

Enews to the St. Mark's Pews
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St. Mark's Anglican Church est. 1792
Niagara-on-the Lake, ON

Hear the Good News! Hear the Good news!

I'm writing this two days before the twentieth anniversary of the 9-11 terrorist attacks. It's a day none of us will ever forget. I was living in New York at the time and was just beginning my middler (second) year at General Seminary in Manhattan. It was a glorious and cloudless morning. We never had classes on Tuesday mornings, and so I was rattling around my room, trying to clean up from a drinks party I'd given the night before. My phone rang, and I answered. It was my friend Brian in Boston.

"What's happening, Leighton?" he asked.

"What are you talking about?" I replied.

He was incredulous. "Haven't you heard the news? A plane just crashed into the World Trade Centre."

Only then did I hear register the sound of sirens outside. Living in New York, you get used to all sorts of street noise and, in time, learn to filter it out. The amazing thing was that I wasn't filtering out ordinary Manhattan street noise: the air was filled with the sound of *literally* hundreds of sirens.

Brian briefly told me what had happened and I said I'd call him back. I went next door to my friend Chris who had a TV, and I knocked. He answered in a fog – why was I knocking on a morning when we had no classes? – and I burst in telling him something was happening at the World Trade Centre and we should turn on the television. We did. And we saw the scene the world was watching. Only a few seconds after we tuned in, the second plane flew into the south tower and what we had assumed was a terrible accident clearly was anything but.

"Jesus Christ!" I said. And if ever a curse was at the same time a prayer, this was the time.

The rest of the day is a jumble of frantic memories which I don't remember—or would rather not remember. But I will never forget the Sunday following the attacks—September 16. I was working as a seminarian at St. Bartholomew's on Park Avenue, and the service there that morning was elegiac and memorial in nature. But it was also infused with the spirit of Easter and a sense of what the Burial Office calls a sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. The church—which seats something like 1400—was overflowing. It was clear that there were many, many

people in the congregation who weren't exactly regular churchgoers but who had been drawn there, as if by some homing instinct. I admit I thought to myself, "How typical that people who have never given God or the Church a second thought suddenly come thronging when disaster strikes." But then I remembered the old phrase: there are no atheists in foxholes. There are no atheists at times like these. When life is frightening, confusing, depressing, uncertain or meaningless, most of us turn to God. And what else is God for except to be there when we seek him? We need to remember that God is to be found where he is needed most—in trouble, sorrow, sickness, adversity, and even death itself. We also need to remember that even though we may forget God, and couldn't care less for him, God never forgets us; and that he cares so much for us that he came to live and die as one of us.

There are many lessons yet to be learned from those terrible events twenty years ago. One of the lessons the Church needs to remember—and don't forget the Church is nothing more than you and I—is that we are called to be always open, welcoming, accepting and available. We get so distracted wondering where the people are, why they aren't in church like the rest of us, and what we can do to get them to come but we're not called to shove religion down people's throats, or to put it like a yoke around their shoulders. We're not called to judge people for what we perceive to be faithlessness. We're not called to minister only to those who are like us. And we're not called to offer simplistic answers to the complex and troubling questions of life and existence.

What we *are* called to do is commend the hope that is within us, never forgetting that even among the debris of life we can build a palace of hope. Those strangers in church *knew* that we are all bound to one another, that there are some things like joy, faith, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace that can never be destroyed. Above all they knew that though the world had been shaken, there was something unshakable and enduring: the power of love.

In September 2002, St. Bartholomew's Choir premiered a cantata the church had commissioned for the first anniversary of the attacks from composer David Conte and poet John Sterling Walker. As I sat in the pew the Sunday morning it was performed and read through the poem, I realized that it was an acrostic; it could be read vertically, taking the first letter of each line. Read this way, it said:

God dwells in joy in the midst of sorrow.

So let our prayer be that in a world of narrow fears we will be the messengers of God's inclusive and strengthening grace and that in a world of crushing sorrow we will be agents of God's boundless and indescribable joy.

Grace and peace,
Leighton

PARISH UPDATES

Keeping in Touch On-line

*Now that we are back to Church in-person our Sunday morning services are **live streamed** on Facebook and YouTube at 10:30 am. Simply go to St. Mark's Niagara-on-the-Lake Facebook page.*

Please use these URLs to watch:

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Marks-Anglican-Church-Niagara-on-the-Lake-235477056649804/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-vVgNf0GbuxrfIjW4sOXzQ>

Our Enews and Order of Service can also be accessed through new website:

Enews: <https://stmarksnotl.org/news/news.>

Order of Service: <https://stmarksnotl.org/worship-ministry/order-of-service-bulletin>

WARDEN'S LETTER

We are ready for Bible study and Wednesday morning prayer services, detail will be in Enews. We continue Sunday morning service and live streaming. There was great improvement in the video and music, but still some difficulty in the audio which we hope will be fixed this week. Patience please! For the next two Sundays there will be Baptisms as part of our regular services.

We still need a Counters lead and counters when we are back to regular services. It takes a maximum of 15 minutes to do the counting and deliver to the office each Sunday. It is done after the 2nd service. Our Greeters schedules are in need of a few more volunteers. Again it is not until we are back at regular service. The need is both for 8:30 and 10:30 and only every 4 weeks.

Although the limit for attendees on Sundays is 50 including everyone, it is important to register in advance. The deadline is Friday at noon. If last minute please contact one of the Wardens before Sunday. As we welcome all in the name of Christ, worshippers are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated out of care for the vulnerable among us, although this is not required.

As we now have the border open and other tourists we can expect some wanting to attend our Sunday service. The past week we had 7 walk-ins and all must complete registration in the hall prior to coming into the Church. A welcome back to Bob Gains and his daughter Elizabeth. They were very impressed with the interior changes in the Church.

Parish Council dates have been set for the next 4 months and notice has been sent out. Please put the dates on your calendar.

We are ordering 2022 weekly donation envelopes based on this past year list. If you are not planning to use them because you will be donating by direct debit, credit card or other, please let office know.

Please, see below the Diocese of Niagara Covid-19 Vaccination Policy, especially its paragraph on Applicability. Any questions, please contact Wardens.

As always a reminder to advise the office of anyone who needs assistance in any way, including a phone call, food picked up and delivered or some companionship through phone, Facetime or over the fence.

Stay safe – keep well

Called to Life – Compelled to Love

Your Wardens



Diocese of Niagara COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Intent

The Bishop of the Diocese of Niagara has enacted this policy to increase the protection and safety of our parishioners, clergy, employees, and all whom we serve by reducing the transmission of COVID-19 in our church and office buildings and other ministry spaces. Achieving high immunization rates is part of a range of measures and actions that can help prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 to those most vulnerable in our society. Vaccination against COVID-19 helps reduce the number of new cases and severe outcomes, including hospitalizations and death due to COVID-19.

Applicability

Those functioning in ministry roles have been entrusted with responsibilities which include protection of the vulnerable. As such, the following people will be required to be immunized with two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada, unless a legal exemption has been granted, to serve in the Diocese of Niagara during this pandemic:

- all clergy holding a Bishop's licence or permission;
- all licensed lay workers;
- all diocesan staff;
- all liturgical leaders including, but not limited to:
 - musicians and vocalists;
 - readers, intercessors, servers, and communion assistants;
 - wardens;
 - greeters, ushers, and sidespeople;
- all people ministering with children, youth, and young adults; and
- all people ministering with marginalized or vulnerable populations, including food security and other outreach ministries.

To continue serving in these roles, persons designated above must have received their first dose of vaccine by September 30, 2021 and the second no later than October 31, 2021. Vaccination status must also be kept current by obtaining booster doses as recommended by public health authorities.

As we welcome all in the name of Christ, worshippers are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated out of care for the vulnerable among us, although this will not be required.

Policy Requirements

For clergy, lay workers & diocesan staff

Proof of vaccination must be submitted via email to Mary Anne Grant (maryanne.grant@niagaraanglican.ca). Alternatively, arrangements may be made to share a copy of the vaccine confirmation via Zoom. Confirmation information (name and date of second vaccination) will be stored securely and destroyed upon expiration of this policy. This will not become part of an individual's permanent clergy or employment file. Supervisors, coworkers, and other parties shall not have access to the vaccine confirmation information or the details of the same, except to the extent necessary to implement this policy.

For parish or regional ministry ministers

Each parish or regional ministry will maintain a record of the lay persons in these roles with an indication that they have provided proof of vaccination. A trusted person is to be assigned to visually check each person's vaccination confirmation and record the name of each person and the date of their second vaccination. Confirmation information will be stored securely and destroyed at the end of the pandemic.

Exemptions Under the *Human Rights Code*

Anyone, be they clergy, lay workers, staff, parish or regional ministers, who is subject to a legal exemption from vaccination under the Human Rights Code (the "Code") shall provide reasonable proof of the same. For example, those medically unable to be vaccinated must obtain a written doctor's note exempting them from this vaccination requirement and submit it to the director of human resources.

Those with a satisfactory exemption will be required to regularly provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test prior to in-person activities, at a frequency determined appropriate by the director of human resources.

All persons requiring accommodation under the Code, whether it be in vaccination or testing, shall be provided with such accommodation up to the point of undue hardship. The director of human resources or his delegate will engage with a person entitled to an exemption for Code related grounds under this section in a co-operative process to determine if reasonable accommodation is possible, including alternative ways a person might continue to safely work or minister. This will consist of an individual assessment based on the specific facts regarding the employee or volunteer's duties, the parish's or diocese's needs and the duty to accommodate up to the point of undue hardship. While every attempt to provide a person who requires an exemption with reasonable and dignified accommodation, there may be situations where an individual cannot be accommodated short of undue hardship.

Non-Compliance

Office-holders and employees who do not provide the required proof of vaccination – or a satisfactory medical exemption may be subject to disciplinary action and/or restricted from performing their duties. Those holding a designated position on a volunteer basis may be asked to refrain from the exercise of their ministry.

Additional Measures

All directives of the Government of Ontario and local public health authorities must be always adhered to, including the following foundational pandemic guidance: minimizing the number of persons in a place at the same time, maintaining a physical distance of at least 2 metres, using well-constructed, well-fitting masks, practising good hand and respiratory hygiene, and staying home if feeling ill.

Amendments

This policy is developed in accordance with current medical and scientific recommendations in an ever-changing landscape. As more information and best practices become known, the policy may be amended by the Bishop of Niagara from time to time.

For more information, please contact Canon Terry DeForest, director of human resources, at terry.deforest@niagaraanglican.ca.

WORSHIP:



Sunday Prayers with Bishop Susan

The services begin at 10:00am on [diocesan Facebook page](#) and then will be posted on [YouTube channel](#).

READINGS FOR SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sunday, September 12, 2021 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Proverbs 1:20-33 Wisdom is personified, as a woman. In places in this book, she is called Lady Wisdom. She tells those who have refused to listen to her advice that they will be without resources when disaster strikes. They will be punished severely at the end of time.

James 3:1-12 The author continues his exhortation regarding Christian conduct. Now he rebukes teachers for intemperate speech. He is a teacher himself. The tongue, the instrument of the teacher, can be used for good or for evil.

Mark 8:27-38 Jesus mentions his Passion for the first time. He is the Messiah, the one anointed by God and expected by Jewish people, but there is one difference: contrary to their expectations, part of God's plan is that he suffer, be rejected by people, be killed, and rise again.

Prayers of the People (submitted by Donna Belleville)

From the complexity of our lives, let us pray. Almighty God, fountain of all goodness: you are our mother, our father, our friend and the source of all being. You are closer than our own breathing. Deepen our love for you and for one another. Let our hearts, homes and churches be genuine places of welcome and hospitality to others, especially those on the margins of society.

Bless this parish family of St. Mark's and those who minister to us. Help us to work together in harmony to serve one another, our community and the world. We give thanks for the presence in

our community of Brett Sherlock and James Booty, David and Gene Anne Smith, Jennifer Smith, and Wendy Steel and we pray for them and their families.

Gracious Lord, we pray for peace in our inner selves, in our homes, our country and the world, and for justice and healing in places afflicted by violence and oppression. Remembering today the struggles in Afghanistan. We pray for leaders who will drive away despair from our politics, revive our dreams of justice, truth and reconciliation and restore our passion for what is good and right. For the health and safety of those we love. Help us to show your face to our friends, our family and all those we encounter on our journey. For the foresight and determination to protect our planet from ourselves. **LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYERS.**

In the Cycle of Prayer for the Niagara Diocese we pray for Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton, the Reverend Dr. Tim Dobbin, Rector and Dean of Niagara; the Right Reverend David Ralph Spence, Pastoral Assistant; the Reverend Canon Patrick Doran, Honorary Assistant; the Reverend Canon J. Lefebvre, Honorary Assistant; the Reverend Canon Eric Charles Mills, Honorary Assistant; the Reverend Canon Brain Shoesmith, Honorary Assistant; the Reverend Canon William Thomas, Honorary Assistant; the Reverend Dr. Eric Griffin, Honorary Assistant; and the people of that parish. In the Anglican-Lutheran Cycle of Prayer, we pray for the Most Rev. Lynne McNaughton, Metropolitan, and the clergy and people of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia and the Yukon, and Rev. Kathy Martin, Assistant to the Bishop, and the staff of the British Columbia Synod.

We pray for the whole human family, that the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts may be replaced by bonds of love, humility and harmony. For those who find themselves abandoned, forgotten, without hope. For those who are sick in body, mind or spirit and those who care for them. Remembering In our parish: Gillian MacKay, Terry, Don Dicarlo, Jan Brown, Lisa, Dorothy Walker, Sharon, Dick, Doug Garrett, Bev Garrett, Jodey Porter, Sean, and Joshua. For the shut-ins: Fred Habermehl, Fred Dixon, Joy Ormsby, Selina Appleby, and Joan Draper. We pray for those who have gone before us: Ross Tomlinson, Peter Ford, Tony Dolynski and Jackie Johnson. Welcome them into your loving arms. Give courage to those who are bereaved, that they may find the strength to face the days ahead. **LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYERS.**

We pray for all the students, teachers and staff who have returned to our schools this week. Make our schools safe places where our children and grandchildren are nurtured, surrounded by love and acceptance, and helped to grow in strength, knowledge, kindness and generosity of spirit. **LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYERS.**

Everlasting God, send us out into the world today with our hearts renewed in worship, our minds in wisdom and our hands in service, strengthened by our fellowship and determined to bring reconciliation and healing to our community and to the world. Let us go forth to build bridges, not walls. **AMEN.**