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HURON CHURCH NEWS

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

A reliable witness for seventy-five years (and counting)



HURON CHURCH NEWS, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1950. Front page of the very first issue of the newspaper features the Bishop's letter, his itinerary, and a photo of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Bishop of Huron was the Rt. Rev. George Luxton (signed as George Huron), and the Archbishop of Canterbury was the Most Rev. Geoffrey Francis Fischer. The first editor of the Huron Church News was Rev. Charles H. James.

A LOT HAS CHANGED since 1950 and the first edition of the Huron Church News: the newspaper itself has changed, but also the church, and the world in general. Seventy-five years, after all, is almost the average length of a human life. And you do not have to be even close to 75 to realize that the world today looks much different than the world of your childhood.

On a larger scale, the one that measures the life of the Diocese of Huron, this newspaper goes way back: The Huron Church News has diligently chronicled almost half of the diocesan existence, 75 out of its 167 years, to be precise.

The year 1950 has not yet seen an established TV broadcast for general audience. Contrast this fact with the information you read today in our *Media Bytes* column — all the things you have to familiarize yourself with to keep your local church up to date in the ever-changing world of social media!

As for the changes in the church, it has been repeatedly stated — and established as a firm fact in the minds of the people of Huron — that the diocese from Bishop Luxton's time is very different from the one we live in now. Huron

Church News witnessed the introduction of the revised Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Alternative Services; it documented the ordination of women in the Diocese of Huron, and the debates about same-sex marriages... But its stories also recorded intricate changes that may not appear very obvious or immediate. *A View from the Back Pew* in this February 2025 issue, revokes the time (not that long ago) when the Exchange of Peace was a new experience in Huron churches. Maybe it is good to be reminded that what now looks like a very special part of the Anglican service (at least for an outsider) was introduced with some opposition and resistance!

Looking back and reflecting on our past may be comforting and pleasant, it may be painful and distressing, but it is unavoidable and necessary. We need to look back before we move forward if we want to be sure that our target is the right one.

In that regard we have been extremely lucky with the Huron Church News. It grew with its church, and for the last three quarters of a century it has been the most reliable tool that has documented all of its transitions.

▶ Page 12 HURON CHURCH NEWS ANNUAL APPEAL

PWRDF is about to change its name. What does it mean for its mission?



” The name *Alongside Hope* is an invitation to humility and mutuality. It calls us to recognize true partnership. The story of hope is not written by our hand alone but is woven together by many hands, hearts, and voices. This name reflects a posture of walking side by side, of listening before speaking, of learning before leading.

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Prayer as a longing for God and a means to relationship

Prayer requests as a way of fostering a deeper connection with congregation: A story from St. George's of the Blue Mountains.



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HURON CHURCH NEWS

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Submissions

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Prayer changes things (Kneeling with Giants)

By Susan Johnson

One of my favourite bookmarks says, "Prayer Changes Things". It's a good reminder for me that I need to spend more quiet time talking to God, despite the days and weeks that can get so busy.

We are now past Christmas, which is definitely a hectic time for many of us! We are hopefully entering into a quieter time when we can refocus on our prayer lives.

When I first knew I'd be writing this article, a book that I read almost 12 years ago came to mind: *Kneeling with Giants: Learning to Pray with History's Best Teachers* by Gary Neal Hansen. Prayer changes things, but perhaps from time to time we need to change the way we pray, to try out new ways. *Kneeling with Giants* gives us ten teachers



ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

and the suggestion to practice each of these approaches to prayer for two weeks, fifteen minutes a day, in order to find which appeals to us (or doesn't!). The Introduction tells us that "The goal is to find a way to deepen your journey with God for the next season of your life." (Ah, a reminder that life is not an unchanging path, we need flexibility in our prayer habits, too!)

These teachers are from many eras of the Christian journey, covering many

centuries and many traditions. They include Benedict of Nursia, father of Western monasticism; Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation; Ignatius of Loyola, well known for his Spiritual Exercises; the Puritans and their method of praying through writing; Andrew Murray, committed to intercession. These teachers may have many ways to pray, but they all agree that "nothing is more foundational for our life in Christ."

At the end of the book, "Putting Prayer into Practice" is a helpful section of short how-to paragraphs to get one started on trying these new ways to pray.

I'm adding a reread of *Kneeling with Giants* to my to-do list: it's time for prayer to change things!

Susan Johnson is an AFP
Huron executive member.

Prayer changes things, but perhaps, from time to time, we need to change the way we pray, to try out new ways.

HURON CHURCH NEWS

75 years with you

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

ALONGSIDE HOPE: It is more than a name change, it is a proclamation of faith, an embodiment of the Gospel imperative to walk alongside those in need



The new name pairs well with the PWRDF existing icon. This continuity will improve brand recognition as we transition to Alongside Hope over the coming year.

ALONGSIDE HOPE - Though you will be hearing people talk about Alongside Hope, the changes to our website and social media will not take effect until March 1, 2025. This will allow us time to complete tax receipts for 2024 under the PWRDF name.

By Rev. Canon Greg Jenkins

PWRDF began as PWRF: The Primate's World Relief Fund.

It was called into existence in response to the Springhill Mine Disaster of 1958. That year a devastating "bump" in a coal mine trapped 174 men 4,000 feet underground. Seventy-five of the miners died. In response to the tragedy, the Anglican church created a fund to offer assistance for the stricken families and community.

Since that time, what started as a simple fund has grown into a ministry of partnership, and hope. PWRF broadened its mandate to include development, and became the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF). The mandate has continued to grow over the years, and we now recognize this by embracing a name that speaks directly to the heart of our mission: Alongside Hope.

This is more than a name change. It is a proclamation of faith, an embodiment of the Gospel imperative to walk

alongside those in need, to share burdens, and to offer steadfast hope. The name Alongside Hope calls us to action, reminding us that we are not solitary agents of charity but co-workers in God's vineyard.

The work of PWRDF has long been rooted in compassion and justice. For decades, it has extended open hands across continents, bringing relief to the afflicted, advocating for the marginalized, and sowing seeds of empowerment. This mission continues as before. However, with the change in name, a deeper truth is revealed: hope is not a gift we simply give to others, but a force we encounter and nurture together with our partners.

The name Alongside Hope is an invitation to humility and mutuality. It calls us to recognize true partnership. The story of hope is not written by our hand alone but is woven together by many hands, hearts, and voices. This name reflects a posture of walking side by side, of listening before

speaking, of learning before leading.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we are reminded that Christ appears not in the grand and obvious, but in the humble act of accompanying one another. Alongside Hope asks us to follow this example, to look for Christ in the stranger, in the refugee, in the farmer, in the mother struggling to provide for her children.

This change comes not out of necessity, but out of vision. It is a declaration that we are committed not just to relief but to relationship, not just to development but to dignity.

And so, we press forward, bearing the light of hope in a world that so often dwells in shadows. Let us walk together, hand in hand, as bearers of hope, partners in justice, and disciples of love. Alongside Hope is not just a name; it is our calling. Let us rise to meet it.

Rev. Canon Dr. Greg Jenkins is PWRDF representative for Huron.

Christ Church in Ayr helping family farm in Holguin, Cuba



A cow and a calf: Enough for five to seven litres of milk a day - a true blessing for the children on a farm in Holguin.

The congregation of Christ Church in Ayr may be small but they are accomplishing great things.

This past November, their priest, Rev. Jenny, was travelling to Holguin and was bringing food, medical supplies and more. The congregation asked if more could be done. In conversation with one of her friends in Cuba, she was told that the family farm could really use a cow. That way their family children and the neighbourhood children could get milk, which is almost impossible to obtain there.

Christ Church stepped up to the challenge and raised enough money to buy not only the cow but also a calf. The calf's presence would ensure the cow kept producing milk for longer.

Unlike in Canada, this cow would be milked once a day, by hand. Not having any food for the cow, the cow lives off any grass or other greenery it can find, so five to seven litres is all they can expect to get in milk a day. This will allow many children at least some milk each day! We are very blessed and grateful to help.

Rev. Jenny Sharp

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- Do I need to change my will or my life insurance policy that benefits PWRDF? No.

Find out more at pwrdf.org/our-new-name/

Greeting cards helping Ascension's Food Security program



Diane Robinson, back left, Colleen Larsen, back right, and Donna Thompson make and sell greeting cards at Church of the Ascension to support the church's food security program.

By Sandra Coulson

Greeting cards spread cheer in more than one direction through a ministry at Church of the Ascension in London.

Caring Cards is the work of Colleen Larsen, Diane Robinson, and Donna Thompson, who each have a talent for producing handmade cards. Besides bringing joy to the recipients, their cards help fund Ascension's Food Security Program.

The cards sell for \$2 each or three for \$5. Even at those low prices, sales have added up to donations of \$496 to Food Security in 2023 and probably \$800 in 2024.

"It's a group that is doing something they like and not keeping any of the money, but giving it to outreach," says Diane, who adds she enjoys the creativity of the work.

It helps that a lot of their supplies are donated. Scrapbooking clubs have given unused materials and executors of estates have passed on both materials and tools.

Colleen also likes the creativity of card-making, which grew from her scrapbooking hobby. She adds, "They say something to another person when they're happy or sad or struggling. I'm shy about what's appropriate to say and (card-making) helps me to communicate."

Donna got involved through a friend she met in a pain management group she attends. "I've seen the look on people's faces . . . the joy it brings to people (when they receive one of the cards)," she says.

Diane also started into card-making through medical issues. "When I had breast

cancer in 1990, a couple of friends from church got me into it . . . They thought I needed something to do," she says with a chuckle.

Word has spread beyond Ascension about their ministry. They've made cards for charities working with breast cancer and for Smiles 4 Seniors, which gives cards to care-home residents. A pastoral care worker at a Goderich seniors' home uses their cards at Christmas and Valentine's Day. In 2024, a Kinette club asked the trio to make 100 cards to send to soldiers posted overseas.

It's a craft that takes many hours of work, but it brings joy to the makers, the card givers, the card recipients, and the food program.

Sandra Coulson is Ascension PWRDF parish representative.

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 Announcing our new program for 6 - 12-year-olds...



Day Trippers

Join us at breakfast and stay until dinner.
 Bring what you need for the day and join the fun, integrated into one of our cabin groups!
 We will even save you a bunk, so you feel right at home.

Dates, fees, and further details will be included in our online registration form opening February 25, 2025. www.camphuron.ca

For more information on the upcoming summer check here next month, go to our website, or contact gerryadam@diohuron.org 519-434-6893 ext. 217.

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Caroling at Christ Church, Vittoria



Christ Church, Vittoria on December 14, 2024

The doors of Christ Church, Vittoria, were opened on Saturday evening, December 14, to welcome in the sound of 38 carolers, ready to sing in the Christmas spirit.

"I dare say it's been well over half a century since carols were sung in the sanctuary," said treasurer/secretary and archivist, James Christison.

Festive decorations and twinkling lights were a delight to behold in the church. The original 1880 Bell Organ was played by Vittoria's own J.P. Antonacci.

O Holy Night on the organ

was a real treat, said a caroler.

The church has no electricity so dressing warmly was part of the experience. Blankets and quilts decorated the pews to keep carolers warm as they sang and sipped hot apple cider.

In lieu of monetary donation for admission, carolers were asked to bring non-perishable food items. Thanks to their generosity, an entire carload is going to the local food bank.

All had a wonderful evening singing and agreed it'll need to be an annual event.

There were new attendees to the village who were able to see the inside of the church for the first time.

The evening ended around a picturesque bonfire on the front lawn of the church, where people chatted into the evening.

Thank you to Christy Brown, James Christison, Joan Noram, Michele Crandall, Melissa Collver, J.P. Antonacci, and Nancy Ratz for making this happen.

Rev. Leah Arvidsson

Photos: James Christison

Festive full house in Simcoe



On the afternoon of Saturday, December 14, Trinity Anglican Church in Simcoe experienced a full house for its 'Choirs & Carols' event.

This new musical venture was brought to fruition by Trinity's Choir director Gena Norbury and Organist Kevin Norbury. A truly ecumenical event for the community, it brought together the musicians and church choirs of Trinity Anglican, St. Paul's Presbyterian and St. James' United.

The music was augmented by the sonorous sound of the local Salvation Army band. The festive event included carols for the congregation as well as performances by the individual and massed church choirs.

A charming element of the concert were the perfor-

mances given by the children of the 'Con Brio' music program, run by Gena Norbury at Trinity. These included singing, dancing and musical movements with props to Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker.

"I am delighted, and simply thrilled, at the number of people who attended!! My biggest joy is in building community, not just within the choir, but within our church. I pray the message seeped through into their hearts," remarked Gena.

Those who attended were encouraged to bring a toy, school supply or food item for the Salvation Army. The response was very generous indeed. In light of the great success of this joyful ecumenical community event, it is hoped that it will happen again next year.

Rev. Paul Sherwood

A True Story



"It's not about how long you live, it's about how you live your life."

Life wasn't about being popular; it wasn't about the so many things that Meghan thought it was.

She was about to discover for herself what truly mattered most in life. Her journey would take her to death's doorstep and back more than once while becoming the young woman God intended her to be, a perfect picture of His grace.

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We invite you to join us at one of our upcoming events. Participation is free, but you can support the work of the Renison Institute of Ministry by making a donation during registration. Each event includes parking and refreshments as part of the day's activities.

Find out which of our events will interest you at

www.renison.ca/RIM



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PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Ordinations

Bishop Townshend called to the Presbyterate at a service of Ordination held on Thursday, December 5, 2024, the Commemoration of Clement of Alexandria, Priest, at Grace Church, Brantford.

- The Rev'd Leah Arvidsson, Curate of the Parish of Long Point Bay
- The Rev'd Barry Ferguson, Priest Assistant under the Direction of the Territorial Archdeacon of the North.

Appointments

Bishop Townshend appointed the Venerable Janet Griffith-Clarke as the Interim Archdeacon of the East (Deaneries of Brant-Norfolk, Delaware, and Oxford), effective 15 December 2024 to allow for some overlap with Archdeacon Osita Oluigbo, who continues in the role until 31 December 2024.

Bishop Todd announced the following interim appointments:

- The Reverend Canon Tony Bouwmeester as Interim Priest-in-charge at Old St Paul's, Woodstock, effective 6 January 2025.
- The Reverend Canon Dr Byron Gilmore as Interim Priest-in-charge of St. Mark's, Brantford, effective 1 January 2025.

Bishop Townshend announced that the Reverend Jamie Baxter, having successfully completed his curacy, is now the Rector of St James', Wallaceburg and St James', Port Lambton, effective 24 November 2024.

Resignation

Bishop Townshend has accepted the resignation of the Venerable Jane Humphreys as Rector of St Mary's (Walkerville), Windsor, effective 30 April 2025.

Archdeacon Jane has accepted an appointment as the Executive Archdeacon of the Diocese of Ontario, effective 1 May 2025. Bishop Todd is grateful for Jane's many years of ministry in Huron and we wish her well in her new appointment.

Conclusion of Ministry

Bishop Townshend announced that the Reverend Raymond Hodgson has concluded his ministry at St. Bartholomew's, Sarnia, effective 29 November 2024.

Raymond remains a priest in good standing in the Diocese of Huron.

Congratulations

Bishop Townshend celebrated the marriage of the Reverend Hana Scorrar and Andrew Hix on Saturday, 14 December 2024, in the Collegiate Chapel of St. John the Evangelist, Huron Uni-

versity College. Congratulations to the newlyweds!

Rest in Peace

The Reverend Canon John E. Birtch, died in Lakeland, Florida on 1 December 2024.

Bishop George Luxton ordained John to the diaconate on 8 June 1952 and to the presbyterate on 31 May 1953. He served as the Rector of St. Barnabas, London; St. Jude's, London; St. Andrew Memorial, Sarnia (later St. Bartholomew's), and St. John's, Preston, before moving to the Episcopal Diocese of South-West Florida in 1971.

John was made a Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral on 26 January 1970.

Please remember Maureen, Stephen, and the rest of John's family and friends in your prayers.

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

Meet the new members of our team

There are new faces at the Synod office over 2024. We are pleased to introduce you to the newest members of our team.



Trisha Taylor has a long history of volunteer work in the diocese while working in the Developmental Services sector. She now serves as our **Governance Coordinator**.

Trish provides governance support including coordination of Diocesan Synods, prepares Clergy and Lay Licences, supports Diocesan meetings and provides administrative support including the collection and utilization of data collected annually from parishes. Trish is in the process of completing her English BA.



Juan Rodriguez is our **Technology and Resource Assistant**.

Responsible for the Diocesan database, Juan works closely with our receptionist, Steph Monaghan, to process Certificate of Elections and keep the database current and functional. Juan helps with the processing police record checks and Safe Church compliance.

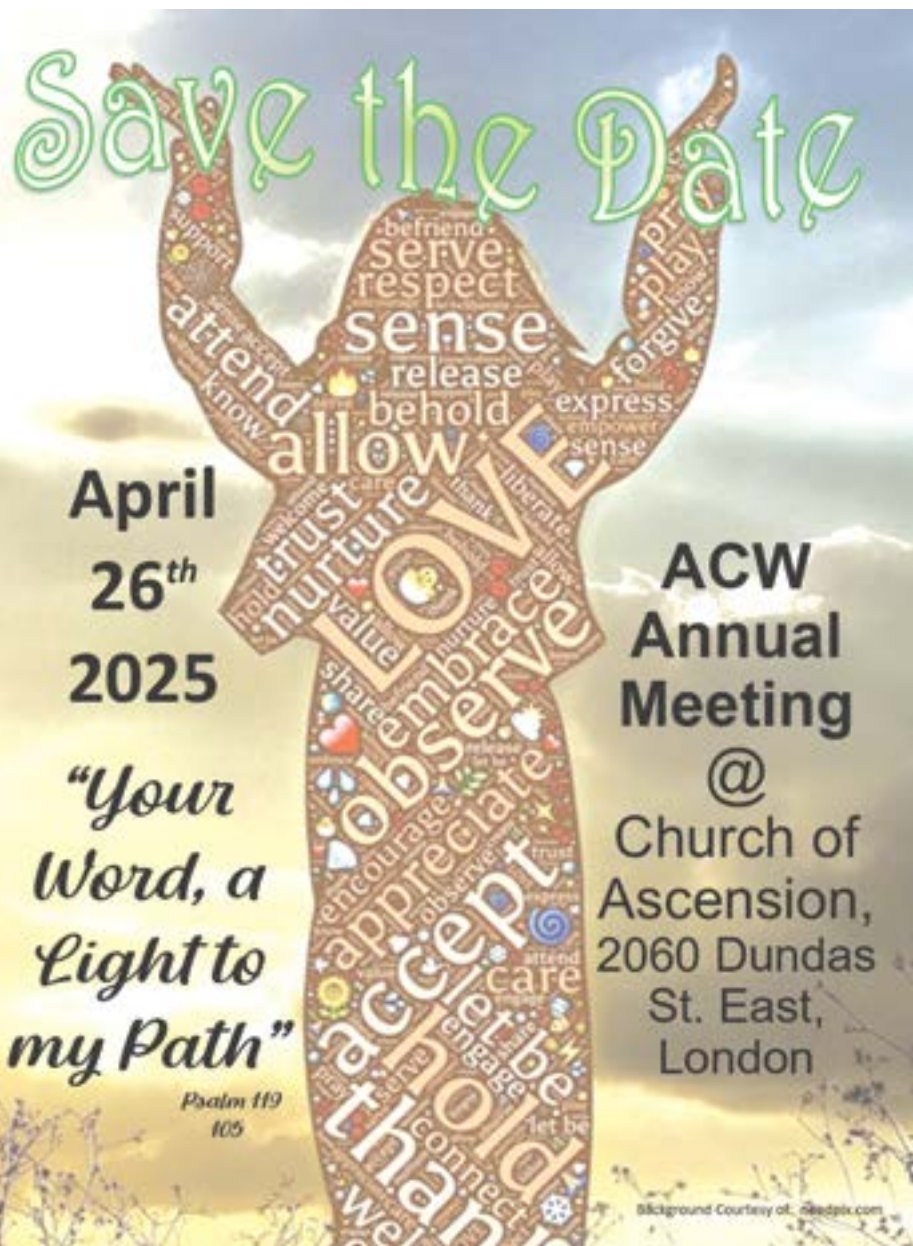
His degree in Computer Software Engineering makes him a great asset to the team for providing training and assistance with technology issues within the office.



Celeste Daneri graduated with her Business Accounting Certificate in 2024 before joining the diocese as an **Accounting Clerk**.

Celeste works in the finance team to process pre-authorized gifts for the parishes. She is responsible for parish payroll billing and other accounts receivable processes.

Celeste is continuing her education part-time with the goal of getting a CPA designation.



In Memory

Delaware Deanery
St. Thomas Church,
St. Thomas
Lois Paddon

Oxford Deanery

St. James' Church,
Ingersoll
Gwendolyn Ada Pittock
Myra Ann Shier



Prayer as a longing for God and a means to relationship

At our final Christmas Eve service, a traditional candlelight Choral Eucharist, I did something I hadn't done before: I asked each of our guests "What can I pray for, for you, this Christmas?"

Years ago, when I was learning what it means to be a priest, and being mentored by an aging pastor (The Venerable D. Ian Grant) who was gifted in his ability to connect with others, by being a good listener, and by dedicating so much of his personal life to the attention of his parishioners and those whom he ministered to in life, I remember asking him: "Of all the things that I can do before Christmastime, among all the busy routines and schedules, what is most important?"

I will never forget his sage wisdom. His response for me was this: "However you can, in whatever time you have to offer in the weeks leading up to Christmas, try to spend time with as many people as you can visit, especially shut-ins, and when you do, ask them this question: 'What can I pray for, for you, this Christmas?'"

At the same time, my mentor shared that the greatest response that any priest could have to these prayer requests, was to share the Christmas Gospel, for the story of the birth of Jesus, God's Son, into the world, was the answer to generations of prayer – and the hope for generations to come.

In advance of hosting our Christmas Eve services this year, I was reflecting on my personal desire to get to know some of the many guests who flock to the Blue Mountains for the opening of ski season, many of whom make an appearance at our annual Christmas services. Of all the services throughout the year, Christmas services tend to be somewhat of a rotating door in our Parish. Over two days we had more than 325 people join us for worship, but the majority of these are not likely to visit again on the following Sunday. In my pre-Christmas reflection, I wondered if there might be a way to foster a deeper connection with some of them?

My wonderings also led me to recall the sage advice from Archdeacon Ian: ask to pray



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

for them! And so, this is exactly what I tried differently this year. At our final Christmas Eve service, a traditional candlelight Choral Eucharist, I did something I hadn't done before: I asked each of our guests "What can I pray for, for you, this Christmas?"

To allow each to respond in their own way, our greeters handed out strips of paper that could allow each guest to take a moment following the homily and to write down what their deepest desire for prayer was in that moment. My promise to each of these guests was to get up with the sun, on Christmas morning, and, in the silence of the church, to offer each of their prayers up to God before our Christmas Day service would begin.

I was somewhat surprised when just about every person in our church took a good amount of time to reflect and then write down their prayer request. As guests left the church, many commented that this was the first time anyone had asked to pray for them in such a personal way.

Christmas at St. George's of the Blue Mountains: It was a very welcoming surprise with attendees in numbers that we hadn't seen since prior to the pandemic.

The following morning, as promised, I got up before the sun and made my way to the church. As the light began to shine through the stained-glass windows, I opened up each prayer request and read it, out loud, to God, praying: "Lord, in your love, hear this prayer."

As I worked my way through the sizeable pile, I was tugged through a series of emotions. Some of the prayer requests considered the needs of others: prayers for peace, prayers for reconciliation, prayers for healing. Some were incredibly personal and painful to read, begging for God's intervention in their life – prayers for the miraculous to happen. Within that hour I shed more tears than I have in a very long time. What I wasn't expecting to read, and noted as one of the most common types of prayers that had been entrusted to me, was the many prayers asking for ways to "know God in my life" or to "share my faith in God" with loved ones.

There was such a deep longing for God in so many of the prayer requests that I found myself inspired by the many intended, or perhaps unintended, professions of faith seeking a closer rela-

tionship with God. I wondered if a way of furthering these conversations (like a pastoral email address or phone number) might have allowed for some of these passersby to continue their prayerful conversations with me, or another member of my Church. So many seemed to be reaching out for something, grasping for something more certain in their faith lives.

Here, I'd like to share a confession with you. Before Christmas this year, I had an ominous feeling that, despite all our congregation's efforts to prepare for a series of different types of Christmas Eve and Day services, our attendance numbers were going to be modest at best.

I don't know why I thought this. I'm sure the postal strike, and our lack of traditional ways of sharing word of our services, did not help. Despite my pessimism, St. George's, The Blue Mountains experienced guest attendees in numbers that we hadn't seen since prior to the pandemic. It was a very welcome surprise.

Looking forward into this 2025 year, I intend to continue to explore the various ways that prayer can be a connection point between

non-members of our church (guests, residents in the neighbourhood, and extended family members and friends) and our congregation.

This year's Christmas demonstrated that there remains a deep longing for many people to know God in more tangible ways. How might our Church see this as an invitation to reach out to others, both through prayer, and through loving service?

My hope in sharing this anecdote with you, is that others might be inspired to do the same! Where might God be calling you to pray for others? And, how might these efforts be the answer to prayer for someone who is longing to take a step closer in relationship to God and perhaps even the Church?

The Rev'd 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.
grayhamebowcott@diohuron.org

“ Before Christmas this year, I had an ominous feeling that, despite all our congregation's efforts to prepare for a series of different types of Christmas Eve and Day services, our attendance numbers were going to be modest at best. I don't know why I thought this. I'm sure the postal strike, and our lack of traditional ways of sharing word of our services, did not help. Despite my pessimism, St. George's, The Blue Mountains experienced guest attendees in numbers that we hadn't seen since prior to the pandemic. It was a very welcome surprise.

Extraordinary encounters (within quite ordinary situations)



Jesus walks right into the middle of the everyday work-a-day world of these fishermen with what will ultimately be quite an extraordinary offer and encounter.



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.

“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.”

When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Luke 5

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

WHILE THE MAJORITY of our days can often feel uneventful, even unremarkable, there are other days that are forever burned into our memories. Generally, these days that remain distinct in our memories do so because of something that did or did not happen on them.

Sometimes the events of a day will be marked with joy and on others there will be sadness or loss. On occasion we will anticipate these events. At other times, they will come out of the blue and change all we have known or will know. I think it is safe to say that many of us are all of an age, to have had our fair share of both of those kinds of events and encounters.

During these early days of February, in Luke’s Gospel we read of an early encounter Jesus had with his soon-to-be disciples by the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus walks right into the middle of the everyday work-a-day world of these fishermen with what will ultimately be quite an extraordinary offer and encounter. Very likely their morning had begun as had many other mornings for Simon Peter and his crew. An unproductive night behind them, a morning filled with empty nets, nothing to sell at the market, so making the most of the time, they got to some chores that needed doing, as they rested on the edge of the Sea of Galilee. But into this “sameness”, this “nothing special moment” stepped the teacher, inviting himself aboard Simon Peter’s boat and using it as something of a platform from which to preach.

When Jesus concludes his conversation with the crowds, the encounter continues as he invites these fishermen

to venture into new depths, into an everyday place they thought they knew, but one in which there was more to discover. This encounter broadened and opened these new disciples to find something new, something hidden in plain sight.

In the EfM program, the materials and resources are prayerfully designed and strongly reliant upon God’s Spirit, to support encounters of all kinds – encounters with one another, with oneself and of course with the divine. We set ourselves to find that certain something hidden in plain sight. The expectation is that right in the middle of all the “ordinary” of everyday life, the extraordinary will reveal itself, surprising us that perhaps it had always been there. A real adventure of discovery.

In several months we will be hosting both online Open Houses and in-person Open Houses, so please watch for these dates, times and locations. In the meantime, be bold and cast out those nets. Who knows what wonders there are yet to be discovered? Need more information about Education for Ministry? Please reach out to Libi Clifford the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or me, Val Kenyon at EFM@huron.anglican.ca to learn more.

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

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Distinguishing between real and AI-generated images

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) has made significant strides in image generation in recent years, creating hyper-realistic images that can be incredibly difficult to distinguish from real pictures.

While this technology has exciting applications in art and entertainment, it also raises concerns about the potential for misinformation and deepfakes. It is key that churches and users of social media protect themselves from these deepfakes and misinformation.

Here are some key indicators to help you spot AI-generated images:

1. Unrealistic Details: Pay close attention to the eyes. AI often struggle with rendering realistic eyes, resulting in pupils that are too large or small. Hands and fingers are notoriously difficult for AI to generate accurately.



**MEDIA
BYTES**

**REV. MARTY
LEVESQUE**

Look for unnatural shapes, missing fingers, or digits that appear fused. While AI has improved in rendering hair, there may still be inconsistencies in the way hair flows or appears too uniform. Backgrounds in AI-generated images can sometimes appear blurry (especially any signs in the background), unrealistic, or contain strange out-of-place artifacts.

2. Unusual Patterns and Textures: AI sometimes generate repeating patterns or textures that appear unnatural or overly uniform. Does the tablecloth match the dress? Also, pay attention to the way light interacts with



objects in the image. Shadows may appear unnatural, or the overall lighting may seem inconsistent or overly dramatic.

3. Technical Artifacts: AI models may sometimes struggle to render fine details, resulting in blurring or a lack of sharpness in certain

areas of the image. This is especially true in the background artifacts. Restaurant signs or street signs are often blurred out.

4. Contextual Clues: If you suspect an image is fake, use reverse image search tools to see if the image appears elsewhere online. If it ap-

pears on multiple websites or in different contexts, it most likely is AI-generated. And be wary of images from unverified sources or social media accounts known for sharing misleading content.

Remember, as AI image generation technology continues to evolve, it will become increasingly difficult to distinguish between real and AI-generated images. By being aware of these potential indicators and using a combination of critical thinking and available tools, you can better navigate the evolving landscape of social media and protect yourself and your church.

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

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Retirement and the wisdom of the years

I AM RETURNING to an article called *Waiting to Exhale* that I wrote and published 10 years ago to the day. It began with this story, a memory I can still see in my mind:

The other day, I noticed a young toddler strolling hands-free aside his mother down a sidewalk outside my apartment. He was wrapped cozily in a heavy, warm snowsuit. Each step is distinguished by a whoosh of his bulky leggings. His little face beamed from out under the snuggly hood.

What mostly caught my attention was the child's undeniable pleasure, seemingly impervious to the drag of the cumbersome outfit. I was riveted by the sparkle of his playful energy, fascinated by his ecstatic buoyancy.

To quote myself, "Many of us have long forgotten how to engage life with such deep pleasure. Our hearts and minds are increasingly distracted by the natural course of pain and loss. And though most of us have developed a great resiliency to life's bumps, we don't breathe as deep as we did as children."



AS I SEE IT

REV. JIM
INNES



It is challenging to recover innocence lost. When specific experiences or knowledge seep into our being, they bring about a subtle dimming of our former selves. This shift results in a sad transformation, where the joy of unreserved excitement gives way to anxious caution. Consequently, one's perspective becomes irrevocably altered.

It is challenging to recover innocence lost. When specific experiences or knowledge seep into our being, they bring about a subtle dimming of our former selves. This shift results in a sad transformation, where the joy of unreserved excitement gives way to anxious caution. Consequently, one's perspective becomes irrevocably altered.

For some individuals, these experiences can result in a protective disengagement from those around them. This can lead to a dwindling enthusiasm, replaced by a

sense of apathy that obscures their once vibrant engagement with the world.

As I enter retirement, I reflect on the excitement I felt over 40 years ago as a student pursuing ordination. Over time, that initial vigour has dulled, replaced by a more measured perspective shaped by my time in ministry and the complexities of life, including relationships and personal loss.

While tempering my exuberance was essential for the well-being of those I served, I mourn the light-

hearted connection I once had to my work. Though beneficial in some ways, this shift is a loss that's hard to describe.

Can we reclaim that sense of childlike energy and buoyancy? Is it possible to rekindle the innocent, playful joy we once felt despite the weight of experience and responsibility?

I propose that the answer is "no." Arguably, the loss of innocence and the challenge of recovering it must be balanced by learning to dance in rhythm with grief. The tune

could be entitled 'Wisdom Gleaned.'

This dance is not about returning to a past state of innocent exuberance; instead, it is about acknowledging our life's journey and, through effort, remembering the moments of joy we have experienced. While this joy may not be as unfiltered as that of our childhood, it can still be equally profound.

As I stand on the cusp of retirement, I recognize that my journey has been a complex tapestry woven with threads of lost innocence and wisdom gained. I long to recapture the genuine delight of that toddler in his snowsuit, but I understand that the journey is less about what was and more about embracing openly and wholeheartedly what is. Though childhood exuberance may not be fully recoverable, profound joy can be uncovered in the experiences and insights gained over our lifetime.

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Black History Month: We need to hear other perspectives

By Rev. Chris
Brouillard-Coyle

BY THE TIME folks receive this edition of the Huron Church News, most will have packed their Christmas decorations away for the year, leaving behind the festivities, at least until society prematurely invites us to engage in Christmas in July and then starts with early Christmas promotions in the fall.

Christmas features heavily into our culture. It includes an entire season of decorations, movies, television specials, music, commercials, and more. There is something comforting about the extent to which our celebration of Christmas feels almost universal.

Except, it isn't, universal that is.

There are other celebrations that happen at the same time as Christmas. Could we imagine living in a world where Christmas was overshadowed? Could we imagine living in a world where, say, Hannukah was the dominant December celebration? Could we imagine a world where menorahs were featured be-

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



Consider reading Robin DiAngelo's "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism". This text could also make an interesting book study.

ginning in the fall and commercials pitched a plethora of Hannukah presents throughout the season. What would it be like to live in a world where there was Hannukah music on the radio playing non-stop for weeks, and Hannukah movies on television and in theatres? What would it be like to live in a world where people insisted on saying Happy Hannukah and got offended when you responded Happy Holidays because you celebrate Christmas and want to respect the fact, they celebrate Hannukah but also want to feel acknowledged that you are celebrating something important to you?

We don't realize how much Christmas overshadows the

celebrations of others because it has become so normalized, such a dominant part of our culture. We have been tricked into believing that this is something important to everyone. We may be shocked to learn that is not the case.

Christmas is not the only aspect of our being that is so dominant and normalized that it overshadows the realities of others. There are privileges associated with being white, cisgender, heterosexual, male, middle aged, able bodied, and neurotypical that can distract us from recognizing the challenges marginalized individuals face each day.

We can count ourselves lucky if we have never had people assume we are crim-

inals simply because of the colour of our skin. We are lucky if we don't have to think about accessibility when we travel around any region. We are lucky if we feel safe walking alone at night. We are lucky if we don't have to think twice about whether or not to show affection to our partner in public. We are lucky if we feel comfortable being our full selves in any and every context. This is not the case for everyone.

Our Marks of Mission include transforming unjust structures of society, challenging violence of every kind, and pursuing peace and reconciliation. There are unjust structures of society from which we benefit whether we are aware of these or not. One step to working towards transforming the unjust structures of society is to understand the ways privilege is related to these.

As we know, February is Black History Month. We need a Black History Month because one of the unjust structures of society is that it is the stories of white Western men that dominate in the education system. We need to hear other perspectives, hear

other stories, to create space for a deeper understanding of our interrelatedness and the unequal realities that continue.

There will be lots of important opportunities for education during the month of February. Note that the contributions of Black individuals to this education is emotional labour and needs to be acknowledged and compensated. There is work non-Black individuals can do as well. Consider, for example, reading Robin DiAngelo's "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism". This text could also make an interesting book study.

The key is for those who hold privilege to humbly listen and learn about what this looks like and what this means in regard to the unjust structures of society. And then, to use that privilege to transform those unjust structures as we are able.

May we each have the courage and grace to enter into this work this month and throughout the year.

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

How do we communicate God's love in God's world?

AT AN EARLY STAGE in my ministry, I was given the opportunity by my Bishop to engage in a conversation with a search committee, and to explore a future move to a new parish.

It was a time in the life of the Church when the Exchange of the Peace with which we are familiar now, was a new experience. It was being seen in some congregations, as a time when people were being encouraged to reach out and, at the very least, shake hands. Some congregations opted for the full embrace approach, while others offered the Peace sign from a respectful distance. Other congregations had a lengthy melee as it was seen as a moment not only to exchange God's Peace and Love, but also to catchup with other members of the Parish Family.

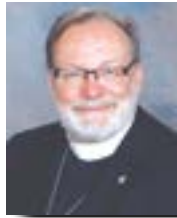
When I asked the search committee what was the practice that was reflective of that particular community of faith, one member of the committee responded, in rather strident tones, "We do not believe in any public tactile expression of affection!"

How do you communicate God's Love in God's World?

As I write this article on Boxing Day of the 2024 Christmas Season, I am fully aware of the frequency of the message that God loved the world so much that he sent his only Son into that world. The personification of God's Love being fully expressed in a little baby is a key feature of how we try and grasp the reality that we are the focus of a Divine Love which has touched the lives of people throughout the centuries in their daily lives and in their unique circumstances.

As we move into the twenty-fifth year of the first century of the second Millennium after the birth of Jesus, we continue to try to comprehend the experience of the Love of God being a reality

...A creche was set up, and some of the stones which had been painted orange to reflect the *Every Child Matters* message were surrounded with other stones placed by members of the congregation as they remembered those whose lives were in upheaval, during the Christmas Season.



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

which is to be found in the person of Jesus. If the totality of God cannot be caught up within a net of words, then, perhaps, the Love of God may be glimpsed in the visual images with which we surround ourselves of the world in which we live.

During the Season of Advent, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of Jerusalem went through the Wall to visit Bethlehem. In a Lutheran church in that setting, they noted how the pastor had prepared the Nativity scene to reflect the current situation of that community of faith. The Christ Child, lying in a manger, had been placed on a pile of rubble, reflecting the war-torn landscape and devastation which is the reality of that part of the world. In that symbol, the word Emmanuel, "God With Us", has a powerful meaning for those who are seeking to be faithful as their



homes are reduced to rubble.

Finding a special location in Vatican City, Palestinian artists set up a Nativity scene where the usual figures were given their place. As he visited the site to offer his Papal Blessing, Pope Francis gazed on the figure of the Christ Child lying on a keffiyeh, in the manger. The black and white cloth represents those Palestinians who are living in the midst of a land torn apart by war and destruction. Since the 1960's when the keffiyeh was worn by Yasser Arafat, who led the Palestine Liberation Organization, the keffiyeh has served as a symbol of the Palestinian national struggle. As they wear the keffiyeh, Palestinians see it as a means by which they are carrying their family identity with them, each and every day. The Pope seized the moment to remind us all in the midst of the pattern of our own lives, to remember

and pray for all those, who, throughout the world, "are suffering from the tragedy of war".

I have been gifted in recent days with the opportunity to offer an Interim ministry, with the community of faith at St. James Church, Cambridge. The folks in that setting have not lost sight of the importance of the vital message, especially in our Canadian context, that *Every Child Matters*. As you can see from the picture which accompanies this article, a creche was set up, and some of the stones which had been painted orange to reflect the *Every Child Matters* message were surrounded with other stones placed by members of the congregation as they remembered those whose lives were in upheaval, during the Christmas Season.

During my experience of Interim ministry, I have benefitted from another

insightful message regarding the Baptismal ministry we all share. At the very outset of the Walk On Christmas Pageant at St. James, (a wonderful experience which may find its way into a future article), the Readers introduces the pageant with these words:

Our Christmas Story is timeless as it has been passed from generation to generation over thousands of years. It has been passed from believer to people hearing the story for the first time, from parent to child, over and over, and we come together to hear it again, either as a reminder or to hear it told in a way that makes the story new and fresh to us.

As we remember and retell the story tonight, we share images from Matthew, Luke and John, as well as traditions born from saints along the way. We offer this telling of our story in the prayerful hope that the presence of the Christ within each of us will shine more brightly and those around us will come to recognize the most amazing Christmas gift ever... the gift of God's Love.

As we claim the presence of Christ to be a reality in our lives, how is that Divine Love shared with others? For some, the sharing of our faith story comes easily. Others express God's Love in their words and actions. Still others, at a loss for words and feeling the situation they are in is beyond their scope, become the conduits of Divine Love by being a silent, caring presence to those whose lives touch theirs.

I invite you to take a moment and reflect on how you may best communicate God's Love in God's World in your own life.

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

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NEW IS LIFE: Having courage to seek opportunities that may be scary



CHANGES ARE COMING TO ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: A community that has chosen to be disrupted, disturbed and even uncomfortable as it has made the life-giving and risky decision to invest in reorganizing the worship space.

I RECENTLY RE-READ Anne Lamott's book *Help, Thanks, Wow*. These words jumped out at me...

If we stay where we are, where we're stuck, where we're comfortable and safe, we die there. We become like mushrooms, living in the dark, with poop up to our chins. If you want to know only what you already know, you're dying. You're saying: Leave me alone; I don't mind this little rathole. It's warm and dry. Really, it's fine. When nothing new can get in, that's death. When oxygen can't find a way in, you die. But new is scary, and new can be disappointing, and confusing – we had this all figured out, and now we don't. New is life!

If you want to know only what you already know, you're dying. Comfort and safety feel really good. In fact we have in many ways been taught from a young age to get an education so that we might get a good job, gain security, and retire comfortable. But what of the risk-taking and safety-averse Jesus that we follow?

The very message of Jesus is saturated with calling people to discern how they might leave the comfort of today for uncertainty of tomorrow. Jesus arrives to the people in the most incarnational and new way possible – as a new-born. We are not long removed from our celebration of Christmas.



It's Just KEVIN

V. REV. KEVIN GEORGE

Jesus arrives in the most uncomfortable way – in a stable. God's call to Joseph and Mary most certainly must have been disappointing, scary, and confusing.

In his life and witness Jesus again and again challenges people to leave what they know to take on something new. In the only account of his childhood in scripture, we have Jesus leaving the security of his family to teach in the synagogue. Peter, along with James and John sons of Zebedee, are told to drop their nets. Matthew leaves his tax collecting. Jesus asks those who have been rigidly following the law to examine what they were doing and embrace love above all else. You get the idea – our Christian story is about launching out from what we know to explore the depths of what is unknown or unfamiliar to us.

Learning is a lifelong goal that should not be connected to jobs, positions, or security. No matter our job, our bank account or our situation, we should be encouraged to discern when we have become too comfortable – so

comfortable that become like mushrooms with poop up to our chins. We need to have the courage to seek opportunities that may be scary, and may be confusing. New is life. No matter how much we come to know we can be assured that we do not have it all figured out. Sometimes we have to put our nets in new and deeper waters.

Thirty years ago, I made the very difficult choice to leave Newfoundland and everything that I knew to move to Ontario to study theology. It was frightening. The pain of leaving a large family and a comfortable level of family and community support was not easy, never mind how foreign London, Ontario seemed to be to me at the time. I still remember how scared I was walking into Huron College that first day. Today, I cannot imagine what my life would be like if I chose comfort over reaching for something new. While I still have great pain in my heart when homesick for family, I could not imagine not being engaged in parish ministry here in the Diocese of Huron.

One year ago, after discerning that I was perhaps getting too comfortable and too safe – I said farewell to a community I loved early, to become Dean and Rector of St. Paul's. I was so comfortable at St. Aidan's I really could not envision ever taking on something new. Hard

as it was to leave behind all that made me feel warm and safe, it was critically important to remember that Jesus called me to serve, not simply to be comfortable. As much as I grieved leaving my previous parish behind, I have come to know that 'new is life'.

These challenges to take risks and embrace what is new come to us daily – not just in the big moments. My daily prayer includes a plea to God to give me strength to take the risk of doing something new – and my prayers of gratitude daily include thanksgiving for learning from new experiences.

Now I am at St. Paul's Cathedral and walking alongside a community that has chosen to be disrupted, disturbed and even uncomfortable as it has made the life-giving and risky decision to invest in reorganizing the worship space. When complete, the nave of St. Paul's will be fully accessible, have a beautiful new floor and cathedral chairs that will allow us to set up worship space in ways fitting for ministry for our day and our time. Naturally, these changes come with some sense of uncertainty and with the challenges that come along with embracing change. I am proud of the parish community for its willingness to explore new possibilities.

Importantly, the Diocese of Huron is also embracing change in supporting these efforts having stepped up with a \$250,000 grant, and a \$500,000 loan to allow this work to move forward. As a Cathedral Church, St Paul's will be well positioned to host all of the Diocesan events. Synod will be held in its entirety at St. Paul's. In fact our first big event in the new space will be the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. This synod will see a new Primate elected and installed in our renewed worship space.

If we are discerning big changes in life – we can do so knowing that 'new is life' and that we never travel from one place to the next alone. If we are simply seeking new ways to let oxygen into our lives of faith, or looking for new ways to serve – we can do so knowing that while doing something new may be scary and unfamiliar – life and hope will result from willingness to step outside of our comfort zone. God will make good with our openness and our vulnerability.

Let us seek to be open to discerning what nets we need to put down and what new adventure we can embrace.

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

” If we stay where we are, where we're stuck, where we're comfortable and safe, we die there. We become like mushrooms, living in the dark, with poop up to our chins. If you want to know only what you already know, you're dying. You're saying: Leave me alone; I don't mind this little rathole. It's warm and dry. Really, it's fine. When nothing new can get in, that's death. When oxygen can't find a way in, you die. But new is scary, and new can be disappointing, and confusing – we had this all figured out, and now we don't. New is life!

Anne Lamott. Help, Thanks, Wow

