

REPORT OF THE DIVISION OF CONGEGATIONAL SUPPORT

Our Mission is to develop strong, vital, committed faith communities in the Diocese of Niagara and to nurture the leadership required to create and sustain them.

Through programs, events, training days and parish consultations, Children, Youth and Family Ministries continues to support the Bishop's priorities for the Diocese of leadership, stewardship and evangelism.

Children and Family Ministries

Program Consultant: Christyn Perkons on part-time basis.

- ✦ Works to enhance the ability of the Niagara Anglican Community to nurture the spiritual growth of children and their inclusion in faith communities.
- ✦ Provides resources and leadership training for Sunday morning programming, junior youth ministry and family ministry to parishes and parish clusters by request.
- ✦ Visits parishes to get to know volunteers and staff involved in children and family ministry; to get a sense of what's happening in parishes across the diocese and to offer resources.

Children and Family Ministry Advisory Committee

- ✦ Regional representatives meet bi-monthly to support the work of the Program Consultant, to vision and plan around diocesan-wide programming and training needs, and to offer feedback about resources.

Family Ministry

- ✦ An annual retreat for families is held at the Canterbury Hills Conference Centre each winter to provide families with an opportunity to relax, to reconnect with their family members, to bond with other families and to nourish each other. The 2008 Winter Retreat is scheduled for February 8-10 and the theme is Making Heart-Bread.
- ✦ Resources particular to family needs are available through the lending library and include books in the areas of parenting, family spirituality, family activities, special needs children, sexuality and family milestones as well as games, music and videos/CDs.

Puppet Ministry

- ✦ Eighteen puppets along with puppet skits, instruction guides, and training manuals are available for loan to parishes to use in Sunday morning children's programming, children's talks, worship, Bible storytelling, and church announcements. Mini training workshops can be provided to parishes by the consultant, and training days by a professional at a puppet training school are offered as interest dictates.

Children's Festivals

- ✦ The consultant provides support to the regional Children's Festivals through advertising, administration, and button design/creation. Over 700 children enjoy this event annually which typically occurs on the last Saturday in April. Planning for the 2008 Children's Festivals in Undermount/Mohawk, Lincoln/Brock, Greater Wellington and Trafalgar began in early November.

REPORT OF THE DIVISION OF CONGEGATIONAL SUPPORT (continued)

All My Relations...the Journey Continues

- ✦ Family-based education component of the five-year Diocesan commitment to New Agape designed to provide children, youth and families with an opportunity to learn about aboriginal culture and interact with First Nations people. The final event was held March 4, 2007 at St. George's, St. Catharines.

Soul Rhythms

- ✦ An annual event intended to nourish, nurture and thank parish volunteers – Sunday, November 25 at St. Christopher's, Burlington.
- ✦ Participants have a choice of workshops which include offerings such as Aromatherapy, Sacred Circle Dancing, Drumming, Biblical Gardening, Card making and also enjoy dinner and a guest speaker.

Lending Library

A wide variety of books, activities, games, music, videos and CDs are available for three week loans through the Program Consultant's office. New resources include:

- Make a Joyful Noise
- Get Up On Your Knees (Preaching the U2 Gospel)
- The Humongous Book of Games for Children's Ministry
- Lamps, Scrolls & Goatskin Bottles: A Handbook of Bible Customs for Kids
- The Creative Storytelling Guide for Children's Ministry: When All Your Brain Wants to Do is Fly
- Fisher-Price Little People Nativity Set
- In the Beginning...Growing into a Life of Faith (for ages 3-5)
- Mixing It Up with Harry Potter: 12 Sessions on Faith

Resources

The consultant can provide:

- ✦ Resource packages for Christian Education Days - All Saints Day, Ash Wednesday and Pentecost.
- ✦ Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation materials.
- ✦ Retreat planning resources.
- ✦ Innovative worship resources.
- ✦ Response to particular needs such as: specific types of crafts, crafts related to a particular observance such as Good Friday, games for teaching servers, developing a junior youth ministry, and summer activities related to church and faith experiences to name but a few.
- ✦ Information handouts including articles on Prayers for Children, Hosting an All Saints Party, Working with Behavioural Challenges, Christmas Pageants, What's Available in Church School Curriculum, Teaching Tips 101, Co-operative Games, Puppet Ministry in the Parish, and Young Teens Ministry Toolbox.

Youth Ministry

Program Consultant: Joyce Wilton and Christyn Perkons job-share this 4/5 time portfolio.

- ✦ Work to enhance the ability of the Niagara Anglican Community to nurture the spiritual growth of youth and young adults and their inclusion in faith communities.
- ✦ Provide resources and leadership training for junior/senior youth ministry and young adult initiatives to parishes and parish clusters by request.

REPORT OF THE DIVISION OF CONGEGATIONAL SUPPORT (continued)

- ✚ Visit parishes on request to get to know volunteers and staff involved in youth ministry, to get a sense of what's happening in parishes across the diocese and to offer support and resources.

Diocesan Youth Ministry Committee (DYMC)

- ✚ Representatives meet monthly to support and offer direction to the Program Consultants, to define and execute the direction, vision and plans around diocesan-wide programming and training needs, and to offer feedback about resources.

The Annual Calendar of Events includes:

Looking Forward: Youth Leaders Training Weekend

- ✚ Niagara is hosting this provincial training initiative for the third consecutive year at Canterbury Hills Friday, November 2 to Sunday, November 4, 2007.
- ✚ This event is geared for adult leaders in youth ministry (both professional and lay) to learn new skills, compare notes, find support and rejuvenation, and share resources.

Diocesan Synod Youth Members Residence & Orientation

- ✚ A residential program at Canterbury Hills that includes an orientation to synod procedures for Youth Members of Diocesan Synod during the annual Synod meeting in November.
- ✚ The residence and orientation will take place on Thursday, November 15 to Saturday, November 17, 2007 at Canterbury Hills, for youth member ages 16-25.
- ✚ Provides an opportunity to create relationships amongst the youth and young adult community attending Diocesan Synod, and offer support and education about procedures and meeting content for Synod.

SpiritQuest

- ✚ An intimate spiritual retreat for youth aged 15-24.
- ✚ SpiritQuest was held the Unity Retreat Centre in Hamilton, with 15 participants and three leaders, February 9-11, 2007.
- ✚ The program has expanded recently to include a young adult component with particular emphasis on making transitions and the spiritual journey.
- ✚ The 2008 event will take place February 1-3 at the Unity Retreat Centre.

Servers' Fest

- ✚ An annual day-long event to connect, thank and encourage servers of all ages from all parishes across the diocese.
- ✚ Christ's Church Cathedral hosted this event on February 24, 2007. There were over 100 participants representing more than 20 parishes ranging in age from six years through to retirement. Thank you to the approximately 20 volunteers who helped make this annual event a success and to the Cathedral for its hospitality.
- ✚ The 2008 event will take place on Saturday, February 23 at Christ's Church Cathedral.

REPORT OF THE DIVISION OF CONGEGATIONAL SUPPORT (continued)

Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP)

- ✦ A three-year leadership training program (now in its third decade) held during March Break. It takes place at Canterbury Hills, this year from March 11-14, 2007 with 40 youth participants, ages 13-16, including six adult leaders.
- ✦ A Commissioning Service for the 3rd year participants, their families and supporters was held at St. Christopher's, Burlington on May 27, 2007. Thanks to St. Christopher's for their hospitality.
- ✦ The 2008 event will take place Sunday, March 9 to Wednesday, March 12.
- ✦ Applications for first year participants are available now and will be accepted until the end of January 2008.

Youth Synod

- ✦ The largest youth ministry program in Niagara, the 19th annual Youth Synod was hosted by St. George's, Guelph, May 4-6, 2007.
- ✦ Offers youth delegates ages 13-21 the opportunity to debate and strategize about issues important to their faith and their communities.
- ✦ Over 120 delegates and over 50 adult volunteer staff were in attendance representing over 50 parishes. The minutes are available on the Youth Ministry website: www.zipsqueal.com. Many thanks to our host parish St. George's for their enthusiasm and hospitality!
- ✦ Youth Synod 2008, hosted by St. Andrew's, Grimsby, will take place May 2-4.

Youth Synod Council

- ✦ This body, which drafts motions for the upcoming Youth Synod, follows up on motions post-Synod, and functions as the voice of youth in the Diocese of Niagara between Youth Synods, came into being as a result of a motion at Youth Synod 2005.
- ✦ Involves 15 youth representatives representing the regions along with the Chair of Youth Synod
- ✦ Thanks to Rev. Stephen Murray for facilitating the Council's work in 2007, and to Matthew Griffin for assuming the facilitator's role for the upcoming Youth Synod.

Youth Ministry Sunday

- ✦ A variety of resources (bulletin covers, theme ideas, and liturgical material) are offered to parishes to help them celebrate Youth Ministry in their congregation on the date of their choosing.
- ✦ Resource material and bulletin covers were mailed to all parishes prior to the June event (our target celebration date, parishes can use the material at their own convenience) and also available on the website at www.zipsqueal.com. Check out this site to view the 2007 resources and the resources from previous years.

Niagara Youth Conference (NYC)

- ✦ The cornerstone event in youth ministry in Niagara - this year was the 61st Anniversary of the first NYC (formerly NLC).
- ✦ The purpose of this five day residential event is to establish a caring, spiritual, participatory, learning community that encourages inclusivity and personal sharing (mitigated, of course, by fun and frivolity).
- ✦ NYC took place from August 26-31, 2007 at Canterbury Hills with 112 participants. The program is staffed by 23 volunteers who give nine months to the planning and execution of this conference; pictures of which can be viewed at www.zipsqueal.com.

REPORT OF THE DIVISION OF CONGEGATIONAL SUPPORT (continued)

Regional Youth Ministry

Lincoln Youth Fest (LYF)

- ✺ The parishes in the Lincoln Region, with the assistance of the diocesan youth ministry staff, began to dream of working cooperatively in ministry to its youth in grades 5-8 in the winter of 2006 which has resulted in the Lincoln Youth Fest which meets monthly, one Friday a month, to share a meal, to have fun together and to develop a new and supportive faith community across the region.
- ✺ Lincoln Youth Fest meets September through May.

Hamilton Regional Youth Worship – The Gathering

- ✺ This event offers worship quarterly in the 21st Century with a live band and liturgy written and delivered by its youth and young adult participants.
- ✺ A group of committed youth leaders and adult supporters meet along with diocesan youth ministry staff to plan this worship in the Hamilton area.
- ✺ A goal of 2008 is to extend this ministry to the Burlington, Guelph and the Niagara peninsula.

Stoney Creek

- ✺ As part of the Stoney Creek/Winona parishes' work on shared ministry, Diocesan staff was invited to participate in children/youth ministry planning; work which has been on hold during the Our Saviour the Redeemer transition period.

Lending Resource Library

- ✺ Includes resources for program planning, current youth ministry theory and theology as well as worship and music resources. Located at the Diocesan Resource Centre Program Department offices and are available to individuals and parishes.
- ✺ To check out the many resources available, an on-line catalogue can be found on the youth ministry website: www.zipsqueal.com.

Consultations and Training

- ✺ Joyce and Christyn are involved with a number of parishes on a consultation basis.
- ✺ Consultations can be as simple as telephone support and resource sharing electronically or as complex as a multi-event response created for your parish.
- ✺ Consultations are designed to meet the needs of the individual parish. The focus of the consultation may include visioning for youth ministry in the specific parish or area, development of a youth ministry program, specific training for youth ministry staff and volunteers as well as advice on hiring youth ministry personnel.

Adult Education

Bishop's Diploma Course (BDC)

- ✺ This program provides instruction related to faith issues for over 100 lay people through two eight-week terms (fall and winter) and is offered in as many as six parish centres. Course themes include Old Testament, New Testament, ethics, liturgy, history, spirituality, world religions and Anglicanism.
- ✺ Diploma requirements are completion of six course and attendance at a retreat.
- ✺ The biennial retreat took place on Saturday, November 4 at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton with guest speaker Bishop Ann Tottenham.
- ✺ Graduations are also planned biennially. The next graduation will be planned for 2008 at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton.

REPORT OF THE DIVISION OF CONGEGATIONAL SUPPORT (continued)

- ✦ Thank you to BDC leaders Rev. Haynes Hubbard, Rev. Canon Dr. Mark McDermott, Ven. Bruce McPetrie, Rev. Canon Barry Randle, Rev. John Ripley and Rev. Paul Whitehouse, for their ongoing leadership and dedication to the program.
- ✦ Jane Wyse provides staff support for BDC – contact her for more information.

Congregation Support

- ✦ Joyce serves on the Safe Church Committee, is a member of the Safe Church investigative team, and is part of the Diocesan Parish Support Team. Joyce also staffs the Volunteer Management & Screening initiatives for the diocese.
- ✦ Christyn does facilitation work for parishes in Open Space, Asset Mapping and Appreciative Inquiry, serves on Candidates Committee, and is part of the Diocesan Parish Support Team, is the diocesan support person for the Clergy Family Wellness Group as well as serving as the Chair of the Bishop's Dialogue Task Force on Same Gender Blessings in 2007.

Thanks to our Volunteers!

We would like to thank the dozens of volunteers who have supported our work in the past year. Without you, children, youth and family ministry would not be transforming people's lives. Thank you!

Staff of the Division are:

- ✦ Marion Vincett, Executive Officer, Ext. 340, marion.vincett@niagara.anglican.ca
- ✦ Christyn Perkons, Program Consultant, Children, Youth & Family Ministries, Ext. 460, christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca
- ✦ Joyce Wilton, Program Consultant, Youth Ministry, Volunteer Management & Screening, Congregational Support Ext. 430, joyce.wilton@niagara.anglican.ca
- ✦ Jane Wyse, Diocesan Administrative Assistant, Ext. 420, jane.wyse@niagara.anglican.ca