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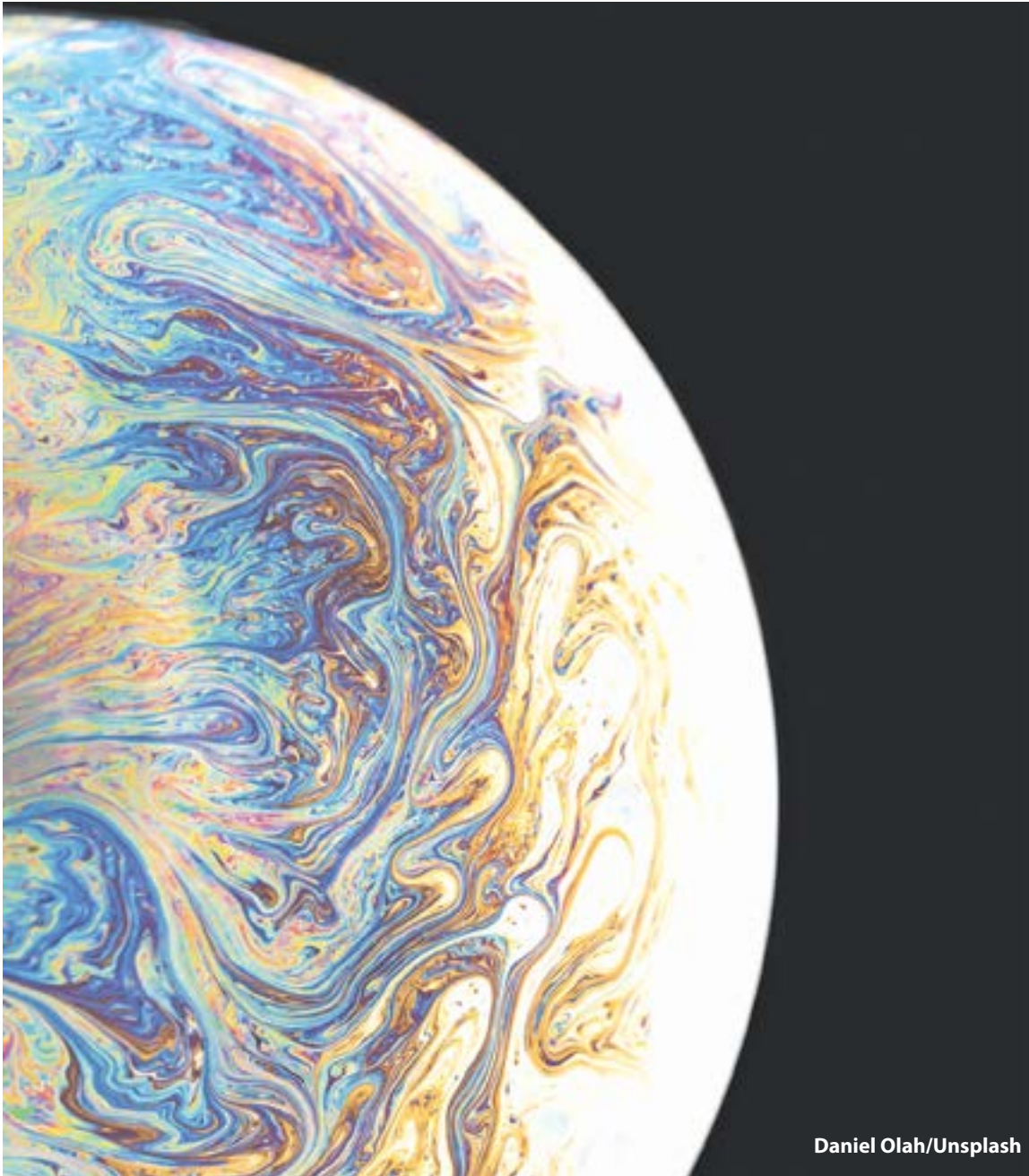
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HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • APRIL 2024



Daniel Olah/Unsplash

Carrying our cross beyond Easter: 'In wisdom you have made them all'

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
(Psalm 104, 24)

April 22 is Earth Day. It falls right in the middle of Eastertide.

Focus on Resurrection inevitably includes reflecting on our responsibility towards Creation. As created beings – beings made, not begotten – we share our destiny with the destiny of our planet. Earth is our birthplace, our resting place, and, ultimately, the place from which we will arise.

Recognizing God's wisdom in Creation means finding grace to listen and learn from what God has done – as our Social and Ecological Justice article states. It means realizing that the current aesthetic ideals may undermine the inherent wisdom in creation; that in following those ideals we may, for example, threaten our native species and put in jeopardy the perfect balance of what God created in our region.

Equally important is the responsibility we have as Christians – as those who believe in salvation – to confront the devastating consequences of climate anxiety.

This chronic fear of environmental doom, as our Field Notes column remarks, is impacting how younger generations feel about “not only their lives and future but their perspective on previous and forthcoming generations”.

The most destructive aspect – and one that directly confronts the foundations of our faith – is “a powerful sense of guilt attached to the thought of bringing more children into the world”.

The answer – engaging with environmental activism but with the theological framework that is able “to own and proclaim with boldness the hope and life woven into our belief system”.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works

(Psalm 104, 31)

▶ Page 9 AESTHETIC IDEALS AND THE INFINITE WISDOM IN CREATION

▶ Page 11 CLIMATE DESPAIR AND ESCHATOLOGICAL HOPE

Mass for All Creatures: Special performance celebrating Earth Day

London Pro Musica and the choir of St. James Westminster will present an exciting choral work by Oliver Whitehead on April 22



On Earth Day, Monday April 22, 2024, at 7:30 PM there will be a very special presentation of the Mass for All Creatures by London composer Oliver Whitehead. The performance will be held in the heart of Wortley Village, at Saint James Westminster, 115 Askin Street.

The piece was originally commissioned in 1997 by St. Paul's Cathedral for a new church service celebrating the Feast of St. Francis.

This piece explores the diversity of the natural world and our relationship to it. The music is eclectic and contemporary with influences of folk and art music from across the globe.

The texts are drawn from various sources such as the writings of the medieval visionaries St. Francis of Assisi

and Meister Eckhart, 18th century romantic poet William Blake and the Bible.

“This will be a very moving, joyful and thought-provoking evening of music, movement and readings, giving us an opportunity to consider the relationship between humans and animals and the natural world.” says Stephen Holowitz, music director at St. James Westminster.

London Pro Musica will combine with the choir of St. James Westminster to present this exciting choral work. The choirs will be supported by members of The Antler River Project which includes the composer Oliver Whitehead and St. James music director Stephen Holowitz. The concert will be conducted by Paul Grambo.

MASS FOR ALL CREATURES

Monday April 22 (Earth Day) at 7:30 PM

St. James Westminster Church, London (115 Askin Street)

Admission by donation

(A minimum donation of \$20 is suggested or an amount that is within your means)

Contact:

Stephen Holowitz -Music Director,
St. James Westminster Church

Phone: 519-868-5769

Email: stephenholowitz@gmail.com

Ian Davies- President, London Pro Musica
info@londonpromusica.ca

Finding God while on retreat

By Rev. Craig Love

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER



In the middle of winter, I made my way to a farm for five days of silent retreat, a time for rest & prayer.

Meals are provided and enjoyed in silence, and speaking is prohibited, along with other forms of communicating.

The silence is broken twice daily. First, to meet with a spiritual director, in order to set "goals" for the day; then, to take part in Holy Eucharist.

Setting aside the labours of this world, our "goals" focus on rest & prayer, variously praying with a short passage of Scripture, with a painting, or on a trail walk, or perhaps simply finding a comfortable seat, sitting back to take in a peaceful view, or taking a walk with no other aim than to enjoy some deep breaths of country air & the stillness of the natural world.

Each person's goals will differ on retreat, but making

a successful retreat always includes gaining some distance from our daily cares, a bit of breathing space to better feel the Holy Spirit, quickened to new life in Christ. So while we go on "retreat," we are

intended to be active, engaged, listening for God — watching for Christ in quietness — with as little interference between us as possible. Being on retreat is the opposite of "passing the time." Reading is discouraged

since it stimulates the mind, diverting us from the work of the Spirit: praying nonstop.

My ordinary rule of life is busy, fast-moving, & loud. And so it is a pleasure to step away from it for a time, removing myself (as much as possible) from the steady stream of human-made sounds. It gives me a chance to notice some of the other sounds Creation offers, otherwise drowned out by daily life. Such an atmosphere, "unplugged" from the norm, offers a great opportunity to focus all my heart, soul, mind & strength on God — to gain fresh insight into how God is calling me.

If this sounds like an experience you would like to try, talk to the AFP representative in your parish to learn of retreat possibilities near you.

Rev. Dr. Craig Love is an AFP Executive and Rector of St. Luke's, Cambridge; St. Thomas the Apostle, Cambridge.

HURON CHURCH NEWS

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Submissions

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

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From a seed to an oak, that just keeps growing...

Street outreach program that started in Anglican communities in Windsor will soon be offered Canada-wide.

By Rev. Glenda Fisher

It all started with one man, Joe Ouellette, who, on a cold evening in the winter of 2021, began his weekly walks along the streets of Windsor, providing resources to the homeless people he encountered.

At that time, the numbers averaged around 12. Along with money, Joe provided blankets, coats and boots to those who needed them.

Eventually, he progressed to creating 'healthy snack bags' for his community of recipients that had quickly expanded to upwards of 40 people. All of this, paid for from his own pocket.

In time, realizing that he was meeting so many people residing on the streets who were experiencing mental health and addiction challenges, and reaching that point of needing assistance with his street ministry, Joe approached Rev. Lance Smith at Church of the Ascension in Windsor and inquired as to whether he knew of someone who might be willing to help with his street outreach. Being cognizant of the fact that 'women' on the streets might be fearful of a lone male offering them support, he asked specifically for a female volunteer. That is when Rev. Lance contacted me and after meeting with Joe, I readily agreed to partner with him.

About this same time, Joe had also contacted the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP), specifically,



Glenda Fisher, Margaret Moroun, Jennifer Wilson, Jacqueline Moroun

the Windsor Essex Central Council (WECC), again asking about a female volunteer to partner with him for his street ministry. As a result, Margaret Moroun accepted to be part of Joe's team.

Joe was thrilled to now have 'on the beat' with him, 'two' women, who also just happened to be seasoned social workers. Joe and I hit the streets on Wednesday evenings and he and Margaret on Sunday mornings.

By the spring, Joe, Margaret and I had become aware that the number of street people was growing exponentially. Given this, Joe reached out again to SSVP - WECC for street outreach volunteers as well as for volunteers to assist with assembling the 'healthy food snack bags'.

Word travelled fast and before we knew it, Joe, Margaret and I were holding our first

'street training' session for a diverse group of new recruits. The SSVP - Good Shepherd Counsel (GSC) agreed to provide leadership for outreach expansion and organization, and arranged for volunteers to assemble the snack bags in Joe's garage.

By May, 2022, our street ministry volunteer numbers had climbed to beyond what Joe, Margaret and I could ever have asked for or imagined. Besides the involvement of SSVP - WECC and SSVP - GSC, we also welcomed volunteer support from the SSVP - John Vianney Counsel (JVC).

With the growing number of street people with food insecurities, the 'healthy food snack bag' assembly line moved from Joe's garage to a warehouse. The SSVP - WECC provided financial support for food cost re-

imbursement as well as the other life necessities (footwear, blankets, sleeping bags, winter coats, gloves, hats and scarves.)

That summer, the deployment of snack bags (250 calories) increased to 50 'meal' bags (1200 calories) every Sunday, and 50 snack bags every Wednesday. By early fall this had increased to 60 bags on each of those days.

In November 2022, due to health reasons, Joe had to step back from the day-to-day operations of the program and the SSVP - WECC assumed full organizational responsibility. Jennifer Wilson was appointed as Chair of the 100% volunteer - driven program, overseeing all aspects of its operation. Margaret Moroun became the Training Coordinator.

By the end of 2022, the initial team of three volunteers, Joe, Margaret and myself, blossomed to span a spectrum of volunteers in terms of cultural and religious beliefs and practices, thus allowing for greater intentional service to our street people. The addition of volunteers who are (like myself), external to the SSVP, included people of various faith traditions: Anglicans, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Roman Catholics, and some folks with no fixed religious affiliation.

At the time of this writing (February 2024), besides utilizing space in two warehouses, we also have a van, donated to the program, from which our abundance of resources are distributed

to people on Windsor's downtown streets. There are fully mobile rotating teams of three, utilizing 22 trained volunteers, that are reaching out to encampments, bushes and alleyways, seeking the lost and forgotten and offering the basic necessities of life, along with recommendations for resources, and assistance in accessing the same. There are teams of volunteers preparing the snack and food bags for distribution.

Our volunteers at our 'receiving' warehouse accept daily donations of food from area farmers and grocery stores, along with clothing, footwear, sleeping bags, and blankets from generous donors. Monetary donations allow us to purchase military grade Myler sleeping bags and emergency sleep systems (bivy bags), toiletries, and so on.

What Joe had always hoped for was to see his Street Ministry grow. We all hoped and prayed for the same. Well, a tiny seed has become an ever-growing oak! Our 'Street Outreach Program', under the ongoing organization and care of Jennifer Wilson and her team, is about to go 'National', across all Society of Saint Vincent de Paul conferences in Canada. Windsor led presentations are soon to be offered at both the Ontario Regional and Canada-wide annual general meetings.

Rev. Glenda Fisher is Deacon at St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Windsor.

EDITOR'S NOTE

A picture and a caption – that's all it takes!



WHAT OUR LORD SAW FROM THE CROSS
(CE QUE VOYAIT NOTRE-SEIGNEUR SUR LA CROIX)

James Tissot. WHAT OUR LORD SAW FROM THE CROSS (CE QUE VOYAIT NOTRE-SEIGNEUR SUR LA CROIX), 1886-1894. Opaque watercolor over graphite on gray-green wove paper, Image: 9 3/4 x 9 1/16 in. (24.8 x 23 cm). Brooklyn Museum.

Couldn't help myself – I had to return to this painting featured on the front page in March! This time looking at it as a storytelling tool.

What do we see? Jewish religious leaders, tired Roman soldiers, desperate disciples, curious onlookers, random passersby... People horrified and people gleeful... People from all social ranks, people of different personal traits.

One picture frame, one snapshot – the entire humanity on display. The very last glance of our Lord – his last scan of this world – had put as all in one frame, forever.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3: 28) That's because we are all in the same picture – as Jews, as Greeks, as slave or free, as male and female.... We are all a part of the same story.

God has become a part of our world. Human history now has its beginning and its end. And we all – as one in Christ Jesus – participate in it, equally. All voices can and should be heard in one and same story. There are no more separate styles – high and low – of antiquity. A new way of storytelling is born.

We, Christians – we are direct heirs of what we consider to be modern storytelling. We own the most powerful story ever told, and we have copyright to the new way of storytelling. Yet, on the pages of our newspaper, out of 150 plus local Anglican communities in Huron, we come with hardly three or four stories. We keep converting living churches into silent bricks and mortar.

Every day brings a new story that is worth telling, all across Huron. And it does not require much to tell it.

A picture and a caption – that's all it takes!

Davor Milicevic



Pandit Dwejendra Doobay (London Hindu Cultural Centre) at the Noon-hour Lenten Speakers Series at St. Paul's Cathedral.

St. Paul's hosts an interfaith and cross-cultural Lenten experience

This Lent, St. Paul's Cathedral reentered the world of the noon-hour Lenten Speakers Series.

Each Wednesday in Lent an average of fifty folks gathered at St Paul's for a series entitled Servanthood and Sacrifice: A Cross Cultural & Interfaith Discussion. Speakers included Rabbi Debra Dressler (Temple Israel), Pandit Dev Doobay (Hindu Temple), Archdeacon Sam Thomas (recounting life as a minority Christian in Kerala, India), Imam Abd Alfatih Twakkal (the Canadian Council of Imams), Sarvarinder Dohil

(Guru Nank Mission Society - a Sikh outreach community that has served over 50,000 meals to the hungry), and Kwaku Asumadu, (Ghanaian Christian Pastor and theology student at Huron University College.)

A vegetarian lunch was served after each presentation compliments of The Guru Nank Society and Mint Leaves Indian Kitchen.

Hearing about servanthood and sacrifice from across so many traditions was an incredibly enriching experience for all who attended. From Hindu practice of fast-

ing Ekadashi, to the Muslim observance of Ramadan, to Lenten practices across the globe, to the observance of Yom Kippur, to the Sikh practice of Seva, it was clear to all present that the world's major religions all hold at their core the importance of serving others selflessly.

Each session ended with a robust Question and Answer period.

The event was sponsored by the St Paul's ACW. Everyone involved expressed an interest in continuing the conversation.

Very Rev. Dr. Kevin George

Harvest Hands at St. Mark's and the Church of the Ascension



What an amazing story told by Jim Collins! It started in a church basement in St. Thomas, serving 12 families in the area. Today Harvest Hands, with more than 100 volunteers and 23 drivers, serves a network of 200 partners, including food banks, missions, shelters and seniors' groups.

St. Mark's and the Church of the Ascension once again have teamed up to help share the possibilities of developing a food network or hub in the London area.

Another session of sharing our knowledge and connections on February 29 was well attended with approximately 20 guests.

We invited Jim Collins from Harvest Hands, located in St. Thomas, to speak to us about his family work to help end food insecurity.

What an amazing story we heard about how this all started in a church basement, serving 12 families in the area.

Fast forward to 2024, with more than 100 volunteers and 23 drivers, the charity stores, processes, packages and delivers unused food across South-

western Ontario, from Chatham-Kent as far as Oshawa.

It serves a network of more than 200 partners, including food banks, missions, shelters and seniors' groups.

Jim shared his story of his faith and how we all need to be sharing the Good News in everything we do. He reminded us that God is the greatest provider and it is all our responsibility to look after the amazing surplus of food available to feed those who are in need.

If you have never been to Harvest Hands, it is worth the trip just to see the place. It doesn't matter the time of day we go, there are always volunteers ready to help or just to chat about your projects. There are people unloading trucks and trailers, people

packaging bulk items. Food is being moved in and out of the fridges and freezers.

There is a sense of peace with all those who work there and you feel the presence of something greater than yourself. You hear stories from other clients about their projects and programs. But the one comment you will hear over and over is just how generous the Collins family is.

Please check out their website and plan a visit <https://harvesthands.ca/>

Church of Ascension and St. Mark's are looking forward to developing more opportunities to share our ideas around food networking, food hub and the possibility of shared programs.

Helen Booth

I can't hear the preacher: What to do if you don't have music (2)

By Rev. Paul Woolley

If you have either recorded, downloaded hymn accompaniments, or used a MIDI file processed to create a recording from synthesizer software, you will most likely need to do some sound editing. This is particularly true with hymn accompaniment from websites such as www.smallchurchmusic.com.

If you examine several hymnbooks of various Christian denominations, you will find that any given hymn may have a different number of verses in various books. So a hymn that you download or otherwise create may have either too many or not enough verses for your purpose. Additionally, you may not want to sing all the verses of a hymn. There is also the problem of varying sound levels between different hymn recordings.

Depending on the playback equipment that you are using you may also want to adjust the amount of treble or bass frequencies.

In the past, solving these problems would mean cutting and putting together tape, and rerecording from one tape machine to another, and require considerable time. However, presently, anyone can learn to quickly do these necessary editing tasks using free software on a PC, Mac, or Linux-based computer.

Audacity is "free, open-source, cross-platform software for recording and



editing sounds." It is powerful software that can not only edit sound but by connecting microphones or instruments to a computer it can also record sounds. Although it is free and open-source software it is extensively used by many professionals. You can, if desired, use other audio editing software, particularly something that you have previously worked with.

To download the Audacity software, go to <https://www.audacityteam.org>, where you will find a copy for your operating system.

If you look at Figure 1, you will see where I have opened an organ recording of Amazing Grace. You can see a graphical representation of the music, it is easy to see the introduction and the four verses.

In Figure 2, I have copied and pasted one of the verses to create a five-verse rendition and have adjusted the volume levels. Using the 'Effects' you can normalize or change volumes, adjust the frequency response, and even change the tempo and key of the music.

When you have made any required changes to a hymn, then you can save it in several different file formats. I generally save music in the *.wav

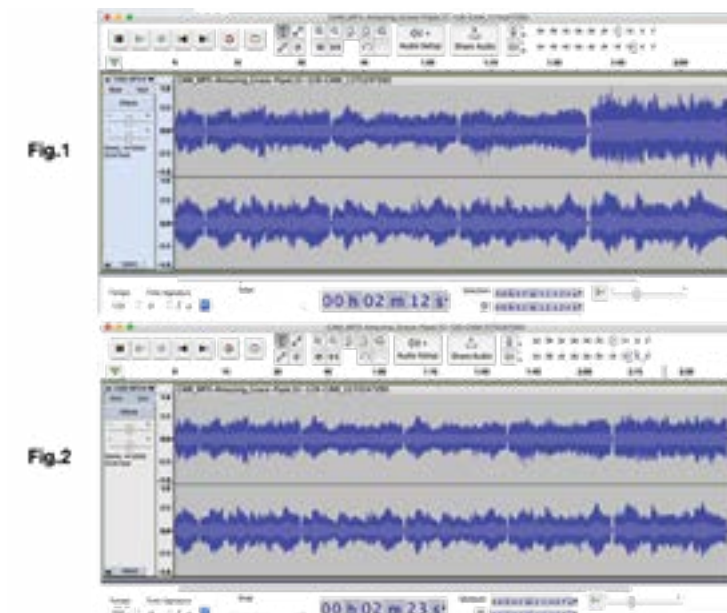


Figure 1: An organ recording of Amazing Grace - intro and the four verses.



Figure 2: One of the verses has been copied and pasted to create a five-verse rendition. The volume levels can be adjusted by using the "Effects".

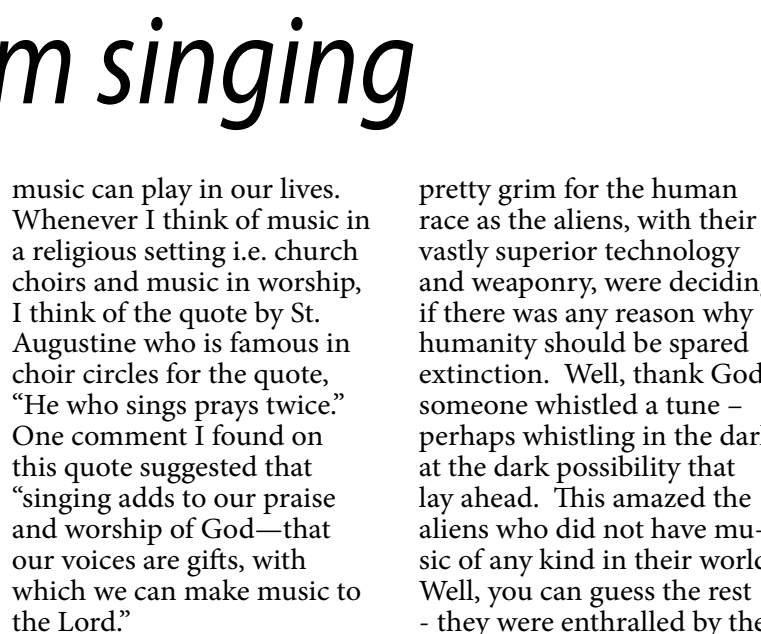


Figure 3: Playing hymn accompaniments on a computer during a service: Four hymns in separate windows on your computer. "Play" and "Pause" controls allow you to play the hymn when required.

file can be opened in a separate window and these can be arranged on the computer desktop ready to play. This is illustrated in Figure 3, which shows four hymns in separate windows on a computer desktop. You can see the play and pause controls for each window allowing you to play the hymn accompaniment when required.

The next instalment in this series will look at the type of equipment that can be used for playback of hymn accompaniments.

Rev. Paul Woolley is Priest-in-Charge of Christ Church, Forest. He has 55+ years of experience working with audio equipment of every description for varied venues.

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2024 SAVE THE DATE **JUNE 2**

How can I keep from singing

By Rev. Greg Little

Music has always been a big part of my life and continues so today.

Yesterday, Lorna and I participated in a "Joyful Noise" service at our parish church of St. John the Evangelist in Strathroy, Ontario. I can say it was both joyful and noisy in a good way.

Lorna and I are also embarking on a musical journey which will end on Good Friday at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario, with a performance of Faure's Requiem.

This latter endeavor is turning out to be something of a challenge as neither of us are as familiar with the piece as we thought we were, having last been involved in a performance more than 25



years ago. I know the music is buried in my memory somewhere, but the excavation has not revealed much so far. In any case, a bit of a musical challenge never hurts - even for someone of my advanced years. With these current musical exploits, my thoughts have turned to the part that

music can play in our lives. Whenever I think of music in a religious setting i.e. church choirs and music in worship, I think of the quote by St. Augustine who is famous in choir circles for the quote, "He who sings prays twice." One comment I found on this quote suggested that "singing adds to our praise and worship of God—that our voices are gifts, with which we can make music to the Lord."

I certainly agree with that as music has been a gift in my life that may have waxed and waned at times but has never left me and I thank God for that gift in my life and for the joy it has brought to the world.

Writing this, I am reminded of a Twilight Zone episode where aliens landed on Earth and things looked

pretty grim for the human race as the aliens, with their vastly superior technology and weaponry, were deciding if there was any reason why humanity should be spared extinction. Well, thank God, someone whistled a tune - perhaps whistling in the dark at the dark possibility that lay ahead. This amazed the aliens who did not have music of any kind in their world. Well, you can guess the rest - they were enthralled by the rich music that was available and on offering and humanity was saved.

As with many of the episodes in that wonderful TV series, that edition caught the essence of being human. Perhaps the lesson is that we need to keep making music to save our world.

I am sure music has saved many human beings literally

and metaphorically. It has certainly been my rock and salvation which has brought me joy and comfort frequently in my life.

I invite you to reflect on the part that music has played in your life. Do you have a song that resonated with you deeply when you first heard it? For me it was 'How Can I Keep from Singing' by Robert Lowry. Do you have a song that is connected to a special event in your life?

In any case, let's keep on singing and making the music of the spheres and may you be blessed with music on your journey. Now, back to relearning the baritone part of the Requiem.

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



Dates & Rates for Summer 2024:

Week-long camps for ages 6-14, grades 1-8: \$740 (HST incl.)

- Session 1 July 7-13 (Here Comes the Sun)
- Session 2 July 14-20 (If We Could Talk to the Animals)
- Session 3 July 21-27 (Follow That Star!)
- Session 4 July 28-August 3 (Bring Forth the Kingdom)
- Session 5 August 4 - 10 (The Rainbow Connection)
- Session 6 August 11-17 (There and Back Again)

NEW FOR 2024: LIT 1, 2, 3 Grades 8-11

- LIT1 (finishing grade 8) July 7-20 or July 28-August 10 \$1500 (HST incl.)
- LIT 2 (finishing grade 9) July 7-20 or July 28-August 10 \$1500 (HST incl.)
- LIT 3 (finishing grade 10) July 7-27 or July 28-August 17 \$2100 (HST incl.)

Bursaries and payment plans available
Questions?
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Good News from Camp Huron

DREAM ON!

A big blue sky stretches over us.
 It just goes on and on!
 Underneath it, let's gather to play, make, learn,
 tell stories, ask questions, share big ideas,
 and even bigger dreams for ourselves,
 others, and God's whole wide world!

Register online at
www.camphuron.ca

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Appointments

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, his Commissary the Venerable Tanya Phibbs appoints the Reverend Quenton Little as Regional Dean of Oxford, effective February 1, 2024.

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, his Commissary the Venerable Tanya Phibbs appoints the Reverend Karen Nelles as Transitional Interim Priest and Administrator of the Church of the Ascension, London, effective February 15, 2024.

Announcement

The Right Reverend Todd Townshend, Bishop of Huron, and the Most Reverend Anne Germond, Archbishop of Algoma and Bishop of Moosonee

are delighted to announce a partnership in the Gospel between the Dioceses of Huron and Moosonee. The Venerable Rosalyn Elm, Huron's Archdeacon of Reconciliation and Indigenous Ministries, will play a key role in an Evangelistic Mission in the Diocese of Moosonee as its Missioner.

Archdeacon Ros will devote approximately 300 hours on a part-time basis between March 1st and September 30th to the Mission, "Who Do You Say I Am?", as part of her responsibilities as Archdeacon. She will continue in her role as priest-in-charge of the Parish of the Six Nations.

Retirement

After many years of faithful service to the Diocese of Huron, Sarah Chase has indicat-

ed her desire to retire from Huron Church House as of August 1, 2024.

Sarah joined the Diocesan staff on December 1, 1997 and is currently the longest-serving employee at Church House. She started in Accounts Receivable before moving to the Bishop's Office, then Parish Services and eventually into her current role as Synod Coordinator. She has provided staff support for innumerable committees including Diocesan Council and has also been the informal social convenor for the Church House staff functions.

We will miss Sarah's caring demeanor, her knowledge of and deep love for the Diocese, and her smile. Sarah

will be recognized with other retirees at the next Diocesan Synod—the first one in a long time that she will not have fully planned.

We wish Sarah many years of happy and healthy retirement!

Commissary Archdeacon Tanya Phibbs, on behalf of Bishop Townshend, has accepted the request of the Reverend Mary Farmer to retire as Rector of the Parish of the Holy Spirit, effective August 1, 2024. Her last day in the parish will be June 30. Until that date, Mary will also continue to assist Trinity St. James, Bayfield, with their transition to becoming a chapel-of-ease.

After spending thirty-five years in her first vocation as a

registered nurse, Mary completed her M.Div. at Huron University College and was ordained to the diaconate on November 30, 2015. On May 31, 2016, she was the first priest ordained in the Diocese of Huron by then-Bishop Coadjutor Linda Nicholls. Mary first served in the Parish of Long Point Bay and became the Rector of the Parish of the Holy Spirit in October 2019. She was a member of Diocesan Council before ordination and on the executive of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, Huron from 2016. Since 2020, Mary has been the Chaplain to Postulants.

We wish Mary well in her retirement and give thanks to God for her faithful ministry.

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN'S ANNUAL
Saturday 27th April 2024
held @ the Church of the Ascension,
2060 Dundas St. East, London

Lunch will be catered by
 Church of the Ascension

The lunch includes assorted sandwiches, vegetable / fruit trays & desserts.
 Coffee & tea will be provided.

(Gluten Free/Vegetarian/Vegan available – see below)

The cost of the lunch is \$18.00 per person, in advance.
 or \$20.00 at the door

Please fill in the following information & return to:
 Anglican Church Women
 Diocese of Huron
 Attn: Cheryl (Annual Luncheon)
 190 Queens Avenue
 London, Ontario N6A 6H7

Please provide the name for each person needing lunch.

NAME: _____ Home Address _____

Postal Code _____ Telephone Number _____

Church Name & Deanery: _____

Please make Cheque or Money Order Payable to: **ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN**

Number of luncheon tickets ordered: _____ x \$18.00 each = \$ _____ by Cheque.
 _____ x \$18.00 each = \$ _____ by Money Order.

Gluten Free, Vegetarian/Vegan sandwiches & desserts are available if requested (indicate number)
 # of Gluten Free: _____, # of Vegetarian: _____, # of Vegan: _____

RSVP for lunch orders, no later than 15th April 2024. Thank you.

In Memory

London Deanery

- St. Anne's, Byron
- Maggie Hanham
- Floora Harris Doran
- Sally Hemming
- Jane Jensen
- Jocelyne Poole
- Mary Shafer
- Jeanne Van Rossum

Oxford Deanery

- Christ Church, Hungtinford
- Donna Wilson
- St. James, Ingersoll
- Minnie Dawe
- St. John's, Tillsonburg
- Mae McClintock
- Carole Parker
- Kay Wilkins

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN - DIOCESE OF HURON

ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE

"All Glory, Laud & Honour"

Church of the Ascension
2060 Dundas St. East, London, Ontario
Saturday 27 April 2024

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

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

Guest Speaker
 Reverend Dawn Davis
 on "Power of Prayer"

Holy Eucharist – 2:00 P.M.



The presence of priest and congregation in end-of-life ministries

There are few numbers that I dread seeing whenever they pop up on my cell phone. The local funeral home's number is one of them.

Whenever I see that number, I know that another funeral will likely follow. In my current parish I have conducted ninety-five funerals, roughly ten funerals a year. Some of them have been of beloved parishioners, members of the congregation whose loss deeply impacts our worshiping community. Others have been complete strangers to me: some identifying with the Anglican denomination although never stepping foot in our church over the last nine years; some requesting me personally (always wonderful to have a reputation for doing good funerals); still others are randomly delegated to me by the funeral home.

What each of these funeral situations has in common is the opportunity for both the priest and the congregation to serve as the presence of Christ. Not all communities see funerals as an opportunity for evangelism, but in my experience, our church has welcomed many a new member directly because of our approach to end-of-life ministries.

Years ago, I remember interning as a seminarian at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario. As an eager student, I



GROWING BEYOND THE DOORS
REV. CANON GRAYHAME BOWCOTT

An important part of the compassionate caring of Jesus that we offer is to invite those who are grieving to be cared for through ongoing prayer and worship.



Pylyp Sukjenko/Unsplash

wanted to learn everything possible about ministry, including the more difficult aspects of pastoral care – illness, dying and funerals. St. Paul's owns and operates one of London's largest cemeteries: Woodland Cemetery. This presented me with lots of opportunity to experience funeral services. Due to the busy nature of the cathedral, many of the non-parishioner Woodland funerals were officiated by retired clergy.

It was raining during my first funeral at Woodland. I waited with the family at the graveside for an elderly priest to arrive. Without much in

the way of introductions, the priest pulled out a laminated Book of Common Prayer funeral service card and jumped right into the service. I remember watching the faces of the family members as they listened to prayer after prayer without much in the way of reference to their loved one. At the end of the service, the priest put away the card, abruptly shook the hands of the bereaved family members and then returned to his car. It was in that moment that I came to realize how vulnerable families can be in these times of loss and how the Church can either embody the

compassion of Christ or miss an opportunity to care for others in their time of need.

Funerals are an opportunity for congregations to model a form of hospitality that is rarely encountered in today's society: a ministry of prayerful presence, of listening and of celebrating the life of one who has died. An opportunity for the proclamation of our faith to comfort the grieving through the sharing of our belief in life after death.

My philosophy with celebration of life services is to do two things: 1) to express the love of Jesus, and 2) to ensure the liturgy is representative of the person who died, so that their family can grieve in ways that are familiar to them. I have spent countless hours sitting with families as they have reflected on the meaning of life, cherished the memories of their loved ones, hugged and cried through the moments that were painful, and, in the end, promised that they would have a safe and loving community that would walk with them through the loss.

Unlike the prayers of the priest from Woodland, whose presence disappeared the moment he walked away from the graveside, I believe that churches play an important role in journeying with those who have lost a loved one. An important part of the compassionate caring of Jesus that we offer is to invite those who

are grieving to be cared for through ongoing prayer and worship.

Over the years, I've watched the members of St. George's, The Blue Mountains, embrace both widows and widowers. I've watched the friendly faces sitting beside those in grief; I've admired the kind words, the food deliveries, and the invitations to cups of tea. Each of these expressions of compassion reflect the love of Jesus. Each tells the story of a church community that offers something different than the rest of the world: a pastoral presence of both priest and congregation.

And so, even though I dread each time I see the number of our local funeral home appear on my phone, I also remember that each of these calls is presenting me, and the congregation that serves with me, with the opportunity to embody Jesus to others in their moment of grief and need. May he always minister through us!

Rev. Canon Dr. Grayhame Bowcott is passionate about fostering congregational relationships and sharing our Anglican vocation with others. He serves as Rector of St. George's, The Parish of The Blue Mountains and as Program Director for the Licentiate in Theology program at Huron University. grayhamebowcott@diohuron.org

Aesthetic ideals and the inherent wisdom in creation

This year Earth Day is April 22. As we engage in reflection and action this Earth Day, can we find the grace to listen and learn from what God has done?

By Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle

Did you know trees emit chemicals that are beneficial for reducing stress and anxiety? So valuable is this process, that the Japanese have developed a practice called 'forest bathing' to encourage people to enjoy the benefits of trees.

Trees are remarkable, capable of holding carbon and providing oxygen. Some offer food and medicine. They are even capable of modifying local climate, by cooling the air around them during hot summer days.

Peter Wohlleben's "The Hidden Life of Trees" highlights the incredibility of trees – how they communicate, support one another, ward off predators, and more. The networks created by their root systems have been known to nurture life in felled stumps for decades afterward. Even when trees die, their decaying bodies provide homes for insects, birds, and future generations of trees and plants. Trees are gifts in ways that are beyond what we can ask or imagine. Creation is filled with gifts that are beyond what we can ask or imagine.

In Christianity, God is described as omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), and omnibenevolent (supremely good).

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



In other words, God knows everything, has the power to do anything, and is perfectly good. Out of these characteristics, God has Created. Believing this, how do we see aspects of God's omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence in Creation itself? Would it not make sense that what we are learning about trees and the many ways they support life, including human life, are intentional characteristics given by a God who is all-knowing, all-powerful, and supremely good?

In fact, there are webs of life everywhere. Butterflies are connected to specific host plants they need to nourish their young as they reproduce. The mutual relationships between pollinators and plants

ensures an ongoing cycle of life. Even amid decay there are systems at play. Leaves left through winter serve as nurseries for butterflies and moths. Some toads, frogs, and salamanders have adapted to hibernate in leaf litter. Other insects use the hollow stems of plants over the winter. Birds can eat seed heads from flowers right through until spring. When God created, God imbued God's wisdom in that creation – connecting plants, insects, and animals in meaningful ways, providing a balance across the seasons, so that all might not only survive, but thrive.

What does it mean to recognize God's wisdom in Creation? How can this

Do we really believe God wants us to control creation based on human aesthetic ideals? To what extent do the current aesthetic ideals reflect what God created in our region?

impact our relationship with Creation? When we learn of the ways plants, insects, birds, animals, and humans are connected, to what extent does this knowledge challenge us to honour the wisdom of Creation? Do we really believe God wants us to control creation based on human aesthetic ideals? To what extent do the current aesthetic ideals reflect what God created in our region? To what extent do the current aesthetic ideals undermine the inherent wisdom in creation?

Do we recognize that turf grass is generally not native to the region? Do we know that constant cutting, so that it is unable to seed, and the use of pesticides to prevent 'weeds', transforms yards into spaces that provide little value for many insects, birds, and animals that have otherwise long existed in the region? Do we realize that too many of the plants available in nurseries are not native to the region and that these species often compete with and undermine the ability of native species to grow, impacting the insects, birds, and animals that rely

on those native species? Are we aware of the many plant species that are now identified as invasive because of the negative impacts these have on the ecosystems God had intended for our region?

What does it mean to recognize God's wisdom in Creation? How can this impact our relationship with Creation? What happens when we know better? Are we willing and able to do better?

This year Earth Day is April 22. As we engage in reflection and action this Earth Day, can we find the grace to listen and learn from what God has done? In doing so, might we make different choices about how we live? In doing so, might we better seek to safeguard the Integrity of God's Creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth? What will we choose to do this Earth Day as communities of faith, as people of faith? How might this impact our choices throughout the year?

Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle is a co-chair of SEJH and a co-chair of Justice League of Huron.

Tending to the work: Remembering wild raspberries

By Very Rev. Kevin George



I love berries. Raspberries are my favourite - wild preferably. I fell in love with them at a very young age.

I was fortunate to grow up in Newfoundland where wild raspberries grow in abundance. I was also fortunate to have a dad who loved berry picking. All the more fortunate that I was only ten when he retired at sixty-five.

My father was never idle in retirement. He valued work above all else. He grew our vegetables, caught our fish, snared rabbits, and yes, he picked berries. He picked a lot of berries. He picked them all – Partridge berries, Blueberries, Bakeapples, and my favourite, Raspberries.

I was probably twelve or thirteen and it was a fine summer day. Dad was going raspberry picking. For whatever reason, I went along. I was not a good lad at picking berries.

give me direction before I ruined every raspberry bush within reach.

He came over and took the bush that I had just pulled two berries from (one for my mouth, one for my container) before trampling it under foot. He lifted it up so I could see the abundance of berries still on the tree. "Kevin, you are always looking for the big and bright berries on the next bush. You need to finish the job on each bush before you move on. Mind the berries that are right in front of you. You are making a mess. You'll never fill your container that way."

For a couple of reasons, I have thought often about that counsel over the years working in the church, in my various roles as a priest, a rector, and now a dean.

First, my patience has not improved a whole lot from that moment picking berries in-over-the-hill. It remains a temptation to look to the next

possibility, the next best hope, the next thing in the calendar, before making certain that I have tended to the work of discipleship that is right in front of me.

The second is more institutional. I have been in ordained ministry now for nearly twenty-seven years. In that time, I have witnessed more programs that were to save the church or right the ship than I can count. In each case these programs have come with real possibilities. But rather than do the heavy lifting and glean as much as we can from our work, we have sometimes excitedly, at other times reluctantly or in frustration, moved on to the next best-looking opportunity for renewal.

All the while, we trample under foot precious resource. We are finding our proverbial containers not filling up. In fact, to our dismay, they are getting empty as we consume that which we've already laboured for with not much to

show for it.

Recalling that day with my dad, I still remember how proud I was when I finally filled that tub – and he was too. I hold this memory sacred. His advice was formative for me. Might we stay in the moments we have with one another rather than marching off to the next thing? Can the church, perhaps, lift high the tree to see the abundance of fruit yet to be harvested?

It's hard work. It can be tedious and frustrating. But I have a hunch that we will realize that it is worth the effort for us to be faithful and tend to the work. I know that each time I have managed to slow down and tend to the work, the relationships in front of me, I experience that same sense of satisfaction and fulfillment that I felt that day in-over-the-hill with Dad.

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

The passing of time: A powerful change agent

For many years in my ministry, I had been challenged by the liturgical season of Lent. It took a long time to appreciate what it invokes.

Lent is a time (40 days) of self-reflection before Easter, often marked by some form of abstinence and an increased focus on reading the Bible and reaching out charitably. The liturgical rituals are penitential and, as I had experienced them, were shrouded by an unwelcoming haze. They dampened me with an uncomfortable shame.

When I spoke of this experience, folks would look at me questioningly. I could sense that my sensitivity was not a common one, nor, I presumed, a welcomed one. And that furthered my awkward tension.

Reflecting on this uncomfortable situation, I recall the struggles many of us had as



As I See It

REV. JIM INNES

we transitioned from the Book of Common Prayer into the regular use of the Book of Alternate services. These books were interchangeably used as our Sunday morning worship outline. And, as I remember, we were accused by some of the well-versed traditionalists of "pulling the rug out" from under Anglicanism by reconfiguring the tone of the worship experience.

The problem encountered was that the Book of Common Prayer (the older book) had a penitential tone that was missing in the newer worship book. In the old book, worship was a weightier, more atoning experience than the



newer version. And those who loved the old book (and still love it) spoke of its beauty in both word and movement.

Those who like the newer book and applauded the move away from regular use of the older one spoke of the revisions as refreshing, an attempt to balance tradition with modernity. And though many of these supporters admitted its clumsiness, there was an appreciation for its increased emphasis on Grace.

The point of the article is this, be it Lenten practices, a theological emphasis, or a liturgical preference, our likings are molded by what we know and what we need--and

and what we once criticized, we can often understand less defensively. Nowadays, I am far less triggered by Shame and have come to appreciate the healthy humility that Lent practices can provoke.

Distance, measured by time, is a powerful change agent. When this distance allows us to step back to refocus or reconsider our needs, we inevitably come into a more authentic frame of reference.

This means, as I see it, that we will eventually, and sometimes despite ourselves, arrive at a place where self-protective criticism no longer rules our needs. A place where we look past what we can't understand or find difficult to accept and put more energy into assimilating the contradictions and differences surrounding us.

Rev. Jim Innes is the rector of St. John's, Grand Bend with St. Anne's, Port Frank.

jiminnes@diohuron.org

Called to love, to serve, to minister



Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence." This is the most important, the first on any list.

But there is a second to set alongside it:

"Love others as well as you love yourself."

These two commands are pegs:

everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them." Matthew 22:37-40 (The Message)

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

It is news to no one that Jesus' first command is that we are to love God with everything that we are. Exactly what that will look like for you or for me may be quite different, but this is our first calling, our highest calling and the calling from which everything else will flow.

Jesus' second command to love others as well as we love ourselves, again may be expressed uniquely in our particular situations, but along with this first truth, these two form the core of who



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.

we are and how we conduct ourselves as disciples of Jesus every single day, with every single choice that we make. Again, we know this.

It is not too far a step to take that in order to love God and our neighbours, we will be involved in service.

The idea of service is also something with which we are very familiar. Every day we are served in a whole variety of ways, whether it be at a counter, in a hospital, in municipal, provincial, or federal offices, or indeed in our faith communities. Most of those who serve us have received special instruction in their fields to allow them to serve. In our everyday lives we serve in particular roles

and functions in our employment, our volunteer positions, supporting those around us, our families, our friends, and our parishes. For many of our roles, we undertake trainings and orientations of all kinds to make us better at what we do, improving the quality of our service.

So, to love is to serve, and to serve as expressed in the language of our faith, is to minister. When speaking to both those who are currently participating in Education for Ministry and to those who are still considering it, the question can sometimes arise that by speaking of Education for Ministry, we are giving the impression that studies of this kind are really meant only for

those interested in ordained ministry. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth.

As Christians, we are all called to love and consequently we are all called to minister in one way or another.

The Apostle Paul will go into great detail about how we in the Church are one body made up of many parts and that the ministry of all the parts are of equal value (1 Corinthians 12). Peter too will chime in, affirming the importance and truth of the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9).

The love, the service, the ministry of each one of us contributes to the overall health and vitality of the Church and indeed of those we serve.

At Education for Ministry, the objective is straightforward, the materials, the reflections, the fellowship, the questions, the conversations, all of it are designed to support us wherever and in whatever function we are loving, serving, ministering.

As we connect with the material both as individuals and in the group setting, by the grace and goodness of God's Holy Spirit, over the weeks this process begins to inform our choices in whatever are our life and faith circumstances, preparing us for ministry as we daily live out of and into the Gospel.

In the months ahead we will be holding a number of virtual Open Houses to share with you more fully all that is available to you through this programme as we consider together what it is to love, serve and minister where God has placed us.

Please consider joining us: Wednesday, May 22, Tuesday, June 4, Monday, August 26 at 7pm on Zoom.

To register for any of these Open Houses or to speak about an Open House for your parish, please reach out to either Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EFM Coordinator or me Val Kenyon at:

EFM@huron.anglican.ca
Rev. Canon Dr. Val Kenyon is EFM Animator in Huron.

How to deal with negative comments on social media

In the fast-paced world of social media, negativity can feel like an unavoidable nuisance.

Negative comments, from mild criticism to outright attacks, can be disheartening and tempting to simply delete. However, ignoring these comments might not be the best strategy. Engaging with them, when done thoughtfully, can offer valuable benefits for the church.

Firstly, responding to negativity demonstrates transparency and accountability. It shows your audience that you're willing to listen and address concerns, even if they're critical. This can foster trust and build stronger relationships with your followers so long as we resist the impulse to respond in an equally uncharitable manner.



MEDIA BYTES

REV. MARTY LEVESQUE

Engaging with negative comments on social media allows you to take control of the narrative around your church and turn negativity into a positive opportunity.

Secondly, engaging with negativity allows you to clarify information or rectify mistakes. If a comment highlights a genuine misunderstanding about your work or mission, addressing it directly can clear the air and prevent further confusion. This proactive approach demonstrates our

commitment to providing accurate information and improving your practices. Furthermore, engaging with negativity can humanize the institutional church or your personal presence on social media. Responding with empathy and professionalism shows that there's a real

person behind the account, fostering a sense of connection and authenticity with your audience.

However, it's crucial to remember that not every negative comment requires engagement. Some comments might be solely intended to provoke or disrupt, and responding to them can amplify their negativity. It's important to discern genuine concerns from malicious attacks and prioritize your mental well-being.

Ultimately, engaging with negative comments on social

media allows you to take control of the narrative around your church and turn negativity into a positive opportunity. By fostering open communication, addressing concerns, and demonstrating professionalism, you can strengthen your online presence and build lasting connections with your parishioners and seekers.

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



Climate despair and eschatological hope

In early February, I gathered with my fellow newly ordained clergy for a session of post-ordination training in balmy 10-degree temperatures and sunshine that permitted our group to walk comfortably outside without a coat on.

While unseasonably warm weather is often received as a pleasant surprise, my colleagues and I were unsettled. This has been an unnaturally mild winter. At the time of writing, the weather this week has been a rollercoaster of Spring temperatures, thunderstorms, and blizzards. Optimistic, stereotypically Canadian small talk about the weather has been replaced with terse, clipped, slightly ominous interactions that seem to dance around the elephant in the room: the consequences of climate change are starting to bear out in ways that we can no longer ignore.

Despair about the climate is most clear to me in the summer months when the weather tends to be more extreme and deadly. Last year's scorching temperatures and country-wide forest fires were not only uncomfortable but environmentally devastating. Now milder winters will have an impact on the agricultural patterns in our region of Southwestern Ontario that will undoubtedly impact the supply chain and food production. Experts and scientists have been begging people to pay attention to these issues and to take them seriously and this winter has been the first time I have observed a widespread angst about the climate from people across age groups and demographics.

Climate anxiety was first defined by the American Psychological Association in

Sometimes the activism we engage in as the Church becomes de-theologized or toned down to be more palatable in the age of Post Christendom. It's time to re-theologize, to own and proclaim with boldness the hope and life woven into our belief system.



FIELD NOTES

REV. ALLIE McDUGALL

2017 as "a chronic fear of environmental doom" that can manifest from mild stress to pervasive psychiatric illnesses and unhealthy coping mechanisms. The majority of young people in Canada (up to 78%, according to my preparation for this piece) report climate anxiety and the Canadian Psychological Association projects that this will only increase, and that country's mental health infrastructure will not be able to respond to the demand generated by the needs of our children and youth.

Climate anxiety is impacting how younger generations feel about not only their lives and future but their perspective on previous and forthcoming generations. Those struggling with climate



Margot Richard/Unsplash

anxiety have remarked on feeling resentful and angry towards the environmental choices and inaction of those who came before.

There is also a powerful sense of guilt attached to the thought of bringing more children into the world and fear for the type of world children already born will inherit. This has promulgated a palpable sense of nihilism that borders on hostility toward parents and children, which are sentiments that have been directed at me by my peers as a mother. This way of thinking about reproduction and the continuance of humanity is at once understandable and deeply disturbing. It is quite obviously a product of deep psychological and spiritual unrest.

On the first Sunday in Lent, we were reminded of the everlasting covenant made between God, Noah, and the whole of creation, that the Lord would not destroy that which He has made. But what happens when we seem bent on destroying the world and ourselves with it?

Modern Canadian Anglicanism is infused with concern for the care and stewardship of creation. This is something that has been prioritized at the national, provincial, and diocesan levels. We must be explicit with those struggling with climate anxiety about what our own tradition affirms and beliefs about creation and life. Christianity is a religion of life and abundance, not death and deprivation. While the

possibility of salvaging the climate becomes increasingly distant and the gods of industry and consumption keep demanding our resources, we can cling to and offer the world the eschatological hope of our faith.

We affirm on a weekly basis that Jesus Christ will return to judge the living and the dead. We believe that creation and all that is contained within it will be made new in the Kingdom of God. We are called to stand firm on the promises of God, and we continue to be people of covenantal relationship with our Creator.

Those who are paralyzed by fear and despair about climate change, particularly those who are young and disconnected from the Church, need to know that Anglicans are already engaging with environmental activism and have the theological framework to address the grief, sorrow, and anxiety felt about climate change. We should be clear and honest about what we believe about environmental stewardship and the hope of Jesus' Second Coming.

Sometimes the activism we engage in as the Church becomes de-theologized or toned down to be more palatable in the age of Post Christendom. It's time to re-theologize, to own and proclaim with boldness the hope and life woven into our belief system. That hope of Jesus Christ is what can soothe the terror simmering in our society and perhaps even motivate us toward real change and delight in the continued gift of life given to us all.

Rev. Allie McDougall is the Assistant Curate of St. Paul's and St. Stephen's, Stratford. alliemcdougall@diohuron.org

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Who am I? (Making your life story known)

If we say we really care for our families and friends, then why not place some time and energy towards planning and preparing for how we will be remembered?

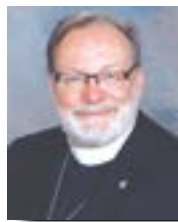
Ernest Hemingway and I were born in Oak Park, Illinois. He was born in 1889. On Palm Sunday, April 11th, in the year Hemingway was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, I arrived on the scene.

Going through papers and pictures which have been accumulated over the years, generates a real appreciation regarding the speed of the passage of time. Moments, people, places and emotions are no longer relegated to the dusty shelves of the past. Stories and conversations, once forgotten, are remembered and appreciated. Years disappear in a flash and are re-experienced in technicolor. (The last part is a bit of a challenge, when the pictures are in sepia tones or in black and white!!)

What I find to be quite fascinating is how twists and turns of incidents can have such a dramatic impact on a life story. Not having my draft number picked during the Vietnam War and surviving a potentially deadly car crash are moments which might have dramatically shortened my life. I will spare you the lengthy list of ways in which members of the medical profession have seen me through a number of challenges. I am deeply mindful of the reality, known by all of us, that each day is a Divine gift.

Being a son, a grandson, a nephew and a cousin are all part of my life story which identified me without any choice on my part. Becoming a husband, a father, a priest, and a Canadian citizen are all different facets of my identity as a person where I had some input into the decision. Being a grandfather, a father-in-law, a son-in-law and an uncle is simply a bonus!

A few years ago, when I retired from active parish ministry, I was invited to join a group of gentlemen who had also ended full time employment. As a part of the



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

I encourage you to engage in gifting those you love with time spent on ensuring that when your end comes, that they will not be burdened by cares which you could have looked after while you were healthy and able to make decisions which they will not have to face.



monthly gatherings there is a presentation offered by new members of the group. That section of the meeting is entitled "Who Am I?". The challenge set for the speaker is to encapsulate their life story within a ten-minute time limit.

The stories told are as unique as the individuals. The varied life stories and experiences are fascinating.

The shared narrative of life experience reminds me of a reflection which can be found in William Shakespeare's "As You Like It". The speech, offers an overview of the pattern of human life from childhood to old age, and begins very simply:

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women,
merely Players;*

*They have their exits and
their entrances,
And one man in his time
plays many parts...*
(As You Like It: Act 2, Scene 7)

Each of us has a story to tell. Each of us has moments to remember. Each of us may reflect on the experience of loving and being loved. Yet who will tell the stories once we are gone?

Whenever I officiate at a funeral or a celebration of life and there is an individual who will be offering a reflection on the life of the person who is being remembered, I always insist that the reflection is written down. It is not only to provide some awareness of time by the speaker, but also to ensure that there will be some written record

that may be helpful for generations to come as they think about their family member or their friend.

One of the realities of those moments when reflections are offered is that often the perspective being shared is simply one of observation, not always close experience. The prayers used at a funeral speak to this dynamic:

*We pray that nothing good
in this person's life will be lost,
but will be of benefit to the
world; and that all that was
important to them will be re-
spected by those who follow...*

*We ask you that they may go
on living in their families and
in their friends; in their hearts
and minds, in their courage
and in their consciences.*

(BAS page 602 - 603)

I have been a part of conversations as individuals prepare to celebrate the life of family member or a friend where they are faced with a barrage of questions regarding decisions which must be made and made immediately. Moving past all of the essential matters regarding governmental identification and financial concerns, decisions regarding casket size, writing death notices and setting a burial location suddenly must be made. Families may become highly stressed and are sometimes overwhelmed by being placed in these situations.

On the other hand, families who have been gifted by an individual with all those arrangements being put into place and all the preparations being made are able to focus their energy on a healthy grieving process.

I remember hearing a diocesan bishop bemoan the fact

that from his point of view, too many death notices were accompanied by the notification that no service would be held. He commented that the services provided an opportunity for family and friends to gather, for grieving to be shared and a life celebrated.

As people of faith, especially during the season of Easter, there is an essential element of who we profess to be, that needs to be given priority. If we say we really love and care for our families and friends, then why not place some time and energy towards planning and preparing for how we will be remembered?

As I reach the age of "three score years and ten" (Psalm 90:10), there is an element of surprise attached to it. I am not being morose when I consider how much longer my life will last. My Father died at age sixty-two, my Grandmother was ninety-nine and a half. Who knows how much longer I will be around?

I encourage you to engage in gifting those you love with time spent on ensuring that when your end comes, that they will not be burdened by cares which you could have looked after while you were healthy and able to make decisions which they will not have to face. Discover a way which is comfortable for you to share your life story so that by "making it known", it may be valued, not only by the next generation, but the generations which follow.

*Rev. Canon Christopher
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