



Follow The Spirit

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



Church in Changing Times.

Back in October 2024, just as I was preparing to go on Sabbath Leave, I received the article you will see in this issue, forwarded to me from Charlotte. The electronic file came from one of our regular writers for The KEY, Leon Baltas, and the file was named “saint edmund’s woes”. The common letters in the title, and the use of simply “saint edmund’s” to refer to our beloved Church of St Edmund’s perhaps reflect some of the pain Leon references in his writing. We celebrated St Edmund’s 65th anniversary in September with a simple mid-week, evening prayer service, which Meg and Leon did not attend as they found it too painful – to attend would have been too much like attending a wake. I can certainly understand that kind of pain and grief: it is very real.

It is the pain and grief that comes with the slow death of the familiar. This is a death that we are contending with in many of our Peninsula church locations in some ways. It is important to name this death and loss. Leon has done a good job of not only naming it, but putting some statistics behind it, which helps us to see that this ailment is not ours alone but is afflicting Anglicans and Roman Catholics in particular.

Interestingly, the Orthodox and “Other Christians” (a category into which I assume the Lutherans are included) are experiencing an increase in numbers.

Anglicanism, of the 4 categories provided in Leon’s article is experiencing the most steep decline – a more than 50% decline in 2 decades. Why might that be?

The heading of Leon’s article reads “The Collapse of the Anglican Church in Canada”, referencing an article that was printed in *The Anglican Planet*. Leon references statistics for the Anglican Church of Canada, on the decline of Sunday attendance (by almost two thirds) and baptism (by more than 75%) over the past two decades.

Whether you are a numbers person or not, the visible decline of “membership” in our Anglican churches is a present reality. I put that word, “membership” in quotes because it is the language we use to describe regular attendees at worship who have committed to be part of the decision-making body of the church. Very often, those who attend worship are those who are identified as “members”. This is how the traditions of both the Lutheran and Anglican churches have evolved. The very term “members” suggests an in-group and an excluded-group: a simple observation of language. Think about it:



church “members”, gym “members”, golf club “members” – is this how we mean to witness to the body of Christ?

Historical context:

Both traditions of the LAAMB and Christ Church have social and cultural histories, along with their spiritual and religious histories. Anglicanism was brought, with settlers, to the lands they colonized. As such, the Anglican tradition is strong in many countries across the world: from nations in Africa and the Caribbean and even Sri Lanka, where my own father was born into an Anglican family. Anglicans were one of the four denominations (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and United) which were party to the Settlement Agreement which established and ran residential schools in Canada.

The Anglican Church of Canada website identifies this history:

“At various times between 1820 and 1969, the Anglican Church of Canada administered about three dozen residential schools and hostels for Indigenous children.”¹ I encourage you to read the information provided on this website, as it details the history, and may be helpful in an integrated understanding of social inclinations towards these four denominations in particular – two of which have held most firmly to tradition (Anglican and Roman Catholic – are in greatest decline). Perhaps there is a co-relation between the history, approaching worship and the gospel in the same lived way, and the decline of numbers in the church. This decline has certainly preceded current community engagement initiatives we are taking in the Anglican churches of the LAAMB on the Peninsula.

In Waterloo Region, an area of significant German settlement in the early centuries of colonization, many of the settlers were Lutheran because Lutheranism was the strongest denomination in protestant Germany at the time. As people migrated from Germany, their churches served not only as places of worship, but significantly as places from which support could be had to settle in this new land – places of social and cultural familiarity. In Waterloo Region, the general decline of numbers in Lutheran congregations is most certainly linked to the lower numbers of Lutheran immigrants. A strong case can be made for the cultural and social aspects of Lutheran churches which made them grow quickly during the season of heavy German immigration in Canada’s history. We can no longer rely on this for growth. Lutheran congregations grow where witness and community engagement are happening.

Back in the times of early settlement and high numbers of German immigration, Sundays remained dedicated days of Sabbath in a dominantly Christian culture. There were fewer “progressive causes” to compete with time and the following of Jesus that would, specifically, happen in worship on Sundays. So, what is our current context?

Current context:

Leon identifies, from *The Anglican Planet*, a diagnosis for what ails us (I think the ailment is the declining numbers), the diagnosis being “the tendency to relegate the gospel to second place behind other matters.” Perhaps I have ailment and diagnosis mixed up here?

One major shift in the churches of the LAAMB since emerging from the pandemic has been very intentional efforts at community engagement. This has not simply been about promoting,

¹ <https://www.anglican.ca/tr/schools/>



relating and connecting with the wider community. It has been about witnessing. In the Acts of the Apostles, which records a time of the most exponential growth of the Jesus-following movement, the witness provided by the followers of Jesus drew non-believing people, in curiosity, to those who were Gospel-followers. This in turn drew these same non-believing people towards the Gospel.

What was the witness of believers? Acts 2:43-47 tells us:

"Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with **glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.** And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

In the book of Acts, baptisms happen by the thousands, and they happen not because of a particular religious tradition, but because of the work of the Holy Spirit, and the witness which believers provide in how they live in the world: with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

There is an inner life that certainly must be nurtured, to draw us all towards things eternal. And there is a light we are given, in Christ, to shine out into our world, to draw others too towards this eternal light. That light draws those who are dwelling in darkness, dwelling in the temporal without having our common Christian understanding of things eternal.

I affirm Leon's naming the pain, and taking the time to ask very difficult questions, which we all have. For taking the time to say it is hard to attend what feels like a wake.

Leon expresses a worry which I have heard from so many of you, regular worshippers of God at the churches of LAAMB & Christ Church: when our church is no more, the communities will not have us. But, if we do not engage in witness with our communities now, they already do not have us. And perhaps this is part of why we are (or were?) experiencing decline? Perhaps this is why engaging in witness with our communities is employing the Acts strategy: living in the world with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. It is working. We aren't baptizing by the thousands yet, but in a number of places we are experiencing growth. We are gaining momentum.

Grief & Growth

When we are in the midst of grieving, we are vulnerable. I have felt your vulnerability and applaud your courage in living, through this grieving and vulnerability as witnesses of an eternal hope, an eternal love, an eternal grace and mercy – which reassures us of life beyond the familiar traditions. As congregations, you have been courageous to try new things, to live a witness of unbounded love and welcome in your communities.

The Church of St Edmund's is living witness through the individual witness of those who worship, and also through two summers of Summer in the Spirit, and sharing our space with Muslims.

St Andrew's Memorial Church is doing this through intentional efforts at connecting with the Howdenvale community, a joyful summer ministry that community members volunteered in,



and quite literally calling people into the church who are outside walking their dogs, to come and join us for worship and communion (and they have come)! We are seeing growth here, amidst the grief of things changing.

Trinity Anglican and St Peter's Lutheran are doing this, through a living witness of sharing all they have as a church with the community. We are seeing growth here, amidst the grief of things changing. We have welcomed new members, one of whom is studying now for the Anglican Licentiate in Theology.

This is what it is to be church in changing times: to bear witness in our current context amidst the grief of losing some of what feels comfortable and familiar. As we enter 2025, my prayer is that we will continue on this trajectory of bearing witness amidst the grief, of the eternal promises God has provided us in Jesus.

With love, in Christ
Janaki

Pastor Janaki Bandara
Phone: 519-588-7701



* We had the best attendance at our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services since I have been here this year.

Lutheran & Anglican Ministries on the Bruce (LAAMB) & Christ Church, Lion's Head



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Every new season is a testimony of God's grace. Creation itself reminds us of God's great faithfulness as we witness renewal and rebirth.

The New Year is a time when God inspires people with new hope, light, peace, and joy.



A Fresh Start and a beautiful new beginning'.

Charlotte Ewbank



Lutheran and Anglican Ministries of the Bruce Peninsula



JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Year C

2nd Sunday after Christmas, Jan. 5 2025 (W)
SIRACH 24:1-12/CANTICLE 11 (WISDOM OF SOLOMON 10:15-21);
EPHESIANS 1:3-14; JOHN 1:01-18
9:30 St. Peter's & Trinity (Janaki)
11:30 Christ Church (Janaki)
2:00 St. Edmund's (Janaki)

The Baptism of the Lord, Jan. 12 2025 (W)
ISAIAH 43:1-7/ PSALM 29
ACTS 8:14-17;/LUKE 3:15-17, 21-22
9:30 St. Peter's & Trinity (Janaki)
11:30 Christ Church (Janaki)
2:00 St. Edmund's (Janaki)

2nd Sunday after Epiphany, Jan. 19 2025 (G)
ISAIAH 62:1-5/PSALM 36:5-10
1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11/JOHN 2:1-11
9:30 St. Peter's & Trinity (Pastor Janaki)
11:30 Christ Church (Pastor Janaki)
2:00 St. Edmund's (Pastor Janaki)

3rd Sunday after Epiphany Jan. 26, 2025 (G)
NEHEMIAH 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10/PSALM 19
1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31A/LUKE 4:14-21
9:30 St. Peter's/Trinity (Charlotte) Word
11:30 Christ Church ()
2:00 St. Edmund's (Reverend Mona)

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**

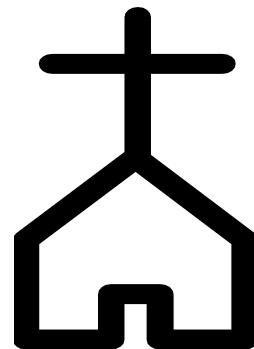
If you wish to make these donations, please speak with Karla in the Parish Office.

LUTHERAN & ANGLICAN MINISTRIES OF THE BRUCE PENINSULA

Together in faith,
loving and serving God
by helping others.

We pledge to:

- be led by Holy Spirit
- embrace differences
- adapt to changing times



*MISSION STATEMENT,
adopted by PPC, November 14, 2018*



Lutheran and Anglican Ministries of the Bruce Peninsula



JANUARY MEETINGS & EVENTS

Church of St. Edmund
Council Meeting
Tuesday January 21st at 7:00 p.m.

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**NEXT AVGEN ORDER
IS
SUNDAY JANUARY 26TH**



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Annual General/Vestry Meeting
In Person in Wiarton and Tobermory
And on Zoom
Sunday February 2nd

St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church
Annual General Meeting
Sunday February 16th

St. Andrew's is working on possible plans
for a Community Pot Luck in February.

An Alpha course promotional image. The top half is red with white text: 'Unpack the Christian faith together.' and a red question mark icon with 'Alpha' inside. The bottom half is pink with white text: 'Meet new people and explore the Christian faith together. Alpha is for anyone who's curious. No judgement, no pressure. Each session unpacks a big question of life, faith, and purpose, and is designed to spark conversation. Come along, see what you think.' Below this is a purple box with white text: 'You're invited!' and a list of details: 'Thursdays Feb 06-Apr 17, 2025', 'Noon-1:30pm', 'Wiarton Salvation Army 576 Edward Street', 'Limited spaces available pre-register at 519-377-0853 or email ingrid.reichard@salvation army.ca'. At the bottom is a photo of three people smiling.

Helen Wheeler



Lutheran and Anglican Ministries of the Bruce Peninsula



The Collapse of the Anglican Church in Canada

The above title is that of an article in the latest edition of *The Anglican Planet*. We shall touch on the article later but some local things to begin with

Summer 2009. It was a grand celebration. It was the fiftieth anniversary of The Church of St Edmund in Tobermory. I can't remember all the events but I do recall a dinner. A large shelter had been erected on the grounds to cover the diners. Several former parishioners had come back to join us. Anne Stewart was in charge of a crew who prepared and served the meals. I remember working with Richard Stewart to drive pegs into the ground to hold the shelter. There must have been a celebratory church service and there certainly was a concert.

In those not so distant days we had dozens of worshippers during summer Sundays. It was close to standing room only. We had a Sunday school.

Summer 2014. My wife, Meg, and I were summer wardens. We were between clergy. To keep the congregation connected we held one or two meetings of the congregation, received reports, had discussions. Before one meeting I had gone through the Vestry Book and looked at attendance over the last few years. My suspicions were being borne out, that our numbers on a Sunday were slowly decreasing. When I drew this to the attention of the gathering I was accused of crying wolf and the audience began to drift away. I had wanted to suggest that we consider ways to keep our numbers from declining further but to no avail.

Summer 2024. Of the parishioners who were present fifteen years ago, either permanent residents or seasonal, a tiny handful remain. The others: have left the area, have health problems and cannot attend, have left the church, have changed denominations, have gone to their maker. Very few have replaced those who have disappeared. On a summer Sunday in 2024 attendance is often under ten.

2024 marked 65 years since the foundation of St Edmund's. There was a small gathering in September to commemorate the event. Meg and I did not attend; we found it too painful. It would have been too much like being at a wake.

At meetings of the Parish Partnership Council and of the St Edmund's congregation there is an occasional groan that if our numbers keep declining.... we ought to do something about decreased attendance...we can't go on this way... You get the idea. But we do not go any further.

What about the article in *The Anglican Planet*?

Here are some figures for the Anglican Church in Canada.

Sunday attendance:	2001	162,000
	2017	87,000
	2022	65,000

Figures on baptisms	1961	44,416
	1981	21,134
	2001	13,304
	2017	4,784
	2022	3,583

You can see it, can't you? Over a sixty-year period baptisms have fallen to one twelfth of what they were in 1961. With so few baptisms, and these becoming ever fewer, the inevitable is staring us where we wish not to look.

It is not that bleak for other Christians in Canada. From Canadian census data:

	2001	2021
Anglicans	2.3 million	1.1 million
Roman Catholics	12.8 million	10.8 million
Orthodox	495,000	623,000
Other Christians	780,000	3.3 million

The author of the article in *The Anglican Planet* has a diagnosis for what ails us. It is "the tendency to relegate the gospel to second place behind other matters." When we put social causes in first place, we ignore our main function, to have Jesus and our souls as our main purpose. The author writes "...what is clear is adoption of progressive causes" and these have "sidelined the Anglican Church's attempt to follow Jesus..."

I can see this clearly at St Edmund's where our main thrust, apart from keeping heat and lights on, and the



doors open a bit, is promoting the Indigenous, relating to Muslims, connecting with the wider community. These are all worthwhile activities, but we do not need a church for these things to happen. A service club is well suited to these tasks. When have I heard about my soul(I do have a soul, haven't I?), salvation, Jesus's role in my life, reconciliation, sin, forgiveness? And when St. Edmund's is no more, and how long before this comes about, the Indigenous, the Muslims, the wider community will not have us.

Every three years we hear this prayer but like so much else we rush through it:

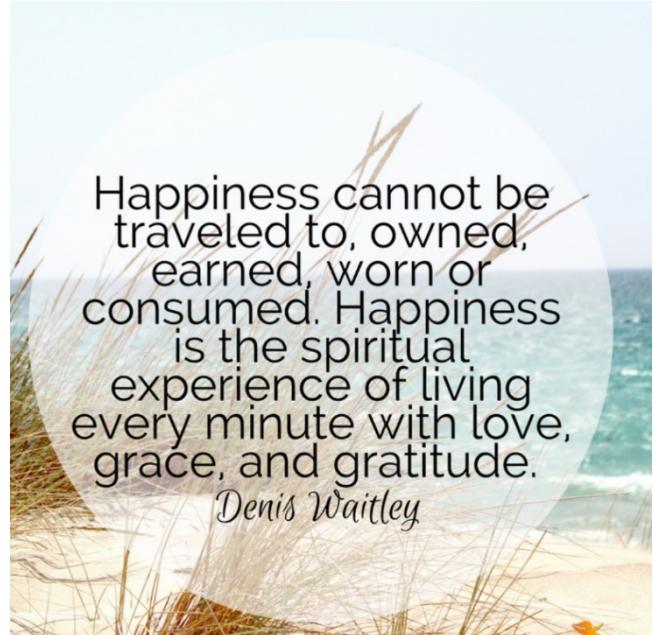
"O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen."

For me the part "we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal" is so very powerful and so very true of my life. Every-day things keep me from the higher good. I want to believe that there is a much higher good and the church should have this as its main and highest purpose, to focus its members on the things eternal. It is not doing it.

Leon Baltas, St. Edmund's

Study Leave

Pastor Janaki will not be available inclusive
January 23rd to January 26



A January Reflection

It's a New Year – a time of reflection, celebration, anticipation and hopefulness. We have journeyed through the season of Advent in hopeful anticipation of the Christ Child's birth. Joy entered the world to be with us bringing us hope. We should approach this new year with the hopefulness of a Messiah who seeks to draw near to us.

We should slow down! We have come through a busy season our bodies, mind and soul needs rest. We need to reflect on the past year possible challenges faced, as well as achievements. What are we proud of, where have we found enjoyment, connection, inspiration. What are we grateful for; did we have any new experiences, opportunities for growth and learning.

Reflecting on the past year can help us to approach the year ahead with purpose.

Charlotte Ewbank



Lutheran and Anglican Ministries of the Bruce Peninsula



Chaplains 'Share A Cloak' in Life's Storms: A New Era at Brightshores

(This article is adapted from one published in the Owen Sound Sun Times on December 21st, 2024 - Graham Bland is Chair of the Grey Bruce Spiritual Care Council, or GBSCC)

For 25 years now, Professional Chaplains have, without interruption, served patients and staff in our local hospitals, in Palliative Care at home and at Chapman House Hospice.

What is a Chaplain? You may be surprised to hear that a 'chaplain' is not about religion. 'Chaplain' comes from an old Latin word, 'cappella', or 'cloak'. An ancient story tells of a pilgrim who shared his cloak with a fellow traveller. Chaplains 'share a cloak' – shelter, protection and warmth – in life's storms.

The chaplain is a listener ... One who supports you as you navigate challenges. One who helps you to listen deeply to your own needs and inner wisdom. One who attends to your struggles as you search for meaning in them.

We are all on spiritual journeys as we seek meaning in life's chances and changes. This quest can be heightened by health crises or when we face our own mortality.

Chaplains do not come with religious answers; they help create a safe space for you to explore your own questions more fully.

Our religious attachments may be declining, but we still carry the same age-old spiritual questions. When a chaplain is available to listen, and to support us through moments of joy, sorrow, fear or grief, our physical well-being also often improves.

For 25 years, until October this year, most of the resources for our hospital chaplains came from Faith Communities and Health Foundations, through the Grey Bruce Spiritual Care Council. Brightshores Health System has now embraced the proven benefits that come to patients and health care staff when Spiritual Care is reliably

available. Resources for Spiritual Care chaplains now come directly from the hospital budget. [Chapman House Hospice still has a chaplain, too, though now hired directly by the Hospice.]

This is a tremendous step forward. Brightshores should be congratulated for ensuring solid Professional Spiritual Care services at all its sites.

5 chaplains work across the Brightshores Health System to respond to your spiritual needs. They cover Owen Sound, Meaford, Markdale, Southampton, Wiarton and Lion's Head hospitals. GBSCC still employs 4 chaplains serving Palliative Care patients through Ontario Health At Home. One of these also serves Hanover and District Hospital.

Unfortunately, South Bruce Grey Health Centre hospitals - Walkerton, Kincardine, Chesley and Durham – recently chose to no longer have chaplains. The GBSCC continues to advocate for a resumption of chaplaincy services there.

The GBSCC promotes strong, quality Spiritual Care in our area. We are presently moving slowly to a new model for our work anticipating a greater focus on Spiritual Care education in the coming years. A Spiritual Care Conference is planned for October 2025.

For hospital leaders and staff, these are difficult times. Our area is growing. Hospitals' budgets are stretched as they care for more and more patients, often without extra funding. This can lead to pressures on front-line staff and health risks for them, too. Questions about life's meaning are no less a part of caregivers' lives than of patients. Chaplains are there for you. Don't hesitate to call or ask for their assistance if you find yourself in hospital.

Rev'd Graham Bland



SUNDAY HUMOUR



One day at church, a priest delivers a sermon about the importance of forgiving your enemies. When he is a third of the way through the sermon, he says, "Raise your hand if you are now willing to forgive your enemies." Half of the people in the church raise their hands, so the priest continues the sermon.

When he is two thirds of the way through the sermon, he says, "Raise your hand if you are now willing to forgive your enemies." Three quarters of the people in the church raise their hands, so the priest continues the sermon.

When he has completely finished the sermon, he says, "Raise your hand if you are now willing to forgive your enemies." All the people in the church raise their hands, except one little old lady.

The priest goes to the old lady and asks, "Why are you still unwilling to forgive your enemies?"

"Simple," the old lady replies. "I have no enemies." "You have no enemies, and how old are you?" The response came quickly '96'.

"Your 96 and have no enemies?" "None at all."

The priest is amazed. "Come up to the front with me! So, the priest and the old lady go up to the front of the church. The priest says, "Please explain to my entire congregation how it is possible that you have no enemies!"

"Simple," says the old lady. "I outlived them all."

Brainy Quotes

I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

C. S. Lewis



DECEMBER Crossword Puzzle

Solution - XXIII



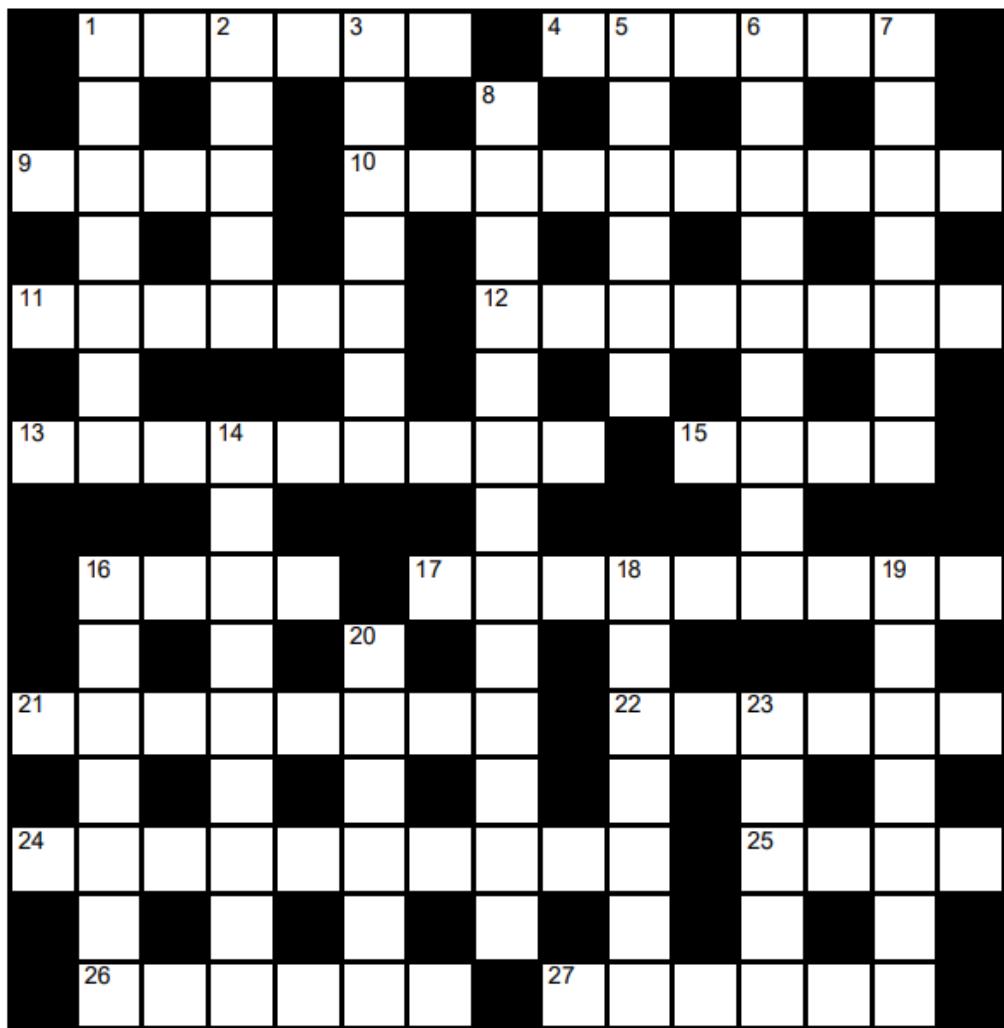
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BIBLE CROSWORD XVI

Across

- 1 These were not to be multiplied by kings (6)
- 4 Immersed (6)
- 9 Implore (4)
- 10 Revelation (10)
- 11 A son of Bebai (6)
- 12 Courteous (8)
- 13 Like the sower's seed (9)
- 15 Number of virgins who were wise (4)
- 16 Chores (4)
- 17 Woodworker (9)
- 21 A city of Macedonia (8)
- 22 Grownups (6)
- 24 Inhabitants of an important Syrian city (10)
- 25 Perfect (4)
- 26 Truthful (6)
- 27 Loved deeply (6)



by *Philologus*

© BiblePuzzles.com

Down

- 1 Nonconformist (7)
- 2 Relating to kings and queens (5)
- 3 Test (7)
- 5 Prophet (6)
- 6 Luke's profession (9)
- 7 Conflict (7)
- 8 Gatherings (13)
- 14 A forger of brass and iron (5-4)
- 16 Very young king (7)
- 18 Worshipped (7)
- 19 Went into (7)
- 20 Aromatic substances (6)
- 23 Like the room used for the last supper (5)



Lutheran and Anglican Ministries of the Bruce Peninsula



LUTHERAN & ANGLICAN CONGREGATIONS EVENTS CALENDAR JANUARY 2025

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Lutheran & Anglican Ministries of the Bruce Office 519-534-1604 Office Hours: Wednesday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.		1.	2. 10:00 a.m. <i>Virtual Bible Study</i>	3.	4.
5. 9:30 St. Peter's Trinity 11:30 Christ Church 2:00 St. Edmund's	6.	7.	8.	9. 10:00 a.m. <i>Virtual Bible Study</i> 2:00 p.m. PEAT	10.	11. 10:00 am Christ Church Council
12 9:30 St. Peter's Trinity 11:30 Christ Church 2:00 St. Edmund's	13.	14. Golden Dawn 10:30	15. 9:00 Ministries - Zoom 10:00 PPC - Zoom	16. 10:00 a.m. <i>Virtual Bible Study</i> 10:00 am Clericus	17.	18.
19. 9:30 St. Peter's Trinity 11:30 Christ Church 2:00 St. Edmund's	20.	21. 10:00 Lutheran Clergy Cluster	22	23. 10:00 a.m. <i>Virtual Bible Study</i>	24.	25. Christ Church Council Vestry Preparation
26 9:30 St. Peter's Trinity 11:30 Christ Church 2:00 St. Edmund's	27.	28. 4:00 W.I.G. at St. John's United, Wiarton	29.	30. 10:00 a.m. <i>Virtual Bible Study</i>	31.	

AVGEN ORDERS DUE

Parish Office Hours are now Wednesday and Thursday