

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

When I began to work with Transitional Ministries, several years ago, the first thing that happened was the unification and integration of the *Diocesan Interim Ministry Program* with Niagara's *Fresh Start Program*, in an effort to better serve the needs of parishes in transition. However, the longer I work in this area; I recognize how all encompassing the task of transitional ministry is. This year, we have expanded to work with congregations experiencing closure and unification with other congregations. Also this year, we have begun to do some work with individual clergy who are dealing with transitions within their work life, including the transition of retirement.

The ***Interim Ministry*** work includes not only assisting and advising the Diocesan Bishop (and at times, the Executive Officer) in the process of deploying trained Interim ministers, but in arranging for screening and training of potential interim ministers. As well, we have a small group of volunteer transition consultants who assist parishes in planning process and in the creation of a parish profile. In addition to the ongoing support provided by the Synod Office to clergy and parishes who are in "Interim time", we host monthly gathering of interims who share their challenges with one another. Sometimes, we formally present case studies, other times we simply have a Question and Answer session together. Other times, we simply come together for mutual support. As this moment, we have seven interims in place in parishes throughout Niagara (although in the past year we have had a total of seventeen interim pastors deployed throughout the Diocese).

In the past year, the **Parish Transition Consultants** who have contributed greatly to the life of this Diocese in parish transitions were:

Dr. Fred Hall
Mr. Bob Morrow
The Reverend John Ripley
Canon Bill Thomas

The Diocese of Niagara maintains an Institutional Membership with the Interim Ministry Network, which is an international ecumenical organization which includes over 35 denominations on three continents. It is through this network that our Interims receive their basic training. It should be noticed that the training modules for Interims have been reorganized within the past two years. In the ongoing training, which we offer our Interims in Niagara, we try to help them connect with the most up to date resources. Currently, the efforts of the Mission Strategy group and Transitional Ministry are unifying in creating a process to help congregations in transition identify the challenges that need to be addressed by specific communities as they form their new ministry plan.

Largely through the efforts of my predecessor, Canon Bill Thomas, Niagara is recognized as being at the cutting edge of Interim and Transition work. Frequently we are asked by other Diocese to assist them in setting up a cohesive Transition program. Currently, both Bill and I are mentoring clergy in the Diocese of Huron as they seek to establish their Interim program. This past spring, Bill joined me in attending the 28th annual Interim Ministry Conference in Pheasant Run, Illinois, outside of Chicago.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY (continued)

Fresh Start is another program which we use during times of transition. Fresh Start is a collaborative effort of The Episcopal Church, sponsored by Cornerstone, a ministry of the Episcopal Church Foundation, the Office for Ministry Development, the Church Deployment Office and now adopted and adapted by the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Fresh Start program uses an educational model based on thematic modules which are organized around leadership tools and theory. Basic to the program is the “family systems” theory, recognition that our parishes frequently operate with some of the same dynamics as do our families.

We look forward to offering meaningful, supportive Fresh Start experiences for both clergy and parishes in transition in the year to come. We continue to experiment with different models to see what best serves the interests of both clergy and parishes as together in Niagara we continue to be proactive about having a great “Fresh Start” as incumbencies change.

Fresh Start Facilitators in the Diocese of Niagara:

Ms. Laurie Adamson
The Reverend Jean Archbell
Ms. Diane Hewat
The Venerable Dr. Stephen Hopkins
Ms. Ruth Anne Martin
Mr. Greg Murray

The Reverend Michael Mondloch
The Reverend Canon Marni Nancekivell
The Reverend Sue Nicholls
The Reverend Canon Bill Thomas
The Venerable Marion Vincett

One of the personal challenges for me is to keep a professional balance, in terms of my work as the Director of Transitional Ministries, particularly in times when I am serving personally as an Interim in a parish. While I am at heart, a pastor and deeply enjoy interim work, I find that sometimes it limits my availability for some of my Diocesan work. My occasional lack of availability is a challenge for parishes who are in need of support in their own time of transition. Even when I am not frequently in my office, I am, however, available by e-mail at: marni.nancekivell@niagara.anglican.ca

I wish to thank the faithful folk who serve in a variety of ways during times of transition, our trained Interim Pastors, Fresh Start Consultants and Parish Transition Consultants. As well, I thank members of the parishes in Niagara, who have been able to trust the process during the sometimes anxious time of transition. You are a wonderful group of people who seek to serve God in moments that can be both rich and challenging in congregational life.

We, in this Diocese are indebted to our retired Diocesan Bishop, The Rt. Reverend D. Ralph Spence and the Venerable Marion Vincett for the work they have done in years past, and thank our current Bishop, the Right Reverend Michael A. Bird and the Venerable Michael Patterson for their support for an intentional process of transition within the Diocese of Niagara.

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