

# ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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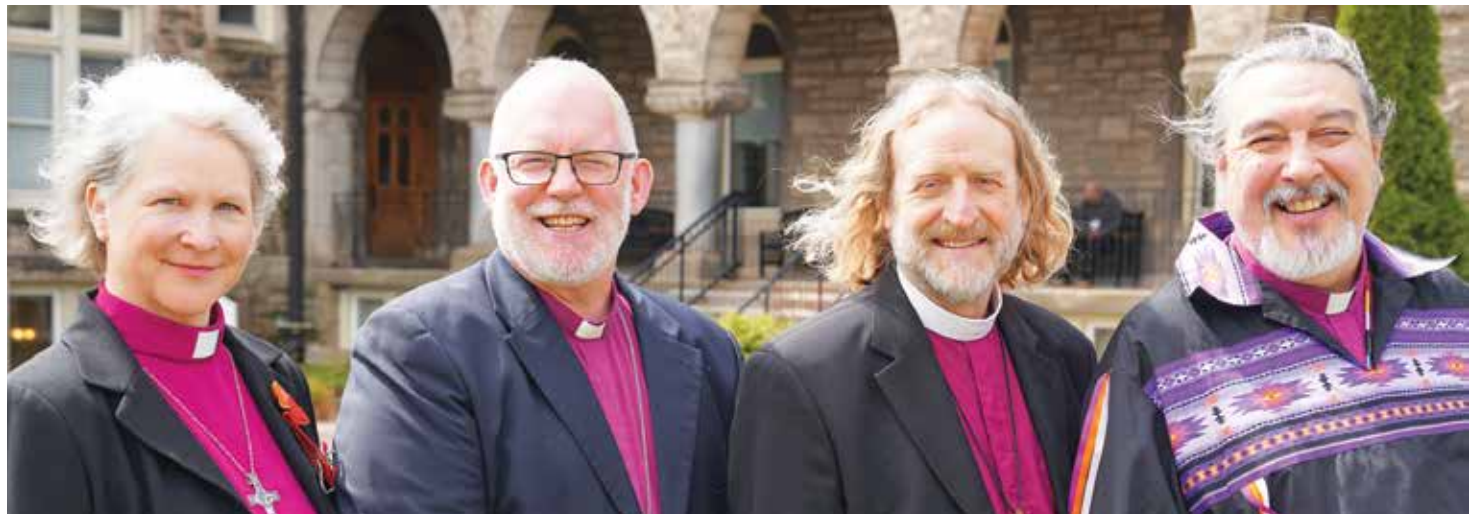
## Bishops pick four candidates for next primate

Matthew Puddister  
STAFF WRITER

The Order of Bishops has chosen four nominees for this June's election of the next primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

They are: National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper; Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson, bishop of Calgary and metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of the Northern Lights; Bishop of Caledonia David Lehmann; and Bishop Riscylla Walsh-Shaw, suffragan bishop in the diocese of Toronto.

Archdeacon Alan Perry, General



PHOTOS: ANGLICAN VIDEO

L-R: Bishop Riscylla Walsh-Shaw, Bishop David Lehmann, Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson and Archbishop Chris Harper gather for a photo during a meeting of the House of Bishops in Niagara Falls, Ont. April 3.

Secretary of General Synod, announced the candidates April 3, one day after the Order of Bishops held a ballot to choose the nominees, as finishing touches were being put on the May issue of the *Anglican Journal*.

Voting in the primatial election will take place June 26 at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ont. during the next meeting of General Synod, with results announced the

same day. The installation of the church's 15th primate will follow on June 29.

Perry invited prayers for members of General Synod in the three orders of Clergy, Laity and Bishops as they prepared for the discernment process. The general secretary also asked for prayers for the nominees, their families and dioceses; for the person who will be elected as primate; and for Archbishop Anne Germond, acting

primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, as she guides the church in the months leading up to General Synod.

According to the canons of the church, nominees for primate must be chosen by the Order of Bishops from among its own members.

The *Anglican Journal* will have more coverage of the primatial election and the nominees in its June issue. ■



IMAGE: LEMBERG VECTOR STUDIO

## Panel outlines six paths to 'big change' in church

### Acting primate urges Anglicans to join work of transformation

Sean Frankling  
STAFF WRITER

The church is approaching a time of important decisions—one which Anglicans can and should embrace with hope, Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, told Council of General Synod (CoGS) in her opening remarks March 7. Her comments came as a commission established by former primate Archbishop Linda Nicholls recommended major cuts to the size of the church's organizational committees and governing bodies.

"This is not just tweaks, this is big change," commission chair Archdeacon Monique Stone told CoGS later that day.

The commission's 48-page document offers six pathways along which the church could organize work to update and strip down its governance to improve efficiency, clarity and inclusion.

In her speech, Germond encouraged CoGS to see the challenging conversations involved as part of a hopeful story of renewal feeding into the upcoming General

Synod national gathering June 23-29.

That synod will include discussions of the pathways, the implementation thus far of the "five transformational commitments" made by General Synod at its last meeting in 2023 and the election of a new primate (see "Bishops pick four candidates for next primate," on this page)—all of which, Germond said, make this a time of vital spiritual discernment.

"Let us embody bold hope through our words and in our actions as we prepare for this extraordinarily important time," she said, adding that the church's leaders and all its members were being invited to participate not just in the rebuilding of a small part of the church, but in its perpetual and holistic transformation. "We're being constantly invited into that space," Germond said. "The Church [is] in constant formation, is being built, and our part is to steward that 'building' now in this time."

The commission's recommendations are aimed at adapting the church to the needs of a smaller membership and a 21st-century social and political landscape. Its report is based on feedback—in the form of 297 responses to an online survey as well as interviews and Zoom meetings with General Synod staff and Anglicans across the country—regarding a set

See REPORT, p. 6

## Anglican-assisted refugee founds group for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers

Matthew Puddister  
STAFF WRITER

Several years ago, Emel was homeless, lonely and uncertain about the future. Having fled his home in The Gambia due to anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination, Emel—who prefers not to give his full name due to safety concerns—was living on the streets in Senegal and relying on the support of fellow asylum-seekers who offered him food and shelter.

Through a friend who had found asylum in Canada, Emel was introduced to Duane Lecky, a member of the congregation of St. John the Divine Anglican Church in Victoria, B.C. who with his husband had invited Emel's friend to stay in their home. Lecky organized a GoFundMe



PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Emel is the founder of Rainbow Haven.

campaign to provide food and housing for Emel while he navigated the asylum process, eventually resettling in Canada in 2019.

Today, Emel lives in Ottawa and works as a personal support worker while studying to become a nurse. He is also the founder of Rainbow Haven, an all-volunteer organization that seeks to provide shelter

and sustenance for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers as they attempt to find refuge in safe countries.

"My own experience as an asylum seeker showed me [for the] first time how vulnerable LGBTQ+ people, refugees, are," Emel says. "Many of us flee one dangerous situation only

See 'IF I SURVIVED,' p. 3



Dr. Scott Brubacher  
Executive Director



## Join AFC's 2nd annual *Say Yes! to Kids* Sunday celebration June 22, 2025



### *Say Yes! to Kids* 2025: Join the Movement

The Anglican Foundation of Canada's *Say Yes! to Kids* (SYTK) campaign is back for its fifth year, building on a strong foundation of generosity and impact.

Since its launch in 2021, SYTK has raised more than \$755,000 to fund youth programs in faith formation, arts and education, outdoor recreation, and more—including vital grants for Indigenous youth initiatives.

This year, Anglicans across Canada are invited to be part of the movement. On June 22, churches are encouraged to celebrate *Say Yes! to Kids* Sunday by praying for young people, using the SYTK liturgy, and dedicating their offertory to support a local or national children's ministry or youth initiative.

Whether your parish has children or not, your prayers and generosity can help strengthen ministries that uplift young lives, including Indigenous-led programs that empower youth through faith, culture, and community. ■

The 2nd annual *Say Yes! to Kids* Sunday will take place on Sunday, June 22, and will once again be supported by a SYTK Sunday liturgy. The liturgical resource has been developed by a team of AFC's clergy board directors from across Canada and is meant to be used with the permission of the Ordinary.

It is a flexible resource that any church can use, whether it has an active campaign or not. Churches that do not have youth to involve as readers, greeters, or elsewhere, can use the service as a time of prayer for

children and their communities and across the country. "What matters most," says Dr. Scott Brubacher, Executive Director, AFC, "is rallying Canadian Anglicans to celebrate children, youth, and young adults in our midst."

Participating parishes can order special SYTK Sunday offertory envelopes and use the offering to support their SYTK fundraising campaign, or other local or diocesan outreach to children and youth. There are also bulletin insert graphics and templates available. ■

**\$755,000**  
**150+ Beneficiaries**

Faith Formation  
\$260,000

34%

Arts & Education  
\$125,000

17%

Outdoor Recreation  
\$110,000

15%

Food Security & Poverty  
Reduction \$95,000

13%

Reconciliation  
\$90,000

12%

Health & Well-being  
\$75,000

10%

## *Say Yes! to Kids* Impact Keeps Growing

*Say Yes! to Kids* is an annual fundraising appeal sponsored by the Anglican Foundation of Canada. Launched in 2021 to encourage church-led pandemic recovery programs and initiatives, the SYTK movement has now provided \$755,000 in funding to more than 150 beneficiaries and fundraising partners for youth-focused ministry and outreach across the Anglican Church of Canada.

"The top three ministry impact zones have been faith formation, arts and education, and outdoor recreation," says Dr. Scott Brubacher, Executive Director. "It's wonderful to see the year-over-year impact as so many churches and dioceses are using SYTK to invest in youth retreats, Vacation Bible Schools, and

part-time staffing to revitalize children and youth ministry programs." Other impact zones include food security and poverty reduction, reconciliation, and health and well-being.



At the close of the 2024 campaign AFC surveyed past SYTK participants. "Seventy-five percent of respondents told us they use SYTK to create a sustainable revenue stream for an ongoing ministry and that it's an important source of funding for them," says Brubacher. "We also heard how influential the AFC Angel Donor matching gift program has been to local campaigns. We are all very grateful to the lead donors who, over the past 4 years, have championed this cause with donations totaling more than \$100,000." ■

REGIONAL NEWS ▶



PHOTO: ROBERT SEXTON

Parishioners began protesting outside the cathedral after Bishop John Organ announced he had revoked Short's license to practice ministry.

# Controversy rocks Newfoundland cathedral

## Parishioners call for bishop's resignation after firing of dean

Matthew Puddister  
STAFF WRITER

A fired dean and rector at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Corner Brook, Nfld. has filed a complaint alleging that Bishop of Western Newfoundland John Organ violated the ecclesiastical province's safe church regulation after, among other things, revoking her license to practice ministry.

Organ announced the firing of then-dean Catherine Short, who had held the position since 2018, in a speech at a live-streamed Sunday worship service Jan. 19. Short filed her claim with the ecclesiastical province March 3. If all avenues through the church are exhausted, Short told the *Journal*, her only recourse will be legal action through civil authorities.

St. John the Evangelist parishioners have called for the reinstatement of Short and Organ's resignation. Many have attended multiple peaceful protests outside the cathedral. All nine members of the vestry resigned after Organ did not respond to their repeated requests for a meeting.

In his speech, Organ described numerous personal conflicts with Short.

He said clashes began shortly after she started as rector and that these had led to her making "angry and threatening social media posts." Organ said Short had served the parish well, but had also exhibited a "passive-aggressive leadership style." He said he would reverse the cancellation of Short's license and welcome her back as dean if she agreed to anger management training and worked within the church's conflict resolution model.

Organ delivered the news of Short's firing to the congregation using the time allotted for the homily. Deborah Howe, a former vestry member, told the *Journal* she was upset and surprised by the manner in which Organ delivered the news to the congregation.

"I couldn't believe it—that he would get up and not address the scriptures at all, and his time for the sermon was strictly used for explaining—or not explaining, really—what was going on," Howe said.

Some parishioners walked out during his speech. Afterwards, she said, vestry members emailed the bishop several times asking for a congregational meeting, at one point offering to bring in an outside mediator for the discussion. After Organ ignored their repeated requests for a meeting, Howe said, the vestry left a letter telling the bishop they felt he should resign. Finally, the vestry resigned en masse in protest on Feb. 14.

Some parishioners have refused to attend services at St. John the Evangelist

and are worshipping at other local Anglican churches.

Longtime congregation member Glynda Seaborn told the *Journal* she found Organ's claim that Short exhibited anger management issues implausible.

Jack Walsworth, misconduct and safe church officer for the ecclesiastical province, is leading the investigation into Short's complaint which, he told the *Journal* March 24, could take 60 to 90 days. As of that date, Walsworth had interviewed Organ and Short and was planning more interviews, potentially with members of the congregation.

The most favourable outcome, Walsworth said, would be the identification of a path forward acceptable to both Short and Organ. If Short and Organ cannot agree on one—if they have what Walsworth calls "irreconcilable differences"—Archbishop David Edwards, metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Canada, will decide what happens next. Only Organ, as bishop of Western Newfoundland, Walsworth said, has the power to reinstate Short's license to practice ministry in the diocese.

In response to a query from the *Anglican Journal*, Organ said he welcomed the investigation and was cooperating with it fully, but otherwise he and Edwards declined comment for this article.

Organ has served as bishop of Western Newfoundland since 2018. ■

**If Short and Organ cannot agree on a way forward, Archbishop David Edwards will decide what happens next, Walsworth said—but only the bishop has the power to reinstate Short's license to practice ministry.**

# 'If I survived, it was because of people who stepped in to help me'

Continued from p. 1  
to find ourselves in another, struggling with homelessness, exploitation and lack of resources. I knew that if I survived, it was because of people who stepped in to help me, like Duane ... So I wanted to do the same for others."

Rainbow Haven currently operates two safe houses in Dakar, Senegal and is working on setting up a third in Kenya. Emel stays in regular contact with asylum seekers living in these apartments, holding regular meetings and sharing updates, while working to find more people who can support the organization.

Lecky is chair of Rainbow Haven. He says helping LGBTQ+

asylum seekers grew out of St. John the Divine's history of support for refugees and queer rights. Its refugee committee settled many newcomers around Victoria over recent decades.

Like many Anglican parishes across Canada, St. John the Divine has a dwindling and aging congregation and no longer has the numbers it used to for hands-on refugee work, Lecky says. He sees Rainbow Haven as a way of continuing the church's refugee ministry and merging it with its longtime support for LGBTQ+ rights.

The friend of Emel who lived for a time with Lecky and his husband—who, Lecky believes, is also the last refugee St. John the

Divine sponsored—played a key role in Rainbow Haven's origins.

In 2014, The Gambia's National Assembly amended its criminal code to impose penalties of up to life imprisonment for "aggravated" homosexuality. Then-president Yahya Jammeh called homosexuality one of the "biggest threats to human existence" and vowed to "fight these vermin called homosexuals or gays the same way we are fighting malaria-causing mosquitoes, if not more aggressively."

"It became really dangerous," Lecky says of conditions facing LGBTQ+ people in The Gambia. "Large groups left, including friends of these guys who were

living with us or had lived with us." He recalls, "The guy who was living with us, he said, 'We've got to help them.' So we started just helping this one group... They were friends of [his] and we provided them with enough money for barebones food and rent on an apartment."

One of those refugees Lecky helped was Emel, who had fled to Senegal from The Gambia. At that time Emel was sleeping in the streets, along with 10 other Gambians he knew who were also seeking asylum.

Raising funds through GoFundMe with friends and family members, Lecky sent money to cover housing and shelter costs for Emel, who was

able to emigrate to Canada after two and a half years seeking asylum. He found a job at IKEA before starting classes to become a personal support worker, and eventually founded Rainbow Haven.

National ecumenical organization Citizens for Public Justice recently donated thousands of dollars to the group, said Lecky. He says he foresees the group eventually taking the form of a single "hub" committee with many "spoke" committees, each managing a safe house.

"Our vision is that there'll be dozens if not hundreds of these spoke committees, each with a safe house somewhere," he says. ■

## 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.

## Church doesn't have to be in crisis, if clergy make gospel relevant

In the February issue of the *Anglican Journal* there was the startling fact that Sunday overall attendance has dropped by nine per cent ("Early data show Easter, Christmas up 41, 50 per cent in 2023; Sunday attendance down nine per cent," p.1). Canon Neil Elliot, the church's statistics officer, wrote in a previous issue that the Anglican Church of Canada could cease to exist by 2040. But with a nine-per-cent drop in weekly attendance nationally, the church might not even reach 2040.

The gospel of Jesus Christ will never be in crisis. What

will bring about a crisis is the way the churches preach the gospel. I once went to a huge historic Anglican church outside of London, U.K. with a congregation of 50 at the best of times. I returned a year later when the church had a different rector, and the service had completely changed. The welcoming congregation numbered more than 200. It all depends on the rector. Preach with the Bible in one hand and the news of the day in the other. Make your message relevant to the people in the pews.

**Graham Wright**  
Westmount, Que.

## Time to merge *Journal* with *Broadview*?

I have noticed for some time concern across our country for the future of the *Anglican Journal*. *Broadview*, the magazine that evolved from the *United Church Observer*, has excellent articles on the themes of spirituality, justice, and ethical living with a section at the end called "The United Church in

Focus." When our church is considering sharing national office space with the United Church and the Presbyterian Church could a win-win situation be created by combining the *Anglican Journal* with *Broadview*? Some of your articles might fit under the themes mentioned above. Others could be part of a section called "The Anglican Church in Focus" or something similar.

**Julia M. Roberts**  
Nanaimo, B.C.



## Trump coverage repels reader

I have long enjoyed and contributed to your paper financially. But by featuring a convicted felon who admitted sexually abusing women ("The church and Donald Trump," April, p.1), you have lost my interest in your paper.

**Gale Moir**

## Christian virtues will see us through Trump era

Thank you for acknowledging the Trump effect of challenges on our Christian church community in your April issue ("The church and Donald Trump," p.1).

Holding on to our Christian values with faith, hope and patience, knowing that God remains in control, will see us through with an inner peace and joy that the world cannot give us. Those Christian virtues will embrace everyone with love and dignity as we use Jesus as our role model. There are no laws against them.

The challenges we are exposed to will have to unite us to become more empathetic to the disadvantaged and counteract the "me first" culture that we are confronted with daily.

We have been given this beautiful world and everything

we need to be good stewards for the well-being of all. We are so blessed!

**Mrs. Lidy Vokey**  
Spaniard's Bay Parish, Nfld.

## Disappointed April issue featured photo of Trump

I was surprised and disappointed to see Donald Trump's face on p. 1 of April's *Anglican Journal*. The article it accompanied ("The church and Donald Trump") was all well and good, and I agree with the folks interviewed about the dangers of Christian nationalism, bigotry and meanness. Indeed, those things oppose the Christian gospel. But I don't think that it is necessary for the *Journal* to feature a photograph of a head of state who regularly threatens our sovereignty and seems determined to do real economic damage to our country. I can't help but think about folks who aren't Anglicans who see the masthead of the *Anglican Journal* and then a picture of Mr. Trump just below. What idea might they get of our church? We should be focusing on those who spread the gospel and do so positively, rather than a president who thinks himself a demigod.

**Thomas Littlewood, PhD**  
Cambridge, Ont.



**Alongside Hope**

Anglicans and partners working for change in Canada and around the world

## Disappointed with PWRDF name change

I was very disappointed to see that the name of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund's name was changed. Why? It takes very little time to explain its mission. The old name explains what it is and where the funds are used. "Alongside Hope" does not give me any information about who this organization is, what it is, where it operates or why. Now the cost of the name change in terms of handouts and advertising is being taken away from the people and groups that need it the most.

**Karen Simon**  
Margaree, Nfld.

## Unwanted subscriptions and the *Journal* budget

I read with interest details about the cost of the *Anglican Journal* as they appeared in the national office's 2023 financial statements: "The *Journal* cost the national office \$883,473 but brought in \$679,710 in revenue, for a net expense of \$203,763" ("Future of General Synod, *Journal* on table as CoGS gets set for March meeting," March, p.1).

Are there subscriptions being sent out that are not wanted? A good number of years ago, there were repeated pleas in the *Journal* for people to let the organization know that they wanted to continue receiving the publication, and that if the organization did not hear from people, they would assume they were not interested and would stop sending out copies to non-respondents.

I would be curious to know how many subscriptions were dropped as a result of non-response. Could the *Journal* let us know, please? Perhaps there could be some savings in printing and mailing possible if undesired subscriptions are not sent out.

**Nancy Craig**  
Edmonton

### Editor's note:

Efforts to pare back the Anglican Journal's circulation list to remove unwanted subscriptions began in January 2019, when circulation stood at 117,500. By the following January, this number had fallen to 36,405. Total Anglican Journal expenses as listed in financial statements for 2019 stood at \$1,747,658, for a net cost of \$478,499 when revenues were factored in; in 2020, total expenses were \$1,049,437, for a net cost of \$12,563. General Synod's Communications department currently has a process in place to ensure the mailing list is reviewed regularly.

## April issue 'thoughtful, relevant and faith-inspiring'

I am reading the April 2025 *Anglican Journal* and feel compelled to thank all involved who made this edition so thoughtful (I have a thinking/philosophical bent), relevant and faith-inspiring. And thank you to those who did the physical work of putting the *Journal* together.

**Pam Trondson**  
Church of the Holy Trinity  
Trinity Square, Toronto

## How are Anglican congregations unsafe for Indigenous people?

This is the heading of an article in the March issue of the *Anglican Journal* ("Reconcili-action!," p. 4). The author gives her prescription for making the church more welcoming to Indigenous people. Her goal has been to make her church "a safe, welcoming and recognizable place" for the Indigenous. The author evidently feels there is a problem which needs a solution. The article left me wondering about a variety of things but I have questions in a specific area: In what ways are Anglican congregations unsafe for Indigenous people? What does feeling unsafe in an Anglican congregation look like? Is the feeling of being unsafe widespread among the Indigenous?

**Leonidas Baltas**  
London, Ont.



## Trump story, Gasson Q&A and Horst column food for thought

Thank you for a wonderful issue (April). Great to think through the church and Trump with thoughtful Anglicans and read the interview with Christopher Gasson. I also loved the "coffin Anglican" reflections. Thanks for the good work!

**Heather Coleman**  
Holy Trinity Anglican Church  
Edmonton

## Does *Journal* need more investment?

We live in an age of consumerism. There are hundreds of churches to choose from, and divisions within our own church don't help maintain our unity. Despite the changes and chances of this fleeting world, there remains one instrument for unity within our body: the *Anglican Journal* ("Future of General Synod, *Journal* on table as CoGS gets set for March meeting," March, p.1).

As a new priest I give out 20 issues a month, and I am needing to increase our subscription by another 10. This isn't including those who receive it by post. The articles within have more depth than a communications department could produce, because journalism aims to give multiple perspectives. As a result, people read our national newspaper and even share it with others. Indeed, as print media become rare, the value of our church newspaper increases.

It is time to invest in the *Anglican Journal* and expand its footprint. What else do we have? In Christ, and with commitment, the *Journal* can once again be a source for unity within our body. Furthermore, with its high standard, our national newspaper can even be of service to our national community.

**Rev. Ted Williams**  
St Matthew's, Tisdale; All Saints', Melfort; Church of the Ascension, Arborfield, Sask.

BRIDGES ▶

# What does Easter mean to you?



By Anne Germond

**F**OR ME, IT is resurrection and salvation. It is names known and hope restored. It is springtime and greening. It is conversation and forgiveness. It is Christ's peace within us. It is Christ the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last who pledged a new creation where pain and sorrow are banished, and God's kingdom of light and love is revealed.

It is all these things and more. It is love and joy and song.

For those of you who were baptized or confirmed during Eastertide, I offer my congratulations and prayers as you embrace this new beginning in all its fullness. To all of us who renewed our baptismal promises, remember that we are forever marked as an Easter people who carry the song of the Spirit in our hearts and whose watchword is hope. We are the ones Jesus calls *blessed* because we have not seen him in the flesh but still we believe in the truth of the resurrection and the difference this means for our lives.

Easter is not one day in a year, but a whole season of gazing into the mouth of an empty tomb believing against all odds, and even in our fear, that the rolled-away stone opens a door of promise to a broken world.

In these challenging times, when the hits keep coming, it's easy to throw up our hands and give in to despair.

We didn't do that five years ago when



▲ **If we can trust in the providence of the God who sorrows over the fall of a single sparrow, the primate writes, then we have nothing to fear.**

IMAGE: NATALIA BACHKOVA

a worldwide pandemic shut us out of our churches and threatened our very existence. Instead, we quickly found ways to connect for worship and fellowship. Loving our neighbours took on a whole new meaning as we supported the most vulnerable and isolated in our communities.

While we cannot change what's happening around us in this moment in history, we can choose how we act, how we speak and where we offer our support. We need the gift of patient endurance and are called to embody bold hope. Let us not cower in the corner but follow the Risen Lord by teaching and healing and preaching the kingdom of God through kindness and acts of loving service; by being merciful, offering the hand of grace and forgiveness; and by remaining steadfast to the end.

What if in this Eastertide we think of this challenging time as containing the birth pangs of something new? What if we are seeing, in the words of theologian Tom Long, but "the old creation groaning for the new; sighing for a mercy deeper than its own anguish, a redemption more hopeful than its sad despair"?

And can we trust that the God who knows the exact number of hairs we have on our heads, who sorrows over the fall of a single sparrow, who has called us by name, commands his providential care over you, over me, over our whole world? If we can, then we have nothing to fear. ■

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

FEATHER AND SAGE ▶



## Rising up in new life and beauty

**FEATHER:** Almighty, Creator God, we the children of your creation lift our prayers of thanksgiving for the continued presence of your Spirit in all things around us; we thank you for the change of seasons and the warming winds which caress our faces. We praise your holy name for the wonder of new growth and the renewal of life in creation. We confess that we too often focus on the negative and step over and beyond the peace and hope that are present around us in all things. Open our hearts and eyes to see more than that which we focus on, too often to our detriment. Grant us courage and strength to do that which we are called and commissioned to do, help us to be leaders and witnesses to your truth and peace, pull us from the storms of conflict and fears, walk with us into the



IMAGE: LARYSA UHRYN

peace of faith in you, that we too might be brought to new life in the season around us. May your Spirit guide us to rebirth through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord in this Easter season. This we pray in the risen Christ. Amen.

**SAGE:** The month of May in Plains Cree is *Sakipakawipisim* (Sa/ki/pa/ka/wi/pisim), which translates as "Leaf-budding Moon" or "New-growth-coming-up Moon." This month is the epitome of what we might be looking for in this season of Easter, like the crocus with its small bluish-purple flower, first of the season, an example and

witness of new life and beauty rising up to the glory of the Creator Father, and for all Creation. Easter and spring call us to grow anew by walking in new life in the sacrifice of Christ our Lord; in the ministry of the church evolving and adapting; and in the fruits of our willingness to change and follow Christ.

As children of God our Creator, we need to acknowledge our need individually to change and come to new life in Christ, our hope for new growth in the church especially in our prayers for the new leaders being lifted up, and finally our thanks for the new growth that springs up when we offer all we are and have to the glory of the Creator who gave everything for us, the children of Creation.

Please keep the church and your leaders in your Easter prayers. Pray for the new bishops, ministries and offerings as we come to the new life in Christ and the new season in faith and healing. ■

**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

**MEMBERSHIP**

**ENGAGEMENT:** Alicia Brown

**CIRCULATION:** Fe Bautista

**ADVERTISING MANAGER:** Larry Gee

**PUBLISHER:**

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**EDITORIAL POLICY:**

Since 2019, the *Anglican Journal* has been tasked by General Synod with producing content of "the highest standards of journalistic responsibility, accuracy, fairness, accountability and transparency" that is "fact-based, fact-checked and in-depth, tackling important issues, asking and answering difficult questions." General Synod, as publisher, respects and defends its journalistic integrity. While General Synod retains the right to intervene in stories which have the potential to bring the church into disrepute, it expects to exercise that right rarely, if ever; in cases of unresolvable conflict or disagreement, General Synod has the right to order changes, but the changes so ordered must be publicly noted in the *Journal*. The policies and practices that govern the *Journal* can be found in full online, at [bit.ly/41lfg5q](http://bit.ly/41lfg5q).

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The editorial board exists to advise the editor on journalistic matters; it does not exercise direct authority over the operations of the *Anglican Journal*. It can be reached at [ajedboard@googlegroups.com](mailto:ajedboard@googlegroups.com).

Michael Valpy, chair  
Ray Aldred  
John A. DeCoste

Michael W. Higgins  
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Karen Webb

**LETTERS:** [letters@anglicanjournal.com](mailto:letters@anglicanjournal.com)

or mail to: Letters, Anglican Journal,  
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Larry Gee  
593 Balmly Beach Rd.,  
Owen Sound, ON  
N4K 5N4

Phone: 905-483-3553

Fax: 416-925-8811

Email: [advertising@national.anglican.ca](mailto:advertising@national.anglican.ca)

**CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS:**

Editor: [editor@anglicanjournal.com](mailto:editor@anglicanjournal.com)  
Director, Communications: [hpaukov@national.anglican.ca](mailto:hpaukov@national.anglican.ca)

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IMAGE: LEMBERG VECTOR STUDIO

# Report calls for cuts to ‘top-heavy’ church structures

## COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD ▶

Continued from p. 1

seven conversation-starting “hypotheses” that the commission put forward in 2023. CoGS voted March 7 to commend the six pathways to June’s General Synod gathering for discussion and action.

The six pathways along which the document recommends the church proceed are:

**1. Organizational structure:** “Current institutional structures are larger than necessary at every level (General Synod, ecclesiastical provinces, and the number of dioceses),” the document, titled “Creating Pathways,” reads. “This top-heavy structure focuses human and financial resources on maintaining outsized institutions rather than proclaiming the gospel in local communities.”

The focus of its recommendations is what form the church’s governance structures would take if they were being designed for the first time to meet the needs of the church today, said Stone. In addition to changes at the General Synod level, that may involve restructuring at the diocesan and provincial levels, which General Synod does not have the authority to mandate directly, she said. What it can do, however, is play a leadership role in the conversation, encouraging regional governance bodies in the church to cooperate on a unified vision of the new shape of the church.

The report recommends General Synod 2025 give the officers of General Synod the mandate and resources to propose a major revision to the church’s organization which they would discuss at a specially scheduled “Constitution Convention” and begin implementing at the following General Synod in 2028. A working group would be tasked with asking, among other things, how national and provincial structures can be “drastically reduced in size,” and how the number of dioceses can be cut.

**2. Management overview and restructuring:** During the consultation process, the report states, it became apparent many Anglicans were unclear as to the jurisdiction, responsibilities, functions and accountability mechanisms of General Synod.

As a result, it continues, “Deep frustrations exist amongst members of the wider church who are asked to share their own declining financial resources with the office of General Synod without a clear understanding of what takes place there or where accountability lies.” Meanwhile, staff have experienced frustration as mandates from CoGS, General Synod, department heads and individual Anglicans conflict, the document says.

To address these problems, the second pathway proposes a managerial review to align national office departments’ work with the current needs of the church and clarify their mandates and scope of responsibilities to staff, leadership and Anglicans across the country.

**3. Inclusion and diversity in decision making:** The third pathway describes the



### ▲ Council of General Synod members talk in table groups.

PHOTO: MATTHEW PUDDISTER

current format and procedures of General Synod meetings as failing to be inclusive to people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, incomes, ages and other social and cultural classes. “It was felt the legislative debate format of meetings has left many people feeling left out and created barriers to participation,” the report says, resulting in a system that “continues to attract and privilege older, affluent, white and able-bodied individuals.”

To address this, the pathway recommends the church review and adapt canons to encourage wider participation. It also calls on the church to appoint a national diversity, equity and inclusion team to consider how the church’s processes and structures could be more inclusive to a range of identities and encourage future meetings of General Synod to facilitate wider exchange of ideas and closer cooperation between diverse people.

**4. Communications:** The fourth pathway incorporates a varied set of perspectives surrounding the *Anglican Journal* and General Synod’s broader communicative function. These include the *Journal*’s role as a mechanism of accountability for the national church, its presence as the “only meaningful source of communication” from the wider church available in some areas of the country and concerns about its journalistic independence or the perception that its work can be divisive.

To accomplish these goals, it recommends examining the current mandate, format, and funding model of the communications department. This would include a discussion of the purpose of the *Anglican Journal*. It also recommends the communications committee of General Synod create a plan for the church’s communications work.

**5. Walking in partnership with the Indigenous church:** The fifth pathway says that while General Synod and the Indigenous church’s Sacred Circle have made significant progress in agreeing on the principles of walking together, there are still obstacles to overcome.

Among these, the document names uncertainties about the exact relationship between the two organizations, the methods of making joint decisions with two different procedures, remaining distrust of the non-Indigenous church among Indigenous Anglicans and colonial attitudes and lack of awareness of the

Indigenous church’s founding principles. “Non-Indigenous Anglicans are hesitant to engage in dialogue and discussion for fear of being considered offensive or racist,” it adds.

The pathway recommends the next primate of the Anglican Church of Canada—to be elected at General Synod in June—and the presiding elder of Sacred Circle produce a shared definition of the partnership between the two churches, explaining what it means for both to be independent and also connected as the Anglican Church of Canada. It also recommends forming a task force of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Anglicans to educate Anglicans on the nature of the Indigenous church and develop methods of decision making, conversation and—if necessary—mediation to discuss past challenges between the two organizations and forge a “good path forward for future work.” This will need to be done in concert with work on the sixth pathway, the report says.

**6. Ministry in remote northern communities.** This final pathway calls the church to re-examine the funding and functions of the Council of the North, a grouping of northern dioceses that contains many Indigenous communities and receives funding from General Synod. The council’s functions and those of the Indigenous church will need to be delineated, the commission writes, to determine where they do and do not overlap.

To do that, the report says, an in-depth conversation between the Council of the North, General Synod and the Indigenous church will be needed. Likewise, it says, “General Synod must be clear and transparent about its inability to fully fund vital ministry in remote areas.”

Still, it adds, General Synod may be able to make some difference by investing in training and support designed to help remote ministries improve their ability to support themselves. It asks the Council of the North and the other institutions to consider how the national context has changed since the council was established in the 1970s.

CoGS discussed these recommendations with particular attention to what they thought General Synod would agree with and where they might expect pushback. Several members said they believed the church would likely see the urgency of the need for change. Others noted that some members would likely object to what Brenda Brochu, lay representative of the ecclesiastical province of the Northern Lights, described as a “chainsaw approach” to rapid cuts. ■

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# Anglican Award of Merit recipients for 2025 announced

**Matthew Puddister**  
STAFF WRITER

Five people have been named to receive the Anglican Award of Merit, the Anglican Church of Canada's highest award for lay people.

Council of General Synod voted March 7 to approve the names of those the Anglican Award of Merit Committee had recommended receive the award in 2025: Canon (lay) Ian Alexander, Nancy Hurn, Teresa Mandricks, Jane Osler and Suzanne Rumsey. General Secretary Archdeacon Alan Perry said Alexander, who is a member of the committee, had recused himself and was not present at the meeting when it discussed the nominees.

Alexander has served on General Synod, including as prolocutor since 2023; Council of General Synod (CoGS) and the communications committee. Today Alexander remains an active member of Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria, B.C.

"I am surprised to be named a recipient of the Anglican Award of Merit, grateful to receive this honour, and humbled to find my name alongside those of so many other lay people who have devoted so much time and effort to our beloved national church," Alexander said.

Hurn served as General Synod archivist for 14 years—following a stint as chair of the archives committee for the diocese of Toronto, during which she served on the General Synod archives committee and material heritage committee. Hurn led the digitization of General Synod Archives to make them available online. She played a leading role in making archival records and photos available to residential school survivors and researchers.

Hurn said she was honoured to receive the Anglican Award of Merit, which she described as "shared with the courageous and resilient survivors of Anglican residential schools whose information and photographs are held in the General Synod Archives."



▲ L-R: Canon (lay) Ian Alexander, Nancy Hurn, Teresa Mandricks, Jane Osler and Suzanne Rumsey have been named to receive the Anglican Award of Merit.

PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

Mandricks worked for 35 years as program assistant in Indigenous Ministries, starting in 1989. In that role she supported the work of Indigenous Ministries, planning logistics for gatherings including the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and Sacred Circle. Mandricks said she was surprised and humbled to learn she would receive the Anglican Award of Merit, highlighting the support she has received from General Synod colleagues, bishops and others. "The support that I received from everybody around—and the elders, especially the Indigenous elders—really was very important to me," she said.

Osler has been a member of the Vancouver School of Theology Board of Governors since 2023. A life-long Anglican, Osler served at the national level as a member of the Anglican Church of Canada's Vision 2019 implementation team, a participant in the primate's consultation "Embodying God's Call—Aligning General Synod Structures for God's Mission Today," co-chair of the CoGS planning and agenda team and the pension committee. She also sat on numerous committees in her home diocese of New Westminster.

Osler said she was thankful to the Anglican leaders who had requested and encouraged her service.

"I never imagined this involvement would result in meeting and developing

relationships with so many amazing people across this country," she said.

Rumsey is the public engagement program coordinator for Alongside Hope, formerly the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF). She first joined PWRDF in 2001 as Latin America and Caribbean program coordinator before moving to her current position in 2010. A fluent Spanish speaker, she worked for a decade for the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America, one of numerous ecumenical coalitions that served as a predecessor to KAIROS Canada, and has served on numerous church committees.

Rumsey said she was at a loss for words when Perry reached her by phone to tell her she would be receiving the award.

"My first reaction was, 'Wow.' Then I wondered, 'Why me?' Then I thought what a wonderful thing it is to have not myself so much, nor even my colleagues, but our collective work of partnership and solidarity over 35 years acknowledged and affirmed. I'm humbled, grateful and glad to have this lay ministry recognized by the church."

Established in 1986, the Anglican Award of Merit was presented annually until 1994, when the church began naming recipients at the last meeting of CoGS before General Synod. Recipients are each presented with the award in their home diocese. ■

# CoGS recommends at least three more years of printed *Journal*

**Sean Frankling**  
STAFF WRITER

The Council of General Synod (CoGS) has recommend continuing the print publication and journalistic mandate of the *Anglican Journal* for another three years, putting to rest at least temporarily the possibility of shutting it down, making it online-only or converting it to a corporate communications organ.

The communications committee and communications department of General Synod will conduct a comprehensive review of the church's communications needs, including the mandate of the *Journal* and the implications of switching it to a digital instead of print format. CoGS voted March 8 to request the review, based on a recommendation made by the communications committee. During discussion, CoGS amended the motion to move the deadline for the review forward from March 2028 to November 2026. The council also voted to recommend fixing the current mandate and format of the *Journal* in place for "at least the next three years."

Canon (lay) Clare Burns, chancellor of General Synod, said the next group of CoGS members would be able to alter the



▲ Communications committee chair the Rev. Cynthia Haines Turner addresses CoGS March 8.

PHOTO: MATTHEW PUDDISTER

three-year timeline if there were changes they decided urgently needed to be made to the *Journal*.

The last of seven "hypotheses" written last year by a primatial commission put forth the idea that it was time for the church to stop funding editorially independent journalism. Noting that was the most divisive of its original suggestions, the commission, in its report released to CoGS in March, calls for an examination of the church's overall communication needs and its current strategy with a view to possible change. (See "Panel outlines six paths to 'big change' in church," on p.1 of this issue.)

The communications committee asked for a cost-benefit analysis of making the

*Journal* online-only, the Rev. Cynthia Haines Turner, the committee's chair, told CoGS. That review, performed by national office communications director Henrieta Paukov, concluded there were few savings to be made for the church this way. Converting to an online-only model would require money to be spent retooling other aspects of communication work to replace functions the print *Journal* serves, the committee's report said. As well, Paukov's analysis highlighted remote regions of Canada and Indigenous communities where Anglicans receive regular copies of the *Journal* but fewer people have access to high-speed internet. Likewise, it notes, the various newspapers printed by the dioceses are packaged with the *Journal* and rely on it for distribution, meaning they too would likely have to either shut down or go online-only if the national paper did. The data on how many people would be unable to access an online-only *Journal* and how many rely primarily on the print edition as their main source of information on the church are incomplete, the analysis adds. It concludes that a comprehensive review is necessary to determine the general communication needs of Anglicans across the country and how to meet them. ■

## EPISCOPACY ▶

# Chad McCharles voted bishop of Saskatoon

Sean Frankling  
STAFF WRITER

When he initially got the call to let his name stand for bishop of Saskatoon, the Rev. Chad McCharles, a Manitoba priest and part-time school bus driver, said his first impulse was “a hard no.” He was happy in his current ministry situation and at home in a community his family had been part of for nearly two decades.

However, his wife convinced him the family should at least pray about it. “And so, like a husband in training still after 25 years,” he said, “I respected that and came to a place where I [believed] the only way to find out if this is God’s will is to put the fleece out.” The best way to do that was to let his name stand for the vote, he said, and in the process, he grew to love what he learned about the diocese of Saskatoon. And based on the outcome of the vote, he said, the diocese must have seen something it liked about him.

McCharles was elected bishop of the diocese of Saskatoon March 8. Elected on the first ballot, he will succeed former bishop of Saskatoon Archbishop Chris Harper, who stepped down in January 2023 when he became national Indigenous Anglican archbishop.

McCharles is currently rector at Neepawa United-Anglican Shared Ministry, a joint Anglican and United Church parish in Neepawa, Man., and has served in parishes in the dioceses



▲ McCharles poses with the school bus he drives in Neepawa, Man.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

of Brandon and Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. He received a diploma in applied theology from St. John’s College and Seminary at the University of Manitoba, a certificate of pastoral clinical education from the University of Winnipeg and completed the leadership and youth theology program at Huron University College and Seminary. McCharles has studied Benedictine spirituality and

took temporary vows as an Anglican Benedictine in 2019. He drives a school bus twice a day, supplementing his income to support two children in post-secondary school.

McCharles said he had often felt atypical as a priest due to his comparatively non-academic educational background. He approached ministry later in life than many do, taking on his journey toward ordination with two very young children, and did not attain an M.Div., as some clergy do. But when he went to work at a five-point parish right out of seminary, he said, things changed.

“Golly, do you get parish ministry experience, right?” he said. “You learn the balancing skills of family life and parish life, and you learn the governance pieces to it and all the ins and outs, pastoral demands, and the hospital visits sometimes twice a night to two different communities.”

McCharles came to see his background differently. “I eventually realised that was something of value to the church and I stopped being ashamed of it,” he said.

In the church and in secular society, he said, he has been deeply concerned with the rise of a culture of polarization which seems to want to push people to hate those they disagree with. In his ministry as bishop he hopes to carve out a space for those who disagree to be compassionate with one another. ■

After serving in a five-point parish, McCharles came to see his background—varied life experience, but no M.Div.—in a new way. “I eventually realised that was something of value to the church and I stopped being ashamed of it,” he said.

## Bishop Lesley Wheeler-Dame of Yukon to retire in October

Sean Frankling  
STAFF WRITER

Bishop Lesley Wheeler-Dame of the diocese of Yukon will retire Oct. 24 this year, she announced in a letter to the diocese dated Feb. 26. On that date she will reach 70, the mandatory retirement age for bishops in the Anglican Church of Canada.

In an interview with the *Anglican Journal*, she said she felt reluctant to leave the position amid a period when the diocese is showing promising signs of renewal. Still, she added, she will not be leaving its service, instead planning to serve in Ministry of Presence, a program in which retired Anglicans volunteer to serve as non-stipendiary congregational leaders to supplement the diocese’s limited number of stipendiary clergy.

Of her time as bishop, which began in 2019, Wheeler-Dame says she sees the COVID-19 pandemic as a surprising highlight. In a diocese with limited resources and staffing and widely distributed parishes, she says, it had become easy to get bogged down in what the church could not do, and how the ways it had always done things were suffering under the pressure of changing circumstances. By interrupting those patterns, she says, the pandemic forced the church to come up with creative solutions, including online services, Zoom and telephone fellowship and checking on parishioners via Zoom and phone.

The shift to these alternative methods of staying connected mirrored a change in the church’s previously rigid thinking about what worship and togetherness could look like, she says. If the church could survive the sudden, forced changes the pandemic required, she says, then the other kinds of change it had already been seeing might



PHOTO: PROVIDED BY LESLEY WHEELER-DAME

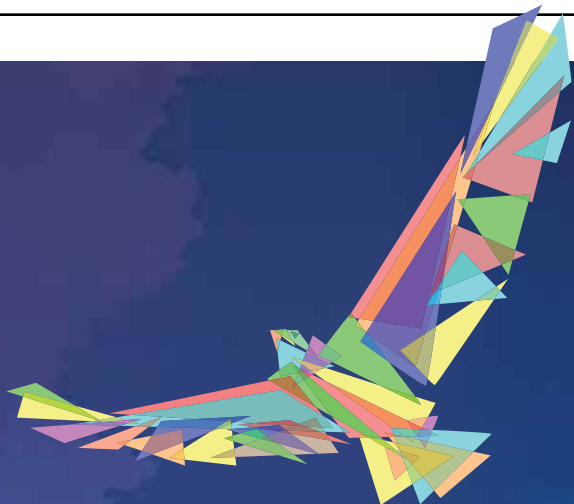
**Bishop of the diocese of Yukon Lesley Wheeler-Dame (left) poses with commissioner of Yukon Dame Adeline Webber.**

not be as much of a death sentence as people feared.

Today, she says, the diocese is seeing increased involvement from younger people and deepening relationships with community members, both those who do and those who don’t often come to church on Sundays. “And so we’re finally starting to get away from, ‘Oh, we have to get all the bums in the pews’ to being more mission-focused and caring about community.”

Some have told Wheeler-Dame it is a shame she needs to retire as this change is beginning to gather momentum, she says. And while she sees the need to be careful that aging bishops are still able to maintain their roles, she also describes the 70-year age cap as a form of ageism.

Still, she says, with the signs that the diocese is ready to grow into a new idea of what church ministry looks like, “[This] might be the perfect time for me to retire, now that people are saying that. It’s not me that made this happen. This is God’s church. So I think we are learning to get out of the way and ‘let God.’” ■



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# Rod BrantFrancis elected to head reborn Moosonee

## Mi'kmaq priest will be diocese's first bishop since 2014

Sean Frankling  
STAFF WRITER

The newly reinstated diocese of Moosonee has elected the Rev. Rod BrantFrancis, a Mi'kmaq priest currently ministering to a Mohawk parish in Ontario, as its first bishop in a decade. BrantFrancis was elected March 26 on the first ballot.

Financial problems forced the northern Ontario diocese to make itself a mission area of the Anglican Church of Canada, without its own bishop, in 2014, but its finances have since then recovered, and last June its synod voted unanimously to restore its diocesan status. Ed Madill, chair of the diocese's search committee, told the *Journal* the election came nine months to the day after that vote.

"The election was a historic day for the diocese," he wrote in an email.

In the interim, the metropolitan of Ontario, Moosonee's ecclesiastical province, has filled the duties of bishop for the mission area. Most recently, that has been Archbishop Anne Germond, with help from former primate Archbishop Fred Hiltz who has shared the work as Germond



▲ BrantFrancis (centre left) with his wife the Rev. Lisa BrantFrancis (left), Archbishop Anne Germond (centre right) and Archbishop Fred Hiltz (right) during the electoral synod.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

also served as acting primate.

BrantFrancis is originally from Newfoundland and has worked in parish ministry for 30 years. He currently serves the parish of Tyendinaga, in the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, near Belleville, Ont., in the diocese of Ontario. He previously served in the dioceses of Fredericton and Moosonee for about a dozen years each.

BrantFrancis was trained as a priest at the Church Army Training College, which was based in Toronto at the time. As a

student, he worked as a prison chaplain, and later ministered to seafarers as a port chaplain in the diocese of Fredericton before beginning his parish ministry there.

BrantFrancis told the *Anglican Journal* his time serving in the diocese of Moosonee had given him a deep appreciation for the heart and life of the people there. When he and his wife first moved to Moosonee 20 years ago, he said, they lived in a fly-in community which was unlike any ministry context they had been used to. But their neighbours quickly embraced them and they learned the strength of that community, even among the difficult circumstances that come with living in the vast and remote regions of northern Ontario.

The focus of his ministry when he is consecrated as bishop on May 28, said BrantFrancis, will be making himself present to the people of Moosonee—a diocese hungry for a hands-on presence.

"People are looking for a bishop who's going to come and spend time in their communities, listen to them and get to hear their concerns and their hopes, spend time to pray with them and to laugh with them and to sing with them," he said.

Within minutes of being elected bishop, he adds, he had received several invitations to parishes around the diocese and questions about when he could come. ■



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JERUSALEM PRINCESS BASMA CENTRE

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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. [info@montrealdio.ca](mailto:info@montrealdio.ca) [www.montrealdio.ca](http://www.montrealdio.ca)

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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](mailto:queens@mun.ca), [www.queenscollegenl.ca](http://www.queenscollegenl.ca) 709-753-0116, Toll free (877) 753-0116.

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## RENISON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Rooted in the Anglican Church, Renison University College is a liberal arts institution focused on helping students make a positive impact in the world. Renison offers degree courses in Social Development Studies and Social Work, as well as language, culture, and arts classes for students at the University of Waterloo, along with community members who are not enrolled.

Renison provides spiritual and faith support to students and the community through the Chaplaincy and the work of the Chaplain who ministers to all Renison students to help meet their spiritual needs throughout their academic careers. The Renison Institute of Ministry (RIM) continues to evolve in response to the needs of lay theological education. Stay tuned for future developments with RIM.

To learn more about Renison University College visit [renison.ca](http://renison.ca).

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## 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](mailto:sarah.kathleen.johnson@ustpaul.ca)

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## 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](mailto:president@thorneloe.ca) Website: [www.thorneloe.ca](http://www.thorneloe.ca)

## TRINITY COLLEGE

The Faculty of Divinity is an ecumenical community of theological education located at the heart of a leading university and theological consortium, rooted in the Anglican tradition’s embrace of diversity and social engagement. Seeking to serve students by deepening knowledge, encouraging hope, and practising love, Trinity prepares Christian leaders to participate in God’s mission to the world. The college offers professional and graduate level programs that prepare students to engage with the needs of contemporary churches and society. We enjoy particular expertise in historical and contemporary liturgy, church history, ethics and theology.

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For more information please contact: Faculty of Divinity, Trinity College, 6 Hoskin Avenue, Toronto ON M5S 1H8 416-978-2133 [divinity@trinity.utoronto.ca](mailto:divinity@trinity.utoronto.ca) [www.trinity.utoronto.ca/study-theology](http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/study-theology)

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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 gospel and attention to the local context, VST is committed to building a community of disciples of Jesus Christ 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. As students gather on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Musqueam people, VST emphasizes the importance of learning with Indigenous churches and those of other faith traditions. 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.

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## WYCLIFFE COLLEGE

at the University of Toronto is an evangelical graduate school of theology which provides high quality education. 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. With Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master in Theological Studies (MTS), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Master of Theology (ThM), Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MA), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs, the College aims to equip students who graduate from its programs 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](http://www.wycliffecollege.ca) or contact [admissions@wycliffe.utoronto.ca](mailto:admissions@wycliffe.utoronto.ca) for program information.



**COUNCIL OF  
GENERAL  
SYNOD** ▶



PHOTO: MATTHEW PUDDISTER

**L-R: Amal Attia, Canon (lay) Clare Burns and Archdeacon Alan Perry update CoGS on the national office's finances March 8.**

## 'Paper gains' in investments save General Synod from deficit in 2024

### CoGS discusses whether—and how—to access \$42.8-million Consolidated Trust Fund

**Sean Frankling**  
STAFF WRITER

The Anglican Church of Canada's national office would have ended up with a \$237,000 deficit—despite \$600,000 in pared-back spending and an unusually high contribution from one diocese—if not for the strong performance of its investment fund, which lifted it to a \$3.19-million excess of revenues over expenses in 2024. But this performance consisted of “unrealized” or on-paper-only gain, and concerns about the office of General Synod's financial sustainability persist.

Expenses for the year at the national office were higher than expected, Amal Attia, treasurer of General Synod, told Council of General Synod (CoGS) in a presentation March 8. This, she told the *Anglican Journal* in an interview afterwards, was due in part to the cost of legal fees related to cases in which the national church is tangentially named, as well as leftover expenses from previous years such as a charge from the venue for General Synod 2023. But one diocese, which Attia declined to name, used real estate sales to catch up on proportional giving which it had been behind on since 2021. This meant an extra \$453,000, which, combined with \$600,000 in cost-cutting at the national office, brought the deficit before transfers down to a comparatively minor \$237,000—an amount the office will cover using funds from its consolidated trust fund (CTF).

The CTF—a body of investments which the church does not normally use for operational expenses, but which it is able to draw on in emergencies—had a remarkably strong year, Attia said. It grew by 24 per cent, she said, compared to its average rate of around 6.5 per cent, and financial statements show that General Synod's surplus was due primarily to that growth, which amounted to \$3.4 million.

This money was not withdrawn from the investment fund, says Attia, and is thus what she refers to as a “paper gain.” She also cautioned that it is important not to count on that kind of growth repeating, as the markets are highly unpredictable. The substantial impact to the stock market caused by Donald Trump's tariff threats, for example, stands to hurt the church's investments in 2025, she said.

The CTF now stands at about \$42.8 million but, Attia told CoGS, only about \$24 million of that is available for the church to use at its discretion, with the rest being money General Synod is managing on behalf of dioceses and parishes (about \$9 million) and in restricted funds which have been donated to the church to be used for specific purposes, often drawn up in the wills of the people who left that money to the church (about \$11 million).

General Synod staff and volunteers are now working on a project to put the restricted money in the CTF to better use, said Canon (lay) Clare Burns, chancellor of General Synod, in an informal panel discussion of church finances at CoGS involving Attia; Burns; Canon Patricia Dorland, chair of General Synod's financial management committee; and Archdeacon Alan Perry, general secretary of General Synod. These restricted funds have been donated to the church over the course of the last century or so, some as far back as the 1910s, Burns said. As a result, the legally binding rules governing what that money can be used for are found in a body of wills and other documents ranging in age across 100 years or more. These must be read and interpreted to determine how the funds can—and cannot—be used. The church is looking for volunteers, especially law students, who are willing to help go through the documents and make a list of what money is available for what purposes, Attia said.

Normally the church avoids touching the bulk of even the unrestricted CTF funds, as that money is tied up in investments as a way of ensuring there are resources remaining for future generations in the church. But after the financial discussion, CoGS voted to supplement General Synod's budget by withdrawing up to four per cent per year from the CTF as a way of holding the church's finances stable while it deliberates on programming cuts and other methods of adapting to the ongoing shrinkage of revenues. Attia said the church had arrived at the four per cent number as a conservative estimate of what it could take without using up all the fund's annual growth.

“I'm a firm believer in rainy days. And the rainy day is not here yet, so let's not push it closer,” she told the *Journal*. ■

## 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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## June BIBLE READINGS

### DAY READING

- 1 Acts 16:16-34
- 2 Psalm 104:1-18
- 3 Psalm 104:19-35
- 4 Proverbs 8:1-19
- 5 Proverbs 8:20-36
- 6 Romans 8:1-17
- 7 Genesis 11:1-9
- 8 Acts 2:1-21
- 9 Psalm 8
- 10 Romans 5:1-11
- 11 Acts 11:19-30
- 12 Acts 12:1-19a
- 13 Acts 12:19b-13:5
- 14 John 16:1-15
- 15 1 Kings 3:1-15

### DAY READING

- 16 1 Kings 19
- 17 Psalms 42-43
- 18 Galatians 1:13-2:5
- 19 Galatians 2:6-21
- 20 Galatians 3:1-14
- 21 Galatians 3:15-29
- 22 Luke 8:26-39
- 23 Acts 13:13-33
- 24 Luke 1:57-80
- 25 Psalm 77
- 26 Galatians 4:1-20
- 27 Galatians 4:21-5:10
- 28 Galatians 5:11-26
- 29 2 Timothy 4:1-8
- 30 Psalm 85

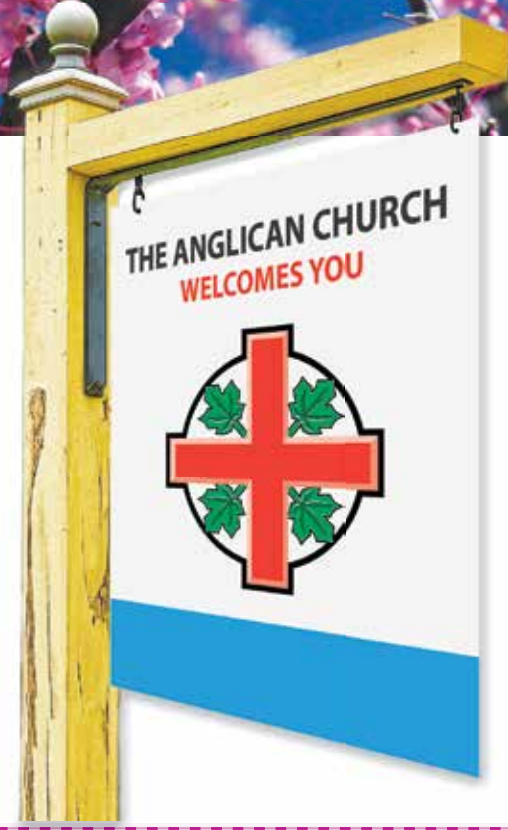
READINGS TAKEN FROM THE DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE 2025 CREATED BY THE CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY. USED WITH PERMISSION.

Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

— Psalm 33:22



St. John's Anglican Church  
Ancaster, Ontario  
Photo: Sara Garcia



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