

# ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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VOL. 151 NO. 3 MARCH 2025



PHOTO: MARK HAUSER

Hayden Leduc performs at a February 2024 launch party marking the release of the Harmony Lounge and Music Club's debut album, *Origin Story*.

## Churches seen playing growing role in community music movement

**Matthew Puddister**  
STAFF WRITER

Community music programs at Anglican parishes across Canada are responding to local needs and attracting growing numbers of outsiders with no previous connection to the church in what Michelle Hauser—development and communications officer for the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) and coordinator of one such music program—calls an emerging trend.

Hauser is program coordinator of the Harmony Lounge and

Music Club at St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church in Napanee, Ont. The program offers free music lessons for children and youth, provides rehearsal space and a venue for live performances and runs a studio where young musicians can record and release original material.

The Harmony Lounge and Music Club has received funding from the AFC, which Hauser says has seen an uptick in grant applications for community music programs in recent years. Where before the AFC might have seen applications for one or two

See MUSIC, p. 6



IMAGE: LEMBERG VECTOR STUDIO

## Future of General Synod, *Journal* on table as CoGS gets set for March meeting

### Primate's commission to present 'pathways' for change in six areas to national council

**Matthew Puddister**  
STAFF WRITER

From March 7 to 9, more than 30 Anglicans from across Canada will gather at a Roman Catholic retreat centre in Mississauga, Ont. for the last meeting of Council of General Synod (CoGS)—the executive body which carries out the work of General Synod, the church's larger triennial gathering—before the latter meets in June. Staying in spartan lodgings that jar with the mansions that surround the retreat centre in Mississauga's leafy Erindale neighbourhood, members of CoGS will gather to break bread, worship and, most of all, deliberate for two and a half days.

While it's impossible to know precisely what decisions will be made at this month's meeting of CoGS, one thing seems certain: much of the discussion that takes place there, and at the General Synod that follows this summer, will focus on radical structural changes that if carried out could change the Anglican Church of Canada forever. On the table, among other topics, will be the presentation to CoGS of findings from *Reimagining the Church: Proclaiming the Gospel in the 21st*

Century, a primate's commission tasked with re-examining church structures that has surveyed Anglicans across the country on a range of topics, including the potential elimination of General Synod or the ecclesiastical provinces and the cessation of funding for the *Anglican Journal*, at least as a journalistic entity.

If the church does take these steps, it seems unlikely to take them soon; at least, the commission itself does not appear in a hurry to initiate major change. In an email sent as this issue was being prepared in late January, Archdeacon Monique Stone, chair of the commission, told the *Journal*, "the commission has always envisioned that this work will continue beyond the short two-year time frame between General Synod 2023 and 2025. As such it has never been the intention of the commission to bring forward motions that will enact specific changes to canons and/or structures at General Synod 2025."

Instead, the commission has prepared a draft report laying out priority ideas or "pathways" in six areas based on the feedback it has received from Anglicans, which the commission's chair says indicate a preference for refining rather than

See COMMISSION, p. 8

“When we took in all of the surveys, there were more suggestions to get rid of General Synod than we had anticipated.”

—The Rev. Cole Hartin

### LIVES ▶



▲ **Canon Eric Beresford**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ATLANTIC SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

## Beresford remembered as 'natural teacher'

**Matthew Puddister**  
STAFF WRITER

Canon Eric Beresford, an influential church ethicist and theologian and the longest-serving president of the Atlantic School of Theology (AST), died suddenly of a heart attack Dec. 31. He was 67 years old.

Rector's warden Mark Stenabaugh and people's warden Ian Bell of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Toronto, where Beresford had served as priest-in-charge

and incumbent since 2022, said on Facebook that Beresford's death was "a tremendous loss to the parish and to us personally."

"He was a very compassionate, caring man—very, very intelligent," Stenabaugh told the *Anglican Journal*. "If you brought up any topic, he could tell you the ins and outs of it. He had musical abilities. He was a wonderful singer. He had a good sense of humour and he was a very strong leader."

See AMID, p. 7

## PEOPLE ▶

# Canadian elected president of Mothers' Union

**Sean Frankling**  
STAFF WRITER

Mothers' Union has elected its first worldwide president from Canada: Kathleen Snow, a board member at the international Anglican charity and parish nurse at Christ Church Cathedral in Fredericton, N.B. She is the second president of the charity to come from outside the U.K., following her predecessor, Sheran Harper from Guyana, who has been president for the past six years, Snow told the *Anglican Journal*.

As president, Snow says she will focus on upholding the charity's long tradition of faith-based social action as an expression of God's love for the world and on renewing its relevance in countries where its membership has dropped in the 21st century.

The nearly 150-year-old charity has proliferated most widely in Africa and Asia in recent decades and is comparatively unknown in countries like Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and Australia, she says. She hopes to boost its recognition and appeal in Western countries by speaking to young people's enthusiasm for social activism.

When she joined Mothers' Union in 1988 at the suggestion of then-dean of Christ Church Cathedral John vanNostrand Wright, Snow says she had no aspirations to leadership. She didn't expect to become a chapter leader a few years later, nor to become the president of the charity's Canadian region in 2005 or the trustee for the zone covering Canada, the U.S., the West Indies and South America in 2019.

"I never, ever anticipated I would be in this role. He is a God of surprises," she says.

Still, Mothers' Union has been a deep and vital part of her faith since she joined in her 20s, says Snow, turning the love of God from a theoretical idea into a practical experience she could use to serve the world through the charity's prayer-into-



▲ Kathleen Snow, the new president of Mothers' Union, poses with local members of the charity on a recent visit to Formosa Province, Argentina.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

action model of service.

"My faith has grown through Mothers' Union more than anything else," she says. "Not [as much] through worshipping every Sunday, [but] through the community that we have—this community of faith."

As one example of the charity's inspiring work in the world she describes a story from members she met on a recent visit to Formosa, a province in northern Argentina where many of the Indigenous women work with Mothers' Union. Snow says two of those women told her about a 2018 incident they witnessed in which armed police faced off against youths with rocks and sticks in a small town in the province. "Something terrible was about to happen," says Snow, when about 10 Mothers' Union members stepped between

the police and the youths, praying, and managed to defuse the tension.

"They stopped what could have been a bloodbath," she says. "That's the power of what they do."

During her presidency, Snow says she hopes to reawaken some of that passion for charity and peace in Mothers' Union's North American branches. By welcoming young people who may have a faith and an interest in social activism but who may have disengaged from organized religion, the charity may even provide a bridge for them to re-encounter the church, she says.

In a letter of congratulation to Snow, Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, called her "a tireless advocate for the welfare of families, women and children" across her decades of service for the Mothers' Union and a representative of the Anglican Church of Canada to the global Anglican Communion.

"Your leadership has not only strengthened the Mothers' Union within Canada but has also made a profound impact on the global work of the organization," Germond wrote. "As you step into this new role, I am confident that your years of experience and your understanding of the power of prayer, fellowship, and practical service will guide you in fostering deeper unity and purpose across the worldwide Mothers' Union network."

Founded in England in 1876, Mothers' Union has operations on all six inhabited continents, including programs supporting refugees, reconnecting prison inmates with their families, delivering courses in parenting and raising awareness to reduce gender-based violence. It has four million members worldwide, according to its website. Members of its worldwide council must be members of the Anglican church or a church in communion with it. ■

Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering

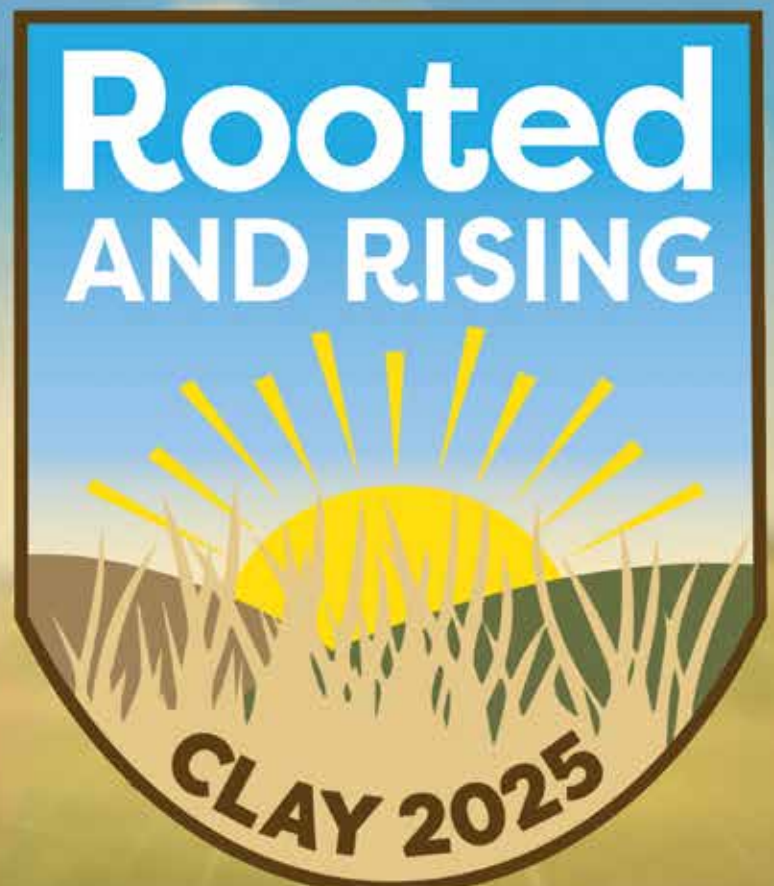
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BY THE NUMBERS ▶

# Stats forum draws Christians seeking answers

Sean Frankling  
STAFF WRITER

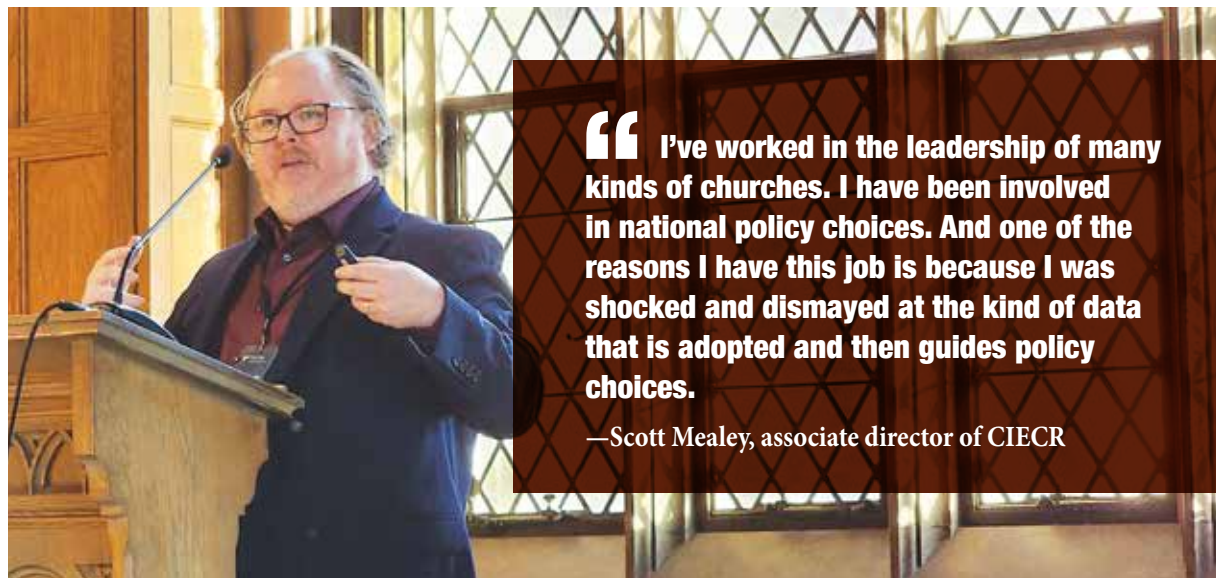
Not only multidenominational church researchers, but also parish and diocesan strategists and even interested lay people attended December's second annual gathering of the Canadian Institute for Empirical Church Research (CIECR), a research institute at Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto. It's a sign that in an increasingly uncertain faith landscape, people are looking for clarity and data to guide their decision-making, ministry and outreach, Canon Neil Elliot, the Anglican Church of Canada's statistics and research officer, told the *Anglican Journal* at the event.

The conference, held at Wycliffe Dec. 12-13, included presentations on global and regional demographic trends in Christianity over the past century; gratitude as an indicator of health in parishes; methods of transmitting faith between generations; machine learning-assisted research aimed at identifying trends in congregational growth and shrinkage at the local level; and a host of other topics.

Scott Mealey, associate director of the CIECR, presented findings showing that while North American attendance in mainline denominations like Anglicanism has been trending downward for decades, that fall has been countered by rising numbers in newer traditions of Christianity. This is a vital point to bear in mind amid conversations that assert secularism is rising and religiosity is falling in Western countries, he told the *Anglican Journal*, as accurate data are essential to good policy.

"If we use data that are not representative of the actual situation around us or in our communities, then consequently we are going to be making decisions based on poor information," he said. That's also why it was so heartening to see both lay people and denominational leaders taking an interest in the researchers' work, he added.

"I've worked in the leadership of many



**"I've worked in the leadership of many kinds of churches. I have been involved in national policy choices. And one of the reasons I have this job is because I was shocked and dismayed at the kind of data that is adopted and then guides policy choices."**

—Scott Mealey, associate director of CIECR



**▲ Barbara Ladner, a parishioner at Bayview Glen Alliance Church in Markham, said she came to the gathering looking for a deeper understanding of the reasons some congregations grow and others shrink. After a period of substantial growth in her home congregation, which has gone from around 900 to 1,500 people since the pandemic, Ladner said, she became curious about how and why that happened.**

PHOTOS:  
SEAN FRANKLING

kinds of churches. I have been involved in national policy choices. And one of the reasons I have this job is because I was shocked and dismayed at the kind of data that is adopted and then guides policy choices."

Barbara Ladner, a parishioner at Bayview Glen Church, a Markham, Ont. church in the Christian and Missionary Alliance, said she came to the gathering looking for a deeper understanding of the reasons some congregations grow and others shrink. After a period of substantial growth in her home congregation, which has gone from around 900 to 1,500 people since the pandemic, Ladner said, she became curious about how and why that happened.

"Why is that happening in our church and not in other churches?" she asked. "And then how can they put that into practice in other churches?"

She believes churches with a strong identity seem to do well, while ones that get what she calls "wishy-washy" about what they stand for seem to be suffering.

Another attendee, Jon Fuller, is both lead pastor at Melrose Community Church, an evangelical Baptist church in Toronto, and chief missiologist for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. He said he came to the gathering looking

for knowledge to help him understand faith trends at the national level and to improve ministry and outreach in his local parish. One important thing he took away from the event, he said, is the idea that churches do better when they are able to reach outside their walls and form meaningful bonds with their surrounding communities.

Mealey pointed to a presentation by Elizabeth Millar, a doctor of practical theology and sessional instructor at Tyndale University, in which she told attendees that clarity of vision was one commonality of great church congregations, mirroring Ladner and Fuller's observations. Mealey said he believes there's much to be learned from that fact.

"One of the things we joked a bit about behind the scenes is that all of these churches and congregations and parishes think that their theology is super important. But we joke about that because they're all radically different. And so the thing that I think is more important is that they are very clear about who they are, and so can rally behind that," he said. "One of the big pieces that is winsome for people is when a church knows what they are and invites people to join that particular thing." ■

GOVERNANCE ▶

# Five dioceses prepare for spring episcopal elections

Matthew Puddister  
STAFF WRITER

Five dioceses will elect new bishops this spring: Saskatoon, Moosonee, Montreal, the Arctic and Rupert's Land. (See also "A prayer for those called to be our leaders" on p. 5 of this issue.)

The diocese of Saskatoon will hold its episcopal election on March 8, to find a successor for Archbishop Chris Harper, who stepped down as bishop of Saskatoon in January 2023 when he became National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop.

The diocese of Moosonee will see a milestone on March 26, when its synod elects a dedicated bishop for the first time in a decade. The diocese had voted in 2011 to become a mission area of the Anglican Church of Canada due to financial difficulties, which took effect in 2014 with the retirement of then-bishop of Moosonee Thomas Corston. Since then, the provincial metropolitan of Ontario—currently Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada—has served as bishop



**▲ Coats of arms of the dioceses of (L-R) Saskatoon, Moosonee, Montreal, Arctic and Rupert's Land.**

PHOTO: GENERAL SYNOD ARCHIVES

of Moosonee.

On May 3, the diocese of Montreal will elect a new coadjutor bishop to replace current bishop of Montreal Mary Irwin-Gibson when she retires. The coadjutor bishop will serve jointly with Irwin-Gibson for several months until her retirement, at which point they will be installed as the 13th bishop of Montreal. Irwin-Gibson says she will retire no later than the end of October, though at the time of writing a specific date had not been set.

From May 8 to May 14, the diocese of the Arctic will hold its diocesan synod, with episcopal elections taking place May 9. The provincial executive has requested to elect a diocesan bishop and up to three suffragan bishops, Executive Archdeacon Alexander Pryor told the *Anglican Journal*.

Bishops David Parsons and Lucy Netser retired as diocesan and suffragan bishop, respectively, at the end of December, while Joey Royal resigned as suffragan bishop Oct. 20 to work in Ottawa for the non-profit Christian Embassy of Canada.

Bishop Annie Ittoshat, the remaining suffragan bishop, is currently serving as diocesan administrator. The diocese of the Arctic plans to retain its present number of bishops, Pryor says—meaning if Ittoshat is nominated and elected as diocesan bishop, the diocese would need to elect three new suffragan bishops.

The diocese of Rupert's Land has also announced it will hold a special meeting of its synod May 31 to elect a new bishop ahead of current bishop Geoffrey Woodcroft's retirement, expected June 1. Woodcroft announced his retirement in October 2024, following a diagnosis of terminal cancer which also prompted him to go on immediate sick leave. The diocese's executive archdeacon, Simon Blaikie, has been serving as diocesan administrator in his absence. ■

**ANGLICAN  
VOICES ▶**


“ Indigenous Peoples used to have a gift economy—one where goods and services were exchanged without any expectation of something in return. I think that fits nicely within the realm of service and the message of Jesus. Now it’s our turn to share our gifts with you.”

# Reconcili-action!

## How to make the church more welcoming to Indigenous people

By Jenn Ashton

**W**HEN I DECIDED to formally study history a few years ago, it was partly with the aim of discovering the mechanics of colonization, from its inception to where I sit now, part of the result of a foiled attempt at the assimilation of Indigenous people. My studies were successful, and I can trace the lineage of colonization worldwide in a number of ways. My main goal, however, was not that discovery but to help find solutions to problems. Studying history was a place to begin, so I could see the boundaries keeping us apart as God’s people and find ways to unravel the tangles in these places, through education and truth-telling, bringing us together in a good way. I wanted to find out how we as a church community could *be* different and evolve our truth and reconciliation landscape into one of “reconcili-action.”

My first step was to offer to create a position at my church whereby I could be part of making change. I worked together with my priest, deacon and parish council to create a new role, which we called “Indigenous cultural sensitivity leader.” The goal was, and is, to make our church a safe, welcoming and recognizable place for us, Indigenous people, to worship—while involving the local Indigenous community in the process. (Please note that I do not speak for all Indigenous people; when I say “us” or “we” I am trying to be inclusive of all who want to join in this mission.) Once there is a steady rock to stand on, the task can start with our recognizing the places where change is needed.

I found two such places:

1. *Indigenous ideas are not often Indigenous-built or -implemented.* I have seen and been a part of tokenism around the truth and reconciliation movement—bringing a single Indigenous person to the table to use as a symbol only, instead of inviting them to the planning board to build something together. We have a saying: “Nothing about us, without us,” and while people’s hearts may be in the right place when they try to be inclusive or express our ways in terms easier for non-Indigenous people to understand, it is actually doing us a disservice, and confusing matters even more, when they try to work on *our behalf*. Self-determination is what we are striving for in all arenas, from education and health care to government and spirituality. We have our own ways of knowing and doing and we are striving to gain back control over our culture in these places. That’s why it was important for us, in creating this position, to make it one that could be held only by an Indigenous person.

2. *There is a lack of Indigenous representation*

*in the Christian church.* Of course there would be, given the history of church involvement in the residential school system, but that is a problem that needs to be solved from the ground up. This means making church an inclusive place, where we have equal input, especially into things that affect our community. This also means recognizing our individual communities; locality is key. Indigenous culture cannot simply be homogenized and spread across the country east to west, to the point where, by the time it gets to British Columbia, it is thin and does not resemble anything we as Indigenous people here are familiar with. Canada is filled with different First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who share some similarities but are also distinct in their traditions, ceremony and language, so local self-determination matters.

A solution, in part, is to make our churches a place for Indigenous people to feel welcome, and part of this is for us to have an ally—somebody who deeply understands the issues at hand and will be a safe person and point of contact—in every church, trained by an Indigenous person. It’s a big goal, I know, but I feel it is the only way. My next wish is to place one Indigenous person, one who knows and practices their cultural traditions, from a local First Nation into every church, to help ensure it is a safe and welcoming place, that local protocols are met, and that they can truly be part of a new church structure, through equal participation and decision-making. Just as the Anglican church wants to teach its way, so do we want to share ours. We want to show how we praise the Creator, by respecting and serving all of creation, and striving for peace and justice. Our methods may be different but our goals are similar and I know in my heart that we can reach common ground.

This will all be the work of a lifetime, but if we could start now, maybe years down the road we will see more Indigenous faces under our roofs, and we’ll all be able to share in the worthy work we are doing—not only in individual parishes, but in the Anglican Church in Canada as a whole.

Methodist pastor and author the Rev. Gil Rendle once wrote, “A faith-based world view is not supposed to make us fit into anything. Rather it is to help us *see* differently, and it is to help us to *be* different.” I hope this new position can be a conduit for that. It is worth a try. I know this position will help me always remember why I’m here at St. Clement’s: to love God, to love my neighbor and to include everyone. Indigenous Peoples used to have a gift economy—one where goods and services were exchanged without any expectation of something in return. I think that fits nicely within the realm of service and the message of Jesus. Now it’s our turn to share our gifts with you. ■

**Jenn Ashton** is a *Skwxwú7mesh* author, artist and historian. She is discerning for the diaconate at St. Clement’s Anglican Church in North Vancouver and lives in Xwesam, B.C.

**LETTER**

## Welby’s guilt in Smyth scandal was ‘minimal’

Your article “Next Archbishop of Canterbury could be from outside U.K., scholar says” (January, p. 1) may mislead readers when it says that Archbishop Justin Welby in 2013 failed to inform police about John Smyth’s history of sexually abusing children. Your reporter summarizes the review of the case by Keith Makin, but not entirely accurately.

The Makin Review says that although many knew or had heard of Smyth’s abuses as early as the 1980s, he was, tragically, protected until finally in 2013 a victim disclosed his own abuse to the safeguarding officer of the diocese of Ely. It was then, under church policy, a matter for the diocese to handle. The safeguarding officer for Ely contacted the Cambridgeshire police, but the detective sergeant who took the call told Makin that she did not regard this contact as a formal referral and wrote no crime report. The bishop of Ely (Stephen Conway) told Welby’s chaplain (Jo Bailey Wells, now bishop for episcopal ministry in the Anglican Communion) about the matter but advised against Welby’s involvement in a police matter. And Wells didn’t follow up because (as she later said) safeguarding wasn’t part of her job description.

Accordingly, Makin writes in his review (at 14.3.32), “The Archbishop of Canterbury was ill-advised about the actions taken in the Ely diocese. He was told that a referral was made to the police. This was not correct.”

The Makin Review makes clear that a great many things went wrong that allowed Smyth to continue abusing and to escape justice, and there’s plenty of blame to go around. The whole system requires serious reform. But from where I sit, Welby’s personal moral culpability in this depressing case was rather minimal. Still, it was right for him, as the chief officer of the Church of England, to take responsibility and resign.

**Canon Alan L. Hayes**  
Wycliffe College, Toronto

*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.*

## ANGLICAN JOURNAL

First published as the *Dominion Churchman* in 1875,  
The *Anglican Journal* is the national newspaper of the Anglican Church of Canada.

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**PUBLISHER:**

General Synod, Anglican Church of Canada  
The *Anglican Journal* is published monthly (with the exception of July and August) and is mailed separately or with one of 16 diocesan or regional sections. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada for our publishing activities.

**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/41fG5Q](http://bit.ly/41fG5Q).

**EDITORIAL BOARD:**

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**ADVERTISING DEADLINE:**

20th day of the 2nd month preceding publication date. Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by the *Anglican Journal* or the Anglican Church of Canada. Indexed in the Canadian Magazine Index, Canadian Periodical Index and online in the Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database. Printed in Toronto, ON by KT Web Printing.  
PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40069670  
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:  
CIRCULATION DEPT.  
80 HAYDEN ST., TORONTO, ON M4Y 3G2

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE:**

\$10 a year in Canada (\$0.50 per issue), \$17 in U.S. and overseas. Excepting these inserts: Niagara Anglican \$15; Crosstalk (Ottawa) \$15 suggested donation; Huron Church News \$15 a year in Canada, \$23 U.S. & overseas; Diocesan Times (NS & PEI) \$15; Anglican Life (Nfld) \$15, Nfld & Labrador \$20 outside Nfld, \$25 in U.S. and overseas.

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ISSN-0847-978X

CIRCULATION: 35,000

Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

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BRIDGES ▶



# Lent, our ‘God-given time of disruption’



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Members of the Halpin family sing a hymn to Mary at the site of the home they lost to January wildfires in California.

By Anne Germond

**D**ISRUPTIONS CAN be the bane of our existence. Sometimes they affect us momentarily and are a mere inconvenience; other times they are life-altering.

Five years ago the entire planet experienced the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effects of this disease linger today. More recently, the devastating wildfires in California have impacted millions of lives, leaving communities wondering how they will ever recover. Our hearts break at the images of once proud lives reduced to dust and ashes by this natural disaster, as they do at images of the ruin of war.

I recall visiting a parishioner in the final stages of selling her house before moving into a nursing home. She was watching her final few possessions being carried off to the city dump. “Look at the final return on virtually every investment I have made in my life,” she exclaimed. “It’s all dust and ashes. And soon that will be me too.”

Lent begins with an ash smudge on our foreheads. “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The echo of the word “remember” lingers in the air as we return to our seats.

But what if we thought of Lent as a God-given time of disruption in the normal flow of our lives, inviting us to re-examine them, laying bare and shining the spotlight on all that is wrong—the pathological unease or “disease” in our own lives and in our world? In the context of global warming, greed, violence abroad and at home, and of our inability to seek peace and be at peace with our neighbours, could the 21st century church this Lent be called to be a modern-day Joel, crying, “The day of the Lord is near”?

David knows what he needs as he prays:  
*“Create in me a clean heart, O God.”*  
 (Psalms 51:10)

The ancient Hebrew people saw the heart as the very centre of humanity—the centre of the will and intellect. To pray for a clean heart was to pray to be recreated.

In her book, *Failure*, author Emma Ineson writes about the British TV show *The Repair Shop*, which features people bringing worn-out items to a shop to be fixed. The owner of the repair shop restores them, causing the owners to marvel, Ineson writes, “at how something so precious and yet broken could be made shiny and new again.”

I think this is the way God deals with our failures. God’s promise is not to leave us in our brokenness but to help put things right.

We are a failing people, but even in our failure and brokenness there is the reminder that the dust from which we came is from God, holy dust. Our dust was molded by the very hands of God, and God’s Spirit breathed life into it. The ashes on our forehead are placed in the form of a cross connecting Good Friday and Easter morning. We hold onto the promise that, as we have risen from dust to this mortal life, so, with Christ, we will rise from the dust of death to eternal life. Yes, to dust we shall return, but with Christ.

One of the most poignant images from the recent Californian wildfires is of the Halpin family, who lost their home to the blaze, singing a song of resurrection at the smoldering remains of it, surrounded by family and friends. I’ll close this message with its words:

*Queen of Heaven, rejoice, Alleluia.  
 Because he whom thou didst merit to bear, Alleluia  
 Has risen as he said, Alleluia.  
 Pray to God for us, Alleluia.*

Wishing you all a holy, disruptive Lent. ■

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

FEATHER AND SAGE ▶



# A prayer for those called to be our leaders

By Chris Harper

**FEATHER:** Creator God, we thank you for the day you have granted and set before us. As we step forward in life and faith, walk with us to guide us on the good road. Protect us from missteps and the traps along the way, keep our eyes and hearts from the many distractions that ever beset us, and bless us with the peace that comes only from you. Today we pray for those who are called to be leaders of your people. Grant them wisdom, patience and peace that they may serve in the depth and capacity of their calling. Grant the blessings of courage and humility to all in our community, that we can walk in unity and serve in greater capacities to build up and enable others. Finally, bless us with your love and promise, that we can listen more to be peacemakers; open our hearts that we can see the others before us in their beauty and calling; and guide us all to be ministers of love who can see you within the circle of all we do and say. Amen.

**SAGE:** March in the Plains Cree moon calendar is *Mikisew Pisim* or “Eagle Moon.” The eagle is a powerful symbol



PHOTO: JUANJO TUGORES

of leadership, strength and blessing. So, it is right that this month we lift up our prayers for the leaders in our ministry.

In my travels, I always say to the communities, “Pray for your bishop; love, support and bless them in their ministry. In this you are doing God’s calling.” This spring there will be four diocesan episcopal elections—in Saskatoon, Moosonee, the Arctic and Rupert’s Land—as well as the election of a new suffragan bishop in the diocese of Montreal. This means that there

will be, God willing in all things, five new members added to the church’s House of Bishops. Being a leader is no easy feat at the best of times, and we the people need to remember that in such a critical and vocal age. Bishops and other leaders of the church are called by the Almighty and community to be prayerful rallying voices and stalwart guides for the faithful—not to be set on a pedestal, but to walk with the people in healing and blessing.

Remember that we are all called to leadership, to give our level best and be all that to which we were called and for which we were created—to serve, forgive, love, lift up and enable the other before us. This month of the Eagle Moon, let us pray for others more than ourselves; let us pray for the House of Bishops and all who are called to leadership; let us pray for those who will be called to the role of primate in our upcoming General Synod, and let us pray that we as a church and community of believers can be better today than we were yesterday. ■

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

# Music programs meet diverse needs of community members—from youths to seniors

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music programs over several years, she says, now it is consistently seeing several such applications each year.

“This is the role of the church,” she adds. “We can’t necessarily influence this, but churches are responding to needs they see in their communities.”

Those needs can vary depending on the demographics. For children and young people, community music programs at churches address desires to learn music and play instruments without financial barriers, or to teach others and forge a career in music. For seniors, hearing and singing music can help stave off the effects of dementia.

These programs also help people of all ages build connections with others and provide them with a “third place”—a social environment separate from home and the workplace touted by some sociologists as beneficial both to individuals and society.

Hauser began the Harmony Lounge and Music Club in 2022 with funding from the Anglican diocese of Ontario, partly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We know kids are suffering,” she recalls thinking at the time. “We know that there’s loneliness and isolation. We know our community doesn’t offer a ton of opportunities—some sports stuff, but there’s not a lot of art.”

Kristy Fletcher, president of Canadian music education charity MusiCounts, in a 2023 *Calgary Herald* op-ed described “the critical and sustained underfunding of music education countrywide” in schools, while noting that paying for private music lessons is often prohibitively expensive.

In Napanee, many parents are reluctant to pay for music lessons for their children, Hauser says. “It’s just not something that they value or that they think is worth the investment. But [then] you see the impact it has on their kids, when they find something that they’re good at, or they connect with a peer group, or they come in here and just socialize with folks.” Approximately 60 to 65 children and youth take music lessons there, she says.

Canon Jeffrey Metcalfe, canon theologian for the Anglican diocese of Quebec, saw a similar impact when he launched Les Anges Cordistes in Quebec City. There are currently seven children and two adults in the program, which offers free music lessons—primarily in cello—and is supported by the AFC’s *Say Yes! To Kids* grant.

Metcalfe, an amateur cellist, says many face financial barriers to playing a very expensive instrument like the cello. “Our idea was, if we provide the instruments and we provide the lessons at no cost, it would just take down a bunch of barriers for people to get their toes wet and to be able to give it a try,” he says.

He and other organizers initially weren’t sure how well it would work, Metcalfe adds—but were amazed by the response. The program began with just a few students and an introductory concert, but word spread and classes are currently at capacity. Professional cellist Tomohisa Toriumi teaches cello in English and French on a volunteer basis.

In Napanee, Harmony Music Lounge has been able to provide paid employment for young musicians as teachers. Two current music teachers are Brock Pettifer, 21,



PHOTOS: MARK HAUSER, MARK HAUSER, MATTHEW PUDDISTER

**Scenes from Harmony Lounge and Music Club. Clockwise from top: Isaac Harvey plays keyboards at the *Origin Story* launch party, with Brock Pettifer on drums; Jade Peter sings at the same concert; Pettifer (left) and Harvey take a break during a recording session.**

who also teaches drums at a music store in Belleville, Ont.; and Isaac Harvey, 18, primarily a pianist, who is taking a gap year and planning to study music at Toronto’s Harris Institute. Both also help produce recordings.

Pettifer says the program has essentially given him a career. “Up until I came here, I was an unemployed musician who was just looking for something to do in life,” he says.

“It has granted me job opportunities, opportunities to play live and get experience and exposure. The same thing goes for a lot of these younger kids, getting their foot in the door of music and doing something they’re passionate about... I’ve made a lot of friends and I’ve made a lot of connections here.”

Harvey says he’s grateful for the opportunity Harmony has given him to get experience working

with different artists. Neither he nor Pettifer had any previous connection to the church.

At St. George’s Anglican Church in Edmonton, an older demographic experiences similar benefits through Music Mends Minds, a program supported by Rotary International with chapters across the United States. The program uses music to support people with cognitive impairments, encouraging participants to play and sing along.

Anne Fanning, a physician and retired University of Alberta professor, started Music Mends Minds in Edmonton, which received funding from the AFC’s Community Ministries grant. She cites research showing that music can be retained longer than more recent memories and can slow cognitive decline in older people.

Having no previous connection to the church, Fanning approached

St. George’s incumbent Madeline Urion (currently on leave), who Fanning says was enthusiastic about hosting Music Mends Minds.

“One of the other regulars said to me, ‘We’re not just a singing group; we’re a community,’ and it’s true,” Fanning says.

For Metcalfe, the church’s growing role in the community music movement harkens back to its own musical traditions.

“The church historically has been a patron of the arts,” he says. “And we still can be, maybe not in the same way we used to...”

What we can do is things like basic instrument teaching and that can make a big difference in a kid’s life.

“If we can hold onto that part of our Anglican heritage by reproducing it in a new way, I think that’s really special.” ■

**“This is the role of the church ... Churches are responding to needs they see in their communities.”**

—Michelle Hauser

# Amid strife, Beresford ‘thoughtful and full of grace’

Continued from p. 1

Colleagues and friends on Facebook remembered Beresford as a brilliant theologian and cherished congregational leader. Judy Paulsen, professor emerita of evangelism at Wycliffe College, said Beresford was a gift to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene and the diocese of Toronto as a whole. “Even when dealing with contentious issues he was always theologically focused, thoughtful, and full of grace,” Paulsen said. “He will be missed.”

Canon John Simons, assistant priest emeritus at the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Montreal, recalled meeting Beresford more than 30 years prior when the latter was a graduate student at McGill University and had an office in his basement. “I admired his brilliant mind and sense of humour,” Simons said.

Born and raised in Manchester, U.K., Beresford studied genetics at the University of Liverpool and theology at Oxford University. He was ordained in the diocese of Chester and served as an assistant curate at St. Mary’s Upton before moving to Canada in 1985. He served as a full-time priest in the diocese of Montreal for a time before switching to part-time ministry during his studies at McGill. Beresford moved on to become a research assistant at the Institut de Recherches Cliniques de Montreal and an assistant professor of ethics at McGill’s

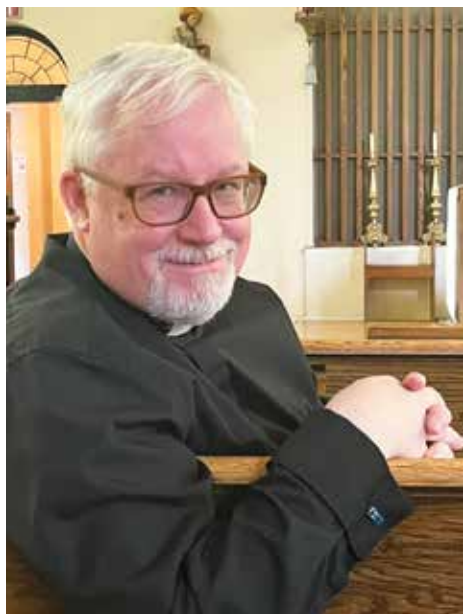


PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

**Beresford had served as priest-in-charge at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Toronto since 2022.**

Faculty of Religious Studies.

Starting in 1996, Beresford served as the Anglican Church of Canada’s consultant for ethics and interfaith relations, playing a leading role in developing education and resources on issues including human sexuality, medical assistance in dying, biotechnology and just war theory. He was also seconded to the Anglican Consultative Council as

an ethics consultant, travelling across the Anglican Communion and working with the council and primates.

“One of Eric’s great gifts was he was a really clear thinker,” said David Hamid, retired suffragan bishop of the Church of England diocese in Europe, who worked alongside Beresford in the Anglican Communion office as director of ecumenical affairs and studies. Hamid said his colleague’s sharp mind came from his training in both scientific methodology and theological thought.

“He had a really good analytical mind, theologically very well prepared,” Hamid said. “But you could see when something was being discussed, you got a look on Eric’s face and you could tell that [his] brain was working very hard at trying to understand precisely what was being said and was always able to come back with a really good incisive set of questions ... He really wanted to push people to be very clear about what they’re thinking and what they’re trying to articulate and helped us with that.”

In 2004 Beresford returned to the academic world when he became president of AST in Halifax, holding the post for 10 years—the longest of anyone in the school’s history. “He was a natural teacher,” Hamid said. “So it wasn’t a surprise to me when he went back to the Atlantic School of Theology to take up work that was really dealing with the preparation for the next generation

of theologians and leaders.”

In 2015 Beresford returned to parish ministry in the diocese of Toronto, serving as theologian in residence at Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora and then priest of St. Timothy’s Anglican Church in North York before his move to St. Mary Magdalene. Stenabaugh said Beresford left the Church of St. Mary Magdalene far stronger than he found it, with a larger congregation and better finances. “He calmed the waters and settled and stabilized the boat,” the rector’s warden said.

Those who knew Beresford highlighted his love of music, books, travel and craft beer. Hamid recalled the late priest as a hard worker, productive writer and excellent preacher and educator—but also someone who enjoyed relaxing at the pub with colleagues at the end of the day.

“Other members of the Anglican Communion office staff at that time ... were, I think, always impressed by Eric,” Hamid said. “He wasn’t bothered by hierarchy ... Whether you were the receptionist or whether you were another director like him, you were all together and being able to have a laugh and have fun and unwind. That was a very human side to him, which I think everybody appreciated.”

Beresford is survived by his wife Janet Marshall, two adult children, three stepdaughters, and seven grandchildren. ■

## Stephens looks to more teamwork within B.C., Yukon

Sean Frankling  
STAFF WRITER

Archbishop John Stephens, recently elected metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of British Columbia and Yukon, says he plans to continue predecessor Archbishop Lynne McNaughton’s work of increasing collaboration between dioceses within the province.

“Under Archbishop Lynne we did much good work on collaboration of the work of the dioceses,” Stephens says. “We are building bridges and connections to better respond to the world of 2025. This to me is encouraging.

“I hope to build on this good work.”

Stephens, bishop of the diocese of New Westminster—which covers the city of Vancouver and some of the area surrounding it on B.C.’s lower mainland—was elected metropolitan of B.C. and Yukon by the province’s house of bishops and council Jan. 18.

Stephens grew up in southwestern B.C. and attended the University of British Columbia to study zoology and evolution before studying theology at Saskatoon’s College of Emmanuel and St. Chad. As a priest, he served in the diocese of Huron as well as at St. Philip’s Dunbar and St. John’s Shaughnessy in Vancouver, according to Stephens’ biography page on the New Westminster website. Stephens was consecrated bishop of the diocese of New Westminster in January 2021.

Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, congratulated Stephens on his new position in a press release from the office of the metropolitan of British Columbia and Yukon.

“I look forward to working with you

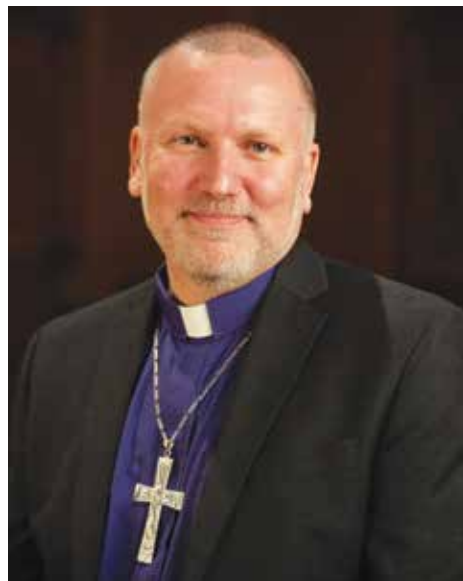


PHOTO: DIOCESE OF NEW WESTMINSTER

**Stephens was elected metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of British Columbia and Yukon Jan. 18.**

in the days ahead and assure you of my support and prayers as you assume the mantle of leadership,” she is quoted as saying. “This election is not just about the selection of an individual—it is about strengthening our collective commitment to leadership, collaboration and the growth of our beloved church.”

The previous metropolitan of British Columbia and Yukon, Archbishop Lynne McNaughton, resigned from her post in November 2024, saying she wanted to focus on her work in the diocese of Kootenay, where she is bishop. Bishop of Caledonia David Lehmann, who is also senior bishop of the ecclesiastical province, served as acting metropolitan until Stephens’ election. ■

Matthew Puddister also contributed to this report.

## Lent with Alongside Hope

**Alongside  
Hope**

Women at Maison Dorcas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo learn weaving as an income-earning opportunity.

## Living into God’s Dream

This year, the Rev. Jonathan Rowe of St. John’s, NL takes us on a Lenten journey, weaving together the five Marks of Mission and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. Using scripture, reflection and questions, prayer and partner stories, Jonathan invites the reader to consider how the design that emerges attracts us, challenges our assumptions, and invites us to grow and change.

Learn more and subscribe to receive a daily reflection in your inbox at [pwrdf.org/AlongsideHopeLent2025](https://pwrdf.org/AlongsideHopeLent2025).

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IMAGE: LEMBERG VECTOR STUDIO

# Commission, senior bishops say they prefer refining to eliminating General Synod, provincial structures

**Continued from p. 1** eliminating current governance structures. As of late January, these pathways, according to Stone, concerned:

- Organizational structures
- Management overview (and potential restructuring)
- Inclusion and diversity in decision-making
- Communications
- Walking in partnership with the self-determining Indigenous church (Sacred Circle)
- Ministry in vulnerable communities (Council of the North)

Stone said the commission will first present its draft report for consideration and possible revision at this month's meeting of CoGS, with the intention of bringing the report and its pathways to General Synod as well.

Meanwhile, the Rev. Cynthia Haines Turner, chair of General Synod's communications coordinating committee, says the committee will offer a report to CoGS about what the implications of any decision to end General Synod's funding of the *Anglican Journal* would be.

Announcing the formation of the commission in 2023, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, then-primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, cited the need for the church to respond to a range of challenges, including financial pressures from the parish to the national level. Since then, the church's financial problems have continued, with General Synod treasurer Amal Attia warning CoGS in November 2024 of a gloomy financial outlook in the face of declining contributions to the national church from struggling dioceses. The church is also grappling with membership decline, at least according to preliminary statistics for 2023—the most recent year for which they are available—which showed average Sunday attendance falling by nine per cent that year.

The third hypothesis, "It is time to eliminate one level of structure—either General Synod or the Ecclesiastical Provinces," has met with rejection from some of the church's most senior bishops, who told the *Anglican Journal* they would prefer instead to retain and streamline the church's existing structures. The seventh hypothesis, "It is time to end independent editorial journalism funded by General Synod," got a mixed reaction from CoGS when the council discussed it at its last meeting in November 2024.

Stone says in reviewing data on each of the hypotheses, the commission found that many gave rise to further questions, which in turn led them to propose the pathways as a way for the church to discern its priorities.

For example, she says, the seventh hypothesis prompted the question, "What are goals and objectives around

PHOTO: DAVID  
LUCKENBACH

▲ **"There's been no change to the marriage canon of the Anglican Church of Canada. But concretely on the ground, most dioceses do same-sex weddings. I think progressives feel like, 'OK, [General Synod] is holding us back. What's the point of this anyway if we have the authority in dioceses to do what we want to do?' And conservatives feel like, 'What's the point in having this kind of national structure and sets of canon law if we're not going to honour them anyway?'"**

—The Rev. Cole Hartin

communications and what are the tools by which we effectively communicate?" The commission incorporated such feedback into the pathways.

## What would it mean to eliminate General Synod?

"Beyond the Hypotheses," a commission document that explores the hypotheses in more depth, draws attention to the significant financial costs as well as time and energy of bishops, clergy and lay people required to maintain church governance structures at the national, provincial, diocesan, deanery and parish levels.

The commission suggests holding a consultation with the primate, metropolitans and representatives from CoGS and provincial councils to consider eliminating either General Synod or the ecclesiastical provinces "and/or a restructuring of responsibilities and resources between the two levels in order to more effectively support dioceses." It also says consideration should be given to amalgamating dioceses or increasing collaboration between dioceses in administration and governance.

"In this time of institutional decline, with its attendant financial pressures, the Commission wonders if the church is 'over-governed' and wants to encourage conversations to re-imagine the church so that its core purpose of proclaiming the Gospel can be supported more vigorously," the commission says.

In addition to being a gathering of Anglicans, General Synod is—unlike the Anglican Church of Canada—a legal entity; national office staff are the employees of General Synod, and lawsuits in which the church is involved name the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Primate's commission member the Rev. Cole Hartin—currently associate rector of Christ Church Tyler in Texas, and previously rector of St. Luke's Anglican Church in Saint John, N.B.—says the commission was at first thinking mainly about provincial synods when it questioned the necessity of having three levels of synodical governance: dioceses, ecclesiastical provinces and General Synod. "It seemed to surprise me, anyway, that when we took in all of the surveys, there were more suggestions to get rid of General Synod than we had anticipated," he says.

The Rev. Christopher Brittain, professor of Anglican studies at Trinity College, University of Toronto, says eliminating General Synod would potentially mean the end of the Anglican Church of Canada as a national presence.

"We'd have the Anglican Church of Canada in different regions, but they'd be really more regional independent churches than a national coordinated entity," Brittain

says. If the church eliminates General Synod, Brittain foresees a scenario in which ecclesiastical provinces continue to talk to each other and coordinate—when they have time and when resources are available. "Initially there might be some capacity to hold together," he says. "But that's going to wither over time and fray."

Without General Synod's constitutions and canons, Canadian Anglicans would have to spend considerable time and money likely start to focus more on concerns in their own geographic regions. Brittain believes getting rid of General Synod would undermine both the functionality and reputation of the Anglican Church of Canada nationally, for example by making it more difficult for outsiders to contact someone who can speak for the church as a national entity.

As an example of why Anglicans might question the need for General Synod, Hartin—stressing that he was merely expressing his own opinion and not the commission's—recalls the divisive debate at two successive General Synods over amending the marriage canon to allow for same-sex marriage. General Synod 2019 narrowly voted against the amendment after it failed to reach the necessary threshold of two-thirds support in the Order of Bishops.

"There's been no change to the marriage canon of the Anglican Church of Canada," Hartin says. "But concretely on the ground, most dioceses do same-sex weddings. I think progressives feel like, 'OK, [General Synod] is holding us back. What's the point of this anyway if we have the authority in dioceses to do what we want to do?' And conservatives feel like, 'What's the point in having this kind of national structure and sets of canon law if we're not going to honour them anyway?'"

Getting rid of General Synod, Hartin says, would mean the church in Canada would be left where it was before the formation of General Synod: with parishes, dioceses and ministry, but without many of the national resources it enjoys today. Anglicans in Canada "certainly would not have a sleek website or excellent national communication," he said. "They would not have the apparatus that supports the primate."

Hartin's own view is that he does not want to see General Synod disappear. "It doesn't seem prudent, because there are enough indispensable things that the General Synod does that I think would be really cumbersome to have to parcel out to other groups like the provinces," he says.

"If [General Synod] did dissolve, then the provinces would have to beef up what they do, which would make us ask, 'Well, if they're doing all the things the General Synod did and taking the resources and time that took,

PHOTO: DIOCESE OF  
CALGARY

▲ **"I think it's really good to have a conversation about our structures and how we might use them more effectively or about what things might need to be eliminated. But General Synod deciding that provinces should be eliminated would mean very little because it would end up being like, 'Well, we want you to eliminate yourself, but [there's] nothing we can do about it.'"**

—Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson

what was the point in all this anyway?"

Stone says both in receiving feedback as well as in members' own opinions, the commission feels "it's important that the Anglican Church of Canada remain part of the Anglican Communion... If the work that moves forward after General Synod is to explore whether maybe the provinces take on more work, or do we remove that element of governance, then some type of national body is going to continue to exist."

Based on what the commission has heard from Anglicans, Stone says, she expects General Synod to invite the next phase of the commission's work to "explore whether there needs to be a movement of roles and responsibilities amongst the different levels of governance," rather than the removal of one level.

## Rejecting 'false dichotomy' in proposed governance changes

In conversations with the *Anglican Journal*, senior leaders of three of the church's four ecclesiastical provinces expressed a personal preference for restructuring over eliminating current governance structures. (Archbishop David Edwards, metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Canada and bishop of Fredericton, declined comment.)

Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson, metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of the Northern Lights and bishop of Calgary, points out that General Synod does not have the jurisdiction or authority to eliminate ecclesiastical provinces, which existed before the national church.

"I think it's really good to have a conversation about our structures and how we might use them more effectively or about what things might need to be eliminated," Kerr-Wilson says. "But General Synod deciding that provinces should be eliminated would mean very little because it would end up being like, 'Well, we want you to eliminate yourself, but [there's] nothing we can do about it.'"

Stone confirms that dissolving an ecclesiastical province must take place at the diocesan and provincial level and is not a General Synod decision.

Any move to eliminate a level of structure "would have to be a collaborative piece of work," Stone says. "From my perspective, the commission [is] saying if you are looking for efficiencies, given that the General Synod is a body that emerges [at] the request of the dioceses and in turn the provinces, is it time to have a conversation about looking at whether both levels are needed?" She notes that other denominations have removed a level of structure—citing the United Church of Canada, which changed in 2018 from a four-level to a three-level model of governance.

But Kerr-Wilson says even if

ecclesiastical provinces voted to dissolve themselves, the Anglican Church of Canada would not likely become more efficient or save money by having General Synod handle tasks that were previously the responsibility of provincial synods. He estimates that the annual budget for the province of Northern Lights is about \$100,000 and says dioceses' annual contributions to General Synod are several times greater than what they pay for the provincial budget.

"If dioceses in the province of Northern Lights took all of the money that they give to the running of the province and gave it to the General Synod, it would make next to no difference to the overall picture, because it just isn't costing that much to run the province," Kerr-Wilson says.

Eliminating General Synod would also create problems, he says, though narrowing the focus of its responsibilities might help. "General Synod was created really as a pragmatic way of sharing resources and trying to get some things done that were difficult to be done at a more local level," Kerr-Wilson says, adding that he views this as beneficial to the extent General Synod does things the church could not do otherwise.

The primate's commission is "trying to start a conversation, and that's great," he says. "But I don't think that's likely to be the most fruitful thing, saying [we need to eliminate] one or the other, because it's not likely to happen and also I don't see that it creates that much by way of efficiencies."

Archbishop Lynne McNaughton, bishop of Kootenay—who spoke to the *Journal* before her Nov. 22 resignation as metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of B.C. and Yukon—calls eliminating either General Synod or the provinces a "false dichotomy."

"It's a perfectly fine hypothesis because it puts us into a conversation about that and the conversation's necessary," McNaughton says. "I'm not sure it's ever either/or. But it does help us prioritize [asking], 'What's the national church for?' and 'What can the provinces do that the national church can't?' and vice versa."

Since a November 2023 provincial summit in Vancouver, McNaughton says, B.C. and Yukon has already been in discussion about restructuring, including sharing resources. Some dioceses have begun sharing payroll administration, administrative assistants and finance directors, since payroll can be done electronically.

McNaughton's successor as metropolitan of B.C. and Yukon, Archbishop John Stephens—elected Jan. 18—reiterated that the hypotheses are not statements on what must be done. He called them discussion starters aimed at helping the Anglican Church of Canada consider new

PHOTO: DIOCESE OF  
EDMONTON

▲ **"I think people demand transparency and we really need to be able to hold the church accountable for its decisions and its actions and to be able to show why we do what we do. Without an independent news source, I don't know how we can honestly do that."**

—Margaret Glidden

possibilities, a qualifier he believes to have been lost in much discussion around the hypotheses.

Financial challenges, he says, will not allow the Anglican Church of Canada to continue doing what it is currently doing.

"I support considering how we could strengthen the role of the ecclesiastical provinces and then the relationship that each province has with the national church," Stephens says. "I don't think the question is whether we eliminate both, but how we reimagine or rethink the structure. It makes sense to me to have a stronger role for the provinces to ensure that the dioceses of each province work more closely with each other."

"This does not mean that the General Synod would be eliminated," he says. "Rather, it might play a different role within our national church."

Archbishop Anne Germond, acting primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Ontario, declined to comment for this story, saying she believed the primate should remain neutral in the conversation at this time. She deferred to provincial synod executive leaders to speak for Ontario, which held its provincial synod from Sept. 24 to 26 in Sault Ste. Marie.

Alex Pierson, executive officer for the ecclesiastical province of Ontario, says there was general agreement at the synod on the need to streamline governance structures, as the Anglican Church of Canada becomes smaller and technology allows for greater sharing of administration and resources.

## Journalism as a mirror for the church

Working relationships across the Anglican Church of Canada are also relevant to the seventh hypothesis, which puts forward a shift from General Synod's publishing a national print newspaper with editorial independence—i.e. the *Anglican Journal*—to instead "devoting time, staff and budget to the core work of the proclamation of the gospel."

The *Anglican Journal* has not had editorial independence formally in its mandate since 2019; it is, however, tasked by General Synod with producing content according to "the highest standards of journalistic responsibility" and based on decisions made by its own editorial staff. General Synod's audited financial statements for the year ended Dec. 31, 2023, the most recent available, show the *Journal* cost the national office \$883,473 but brought in \$679,710 in revenue, for a net expense of \$203,763.

The role of the *Journal* has come before General Synod more than once—most recently in 2019—as the church has tried to decide whether it should continue as a newspaper publisher, and if so, what principles should guide it. Michael Valpy, chair

Continued on p. 10





IMAGE: LEMBERG VECTOR STUDIO

# Diocesan editors' group opposes axing of *Journal*

**COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD ▶**

Continued from p. 9

of the *Anglican Journal's* editorial board, says the Anglican Church of Canada has until now found consensus “elusive—impossible, actually”—on what its media voice should be. Fully integrating it into General Synod’s communications department, he says, could hamper the church’s ability to discern a course for itself.

“Waving aside the chatter of editorial autonomy and folding the *Journal* into a bureaucratic newsletter ... might end or further mute an intellectual and spiritual exploration over where our church might go, which likely will sadden many of us,” he said by email.

Margaret Glidden is president of the Anglican Editors’ Association (AEA)—a national network of editors, writers and graphic designers from 19 diocesan newspapers plus the *Anglican Journal*, who provide mutual support in their ministry. She says an end to General Synod’s funding of editorially independent journalism would drastically reduce the church’s abilities to communicate at all levels. She asks who would share Anglicans’ stories in the absence of Anglican journalism, since secular news sources rarely have dedicated coverage of religion anymore. She is staunchly in favour of General Synod funding independent journalism, not just corporate communications.

“I think people demand transparency and we really need to be able to hold the church accountable for its decisions and its actions and to be able to show why we do what we do,” she says. “Without an independent news source, I don’t know how we can honestly do that.”

Glidden, who is also editor of *The Mes-*



PHOTO: MATTHEW PUDDISTER

▲ **“We would not have an in-house mechanism to hold up a mirror to ourselves. That being said, I think there are lots of places in our world where people do hold up a mirror to what we do and hold us accountable.”**

—The Rev. Cynthia Haines Turner

*senger*, the diocesan newspaper for Edmonton and Athabasca, says that without the *Anglican Journal* many diocesan newspapers might not exist. By funding the *Journal*, General Synod also supports diocesan news reporting: proceeds from the annual Anglican Journal Appeal are divided between the *Journal* and diocesan papers. In 2024, for example, *The Messenger* received \$3,400 from the appeal.

Since diocesan newspapers are also mailed out as a section of the *Anglican Journal*, they benefit from the heritage grant that the national church receives towards mailing costs. “We would not be eligible for that grant on our own if our diocese was to print its own paper” due to its lower circulation, Glidden says. General Synod and the *Journal* negotiate a shared printing contract on behalf of diocesan newspapers.

Along with these cost-sharing benefits, Glidden says, *Journal* staff members support diocesan editors, writers and graphic designers—many of whom perform this ministry on a volunteer basis and have not worked on a newspaper before—by sharing their skills.

Haines Turner says any decision on whether the church should continue funding journalism is the decision of CoGS and General Synod. She described the committee’s job as collecting information, analyzing what they see as key issues, outlining choices and allowing Anglicans responsible to make decisions.

Haines Turner sees the newspaper’s journalistic integrity as a value to the church, although, she adds, “whether it’s a value that the church itself wants to uphold is another thing.”

Personally, she sees the merits of both arguments. Those who support General Synod funding the *Journal* as a truly journalistic enterprise see it as representing the church to itself, which, she says, “helps us become better at who we are and what we do.”

Ending that funding, she says, would mean that “we would not have an in-house mechanism to hold up a mirror to ourselves. That being said, I think there are lots of places in our world where people do hold up a mirror to what we do and hold us accountable.”

## Church leaders reiterate change is needed

While putting forward their views on re-imagining church structures, provincial representatives and other leaders who spoke to the *Journal* shared the view that change is necessary.

“What the commission has done is focus a conversation that we always need to be having,” Haines Turner says. “If we’re facing financial difficulties, then we have to look at everything we do [and say,] ‘Is this what we wish to continue to do?’”

McNaughton describes a sense of relief among Anglicans she encounters that the church is talking about potential changes.

“I’m grateful to the primate’s commission for raising those questions,” McNaughton says. “We need to be talking about them at every level of the church.”

Muses Pierson, “What we did worked very well for many, many decades, arguably centuries. It’s a different day, and so we need to adapt and evolve with it.” ■



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

**DAY READING**

- 1 Zechariah 4
- 2 Zechariah 5
- 3 Zechariah 6
- 4 Isaiah 43:14-28
- 5 Psalm 126
- 6 John 12:1-11
- 7 John 12:12-26
- 8 John 12:27-43
- 9 Psalm 118:1-14
- 10 Psalm 118:15-29

**DAY READING**

- 11 Isaiah 50
- 12 Luke 19:28-48
- 13 Philippians 2:1-11
- 14 Zechariah 7
- 15 Zechariah 8:1-19
- 16 Zechariah 8:20-9:10
- 17 Luke 22:7-23
- 18 Luke 23:26-43
- 19 Luke 23:44-56
- 20 Luke 24:1-12

**DAY READING**

- 21 John 20:1-18
- 22 Revelation 1:1-11
- 23 Revelation 1:12-2:7
- 24 Revelation 2:8-29
- 25 Mark 16:9-20
- 26 John 20:19-31
- 27 Acts 5:17-32
- 28 Acts 5:33-42
- 29 Revelation 3:1-13
- 30 Revelation 3:14-22

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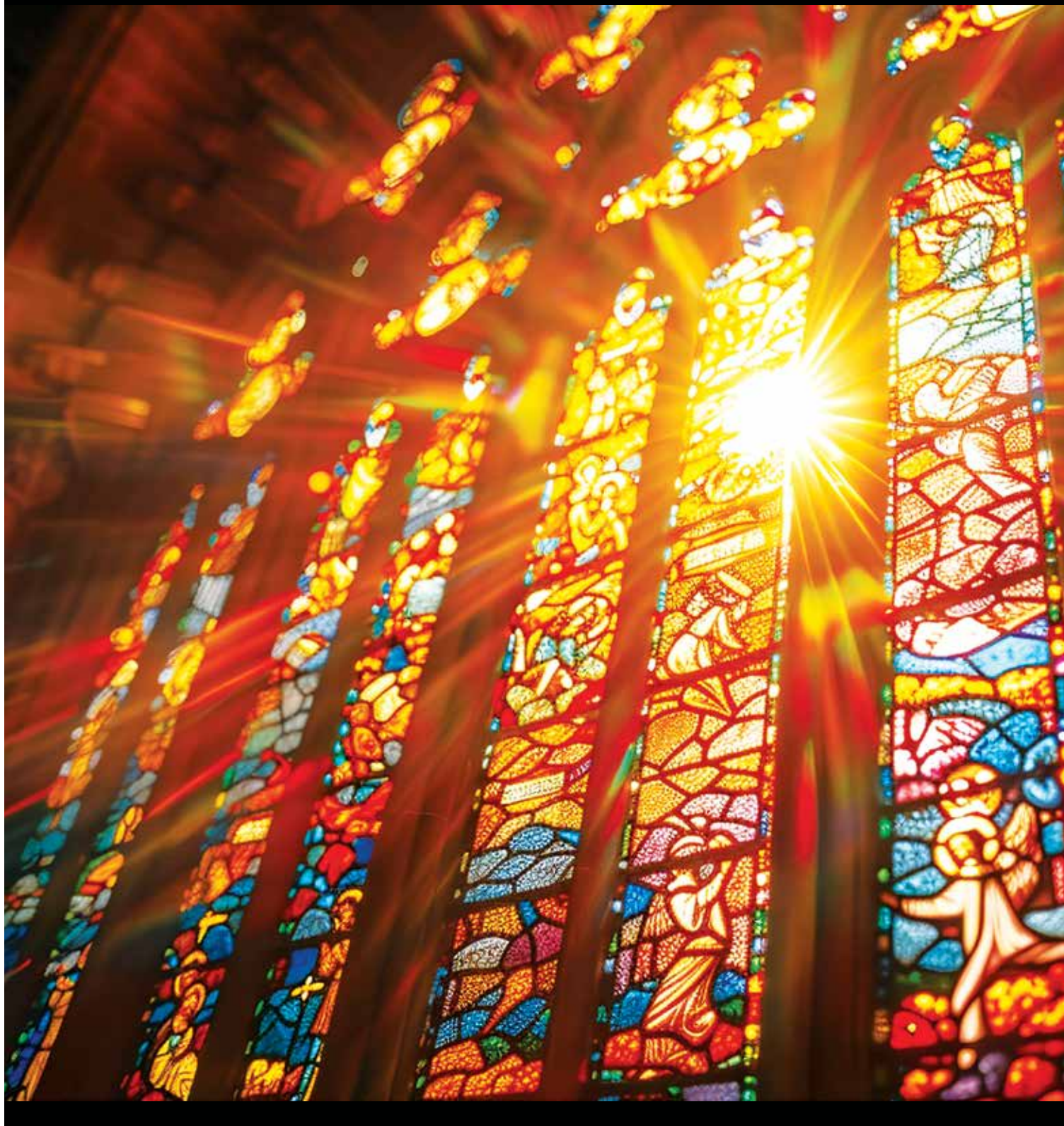
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