

# ARCHBISHOP'S CHARGE



*Restore us, O God;  
make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.  
Psalm 80:3*

by  
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ARCHBISHOP OF ALGOMA

TO THE FIFTIETH SESSION

OF THE

SYNOD OF  
THE DIOCESE OF ALGOMA  
Anglican Church of Canada

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

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# Archbishop Anne Germond's Charge to the 50th Synod of the Diocese of Algoma

ARCHBISHOP ANNE GERMOND\*

September 17, 2021

## *Diocese of Algoma Motto:*

*"To share in the gathering work of Christ so that his newness of life overflows into our hearts, homes, churches and communities."*

### 1. SYNOD THEME 2021

*"Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved." (Psalm 80.3)*

Who needs to hear these words? Clearly, people who are living in the depths of despair, lost, forsaken, hurt, and suffering. Israel in the Babylonian exile definitely qualified. Uprooted far from their home country of Palestine and radically separated from their holy place in Jerusalem, everything that was familiar to them had been taken away. Family life was disrupted. Their culture, so much a part of their daily existence, was in disarray. Their religious practices, at the heart of who they were as a people, specially chosen by God, were mocked. Because they had been forcibly removed from their homes, there was insufficient time to prepare for it. Uncertainty became their daily companion. Their daily prayer was one of longing to return home, but as months turned into years and then decades, hope of ever returning faded away.

We know that the Hebrew people fared quite well in exile. They were not mistreated or discriminated against, and economically they were able to sustain themselves. But the truth

of the matter was that they had been rendered homeless and were exiles in a foreign land.

The deeper dimension of the exile was the truth that they were there because of covenantal disobedience to God. They and everyone else knew the real reason they were homeless and uprooted, living in a foreign land was the judgment of God. The prophets had given hundreds of years of warnings which God's people had persistently chosen to ignore.

But it hadn't always been that way. Psalm 80, from which our synod theme is taken, also recalls a different time - the story of God's saving act in bringing 'God's vine', the chosen people of Israel, from captivity in Egypt. It recalls God's planting of that vine in a place of God's own choosing. It recalls the vine taking deep root in the land flowing with milk and honey, and the vine growing and thriving.

Now the vine, far from home and without its familiar and protective walls around it, is vulnerable. It has been ravaged, burned, and cut down. Instead of being able to eat the 'bread of presence' which held a sacred place in the tabernacle in the Temple, the people had been forced to consume the 'bread of tears'. The vine is bereft of everything that was once theirs, including their stability and their strength. But the most horrible thing of all was that the vine now feels bereft of God. That is their final af-

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front. "How long?" the people cry. "How long will our suffering continue?"

Interestingly, God's first words of response to the people in exile were not words of condemnation or judgment. If they had been they would have been true, but they would not have been good news, or the 'gospel'. Instead, God's first words were tender-hearted and comforting.

*"Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God."* (Isaiah 40.1) God seems to be addressing the angels and messengers who are gathered around the heavenly throne. *"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid."* (Is.40.1-2) The word of hope that comes through the prophet Isaiah is that the time has come for God's people to return home and for those who remain in Babylon there will be a new lease on life.

*"Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved."* (Psalm 80.3) This is a prayer of lament. It is a plea for the restoration of their community and of their relationship with God. It became one of the sung prayers of the people of God in exile and it is our prayer for the coming years.

One can hear the great longing within the people in these words of lament, individually and socially – for God's blessing of security, graciousness, and peace to be upon them once more. For God's presence and love to be with them in their time of distress. And that, once again, God's face will shine on God's people and they will be saved.

## 2. THE DIOCESE OF ALGOMA IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

Who knew that when Synod was prorogued in May 2019 that we were actually staring down a pandemic that would have disastrous consequences around the globe and that we would witness increasing brokenness and fragmentation in an already hurting world.

*"Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved."* is a profound description of the voices and cries of lament rising to God from individuals and communities in

every corner of the globe.

This is the lament of those within our pews, and it is the lament of those outside our walls. It is a lament that we must take up as we gather for our 50th Synod and that we, as a Church, must take up in the coming years. We must never forget the pain and loss of the last two years, naming the "Good Friday" moments honestly, as well as the toll they have taken individually and communally.

Sadly, the vulnerable in society, especially those living in poverty, those experiencing homelessness, and racialized communities, were most negatively impacted by the virus, and, to this day, too many families are still waiting to honour loved ones who died over the last couple of years. The delay of funerals and interments has only exacerbated and made the grieving process more difficult. So let our first actions be to grieve the losses and to grieve the dead. As N.T. Wright says *"The initial calling of the Church, first and foremost, is to take our place humbly among the mourners. Grief, after all is part of love."* (N.T. Wright: God and the Pandemic pg.53)

But the narrative of ongoing pandemic, of scarcity, fear, greed, and violence is not the only story there is for us to tell and share about the last two years. In the midst of tremendous suffering we have also witnessed graced moments of generosity and compassion. Doctors, nurses, caregivers, and other frontline workers, whose vocation is service to others, and who in the beginning had inadequate protection from the virus, demonstrated selfless care in action. Their choosing to remain on the frontlines was sacrificial and costly – no wonder people stood on their doorsteps or balconies to applaud them. We honour them!

In the Church we witnessed friends, neighbours, and perfect strangers reaching out to one another, and to those who live on the margins of society whose lives were not merely inconvenienced like ours but devastated, levelled. Some might call them saints, others 'salt of the earth' Christians. These acts of kindness have been none other than the healing presence of Jesus as we became the visible body of

Christ in and for the world at a time when we were unable to gather for worship and receive the precious body and blood of our Lord in holy communion.

Being cast out of our church buildings by the pandemic has shown that, while our buildings are necessary for many things, they are not the only things that Jesus needs to do his work. Ministry happened in new and exciting ways beyond the walls of our church buildings as 'connection' became the buzzword around the Diocese of Algoma.

The telephone, electronic, and printed word increasingly became an important mode of communication to stay connected with our fellow parishioners. There was an almost seamless transition to online worship within days of the pandemic being declared, enabling the Church everywhere to reach far beyond its four walls, entering into peoples' homes like never before. Whether services were pre-recorded and posted online, live-streamed, or held on a platform like Zoom, we were still able to gather for worship, rooting ourselves in prayer for one another and the world.

I am particularly grateful to the many people around Algoma who, with little technological training or ability and few resources, helped parishioners stay connected with their parish community at a time when prayer was most needed. I am aware that increasing online presence and capacity was a steep learning curve for everyone. To make this a reality, a number of parishes in Algoma spent countless hours learning new skills and invested thousands of dollars in audiovisual equipment which will continue to be utilized in the future as hybrid forms of worship become normative. Thank you for your commitment to prayer and worship throughout the pandemic.

Your technologically challenged bishop, with the support of her husband, Colin, became sufficiently adept at livestreaming so that I was able to offer Morning and Evening Prayer on Facebook during the holy seasons of Lent and Advent in 2020 and once again in Lent this year. We now have a lighting and sound system at Bishophurst that any professional would be

happy to use.

Many people who would never have ventured into a church building have come to know Jesus in a whole new way through these online praying communities – and all from the comfort of their living room.

I would also like to extend my thanks to those of you who have been on the frontlines in taking care of closed buildings and implementing the protocols for gathering. With little or no experience in the more practical aspects of public health, you did a wonderful job in preparing the buildings and God's people for worship. You were nimble in changing those carefully prepared plans in the face of quickly evolving pandemic circumstances. In numbers of parishes, just a handful of people have been overseeing the care of the building, the pastoral care of the people, and the online worship offerings. We applaud you!

Thanks to the responsiveness of the general public in following the covid protocols and to the life saving Covid-19 vaccine, it is now possible for us to return to in person gatherings for worship. Some parishes in Algoma reopened after the Spring 2021 stay-at-home order in late June. I am hoping that by September 12th every parish will have resumed in-person worship.

There is now a comfort and a convenience in being able to sit at home in pjs with a coffee in hand to watch a Sunday service online or pick it up later in the week. Historically though, we are people who are formed in and by community to offer our best to God in Sunday worship. It requires work and effort to worship in community, especially after such a long time apart. Your presence and support is needed now more than ever. Therefore, as you are personally comfortable, I urge you to return to your church buildings when possible to gather as faith communities once more.

The truth is that, whenever and however we gather for worship, we remember what God has done for us and for the world. We hear and share the story of our faith and recall God's neverending faithfulness. Ultimately, our destiny lies in the hands of the One who came to dwell with us and within us - the One who is

the author of peace and the source of our unity. Increasingly, hybrid models of worship will be offered in our churches which will allow for people living in remote communities or concerned about their own health and safety to attend from their homes.

Let me say a few words about diocesan finances and stewardship during the pandemic. I am pleased to say that no clergy were laid off during the time of pandemic and no church building closure over the last eighteen months was directly related to the pandemic. Through the ongoing generosity of the people of God in Algoma in making regular offerings to their local parish throughout the pandemic, parishes were able to sustain their present level of ministry. Thank you! Some parishes even reported an increase in offerings as stewardship was spoken about from the pulpit and in the pew. Algoma benefited from the wage subsidy program offered by the federal government for which we are most grateful. The financial picture in 2021 and the forecast for the coming two years is quite difficult to predict which means we need to remain vigilant and careful in our spending. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Diocesan Treasurer, Jane Mesich, and our Assistant Treasurer, Jen Baron, for their extraordinary care and attention to the stewardship of the diocesan finances and for helping parishes navigate their way through the covid financial crisis.

But we are not out of the woods yet. Covid-19 isn't going away anytime soon as shown by the increase in cases in August and early September and our entry into the fourth wave with the highly transmissible Delta variant being the dominant strain. All of this despite over 70% of eligible Canadians being fully vaccinated. Health authorities have said that the way out of the pandemic is not to build bigger hospitals with more ICU beds but for everyone to receive the life-saving vaccine.

We prayed that God would save us from Covid-19. In a relatively short period of time we witnessed scientists and researchers working tirelessly to produce the Covid-19 vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine recently received full FDA ap-

proval. The vaccine is a gift to us and to the whole world and a passport to return to normality.

Those of us who are serving in God's church have a moral responsibility and an obligation to do what is right for the common good. The Covid-19 vaccination is the best tool to curb the spread of the virus. I am respectfully requesting that all clergy and lay leaders holding the Archbishop's licence, as well as parochial office holders, pastoral visitors, deanery lay stewards, Sunday school teachers, and youth workers be fully vaccinated before the end of October 2021. Already clergy are required by the Bereavement Authority of Ontario to be vaccinated before entering a funeral home. Of course, I would urge everyone who is eligible to protect yourself and those around you by being vaccinated as soon as possible. In addition to all the other health and safety protocols that have helped get us through this very challenging time, being vaccinated is what 'loving our neighbours' looks like now.

Unfortunately, there still remains a great stigma for individuals who contract Covid-19. Every family in Algoma likely knows someone who has had Covid-19, or has been infected themselves. Let us not name and shame people for contracting Covid but pray for them and do everything we can to support them in their recovery and isolation.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to members of Archbishop's Council, the House of Bishops, the Executive Officers of the Province of Ontario, the Diocesan and Provincial Chancellors, and the Rev. Michael Garner from the Diocese of Ottawa, an epidemiologist who served as the advisor to the House of Bishops, for their extraordinary work over the last eighteen months. We began our work together with little knowledge about the coronavirus, but, through hours of learning and consultation, developed excellent protocols which have brought us safely through this time.

The Diocesan Archdeacon, Jay Koyle, was instrumental in preparing the very detailed protocols for Algoma and, along with the Diocesan Treasurer, Jane Mesich, and me facilitated a

number of very helpful Diocesan Information sessions for parishes during the pandemic. I am thankful for the time and careful attention Jay has given to these protocols and to answering questions from parishes as they arose.

### 3. SHAPED BY A LIVING HOPE: LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE

And now a look ahead. Several years ago, the Diocese of Algoma coined the phrase 'Shaped by a Living Hope' to describe its mission and ministry. It aptly describes the work of the Church, and us as people of faith to be an 'Easter' people; to hold onto the truth of the Resurrection - to believe in its power to call forth new life from death.

As we continue to be shaped by the Risen Christ, let us live into the diocesan motto as never before by tenaciously holding onto the promises of God and trusting in God's never ending faithfulness to be with us in all our doings.

*"Friday in our drama of faith is countered by Sunday, by the inscrutable gift of new Easter life in a world that has been shut down by despair."* (Walter Brueggemann: Fall 2020: How do We Not Live in Despair?)

Walter Brueggeman, theologian and author of *Virus as a Summons to Faith*, writes of the Church in a post-pandemic world being counter-cultural - proclaiming abundance in the face of scarcity, courage in the face of fear, generosity in the face of greed, and peaceableness in the face of violence.

Last week we were most fortunate to have as our Synod 2021 Keynote Speaker the Rev. Susan Beaumont, author of the book, "How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in Liminal Time". This is the time we are in right now. With the onset of the pandemic and all it brought with it, something has ended but the way forward is not yet clear. Rev. Susan led us through four sessions in which she helped us see that letting go of the old order or way of doing things, standing in the 'unknowing' as we discern together the new thing that is emerging out of the chaos,

having a sense of wonderment, and even being comfortable with being uncomfortable is alright. This liminal season may be a long one so let us lean into this time together and attend to one another with kindness and forbearance even as we keep moving forward with our mission and ministry in each of our contexts. She describes where we are right now as being, "part of a remarkable chapter of church history" - how exciting is that!

What does this mean for us as a people who are named, blessed, called, and sent by God to do God's work in the world? Being counter cultural begins with us and with the reordering of our own lives in rethinking our priorities in what we value, desire, and seek. For the Jews, the exile was not only punishment for deeply ingrained idolatry and systemic injustice, but also a divine call for re-examining their faith and reordering their society.

The phrase "Loving Our Neighbours" undergirded our lives as Anglican Christians in Ontario during this time of pandemic. The first pastoral letter from the House of Bishops on March 13th, 2020 reminded us that the ancient prophet Jeremiah exhorted God's people in exile to "seek the welfare of the city" (Jer. 29.7) in which they were living.

As we emerge from the pandemic we continue to love our neighbours and seek the welfare of the towns and cities in which we live by doing our part to be agents of healing in our world. In this world, which has been laid bare by Covid-19 and by unconscionable acts of violence, systemic racism and discrimination; in the reliving of traumatizing events of life in residential school following the discovery of unmarked burial sites on residential school properties; by economic crises, the jeopardy of democratic institutions, and natural disasters resulting from climate change.

We have seen with our own eyes the full impact of the pandemic on those who live on the margins of society. While the words 'we are all in this together' was the catch-phrase in the beginning of the pandemic, the lived reality locally and globally was very different for poor families living in overcrowded conditions,

for those who did not have access to health care and life-saving treatments, and for those who could not afford to stay home and isolate because their country did not offer a wage subsidy program.

This continues to be the case now as many countries are in recovery mode. Often economists use letters like W, V or U to talk about how the recovery period from a recession may look if plotted on a graph. In the case of the Covid-19 pandemic, the letter 'K' is being used, describing how one segment of the economy or the population begins to climb upward and recover well, while the other segment continues to suffer. Why this divergence? The theory is that it stems from pre-existing social and economic divides that are exacerbated by the recession. Essentially what happens is that the gap between those who are doing well and those who are not widens even further.

This 'K' shaped time can also be a '*Kairos*' or God-given moment for our Church to be like a *watered garden*, like a *spring of water* and become, "*repairers of the breach, restorers of the streets for people to live in*" (Isaiah 58.12), as the ruins from Covid-19 are rebuilt. The Church collectively and we, as individual members of it, have always been involved in servant ministries of reaching out to the poor, the homeless, the hungry, and the abused. This particular time is also a God-given moment for us to use our prophetic voices and courageously speak 'truth to power', in love, for the voiceless ones as we work towards a more just global society.

We will not be a people in and for the world if we think we can simply ramp up our lives again and return to the false securities we enjoyed before the pandemic hit; if we continue to live as though the organizing principle of society is individualism; if we succumb to the virus of indifference or put our blinders on and claim that the task at hand is too big for us to manage, or that someone else will do it; if we retreat back to preserve the status quo instead of stepping bravely and boldly forward, even in the face of uncertainty.

The truth is that we are part of God's economy which isn't 'K' shaped at all, but one that

would give to everyone the basic necessities of life including access to clean drinking water and health care, safe and affordable lodging, and the abundant fruits of God's creation. There is enough of everything to go around if wealthy peoples and nations would share with poorer peoples and nations.

St. Augustine once said, "Love God and say it with your life." The time has come to cross the road as the Good Samaritan did, even if it is difficult to step outside our comfort zone and step into the world of the wounded and the marginalized. It will mean entering fully into others' suffering and taking all steps possible to alleviate their pain. The Good Samaritan lifted the injured man onto his donkey, took him to a place of safety and ensured that there were funds in place to provide for his care. That small act created a new future for a man left for dead in a ditch.

This will look different in each of our contexts depending on where we live, work and worship in this geographically vast and socially diverse diocese. For parishes in urban areas it might mean helping the addicted or those experiencing homelessness or living in poverty. Many parishes exclaim, "We have no young people!" – yet there are children and youth living in all our communities. Perhaps this is the time to seek them out and participate in a school breakfast program or invite them over for a hot meal. Thanks to your generosity through the Anglican Foundation of Canada's *Say Yes! To Kids* fundraiser, these things are now possible. With the monumental rise in housing costs it might mean coming alongside community partners to address the issue of affordable housing. For other parishes it might mean finding meaningful ways to reach out to new-to-Canada families or those who are struggling with mental illness as a result of the intense isolation.

For those of us who truly believe that, 'we are all in this together' this *Kairos* time also means looking beyond our local context and acting globally in the midst of the an ever-widening disparity between rich countries and poorer developing nations. The vision God has given

us is not a vision for ourselves alone, but is ultimately a framework for the repair of the whole world, something the Jews refer to as “*Tikkun Olam*” – the repair of the world.

A 17th century midrashim (a story about a story in the Bible) explains it this way. In the beginning, it says, when the creator of the universe made the world, he set in place vessels into which he poured his divine light. But the light was too brilliant for the frail vessels which, unable to contain the light, shattered all over the universe. Ever since then, the myth continues, the task of human beings has been to go about God’s universe mending and transforming the broken vessels so that they can once again be receptacles of God’s divine light. But while everyone is called to repair the world, it is only the faithful who can do it, for they alone know the purposes of the Creator. The vision of the Creator is that the whole earth will: “*Itself be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*” (Romans 8.21). Paul tells us that creation is eagerly awaiting this new time. How we get there is the ministry of all believers, and it embraces all people, all of creation. “*Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves*”, writes James. This is the task we will set for ourselves in the coming years, to find ways in which we will all be doers of the word.

The sheer size of the task at hand can paralyze us into inaction, instead of daring to dream of new possibilities in the face of a disaster. I have witnessed with my own eyes how resilient, courageous, resourceful, and strong God’s people in Algoma are. With God’s Holy Spirit working in and through us, we can do more than we can ever ‘ask or imagine’, especially if we begin by placing the Gospel in the very centre of our lives and then taking it with us into our daily lives – with Christ’s light and love going before us. The demands of being a Christian often seem impossibly great. Sometimes though, it is in the simplest of acts – the giving of a glass of water. It may seem insignificant, but, as a sign of the way we treat others, it is everything!

Ensuring that anyone in the world who is eligible to be vaccinated, or working towards global vaccine equity, is a good place for us to begin “*Tikkun Olam*” and a small step in the right direction. During Synod you will hear a presentation from Will Postma, Executive Director of Primate’s Word Relief and Development Fund, speaking about the “Pay it Forward” vaccination program whose aim is to ensure vaccine equity around the world.

Together then, let us live into God’s vision of a world where the hungry, poor, and lowly are lifted up and filled with good things. By remembering that we are called to live together in unity with one another, rich and poor, and people of every faith and creed.

#### 4. RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Words of lament began the 10th Indigenous Anglican Sacred Circle this summer with the National Indigenous Archbishop, Mark MacDonald, acknowledging the many losses Indigenous communities have suffered during Covid-19 along with the epidemic of youth suicide.

Never one to give in to despair, Archbishop Mark raised his voice in hopeful tones and went on to speak about this ‘extraordinary time’ in which we are living. A time when a lot of powerful things are happening, “*The children have spoken from the grave calling this land to justice, calling this land to truth, and it is a very painful time. But it is a time of truth and a time when we are being called back to what God has meant us to be.*” (Abp. Mark MacDonald: Sacred Circle 2021).

Indeed, the discovery of the unmarked graves of Indigenous children on the grounds of former Indian residential schools across Canada this spring and summer has reopened past wounds for residential school survivors and their families - wounds which had begun to heal through the building of relationships with Indigenous peoples, through the 94 Calls to Ac-



tion of the TRC and the commitments enclosed therein.

In the Anglican Church of Canada, that work of reconciliation has been ongoing for the past 25 years, starting with the (then) Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers' *Apology for Residential Schools* delivered on August 6th, 1993 in Minaki Ontario. A second *Apology for Spiritual Harm* was made on July 12, 2019 in Vancouver at the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Synod of the ACC by former Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz.

Yet this year, nothing, not the TRC Calls to Action, nor the apologies made for the harm inflicted in residential schools on behalf of Anglicans could be heard over the tears shed for the children who never went home, whose remains have now been discovered in unmarked burial sites.

The grief which we acknowledge is the kind of which the prophet Jeremiah writes following the assault by foreigners on God's people. *"Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentations and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children because they are no more."* (Jeremiah 31:15)

Following the discovery of the first remains of children in unmarked burial sites in Kamloops, people started bringing shoes to former residential schools and churches associated with them. A collection of shoes grew outside the doors of our Cathedral Church. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Dean and I held a prayer service outside St. Luke's and invited Elder Willard Pine from Garden River to offer a teaching. Elder Willard spoke about the children by saying, *"The little ones whose spirits are going to help us get along so we can mend in a good way. Already we are seeing communities working together, adults, children, grandparents bringing shoes so their spirits can walk with us. They are bringing shoes to remind us of Shingwauk's journey in a good way. The little ones are showing us that hate, jealousy, animosity doesn't pay."*

As a Synod, let us recommit to doing our part to walking in a good way with 'all our relations'. I have found that the 'good way' sometimes means listening to difficult truths being

told and having one's heart unsettled by them. In a desire to continue walking in peace and reconciliation with Indigenous people, and in response to the discovery of the unmarked graves, Archbishop Fred Hiltz (Assisting Bishop of Moosonee) and I wrote a letter in June of this year to the dioceses of Algoma and Moosonee, which we serve. In it, we made the following commitments and invited them to join us in making them. In each commitment I indicate what is already happening in italics.

- Giving immediate attention to *Calls 71 – 76* within the *94 Calls to Action* from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They address missing children and burial information. They call for a National Residential School Registry (72), an online registry of Residential School Cemeteries (73) and appropriate commemorations, ceremonies and markers and reburial in home communities where requested (74); and all in accord with aboriginal protocols for honouring the deceased children.

*I have ordered 150 copies of a resource book for churches produced by the United Church of Canada about the TRC and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. 25 copies will be sent to each deanery. It can be ordered (here) for no cost besides postage.*

- Making every effort to respect the oral tradition of Indigenous peoples, listening attentively to their stories about children who went to Residential Schools and who died there.

*Elder Willard Pine, a direct descendant of Chief Shingwauk, has accepted my invitation to be the Indigenous Spiritual Advisor to the Archbishop of Algoma. Already there is a beautiful exchange of story and wisdom taking place and I am looking forward to learning more about the sacred traditions of Indigenous peoples from Elder Willard.*

- Helping in the search for graves, committed to assisting in the preservation of these graves with suitable markers and maintenance in a manner that honours the chil-

dren whose precious remains lie there. So that this sacred work can be done properly and thoroughly we will draw on a refund of funds requested of the diocese through the 2001 Residential Schools Settlement Agreement between the Government of Canada and our Church.

*I am honoured to have been invited to be a member of the 'Shingwauk Site Project Team', a small group which has been meeting since late June to begin the work of looking for unmarked burial sites at the former Shingwauk Residential School. I have committed the \$78,000 refund from the 2001 Residential Schools Settlement Agreement as Algoma's contribution to this work.*

- Standing with those who are calling for an annual National Day of Mourning for the children who died in Residential Schools. *Let us mark 30th September each year as TRC Day as declared by the Canadian House of Commons in June 2021. Let us wear orange T-shirts and boldly declare that 'Every Child Matters' and let us weep as Rachel wept for all the children who 'are no more'.*

## 5. CREATION CARE: THE GREEN CANOPY

*"Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved."* These words of lament can be heard echoing throughout creation. The Covid-19 pandemic heightened our awareness of the turmoil in our world. And while we were isolated with family inside our homes, we were also becoming increasingly aware about extreme climate events. Flooding and record wildfires on the West Coast of Canada, the US, and in Europe threatened the homes and lives of many and are cause for concern and fear. These tragic and alarming events are a sign of the times; a warning to us to take climate change more seriously.

Because we do not have the knowledge or expertise in the area of climate change our response is one of two things. We either throw our hands up in despair as we watch our planet experience one devastating crisis after another

as hurricanes, typhoons and earthquakes become more intense, wildfires more extensive and heatwaves stronger. We declare that the problem is beyond our ability to do anything about and our efforts miniscule in comparison to what is needed. Or, we hide our heads in the sand and run away from the fear and the danger.

Instead, let us not ignore the impending signs of destruction but let us recall who and whose we are. Created in the image and likeness of the Creator we are Christians whose baptismal calling is to *"strive to safeguard the integrity of care of God's creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the earth."* (BAS p. 159). At creation, humanity was placed in the Garden of Eden to tend and nurture it. Instead of running away from our responsibilities with respect to the care of creation, let us engage in 'rational hope' (Hayhoe) and catch the vision of a better future with abundant energy, stable economies, and resources available to all.

Christian climate scientist, Katharine Hayhoe, says that we can't give in to despair. Instead, *"We have to go out and look for the hope we need to inspire us to act, and that hope begins with a conversation today."* (TED Talk – "The most important thing you can do to fight climate change is talk about it", 2018)

At General Synod in 2019, the Season of Creation was officially designated to be a time for us to celebrate the good gifts of creation and to create awareness about the climate catastrophe. The theme chosen by the ecumenical community in 2021 is "A Home for All? Renewing the *Oikos* of God." Picking up on the theme of all humanity being under the same roof, the *Oikos* is now in danger because of disrespect, greed, exploitation, and the degradation of God's creation.

It begins with prayer which leads to transformed hearts and lives. So let's begin a new conversation in Algoma that includes viable, accessible solutions to issues of climate change that begin with us. Let's plant vegetable gardens and eat local and lower down on the food chain. Let's reduce the amount of waste from food, change the light bulbs in our homes and

places of worship to LED, and plant trees.

Colin and I are privileged to live at stately Bishophurst which has been the home of all 11 Bishops of Algoma since 1876 when it was built with an initial gift of money from Lady Angela Burdett-Coutts. The park-like garden is often visited by local botanical enthusiasts because of its many magnificent trees in it already including a rare example of the endangered American Chestnut and a pre-settlement Bur Oak. This summer one of the larger pine trees on the front lawn had to be taken down due to disease and the tree-man encouraged me to keep planting trees in the yard, as some of the older trees have become increasingly fragile.

In February 2022, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will mark her Platinum Jubilee as she celebrates the 70th Anniversary of her reign as our queen. This will make her the longest-reigning monarch in British history. Her Majesty is requesting that this milestone be celebrated with the planting of trees. Commenting at the official launch of "The Queen's Green Canopy", the Prince of Wales spoke about the planting of trees being a "statement of hope and faith in the future" and invited everyone to plant a tree for the Jubilee. A "Treebilee".

The idea of planting trees in every parish in the Diocese of Algoma to honour Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has captured my imagination - a great Green Canopy of newly planted trees extending from Thunder Bay to Gravenhurst in June 2022, which is when the official celebrations will take place. I invite every parish in Algoma to plant trees on their property in honour of the Jubilee and to do our part in restoring the *Oikos* of God's creation.

In the next four years, I would like to plant 16 trees in the garden of Bishophurst. One will be in thanksgiving to God for bringing us safely through this time of pandemic; one to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Anniversary; one in honour of Lady Angela Burdett-Coutts, benefactress of Bishophurst; one as a sign of our ongoing commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples; one in celebration of Thorneloe's 60th anniversary; and eleven in honour of past bishops of Algoma. I hope the "Tree-

bilee' will help to beautify the neighbourhood as we do our part to tackle the climate crisis and reduce CO2 emissions.

Friends of ours brought their newborn baby home in January of this year. Their three year old son was excited but rather speechless when he saw his little sister for the first time. "Say something to her," said mother Rosie. "We live on a beautiful planet," were the first words out of big brother Lucas's mouth. We do indeed. Let's keep it that way!

## 6. APPOINTMENTS

Hearty congratulations to Mrs. Frances Glover, parishioner at Holy Trinity Sault Ste. Marie who will be installed as an Honourary Lay Canon of St. Luke's Cathedral on September 16th. Fran, as she is fondly known to her friends, has served Algoma faithfully for over 50 years in numerous roles, including Diocesan Lay Reader, President of the Deanery ACW, a Deanery Lay Steward, and as a member of the Administration and Finance Committee for the Diocese. A woman of immense compassion and care, never afraid to 'step out', Fran is the kind of person who, when she sees a job that needs doing, goes and does it.

News of Canon Fran's appointment has delighted many Algomites who have served with her and know her well - especially her hilarious turns of phrase. Bishop Thomas Corston recalls a time when she was speaking to the ACW and, "in a charging voice declared that it was time for them to pull up their collective pantyhose and get on with their ministry!" A fellow Canon, Rev. Bob Elkin, said that as she had once worked as a dispatcher in the trucking industry she could be tough, but "has a heart as big as all outdoors" which she used constantly in caring for others. Canon Bob remembers Fran looking over at him after a difficult encounter, shaking her head and saying - "We sure were lucky to get you, weren't we?!" Congratulations on this appointment Canon Fran - Algoma sure is lucky to have gotten you!

Several clergy were appointed to parishes dur-

ing the last two years with some of them arriving in Algoma from other dioceses in the heart of the lockdown, making it challenging for them to get to know their new parish. I commend both the new clergy and the parishes, whether they be for interim or full time incumbencies, for their understanding and the extra effort they made in finding ways to make connections happen.

I extend a warm Algoma welcome to the Rev. Catherine Murkin from the Diocese of Moosonee (Emsdale, South River, Eagle Lake, Magnetewan), the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Green from the Diocese of Toronto (Church of the Epiphany - Sudbury), the Rev. Raymond Knight (Christ Church – Sault Ste. Marie) and the Rev. Enid Pow (St. Michael and All Angels – Thunder Bay) from the Diocese of Rupert's Land, the Rev. Holly Klemmensen from the Diocese of Niagara (Emmaus – Sault Ste. Marie). In October, the Rev. Kevin McAllister will be joining the Algoma family from the Diocese of Fredericton to serve at St. John the Divine (North Bay) and Trillium Parish (Callander and Powassan). We welcomed the Rev. Bruce McLeish back into the Anglican Communion after serving for many years in the United Church. In May this year, we welcomed Ms. Katherine Walker, who serves in the RC Navy, as part of her two year training for military chaplaincy. This is taking place at St. Luke's Cathedral.

Sadly, we bid farewell to the Rev. Pam Rayment and the Revs. Aidan and Sarah Armstrong who accepted new charges in the Dioceses of Toronto and Huron respectively. The Rev. Christian Pichette completed his curacy at St. Luke's Cathedral in July 2020 and is now engaged in chaplaincy in the military.

The Rev. Beverly van der Jagt was ordained a deacon in Christ's church, in June, 2019. While episcopal services of confirmation and ordination were all postponed during the pandemic there were a few ordinations before the third wave hit last fall. The Rev. Val Paterson, the Rev. Kate Scott, the Rev. Joan Morris, and the Rev. Susan Montague Koyle were all ordained as deacons in Christ's holy catholic church.

Sadly, the Rev. Joan Morris died unexpectedly in November. May she rest in peace and rise with Christ in glory.

Congratulations to the Ven. Kelly Baetz who was collated as the Territorial Archdeacon for Muskoka on March 8th, 2020. Congratulations to the Ven. Dr. Jay Koyle who was collated as the Diocesan Archdeacon on February 2nd, 2021 on the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple.

## 7. THORNELOE UNIVERSITY AT 60.

Congratulations to the Rev. Canon Dr. John Gibaut, President, Vice Chancellor and Chaplain of Thorneloe University as it celebrates its sixtieth anniversary this year. There are strong connections between Thorneloe and the Diocese of Algoma which started over 60 years ago in Archbishop Wright's Charge to the 19th Session of the Synod of Algoma in 1959.

Archbishop Wright spoke passionately about a new 'University in the North' soon to be housed in Sudbury, and his belief that the Church should be represented on university campus and that an Arts course, as well as Science and Forestry should be offered at such an institution. Archbishop Wright urged the people of the church as well as members of the local community to support this new and exciting endeavour in every way they could, including financially.

Two years later, at the 20th Session of the Synod of Algoma in 1961 Archbishop Wright followed up again in his Charge and was able to report that the University of the North was named Laurentian University and that in the years between synods negotiations had been carried out between Laurentian University, the Provincial Government and representatives of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Churches which would all become federated universities of Laurentian, housed on the same campus.

Archbishop Wright requested that Algoma's Synod give their concurrence for the establishment of Thorneloe University, which Synod granted. With Synod's concurrence and the granting of its university Charter from the On-

tario Government to be a church-related university serving the Federation of Laurentian University in Sudbury, Thorneloe University came into being.

Founded on the three-legged Anglican stool of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, and holding onto its values of community, diversity, and inclusion, Thorneloe has made its mark on the Laurentian campus for the last sixty years.

The ties that bound us to Thorneloe at its birth have only been strengthened over the last 60 years. We give thanks for Countless individuals from Algoma have taken courses at Thorneloe towards degrees conferred by Laurentian or Thorneloe. Graduates of the B.Th. course serve as clergy or lay readers in Algoma and Moosonee. Members of the diocese have served faithfully as directors of the Thorneloe Board, or have been honoured with Honourary Doctorates, as Fellows of Thorneloe, or been awarded the Thorneloe Mitre. Others have served as Thorneloe's Chancellors.

Unfortunately, 2021 has been very difficult for Thorneloe University. Laurentian University went into receivership earlier this year and announced that as part of restructuring it intended to end its sixty-year relationship with Thorneloe and the other federated universities (Huntington and the University of Sudbury). This has had a devastating impact on the lives of many of the faculty, students and staff at Thorneloe, affecting Ancient Studies, Classical Studies, Religious Studies, Theatre and Motion Arts, and Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies. Thorneloe is committed to rebuilding itself and is dedicated to its Theology Program, its residence, and the beautiful Fielding Memorial Chapel of St. Mark's.

Having been a former student, graduate and board member of Thorneloe University and currently its Chancellor, I am confident that a new future awaits. The Thorneloe community that I know are a resilient people who are filled with hope and determination to see something new come into being. Under the strong leadership the Rev. Canon Dr. John Gibaut, Thorneloe will reimagine its future so that it can continue to be a dynamic school of

learning in the North. I know of a number of individuals in Algoma who are committed to theological education - they are resourceful and have the knowledge, gifts and skills to contribute to Thorneloe's new beginning. I am also personally committed to finding ways for the Diocese to remain actively involved at Thorneloe University

Let us pray for Thorneloe University with thankful hearts for the knowledge and wisdom that has been shared, for memory that enables us to build on the experiences of the past, for imagination which admits us to a wider world than we could otherwise know, and for foresight by which we must plan for the future.

## 8. GRATITUDE

I close my Charge to the 50th Synod of the Diocese of Algoma with words of gratitude. To each and every person who has prayed for me, encouraged me and supported my humble and oftentimes fumbling efforts as your archbishop. It means the world to me to know that each Sunday you are praying for me. Be assured that you are daily in mine.

I am thankful for those who work closest to me on a daily basis, some already named in this Charge. On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank the Rev. Peter Simmons for his leadership as the editor of the *Algoma Anglican* for 15 years. I am especially grateful to Archbishop Fred Hiltz for his friendship and great help as Assisting Bishop of Moosonee and to Liz Hamel for her constancy and the patient professional way she undertakes her role as Administrative Assistant. And to my beloved Colin for his love, patience, and understanding.

There is a beautiful prayer of gratitude that the Jewish people sing every Passover with the refrain *Dayenu* meaning "It would have been enough". It is a song in which they recount the marvellous events through which God liberated them from slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land.

It goes like this:

- If you had only led us to the edge of the Red Sea but not taken us through the waters, *Dayenu, it would have been enough.*
- If you had only taken us through the Red Sea but not led us through the desert, *Dayenu, it would have been enough.*
- If you had only led us through the desert but not taken us to Sinai, *Dayenu, it would have been enough.*

As the song continues the Hebrew people are led in safety to the Promised Land and eventually the Holy Temple in Jerusalem is built. At any verse in the song, at any point in the history of freedom, it would have been enough to sing and praise God forever. But God, the generous giver of perfect gifts, continued to give.

Tucked away in the words for the theme of our Synod are the actual words of the priestly benediction with which the people of Israel in exile were blessed and that we are also familiar with – *“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”* (Num. 6.22-24). Our God is a God who blesses which means that those who receive the gift of blessing are a blessed community.

At any point in your life or mine, it would have been enough to sing praises to God for the gifts and blessings of our lives. But now, in 2021, in spite of all of the hardships of the past two years, there is so much to be thankful for. If God had only brought us through this time, *Dayenu, it would have been enough.* But now we even have the help that has come in the form of vaccines and life-saving treatments for Covid-19.

*“Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.”*

As we make this prayer our own, we look with hope to the restoration of our communities in a post-pandemic world. Let us stand in solidarity with all who are afflicted, while, at the same time, tenderly pointing to the Incarnate One whose countenance is shining on us. No one can see God face to face but, as we look ahead and long for Christ’s coming again, our

faces shine, and so do everyone else’s if we are looking at them properly.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”* (Num. 6.22-24)

Faithfully submitted,  
+Anne: Algoma  
September 17, 2021