



# ST. MATTHEW'S

The Anglican Church in the Glebe

## *Pulse of the Parish*

**SPECIAL ISSUE APRIL 2022**

### THE REVEREND CLAIRE BRAMMA'S JOURNEY TO ORDINATION

VALERIE NEEDHAM

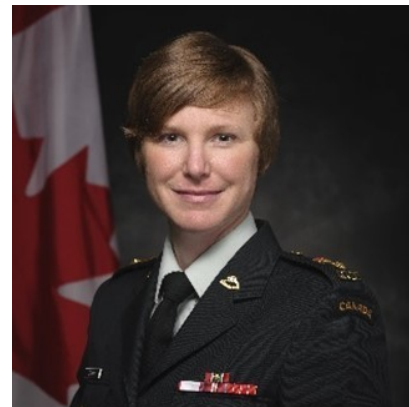
On Sunday, April 24, 2022, St. Matthew's welcomed The Reverend Claire Bramma with joy and celebration as she returned to worship with us after her ordination to the Diaconate at Christ Church Cathedral on April 23. How good it was to have her amongst us again in her new role as a Deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada!

St. Matthew's is the sending church, the church which Rev. Bramma left to commence her path to ordination, and it was a privilege for us to have her worship here for her first service after being ordained.

Claire was a parishioner at St. Matthew's from 2016 to 2019, during which time she participated in parish life and discerned a call to ministry. She forged many friendships and prayer relationships during those years and co-chaired the Strategic Planning Committee's Learning and Formation Task Group with the then-Incumbent, The Rev. Gregor Sneddon.

During her time of pursuing a Master of Divinity degree at Trinity College at the University of Toronto, she continued to send articles for the *Pulse of the Parish*, all of which are reproduced in this Special Issue.

Claire was born in Ajax and grew up in Whitby, Ontario. Her father, Peter, who passed away some years ago, was a police officer. Her mother Jacky, now retired, was a French teacher and her older brother, Jamie, is a police officer and has two teenage sons, to whom Claire is a proud Aunt. She was a keen volleyball player in high school and university and played the trumpet in the Whitby Brass Band, along with all the members of her musical family.



At 18, she was accepted into the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, studying engineering and experiencing the rigours of military training as a cadet. After graduation in 2002, she rose steadily through the ranks from Captain to Major to Lieutenant Colonel with ever-expanding responsibilities and larger numbers of soldiers to command. She was twice deployed to Afghanistan (from 2004 to 2005 and 2012) and in her second posting, was awarded the Commander's Commendation.

In 2016, Claire became the commanding officer of the 300-strong Mapping and Charting Establishment that provides diverse maps and satellite imagery for the entire Canadian Forces. In her final posting before commencing Master of Divinity studies at Trinity College, she worked at the National Defence Headquarters in a deputy-Director role, was being considered for promotion to Colonel and In 2018 was invested into the Order of Military Merit (OMM).

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(Continued from page 1)

Claire's spiritual journey began in childhood in the bosom of a family that lived by Christian values. At the age of 15, she attended a Billy Graham Crusade in Toronto and was profoundly moved, coming forward to accept Jesus into her heart. She attended Calvary Baptist Church in Oshawa, belonging to the youth group there, and several years later attended All Saints Anglican Church in Whitby.

In 2016 when Claire was posted to Ottawa, she was searching for a church home and came upon St. Matthew's. She was drawn by warmth of the community, the hospitality of food and fellowship and the communion around the altar. She especially recalls a homily by Rev. Sneddon, in which he held up a mirror to parishioners, saying "Here is Jesus Christ. Go and be Christ in the world". This moving moment caused her to reflect upon what God was calling her to be and to do in her life.

As a member of the Learning and Formation Task Group, Claire realized that she could integrate her thinking and organizational skills into parish life. She was inspired by the "passion of St. Matthew's to learn about the Christian faith, to follow Jesus and to be a presence in the community". Prompted through serving in various ways in the St. Matthew's community, she began to discern more intentionally, "how is God calling me to love others and the world?" As she reflected upon her military career, she noticed that her priorities were moving away from technical and operational demands and towards the well-being of others.

This shift in priorities had first presented itself during a posting to Valcartier, Quebec in 2009 as commanding officer of an Engineer Squadron which had just returned from Afghanistan. She journeyed alongside this group of soldiers as they recovered from a range of physical and mental injuries, as well as grief in the aftermath of losing

several comrades. In 2010 she deployed with the same Squadron to Haiti after the devastating earthquake there. The humanitarian assistance projects they participated in resulted in helping many of the soldiers in their healing journey. This experience "impressed upon me the importance of spiritual and emotional care and I felt more drawn to that than to the role of a commanding officer."

Another turning point for Claire was the death of her dear friend Captain Nichola Goddard, killed in Afghanistan in 2006. She offered a moving tribute to Captain Goddard in a Remembrance Sunday reflection on November 14, 2021.

[\(Tribute to Captain Nichola Goddard\)](#)

When, as a young woman of 18 signing the documents to join the Canadian Armed Forces, the recruiting Sergeant said to her, "Claire, never forget where you come from." And so, she wishes to honour the friendships and prayers of St. Matthew's as the sending church during her formation in ministry. She is grateful for the abiding support and wisdom of her Discernment Committee, comprised of Sue Rayner, Randi Goddard, John McBride and Rick Trites, who have been "wonderful companions along the way." Sue and the Canon Kevin Flynn presented Claire for ordination on April 23.

Reverend Bamma has been appointed the Assistant Curate in the Parish of the Valley for two years, effective July 19, 2022. She then hopes to transition to the military Chaplaincy (the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service) and to be a channel of God's love and mercy for the people of the Canadian Forces, especially in this era of institutional change.

Congratulations, Claire! We wish you God's blessings as you begin your vocation of service in His name.



# THE 'TRANSFORMING CHURCH' WORKSHOP: ROOTED IN OUR CORNERSTONES, VENTURING INTO THE FUTURE

MARCH 2018

On Saturday March 10, just over 30 St. Matthew's parishioners gathered for the "Transforming Church" workshop lead by the Very Reverend Andrew Asbil, who is the former Rector of The Church of the Redeemer in Toronto, and since 2016 has been the Dean of St. James Cathedral. This marked the first of four invited speakers to help us in our strategic planning journey with 2018 as a year of exploration.

We were blessed and delighted to have Rev. Asbil with us; he encouraged us to acknowledge where we come from (our history), to assess our financial stewardship (our giving), and to think big about what God can do at St. Matthews (our vision).

In his introduction, Rev. Asbil told the story about the migration of his family from Ireland to a homestead in the eastern townships of Quebec. This story served as a vignette for us to explore our own arrival to where we are today: as individuals, as our respective families, and as the parish of St. Matthews.

We were invited to line up in order from the person who has been at St. Matthews the longest to the person who is the newest arrival. Interestingly, that time span covered over 55 years. We then divided into 5 groups composed of a people with a variety of experience and time at St. Matthews.

Each group considered the following questions: What brought you to St. Matthews? Why did you stay? How do our neighbours see us? Where are we going? Group discussions were energetic and thoughtful, and the recurring themes that were reported included a sense of welcome and community, opportunities for outreach, music that leads into worship and sound teaching/theology.

After relating the transformation that The Church of the Redeemer experienced, Rev. Asbil invited us to engage in a "blue sky" exercise. In small groups we considered what could be done at St. Matthews if money was no object.

Some common themes resulting from this discussion included building reconfiguration (in an environmentally sustainable way) and hiring more staff.

There were also some interesting ideas about conducting both secular and sacred programs that meet the needs of our wider community from children to retirees. Rev. Asbil's advice to us included the following: if we don't take risks we will not progress; we should give permission to evolve organically while not being overly constrained by process; and we should get creative about how God is leading us into the future.

The final theme of the workshop was stewardship. Rev. Asbil introduced this topic with the following verse from the letter of Paul to the Galatians chapter 6:7, "...for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap..."; he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. We were invited to choose a partner and to share about how the family we grew up in talked about money so that we could become more comfortable talking about it.

The discussion then moved to tithing. Rev. Asbil stated that "giving 10% is the goal, but there are times in our lives where we cannot meet this giving goal, and other times when we can surpass this. Give until it feels good, it feels right." Andrew shared with us a quote by Henry David Thoreau, "The soul grows by subtraction not by addition".

This inspires us in our tithing practices to be a cheerful giver, and to support our parish's stewardship plan as much as we are able. We were also encouraged to not be afraid to ask for money and not to underestimate our community's capacity to give (inside the congregation and beyond).

The Transforming Church workshop was a thought provoking experience in which parishioners of St. Matthews had the opportunity to hear about and to consider insights around the ways and means that we can evolve into the future.

# DISCOVERING DISCERNMENT I

MARCH 2019

*"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps". Proverbs 16:9*

Since September I have been on an intentional journey of discernment as I stand at the crossroads, contemplating where God is leading me next in my personal and professional life. I am blessed to have the support of family and friends at this juncture in my life, and I am filled with gratitude for having the St. Matthew's community as a safe place for me to simply "be" as I explore who I am in Christ and discern God's call.

I am sure that many of you are like me when it comes to decision making: we assess the situation; we identify the important factors; we examine the possibilities and compare them; and then we choose the "best" option.

As a decision-maker and engineer in my professional life,

I appreciate that I am naturally drawn to formulas, flowcharts, and checklists that somehow serve to validate and justify a given decision, having diligently followed a proven process. Over the past 6 months, God has been showing me to rethink such rigorous methods of decision making when it comes to life decisions.

The hope in writing this article is to share with you some of my thoughts about discernment, as it pertains to seeking and following God's will. Discernment can simply be defined as the ability to decide between right and wrong. However, in this context I define discernment as the process of recognizing one's vocation, guided by internal and external signs of God's leading. I propose that discernment is a "cycle" (see the graphic below) in which five areas of discovery are connected through prayer, and may be repeated as the situation evolves.

In *Discovering Discernment I*, I describe the first and second areas of discernment as they have touched me. In *Discovering Discernment II* (in the June issue of the *Pulse of the Parish*), I will describe areas three, four and five.

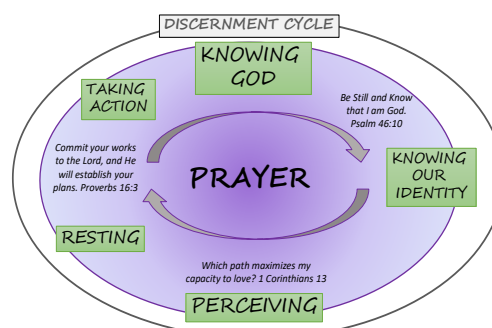
The first area of discernment, "Knowing God" grounds us in the foundation of our faith. I have found that creating space for prayer has been essential; so that in stillness and silence, the language of God may be heard. Actively seeking out God's character (as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) has provided me with insight concerning what is important to God and how I might live out God's Will in the world.

I have found the writings of St. Paul to be particularly encouraging, as he reinforces the idea that God's work in this world is to be rooted in love; the absolute hallmark of God's character. St. Paul also encourages us to be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, to reflect Christ and to be united in Him. Lately, I have discovered that Scripture can interact with the desires and thoughts of our souls. My daily encounters with the Bible, sometimes using the *Lectio Divina* method, have been an important part of discovering God and transforming the heart.

In the second area of discernment, "Knowing Our Identity", we are encouraged to seek-out clues about who we really are in God eyes; discovering our true self. How might our desires be transformed to align with God's will? With the guidance of a spiritual director, I have been exploring motivations, as well as some underlying fears and hesitations.

In the book *Soul Guide: Following Jesus as Spiritual Director*, Dr. Bruce Demarest defines spiritual direction as "the ministry of soul care in which a gifted and experienced Christian helps another person to grow in relationship with God through following the example of Christ".

Joined by the presence of the Holy Spirit, spiritual direction offers an opportunity to learn more about ourselves and to be renewed in Godly purpose. I have been examining what kinds of gifts and talents God might be calling me to use in His service, as well as establishing the priorities in my life. Taking this kind of personal discovery and inventory has given me a renewed sense of purpose, while revealing some other possibilities in ministry.





# DISCOVERING DISCERNMENT II

JUNE 2019

*"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps." Proverbs 16:9*

In the March issue of *The Pulse of the Parish*, I wrote about my journey of discerning God's call to ministry and developed an illustration of this process as I have come to understand it. I described the first two steps of discernment as "Knowing God" and "Knowing Our Identity". In *Discovering Discernment II*, I will describe the three remaining aspects of this journey which I name "Perceiving", "Resting" and "Take Action".

The third aspect of discernment, "Perceiving" involves identifying and exploring pathways that may unfold, asking God to reveal opportunities to serve Him in the present and in the future. It is also about inviting God, and the Holy Spirit, to be an intimate part of my assessment and exploration, so that I am guided down the path that pleases Him the most. In my journey of discernment, several options have come to my mind and heart as I asked myself the following questions:

- Which path maximizes my capacity to love?
- Which path fulfils a need, in the Body of Christ or in the world?

Prayerfully asking for God's guidance and inspiration has been essential, and I have introduced more space for silence and stillness into my day. When I feel overwhelmed by reflecting on the options, spending time in prayer has helped me to re-focus on God's presence. Furthermore, I believe that God purposefully places people in my path.

By having a heightened awareness (with the help of the Holy Spirit) as I go about my day, or as I intentionally spend time with others, my heart is counselled and enlightened. Lately, I have been especially blessed through time spent with trusted friends, family, and colleagues. Gradually, I have discovered a refinement of possible pathways, feeling God's gentle leading to guide my steps.

The next aspect of discernment involves a time of "Resting". At first, I found this to be a challenge and a test of patience. However, I have come to embrace this precious time of waiting as an opportunity to enjoy God's presence. During this period, doors may open and close. Prayerfully, I have been able to act when opportunities have arisen, while gracefully accepting those occasions in which an obstacle cannot be overcome.

While "Resting" and seeking God's guidance to receive a sense of direction, I have asked the following questions:

- What am I asking of God?
- What is God offering to me?

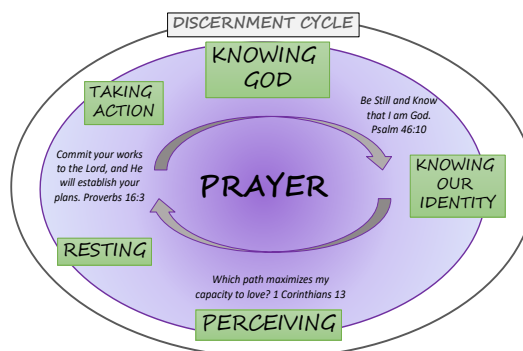
With discernment comes moments of spiritual warfare; I praise God for working in both my internal and external worlds to overcome darkness, fears, temptations, and doubts. There is an amazing opportunity in the "Resting" phase to listen with the ears of the heart, and to receive God's gracious gifts of inspiration, forgiveness, healing, transformation, and comfort.

Finally, when the time is right, I believe that God presents an opportunity to "Take Action", to follow God's will towards a particular path. This may require a step of faith and trust, especially if following this path goes against worldly values.

Over the past few months, I have come to know that discernment is a continuum and that it is energized by prayer as a central force. As my understanding of "Knowing God" and "Knowing Our Identity" evolves, I move into periods of "Perceiving" and "Resting", and then reach a stage to "Take Action".

I give thanks and praise God that I have been supported by the St. Matthews community during this time of discernment. May God ever be at my side, strengthening and equipping me along the way, as I discover what my next big adventure with Him will be!

*(Editor's Note: Congratulations, Claire, upon being admitted to the Anglican Studies Program at Trinity College, University of Toronto. May God's love sustain you as you prepare to serve Him.)*



# GOD HAS A GIFT FOR EVERYONE!

DECEMBER 2019



In my journey of discernment concerning a call to ordained ministry, I have been praying about which spiritual gifts I should nurture and those for which I might ask.

I have almost completed my first semester as a part-time Master of Divinity Student at Trinity College in Toronto. During my two academic courses this term, I

have been studying the Old Testament (Genesis through to Kings) and reading some of the philosophers and thinkers who have influenced Christianity.

Another part of my formation includes regular participation in the Trinity College Chapel life, learning the Anglican liturgy for the services of Morning Eucharist and Evening Prayer.

Through these experiences I have been encouraged to cultivate the gift of faith. When stretched intellectually, I am discovering anew that faith in a loving and Almighty God expressed through the Trinity is vital, valuable, and life-giving and that it is not something that a university can teach.

I am thankful for this time of academic and religious formation, and in the spiritual domain I have been led to ask God to reveal and cultivate additional spiritual gifts that I might use in His service in future roles in ministry.

This train of thought reminded me that God is a giving God; so why not just ask Him? As we turn our hearts to God in this season of Advent and with the frenzy of Christmas gift-giving upon us, I offer the thought that we might be inspired to make a kind of “wish-list” to God: to ask Him for the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and to humbly accept and cultivate spiritual gifts.

This might include gifts in addition to those we may already have accepted, or it could include those gifts that

we desire or have only every imagined.

The New Testament scriptures encourage us all to ask for such gifts and to have confidence in God’s good intention. Jesus said: “For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” (Luke 11:10-13)

Foundational teaching regarding spiritual gifts also comes from the Apostle Paul. He tells the Galatians that the Holy Spirit manifests the characteristics (or virtues) of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness. (Galatians 5:22-23).

He tells the Corinthians that spiritual gifts are allocated by God and that they come in many different forms. Such gifts are rooted in the Holy Spirit and are designed by God to be used in love, for the betterment of the world. (1 Corinthians 12: 4-11).

He also tells Peter that God has given each person a unique gift from “His great variety of spiritual gifts” to be used well in order “to serve one another”. (1 Peter 4:10) Therefore, spiritual gifts are the gift that keeps on giving – what a deal!

It is my prayer that as followers of Jesus Christ, we may be inspired to ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts that may be given to our lives and shared with others. I believe that God is ready to give and that He is simply waiting to be asked! May the desire for spiritual gifts be part of not only our Christmas “wish-list”, but may it be a continual prayer no matter what the season.

*Claire Bamma was a parishioner of St. Matthew’s from 2016-2019 and is currently working and studying in Toronto. She is a Postulant in the Diocese of Ottawa and is praying for the opportunity to become a Chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces.*

# UPDATE FROM CLAIRE BRAMMA

## MARCH 2020

Greetings from Toronto! The 2nd semester of Divinity studies at Trinity is continuing and since March 15 we have moved to an online format given the pandemic. We are in the home stretch, with final papers and take-home exams due before Easter.

This term I am taking "Old Testament Part 2 (Prophets and Psalms)" as well as "Systematic Theology in an Un-systematic Age". As the titles imply, the courses are comprehensive with a lot of reading but they are fascinating. I also continue to enjoy the chapel life and experiencing a variety of liturgical expressions.

On 10 March I had the honour of being a Thurifer for one of our Anglo-Catholic Eucharist services. I learned how to prepare, carry, and use the thurible or censer. This service also had an ecumenical element with local Lutherans participating as the gospeller and guest

preacher (The Reverend Dr. Christian Ceconi).

In addition, I am thrilled to announce that I have been conditionally selected for the military chaplain training program! I am waiting to receive the final paperwork and from there I expect that this summer I will assume a new rank (Captain) and status as Chaplain-in-Training.

I continue to keep the St. Matthew's community in my prayers, and especially for peace and protection during the pandemic. I am convinced that the Holy Spirit is working during this difficult time to share the love and peace of Christ with the world, even in ways that were previously unfamiliar.

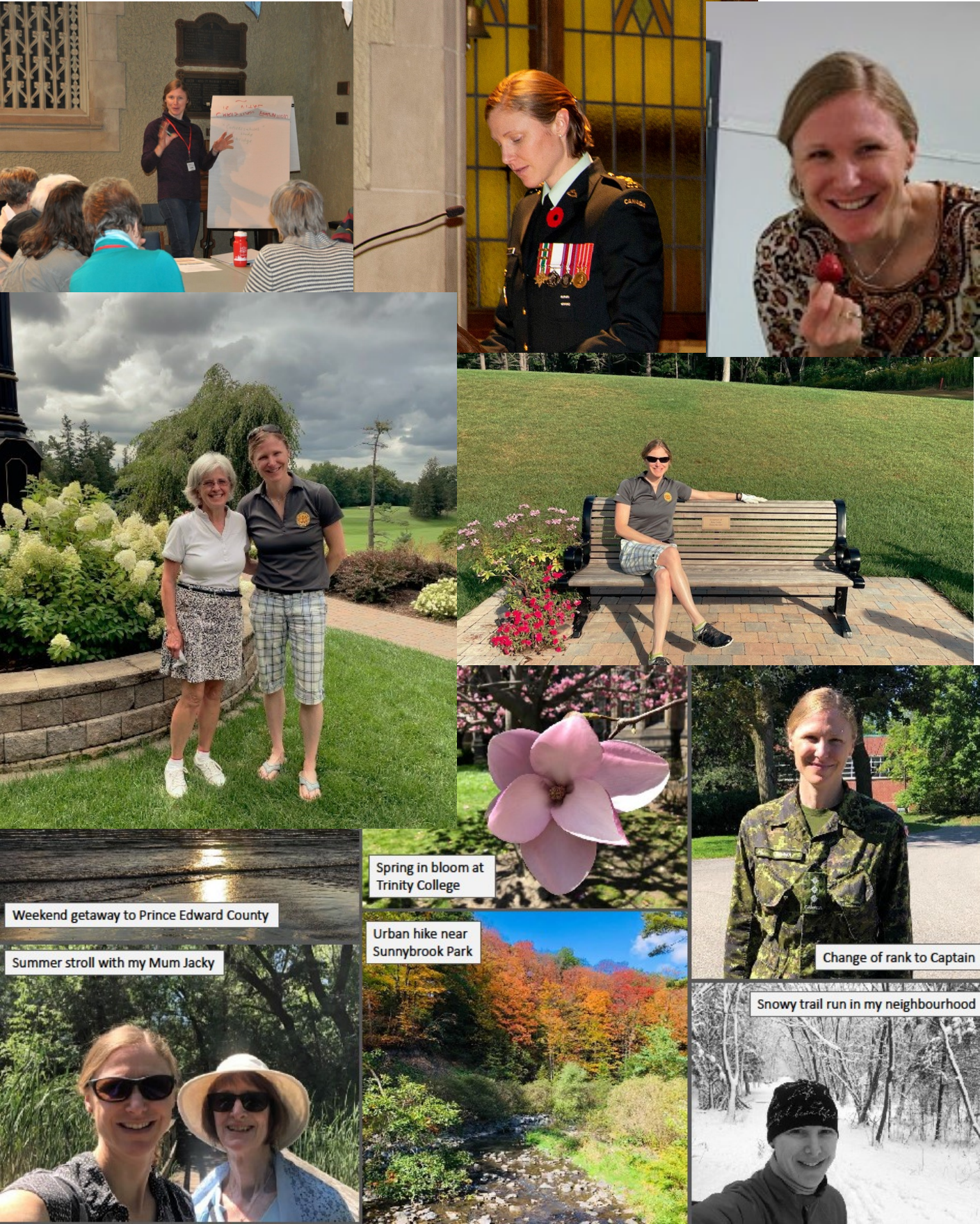
*Claire Bramma was a parishioner of St. Matthew's from 2016-2019 and is currently working and studying in Toronto. She is a Postulant in the Diocese of Ottawa.*



*10 March 2020 in Trinity College Chapel. Claire Bramma (far left) with worship team and guest preacher and presider Rev. Dr. Christian Ceconi (far right).*

*This service of worship was an Anglican-Lutheran Community Eucharist with a missional message and a healthy complement of incense.*





Weekend getaway to Prince Edward County

Spring in bloom at Trinity College

Summer stroll with my Mum Jacky

Urban hike near Sunnybrook Park

Change of rank to Captain

Snowy trail run in my neighbourhood



# CONGRATULATIONS TO CLAIRE FROM HER ST. MATTHEW'S DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

SUE RAYNER

In late 2018, a committee of four parishioners was brought together to assist Claire in discerning her call to ordination and military chaplaincy. What a delightful task it was, as we grew to know Claire and explore this prospect with her.

Our meetings concluded with whole-hearted support of her call. In our letter to Bishop Chapman we said:

*"Claire is strongly rooted in the Christian faith and committed to a life-long journey of following Christ in the service of God and neighbour ... Claire is compassionate and loving, reliable, faithful, and gifted in role of listener and also of leader, tested by trauma and grief, and trusting that God will supply comfort and strength in difficult times.*

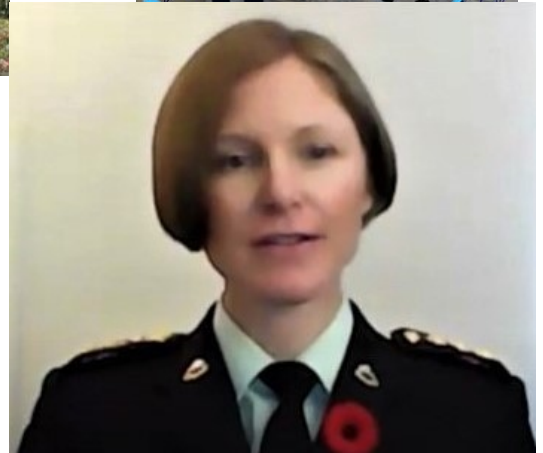
*She is blessed with the gifts of music, athleticism, confidence and humility, and she has diverse inter-*

*ests and friendships. She demonstrates leadership, organizing and motivational skills.*

*Claire is an excellent listener, empathetic and open to differing points of view. She is sensitive in teaching and offering spiritual support, often reminding the person that the Spirit supports and guides throughout our lives' journey. She is open and confident in faith, self-aware of her strengths and weaknesses. Claire has a strong prayer life.... she is exploring a rule of life and contemplative prayer."*

Now on this glorious occasion of Claire's ordination to the Diaconate, we rejoice that she has completed this stage of her journey with distinction and exemplary diligence. It has been an honour and a joy to be a part of this process,

John McBride, Randi Goddard, Rick Trites and Sue Rayner



## Coping in the Time of Covid-19

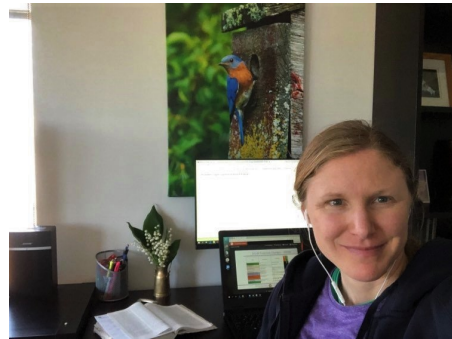
June 2020

I would like to share four ways that I have been coping (and at times thriving!) during the covid-19 pandemic while living alone in a 500 square foot apartment in downtown Toronto. Covid-19 brought an abrupt halt to my former lifestyle which was characterized by going to a physical place for work and school, joining worship and fellowship in church buildings and social events with family and friends.

- I established a comfortable and enjoyable space to work, read and study from home (see photo). I am thankful that last year I decided to invest in a good desk chair and that I have a separate monitor to complement my lap-top. Having aesthetically pleasing objects around my workspace also increases the attractiveness for work and study
- I complete a minimum of 10,000 steps per day (walking or running), and when possible share this time talking to a friend on the phone, or walking with a neighbourhood friend (6 feet apart). The conversations and the exercise have been good for the body, mind, and soul

- I share food and drink with others via FaceTime or Zoom. I have enjoyed dinner dates, coffee meetings, and happy hours 'virtually' as an alternative to social outings and fellowship
- I have increased prayer and worship time. Besides tuning into a wide variety of virtual services and sermons, my private prayer time has helped me to process the range of emotions that I have experienced. It has also allowed me to participate spiritually and express solidarity with others concerning the world's response to covid 19.

I have come to view this time of pandemic as an extended season that warrants both reflection and transformation, rather than just "waiting out" a bad storm before going back to "normal". May "Thy Kingdom Come" and "Thy Will be Done" in the midst of this season.



## Coping in the Time of Covid-19

June 2021

Here is an update to the "4 ways of coping" that I wrote about last June.

- Prayer. Besides tuning into a variety of virtual services and prayer meetings, my private prayer time has evolved over the past year. I have been consistently praying Morning Prayer in the Anglican tradition and I am particularly grateful for the leather-bound Book of Alternative Services that St. Matthew's gifted to me in 2019!
- Work and study space. In addition to paying attention to good ergonomics, I have added green plants and a "diffuser" to my office space, which brings a sense of wellbeing. My favourite essential oil concoction combines orange, bergamot, grapefruit, and lemon!
- Movement. Most days I log 10,000 steps and I practice yoga at home. Whenever possible, I walk with one of my neighbourhood friends; the conversation combined with exercise and fresh air are a great blessing.
- Socializing over Zoom. I admit that "zoom fatigue" has taken its toll and online socials have gone by the wayside. Lately, I have preferred one-on-one chats via FaceTime or the telephone. I am still longing for the day when I can socialize in "3D" and hug my friends and family!

I now see that this pandemic is not so much an elongated season but rather a "state"; a state of living that compels me to adapt and find ways to make the best of it despite all the challenges and the suffering around the world. Nevertheless, I continue to pray for a merciful end to this time.



# CAPTAIN CLAIRE BRAMMA, CHAPLAIN-IN-TRAINING

SEPTEMBER 2020

*"We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing." 2 Thessalonians 1:3*



Greetings from Toronto, where I am now studying full-time towards a Masters of Divinity at Trinity College. I had a busy summer finishing up my duties as a military staff officer while concurrently completing two courses online; one was a historical, social and literary study of the Gospel of Luke and the other a theological reading of a selection of works by Saint Augustine.

On August 14, I took part in a change-of-rank ceremony, exchanging my Lieutenant-Colonel insignia for that of Captain ("down" by two ranks, but in my mind it was a kind of promotion!). This day also marked a change in my occupation from Army Engineer to Chaplain-in-Training.

For those with a keen eye for military uniforms, you will notice in the photograph that I am wearing three "pips" indicating the rank of Captain in the Army. It was difficult in some respects to leave behind my 22 years as part of the Canadian Military Engineers, but I am filled with joy and hope for what lies ahead, and I rely on the Lord's love, grace, and guidance.

This semester at Trinity (and also at the Toronto School of Theology), nearly every course is offered exclusively online. Daily prayer services will continue, but we will gather via Zoom. While I embrace the advantages of a virtual learning environment, I am really feeling the loss

of in-person activities. A physical presence in chapel services, seminars, and tutorials is a big part of individual and collective formation in Divinity programs, so our community life will be adapting for the foreseeable future by maximizing technology.

This fall semester I will be completing 120 hours of internship at St. Clement's Church and I am also enrolled in four mandatory courses and one elective:

- History of Christianity to 843 CE (Wycliffe College).
- Introduction to New Testament (Regis College).
- God's Mission and the Church's Calling (Trinity).
- Spiritual Formation in the Anglican Tradition (Trinity).
- Land, Food, and Justice (Trinity).

I continue to keep St. Matthew's in my prayers for your protection and for the work of the Holy Spirit to comfort and inspire each of you in these strange times. I really appreciate staying connected through the Wednesday Meditation group and every now and then I tune in to Morning Prayer and the recorded Sunday worship. I also found the Covid-Artz Project to be a real blessing!

## Learning and Formation Task Group Update Claire Bamma, June 2018

On 5 May, Rev. Gregor and I hosted a chapel chat entitled "Come to the Waters" as an information session to inspire and invite participation in a number of different exploration activities. The information session consisted of a review of the Seek-Discover-Become framework, followed by a presentation on the relevance and importance of Christian formation, Baptism, and making this

accessible to all. There were 14 enthusiastic attendees and we came away with a small volunteer base as well as a core group of people signed up to participate in the book study "Come to the Waters: Baptism and Our Ministry of Welcoming Seekers and Making Disciples". There is still time and opportunity to get involved! You may add your name to the sign up on the sheets posted at the back of the church, or you may email me directly ([clairebramma@lycos.com](mailto:clairebramma@lycos.com)).

# WHAT TO READ ON A COLD WINTER'S NIGHT? SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A SEMINARIAN

DECEMBER 2020

As we spend more time inside with winter weather closing in, and as we consider items we might want to put on our Christmas wish-list, I would like to share with you some book recommendations. Although I have enjoyed much of my assigned reading for my seminary courses this semester, here are my “top-three” selections:

1. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (translated by John W. Doberstein), published by Harper One, 1954 (122 pages).

Bonhoeffer was a German theologian, pastor, teacher, and writer who advocated for genuine Christian living and discipleship. Because of his opposition to Naziism as a faithful Christian, he was imprisoned and then executed by the Gestapo in 1945. What strikes me about this book is his practical (and passionate) teaching about gathering with others for prayer, scripture reading, singing, and the Eucharist.

He argues that Christians must dwell in community to foster unity with Christ and to receive the mutual support required to live the Christian life in the world. In claiming that Christians belong to one another, he states that “Christianity means community *through* Jesus Christ and *in* Jesus Christ.” Accordingly, this book is best suited to read and discuss in a group setting.

2. *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions* by Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright, published by Harper One, 1999 (288 pages).

The authors reflect different theological views, but they put forth a reasoned and respectful exchange of ideas

about the historical Jesus and how Christians have come to worship Him. The book was written with the intention of reaching a broad audience: non-Christians who are spiritually curious, and Christians who want to explore the historical Jesus in a deeper way.

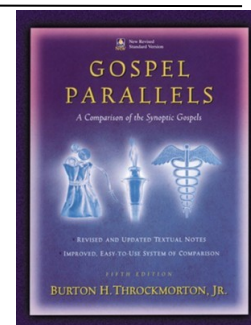
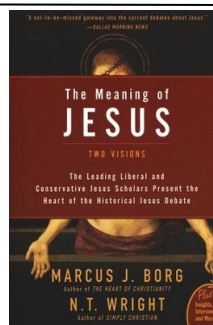
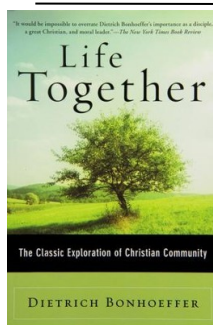
This book reveals how the dedication and passion of the early followers of Jesus have shaped how Christians over time have come to believe in and embrace Jesus as Lord. A must-read for anyone interested in getting to know Jesus through an historical lens.

3. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels* (Fifth Edition, NRSV) by Burton Throckmorton Jr., published by Thomas Nelson, 1992 (210 pages).

This book is very helpful for developing a better understanding of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). By presenting the Gospels in three parallel columns, it allows for comparison to identify similarities, differences, and omissions throughout the texts.

The preface outlines the different types of sources used to write these canonical Gospels. And in detailed footnotes, the book provides information from the perspective of non-canonical Gospels (ie. The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of the Nazarenes) about the life of Jesus, offering another vantage point to our traditional sources in the New Testament. This book is easy to read in short sections and is an excellent reference.

*Claire Bramma, a former parishioner of St. Matthew's, is an Master of Divinity student at Trinity College, University of Toronto*





# MY SATURDAY WITH GEORGE HERBERT

MARCH 2021

On the morning of February 27th, with a large cup of coffee in hand, I set aside some time to catch up on a blog that I often enjoy reading (<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/blog/>). But I knew that I couldn't dwell on it too long because I had a fast approaching essay deadline for one of my courses, "Anglican History and Theology".

As I began reading, I learned that this was the day that the Church of England (as well as the Anglican Church of Canada) commemorates George Herbert, who was a 17<sup>th</sup> century English priest and poet. You can read more about Herbert in the Anglican publication *For All the Saints*: [For All the Saints](#)

The blog post of the day was a poignant offering of thanks and praise for Herbert's poetry which illuminates the experience of communion with God in Christ, in a variety of settings both individual and collective and through different forms of prayer. I then read a few of Herbert's poems and quickly became inspired, losing myself in the imagery and feelings created through his words. I was also reminded that some of his poems were set to music, most notably *Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life*.

Before I knew it, 2 hours had passed, and the thought of my school assignment loomed over my head. The assigned subject for this essay was the examination of a doctrinal topic relevant to the Reformation, incorporating primary source writings from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The light bulb turned on – in Herbert I found an important 17<sup>th</sup> century voice to be included in my essay; but even more, I knew that I had found a poet companion for my own faith journey!

According to Christian historian Stephen Neill, Herbert is "*par excellence* the poet of Anglicanism." Throughout the rest of the morning, I delighted in Herbert's experiential view of fundamental topics of the Christian life such as love, prayer, worship, and the sacraments.



Inspired by Herbert's poetry, I incorporated his experience of communion with Christ as reflected in two of his poems, *H. Communion* and *The Banquet*. (The paper was titled "The Real Presence of Christ in Holy Communion: A Reformed View".)

*H. Communion* describes how the consecrated elements of the sacrament change a person in their heart and soul, bringing forgiveness and freedom from sin as well as holistic nourishment and restoration.

*The Banquet* offers a dramatic description of the feelings evoked in Holy Communion and expresses that although Christ's sacrifice is both difficult to bear and comprehend, it mysteriously stirs us into thanksgiving and experiencing divine joy. Both poems are available online through the *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*:

[H. Communion](#)

[The Temple, Complete Poem Index](#)

In this season when so many of us are fasting from physical participation in the sacrament of Holy Communion, Herbert's poetry might perhaps provide some consolation as we experience spiritual communion with Christ. May we be reminded of this truth each day, as our risen saviour Jesus Christ proclaims: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b)

*Claire Bramma, a former parishioner of St. Matthew's, is a Postulant and Master of Divinity student at Trinity College, University of Toronto*

# A SUMMER OF CREATION CARE

SEPTEMBER 2021

Gaining ministry experience through an internship is an important part of the Master of Divinity program and I recently had the opportunity to spend 3 ½ months at All Saints, Whitby. It was a wonderful and refreshing way to spend the spring and summer after a very busy academic year completing 10 courses in a virtual environment.

My internship was based upon three areas of learning that were self-identified. These were:

1. collaborative leadership
2. Christian Education
3. pastoral identity

To realize my learning goals, I was involved in three projects related thematically to *creation care*, drawing attention to what we profess in our Baptismal Covenant to “respect, sustain, and renew the life of the Earth”.

The first project I led was the establishment of a community garden. While the initial aim was to grow fresh produce for the church’s bi-weekly foodbank, the vision expanded to create a sacred space that expressed love for neighbour and for creation. As such, in addition to planting a variety of vegetables, the garden included pollinating wildflowers and a Three Sisters mound (white corn, pole beans, butternut squash planted in the Haudenosaunee tradition).

In April, funds were secured, a committee was created, and a base of volunteers was formed. Then over a matter of days in mid-May, we converted a 20m x 12m patch of grass by building six raised beds and a perimeter of in-ground beds. Thanks to discounts and donations we completed this building phase under-budget and on-time, learning the value of community engagement and teamwork among volunteers. (You can read about this garden project among others in a recent article in Toronto’s *The Anglican* pages 6-7 ([the-anglican-sept-2021.pdf](#)).

While the seedlings grew, I then switched gears to a five-week Bible study that I developed based on a combination of resources from the *Season of Creation*

([Home Interest - Season of Creation](#)). Every Tuesday evening in June a group of 15 people gathered via Zoom to explore how the Bible bears witness to be in partnership with God and one another to be good stewards of the earth.

Then, in early July, I collaborated with the Priest-in-charge, The Rev. Jennifer Schick, to create a five-day Vacation Bible School for children ages 5-12 that was based on the theme of renewing God’s creation. This too was held online and consisted of a variety of songs, stories, crafts, snacks, and games that related to a Gospel reading of the day. While the camp involved a lot of preparation, I experienced firsthand how children can express the love and joy of Jesus and I came away with an appreciation for the ongoing need to generously resource children and youth ministry.

From this internship experience my learning goals were more than satisfied and I felt the Holy Spirit at work to give momentum to *creation care* and to reveal the Kingdom of God in our midst. I learned that each of the ministries in a parish are interconnected on many levels and that everyone has something to contribute, whether in prayer, presence, or action.

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.”

(1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

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*Student at Trinity College, Toronto.*





# THE HOSPITAL AS A LIMINAL SPACE

MARCH 2022

Since the middle of January, I have been immersed in a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) experience at North York General Hospital (NYGH) in Toronto. This accounts for two credits towards my Master of Divinity program and offers the necessary pastoral care experience expected while in seminary. CPE is an interfaith educational process designed to assist candidates for ministry and as spiritual care providers to develop a personal spiritual identity along with the skills of holy listening to offer in spiritual care.

Under the supervision of an experienced mentor, we are four students gaining experience in spiritual care in a clinical setting, while at the same time developing self-awareness and growing spiritually. This 12-week intensive course runs until April 8<sup>th</sup> and involves being at the hospital from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday, as well as taking turns being 'on-call' on evenings and weekends.

NYGH is a leading academic community hospital that provides a wide range of health care and learning opportunities. Each CPE student is assigned to a different area of

the hospital and I am assigned to units that focus on orthopaedic surgery and internal medicine. I chose these areas because I seek experience working with a wide range of patients who are facing potentially life-limiting surgeries and illnesses. I believe that this will be valuable experience that I can bring to military chaplaincy as well as pastoral care in parish ministry.

I am now 9 weeks into the CPE experience, which I could summarize as being *intense, transformative, and liminal*. Intense because I have learned what it takes to be fully present and remain energized through a 40-hour work week, in an environment that has its fair share of risks and challenges. This was especially true during my first five weeks when the number of Covid-19 cases was high and when I spent time with Covid-positive patients, including one who was facing the end of their life with limited access to family and friends.

CPE is also intense because of the richness of each encounter. I am seeing the image of God in each person I meet; whether through signs of vulnerability and suffering or through courage and strength. Intensity also relates to the potential for spiritual healing and growth, not only for

the patient but for me as a learner and care provider. And this is what makes CPE transformative.

I am transforming as a person, as my own spiritual landscape is expanded and shaped. The spiritual care (CPE) team is also transforming as we collaborate and extend compassion and love to the patients of NYGH. And I have faith that everyone we interact with is transforming, whether they are patients and their families, or healthcare workers.

By the grace of God, I believe that spiritual care providers help others embrace spirituality and faith in ways that brings healing and wholeness, in spite of or in connection with, the state of one's physical health. Finally, I believe that spiritual care in a hospital setting occurs in a liminal space; as a space of threshold that seems to exist beyond time, location, or situation. On numerous occasions I have felt a profound connection with both a patient and with God that for me has represented a threshold between existence and eternity, and a place where the grace, mercy, and love of God is revealed.

I give thanks to God, in Christ Jesus for this season, where every encounter is an opportunity for learning, serving, and loving.

*Claire is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Master of Divinity student at Trinity College in Toronto. She is a Postulant for ordination in the Diocese of Ottawa and a military chaplain in-training. She has been connected with the St. Matthew's community since 2016 and looks forward to returning to the Ottawa region this summer for a ministry appointment (to be announced).*



# ST. MATTHEW'S

## The Anglican Church in the Glebe

*St. Matthew's is a vibrant Christian community that welcomes everyone, embraces inspiring worship and learning, and is committed to hospitality and loving service.*

**Sunday 10:30 a.m.**  
In-person Choral Eucharist,  
streamed on YouTube  
[Worship Services](#)

Streamed on Facebook  
[Worship Services](#)

**Sunday 8 a.m. and Thursday 10 a.m.**  
In-person Said Eucharist

### Clergy

Rector ..... The Reverend Geoffrey Chapman  
Honorary Assistants ..... The Most Reverend Barry Curtis  
The Reverend Canon Jim Beall  
The Reverend Katherine Tait

### Leadership and Administration

Rector's Warden ..... Rick Trites  
People's Warden ..... Tom Barnes  
Deputy Wardens ..... Sancho Angulo  
Valerie Needham  
Parish Administrator ..... Catherine James-McGuinity  
Communications Chair ..... Jan O'Meara  
Nominating Chair ..... Helen Griffin  
Property Co-Chairs ..... Bill Nuttle  
Bill Cornfield  
Stewardship Officer ..... Paul Wefers-Bettink  
Members of Synod ..... Randi Goddard  
Rick Trites  
Charles Nixon  
Valerie Needham

### Finance and Accounting

Finance Chair ..... Walt Draper  
Fundraising Chair ..... Peggy Nankivell  
Treasurer ..... Amy Lockwood  
Counters ..... Michael Goddard  
Contributions Coordinator ..... Brian Effer  
Stewardship Co-Chairs ..... Paul Wefers-Bettink  
Janice Sonnen  
Stewardship Officer ..... Paul Wefers-Bettink

### Worship and Music

Director of Music and Organist ..... Kirkland Adsett  
Altar Guild ..... Elizabeth MacMillan  
Robina Bulleid  
Servers Guild ..... Cathy Simons  
Sidespersons ..... Peter Frayne  
Worship Committee ..... The Reverend Geoffrey Chapman

### Nurturing and Fellowship

Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministry ..... *seeking* .....  
Christian Education and Formation ..... Helen Griffin  
Community Chair ..... Marg Terrett  
Coffee Hour ..... Jane and Peter Rider  
Prayer Support Team ..... Catherine Thurlow  
Prayer Chain ..... Janice Sonnen  
Open Doors ..... Jane Oulton  
Pastoral Care ..... Mollie Stokes

### Outreach

Outreach Co-Chairs ..... *Seeking* .....  
CCSAC Emergency Food Centre ..... Elizabeth Kent  
Cornerstone Meal-A-Month Program ..... Ashley Thorvaldson  
Harmony House ..... Catherine James-McGuinity  
Marmalade Team ..... Peter Rider  
Out of the Cold Supper ..... Anita Biguzs  
FACES Refugee Committee ..... Tom Martin

*Pulse of the Parish*, the community newsletter of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, is published four times a year. The dates for publication in 2022 are as follows: March 25 (submissions by March 18), June 10 (submissions by June 3), September 16 (submissions by September 9) and November 25 (submissions by November 18).

Please forward contributions of up to 600 words and photographs by these due dates to Val Needham, Editor:  
[needhav@algonquincollege.com](mailto:needhav@algonquincollege.com).

Together, we celebrate all that we do at St. Matthew's to the glory of God and in loving service of our neighbours.



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