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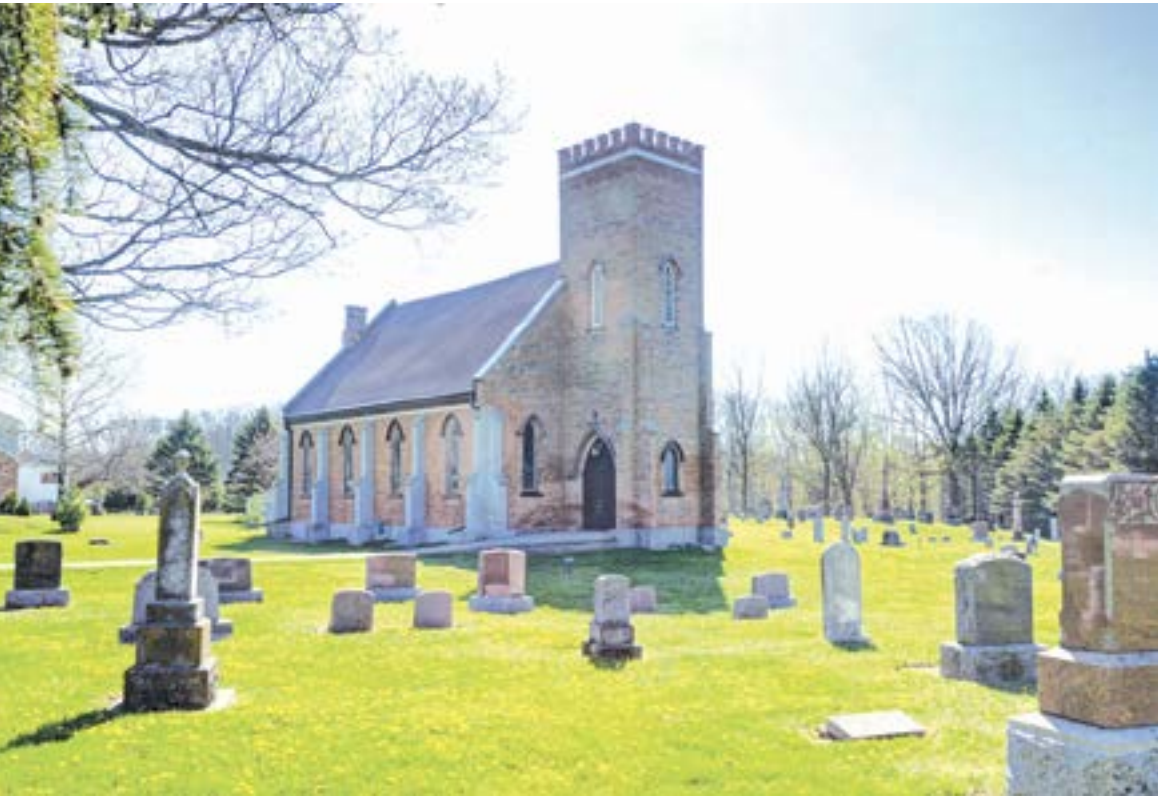


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HURON CHURCH NEWS

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

On being a Worshipping Community: ONE YEAR IN



SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE: St. Matthew's church and cemetery, Florence.

This picture has been associated with the life of the Anglican community in Florence, Ontario for way too long. The church building has become a beautiful, ruinously expensive problem that has drained the parish's bank account. Services were held in the parish hall just to save on utilities. Today, St. Matthew's is a Worshipping Community. It is divested of its church building but it remains in Florence. People here meet, and people here talk. And fundraisers organized in the parish hall today are for outreach not to keep the church doors open. This is not the end of the story. It is a new beginning.

By Lawrene Denkers

I'M GOING TO START at the end of the story. The end of the story is that my church, St. Matthew's, Florence, is a Worshipping Community. It is an experiment. It is divested of its church building, still maintaining its separate church hall, and growing, learning, teaching, reaching out, praying and worshipping. I wanted to tell you that part first so you wouldn't read my original first sentence and assume this was the same old story, another closed church. My original first sentence was: Something had to give. So now I'll restart with that. Something had to give. We are a tiny church, hopelessly rural, the last one standing in a village that once (circa 1900) had five churches, Wesleyan Methodist, Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Anglican. The Anglican was the first (Church of Ireland, 1843), and when the United Church closed in 1994, it became the last.

By early 2023 we had a problem. We had a beautiful, historic, neo-gothic, ruinously expensive problem. Our church building drained our bank account so dry that we were holding many services in the parish hall across the road just to save on utilities. And that was just the beginning. I've written in these pages about the species-at-risk snakes in the basement and the bees in the walls. Between dealing with whatever might be next and covering the costs, the place was wearing us out. It's a lot, physically and psychologically, closing the last church in town, but it seemed all we could do. We were down to a handful of worshipper-workers, and we had vowed (formally, at a board meeting) that we wouldn't keep those exquisite doors open with fundraisers. Fundraisers here are for outreach. If we were going to start having to use fundraisers to pay utilities, then we were no longer relevant.

► **PAGE 3: It's not the end of the story, it's a new beginning**



Susan Bagshaw: Saint Anna

A healing journey through an icon

By Rev. Susan Bagshaw

MONTHS AGO, I was approached about a memorial for our church. 'Of course I'll do it' I said. 'It would be an honour.' After some discussion about the why and the what between the priest, the patron and myself, we agreed on a subject. The harder part was writing the homily for the day the icon was dedicated, December 8, 2024, and it went something like this... Nonna, Gramma, Grandmother, Mimi, Gigi, Bubbe, Grand-mère, Oma, Savta, Grannie among others... I am sure you all had, or have, a special name for your grandmother. It is special because of the relationship you shared or continue to share with that person. "If I were to ask you what the name of Jesus' grand-

mother was, who could answer?" This question posed to the congregation met me with a silent response. Perhaps some knew but were uncomfortable in providing an answer in front of everyone. So, I continued. "Anna" or "Anne" came my response. We don't often think – if ever – that Jesus had a grandmother and it seemed to come as a surprise to some, but of course Mary would have had a mother and father. They just didn't get mentioned in the Bible as we know it. They are, however, named in the non-canonical writings of the Gospel of James and we know them by name as Anne and Joachim. SAVTA is the Hebrew word for grandmother and what little we might know about her is based on some much later accounts with perhaps some details that may or may not

be factual added in about her life. To be honest, she would not have made it on anyone's radar as simply Anne, wife of Joachim, had her child Mary not have become the mother of God, Jesus the Christ Child. Legend says that Anne was unable to conceive a child and was the subject of ridicule from the women in her community as was her husband for not being able to contribute to the 'offspring of Israel'. Joachim was not allowed to attend public worship as a result and Anne was shunned. Their pain was exacerbated by their communities. So both Anne and Joachim went off to pray for a child and God sent a message through His angel Gabriel to Anne - "Anne, Anne, the Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall conceive and bear a child, and your offspring shall be spoken of in all the world."

► **PAGE 3: A grandmother, a mother, and a child**



Recognizing the Risen Lord in Emmaus: A fresco from Grachanica monastery, Serbia, 1321

We have a future, and a task, with the Risen Jesus

BY THE TIME you read this we will be several weeks into the season of Easter, hearing the stories of Jesus’ appearances in the time of the Resurrection. We will also have come through a Federal election, and who knows what will have happened in the un-nerving, and at times terrifying, developments in the USA.

In all of this, we are a bit like the first followers of Jesus who were so disoriented by the events of his death and resurrection that they could only “go home”, “go fishing”, or “lock themselves in” as responses to the fear they felt.

The death of Jesus occurred in the context of political struggle. The mere presence of Jesus was extremely unsettling to those who had



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political power. His teachings upended the ways of empire and oppression. His acts of healing frustrated the ways of war. His resurrection reveals the impotence of any meaningless quest for “greatness” in the world, especially if greatness is “won” by violence. He had refused the devil’s temptations in his life and, raised from the dead, he now embodies the undoing of death and the dissolution of all of the resentment and violence that fuels authoritarian political leaders.

We see in these Easter narratives that the work of the Risen Jesus isn’t done. He intrudes—in the midst of their fear—offering his presence and his gift of peace. He had not abandoned them and, much more, he assures them that they have a future with him. And a task.

Seeing the task given to us by Jesus is important. In this time there are going to be many who suffer economically due to the trade wars and the various assaults on the dignity of human beings. There will be many who suffer physically, emotionally, and spiritually. There will be those who abandon basic human empathy—and that never ends well for anyone.

So, we recommit to our baptismal covenant as a gift

and task. With God’s help we continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers. We persevere in resisting evil and, whenever we fall into sin, we repent and return to the Lord. We proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ. We seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves. We strive for justice and peace among all people, and we respect the dignity of every human being. And we strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the earth.

May God inspire and bless us in the work of resurrection-life.

+ Todd

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

By Rev. Diana Boland

ON THE SECOND Sunday of this month, we celebrate “Good Shepherd Sunday.”

All the readings will relate in some way to Jesus being our ‘good shepherd.’ Jesus himself says “I am the good shepherd: A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” Jesus laid down his life for us on the cross and he gathers his faithful flock around the cross saying, “when I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself.”

Jesus also says that he will protect us from the wolves. The wolves are those who want to destroy the shepherd and scatter the sheep. Anyone who seeks to create division among the flock is a wolf. In the face of this,

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

Jesus prays that we all be one, and he promises that there will be “one flock, one shepherd.”

Jesus calls us by name and when he calls, we must follow. He leads us to green pastures, while others seek to lead us to places that are not so life-giving. Jesus is the Good Shepherd whose voice we must always hear, who’s cross we must always gather around, and who’s lead we must always take.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Rev. Craig Love is an AFP Executive and Priest-in-Charge and Curate Rector of St. James’ Church, St. Marys.

A prayer from the Church of Scotland

*Good Shepherd, watch over us today, In all we face and experience.
Never leave us or forsake us and journey with us always.
Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

*Good Shepherd, you know us as no-one else knows us.
Guard us and keep us, As you guard and keep those whom we love.
Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

*Good Shepherd, we pray for the sick and the lonely.
For the anxious and the bereaved, for those whose pain is beyond
our comprehension.
We stand with them and commend them to your care.
Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

*Good Shepherd, you know the depths of our heart and the fears
which are ours.
Speak into the depths of our heart and calm our fears.
Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

*Good Shepherd, you know us by our name and our identity is not
hidden from you.
Gather us to yourself as a shepherd gathers the sheep, that we
might know your Name.
Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

Amen.

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Editor

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

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Angela Rush
huronchurch.ads@gmail.com
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The Right Reverend
Todd Townshend
Bishop of Huron
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It's not the end of the story, it's a new beginning

From Page 1: On being a worshipping community

IF YOU KEEP your doors open with fundraisers, good on you! We all do what works in our vastly differing communities and situations. It wasn't a solution in our case. We were out of solutions.

How did we get from there to here?

We did it through discussion.

We talk in this church. Some of us talk while walking the bounds of our village, a visible presence in town every morning.

We talk on Monday nights, via more formal Zoom learning sessions, with our friends at Christ Church, Dresden, about our faith, about justice issues, about climate issues, even about dying. (Ask us about our Death of a Christian series! While you're at it, ask us how Revive and The Way of Love carved a path for us.)

We talk during church. Every third week, when we have no clergy or lay reader present, we gather to say Morning Prayer and, in lieu of a sermon, we prayerfully discuss the Scripture readings of the day.

We talk about the Bishop's plan, Turning to Grace, during meetings and when walking, learning and wor-



We meet, we talk, we walk... Some of us talk while walking the bounds of our village...

shipping. What could creating a plan, transitioning, embracing the moment, prioritising "people first and then material things," do?

Sure, we could close St Matthew's, Florence, and scatter to other congregations. But maybe there was another way. Maybe we could embrace the moment, make a plan.

Maybe we could turn the church building back to the diocese – to sell maybe – and use our modern (1994) hall, and our very modern Zoom capabilities, for worship, study, and ministry. Maybe we could focus on teaching and learning and social justice rather than on paying utility bills for a building

that was being served (by us) more than it was serving anyone.

We met after church every week for three months. We read the canons. We asked questions. We made that plan. Specifically, we made a community Rule of Life, an Annual Learning Plan, and a Proposal to become a Worshipping Community.

First up in the way of obstacles was our larger community.

Folks who hadn't darkened our doors for a generation popped up to tell us how wrong we were. A man from miles away and with no affiliation stopped at my house to confirm the news that we

were acting so selfishly.

Dealing with that takes so much explaining that you get tired of the sound of your own voice, but it's worth it. People do come to understand.

Next up was the sheer amount of work it takes to change anything that's been done one way for a century and a half. It really helps to have your Archdeacon, and other patient and kind souls at the diocese, in your corner.

What we came up with, and have implemented, is this:

We are no longer responsible for the church building. It is surrounded by a cemetery, so the cemetery committee is separate from us as well.

We report to Christ Church, Dresden, and contribute enough to the Rondeau Bay Transfiguration Partnership to have clergy on six Sundays per year. Thereafter we bring in clergy at our own expense, and use this rotation: Week One is Eucharist with clergy in the worship space of the hall, Week Two is Morning Prayer in the hall with the people as leaders, Week Three we visit another congregation for Eucharist. We often visit Dresden, but also the other churches of the Partnership and go further afield if something special is happening somewhere. We

also Zoom our Week One and Two services for anyone who cannot attend in person.

We continue to meet for study on Monday nights with Dresden.

We have turned our hall into, not just a worship space, but a ministry space. St. Matthew's has never been busier! You can tell at the door, where a red dress hangs to honour and remember the missing and murdered Indigenous women of our community, colourful quilts sit ready for delivery to shelters, and posters announce the low-income tax preparation clinics, foodbank distribution and community medical clinics happening inside.

It's not the end of the story at all. It's a new beginning. One year into being a Worshipping Community, this February, we are energized and even growing. We have some new folks on board for worship and study.

And we would love to show you what we are doing. We'd love to walk you through it. Come visit us or write to us to ask what can happen when you make a plan.

You can find us at www.stmatthewsflorence.org

Lawrene Denkers is a St. Matthew's, Florence parishioner.

A grandmother, a mother, and a child

From Page 1: A healing journey through an icon

WE KNOW the child as Mary. Anne, this Savta, whose own life modelled prayer, love and humility raised Mary and taught her the scriptures and prepared her - rather unknowingly - to be the mother of God's son by opening her heart and faithfully listening and responding to the voice of God's messenger by saying "yes". We know the rest.

Anne is known as the patron saint of grandparents, mothers, married couples and those who are infertile. It is, as any mother or parent knows, a difficult responsibility to raise a child if you are blessed to have them, and help raise grandchildren – again a blessing but not a guaranteed one. This is where grief and heartache led a grandmother to me. The loss of a child.

Grandmothers have a love that knows no bounds. As a grandmother myself I know this. It is everlasting, without ceasing. One such grandmother came to us seeking a way to do 'something' to



honour and remember her grandchild who passed before she came into this world and was able to know the depth and breadth of her grannie's love. The grannie's name was Wendy and her granddaughter's name was Jennifer. Jennifer left the world the same day she entered it – July 19, 2003. A long time ago, but clearly never forgotten by Wendy and she wanted to do something to remember her by and let her know she is still loved dearly by her Grannie.

As work on the icon progressed, we also discovered another member of our congregation was still suffering the same kind of unimaginable loss and pain and desired some way to express it. Sammie Collin and Jenna Rose also left this world before they were able to know the immense love that their grandma, Mary Ellen, had for them as well.

I believe it was nothing short of divine intervention that these two Savtas met and connected under the roof in our parish and were able to share their stories, their grief and their feelings with one another. This was now a collaborative effort from both grandmas to put into some tangible way a physical representation of the love of two grannies for the grandchildren they were unable to see grow, cuddle, read to, bake cookies for, and champion their interests.

Jennifer would now be 21. Sammie would be 25. Jenna Rose would be 22. They remain forever babies in the eyes of their grandmas and

although the years have rolled by they are clearly not forgotten.

As mothers, Wendy and Mary Ellen watched as their own children suffered through these incredible losses and must have had a feeling of helplessness knowing there was no salve they could put on the wound to heal the pain – except to be there and share in their grief. There is still heartache. There are permanent scars. There is also unending love for their grandchildren that joined them together on this healing journey.

She may not be mentioned in the Bible but had it not been for St. Anne and the way in which she taught Mary growing up, Mary may not have been chosen to bear the Christ Child. - pure speculation of course - we know God had a plan - but the immense influence and importance of this woman cannot be overstated. Anne, the mother of Mary and the Savta, Grannie and Grandmother of Jesus.

I feel a deep and profound sadness that Wendy passed

so unexpectedly November 17th and she did not see the finished icon that was just days away from completion. She was keeping a close eye on my progress all along and we texted pictures that very day. I am sure she was looking down on us as our community gathered and dedicated the icon in honour of Jennifer, Sammie and Jenna Rose.

Thank you Wendy and Mary Ellen for allowing me to be part of this healing journey with you and for sharing the immense love of your grandchildren with us all as we dedicated the icon that hangs appropriately in the Lady Chapel at St. John's in their memories.

We have an icon of St. Anne, The Blessed Virgin Mary and Jesus the Christ Child.

We have an icon of a grandmother, a mother and a child.

Love flows down.

Rev. Susan Bagshaw is Deacon at St. John's, Cambridge.

***The last names of the families have been omitted in respect for their privacy.*

The Chaplain and the Twelve Titans: Ministry of grace, love and acceptance



Chaplain Dan praying with the KW Titans team. Photo: Dan Congdon

By Rev. Marty Levesque

LET ME TELL YOU a story about a guy and twelve friends.

A community partner, Camino Well-Being, reached out to the SideWalk Community Centre in the spring of 2024, wondering if we could help one of the pro basketball players from the KW Titans with a location for skills development camps. The Rev. Dan Bowyer arranged the meeting with forward Anthony Lee Jr. of the KW Titans, who plays in the Basketball Super League. A partnership formed, Anthony began teaching youth basketball skills in the gym at the SideWalk Community Centre and became fast friends with All Saints' Waterloo.

But as Dan reminds All Saints often, one community connection often leads to another and opportunities for ministry. The Basketball Super League emphasizes chaplaincy to support their players who come from diverse and sometimes difficult backgrounds. Through Anthony, Dan learned that the Titans were looking for a team chaplain. Dan's eight years of chaplaincy experience with the Stratford Warriors of the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League proved to be an asset. "I didn't anticipate God integrating team chaplaincy into my wider ordained ministry once, let alone twice. I now see that through my time as a chaplain with the Stratford Warriors, God was preparing me for chaplaincy with the Titans" Dan shares.

Dan began his role as team chaplain of the KW Titans at the start of the 2024/2025 sea-

son. He formed quick bonds with the players, praying before games, dropping off snacks for the players to assist in breaking their Ramadan fast and being a supportive presence to the players to help keep them grounded through the ups and downs of the season. "Walking alongside professional athletes pastorally requires a particular skill set as the ministry context is very distinct," Dan says. "I am the team chaplain for the whole team, so I need to meet players who share my faith, practice a different faith or are of no faith where they are at. It is incumbent upon me as a Christian to love my neighbour as myself". Kate Schooley, one of the team's owners, remarked early on that Dan was "the missing piece we didn't know we were missing and needed."

Point Guard Antoine Mason says, "It's a good spirit to have, especially, you know, me taking my religion seriously, somebody that I could lean on and just ask for references, and you know, guidance during certain times in the season. You have ups and downs, and it's good to have somebody that, like I said, has positive energy and insight."

Shooting Guard Devon Baulkman attends the monthly character-building sessions based on scripture offered by Dan. "Once a month, we all get together, and I'm all in. We'll have a topic for the month, and I believe they help us come together, even off the basketball court. People go through stuff, and, like, life happens, and we come together as a team to understand everybody's feelings, and I think it brought us closer as a team."

Shooting Guard Dee Barnes remembers how instrumental having a chaplain at school was for him. "It was always good having someone around who keeps the Word heavy on your heart and heavy in your life. It's good having Dan around when you're away from home. You can lean on him and kind of just get the Word."

James Robinson, the Lead Assistant Coach for the Titans, remarked, "Having Dan around helps with building team unity. Honestly, having Dan as a secondary safe space for the guys outside of the coaches gives them another voice or another person they could come to who is unbiased, so that way, it keeps their emotions under control and keeps their mental game sharp."

Additional duties for Dan as the team chaplain are to assist with player appearances and connect with the broader community. SideWalk has been fortunate to welcome the Titans to our own Youth Basketball initiative in North Waterloo. Watching these young men run drills and mentor youth is manna for the soul.

Dan's presence with the team is captured by members of the Titans in a few words: unique, easy-going and honest. It's a ministry of grace, love, and acceptance that is transforming the lives of the players and has made Dan quite the basketball fan. It is the ministry of one man with 12 friends. And it is good to see Dan in the right shade of blue and white.

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

St. George's of Forest Hill: Pancake supper for foster children in Ghana



Cher Ray and Pancake Supper Team at St. George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener, on March 4, 2025

St. George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener held a successful pancake supper on March 4.

A variety of pancakes, sausages and beverages were served and take-out meals offered all enjoyed by parishioners and our neighbours. \$1575 was raised to support our two foster children in Ghana. Thanks to all of the MANY great volunteers that helped out lead by Chef Ray.

Mary Ann Millar

On March 1, 2025 PWRDF has become ALONGSIDE HOPE



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

MORE GOOD NEWS OF GARDENING: Native plants thriving on privately owned land



Photo: Lisa Wang

Native plants are crucial to supporting wildlife because animals have evolved over thousands of years to make use of the plants that occur naturally in their environment.

By Rev. Canon Lisa Wang

OUR DIOCESE is located in the heart of “Carolinian Canada”, an area between Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, and Lake Huron. While the Carolinian Life Zone is home to the greatest number of plant and animal species in Canada, it also has the least amount of protected land and the highest number of endangered species.

Arriving here eight years ago, we found ourselves surrounded by empty lawns and a barren landscape. We wondered what we could do for hungry, displaced wildlife, God’s creatures. We wondered what we could do to make reparation for how the land, God’s creation, was being treated all around us.

The first thing we did was to visit our local conservation authority. Through their native tree planting program, we obtained hundreds of tiny seedlings of many different Carolinian trees and shrubs, and planted them all around the house. Then, when a neighbour saw what we were doing, he brought us even more! Each year, we added a little: trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and prairie grasses from local native plant nurseries. Many of the trees have now

reached fifteen feet; the shrubs have formed an impenetrable wall; the wildflowers and grasses are thriving.

And so is the wildlife. When we first arrived, there was one single, lonely firefly in a silent expanse of barren lawn. Now, there is a festival of light and sound! Night and day we delight in the splendour of butterflies, moths, fireflies, and dragonflies; the chorus of birds, frogs, toads, crickets, and grasshoppers; the sight and scent of colourful prairie wildflowers: each creature a revelation of God. We host an astonishing variety of insects, birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, including several endangered species. God’s creation is flourishing here, and we are surrounded by life and beauty, all because of native plants.

Native plants are those that occur in an area naturally, rather than those that have been imported by humans. Native plants are crucial to supporting wildlife because animals have evolved over thousands of years to make use of the plants that occur naturally in their environment. This is why, as scientists such as E.O. Wilson have shown, the key to our planet’s survival is native biodiversity. Yet in the area encompassed by our

diocese, human activity has left almost no such diversity: less than 2.5% of our landscape is protected.

Believe it or not, there is Good News in all this! With so little of our land being protected, the vast majority (95%) is privately owned. According to entomologist-ecologist Douglas Tallamy, “If we planted native on 50% of this private land we would restore biodiversity.” That means the ability to make a difference is not in the hands of governments or institutions, but in our hands. Wherever we live, work, play, learn, and worship, we can plant. On a patio or balcony, we can plant! Even just one native wildflower is better than nothing at all, to a hungry creature of God.

Planting native is an essential part of creation care which, as our diocesan plan Turning to Grace reminds us, is part of being a Just Church. It’s also simply worth it. Nothing could be more rewarding than beholding the beauty of the Creator reflected in the creation, when it is allowed to be as it was intended to be.

An empty lawn could never compare to this. And all it takes is 50%!

Rev. Canon Dr. Lisa Wang is Developer for Catechumenal Ministries, Diocese of Huron.

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

Find out which of our events will interest you at www.renison.ca/RIM



Anglican Foundation of Canada invites applications for \$50,000 in community ministry partnership grants

By Michelle Hauser

The Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) is calling on Canadian Anglicans to strengthen community connections and expand ministry partnerships through its 2025 Request for Proposals (RFP) for Community Ministry Partnerships.

The AFC Board of Directors has approved \$50,000 in funding, with grants available for both local and regional projects that foster collaboration between Anglican organizations and external community partners.

“Anglicans across Canada are building meaningful partnerships that extend their ministry beyond church walls,” says Dr. Scott Brubacher, Executive Director of AFC. “By working alongside not-for-profit organizations, schools, small

businesses, and other faith groups, Anglican churches and ministries can multiply their impact, develop innovative solutions, and strengthen communities.”

As in previous years, AFC will consider funding both new and existing projects that reflect a partnership approach to community engagement. Grants will be awarded in two categories:

- Category A – Local: Up to \$5,000 for projects that establish or meaningfully expand a partnership at the local level.
- Category B – Regional: Up to \$15,000 for projects that establish or meaningfully expand a partnership across a city, diocese, or region.

Eligible funding uses include administrative expenses, travel, equipment,

technical costs, remuneration, honoraria, and food. Applications will be accepted from September 1 to October 1, 2025, with funding decisions announced in December 2025.

“AFC continues to prioritize partnerships as a powerful model for sustainable ministry,” says Brubacher. “This RFP is an opportunity for Anglican communities to deepen their outreach by collaborating with like-minded organizations that share their mission and vision.”

For full eligibility criteria and application details, visit www.anglicanfoundation.org/apply/2025rfp or contact foundation@anglicanfoundation.org.

Michelle Hauser is AFC Development & Communications Officer.

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Appointments

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Jordan Murray as the Rector of Holy Trinity-St. Stephen's Memorial, London, effective 1 April 2025.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Rambie Bernardino as the Rector of St. James, Cambridge, effective 1 May 2025.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Bill Strang as the Interim Priest-in-charge of St. John's, Windsor (Sandwich), effective 1 April 2025.

Bishop Townshend's Commissary, the Venerable Tanya Phibbs, appointed the Reverend Andra O'Neill as the Rector of St. George's, Middlesex Centre, effective 1 March 2025.

Bishop Townshend's Commissary, the Venerable Tanya Phibbs, appointed the Reverend Greg Little as the Interim Priest-in-charge of St. John's, Strathroy, effective 1 March through 31 May 2025.

Induction

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, the Venerable Amanda Longmoore inducted the Reverend Kevin Dixon as the Rector of St. Jude's, London, on Sunday, 30 March 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The preacher will be Pastor Steve Dozeman.

Resignation

Bishop Townshend accepted the resignation of the Reverend Peter Ciallella, who accepted an appointment as the Rector of St. John's, Winona, in the Diocese of Niagara, effective 1 May 2025. In addition to this appointment, he will also serve as the Migrant Farm Worker Missioner for the Diocese of Niagara, effective 1 April 2025. Peter has

been serving as the interim Priest-in-charge of St. James, Brantford.

Retirement

Dr Davor Milicevic will be retiring as the Communications Officer for the Diocese of Huron, effective 30 June 2025. His last day in the office will be 10 June.

Davor joined the Church House team in January 2016 and has had a wide range of responsibilities, including responding to media inquiries, developing communications strategies, and overseeing and troubleshooting the technological infrastructure of Church House. He is perhaps most widely known for his award-winning editorship of the Huron Church News as well as for the design, updating, and maintenance of our web site.

It is hard to imagine Church House without him. We wish Davor many years of healthy and happy retirement!

Rest in Peace

Frances Murray, died on 4 March 2025.

She was a faithful member and chorister of St. George's Parish of The Blue Mountains. Frances wore many hats within St. George's, the Diocese and throughout the Deanery of the Saugeens. She spent many years as Warden, Lay Reader, Executive member of ACW, Synod Delegate, on Diocesan Executive Committees and as Deanery Co-Chair.

A funeral was held at St. George's Anglican Church in Clarksburg at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, 20 March 20, 2025. The full obituary may be found below.

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

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

In Memory

Saugeens Deanery

St. George's,
The Blue Mountains
(Clarksburg)
Frances Murray

London Deanery

Church of the Ascension
(formerly St. Timothy's)
London
Sandra Colbert

The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer
is pleased to present

The Bishop of Huron Prayer Conference

Saturday May 3, 2025
10:00 am to 3:00 pm
at Church of St. Jude's
1537 Adelaide St., N. London
Cost: \$20.00 (includes lunch)

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" - 2 Chronicles 7:14.
If we can't see God's face, how do we seek God's face?

FINDING THE FACE OF GOD IN PRAYER

Join us for a day with the Right Reverend Todd Townshend, Bishop of Huron speaking to us from his experience with prayer. The day will include presentations, breakout groups and workshop opportunities and is suited for everyone who is searching for God, in our churches, communities, homes, and beyond.

To Register: Please follow link or contact Susan Johnson @brlmail2@aol.com

Last date to order lunch will be Wednesday, April 30, 2025



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

Good News from Camp Huron. Registration is now open!

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

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,
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here in this place... and beyond!

Go to www.camphuron.ca to find out more, see great pictures,
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gerryadam@diohuron.org 519-434-6893 ext 217



Week-long Camps for ages 6-14, grades 1-8 \$740.

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Evergreen Session 3	July 20-26
Evergreen Session 4	July 27-August 2
Evergreen Session 5	August 3-9
Evergreen Session 6	August 10-16

Day Trippers: Join us at breakfast and stay the day, Monday – Friday inclusive for ages 6 – 12, grades 1-6, \$325

Day Trippers Session 1	July 7 – 11
Day Trippers Session 2	July 21 – 25
Day Trippers Session 3	July 21 – July 25
Day Trippers Session 4	July 28 – August 1
Day Trippers Session 5	August 4 – 8
Day Trippers Session 6	August 11 – 15

LIT 1, 2, 3 Grades 8-11

LIT1 (finishing grade 8) July 6-19 or July 27-August 9	\$1600
LIT2 (finishing grade 9) July 6-19 or July 27-August 9	\$1600
LIT3 (finishing grade 10) July 6-26 or July 27-August 16	\$2100

Bursaries and payment plans available. Please ask!



Services at the Mohawk Chapel for 2025

Sunday, October 5 (Thanksgiving Service) at 2 pm
Sunday, December 7 (Christmas Service) at 2 pm

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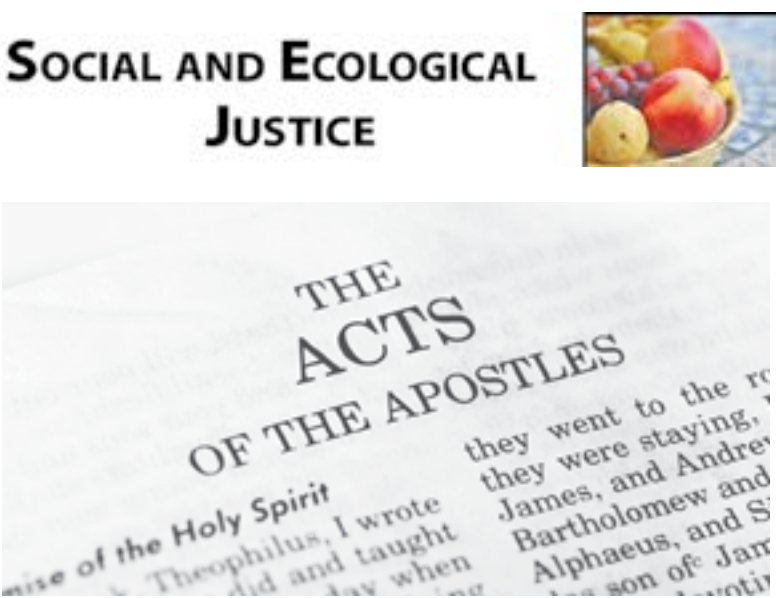
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Federal election: What can we learn from the Book of Acts?

By Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle

DURING the Easter season, our lectionary includes readings from the Book of Acts (unless the semi-continuous readings have been chosen for the cycle). This gives us important insights into the ways in which the fledgling Christian community sought to embody what they had learned from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The stories from this text remain an important invitation and challenge to us as we seek to embody our faith in this world today.

What this looks like extends beyond what happens on Sunday morning. As modelled by Christians throughout history, faith is meant to influence every aspect of our lives. The call to love our neighbours as ourselves doesn't just happen within the confines of our churches. It happens every day in the choices we make, in the ways we seek and serve Christ in all persons, and the ways we respect the dignity of every human being. This means that faith ought to influence the choices we make when we engage in the electoral process, both in our conversations with candidates and as we cast our votes.



So, what can we learn from the Book of Acts, as we reflect on our engagement with the current Federal election: the choices we make at the ballot box and in holding the elected officials accountable for building a just world?

All who believed were together and had all things in common, they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. (Acts 2:45)

There are multiple passages suggesting that the early Christian community distributed resources based on need! What we might learn from that for today is this community would provide resources like food, housing, medication, dental care, and affordable daycare to individuals and families simply because they needed it. There would be no hoops to jump through to prove they somehow deserved it. The Christian community would find a way to ensure that those who needed resources could have them simply because they are neighbours, family whom the Christians are called to love and care for.

To what extent have we considered the policies and practices of the political parties and their approaches to providing for those in need? How does each party choose who benefits from the resources available? To what extent does each party respond to human need with the loving

provision of resources? What priorities get in the way of this kind of loving response? How can we better hold our elected officials accountable for caring for our neighbours, our siblings in need?

Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. (Acts 8:27)

This is but one story in which the Book of Acts highlights the openness of the fledgling Christian community to a diversity of individuals. Philip is called by the Spirit into an encounter with a racialized, gender non-binary individual who is open to learning about faith. At the Ethiopian's request, Philip baptises this person and welcomes them into the Christian community.

Following the inauguration in the US, Bishop Budde asked Trump to have mercy on those who are scared now. We have seen policies from the US have drastic impacts on marginalised communities. The Ethiopian eunuch could easily be a member of those communities and yet, we have this powerful story of inclusion.

As we cast our votes, to what extent are we paying attention to whether there are communities who are scared about the policies and practices of any of the parties? Is there anything that candidates have said or done that have raised red flags suggesting further marginalization for those who are our neighbours, our siblings in Christ, those whom we are called to serve? Are we prepared to call upon candidates to have mercy? Are we prepared to have mercy ourselves to the point where perhaps the choice we make at the ballot box is based on what is necessary to protect those who might be scared now?

There are a plethora of stories and examples from the Book of Acts that remind us about what it means to embody our faith based in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Every one of us could benefit from reading this text and reflecting on these stories in relation to our engagement in world today and our participation in this Federal election.

Our participation in this process is a right, a privilege, and a responsibility. It is one of the important ways in which we can transform unjust structures, challenge violence of every kind, and pursue peace and reconciliation. To what extent will your faith inform your vote in this federal election?

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

Is this image mine? (AI generates pictures... and some moral dilemmas)

By Jamie Smith

ONCE, when I was teaching a drama class, my fellow instructor predicted that one day everyone would be wearing wrist radios to communicate just like Dick Tracy.

Obviously, that was a long time ago and part of the prediction has not become a reality. But isn't it true that many wear wrist watches that will do far more than allow wireless talking?

The majority of Canadians today have cell phones that do likewise! The devices even "talk" to each other and can send rescue assistance to people who are injured and unable to do so themselves!

Of course, this is the good side of what I would call Artificial Intelligence (I use the term in its broadest meaning, not only for the newest software and things that can write letters, poetry, or that can create images or guide a robot). Nevertheless, the use of AI does raise significant social and moral questions.



I will share my experience, related to photography, where software companies apply the term AI to many different presets they give you to use when developing your own photos. All it really does is play with the settings for you, so you can change the image to whatever you like. The major breakthrough for me is AI that assists me to create details in an image or even makes a completely new image for me. (I have always wanted to write a book and have it illustrated. Now I can do it myself!)

The above image is created entirely with AI. First of all, I created the background in Adobe Photoshop using Generative AI which gave me three images to choose from. Having selected one, I then used Generative Fill to create the guitar on the background. You will notice that it matches because now the computer uses pixels from the background. I told it to make a vintage jazz guitar, and, voila – it made this one! (again with three choices).

For the last step I used my

creative skills to touchup what I had done to my own liking, and then I saved it. After that, as always. I gave it a title. This time, I add "AI" to tell myself I utilized Artificial Intelligence.

The first moral question is, of course, "Is the image mine?" According to my agreement with Adobe, it is mine, and I can even sell it if I want to. What I can't do is make questionable photos (it will not allow pornography for example), or ones including copyrighted images (I naively tried to make an image of Superman flying, and it would not allow it).

A famous sculptor, who was making a huge block-long sculpture with robotic AI, was asked, "If the robot does the carving, where's the creativity?" He immediately responded, "In the idea!" And I agree with him. So the finished photo is mine, but I like to remind myself that I had help.

Still, my greatest help I call GI. It is my assistance obtained through prayer and the Holy Spirit - it is GOD INTELLIGENCE!

Scripture says that we "have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). Not only does the Holy Spirit give me ideas and assistance when compiling creative ideas, but He also gives me guidance in how to utilize them. I want to bring glory to God so I cannot violate His standards.

But the major question regarding Artificial Intelligence remains unanswered. What about others who have criminal and low or no moral standards? How will they use AI?

In a nutshell, BADLY! As always, with knowledge and understanding, there will be those with no wisdom, especially Godly Wisdom, who will use it for selfish, ruthless, and harmful purposes.

What shall we say then?

AI must be used in personal or public matters carefully and mindfully. That responsibility belongs to all humanity but especially to those who call themselves Christ's!

Jamie Smith is a Trinity, Cambridge parishioner.

A fork in the road of ministry: Exploring partnerships strengths

IN MY OBSERVATION of the life cycle of congregational ministry, there have been countless examples of church communities who have come to a fork in the road when determining the future sustainability of their ministry.

This trend has become a familiar one in our contemporary Canadian society: the story of an aging congregation coming to recognize that both their membership numbers and their financial resources are no longer sufficient to keep up with the rising costs of utility bills, insurance, building repairs, and even the ability to afford their clergy stipend. We know that this challenge is not simply an Anglican one, but that almost every town and city has experienced the closure of a Christian denominational church.

There is even a well-worn adage that has come to represent this trend: "When the last one of us has been buried, it's time to turn the lights out." Often, the closure of a church building feels like a funeral. While deceased churches don't have graves or headstones, I wonder if congregational survivors would be satisfied with a headstone marked by the abovementioned adage? I know that, at least from the perspective



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

of this Anglican, I certainly wouldn't!

It has been a concerning trend to note that, among the many closures of church buildings in our Diocese, often the fate of the surviving congregation is tethered to the possibility of them moving to another church building. We have so few examples (at least in our Anglican context) of our faith communities existing outside a consecrated church building.

Today, I'd like to write of an exciting experiment that has fallen into the lap of my own congregation, of St. George's, The Blue Mountains. Firstly, I think that it is important to give credit where credit is due: the exploration of this potentially new ministry model was not the initiative of Anglicans! In our small town, a very active and future-oriented United Church of Canada congregation, called Grace Church, has come to a conclusion about their own fork in the road for ministry.

Grace, in assessing their future sustainability for



ministry, recognized that they could currently afford a minister for only two days per week (Sunday and one other day). This limitation was inhibited because of the expense of maintaining a beautiful historic church building – all the expected bills that are required to keep the lights on. This United Church congregation recognized that, while they could maintain the two day a week status quo for a few more years, another choice would be to explore the potential of making a drastic change in their ministry model that might unlock the possibility of once again supporting full-time ministry.

With an entrepreneurial spirit, Grace has come to recognize that in either the repurposing of their church building, or perhaps in even the sale of their property, they might be able to unlock financial resources to invest in a full-time minister. They hope that in investing in relationships in our community, instead of simply paying the

bills to maintain their church building, perhaps this might become the catalyst for congregational revival.

In order for this new ministry model to work, Grace United Church would need to find a new place of worship – a new center from which their ministries could be hosted. What if they could partner with another Christian denomination?

I am deeply honoured that the first church that Grace sought out in this experimental conversation was my Anglican congregation. Over the past decade, Grace and St. George's have partnered in numerous services and events, especially in musical collaborations involving both of our choirs.

What might it look like if our two congregations explored the sharing of our ministry resources? While a long-term solution to Grace's infrastructure challenges might be to one day move into St. George's church building, while at the same time repurposing their

property, in the meantime, we are hoping to explore our congregational relationships. This summer, we're going to try "speed dating," a humorous analogy to describe our intent of experiencing each other's worship traditions and ministry hopes for the future. During the summer months, when clergy are on holiday, we will each host the other congregation with a special focus on learning each other's stories.

What will the future bring for us? We don't know that yet, but we do know that congregations are always stronger when we choose to work together, rather than adopting the prevailing "do it alone until the lights go out" mentality. I am inspired by Grace Church's courage in exploring new ministry possibilities in partnership with their "sister" Anglican denomination. Stay tuned in the months ahead as I share about our mutual experiences. We look forward to sharing learnings on this ecumenical experiment in The Blue Mountains.

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.

grayhamebowcott@diohuron.org

A priest's reflection on authenticity

ONE OF THE IMPORTANT insights I've gained as I embrace retirement is the value of being authentically myself.

This newly retired phase offers a wonderful opportunity to revisit past interests, whether they are hobbies, sports, artistic pursuits, or thrilling activities. It also serves as a creative space for exploring new adventures and discovering fresh ways to express myself and engage socially. Whatever I unpack and discover, the important value is authenticity.

Too often, authenticity is overshadowed by conformity, which can become habitual and ingrained to the point of being confused about authenticity itself.

Oscar Wilde aptly stated, "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken." This sentiment underscores the balance between being authentic and adhering to societal and corporate expectations, a balancing act that I



AS I SEE IT

**REV. JIM
INNES**

have found difficult at times in my career as a priest. One wishes to be part of a greater movement yet is occasionally paused by unpalatable direction.

Being authentic in a corporate context, even when faced with disagreeable directions, can be managed. At times, one may choose to let things unfold and trust the process. Other times, it is necessary to share your thoughts and engage in meaningful dialogue to find a workable balance. Unfortunately, and as I have found, there are times when you must say "no" and face the consequences.

I have never been good at saying "no." My disagreeable feelings are often hidden behind a neutral façade as

I think of ways to avoid the situation. And this is neither being truly myself nor helping the corporate whole.

When we are authentic, we risk rejection. Ralph Waldo Emerson quipped, "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." I believe this accomplishment transcends personal success; being true to oneself in the face of rejection and pushback can be life-giving to the greater whole. I only wish I had more courage to act in alignment with what my mind told me was true.

The courage to be more authentically oneself begins early in life. Recently, I encountered a Facebook message that suggests, rather accurately, that individuals with an unhealed inner child often become insecure and overly accommodating, highlighting how people-pleasing can evolve into a coping strategy that undermines true authenticity.

As a priest, one must integrate authenticity with the call to serve as a loving and empathetic shepherd to the sheep.

This calling requires placing personal needs aside for the benefit of others. What renders this an authentic expression of self is that it's a choice rooted in a spirituality of self-emptying, a core virtue revealed through participation. However, one may occasionally feel lost in the complexities of church politics, leading to a wavering authenticity driven by fear of reprisal. Furthermore, we often carry the burdens of personal baggage, a reactivity that may impede our ability to be genuinely loving and caring.

As I transition into retirement, I have ample time to reflect more deeply on the choices I'm making. I want to be more authentic, free from the concerns of politics, but instead trust that, at my deepest core, I genuinely care about people and want what's

best for them, a trust that I have often failed to appreciate.

Authenticity is a multi-faceted topic, and the act of being authentic transcends mere words or reactions. Brené Brown articulates this beautifully: "Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It's about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen." It is about living a truth that is deeply anchored in one's core.

As I've reflected on my past to discover an authentic self-going forward, I have discovered that I've changed. The passage of years profoundly shifts one's nature—not merely in body but also in mind. This realization renders authenticity a dynamic and evolving concept, one that invites continual growth and self-discovery.

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

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!!



EfM online Open Houses: Tuesday, May 13 and Wednesday, August 27.
In-person Open House: Wednesday, June 4, all at 7pm.

To indicate your interest in attending one of these sessions, or to register for Fall classes in the Diocese or to discuss possibilities of beginning an EfM group in your area, please contact Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or Val Kenyon at EFM@huron.anglican.ca

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

ALONG WITH the warmer days of spring, comes a very special moment in the life of some of the EfM participants here in Huron as after four years together they will be graduating.

While each EfM group celebrates this accomplishment in their own way, it is, without doubt, a real accomplishment.

Past graduates have spoken of their experiences over the four years of the EfM programme, and how developing the practice and habit of theological reflection had changed them in so many ways. They also shared that being part of an EfM group had helped them become more aware of and relate to the needs and concerns of the world around them, in particular in light of their desire to be followers of Jesus.

For many in this group they would leave it with quite a different idea of “ministry” then when they began. With a renewed, expanded perspective of ministry for all of the baptized and a view of



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.

God as dynamic and leading the way in mission, they experienced a greater openness to where they felt God was leading them in every aspect of their daily lives. While their reading and study would bring a number of insights, what they gained from the sessions together was not so much about knowing more, but rather about developing an understanding of who they were in God, remaining open to who they were becoming, and what it was to be part of what God was doing in the world all around them.

A common sentiment among graduates is that they began as a collection of individuals from a variety of parishes and approaches. By

the end of their time together they would become a group journeying, exploring and wondering together. For many they felt that they were not the same people as they had been at the start of their time together.

With new EfM sessions beginning in September with in-person, hybrid and virtual formats, we hope that you will take advantage of several upcoming virtual EfM Open House Evenings on Tuesday, May 13th and Wednesday, August 27th with an in-person Open House on Wednesday, June 4th, all at 7pm.

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

EFM@huron.anglican.ca

Innate violence of our busy lives

I AM RE-READING Thomas Merton's *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*.

I really love reading authors who invite readers to be suspended in the questions. Faith and its expression is often lived out in mystery. This is not a comfortable place for some. Merton has a way of expressing the many ways that we are connected as people and the many ways in which God is connected to our daily journeys.

Consider these words about the pervasiveness of violence in our lives:

“There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner

The pressure imposed from others, and from ourselves, to accomplish all things does indeed disrupt and even destroy our inner peace.



It's JUST KEVIN

V. REV. KEVIN GEORGE

capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.”

These are powerful words. They speak a deep and difficult truth. The lives that we are living are indeed a form of innate violence. Now this is not easy to accept. Being an idealist myself and wanting to do all that I can to work for justice as I see it, it is hard to imagine that being the idealist makes me so susceptible to this contemporary violence. That's why these words are so very powerful to me. Stepping back from it for a moment and allowing Merton's words to soak into my being, I can see the wisdom offered in

them. Merton is asking if we succumb to; too many concerns, too many demands, too many projects, helping everyone in everything? I am forced to answer; yes, yes, yes, and yes! And I feel pretty certain that I am not alone.

Merton uses powerful language, suggesting that or overzealousness to do good, to help others, and to complete every project is a form of violence. The pressure imposed from others, and from ourselves, to accomplish all things does indeed disrupt and even destroy our inner peace. Sometimes our efforts can indeed tear us from the reassurance that we are God's beloved. When we get frustrated from our inability to do all things and fulfill all the demands we take on, we also risk succumbing to destructive thoughts of inadequacy. There is no doubt in my mind 'of the pervasiveness of the contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs.'

I think we all need to evaluate how we might be succumbing to this innate violence. Can we identify places in our lives where we are fighting our own unrealistic expectations or those of others? Are we losing ourselves while trying to save the world? Are we able to be present to the injustices of the world if we lose ourselves in the violence of our efforts? Have we removed our inner capacities for peace and in the process destroyed the fretfulness of our efforts? If we can identify the ways that we have succumbed to the quiet violence – perhaps we might also be able to identify how we might find ways to meet the goals of God's love in measured and realistic ways.

God heal us of the violence conflicting concerns, busy day planners, and many projects. Give us patience to seek your presence deep within. Grant us inner peace and the wisdom to find fruitful ways to deliver love and justice and your quiet presence to a world obsessed being busy.

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

kevingeorge@diohuron.org

St Paul's Cathedral: ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

We are honoured to announce Catherine Morrissey's appointment as the inaugural Artist in Residence at St. Paul's Cathedral for 2025-2026.



This residency offers Catherine the opportunity to create works showcasing the beauty of London, its surroundings, and the cathedral's community, reimagining the church through her artistic vision. The residency will also enable Catherine to engage the downtown neighbourhood in our soon-to-be renovated space, leveraging art as a means of spiritual exploration and expression.

We are confident that her residency at St. Paul's will build community and help us explore the possibilities that may come with being London's Creative Sector Hub and, at the same time, help us discern how we might establish the cathedral as a cultural centre for music, visual art, and literature.

Are we coping? (Preaching the Gospel of hope in a tumultuous time)

THE SPIRIT of this column has been to comment on the “post-COVID zeitgeist” – the spirit of a new age in the shadow of a life-altering global pandemic.

More than five years on, we are still attempting to stabilize and define a new normal, a new baseline for how we live, work, play, and relate to one another. Instability persists and this is borne out in the edginess I perceive in myself and others. Interpersonal tension is high, the ability to cope with mounting pressure and stressors is at an all-time low, and the hope of relief for life's burdens has been heavily diminished. Because it's not only the COVID hang-over that troubles us, but the possibility that the world has not recovered and has indeed been flung into deeper confusion and division.

I think our response to the pandemic itself was the first red flag for the age to follow. Rather than being unified around a common goal, Canadians found ourselves split on public health policy and the politicization of the same. This has led to further ideological entrenchment, which persists into the current federal election cycle.

We are mired in distrust of once-authoritative institutions, from government



FIELD NOTES

REV. ALLIE MCDUGALL

to ecclesial, and steeped in cynicism about the integrity of our leaders. Average Canadian households are bearing incredible financial strain in response to the skyrocketing cost of living and stagnating wages. The economic future of this country is subject to the whims of our southern neighbours.

Our news cycles are filled with death and endless war, broken up by invitations to spend and consume more and more. The coping mechanisms offered, while not substantially different from tools used historically in times of crisis, range from mindless consumerism to pharmaceutical treatment to limitless access to recreational drugs,

pornography, and smartphone escapism.

When I spend time with friends, family, and parishioners and get beyond small-talk pleasantries, there is a quality of brittle fragility. People are hanging on by a thread to accomplish the tasks of daily life, assaulted by psychic and spiritual anxiety and genuinely afraid of what the future holds. It is a difficult time to preach the Gospel of hope and the promise of liberation that comes in God's Kingdom when the present moment feels terrifying, when the world has changed but not enough for a new normal to emerge.

Perhaps this is the new normal? The world that existed before the onset of the pandemic was not perfect by any stretch, but our collective memory is short, and we tend to idealize the past. The idea that the future might be worse and less prosperous than the past we recall and cherish is frightening and stressful, par-

ticularly for those who were raised in the bright shining hope of the 20th century. If you were promised a future of infinite growth and progress, the acceptance of a future that is defined by scarcity and reactionary reversals feels impossible. Living in the lurch of a pendulum swinging into the unknown is uneasy and anxiety-inducing.

This Eastertide and in the lead-up to Pentecost, we must remember that the Church thrives and grows in seasons like this one, where the ground feels uneven and liable to split open. The earliest followers of Jesus were subject to the whims of empire, wrought with division, and existentially threatened at every turn. These were followers of Jesus who believed, with great cause, that Christ's Second Coming was imminent, not out of paranoia but to preserve hope in the face of an uncertain future. Sharing in their apocalyptic thinking is not a flaw or failure of hope, it is the choice to re-centre ourselves in the greatest, consummate hope of the Christian faith. This too shall pass (i.e. the turmoil of the present moment), but we have no assurance that a better, more loving, more compassionate world will be brought to its fullness outside of God's plan to restore

the Earth and establish His reign forever. The earthly, immediate hope is that the work has begun in the work of Christ and that the light of the Kingdom shines through the cracks in the veneer of this broken world. Our part in striving for that kingdom is to look for those lights, and maybe make a few cracks ourselves.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’ And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’” (Revelation 21:1-15)

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

alliemcdougall@diohuron.org

Beyond the hashtag: Solidarity vs Charity in the social media age

SOcial MEDIA has amplified our awareness of global and local crises, sparking an outpouring of support. However, how we engage with these issues online reveals a crucial distinction: charity versus solidarity.

Often prevalent on social media, the charity model manifests as viral donation campaigns and “awareness” posts. While these efforts can provide immediate relief, they often perpetuate a “saviour” narrative, where those with platforms offer aid to passive recipients. Think of the trend-



MEDIA BYTES

REV. MARTY LEVESQUE

ing hashtag that raises money for a specific cause but fades when the next crisis hits.

Solidarity, on the other hand, demands a deeper engagement. It's about using social media to amplify marginalized voices, challenge unjust structures of society, and build lasting communities. It moves beyond fleeting



donations to fostering sustained dialogue and action.

A solidarity-focused approach might involve platforming affected communities and sharing their stories, rather than filtering them through a privileged lens. Solidarity moves beyond the superficial and challenges misinformation through

critically analyzing narratives and exposing the root causes of inequality.

Solidarity builds online and offline networks and connects with local organizations and movements working towards long-term systematic change through promoting education and critical thinking for privileged communities. Social media allows the sharing of resources that empower users to understand complex social issues.

Social media's potential for connection can be a powerful tool for solidarity. It allows us to transcend geographi-

cal barriers and build global movements. However, it requires a shift from passive consumption to active participation, from fleeting charity to sustained solidarity. By leveraging social media to amplify marginalized voices and challenge unjust structures of society, we can move beyond performative activism and build a more equitable and just world and fully live into our baptismal vows

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

martylevesque@diohuron.org

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'For the faith – In the service of humanity'

HIDDEN in the calendar dates of your commitments is the reminder that we acknowledge that 2025 is the 80th anniversary year of what is commonly called “VE Day”.

Victory in Europe marked a moment of significant transition in the lives of many people who had been dealing with the reality of war for a number of years. It was a moment of celebration, as the prospect and hopes for peace seemed closer to reality.

VE Day marks, not simply the conclusion of military action in Europe, but also a moment when the balance of power across the globe underwent its own transformation. That process, from my perspective, continues to this day.

In the climate of a world at war, leaders spoke with energy and conviction as they called their nations to rally around shared goals. Eloquent orators declared that surrender was not an option. They offered a battle cry that declared that every citizen, no matter who they were, had a role to play in an endeavour which would lead to a brighter future, to victory and to peace.

In our day, as we gaze at the reality of life in the global village we inhabit, there are few identifiable voices of leadership whose call reaches over the cacophony of chaos and catastrophe which permeates our news cycles and social



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

The atmosphere lived in by previous generations where there was respect for places of worship and communities of faith is not a “given” in today’s world. Yet that reality need not be a deterrent for people of faith.

media. Although some might find it difficult to think of the world we live in as a spiritual battleground, the reality is that when individuals of faith speak up, there is a very real possibility that they will become targets and the focus of personal or even physical attack.

During a recent experience of interim ministry, I became aware of a fund generated by the provincial government which has been created in response to attacks, motivated by hate, on buildings associated with communities of faith. Places where people gather for worship are defaced and desecrated. The dollars associated with this fund are intended to deter this kind of activity and to provide some kind of safeguard for com-

munities of faith. This is the battleground in which we live.

The atmosphere lived in by previous generations where there was respect for places of worship and communities of faith is not a “given” in today’s world. Yet that reality need not be a deterrent for people of faith. The generation that lived through the global conflict of decades past, fought for what they believed to be right. They set the bar of expectation high for those of us who have followed.

A thousand years ago, a group of knights who were in the City of Jerusalem determined that they could live out their commitment to their Lord by serving others in his name. They looked after the poor and needy, the sick and the infirm. There were no

questions asked as a prerequisite to offering care. The community was identified by a White Cross and their motto reflected their purpose, “For the Faith - In the Service of Humanity”.

Today, in communities across the Diocese of Huron, the Province of Ontario and all across Canada, this working Order of Chivalry continues in the activities of those volunteers who commit themselves to the work of St John Ambulance. There are those who work as Therapy Dog volunteers as well as the Medical First Responders who wear the traditional White Cross and may be seen at a number of community events. Through many other facets in the life of the organization, offering trained

medical assistance to those in need, is the way in which individuals associated with the White Cross of St John, put their commitment to serve others, into action.

Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple offered an important vision of the identity of the church. He said, “The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members”. As the institutional church undergoes significant transitions, that insight offered years ago, still rings true.

When each of us seeks to live out the commitments described through our Baptismal Covenant, Archbishop Temple’s vision of ministry reminds me of an insight that was shared with me years ago. As we step out over the threshold of our church buildings, we enter the mission field. Through your words and actions, you express your love for your Lord. You are motivated by your faith to serve others.

“For the Faith - In the Service of Humanity”.

This is truly a valid battle cry for ministry and mission for people of faith who seek to serve our Lord in today’s world.

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



Pictured at Pearson — Dean Kevin George, Isabelle Li (Laurence’s Partner), Laurence Williams, and Catherinanne George

Please visit DreamsAndVisions.ca to follow the progress and learn how you can participate in this exciting renewal

Dreams & Visions at St. Paul's: New people & renewed building

A NEW ERA OF MUSIC began at St Paul’s this spring as the parish welcomed its new Director of Music, Laurence Williams. Laurence immigrated to Canada from the UK, and is excited to build on the strong legacy of musical excellence at the cathedral.

Laurence was a chorister at Westminster Abbey for six years, during which time he sang daily services and for royal occasions, including for HM The Queen Mother’s Funeral in 2002 which was broadcast worldwide. He continued this royal theme with a gap year as Organ Scholar at St. George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle where he was responsible for accompanying and helping train the choir (he also got to live in the castle!).

He spent three years at Trinity College, Cambridge in the choir where he read music, studying under esteemed conductor, Stephen Layton. He completed his Masters in Vocal Performance at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2017 with Distinction. Since then he has sung internationally as both a soloist and in choirs such as the world-renowned Monteverdi Choir.

He has held directing positions with amateur and children’s choirs and most recently spent two years as Director of Music at St. Michael’s Church, Barnes in London England. He plays piano and organ for various choirs and loves educating the next generation.

He is looking forward to having a slightly less hectic schedule running around on the London Underground and UK rail system!

WORK continues to move along at St Paul’s at a steady pace. The structural work is complete, and we are currently witnessing the mechanical renewal of the space. Gone are the days of sweltering, hot synod services and ordinations. The builders are now framing in the ramp. We are excited that very soon we will have accessibility between the nave and the rest of our church facility.

