



## A Pastoral Letter to Vestry 2020

January 20, 2020

First Day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

My sisters and brothers,

*Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. "Who are these with you?" he asked. Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant." Genesis 33:5.*

You are soon gathering for your Annual Vestry Meeting, where you will thank God for all God's blessings in 2019 and seek God's will for your parish in 2020. You will be prayerfully discerning the priorities God is calling your parish to and ensuring your finances reflect that. It is my sincere hope that within those top priorities are plans to form living faith in children and young people.

Studies have shown that the majority of people who live as disciples of Jesus as adults had a positive encounter with the gospel before they turned eighteen. This highlights how critical it is for us to be creating opportunities for children and teenagers to experience the gospel. Regardless of whether your parish currently has no children or has vibrant ministries for children and youth, this call to share the good news with the next generation (as it was shared with us) is a privilege for each parish in York-Credit Valley.

One of the two strategic priorities that our 2017 Town Halls discerned was fostering the growth of children and youth ministry. We have made progress! There is a palpable sense of renewal and new life in youth ministry, with youth worship nights popping up across the Area and more parishes wanting to train youth leaders through YMAP (the Diocesan Youth Ministry Apprentice Program). In 2020, our Children/Youth Ministry Taskforce will be developing some "best practices" around confirmation. That same taskforce has just produced a guide, which will soon be made available, for healthy practices to begin, grow, and sustain children and youth ministry in your parish. And on April 18 of this year, we are hosting a workshop on how to start and sustain a Messy Church ministry (plan to bring a team).

Every parish in YCV needs to make the formation of faith in children and young people a priority. Even if your parish has no way to serve neighbourhood children, you can financially contribute to children and youth ministry at a neighbouring Anglican church, help volunteer with their Messy Church, or join in

prayer for children around the world – you get the point! And because God has entrusted children to our care, I commend for your consideration our [Social Justice Vestry Motion](#) inviting parishes to take concrete steps, in the name of Jesus, to address climate damage, through government advocacy and reducing our own carbon footprint.

I continue to be amazed at, and deeply grateful for, the sacrificial and servant hearts of so many of you in leadership—Wardens, treasurers, children and youth ministry leaders, those working through the ACW, or on property upkeep, and those involved with social justice. We continue to have significant turnover in our clergy corps with nine new clergy joining our parishes in the past year. Please join me in sincerely thanking them for faithfully ministering the good news of Jesus through Word and Sacrament.



Together, in these challenging times, our Heavenly Father is still calling us forward in mission and so pray for me, as I pray for you, that we would be found faithful on the last day.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Jennifer Andison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Right Reverend Jennifer Andison  
Area Bishop of York-Credit Valley  
Bishop Suffragan of Toronto