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# HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • DECEMBER 2020



St. Paul's Cathedral is the oldest church in the city of London (Ontario).

## Pandemics in Huron, now and then...

Churches in Huron were closed during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-1919. Just like today, in the COVID-19 era, local congregations had to find new ways to provide their ministry.

By John Lutman

For three weeks in October of 1918, the Spanish Flu ravaged London and the entire area of Huron with great severity.

Schools, theatres and all public venues in the city of London were closed. A second wave returned in the winter of 1919.

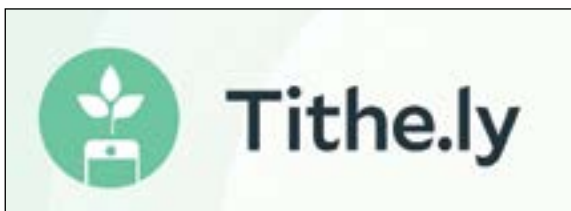
Orlo Miller in his history of London (London 200, published in 1992) devotes considerable attention to the effect of the Spanish Flu on Londoners. He estimates that one in six Londoners was affected.

The three-week October closure applied to all Anglican churches in London. This is confirmed in histories of Cronyn Memorial Church by Colonel Francis B. Ware and of St. John the Evangelist by J.D. Purdy.

It is reasonable to suspect that the closure of churches was by order of London City Council or the city's Board of Health (or its equivalent in 1918).

Going "on-line" in the year 1918  
Page 4

## Diocese switching to a new all-in-one online platform for churches



The Diocese of Huron is gradually switching to a new all-in-one online platform for churches.

The platform is managed by Tithe.ly, which has been known as one of the world's largest online donation platforms for charities. In the last 15 months Tithe.ly has expanded its platform to include website design and support and has also focused on church management and content sharing.

The partnership with Tithe.ly started in October with a small group of Huron participants testing the new platform.

MEDIA BYTES  
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## St. Andrew's Church, Muncey severely damaged in fire

A fire, deemed as suspicious by the OPP, engulfed a church in the Diocese of Huron on November 1, 2020.

The fire at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Muncey, started around 6 am on Sunday morning, November 1. It is reported that another church building, belonging to the United Church, not far away from St. Andrew's, was also burned down just a few hours earlier. Nobody was hurt in either fire.

Read the diocesan media release, Page 3



## A sign in front of St. Peter's Anglican Church puts Dorchester on the map of the world

It was a single tweet by a famous author that made a Huron church known around the globe.

Stephen King tweeted a picture of the sign in front of St. Peter's Anglican Church in Dorchester on October 27. In just one day the message "Thou Shalt Wear A Mask", said to be "quoted" from "Hygenesis 20:20" was seen by the tens of thousands of King's followers and garnered over 17,000 likes.

FAQ about the Amber Stage, Page 7





# Maybe God wants us to be more like Mary

The seasons of Advent and Christmas remind us that we probably should not try to explain and define exactly what's going on in the world around us.



**BISHOP  
TODD  
TOWNSHEND**

Strange and wonderful things are going on in the lives of the people in the biblical stories we will hear and they have no idea what God is up to. These seasons bring surprises for all of us—and it may be wise to make some space and time available in order to receive what God is offering and to respond.

Think of Mary, the mother of Jesus, coming face to face with the presence of an archangel and the news of a holy child that she will bear. She's wondering "how is this possible?" She learns that everything is possible with God – and she remains open to God's will for her.

I'm wondering if God wants us to be more like Mary. Think of Mary's generosity, her openness. Mary is vulnerable,



perplexed, happy, threatened, all at the same time. So young. Isn't it just like God to come to a person who does not have it all together yet? Isn't it just like God to come to the lowly.

Mary is young. Maybe a teenager. Unmarried, with no real standing her society. The religious and cultural law of her time would have her stoned for getting pregnant when she did. Not to mention how she did!

What was God thinking when choosing her? Perhaps, God was thinking, "Ah perfect. She might just receive this and respond." She does—and she

delights in the Lord. She is generous. She is vulnerable. She is perplexed. She is happy. She is threatened. Yet, she breaks into song. Maybe God wants us to be more like Mary?

God knows, and deep down we probably know too, that we are vulnerable, we are lowly, we are anxious, we are nervous. It is a nerve-racking time in which to live. But we can trust that God knows what God is doing. We can trust that God is drawn to those who need. This child born of Mary, Jesus, could not stay away from the ones who were most vulnerable. He

was drawn in by their need for him, his word, his healing, his reconciling ministry. He was hard to follow around because he kept veering off the path to reach out to someone who needed him. If God has a "flaw", it's God's weakness for those who are weak. God keeps stopping for them, in order to raise them up.

This is one way to describe the mission of God. It is good news—for what God has done in Mary, God wants to do in you, and in me. May you be blessed in these holy seasons.

+Todd

## Joyful anticipation in a different setting

By Rev. Mary Farmer

December and the season of Advent mark the beginning of the new church year.

Traditionally it's the time to re-immerses ourselves in Jesus' story. It's a time of joyful waiting, anticipation and preparation to experience the birth of Christ anew, as we are once again experience beginning of the story.

We have spent much of the last year 'waiting', not with joy and anticipation, but with fear and uncertainty. Whether or not we like it, we live in a new way of being and doing. This is uncharted territory, not the comfortable and familiar changing of the church seasons that we look forward to.

As people of prayer, both corporate and personal, Anglicans have a strong and enduring connection to Jesus through prayer. Especially in 2020, as all around us seems to be in chaos and the future uncertain, we need that tether and foundation more than ever.

One of the blessings of these pandemic times is that busyness has been nudged aside, replaced with lots of time to just be. With less busyness comes more space in our lives

### ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER



to explore practices, like prayer, that have been crowded out by the seemingly never-ending to-do list.

Advent 2020 is an opportunity to begin to work toward becoming a 'new church' in the light of Bishop Todd's charge to Synod, expanding something with which we are already familiar. One way to do that is for you and I to try new-to-us ways to prepare our hearts and lives for the blessing we receive through the birth of Jesus. One way to do that is through our prayer life.

Perhaps this is the time to try a different prayer practice. There are many ways to engage in daily prayer, with the BCP and BAS offering a template and prayers. You might consider exploring contemplative prayer as a way to learn to be in God's presence. A prayer inventory might appeal to you, as a resource to change and grow in relationship with God. Lectio Divina, repeated reading of a passage of scripture to see what catches your attention is an option. Daily Advent words and readings are available through

many organizations to give focus to your day's thoughts. Perhaps the most challenging thing about prayer is bringing our whole self to sit quietly in God's presence and listen for what God is saying to us.

The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada) has many resources available on the website. Many congregations have an AFP representative who is willing to help access resources and explore opportunities to grow in our individual prayer lives as we wait. Though larger gatherings have been postponed for the time being, the Bishops Prayer Conference and Fall Gathering organized by AFP Huron are excellent ways to meet others and expand your prayer life.

Whatever form it takes, may your time of preparation for the birth of Christ in Advent 2020 be steeped in prayer and open your heart and mind to see what God is doing to make all things new, right here and right now. AMEN

Rev. Mary Farmer is an AFP Huron executive member and the rector of Trinity, Bayfield and the Parish of the Holy Spirit.

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# Finding grace on the silver screen (or Netflix)

By Rev. Matthew Kieswetter

Back in my early 20s I took a university course on religion and film. I thought it would feature the classic Hollywood adaptations of the gospel stories, but it turned out to be a class all about the famed Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman. The films rarely dealt with religion explicitly, and — you'll know this if you're familiar with Bergman — they were grim in outlook. It became a quest to find glimmers of hope and faith in a largely atheistic situation. It took some getting used to, but it turned out to be incredibly rewarding.

Around the same time a friend and I went to the local repertory cinema for a midnight screening of David Cronenberg's 1983 masterpiece *Videodrome*, a film that basically predicted the role of the internet in our lives today. It is a confusing and frightening picture, but it showed me that even gory horror films can deal seriously with important themes.

Those two experiences set me on a path of appreciating movies for their ability to promote conversation and reflection.

Near the beginning of the pandemic lockdown period a small group from my parish of St. Andrew's, Kitchener, came up with the idea of suggesting movies for our community to watch, and then offer a time when interested parties could come together in conversation over the Zoom video conferencing app that was then becoming a prominent part of our parish life. On one level this was simply a way of fostering communication during an anxious time. On a deeper level the conversations would provide the opportunity for grappling with issues of faith and meaning.

Film selections have varied, reflective of our group members' tastes and the Anglican value of moderation. Co-found-



Movie discussion group: clarifying the context in which we are ministering

er Nick Collins explains: "Part of the challenge is to select movies that are entertaining and about something worthwhile, without being too heavy." So, we have watched everything from the fun and suspenseful Agatha Christie classic *Witness for the Prosecution*. I, predictably, leaned toward eccentric fare, such as Terry Gilliam's dystopian love story that deals with terrorism and bureaucracy run amok, *Brazil*. We've watched some films depicting the overlapping of love and sadness: *Carol* and *Children of a Lesser God*. Most recently we had a Halloween-appropriate discussion of the horror classic *Night of the Living Dead*. It was pandemic-appropriate too, as the movie revolves around the now familiar phenomena of sheltering in place. Not to mention society turned upside down in the blink of an eye...

"Northrop Frye, in *The Great Code* makes the case that it is almost impossible to fully understand English literature without an understanding of the English Bible, as almost all books make some allusion to biblical events, stories, themes," says Fr. Gerry Mueller. "I think the same thing can be said of English-language movies. And the reverse is true, movies are a mirror of culture, and can remind Christians of what our

values are, even while perhaps violating our norms, and strengthen our faith by challenging it."

Watching a movie doesn't mean we have to adopt the writer or director's view as our own, or feel comfortable with the actions we see on the screen. But we can use them as partners in dialogue to work out our own perspective.

Canon Valerie Kenyon has recently joined our group, and seems to share Mueller's view that movies reflect our society and its concerns. "Are there frequent themes of dystopian worlds, weather disasters, complex societal situations, or inspirational true life stories of people beating the odds? Alternatively on the lighter side there can also be romantic comedies and coming of age tales with their challenges and successes. Each of these have something to tell us." Our viewing can assist us in the proclamation of our faith, she says. "As a faith community and disciples of Jesus, we are always looking to clarify the context in which we are ministering, intent on presenting the Gospel in a language that speaks to the current reality of those with whom we share this world."

Nick Collins appreciates the way in which discussing movies can help us to understand

others. "Considering a variety of viewpoints about a movie can give people greater insight into how other people think, and what other people see as priorities that are different from their own... A group like ours encourages considering other viewpoints, and consideration for others fits with Christian philosophy."

Collins has found that the movie group has helped him through the pandemic. "It's important to find ways to keep up a positive mental state as much as possible. Any way of staying connected with family and friends is good for that, and any online activities based on a common interest are helpful."

Sandra Coulsen, who joined us from her home in London, agrees. "It was nice to have an opportunity for an in-depth, insightful conversation during the pandemic when so many of us were isolated. As a person who lives alone, I found these occasions particularly welcome. I thought the Zoom format was a reasonably good substitute for in-person discussions, and it was good to meet new people."

Our movie discussion group has been continuing along under the radar, gradually attracting new people based on the movie that is being highlighted. Then something more dramatic happened when word got out that we'd be discussing a zombie movie on Halloween. Some found the premise unique and a bit shocking, while others — either already familiar with the movie, or trusting my description of it — appreciated how the filmmakers wove civil rights-era social commentary into the horrific tale. The movie's fantastical depiction societal breakdown might help us to process and explore the tensions and tragedies of the present day.

I was surprised when a producer from our local CBC radio morning show contacted me for an interview that was featured over the air and later transcribed for their website.

Executive producer Gary Graves explained what caught his attention. "Timed for Halloween week, the movie chat seemed like a fun idea... and the popular perception of many people is that the reflective and spiritual nature of churches is counterintuitive with 'fun.'"

We might be bursting some stereotypes, but Graves saw how it fit with our church's mission. "It's an example of an innovative approach to engaging congregants in conversation not only about the perspective of the church but also about the role that entertainment and media play in reflecting, exposing, and discussing the challenges the world presents to us." It sounds like Graves is on the same page as our movie club members.

It turns out that the CBC coverage captured the imagination of people beyond our church walls. We welcomed a new participant that had heard the radio interview, and several others have asked to be kept informed of future online gatherings. Engagements on our Facebook page are up. I quickly decided to offer a live-streamed All Hallows' Eve evening prayer liturgy on Facebook, in part as a way of connecting with these new inquirers, and piggybacking with the Halloween motif.

Our movie discussion group has helped keep us entertained and in touch throughout the pandemic. Its online format has encouraged the participation of people from other parishes. And the CBC coverage that was appreciative of our engagement with the horror genre has brought our presence to the attention of our wider community.

We remain committed to exploring movies of all types, but I hope that our existing group is open to watching a few more spooky flicks as we seek to reach out to new people.

Rev. Matthew Kieswetter is the rector of St. Andrew's Memorial, Kitchener.



The interior of St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Muncney

Photo: Huron Archives

## The people of St. Andrew's and their needs come first

The Diocese of Huron issued a statement after the fire devastated St. Andrew's Church, Muncney on early Sunday morning, November 1.

"The people and their needs come first after a devastating fire that destroyed St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Muncney early Sunday morning.

The entire Huron family stands by St. Andrew's parishioners and will support them in their efforts to continue their journey as a church even after the loss of their building. We are grateful that they will have the on-going compassion and care of their long-time priest, the Reverend Canon Gaye Whippey in this time of grief.

The Diocese is aware that another church building on Muncney road, belonging to the United Church, was burned down just several hours earlier. We caution against any premature conclusions regarding the cause of these fires and speculations about their possible connection, and we call for a fact based and responsible reporting about the incidents."



# Going "on-line" in the year 1918

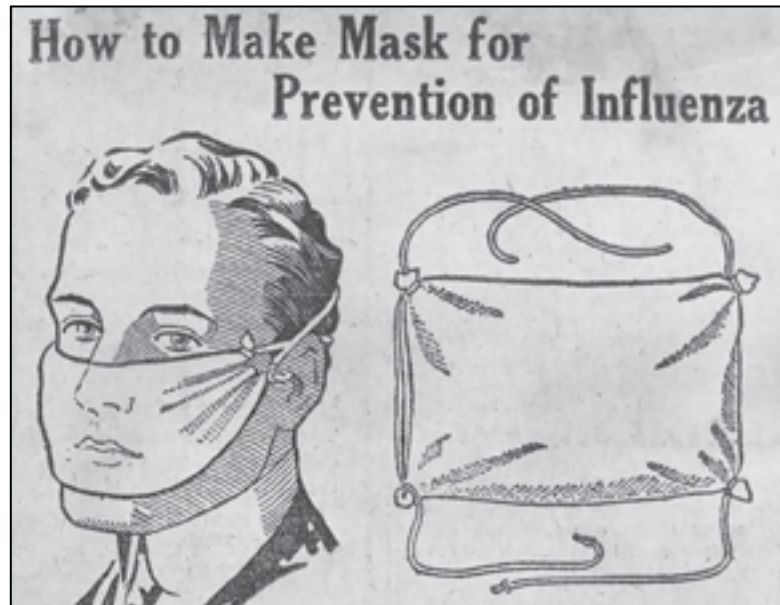
## From Page 1

Churches were also closed in Delaware in October-November 1918 (for three weeks), and in Owen Sound for the entire six weeks by its Board of Health) and also in Ridgeway.

The archival record is not clear on the information if the Anglican churches closed in Delaware and Ridgeway were closed by their Boards of Health at the town, township or county level or if that was an initiative by the churches themselves.

Though we have no confirmed data it is almost safe to say that other churches throughout the Diocese were closed as the disease spread exponentially from one person to another.

Church services and other religious activities were suspended. In a Pastoral prepared by Bishop David Williams, dated November 4, 1918, he



Looks familiar? Instructions in a local newspaper in 1918 on how to make mandatory face masks

asks clergy of the Diocese of Huron on the authority of the Primate, to quote from the Pastoral:

"This is to notify you that all those Parishes which owing to influenza... did not hold Children's Day Services on the

third Sunday in October are asked to do on the last Sunday in November (the 24th)..."

And as we do today by moving our church online, the Anglicans in Huron in 1918 scrambled to use the then available media platforms. In

**In the Fall of 1918, during the Spanish Flu pandemic, clergy in Owen Sound were invited to preach "sermonettes" for publication in the town newspaper.**

Owen Sound, clergy were invited to preach "sermonettes" for publication in the town newspaper.

The Report of Committee on Social Services found in the Synod Journals for 1918 and 1919 makes reference

to deceased priests and their cause of death. Descriptions such as "his ministry was a brief one", "owing to failing health", "compelled to give up his ministerial work", "after administering to the sick" and "he contracted influenza" provide a hint, either suggestive or clearly, that the priest died from the Spanish influenza.

In London the first cases reported were five bandmen from the 1st Battalion of the Western Ontario Regiment located at Carling Heights on September 30, 1918. The pandemic quickly expanded from there to throughout Southwestern Ontario

It is interesting to note that in the midst of a world-wide pandemic, the authors of the Report were more concerned with venereal disease, the cause — a consequent lapse in moral standards!

*John Lutman is the Diocesan Archivist.*

## Responding to the challenge in an inspiring way

giving

By Rev. Andra Townshend O'Neill



## Ways to give... Planning for 2021

It has been a challenging year and so many have responded with faithful commitment to the needs of one another and the needs of the communities in which you live. Thank you! Thank you for finding your own way to live into your membership in the body of Christ in these times through time, talent and treasure.

To you who have made every effort to ensure that the ministry of the church has been able to continue at this time through continuation of regular offering.

Thank you.

To you who have offered countless hours to ensure that our churches are clean and safe, that signs were ordered and placed, that pews were marked and buildings secure.

Thank you.

To each person who has participated in sharing liturgies with our congregations and wider community through music, scripture, technology and support of the clergy.

Thank you.

To every one of you who has learned to use ZOOM, FaceTime, YouTube, Facebook... and to everyone who is still planning to try! In this environment, the inability to access technology can feel like being locked out of the church, out of life itself. Bravo to so many for the leaps of faith and leaps in technology that you have taken!

Thank you

To every one of you for your part in ensuring that we the church continue our mission - to love God, love one another and to ensure that the saving, loving, accepting message of Jesus Christ becomes known to this world that is so desperate to hear it.

### Mail your cheque to the church:

If you would like to use cheques by all means please do so. You can even send one envelope for the month to save postage with post-dated weekly or bi-weekly cheques or one for the month.

### Sign up for Pre-Authorized Giving:

There are various giving options available. Patrick and I have been giving this way for 20 years. We increase the amount regularly, we've been able to give to multiple churches and have even adjusted the bank account - it can be very flexible. For our family, this is the best way to ensure that our regular offering to the church happens

every month without interruption. We are then free to give to outreach or capital projects at any time in addition to our monthly giving.

### Electronic Giving:

These days moving money from one bank account to another is one of the easiest things to do. My nephew demonstrated this during a family graduation party when he opened his card, read it, thanked his Grandma for the message and the cheque, pulled out his phone, snapped a photo and deposited the cheque directly to his bank account. My mother-in-law asked him what he was doing and he said, "I'm putting it in the bank Grandma - I don't want to lose it!"

### Canada Helps, Tithely, Electronic Funds Transfer...:

These are all ways that our church can receive offering once set up to do so. There are some fees associated with some of these options, depending on your bank, and you will want to know what they are. However, these are the familiar options for many people today, people that we are inviting to become part of our churches and people who are happy to generously support our outreach and ministry. We need to be able to receive their offering in the way that suits their daily financial life.

*Rev. Andra Townshend O'Neill is a member of the diocesan Stewardship Committee.*





# It started out as a job but turned into a rewarding ministry

By Kyle Gascho

Between November 2015 and February 2016, the Government of Canada resettled 25,000 Syrian refugees through government supported and private sponsorships.

My first experience working with refugee resettlement was through my parish of St. James, Stratford and the Stratford Anglican Lutheran Team (SALT) for Refugees. While the experience was quite limited, it was very rewarding to be part of making a difference in the lives of a family who needed help.

Fast forward to the summer of 2019, I was hired on as an employee at Huron Church House as part of the Canada Summer Jobs program. After the summer employment term had ended, I was approached about a possible job with the Diocesan Refugee Committee. Having no clue what I was signing up for, I interviewed with Jane Townshend, the chair of the committee and another committee member about the position. After the interview, they informed me that the position was mine if I wanted it!

The position started out solely as administrative. The largest part of the position was



**Kyle Gascho: Making refugees feel supported and respected in the most challenging times.**

to process and submit applications for refugee sponsorship to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The diocesan refugee committee has the hardest working and most dedicated group of people that I have encountered. Working tirelessly with families here in Canada to help resettle their loved ones from across seas, this committee helps make a difference in the lives of so many people every year.

With so many government regulations, policies and procedures that need to be adhered to in every case, and with a stack of documents

and forms about ten feet high that needs to be completed by the refugees, their loved ones here in Canada (co-sponsors), churches that may be involved in the sponsorship (constituent group), and the diocese (sponsorship agreement holder), our committee members help to get all of this done so that they can send me the full application to be thoroughly checked over and then submitted to the government.

The hours and hours of work don't stop there. Each committee member takes on their own cases every year and works with the family constantly from the

initial meeting before even getting started on the paperwork, to the arrival of the refugee and their family, all the way through to typically 12 months after the arrival. Day and night, our committee members support the families that are resettled here in Canada, and also support the people that are sponsoring them. Sometimes this process from start to finish can be a few years.

Over the years, many parishes and deaneries have signed on to sponsor and support the resettlement of refugees through the diocese. With the help of parishes, deaneries and groups around the diocese, refugees and their families have been supported so well and impact their lives in such a meaningful way. When these groups sign on for a sponsorship, we know that any refugee family is going to receive the best support imaginable. The support from around the diocese is greatly appreciated by not only the refugee committee, but also the families whose lives have been turned upside down. You make them feel supported, cared for, valued and respected in the most challenging of times! Thank you!

What started out as just a job that could help me to get through my post-secondary education, has become a meaningful, passionate and extremely rewarding ministry for me. It is no longer a job to me. Since I started working with the diocesan refugee committee in October 2019, I have now taken on two cases of my own, one here in London and another in my hometown of Stratford.

I am so grateful and blessed to have been given this opportunity and it is truly an honour to work with such an amazing group of people on the refugee committee. We are always looking for people to join the diocesan refugee committee. Though it can be quite the commitment, I can promise you that it will be very rewarding.

If you have any questions about the committee, refugee resettlement, or have a parish or deanery that would be interested in sponsoring refugees, please don't hesitate to contact Jane Townshend at [refugee@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:refugee@huron.anglican.ca) or Kyle Gascho at [kgascho@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:kgascho@huron.anglican.ca).

*Kyle Gascho is the staff support for the Huron Refugee Committee and the Verger at St. James in Stratford.*

# Saying "YES": We want to respond as generously as possible

By Judy Rois

At Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) we love, more than anything, to say "Yes!" and to help our parishes imagine more. The Foundation has been saying yes steadily and unflinchingly—through good times and bad—for more than sixty years.

In the Diocese of Huron, since 2010, we have said "Yes!" to nearly \$320,000 in grants and loans for your parishes. The vast majority has been invested in buildings and programs, including projects that reduce barriers and make it possible for those with mobility issues to continue to participate in church life.

AFC has also provided funding for a Wilderness Pollinator Garden and Beehives, Cooking



Judy Rois

for the Climate project, and the Three Cathedrals Choral Festival. AFC's commitment to theological education has resulted in \$62,000 in student bursaries in the past ten years, Making Huron College accessible, and a Consultation on Medical Assistance in Dying and the Church.

This past May, in spite of the challenges of the COVID-19

crisis and the impact on AFC's investment portfolio, we said "Yes!" to St. John in the Wilderness Church, Bright's Grove, Church of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener, and St. John's Anglican Church (Woodhouse), Simcoe.

For nearly ten years now as Executive Director of the Foundation, I've had a front row seat to some of the Canadian church's best ideas: the ministries and programs parish visionaries might undertake if only they had some strategic funding to help them get started. Knowing what I know about the innovative and compassionate character of the church nationally, I cannot help but feel hopeful about the future.

Please be assured that AFC will continue to be a force for

stability: we have been there and will continue to be there no matter what the future may hold. In order for AFC to remain strong and vibrant, however, I am asking those who can continue to partner with us to do so. If you are a member I ask you to renew your membership. If you have never been a member of the Foundation before, please accept this invitation to pay-it-forward.

The social and economic impact of COVID-19 on people and communities will undoubtedly give rise to compassionate and innovative responses on the part of our churches. To those currently discerning how to meet a real and pressing need in their communities—faithful leaders in the Diocese of Huron among them—we want

to respond as generously as possible.

Join us and help AFC continue to be able to say Yes! to the dreams and aspirations of the people and parishes in your diocese, and to so many more across the country.

To donate to the Anglican Foundation of Canada visit [anglicanfoundation.org](http://anglicanfoundation.org).

*Judy Rois is the Executive Director or the Anglican Foundation of Canada.*



ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

**Generous People are Everywhere**  
an illustrated book for young people ages 8 to 14  
text by Judy Rois, illustrations by Michele Nidenoff

What is generosity?  
What does generosity look like?  
Are generous people happier?

[anglicanfoundation.org](http://anglicanfoundation.org)



**Donate online to your parish or to the diocese:**  
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## ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

# Our "Wounded Warriors" deserve much better treatment

Do we feel gratitude for our soldiers only once a year, on Remembrance Day?

**Why can't we work together as God's holy body of people to bless those who have blessed us with peace and safety?**

“**T**here is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friend” (John 15:13).

Sacrificing your life for loved ones, family and friends is an act of courage. Sacrificing your life for your country and millions of complete strangers is an act of untold bravery. Can you imagine being ordered by a superior officer to take a hill or other dangerous position endangering your life? Have you ever thought what it would be like to put yourself in the place of these young men and women who so courageously fought for us despite the threat of injury or death? Bless them for their heroism and ultimate sacrifice.

They now reside with God in His heavenly realm. All those in the military who are deployed and those who are local also deserve our gratitude. They serve our country unselfishly at the great expense of being unable to spend time with their families especially during the holidays. Spouses and some grandparents are left to care for their children.

It has to be heart-wrenching to be separated from loved ones and miss the joy of sharing special days and events. How often do we feel grateful to those soldiers who protect us? Do we only feel gratitude once a year on Remembrance Day?



**Fallen, soon forgotten?**

Photo: Ian Taylor/  
Unsplash

The families of our veterans also sacrifice time and holidays with their soldiers. It is most disturbing and unbelievable that in one of the richest countries in the world that so many of our veterans are homeless. Why has our government so obviously neglected those who protected and fought for us?

Many of our vets have returned home physically and emotionally wounded. Some turned to drugs to ease the pain and possibly the guilt of what they were ordered to do. They have been forgotten outcasts and these "Wounded Warriors" deserve much better treatment than they have received.

The Bible says, "Love your neighbour as yourself" as one of the two most important commandments. How can we be so thoughtless and uncaring to those who have protected us? We need to help and protect those who sacrificed so much for us.

We need to get these "Wounded Warriors" of the streets and into affordable housing. It is disgusting to think that they are left to their own devices and struggles without any kind of assistance. What are we willing to do to offer our help?

The Bible says, "When you were hungry, I fed you and when you were thirsty, I gave you water to drink". It will be difficult, maybe even impossible, to ask the government to grant additional spending during this time of COVID-19, but there are wealthy people, organizations and lay corporations who could donate money. How many times have numerous people given small donations that have grown into many thousands of dollars? Why can't we work together as God's holy body of people to bless those who have blessed us with peace and safety?

Our veterans should not have to suffer in extreme heat or freezing cold or rainy weather without shelter. It is

inexcusable to stand by and do absolutely nothing to help our veterans. How many of us have said thank you to a vet?

At Church of the Ascension in Windsor, the ACW annually honored veterans twice a year. In May for those who served in the Battle of the Atlantic and for Remembrance Day they attend our church service. We had them stay for a luncheon provide and prepared, and hosted by the local ACW. It was our way of saying many thanks. Some of us got the opportunity to visit with them and thank them personally as well.

We need to do much more and to treat these veterans much better than we have done in the past and are doing presently. May God give us the strength, energy and resources to help and bless these deserving "Wounded Warriors".

Barbara Jackson, President

## Announcing a new name and a new look for our beloved camp!

We have been working throughout the past year to consider ways to share our camp story, recruiting new camp families, drawing our circle wider and wider and wider!

If a picture is worth a thousand words here are a few that come to mind as we present our new logo!

Camp Huron - a wondrous place!

Beneath a deep blue starry sky, a wooden cabin sits gently on the land by the wavy waters of Lake Huron, amongst fir trees that seem to whisper, "welcome home".

Peek through its tiny window - just imagine the people, possibilities and adventures waiting for you!

Keep watching for the launch of a new, improved website and updates about our 2021 season!



[www.camphuron.ca](http://www.camphuron.ca)



**OUR STORY GOES ON...**



# Frequently asked questions about the Amber Stage

As the COVID-19 case counts increase in our province, Bishop Todd and your diocesan leadership continue to monitor the situation. Following our AMBER Stage guidelines minimizes the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our churches, however, that risk is not zero. Please do not feel that you must attend in-person worship if you are in any way uncomfortable doing so. It is also perfectly acceptable to refrain from receiving the Eucharist at this time should you have concerns with receiving.

Many questions are being asked about the guidelines or things that are not in the guidelines. Here is a selection of FAQ prepared for this edition of HCN.

**Service length:** It is important that service length be no more than 45 minutes for a Eucharist and 30 minutes for a Service of Word. Not replacing all the hymns with other music will save some time; if you feel other changes to the liturgy will be needed to decrease the service length (such as fewer readings) please consult the email sent to clergy on October 16, or with your Territorial Archdeacon or Archdeacon Tanya Phibbs. Any changes will be authorized on a temporary basis only, until our AMBER Stage precautions are no longer needed.

**In-person worship and face coverings:** Members of the congregation are to leave their face covering in place throughout the service, including while in their seat. The face covering is only to be removed when consuming communion. Not only is this diocesan policy, it is explicitly stated in the directives of some of the public health units. Some public health units also differ from others on which face coverings are appropriate; please check your local unit's website to be sure that your church is complying with their direction.

**Face coverings for officiants and presiders:** Our AMBER Stage guidelines allow those leading worship to remove face coverings if at least 4m (12 feet) from the congregation.

Priests who are not wearing a face covering while celebrating the Eucharist need to ensure that the hosts are covered at all times by a purificator, pall or the lid of the ciborium. If this is not possible, then a face mask should be worn throughout the Eucharistic prayer.

While the presider may use a face shield throughout most of the service, s/he must wear a face mask that covers nose and chin while distributing communion.

Some public health units have more stringent guidelines which must be followed. Please become familiar with the ones for the public health unit in your area.

**Singing and choirs:** Singing is a high-risk activity with a significantly greater risk of transmitting COVID-19 than speaking. For this reason, congregational and choir singing has been suspended in all our churches. Single singers or small groups no larger than FOUR may sing during worship if each singer is no closer than 12 feet (4 meters) to any other person. Solo or small group (4 or less) rehearsals are to be no longer than 30 minutes. Groups larger than 4 persons may not sing in our buildings. Please note that this applies to renters as well.

**Trumpets and bagpipes:** Due to the risk of viral transmission, wind instruments may only be used if separated by an impen-



trable barrier from the congregation. This could be accomplished by use of a plexiglass barrier or having the musician play in a different area of the building such as the narthex.

**Contact tracing:** The contact tracing information must be kept in a secure location for 3 years. It is possible, however, that you may have visitors who refuse to or who are unable to provide contact information. No one should be turned away because they cannot or will not provide this information. Often people are afraid to share such information because of privacy concerns or safety issues.

**12 Step groups and contact tracing:** 12-step groups are by their very nature anonymous and most members may be uncomfortable giving out private information. Please speak with the group contact person and ask that they keep such records as they are able. Groups should hold their own records---they do not need to hand them into the church.

**Insurance requirement for outside users:** the insurance requirement stated in the Indemnity agreement has been reduced to \$2,000,000.

Churches with cemeteries and scattering gardens: The Bereavement Authority of Ontario has issued an update regarding graveside services and interments. If

there are more than 25 persons in attendance, a Funeral Director must be present and must have one staff person for each 10 persons attending the service.

**Heating systems:** Minimize the use of furnaces and fans because of the potential for circulating air to also circulate the virus. To minimize the discomfort from cold, the following procedure is recommended:

Turn the heat up two hours prior to the start of your service. Choose a temperature setting higher than usual that is still comfortable. The reason for turning the heat up early is that you want time for the heat to warm walls, floor and furnishings, not just the air. The walls floor and furnishings will act as a heat reservoir and will keep your space warmer for longer as a result. Conversely, if you turn the heat up just before the service starts, the walls, floor and furnishings are still cold, and will drag the temperature of the air back down quickly.

Adjust the recommended two-hour timing to suit your particular building based on your experience.

As coat racks in narthexes are not to be used, your congregation will have their coats in church with them which will be helpful as they may need them later in the service, even though it is nice and warm to start.

**Bazaars and bake sales:** Indoor sales are not permitted at this time due to the difficulties of ensuring the safety of both volunteers and purchasers. Churches may want to consider outdoor or on-lines sales events instead.

**Food fundraisers:** Take-out dinners or sales of baked goods prepared on the church premises may take place provided the church has received permission from the local public health unit for the preparation of food in the church building since the beginning of COVID-19 restrictions. This is not the usual certification that your church may have received from the health unit in the past but a vetting of your plans by the health unit to ensure the lowest possible risk of COVID-19 transmission among volunteers or those purchasing items.

Preparations must be carried out in a physically distanced manner and all participants must wear face masks. (Face shields and other face coverings do not provide adequate protection when working with food.) Regular breaks should be taken to allow volunteers to go outside the building and remove their masks for a short period of time.

With the increase in COVID-19 cases in parts of our province, local health units may be updating guidelines and directives. Please check these regularly to ensure that your parish is in compliance. Remember that whenever health unit requirements differ from diocesan guidelines, the more stringent must be followed. Also, check our website COVID-19 page for regular updates: <https://diohuron.org/covid-19-resource-hub/>

If you have suggestions for items to include, please send them to Archdeacon Tanya Phibbs at [tphibbs@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:tphibbs@huron.anglican.ca)

## PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

### Ordination announcements

Bishop Townshend announced on Oct. 18th that the following will be ordained to the Order of Priests on the Commemoration of Elizabeth of Hungary, November 19, 2020 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, attendance will be by invitation only. Please keep the ordinands in your prayers in the days ahead as they prepare for their ordination.

- The Reverend Dr. Justin Comber, upon priesting the Rector of the Parish of the Transfiguration (Church of the Advent, Ridgetown; St. John's-in-the-Woods, Aughrim; Christ Church, Dresden; St. Mat-

thew's, Florence; Church of the Redeemer, Highgate and Trinity Chapel of Ease, Highgate.)

- The Reverend Andra Townshend O'Neill, upon priesting the Rector of St. Mark's, London.

Bishop Townshend announced on Oct. 13th that the following will be ordained to the Order of Deacons on the Feast of St. Andrew, November 30th at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, attendance will be by invitation only. Please keep the ordinands in your prayers in the days as they prepare for their ordination.

- Ms. Susan Bagshaw, upon ordination, Deacon with special responsibility for Pastoral Care, St. John's, Cambridge

- Mr. Enrique Martinez, upon ordination, Deacon-in-Charge of the Parish of Long Point Bay (Port Ryerse Memorial Church, Port Ryerse; St. John's, Woodhouse; St. John's, Port Rowan; St. Andrew's-by-the-Lake, Turkey Point and Christ Church Chapel of Ease, Vittoria)

### Appointments

Bishop Townshend announced on Oct. 25 that he had appointed Mrs. Jane Townshend as the Chair of the Diocesan Refugee Committee. The diocese is deeply grateful to Jane and the other volunteers on this committee for their dedication to this important and often time-consuming ministry.

Bishop Townshend shared on Oct. 18th that Bishop Susan

Bell appointed The Venerable Dr. Timothy Dobbin Rector of Christ's Church Cathedral and Dean of Niagara, effective January 1, 2021.

Dean-designate Tim is currently the rector of St. Mark's, Brantford and the Archdeacon of Brant/Norfolk. We give thanks for Dean-designate Tim's ministry in the Diocese of Huron and hold him and his family in our prayers during this time of transition.

Bishop Townshend shared that the Faculty of Theology at Huron University announced on Oct. 25th that The Rev. Dr. Grayhame Bowcott was appointed as the new Coordinator of Huron's Licentiate in Theology Program. This is in addition to Grayhame's appointment as

the Rector of St. George's, Blue Mountains.

Bishop Townshend appointed Mr. Enrique Martinez as the Lay Pastor in Charge of the Parish of Long Point Bay (Port Ryerse Memorial Church, Port Ryerse; St. John's, Woodhouse; St. John's, Port Rowan; St. Andrew's-by-the-Lake, Turkey Point and Christ Church Chapel of Ease, Vittoria) effective November 1, 2020.

### Rest in Piece

Mr. George Edward Ballard, the husband of The Rev'd Jane Piercy Ballard died peacefully at home on Thursday, October 8th. A cremation and memorial service was held at a later date.

May George rest in peace and rise in glory.

# Going GREEN for Advent

The first Divine to human conversation was God's instructions to Adam to love and care for the earth and everything on it (Gen. 1:28). As we prepare for the coming of our Lord and Saviour, we can do so in a loving way to another wonderful gift from God, the earth.

Below is an advent calendar with daily Gospel readings and an idea you can reflect on and practice to make the world a cleaner place for baby Jesus and all the generations ahead of him.

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13)*

## SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



Prepared by: Caroline Sharp

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>Nov. 29</b></p> <p>Mk 13:24-37</p> <p>Be mindful of idling your vehicle as you bustle about. Don't snuff out the sun!</p>	<p><b>Nov. 30</b></p> <p>Mt 4:18-22</p> <p>Regifting is OK! Be like James and John and mend broken items rather than toss them in the trash.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 1</b></p> <p>Lk 10:21-24</p> <p>Create less trash. Be grateful for what you have. Don't worry about presents and BE present!</p>	<p><b>Dec. 2</b></p> <p>Mt 15:29-39</p> <p>Be mindful of food waste over the season. Share leftovers with friends and family or those in need.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 3</b></p> <p>Lk 10:1-9, 17-20</p> <p>Carry a reusable bag and reuse any plastic bags you have. Let's keep God's creatures safe.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 4</b></p> <p>Lk 10:38-41</p> <p>Keep plastic bottles out of the dump. Get a reusable water bottle. If you're on the go like Martha, you'll have to hydrate!</p>	<p><b>Dec. 5</b></p> <p>Jn 6:57-63</p> <p>Eat local! Manna from California has a big footprint. Consider buying more local foods from small businesses.</p>
<p><b>Dec. 6</b></p> <p>Mk 1:1-8</p> <p>Conserve water by eating less meat. Industrial meat farms use a lot of water and are one of the worst pollutants to ground-water.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 7</b></p> <p>Lk 12:35-37, 42-44</p> <p>Conserve energy by turning your lights off when you're not using them.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 8</b></p> <p>Lk 1:34-38</p> <p>Try cloth diapers if you have a baby at home. They are much gentler on the environment and have less chemicals against your baby's skin.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 9</b></p> <p>Mt 11:28-30</p> <p>Make your burden light and use simple wrapping. Metallic "paper" and glitter are single use plastics!</p>	<p><b>Dec. 10</b></p> <p>Mt 11:7-15</p> <p>Don't fall for cheap fashion that ends up in landfills. Even donated clothing often gets thrown out.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 11</b></p> <p>Mt 11:16-19</p> <p>Use refillable containers to buy bulk food items at natural food stores or the bulk barn.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 12</b></p> <p>Mt 17:9-13</p> <p>Don't know where to get local honey this time of year? Consider buying fair trade imported goods.</p>
<p><b>Dec. 13</b></p> <p>Jn 1:6-8, 19-28</p> <p>Don't leave outdoor lights on all night. Natural darkness is needed for many of God's nocturnal creatures.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 14</b></p> <p>Mt 21:23-27</p> <p>Everything comes from God. We are made from dust and are part of the earth. Let's make it clean in this season of new birth.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 15</b></p> <p>Mt 21:28-32</p> <p>Climate change is real! We are using the resources that 3 planet earths would be required for us to be sustainable!</p>	<p><b>Dec. 16</b></p> <p>Jn 17:6-19</p> <p>It's not yours! Take it easy on the planet today by trying to use as little energy as possible.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 17</b></p> <p>Mt 1:1-7, 17</p> <p>Seven generations! Think of your great-grandchildren's grandchildren and keep the planet clean for them.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 18</b></p> <p>Mt 1:18-25</p> <p>Consumers hold the power! Don't support wasteful packaging and large carbon footprints.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 19</b></p> <p>Lk 1:5-25</p> <p>In seclusion because of COVID-19? Wear a reusable mask. God wants you to be safe and to keep others safe!</p>
<p><b>Dec. 20</b></p> <p>Lk 1:26-38</p> <p>Feminine hygiene products have a high footprint. Consider using more natural products with fewer chemicals.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 21</b></p> <p>Lk 1:39-45</p> <p>Support PWRDF and their goals of empowering women in other countries.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 22</b></p> <p>Lk 1:46-56</p> <p>Real or artificial tree? Consider getting a young tree from your local nursery and reusing it until it gets too big - then plant it!</p>	<p><b>Dec. 23</b></p> <p>Lk 1:57-66</p> <p>Can't hear Zechariah? Perhaps you hear the earth groaning? Make your coffee at home and put it in a reusable travel mug.</p>	<p><b>Dec. 24</b></p> <p>Lk 2:8-20</p> <p>Jesus was laid in a manger before the shepherds came. Humble is OK. You don't have to upgrade your technology if it still works fine.</p>	<p><b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b></p> <p>Jn 1:1-14</p> <p>Replace your light bulbs with LEDs and let the light shine!</p>	<p><b>SABBATH DAY</b></p> <p>Don't forget to take some time to unwind.</p> <p>Both our planet and yourself need time to rest and rejuvenate.</p>

May you have a blessed Christmas!



# Introducing a new all-in-one online platform for churches

By Rev. Marty Levesque

Recently the Diocese of Huron has entered into a partnership with Tithe.ly



**MEDIA  
BYTES**

**REV. MARTY  
LEVESQUE**



John Schnobrich/Unsplash

Tithe.ly is your all in one online platform for churches. Through Tithe.ly the diocese and its parishes will have access to an online giving platform, messaging service, apps for individual parishes, professionally designed websites for parish, Church management software (including accounting) and event coordination.

Tithe.ly is a powerful evangelism tool for the Diocese of Huron and individual parishes. The Diocese of Huron itself,

Proud Anglicans Huron, All Saints Waterloo, The Parish of the Blue Mountains, St. James' Stratford, St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Mark's London and St. Thomas St Thomas are all first adopters of this new system.

Signing up to the system does not mean you have to have everything. Parishes will be able to pick and choose buffet style the pieces of the platform they wish, such as professionally designed websites for \$9 (US) a month or they could just opt for the all-access option.

Over the coming number of issues of the Huron Church News, I will be highlighting one part of the system.

The first place I want to begin with is websites. Tithe.ly has several professionally designed themes. Choose the theme that works for your parish. It is as simple as dropping in your images and updating the content.

In 24 hours, I was able to port images, select a few new ones, port content and customize my menus, fonts, buttons etc.

**Stay tuned as over the coming month I learn to build my first app so that I can push content right to peoples' phones, stay connected and offer more opportunities for engagement with parishioners and seekers.**

All this sounds a little scary, but please rest assured if you can fill out a Facebook profile you can build a Tithe.ly site for your church.

Some of the features I find outstanding are the integration of my live stream from Facebook right onto my site, the plan your visit feature, so parishioners can reserve seats during this time of pandemic and a customized footer that will be available for the Diocese of Huron only, that will help

to create and foster a diocesan culture and brand.

Stay tuned as over the coming month I learn to build my first app so that I can push content right to peoples' phones, stay connected, and offer more opportunities for engagement with parishioners and seekers.

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

[martylevesque@diohuron.org](mailto:martylevesque@diohuron.org)

# Coaching help for our congregations in these changing times

By Ven. Perry Chuipka

I wonder if you have asked some of the questions I have asked during this pandemic. Am I doing enough? What should be the focus for our congregation? What should our congregation be doing? What can we do?

These are only a few questions of the many that I have asked myself and my wardens throughout this pandemic. At our coaches meeting we have been asking similar questions. How can we help congregations, their leaders and their priests deal with all this change coming at them?

In tackling some of these questions, our coaches were asked to reflect on the book, "Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions," by John Kotter and Holger Rathgeber.

This book begins with a simple story about a group of emperor penguins living on an iceberg near the coast of Antarctica. They have lived on this iceberg for years, having everything they needed to live a comfortable life. Then one curious penguin discovers that there is a crack in their iceberg which will eventually get bigger and destroy their home. When he tells people what he has discovered nobody believes him.

The various characters in the book reflect the different attitudes that people have which is very similar to the attitudes people have in any organization. The importance of the story shows us how to over-

## CONGREGATIONAL COACHES



come resistance to change and the many obstacles people face. It offers us a powerful example in how to adapt to changing times. The book concludes with John Kotter outlining eight valuable steps that can help any organization work through change and transition.

Our coaches found the penguin's story along with the eight steps extremely helpful in our conversations about helping congregations deal with change and adapting to new circumstances. I highly recommend this book which can be read in two or three sittings.

I also had the opportunity to follow up this book with a webinar entitled, Leading Rapid Change, by Russel Raath, who is President of Kotter International. Russel has twenty-six years of experience in behavioural science helping organizations in different countries around the world.

Let me highlight four principles that he spoke about that you may find helpful to use in your organization during this pandemic.

He called them tactics for leading rapid change.



### 1) Predictability

A) Make it a routine to provide your organization information.

For example, you could provide an update on the how your organization is doing every week. Let people know the day you will be doing this. Then be consistent in ensuring that the update happens every week on that same day. This will lower the anxiety and the fear of the people in your organization along with making them feel a part of what is going on.

B) Let people know what will be different. Be decisive.

When people in your organization are prepared for what is coming, especially when it has changed from before they will be better equipped to deal with the change.

C) When you make progress no matter how small celebrate it.

As humans, we like to know we are gaining progress so even if it is a small accomplishment make a big deal about it. Every achievement moves us forward and encourages everyone to continue the journey forward.

### 2) Control

A) Take control of what you can control, and name what you cannot control.

When you name what you can control you energize not only yourself, but everyone else in your organization. Then follow through with what you can control. Make the changes fast so that everyone can participate in them. The faster you make the change the faster you can get people to come alongside you. In the same way, name what you can't control so that you and others do not spend energy on talking about those things.

### 3) Aspiration

Everyone in your organization needs to know why you are making these changes. What is the end result? A wise person once said, "to mobilize massive action on a grand scale you need a grand ambition".

Ask the questions what drives you? What drives others?

Finally, decisions about change need to include people who are on the ground floor.

I remember the example I heard at Business College many

years ago. The automotive company BMW was very successful because it included even the people who were picking up the garbage in the various offices. They were asked by the management what the company needed to change in order to be successful. These cleaning people saw their organization from a different perspective.

In sharing this perspective, the organization gained knowledge that they would not have had before. For example some churches have secretaries that may not be members of their church. They need to be asked how they see things going in the church. You may be surprised by the information they may give you about your organization that you never saw before.

So, let me go back to the questions I started with. All our churches are asking different questions during this Pandemic. You are probably doing a great job fielding questions. However, maybe a coach can help you and your congregation by facilitating a zoom meeting to have a conversation about helping them deal with change and adapting to new circumstances.

Please feel free to call myself, Perry, 519-534-2607 or Paul 519- 433-5406.

You may also want to check out our website <https://coaching.diohuron.org>.

*Ven. Perry Chuipka is the Archdeacon of Congregational Development in the Diocese of Huron.*



# What motivates the Church? Understanding local theologies

Last month, I argued that fear of congregational decline, fear of losing our denominational structures and fear of change because of the possibility of closure is neither a healthy nor sustainable motivation for seeking membership growth.



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

If this is in fact true, then the question that follows up this statement is: if not fear, then what? Where should churches turn to for their motivation? Or, here's another way of asking the question: what motivates congregations that are fostering new relationships and, as a result of their actions, welcoming new members?

This question, in a nutshell, has been what I have dedicated my research to over the last four years. Many in the Church might respond in frustration to such a question. Isn't it



assumed that Jesus Christ, our belief in God and the Kingdom, and our calling to be Christians in the Anglican tradition is motivation enough? Isn't sharing our faith with others the central reason why we would ever desire to foster new relationships? I wish this were so, but my personal experience in the Church, furthered by my research suggests that most Anglican congregations are actually quite uncomfortable talking about their faith outside of their Sunday liturgy. Like-

wise, talking about Jesus is rarely what motivates the items for business found on most parish council meeting agendas.

Another truth that I have discovered over time is the fact that Anglican congregations all have their own unique personalities, their own localized faith beliefs and their own particular motivations/agendas. I learned this the hard way when I proposed the very first Regional Ministry plan in the Diocese of Huron which sought to have three rural congregations enter into a new ministry relationship with one another. The negotiations of that relationship were very challenging at times because each community had a very different experience of what it meant to be Anglican. Each held very different congregational beliefs and motivations. If a sense of 'Anglican commonality' or 'uniformity' of local beliefs ever existed, my experience has been that this is, more often than not, no longer the case.

If such a thing as a secret to successful ministry exists in our Anglican faith tradition, I now believe that it is found in

understanding what is called local theologies.

The term local theologies was coined in the 1980s by a Roman Catholic missiologist (the study of missional motivation in the ministry of the Church) named Robert Schreiter. It refers to how local communities reflect on what they hold to be meaningful within their unique experience of being Church. Local theology refers to how a community expresses its own beliefs (through its own testimony, stories, history and actions) in terms of three areas of reflection: Gospel, Church and Culture. Another way of saying this is: local theology is how a local faith community expresses their beliefs, values and motivation in their own words and ways.

My first observation, having conducted a study of a thousand Anglicans over dozens of growing congregations within two immensely different dioceses, is that localized beliefs among congregations are, in fact, incredibly diverse. Individual congregations respond to the Gospel in different ways, live out their role as Church

with different interpretations and conduct their ministry among different cultures and in unique contexts.

However, despite the diversity among Anglican congregations (at least in the dioceses of Huron and Toronto) my research has led me to a central conclusion: there is a direct correlation between the presence of some local theologies and how these beliefs can motivate practices of evangelism, outreach and membership growth.

From this point forward in this column I am going to let local theologies speak for themselves; I'm going to let other Anglicans do all the talking. About what motivates them to seek out new relationships and how their locally held faith beliefs are causing their congregations to thrive and grow.

*Rev. Dr. Grayhame Bowcott is passionate about fostering congregational relationships and sharing our Anglican vocation with others. He serves as rector of St. George's, The Parish of The Blue Mountains. grayhamebowcott@diohuron.org*

# Reflecting more deeply on the songs we "sing"

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

While it is true that we are both currently living through a season of Covid that has thrown all kinds of wrenches into our holiday celebrations and that we will not be bursting out into song in any group settings in the foreseeable future, nevertheless, this is a time of year when we are surrounded by beautiful hymns, carols, and songs in celebration of the season.

Consider how the message of Advent is ushered in in such selections as: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", "People Look East" and "Wait for the Lord, Whose Day is Near". Or, perhaps, allow yourself to ponder how in the hearing of the many Christmas hymns and carols also reserved



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for this time of year, we are reminded of the central story of the Gospel, in the coming of God's Son to both bring and be light in the darkness of our world.

How many of these familiar carols and hymns do you know by heart? In how many places, and with how many loved ones, have they been sung, and sung,

and sung again? How many years have they been a part of our celebrations and supported the telling and retelling of the miracle of Christ's coming to us? The simple answer would be, probably, too many to count.

I know what you're thinking, though – it's different this year, and of course, you are right. Out of care for one another, we

have set congregational singing aside for the time being as we gather for worship (though I suspect if you are like me, you may be enjoying singing along with many online service offerings in your own home). However, what has not changed, is the truth found within the lyrics of these seasonal songs. The fact that we cannot sing them as we have in years gone by, in some ways encourages us to reflect more deeply than in other years upon the story being told in these beautiful and familiar tunes.

While I may be dialing down the outward expression of "Joy" found in Joy to the World, I am nevertheless encouraged to still make the trip to Bethlehem, to come and adore the one born to be the king of angels, under

the beauty of a silent and a holy night, where for the moment all is calm, and indeed all is bright. Advent and Christmas 2020 offer us a chance to reflectively enter into the story of these carols in a deep and meaningful way. Will we allow the transformative power of these lyrics to do their work in us?

Wishing you every blessing of the season and the very best of the year to come as we continue to make reflection, wherever and whenever it is found, a part of our holiday season. From your Education for Ministry team within Huron, Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or myself Val Kenyon at EFM@huron.anglican.ca,

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



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# Letting go of the old, discerning the new

Earlier in the month, I had bought a special sale car wash. This bright sunny morning, I decided to use it.



AS I SEE IT

REV. JIM  
INNES

As I sat semi-patiently behind five cars, I realized that each car took between five or 10 minutes to move through. It would be 20+ minutes before I got into the automated drive-thru. And, just as that slightly unsettling thought began to take hold, I noticed that all the cars in front of me were relatively clean, if not, sparkling clean.

I felt some embarrassment, maybe even a little bit of shame. My car was dirty, but I wasn't going to be taking anybody anywhere. Was I going to waste the next 20 to 25 minutes watching these clean cars get



scrubbed? After all, the sun was shining warmly on the day, and the hay was waiting to be baled!

I decided that I could let it stay dirty for another day or two. I had work calling and creative thoughts, needing to be processed. Luckily, no car had pulled up behind me yet, and I backed out of line. And I felt the better for it.

This decision was not from impatience. Well, maybe a little. But, mostly, it was a matter of

**Our church exists in a world where the phrase 'spiritual but not religious' is a growing catch-phrase, even among churchgoers.**

priorities. I didn't want to be part of the parade that didn't seem necessary. There were more important things to be done than polishing a shine. And besides that, seeing others washing clean cars triggered a sense of embarrassment. My eight-dollar supreme wash could wait for a good mudding (even though it was a sale price).

Priorities seem to shift. I can't always say what triggers it. It could be a mood, a circumstance, or someone's influence. But what I do know is that COVID has been impactful. Because of COVID, my priorities in ministry are beginning to become challenged.

My scheduling is changing, as is my means of communication and outreach. I still have many traditional ministry-type

activities that I need to accomplish in a week. But there is a demand for recreating ways of being in ministry.

These demands are all good stuff, despite the anxiety that accompanies the unknown walk. I continually ask God, "what now." And, more than before, my ministry is a little unclear. I need divine guidance as the old routine becomes obsolete, and new paths are sought out, tried out, and finally chosen.

I've been in ministry for so many years I have developed a cycle of pastoring (and administration) often done by rote. So changing – as exciting as that is – is disconcerting. But it needs to be done, for everybody's sake.

It dawned on me that my experience is reflective of our church community in gener-

al. It's changing. The old ways don't work as they once did. The people are not the same, nor can we expect them to be. Our church exists in a world where the phrase 'spiritual but not religious' is a growing catch-phrase, even among churchgoers.

But saying all that, and not wanting to get lost down the path of criticism, I want to share my process of coming to grips with this changing cycle of what it means to be in ministry. It is a shifting of what was once routine. Letting go of the old, while discerning and accepting the new.

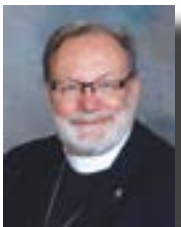
As I see it, whatever change we must face, God is already there, preparing our path and gently calling us to the task. May we all feel that rich spiritual pull, pulling each of us to new ways of being compassionately in community.

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## What can I give Him, poor as I am?

One of my favourite Christmas hymns is a thoughtful and meditative reflection combining the wintry experience of the season known by the poet Christina Rossetti, with her devotional approach to being present at the stable scene as a wondering observer.



A VIEW FROM  
THE BACK PEW

REV. CANON  
CHRISTOPHER  
B. J. PRATT

*"What can I give him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd,  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise Man,  
I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give him –  
Give my heart.*

(The Book of Common Praise – Hymn 691)

In a world where many would affirm the truth of that historic adage, "whoever dies with the most toys wins", Rossetti's words guide us along a different way of thinking. We do not need to have an answer for those who prior to Thanksgiving are asking, "Are you ready for Christmas?" We do not need to succumb to the pressure of having a response for those who ask, "Have you done all your Christmas shopping?", when the calendar page has not



Max Bohme/Unsplash

yet been flipped to November.

Perhaps, before we try to find a good answer to the well-meaning question, "What would you like for Christmas?", we might simply pause for a moment, and reflect on what we already have. What is the most precious "thing" that you possess? How would your life be different if you did not have it anymore?

The search for the special gift for the special someone we think of becomes a seasonal adventure for some, a period of distressing burden for others. Self-imposed pressure to be able to offer that perfect trinket, that costly item, that tangible expression of our love and affection may cause emotional distress if we feel that we have not succeeded in our mission.

As people of faith, the reality of the Christmas season is not something that is shaped by the

gift exchanges between family and friends. That is one of the joys of the season, but it is not at the core of the moment. The gift of the tangible expression of Divine Love personified in a little baby named Jesus is at the centre of the Christmas story.

On a personal level, as I try to divest myself of the "stuff" which I have accumulated over the years, being gifted with more "stuff", does not rank high on my list of priorities. Instead, I have been spending time thinking about how gifts that I have received recently have shaped my life. The gifts that I am grateful for are unique, precious and life-changing.

Recently I have tried to smile as I wonder out loud, "I wonder what the medical profession was doing prior to my retirement?" The simple fact of the matter is that without surgical

**We need to look around us and contrast what we define as our own needs experienced from the perspective of abundance, with a list of the needs of others which is offered from the perspective of bare necessity.**

procedures to repair torn retinas in both my eyes, cataracts in both eyes and two new hips, living my life, at this moment in time, would be radically different. You may be able to understand why I am grateful for the gifted surgeons, nurses and care givers who have shared my recent journey through life. There is much for which I am thankful.

Yet as much as this is a personal expression of thankfulness, I have also had a growing awareness that there are Canadians who do not have fresh water to drink each day. There are individuals for whom injustice being experienced in many ways, is a daily feature of their lives. The plea for time to be spent addressing peace and reconciliation is an ongoing petition that demands a response. This abbreviated list of priori-

ties is not something that may be satiated by throwing "stuff" in the general direction of these items in the hope that something will stick.

What do these last paragraphs have to do with the Christmas season? I suggest that in the midst of life we need to pause and be grateful for the many blessings that have been given to us. As we experience the blessing of the Christmas season we need to reflect on what our part and role is as we witness Divine Love being gifted into the world. We need to look around us and contrast what we define as our own needs experienced from the perspective of abundance, with a list of the needs of others which is offered from the perspective of bare necessity.

"What can I give Him.....?" Once we give our heart to our Lord, then we will be able to see more clearly where the God given talents and blessings which have been given to each one of us in our own lives, will be able to be used to God's glory and make a difference in God's World.

This Christmas Season I invite you to be thankful and to be generous.

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# Tossing aside less crucial portions of a tradition?

As we begin the final month of 2020, people are, no doubt, still touting this as the strangest year on record, mostly due to the evil COVID 19 pandemic.



**MOSTLY ABOUT  
RELIGION**

**REV. CANON  
KEITH  
NETHERY**

As I write this, more than a month earlier that you will read it, there is no clear understanding of what Christmas will look like in 2020. I'm quite sure there will be great angst about what we will do, how we will do it, and will anyone come to see it?

Perhaps we need to take a rather dramatic step back from our need to score a cheap victory over the nasty opponent cloaked in a virus too small to be seen, but powerful enough to change not only lives, but the world as we know it.

In fact, nothing will change about the true Christmas. Given that we are mostly certain that Jesus was not born on December 25, we will again mark a symbolic entry of God into human form, in of all places a barn! Then again,



we're not really sure about the nature of the structure in which He was born, nor do we have great certainty about the details leading up to said birth. Mark was so enthralled with the story that he left it out of his Gospel. Luke has a prominent role for angels and shepherds to play; carries forth our deep love of a good census and has Jesus frolicking in a manger; but apparently not waiting for Magi or Wisemen, or whatever they might be referred to. Matthew is the one for whom the camel riding, gift bearing threesome is important. Except it doesn't say anything about how many came riding or what they travelled upon. COVID-19 can not do anything more to mess up the story than we have by mashing together several versions and insisting on carrying on traditions that are demonstrably not true.

Perhaps instead, the pandemic will help us to toss aside some of the less than crucial portions of the spiritual and secular traditions and allow us to have an up close and personal look at reality.

First, the spiritual understanding. For more than two decades I have come to understand Advent and Christmas as pointing me in the direction of understanding God's entry into human history. But God doesn't make it so easy as to simply walk through the Norman Rockwell painting and into the living room of Christmas. There is a place in our lives for comfortable and quaint traditions, but Jesus birth isn't one of them. When we get hung up on the details and ignore the beating heart of true faith, we are sliding down a steep hill on a sled with a badly warped runner. It all became real to me when God

finally got through to me that the words and the stories won't get me there. The truth is, we can't say for certain just how Jesus got here. But we do know that the arrival took place, and that I it has changed the world. My spiritual Christmas has long since stopped being about traditions and morphed into a combination of the wonderful sense of expectant anticipation of Advent and the deeply spiritual question of why God chose to come to earth and the nearly endless possibilities that spring from that question. Now I'm not the Grinch (although I have been accused of playing the role) who wants to take away Christmas carols and Nativity pageants and the sensory overload of Luke's magnificent drama read on Christmas Eve. I just want you to consider getting past the tinsel and lights and get to the "faith" story of Christmas.

Now a less charitable look at the secular celebration. I am in great anticipation of COVID putting the brakes on the all out commercial extravaganza that exists mostly to make CEO's of significant corporations much wealthier. In this I am a Grinch. I can't be bothered to wrestle a ladder from the back of the shed to freeze my fingers in affixing a string or two of lights to parts

of my house that are reluctant to allow me to do so. Any television channel that starts showing Christmas movies in months not named December, will find that my nimble fingers will guide my TV remote away from their numbers and thus make a plea, via a reduction in ratings by one, for them to stop the secular suck up to those peddling more more more at Christmas. I truly believe that the commercial nature of Christmas has gone past the point of no return, and only a complete revitalization based on anything other than profit and greed, will bring me back to any significant participation in what most definitely in mind is no longer Christmas.

So yes, the pandemic has done a number on a lot of things that we know and love. We have missed out on many things we wanted to participate in. We have watched things change multiple times in a very short period. There have been days we've gone from terrified to hopeful to all points in between in a 24 hour period. There has been little sense of normalcy and it has been hard on us.

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# It is still Christmas!

As we journey through Advent and get nearer to Christmas, I am hearing more and more comments like "This Christmas is going to be so different!"



**LAUREL  
PATTENDEN**

We find ourselves together, with the whole world, in the same boat, as we are all affected in some way by this pandemic. It has affected all groups of people with a universality that no political agenda could create. No matter what our birth status, economic status, political status we are all considered touchable by this virus. Granted, perhaps not equally, but indeed affected.

Just as our everyday routines have been affected we project this feeling on to the coming Christmas season. Truly, it will be affected, but I don't want the virus to ruin Christmas. As the saying goes "Christmas comes just once a year!". So I decided

to give some thought on how Christmas will be Christmas, virus or not.

The following points are what I came up with.

Starting at the end of the Christmas story with Joseph, Mary and Jesus fleeing to Egypt for safety. Their time in exile was needed for Jesus to be, well, safe. Was this the first example of social distancing to be safe?

Every year we walk to the manger during Advent and Jesus is beside us. Guiding our way and helping us to not get lost along the road. When we get to the manger we are assured that it is filled. He was there all along! The Christ Child is there, and always will be. That was promised, and so we acknowledge this promise. The manger is full, virus or not.

Perhaps the virus is changing our shopping and gifting habits. However, the shepherds arrived empty handed but full hearted at the first Christmas. Be thankful to those shepherds for precedent has been set! So drop the gifting anxiety this year because of the virus. Actually, let's drop the gifting anxiety from now on. Perhaps this can become the new normal!

Of course, if you are a wealthy king, do what you need to do.

The main point of my pondering comes from the the Easter story when Jesus appears to the disciples in the locked room. He gets to them! In a locked room! So, Christ will be with us. Nothing can shut him out. Surely not the places we will be? Surely not a mere virus? Is this not proof that Christmas can not be locked down? Especially in our hearts?

Yes, Christmas will be different from how we usually celebrate it. However, Christmas will not be different. We may be in exile to be safe. Jesus did it. Our walk in Advent may feel a bit stranger but we are not alone. Jesus is by our side. The gifts might not be piled so high but the manger is still under the tree. Jesus is in the manger. Our Christmas dinner may have fewer chairs around the table, because of the virus, but we rejoice!

Christmas can not be locked down! Nothing can hold back the birth of the Christ Child!

*Laurel is retired and likes to spend her time in her art studio.*



**Laurel Pattenden, Holy Night**