



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

Parish Outreach Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Faith in Jesus Christ is of central importance to us as Anglicans. But following Jesus requires much more than mere personal faith. It requires that we act in a way that reflects that faith.

The need to live out our faith through acts of generosity and justice is woven throughout Scripture. Through Moses and the prophets, God calls his people to “open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land” (Deut. 15:11) and to “seek justice, rescue the oppressed” (Isaiah 1:17). In the book of Proverbs, we read: “Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Jesus calls us to love our neighbours as ourselves (Mark 12:31), reminding us that when we serve those in need, we are serving Christ Himself. (Matthew 25:34-40). Similarly, the apostles James and John urge us to show our faith by our deeds (James 2:18) and to love not only in words and speech but in actions and in truth. (1 John 3:17).

In our baptismal vows, we are called to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves, to strive for justice and peace and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being, and to strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation, respecting, sustaining and renewing the life of the Earth. Our participation in God’s reign calls us both to care for those who are vulnerable and to participate in shaping laws, policies, and systems that ensure fairness and equity.

Across our Diocese, parishes are responding to this call. The manner in which parishes respond varies as greatly as the communities they serve. Some creative examples of outreach and advocacy are highlighted in this guide. We also offer some ideas, theological insights, and resources you can use in your own parish. We invite you to use this material as you follow the Spirit’s direction for your parish ministry.

OUTREACH OR SERVICE-PROVIDING MINISTRIES

An outreach or service-providing ministry is a program that responds to a need in the community. For example, an emergency meal program responds to hungry people, one of many examples of how such ministries meet a real and immediate need.

Service-providing ministries typically arise when a community need is identified by a group of people who decide they want to meet the need. But how is that need identified?

Sometimes, changing circumstances inspire a new ministry, or propel an existing ministry into a new direction. This is what happened at All Saints, Collingwood, which had for several years hosted a monthly Friendship Dinner in its parish hall. These free, buffet-style dinners typically served 100-125 people each month. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, hosting a sit-down meal indoors was no longer an option, so All Saints’ food coordinator, Susan Scouten, worked to arrange the meal on a take-out basis, with an option for non-contact delivery. Recognizing that local food insecurity had skyrocketed due to the pandemic, the parish also began offering “Entrees to Go” in addition to the monthly Friendship Dinner, providing two free frozen entrees per person each week. Both programs are volunteer-run, fully funded by donations (including produce from the

parish's community garden and a partnership with a local bakery) and provided free of charge to recipients. Between the two programs, the parish is now providing over 200 takeout meals monthly and 80 entrees every week.

As Kathleen Wilkinson, people's warden at All Saints, puts it, "Outreach has always been a significant part of what we do at the church. But the pandemic just made us realize in the community and within the church the food scarcity and how important the outreach really is."



In other situations, the need may not be immediately obvious to those in the pews. In the words of the Rev. Jacqueline Daley, churches need to "follow Jesus to the streets" – to learn more about their communities and find out who is and isn't being served, and where the local parish can make a difference. Within a short distance of her parish of St. Margaret, New Toronto in south Etobicoke,



Ms. Daley found three Caribbean restaurants, indications that the neighbourhood was considerably more diverse than the profile of guests of the parish's Out of the Cold program might suggest. Seizing the opportunity to host a table for the parish at a community fair hosted by the local LAMP community health centre, Ms. Daley was able to meet and build relationships with other leaders in the community and discuss their needs. She discovered that young families in the neighbourhood, many of whom are racialized, needed a space to gather with young children. Thus St. Margaret's "Family Fridays" were born, offering an opportunity for the parish to connect more deeply with their immediate neighbours. The same Caribbean restaurants Ms. Daley had noticed on her walks around the church became partners in supplying food for Family Fridays. Some of the participants in Family Fridays ended up joining the parish, transforming and renewing the worshipping community.

Though the Family Fridays program has had to be suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, the relationships built with other local community leaders allowed the parish to expand its outreach during the pandemic in other ways. In 2020, St. Margaret's was invited to join a table of 28 local agencies called the South Etobicoke Cluster. Through this cluster a need was identified for a Community Support Centre that would enable those most at risk to have a hot meal, showers, laundry, toiletry items, and access to other services such as harm reduction, vaccination, and

housing supports. These services are now provided at a drop in hosted by St. Margaret's every Saturday and Sunday, in collaboration with other local agencies in the Cluster.

St. Margaret's example shows how important getting to know one's local community is for successful outreach. Not only does it help build a deeper awareness of who our neighbours are and what needs they have, it offers opportunities for partnership and engagement with others in a way that enriches and deepens the life of the parish. "The church isn't just "our little thing," says the Rev. Daley. "If we follow where God is leading us, and are prepared to share control and power, we will be amazed at the relationships that are build and the leadership that arises."



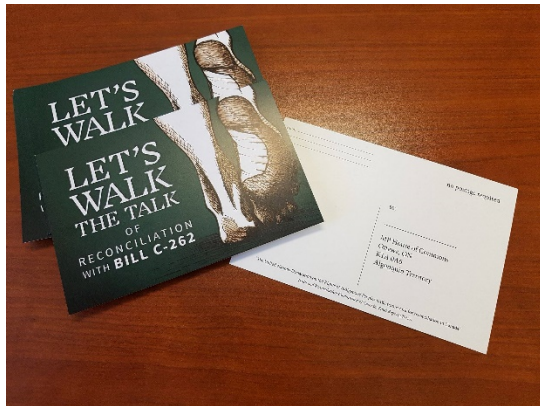
ADVOCACY MINISTRIES

Outreach ministries provide vital services to people who are experiencing immediate needs. But these programs, by themselves, offer only a short-term solution to the underlying problem. While an emergency meal or a food bank might provide a hungry person with food for now, the deeper issue of food insecurity remains untouched. As theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer remarked, "We are not simply to bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself." Or as Archbishop Desmond Tutu puts it, "We need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."

Advocacy ministries address the underlying issues that perpetuate the inequalities in our society. Their efforts impact large numbers of people beyond their parish or community boundaries. Advocacy ministries work for systemic social, political, and economic changes to create a more equitable society.

The Diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy Committee coordinates advocacy efforts across the Diocese so there is a consistent message from our Church. Our Diocesan Social Justice Vestry Motions are one tool we use to connect parishes with a Diocesan advocacy concern. Parishes are invited to learn about a particular justice issue and add their voice to Diocesan advocacy efforts through a positive vote on the motion at their annual Vestry meeting. These votes add weight to letters and submissions by the Bishops and Social Justice & Advocacy committee urging governments to act. Parishes are also encouraged to write their local representatives on the issue, using background materials provided with the Vestry motion.

Sometimes, we join with churches and other organizations across the province or across the country on an advocacy campaign. In February 2017, 64 parishes in our Diocese passed that year's



Diocesan Social Justice Vestry Motion, which called on the federal government to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). At the time, MP Romeo Saganash had introduced a private member's bill, C-262, "An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." Most Private Member's Bills, especially those introduced by opposition or third-party MPs, never get past First Reading.

However, in summer of 2017, Mennonite Church

Canada began printing postcards with the message "Let's Walk the Talk of Reconciliation – Pass Bill C-262" that people could address and send, postage-free, to their Members of Parliament in Ottawa. Our Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant contacted Mennonite Church Canada to ask if we could order some of these postcards for Anglicans to send as well, since this campaign dovetailed with our recent Vestry motion. They agreed, and over the next two years, Anglicans in our Diocese sent hundreds of these postcards and other messages to their MPs in support of the Bill. Bill C-262 passed Second and Third Reading in the House of Commons, and made it through Second Reading in the Senate, before being stalled at the Senate Committee and dying on the order paper when Parliament was dissolved in June 2019. However, Senator Murray Sinclair remarked that the Bill would never have got so far without the concerted advocacy efforts of church groups and other Canadians across the country. This groundswell of support helped pave the way for the government to introduce its own UNDRIP implementation bill, Bill C-15, which received Royal Assent in June 2021.

This example demonstrates how a large, coordinated effort can have positive results on governmental legislation and policies that can help create a fairer society. Campaigns like this are important, and require the support and involvement of parishes across the Diocese – and in this case, parishes and other faith communities across the nation. We hope your parish will consider being involved in our next campaign. But there is no need to wait until the next Diocesan-wide campaign to get started, as our next story shows.

During the fall of 2020, the Rev. Susan Spicer, priest at St. George's, Ajax, enjoyed watching migratory birds gathering at the Duffin's Creek wetlands near her home. Yet she soon learned that there were plans to build a casino complex and warehouse on these provincially significant wetlands – a natural system that not only provided vital wildlife habitat and a source of recreation but soil stabilization, flood mitigation, and water quality improvement for the region. In talking with her parishioners, Ms. Spicer found many who shared her concerns. They came together to form a small group of "Creation Caretakers," who walked to the wetlands to pray and celebrate Eucharist in December 2020. As they



learned more about the proposed development, they discovered that the provincial government was using Minister's Zoning Orders and retroactive legislation to override existing protections, paving the way for development. Their opposition grew, along with the concerns of many in the community. They joined forces with Anglicans from the neighbouring parish of St. Martin's, Bay Ridges and with local citizen advocacy group EANAP (Environmental Action Now Ajax-Pickering). Through participating in marches, blockades, petitions, phone blitzes to municipal and provincial representatives, and a lawn sign campaign, the advocates were successful in raising awareness of and mobilizing a groundswell of community opposition to the planned development. By March, 2021, the developers pulled out of the project, and by July, the Minister's Zoning Order was revoked and the original zoning re-instated, preserving the wetland.



For the Rev. Susan Spicer and the parishioners of St. George's and St. Martin's, this experience was an example of how "location creates vocation": a connection to the place in which we live and serve offers opportunities for protecting and advocating on behalf of that place. It was also an experience of getting out beyond the walls of the church – during a time of pandemic, no less – and finding ways to connect with issues affecting the local community. She writes, "For me it is a form of prayer, a way of responding out of the deep anxiety and grief about what is happening to the environment, and finding hope in knowing that so many people in our community are also being called to action."

WHERE SERVICE AND ADVOCACY MINISTRIES UNITE

So far, we have examined service and advocacy ministries separately. However, the most effective social justice ministries are those that bring both of these elements together.

A parish's service ministry can be a force for positive change when those involved start asking the hard follow-up questions. Why is this program needed? What are the underlying and systemic factors and policies that result in so many people needing to access our food bank or emergency shelter? How can we work together to change those factors so fewer people end up falling through the cracks? In Archbishop Tutu's words, as we work to pull people out of the river, we also need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in.

Likewise, advocacy is more effective when the people raising their voices are on the front lines, directly involved in ministry programs addressing a particular need. Nothing beats speaking from personal experience. When we meet with politicians to advocate for social justice, we are often

asked, “What are *you* doing about it?” Being able to answer that you’ve been working in this area, have seen the need first-hand, can tell a personal story, and have witness increased demand for the service can all help your cause. Better still, you can actively involve people affected by the issue as equal members of your group, including them in delegations meeting with politicians. They can speak for themselves about their experiences and needs.

One way to do this is to invite local politicians to observe or even participate in your parish’s outreach programs. At St. Aidan’s in the Beach, Toronto, volunteers at the parish’s Out of the Cold program invited their local city councillor and his staff to help prepare a meal once a season, taking the opportunity to introduce the visitors to the regular guests. Members of the parish built on that relationship in their advocacy efforts with the city around homelessness and affordable housing. During the pandemic, the Out of the Cold program was suspended and St. Aidan’s volunteers began delivering hot food to homeless encampments in parks around the city. They invited the councillor to see for himself the conditions and needs in the encampments and to listen to the concerns of encampment residents, even though they were outside his ward. They also invited the councillor to a Zoom meeting with members of St. Aidan’s and other neighbourhood churches to discuss the city’s response to homelessness and affordable housing, and the proposal to build new supportive housing in the ward. Despite vociferous opposition from some members of the community, the parish threw its support behind the proposal, writing articles for the local newspaper articulating the need and endorsing the proposed housing development. One parishioner, who also chairs the Diocesan Housing Advocacy subcommittee, volunteered to join the community liaison committee for the new development.

“St. Aidan’s Out of the Cold had been operating for about 16 years and we had seen that we were a band-aid, not “the solution” for people experiencing homelessness,” says the Rev. Michael Van Dusen, vocational deacon at St. Aidan’s. “We knew that permanent housing, with support for people with addition and/or mental health issues, was needed. We believe that our continuing actions on behalf of people who are homeless and our communications with our councillor reinforced his resolve to proceed with this new proposal, despite the opposition from some quarters.”

Service and advocacy ministries exist less in contrast to each other than along a continuum. At Church of the Redeemer on the corner of Avenue Rd. and Bloor, the Common Table drop-in offers hospitality to street-involved people in a neighbourhood dominated by high-end boutiques selling luxury goods. All too often, members of the Common Table community have the police called on them while sitting in a coffee shop or going through their goods on a park bench, their mere existence an affront to the wealthy. This criminalization of poverty buries already-marginalized people under further levels of systemic oppression.

In response, Redeemer’s outreach director Angie Hocking and her team began to see their job in the community as building understanding between neighbours. Redeemer staff now host



workshops for local businesses and residents, to help them engage compassionately with their marginalized neighbours. Through reaching out in this way, they have been able to influence higher-level decision making when it comes to engaging with the poor in the community.

“Reflecting on our connection between service and advocacy is a bit funny for me,” says Ms. Hocking, “because in practice, when you are doing the work of journeying alongside folks, it doesn’t feel like a clear distinction between one thing and the other. When someone is sleeping against our church after being told they would have a room in a shelter hotel two weeks ago, and they are still waiting, getting increasingly cold and hungry and unwell – when do the calls we are making for that person to the local shelter, that turn into letters to management, to engagements with local politicians, switch from “service” to “advocacy”? Perhaps it is less about distinguishing the difference between the two than it is about living into those spaces where we can’t tell one apart from the other, and creating more spaces where our personal connection and love for individuals is fueling our engagement with whatever they need to thrive.”

EDUCATION

Education is a vital element of social justice work. Too often, the social justice ministry of a parish is done only by a small group of dedicated and passionate parishioners. This core group is a vital part of sustaining the ministry of your parish, but it’s important to engage all parishioners as much as possible. The more people you get involved, the greater spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial support you will have. As you attract new members, you will find that they bring different gifts and new ideas as well.

Here are a few ideas to consider for your parish’s educational initiatives:

- **Ask the Diocesan Social Justice & Advocacy Consultant**, Elin Goulden, to lead a workshop or facilitated discussion with your parish. Two popular Diocesan workshops are “Charity with Justice,” which explores Biblical and modern concepts of charity and justice, challenges participants to re-examine their ideas and practices around these concepts, and prompts discussion of new ideas and next steps; and “Tools for Advocacy,” which focuses on tips for bringing your message to political representatives and gaining support. Elin is also available to facilitate discussion with parish groups on potential new initiatives in outreach and advocacy, as well as for guest preaching on Sundays. You can contact her by e-mail at egoulden@toronto.anglican.ca
- **Invite a guest speaker** to address your congregation at an information evening. For suggestions of speakers affiliated with the Diocese, contact the diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant. You can also invite a speaker to preach at your parish on Sunday, so that more members of your parish will hear the message.
- **Hold a movie night** where you watch a film or video about a social justice issue and discuss it afterwards. This might be something you do together with other parishes in your neighbourhood or deanery. In the fall of 2020 and the fall/winter of 2021-22, the Deacons of Parkdale-West Toronto Deanery have been hosting a series entitled “A Reconciliation

Walk”, involving film discussions and other activities related to the impact of residential schools and other aspects of Indigenous justice. This has been a tremendous opportunity for education and mobilization of Anglicans on these issues. Many excellent films and documentaries are available from your parish library. You can also stream many from websites such as the National Film Board of Canada <https://www.nfb.ca>, TVO <https://www.tvo.org/documentaries>, or www.freedocumentaries.org

- Encourage your parish to use the materials produced by the Diocesan Social Justice & Advocacy department. These include bulletin inserts combining theological reflections with a list of action ideas; backgrounders; template letters; questions for candidates in upcoming elections; and more. Current materials can be found on our website at www.toronto.anglican.ca/sjac and further resources are available at <https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/diocesan-life/social-justice-advocacy/advocacy-resources>
- Encourage your incumbent, churchwardens and other key parishioners to support your efforts. Their support can make a big difference in your impact!

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF: OUTREACH AND PARISH RENEWAL

Social justice ministry is not just offering help to people, meeting local needs, raising awareness of injustice and advocating for change. It also evangelizes our congregations, reclaiming the Good News and reminding us of who we are and what God is inviting us to do. It is work that brings life, energy and meaning to parishes. It invigorates people and contributes to building the reign of Christ “on earth as it is in heaven.” When a whole parish gets involved, it is rejuvenated. New relationships are built and existing ones are transformed, both within the parish as well as with the surrounding community.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, the parish of St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope, was looking for a way to create an outdoor space, both to facilitate parish activities and to signal to the surrounding community that the church was never closed, even though the building might be. Members of the parish partnered with local organizations such as Port Hope 4 Future and Punk Rock Produce to create a garden on the church property. With “seed” funding from a Diocesan Reach Grant, as well as contributions of money, time, and materials from volunteers, the parish created a vibrant and welcoming space not only for parishioners but all who pass by. Fresh produce grown in the garden is distributed to the Northumberland Fare Share food bank. Care for creation is displayed through the

growing of pollinator-friendly plants, the provision of houses for birds, bees, and bats, the collection of rainwater for the garden, and in the repurposing of materials – such as an antique bathtub now

brimming with flowers! One area is set aside for children’s activities, featuring a chalkboard and seating for outdoor Sunday School as well as a “mud kitchen” where kids can play and learn. Other parts of the garden feature shady seating and wind chimes to foster quiet contemplation. “Celebration stones” bear tribute to those who have been “rocks of faith” in the community. St. John’s Spiritual and Community Garden was ceremonially opened by Port Hope mayor Bob Sanderson and Trent-Durham Area Bishop Riscylla Shaw in June 2021.

Since its opening, the garden has hosted a wide variety of activities from outdoor Sunday school and Vacation Bible School to outdoor music recitals, Family Movie nights, canning and crafting parties, and visits from local schoolchildren to learn about growing food, composting, and the role of pollinators.

A sign at the garden’s entrance reads, “In this garden we grow food, but also community, love, and hospitality... All who yearn to cultivate good things are welcome.” Parishioner Shane Watson remarks that “With God, those who thought they were not welcome anywhere have a place near the front. [This garden] is a symbol of renewal and welcome for all – a slice of the Kingdom of God.”



We should not be surprised at the impact that a commitment to social justice and advocacy can have on the spiritual life of a parish. In Isaiah 58: 6-11, the prophet proclaims:

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.”

GETTING THERE

When considering how your parish wants to move forward with service-providing and advocacy ministries, here are a few questions to keep in mind.

What programs and services already exist in your community?

All communities have programs and services of some kind. Some are publicly funded, and some are made available through other charitable and non-profit organizations, including other local churches and faith communities. You may want to partner with other organizations and offer supplementary programs and support, or you may want to initiate something new. Either way, you should be aware of what else is going on in your area before starting on a new outreach project.

What needs are not being met in your community right now?

For your program to be successful, you need to find out what is needed and why that need isn't being met. The best people to talk to about these gaps in services are the people you want to serve. Build relationships and ask them about their experiences. What programs do they appreciate? What programs work well, and why? What programs don't work well, and why? What needs do they have that aren't currently being met, and what would they find helpful? By asking these questions, your parish's response becomes a collaboration with those you would serve, involving them as partners with agency and dignity rather than merely as recipients of your services.

Where has your parish been involved so far?

Reflect on the work your parish has been involved with so far. Where has there been the greatest response from the congregation? Which programs have had the most success? If you're looking for support from your congregation and parish leadership for a new program, you're more likely to get it if you're entering territory that is familiar to the rest of the parish. Also, if you've already started work in a particular area, or in partnership with a particular agency, you may be able to build on that work by taking it to the next level – adding another program to meet the needs of participants, or incorporating an advocacy campaign to address issues faced by people who are using your outreach ministry.

Who do you have on your outreach committee?

It can be tempting for a social justice group or committee to lament their limitations, but you might be surprised at the wealth of resources that exist in your group. Ask each member to share the gifts they can offer. These can range from a knack for graphic design to create posters and pamphlets for sharing information and news of events, to social media skills, to a love of baking that can include home-baked treats with community meals or food bank parcels, a green thumb that could start a community garden, or someone with marketing expertise who has innovative ideas for fund-raising. Or perhaps there's another parishioner with these gifts who might like to contribute them to your work. You might be surprised at what people have to offer when you give them a chance!

Once you have looked at these questions, it's time to move to the next step. Consider the following elements as you move ahead with your campaign:

Support from your clergy and churchwardens

Support – or lack of it – from your parish leadership has a big impact on your work. Support from your clergy and churchwardens can ease your work, while unsupportive leadership can impede it. If your leadership teams is not supportive at this time, consider how you might reach out and include them in your work. This could include inviting them to attend a meeting of your committee to share concerns.

Support from the broader parish

Getting your entire parish behind your work will help in many ways. Your work will be upheld in prayer; you will have access to more funding; your efforts will become better known; you will have a larger volunteer base to draw from; and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your work is understood and appreciated by your fellow parishioners. Parishioners who may not be able to commit to regular meetings or volunteer shifts may be willing to participate in advocacy campaigns around issues supported by your committee. If your broader parish is not currently aware of or supportive of the work done by your committee, strategize about ways to get them more engaged. This could include an educational event, an outreach fair, or even a presentation on your work as part of the Sunday service. Speak with your clergy about possible ideas for engaging the parish more broadly.

How much money do you have in your budget, and how is this allocated?

Insufficient funds can hold back plans and projects. Sometimes, if the committee controlling outreach funds is the same group of people it has been for years, the members may merely be upholding the status quo and/or funding their own pet projects. Consider advocating for new ways of allocating funds that are open and fair. Perhaps the parish can host a fundraiser the proceeds of which go to supporting outreach ministry.

Remember, too, that a robust FaithWorks campaign not only raises funds for outreach ministries throughout the Diocese and beyond, but parishes are entitled to hold back 15% of all FaithWorks

donations made through the parish for funding their own local outreach initiatives and partnerships.

Setting goals

To help keep your work focussed, productive, and accountable, it's useful to articulate and record your goals. One way of doing so is to use SMART criteria: setting goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-specific. These criteria will help you understand what your goal is and how you can go about achieving it. Instead of saying "We want to get our parish involved in social justice" your group might decide "In a year's time, we want at least a quarter of our congregation to be actively involved in the advocacy campaigns of the parish," and go from there.

However, do not feel too constricted by the SMART goals criteria. Often, especially in justice and advocacy work, results can take longer than expected, and be hard to quantify. We rarely accomplish what we set out to accomplish in the way we thought we would accomplish it.

In fall of 2018, as the opioid crisis was taking hold, the newly-elected provincial government announced a moratorium on the opening of new overdose-prevention sites. Those sites which were already open were forced to re-apply, under new and restrictive conditions. Several of these sites, including Street Health and St. Stephen's Community House, re-applied but were denied provincial licences and funding with little notice and no reasons given. Both of these sites had connections with outreach programs at local Anglican parishes (All Saints, Sherbourne and St. Stephen in the Fields, respectively). The College of Bishops, together with clergy from these and other downtown Toronto parishes, wrote the provincial Health Minister urging her to grant licences and funding to these sites. Individual Anglicans, including social workers, health-care workers, and members of the Social Justice and Advocacy and Poverty Reduction Committees, added their voices, writing letters to their MPPs, to local newspapers, and demonstrating at Queen's Park and City Hall. Despite these pleas, the provincial government declined to authorize these sites. However, the groundswell of public support led other levels of government to step in. The sites were allowed to stay open under a federal government licence and with funding from municipal sources and private donations.

Some would say that the campaign failed, or had at best, only partial success. In other ways, though, the campaign was a success. It raised awareness of the severity of the opioid crisis and the impact of the crisis on people who are beloved members of our parish communities. It helped Anglicans and others learn about the important service provided by overdose prevention sites and how they not only save lives but help build connection and community. All this led to the sites being supported and funded through another avenue.

Similarly, with your other social justice initiatives and advocacy work, you will hit unanticipated obstacles that prevent you from achieving what you hope to accomplish. Rather than give up, view these challenges as learning opportunities and remember that social justice and advocacy work is never wasted. Even if it doesn't work the way you wanted, you are always planting seeds for the future. And you have followed the call to "seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8)

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Photo credits:

p. 3, top right: Susan Scouten and Kathleen Wilkinson at All Saints, Collingwood (Maddie Johnson)

p. 3, bottom left: Families enjoy Family Friday at St. Margaret, New Toronto. (Jacqueline Daley)

p. 4, top right: Community Support Centre volunteers at St. Margaret, New Toronto. (Jacqueline Daley)

p. 5, top left: “Let’s Walk the Talk” postcard campaign (Elin Goulden)

p. 5, bottom right: Celebrating the Eucharist at Duffin’s Creek wetland, Dec. 2020 (John Tennant)

p. 6, middle: Parishioners from St. George, Ajax and St. Martin, Pickering march to save Duffin’s Creek wetlands from development, March 2020 (Eugene Farrugia)

p. 7, bottom right: Common Table staff take the Outreach Cart to minister to community members in an otherwise affluent area of Toronto (Church of the Redeemer Common Table Outreach)

p. 9, bottom left: Children at St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope show off greens from the garden to be shared with Northumberland FareShare food bank. (Shane Watson)

p. 10, right: The entrance to St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope’s Spiritual Garden, showing the bathtub planter. (Shane Watson)