

## **REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRIES**

### **Interim Ministry**

The time of pastoral transition in a congregation is often a complex time. For that reason, in the Diocese of Niagara, we practise Interim Ministry, which is a time of the intentionally focused work of pastoral and administrative care and leadership. In our Diocese, clergy who are interims have been specifically trained for this work. The interim placements generally extend from between six to twenty-four months, and are held at the Bishop's pleasure.

This past year, we have significantly re-vamped the Diocesan Policy for Interim Ministries. At the present time, the draft policy is in the hands of our Diocesan Bishop, and in due time will be presented to Synod Council for review. Specifically, new policy seeks to clarify the financial policy, issues around benefits, hours worked and vacations, travel costs, among other things. We are indebted to the Reverend Susan Wells who chaired this Task Force, as well as to the Reverend Canon Fran Darlington, the Reverend Barbara Sykes and the Reverend Canon Terry DeForest for their dedicated work in creating this revision.

New to this policy is a three way covenant, between the Diocesan Bishop, the Parish and the Interim. Not all parishes are the same, of course, nor are the circumstances pertaining to each interim appointment. The covenant agreement allows for specific issues and tasks to be named by the parties which may need attention in the individual interim appointment. (For example, a specific parish may be in transition from an individual parish to being part of a parish cluster. If so, not only their identity will need a different kind of reflection, but also their expectations and ways of functioning will need to change.) By specifically naming these concerns in the covenant, work in addition to the usual developmental work of interim time will be facilitated.

### **Fresh Start**

In the recent past, Fresh Start has been a programme which has assisted both clergy and congregations during the time of pastoral transition. Originating in the United States with the Episcopal Church, Fresh Start has developed considerable Canadian content over the past years. Fresh Start 2.0 reflected that contribution. Within the past year and a half, Fresh Start has evolved yet again, to Fresh Start 3.0. It brings a wider range of resources, and a depth of information to parishes and clergy dealing with transition. Although external structure has stayed the same, many of the modules would be virtually unrecognizable to people who participated in earlier versions of the programme.

In the past year, two groups of parishes have "graduated" from Fresh Start. I thank especially, the Reverend Canon Bill Thomas, the Reverend Jean Archbell, and Mrs. Laurie Adamson who have shared with me, leadership in facilitating these two groups. At the present time, we have one cluster of parishes engaged in Fresh Start. Mrs. Ruth Anne Martin shares leadership with me in that particular group.

Much changes in Diocesan life, and we are currently engaged in a conversation about how best to serve clergy and congregations in transition. The shift to sometimes appointing new ordinands to incumbencies creates a dilemma about how best to address the needs of those clergy and others.

## **REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRIES (continued)**

At the request of Bishop Bird, we are currently in the process of evaluating our Diocesan Fresh Start participation, so we can better learn specifics of how it has benefited clergy and congregations, and to hear what other needs may need to be addressed.

This past year, Archdeacon Stephen Hopkins, who has been a key leader in the Fresh Start programme, within the Diocese of Niagara and throughout Canada and the United States has submitted his resignation to our Diocesan programme. We thank Archdeacon Hopkins for his invaluable contributions, and the echo of his wise question: “What can we learn from this?” will long ring in our ears.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Reverend Canon Marni Nancekivell  
Director of Transitional Ministries