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## National church could support diocesan networks, primate says

Sean Frankling  
STAFF WRITER

General Synod will likely shift toward supporting programming developed and delivered across diocesan networks rather than delivering that programming itself, says Archbishop Shane Parker, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The change is emerging as a part of the church's restructuring process toward a leaner national office, he says. The process involves asking what functions can only be served by the Office of General Synod and which ones can be handled at other levels of the church.

The national office has other roles only it can play, such as supporting the office of the primate—but it should otherwise focus on building functions that visibly support parish and diocesan work, Parker says. This is in line with the “three Cs” that a previous primate's commission identified as the core functions of General Synod, he says.

“When we focus on those core functions of ‘convene, connect and communicate,’ it's clear that's a very different approach to a national church than being a place which is doing a lot of programming in and of itself,” the primate says.

See TRANSFORMATION, p. 3

## Profound devotion

“Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.” The passage from John 12:1-8, foreshadowing Christ's sacrifice and typically read

in Lent, inspired this painting by artist Lauren Wright Pittman. “This is the posture that Jesus calls all of us into; a profoundly uncomfortable, shockingly reverent position,” writes the artist. For a Lenten reflection from Archbishop Chris Harper, go to page 5.

## Mixed-ecology model growing in Anglican parishes



▲ Bishop of Niagara Susan Bell.

PHOTO: DANI LITIS

Matthew Puddister  
STAFF WRITER

The Church of England declared in its vision and strategy for the 2020s that one of its three priorities is to “be a church where mixed ecology is the norm”. But the concept of a “mixed-ecology” church, in which a traditional parish co-exists with new expressions of church, has also become increasingly popular within the Anglican Church of Canada.

Bishop of Niagara Susan Bell spoke about the call to become a mixed-ecology church in her last two charges to the diocesan synod. Diocesan community missioner Canon Ian Mobsby says



▲ The Rev. Ed Olsworth-Peter

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Niagara is committed to becoming a “mixed-ecology diocese.”

In October, Trinity College in Toronto hosted a public lecture by the Rev. Ed Olsworth-Peter, director of innovation and development at St. Mellitus College—the Church of England's largest theological college—on his book *Mixed Ecology*, which details the church's recent experience with this approach.

Mixed ecology, Olsworth-Peter told the *Anglican Journal*, refers to a model characterized by “all sorts of different types of church sitting side by side that serve different needs ... It could be a parish church that loves what they do, but realizes they're not going to reach

everyone. So they might start something else along the side.” He cites examples such as Forest Church, which involves worshipping in nature; Messy Church, built around activities for children and families; or café church, in which Christians gather in cafés to offer fellowship and outreach.

Rather than feeding people into an established church, a mixed-ecology parish often involves congregation members running different initiatives that may share theology with, and are typically resourced by, the parish, Olsworth-Peter says.

He acknowledges overlap between the

See NIAGARA, p. 2

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Grant for pioneering AST program



New chancellor

## MISSION ▶



PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

St. Luke's Anglican Church in Oakville has grown by reaching out to Mandarin-speaking immigrants in an application of the mixed-ecology model, rector and missionary Canon Garfield Adams (front row, wearing red robes) says.

## Niagara aims to become 'mixed-ecology diocese'



▲ Canon Ian Mobsby: "There's a huge number of people who are 'spiritual but not religious'. One of the challenges in Canada, I think, is how to respond to that."

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Continued from p. 1

mixed-ecology model and other novel approaches to ministry, such as Fresh Expressions—an ecumenical movement that aims to develop new forms of church with existing congregations, which started in the U.K. as a partnership between the Church of England and the Methodist Church—and particularly Messy Church.

"There's lots of grassroots stuff that's been going on for years ... I think it might be that the [church] structure is catching up with that," Olsworth-Peter says. "The language is catching up ... There were quite a lot of people who were doing it already instinctively. [Mixed ecology] just gave a helpful framework and language to what was already there."

**'It's all about mutual flourishing and responding to spiritual need'**

Mobsby says mixed ecology recognizes the "post-secular culture" now prevalent in countries like Canada, in which Christianity is no longer the dominant force and different cultures exist alongside each other.

While building on inherited church models, Mobsby says, a mixed-ecology church also seeks "to respond to missional opportunities to engage with de-churched, non-churched people to form new ecclesial communities out of contextual mission."

The language of ecology, he says, suggests coexistence rather than competition. "It's all about mutual flourishing and responding to spiritual need ... There's a huge number of people who are 'spiritual but not religious'. One of the challenges in Canada, I think, is how to respond to that." The diocese of Niagara, he notes, is currently experimenting with holding groups for contemplative prayer and meditation.

From 2015 to 2020, Mobsby served as Woolwich Episcopal Area mission enabler for the Church of England and priest-in-charge at St. Luke's Church (Camberwell) in Peckham, South London. St. Luke's was "in a bad way," he says, with an aging congregation that was not renewing itself.

At the same time, St. Luke's was next to several arts colleges with "lots of people



▲ Canon Garfield Adams: "I believe [this is] a strategy of parish development which ... gives us a vision to create a new type of church."

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

exploring spirituality," Mobsby says.

"There was a total disconnect between the parish church and the opportunities on the ground."

In response, St. Luke's set up a new monastic community alongside the traditional parish. New monasticism refers to a diverse Christian movement that emphasizes broad forms of communal life, prayer, contemplation, hospitality and concern for the poor.

"That expanded to reaching out to all sorts of different people ... I think we have to take more seriously the culture which people are coming from," Mobsby says.

From 2020 to 2023, Mobsby was assistant dean for fresh expressions and pioneer ministry and interim pioneer rector at Christ Church Blackfriars, a former industrial mission in Central London he says had lost much of its identity in the wake of de-industrialization. Alongside traditional Sunday morning worship, the parish sought to engage during the week with those who lived and worked in the area.

"A lot of that was dealing with people with stress and anxiety and mental health problems and opening up Christian resources to support people," Mobsby says. "And that grew a whole mission of itself."

**Diocese of Niagara recruits commissioned lay missionaries**

Missioners—known in the Church of England as pioneers—play a leading role in mixed-ecology parishes. The diocese of Niagara recently introduced its first commissioned lay missionaries (CLMs)—trained volunteers who help create missional initiatives with the hope that they will form new worshipping communities.

CLMs support the existing roles of licensed lay missionaries, who are paid and head specific mission work, and ordained missionaries—Anglican clergy who lead missions. Nine Anglicans in the diocese have begun a two-year apprenticeship to become CLMs, Mobsby says.

Canon Garfield Adams, rector and missionary at St. Luke's Anglican Church in

Oakville, Ont., is currently leading three CLMs in the Mission in Acts Mission, an official diocesan mission based at St. Luke's with some activity taking place at nearby St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church.

In response to a growing population of Mandarin-speaking Chinese immigrants, the mission began holding Mandarin-language Eucharist services and Bible study. Each Sunday, St. Luke's simultaneously holds two Anglican worship services: one in English using the *Book of Alternative Services*, and the other in Mandarin.

Afterwards the two groups join for fellowship over coffee, with bilingual lay leaders helping translate. St. Luke's also hosts regular English coffee events, inviting guest speakers from the community to help participants practice their English.

Before, the congregation "had been shrinking for the last few years," Adams says. "But it's gradually recovered because of [the people] we brought in." Though there were tensions at the very start due to linguistic and cultural differences, he says, regular Sunday worship attendance has increased from 15-20 people to 60-80.

With mixed ecology, "basically we embrace the difference," Adams says. "We're all God's people. I believe [this is] a strategy of parish development which gives more space or gives us a vision to create a new type of church."

The diocese of Niagara is currently focused on establishing CLM cohorts to make mixed-ecology parishes sustainable, Mobsby says. He has also had discussions about establishing similar missions in the diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

"What I think [mixed ecology has] done is given parishes a confidence to think that God is very present in their communities," he says.

"I think it's moved away from a survival mentality to a missional mentality ... There's a renewed confidence of clergy in having a role to play outside of church buildings. I'm seeing lay people gaining some confidence in getting to know people relationally in their context, listening and discerning spirit and opportunities in their communities." ■

### Correction

Julianna Buck, executive assistant to the General Secretary, was among the Church House staff who have moved on from their positions with the church. Incomplete information appeared in the report from the Council of the General Synod on p. 2 of the February issue.

FORMATION ▶

# Grant to fund ecumenical shared ministry training



▲ Atlantic School of Theology president the Rev. Heather McCance

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

**Matthew Puddister**  
STAFF WRITER

Atlantic School of Theology (AST) will establish a pioneering ecumenical shared ministries training program after receiving a US\$2.5-million grant from the Lilly Endowment foundation.

Designed for students preparing for ordained or lay professional ministry, as well as continuing education for existing clergy and lay ministers, it will be the first formal training program of its kind, AST president Heather McCance says. Ecumenical shared ministries refer to Christians from different denominations worshipping together or sharing a program, mission, ministry, clergy, staff and/or building.

To develop the curriculum, AST—an ecumenical university formed as a merger between Anglican, United and Roman Catholic schools—will work with other organizations knowledgeable in ecumenical training or ecumenical shared ministries. Partners include the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism in Saskatoon, St. John's College in Winnipeg, Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Henry Budd College for Ministry in The Pas, Manitoba, and the Canadian Council of Churches.

AST's president says the need for formalized training in ecumenical shared ministries reflects both longstanding



▲ Atlantic School of Theology campus in Halifax

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

theological values and growing practical considerations.

"Jesus prayed that we would all be one as he and the Father are one," McCance says. "There's a deep theological need for Christians to be unified . . . But at this juncture, there are lots of places in Canada where there are more church buildings than the number of worshipers in those buildings would necessarily require."

At the same time, she says, there are fewer full-time, paid clergy positions available. In this context, many communities have seen denominations

holding worship services in the same building, sharing clergy, doing Bible study or children's and youth ministry together, or collaborating on food banks and other outreach ministry.

"To have the training for people to do this work faithfully and well will allow them to enter into it, I think, better equipped," McCance says.

The Rev. Sandra Beardsall, a retired professor of church history and ecumenics at St. Andrew's College and a United Church minister who served an Anglican-United congregation in Labrador in the early 1990s, praised the launch of the new training program.

"It's something I would've loved to see much earlier, because it really helps to strengthen the notion of shared ministries as a viable and important option for the churches," Beardsall says.

The Lilly Endowment, which provided the grant to AST as part of its Pathways to Tomorrow Initiative supporting theological schools, is a private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by members of the Lilly family through stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. The firm is now the world's largest pharmaceutical company and in 2025 became the first health-care company to reach a market value of \$1 trillion. ■



PHOTO: MATTHEW PUDDISTER

**Transformation Task Force co-chair Canon (lay) Andrew Stephens-Rennie, flanked on the left by fellow co-chair Canon (lay) Janet Marshall, says the groups affected by the church's transformation must be consulted as decisions are made.**

## Transformation at 'the speed of relationship'

Continued from p. 1

Dioceses are already doing work in areas like justice, advocacy, worship and service, Parker says, and the national church can support them by facilitating networks to help them benefit from each other's specialties.

"Let's say diocese A has a very strong financial development function, for example," he says. "How do those resources get used by dioceses where there isn't a large staff focused on fundraising? It's a matter of active engagement and sharing and support at multiple levels."

The need for this de-centralization is one of the early themes emerging as the primate and other church leaders proceed on the restructuring mandated by General Synod at its June 2025 meeting, Parker says.

Meanwhile, the co-chairs of the Transformation Task Force approved by the Council of General Synod (CoGS) in October tell the *Journal* the task force has formed two subgroups dedicated to pathways two—management overview and restructuring—and four—

communications.

The co-chairs are Canon (lay) Andrew Stephens-Rennie, former CoGS member for the ecclesiastical province of British Columbia and Yukon, and Canon (lay) Janet Marshall, director of congregational development for the Diocese of Toronto. They say the task force and other subgroups still in formation will examine the areas for change laid out in the *Creating Pathways* document and return to CoGS with recommendations on how to proceed.

That process will involve heavy consultation and conversation with the groups affected by each pathway, including Sacred Circle and the Council of the North, proceeding at "the speed of relationship," they say. That phrase reflects a desire to ensure those affected by the church's decisions have a voice in those decisions, Stephens-Rennie says.

"We're bringing together groups to discern so that we get to the place where we can say, 'This seems good to the Holy Spirit and us,' and we can move forward and say, 'Maybe this isn't perfect, but it's good enough to try.'" ■



St. Philip's on-the Hill Anglican Church, Unionville, 2025

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## PEOPLE ▶

## Meet General Synod's new chancellor, George Cadman

## Emphasizes role of consultation and advice

Sean Frankling  
STAFF WRITER

The new chancellor of General Synod, George Cadman, describes himself as a cradle Anglican with over 35 years of experience in the role of chancellor. He has held that role in the diocese of New Westminster since 1988.

Cadman, who spoke with the *Anglican Journal* in January, became the national church's chancellor—a volunteer officer of General Synod who provides advice on both secular and church law—on Jan. 1. He succeeds former chancellor Canon (lay) Clare Burns, who submitted her resignation on Nov. 10, 2025, to take effect no later than Dec. 31, 2025.

Cadman was born and baptized in Trail, B.C. His family lived there for the first few years of his life before moving to Vancouver, where his father pursued an education in classical studies.

Remaining an Anglican in his adult life was simply a natural development based on his family history, Cadman said, with a grandfather who was a member of the Church of England and parents who met through the Anglican Young People's Association.

"It is who I am, and that's all I can tell you," he said. "I grew up in the church and here I am."

Cadman holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of British Columbia and earned his bachelor of law degree at Toronto's Osgoode Hall Law School. According to his biography on the website of his law firm, Boughton Law, he has practised law for over 40 years at all levels of the Canadian judicial system and at various administrative tribunals.

Cadman will continue to serve as chancellor for the diocese of New Westminster during his term as General Synod chancellor, he told the *Journal*.

Cadman's biography lists numerous professional positions in his career, including director and secretary-treasurer of the Vancouver Board of Trade, chairman of Meritas Law Firms Worldwide, president of the Kiwanis Foundation of Canada and president of the Kiwanis Children's Fund. With Kiwanis, he told the *Anglican Journal*, he worked in partnership with UNICEF on maternal and neonatal health.

In 1990, he was appointed King's



▲ George Cadman received the Anglican Award of Merit (medal pictured) in 2023 for his work as chancellor of the diocese of New Westminster.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Counsel, an honorary title recognizing lawyers who have demonstrated a commitment to pursuing legal excellence in service to the Crown and to their communities. In 2023, he received the Anglican Award of Merit for his service as New Westminster's chancellor.

Cadman said he was on a learning curve as chancellor of General Synod, then still in the first month of a role he will hold throughout the triennium leading up to the next General Synod.

Asked what he has learned about being chancellor from his long experience, Cadman said, "I have learned that one needs to be flexible and that there are great opportunities for the church. Part of the role of the chancellor is to make sure that there's a clear understanding by those who are tasked with leading the church, a clear understanding of how best from a legal perspective to maximize those opportunities."

He will play a role advising on the transformational change process the church is undertaking during this triennium, he said, including work on governance, one of the competencies listed in his biography. However, he declined to comment on any specific

aspects of the work.

Cadman will also be a member of the Primate's Council, a group Archbishop Shane Parker, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, has convened to supervise transformational work, which includes all the officers of General Synod.

"I like to think that I have some knowledge that will be of assistance to the church," Cadman said.

It is not appropriate in general for a chancellor to act as a spokesperson for the church, he said. Rather, the position is about advising and assisting the work of the church as it connects to legal matters, he said, which may involve matters of church governance, General Synod procedure and the canons that govern the way changes are made.

"The role of a chancellor is to advise and, if a question is asked, to provide the best advice possible," he said. "The nature of my profession is to provide objective advice, and in that context, to help guide those who seek the advice."

"I would like to think that the advice I give in any situation is as objective as possible. It does not mean that I am devoid of ideas, but it does mean I have a role which is independent of that." ■

## Editor's note:

Henrieta Paukov, Anglican Church of Canada's Director of Communications, is acting editor and is organizing interim editorial support pending editor Tali Folkins' return from a temporary absence.

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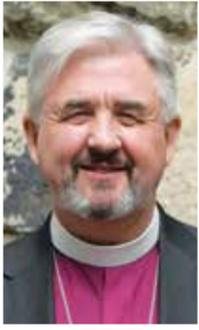
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ARCHBISHOP SHANE WRITES ▶



# Pray with deep trust, then listen to the spirit



PHOTO: SHANE PARKER

A ray of light appeared in this photograph taken by the author, who says that signs like these are simply moments of grace.

By Shane Parker

SIX YEARS ago in March, we suddenly had to take up masking, distancing and sanitizing as weapons of choice in our early fight against the global coronavirus pandemic. The development of effective vaccines was relatively rapid, although the distribution was uneven around the world. Pray that we will use our gifts of memory, reason and skill to develop and equitably share vaccines and treatments across the globe to arrest or fend off all dangerous infections.

The photograph accompanying this column was taken on March 13, 2020, a couple of days before pandemic lockdowns began. I took the picture from the top of a large training hill near Mooney's Bay in Ottawa, a height of land that had been part of my life since moving there in 1969. I spent a lot of time on that hill over the years, sliding down it as a youngster (and later with my own children), interval training up and down it for distance running and cross-country marathoning, and walking up and over it nearly every day when I moved from full-time work to full-time university studies in my early 20s.

It is the vantage point from which I saw the cityscape change and diversify, first with several Orthodox churches appearing on the horizon, then with the visible creep of suburban development to the south and many more office and apartment towers to the north. Mostly, it was an easy place to get to when I needed to sit down and gain perspective, and it continues to be so today.

Being in a place where you can look out and far away in all four directions has a centring effect: you feel smaller in a good way, and the thoughts you carry become more like prayers. As the prayers flow out and away from you, a kind of

holy silence replaces them, and you are able to listen to the wisdom of the Spirit.

I was on the top of that hill on March 13, 2020, because I was a candidate in the Diocese of Ottawa's episcopal election that would be held the next day, and I wanted to be deeply centred going into it. After a good time of silent, prayerful reverie, I felt moved to take a picture facing southwest, where the river flowed.

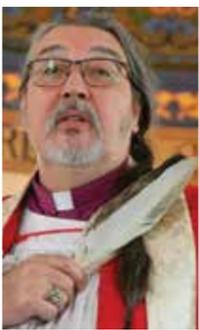
To my surprise, a strong ray of light, like a sign of some kind, appeared in the photograph. I chuckled when I saw it, because I learned long ago that signs are simply moments of grace, like a smile from God, and rarely mean what we think or hope they mean.

When I was a less seasoned follower of Jesus, I prayed for specific things to happen (or not happen) for people I loved, or in situations that seemed unbearable. Perplexingly, none of these things turned out the way I desperately wanted or thought they should, yet I was somehow conscious of being firmly tethered to God as they unfolded. In time, I learned to pray with deep trust, knowing that everything is held and will be resolved in Christ. My faith journey taught me that if you understand personal prayer to be about letting your thoughts be lifted up and away from you so that you are finally silent, you are on the right track.

Jesus teaches that God will answer anyone who asks or seeks, but you cannot possibly hear the answer if your own voice is in the way. Best to pray away until there is nothing more for you to say, and then, when you can be silent, to trust that the wisdom of the Spirit is speaking and let it be. Get up and go your way—you have been heard and answered. Live it out and see what happens. ■

Archbishop Shane Parker is the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

FEATHER AND SAGE ▶



# Find God's truth and peace in silence

By Chris Harper

**FEATHER:** Creator God, we the children of your creation give you praise and thanksgiving for ever listening and hearing our prayers. We thank you for all the gifts of the seasons in how they open our eyes and hearts to your presence. We thank you for the season of Lenten silence, wherein we seek to open ourselves to you. For in the silence, when the world around us is quiet and all distraction is humbled, you speak. Speak now to our humbled hearts, reveal your Word of truth, guide us to your will and way, that listening we may hear your purpose and promise and be children of hope in this world and for your glory. This we pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

**SAGE:** The Lenten season has an important aspect of listening, of prayerful opening of our ears to seek what the Almighty is saying to us. Listening is an important skill that few these days seem to master. The world is filled with noise and opinion, people speaking over each other, everyone an expert in their own right, with a need to prove others wrong. To truly listen, we need first to close our mouths and open our hearts and minds,



PHOTO: DARYA PONOMARYOVA

tuning our ears to the other before us. In so doing, we just might hear a truth other than our own.

In scripture, the wilderness is a place of silence, a hollow or valley wherein the sound of the world is hushed, where one might find a place of refuge and comfort, a place where truth and peace abound, emanating from our Creator God. When scripture speaks of a holy place, it is usually quiet, and reverence sits heavy in the air like incense. Silence and prayerful listening are important in scripture, whether it's God calling or speaking through the prophets or Jesus saying "pay attention to how you listen" (Luke 8:18) as he teaches with parables.

Listening is a skill mastered through

humility, the ability to be silent when the world or opinions fill the landscape. Listening and silence are not easy but are skills that we as Christians should practice more, especially as platforms such as social media can make our voice resound far beyond our immediate circles. Today, may we prayerfully rein in our tongues and offer words that have been filtered through the silent place full of our Creator's peace. A blessed Lenten season to all—may the prayerful silence be a healing hug as you listen for the quiet guiding voice of the Almighty. ■

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

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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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## 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)

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ADVOCACY ▶

# Primate criticizes hate speech law amendment

**Sean Frankling**  
STAFF WRITER

Archbishop Shane Parker, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, has written an open letter asking the Canadian government to reconsider an amendment to an upcoming bill that would remove religion as a defence against hate speech charges—while other critics describe the bill itself as an attack on free speech.

The primate otherwise expressed his support for Bill C-9, which he described as intended to address a growing number of incidents involving hateful speech or conduct, including antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Parker said his concern is that removing protections for speech grounded in opinions on or interpretations of religious texts will introduce uncertainty about the legal boundaries of religious education and practice. It may also unintentionally “deter the kind of open and healthy discourse that is central to spiritual and religious communities—including some of the communities the Bill intends to protect,” he added.

Bill C-9, introduced by the minority



▲ **Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) says legitimate criticism was labelled antisemitic at 2024's Palestine solidarity encampments like the one at the University of Toronto.**

PHOTO: SEAN FRANKLING

Liberal government, proposes four new criminal offences that the Liberals say are designed to address hate-motivated crimes and protect access to religious and cultural spaces.

These offences criminalize intimidating behaviour intended to provoke fear and impede the target's access to a place of worship or a building associated with a religious, cultural or other identifiable group; the intentional obstruction of such a site; and the display of certain hate or terrorist symbols in public for the promotion of hate.

The bill also creates an offence for hate crime, to be appended to charges for other crimes in cases where they are judged to be motivated by hate. It includes a definition of hate to be used in determining which offences would be subject to the additional charge.

Section 319 of the Criminal Code of Canada outlaws the promotion or incitement of hatred against any identifiable group of people and lays out acceptable defences against such charges. Among these is a clause that states, “No person shall be convicted of an offence ... if, in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text.” The Liberal government agreed to remove the religious defence as part of a deal to gain support for the bill from the Bloc Québécois.

Parker asked the government to

reconsider the amendment and retain the defences currently laid out in the code. Bill C-9 has drawn criticism from both religious and secular organizations, including the Canadian Labour Congress, the Coalition for Charter Rights and Freedoms and Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV). The latter, a Jewish organization that frequently criticizes Israeli policies, wrote its own submission to Parliament in October.

Much of the discussion of the bill has described it as aimed at addressing antisemitism, the submission says. But IJV argues that many of the Jewish organizations MPs have cited as supporting the bill label almost any criticism of Israel as antisemitic. They use the accusation to scare and silence potential critics, IJV says.

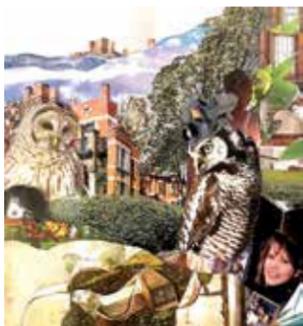
The IJV submission uses the example of disagreements over what did or did not constitute antisemitic expression at the University of Toronto's Palestine solidarity encampment to illustrate how the expressions Bill C-9 seeks to limit are not clear-cut.

Removing defences and further limiting criticism of religious institutions puts too much discretion in the hands of government and law enforcement to decide what constitutes prosecutable speech, it says.

As this issue was going to press, Parliament's Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights was in the process of considering Bill C-9. ■

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## April BIBLE READINGS

### DAY READING

- 01 Matthew 27:1-26
- 02 Matthew 27:27-56
- 03 Isaiah 52:13-53:12
- 04 Matthew 27:57-66
- 05 Matthew 28:1-15
- 06 Psalm 118
- 07 John 11:14-27
- 08 Psalm 16
- 09 1 Peter 1:1-12
- 10 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
- 11 John 20:1-18
- 12 John 20:19-31
- 13 1 Corinth. 15:12-28
- 14 Jonah 1
- 15 Jonah 2

### DAY READING

- 16 Jonah 3
- 17 Jonah 4
- 18 Isaiah 25:1-12
- 19 Isaiah 26:1-12
- 20 Luke 24:13-35
- 21 Genesis 18:1-14
- 22 Proverbs 8:32-9:6
- 23 Psalm 23
- 24 Exodus 3:16-22
- 25 Ezekiel 34:1-16
- 26 John 10:1-10
- 27 1 Peter 5:1-11
- 28 Psalm 100
- 29 Jeremiah 23:1-8
- 30 Ezekiel 34:23-31

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

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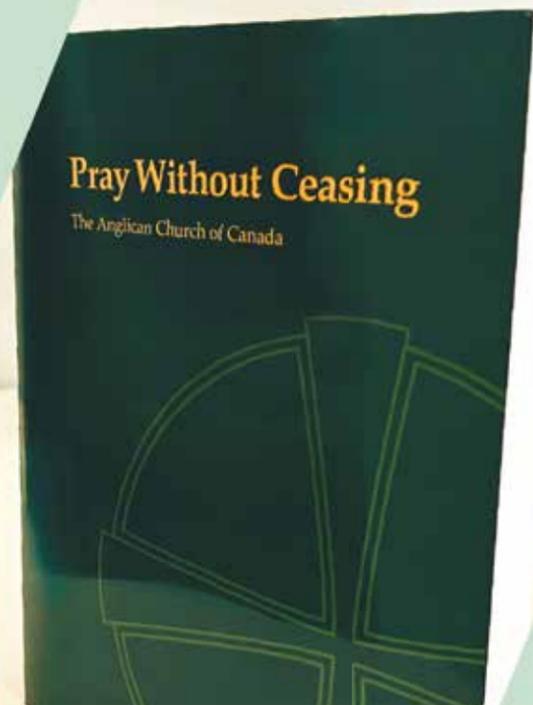
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