

The Rainbow

Niagara Huron Anglican Cursillo Newsletter

Winter 2021

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1. MESSAGE FROM THE LAY DIRECTOR

Renée Anderson

"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."
Romans 8:28

Advent, Christmas, and New Year's Eve saw us celebrating in a different fashion than usual. But Advent teaches us to be patient and wait for what's to come. Christmas offers the joy of the birth of Christ and reminds us He is with us. The new year shows us new beginnings and new things. It all works together. We anticipate, hold on, and carry on. Take time to be quiet with God and feel his spirit surround you.

As part of our past work on Secretariat you will see various reports in this newsletter of progress on our path in Cursillo. My news, in part, is to advise you that a new mandate has been adopted by Secretariat, to be later approved in September at the Annual Meeting.

The mandate of the Niagara Huron Anglican Cursillo Secretariat is to plan and manage the growth of the Cursillo Movement in the two Dioceses of Niagara and Huron. This will be done in collaboration with the Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat, Diocesan Clergy and other stakeholders, so that the Movement remains authentic, healthy, sustainable and is aligned with the Bishops' Pastoral Plans.

This mandate has been included in the By-Laws which are being updated. They will also be presented at the Annual Meeting for approval. As you can see, this mandate is inclusive; working together to do God's work.

Secretariat will work with CACS in holding a Cursillo Learners Workshop or CLW. This will be held via Zoom for three Saturdays in March 2021 and offers an array of talks, discussions, worship, and personal growth. I hope you will take this opportunity to join in. More information is included in this newsletter.

I am pleased to report that our Ultreyas are going well, with many people helping to make it a reality via Zoom. On behalf of Secretariat, I thank all participants, providing a method to meet with friends, share our experiences, and pray together.

In October 2020 CACS approved a new guideline named “Two Cursillo Movements-One Secretariat”. This guideline can be found on their website www.anglicancursillo.com. Cursillistas from Niagara and Huron were instrumental in its development and we can be gratified in seeing the success of dioceses coming together and working as one movement. It did not happen overnight and demanded the dedication of a few who dealt with closure and loss, just as one would have with a church closure. With open arms, acceptance, and love for one another, Niagara and Huron have come together with the support of our bishops.

Also, thanks to CACS, Lay Directors and Spiritual Directors across Canada are invited to a Round Table via Zoom on January 30th. Here we will share what’s going on in our movements, and talk about how we do things. Movements can be different in procedures and who knows what else! That’s what we will discuss. I am looking forward to it. You may recall the Lay Director from Ottawa, David McCreary, joined a Weekend with Niagara Huron and enjoyed the experience.

Christyn Perkons, our Diocesan Liaison to Bishop Bell gave a presentation to their Synod and we thank her on behalf of all Cursillistas as she promotes positive growth with the Cursillo Movement in Christian life and in following our baptismal vows.

I offer up prayers for those who have had recent surgeries, are fighting illnesses, suffering from loss, support or function as primary caregivers, and experience isolation. All of these create stress and exhaustion, change in living habits or access to other human beings. We pray for God’s love and guidance for all.

I encourage everyone to offer their story through this newsletter publication. We would like to hear from you. You have a story to tell. Your story is important to all of us. What are you doing for Jesus? What friend’s action touched your heart? Maybe not a friend—maybe a stranger. How is your church coping in today’s world? How is your priest supporting you and in turn, in what ways are you supporting your priest? We look forward to hearing from you about anything that touches your heart.

2. Spiritual Director - Rev. Brian Galligan

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)

Over recent months, much has been said and written about the negative impacts of 2020 and those throughout the world, including our loved ones, friends and neighbours, who have been affected by the Covid-19 Virus. However, as I write this letter and pray that everyone will experience a Happy and Healthy New Year for 2021, I have decided to shift focus from the negative and to instead reflect on the positive aspects of 2020, of which we can find many. Perhaps for some, the item bringing the greatest hope or relief is that a variety of Coronavirus vaccines have now gained regulatory approval and mass vaccination programs are now starting to roll-out. However let us not overlook some of the other things to be grateful for.

For instance, over recent years we have watched in despair at the increasingly negative impact of the mistreatment of Planet Earth, the beautiful home to which God appointed us to be stewards. Many thought that rising sea levels and widespread species destruction through pollution and climate

change were both inevitable and unpreventable. Yet, as a result of the pandemic, while some have certainly become unemployed and had to rely on Government support, others through a process of necessity and technology, have found ways of working from home and leaving the car in the garage. This, combined with a reduced demand for business and vacation travel and the movement of ships and planes, has caused a sudden, massive decline in carbon and nitrogen emissions, resulting in cleaner air and water, and wildlife reclaiming contested habitats. Throughout the world there is renewed hope that with God's help we can actually reverse the damage caused to the environment through our negligence and that God will make our paths straight again.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7139249/>

Similarly there is also hope that another threat to the well-being of our planet, namely the millions of tons of plastic that is generated and then discarded every year as waste, is about to be resolved. In March 2020, German scientists published a paper describing a recently discovered naturally occurring bacteria that breaks down the synthetic polymers used in plastic. This bacterium created by God's own hand, could potentially be used to clean the planet by "digesting" huge quantities of waste plastic. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmicb.2020.00404/full>

Then in April 2020, French scientists revealed that they have identified an enzyme, "PET depolymerase" that can break down Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) into its basic monomers for recycling. This is the most abundant polyester plastic made with almost 70 million tons manufactured annually worldwide for use in textiles and packaging. Since our Baptismal Covenant asks us the question, "*Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth?*" to which we reply, "***I will, with God's help***", as Cursillistas, let us rejoice! As a priest with a science background, I am really hopeful that these discoveries, guided by God's providence, will enable us to leave a healthier, less polluted, and more sustainable planet to our children and our grandchildren. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2149-4>

While the pandemic unfortunately led to the cancellation of our planned November 2020 Weekend # 56 at Five Oaks in Paris, Ontario, let us consider what gains came out of it as we used the time to invest in leaving the Cursillo Movement with a stronger foundation and better defined structure for those who will follow us. Throughout 2020 the Niagara Huron Anglican Cursillo Secretariat (NHACS), was able to utilize technology to overcome physical restrictions and continue to work on its response to the Cursillo telephone survey, the Niagara Clergy written survey and the Niagara Clergy Focus Group meeting. These provided a combination of positive praise about the effectiveness of Cursillo but also brought to light real concerns, particularly in the post-Cursillo Weekend phase of re-integration into parish life, that the NHACS recognized they needed to be transparent in addressing, in a carefully considered and effective way.

Conversations took place with both Bishop Todd Townshend of Huron Diocese and Bishop Susan Bell of Niagara Diocese, and a report was prepared by the NHACS that was endorsed by Bishop Bell in March 2020. This report captured both the positive and negative responses to Cursillo that were highlighted by Diocesan Clergy and described a number of proposed steps that would be taken to improve the Cursillo Movement and to apologize for overlooking opportunities to take corrective

action in the past. While remaining committed to the Fundamental Principles of Cursillo, these steps included: revising the role and mandate of the NHACS; defining a new formal reporting relationship with the Bishop of Niagara; developing a new Parish-Level Collaborative Cursillo Model and identifying at least ten Niagara parishes to participate in a pilot of the new model; developing a three-to-five-year strategic plan and conducting an Annual NHACS Planning Process. These steps were all able to be completed during 2020 and detailed changes are now underway to ensure that in the weeks following our re-scheduled Weekend #56, which will be held on November 12-14, 2021, we will be able to conduct a full assessment of the impact of these changes.

One last thing before I wind up this letter. I want to draw everyone's attention to the advantages that we have gained from using technology to connect with one another, because of the pandemic. Grouping for instance has become much more simplified and a "breeze" through participating from home using social media platforms on tablets, cell phones and computers. Ultreyas also, are now being held again on a regular basis with more people attending than before, but from the comfort of their own homes. I pray that we all recognize the opportunities for strengthening and growing Cursillo that have been created by the pandemic and that we will try engaging in on-line Grouping and Ultreyas. Let us then emerge from this time of trial renewed, refreshed and re-invigorated in our willingness to embrace the "Great Commission" and using the Cursillo Method to transform our environments for Christ.

Ultreya!
Brian+

3. Message from the Palanca Chair - Rita Predon

The Spanish word palanca means 'lever'. A lever enables us to lift something that is beyond our human strength. Just like the lever enables a person to move things, Palanca empowers the accomplishment of things which would not have been possible without the Grace of God. "For man it is impossible, but for God all things are possible." (Matt 19:26)

God has given us a powerful tool in prayer, but like any tool it is not much use if you just leave it lying around and ignore it. We are called to pray for ourselves, our sisters and brothers and our world. Within our Niagara Huron Cursillo, we have a prayer team. If there is someone in your life in need of Prayer, please let me know at predonr@yahoo.com, Before you do that though, contact that person and ask if they would like you to do this. Let them know that they are being held in prayer and keep me posted on their progress so that I can keep the prayer team up to date. Prayer is a powerful tool, let's use it.

Ultreya

4. Canadian Anglican Prayer Cycle



Please pray for all Diocesan Bishops, Diocesan Cursillo Movements and their leaders and communities, that they will be filled with the Holy Spirit and be a source of strength, encouragement and support to each other. Pray for guidance, discernment and wisdom that all will be done for the glory of God as we strive to change our environments for Christ, through Faith, Study and Action.

Monday

Pray for Cursillo worldwide

Tuesday

Pray for Cursillo in Canada and the Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat

Wednesday

Pray for the Cursillo Movements and all Dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada, which includes: The Dioceses of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, Central Newfoundland, Western Newfoundland, Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island, Fredericton (NB), Montreal and Quebec

Thursday

Pray for the Cursillo Movements and all Dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, which includes: The Dioceses of Ottawa, Ontario, Toronto, Niagara Huron, Algoma, Moosonee

Friday

Pray for the Cursillo Movements and all Dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, which includes: The Diocese of Rupert's Land, Qu'Appelle, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, The Arctic, Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh, Brandon, Edmonton, Athabasca and Calgary

Saturday

Pray for the Cursillo Movements and all Dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia and Yukon, which includes: Territory of the People, Caledonia and New Westminster

Sunday

Pray for your own Diocesan Cursillo Movement

5. January 2021 Progress Report on the Implementation of Recommendations in the Report on Proposed Changes within the Diocesan Cursillo Movement Following Feedback from Clergy

In March 2020, the NHACS Report was reviewed with Bishop Susan Bell, who suggested some changes. These were made and on March 15, the Report was distributed to clergy, deacons and honouraries with a cover letter from the Bishop, which expressed support for the proposed changes and announced the appointment of Christyn Perkons as Diocesan Liaison to the Cursillo Movement in Niagara. The full Report is posted to the Niagara Huron Anglican Cursillo website.

The implementation plan for the recommendations has nine components, and work is proceeding on all components, spearheaded by Renee Anderson, Rev. Brian Galligan and Blair Richardson. Here is an update on progress.

Christyn Perkons, Diocesan Liaison to the Cursillo Movement in Niagara

A role description for this new position was approved in June. The purpose of this role is to enhance communications between the Bishop, Diocesan staff and the Cursillo Movement in Niagara, as represented by the Niagara Huron Anglican Cursillo Secretariat (NHACS), so that both organizations continue to work collaboratively toward goals which are aligned.

A New Parish-Level Collaborative Cursillo Model

A new model, which incorporated feedback from clergy, was articulated and approved by NHACS in November. In December, it was approved by Bishop Susan Bell. The description of the model is attached to this report.

November 7 Meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara

Canon Christyn Perkons provided an update on the diocesan Mission Action Plan (MAP), which identifies our active seeking of God and God's mission and lays out diocesan priorities for the next 3-5 years. In talking about the first objective, "to discern and implement opportunities to ignite and strengthen faith", Christyn referred to "a renewed relationship with Cursillo". This is a concrete sign of the progress that our two organizations are making in becoming more collaborative, and it reflects Christyn's effectiveness in her new role.

Selecting Ten Parishes in Niagara to Implement the New Model

With suggestions from the Bishop, work is proceeding to identify ten parishes (out of 83) to be the first to implement the new model. We want to select those parishes most likely to succeed with implementation. Rev. Brian Galligan has interviewed many priests, asking about their support for Cursillo and their willingness to devote time and effort to implementation activities. We also are identifying Cursillistas who are willing to help, too. The goal is to have 20 candidates from the ten parishes attend the Cursillo Weekend scheduled for November, 2021.



A New Parish-Level Collaborative Cursillo Model For the Diocese of Niagara November 13, 2020

Introduction

Cursillo, or “Cursillos de Cristiandad” means “Short Courses of Christianity” in Spanish. First offered in 1944 in Spain, these were designed to help motivate and support Christians to live out their baptismal covenant and to faithfully share the Gospel. These were very successful and the Movement began to spread world-wide, across the major denominations. The Cursillo Method involves attending a weekend course, joining a small discussion group, meeting with a spiritual director and attending regional worship gatherings (ultreyas). In 1977, the first Canadian Anglican Church Cursillo Weekend was held in the Toronto Diocese and the Movement spread across Canada.

In March, 2020, Bishop Susan Bell endorsed a report which had been prepared by the Niagara Huron Anglican Cursillo Secretariat (NHACS), on proposed changes to improve the Niagara Diocesan Cursillo Movement, following feedback received by NHACS from clergy. The feedback came from response to a survey and from a clergy focus group discussion. This report was distributed to active and retired clergy and licenced lay workers that same month. It contained a number of recommendations which are being implemented in collaboration with the Diocese of Niagara. This includes a new model, to operate at the parish level, as described below. This new model has been approved by the Bishop.

Key Roles in the Model

1. A Cursillista (a person who has participated in a Cursillo Weekend) who has agreed to be the NHACS contact person with the chosen parish, to help it implement the new model.
2. The rector in the parish, who acknowledges the benefits for parishioners and who agrees to implement the new model.
3. Local Cursillistas, who are participating in, (or willing to start), a small discussion group which meets regularly, known as a Small Group Reunion.
4. A lead Cursillista in the parish, who works with the rector and the NHACS contact person on behalf of all the Cursillistas in the parish (1 and 4 could possibly be same person)
5. Cursillistas who offer to become sponsors for possible participants in Cursillo Weekends.
6. Possible participants in an upcoming Cursillo Weekend.

Steps in the Process: How the Model Works

1. The rector, NHACS contact person and local Cursillistas decide how best to promote the Cursillo Weekend among the congregation.
2. The rector and local Cursillistas undertake various communication activities within the parish.
3. The rector and local Cursillistas prayerfully identify possible participants.

4. A Cursillista who knows the possible participant and who has agreed to be a sponsor, approaches them to describe the Weekend, how it might help them with their spiritual discernment and faith formation and then explores with them if the Weekend would be appropriate.
 5. If a possible participant is interested, then the Cursillista who will become their sponsor explains his/her role and answers questions. The sponsor encourages the possible participant to talk to other Cursillistas as well.
 6. The sponsor arranges a meeting for the possible participant with the rector, who discusses and guides the possible participant in their decision-making.
 7. If the possible participant decides to proceed, then the sponsor provides an application form and offers to assist them to complete and submit it, together with payment and the endorsement of their rector, before the deadline.
 8. The sponsor offers to transport the candidate to and from the Cursillo Weekend location.
 9. The rector, sponsor and local Cursillistas prayerfully support the participant before, during and after the Weekend.
 10. After the Weekend, the sponsor arranges a meeting between the new Cursillista and rector to review their Weekend experience and to prayerfully explore next steps, which may include possible volunteer roles/opportunities open to the Cursillista.
 11. The new Cursillista decides on next steps, which may include ministry in specific environments inside or outside the parish.
At this point, the new Cursillista may choose to complete a “Rule of Life”, which is a commitment to God and oneself about how you intend to live your life. According to the Book of Common Prayer (p. 555), a rule of life may include a commitment to all or any of worship, prayer, study, action and stewardship.
 12. The sponsor offers to introduce the new Cursillista to a Small Group Reunion of local Cursillistas, who meet regularly to discuss and support each other’s progress on faith, study and action.
 13. If the new Cursillista is agreeable, then the sponsor obtains the consent of the group and makes the introduction.
 14. The sponsor keeps in touch with the new Cursillista and offers to transport them to the next scheduled regional Ultreya, or gathering of Cursillistas and invited guests.
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6. Fourth day report - Kathy Parker

We are holding virtual ultreyas in the diocese the first Friday of the month at 7:30.

I need to thank so many people for helping to organize and run the ultreyas. Shirley Kitchen and her able crew. Lorrette Shermet for organizing and running the Zoom meeting and all the participants who have offered to help organize and run the ultreyas and to those who participated to make this time so rewarding and allowing all of the Cursillistas to meet and be in community.

In November we had 38 participants, December we had 31 participants, in January we had 33 excited participants looking forward to the next Ultreya in February. There has been much singing and sharing, wonderful witness talks and a continuing sense of community. We are a community in action, supporting and sharing our journey through these uncertain times.

Stay safe and stay strong. Reach out to others, we are not alone.
Ultreya

Feedback from Zoom Ultreyas!

It's been many years since we've attended an Ultreya, but thanks to Covid-19, we were able to join your group via Zoom last Friday evening. It was nice to see and hear the banter going on among friends prior to the meeting started and it brought back fond memories of the good times that we had over the years with our Cursillo group here in Stratford and during the weekends held in London.

Decolores

Bob and Lynne Burford

Hello, all!

Thank you for the opportunity to plan the witness talk last night; I feel blessed to be a part of this group, and I was truly honoured to participate in this way! Thank you to all that organized and helped this evening come together! I felt that we truly supported each other, "from a distance", however, we still "made it happen" despite the odds.

Many blessings, and Love to all,

Melanie

You hold it, they will come!

Alleluia!

Carol

I was blessed to end up grouping with Rev. Graham. I didn't know him before this. It was just three of us (Ann Mulvale was the other member) but it was a total blessing in this upside-down time right now.

Blanche

Thank you for the Ultreya. Just great!

Margaret

7. Member-At-Large Report - Ann Mulvale

The November 2020 Cursillo was cancelled because of COVID; disappointing yet clearly the correct decision.

There were many key components of any Cursillo weekend that COVID prevented; singing, hugging, close contact, shared fellowship over meals, study, worship and sharing opportunities.

Plans for a Cursillo in 2021 continue and via the wonder of technology – Zoom in particular – your Secretariat continues to meet and Ultreyas continue. I particularly enjoyed singing along with Margaret's guitar playing and voice at the November Ultreya and the encouragement of Melanie's Witness Talk – clergy response too! Celebrating the 38 participants in that Ultreya; please consider joining to swell this number: a warm welcome and lots of virtual hugs await you!

In short we - the Cursillo community - are doing the best that we can despite the impact of this global pandemic.

More importantly, we are hopefully by and with God's grace, continuing to live out our Fourth Day in ways that bless and sustain others while adding joy to our own lives.

In most of our communities the needs of people facing food insecurities continue to increase. As does the risk of mental illness, triggered by loneliness grows. Despite positive news on the vaccine front, much uncertainty remains. "When will life return to 'normal'?" The sad reality is that 2021 will, for many – if not most – feel like a 'hangover' from 2020 for many months as the New Year unfolds.

May each of us, see and 'seize' the opportunities God presents daily to bring comfort to our families, neighbourhood, faith communities and a suffering world. In the words of Gandhi, may we "Live simply so others can simply live" and remember that "In a gentle way you can shake the world".

Jesus reminds us, "Love your neighbour as yourself"; please be kind to yourself so that you are filled up and thus able to be 'poured out' to comfort and serve other Children of God.

Be well – stay well & safe – blessings to you and all whom you cherish. Ultreya.

8. Communications Report – Blanche Mills

Thank you everyone for submitting reports for this Rainbow so that a Winter Rainbow could be published. My thanks to Renée, and many others who are always at the end of an email when I have a question.

Are you moving? Changing your email?

Please remember to forward changes to niagaracursillocomm@gmail.com so that we can continue to keep our records up to date. If you know people who aren't receiving emails, please have them get in touch so that we can keep in touch.

I pray that everyone is staying safe and well. Don't forget to join us for the next Zoom Ultreya.

9. Announcements

**2021 CURSILLO LEARNERS WORKSHOP
NIAGARA HURON ANGLICAN CURSILLO
SATURDAYS: MARCH 13, 20, 27**

VIA ZOOM

THREE DAYS OF PRAYER, TALKS, ULTREYA, AND WORSHIP
PRESENTED BY CACS, CANADIAN ANGLICAN CURSILLO SECRETARIAT

TIME: 1:00 P.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

- ❖ An opportunity to hear about the Vision of the Founder
- ❖ Deepen your commitment to Christ amongst Cursillistas
- ❖ Get a clear understanding of your role to make the movement an effective instrument in the evangelization of environments.
- ❖ Assistance to the leaders of Diocesan Cursillo Movements

This workshop is for you.

The workshop has been developed to be relevant for today's world.

In lieu of a fee, NHAC will make a donation to CACS.

REGISTER HERE OR FROM OUR WEBSITE.

You will be contacted by the CACS Chair.

REGISTRATION FORM – CLW

DEADLINE: MARCH 6, 2021

NAME(S): _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

PARISH, CITY, AND DIOCESE: _____

(Save this page to your computer, then attach to your email to Blanche.)

Registrar: Blanche Mills, niagaracursillo@gmail.com

ZOOM ULTREYA

Zoom Ultreyas have been taking place the first Friday of each month. Come and join everyone for a wonderful experience. Invite your friends!

The next Ultreya is Friday, February 5 at 7:30 p.m.

Zoom link and agenda will follow shortly.

Zoom event

Special Opportunity – Return of John Bell

The Spirituality of the Psalms

Friday–Sunday, March 5–7, 2021

For many believers, the psalms comprise an essential part of the liturgy of Holy Communion—a welcome pause between the Old Testament reading and the Epistle. The psalms are much more than this. They are words which nourished the spirituality of Jesus. They abound in insights regarding God’s relationship with the natural world, texts that offer us words for prayer when our words fail us, and an inexhaustible mine of poetic imagery with which to ponder life and faith. In this retreat we will read, sing, reflect on, and enjoy the psalms.

Led by John Bell of the Iona Community, an inspiring speaker and the composer of much well-known and loved contemporary Christian music used in the Iona Community and around the world.

Fee: \$160



The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine

<https://ssjd.ca>

To see more details and register for this event, please go to:

<https://ssjd.ca/2020/12/24/spirituality-of-the-psalms/>