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Food bank steps up efforts as need soars

More clients seeking food, work

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

CHURCHES have long provided support to people facing food insecurity, with food banks, food pantries and deacon's cupboards springing up across the diocese. Now, with food prices on the rise, the food bank of St. Paul on-the-Hill, Pickering is expanding its capacity to meet the higher needs of its neighbours.

Established by members of the parish in 1990 as a temporary outreach program, St. Paul's Community Food Bank has seen local demand for its services grow exponentially, especially in recent years. From 7,800 clients in 2012 to 14,000 in 2021, the food bank saw a huge spike in need last year, feeding 20,886 people in 2022.

"We've probably doubled in size since I started in August, and I anticipate it's only going to get worse as 2023 continues," says Lindsey Morrill, the food bank's director. "Christmas was very, very busy, and then we anticipated a little bit of a lull in January, but that did not happen. We're increasing to about 100 people per day."

Despite that growing need, St. Paul's food bank is the only one in Pickering, a city of 99,000 people. The next closest option is in Ajax. "There are no other resources around us. We are basically the heart of the community of Pickering. Without us, they won't have access to any other food," says Ms. Morrill.

She joined the food bank last summer, taking over from Marg Jocz, the previous director. She handles everything from fundraising to connecting with local organizations, registering new clients, keeping the shelves stocked, updating the website and more. "It was starting to supersede a volunteer position," she says. "I've always had a very strong passion for not-for-profit. I think my first food drive was when I was seven. To be able to turn my passion into a career was a huge step in the right direction for me."

The food bank is open to clients on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10



Volunteers help out at St. Paul's on-the-Hill Community Food Bank, the only food bank in Pickering. At right is Lindsey Morrill, the food bank's director. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ST. PAUL'S ON-THE-HILL COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

a.m. to noon. Clients can access the food bank twice a month, receiving canned goods, pantry staples and fresh produce. "We've added an extra visitation if needed, just to kind of temporarily ease some of the pain from inflation," says Ms. Morrill.

The food bank receives support from the parish in the form of volunteers, funding and guidance. Members of the congregation can designate gifts specifically to the food bank, and Ms. Morrill has a strong relationship with the Rev. Canon Stephanie Douglas-Bowman and the churchwardens. "We do get really great support from them, whether it be monetary, whether it

be food, whether it be just support I need for resources," she says.

More than 40 volunteers help the food bank function, along with partnerships with many local businesses, churches, community organizations and individuals. Ms. Morrill says that support has been vital in helping the food bank adapt to rising food costs even as its client list grows. "We have been very blessed with some incredible support, so we haven't had to pivot too much - minor things here and there," she says.

Thanks to a new deal with a nearby Loblaws store, this year clients will have access to more high-quality meat, produce and



prepared meals like shepherd's pie. "They donate all of their food items that they otherwise would have thrown away, as long as it's frozen on or before the best-buy date," says Ms. Morrill. "Whatever they have that they didn't sell that week, it now comes to us."

This arrangement fits perfectly with her goal to expand the kinds of food the food bank can provide to its clients. "If we pivot to fresher foods and better quality of foods,

it's more sustainable than handing them a box of canned salt and sugar," she says.

Besides food, what the food bank's clients most need is help finding employment. "There's a massive language barrier for, I would say, about 80 per cent of our clients. We have a lot of refugees. We have a lot of people from Ukraine that are just off the plane. They're looking for help,"

Continued on Page 7



NEW START

The diocese's new archdeacons and canon administrator stand with Bishop Andrew Asbil, suffragan bishops, clergy and laity after their collation service at St. James Cathedral on Jan. 15. From row from left are Archdeacon Theodore Hunt, Canon Administrator Laura Walton, Archdeacon Cheryl Palmer, Archdeacon Steven Mackison and Archdeacon John Anderson. They have been appointed to five newly created archdeaconries in the diocese. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON



Team seeks input on governance pilot project

BY STUART MANN

THE team that is evaluating the diocese's governance pilot project is seeking more input as the project enters its final year.

Joy Packham, ODT, and Robert Hart, ODT, who were appointed last year, would like to hear from any individual or church that has done business with Synod Council or its committees and would like to comment on the experience. They can be reached at governancereview@toronto.anglican.ca.



Joy Packham, ODT, and Robert Hart, ODT



"This is a chance to have your voice heard and to feel that you

are at the table, being part of the discussion," says Mr. Hart.

Respondents will have the option of filling out a questionnaire or meeting with Ms. Packham and Mr. Hart in person or on Zoom. All replies and comments will be kept confidential. The feedback will help determine if the new governance structure is effective, efficient, transparent, fair and diverse.

In addition to individuals and churches, Ms. Packham and Mr. Hart are seeking input from members of Synod Council and the

chairs and members of its committees who haven't already provided feedback or would like to update their initial comments.

They are also keen to hear from people who dealt with the former Diocesan Council or the former Executive Board.

The governance pilot project was implemented last January with the first meeting of the newly constituted Synod Council, an amalgamation of Diocesan Council and the Executive Board. The group provides strategic direction for the diocese between Synods.

Synod Council is chaired by the diocesan bishop and currently has 25 members, both clergy and lay, from across the diocese. It has five committees: the Audit Committee, the Finance Committee, the Property Committee, the Human Resources Committee and the Risk and Governance Committee. The committees are responsible for making decisions and recommen-

dations within their remit.

The goal of the new governance structure is to facilitate and streamline decision-making, allowing more time for thorough discussions, says Canon Rob Saffrey, the diocese's executive director.

Ms. Packham and Mr. Hart submitted their initial report to Synod Council's Risk & Governance Committee and it was shared at the diocese's Synod last November. They plan to submit a follow-up report to the committee at the end of March.

Their initial report stated that the majority of responses were positive and showed support for the new Synod Council structure. A few responses indicated it is too soon to tell.

The governance pilot project will remain in effect until Synod in November, at which time Synod will decide whether to adopt the changes permanently or revert to the previous governance model.

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PRAYING TOGETHER

An interfaith prayer vigil is held outside Toronto City Hall on Jan. 31. Participants were seeking increased aid for homeless people in the city's next budget and the opening of more warming centres this winter. Organized by the Stone Soup Network, the vigil drew people of different faiths, including Buddhists, Jews, Muslims and Christians. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON



FaithWorks achieves strong results in 2022

Diocese's annual outreach appeal sees surge in online giving

BY STUART MANN

DESPITE challenges created by the pandemic, FaithWorks raised \$1,434,100 last year or 95.6 per cent of its campaign goal. The money will support 17 Anglican affiliated ministries and agencies that serve the needs of people who are Indigenous, homeless, hungry, at-risk women, children or youth, immigrants or refugees and those living with HIV/AIDS.

"Anglicans rose to the occasion as they have done time and time again," says Peter Misiaszek, the diocese's director of Stewardship Development. "They are exceedingly generous."

More than 90 per cent of parishes in the diocese took part in the annual outreach campaign, with 84 parishes raising more than they did in 2021. "That is really encouraging and it's a sign of hope," says Mr. Misiaszek.

One of the surprises of the campaign was the amount given online. Donors gave \$165,000 through the FaithWorks website. "That's unprecedented," says Mr. Misiaszek. "We've never received that sort of response before."

Direct mail solicitation and online giving amounted to more than \$400,000. Four new family foundations supported the campaign.

In addition to giving \$65,000 to the Toronto Urban Native Min-

istry, donors gave \$41,000 to the Spirit Garden, a memorial to former students of Canada's Residential Schools that is planned for Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto.

"That shows where Anglicans' hearts are," says Mr. Misiaszek. "They really are striving for reconciliation."

The campaign benefitted from two "challenges" to donors. The first was a \$100,000 matching challenge to parishes and individuals, whereby every dollar given would be matched by a dollar. The other was a two-for-one challenge for major gifts, whereby for every two dollars raised, one dollar would be given. Both challenges reached their targets.

Mr. Misiaszek says communication was key to the campaign's success. "We're telling the story, we've got a great website, and we're giving people all sorts of opportunity to support us, and they are. We have more people giving over \$1,000 directly to us than ever before."

Faithlines, the campaign's electronic newsletter, is sent to about 4,000 people every two weeks. Edited by Peter Mentis, the FaithWorks campaign manager, the bulletin provides stories, testimonials, updates and ways to give.

"My hat's off to Peter Mentis," says Mr. Misiaszek. "He's worked closely with a lot of parishes and

helped inspire generosity and I'm really grateful for his contribution."

This year's FaithWorks campaign goal is the same as last year's - \$1.5 million. Now in its 27th year, the campaign has raised more than \$35 million for those in need in the diocese, across Canada and around the world.

"Outreach is a defining characteristic of what it means to be an Anglican," explains Mr. Misiaszek. "It is critical to our identity."

Despite last year's success, he encourages donors not to become complacent, as the needs are greater than ever. "The ministries and agencies that we support depend on our funding. We're a vital lifeline for several of them. In some cases, it amounts to 50 per cent of their budget."

The ministries and agencies are located throughout the diocese. Two major recipients are All Saints Church-Community Centre, serving some of Toronto's most marginalized people, and Flemingdon Park Ministry, providing food and other essentials to residents of Flemingdon Park in Don Mills. The newest ministry is the Durham Migrant Workers Ministry, serving migrant workers on farms in Durham Region.

To give to FaithWorks, visit www.faithworks.ca.

A CALL TO MUSICIANS



Now in its fourth year, The Bishop's Company Cabaret is looking to celebrate musical artists and dancers within our Anglican community as we raise funds to support The Bishop's Company. We aim to share this evening with everyone in the Diocese of Toronto and provide a selection of diverse performances that reflect our community at large. All are welcome to audition. Each act will receive an honorarium. This year's Cabaret will be done in conjunction with the Bishop's Company Dinner.

Submission Deadline: April 28th - send examples of your work and let us see what we can expect.

Selected Artists will be notified: Friday, May 5th.

Once selected, artists will need to submit a bio, photo, social media links (if applicable), and song selection with copywriting info, by the end of May.

To ensure quality, artists are required to film their pieces with Blindspot Media before the end of August.

The content will be recorded specifically for the use of the Cabaret. Performances will be shared with the Diocese and later posted on the Diocesan YouTube Channel, and our Facebook page. The Bishop's Company is willing to work with the artists on cross-promotion.

Send submissions and enquiries to bishopscompany@toronto.anglican.ca.

Check us out on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BishopsCoTO/>

Last year's Cabaret can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EU7PD2wToE>.



We look ahead with great hope

The following is the College of Bishops' pastoral letter to vestries, to be read or circulated on the Sunday of the parish's annual vestry meeting. It is addressed to the clergy, churchwardens and parishioners of the Diocese of Toronto.

Dear friends,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:2). As we come to our annual vestry meetings, it is a good time for us to reflect with thanksgiving on the past and look with a sense of hopefulness to the year ahead.

The past year was significant in many ways in the life of our diocese. First, we have been returning to some sense of normalcy after two years of Covid lockdowns and restrictions. While we continue to urge parishes to exercise caution, many of our communities have returned to something that resembles our pre-pandemic life together. We thank God that the worst of the pandemic now seems behind us.

Of course, parishes are continuing to grapple with the effects of Covid. Many of our churches continue to experience a decrease in Sunday attendance, fewer volunteers to fill key parish roles, and a diminished number of regular financial givers. Clergy and lay leaders also continue to experience a deep sense of fatigue and anxiety about the future. In that light, we continue to encourage a gentleness with one another and a renewed commitment to self-care as we navigate post-pandemic realities. Over the past year, we have been pleased to offer a mini-sabbatical opportunity for clergy. These 10 days – taken together or broken up – are intended for rest and renewal. We have been delighted to hear that many clergy have already taken a mini-sabbatical or have made plans to do so in 2023.

The past year also saw the launch of Cast the Net, a strategic visioning process for our diocese. Aply led by the Very Rev. Peter Elliott, Canon Ian Alexander and Dr. Anita Gittens, ODT, the Cast the Net team has surveyed the clergy in the diocese in various consultations, and is now engaging lay people from every parish across the diocese. Based on John 21, this biblically grounded initiative is seeking to help us chart of path forward as a diocese. We eagerly anticipate a full report from the Cast the Net team at our Synod next November.

Our restructuring of episcopal leadership also continued through 2022. The Episcopal Leadership Implementation Team followed up the good work of the Episcopal Leadership Working Group and brought forward a model for raising up and deploying territorial archdeacons and canon administrators to assist the bishops in their work. Interviews took place in November, leading to the appointment of four new archdeacons and one new canon administrator. Many of you were present at the cathedral on Jan. 15 as Archdeacon John Anderson, Archdeacon Theodore Hunt, Archdeacon Steven Mackison, Archdeacon Cheryl Palmer and Canon Laura Walton were collated. They have now begun their work and are already helping to share ministry with the College of Bishops.

After 20 years of service, Canon Clare Burns also retired as our chancellor and is now chancellor emeritus. We are grateful for Clare's ministry and are also delighted to welcome Marg Creal as our new chancellor. Those of you who were present at the New Year's Levee on Jan. 1 will remember the joy of Chancellor Creal's installation.

Our work in the area of anti-bias and anti-racism (ABAR) also continued in 2022. The workshops for clergy concluded last year and we began to roll out the parish-based program. Clergy and lay facilitators are now trained to visit parishes and lead this im-



Clockwise from top: the Rev. Maria Nightingale of St. Peter, Erindale finishes her pilgrimage on the Camino Nova Scotia during her mini-sabbatical last October; Cast the Net helps the diocese seek a path forward; new archdeacons and canon administrator are congratulated after their collation service at St. James Cathedral on Jan. 15; Chancellor Marg Creal receives a welcoming hand by the Very Rev. Peter Wall during her installation at St. James Cathedral on Jan. 1. PHOTOS BY THE REV. MARIA NIGHTINGALE AND MICHAEL HUDSON

portant work. The ABAR Pod has also been formed to lead the ongoing work of dismantling bias and racism in our structures. May God continue to bless our efforts and encourage us in this vital work.

As we look ahead to a new year, we do so with a sense of great hope. Our beloved Church has changed dramatically over the past few years and will continue to change. But God is present and faithful, and our proclamation and sharing in the redemptive love of God in Christ continues to be the mission to which we are called.

Be assured of our prayers for each of you as you meet for your annual vestry meeting. We want to express our profound thanks to all who exercise leadership in the Diocese of Toronto. Whether you are stepping down from a particular ministry, or continuing on, or taking up a new role this year, thank you

for your commitment and faithfulness. You are a blessing to the Church in our diocese.

We write this letter on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. As the Church celebrates the beginning of Paul's evangelistic ministry to the Gentiles, please join us in praying and working for the extension of the gospel in every place, and for the renewal of the Church in our midst.

Yours faithfully in Christ Jesus,

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil
Bishop of Toronto

The Rt. Rev. Riscylla Shaw
Suffragan Bishop of Toronto

The Rt. Rev. Kevin Robertson
Suffragan Bishop of Toronto



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In the Diocese of Toronto:

A community of 254 congregations in 210 parishes covering 26,000 square kilometers. Of the nearly 5 million people who live within the diocesan boundaries, 376,000 claim to be affiliated with the Anglican Church, with about 80,000 people identified on the parish rolls. The diocese is home to many ethnic and language-based congregations, including African, Caribbean, Chinese, Filipino, French, Hispanic, Japanese, and Tamil. The City of Toronto has a large population of aboriginal peoples.

Bishop of Toronto:

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil

Suffragan Bishops:

The Rt. Rev. Riscylla Shaw and
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Our faith calls us to do what we can

As a diocese, our key social justice priorities include reducing poverty, working to end homelessness by creating affordable housing, and safeguarding the integrity of God's creation – the land, water and air that sustains us all. Our faith calls us to do what we can, not only to help meet the needs of those most vulnerable in our communities, and to protect and preserve the earth from which we live, but also to use our voice and influence in public witness for the common good. We believe that our efforts as individuals and parish communities must be supplemented by public investment and policy measures in order to address the systemic issues affecting Ontarians. Here are our recommendations for the 2023 provincial budget:

Poverty reduction

As inflation has soared over the past year, Ontarians on low incomes are facing the economic pinch more than ever. Ontarians on social assistance, as well as those in low-paying and precarious employment, are especially vulnerable to the increased cost of living.

While we were pleased to see Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates raised by 5 per cent last September and indexed to inflation beginning in July of this year, this long-overdue increase is still far below the level needed to lift disabled Ontarians out of poverty. Moreover, recipients of Ontario Works (OW) have had their rates frozen since 2018, with no increase or indexation to inflation. We join with over 250 faith communities, legal clinics, food banks, and other community organizations in calling for a doubling of social assistance levels for both OW and ODSP recipients, and thereafter indexing both rates to inflation, so that Ontarians who are disabled or who have fallen on hard times are able to afford the basic necessities of life and participate in their communities, rather than being trapped in legislated poverty. We also reiterate our call from last year's pre-budget submission to end the artificial division between the basic needs and shelter allowance components of social assistance.

At \$15.50 per hour, Ontario's minimum wage falls well below a living wage in any part of the province and is barely two-thirds of a living wage in the Greater Toronto Area. We call on your government to progressively raise the minimum wage in Ontario until it approximates the average living wage in Ontario, and to continue to index it to inflation.

In addition to low wages, the precarious nature of many jobs leaves too many Ontario workers in conditions that compromise their health and well-being and make it more difficult for them to get ahead. This government's temporary Covid-related sick leave policy, currently extended to March 31, 2023, is too limited in scope and duration. Moreover, the eligibility requirements are complex, the program is merely temporary, and finally, it puts the financial burden of paid sick days on the taxpayer, rather than on the employer. We call for legislation requiring 10 employer-paid sick days per calendar year, accessible to all workers, on a permanent basis. We also add our voices for an additional 14 paid sick days in times of public health emergency, such as the current pandemic.

We also call for legislation requiring employers to provide a minimum number of hours per week for each position and give employees adequate advance notice of work schedules. This would give workers the stability they need to budget, arrange childcare, and take advantage of



A candle is held at a vigil at Toronto's homeless memorial outside Holy Trinity, Trinity Square. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

opportunities for supplementary work or training. In addition, we call for legislation requiring employers to pay part-time, temporary and casual workers the same rate as their permanent, full-time employees doing the same work, so that employers have less incentive to offer precarious jobs.

Last year, over 60 per cent of the parishes in our diocese passed motions affirming the need for these job protections. Their views are in line with a majority of Ontarians: workers deserve better.

Meanwhile, the opioid epidemic continues to rage across the province. The vast majority of opioid-related deaths are accidental, and could be averted with greater access to overdose prevention sites, especially in communities outside the GTA. We therefore reiterate our call to this government to remove the cap on the number of provincially funded overdose prevention sites in Ontario.

Affordable housing

Ontario's housing crisis is primarily one of affordability, not merely of supply. In our brief on Bill 23, we noted that some of its provisions are welcome, including the waiver of development charges for non-profit housing providers, measures designed to allow as-of-right additions of up to three residential units per property, and provisions to require a higher minimum density around transit hubs.

Unfortunately, the new legislation does not go far enough in ensuring housing affordability, and several of its provisions actually exacerbate the problem. Bill 23 allows the Housing Minister to override municipal rental replacement requirements, which ensure that existing rental units are replaced at affordable levels when an apartment building is being redeveloped. Losing these affordable units would put pressure on remaining affordable housing and would result in more Ontario tenants becoming homeless. Further, the new legislation waters down existing municipal inclusionary zoning provisions, resulting in fewer affordable units available for a much shorter period. We urge your government to repeal those provisions of Bill 23 that would override municipal rental replacement by-laws, limit inclusionary zoning, and shorten affordability periods. The legislation should set a minimum floor for affordability measures that municipalities could have the option to strengthen, rather than reducing all such measures to a lower standard.

While we welcome the exemption of non-profit and co-op housing providers

from development charges, we do not believe these exemptions should apply to market developments producing only the minimum numbers of so-called affordable units, where affordability is measured as a percentage of market rent rather than based on what is truly affordable to people on lower incomes, and where affordability periods are limited instead of permanent, should not be able to benefit from these incentives. To do so shifts the financial burden off developers of market units, who are already making substantial profits, and onto municipal governments and individual taxpayers, who are much less able to bear the burden. The resulting shortfall in municipal revenues also leaves municipalities with diminished capacity to create new affordable homes, support other housing affordability programs, and create the infrastructure needed to serve these developments. We therefore urge you to amend Bill 23 to ensure that the waiver or reduction of development charges is applied only to the provision of permanent, truly affordable housing.

Bill 23 also does nothing to ensure that rental units in Ontario – even those built with public incentives – remain affordable. We cannot build our way out of the housing affordability crisis without measures to prevent the loss of affordable units. For this reason, we continue to call for rent control and vacancy control to apply to all residential rental properties.

Rather than placing the financial burden of ensuring housing affordability on municipal governments and taxpayers, we urge you to expand taxation measures on those who benefit most from the financialization of housing, such as taxes on real estate speculation – even for domestic investors – and on vacant properties.

Environmental stewardship

The health and wellbeing of Ontarians depends on a healthy environment: local farmland and watersheds that supply us with fresh food and drinking water; moraines and wetlands to filter water pollutants and absorb potentially catastrophic flooding; and flourishing, biodiverse ecosystems where people can connect with nature and engage in recreation to boost their physical and mental, as well as economic, wellbeing. The environment is the base upon which all Ontario's health, security and prosperity is built.

Unrestricted growth threatens that health, security and prosperity. Ontario is now losing 319 acres of farmland daily, a loss that is simply not sustainable if we

hope to have any kind of food sovereignty or independence in this province. Ontario's Greenbelt also provides "ecosystem services," including flood mitigation, preservation of wildlife habitat, and reduction of air and water pollution, that save us billions annually. Increased development will disrupt these ecosystem services and leave Ontario at greater risk of the impacts of climate change, with disastrous financial, infrastructure and human impacts.

Legislation such as Bill 23 takes us in entirely the wrong direction. It would allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing to amend any official plan by order without recourse, allowing the minister to impose urban sprawl on municipalities that have already planned fiscally and environmentally responsible development within existing boundaries.

Bill 23 guts the power of Conservation Authorities to regulate projects under the Planning Act or to refuse permits based on concerns about pollution or the conservation of land. It removes the obligation of the minister to consider such matters on appeal, and even prohibits Conservation Authorities from providing municipalities with the information they need to build land and water protections into planning approvals. As a result, projects undertaken will be at greater risk of flooding and infrastructure damage.

We urge your government to protect Ontario's environment, food and water by keeping the Greenbelt free from development and repealing those provisions of Bill 23 that override protections for agricultural land and environmentally significant areas. We also call on this government to restore the powers of Conservation Authorities inhibited by Bill 23.

On top of this environmentally disastrous legislation, the construction of Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass will exacerbate urban sprawl and increase air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, without easing traffic congestion long-term. This is especially misguided, considering our need to reduce emissions and avoid catastrophic climate impacts. We therefore urge you to cancel the development of Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass and invest those dollars in expanding and improving public and regional transit.

Ensuring democratic governance

Finally, we wish to express our deep concern regarding the passage of Bill 39. This legislation allows "strong mayors" in Ottawa and Toronto to pass municipal budgets and by-laws with the support of only one-third of their city councils. It proposes to assess Durham, Peel, York, Halton, Niagara and Waterloo regions for the purpose of expanding such "strong mayor" tools. Moreover, it would allow the Minister to replace the legitimately elected regional chairs of Niagara, York and Peel. This legislation, introduced the day after the most recent municipal elections, attacks the democratic principle of majority rule, and erodes public faith in our government institutions. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to repeal this undemocratic legislation.

Conclusion

We ask your government to include these recommendations in preparing the upcoming provincial budget. While many of them are not new, the need to implement them is greater than ever. We urge you to "get it done" and set us on a path to a stronger, more resilient, and flourishing Ontario.

I pray I may be a blessing to someone each day

The Rev. Lorna May is the deacon at St. Luke, Creemore.

I have had the privilege of being the deacon for St. Luke, Creemore for 15 years. We are part of the Southern Georgian Bay Regional Ministry Team that includes All Saints, Collingwood and Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach.

St. Luke's is a small parish whose focus has always been on the wider community. Currently, I coordinate our weekly foodbank, receiving and delivering food, as well as coordinating volunteers. Our Soup for the Soul is a new initiative that targets those interested in cooking nutritious, budget-wise meals. We are also re-instating our monthly Soup Lunch, which invites the community to come and sit with friends, new and old. I support our priests in preparing the Prayers of the People, officiating and preaching when asked. I am active in the Chaplaincy on Call program at Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and at the Leisureworld nursing home in Creemore. I am part of the Diaconal Advisory Committee, and the Bishop's Diaconal Review Committee.

The St. Luke's Community Foodbank initiative started in 2022. After many conversations within the community at large, we are implementing strategies for food-sharing and nutrition. I am encouraged by the innovative plans that have been put forward for growing and delivering fresh produce. Collaborating with The Sharing Place in Orillia, the Simcoe County Food Council and the Canadian Food Council brings expertise and encouragement. As I watch those we serve volunteer, I am thankful for the presence of the Spirit in our ministry. As I consider my ordination vow to "interpret to the Church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world," I know that we are making a difference in our community.

As I reflect on our ministry in 2022, I feel the best part of our ministry is the smiles from families that know they have support. Supporting refugee families has increased our awareness of "welcoming the stranger."

I find it frustrating to see and deal with the lack of resources for those living



The Rev. Lorna May at St. Luke, Creemore.

with poverty and mental health issues in a country as rich as Canada. I see people living in homes that should be condemned but have no other place but the streets. I see seniors who need assisted-living struggling to manage at home because there are no spaces for them and little to no home care available. With so much need in our community, I pray that I may be a blessing to someone each day.

I was raised in Sudbury, Ontario. My father worked for Inco, a member of Steel-

workers Local 6500, and my mother was a homemaker. I began piano lessons at the age of 10 and pursued oboe and piano at the University of Toronto. I taught for the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto for 10 years before moving to our farm in Mulmur Township with our young family. I was an examiner for the Royal Conservatory of Music for 36 years, travelling extensively in Canada and the U.S. We moved to our farm in 1987, where I continued to teach piano privately. It was at this time that I was asked to be the organist at

St. Luke's. Doug and I have three grown daughters, four grandchildren and an eight-year-old son. We currently live in Wasaga Beach and enjoy gardening, riding our bicycles and hiking.

I am a cradle Anglican and I believe the first female server in Sudbury in the late 1960s. While at university in Toronto, I did not attend church regularly but did visit St. Thomas, Huron Street and the cathedral on occasion. I began to rekindle my faith journey when I became the musician at St. Luke's. Some things had changed but I still knew the words of the BCP! At this time, St. Luke's had young families and we all knew and supported each other. In 2005, Rev. Catherine Miller was our priest-in-charge and was very involved in the community. With her direction and support, I began accompanying her to the nursing home, offered support for single mothers, and made meals for those who needed them. It wasn't long before I was asking the St. Luke's community to supply meals and became known in the community as the person to go to for help. Catherine gave me some information on the diaconate, and back to university I went. The campus looked the same, but I did not! Older, feeling somewhat out of place in my first few classes at Wycliffe College, it took a community to get me to and from the Barrie bus station! There were times of frustration, tears, uncertainty and gratitude throughout those years. After three years of discernment, I was privileged to be ordained on St. Luke's Day, 2007.

In five years, I hope to be encouraging and supporting others through outreach in Southern Georgian Bay.

My favourite passage from scripture is 1 Samuel 3: 1-10. In all his listening, Samuel obeyed the Lord's instructions. While God may not most likely call us as He called Samuel with an audible voice, God has a unique purpose for our lives and each of us is indispensable in this plan. We have been created with our own unique gifts and talents to use and serve. Samuel's life was dedicated to serving and fulfilling God's purpose for him. Each of us is faced with this choice every day. "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

My visit to One City Peterborough

BY PETER MENTIS

During the lockdowns of the past two years, I had done what I could to research One City Peterborough (OCP), mainly through its website. Here is the introduction:

"One City Peterborough is a non-profit charitable organization. We operate on the belief that everyone belongs, and it is together that we flourish. To that end, we focus on supporting those who have experienced homelessness and/or criminalization towards their full inclusion into the community.

"Some of our programs look to create stability and increase wellness for those experiencing criminalization and homelessness, such as housing, employment and support programs; some of our work focuses on advocating for systemic change such as challenging laws that

criminalize individuals; and some of our work addresses immediate needs, such as survival gear for folks sleeping outside."

This would not prepare me for the eye-opening visit that the Rev. Christian Harvey, co-executive director, would lead me on. We began with a tour of the main house where the offices are located. Along with the administrative offices were two special rooms. There is the art therapy room. By helping the participants to develop their creative side, the art therapist helps them peer into their inner selves, explore their feelings and come to greater self-awareness and healing. There is also the simple joy of learning to draw and paint.

There is also the music room. It is a popular place to enjoy a tune, meet with friends and release the tension of the day in a healthy way. A wide variety of instruments are available for participants

to enjoy. I'm sure there is never a dull moment here.

Christian also took me to visit one of their homes that is currently being renovated to better serve senior ex-prisoners who are struggling with mobility issues and other effects of aging, while struggling to find food, shelter and a job.

What was most moving for me was a room being created for prisoners in palliative care, that is, those who are in prison and near death. In prison, as you near death, you are assigned to a cell in isolation, often without windows. Worse than dying so alone, the myth in prison is that if you die in prison, you automatically go to hell. How terrifying this situation must be as the end draws near.

So, One City Peterborough is negotiating with Corrections Canada to allow palliative care prisoners to be transferred to its seniors' home and die with others

around them in a room with big, beautiful windows overlooking a garden.

I have been taught that a person is considered palliative if they are within six months of dying. Corrections Canada would like to release a prisoner to One City Peterborough's care for only the last week of their life. OCP is negotiating for two weeks.

This is just a glimpse of my visit to One City Peterborough and what FaithWorks is about. Allowing someone to pass their last week or two in this life with some humanity, compassion and hope for eternal life is what your donation to FaithWorks supports. It is an expression of God's love and mercy.

Peter Mentis is the diocese's FaithWorks campaign manager. This article originally appeared in Faithlines. One City Peterborough is a FaithWorks ministry partner.



VISIT TO INDIA

Bishop Andrew Asbil and his wife Mary travelled to the Diocese of Madhya Kerala in India in January. The Diocese of Madhya Kerala is part of the Church of South India. Bishop Asbil was the keynote speaker at the diocese's 57th Sesquicentennial Memorial Convention. Clockwise from top left: Bishop Asbil delivers an address with the Rev. George Jacob translating; Mary Asbil after addressing the Women's Fellowship; visiting a local school; Bishop Asbil standing in front of a billboard advertising the convention; greetings; looking out at the crowd at the convention. PHOTOS COURTESY OF BISHOP ANDREW AND MARY ASBIL AND THE DIOCESE OF MADHYA KERALA

'They're looking for help'

Continued from Page 1

she says. The food bank provides pamphlets and information about other resources that are available in Pickering.

As she looks ahead to the end of her first year as director, Ms. Morrill says her next goal is to help the food bank reintroduce itself to the Pickering community and draw attention to the growing problem of food insecurity. "There are a lot of people that don't know we're here," she says. "To be honest, I don't think people realize how bad it is until they see it. Our food bank faces a main road, so you can see the lineup if you drive past. A couple people have stopped and

asked what it's about."

Despite the growing need for food banks and concerns about worsening food insecurity, Ms. Morrill finds hope and inspiration in the clients themselves. "Just hearing the stories of some of the clients, it really pulls at your heartstrings," she says. "I have two young kids, and I can't imagine being in the position of not knowing where their next meal's going to come from. The fact that I get to be a part of helping that is very inspiring."

To learn more about the food bank and offer support, visit www.stpaulsonthehillfoodbank.ca.

BRIEFLY

ACW annual general meeting April 22

The diocesan Anglican Church Women will be holding its annual general meeting on April 22 at 10 a.m. on Zoom. The theme is "Having Faith" and the guest speaker will be the Ven. Lydia Constant, Elder and faculty member at the Henry Budd College for Ministry in The Pas, Man. She will speak on her faith journey combining traditional ceremonies and practices with Christian beliefs. Event registration details will be posted on the ACW's webpage on the diocese's website, www.toronto.anglican.ca.

AURA seeks board members

The Anglican United Refugee Alliance (AURA) is the diocese's ministry partner in refugee sponsorship. It is currently seeking dynamic individuals to serve as members of its board. To find out what is entailed and how to apply, visit the AURA website, www.auroforrefugees.org.

PWRDF compiles Lenten resource

When the pandemic forced churches to close to public worship, PWRDF began to gather its volunteers and supporters on Zoom. This Lent, PWRDF is presenting a collection of its favourite reflections from partners and volunteers, with

music, videos, stories and more. Subscribe to receive a daily message at www.pwrdf.org/Lent2023.

Series explores use of technology

Did your parish receive a technology Reach Grant in the last three years? Do you wonder how you might do ministry better with your online congregations? Are you asking what's next? Join fellow Anglicans in "Using Technology for God's Mission: Leading & Learning Together," a series of four online sessions to discuss broad ways churches are using technology. Learn more on the Reach Grants page of the diocese's website, www.toronto.anglican.ca or contact Cynthia Majewski at cyn.majewski@gmail.com.

AURA continues to sponsor refugees

New rules create challenges for small Sponsorship Agreement Holders

BY THE REV. STEPHEN DRAKEFORD

Fritznel Richard intended to be with his family in the United States this past Christmas. Tragically, authorities found his body in Quebec near the notorious and illegal Roxham Road border crossing. Mr. Richard was trying to get back into the U.S. and instead died of hypothermia.

According to the CBC, Mr. Richard and his family had found their way to Canada from Haiti over a year ago. But because of federal and provincial delays in getting work permits and health coverage, his wife and one-year-old son returned to relatives in the U.S., again via Roxham Road. But Roxham Road did not work this time in late December. Knowing he was lost and freezing to death, he called his wife to say, "I love you" and "Goodbye."

We ask two questions. First, why do people take such huge risks? Whether it is the family of Syrian two-year-old Alan Kurdi, who washed up on the shore of a Greek beach in 2015, or the Patel family of four, who froze to death near the U.S. border in Manitoba last January, what drives people to take such life and death risks? Intuitively, we might know the reasons; they want for their children what we have: health, safety, security and education – in short, hope for a future. These are migrants. And then there are refugees. The difference between migrants and refugees is that refugees can't go home. Refugees have been driven out. The UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) estimates that global forced displacement reached 103 million people by the middle of last year; this includes

more than 32 million refugees. Families like the Richards, Kurdis and Patels leave their homes for a myriad of reasons. Refugees are driven out and flee for their lives. It doesn't take a clairvoyant to see that the global refugee crisis is only going to deepen.

Second, individuals and families seeking hope and a home in Canada take such risks to leave because of frustration with the Canadian immigration procedures. The bureaucracy in Canada seems not only unjust but deathly slow. As of last September, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) reported more than 900,000 refugees are in the backlog. It seems that the IRCC is critically under-resourced.

In the midst of this, it is mystifying why the IRCC has made things more difficult for Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) or SAH-organizations who are authorized to resettle overseas refugees. The IRCC has just laid out new and detailed eligibility criteria: all Sponsorship Agreement Holders must be able to demonstrate that they can monitor their caseloads, prove financial viability, be properly trained, and have a detailed operations structure, among other things. We would agree that such accountability is essential when dealing with the globe's most vulnerable people. Yet we are perturbed to read that such regulations are forcing smaller Sponsorship Agreement Holders to shut down.

In particular, a Jan. 17 article in *The Toronto Star* alarmed Anglicans in the Diocese of Toronto when it pictured Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee of the Diocese of British Columbia. Bishop Greenwood-Lee



Helped by AURA and Anglicans in the Diocese of Toronto, a Burundian family arrives in Toronto after many years of displacement in Uganda. PHOTO COURTESY OF AURA

is concluding her diocese's status as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, citing the heavy bureaucracy of the IRCC's new rules. Anglicans of the Diocese of Toronto have asked, "Well, what about us? We know we have a robust sponsorship commitment. Are we having to close down our work, too?" The answer is no. The Anglican United Refugee Alliance (AURA) can manage the new IRCC requirements. In our diocese, churches sponsoring refugees are supported by AURA. AURA has already submitted all the required documentation to the IRCC. So in our diocese, there is no need for concern.

AURA is the go-to organization for assisting Diocese of Toronto churches in our ministry of sponsoring the world's refugees, as we are called to do by Jesus' commandments to love our neighbour and welcome the stranger. AURA has a full-time operations director, a full-time sponsorship director, and a part-time sponsorship assistant. Further, AURA has an active working board of eight directors. Last year, AURA worked with more than 750 people in 50 Anglican parishes and 84 active sponsor groups to welcome

323 refugees to Canada. Moreover, these new residents were properly supported, cared for, and loved. The IRCC continues to recognize AURA's competency and increases annually the number of sponsorships we can hold. AURA's board and staff are currently conducting a review of our policies and procedures to increase our capacity.

With climate change gripping the planet and war seizing nations, the need for increased Sponsorship Agreement Holders is here, but clear oversight, monitoring and supervision are a necessity. Canada needs to think hard about how it can increase the capacity of SAHs. It needs to welcome refugees in a timely way. And AURA is thinking about how we can support smaller SAHs. We need to continue to work with the IRCC to increase the Canadian capacity to welcome refugees safely to a new home.

The Rev. Stephen Drakeford, a retired priest of the Diocese of Toronto, is co-chair of AURA's board of directors. To learn more or get involved, visit AURA's website, auraforrefugees.org.

Resting, not texting, in God's spirit

BY MURRAY MacADAM



The massive highway sign hammered home the issue for me: TEXT STOP AHEAD.

That's right: barreling along the U.S. interstate en route to visit friends in Kentucky last fall, every 30 or 40 miles an overhead sign assured drivers they could pull off the highway to designated areas and safely catch up on their texts or send one.

I first heard the term "screen addiction" from a favourite author, Wendell Berry, a Kentucky farmer, author and critic of modern society. Those highway signs underscored the grim reality of this modern addiction: some people are willing to risk their lives—and the lives of others—as they drive because they can't miss what that buzz, beep or ding on their phone might mean.

Can't miss—or refuse to miss?

How the world has changed! The culture of a single phone on a table or wall of a family home ringing only when a person

called to talk now seems like ancient history. Nowadays almost all of us (including me) carry our cell phones with us all day and keep them handy at night. It's not just our phones that demand our constant attention. A vast onslaught of social media and other online information and messages barrages us 24/7. We are well into the age of distraction.

Do we have to be? What is behind the fact that most of us allow our lives to be shaped by technology and its manifold gadgets and pressures, this drive to stay constantly in touch?

Some of it, I feel, stems from another addiction, workaholicism, the belief that we need to be productive and hard-working nearly all the time to feel good about ourselves and respected by others. A modern T-shirt says: "Jesus is coming. Look busy!" Funny? Maybe not. Maybe a slower, more "unplugged" life can be a richer one.

The fact is, we don't have to be subservient to our phones, to social media and to other technological devices. Feeling distracted and unsettled has, of course, long been a challenge for humankind. In his classic book *The Sabbath*, published in 1951, Rabbi Abraham

Heschel notes that the technological accomplishments we've achieved in some ways amount to defeats in terms of improving the human condition. As he says, "we have fallen victims to the work of our hands; it is as if the forces we had conquered have conquered us."

How do we unravel ourselves from this intense web of technological pressures, from "hurry sickness"? It could start with intention: deciding we want to live a slower, simpler life. By accepting that we deserve to rest from everything, especially from that which separates us from life in the Spirit. We can start by enacting "no-go" spaces and times for our phones and from social media.

Our faith has long affirmed the concept of the Sabbath as a spiritual practice that can awaken in us a deeper realization of who God is, enabling us to savour God's spirit through entering into the holy present – a time of stillness and peace. Sabbath need not be limited to just one day of the week, but rather invites us into a mindset of letting go, of reflecting deeply about life and where we are going on our path through life.

Theologian Jurgen Moltmann ponders the moments when our souls rest in God in his book *The Spirit of Life*, noting "if we become one with ourselves, the Shekinah (presence of God) comes to rest." A life of relentless activity and distraction makes it harder, if not impossible, to attain this.

It's worth noting that some of the most significant times in the life of Jesus occurred when he "unplugged," that is, when he went off alone to pray in a garden, in the desert or elsewhere. Some today might say Jesus was "doing nothing." Yet Jesus' solitude was essential to his intimacy with God. He invites us to join him in a deeper connection to God.

Jesus also encouraged the disciples, after he had gone out to do ministry, to separate from the people following them: "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while" (Mark 6:30-32). In the current context, he likely would have added: "Make sure you've turned off your phones. No checking your email, Facebook or Instagram either."

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

Diocese speaks out to protect Greenbelt

Development threatens prime farmland, wildlife habitat

BY ELIN GOULDEN

The Diocese of Toronto extends far beyond the urban metropolis, encompassing 26,000 sq. km. of south-central Ontario. Nearly half of Ontario's Greenbelt falls within the diocesan boundaries, including most of the proposed route of Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass. This area includes the watersheds of major tributaries to Lake Ontario, critical wildlife habitat, and much of our province's prime agricultural land – and it is under threat of development as never before.

"Once you pave it over, you never get it back," says the Rev. Barbara Russell, deacon at St. George, Grafton, a member of the diocesan Social Justice & Advocacy Committee, and a retired farmer. She sees the loss of prime agricultural land as a direct threat to rural communities and a weakening of Ontario's ability to feed its people.

According to the 2016 Census of Agriculture, Ontario was losing 175 acres of farmland every day. By 2021, this figure had jumped to 319 acres a day. Peggy Brekvel, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, calls this rate of farmland loss "simply not sustainable if we hope to have any kind of food sovereignty or independence in Ontario." Meanwhile, Ontario has already lost over 70 per cent of its wetlands, 80 per cent of its forests, and 98 per cent of its grasslands. More than 200 plant and animal species are at risk in Ontario, largely due to loss of habitat. Yet the passage of Bill 23 and the provincial government's highway building plans mean that the loss of farmland and wildlife habitat in southern Ontario is just ramping up.

Called to care

The call to care for the earth is one of the earliest commandments given by God to



The government's proposed Highway 413 is expected to add more than 17 tonnes of carbon emissions by 2050.

humanity in scripture. While for much of our history humankind has done a spectacularly bad job of honoring this command, more recently, Christians and others have been reawakened to the need to respect and sustain the life of the earth. It has been enshrined as the Fifth Mark of Mission of the Anglican Communion and, since 2013, incorporated into the baptismal vows of the Anglican Church of Canada. Our diocese has also recognized creation care as one of our leading justice priorities.

That's why our diocese has been vocal in advocating for the preservation of the Greenbelt from development, including speaking out against the proposed Highway 413 and Bradford Bypass. We have incorporated our concerns into our provincial pre-budget submissions, official submissions on Bill 23, and advocacy letters. We were among 50 faith leaders and organizations who signed an open letter from the David Suzuki Foundation protesting the construction of Highway 413. At the local level, Anglicans across our diocese have joined protests against Greenbelt development, and written, called and visited with their MPPs to express their concerns.

Another dimension of concern is that local First Nations have not been adequately consulted about the impacts of Greenbelt development. Days before Bill 23 became law, the Chiefs of Ontario released a statement calling it "unacceptable and an abuse of power" for the Ford

government to change how development projects in Ontario are approved without engaging First Nations. Individual chiefs, including Chief Kelly LaRocca of the Mississaugas of the Scugog First Nation and Chief Stacey LaForme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, have also raised their concerns. "We are trying to build right relations with our neighbours, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island," says the Rev. Ruthanne Ward, incumbent of Ascension, Port Perry. "If we as Anglicans are truly committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, that means recognizing their inherent, treaty and legislative rights to be properly consulted about development within their territories. The actions of this government take us in the opposite direction."

Stress on environment

The Greenbelt protects 721,000 acres of wildlife habitat (including habitat for 78 species at risk) and 750,000 acres of farmland. The health of its watersheds also affects the drinking water of over seven million Canadians. More than that, it helps mitigate the effects of climate change. Wetlands absorb rainwater, mitigate flooding during extreme weather events and help to filter out pollutants. Trees and other vegetation lower ambient temperatures and absorb carbon dioxide. These "ecosystem services" have an estimated value of \$3.2 billion per year and could become even more valuable as the effects

of climate change continue to grow.

Paving over the Greenbelt to create mega-highways not only does away with those benefits but multiplies the environmental stressors. Highway 413 alone is estimated to add more than 17 tonnes of carbon emissions by 2050 – when Canada will already be hard-pressed to reach the goal of carbon neutrality by the same date. It is also estimated to add at least \$1 billion in costs related to air pollution. Ontario members of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) have spoken out against the highway proposal, citing the greater risk of respiratory illness and mortality in communities along major highways due to air pollution. Paved surfaces, unlike those covered by vegetation, increase runoff, leading to increased flooding and water pollution. Moreover, the creation of a new highway is associated with increased urban sprawl along its route, creating yet another wave of pressure on the threatened Greenbelt.

Urban and transportation planners have found that the long-term impact of highway building on reducing traffic congestion is minimal. Indeed, studies have found the opposite is true: traffic numbers tend to increase as more lanes of highway are created, following a phenomenon called "induced demand." Thus, while the positive impacts of creating new mega-highways are short-lived, the negative ones – reduced farmland and wildlife habitat, increased air and water pollution, increased carbon emissions and greater vulnerability to climate change impacts – will continue to be felt for generations to come.

Our welfare as the people of this province – our food, our water, our health and our resiliency in the face of climate change – is inextricably bound up with the health of the land on which we live and the creatures with whom we share it. As Romans 8:19 reminds us, "the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God." As children of God, charged to care for God's creation, let us continue to make our voices heard.

Elin Goulden is the diocese's Social Justice and Advocacy consultant. To learn more about advocacy to protect the Greenbelt, visit the Creation Care webpage on the diocese's website, www.toronto.anglican.ca.

I encourage you not to look back



My friend and former colleague Dave Robinson was fond of saying that many church leaders suffer from "terminal nostalgia." That is to say, they retain memories of a

church long past and yearn for that same model of church to return. That terminal nostalgia clings to an assumption that if only we did things the way we used to in the 1960s and '70s, the ministry and position of the Church would blossom once again. For example, there appears to be a very strong correlation in thinking by some that robust Sunday school attendance was a direct result of using the Prayer Book, or that church growth was connected to the messianic appeal of a particular priest.

Recently I was told the story of a church in

THE STEWARD

By PETER MISIASZEK

our diocese that once boasted 400 students in its church school program. I was impressed – who wouldn't be? But then I asked, "Where are they now?" The response was less than predictable: "Good question." Sometimes I think it's really easy to look to the past through rose-coloured glasses without acknowledging that things weren't always as straightforward as we would have liked them to be. Times change, after all, and so must the Church.

Terminal nostalgia can be a form of inertia that prevents churches from responding to their new reality. Now that we are on the other side of the pandemic, I want to encourage you not to look back. I actually want to plead with you not to yearn for the way

things were. Yes, cling to the relationships and the good memories of church life, but also recognize that so much has changed in three short years. During that time, we've made some impressive changes to the way we do church that we might not have gotten around to in another 10 years without the pandemic.

Hybrid worship, online events, electronic giving, virtual Bible study and enhanced website design are just some aspects of our new reality. And while I can appreciate that online worship might not have the same solemn appeal as in-person worship, it is a gateway for seekers, the housebound or even the sluggish to stay connected and engaged in it. Thanks to technology, we can share the Anglican journey with more people than ever before. Those who choose to avoid this engagement opportunity do so at their peril.

So too has the pandemic led to the prolif-

eration of online giving. FaithWorks has seen a five-fold increase in the number of gifts via its website – prompted by either direct mail (traditional) or e-newsletter (recent). While newsprint is still an important way that we stay connected with one important demographic, email and social media allow us to connect with another. As more of our commerce becomes cashless, it is only a matter of time before tap-to-give kiosks replace the offertory plate itself.

I am heartened by the fact that the Anglican family remained steadfast in its generosity throughout the pandemic. For nearly 20 years with the diocese, I have had a front row seat on acts of generosity, and I never have to doubt that we will rise to any challenge and respond with enthusiasm and energy.

As we emerge from the testing experience of being disconnected from corporate wor-

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People of different faiths share views

BY STUART MANN

THE Bishop's Committee on Interfaith Ministry hosted an educational event online on Jan. 30. The gathering, Exploring Interfaith Ministry, included small group discussions and a panel of speakers from the Buddhist, Islamic and Sikh traditions.

The 2021 census identified more than 100 religions practiced by Canadians. More than half of Canadians identified as Christian while more than one third reported having no religion. The proportion who identified as Muslim, Hindu or Sikh and others has doubled in the last 20 years.

The Rev. Roshni Jayawardena, the committee's co-coordinator and one of the evening's facilitators, said interfaith ministry can take many forms, from reaching out to neighbours of different faiths to partnering together to facilitate peace and hope.

"There are so many things that you can do," she said. "It's important to remember that those moments of interfaith connection shouldn't be left to our bishops or clergy or a committee – they are things that we can all do, and I think things we're



Some of the event's participants. Front row from left: the Rev. Gerlyn Henry and the Rev. Roshni Jayawardena. Back row from left: the Rev. Jeff Nowers, Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa, Dr. Jennifer Bright and the Rev. Canon John Hill. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BISHOP'S COMMITTEE ON INTERFAITH MINISTRY

called to do as Christians."

The event preceded World Interfaith Harmony Week, held Feb. 1-7. The aim of the week is to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith.

The panel discussion, moderated by the Rev. Canon John Hill, featured Dr. Jennifer Bright, a Bud-

dhist, Imam Abdul Hai Patel, a Muslim, and Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa, a Sikh. Canon Hill, a member of the committee, asked the panel three questions and also asked questions sent in from the audience.

In answer to the question, "What is interfaith engagement and what are its goals?" Dr. Bright answered,

"It's a way of being together, of finding our commonality. There can be a lot of religious strife in the world, so I think it's important for us to model what cooperation looks like, and that we can get along and we do great things together."

Imam Patel said, "Interfaith dialogue is a way of engaging. It's about exploring common ground and coming to an understanding, not to change one another but to share about other faiths so that we can respect each other and maintain harmony, peace and civility. We can enrich ourselves through knowledge of other faiths."

Guru Khalsa added, "Interfaith dialogue hopefully is a place where we can drop our defences and agendas."

The panelists were asked to identify the challenges and obstacles to interfaith engagement within their own faith tradition. Imam Patel said people of all faiths have been brought up to believe that certain actions will dilute their faith, or they will lose their own belief. "That is the fear that prevents many people from engaging in dialogue, and that's what we need to overcome," he said. "We need to learn about each other so that we can work

together to solve problems in the community." He said Canada is far ahead of many other countries when it comes to interfaith dialogue and is "a model for the world."

Canon Hill asked the panelists to share their experiences of interfaith dialogue. Dr. Bright said it is important to talk about differences as well as areas in common. "Part of growing together means sometimes we need to be uncomfortable, sometimes we need to be challenged. Sometimes being uncomfortable can lead us into deeper relationship. We need to be comfortable being uncomfortable. If we're going to solve the problems we have in common, we need to have deeper trust."

In a question from the audience, the panelists were asked how a visitor could attend a place of worship without feeling like a trespasser and in a way that was respectful. Dr. Bright said people of faith were generally hospitable and want to share their religions. "I think any healthy congregation of any spiritual tradition is going to be welcoming and will accept you as you are. I can appreciate the fear and anxiety, but I think most of the

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Women at a Crossroads

A residential program for women seeking direction in their lives

July 7- July 30, 2023

If you are interested in:

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There is no fee for room and board, but participants contribute to the life of the Community by sharing in the Sisters' work. A monetary contribution (tax deductible) may be made to the Sisterhood but is not required.

Application deadline: April 10, 2023

For more information

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ALL TOGETHER

Christian leaders from across the Greater Toronto Area gather for a photo after a service celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at St. Andrew's Presbyterian church on Jan. 23. From the Diocese of Toronto are Bishop Kevin Robertson (seated far right), the Rev. Canon Susan Climo (standing fourth from right) and the Rev. Canon Philip Hobson (standing second from left). Thirteen denominations were represented at the service. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, held Jan. 18-25, invites Christians around the world to pray for the unity of all Christians, to reflect on scripture together, to participate in jointly organized ecumenical services and to share fellowship. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

IN MOTION

Appointments

- The Rev. Canon John Read, Honorary Assistant, Redeemer, Bloor St., Jan. 15.
- The Rev. Claire Latimer-Dennis, Assistant Curate (part-time, Sundays only), Church of the Resurrection, Jan. 22.
- The Rev. Christopher Dangpilen, Incumbent, San Lorenzo Ruiz Church, Feb. 1.
- The Rev. Vernon La Fleur, Interim Priest-in-Charge, Our Saviour, Feb. 1.

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. Cyprian
- Christ Church, Scarborough
- Grace Church, Scarborough
- Christ Church, Bolton
- Parish of Craighurst and Midhurst
- St. George, Haliburton

Parish Selection Committee Process

First Phase - (not yet receiving names):

- Grace Church on-the-Hill
- St. George Memorial, Oshawa

Second Phase - (receiving names via Area Bishop):

- Holy Trinity, Thornhill
- St. John the Baptist, Oak Ridges
- St. James Cathedral
- St. Aidan, Toronto

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names): N/A

Ordinations

- The Rev. Jillian Ruch will be ordained a Priest at St. Bride, Clarkson on March 5 at 4 p.m.
- The Rev. Dr. Max Dionisio will be ordained a Priest at St. John the Evangelist, Peterborough on March 26 at 4 p.m.

Retirements

- The Rev. Jo-Anne Billinger's has announced her retirement. Her last Sunday at St. Paul the Apostle, Rexdale will be April 16.
- The Rev. Canon Philip Hobson, OGS, has announced his retirement. His last Sunday at St. Martin in-the-Fields will be April 23.

PRAYER CYCLE

FOR MARCH

1. Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach
2. St. George, Allandale
3. The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer
4. St. George, Utopia
5. Bishop Andrew Asbil
6. St. John, Craighurst
7. St. Luke, Creemore
8. The Anglican Church Women (ACW) – Enid Corbett, Diocesan President
9. St. Margaret, Barrie
10. St. Paul, Innisfil
11. The Community of Deacons (Archdeacon Kyn Barker)
12. The Synod Council of the Diocese
13. St. Paul, Midhurst
14. St. Thomas, Shanty Bay

15. Trinity Church, Barrie
16. All Saints, Kingsway
17. Atonement, Alderwood
18. Christ Church St. James
19. Etobicoke-Humber Deanery
20. Christ the King
21. The Prayer Book Society
22. Church of South India (CSI), Toronto
23. San Lorenzo-Dufferin
24. St. George on-the-Hill
25. St. Joseph
26. The Cast the Net Visioning Project
27. St. Margaret, New Toronto
28. St. Matthew, Islington
29. Churchwardens and Treasurers of the Parishes of the Diocese
30. St. Matthias, Etobicoke
31. St. Paul the Apostle, Rexdale

Move out of comfort zone, says speaker

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time you'll be okay. I think sometimes people are afraid to move out of their comfort zones. And we sometimes fear the unknown and are afraid of causing offence. But in my experience, people are quite forgiving."

Due to terrorist and violent attacks on synagogues and mosques, Imam Patel said some places of worship have security measures in place and should be contacted ahead of time. Once arrangements have been made, visits are warm and friendly, he said.

Before the panel discussion, the audience was divided into small

groups and asked to discuss the following questions: Why do interfaith ministry? What challenges present themselves? What have been your experiences of interfaith ministry, as an individual or in a group?

In answer to the first question, a participant said, "We won't have peace in the world unless we have peace among the religions." In answer to the second question, a person said, "Many hold different attitudes toward gender and it's difficult to connect with groups that have restrictions." In answer to the third question, a participant wished for an "exchange program"

between a church and a mosque on a specific day. "This would make it less scary to visit out of the blue," said the person.

At the end of the two-hour forum, the Rev. Jeff Nowers, the committee's co-coordinator, thanked all those who participated. He said the event had "just scratched the tip of the iceberg" and indicated that another similar event would be held in the future.

For more information about interfaith ministry in the diocese, contact the Rev. Roshni Jayawardena and the Rev. Jeff Nowers at interfaith@toronto.anglican.ca.

LOOKING AHEAD

To submit items for Looking Ahead, email editor@toronto.anglican.ca. The deadline for the April issue is Mar. 1. Parishes can also promote their events on the diocese's website Calendar at www.toronto.anglican.ca.

Gatherings

MARCH 1-29 - Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 7 p.m., plus light refreshments at 7:30 p.m. and the Rev. Rob Mitchell's five-part

Lenten series on the faith of Queen Elizabeth II, based on the book by Dudley Delffs, St. Olave, Bloor Street and Windermere Avenue, Toronto.

MARCH 13-17 - March Break STEAM Camp, open to all ages, Holy Trinity, Guildwood, 85 Livingston Rd., Toronto. For information or to register, contact denise@trinity-guildwood.org or call 416-261-9503. **MARCH 21** - Guildwood Tech Skills Workshop, 4 p.m., Holy Trinity, Guildwood, 85 Livingston Rd., Toronto. Registration is \$25 per session. Do you find technology confusing or frustrating? If so, you're not alone. This workshop offers help with technology for the elderly, seniors and anyone who is struggling. For more information, email denise@trinityguildwood.org or call 416-261-9503.

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Quilters in Wasaga Beach have faith

During the early months of the pandemic, five women at Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach decided to use fabric left over from their new altar frontal to make a quilt. It would be a biblical quilt, with each square representing a story in the Bible, such as Jacob's ladder, Joseph's coat of many colours and Jesus' crown of thorns.

The quilters – Jane Lancaster, Mary Courtney, Heather Kaufman, Valerie Beasley and Nancy Perrault – didn't know the final purpose of the quilt when they began, but they had faith that it would unfold. They decided which square they would like to tackle, and Heather Kaufman, temporarily in Toronto, cut out the fabric, labelled the pieces and mailed packages to each quilter.

Many of the squares were difficult and most did not come with instructions! But the quilters persevered. They kept busy sewing at home and tried to forget that they were in a pandemic. Finally, in the summer of 2022, they met in the church basement and set out the squares in a pleasing but challenging pattern called "on point." In September 2022, just as they were finishing the quilt, beloved parishioner Marlene Hayes became ill, and before they knew it, she was at Campbell House hospice.

Marlene died on Oct. 4, 2022, and the quilters realized that the quilt begun in faith during the pandemic should be donated to Campbell House in her memory.

Finally, the quilters came together to hand-sew the two-and-a-half inch binding around the outside of the quilt. And just as mothers, grandmothers and neighbours have done in the past, they sat at a table and hand-sewed the binding. As they did, they shared stories and memories of Marlene. The quilt contains 18 biblical squares from the New and Old Testaments in addition to a maple leaf to represent our country.

Submitted by the Rev. Louise Dightam, assistant curate at Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach.

Church gives bursaries, scholarships

For the past 15 years, St. Paul on-the-Hill, Pickering has donated bursaries to groups or individuals in financial need around the world. In 2022, the church's Arcelia Hunte Memorial International Bursary



Quilters from Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach stand with their quilt. From left are Jane Lancaster, Mary Courtney, Heather Kaufman, Valerie Beasley and Nancy Perrault. PHOTO BY THE REV. LOUISE DIGTAM

was presented to Universal Seniors Social Services Uganda, which seeks to improve the lives of seniors in Uganda through food security, nutrition and medical care.

Over the years, 16 bursaries have been donated to individuals or groups in Tanzania, Guyana, Uganda, Guatemala, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Egypt, Cambodia, Algeria, Nepal and Belize.

In addition to the international bursaries, the church awards scholarships to help local Grade 12 students pay for their post-secondary education. The Youth Achievement Scholarship is unique, as it includes a spiritual component. Since 2008, the church has given scholarships to 50 students who are members of the church or reside in Pickering or Ajax. In 2022, scholarships were given to Teresa Bowman, Paige Ramjist, Kathryn Scott and Lauren Smillie. These students demonstrated outstanding academic performance in addition to commendable leadership and service within their schools, communities and churches.

For more information about the scholarship program, including how to donate to it, call the church office at 905-839-7909.

Submitted by Marilyn Sinclair and Marg Jocz.



Marilyn Sinclair and Marg Jocz of St. Paul on-the-Hill, Pickering present parishioner Kathryn Scott with a Youth Achievement Scholarship. PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. PAUL ON-THE-HILL, PICKERING.

Embrace opportunities

Continued from Page 9

ship, let us cling to those things that undoubtedly define us: our music, common prayer, an abiding commitment to social justice and outreach, hospitality and inclusion. Let us also embrace those opportunities to cast the net wider through technology, engagement with young people, new leadership, the welcoming of seekers, and renewed conversations about mission and generosity.

With recent discussions about declining church membership and participation in faith com-

munities, there is a temptation to allow fate to take its course and become a self-fulfilling prophesy. Contraction is taking place, but it need not be the final story. The lessons from the pandemic might be a lifeline that has forced us to innovate in ways that weren't even on our radar screens. So, while there is pain in transition, there is always hope.

Peter Misiaszek is the diocese's director of Stewardship Development.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

St. Mark, Port Hope hosts a celebration on Jan. 15 to mark the Rev. Dr. Graham Cotter's 98th birthday. Dr. Cotter is an honorary assistant at the church. Taking part in the festivities are, from left, the Rev. Johanna Pak, priest-in-charge, the Rev. Lesley Barclay, a former incumbent of the church, Dr. Cotter, the Rev. Dr. Patrick Gray, an honorary assistant, and Bishop Riscylla Shaw. Bishop Shaw also blessed the church's new missal stand, made by the Men's Woodworking Group of St. Timothy, Agincourt. PHOTO BY ANNE ORAM