

# STREAMS OF JUSTICE

Let justice flow down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:24)

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## “More Than Just a Meal”

*By Gayle Clarke and the Rev. Carey Jo Johnston, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Sutton West.*

Since 2005, our congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Sutton West, Ontario has been providing a community meal each Tuesday night to an average of 60 community members who need the support for themselves and their families. Over the years, St. Andrew's has provided over 50,000 meals.

Our first meal began with six guests, as we answered God's call to “feed my sheep” in a very literal and positive way. That was the answer to “What would Jesus do?” here in Sutton. The ‘seed’ money came from members of our congregation, and then we watched as the meal became so much more.

Our motto, “More than just a meal!” came out of a dinner guest's visit who, after being released from prison, came anxiously to our Tuesday meal saying, “I was afraid you wouldn't be here.” Guests experience weekly the love and care of Jesus. It also became “More than just a meal!” as we now share worship songs led by guitar, a short meditation, and a prayer before the meal. We also provide a food pantry for guests.

The community meal functions through the donations and volunteer help of our members as well as the support of the local community and the churches in the Oak Ridges Presbytery. This is truly a community mission.



Left to right: Mary Foster, Jackie Kalpouzou and Diane Morris serving the community meal at St. Andrew's.



# KAIROS Report Card on Call to ACTION 62.i: How is Your Province Doing?

Following the 2015 release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, KAIROS launched the *Winds of Change* campaign with a focus on *Education for Reconciliation* – ensuring that all provinces and territories implement Call to Action 62.i.

In Call to Action 62.i, the TRC calls on governments in Canada, "in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students."

In 2016, KAIROS evaluated Canadian provinces and territories on their public commitment to and implementation of Call to Action 62.i. **On October 9, KAIROS released an updated Report Card with revised grades for each province and territory.**

Good news! Most provinces and territories are making progress towards implementing Call to Action 62.i.

**Find out how your province or territory is doing** in implementing Call to Action 62.i by visiting KAIROS' Winds of Change campaign page: [kairoscanada.org/windsofchange](http://kairoscanada.org/windsofchange)

## Take Action!

- 1. Review** the revised Report Card to see how each province and territory is progressing towards full implementation of Call to Action 62.i.
- 2. Write a letter** to your MPP/MLA calling for the implementation of Call to Action 62.i. Name the things your province or territory is doing well. Encourage action where more is needed.
- 3. Meet** with your MPP/MLA and the Ministry of Education. KAIROS has resources online to help.
- 4. Circulate** the paper petitions where appropriate.
- 5. Host and arrange for a workshop or event** to bring the Winds of Change campaign to your community.

For further information, contact Justice Ministries at [healing@presbyterian.ca](mailto:healing@presbyterian.ca).

## Coming Together: KAIROS Regional Gathering

*By the Rev. Joye Platford.*

On October 12, a group of Indigenous people and friends from the ecumenical community gathered at The Forks by the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in Winnipeg, Manitoba for a vigil to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Prayers, songs and tobacco were offered. There were also moments in this remembrance and for missing men and Two Spirit\* individuals.

The next day part of the group met for the KAIROS Cambrian-Agassiz regional gathering and annual meeting. Participants tried a new mapping exercise from The Anglican Church of Canada called "Mapping the Ground We Stand On," which shows the movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on Turtle Island over time. The day was also an opportunity to connect with and receive updates from KAIROS staff members and other justice-seekers from Manitoba and Northern Ontario. Several members of Presbyterian churches and ministries attended.



Front row: Margaret Hunter, Cathy Lindsay and Tommy Keesick from the Kenora Fellowship Centre with the Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin (Place of Hope Presbyterian Church). Back row: the Rev. Joye Platford and Vivian Ketchum.

*\*Two Spirit is an English umbrella term to reflect and restore Indigenous traditions forcefully suppressed by colonization, honouring the fluid and diverse nature of gender and attraction and its connection to community and spirituality. It is used by some Indigenous people rather than, or in addition to, identifying as LGBTQI.*

# Be a Change Maker

*By Amy Zavitz. Supported by the PCC, Amy served as an Ecumenical Accompanier in the West Bank, Palestine earlier in 2018.*

We live in challenging times. It is easy to feel small when looking at the state of our global society and to think: what can I, as one person, do?

From January to April, 2018, I lived in the Jordan Valley, West Bank, with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel<sup>1</sup> (EAPPI), a program of the World Council of Churches. I lived alongside communities to witness life under occupation, provide a protective presence to vulnerable communities, and monitor and report on human rights abuses and violations to international law.

A fundamental principle of EAPPI is raising awareness and advocating for a just peace in Palestine and Israel. Recently, many people who participated in EAPPI from Canada and the United States gathered in Washington for an advocacy summit. We discussed best practices for advocacy, shared stories of sorrow and resilience, celebrated successes and met with staff of US Senators asking them to call on President Trump's Administration to reinstate (1) United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)<sup>2</sup> funding and (2) humanitarian aid to Palestine that was reallocated in August 2018.<sup>3</sup> Previously, the US was the largest single donor to UNRWA.

The staff we met with agreed with these requests in theory, but ended the conversation without tangible action...but that doesn't mean we stop asking! Each of us can use our power as citizens to hold our governments accountable. We must be clear, prophetic and faithful in our Christian witness to governments.



Ecumenical Accompaniers at a community meeting in the West Bank, Palestine.

If you are passionate about an unjust situation, you can use the following advocacy tips to have an impact – meet with your MP, sign a petition, or work to engage your community. Before you set out, have a plan.

**1. Discern how you, as a Christian, feel you are called to respond.** Our Christian identity and faith guides our sense of purpose, calling and response to situations in the world. The Biblical message of hope for all people is our foundational source of insight, comfort, challenge and calling.

**2. Identify clear goals.** Highlight one or two aspects of the issue to help get your point across and prepare an "ask." If you are meeting with an MP, what exactly do you want them to do? If you are sharing with your congregation, how specifically can they be involved? Share personal stories and experiences to underscore the urgency and humanize the issue.

**3. Be pragmatic.** What will work to advance your goals? While ethical factors are important, there may be situations where economic and social impacts are more persuasive. In the case of Palestine and Israel, it is important to acknowledge that ending the occupation is not only good for Palestinians, but for Israelis too.

**4. Do your research** and get your facts straight. Nothing derails a productive conversation quicker than inaccurate information. Learn from a diversity of reputable sources.

**5. Work as a team.** Gather a group of people who are passionate about the same issue. Share the responsibility and reflect collectively on successes and challenges. In planning a meeting, identify which person will speak to particular points.

**6. Stay in the game.** Advocating for justice is not a sprint, it is a marathon. Change happens when, despite all odds, groups of dedicated people driven by hope work persistently to address injustice in the world, striving always to render possible that which seems impossible from within the situation.

I believe political advocacy should be at the core of our identity as a church. The global church is called into costly solidarity with the local church, to boldly accompany those facing injustice. Walking in solidarity cannot be passive to injustice, it must speak out in the face of oppression. We live in a country that boasts respect for human rights as a core principle. Do you believe this is upheld? If not, are you ready to take a stand?

1. [eappi.org](http://eappi.org)
2. [unrwa.org](http://unrwa.org)
3. [npr.org/2018/08/24/641689522/u-s-cuts-more-than-200-million-in-aid-to-palestinians](https://www.npr.org/2018/08/24/641689522/u-s-cuts-more-than-200-million-in-aid-to-palestinians)

## Crossing Cultures Together 2018: “Shaping Our Future Together”

*By the Rev. Dr. Dong-Ha Kim, Interim Director of Academic Programs & Asian Centre Director, Knox College.*

On October 11, the Asian-Canadian Centre for Theology and Ministry (Knox College) and Justice Ministries hosted the 12th *Crossing Cultures Together* event with a focus on the relationship between Indigenous people and newcomers to Canada.

The planning committee desired to see a gathering where the participants could learn about ethical truth telling and reconciliation between Indigenous people and others, especially those who are newly calling Canada home. We envisioned an event wherein all who were gathered could start breaking down the walls of misunderstandings that continue to define the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The day began with a unifying communion service. All the participants were then blessed to participate in the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, which broadened our understanding of the experiences of Indigenous people in Canada. Katharine Sisk and Carragh Erhardt (Justice Ministries) led the group through the exercise, culminating in the sharing of soul-searching reflections.

As part of the plenary speaker’s panel forum, Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo (Director, Indigenous Initiatives, the University of Toronto) emphasized the importance of really getting to know each other before we embark on the journey of shaping our future together. Getting to know someone else demands that we give up something of ourselves! This has not been an easy venture for anyone under the best of circumstances. Truth and reconciliation asks how all of us may move forward, together. We must first understand; we need to listen to the stories being told. Here, listening is doing.

Dr. Ben C. H. Kuo, a Taiwanese-born and North American educated psychologist (Professor of Clinical Psychology,

the University of Windsor), provided an overview of inter-generational trauma within communities.

Indigenous people have been subject to the transmission of oppression through colonization and residential schools that, over time, has become cumulative. Undoing this accumulated trauma will realistically take seven generations of active engagement from all levels of our collective society. Healing can begin to take place when people start to talk about the trauma. God can be so gracious as to grant us, through occasions such as this public forum, the opportunity, if only in the modest way, to better understand and begin this healing journey.

Dr. Esther Acolatse (Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Intercultural Studies, Knox College) outlined the importance of acknowledging that many newcomers deal with their own issues as they journey through the psychological and cultural transitions into their new home. The fear of losing language – the hub of identity – for instance, can be a barrier to engaging with the legacy of colonization and residential schools. Dr. Acolatse aptly underlined the scripture’s impetus to bless the new lands where the migrants find themselves and begin to take root, physically and spiritually, wherever they may be. Dr. Acolatse noted that in scripture, God’s plan entailed “an enlargement of their horizons as they got to meet new people and learn that people are people.” Dr. Acolatse encouraged newcomers to Canada to invest in their future by earnestly engaging in the act of shaping our future together.

At the end of the day, there was a unified chorus of voices calling for clearer understanding of the injustices carried out upon Indigenous people. I would venture to add that those present understood that listening to the stories being told is an important venture towards community building, healing wounds, and is an investment towards a future that we will all share together. Thanks be to God.



## Merry Christmas from Justice Ministries

Advent is a time for preparation. We anticipate the miracle of Christ's birth as the beginning of a new age.

"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word." (Hebrews 1:1-3)

In Jesus' ministry, new hope is found and we are shown God's vision for peace. We give thanks in joy because through Christ, love is given new meaning as an act of vulnerability and even as sacrifice. As we look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth this Christmas, Advent is also a time of reflection on the year that is ending. Where do we see Christ's love in action today?

In the community meals at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Sutton West and the Grandmothers' Tea gatherings in Ohsweken, we see Christ's love in the invitation to break bread with one another and learning that we are often more similar than different.

Friends of KAIROS joined together in Winnipeg for a vigil in honour of Indigenous people who have gone missing or who have been murdered in Canada. We see Christ's love in communities that gather for comfort in times of lament.

Amy Zavitz writes of the calls for members of the global church to be in costly solidarity with Palestinians in the occupied territories. In light of her experience as an ecumenical accompanier in Palestine, she shares ways for Christians to put love into action through advocacy.

These, and other stories in this edition of *Streams of Justice* are hopeful examples of people seeking peace and justice in their communities and in the world.

Jesus set an example through his ministry with those on the margins that calls us to seek relationships across different experiences and perspectives; relationships where there is room for everyone at the table to give and receive from one another. Sometimes these relationships ask us to be vulnerable; to see and feel outside our comfort zones. They may challenge us to respond to injustice as an act of discipleship.

As you gather with family and friends this Christmas, may you show and be shown the love we've been taught through Jesus Christ, once a child born in a stable.

On behalf of Justice Ministries' staff and the Justice Ministries Advisory Committee Members, Merry Christmas.

Carragh Erhardt & Katharine Sisk



### Give a Gift of Change

This Christmas, keep hope alive for farmers in Palestine by planting an olive tree.

Learn more at [presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange](http://presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange)

## Webinar: Applying to the Healing and Reconciliation Seed Fund

The Healing and Reconciliation Seed Fund offers grants up to \$5,000 for Presbyterian groups that are committed to building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The fund has supported a wide range of initiatives over the past 12 years. The next deadline for applications is Friday, March 15, 2019.

On Tuesday, January 22, from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. (Eastern), Justice Ministries will host a webinar to provide advice on how to begin building relationships with Indigenous people in your community and tips for different stages in the Seed Fund's application and reporting process. Past grant recipients will share their stories and lessons they learned.

For all log-in details and to register, go to: [presbyterian.ca/webinars](http://presbyterian.ca/webinars).



Rachel, Amanda and Theresa of Mino Ode Kwewak N'Gamowak (Good Hearted Women Singers) shared their gifts for singing and drumming at Toward (Un)Common Ground, an event supported by the Healing and Reconciliation Seed Fund.

## Reflection on Grandmothers' Tea

*By Shirley Copeland and Shirley Miller. Shirley Copeland is retired but worked 10 years with Indigenous people in Northern Ontario. She has also volunteered with Winnipeg Inner-City Missions. Shirley Miller, past president of South Western Ontario Synodical, is the Women's Missionary Society Executive Council's representative on the Justice Ministries Advisory Committee.*

In 2017 the Women's Missionary Auxiliary program at Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ontario participated in activities related to the theme: "Discover Truth, Seek Reconciliation. Aid Healing."

Some highlights included a visit to the *First Native Women's Firsts* display at the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario; the KAIROS Blanket Exercise with the Paris PC youth group facilitated by Katharine Sisk and Carragh Erhardt (Justice Ministries' staff); and a special evening "Walking Together" with the Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin and other guests from Winnipeg Inner-City Missions (WICM) who led a smudging ceremony and Sharing Circles. Margaret is the minister at Place of Hope Presbyterian

Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the former executive director of WICM.

The auxiliary president, Shirley Miller and secretary, Shirley Copeland are following in the healing process by attending Grandmothers' Teas hosted by Nations Uniting, an outreach ministry of The United Church of Canada in Ohsweken, Ontario. The Grandmothers' Teas are times of sharing and building bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women. Meetings begin with a bountiful potluck lunch. Following lunch, a leader will explain the topic that everyone is invited to speak about. As we go around the circle only the person holding a special stone may speak. As each participant shares, it is obvious that our thoughts and experiences are very similar. We are certainly more alike than different, regardless of culture or heritage.

There is such a tremendous need for dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and we appreciate the opportunity to learn about life from members of Six Nations through these Grandmothers' Tea gatherings.

## Preparing for the Journey of Reconciliation

The Synod of Alberta and the Northwest met on October 20 for its annual educational event. This year's theme centred around reconciliation and what we can do in our congregations to honour the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.

We had two guest speakers for the day. Our first speaker was Sykes Powderface from the Stoney Nakoda Nation. What a great experience! Sykes is a very well-respected speaker and teacher who has spent his life working in politics, dealing with the laws concerning Indigenous child welfare and teaching on Indigenous ways of life. He also worked as a stunt man in movies made in Alberta from the 1940s until 2009.

He explained colonization in a relatable way. To paraphrase, he said: Imagine that Canada is a house. When the settlers first arrived we invited them to have a meal around our fire. They did and then they went home. The next time the settlers came they asked if they could spend the night and we offered them our guest room. They spent the night and then they left. The next time the settlers came, they asked if they could see our whole house, and which bedroom was ours. We showed them and then they told us that we could stay in our bedroom and they would take the house.

It was a thought-provoking way to look at the movements of the settlers. He also spoke about the importance of living equally, with respect. His words generated lots of comments and questions.

Carragh Erhardt (Justice Ministries) then talked about support that is available through the national church as she led us through a presentation about allyship and reconciliation. Many people don't know how to begin to be allies with Indigenous people. Carragh shared advice and resources for getting started including worship resources, the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, books and films by Indigenous people and questions for studying the TRC's Calls to Action.

We then broke into working groups to brainstorm plans that we could put into action in our congregations. If you are on the worship committee, what would you do? If you were on the Christian Education committee, or the mission committee, what kinds of things could you do? This was a worthwhile brainstorming time as it mixed city with rural representatives and it was interesting to hear the different approaches we all came up with. At the end of the time it was agreed that talking about the Calls to Action needs lots of forethought in order to honour the meaning behind them. We want to be sincere in our actions, and not appropriate symbols or culture. We need to invite Elders to work with us.

We ended the day with a time of worship that included reflections about what a future of reconciliation could be and returned home with that dream in mind.

*By the Rev. Sandra Franklin-Law, minister of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Eckville, Alberta.*