



Diocese Of Toronto
Anglican Church Of Canada

The Rt. Rev. Linda C. Nicholls
Area Bishop of Trent-Durham

The Incorporated Synod
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Vestry letter 2012

Dear friends in Christ,

As the winter begins to wane, the snow recedes and one day the frozen ground is pushed back by the first tender shoots of the earliest spring flowers. Our times of struggle are like that. After a long hard period of endurance and discouragement suddenly a shoot of new life reminds us that God's creation is one that is constantly renewing itself. Resurrection is the last word!

There are signs of renewed life all over our Area as you have reached out in the name of Christ willing to try new ways of sharing the Good News and faithfully caring for your communities. Stories of hope and change are told in the video – Missional Road Trip – on the diocesan website and on our Area website – www.trentdurhamanglicans.ca . Thank you to all who are taking risks – even and especially those risks that fail for they will be our teachers for the future.

Thank you to all parishes that have faithfully engaged in the *Our Faith, Our Hope* Campaign over the past year. Some of you exceeded your goal and surprised yourselves with the generous capacity for giving you have within your community. Others told the story of diocesan dreams and parish possibilities and, in the midst of parish challenges, raised more than they could have imagined. For many the best part was the opportunity to visit with one another – to meet and get to know one another and strengthen personal relationships. At the time of writing this letter our diocese has raised \$35 million dollars – no small feat!! The heart of our goal though is not the dollar total but the dreams for parish and diocesan ministry. Your contributions will assist in leadership training of laity and clergy; better use of technology and generosity in sharing with others in Canada and the world. Thank you for your faithfulness and commitment.

As we look into 2012 I know we face strong challenges. No parish can 'coast' into the future. We are in a time of pilgrimage much like that of the Exodus when God's people had to leave what was familiar and venture into the unknown not really sure where they were going. We are on a pilgrimage from the relative surety of the Church as we have known it into finding new ways to be Church in our communities. We are in anxious, uncertain times that are an adventure. Just as Mary embraced the call into the adventure of motherhood not knowing where it would take her and what it would mean, we are called to embrace the adventure of being God's people in this time and culture, trusting in our God who is always faithful.

In Fall 2011 the Durham-Northumberland Deanery participated in the *Reimagining Church* course – a five-week exploration of what it means to imagine our life as the church in fresh ways. In Lent 2012, I will lead the course in the Peterborough deanery followed in late Spring by offering it in the Victoria-Haliburton Deanery. In Fall 2012, I plan to offer it in the Oshawa Deanery. Come with a team of clergy and parishioners! Listen and share with others in this adventure we are on together as church. Watch for the details of dates and times on the Area website.

Thank you to all who give leadership in our parishes – Churchwardens, Advisory Board members, Lay members of Synod, clergy and all who guide the ministries of our congregations in worship and mission. Your gifts of time and talent are the lifeblood of congregational life.

May God strengthen and guide us as we joyfully seek to serve.

Blessings in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda Nicholls". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

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