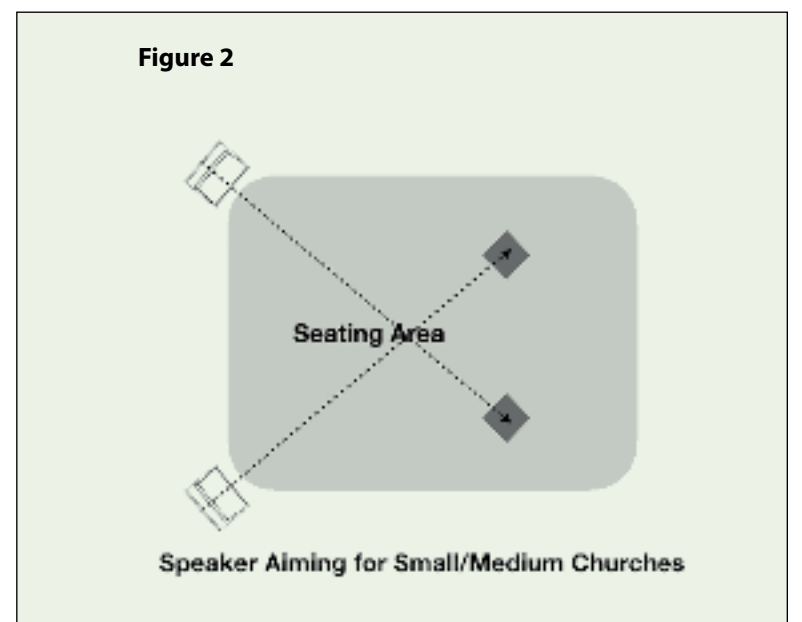


C – Speakers not focused for best coverage

One of the most common causes of problems with speech intelligibility is excessive reverb. We can reduce reverb by placing our speakers to focus on the audience and avoid the walls. Stated simply, aim the sound where you need to put it and nowhere else.

Most speaker systems, at lower and midrange (voice) frequency ranges have an approximately conical dispersion pattern of about 90 degrees. In most of our smaller churches, this ends up with a situation where the centreline of the two speaker systems need to be aimed at a point which is on the opposite side of the church around two-thirds of the distance to the rear of the seating area, and roughly one third of the distance from the opposite wall.

See figure 2.



D- Speakers placed so that sound doesn't get into microphones.

I would hope that this would be such an obvious problem that it wouldn't need to be mentioned. We have all been subject to 'feedback' caused by this mistake.

Imagine a line across the front of the chancel area, where the microphone positions for the lecture and pulpit are located. Make sure that the speakers are located ahead of that line, in other words between that line and the seating area.

The second consideration is taken care of by the previously mentioned speaker height and focusing. Again the concept is to keep the sound output from causing excessive room reflections

and reverberation which leads to feedback.

However, I have seen many instances where speakers had been mounted flat on walls at the front of a church aimed directly at the back wall. The sound bounces between the front and back of the church, then into a microphone to cause either a hollow sound or often ear screeching feedback.

Rev. Paul Woolley is a retired priest in Huron. He has 55 years of experience working with audio equipment of every description for varied venues.

(Note: Paul will answer any questions about sound systems in future articles. His email may be found on the Diocese of Huron clergy contact listings.)

Special times of connection: Music and prayer

By Rev. Andreas Thiel

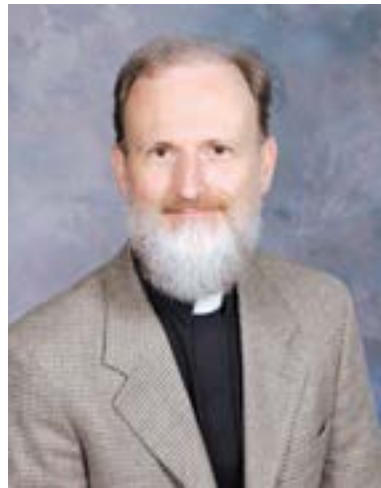
Twenty years ago, I was living the life of a freelance musician. By necessity, that meant wearing several professional hats: concert pianist, teacher, accompanist, vocal coach, adjudicator, chamber musician, occasional composer, organist and choir director.

But in 2003, I became increasingly aware that these activities – as interesting and rewarding as they were – were somehow “not enough” for me. Although I didn’t yet have the language to articulate what that might mean, over time I came to understand that God was in fact summoning me to explore the path of ministry.

Eventually the Church offered an ‘Amen’ to my sense of priestly vocation, which culminated in the admission to holy orders in 2010.

Upon reflection, those years of transition provided me with many twists and turns, as well as opportunities for discernment. This included the question of what was to be done with my prior calling, that of musician. I became aware of certain doors closing, ever so gradually, while others opened.

My first appointment in a parish taught me that there were only so many hours in a day, and that meant that my musical life would be somewhat reduced.



The questions persisted: What will I do with my prior calling as a musician? Might there be an intersection of music and theology, and if so, what would that look like in practical terms?

On May 6, 2023, the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer will hold their annual Bishop of Huron’s Prayer Conference. It’s a privilege to have been asked to contribute to that conference, which I see as being a wonderful opportunity for us to explore some of the ways that music and prayer intersect in our lives.

How has this been true for you? Or are you perhaps in the early stages of discovering how it might be so? What are some of the ways that music supports us in our prayer life?

Those are just a few of the areas that we’ll explore on May 6, and I hope that many will be able to join us for this special time of connection.

Speaking of special times of connection, I have a vivid memory of a heightened awareness of the intersection of music and prayer in my life. It happened many years ago. I was seated at the piano, preparing a recital program.

One of the pieces on that program was the Impromptu in f-minor by Franz Schubert (Opus 142). There was a portion of this composition that struck me as being particularly beautiful, and in my practice session I found myself repeating the musical phrases in an attempt to draw out as much of the beauty as I could. I knew that there were spiritual depths to the music, and I was convinced that if I played it enough times, I’d plumb those depths!

How many repetitions were there? I have no idea. How much time had passed? I couldn’t say. But I became aware of having entered “a different space”.

As I consider what happened in that space, I can only say that it was an experience of a dimension of prayer. Through music, God had opened a sacred space for me, and I was only too happy to step into that space.

Some might characterize that experience as the intersection of music and theology. I prefer to consider it the gift of prayer.

Rev. Andreas Thiel is the rector of St. Matthew, Windsor.



The Intersection of Prayer and Music: Encountering these practices as Individuals and as Faith Communities.
with
The Reverend Andreas Thiel

Please join the Rev'd Andreas Thiel, rector of St. Matthew's and former professional musician from the Diocese of Huron to explore aspects of how we encounter prayer and music in our own lives and in our faith communities. In a variety of ways, we will explore together how music in our liturgies and in our lives both serves as and enhances our prayers. Afternoon workshops will be designed to put some of what we will hear in the morning and afternoon sessions into practice. Please join us in person at 9:30 am for refreshments.

To register please contact: the Rev'd Ann Webber at annwebber@diochuron.org or by calling or texting info to 226-373-1391



Our church has inherited many different streams of tradition and they come together in wonderfully diverse ways. We seek to become a more multi-traditioned, multi-cultured, multi-lingual, multi-racial church so that we may find unity in our God-given diversity.

– Bishop Todd: A Diverse Church

Once a week or once a month, perhaps with a meal or perhaps online... IT'S ALL ABOUT COMING TOGETHER

From Page 1

We may feel that we don't have time for all this, or that no one else is interested. And yet, isn't this the reason why we're here? Isn't this the reason why we're the church?

Maybe your church doesn't have a group who meet regularly to learn together. Yet perhaps you feel that you'd like to try something new!

Are there two or three (or more!) people in your congregation who you think might respond to an invitation to spend time with God and with one another? Such a shared time need only involve three things:

time to “hang out”, often with a meal or other activity; time to reflect and learn together; and time to pray together. Could you invite these people to come together, maybe once week, or maybe once a month; perhaps with a meal, or perhaps online?

How would it impact these individuals, and yourself, to set aside this time to work together on your relationship with God and each other? To share your thoughts and experiences of God in your lives? To accompany and support one another in your common commitment to following Christ?

What changes could happen as a result? What new things might arise? Could your understanding of our baptismal vocation, the church's mission, deepen and grow? Could it lead to action? Might others join in too? Might a new, intentional way of living your faith take hold in your congregation? How would that affect its role in the wider community? How would that affect its future?

Thinking of giving it a try? Wondering how to begin? Please be in touch!

Rev. Lisa Wang is the Developer for Catechumenal Ministries for the Diocese of Huron.



St. George's of Forest Hill: Bells of Christmas at Winston Park

Angel tree in its pre-pandemic format with ninety-four gifts to support those in need.

St. George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener spread Christmas cheer through “Bells of Christmas” at Winston Park Long Term Care Home by providing ninety-four Christmas gifts to residents in the long term care units and in the dementia unit.

The staff shared what each resident needed and would enjoy. Some of the residents requested CDs and CD players. Our parishioners donated four used CD players and many used CDs that are hard to find in the stores.

This year we were thrilled to be able to hold our Angel tree in its pre-pandemic format with parishioners selecting an Angel from the tree and purchasing a gift or grocer voucher to support those in need.

Our parish community generously supported eighteen individuals: One young adult with special needs, a family of six, a family of five, a family of four, and three youth through Family & Children's Services

Mary Ann Millar, St. George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

The future of the Anglican Church Women in Huron

At the most recent annual meeting, which took place in April 2022 via zoom, a call was made for the formation of a committee to determine what the structure of the A.C.W. (Anglican Church Women) should be as the church moves forward into the future.

The committee of ten members would be representative of active parish A.C.W. members in the Diocese of Huron and members of the current Diocesan A.C.W.

The committee members from the parishes were volunteers, the members from the Diocesan A.C.W. were selected by the Diocesan President.

Structure of the Organization

1. Diocesan Council
2. Deaneries
3. Parish Groups

The Diocesan Council purpose is to give the women of the Anglican Church opportunity for members to unite in a fellowship of worship, study and service which will lead them into Christian service in the parish, community, Diocese, nation and the world. Providing members to share faith, fellowship and to learn from one another.

Parish Groups exist to unite all Anglican women within the parish in the fellowship of worship, learning and sharing, leading them into fuller Chris-

tian service by identifying their gifts and abilities as Christians in their communities.

The Future Committee has met via zoom on three occasions.

One volunteer resigned prior to the first meeting, there have been technical challenges with email providers complicating sharing of communication. An email account has been established for the gathering of information acwfutures@gmail.com from which the Futures Committee will be using to guide them in discoveries.

What has been clearly evident during the discussions, is each Parish A.C.W. is unique, with a common demographic challenge of aging members.

The encouragement of younger women to join the A.C.W. is essential for the organization to continue into the future in its current form.

As Sisters in Christ, we prayerfully request input from you as to your successes and learned experiences within your own A.C.W. groups.

The mandate for the committee "What the future holds for us and what should we do to prepare for it" is a complex challenge.

Trudy Warren

Policy Chair

A.C.W. Diocesan Council



ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN - DIOCESE OF HURON

ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE

"Walk Humbly with God"

St. Paul's Cathedral
London, Ontario
Saturday 29 April 2023

Registration @ 9:00 a.m.
Meet & Greet – Coffee/Tea
Morning Prayer – Followed by Meeting – 10:00 a.m.

Guest Speaker
Diane Dance
on the Anglican Foundation topic "Say Yes to Kids"

Holy Eucharist – 2:00 P.M.
Bishop Bob Bennett
Celebrant



New advertising manager for Huron Church News

Ads are coming back to Huron Church News!

It's with a great pleasure that we present to you our new advertising manager Angela Rush.

Angela brings a 18 plus years long record as an inside sales representative. As a long-life member of the Anglican Church, she had managed to transform her advertising and marketing skills into a true ministry: Angela today represents several other Anglican newspapers in Canada after reaching out to them at the last General Synod.

Angela has organized and led many successful promotional and fund-raising initiatives. She led an ALPHA group for young people.

For all your advertising needs please contact Angela at: huronchurch.ads@gmail.com or 905-630-0390.



Angela and Karma

Photo: Angela Rush

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PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Appointments

Bishop Townshend has appointed the Reverend Kim Myer as the Chair of the Diocesan Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Committee and the Diocesan Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Representative.

Kim is also the rector of St. John's, Leamington. Bishop Todd is grateful to the outgoing chair, the Reverend Canon Dr. Val Kenyon, for her years of leadership in this role.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Paul Silcox as the Rector of the Church of the Epiphany, Kingsville effective March 1, 2023.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Jenny Sharp as the interim priest at Christ Church, Ayr effective January 16, 2023.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Jordan Murray as interim Director of Luke's Place with St. Luke's Worshipping Community, and as the interim Director of Community Engagement for St. Aidan's, London effective January 1, 2023.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Dr. Justin Comber as the Regional Dean of Kent. Justin continues to serve as the Rector of the Rondeau Bay Transfiguration Partnership.

Interim Appointments

Bishop Townshend appointed the Venerable Neil Carver and the Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully as interim priests at the Church of the Holy Saviour, Waterloo, effective January 1, 2023.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Jack Dressler and the Reverend Canon Bryan Girling as interim priests at St. Marks-by-the-Lake (Tecumseh), Windsor effective December 1, 2022.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Jean Doyle as interim priest at St. John's, Arva effective January 9, 2023.

Induction

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, the Venerable Megan Collings-Moore inducted the Reverend Canon Robert Lemon as the Rector of St. James and St. Paul's, Stratford on Sunday, January 22nd, at St. James, Stratford at 4pm.

The preacher was the Venerable Jane Humphreys.

Celebration of Ministry

Archdeacon Osita Oluigbo and the congregations of St. Luke's-St. Hilda's, St. Thomas and Trinity Aylmer celebrated the appointment of their Assistant Curate, the Reverend Ann Webber, and their ministries together on Sunday, February 12th at 2pm.

The service took place at St. Hilda's-St. Luke's, 185 Elm Street in St. Thomas. The preacher was the Reverend Jordan Murray.

Resignation

Bishop Townshend has accepted the request of the Reverend Joel Steiner to resign as the rector of Christ Church, Ayr effective January 15, 2023. Joel remains the rector of Holy Trinity, Kitchener.

Rest in Peace

The Reverend Paul Walmsley, died on Saturday, Jan. 7, 2023.

Paul was ordained and served in the Diocese of Algoma before moving in his retirement to the town of Ingersoll in the Diocese of Huron. He had been serving as the priest-in-charge of St. James', Ingersoll since 2019.

May Paul rest in peace and rise in glory.

The Reverend Brian McKay (retired) died on Monday, December 26, 2022.

Brian was ordained a deacon in May 1970 and priested in May 1971. Parishes he served included Trinity, Cambridge, St. Timothy's, London, St. David's, London, East London Anglican Ministries (now Church of the Ascension, London) and St. Andrew Memorial Church, London from which he retired in 2010. He also served on Diocesan Council. The funeral service was held at St. Jude's Anglican Church, 1537 Adelaide Street North on Saturday, December 31 at 11:00 am.

May Brian rest in peace and rise in glory.

Mr. Edward (Ed) Poolton, the father of the Reverend Paul Poolton, father-in-law of the Reverend Sharla Malliff and a faithful member of All Saints, Waterloo died on Christmas Day 2022. Left to mourn are his wife Sandra, his children and grandchildren.

May Ed rest in peace and rise in glory.



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Major changes to Anglican Foundation grants program



Effective January 1, 2023, AFC moved from a semi-annual grant cycle to a quarterly one, with application windows open on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 each year.

” Despite the fact that our roots reach back through England to the early church, we are always becoming new in the Resurrection life of Jesus. We are living in a time of transformation and a certain dying and rising will be the mystery and joyride of our generations. Led by the Holy Spirit, in every decision, every loss, every opportunity we will ask, “is this a sign of God’s new creation to taking root?”

– Bishop Todd: A New Church

By Michelle Hauser

The Anglican Foundation of Canada’s (AFC) grants program will look substantially different in 2023 thanks to some important changes approved by the AFC Board of Directors in 2022.

Effective January 1, 2023, AFC moved from a semi-annual grant cycle to a quarterly one, with application windows open on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 each year.

According to Dr. Scott Brubacher, AFC’s Executive Director, “This rolling entry to the grants program will give potential applicants increased accessibility and flexibility, which is intended to result in timelier decisions.”

The Board also approved the introduction of Category A grants of up to \$5,000 with no matching local funds required.

“These category A grants were introduced for AFC’s 2021 Say Yes! to Kids Request for Proposal and proved very effective,” explains Rob Dickson, Chair, Grants Policy Working Group. “That experience demonstrated how the infusion of a few thousand dollars can have an enormously positive impact on ministry.”

The long-established traditional AFC grants—up to

\$15,000 and no more than 50% of the project budget—will become the new Category B grant.

Lastly, the Board approved the introduction of Category C grants of up to \$50,000.

“This new third category will allow the Board greater discretion in approving larger grants where the impact will be most beneficial,” explains Brubacher. “It will also allow AFC to be a more flexible funding partner in dioceses where a cornerstone project needs a major boost.”

Rob Dickson says the new and much larger Category C grants have the potential to be a game-changer for smaller dioceses. “The opportunity to submit a \$50,000 grant request is well-suited to a diocese that may have the capacity to bring only one project per year, but a transformational project the entire diocese can rally around.”

Dickson says the Category C grant will be the one application a diocese is allowed to submit in a calendar year. In terms of the matching funding requirement for such a project, that will be left to the discretion of the AFC Board.

Dioceses will need to articulate a strong case for merit, and

the Board will have to evaluate these applications very carefully.

The Board also approved removing the requirement that grant applicants be current members of AFC. Dickson says, “It is more consistent with our value of generosity to invite applicants to donate out of a spirit of generosity to ‘pay it forward.’”

These changes mark the conclusion of AFC’s Grants Policy Working Group’s year-long review.

“The Foundation’s role in resourcing a change-minded church in the wake of a global pandemic is only beginning to be defined,” says Brubacher. “We hope our members and friends across the Canadian church will see in these changes to our grant program a deep and genuine desire to resource the church as faithfully and abundantly as possible, so that we may drive change, together, with hope, courage, and vision.”

For more information on AFC’s new grant categories or to apply for an AFC grant, visit anglicanfoundation.org/apply.

Michelle Hauser is the AFC Development & Communications Consultant.

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Bishop Townshend announces that the following will be called to the Priesthood at a service of Ordination to be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, The Commemoration of Thomas Cranmer at 7pm at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London:

- The Reverend Jamie Baxter, Assistant Curate, St. James the Apostle, Port Lambton and St. James the Apostle, Wallaceburg.
- The Reverend Craig Love, Assistant Curate, St. Thomas’, Cambridge and St. Luke’s, Cambridge.
- The Reverend John Paul Markides, upon ordination, Priest Assistant under the direction of the Territorial Archdeacon.
- The Reverend Allison McDougall, upon ordination, Assistant Curate to the Rector, St. Paul’s, Stratford and St. James’, Stratford.

The preacher will be the Reverend Dr. Grayhame Bowcott. Clergy, and postulants of the Diocese of Huron, are invited to vest, the colour being red.

Make connections with Jesus' people!

By Caroline N. Sharp

Lent has got to be the most exciting time in Jesus' ministry.

Everything he's done for the past few years is coming to a head. He has exposed himself and riled communities and was considered to be a troublemaker by some. He even got upset and flipped tables!

Jesus was a wordsmith and a true advocate for human rights, standing up for the poor and oppressed – people my husband and I call "Jesus' people." You know the ones, the people you don't want to look at or you have trouble forcing yourself to smile and make eye contact with. The ones most of us don't see in our parishes on Sunday mornings.

The status quo of parish populations does not generally fall into this category of being Jesus' people but there are plenty of groups who do. Yet, somehow, we tend to avoid Jesus' people as much as possible – the homeless, the poor, the hungry, the disabled, the broken people in society, and those who don't fit into our box of privilege.

For example, did you know that 73 per cent of First Nations' water systems are at high or medium risk of contamination? How does this happen in Canada, of all places? How is it that even though over half of our population considers themselves to be Christian this is still a problem?

According to Statistics Canada, unmet housing needs are

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



up 1.6%, unmet health needs are up 18% and food insecurity is up 3.7% - the most recent of these values is from 2020 and I am certain that these have only been exacerbated of late. Average hourly rates are falling and both literacy and numeracy in teenagers is increasing dramatically. But what are we doing to change this?

We know our school boards are suffering. Teachers and those who work in classrooms with them do not get paid their worth. The education of all of our children is failing them, especially since COVID hit.

In this time of COVID, we've also discovered how rotten many of the nursing homes are where we expect our beloved parents and grandparents to live. Where is the line we draw in the sand when our public system no longer agrees with the morals of our Christian system? Where is Jesus' line (and we know he likes to draw in the sand)?

Thinking about these issues always reminds me of Jesus' Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). We have the scriptures, Jesus pulled off a ton of miracles and people still believe in Christ thousands of years later. So, why don't we want to do what we know is right? How far are we willing to go to make sure that the Lazarus' of today receive the love and care that Jesus asks of us? And what does this have to do with Lent?

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Lent is:

... "a 40 day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from

luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ." (<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/lent>)

At least once a year, we are reminded that we are to follow "Christ's will more faithfully." Jesus asks us to clothe his people and feed them as we would him.

Okay, maybe some of us do that. The reality is that many of the programs born through a social justice need were put into place during the great depression but they never went away because poverty will always exist. There are those who wish to get to the root of the problem and advocate for a Universal Basic Income (UBI) which aims to eradicate poverty and serve the population in an equitable fashion. Is that the solution? Maybe, but maybe not. I don't have all the answers.

Perhaps the answer lies with real empathy – to understand Jesus' people. We often come from a place of privilege and view life through a lens of colonialism. Many of us can't identify or relate with people who find themselves in tough spots. Changing this demands that we build relationships and love everyone we meet.

Building relationships take a lot of time and effort which is something everyone seems to be short on these days. When

was the last time you grabbed a couple of coffees and sat with an unhomed person to hear their story and learn who they are? When was the last time you offered to babysit for a young single mom who wants to reeducate herself (so she can stop working 3 part time, minimum wage jobs) and make a better life for her family?

It is though building relationships that we learn that Jesus' people are just like us but they just can't get a break. Maybe they don't have the privilege we have. Maybe they need a friend who can use their privilege to get hearts to soften and ears to hear. When we learn about people, we also learn to love them for who they are with all their quirks (because we all have them) and that is definitely something I think we're missing. We find ourselves eager to learn and educate ourselves except when it comes to learning about the people we come across every day.

Find a way to make connections with the Jesus people you see. If you don't see them, maybe you need to walk a few extra blocks down the road because Jesus people are everywhere. If it isn't an unhomed person, maybe it's the lonely old lady who lives across the street or angry teenager next door who always gets yelled at. The world is full of Jesus people who need the love of Christ which is in you to give.

Caroline N. Sharp is a tri-chair of SEJH.

Mission to Seafarers at Open Streets Sandwich

MISSION TO SEAFARERS is a volunteer organization operating through and with St. John's Anglican Church, Sandwich, under the leadership of Rev. Gordon Maitland.

This organization operates in port cities, providing assistance to sailors who may have been on a ship for weeks or months and may need basic life's essentials. A trip to the stores can be a great help and there are often no public services from the docks.

We also provide ditty bags filled with shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste and brush, pads of paper and pens, as well as snacks.

It is a small welcome to our community to make sailors feel welcome here.

Early in the morning on September 18, 2022 Mission

to Seafarers volunteers took to the streets. The reason was OPEN STREETS SANDWICH, one of many areas celebrating neighbourhoods.

This particular day we had a booth to both inform the public about the group but also to provide a fun experience for the hundreds of families that flowed through the street on the bikes and on foot.

The fun came through free freezies and fresh popcorn. The popcorn machine did not stop until we ran out!

The highlight of the day was a draw for three bikes, one adult, one junior and one child.

Visitors to our tent did not have to pay to enter, just fill in a ballot.

The winners were all thrilled. The adult bike was

won but an out of country university student living on campus so will be very useful.

The mid-sized one went to a seven-year old boy who told us: "I never won anything before".

The smallest one went to a father with three small children.

This was an opportunity to meet and greet members of the community and spread the word of some of the outreach.

Interesting to note, St. John's Anglican Church was built in 1871, replacing an earlier structure destroyed in the war of 1812. The original congregation started in a log cabin in 1796. A wonderful part of this area's rich history.

Barbara Pastorius, a volunteer with The Mission to Seafarers.



Mission to Seafarers' Popcorn booth at Open Street Sandwich



Foreign student bike winner

Questions – a central part of Jesus' ministry

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

Questions... How many of them do you ask in an average day? How many do you answer?

Some are very simple aren't they, "What time are we meeting?", with others being far more complicated, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

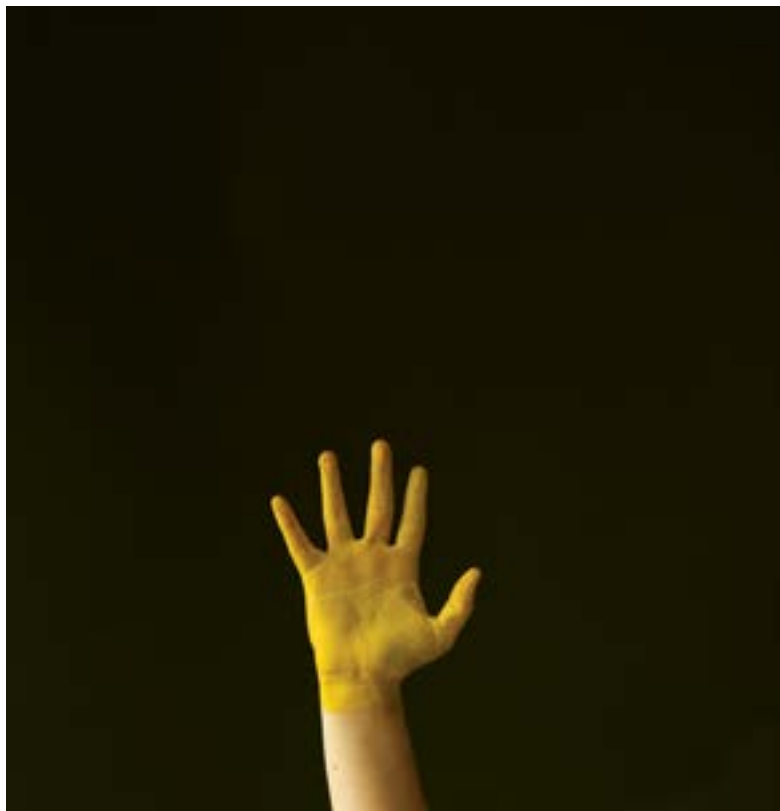
We are a curious species for to be human is to ask and to seek answers for questions. This is most clearly seen in the area of scientific inquiry with observing, inferring, classifying, predicting, measuring, questioning, interpreting and analyzing of data.

As surely as questions are central to our development as a species, they are most certainly at the centre of our spiritual formation as well, beginning from our earliest days, as noted by the Godly Play Foundation, where the question "I Wonder ..." is the central pillar around which spiritual formation for children is supported.

The question (and all that follows a question... usually more questions) was, as we know, also a central part of the work and ministry of Jesus. His day was full of questions from his disciples (Matthew 17:19; Mark 9:28), scribes and Pharisees (Mark 10:20; Luke 17:20; Luke 11:53), the Sadducees (Matthew 22:33), his followers



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



(Mark 10:4), lawyers (Matthew 22:35) and even Pilate (Luke 23:3).

Great treasures lay beneath the surface, of an environment where questions are encouraged. To give hospitality to questions, is to encourage thinking, problem

solving, creativity, improved communications, an enriched understanding, a connection to real-world problems, and if the environment in which these questions are being asked is just right, with time, inquirers will see questions as the route to continuing to

Questions can make us uncomfortable, as in any group there will be a range of different sensibilities, experiences, and understandings. However, as followers of Jesus, we know that transformation and change are part of that to which we are called.

learn and grow. Important for a Learning Church seeking to share the Gospel and serve our neighbours in an ever-adapting manner.

There can be risks when questions are asked. Questions can make us uncomfortable, as in any group there will be a range of different sensibilities, experiences, and understandings. As well there may well be a sense of loss and natural anxiety that quite predictably accompanies change.

However, as followers of Jesus, we know that transformation and change are part of that to which we are called. We come to understand that change is as an opportunity, a Spirit-led opportunity and that it has been a part of the Christian tradition since its earliest days.

Within the setting of an Education for Ministry (EfM) group, on any given day, there will be a full range of questions. Whether in the reviewing of that week's readings, the sharing of experiences since the last meeting, or in the discussions around a theological reflection, an EfM gathering is one in which re-

fective conversations birthed out of any variety of questions, will thrive. It is a core value at EfM that participants feel safe and free to share as they support one another in holding space into which questions can be explored.

Reflective conversations, will not always be easy, however over the many years of the EfM program, they have been shown as the path forward in the expanding of our understandings and concepts around being followers of Jesus in these constantly changing times. EfM reminds us that these conversations are just waiting to happen in each of our lives.

If you would like to learn more about all that is available to you at Education for Ministry, please reach out at any time to either Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or myself Val Kenyon, Huron's EfM Animator at valeriekenyon@diohuron.org as we would be pleased to hear from you.

Dates for upcoming Open House sessions will be announced next month.

Rev. Dr. Canon Val Kenyon is EfM Animator in Huron.

Good evangelism strategy: Brought to you by.. the AI!

Over the years I have written many columns on technology and ministry, best practices, and how to lever social media and technology for the building of the kingdom of God and evangelism.

Recently though, Rev Dan Bowyer, Associate of All Saints Waterloo for Pastoral Care and Outreach Ministries asked ChatGPT, the artificial intelligence computer program, "What is a good evangelism strategy for Anglican Christians in Canada."

What follows is the AI's response:

1) Building relationships: Establishing genuine relationships with non-Christians is often a crucial first step in evangelism. This can be done through volunteering in the community, participating



**MEDIA
BYTES**

**REV. MARTY
LEVESQUE**

It's important to remember that effective evangelism is a process, and that it may take time to see results.

in neighbourhood events, or simply getting to know people through everyday interactions.

2) Meeting people where they are: It's important to

understand the cultural and spiritual context of the people you are trying to reach, and to speak to them in a way that is relevant and meaningful to them.

3) Being a good listener: Being a good listener is one of the best ways to build trust and credibility with people. It helps people feel heard, valued, and respected.

4) Using social media: Social media is a powerful tool for sharing the Gospel with a wide audience. Anglican churches can use social media to share sermons, Bible studies, and other resources that help people grow in faith.

5) Living a consistent Christian life: Evangelism is not just about words, but about actions too. People will be more likely to be interested in the message of Christianity if they see it lived out in the lives of those who follow it.

6) Partnering with other organizations: Partnering with other organizations,

such as local charities or service groups, can help to build relationships and bridge gaps with people who might be difficult to reach otherwise.

It's important to remember that effective evangelism is a process, and that it may take time to see results.

The most important thing is to be faithful and consistent in your efforts, and to trust that God is at work in the hearts of those you are trying to reach.

I am not sure I could have said any better than the AI.

You can learn more about ChatGPT here: <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>

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

martylevesque@diohuron.org

Creating space for newcomers: Avoiding a 'Saran Wrap Welcome'

Years ago, before my wife Jacqueline and I were even married, I remember her attending a marmalade-making session hosted by the ladies of a church in which I was placed as a seminarian. She showed up, hoping to meet new people, perhaps make a friend, and offer her assistance wherever needed in the marmalade-making production.

In the church hall, card tables were set up and different areas were assigned different tasks. Jacqueline went to join the first table in which four people were already seated and cutting up orange peels.

When she went to pull up a chair, she was told that their table was already complete. Two pairs of two. She would be the odd one out, so she needed to go find a partner.

This struck Jacqueline as odd, considering the fact that all four of them were simply chatting away while they cut up the oranges, but okay, she'd go looking for a partner.

Jacqueline found a table of three ladies seated at another table and thought: perfect, I'll join in. The moment she sat down, it was explained to her that this table was awaiting a fourth to join momentarily.

Jacqueline was in her spot. "Hmmm," thought Jacqueline, "I thought they had announced this event as open to newcomers."

Figuring that it was safest to simply sit down at her own table, Jacqueline looked across the room at how others were cutting up their orange peels. She began to do the same. She distinctly remembers the first time one of the ladies approached her in conversation. As she looked up to welcome a new face, she was greeted with these words: "You aren't going to cut them up like that, are you?"

Suffice to say, that was the last time Jacqueline volunteered for marmalade duty. It was also the last event that she attended hosted by the ladies of that congregation.

A common cry of desperation among Anglican congregations across the country is a desire for new members to join our ranks: to partici-



Velizar Ivanov/Unsplash



**GROWING
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BOWCOTT**

pate in our worship services, to volunteer at our various fundraising events and outreach ministries, to replenish the generations of Anglicans who served dutiful, but are now represented by empty pews and grave stones.

However, despite our longing for new relationships and our regular talk of 'being welcoming' more often than not newcomers to our communities experience a phenomenon that I have begun referring to as the "Saran Wrap Welcome".

The Saran Wrap Welcome is when a congregation claims to be welcoming. It's when we talk about the ways in which

we'd love to include younger generations, those exploring the Anglican tradition or even Christianity for the first time. It's when we put out the "special visitor" coffee mugs and may even have a welcome package awaiting at the front door of the church.

Yet, despite our expressed desire to be welcoming communities, when newcomers actually arrive on our doorstep, we don't know how to create space in our routines and friendships to allow for them to change us.

Instead, they experience a lot of talk about: "This is how things are done around here. This is our tradition." Or in other words: "Don't go changing anything on us. We like things just the way they are."

Like Saran Wrap, they can see the bonds of community that exist in our church families, but various invisible forms of barriers exist that

Each new person who joins a church community changes the DNA of that congregation. If prior groups and generations of church members fail to accommodate the new ideas and contributions of newcomers, if we fail to make space for them, then what happens is that these potential new members will become discouraged and seek out other forms of community that are more interested in including them for who they are and for their unique contributions that they have to share.

prevent them from feeling included.

The truth about any newcomer to a church congregation is that each person is desiring to belong. In order to feel like you belong, you need to be able to contribute your own gifts, ideas and personality to the community.

The Saran Wrap effect is all the ways that churches either consciously or unconsciously fail to create a space for change, for new ideas and ways of doing things that are the gifts that inevitably arrive with each newcomer.

Each new person who joins a church community changes the DNA of that congregation. If prior groups and generations of church members fail to accommodate the new ideas and contributions of newcomers, if we fail to make space for them, then what happens is that these potential new members will

become discouraged and seek out other forms of community that are more interested in including them for who they are and for their unique contributions that they have to share. Often these other communities are not Church-based one.

In a recent congregational leadership retreat that I was leading, in which a parish council was exploring ways of fostering new relationships with non-members, it was noted that of the dozen leaders gathered, all of them had been attending their church for ten years or longer. None of them was anything close to being a newcomer.

When we explored the results of a congregational survey, they were shocked to hear some of the comments that it shared: "I wish someone would notice me here," and "it took five years for anyone to say hello to us."

We then reflected on the trend of visitors coming to explore their congregation but never seeming to stick around longer than a few initial visits. I pointed out my observation: "I think you have a Saran Wrap problem!"

As the average age of parishioners in Anglican churches continues to age (mid-70s is what I'm seeing in Huron), it is even more important for long term congregation members to understand and appreciate how to make space for newcomers. That all of the efforts of being a 'welcoming church' mean nothing at all unless we take the Saran Wrap off our communities and open ourselves up to change. Sometimes creating space for others means we need to step out of the traditions and roles that we, ourselves, are occupying in order to let another try out their own expression of being Church.

Rev. 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. grayhamebowcott@diohuron.org

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Water of Life (Or: Why do we make our lives so complicated?)

A number of years ago, when I dipped my toe into the experience of retirement, I was invited to become a member of a group of retired individuals who meet every month.

Each month a guest speaker provides insight into a different topic which helps to ferment discussion during the time given over to coffee and fellowship.

Recently, a speaker reflected on "The Water of Life".

This was not billed as a theological educational experience, as much as it was an overview on a topic near and dear to many... Scotch.

I will not take time in this article to review his talk in detail. Yet there was something that he said that did generate some ideas that deserve reflection.

"Why do we always try to complicate things?" he said. "Scotch is a combination of only three ingredients: barley, yeast and water. Those who use those three ingredients to make Scotch follow a simple process. They ferment a sugary liquid. They distill that liquid and then they store it in barrels... and then, they wait."

The simple reality is that there is an endless variety of how those elements and how that process fall into different equations. That variety, in turn, generates a multitude of different experiences of what Scotch ends up on



Sarah Dorweiler/Unsplash



**A VIEW FROM
THE BACK PEW**

**REV. CANON
CHRISTOPHER
B. J. PRATT**

a person's tastebuds. Where is the barley grown? Does the water flow over rocks or peat? What is the origin of the yeast? When the liquid is stored in barrels for years at a time, where do the barrels come from?

A key part of the speaker's presentation noted that with such a wide variety of choices to be made, that it was not helpful to name one as, "the best Scotch". It was possible for a person to enjoy the process of taste testing and discovering a Scotch that became their own, personal favourite. There was also an appreciation that tastes change over time,

so having a variety to choose from means that a person may still enjoy Scotch, but perhaps from a different distillery with a different story.

I reflected on an experience that I had during my ministry of being able to welcome a couple to the parish that I was serving, who came from a non-liturgical community and who began to engage in the life of the congregation. They involved themselves deeply in the life of the parish. They provided leadership in parish life, served on parish committees, and were faithfully engaged in the worship of the parish family for an extended period of time. After spending years together, the couple approached me and said that they were leaving to become members of another denomination. They did so without expressing anything but gratitude for our shared experience together.

There was a time in the life of the Anglican experience of the Christian faith that there was a sense of uniformity in the worship of the Church. A single Book of Common Prayer served as the framework around which the life of the Church and the lives of individuals could be shaped. For many individuals, that book continues to be the cornerstone of their worship and devotional experience. Yet even as the same words of the liturgy were offered, there was a different experience that individuals had as they moved from congregation to congregation.

Over time, in response to the expressed needs of people who sought to find different ways to express their love for God, new ways of worship, new language and new music began to be offered in communities of faith. Adherence to a physical structure and being located in a specific geographical area ceased to be the glue which kept individuals connected to one congregation.

Increased mobility has meant that a greater choice may take people past several different congregations on a Sunday morning, so that they may engage in worship which meets their self-defined needs. A sense of purpose and mission, preaching, music and community life are some of the different elements which influence the "taste" of a place.

The ability to simply tune into congregational worship from the comfort of home, catching the latest Youtube broadcast, generates another changing dynamic in church life today.

Yet for all those complications and choices, the basic elements which define a person's faith journey through the Season of Lent remains simple. We are called to engage in community worship, personal prayer, reflection, repentance, and service. We are called to discover, or to reclaim a commitment to a community of faith where our spiritual journey can move forward in a meaningful way, through our own Baptismal Waters of Life at the Easter Vigil to experience the joy of the Resurrection.

The call to worship, participating in the life of a community of faith and serving the wider community in the Name of our Lord are some of the very simple elements of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Why do we make our lives so complicated?

During this Season of Lent, I hope that you will come, taste and see how gracious the Lord is. Happy are those who trust in Him.

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'A light heart is a long life': My reflections on Love

Recently, while playing pool with a group of regulars, I was off the mark, missing more shots than usual. The balls refused to drop, and most always bounced sloppily above the pocket. Every attempt rousing the review, 'close but no cigar.'

Mercifully, this particular squad of old-timers came mainly for the camaraderie. And the absence of pressure, replaced by good-hearted banter, was a gracious gift. During one game, a fellow gets positioned to take a shot, looks down the length of his cue, and unexpectedly steps back. He removes his glasses and says, "I know there is a pocket down there somewhere."

One of the great things about the old boys I play pool with is that they are all equally capable of having a bad night. Even occasionally embarrassing. I'm surmising this lets me know I'm getting to an age where learning to laugh



AS I SEE IT

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at yourself is more important than getting it right.

Giving myself the space to fumble and mumble, I realize that 'life is too short to be serious all the time.' I don't know how often I have cursed my fault (out loud even), only to realize folks were looking at me as though I'd already gone off my rocker.

Last week, a young shop attendant heard me scolding myself (I won't say why). You can well imagine he stepped quickly in the opposite direction. Truth is, and we all know it, the only thing more awkward than getting caught talking out loud is hearing others do it.



Most others have done more foolish things than we have. And they survived to tell about it. Learning that we are all half a step ahead of lunacy and far behind perfection. To use another cliché (which I refuse to be embarrassed by), it was once said, "don't take yourself so seriously. Nobody else does."

I will never forget an incident involving a kind matriarch in my St Thomas parish. She was going on into her 90s and noticeably struggling to

get around. Yet, as always, she came up to the communion rail. This time, however, with the assistance of her equally good-natured son (the apple doesn't fall far from the tree). As wobbly as she was becoming (and unable to kneel), you could not but admire her grit. When I placed the bread in her upturned palm, she began to tilt forward a bit. Looking at me, she quickly ribbed, "it's just a little heavy."

As I see it, with any luck, we may come to appreciate that

life must be lived with a light heart. Shakespeare quipped, "a light heart is a long life." I guess he had it right. He lived about a decade and a half longer than the average person of his day.

I will also never forget a particular funeral director whose sense of humor was quite disarming.

I was brand new in the ministry and officiating my first funeral. During the procession to the graveside, he was telling me a story that involved a clergyman who, halfway through the funeral rite, slipped on the fake plastic grass surrounding the plot. Giggles began to build as he landed flat on his backside beside the coffin. The deceased's brother came with a hand-up and added, "don't try to empathize quite yet, me son."

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