

Making Connections

# Ride the Cariboo Trail

*Ministry and Mission Insights from Cariboo Presbyterian Church*



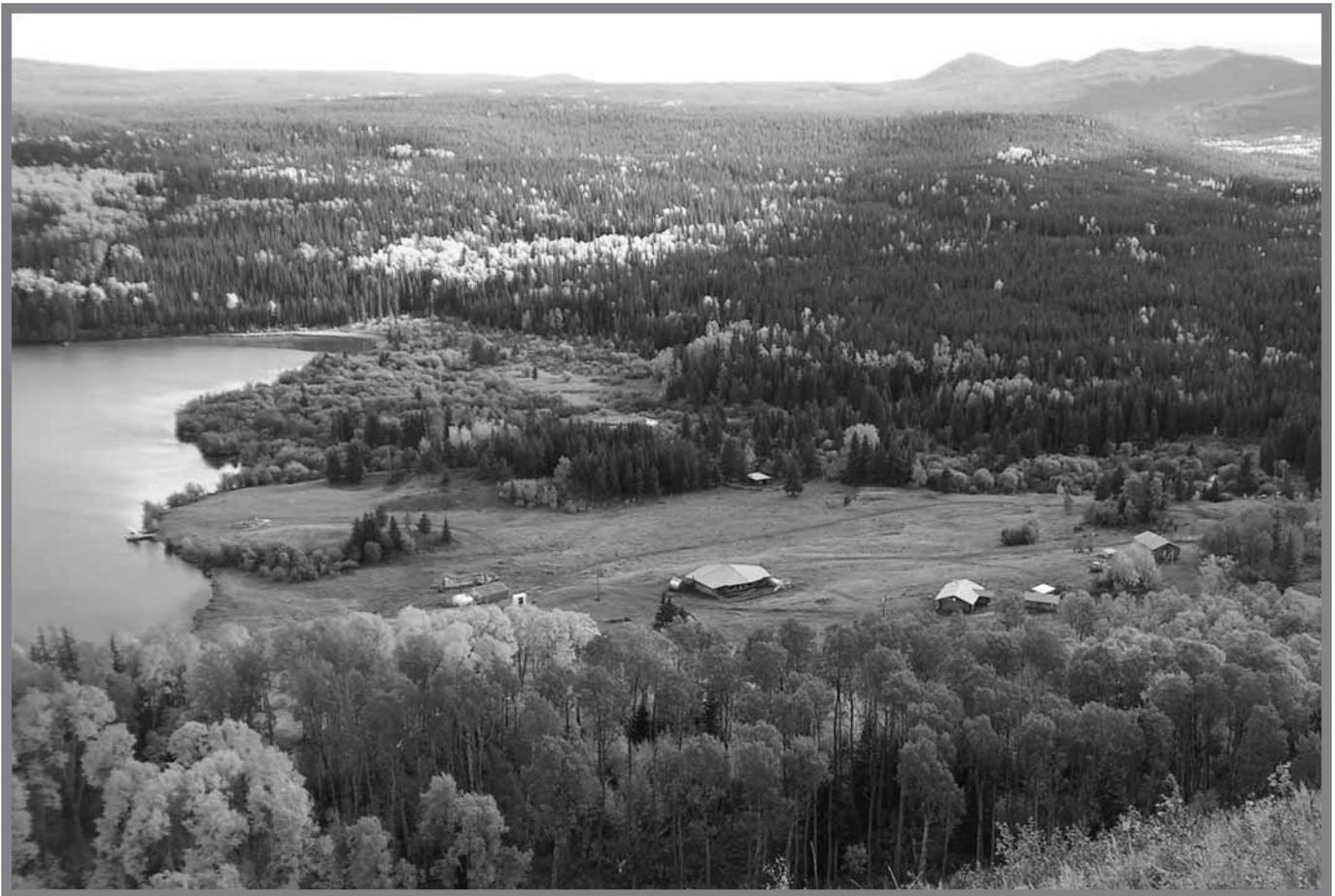
by Shannon Bell-Wyminga

The Church's Study 2011-2013 • The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Making Connections

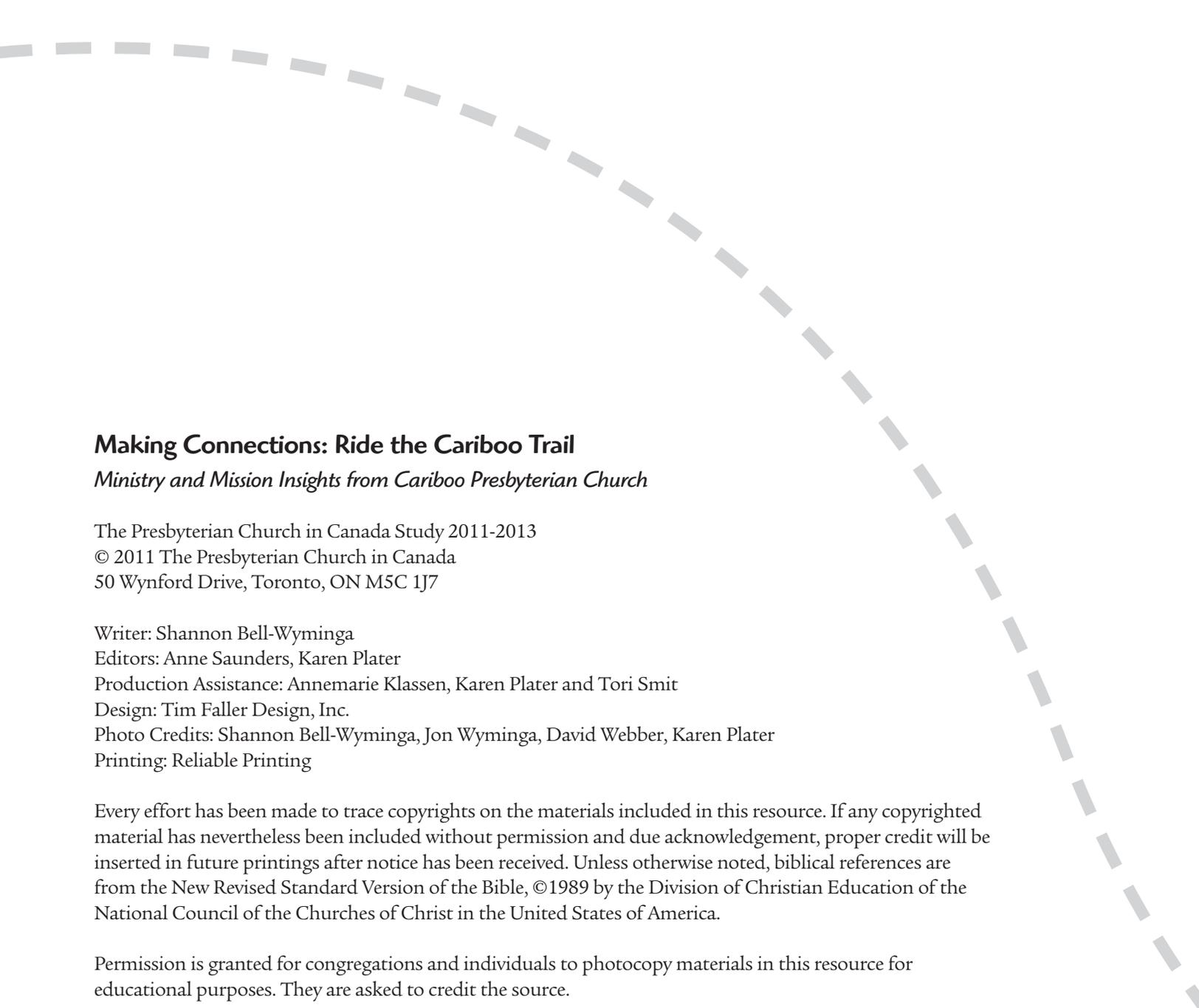
# Ride the Cariboo Trail

*Ministry and Mission Insights from Cariboo Presbyterian Church*



by Shannon Bell-Wyminga

The Church's Study 2011-2013  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada



## **Making Connections: Ride the Cariboo Trail**

### *Ministry and Mission Insights from Cariboo Presbyterian Church*

The Presbyterian Church in Canada Study 2011-2013  
© 2011 The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M5C 1J7

Writer: Shannon Bell-Wyminga  
Editors: Anne Saunders, Karen Plater  
Production Assistance: Annemarie Klassen, Karen Plater and Tori Smit  
Design: Tim Faller Design, Inc.  
Photo Credits: Shannon Bell-Wyminga, Jon Wyminga, David Webber, Karen Plater  
Printing: Reliable Printing

Every effort has been made to trace copyrights on the materials included in this resource. If any copyrighted material has nevertheless been included without permission and due acknowledgement, proper credit will be inserted in future printings after notice has been received. Unless otherwise noted, biblical references are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, ©1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Permission is granted for congregations and individuals to photocopy materials in this resource for educational purposes. They are asked to credit the source.

We are grateful to the Women's Missionary Society for financial assistance in the production of this study.

PRINTED IN CANADA

## **About the Author**

### **Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

Shannon Bell-Wyminga and her husband, Jon Wyminga, are ministers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Shannon and Jon are part of the ministry team in Cariboo Presbyterian Church. They have two teenage daughters, Shelby and Joelle. They live in a log cabin in the bush on the edge of the Ndazkoh First Nation reserve in the Central Interior of British Columbia. An hour and a half drive from the nearest town, they minister among the Southern Carrier (Dakelh) people as well as the non-Native ranchers and loggers in the Cariboo region. Ministry takes them all over logging roads and mountain areas as they seek to reach out with Christ's love to the people of the region.

# Contents

## Introduction

Cariboo Presbyterian Church	4
Tips on leading the study	5
How to use this study	7

<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Build relationships</b>	<b>8</b>
	<i>House Church at Punchaw</i>	

<b>Session 2</b>	<b>Discover the culture of the kingdom</b>	<b>15</b>
	<i>House Church at Ndazkoh</i>	

<b>Session 3</b>	<b>Include children</b>	<b>23</b>
	<i>Kids' Space</i>	

<b>Session 4</b>	<b>Use your gifts</b>	<b>32</b>
	<i>House Church at McLeese Lake</i>	

<b>Session 5</b>	<b>Go out</b>	<b>38</b>
	<i>House Church at 100 Mile House</i>	

## Appendix

The Carrier Language	44
Button Blanket	45
Prayer Stick	46
Prayers	46
Map of the Cariboo Chilcotin region	48

# Introduction

**Welcome to the Cariboo** – a vast region of forests, ranches, reserves, scattered communities and people in the Central Interior of British Columbia. The Cariboo Chilcotin area covers over 80,000 square kilometres with an overall population of about 70,000 people. There are three large communities in the region – 100 Mile House (2,000), Williams Lake (12,000), and Quesnel (10,000). The rest of the population is spread throughout the area on ranches, First Nations reserves and in small villages and communities. Many people drive an hour or more to a larger centre for groceries, fuel, medical care, recreational facilities and even schools. A good number of these people are hours away and live beyond the reach of hydro, phone and gas lines; they must meet their own needs for heat, power and communication.

## Cariboo Presbyterian Church: Geography

Part of the reality of church in the Cariboo is the travel involved in getting to the various ministry points each week.

A road map of British Columbia (the CAA provides a good one free to members) shows the Cariboo region. To define the area served by Cariboo Presbyterian Church, find Cache Creek along Hwy 97 North, part way up from Vancouver. Find Lillooet a little south and west of Cache Creek. Draw a line from Cache Creek to Lillooet and then straight out to the Pacific coast. Then draw a line from Cache Creek over to the Alberta border. This is the southern boundary (excluding Kamloops). Now find Prince George which is about half way up the province on Hwy 97 North. Draw a line just a little below Prince George west all the way to the coast and east along Hwy 16 to the Alberta border. This is the northern boundary. You have now outlined the approximate area of the Cariboo Chilcotin and the parish of Cariboo Presbyterian Church! The ministry team of Jon Wyminga and Shannon Bell-Wyminga live in Nazko and cover the territory north of McLeese Lake; David and Linda Webber live in Lake La Hache and cover all the area from McLeese Lake southward. (See map on page 48)

## Cariboo Presbyterian Church

It is into this widespread region that David and Linda Webber began Cariboo Presbyterian Church, a ministry of house churches, in 1989. The vision of the church was, and continues to be, to reach out with the love of Jesus Christ to people who live beyond the traditional church in the rural and remote areas of the Cariboo Chilcotin region. The church was established by funding from the churches of the Synod of British Columbia and later *Presbyterians Sharing*, the ministry and mission fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, began funding it as well. The ministry recognizes that the traditional model of church with a building is not practical in a setting such as the Cariboo; but that the church, as the people of God, is called to be present and active in reaching out with Christ's love to people who live in rural and remote places. Read the box *Cariboo Presbyterian Church: Geography*.

Within five years, David and Linda had established six house churches and a children's outreach program on Ndazkoh First Nation Reserve. At that point they called another ministry couple to join them. Jon Wyminga and Shannon Bell-Wyminga began serving in the Cariboo in 1994. In 2003 Charles McNeil joined the team expanding the ministry further. Recently he moved to Alberta to join a new regional ministry there. At present, Cariboo Presbyterian Church has two full-time ministry teams and two elders, Bruce Wilcox and Ginny Alexander, who have been designated as lay missionaries and who lead worship on a regular basis in specific places.

Over the years, God's Spirit led and equipped team members in different ways, resulting in each ministry team responding to its unique call. In the southern part of the Cariboo, David and Linda focus on the development and strengthening of Christian communities in house churches and equipping members to reach out to their own communities with Christ's love. In the north, where many First Nations people live, Jon and Shannon focus on ministry with the Southern Carrier First Nation and the communities around the Ndazkoh area. You will see these varying expressions of ministry in this study.

## Mission and Ministry

One distinction that Cariboo Presbyterian Church makes in its work is the difference between “ministry” and “mission.” It defines ministry as what we do to build up the church and serve the needs of those within our body. Things like church school, choir, worship teams, the session and board, Bible study, and specialized groups serve the church body. These benefit the church; they are good and necessary for the church to grow and function well.

Mission, on the other hand, is what we do for those outside the church to express to them the love of Christ, without expectation of any direct benefit to the church itself. Church growth strategies then are defined under ministry since they are designed to bring people into the church. Mission will hopefully have that result as people see the love of Christ lived out; but the church does not love and serve people in mission simply to that end. Cariboo Presbyterian Church is a mission of the wider church, of people and congregations who support our outreach to rural and remote areas in the Cariboo, but who do not directly benefit from that work. Cariboo Presbyterian Church has opportunities to be involved in both ministry and mission in Canada, just like every Presbyterian congregation.

It is hoped that the participants and leaders who delve into this study will be excited about what God is doing right here and now in our own country. There are many people who have had no opportunity to hear of God’s love or join in worship with other believers. People are isolated because of geography, but also because of differences in culture, income, race and many other things; and this happens in cities, as well as in remote areas. God calls all of us to reach out to those who are on the fringe, or isolated, to show them the deep love and healing power of Jesus for their lives – whether they are five, 50 or 95 years old! Let this study inspire you to see the opportunities for ministry and mission in your own back yard, as well as in the remote regions of our country.

---

## Tips on leading the study

Each session takes participants to a different part of the Cariboo region and a different house church. The one exception is Session Three which focuses on one of the children’s programs. Each session begins with a statement of goals and materials needed for that session (see *Recommended materials for all session*”), and closes in prayer. The structure of all five sessions includes the format of house church worship.

### Setting the scene

This section begins with an exercise to focus participants on their own experiences related to the session’s theme. The connection is then made with a particular church or program of Cariboo Presbyterian Church. The *Getting There* section helps people feel what it is like to be in the Cariboo. The participants see what it takes for one of the ministry team to get to the ministry point from Nazko (Shannon and Jon) or Lake La Hache (David Webber.)

### Worship

In the main part of the study you meet together and follow the structure of a house church service. It’s like getting to visit without leaving your own community! Participants of house churches gather in peoples’ homes, usually sitting in a circle or semi-circle in their living room. See *Prepare for worship*, p. 6.

**Call to worship:** House church services begin with words of scripture, setting the tone for our worship time together.

### Recommended materials for all sessions

- ◆ Map of British Columbia showing the Cariboo Chilcotin region
- ◆ Download photos to accompany the stories at [www.presbyterian.ca/missionstudy](http://www.presbyterian.ca/missionstudy). Print the photos to show the group or project them with a computer and projector. A script to accompany the photos is included on the website.
- ◆ Worship items: Bibles, personal musical instruments; percussion items for distribution, music books (*Book of Praise*, 1997; songbooks; or CDs). Option: For the music recommended by our partner, access it on the Internet on YouTube and sing along

## Photos

Photographs to accompany each session can be found at [www.presbyterian.ca/missionstudy](http://www.presbyterian.ca/missionstudy). The photos show a) the territory through which the ministry team travels and b) the partner church or program in progress. The territory photos can be used in the Getting there section, while the program photos are used in the partner's stories. The photos can be printed out, shown on a laptop or projected onto a screen for viewing. You have the option of downloading the individual photos or using them in an already prepared PowerPoint with an accompanying script showing when to change the photos.

## Prepare for worship

Arrange all seats in a circle, hand out Bibles and music books. Ask participants with musical instruments to have them ready; hand out percussion items like tambourines, shakers, and drums to others who are interested. Relax and be ready to participate in discussion, prayer and music throughout worship!



## Prayer circle

In most First Nations traditions, prayer is done in a circle. In the circle everyone is equal and respects one another. An item (such as a prayer stick, talking stone, or eagle feather) is passed around the circle in the direction of the sun (clockwise) as each person has a chance to pray. While the person has the item, it is their turn to offer their prayers and everyone else is quiet. When the item comes back to the first person, the prayer is finished. This style of prayer gives everyone in the circle the option to offer prayer without anxiety of when to jump in, as well as the option to pass the item on. – From *We are One in the Spirit Liturgical Resources*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2010, p. 16

**Pray:** It is often the practice to ask someone “on the spot” to open the worship time with prayer. Ask different people to lead the prayer each week. See the box *Prayer circle*.

*Note: For groups not as comfortable praying spontaneously, the appendix includes prayers for each of the session. Groups are encouraged, throughout the sessions, to move towards more spontaneous prayers.*

**Praise:** Music and worship is an important part of every ministry point. Music in the Cariboo is an eclectic mix and their own songbook is used. It contains traditional hymns, gospel tunes, folk style songs as well as contemporary praise songs. As well, in the northern points there is a supplementary book which includes songs with First Nations chants and the Carrier language. (See *First Nations worship music*.) Praise time usually lasts at least 30 minutes!

The study recommends music that is used widely in the house churches. Most of the music can be found on CDs or on the Internet (e.g. music videos on YouTube). The music from the *Book of Praise* is given as alternative suggestions, but is not really the music used in the house churches, and you are encourage to try something new!

**Hear a partner's story:** In this section participants read a story from a particular ministry point of Cariboo Presbyterian Church. A story could be told by one person who prepares ahead of time, or read in parts by several people. Together the stories give a broad overview of Cariboo Presbyterian Church and the unique nature of its ministry points. There are over 20 different ministry points, each with its own story, so this is just a sampling (see *Five partner stories*). Photos to accompany the stories can be found online. See *Photos* box. Share reactions and use the questions to discuss the story. Make connections with the session theme and reflect on ministry in Cariboo Presbyterian Church as well as in your own lives and congregations.

**Hear God’s word:** This section is like a Bible study with a presentation of scripture along with discussion questions. The questions are meant to help participants further explore what the scripture is saying about the session theme – to us in Cariboo Presbyterian Church and to participants in their congregation.

**Pray:** In every mission point’s worship there is time for prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, when people share in open prayer the needs they are aware of. Groups are encouraged to be spontaneous in praying together. For groups not as comfortable praying spontaneously, the appendix includes suggestions for each session. Groups are encouraged, throughout the sessions, to move towards more spontaneous prayers.

### Live it out

*Choose one or more of the activities.* In every session several suggestions are provided for crafts and activities which respond to the material in the study. Choose options that will help the participants apply what they learned from the session’s material and discussions. The suggestions are meant to stir up excitement for ministry and mission in their own communities and contexts.

### Go out

Each session closes with a prayer to send the participants out and live what they have learned in this study.

---

## How to use this study

The underlying themes of this study are common concerns in congregational life today:

- ◆ building relationships
- ◆ embracing diversity
- ◆ including children
- ◆ sharing leadership
- ◆ reaching out

The study is designed for groups to gather for five 60-90 minute sessions with members sharing leadership. In each session participants will have the opportunity to pray, sing, hear a partner’s story, study God’s word, share their experiences, discuss and reflect together, and apply what they have learned.

Parts of this study – the prayers, songs, partner stories, Bible passages, slides, and some group responses like a banner – can be used for presentations to another group, a congregational meeting, or in worship. By sharing your study experience and learning with others in your congregation, you can encourage discussion and reflection among members.

## First Nations worship music

In Cariboo First Nations worship, favourite pieces come from these Christian artists:

### Cheryl Bear

([www.cherylbear.com](http://www.cherylbear.com)) is a Carrier recording artist and pastor who has released two recordings. Her song “Drum Doxology” is great for people of all ages, using the familiar words of the doxology along with a new tune and Native chant. This can be seen and heard on YouTube.

### Broken Walls

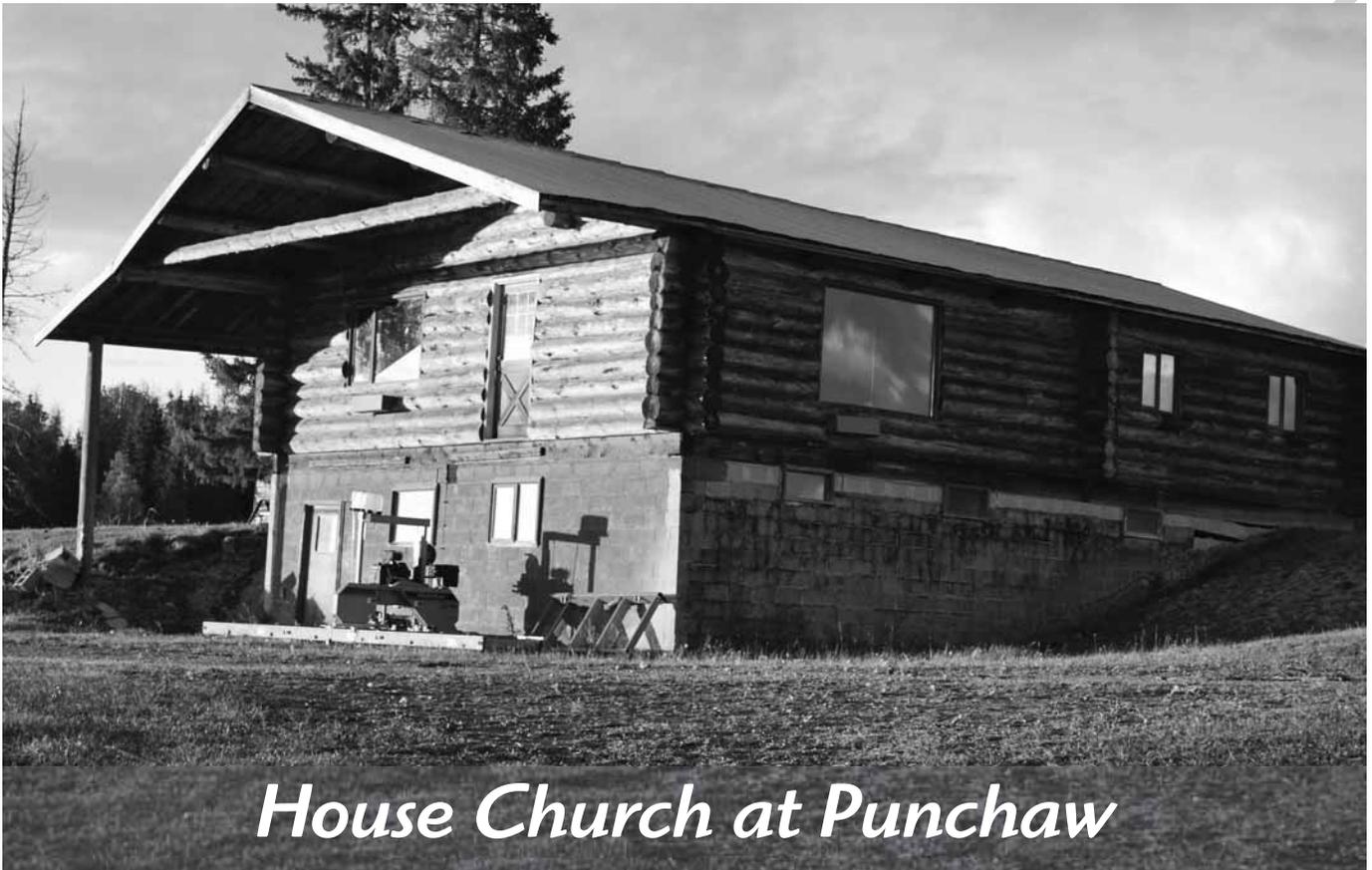
([www.brokenwalls.com](http://www.brokenwalls.com)) is a worship band with numerous recordings and led by Ontario Mohawk Jonathan Maracle. Many of their songs are drum songs and chants. A favourite of the Cariboo Church in Ndazkoh is “River of Life.” This can be heard on YouTube.

---

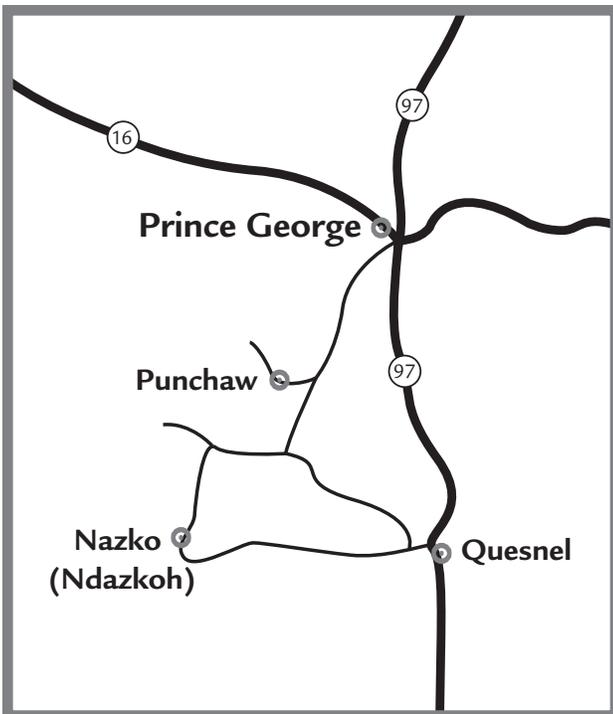
## Five partner stories

Each story is true in the sense that it accurately reflects the story of that Cariboo ministry. But not all the characters or events are real. The first story of Anne in Punchaw is her real story. In Session Two, Ruth is representative of the Ndazkoh First Nation elders and residential school survivors in the community; there isn’t a real Ruth, but her story is typical. The stories of Shannon and Elaine in children’s ministry (Session Three) and Bruce and Ginny as lay missionaries (Session Five) are about real people, and the stories are true but composites of normal happenings in those settings. The story of Devin in Session Four is a composite of the experiences of younger members in the McLeese Lake house church.

# Build relationships



*House Church at Punchaw*



## Goals

1. To introduce participants to house church worship in Cariboo Presbyterian Church.
2. To identify characteristics of house churches in biblical and modern times.
3. To reflect on forms of isolation in the world today.
4. To reflect on the importance of mutual support within the body of Christ.

## Materials

- ◆ See *Recommended materials for all sessions* on page 5
- ◆ Flipchart paper and marker
- ◆ Supplies for the response activities the group might choose to do

---

## Setting the scene

### *Experiences of isolation*

Despite the fundamental belief of churchgoers and many non-churchgoers that “we are not alone,” isolation and feelings of being alone are experiences we have all had at one time or another. Turn to a partner and take a few minutes to share an example of a time when you felt

- 1) most isolated from other people and
- 2) most isolated from God.

As a group, talk about these experiences, perhaps listing them in two columns on a piece of paper. Try to identify underlying causes of the isolation, like physical separation, emotional trauma, spiritual crisis, secular distractions, differences in values or beliefs. Comment on how our judgments about the choices and lifestyles of others can create isolation.



### *Getting there*

The ministers and members of Cariboo Presbyterian Church know about isolation. The geographic boundaries of this church extend from Prince George in the north to Kamloops in the south, from the Pacific west coast of British Columbia (B.C.) east to the Alberta border. This is a region of over 87,000 square kilometres. While the church does not cover the whole area, it is the only Presbyterian church within these boundaries and its members are scattered. The ministry teams drive from 2,000 to 2,500 km per week to get to and from ministry points.

Today we imagine that we are participating in worship in the Punchaw house church. To get to Punchaw, Shannon Bell-Wyominga and her husband Jon Wyominga, both ministers, travel two hours north toward Prince George on logging roads from their home in Nazko. For this study we will be using the Carrier First Nation spelling, Ndazkoh. See the Appendix for the pronunciation key for the Carrier language.

---

## Worship in Punchaw house church

See *Prepare for worship* on page 6.

### **Call to worship**

Divide participants in two groups. Responsively read Psalm 22. Reflect silently for a moment on the psalmist’s emotional conversation with God. Listen to the emotions that the psalmist expresses in the first verse and those that follow. Notice the different emotions that emerge in the last half of the psalm, when the psalmist acknowledges being *in the midst of the congregation*.

### **Pray**

At the Cariboo House churches someone will open worship with prayer. Choose someone to begin the worship time in prayer.

## Praise

“Come, Now is the Time to Worship” (Brian Doerksen ©1998 Vineyard Songs)

“We Have Come Into His House” (Bruce Ballinger ©1976 Sound III Inc.)

Alternatively, choose your own favourite worship songs or select from these hymns in the *Book of Praise* (1997); #412 “Come, let us sing to the Lord our song”; #447 “O Great Spirit”; #455 “Day by day”; #466 “Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet.”

---

## Hear a partner’s story

*This story tells about the real experiences of Anne,  
a member of Cariboo Presbyterian Church, and her family.*

Drive an hour into the bush from Prince George (which itself is a 10 hour drive north of Vancouver) and you will travel through many kilometers of forest with occasional meadows and logging cut blocks to get to the scattered ranches that make up the community of Punchaw. Community is a term to be used in a purely relational way since no two ranches are closer than several kilometers from one another. The people who live here often don’t see one another for long stretches of time.

Anne and her husband Mike homesteaded in Punchaw in the 1960s. They cleared acres of land to create grazing lands and hay meadows for cattle; felled and peeled logs to make a house that still stands, having been home to their family for three generations. Over time they built up a herd of beef cattle. Anne and her family were faithful followers of Christ, but they missed being able to worship and to share in Christian fellowship. The nearest church in Prince George is an hour away by truck, an even greater distance by lifestyle and culture. As their family grew up, each of their children adopted the same lifestyle of living in the remote ranching community. They

married, started their own families, moving several kilometers away to begin clearing land for their own ranches. Often they had to supplement their income to support their families and ranches with other work like logging, mill work and truck driving. Anne and Mike’s grandchildren were also raised to know the love of God in their lives.

Tragedy struck when their oldest son was killed in an accident. Anne and Mike’s family clung to their faith, but felt very alone through this dark time. Several years later



when Cariboo Presbyterian Church began house church meetings in the region, the minister, Dave Webber, made contact with Anne and Mike and their family. Dave had known their son before his death and recognized that the church was not available to this faithful family during their time of need. He offered to meet with them for worship in their home on a bi-weekly basis. This was the beginning of the Punchaw house church.

Punchaw house church members have lived and worshipped and loved God together through more than two decades. Children of the house church have grown, “sprouted wings,” and moved out into the world. Members have experienced family challenges, struggled with isolation, endured long harsh winters, borne the economic impacts of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and fluctuating beef demands and prices, and questioned whether there is still a place in this world for small family ranches. Most recently they have grieved together the loss of Mike, their husband, father and grandfather.

Through the past 22 years, they have not faced it all alone. They prayed and worshipped together in their house church; they also knew they were part of the larger Cariboo Presbyterian Church. They have regularly prayed for people in other house churches, even praying for them by name though they had never seen their faces. And those same brothers and sisters, in faith communities hours away, have prayed for the Punchaw people.

Like all house churches, there have been changes over the years. Most of the grandchildren have grown up and left the ranching lifestyle for a more urban one, finding their own ways and callings. Anne now lives alone with fewer animals. She still keeps sheep and goats and a few cattle, but not to the extent she once did. Worship gatherings are smaller but still life-giving to these people. They continue to witness to neighbours on surrounding ranches, continuing to be the church – the light of Christ – where otherwise there would be none.

### **Share your reactions to Anne’s story.**

1. What do you think it would be like to live in a remote community with many kilometers between you and the nearest neighbour? How would this affect your faith and ability to follow Jesus?
2. What is it about being a part of a church that feeds you? How has the body of Christ been there for you during the highs and lows of life?
3. Read the box “What is a house church?” What house churches have you heard about? Why do you think some Christians have turned to this model of church? What is it about being a part of a traditional congregation that you would miss in Punchaw house church? What benefits might you gain from the Punchaw worship experience?
4. Anne and her family are isolated because of geography and low rural population density. In your region of Canada, what kinds of isolation separate people from Christian worship and fellowship?
5. Who are the isolated people in your faith community? In your neighbourhood? Consider people who are poor, unemployed, parolees, grieving, abused, challenged in some way, coping with mental illness, without any faith upbringing, newcomers/strangers, and people in non-traditional families – how might they be isolated?

## What is a house church?

A house church is a small community of Christians who meet in a private home, usually belonging to one of the community members. Worship is informal, often with shared leadership, and usually followed by a communal meal. Over the centuries the house church “model” has been adopted for a variety of reasons and in many countries.

## House churches then and now

The early church had no church buildings. Originally Jewish Christians met in the synagogues (Acts 2:46), but as Christianity grew and spread among Gentiles, increasingly the early Christians gathered and worshipped in each other’s homes. It was to such house churches in Corinth, Phillipi and Thessalonica that Paul wrote many of his letters (see Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1). Also, because of persecution by Roman authorities, many Christians worshipped secretly – even in caves and catacombs. With Emperor Constantine’s Edict of Milan in 313 CE, Christians were free to worship publicly and the first church buildings were constructed.

“Paradoxically,” says an article in the *Economist* (October, 2008), “the need to keep congregations small helped spread the faith. That happens in China now.” The largest and fastest-growing group of Christians in China belongs to Protestant “house churches,” small congregations that meet privately in people’s homes out of sight of the Communist Party. There are thousands of them across the country. The high rate of growth of new churches is a blessing and a curse for the house-church movement. “We don’t have salaries to pay or churches to build,” says one Chinese Christian. But “management quality” is hard to maintain. While churches can get hold of Bibles or download hymn books from the Internet, they cannot so easily find experienced pastors.

## Hear God’s word

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13.

The church in Thessalonica was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey. He preached in the synagogue in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-3); both Jews and Gentiles “were persuaded” (Acts 17:4). However, due to Jewish opposition, Paul and his companion Silas had to flee abruptly, and the church was on it’s own. Despite persecution, this church grew.

While the Thessalonian church is not explicitly identified as a house church, Acts 17:5-8 describes Jason as hosting Paul and other Christians. Not able to visit himself, Paul had sent Timothy whose report described a strong and growing community of faith.

To help experience the personal nature of Paul’s letter read today’s passage aloud a second time, but with the reader substituting your congregation’s name (e.g. St. Andrew’s, Cariboo, Knox) for the word “you” every time it appears. Read the box *House churches then and now* and reflect on the role of persecution in fostering the growth of house churches.

Share your reactions to the Thessalonians passage.

1. Describe the relationship between Paul (in Athens at the time of writing) and the Thessalonian church members. How did visits and communication between Paul and members of such congregations affect each of them?
2. While we have religious freedom in Canada, societal trends of secularization and individualism are seen as threatening the future of many churches. Many of our congregations are struggling; most congregations are isolated from one another. How can we form relationships and build community to encourage and strengthen one another?
3. Many congregations feel they are increasingly isolated from people in their neighbourhoods, even though studies show that Canadians are still interested in God. (See *Canadians and God*.) Review the barriers identified in the opening exercise. How can we break down barriers? How can we have an effect on the spiritual lives of people who are isolated for one reason or another?
4. In what ways can our judgments of the choices and lifestyles of others create isolation? How can we work to overcome that? How could your group grow and benefit from reaching out to the people around you who are lonely and on the ‘fringe’?

## Pray

Invite people in the circle to share items of concern and thanksgiving. Spend a few minutes in open prayer. The leader can start and leave silence for others to offer up prayers. Finish the prayer time with the Lord's Prayer together.

---

## Live it out

*Choose one or more of the following activities.*

### Create your own 'church in a box'

In the Cariboo we carry all we need for worship services in a plastic tote box. Create your own for portable worship services. Include song books, musicians books, mini podium that sits on the top of the box for music and notes, plate, cup and small cups for communion (make sure they are not breakable!), anointing oil, a gift bag or can for offerings, musical instruments such as tambourine, shakers or rattles and extra Bibles. Use this church in a box for the study and to take church to places outside your regular place of worship.

### Live in community

Read the box about *Relational-based churches*, p. 14. Share your reactions in pairs or small groups. In the large group, place yourself along a continuum (by lining up or show of hands) describing your congregation as strongly relational at one end and strongly purpose-drive at the other. Promote wider discussion of this matter in your faith community by creating a poster or banner to be displayed prominently with a statement about living in community like "In community, we 'abound in love for one another'" (1 Thess. 3:11) or "What is the news of our church's faith and love?" (1 Thess. 3:6.)

## Canadians and God

According to researcher Reginald Bibby, "God has not disappeared from the lives of the vast majority of Canadians. The average people we pass on sidewalks and roadways and see in supermarkets and mall...most of them believe in God, converse with God, and in nearly one in two cases think they have experienced the presence of God."

– From *Restless Gods*, 2002



## Relational-based churches

One aspect of Cariboo Presbyterian Church is the relational nature of its house churches. Reginald Bibby's research on religion and spirituality in Canada has revealed that "there is nothing more important to Canadians than relationships" (*Restless Gods*, 2002). Some American writer-pastors have translated this into their vision of the 21st century church describing the relational church with its family nature as the opposite to the purpose-driven model, which is compared to a well-run club. Scott Boren (*The Relational Way*, 2007) says, "The American church has to learn not only how to do small groups, but also how to do relationships." The implication is that churches need to know not only how *to meet* in community but also how *to live* in community so that differences like theology or worship style preferences do not divide them.

---

## Boarding Homes Ministry

Boarding Homes Ministry in Toronto, Ontario, is supported through gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*.

*Boarding Homes Ministry* nurtures Christian community by linking residents of boarding homes with visitors from area congregations. Regular visits are established and friendships blossom as this new community becomes united in Jesus. People gather to worship, pray, sing, rejoice and celebrate life together. The residents of these homes are a gift. They can be witty, charming, deeply caring and will greet us with a wonderful hospitality. Residents are brave in the face of often serious illness and tragic isolation. They frequently have great insight into spiritual matters and become our teachers in life and in our understanding of God-among-us.

While currently operating in Toronto, our hope is to generate more teams to link with homes across the country. The need for mutually supportive, small group Christian community is urgent. BHM provides written material for congregations on how to learn where these homes exist in their community and how to generate teams of church visitors. Our spiritual life is bereft without humble, generous, small group communions.

– The Reverend Rodger Hunter, Chaplain,  
Boarding Homes Ministry

From *Stories of Mission 2010*,  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

## Cross barriers

Choose one of the groups in your community you identified as 'isolated' in your discussion time. Think of ways that you can cross the barriers that keep them from feeling welcome in the church or able to join in spiritual growth and fellowship. As a first step, choose a simple activity that you can do together to cross that barrier and reach out in friendship.

## Start or support a house church ministry

Look for places in your community where people are isolated from the opportunity to be part of a worshipping community and investigate the possibility of developing a regular fellowship there. Women's shelters, retirement facilities, boarding homes, jails, university dorms are just a few of the possibilities beyond using individual homes. See the box *Boarding Homes Ministry* for inspiration. Talk with members in your congregation who might already participate in worship in such communities.

## Forge partnerships

Reach out in friendship to another church that is geographically distant from you, possibly in a remote and isolated location. Consider the connections that members of your church have with members in other congregations (e.g. relatives, friends who have moved, student ministers). Alternatively, contact Canadian Ministries/The Vine (1-800-619-7301) for ministries supported by gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*.

Begin by forming a prayer partnership and sharing concerns. Learn about each other through emails, letters and prayer requests. As the relationship develops between your congregations, consider ways to mutually support and strengthen each other.

---

## Go out

Pray or sing together (#580 in the *Book of Praise*):

God be in my head and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart and in my thinking;  
God be at my end and at my departing. Amen.

– Richard Pynson (circa 1514)

# Discover the culture of the kingdom



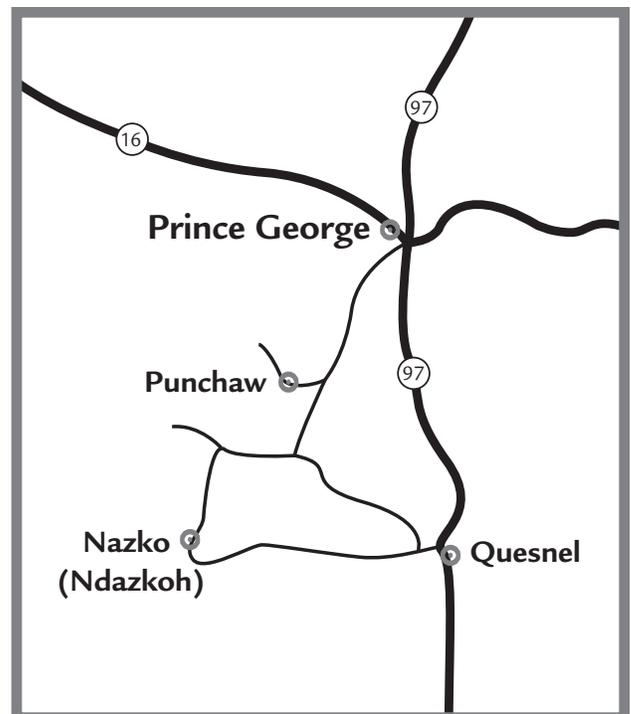
*House Church at Ndazkoh*

## Goals

1. To introduce participants to a First Nations house church worship.
2. To hear the story of a First Nations elder's experience in church.
3. To reflect on the role of culture in the church.
4. To think about ways the church can cross cultures in order to do the mission of Christ.

## Materials

- ◆ See *Recommended materials for all sessions* on page 5
- ◆ Item for a prayer circle such as a stone, talking stick or eagle feather. See *Prayer Circle* on page 6
- ◆ Supplies for the response activities the group might choose to do





---

## Setting the scene

### *Building Community*

We have all been part of communities; and despite the strong trend toward individualism in today's society, most of us still value belonging to a community. What are some of the communities you have belonged to? What has defined these communities for you – perhaps the location, physical boundaries, age, religious denomination, special interest or activity? If you are a long-time churchgoer, reflect on the faith communities you have been part of from your earliest experiences to the present.

With a partner or in small groups, share a positive community experience. What gave you a sense of belonging? What connected you to the other members? What did you have in common? What were some of the sources of diversity, if any, in that community? What impact does diversity have on the sense of community? How did you discover unity amidst diversity?

### *Getting there*

Today we imagine participating in the Sunday evening worship of the house church of the Ndazkoh First Nations reserve. While ministers Shannon and Jon live by the reserve, Shannon spends Sunday afternoons at the Quesnel house church. So in fact she must drive a couple of hours west from Quesnel to get home for the evening service.

Find Nazko on the map. (Note: Ndazkoh is the Carrier spelling of the place. To find it on a map use the English spelling of Nazko.) Go straight East and you will find Quesnel where the afternoon service took place. Ndazkoh house church meets in the evening on Sundays.

---

## Worship in the Ndazkoh house church

See *Prepare for worship* on page 6.

### Call to worship

Read Psalm 150 together by going around the circle and taking turns reading a verse.

### Pray

Choose someone in the circle to begin the worship time in prayer.

### Praise

“Drum Doxology” by Cheryl Bear

“Beautiful Great One” by Broken Walls

Alternatively, choose your own favourite worship songs or select from these hymns in the *Book of Praise* (1997): #229 “Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love”; #301 “Many and great, O God, are your works”; #303 “Holy, holy, holy”; #480 “In Christ there is no east or west.”

---

## Hear a partner's story

*Ruth's story is based on the experiences of many of the elders in the Ndazkoh community.*

*Ruth represents the people who grew up going to residential school, removed from their homes and families, and forbidden to speak their own language or practice their cultural traditions and spirituality. Today they live dealing with the brokenness this has caused them, their families and their community.*

Ruth quietly beats on the drum as she sings, "Way yo hi ya. Yah web, way yo hi yah." \* Sometimes it still feels odd to her to be able to sing and play her drum during worship. When she was a young girl at residential school, she was forbidden from singing the ancient chants of her Carrier people or from playing the hand drum. Now in Ndazkoh house church she can drum and sing freely. "Thank you Lord," she prays silently. "What a long way we have come."

At the end of the song, another is chosen. The small, intergenerational group gathered in the living room join their voices in a contemporary praise tune. After four more songs, the drum and rattle, the guitars are all put away and the Bibles are brought out. Around the circle each person reads a few verses in their own translation of Scripture until the reading for that day is finished. Ruth finds it interesting to follow in her Bible; those who can read, do so from other Bibles. Each translation is slightly different and maybe some of those differences will come out in the message tonight.

Then Jon picks up the *Yak'usda Bughunek*, the New Testament in Southern Carrier, and reads the key verses in Ruth's "heart language." She thinks back to her childhood when the teachers would punish them if they were caught speaking her language. Many of her people lost their ability to speak their own language. That is why Ruth works so hard to pass it on to the next generation. She laughs at some of Jon's pronunciation, but is glad that he makes the attempt, that he honours her people by seeking to learn their language.

Listening to today's message in the circle isn't just about listening to Shannon speak. She asks questions and encourages discussion. Although many of the elders are quiet, the younger ones express their thoughts more freely. The message time wraps up after about 30 minutes and Shannon invites people to share concerns for prayer. This time it is the elders who speak up first. These wise women are praying women and always have a list of those in the community in need of prayer.

Listen to the needs:

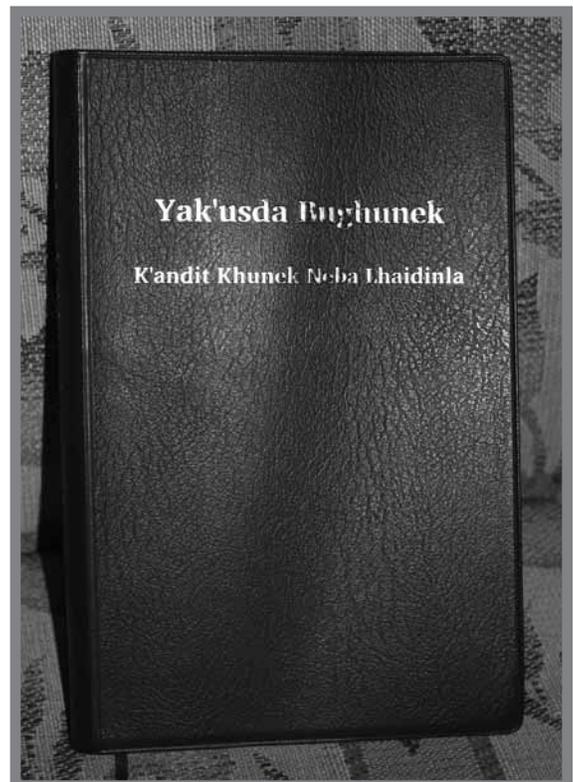
"Pray for Dallas. He's coming home from the treatment centre in two weeks and I really want to see him be strong."

"Pray for Melody. She's going to have her baby any day now."

"Pray for my daughter. She's going in for tests this week to find out what's wrong with her stomach."

"Pray for my grandson. He needs to find a new place to live."

"Pray for my cousin in 'Ulkatcho. Her liver is shutting down."



Ruth thinks of all these people who needed prayer. She knows them all and these prayer needs. In fact there isn't much that she doesn't know about in her small community of Ndazkoh. With only 250 people in the whole area, there aren't many secrets, which means that the joys and pains of everyone affects the entire community in a profound way.

When all the prayer requests have been spoken, Shannon passes around the prayer stick. It is beaded with symbols of the Christian faith with leather and feathers on the ends. The group follows the traditional way of praying, passing the stick around the circle in the direction of the sun as each person is respectfully given a turn to pray silently or aloud. Afterwards they join together in saying the Lords' Prayer, finishing with the blessing spoken in Southern Carrier: "*Ba chah ye chah ndoni chah beboozu be nduboneh*" \*\* meaning "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

With the community gathered around the table after worship, Ruth enjoys her coffee and eating fresh bannock with wild blueberries. They catch up on the news of the week and share the best places to pick berries this season. She looks around the table at the faces. What a mixed group! Young with old; Carrier with non-Native; those who had graduated from high school sit beside those who can not read. This is really what the kingdom of God is about. And to think that for many years Ruth had nothing to do with the church. Her residential school experience made her see God as an angry father who would "get you" if you were bad. Eventually she came to know God the Creator who loves her as a Carrier woman, who gave his own life for her and has the power to heal her hurts. She is thankful every day for her sobriety of over 20 years and the way that Jesus walks with her as she continues on her healing journey. Her desire now is to see her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren come to know the healing power of Jesus in their lives.

*\*This chant is written as an English phonetic version.*

*\*\* See The Carrier Language in the Appendix for pronunciation*

### **Share your reactions to Ruth's story.**

1. What is your 'heart language' – the language you learned as a child? Have you ever worshipped in a totally different language and/or culture? What was different about it? How comfortable were you? Did you find yourself valuing, ridiculing or judging aspects of it?
2. While worshippers today in Presbyterian congregations across Canada have diverse origins that include Scotland, Netherlands, Trinidad, Guyana, India, Korea, the worship remains primarily rooted in the culture of Western Europe, as it does in many churches in countries worldwide. Read the box *The gospel and culture*. Talk about the encounter of cultures. How do you think this impacts people's expression of worship?
3. Consider the definition of culture that goes beyond racial and ethnic differences – "the beliefs, practices, values of a specific group of people in society." Every faith community's worship has a cultural context that includes the language and symbols used, who participates and who doesn't, the choice of music and instruments, the place and timing. What are the cultural origins and practices of your congregation's worship style? How do they reflect the culture of members? How do they reflect the culture of members of the neighbouring community? Are there other cultures in your church that you could draw from and enjoy?

---

## Hear God's word

### Revelation 7:9-17

Read together Revelation 7:9-17. This is a picture of the kingdom of God. Share your reactions to this vision.

1. If you were to describe that scene in your own words, how would you describe all the people who were worshipping together? In what ways were the people expressing unity? In what ways was diversity expressed?
2. How was diversity part of the work of the apostles? Recall the Pentecost story (Acts 2:1-13) and Paul's words, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Refer to the box *In the beginning*. How can we find that kind of balance between unity and uniqueness in the church today?

### I Corinthians 9:19-23

In the epistles we learn of Paul's passion to win people to Christ. He is a man bridging cultures in order to do that. Born and raised as a devout Jew, he was called to serve the very people that he was taught to look down upon. He had to adjust his cultural viewpoint in order to reach them effectively. He had to set aside his cultural biases. Paul was aware of the inequality of power and privilege in his world, and he understood that the Gospel requires the powerful to give up power, to become "weak." Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Share your reactions to the Corinthian passage.

1. How do you understand verse 19? How does Paul view his freedom? What is the result? What cultural practices and perspectives would he have had to let go of in order to live as he describes here?
2. Read the box *For the sake of the gospel*, p. 20. When have you held power and authority? How did that feel for you? For the others involved? When have you been in a situation of being weak and powerlessness? How did that feel for you?

## The gospel and culture

When European explorers arrived in Canada, they were at first dependent on North American Aboriginal people, "For at least 200 years, the newcomers would not have been able to survive the rigours of the climate, succeed in their businesses (fishing, whaling, fur trading), or dodge each other's bullets without Aboriginal help"<sup>1</sup> However, this relationship too quickly gave way to domination.

One contributing factor was the European Christian ideology of superiority over all other peoples. "Missionaries applied themselves to winning subjugated peoples over to the religion that would set them on the path to 'civilization'"<sup>2</sup>. Christianity, once the religion of the persecuted, became the religion of the powerful as in Canada's residential schools policy. "Despite the intention to promote well-being," writes Wendy Fletcher of Vancouver School of Theology, "partnering the gospel with the imposition of culture meant stripping away the culture of the other. The assumption of the racial and cultural inferiority of Aboriginal peoples, set in juxtaposition to the presumed superiority of European culture, meant the practical dehumanization of the other...children were forcibly removed from their families, severed from their kinship groups and the traditional wisdoms which had sustained them as a people."<sup>3</sup>

1. *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, Ottawa, 1996.
2. Theme 4: Mission and Power" (2010). In *Edinburgh 2010 Volume II: Witnessing to Christ Today* (Daryl Balia & Kirsteen Kim, eds). Regnum Books International, Oxford, U.K. p.96.  
[www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/Study\\_Process/reports/E2010%20II-whole-final.pdf](http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/Study_Process/reports/E2010%20II-whole-final.pdf)
3. Theme 4: Mission and Power, p.113.

---

## In the beginning

"Jesus' earliest followers gathered into culturally diverse congregations where Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans and Africans worshipped and served God together. Besides being racially and ethnically diverse, early Christians held a variety of theological views and created varied spiritual practices that shaped the new religion. Christianity thrived in the multicultural cities of the Roman Empire, and the faith reflected this environment. Yet, in the midst of this variety, the practice of love bound together the Christian community into a kind of oneness that honored diversity while, at the same time, fostering harmony and unity..."

– Diana Butler Bass in  
*Christianity for the Rest of Us*, p. 149.

## For the sake of the gospel

Eric H. F. Law, wrote in his book *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb* (1993), “Salvation for the powerful comes from the decision to give up power and take up the cross...Because the powerless are already on the cross, salvation comes from endurance and faithfulness in the hope of God’s deliverance through the resurrection...It is crucial to determine in a given situation which side of the cross we are on if we are to experience the wholeness of the Gospel...”

Law goes on to describe two situations. In one, as a Chinese American working in the Episcopal Church, he has participated in meetings as the “token Asian” where he is set up as “powerless.” Law says prior to entering such situations he takes time “to get in touch with the empty tomb, the resurrection side of the Gospel” reassuring himself that he is blessed and a child of God. Other times, as a trainer and consultant, Law is given power and authority in situations and he prepares by “reflecting on what it means to choose the cross.” He reminds himself that he must humble himself to serve the participants.

3. How difficult is it for you to let go of practices and perspectives in order to reach out to those who are different? Read the box *Cultural pluralism*. Can you name some practices that you recognize as a barrier to people of another culture or generation? How might your congregation and its worship relate differently to its neighbourhood to become more welcoming and inclusive of diversity?

### Pray

Find an item that symbolizes listening for the group. Read *Prayer Circle* on page 6. Like Ndazkoh house church members, have everyone name one or more prayer requests that reflect the concerns in your faith community and neighbourhood. Then, in your circle, pass the item you have chosen around the circle allowing each person the opportunity to pray aloud or silently, for a particular request when the item comes to them. When the circle is completed, join in the Lord’s Prayer together. Then say together the blessing “*Ba chah ye chah ndoni chah beboози be nduhoneh.*”



## Live it out

Choose one or more of the following activities.

### Imagine a church with diversity

Watch the four minute music video for the Newsboys' song *He Reigns*. It can be found by searching for "Youtube He Reigns by Newsboys" or by obtaining the music video DVD. It depicts people of all races and languages praising God along with images of God's creation.

Discuss how you would express your praise to God in a way that reflects the culture you are at home in. How could you visually express your praise to God in a way that reflects the diversity of your congregation? Plan to create a video, still photo or collage of words and pictures that you could present to your congregation to show them the diversity that exists or could exist.

### Experience another culture

Learn something about another culture. Don't just read about it, find an opportunity to experience it. Contact an Aboriginal community near you and inquire about attending a pow wow. Listen without judgment and learn about the various ceremonies and components of the celebration. Go to a Chinese New Year's celebration or attend worship of another culture or faith. Spend a day with people who are physically or mentally challenged. Volunteer to chaperone a high school dance or to drive youth to a live concert and attend with them. These will all be cultural experiences!

### Plan a heavenly worship service

The kingdom of heaven will involve people of every nation, tribe, race and language. Plan a worship service that brings together styles of worship and practices from several cultural traditions. Don't just look at the practices however, but look deeper to the values of the culture that those practices express. Think of how your worship time can reflect the underlying worldview and values of other cultures. For example, the passing of the prayer stick in First Nations culture reflects the value of each person in the circle and a respect for them that says, "I'll listen as long as you need me to and share in your prayer to the Creator." In Thailand, one church follows a cultural practice for meetings. They stop everything in the middle of the service, move back the chairs and everyone joins in a fun game before the singing and prayer starts again. Have fun with worship!

## Cultural pluralism

"Cultural pluralism necessitates that churches relate differently to the world around them, more like they did in the early Church. As Canadian Presbyterian minister Peter Coutts said, "In a postmodern world, you can no longer assume the Christendom model. It becomes more imperative to figure out what it is that we really stand for. There is no longer a meshing of church and culture. We have to relate to the culture in a different way."

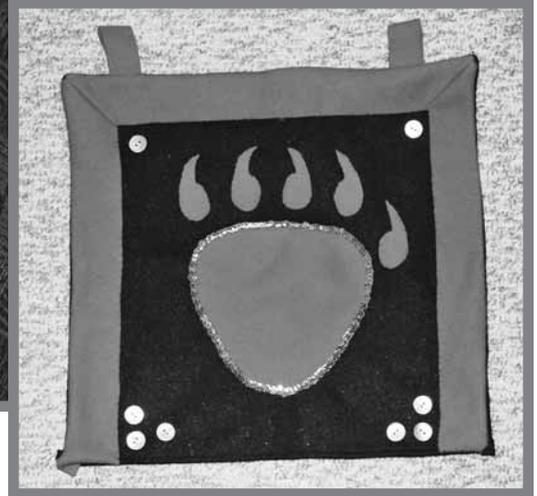
– From *Future Faith Churches*  
by Don Posterski and Gary Nelson, 1997, p. 189

## Imagine

"I find it hard to imagine a church where everyone looks alike, thinks alike, and acts alike. Diversity is, after all, a foretaste of heaven, God's dream here and now."

– Diana Butler Bass in  
*Christianity for the Rest of Us*, p. 156





### Make cultural symbols

Prayer sticks and button blankets are traditions and symbols for the Carrier people. Worn like a cape, the button blanket has an image on the back, often of an animal, to represent the person's family clan. Buttons around the image or the edge of the blanket represent the members of one's family.

Make a button blanket or prayer stick as a group project that could be dedicated, given to your congregation and used in worship as a symbolic reminder of the diversity in God's realm, and that in Christ we are all one family. Adapt the blanket to represent that Christians are all one family or to represent your congregational family.

Alternatively, each group member could make one of these for themselves over the course of the study. See the Appendix for instructions.

---

### Go out

Pray together the Prayer of St. Francis:

O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace!

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is discord, harmony;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light, and

Where there is sorrow, joy.

Oh Divine Master, grant that I may not

so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand; to be loved

as to love; for it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.

# Include children

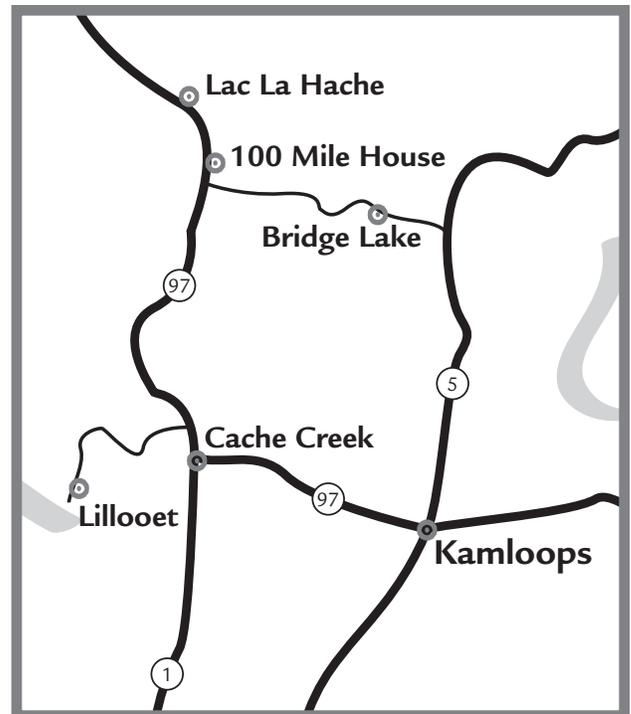


## Goals

1. To learn about children's programs of Cariboo Presbyterian Church.
2. To reflect on the place of young people in the body of Christ.
3. To consider how God might be calling you to strengthen your ministry with children.
4. To play, eat, have fun and be creative

## Materials

- ◆ See *Recommended materials for all sessions* on page 5
- ◆ Food for a snack
- ◆ Old newspapers for game
- ◆ Small prizes for Bible memory verses
- ◆ Prayer stick, stone or eagle feather as in the study on Ndazkoh
- ◆ Craft supplies listed below
- ◆ Supplies for the response activities the group might choose to do





---

## Setting the scene

### *Experiences of children in church*

Recall your experiences of being a child in the church, of raising your children in the church, or of watching children in your congregation today. How do congregations benefit when children are integrated into their community? What are some of the challenges that this presents?

### *Getting There*

Children are part of almost all aspects of Cariboo Presbyterian Church. House churches are all intergenerational. In addition, some programs are offered particularly to involve children of the wider community in worship and fellowship.

Today we are going to experience the Ndazkoh Bible Class, a children's program. The program is being visited by Elaine, the coordinator of Kids' Space located near Bridge Lake and has taken the opportunity to visit the Ndazkoh Bible Class after school on a Tuesday. Elaine had to drive 4 ½ hours from Bridge Lake (south east of 100 Mile House) to get to Ndazkoh.

---

## Experience a partner's story

*Today's story is a conversation between Shannon and Elaine as they share what is happening in each of their outreaches to local kids. It can be read in parts by three people. The other participants in the study will actually experience what the children's session is like, by partaking in a number of activities. This is a great opportunity to see the world as children see it and exercise your creative skills. Because of the difference in the flow of this study, the instructions for participants and leaders are in italicized print.*

**Narrator:** Elaine pulled up after her long drive from the Bridge Lake area to the Ndazkoh Valley Community Centre. As she entered the cedar building she could hear the children in the school down the hall. She greeted Shannon who was in the kitchen preparing the snack.

**Shannon:** Hi Elaine! How was the drive?

**Elaine:** It was fine. I'm glad I came before the snow has started. That road really winds around the mountains. What can I do to help?

**Shannon:** I'm just preparing snack for the kids. Jon will take them to the gym as soon as they are out of school to run off some energy and we'll get the snack ready in the meantime. You could cut up those apples for me. Today we have the younger group. They are in grades K-3. Our school goes from K-7 as you know, but I have divided up the kids so we have K-3 one week and grades 4-7 the following week. Smaller groups mean more time with each of the kids and their skills levels are more in line with one another. It is just Jon and I doing the programme so we like to keep it simple. We've been doing this for over 16 years now so we have figured out what usually works best. How about you, what age of kids come to Kids' Space?

**Elaine:** We have kids from kindergarten up to grade 8 and 9 – high schoolers. They just keep coming! Our kids all live in a very spread out area and are too far away to just hang out after school. Kids’ Space is one of the only opportunities for our kids to participate in group activities and have fun together. We have a number of adult volunteers so we can divide the kids into age groups each evening for the Bible story and discussion. We do food later in the evening since it is not right after school. We have a great cook who makes dinner for the kids!

**Shannon:** That’s it for the apples and cheese and crackers. Let’s join in the game in the gym!

**Narrator:** Shannon and Elaine went into the gym where Jon and the kids were wrapping up the games. Join in with the kids by having a snowball fight.

### *Snowball fight*

*Take pages of newspaper and crumple them into balls. There should be enough balls for everyone to have at least three balls. Line up your chairs in two teams facing one another with a line down the middle between the teams. Chairs should be at least 1 m back from the line on either side. At the count of three, everyone is to throw their balls over the line towards the other team. The goal is to have fewer balls on the ground on your side of the line when the game ends. No one can leave their chair, but can pick up any snowballs within reach and throw them back to the other team’s side. Count the snowballs on each side after a few minutes and the team with the least is the winner.*

**Narrator:** After the games everyone walked down the hall that led from the classroom part of the building to the community centre part. In a multi-purpose room they sat around a table ready to eat. Some of the children suggested the “Sing, Sing, Sing” grace (sung to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”): *Sing, sing, sing our praise, to the Lord above, for our friends and for our food, and for God’s lasting love.*

### *Snack*

*Enjoy your snack together as you visit and catch up on the past week. You may also all go down the hall together if you need to use the washroom!*

**Narrator:** After the snack the children join in singing praise songs.

**Shannon:** OK everyone, let’s sing!

*Sing “Kum By Yah” and “I’ve Got the Joy.” Use the new, hip versions – ask a youth who has been to church camp to teach these to you! Or search for them on YouTube.*





*“Not Be Shaken” by Norm Strauss  
©1993 Remnant Records (Also can be  
found on YouTube.)*

*Alternatively, choose your own  
favourite worship songs or select from  
these songs in the Book of Praise  
(1997): #449 “Lord, listen to your  
children praying”; #466 “Praise the  
Lord with the sound of the Trumpet”;  
#475 “I am the church! You are the  
church!”\*; #700 “Praise our Maker,  
peoples of one family.” \*Note: Hymn  
#475 is sometimes sung in Carrier.  
See the Appendix for the words.*

**Shannon:** Great singing everyone! It’s circle time. Everyone come and sit in the circle together. Elaine, tell us how you do your time with God’s word.

**Elaine:** With our Kids’ Space, we have the story time as soon as all the kids arrive. We have two groups, one for younger kids and one for the older ones. We tell the stories of the Bible in our groups and then talk about it. I hear that you guys like to act out the stories.

**Narrator:** There was a chorus of yeses and then all the kids started to beg for a part in the story. “Can I be Jesus today?” several of them asked. Shannon chose parts for all of the children.

**Shannon:** Before today’s story, who can remember the memory verse from last week?

*Ask if anyone in the group can remember the scripture passage from last week’s study. Have a prize available for anyone who can recall the content of the passage.*

**Narrator:** Two of the girls could say their verse and Shannon put 2 stickers up on a chart on the wall next to each of their names. They collect stickers through attendance, Bible memory verses and respectful and helpful behaviour. Every few weeks the children have the opportunity to trade in their stickers for prizes. Shannon began to tell the story.

*Here you can choose several group members to play the parts in the story and act out what is being told by Shannon. You can also read the story from Mark 10:13-16.*

**Shannon:** One day Jesus and his friends were in a town and people found out that they were there. Everyone had heard about Jesus and wanted to bring their kids to him so that he could say a blessing over them. People started to walk to where he was and all of a sudden there were all kinds of parents and kids trying to come and talk to Jesus. His friends didn’t like this one bit. They were rude and told the parents to take their kids away. “Don’t bother Jesus,” they said. “He’s too busy and important to bother with your kids.”

But Jesus was angry that his friends said that. “No,” he said. “Let the children come to me. I love little kids. They are special to the Creator. In fact, if you want to be a part of my kingdom, you have to be like these little kids. I want them with me.” Then Jesus took all the kids and sat them on his lap and hugged them and blessed them. Yes, Owen, if you want to be Jesus in the story, you have to be able to hug the girls.

**Narrator:** Shannon began to ask the kids a series of questions and they discussed the story together.

Do you ever feel like adults think you aren't very important?

Can you tell me about a time when you were told to go outside or go away instead of being with the adults?

How do you think the parents and children felt when the friends of Jesus sent them away?

How do you think it felt when Jesus told them to come, and that they were important and he hugged them?

*In your group, discuss these questions from a child's point of view. Try to remember what it was like for you in your childhood at home and in church.*

**Shannon:** All right, it's time for us to pray now. Anyone have anything you'd like to pray for today? Kobi, how about we pray for your grandma who is going in the hospital this week? I'll start and then pass the stick to my left to J.J. You will each have a turn and we'll finish with the prayer Jesus taught to his friends.

*In your circle, take this time to pray together. Pass your prayer stick, stone or eagle feather around, finishing the prayer time with the Lord's prayer.*

**Shannon:** Amen. Now here's our memory verse for this week. If you can say it today before you get on the bus, you get a sticker. If you can say it next time you come, you'll get two more stickers. Let's say it together now. “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them” Mark 10:14. OK. Time for crafts and games. If you want to do a craft, come to the table. Otherwise you can get out a board game or play air hockey.

**Narrator:** As the children chose their activities, Shannon and Elaine got out the materials for the craft. After some simple instructions to the kids, they continued their discussion on their respective outreaches.

*You could choose to do the craft listed below at this point while the story continues or you can use the craft as an activity later.*

**Elaine:** This has been a lot of fun. Fun is what we emphasize in our Kids' Space. We want the kids to come to a place where they are safe and loved and have a lot of fun. Not all our adult volunteers are church people, but we feel that the whole experience is a witness to both kids and those adults who help

## The Bible and children

“When you consider the importance of children in the Scriptures, it’s surprising that ministry aimed at children has often been a low priority. The Bible is particularly concerned with teaching children about God and His laws, from Moses and Joshua on through the prophets and Psalms. The prophet Jeremiah and others warned of the dire consequences of not passing on knowledge about God to children. When Jesus’ disciples were preventing children from coming to Him, Jesus rebuked the disciples and seized the occasion to re-emphasize and extend this theme. He did the same when He urged adults to become “like children” in order to inherit the kingdom of God.”

– Joe Coutto, “Children’s ministries – more than Christmas pageants” in *Faith Today*, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Nov/Dec 2001.

out. Of course the Bible teachers are followers of Christ, but we want to reach out to the whole community through reaching out to the kids.

**Shannon:** That’s how we see Bible Class as well. While no one from the community volunteers, they value what we are doing for their kids; and it brings the gospel message into their homes through what the kids are learning. We hope we are planting seeds that God will grow as they grow older. While none of our former students come to church, we do know that when they are adults and face a crisis, they will be open to our prayers and input. They learned as kids that we love them and God loves them.

It’s different from what happens with the kids who are part of our house church where the children are completely integrated into the life of the church. In most house churches, the kids are involved through the whole worship time. They aren’t separated out; they feel a part of everything and they learn from the older youth and adults, who also learn a little more tolerance of kids who can’t always sit still and be quiet. When parents feel their kids are valued, they are more likely to stay involved.

**Elaine:** Yes, outreach to kids has some different goals than ministry to kids within the church. We are thrilled that so many kids come out to Kids’ Space. We have even created a Teens’ Space program as well and are hoping to expand that. There is so much interest on the part of the kids and their families. One day we hope that we will even have an Adult Space happening.

**Narrator:** With that it was time to get the kids ready for the bus stopping in as it brought back the high school students from Quesnel. The kids quickly cleaned up and said good bye as Shannon accompanied them to the road. When she returned, Elaine and Jon had cleaned up the room and were ready to go as well.

**Shannon:** Elaine, thanks so much for coming. It was great having you visit. I’ll plan to come and visit Kids’ Space next month. I hope you have a safe drive back home.

**Elaine:** I really enjoyed meeting your kids and having the time with you. We’ll keep in touch and perhaps we can share some resources. I know that you write all your own curriculum and so do I. It is nearly impossible to find material written for kids in a rural/remote setting and I imagine even harder to find appropriate material for First Nations kids.

**Shannon:** That’s so true. We’ll keep in touch!

**Share your reactions to Elaine and Shannon’s story.**

1. Talk about the children in your congregation. What ministry is offered to them to help them grow in their faith?
2. What opportunities do they have to interact with adults and to learn from them?

---

## Hear God's word

Read Mark 9:33-37 and Mark 10:13-16.

1. What stands out for you in these readings today?
2. What priority does your congregation give to children's ministry? Read and comment on *Ministering to children today*.
3. Many people in the church say they do not have families with young children coming to church anymore. Other congregations lament that school-age children stop coming at 10 or 11 years old. Perhaps we are not called to have them come to us, but that we go out to meet their needs where they are. How does or could the congregation relate to children outside the church? Read *Children's ministry* and talk about how God might be calling your congregation to ministry with children?

---

## Live it out

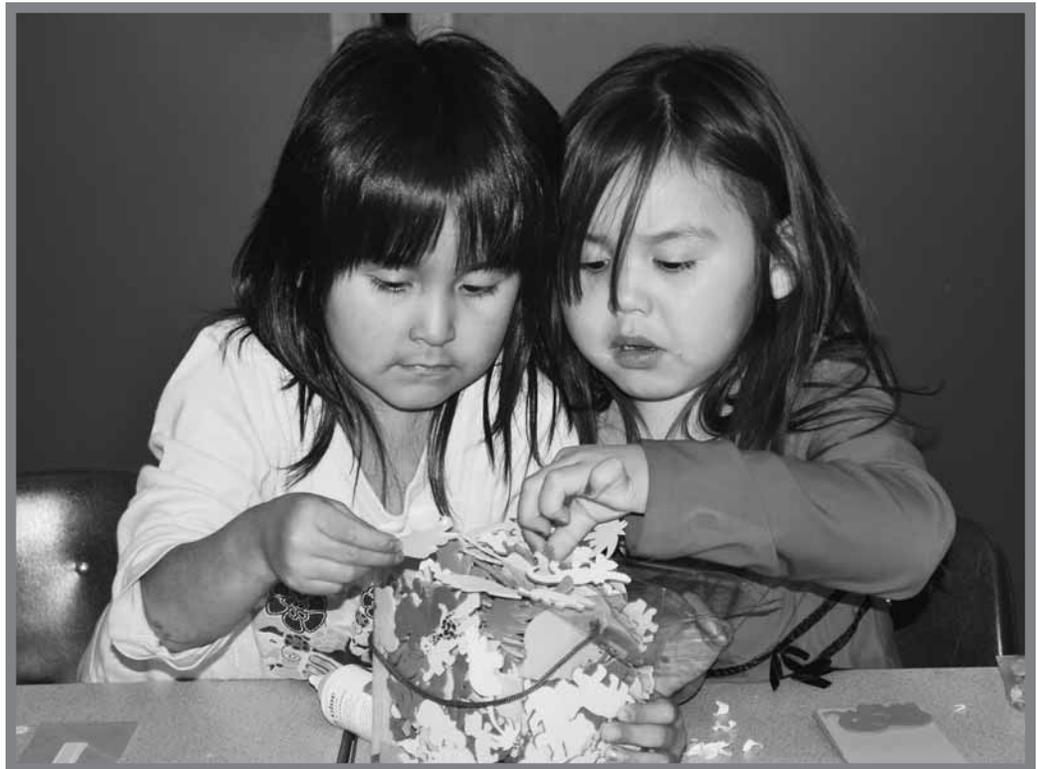
Choose one or more of the following activities.

### Kids' Can Craft

Materials needed:

- ◆ Coffee can
- ◆ Pictures of kids' faces from magazines, photos, calendars
- ◆ White glue
- ◆ Scissors

Make a collage of kids' faces on the coffee can by cutting out pictures and gluing them onto the outside of the can. When finished, coat the whole thing with a layer of white glue mixed with a small amount of water. Let dry. Use the can to collect coins to support a children's ministry in your local community, in another part of Canada or overseas. For ideas go to [www.presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange](http://www.presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange) or order free *Gifts of Change* catalogues from The Book Room. 1-800-619-7301.



## Ministering to children today

“Ministering to children is so critical to the church's future, yet it has often been undervalued. It was often left to volunteers, particularly women, and given the worst space in a church. The church is incomplete unless children are part of the church community. The good news is that children are leading the family back [to the church] because they're asking the big questions of life, questions many parents feel ill-equipped to answer.”

– Beth Posterski, professor  
at Tyndale College and Seminary, Toronto.

---

## Children's ministry

“Children's ministry is ministry with, to and by children. It happens in our churches, communities, schools and homes and is the awesome responsibility and privilege of every Christian.”

– Jill Kayser, “Children's ministry dreams”  
in *Candour*, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa  
New Zealand, No. 8, September 2008.

### Vacation Bible Schools

Does your congregation offer VBS or a similar program? Experts attribute the increased demand and popularity of VBS over the past decade to the increased number of working parents needing programs for their kids when school is out. Some congregations not only try to meet the summer vacation need, but also the need at mid-winter school break, professional development days, weekdays after school, or on Saturdays. However, success depends on a sufficient number of skilled volunteers. See *VBS teachers*. What are some of the ways group members might help with such programs in your congregation or community?

### Family Night

Plan a family event in your church or community hall. Show a movie with popcorn and baking or plan a games night. The goal is simply to have fun. Invite the whole surrounding community. Through daycares and schools, invite children from the community. Encourage them to bring their older siblings and parents and grandparents. Let the families in your area know that you value kids.

### Grandparents Club

Start an after school or evening club that is informal. Have baking available and older adults who are willing to play board games or read with younger children. It doesn't take a lot of training to be able to sit and read books or help a child with their reading. Buy a bunch of board games and just open the doors for an hour a week and invite the local kids in.



## Mentoring

Take an interest in a child or family in your church or community. Make a special effort to invite them over, find out about them and show your love and interest. Attend their sports games and school plays. Take them out for ice cream or have them over to bake cookies. As they grow, share your story with them and the things you have experienced and learned through life.

## Share God's love

Think about children in need in your community like hungry children at the breakfast club, crisis situations at the children's hospital, children on welfare, children at a shelter for abused women and their families. Ask your local elementary school principal for ideas. Contact an organization for an estimate of the number of children served in one year; then together make something (e.g. a pillow, blanket, stuffed toy) that the organization could give to each child served. Attach a printed message to each saying "God loves you no matter what." from ... (*name of congregation or group*).

---

## Go out

### Pray together:

Saviour, teach me day by day  
love's sweet lesson to obey;  
sweeter lesson cannot be,  
loving God who first loved me.  
With a child's glad heart of love  
At thy bidding may I move,  
prompt to serve and follow thee,  
Loving God who first loved me. Amen.

- Jane Eliza Leeson (1807-1882)



## Creative Ministry

The Creative Ministry with Children & Youth Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada provides funds for new, innovative and creative programs for children and youth. For more information contact Canadian Ministries/The Vine, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1-800-619-7301 or see the application online at [www.presbyterian.ca/webfm\\_send/3560](http://www.presbyterian.ca/webfm_send/3560)

---

## VBS teachers

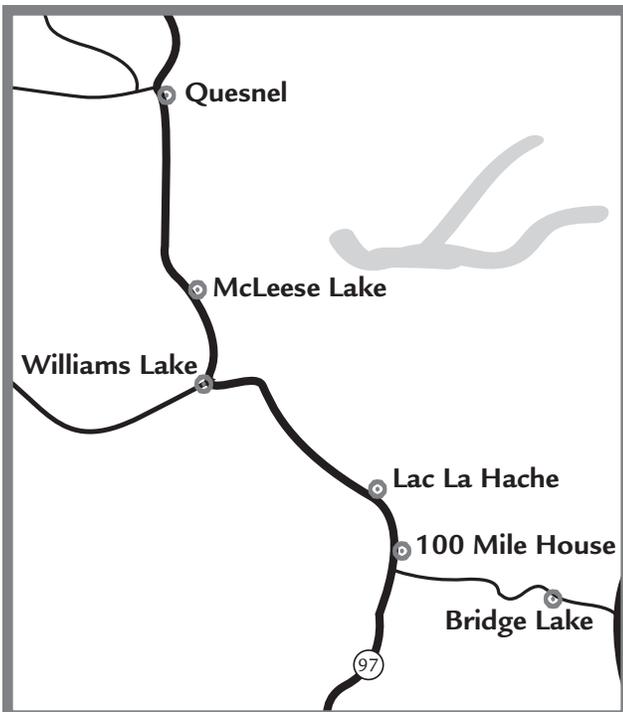
"One church in Toronto that's seen continuing success with its VBS is St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church [Islington]. Not only do many of its VBS kids return for a Saturday afternoon kids' program during the rest of the year, but the VBS acts as a 'feeder' for getting parents interested in the church's Alpha program, says coordinator Sandy Dilena. Her small suburban church drew 82 neighbourhood kids to its VBS this summer while attracting more than 40 volunteers, including two leaders from other churches. Dilena says that the church made a simple but profound change five years ago when it switched from keeping children with one teacher for a whole week to rotating the kids among different teachers with different approaches that emphasized a constant theme. 'The teachers stayed fresh because they prepared one two-and-a-half hour lesson they could teach different children every day and kids looked forward to a new teacher with a different style,' she says."

- Joe Couto, "Children's Ministries - More than Christmas Pageants" in *Faith Today*, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Nov/Dec 2001

# Use your gifts



*House Church at McLeese Lake*



## Goals

1. To introduce participants to a house church that has multiplied.
2. To reflect on leadership in house churches and in our own congregations.
3. To consider how everyone can share their gifts in the church.
4. To see how mission work can be done in your own community.

## Materials

- ◆ See *Recommended materials for all sessions* on page 5
- ◆ Supplies for the response activities the group might choose to do

---

## Setting the scene

### *Working Together*

Our days and weeks are busy doing important and mundane tasks; people depend on us and we depend on others to ensure that everything gets done in our work, school and home. Some tasks we have become very good at; some of them we enjoy more than others. Invite everyone to write down on slips of paper things they are particularly good at or enjoy, one task per piece of paper. Begin each sentence with “I.” For example, “I make the coffee,” “I drive the kids to lessons” or “I review the financial statements” or “I listen to people’s problems.” Put all the slips of paper in a container.

There are also daily and weekly tasks related to the running of a church. Think about the weekly and seasonal programs of your congregation; think about the activities related to weekly worship. Through a brainstorming process, identify important tasks for the running of your church – like singing in the choir, teaching church school, preparing a sermon, visiting a hospital patient. List them on a large piece of paper

Now draw the slips of paper from the container and tape them around the edges of the large paper. Which of these could be helpful for running the church? Draw lines to connect them. Be creative in finding connections and have fun with the possibilities! Then take a moment to reflect on how much members depend on each other and how much they depend on the minister.

### *Getting there*

Members of the house churches of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church know about depending on each other. With only two ministry teams, great distances between ministry points and travel affected by weather and road conditions, members depend on each other much of the time when big city congregations depend on their ministers.

Today we imagine that we are participating in the weekly Tuesday evening worship of the McLeese Lake house church, one of the original ministry points in the Cariboo. McLeese Lake, which is north of Williams Lake, is an hour and 15 minutes drive from where David Webber lives at Lac La Hache. The service often goes on for two hours and then continues with fellowship over coffee and desserts.



---

## Worship in McLeese Lake house church

See *Prepare for worship* on page 6.

### **Call to worship**

Turn to Psalm 135:1-6,19-21. Read the passage in this way: one person reads verse one, and with every verse another one (or two or three) people join in so that by verse 21 everyone reads in unison.

### **Pray**

Choose someone in the circle to begin the worship time in prayer. Choose someone who hasn’t done this yet.

### **Praise**

“Indescribable” by Chris Tomlin ©2004, [worshiptogether.com](http://worshiptogether.com) Song/sixsteps Music

“In Christ Alone” by Keith Getty & Stuart Townsend ©2001 Kingsway’s Thankyou Music

Alternatively, choose your own favourite worship songs or select from these hymns in the

*Book of Praise* (1997): #472 “We are God’s people”; #484 “The church is wherever God’s people”; #590 “We have this ministry”; #648 “I’m gonna live so God can use me”; #761 “Who’s goin’ tell the story.”

---

## Hear a partner’s story

*The McLeese Lake house church has been meeting for over two decades. During that time there have been great changes. Devin, in today’s story, represents the experiences of a person who has grown up in this house church.*

Devin heard the phone ring and ran to grab it. It was Greg calling to remind him to come an hour early tonight to practice before worship.

“Don’t worry,” Devin said. “I’ll be there. I have new strings on the bass so I’m ready to go.” Devin was proud of his new electric bass guitar and loved to play it with the rest of the band for church on Tuesday nights. There were, in fact, two bands that played in their house church. There were so many gifted musicians that they had to take turns leading the worship times.

Devin thought back to 15 years ago when he was just starting kindergarten and attending house church with his mom, brother and grandparents. A lot of nights the worship was led just by Dave Webber strumming on his guitar. They all loved to sing, but the group was much smaller then. As a child Devin loved to go to church at his grandparents or another neighbour’s house. It was like one big family each week and he was excited to know what kind of great story Dave was going to tell them. He told stories of bears and eagles and silly things that had happened to him as a kid. All of them in the end pointed them to something that was in the Bible. Devin remembers that Dave always told them that though he was the pastor, they were the real ministers in their community. Dave lived over an hour away so it was up to them to share the love of God with the people in McLeese Lake.

When Devin was in grade 2, there weren’t so many people in church any more. A couple of people had died and several had moved away. Devin wondered what

would happen. About a year later Greg’s family moved into the community and began to come to church. They had a lot of kids and Devin was happy to have someone his age at church.

Their parents decided to organize a Vacation Bible School and a lot of kids came. They invited the families to a barbeque and began to share with them stories about God’s love. Soon other families came. One of the men in the group, Steve, wanted to reach out to other men in the community so he invited them all to a men’s breakfast. Now once a month a group of men get together on a Saturday morning to have bacon, eggs, pancakes and



to share with one another what is happening in their lives. They pray together and ask for God's guidance and help for their families.

By the time Devin was starting high school, the house church had grown to the point that they needed more room than they had in a living room. The people in the church decided it was time to divide and multiply. On their own they started two house churches in two other communities and they meet on Sunday mornings. They lead the services themselves without a minister present. One of those house churches also started a monthly community dinner along with the service.

One of the people in the original house church began to lead worship in another community, helping a struggling church in a remote area. Another family began a worship gathering at their daughter's house in still another community. Some of these other groups don't really come under the leadership of the session of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church, but they have been given birth through the outreach that happened in the first house church. Churches seem to keep springing up where people are thirsting to worship, and they don't need one of the pastoral team there.

Devin has stayed in McLeese Lake with its Tuesday night house church. He's happy to use his gifts there. As Devin packed up his bass to get to the community hall for practice, he said a prayer of thanks to God: that he could learn and grow in his faith, that the people in his church love to share their faith with so many others, and that he could participate in praising Jesus through music. As he got into his truck, Devin looked up to see the stars brilliantly scattered over the inky black night sky. He thought how the house church is like that night sky. Though the members are scattered and different, they all contribute and together shine Christ's light in a corner of the Cariboo.

### Share your reactions to Devin's story.

1. The house church in McLeese Lake began to grow as members recognized groups of people in the community who needed to be reached – men, families with children, a church in a remote location and even their own family members in another community. What do you think it took for these people to step out and begin to gather people together in mission?
2. Members of the Cariboo house church not only contribute to the worship services and the programs in their own community; they have also set up new house church groups and, in the absence of an available ordained minister, they have led worship services. See *We have this ministry*. Sometimes the gifts of people in a group are hidden or quiet. Take a moment and go around the circle, saying what gifts for mission you see in each person in your group. How can you practically use some of these gifts to reach out to your community?
3. There is a flexibility and fluidity with this model that may mean regular changes: in leadership, membership and church identity. What challenges might such a model present? How would a leadership model like this work for your congregation?

### We have this ministry

Cariboo Presbyterian Church depends on members ministering to others inside and outside the church. Shannon Bell-Wyminga speaks about the plan at Ndazkoh to “offer discipleship and training for local people to become leaders in the body of Christ and equipped for ministry themselves.” It is happening in the other house church communities too. Rev. David Webber tells the story of being taken aside one Tuesday evening after the McLeese worship. Member, Colin, told David that there was an old reclusive man living in a run down old shack back of McLeese Lake, that neighbours said he was dying of cancer. Colin wondered if David could visit him. But instead, David told Colin to do it. So Colin visited the old man; then he got the old man's permission to get the church praying for him; on another visit Colin told the old man about Jesus and the good news; soon after Colin prayed with him as he accepted Jesus. David did meet the old man – when Colin called him to the hospital to baptize him a few days before he died. At the old man's request, Colin conducted his funeral.

## Parts of one body

“Our identity has value. We are an important part of Christ’s body, but not the only part. Bob Rognlien states in *Experiential Worship*, ‘we must learn from each other and regain the full historical content of our biblical faith so that the Spirit might move dynamically through the various expressions of Christianity... The key is that each community of faith utilizes its unique combination of resources, context, and history to invite people into a more complete experience of God that is empowered by the various streams of Christian tradition.’”

– From “Diversity in Worship,”  
The Presbyterian Church  
in Canada

## Gift-based ministry

In 1989 Christian Schwarz founded The Institute for Natural Church Development. According to Schwarz recognizing “gift-based ministry” is one of the essential areas that determine the success and health of every growing church. Gift-based ministry refers to a ministry that works with the spiritual gifts that each person has, using them to build up the church. For this to happen, church leaders help their members discover, develop and exercise their gifts in appropriate ministries which “promotes the [church] body’s growth in building itself up in love” (Ephesians 4:16).

## Hear God’s word

When gathering people in a small community to worship Christ together, there is bound to be many differences in theology and practice of our faith. However, in this passage, Paul appeals for unity in the body of Christ. In particular, Paul reminds them that they are no longer Gentiles or Jews but “one new humanity” (Ephesians 2:15). However, while united, he recognizes they will look, act and speak differently according to their gifts. Invite three people to read Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16 in these parts: Reader one reads verses 1-6; Reader two reads verses 7-13; Reader three reads verses 14-16.

1. List some of the kinds of gifts that God gives to those in the church. Use verse 11 as a starting point, but add to the list as you recall from other passages. What is the purpose of giving these gifts to the people in the church?
2. What do verses 14 and 15 tell us is the result if we earnestly and humbly seek unity and affirm the gifts of the church? If we are truly held together in Christ as Paul says in verse 16, what will be the result?
3. It is in Christ that we are held together. Why or why not is it important that we fit different expressions of church into our structures?
4. What things can your church do to encourage people to reach out to those in need (spiritually, emotionally, physically) without expecting a benefit to your own church?
5. If your church were to start a mission work to reach out and meet the needs of others, what would your response be if it grew beyond the scope you intended and grew into its own ministry?

## Pray

On pieces of paper, write down the kinds of things that keep people from using their gifts, from stepping out to reach others, or from starting mission work that might not directly benefit your church. One by one, offer up these barriers to God and ask that you be released from them. Ask God to encourage you all to use your gifts, to listen to God’s call and to act upon it with trust. As you pray, take each piece of paper and place it into an offering plate or bag as a sacrifice to the Lord.

## Live it out

*Choose one or more of the following activities.*

### Spiritual gifts inventory

There are many resources available to help you discern how God calls you to work in the body of Christ. Research gifts inventory – online, through church libraries and in discussion with church leaders. Do one together and discuss whether the results reflect your own perceptions of yourselves.

#### Resources for a Spiritual Gift Inventory:

*Foundations of Christian Living* by Rev. Dr. David Sherbino (2006). Available through The Book Room, 50 Wynford Dr. Toronto, ON. 1-800-619-7301

*Discovering Your Motivational Spiritual Gifts* by Rev. Dr. Lawrence Selig. This questionnaire is available for \$1.00 from Presbyterian and Reformed Ministries International, available at [www.primi.org](http://www.primi.org). You answer the questions, add up the categories and see where your gifts are the strongest.

### **Auction gifts**

Have an evening where people auction off their gifts. Invite people to offer things that they can do well or do for others: knitting an afghan; delivering a home-cooked meal, snow-shoveling for a month; babysitting; a couple of hours of mechanical work or household repairs. In our community we love to bid on firewood cut and stacked in our shed! Do either a silent auction or a traditional bidding auction. Use the proceeds to support mission work that does not bring direct benefit to your own church.

### **Exchange gifts**

Here's a new twist on a traditional gift exchange. Draw names to exchange gifts, however, you will give a gift to someone in need in the name of the person whose name you drew. For example: Chris draws Judy's name and he gives a donation to the local food bank in Judy's name. Or, Beth draws Harold's name and she bakes two pies and gives them to a bereaved family in Harold's name.

### **Make a statement**

Create a visual aid like a banner or power point that could be featured in a congregational meeting that shows and affirms the gifts of congregational members. Use photos, drawings, words. Include everyone who attends and participates in some way, not just through worship but think about all who participate in midweek programs and outreach ministries.

### **Develop leadership**

In consultation with your congregation's leaders, plan a worship service that is completely led by lay people, from the call to worship through the message to the closing benediction. How can you involve lay people beyond your study group to represent the diversity in your community? Alternatively, group members may want assistance in carrying out a new ministry such as with newcomers, the bereaved, single parents, or young people. Outline a plan for this ministry, identifying the help needed in the way of skills or resources. Plan how you will seek assistance to launch this ministry.

---

## **Go out**

### **Pray together:**

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."\*

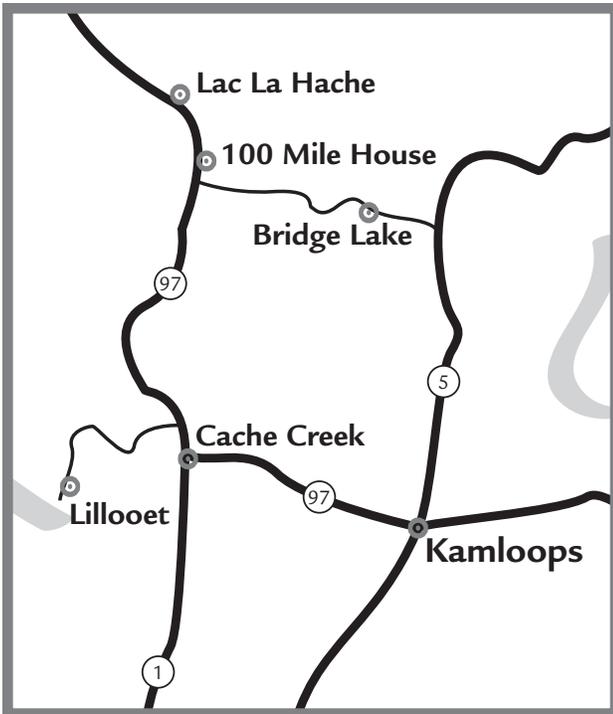
Let us go, brothers and sisters, and together do the work of the Lord. Amen.

\*1 Corinthians 1:12-13, 27

# Go out



*House Church at 100 Mile House*



## Goals

1. To introduce the ministry of lay missionaries in the context of the Cariboo
2. To reflect on the need for both mission and ministry by the church
3. To explore opportunities for mission for individuals, groups and congregations

## Materials

- ◆ See *Recommended materials for all sessions* on page 5
- ◆ Poster board and markers
- ◆ Supplies for the response activities the group might choose to do

---

## Setting the scene

### *Exploring Mission*

Display a piece of poster board with the word ‘missionary’ written on it in the middle. Brainstorm words that you associate with that word. Create a word picture and write down each word around the central word ‘missionary’. Looking at the finished picture, summarize how your group pictures who a missionary is and what they do. Discuss how many of the words can describe you and your church or group.



### *Getting There*

Today we visit a unique house church that is led by lay missionaries. Find 100 Mile House on the map.

The church that meets in 100 Mile House is located in a senior’s assisted living facility called Carefree Manor. This church is ministered to by two people designated as lay missionaries to Cariboo Church by the Presbytery of Kamloops. Ginny Alexander was designated a lay missionary while she was working on a two year distance education program for lay ministers at Whitworth College in Washington State. A couple of years later, the Presbytery also designated Bruce Wilcox as a lay missionary. Bruce’s training has been more informal, involving personal study and mentoring by ordained ministers, including David Webber and Charles McNeil.

---

## Worship at 100 Mile House

### Call to Worship

Read Hebrews 10:23-25.

To worship the Lord together is a gift as well as a command. Our time together is precious whether we are young or seasoned by life. It is how we grow and encourage one another in our faith.

### Pray

Go around the circle and invite each person to offer up an item of praise. Focus on who God is and God’s attributes. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak.

### Praise

Suggested worship songs:

Days of Elijah by Robin Mark ©1996 Daybreak Music Ltd.

Have Thine Own Way Lord by George Stebbins

Alternatively, choose your own favourite worship songs or select from these hymns in the *Book of Praise* (1997): #585 “Christ, you call us all to service”; #592 “I, the Lord of sea and sky”; #648 “I’m gonna live so God can use me”; #755 “Go ye, go ye into the world”; #761 Who’s going to tell the story; #777 “Send me, Lord.”

---

## Hear a partner's story

Bruce arrived at Carefree Manor in plenty of time to set up his guitar and distribute songbooks around the lounge before residents started to arrive. Bruce tuned his guitar and placed his Bible and study notes on the guitar stand. He heard a sound and looked around. Nellie was walking in with her Bible in her hand and a smile on her face.

"Hi Pastor Bruce. How are you doing today?" she spoke brightly.

"Great to see you Nellie. I'm doing well. Just setting up. How's the hip feeling this week?" Bruce asked with interest.

"Oh, it is much better. I'm getting stronger every day after that surgery," said Nellie. "Is Jackie with you this week?" asked Nellie.

"Yes, she's here," said Bruce indicating the office where his wife had disappeared to when they entered the building. "She is just saying hello to the staff on duty this morning." Bruce continued to chat with Nellie and greeted several other seasoned citizens as they arrived from the various parts of the building. About 10 minutes before the service started, Ginny came into the building and greeted everyone with hugs and handshakes. Like most Sunday mornings, Bruce would be leading the worship and study, but Ginny was almost always there to participate along with the residents of the Manor.

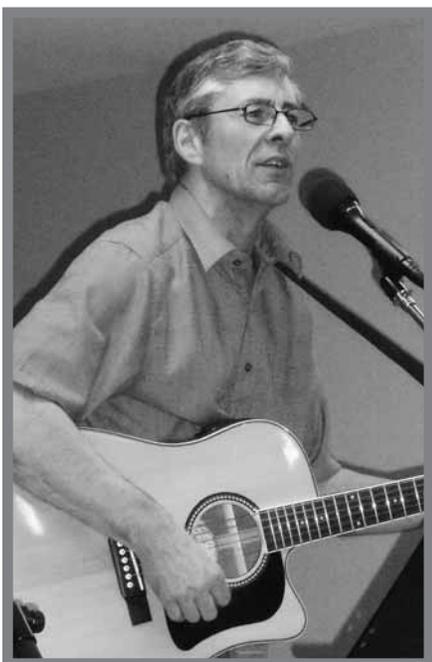
Bruce has been spending his Sunday mornings at Carefree Manor for the past seven years. Ginny has been attending for most of those years as well. Bruce and Ginny are lay missionaries, designated by the Presbytery of Kamloops for important work within the Cariboo Presbyterian Church. Both have full-time paying jobs through the week, but they are also called to the tasks of mission and ministry through the whole Cariboo region. Bruce is a lumber grader at a local mill, while Ginny is a piano and speech arts teacher. Each have been set aside as mission workers to join the pastoral team in reaching the many communities in the Cariboo.

Carefree Manor is just one of the mission points in which Bruce and Ginny have offered leadership. They have each been ordained as elders and serve on the session of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church. Bruce and Jackie are the pastors of Kids' Space, which you learned about in Session 3. Ginny has gone through the whole process of starting a house church, nurturing it for a time and then gracefully dissolving it when it was the appropriate time. Both lay missionaries regularly lead in preaching, worship and music in various house churches when one of the pastoral team is unavailable. The lay missionaries play a special role in the Cariboo team. While they don't hold theological degrees, and they have not been ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, Bruce and Ginny are continually learning and growing through their own study and the mission work they engage in. Experience has been a great teacher.

The chairs quickly filled up as the time for worship arrived. Bruce played guitar his deep twangy voice giving the music a country flavour. Ginny played along on the electronic keyboard she had brought. After a time of singing and prayer, the people in the circle got out their Bibles as Bruce announced the passage they would study this morning.

"Acts 13:1-5 today," he said. "Who would like to read that for us?"

After reading through the passage together, Bruce began to speak about the call to mission and leadership that was placed upon the two



early church members – Saul and Barnabas. Bruce guided the people through the passage, asking questions and inviting people to comment.

“I see how God set apart these two for mission, and I also understand that we are all called to be sent out with the gospel, but how can we do that in our situation? Most of us hardly ever go out from here,” commented Melanie.

“But we don’t have to literally go across the world or even Canada to still hear the call to mission,” said Grace from her wheelchair. “We have people who don’t know the love of Christ who come in to visit here every week. And we can pray too. Don’t underestimate the power of prayer. We can pray for people like Bruce and Ginny who do go out.”

Frank indicated the two little girls who were sitting in the circle with their parents. Their family began coming to church at the Manor after visiting their grandmother a number of times. “We have a mission here too. Most of us have children and grandchildren.”

Ginny spoke up, “I think the thing to note is that Saul and Barnabas were sent out from the church in Antioch. They didn’t just stay and use their gifts for the people in the church, they went out to serve those who were outside. That’s the difference between mission and ministry. They are both sides of the coin that is the church. Ministry is what we do to build up the church and encourage one another. That’s important. We do that here through our worship time, when we pray for one another, and when we do those little things to encourage one another each week. In other churches, that includes things like Sunday School, bible studies, choir and all kinds of programs designed to grow the church.

Mission, on the other hand, is what we do to show God’s love to those outside the church, without expecting we’ll benefit from it. It is when we start up a program like Kids’ Space or have a garage sale to raise money for a well in Africa. It is when we put on a musical afternoon for the others at the Manor or one of the other care facilities, just for their enjoyment and to show them God’s love. The church in Antioch had pastors and prophets who built up the church. Saul and Barnabas were sent out with the good news and love of Jesus.”

People were nodding in agreement. They began to discuss ways in which they could be more involved in mission in their community, realizing that they didn’t need to see their age or stage in life as a limitation, but as a new mission field.

“Now I realize that all those funerals that Pastor Bruce does are really a part of the mission here,” reflected Melanie. (Bruce does more funerals each year than the rest of Cariboo’s ministry team combined.) “It gives him opportunity to share the hope we have in Jesus with residents, families, staff, and friends.”

The group wrapped up their discussion and finished their time with prayer. They prayed that God would lead them each to being ‘sent out ones’, or missionaries like Saul and Barnabas. As the residents lingered and chatted with them, Bruce, Jackie and Ginny stacked up songbooks with the help of the more able in the group. Each of them were smiling, thinking what a privilege it is to serve God among these faithful people and to extend Jesus’ mission into one more unreached area of the Cariboo.



## Lay missionaries

In The Presbyterian Church in Canada lay missionaries are lay persons appointed by presbyteries to provide pastoral and teaching leadership in congregations. Typically, lay missionaries serve under the supervision of an interim moderator in a congregation or pastoral charge lacking a called or appointed minister of Word and Sacraments. They may also serve in “ministry clusters” – multiple-point pastoral charges led by a team of several presbytery-appointed lay leaders and a called or appointed, supervising minister of Word and Sacraments.

– Acts and Proceedings, 2008, p.343

## Share your reactions to Bruce and Ginny's story.

1. List the programs and activities in your church. Which of them are primarily geared to ministry – the building up and growth of those in the church – and which of them are primarily mission – reaching out to those outside the church to share the love of Christ without direct benefit to the church? Which programs work the best? Which could be strengthened?
2. When have you felt called to share the gospel with someone? How did you respond to that call and what was the result?
3. Can you think of an unreached group of people in your community with whom your church can engage in mission? What simple things could you do to serve that group of people?
4. How can you actively participate in mission work that is not so close to home, such as across the country or across the globe?
5. How could lay missionaries enhance the mission and ministry of the church?

---

## Hear God's Word

### Challenge for mission

North American theologians discussing church mission today will often suggest that the “attractional mode” that has dominated the church in the West is no longer effective. Called “outreach and in-grab” by Alan Hirsch, author of *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the missional church* (Brazos Press, 2006), some say the model does not work with the post-Christian cultural context. They suggest that mission must be believer-based rather than church-based, with every church member involved in mission in their everyday living. David Webber, minister in the Cariboo Presbyterian Church says, “The problem in mission is not how to get people into the church, it is how to get the church into people...to get the church to where the people are...in a physical, liturgical, spiritual and theological sense.”

Read Matthew 28:16-20 together.

1. Where was Jesus sending the disciples? What is the implication for where they were to do mission?
2. What specific things were they sent out to do?
3. Using a circle, draw a diagram which shows how each of Jesus' instructions flows in and out of the lives of those who are touched by the gospel. If we follow through on each of these instructions, what will be the result? How does this reflect the importance of engaging in both mission and ministry?

Read Acts 13:1-5 together.

1. What was the context in which Barnabas and Saul were called and set apart?
2. How can prayer and fasting open the door for greater mission activity?
3. The early church recognized the need to go out, to send and be sent. Mission and evangelism does not happen within the walls of the church, but outside. To whom might you and/ or your church be sent?
4. Share any stories you can remember of Saul (later Paul) and Barnabas and the results of their being sent out.
5. What are some of the challenges in responding to a personal call to mission? What are some of the challenges for congregations today in fulfilling their call to mission?
6. Discuss what changes might happen if your church became even more engaged in mission, serving others without expecting benefit to the church? What might your church begin to look like?

### Pray

Choose someone in the circle to begin a time of prayer. Pray for lay missionaries in our church as they carry out the call of God in their lives. Pray for the mission of your church – locally, nationally and internationally. Ask God to reveal to you ways to be more involved in being ‘sent out ones’.

---

## Live it out

*Choose one or more of the following activities.*

### Pray and Fast Together

The church in Antioch were ready to send out Saul and Barnabas because they had spent time listening to the Holy Spirit, taking time away from other activities in daily life – even cooking and eating -- and coming together to seek God’s direction. Set aside a day for your group to pray and fast together with the specific purpose of asking God to direct you in mission work. Invite others who are seeking the same direction for your church or group. Plan to include Bible study and individual and group prayer time in the day. Encourage people to share what they think the Holy Spirit is saying, so that you may discern God’s direction together.

### Send people out

Have a service that recognizes the many people with gifts in your church and acknowledges their call to ministry. They may not be designated as lay missionaries by Presbytery, but encourage them to seek further growth in the area of their gifts. Lay hands on them for the mission they are called to.

### Create a ‘Seasoned Church’

If there is a Senior’s residence in your area that does not have regular worship, consider creating a worshipping community within that residence. Make it completely led by the people of the church rather than a clergy-person. You will need to seek the permission of the facility management and discern the level of interest, but it could become a really rewarding ministry for the people in your group. It doesn’t have to be on Sunday mornings, but anytime that fits the schedule of the facility and your leaders. Make it simple to begin – some singing, prayer and scripture reading with a discussion. Watch the Holy Spirit grow a community of faith.

### Gather together in the kitchen

Do you have a kitchen that is well-equipped and under-used? Invite people to learn how to make bread, antipasto, pasta sauce, or jam. Consider asking a local chef, well-known cook, or dietician who can provide the participants with practical ideas. Or have people bring and share their favorite recipes. Provide all the supplies and offer coffee, tea and snacks to participants. Be sure people know that they are free to attend, whatever their faith or religion, and that there is no expectation for them to come to the church.

Alternatively, members of the church can do this activity, taking the finished products to people outside the church. Prepare gift tags that will remind the recipients of God’s love for them. Are there any community organizations that might help you distribute them?

*Note: If you want to attract non-church goers to the gatherings, think about how you will reach out to them in their particular situations.*

## Being sent

“So who are the apostles, the sent ones, the missionary witnesses?... Jesus is very explicit: “you will receive Holy Spirit power” and “you will be my witnesses”... Not some [disciples], but all. Not may be, but will be. In terms of the huge mission field at our doorstep, we have seen the apostles, the sent ones, and we are they. In terms of the huge mission field at our doorstep, we have seen the apostolic work of bearing witness to Christ, and it is ours. It is ours as individual believers. It is ours as communities of faith. Individually, and as community, the apostolic work of bearing witness to Jesus to those outside the fellowship of Christ is our work. When we begin to understand this and begin to act upon this, amazing things begin to happen.”

– From David Webber  
in *Home Missions in a New Millennium: The Apostles*, 2009

# Appendix

---

## The Carrier Language

### Pronunciation key

All letters are pronounced in Carrier. Since it was not a written language until the Europeans came, and it has only been written in Roman script relatively recently, they developed the written language so there are no silent letters etc like in English. So every h is pronounced and heard, even on the ends of words. Combinations such as nd, nk, kw etc are all sounded. Every letter of Ndazkoh, the name of the village and people, is pronounced.

There are 45 sounds in the Carrier alphabet. The vowels are always pronounced the same, but there are more of them. There are actually seven vowels plus the same vowels with a glottal. A glottal, which is indicated by the ' in words, is a stoppage of air as you speak. It can come before or after certain letters. So some words will have a ' followed by a letter or a vowel. You have to stop the air at the beginning of the sound. This happens in the word 'et. Some glottals will come after a letter and then you stop the air abruptly at the end of the sound. The word 'int'oh has a glottal to begin the i and then the t is also cut short.

The sounds of the vowels are as following and are always pronounced this way, with the exception that they are a bit different with a glottal.

- a** sounds like awe, not like the way we say can or bat, but an aw sound.
- e** is like in bet
- i** sounds like ee
- o** is a long o such as hope
- u** is like in bun
- ai** is like a long i in English. It sounds like line or bike.
- oo** is like in cool

There are also unique combinations that are single sounds in Carrier but are written with two letters in English. Here are some:

- ts** is one sound that combines these two letters just like you would say them on the end of a word such as tents.
- ih** is pronounced by putting your tongue at the front of the roof of your mouth like you would for an l and then pushing the air through from the back of your throat like an h. Hard to explain in writing and very hard to do correctly.
- gh** and **kh** work the same way. Put your tongue in place for the first letter and then pronounce and h through it.



---

## Prayer Stick Instructions

### You will need:

- ◆ a stick, 30-45 cm long
- ◆ leather strips
- ◆ feathers or beads
- ◆ eagle claw or talon for the top (optional)
- ◆ paints and craft glue



### Instructions:

Wind the leather strips around the stick, thread them through beads or attach feathers as you wish. Paint parts of the stick or decorate in some other way. Often a special decoration is added to the top of it.

---

## Prayers

In every mission point's worship there are times when participants are asked to share in open prayer. Groups are encouraged to be spontaneous in praying together. For groups not as comfortable praying spontaneously, the following prayers can be used for each of the session. Groups are encouraged, throughout the sessions, to move towards more spontaneous prayers.

### Session One: House Church at Punchaw

#### *Opening Prayer*

Have one group member begin with the prayer below, allowing others to participate by naming things they are particularly thankful for today. After everyone who wishes has spoken, the leader can say the last line of the prayer.

Dear God, we praise you for being with us and for bringing us into community with one another. Hear us as we speak aloud and silently our praise and thanksgiving for your presence among us and the ways we experience you today. *(Pause to allow anyone who wishes to pray aloud).* God, hear us as we praise you with our hearts and minds and voices. Amen.

#### *Prayer of intercession and thanksgiving*

Hand out slips of paper and pencils, inviting group members to note people and situations they want to pray for. Have one person lead in prayer. During the silence, members can place their papers in the middle of the circle, speaking aloud their prayers if they wish.

Loving God, thank you for this opportunity to worship you together in this place, to strengthen our relationship with you, and through you, with one another and with our community. We are troubled by the barriers that separate so many people from your love and abundant life. We are grateful and celebrate the signs around us of your peace and justice and love. God, hear us as we pray... *(Members place their prayers in the circle silently or speak them aloud.)* We pray all this in Jesus name who taught us to pray saying... *(say the Lord's Prayer together).*

## Session Two: House Church at Ndazkoh

### *Opening Prayer*

Together praise God whose love knows no bounds. Have a group member begin and then invite others to participate, naming things and people they are particularly thankful for today. After everyone who wishes has spoken, the leader can say the last line of the prayer.

Dear God, we praise you for coming among us and for bringing us into community with one another. Hear us as we speak aloud and silently our praise and thanksgiving for your presence among us and the ways we experience you today. *(Pause to allow anyone who wishes to pray aloud)*. God, hear us as we praise you with our hearts and minds and voices. Amen.

## Session Four: House Church at McLeese Lake

### *Opening Prayer*

Have a group member begin and then invite others to participate, naming people and things they are particularly thankful for today. After everyone who wishes has spoken, the leader can say the last line of the prayer.

Dear God, like the psalmist we praise you, for you are good. Hear us as we speak aloud and silently our praise and thanksgiving for your presence among us and the ways we experience you today. *(Pause to allow anyone who wishes to pray aloud)*. God, hear us as we praise you with our hearts and minds and voices. Amen.

### *Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession*

What are some of the situations and factors that keep people from using their gifts? Name some of these and then pray together:

Loving God, you have created us in different shapes and sizes and colours; you have given us different interests, abilities, and personalities. We want to be together as the body of Christ, but sometimes we face barriers like... *(read out the barriers)*. God free us from these constraints. Encourage us all to use *your* gifts, to listen to *your* call, to act with trust. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Session Five: House Church at 100 Mile House

### *Opening Prayer*

Together praise God who accompanies us through all life's ups and downs. Have a group member lead in prayer and then invite others to participate, naming people and things they are particularly thankful for today. After everyone who wishes has spoken, the leader can say the last line of the prayer.

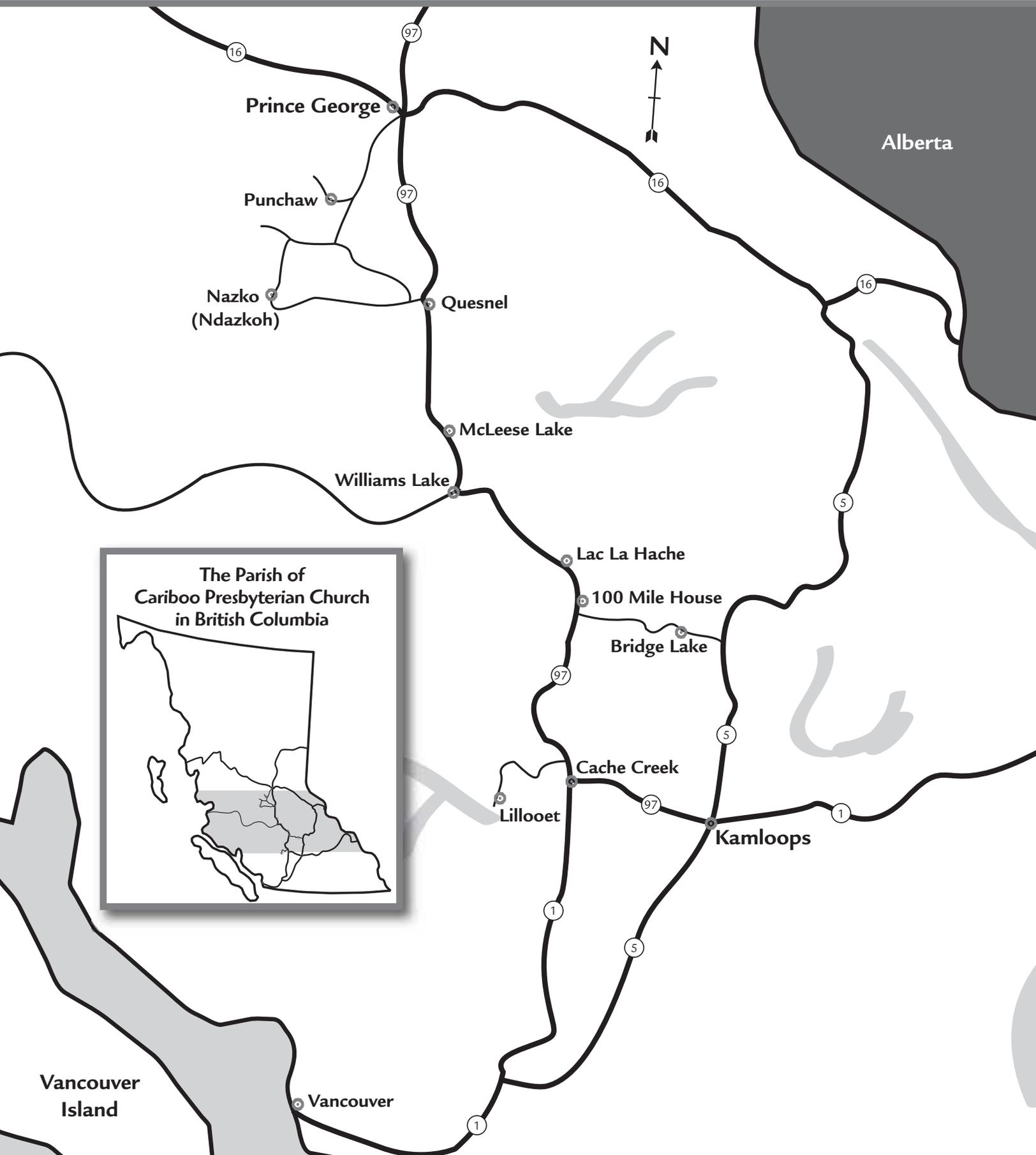
Dear God, like the early Christians we praise you for messages that encourage us and for messengers that remind us of your love. Hear us as we speak aloud and silently our praise and thanksgiving for your presence among us and the ways we experience you today. *(Pause to allow anyone who wishes to pray aloud.)* God, hear us as we praise you with our hearts and minds and voices. Amen.

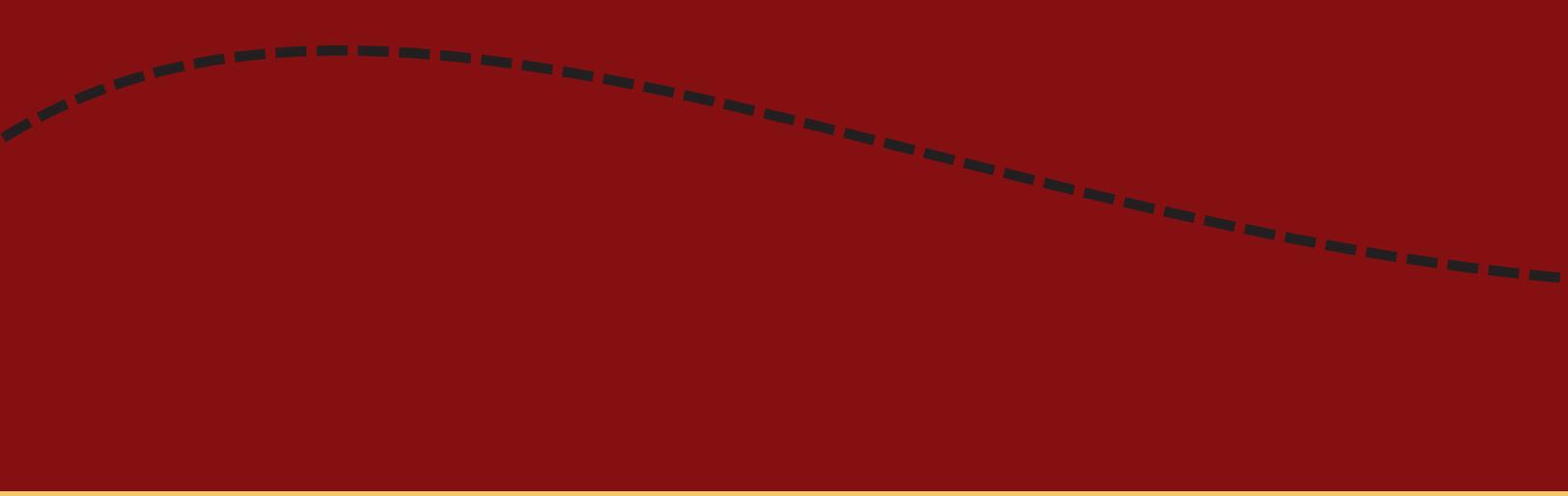
### *Prayer of Intercession*

Pray in unison:

God of all nations, we pray today for the people outside our congregation, people in our neighbourhoods, in our region of Canada. We pray particularly for people who have not experienced your love for them. We pray for our church and all its members, that we might all hear the call of God in our lives, and that we all might respond with words and works. Amen.

# Map of the Cariboo Chilcotin region in British Columbia





The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
[www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca)