Ah, you’re not the Jesus I had in mind...

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

Matthew 15.21-28

My brothers and sisters, the last few weeks in the news, we have been tragically reminded again of our collective condition of human brokenness. We have seen in America, the hateful racism and violence from the “Alternative Right,” and heartbreakingly, in Spain, the ugly face of terrorism where men drove a white van into a crowd in Barcelona’s historic Las Ramblas district killing and wounding several persons. Such violence, hatred, and racism surely has no place in God’s kingdom and when we hear, particularly in America, of persons who espouse such hateful rhetoric and still wish to claim the title of Christian, naturally, we feel right to quickly balk at their claim to be disciples of Christ who are taught to love our neighbours as ourselves. (Matt. 22.39) Perhaps the most famous parable that characterizes this key commandment or principle is the beloved Parable of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10.30-37)

And yet, there are other passages in our gospels that are a bit more problematic to our faith, such as the scriptural passage quoted at length above detailing Jesus’ encounter with the Canaanite woman begging and shouting at him to release a demon from her daughter; and to whom, Jesus, at the very least, gives the cold shoulder to and does exactly the opposite by calling her a dog, or puppy - Matthew uses the diminutive form of the greek kunarion, which translates as either puppy, or mutt. Regardless, of our feelings or position on the existence of demons, it would be like Jesus going up to a woman today begging for him to heal her daughter of a mental illness and Jesus flatly telling her: “sorry, I’ve come to heal only a certain race of people; so get lost!” Jesus’ response in Matthew’s gospel hurts us; it’s the sort of thing we teach our children never to say to anyone, so when we hear Jesus sounding like anything but the God of compassion and empathy we all know and love, it leaves us wondering: well, what we are to make of this passage?
Now there are traditional ways of explaining Jesus’ ‘tough love’ here: some folks have suggested that Jesus was just testing her. But, I have troubles with this interpretation: Jesus, certainly didn’t have any qualms healing and feeding 5,000 men without testing their faith. So why the holdup? It seems particularly callous for him to be so demanding here with a woman in such obvious distress.

Others, try to downplay Jesus’ racial slur by suggesting he was only referring to her as something like a lapdog or something cute like a puppy. But in Jesus’ day, dogs weren’t viewed affectionately in the way we treat dogs today. As people of the covenant concerned with upholding purity laws which kept a person in good standing with God, to call someone a dog, was a way of demeaning a person as being unclean or defiled, as dogs were known to return and eat their own filth. (Proverbs 26.11) In the time of Jesus, this was a favourite slur for Israelites to refer to the gentiles. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus himself seems to suggest that such people were incapable of distinguishing or appreciating what is holy: “Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.” (Matt. 7.6)

Rather, I believe what this passage theologically asks us to wrangle with is the very uncomfortable question of what do we mean when we say that Jesus was fully human? Fully divine, but also fully human? Are we prepared to believe that Jesus was capable of having a bad day like the rest of us? Or, that if Jesus was raised at a certain time and age in a certain social setting, that he was capable of absorbing or being exposed to a culture’s social prejudices? This passage certainly doesn’t offer us any easy outs, but I do believe, as a wise man once said: “We all have prejudices. What we do with them is the important issue…”

I believe this may be the only place in the New Testament, where someone actually has a comeback to Jesus which leaves him floored. We always see Jesus in public being able to shame the Pharisees with the last word which leaves them speechless; but here, when Jesus lets this Canaanite Woman know: “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs…” (v.26); in a kind of impressive ‘verbal judo,’ she turns the phrase around and flings it back into Jesus’ face saying (and respectfully): “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” (v. 27)

In a way, just like I learned in martial arts, this woman was able to take the force or energy of her opponents’ attack and redirect it harmlessly back at him. In a sense, she renders the insult harmless and takes the sting out of it. In an odd way, isn’t this exactly what Jesus does later on the cross by similarly redirecting his opponent’s evil or wickedness, and turning the very instrument of his torture into the means and symbol of his triumph? A triumph, which later, the apostle Paul famously quipped: “Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15.54-55)

However, I believe Jesus saw something in this woman that others among his own people including the Pharisees or scribes could not understand and that actually maybe made him change his mind: “This Gentile woman understood that there is a place in the banquet of grace for even the most lowly, apparently insignificant member of the household of God’s creation. No one, not even the family dog, is excluded.” (Mark’s Gospel, p.81, Christopher Page) The face of this woman’s
suffering, gentile or not, reached across the boundaries that separated jew from gentile, and in her suffering, Jesus chose to heal her. The mother of this little girl understood that you don’t have to be some member of a chosen race to come and kneel before God, and her example continues to reach out to us today, urging us to show the same compassionate response to those which include our poor, our disadvantaged, and the alien among us.

As Christians, I think we have a lot to learn from this woman who although has little identity, possesses great faith! I believe in our responses to violence and racism and ignorance, she demonstrates peaceful, yet active resistance and reveals how we too, can take the sting out of our opponent’s barbs, insults, and wickedness.

Given, that all of us are made in God’s image and likeness (Genesis 1.27), through God’s grace, I believe we can continue to grow in this likeness by the way that we choose to serve others by appreciating them in the same way that God appreciates them, and in so doing, we take on divine qualities. To quote a modern sage: “I believe that appreciation is a holy thing - that when we look for what’s best in a person… we’re doing what God does all the time. So in loving and appreciating our neighbour, we’re participating in something sacred.” - Fred Rogers.

This, I believe, is what I take away from Jesus’ encounter with the Canaanite Woman and reveals to me, that Jesus was not only fully human, but also fully divine. Amen.

Respectfully Submitted
Jeff Kischak

Summer Lay Pastor Contact Information
At The Cottage:  519-422-0050

Rector Contact Information
Rectory:  519-534-0916
Cell:  519-377-2162
WORSHIP SCHEDULE

1st Sunday in Creation-Forest, Sept. 3, 2017 (G)
Genesis 2:4b-22/Psalm 139:13-16
Acts 17:22-28/John 3:1-16
9:00 St. Peter’s, Sauble (Chad/Jeff K.)
9:30 St. Edmund’s (Thelma Kedulka)
9:45 Trinity/St. Peter’s (Maria KS) (w)
10:30 St. Andrew’s (Chad/ Jeff K.)
11:30 Christ Church Gisèle P) (w)
7:30 St. Margaret’s (Jeff K/Chad) (w)

2nd Sunday in Creation-Land, Sept 10, 2017 (G)
Genesis 3:14-19; 4:8-16/Psalm 139:7-12
Romans 5:12-17/ Matthew 12:38-40
9:30 St. Peter’s, Sauble (Bob S)
9:30 St. Edmund’s (Ian McAlpine)
9:45 Trinity/St. Peter’s (Chad)
11:30 Christ Church (Chad)

3rd Sunday in Creation-Wilderness, Sept. 17, 2017 (G)
Joel 1:8-10, 17-20/Psalm 18:6-19
Romans 8:18-27/ Matthew 3:13-4:2
9:30 St. Peter’s Sauble (Mark Curtis)
9:30 St. Edmund’s (Michelle Collins-Wonkee)
9:45 St. Peter’s/Trinity (Chad)
11:30 Christ Church (Chad)

4th Sunday in Creation-River, Sept. 24, 2017 (G)
Genesis 8:20-22; 9:12-17/Psalm 104:27-33
Revelation 22:1-5/ Matthew 28:1-10
9:30 St. Peter’s, Sauble (Bob S.)
9:30 St. Edmund’s (Mark Sceviour)
9:45 St. Peter’s/Trinity (Chad)
11:30 Christ Church (Chad)

Sponsorship Opportunities

In memory of loved ones or in celebration of a milestone in your life consider in addition to donating flowers other methods to gift our congregations through sponsorship opportunities.

The KEY may be sponsored for $60.00
An individual congregational bulletin may be sponsored for $30.00

If you wish to make these donations, speak with one of the editors or with Mary Lou in the Parish Office.

LUTHERAN & ANGLICAN MINISTRIES OF THE BRUCE PENINSULA

To WALK as Jesus taught.
To GROW in love and compassion, seeking justice for all.
To REACH OUT to community using our gifts to serve.

MISSION STATEMENT, adopted by PPC, April 2011
SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Rachel Snow Concert
St. Margaret’s Chapel – Cape Chin
Saturday September 9, 2017
at 2:00 p.m.
Rachel is a classical soprano and performs both classical and modern pieces
Tickets are $15.00 and are available from The Pharmacy in Lion’s Head
From Pat Horner
Or at the Door

Parish Retreat
Wednesday, September 13, 017
Red Bay Lodge, 462 Huron Road, Mar
Guest Facilitator – Sister Doctor Anne Keffer
Registration starts at 9:00 a.m.
Retreat starts at 9:30 a.m.
$20.00 includes lunch and refreshments

CONVERSATIONS IN FAITH
Starts another season on Tuesday, September 26th at 9:30 a.m.
at St. Peter’s Lutheran in Wiarton
With The Venerable Bob Snelling
Come for worship and discussion each Tuesday morning.
Where will the spirit lead us this year?
All are welcome

This Issue of the Key
Is Sponsored by
David and Janet Arnold
In Celebration of their 55th Wedding Anniversary
On September 8th

May you have many more years filled with God’s blessings and grace

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH
Sadly it is that time again when our summer churches are starting to close for the season and folks are heading back to their home parishes. As part of your church family we hope you will keep in touch while you are away. We invite you to visit our web site at www.laamb.ca to pick up your copy of THE KEY. We also encourage you to send us an article about special happenings in your lives and/or parish to share with us here on The Bruce.

God Speed to each of you – we look forward to your return in the spring!
Parish Partnership Council
Update – August 9, 2017

St. Andrew’s, Howdenvale reported that their re-invention as a Community Center, Coffee House during the week has been very well received. The space is alive during the week and as a positive overflow attendance has been up on the Sunday’s setting a record one Sunday with 31 in attendance. They also enjoyed a very successful Silent Auction and Make Your Own Sundae on Saturday, Aug. 5th making $1,000.

Each of our churches reported on ongoing activities and worship together. St. Edmund’s were pleased to report on another successful Yard Sale and Barbecue raising just over $3,300 towards outreach. Trinity and St. Peter’s continue worship together and reported on a successful fish fry on Saturday July 22nd. The rainbow trout was delicious.

Jeff Kischak on behalf of St. Peter’s Sauble and St. Andrew’s reported the acceptance of our venture into the Little Library project. The portable cart was rolled out twice onto the beach at Sauble handing out between 125 and 150 books. Pastor Chad noted the most popular books were the Lutheran Cookbooks. I think the term is ‘they went like hot cakes’. Both Jeff and Pastor Chad also visited door to door in Howdenvale re-introducing St. Andrew’s new vibrant Community Center to the residents.

The Ministries Group debriefed our recent Parish Event, Beer and Hymns at Red Bay Lodge. They were also looking ahead and have started looking at our services for Christmas Eve which this year falls on a Sunday as of course will New Year’s Eve. Final decisions have not been made yet, but if you have any input please let Pastor Chad know.

Gisèle Partridge led a discussion on the timing of our services on Sunday. Often Pastor Chad is running late for the service at Christ Church, travelling from Wiarton. This is a concern for the congregation at Christ Church, the Lay Reader and for Pastor Chad himself, often literally running in with not a moment to center himself before rushing straight into the service. Further discussion will continue in this area as we are planning our future services.

Also meeting this day was the Fund Raising Committee. A proposal was put forward and approved by the PPC for the implementation of a new fund raising endeavour. The high-lights are listed below. Full details will be presented at each church during the month.

Avgen Gift Card Program

Avgen carries gift cards from over 68 different retailers. We purchase gift cards only for stores we want. Buy a $100 Gift Card from a store and receive a $100.00 in value.

The cards carry a running balance with no expiry date.

Popular retailers that participate in the program include, Foodland, Zehrs, No Frills, Food Basics, Esso, Petro Can, Shell, Swiss Chalet, Canadian Tire, Shoppers and many, many more. Buy only what you want when you want, no sales of unwanted or high priced items involved.

The program will be run throughout the whole Parish with the profit from each church being retained by their church under the Parish umbrella to directly reduce their own Parish expenses.

We will be asking for the support of our fellow parishioners by buying gift cards for everyday purchases such as groceries, gas and home maintenance items. Of course they are also ideal as Gift Cards for grandchildren and other family members especially for those who live farther away and we must mail their presents to them.

Submitted by:
Charlotte Ewbank
Visioning Committee Report
August Meeting

The meeting this month looked at how we might proceed with the idea of volunteers from each congregation visiting new people to our communities and offering them information and goodies to welcome them to the Bruce. Christ Church is the only congregation that has two members who are ready to take on this initiative so we wonder if it might be good to start with them and that area. It was then suggested that perhaps more people would get on board if they had some training in what they were to do and say so it was agreed that we would approach the Diocese to see if they have someone who might offer a short in-service for us. We agreed that knocking was easy but what to say once the door opens is another matter and how to share who we are is not easy for most of us. So stay tuned for upcoming announcements about this exciting opportunity.

We all are aware of the difficulty churches are having attracting new members and the committee discussed this complex issue wondering what can be done. It seems that today, people are searching for meaning and spiritual fulfilment but they do not see the church as the place that speaks to them. We wonder why? Are we stuck in the same pattern of worship that leads to rote praying and songs that although very meaningful are difficult to sing? Are sermons a thing of the past as people long to discuss deep faith issues?

Would people respond if Chad were to offer a short reflection on the gospel and share how the word spoke to them or what questions were raised?

Do people want services at different times, in different locations?

We wonder if in our communities there are opportunities to offer a gathering for people on a regular basis where people can develop relationships of trust and in time begin to share their faith journey, their spiritual questions and learn/grow together.

We reflected on the games night in Lion’s Head this past year where half of the participants were from the community, not members of the congregation. They had fun together so perhaps we could do something like that again on a more regular basis. Perhaps we could offer coffee time once a week at the church for all the folks who like to get together but don’t wish to travel to Tim’s. Perhaps there might be interest in a book study. All of these ideas give food for thought.

Already we are doing great things in our communities to be more present and reach out in different ways. (the book wagon/library in Sauble; the community centre in Howdenvale; providing medical equipment in Lion’s Head; storytelling at St. Margaret’s; the little library by the road in Wiarton; bible study/meditation in Tobermory).

Still, as we look at our 5 year plan let’s continue to think outside the box. Looking for ways to bring people together in relationship with one another and provide opportunities to know Christ and make Him known.

Helen Wheeler
Chair, Visioning Committee
The Evangelism Tool Box

Tool #3 – How Can We Engage What Keeps Us From Doing Evangelism?

II. Fear

“We never talked about our faith when I was growing up; things just were.”
“I never asked questions about my faith. Whatever the pastor said was it.”
“My faith is between me, God, and nobody else.”
“Everyone was Christian when I was growing up, we even said the Lord’s Prayer in school, there wasn’t a need to talk about things.”

For many of us growing up, we didn’t talk about our faith outside of our immediate family or our churches. Faith, while it was considered very important, wasn’t something we usually talked about. Faith was considered a private matter. More and more, in the public sphere, the stance held by some is that faith should be private; not to be shared with others. In other words, “keep your opinions to yourself”. This a response given when faith has seemed like it was forced or imposed on others. So, keeping our faith to ourselves is something that some members of our society and culture have tried to impose in an attempt to purge racism, prejudice, conservative fundamental theology from the public sphere; as well as the effort to not offend anyone.

This is the reality we find ourselves, as Christians, trying to figure out how we live out our faith in a society that tells not to offend anyone and to keep our faith to ourselves.

Firstly, faith is personal. We struggle with what we believe. We learn. We grow. We discern. Each of us will understand and live out our faith in slightly different ways. We will read scripture and will take away from different views and opinions in light of our backgrounds and traditions. However, faith isn’t a private thing.

“Because when faith is reduced to the private domains of life it ceases to have public and broadly interpersonal effect. The test of Christian faith is not what people individually choose or want. The only real test is the test of love. Jesus put it plainly when he told his followers to love others as he loved them. Love is the crucial thing because love is the power that nurtures relationships, reconciles divisions, and heals the world. As such it must have political, social, and economic effect.

Jesus does not call people to the cozy confines of the home or church. He calls them to go out into the world to share love rather than hate, and to practice humility and mercy rather than arrogance and belligerence. Faith is a personal and a public thing. It is the kind of thing that can be judged by the kind and quality of its fruit, which is why Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). If love is absent, someone other than Jesus is being followed.

There is no more decisive refutation of a private, apolitical faith than John’s own words in scripture: “Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (1 John 4:20). Christian faith is not reducible to the relationship between an individual person and his or her God. It is a relationship that grows, and is shown to be true or false, in the love people show to each other. (Norman Wirzba, Professor of Theology and Ecology at Duke Divinity School)

We are called to do much in the world in light of our faith. Do justice, love kindness, love others as we have been (and are) loved, pray, read, worship, study, serve, give, and tell. The world needs what we have. We hear of a world, people in pain and struggling. Places that need God’s love. We are called to be God’s presence. Our faith is personal but not private. In embracing this reality and with the world as it is, there are fears which hold us back.

That being said, many of us know this. We know that we are called to share the Good News of Christ with others. We know Christ even says in scripture that we are to go and make disciples.
We hear the phrase “fear not…” over 80 times throughout scripture…and, we still are afraid. Here are some of the statements people have shared with me over the years, maybe you have even said these statements. So, let me offer some pastoral words in response to them.

“I don’t want to offend someone.”
The fear in this statement is that the person whom you might share your faith with will become offended and then may not want to talk to you, be friends with you, speak ill of you to others, etc. Being offended by something or someone is subjective, it depends on many things such as race, creed, political views, and orientation (to name a few). What offends one person might not offend someone else.

Truth be told, knowing most of you as I have for the past 3 years, I am doubtful you would intentionally offend someone with what we believe. If it happens unintentionally, also unlikely, most people are decent and understanding and will forgive a faith “faux pas”. In the rare situation the extreme happens and someone is offended, they won’t be for long. There are far greater things in this world for someone to be offended about, and dwell on, than a well-meaning person from a church on the Bruce Peninsula.

“I don’t want to be hurt”
No one ever wants to be hurt. We all take steps in our lives to prevent ourselves from being hurt and from hurting others. All relationships function on a level of trust. Trust is essential in order that relationships exist and within those relationships there is always the possibility of betrayal (to a greater or lesser extent; intentionally or unintentionally). Without trust, there would be no relationships, friendships, closeness, none of the emotional bonds that make us who we are. Yet, with each relationship, we put ourselves at risk because there is so much to gain by new relationships, friendships, and bonds.

As we build new relationships with people, share our faith, and invite people to share in it, there is the possibility that we may get hurt. The good news is that we are not alone. If we get hurt we have friends, a community of faith, and a God who will help bring healing to our lives once again; maybe even help us heal with tougher skin. We have to ask ourselves, is the love of God worth sharing, understanding there is a risk we may get hurt?

“I don’t want to be made fun of, laughed at, or gossiped about”
We all know how Tim Horton’s, Mary Dales, Knowlesies, and local coffee groups can be. While they can be great places to connect, socialize and recharge, they can also be places where gossip happens. The last thing we want is to be a topic of conversation in a negative way. This taps into the old fear of our school days, when rumors ran rampant and could deeply hurt someone. They were the ammunition of cliques and could keep us from groups we wanted to be a part of and even our friends.

While this was and is still a concern in schools and some communities, it isn’t as much here on the peninsula. In the off chance one of us came up in conversation for sharing our faith, the gossiping wouldn’t last long. With everything happening in our world and the issues that are present on our peninsula, the people who gossip at these establishments have better things to complain about than a well-meaning member of one of our churches sharing their faith.

“I don’t know what to say & I don’t want to sound / look silly”
This usually means we are out of practice. We want to share our faith and we don’t know what to say. This is a problem we can address easily in our congregations. If we are out of practice and don’t know what to say, maybe we need to practice. What might that look like? Be sure to read the next edition of the KEY.

Next Month
Tool #3 – How Can We Engage What Keeps Us From Doing Evangelism? III. Out of Practice

The evangelism toolbox is inspired by my training with the Venerable Bill Harrison, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, and is based on his research and work.
Parish Event at Sauble Beach
St. Peter’s By- The- Lake
A Putterama Golf Tournament
on Thursday August 17th

A fun day in spite of the trickling rain! There was no stopping our keen golfers once it was tee off time.

A dog named Serge got into the act, children and grandchildren, parents, and grandparents, people from up and down the Peninsula came out for some fun.
Following our outdoor activity we went back to St. Peter’s for a summer barbecue. Barbecue, it was an epicurean delight! Summer Student Pastor Jeff Kischak barbecued up some lovely sausages, served along with salad, coleslaw and pierogis and with the loving assistance of his Mother an enormous plate of homemade cabbage rolls. Thank you to both Jeff and his obviously wonderful and loving Mother.

Sadly we also said good bye to June Manewell long time Warden of St. Peter’s who is in the process of moving back to Hamilton. June has helped in many ways over the years including serving as one of our Editors for The Key.

She will be missed but we hope she will drop in for a visit when she has a yearning to see the ‘beach’.
Parish Prayer Chain

Does an all-powerful God need our involvement? Do our prayers really matter?

In his book, “Intercessory Prayer”, Dutch Sheets describes us, the church as Jesus’ humans on earth as Jesus had been God’s human on earth when he lived among his people as one of them. God, who gives the healing, who restores the wholeness, invites our participation. We offer ourselves as channels of God’s grace.

The Prayer Chain of the Parish of the Bruce was formed in 1991 for the purpose of ongoing prayer for those “in any way afflicted or distressed in mind, body or estate”. A brochure is available explaining our purpose and commitment. The brochure includes forms of prayer which may be used either by the person in need or by those giving care and prayer support.

A request for prayer may be made to any member of the Chain. We believe it is useful for the person in need to consent to being prayed for by our group, and that the person making the request also offer prayer. We continue to pray for a needy person as long as necessary, but we do need to be kept informed of progress so that we can adjust our prayers and give thanks to God when healing occurs. Updates on changes are usually made to the Prayer Chain member who received the original request, but may be made to any member.

While we usually pass prayer request from one member to the next by telephone, we do meet once a month to update our lists and to spend some time in prayer and reflection. We have a co-ordinator but it is a group with shared leadership and we take turns in providing a theme for discussion. The Chain is a parish group, open to members of the various congregations.

Out of respect for the privacy of anyone in distress, we have a strict mandate of confidentiality. You may give as much or as little information as you feel appropriate; we do not divulge this information, nor the fact that the person is on the prayer list. In this way, our intercessions differ from those in our church services where we pray as a family.

Perhaps because of our commitment to confidentiality, the Prayer Chain may not be too well known. If taking part in this ministry would be right for you, please let me know. We would be glad to welcome new members.

Ruth Tompkins

Who I am in Christ

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.

John 1:12

I am God’s Child
Catholic Horses

A gambler was at the horse races playing the ponies and all but losing his shirt, when he noticed a Priest step out onto the track and bless the forehead of one of the horses lining up for the 4th race.

Lo and behold, that horse - a very long shot – won the race. Next race, as the horses lined up, the Priest stepped onto the track. Sure enough, he blessed one of the horses. The gambler made a beeline for a betting window and placed a small bet on the horse. Again, even though it was another long shot, the horse won the race.

He collected his winnings, and anxiously waited to see which horse the Priest would bless next. He then bet most of his winnings on it, and sure enough it won. As the races continued the Priest kept blessing long shots, and each one ended up winning.

The gambler was elated as they came up to the last race of the day. He made a quick dash to the ATM, withdrew all his savings, and awaited for the Priest's blessing that would tell him which horse to bet on. True to his pattern, the Priest stepped onto the track for the last race and blessed the forehead of an old nag that was the longest shot of the day. This time the priest blessed the eyes, ears, and hooves of the old nag.

The gambler just knew he had a winner and bet every cent he owned on the old nag.

He watched dumbfounded as the old nag came in last. In a state of shock, he went to the track area where the Priest was. Confronting him, he demanded, 'Father! What happened? All day long you blessed horses and they all won. Then in the last race, the horse you blessed lost by a mile. Now, thanks to you I've lost every cent of my savings!'

The Priest nodded wisely and with a certain amount of sympathy.

'My Son,' he said, 'that's the problem with you Protestants, you can't tell the difference between a simple blessing and last rites.'
July 15th was our Annual Yard Sale, at close of day, we were all busy with clean up, when a group of Muslim women came with some children; they went through and bought a few items.

However they did not leave but remained and helped with the clean-up, lifting big boxes of “leftovers” into the hall. I spoke to one of the younger ones, who said they had seen our sign and knew they were welcome.

Then on Sunday August 13th as I was just completing Altar Guild duties, a young man, came into the hall and said he wished to give a donation to our church, I asked his name and address so that we could send a tax receipt, he insisted that was not necessary, he said that he had read the “multi language sign” and was pleased to know so many different people were welcome. He was a Sikh wearing a Brilliant Blue Turban.

What a joy to meet these people, who know that God will welcome them unconditionally.

The Signs are working.

Jan Arnold.
The Anglican Church of Canada

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
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