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Lent is not a moment for nostalgia, but a time for penitential reflection.

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# HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • MARCH 2026

## *It was messy and challenging... and it was the right thing to do*

On the last night of January, when temperature dropped to -35°C, St. Paul's Cathedral opened its doors for fifty unhoused residents of London.

By Very Rev. Kevin George

RECENTLY, London experienced some of the coldest temperatures we've had in many years.

For many of us, the cold is an inconvenience. We dress a little warmer, break out our favourite sweaters, and spend our days asking everyone "is it cold enough for you yet?" For some of our neighbours in downtown London, the cold is not an inconvenience, it's a life-threatening problem.

Driving home on a Thursday evening and hearing on the radio that the temperatures were about to drop to -35°C, I found myself unable to think about anything else, but how in the world people are going to survive this. The previous Sunday, I was counselling with one of our more vulnerable congregants, to allow the doctors to deal with his frostbitten hands. His fingers need to be removed. He is scared and refused to let the doctors do their work.

I arrived home, I took off my warm boots, my scarf, my insulated mitts, my favourite



Montréal Canadiens toque, and my new warm winter coat, and sat down to a warm supper. I sang a prayer (before it can become pretty rote): "And bless those who have no food to eat..." Surely I could do more than pray?

When St Paul's Cathedral completed the renovations in 2025, much attention was given to the fact that the space we created would be able to welcome multiple uses. Most of that attention was focused

on banquets, conventions, concerts, and the arts. Lost on a lot of the media types at the time, was the insistent step for us.

The space renewal also meant allowing us to worship in ways that are far more honest to who we are as a church today, and that we would open our space not just to our neighbours living in high-rises, but to our neighbours who are living in doorways and tents.

St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Ontario, January 2026: "God's kindness continually challenges us to reconsider our commitments. Jesus and the stranger stand outside, asking our communities to enlarge their borders and to share their resources."

(Christine Pohl: The Life Jesus Wants for His People)

I finished my dinner and realized that now was the time for the 8000 ft.<sup>2</sup> worship space at St Paul's to be used as a place to warm those who could otherwise freeze to death.

That evening we decided we had to act. Twenty-four hours after hearing that weather report, St Paul's opened its doors to fifty unhoused residents of London Ontario.

It was messy, and challenging. It was heartbreaking, and

it was the right thing to do.

It came with criticism. I'm getting used to that. We were imperfect. But I am proud of the people of St Paul's for not allowing perfect to be the enemy of the good.

I spent the night there. When the people of St Paul's Cathedral open their hearts, expand their borders, and share their resources, they are opening themselves to the presence of Jesus in the stranger.

Those neighbours that we have, that make us uneasy, that sometimes caused us to look away, those neighbours are made in an image of God. Those neighbours bear the mark of Jesus Christ. When our door is closed to them, our door is closed to Jesus.

It's often unsettling to expand borders, and share resources. Let's not let fear dissuade us from welcoming the stranger, from welcoming Jesus.

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

## Trade wars, wine, and Eucharist



St. James Westminster, London is embracing a BUY CANADIAN POLICY to strengthen its own resolve to promote love and loyalty for our country.

Up until now the Altar Guild at St. James have been using a sacramental wine from California. The recent change in Canada-US trade relations made them realize that in Ontario we produce so much great wine, and that 'BUY LOCAL' is the way to go!

► PAGE 3: EUCHARIST AND WINE TASTING AT ST. JAMES WESTMINSTER



► PAGE 4: CAMP HURON: ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

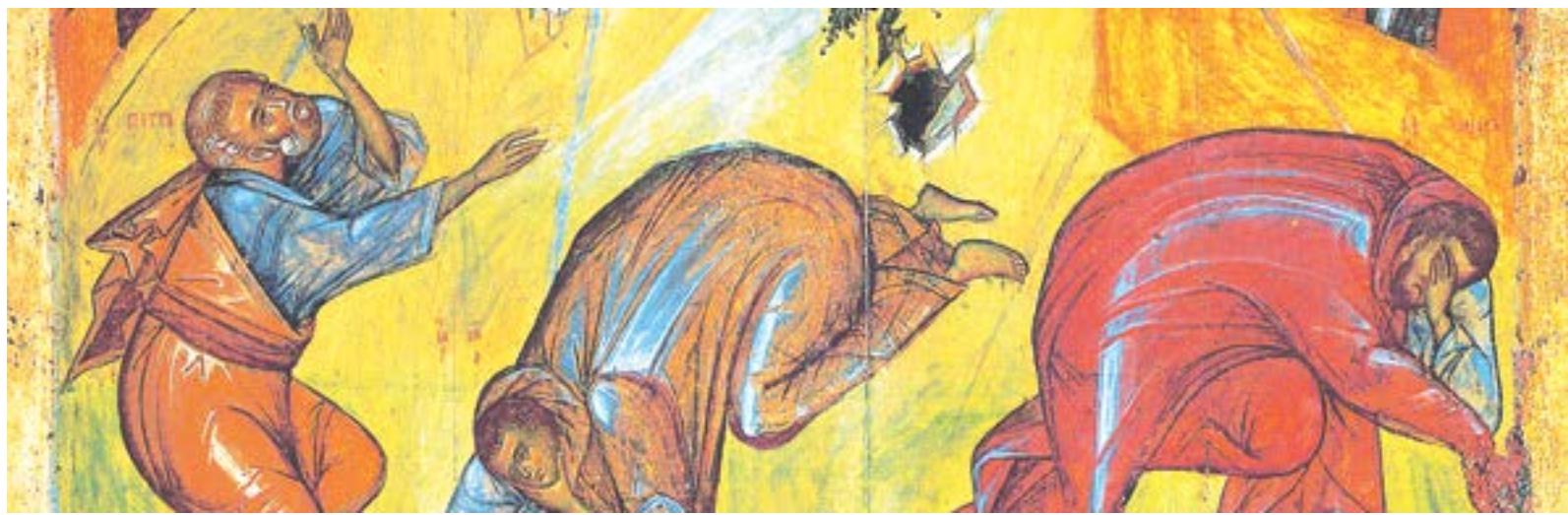
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► PAGE 6: AFC

Theophanes the Greek. *Transfiguration* (detail), 15<sup>th</sup> century. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

## Walking toward restorative justice

By Rev. Gilles Haché

**L**ENT is a season when the Church is invited to slow down, to listen deeply, and to allow God to reveal both what is broken in our world and what God desires to restore.

It is not merely a time of personal discipline. It is a time of unveiling and a time when the Spirit leads us, as Jesus was led into the desert (Mt 4:1-11), to confront the forces that distort human dignity and fracture our common life. In the desert, Jesus faces three temptations that are, in truth, the great distortions of human power: the power to possess, the power to dominate, the power to manipulate God.

These temptations are not abstract. They manifest today in policies that dehumanize, in systems that crush, and in rhetoric that fuels fear. They appear in coercive immigration practices such as those associated with ICE, in political exaggerations that turn vulnerable people into threats, and in structures that separate families or criminalize poverty and insecurity.

These realities are not simply social problems. They are spiritual wounds. Lent calls us to face them with courage, clarity, and compassion and to restore justice and participating in God's Work of Healing.

Restorative justice is not a political trend or a social program. It is a theological vision rooted in the very heart of the Gospel. It reflects the way God acts in Scripture: God hears the

cry of the oppressed (Ex 3:7). God brings water from the rock in places of conflict and complaint (Ex 17:1-7). God restores the dignity of the marginalized, like the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:5-42). God opens the eyes of those society has rendered invisible (Jn 9:1-41). God raises what has fallen into death (Jn 11:1-45).

Restorative justice is therefore an expression of God's desire to heal relationships, rebuild communities, and restore the dignity of every person. It insists that no one is disposable. No one is outside the reach of God's mercy. This is why policies that break families, that bring fear, or reduce human beings to legal categories, are not only unjust but they contradict the Gospel itself.

The story of the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1-9) reminds us that discipleship begins with a transformed vision. Peter, James, and John are invited to see Jesus differently and not to escape the world, but to return to it with new eyes. In a world marked by inequity, polarization, and fear, we too need transfigured sight. We need to see: dignity where others see danger, a neighbour where others see a stranger, a possibility for healing where others see an impasse. Restorative justice begins with this conversion of vision and a willingness to see the world as Christ sees it.

The Scripture does not ask Christians to avoid politics. It asks us to discern it. Paul

teaches that authority exists for the common good (Rom 13:1-4), yet he also commands believers to "expose the works of darkness" (Eph 5:11) when power becomes oppressive. The prophets Isaiah, Amos, Micah all speak with one voice: God judges societies by how they treat the poor, the foreigner, the widow, and the orphan. This means that contemporary political distortions including coercive immigration practices, fear-based rhetoric, and systems that exploit vulnerability, are not merely policy debates. They are theological questions. They force us to ask: Do we believe in a God of mercy?

Silence has a sacred place in Christian life. Jesus himself withdraws into silence to pray. But silence can also become a form of surrender. When the crowd tries to silence Bartimaeus, Jesus refuses. When authorities try to silence the man born blind, Jesus stands with him. When Lazarus lies in the tomb, Jesus breaks the silence with a cry of life. Christian silence is never a silence that protects injustice. It is a silence that listens, discerns, and prepares a truthful word. But when silence allows the powerful to crush the vulnerable, it becomes complicity.

Paul writes, "You are light in the Lord" (Eph 5:8). In Scripture, light is not merely brightness. It is revelation, healing, and transformation. In the Gospel of John, the signs of Jesus are not displays of power. They are acts of restorative justice: restoring sight, restoring dignity,

restoring community, restoring hope and restoring life. To walk as children of the light is to refuse the shadows where fear, manipulation, and abuse hide. It is to speak truth with compassion. It is to act in ways that heal rather than harm.

Paul assures us that "hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5). Christian hope is not naïve optimism. It is a form of spiritual resistance. I believe that an unjust system can be transformed, that hardened hearts can be opened, wounded communities can be healed, broken people can be raised up, and death does not have the final word.

Hope is not passive. It is active, courageous, and deeply rooted in the Resurrection. Lent leads us toward Easter and toward the triumph of life over death. This journey is not only spiritual. It is profoundly concrete. It calls all of us to: discern the forces of death at work in our world, reject the logics of fear and domination, defend the dignity of every person, act with compassion and courage, and become artisans of restorative justice.

May the Spirit give us a transfigured heart, an enlightened gaze, and a word that liberates. May our Lenten journey draw us deeper into God's work of healing and for our communities, for our world, and for every person created in the image of God.

Rev. Gilles Haché is the Rector of St. Matthew's, Windsor and Chaplain to Lay Readers in the Diocese of Huron.

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# The Eucharist and wine tasting at St. James Westminster

By John E. Montgomery

EVER SINCE the first Eucharist, wine has been an essential component in the preparations for the Lord's Supper. Up until now St. James Westminster has been using Cribari Altar Wine from California. The Altar Guild thought it was time to change that.

## Why the change?

The major motivating factor was the recent change in Canada-US trade relations. It is not easy to watch what is happening in the US and sit by and do nothing. In Ontario we produce so much great wine we felt that 'buy local' was the best option. St. James Westminster is embracing a buy Canada policy to strengthen its own resolve to promote love and loyalty for our country Canada.

## But what kind of wine?

Sacramental wine is bottled under the guidance of church officials who on behalf of a church or bishop give a certificate.

Sacramental wine is produced "ex genimine viti" (from fruit of grapes) follow-



ing ancient canonical rules with their origin in the text of the Gospel (Matthew 26:29). (Source: The Eucharist: Mystery of Presence, Sacrifice, and Communion- Lawrence Feingold.) Those rules ensure the purity of sacramental wine. With increased Canadian regulation in the bottling of wine in Canada and around the world there is less concern these days over purity.

Anglican churches often use natural grape wine from appropriate ecclesiastical suppliers. Due to increased regulation generally in food and beverage handling, more and more individual churches do not see the necessity of having specially bottled wine for church purposes. There is only the need to have policies and habits in place to make sure the wine doesn't spoil when a bottle is opened.

Members of the Altar Guild gather around Elizabeth King, their President, who holds the winning wine which was suggested by Dawn and Dave Nicholson. From left to right: Dawn Nicholson, Dave Nicholson, Lisa Boate, Jovia Namugenyi, John Montgomery, Elizabeth King, Adèle Miles, Karen Lemanski, Esther Sizeland, Kate Beale

## So, how did we choose the wine?

Often, parishioners have very little say in what kind of communion wine they drink. The Altar Guild felt that as St. James parishioners were the ones consuming the wine why not get their input. To do that, in September with Rev. Michael Bruce's agreement, we set up a wine tasting for the congregation between services one Sunday.

We chose two wines for the tasting and parishioners, Dave and Dawn Nicholson, suggested a third. The tasting didn't require a refined palate. Parishioners simply sampled the three wines and gave their own personal preference. Even those who knew nothing about wine were surprised they could pick a favourite. In the end most agreed on one of the wines. In fact, there was over 75% agreement.

## What did we end up choosing?

We chose Open Smooth Red, an off-dry Canadian red wine blend. The LCBO describes it as having "fruit flavours like cherry and raspberry, with notes of cocoa and spice, and soft tannins."

We had fun making what we believe is an important change in our common eucharistic life. We are supporting local, reducing our carbon footprint, and in some small way standing up for justice in God's world.

John E. Montgomery MDiv MTS is a St. James Westminster parishioner.



"We aren't here to pick a side, we are here to stand with people."  
Iranian community in the Waterloo Region was hosted on January 31 at All Saints' Anglican Church. For All Saints' this was not a matter of international politics, but a matter of family.

# Persian community memorial service at All Saints' Anglican Church, Waterloo

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, the sanctuary of All Saints' Anglican Church was filled not just with prayer, but with the beautiful melodies of Farsi song.

More than 100 people gathered for a memorial service to honour those who have lost their lives in the ongoing struggle for freedom and human dignity in Iran.

While the music reflected the deep roots of the Persian community, the spoken words bridged the gap between neighbours in Waterloo and family members thousands of

miles away.

For All Saints', this wasn't a matter of international politics, but a matter of family. Many members of the parish community are of Persian descent who recently immigrated, with loved ones still living through the uncertainty in Iran.

The atmosphere was one purposeful solidarity. Bardish Chagger (MP), Tim Louis (MP), and Catherine Fife (MPP) were in attendance, making it clear that Canada wants to see an end to the violence.

"We aren't here to pick a side," one participant noted, "we are here to stand with people."

In a world that often feels divided by borders and headlines, the gathering served as a reminder that the "Great Cloud of Witnesses" includes those standing in the streets of Tehran just as much as those sitting in the pews in Waterloo. As the candles faded and the music faded, the message remained clear: when one part of the body hurts, the whole body feels it.

Rev. Marty Levesque



## STRATFORD MUSIC & ART SALE Fundraiser for the Stratford Anglican Church Food Bank

Saturday, March 28, 2026, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Anglican Church, 6 Hamilton St. Stratford

- Local artists donating a portion of their sales
- Featuring SDSS jazz combo directed by Kelsey Regier and more...
- Entry by donation

More info: Church Office 519-271-3572 [office@stjamesstratford.ca](mailto:office@stjamesstratford.ca)

# STAR STUFF...

Be humble for you are made of earth, be noble for you are made of stars...



Fireflies dance at the edge of the woods. Sprays of orange embers float above the campfire circle. The moon hangs low over the chapel.

Slowly, slowly, night darkens down. Once again, God tucks us under a dark blue-sky blanket covered in stars, stars, and more stars!

It is good to be with friends, heads tipped back, marveling at the twinkling vista spread across the boundless sky. Companions' faces beam, their eyes sparkling orbs of radiant light.

Scientist Carl Sagan said, "The earth and every living thing are made of star stuff."

*Just imagine... stars all around us... stars part of us?*

It's Camp Huron's 80<sup>th</sup> summer! Wow! That's 80 summers of candlelight, firelight, and starlight, shining all around us, 80 summers of Christ light, shining through us.

Join a veritable camp constellation of those who have gone before us, who journey with us, whose shining light guides us on our way, God's way of love. And leave your own trail of star stuff for those who will surely follow!

Back by popular demand – six week-long overnight sessions, two sessions of LIT 1, 2, 3, and Day Trippers, weekday camp for local school-aged campers.

See our website for all the details!

**ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN**

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

Bursaries and payment plans available. For more information, please contact

[gerryadam@diohuron.org](mailto:gerryadam@diohuron.org) or call 519-434-6893 ext 217



## The Companions Program

September 2026 – June 2027

The residential Companions program is an immersive opportunity to experience a contemporary monastic community rooted in the Benedictine tradition. It is open to women aged 21 and up regardless of Christian denomination.

Companions live, work, and pray alongside the sisters, learning from them but also sharing each companion's own gifts with the sisters and their ministries. They will:

- ↳ Learn to cultivate peaceful and creative ways of living in a diverse intentional community
- ↳ Appreciate silence and solitude as well as community and service for a healthy life
- ↳ Put down deep roots of spiritual intimacy with God and each other
- ↳ Develop a personal path to ongoing spiritual growth



Application start & end (both programs):

January 1, 2026 – May 1, 2026



**Cost:**  
Residential Companions: sugg. \$150/month.  
Companions Online: sugg. \$100/month.  
If cost is a hindrance, assistance is available.

Open to women of all Christian expressions, Companions Online is an opportunity to become "monastics in the world," living a Benedictine rhythm of prayer, work, study, and recreation. Online Companions learn to develop practices that support and nurture their spiritual life from the comfort of their homes.

They meet regularly for classes and discussion groups, and commit to times of personal prayer at home. They share in book studies, participate in online worship and sometimes screen a film relevant to spiritual growth and self-understanding. Online Companions also develop spiritual disciplines that follow the liturgical year.

To learn more about either program, or to apply, email:  
Canon Sr. Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, SSJD, at  
[companions@ssjd.ca](mailto:companions@ssjd.ca), or phone St. John's Convent:  
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# Follow the rocky road to the Archives new home at St. Paul's Cathedral

We looked at mall store fronts, commercial units in strip plazas and office rentals in high rise buildings. We investigated existing diocesan properties and considered moving to a deconsecrated church. We imagined be-spoke construction of a new purpose-built Archives on property we own...

By Tom Adam

**I**N THE SUMMER of 2024, the long standing partnership the Diocesan Archives had enjoyed with Huron University College came to an end with the announcement that the space we occupied below the Chapel was needed for other purposes.

In all honesty though, the Archives had long outgrown its basement corner at Huron, filling every nook and cranny and occupying every square centimetre of every surface in our suite of rooms. So while the problem facing us precipitated a bit of a panicked scramble and initiated a huge volume of work for the small working group struck by the Bishop, we considered our forced eviction as an opportunity, a challenging one to be sure, but an opportunity to go back to square one, to re-examine and re-imagine our current practices and the space we occupy. And in October 2024 we set about to make it all happen.

Our first big task was to find an answer to the WHERE? question. We faced the reality that finding a move-in-ready space would be impossible. We knew sufficient lead time to adequately prepare any new location would be a given, in addition to planning and overseeing the move itself. So we found ourselves behind the eight ball virtually from the start of the project. In sorting out where on earth we possibly could go, the Diocese also charged us to consider two key drivers to shape our work.

Given our current economic climate, we were asked to find the most cost-efficient new space solution for the Archives. We very quickly discerned this was not the sort of move where you call in favours with all your buddies with pick-up trucks, get a few cases of beer and pick a weekend to get 'er done! We were going to incur costs, quite likely rather substantial ones; and expenses of two kinds.

There are the one-time amounts related to the move itself. We will need to renovate and retro-fit a new space to accommodate our unique requirements. We will need to install expensive environmental systems to ensure stable temperature and humidity in the Vault in order to safely preserve our collections. We will need appropriate containers and packing materials for our artifacts and movers



**We talked it through in our small group, multiple times. We consulted our experts, multiple times. We weighed the pros and cons. We toured the available Cathedral spaces and discussed and re-visited again. Ultimately we concluded that space sharing with St. Paul's proved to be our best possible option and we set about to develop idea into plan.**

to transfer our furniture and fixtures. We will need other professionals to relocate our Vault, to unload, safely pack, dismantle, move, re-configure, re-install and re-shelve, our compact storage unit and its contents. All this will cost.

And then once the new Archives is established, it will necessarily incur ongoing expenses. There will be new leasing costs plus all the normal day to day operating expenses; the things we almost took for granted during our life at Huron.

The second key driver for our working group was the challenge to exhaustively explore innovative solutions and mine every potential for sharing expenses through establishing new partnerships and collaborations with other local agencies, institutions

and groups. So we considered multiple scenarios for a new Archives.

At one end, we thought about closing altogether. What if we used someone else, the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod Archives in Toronto for example, to steward our history, manage our records and provide archival services for us?

At the other end we dreamt big. There currently is no Municipal Archives in the city. What if local stakeholders, the City of London, London Public Libraries, other Regional Archives and Historical Societies, our counterparts in the Lutheran Church, the United Church and the Roman Catholic Diocese of London and its affiliates all banded together, pooled resources and created

a shiny new Archives Centre for London? Each unit would retain responsibility for their unique collections but we would share facilities and services common to all.

We balanced each scenario with the implications it would have on the effective use of our material and the services we provide to parishes and others across Southwestern Ontario, along with the related costs both in time and money each would entail. We talked and met with representatives from each of these groups to explore collaborative potentials. While our conversations in all cases were fruitful, advice, support and interest in our project were evident in all our meetings, it became increasingly clear that for various reasons, advice, support and interest would be the most that we could expect. No one was in a position to collaborate with us, especially given our tight timeline. So we were on our own.

In terms of finding the most cost effective location, we visited a host of potential new spaces. We were fortunate to engage the services of a couple of local real estate agents who scouted out rental solutions for us. We looked at mall store fronts, commercial units in strip plazas across London and office rentals in high rise buildings in the downtown core. Ultimately, however, all unfortunately proved to be cost prohibitive.

We investigated existing Diocesan properties. We considered moving to a deconsecrated church like Trinity in Lambeth. We imagined be-spoke construction of a new purpose-built Archives on property we own, at St Mark's in East London for example. Members of the Diocesan Lands and Properties Committee toured locations with us and gave expert opinion on the viability of each. In the end though, limitations related to the site - the surrounding cemetery and a rabbit's warren of rooms inside Trinity; or to the situation - a minimum 5-year timeline

and at least a 5-million-dollar price tag to get us from plans to a finished new build at St Mark's, put us no further ahead. We found ourselves running out of options.

Just before Christmas 2024, a meeting was scheduled at St Paul's with the intent to explore any possible potential in the commercial buildings immediately surrounding the Cathedral. Over the course of the meeting, our discus-

sion shifted to the possible potential to re-imagine space within the envelope of the Cathedral itself. The program of renovation and renewal underway at St Paul's could perhaps open spaces for us to re-purpose to meet our needs.

Could we consider a new partnership with the Cathedral? It might be doable; not ideal perhaps but then finding the perfect solution was proving impossible. And we recognized several advantages to the idea. The available rooms while on separate floors on the second and lower levels, are in close proximity to each other within the Cathedral proper. St Paul's also assured us that accommodation will be made for anyone with mobility issues needing use of the collection until the Cathedral complex is fully accessible.

In addition, the Archives itself will be conveniently located in downtown London and easily reachable with parking or via public transit by parishes, researchers, Archives patrons, staff and volunteers. We will be right next door to Church House, our primary user. It also allows us the opportunity to consolidate Diocesan services, centrally, right in the "Heart of Huron."

We talked it through in our small group, multiple times. We consulted our experts, multiple times. We weighed the pros and cons. We toured the available Cathedral spaces and discussed and re-visited again. Ultimately we concluded that space sharing with St. Paul's proved to be our best possible option and we set about to develop idea into plan.

We considered various arrangements of the spaces to meet our needs, drafted a rudimentary budget, drew preliminary floor plans and took everything along with a motion for financial backing to the June 2025 Diocesan Council meeting where we received unanimous support for moving forward.

With the Cathedral as a workable solution to the WHERE? the focus of our work transitioned to the HOW? and the WHEN? to accomplish it; which you can read about in an upcoming issue of Huron Church News.

Tom Adam is Chair of the Archives Relocation Working Group.

## Parishes and dioceses invited to register for Say Yes! to Kids 2026 by April 1

The Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 2026 Say Yes! to Kids (SYTK) campaign, the Foundation's national fundraising initiative supporting children and youth-focused ministry across the Anglican Church of Canada.

Parishes, dioceses, and Anglican-affiliated organizations are invited to register by April 1, 2026, at: <https://www.anglicanfoundation.org/apply/sytk/>

Now in its sixth year, Say Yes! to Kids equips local ministry partners with fundraising tools, matching incentives, and communications support to help strengthen programs that serve children, youth, and young people in their own communities. Campaign teams will fundraise locally in the spring, with Say Yes! to Kids Sunday taking place on Sunday, June 14, 2026.

"At the point of registration, we simply ask teams to tell us what the focus of their Say Yes! to Kids fundraiser will be and to share any background information they feel will help us support them and develop a strong team marketing kit," says Michelle Hauser, AFC's Development & Communications Officer.

Since its launch in 2021, Say Yes! to Kids has raised nearly \$1 million in support for youth-focused ministry nationwide, funding initiatives in areas such as faith formation, mental health, food security, arts and music, outdoor education, and leadership development.

To support teams who are new to the campaign—or those who would like to learn more before registering—AFC hosted a series of Say Yes! to Kids Info Sessions via ZOOM throughout February.



Join AFC's 2026  
Say Yes! to Kids campaign  
Register by April 1



# Thank You

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- ▶ St. Andrew's-by-the-Lake, Turkey Point
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- ▶ St. George's Anglican Church, Clarksburg
- ▶ St. George's Anglican Church, Goderich
- ▶ St. Hilda's – St. Luke's ACW, St. Thomas
- ▶ St. John the Evangelist, Schreiber
- ▶ St. John's Anglican Church, Cambridge
- ▶ St. John's Anglican Church, Tillsonburg
- ▶ St. John's-in-the-Wilderness Church, Brights Grove
- ▶ St. Jude's Church, London
- ▶ St. Mark's Anglican Church, London
- ▶ St. Paul's Anglican Church, Port Dover
- ▶ St. Paul's Anglican Church, Sarnia
- ▶ St. Paul's Anglican Church, Southampton
- ▶ St. Paul's Cathedral, London
- ▶ St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kitchener
- ▶ St. Peter's Anglican Church, Dorchester
- ▶ St. Thomas the Apostle, Kitchener
- ▶ Trinity Anglican Church, Durham
- ▶ Trinity Anglican Church, Port Burwell
- ▶ Trinity Anglican Church, Sarnia
- ▶ Trivitt Memorial Church, Exeter

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**Chinese New Year's:**  
Our hosts for the lunch were Christine M and Millie H.

### Chinese New Year in Tillsonburg (and Birthday Cake Boxes for Season of Giving)

The ACW at St. John's Anglican Church in Tillsonburg got together after the Christmas rush was over to gather to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

We had Chinese takeout delivered from a local restaurant and we ate it at the church and then we exchanged gifts (\$10 and under).

Last year, we had so much fun that we have decided to make it an annual event.

Earlier, over the November/December "Season the congregation, led by the ACW, gathered 110 Birthday Cake Boxes over the November/December "Season of Giving".

What is a cake box you ask?--it is 1 cake mix (any flavour), 1 can of pop (any flavour), 1 container of icing (any flavour), candles and balloons placed into an aluminum cake pan. One cake mix plus one can of pop is all it takes to make a birthday cake.

The birthday cake boxes are then given to the Helping Hand Food Bank's Backpack Program, here in Tillsonburg, where they are delivered to each registered child, during the week of their birthday. If there is no adult available, the child can make their own birthday cake--it's so easy. The drivers tell us the children are excited when they knock on the door and see that they will have a birthday cake this year.

## PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

### Appointments

Bishop Townshend appointed the Venerable Tanya Phibbs as the Associate Rector of the newly formed Stratford Anglican Ministry and St. James' St. Marys, effective 1 February 2026. She will continue to provide support and guidance to the Bishop and Diocese on legal issues as well as serve the national church as the Prolocutor of General Synod. In recognition of this and of her long service in senior diocesan roles, Tanya will continue to hold the title of "Archdeacon."

Bishop Townshend appointed Ms. Jacqueline Davison as the Acting Secretary-Treasurer, effective 1 February 2026 until the next Annual Synod meeting.

Bishop Townshend appointed the Venerable Dr Stephen McClatchie

as the Registrar, effective 1 February 2026.

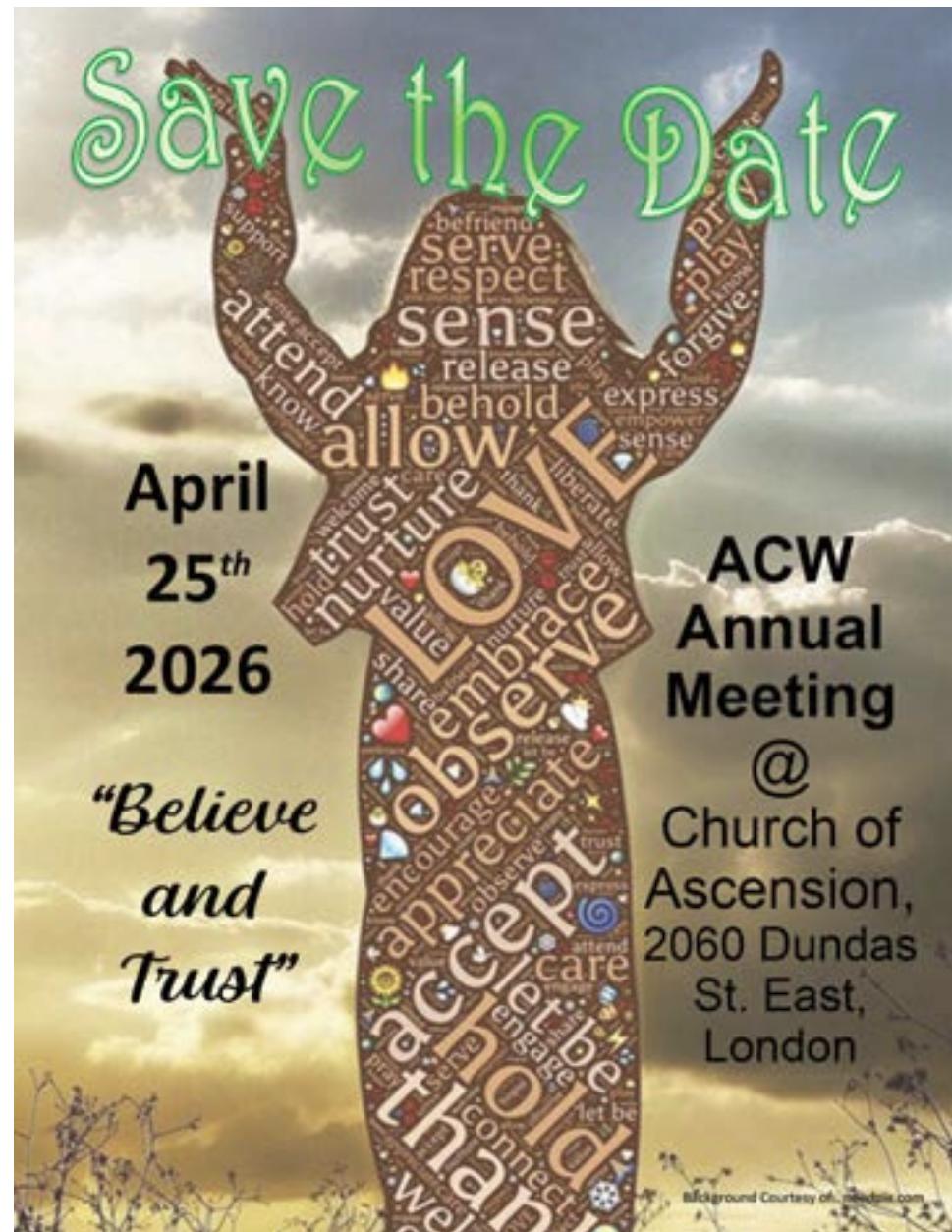
### Inductions

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, Archdeacon Matthew Kieswetter inducted the Reverend Clare Stewart as the Rector of Holy Trinity, St. George's, on Sunday, 8 February. The preacher was the Reverend Judy Steers (Diocese of Niagara).

### Rest in Peace

Gordon Cockell, died on 11 December 2025. Gordon was the spouse of the Reverend Michelle Cockell, who was ordained and served in the Diocese of Huron until 2014.

Please remember Michelle, Lee, Sean, Andrew, and the rest of Gordon's family and friends in your prayers. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.



### London Deanery

#### In Memory

St. Jude's, London  
Margaret Rose MacLaren  
Kerry Lynn Oliver

St. George's Church,  
Middlesex Centre  
Eleanor Little

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**JENNIFER BOWEN, MDiv, RCFT, RP**  
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# Holy Listening: Seeking the direction of God in the voices of the neighbourhood

AS I WRITE this article, preparations are being made for our upcoming annual Vestry Meeting, a time when the membership of our church will reflect on our lives and ministry together over the last year, and then seek to discern God's direction for our community in the year ahead.

Vestry can be an exciting time, especially when a congregation is open to the idea of God calling them to something new in the future. But how do we discern God's calling for our congregations? How do we set our ministry priorities in a way that is faithful to God's mission in our lives and in the communities that we are called to serve?

I believe that one of the most important elements to finding our missional direction (the marching orders of how to serve) is to create space for Holy Listening in our congregational priorities.

One of the greatest impediments to missional planning, especially when these conversations occur in the busyness of the Vestry season, is the fact that the people present at our Vestry meetings tend to be our most committed members of the church. For starters, that's a good thing! We should always be deeply grateful for the membership of our congregations, who are the bedrock of the planning and exercise of ministry in our churches. However, as Vestry is usually a gathering of the membership of the church, what is often missing, are the voices, the needs, and the



2025 Vestry in the Parish of the Blue Mountains.



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

community partners who are not part of the membership of the congregation.

It is helpful to remember this important point about discernment: that God doesn't just work through the membership of the faith community inside the walls of a church, but rather that God is already at work in the wider neighbourhood beyond the walls of our churches. The question we sometimes need to ask is: how do we participate in what God is already up to?

More often than not, our Vestry meetings can become a meeting of "Anglicans talking to Anglicans", and they tend to focus on the needs, concerns, interests and values of those within our membership group.

**Whenever congregations engage in Holy Listening beyond the membership of their church rolls, there is a potential for new partnerships to be made, for unknown needs in the neighbourhood to be identified.**

When congregations are discerning God's call to service in the contexts of their influence, within the neighbourhoods that they are situated in, often we need to journey outside the opinions of our membership to hear God's voice in the wider community. The exercise of Holy Listening is when space is made to invite other voices to the table where our ministry planning decisions are being made.

A great example of this was found several years ago when a neighbouring congregation to mine, Christ Church in Meaford, decided to host a Town Hall meeting to talk about the most significant needs in their community.

During the pandemic, the congregation of Christ Church had jumped into action through hosting community meals, and through their generosity, tens of thousands of meals were prepared in their church and served throughout the entire country! It was truly a ministry of profound generosity!

However, when some effects of the pandemic began to subside, the congregation decided that it was time to discern where God might be calling them to next. To do this, they engaged in an exercise of Holy Listening, by hosting a community conversation (a Town Hall meeting), and by inviting their mayor, community group leaders,

and anyone interested in joining a conversation about the needs of the community and the ways that caring groups, including their church, might respond.

Whenever congregations engage in Holy Listening beyond the membership of their church rolls, there is a potential for new partnerships to be made, for unknown needs in the neighbourhood to be identified, and in some ways, most importantly, for faithful church leaders to hear where God might be calling them to serve in the future.

My invitation to any congregation that is struggling to discern their calling or purpose in their own local context, or to any congregation that is seeking to grow in new relationships and partnerships, would be to find ways to include Holy Listening in their own ministry planning conversations and meetings.

God doesn't always provide all the answers to our future service within the membership of the Church. Sometimes we need to journey to the voices beyond our own walls to hear God's will for 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*

## Letting God love me more (There is a crack in everything...)

**By Rev. Greg Little**

THE ISSUE – if I can call it that – of what we can do when God seems to be absent in our lives, has been presented to me recently in different ways.

This is true in my personal life and with a couple of people raising that with me. This has also come up a few places in the messages I receive regularly from different sources. There are times when God does not seem to be making God's presence known to me. These raises (or perhaps begs) the question, how can I help God to be more present in my life?

One of the recent Daily Meditations by Richard Rohr was on point:

*Seeking to experience God's love more fully, spiritual director Colette Lafia asks a monk*

*with whom she is friends, "How do I let God love me more?"*

*Without missing a beat, Brother Paul answered in his joyful tone, "God cannot love you more. God already loves you infinitely. You just need to become more aware of [God's] love ... by becoming more present to it. It's like hearing birdcalls. By paying attention and delighting in it."*

The Advent Reflection by the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine was also applicable:

*If we aren't paying attention then that narrow space between pleasure and anxiety can trip us up, and just like a crack in the pavement, cause our steps to stumble and our resolve to falter. Henri Nouwen reminds us, "The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life*



*is recognizing the coming of the Lord." (SSJD Advent Reflection 2025)*

This brought to mind the line from Leonard Cohen's song, *Anthem*, "there is a crack in everything – that's how the light gets in."

I have believed – known – for quite a while, that God is always present in our lives. God makes Godself known to us in many ways. However, because of who we are and how God created us to be – ironically – we are blind and deaf and dumb to many of these ways. Due to who and how we are, we are not open to many of the ways in which God is present to us. This is, in part, because of our person-

alities and in part because we are often unavailable to God presence in our lives.

If we quiet ourselves and pay attention, we may be able to discern more clearly God's presence in ways that are familiar to us or even ways that are not familiar to us. For me, I am not usually attuned to the outer world around me – walking in nature does not do much for me but I am working on that.

I will close with another message that I received this morning from Richard Rohr:

*Mirabai Starr offers this stirring description of the Dark Night of the Soul, in which God moves from dynamic presence to loving absence:*

*Say what's secretly going on is that the Beloved is loving you back. That your first glimpse of the Absolute was God's first great gift to you. That your*

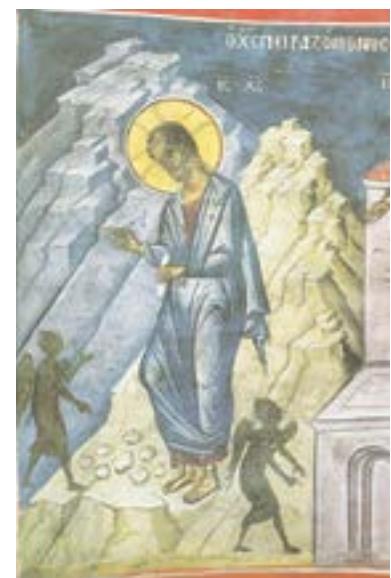
*years of revelation inside his many vessels was his second gift, wherein, like a mother, he was holding you, like a child, close to his breast, tenderly feeding you. And that this darkness of the soul you have come upon and cannot seem to come out of is his final and greatest gift to you.*

I would disagree on one point. It is not a case of God {the Beloved} loving us back. It is a case that God always loves us, and we have to opportunity to love God back. It is not a question of God being more present in my life? The question is, how can I be more aware of God's presence in my life? When I do, how can I respond?

I hope we can be blessed to do that on our journey.

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

# Lent: An investment of time and intention



By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

**A**S WE STEP into the month of March, we do so after what seems far too many months of winter. I have heard it said that it is something of a national trait that as Canadians we are rather preoccupied with the weather, but the truth is, when Mother Nature speaks, we all listen, and adjust accordingly.

As March dawns upon us, we are technically still in winter, yet the promise of Spring, is drawing closer. The light has changed. The days stretch longer. There are hints, that something new is just around the corner. After a winter that has felt especially long and demanding, these small signs matter and simply noticing them gives us hope.

The season of Lent, too, lives in something of an in-between space as well. We know where our story is going. We know resurrection awaits. And yet, for now, we continue on the road with Jesus. We continue through wilderness, questioning, vulnerability, and honest self-examination. Lent does not rush



**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.**

us toward Easter. It invites us to stay present to the journey, even the icy, snowy and challenging bits.

Education for Ministry is well suited to this season. EfM asks us to sit with scripture and tradition without easy answers, to reflect theologically on our lives, and to listen deeply to God, to one another, to our neighbours, and to the questions that surface when certainty gives way to curiosity. Lent shares these characteristics reminding us that faith is so much more than a destination, and far more about the lessons on the journey, with particular attention to all that is unfolding both within and around us.

This time of year, and indeed this time in our collec-

tive and global realities, may find us weary. In all of this it feels quite natural to strain for a happier part of the story, to rush to the celebrations of Easter. But here enters the disciplines of Lent, those practices and inner strivings that ask us to resist this impulse. Simultaneously we hold the truths that Easter will dawn while at the same time acknowledging that Lent reminds us that growth, healing, adapting, learning ... these all take the investment and the faithful stewardship of our time and intention.

Within our Education for Ministry groups, as we move through March, in our studies, we continue to promote an honesty in prayer, a renewed commitment to

learning always in anticipation of those surprising insights in scripture, and those moments of grace in conversation which break in upon us in what can often be quite unexpected ways.

While it is true that new Education for Ministry groups will not be forming for some months, as a part of a learning church, it is never too early to explore what is available both in the one-year and the classic four-year programmes within Huron. We will be announcing Open House dates next month, but interest for new in-person groups in the Brantford and the Walkerton area is forming now. As well with the online EfM group also as an option, there is an opportunity to participate no matter where you find yourself in the Diocese.

As always, if you want to learn more about any aspects of Education for Ministry, we are here to explore with you. Please contact Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or Val Kenyon at [EFM@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:EFM@huron.anglican.ca)

Rev. Canon Dr. Val Kenyon is EfM Animator in Huron. [EFM@huron.anglican.ca](mailto:EFM@huron.anglican.ca)

**Lent does not rush us toward Easter. It invites us to stay present to the journey, even the icy, snowy and challenging bits.**

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# Acts of faith: Building a new world, living without fear

By Rev. Chris Brouillard-Coyle

**B**ACK IN JANUARY, Bishop A. Robert Hirschfeld of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire advised clergy to get their affairs in order acknowledging that this is a time when they may need to move beyond statements and use their bodies to stand between the powers of this world and the most vulnerable.

"Those of us who are ready to build a new world, we also have to be prepared," he said. "If we truly want to live without fear, we cannot fear even death itself, my friends." (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/new-hampshire-bishop-warns-new-era-martyrdom-ice-shooting-rc-na254813>)

Recently, posts have also been floating around social media advising clergy and people of faith about what to do if they are arrested. These posts proved timely for some as clergy who gathered for protests in Minneapolis were, in fact, arrested. (<https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/clergy-members-arrested-minneapolis-st-paul-international-airport/>)

Admittedly, for me as a clergyperson, it can feel surreal reading news stories and posts about clergy taking risks and making sacrifices in the

## SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



Yayan Sopian/Unsplash

name faith. It is hard not to feel a bit of angst over clergy who are being harassed, pepper sprayed, attacked, and arrested as they stand up for the vulnerable and challenge injustice. I knew when I took my vows that this was not a typical job, but what does the Lord require of us? Indeed, what does the Lord require of any of us, lay or ordained?

What does it mean to be a person of faith? On Feb. 1, the reading from the Prophet Micah explored this same question from the perspective of the Israelites. Fundamentally, the author wanted to know how to best worship God. The response? "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to

do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8) These words offer important benchmarks for us today inviting us to consider:

How are we doing justice? How are we standing alongside those who are vulnerable and fighting for the freedoms we enjoy? What are we doing to ensure all people have access to basic livability? To what extent do we recognise income inequalities and exploitation that are embedded in the capitalist system in which we participate? What support have we given for those who are being told to pull themselves up by their bootstraps even though they have no boots? What can we do better?

**We are blessed if we live in a world where we don't fear martyrdom as we walk humbly with our God.**

How are we loving kindness? How do we show kindness to minimum wage workers, unhoused people, people who are mistreated because of who they are or who they love? What do we do when we hear people repeat stereotypes, utter microaggressions, or put down people because of who they are? What would it take for us to intervene when we see someone being mistreated? What risks are we willing to take to show kindness and bring people out from the cold?

How are we walking humbly with God? As we walk through Lent, we prepare ourselves to enter into the mystery of Holy Week, a time that begins with the celebration of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem followed by a reading of the Passion – the story of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus. Holy Week centres the journey to the cross, a story in which Jesus is demeaned, mistreated, and abused by people with power who are manipulating the circumstances for their own benefits. Jesus carries the worst of the world on the cross. Out of tremendous love he carries all of sin, to the

point of death. In doing so, he shows a love that is more than we can ask or imagine. Jesus' love is one that is revealed in service and sacrifice. As we seek to walk humbly with God, how is our love revealed in service and sacrifice?

We are blessed if we live in a world where we never need to risk arrest to act with justice. We are blessed if we live in a world where empathy and understanding makes it easy to love kindness. We are blessed if we live in a world where we don't fear martyrdom as we walk humbly with our God.

As the world changes, may we perpetually have the courage to continue to embody these ideals even if the risks increase. May we trust that, just as God remained with Jesus through his Holy Week journey, God is always with us. May we trust that words of our doxology hold truth for us today: Glory to God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

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

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# Our years of solitude – Discovering our unique self

**A**LONENESS acts as a mirror for an often-uncomfortable truth: we have our own individuality and sense of separateness.

Although humans are naturally social beings and part of a larger system, when alone, we connect with unique aspects of ourselves that only solitude can reveal.

While solitude is important for discovering and rediscovering our unique self, many people often find it difficult to embrace it. They are challenged by demands on their time and expectations of their behaviour, leading to stress and a feeling of losing themselves. Often, we long for a groundedness that seems far away, if not nearly impossible.

Nonetheless, overcoming such barriers is vital to our physical health and emotional well-being. It is a process that can be both challenging and transformative. It often involves facing fears, challenging habits, and stepping out of comfort zones. Yet, despite these challenges, the journey leads to new insights, the development of healthier coping mechanisms, and a stronger sense of self.

As folk begin this journey, they may feel discomfort when moving away from



Johannes Plenio/Unsplash



## As I SEE IT

**REV. JIM INNES**

external stimuli and returning to a quiet state; sometimes, this quiet can seem unsettling, and I have heard it described anxiously as an inability to breathe or a feeling of abandonment. It's as if one must first pass through a dark valley of uncertainty or even fear to find the light or their centre.

Beyond this discomfort, the experience of solitude can differ greatly; it might be a conscious choice or an unfortunate reality shaped by life's tough transitions. Finding

**Solitude, whether chosen or imposed upon us, serves as a transformative journey, an inner journey into our identity. It might not be a place we wish to stay in for very long, but bravely stepping into it has significance.**

stability and authenticity in a solitude that is imposed by circumstance, can be quite difficult. Such situations may result from major life events like losing a job or the death of a partner; both which can trigger profound grief and a sense of lost identity. A more subtle example involves the elderly, who often face a 'shrinking world.' Along with health and financial limitations, they experience complex emotions as they become more isolated from their previous environment.

In addition to this discomfort, solitude can be experienced in very different ways; it may be a deliberate choice or a harsh reality shaped by life's difficult transitions. Finding stability and authenticity in circumstances that impose solitude can be quite challenging. Such situations often arise from significant life changes like losing a job or the death of a loved one, both of which can lead to deep grief and a loss of identity. A subtler example involves the elderly, who frequently encounter

a 'shrinking world.' Along with health and financial constraints, they often face complex emotions as they become more isolated from their previous environment.

Solitude, whether chosen or imposed upon us, serves as a transformative journey, an inner journey into our identity. It might not be a place we wish to stay in for very long, but bravely stepping into it has significance. Psychologically, it is regarded as an essential experience whereby parts of ourselves, significantly authentic parts, are revealed (or released) from within us. Pablo Picasso wrote, "Without great solitude, no serious work is possible."

Reflecting on these themes, I realize that my own experiences with solitude have provided both refuge and growth, especially during moments of overwhelming stress. Perhaps this is what the divine intended when a day was designated as a Sabbath, a space to reconnect with one's authentic self, free from the demands of the world around us... as uncomfortable as that might be!

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

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

# Evangelism has not changed, only the medium has

**F**OR THE BETTER PART of a decade, we've been told that every parish needs a "digital strategy."

We've spent countless hours trying to master the Facebook algorithm, polishing our websites, and ensuring our YouTube thumbnails look professional. We've treated our church social media accounts like institutional billboards, official channels where we broadcast our "brand".

But here is the hard truth: people are becoming "brand-blind."

In 2026, the average person scrolls past a polished church graphic as quickly as they scroll past a car commercial. We've entered an era of deep skepticism toward institutions, where the "Official Voice" of a church often carries less weight than a casual recommendation from a friend.

If we want to reach the "mission field" of the digital age, we have to stop acting like media moguls and start acting like talent scouts. The most powerful media ministry in your parish isn't the person running the live



## MEDIA BYTES

**REV. MARTY LEVESQUE**

stream; it's the person sitting in the third row with a smartphone in their pocket.

We need to stop worrying about our "reach" and start empowering our Micro-Influencers.

In the world of marketing, a micro-influencer isn't a celebrity with millions of followers. It's a regular person with a small, dedicated circle—perhaps 200 or 500 friends and family—who trusts what they say. In church terms, we used to call this "personal witness." Today, we call it a post.

When a parishioner shares a photo of the light hitting the incense during a mid-week service or tags the church in a video of the community garden, they are infiltrating a digital space where the "Official Church" is rarely invited.

Equipping your congregation doesn't require a workshop; it just requires inten-

**If we want to reach the "mission field" of the digital age, we have to stop acting like media moguls and start acting like talent scouts. The most powerful media ministry in your parish isn't the person running the live stream; it's the person sitting in the third row with a smartphone in their pocket.**

tionality. Here are four ways to help your parishioners find their voice:

- The "Check-In" Ritual: One of the simplest forms of evangelism is the Facebook or Instagram "Check-In."

When a parishioner checks in at your church, it's a signal to their social circle that church is a place where they belong. It's a digital "open house" that costs nothing.

- The "Aesthetic of Grace": We are blessed with beautiful spaces, but we often forget to look up. Create "Photo Ops" by highlighting the small things: the sunlight on the font or the spread at a parish potluck. Explicitly tell your congregation: "If you see something beautiful today, share it."

- The "POV" (Point of View) Post: A photo of a messy kitchen after a community meal or a "behind

the scenes" shot of the choir warming up is far more engaging than a flyer. These "unpolished" moments prove the church is a living, breathing community, not a museum.

- The "Why I'm Here" Prompt: Once a month, give the congregation a simple question to answer on their own feeds. "What's one thing from today's service that gave you hope?" When people share their own answers, they aren't just promoting an event; they are sharing their journey.

The biggest hurdle for most parishioners is the fear of "getting it wrong." As leaders, our job is to permit them to be imperfect. In a world of AI-generated perfection, the "Micro-Influencer" evangelist wins because they offer the one thing people are starving for: the truth.

At the end of the day, evan-

gelism hasn't changed; only the medium has. In the early Church, the Gospel didn't spread because of official decrees from Rome; it spread because people sat at kitchen tables and told their neighbours about a man named Jesus who changed their lives. Today, those kitchen tables are digital.

Our job is to empower the people in the pews to realize that their digital footprint is a sacred path. When we stop trying to "run" a media department and start encouraging a movement of micro-witnesses, we find that the Good News travels faster, deeper, and further than any boosted post ever could.

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

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# Nostalgia, memory, reflection and transformation

MY GRANDFATHER served as a soldier in the British Army during the First World War.

As a student of history, I tried on a number of occasions to get him to share with me some of the memories of his time of military service. Moments of personal pain and suffering or having witnessed others who were facing their own pain, suffering or death are not stories which were easy to tell.

Often, he would lapse into the silence of his own memories, memories where the experiences of the past were indelibly etched into his heart and mind. The moments of his past were forever locked away as our conversations moved on and we talked about other things.

My Grandmother, who was also born in England at the end of the nineteenth century was able to speak freely of the changes she had experienced in her life. Immigration to the New World, the transition in day to day living which led into the radical reality of indoor plumbing and eventually watching human beings walking on the surface of the Moon were all part of her life experience. It was easy for her to think about the transitions themselves without colouring her memories with a sentimental longing for the past.

My parents, as they lived through the twentieth century, talked about the opportunities and challenges which they faced in their lives. Living through the Great Depression, the Second World War, finding each other, starting their lives together and our family life all had stories attached to

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**We have a need, at some point, to look into the past and remember, or even discover, how we arrived at where we are in our lives.**



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

moments which were easy to tell... I had the opportunity to add to some of those stories from my own perspective as together we remembered special times we lived together through the years.

When I speak of my life experience with my own family, there is the temptation to go into detail as I reflect on moments, on places and people who I have met along the way. Telling stories to the same familial audience over the years, gives me hope that they will be remembered and will be shared, at some point with the next generation.

The experience of generational heritage and storytelling is an essential part of family life. We have a need, at some point, to look into the past and remember, or even discover, how we arrived at where we are in our lives.



Mohammad Reza/Unsplash

We may choose to watch programs which are offered for our entertainment where we observe the path individuals follow as they journey into their own family history and how they respond to the discoveries that they make along the way.

It is interesting to note that the reflections offered by my Grandparents, my Parents, or my own life story are not weighed down with a sense of nostalgia. Although the past of each generation is populated by individuals whose presence has enhanced our lives, I do not recall hearing from past generations of my family a wistful yearning to return to the past.

In recent days our Prime Minister noted the reality of our changing times when he said:

*The old order is not coming back. We should not mourn it. Nostalgia is not a strategy.* (Davos, Jan. 2026)

As we live out our Christian faith as Anglicans, there has often been an acknowledgement that many of us do not welcome, or even know how to adjust, to change, well. I suspect that many of us have heard a joke with a variety of endings which begins with, "How many Anglicans does it take to change a light bulb...?" I will leave you to fill in the punch line.

The emotional and devotional reality of the season of Lent is that we specifically take time to reflect on the past in general and our own past in particular. This is not a moment for nostalgia, but rather a time for penitential reflection.

As a result of this season of reflection, we are challenged to undergo a personal transformation.

On Good Friday we have the opportunity to pray for God's world to be transformed when we pray:

*Let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which were old are being made new...* (BAS pg. 313)

On another level we seek Divine forgiveness and a new personal perspective when we pray:

*We pray you of your mercy, forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name.* (BAS pg. 308)

Lent is not a time for nostalgia when we remember filled churches and burgeoning Sunday Schools. Lent is not a time to mourn closed church buildings and moments of the past. Lent is a time for examining how the Holy Spirit is living in the church community we have identified as our spiritual home. Lent is a time when we look at the mirror at the reflection of one of God's children and seek to discover how that person may serve our Lord and best live the miracle of life each day.

May the Season of Lent 2026 be a time of transformation for us all.

Rev. Canon Christopher B. J. Pratt has retired from full-time parish ministry but continues to offer priestly ministry in the Diocese.  
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## Prayer: A path of trust during Lent

By Rev. Gilles Haché

EACH YEAR, Lent offers us a path back to God—a time to slow down, to listen, and to enter more deeply into prayer.

Yet prayer is not always easy. At times, it can feel like a desert, a night, a thirst, a blindness, or even an inner tomb. But at the heart of these experiences, the Lenten Gospels reveal a profound truth: Jesus walks with us. He goes before us and guides our steps.

Through the narratives of Matthew and John, we encounter a Christ who enters our human realities in order to lead us into life. Prayer becomes less a duty and more

### ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

a meeting—an encounter, a breath, a surrender of trust into his hands.

1. The Desert – Jesus enters the desert before us, facing hunger, solitude, and temptation (Mt 4:1–11). Our own deserts become places where he precedes us and remains at our side. The desert becomes a school of prayer, and we are never alone: Jesus knows this terrain and walks it with us.

2. Nicodemus' Night – Jesus welcomes the hesitant searching of Nicodemus (Jn 3:1–17). Like him, our prayer often begins in the night, where Jesus gently illuminates our path.

3. The Samaritan Woman's Thirst – At the well, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman in the depth of her thirst (Jn 4:5–42). Prayer becomes the place where he encounters us and lifts us up.

4. The Man Born Blind – Jesus opens the eyes of the man born blind (Jn 9:1–41). In prayer, he enlightens our vision—our view of God, of ourselves, and of others.

5. Lazarus – Before the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus calls forth life (Jn 11:1–45). Prayer becomes a cry of trust that draws us out of our places of confinement.

During this Lenten season, one certainty remains: Jesus walks with us.

Prayer teaches us to trust him, to listen to his voice,

and to let ourselves be guided toward life.

Because this journey is one we walk together, AFP Executive warmly invites you to a catechesis on prayer, in the presence of our bishop, Rt. Rev. Todd Townshend.

The Spring Conference will take place on **Saturday, May 2, 2026, at St. Jude's Church, London**, under the theme: *Finding the Face of God in Prayer*. This will be a precious opportunity to deepen our relationship with God, contemplate the beauty of prayer through sacred art, and allow Jesus to continue guiding our steps.

Rev. Gilles Haché is AFP Executive Member.



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