



MISINFORMATION AND THE NEED FOR DISCERNMENT

How to critically evaluate sources of information?

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UNPLUGGING FOR LENT: A SOCIAL MEDIA DIET FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Lent offers a unique opportunity for spiritual growth and self-discovery.

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LORD, HAVE MERCY!

What role does our faith play in how we engage with the Provincial Government?

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HURON CHURCH NEWS

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

Praying for strength and guidance in the time of renewal



ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, end of January 2025: The changes come with a vision that goes far beyond hosting General Synod in June.

Work is well underway at St. Paul's Cathedral. The pews have been removed, and thirty holes cut in the floor to allow for the foundation work needed to add concrete piers below our building to strengthen the aging beams that support us while we pray and praise, while we offer laments and petitions.

The crew from EllisDon are doing a fantastic job. Everything is on schedule.

Look soon for the launch of our Dreams and Visions Campaign.

Please pray for our Cathedral church in this time of transition.

▶ **Page 5 WHERE LOVE CAN DWELL**

When CHURCH becomes your HOME, literally



These numbers are not just statistics; they are stories of survival

A personal (family) story shared by Helen Booth, St. Mark's (London) warden and a Food Pantry ministry member, accompanies reports and numbers for St. Mark's outreach efforts.

” **My mother was my beacon of hope, a light that guided me through the darkest of times. It's that same spirit of hope that fuels my work at St. Mark's. I pray that every guest who comes through our doors feels the same, that they leave with a sense of belonging, friendship, and hope for a better tomorrow.**

▶ **Page 3 WHERE WOULD MY FAMILY BE TODAY?**



Join AFC's 2025 Say Yes! to Kids campaign
Register by April 1

Help to grow a brighter future for children, youth, and young adults!

Learn more at anglicanfoundation.org/sytk2025



AFC launches 5th annual Say Yes! to Kids campaign

▶ **Page 4: SAY YES! TO KIDS**

BELIEVE IT OR NOT....

Summer is around the corner!



AIM FOR THE BEST!

CAMP HURON: REGISTRATION FOR 2025 SEASON IS NOW OPEN

NEW IN 2025: DAY TRIPPERS
Join us at breakfast and stay until dinner

▶ **Page 7: CAMP HURON 2025**

Being part of a global Anglican network:

Learning from Indigenous Church in New Zealand

HURON CHURCH NEWS

Volume 75, Number 3

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**BISHOP
TODD
TOWNSHEND**

Indigenous Network, Anglican Peace and Justice Network, Colleges & Universities of the Anglican Communion, Network for Inter-faith Concerns, International Anglican Family Network, International Anglican Women's Network, Réseau francophone de la Communion anglicane, Anglican Communion Safe Church Network, and so on.

We are part of a global church that is a very large network—almost too broad and diverse and wonderful to comprehend. So, we meet, to begin to comprehend the gift that it is. You are invited, as you are able, to explore these networks and to become part of one or more of them. As your bishop, I am honoured to have the expectation placed on me to be a part of those networks. As part of my service on the Board at Huron University College, I am a

voting trustee of the Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion (CUAC). I also serve on the International Standing Committee for Unity, Faith, and Order (IASCUFO), whose role is to advise the Instruments and Member Churches on matters of doctrine, ecclesiology, liturgy, canon law, and ecumenical relations. While being very demanding, it is work that we can do so that Huron is contribution to, and learning from, this beautiful, God-given worldwide communion.

Many of you have experienced the joy and discovery made possible in the relationship we have with Amazonia, our Companion Diocese in Brazil. This is perhaps the most tangible connection many of us have to Anglicans in another part of the world. We are far away from one another, yet so close in Christ and in mission. We look forward to having time together with Bishop Marinez and others from Amazonia when General Synod meets in London this June. We will meet, again!

In the next few weeks, I will

be learning from in an expanding network, an Anglican Indigenous-led network, when I join a Compass Rose Society pilgrimage to Te Pihopatanga O Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia Feb. 17-March 2. With the financial support of two generous benefactors who are covering the cost, we will meet, experience, and learn from the Indigenous churches there in order to strengthen bonds for mission. Our National Indigenous Archbishop Chris Harper and Huron's own Archdeacon Ros Elm both visited there last year and witnessed to the eye-opening possibilities for Anglicans in Canada as we continue the work of truth-telling, healing, and reconciliation. I'll share what I learn upon my return!

I invite you to pray for all those who serve our churches, here at home and around the world. We pray for those who are discerning who the next Archbishop of Canterbury will be. And we pray for the unity of the church giving thanks for the promised reconciliation of all things in Christ.

+ Todd

'With you, Jesus, we walk in the desert...'

By Rev. Gilles Haché

WE ENTER LENT together, a time that reflects on the forty days of fasting of Jesus Christ in the desert, as depicted in the three synoptic gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, and also refers to the forty years of wandering of the Hebrews in the desert, after their exodus from Egypt.

Therefore, for us, as for Jesus and the Hebrews, Lent is a time of spiritual preparation and conversion. We are invited to refocus on the essential through prayer, penance, fasting, as well as through concrete acts of charity, such as almsgiving.

Lent is, unequivocally, a propitious time to make the Gospel alive and present in

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

our respective communities, and in our world, by caring for each other, the homeless, the poor, and the sick, and to truly live as an inclusive Church that provides justice for all. May this Lenten season be for us all, a time of prayer and commitment, to embrace God's grace.

With you, Jesus, we walk in the desert, under the movement of the Spirit. With you, we want to feed our hunger, our thirst, and follow the call of the Father. Lord Jesus, we may not always be sure that it is really the desert where you call us to be, but wouldn't it be the place where our conscience is, where our heart longs for, and the place that we must cross

to effect change? We entrust to you Lord, all our human sisters and brothers, the ones you know and who are tested by different life situations, even those who sometimes might lose heart. May we, by your grace through your Spirit, be an instrument of your presence for them in this time of Lent, and through them, allow us to fully recognize you and become better disciples. Help us, Lord, recognize what we truly need in life, not to lose heart, and to always turn to you. Help us inhabit our own deserts during this Lenten season, so that our heart and conscience may be transformed, by the power of your Spirit.

Amen!

Rev. Gilles Haché is an AFP Huron Executive member.



Where would my family be today? (A plea for compassion and community)

By Helen Booth

I PORE OVER the reports, the stats, the financial statements that are so vital for the St. Mark's food pantry. I understand the need for these figures, the vital role they play in securing funding and grants. But behind every number, every neatly organized column, lies a human story. A story, in fact, that is deeply personal to me and fuels my profound passion for the work we do. It's a story that begs the question: Where would my family be today?

Imagine, if you will, 1965. My mother suddenly becomes a widow, left with the crushing weight of 12 children to care for. The youngest, a mere nine months old, the eldest just 15. No income. No social safety net. No savings, no insurance, nothing. Just a family teetering on the precipice of utter despair.

The reality was stark. Rent was impossible, meals were meager, and any concept of "extras" vanished. We found refuge in a vacant farm building, a humble roof over our heads that a friend offered to us. The family was together, that's all that mattered. My mother foraged for wild berries, relying on the kindness of neighbours for the odd vegetables. A local grocer, with simple human



Saint Mary Magdalene Church in Monteith:
"Pews became beds, the wood stove a cooking place. A sacred space became our home, our lifeline."

grace, gave us day-old bread and deli scraps. My mother, already exhausted from loss and worry, started skipping meals so her kids would have more.

And then winter. The biting, ruthless cold of Northern Ontario descended upon us. An old, drafty farm building is no match for temperatures that can easily plunge to -30 degrees Celsius. Hope, already fragile, was starting to fade.

But in that darkness, a glimmer of light appeared. The priest from Saint Mary

Magdalene Church in Monteith offered us sanctuary in the church building for the winter. Pews became beds, the wood stove a cooking place. A sacred space became our home, our lifeline.

My most vivid childhood memory? One Christmas Eve. All 12 of us huddled on the steps leading upstairs in our house, waiting for the knock at the door. And then it came, and there he stood, a man dressed in black except for a single red ribbon on his hat. This was our "Santa." This was the Salvation Army, a symbol

of the charity that lifted us from despair.

Growing up, I honestly don't recall the struggles as much as the love. The sense of unity, the feeling of belonging. My mother, through it all, made us feel cherished and safe.

But that's the thing about a child's perspective; it doesn't always grasp the gravity of the situation. As an adult, I often ponder: Where would we be today? Would people still open their homes? Would a priest still offer a church sanctuary? Would strangers still offer food, not as a government program, but as human beings offering help?

I know, sadly, the answer. We would likely be homeless, and my mother would have been unable to keep her family together. In today's fragmented world, there would be no shared community and compassion. The consequences would be devastating.

My mother was my beacon of hope, a light that guided me through the darkest of times. It's that same spirit of hope that fuels my work at St. Mark's. I pray that every guest who comes through our doors feels the same, that they leave with a sense of belonging, friendship, and hope for a better tomorrow.

Here are the figures for 2024. Numbers are important; they tell our story of impact.

Through our network and shared resources, we touched over 86,000 lives. With the incredible help of Just a Bunch of Friends and COBs Bread, we delivered 600-700 sandwiches directly to those living on the street every week.

Three hundred and sixty clients visited us on our pantry days, offering crucial support to 1906 individuals. Out of our clients, 81 were new first-time guests and 279 were returning.

Our Food Education program delivered 24 sessions, supporting 720 individuals. And with the generosity of our supporters, we provided food for three community meals and Christmas dinner for 45 families.

These numbers are not just statistics; they are stories of survival, of people who need a helping hand. They are stories of hope, of compassion in action. And they fuel our passion to continue, to expand, and to ensure that no one will be left wondering; where would my family be today, in a world so driven by figures, that they lose sight of human need. Join us in making a difference, in building a community where everyone is valued and has hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Helen Booth is a warden at St. Mark's London and a member of the Food Pantry Ministry.

St. George's of Forest Hill outreach: Walk another mile in my shoes (and a 'Soup Can' challenge from a neighbouring parish)



Catherine from St. George's Outreach and Connie from St John's Kitchen, Kitchener. Boots and winter gear will help the most vulnerable clients at St. John's Kitchen.

Walk Another Mile in My Shoes... this outreach campaign asked people at St George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener for footwear--boots or running shoes--to be collected and given to the clients at St John's Kitchen (Kitchener).

This organization supports some of the most vulnerable clients by providing meals and a warm place to spend time, year-round, whether they be low income or unhoused. As the Polar Vortex settles in this winter, those who must spend the majority of their hours outside, were in need of better footwear.

Within a week of asking for folks to check closets, St George's collected nearly 8 dozen pairs of boots and shoes and winter coats and warm-wear. All of this is a testament to the generous and compassionate collective heart of St George's.

Our parish has provided support to St. John's Kitchen in many ways throughout the year. Our ice cream on Fridays during the summer is a great hit; more on that outreach in June!

+++

In January St. George's of Forest Hill's Book Club read "When the World Fell Silent" by Donna Alwood; a novel about the Halifax explosion and the disaster that occurred. Marilyn Graham presented the histories and stories of her family and that of her best friend who experienced the devastation that followed. It was a wonderful afternoon of discussion and fellowship.

+++

And finally, a short and exciting announcement: Trinity Anglican Church in Cambridge challenged St. George's of Forest Hill in Kitchener to a "Soup Can" Competition to feed the hungry. Stay tuned for the results in the next Huron Church News edition!

Mary Ann Millar/Catherine Carlson

Coronation Medal for our columnist



Rev. Canon Christopher Pratt (right) with Brian May, Member of Parliament for Cambridge.

Rev. Canon Christopher Pratt received the King Charles III Coronation Medal from the Member of Parliament for Cambridge, Brian May.

The citation offered an appreciation for Canon Pratt's governance work with St. John Ambulance at the local, provincial and national levels over thirty years of his association with the organization.

His work in providing leadership to a team that created a Prayer Resource Book for St. John Ambulance which has been circulated provincially, nationally and internationally was also noted.

Canon Pratt is one of 30,000 Canadians who will be given this recognition after having deemed to have made "a significant contribution to Canada".

Where is 'Anglican' in Alongside Hope?

By Rev. Greg Little

AN ARTICLE in the December edition of the Anglican Journal, PWRDF to change name to Alongside Hope, addressed the change in the name of the Primates World Relief and Development Fund.

In explaining the reason for the change, the article quoted the president of the PWRDF board:

Aside from being a mouthful to pronounce either in long form or as initials, says board president Mark Hauck, the meaning of the charity's existing name has sometimes been unclear to people outside the church who aren't familiar with the word "primate" as a religious title.

"My wedding was two years ago and in lieu of gifts, we

asked people to give to PWRDF. A friend of mine, who's not Anglican, said to me, 'I didn't know you guys were so interested in working with apes.'"

I can imagine a scenario which, an update the scenario on the article, might go like this:

'My wedding was two years ago and in lieu of gifts, we asked people to give to Alongside Hope. A friend of mine, who is not an Anglican, said to me, 'I would have thought you would ask for contributions to an Anglican Charity.'

I can understand the reasons to change the name of PWRDF. It can be awkward and a mouthful. However, I cannot for the life of me understand why you would not identify it as Anglican. What's wrong with Anglicans Along-

side Hope for instance – just off the top of my head?

As noted in the press release, which the article quoted, "It's still based in the **Anglican** church...It works with the Canadian [**Anglican**] church and with **Anglican** clergy and volunteers across the country to communicate that work to [**Anglican**] parishioners, bring forward **Anglicans'** ideas for areas of need and raise money to do the work."

The bolding and emphases in brackets are mine – to emphasize the Anglican nature of this organization. How are people to know this if there is nothing in the name to indicate that it is an Anglican endeavor?

In these times when many in our culture do not see the relevance of religious organiza-

tions, much less the Anglican Church, why would the strategic planning committee want to hide the Anglican essence of who we are? PWRDF – if you will allow me to use the traditional name – does wonderful work and we should do all we can tell the world that it is done by Anglicans.

I am reminded of the old aphorism about a camel being a horse designed by a committee. Perhaps this is not a good decision by the committee.

Regardless of the name change, I hope that supporters – especially Anglicans – continue to support PWRDF/ Alongside Hope as it's work is needed more than ever in these troubled times.

Rev. Greg Little is Honorary Assistant at St. John the Evangelist, Strathroy.



Why would the strategic planning committee want to hide the Anglican essence of who we are?

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AFC Launches 5th Annual Say Yes! to Kids Campaign

Registration for the Anglican Foundation of Canada's (AFC) 5th annual Say Yes! to Kids (SYTK) campaign is now open.

The 2025 campaign will launch on Tuesday, April 22 and close on Monday, June 30.

All parishes, dioceses, and organizations seeking to partner with AFC are asked to register by April 1.

TO REGISTER GO TO:

<https://www.anglicanfoundation.org/apply/sytk/>

Participation will be limited to 30 teams and registration is on a first-come-first-served basis. Teams will be asked to articulate a campaign goal and project focus at the point of registration. Most costs associated with youth projects and programs, including staffing, are eligible.

SYTK is an annual fundraising appeal sponsored by AFC. Launched in 2021 to encourage church-led pandemic recovery programs and initiatives, the SYTK movement has now provided \$755,000 in funding to more than 150 beneficiaries and fundraising partners for youth-focused ministry and outreach across the Anglican Church of Canada.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE!

Contact Angela Rush:

huronchurch.ads@gmail.com

905-630-0390



Join AFC's 2025 Say Yes! to Kids campaign

Register by April 1

Help to grow a brighter future for children, youth, and young adults!

Learn more at [anglicanfoundation.org/sytk2025](https://www.anglicanfoundation.org/sytk2025)

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Where Love Can Dwell

Changes to St. Paul's interior reflect deep understanding of the Cathedral's new role in the wider London community



Where Love Can Dwell: A Prayer for Renewal

God of infinite wisdom,
For nearly two centuries you
have loved and sustained the community of
St Paul's.
We give thanks for the generations of saints
that have been sustained in our community
around Word and Sacrament.
We pray for strength & guidance
in this time of renewal & reimagining.
Guide us as we make change.
Together, let us build a house where love
can dwell
for generations of saints yet to come.
Give us patience with one another
as we navigate our temporary worship
space.
Give us hearts to be faithful stewards
and a spirit of generosity to raise the
resources
we need in our time of renewal.
May our hopes, and dreams, and visions
inspire us to build not just a renewed
worship space,
but a renewed community.
We ask all this through your beloved Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

*(Written by Kevin George & Sam Thomas.
Inspired by the Hymn All Are Welcome -
by Marty Haugen)*

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.*

**Great Gift - \$20.00 includes free bookmark
missmeghansbeads@gmail.com**

**God’s Love and Blessings Always
Angela Rush 905-630-0390**

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Renison is pleased to provide the Renison Institute of Ministry (RIM) programming as our gift to the Anglican community. All we ask is that you bring your openness to sharing your thoughts and opinions, and a willingness to embark on this journey with us.

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



People accessing food bank are our neighbours

SideWalk Community Center at All Saints' Anglican Church plays a valuable role in the Community Food Assistance Network in Waterloo Region.

By **Melissa Bender**
(The Food Bank of Waterloo)

EVERY WEDNESDAY from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., community members living within the neighbourhood boundary and in need of food can pick up a hamper at All Saints' Anglican Church in Waterloo. The program, run through the church's SideWalk Community Centre, receives fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food from The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

"We have a volunteer waiting at the gym door, where the food is set out, who walks alongside the guest and answers any questions about products," explains Jane Bender, one of the volunteer coordinators of the food hamper program.

"Products are arranged in various categories, and once guests move through the non-perishable section, they pick up fresh produce before heading to the frozen food counter."

"We organize everything as if it were a grocery store, ensuring it's dignified and presentable for our guests," adds Ron Bender, who also helps coordinate the program.



Ron Bender, Jane Bender, Rev. Marty Levesque, Rachel Prichard, and others who help coordinate the food hamper program are pictured here.

Rice, pasta, pasta sauce, and halal food are among the most-requested items at the program. Each week, volunteers from the church and community serve around 40 households, building meaningful connections with everyone who accesses the program.

"We make sure we're on the same side of the table as them, so there's no barrier between us," says Marty Levesque, the lead pastor at All Saints' Anglican Church. "They are our guests. We walk with them and get to know all their names."

In addition to food, people can also access non-food items like toilet paper,

Kleenex, diapers, and period products once a month.

"Toothpaste and toothbrushes are always the first to go," notes Rachel Prichard, the volunteer coordinator of the program's non-food section.

Marty says that the food hamper program has re-shaped the church's approach to helping those in need.

"It's allowed us to make a structural shift within our organization—from a charity model to a solidarity model," he explains. "Instead of me standing at the front of the church collecting for the food bank, now volunteers come together here, walking alongside people. We have conversations and build relation-

ships with them. This mutual transformation helps us see one another, and we grow as Christians and as people. It's a deeper connection where we no longer view people accessing The Food Bank as 'other;' we see them as our neighbours."

Marty adds that while he's glad they can support people in need, he wishes that this type of assistance wasn't needed in the first place.

"If the program grows, we're going in the wrong direction," he says. "The goal, ultimately, is for food banks to no longer be needed. That's the dream."

Though the long-term vision remains a world without

food banks, the team is still grateful for the immediate difference they're able to make for those struggling to afford to put food on the table.

"Being able to provide food to so many people... having them come in and leave with something is really good," Rachel says.

"I'm thankful that we're meeting a need that's so prevalent in our community and that we can make one, two, or even three meals easier for a family," Jane agrees.

All Saints' Anglican Church is one of 54 organizations in the Community Food Assistance Network. Visit allsaintswaterloo.ca to learn more. If you'd like to help The Food Bank support Network partners like All Saints' Anglican Church, visit our Get Involved section on our website to learn more about donating food, funds, or time.

Melissa Bender is Communications Specialist at The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

(Text reprinted, courtesy of The Food Bank of Waterloo. Originally posted on January 14, 2025 <https://www.thefoodbank.ca/2025/01/agency-spotlight-all-saints-anglican-church/>)



Services at the Mohawk Chapel for 2025

Sunday, April 13 (Palm Sunday) at 2 pm

Sunday, October 5 (Thanksgiving Service) at 2 pm

Sunday, December 7 (Christmas Service) at 2 pm

H. M. Royal Chapel of the Mohawks
301 Mohawk Street, Brantford
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Visit: <https://diohuron.org/resources/tithe-ly-partnership>



evergreen

thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping **greenly** spirits of trees and a **blue** true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes

e. e. cummings

Come and gather with us at Camp Huron! Under the trees let us worship, work and play. Like the trees themselves, let us root ourselves in our faith as we grow in God's fresh, **evergreening**, gracious, love. Let our arms be like branches spread wide, stretching out towards one another in Jesus' name, here in this place... and beyond!

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Just imagine sitting under your favorite tree. Look up into its leafy canopy of **green, green, and more green**, rustling in the summer breeze... shelter, shade, and nourishment for the earth, a home for wild-life, a source of beauty, wonder, and delight!

PWRDF changes its name to ALONGSIDE HOPE on March 1, 2025

Quick answers to Frequently Asked Questions:

- Is the relationship with the Anglican Church of Canada changing?
▶ No, it is not.
- To which organizational name should donors provide donations?
▶ Either will work.
- 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/



Our name has changed. Our work stays the same.

PWRDF is now Alongside Hope

After two years of discernment and consultation, PWRDF's members* have approved a new name. Alongside Hope emphasizes themes of partnership, accompaniment, community and teamwork that have always exemplified the way we work.

With its tagline – Anglicans and partners working for change in Canada and around the world – Alongside Hope honours the legacy of PWRDF as an agency of the Anglican Church of Canada, and it will carry us forward into the future.

As we walk alongside our partners and many supporters, listening and sharing with one another, we embrace and embody the hope of a truly just, healthy and peaceful world.

Scan the QR code to view a video about our new name and read our list of Frequently Asked Questions, or visit pwrdf.org/our-new-name.

* The PWRDF Board of Directors, Diocesan Representatives and Youth Council comprise the voting membership.



Alongside Hope

Anglicans and partners working for change in Canada and around the world



Auprès de l'espoir

Anglicans et partenaires œuvrant pour le changement au Canada et à travers le monde

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Appointments

Bishop Townshend confirmed the continuing appointment of the Venerable Amanda Longmoore as the Archdeacon of Western Huron (Deaneries of Lambton and London). Archdeacon Amanda has served in the role from 1 July while the review of the territorial archdeacon project was being assessed and the adjusted model presented to Diocesan Council for approval. She will serve a five-year term, from 1 January 2025.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Bill Graham as the Interim Priest-in-charge of Holy Trinity, St. George, effective 1 January through 30 April 2025.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Kevin Dixon as the Rector of St. Jude's, London, effective 15 January 2025.

Bishop Townshend announces the following interim appointments:

- The Venerable Dr. Rick Jones as Interim Priest-in-Charge of St. John's, Eastwood, St. Paul's, Princeton, and Christ Church, Oxford Centre, effective 1 January 2025.
- The Reverend Canon Mark Kinghan as Interim Priest-in-charge of Trinity, Aylmer, effective 1 January 2025.

Induction

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, the Venerable Jane Humphreys inducted the Reverend Bob Masters as the Rector of All Saints, Windsor and St. Augustine of Canterbury, Windsor, on Sunday, 12 January 2025 at All Saints. The preacher was Gerard Phillips.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Captain

the Reverend Meghan Nicholls on the birth of her daughter Finley Jane Anne on 20 December 2024. Baby and mom are doing well. Meghan is on leave from the Diocese of Huron and currently serves as military chaplain in Halifax, NS.

Retirement

Bishop Townshend accepted the request of the Reverend Sherry De Jonge to retire as Rector of St. John the Evangelist, Strathroy, effective 28 February 2025. Sherry's last Sunday in the parish will be 23 February 2025.

After a first vocation as a secondary-school teacher and adult-education instructor, Sherry returned to university for her M.Div. degree, which she received from Huron University College. She was made a deacon on 8 May 2013 and priested on 30 November 2013,

both in the Diocese of Algoma. Sherry served in two parishes in Algoma until 1 December 2019 when she came on the strength of Huron and accepted the Bishop's appointment the Rector of St. John the Evangelist, Strathroy and St. James, Parkhill (to 2022). She also provided pastoral oversight for St. Ann's Chapel of Ease, Adelaide, until it was deconsecrated in September 2023.

We give thanks for Sherry's ministry and wish her well in retirement.

Rest in Peace

Mr. Joe Wooden, died on 10 January 2025. Joe received the Order of Huron from Bishop Howe in May 2004 or his long service to the Diocese. He was a member of Diocesan Council and Sub-Council, the Strategic Planning Task Force, the Imagine Huron Committee, the Nominating Committee,

and the Synod Organizational Committee and served as Honorary Lay Secretary of Synod. Joe was elected to both Provincial and General Synod and was a long-time member of the Bishop's Friends in London.

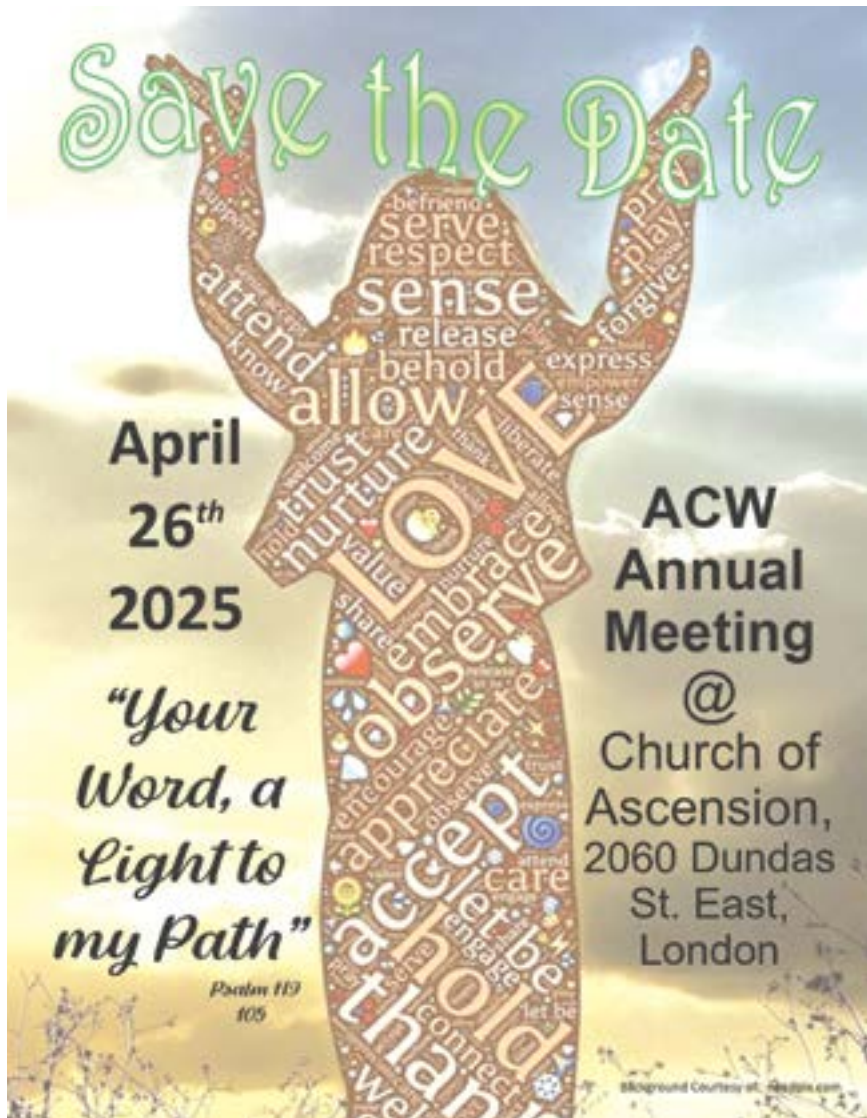
A funeral service was held at Trivitt Memorial Anglican Church, Exeter on Saturday, 25 January. Please remember Linda, Sue, Deb, Catherine, John, and the rest of Joe's family and friends in your prayers.


Dorothy Griffin, died on 4 January 2025. Dorothy was the spouse of the late Reverend Canon Thomas Griffin (1991).

The funeral service was held in Ingersoll, on Friday, 10 January. Please remember Allan McPhail and Dorothy's children, Llyn, Tom, Leslie, and their families in your prayers.

May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN





ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN - DIOCESE OF HURON

ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE

"Your Word, a Light to my Path"

Psalm 119:105


Church of the Ascension
2060 Dundas St. East, London, Ontario
Saturday 26 April 2025

Registration and Meet & Greet @ 9:00 a.m., Coffee/Tea
 Opening Prayers – 10:00 a.m.

Please bring your A.C.W. Banners for display.

Guest Speaker
 The Reverend Canon Doctor Constance Joanna Gefvert
 on "Your Word, a Light to my Path"

Holy Eucharist – 2:00 P.M.
 The Right Reverend Todd Townshend
 Celebrant



In Memory

Oxford Deanery
 St. James' Church,
 Ingersoll
 Dorothy Gwendolyn Griffin

The blessings of bivocational ministry



A Psychiatrist, a Mathematician, and a Teacher being ordained for real! All of them are students from Huron University LhT program.

WHAT DO a Psychiatrist, a Mathematician, and a Teacher have in common?

No, it's not the beginning of a bad joke (at least this time). What links these vocations together is the fact that in recent months, individuals holding these professions have also been ordained into leadership roles in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Within the last two years, there has been an explosion of bivocational individuals discerning a call to serve our Church. In previous generations, these same individuals might not have stepped forward because there was a misconception that ministry leadership was the sole responsibility of full-time, seminary-trained clergy. Whether or not the concept of a full-time priest in every parish was a sustainable or healthy ministry model, this previous misconception suggested that it should be normative wherever the resources could be found to support it.

In using the word "misconception", I recognize that some readers could take offense. Allow me to note that I am certainly not against full-time, single-cleric ministry, and in many places within our diocese



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

and across Canada this model has served the church well. However, what we are experiencing in this current moment in the leadership of the Church is a discernment of the wider gifts of the membership of our Church to raise up ordained leaders who desire to work together, in ministry teams, in a division of pastoral, administrative, and liturgical roles that unlock the capacity of congregations to reach out in relationship to more people than the single-priest, single-parish model was ever capable of.

A Psychiatrist, a Mathematician, and a Teacher will each relate to people in different ways. In my years serving in ministry, I have recognized that my own personality and gifts do not necessarily relate to all people in the same way. Where one person might connect with my personal ministry style, another person might not be so inspired. Yet, when I am able to work in partnership with additional ministry

leaders, the diversity of their gifts and personalities help to unlock relationships with people that I might not have been able to reach on my own.

Some people believe that bivocational ministry is a blessing because the ordination of non-stipendiary clergy lessens the financial burden of congregations facing financial and numeric membership decline. And, yes, the truth is that without many of our non-stipendiary clergy, there are congregations that would not be able to afford the cost of keeping their doors open for regular worship services. However, it is my experience that bivocational ministry is at its most impactful when these leaders are not utilized as a desperate last line of ministry, but rather as an augmentation of ministries that would like to explore growing in their capacity of diversifying their ministry outreach and in the possibility of seeking new relationships.

There was a time when theological education was restricted in a way that only someone who could afford the time and cost of committing years of study in a residential seminary model would be able to access the skills needed to become a deacon or a priest in the

Church. Thankfully, with the teaching innovations that have evolved since the pandemic, more flexible theological study options are available than in any other time of history in our Canadian Church.

And so, now a Psychiatrist, a Mathematician and a Teacher might also be able to share a virtual classroom, within an accessible schedule, that for the first time could allow for them to test out their own vocational call. I find it remarkable that this scenario is no longer just theoretical, but that this is becoming the new reality of ministry in the Anglican Church. If you are reading this article and are wondering: "might he be talking about me?", perhaps now is the time for you to explore the possibilities of taking the next step in your own discernment to ministry leadership! If so, give me a call, I'd love to hear where it might take you.

Rev. Canon Dr. Grayhame Bowcott serves as Rector of St. George's, The Parish of The Blue Mountains, and as Program Director for the Licentiate in Theology program at Huron University.

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Misinformation and the need for discernment

MISINFORMATION is a crucial issue in today's social and political landscape, and digital communication.

When I read the newspaper, I often find myself questioning what's factual and what's not. This uncertainty is disconcerting, especially when different sources present conflicting narratives.

Sometimes, it's obvious when someone is pushing an agenda, and in those cases, I just switch it off. Other times, I get drawn into a compelling analysis or narrative where the facts and their explanations significantly shape my perspective.

As we navigate this complex information environment, our minds often attempt to fill the gaps when precise information is lacking. This can cause us to mix up factual details with biased or agenda-driven content. Consequently, I am hesitant to listen to news stations featuring supposed specialists sharing



As I See It

REV. JIM INNES

their analysis, as it can quickly confuse me between what is truly fact-based and what is sensationalized commentary.

Misinformation can also lead to frustrating misunderstandings. Consider moments when a text message is misinterpreted or a lighthearted joke is taken seriously. When such misunderstandings arise, especially from trusted sources, they can lead people to become firmly convinced of incorrect information, initiating a cycle of spreading rumors.

"Fake news" has often been used as a buzzword to describe how misleading information can lead to disastrous consequences. A poignant example, relevant to the season, is King Herod's reaction



Elimende Inagella/Unsplash

to the birth of Jesus.

In the days leading up to Jesus' birth, King Herod ruled over Judea. When the wise men from the East arrived in Jerusalem asking about the newborn king, their inquiry stirred panic and intrigue in Herod's court. Driven by ambition, Herod saw this child as a potential threat to his reign.

Determined to locate the prophesied Messiah, Herod summoned the chief priests and scribes, who informed him that the ruler would come from Bethlehem. He called the wise men to meet with him, feigning excitement and asking

them to report back once they found the child.

The wise men followed the star to Bethlehem, found Jesus, and offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. However, warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they took a different route home. Realizing he had been outsmarted, Herod's anger turned to desperation. In a tragic response to his misinformation, he ordered the massacre of all boys in Bethlehem aged two and under.

Throughout history, misunderstandings have had significant consequences,

often difficult, if not impossible, to reverse. This applies to personal relationships, community issues, and global conflicts alike. Misplaced perceptions can create a ripple effect that causes considerable harm. In my job, I have witnessed rumors and misinformation damage friendships, disrupt long-standing working relationships, and erode trust in leadership.

Misinformation inundates our minds often without warning. In an age of social media and influencers adept at manipulating the system, the need for discernment has become a personal hallmark. Cultivating the ability to critically evaluate sources and separate fact from fiction is essential—whether that be news programs, social media, and online platforms, or the rumors you hear while out and about.

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

LENT: A season of great hope and expectation

...led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days ...

Luke 4:1b,2a

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

IT'S LENT. At its core, this season serves as an annual invitation to draw closer to God.

In anticipation and perhaps even with some trepidation, our aim is to journey with Jesus out into the wilderness, that is, out into a place, or a way of being, that allows for fewer distractions, perhaps even to a place to which we have never venture before.

This invitation asks us to give ourselves the moments needed to prayerfully examine those places in our lives that keep us from following more closely this God whose voice we have heard, and



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.

whom above all else we wish to serve.

In Lent we remember that great love with which we are loved, that love that gives us life, that love that will go to Golgotha, and most importantly that love we will celebrate on Easter morning. Lent invites us in through the shadows, into the promise of light, into the ongoing and ever-evolving promise of life in Christ. Don't be fooled though for Lent, while many things, is also a season of

great hope and expectation.

While everyone's journey is unique, some of our journeys are undertaken in the company of other like-minded, and sometimes, not so like-minded company. As reflecting on our faith in the light of our everyday experiences and challenges, is so central to the Education for Ministry way, Lent strengthens our resolve to commit to making space for learning, for seeking, for wondering, for exploring. We enter this

season led by God's Holy Spirit, empowered by the presence of God in our lives, and the possibility of more than we can ask or imagine.

Interested in more information about Education for Ministry? In the months ahead, we will be hosting both online and in-person Open Houses.

Our online Open Houses will be on Tuesday, May 13 and Wednesday, August 27 with an in-person Open House on Wednesday, June 4, all at 7pm.

Please reach out to Libi Clifford the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or me, Val Kenyon at EFM@huron.anglican.ca to learn more or to schedule an alternate date for a presentation or for further information.

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

EFM@huron.anglican.ca



Ylona Maria Rybka/Unsplash

EfM online Open Houses: Tuesday, May 13 and Wednesday, August 27.

In-person Open House: Wednesday, June 4, all at 7pm.

Lord, have mercy (A note on provincial election)

By Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle

ON JANUARY 21, the Right Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde gently and courageously asked the newly inaugurated president of the United States to have mercy on marginalized populations who may be fearful as a result of the implications of policies signed by the administration. Her words were widely recognized as an authentic embodiment of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

As we cast our votes to select those who will make choices on our behalf through the Provincial Government, this presents an interesting opportunity for us to reflect on who needs to be shown mercy. Who are the individuals so impacted by Provincial legislation that it can make a difference in their well-being? To what extent are the needs of these individuals considered in the electoral and legislative processes? What role does our faith play in how we engage with the Provincial Government?

The Provincial Government has responsibility for the most economically vulnerable

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



individuals through Ontario Works (OW), Disability (ODSP), and decisions about minimum wage. This means that the Provincial Government can decide the extent to which thousands if not millions of individuals in this Province can afford the basic necessities of life. Alongside the one in four children in Windsor who are food insecure are parents who are receiving OW, ODSP, and/or are working for minimum wage. Provincial decisions can impact the well-being of individuals and families. Lord, have mercy.

There are also vulnerable populations who have completely fallen through the cracks and have found themselves without housing. Some have found community and mutual support through encampments. Unfortunately, these are deemed unsightly by individuals who have never experienced the depths of this vulnerability.

The Provincial Government has the power to determine how these encampments are handled. They can decide whether or not these individuals are treated with dignity. They can prioritize addressing the root problem – namely a lack of affordable housing or choose to criminalize those who are vulnerable. Lord, have mercy.

The Provincial Government has responsibility for education. Children spend some six hours a day in schools which not only support their education but also provide resources for their overall well-being. A well-educated population is also extremely important for the future of any community. Decisions about content, context, staffing, buildings, and every other aspect influencing the education system have implications not only for children today, but also for our future as a province. Lord, have mercy.

The Provincial Government has responsibility for health care. We all need to access the health care system. We know those things that frustrate, the struggles with understaffing that can lead to excessive wait times and/or missed diagnosis because staff are rushed and flustered. We may recognize how stressful it can be to try to deal with underfunding, changes in priorities, and politics. We know this can impact the well-being of staff and patients. Lord, have mercy.

There are also those whose health is impacted by addictions. This is as much a health condition as any other and yet, the choices of the Provincial Government can frame those fighting addictions as criminals who don't deserve the same dignity as other health care needs. Lord, have mercy.

The Provincial Government is responsible for some infrastructure projects that have implications for those who travel and the environment. What is the priority? Populations need to move from one place to another. Climate change is also real and has implications for the long-term well-being of this province.

Lord, have mercy.

Of course, while Bishop Budde directed some of her remarks directly to the president, as with all good sermons, we know that all those who have ears should hear. It is not only those who have political power who need to be called to have mercy. When we cast our votes, we too have the opportunity to act with mercy, to make a choice that seeks to honour the dignity of every human being. To those who may say there is supposed to be a separation of Church and State, I remind you, this doesn't mean you leave your faith outside the voting booth. We carry our faith wherever we go. It should influence all of our choices, including at the polls.

As we cast our votes in this and future elections may we do so praying as Bishop Budde did not so long ago, "May God grant us the strength and courage to honour the dignity of every human being, to speak the truth to one another in love, and walk humbly with each other and our God, for the good of all people." Amen.

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



Getting sucked into my phone: A case for unplugging

WHEN THE CHURCH engages in conversations about stewardship, we categorize our God-given resources in three ways: time, talents, and treasure.

We tend to think of stewardship as an extension of parish and diocesan administration rather than an exercise of lifelong Christian discipleship. We are called to serve Christ in all things, in every facet of life, not just the time spent at our local parish. What we have failed to do is consider how our attention, which is really a commitment of time, can be stewarded for our spiritual benefit or co-opted and wasted for the benefit of corporations who will consume everything we offer them without compunction.

As the landscape of social media and Big Tech becomes continuously politicized and influenced by the whims of the billionaire power players driving the boat, the question of how Christians should engage with social media has become convicting. Financial profit on social media platforms is driven by user engagement and advertising. The more we scroll on our phones and give our attention to feeds



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FIELD NOTES

REV. ALLIE MCDUGALL

by ads, non-human spam bots, and AI-generated slop, the more money is generated through advertising revenue for the platform.

The likelihood of users making frivolous purchases through repetitive and compelling ads is also increased – it seems like every time we open our social media apps, we are being asked to spend money on something that we probably don't need. Whether

we intend to or not, we work to enrich shareholder profit while giving hours of our time away for free. Our attention, information, and images are being daily sold to the highest bidder and there is no great conspiracy to conceal this, it's all baked in to the user agreements we blindly checkmark.

Attention farming aside, there are environmental and ethical factors that must also be considered as companies like Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp), X (formerly known as Twitter), and Google become more reliant on AI. AI has become nearly impossible to avoid and uses, with permission buried in terms & conditions agreements, the images and data

we upload at an enormous environmental cost. AI queries and generated images rely on already-strained water and energy resources, and for what purpose? To poorly replicate the human image? To "streamline our creative processes" by incorrectly plagiarizing and spreading misinformation? The allure of convenience is not worth the added environmental and intellectual degradation.

A metric for godly social media use and screentime, a topic that our ancient corpus of Scripture is famously silent on, could be viewed through the lens of stewardship, but perhaps it could be even simpler than the management of time. Does your usage of social media platforms help you love God and love your neighbour?

I made the personal decision to taper off social media and close accounts that I had held for over a decade because I found the answer to this question to be, no. Getting sucked into my phone through the allure of notifications and the mindless, never-ending scroll made me feel inadequate, anxious, and misled about world events. Observing vicious Facebook comment wars about seemingly minor

issues, echo chambers of virtuosity, hate speech, and the stifling influence of American politics on Canadian affairs mixed in with eerily specific targeted ads and the occasional update from a friend or family member did not help me on my Christian path.

Discerning the decision to unplug from social media is a personal one and the ubiquity and convenience of these platforms has made it difficult for us to imagine life without them. But there was a time before, a time when connecting with the people we care about was only slightly more effortful, when the search for knowledge required a bit of skill and judgement. To feel more human, more aligned with the love of Christ, we may be called to surrender those things which distract us from our humanity, from beauty and nature and transcendence. Our time is a valuable gift from God that we are called to steward for the sake of love and the work of His Kingdom. To whom are we giving this gift and for what price?

Rev. Allie McDougall is the Vicar of St. Paul's and St. Stephen's, Stratford.

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The Body of Christ – being vibrant, tireless and relevant

POPE JOHN XXIII once remarked that "we are not on earth to guard a museum, but to cultivate a flowering garden of life."

I absolutely love this quote. I think that we should have it on all of our church doors and signs. It is not enough to place those words at the front door however, if there is not a fire burning within the church that will allow this cultivation to become reality.

Pope John XXIII's influence on Christianity was incredible. In calling the Second Vatican Council, he not only reshaped the face of Roman Catholicism, but the face of the wider Church. While many believed that Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli would be a short-term Pope of little influence, nothing could have been further from the truth. When the Cardinals gathered and elected him to be the Holy Father, few could have envisioned the reshaping of the church that would be the result of Roncalli's vision and courage to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The revolutionary Pope understood the Church to be



IT'S JUST KEVIN

V. REV. KEVIN GEORGE

living and dynamic. The Body of Christ is not a corpse to be viewed, or visited on Sundays between 8 am and 12 pm (no flowers by request). The Body of Christ is to be vibrant, kinetic and indefatigable.

Too many of our church communities have become museums that we work hard to guard, protect, maintain, and honour. We actually use those words in practice. It is not uncommon to hear an Anglican say, "we must protect the church from culture and the ways of the world." Also popular is, "We cannot do that here it does not fit with our tradition." All the while, our churches are in decline. At times I hear the words of John XXIII ringing in my ears and wonder how long before all that we have left are museums to guard, or a body on display for visitation? This gift that

we are given is too precious to be diminished to the halls of history.

The Church is a living organism that has for centuries lead social change and advanced the cause of justice. We have forgotten how relevant we used to be. What is worse we seem to have accepted the notion that we do not need to be relevant – often arguing that 'we are so different than the world.' John XXIII saw a need to remind the people of God that 'cultivating a garden of life' is a wonderful calling and it demands the courage to see change happening before our eyes. It also demands the willingness to lead the church away from the dark halls toward the Sunlight. As church, we do not plant flowers and forget about them. We plant them, we water them, we nourish them, and we delight in watching them change and grow, and often we plant those seeds for generations after us to enjoy.

If we have the courage to take the leading of Spirit it is tremendous what might happen. Take note of the response

to the prophetic preaching of Bishop Mariann Budde at the recent service at the Washington National Cathedral. Bishop Budde dared to take seriously the promises she made in her Ordination to the Episcopate to "boldly proclaim and interpret the gospel of Christ, enlightening the minds and stirring up the conscience of the people," and to "be merciful to all, show compassion to the poor and strangers, and defend those who have no helper!" She rankled Christian Nationalists — thanks be to God! More importantly, she inspired and heartened many who have been struggling to find a voice in the face of mounting injustice and oppression. Bishop Budde understood that her role was not to curate a cultural exhibit, but to till the soil and reach for the radical words of Isaiah, she got to roots as did Jesus when he read in the synagogue at the outset of his ministry;

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good

news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

In cultivating the garden of life we are guided by a Spirit that seeks to bring about a great peace and a great hope for all. That Spirit is speaking to the Church. The Spirit sings to the laity as well as the ordained. The Spirit is calling us to cultivate a garden where justice grows abundant, forgiveness is the bedding, and the love of baptism the constant water poured out to nourish the landscape of hope and mercy that God gives us. We are cultivating a garden of life. To quote Bishop Budde may "God grant us all the strength and courage to honour the dignity of every human being, speak the truth in love, and walk humbly with one another and our God, for the good of all the people of this nation and the world."

Very Rev. Dr. Kevin George is Rector of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and Dean of Huron.
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Living our lives without fear (in these changing times)

THE 1960s and early 1970s were turbulent years to be growing up, as I did, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There were moments of joy and celebration when the city rejoiced, like the first Earth Day events which packed the streets with people. They saw the day as a moment when a message could be sent to those who held political office that the care of the environment needed to be given priority, for the benefit of all.

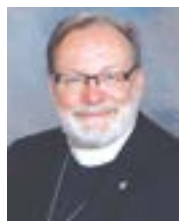
The city was a great place to be in moments of celebration. When the Philadelphia Flyers brought the Stanley Cup through the cheering throngs, they passed a large banner hanging on the wall of a bank sponsor which honoured the Flyers' goalie as it declared, "Only God Saves More Than Bernie Parent"! I stood in the courtyard of the City Hall building and sang the Flyers' theme song, "God Bless America" as loudly as anyone else.

Yet, at the other end of the emotional spectrum, the city resonated with anger and frustration as the Vietnam War wore on year after year. Protests were frequent and fueled by rage. Standing in the midst of the crowd, shoulder to shoulder with other anxious young men who, like me, wondered where their name would fall as Draft numbers were drawn and a future leading to the battlefields of Vietnam loomed on the horizon.

The assassinations of President Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator



Weston M/Unsplash



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

Robert Kennedy came at a time when the Civil Rights Movement was clamouring to be heard across the nation and in the halls of power. A radical protest touched close to home when individuals came into my home parish and after standing in the front pew throughout the service proceeded to throw the Alms Basins to the floor and stormed out.

During these days a singer's voice cut through the cacophony with a distinct tone and sharp insight.

"Come mothers and fathers

*throughout the land
and don't criticize what you
can't understand*

*Your sons and your daughters
are beyond your command*

*Your old road is rapidly
agin'*

*Please get out of the new one
if you can't lend a hand*

*Cause the times they are a
changin' "*

(The Times They Are A
Changin' - Bob Dylan

Those years are classified by some people as being "the good old days".

As I sat in a darkened theatre watching, "A Complete Unknown", the story of the early stages of Bob Dylan's career, I was emotionally transported back through the decades, where many of those memories I have just shared with you, became vivid once more. The music and the

message of those years, which initially feel as though they are reflective of a distant past, ring true during the turbulent times we live in today.

The Editor of The Huron Church News recently reflected on the big picture of the world as he marked the 75th Anniversary of our diocesan paper and encouraged all of us to offer our financial support for its essential ongoing ministry. He wrote:

"A lot has changed since 1950 and the first edition of the Huron Church News: the newspaper itself has changed, so has 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 from the world of your childhood. [HCN] has never claimed to be more than it is - a reliable and truthful witness to the events in Huron's churches."

-Davor Milicevic, Editor HCN

In the midst of all the change, the turmoil, the transitions, some of which we may understand, some of which may be beyond our comprehension, there is something that remains as a constant. Our faith and trust that God's presence in our lives is a reality upon which we can all depend. We discover that we are the focus of Divine Love as we share in the life of the community of faith that we call our spiritual home. The congregations where we feel that we may safely and freely express our faith are sanctuaries that many people in the rest of

our global village simply envy.

Our attempts to be relevant and responsive to the needs which are clearly evident all around us are parallel experiences to those whose lives and whose sacrifices have given us the freedoms to express our faith in a world which does not always welcome the message of the Gospel.

When the Bishop of Washington offers a message, pleading for mercy to be the hallmark of a new Administration, it should not, from my perspective, be heralded as a radical statement. The proclamation of God's Word, the experience of speaking truth to power, is one of the essential missions of those who seek to follow Jesus. Speaking words of compassion, living lives offered in the service of humanity and being "reliable and truthful" witnesses to Our Lord each day is a mission and ministry which has remained as an unchanging reality over the generations.

As we move in and through the Season of Lent, we have the opportunity to remind ourselves of our story of faith. Through reading, reflection and prayer, we are able to renew our relationship with the one who loves us and who has told us to live our lives without fear, no matter how daunting the challenges we face may be, in changing times.

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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Unplugging for Lent: A social media diet for spiritual renewal

LENT, the 40 days of reflection and preparation for Easter, is a time for many Christians to engage in acts of self-denial or intentional reflection. This year, consider a "Social Media Diet" as a unique way to deepen your spiritual connection and rediscover the joys of real-life interaction with friends, family, and neighbours.

But what precisely is a social media diet?

A Social Media Diet can involve limiting social media use or completely abstaining from social media platforms for the season of Lent. This could mean complete abstinence, deleting apps from your phone and avoiding



**MEDIA
BYTES**

**REV. MARTY
LEVESQUE**

social media altogether. Or it could mean limited access. Setting strict time limits for social media use, such as first thing in the morning, or just an hour at noon.

You may wish for a Platform-specific abstinence. Choosing to abstain from certain platforms while continuing to use others. Such as avoiding X, while still using TikTok. And finally, there is the "Mindful" use option. Pay attention to how social media

By disconnecting from the constant stream of information and opinions, you create space for introspection, prayer, and a deeper connection with Christ.

makes you feel and consciously choose to disengage when it's negatively impacting your mood or well-being.

But what are the benefits of a Social Media Diet During Lent? First, reduced stress and anxiety. Constant social media exposure can contribute to feelings of inadequacy, comparison, and anxiety. Stepping away allows your mind to rest, recharge, and focus on the things that truly matter in your life, such as

your faith, family, and friends.

Distractions from social media can significantly impact your ability to concentrate on work, studies, and other important tasks. A social media diet can help increase focus and productivity as well as improve the quality of sleep as the blue light emitted from screens can interfere with sleep patterns.

But more importantly, freed from the digital world, you'll have more time and energy to

connect with loved ones face-to-face and deepen relationships. Also, by disconnecting from the constant stream of information and opinions, you create space for introspection, prayer, and a deeper connection with Christ.

A Social Media Diet during Lent offers a unique opportunity for spiritual growth and self-discovery. By embracing this challenge, you may find that you rediscover the joys of real-life connections and cultivate a healthier relationship in real life and with technology.

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