

Church helps
with vaccinations

Church makes
generous gift

The early days
of FaithWorks



The Anglican

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Church honours workers on front lines

Parishioners
delighted
to be
recognized

BY STUART MANN

THE Church of the Nativity, Malvern held a service in March to honour parishioners who are essential workers on the front lines during the pandemic.

The service, which was held on-line, honoured more than 30 parishioners, including nurses, a police officer, postal workers, personal support workers, mechanics, teachers, childcare workers, a gas station equipment technician, grocery store clerks and a TTC worker.

"They're going out there on the front lines every day for us, so I thought, 'Let's show them that we appreciate them and the hard work they do,'" said Donna Lovell-Mannick, who came up with the idea for the service and helped to organize it along with Noreen Callendar and Arianne Johnson.

The service featured a Power-Point presentation that showed the names and occupations of the workers. In some cases, the person's photograph was shown as well, some of them wearing their face mask and uniform. They received a certificate from local MP Shaun Chen and also a certificate from the church, created by Shauna Callendar, that thanked them for their courage and dedication. They were also given a key chain with the Lord's Prayer on it and a card.

The workers were delighted to be recognized and many of them shared their certificates with their co-workers when they returned to work the next day. "They were so happy that people remembered them," said Mrs. Lovell-Mannick.

The Sunday morning service included hymns, prayers for essential workers, a homily by the Rev. Pam Prideaux, a poem by nurse Emma Cloney, a solo singing of The Blessing by Joseanne Job, artwork by two children of the parish, and a special selection of music by organist Valentina Sadvoski. Afterwards, there was a coffee hour where the local politicians spoke and some of



From left, service organizers Arianne Johnson, Donna Lovell-Mannick and Noreen Callendar stand in front of The Church of the Nativity, Malvern. The church gave frontline workers a certificate and a card, and a young member of the congregation showed her appreciation through her artwork. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON



the honoured workers expressed their thanks and appreciation.

Mrs. Lovell-Mannick said the

service was an amazing experience and urged other churches to honour their essential and frontline

workers as well. "You have to let people know they're appreciated and they're not alone," she said.

"They are going the extra mile for us, we have to pray for their protection."



Church helps seniors with vaccinations

Website, volunteers make process easier

BY STUART MANN

HUNDREDS of seniors in Markham are signed up to receive their anti-coronavirus vaccinations, thanks to a ground-breaking initiative at Grace Church, Markham.

In early March, the church launched a website where seniors could sign up to book a vaccination. The church would then book an appointment on the senior's behalf, call them up to confirm the appointment and offer to drive them there as well.

The church launched the website, www.markhamvaccinates.com, to make it easier for seniors to get their vaccinations, says Ray Lai, a

member of the church who created the website. "The government was announcing a lot of changes at the time and it was quite challenging to book an appointment online, so we felt we could help."

Word about the website spread through local churches, social media and word-of-mouth. It soon became a runaway success, filling a need in the community. As of March 24, 2,300 seniors had signed up to receive a shot and 1,500 appointments had been made for them.

To handle the demand, the church has recruited a team of volunteers from the parish, other churches and the wider community to help with booking appointments,



Ray Lai, a member of Grace Church, Markham, built a website to help seniors sign up for their vaccination shots. Other volunteers at the church help to make appointments for the seniors, notify them of their appointments, and then drive them to get their shots as well if necessary. PHOTO COURTESY OF GRACE CHURCH, MARKHAM

making phone calls and providing rides. Staff of the Stouffville Public Library are also helping out.

"It has really become a grassroots ecumenical program," says the Rev. Canon Nicola Skinner, incumbent of Grace Church. "It's a great witness to the church looking after the neighbourhood and not

just parishioners."

Mr. Lai says a lot of seniors in the community are grateful for the work that is being done on their behalf. "A lot of them don't know where to turn so they contact us. Some of them don't have cars, so they're very grateful for a ride."

He takes no credit for the suc-

cess of the project. "We're just helping. We saw a gap, a need, and we filled it. We're just serving the community."

He says other churches can do something similar. "Anyone can run something like this. It doesn't take much to set up a website, get a list together and help people."

Three honoured by Archbishop of Canterbury

THREE Anglicans who have served in the Diocese of Toronto are among the recipients of the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2021 Lambeth Awards, which recognize outstanding contributions to the Church and wider society.

Dr. John Bowen, professor emeritus of Evangelism and the retired director of the Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College, Archbishop Colin Johnson, the retired

Bishop of Toronto, and the Rev. Canon Dr. Isaac Kawuki-Mukasa, the retired Africa Relations Liaison for the Anglican Church of Canada were honoured by Archbishop Justin Welby in early April, along with 34 others from across the Communion.

Dr. Bowen received The Alphege Award for Evangelism and Witness "for his attractive articulation of the love of God for all people, with

a particular heart for those who have not yet heard the name of Jesus, and for his mentoring and discipling of Christian leaders."

Archbishop Johnson received The Cross of St. Augustine "for extraordinary efforts and leadership in sustaining communion through initiating ongoing dialogue amongst bishops across the Anglican Communion – especially Canada, Africa, the U.K. and the

U.S.A. – following Lambeth 2008 through to 2020."

Canon Kawuki-Mukasa received The Cross of St. Augustine "for extraordinary efforts and leadership in sustaining communion through initiating ongoing dialogue amongst bishops across the Anglican Communion – especially Canada, Africa, the U.K. and the U.S.A. – following Lambeth 2008 through to 2020."

Archbishop Welby said: "During the pandemic, we have seen just how vital the contribution of churches is to the fabric of our society. As well as finding creative ways to worship together safely, churches have been feeding the hungry, reaching out to the lonely

and offering hope to those struggling in the midst of the crisis."

"This year's Lambeth Awards recipients, not all of whom are Christians, embody this spirit of service – not just during the pandemic but, for many of them, through decades of faithful work. I commend them and their efforts and look forward to the time when we meet to celebrate their contributions to society."

Bishop Andrew Asbil, the current Bishop of Toronto, said he was delighted by the news. "The Church both here and across the Communion has benefitted enormously from their contributions and I am so thankful for their work over many years."

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Gift supports frontline ministries

Parish moved by plight of others

BY STUART MANN

A parish that has been changed by the pandemic is providing much-needed financial support to frontline Anglican ministries that are under-resourced.

St. Timothy, North Toronto originally earmarked \$10,000 in its budget to help St. Stephen in-the-Fields, Toronto, which provides hot meals and other services to hungry and homeless people in and around Kensington Market.

"We were very aware that the pandemic has affected the most vulnerable the most negatively," explains the Rev. Canon Dr. Eric Beresford, incumbent. "As a church, we began to ask ourselves, 'How do we find ways to be really generous?'"

As the gift was debated at St. Timothy's vestry meeting, the amount started to climb, eventually reaching \$50,000. "There was a will to do more," says Trish Beck, who had proposed the original amount. "It was fantastic."

The money will be coming out of the parish's endowment funds, the largest part of which were given to St. Timothy's by the late Reginald Soward, a former parishioner who was active in the Anglican Church at the local, diocesan and national levels. "We're very lucky to have this endowment to help others in these terrible times," says Ms. Beck.

The funds are being given to under-resourced Anglican churches and ministries that help marginalized people. Fifteen thousand dollars has been given to St. Stephen's and the rest will go to All



Trish Beck of St. Timothy, North Toronto presents a cheque for \$15,000 to the Rev. Maggie Helwig, incumbent of St. Stephen in-the-Fields, Toronto. Also in picture are, from left, Carol Logan, the Rev. Canon Dr. Eric Beresford, the Rev. Andrea Budgey, Janet Nichols and Elizabeth Loch. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

Saints Church-Community Centre, Toronto Urban Native Ministry, St. Bartholomew, Toronto for its outreach programs to Regent Park, and the Diocese of Mishamikoweesh, located in northern Ontario and Manitoba.

Bruce Cameron, a member of the church's outreach committee, says the pandemic has prevented St. Timothy's parishioners from helping others in the usual ways, so the gift was one way of overcoming that. "We were looking for ways to get energized," he says.

The church usually holds a community lunch and a fundraising bazaar, and parishioners help out at Moorelands Camp and at food-banks, but the pandemic has put those efforts on hold.

Mr. Cameron says the gift is unusual for St. Timothy's. "Traditionally, we ask people to contribute to fundraising campaigns, to give to FaithWorks or to volunteer. But this was different. It was about looking at the blessings we have and saying, 'There's a lot of people who don't have rainy day funds' and how can we help them?"

Although the \$50,000 is a one-time gift, St. Timothy's is hoping it will be the start of a partnership between the church and other ministries. "We're hoping to build relationships and learn from them," says Canon Beresford.

He believes one of the reasons for the church's outpouring of generosity is its daily Morning Prayer service, which has been held online,

Monday to Friday, since the pandemic began, regularly attended by an average of 30 people. "People can't pray together like that over such a long period of time without being changed," he says. "The daily act of putting our lives in God's hands is affecting and shaping us. That has been one of the pandemic's gifts to us."

The church has also been going through the diocese's MAP (Mission Action Planning) process, which helps churches to look outward and engage with the surrounding community. As part of connecting with its neighbours, St. Timothy's plans to invite them to give to the frontline ministries as well.

He says the gift says a lot about the character of St. Timothy's

members. "The decision reflects a grassroots sense of who we are, who want to be and our willingness to take risks to be that."

The Rev. Maggie Helwig, incumbent of St. Stephen's, thanked St. Timothy's for the gift. "I began my ordained ministry as a curate at St. Timothy's, and I have very fond memories of the people there. I'm delighted that we've been able to maintain a relationship, and that they have supported and engaged with the outreach programming at St. Stephen's for years. This exceptionally generous gift will help to keep us going through the additional expenses of providing food, shelter, and social support to our marginalized community members during COVID-19."

Girl raises funds after seeing homeless

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD Mackenzie Hennigar is doing her part to help alleviate the suffering of Toronto's homeless people.

While in the car with her mother, Mackenzie saw some people on the sidewalk asking for money. She asked why they were doing that, and her mom Dana replied that they were homeless and needed the money to survive.

When they got home, Mackenzie decided to "make a charity" and to donate the money to an agency that helped the homeless. She talked to her great-grandmother, Mary Mann, a member of St. Martin, Bay Ridges in Pickering, who told her about the work of All Saints Church-Community Centre in

downtown Toronto.

All Saints, a church and an outreach ministry of the Diocese of Toronto, provides a drop-in space and programs for some of the city's most marginalized people, including the homeless.

Mackenzie and her mom visited All Saints' website and watched videos about how All Saints helped the homeless and others. Then Mackenzie started asking people for money – family members, her teacher, her school's principal and daycare staff. She raised \$150. She also sent every donor a thank-you note, telling them where the money would be going.

Due to the pandemic, she couldn't give the money in person to All

Saints, so her mother sent an electronic transfer instead. Mackenzie is looking forward to the day when she can visit in person.

Dana said she is very proud of her daughter. "She noticed a problem and took action and that says a lot," she said.

The Rev. Dr. Alison Falby, priest-in-charge of All Saints, thanked Mackenzie for her efforts. "I was very moved to hear that Mackenzie had been thinking about people in need during an especially challenging time. When I asked one of our folks how I should thank her, he said I should tell her that her heart is a blessing to our community and that she should stay who she is. I couldn't have said it better myself."



Mackenzie Hennigar, 7, plans to visit All Saints Church-Community Centre in Toronto when the pandemic restrictions are lifted. PHOTO BY DANA YOUNG

Getting out of our boxes – or letting each other out?



God is good! Genesis 1:27: “Humankind was created as God’s reflection: in the divine image God created them...” from the Inclusive Bible.

What categories do you use to describe yourself? Keep checking your assumptions, reconsidering your perspectives – how many different categories does it take before you start thinking of yourself across a broad spectrum? This is a colourful way of thinking, and it invites us to expand our careful classifications to expose the jagged limits of their usefulness. As we explore our own human identities, often it becomes clear that we need to do more inner work, learning to love ourselves – for when we are able to “hide” our pains and shames from God, we find ways to turn away from other people’s pain. It seems to be a human trait to project onto others our own understanding of ourselves as created in the image of God. Something shifts, when we use love – language to describe the image of God – unconditional Love – no matter what you have done – as in the Gospel story of the father who ran out to meet his prodigal son – welcoming him with love and radical forgiveness before the son even had a chance to say a word to his dad. If we can love ourselves so radically, and let ourselves be so wildly loved by God, we can come to a different

BISHOP’S OPINION

By BISHOP RISCYLLA SHAW

understanding of our relationships with one another – also created in the image of God. What would it take to let yourself be fully and completely loved by God? It comes back to Sunday School, with the song that teaches us: “Jesus loves me, this I know – for the Bible tells me so.” In being courageous to love, we can tap into the deep honesty, respect and wisdom required of us to uncover our unconscious racism that infiltrates our culture and our language. Simone de Beauvoir once said: “It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for acting.”

I give great thanks to God for the humble leadership of our clergy, congregations and parishioners as we work in the diocese to dismantle racism – which is itself institutional, systemic and structural. Racism is a reality in our human condition – therefore also reality in the power dynamics and policies that govern our congregations and communities. As our Anglican Church in Canada was founded in a colonial landscape, where can we identify racist policies, and how can we use our power to change and guide policies in our Church and in our government? Can we be intentional in working against

complacency – in bringing the gospel into the conversations where people are divided by inequity and injustice, where people are hungry and poverty-stricken? When we feel like that inequity is somehow far from our own context, take a look at where many of the COVID-19 transmissions are found, and ask why? Who is the population? Why hasn’t there been an emphasis on vaccinations and healthcare provisions there? We have much ongoing reconciliation work to do within our own Church and in our land. How can we learn to relate across our human differences, as equals? When we are constricted by thinking that there is a finite amount of honour, money or status to go around, then people in positions of power and privilege are often scared of somehow losing it. Jesus is the dynamo – the “power” that blows up that argument – the last shall be first, and the first shall be last. In resisting a sense of false certainty, we can seek patterns and clarity – outside, beyond, across and maybe even without any boxes or categories. Racism, sexism and other prejudices will be much harder to justify when we allow ourselves, and especially encourage one another to see beyond the categories/buckets/slots we maintain as a culture and as individuals. As Christians, we are an Easter People! And we are called, even in the midst of the cares of life, to recognize our created-ness in the image of God, who is Love.



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EASTER DINNER

Sue Savage, Anne Truax, Katherine Knowlton and the Rev. Sue Curtis package up hot meals at All Saints, Penetanguishene on Easter Day. The church handed out meals to about 100 local residents. The meals included ham, scalloped potatoes, vegetables and dessert, all of which was donated by members of the community. ‘It was amazing how people rallied around to help,’ says the Rev. Eileen Steele, incumbent. After serving the meal, the church had five hams left over, which were donated to a shelter in Midland. PHOTOS BY THE REV. EILEEN STEELE



FaithWorks: how it all began



“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill’, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith.”
James 2:14-18

BY WARD McCANCE, ODT

It is the 25th year of FaithWorks in our diocese, and it is well worth celebrating. It may be of interest to know how FaithWorks came to be.

In 1995, the diocese had a Treasury Board, made up of volunteers, that was responsible for, among other things, creating a budget for the Synod Office. We were struggling to cover expenses without having to raise parish assessments. We examined the Community Ministries department’s budget, which funded the diocese’s major outreach programs such as The Dam, Flemington Park Ministry and others. We thought we might fund them from freewill offerings rather than using parish assessments.

We then applied the Anglican Church’s Rule 101: when in doubt, form a committee. So three of us (myself, Tom Abel and John Howard) created the Stewardship Development Committee. Our first question was: how will the new program appeal to parish families? The diocese’s outreach programs were not well known. We looked to the Bible for guidance – the stories of Jesus’ healing and giving. Tell the stories, we thought.

Beyond the outreach programs, we thought about our parishes: could we



The FaithWorks logo was introduced to Synod in 1996. This year celebrates the 25th anniversary of the diocese’s outreach appeal.

share a portion of the gifts, to provide seed money for local outreach projects? What if we gave our episcopal areas a portion, too, to seed larger projects that sister parishes could create together? If we shared these stories, they might inspire other people to take action.

We then thought about other outreach programs such as Anglican Houses, The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) and Anglican Appeal. Parishioners were torn – which program was most deserving? We thought that we should wrap the other programs into this new one. In a meeting with the Anglican Houses team, their concern was that donations might shrink. We then suggested that they take a leap of faith with us – that together we would be stronger. They agreed. Shortly thereafter, Anglican Houses became Leap Of Faith Together (LOFT).

Our next meeting was at the national church’s office, to see if the Anglican Appeal and PWRDF would join us. We met Suzanne Lawson, who was so excited by this that she not only agreed, but joined our team. What a Godsend! Susan Graham-Walker also joined us from the diocese’s Program Resources department, to help give us much-needed guidance.

The new program had to be ongoing. Every year, an appeal would be needed, with new stories told and new initiatives

taken. This would require new Synod office staff, and with God’s grace, Richard Garnett became our first director of Stewardship Development.

Something was still missing, however – a name. It had to inspire. We spent several meetings struggling with this. I was walking to Union Station after one meeting when it hit me. I actually froze and almost got trampled by other commuters. Our next meeting was in two weeks – I could hardly wait. I spent the time sketching the logo: Faith had to be airy, with spaces for light, reaching up, with a cross in the center. Works had to be grounded, solid, industrial-strength. Can you see it?

I brought copies of the sketch to the next meeting and passed them out. I took a deep breath – was this a dumb idea? Five mouths opened, then smiled. FaithWorks was born. Well, almost.

Richard was ready to go, but we explained that we had to present the proposal to Synod. Richard said, “You need the parishes to vote on this? How do you get anything done?” John replied, “Quite well, actually.” I remember the discussion about Synod: how do we present FaithWorks to Synod? How could it appeal to Synod members? Answer: tell the stories, of course. But there were hundreds of stories, and we only had 45 minutes. Then show them the stories, we thought.

There were to be four slide projectors at Synod, and I agreed to put the stories together. I cut articles from the Toronto newspapers. There was a picture of furniture sitting curbside in the rain: the only possessions of an evicted family. And one of a man in a sleeping bag on a steam vent in front of our new, shiny City Hall. I needed 60 articles, which I found in only one week’s worth of papers. Then I wanted stories of our outreach programs. I spent hours in the diocese’s Archives and had to go back 10 years to find 40. Outreach was under the radar then.

Synod came, the lights dimmed, the music started and images flashed across the four screens – all different but all the same. It lasted for two minutes. The music ended with a boom, and four FaithWorks logos flooded the room. The lights came up and John, Tom and I explained how FaithWorks came to Synod, and Richard explained how the program would run in the parishes. After a break, Synod voted and FaithWorks became a reality. It was 1996.

At the break, someone asked if I did this for a living, pointing at the screens. I looked at the people in the room and said, “We all do.” She smiled. After the vote, a Synod member approached John, Tom, and I and asked, “Did you ever think that FaithWorks would not happen?” Tom replied, “Never!” Ever.

Cheryl Bristow, Ebert Hobbs and Richard Parton joined our team to help with the first campaign in 1997, assembling posters, parish brochures, the blue envelopes and taking care of thousands of other details. And the rest is history – and the present and future.

I will not likely live to see FaithWorks turn 50, but it will happen – because of our works of faith, and because our faith works.

Ward McCance is a member of St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope and a member of the Order of the Diocese of Toronto.

Parishes respond to anti-racism vestry motion



BY ELIN GOULDEN

Last November, the College of Bishops approved the Social Justice Vestry Motion “Committing Ourselves to Anti-Racism.” While in

most years the Social Justice & Advocacy Committee (SJAC) proposes the annual Social Justice Vestry Motion, this year it invited the Bishop’s Committee on Intercultural Ministry to draft the motion, in light of the greater awareness of racial injustice, and anti-Black racism in particular, which came to the fore in 2020. The motion invited parishes to acknowledge anti-Black racism and all forms of racism as a sin against God and against our neighbours. It further asked parishes to commit themselves to recognizing, dismantling and eliminating racism in our secular institutions, in our Church, and in ourselves, and to work for the full inclusion, participation and belongingness of Black, Indigenous and other racialized people in all sectors of our common life.

By mid-March of this year, 40 parishes in the diocese had contacted me directly to report that their parish had passed the motion. These 40 parishes, however, are

only the tip of the iceberg. This year, for the first time, the Incumbent’s Return form included the question, “Did your congregation pass a Social Justice Motion at your last Vestry?” Based on the returns uploaded to the diocese’s database by March 23, 130 parishes out of 204, or 64 per cent of the diocese, indicated that they had passed this year’s motion. Of the remainder, 36 parishes indicated that they had not passed the motion, and data from 38 parishes had yet to be uploaded from paper returns.

This is a greater number of positive responses to a Social Justice Vestry Motion than has ever been reported since these motions were introduced! However, due to the change in how the data was collected, it is hard to say to what degree this year’s numbers reflect the ease of reporting, and how much is due to the substance of this year’s motion. While data from the Incumbent’s Return gives a better indication of the number of parishes supporting the motion, it cannot give a qualitative description of the ways in which parishes responded. However, the reports received directly indicate that this year’s motion was gladly received by many parishes, and that congregations have taken it to heart and engaged with it in creative ways.

At St. Olave, Swansea, members of the youth group took turns on Zoom speaking to the motion and putting it into the context of current events and biblical faith. Many parishes are forming anti-racism working groups, planning book and film study series, and inviting guest preachers and workshop leaders to address the topic, while some are also looking inward, inviting parishioners to share their own stories of identity, inclusion and exclusion. Plans to celebrate Asian History Month, with contributions from Asian and South Asian parishioners, are underway at St. Philip-on-the-Hill, Unionville. In addition to learning, dialogue, and celebration, a number of parishes are taking the next steps to examine how their parish life and leadership reflect the racial diversity of their congregations and communities. Several commended the diocese’s effort in rolling out anti-bias/anti-racism training and looked forward to this training being offered at the parish level. As the anti-racism working group at St. Anne, Toronto, put it, “Together, we seek to go beyond inclusion, to ensure that our faith in action and the spaces we cultivate are reflective of the voices, experiences and identities of Black, Indigenous and other racialized people, so that all members

of the Christian family not only feel that they are part of the Church, but also that they have a collective role in reimagining and sustaining it.”

Extrapolating from these reports, it seems that this year’s motion has struck a chord with many parishes who are eager to begin or expand upon this work. While the annual return gives a fuller picture of the extent to which parishes in our diocese engage with the motion, the narrative reports provide much more detail of the ways in which parishes make the motion their own.

Several clergy reported that their parishes had used Vestry season to reflect on the progress they had made on previous Social Justice Vestry Motions, and had been pleased by the work that these motions had inspired in the parish. “I think the SJAC motions are a really effective tool,” said the Rev. Susan Spicer at St. George, Ajax. This is indeed the goal of the annual Social Justice Vestry Motion – for parishes to engage with a particular social justice issue and to find ways to take meaningful action on it, within their local context.

Elin Goulden is the diocese’s Social Justice & Advocacy consultant.

I've been schooled in the 'Book of Creation'

Shannon Frank-Epp is the communications and Companions coordinator at the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine (SSJD).

My main duties include overseeing and maintaining the Sisters' website and general online presence as well as coordinating, facilitating and journeying with the people who join the Companions program in both their residential and online forms.

The Companions program is offered in two forms: the original residential or "in-person" program where the Companions live and work and pray with the Sisters at the convent, and an online form which we have called "Companions Online."

Companions Online is an 11-month program that has been developed specifically for people who are working, have families or who are in school. In this program, Companions have the opportunity to become "monastics in the world," living a Benedictine rhythm of prayer, work, study and recreation within an intentional online community. Online Companions learn to develop practices that support and nurture their spiritual life from their homes.

The residential or "in-person" Companions program invites women aged 21 and up to live with the Sisters for 11 months to explore an expression of contemporary monasticism rooted in the Anglican tradition. The Companions develop a rhythm of life that includes public and private prayer, engaging in service



Shannon Frank-Epp (left) joins Companions in the chapel of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine in 2020. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

to others, and learning to live in intentional community. They also cultivate an appreciation for the values of prayerfulness and service, deepen their rootedness and spiritual intimacy with God and each other in community, discover a personal path to spiritual growth and transformation and discern individual gifts and vocations.

There are many parts of my job that I enjoy. I'd have to say that the best part for

me is working with the Sisters and other staff and journeying with the Companions. I wouldn't call this a challenge, but let's just say it was an adventure moving the tail-end of last year's residential Companions program over to Zoom!

I was born in Alberta and raised in the foothills, on the threshold of Kananaskis Country, amid farm animals and mountains, rivers and wheat fields. Having discerned a call to religious life in

early adulthood, I joined Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, where I had the great privilege to journey with many of the poorest of the poor throughout the U.S.A. and Mexico. Upon my leaving the order, I moved to Toronto and earned my Master's degree in Theological Studies. Soon afterward, I began working for the Sisters at St. John's Convent.

Growing up surrounded by nature was foundational to my faith life. I resonate deeply when the Psalms say that "Creation declares the glory of God." Creation does indeed declare and impart wisdom, and I have been richly blessed because of it. As Celtic spirituality so beautifully puts it, I have been schooled in the "Book of Creation." In addition to nature, my faith has been deeply formed by the liturgy and contemplation, especially on the Mysteries of the Incarnation and the Eucharist. As to important people along the way... there are too many to mention. Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity is certainly one, my childhood parish priest is another, as well as many friends and family.

Five years from now, I will hopefully still be working at SSJD!

I actually don't have a favourite Scripture passage.

Both Companions programs offered by the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine are free of charge. More information about the program in both its forms can be found by visiting the Sisterhood's website, www.ssjd.ca, and searching "Companions Program."

Forgiveness stretches far and wide



BY MURRAY MACADAM

FORGIVENESS: it's a quality drilled into us as essential for our Christian faith.

It's at the heart of our relationship with God and with others. We see plenty of references to forgiveness in the Bible. Jesus

speaks about forgiveness often and weaves this quality into his instruction on how we should pray (Matthew 6:9-13).

All of us have been hurt by others. It's not easy to forgive a wrongdoer. Yet Jesus underscores the importance of forgiveness in the famous episode where he says we should be prepared to forgive not seven times, but 77 times – in effect,

to practise forgiveness without end (Matthew 18:22). He drives the point home in the following passage in the parable about the unforgiving servant.

Forgiveness, however, like so much of Christian faith, is not only about our individual lives. It has a communal dimension as well. How do we practise forgiveness as a society?

One way is by forgiving ex-offenders. The concept of restorative justice, in which communities try to repair the hurt caused by crime, is an important example of this. Indigenous people have been practising this kind of community-based justice for generations. More recently, a Mennonite-inspired program called Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) strives to put this belief into action. A small group of volunteers walks alongside a former inmate determined to turn his life around (and we are usually talking about males in these cases).

For the past several months, I've been working with a Circle group involved with an ex-offender I'll call Andy. When first asked if I'd join his circle, I hesitated. Andy spent time in prison for sex-related crimes and as a survivor of sexual assault as a child, I wondered if I could find it in my heart to forgive Andy. I prayed about it and decided to give it a try.

When I first met Andy and the

rest of the Circle team, I felt apprehensive. But as we met and got to know each other, I felt more at ease. I quickly learned that the CoSA program is anything but a "get out of jail free" card. The program's accountability element is front and centre. An ex-offender must show sincere willingness to work on his challenges. He also lives under many conditions affecting his life, including whom he can associate with, where he can go and his access to the Internet. I soon realized that Andy is determined to leave his mistakes behind and he acknowledges the harm he's done. In fact, Andy began looking for programs that could help him re-integrate into society while he was still in prison.

For the Rev. Christian Harvey, executive director of the One City Peterborough community agency that sponsors the CoSA program in my city, a key element is that this initiative tries to re-integrate sex offenders back into society – or to welcome people into the community who have always been isolated, never feeling they were part of the community. If someone is further isolated after release from jail, they're more likely to re-offend.

"The narrative from much of society is that sex offenders are monsters," notes Mr. Harvey, a deacon at St. John the Evangelist in Peterborough. "When you're told repeatedly you're a monster, you're

more likely to do monstrous things."

The message of forgiveness along with accountability upon which the Circles program is based ties in with Christian faith, he says. "Jesus was always going to those pushed to the margins and saying what you did wrong doesn't define you." Mr. Harvey has spent time with many former inmates and has found their willingness to repent beautiful and Gospel-based – as I have, when listening to Andy own up for his harmful actions.

Nonetheless, forgiveness is far from easy. When I find it tough to forgive, I say the Lord's Prayer slowly, pondering the words, "As we forgive those who trespass against us." I also meditate on the rap-style reflection in a powerful song called Forgive, by folksinger Trevor Hall:

*Forgive everything that has ever happened
Life is everything we can imagine
Laid out in patterns of pain and passion
You cannot control it so keep your compassion
There are no accidents
And there are no factions
There is no "us" and "them"
And only forgiveness can make that happen.*

Murray MacAdam is a member of St. John the Evangelist, Peterborough.

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PRAYER CYCLE

FOR MAY

1. St. Martin, Bay Ridges (Pickering)
2. New Curates of the Diocese of Toronto
3. St. Martin, Courtice
4. St. Matthew, Oshawa
5. St. Paul on-the-Hill, Pickering
6. St. Paul, Uxbridge
7. St. Peter, Oshawa
8. St. Thomas, Brooklin
9. Oshawa Deanery
10. Wycliffe College
11. Trinity College
12. Christ Church, Bolton
13. Ecumenical Dialogues of the Anglican Church of Canada
14. Christ Church, Brampton
15. Holy Family, Heart Lake (Brampton)
16. North Peel Deanery
17. St. Hugh and St. Edmund
18. St. James the Apostle, Brampton
19. The Postulancy Committee
20. The Postulants of the Diocese
21. St. James, Caledon East
22. St. Joseph of Nazareth, Bramalea
23. Intercultural Committee and Bishop Kevin Robertson, Diversity Officer
24. St. Jude, Bramalea North
25. Christ Church, Scarborough
26. Grace Church in Scarborough
27. Holy Trinity, Guildwood
28. Thanksgiving for the 25th Anniversary of FaithWorks
29. Nativity, Malvern
30. Theological Colleges of the Anglican Church of Canada
31. New Hope Anglican Mission

York-Credit Valley

- The Rev. Robert Hurkmans, Incumbent, Trinity, Streetsville
- The Rev. Pam Prideaux, Incumbent, St. Joseph of Nazareth, Bramalea

York-Scarborough

- The Rev. Andrew MacDonald, Priest in Charge, St. Nicholas, Birch Cliff.
- The Rev. Andrew Kaye, Incumbent, St. Margaret in-the-Pines, West Hill.

York-Simcoe

- The Rev. Eyad Ajji, Priest-in-Charge, Evangelists, New Tecumseth.
- The Rev. Ian LaFleur, Incumbent, St. Stephen, Maple.



CANADA BRIEFS

Parish plans more housing using existing buildings 1

OTTAWA - The parish of St. James, Perth, is developing a plan to create badly needed affordable housing using existing buildings. The initiative is based on the successful housing of four Syrian refugee families in the town of 6,000 from 2015 to 2019. Members of St. James played a significant role in that effort, with many volunteering their time and donating money.

While that program was successful, many in the town felt that more should be done to help existing residents in need. "There are more than 800 on a waiting list in Lanark County for affordable housing, more than 70 of whom are women and some children fleeing from violence who are on a special priority list," says the Rev. Kenneth Davis, incumbent of St. James. Local people experiencing homelessness are being housed temporarily in motels.

Mr. Davis is working with David Kroetsch, chair of the parish's outreach committee, to present a concrete plan on behalf of the parish to a virtual town hall meeting organized by the advocacy office of the town's Table Community Food Centre.

Mr. Davis is under no illusions that the initiative will be easy. It will be more complicated to house Canadians with particular needs — mental and physical health and addictions, for example — than displaced but healthy refugees. He favours the "housing first" model championed by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness whereby safe and secure housing is combined with a full range of supports.

The goal will be a multi-year project to develop several units, the exact number to be determined. "I think we can make a difference for people needing housing — a few individuals or families a year," he says. Working with Lanark County, tenants would be selected from the county's long waiting list. Inspiration for the project comes

from Terrilee Kelford, the chair of Cornerstone Landing Youth Services and co-chair of the Alliance to End Rural and Remote Homelessness. She created three housing units for youth where there had been one by renovating a single house into two units and installing a third "tiny house" on the property. Mr. Davis hopes to emulate Ms. Kelford's success by creating an adult version of her project — finding and renovating housing and, where suitable, adding a tiny home to a property.

Crosstalk

Diocese expands tradition of Bible proclamation 2

EDMONTON - For a few years now, Christians from various churches in High Prairie, Alberta have joined in a Holy Week Bible Reading Proclamation. St. Mark's Anglican Church has led the way, organizing volunteers in the continuous reading aloud of God's Word from Passion Sunday until Maundy Thursday. Readers came to the church to read and took breaks only in the hours from midnight to 6 a.m. each day. This year, thanks to the online possibilities, the Diocese of Athabasca hosted the proclamation on Zoom from 1 p.m. on Passion Sunday to 5 p.m. on Maundy Thursday, with no breaks — 100 hours of non-stop reading of God's word. The benefit of the virtual reading was that people could participate from anywhere.

The Messenger

Breakfast program marks milestone 3

ST. CATHARINES - February marked the quarter-century anniversary of the Community Breakfast Program at St. George's Anglican Church in downtown St. Catharines. Over 500,000 breakfasts have been served in the last 25 years without missing a single morning. The breakfast is for all comers every morning, no questions asked. Thanks goes to the many tireless volunteers who have made this ministry possible, as well as the church and wider community who have supported it financially. The church provides a simple breakfast, prepared by volunteers, funded largely by individual donors, and overseen by a team of hands-on leaders.

Niagara Anglican

IN MOTION

Appointments

- The Rev. Bonnie Skerritt, Incumbent, St. Paul, Lindsay, May 1.
- The Rev. Canon Kimberley Beard, Honorary Assistant, St. Paul, L'Amoreaux, Dec. 1.
- The Rev. Bob Bettson, Interim Priest-in-Charge, St. Matthias, Bellwoods, March 15.
- The Rev. Jennifer Weetman (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada), Interim Priest-in-Charge, Church of the Transfiguration, Toronto, March 19.
- The Rev. Johanna Pak, Interim Priest-in-Charge, St. Mary Magdalene, Toronto, April 17.
- Claire Latimer-Dennis, Assistant Curate, St. James Cathedral, May 10.
- Micah Latimer-Dennis, Assistant Curate, Grace Church on-the-Hill, May 10.

Vacant Incumbencies

Clergy from outside the diocese with the permission of their bishop may apply through the Diocesan Executive Assistant, Canon Mary Conliffe.

Bishop's Direct Appointment Process

- (receiving names):
- St. James Cathedral, vicar
- St. Anne, Toronto
- St. Cuthbert, Leaside

- St. Luke, Creemore
- Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach

Parish Selection Committee Process

First Phase - (not yet receiving names):

- St. George, Allandale, Barrie
- Parish of Lloydtown

Second Phase - (receiving names via Area Bishop):

- N/A

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names):

- St. Matthew the Apostle, Oriole
- St. John, York Mills
- St. Paul on-the-Hill, Pickering

Celebrations of New Ministry

(Dates pending)

Trent Durham

- The Rev. Alvarado Adderley, Incumbent, the Parish of Fenelon Falls & Coboconk
- The Rev. Peter Gachira, Incumbent, the Parish of Lakefield.
- The Rev. Shelly Pollard, Incumbent, St. Martin, Bay Ridges, Pickering.
- The Rev. William Roberts, Priest-in-Charge, St. Mark, Port Hope.
- The Rev. Jennifer Schick, Incumbent, All Saints, Whitby.
- The Rev. Bonnie Skerritt, Priest-in-Charge, St. George, Newcastle.

BRIEFLY

Clergy honoured for 25, 50 and 60 years of ordination

Clergy who have been ordained for 25, 50 and 60 years were honoured at the diocese's Blessing of Oils

and the Reaffirmation of Ordination Vows of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons service on March 30 at St. James Cathedral. During the service, which was livestreamed due to the pandemic, Bishop Andrew Asbil read out the names of the clergy and thanked them for their dedication.

Honoured for 25 years of ordination were the Rev. Deacon Aldith Baker, the Rev. Mary Bell-Plouffe, the Rev. Deacon Marlene Carscal-

len, the Rev. Wilner Dangawen, the Rev. Canon Dr. Philip Der, the Rev. Dr. Sonia Hinds, the Rev. Sharon Johnstone, the Rev. Geoff Lloyd, the Rev. Sharon Melvin, the Rev. Mona Rush and the Rev. Dudley Walker. Honoured for 50 years of ordination were the Rev. Canon Stephen Booth, the Rev. Canon Timothy Foley and the Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Henderson. Honoured for 60 years of ordained ministry was the Rev. Doug Jacques.

The Diocese is on
Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

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Imagine what's possible on your church's land

BY SYLVIA KEESMAAT
AND CHANELLE MCLEOD

IMAGINE that you are reading a story. It is a thrilling tale, with adventure, intrigue, betrayal, deep despair and unexpected hope. Now imagine that at a certain point you turn the page and discover that you have been pulled in – nothing more is written, but you are suddenly expected to live in this story. You desperately try to remember what came before: what was the task you were supposed to complete? Who were the agents of betrayal? What is the expectation?

This sounds like *Alice in Wonderland*, doesn't it? Or Harry Potter entering the wizarding world, rather than the way we usually think of our lives. And yet, we do live in the story of God's relationship with ourselves and all of creation. Each week, we hear bits of the story at church, in our own devotional reading, and ideally, we are pulled into the story, carried along by it in our own daily lives.

The Bishop's Committee on Creation Care (BCCC) has been working since last July to help Anglicans, parishes, and the diocese as a whole to better imagine how we might live out this story in relation to creation. Our world continues to grapple with the climate crisis, and the Church is realizing the many ways that we have neglected our calling to live in peace with the diversity of plants, insects, animals, and people that God created in that first garden community or community garden.

In that context, the BCCC is asking parishes to spend some time thinking about the land, and the actual earth that surrounds their churches. What other creatures live in the soil and in the foliage? How could these creatures be cared for? What needs to be done to ensure that plants, animals, insects and birds continue to flourish around your church? What has been lost, and what needs to be restored? What can grow there? Is there a way that you can tend the earth around your church and also meet the needs of the surrounding community?

Perhaps your church has enough space to create beds that provide gardening opportunities for those who have no other access to land. Perhaps your church has enough space to grow vegetables for those in your community who are food insecure. Perhaps making a pollinator garden for your community is the most appropriate choice. Or perhaps you have a vision for both vegetables and pollinators.

Does your busy context mean that a meditation garden would be appropriate? Is it possible to tuck a few currant or raspberry bushes in the shady spots around the perimeter? Is there room for a dwarf apple or peach



The Common Table, an outreach project of Flemingdon Park Ministry, grows produce at Our Saviour, Don Mills for the surrounding community. At right, a pollinator garden at St. Martin in-the-Fields, Toronto. PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY THE BISHOP'S COMMITTEE ON CREATION CARE

tree or two? Or maybe your church only has space for a small bed of native plants or some pollinator annuals in a planter.

Of course, imagining what is possible on the land around your church is one thing. Turning that vision into reality can be more challenging. Where to start? This is where the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care hopes to help in a number of ways:

- Members of the BCCC are available to discuss your project both in terms of vision and in terms of practical steps.
- Numerous parishioners from churches with established community gardens have volunteered to act as a resource for those with questions about gardens. They are also willing to provide tours of their gardens.
- The committee has created a toolkit that outlines the steps to starting a garden, including assembling a team, plant selection, allocating a budget, pruning



and planting tips, and COVID-19 consideration. In addition, there are links to external resources providing detailed instructions on starting a community garden and suggestions for plants. This can be found at www.toronto.anglican.ca/creationcare.

We don't know what this summer will bring in terms of worship and communal life in our churches. Beginning a garden project is one way that we can gather as a community,

imagine our life together in a new way, and enter into the story of healing for creation that God calls us to. Please, join us.

Sylvia Keesmaat and Chanelle McLeod are members of the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care. If you would like more information on starting a garden on your church property, go to www.toronto.anglican.ca/creationcare or send an email to creation.care@toronto.anglican.ca



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Members of The Green Team of St. Martin, Bay Ridges in Pickering and the Creation Caretakers of St. George, Pickering Village in Ajax join other local environmental activists in March to protest a plan to build on a protected wetland in Pickering. The developer later put the plan on hold. PHOTOS BY EUGENE FARRUGIA.