



## Side by Side with Seniors Suffering from Dementia

By Claire Huene, Side by Side  
Program Coordinator at Varsity Acres  
Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta.

Dementia is a cruel and insidious thief, silently deconstructing lives and stealing people from their loved ones, one tiny brain cell at a time. Slowly—almost imperceptibly at first—memories begin to slip away. One by one, words drop into darkness. Time collapses and expands, swirling and twisting until it becomes irrelevant. Linear thinking and the ability to reason quietly break apart, like so many puzzle pieces in a box, waiting for someone to join them together and find meaning. Familiar things become alien. Anxiety grows and gathers strength. Fear conjures distrust, and frustration erupts into anger. The physical body, once so agile and strong, becomes a betrayer: no longer able to respond, adapt or heal.

For someone with dementia, and for their family and close friends, dementia is a deep and largely private tragedy—a vortex into which all things known, loved, hoped and remembered disappear without a trace.

For Canada and for its healthcare systems, dementia is generating a tidal wave, the leading edge of which we are only beginning to perceive. In the face of this looming crisis, there is a profound need for support and informal care options within the community for individuals with dementia.

If you were to take an informal poll among your family and friends, you would probably be hard-pressed to find anyone who doesn't know someone who has been affected in

some way by dementia. It is everywhere. No one is immune, and the incidence of dementia is increasing.

According to the Alzheimer's Society of Canada, dementia is not one specific disease, but rather a name for a set of symptoms caused by a variety of diseases that affect and damage the brain. That set of symptoms may include memory loss; difficulties with thinking, language, and performing everyday activities; and changes in mood and behaviour.<sup>i</sup> Some treatable conditions may present with dementia-like symptoms and are reversible, but true dementias are progressive and irreversible.<sup>ii</sup>

This is the story of a small group of people in Calgary, Alberta, doing what they can to walk with and support those experiencing the personal tragedy of dementia, and maybe—just maybe—refining a way to affect the tidal wave of dementia that is rising among us.

Side by Side is a small-scale recreational day program for people with dementia. It is currently offered at two Presbyterian churches in Calgary, with no formal cost to attend. The program consists of a variety of activities designed to provide mental and physical stimulation and meaningful social interaction. Each participant (person with dementia) is paired one-to-one for the day with a volunteer who offers caring companionship and help with activities, as necessary. The program day runs from 9:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., making available 4.5 hours of respite time for caregivers (typically spouses or family members).

The first Side by Side program was



Participants of the Side by Side program at Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church in Calgary.



Every second week, Side by Side participants engage in some kind of arts and crafts activity. "Calgary Birdman" Andrew Stiles (pictured right) came on this day to help everyone build bluebird nest boxes.

the brainchild of the Rev. Jan Hazlett at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary. It began in October 2012 as a biweekly pilot program to minister to members of the congregation who were coping with symptoms of dementia, as well as to their caregiver family members. The program, initially coordinated by the Rev. Hazlett and supported by volunteers from the congregation, launched with a single participant. By early 2013, there were four participants, and the program was running every week. Soon after, the coordinator's role became a paid part-time position.

Inspired by a 2013 report from the Alzheimer's Society of Canada titled



"Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society," St. Andrew's applied to the national church for support of a program proposal that would see them partner with another congregation to develop a second

Side by Side program. They also proposed to document the process so that, potentially, a whole network of Side by Side programs could be created.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

# Loving These Women in Ministry!



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

In the last issue of the *Presbyterian Connection*, I shared one of my favourite ecumenical quotes from Cardinal Mercier of Malines, 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."

Over the past few months, I have had the opportunity as the 2019 Moderator to meet a variety of people. Those of you who have been following me on Facebook will know that my autumn visits have been filled with opportunities to speak with, listen to, connect with and learn about so many of our siblings in the Body of Christ. And with each meeting there has been the occasion to learn about our partners, to grow in love for them and to take steps toward greater unity in Christ.

When I returned from the Moderator's international visit to the Reformed Churches in Hungary and Romania in

September, many people asked me what the highlight of the trip had been. That was a difficult question to answer. The people were welcoming and hospitable. The bishops, ministers and lay leaders were dedicated and inspiring. The history of the countries and political issues were complex and difficult to fully understand. The challenges of deep poverty, cultural and linguistic divisions, economic migration and the churches' mission with the Roma People each added layers of complexity and much upon which to reflect.

As I thought about it, I realized that the highlight for me was the experience of meeting, and getting to know and to love the women in ministry that I encountered in Hungary and Romania. Yes, we also met some excellent male church leaders, including several bishops who greeted us warmly, and the ecumenical officers of both denominations who guided us, translated for us and provided for our practical needs in many and various ways.

But it was the women in ministry who touched my heart.

First there was Dóra Kanizsai-Nagy who coordinates the Kalunba Refugee Ministry in Budapest. I was amazed by the dedication and determination of Dóra and her small team to support and equip the vulnerable people who are trying to make a new life in Hungary after fleeing from persecution in their home countries. Given the political climate, general fear of refugees and immigrants, and lack of financial and moral support, I was touched by Dóra's personal sacrifice to stay faithful to this important work.



The Moderator (second from left) is pictured here with staff at Kalunba.

Next, we visited Samuel House in the Village of Miske, Romania, and met Csilla Bertalan. Csilla directs a Christian social ministry that supports children from poor families in a rural area. Thirty-three children from preschool to high school are assisted by her ministry, with 16 students currently living in the house throughout the week, while the rest live in the village. They are supervised by full-time caregivers from Monday to Friday and return to their families on weekends. The children are selected for the program based on need, poverty and those at risk of being put into "state care" orphanages. The non-residential students come to the house during the afternoon and are fed a healthy lunch and dinner before returning to their homes in the village.

It was clear that Csilla loves the children of Samuel House like her own children, and she works hard every day to support both the chil-

dren and their parents so that the children can receive a good education and escape poverty.

In the City of Oradea, Romania, we met the Rev. Judit Vinczéné Pálfi who is the Director of Missions for the Reformed Church of Romania. We visited some of the mission programs that she oversees, and she was excited to share with us about how she is bringing together all the diaconal ministries under one umbrella and working on connecting the ministers with one another for support, encouragement and training. In addition to her denominational role, Judit also serves as the pastor of a local congregation, where we were privileged to worship and hear her preach.

Back in Budapest, Hungary, we visited with several more women engaged in various ministries. Dia Erdélyi made a particular impression on me, especially when she introduced herself as an "ecumaniac." She was serving in the ecumenical office of the Reformed Church of Hungary, but it quickly became apparent that it was not just a job for her, but a calling. Dia grew up in an inter-church family with a mother in the Reformed Church and a father in the Greek Catholic Church, and her ecumenical family experience prompted her to work for the unity of the Christian Church. In addition to working in the ecumenical office, she also serves as an elder at a very diverse and inclusive congregation in Budapest, and as an Executive Committee member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

During our visit to Dia's congregation, we also had the pleasure of meeting Szabina Sztojka, the Student Associate Minister at the St. Columba Scottish Mission, the English-speaking congregation in Budapest. When Szabina finishes her studies, she will be the first woman with Roma ancestry to be ordained in the Reformed Church of Hungary. It was so interesting to hear about

her experiences—all the while aware that this young woman was breaking through the stained-glass ceilings of both gender and culture—and to anticipate all that God would do through her as her ministry continued.

I felt privileged to be a Canadian Presbyterian woman Moderator visiting, encouraging and learning from these inspiring women. As I got to know them, I truly began to love them and to desire unity in Christ across differences in geography, language, culture and experience.

Back home in Canada, meetings with women in ministry continued to be a part of my itinerary. Of course, I had gatherings with congregations, presbyteries and students at Knox College and the Toronto School of Theology that included a diversity of genders. And I was also an ecumenical guest at the Plenary Assembly of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, which, as you can imagine, was mostly men—Catholic Bishops.

But the women continued to encourage and inspire me. In Manitoba, I met Ruth Magnuson, the Executive Director of the Winnipeg Inner City Missions, a program that is supported through Presbyterians Sharing. Ruth introduced me to the staff and volunteers and gave me a tour through the various programs of WICM. And I was once again amazed by another woman putting her heart and soul into the work of ministry and the lives of the people with whom she ministers.

I was also able to visit the Rev. Margaret Mullin and the people of Place of Hope Presbyterian Church, the Indigenous Presbyterian congregation of Winnipeg. And finally, I was welcomed to join in meetings of the Executive of the National Indigenous Ministry Council that was meeting with PCC staff Jen de Combe (Canadian Ministries) and Allyson Carr (Justice Ministries). As these Indigenous and non-Indigenous women discussed together the sensitive and important issues around our church's response to the Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, I was honoured to be part of the conversation to listen and learn from these wise women leaders in our own denomination.

I am looking forward to many more meetings as I continue my travels as Moderator this year, and I will continue to pray that in meeting one another, we will come to know one another, and then grow to love one another as well. And I pray that God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will make us One in Christ, so that the world will believe.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY



The Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald with two members of the Atlantic Mission Society.

# Celebrating Our Mission Societies

By the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald,  
General Secretary

Attending meetings of the Atlantic Mission Society (AMS) and the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) are highlights of my year. These two remarkable groups have, for well over a century each, been transformative forces in the church by calling for us to focus on and participate in God's mission in the world. They are among the PCC's greatest treasures.

Individual members of these two groups have been among the strongest leaders in the church. As groups, they support local, national and international mission projects and encourage congregations to be more involved. The results of their prayers, studies, offerings, advocacy and projects make a real difference in the lives of students, prisoners, women, refugees, and people struggling with addictions, social stigma, literacy, discrimination and hunger.

They are so consistently effective and dedicated in their support that the WMS and AMS are known seemingly everywhere. In a small town in rural India, I met a woman who asked that I take a photo of her and her child who was wearing a vest knitted by people she knew were members of the AMS. In a remote part of Malawi, a man asked if

I knew a specific woman from the WMS who had been faithfully supporting his church and writing him encouraging messages.

The AMS and WMS are adaptable in their outlook. Over the years, their focus, purpose and activities have changed in order to meet the needs and challenges of new circumstances. Sometimes this has meant taking an unflinching look at the past and apologizing before becoming leaders with their partners to help create new and better relationships.

AMS and WMS meetings feature warm fellowship, prayer, vibrant worship and faith-formation that is relevant and reflective of solid scholarship. But the mission societies are not immune to the concerns that all North American denominations, congregations and committees have today—greater demands, dwindling finances, decreasing membership and an increase in the complexity of contexts. What makes the meetings of the WMS and AMS so remarkable is how they respond to these forces. Many of us are tempted to face these challenges with some mixture of hand-wringing, anger, disillusionment, jadedness and denial. But I don't see much of those things at mission society meetings.

I have seen the AMS move adeptly from learning about very distressing pastoral matters to enjoying

two of its members dressed up in costumes, distributing gifts, giving hugs and cheering people. The efficient treasurer of the AMS gives the clearest and most unblinking finance report I have ever heard. And then she announces that the offering will be collected while singing and acting out an amended and holy version of the "Hokey Pokey" saying, "Remember, God loves a hilarious giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

In the midst of a very difficult meeting of the WMS, the group took a break after a long period of making heart-wrenching decisions with sad implications. I expected everyone to run for coffee or something stronger to drink in order to steady themselves amid the mourning and loss of treasured things. But not these women. Instead they turned their mourning into dancing, and everyone got up and started to practice Zumba. It reminds me of the Woman of Wisdom in Proverbs who "can laugh at the times to come"; laugh not because there is anything funny but because of how confident they are in God's providence.

This is not denial, it's faith. It's a faith that's beyond mere belief and which takes root in the souls and characters of people so that they live and work with a deep sense of trust rather than fear. Faith makes its bearers fit and able to re-frame situations

so it becomes possible to respond with creativity in changing times. There is an "in spite of" aspect to faith that frees people to celebrate even in the midst of loss; to try new things, to risk falling, to fear and still keep on going in the face of pain and the unknown with hopeful enthusiasm. That is not only what faith is but what leadership looks like. The faithful leadership I have witnessed in the mission societies sits loose in the saddle and is assured by the knowledge that while the path may be rough it is possible to move ahead with confidence and hope.

It reminds me of lines from the poem "Blessing of Hope" by the United Methodist Minister, Jan Richardson: "...hope not made of wishes but of substance, ...hope that has breath and a beating heart...hope that knows how to sing when there seems little cause, ...hope that raises us from the dead—not someday but this day, every day, again and again and again."

Since 1925, the WMS has published *Glad Tidings* magazine, which supplied news, excellent liturgies and in-depth analysis of current events and theological issues. Sadly, *Glad Tidings* will cease publication at the end of the year. We are looking forward to featuring news and articles associated with the WMS in the newspaper in 2020.

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



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## FEATURE (cont'd)

# Refining a way to affect the tidal wave of dementia rising among us

Continued from page 1

The proposal was successful, and Canadian Ministries awarded a grant that would cover costs for the first year of a new Side by Side program.

Early in 2014, the Session at Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church (VAPC) in Calgary received a presbytery report about St. Andrew's seeking a ministry partner to start up a new Side by Side program. After convening a working group to study the feasibility of such an arrangement, VAPC's Session approved a recommendation to partner with St. Andrew's. In November 2014, VAPC received the promised grant monies and its Side by Side journey began!

Like the original program at St. Andrew's, VAPC's Side by Side program was set up to run for 4.5 hours, one day a week, and included snacks and a nutritious lunch. The program elements and organization were also similar: one-to-one volunteer/participant pairings and a variety of short program segments (15 minutes each), including coffee and conversation, gentle exercise, theme discussion, movement to music, worship/devotion, "brain gym-like" exercises, arts and crafts, and sing-along. A professional music therapist led a 30-minute session every second week.

The VAPC congregation stood firmly behind its Side by Side program, with many members volunteering their time. They partnered with the program participants, made generous financial contributions, and regularly responded to calls for baked goods and program resource materials. After running successfully and continuously every week for four years, however, circumstances dictated the need to re-evaluate.

Early in 2018, the coordinator (a pastoral associate) was called to another church. Several of the volunteers worked together for months to cover the tasks formerly done by the coordinator but found it time-consuming and stressful. Some of the participants were quite advanced in their disease and were becoming difficult to manage. There were not enough "sides" (volunteers who work one-to-one with participants) to cover when the "regular" volunteers were away sick or on vacation. Funds were low and new sources needed to be found. Those involved were tired and discouraged. There were concerns that the program was no longer sustainable.

The steering committee made the unprecedented decision to put the program "on hold" for two months, and then used that time to try to re-energize it. In August of 2018, they hired a new coordinator and secured

funding for another year. They revisited their mandate and set out a new statement of goals and foundational values. The steering committee developed an information sheet to be used in recruiting volunteers. They simplified the admission and discharge guidelines, established a new intake process for screening participants, re-evaluated the discharge process, and created a new set of forms to be used with each process associated with running the program.

VAPC's Side by Side program is now approaching its five-year anniversary. The steering committee still hopes to see the program spread to other churches. Toward that end, this is a good time to look back and document some key learnings.

### 1. Running a Side by Side program is a delicate balance.

- There must be "just enough" volunteers: too few and things are not adequately covered; too many and people don't have enough to do and don't feel useful.
- Scheduling needs to be flexible enough to respect the fact that volunteers have busy and interesting lives outside of their volunteer commitments.
- Monitoring the progression of the participants' dementia is essential. As their dementia worsens, they may need more care than volunteers can provide. Ultimately, some will be discharged and others will enter the program from the waiting list.
- It is critical to plan ahead and seek new sources of funding.

### 2. Many volunteers are needed to support a small number of people with dementia.

- In addition to the (paid) part-time coordinator, VAPC's Side by Side program currently has seven participants and 12 "regular" companion volunteers. There are also two back-up companions who can help in a pinch. Two volunteer pianists play for sing-along in alternate weeks, and a retired chef cooks lunch each week. There is also a pool of about 22 volunteers (some of whom are members of the congregation and others who are members of a local philanthropic club) who take turns (two to four per week) helping with coffee and snacks and laying out and clearing away lunch. VAPC's minister and pastoral associate help with the worship segment. On any given program day, about 18 volunteers are present supporting



From time-to-time, Side by Side invites special guests to visit. On this day, Lisbeth Duncan enjoys the company of a pet therapy dog from PALS (Pet Access League Society) Calgary.

the program for the benefit of its seven participants.

### 3. Volunteers are, well—volunteers!

- Working with volunteers is a joy and a privilege, because they want to be there doing something useful. At Side by Side, most of the volunteers are retired seniors because they are the ones who have time to volunteer during normal working hours. They are the perfect "staff" for the program, because they are similar in age to many of the participants. They "get" each other and easily develop high-quality companionable relationships. And they come with a lifetime's worth of incredible skills and experience that does not exist in any other population.



Seasonal celebrations tend to bring out costumes and plenty of smiles. Willie Murray and Ralph Lundberg try their hand at a game of bocce ball, hoping the luck of the Irish will be with them on this St. Patrick's Day.



A spontaneous dance between partners Bob Boutillier and Florence Tambe during afternoon sing-along. The combination of music, rhythm and singing reaches people on a deep level and is a favourite activity each week.



## FEATURE (cont'd)



Group members with their necklaces and strings of cereal during a Brain Gym session. This activity was an effective way to work on fine motor skills, while sorting and sequencing colours is excellent brain work. And it's fun too!



Every year when Stampede time rolls around in Calgary, Side by Side volunteers and participants saddle up for some cowboy fun. Sandi Churchill and Ernie Ford tried some quick-draw shooting with water pistols.

• The tricky part is that volunteers offer their time (unpaid) for their own (sometimes unspoken) reasons. And since they have no contractual obligation, they come and go as circumstances and priorities in their lives ebb and flow. Working with “senior” volunteers is a special case. Even though they are retired, they may have families who visit, grandchildren to enjoy, and time to take extended vacations. Sometimes they need to deal with their own significant health issues. A program like Side by Side needs many volunteers to ensure adequate coverage, especially when some are away or decide to leave the program.

#### 4. Dementia is complex and progressive and unpredictable.

• For participants, Side by Side is a temporary stopping place. Their disease is always progressing,

and there comes a point at which non-medically trained volunteers are no longer able to provide safe supervision. Volunteers must understand this and respect their own limitations. Assessing when a person with dementia symptoms and behaviours can vary from week to week. Discharge is a bitter pill for everyone concerned. Participants and volunteers develop friendships and become attached to each other. There are few care options available for people in the later stages of dementia and waits for placement can be long. For caregivers, the impact of losing supportive relationships and respite time after discharge is daunting.

#### 5. Funding, even when requirements are modest, is an ongoing concern.

**The Context:** Dementia is primarily a disease of the elderly, and Canada's aging population is increasing. Although a significant number of people under the age of 65 are diagnosed with dementia, the majority are over 65.<sup>iii</sup> And of those with dementia who are over the age of 65, an estimated 65% are women.<sup>iv</sup> The first of the so-called “Baby-Boom” generation turned 65 in 2011, and from that time the aging of the Canadian population and the dementia burden on Canadian society began to accelerate.<sup>v</sup>

**The Challenge:** In Canada, it is estimated that 638,000 people are currently living with dementia.<sup>vi</sup> If you include those who have mild cognitive impairment but have not been diagnosed with dementia, the number is much higher. Many more are directly and/or indirectly affected: family members, friends, professional caregivers, employers, communities and healthcare facilities of all kinds. The associated emotional and economic costs of dementia are staggering, and the need for support and accessible care options is becoming critical.

#### FOOTNOTES

- Philosophically, it is important to the churches that host Side by Side to be able to offer the program without cost to those who need it. Thanks to the generosity of the congregations and volunteers who make Side by Side happen, it is not an expensive venture, but there are modest, ongoing costs that must be met. Looking ahead to find funding cannot be neglected.

- i. <https://alzheimer.ca/en/Home/About-dementia/What-is-dementia>
- ii. <https://alzheimer.ca/en/Home/About-dementia/What-is-dementia>
- iii. Table 2c in *Prevalence and Monetary Costs of Dementia in Canada*. Toronto, Alzheimer Society of Canada, 2016
- iv. Table 2c in *Prevalence and Monetary*

- Costs of Dementia in Canada*. Toronto, Alzheimer Society of Canada, 2016
- v. *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*. Toronto, Alzheimer Society of Canada, 2013.
- vi. Table 2c in *Prevalence and Monetary Costs of Dementia in Canada*. Toronto, Alzheimer Society of Canada, 2016

Some might argue that the cost and number of people required to run a Side by Side program are not warranted for the small number of participants served. However, the benefits extend far beyond the participants to their family caregivers, to the program volunteers, to the host congregations and to the local community. For some families, the expense associated with having someone attend a private day program is prohibitive, and provincial healthcare day programs often have long waiting lists. Side by Side programs represent a different model that could become a viable community-based care option. Side by Side capitalizes on the nature and ability of churches to create and nurture community, as well as on the availability, skills, knowledge and experience of an increasingly large number of retired seniors who enjoy volunteering their time in a productive and fulfilling way.

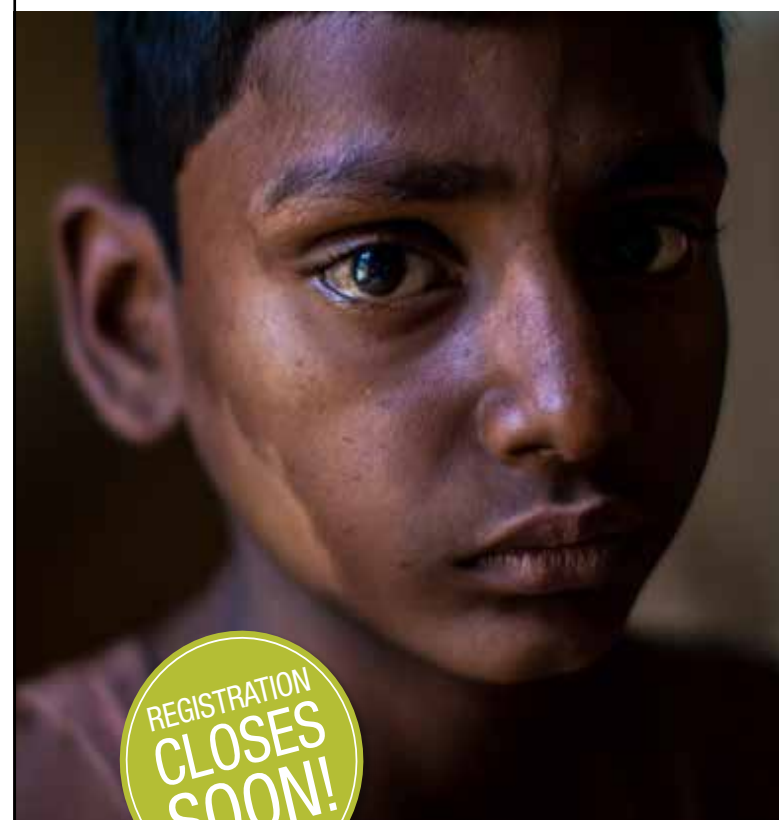
*Oh, we ain't got a barrel of money  
Maybe we're ragged and funny  
But we'll travel along, singing a song  
Side by side.*

*Don't know what's coming tomorrow  
Maybe it's trouble and sorrow  
But we'll travel the road,  
sharin' our load  
Side by side.*

(from the 1927 song, “Side by Side,” by Harry Woods)

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Clarification Needed

I read with interest the whole of *Presbyterian Connection* Fall edition 2019. Part of one paragraph in the “Just Wondering” section prompts me to ask for clarification: “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...” Would the author(s) please expand on that statement?

—Stanley Cox

The paragraph above has raised the question about the limits of liberty of conscience and action with respect to ordination. The remit dealing with ordination and the remit dealing with marriage have different descriptions of liberty of conscience and action. With respect to ordination, the remit indicates that liberty of conscience and action is related and restricted to “participation” only:

*“...with the provision that liberty of conscience and action regarding participation in ordinations, inductions and installations be granted to ministers and ruling elders.”*

That is why the Clerks of Assembly included the line in the article about a minister not being free to believe that the ordination itself is invalid. The Clerks are of the opinion that this is

a reasonable and workable approach to the issue of ordination and liberty of conscience. Disagreement with the relationship status of a candidate can be expressed by not participating in the minister’s ordination. In our view, there was never any intention in any of the decisions of the General Assembly, or for that matter, in the materials previously presented by either the Committee on Church Doctrine or the Life and Mission Agency, to suggest that any minister, or any part of our church, could consider an ordination invalid once a presbytery has completed the ordination with prayer and the laying on of hands.

It would not be workable to have some ministers refuse to accept the ordination of certain ministers or elders.

This still does not limit a minister’s liberty of conscience to disagree with the relationship status, if, for example, a minister is in a same-sex marriage.

The liberty of conscience related to marriage in the other remit is broader:

*That congregations, sessions, ruling and teaching elders be granted liberty of conscience and action on marriage.*

The Clerks believe that this will allow a minister to agree or disagree with same-sex marriage and to teach according to conscience in that regard. This implies a minister would continue, as is now the case, to be free to teach that marriage is between a man and a woman. Congregations and ministers would not be required to host or participate in



a same-sex marriage. The remit includes the freedom to hold to either of two definitions of marriage: between a man and a woman, or as a covenant relationship between two adult persons.

If a minister holds to the first definition (a man and a woman), then when it comes to ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacraments, the appropriate time a minister could choose to express a concern about the ordination would be when a call

is being considered. That minister could express the view that because the minister being considered for ordination is in a same-sex marriage, they believe the person should not be ordained. This would be based on their conscience dictating that marriage is between one man and one woman and the contention that the individual is, therefore, not suited to be ordained.

If the presbytery, by majority vote, nevertheless upheld proceeding with the ordination, the minister holding to the first definition is free to exercise their conscience on the matter by not participating in the ordination or by registering dissent. After the ordination, the minister would still not be required to accept the same-sex marriage (though one would hope that respectful and grace-filled col-

legial relationships would still be present), but the ordination, once it has taken place must be considered valid throughout our church. To do otherwise risks violating a fundamental principle of our polity that, once ordained, all are equal in power, and rule is by mutual consent (Book of Forms section 4). Every ordained minister has the right to know that their function (ordination) is held as valid throughout the church.

Of course, the article in *Presbyterian Connection* is the opinion of the Clerks of Assembly based on our best reading of the remits and our research based on the Westminster Confession and reports of the General Assembly. It is not intended to be a ruling on the matter.

—the Rev. Stephen Kendall and the Rev. Don Muir, Clerks of Assembly

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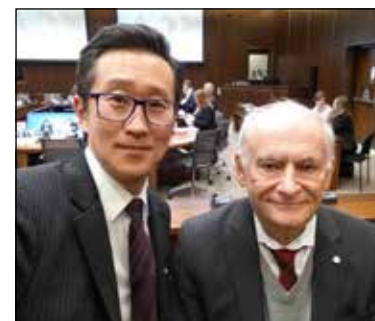
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**5** Craig  
travel

## Oops!

In the Fall 2019 issue, we incorrectly labelled the photo captions to the piece “Online Hate” by the Rev. Daniel Cho. The images should have appeared with the following captions:



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.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words



The sky opening above the Cabot Strait during a memorial service.

By John Barrett, Clerk of Session, Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I.

After seeing the article entitled "Stormy & Messy Times" (Summer edition 2019, written by the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald), I simply had to send a note along with a totally unrelated story. It is the photo accompanying this article that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up!

In October 1942, a young RCAF pilot by the name of Ft. Lt. John Hamilton Barrett was granted a several-day furlough to travel to Sydney, Nova

Scotia, for the purpose of marriage. With John being from Curling, Newfoundland, the young couple had decided that following the wedding they would travel to Curling in order to visit his parents, who were unable to attend the ceremony in Cape Breton.

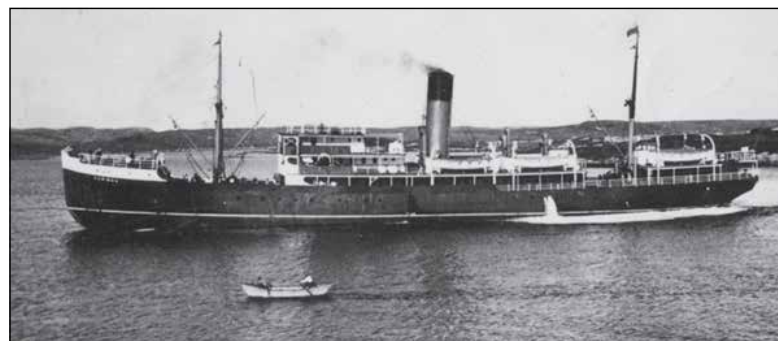
On the evening of Oct. 13, 1942, the newlyweds boarded the S.S. *Caribou* in North Sydney for the 10-hour journey to Port Aux Basque. Tragically, however, during the early hours of Oct. 14, the *Caribou* was struck by a German U-Boat torpedo and Ft. Lt. Barrett, along with 135 other passengers, perished in the cold, harsh Atlantic waters. His new wife survived.

John Barrett was my uncle.

Seventy years later, a memorial service for the lost men and women was planned in Port Aux Basque, N.L., as this is where the survivors and any recovered bodies were taken following the tragic sinking. Having never met my uncle, I felt it was important to make the trip for this special service and in his memory. I decided to take the ferry on the night of Oct. 13, just as my namesake had done seven decades before.

Shortly after boarding the massive *Marine Atlantic* ferry for this special journey, I met some naval officers in uniform who were obviously on board for the same reasons. I introduced myself, explained my reason for being there and was introduced to their coordinator, Captain John Barrett, chaplain to the military group assembled. Coincidence you might say; most certainly an incredibly eerie experience for us both.

Unknown to me, *Marine Atlantic* and the military had been planning this event for some time and there was to be a special time of remembrance at sea in the early hours of Oct. 14. At the designated time, the ship was brought to a standstill at the very location of the *Caribou's* sinking, and various wreaths were laid at sea to honour those who had been lost and never recovered.



The S.S. *Caribou*.

More amazing and moving than any of the experiences up to this point in the journey was the powerful act of nature that took place as the ship ground to a halt. The Cabot Strait in October, especially in the early hours of dawn, is a dark and dismal expanse of black water and overcast sky...that is, until the ceremony honouring the fallen began. This actual photo (which I took at that very moment), was like a scene from the *Ten Commandments*. A tiny portion of the sky opened up to reveal

golden rays of brilliance that poured down on the very resting place of the S.S. *Caribou*.

For some, credit for this special life moment might be attributed to Mother Nature or simply to a high-pressure weather system coming in from the north. And yet for others, Presbyterians perhaps, our Lord was blessing those gathered above and below the surface in such a powerful way that we could never ignore God's strength and love for us all.

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## STEWARDSHIP

# More Churches Now Offer eGiving

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.

Cashless living is becoming a reality for more and more Canadians. Many will continue to give cash but, for visitors without cash to be able to give, churches need to implement electronic giving practices. As an added benefit, electronic giving can eliminate time spent counting money and handling cheques and reduce the risk of theft.

## Easy to give through PAR

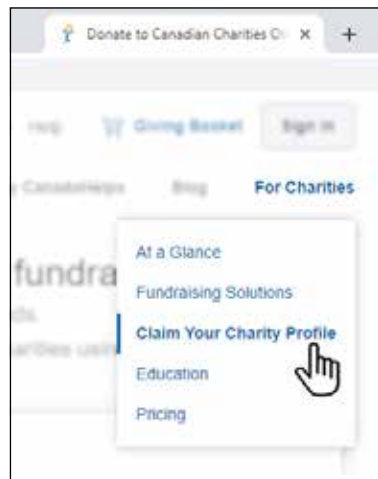
Most Presbyterians can schedule monthly giving through direct debit from their bank accounts as PCC churches usually offer the Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) Program. This is a great way for committed, regular givers to give proportionally, intentionally and faithfully to their congregation. To take advantage of efficiencies of scale, PAR is administered by the United Church in Canada, which keeps down the cost for each congregation. Churches pay fees of \$0.50 per donor per month. Fees are capped at \$45 per month, per church. PAR forms can be downloaded and customized from [presbyterian.ca/par](http://presbyterian.ca/par).

## Online forms on church websites

The next step to setting up eGiving is to offer the ability to give through interactive forms on your website. CanadaHelps.org, Tithe.ly ([tithe.ly/rp/pcc/register](http://tithe.ly/rp/pcc/register)) and iATSPayments.com offer robust unlimited embedded donation form solutions. These forms allow users to give from their personal computers or mobile devices.

Though online forms simplify eGiving, giving by credit card makes some donors uneasy because it means incurring short-term debt. If people in your congregation feel this

way, you will want your church to be able to receive donations via Interac or Visa Debit. Access to Interac donations is one of the main reasons charities in Canada make the extra effort to set-up giving with a payment company like Square. However, if all you want to do is add simple donation forms to your website, CanadaHelps.org, Tithe.ly and iATSPayments.com can accept gifts through VISA debit cards. Tithe.ly offers additional features and options, like a mobile phone app and financial management tools (which cost additional money).



Claim your charity profile on CanadaHelps.org.

## Setting up CanadaHelps.org

Every registered charity in Canada has a free "profile account" on CanadaHelps.org and if any gifts are given to your church, a cheque is forwarded to your church at the end of the month. Even better—by claiming your church's profile and creating a full fundraising account with CanadaHelps.org you can take advantage of customizable donation forms, peer-to-peer fundraising via social media, and receive gifts within days. There is no extra charge for a full fundraising account; the only cost is the per transaction fee.

## Who provides the tax receipt?

For congregations that use Tithe.ly or IATS Payments, the congregation issues the tax receipt. Both can issue an instant tax receipt on your behalf or you can choose to give a final tax receipt at the end of the year with other gifts made to the congregation. However, CanadaHelps.org is a registered Canadian charitable foundation that provides the charitable tax receipt to the donor. Your church may choose to send a thank-you note to

a donor who gives through CanadaHelps.org, but you should not include a tax receipt. The fact that donors must retain their CanadaHelps.org tax receipts should be spelled out on your church website.

## Ensuring security

When embedding donation forms on a website, congregations should ensure their websites are secure (SSL enabled). Some donation forms won't work without this protection, and many savvy donors won't give through the web unless they are assured of security. For instance, on secure web pages, you'll see a lock icon and/or "https" at the beginning of the domain name to indicate the page is secure. If you don't see this, contact your hosting provider to find out how to get SSL protection. Churches that are the PCCWeb network for free web hosting will be automatically updated over the coming months.

## In-church eGiving

Online donation pages can also be accessed on a personal computer or tablet device set up in your church foyer, which allows donors to give electronically while in the church. However, manually entering your credit card in a form on a computer in the narthex can be time-consuming and clunky when all one wants to do is grab a seat in the sanctuary or join everyone for coffee time. A dedicated terminal device can solve this problem.

Dedicated tap, chip and swipe terminal devices can be circulated



A credit card tapping a Square Reader.

during the offering. These devices are interactive and social—a greeter can help you quickly tap-to-give with a small handheld sensor that connects to a mobile device. When using terminal devices, you'll need to make sure you take the added step of capturing or confirming the personal information needed to generate a charitable tax receipt.

## Church management tools

The Square Reader terminals ([squ.re/PCC](http://squ.re/PCC)) seem to be the easiest for givers to use. Nevertheless, your church will have to export and manually input Square transaction data into your church accounting software. Square offers a "store" that enables donation forms on websites, but because Square eCommerce is designed first and foremost for merchants, there are extra steps involved compared to the online forms provided by Tithe.ly or CanadaHelps.org.

For churches that have the staff to support church marketing and management software platforms like Micharity.com ([micharity.com/pcc-churches](http://micharity.com/pcc-churches)), handheld mobile terminal devices can transfer transaction data directly into the donor database. For instance, a Clover Flex terminal can send data directly into a Micharity.com fundraising database. A Stripe terminal will send data directly into

a Planning.Center database. IATS Payments offers a mobile reader that works exclusively with iOS (Apple) devices and delivers data directly into your church's IATS Payments donor database.

Fundraising and church management services like Micharity.com, Planning.Center and Tithe.ly's management option (which costs additional money) not only offer donation forms and device compatibility but may also help your church grow, if you have the staff and volunteers to use the fundraising, e-marketing and organizational tools they offer.

## Transaction fees

All eGiving tools charge fees for each transaction. The chart below shows some of the differences between these solutions.

Cost is only one of the things to keep in mind when selecting a digital giving tool. Ease of use and administration are also important factors.

For more information, watch the previously recorded webinar at [presbyterian.ca/egiving-webinar](http://presbyterian.ca/egiving-webinar). For advice and assistance on getting started or getting to the next level with eGiving in your church, contact Jim MacDonald at the Stewardship & Planned Giving office by phone at 1-800-619-7301, ext. 257 or email [plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca](mailto:plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca).

eGiving Solution	PAR	Canada Helps.org	Tithe.ly*	iATS Payments	PayPal.com	Square Reader*	Micharity.com*	Push Pay.com	Planning.Center
Monthly Fee	\$0	\$0	\$0 w/o options	\$10	\$0	\$0 (+)	<del>\$29</del> \$0* (Minimum)	\$200 minimum	Depends on apps selected.
Transaction Fee	\$0.50/donor/mo. (\$45/mo. max.)	3.5% (+/-)	2.75%* + 0.30 (+) (Special PCC rate)	2.05%-3.5% + 0.25	1.6% (+) + 0.30 (PayPal & CC)	2.65% CC† (+) \$0.10 Interac/Tap	2.9% + 0.30 (+)	2.2% + 0.30 (+)	2.2% + 0.30 (+) (CDN Visa/MC) Acct. w/Stripe
Debit Card	n/a	Visa Debit	Visa/MC Debit	Interac‡ Visa/MC Debit	Visa/MC Debit	Interac‡ Visa/MC Debit	Interac‡ Visa Debit	Visa Debit	Stripe accepts Visa/MC Debit
Generates Tax Receipt?	n/a	Yes, church does not issue	Optional	Optional	No	No	Optional	Optional	No
Terminal Device (Give in-church or anywhere)	n/a	No device except computer "kiosk" w/ website	No device except computer "kiosk" w/ website	iATS Mobile CC card reader for iPhone (\$125)	No device except computer "kiosk" w/ website (Virtual Terminal)	Many options incl. Contactless & Chip Reader \$59. Easy-to-use.	Offers Clover Flex Terminal (\$49 + \$40*/mo.)	No device except computer "kiosk" w/ website (Virtual Terminal)	Compatible with Stripe terminal but does not sell.
Notes	Administered on behalf of the PCC by the United Church in Canada. PAR forms available at <a href="http://Presbyterian.ca">Presbyterian.ca</a>	Foundation focused on CDN non-profits. Addl. online fundraising tools (E.g., Peer-to-peer) charged on fee/transaction basis.	Service focused on church giving. (Integrated church management software and mobile app avail. for extra \$)	Payments co. focused on non-profits. "Aura Forms" are attractive. No SSL needed for embedded forms. May need developer.	Payments co. 1.6% + 30 is discount rate for charities.	Payments co. Square Reader accepts Interac and CC, Apple Pay, etc. Must set-up online store to use for website donations.	Fundraising management platform. eGiving one component of many. Clover Flex optional. Provides training.	For larger churches. eGiving a component of church marketing system. Integrates with Quickbooks. No terminal device.	Sells a la carte church mgmt. apps. Church must contract separately with STRIPE for eGiving. Requires developer.

\* Special PCC rate

† Credit card rate increases when data is input manually (typed-in) rather than by chip/swipe/tap

‡ In-person, Tap & chip only



When giving from existing funds (your bank account):

- a) online forms use Visa Debit or Debit Mastercard
- b) payment terminals with tap or chip use Interac



## STEWARDSHIP

# More Than You Could Imagine

By Karen Plater and Jim McDonald,  
Stewardship & Planned Giving

Christmas is the time of year people think about giving gifts. Helping people discover how they can plan to leave a gift to the church—more than they ever imagined—is one of the best things about working in the Stewardship & Planned Giving office.

Many Canadians hold their wealth in fixed assets like savings for retirement, home, cottage, a pension plan or securities. Canadian tax regulations for giving from these types of assets are generous when compared with much of the rest of the world and many people are learning how to use those tax savings to maximize their gifts. Below are the most common ways you can give a planned gift to your congregation, Presbyterians Sharing, Presbyterian World Service & Development or any other ministry important to you. Find out more at [presbyterian.ca/waystogive](http://presbyterian.ca/waystogive).

### Gift in a will

Your final tax returns are often the largest you will ever pay, because many of your assets are counted as income at the time of your death. A gift made through a will can support a ministry important to you, while offsetting taxes and still providing for your family and friends. Gifts can be either a set amount or a residual (proportion) of the estate. Using appreciated publicly traded securities (see below) to make a gift from your will saves the estate capital gains taxes and provides a gift receipt to offset other taxes. Find out if your church has recommended language or use the language suggested in the PCC's free Will-Planning Guide and Workbook ([presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/resources](http://presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/resources)). Remember to include the church's full legal name, address and charitable number so there is no confusion as to where the gift is supposed to go.

### Publicly traded securities

When Canadians sell publicly traded securities, they are taxed on 50% of the capital gains. However, if Canadians give listed publicly traded securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds), including ones listed on non-Canadian stock exchanges (e.g., NASDAQ)



You can make your church one of the beneficiaries of your RRSP/RRIF or TFSA.

directly to charity as a gift-in-kind, they pay no tax on the capital gains while also receiving a charitable tax receipt for their full market value to offset other taxes. This means that giving appreciated securities is a much more tax-efficient way to give than selling the securities and donating the cash. The Presbyterian Church in Canada's stockbroker will receive donations of stock for any PCC ministry or congregation.

### RRSP/RRIFs

Possibly the simplest legacy gift you can give is the gift of registered funds by making a charity the beneficiary of these registered funds. You can name the church as the beneficiary of your RRSP/RRIF or TFSA plan at death. The church receives the gift immediately after death and because the donation takes place outside the estate, there are no probate fees. The income from these plans accrue to the donor's final tax return(s), so the tax credits from the charitable gift receipt can offset the tax which needs to be paid and, under the right circumstances, the tax payable could be offset entirely by an equal tax credit.

### Life insurance

Life insurance can be a creative way to increase the amount you are able to leave the church. If you already have a policy, you can change the beneficiary to your church. Because this is a revocable gift, the estate receives the receipt for the gift in the year it is received.

Policies can be purchased with the church as owner and beneficiary or existing policies can be transferred to the church. The church then issues tax receipts for the annual premiums paid after transferring the policy, and in the case of a whole/universal life policy, an immediate tax receipt is also issued for a portion of the policy's cash surrender value. Both of these are non-revocable gifts and

no tax receipt is issued to the estate, because tax relief was given to the donor.

### Charitable gift annuities

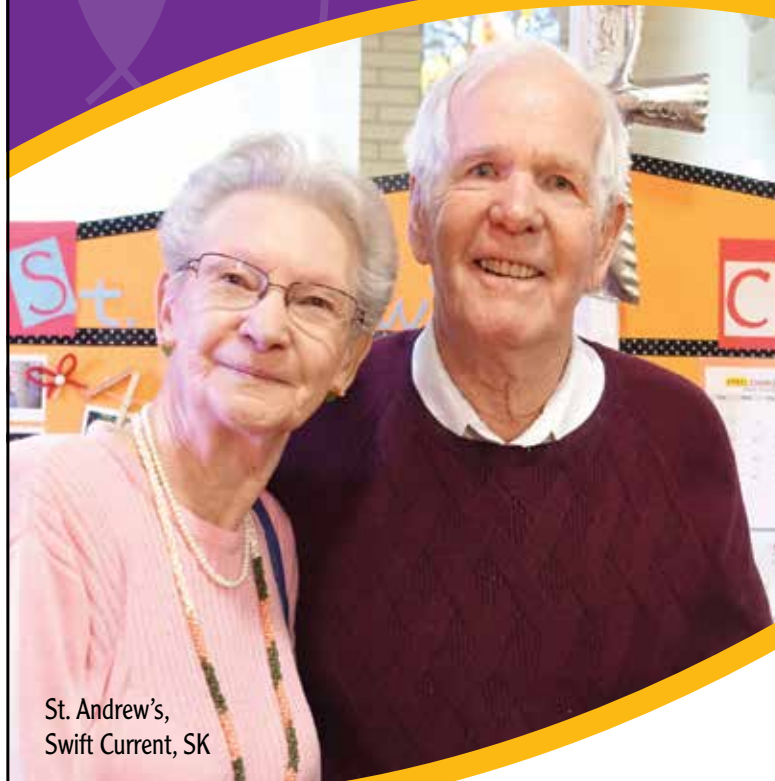
The PCC's charitable gift annuities can be directed to any PCC ministry or congregation, Presbyterians Sharing or PWS&D. They are a way that Canadians 60 years of age and older can make a gift while receiving a guaranteed annual income for life (single or joint). The majority or all of that income is tax-free. If you depend on a consistent income stream now but want to leave a legacy gift to the church, this might be for you. The annuity rate (based on age, gender, and when it is acquired) is designed to provide income for life from the capital and interest. When you die, whatever is left in the annuity becomes your gift. Because the gift is made outside the estate, there are no probate taxes to pay, and you receive a gift receipt for at least 20% of the value of the annuity in the year you acquire it. An 80-year-old woman who acquired a single-life gift annuity for \$50,000 from the PCC in October 2019 would receive a gift receipt for \$14,052 and pay no tax on the annual income of \$3,044 per year (rate of 6.09%). The church receives a gift of at least \$14,000 when she dies, often more.

You don't have to be rich to leave a planned gift. II Corinthians 8:12 reminds us that "the gift is acceptable according to what one has." Being intentional about making a planned gift and taking advantage of the tax credits just means we can participate in God's mission, sometimes in more ways than we could imagine. What a wonderful thing to think about at Christmas, as we celebrate God's greatest gift.

*Note: Anyone wanting to make a planned gift should consult their certified financial planner to find out what is best for their circumstances.*



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## HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

# Acknowledging the Truth, Honouring the Children

By Carragh Erhardt, Justice Ministries

In September 2016, many Canadians learned the story of Chanie Wenjack because of *Secret Path*, a project led by the Tragically Hip's singer, the late Gord Downie. Chanie was from Marten Falls First Nation and died when he was only 12 years old during an attempt to run away from the Presbyterian-run Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in 1966.

On Sept. 30, the names of 2,800 other children who died or went missing from Indian Residential Schools were made public during a ceremony I attended at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Que., during the release of the National Student Memorial Register. The register was compiled in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action No. 73 and is maintained by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) in Winnipeg, Man. In addition to the 2,800 children that the NCTR can name, there are 1,600 more records of children who died whose names are unknown.

The ceremony in Gatineau was a space to publicly bear witness and commemorate both the named and the unnamed children who never made it home from residential schools. Speakers, musicians and

dancers honoured the children with their expressions of grief and love. There was a deep sadness in the room as we sat with the truth that so many children had lost their young lives because of residential schools. But there was also a sense that by shedding light on the truth, families who'd lost loved ones may come closer to healing.

When it came time to seeing the names of all the children who have been documented so far, I knew that I would see them on the large swath of red ceremonial cloth. What I was not prepared for was the realization that the cloth would be too long to extend in one straight line across the front of the room. Instead, all 50 metres of the cloth were folded carefully, metre by metre, as it approached the stage. It was a heavy moment. As I looked upon their names, I was reminded that for each child listed, there was a family and community left behind: some received answers about the loss of their loved one, and some never did. The red cloth is a reminder of the very real and profound cost of the racism, neglect and abuse endemic to the Indian Residential School system—a cost that Indigenous peoples never should have been forced to bear.

The release of the Memorial Register is another step in acknowledg-



A ceremonial cloth with the names of the 2,800 children who are named in the National Student Memorial Register as it was presented at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau on September 30.

ing the truth and there is much more work to be done. The NCTR expects that names will continue to be added as their research continues. Work needs to be done to identify, restore and protect sites where children were buried at residential schools, many of which are unmarked and vulnerable to disturbance. In all that is yet to come, I pray for the healing of residential school survivors and the families who lost loved ones. By committing to creating a better future for Indigenous children, I pray that as a country we will work to redress the harm done, and honour the children who never made it home.

To read the National Student Memorial Register, visit [memorial.nctr.ca](http://memorial.nctr.ca). A National Residential School Crisis Line has been set up to provide support to former students. This 24-Hour Crisis Line can be accessed at 1-866-925-4419.



A plaque marks the location of the Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School site.

## Pastoral Letter from the Moderator

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

Sept. 30, 2019

Residential school Survivors and families, and all who walk a path of reconciliation,

This morning, during a ceremony at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Que., the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation released the first list of the known names of children who died and went missing while at residential schools.

It is difficult to express the depth of sorrow that losing a child causes a family. Even speaking of healing

in this context is painful, for how can one heal from such a loss? For some survivors, families and communities, the release of these names will be a step toward closure; yet some may also struggle with reopened wounds. Many still seek answers about what happened to their loved ones. There are more names yet to be found and much work lies ahead to gather the names and stories of these lost children, and to honour their lives. For all who mourn the children named, and those who have yet to be named, I share in your mourning. We carry the weight of knowing our church was involved in running these schools and taking



these children. I pray for the Creator's healing presence and comforting Spirit to be with all who mourn, and to guide our church in living out the Confession of the harm we caused by operating residential schools and our commitment to a journey of reconciliation.

Today is a day to bear pain in solidarity and to bear witness to the lives of the thousands of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children who never returned home from residential schools. As a denomination, we have committed to walk with Indigenous people toward healing and wholeness. Part of this journey to healing involves confronting the in-

tergenerational cost of the residential school system on Indigenous communities. The release of the Missing Children Register is an invitation to remember and honour the children who attended the schools: those who survived, and those who did not. In this time of hearing difficult truth, I encourage all Presbyterians to pray together. Pray for the children, their families and their communities. With the knowledge that healing is still needed, I also encourage all of us to reflect on how we can contribute to furthering a path of healing and reconciliation.

May God help us all to walk gently and with compassion.



## HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

# Learnings from the H&R Tour



Participants touring the grounds of the former Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School with Richard Green, an Indigenous leader in Kenora.



Tour participants listening to Dylan Nippi, the new executive director of Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry.

By Inge Stahl, St. Lawrence  
Presbyterian Church in London, Ont.

I am a first-generation immigrant, born in Germany three years after World War II ended and came to Canada when I was three. As a teen, I struggled with guilt over the Holocaust. Some of these feelings resurfaced as I prepared for a Healing and Reconciliation event through the Presbytery of London, and the PCC Healing and Reconciliation Tour. The country of my birth has a history that I'm ashamed of. And now, the country I had adopted has a history that I'm ashamed of. I hoped that the tour would be a journey of healing.

Our tour leaders, David Phillips and the Rev. Linda Patton-Cowie, have already written about the tour. I credit them with helping me, as we moved from ministry to ministry, to absorb and reflect on what we were experiencing. I am writing about how

the tour and subsequent reading and study affected me personally.

Before we even left, I found an article that helped me sort out my feelings, written by the Rev. Margaret Mullin, minister at Place of Hope Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, for the Spring 2019 *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper. She ended it saying, "Shame and guilt are not yours to carry for historical injustice. Carry a Godly sorrow and get involved."

At each stop, we met people who were giving unselfishly and passionately to the people in their care, mostly working with few resources and long hours. They gave of themselves with love and compassion and without judgement. We met Indigenous peoples, mostly, but not exclusively, who came to find love, hope, perhaps a meal or a safe place to sleep. I met a talented man in Saskatoon who came to create incredibly beautiful artwork. We heard stories—stories that were

hard to tell—some of them incredibly sad, some heartbreaking, some hopeful, always deeply emotional, always with forgiveness. I was struck particularly by the loss—the lost lives of Residential School survivors, the loss of what they might have contributed to their communities and our country. I was struck by the resilience that I saw. There was no rancor, only a desire to be understood.

In the Summer 2019 issue of *Presbyterian Connection*, the Rev. John Vissers wrote about the Confession after 25 years and the challenges of moving forward toward Reconciliation. At the end of his article he wrote, "My prayer is that our work with TRC will move our apology not just from our heads to our hearts, but also to our hands."

I have come to the conclusion that we can connect with our Indigenous neighbours, listen to their stories, befriend them and let them know that we care. We can support the various ministries with Indigenous peoples of our church, by donating money, our time or goods. We can go on tours like this one, read and educate ourselves and share that knowledge in order to educate others. We can read a "land acknowledgement statement" at our meetings and other places, as long as these statements are not merely political correctness but calls to action. All of these things matter. They are important and good to do. But they are not enough. We need to become political as well, to let our elected representatives know that we will no longer condone inaction or broken promises. We can exercise our vote in such a way that people of integrity and action are elected. We can show the world that we have political and

individual will in this country to right the wrongs that were done. And then we can exert pressure on our political allies and trading partners to do the same. Canada's history isn't unique. In every country that Europeans of all countries went to, people were found already living there, and those established colonies pushed aside Indigenous peoples with a similar story to tell. But first, let's clean up our own house.

In Luke 19:1–10, we read about the corrupt tax collector, Zacchaeus, who acknowledges what he had done and the concrete actions that he planned to take in order to restore his relationship with the people he'd hurt and with God. An example for us all. With our federal election now behind us, let's pray that our leaders act as our representatives, so that our country is the winner not the politicians; and that we, who care, are there to remind them of why they are in Ottawa.



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## HISTORY

# The Biafran Airlift: A Defining Moment in Canadian History

*By Anne Saunders, member of the Cutting Edge of Mission Committee and the Rev. Rick Fee, former General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency and former international mission staff to Nigeria*

Fifty years ago, the world was anxiously watching the final weeks of the Nigerian-Biafran War, though no one knew the war was coming to an end. For three years, Canadians—in particular, Canadian Presbyterians—had been attentive, playing key roles in trying to bring about a peace accord and providing humanitarian relief for the starving victims.

From the outset, this was a complicated conflict. Following Biafra's announcement on May 30, 1967, that it was seceding from Nigeria, the federal Nigerian government declared war a month later. Just seven years earlier a unified, albeit very diverse Nigeria (with 300 different cultural and ethnic groups within its borders), had celebrated its independence from Britain. However, in 1966, violence had erupted as a result of political, ethnic, cultural, economic and religious rivalries. New crude oil production in the eastern region had sparked greed, mistrust, jealousy and competition for profits. Other countries responded to the war, taking various military and political positions: some supplied arms and fighter planes, some sought a share of the oil reserves, some wanted to protect Nigeria's sovereignty and others to protect Biafra's right to self-determination. The Organization of African States hosted a couple of peace conferences, but the United Nations chose not to get involved.

As the war raged on, and due in large part to the media coverage of thousands of starving women and children, citizens around the world responded—often disregarding their own government's positions. Daily television news broadcasts brought the violence and suffering into Canadian homes. Viewers were confounded by competing opinions. What is the truth? Who are the protagonists? Who, if any group or nation, is prolonging this conflict? Has starvation become a weapon of war? Is there a genocide? Who is responsible for feeding the starving victims?

Canadians chose not to stand by idly. Even prior to the conflict, many communities across Canada had felt connected to Nigeria and often to the eastern region, which was now part of Biafra. In the mid-1950s

The Presbyterian Church in Canada had established a partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN). Clergy, teachers and medical personnel had been assigned to the PCN since 1954. In 1956, the PCC's Overseas Secretary of the General Board of Mission, the Rev. E. H. (Ted) Johnson, enabled a prominent Nigerian medical doctor, who had been educated in Scotland, to do a cross-Canada tour. Sir Francis and Lady Ibiem spoke on university campuses and in innumerable churches. They met with provincial lieutenant-governors and the Governor-General. The Ibiems introduced their audiences to Nigeria and invited new graduates to fill Nigeria's skill needs. Between then and 1970, the PCC responded by sending more than 30 mission staff (many for periods of longer than six years). The PCC was the only Canadian church with a presence in Nigeria. In the 1960s, one of its mission staff, the Rev. Walter McLean, served as the first in-country coordinator of the young volunteer organization, CUSO. From 1962 to 1969, CUSO sent almost 250 volunteers to Nigeria (for periods of normally two years). Each Canadian serving in Nigeria had an extended family, friends, a community and often a church congregation back in Canada that learned about Nigeria through their letters and visits home.

Since the mid-1950s, the Rev. Ted Johnson had been travelling to Nigeria, visiting mission staff in their various communities and meeting with Nigerian officials. During the war he continued to visit—a total of ten times. Recognizing Johnson's unique position and gifts, in the latter part of 1967, the PCC gave him permission to take leave from his regular national church responsibilities to focus solely on the Nigerian-Biafran conflict, and to do whatever he could to broker peace. With his knowledge, ecumenical and international contacts and reputation, and his commitment to serving those in need, he was ideally positioned. Presbyterians were to be found in both the Nigerian and the Biafran governments holding vital government positions. Johnson knew many of the key players on both sides: he was welcomed in Lagos and wherever the government of Biafra found itself. Johnson also had access to politicians and leaders of international and church organizations in Europe, Britain and the U.S. In Canada, he frequently met with



Bombed hospital in Biafra circa 1968.

federal Members of Parliament of different political parties (e.g., David MacDonald, Andrew Brewin, Ralph Stewart, Lorne Nystrom and MPP Stephen Lewis, all who travelled into Biafra at different times) and with then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

While all foreigners, including Canadians, were encouraged to leave when the conflict broke out, some Canadian Presbyterians remained and served during the war years, both in Nigeria and in Biafra. David Craig, Ron and Hazel McGraw, Earl and Dorothy Roberts, Elsie Taylor, Marjorie and Murray Ross, Russell and Margaret Hall, and Sam and Hazel Harder were involved with relief efforts on both sides of the war front. Their lives were neither easy nor without risks. There is a harrowing story of David Craig's narrow escape from death in Calabar in October 1967 when Nigerian soldiers captured him as a suspected mercenary, then bound and held and interrogated him for 24 hours. In September 1968, two International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) volunteers and an English mission couple were shot dead on the Okigwe hospital property. Presbyterian hospitals at Itu, Arochukwu and Itigidi were bombed, even though huge red crosses had been painted on their corrugated iron roofs. Ron McGraw was present at Itu when that hospital was attacked. In radio and TV interviews throughout the conflict, Canadians heard reports from many of these mission personnel as well



A photo from a Canairelief poster soliciting funds during the War.



## HISTORY

as from Scottish missionaries and the Rev. Ted Johnson. They spoke with current, first-hand knowledge and authority about the situation and the growing humanitarian crisis. Alex Zeidman of the Scott Mission in Toronto volunteered for six months at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Umuahia.

Prior to May 1968, the Canadian government had procured a Hercules plane to the Red Cross, which flew eight trips with food and medical supplies into Port Harcourt. When the Nigerian military government took over the airport and airspace, their bombers threatened any foreign planes. The complete blockade of Biafra had begun. Over the summer of 1968, Irish Catholic missionaries sent out reports of a deteriorating situation: Biafrans were suffering a protein deficiency called *kwashiorkor* and an estimated 1,000 people were starving to death each day. Many were children. By the end of the summer an international consortium, Joint Church Aid (JCA)—fondly known as Jesus Christ Airlines—was formed through the auspices of the World Council of Churches involving 50 member churches and relief organizations from 24 countries across Europe and North America. JCA was determined to fly supplies into Biafra and commenced an airlift second only in scale to the Berlin Airlift of 1948-49. This implausible, audacious circumvention of military tactics became a very real possibility when the Biafrans provided Johnson with the Uli airstrip landing codes.

As a result of Johnson's high profile, a group of determined and committed people coalesced around him. They included the Rev. Eoin MacKay, chair of the PCC's overseas relief committee and minister at Rosedale Presbyterian Church; Henry Fletcher, the Executive Director of Oxfam Canada; and Jack Grant, a Jewish businessman and philanthropist. On Dec. 13, 1968, they bought an airplane from Nordair—a Super Constellation needing refurbishing—and formed Canairelief, which became the Canadian unit of JCA. They later bought four more planes. They had no experience in operating an airline; they knew nothing about flying in war zones. But they knew how to organize, how to raise money, and they were compelled to help alleviate the horrendous, unfolding humanitarian crisis. They inspired unprecedented support from the Canadian public, and throughout 1969 had a massive impact on the humanitarian relief effort.

The risks were immense for pilots and their crews. The only access into Biafra for planes was the Uli airstrip, a widened portion of a highway and given the nickname "the sidewalk" by pilots. To avoid the federal Nigerian fighter planes and bombers, called

"intruders," relief planes could only fly after dark with both airplane and runway lights turned off, except for a few minutes just before landing. There were many close calls. The casualties added up: in 10 different incidents, 29 pilots and crew on relief planes were killed because of accidents or by direct Nigerian action. This included one Canairelief plane—CF-NAJ, which crashed on the night of Aug. 3-4, 1969, due to miscalculations. Canadians Captain Donald Merriam, First Officer Raymond Levesque, Flight Engineer Vincent Wakeling and Loadmaster Gary Libbus all died. The next week, and throughout the conflict, Johnson flew into Uli under such conditions, saying he needed to see for himself what was being asked of the aircrews; he wanted to be sure that the humanitarian need merited people taking such risks.

Month after month, Johnson persisted in approaching leaders in Paris, Geneva, London, Ottawa and Washington, asking for more help with the relief effort and seeking ways to bring the two sides together to resolve the conflict. On Nov. 20, 1969, in his capacity as vice-chairman of Canairelief, Johnson participated in a 70-minute meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau. Seven days later, on Nov. 27, the House of Commons held a special debate on the Biafra-Nigeria situation. It was also "Peace Biafra Day" across Canada, a day organized by private citizens when many communities held demonstrations and candlelight vigils. On Dec. 4, 1969, Johnson said he was hopeful that his recent request for financial support from the Canadian government would be successful. He also restated his belief that if the Canadian government would take on a leadership role in promoting a peaceful settlement, then the international community would respond.

On Christmas Eve 1969, on CBC TV's *Weekday* evening broadcast, Barbara Frum interviewed Rabbi Gunther Plaut who had just one week before been in Biafra, accompanied by Presbyterian minister and Canairelief Chairman, the Rev. Eoin MacKay. Speaking about the Christmas season, Rabbi Plaut said, "If this season teaches us anything, there is no such thing as non-involvement in this world." Rabbi Plaut asserted that if a person has heard about the starving victims and does nothing, then that person is in fact contributing to the starvation. He spoke with respect and admiration for the religious institutions and people who "...have been doing the work of feeding, caring, healing at considerable risk."

On Jan. 7, 1970, the Nigerians launched an offensive, which turned out to be the last one of the war. The Biafrans were quickly overwhelmed.



Biafran casualties being treated in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Umuahia.

Two days later, the Biafran leader Colonel Emeka Ojukwu flew into exile in Ivory Coast. The Biafran capital, Owerri, fell. Ironically, on this same day, the Canadian Ministry of External Affairs finally announced financial aid to Biafra and Canairelief—a commitment they never had to follow through on. Two days later on Jan. 11, Uli fell. Those left in command of Biafran forces surrendered. On Jan. 15, 1970, the leader of the Nigerian military government, General Gowon, officially declared the war had ended.

What difference did Canada and Canairelief make? The final Canairelief report written by Johnson estimated that "Canairelief enabled about one million people, the majority of them women and children, to survive who would not otherwise have lived through the starvation period of the blockade." With the support of the PCC, other Canadian churches, the Jewish communities, Oxfam Canada and many, many individual Canadians, Canairelief had completed 670 flights and delivered 11,000 tons of food and medical supplies into the blockaded state of Biafra.

With an estimate that as many as two million Biafran civilians may have died from starvation, the international humanitarian relief community was left troubled. A direct result was the creation of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) and TearFund (UK). Less direct and immediate, JCA evolved into Action by Churches Together (ACT), and the Presbyterian Church's overseas relief committee became the relief and development agency Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D). Canadian churches were empowered by their ability to make a difference by working together—the aid to Biafra was one example of effective ecumenical and inter-faith collaboration. In the mid-1970s mainline church leaders and moderators



Hazel and Ron McGraw being evacuated on Canairelief flight at end of the War.

toured across Canada forming Ten Days for World Development, which has evolved today into KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. In 2005, after years of examination and conversation with its members, the United Nations obtained international agreement about the moral "responsibility to protect" or R2P, the sentiment that had motivated those behind JCA and Canairelief. The initiative finally succeeded with "a global political commitment which was endorsed by all member states of the United Nations at the 2005 World Summit in order to address its four key concerns to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

For most of the world, the Biafran-Nigerian War quickly receded from

the news and people's consciousness. In Nigeria, not only were people reluctant to speak of the war, even in the privacy of their own homes, but it was never included in school history books and curriculum. A few years ago a young Nigerian broadcaster, wife and mother, Angela Onuora, living in Waterloo, Ont., made connections between the Biafran-Nigerian War, her own family's history, and the role of Canadians—particularly their participation in the Canairelief operation. Inspired by meeting many of the people mentioned in this article and compelled by the story of Canairelief, Ms. Onuora is making the documentary *Operation Lights Out: The Story of Canairelief*. For more information, go to [thisnaijagirl.studio/home/projects](http://thisnaijagirl.studio/home/projects).



## MISSION

# Evangel Hall Named One of Canada's Top 100 Charities



*By the Rev. Alex Bisset, Minister of Westminster and Riverdale Presbyterian Churches and the Clerk of the Presbytery of East Toronto*

Evangel Hall Mission (ehm), a mission of the Presbytery of East Toronto, has been named by MoneySense as one of the top 100 charities in Canada. The only mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to be recognized on this list, ehm was awarded an overall grade of A-.

MoneySense (an online finance

and lifestyle magazine, founded by Rogers Media and now owned by Ratehub) has been compiling a list of the top 100 Canadian charities annually for the past nine years. These charities are evaluated on factors such as how effectively they fundraise, how efficiently their funds are used, how transparent they are about where their funding comes from and how it is spent, as well as how well they communicate to donors the impact of their donations. As Claire Brownell, the author of the MoneySense study, noted, "Donors have a right to know how their money is being spent and whether it's truly helping people."

For more than a century, ehm has been a Presbyterian inner-city mission whose purpose is to build community with poor, homeless and



**Jennifer Sully-Ferraro, Director, Programs & Client Care, and Ainsley Chapman, Executive Director, Evangel Hall Mission.**

socially isolated people in Toronto through support, housing, services and advocacy. The mission operates on the principle of loving one's neighbour as one's self, and welcomes all who come to its doors. Evangel Hall is committed to community leadership in assisting poor, homeless, underhoused and socially isolated people achieve emotional, social, spiritual and physical health and well-being.

Evangel Hall was founded in 1913 under the auspices of The Presby-

terian Church in Canada's Board of Social Service and Evangelism and the Presbytery of Toronto. In 1917, oversight of the mission was given to Knox Presbyterian Church (Spadina), and the congregation continued in this role until 1976, when Evangel Hall became a mission of the Presbytery of East Toronto, under its own board of directors. Evangel Hall moved from its original home on Queen Street West to its current building at 552 Adelaide Street West in 2006.

At this facility, ehm provides 84 units of subsidized and supportive housing, which give 110 people a safe and secure place to live. Through the daily drop-in program, ehm serves 100,000 meals, 31,000 sandwiches and 44,000 cups of coffee and tea annually. As well as drying off, warming up and eating a nutritious meal, clients who visit the drop-in can shower, do their laundry, see a nurse, receive budgeting help, find new clothing and talk to a spiritual care provider. There is also a dental clinic, which provides over 850 dental visits every year.

Ainsley Chapman, Executive Director of ehm, says that, "Money is getting tighter for everyone, and we make sure that every dollar we are given is stretched as far as it can go and has the most impact possible. The team at ehm works really hard to manage our assets, to keep our costs low and to put money where it is most needed. This award recognizes that the work we've been doing has been effective and demonstrates that we are a charity donors can trust with their gifts."

You can access the full list of Canada's top 100 charities at [moneysense.ca/save/financial-planning/canadas-top-rated-charities-2019-overview](http://moneysense.ca/save/financial-planning/canadas-top-rated-charities-2019-overview) and learn more about ehm (and make a donation in support of its work) at [evangelhall.ca](http://evangelhall.ca).

# Halloween Event for Kids Facing Physical or Mental Barriers

*Reproduced with permission from the Journal Pioneer community newspaper*

While many families gear up for the spookiest and most frightening night of the year, those facing physical and mental barriers may find getting into the spirit of the season a little more complicated.

To help everyone navigate Halloween, Summerside Presbyterian Church, P.E.I., hosted a special treat early Sunday afternoon.

"When the announcement was made during the service for the Halloween event, Rev. Blaikie mentioned to us that his children are on the au-

tism spectrum and this time of year can be intimidating for those with special needs," said Nancy Harvey, clerk of session.

"This building provides kids with safe, wholesome fun. They can come in costume and participate in fun games or get candy. It's just great for those that are not comfortable going trick-or-treating in dark and unfamiliar places," she added.

The Rev. Brad Blaikie said the congregation came together in a show of support for the event. "We saw there was a need in the community and our church has the space, so we brought this idea of a fun seasonal event to the congregation and they were very generous with both their time and the



**Sensory Halloween event at Summerside Presbyterian Church.**

donation of candy," he said. "The church is welcoming and open."

Kids—and adults—came dressed in elaborate costumes for the not-so-scary Halloween fete that kicked off at 1 p.m.

"We received some candy donations from groups that provide services for children with special needs. These groups heard about the event

through social media and word of mouth, and overall we have been overwhelmed by the response," said Nancy.

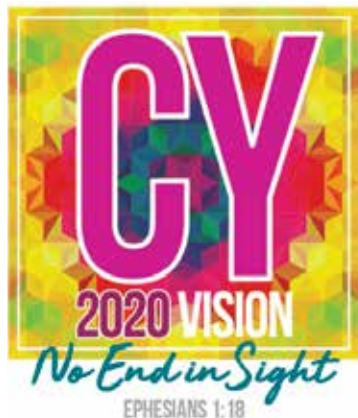
"This sensory event is to focus on children having fun, playing games, getting treats, and there are no dark aspects involved. This is a place for fun, games, stories, and children just having a good time," she said.





## YOUTH

# CY2020: Twenty Years in the Making!



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[PRESBYTERIAN.CA/CY](http://PRESBYTERIAN.CA/CY)

By Jo Morris, CY Coordinator

Since 2000, CY (Canada Youth) has been a gathering place for enthusiastic Presbyterians to worship, play, create, pray, learn, make new friends, study scripture, laugh, discover, reflect, sing and share. More than 4,000 people have attended CY since its inception and the impact has been felt in our camps, congregations, colleges and the courts of the church.

CY2020 will be held at Brock University from July 6 to 11. We will gather around the theme "No End in Sight."

Preserved in the Gospel of Mark is a quirky story about Jesus healing a blind man. Jesus uses all the usual methods of healing we find in other restorative stories: touching, spitting, laying on of hands. But when Jesus asks the man if he can see, the man says he can see people but they look like trees that are uprooted and walking around. It might startle us to think that Jesus' healing doesn't quite work on the first try. But the story reminds us that none of us has 20/20 vision. Sometimes we look but do not see. Often, we have knowledge but not understanding. We want to live with hope, but our vision is clouded. In the story, Jesus lays his hands on the man's eyes again and this time the man sees everything clearly (Mark 8:25-28).

All of us long to see things properly. We need, as Ephesians says, to have the eyes of our heart enlightened so that we may know hope (Ephesians

1:18).

CY2020 will be a place where hope will come alive. CY2020 will be a place where we learn to discover beauty amid the brokenness. CY2020 will be a place where we will see more clearly with the eyes of the heart.

Come and join us on an amazing journey to new perspectives and new friends, fresh vision and refreshed hope, greater insight and a great week of fun.

CY2020 will offer the three tracks for all ages:

- Youth Track: Activities designed for those who have graduated Grade 9 and up to celebrate their unique place in our church and experience a landmark event in their faith journey
- Discipleship Track: An opportunity for young adults (ages 19 to 25) to think deeply about their gifts, to be empowered to be faithful servants and leaders.
- Leadership Track: This track is specially designed to equip congregational leaders of any kind, and includes a separate stream devoted to youth ministry leadership. If you are clergy, lay, paid, volunteer, full-time, contract or part-time leadership, the Leadership Track will have something for you. It will run the entire length of CY2020.

CY2020 registration will begin on March 1, 2020. The registration fee for the event is \$585. For more details about CY2020, visit [presbyterian.ca/cy](http://presbyterian.ca/cy).

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## INTERNATIONAL

# Starpoint Youth Festival

## Finding God's Kingdom

By Philip MacFie, Parkwood  
Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, Ont.

At the invitation of the Reformed Church in Hungary, I attended the Starpoint Reformed Youth Festival in Debrecen as one of the three young adults representing The Presbyterian Church in Canada from July 23 to 27, 2019. Starpoint is a youth festival for those aged 14 to 35 organized by the Hungarian Reformed Church every two years.

In its ninth meeting, this year's festival featured over 3,000 participants and 600 volunteers from all over the Carpathian Basin (Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and other neighbouring countries). In addition, 31 international delegates from 11 different countries representing 16 international partner churches were invited by the Reformed Church in Hungary.

The main theme of the conference was the "Kingdom of God is Among You"—words taken directly from Luke 17:21. No one can point to one sole physical place where the Kingdom of God can be found. Rather, it runs in and through each one of us, thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Márton Járny, the keynote speaker, shared about how there are no second-class citizens in the kingdom of God as everyone is a masterpiece

created in God's image. As such, God calls us into relationship in a community with God at its head. God desires active collaboration with each one of us to bring more people into God's Kingdom.

Throughout five action-packed days, I learned how I, as a young adult Christian, could live out this message. Each morning I participated in a main worship time, featuring sound Biblical teaching, uplifting contemporary worship and impactful testimonies. Directly afterwards, all participants gathered in small groups to discuss and give feedback on the morning's lesson. As an English-only speaker, I could still fully participate in these sessions, thanks to translation of the main session and English-language small groups.

The afternoon was devoted to workshops, worship sessions and fun activities, where participants could discover their place in the kingdom. The international participants enjoyed English-specific events such as a Kitsch party, where each country had five minutes to share what was great about their country. In addition, I had the privilege of being one of several international participants interviewed one afternoon by the Hungarian Reformed radio station. Our words were later synthesized into an online article at [reformatus.hu/mutat/16586](http://reformatus.hu/mutat/16586).

Supper was followed by a full slate of activities, beginning with evening devotions. Afterwards, participants rocked out to local Hungarian musicians until the early hours of the morning and enjoyed a number of other fun activities.

My biggest take away from my experience at Starpoint is not the excitement of music shows, but a newfound appreciation for the Kingdom of God. It is something you can be a part of whether you live in Budapest, Hungary or in Ottawa, Canada. Following my time in Hungary, God has asked me how I can build the Kingdom in my small corner of Canada.

## Reflections on Starpoint

By Hanna Yun, Kitchener-Waterloo  
Korean Presbyterian Church, Ont.

Canada. United States of America. Pakistan. Syria. Germany. Scotland. Britain. France. Spain. South Korea. Taiwan. Hungary. Young people from all over the world, with one thing in common: a passion to learn about and celebrate God and God's people.

Through the Starpoint Reformed Youth Festival, people from different backgrounds—students, doctors, advocates, PhD candidates—were able to explore the beautiful country of Hungary and discover how our everyday lives differed from one another.



The Presbyterian Church in Canada sent three young adults Philip MacFie (Parkwood PC, Ont.), Hanna Yun (Kitchener-Waterloo Korean PC, Ont.) and Maya Kirstein (Prairie PC, Man.) to the Starpoint Reformed Youth Festival in Debrecen, Hungary, from July 23 to 27, 2019.

Expressions like, "Whoa, I never knew that" or "That's so interesting!" and "I never thought about it like that before" were ones I used often during the trip.

I admit, I am pretty naive and uninformed about how the religion I practice came to be. I tell people my denomination in the same way people tell their birthday, a way of individualization and identification. But what real weight does your birthday have in determining what kind of person you are (sorry to the horoscope readers out there!). I had to travel across the world to understand the rich and complex history Presbyterians have, what horrors we faced and the horrors we inflicted, and ultimately how people had to fight to legitimize this branch of faith.

I realized there are so many spectrums to our denomination, so many viewpoints on topics like LGBTQIA+,

relationships and styles of worship. It was interesting to see what some considered "radical" ideas and some "conservative" ideas. The great debates and respectful conversations I was able to have with this wonderful group of people will be as unforgettable as the goofy times, where we just danced and sang the night away.

My favourite moment had to be when we were all singing "Hillsong" together—30 international guests and 3000+ Hungarian youths. It was a wonderful moment of unity and it was so impactful to hear the next generation of Christian voices. Having so many youths talking together about how to be a Christian in our day and age was fantastic. It was also reassuring to know that the struggles and rewards of being a Christian are universally shared and that we are not alone as we head into the future.

# Caring for Children at Samuel House

By the Rev. Glynis Williams,  
International Ministries

On a beautiful, sunny September day, with kids laughing and playing with their new toys, it felt like autumn in Canada. But in Micske, a rural area in western Romania, many people are very poor and the differences between Micske and Canada were apparent. Here, life is hard for many. Adults often have to migrate to other European countries for work. Elderly grandparents become the parents; families are divided.

On that day in September, the Moderator, the Rev. Amanda Currie, her husband Nicholas Jesson and a small group from St. Giles Church in St. Catharines and St. Giles-Kingsway in Toronto, and the Rev. Glynis Williams of International Ministries, were visiting a small and impressive ministry that cares for children.

Samuel House was the dream of Csilla Bertalan and her husband,

Loyos—a place where vulnerable children receive nutritious food and homework tutoring in a caring Christian environment so that their potential can be realized. Thirty years after the fall of Communism, the shadow of that terrible era still haunts Romania. It is hard to believe that this is a country within the European Union. There are currently 33 children and youth in the Samuel House program, ranging in age from five to 19. Some children live in the house, while others go back home in the evening after homework, play and a hot meal. Children are selected by poverty level and those who are at risk of being put into state care.

Our group arrived in time for a delicious noonday meal as the children returned from their local schools. There was plenty of exuberant play among the younger ones. As the meal was served, Csilla asked them about their day and the kids eagerly shared their thoughts. At the end of the meal,



The children of Samuel House pictured with Director, Csilla Bertalan (far left), the minister and two elders of St. Giles Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, Ont.

even the little ones joined in a prayer of thanksgiving for the food and God's love. Even without understanding Hungarian, the language of these Reformed Church members, it was clear that the kids adored Csilla. Samuel House does not replace the parental and family ties. Believing that education is the key to fighting poverty and despair, Csilla urges the older children to encourage their parents and younger siblings to stay in school and be hopeful for their future.

Csilla is encouraged by Paul's words to the people in Corinth: [Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthi-

ans 13:7).

This trip was part of the moderator's work to visit and encourage our international mission partners. This year we combined it with a congregational mission trip. The group visited numerous social ministries of the Királyhágómellék District of the Reformed Church in Romania, including ministry among Roma children, income generation workshops for women with challenges, and the Lorántffy Zsuzsanna Reformed High School.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has supported Samuel House since 2014, and the congregation of St. Giles (St. Catharines) has pledged to support



This young girl from Samuel House sends her love to the PCC!



The great friendships witnessed at Samuel House.

this ministry annually for three more years. The congregational members were generous in their contribution toward making the annual trip of the Moderator possible.



**LEADERSHIP**

# Seniors and Mental Health

By Brent Harding, St. Andrew's  
 Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta.

Social worker Joelle Richardson reported at a September seminar on seniors' mental health that the most likely demographic for suicide is men over the age of 80. Ms. Richardson spoke to the second annual mental health seminar hosted by the Mission and Pastoral Care Teams of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary.

Ms. Richardson explained that seniors (those aged 60 and over) face considerable challenges to their mental health. With the variety of prescription medications most people are using, it's easy for mental health challenges to be brought on by drug interactions and side effects.

As well, seniors tend to get more isolated as time goes by. Deaths among friends and family, family moving away, loss of a home due to downsizing, retirement, a missing sense of worth and purpose that came from work, mobility issues including loss of a driver's licence, along with basic loss of independence and previous income are among the factors Ms. Richardson outlined that result in increasing isolation and poor mental health.

Mental health is distinct from mental illness. Age-related conditions, such as Alzheimer's or dementia, are considered illnesses, while depression or anxiety are considered health concerns. Typically, seniors with health concerns—usually pain—easily speak to a doctor to be diagnosed and treated. Young people talk to their doctors about feelings. But when it comes to mental health, seniors are less inclined to speak.

Mental health professionals estimate that some 20 per cent of Canadians suffer mental health challenges. Ms. Richardson said she believed that number may actually be higher. "In 2017, the World Health Organization estimated 15 per cent of people over 60 have mental health issues," she said. Discussing mental health often makes people uncomfortable. There is a negative belief about mental health—a stigma that mental health professionals are attempting to change in order to promote greater acceptance within the community. One of the major problems addressing mental health issues that deters people from discussing problems is not knowing how to respond.



What are the risk factors for mental health issues? Ms. Richardson said retirement or leaving a job can be big risk factors as well as a loss or bereavement. A prior episode of depression can be a trigger as well as a disability. Sleep disturbance can also be a factor affecting health, both physical and mental.

The fastest growing demographic in Canada is seniors but psychologist Adam Hall, who chaired the session, noted he and the seminar organizers had difficulty identifying a psychologist, or other mental health professional, with much geriatric experience.

There are approximately eight million unpaid caregivers in Canada, she said. Addressing mental health issues can make a caregiver's job that much easier. Caregivers include people such as family members, friends and professionals. Whichever the type of caregiver, bringing mental health issues under control can take a load off the caregiver's mind.

"Women are most likely to be diagnosed with depression," Ms. Richardson said. A common example of conditions leading to depression, one type of mental health issue, is a senior who has lost a friend or close

family member, perhaps a spouse. Logically, an individual will be depressed and grieve. Grieving has recognizable stages but when it goes on for too long it becomes a mental health issue that requires intervention. "Depression is not a normal part of aging," she said.

More Canadians die by suicide than homicide and automobile collisions combined. Detecting a person prone to suicide is relatively easy, she said. A study has found that directly confronting a person about their intention is the most revealing. That is the time to call 9-1-1, she said. During last year's mental health seminar, a psychologist told the audience that simply raising the matter with someone facing challenges is a good first step.

What does intervention look like? The two main components may be medication and counselling. Typically, a doctor, or someone like Ms. Richardson, may refer a patient to a psychiatrist who is trained to identify mental health issues. The psychiatrist is the one who would prescribe medication. The next step, counselling, may be carried out by a number of different professionals, including social workers, psychologists and

mental health therapists.

One of the best therapies for someone facing a mental health challenge is volunteering. Attending church, and participating in the congregation's activities, brings someone who may be isolated into contact and provides many opportunities for activities and support. In her presentation, Ms. Richardson said that church attendance may be one component of a recovery from depression. "Whatever works for you, do it," Ms. Richardson commented that while medications are important, "They are not the be all and end all."

At last year's seminar, the Rev. Tim Archibald said that the church is the place to come "when you are broken."

A feeling of helplessness often stops a person from taking action, yet there are many resources avail-

able in the community, from assistance with mental health to activities for involvement.

The Mission Team launched this seminar series last year before Mental Health Week. Behind the team's initiative was the realization that many Canadians experience mental health issues. Last year's discussions included recognition of a role for Christians in addressing mental health. One factor in the team's motivation was the current initiative in the mental health community to destigmatize mental health by recognizing that everyone faces mental health challenges at some point in their life. These challenges are addressed by recognizing and seeking help rather than hiding. This enlightening event was co-sponsored by Heritage Seniors, a seniors group affiliated with St. Andrew's.

## A SOUND STAGE NIAGARA PRODUCTION

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## GATHERINGS



Every September, Knox Presbyterian Church in Bassano, Alta., (population: 1,300) hosts their annual Apple Pie Fundraiser. Volunteers from the church and community come together for a day and a half of work, fellowship and good food (feed them and they will come!) to make apple pies from scratch. This year, we made 1,114 pies and raised over \$8,200!



Missional “musicking” is central to the work and witness of Brentwood Presbyterian Church in Burnaby, B.C. Brentwood PC’s Jazz Evensong services offer the community the opportunity to experience uplifting jazz music and prayer in perfect harmony. Every Wednesday night, the church is blessed to share amazing talent from a rich pool of both local and visiting jazz musicians. Pictured above are performers Adele M. Wilding (vocals), Dan Reynolds (piano), Marcos Flo (bass) and Adam Cormier (drums), who contribute to the weekly Jazz Evensong services. On the left are performers Miles Black (piano), Russ Botten (bass) and Dave Robbins (drums), who play Oscar Peterson’s Easter Suite for Jazz Evensong during Holy Week.



On Sept. 22, Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre in Puslinch, Ont., hosted a Fall Forage and Feast. Local forager and chef Steven Allen (pictured, with basket), and Crieff’s new chef, Damien Ingrao, led a hike to find wild fruit and mushrooms, followed by a fall meal with the freshly picked ingredients. It was so inspiring that now a spring event is in the works!



Orange Shirt Day Sunday was recognized at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., on Sept. 29.



## GATHERINGS



Gospel Fest was an outdoor concert hosted by St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Winchester, Ont. The afternoon musical event was held to provide inspiring gospel music for the community by local performers, as well as to raise awareness of our Community Garden project, where the event was held. The Community Garden, which is maintained by the church with the help of community volunteers, provides produce for the local food bank.



Renfrew Presbyterian Church held its Spring Mission Campaign this past May in support of purchasing a "THERA-Trainer Mobi" for the Physical Therapy Department of the Renfrew Victoria Hospital (RVH). The church challenged itself to raise the \$2,400 needed to purchase the much-needed equipment. With donations from the congregation and the church's chapter of the Dr. Margaret O'Hara's Women's Missionary Society (WMS), the project surpassed its goal—raising a grand total of \$3,737—and was able to direct the remaining funds toward the purchase of new patio furniture for the hospital's Healing Garden Gazebo. Pictured with the physical therapy device is Jenn St. Michael, RVH Senior Physical Therapist, Mary-Lynn McConnachie, the Rev. David McFarlane and Betty Zwiers. Pictured with new patio furniture is Melanie Clemmer, RVH Foundation, the Rev. David McFarlane and Patricia Dillabough, RVH Foundation (back row). Seated are Mary-Lynn McConnachie and Betty Zwiers.



Elmvale Presbyterian Church in Elmvale, Ont., celebrated three baptisms in May and June—the baptism of young Annie Stroud (pictured left with her mother, Leslie, and godparents) took place on Mother's Day, while the slightly more experienced couple, Gord and Brenda Wilson, (pictured right) were baptized at the end of June. Officiating at both services is the Rev. Paul Sakasov. The congregation of Elmvale Presbyterian was very pleased to be present to witness both sacraments.

Thanks to a grant from the Canada Summer Jobs program, three students (left to right: Ryan Gombocz, Scott Graham and Sara Robertson) helped care for the vegetable and retreat house gardens at Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre this summer.



## GATHERINGS



Youth from the mission trip to Guatemala with the Rev. Rebecca Jess after a special intergenerational Guatemala Sunday service at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont. Pictured left to right: Nikki Forbes, Jasmine Khnanishoo, the Rev. Rebecca Jess and Paige Brown. Missing from the photo is Theresa Nettleton.



The Armour Heights PC mission group during a visit to a farm in the mountains near Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. The trip was made possible through Youth in Mission and included seven youth participants from around Ontario. The group, along with John Popiel, PWS&D program coordinator, travelled through Guatemala for two weeks in May and met a number of partners to PWS&D.



The Mission and Outreach Committee at Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church in Richmond Hill, Ont., organizes and hosts a community pancake breakfast five times a year. The proceeds from the pancake breakfasts held this year have supported the PCC, PWS&D, Indigenous Ministries Fund and Richmond Hill Food Bank. This September's breakfast assisted Home on the Hill Supportive Housing. PHOTO CREDIT: SNAPD RH



Pictured here is Elder Mike Cobb presenting Presbyterian College student Silvio Estevez with a scholarship cheque in the amount of \$5,500. This award is given annually by the congregation of St. Paul's Simcoe in memory of one of our beloved members. Congratulations to Mr. Estevez—the prayers and blessings of all of us go with you.



St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont., held a wonderful outdoor service on Sunday, July 7. The service included "The Blessing of the Animals" (pictured above on the right) and was followed by an excellent BBQ!



Knox Presbyterian Church in Holstein, Ont., celebrated its 156th Anniversary Service on Sept. 22. The worship service was led by the Rev. Kees Vandermeij, and members from Knox Holstein's sister congregations of Knox Presbyterian Church in Normanby and Amos Presbyterian Church in Dromore were also in attendance.



Recently, the five-member Sunday School from Knox Presbyterian Church, Ross Ferry in Cape Breton, N.B., learned about maternal health in Malawi and Afghanistan. It was very interesting for the children to see how Presbyterian World Service & Development is improving conditions for moms and babies in these areas, and so they decided to help. A luncheon was held after a Sunday service and a free-will offering resulted in raising \$155! This amount will be matched by the Canadian government, so it will actually work out to \$310!



## GATHERINGS



Stamford Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont., once again had a wonderful time at this year's Pumpkinfest. It was the church's seventeenth year holding this event and the community's participation was tremendous. God sends more and more new, as well as returning, neighbours each year to buy preserves, have lunch at the BBQ, take their children to the Children's Activity Centre, or sit in our sanctuary and listen to a free concert by the Niagara Men's Chorus. The congregation feels blessed to have this opportunity to laugh and have fun together. This year, the Rev. Anita Van Nest's pie, aptly named "The Preacher's Pie," took first place and was auctioned to the highest bidder for \$150!



The Prayer Shawl Group at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newmarket, Ont., with a wonderful donation of knitting and crocheting materials. The Prayer Shawl Group began in 2016 and welcomes anyone from the community who knits or crochets, or would like to learn. Their mission is to create beautiful shawls and prayer cloths free of charge for anyone needing prayers and a "warm hug." To date, the group has given out over 640 prayer shawls; among the recipients are disaster victims in Alberta and many places across Canada, as well as patients in hospitals and nursing homes, and those suffering loss or illness anywhere.



This past spring, Knox Presbyterian Church in Ripley, Ont., celebrated 170 years of ministry. On Sunday, Oct. 20, the church officially closed, but the legacy will live on throughout the community and congregation. Pictured standing at the front of the church after the last service from left to right are Doug Martyn (Clerk of Session), the Rev. Randy Benson (Moderator of Presbytery), the Rev. Marian Raynard (former minister of Knox Ripley), the Rev. Ruth MacLean (Interim Moderator and former minister of Knox Ripley) and John Gilbert (Clerk of Session of the Presbytery of Grey Bruce Maitland).



Members of the PCC's National Indigenous Ministry Council as well as those from Justice Ministries gathered in October to prepare a report on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls for the 2020 General Assembly, being written at the recommendation of the 2019 General Assembly. Pictured from left: Yvonne Bearbull, the Rev. Mary Fontaine, the Rev. Amanda Currie, Fay Blaney, Allyson Carr, Jen de Combe and the Rev. Margaret Mullin.



Youth from St Paul's Simcoe spent a day paddling on the Grand River, embodying Truth and Reconciliation as they learned about the Two Row Wampum—an agreement between settlers and First Nations, which in essence was that the two peoples would paddle along the river of life side by side, close enough to be of assistance, but far enough so as not to interfere.



On Sept. 13, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Lindsay, Ont., held a spectacular Fashion Show. This event is organized by the Mary Marthas group at the church. The fashions, fittings and behind-the-scenes work is provided by two local businesses, Cathy Allan Ladieswear and Hamilton Creek. The models were mostly church members. A large crowd enjoyed delicious desserts and coffee before the show and then relaxed while they had a first-hand look at fall and winter fashions accompanied by lively and entertaining commentary.

### Resources for the Season

[presbyterian.ca/worship](http://presbyterian.ca/worship)

 The Presbyterian Church in Canada



Those involved with the 2019 Vacation Bible School posed in front of the main doors of St. Andrew's Church in Tillsonburg, Ont. This fall, the original oak doors from when the church was built in 1930 were removed, refurbished and reinstalled following the addition of new steps and railings. The original cedar shake roof of the church was also replaced.



## GATHERINGS



St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont., held a Memorial Service on Sunday, May 26. On this day, members of St. Mark's came together to take part in a Memorial Garden planting.



On Sept. 21, St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont., held its ninth annual golf tournament at the Bradford Highlands Golf Club. As with the previous eight years, they were blessed with a beautiful early fall day. The yearly event is organized by a committee of St. John's members, led by elder Scott Reimer. The tournament attendees include members of the congregation as well as friends and family from the greater Bradford community. For 2019, the funds raised will go toward a special needs camp program at St. John's. Attendees pictured on the left are the Rev. Richard Bodini of Holland Marsh Christian Reformed Church, Leslie and Charlotte Gunn and the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott. The two gentlemen on the right are tournament organizer Scott Reimer and longest-drive winner, Will Snow.

Some of the folks from Armour Heights Presbyterian Church who participated in the Ride for Refuge in support of ARISE Ministry on Oct. 5.



St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont., held a wonderful outdoor service on Sunday, July 7. The service included "The Blessing of the Animals" (pictured above on the left) and was followed by an excellent BBQ!



During the summer months, Norfolk County is home to a large number of migrant agricultural workers. This season, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in downtown Simcoe, Ont., hosted four monthly street BBQs to welcome and celebrate the men who labour far from home. The food is free, the church doors are thrown open, prayers are offered and the Spirit is present. Over the summer, we gave away 1,600 hamburgers and 700 hot dogs while building comradery with our seasonal Jamaican and Mexican residents.



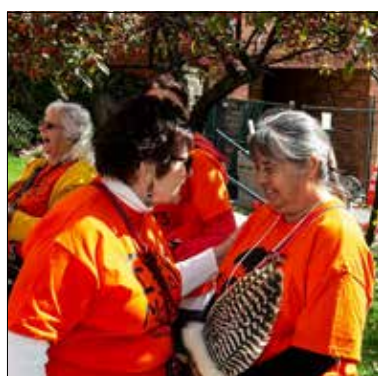
Just over 10 years ago, St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont., began hosting bimonthly Canadian Blood Services donation clinics in our then fairly new church building. The church not only supplies the space, but also dedicated volunteers who provide support and hospitality by serving drinks and refreshments, including homemade treats. Many of the volunteers have been providing this important community service since its inception. Volunteers pictured above (left to right) are Allan Saunders, Joan Smith, Tina Stoddart, Diane Weick, Christine Simpson, Bev Fulford, Marie Wood, Leila Lloyd and Edgar Lloyd. Absent: Janet LeDrew-Cox and Janet Maslak.



The Women's Association of Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church hosts two rummage sales during the year—one in the fall and one in the spring. The recent fall sale featured great deals on clothing, antiques, jewellery, housewares, games, purses, shoes, books and more. The proceeds from the rummage sales are used to help support the church's special projects. PHOTO CREDIT: SNAPD RH



## GATHERINGS



On Sunday, Sept. 29, on the land of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, in Uxbridge, Ont., Orange Shirt Day 2019 took place. This event was planned by Church of the Ascension-Anglican, Port Perry; St. Andrew's-Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Uxbridge; Trinity United Church, Uxbridge; and St. Paul's Anglican Church, Uxbridge. An ecumenical service was held at St. Paul's Anglican Church, followed by a community walk to Trinity United Church and a luncheon. After lunch, everyone enjoyed a concert featuring Indigenous performers, drummers, dancers, singers and storytellers.



The PCC mission trip to Taiwan received a warm welcome upon their arrival on November 7 from trip hosts, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT). The PCT is one of our oldest partners, dating back to 1872, with the arrival of the Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay. During their trip, the delegation visited PCT churches and institutions. The visit was educational, enriching and a mutual blessing to both the PCC and the PCT. PHOTO CREDIT: CARYS HUMPHREYS (PCT)

## BOOK REVIEW

# A Review of *Happy Are Those*

By Sylvia and the Rev. John Congram,  
former editor of the *Presbyterian Record*  
magazine

*Happy Are Those* written by  
Dorothy Brown Henderson, 2019

*Happy Are Those* is the second novel from the pen of Presbyterian diaconal minister, Dorothy Henderson – writer, cook, gardener, Christian educator, wife, mother and grandmother. Along with her novels Dorothy has also published a delightful cookbook.

For all those who read Dorothy's first novel, *The Season for Strawberries* and demanded a sequel, *Happy Are Those* is their answer. But fear not, it is not necessary to have read the first novel to understand this one.

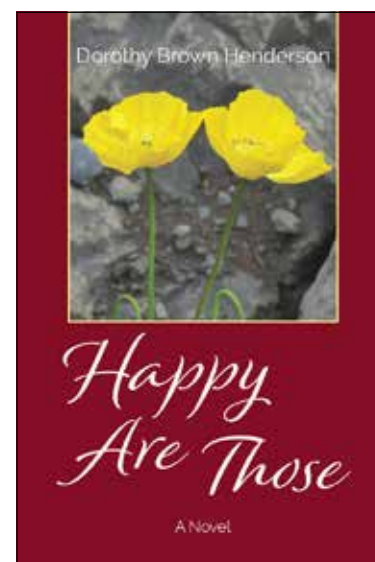
It continues the story of Aleda Vastag, a 42-year-old Presbyterian minister in a small town in Southwestern Ontario called Milburn Corners. We get to know her well through her relationships, her thoughts and experiences, and her faith.

The story begins with Aleda planning a summer vacation. She wants to use the time to think about the age-old question, "What is the meaning of happiness?" But before she can go away, serious problems erupt in her

community: a tragic barn fire, a suspected child-abuse case and the arrival of a beautiful stranger who pits citizens against one another. Aleda's up-and-down romantic interest with the local provincial police officer is woven throughout the events of this story. Will they finally get together? You will have to read the book to find out.

The most effective writers are those who write about the things they know best. Dorothy grew up on a farm in the area she writes about. She knows intimately how rural folk think and act. She has also been immersed in church life from an early age. So you will meet Roy the retired widower and churchman who lives next door. He becomes a close friend and mentor to Aleda, providing advice when asked. You will meet disgruntled people, like Connie, with her carefully guarded secrets, Dorrie with deep dark forces and, of course, the town gossips. You will also be introduced to various animals, including Aleda's old horse who lives in a barn next to the manse.

You will come away from this story knowing a little more of what it is like to live in a small town and be part of a tiny congregation. An added bonus



is you will come away with some pretty good recipes. More importantly, you will have a new appreciation for the ministry of women ministers and wishing that all ministers could be as perceptive and effective as Aleda. Dorothy presents a composite of Aleda from women ministers she has known and admired. It is no accident that she dedicates this book to these women.

Who is this book for? A perfect gift for the favourite minister or elder in your life. But anyone who enjoys a good story well told will enjoy this book. As expressed in an Amazon review by David Miller, "Reading the second novel was like meeting old friends again...Truly a pleasure to read." I think these sentiments will be echoed by anyone who reads this novel, whether or not you have read the first book.



## COMMITTEES



The Life and Mission Agency Committee at the November meeting. The members of the LMA Committee are Cindy Stephenson (Convenor), Aubrey Hawton, Marion Lade, the Rev. Sampson Afoakwah, the Rev. Allyson MacLeod, Vivian Ketchum, the Rev. Douglas Schonberg, Dr. Jo Szostak, the Rev. Cheryl MacFadyen, the Rev. Jeffrey Lackie, the Rev. Dr. Charles Cook, Donna McIlveen, the Rev. Jinsook Khang (Assembly Council), Carol Stymiest (Assembly Council), Robert Griffiths (AMS Representative), Rob Robertson (PWS&D Representative), Janet Brewer (WMS Representative).

# The Life and Mission Agency Committee

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

The Life and Mission Agency (LMA) Committee is an agency of the Presbyterian church that reports directly to the General Assembly annually. The committee is comprised of 14 members, two of whom are named from the membership of the Assembly Council and 12 of whom are named by the General Assembly. Additionally, one ex-officio representative selected from each of the Atlantic Mission Society, the Women's Missionary Society and PWS&D Committee sits on the LMA.

Responsible for supporting much of the programmatic initiatives the church undertakes denominationally, the church has said that in all its affairs the LMA will, with the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit:

- Strive to enable the whole church to serve the whole world
- Give leadership in the specific programs mandated by the General Assembly
- Be faithful to the mission statement of the church
- Integrate discipleship, evangelism, social action and justice ministry
- Respond flexibly, creatively and effectively
- Give priority to doing what must be done at the national level

- Seek to facilitate tasks that can be done more appropriately at another level of the church, or ecumenically

The LMA Committee has a broad portfolio, including worship; supporting evangelism as well as new and renewing ministries; ministry with Indigenous peoples and international partners; supporting justice initiatives; Healing and Reconciliation programs; helping to discern calls to ministry, hosting and developing congregational websites; and international development projects. The LMA organizes mission trips, Canada Youth (CY), evangelism and leadership conferences and posts mission staff overseas. Policies such as Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment and Leading with Care are updated, animated and stewarded by the LMA. The staff of the committee also support, among others, committees belonging to International Affairs as well as the Cutting Edge of Mission, which gives an award each year in recognition of a person or group for their efforts on the cutting edge of God's work in the world (past recipients include environmentalist Sheila Watt-Cloutier, child advocate Cindy Blackstock, the Rev. Dr. Terry LeBlanc, the Very Rev. Dr. John Dunlop (Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; peace activist), the Rev. John Bell (Iona Community, composer) and Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu.

When the *Presbyterian Record* magazine ceased publication, the LMA launched the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper.

The LMA Committee uses a management model built upon principles outlined by Dr. John Carver that "enables the board to focus on the larger issues, to delegate with clarity, to control management's job without meddling, to rigorously evaluate the accomplishment of the organization; to truly lead its organization." This model frees the Committee to focus on long-term policy, purpose and program priorities, and not on short-term, reactive, administrative decision-making. The Committee creates, reviews and approves priorities and mandates. The staff of the LMA then do their work within approved mandates and in light of assignments by the General Assembly. More than a dozen advisory committees, comprised of over 100 Presbyterians from across the country, help guide the work of the departments of the LMA.

The staff of the LMA also support the work of various other committees of the church by contributing to the research and written reports, holding meetings and so much more. The LMA Committee has two standing boards that report each year to the General Assembly directly: that of Education and Reception, as well as Presbyterian World Service & Development.

## A Precious Gift

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

We are holding a precious gift. People from across the country have told their stories. Stories of harm done because of homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and hypocrisy. Stories that were lived and continue to be lived out that reveal pain and vulnerability. Stories that are hard to tell. Stories that are hard to hear. We have also heard stories of God's grace revealed even in the midst of great challenge and pain. Stories of hope. Stories of love. Stories of family and community. Stories that reveal gifts and possibilities we could never have imagined. Stories that we all need to hear if we are to be honest with one another. Stories we all need to hear if we are going to discern how God is calling us to repent from what we have done.

These stories are the precious gift we hold. They are now in the hands of Rainbow Communion and we hold that gift with care. It is our task now to deliver that gift to the church. Over this final year of our mandate, we are engaged in preparing our final report and our recommendations will be presented at the General Assembly in June. We ask for your prayers as we do this work.

Something we have come to understand over the past two years is that we all need to listen and learn. In order to live out our repentance, we need to learn how to change and how to welcome all into our communities. Words are not enough. We all agree that harm done to others must stop. The challenge is, how to stop the harm. Where do we turn for support in acting out our repentance?

One of the recommendations in our interim report that was approved by the General Assembly this year was that the Life and Mission Agency develop and gather resources to strengthen our ability to provide appropriate support to congregations, Sessions, presbyteries, synods and other bodies of the church

in developing models of pastoral care that recognize the gifts of all and encourage mutual support and care for those who have been harmed by homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism\* and hypocrisy.

This work has already begun and will continue. The Life and Mission Agency is developing a resource that will be available to the whole church as we walk together on the road of repentance and seek to stop the harm. This, of course, will take time. We trust that our report will be part of that resource that faithfully transmits the gift we have been given.

What is important is that we have begun. We recall again the words of the Moderator's Letter of Repentance, written by the Rev. Peter Bush in 2018—words that have been so important to the many who have told their stories; words that have set a course for us all:

By God's grace, led by the Holy Spirit, and seeking to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ we repent and desire to go in a new way and to be a welcoming church centred in the Triune God of grace who draws us into community. As such a community, we will seek, as individuals and congregations, to welcome all, as Jesus Christ has welcomed us. We will reach out, rejoice together in fellowship, and seek holiness as we worship, pray, sing, eat and listen together for God's Word speaking to the whole church. We commit ourselves to pray with one another, weep with one another and rejoice with one another.

*\*Heterosexism is the assumption that heterosexuality is the social and cultural norm as well as the prejudiced belief that heterosexuals, or "straight" people, are socially and culturally superior to LGBTQI people. Heterosexism is the systemic bias which favours heterosexuals and heterosexuality. It stems from the idea that male and female roles, thoughts and expressions are separate and distinct. A common example of heterosexism is assuming that everyone is straight.*





## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

### Sponsorship Corner

By Rob Shropshire  
PWS&D Program Coordinator

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” (Hebrews 13:2).

I have been involved in refugee sponsorship for many years and that has always been my experience. From refugees—newcomers when

they arrive here—I have experienced the greatest warmth, the greatest smiles, the greatest hospitality and, at times, the greatest pain. From sponsors, I have witnessed great caring, warmth and hospitality.

When I began my role as Refugee Program Coordinator at PWS&D in 2013, little did I know what path my life was following and how sponsorship would take off as Canadians



The PWS&D Refugee Sponsorship team in 2017: Biniam Goitom, Michelle Ball and Rob Shropshire.

from coast to coast to coast accept the call to welcome the stranger.

I am now taking on responsibilities for programs in Asia and for planning, monitoring and evaluation at PWS&D. Someone new will soon assume the refugee sponsorship portfolio and I didn't want to move on without a last word of thanks.

It has been a humbling experience working with Presbyterians and your community partners to sponsor refugees. It has been a wonderful ministry to partake in and I have been so grateful for your efforts. Thank you!

### The Ride for Refuge



PWS&D supporters rode their bikes through the Thames Valley Trail in London in support of maternal and child health.



Edna King, from Mill Woods PC in Edmonton, walked 5 km in support of PWS&D at the Ride for Refuge.

By Emma Clarke,  
PWS&D Communications

The rubber hit the road on Saturday, Oct. 5 for more than 50 PWS&D sup-

porters dedicated to improving the lives of mothers and babies in Malawi and Afghanistan. Seven teams participated in the Ride for Refuge, a Canada-wide cycling and walking fundraiser that helps charities provide refuge and hope for displaced, vulnerable and exploited people.

For Mill Woods Presbyterian Church in Edmonton, Alta., the Ride was an opportunity for several generations to come together with a common goal. “Those who responded to our invitation to join the team were of all ages, from 12 to 88 years old,” reflected team captain, the Rev. William Ball. “The Ride for Refuge allowed the congregation to reach out beyond ourselves, opening up conversations about maternal, newborn and child health.”

Pregnancy is especially dangerous for women in Malawi and Afghanistan, where maternal and child mortality rates are among the highest in the world. PWS&D's maternal, newborn and child health program is helping to ensure pregnant women, mothers and their newborn children get the care they need to survive childbirth and stay healthy. Matched 4:1 through additional support from the Government of Canada, the over \$16,000 will go even further.

Since PWS&D began participating in the event four years ago, the Ride for Refuge has raised over \$52,000 to help make healthy deliveries a reality.

PWS&D's maternal and child health program receives generous funding from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.

### A Walk in Their Shoes



Solidarity walk participants answered the call to “share the journey” with refugees.

By Emma Clarke,  
PWS&D Communications

With their communities torn apart by political conflict, over 70 million people worldwide have been forced from their homes, often walking for long periods in search of safety. On June 23, congregants from Knox Presbyterian Church in Kouchibouguac, N.B., joined with members of other area churches to walk a few steps in their shoes.

While their strides were symbolic, the stories heard by those attending the “Walk in Solidarity with the Refugees of the World,” hosted by Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola Catholic Parish, were real. On the walk, par-

ticipants expanded their understanding of what refugees experience by hearing the true story of a refugee from Sudan who now lives in their community. Then, they celebrated the rich cultural traditions refugees bring to Canada as they feasted on *chapatis* made by two young Syrian refugees.

When asked if they would be willing to “share the journey” with refugees, participants in this ecumenical walk repeated what so many Presbyterian congregations have emphatically declared in their sponsorship efforts: “Ben oui!”—“Of course!”

To learn more about the PCC's refugee sponsorship program, visit [WeRespond.ca/refugee-sponsorship](http://WeRespond.ca/refugee-sponsorship).

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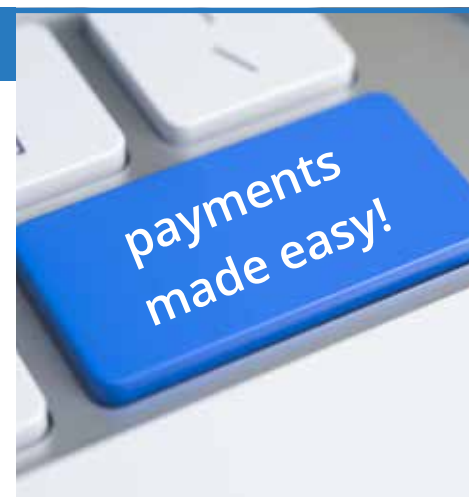
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## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

# Thinking About Hunger

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

I'm writing this on World Food Day—a time to think about hunger issues in the world and how to end hunger in countries where people struggle to find enough food for themselves and their families. It's a day when we recognize the importance of our collective work with Canadian Foodgrains Bank. PWS&D is responding through the Foodgrains Bank to hunger struggles in Malawi, Syria, Bangladesh, Haiti, Guatemala, Pakistan and Yemen. We also acknowledge with gratitude the support the Canadian government offers the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in our Christian response to hunger.

On Oct. 15, the Nobel Prize in economics was awarded to a trio who have been working to figure out the most effective way to eliminate poverty. Congratulations to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer. They seek to better understand gaps in development so that we can all be more effective at closing them. There are still too many people who live with

very little. It is estimated that over 700 million people live in extreme poverty, on less than \$2 per day, and that number keeps growing. The world needs more economists and leaders who dedicate their attention to the best ways to eradicate poverty. Their work can help guide us all in being more effective in achieving a more sustainable, compassionate and just world.

I was recently in Kenya with a delegation from Canadian Foodgrains Bank, visiting projects that contribute to women's empowerment. The farmers we met were women who had learned to diversify their production using conservation agriculture techniques that greatly improved the productivity of their small parcels of land. Those women are role models for others who learn from them. They are proud of their achievements and keen to show others how to do the same. Their energy is contagious.

Men were skeptical at first, as the risks in adopting new agricultural techniques could have especially dire consequences for the whole family if



Women and men are collaborating to harvest a variety of crops in Kenya, including papaya, bananas, onion, millet, cassava and more.

crops are lost. After witnessing the success though, men tend to come on board and help women expand production.

The projects we visited focus on learning rather than providing physical goods. This is so effective because people see that what they achieve is based on their own efforts and skills.



Lydia Wanjiru Waweru stands in her conservation agriculture field in Kenya.

These women are much more self-reliant because they are using locally available resources. Their own and their family's nutrition have improved through crop diversification—planting more drought-resistant crops and fruits and vegetables. Some were able to generate supplementary income through the sale of vegetables from their gardens. They had also learned to process potatoes and bananas into dried or fried chips, thereby adding market value and reducing

waste.

One of the main lessons learned from our visits was that men in these communities often feel challenged to provide for their family, especially in the context of scarce resources. Unpredictable weather patterns adds to the stress for families. The success of women's efforts in conservation agriculture helps to reduce these pressures on the family and contributes to household harmony, which is a good news story.

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## Partner Spotlight: CEPAD



Dámaris and her husband, Gilberto.  
PHOTO CREDIT: CEPAD

By PWS&D Communications

Dámaris Albuquerque, Executive Director at the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua (CEPAD), always wanted to help people. Growing up in Masaya, Nicaragua, she dreamed of studying psychology at university so that she could help people overcome challenges in their lives. Violent conflict that gripped her hometown prevented Dámaris from continuing her studies at university, but also led to her position at CEPAD.

CEPAD works toward the sustainable development of vulnerable communities in Nicaragua. PWS&D supports a food security project that helps small-scale farmers grow more food after they learn about soil quality, pest management and more sustainable techniques. Farmers are given vegetable seeds and fruit tree saplings to diversify their diets for

better nutrition.

Dámaris is fulfilling her dream of helping people in need—lifting up and empowering vulnerable people to create positive change in their communities—and it has become her passion. “I learned about the equal value of women and men, as well as about community development and how life should be on earth.”

### How did you become executive director of CEPAD?

I started working as a secretary at CEPAD in 1978, after the first violent uprising in Masaya, Nicaragua, working with those affected by the bombings taking place. That was the beginning of the office there. After serving many roles, I became the executive director in 2001.

### What has been a particularly memorable moment for you during your work with CEPAD?

I often think of Gladys Rizo from Pantasma in Nicaragua. She is a grandmother who always keeps learning and loves her community. When CEPAD came to walk with the community, Gladys immediately joined the sustainable agriculture program. She has improved her garden and has learned the nutritional value of the food. She is now the vice mayor in her community.

### Why is CEPAD's work so important?

CEPAD's philosophy is that every person must participate in the decisions that affect their lives. We walk with people in the communities that we're supporting on their road to development by providing them with tools.

PWS&D has been a partner in empowering men and women, as well as youth, and we celebrate together the local achievements—from organic agriculture to family gardens. Most importantly, we are helping people understand their worth and how they can achieve what they need—with a little help from friends at PWS&D.

### What inspires you?

My inspiration comes from Jesus who came to give us abundant life, here on earth as it is in heaven. He went through the villages teaching, preaching, healing—and told us to do the same.

### What message do you have for people in Canada reading this?

We are all part of the body of Christ wherever we are and whatever our context. We need each other to carry out our missions, whether in Canada or Nicaragua. We need to learn from each other about our challenges, but also about our hopes. We need to celebrate our achievements.



## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT



Displaced from his home, Ahmed, his wife and seven children take shelter under a bridge in Yemen. PHOTO CREDIT: ADRA

# Conflict and Hunger

By PWS&D Communications

Conflict is the cause of acute food insecurity in many countries around the world. Over sixty per cent of hungry people in the world live in countries affected by conflict.

Instability that triggers mass displacement and disrupts food production leaves women and men trapped in cycles of hunger and children facing life-threatening malnutrition. In countries affected by conflict, a plate of food can sometimes cost more than a day's wages. PWS&D is called to respond to those in need due to conflict and hunger.

### Yemen

Airstrikes and ongoing fighting in Yemen continue to affect access to food, clean water and the other essential services that millions of residents need to survive.

After Ahmed and his family of nine fled their home because of encroaching violence, they were forced to seek refuge under a bridge in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen. Now, his days are filled with collecting and selling empty water bottles in an attempt to afford bread and yogurt for his family.

Ahmed lost so much but remains thankful because he still gets to hold

on to the things that are irreplaceable.

"We had nothing to bring with us, but I look at my kids and thank God every time I see them with me. We can always replace material things, but we can never replace a human life."

PWS&D is supporting members of Canadian Foodgrains Bank as it provides 1,100 vulnerable families with flour, beans, oil, sugar and salt. PWS&D is also helping to rehabilitate water sources, benefiting over 15,000 people.

### Rohingya Refugee Crisis

Since the outbreak of state-led violence against the Rohingya minority in 2017, almost one million women, men and children have been living a life of turmoil. A shortage of international support means that 65 per cent of the food and security needs of Rohingya refugees are not being met and so any supplementary efforts will help fill the gap.

After fleeing prosecution in Myanmar, Rohingya refugees like seventeen-year-old Sufira have made a new life among the makeshift shelters of the sprawling refugee camps in Bangladesh—but it hasn't been easy.

Soon after arriving, Sufira's mother



Ayaan and her family receive food baskets in Syria with support from PWS&D and Canadian Foodgrains Bank. PHOTO CREDIT: HELEN MANSON/WORLD RENEW

became very ill. After she passed away, her brother fled the camp. Suddenly, Sufira was completely alone, living among strangers, and uncertain about where her next meal would come from.

The women and men living around her, once unfamiliar, formed a network of support for Sufira. They encouraged and consoled her and shared any supplies they could manage. Using food vouchers, provided by PWS&D with Canadian Foodgrains Bank members, they helped Sufira purchase the food she needs to get by. "I hope the food will continue," said a grateful Sufira.

### Syria

Between December 2018 and July 2019, the number of people in need in Syria reached over 13 million, due primarily to the impact of hostilities. Between May and August, a further 630,000 people were displaced in Syria.

It's been seven years since Ayaan, her husband and her five children enjoyed a life of peace, safety and comfort.

In 2012, they were forced to flee Homs, Syria, when an armed group broke into their home and attacked Ayaan's husband. Since that day, Ayaan's husband has been suffering severe depression and requires constant care.

The family made their home in a sparsely furnished apartment in another part of Syria. Ayaan wasn't able to leave her husband, so to earn some money, her two young sons started working at a nearby grocery store instead of going to school.

Still, the family struggled to access basic necessities. "It breaks my heart to see my children hungry," said Ayaan, who was often forced to skip meals.

Relief came to Ayaan in the form of food baskets distributed through a PWS&D-supported project with Canadian Foodgrains Bank partners. As a result, life has been easier for the family and Ayaan's sons have been able to go back to school.

### Respond with PWS&D

Because of generous Presbyterian support, PWS&D has responded to these and many other crises to ensure thousands of families receive life-saving assistance after fleeing violence. But the gap remains between the need and our capacity to respond—please help close the gap. Donations in response to these crises are eligible to be matched 4:1. To make a donation, visit [WeRespond.ca/emergency-relief](http://WeRespond.ca/emergency-relief).

## Champions' Corner

By Emma Clarke,  
PWS&D Communications

Gone for many is the favourite pastime of letter writing. Still, it can be exhilarating to receive a postcard from a travelling friend, or a neatly wrapped package in the mail to mark a special occasion.

Every year, Champions—volunteers from across Canada who connect their congregations with the work of PWS&D—eagerly await the arrival of a big white envelope: the PWS&D annual resource pack. This collection of reports, brochures and activities provides a window into the life-changing work happening around the world through the generosity of Presbyterians. Often, it gives Champions the spark they need to inspire their congregation to get involved.

### A day in the life of a Champion: the Rev. Anita Van Nest

The Rev. Anita Van Nest is the minister of Stamford Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont. Last year, a note Anita received in PWS&D's mailing inspired her to start an annual World Food Day celebration at her church. Momentum continues to build at Stamford as many generations engage together in an interactive cooking and dining experience that is helping them understand the diverse food needs of people around the world.

Anita considers updates from PWS&D helpful when sharing with her congregation and presbytery, and considers them vital to her role in the national church. When asked why she decided to become a Champion, Anita shares, "There are lots of things that distract us. I like to pull our attention back to the important things."

Do you want to be among the first to receive news and resources from PWS&D? Become a Champion today by visiting [WeRespond.ca/be-a-champion](http://WeRespond.ca/be-a-champion).



Youth at Stamford PC in Niagara Falls prepared and cooked food as they learned about food insecurity in honour of World Food Day.





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## PWS&D

# Presbyterians Respond to Cyclone Idai



In Malawi, Cyclone Idai devastated fields and homes, leaving many in need. PHOTO CREDIT: CFGB/Shaylyn McMahon

By Shaylyn McMahon,  
Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Mwadaine Nasiyaya was three months pregnant when she watched her crops wash away. She had been hoping to harvest the maize, pigeon peas and peanuts in a few weeks, and there they were—flooded and washing away.

Mwadaine lives and farms in the southern Malawi district of Mulanje, where many homes and crops were destroyed when Cyclone Idai hit mid-March.

It's a time of year that's typically full of hope for the future, as Malawian farmers prepare to harvest their crops to produce food and income for the coming months. Instead, this year's harvest season was met with devastation from the cyclone, which affected three million people across Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

It was one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to hit southern Africa. In Malawi alone, it's estimated that 922,000 people in 15 districts were affected, with 86,980 people being forcibly displaced from their homes.

Compared to some of her neighbours, Mwadaine was lucky: her home didn't collapse—there were a few cracks here and there, but it stayed standing—and she managed to salvage a bit of maize from her one-acre field.

Yet despite this "luck," Mwadaine was worried: the maize was the only food she was able to access for her four-year-old daughter and seven-year-old son immediately after the cyclone swept through.

In Malawi, families will typically dry out their maize so they can grind it up into a flour and make the country's traditional dish of nsima—a type of porridge made from boiling

maize flour and water. This is the preferred way to eat maize, but Mwadaine didn't have time to dry it out. Her family ate it fresh, as there was nothing else available.

"It was tough to find enough food," she said. "I would wake up and wouldn't eat until noon, even though I was pregnant."

Mwadaine looked for work on other farms to make money to buy more food for her family, but there wasn't a lot of work available. Many of the larger farms were also flooded, and there was an overload of people who were similarly affected by the cyclone looking for work to get by.

"I had to ask some of my neighbours for seeds," she said. "I am grateful they gave me some tomato seeds for me to plant."

She planted the tomato seeds with hope for the future, but it would be a while until she could harvest anything to eat or sell.

"I planted everything by myself. I'm a single mother. Sometimes my brother can help with the farming, but he has his own family and farm to look after as well."

## Presbyterians respond

Presbyterians in Canada were among the first to give generously after Cyclone Idai hit. With this support, Presbyterian World Service & Development and Canadian Foodgrains Bank were able to respond quickly and efficiently.

Mwadaine was one of 10,000 people in Malawi's Mulanje district who received four monthly food packages through PWS&D and their local partner, Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD), a project that received financial support from the Foodgrains Bank and the Government of Canada. The food baskets consisted of maize flour, beans and cooking oil.



Mwadaine stands with her newborn daughter in front of their home. Food assistance from PWS&D and Canadian Foodgrains Bank allowed her daughter to be born healthy and strong. PHOTO CREDIT: CFGB/Shaylyn McMahon

Mwadaine also received a special fortified porridge that's high in nutrients for her and her young children, as well as seeds to grow more food for the longer term.

"I noticed a big difference in my kids, because they are energized and healthy now," said Mwadaine.

She also noticed a big difference in her own health. Six months after Mwadaine watched her crops wash away and worried how she'd provide for her family and unborn child, she gave birth to a healthy girl named Tamandani. "My babe was born healthy and strong," she said. "And I'm able to produce enough milk for her."

## Meeting immediate needs so families can focus on longer-term recovery

The emergency food provided by PWS&D, CARD and the Foodgrains Bank meant that Mwadaine and other families no longer had to worry about their immediate food needs. They knew where their next meal was coming from, and they knew that there would be food in the house for months to come.

With that worry at ease, Mwadaine focused on planting seeds in order to feed her children for the rest of the year. She harvested the tomatoes given to her by neighbours, and then planted the seeds she received through the project.

It was exhausting work, especially when she did it alone and while pregnant, but she's grateful for the opportunity. "Thank you," she said. "I've been really greatly helped."

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



## NEWS

# Backyard Mission Project in Chatham

*By Rev. Mike Maroney, First Presbyterian Church in Chatham, Ont.*

Every summer, First Presbyterian Church and First Christian Reformed Church in Chatham, Ont., team up for our Backyard Mission. Over two days in August, a group of volunteers transform the exterior of a house and yard for an individual in need in our city. Over the past 10 years we have scraped and painted houses, built wheelchair ramps, erected fences and gates, done general carpentry repairs, replaced eavestroughs, landscaped and done general cleanup at our project sites. All the work and materials are donated free of charge as an extension of Christian love and compassion to the homeowner.

The idea for our Backyard Mission came about after we sent our youth group to several mission trips of a similar nature held in the U.S.A. The mission trips were useful and fun for our teens, but we found them to be very expensive. Further, the rest of our congregation could only participate in the raising of funds, and not the projects themselves. Finally, we were keenly aware that homeowners in our own city could benefit from a mission project like this.

We held our first Backyard Mission in 2009 in which we worked to help people in our own backyard. The following year we invited churches in our city to join us and First Christian Reformed Church responded enthusiastically. The good people at First CRC have been our hard-working partners in this mission ever since.

This mission project is one of the highlights of the year for both congregations. Not only do we help our neighbours in a very practical way, but we have also forged strong

friendships and a sense of co-operation between both churches. There is a lot of hard work to do in the two days of the project, and we are always amazed at how much is done in such a short period of time. On average, we have 50 volunteers on site and many more ferrying building supplies, landscaping materials, and food and drinks to the site.

This year we were able to work on two houses on the same street. One house required mostly scraping, painting and some landscaping, while the other needed the complete rebuilding of extensive wooden walkways, ramps and a deck, as well as the building of a raised flower bed. Both sites looked fully transformed at the end, and the homeowners said they could not believe how beautiful their houses looked. Such sentiments expressed by the homeowners are one of the special blessings of our mission project. Most commonly, we witness near disbelief at how much work was accomplished in so short a time. Not surprisingly, we often hear the homeowners say, "I just can't believe I don't have to pay for all this!" And yet another is, "I can't believe you did this for me!" All in all, love and gratitude flow freely during the Backyard Mission.

We are thankful for our coordinators who work for months prior to our project in August. A lot of planning goes into our Backyard Mission, from soliciting nominations for deserving homeowners, to working with businesses in town to secure building supplies and even food for our on-site volunteers. We were very pleased that over 25 businesses in Chatham contributed to the success of this year's project. In a way, this is a city-wide endeavour!



All wooden walkways, ramps and a deck were replaced at this house. As well, overgrown gardens were replaced by new and tidy flower beds. Finally, a raised flower garden was built at the request of the homeowner who has mobility issues.

# 146th Meeting of the Atlantic Synod

*By John Barrett, Clerk of Session, Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I.*

In keeping with tradition, the Atlantic Synod held its annual fall meeting during the third week of October—this year hosted by Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Consisting of the six Atlantic Canadian Presbyteries, this year's attendance was outstanding and, as such, the great number of delegates contributed much to the wonderful worship and business components of Synod.

Opening Worship and Communion was conducted by outgoing Synod Moderator, the Rev. Michael Koslowski, and Zion Church Lead Minister, the Rev. Douglas Rollwage, on Monday evening. Following the service, the first of several sederunts took place during which time the Rev. Marion Barclay MacKay was elected Moderator.

Synod guest speaker, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Long, a professor emeritus of preaching at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, provided insightful and fascinating words during his two in-depth sessions over the

three days of Synod. Attendees also heard from the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart (Vancouver School of Theology), and the Rev. Dr. John Vissers (Knox College, Toronto), who brought greetings and updates from their respective colleges.

Breakout workshops, a new addition to Synod since 2018, were conducted by Barb Summers (Communications) and Jen de Combe (Canadian Ministries) from the PCC national office, the Rev. Dr. Lonnie Atkinson and the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart.

As usual, great food formed an important component of Synod and

a full roast beef banquet was hosted on Tuesday evening by Zion Church followed by some entertainment provided by members of Zion's Sanctuary Choir.

Synod is a tremendous opportunity to learn, renew collegial friendships and share both our successes and challenges within our denominational region. By all reports, the 146th meeting of the Atlantic Synod accomplished all these goals and special thanks are extended to the many Zion Church volunteers and staff who contributed toward this success.



Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown.



## NEWS

# 25 Years and Going Strong

By Janet Brewer, President of Women's Missionary Society

Twenty-five years sounds relatively young in human terms. At this age, one would be considered a "millennial," but in terms of a worshipping community, this is a pretty good start. It is especially good given that that community has grown from being just an idea to becoming a congregation of 400+ members, consisting of people of all ages who worship together in a large building in Toronto, Ont., all in the small span of a quarter of a century.

I attended the 25th anniversary worship service of the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church on Sunday, July 28, which was the crowning celebration of the week-long anniversary event and the culmination of several

years of planning. The service began with praise, prayer, songs, scripture, sermons and presentations, and lasted until 1:45 p.m. The sanctuary was full of people overjoyed to be a part of the special celebration, including two previous ministers (who came all the way from Ghana), the current minister (the Rev. Raymond Abekah), current and former members, representatives from the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church in Montreal, Que., the Boys Brigade, the choir, praise band, a special soloist, community dignitaries, national office staff and presbytery representatives.

As part of the celebration, almost everyone wore unique outfits that had been designed especially for the day. Following the service, a wonderful buffet lunch was available for everyone present. What a celebration!



Ministers and members associated with the Toronto Ghanaian Presbyterian Church in Toronto.



Janet Brewer (second to right) with members of the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church in Toronto.

# 175th Anniversary in Stratford

By Al Dickie, Knox Presbyterian Church in Stratford, Ont.

It's known as "the big church with the big heart" in the heart of Stratford. Knox Presbyterian Church, in this southwestern Ontario city of 31,000, is celebrating 175 years of existence by continuing the tradition of service.

Knox Stratford is actually older than the city itself. It was founded by Scottish settlers in 1843 with services in a log cabin. The first Knox on the present site in downtown Stratford was consecrated in 1873, but was devastated by a fire in 1913, claiming the lives of the fire chief, police chief and a police constable. A joint funeral service held for the fire victims was attended by 16,000 people. A plaque on the grounds of the present church, which was rebuilt on the site and consecrated in 1915, commemorates their sacrifice.

As part of the anniversary celebrations this year, the congregation revived the ceremony of the Kirkin' o' the Tartan in recognition of the church's Scottish roots. Parishioners and guests were welcomed by Interim Pastor, the Rev. Joe Gray, as they paraded the clan tartans into the church for the blessing.

Today, the congregation worships in the large structure anchoring Stratford's main street and continues its

tradition of service to the community. For the 175th anniversary, the congregation's outreach team undertook 175 acts of outreach, and the congregation responded enthusiastically. Support included providing sunscreen and sun hats for a seniors' residence, playground toys for a school, and food and grocery cards for the local food bank and community shelters.

Ongoing mission services provided by church volunteers include the Alley Thrift Store. Over the last decade, the store, with a substantial shopping space located in the church, recycles and sells clothing, books, dishes, jewellery and other donated goods. Proceeds have totalled nearly \$400,000 since first opening. These proceeds have been donated to, besides the church itself, local, national and world charitable missions, including Presbyterians Sharing and outreach programs.

The church is also the home of the Cancer Care Mission (Wigs and Accessories), which offers a selection of wigs, hats and scarves as well as related assistance free of charge for cancer patients in southwestern Ontario. Experienced volunteers and professional hairdressers offering free services in a compassionate, supportive setting. Since its inception in 2004, the demand for its assistance has grown throughout



Following our Kirkin' o' the Tartan service, a time of fellowship was held along with Scottish dancing. The 175th anniversary was celebrated in style.

the region and serves people from centres such as Kitchener-Waterloo, London, St. Thomas, Goderich and Listowel (to name a few).

Knox Stratford, with its central location and large kitchen facilities, also hosts community dinners. Up to 100 people receive free meals in the church on a monthly basis during the fall and winter months. With its marvellous acoustics and majestic setting, the church has also served down through the years as a venue for numerous concerts and recitals, ranging from folk music to symphony.

Knox Stratford, like many of the venerable churches across the country, faces challenges in order to survive. The majestic old building is showing its age and is in dire need of extensive repairs. A church task force has been working with an



At least twice a year, the folks at Knox Stratford enjoy a games night where we play our favourite games, snack, get to know each other and have a good laugh.

architect and developer to draft a design toward rehabilitating the church.

The Rev. Dwight Nelson, who is serving as Interim Moderator of Knox and an adviser to the task group, emphasized the church's value to the community in an interview with the *Stratford Beacon Herald*. "The heritage of a congregation is not just the building," he said, "it's what the congregation has contributed to the



Piper, Dan Johnson, and Interim Pastor, the Rev. Joe Gray, led our colour parade into the sanctuary in a celebration of Knox Stratford's heritage. PHOTO CREDIT: FRED GONDER



In the spring and fall, Knox Stratford holds a Family2Family sale in our banquet hall. This enables families to "clean house" and other families to buy new items for great prices.

community over the years, and this congregation has a long heritage of active partnering with the community."

For Knox Stratford, it continues to be about service.



## NEWS

# Master of Theological Studies at Presbyterian College

*By the Rev. Dr. Roland J. De Vries,  
Director of Pastoral Studies at the  
Presbyterian College in Montreal*

For much of its history, The Presbyterian Church in Canada has had a rather arms-length relationship with French-speaking populations in Canada—and particularly with the Francophone majority in Quebec. This wasn't always the case. Shortly after its founding in 1865, for example, the Presbyterian College (PC) was able to establish a French department for theological instruction and, to this end, engaged the Rev. Professor Adrien Coussirat to teach theology. Coussirat had been born into a Huguenot family in France and eventually moved to North America to pastor and to teach. He went from part-time lecturer at the College in 1868 to full-time professor in the French department in 1870.

Unfortunately, in the early decades of the 20th century, this focus on theological education in French waned

considerably, and much of the PCC's investment with Francophone communities was lost.

Fast-forward to the summer of 2019, when the Presbyterian College was able to sign an agreement with the Institut de Théologie pour la Francophonie (ITF), to launch a Master of Theological Studies in French. The Institut is an evangelical theological school in Montreal affiliated with Université Laval. The new master's program began in September of this year as a pilot project and has four students enrolled—its curriculum focuses on the formation of missional leaders for diverse, Francophone congregations.

The goal of the program is to help church leaders bring the good news of Christ into various contexts with confidence and with theological care. Further, the hope of both ITF and PC is to enrol an increasing number of women and men in the program, and to eventually offer it on a bilingual basis.

Dr. Glenn Smith, formerly of Direction Chrétienne (Montreal) and a long-time friend of the Presbyterian College, is Academic Dean at ITF and has been named Director of the Master of Theological Studies program. It can be said that Dr. Smith and the Faculty of PC approach this program in the same spirit that the Rev. Coussirat approached theological education more than a hundred years ago: "Coussirat aimed to have both an evangelical and a wide theological perspective in his teaching" (Richard Loughheed in the book *Still Voices—Still Heard*).

Among the students in the pilot project, Warren Beaubrun describes his approach to studies in this way: "I've been wanting to study at the graduate level for many different reasons, mostly because I seek to do more for the church, and to learn more from the church. I feel that graduate studies have a way of working your mind more, so to speak. I feel that what I will learn throughout this journey, will



Students of the new Master of Theological Studies program with the Rev. Dr. Roland J. De Vries (standing far left) and Dr. Glenn Smith (standing far right).

contribute to the advancement of the kingdom and will be of service to the congregation. I also want to be able to train the next generation of men and women that have the calling to serve Jesus."

The church across the country is imagining new possibilities for its life and ministry. That is no less true in Quebec, and no less true in theological education. These are exciting days!

# Dance and Musical Theatre Outreach in Collingwood



Back Row (left to right): Jane Moysey, Mary Marshall, Marie Borrelli, Cherolyn McKee, Marlene Weatherall, Phyllis Smith and Jennifer Phillips. Front Row (left to right): Janis McKechnie, Jo-Anne Morrison, Nathalie Demers-Carswell and Linda Miles. Absent: Cathy Baginski.

*By Marlene Weatherall, First  
Presbyterian Church in Collingwood,  
Ont.*

## The First Pres. Tappers

The First Presbyterian Church in Collingwood, Ont., offers a variety of opportunities to contribute to outreach programs at the church. One of these is the opportunity to build connections and a sense of community by being part of a dynamic dance troupe known as the "First Pres. Tappers."

This group was created in 2015 after an inspiring tap dance routine was performed at a Variety Night held by the church. Following this performance, a number of women in the church expressed an interest in learning to tap dance or, in some cases, reconnecting with it. It was not long before a collaborative effort between

Barbara Sharp, Jo-Anne Morrison and Marlene Weatherall got a tap dance group going. Phyllis Smith, an indispensable contributor to the Outreach Program and a tap professional, volunteered to lead the group. With the blessing of Session, First Pres. Tappers was launched.

Approximately 20 participants gather Tuesday evenings to tap with joy. The evening opens and closes with prayer. First Pres. Tappers have since developed an outreach program, performing at the church's Remembrance Day Tribute Service and at their Variety Night. They also spread their love of dance during performances at local nursing homes and retirement homes.

First Pres. Tappers share and support one another outside of tap as well, and this troupe has strength-

ened their sense of family and faith through dance. Some comments from participants have included: "It is a worthwhile and fun-filled recreation." "It's so good for my soul." "After my cancer treatments were completed, I tapped across to ring the bell."

First Presbyterian Church is truly blessed to have a congregation that is so full of talent and enthusiasm to support outreach programs.

## Burning Bush Theatre

First Presbyterian Church is also proud to offer Burning Bush Theatre (BBT), an authentic musical theatre experience for youth aged 7–17—free of charge. BBT is a ticket to learning all about music, dance, drama, staging and story. The group meets on Thursdays from 4 to 5:30 p.m. and there are several sessions throughout the school year. No audition is required, and it is open to all youth in the surrounding communities.

BBT was formed in 2016 and has already performed six mini-musicals. The troupe began with "From Borders to Bridges," and since then has thoroughly enjoyed presenting the upbeat biblical musicals of Tom S. Long and Allen Pote. In the past, audiences have enjoyed "The Rock Slinger's Greatest Hit," "Malice in the Palace," "Are We There Yet?" and "The Sailor's Bible." This fall marked BBT's sixth and latest musical production, "Life of the Party: The Story of Mary and Martha."

An atmosphere of love and accept-



The First Pres. Tappers performing at the church's annual Variety Night, "A Little Night Music," in June.



The members of the Burning Bush Theatre group rehearsing their latest production, "Life of the Party: The Story of Mary and Martha," performed on Sunday, Nov. 10 at both Sunday services.

ance is fostered within this group. Theatre is fun and a great confidence builder. BBT provides an incredible opportunity for both the actors and the audience to live and experience the journey of Jesus and other well-known biblical characters. The com-

pany is thankful for the leadership of Kimberley Raeburn-Gibson, the musical director at the church, and for the talents of Grenville Bray, Barbara Sharp (directors), Martha Lawrence (stage manager) and Jessica Mills (choreographer).



## NEWS

# Music Ministry at Knox, Vernon



Members of the regional square-dancing club having a blast at their Jamboree, held quarterly at Knox Vernon.

By the Rev. Dr. Teresa Charlton, Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C.

Whether singing, dancing or toe-tapping, music at Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C., is an integral part of the life of the community and the congregation. Many local organizations make use of the large fellowship hall at Knox for their various musical activities.

For the past 20 years, the Vernon

Scottish Country Dancing Club can be found “reeling and jigging” their way around the hall. Not to be confused with Highland dancing, Scottish country dancing is done in small groups wearing flowing kilts, and is in high demand around the celebrations for Robbie Burns.

At a slightly faster pace, regional square dancing clubs make quarterly use of Knox for their jamborees. And once or twice a year, they offer a cos-



The Vernon Scottish Country Dancing Club.

tume “Buy, Trade & Sell,” where the foyer of Knox becomes a colourful array of tulle, crinolines and bling.

More recent additions to the roster are an African drum class and instructional seminars led by North Okanagan Pipes and Drums. You’ll want to wear your ear plugs on these days!

The sanctuary at Knox offers the city a different kind of music. A community choir, aptly named Counter-

point, practices weekly and offers two yearly thematic concerts. But the grand piano is also busily engaged with piano recitals and other local entertainers.

The music ministry of Knox also works diligently to serve the spiritual needs of its senior congregation and the growing aging population in the city of Vernon. Surrounded by retirement homes and apartment buildings, Knox is a growing congregation of the recently retired and the experienced senior. Seasonal mid-week services partner with local long-term care facilities to provide meaningful worship to those suffering with dementia and complex care needs by offering worship at a time when care facility transportation and staff can attend and assist.

At the same time, the music ministry of Knox moves out into the community, visiting over seven local long-term care facilities each month, with songbooks, stories and devotionals. This past summer, we experimented for the first time with an “Old-Fashioned Hymn Sing,” which was so well received by the community that a second event is already in



One of the newest additions to the music ministry of Knox: African drum classes.

the works.

Knox has musically embraced the old adage, “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.” If our Presbyterian roots come through in the “blue,” then our worship and music style have a splash of the “old” familiar favourites, blended with “new” contemporary worship, while “borrowing” from the many denominations represented in our city.

## Little Miracles in Winnipeg

By Ann Brough, Little Miracles Preschool Program Volunteer at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Man.

If you were to step into the hall at St. John's Presbyterian Church in the north end of Winnipeg, Man., on a Monday morning, you would see an excited group of young music makers.

On Sept. 9, 2019, our Little Miracles program began its seventh year of music and play, with the latest group of preschoolers and their caregivers. We accept children from birth to five years of age. This year, our youngest baby was born just this fall and our oldest child is almost four years old.

Seven years ago, two of our elders, Dave and Sam (both men in their senior years) met for coffee to talk about reaching the community on a more regular basis. We already hold an annual barbecue and Christmas breakfast, as well as run a food bank for Winnipeg Harvest every second week. Then the guys came up with the idea of a weekly preschool program!

When they shared their idea with

me, Dave's wife, I thought they were crazy. Having a background in early childhood education, I knew what an enormous task it would be. God had other ideas. The following Sunday—just three days after the coffee meeting—our music director, Joanne, stopped me after church and shared with me that she had always thought about beginning a preschool music program, and felt she had some extra time to pursue that dream. When I gasped, “You're kidding, right?” she assumed I wasn't a fan of the idea, but I quickly explained what Dave and Sam had discussed a few days before. We all felt it was no coincidence, but a very direct message, and we began to find ways of putting together a plan.

With a generous grant from the PCC to start us off with some musical instruments and equipment, we were up and running by September of 2012.

We have continued to receive wonderful community grants, as well as a Synod Grant, along with personal donations and support from our congre-



During playtime, the group loves working on large projects, particularly when there's paint involved.

gation. We have a loyal and dedicated group of volunteers, who have been with the program since the beginning.

Monday mornings begin at 9:30 a.m. with Miss Joanne leading a music session, where the children experience a wide variety of activities, involving percussion instruments, singing, dancing, listening and storytelling. They quickly learn rhythm and pitch, and I'm always amazed by their progress.

Guest musicians are invited to our program to share their talents. We have been fortunate enough to enjoy cello, clarinet, guitar, organ, piano, steel drums and even bagpipes, when the children marched behind the piper up and down the aisles of the sanctuary, playing percussion instruments. A recent guest musician was one of our dads, who shared his love of the music of Georgia.



Little Miracles group picture. Joanne Diplock, the music teacher, is seated on the floor (far left).

At 10:15 a.m. we provide a wonderful snack—I'm not kidding! Miss Ann makes the most amazing snacks, and coffee and tea for the moms, dads and grandparents. After snack time, it's playtime and the volunteers transform our hall into a child's world with equipment ranging from tunnels, tents, blocks, a sandbox, ride-ons and pushcarts, to a kitchen centre, Play-Doh, books, puzzles, arts and crafts.

With 15 small children enjoying their playtime together, it may sound like chaos, but it isn't. As adults, we feel especially blessed to have our



Kids trying their hand at bell ringing.

church hall filled with music, laughter, excitement and fun every week.

The children are indeed our LITTLE MIRACLES.



## NEWS

# Let There be Light in Bradford

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

When St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont., moved to a new facility in 2004, the decision was made to preserve some items from the old building originally built in 1893—the organ pipes, some stained-glass windows and the original gas lamps. The gas lamps were inverted and electrified by a local contractor (Skidderal Electric) about 40 years ago. Edgar Lloyd, a long-time member, painstakingly restored one of the gas lamps with steel wool and a toothbrush. It's now mounted in the multi-purpose gathering room adjacent to the sanctuary.

But the original gas lamps, while a classic and enduring fixture of the church, are not very cost or energy efficient. To realize a cost savings on

hydro and to steward resources and the environment, a family from St. John's offered seed funding to switch to LED lights.

The church's facility manager, Ron Glendenning, was tasked with pricing out the new LED lights. He recommended that the Board of Managers do the conversion in three phases, starting with the sanctuary and hallways, then the gym and classrooms, then the outdoor lights. With the help of a retired electrician and active church volunteer, Jim Van Hemert, the lights were installed throughout the facility. The first and second phase is complete, including replacing 500-watt incandescent bulbs in the sanctuary. All that remains is the outdoor lights around the church and in the parking lot.

Yes, the conversion is expensive. However, the church pre-qualified for grants from the Independent Energy



**The gas lamps, preserved from the original church building built in 1893, fitted with new LED lights.**

System Operator program (formally known as "Save on Energy") and received over \$2,000. Immediately the Board of Managers noticed a significant savings on hydro—almost 50%! The switch to the new LED lights will pay for itself in no time. Having said, "Let there be LED lights," installed them and noticed the savings, the Board of Managers said, "It was good."



**Ron Glendenning, Facility Manager, with Jim Van Hemert, electrician.**

# Restoration Project in St. Catharines



**The original Knox Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, Ont.**

*By Peggy Boyle, Restoration Team Member, Knox Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, Ont.*

Knox Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, Ont., began as a congregation in 1841 in a small house. It wasn't until 1860 that the present building was constructed. Presbyterians of the day were naturally frugal and so the building was not as ornate as other religious buildings of the period.

The church building, while not designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, is considered a "Priority 2" building by the City of St. Catharines, meaning the City would consider the building for Heritage designation if

requested. At this time, there are no plans to request designation.

As part of improvement and preservation efforts, a restoration team was formed with team members bringing their expertise to the table: engineering, finance, heritage, project management, congregation member, administrative support. A number of meetings were held and are still being held every two weeks so that the project is done just right. There are so many decisions to be made—some subjective (i.e., colour, style) and some objective (i.e., cost vs benefit). As with many restoration projects, work on one area often uncovers other issues that need to be

addressed.

A project of this scope and detail is daunting to say the least, but once it begins, it requires many discussions about the finer points and the hundreds of decisions to be made. The contractor has provided the church with a project manager, who meets with the team every couple of weeks to walk through the upcoming work schedule and explain the various jobs to be completed and, of course, the costs of each project. Two restoration team members are on-site a couple of times per week to observe and discuss the progress with the site manager.

The actual restoration work began in April of this year. The goal for November was to have the front and driveway elevations—the two most common elevations seen by the public—be completely restored. The balance of the building will be restored in the spring and summer of 2020. The 2019 restoration project has included work such as repairing the wood on the main front doors, removing the paint on brick surfaces to reveal the original brickwork, painting trim around windows and much more.

All the work involved needs to be scheduled so that scaffolding is in the proper place for the length of time required, while not impeding



**The church before the restoration project began.**



**The new Knox St. Catharines as of August 2019.**

the weekly access to the building for various functions. Fortunately, there were no weddings planned for the church to date!

Congregation decisions have also been integral to the overall project. The change back to the original red brick was viewed by some as being contentious, but when the day came, the decision was made and I believe that most members are supportive of the change. It is certainly a building to be proud of and, as it is located directly across from City Hall, it is in

a landmark position.

We, as a congregation, are blessed to have the commitment of so many members who are supportive of seeing this building preserved for future generations. This commitment came through those members of the Restoration Team who contributed their time and expertise, along with the commitment of the congregation's finances. This project would not have been possible without the financial contributions of the congregation, who fully funded the project.



## NEWS

# Brockville Presbyterial Fall Rally



Presbyterial members enjoying the Fall Rally.

*By the Rev. Marianne Emig Carr, First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont.*

Approximately 25 people gathered on a crisp fall afternoon for the Brockville Presbyterial Fall Rally on Oct. 3 at Morewood Presbyterian Church in Morewood, Ont. After coffee, fellowship and dessert, the meeting opened with worship led by the Morewood WMS Group.

The Rev. Donna McIlveen gave a short history of the life of the late Beryl (Millar) Hunter, a Deaconess, active member of the WMS and member of Morewood Church. Beryl served in the Shoal Lake area, where she was the first resident missionary (and first woman as well). She started a kindergarten, programs for older children and a boys' hockey team. While at a hockey game, she met her future husband, Douglas Hunter. They married in 1958, moved to his family farm in Morewood and raised six children. Beryl passed away in February 1989 and is buried at Morewood Presbyterian Church's cemetery.

The keynote speaker was Stephanie Chunoo, who served as a Young Adult Intern with Kalunba Social Services, the refugee ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Stephanie's work with Kalunba included: teaching English language classes,

child care responsibilities and assisting with locating housing and employment for refugees from countries such as Cameroon, Somalia, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Stephanie depended on her faith in God to help her navigate her time in Hungary. She knew God was with her and "had her back," supporting her and encouraging her during difficult times. The staff and volunteers at Kalunba were a highlight of her experience—their dedication and bravery in the face of difficult circumstances was inspiring and helped deepen her faith. She would go back in Hungary in a heartbeat!

Following Stephanie's presentation, Presbyterial business included reading and approving the minutes from the May meeting, hearing the report from treasurer Ruth Pollock and approving the provision of financial assistance to those planning to attend the Women's Gathering in May 2020.

Courtesies were given by WMS members from Ottawa. The Rally closed with singing "Siyahamba: We are marching," prayer and benediction. Everyone agreed that the Rally indeed helped them to experience God's gift of hope and learn how that hope is shared with so many people in Canada and around the world!



The Rev. Donna McIlveen of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Winchester, Ont.



Keynote speaker, Stephanie Chunoo, who served as a Young Adult Intern with Kalunba Social Services.



St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on Amherst Island, Ont.

## Garden Party Magic on Amherst Island

*By Amy Caughey, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on Amherst Island, Ont. Amy lives in Iqaluit, Nunavut, but plans her year around being on Amherst Island on the last Saturday in July for the Garden Party.*

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on Amherst Island, Ont., celebrated their 71st annual Garden Party in July. In 1948, the Garden Party was started by the women of the church, who observed too many snakes in the church outhouse, and initiated a fundraising effort to supply the manse with indoor plumbing.

Supported by their long-standing minister, the Rev. R.K. Earles, the congregation held a tea and bake sale on the lawn of the manse to raise funds. They added games for children, a white elephant table and BINGO. The men of the congregation made ice cream for the Garden Party and stored it in the ice house at the island's bustling Fishing Village.

For over 70 years, the Garden Party has brought together generations of islanders and mainlanders to enjoy a summer afternoon of homemade baked goods, pie and ice cream, used clothes, music, theatrical productions, plants, quilt displays, antiques, auctions and visiting. The sheds behind the church that once kept horses from the sun and rain during Sunday service are now the venue for the Garden Party, which happens rain or shine. Dozens of people come together to make the Garden Party happen—many hands to clean up, strike tents, haul boxes, bake pies, raise flags, move tables, wash chairs, sort clothes, park cars, flip burgers and sing songs. What started as a quest for indoor plumbing has since supported the building of a large church hall, endless main-

tenance of the nearly 200-year-old limestone church, community initiatives and international service work.

But for some, the Garden Party is more than a critical fundraiser in the life of a small church: it is a touchstone time to reconnect with old friends and remember those who came before us. It is a chance to meet across generations and bring together the best of old and new ideas. It is a day where we can set aside our differences and work together for something we all believe in.

My grandmother, Helen Caughey, helped launch the first Garden Party over 70 years ago. I thought of my grandmother as I watched my daughters and their cousins sell lemonade on the church lawn last summer. She would have been pleased seeing another generation of her family taking on the Garden Party tradition. Rural places face unique challenges, but also possess rich history and strength. We can harness the wisdom, skills and determination of our

past to carry us forward. We can share the story of the strong island women and men who worked for change. On Amherst Island, we will keep on passing down the art, the science and the magic of the Garden Party.

The next St. Paul's Garden Party is scheduled for Saturday, July 25, 2020.



Susie Caughey and Jill Caughey Walhout at the Garden Party.



For Amy, the St. Paul's Garden Party is a family tradition that has spanned generations. Her grandmother, Helen, was a founding member in 1948. 70 years later, Helen's great-granddaughters (Piper, Bronwyn, Anna, Abby, Maeve and Lily) manned the lemonade stand.



**NEWS**

# Mission and Outreach in Cambridge



A crowning sight to behold: the Rev. Dr. Aubrey Botha with his hair dyed green.



A bountiful harvest!

## Veggie Patch Summer 2019

By Kerri Beda, Missions & Outreach Committee, Central Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, Ont.

This past summer, Central Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, Ont., engaged in an exciting outreach project, partnering with our local food bank. Central PC was tasked with collecting cans of vegetables. Our Missions and Outreach committee got right to work, finding ways to make this a fun few months while bringing everyone together to help. The name “Veggie Patch” was born and the bar was set high...3,000 cans of veggies to be collected over the summer!

As the weeks wore on, stacks of cans began to grow with the weekly total changing before our eyes. One particular Sunday as our minister, the Rev. Dr. Aubrey Botha, announced the total, someone challenged him to up the ante for us. Being the fun-loving, always-there-to-support-the-cause kind of guy, he rose to the challenge and announced that if we surpassed our goal and got to 4,000 cans, he would dye his hair green! Applause erupted and so became the new goal—4,000 cans by Labour Day.

Our Vacation Bible School leaders quickly saw the perfect opportunity—sitting right before our very eyes—to connect into the Veggie Patch excitement. They saw not only the opportunity to collect more cans, but the opportunity to teach the children about our local food bank and

the ways that it supports those in need in the community around us. Children attending VBS were given the goal of bringing in 150 cans by the end of the week. Our summer interns did a fantastic job of creating competition and enthusiasm between teams. The children were equally motivated by a minister who offered to dye his hair green—a sight they desperately wanted to see! By the end of the week, the children more than tripled their goal and brought in 427 cans! The green hair deal would most certainly be sealed.

Five thousand cans later, Green Hair Sunday came and went. Without a doubt, it was a delightful and memorable moment still regarded with much warmth and laughter. But it was also so much more than that. Watching the body of Christ...from the youngest to the oldest, working together to serve our community was an incredible blessing. Children becoming aware of the needs around them and seeing that they can help too was another huge win. For all of this, we give the honour and glory to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## Road to Hope Marathon

By Greg Gowing, Missions & Outreach Committee, Central Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, Ont.

The Hamilton Road to Hope Marathon takes place the first weekend in November each year. This year, the marathon took place on Nov. 2 and



The runners from Cambridge Memorial Hospital at last year's marathon.

3. For the past several years, Central Presbyterian Church, along with the doctors and nurses at Cambridge Memorial Hospital, has used it as our primary fundraiser for Rachel's Children's Home, an orphanage in Maputsoe in small town Lesotho, Africa.

The funds we collected will go toward buying food, vitamins and clothing for the children. They will also provide teachers' salaries and fund repairs and maintenance. We are thankful for everyone who has given their time to make a difference for the children who are at Rachel's Home today. To date, four young people from Rachel's Home have moved on to post-secondary education, studying accounting, nursing, business and child psychology. Graduates have found jobs, built lives, careers and families.

To learn the remarkable story of Rachel's Home as well as our in-

volvement in the organization and the Road to Hope Marathon, visit our website: [centralchurchcambridge.ca/our-missions/lesotho-education-project](http://centralchurchcambridge.ca/our-missions/lesotho-education-project)



Elsie Botha and her daughter, Elrey. Elsie is the team leader for Central PC's Lesotho Mission.

# Knitting in Niagara Falls



A display showing a sample of all the items made (with the full boxes containing the rest) was prepared for a dedication before being sent out.

By Christine Sands-Vizzari, Coordinator of Discipleship, Chippawa Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont.

Chippawa Presbyterian Church's (CPC) “Knit-a-Thon” group meets each week for a couple of hours. The

time is filled with laughter and fun, coffee and tasty sweets, prayer and devotions, looms and many needles, learning and sharing, and always beautiful rainbows of wool.

Linda Carter, a member of CPC, had a heart to bless those who are often overlooked, particularly teenagers at Christmas. Linda also wanted to start a weekly knitting group where caring individuals could find connection while serving the community. In just one year, it has blossomed into a popular endeavour. When the group received a large donation of wool from a local partner organization, it became possible to make the group free to anyone who wanted to participate. Several participants came to learn how to knit—and stuck around to continue!

This fall, after about one year of working together, the 15 crafters do-

nated 98 pajama pants, 240 hats, 83 scarves, 98 slippers and 17 blankets. It was very satisfying for many of the participants to be able to bring boxes full of donations to local charities close to their hearts. A representative from these local organizations came to CPC's dedication of all these gifts, which took place during the Sunday, Oct. 6 service. The Rev. Doug Schonberg led the congregation to thank God for the service and ask for God's blessing for the gifts and for those who receive them, as well as for the warmth of compassion, care and notice that would go out with these gifts.

“Knit-a-Thon” works with many local organizations, including Project Share (Niagara Falls food bank and service provider), Nova House (Niagara Falls women's shelter), Night Light (Niagara Falls youth shelter), as



CPC Member, Linda Carter, dropping off over 60 gift baskets plus some extra hats, headbands and scarves.

well as schools and other community groups to provide a needed utilitarian service for keeping our community warm; not to mention creating beautiful gifts for local teens at Christmas.

Individuals and families who show up with little, can have something to change into and a means to keep warm, while they gain the knowledge that somebody cares about them.





## NEWS



The two members behind the design and building of the new Prayer Garden. On the left is Markus Knecht, who installed all of the flowers, shrubs, brickwork and sod. On the right is David Clarkson, who built all of the wood structures and benches.

## Claude PC in Caledon is Looking Good

By Bill Horton, Claude Presbyterian Church in Caledon, Ont.

At our last Annual Meeting, it was decided that we should build a small outdoor Prayer Garden, where anyone passing by could stop in and connect with God through prayer. We had a small unused area behind our church, and we chose to locate it there. Plans were drawn up and approved. Over the summer, two of our ambitious members built the garden, complete with a small lily pond and a couple of benches.

After lengthy discussions with the Town of Caledon and the Ministry of Transportation (as the church is located on a provincial highway), we were finally granted a permit to install a new roadside sign at the front of our property. We were limited in the size of a sign that could be installed and the type of message board it

could include, but we now have a new sign that shows that Claude PC is alive and active.

One other thing that happened at the beginning of the summer is that we are now connected with a Presbyterian church in Guyana, South America. It is a church that one of our newer family members used to attend. Earlier this year, we collected a barrel full of summer clothing and shipped it to them for distribution in their area. We hope to have a second barrel of children's clothing and school supplies ready to ship to them in time for Christmas.

It is exciting for us to be able to share our news with others. We had reached a point a few years ago where we were seriously considering whether we would have to lock the doors and shut down. It is a great feeling to see our congregation come alive again!



Claude Presbyterian Church's new roadside sign.



Taken at the dedication of the Claude Community Prayer Garden on Sunday, Sept. 22.

## REFLECTIONS

## Of Love and Hope

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

About 30 years ago, I pushed open the doors to a small Presbyterian church in our town. (I had served for many years at another church and had even been its secretary for five years, but the focus of that church had changed, and I could not always agree with the decisions that were being made.) When I walked into this new building, I was welcomed with open arms and felt God's love permeate every hello I received. I knew it would be my home forever. Their love covered and comforted me when a year later my husband had a massive heart attack at 56-years of age—and



lived! They were still there for me when my husband died of cancer 12 years ago.

In September of 1991, I was asked to be an elder. What a privilege to serve these people that I loved. I was able to share in the good times and the bad, and together we prayed and trusted the Lord in every situation.

Recently, I have given up my eldership. I had loved serving these wonderful people who I have prayed with, cried with and laughed with, but I have some concerns about things that are happening in the church and felt I could no longer participate in the dialogue needed to make good decisions. I see there are several alternatives in

the decisions being offered and I am hopeful I will be allowed to answer to my own conscience and God.

I have on my dresser a small wall hanging with the words "God is love" painstakingly written on it. On the back is my maiden name and the date 1943. I was 10 years old. God has been a part of my life...through the War, the Depressions, a 7.1 earthquake and the 1948 Fraser Valley Flood. I have visited many countries and lived in Germany with the Peace Corps from 1955-58. I will celebrate my 86th birthday in November. God has been there for me every day of those 86 years and I know God will continue to guide my life.

## Recapturing Life's Beauty

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

It was the most amazing half hour. At least, that's what the little girl thought. Who would have guessed a trip to Mr. Lube could be so exciting? Yet there she was, in absolute wonder and awestruck delight.

As air guns blasted off rusted tire bolts and hoses throbbed, pumping oil into hot engines, her eyes stretched wide with wonder. Action pulsated around her. And when someone brought her hot chocolate, well...she couldn't have dreamt it better.

Sometimes life is that simple. The birds are singing. God loves us. All our needs (and most of our wants) are met. Perfect.

Yet, often the swift current of 21st century living sweeps away life's wonder. The simple beauty of the old "Jesus Loves Me" hymn no longer satisfies our sophisticated minds.

I cycle to work most days along the beautiful Ottawa River Parkway. What could be more relaxing than gliding through forested areas on my bicycle, watching tiny goslings follow their parents into the cool water? But often my mind brims over with distraction and concerns. The beauty of God's world escapes my preoccupied attention.



It's all about learning to live in the moment.

Jesus warned us about this with a story about a man scattering seeds. Some fell on good soil and some on rocky ground. Sometimes I think the pace of living moves the seed in my life from the good soil of my heart into the rocky ground of my afterthoughts. My praise withers. Personal worship time becomes a memory. Who has time for it anyway?

Several years ago, Ann Voskamp's *One Thousand Gifts* rocketed to the top of the *New York Times* book ratings. Subtitled *A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are*, it's her personal story of struggling against a long list of emotionally shattering experiences. However, she notes that the road back to exuberant life is not complex. It's all about learning to live in the moment.

To regain this lost art, Voskamp de-

cided to write down every nice thing that happened and every point of beauty around her: morning light filtering through kitchen curtains, a yellow flower dancing in the breeze, an unexpected smile. It all went into her notebook—every delightful event—and she found there were many. She took them as God's personal gifts to her—holy treasures, not to be missed.

The practice transformed her life. No longer is she known as a glum, morose Christian somehow getting by. Now, she's a gushing fountain of gratitude. Despite the crushing blows life delivered her, gratitude flows from her lips. Not complaints. Every day is filled with watching for unexpected gifts from God and expressing gratitude for them. She's recaptured the little-girl excitement that God wants us all to experience.

Life has purpose. We are not mere dust in the wind, we are not alone. It's time to start seeing the footprints of God all around us.

So, this fall, I'm going to cycle to work a little slower. I'm going to consciously pause and enjoy some of the baby "quacks!" I hear. I'm going to accept each moment of beauty and colour the Lord offers. They are personal gifts from God's hand—I've even started to write them down.

And if someone brings me hot chocolate, well what else could I possibly want?!



## REFLECTIONS

# Experiencing Kirchentag



Closing worship at Signal Iduna Park: one of two stages for worship leaders, with the brass band of 1000 behind.

By the Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe,  
Glenview Presbyterian Church in  
Toronto, Ont.

From June 19 to 23, I represented the PCC at the biennial Protestant Kirchentag in Dortmund, Germany, along with my wife, Janet. Kirchentag means “church day” and it describes biennial gatherings of Christians for study and worship. There is a Catholic Kirchentag, and in 2021 there will be an Ecumenical Kirchentag in Frankfurt. At least 121,000 people were registered for the Protestant Kirchentag, and 80,000 attended all or most events, while 41,000 came on day passes.

It’s hard for a Canadian Christian to imagine tens of thousands of disciples taking over a city for five days. There are large gatherings in North America usually devoted to latter-day moral matters or mass evangelism. This meeting is devoted to addressing issues arising from mass migration and climate change, and exploring ways to work for peace and the justice that makes for peace—with worship, of course, and lots of prayer.

On the first evening we went to Hansaplatz—a large, open public square in Dortmund. One of three opening services was held there. The service was offered in Simple German, in recognition of the large population of Germany whose second or third language is German, which is about a third of the citizens of Dortmund alone (200,000 people). A highlight was a series of three speakers who answered the question posed by the event’s theme: “What confidence is this?” (2 Kings 18:19). The first spoke about living with someone with a serious illness. The second was a woman originally from Cuba, who talked about Christians who face persecution by the government in Cuba, lack of employment, overwork at re-

sorts and living in the shadow of the U.S.A. The third speaker was a man from Damascus. A worship leader read his story while he improvised on the piano. Then he... I have to say keened. All I can compare his cry to is the chant of a Sufi singer I heard years ago. Then he sang his lament in Arabic. He invited us all to chant with him. His refrain on the piano was powerful, à la Chopin. All three speakers ended their talks by addressing faith, hope and confidence.

The preacher was a Lutheran bishop from Romania. Her sermon was short and to the point. Her illustration was the plight of Christians in her country, coloured by the hope expressed by voters in a referendum on the policies of the corrupt government.

I attended a panel on Agenda 2063—a plan for the future of Africa in which five speakers expressed a perspective on the progress of the continent from their own expertise and national identity. Janet attended a panel on peacemaking. The theme continued into the afternoon, when she attended a panel addressing some of the challenges peacemakers face in different areas of conflict. The theme of my afternoon session was “The Long and Winding Road Toward Reconciliation.” Two speakers described their situations—in Northern Congo and Nepal—in detail, but it was clear that neither felt their people were very far along the road. A third speaker was German, and he spoke very generally about theories and practices toward reconciliation. The stories resonated with our situation in Canada, and our efforts to seek reconciliation and right our relationship with Indigenous peoples.

In the early evening, we explored several big exhibit halls in the Marketplace of Possibilities. There were Fair Trade products of all kinds for sale—all produced by, and in aid of, Chris-



Audience gathers for the premiere of a musical on the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. A choir of 2000 gathers behind the screens.

tian missions. Dozens and dozens of domestic and international mission, aid and development ministries were represented. We learned about some innovative approaches to theological education in Germany. Janet had an informative conversation with a woman who represented an organization that supports the ministry of women in European Lutheran communions. Outside of Germany the struggle goes on—against patriarchy, setbacks and even reversal of policy leading to revocation of ordinations.

The two main Protestant traditions in Germany—Lutheran and Reformed (we would say Presbyterian)—work together under the name Evangelisch. Their engagement in social reform, politics, education and evangelism is almost unbelievable to a Canadian. The President of the Republic spoke at a Kirchentag event. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, was part of a panel on Saturday. I have to remember how free the churches in Germany are to devote themselves to mission. The man in the seat next to me last night asked about my denomination in Canada. He asked, “You support yourselves?” When I told him we do, he said, “I suppose that can work.” German churches receive government support via a Church Tax.

What does a city look like when enthusiastic Christians take it over? For one thing, there’s music everywhere. We heard bands and vocal ensembles at public squares and crossroads. Janet visited some old churches. I took part in a sing-along in a Catholic church that was led by a large worship band made up of Kirchentag participants. We sang from the Kirchentag songbook.

As we left the city centre, we met crowds of Kirchentag folks on their way to late night events, while many others moved alongside us as we made our way to the subway to go to a huge park for a candlelight celebration with Taizé music.

I have to say again that a North American Christian just can’t imagine an event like Kirchentag. We simply can’t understand how thousands of people whose faith may be traditional,

but whose politics are progressive, and whose passion for justice challenges the powers can be welcomed into a “secular” city and state.

On the fourth day we attended an event with Angela Merkel and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (past president of Liberia). The topic: Confidence in International Politics? Both spoke, then responded to questions from the audience and emcee. The first thing Ms. Merkel said was that she would replace the topic’s question mark with an exclamation mark. There were powerful appeals from both speakers to reverse the reversal of values and stem the tide of populist nationalism. Johnson Sirleaf described the advances and victories won through internationalism. Chancellor Merkel declared that renewed international co-operation is our only hope. Both speakers had a strong grasp on history. Merkel told Germany’s story in the 20th century and told us history can be repeated, unless we are vigilant. Johnson-Sirleaf, from the troubled West African country of Liberia, sounded like a senior stateswoman. They agreed that the time has come for more women in leadership. It has been a long time since I’ve heard such knowledgeable and insightful political discourse.

We attended an afternoon panel, “Until Black Lives Matter All Lives Will Not Matter.” It was a powerful experience. A Black theologian from the U.S.A. talked about Black history. A German pastor who works with migrants and refugees challenged we who are white to recognize white privilege. An American pastor introduced us to a curriculum current in the United Church of Christ called “Let’s Talk,” which addresses white privilege. All speakers agreed that the word racism really means “White Supremacy.”

The closing worship was held in two locations: the beautiful Westfalenpark and Signal Iduna Park, the largest football stadium in Europe (capacity 83,000). The service at the soccer field offered a screen with English subtitles, so we were directed to that location. About 50,000 other Kirchentagers were there with us.

The worship included a mix of dig-



Preacher at closing worship.

nified traditional and energized gospel music. Singing was accompanied by a brass band of 1000 pieces. The worship band and song leaders were excellent. The sermon was brief and powerful. The preacher’s confidence and joy shone through, as she stood alone in the centre of the soccer pitch. Her sermon was punctuated by applause. I can only imagine what it feels like to walk out of a pulpit to the applause of 50,000 people! Communion was served to everyone, and the whole service was over in one hour and 20 minutes.

The theme for the service was translated as “Don’t rubbish your confidence.” The text was Hebrews 10:35–36. In the NRSV that’s “Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.” The preacher was honest about her own experiences of discouragement, as a Christian leader in today’s context. She described the challenges the church faces in an increasingly secular and indifferent culture. Here’s where she, and all of Kirchentag part ways with North American sisters and brothers. On our side of the Atlantic, the loudest preachers proclaim a message of persecution. The world is the enemy. At Kirchentag, the message was clear. We face the same huge challenges that all citizens face. We may be a minority, but we have a message, a vision and resources to contribute to change for the good. We can work with others. We offer a gospel that means personal transformation and engages us all in the transformation of the world. Don’t toss aside your confidence in God and God’s mission!

This is what Kirchentag is about. Thousands of Christians gather to learn new things, to hear again messages they know well, to meet up with old friends and to believe that Christians have a purpose in this world, regardless of what conditions may suggest or others may say. There’s recovery of courage, renewal of confidence and empowerment for mission at Kirchentag.



## JUST WONDERING...



Submit your questions to  
[connection@presbyterian.ca](mailto:connection@presbyterian.ca)

**I have been bringing my niece to church now and then. She isn't Christian but I believe she's starting to take an interest in my faith. My question is about Communion. Is it okay for her to take part? I don't think she should have to sit out, but I would like to know the official stance on this.**

*Answered by the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, Life and Mission Agency*

There was a time in our history when only a very select few in the congregation were permitted to receive the sacraments, based on whether the minister and elders thought they were living in ways that made them worthy. Over time, practices have changed. For many years, anyone who was baptized and had made a formal profession of faith and been confirmed was welcome at the Lord's Table. Since 1987, Sessions have been encouraged to welcome children to the Lord's Table who have been baptized but who have not yet made a profession of faith.

In 2001, the PCC adopted a catechism, which asks, "Who may participate in the Lord's Supper?" The answer being: "All those who love the Lord Jesus and belong to any Christian church may participate. We come to the Lord's table not because any individual goodness gives us a right to come, but because Christ welcomes us. He loves us, gave himself for us and invites us to receive his body and blood to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. Baptized children may participate if they have their parent's permission, the Session's approval and have received instruction in the meaning of the Lord's Supper."

That said, there is a diversity of practices in the PCC, and customs differ from congregation to congregation. Some congregations will practice a fellowship of the Lord's

Table that adheres closely to the answer from the catechism above. Other congregations will exercise a more open fellowship based on an invitation to the Lord's Table in the PCC Book of Common Worship, which reads, "This is the Lord's table. Our Saviour invites all those who trust him to share the feast which he has prepared."

It might be helpful for your niece to speak with the minister of your congregation to discuss the practices of the Session in light of your niece's circumstances. I hope your niece finds herself warmly welcomed in the congregation.

### How do I order PCC resources?

*Answered by Barb Summers, Communications Office*

National office produces many print and electronic resources for congregations and groups. The PCC website at [presbyterian.ca](http://presbyterian.ca) is a large repository of educational and informational materials that are all available for congregations to download, copy and paste, print and share. A good section of the website to visit is [presbyterian.ca/resources](http://presbyterian.ca/resources), as this is where you'll find a directory of the different types of resources that are available, broken down by categories. Some resources are only available by electronic download.

All resources that are available to order in print can be found on the online order form at [presbyterian.ca/order](http://presbyterian.ca/order), and most of the materials are free of charge. You can also email [resources@presbyterian.ca](mailto:resources@presbyterian.ca) or call 1-800-619-7301 and we'll be glad to send you what you need. If you're looking for something specific, why not try out the PCC website's chat feature? When you're on the [presbyterian.ca](http://presbyterian.ca) website, a small box will appear in the bottom right corner of your screen. Click it and you can live-chat with someone during regular business hours or leave us a message and we'll get back to you right away.

## FEATURED IMAGE



These captivating photos from Trinity Presbyterian Church in Grenfell, Sask., 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](http://presbyterian.ca/stained-glass)

## PULPIT VACANCIES

To see all pulpit vacancies, visit [presbyterian.ca/vacancies](http://presbyterian.ca/vacancies)

**Fort McMurray, Faith** (full-time minister) – Alberta and the Northwest

**Vancouver, Kerrisdale** (full-time minister) – British Columbia

**Calgary, Calgary Korean** (full-time minister) – British Columbia

**Barrie, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – CNOB (Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda)

**Norwood, Warkworth-Hastings and Campbellford, St. Andrew's Pastoral Charge** (full-time minister) – CNOB

**Orillia, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – CNOB

**Port Carling, Knox and Torrance, Zion** (full-time minister) – CNOB

**Rockwood, Rockwood** (half-time minister) – CNOB

**Ottawa, St. Giles** (full-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

**Sherbrooke, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Quebec & Eastern Ontario

**Mistawasis First Nation Reserve, Mistawasis Memorial** (full-time minister) – Saskatchewan

**Goderich, Knox** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

**Owen Sound, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

**Point Edward, Point Edward** (half-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

**St. Catharines, Knox** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

**Tecumseh, Lakeshore St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

## DEATH NOTICES

Read all full obituaries online at [presbyterian.ca](http://presbyterian.ca)

**June Stevenson**  
 Ajax, Ont.  
 Deceased November 3, 2019

**Isabel Winnifred McLean**  
 Toronto, Ont.  
 Deceased October 31, 2019

**Thelma Pearl Nunn**  
 Dundas, Ont.  
 Deceased October 18, 2019

**Dr. Wallace Burton MacKeigan**  
 Sydney Mines, N.S.  
 Deceased October 16, 2019

**The Rev. Joyce Davis**  
 Cape Breton, N.S.  
 Deceased October 4, 2019

**The Rev. Dr. Tom Billard**  
 Mississauga, Ont.  
 Deceased September 6, 2019

**The Rev. Major Donald Howson**  
 Peterborough, Ont.  
 Deceased August 26, 2019

**The Rev. Barbara Young**  
 Sidney, B.C.  
 Deceased August 25, 2019

**Dal Schindell**  
 Vancouver, B.C.  
 Deceased August 6, 2019

**Mary Agnes Campbell**  
 Ottawa, Ont.  
 Deceased July 28, 2019

**The Rev. Coralie Jackson-Bissonnette**  
 Pointe Claire, Que.  
 Deceased July 24, 2019

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## SMILES

### Crossword

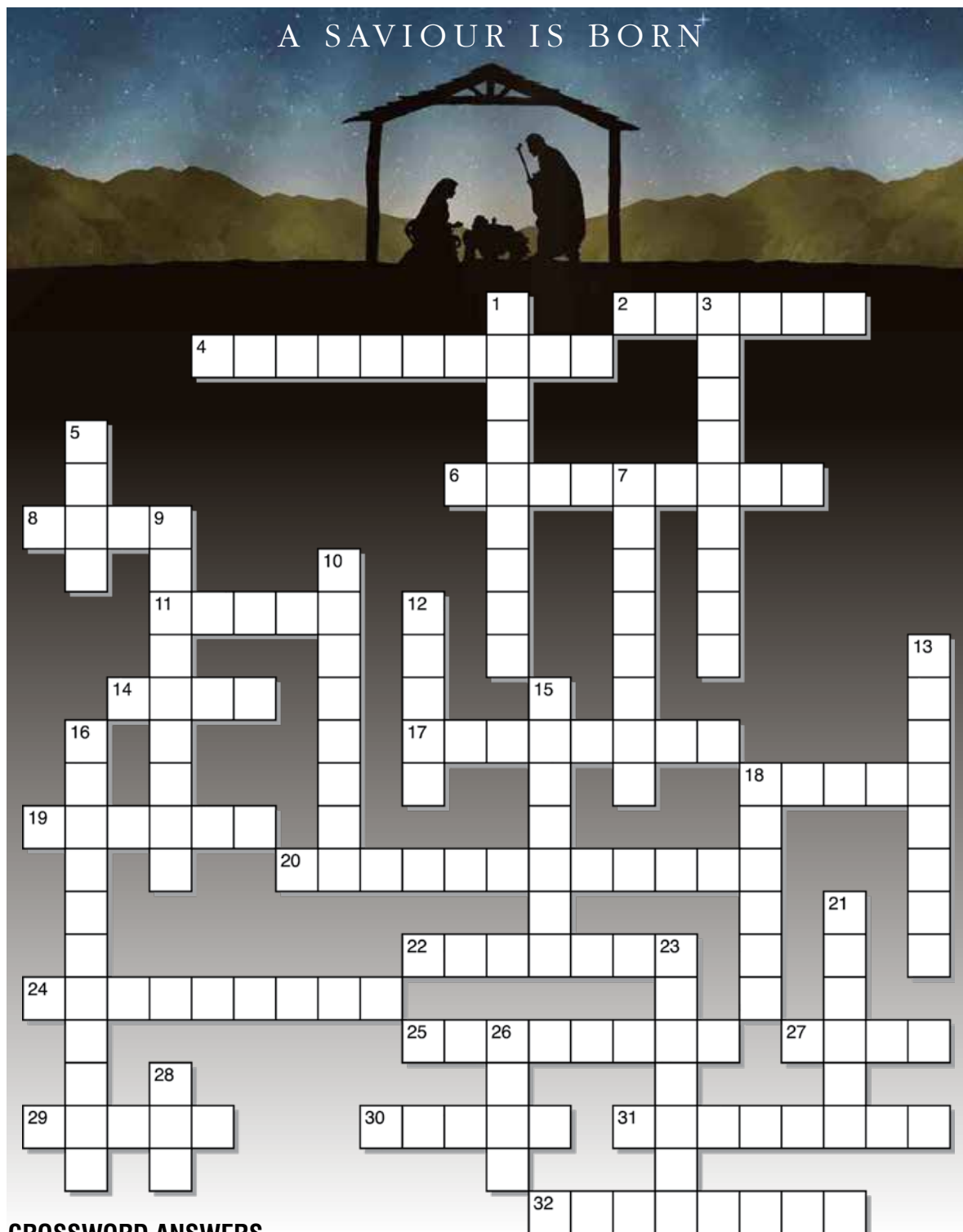
*Test your knowledge on our Christmas-themed crossword with the clues below.*

#### ACROSS

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ Missionary Society has members across the country from British Columbia to Quebec.
4. It is recorded in the Book of Genesis that he died at the age of 969 years.
6. The father of John the Baptist.
8. In the beginning was the \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The theme of CY2020 is "No end in \_\_\_\_\_."
14. In Isaiah, the \_\_\_\_\_ shall live with the lamb (11:6).
17. "The young woman will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him \_\_\_\_\_."
18. \_\_\_\_\_ fled to Tarshish because he suspected that God would renege on a threat to destroy a wicked people because God is gracious and compassionate.
19. This former fisherman was the first disciple Jesus called.
20. The phrase "vanity of vanities" is from this Old Testament book.
22. He appeared to tell Mary that she was to bear a child.
24. Biblical town meaning "House of Meat" in Arabic and "House of Bread" in Hebrew.
25. Paul encountered Christ on the road to \_\_\_\_\_.
27. Recorded in the Bible as the first child born.
29. \_\_\_\_\_ the Great ordered the murder of all young boys when he heard about the birth of Jesus.
30. A resin extracted from small, thorny tree species used as a perfume, incense and medicine.
31. New Testament book named after the owner of Onesimus the slave.
32. Queen Esther's cousin and guardian.

#### DOWN

1. The cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus.
3. Mary sing, "My soul \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord..."
5. The PCC theological college celebrating 175 years of theological education.
7. Emperor \_\_\_\_\_ decreed that all the world should be registered.
9. In 2019, the General Assembly repudiated (rejected) the Doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Mission Society in Eastern Canada.
12. The first registration that is referred to in the Gospel of Luke was taken while Quirinius was governor of \_\_\_\_\_.
13. The mother of Aaron, Miriam and Moses.
15. The \_\_\_\_\_ Act is a decision-making process that seeks the wisdom of presbyteries about a matter the General Assembly decided.
16. Name of the not-for-profit that was organized by the PCC to convey 10,000 tons of food as part of the Biafran airlift.
18. King of Israel who started his reign when he was only eight years old.
21. His donkey saw an angel and his mouth was opened by God and could speak.
23. Sarah did this when she heard that she and Abraham would have a child.
26. The Gospel of \_\_\_\_\_ does not record anything about Jesus before his baptism.
28. Biblical character who said, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."



#### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

28. JOB  
26. MARK  
23. LAUGHED  
21. BALAM  
18. JOSIAH  
16. CANAIRELIEF  
15. BARRIER  
13. JOCHERED  
12. SYRIA

10. ATLANTIC  
9. DISCOVERY  
7. AUGUSTUS  
5. KNOX  
3. MAGNIFIES  
1. ELIZABETH  
DOWN  
32. MORDECAI

31. PHILEMON  
30. MYRRH  
29. HEROD  
27. CAIN  
25. DAMASCUS  
24. BETHLEHEM  
22. GABRIEL  
20. ECCLESIASTES  
19. ANDREW

18. JONAH  
17. IMMANUEL  
14. WOLF  
11. SIGHT  
8. WORD  
6. ZACHARIAS  
4. METHUSELAH  
2. WOMEN'S  
ACROSS



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