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IMAGE: AGSANDREW

While AI creators prophesy dramatic futures for their technology, the simpler generative AI tools already available are a source for enthusiasm for some in the church—and a source of suspicion for others.

Anglicans wrestle with potential uses, pitfalls of artificial intelligence

Sean Frankling
STAFF WRITER

All across the bustling show floor at Collision 2024, startup companies display laptops, flyers and signs promising to apply artificial intelligence (AI) to security, data analytics, online shopping, code optimization—on and on it goes. Between quirky intro and outro music, panels of experts at the North American tech expo give prognostications ranging from the optimistic (AI will drastically increase productivity) to the very optimistic (AI will boost longevity to the point of making everyone immortal) to the catastrophic (AI will interfere with

democracy or become a threat to human life).

Vinod Khosla, a venture capitalist and heavy investor in leading AI research and development firm OpenAI, tells an audience he expects computer learning tools to take over from human experts entirely within a decade.

“Whether you’re talking about a primary care doctor, a mental health therapist, a structural engineer, an oncologist, a salesperson, a chip designer—every one of these expertises is an opportunity for some startup here,” he says.

Meanwhile, skeptics, including
See **OPTIMISTS**, p. 9

‘My main priority is to act as interim leader’

Will not allow name to stand if nominated for primacy, acting primate Anne Germond says



▲ **The Anglican Church of Canada's primatial coat of arms**

IMAGE: GENERAL SYNOD

Matthew Puddister
STAFF WRITER

With the retirement of Archbishop Linda Nicholls as primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Anne Germond, metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Ontario and diocesan bishop of Algoma and Moosonee, took on the role of acting primate Sept. 15.

Born in South Africa, Germond was raised Roman Catholic but converted to Anglicanism in high school. She worked as a primary school teacher and a college instructor before emigrating to Canada in 1986. Germond was ordained a priest in 2002, serving as rector of the Anglican Church of the Ascension in Sudbury, Ont. until 2016. A graduate of Thorneloe University's School of Theology, she has

See **'IT'S UP TO US,'** p. 3

Sexual misconduct policy in spotlight across church

Sean Frankling and Matthew Puddister
STAFF WRITERS

Across the Anglican Church of Canada, governing bodies from the national to the diocesan level are in the process of reviewing, updating and in some cases introducing for the first time sexual misconduct policies.

The ecclesiastical province of the Northern Lights—which covers, roughly, the country's three Prairie provinces as well as most of the Canadian Arctic—falls into this last group, says Karen Webb, chancellor of the ecclesiastical province and a member of the *Anglican Journal's* editorial board. Some of its dioceses also lack policies, but may not for much longer; the province will be requiring its dioceses to show it their policies where they have them, Webb says, and where they don't, it will be using all the leverage it has to get them to create one.

See **NEW NORTHERN**, p. 6

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Diocese of Arctic launches radio channel

Anglican Church Radio broadcasts services, prayers, hymns in Inuktitut and English

Matthew Puddister

STAFF WRITER

The Anglican diocese of the Arctic has ramped up its airwave presence with the launch of a new radio channel broadcasting worship services, hymns and prayers in Inuktitut and English to listeners across Iqaluit and surrounding parts of Nunavut.

The first equipment check and test broadcast of 98.3 CIJC-FM Anglican Church Radio, broadcast from St. Jude's Cathedral in Iqaluit, took place Sept. 9. A three-week period of official testing followed, as required by the federal government for any new radio channel to gauge potential interference with other broadcasts or air traffic.

The station's current schedule consists of recorded material from Monday to Saturday, including daily prayers, hymns and Inuktitut gospel music in the morning, noon and evening. Broadcasts also include recordings of Bible readings in Inuktitut from the Canadian Bible Society.

On Sundays CIJC airs live broadcasts of the cathedral's three morning services, two in Inuktitut and one in English. Parish priests the Rev. Ann Martha Keenainak, the Rev. Abraham Kublu and his wife the Rev. Samantha Kublu lead worship services at St. Jude's.

The Rev. Chris Dow, former dean of St. Jude's, initiated the radio channel project—inspired by Keenainak's experiences using community radio for ministry in the hamlet of Pangnirtung after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"During COVID, we were restricted being able to attend church," Keenainak recalls. After doing morning and evening services over the radio, she mentioned to Dow "how beneficial it would be here in Iqaluit, if we were able to get something



▲ **The Rev. Ann Martha Keenainak and the Rev. Abraham Kublu install an antenna at St. Jude's Cathedral in Iqaluit.**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

going like that for elders that are not able to attend church services and for those that are at the hospital."

Executive Archdeacon Alexander Pryor, drawing upon some of his experience in audio engineering, helped with technical setup of the station.

"FM radio is an important way of communicating in communities across the North, in part because the technology is really straightforward," Pryor says. "Radio is also very important for the preservation of the Inuktitut language and regional dialects. With so much English content streaming in over [satellite internet service] Starlink, local community radio stations provide a reliable and accessible way for communities to produce and preserve their own content."

He adds, "In many Arctic communities, FM radio became the go-to for churches during the lengthy COVID lockdowns, as the default option in many communities was for ministers to deliver their sermons over the local radio station since, even a few years ago, the internet speed and bandwidth wasn't there for online streaming."

St. Paul's Bloor Street, an Anglican church in Toronto, also played a role in establishing CIJC. After Dow approached St. Paul's, the church donated \$20,000 to pay for equipment and set-up needed to

establish the radio station.

The Rev. Benjamin Tshin, associate priest for outreach and worship at St. Paul's, says the Toronto parish has "generally been a church that has been blessed financially" and agreed to support the Arctic radio station as an important initiative.

"The generosity of our congregation to support others in Toronto, in Canada and around the world is an overflow of how deeply we have already been blessed," Tshin says.

CIJC received a broadcast certificate from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission under an exemption that allows local low-power transmitters in churches broadcasting religious celebrations and ceremonies. It is not licensed as a community radio station, which would mean having hosts, radio shows or the ability to broadcast 24/7.

Pryor says with a 50-watt transmitter, the maximum allowed under the exemption, CIJC has been able to reach listeners in all of Iqaluit and the nearby community of Apex—both of which fall within a five-kilometre radius of St. Jude's—according to initial tests. Thanks to radio waves skipping off the atmosphere, he says, the signal has also reached Pangnirtung, 300 km away.

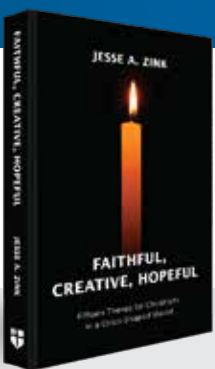
St. Jude's parish priests say their radio programming has been well received by local listeners.

"From the last service on Sunday, we finally saw new faces that came into the church since the broadcasting started," Abraham Kublu said Sept. 25. "It's very early to say there may be more people coming in, but it was a good sign that people are coming back to the church." Keenainak describes it as a blessing to hear the Bible read in Inuktitut over the radio, particularly for listeners such as elders who may not be able to read anymore due to vision problems.

Pryor says the planned next step is the creation of a 24/7 online stream of Inuktitut-language programming accessible anywhere with an internet connection—keeping the same basic format while also featuring discipleship or catechetical programming from across the North.

To that end, he hopes the diocese will apply for a full 24/7 community radio broadcast license, allowing interested communities to apply for a low-watt local transmitter license to re-broadcast the signal with little cost or effort. ■

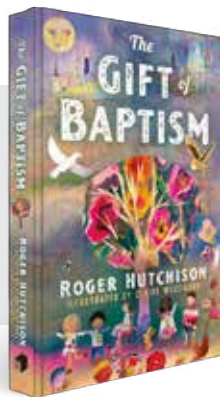
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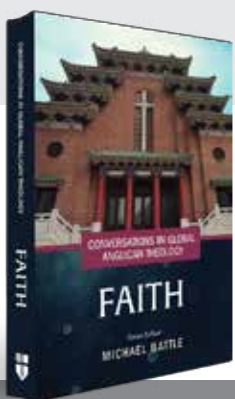
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Joey Royal resigns as Arctic suffragan bishop

Matthew Puddister

STAFF WRITER

Bishop Joey Royal resigned his position as suffragan bishop of the diocese of the Arctic effective Oct. 20, Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, announced in an Oct. 2 news release.

Royal told the *Journal* he was resigning mostly for the health of his family. "Episcopal ministry can be demanding on families and that's especially true in the Arctic where a bishop can be away for weeks at a time," he said. "But I love the North and always will... I'm so grateful for these experiences I've had."

Royal will move to Ottawa to work with the Christian Embassy of Canada, a non-profit that ministers to politicians and diplomats.

"We are grateful for Bishop Royal's ministry in the Arctic," Germond said. "He



▲ **Bishop Joey Royal**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

will be missed. We also give thanks for his contributions in the National House of Bishops and other areas in the wider church where he has served effectively and well."

Elected March 28, 2019 as one of the diocese's three suffragan bishops, Royal

previously served as director and primary instructor at the Arthur Turner Training School in Iqaluit, and rector at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Yellowknife. He has been a member of Council of General Synod and General Synod and was the Anglican Church of Canada's representative on the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order. ■

‘It’s up to us to give a counter-narrative’

Church has challenges aplenty—but also good news to share, says acting primate



Continued from p. 1

served as the university’s chancellor since 2015. In February 2017 she was elected bishop of Algoma and in October 2018 metropolitan of Ontario, through the latter also becoming bishop of Moosonee.

Germond will serve as acting primate until next summer’s General Synod, which will see the election of a new primate. The *Anglican Journal* spoke to Germond in mid-September about her plans as acting primate. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What are your top priorities as acting primate?

My main priority is to act as an interim leader, and this is going to be a very part-time position because of my other commitments.

Some of my responsibilities and therefore priorities are going to be to participate in some of the important councils of the church. I will be chairing the Council of General Synod (CoGS). I’ll be a member of the planning and agenda team for General Synod. I will be chairing the fall and spring House of Bishops meetings. The spring meeting in particular is going to be a very important national House of Bishops meeting because the candidates who will be the nominees for primate will be discerned through an internal process.

One of the things that is very important for the primate is to be the voice of the Anglican Church of Canada. Because I’m not going to be able to do very much travel over the next eight months—as I’ve mentioned, this is a part-time position—the way that I communicate within the church is going to be important. I think those messages which are seen by and read by the church as they come through the *Anglican Journal* and other communication channels are going to be important. We all need words of encouragement, words of hope, good words, gospel words. Communication and preaching and teaching have always been things I’ve been passionate about.

What do you see as some of the main challenges and opportunities facing the church during your eight months as acting primate?

There are plenty of challenges. I don’t think that I need to give an extensive or exhaustive list of them. People are concerned about finances and that’s across the board. There’s a concern around declining numbers. Those challenges are there now and probably will be long after I’m no longer the acting primate.

I always feel that in a time of challenge, it’s up to us to give a counter-narrative,

because there are good stories. There are so many good things happening at the local parish level that give counter-narrative to decline. Our parishes are making a huge tangible difference in the lives of individuals, both in their parish and in their communities. Jesus used storytelling often, and we need to start telling good news stories. I think we are given an opportunity every day to do that.

The primate’s commission on re-imagining the church has put forward several hypotheses on potential structural changes, which have sparked debate across the church. How much of a challenge do you see navigating this process leading up to the commission’s report at General Synod 2025?

In whatever way I can as the acting primate, I want to work with the members of the primate’s commission to keep moving that work forward. It’s definitely provocative and causing lots of conversation in the church, and perhaps that’s what we need. There are strong opinions on each and every one of those seven hypotheses.

I hope that those who are invited to engage in this work with the primate’s commission will do so. The primate’s commission has made it very clear that this is not a definite course of action that the church will move on. Chair [Archdeacon] Monique Stone has said clearly that the commission will be sharing the substance of the responses that they’ve gleaned with General Synod next June. But certainly everything will not be resolved by then. We rely on the chair and the primate’s commission to do their work [and we need] to support them in their work, to pray for them in their work.

As to a personal comment on any of the hypotheses, I’m going to be participating in discussion with the House of Bishops and will reserve my personal comments to then.

What will be your approach to relations with Sacred Circle and the Indigenous church?

This is an opportunity to really continue to listen well to the Indigenous church through ACIP [the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples], through Sacred Circle. I already have a really good friendship and relationship with [National Indigenous Anglican] Archbishop Chris [Harper]. Last week at Church House, I had the opportunity to meet with [Indigenous Ministries Coordinator] Rosalyn Elm and just to spend time getting to know their vision for the Indigenous church as we move forward in this new time, and how we continue to find and look for opportunities to embrace mutual interdependence.

The word that comes to mind is an African word that was often used by Desmond Tutu, *ubuntu*. Ubuntu basically says a person is a person through other people. We need each other. That’s part of what I look forward to—growing in my understanding of the Indigenous church as it sees itself becoming something new within the Anglican Church of Canada and how we can keep saying to one another, “Ubuntu—I need you and

you need me to be the people that God intends us to be.”

How do you plan on balancing your responsibilities as primate, metropolitan of Ontario and bishop of Moosonee and Algoma?

In the diocese of Moosonee, I have appointed Archbishop Fred Hiltz, who had been working with me as the assisting bishop of Moosonee since late 2019. I have actually named Archbishop Fred as the commissary for Moosonee, and so Archbishop Fred has been given all the authority to take on the mantle of leadership in Moosonee. He lets me know what’s happening in the diocese. Thank God for Archbishop Fred, because he’s doing a tremendous amount of work.

Moosonee had a historic synod in June where they voted to return to being a diocese with their own duly elected bishop. That’s what Archbishop Fred is going to be [working on]. His focus over the next several months is working with the diocese of Moosonee to prepare for that electoral synod. We don’t have a date for it, but it’ll probably be sometime next year.

With respect to the province, we have been preparing for our provincial synod next week [Sept. 24-26], which is taking place in Sault Ste. Marie. I’m expecting that once next week is over, things will quieten down at the provincial level. Just as I have huge support in the diocese of Moosonee, every single one of the Ontario House of Bishops has reached out to me to say, “How can we help, Archbishop, with your new responsibilities?”

In my beloved diocese of Algoma, they are incredibly generous, incredibly prayerful and incredibly supportive in so many ways. I am in conversation with Bishop Michael Oulton, retired bishop from the diocese of Ontario, who has agreed to come and lend a hand in Algoma—he’s going to become the assisting bishop in the diocese of Algoma for eight months. We’re still in conversation about exactly how that will look, but Bishop Michael knows Algoma very well. He’s been to two of our synods.

I do not feel in any way that I am holding up the Anglican Church of Canada. The Anglican Church of Canada has got incredibly gifted leaders, and I feel very honoured to be working alongside them.

The primatial election next June is going to be very important as the church discerns who the next primate for the Anglican Church of Canada is going to be. I would like to invite the church to be praying with me for the bishops who may already be discerning whether, if they are nominated, they would let their name stand. The Holy Spirit is touching and will touch people’s lives, and so I would just really like to call the church to prayer as we contemplate the primatial election next year.

Have you thought about allowing your name to stand as primatial candidate, if you are nominated?

I’m very willing to serve as acting primate but will not be letting my name stand for primate if nominated. ■

▲ Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

PHOTO: GEORGE CRIBBS

LETTERS ▶

The Anglican Journal welcomes letters to the editor.

Since not all letters can be published, preference is given to short correspondence (300 words or less). All letters are subject to editing.

You can get the media interested in church news. Here's how we did it



PHOTO: COURTESY OF DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Sidney, B.C. sent out a news release on the serving of the 100,000th bowl of soup at its weekly lunch. This photo, showing parishioner Irene Shaw, appeared in a local newspaper as a result.

I was sorry to read Murray Fox's lament about the challenges of getting church work noticed by the media ("Anglicans are doing much good—but it's hard to get the word out," September, Letters, p. 4.) His word-of-mouth suggestion is a good one, but there are other effective strategies.

Perhaps it is easier in a small community than in a big city to gain media attention. In Sidney, population 13,000, we have used two main vehicles to promote the work of our parish: paid advertising and news releases. In our local weekly newspaper, we run ads for Christmas, Holy Week and Easter services and we run an ad in an annual vacation guide.

Getting media attention is best done by news releases. We have used them to announce the receipt of grants, a new

program, the ringing of the church bell on the discovery of residential school graves and the award of the Order of the Diocese of B.C. to parishioners. Our two most successful were on the appointment of our first female rector and on the serving of the 100,000th bowl of soup at our weekly lunch. In both cases the key was to have a hook to attract attention. That worked well for us; three or four news outlets ran the stories, requested interviews or, in the case of TV, came to film our work for broadcast news.

Along the way we have developed helpful working relationships with media staff.

Best of luck to St. Titus in getting the word out more effectively.

Gary Davies
St. Andrew's Anglican Church
Sidney, B.C.

Newspapers valuable for church outreach

Before retiring as a priest, having served two quite different parishes, I found the *Journal*-diocesan newspaper package the best tool to build up attendance. Every year I was urged to delete the subscriptions of people who no longer attended church, and when I did so I took the opportunity to review past deletions and re-instate all who were still living in the neighbourhood. Between a quarter and a third replied or returned to church because they appreciated the fact that we cared enough to contact them. Sometimes this prompted only a conversation about the parishioner's departure—but healing a breach and learning from it are both useful outcomes.

People fall out of the HABIT of church-going when something in their routine, health, or family dynamics changes. Every business knows that former customers are more readily engaged than "cold calls." Also, unless a church is in a mall or plaza, there is no "foot traffic" to

attract. The *Journal* package is the least expensive and most cost-effective means for a parish to attempt to connect with potential members.

Gothic buildings with music no one hears on the radio, language that sounds alien, unfamiliar rituals and exotic costumes will never attract new contacts. Those things DO strike a chord with former members who are reminded of what it was like when they belonged to a beloved community. And those who return may end up serving as more persuasive ambassadors for the church than those who never left.

Neither the pronouncements of General Synod nor the "decolonizing" of the historical "faith of the Apostles" are top-of-mind issues for struggling parishes forced to function on 75-cent dollars, financing remote bureaucracies and invisible ministries doing things not understood. Without the *Journal* no one will even know they exist.

The Rev. John Lockyer
Church of St. John the Evangelist
Elora, Ont.



IMAGE: 'FOOT TRAFFIC' BY ALEUTIE

Women-only Nicholls fund will help redress imbalance

The letter from Brenton Haliburton ("New education fund should not be for women only," September, Letters, p. 4) about the establishment of the Archbishop Linda Nicholls Theological Education Fund, intended to provide bursaries for female candidates, touches on an important issue of scope that charities often wrestle with.

As a general rule, for the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) to receive a gift restricted for a specific purpose, that purpose must be consistent with our founding

documents, and it must benefit a broad enough segment of the community to provide what is known as a "public benevolence;" it cannot, for example, be designated for a specific individual or family.

The AFC currently holds 15 named bursary funds with a variety of restrictions. Two are explicitly for male students; two others are for students from Ontario. One is for people interested in children's ministry. Several are for funding graduate-level study. The Anglican Church Women of the diocese of New Westminster

has a bursary fund with "preference for female students" from the dioceses of New Westminster or Yukon. This fund has provided support to a male student in the past who lived in the diocese of Yukon.

The Nicholls Theological Education Fund is the only fund held by the AFC explicitly for women. As such, it helps correct an imbalance in our available funds, while also elevating people who until very recently were disadvantaged in pursuing ordination as priests and bishops and seeking other senior ministry positions within the church.

Church leaders' statements on Gaza war show their naivety

Regarding "Gaza pilgrims call for 'just peace'; bishops protest hospital closure" (September, p.16): One of the big obstacles to finding peace in Gaza is that Hamas does not want peace. This terrorist organization, with ties to Iran, will not stop until it eliminates all Jews and destroys Israel. Peace will be temporary since Hamas agreements have no credibility.

Hamas wants maximum civilian casualties since it helps with its propaganda and results in donations from the West. It has been accused of using hospitals, schools and residential neighborhoods as weapon depots and military attack staging areas. Its underground tunnels holding soldiers and supplies connect to residential areas.

I'd like to see the Anglican church remove itself from political statements voicing a desire to cease arms transfers to Israel. Does my church want Hamas to defeat Israel? When I became an Anglican, I had no idea that my church was a political organization. I'll join a political organization if I want to influence politics—I don't attend church for political reasons. As this article illustrates, often when clergy make political statements they show their naivety.

Marguerite Ancell
St. Peter's Anglican Church
Campbell River, B.C.



IMAGE: SASKIA ROWLEY

Time to axe voting by order?

Regarding "Commission asks: Time to axe General Synod, *Journal*?" (September, p.1): Unless and until the Anglican Church of Canada eliminates voting by order at all synods our bishops will impede progress.

Fred Zeggil
Stittsville, Ont.

For the real meaning of 'woke,' read the gospels

Bruce Timms in his letter published in the September issue ("Church's focus should be on teaching faith in resurrection, eternal life," p. 4) asserts that the church needs to get back to "the priorities of Jesus, St. Peter and St. Paul," which he believes were teachings on faith in the resurrection and the life everlasting. If Mr. Timms reads the gospels he'll find that Jesus' priorities were pretty much in line with what Mr. Timms calls "the wave of the woke"—that we treat one another as equals, that we love one another, care for one another, look after one another. I refer him to the teaching of Jesus found in Matthew 25:31-46.

Rene Jamieson
St. John's Anglican Cathedral, Winnipeg

BRIDGES ▶

On giving thanks for, and emulating, the saints



By Anne Germond

ALL SAINTS' DAY gives us the opportunity to remember those we have known as saints as well as those known to others or only to God. The word "saints" literally means "holy ones," and is the title most commonly used for Christians. That's us!

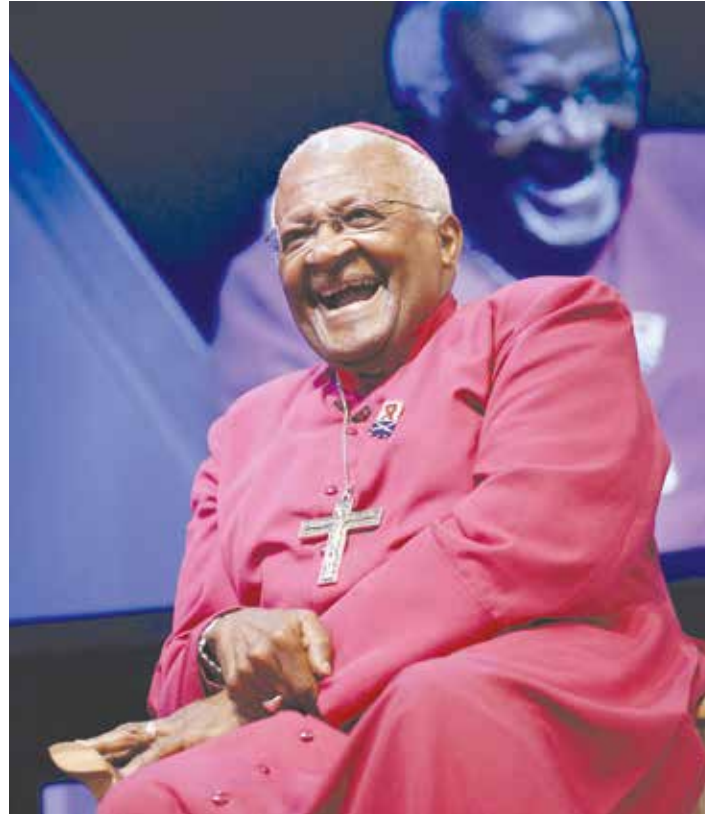
In *St. Augustine's Prayer Book* there's a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving for life within the church. Each line of the litany gives thanks for one aspect of the church's life, starting with those who first taught us to pray and opened the gospels to us—those who stood with us at the font where we received the "abundant grace of baptism."

In my mind's eye I envision my parents Harold and Nora, my godmother Cynthia and my older sister Helen standing around the font in our church in Johannesburg, South Africa. I imagine their "yes" helping me to grow into the full stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13) I imagine them praying as water was poured and a single lit candle was handed to me with the invitation to become a light-bearer for Christ.

But whenever I pray that prayer I add this litany of my own:

"For the saints whose courage in the face of adversity has been an example to us in living a cross-shaped life."

The person who springs to mind in these moments is one of my faith heroes, the late archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu.



▲ **Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the acting primate writes, is one of her faith heroes.**

PHOTO: PETER RHYS WILLIAMS/SHUTTERSTOCK

A spiritual and moral giant and one of the greatest bridge-builders of our time, Tutu during the apartheid years in South Africa helped make a pathway to peace.

Tutu was courageous in his efforts to resolve conflict through dialogue instead of violence. He was uncompromising in his conviction that reconciliation was better than retribution, and that we, "this

unlikely lot," in his words, are all called to share in the work of peacemaking. He was a man of many emotions; I've seen footage of him laughing uproariously one minute and the next waving his fist in righteous indignation at the apartheid bullies. I've seen him weep openly as he listened intently to the heartrending testimony of a traumatized victim of violence at The Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"The Arch," as his close friends called him, was a man of deep prayer. The more difficult the day and the more challenging the task, the longer he spent in prayer.

Ultimately Tutu believed in humanity's extraordinary capacity for good. "Fundamentally," he said in a 2001 speech, "we are made for love, for compassion, for caring, for sharing, for peace and reconciliation, for transcendence, for the beautiful, for the true and the good." It is the saints like Tutu we need to look for now more than ever. The writer L.R. Knost wrote that we must seek these bridge-builders and try to walk in their footsteps: "Look for them in this present darkness. Light your candle with their flame. And then go. Build bridges. Hold hands. Bring light to a dark and desperate world." This All Saints' Day, let us give thanks "for the saints whose courage in the face of adversity has been an example to us in living a cross-shaped life." ■

Archbishop Anne Germond is the acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

FEATHER AND SAGE ▶

The blessings and challenges of reconciliation ministry

By Chris Harper



FEATHER (Prayer): Almighty, today we the children of your creation gather in humility and wonder at your hand in creation and with us in our journey of life and faith. We lift our prayers of thanksgiving for blessings seen and unseen. Forgive us where we have failed and offended, lift us to be renewed in our call and ministry, strengthen and embolden us to not only proclaim, but to live out our faith for all to see, that your grace and mercy might flow out over the land and to all peoples.

Grant us the wisdom and understanding in this season of reconciliation to seek truth other than our own and grant us peace to see the other before us, that we together can be the vessels of your peace and hope.

In this season of change and transition, keep us from distraction that



PHOTO: RAWPIXEL.COM

we may keep our eyes and hearts upon your good road and call. Help us to be better today than we were yesterday and the day before. This we pray in Christ. Amen.

SAGE (Offering): The ministry of reconciliation is a ministry of forward progression in faith and by faith and is only slowed by the most resistant among us. In my journey and travels of truth-telling and reconciliation in 2024 I have engaged in conversation and ministry story sharing, wherein the stories and legacy both of the church and Canada are explored and challenged. Balanced by the cross and prayer, these dialogues have been both a blessing and a challenge.

The blessing is that we're enabled by them to walk together and envision a shared hope and prayer for the people and lift up all who live the reality of brokenness and struggle to see faith.

The process becomes especially challenging, however, when we deny or minimize the reality of the other to ease or pacify our sensitivities or to bolster our own narrow views. We have all inherited the residential school legacy, and it affects all of us in the ministry of the church whether we acknowledge or deny it.

Truth and reality are being constantly challenged today, but I know with all certainty that the Almighty can do more than we can ever envision. Faith calls us to bring to the cross all that besets us, knowing that Christ the healer and reconciler can surpass all limits and even our personal resistance.

Glory to God who can infinitely exceed all limits! (Ephesians 3:20-21) ■

Archbishop Chris Harper is national Indigenous archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada.

ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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EDITOR: Tali Folkles
ART DIRECTOR: Saskia Rowley
STAFF WRITERS: Matthew Puddister, Sean Frankling

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SAFE CHURCH ▶

When it comes to 'dead cats,' Webb says she has seen people transferred into the province who likely fit the bill. She thinks the practice is part of a tendency in the church toward reluctance to acknowledge incidents when they happen.

New Northern Lights policy targets 'dead cats'

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Meanwhile, the ecclesiastical province of Ontario has struck a task force and the ecclesiastical province of Canada (which covers Atlantic Canada and part of Quebec) has a policy that other provinces have been learning from. At the national level, Chancellor of General Synod Canon (lay) Clare Burns has been working on drafting an updated version of General Synod's current sexual misconduct policy, which dates to 2005—a process General Synod committed itself to in 2019.

One factor behind this trend, Webb says, is a major cultural shift in Canadian society's perspective around sexual misconduct. Where sexual comments and propositions were something she and her friends were expected to laugh off in her college days, she says, the younger generation is calling for much more scrutiny and accountability in these matters. As a result, she says, she and other chancellors across the church are working to understand and respond to the demands of a world that expects the church to be able to protect its members more diligently.

Meanwhile, similar work is being done elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. From Sept. 5-10 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, members of the Anglican Communion's International Safe Church Commission met with Anglican leaders from around the world. The goal, said the Rev. Luke Chigwanda, general secretary of the Anglican Council of Zimbabwe, in a video released on the council's YouTube channel Sept. 20, was for the commission



▲ Women sing and dance at the Anglican Communion's International Safe Church Commission meeting held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe Sept. 5-10.

PHOTO: GORODENKOFF

"to empower and equip Anglican church leaders on how to make our Anglican churches safe places," including the implementing of systems to prevent abuse. It builds on years of work by the commission, which was founded in 2016.

Putting in writing dioceses' duty of disclosure

The policy Northern Lights is drafting includes a concerted effort to address one particular type of case: when a priest who has some form of complaint or record on their file involving sexual impropriety moves to another parish or diocese where that element of their past is unknown. In the past, bishops have not always passed on that information to the leadership in their new posting; in fact, one way dioceses have

historically dealt with problematic staff was to remove them from where the problem happened and send them somewhere else to start again. But dioceses have a duty to disclose such information about staff who transfer, Webb says, so appropriate steps can be taken to watch for any further reports or signs of misconduct in the staff member's new workplace—otherwise they're just passing on a problem, what some call "throwing a dead cat over the wall." Northern Lights' new policy will put that duty in writing.

"There may be a reason [...] we're going to give him or her—almost always a him—a second chance," she says. "But you've got to let us know. Not telling us—how are we supposed to do anything useful? If you don't tell us, that's throwing the dead cat over the wall."

Webb says she has seen people transferred into the province who likely fit the bill. She thinks the practice is part of a tendency in the church toward reluctance to acknowledge incidents when they happen. "We're not supposed to have this kind of thing happen to us. Aren't we better than that?" she says.

Leaving incidents unspoken can sometimes come from an impulse on the part of leaders to preserve the church's image as a place where people can feel safe, says Webb. But any hidden incidents will eventually come to light and in the process cost the church both the image of a safe institution and the public's trust that it will be open and honest when

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▲ **Carol Penner**
PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

In cases of sexual misconduct by leaders, Penner says, “the church has to have mercy and grace and say, ‘We love you. We still want you as a member of our body. But you can’t be a leader anymore.’”

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things do go wrong.

Burns says the goal of the General Synod policy revision, a draft of which was presented to CoGS in November 2023, has been to align the policy with the maturation of society’s and the church’s understandings of sexual misconduct and unacceptable behaviour.

“The policy is supposed to also have an educative purpose so that we identify what has changed,” she says. Beyond just laying out the circumstances under which someone can be punished, it is also meant to be used in training staff on what is and is not acceptable behaviour.

The draft policy, says Burns, strives for accountability, consistency and “a procedure that a complainant and a respondent can rely on ... so the people who are exercising the power of investigation have a clear model of how they are supposed to conduct that. Because the church wants to be transparent.”

The new General Synod policy will cover national office staff and volunteers plus members of General Synod itself and associated bodies such as CoGS and its various committees. General Synod is not able to mandate specific requirements for the misconduct policies of individual dioceses or provinces; each jurisdiction of the church is responsible for laying out its own—something often complicated by the fact that resources are limited in remote areas. And dioceses are not always able to simply copy the policy used in another region either, partly because secular law in each province can differ with respect to sexual misconduct and partly because church governance can vary from one diocese to another.

While provinces have no more power than the national church to compel their dioceses to draft their own policies, Webb says what they can do is strongly recommend that every diocese create one or update their existing one. Likewise, provinces and dioceses can collaborate with one another to work toward uniformity of policy and to share good ideas so that each policy is strengthened by all of their efforts.

‘A big problem that hasn’t been addressed adequately’

Carol Penner, director of theological studies for Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo and a former Mennonite pastor, has extensively researched abuse issues and feminist theology. She calls sexual misconduct in churches and seminaries “a big problem that hasn’t been addressed adequately.” She also notes abuse in Christian institutions is “not a one-way street.” church leaders can be victims of abuse and harassment as well as perpetrators.

For her part, Webb recalls false allegations made last year against Bishop William Cliff, then bishop of the diocese of Brandon, which nearly ended his career. She says the church has a duty to uphold the fundamental presumption of innocence until guilt is proven, and with that in mind, she says, she and others in the province of Northern Lights will be working to ensure the final version of the procedures they draft is fair to both the complainant and the accused in incidents of sexual misconduct. The guiding principle is to balance mercy with a serious-minded approach to ensuring even small signs of concern are appropriately documented and followed up.

Much of what needs to be in a policy—



▲ **Both clergy and parishioners, Penner says, can be either perpetrators of abuse and harassment.**

PHOTO: GORODENKOFF

and for that matter much of best practice on preventing sexual misconduct problems in general—is actually very simple, says Webb. No one should be meeting with parishioners behind closed doors, for example. Meetings should take place with somebody else within earshot. Though some of these measures may seem unnecessary to some, they can be critical, she says.

While sexual misconduct by leaders happens everywhere, Penner believes that other institutions have done a better job at addressing it than churches. Professional associations, for example, tend to be more open and straightforward about advertising their sexual misconduct policies and how to make a complaint, she says.

Andrea Gunraj, vice president of public engagement at the Canadian Women’s Foundation, says some environments may have greater abuse prevalence and risk for groups victimized most often: women, girls, LGBTQ+ people and children. These can include the military, schools, workplaces—and churches.

“As a lifelong church member, I have seen movement in the right direction in churches and denominational bodies,” she says. “I have also seen resistance to change that is both disappointing and ungodly. I have hope that voices of Christ-loving changemakers and advocates are breaking through. Those in leadership have to support them and do all they can to break institutional cycles of abuse.”

Penner says while there is a perception that the culture of how churches respond to sexual misconduct allegations has changed, “I don’t think it’s changed. There’s a perception there that it’s easier now to lay a complaint. It’s not easy. Nothing has changed in the church to make it easier ... I think what has changed is the awareness of congregations that that’s not acceptable behaviour.”

Those who make allegations often face backlash, Penner says. “They are vilified, they’re blamed, they’re not believed. They rarely can stay in their congregation because they are ostracized.” Many parishioners refuse to believe allegations against a minister, she adds.

Within churches, Penner says, traditional patriarchal attitudes can play into why sexual misconduct is not reported. “The pastor has an aura about them that if they say, ‘This is okay,’ it must be okay. Sexual misconduct often is reported over a decade after it happens because people have to get away from the pastor.”

“Often sexual misconduct in the church

is couched in love language,” she adds. “It’s harder to recognize it as abuse when someone’s saying, ‘I care for you. I’m concerned about you and you’re a special person.’”

Another difference Penner identifies between how church and secular institutions respond to sexual misconduct is the importance laid on forgiveness in Christian teachings. She adds, “I think the church has to have mercy and grace and say, ‘We love you. We still want you as a member of our body. But you can’t be a leader anymore.’”

Many churches cannot weather sexual misconduct allegations, Penner says. In some cases churches have closed down after accusations are made against clergy. “The whole congregation feels betrayed,” Penner says. “The whole congregation goes through a long journey of healing: ‘Can we trust our next minister? Can we trust any minister?’”

“This erosion of trust has implications financially because people stop giving. It has implications for volunteers: ‘I don’t want to be volunteering in an organisation that supported that.’ ... The congregation is convulsed with conflict, because a lot of people support the minister and some people support the victim. Everyone is mad about how it was handled and everyone’s fighting about it.”

The strongest response the church can have to sexual misconduct, Penner says, is transparency and proper investigation. Attempts to protect the institution by covering up abuse cases are not just counterproductive, she adds, but place more people in harm’s way.

In her own conversation with the *Journal*, Burns acknowledges many of the issues Penner and Gunraj raise.

“I agree that over time, institutionally, the church has not dealt with these matters well ... [but] I will say that in my personal experience having served as a chancellor and a vice chancellor well on 20 years, I have never seen a misconduct matter covered up,” she says. However, she adds, there are times when the church or its representatives have been made aware of an issue before it came to public attention but failed to act because no one involved was willing to go forward with a complaint that would have kicked off a formal process to intervene.

The goals of the national office’s new policy, she says, include making it easier both for people to bring complaints and for leaders, where there is some factual basis, to start investigations on their initiative, even if no complainant has come forward. ■



“As a lifelong church member, I have seen movement in the right direction ... I have also seen resistance to change that is both disappointing and ungodly.”

—Andrea Gunraj

LOCAL NEWS ▶

Halifax church marks 275th anniversary



▲ Archbishop Linda Nicholls receives a cake from St. Paul's Halifax.

PHOTO: ASHLEY STEPHENSON

Nicholls delivers homily at service on last day as primate

Matthew Puddister
STAFF WRITER

Halifax's oldest building and Canada's oldest Protestant church, St. Paul's Anglican Church kicked off its 275th anniversary year Sept. 15 with a special service—featuring a homily by departing primate Archbishop Linda Nicholls on her last day in active ordained ministry.

Nicholls said the anniversary of St. Paul's, designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1981, provided an opportunity for thankfulness and self-reflection. In the course of its history, Nicholls said, St. Paul's had seen a variety of transitions, passing from European colonial empire-building to repentance and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples; and moving through rapid technological advances from the Industrial Revolution onwards.

"Through it all, there has been a community of faith here, loving God and loving their neighbour," Nicholls said.

'An extremely important church in the history of Halifax'

The history of St. Paul's is closely intertwined with the history of Halifax and Nova Scotia.

"St. Paul's is an extremely important church in the history of Halifax because it was founded in 1749, which was the year in which Halifax was founded," says Henry Roper, a retired humanities professor at the University of King's College and St. Paul's parishioner since 2021.

Scottish architect James Gibbs based St. Paul's on another church he had designed, St. Peter, Vere Street in London. Both reflected the Georgian architectural style prevalent in English-speaking countries between 1714 and 1830—characterized by a focus on balance and proportion that drew upon the influence of classical Greek and Roman buildings.

"Originally, it was a fairly simple Georgian structure," Roper says of St. Paul's. The building underwent significant modifications in the 19th century with the addition of a vestibule and steeple in 1812, side wings in 1868 and a chancel in 1872.

Alison Kitt-Grainger, a St. Paul's parishioner and co-author of the book *St. Paul's Church at 275*, finds the blend of different elements characteristic of the church.

"I find it interesting how it's developed over the years," Kitt-Grainger says. "The building itself has had multiple expansions put on ... It has so many different styles sort of wrapped up in it. Every single stained-glass window is in a slightly different style."

On Sundays, she says, the church will alternate between traditional and non-traditional services, the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) and the *Book of Alternative Services* (BAS), organ and piano. The parish's history shows the typically Anglican tensions between high and low church, Kitt-Grainger says; over the years, it has evolved from the more evangelical



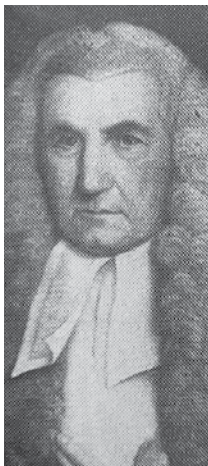
IMAGE: RICHARD SHORT (MILITARY ARTIST). PUBLIC DOMAIN

Etching of St. Paul's and the Grand Parade, Halifax, N.S. in 1759



PHOTO: ASHLEY STEPHENSON

The Rev. Paul Friesen and authors Sarah Baxter Emsley (left) and Alison Kitt-Grainger (right) with their books at the 275th anniversary launch for St. Paul's Sept. 15.



▲ Among those buried in the church's crypt is Sampson Salter Blowers, attorney general for Nova Scotia from 1784 to 1797 and then chief justice until 1833, credited with contributing to the decline of slavery in the province.

IMAGE: PUBLIC DOMAIN

"low-church" tradition that prevailed at its inception to embracing a broader range of worship styles. She points to old letters in which rectors debate whether to show credence tables—small tables used during the Eucharist in Roman Catholic and "high-church" Anglo-Catholic traditions.

For *St. Paul's Church at 275*, which Roper co-edited, Kitt-Grainger and coauthor Aidan Ingalls wrote a series of essays recounting different episodes of the church's history. They describe the influx of Loyalists into Canada after the U.S. War of Independence, which swelled the population of Halifax as well as the congregation at St. Paul's.

One such Loyalist was Sampson Salter Blowers, who became attorney general and then chief justice of Nova Scotia and gained renown for his efforts to free enslaved Black Nova Scotians. Blowers—who is buried in the crypt at St. Paul's—frequently ruled in favour of slaves at a time when the legal status of slavery in many of England's overseas colonies was uncertain. By putting the onus on slaveowners to demonstrate they had a legal right to purchase human beings, Blowers contributed to the decline of slavery in the province.

Other episodes from the church's past are its establishment of Chinese Sunday schools to teach adult Chinese immigrants; its loss of cathedral status in 1864 to the parish church of St. Luke's (which later burned down and was succeeded as cathedral by All Saints, the present cathedral, construction of which was

completed in 1910); and the role of its women's auxiliary in mission work and helping the poor.

In December 1917, St. Paul's served as an emergency hospital in the wake of the Halifax Explosion, which killed at least 1,782 people and injured approximately 9,000. As detailed in a church pamphlet produced for the 100th anniversary of the disaster, *St. Paul's and the Great War: "The Halifax Explosion"*, the church provided a location for doctors and nurses to treat the wounded. About 100 parishioners volunteered to help at the hospital as St. Paul's received bedding, clothes, food and medical supplies for the injured and those needing shelter.

Vibrant congregation in a growing city

More than a century later, parishioners still describe a thriving congregation at St. Paul's. Rector the Rev. Paul Friesen estimates anywhere between 80 and 120 people attend worship on a typical Sunday, encompassing many families and multiple generations. The rector connects this attendance to high population growth in Halifax, which Statistics Canada reported was the second fastest-growing city in the country in 2022.

"We don't yet have a situation where St. Paul's is a downtown church that's hollowed out," Friesen says. People who attend may come to St. Paul's for a variety of reasons, he adds. Some walking through downtown Halifax simply wander in. Others are attracted to the congregation's youth and children's programs.

Many historic churches across Canada face challenges in maintaining their buildings, as detailed in a recent *Anglican Journal* report. Friesen says building maintenance is an ongoing project and regular item of discussion at parish council meetings. While St. Paul's has a sprinkler system and insurance coverage, Friesen says, "It's costing us more to take care of the building for sure."

At the same time, he adds, "There's no sense of despair and there's every sense that if we have the property, we have to take care of it—remembering that it's the congregation that's the church, not the building... It's more that it's an inheritance to us ... and it's actively used." ■

Optimists, doomsday prophets and skeptics

In contexts secular and sacred, AI is provoking diverse views

Continued from p. 1

scholars Timnit Gebru and Emily Bender, have argued that both utopian and nightmare AI predictions loom larger than they should, because AI industry leaders have exaggerated the technology's abilities and sidestepped its limitations.

As secular techno-optimists and doomsday prophets argue with skeptics about the promise and peril of AI, the tools AI companies have turned out so far are already a source of controversy among Anglicans in Canada. Some in the church are eager to embrace the use of auto-generated text, for example, as part of daily ministry work, while others raise serious misgivings about the meaning to be found in text generated by a merely probabilistic process.

The possibilities for using a tool that can quickly search documents to summarize or generate text are numerous in a parish setting, says the Rev. Tay Moss, a priest at St. John's Norway and director of online church learning platform CHURCHx. Moss uses customized tools based on ChatGPT, a popular chatbot from OpenAI, for everything from research to quickly looking up daily liturgy and readings to sermon drafting to generating Bible study questions. He likens the process to having a conversation with a theology student: they might not get everything right, but using the chatbot to ask questions and prompt responses is a way to spark inspiration and work out ideas.

Moss walked the *Journal* through how he uses ChatGPT to look up information on mustard seeds for a potential sermon on their significance in parables, then asked the system to generate a prayer for farmers of mustard seeds and demonstrated how it could reword a sermon to be easily understood by children.

"I wouldn't necessarily use this as the final product, but ... this is a very helpful tool to be able to very quickly generate ideas one could riff on," he says.

Moss has also worked with The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada's counterpart in the United States, on an AI chatbot called AskCathy.ai which, trained on more than 1,000 pages of documents on church policy and theology, allows users to ask questions about matters of faith. This application is perfect for people who may be curious about church life but either do not have access to qualified clergy or are nervous about approaching them, he says.

Between its June 2024 launch and mid-September, Moss tells the *Journal*, "Cathy" had processed 3,147 conversations averaging about 10 messages each. It had fielded pastoral questions, had exchanges with users who approached it with hostile language and debated difficult questions about theology, he says.

Testing AskCathy.ai out, the *Anglican Journal* found it was able to provide general answers about topics including adultery, evil spirits and more specific answers about The Episcopal Church's policies on the inclusion of transgender people. When asked why anyone should believe the Bible is true, however, it replied that some people choose to believe the Bible based on



▲ **Vinod Khosla, a venture capitalist and major investor in OpenAI, speaks at the Collision trade conference, held in Toronto June 17-20.**

PHOTO: SEAN FRANKLING

faith or the fact that others have believed it for a long time, and added that ultimately it's a personal choice everyone has to make for themselves.

In a training course produced in association with the World Association for Christian Communication, Erin Green, a theologian and communications lecturer at Thomas More University in Belgium, argues churches and other nonprofits should get to work now on guidelines for responsible use of AI in

their communications and other work as the technology grows more prominent. "There's huge issues with privacy, ethics and bias, but this is the ecosystem in which we already live. This is already a fact of life," Green says in the online course.

Organizations must decide for themselves what their priorities are when drawing up a policy, she says, but there is a wealth of resources available to show how others have approached the question so far. As one example, she holds up the treaty-based approach developed by Maori tech ethics researcher and doctor of Indigenous studies Karaitiana Taiuru, whose 2020 document on tech ethics emphasizes the Maori's sovereignty over their data and their right to control its "creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, security, dissemination, use and reuse." As a potential resource for organizations putting together their own AI policy, Green points in the course to a rich list of policies from around the globe on the website of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development at OECD.ai, including a list of values-based principles and recommendations for policy makers. She encourages organizations to especially consider seeking out underrepresented perspectives.

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“There's huge issues with privacy, ethics and bias, but this is the ecosystem in which we already live. This is already a fact of life.”

—Erin Green

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MONTREAL DIOCESAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

is a creative learning community rooted in the Anglican and United Church traditions, helping students to grow in spiritual maturity and exercise leadership in the church and world. The college is affiliated with McGill University and is a member of the ecumenical Montreal School of Theology. Our programs include Bachelor of Theology, Master of Divinity, Diploma in Ministry, Master of Sacred Theology, and Certificate in Bilingual Ministry. We also offer distance-education options such as the Licentiate in Theology program which prepares students for ministry in local contexts across Canada. We are located in downtown Montreal and have students from across the country and globe.

For information, please contact: The Rev. Dr. Jesse Zink, Principal,
3475 University St., Montreal, Quebec H3A 2A8. 514-849-3004 x222.
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QUEEN’S COLLEGE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

Though Queen’s College has been preparing people for varieties of ministry opportunities since 1841, we are acutely aware of the changing needs of the world today and are envisioning a new way to be church as we move into the future. We offer full-time and part-time programs for those preparing for ordained and non-ordained ministries in the Church and community. We have on-campus, on-line, hybrid and correspondence courses that help students complete M.Div., MTS, M. Th, B. Th., Associate, Diploma and Certificate programs. We collaborate and partner with other faith groups to strengthen our programs and the learning experience. Our programs include and foster theological education, pastoral training and supervision, spiritual development, participation in faith-based learning community, and a vibrant chapel life. Queen’s is situated on the campus of Memorial University in St. John’s, NL.

For more information about our programs contact The Provost, Queen’s College Faculty of Theology, 210 Prince Philip Drive, St. John’s, NL A1B 3R6.
queens@mun.ca,
www.queenscollegenl.ca
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RENISON INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY (RIM)

The newly imagined RIM will now focus on offering retreats and workshops which address the learning longings of the local Anglican church, an annual Youth Event convened by our Chaplain, an annual Lenten lecture series which focuses on theologies of Social Justice and action toward the common good, and two co-sponsored programs offered in collaboration with parishes each year. We also invite you to make suggestions for future programming ideas: reninmin@uwaterloo.ca

Please join us at one of our upcoming events. Participation is free. You can support the work of the Renison Institute of Ministry by making a donation during registration; there will also be freewill offering baskets available at the events. All events include parking and refreshments as part of the day’s activities.

Find out which of our events will interest you. Visit www.renison.ca/RIM

SAINT PAUL UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

Would you like to deepen your understanding of your faith and discover fresh ways of bringing it to bear on the questions and challenges of life? The Faculty of Theology at Saint Paul University has been preparing Anglicans for lay and professional ministry for over forty years. Students pursue practical ministry experience in the Anglican tradition in a rich ecumenical and bilingual educational context, beautifully situated in the national capital region. The Faculty of Theology offers a variety of programs: BA, MTS, MDiv, MA, and PhD. Courses are offered online and in person.

For more information, please contact Dr. Sarah Kathleen Johnson at Saint Paul University, 223 Main Street, Ottawa, ON K1S 1C4
sarah.kathleen.johnson@ustpaul.ca

THORNELOE UNIVERSITY

is an innovative Anglican college in Sudbury, Ontario offering creative programs in Theology. Largely through distance education, the School of Theology offers courses at the certificate and diploma levels, as well as a Bachelor of Theology. Thorneloe University has 58 single rooms in its community-focused residence, which is open to students at Laurentian. For more information, please contact the President of Thorneloe University at: president@thorneloe.ca
Website: www.thorneloe.ca

TRINITY COLLEGE Shaped by the generous breadth of the Anglican tradition, Trinity prepares Christian leaders of varied backgrounds to participate in God’s mission to the world. The college offers professional and graduate level programs focused on preparing students to engage with the needs of contemporary society and to contribute to the future of God’s church. The Faculty of Divinity enjoys particular expertise in historical and contemporary forms of liturgy, church history, contemporary ethics and theology, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox studies, philosophy of religion, and congregational studies. In ecumenical collaboration within the Toronto School of Theology and in federation with the University of Toronto, the Faculty of Divinity offers the following degree programs: MDiv, MTS, MA, ThM, DMin and PhD. Short-course Certificate programs are available, with concentrations that include Anglican Studies, Orthodox Studies, and Diaconal Ministry.

For more information please contact: Faculty of Divinity, Trinity College, 6 Hoskin Avenue, Toronto ON M5S 1H8 416-978-2133
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VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged, and generous Christian leaders for the 21st century. With a deep grounding in the local context and a global network of partners, VST is committed to building a community of disciples of Jesus Christ who are inspired, rooted in tradition, reflective, open to amazement, equipped for leadership, and diligent in their determination to serve the world that God so loves.

A theological education at VST will stretch you academically, spiritually, and emotionally. Students from all across Canada and the world come to study at VST, bringing their own unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to the common life of the school. Learning with and from Indigenous partners and those of other faith traditions is a key element of VST’s mission, and engagement with tradition and contemporary thought with courage and faithfulness is at the heart of a VST education. VST graduates are thoughtful people, reflective about how to interact with the challenges of our time on the basis of the deep resource of faith.

If you love scholarship, seek a generous and hospitable community, and want to deepen your knowledge to serve the world God loves, please contact Samuel Andri at sandri@vst.edu.

WYCLIFFE COLLEGE at the University of Toronto is an evangelical graduate school of theology which provides high quality education shaped by the Bible and mission. Rooted in the Anglican tradition, the College has a long history of fostering spiritual formation and academic excellence since its founding in 1877. Understanding the Bible as the Word of God written, Wycliffe posits the theological interpretation of Scripture as central to the identity and work of the College.

As a founding member of the Toronto School of Theology, Wycliffe offers conjoint degrees with the University of Toronto at both the master’s and doctoral levels, as well as certificate programs. The College aims to equip students who graduate from our programs- Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master in Theological Studies (MTS), Master of Theological Studies in Development (MTSD), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Master of Theology (ThM), Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MA), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)- for readiness in leadership for Christ’s church and a variety of vocational settings globally. Certificate programs are also offered in Theological Studies and Anglican Studies.

Learn more at www.wycliffecollege.ca or contact admissions@wycliffe.utoronto.ca for program information.

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TECHNOLOGY AND THE CHURCH ▶



PHOTO: BLACKDAY

Wilson says he questions whether disembodied software can create meaningful prayers or give worthwhile spiritual advice.

“Blessed are the algorithms that create beauty and inspire creativity ... Blessed are the models that bring forth understanding and enlightenment.”

—Ryter

Generative AI subject of lawsuits

Continued from p. 9

At the end of the course, Green presents a series of ten beatitudes for AI she had asked AI tool Ryter to generate.

“Blessed are the algorithms that create beauty and inspire creativity,” it begins. “Blessed are the models that bring forth understanding and enlightenment.”

Green’s course also highlights some potential uses of AI for generating communications materials. She describes how she used AI tools to help with graphic design and to create prompts for a full year’s worth of LinkedIn posts for a friend’s wool goods business, demonstrating how to use artists’ names to ‘flavour’ generated images with their style.

She also warns users to beware a variety of pitfalls in AI results, ranging from biased training data and developers’ influence on depictions of vulnerable cultural groups to the tools’ potential for spreading misinformation. However, while the course demonstrates what such results might look like, it provides few strategies for correction beyond simply watching for problematic output and trying to prompt around it.

Green also mentions one of the several active and prospective class action lawsuits in the U.S. and Canada that centre on AI. One type of AI tool used to generate text is the large language model (LLM). LLMs analyze vast bodies of “training text”—text, often scraped from the internet, and fed to the AI to teach it patterns—and produce human-sounding answers to user prompts. They produce these answers by calculating what word is likely to come next in a sentence based on the analysis they’ve performed of the training text, often running prompts and results through multiple layers of processing tuned for subject matter expertise, ethical guardrails and other refinements. In the current lawsuits, writers, artists and private citizens object to the nonconsensual scraping of their work and personal data from the internet and its use to profit others without asking or paying them.

Green declined a request by the *Journal* for an interview or comment on AI and copyright issues.

Kieran Wilson, who sits on the national council of the Prayer Book Society of Canada, says his organization is trying to be open-minded on AI tools. But for the moment, he says, he and the society’s other leaders only trust it on very simple, straightforward tasks, like typesetting a bulletin or looking up psalms and hymns.

Tasks that involve generating prayers or giving advice are less appropriate for AI, he says.

Of AskCathy.ai, he says, “I think we have pretty serious concerns about something like that because AI doesn’t have spiritual discernment. We’ve seen a lot of recent stories about the possibility for AI to hallucinate, which is basically just to make up information, telling people what they want to hear without being able to discern the truth.”

Anglicans believe clergy receive divine graces to perform the task of spiritual discernment when they are ordained, he says. And while that’s not a guarantee they always get it right, he argues, at least when they get it wrong, they can be held accountable. When Christians use church-approved liturgical texts, he says, they are participating in the embodied, baptismal life of the Church. He questions whether the output of disembodied software can add anything meaningful to that process, even though it may be grammatically convincing.

Like Wilson, American author and writing teacher John Warner is profoundly skeptical of treating the output of LLMs as meaningful writing. His upcoming book *More Than Words* examines the lessons the emergence of AI can teach about how students are taught to write. When a person sits down to write, he says, they have an idea in mind which they intend to convey to a reader using words as a medium, which he argues is fundamentally distinct from the process of probabilistically calculating responses based on input.

“What happens when humans write has no relationship to what happens when those things generate syntax,” Warner says.

In May of this year, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby signed his name to the Rome Call for AI Ethics, a document created by the Roman Catholic church’s Pontifical Academy for Life. The Vatican says the document is aimed at fostering a sense of responsibility between organizations, businesses and governments to ensure everyone benefits from the development of the new technology and that its development is administered in a way that respects human dignity.

Echoing a common theme from his teaching on technological equity, Welby said AI “cannot be the sole property of its developers, or any single part of the human race.” ■

CLASSIFIEDS

BOOK



REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE: Two Unfinished Symphonies

Two young women, living parallel lives, were handed similar daunting diagnoses of cancer by their doctors, with uncertain prognoses. Both of them, known to be community movers and shakers, decided to increase their workload, in spite of being faced with unexpected challenges and dangers.

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They were fighting for their lives and yet not giving up on helping humanity during endless conflicts and global upheaval. To order this inspirational book, please contact Mary Shepherd, illustrator and editor, at 514-487-0126. Or email at: marymathilda@hotmail.com.

BOOK



Transcendence on the Trans-Canada and Wild Dogs and Doctors

A young med student travels to the Canadian North in mid-winter, while suffering from serious health problems. Determined to complete her training, she finds herself being helped by a wild dog who becomes her guardian, during the last three weeks of her internship on a reserve. The dog takes her to work every day and to all her necessary outings, and virtually saves her life. This and other stories of remarkable healing, including a salesman’s transformative experience on the Saskatchewan Trans-Canada highway, can be ordered by contacting Mary Shepherd, editor and illustrator, at: marymathilda@hotmail.com or 514-487-0126

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December BIBLE READINGS

DAY READING

- 1 1 Thessalonians 3
- 2 1 Timothy 3:14-4:5
- 3 Psalm 137:1-6
- 4 Malachi 4
- 5 Mark 13:32-37
- 6 Philippians 1:1-17
- 7 Philippians 1:18-30
- 8 Luke 3:1-11
- 9 Zephaniah 1
- 10 Zephaniah 2
- 11 Zephaniah 3
- 12 Philippians 4:1-9
- 13 Luke 3:12-20
- 14 Micah 1
- 15 Micah 2:1-3:7
- 16 Micah 3:8-4:7

DAY READING

- 17 Micah 4:8-5:15
- 18 Micah 6
- 19 Micah 7
- 20 Hebrews 1
- 21 Hebrews 2
- 22 Hebrews 3
- 23 Isaiah 8:16-9:7
- 24 Luke 2:1-20
- 25 1 Chronicles 16:8-36
- 26 Acts 6:1-15
- 27 Genesis 1:24-2:4a
- 28 Psalm 92
- 29 Colossians 3:1-17
- 30 Nehemiah 8:1-12
- 31 Numbers 6:22-27

READINGS TAKEN FROM THE DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE 2025 CREATED BY THE CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY. USED WITH PERMISSION.

LUKE 1:38

“Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me according to your word.”



IN THIS SEASON of attentiveness, of patient waiting and watching, we are invited once more to look around and notice the many ways in which God is at work in our midst.

May this Advent be for us a precious holy time of preparation for the dawning of a new day with the arrival of the Christ-child, a day that will bring new hopes and new possibilities. Let us watch and wait together with unshakeable hope for the Prince of Peace.

Anne Germond

Archbishop Anne Germond,
Acting Primate



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