



Caring for Creation

Taste of Grace

By the Rev. Ken and Shaunna MacQuarrie, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Thorold, Ont.

Our family has been keeping honeybees since 2015. It has been a rich experience of discovery, growth, pain, disappointment, connection, ecological engagement and wonder. It all began when we were inspired by a few members of our church who had kept bees in the past. They shared their wisdom with us, we purchased two colonies and were on our way! We now manage approximately 30 colonies located on three different properties.

Bees are absolutely amazing! The queen—the mother of the colony—is able to lay more than her own body weight in eggs daily. The workers carry out specialized roles—cleaning the hive, caring for the brood, gathering pollen and nectar, storing and curing the honey, feeding the population, protecting the hive from predators and pests, etc. A foraging bee will generally fly up to two miles from her home to gather nectar from flowers. In her entire life (30 to 45 days) one bee will gather approximately 1/8 of a teaspoon of honey. Fortunately, a colony has about 80,000 bees, so a good hive can produce many litres of honey in a season.

The honeybee has been a creature of intrigue and esteem for humanity throughout history. And bees have found a place of stature within many faith traditions. In the Bible, bees and honey are attributed with the qualities of healing, prosperity, blessing and abundance. And so it is of little surprise that beekeeping has been a passion of many Christians over the generations—especially, it seems, ministers.

The most commonly used bee boxes today are called “Langstroth hives.” Prior to their invention, bees

were kept in skeps (upturned straw baskets), which required destruction of the comb, and sometimes the bees, to harvest the honey. In 1852, L.L. Langstroth, a congregational minister in Massachusetts, patented a system of stacking boxes with removable frames. This innovation allows a beekeeper to easily check the health and condition of a colony and remove honey frames without harming the bees.

Do you want to help our important pollinators thrive? There are many things that you can do. Learn not to fear honeybees (they are not inclined to sting!). Avoid using pesticides on your lawn (get to know the beauty of dandelions). Learn more about honeybees and natural pollinators. Plant a pollinator garden at your home or your church. Get to know a beekeeper and buy local honey. Perhaps even visit an apiary—maybe you'll be a beekeeper yourself one day!

The author of Proverbs writes, “Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body” (Proverbs 16:24). Our experience of bees is that they can teach us much about living a life of faith and to be attuned to God's will for us. A day spent in the bee yard brings a sense of calm, order and beauty which is difficult to describe. It's a taste of grace.

Lessons from the Bee Yard

By the Rev. Linda Patton-Cowie, St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont.

Lesson #1: When we each do what we can, and do it well, we make it possible for others to do the same

A queen honeybee is constantly attended to by a “court” of worker bees. These workers feed and groom her. Without the constant care of her attendants, the queen would die. She



Beekeepers the Rev. Ken and Shaunna MacQuarrie. PHOTO CREDIT: BOB LIDDYCOAT OF THOROLDNEWS.COM



The Rev. Linda Patton-Cowie, beekeeper.

even relies on them to digest her food. Queens do not have the same glands workers use to digest their food, so her food is predigested and then fed to her.

Before she will lay an egg, the Queen inspects the wax cell to make sure it has been properly cleaned by the workers. Once satisfied the cell is clean enough, she lowers her abdomen into it and lays a single egg. She repeats this process with every egg.

Bees each have a job, and they know what it is. The queen doesn't try to do the worker's job, and the

worker doesn't try to do the queen's job. I think this is a good reminder for us. We can't do it all—we all have limits. We need other people. Do what you can, and do it well, and then leave the rest up to others.

When we each do well what we can, we make it possible for others to do what they can.

Lesson #2: There is a time for every purpose under heaven

The life span of an adult worker bee varies with the time of the year. When the colony is active in spring and



Removing bees from a hollow tree.

summer, a worker bee may live as long as 5 to 6 weeks. During the inactive period in winter, a worker bee can live five months or more. What this means is that often the bees who live during the winter are sustained by honey provided by the bees that lived and worked during the summer. In the same way, we are often fed and sustained by those who have gone before us. As we too, by offering our love to others, may find that that love outlives us and strengthens others, even after we are gone.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Reconciliation: Meeting Each Other Again



By the Rev. Amanda Currie,
Moderator of 2019 General Assembly

In *Living Faith*, we affirm that “The church is one. It is one family under God whose purpose it is to unite all people in Jesus Christ” (7.1.2). And yet, we live and minister within a church that is divided—separated from our siblings in Christ in other Christian traditions and threatened by the possibility of division even within The Presbyterian Church in Canada over differences and conflicts that we seem unable to resolve.

In the midst of these challenging days, we should remember the statement made by the 123rd General Assembly (1997) on ecumenism. Part of it said:

“We recognize the common calling in Christ which we share with all Christians and we seek ways of making visible the unity which God has given us. We affirm one church, one faith, one Lord, sharing in worship, witness and service to the world. As part of the Church Universal, we strive to listen to and learn from one another, to break down the barriers which divide people and to promote justice and

peace in the whole human family and the integrity of all creation.

We work toward a church which shares one baptism, celebrates one eucharist and recognizes one ministry. At the same time, we acknowledge that unity is not the same as uniformity and that diversity of polity and practice can be faithfully sustained within Christ’s church.”

Whether we are working on relations with other churches from which we have been separated for hundreds of years, or whether we are navigating the relationships impacted by current conflicts and debates, reconciliation is needed.

“To ‘reconcile’ or bring about ‘reconciliation’ is to restore harmony or friendship between two entities formerly divided. In the biblical tradition, reconciliation denotes the fundamental fact of a restored relationship, either between human persons, among various elements in the cosmos, or between humans and God” (*Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 1112).

Reconciliation is an important concept beyond the church as well. The word is used in politics and in ethnic relations to refer to the restoration of normal relations between groups, or the restoration of mutual respect between people from different backgrounds. Reconciliation may refer to the process of winning over hostile people to friendliness. It may be about settling a quarrel or dispute. Or it can be a matter of bringing things into agreement or harmony—making things compatible or consistent.



Reconciliation has become an often-used word since the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and much of the conversation has surrounded what it might mean to achieve reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Literally, reconciliation means “to meet again.” The Latin “re” means *again*, and “conciliare” refers to a meeting (like the English word, *council*). In fact, it refers specifically to a “friendly meeting.”

In work for Christian unity, reconciliation involves the churches coming together again. After all, a lot has changed since we parted ways. Sometimes our ideas about each other are based on old memories, or even on incorrect assumptions or stereotypes. When we meet again, we may discover who the other actually is, what they believe, how they worship, what their priorities are, and

we may find that we have a great deal in common.

In relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, reconciliation also involves us receiving each other again. Our first meetings on this land didn’t go very well, and we need to acknowledge that. Colonial and paternalistic ideas and policies of the settlers harmed Indigenous communities and families deeply, and sought to wipe out Indigenous languages, cultures and spiritual practices. Lands were stolen, children were taken away from parents and Indigenous peoples were expected to become like “civilized” Europeans.

I often think of the helpful words of Cardinal Mercier of Malines, Belgium, an ecumenical pioneer. Speaking of reconciliation between the churches, he suggested that, “In order to unite with one another, we must love one another. In order to love one another, we must know one another. In order to know one another, we must go and meet one another.”

In order for reconciliation to take place between churches, between factions within our denomination and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, I believe that we must go and come together. That is the first step toward knowing, loving and being united with one another.

Presbyterians must make the effort to meet their Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical neighbours. Get to know them, discuss life and faith with them, eat with them, pray with them, look for ways to work together with them.

Presbyterians with varying views on significant issues like same-sex marriage must meet with each other—friendly meetings, not debates and arguments or heated online discussions. These should be times when we get to know each other, discuss life and faith together, eat together, pray together and look for ways to

work together across our differences.

Non-Indigenous Presbyterians must also go and meet with their Indigenous neighbours, perhaps beginning with those who minister and worship within our own denomination, or perhaps by beginning with an Indigenous community that is in their local community. They must get to know each other, discuss life and faith together, eat together, pray together and look for ways to work together across our different cultures and spiritualities.

We may want to consider having some of these meetings and discussions in the format of a talking circle. There is great wisdom in the Indigenous practice of sharing in this non-hierarchical way that invites each person to spend more time listening than speaking, and to share from the heart.

In the coming months, we will continue to discuss and discern the way forward together as a denomination addressing same-sex marriage. We will also begin to think about what it means that the 2019 General Assembly repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, while continuing to live into our 1994 Confession to Indigenous Peoples, responding to the TRC Calls to Action, and considering our response to the Calls to Action with regard to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. And I hope that Presbyterians across Canada will continue to make connections with other Christian churches to rebuild relationships of trust and co-operation with our ecumenical friends.

This sounds like a lot of work, and it may seem daunting and difficult. Yet, Paul reminds us that it is God “who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18). May God lead us to take some steps toward reconciliation by going forth and meeting one another, and may God make us one.

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MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY



Stormy and Messy Times

By the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald,
Life and Mission Agency

Commissioners at this year's General Assembly dedicated time to discuss their feelings as they wrestled with the decision to recommend that ministers be permitted to officiate at same-sex marriages and that people in same-sex marriages be eligible to be ordained as elders and ministers. Reactions ranged from a mixture of surprise, confusion, joy, grief, anger and hope. Details for further opportunities to share feelings about these recommendations can be found at presbyterian.ca/feedback.

During the discussion time, the Rev. Paulette Brown said, "Let's talk about what the Holy Spirit was doing: maybe the Spirit wants us to be in this kind of mess so we can work it out." I don't know all she meant, but I do know that we were in a mess at Assembly and the PCC will probably be in a bit of mess for a while. And that's okay. If we are in uncertain and difficult times, certainly the Spirit has led us into them, certainly the Spirit is abiding with us in them and certainly the Spirit will work resolution among us.

Life in the Spirit is no defence against difficulty: people of faith are called to unrest and the history of faith and church has always been more than a little messy. We barely get into the second chapter of

Genesis before humanity is plunged into a mess—and we have been in one ever since. And faith, far from an inoculation against mess, is more often than not a catalyst for messy circumstances. Abraham's life was relatively quiet until the day God called him. Then Abraham had to leave his home (Genesis 12), change his name, raise an unexpected child in his old age (Genesis 17), deal with tensions between his wife and his concubine (Genesis 16 and 21), banish one son (Genesis 21) and nearly slaughter the other at God's direction (Genesis 22). That's messy. The prophet Hosea's life was unquestionably messy when he married and had children with a prostitute at God's bidding (Hosea 1:2-4). St. Paul's life was supremely well ordered until he was blinded by a light and called to ministry; thereafter he was homeless, shipwrecked, imprisoned, flogged, persecuted and endlessly embroiled in conflict. The crisis of Good Friday when God in Christ died and day turned to night, the earth quaked, rocks split and the dead walked is an existential mess on a cosmic scale. Messes that, by grace, God works to redeem are part of church life and wanting a pure church, therefore, is wanting no church at all.

A friend of mine serves in a congregation in a region of USA often ravaged by wild storms. A hurricane

recently ripped through his city leaving a mess in its path. The congregation rose to the challenge of helping rebuild the neighbourhood and city that had many pre-existing problems and inequities related to race and poverty. The congregation's mantra became "let's not waste a disaster" and they became energized for renewed service, pursued unexplored opportunities, exercised old muscles in the service of new missions—they found a new focus. In working through the mess left by the hurricane, the congregation came to know the truth we all have been taught in Romans 5, that: "suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

The PCC has been called to minister in stormy and messy times. There are endless challenges and endless opportunities for the church to find a voice and play its role. We have work to do to push open the doors of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada; to advocate for persecuted peoples around the world; to push for change in a society that silently tolerated more than 600 missing and murdered Indigenous women in this country; to minister and be the church in a changing and tricky context; to help heal creation that is in crisis; and to speak amid the dangerous rise of nationalism, racism, religious persecution and extremism at home and around the

world. If the church has been given the mess then we have also been given: the Spirit to lead us; the grace to know how to be and speak and what to do when things are messy; the faith that trusts that the kingdom comes; the hope to move ahead; and the good news to share. Maybe part of the mess we think we are in regarding sexuality is the Spirit's way of waking us from our slumbers to pay attention to how we deal with each other and to see the reality of what else matters and what resources we have been given.

Oops!

In the Summer 2019 edition, the Letter to the Editor written by Joshua Weresh (p. 13) incorrectly used the word "ironic" when it should have said "irenic." The section should have read: "...In Jesus' words, love your enemies and do good to those who hate you. If military chaplains truly refuse to bless or endorse war, it seems clear that such irenic advice to those in charge should form a large part of their care, and, for the laity, such advice should be coupled with a refusal not only to fight but also to pay any taxes that are spent on national defence, which should be directed instead toward a conscientious-objectors' fund." Our apologies for this error.



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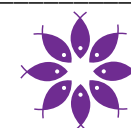
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Moderator of 145th General Assembly:
The Rev. Amanda Currie



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LEADERSHIP

People You Wish Would Never Die

By the Rev. John Congram
 former editor of the
 Presbyterian Record magazine

As you move through life you meet people you feel live too long. When I was a minister of a church, if I was to be perfectly honest, I sometimes thought, but never articulated, that a few well-timed deaths in the congregation would make my life easier and the work of the congregation more effective. On the other hand, you meet people you wish would never die.

For me, one of the latter was Jean Vanier. On May 7 of this year, Jean Vanier died at the age of 90. He was the son of Georges Vanier a former Governor General of Canada. Jean Vanier served in the Canadian navy during the 1950s. Becoming dissatisfied he resigned and went to France where he studied and taught philosophy. In France he became a friend of a Roman Catholic priest named Thomas Philippe and through that friendship became aware of many people institutionalized with develop-

mental handicaps.

As a result of this experience Vanier invited two men who had been institutionalized to come and live with him in Trosly-Breuil, France. This became the basis of what we know as the first L'Arche community where people with disabilities live with those who care for them. Vanier believed that people with disabilities could be our teachers rather than being seen as burdens to society. Today there are L'Arche communities in 37 countries.

I met Vanier only once when he visited the L'Arche community in Richmond Hill, Ont. It had a lasting effect on me. Although he was over an hour late, the excitement and anticipation of the crowd remained at a high level. Apparently being late was not unusual for Vanier, who had constant demands on his time. And those who waited were not disappointed. It is difficult to describe his effect on the community as his presence seemed to embrace the room while he also embraced the residents individually. He appeared in well-



Jean Vanier, Canadian Catholic philosopher, theologian and humanitarian who died May 7, 2019.

worn casual clothes, moving slowly among the welcoming throng, affirming the worth of each person by

his very presence. This may sound blasphemous, but it was almost as if Jesus had been reincarnated in our midst.

Vanier was a deeply religious man. His writings are filled with references to the Bible and to Jesus. His foundational belief was that every human being is valuable whatever their condition. In that conviction, he reflects Jesus' own basis for living in community. But I wonder if we are willing or able to maintain this conviction in society today, let alone in our own lives. We have trouble implementing this belief, Vanier claims in his book *Be Not Afraid*, because as he puts it, in the "normal" there is so much fear. "We have so much fear of one another; we are afraid of meeting." I cannot help but wonder whether it is this fear that keeps us from resolving some of the so-called "big issues" we've been wrestling with for years in the church.

I wonder too how Vanier's basic conviction might impinge on our attitudes regarding the huge refugee

problem in our world. Would governments spend less money on ways to keep people out and more on ways to help them? Would we in Canada still complain about the relatively small number of refugees who cross our border?

And then there is the recent report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We seem more interested in whether this should be described as a genocide rather than addressing our failure to take these women seriously. Too often society in general, including the police, viewed them primarily as drug users, prostitutes or alcoholics rather than as people of value.

The last word I reserve for Vanier himself from the well-worn pages of my copy of his book, *Be Not Afraid*. "But we can [still] say with hope, with confidence, with trust, Come, come Lord Jesus. And he will answer, Yes I am coming soon. Yes, I am coming for you who are yearning for love. Be not afraid to love."

FEATURE (cont'd)

It's important to plan for change

Continued from page 1

As the scriptures say—there is a time for every purpose under heaven. We may want to do what we've always done, but maybe the time has come to do something new. Our focus changes as we grow.

Lesson #3: We belong to one another and communication is critical

Bees communicate with what is called the "waggle dance." We've known for a long time that bees are master communicators. They're not afraid to share with others when they've found something good—something that can benefit them all. They don't hoard new-found treasure for themselves.

Communication is so important to us, too. So keep talking—claim your space, guide others. We are bound together on this journey. One bee is no bee; one person is no person. We

belong to each other in discovering and living out our vocation fully.

Lesson #4: It can be good to get a fresh start

When a colony grows too big, and there are too many bees for the hive, the colony usually splits into two halves. The old queen will leave and take a big part of the existing population with her. This is also known as swarming. Having found a new location, scout bees will lead the homeless colony there. They wait for unanimity among the bees when they choose their new home—they choose it together. Before the bees swarm, however, the original colony will produce several queen cells—and the larvae will be fed only royal jelly. That way, when the swarm takes flight, there will be a new queen to keep populating the original colo-

ny. They plan ahead!

Sometimes, after realizing that we need a change, we'll also start again. We will bring some of the things we've learned along with us and we will do some things in a new way. And that's okay. It can be good to get a fresh start. But it's also important to plan for change.

Lesson #5: Sometimes we all need to be fed

Beekeepers need to leave enough honey in the hives for their bees to live on, especially throughout the winter. The bees need it in order to survive. We need to acknowledge our need to be fed, too. An empty vessel can't offer sustenance to anyone else—so don't forget to refill your resources. Read scripture, pray and worship, and care for the gift that God made you to be to the world.



A queen bee laying eggs.

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LEADERSHIP

Online Hate

By the Rev. Daniel Cho, St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., and Moderator of the 2018 General Assembly

On May 2, 2019, the Rev. Daniel Cho, Moderator of the 2018 General Assembly, was invited to speak before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on behalf of Presbyterians. A portion of his testimony is below.

As Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, I represent many Canadians of all cultures and backgrounds who hold deep faith to help shape a better world for all. On their behalf, I express gratitude to this committee for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion of online hate.

As members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, we have as our core values care, love and respect for our neighbours. We hold to an unwavering commitment to work for just causes and outcomes and affirm the inherent dignity of all people. In this regard we enjoy a special relationship and partnership with many of our faith-based groups in our common vision to foster compassion and understanding toward one another. We have all been alarmed by recent events around the world

of mass killings that have targeted specific groups, whether based on race, ethnicity, cultural background, religion, geographical origin or sexual identity. Often, the perpetrators of this violence have been radicalized by online influences or have discovered a like-minded online community and through it find validation for their specific personal bigotry and hatred. Sadly, it is not difficult to countenance the cruel reality of religious, racial and gender prejudices. Racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and homophobia can gain momentum through online platforms that recruit and incite others.

But if we consider for a moment the brazen van attack in Toronto last spring that resulted in 10 deaths and 16 badly injured, mostly women, it raises an important question: Who would have thought there existed a fringe cyber community of misogynists bonded together by their collective and explicit disdain of women because of social and sexual rejection? It is deeply troubling that online hate and the incitement to violence are so exacting in their allure and resonance. In virtually all these hate crimes reported in the North American media, we have come to learn that the perpetrators were, to some degree, influenced by online activity



Daniel Cho testified before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on May 2.

Presbyterians
have a deep
commitment
to help shape a
better world for
all.

and affiliations. Some cases involved pre-existing mental health issues. This might lead us to the conclusion that it is those individuals who hold extreme, bigoted views, and who have a propensity for violence

or suffer from a form of mental illness, that are susceptible to commit such crimes. This might very well be true. But let us consider one point in a statement made by this committee regarding the statistics of the rise in hate-related conduct: "...non-violent crimes such as public incitement of hatred played a greater role in the increase than violent hate crimes." It shows then that people in general are more emboldened to act and speak out about their particular bigoted views at an alarmingly higher rate than doing so through violent acts. The Internet can often act as an open door for the enticement of hate. The very fact that there are others online who also share the same hate is what gives it a perceived legitimacy.



The Rev. Daniel Cho with David Matas, Canada's highly acclaimed international human rights lawyer and professor.



The Rev. Daniel Cho with Dave MacKenzie, MP from Oxford County and an enthusiastic Presbyterian.

Incivility: Time to Break the Habit?

By Allen Macartney, Gloucester Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, reproduced with permission from SPUR Ottawa Magazine

"What's wrong with you!! What an incredibly &#x\$* idea! You've got the IQ of a hubcap!"

Welcome to the 21st Century.

Ours is a highly competitive culture too frequently seasoned with hostility and disrespect. Shielded by the Internet's anonymity, many bloggers vent anger by launching unrestrained warfare using sneering words meant to humiliate, demean and insult those who disagree. Wired on double cappuccinos and high-octane energy drinks, we're like a society of ramped-up, tuned-out, adrenaline-charged hamsters running madly around our cage. Restaurants boast, "In and out in 15 minutes or it's free!" One-minute bedtime stories now condense an entire 19th classic into a quick, hit-and-run, 60-second sound bite—perfect for busy parents.

Ironically, in this age of 24/7 communication, news streams, tweets,



Facebook, e-mails and text messages, most people have few or poor communication skills. Plus, we're all too stressed out. The result: a feverish escalation of incivility and provocative attacks that often spiral out of control.

Even some Christians readily adopt an insulting, biting tone with those who disagree on hot-button topics like abortion, same-sex relationships and assisted suicide. Truth matters but not when it's delivered in

a toxic, arrogant way.

If we're only pleasant and reasonable with those who agree with us, are we any better than the society around us? Mercy and love must temper our words and tone. Discussion doesn't need to become an adversarial battle of egos where the most acerbic person dominates the other.

The Gospel of James tells us to be "quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19). Jesus told us to do to others

as we want them to do to us. Like it or not, we are obliged to show respectful self-restraint. This isn't a weak form of sentimentalism.

No one could accuse Dr. Martin Luther King of lacking passion. Yet he used non-violent respectful words that didn't vilify others. Even when they were beating him with a club and releasing attack dogs against him, his Christian witness shone. Change didn't come immediately, but people soon noticed.

Not all ideas are equal, balanced and right. Some people are simply wrong. But here's the point: ideas might not be equal, but people are. We can disagree strongly, even passionately, without attacking in an insulting, demeaning or humiliating way. The core of civility means living in peace with others despite deep differences.

Russian KGB secret police recruiters used to train their spies to be great listeners. The reason: everyone wants to talk, and no one wants to listen. The moment we really listen actively to someone, unconsciously,

they start liking us.

Listening skills are weak today. Our culture glories in assertiveness. This provides opportunities. If people knew Christians as a listening, gentle people, not easily slighted and offended, would that bring honour to God? We don't have to drive the full speed limit. We can ease off slightly. (Full disclosure: I personally find this very hard!)

So what can we do to breathe some balance into a raw conversation? What are some de-escalating strategies? Try speaking a little bit quieter and slower than the other person. Adopt a measured approach, pausing. Listen actively. Refuse—actually refuse—to interrupt.

We don't have to become willing doormats. If someone starts loudly ranting, it's time to simply walk away, hang up or sign off.

We're called to be counter-cultural. That requires discipline. It also might be creative and fun. Let's look for it. In this era of road rage, air rage and shopping cart rage, let's be utterly outrageous.

LEADERSHIP (cont'd)



Enthusiastic participants of the May 2019 Cyclical PCC meeting.

Church Planting with Cyclical PCC

By the Rev. Steve Filyk, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kamloops, B.C.

At our November 2018 presbytery meeting, it was proposed that the presbytery investigate the possibility of planting new churches within our bounds and discover expertise for this venture. Through conversations with colleagues in the Presbytery of Westminster I became aware of an initiative called Cyclical PCC.

Cyclical PCC is a new church-planting support initiative within the PCC that, in partnership with Cyclical Inc., affiliated with the PC(USA), is designed to encourage presbyteries and leaders within our denomination to take first steps toward beginning new worshipping communities. In Cyclical PCC, participants are led through a three-step process of discerning call and vision, taking initial steps toward living out the vision and establishing a sustainable new ministry.

I reached out to Cyclical PCC about the possibility of learning more about this initiative as an observer, rather than a participant, with explicit intentions of starting a new worshipping community. After some discussion among Cyclical leaders, I was invited to attend their Spring Gathering. At our last presbytery meeting I was granted the permission and the funds to attend the May 13–16 event.

The Spring Gathering brought together over 40 participants and

included a full schedule of worship, presentations, discussions and time for building relationships. Topics addressed included: widening our understanding of mission, widening our understanding of church, coaching, spiritual practices, identifying and building on our strengths, going from nothing to something.

At the outset we were asked to consider the current and past models of church-planting to assess their liabilities. Below is a short summary that was shared (and can be found in *Starting Missional Churches: Life with God in the Neighborhood* by Mark Branson and Nicholas Warnes, beginning on p. 14):

- Suburban sprawl (build in growing areas)—this tends to deliver predetermined goods without assuming what the Spirit is doing; success is rarely transferable
- Protestant splitting (building a community out of refugees from other churches)—prioritizes consumer preference over God's mission and makes discontent foundational in the church DNA
- Expert strategies (calling in the church consultant)—misses unique characteristics of the mission context, objectivizes the context, and undervalues the active participation of the church community
- Charismatic figure—builds the

community around a single person which makes it vulnerable to their eventual departure

All of these models tend to ignore the context (a place in which God is already working) and discount the involvement of everyday Christians (through whom God desires to work).

Throughout the conference, we discussed priorities for starting missional communities. These include the following (which can also be found in *Starting Missional Churches: Life with God in the Neighborhood*, beginning on p. 37):

- Priority on discerning God's activity—it is foundational that God is already at work in the neighborhood and it is our task to discover what God is doing and how to join in this work
- Priority on the neighbour as a subject—rather than assuming we know what the neighbor needs and treating them like objects or targets, we are invited to join into life with them in mutual relationships
- Priority on boundary crossing—starting new worshipping communities demands a willingness to move outside our boundaries of what is safe and familiar and engage those who may be different in terms of age, ethnicity or socio-economic differences (among others)
- Priority on plural leadership—

Cyclical communicates a foundational belief that when God is shaping a people, God brings together a team of leaders with various gifts, skills, abilities that will be used collectively for this task

What is clear is that church planting according to Cyclical PCC is not a program that you purchase off the shelf, to be used on an unsuspecting audience by a solitary church professional. Rather, it involves active discernment and involvement within communities by people who believe that they are called to this work. If a church professional is to be employed it seems that their role is to facilitate (rather than direct) the process of a larger group discovering the mission to which they have been called and to support them in this work.

Discerning who might comprise the team that is creating a new worshipping community is also crucial. A number of times throughout the week, it was underscored that the church's DNA tends to reflect that of its founder(s). That is, if you gather a group of Caucasian male Christian seniors to be a foundational leadership group, it is very likely that the community that is formed will have a striking resemblance to this team. Similarly, if the group has a culture of generosity versus a culture of tightfistedness, it is very likely that this cultural element

will emerge in the church nascent community that is being formed.

I should note that significant time was spent on Gallup's StrengthsFinder tool (completed in advance), not as a means of determining who is suitable for church-planting, but as a means of self-awareness for those who intend to go into this work, so that they might know what strengths can be leveraged and where they will need the input and assistance of others.

It was extremely encouraging to attend this Spring Gathering and learn more about Cyclical PCC. It is clear not just that people in the PCC are interested in starting new worshipping communities, but that such communities are already beginning, and that there is a growing interest to take part in this work. For those who have consistently heard that it is fall/winter in the life of the PCC, I saw distinct signs of springtime. I would humbly suggest that ministry committees and presbyteries, in their desire to start new worshipping communities, begin by engaging in prayer, asking God to point out to them the work that God wants accomplished, and to help us find those very people among them who God is calling to this task. I would also suggest that, if establishing new worshipping communities is a priority, congregations consider engaging the Cyclical PCC program.

To learn more about Cyclical PCC, visit presbyterian.ca/cyclicalpcc

LEADERSHIP (cont'd)

Small Church Having a Big Impact



By Canadian Ministries

Small churches can have a big missional impact. In the rural town of Grand Falls-Windsor in Newfoundland, members of St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church have been responding to promptings by God to connect more intentionally with their local community.

It began with just a few small steps. The first initiative was to place a Food Bank donation box in the front entrance of the church. Soon, the box was overflowing, and the congregation realized they would need a group to take the lead on their community outreach.

This resulted in the rebirth of the Thistle Club, a women's group that had dismantled eight years before. Passionate about this new vision, the members got down to business and brainstormed ideas for more community outreach projects. At first, their conversations centred on what could be done in the congregational context, but soon they began imagining what could happen if they partnered with local community service organizations.

In a discussion with the Salvation Army Community and Family Services Coordinator, it was determined that a supply of socks and underwear was required for adults in need. The Thistle Club decided to create a Community Clothesline in their sanctuary. It wasn't very long after the clothesline was constructed in the sanctuary that it was filled with new socks and underwear donated by the congregation.

Another need identified in the community came from Janeway Children's Hospital in St. John's and their own local hospital. There was a shortage of knitted caps, mitts and blankets for babies. Two meetings of the Thistle Club later, there were 57 hats and pairs of mitts as well as 32 incubator blankets that were ready for delivery to the hospitals. This was a project that not only St. Matthew's got on board for, but also friends of the congregation.

The Thistle Club did not stop at reaching out to service organizations. They also wrote to other Christian women's groups, offering to support outreach events they were planning. They were quickly taken up on their offer of help and are now planning an ecumenical project with a neighbouring church this summer.

This story confirms that all congregations, regardless of size, have the ability to impact their communities. Taking the first steps in response to God's missional call led St. Matthew's to a renewed sense of excitement, purpose and connection to neighbours. What first steps might God be calling your congregation to take? Are there organizations in your community that you could partner with to respond to a local need? If nothing is coming to mind, take time to pray and ask God where your congregation could serve.

Canadian Ministries would be happy to talk to you about ways to reach out to your community. Please email canadianministries@presbyterian.ca or call 1-800-619-7301.

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PLANNED GIVING

The Tale of the Westcoast Scot

By Jim MacDonald, Development Manager for Stewardship & Planned Giving, part-time M.Div. student at Knox College, and elder at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Vaughan, Ont.

In my job, I have the great privilege of meeting people who want to support the work of the church with the gifts God has given them. I am inspired by their stories, as I see how their gift is an extension of how they have lived their lives. After one such conversation with a wonderful woman in B.C., I asked if I could share her story with you. She kindly agreed but asked if I would keep her name anonymous, so I've changed the names in the story below. Here is her story:

Way back in 1956, Lorna travelled halfway around the world in pursuit of a dream. Her husband, Graeme, was in B.C. and waiting for Lorna and their three children to join him there. She left the Highlands of Scotland for the mountains of B.C. with a hundred dollars in her purse and three wee ones in tow. They sailed from Liverpool to Halifax and then traversed Canada by train. In those days, children took the train for free, but only if they slept in the same berth as their parent! Caring for three children, it was a difficult journey, not least because disposable diapers hadn't been invented yet. Remembering fondly, Lorna told me, "Being from the Highlands, we didn't expect anyone to take care of us—we just got on with it." By the time they arrived, Graeme had landed a full-time job and had just found a rented house for the family on the previous day. Lorna was grateful to God for bringing her family safely to their new home.

Lorna realized that she would also need to work and soon found a job doing clerical work. Graeme worked nights, while Lorna worked days. The family lived on his wages and saved her salary, gathering together a down payment to buy a home. Graeme encouraged Lorna to sign up for specialized training that was offered by her employer. Over five years, Lorna studied part-time and earned a professional designation. She then had more income and more responsibility.

After years of saving, Graeme and Lorna had an opportunity to buy a beautiful bungalow with a gorgeous view. The asking price? Sixteen thousand dollars. They only had \$3,500 for the down payment and another couple was offering \$4,500. They

went home with their hopes dashed. However, somehow the homeowners had taken a liking to Graeme and Lorna and allowed them to buy the house. By scrimping and saving, they had the mortgage paid off in just four years. It was only then that they finally decided to buy their first car. Lorna and her husband were committed to staying out of debt, believing that was the only way to get ahead.

The family kept saving and investing. Lorna's portfolio had its peaks and valleys over the years and took a particularly bad hit in the early '80s when interest rates surpassed 20% but, whenever her investments went badly, Lorna took it in stride. She says, when the going gets tough, "you just get on with it." Over time, through Lorna's wise management, the family came out ahead financially, and for that, Lorna is very grateful to God.

In later years, Lorna had two growing concerns. First, Graeme was a solid provider who kept the same job for 35 years, but he didn't care much for managing money. Since Lorna had made a career of financial management, Graeme's lack of interest was just fine. However, it also meant that, if anything should happen to Lorna, Graeme would not have the skill set to manage a complex portfolio.

Lorna was also worried about her local Presbyterian church. Because they had been blessed with financial success, her family's offerings represented a significant percentage of the annual gifts received by her congregation. Should something happen to Lorna and Graeme, the loss of revenue would have a serious impact on the church's finances. Lorna needed to find a solution: an investment that would lessen the impact of her unexpected departure on her family and her church. But what could that solution be?

Lorna realized that she could solve both problems by purchasing joint Charitable Gift Annuities from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. This unique planned gift mechanism provides an income to the donors for the rest of their lives and, when they both die and the income is no longer needed, the balance in the account goes to the designated beneficiary: any ministry or congregation in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The income from an annuity is predictable, lasts a lifetime and is easy to understand. Annuities can be obtained

as a "single life"—for one person, or "joint life"—covering the lives of both spouses or siblings. At the end of your life (or both lives, in the case of a joint annuity), the remainder of the gift annuity capital becomes an immediate gift for the church, avoiding probate and other fees associated at estate time.

Lorna purchased joint annuities, so Graeme's financial future would be secure if she should pass away before him, and he wouldn't have to worry about managing a "big mess of investments." And if he passed away before her, she would also receive the income. In the first annuity they acquired, Lorna made her congregation the beneficiary of the funds remaining in the annuity after they die. In this way, should Graeme and Lorna both pass away, the income would ease the church's adjustment to the loss of their family's annual giving. According to Lorna, she had found the perfect "two birds with one stone solution."

Are You Concerned About Outliving Your Income?

As an expert in finance, Lorna explained, "One way to ensure a guaranteed income for life is to purchase a Charitable Gift Annuity from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It also gives the benefit of a Charitable Donation Income Tax receipt for part of the total value (at least 20% of the gift). The guaranteed income is often tax free, depending upon the age of the annuitant (the person who



receives income from an annuity) when they obtain the annuity." (see examples in box below)

When you purchase a PCC Charitable Gift Annuity, you can designate the Presbyterian ministry that will receive the funds remaining in the annuity after your death, or the deaths of both annuitants in the case of a joint annuity. For example, you might choose Presbyterians Sharing, Presbyterian World Service & Development, PCC camps or theological colleges and, of course, your congregation. The Presbyterian Church in Canada will ensure the funds are distributed as designated.

Lorna explains, "I started purchasing annuities several years ago, buying \$10,000 to \$15,000 on an annual basis, and it is amazing how it builds up to a substantial guaranteed income. Income can be received semi-annually, which for us comes in handy because our property taxes are due on July 2, and the payment is deposited into my bank account promptly on the due date."

(For larger annuities, payments can be received monthly.) Lorna has identified a number of beneficiaries for her annuities, including her congregation, PWS&D's Loaves and Fishes Fund and the Norman Patterson Fund for Ministerial Assistance.

Lorna finished off by saying, "I'm happy to recommend guaranteed lifetime income through the annuities offered by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and trust that many will find it as helpful as we have. May God bless you all."

I want to thank the "Westcoast Scot" for allowing me to share her story and her good advice. And please, if you do happen to guess who Lorna and Graeme really are, please don't tell them or anyone else!

For a no-obligation, personal and confidential quote on Charitable Gift Annuities from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, you can reach Maggie Leung at the Stewardship & Planned Giving office by phone at 1-800-619-7301, ext. 239 or email plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca.

Charitable Gift Annuities

Here are a few examples:

Joint Annuity: Female 65, Male 69 Annual income \$1,922.29 (taxable portion \$311.61)
\$50,000.00 Charitable Donation \$10,000.00

Single Annuity: Female 70 Annual income \$1,191.04 (taxable portion \$81.25)
\$25,000.00 Charitable Donation \$5,000.00

Joint Annuity: Female 75, Male 78 Annual income \$4,911.50 (taxable portion \$242.16)
\$100,000.00 Charitable Donation \$22,584.39

Note: These quotes were valid until July 2, 2019, and rates may vary depending on when a quote is obtained. Minimum amount of Annuity is \$10,000. Minimum age is 55. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a member in good standing of the Canadian Charitable Annuity Association and adheres to the standards and ethics required of members. The Association carefully sets recommended annuity rates based on a professional actuarial firm's calculations and assumptions. Everyone is encouraged to seek independent financial advice before obtaining a gift annuity.

PRESBYTERIANS SHARING

An Attitude of Gratitude



Heather and the Finlay/Chappell/Lambie clan, Thanksgiving circa 1982.

By Heather Chappell, Stewardship & Planned Giving

As Thanksgiving approaches, I find myself thinking about gratitude.

When I was young, my family would sit around the big Thanksgiving harvest table, enveloped by the good smells of turkey and gravy and apple pie, and each of us would name something we were grateful for. It was always difficult to choose just one thing: family, friends, health, music, colourful leaves, Bear (our dog). I usually ended up choosing family. It was uplifting to hear the answers my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings gave. It was a good exercise in counting our blessings.

Many people keep a gratitude journal, writing down something they are thankful for each day. Eventually, gratitude becomes a habit. When we deliberately cultivate gratitude, it can make us feel more positive, optimistic and compassionate. It can deepen our relationships and increase productivity. It can improve both mental and physical health and motivate us to make positive changes in our lives. And it can make us even more grate-

ful: gratitude begets gratitude!

A number of years ago, I spoke with a woman on the phone and answered some questions she had about stewardship and the ministry of the PCC. A few days later, I received a note in the mail, thanking me for my work and letting me know that I was making a difference. It was a simple gesture, but it meant so much to me that she had taken the time to write. It literally brought tears to my eyes. I pinned that note to my bulletin board where it remained for many years. Saying thank you is powerful. And it is a gift.

Working in the Stewardship & Planned Giving department at the PCC's national office, I have the privilege of witnessing the continuous generosity of Presbyterians across Canada who give to the mission and ministry of our church. I also have the privilege of witnessing the many ways these gifts are changing people's lives. Over the past few weeks I have been reading reports from the ministries that receive support through gifts to Presbyterians Sharing. There are so many inspiring stories—many of which fill the pages of this newspaper.

And I am grateful for all of the good work that is being done.

In Thessalonians 5:18, Paul writes, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." God is the giver of all good gifts. Yet in the midst of the struggles and stresses of our daily lives, we don't always feel like we have the time to express thanks to God for all that we have been given. Pausing to focus on God and our many blessings gives us time to breathe, to be still and to be refreshed. Which makes us better equipped to cope with the obstacles we face along life's journey.

I am grateful for so much. It's a long list that grows longer as each year passes. And I include you in that list—my Presbyterian family. Thank you for sharing your prayers, your gifts, your time, your talents. Thank you for making a difference, and for shining Christ's light in the world.

This Thanksgiving, I will once again gather with my family around the harvest table and sing our traditional Finlay Family Grace (also known as Johnny Appleseed). We will count our many blessings. And we will be thankful.



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2019

The 145th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada took place from June 2 to 6, 2019, at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont. Opening worship at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kitchener, Ont., was led by the Rev. Daniel Cho, Moderator of the 2018 General Assembly. During the first session, the Rev. Amanda Currie, minister at First Presbyterian Church in Regina, was installed as the new moderator.

This year's Assembly featured several guest speakers: Peter Noteboom, General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches; Kerry Rice, a ruling elder and long-time employee of the Presbyterian Church (USA); the Rev. Jonghyun Kim, Moderator of the 54th General Assembly of the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ), who was accompanied by the Rev. Byuungho Kim, General Secretary; and Dr. Sheila Watt-Cloutier, an internationally recognized environmental, cultural and human rights advocate who accepted the Cutting Edge of Mission award.

With regard to the lengthy and significant discussion on sexuality, several recommendations were adopted

that will be applied as work by the church proceeds. Presbyteries will vote on the recommendations and if a majority is reached, the 2020 General Assembly may pass the recommendations into the law and policy of the church. To submit feedback on General Assembly's decisions regarding sexuality, visit presbyterian.ca/feedback.

All the summaries and photos from General Assembly, as well as the full minutes and recordings of the livestream, are available online at presbyterian.ca/ga2019.



A Letter from the Young Adult Representatives

Dear Commissioners:

The Young Adult Representatives (YARs) would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to the 145th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada that has supported us in our participation within the court. The YARs are in awe of the work that goes into the preparation of the Assembly and are grateful for the innumerable hours of work that go into the preparation of reports and administration of the national church.

The YARs of this Assembly were diverse in age, background, congregational context and theology. As we grew closer to one another this week, we established a community in which Young Presbyterians could voice their opinions in a respectful environment while engaging in meaningful fellowship, a dream we have for our wider church. We also hope that more of this work can be done intergenerationally within the denomination.

The Spirit moved through us this week and opened us up to a wide range of emotions. At times we felt connected and yet at other times, we felt no affiliation with the Church that we all call our home. While we may be facing brokenness now, we acknowledge that sometimes it is necessary to feel that brokenness in



The Rev. Amanda Currie, Moderator (bottom left) and the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary (top right) with the young adult representatives at General Assembly.

order to put ourselves back together in a better way.

At General Assembly, many of the YARs discovered the united yet distinct perspectives their voices brought to the conversation. We

spoke courageously, and our presence at the microphone and advisory votes were well-received by the assembly. We were honoured to also have a representative on the implications committee, and we appreciated

this acknowledgement of the value we bring to the discussion. We would urge all youth within the PCC to continue speaking the truth of their faith.

As a reformed church, we seek to honour our denomination's commit-

ment to change. The biggest question facing us as YARs returning to our home congregations is how we can actively work toward unity, toward whole inclusivity; inclusivity that does not simply tolerate different beliefs, but accepts them—and embraces them for what they are.

We encourage all Presbyterians to engage in challenging conversations, acknowledging that avoidance will not make them go away. We believe that in order for such conversations to reach meaningful resolutions, an empathetic, grace-filled listening is required. We hope to see members of the church be proactive rather than reactive in listening: with open minds, receptive hearts and arms extended.

Shalom,
 Omar Zachary Baboolal, Brampton
 Kelly Christopher, Calgary-Macleod
 Danielle Currie, Brandon
 Julia-Don Edwards, Edmonton-Lakeland
 Victoria Graff, East Toronto
 Priscilla Joun, Eastern Han-Ca
 Bryan Kenwell, Grey-Bruce-Maitland
 Jacqueline Nathaniel, London
 Ama Mambe, Pickering
 Bronwyn McCormick, Vancouver Island
 Brittany Power, Halifax & Lunenburg
 Crystal Tufford, Waterloo-Wellington

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2019

Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery

By Justice Ministries

At General Assembly this year, commissioners voted to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* as a step in the church's journey toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Although these concepts have shaped and continue to influence Canada as a country, many people are unfamiliar with them.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) describes the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* as "concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples. Underlying these arguments was the belief that the colonizers were bringing civilization to savage people who could never civilize themselves. The 'civilizing mission' rested on a belief of racial and cultural superiority" (TRC Executive Summary, p. 46). These concepts were first given formal framing when the Roman Catholic Church issued a set of papal bulls (decrees) during the middle ages that effectively encouraged Christian monarchs in Europe to explore the world in search of lands and peoples to colonize. These decrees are now collectively referred to as the Doctrine of Discovery, and they rest on a related legal concept known as *terra nullius*, which is Latin for "empty land" or "land belonging to no one."

In order for monarchs to justify colonizing the places their explorers came across, they needed an explanation for why they had the right to do so when there were Indigenous people already living there. *Terra nullius* justi-

fied the understanding that while land could not be claimed by one nation if it was already occupied by another, in order for land to be considered "occupied" it must be used in particular ways—notably practices similar to European agriculture. The papal bulls also essentially said that Christian nations had the right to seek out, enslave and take the land and possessions of any peoples who were not Christian. This is because those who weren't Christian—particularly people from different continents—were seen as less than human and undeserving of the right to land and self-governance. It's important to note too that while the Doctrine of Discovery originated with the medieval Catholic church, the reasoning used in these decrees shaped both Catholic and Protestant responses to Indigenous peoples going forward.

This mindset led not only to the practice of taking land and not respecting those treaties that were formed but also eventually to the compulsory separation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children from their families into residential schools. Mindsets shaped by the Doctrine of Discovery continue to be the foundation for racism against Indigenous peoples today. Because of this, the TRC issued a number of Calls to Action for churches and governments to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery (39.i, 46.ii, 47, 49). Repudiating is also in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples which "affirms that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating for su-

periority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin, or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust."

By voting to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery at General Assembly, The Presbyterian Church in Canada joins its voice with many other denominations that have already done so, including The United Church of Canada, The Anglican Church of Canada, The Christian Reformed Church in North America, and international bodies like the World Council of Churches. The National Indigenous Ministry Council (NIMC) stood as witness to the vote to repudiate, and noted it was an "historic moment." It is indeed an historic moment. We reject this doctrine not simply because we affirm the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but because we believe this doctrine is contrary to the will and way of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. The Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, as embraced and taught by the church, is a failure of the church to believe and live the gospel, which teaches that all humans were created in God's image. In the moment that we formally repudiated these concepts, we committed again to seeking ways to be in good relations with Indigenous peoples, and we are able to live out our faith more fully.

To put this repudiation into action, Presbyterians are encouraged to study the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* to understand how they continue to justify harm to Indigenous



The Rev. Margaret Mullin of the National Indigenous Ministry Council addresses the Assembly after a discussion on the repudiation of concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples.



Members of the National Indigenous Ministry Council joined the Assembly for discussion on the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and adoption of recommendations responding to Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Actions.

peoples. We all must consider ways that we can resist further damage and redress past wrongs. For too many years, Christ's instruction to love our neighbour was warped into practices that could never be termed love. We are beginning to recognize and seek to change that; may we continue to

do so.

For more information and to watch videos about the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, and how to support healing and reconciliation going forward, visit presbyterian.ca/doctrine-of-discovery or contact Justice Ministries.

Decisions Made Regarding Sexuality

By the Rev. Don Muir,
General Assembly Office

Many Presbyterians are deeply interested in the life and witness of the church as it relates to questions of sexuality. It's a topic that has been discussed at every level of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and by many other Christian bodies.

The 2019 General Assembly made the following decisions after a process of prayerful discernment.

- That the following be approved and remitted to presbyteries under the Barrier Act: The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds two parallel definitions of marriage and recognizes that faithful, Holy Spirit filled, Christ centred, God honouring people can under-



stand marriage as a covenant relationship between a man and a woman or as a covenant relationship between two adult persons.

- That congregations, Sessions,

ruling and teaching elders be granted liberty of conscience and action on marriage.

- That the following be approved and remitted to presbyteries under the Barrier Act: That congregations and presbyteries may call and ordain as ministers and elect and ordain as ruling elders LGBTQI persons (married or single) with the provision that liberty of conscience and action regarding participation in ordinations, inductions and installations be granted to ministers and ruling elders.
- That the Clerks of Assembly be instructed to provisionally prepare guidelines to ensure that calls to LGBTQI ministers and the election of LGBTQI elders are fa-

cilitated in presbyteries and congregations.

- That the moderator write a pastoral letter to the church.
- That as a matter of urgency, the Life and Mission Agency provide a means for those affected by this decision to express their concerns, views and pain in a safe environment, and that these concerns be reported back to the 2020 General Assembly before the report on remits is received and its recommendations considered.

These decisions are also posted on the presbyterian.ca website. Items (1) and (2) are not final. Presbyteries are to review these matters as part of the Barrier Act process and the 2020

General Assembly will make the final decision regarding them.

Mindful that the theme of the 2019 General Assembly was "Receive the Holy Spirit," Living Faith (4.2.2) speaks to us words of peace and patience as we ponder these matters and seek the will of God:

The Holy Spirit accompanies us on our journey of faith.

We may not always be sure of this presence.

Yet God's Spirit is with us, sometimes gently, sometimes powerfully, guiding us in the midst of life, our comfort and our help. Christian life is a pilgrimage: it begins, continues, and ends in God.

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

Listen Deeply and Work for Justice

By Justice Ministries

On June 3, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its final report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, at a ceremony in Gatineau, Que. The report is the result of decades of advocacy from Indigenous organizations calling on Canadians to take a close look at why Indigenous women and girls are so often victims of violence. Because of their persistence, and the participation of more than 2,380 people who spoke to the National Inquiry, we now have a report to help us see the causes more clearly, and to guide us in taking steps to ensure the safety and well-being of those the report focused on: Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual) people.

The National Inquiry heard thousands of stories of violence. In these testimonies, the commissioners noted the continued impact of colonialism and the ongoing human and Indigenous rights violations that are committed and condoned by the Canadian state. The report is clear: Canada continues to deny Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people safety, security and human dignity. One of the key findings of the National Inquiry is that this denial of

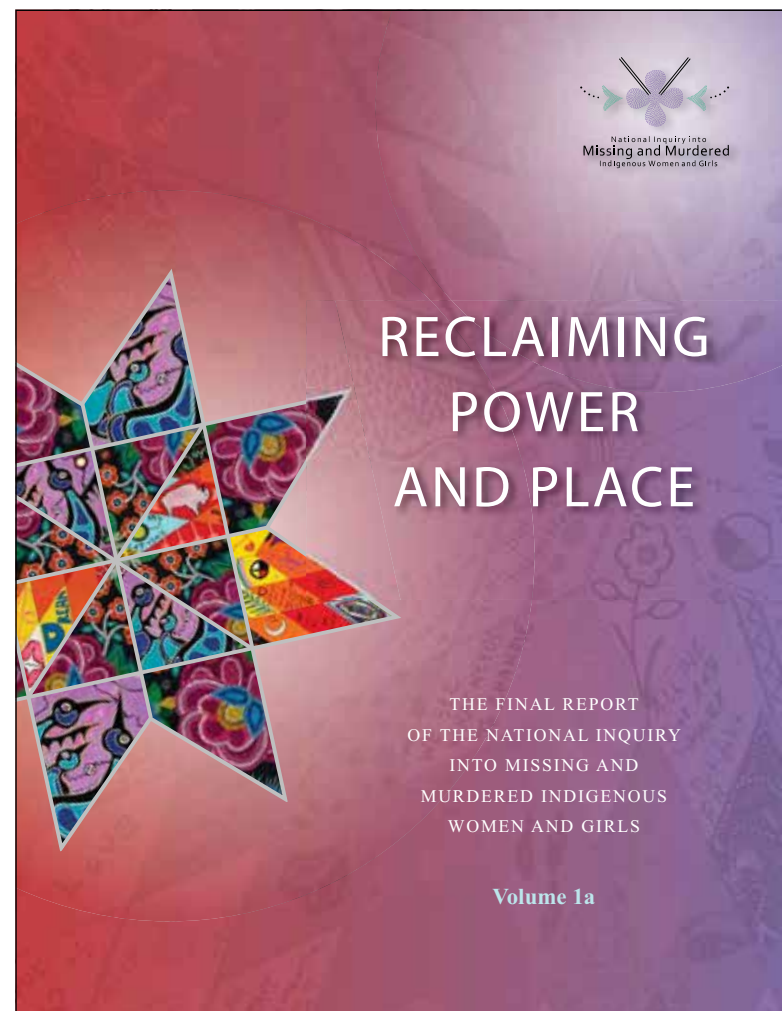
rights amounts to genocide against Indigenous peoples, one especially targeting Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. The finding that Canada is committing genocide has been very difficult for many non-Indigenous Canadians to receive. My hope is that rather than shying away from what the National Inquiry has put before us, we will accept their call to listen deeply so we can understand what has brought us here and how we can change for the better.

By listening deeply, we can hear that the violence against Indigenous people today is rooted in a long history of racism. In Chapter 4 of the final report, the National Inquiry traces this racism back to the 15th Century when Pope Alexander VI issued a decree stating that lands not owned by Christians could be “discovered” and claimed by Christian monarchs. Further, Christian nations were encouraged to enslave non-Christian people, who were seen as less than human. This false interpretation of the gospel is part of the Doctrine of Discovery and led to colonization efforts all over the world (read more on pg. 12). The Presbyterian Church in Canada took the important step of repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery at General Assembly this year. That repudiation, though only a first step, was so important because the attitudes and reasoning behind the

Doctrine of Discovery enabled the creation of the racist and patriarchal structures that were put in place to disrupt Indigenous nations’ culture and connection to the land. In these structures, Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people are treated as less important than other people in Canada and their rights are not honoured.

Reclaiming Power and Place centres the voices of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people and their families, recognizing that they know what is needed for healing. The report describes a process of commemoration and calling forth. It reminds us that it is not enough to remember those who have been lost to violence; we must also understand commemoration as “tied to individual and community healing, the recovery and reclamation of identity, the expression of deep knowledge and truth, and most importantly, change for the future” (Executive Summary, p. 46). To remember is to work for justice.

The wisdom of those who testified at the National Inquiry is combined to present 231 Calls for Justice as steps taken to create “a world within which First Nations, Inuit and Métis families can raise their children with the same safety, security, and human rights that non-Indigenous families do” (Volume 1b, p. 168). The Calls for Justice are divided into 18 sec-



tions directed at different levels of government, types of public servants and industry sectors. Section 15 is addressed to all Canadians, though, recognizing that we each have a role in ensuring that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people’s rights are met, and that these individuals are safe.

As Canadians, we are not only invited but we have a responsibility to listen to the hard truths that the National Inquiry has presented. As

Christians too, we have a responsibility to work for reconciliation and to do what is just and right. We are called forth to speak out against violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people and to confront racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia and transphobia wherever it occurs. This journey begins by listening deeply. Justice and healing are possible, and ignoring these hard truths would come at too great a cost.

Awe and Reverence

By the Rev. Steve Filyk, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Kamloops, B.C.

It is now quite common for public gatherings to start with an acknowledgement of traditional territory. Sometimes an Indigenous elder is invited to say a prayer. Over time I’ve grown to appreciate these beginnings. The prayers I’ve witnessed express gratitude to the Creator, with reverence and humility that is seldom observed.

Christians don’t always position themselves before God in this way. Dress for worship is casual. Prayers are chummy and familiar. More people are checking their phones than quieting their hearts and minds (let alone kneeling).

This is may be a danger inherent in Christianity. While some religions emphasize God’s transcendence

(that is, God’s “otherness”), Christians also emphasize God’s immanence (God’s “nearness”). The incarnation is about God moving into the neighbourhood, the Son of God walking among us, getting sand stuck between his toes.

This God who stoops to come near is a central tenet of Christianity. But at its best, Christianity doesn’t let go of God’s transcendence to embrace God’s immanence. Our scripture points to a God who is both majestic and maternal.

In the biblical Book of Job, we encounter a man who has been abused by life. In a quick succession of tragic events, he loses his health, his wealth and his children. After listening to his friends, this brazen but broken man demands that God account for his pain and suffering.

To everyone’s surprise, God ap-

pears. The response God offers, however, is not what Job expects. In what is probably the most ancient of all the biblical creation stories, God asks Job to reconsider his indictment: “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?... Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it?” (selected verses from Job 38 NIV)

After hearing God’s testimony, (and that testimony goes on for a couple of chapters) Job is awestruck and suitably humbled. The Bible clearly upholds the “otherness” of the Creator.

And surprising to some, the Bible does the same for Jesus. While Je-



sus has been reduced in many imaginations to a gentle spirit who waxed poetic about love, the Bible gives him more street cred. In the Gospels, we meet an exorcist who casts out demons, a teacher who curses clergy and a miracle worker who commands storms. When his disciples watched him perform the latter, we are told that they were terrified (see Mark 4:41).

I didn’t see a lot of awe and wonder among the Christians I grew up with, or in the services I sometimes visited. But it still exists, in small pockets. I observe it when my elders pray. Like those prayers from the Indigenous elders I mentioned, their prayers are also marked by humility and awe. This inspires me. This inspires me because, deep in my soul, I am looking for a God who is bigger than me.

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

Come and See!

By the Rev. Linda Patton-Cowie, St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont.

On June 15, 2019, 34 Presbyterians from Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta gathered in Winnipeg to embark on the continuing journey of Healing and Reconciliation. I am grateful that our group included people from a wide range of ages and several different cultural backgrounds; that certainly added to the experience for all of us. We had heard the call to "come and see"—to meet with Indigenous peoples in Winnipeg, Kenora, Birdtail Reserve, Mistawasis and Saskatoon in order to learn, to listen, to share experiences and to form relationships.

2019 marked the 25th anniversary of the Confession, and we felt it was important to personally present the Confession to the communities we were to visit. It was also important that the Confession was seen to be more than words on a piece of paper; that it had weight; that it was offered by people who were prepared to live out what it would mean to be committed to the journey of healing and reconciliation. So, with a little help from some friends in Winnipeg, copies of the confession were framed and waiting for us when we arrived. Every participant signed their name on the back of each Confession, signifying our intentions to live out those powerful words.

The Confession was first presented at Winnipeg Inner-City Missions, and Vivian Ketchum agreed to share her thoughts about receiving it:

Words written on the piece of board. The Confession by the Presbyterian Church. When I first saw it many years ago, my emotions were still raw on the surface as I was beginning the legal process of my residential school claim. I couldn't even bear to read it. My anger and scars of the past were blinding me from reading the words of the wrongs done to Indigenous peoples. It took time and walking with the church in various areas for me to heal from my wounds. That and a great therapist who worked with me in dealing with my anger.

Now I can read the words and try to understand what they fully mean to me. In small portions. I can't just take the words of the acknowledgements of the wrongs done to survivors. That would create an imbalance. There would be a wrongful sense of smugness in me. Not a healthy way to heal. I need to take the words of the wrongs done and apply

them to my wounds. Take the words of the deeds done to us as children. The sexual abuse, physical abuse, cultural and all the other abuses listed in the Confession. Let my Shadow Child be aware of the many wrongs done to her. I refer to my Shadow Child as the one who holds my worst memories. My way of coping with my past. Let her weep. Let her know she no longer has to hold the secrets of the past. The church is now with us in our healing journey.

Today I can read the words of the Confession. Each sentence written is of some importance to my healing journey. Each paragraph a part of my healing journey with the church. A couple of decades ago, I couldn't bear to read the words. A few weeks ago, I was able to hold it in my arms.

A sign of my healing. A visible sign of my faith walk with the church.

Shadow Child, Vivian

Next, the Confession was presented at Kenora Fellowship Centre, where Victoria Chandler shared her thoughts:

I presented a copy of the PCC Confession to Cathy at the Kenora Fellowship Centre. While doing so I got the chance to speak to some of what had been on my heart while on the first week of our Healing and Reconciliation trip. I found this chance to be quite moving for me as I felt quite connected with Cathy and the patrons of the fellowship centre as I spoke to them. To me, this moment not only symbolized a continued commitment of the Presbyterian church to Indigenous peoples through the Confession, but it also symbolized my desire to live out the words I was sharing. After having been given this opportunity, it has further solidified my desire to continue learning about the injustices Indigenous peoples have faced, as well as work toward reconciliation with these individuals. This has led me to present some of the things I have heard and learned on this trip to the children I work with at Camp Geddie this summer, as well as having a few events planned with various churches in Nova Scotia for the fall. I continue to pray that as a church we are committed to reconciliation and that our eyes will be opened to the work that needs to be done with our Indigenous neighbours to make this a reality.

We visited the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, where Cindy Stephenson, from Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary, presented.



The Rev. Margaret Mullin with the Rev. Linda Patton-Cowie during the Healing and Reconciliation Tour.

Here are her reflections:

A number of words come to me as I reflect upon last month's Healing and Reconciliation trip.

One word is "sorrow." I had been so ignorant and so detached from the hurt and the intentional injury inflicted upon fellow children of God—I am sorry for my past indifference. The smiling faces of little girls are seared onto my heart and I weep as I consider the probabilities of what their lives might be.

Another word is "humility." I don't have the solutions and I can't wave a magic wand to undo the harm. As a person of privilege, who am I to suppose I know the answers? I am humbled by the gentleness and forgiveness of the individuals who shared their stories with us. They exhibited grace in ways that I would never have imagined.

I also experienced "hope." I met Indigenous leaders who shared great wisdom and incredible love for their communities. There are programs, designed and run by Indigenous coordinators, that provide healing and education and are making a difference. I will support these leaders and programs.

Finally, I feel "gratitude." The trip organizers had prayerfully arranged our schedule to enable us to see and experience much; our chaplain's meditations and the generosity of fellow travellers sharing their observations and feelings as we went greatly

enriched my learning; Presbyterians Sharing made this trip possible; and so, essentially, the individuals who opened their hearts to us have made it impossible for me to be the same as I was. I have been blessed. Migwech.

David Phillips, one of the leaders on the journey, presented in Mistawasis:

Mistawasis is a very special place since it was there that I realized that my education about Indigenous peoples was sadly lacking. It was also there that I saw The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Confession. Later, I spoke with the Rev. Alan McPherson, who was moderator of the Presbyterian Church in 1995 and went to Mistawasis to present that

Confession to Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church and the community of Mistawasis as moderator. His sincerity, even several years later when he spoke with me, was moving.

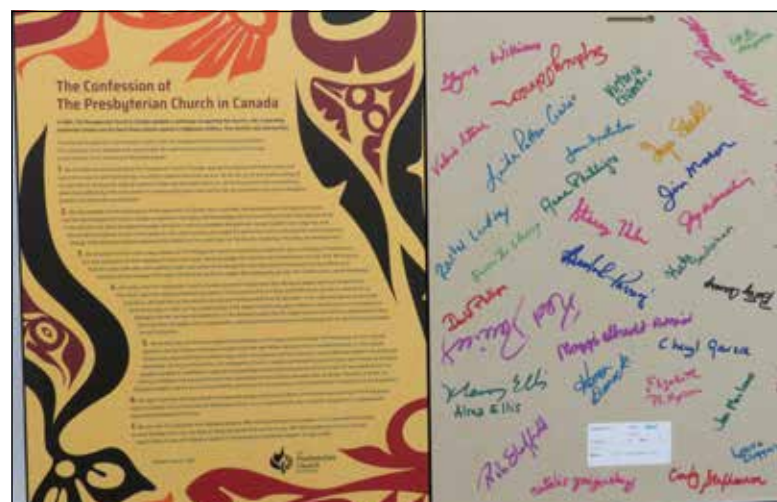
I was given the opportunity to present again that Confession and it was a moving experience for me. It was moving in two ways. First, it was the Confession of my church to show our sincerity of what we had done and also a determination to move forward. Secondly, it was my own confession of how wrong I had been about Indigenous peoples generally and the people of Mistawasis in particular. As I looked at the those present and then thought back at all the hurt I had heard through reading and the TRC, I realized the Confession was much more than a piece of paper: it was the heart and soul of our future with Indigenous peoples of Mistawasis and Canada.

Our last stop of the journey was Saskatoon, where the Rev. Joan Masterton, from St. James Presbyterian Church in Stouffville, Ont., presented at Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry:

In thinking about what I would say before presenting the Confession to Stewart Folster, I realized that my personal signature on the back meant that this was my confession, my expression of regret, my sense of humility, and my resolve to listen, learn, make new friends, share my experiences, and do what I can in my context to be active in the processes of healing and reconciliation. Thank you for that opportunity!

Perhaps Nicole Flynn, from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Tweed, Ont., summed up all of our feelings by saying that she is fully committed to taking action and standing with Indigenous peoples in Canada, to continue the journey of healing and reconciliation that we have begun.

Many thanks to Presbyterians Sharing for helping to make this trip possible.



The Confession, along with the signatures of mission trip participants.

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

Continuing the Journey

By David Phillips, *Healing and Reconciliation Tour Leader*

The Presbyterian Church in Canada confessed its role in the tragic legacy of the Indian Residential Schools in 1994. On a recent Healing and Reconciliation trip in June, participants learned about some of the complex issues related to The Presbyterian Church in Canada's involvement in the schools and how we have been walking alongside Indigenous peoples as we live out the spirit of the Confession and work toward reconciliation.

This is the PCC's 25th Anniversary of the Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to Indigenous peoples, and at each of the locations we visited, we presented our Confession once again.

Over the course of 12 days, we visited three of the PCC's Indigenous ministries: Winnipeg Inner-City Missions, Kenora Fellowship Centre and Saskatoon Native Circle, as well as congregations, the sites of two residential schools and Indigenous reserves.

The journey began in Winnipeg on National Indigenous People Sunday with worship at First Presbyterian Church and then later at Place of Hope, the worshipping community connected with Winnipeg Inner-City Missions. At Place of Hope, a meal and stories were shared. The journey had begun.

We continued the journey, trying to understand the hurts caused by residential schools, listening to survivors

and other Indigenous voices and trying to seek a way forward in mutual understanding and respect.

Part 7 of the Confession states: "With God's guidance our Church will seek opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people." We set that as a goal to walk together and to work together on various projects. We were privileged to help clean and paint various buildings at Winnipeg Inner-City Missions, cook a fish fry to share with patrons at Kenora Fellowship Centre, and share in crafts and preparing and serving lunch at Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry. Near the end of the journey, we also worshiped with the congregation at Mistawasis Memorial Church, the only Presbyterian congregation on a reserve.

One especially important part of the trip was to visit the sites of two of the residential schools, Birtle and Cecilia Jeffery, that remained Presbyterian-run until they were taken over by the Government of Canada in 1969. Birtle is on private property now and we could only see it from a distance, but we were struck by the sheer size of the school. In Kenora, we were able to visit the second and final site of the Cecilia Jeffery Residential School, where we placed tobacco at the memorial to the children and saw the swing and one building that still stands. While there, Indigenous elders and others spoke to us about residential schools and the hurt



Participants of the Healing and Reconciliation mission trip.



The Rev. Joan Masterton presents a poster of the PCC's Confession to Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry.



Taking part in the Blanket Exercise in Kenora.



Gathered around the fire at Winnipeg Inner-City Missions.

that is still felt. We also travelled along the recently completed Freedom Road to Shoal Lake, the initial site of Cecilia Jeffery Residential School; there is only a monument to the children there now.

What is reconciliation? One of my Indigenous friends said to me that we spend too much time trying to figure it out and so little time living it. In the coming year, let's try to focus on changing that.

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JUSTICE

Poverty Reduction Act Entrenched in Law

By Justice Ministries

In the last round of bills passed by Parliament before adjourning for the summer, at least one important milestone for Canada was reached. That milestone was the legislation of the *Poverty Reduction Act*, which is now entrenched in law.

The Government of Canada released the nation's first poverty reduction strategy, *Opportunity for All*, in August 2018. Using a baseline year of 2015, it aimed for a 20% reduction by 2020 and a 50% reduction by 2030. Those targets became part of the Act. While it must be stressed that poverty reduction doesn't go far enough—one person living in poverty is still one person too many—meeting the targets that are now set would improve the lives of a significant number of people.



Using numbers from Canada's population in 2015, it is estimated that meeting the 50% reduction by 2030 would translate to 2.1 million fewer people living in poverty.

For Canada to meet the goals set out in the *Poverty Reduction Act*—both its 2020 goal, and the longer-term ones—concrete and informed follow-through is required. While

developing a strategy was a good initial step, legislation was necessary for the national poverty reduction strategy to have real power to effect change and to improve its chances at reaching those long-term goals. "It is an important step forward for the federal poverty reduction strategy to see this legislation pass," states Darlene O'Leary, socio-economic policy analyst at Citizens for Public Justice, further encouraging people to continue pushing for: "strong regulations and accountability in the implementation of Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy, particularly ensuring that the government makes poverty eradication the goal moving forward."

More work is needed to eradicate, and not simply reduce, poverty. That said, while the legislation could have been stronger, there is still cause to celebrate legislation that gives Cana-

ans specific targets to hold future governments to, and that acknowledges addressing poverty as an important priority. This is also an opportunity to re-commit to continued work at ending poverty. Christians have long been known for helping those vulnerable to poverty. It can be argued that the gospel calls us to do so in love and to help those who need food, water, health care, housing and necessities like clothing, not to mention comfort for those in prison (Matthew 25:34–40). Whether through advocating for fair housing and employment programs, pushing to improve services that help vulnerable people gain security and skills, working to support initiatives such as basic income programs, or through other means, we have a responsibility to find and support just and effective solutions to the reasons behind poverty.

MISSION

Sharing Knowledge and Friendship

By International Ministries

For many, retirement is a time to finally check off a few things from their bucket list. After working hard for many years, it is an opportunity to do things for themselves. Some choose to see the world while others choose to spend more time with friends and family. Many use the time to pick up a new hobby or learn new things.

Then there are those who choose to volunteer their time and abilities internationally, seeking an experience of the diversity of the global church and the people. That's the path Nora Martin and Steve McInnis, active members of Knox Presbyterian Church in Woodstock, Ont., chose to take. This fall, they will embark on a new journey, one that will take them to Malawi. For a year, they will be working with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod, a long-standing partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Nora taught English to elementary and secondary-school students for 40 years. She has been active in the

prayer shawl ministry, pastoral care committee and the knitter's guild. Steve is a chemical engineer, working as a product manager for many years. He is an elder and convener of Knox's Board of Stewards (Managers). Steve was a member of the Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) committee and represented the PCC at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB). Nora and Steve served three years with the Mennonite Central Committee in Bangladesh in the early 1990s, a life-changing experience. They are both avid singers, having been part of the church choir for over 20 years.

Nora and Steve will join in a ministry within Chichiri prison, in the southern city of Blantyre. They will be teachers, working with the inmates who are attending classes during the day. Nora will teach English and Steve will teach mathematics. There are few activities and some prisoners may have limited education, so the opportunity to learn is appealing. English is the official language of Malawi but in reality, about half the

population speaks Indigenous languages, primarily Chichewa. Steve will also assist with the Ndirande Rehabilitation Centre working with people with physical and cognitive disabilities.

It won't be an easy assignment. Malawi is a very poor country where the minimum wage is \$1 USD. Prisons are overcrowded, and they lack basic items such as soap, bed mats and medicine. Inmates are often hungry, usually eating only one meal of corn porridge a day. Prisoners can be held for many months without ever having their day in court. Some could be released on bail, but most don't have the money to do so. In sharing their gifts of teaching and forging new friendships with those who have been shunned or forgotten by their families and society, Steve and Nora will be living out the words found in Matthew 25:36, "When I was in prison, you visited me."

Steve and Nora won't be alone in this work. They will join a group of three volunteers from the Blantyre Church who felt called to visit the



Nora Martin and Steve McInnis, from Knox Presbyterian Church in Woodstock, Ont., will be serving as PCC mission staff in Malawi this fall.

prisons, providing activities such as Bible studies, prayer and counselling and most importantly, hope. They call themselves the "friends of the prison." These dedicated folk visit 11 different prisons weekly, many small and remote. The Rev. Joel Sherbino of Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ont., supports these volunteers via Internet and Skype and an annual visit. Joel will also provide support for Nora and Steve.

For Steve and Nora, mission is a mutual sharing of experience and

expertise among partners. By living in Malawi and spending time with the people, they hope to learn from them. Nora said, "No one group has the answers to life's problems but working together helps us to work toward answers." In a country where honour and shame defines public life, the presence of Nora and Steve will be a reminder to the prisoners that they are human and worthy of friendship. Sharing knowledge with patience, respect and humour will be a blessing.



MISSION

Innovative Session Opens Doorway for Change



The Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise kitchen.

By Rebecca Sherbino
the Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise

"I remember Kate really well because I saw so much of her at different stages in her life: when she had children, when they were taken away and in the difficult days afterward."

Sylvia Rudy was the church administrator at Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ont., for 17 years. During that period, she became intimately acquainted with Kate, a mother with developmental disabilities and a husband that struggled with bipolar disorder. Kate's children were placed in foster care when they were aged 4 and 8.

"I knew Kate well," Sylvia recalls, "because she would visit me at church. She was beside herself after losing her kids and needed somebody to talk to. After her children were taken, she was always sad—understandably so. She rarely smiled, never laughed and never had anything positive in her life to talk about." Kate used to mourn; "I don't know what I'm supposed to do. Every day after breakfast, I clean the apartment. It takes me an hour and then I'm done. I don't know what else to do. I have nothing to do."

"As the administrator, I saw so many people in similar circumstances come into and out of the church looking for assistance of one kind or another. They all had the same problem—nothing to do, and that's exactly what they would tell me. They had nothing to do all day."

Colleen and I, members of Paris

Presbyterian Church and co-founders of the Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise ministry, had become involved with some of these same folks both within and outside the church through a church drop-in program. We recognized that there was a major gap in the support system.

"There are half a million people in Ontario on disability support, many that are marginalized through poverty and socially isolated," explains Colleen Graham. "We wanted to start something that would minister to people spiritually and meet their needs financially."

With a desire to follow the example of Jesus and also create a sustainable means of income for those in poverty, Colleen and I approached the church Session to consider an out-of-the-box initiative to use the church kitchen during the week and hire individuals on the disability support program to prepare and cook gourmet soup. It was a unique ministry and one that had some risks and questions that needed answering as the church explored the possibility, but they were excited to consider it.

"Session was unanimous in responding positively to the start-up of the Raw Carrot," said Session member Haidee Vlaar. "[Paris Presbyterian Church] session has a strong history of supporting missional and grassroots enterprises within our community. We heard Rebecca and Colleen's desire to help those folks on ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) and increase their quality of life by being able to work in a safe

and supportive work environment. And what's more, what keeps everything going, is that the soup's great!"

Kate was one of the first four people hired from the church congregation and amazed everyone with her proficient chopping skills. The Raw Carrot started selling soup and Kate started earning money and had something meaningful to do 2 to 3 days a week.

Sylvia could see the transformation in Kate as she started working. "More and more she had confidence in herself which was totally and absolutely lacking before. She could actually laugh about something that had happened! The interesting thing was that she never really talked about earning money very much. Even though that was important, that was not the main thing. She felt appreciated. I was absolutely thrilled with the changes that I could see in her. She would be dead tired when coming to choir after a day at work—but she was happy."

Through a supportive church Session and seed funding from both the Paris Presbytery and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise has expanded to three locations with a fourth launching this fall. By October 2019, 25 permanent part-time jobs will have been created for talented folks with disabilities and mental illness.

"When I talk to Kate now," Sylvia affirms, "she smiles. And that is the very best sign that things are going well, if a person is able to smile."

(Note that some names have been changed.)

The Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise continues to grow through the ongoing support of individuals who believe in the vision to create dignity through meaningful employment. Here are three ways that you can contribute your gifts to build up the body of Christ in Canada!

Time: We are always on the lookout for people willing to serve with us to grow this ministry. Volunteer roles could include kitchen helpers, volunteer soup drivers and marketing professionals in one of the four Raw Carrot locations in Ontario (Paris Presbyterian Church – Paris, Mennonite Central Committee – Kitchener, Mount Forest United Church – Mount Forest, Innerkip Presbyterian Church – Woodstock).

Talent: Would you consider serving on an advisory board that would expand networks to find freezer storage or larger-scale transportation of soup to retail stores in Ontario? Email rebecca@therawcarrot.com.

Treasure: We are passionate to grow this ministry, but we need your help! Each Raw Carrot location is working to cover the salaries of the staff and expenses through the sales of soup. With your support we can expand our vision: helping more people with disabilities in more communities to find meaningful employment—and the smile that comes with the dignity of work!

Watch this short two-minute video to see our team at work: presbyterian.ca/raw-carrot-video

Please visit therawcarrot.com to make a gift today or call one of the co-directors to learn more about how you can support the ministry: 519-865-1965. Want to start a Raw Carrot site, hold a soup lunch or have us speak at your church (currently only available in Ontario)? Let us know! info@therawcarrot.com

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"
Matthew 6:21.



Soup made by the Raw Carrot assists people on the Ontario Disability Support Program.

MISSION

Messy Church Breathes New Hope



By Allen Macartney, Gloucester
Presbyterian Church in Ottawa

"What the heck?!"

That's the first thing I said to myself as I got off the bus at the church one afternoon in May. Though it was raining and quite miserable, the parking lot was almost filled with cars. Inside, the church was bouncing with life: kids running and laughing, and parents (many of whom I didn't know) grinning and talking to each other. Church members Olive and Hala were helping people make name tags. David was teaching little "shepherds" how to herd sheep (balloons) with canes (swimming pool noodles). It's not easy! Others were tossing bean bags to nudge wayward sheep away from a cliff. Crystal, Joan and Carol were helping other little shepherds make sheep faces on cupcakes and/or paper plates. Fun! What a mess!

In the background, Geoff had the kitchen humming with cool efficiency, while Denis and Sabrina entertained with bright music. (At one point, Denis imitated a rock star by

It was the
most interactive
service I've ever
attended.

picking up his guitar, kicking back on one leg and letting it rip!) Not bad for a guy who's been a senior for over 20 years!

Later in the sanctuary, a larger shepherd (dressed in an old dressing gown) led the worship and "sermon." I hardly recognized pastor Denise. It was the most interactive service I've ever attended. Adults and kids alike listened intently while excitement buzzed. People of all ages learned about the Good Shepherd searching for lost sheep, while we threw our arms out wide, reached up high and shouted, "Ya!" The rafters vibrated.

And the "messy blessing" at the end was something that I'm sure

set God's angels dancing. Then we headed to the hall for a delicious (and somewhat casual) meal. More games and crafts followed until people drifted off home.

The Bottom Line

I've never been a fan of Messy Church—too chaotic and loud for me. Too...well...messy. But during our Messy Church service, God's name was lifted up in our community. People were introduced to God in a new way. They heard about God's great love for all people, and about God's rescue plan for their lives. They also learned that being in God's family is a lot of fun—an unusual thought for some.

Almost every Messy Church brings more people to our Sunday worship services. It's a simple way to ease shy, skeptical people through the doors. But most importantly, in a non-traditional way, our neighbours are hearing the simple words, "Jesus loves you!" Often, it's the first time they've really heard that message in their lives. And it's bringing them hope.



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ENVIRONMENT

The Gift of Gardening in Montreal

By Cheryl Doxas, Chair of Food Ministry Committee and Clerk of Session at St. Columba By-The-Lake Presbyterian Church in Montreal, Que.

Three years ago, as an extension of St. Columba By-The-Lake Presbyterian Church in Montreal's thriving Food Ministry, Nadia Prevost, co-ordinator of Food Ministry, headed a group to secure a grant from the Toronto Dominion Friends of the Environment Foundation. The grant application was successful and allowed St. Columba to take on a new project. Since receiving the grant, eight above-ground community garden beds have been built and then maintained by neighbours and friends of the church.

It has been wonderful to see the blessings that have come from this, and the way it has led people to work together. Members of the church's property committee purchased, assembled and readied the beds for planting, and since then bountiful crops of vegetables and edible flowers have been grown. In addition to providing food for the gardeners,

harvesters donate fresh vegetables to a local food bank. The gardens are a source of food and enjoyment for many people but also provide a means for augmenting food resources in our local area.

A community spirit is generated as like-minded gardeners meet to discuss which crops to plant and the most successful gardening techniques. In fact, Extra Hands, a group of intellectually handicapped adults who gather weekdays at St. Columba, have taken over the role of planting and nurturing one of the gardens. This project gave them the chance to learn to tend the garden and delight in the vegetables they grow. In addition, the professionally trained chef, Ms. Prevost, offers classes to those who wish to learn canning techniques or some new recipes that rely on the fresh produce. So many people and communities are sharing the gifts of this garden!

As St. Columba continues to encourage the "greening" of our church and its land, this season Echinacea has been planted to help attract butterflies to the rest of our garden



Tending the gardens at St. Columba By-The-Lake Presbyterian Church in Montreal.

area. We continue to compost all food waste generated from our First Friday community dinners and from the monthly lunch we provide to a local seniors' home. Likewise, we lend our cooking skills to provide meals for local youth centres. Members of the church community attend seminars seeking to learn about and support issues of food security in the Montreal area. The gardens, and the energy they have brought to the congregation, have provided opportunities for so many, in more ways than we could have imagined. They are helping us to actively participate in all areas of improving the culture and community surrounding the environment in which we live.



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20 YEARS IN THE MAKING



COMMITTEES

History is Alive

First established on June 21, 1879, the Committee on History is one of the older committees of the General Assembly and has been, more or less, in continuous existence ever since. In its early days, the Committee appears to have been more concerned with the collection and preservation of records than with the actual history of the national church.

The Committee functions under, and reports directly to, the General Assembly. Each year a report detailing the activities of the Committee is submitted to Assembly and is published in the Acts & Proceedings. The Committee gives out awards for books written on matters of Presbyterian Church history. Our mandate is to raise awareness of, and interest in, the history of our church. The Committee acts as a resource to other committees and bodies within the church on

historical matters.

The Committee has always actively encouraged congregations to properly care for their records and to ensure their preservation by having them microfilmed. Further information on microfilming can be obtained from the Presbyterian Church Archives.

The Committee works diligently to engender an interest in, and awareness of, our church's long and glorious history. We do this by encouraging the celebration of significant anniversaries or other prominent occasions in congregations. From time-to-time various members of the Committee have written articles on historical matters in the *Presbyterian Record*.

We firmly believe in the importance of preserving Presbyterian history right across the country. We know, as well, that preservation of church records is a legal require-



ment of our denomination. Our history is alive in the buildings in which we worship, in the beauty of our stained-glass windows, in our books, records and other artifacts. Preserving them is another way in which we Presbyterians can be good stewards, standing behind our faith, ready to pass all of these things on to the generations to come.

The Committee on History is available to assist congregations and others on matters regarding the history of our church.

The Presbyterian Museum is Moving and Changing

The National Presbyterian Museum is overseen by the Committee on History. The artifacts and items currently held at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Toronto were packed up for storage this summer and will be moved to the new location in 2020. The museum will be renamed as the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre.



High school and university student volunteers from St. Timothy Presbyterian Church in Etobicoke, Ont., were invaluable in assisting with the packing up of museum artifacts. The Rev. Simon Park, youth pastor at St. Timothy, coordinated their important efforts.

Taking Some Steps on Our Journey of Repentance

By Rev. Dr. Robert Faris and Sue Senior, Rainbow Communion Co-conveners

Rainbow Communion has been listening. Over the past year we have heard more than one hundred stories—mostly in face-to-face spaces—from people across the country, including LGBTQI people, their friends, family, fellow church members, colleagues and more. We have heard stories of harm done in the church by homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and hypocrisy. We have also heard stories of grace received in the midst of very severe challenges. We were pleased to bring a second interim report to General Assembly that begins to address some of the issues resulting from these stories. We invite you to read our full report and recommendations at presbyterian.ca/listening.

As noted in our report, of grave concern from what we are hearing is that some people have been deeply traumatized by attempts to change their orientation through so-called conversion or reparative therapy—what are now often referred to as “sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts” (SOGICE)—and that these programs are still being recom-

mended and are seen by some to be a helpful pastoral response for LGBTQI people in the church.

Rainbow Communion recommended to General Assembly that the PCC reaffirm its statements (A&P 2003, pp. 526–47, 26, 34, 37–41, 43–45) that homosexual orientation is not a sin and that studies have not revealed any scriptural, scientific or pastoral basis or justification for programs to change a person's sexual orientation and therefore acknowledge that any form of conversion or reparative therapy is not a helpful or appropriate pastoral response to those who identify as LGBTQI. This was adopted overwhelmingly by commissioners.

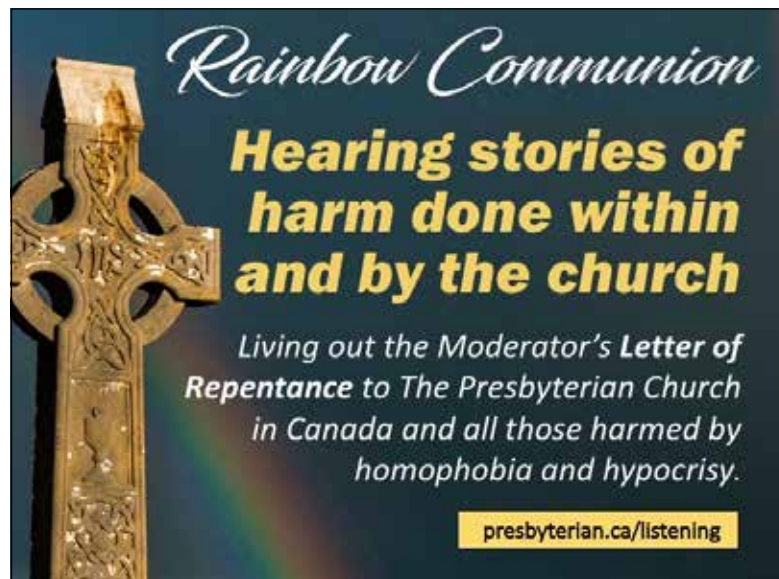
In accordance with this decision of the Assembly, the Moderator, the Rev. Amanda Currie, has added her name to a campaign organized by Generous Space Ministries, an ecumenical organization “encouraging Christ-centred spiritual formation by inviting people to work together to dismantle fear, division, and hostility at the intersection of faith, gender, and sexuality.” The campaign for church leaders called “Pastors Stopping the Harm” has the goal of eradicating the harm of “sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts” in the church.

As background to this petition, *Generous Space Ministries* explains on their website:

Few spiritual interventions cause the degree of harm that efforts to change someone's sexual or gender identity do. From deeply internalized shame and self-loathing, to depression, high-risk behaviours like substance abuse, and suicidal ideation, attempts, and death by suicide, sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts (SOGICE) have caused profound trauma. When these efforts are practiced in the context of one's faith community, by the spiritual authority figure, the harm goes incredibly deep.”

Recently, efforts to ban the practice of conversion therapy, particularly for minors, have intensified. Two Canada-wide petitions asking the government for a federal ban have garnered thousands of signatures. The challenge with legislative efforts is that many SOGICE experiences do not take place in therapists' offices.

Much of the harm is experienced in churches—perpetrated by well-meaning pastors. For decades there has been a



steady stream of Christian resources published to equip the local pastor to believe they could be used of God to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. Exorcisms. Prayer sessions. Bible memorization. Accountability. Church discipline. Counselling attempts.

Energized by a theology that taught that LGBTQ2S+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, 2-Spirit, plus people) were inherently sinful, disordered, and in need of repair, the damage caused by the Christian community is unfathomable.

Psychological trauma. Emotional trauma. Spiritual trauma. Physical trauma. Financial trauma.

It is more than time for: Pastors

Stopping the Harm.

Many ministers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada have already joined the moderator in adding their names to the campaign. Other people are welcome to sign as well, making clear the church's opposition to programs of SOGICE and our deep concern over the harm done by them. Visit generousspace.ca/pastors-stopping-the-harm.

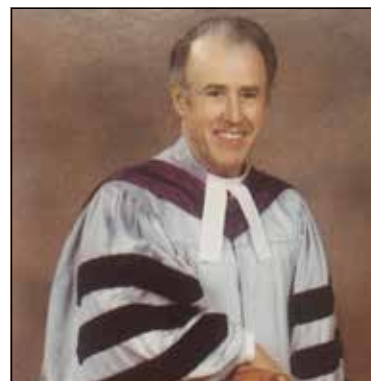
This is a concrete action in which leaders in our church can be engaged to reduce the harm done to LGBTQI people and continue to live out our journey of repentance begun in the moderator's 2018 letter to The Presbyterian Church in Canada and all those harmed by homophobia and hypocrisy by and within the church.

LGBTQI is an acronym used to refer to people whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual and/or whose gender identity does not conform either to binary male/female categories or the “assigned” gender at birth. LGBTQI is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex.

GATHERINGS



Before heading to Guatemala to take part in a PCC Youth in Mission trip, youth from Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto held a "Guatemala Night" to eat authentic Guatemalan food and to learn alongside the congregation about issues facing that country.



On May 5, 2019, the Session and congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont., were delighted to host the Rev. Dr. Eric Beggs and to unveil a plaque commemorating his 31 years of service to the life and spiritual wellbeing of the congregation. From 1963 until his retirement in 1992, Dr. Beggs was a very special part of St. Andrew's and the community of Orillia. The congregation is grateful that Dr. Beggs was able to return home to greet his friends and the many congregants whose lives he helped shape during his tenure.



The three choral programs at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Port Hope, Ont., have been doing wonderfully well. The Junior Choir is an after-school program for children between the ages of 6 and 16. This year they won their class at the Peterborough Kiwanis Festival in March. The St. Cecilia Singers (a group of seven young women) won the overall Choral placing at the Peterborough Kiwanis Festival. They also received a trophy and a small scholarship. Most exciting was that they placed second overall at the Kiwanis Music Festival provincial recorded competition. The St. Paul's Singers is an SATB (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) choir who participate in worship every Sunday. This year they tried something new and held two choral events (Christmas and Easter) that included audience participation. Both events were an exciting adventure and a big success. The Christmas concert raised close to \$700.



More than 75 people gathered in a day of worship and encouragement during the Renewal Fellowship's annual general meeting at Grace West Hill Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., on April 6. The Rev. Daniel Cho, centre, continued the moderator's tradition of attending, posing with renewal executive director, the Rev. Andy Cornell, left, and board chair, the Rev. Ian Shaw. Three speakers, including the Rev. John Park of London, Ont., explored the Renewal Fellowship's new mission statement: To lead each other and The Presbyterian Church in Canada to authentic Biblical thinking, powerful, spirit-led prayer and effective Gospel witness.



As a congregation on the shores of Lake Erie, First Presbyterian Church in Port Colborne, Ont., is taking a serious look at the climate crisis. In a series of five evening events that were open to the public—featuring discussions, meditations, films and exhibitions—First PC considered how the city should be responding, practically and spiritually.



The Treble Makers foursome offered some magical musical moments for Father's Day at First Presbyterian Church's "The Gathering Place" in Port Colborne, Ont.



After years of steadily declining membership at Claude Presbyterian Church in Caledon, Ont., and with a Sunday School membership down to just one child, the congregation started discussing whether to close their doors. It was a struggle, but they happily decided to remain open. Recently, for the first time in many years, the congregation welcomed seven folks by Profession of Faith. The Sunday School is growing and there are now 14 children on the roll. Claude PC is thankful to God for sending all of these great people.



The Rev. Doug Maxwell and his wife, Joyce, at their retirement lunch at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Olds, Alta., on June 16. The Rev. Maxwell was with the congregation for five years.

GATHERINGS



The congregation of Petawawa Presbyterian Church in the Ottawa Valley celebrates Easter in style! Traditionally, after the service on Easter Sunday, the congregation sings “Easter Parade” and all the women wear bonnets and have their picture taken together. This brings much joy for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Nine former PCC missionaries to Taiwan held a reunion mid-July at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, Ont. For many years the group met at the Garvin Cottage on Bird Lake in Muskoka, but, after the death of missionary Murray Garvin, the retreat didn't take place for several years. Upon reuniting at Crieff, the group felt that there had been no gap at all in the years between. The retreat was a wonderful time of reminiscing, catching up, talking about families and remembering those who were unable to attend or had passed on. There were meaningful exchanges on current issues related to Taiwan, as well as great discussions on the pros and cons of aging! Of the group, Louise Gamble and the Rev. Dr. Paul McLean continue to serve in Taiwan. Pictured above are (front row, left to right): Louise Gamble, Florabell (Betty) Geddes, MaryBeth McLean, Mary Helen Garvin, Diane (Petrie) Osborn, Susan Samuel, Joy Randall. Back Row: Terry Samuel. Missing is Wilma Welsh. Absent were Marie Wilson, Marilyn Ellis and Paul McLean.



When Evangel Hall Mission in Toronto had a flood in April, they were unable to prepare food or serve meals. The call for help went out to several local congregations. The Rapid Response Team at Glenview Presbyterian Church got together in their kitchen and, with the help of others who worked from home, delivered 50 loaves of sandwiches, just in time for supper. Glenview also supplies sandwiches to the mission one Sunday each month.



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Picton, Ont., held its third annual Pride service on Sunday June 9. It is important to the congregation that they share an inclusive gospel vision with the wider community. The theme, “For everyone born, a place at the table!” is from the hymn of that name by Shirley Erena Murray. Local poet Roz Bound created an original piece of poetry for the event and joined the congregation to celebrate and affirm diversity.



Members of Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto took part in the Toronto Pride Parade on June 23. Pictured above are (left to right): Kim Stanbury, the Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis, Shaun Alphonso, the Rev. Deb Stanbury and the Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll.





GATHERINGS



Thornhill Presbyterian Church in Thornhill, Ont., hosted a fundraiser for ARISE Ministry in May. The Spaghetti Dinner and Euchre Night raised over \$3,600. Event organizers, Donna Chapman and Lorraine McBride, were pleased to present the cheque to the Executive Director of ARISE, the Rev. Deb Stanbury. ARISE is a mission of the Presbytery of East Toronto, providing hope and support to individuals involved in the sex trade by helping them reclaim their lives.



In February 2018, Burns Presbyterian Church in Milverton, Ont., stepped forward in mission to support the building of a much-needed hospice in Stratford, Ont. With the efforts of Session and the congregation, they raised over \$10,000 in various fundraising events. Pictured in June 2019 is the Burns Session with the last cheque presentation from the profits of a Drive-Thru Chicken Dinner.



The congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Regina, Sask., presented the Rev. Amanda Currie with this pectoral cross in honour of her role as the Moderator-Elect (and later Moderator) of the 145th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Amanda's husband, Nicholas Jesson, joined her for the presentation, which was made by Graeme Mitchell on behalf of the congregation.



Guest minister the Rev. Daniel Cho knows how to get the attention of the youngest people in a congregation by using costumes to explain why it's just as important to clothe ourselves with love, compassion, kindness and gentleness. On May 12 at St. Columba Presbyterian Church in Kirk Hill, Ont., the Rev. Cho even got Interim Moderator, the Rev. Jim Ferrier, to put on a hat to make the point. The Rev. Cho and his wife, Esther, were visiting in honour of the church's 200th anniversary. The Chos were treated to musical offerings by Taylor Hambleton, who sang two Celtic songs, and fiddler Robyn Howes. The service was the first in a year of events celebrating 200 years since the congregation of St. Columba was formed. PHOTO AND ARTICLE COURTESY OF MARGARET CALDBICK, GLENGARRY NEWS, ALEXANDRIA, ONT.



The congregation of Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto inducted the Rev. Deb Stanbury as a Minister-in-Association on March 24, 2019, celebrating the occasion with—you guessed it—cake! Welcome, Deb!



The Sunday School at St. James Presbyterian Church in Hanwell, N.B., took on a secret project during Lent to help transform the sanctuary Easter morning. They decided to produce stained glass pictures using tissue paper. They did such amazing work and it was a creative, economical way to make stained-glass windows.



At St. David Presbyterian Church in Halifax, N.S., a small garden is growing in the tiny cemetery. The produce grown in the garden is used for a "David's Place" meal offering to the people in need, which takes place on Friday mornings. The garden has been part of a New Beginnings project and supplements the Nova Scotia Feed program that contributes to the meal program. Pictured above, hard at work, is a member of the congregation who is also a volunteer at David's Place. The cemetery garden is very small, yet it grows a rich bounty of lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, radishes, garlic, parsley, beans, peas, chives and zucchini.



June was wedding month! To honour wedding stories from members of the congregation, Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C., invited members to submit a photo of their wedding day, along with a few lines of how they met. By mid-summer, the bulletin board was full of photos, touching stories, along with a few wedding dresses to display.



Twenty-one guests from the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) visited the PCC national office on Tuesday, June 11, including ministers and some spouses. A lunch was jointly hosted by the PCC and the United Church of Canada (UCC). Also in attendance were former mission staff to KCCJ, the Revs. Bob and Priscilla Anderson, the Revs. Glen and Joyce Davis, and Beth McIntosh. The UCC was represented by Nora Sanders, General Secretary, and Patti Talbot, Global Partnership Program and Northeast Asia Partnerships. The Rev. Stephen Kendall, the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams and Lily Ko, International Ministries, attended from the PCC, for a total of 32 people in attendance. Greetings were shared by all three churches and a joint gift from the UCC and PCC was presented to the KCCJ.

GATHERINGS



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ajax, Ont., held a special outdoor worship service this summer in a shady place that included a barbecue, games, fellowship and plenty of music. The Rev. Shalini Rajack-Sankarlal gave a sermon focusing on how we are called to care for nature and each other since we are all created by God. Angela Wellwood, organist-turned-accordion-player, was joined by her husband, Bevin, on keyboard. The choir sang praises to God's glory manifested in his creation. PHOTO CREDITS: ROSANNE PURNWASIE AND JUNE IDE.



The Knitting Pilgrim is a one-man show by Kirk Dunn, a member and elder at Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church in Toronto. The show details Kirk's artistic and spiritual journey over 15 years and features three large tapestries designed to look like stained glass windows. The pieces look at the commonalities and conflicts of the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The show premiered at the Aga Khan Museum in May 2019, and is touring Ontario theatres, museums and places of faith for 40+ shows. For more information, visit kirkdunn.com. PHOTO CREDIT: ANNA PAPPAS.



On June 2, the congregations of Rockway & First Presbyterian Church in North Pelham, Ont., gathered to thank Carole Vosburgh for her 25 years of service as the church secretary and bulletin editor. The congregations enjoyed a potluck lunch...and of course we had cake!



On May 26, West Vancouver Presbyterian Church had its second annual Parking Lot Party—and it rained! The musicians were moved into the lower hall, but the main feature—a bouncy castle—could not be used when wet and was too tall for the hall. However, as you can see, it fit nicely into the sanctuary, so for one whole afternoon, West Vancouver PC was filled with bouncing children!



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Markham, Ont., recently held a pancake dinner in support of relief efforts for African countries facing conflict and hunger due to weather-related disaster. The congregation's gifts, totalling \$400, will help provide humanitarian relief for families in Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia through Presbyterian World Service & Development.



Maye Cann has a heart for the hungry. Over the years several organizations that meet the needs of the less fortunate have been, and continue to be, blessed by Maye and husband Don's willingness to lend a hand. Several years ago, Maye created a HOPE garden. HOPE stands for Helping Other People Eat. Under the auspices of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Salmon Arm, B.C., a dedicated group of volunteers prepare, plant and tend a garden plot. They grow potatoes, carrots, beets and onions—long-lasting root vegetables that are household staples. The vegetables are harvested and then donated to the Second Harvest Food Bank. Last year the garden netted 1,100 lbs of fresh produce. Second Harvest is very thankful for the donations as they provide so many wholesome, farm-fresh vegetables for their clients to enjoy.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Review of *Claws of the Panda*

By the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont.

Claws of the Panda: Beijing's Campaign of Influence and Intimidation in Canada

Written by Jonathan Manthorpe
Cormorant Books, 2019

As China moves inexorably toward becoming the world's largest superpower, the relationship between China and Canada is in trouble. And that is a big problem.

There is a social feature of Chinese society called *Quanxi*. On the individual level, one wants to have good *Quanxi* (relationships) with others in order to be successful. In order to have good relationships, one gives favours and expects favours in return. It's something like the perplexing Parable of the Dishonest Steward in Luke's gospel, where Jesus urged, "Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings." In other words, the parable seems to promote "give to get" or "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."

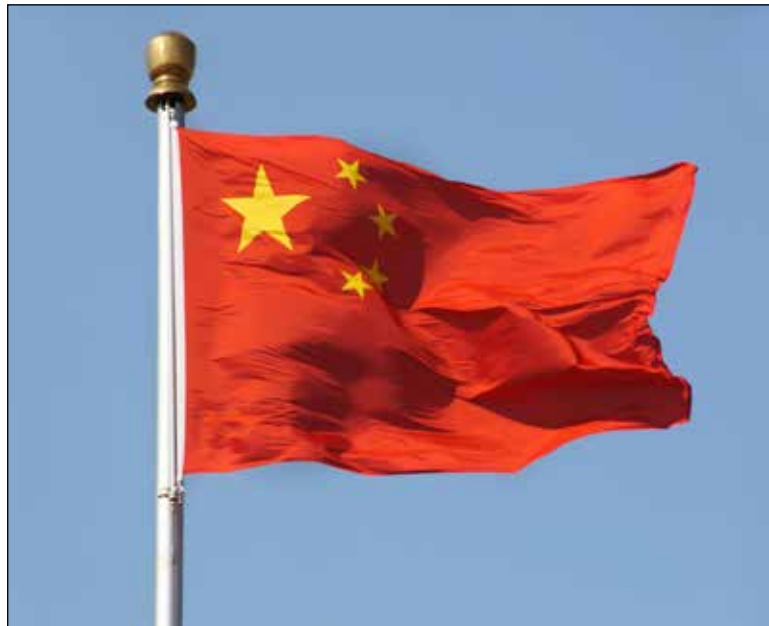
The opposite concept is also true in *Quanxi* (relationships). If you do something to hurt me, I'll do something to hurt you. Or, according to Newton's Third Law: "For every ac-

tion there is an equal and opposite reaction." So, as in relationships with individuals, if a nation harms China, China will retaliate. When Canada detains one Chinese citizen, China retaliates by detaining two Canadians.

A few months ago, in the wake of John McCallum's removal as Ambassador to China by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the "At Issue" panel on CBC's *The National* zeroed in on "Fixing China Relations." Out of the blue it seemed, on a Thursday in January 2019, Paul Wells of *Maclean's*, an "At Issue" commentator, burst into a passionate endorsement of an as yet unpublished book that helps explain the current breakdown in the relationship between China and Canada.

Wells mentioned he had recently become an advocate of this book by a Canadian journalist he had not even met. He explained that Jonathan Manthorpe's book was key to understanding the current situation. The relationship between China and Canada has been strained, to say the least, by the detention of Meng Wanzhou of Huawei in Vancouver weeks before. And, in a country that flourishes in the art of *Quanxi* (relationships), the strain in relationship is a big deal.

In this book that Wells promoted, Manthorpe details that as a result of Canadian missionary activity in



China a hundred or so years ago, we have developed a mindset that we are "saving" China. And, this attitude of "if we help China, they will help us" has permeated Canadian interaction with China throughout the years. Manthorpe argues forcefully that this attitude needs to change because the relationship has changed.

As Wells pointed out, as late as the 1970s, Canada was China's fourth largest trading partner. Today, Canada has fallen to number 21. Simply put, Canada is no longer important to China, except as Wells said quite boldly, and I'm paraphrasing, "Canada is

vanishing from China's radar screen except as a place for industrial espionage, exerting pressure on the Trump administration or as a haven for money laundering mostly in the lower mainland of British Columbia."

Based on the impassioned promotion of the book, I immediately ordered it online and then eagerly awaited the book's publication and delivery. I received it mid-February. It is compelling, and as David Mulroney former Ambassador to the People's Republic of China says, "disturbing."

Why disturbing? Well, Canada has had a long relationship with China—"Chinese build Canada and Canadians Save China." In roughly the same time period over a century ago, Chinese were arriving in Canada to work on the railroad and Canadian churches, of all stripes, were sending missionaries to "save" China. A song of Canadian missionaries in China, sung to the tune of "Bringing in the Sheaves," expressed this evangelistic fervour this way:

Bringing in Chinese,
Bringing in Chinese,
We shall come rejoicing,
Bringing in Chinese.

And yet, Canadians persist in this

idea, following in the steps of our famous Presbyterian missionary Jonathan Goforth, as well as the children of former Canadian missionaries, that somehow Canadians need to "save" China. The hope was that Canada would have good *Quanxi* (relationship) with China. If we helped them, they would be so pleased with this help and want to do good to us in return.

However, Manthorpe chronicles the systematic approach China has taken to change the way it deals with Canada. This goes well beyond the romantic view many Canadians have of China (beautiful ancient culture, spectacular tourist attractions, impressive Olympic venue) to pointing out the reality that today Canada is no longer important to China. This is a reality that hits Canada like a snake-bite.

Beijing has concertedly and consistently, through a variety of means, including co-opting overseas Chinese, controlled the message and controlled the thought of how people understand China. But more than that, China has infiltrated Canadian society and is, in some ways, controlling it. "All too often in the past, Canadian politicians, officials, security agents, business people, academics, and, on occasion, the media have shied away from levelling justified criticism at the Chinese Communist Party and its operatives for their behaviour in Canada against Canadians" (p. 241). This behaviour is not acceptable.

According to Manthorpe, in the Epilogue to his excellent book, it is time for Canada "to abandon the Missionary Spirit." That is, Canadian leaders need to move beyond the "romantic notion that the example of Canadian civic values will change China." Or, put another way, "be nice to them and they will be nice to us."

Unfortunately, Manthorpe doesn't provide much insight as to how to repair the *Quanxi* between China and Canada. He diagnoses the problem and says the relationship is stuck. As Canadians, and as Christian Canadians, we need to pay attention to this relationship for many reasons, not least of which demographic trends suggest, and various media outlets have reported on this, that China is poised to be not only the world's most populous nation, but also the most populous Christian nation within a decade or two.

Canadian Christians and Chinese Christians as members together in the "one, holy and catholic" church need to have good *Quanxi* (relationship).

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BOOK REVIEWS

Being Christian and Being Canadian

By the Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis,
Armour Heights Presbyterian Church
in Toronto, Ont.

What does it mean to be a Christian in Canada today? Two recent books engage this question in easy-to-read language with perspectives that are profound. In this article I share reflections on Douglas John Hall's *The Canada Crisis: A Christian Perspective* and Mary Jo Leddy's *Why Are We Here? A Meditation on Canada*. I consider their insights for what it means to be Christian and Canadian today.

Douglas John Hall is a Canadian theologian with a global reputation who taught theology for many decades at McGill University in Montreal to seminarians, of which I am one. His book is a 2019 reprint of an earlier version with the same title. Even though the "crisis" Hall is addressing (i.e., the French-English divide over repatriating the constitution in the 1970s and 80s) is far away from the crises Canada is facing in 2019, the book has been reprinted because it offers a powerful biblical-theological template for how to find hope in the face of the kinds of fear and despair we experience today as individual Canadians and as churches.

Mary Jo Leddy is a Christian philosopher who has taught both Protestant and Catholic seminarians at the Toronto School of Theology. She is also a founder of Romero House, which provides housing and advocacy for refugees. Her book is a series of reflections on Canada: "spiritual...perspectives in and for a post-secular age" (p. 10). Leddy and Hall are mutual admirers of each others' work. It is no surprise then, that despite many differences, the books share much in terms of their analyses of the Canadian context, even as Hall's work also focuses on being church in the Canadian context.

At its best, Canada is a place and a space that welcomes refugees and newcomers and provides cooperative opportunity to build together a common good where everyone is respected, welcomed and supported. At its worst, however, Canada and Canadians have succumbed to two key historic temptations that have led to oppression and despair for ourselves and others. In their books, both Hall and Leddy explore two key dynamics of our context: colonialism/mastery and fear-based survival.

First, both writers acknowledge how Canada is founded on colonialism. Colonialism is about mastery: mastery of nature, the earth and other people. The version of mastery known in the church is *triumphalism* (i.e., overcoming negation through triumph of the positive, or overcoming the cross through resurrection). Mastery undermines the need for co-operation and shuts down the possibility of facing our own failures and vulnerabilities. Consequently, when the colonizing impulse of mastery persists, we are unable to recognize our own need to repent for the hurt we have caused, and we are unable to listen to the voices of others and receive them as sources of wisdom and enlightenment.

Second, both explore the temptation to survival based on fear and the feeling of threat: fear of other people (i.e., Indigenous peoples, refugees or others who are different than us) or fear of nature itself in a harsh and unforgiving climate that is Canada. Humans often deal with our fear and sense of threat by seeking to master that which we fear—mastering our environment with technology or condemning those who are different by marginalizing them. And in the church, we build walls of morality, doctrine and tradition as a safeguard to risking openness, change and transformation.

Some on the margins of Canadian society live their despair more openly. Some of us who on the surface are all put together carry our despair more covertly, afraid to name it openly for fear of rejection and ex-

clusion. How do we find a spiritual/theological template for hope that will engage both overt and covert despair and integrate it into who we may become as a nation and as churches in a secular age?

Instead of reacting out of fear and a sense of threat, Hall writes: "There is a more courageous way of reacting to the dark place. It is to find, somehow, the will to stay there; to wait in the dark, as it were, until one's eyes are a little accustomed to it; to feel one's way about, take a few steps. Perhaps one will stumble and fall. On the other hand, after some initial awkwardness, it may grow less frightening. There may even be some light to be discerned—there, in the dark! Christians ought not to be surprised if such were the case, since they hold the faith of a light which shines in the darkness and may be seen only from within that darkness" (p. 44).

Darkness is a metaphor for the experience of despair or the experience of the cross. As the apostle Paul and the Gospels understand the cross, it is not something to be overcome or get past through resurrection. Rather, the cross is a reality and truth that shapes the Christian life. An experience of resurrection that is authentic integrates the marks, wounds and scars of the cross into the persons and communities we become. The question, then, becomes how can we, as Christians and as churches, be shaped by the particular vulnerability of our existence? How can we face the despair of our present and future as church, so that resurrec-



tion, when it comes, grows out of and integrates the pain and struggle we know in being church today? How might present experiences of pain and struggle become more integral in shaping our vision of hope and our mission as churches? And how might this journey also provide some vision and purpose for our way of being and doing within the larger place and space we call Canada?

Both Leddy and Hall provide some positive directions for us to live authentically and faithfully today. They do this with feet firmly rooted on the ground. Nothing worthwhile is accomplished by downplaying the effort and struggle involved and the transformation that must happen in us all. For Leddy, as Canadians at our best, "We are here to take up responsibility for this place on earth, for the sake of the whole earth" (p. 82). For Hall, being a Christian in the church means that we see in the "crisis" of our despair God's call to discern a new opportunity to be church as an increasingly marginalized and minority movement.

For both Hall and Leddy, living in solidarity with all those marginalized in Canadian society is the means to find a renewed identity and sense of mission through advocacy and community. The journey to hope is about rediscovering ourselves according to the gospel metaphors—as little lights in dark places, pinches of salt and yeast. The journey to hope is about discovering how welcoming into our family those historically excluded changes us, and how such welcoming inclusion can become new wine that no longer fits into the old wineskins of our historic alignment with power, privilege and mastery. Hall and Leddy challenge us, as churches and as Canadians, to genuine hope based on openness, trust and solidarity. Are we willing to face our fears, our failure and our despair? In the journey to genuine hope are we prepared to engage those we have excluded because we are learning what it means to be marginalized ourselves? May we follow Christ through our cross to new resurrection.

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PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Caring for Creation in Times of Disaster

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

We live in turbulent times and are challenged to care for God's creation so that we can continue to enjoy the bounty of the planet God gave us to live on. We know it is possible for all to live lives with dignity. But climate change is creating hardship for millions, and we are called to make renewed efforts to reach out and provide a helping hand.

This is the case in Malawi where, in May, I visited areas affected by Cyclone Idai. This cyclone—affecting Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe in March—has been called one of the worst weather-related disasters to hit the Southern Hemisphere. More than 900,000 people were affected in Malawi, losing crops, homes and sanitation facilities to the torrential rains.

There I met Esther, a single mom of three young children aged five, three and one. She had to leave her house during the cyclone, as the mud bricks were washed away. She ran with her three kids to her sister's home a few hundred metres away. She was able to stay there, adding four people to

an already overcrowded house. Once the rains stopped not much was left of her home.

When I visited, she stood on a pile of rubble where her house had been, with her little one in a sling on her back. She showed us her cornfield that had almost been ready for harvesting when the cyclone hit, taking away her food supply for a large part of the coming year.

Esther is now receiving food assistance as part of PWS&D's Cyclone Idai response. With the help of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, 2,000 households (around 10,000 people) in that part of Malawi are receiving the food they need to help get them to the next harvest season.

The total budget for this project is just under \$500,000. Generous donations of \$150,000 to PWS&D, along with matching funds at Canadian Foodgrains Bank and contributions from other CFGB members, have made it possible to carry out this important response.

Around Mulanje in southern Malawi, countless families saw their latrines overflow and collapse during the rains. Caring for creation

also means managing human waste adequately to prevent the spread of disease caused by open defecation. This is of especially great concern in an area of Malawi where PWS&D is working to promote maternal and child health.

To alleviate health risks, we are responding with the Mulanje Mission Hospital to help communities restore their sanitation facilities. Families are given a quality concrete slab to cover a deep hole they've dug. PWS&D is providing funding for 525 households to get latrine slabs.

PWS&D works with its partners around the world to build resilience against climate change and the challenges it brings. In Malawi, where rains are less predictable than they used to be, farmers involved in conservation agriculture projects are able to better protect their land from the erosion that happens during the rains, and preserve moisture in the soil by covering it with mulch from locally available crop residues.

Our project in Guatemala was the recipient of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank Climate Fund—an affirmation of our partner's work in helping to



A woman stands atop the rubble of her destroyed home in Malawi. PHOTO CREDIT: ERIN WHITTAKER

counter the effects of climate change through reforestation and sustainable agriculture. We work with farmers in Haiti to build resilience in a similar fashion.

However, when dramatic events such as Cyclone Idai come, no amount of ground cover can resist the devastating powers of nature. In those cases, one must start from scratch, hoping for a helping hand to get through the difficult times.



In areas where latrines were damaged or swept away by Cyclone Idai, PWS&D is providing concrete latrine slabs to aid in reconstruction. PHOTO CREDIT: ERIN WHITTAKER

Praying for Yemen's Hungry on World Food Day

By Anna Muir,
PWS&D Communications

Yemen's four-year civil war has produced the worst humanitarian crisis on the planet. Airstrikes and fighting have killed thousands and devastated the lives of millions more by impacting the availability of food, clean water and other essential services.

Fighting at the port of entry for much of the country's food has stopped imports and blocked other vital aid shipments. About 16 million people wake up to severe hunger every day.

Staggeringly, conflict is named as the cause of acute food insecurity in 18 countries around the world. Instability that causes mass displacement and disrupts food production leaves women and men trapped in cycles of hunger, and children facing acute malnutrition. As health care facilities collapse, disease spreads, leading to greater malnutrition.

This World Food Day on October 16, as we give thanks for abundant food and God's good gifts, we also remember those who struggle against

hunger and malnutrition—especially in areas fraught with conflict.

In the Harib Al Qaramish District of Yemen—an area that has experienced extremely intense conflict—PWS&D is responding to meet urgent food needs. PWS&D is supporting members of Canadian Foodgrains Bank to provide 1,100 vulnerable families with packages of flour, beans, oil, sugar and salt.

In another area of Yemen, PWS&D is also supporting the rehabilitation of water sources to help prevent the spread of disease.

Global media attention has shifted from this crisis, but the needs in Yemen continue to mount. This World Food Day, learn and share about PWS&D's response in Yemen and help bring innocent people caught in this crisis back from the brink of starvation. Find out more at WeRespond.ca/yemen-crisis.

PWS&D is a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger.



Airstrikes destroyed Ahmed's home in Yemen, forcing him to take shelter with his wife and their seven children under a bridge in the country's largest city. PHOTO CREDIT: ADRA CANADA

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Maternal Health in Afghanistan

By Emma Clarke,
PWS&D Communications

In many parts of the developing world, when the sun sets, delivery wards become empty. Without somewhere for nurses and midwives to stay nearby, late-night deliveries are often not attended by health care professionals. Even at the times of day when medical staff are available, many women do not have the transportation or the finances to access their services.

These conditions make it remarkable that Murzia gave birth to a healthy baby boy in a local health centre early one morning. After several painful experiences in childbirth, including two miscarriages, when Murzia learned that she was pregnant with her fourth child, she was determined: “The physical and mental trauma and pain of experiencing miscarriages and delivery complications had really affected my health adversely. I

did not want to repeat the mistake of being careless and let myself and my child suffer again.”

Thankful to not have to travel far or take another loan in order to afford treatment at a private clinic, Murzia followed the advice of her peers to visit the newly constructed PWS&D-supported health centre close to her home in Laghman province, Afghanistan. Months of neonatal support, as well as the staff’s dedication to ensuring a prompt, hygienic delivery, gave Murzia the power to say, “I am a very happy mother. My newborn is healthy and my health has improved, too.”

In a country where the maternal mortality rate is too high—close to 400 women die every day from childbirth or the complications of pregnancy—it is imperative that all women have the help of skilled health professionals before, during and after the delivery of their baby. According to the World Bank, this could de-



A woman accesses screening services in a local health facility. PWS&D and CWSA are working to make ante- and postnatal care available to women in underserved areas of Afghanistan. PHOTO CREDIT: CWSA

crease maternal mortality rates by a whopping 74%.

PWS&D works with Community World Service Asia (CWSA) to improve the quality and availability of services for pregnant women by helping health-care workers develop their skills and by building and equipping health facilities in underserved areas in Afghanistan. Through this vital work, midwives are not only available around the clock, but they also travel to assist pregnant women who live in rural areas where isolation makes the maternal mortality

rate markedly higher.

The work of PWS&D and CWSA does not stop here, because maternal and neonatal health care services are only successful if women are able to access them.

Only one in two Afghan women participate in decision-making about their own health care. Many also do not have a say in how their household’s finances are spent; so even a small transportation cost can prevent them from getting the care they and their baby need. In order for women to have the opportunity to seek, re-



A nurse provides outpatient care at a PWS&D-supported health clinic. PHOTO CREDIT: CWSA

ceive and advocate for appropriate health services, their autonomy must be improved.

PWS&D’s maternal health project, with support from the Government of Canada is helping to decrease maternal mortality by ensuring men understand that when women make decisions regarding their own health, everyone benefits. Programs that teach about sexual and reproductive health rights, family planning and gender equality are helping whole communities, as behaviours that put women and girls at risk are left behind.



Twambilire, a lead farmer with PWS&D’s conservation agriculture project in Mpata, Malawi, stands in front of her plot of land.

By Anna Muir,
PWS&D Communications

In the village of Mwenitanga in northern Malawi, slopes of farmland stretching in all directions are golden—they are overspread by long stalks of yellow maize.

Twambilire inspects the soil that lies beneath the layers of papery husks on her own plot. Like all farmers in her village, Twambilire toils for many hours to prepare her land so that she can harvest a good crop.

But climate change has increased the frequency and severity of drought and erratic rain—events that make it difficult for Twambilire to grow enough food to eat and sell at the market. To support her children, the desperate

mother had been begging her neighbours for money.

That’s when Twambilire decided to try conservation agriculture. With the help of PWS&D and Canadian Foodgrains Bank, she learned to farm in a way that encourages minimal soil disturbance, crop rotation and the use of old plant material—like the maize stalks that cover her land—as mulch.

Conservation agriculture helps make land more productive and allows farmers to better cope with drought. Twambilire proudly explained that, since mulching her plot, her soil is rich and healthy where it was once degraded.

Stretches of mulch-covered ground throughout the community indicate that other farmers have also taken up

Women Farmers Ensure Food Security

conservation agriculture. Twambilire beams as she says that. As a lead farmer with the PWS&D project, she taught many of them.

“They were reluctant at first, but after the training, they mulched their entire plots and their crops have done better,” says Twambilire.

In a country where few women hold decision-making positions, it is empowering to see clever and confident Twambilire in her role as lead farmer.

In Africa, women comprise up to 60% of the agricultural labour force. In countries like Malawi, they are essential to food production and the food security of their families and communities. And yet, in many cases, women subsistence farmers don’t have a say in farming decisions. They often lack access to training and education as well as savings and credit, making it difficult to invest in their farms.

For Twambilire, assistance from PWS&D changed this experience. Not only did she receive training to rehabilitate her weather-worn land, she also was able to get the farming supplies she needed.

PWS&D supports village savings groups for vulnerable farmers in the

region. As a member of the group, Twambilire regularly meets with farmers in her village to share and distribute loans. Twambilire has used her loans to buy farming tools and seeds, and with extra income, she is able to provide health care, clothing and education for her children.

Empowering rural women with training and resources translates into better food security and the improved

well-being of children, households and communities. Through your support, women can continue to restore creation and grow the food that sustains their communities.

PWS&D is a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger.



Twambilire takes record of loans shared among her neighbours during a PWS&D-supported savings group meeting.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

PWS&D Champions' Corner

By Emma Clarke,
PWS&D Communications

A quiz about development around the world appears on the placemat at your church's Easter breakfast. The story of Junayet, a high-school chemistry teacher fleeing conflict in Myanmar, is read during a community Advent service. Often, these are the marks of dedicated volunteers called Champions.

Passionate about the mission and ministry of PWS&D, Champions stay informed about PWS&D's projects and partners, promote the work of PWS&D within their church and encourage others to get involved. Champions are vital to the ongoing work of PWS&D.

To facilitate a deeper connection with congregations across Canada, PWS&D has a vision to see one Champion in every Presbyterian church. If

you have a passion for PWS&D and a desire to use your unique gifts and interests to engage with our work, there's a place for you on the team.

A Day in the Life of a Champion: the Rev. Laura Kavanagh

Members of Knox Presbyterian Church in Victoria, B.C., love being greeted on a Sunday morning by the smiling face of Poonam from India or Rosa from Nicaragua. Inspired by her community's desire to learn about those impacted by PWS&D, Laura shares the stories of PWS&D beneficiaries like Poonam and Rosa by including Mission Moment slides in each week's worship service—making sure everyone has the opportunity to connect with their global sisters and brothers.

From distributing resources to participating in a monthly leadership webinar or praying for those touched

by a natural disaster, every day—and for every person—being a Champion looks a little different.

A Day in the Life of a Champion: Olive Brinson

While Elvis may seem to have nothing to do with PWS&D, Olive, the Champion at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Tweed, Ont., and church member Gail Brown recognized their own town's Elvis Festival as an opportunity to reach their community. By setting up a table to sell gently used purses during the Tweed Elvis Festival's Gospel Brunch, Olive's team raised awareness and funds for the work of PWS&D in Guatemala—while joining their neighbours in listening to some great music.

Whether they plan a mission-minded service or share about the work of PWS&D in their community, all Champions' commitments are the



Champion Olive Brinson and her team sell gently used purses at the Tweed Elvis Festival to raise funds for PWS&D's work in Guatemala.

same: to help build God's kingdom on earth and bring about a more sustainable, compassionate and just world.

To learn more or tell us how you're a Champion for PWS&D in your congregation, visit WeRespond.ca/be-a-champion.

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Join the Ride for Refuge



Team Lightning Bolt and Team PWS&D at the Ride for Refuge in Toronto.

In a world filled with need, we have a chance to create positive change—and it's as easy as riding a bike.

On Saturday, October 5, join PWS&D in the Ride for Refuge—a cycling and walking fundraiser with

locations across Canada. Participants, choosing to either walk 5 km or cycle 10, 25 or 50 km, will raise funds and awareness for PWS&D's maternal, newborn and child health projects in Afghanistan and Malawi.

Your participation will help deliver healthy futures by supporting projects that train health workers, provide medical equipment and build up health facilities in poor, remote communities.

With support from the Government of Canada, dollars raised for this project are matched 4:1, making your support go even further. Register today! Visit WeRespond.ca/rideforrefuge.

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REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship Corner: Given Destiny

By Sha Tha Lei Wah

Sha Tha Lei Wah's brother, Tamla Lar Wah, was born to Karen parents in a refugee camp in Thailand, living there all his 20+ years. Together with the Karen People Refugee Sponsorship Foundation, Tamla was sponsored to Canada by First Presbyterian Church in Thunder Bay. The two groups have a close relationship that runs much deeper than the administrative tasks of sponsorship.

On behalf of my family, I want to thank you all for the refugee sponsorship program that changed our lives radically from east to west.

In 2009, my younger brother Sha Tha Yu Wah, my adopted sister (biological cousin), my cousin Prer Nay Htoo and I were sponsored to come to Canada. In 2015, my second-last brother Saw Lwe K' Pru Soe joined us, sponsored by Government of Canada. And on June 26, 2019 my last brother, Tamla Lar Wah, joined us

in Canada, sponsored by First Presbyterian Church together with Hosanna Karen community in Thunder Bay.

For over six years we tried to bring Tamla Lar Wah to Canada through various ways by our own efforts. We faced challenges such as his ineligible age, finding sponsors, language barriers, finances and gathering required documents. We even tried to adopt him once when he was under-age and were rejected.

However, we didn't give up on him. He'd been through a lot at his really young age when we left him in 2009 for Canada. Rejection of his application was very discouraging, but it wasn't impossible.

Many times, I encouraged myself and my brother to trust God. God has a plan and God never makes a mistake. God became our only hope and we tried to abide within God's promises. I yielded back my own effort and trusted God in every way possible. I prayed heartfelt and desperate prayers.

Then came the answer to our prayers—First Presbyterian Church, working together with Hosanna Karen community. I know that much time and effort was selflessly put forward to make this sponsorship successful. I want to say thank you all from the bottom of my heart. We could never repay the good work you've done in our lives, but I know the Father God is the true rewarder.

As countryless refugees, we struggle with our political and national identities, life purpose and the meaning and definition of our futures. Having fled from the Burma civil war, involuntarily born countryless refugees and politically prohibited to integrate into Thai society, this was a given destiny that only God could liberate us from.

We once lived in a pond. Now we live in the ocean. We couldn't tell the difference then. Now we know the vastness of the ocean with all the freedoms, adventures and challenges it offers—all by the grace of God.



The Wah brothers as young boys in a refugee camp in Thailand.



The Wah brothers finally reunited in Canada in June 2019.

NEWS

Celebrating Diversity



By Michael Turman, program coordinator

This spring, at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Kitchener, Ont., we took a congregational photo. The flags above the main entrance represent the diversity of countries from which our people come. We give thanks to God that we may all join together to give God praise each week!

NEWS

200 Years of Presbyterian Presence

By the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont.

On July 4, 1976, I sat on my grandmother's couch watching the U.S. Bicentennial celebrations. As a teenager, I never dreamed I'd be asked to speak at a 200th anniversary, but on June 16, 2019, the Bradford West Gwillimbury Local History Association hosted a celebration of the church and the establishment of the "Scotch Settlement" at the "Auld Kirk" (First West Gwillimbury Presbyterian Church). Jan Blommaert, the Association's President and an adherent at St. John's, Bradford, invited me to say a few words.

From the outset, these Selkirk Settlers received spiritual care from James Sutherland. The Rev. William Gregg, DD, in his *History of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada*, claims, "None stood higher in the estimation of the settlers, both for sterling piety and Christian conduct." And the Rev. Jonathan Dennis, the 2018 anniversary speaker at the Auld Kirk says, "It is not certain from whom Mr. Sutherland obtained

authority to marry and baptize. It would seem...that he obtained it from Lord Selkirk; but from another statement he received it from the Presbytery of Caithness...it has also been stated that he received it from a parish minister of the Church of Scotland." By whatever authority, the early settlers were in good hands and a congregation was first established on January 6, 1822.

During the 1800s the hearty Selkirk Settlers, along with Irish immigrants, built five Presbyterian churches in Bradford West Gwillimbury! In the 1900s, as these various congregations began to decline in number, they chose to amalgamate and form St. John's Presbyterian Church in the downtown core. However, in 2004, the congregation moved to a brand-new building at the corner of Middle-town Sideroad and 8th Line.

Growth happened again on that corner and in partnership with Bekeran Properties Inc., a \$53 million retirement home officially opened on June 22, 2019. The congregation's stake in this development project will provide for an expansion to their facilities and the engagement of an



First West Gwillimbury Presbyterian Church.

Associate Minister for Children's and Youth Ministries. Construction on a second phase "Memory Care" home will begin this fall.

St. John's, Bradford, will be celebrating 200 years of Presbyterian presence, beginning with a special lecture series and an anniversary service on the third weekend in November 2019. The events are livestreamed so you can watch our bicentennial events from the comfort of your own couch.



The Rev. Dan Scott with Edgar Lloyd, a Trustee at St. John's and a member of the BWG History Association.



PHOTO CREDIT: NICHOLAS MOLNAR PHOTOGRAPHY

Drawing Closer to God through Bible Readings

By Allen Macartney, Gloucester Presbyterian Church in Ottawa

Each year, for the past 10 years, about 70 people from Gloucester Presbyterian Church in Ottawa sign up for a New Year's Challenge. It involves reading large parts of the Bible (both Old and New Testament) in the month of January. The readings change each year. Last year we read Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Matthew and Mark.

The challenge involves a commitment to read roughly 20 minutes a day during the month of January from God's Word. Youth aged nine to 12 have a much shorter requirement, while teens aged 13-17 read about half the adult list. Each year about 45 people finish the task within the 31 days allotted.

But reading isn't the only way some people complete the task. Many choose a high-tech method to get God's living words into their hearts and minds. They listen to MP3 files, or CDs, or listen directly from the Internet. It's easy to do. Just "Google" Biblegateway.com and

choose the Biblical passage or book you want to hear. You can listen to it in a wide variety of translations, even paraphrased versions.

Some couples use this challenge to spend time together, with one person reading out loud while the other listens. Some families incorporate it into their January mealtimes.

Others adopt a slower pace and take notes while they read or listen. Still others take a more meditative approach and use the reading to pray through the verses.

Readers range in age from about nine to early 80s. Our Gloucester folks were not the only ones to accept the challenge. Several years ago, an engineering student living in the Netherlands heard about our challenge. He decided to read the entire New Testament from Matthew to Revelations. "I've always wanted to do it, and this was my incentive," he said. Was he successful? You bet! We highlighted his name on the cake in bold face to celebrate his initiative and drive. He continues to join our challenge each year.

So why do we read the Bible in



Taking up a Bible reading challenge at Gloucester Presbyterian Church in Ottawa.

January?

In the Middle Ages, churches had colourful stained-glass windows because so few people could read. All they had to do was look up at a Biblical scene portrayed with light streaming through brightly coloured glass. The stained-glass windows depicted the story of God's great passion for his people. It helped build faith in Jesus.

In the words of song-writer Michael Card, "Open the Bible and

move toward the light." Every time we hear or read scripture we're drawing closer to God. And that's what the New Year's Challenge is all about. It's a great way to build enthusiasm for reading the Bible.

Then, on the first Sunday in February, our entire church celebrates the end of the challenge by eating cake decorated with the names of all those who complete the readings. What a celebration! This builds momentum for next year's challenge.



Allen Macartney writing the names of those who have completed the Bible reading challenge on a congratulatory cake.

Another church in Ottawa (St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church) has adapted this into a challenge leading up to Easter. They love it.

Are you ready to take up the challenge?! Please contact us at yukonsummer@gmail.com if you're interested.

NEWS

Aboriginal Sharing Day



An Indigenous dancer.



Left to right, Ernest Poundmaker of the Calgary Aboriginal Friendship Centre and master of ceremonies for the day, and the Rev. Jared Miller.



A teepee on the grounds of St. Andrew's used for storytelling by elders.

Located in the Northern Great Plains, the area around Calgary is part of the traditional home of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Stoney-Nakoda, Tsuut'ina and the Métis Nation. One of the largest reserves in Canada, the Tsuut'ina Nation, is next to Calgary's southwest boundary, yet many Calgarians know little about their next-door neighbours. In the spirit of "getting to know your neighbours," St. Andrew's partnered with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary to host a daylong gathering on the church grounds.

Burning sweet grass (a mixture of wild prairie grasses) was the traditional beginning of Aboriginal Sharing Day on May 25 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary. Two full-size teepees were erected on the lawns where elders shared teachings of traditional life. Indigenous dancers performed in their regalia, accompanied by an explanation of the dances.

After a first round demonstrating the dance, audience members were invited to join in.

Brian Hawco, a member of the organizing committee, estimated some 375 to 400 people took part, with about 300 people present at any one time. Some guests chose to pass by the activities and enjoy the display and sale of Indigenous art elsewhere in the church, while others remained throughout the event.

Master of ceremonies, Ernest Poundmaker, together with Trian Knight, represented the Friendship Centre at the event and worked alongside members of the church to plan for the day so it would go off without a hitch. Mr. Knight summed up the event as one of breaking down barriers, bringing people together.

The Rev. Dr. Tim Archibald and the Rev. Jared Miller began the day's activities with prayers, while Mr. Poundmaker led the event praying

in Athapascan. A feast of traditional food was prepared by the Friendship Centre's Lana Manybears to end the day. Hard as it may be to believe, one of the biggest challenges faced by organizers was getting bison meat for the dinner. Wilfred Kangong, a member of the congregation and a butcher, used his influence to secure the meat which, the committee learned, has to be ordered well in advance.

Long-time congregation member Jim Hope-Ross was also part of the organizing committee. He explained a key point about the history of Indigenous peoples in the prairies: "These are not a conquered people," he said, commenting that Western Canada was settled when Indigenous peoples signed treaties with the Crown to allow settlement. Calgary is part of Treaty Seven. "In a very real sense, the people of Treaty Seven have been, and are, our neighbours. And yet, through our failure to respect and honour our differences, we have remained distant from those whose traditional lands we are privileged to occupy." Alberta also includes Treaties Six and Eight.

Other Calgary churches participated in the event at St. Andrew's and are discussing organizing similar partnerships in their communities.

New Leader for Justice Ministries

The Life and Mission Agency Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Allyson Carr as the newly appointed Associate Secretary for Justice Ministries. Allyson has been working at the national office since January, serving in the position of Justice Ministries Program Coordinator.

Allyson brings a diverse skill set and deep commitment to social justice initiatives and to the role of Associate Secretary. She is a strategic leader, an experienced administrator, a skilled project and public events facilitator, and an accomplished writer and editor. Allyson previously served as an Assistant Professor of philosophy at Trent University

and as the Associate Director at the Centre for Philosophy, Religion and Social Ethics with experience leading collaborative projects grounded in a community ethos with a justice focus.

Allyson has a deep understanding of the power of storytelling and identity to help communities find and name who they are and who they want to be. She finds joy in learning and helping others understand. Allyson has a passion for digging theologically into a topic to better reflect on and articulate the intersection of justice and scripture, and it has been her experience that by rooting our understanding of "how to do justice" in one's faith



Allyson Carr, Associate Secretary for Justice Ministries.

and spiritual practices we yield better fruit.

"I am very excited to be able to take on this new role as Associate Secretary of Justice Ministries, where shaping understandings and practice of justice in a faith context is the daily focus and form of service to the Presbyterian community," said Allyson.

Allyson's research, writing and leadership skills, combined with her passion for justice, will serve her well in this new role. The Life and Mission Agency looks forward to the many contributions Allyson will make to the continuing ministry of Christ through The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Free Leadership Webinars

presbyterian.ca/webinars



NEWS

145 Years in Fort Erie



The Rev. Trish Archibald with Fort Erie Mayor, Wayne Redekop, and Wayne Gates, MPP Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

By the Rev. Trish Archibald,
St. Andrew's-Knox Presbyterian Church
in Fort Erie, Ont.

It depends on who you ask: we might have been marking 145 years of the Presbyterian Church in Fort Erie, Ont., or 52 years together as St. Andrew's-Knox Church—but it was clear we have a great deal to celebrate!

On Sunday, June 23, members and friends of the congregation shared a wonderful meal together and unveiled a memorial cabinet of curios, including study notes from previous ministers and a silver christening cup belonging to Janet Engels, the first baby baptised in the new church on Highland Avenue 75 years ago—which makes her our longest, if not oldest member.

The gathering also recognized Laird Kinghorn's 45 years of service as a firefighter, and the generous



Janet Engels (longest member) and Ella Homewood (most recent member) of St. Andrew's-Knox, Fort Erie. PHOTO CREDITS: MAPLE LEAVES PHOTOGRAPHY (HOLLY L. CAVANAGH)

gifts of donors and contractors who have seen the church through a year of staggering repairs. The congregation of St. Andrew's-Knox can't wait to see where God will lead in the next 145 years!

July 1 in Newfoundland and Labrador

By Bruce Templeton, St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Church in St. John's, N.L.

July 1 is a different day in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Before you read any further, I ask you to think about your own church: What would be left of your church congregation today if you took twenty-five young people aged 18-24 years old, sent them off to war and they did not return? Yes, twenty-five youth members of your congregation.

There are three monuments inside St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (the Kirk) in St. John's, at which we lay wreaths in memory of those who died in world wars. Two of the plaques mark the First World War and the third plaque is for those who died in the Second World War.

For the First World War, Newfoundland and Labrador made up a regiment we call The First 500. This was the founding group that made up what is known today as the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. In St. John's, four of the churches that make up the downtown core are within two blocks of each other. As the recruiters sat at tables and interviewed prospective soldiers, they found that it was through the church youth groups where skills of camping and cooking had been developed. As a result, an estimated 400 members of The First 500 came from the church youth groups. The Church Lads Brigade came from the Anglican Church. The Methodist Guard came from the United Church. The Roman Catholic Church had the Catholic Cadet Corp and from St. Andrew's Church came

the Newfoundland Highlanders. The cap badge selected for the regiment was the caribou badge from our highlanders and it is still today the symbol of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. One can follow the Trail of the Caribou and the story of the regiment's battles as there is a full-size bronze Caribou Monument featured at each battle site. Together they represent some of the most important moments in Newfoundland's First World War experience and these statues are erected in France and Belgium.

Now picture a small battlefield, one no longer than a football field, and think about a trench full of young anxious soldiers in one end. This was where the Royal Newfoundland Regiment found itself in Beaumont-Hamel, France, on the morning of July 1, 1916. At 8.45 a.m., the order was issued to "go over the top" and advance on German Forces who were well prepared not more than 100 yards away. They had been there for months in preparation. The losses sustained were staggering and of the roughly 800 Newfoundlanders who went into battle that morning, only 68 were able to answer the roll call the next day, with more than 700 killed, wounded or missing. We lost a whole generation of our youth.

Therefore, when we stand and lay the wreaths at the plaques on July 1, we think of them all, but especially the 25 members of our Kirk congregation who died in the first war, and the 24 members lost from the Newfoundland Highlanders, not all of whom came from our Kirk. In the front vestibule, we honour the eight members from



Laying the wreath at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newfoundland.

the congregation who fell in the Second World War. There are very few veterans left to lay the wreaths, but the service has equally great meaning when you watch the youth lay the wreaths, for they know that some of those engraved in bronze before them were not much older than they are. On July 1, we all wear Forget-Me-Nots.

Yes, July 1 is different in Newfoundland and Labrador as commemorative wreaths are placed at monuments throughout the province at 11 a.m. Then, in the afternoon, the flags return to full mast, and the Canada Day festivities get underway.

Service of Celebration and Reflection for Graduates

By Nancy Harvey, Summerside
Presbyterian Church in P.E.I.

When the Rev. Brad Blaikie, minister of Summerside Presbyterian Church in Summerside, P.E.I., learned that the local high school would not be having an invocation prayer during this year's graduation ceremony, he and the Session of SPC decided to find an alternative to offer to the graduates and the community.

The church has lasting connections with the high school, in part because it is located right behind the school and has a strong relationship with the students. Many of the students have come to the church for

the free Kraft Dinner lunch on Thursdays during their three years at the school. As well, the church is listed as the school's safe place in case of emergency. The Rev. Blaikie stated, "When people ask where our church is, I say 'behind the high school.' And, while I mean it literally, it also means that we want to support them and be behind them."

A church service was organized with a focus on celebrating and praying for graduates. As well, the church partnered with the Canadian Bible Society to present a Bible to each graduate who attended. To complete the celebration, there was cake (of course!) and a time of fellowship.



High school graduates at Summerside Presbyterian Church, P.E.I.

NEWS

St. Columba Celebrates 200th Anniversary

By Evelyn Westgate, St. Columba Presbyterian Church in Kirk Hill, Ont.

St. Columba Presbyterian Church in Kirk Hill, Ont., celebrated the 200th anniversary of its founding on June 2, 2019, with an old-fashioned service and the book launch and dedication of *St. Columba Presbyterian Church: Celebrating 200 Years, 1819–2019*.

It was in 1794 when the first Presbyterians who came from Glenelg, Scotland, settled in the Township of Lochiel. The congregation was formed in 1819. Shortly after the arrival of the Rev. John McLaurin in 1820, a wooden church named the Lochiel Church of Scotland was erected. In 1862, the planning began for a new stone edifice, which was dedicated in 1869 and renamed St. Columba Church. Although The Presbyterian Church in Canada was formed in 1875, it was not until 1911 that St. Columba decided to become part of the national church. St. Columba was the second-last church in Canada to secede from the Established Church of Scotland.

For the special service on June 2, the church was decorated with various tartans in keeping with the strong Scottish heritage in the area. Historical artifacts, loaned by church members, and early church documents were on display. Individuals dressed in period costume added to the ambience of bygone days. On view at the front of the church and set on an easel was a beautiful oil painting of St. Columba Church painted in 1947 by Stuart McCormick.

The Rev. Jim Ferrier, Interim Moderator, brought greetings and conducted the service. The guest speaker was the Rev. Jean Franklin Harms, who de-

livered the Message: “I Will Build My Church.” She attended St. Columba in her formative years and now lives in Hamilton, Ont. Former student minister at St. Columba during the period 1960–1963, the Rev. Leo Hughes offered Prayers of Adoration and Confession. In keeping with the tradition of the congregation’s forefathers, people stood to pray and stayed seated to sing, and several of the hymns were without accompaniment. Psalm 23 was sung in Gaelic with the congregation echoing the words of precentor Darrel MacLeod, while Donaldson MacLeod said the Lord’s Prayer in Gaelic.

The anniversary book *St. Columba Presbyterian Church, Kirk Hill, Celebrating 200 Years: 1819–2019* was then presented by Audrey Nixon Crawford, chair of the book committee. This hardcover commemorative book illustrates the important events in the church’s history and includes information on the various organizations within the church, such as the Ladies’ Aid Society, Sunday School and Young People’s Society. It contains a list and description of In Memoriam gifts, artifacts, banners and plaques and records the names of the men and women of St. Columba who served in the First and Second World Wars. Also featured are the memories and pictures of past and present church members, some of whom are direct descendants of the original Glenelg, Scotland, settlers. The dedication reads as follows: “The past 200 years is rich with the history of our Scottish ancestors. This book is meant to be a written and visual testament to their faith and perseverance as they settled the area and developed the agricul-



St. Columba book committee members receive the first copies of the anniversary book. PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARGARET CALDBICK, GLENGARRY NEWS, ALEXANDRIA, ONT.

tural roots of the Kirk Hill community. In her book, *Up and Down the Glens*, Dorothy Dumbille wrote: ‘These Scottish people brought to their task a tenacity of purpose, a resourcefulness and courage that were rooted in deep religious faith. Loyal to their principles, they never failed in their response to duty.’ We thank God for their labours. This Book is dedicated to the men and women who have contributed to the spiritual well-being of the people who have called St. Columba home for the past two centuries. May the goodwill and fellowship of the church community continue to be enjoyed by future generations as they worship together under the Gaelic words *Tigh Dhe* (House of God).”

An “international link” was formed as the congregation welcomed Jean Macrae who travelled all the way from Glenelg, Scotland, to attend the event. It was through researching a former Glenelg minister that Jean saw the notice of St. Columba’s 200th anniversary celebration and “kinda invited herself.” She had visited St. Columba some 54 years ago. Sporting a white cotton bonnet and tartan shawl, Jean gave an interesting talk about the Parish of Glenelg. She joked that she hoped it wasn’t her who brought a Highland Scottish mist to the celebra-

tion. The drizzle mattered little to the large gathering seated in their warm pews other than to cancel a planned group photo on the church’s steps after the service.

The service was a music-filled affair, featuring the Campbell Trio—Gabrielle and her talented children Rachel and Noël—who brought a gasp of appreciation and an uttered “Wow!” at the close of their beautiful rendering of the hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.” A highlight was Bill Connors’ accompaniment on the church’s antique reed organ to “Blest Be the Tie That Binds.”

After the service, the membership headed through the rain and across the lawn to a large tent, where tables and chairs seated the several hundred people attending the anniversary lunch that consisted of a long banquet table covered in sandwiches, vegetable platters, dainties, desserts and a 200th anniversary cake. Adding to the festive atmosphere were the sounds of the pipes and drums of the Kirk Hill pipe band, descendants of the original settlers, who gallantly played in the rain. The crowd then returned to the sanctuary to enjoy an hour-long splendid performance by the Campbells. To end this memorable day, a slideshow of colourful photos collected from over the years was presented.



Here it is! Audrey Nixon Crawford, chair of the St. Columba book committee, presents the anniversary book, *St. Columba Presbyterian Church, Kirk Hill, Celebrating 200 Years: 1819–2019*.

Two earlier bicentennial events included a visit on May 12 from the Rev. Daniel Cho, Moderator of the 144th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and a sold-out Victorian Tea and Fashion Show held in the Dalkeith Recreation Hall on May 18.

To complete the 2019 celebrations, the ever-popular Kirkin’ o’ the Tartan took place August 4, Memorial Sunday was observed on August 11, and a Gospel Choir featuring Concession 23 is slated for October 27.

Nominate a Presbyterian Woman of Faith

By Liz Brewer,
Ministry and Church Vocations

The Presbyterian Woman of Faith Awards (WOFA) will again be presented at the National Presbyterian Women’s Gathering in May 2020. Nine women have received this award at previous Women’s Gatherings and have shared their stories of ministry. The award has been given to faithful workers in their congregations, to women who engaged in a special project or unique ministry and to women

for lifetime achievements.

All of the recipients of the award were nominated by the people of The Presbyterian Church in Canada—Sessions, presbyteries, the Women’s Missionary Society, the Atlantic Mission Society, various groups and organizations within the church.

Once again, we need nominations to honour three new award winners at the 2020 Women’s Gathering. The award is open to all women of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Think about women who deserve to receive

this award and nominate them. Also, consider nominating a younger woman! Decide which category best fits your nominee. The three categories are: Faithful Service, Specific Accomplishment and Lifetime of Achievement.

Details outlining conditions for nomination, the nomination application and other information are all available on the website at presbyterian.ca/wofa, or by email to wofa@presbyterian.ca. The committee will receive nominations until Nov. 30, 2019.



NEWS



(Left to right): The Rev. Dr. Terry Hibbert, Nancy Hibbert, Linda Inglis, the Rev. Dr. Glenn Inglis, the Rev. Betty McLagan, the Rev. Dennis Howard, the Rev. John Calvin Rhoad, Bunny Rhoad, Carol Garvin, the Rev. Bob Garvin.

Forty Years in Langley, B.C.

By Marianne Lazaro,
*Langley Presbyterian Church in
 Langley, B.C., 40th Anniversary Chair*

It was a joyous day! On November 18, 2018, Langley Presbyterian Church (LPC) held a special worship service and luncheon to celebrate our 40th anniversary. A reunion of former ministers and others who were part of LPC throughout the years joined us. Festivities included choir anthems, a sermon on grateful remembrance, displays, speeches and tributes, a luncheon, cake cutting, the LPC timeline and the LPC's 40th slideshow.

Special guests included former

ministers and their partners: the Rev. John Rhoad and Bunny, the Rev. Dr. Glenn Inglis and Linda, the Rev. Bob Garvin and Carol, the Rev. Dr. Terry Hibbert and Nancy, the Rev. Betty McLagan, and the Rev. Dennis Howard. The Rev. Bruce Cairnie, his wife, Beth, and family sent their wishes to LPC via e-mail, which was read to the congregation at the start of the service.

The worship service sermon by the Rev. Dennis Howard was entitled "The Anniversary of Your Departure from Egypt" found in Deuteronomy 16:1-8. He spoke of the celebration as a time to engage in remembering "God's past blessings, and working

with God into the future God holds for us." The LPC choir sang two anthems, "Here in the House of the Lord" and "Give Thanks" during the service. The Rev. John Calvin Rhoad, LPC's first minister, spoke of LPC's 40-year history in his comments during the service. The bulletin included the LPC timeline, mission statement, purpose and the list of ministers from 1977 to present.

The luncheon and program in the main hall included trays of sandwiches, croissants, fruits and vegetables, with baked goods provided by church volunteers. A special "LPC's 40th Anniversary" cake was displayed on a table together with a floral arrangement.

A display table of LPC archives was set up in the main hall with photos of all LPC ministers, several photo albums and other historical documents. An open mic time was held and several people shared personal stories and tributes, or reminisced about LPC's history. The choir sang another anthem, "Bless This House," during the luncheon. The cake-cutting ceremony was performed by our first minister, the Rev. John Calvin Rhoad, and our current minister, the Rev. Dennis Howard.

Thanks to many members who worked behind the scenes to make this a very special day. A very big thank you to the LPC's 40th committee members, for their work on compiling the slideshow, for the coordination of catering, and so many other details to make this a joyous day!

View our LPC timeline and photos at: langleypresbyterian.ca/welcome/about



The Langley Presbyterian Church choir.

Two Honorary Doctorates

**The Rev. Susan Shaffer and
 the Rev. Dr. Paul McLean**

Presbyterian College in Montreal recently announced that the degree Doctor of Divinity (*honoris causa*) has been conferred upon the Rev. Susan Shaffer. Susan has served faithfully in pastoral ministry within The Presbyterian Church in Canada and has also been active in educational ministry within the church.

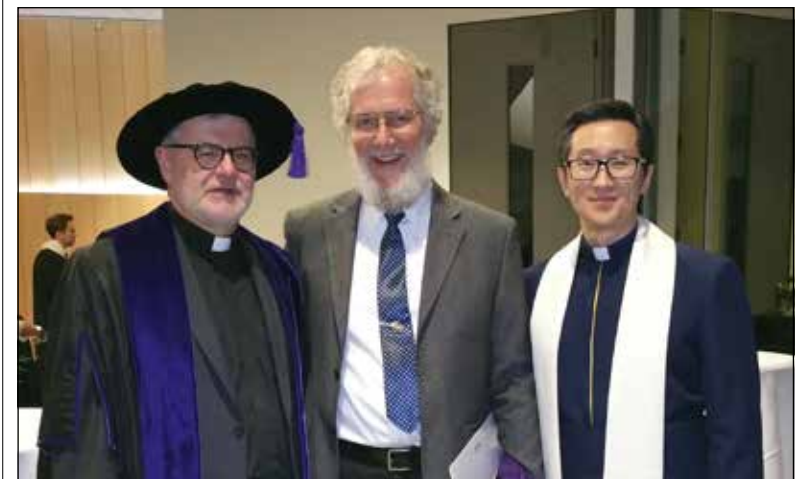
She was especially recognized for her faithful and careful service within the wider denomination over many years. Since 1997, Susan has served as Associate Secretary, Ministry and Church Vocations, and has undertaken this work prayerfully, diligently and with a deep commitment to the well-being of the church and to those who serve within it. The convocation was held in Montreal on Thursday, May 9, 2019, at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul.



The Rev. Susan Shaffer (left) with the Rev. Dr. Dale Woods from Presbyterian College.

The Board of Governors of Knox College is pleased to announce that the degree Doctor of Divinity (*honoris causa*) has been conferred upon the Rev. Dr. Paul McLean in recognition of outstanding service in the completed and ongoing work of Bible translation, together with the translation teams of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT).

In conferring this degree, Knox College lifts up the partnership between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in Bible translation, especially the work of the translation teams among Taiwan's Hakka people and Taiwan's Indigenous peoples. The degree was conferred at the 175th Convocation on May 8, 2019.



The Rev. Dr. Paul McLean (centre) with the Rev. Dr. John Vissers of Knox College (left) and the Rev. Daniel Cho.

A full year's worth of PCC bulletin covers
presbyterian.ca/bulletins

 The Presbyterian Church in Canada

REFLECTIONS



A Sliver of Silver

By Patricia Schneider,
elder at Forbes Presbyterian Church
in Grande Prairie, Alta.

I was recently dusting off some furniture and found a stray strand of hair clinging to one of the chairs in the room. I went to pull it off and then realized that the sun was shining on it and the whole length of it was reflecting the sun's rays. Such a thin bit of silver but God was using it to reflect God's glory.

It made my day. As a senior in my new residence, I often feel rather useless. At one time I had a house, a yard, a husband and children to look after. Now the girls are gone, the house is gone, my husband is gone, and all I have are the memories.

Then I thought about that tiny sliver of silver. Such a tiny bit of nothing, not even contributing any longer to a head of hair, yet God had chosen it to reflect this glory.

Somehow it gave me a lift and that lift has helped carry me along. I thought of the gospel song, "Love Lifted Me," and it seemed to speak to me.

I smiled as I saw two little girls wander into the back garden with their great-grandma. They were admiring the flowers, especially the big pink peonies. "I have a loonie and a dime, can I buy one?" the younger asked me. Not being sure of what to say, I checked with the office. "She can have one," I was told by the lady there and she was amused and seemed delighted that the girl had offered to pay. Here was an example of appreciation of beauty by a small child and also the message that God gives us so much, only asking for our love and thanks in return.

So whether it is a bit of silver hair, or a pink peony, God can use all of creation to reflect back his love to all of his children...both the young and the old.

"The French Connexion": A Pastoral Visit and Missionary Outreach in France

The Rev. Daniel H. Forget recently retired from the Canadian Armed Forces after serving eight years as a chaplain

Early in December 2018, I was invited by the Session of l'Église Protestante Unie du Pays d'Arles in southern France to provide pastoral care to this community of faith who have been without a minister since 2016. This parish is comprised of three congregations. The main congregation is located in the City of Arles; the other two are in Mouries and in Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône. This parish is part of l'Église Protestante Unie de France, formally named l'Église Réformée de France.

This visit was to provide pastoral care and worship services during the Lenten Season and the Holy Week leading to Easter Sunday. In fact, it was missionary outreach aspiring to revitalise the parish. The parish provided accommodation in its manse and facilitated local transportation during our journey. International flights, medical insurances, food, incidentals, etc., were our own expenses.

My wife, Lucie, and I give thanks to God for the privilege, which was ours, from February 28 to April 30 of this year, to provide pastoral ministry to this faith community. The parish impressed us with its "Temple" located in the heart of the city of Arles. Yes, Protestant churches in southern France are referred to as temples. We were most fascinated with this parish's strategic location, which offers great potential to impact the citizens of this city with the gospel. Much more than church dust falling from the columns of the temple, we found living stones in its sanctuary: a warm and welcoming people. It is certainly an aging parish, but also a community of faith on a journey to becoming what God intends it to be. I say, "becoming" because we are always in the process of transformation. It is important for us to continually reform ourselves in order to build the Church of Christ for the glory of God.

Without listing all our activities, let me just share briefly the following. There is little doubt that worship services are opportunities to hear God's Word proclaimed and made relevant in order to nourish our faith for daily living. Throughout our pastoral visit, I presided over all worship services, including Holy Week. It was a joy to

provide Bible studies, to make pastoral visits, to participate in the choir rehearsals; and of course, to attend Session meetings. I had the great pleasure of sharing music ministry by presenting three recitals in the temples of Arles, Beaucaire-Tarascon and Mouries.

In the last twenty years of my pastoral ministry within The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces, ministry was essentially done in the language of Shakespeare. *La langue de Molière*, with its various accents, seemed sweet to my ears and honey on my lips.

Southern France is a beautiful country. In our spare time we visited Arles and its surroundings, the Camargue, Mouries, Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône as well as the cities of Marseille, Nîmes and Aix-en-Provence, to name a few. We discovered the Cévennes, a symbol of Protestantism that resists the blind persecution of obscurantism. French Protestants, the Huguenots, were established in the Cévennes at the beginning of the 16th century, but were often persecuted and lacked the freedom to worship openly. The Cévennes will remain engraved in our memories so that we can share its history with Protestants in Québec and in Canada.

But it is the people we have met and not the activities and visits of the cities in themselves that constitute the legacy that the people of Arles give us. Lucie and I were accepted as members of their family during our stay. We were greeted in homes with courtesy, sharing delicious Provençal meals, sharing our common faith.

Oh yes, I almost forgot. From the manse, on the third floor of the temple, we were in the best location to contemplate "la Ferie de Pâques," one of the greatest events of the year in Arles. It attracts more than 500,000 people during those four days. On the Boulevard des Lices (where the temple is located), we can see beautiful horses and bulls from the Camargue. Numerous *abrivado* and *bandido* races that consist of letting the bulls in the closed streets of the city, providing spectators with a tremendous show. All over the city, people gather in the streets to dance with moving orchestras (called *peñas*) and concerts.

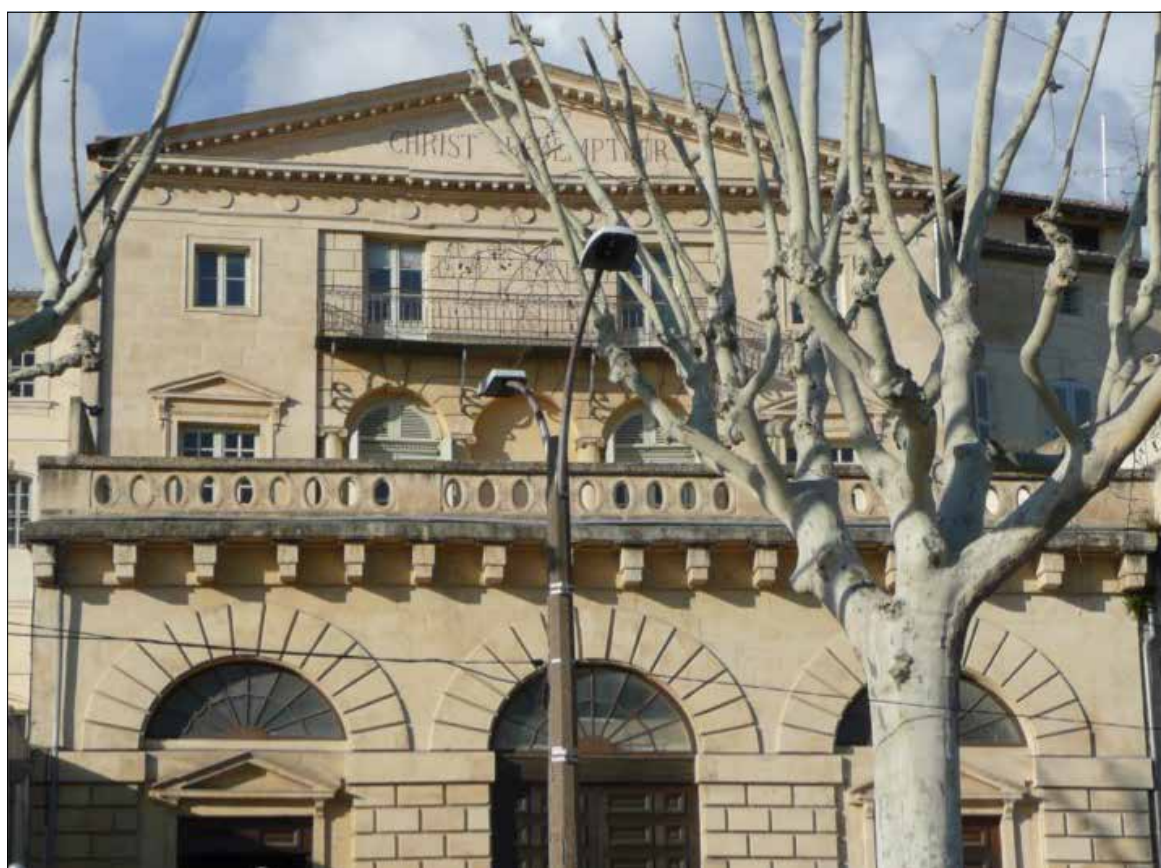
We came to Arles without any special expectation but to melt into the people's journey of faith in order to serve the cause of the One who called us. This faith community will have left an indelible mark in our hearts. We have learned to know



The Rev. Daniel Forget preaching the Word of God.

them and appreciate their commitment to the values of the Reformed faith. These values find their sources in our relationship with God and our affection for the teachings of Christ incarnated in each and every one of us to carry the Gospel. After experiencing the joy of being in their presence, we now live the absence, the pain of being apart. However, we know that the people we met are in good hands, for God is with them.

Once one is called to serve, one always wants to serve the cause of Christ's kingdom. That is why I continue to search God's will and discernment for the future of my pastoral ministry within the francophone milieu in Canada or elsewhere.



The Protestant church of Arles (Le temple protestant d'Arles, dit La Rotonde d'Arles), is a Protestant (Reformed) place of worship located at 9 rue de la Rotonde in Arles, Bouches-du-Rhône, France. The parish is attached to l'Église protestante unie de France.

REFLECTIONS

No More



The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls monument at the Forks in Winnipeg.

By Vivian Ketchum, originating from Wauzhushk Onigum Nation of Northern Ontario and now a member of Place of Hope Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Man.

Here is to hoping that ALL the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) recommendations are carried out in a timely fashion. That the federal government carries them out as promised. (Visit mmiwg-ffada.ca to learn more.)

As a photographer, I don't want to be taking any more pictures of families at vigils. Their private grief out in the open for the public to view. I don't want to hear a mother's wailing of her loss as she stands by her daughter's vigil. I don't want to see a mother's children putting flowers in that circle of candles.

As a writer, I don't want to have to find the words to describe the emotions of losing a mother, daughter or child to violence by a family member. As I stand at yet another vigil of a missing and murdered woman, the beating of the drums resonates the grief of yet another family.

As a reader of the media, I don't want to be reading any more stories of a woman gone missing. Or how she was described by how she lived or what she did by the justice system. No more cruel words of drug use or of prostitution to describe the women. No more seeing of pictures of body parts in jars. What I hope for the future is a more humane justice system for the families.

I do consider myself a social activist. I don't only attend vigils or marches to highlight a social issue, I



am a grassroots member in the community. I have sat with other grassroots members and heard their stories of loss and emotional pain. Their stories often begin with words of: she didn't come home that night, or I began phoning around for her. I tried reporting her missing. The beginning of their nightmares of loss or missing loved ones.

I don't want to be putting up posters of the missing or taking down posters in my community. I don't want to be lighting candles at vigils. I don't want to be holding a grieving mother in my arms as she stands by a vigil of her daughter. Sharing my tears with the community. Sharing my anger of the injustice of it all.

If the recommendations of the MMIWG are carried as planned, there will be less of these activities and more hope for the future.

No more Stolen Sisters.

A Biblical Look at the Environment

By Dr. Robert "Roy" M. Strang, member of Fairview Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, B.C.

We are called to think about our collective stewardship of the God-given creation we share.

Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it." To me, this verse says that all of the world's natural resources come from God and are not ours to exploit, mismanage or despoil, but that they belong to our Lord.

In Colossians 1:16, Paul writes that, "For in [Jesus] all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him." In Genesis 2:15 we read that God took the man into the Garden of Eden "to till it and keep it." (Some translations use "tend" instead of "keep.") The Hebrew word for "keep" is "shamar," which implies a loving, caring type of keeping and it appears too in the Aaronic Blessing, "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24–25). In other words, it's our responsibility to look after, to care for, to tend the world we live in. Having dominion over it does not confer licence to dominate, control or exploit, it means exercising responsible management as we're told in Genesis 1:28 to "replenish the earth." Because, as Gen 1:31 says, "God saw everything that He had made and, indeed, it was very good."

If that scale is too large to con-

template, bring it down to the local level. We're in a position analogous to a neighbour who agrees to mow the lawn and water the plants while those next door are on vacation, or a sibling who looks after a family member's aquarium while they are away at camp. That's almost a case of *reductio ad absurdum*, but I hope it makes the point: we are tenants or caretakers, not owners. We have no proprietary rights.

Endless are the ways in which the world is being damaged, often unintentionally, too often in ignorance and sometimes for short-term gain. I don't believe anyone intended that the Atlantic cod-fishery should collapse, but it did; we're still wrestling with the fate of Pacific salmon stocks and trying to ascertain what influences are at work; conversion of pristine complex Indonesian forest to palm oil plantations is extensive, with serious adverse consequences. These are just three examples among many.

Recall the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19–31. The rich man did nothing to help poor Lazarus in life and so, in death, he appealed in vain for Abraham to enable Lazarus to bring him relief. How will we rate when we're called to account for our selfishly profligate use of natural resources? We readily burn fossil fuels and complain about the price more than trying to limit use; how does that match against the African women who collect plastic scraps for fuel and risk dying from resultant toxic fumes because fuel wood is so hard to come by?

When we waste water by washing down driveways, apply it for cosmetic reasons to lawns or fairways, or render it unusable by pollution, do we think of the women and children who must walk miles for their meagre supply?

We are either complacent or lazy when it comes to linking cause and effect. For example, before a factory can be built to produce a saleable product and incidentally provide employment, land has to be cleared, which destroys habitat; the surroundings are paved, which means water runs off carrying pollutants into streams; metal and concrete are used in construction, but these materials are dug from the earth, causing further habitat damage, and so the story goes on. Now, I'm not saying don't build a factory, but when you do, recognize all of the long-term, sometimes hidden or unexpected fiscal and environmental impacts and costs, and compare those costs to any environmental harm—is it good stewardship? Be aware of the law of unexpected consequences. If there is harm, how can it be minimized or mitigated?

This is the kind of environmental stewardship the Lord requires of us. It's not just an uncritical "green" approach, it's an obligation laid on us if we are serious about Jesus' instructions. If we fail, there's a real possibility that, in practical terms, there will eventually come a time when the earth will no longer be able to sustain our present comfortable lifestyle and, theologically, we'll be answerable to our creator.



JUST WONDERING



Submit your questions to
connection@presbyterian.ca

I have heard that ministers will be able to exercise liberty of conscience if the proposed changes to the church's understanding of marriage is adopted. What is liberty of conscience in the PCC?

Answered by the Rev. Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk, and the Rev. Don Muir, General Assembly Office

Conscience is sometimes defined as a personal awareness of right and wrong that you use to guide your actions to do right.

Remember Jiminy Cricket's song to Pinocchio when he was learning how to be a real boy: "And always let your conscience be your guide." Pinocchio was learning to become human, to take responsibility for himself and his actions.

When the General Assembly uses the language of granting "liberty of conscience and action," the church seeks to create space for respecting differences in theological views and how they are lived out.

Liberty of conscience in the Westminster Confession of Faith

The Westminster Confession of Faith, in chapter 20, provides what can be said to be the classic Reformed delineation of liberty of conscience: God alone is the Lord of the conscience (XX.II).

Influenced by Puritan and covenant theology of the day, the Westminster Confession of Faith was drawn up over five years preceding 1646 to be a confession of the Church of England. It later became a subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland. The Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted it in 1875 as part of our Basis of Union and as our principal subordinate standard.

Much of the reason for including liberty of conscience in the Westminster Confession of Faith had to do with the relationship between church and state. There was a "state" church and a "free" church and both needed to determine how much influence church and state could rightly have on each other.

In our Basis of Union of 1875 (Book of Forms 442.2), liberty of conscience was granted with respect to the authority of the state over the church. This was reflected in our ordination vows as late as 1954, which state that:

... nothing in the ... Confession or Catechisms regarding the power and duty of the civil magistrate

shall be held to sanction any principles or views inconsistent with full liberty of conscience on matters of religion (Book of Forms 1954, section 406.2).

A few years later, The Presbyterian Church in Canada granted liberty of opinion on section XXIV.4 of the Westminster Confession of Faith that states a person may not marry any of their spouse's family members nearer in blood than they may marry of their own (see Book of Forms 445.1). Here, the Westminster Confession of Faith is saying, for example, that if a spouse dies, the survivor may not marry that person's brother or sister. Our church grants liberty of opinion on that point.

Today, ministers and elders are expected to uphold the doctrine found in our subordinate standards "under the continual illumination and correction of the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures" (Book of Forms, section 447.2, 449.2). Cases of liberty of conscience (or opinion) have, in our church, been used very rarely to accommodate differences.

While chapter 20 states that God alone is Lord of the conscience, it recognizes that people, being human after all, sometimes adopt doctrines and commandments that might be contrary to God's word. It's possible for us, and others, to misunderstand or misinterpret God's word and will. Because of that possibility, nothing should interfere with an individual's liberty to align their conscience with God's word and will.

This does not mean we can believe whatever we want. It is quite the opposite. We are expected to believe and act according to God's word and God's will. Our conscience should help us to do that. Liberty of conscience is the term used to describe the importance of not interfering with that expectation.

Paragraph three of the same chapter (XX.III) drives this home (and wades into the realm of liberty of action) by stating that if anyone, claiming liberty of conscience, "practices any sin, or cherishes any lust," liberty of conscience is destroyed. There is a limit to our liberty of conscience, especially when it leads to what is damaging or contrary to God's will.

This raises the question about what is the correct interpretation of God's will and God's word. How can we be certain to know what is correct? While this is an individual task, it is also the task of the church. Together we meet and pray and discern in churches week by week, and in colleges, councils and courts to have

conversations with and about God's word and God's will. Living Faith 5.4 provides guidance in how we are to understand and interpret the Bible. The role of the church in interpreting God's word and will is also central to this section of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The next paragraph (XX.IV) says that in addition to our liberty of conscience being subordinate to God, God's will and God's word, it should also be subordinate to "lawfully appointed powers, either ecclesiastical or civil." We understand that the church has a role in dictating, or at least guiding, our liberty of conscience.

How can this be if only God is the Lord of conscience?

The Westminster Confession of Faith says it is because this liberty is intended by God as a means for us to uphold and preserve one another in the faith, not to destroy one another. This section (XX.IV) places upon the church the obligation to put limits on practices or even opinions that might be destructive to the peace and order that Christ intends for the church.

Take the example of the doctrine of the Trinity. If a minister were to say that they no longer believed in this doctrine, the church would be quite justified in declaring that that is outside of permissible belief for a minister of our church. As ministers and elders, we cannot believe whatever want and not expect to be held accountable for it.

Liberty of conscience in the Westminster Confession of Faith presents the important Reformed principle that our conscience is something that is a gift from God, who is Lord of our whole being, including our minds. It is also a means of grace that should always be for the upbuilding of the church.

Living Faith

While Living Faith does not expressly use the language of "liberty of conscience," in various sections this subordinate standard of our church acknowledges that there will be and can be a variety of opinions among those within the church. For example, section 9.1.2 describes mission as evangelism and 9.1.3 describes it as service. While evangelism and service are often complementary ways of approaching mission, it is also true that we have the freedom to place more emphasis on one approach or the other.

If the current legislation is adopted with respect to marriage, liberty of conscience would be granted

on one line of Living Faith section 8.2.3: "Christian marriage is a union in Christ whereby a man and a woman become one in the sight of God." This section could still remain in our subordinate standard, but, as with the sections noted above on the Westminster Confession of Faith, liberty of conscience and action would be granted.

Liberty of conscience and the proposed legislation

The proposed legislation about marriage and ordination, as remitted to presbyteries under the Barrier Act, provides for specific and limited aspects of liberty of conscience that our church would allow on these subjects. This takes effect if the remits are approved through the Barrier Act process.

With respect to marriage, this means it is acceptable for our conscience to dictate that our understanding, or belief, of marriage is that it can be faithful as either (a) only between a man and a woman, or (b) between two adult persons.

With respect to the ordination of LGBTQI people to the office of teaching or ruling elder, the liberty of conscience (and action) is limited to one's participation in ordinations, inductions and installations. This means a minister would not be free to believe that the ordination of an LGBTQI colleague is invalid based on orientation, identity or relationship status. If one's conscience did not permit them to accept the understanding that faithful marriage can be between two adults of the same sex, that person is permitted to not participate in the ordination, installation or induction.

Liberty of action

The remits that our church is now considering include both liberty of conscience and action. While the Westminster Confession of Faith focuses on conscience, it does not ignore action. The guidance it gives with respect to action is that no action should lead to division in the church, or to the destruction of peace within the church.

Liberty of action – marriage

Regarding marriage, liberty of action means that no minister would be required to conduct a same-sex marriage. This is something that is also enshrined in Section 3.1 of the Civil Marriage Act, which states:

For greater certainty, no person or organization shall be deprived of any benefit, or be subject to any

obligation or sanction, under any law of the Parliament of Canada solely by reason of their exercise, in respect of marriage between persons of the same sex, of the freedom of conscience and religion guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms [Section 2 (a) or the expression of their beliefs in respect of marriage as the union of a man and woman to the exclusion of all others based on that guaranteed freedom.

Similarly, granting liberty of conscience and action to a Session means that, while no congregation would be required to host a same-sex marriage, any congregation would be free to do so. This freedom still comes with pastoral responsibility. If a same-sex couple comes to a church to request a wedding, the minister who is in a church that chooses not to host such weddings, may exercise pastoral concern by, for example, helping the couple find a nearby church that will offer the wedding.

Liberty of action – ordination, induction or installation

As described above, liberty of action is restricted to the participation in these events. It might be that the minister or elder whose conscience dictates disagreement would attend, but not participate in the laying on of hands. That person might still wish to extend the right hand of fellowship as a sign that it is just the ordination (or induction) they are absenting themselves from, but they are nonetheless wanting to express, by extending the right hand of fellowship, their support for the gospel ministry that has been affirmed in this act and they will support their colleague in this ministry.

Another minister or elder may feel that it is best to send regrets to such a meeting as a quiet way of privately expressing the freedom of action. That same minister or elder might want to make the point that they will be a supportive colleague by having lunch with the inductee, or by extending a welcoming phone call or encouraging email.

These gestures of kindness will be important in the context of liberty of conscience and action in order that the peace of the church be maintained, and support for one another as colleagues in ministry be respected. An important principle of the polity of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is that all are equal in ministry (Book of Forms section 4).

Continued on page 4



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JUST WONDERING (cont'd)

Continued from page 37

Liberty of Conscience and Action regarding the Ordination of Women (1966 – 1989)

When the ordination of women was approved in 1966, no provision for liberty of conscience or action was put in place. In the years that followed, the church lived into what it meant to be a denomination that holds as equal the role of women and men within the church.

In 1981 and 1982, the General Assembly considered reports (e.g., A&P 1982 p. 506–7) that wrestled with the apparent conflict between the authority of God over the conscience and the authority of the church. A Declaratory Act was added to the ordination vows that provided for “freedom of belief but not freedom of action.” Active participation at the ordination of women was made a requirement. At the same time, presbyteries were called upon to deal with cases of conscience with pastoral

care and concern for the unity of the whole church.

Then in 1989, another Declaratory Act was adopted and resulted in what is currently section 11.2 in the Book of Forms. This replaced the 1982 Declaratory Act that was applied to the ordination vows.

11.2 The following Declaratory Act was adopted by the 1989 General Assembly and ordered inserted in the Book of Forms (A&P 1981, p. 90; A&P 1989, p. 271, 65): By virtue of their ordination vows, all ministers and elders are obliged to exercise full ministry including, among other things, active participation in the ordination of candidates to the eldership and to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. Though presbyteries have no authority to grant permission to disobey church law and doctrine, yet they are enjoined to deal with cases of conscience on any question with pastoral care and understanding

for the parties involved, with concern and sensitivity for the peace and unity of the whole church.

The intent of this section is that all ministers and elders are expected to participate in all ordinations, including those of women.

Section 11.2 means that freedom of action regarding ordinations was removed, and freedom of conscience, while still acknowledged, is conditioned by the obligation of presbyteries to obey church law and doctrine (including the ordination of women). Pastoral care, understanding and the peace and unity of the whole church are to be the guiding principles in dealing with cases of conscience.

If the current remits before the church are approved, a note could be added to the Book of Forms referencing liberty of conscience and action related to marriage and the ordination of LGBTQI people.

I've been hearing a lot about the Barrier Act. Can you tell me what it is and why it's important?

Answered by the Rev. Don Muir,
General Assembly Office

The Barrier Act is a decision-making process of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is used when changes to the law or doctrine of the church are proposed. It requires the agreement of two General Assemblies and, between the Assemblies, the approval from a majority of presbyteries (whose membership represents a majority of all those on the constituent rolls of the presbyteries) before the proposed change can be made. Here is an example of how the Barrier Act functions.

Step 1: The 2019 General Assembly adopted a recommendation to amend how Term Service for Eldership works and to send the legislation to presbyteries for their consideration. This is called a remit.

Step 2: As presbyteries meet during the remainder of 2019 and into 2020, each one is expected to approve or disapprove the remit and to

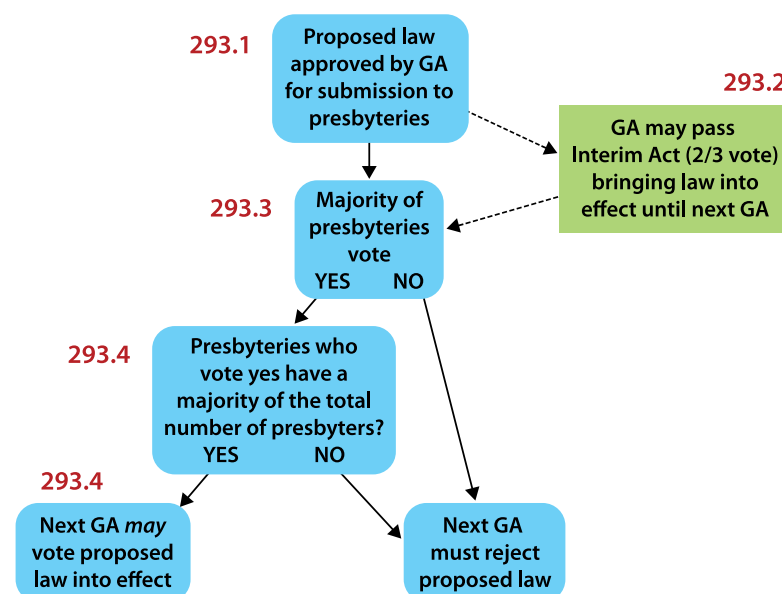
let the General Assembly Office know its decision by April 1, 2020.

Step 3: If the majority, as described above, approves the remit, it will be placed before the 2020 Assembly where it can be adopted by the church or defeated. If the presbytery majority

disapproves the remit, the 2020 General Assembly will dismiss it.

This is an important process because it compels the General Assembly to consult with the wider church before making changes to the law or doctrine of the church.

The Barrier Act (Book of Forms 293)



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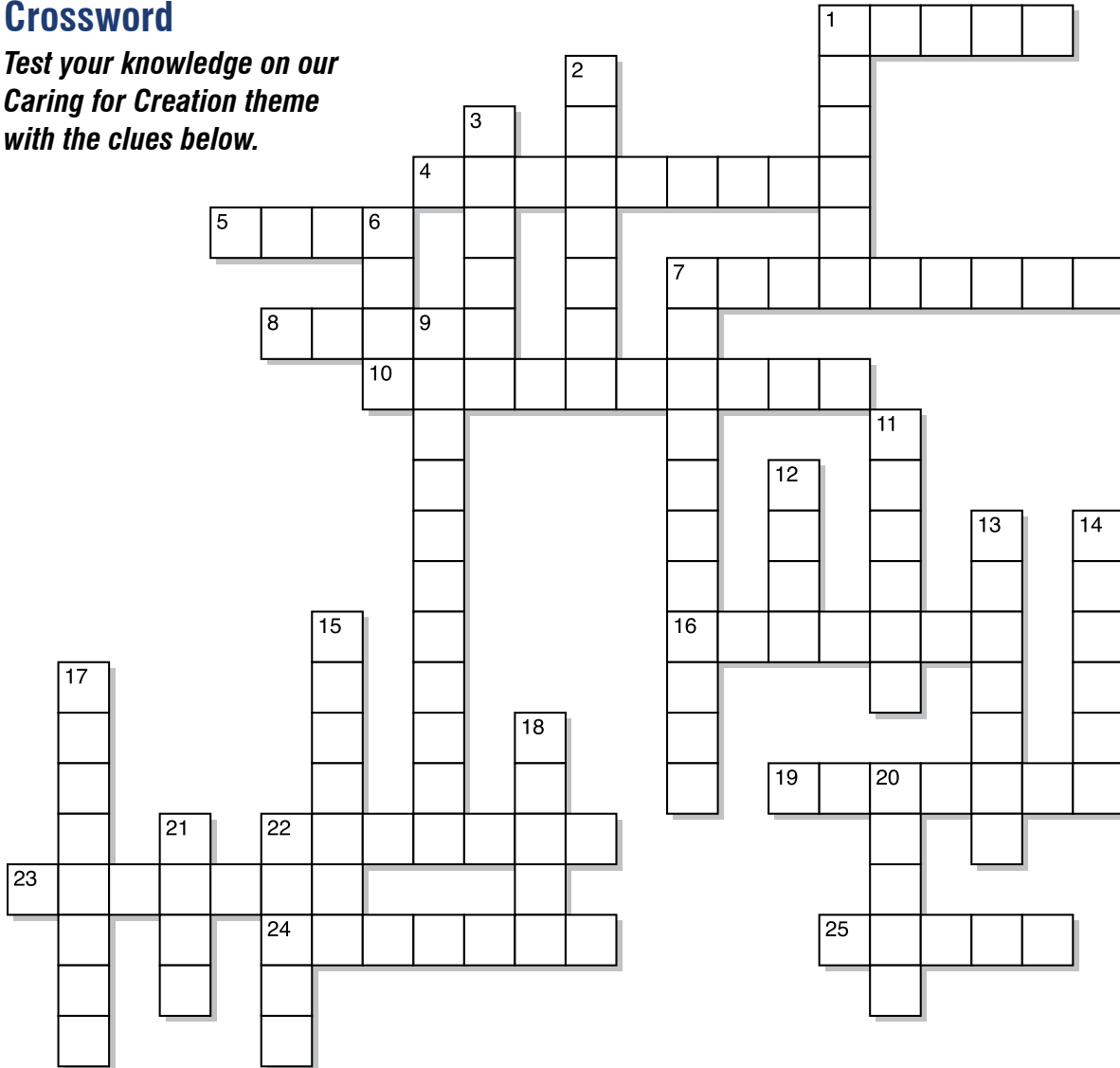


presbyterian.ca/read

SMILES

Crossword

Test your knowledge on our
Caring for Creation theme
with the clues below.



ACROSS

- The _____ sang together when God laid the cornerstone of earth, according to Job 38:7.
- Name of sea creature that could be caught on a hook in Psalm 74:14.
- God is referred to by this honorific title in place of God's name in the creation story in Genesis 2.
- A biological community of interacting organisms and the physical environment in which they live.
- The first bird Noah sends out from the ark.
- According to the World Wildlife Fund, the conservation status of blue whales, chimpanzees and Malayan tigers are all _____.
- Decayed organic material used as a plant fertilizer.
- To reuse material but make it into something of higher quality.
- In Jesus' parable the kingdom of heaven is like a _____ seed, which, though it is the smallest of all seeds, becomes a tree.
- The natural home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism.
- Convert waste into reusable material.
- This covers 71% of the earth's surface.

DOWN

- "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the _____ will cry out" (Luke 19:40).
- In the King James Version of the Bible, the wild ox referred to in Numbers 23:22 is called a _____.
- In Genesis 1, the sky was created on the _____ day.
- The second bird Noah sends out from the ark.
- Save _____ in your house by changing to compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- The surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal or plant lives or functions.
- Gaylord _____ is the founder of Earth Day, which began in 1970.
- First human whose name is associated with "earth."
- Passenger pigeons, Tasmanian tigers and the Dodo are all species that are _____.
- The gardener volunteers put _____ around the tree in the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree and let the tree remain for a year before cutting it down (Luke 13).
- To contaminate with harmful and poisonous substances.
- One of the constellations of stars mentioned in Job 9:9.
- What month is Earth Day in?
- According to Psalm 92, "The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like the _____ in Lebanon."
- In Psalm 98, the hills _____ for joy at the coming of the Lord.
- In what month is World Water Day?

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

20. CEDAR	14. MANURE	9. ENVIRONMENT	2. UNICORN	25. WATER	19. UPCYCLE	7. ECOSYSTEM	5. LORD
21. SING	15. POLLUTE	11. NELSON	3. SECOND		22. MUSTARD	8. RAVEN	4. LEVIATHAN
22. MARCH	17. PLEIADES	12. ADAM	6. DOVE	DOWN	23. HABITAT	10. ENDANGERED	
	18. APRIL	13. EXTINCT	7. ELECTRICITY	1. STONES	24. RECYCLE	16. COMPOST	

FEATURE IMAGE



These beautiful stained-glass window images from Grace Presbyterian Church in St. John, N.B., by Mark Hemmings were submitted in response to the call for images of stained-glass windows from congregations. To submit photos from your congregation, visit presbyterian.ca/stained-glass.

DEATH NOTICES

Read all full obituaries online at presbyterian.ca

Ian Gordon Michie

Toronto, Ont.
Deceased June 27, 2019

The Rev. Alan Ross

Bracebridge, Ont.
Deceased May 1, 2019

The Rev. Freda MacDonald

Fonthill, Ont.
Deceased June 2, 2019

Robert Edward Carpen

Toronto, Ont.
Deceased April 27, 2019

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– Atlantic Provinces

River John, St. George's – Toney

River, St. David's (full-time minister)

– Atlantic Provinces

Cornwall, St. John's (full-time

minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Ottawa, Westminster (full-time

minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Sherbrooke, St. Andrew's (full-time

minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Barrie, St. Andrew's (full-time

minister) – CNEOB (Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda)

Grand Valley, Knox (part-time

minister) – CNEOB

Toronto, York Memorial (half-time

minister – CNEOB

London, New St. James (full-time

minister) – Southwestern Ontario

Point Edward, Point Edward

(part-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

St. Catharines, Knox (full-time

minister) – Southwestern Ontario

Kenora, First (full-time minister) –

Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Mistawasis Memorial (full-time

minister) – Saskatchewan

Abbotsford, Calvin (full-time

minister) – British Columbia

Creston, St. Stephen's (full-time

minister) – British Columbia

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