Office of the Primate

The Anglican Church of Canada
L'Église anglicane du Canada

November 2026

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women

On November 30, 1976, on the Feast of Saint Andrew, a traditional day for ordinations, several people were ordained as priests in the Church of God at services across the country. Six of them were the first in a long succession of women to be ordained as priests in the Anglican Church of Canada.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women, we gratefully celebrate the gifts of women who serve in ordained ministry as priests—and as deacons, archdeacons, deans, bishops, and archbishops. Many of us have no memory of a time when women did not serve in these ways; others remember the days when women were a tiny minority among ordained persons or when there were none in holy orders.

The ordination of women came about because women and men believed that it was profoundly right from every perspective and through every lens. These people of conviction and courage spoke out, put themselves forward, and made decisions. They took concrete action to discern, to demonstrate and, ultimately, to consecrate. And so, our church was blessed and enriched—and continues to be—by the gifts of priests who are women.

At the November meeting of the Council of General Synod, we celebrated this 50th anniversary with prayers and hymns. We sang "God of the Women" by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. This verse stayed in my mind:

God of the women long put to the test,
Left out of stories, forgotten, oppressed,
Quietly asking: "Who smiled at my birth?" —
In Jesus' dying you show us our worth.

As we joyfully lift up and celebrate the strong and talented women who serve in the ordained ministry of our beloved church, let us remember that we, together, are a living witness, a beacon, to every woman, every community and every place—in our country and around the world—where girls and women continue to be left out, forgotten, oppressed.

May we, like our forebears who gave us the ordination of women to the priesthood, courageously demonstrate our conviction that every person is made in the image of God and is worthy of dignity, inclusion, and celebration.

The Most Reverend Shane Parker
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