



# ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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## Archbishop will be great ambassador

BY MARITES N. SISON  
STAFF WRITER

The primate of the Anglican Church of Canada says the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, will be “a great ambassador” who can steer “holy conversations.”

Welby, 56, was the bishop of Durham and succeeded Archbishop Rowan Williams, who retired at the end of 2012.

Speaking at the fall meeting (Nov. 15 to 18) of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) in Mississauga, Ont., Archbishop Fred Hiltz spoke of Welby’s intellectual capacity, negotiation skills and deep commitment to reconciliation, mission and ecumenical relations. “I think we can all look forward to Welby’s leadership,” said Hiltz, who first met Welby in 2009.

The Canadian primate, along with all the primates in the worldwide Anglican Communion, has been invited to attend Welby’s enthronement in Canterbury Cathedral on March 21, 2013.

Hiltz expressed best wishes on behalf of the Anglican

“I think we can all look forward to his leadership.”

—Archbishop Fred Hiltz

Church of Canada in a letter inviting the new Archbishop of Canterbury to visit, possibly around the time of General Synod 2016 in Toronto. “We rejoice in his appointment and assure him of a warm welcome,” said Hiltz.

An executive in the oil industry for 11 years, Welby left to pursue a degree in theology in 1989, six years after the death of his infant daughter. He was ordained a deacon in 1992 and spent 15 years serving the diocese of Coventry as curate and rector of various parishes. In 2007, Welby was installed as dean of Liverpool Cathedral, the largest cathedral in England, and three years later, he became the bishop of Durham.

Welby’s 20-year ministry includes conflict resolution in parts of Africa and the Middle East.



KEITH BLUNDY/AEGIS ASSOCIATES

CONFLICT RESOLUTION EXPERT Archbishop Justin Welby

## TEACHING MOMENT

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, has called declining revenues and a looming budget shortfall a “teaching moment handed to us by God.”

What’s needed now, said Hiltz, is “transformational change.” He called on the Council of General Synod (CoGS) members to find “the courage to let go of our deep attachments to old ways and structures” and to “dare to imagine new scenarios.” In recent years, the church has attempted to effect change, but “the structures don’t really look very different,” Hiltz noted.

CoGS members were asked to discuss Vision 2019 priorities, including a more streamlined structure for General Synod. The work done at CoGS is part of a series of discussions that will take place over the next eight months leading up to General Synod 2013 in July. This month, Hiltz is convening a national consultation in Toronto to look at the future of church.

CoGS approved a 2013 budget with a deficit of \$513,000. —M.S.

## STRONGER ADVOCACY NEEDED

BY MARITES N. SISON  
STAFF WRITER

The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) must strengthen its response to humanitarian needs, particularly in situations of violence against indigenous women, according to its partner from Mexico.

About half of Mexico’s population—or 52 million—live in poverty, most of them indigenous people whose basic needs are not being met, said Lina Barrio at a recent PWRDF-hosted global partnership roundtable in Toronto. Barrio is president of Kinal Antzenik, a grassroots

organization based in Mexico City that has been a PWRDF partner since 2006. PWRDF can help to ensure that governments in Canada and Latin America comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, she said, adding that her organization’s partnership with PWRDF has helped to empower indigenous women in southern Mexico.

Another visiting partner, Father Rex Reyes, underscored the needs of indigenous communities in the Philippines. Many are affected by mining activities of Canadian companies not observing environmental protection rules and regulations, said Reyes, who is general secretary

of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

Bishop Pie Ntukamazina, of the Anglican diocese of Bujumbura, said Burundi continues to struggle with inflation, poverty, HIV/AIDS, corruption in government and violation of human rights. The diocese has been in partnership with PWRDF since 1992 through programs that address HIV/AIDS, peace and health. As PWRDF fulfills its role as a “tool for community transformation,” it should remember that partnership is “about dialogue, gender equality, togetherness, advocacy for the voiceless and presenting a prophetic message to those in need,” he said.



SIMON CHAMBERS

PWRDF PARTNER Lina Barrio

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## FROM THE EDITOR

# Driving a hard bargain

KRISTIN JENKINS

For her 80th birthday, my grandmother decided to treat herself to a new car. She told not a soul. The object of her desire was a sporty Olds Cutlass, white with a maroon interior. It was the test-drive car at Trudeau Motors, a Belleville dealership that was also one of Nana's best Welcome Wagon sponsors. She knew them; they knew her. Nana sensed an opportunity to get the car she wanted at the

right price. The magic number? Ten thousand dollars. Cash.

The ticket price was \$12,500 but that didn't deter Nana. Firmly, she told the salesman what she was prepared to pay. Sensing an unex-

pected windfall, the man scampered back to the manager's office with a promise to return.

"Good news, Mrs. Hagerman," he said a few minutes later. "We've crunched the numbers and it looks like we can let you have the car

for \$11,000." He was grinning from ear to ear and appeared to be washing his hands without benefit of soap or water.

Nana looked back at him with her best poker face. "I'll pay \$10,000 and not a penny more," she said, evenly.

Back he went to the manager. "Good news, Mrs. Hagerman," he said again, on his return. The handwashing had stopped and his smile was tight-lipped. "We can let you have the car for \$10,000 plus tax."

As I listened to my grandmother tell this story several days later, I remember wondering why the Hard Bargaining Gene had not been passed along to anyone else in the family, including me. "I told that man," said my grandmother, leaning over her mug of tea, her voice rising slightly in anticipation of the denouement, "that I was paying \$10,000 and that included tax!"

Her right fist came down on the table for emphasis and she gave me an exasperated look that said, "Was the man a moron?"

Nana drove that Olds Cutlass with a point-and-shoot style—one foot on the gas, the other

on the brake. When she was 98, the car went to my sister, Laura. The mileage was just under 20,000 km.

In November, we learned that \$57,000 was disappearing from the *Anglican Journal's* 2013 operating budget. We sat down to take a look at what we could do to soften this blow. Rather than sacrificing staff, paper quality or colour, we've decided to telescope down the newspaper from 12 pages to eight. Our thinking is to keep the same quality of reading experience, just compress it. We've also come up with ideas for adding back those disappearing four pages in the form of sponsored special reports. This way, advertisers support the cost of the pages and we get to bring you more stories about life in the church.

I hope you understand there will never be cuts to our commitment to bring you the best newspaper and website possible. On that, we will always drive a hard bargain.

KRISTIN JENKINS is editor of the *Anglican Journal*.

**“He was grinning from ear to ear and appeared to be washing his hands without benefit of soap or water.”**



## WALKING TOGETHER

# Unity in God's love and work

MARK MACDONALD

Gathering funds for the poor of Jerusalem appears to have been a central initiative of the apostle Paul's ministry. Modern commentators have tended to stress the utilitarian and political aspects of this effort. Paul, they say, was trying to strengthen the common work of the church by increasing the ties between the growing new churches and the suffering mother church in Jerusalem.

This may be partially true, but it seems more likely that Paul was motivated by a spiritual and theological concern—expressing

the tangible proof of the gospel he preached. God has made us one in Jesus, not by destroying who we are individually and culturally, but by miraculously raising us to a new life of unity in the eternal purposes of God—unity in the work of Christ that was achieved even between those who formerly were suspicious strangers.

These very old truths are comparable to the spiritual import and meaning of the growing community between indigenous and non-indigenous people in our time. It is a unity that is achieved in the acceptance of difference and made tangible in mutual compassion. This unity, possible through the love and sacrifice of Jesus, is a unity that craves truth and demands a commitment to mutual well-being. Here we find the same challenge that Paul addressed in his work.

Over the past decade, close to 600 indigenous women have been murdered or reported missing. (Proportionate in the larger society, the figure would be 18,000.) This is tolerated by our government and society, along with a number of other gross inequalities. Can Christians live in the truth of the gospel and, at the same moment, live in a seemingly rigorous indifference to the need of our brothers and sisters? The answers to the problems facing indigenous peoples are certainly complex, but the energy that will lead to those answers is simple: love, compassion and hearts touched by the Good News that addresses all creation. Such love, such unity, is the unmistakable fruit of God's work among us.

MARK MACDONALD is national indigenous bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada.

**“This unity craves truth and demands a commitment to mutual well-being.”**



## YOUTH VIEW

# Stronger together

ANDREW STEPHENS-RENNIE

The hills were alive with the sound of music. There was singing and laughter and much discussion. As they gathered at Kingsfold Retreat Centre in Cochrane, Alta., they dreamed the future of youth ministry.

Stronger Together 2012 deepened eight key values designed to shape youth ministry: Knowing God, Living in Christ, Missional Direction, Moving Beyond Survival, God Conversations, Bold Experimentation, Spiritual Practice and Individual Young People. In a blog post, Caitlin Reilly Beck, a

youth minister at St. Philip's in Vancouver, wrote, "I love these values. They find a bal-

ance between tradition and innovation, individuals and community, and include all the important aspects of Christian life."

Focusing on the value of "Beyond Survival," she went on to say, "So often fear and anxiety concerning the future survival of the church shape youth ministry more than anything else. This value calls us to trust and look towards a future where the church, as the Body of Christ in the world, is truly a source of new and eternal life."

While the gathering focused primarily on youth ministry from a regional lens, its impact goes much further. Sitting down with Cameron Gutjahr after the gathering, I felt encouraged to hear his take on it. Actively involved in the executive leadership of the British Columbia—Yukon Anglican Youth Movement (BCYAYM), Cameron sees these values playing out at multiple levels.

"Each of these values can play out locally in my parish, and provincially, through BCYAYM," he said. "It'll be important for us to reflect on them and to see if our ministry aligns with these values." As BCYAYM celebrates 100 years of ministry in 2013, it recognizes the importance of empowering young people to embrace their own ministries.

Stronger Together is an integral piece of the puzzle. This gathering of national youth ministry leaders helps realize new forms of ministry amongst youth.

To read the values statement for youth ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada, visit [generation.anglican.ca](http://generation.anglican.ca), the national youth ministry website.

ANDREW STEPHENS-RENNIE is a member of the national youth initiatives team of the Anglican Church of Canada.

**“While the gathering focused primarily on youth ministry, its impact goes much further.”**





COME AND SEE

# A solidarity plunge

FRED HILTZ

While yellowed and frayed around the edges, my certificate of baptism on April 7, 1957 is a reminder of my immediate forbears in the faith—my parents and grandparents, and the common life and labour to which we are all called in the Lord.

The church celebrates Jesus’s baptism every year on the first Sunday after the Epiphany. We recall his wading into the Jordan River, into those same waters in which so many others had waded for a baptism by John—a baptism of repentance and readiness for the coming of the Messiah. Our friend Herbert O’Driscoll helps us to imagine the moment.

“Light dims, breath stops, symbolically life ends as the waters devour Jesus. Then there is sun again, breath again, life again...” As Jesus rises, the Spirit of God descends and hovers over him and a voice from heaven is heard, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

It is clear that Jesus understood his baptism as the prelude to his ministry. He moves among the people, teaching, reconciling, bringing hope, announcing peace and proclaiming the coming of God’s reign on earth.

In the same way, our baptism is a sacramental calling to a life of service in his name. Indeed, as Christopher Duraisingh (*From Church-Shaped Mission to Mission-Shaped Church*, Episcopal Divinity School) writes, “baptism is primarily an event, as it was with



MARKS OF MISSION

share the good news  
teach new believers  
help people in need  
work to make things fairer  
look after the planet

MARKS OF MISSION ADAPTED FROM MARKETING THE ANGLICAN WAY BY RODERICK MACKIN

the baptism of Christ, ‘a solidarity plunge’ in the waters of Jordan that flow through our neighbourhoods today, that is a commitment to walk in solidarity and compassion with others, sharing their hopes and fears, their joy and pain. As such, baptism is fundamentally a missional act of stepping out with Christ in a life for others.”

Pray that, each and every day, God will give us grace “to make the plunge!”

**ARCHBISHOP FRED HILTZ** is primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

“Our baptism is a sacramental calling to a life of service in his name.”

LETTERS

NOT ACCEPTABLE

In November, you reported that the number of same-sex couples in this country increased by 42.4 per cent between 2006 and 2011, according to Canada Census statistics [*The new face of family*, p. 1]. Then, on page 3, there is a cartoon that denigrates traditional families adhering to fundamental Christian principles. While this might be acceptable in a general newspaper, it has no place in a Christian publication.

**Robin Chaplin**  
Fredericton

THE NEW NORMAL?

Making a mockery of a “normal” family is unacceptable to a faithful Christian like me [*The new Canadian family*, Nov. 2012, p. 3]. Next, perhaps you will be portraying how quaint it is for people to be attending church on Sunday, instead of going to a hockey arena or shopping at Walmart.

**Gordon W. Dawson**  
Victoria

OPEN TO LIFE

How disheartened I was after reading *You call this inspiring?*—the letter in response to the election of The Rev. Dr. Gary Paterson, the first gay moderator of the United Church of Canada [*Anglican Journal*, Dec. 2012, p. 3].

I think it is wonderful and very inspiring to have any gifted and talented person elected head of any church regardless of sexual preference, which by the way is given to all of us from God. This [letter] bleeds of the hatred and bigotry present in our faith circles. I really don’t believe this is anything my God would support.

With respect to the two lesbian priests



LOBKE PEERS

HEALING THE HUMAN HOST

Although there’s much justified outrage at the unbelievably cruel acts committed against the North Vancouver sled dogs, such acts will likely happen again. This is because our fundamental mindset places animals on a lower category of life and thus judges them less worthy of humans’ compassionate treatment.

It began as early as the Bible/Torah/Koran, all of which promote the sacrifice of animals solely for the

alleged spiritual benefit of humanity.

But while this travesty continues, the beautiful reality, as most loving pet-owners already know, is that a healing, symbiotic-like relationship can exist between both the (usually domesticated) animal and its human “host.” Indeed, petting a dog or cat can reduce the human host’s high blood pressure, among other health benefits.

**Frank G. Sterle, Jr.**  
White Rock, B.C.

GREATLY APPRECIATED

Kristin Jenkins’ December editorial [*Taking Christmas to task*, p. 2] and Andrew Stephens-Rennie’s Youth View [*More than crumbs*, p. 4] were greatly appreciated among much good Journal writing.

Thank you!

**The Rev. Philip Rowswell**  
North York, Ont.

THANKS FOR BEING THERE

I just read your editorial [*Taking Christmas to task*, December 2012, p. 2]. Again, a fantastic piece of sensitive and realistic journalism. Thank you.

For years, although I did assist a great deal, I was free to run off to play church while leaving the extra Christmas burdens to my beautiful wife, who “made Christmas” for the rest of us.

**John Spencer**  
Stratford, Ont.

STAMINA REQUIRED

In the November issue, I noticed an error in the article on what teachers earn [*Report on education*, p. E3].

The total average hours of formal classroom teaching per year was indicated as 7,391.

Since this average comes out to more than 20 hours per day seven days a week, I would love to meet the children with the stamina to endure such a program and the teacher who could present it.

I would guess the average is closer to 739 hours, since the average teacher works about 180 days a year with less than five hours a day of instruction per child.

**Leif Pedersen**  
Sechelt, B.C.

GOD’S GIFT

This is an accolade and a “thank you.” I very much appreciate [Bishop] Mark MacDonald’s monthly column, *Walking Together*. I find his writing about God and his daily experience of Him to be a great pointer on how to live as a Christian in our messy world. Please encourage him to keep writing. It is God’s gift to us in an alien world.

**Geoffrey Purdell-Lewis**  
Hamilton, Ont.

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# THE COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD



The Council of General Synod (CoGS) held its fall meeting Nov. 15 to 18 in Mississauga, Ont. Marites N. Sison, senior staff writer for the *Anglican Journal*, filed the following reports.

## 'JOBS AND LIVES THAT NEED PLANNING'

Council of General Synod (CoGS) members agreed to view the 2013 General Synod budget as "transitional," with undesignated reserve funding being used to cover expected shortfalls in 2012 (\$288,000) and in 2013 (\$513,000) resulting from a drop in revenues.

Chancellor David Jones explained that a transition period was necessary because "...there are jobs and lives that need planning."

Rob Dickson, chair of General Synod's financial management committee (FMC), called the transition budget a "prudent way of moving forward." A series of discussions in 2013 will be aimed at balancing the General Synod budget in 2014.

Archdeacon Harry Huskins, deputy prolocutor of General Synod, said using reserves will pave the way for a more humane and orderly transition. "If we have layoffs, I want it done with compassion, understanding, kindness and thankfulness," he said.

A few members expressed reservations. The Very Rev. Josiah Noel, from the ecclesiastical province of Canada, said he was "uncomfortable" with deficit budgeting. A transitional budget must also have a plan with more specifics, he added.

## TRANSITIONAL 2013 BUDGET APPROVED

The Council of General Synod (CoGS) approved the 2013 budget for General Synod as "transitional" with a commitment to a fiscally sound expenditure plan for 2014.

The 2013 budget forecasts revenues of \$11.59 million and expenditures of \$12.82 million. Adjustments to revenue and expenses totaling \$712,000 reduced the deficit from \$1.12 million to \$513,000.

With the approval of the board of directors of the Missionary Society of the Anglican Church of Canada—a group composed of CoGS members—unrestricted funds will be used to bridge this deficit. It was also agreed



David Jones

that reserve funds from 2012 Sacred Circle would be used to relieve an anticipated 2012 deficit of \$288,000.

In 2008, CoGS passed a resolution to eliminate deficit budgeting by 2012. Costs were reduced in 2010 through a restructuring that included national staff layoffs, cuts to grants and ministry work, closure of the library and reduced travel and face-to-face meetings.

A return to deficit budgeting arrived sooner than expected, however. In its written report to CoGS, the financial management committee (FMC) noted that "revenues have been declining more rapidly than expected." Many factors account for the drop in revenues, including a decline in diocesan contributions. Some 70 per cent of to-

tal budgeted revenues come from diocesan proportional giving and it is anticipated that by year-end, there will be a shortfall of \$100,000.

Anticipated revenue from Resources for Mission is also under budget by \$379,000, and it is anticipated that it will take at least two to five years for the diocesan-based national stewardship campaign to yield significant revenues.

In addition, a shortfall of \$288,000 is expected by year-end from the annual Anglican Appeal. Revenue from the *Anglican Journal* is also under budget, primarily due to a \$103,000 shortfall in advertising.

## COMPETENCY GUIDELINES 'A ROAD MAP FOR GROWTH'

So you want to become a priest in the Anglican Church of Canada?

Chances are, you will find different sets of guidelines across the church's dioceses in Canada as to what skills and knowledge you must possess to become a candidate for ordination.

This situation may soon change.

A commission mandated by General Synod 2010 to identify competencies for priests has completed a final draft, and the committee for Faith, Worship and Ministry (FWM) presented it to the Council for General Synod (CoGS) for discussion. The list of competencies and examples of how



Eric Beresford

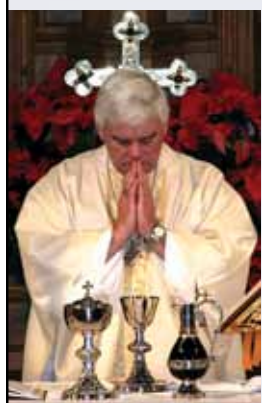
they are manifested will ultimately be submitted by the FWM committee for approval to the 2013 General Synod in

Ottawa.

"This is a document by the church, for the church," Canon Eric Beresford, commission member, told CoGS.

The document recognizes "the rapidly changing and increasing demand for ministry," and prepares the church for "whatever shape it may come in the future," said Beresford.

Archbishop Colin Johnson, metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Ontario, said the competencies help to make the selection "a much fairer process" and could also be used by clergy as a "road map for ongoing professional development and growth."



## An Invitation for 2013



The staff of Resources for Mission have prepared a colourful folder—*SEEDTIME: Ministry and Mission*—illustrating many aspects of the ministry and program of General Synod:

1. Young people and their passion for justice
2. Support for the Anglican Bishop who ministers to the Canadian Forces
3. Support for the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop
4. Ongoing healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples
5. Support to the Northern dioceses—grouped as the Council of the North
6. Helping The Primate's Fund provide bicycle ambulances in Burundi
7. Building bridges through enhanced communication
8. Enhancing the *Anglican Journal* as the Church's primary communications tool.

PICTURED ABOVE: Archdeacon John Robertson

If you are interested in considering a generous gift to ensure these vital areas of our work continue throughout the coming year and well into the future, please let me know and I will send you a copy of our folder which provides details about our vital ministries and how you can make a significant difference by offering financial support. For example, you may wish to consider a gift of listed securities, thereby saving tax on capital gains; a cash gift or pledge; or a bequest or annuity.

We have lots of opportunities for generosity! We would be very grateful!

For more information, please contact me anytime:



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# LONGER SESSIONS, SHORTER BREAKS

Anglican delegates to the 2013 General Synod/Joint Anglican-Lutheran Assembly, scheduled July 3 to 7 in Ottawa, may need to brace themselves for longer sessions and shorter breaks.

The joint assembly is the first since full communion in 2001 between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. As a result, General Synod has been shortened to four days from the usual nine.

At the Council of General Synod meeting, concerns were raised about whether or not this triennial meeting would provide enough time for critical discussions about budget and plans to restructure General Synod.

Archbishop Colin Johnson,



**TECHNO SAVVY** From left, Michael Thompson, Fred Hiltz, Robert Falby and David Jones a test one-click voting device.

of the ecclesiastical province of Ontario, said longer discussions do not guarantee good decisions. “We need to be more disciplined,” he said.

To move processes along, delegates will use “clicker” technology that allows them to vote on resolutions electronically using a handheld device. The technology makes it possible for 1,000 responses to be counted and tabulated in 10 seconds.

# MINERAL RIGHTS

The Council of General Synod (CoGS) has consented to lease mineral rights on land that was once the site of an Alberta residential school.

All revenue from the property will be devoted to indigenous ministries. The property, near Lethbridge, is now a provincial historical resource, owned by the Missionary Society of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The lease will be a joint venture between KaNai Resources, owned by the Blood Band, which also holds re-

source rights, and Murphy Oil.

Chancellor David Jones said that officers of General Synod consulted widely about the issue, including the chief of the Blood tribe—whose reserve is located near the property—as well as the Anglican Council on Indigenous Peoples, and National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald.

MacDonald said he supports the concurrence of the local band to the lease as “part of their sovereignty.”

# BACK ON TRACK

The 15th Anglican Consultative Council meeting had a “peaceful tone,” according to the Canadian representatives at the Oct. 27 to Nov. 7 gathering in Auckland. “We’re back on track, respecting differences,” said Suzanne Lawson, co-ordinator, Together in Mission, who with the Very Rev. Peter Elliott, dean of New Westminster, gave a report to the Council of General Synod.

The Canadian church’s proposal to add a sixth Mark of Mission relating to peace, conflict transformation and reconciliation has been appended to the fourth Mark of Mission.

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## February Bible Readings

DAY	READING		DAY	READING	
01	Malachi 3.1-12	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	Deuteronomy 26.1-11	<input type="checkbox"/>
02	Luke 2.22-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	16	Psalm 91.1-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
03	Haggai 2.1-9	<input type="checkbox"/>	17	Luke 4.1-15	<input type="checkbox"/>
04	Isaiah 40.1-11	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	Jeremiah 32.16-25	<input type="checkbox"/>
05	Psalm 99.1-9	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	2 Kings 19.8-19	<input type="checkbox"/>
06	Exodus 34.29-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	Lamentations 1.1-22	<input type="checkbox"/>
07	2 Kings 2.1-18	<input type="checkbox"/>	21	Genesis 15.1-21	<input type="checkbox"/>
08	2 Corinthians 3.1-18	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	Psalm 27.1-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
09	2 Corinthians 4.1-18	<input type="checkbox"/>	23	Philippians 3.12-4.1	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Luke 9.28-43a	<input type="checkbox"/>	24	Luke 13.22-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Nehemiah 1.1-11	<input type="checkbox"/>	25	Exodus 3.1-15	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Ezra 9.1-15	<input type="checkbox"/>	26	Isaiah 55.1-13	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Psalm 51.1-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	27	Psalm 68.1-20	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	1 Corinth. 12.31b-13.13	<input type="checkbox"/>	28	Psalm 68.21-35	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# A most beautiful day

LEE LAMBERT

"I met the most wonderful older woman today."

That was my friend and colleague Kate: expansive in the word's every applicable sense, and shiny too, so very shiny.

The visit that she went on to describe seemed, well, wonderful. Most wonderful, in fact.

Time passed. Our table conversation bubbled and flowed until she cast out a new story about another lady she had visited a week earlier. That woman was also "most wonderful."

Briefly, I wondered if Kate was drawing on a totally different visitation list than me.

The following day found many of us in the same corner of the cafeteria when a familiar phrase caught me: "She is fantastic, truly. Honestly, she is the most wonderful person I have ever met."

Like a carp lying in the muck, I have a hard time sitting still when shiny objects are dangled



PHILLIP DYHR HOBBS

**WONDERFUL PEOPLE**  
**Myth or reality?**

in front of me. (My long-suffering mother will remember that attic box of dusty report cards with their margin scrawls that read: "Lee is an enthusiastic participant in class, but needs to let others speak," right alongside "doesn't always play well with the other children.")

"Kate, is this the same woman you told us about yesterday?" I asked.

"No, that was another woman," she replied.

"Ah, because I thought you said that she was the most wonderful, older woman you'd ever met."

Predictably, it just went downhill from there.

Maybe Kate is right to regard everyone as being the absolute best. But why then did God make a point of telling us to love our neighbour?

I think it better to see myself and others as deeply flawed because that is where I can truly respect and, I hope, love them. "Most wonderful" people are like mythical creatures I have never actually met.

Broken, sinful, tired, struggling people? Those I have met. And they are most wonderful because they are the most real.

Wait...maybe that's what Kate meant all along...

**THE REV. LEE LAMBERT** is rector of St. Mary's Anglican Church in Russell, Ont., and the author of *Jacked: A Novel of the Apocalypse*, available at Amazon.com.

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