



## Biotechnology in Agriculture

*By Laura Rance, agricultural journalist, who travelled in East Africa while on secondment to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in 2015 to write about the role of agriculture in development. Laura, who works at Glacier FarmMedia, has covered agriculture, food security and rural development for more than 40 years.*

Three decades have passed since the first genetically modified organisms (GMOs) entered our food system, and many consumers remain queasy with the notion of gene jockeys playing God with our foods.

The crops grown using these modern plant-breeding tools are now grown by 17 million farmers in 29 countries on 190.4 million hectares worldwide, according to 2019 data produced by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA).

“Thus, biotech crops are considered as the fastest adopted crop technology in the history of modern agriculture,” it says.

Unless you’ve gone to extreme lengths to avoid them, ingredients from the genetically modified crops have been in the foods we’ve eaten every day since the mid-1990s, and with no verifiable ill effects. “Frankenfoods” they are not.

Some of the newly emerging manufactured and laboratory-produced alternatives to meat proteins are biotech creations. That’s a dilemma for ethical eaters motivated by environmental and animal welfare concerns who are also ethically opposed to GMOs.

The ISAAA report also noted that farmers in developing countries increasingly embrace biotech crops. “In 2019, 24 developing countries planted 56 per cent of the global biotech hectares, while five industrial countries took the 44 per cent share. This trend is expected to continue in the upcoming years due to the increasing number of countries in the southern hemisphere adopting biotech crops and the commercialization of new biotech crops such as



Agnes Tembo and her husband, Geoffrey Nkhambule, harvest corn and peas, which have been planted together on their farm in Edundu, Malawi. With support from PWS&D and Canadian Foodgrains Bank, families in the village have learned about intercropping, crop rotation and composting practices that have improved soil fertility and increased crop yields. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY, PWS&D

rice, which is mostly grown in developing countries,” it says.

For ISAAA, a not-for-profit international organization promoting the benefits of crop biotechnology, this is all good news; it is a story that will help feed the world, help mitigate climate change and spare the environment.

Others are less enthusiastic. “The argument that this technology can solve the problem of world hunger, or be a tool towards ending hunger, is compelling but false,” says the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network on its website. “Experience with GM crops shows that the application of GM technology is more likely to enhance and entrench the social, economic and environmental problems created by industrial agriculture and corporate control.”

So, which is it?

From my perspective, it is neither and both.

After writing about agriculture and food for 40 years, I confess to being skeptical of anyone pointing to technology as either “the” solution or villain. While many of the initial promises around GMOs don’t hold up to scrutiny, these technologies aren’t a bust, either.

Like any tool, biotechnologies are only as good as the hands wielding them.

It’s been nearly 30 years since GMOs and other biotechnology concepts were commercialized and promoted as the answer to ending hunger. We still have a lot of hungry people in the world, even though farmers produce more than enough calories to feed everyone.

Continued on page 4



Farmers in Malawi are learning new ways to conserve and rejuvenate depleted soil. By practicing minimal tillage, planting cover crops and introducing compost and mulch, more nutrient-rich soil helps to ensure better harvest results. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY, PWS&D

**MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR**

# Joy and Patience



By the Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott,  
Moderator of the 2021 General  
Assembly

I remember one night, as a child, waking up to screams of “Fire! Fire!” and “Please help! Fire!” It was the voice of our neighbour who was also frantically honking the horn of his car to get our attention.

Fire trucks soon arrived, and I remember being led across the street by firefighters, one of whom held hands with me and my brother as we hopped over fire hoses and blinked at the flashing lights coming from the fire engines that had arrived from

the nearby fire station. Another of my brothers was carried by a firefighter, and my mother carried our new baby brother.

In the morning, my parents gathered us together in the bedroom of a neighbour’s home on an adjoining street to where our now burnt house was. My father had a red-cover edition of the Gideon New Testament—I was not sure where he got it from when he had lost everything else. He took it out from his pocket and read from Chapter One of the Book of James in the King James Version:

*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (1:2–4).*

He then prayed, “Dear God, help us to count it as joy as we go through this fiery trial. May we have patience, and please provide for us. Amen.”

This all happened in October 1969. More than 50 years later, we are in the midst of a pandemic, and for many, it is a significant trial and test of faith. I’ve found the fifth wave to be the hardest so far. At St. John’s Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont., we were gather-



ing, carefully, in person throughout the fall of 2021. Every week, we were excited to see people return who we hadn’t seen in months. We thought that things would soon be back to normal.

Like many congregations across the country, our critical incident response team decided the week before Christmas that we would return to services online only. In response to the decision, someone said what a lot of us were feeling, “This is a drag.”

Recently, I met (virtually) with faith leaders for a retreat organized by the Canadian Council of Churches. The facilitator asked us to talk about the joys and sorrows we experienced during the pandemic. Each leader described some of their difficulties—some shed tears. It was heartening, though, to hear about the tremendous joys that people also spoke of. The list of joys included tangible things like long walks and hikes in the

woods, grandchildren, pets—a new puppy or cat—and making snow angels. Of course, there were stories about spiritual joys like prayers, scripture and fellowship with other believers.

It was a good reminder that there have been joys despite COVID-19.

The trying of faith has not only brought joy, but patience, too. Back in March 2020, when we went into the first lockdown for two weeks to “flatten the curve,” I would have never dreamed that two weeks would stretch into two years.

We’ve all had to learn patience. A particularly poignant lesson of patience has been the deferral of major life events—especially weddings and funerals.

New parents have had to wait to introduce their parents to their newborn babies in person—some have posted pictures on social media of grandparents looking through a window at their new grandchild, unable

to hold them or hear their giggling noises or smell the baby breath of the little one.

Children have shown great patience by attending school day in and day out online, not getting to be with their classmates. Some university students have never gotten the opportunity to go to a class on campus or hang out with roommates in their dorm room. They didn’t get to go to their graduations or the prom, either. Missing out on these experiences requires patience.

Patience, according to James, is perfecting us. He should know. He wrote his letter to a group of struggling early Christians who were scattered, separated and isolated.

As a young boy, it was as if James’s letter was addressed to me and my brothers.

Reading the letter of James during the pandemic is not reading someone else’s mail. It is addressed to us in the midst of our fiery Covid trial, too.



## CALL FOR PHOTOS FOR 2023 PCC WALL CALENDAR



Does your congregation have a meaningful item associated with its ministry, mission, history and identity?

- A communion table or chalice that generations have gathered around and shared during celebrations of Holy Communion?
- A baptismal font where new members were welcomed into the faith and into church?
- A Bible that has been read from for decades?
- Stained-glass windows that exalt the beauty of your worship space?
- Items that were lovingly designed or crafted by members of your congregation, such as crosses, banners or pulpit falls?

Please send us photos of special items from your church for the 2023 Wall Calendar by June 30, 2022

[presbyterian.ca/2023-calendar](https://presbyterian.ca/2023-calendar)



## FEATURE

# Gene Editing (CRISPR-Cas9) and its Implications for the Common Good



By Rev. Joan Masterton, the PCC's representative on the Canadian Council of Churches' Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group, and the minister for St. James Presbyterian Church in Stouffville, Ont.

There is no doubt that human health and well-being have benefited from many of the things we've learned from scientific research and discovery. Genetic science has changed and enriched our understanding of life on Earth. Recent developments have enabled scientists to combine biology, technology and computer science in ways that have allowed the intentional manipulation of the genome (the complete set of genetic material of any human, animal, plant or other living organism). This intentional manipulation is called gene (or genome) editing.

CRISPR-Cas9 is a precision technique developed by scientists to enable the efficient and targeted manipulation of genomes—it acts as a molecular scalpel that is used to cut and edit a DNA sequence. The two scientists who developed the CRISPR-Cas9 process, Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier, were awarded the Nobel Prize in 2020 for

their work in this field.

Let's look at an example of gene-editing applications. Through gene editing, a genetic sequence could be inserted into a mosquito that could prevent that mosquito from hosting the malaria parasite. Why might scientists attempt this? Because it could potentially reduce the transmission of a terrible disease that causes suffering and death in thousands of people. Other applications include correcting genetic diseases such as sickle cell anemia and developing new crops with higher nutrient values or other favourable traits. Gene sequences can be removed, activated or repressed, providing great potential for improving the health and well-being of many people.

In spite of the incredible potential of this technology, its application in human beings, particularly when affecting heritable aspects of human genetics (those genes which are passed from parent to offspring), have raised questions about the biological and ethical implications of its use. As well, researchers have now recognized "off target" results from using CRISPR-Cas9 technology—changes that were not anticipated and could have negative results.

Globally, the use of this technology on human embryos is banned; nevertheless, the first case of a doctor ignoring the ban and producing genetically altered human beings (twin girls) has already occurred. That doctor is now in jail, but "Pandora's box" has been opened. The ethics and moral considerations around gene-editing technologies are just beginning to be discussed, and there is no consensus.

As a community of faith, Presbyterians adhere to a belief that God loves the world, and that humankind has a role to play in honouring the integrity of creation. We also welcome the truths and insights that human skill and science can reveal about the world and the universe (*Living Faith* 2.4.1). For more than 20 years the Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group of the Canadian Council of Churches has served its member churches as a forum for discernment and discussion about the theological and ethical dimensions of cutting-edge life sciences. Members of the Reference Group dialogue with scientists and policy-makers, assess the present and potential impacts of new technologies, and collaborate on conferences, webinars (e.g., on CRISPR-

Cas9 in 2021), and written materials to help educate churches and civil society. Understanding this new scientific field is only the beginning, but understanding is necessary before ethical, moral and theological reflection can be applied. Everyone might be in favour of eliminating genetic diseases from people, for example, but should parents be allowed to "design" their children through the use of this technology?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is grateful for the work and expertise of the Faith and Life Science Reference Group. It is an example of the kind of collaboration that contributes to the common good that is possible through participation in ecumenical organizations like the Canadian Council of Churches.

For further information, please visit [councilofchurches.ca/biotechnology](http://councilofchurches.ca/biotechnology). You can learn more about the reflections of faith communities on the implications of CRISPR-Cas9 technology at [councilofchurches.ca/news/faith-and-life-sciences-webinar-videos-now-available](http://councilofchurches.ca/news/faith-and-life-sciences-webinar-videos-now-available). You can also learn more about CRISPR technology by watching the documentary at [youtube.com/watch?v=GoOWt4cZsfq](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoOWt4cZsfq).


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**Moderator of the General Assembly:**

The Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott

The national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Petun, Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit Indigenous peoples.



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*The opinions expressed, books reviewed and activities undertaken by contributing writers reflect the broad diversity of experience and opinion in the church. Their inclusion in the newspaper is not necessarily an endorsement by The Presbyterian Church in Canada.*



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**FEATURE**

# “We still have a lot of hungry people in the world”

Continued from page 1

Our environment is still under siege, and we’ve seen continued consolidation of corporate control over the world’s genetic resources.

Critics are also correct in saying that the way we are applying these powerful new tools is contributing to the decline of biodiversity, which is widely acknowledged as a dead-end when it comes to sustainable farming. The promise of better nutrition, such as Vitamin A-enriched rice (Golden Rice), is one way to address dietary deficiencies in developing nations. However, a far better approach would be to increase people’s access to a diet that includes leafy green vegetables. How well would you fare on a diet of vitamin-enriched oatmeal?

Herbicide-tolerant crops, some of which are genetically modified, allow farmers to spray a non-selective herbicide such as glyphosate on their growing crop and kill everything but the crop. These lived up to the early promises, at least initially. Farmers were able to use fewer herbicides and products that had lower relative toxicity. They were also able to reduce the amount of soil-disturbance by doing less tillage.

But overuse caused the weeds to develop resistance to glyphosate. Now farmers use stacked combinations of products to keep on top of the weeds. Or, they are reverting to tillage, which is detrimental to soil health.

However, while these tools haven’t necessarily increased yields, they have had a yield stabilizing effect, which reduces the risk for farmers. Yield boosts have simultaneously occurred through crop breeding tech-

niques such as hybridization, which amplifies desired traits by crossing two parental lines to produce so-called hybrid vigour in the first generation cross. That vigour is usually not transferable to the second generation.

These technologies also make farming easier, which is one of the main reasons they are so popular with farmers.

Biotech crops offer alternatives to pesticides, which is potentially even more beneficial to small-scale farmers than it is for farmers in industrialized countries.

This hit home for me in 2015 when I was working on secondment to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank on a project writing about the role of agriculture in development. I observed a farmer’s wife in Zambia applying a powerful pesticide using a backpack sprayer and wearing no protective gear to cover her arms, legs and face. The risk-benefit breakdown in that family was clear. For the husband, being able to afford pesticides on a cash crop such as cowpeas, was a visible sign to his neighbours of stature and wealth. For his wife, who, like in many families in Zambia, did most of the fieldwork, spraying meant the difference between one day or several days of hard manual labour in the hot sun. Access to seeds that are genetically resistant to the pest attacking that field would potentially spare her health and could be more environmentally friendly, as well.

Newer technology such as CRISPR-Cas9 is often referred to as “gene editing,” because it enables plant breeders to easily alter DNA sequences within the plant to modify how the genes function. It’s consid-



The production challenges confronting farmers in non-industrialized economies, who produce a significant proportion of the world’s food, isn’t rocket science—it’s far more complicated than that. Modern technologies can play a role in boosting yields and nutritional content, but they aren’t the solution. PHOTO CREDIT: LAURA RANCE, 2015

ered less invasive than inserting new genes from somewhere else. As a result, regulatory agencies appear to be moving toward a less rigorous approach to approvals.

It’s all part of an emerging convergence of technology focused on “engineering biology” made possible by the success of genome mapping over the past decade.

Whereas “bioengineering” is about engineering a single process in a plant, “engineering biology” is a suite of applications that apply tools such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and automation to biological applications.

Steven Webb, formerly the chief executive officer of the Saskatoon-based Global Institute for Food Security, told me in a 2021 interview that the new ABCs of innovation—automation, biology and computation—don’t change the questions researchers are asking. However, they significantly accelerate the pace at which they get answers. “That’s the future of how work is going to be done in science,” he said.

But developing new crops faster won’t solve the problem of global food insecurity, either.

Small-scale farmers who are focused first on growing enough to feed their families are afraid to risk a crop failure by trying new seed, especially seed that has to be purchased every year. For farmers in industrialized countries, the risk associated with trying new things is economic. In the

developing world, it’s the difference between eating or not.

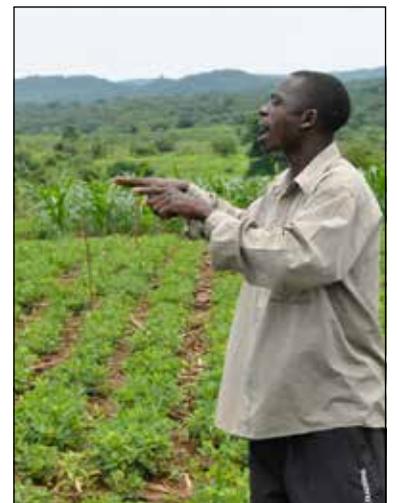
Buying on credit is also risky. What do they do if it doesn’t rain, or political unrest makes it impossible for them to harvest? They have debt but nothing to pay it with.

Farmers need soils healthy enough to support higher yields before they can embrace new technology. Fertilizers are of little benefit if the soils are so depleted that they can’t make use of the rains they receive, which is the story in much of Africa. Soil health is a function of reducing tillage and following the principles of regenerative agriculture to restore the soil’s natural fertility and resiliency—not biotechnology.

If small-scale farmers manage to increase production, they need improved access to storage so their crops don’t rot or get consumed by rodents. They require marketing systems and better roads and transportation to market. That’s not about biotechnology, either.

Simply helping farmers to produce more without any heed to market and infrastructure development can have the opposite effect on food security if local markets become oversupplied and prices drop.

Solving poverty, which is the root cause of hunger, is not about tools or technology. It is about social justice, peace and political stability, education and building basic infrastructure. And it is about supporting healthy soils.



Thomas Nkhunda, a farmer in Malawi, is telling his story to a visiting delegation. Soil-conserving practices had improved the fertility and moisture-holding capacity of his fields, which allowed him to begin to use higher-yielding varieties and commercial fertilizer. The increased yields help pay for his children’s school fees and even allowed him to have a savings account at the bank. PHOTO CREDIT: LAURA RANCE, 2015



Zambian farmers Irene and Wilfred Hamakumba prepare to spray their cash crop of cowpeas. Access to seeds that are bred to withstand common pests without pesticides could benefit small-scale commercial farm operators. PHOTO CREDIT: LAURA RANCE, 2015

Tools alone won’t take us where we need to go. But under the right circumstances, they might help us get there. It takes more than a hammer to build a house.

Laura’s work was recognized by the UN-FAO and International Federation of Agricultural Journalists for excellence in global food security reporting in 2016, because of this story. Learn more at [winnipegfreepress.com/special/long-reads/Africas-hunger-games-299349391.html](http://winnipegfreepress.com/special/long-reads/Africas-hunger-games-299349391.html)

**LEADERSHIP**

# From Coachee to Coach:

## Stephen Kwon's Journey in the Cyclical Network



By Emily Hill, Canadian Ministries

The question that may come to mind for many people when they hear that the minister, Session or other leaders in the congregation are receiving coaching is: "What does coaching have to do with ministry?"

It's easy for participants in the

Cyclical PCC network to answer this question. As part of the church-planting support initiative, participants are paired with a coach who provides support and encouragement as they discern God's call, refine visions and take steps toward starting sustainable new ministries.

The Rev. Stephen Kwon was one

of the first participants in the Cyclical PCC network when it started in the fall of 2018. At the time, the Well Church in Mississauga where he serves was only a year old. It was a newly formed Presbyterian church within the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca.

Stephen says this about the coaching he received from the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart of St. Andrew's Hall at the Vancouver School of Theology: "The guidance that Ross provided really helped me get established in my role as the leader of a new worshipping community. He listened to me, asked good questions and shared ideas from his own experience. He encouraged me to think deeply about our ministry at the Well Church and to discern where God was calling us next as a community."

Stephen's experience with Ross demonstrates many of the features of a strong coaching relationship:

- purposeful conversations in which the coach listens well and asks good questions
- space for the person being coached to reflect and seek out answers within themselves
- encouragement to listen for God's guidance and sense the movement of the Spirit

Stephen is now a coach with the Cyclical PCC network. He describes



Gifts to Presbyterians Sharing encourage and nurture new ministry through programs like Cyclical PCC.



this experience as follows: "I enjoy the ability to encourage other church planters by sharing my stories and my experiences. The person I am coaching is establishing an English Ministry in a Korean congregation, which is something I have done. My experience means that I can be a really good listening ear and ask the right questions."

When asked what he would say to someone considering joining the Cyclical PCC network, Stephen said, "Yes, 100% do it. If you are interested in exploring the possibility of starting a new worshipping community and your church or presbytery supports you in it, join the network. You'll find a community that will support, encourage and cheer you on."

# Responding to Harm Done Due to Homophobia and Transphobia in the PCC

By Carragh Erhardt, Program Coordinator, Sexuality & Inclusion

In 2021, The Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted the final report of the Rainbow Communion. The report draws on the stories of 139 people who shared their experiences of harm due to homophobia, hypocrisy, transphobia and heterosexism in the church. In recognition of the harm the church has caused, funds are available to provide financial assistance for accessing counselling or psychotherapy to help support healing.

### What is the fund for?

The fund provides financial assis-

tance to support psychotherapy or counselling for those who have experienced harm done by homophobia, hypocrisy, transphobia and heterosexism in The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Financial assistance provided through this fund may be used for an array of therapeutic options. Requests may be submitted to reimburse costs incurred for past counselling or psychotherapy sessions and/or to cover the cost of ongoing counselling or psychotherapy sessions.

### Who is eligible to receive funding?

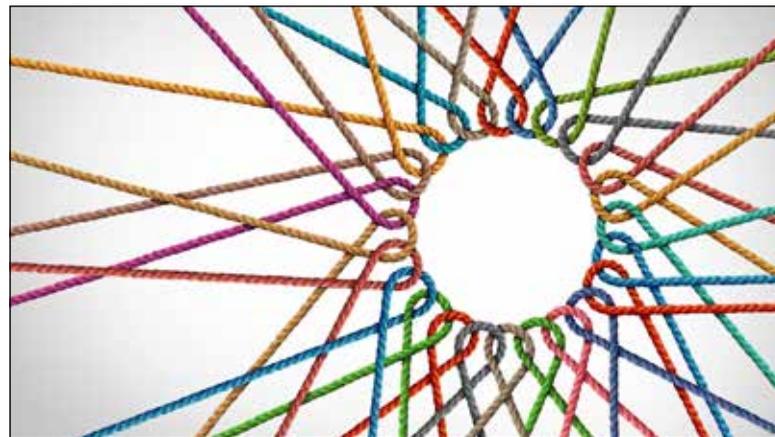
People who have experienced harm

done by homophobia, hypocrisy, transphobia and heterosexism in The Presbyterian Church in Canada are eligible to be considered for financial support.

People inquiring about funds will be asked to relate their story and describe how homophobia or transphobia in the PCC has negatively impacted them, but they do not necessarily need to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity.

### Who reviews requests for funding?

Requests will be considered promptly by a small committee. There is no annual or quarterly deadline to sub-



mit a request. All requests are kept strictly confidential.

The review committee is composed of the Program Coordinator, Sexuality and Inclusion; the General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency; and the Principal Clerk, General Assembly.

The work of the review committee is confidential and only pertinent details are shared with the full review committee. Questions about this process and its composition can be discussed when speaking with one of the members of the committee about

applying for funds.

### How can requests be submitted?

Individuals inquiring about the fund, or who are interested in requesting support from it, may contact Carragh Erhardt, Program Coordinator, Sexuality & Inclusion, at cerhardt@presbyterian.ca or 1-800-619-7301 ext. 278.

Additional information about the fund is available at [presbyterian.ca/funding-for-harm-done](http://presbyterian.ca/funding-for-harm-done)

## LEADERSHIP

# Connecting through Facebook

Written in consultation with Chippawa Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont.

Imagine having 62,000 people in your congregation's Facebook group, with hundreds of new people joining each day. That's exactly the situation that Chippawa Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont., finds itself in.

What, you might be asking, could draw so many people to a local church's Facebook group? The answer is the first multi-season series about the life of Jesus called *The Chosen*. The historical television drama is based on the life of Jesus of Nazareth and was created, directed and co-written by American filmmaker Dallas Jenkins. Two seasons have been completed with a third in production, portraying Jesus through the eyes of those who met him. It holds the record for crowdfunding, and they are currently working on funding season four. They plan to release seven seasons in all of *The Chosen*.

The fictional series is deeply inspired by and steeped in scripture, which is one of the reasons that Christine Sands-Vizzari, coordinator of discipleship at Chippawa Presbyterian, chose it as the topic of an adult study for the congregation in spring 2020. She started a Facebook

group called "*The Chosen* Discussion Group" so that members of the study could easily find the series' episodes (available for free online) and share their thoughts about the show. For the first year of the group's existence, that is exactly what happened. Then, suddenly, in August 2021, the group was discovered by other fans of *The Chosen* from across the world and the number of people in the group grew and grew and grew. It hasn't stopped growing since then!

The discussion group attracts people who love the show, but it is so much more than a fan page. "Our focus is on Jesus," Christine explained. "We talk about the way scripture has taken on new meaning in light of the show. We also discuss the moments that challenge our understanding of Jesus. And we ask questions about the Bible and faith that we might not otherwise ask."

While managing such a large Facebook discussion group comes with challenges, Christine sees the group as a gift from God: "This group shows that God can and does use small things to share Jesus' love and make disciples. There are people from many different backgrounds coming together to talk about Jesus' impact on the characters in the show and in their own lives."



*The Chosen* continues to grow in popularity, and Chippawa's Facebook group will likely continue to grow along with it. As it does, Christine will continue to embrace the unexpected gift that it has become. She recommends that if you have not yet had a chance to watch *The Chosen* to do so: "It is such a great tool for outreach and connection. You never know how God will use this series to grow, bless or strengthen faith in your midst."

*The Chosen* is available to view for free at [watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen](http://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen). On a tablet or phone it will direct you to download an app so you can screencast it to a TV.

Join *The Chosen* Facebook Discussion Group at [facebook.com/groups/3337004546380290](https://facebook.com/groups/3337004546380290).



Images from *The Chosen*, a television drama created and directed by American filmmaker Dallas Jenkins.





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**JUSTICE**

# Walking Out the Church Door into the Wider World

By the Rev. Allen Aicken, retired Presbyterian minister in Vancouver, B.C.



People in the church are understandably concerned about the future. While we probably have a future, we can't yet see it. It's not only we who are shifting sands, but so too is everything in the world in which we live and work. For what are church and world yearning?

We all have many prayers, of course, but there is one that many of us express daily, while others can lose sight of it because it doesn't touch them directly—some people and families don't have enough money to live on. Poverty and the cluster of pain that clings to it affect too many.

The most basic level of our needs is subsistence: a roof over our heads, food to eat, inclusion within our com-

munity, and at least a modest dose of Sabbath, whereby people can take time off from work to enjoy leisure and relationships with each other. We all need at least this much. Could we deny it to the lowest economic echelons of society?

The idea of a Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) was proposed for

Canada and enacted for a three-year period in some Manitoba communities in the mid-1970s. It was also very briefly tried in some Ontario regions five years ago. There was much to be learned from it that no one had predicted. Before the full implications of either experiment could be evaluated, they were ter-

minated. Meanwhile, the mainline churches have been advocating a GLI for the past 50 years.

And now, the GLI is being bandied about again. The world is changing. Employment Insurance that once fit the world in which it was established no longer meets the needs. The idea of a "steady job" has segued into contract work, which normally pays about 30% less and comes without income security. We're into another Industrial Revolution, where constant retraining is needed to maintain employability. On top of all this, along came the pandemic.

The Ontario experiment provided \$17,000 a year for people living alone; \$24,000 a year for two people living together. The long-ago Manitoba experiment, Mincome, provided a little more than \$22,000 a year (accounting for inflation) for a family of four. The aim of a GLI is to provide

enough for a modest but dignified level of living. Whatever a prospective Canadian GLI might provide has yet to be decided. Politicians, being who they are, make that call—we may expect some to press it higher, and some to press it lower. Perhaps Christians can stand back a little and let the wider world decide the amount. Our role is to be the lowly "salt of the earth." We followers press for Jesus' vision of "the Kingdom of God" (or "Community of God" in 21st century language), while fellow citizens decide how it happens.

Past experiments show that a GLI does not reduce the number of people working for a living, as instinct suggests. When it comes to the cost for each one of us, the journalist Andrew Coyne said this: "Three [percentage] points on the GST, to end poverty? Guaranteed Income sounds like a good deal" (*National Post*, April 18, 2018).

Assuming the math is right, and a GST of 8% could decimate poverty, would that be a good deal for you?

Read the church's letter to the Prime Minister calling for guaranteed liveable (basic) income at [presbyterian.ca/letters](http://presbyterian.ca/letters).

**TECHNOLOGY**

# So You Want to Live Stream Your Worship Service?



By Wayne Sankaral, University Community Church in Windsor, Ont. Wayne currently provides IT and website consulting and tech advisory services through his company, IT4Worship, where web, tech and worship meet.

So you want to live stream your congregation's worship service? Want to know what the most important component is for a successful live stream, even more important than the technology?

Wait for it...

Curious volunteers.

That can't be right, can it?

Yes, it is, absolutely. The. Most. Important.

Live-streaming volunteers don't need experience with using technology; they don't need to be comfortable with software; they don't even need to own a computer. What they do need is a desire to learn, to ask questions and to be persistent—that's it.

I'll give you an example. A client of mine is a small rural church in southwestern Ontario. I set up a Zoom live-streaming system for the congregation, complete with a new camera, a new PC, monitor and all the various and sundry cables needed to connect everything with their existing sound system. Once we had all the components together, it took about 10 hours of setup and onsite configuration to work out the issues that arose.

(As an aside, there will always be issues. It just comes with the territory of blending new technologies with old technologies. None of the issues are insurmountable, but they may take some time to work through to a usable solution, depending on

the age of the old technology components.)

After setting it all up came the training phase. I spent about three hours going through how the system worked, devoting two of those three hours to hands-on practice. We set up the system, tore it down, set it up again, connected the audio to the camera, the camera to the PC, and the PC to the Internet. We opened Zoom and connected it to the church's YouTube channel, so that the live stream would happen automatically. Then we repeated this four or five more times with everyone taking part.

During this time, I was peppered with questions: How does this work? Does it matter what order I start the programs in? Should the sound system be on before I start the computer? Why does it matter? How do I know the camera is working? How do I know the camera is picking up sound from the sound system? What do I do if I don't see the sound bars moving? Do we turn each piece of equipment off or can we turn off eve-



rything at the same time by switching the power bar off?

These and many, many more questions came my way, and I was blissfully happy. Why? Because these folks on the upper side of their 60s, and one into her 70s, wanted to know everything they possibly could. They were initially reticent and a little intimidated by the computer, but somewhere along the way, they saw it for what it was—just a tool to get something done. They had let their natural curiosity take over, and it was a joy to behold.

The other thing their curiosity told me was that this would not be a project that died on the vine after it was implemented. And that was cement-

ed in my mind after I watched the third sermon that they live streamed. Instead of a single camera view of the pulpit alone, the camera started to pan across the congregation. A few services later, a zoom in and out feature was added to the camera shots. Somewhere in between, audio control was implemented by this new AV team. Watching (literally) the evolution of this team of previous-generation volunteers use next-generation technology was something to behold and continues to be.

And that's why I say that, putting technology aside, curious volunteers are the critical resources a church needs if it wants to step into live streaming its services.

## RECONCILIATION

# Why Work to Decolonize?

By *Allyson Carr, Associate Secretary, Justice Ministries*

In conversations about the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2019, I heard one participant say, “We need to decolonize our hearts, sure. But we also need to decolonize our institutions and our systems.” Having spent several weeks wading through the entire report with a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the sentiment struck me harder than it had before.

But what is decolonization? I (a white settler) won’t attempt to define it once and for all, but from what I have learned, it is the process of undoing the ways colonialism and colonization continue to shape current attitudes, institutions and society.

The title of the study guide for the National Inquiry’s final report that members of the PCC National Indigenous Ministries Council and Justice Ministries collaborated on became “Why work to decolonize?” It’s an important question. Why should the church, among other institutions, work to decolonize? The answer becomes clear once we understand

what colonialism and colonization are. They are intensely harmful ideologies and practices incompatible with Christian faith that have nevertheless significantly shaped the church.

Stated plainly, colonization is the processes by which Indigenous people all over the world, and here in Canada, have been dispossessed of such things as their language, culture, land and resources. To legitimate taking people’s land, colonization works by the ideology of colonialism. Colonialism dehumanizes Indigenous people as a group and as individuals. It asserts they have less worth and so should have fewer or no rights. At the same time, it targets those who survive being dehumanized and treated as though they have no or less rights for assimilation into a dominant culture. It actively works to erase Indigenous identity and practices.

Colonialism and colonization flow from the Doctrine of Discovery, which originated with the church and worked to increase the wealth and power of the church and European states. (To learn more about the Doctrine of Discovery, visit [presbyterian.ca/dod](http://presbyterian.ca/dod)).



A communal art project created after a reconciliation workshop led by Justice Ministries.

Based on its investigations and the stories it heard, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls concluded that colonization in Canada has amounted to genocide. The federal government accepted those findings, as did the PCC at last year’s General Assembly. For many people, the finding of genocide is confirmation of what they already knew. Others can struggle to come to terms with the strong charge of genocide and what this means in the Canadian context. And there is much for us to think about and do as we collectively process these findings.

While struggling with these emotions, we need to understand that colonization and its supporting ideology of colonialism are exploitive because they are built on the claim that some people are worth more than others. They teach that it’s “okay,” even “normal” to exploit people. (The Doctrine of Discovery used the phrase “perpetually enslave”). Colonialism also exploits the land. It sees resources (including land) as a means of building wealth. But that wealth isn’t for everyone. Specifically, it isn’t for the local community; it’s to be sent *back*, elsewhere. The wealth created is for those in power to hold and give out as suits the purpose of maintaining power and wealth. This contrasts with seeing resources or land as responsibilities to be cared for and shared for the good of the local community.

So, colonization and colonialism take resources away from a local community, but they often take people away too. We see this in Canada with the forced removal of Indigenous people from their lands. We also see it in the Residential School

system, the Sixties Scoop and the ongoing disproportionate number of Indigenous children taken into foster care. It’s important to remember too that colonialism was a driving factor in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which produced massive amounts of wealth (in Canada as well). That wealth was concentrated in the hands of those who didn’t have to pay for labour or land and were thus able to turn a more significant profit. Much of the wealth that was created through the trans-Atlantic slave trade and government seizure of Indigenous lands across North America was invested and still exists.

This article has focused on how colonialism benefits the wealthy and powerful. One of the next steps is learning how colonialism conditions even those who are not wealthy to be “okay” with the exploitation it needs to thrive. Colonialism conditions people to be okay with racism. It conditions non-Indigenous people, and it especially conditions white people, to be blind to benefiting from racism and exploitation. It separates people from each other.

Understanding how colonization and colonialism function through exploitation and have the goal of creating wealth and power for the few, we can see why the church cannot support these ideologies anymore. Jesus flipped the tables on the money changers in the Temple for a reason—and it wasn’t because he was upset with them for not turning enough of a profit. To be a follower of Jesus is (as he said) to love your neighbour, not exploit them. This is a lesson I have learned in large part from Indigenous, Black and other Christians of Colour, and it is a lesson I am deeply grateful for.

*This article is just one piece in an ongoing conversation about racism and decolonization. To learn more, see the resource list “Some Ways to Begin and Continue Decolonizing” on the Indigenous Justice page of the PCC’s Social Action Hub: [presbyterian.ca/indigenous-justice](http://presbyterian.ca/indigenous-justice).*

## The Art of Transitional Ministry

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**RECONCILIATION**

# UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

By Katharine Sisk, Justice Ministries

On June 21, 2021, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Bill C-15, an Act to bring Canadian laws in line with the articles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, received Royal Assent and was passed into law. The Bill requires the Canadian government to consult with Indigenous peoples and prepare a plan for implementing Bill C-15 within the next two years. Beyond that, it requires annual reporting on progress made to the House of Commons for transparency and accountability.

To understand the significance of this bill and its accountability we must recognize that as a nation, a political entity with laws and policies, and as a society, there is an urgent and desperate need for its implementation. We don't need to look further than the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and

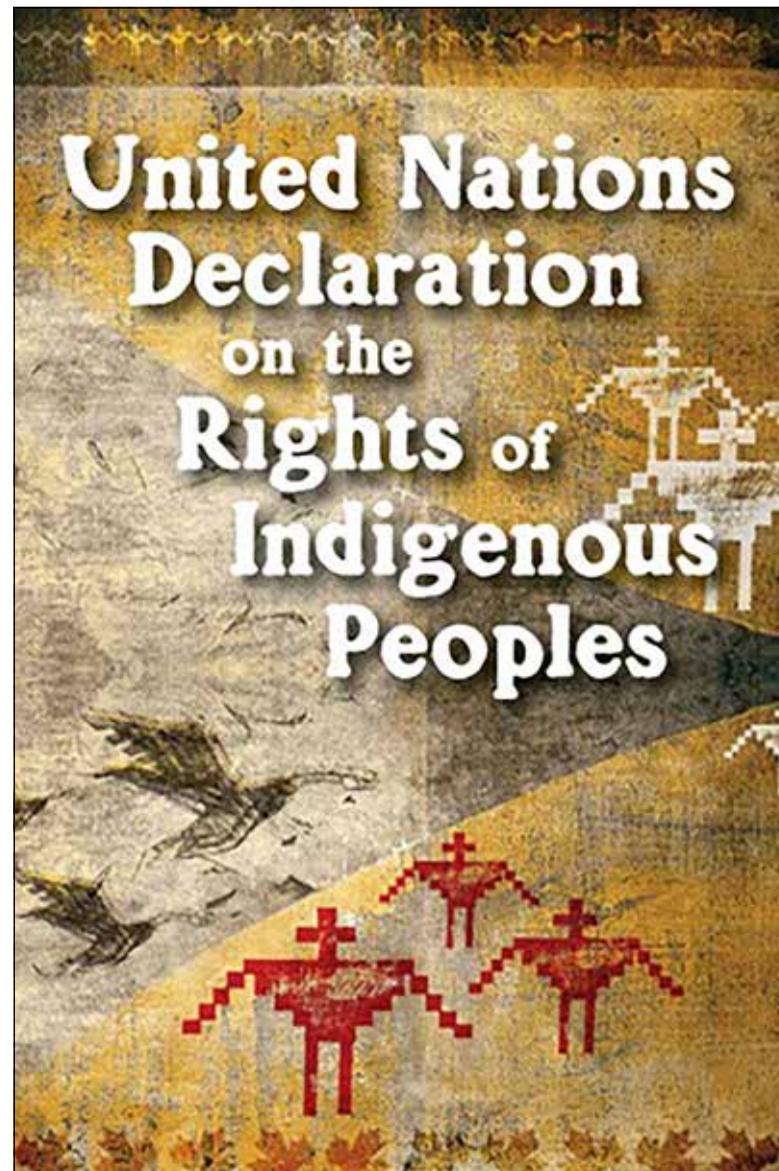
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to see how anti-Indigenous systemic racism is not a thing of the past, but a weapon that continues to carry deadly force today.

In May 2021, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation was the first of several Indigenous communities to share information that unmarked and undocumented burial sites had been located on the grounds of former Residential Schools. The Presbyterian Church in Canada, which operated 12 Residential Schools, continues with repentance to examine its involvement in the harms of colonization. These announcements have surprised and disturbed many non-Indigenous Canadians and re-triggered intergenerational trauma for many Indigenous people. But the surprise of many Canadians is itself a symptom of colonialism—the announcements did not surprise Indigenous people. The societal structures and the discriminatory beliefs that gave rise to the Residential Schools

system, still shape the lives and experiences of Indigenous peoples today through barriers affecting access to health care, the safety of loved ones, access to clean drinking water, equity in education, and equitable treatment under Canadian laws and in court systems.

The passage of Bill C-15 is not just an act of Parliament, but a moral imperative with legal leverage that can be used to reframe the relationships between governments and Indigenous peoples onto a more just foundation. It is not itself a remedy against racism, or a resetting of broken trust, or medicine for intergenerational wounds. It will not immediately counter complex layers of prejudice and bias. Rather, it gives us guidelines that constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples—a framework for reconciliation.

Though there were many allies supporting efforts to see this bill become law, the passage of this bill



would not have been possible without the leadership and immense work of many Indigenous people. And while there is so much yet to be done, in this moment, we express gratitude for the persistence, resilience and courage of Indigenous peoples, and all who work for Indigenous rights.

### What can churches do?

- Learn about the National Indigenous Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada at [presbyterian.ca/indigenous](http://presbyterian.ca/indigenous). Watch a worship service by ministry leaders to mark National Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Seek to understand the harms of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous peoples and communities by reading the Final Report and Calls to Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and use the PCC study guide on the final report: *Why Work to Decolonize?*, available at [presbyterian.ca/why-work-to-decolonize](http://presbyterian.ca/why-work-to-decolonize). You can also read the resources and support the work of Indigenous organizations, such as the Native Women's Association of Canada.
- Learn about the impacts of colonialism and why it was necessary for the church to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery at [presbyterian.ca/dod](http://presbyterian.ca/dod).
- Be a partner for change. Read the statement by the former and current moderators made in light of the findings of 215 unmarked graves of children at Kamloops Residential School at [presbyterian.ca/joint-statement](http://presbyterian.ca/joint-statement). Discuss it in your faith community. How can your church support Indigenous-lead initiatives that centre around and magnify Indigenous knowledge, culture, language and traditions?



## SHARE YOUR PHOTOS!

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## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

# General Assembly to Meet Online in 2022

By the Rev. Stephen Kendall,  
Principal Clerk, General Assembly

The year 2021 will be remembered, among many other things, as the first year in our history that the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada was held online. The global pandemic continues to move much of the life of the church online and, in 2022, this will once again be the case with the General Assembly.

Assembly Council, on January 19, agreed that the Moderator be requested to convene an online General Assembly to be held June 5–8, 2022. After discussions with the university where we had hoped to meet in person, and following prayer and discussion, the Council could not, with confidence, recommend planning to meet in person this year, much as we would have liked to.

Since this is not our first experience holding an online General Assembly, the learnings and feedback from 2021 will inform the format of

the upcoming online gathering.

As always, commissioners will be responsible for the business of the Assembly and its decisions. There will also be worship, ecumenical and interfaith guests, young adult and student representatives and new opportunities for fellowship. The wider church will have the opportunity to follow the Assembly through live streaming.

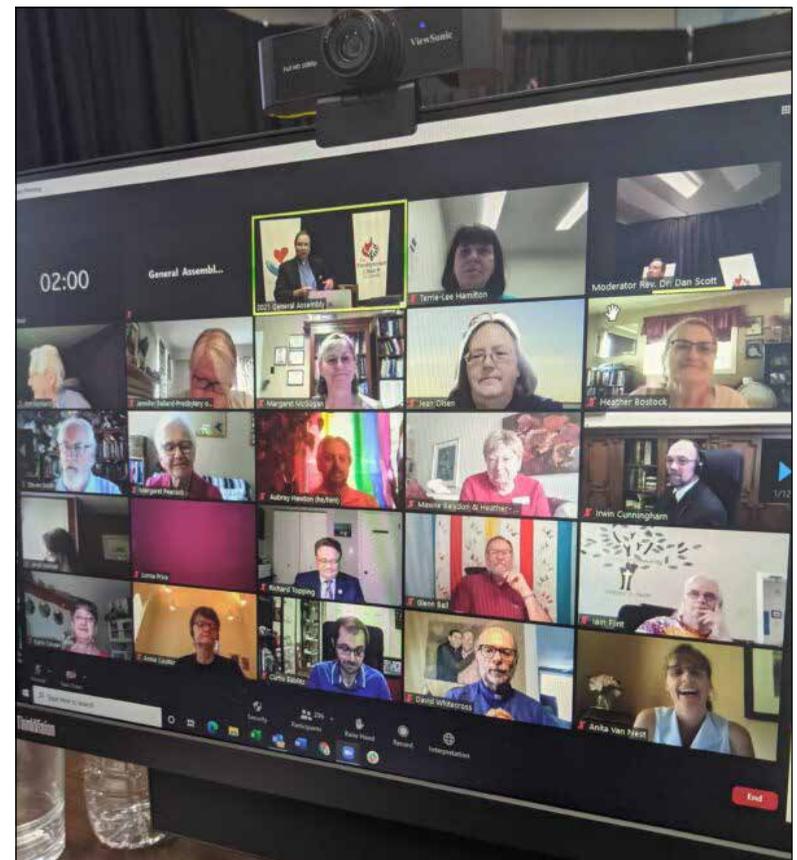
The General Assembly Office will continue to work with the General Assembly Design Team on making the online gathering as meaningful and effective as possible under these circumstances.

In 2021, very significant matters of business came before the Assembly, along with a backlog of overtures, reports and recommendations from 2019 and earlier. This resulted in a great number of decisions that had to be made in the time we'd spent together. We do not expect this to be the case this year. Standing Committees are being asked to tailor their re-

ports for an online Assembly, where possible and reasonable, by limiting the number of recommendations and the scope of business to those issues that need to be considered this year. Committees will also be asked to prepare a list of consent recommendations consisting of topics they think could be decided upon together and possibly without debate. Commissioners will be permitted to ask that recommendations be removed from any Consent Agenda.

Commissioners are ultimately responsible for the Assembly. They will need to authorize its very existence when it starts, decide on the business to be considered and approve any procedures that will be necessary to facilitate the online Assembly.

PC-Biz.org, the online platform that we used last year, will be used again for presenting the reports and recommendations to commissioners in real time and for voting. Every commissioner will be trained in its use, and provided with briefing opportu-



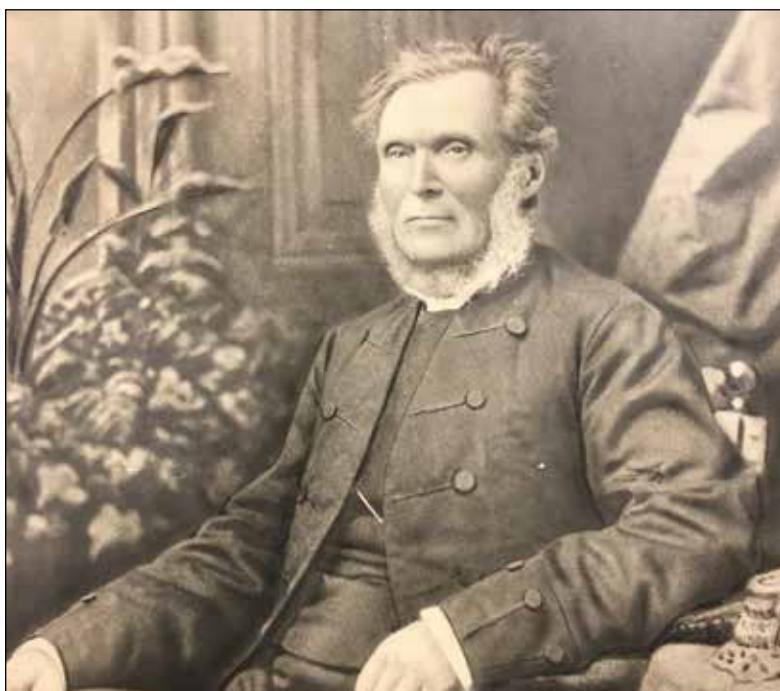
In 2021, The Presbyterian Church in Canada held its first online General Assembly.

nities related both to the reports and functioning of the online Assembly in order to ensure a sufficient level of confidence in this important work.

The General Assembly Office looks forward, once again, to working with

a team of volunteers and staff to help the Assembly be a positive and memorable experience. As plans continue to develop and unfold, the Assembly website will be updated at the GA2022 web page at [presbyterian.ca/ga2022](http://presbyterian.ca/ga2022).

## How is the Moderator Chosen?



The Rev. John Cook, the PCC's first moderator, elected in 1857.

By the Rev. Don Muir,  
Deputy Clerk, General Assembly

In 1875, the Rev. John Cook was elected to serve as moderator of the first General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Every

year since then, except in 2020 when the Assembly was cancelled, the church has elected a moderator to preside over the proceedings of our highest court.

Each autumn, the General Assembly Office invites presbyteries to sub-

mit up to two nominations for moderator. The presbytery, after contacting their nominees to confirm they are willing to let their names stand, will submit a biographical sketch for each one. Minister nominees are to be on the constituent roll of a presbytery at the time the Assembly is held, and elder nominees are to be on the constituent roll of a Session. A candidate must be nominated by at least two presbyteries before their name is added to the ballot.

Ballots are then circulated to presbyteries. Every minister and elder on the constituent roll of a presbytery is eligible to vote. All ballots must be returned to the General Assembly Office by midnight on March 31. A preferential system of voting is used. This means that unless one candidate receives 50% + 1 of first-place votes on the first round, the nominee with the fewest votes is excluded and their second-place votes are distributed among the other candidates for second-round count. This process continues until one nominee has a majority of votes. The ballots are counted by the Committee to Advise with the Moderator, which is appoint-



Portrait taken in 1992 of the Rev. Linda Bell, the first woman to be elected as moderator of the General Assembly.

ed by each General Assembly. On April 1, the name of this candidate is announced.

When the Assembly meets, the moderator of the previous Assembly will present the nominee for election by the commissioners. Thus elected, the new moderator is installed with covenant promises and prayers for God's blessing and guidance. The church continues to be wonderfully



Portrait of Tamiko Corbett from 1996, the first non-minister to be elected as moderator of the General Assembly.

enriched by the faith, gifts and experience each moderator brings to this ecclesiastical office.

This year, since only one person received nominations from two or more presbyteries, the election process was not needed. This has happened from time to time. In 2021, the General Assembly authorized the use of online voting. This will likely take place on an experimental basis next year.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

# Meet the 2022 Moderator



**The Rev. Dr. Bob Faris.**

*By the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald,  
General Secretary*

**The Rev. Dr. Robert (Bob) Faris, B.A., MDiv, M.Th., PhD**

Bob is a lifelong Presbyterian who has an ecumenical spirit and openness to the new thing that God is doing. This has included more than 35 years of innovative ministry within the PCC that has been focused on understanding and working toward

the improvement of lives and communities negatively affected by social injustice and colonialism.

Raised in Newmarket and Sarnia, Ontario, Bob completed his undergraduate studies at Queen's University. Both his parents were elders and Bob felt called to ordained ministry early in life. His involvement in the Presbyterian Young People's Society and Camp Kintail led to his ordination to camping ministry as the first full-time director of Kintail in 1984. His creative ministry influenced a new generation of leaders and helped set Camp Kintail on a path toward becoming a model of church camping.

After receiving an M.Div. from Knox College, he worked for some time with a congregation in Hamilton where issues of child poverty were part of the ministry. His passion for the life of the global church was fed at New College in Edinburgh, where Bob completed an M.Th. in 1987, then responded to a call to serve with the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique as a professor at the *Seminário Unido de Ricatla*. He was the first Ca-

nadian Presbyterian to be appointed to Mozambique. After language study in Brazil, Bob spent six years in the context of Mozambique's civil war as well as the ending of apartheid in neighbouring South Africa. His admiration for the courage and witness of Christians in Mozambique in the face of immense violence and poverty informed his doctoral thesis at the University of Cape Town, which was published with the title, *Liberating Mission in Mozambique: Faith and Revolution in the Life of Eduardo Mondlane*. His experience in southern Africa also opened his eyes more fully to the legacy of colonialism in Canada and particularly to the catastrophic harm done to Indigenous peoples.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has benefited from Bob's academic work and teaching. He has taught courses in pastoral ministry and mission at Knox College and accompanied students to Cuba. In the lay education program at Knox College, he taught a course in spirituality and politics.

Bob has been a key ecumenical leader at a time of significant challenge and change. He was Director of the Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministries and the Churches' Council on Theological Education in Canada. He also served on the PCC's Church Doctrine Committee and was convener of both the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee and the Cutting Edge of Mission Committee. He chaired the Board of Cooperation Canada Mozambique, was a member of the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches, was a delegate to the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and accompanied the Moderator's visit to Lebanon, Israel and Palestine in response to the KAIROS Palestine document.

In 2011, Bob was called to St. Andrew's Church in downtown Toronto. He shares in worship leadership, coordinates Out of the Cold and Refugee Sponsorship programs, has provided innovative leadership in adult education and has fostered a partnership relationship with Marabella Church in Trinidad. He has had a significant role in St. Andrew's growth among a younger demographic living in condos and working downtown and its deepening commitment to being an intercultural and inclusive congregation. He has also taken a leadership role in the Presbytery of East Toronto.

Bob has taken some time to reflect on the year ahead and on some of the matters he would like to focus on

while Moderator. Relationships are at the forefront in his mind, especially in two different but connected themes.

First, Bob spoke about the importance of working toward new relationships with Indigenous people. "Truth-telling around the experience of Indigenous people and the church's history in Canada is of highest priority for the church's attention." He hesitated to move too quickly to use the word *reconciliation* because there is still much truth-telling yet to be done. "Telling the story is how we forge new pathways," Bob said.

Second, the church's work toward inclusion of LGBTQI2+ people is important for Bob, who said, "We still have a long journey ahead of us on that front."

Bob served as co-convenor of the General Assembly's Special Listening Committee re LGBTQI, known as Rainbow Communion. As a gay man, Bob has experienced the harm done to people who identify as LGBTQI2+ in the church. He has sought to live with integrity, while calling the church to change its doctrine and practice that has diminished and harmed God's beloved LGBTQI2+ children. He rejoiced when last year's General Assembly adopted the remits that allowed for same sex marriage and the ordination of people in same sex relationships as well as all the recommendations brought by the Rainbow Communion.

Bob doesn't believe that the church is beyond the divisions around sexuality and inclusion and knows that important discussions will continue to be part of the conversation that the church is having. "But decisions have been made and we are in the place where we are working out what it means to be the church with these new decisions," he said. "It is hard work, but it is where we are called to be. I hope we can still listen to each other and all the perspectives among us, recognizing that some of the voices we will hear now will be new."

Bob sees these two focuses as part of the larger issue of inequality and injustices in Canadian society and globally. He says that the church needs to understand the reality of injustices from a biblical and theological perspective and recall scripture's focus on God's call to justice.

Reflecting on the decision that the General Assembly will again meet online this year, Bob noted that meeting in person encourages relationship building and a greater sense of community and connection. At the same time, he acknowledged that

## Reading with the Next Moderator

Here are some of the books on Bob's bookshelf that have been important to him on his faith journey.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*

Sally McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*

Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*

Leonardo Boff, Church: *Charism and Power* and *Ecclesiology*

*The Kairos Document* from South Africa

John DeGruchy, *Liberating Reformed Theology* and *The Church Struggle in South Africa*

Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Rise of Global Christianity*

Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World*

Charles Fensham, *Misguided Love: Christians and the Rupture of LGBTQI2+ People*

Jesse Thistle, *From the Ashes*

Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*

Esi Edugyan, *Washington Black*

Bob has read quite a bit of John Irving, most recently *Avenue of Mysteries* and he likes Shyam Selvadurai (*Cinnamon Gardens* and *Funny Boy*)

A historian at heart, Bob has enjoyed Margaret MacMillan's books and how she personalizes the great moments of history to give insight into the people who have shaped our world.



**The Rev. Bob Faris in personal protective equipment for take-away meals for the Out of the Cold program at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont.**

there are good things to be learned by the church that come from meeting online. "Meeting online does not need to limit our discernment; for some it made participation easier and enhanced their ability to contribute. It is good for the church to know that we can do both and look at hybrid models."

Amid the many challenges and periods of grace experienced during the pandemic, Bob continues to look forward to responding to God's calling and to sharing the journey into this new time that lays ahead for us all.

**MISSION & OUTREACH**

# Brick by Brick Community Fundraiser in Halifax



Renovations underway at the Presbyterian Church of Saint David in Halifax, N.S.

*By the Rev. Iona MacLean,  
the Presbyterian Church of  
Saint David in Halifax, N.S.*

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David is a welcoming, worshipping and sharing community in the heart of downtown Halifax, N.S. As a congregation, we have a deep appreciation for the art of hosting, thriving on our role as host for Sunday worship, for community collaboration, a gathering place for those who need safe-haven (David's Place) and a venue for music and the arts. In choosing to remain in the 1869 sanctuary at this location, we collectively see our mission and presence as an important contribution to the well-being of those on the margins in the inner city.

Our major renovation project at the Presbyterian Church of Saint David this year is to replace the bricks and restore the six stained-glass windows on the south wall. This was deemed to be urgent repair to make

our church secure so that it may continue to provide safe haven. Time has been truly pressing on us as we near completion of the south wall project before the depths of winter. The work that had begun in the summer is going well and is projected to be completed in early 2022.

At the beginning of the project, the congregation had 70% of the necessary funds (thanks in large part to loans from the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation), but still needed to raise an additional \$250,000. We embarked on a fundraising campaign in the summer, knowing that "many hands make light work" and that the project would not be possible without the support of our community.

Throughout the fall, we have hosted the "Brick by Brick Concert Series" to raise funds, but also, and equally as important, to raise awareness of Saint David's in the wider community, especially among musicians and supporters of the arts. It



has been a wonderful experience of diversity in musical styles with musicians enthusiastically endorsing Saint David's as a great place to play and sing.

We have reached out to our congregation, but also beyond to people in the community and those with past connections to Saint David's, for assistance and support in the Brick by Brick Campaign. We are very grateful for the generous support we have received. We would gladly and humbly welcome contributions from anyone in our wider Presbyterian family in our continuing effort to provide a safe, secure and beautiful meeting place in our neighbourhood.

The **Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC)** enables congregations to obtain the funds necessary to build or expand their facilities at favourable rates of interest by providing guarantees for loans. PCBC is evolving with the changing needs of congregations and is open to considering all building proposals. The goal is to work with congregations by using all available resources to develop a plan and provide guidance in exploring possibilities to generate revenues and become financially viable. This includes examining available opportunities to repurpose buildings.

## New Beginnings in Kingston

*By St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
in Kingston, Ont.*

Back in 1840, as Kingston was preparing to become the capital of the new province of Canada, the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church committed to building a manse. It was to be placed adjacent to the church and provide housing for its minister. To design the large family home, they employed George Browne, the architect who also designed the city hall, and in 1842, the structure was completed.

It is a stately, two-storey house, in the Regency style, built of local limestone, with the front door facing the church. At one time there was even a tunnel connecting the house directly to the minister's study! Although the tunnel is now sealed off, adults who grew up in this congregation reminisce about daring each other to go

into it as children.

The manse was used for a long time, and has been kept in excellent, and unaltered condition—except of course for modern upgrades to the heating, plumbing and electrical system.

Eventually living so close to the downtown church became less appropriate, and the congregation shifted the use of the manse to support students who wished to live in an intentional Christian community. The fact that the Presbyterians had received a royal charter to begin Queen's University in 1841 made this use of the manse ideal!

During a year of vacancy due to Covid, a committee of the congregation decided to review the use of the house. A full range of options were investigated, including even selling the property. Upon reflection, the congregation expressed the desire



Photos of the manse at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kingston, Ont. PHOTO CREDITS: JORDAN SIMONS

to dedicate the manse to be of assistance in some way with respect to the affordable housing crisis faced by many in the city. (Did you know that an individual on Ontario Works receives only \$390 a month to cover rent and utilities?)

After a great deal of work, St. Andrew's has formed a partnership with Ryandale Transitional Housing. The manse will provide a home for seven individuals at a time who are leaving the correctional system or rehabilitation programs as they transition into independent living. St. Andrew's will provide the manse, itself receiving only the government housing allowances to cover maintenance of the

building, and Ryandale will provide the expertise of support.

The initiative has received financial support (from the City of Kingston, Sleep Country and various individual donors in the congregation and community) to equip the manse for this change of use, and will be receiving an annual grant to provide the necessary personal support and supervision (from the United Way). There is a real need for an initiative like this, and many have responded with commitment.

Two teams will accompany the project as it moves forward. One is tasked with maintaining the physical building, while the other will cre-

ate relationships of support with the tenants. Each team is composed of people from both the congregation and Ryandale.

The first group of residents moved in on January 10 and we are excited to encourage these men on their journey...in the name of Christ! As I write this, my mind and heart return to the passage we heard at a recent service at St. Andrew's: "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers... Remember those who are in prison... Keep your lives free from the love of money... Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever" (Hebrews 13).



**MISSION & OUTREACH**

# Sunday Supper Ministry in Brockville



Lloyd and his potatoes.

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

First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., in partnership with local Anglican and Baptist churches, has started a new ministry to provide hearty take-out Sunday meals on the fourth Sunday of each month.

The Sunday Supper program was started in Brockville to provide meals for hungry, homeless and isolated people, who otherwise depend on the local Loaves & Fishes restaurant for meals on weekdays. The remaining Sundays are covered by

other community churches. There is no charge for these meals, but donations are welcome.

The meal preparation team at First PC cooked 150 meals, which were supplemented with dessert and beverages, and distributed from First Presbyterian Church. Additional meals were delivered to those who are homebound and to the local homeless shelter.

We are grateful to all who donated food, prepared and distributed the meals, and cleaned up afterwards. We look forward to the time when the Sunday Suppers may be served and enjoyed in community.



The super potato peelers.



Preparing the meals.



Ready for take-out!

# Stronger Together:

## When Two Missions Become One

*By Ainsley Chapman, Executive Director, Evangel Hall Mission, Toronto, Ont.*

The cost of housing, food and gas has been going up for many years, making it more and more difficult to make ends meet. But these are not just costs that affect individuals and families—as Presbyterian churches across the country understand very well, they are also making it more expensive to help those in need. In their continued commitment to offer housing and supports to people who are homeless, the Boards of Directors of Evangel Hall Mission (ehm) and Portland Place have spent the past year planning something exciting—and they are now thrilled to announce that as of January 1, 2022, these two beloved Presbyterian missions have become one!

Evangel Hall Mission first opened its doors in downtown Toronto in 1913, as a soup kitchen, Sunday School and source of spiritual care for the community—many of whom were newcomers to Canada. While the neighbourhood changed, ehm was there for those in need throughout two World Wars, and continued to provide care and support throughout the 20th century.

In the 1990s, a group of forward-thinking staff and volunteers proposed that it was time to do more—it was time to build permanent housing for the people who relied on ehm for

food and support. And with that vision, Portland Place was born. A four-storey building with 46 apartments became home to many. The Rev. Bob Smith, a Portland Place Board member for over four years and member of the newly amalgamated Board, reflected on what makes Portland Place so special. “It is more than just housing—it provides support to residents to help stabilize and manage their day-to-day lives in the city. Spending time with residents by serving meals underlined for me how much the place had become a real community. At one meal, in a conversation with one of the residents, I asked whether they had family. The response was, ‘Not really, not anymore. This is my family. This is my home.’”

The success of this housing project led to a second one—in the mid-2000s, ehm sold its tiny property that it had long outgrown (I often hear from volunteers who tell me about the days of balancing trays of chili while carefully stepping down narrow wooden stairs) and with that money built a six-storey building with 84 apartments, giving housing to people living in the shelter system.

It was felt that the two buildings would be best managed independently, with two Boards of Directors. Located only two blocks apart from one another, Portland Place tenants became regulars at ehm—making use of the services and volunteer-

ing their time. While the spirit and personality of each residence was unique, they continued to share many ties. But with rapidly rising costs, and the challenges that come with supporting tenants as they age, the two Boards began talking about ways to share resources to better support tenants, and to keep up with skyrocketing maintenance costs.

By merging into a single agency, there is so much opportunity to save on the costs of maintaining and administering two apartment buildings. But what is truly exciting is that ehm has been able to expand and share so many programs and services with Portland Place’s tenants—like the Spiritual Care Program. This program has been growing throughout the pandemic—we have welcomed placement students from divinity programs at both Knox College and Emmanuel College, started a Grief and Bereavement Support Group, and created the Peer Worker employment program for individuals who have been recently homeless or underhoused. Led by the Rev. Dale Henry and Spiritual Care Program Manager Crystal Cotter, the Spiritual Care Program and all its services and supports are going to take on a more visible presence at Portland Place.

The Rev. Rebecca Jess, ehm Board member and Vice President, explained why the Spiritual Care Program is needed at both buildings more than ever before: “Particularly



Pictured (left) is Crystal Cotter, Spiritual Care Program Manager and (right) Judy, a Portland Place tenant, enjoying a Volunteer Appreciation Event in ehm’s Drop-In Centre.

in these days of greater isolation and challenges due to Covid, meeting the spiritual needs of clients is extremely important. In this way, clients are far more than people in need—they are individuals with unique stories and situations whose voices are worthy of being heard and who are deserving of love and compassion. Following Christ’s example, Spiritual Care offers space for transformation through love and grace.”

At the heart of this amalgamation is a desire to provide the hope and dignity that can only come when someone has a safe, clean and permanent home of their own. Why should we care about housing? The Rev. Bob Smith explained: “It is such a critical need in the city and is perhaps the single most important place to start in lending a hand to those

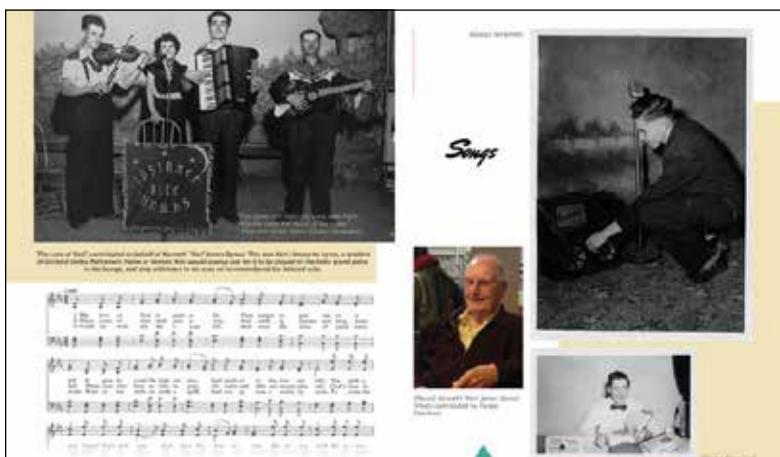
who are vulnerable. The need is crucial and immediate and can make the difference for someone living in poverty to function and even survive. On top of that serious need is the inescapable call of the gospel to love our neighbour and to follow Christ in his mission to bring good news to the poor and lift up those who struggle.”



Gifts to Presbyterians Sharing provide support to ehm, bringing hope to vulnerable people.

**MISSION & OUTREACH**

# Sharing Our Story in Vernon



Pages from the *Tell Me a Story* magazine produced by Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C.

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

The *Tell Me a Story* magazine was initially conceived by the congregation of Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C., as a feel-good project. The North Okanagan Community Foundation offered grants to help lo-

cal non-profits initiate creative ideas to keep the community engaged and to uplift spirits during COVID-19. Of particular interest was how these projects might impact seniors in positive ways, as the elderly were often most restricted due to health and mobility challenges, along with the regulations of the retirement resi-

dences many called home.

Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C., took up the challenge and planned an online and print magazine full of stories, pictures, anecdotes, recipes and poems from both church and community members.

With funds on hand, a summer student with an eye for graphic arts was hired to help put together the magazine and organize the material received. Several retirement homes in Vernon were gracious in allowing the summer student to interview their residents, while some church members even invited the student into their home (adhering to COVID-19 protocols, of course). A family, grieving the loss of their mother, donated photo albums containing old black and white photos to help fill the pages of the magazine with nostalgia and special moments in time; in some way, bringing their mother's memory alive once again.

For the final step of publication, the Session of Knox opted to have a professional printer bind the 80-plus pages, which gave it a professional and polished look. While the publication was distributed online, the elders recognized that for many seniors, the old-fashioned print magazine was an important way that each participant in the program could celebrate their "few minutes of fame" and share it with family and friends.

## Lessons learned from this project

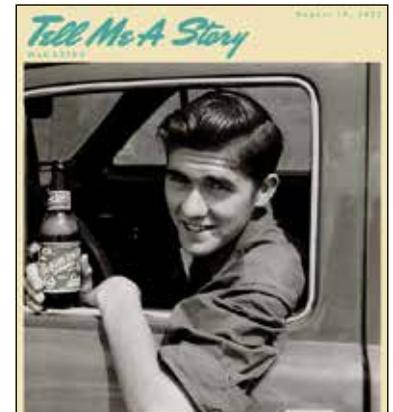
We Have a Story to Tell: Our story may be the most valuable asset the

church has today. As Christians, we know we have "The Story" to share, but our congregations are full of seniors with rich stories of life's ups and downs, the once-in-a-lifetime moments and even the everyday moments. While "The Story" feeds our faith, the stories of those who sit in our pews remind us of our resilience, persistence, laughter and friendship. Finding creative ways to share the stories of life and to create opportunities to celebrate the wisest and dearest of our congregations serves us well as the people of Christ.

Bringing the Generations Together: One of the unexpected developments of this project was the impact that the stories had on the summer student. He encountered many things lost from his generation: real film negatives, a copy of the Vancouver Sun from the day "Man Walked on the Moon," and he learned what a "shivaree" was. He was patient and mannerly as the elderly shared the same story more than once and he watched carefully when he worked in the church offices, observing how we cared for each other in the day-to-day comings and goings at the church.

Many parishioners returned several times, bringing new stories and photos for the student to consider. In glimpses of the holy, we could see our student become more respectful of the seniors before him, while our seniors were genuinely pleased that someone was interested in what they had to share.

Magazine Becomes Ministry: Our



grant requirements clearly stated that the primary focus of this project was to be community-based, not church-oriented. Yet, by the time of its completion, a spirit had fallen into the pages; relationships had been created, stories and names remembered, grief released, family recipes and laughter shared. We could hear whispers as the pages turned: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20).

As our church wrestles to become something new while holding on to the heritage of its past, we have the opportunity to gather together the stories of our congregation, our community and our church families. It is these stories that can bind us together and remind us not only of the church we have been, but the church we will become. The potential to create publications with a focus on weddings, the war-years, seasons of church life, and so forth are almost limitless; easily shaped to suit your church family and interests.

Stories are at the heart of the Christian experience. These stories have brought us this far. Where will they take us next? It's time to "Tell Our Story"!

# Acting Together through Faith in Uxbridge

By David Phillips, St. Andrew's-Chalmers Presbyterian Church in Uxbridge, Ont.

We are fortunate in many ways at St. Andrew's-Chalmers Presbyterian Church in Uxbridge, Ont. As we develop and implement our new Vision Statement, "Acting together through faith we offer care and community to all," there are two ways in particular where we would like to highlight our good fortune.

First, we were blessed with good luck to be the recipient of a large amount of money to be used at our discretion and, second, the congre-

gation is using it well.

A Growing Together Fund was established with very defined criteria. Each year 70% of the gains are available for mission and 30% is available for major church property improvements.

In 2021, there were three major projects: 1) educational support in Guatemala, 2) relief support for Afghanistan and 3) financial support for the North Durham Warming Project.

Guatemala: The congregation has supported the Francisco Coll School for over 20 years. However, we wanted to help some students advance past the first six years of education and attend three years of

"high school"—three more years of learning trades and skills to help them in their adult future. We have pledged \$10,000 a year for seven years to help with the education of graduates of Francisco Coll to participate in this next level of education. This program was just implemented in January 2022.

Afghanistan: We have contributed \$40,000 to PWS&D for an emergency food assistance project. This project is qualified to receive matching funds from the Government of Canada and is an ecumenical initiative through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, helping the many in need in



A group of internally displaced people in Kabul, Afghanistan, following the takeover by the Taliban, September 2021. PHOTO CREDIT: PWS&D

Afghanistan.

North Durham Warming Initiative: Uxbridge has seen an increase in homelessness and those who are at risk of becoming homeless. This initiative addresses the needs of people who are living in their cars or tents over the winter. The total donation is \$10,000, which is distributed as re-

quired in \$2,500 amounts.

The year 2022 marks the first full year of implementing our new vision for the congregation and we look forward to seeing what new and creative ways will develop to live out this vision, either through our own programs or through disbursements from the Growing Together Fund.

**MISSION & OUTREACH**

# What's Different about "Free Little Mitten" Trees?



Free Little Mittens tree at transit station in South Calgary.

By Alice Post, on behalf of theCreek Team, a ministry extension of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta.

Many of us have seen mitten tree initiatives. In the days leading up to Christmas, a Christmas tree is set up in the church foyer, or in the sanctuary, and congregants are invited to bring donations to be placed on the tree. The mitten tree acts as a meaningful collection system for our gifts of warmth and care. Gifts are gathered up, dedicated and then brought to a community organization that distributes to those in need.

But what do you do when you want to invite people from different communities to take part, and you don't have a building that is in (or within) close distance to those communities? And what do you do when you are not able to gather?

How about taking the mitten tree from inside the church and setting it up outside, letting it be both a collection and distribution system? Free

Little Mitten Trees work similarly to Free Little Libraries. They are outside and accessible to all. Everyone in the community is invited to "take what you need and give what you can."

In December of 2020 and 2021, theCreek Team placed Free Little Mitten trees outside the church building at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., and also at each of the three transit stations that serve the south Calgary communities where theCreek is present.

In 2020, when the city was in lockdown, thousands of items were given and received, making a meaningful difference to the many who were deeply affected by pandemic restrictions and job loss. In 2021, with economic recovery in the works, the trees still had an impact, with well over 700 items given and received through the Free Little Mitten trees.

Free Little Mitten trees placed at high-traffic areas, like transit stations:

- are Covid-safe, since they don't require anyone to gather indoors
- are visibly present and easily accessible to the community
- inspire and invite community involvement
- reach people who might not otherwise seek help
- allow people to give or access help as, and when, they are able

For theCreek Team at St. Andrew's, Calgary, this was a great fit with our desire to be present in these communities and to be part of the mission of God in south Calgary neighbourhoods. It meant letting go of the idea that we need to control where the donations go and who receives the gifts by letting the Holy Spirit take care of all of that.



A donation is placed on the mitten tree.



The congregation at St. Andrew's, Calgary, enthusiastically supported this new initiative with generous and thoughtful gifts of warm hats, mittens, scarves—many lovingly handmade. This year, since Covid restrictions allowed for in-person worship, a special and meaningful dedication was held during a worship service, with prayers for those who would receive each item.

# Church Partners with Medical Recycling Depot



The supplies area of the mission depot. Pictured (left to right) are Cam Fraser, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church member, and volunteers, Rae Mavor, RN, and Anne Wood, retired RN.

By Jean Aitchison, retired nurse, Avonton Presbyterian Church near Stratford, Ont.

As a member of Avonton Presbyterian Church near Stratford, Ont., and a retired registered nurse, I have been coordinating a medical recycling depot for more than 25 years. This pro-

ject began when I started doing short-term medical and humanitarian mission trips, because our host developing communities had no supplies to work with. (The supplies have accompanied me on all 38 mission trips.) Many Presbyterian congregations in southwestern Ontario have donated medical supplies and made items like diapers and quilts. I gave a presentation in Goderich, Ont.,

to the Women's Missionary Society Synodical, resulting in several other Presbyterian churches participating in the program.

We have moved our workspace several times: going from various locations at Stratford General Hospital, to the basement of a veterinary business, to an industrial building, and



Jean Aitchison, retired RN and coordinator of the depot, and Cam Fraser, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church member and new depot volunteer who set up all of the shelving and continues to volunteer.

last year we were invited to occupy an unused funeral home. Unfortunately, this past October, after one year there, we were asked to leave, as the owner had other plans for the space.

The local newspaper, the *Stratford Beacon Herald*, did a story on our plight, and we received an invitation to tour a large upstairs space, about 2,000 square feet, with elevator access, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Stratford. Our volunteers loved it on first viewing, as it was warm, bright, clean, open and airy—and just the size of space we needed. Hayter Hall is located in the very upper part of the church, in the arches, constructed in the 1960s to accommodate a larger Sunday School and meeting place. For the past number of years, Hayter Hall has not been used effectively.

We joined an online Session meeting hosted by the Rev. Mark Wolfe to make a presentation about the work

of medical recycling and to answer questions. A week later, Session voted unanimously to invite us to occupy Hayter Hall for three years to start. I again have tears in my eyes as I think about it.

We contacted all the agencies that we assist with supplies, and they came and picked up our prepared inventory. Our supplies reach about 26 countries around the world every year. Our accumulated stock went to Beirut, Lebanon, Cuba, Venezuela, Zambia, South Africa and South Sudan, as well as Stratford outreach organizations like the food banks, SPCA, a centre for the homeless and at-risk youth, and a women's shelter.

We moved into Hayter Hall at St. Andrew's just before Christmas. Our wonderful Christmas gift! We are set up, accepting and sending out medical and personal care supplies once again!

But that is not the end of this good news. St. Andrew's had large, beautiful tables already in this space and asked us if we could use them, otherwise, they would have to get rid of

them. We happily accepted and gave about 10 eight-foot long heavy tables to a local missionary loading a sea container for South Sudan. I bought 10 used standalone metal shelving units to use as our pharmacy shelves. All of our existing wood and steel shelving units that we had used for 25 years and moved with difficulty from place to place, and set up each time, were also picked up and are being loaded into the container to go to South Sudan. Talk about a win-win-win!

Cam Fraser, past Clerk of Session and St. Andrew's resident handyman, used his ingenuity to line all the new pharmacy shelves and make the medical depot secure, and has become a regular volunteer. We all get new friends.

*The Stratford Mission Depot is a group of volunteers who accept discarded and donated medical, educational, sports equipment, and personal care supplies from individuals, hospitals, long-term care facilities, community care agencies, physician offices and clinics, and schools.*

"The partnership between St. Andrew's and the Stratford Mission Depot is a natural one, with a shared vision of mission and outreach. St. Andrew's is pleased to assist the Stratford Mission Depot in the fulfillment of their mission, which also helps us to fulfil our mission of reaching out with the heart and hands of Jesus into our community, and into the greater world."

—The Rev. Mark Wolfe, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Stratford, Ont.

**MISSION & OUTREACH**

# Blessed to be a Blessing



*By the Rev. Germaine M. Lovelace and the St. Mark's Helpers at St. Mark's (Malton) Presbyterian Church in Mississauga, Ont.*

As we answer the call to follow Jesus, we are in a great way giving ourselves for service and making ourselves available to be used by God in places of need around us. We remember the beginning of Jesus' well-known discussion with his disciples in Matthew 25:35-40: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink..."

The past two years have been rough for people across the world. Many have seen their lives changed in significant ways, and many have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Food banks in Mississauga, Ont., have been stretched to their limits and have had to call on businesses and the gov-

ernment for help, as more and more people are finding it hard to get by.

It was out of this awareness of the increasing needs around us that our congregation started to reach out to members of our community who required financial help. Some folks called or came to the church looking for assistance, while others were referred to us by members of our own church family. Through the kindness of our congregation, we have been providing food items to several families, as well as gift cards, so that people can manage a little easier during tough times.

For the past two years, we've been blessed by the generosity of Burnbrae Farms as they gifted our church with 1,500 pounds of non-perishable food items.

As church families and faith communities rise to the occasions of need in their areas, they are challenged by this conversation in Matthew's gospel. This was our challenge over a year ago when we started to feed the hungry and reach out to those in need through our ministry, which later became the St. Mark's Helpers. The St. Mark's Helpers grew out of a need to assist our fellow community members who are struggling with income or housing insecurity. The Helpers became a new ministry of the family of St. Mark's in early

2020. Their early outreach activities included sorting, packaging and delivering food donations to a small number of individuals and families in our community.

At the end of last year, we distributed Christmas hampers to some families in Malton. The hampers included non-perishable food items, gift cards, items of clothing, toiletries, hygiene supplies and toys for families who have children. These families were able to spend Christmas without worrying where their meals would come from. They also experienced what Jesus describes in Matthew 25 and their hope for the future will be rekindled.

We continue to help a large number of the families we had helped last year on a monthly basis, as the reports have shown that more and more people are turning to food banks for assistance. With the price of food and other grocery items skyrocketing, many families have had to depend on the generosity of food banks and aid agencies in order to survive on a monthly basis.

The St. Mark's church family hears Matthew 25:35-40 clearly and also have heard Matthew 10:8: "Freely you have received so freely give." Our entire church family has heard these calls of the gospel, as each month different individuals rise to the occasion and donate items of food, clothes or gift cards to help other families who are struggling.

The Helpers have assisted several people who struggle to get out to the food bank for a variety of reasons. A few of the friends they've assisted include: a woman who has been battling cancer and lives alone with no other family residing in Canada; people who have been evicted; a grandmother who became responsible for the care of her daughter's four children after her daughter and her husband died in 2020; a senior living alone, who struggles with several health problems.

There are numerous others.

The kindness and love of the St. Mark's church family, who continue to respond to the call of Jesus to be his hands and feet in the world, is part of what makes our community special. From the numerous gift cards collected since July 2020 (now totalling over \$1,000) to the numerous drop-offs of groceries, toiletries and clothing, they have been a tremendous blessing.

### Tara's reflection on being a Helper

I was born in this beautifully unique and diverse community and have lived here for over 50 years. However, the lack of affordable housing, and the few, if any, raises to minimum wage or social assistance rates, not to mention the repeated cuts to benefits have left many people barely able to put food on the table.

Within the last 10-15 years, the community of Malton has witnessed more and more of its citizens struggling. There are families and young people whose present living situation involves needing to "couch surf" from month to month. Malton has also seen more tent cities pop up in the forested areas of public green spaces.

On top of this, the effects of a horrendous pandemic have only added more challenges to the mix of families and individuals on the edge of survival. This is also a struggle experienced by several families who were comfortably getting by, and even thriving, until suddenly their worlds had been turned upside down by the pandemic.

The Helpers Ministry actually began, in conversation, in August 2019. By the grace of God, it has continued to grow. As someone who has been so blessed to be part of it, I really have seen the hope and love of my church's family come together to provide for others in such a plethora of ways.

Our Christmas Hamper project, I believe, is a great example. A Christ-



mas Hamper is a special gift from the entire family of St. Mark's because, as we help provide for others, it is our attempt to mimic the ultimate gift we all were provided with when Our Almighty Father of Love and Grace sent His Son the Christ Child, Jesus.

In our second year, our church family doubled the number of hampers and increased the number of gifts provided from within, further growing our goal to make them feel special. Through donations, we were able to provide each client with brand-new winter accessories, a special Christmas gift, goodies and gift cards for a local grocery store to purchase fresh food to go with their non-perishable food items. Our local Community Centre donated a turkey for each hamper, and gift bags of items were sent from our MPP and City Councillor.

What makes this such an incredible Holy Spirit-led endeavour to me is that the Helpers received all of the items needed (plus some surprises!) through the generous donations of the St. Mark's Church family.

And how did the Helpers get their name?

The Rev. Germaine made an announcement toward the end of an online service that this ministry was looking for a name. Right before the feed cut out, I saw his young son, Secoya, rush up to the pulpit and say, "Dad! What about St. Mark's Helpers?"

"The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fawning together, and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

 The Presbyterian Church in Canada



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**RECOGNITIONS**

# Presbytery of Central Alberta Special Recognition Service



Presbyterians Sharing supports the Central Alberta Shared Ministry.



The Rev. Charles McNeil, the Rev. Lyn Lamers, the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, the Rev. Harry Currie.

*By the Rev. Steven Webb, Memorial Presbyterian Church in Sylvan Lake, Alta.*

A special recognition service was held at Memorial Presbyterian Church in Sylvan Lake, Alta., by the Presbytery of Central Alberta. This service, which was attended by the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, Moderator of the 146th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, was held to recognize the appointment of two interim ministers.

The Rev. Charles McNeil was recognized into a newly created Central Alberta Shared Ministry established between Knox Presbyterian Church and West Park Presbyterian Church in Red Deer and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Innisfail. This ministry was created by a special committee of the presbytery to find a way to meet the needs of several congregations that were without ministers.

The Presbytery of Central Alberta was meeting the ministry needs of the local congregations with two ac-

tive ministers and a few retired ministers. One solution that presented itself was for these three congregations to share a minister. With the assistance of Ministry and Church Vocations, a working model was developed that would allow all three congregations to maintain their autonomy while sharing a minister at the same time.

After much good discussion among the three congregations, a starting point for this shared ministry was established, and a very suitable interim minister, the Rev. Charles MacNeil, was found to further develop this ministry. This Interim Ministry, which will take place over a two-year period, will work toward establishing a permanent shared ministry between the three congregations. It will allow each congregation to maintain their own individuality while sharing the cost of full-time ministry. The presbytery is excited to see how this model of ministry will develop.

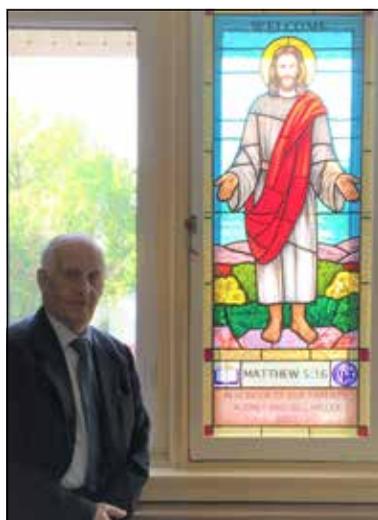
The Rev. Lyn Lamers was also recognized into an Interim Ministry

position—at Memorial Presbyterian Church in Rocky Mountain House. This Interim Ministry was established to enable the congregation there to rebuild and prepare for future ministry with their own called minister. The Rev. Lamers brings considerable pastoral experience to the congregation. She will work with the Interim Moderator at Memorial PC and a Special Oversight Committee of the Presbytery of Central Alberta as this congregation continues to serve Christ in this wonderful community.

Each of these ministers was chosen for the particular gifts that they will bring to the ministry and share with their congregations. The Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, drew attention to this during his sermon on being Apostles.

In attendance at this service were a few representatives from each of the congregations involved, as well as members of the presbytery. The service was live streamed to the members of these congregations and to the members of the presbytery.

# Honouring Faithful Service at Westminster Ottawa



*By Carol Ann Joiner, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, Ont.*



**Bill and Audrey Miller.**

offered to the church to honour their parents. Audrey and Bill have been very active and integral members of Westminster for over 55 years and Audrey was a recipient of the Women's Missionary Society Presbyterian Woman of Faith Award in 2017 for Faithful Service. Sadly, Audrey passed away in the summer of 2020 after a lengthy illness.

The dedication included the scripture Matthew 5:16: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so

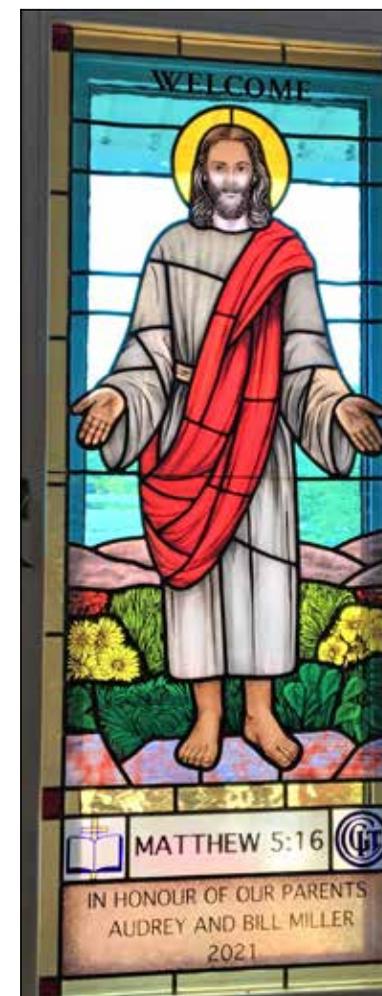
that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." Whatever Audrey and Bill did, be it a ministry of the church, an activity in or away from the church, grocery shopping or meeting a stranger at the local market, they "let their light shine" for all to see.

The main theme of the window is "Welcoming Jesus," which is so appropriate as Audrey and Bill have been such a welcoming force to so many people in their community. Two

other symbols were added to the design: the open Bible and cross, and the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) logo. The first symbol represents the cornerstone of their lives: their faith. And the second, the CGIT logo, speaks to Audrey's 50-plus years of involvement in the CGIT movement, and for which she was honoured by the Ontario CGIT Association for her dedication and volunteer work that spanned more than five decades. No matter what each of them took on, Bill and Audrey have always been in support of one another 100%.

The window was received and dedicated to the Glory of God. We give thanks for the life and work of both Audrey and Bill Miller at Westminster.

Bill is still very active in the life of Westminster, although he is grieving the loss of his beloved wife of 59 years. He has a new place to sit in church now, beside this window, which brings him much comfort.



The stained-glass window at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, Ont.

## NEWS

# A Story of Hope from Knox, Bracebridge

By the Rev. Dr. Heather Malnick, Knox Presbyterian Church in Bracebridge, Ont.

In this time of constantly changing Covid protocols, dire news stories and personal worries, comfort can be found in the timeless expressions of faith and hope. For the congregation at Knox Presbyterian Church in Bracebridge, Ont., and its surrounding community, this comfort is illustrated in the restoration and reinstallation of beautiful stained-glass windows, some of which date back to before 1931 when the original church was opened on McMurray Street.

In 2013, the McMurray Street location was sold and the congregation moved into its current home on Taylor Road. The antique stained-glass windows had been packed up and tucked away in a storage shed—where they remained until

just recently. With the church closed to public worship during the Covid shutdown, a few members of the congregation wondered about the structural stability of those beautiful stained-glass pieces of art and began dreaming about the possibility of renewing and restoring them as a gift to the congregation and community during these most troubling days.

The windows were retrieved from the shed and laid out on tables in the church for examination. While some were deemed to be in a severe state of disrepair, others were found to be in decent shape and were just in need of some tender care. That care came from Sharon and Ken Veitch, who took on the task of gently cleaning and then framing the windows. With help from their son, David, the stained-glass artwork was hung in the windows of the “new Knox,” just in time to greet the congregation when in-person worship services re-

sumed in the autumn of 2021.

Not only do these windows add beauty to the worship space, they also serve as reminders of those who had served the congregation and community in the past, and whose memories are now honoured through the artwork. One window in particular was crafted in memory of Roy Blain McDonald, who died at the age of 23 in 1917 while serving with the Central Ontario Regiment of the Canadian Infantry. He was buried at Pas-de-Calais, France, the site of the Vimy Memorial, but his memory is shared in the sanctuary at Knox.

Another window honours the memory of Olive Eileen Marshall who was just 11 years old when she died in 1923. Her parents, George and Eva, owned the local funeral home at the time and had the heartbreaking task of burying their own child. Yet another window is in memory of Margaret Shier who was the wife



Ken and Sharon Veitch in front of one of the windows they lovingly restored at Knox Presbyterian Church in Bracebridge, Ont.

of John T. Shier, co-owner of the J.D. Shier Lumber Company, one of the largest logging operations in Muskoka. And another window was dedicated to Donald McGibbon by his son Dr. Peter McGibbon, a local doctor and Member of Parliament. Donald had received the Military Cross for Conspicuous Bravery presented personally by King George.

Perhaps one of the most beautiful pieces of stained-glass art depicts the story from Matthew 19:14 when Jesus invites the children to come and gather at his knee. This message of love and acceptance is perhaps what we all need during these tenuous times, as we honour our past, embrace our present and anticipate our future.

# Chimes Ring Out Again in Ridgetown



The spire postcard from Mount Zion Presbyterian Church in Ridgetown, Ont.

Submitted by Mount Zion Presbyterian Church in Ridgetown, Ont.

Residents of Ridgetown, Ont., may have noticed melodious sounds coming from the bell tower of Mount Zion



The church bell.

Presbyterian Church. Recently repaired, the chimes are once again playing.

During the past 140 years, the bell in the church tower has played various roles in our town history. In addition to calling

out a welcome to church services and occasions, it also served as the Ridgetown Fire alarm for many years.

In 1889, the town fathers arranged for it to be used as Ridgetown’s “Town Bell.” As a result, it rang out a

daily announcement at opening, noon and closing hours. The sound organized the day of the entire business section of town: for workers, shoppers, as well as residents of most of the surrounding homes. If there were special events and parades, the toll of the bell called residents to come join in the celebration. Over many years, times changed, and its ringing was once again only required for church-related events.

To mark Mount Zion’s 150th Anniversary in 2005, the church youth group made plans to contribute to the event. The boys and girls participated

in swim-a-thons and walk-a-thons to raise funds. With the pledges received, they were able to purchase equipment for outdoor chimes. Their gift was presented at the 150th Anniversary event in May of that year. The church was now able to play chimes or music through speakers in the tower. Hymns were played before Sunday services and chimes marked the daytime hours for several years. Eventually wiring was changed in the sanctuary and, as a result, the chimes stopped working.

When COVID-19 forced congregations to suspend in-person services, Mount Zion turned to the Rev. Jon Van Den Berg, their stated supply minister, to provide online services through the church website. The Rev. Van Den Berg used his own equipment to record services from his home and provided a link to the Mount Zion website so that the congregation had access to online services. Early in 2021, the Rev. Van Den Berg accepted a call to Dorchester Presbyterian Church. The Mount Zion congregation still wanted an online presence to reach people who were not comfortable resuming in-person worship, people who found it difficult to come to church and people who were searching for a church home.

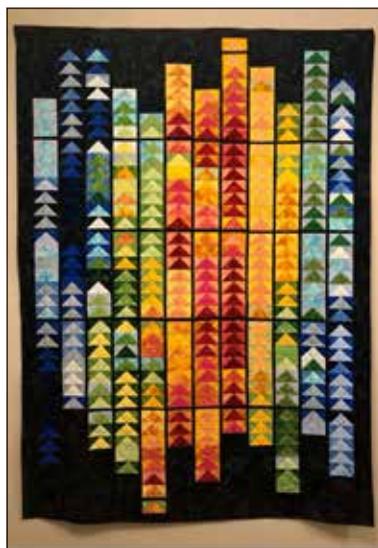
Musical Strings ‘n Things, a local company with lots of experience setting up live-streaming equipment in churches, was contacted. Their technician, Brett Sansom, set up cameras and equipment in the sanctuary and trained members of the congregation to run the system.

In the process of installing the live-streaming equipment, Brett noticed that the chimes were not working. He fixed the wiring problem and set up the chimes at no cost to the church. Now they ring every half hour from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day. The system also plays hymns before Sunday services and during the seasons of the church calendar like Advent.

Because of its location in the centre of town, in 1889, Mount Zion’s bell was the perfect choice to notify the people of Ridgetown of the routines of the workday and emergencies. Spurred on by a desire to contribute to the 150th Anniversary celebrations in 2005, the Sunday School raised funds for the purchase of outdoor chimes. When the present-day congregation wanted to reach out with an online presence, once again the chimes received new life. Throughout the history of the church, Mount Zion has communicated God’s presence in their community.

**NEWS**

# Taking the Year's Temperature in Kingston



The 2021 Temperature Quilt, which measures 205 cm x 147 cm. PHOTO CREDIT: LORI-KIM DEN OTTER

By Lori-Kim den Otter, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kingston, Ont.

In the summer of 2020, several sewists in our congregation gathered on the church lawn to design a new pulpit fall for the church out of scraps left over from masks we'd made for ourselves, friends, families, local health-care workers and others with no access to PPE. We had a lot of scraps! We decided on a "Joseph's coat of many colours" design, with the outline of a fish—that most ancient symbol of Christ and Christians—in blue fabric, nestled among the random colours. If you look at it from a distance, (not a problem in St. Andrew's large sanctuary!) the fish becomes clear. The moment it takes to focus on it plays right into the image of Jesus always being here, even amid "chaos," but that sometimes we must step back to see him—to focus on him.

When 2020 morphed into 2021, we were still under Covid protocols. I decided I wanted to remember 2021—to have a project of some sort to mark each day of what would be a full year in this seemingly endless pandemic. I was well and truly "languishing" by then, and I knew that for my own mental health I needed to record that year. I struggled for a while with what to do. Writing a journal didn't appeal to me—some days words just don't come or seem inadequate to express my emotions. Besides, I wanted something more...

creative, I guess.

One afternoon, a boring mending project coincided with a climate change podcast, and an idea was born. I would record the year's "temperature" in a quilt.

Every day last year—Every. Single. Day. I took note of the highest and lowest temperatures recorded by our backyard weather station (a range of -25 to +38 in 2021). I chose mottled, batik fabric from my stash to represent each 2–3-degree temperature increment, made a pattern and started sewing.

In the photo, each long strip is a month from January to December.

Each long rectangle within the strip is a week.

Each little rectangular block is a day.

The inner triangle represents the daily high, the outer triangles represent the low.

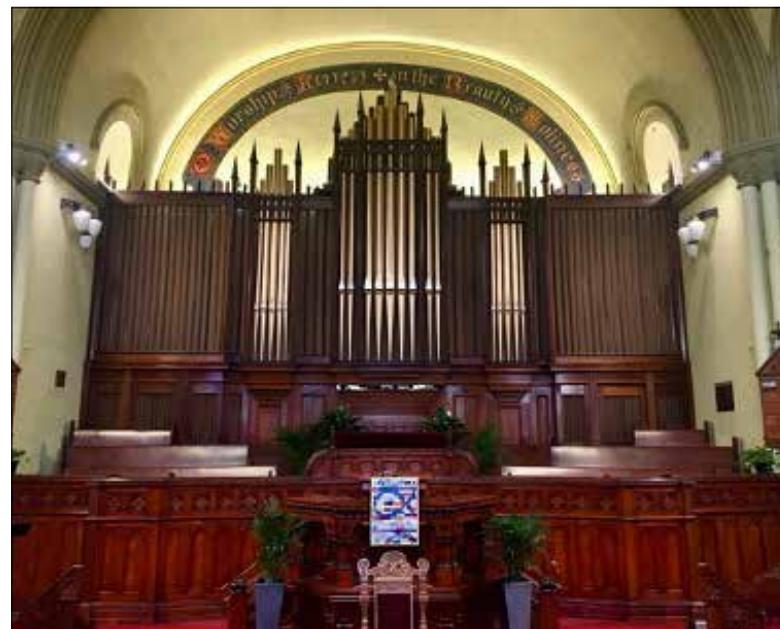
This block is traditionally called "flying geese."

I had misgivings during the year that my project idea was dumb; that the finished quilt would be ugly. I almost abandoned it a couple of times. I thought, surely I could spend those hours and hours and hours doing something more edifying, something important, significant.

But it was soothing. Measure. Cut. Piece. Sew. Press. Trim. Sandwich the batting. Top stitch. Repeat. The way the fabric whispered as it slipped through my fingers; the faint aroma of vegetable dye released by the steam under my iron; the feel of soft, comforting cotton batting... This gentle rhythm allowed my mind to wander. I would think about the glorious heat of summer, the bitter cold in winter. I stitched my laughter into the day I first heard the "peepers" again in April, and my tears spattered the fabric the October day my nephew was lost at sea. I'd think about the day I was sewing, and the people I'd encountered in it. And, as so often happens, without any effort, those thoughts became prayers and the prayers sewn into the quilt blocks.

And when I was finished, I showed it to my friend who commented on its beauty. Not necessarily the quilt itself was beautiful, but what it represented. The colours, the changes in season, the unexpectedness of a warm day in December, of chilling

frost in April. They upset the "pattern" of the quilt, but it was that one green among reds, or orange among blue, that made it more interesting, more...dynamic, just like those memorable days when unexpected things happen that turn out to be amazing. But more than that, it helped me to see that even from a year that was in many ways so unfulfilling, so strange, so difficult, so *ugly*...even from *that* came something beautiful. And I realized again how very wise my friend is, because that was spot on.... My quilt is not perfect—any sewist will easily see the mistakes, any artist the flaws—but I will treas-



Fish Pulpit Fall in the sanctuary of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kingston.

ure it for exactly those imperfections. Because every time I see it, I will remember this strange, dissonant time. And that's good!! Because even as I think about the pandemic, the loss, the anxiety, I will also remember the *beauty* hidden in this marvellous, ter-

rible year. And I will celebrate with Paul, and countless Christians before me, that "all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28).

And I will smile.

## A New French-speaking Congregation in Québec



Boris Mboke, Francine Carole Dongmo, Gina Farnell, Jackie Branion, Viviane Victoire Diemna, Delange Chimi. (Eric Nzokem Jeutsa is present but not visible in this photo as he is behind Boris.) PHOTO CREDIT: THE REV. DR. KATHERINE BURGESS

By the Rev. Dr. Katherine Burgess, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Québec City, Que.

Just before the COVID-19 lockdown shut everything down, a new French-speaking Presbyterian congregation took root in Québec City. To say that helping it to flourish ever since then has been a challenge is definitely an understatement! La Communauté Chrétienne Béthanie originally met in person, but with the onset of the virus, they moved to online worship, as most of us did. The lockdown also prevented us from beginning the elder training that had been planned. However, with the relaxation of travel restrictions, the Rev. Eloi Agbanou

was able to travel from Montréal to get the elder training started just before Christmas.

Five of the proposed elders met with the Rev. Eloi Agbanou for a first session. Then, we came together on Saturday, December 4, 2021. The Rev. Ross Davidson came from Thetford Mines to assist with the elder training. Gina Farnell and Jackie Branion, assessor elders from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Québec City, assisted as well. There will be at least one more training session before the elders are ordained.

This training was made possible thanks to generous donations from Presbyterians to the mission funds of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



The Rev. Dr. Katherine Burgess and the Rev. Eloi Agbanou. PHOTO CREDIT: THE REV. DR. KATHERINE BURGESS



The Rev. Ross Davidson. PHOTO CREDIT: THE REV. DR. KATHERINE BURGESS

## NEWS

# Vancouver School of Theology Receives Grant

By Ian Sheb, Vancouver School of Theology in Vancouver, B.C.

The Vancouver School of Theology has received a grant of \$1 million (USD) from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help advance its work in theological field education.

The project is being funded through Lilly Endowment's Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. It is a three-phase initiative designed to help theological schools across the United States and Canada as they prioritize and respond to the most pressing challenges they face in preparing pastoral leaders for Christian congregations, both now and into the future.

Theological Field Education (TFE) at VST has, for many years, been a mutual experience in which students, mentors in various areas of practice, and the school's faculty have established a teaching and learning network. TFE has a central place in the school's core mission to "prepare thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders," in conversation with other faith traditions and the Indigenous church.

"The Vancouver School of Theology is thrilled at this grant," said the Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, VST President. "It will make possible the development and implementation of a stellar program of theological field

education through a network of experienced practitioners that will prepare and inspire students for ministry in our time."

This funding will enable VST to develop further its teaching, mentoring and learning practices so that they are even more responsive to the challenges of ministry. It will work closely with its denominational partners, leading churches and effective clergy mentors to deliver TFE experiences that shape students for faithful and relevant ministry.

The Vancouver School of Theology is one of 84 theological schools that are receiving collectively a total of more than \$82 million in grants



The Vancouver School of Theology.

through the second phase of the Pathways initiative. Together, the schools represent evangelical, mainline Protestant, nondenominational, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, Black church and historic peace church traditions (e.g., Church of the Brethren,

Mennonite, Quakers). Many schools also serve students and pastors from Black, Latino, Korean American, Chinese American and recent immigrant Christian communities.

To learn more about the Vancouver School of Theology, visit [vst.edu](http://vst.edu).

# Shepherding Elders: A New/Old Model of Care

By the Rev. Cherie Inksetter,  
St. Giles Presbyterian Church in  
St. Catharines, Ont.

*"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone" (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).*

In a recent Facebook post, I shared the exciting news that we at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines had ordained five new Shepherding Elders. Some friends expressed that they had not heard of this, so we thought it would be great to share this "new/old model" with the wider church.

Here at St. Giles, we have two groups of elders: Session or Administrative Elders, who gather once a month to oversee the business of the church, and Shepherding Elders, who act as the caregivers for the congregation and the conduit for communication within the church. We have 12 each of Administrative and Shepherding Elders as leaders in our church. This replaces the model where Session elders are given districts to oversee, while sitting on Ses-

sion and on Teams within the church.

In 2013, we had some visioning time and identified that everyone is gifted by God in different ways. Some elders love being on teams and offering leadership to the church on Session, but weren't necessarily gifted with pastoral leanings. In the past, carrying both responsibilities had become burdensome and some leaders were feeling guilty about neglecting their districts. On the other hand, some elders loved to visit and connect with people and were gifted at caring for others, but didn't necessarily want to attend meetings or be involved in decision making at the Session level. So it seemed only natural to embrace our God-given gifts and have two types of elders to better care for our family of faith.

At that time, the current group of elders self-identified where their interests lay, and those who felt called to this Shepherding Role were the seed group that launched this wonderful ministry. Since then, we have called elders to both roles and, as we have Term eldership for both, we have seen amazing people step into each ministry role.

So, what does a Shepherding Elder do? They have several responsibili-

ties, including:

- visiting members and adherents as ambassadors on behalf of the church;
- being a caring presence for those who are struggling;
- being of help to the people in their districts in a variety of ways;
- maintaining lines of communication with the people in their districts;
- developing relationships that will benefit the people and the church;
- ensuring information is brought from Session to members and adherents and communicate the district's concerns back to Session;
- sharing concerns that should be brought to the attention of the minister, with permission from the members/adherents;
- following up with their districts at least once a year to determine if their needs have remained the same and to find out how we can be of service to them.

The methods of communication vary, and it is left up to the Shepherding Elder and each member as to how they will be in contact, whether



From left to right : May Crawley, Joan Michon, Sue Reimer, Anne Larocque and Janet McLoughlin.

it is by phone, email, Facebook, texts or, if they wish, in person. Members are encouraged to look at James 5:13-14 as the model. "Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them

pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord."

We have been greatly blessed by this ministry and feel our congregation has been strengthened, as well.

If anyone wishes to have further information, I welcome you to be in touch with me by email to [pastorcherie@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcherie@gmail.com).





# Presbyterians Sharing

supporting mission  
and ministry through  
The Presbyterian  
Church in Canada

## Living Our Faith Together

*Presbyterians are called to love and serve God  
and to care for those who are in need.*

Adapted from *Living Faith* 2.3.2

When we give to Presbyterians Sharing, we are expressing our faith. Through the words we use, the decisions we make and the actions we take, we proclaim God's love, hope and grace in the world God loves. Together, in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, we are continuing Christ's ministry in Canada and around the world.

The direction of our shared ministry is set at General Assembly. Together, we send mission staff to accompany and encourage international partners. Grants support strategic ministries, bring together new communities of faith, and provide synods and presbyteries with funding for staff and events to serve local needs.

Theological colleges and national programs prepare ministers, elders and lay leaders to serve the church. The *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper shares stories of hope and challenges. Volunteers, staff, committees and working groups develop educational resources, lead conferences and webinars, provide coaching and mentoring, share best practices, write letters to governments, reflect theologically and participate in ministry programs.

**When we put our gifts into God's hands,  
God does remarkable things!**



Samuel House, Romania

**We equip congregations** in Christian education, worship, evangelism, stewardship, communications, youth ministry and justice work.



Murray with Crystal Mckeen, First Steps Coordinator, and Ruth Magnuson, Executive Director

I can't say enough how much it means to be supported through the darkest days of life, to be accepted and yet held accountable for my actions. That's what the staff at WICM do. They provide me with the support I need to make it through the scariest of days.

Murray, Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM), Manitoba



Juanita Penner with Chris Cornthwaite and the Rev. Ruth Draffin

Our church is open—our hearts are open to wherever God leads us, our hands are open to continue to receive God's blessings, our arms are open to share each other's burdens and our eyes are open to the needs of our community. God is still at work in our midst.

Juanita Penner and Kevin Hopkins, Rockland Community Church, Hamilton, Ontario



I thank God daily for my dear friends and coworkers, and the wonderful teamwork we enjoy in our shared goal to translate the Word of God into all the languages of the people of Taiwan. Thanks to all in the PCC who continue to pray for and support our mission of Bible translation through Presbyterians Sharing.

The Rev. Dr. Paul McLean, Bible Translation, Taiwan

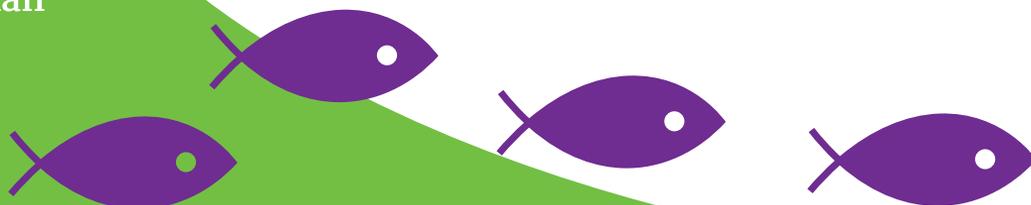
**We support ministries** for refugees, sex workers, prisoners and marginalized people, and **speak out against racism, advocate for human rights and care for creation.**



I would like to express my sincere gratitude to The Presbyterian Church in Canada for their support in preparing skilled theologians and prospective ministers for the church of Christ in Romania.

Csaba Balogh, Dean, Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca, Romania

**We journey toward healing and reconciliation** by creating spaces where Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and volunteers can work together to meet the physical and spiritual needs of people scarred by Residential Schools, racism, discrimination and the loss of culture and language.

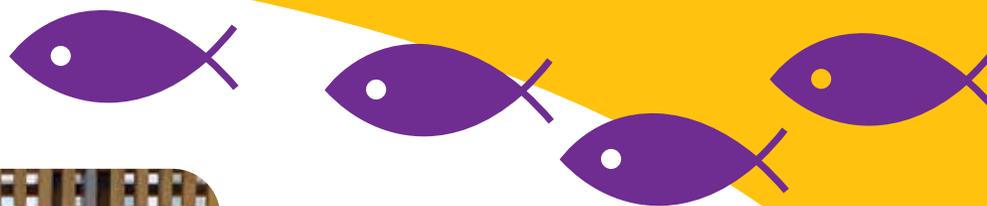


Evangel Hall Mission is my secure spot. There are a lot of benefits to living at ehm, like the staff and programs. I feel safe and supported here.

*Kim, Evangel Hall Mission (ehm) resident*



Kim (centre) with Ariana, Residence Manager, and Rev. Dale



Presbyterians Sharing

**We help emerging and experienced leaders** by helping them develop their skills in strategic visioning, people management, biblical interpretation, theological reflection, teaching methods and evangelism.



If you are interested in exploring the possibility of starting a new worshipping community and your church or presbytery supports you, join the PCC Cyclical network. You'll find a community that will support, encourage and cheer you on.

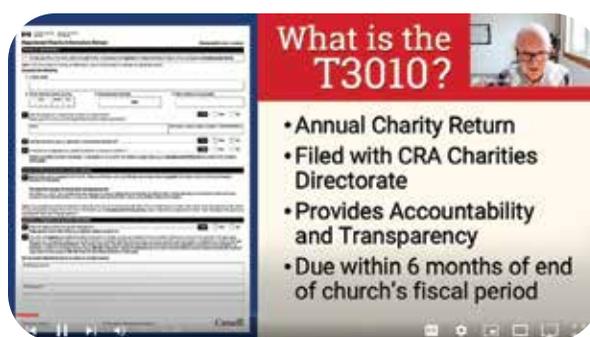
*The Rev. Stephen Kwon, The Well Church, Mississauga, Ontario*



Friends of Prison volunteers Rammy, Lyca and Hastings

My work in Malawi focuses primarily on prison ministry. I oversee a team of volunteers that are involved with 17 prisons engaging with over 2,800 inmates in the Southern part of Malawi. Our vision is to plant seeds of hope. It is amazing to see the transformation that is taking place.

*The Rev. Joel Sherbino, Prison Ministry, Malawi*



It is reassuring to know that all treasurers will benefit from the resources the team has shared with us. I personally feel that I have someone who will help me to figure out the correct way to do things, especially filling out those Canada Revenue Agency forms. May our Lord bless each person that has participated in this series of webinars.

*Jan Rustebakke, Treasurer, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*

**We speak with a common voice** on issues important to us and **collaborate with ecumenical and interfaith partners** on matters of justice around the world.



West Park PC, Red Deer, Alberta

The opportunity for teaching, facilitating and mentoring the lay leaders comes in the Sunday services and weekly mid-week interactions. The PCC webinars "Designing Adult Faith Formation for a Post Pandemic World" and "Cooperative or Cluster Ministry" provided insights for our ministry. The congregations are demonstrating, each in their own way, wonderful creativity and the willingness to suggest, lead, and participate in training to deepen their spiritual lives and develop their abilities to do ministry in changing realities and new contexts.

*The Rev. Charles McNeil, Central Alberta Shared Ministry*

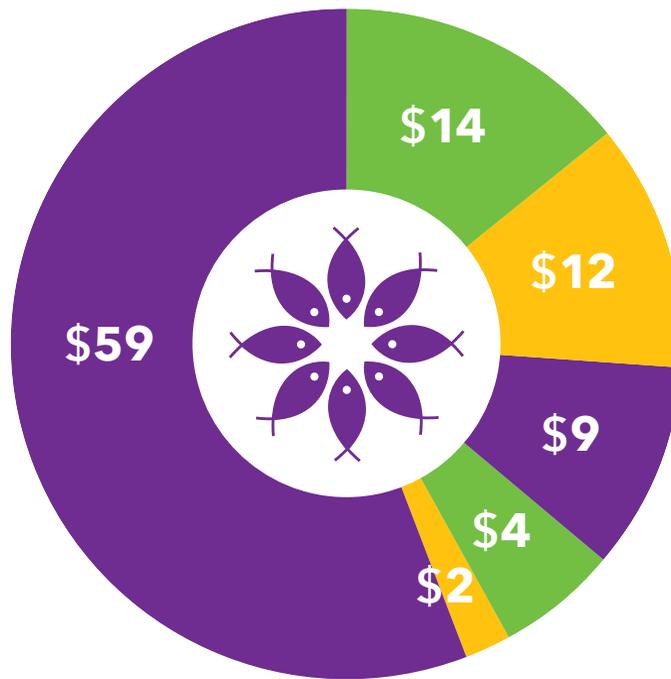
# Presbyterians Sharing

*By the power at work within us God can accomplish abundantly more than all we can ask for or imagine*

Ephesians 3:20



Mistawasis Memorial PC,  
Mistawasis First Nation, Saskatchewan



## Out of every \$100

- \$59** equips congregations and ministries in Canada
- \$14** accompanies international mission partners
- \$12** supports ministries with Indigenous people
- \$9** provides financial and administrative services
- \$4** supports governance
- \$2** advocates for justice

**None of this would be possible without your generous gifts. Thank you.**



**The Presbyterian Church in Canada**

50 Wynford Dr. Toronto, ON M3C 1J7  
1-800-619-7301 | presbyterian.ca



Living Waters Mission,  
Peterborough, Ontario

### Pray

Pray for congregations, presbyteries, leaders, international partners, and ministries with children, youth and Indigenous people, as we continue to love and serve one another.

### Act

Add your voice to advocacy efforts. Volunteer to serve a committee or working group. Write letters on human rights, climate change and healing and reconciliation. Participate in an online webinar or conference. Share your experience of mission and ministry in our newspaper.

### Give

Donate through your congregation, online at [presbyterian.ca/donate/sharing](http://presbyterian.ca/donate/sharing) or by mailing a cheque. Learn how gifts of securities, life insurance plans, charitable gift annuities and bequests can support ministry at [presbyterian.ca/waystogive](http://presbyterian.ca/waystogive).

## You have a story to tell!

Just as these four pages share how God is working through gifts to Presbyterians Sharing, you can share how God is moving through your congregation by creating your own narrative budget.

- Use your mission statement and annual report to create missional categories that correspond with what your congregation is doing: worship, children & youth ministry, caring for creation, sharing the good news, working for justice, etc.
- Talk to ministry staff and committee chairs to see how the building, money, and staff and volunteer time are being used to do mission and ministry. From this you can determine how the congregation's resources are being used as percentages of the missional categories. For example, you might discover that the church building is used 50% of the time for worship activities, 15% for evangelism, 15% for caring for vulnerable people, 10% for children & youth ministry, 8% for Christian education and 2% for justice initiatives.
- Apply the percentages to budget line-items like salaries, utilities and program expenses.
- Now write a narrative description based on your breakdowns and add some graphs, photos and quotes to really connect how the gifts are helping continue Christ's ministry.

See real samples and find tools to transform your congregation's budget at [presbyterian.ca/narrative](http://presbyterian.ca/narrative)



## GATHERINGS



Pictured above is (left to right) Nate, Jeanne Kaye Speight and the Rev. Wendy MacWilliams, taken at St. James Presbyterian Church in Hanwell, N.B., on Oct. 10, 2021. That was the week that our Church School curriculum featured the lesson of the widow who gave two coins—all she had. In our class, we share what we have by giving to The Presbyterian Church in Canada Gifts of Change program.



The youth group at Thornhill Presbyterian Church in Thornhill, Ont., accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Heather Vais, prepared and served over 150 meals at Evangel Hall Mission in downtown Toronto on Dec. 19, 2021, even with a reduced attendance due to Covid restrictions. This is an annual Christmas tradition for the Thornhill Presbyterian youth group that extends back well over 25 years.



On Legacy Sunday, Nov. 14, 2021, First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., dedicated a plaque in honour of Clifford and Mary Wing, who made a bequest to the church in memory of their son Paul. Members of the Wing family attended the service and were delighted to take part. Many thanks to Ross Butler for organizing the creation of the plaque. First Presbyterian Church is grateful to the Wing family and to all who have faithfully remembered the church in their wills, enabling the church to continue its ministry of sharing God's love in the Brockville community.



The Rev. Markus Arseneault on his ordination at Iona Presbyterian Church in Dartmouth, N.S., on Dec. 18, 2021. He has accepted the call to Lakeview Presbyterian Church in Thunder Bay, Ont.



The youth at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., have been staying connected by baking online together once a month. In October, we baked Congo Bars (a Cairn Camps specialty!) and made pumpkin-spice lattes; in November, we baked chocolate-dipped Christmas cookies.

**GATHERINGS**



Pictures from the Christmas Concert at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont. The Christmas Concert took place on Dec. 3, 2021, in person and online, and included an online post-performance reception.



Some "behind the scenes" pictures of the 2021 online Christmas Pageant at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., complete with a protest! To follow COVID-19 safety protocols, most of the scenes were filmed outside. We also included a "pageant viewing party" on our big screen in our Scott Duncan Hall.



The "Tree of Warmth" at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont., was filled with gifts knitted by members and friends of St. John's, including the Christmas tree decorations, which represented gifts to Presbyterians Sharing. Pictured is the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott with Ram and Amelia, who dropped off gift cards in time for Christmas.



Two elders were ordained at West River Presbyterian Church in Durham, N.S., on Sept. 26, 2021. Due to Covid health regulations, a welcome reception was held later, after the Christmas pageant on Dec. 12, 2021. Standing left to right are Robert Love, the Rev. Mary Anne Grant (holding a "Happy Birthday Jesus" cake) and Verdon Locke.

**GATHERINGS**



The Ancaster Mission Team at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ancaster, Ont., sponsored a donation drive for the Purse Project. The Purse Project collects new or used purses in good condition and fills them with personal care items and a card of blessing. The congregation donated soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, body lotion, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, hand sanitizer, small packages of tissue, feminine hygiene products, socks, hats and gloves. Financial donations were also received. Team member Jennifer Pooni involved her extended family in the project and, with their contribution of additional purses, we were able to donate 40 purses to Mary's Place, a shelter for homeless women in Hamilton.



The "Christmas Angels" team at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., wrapping gifts for families in need in our community, in association with ARISE Ministry (and also with a little help from "Gnorbert" the Armour Heights Gnome).



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Islington, in Etobicoke, Ont., kept busy over the Advent and Christmas season. Carollers welcomed church attendees each Sunday of Advent. Others took part in the Sandwich Brigade, which included preparing homemade sandwiches, eggs and cookies for Evangel Hall Mission residents in downtown Toronto.

**Create personalized resources for your congregation exclusively on the PCC Resource Ordering Portal.**

Choose from a wide variety of customizable resources, such as worship bulletins, certificates, greeting cards and more, at [presbyterian.ca/portal](http://presbyterian.ca/portal)

Contact the Communications Office if you require assistance accessing your church's Portal login information: [communications@presbyterian.ca](mailto:communications@presbyterian.ca)



**GATHERINGS**



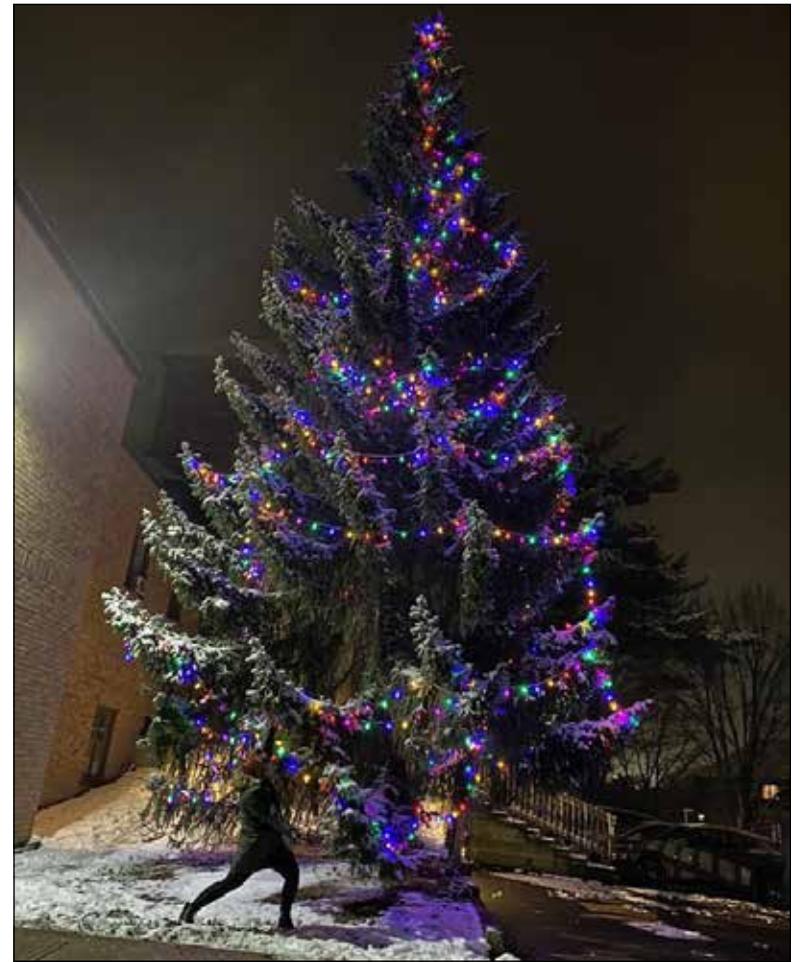
A fun morning was had decorating the Christmas tree in the sanctuary at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Halifax, N.S. Unfortunately, we were only able to have a few Advent services before being shut down because of COVID-19.



Florence Mair, a long-time member at Point Edward Presbyterian Church in Point Edward, Ont., turned 100 years old on Jan. 2, 2022. Congratulations, Florence!



The congregation of Doon Presbyterian Church in Kitchener, Ont., held a Tree Lighting Celebration for the neighbourhood on Sunday, Nov. 28, 2021. The free event featured hot chocolate and cider, chili, carol singing, easy take-home crafts, “Ugly Sweater” cookie decorating, and the lighting of our huge tree—all done with lots of Covid protocols in place to keep us safe. It was a great way to reconnect with neighbours and kick off the Advent season. About 80–90 people, mostly locals, attended. We hope to do it again in 2022, God willing!



“Share the Warmth” was the Advent project at The Gathering Place Presbyterian Church in Port Colborne, Ont. Three Port Colborne businesses hosted collection boxes for new scarves, hats, gloves and socks, and the Port Cares community agency distributed a mini-mountain of knitwear—donated from all across the Niagara Peninsula—with Christmas food parcels.



GATHERINGS



Knox Presbyterian Church in Conn, Ont., held its Annual Nativity Display event from Dec. 10 to 12, 2021. There were 322 nativity scenes on display, ranging in size from very tiny to fairly large, and in a variety of mediums, such as ceramic, crystal, wood, resin, jigsaw puzzles, metal and other materials. Some played music and some lit up. There were also 183 angels on display that ranged in a variety of sizes and mediums. A 140-Christmas card display, each with a different nativity scene, was strung around the room. The International Christmas histories were on display, but this time without any goodies due to Covid regulations, but there were recipes to take and try. The display showed the spirit of Christmas and was a reminder of the reason for the season.



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kamloops, B.C., engaged in meaningful service events this Christmas season. In mid-December, the congregation partnered with PWS&D and the Salvation Army to purchase and pack Christmas gift hampers for families in Merritt who had been displaced by recent flooding. On Christmas day, they prepared over 80 take-out dinners for those in the broader community. These activities were fun and memorable for all who served, including the shoppers, the sponsors, the drivers and the cooks.



The dedication service at Jazz Evensong at Brentwood Presbyterian Church in Burnaby, B.C., on Jan. 19, featured one of the seven jazz bands that practice and jam in Brentwood's little space of grace. The Grand Slam Jazz Band is Ben MacRae (woodwinds), Kayden Gorden (trumpet), Aaron Lee (trombone), Alvin Brendan (guitar), Michael Wagler (bass) and Tyler Murray (drums). In the photo on the right are (left to right) Miles Black, who sold us his 7'3" Steinway concert grand piano for use in our missional music making, Vonnie Hawkes, a regular at Jazz Evensong, who quilted the cover with prayers in every stitch, and the Rev. Dr. Brian Fraser, minister at Brentwood PC.

**GATHERINGS**



First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., welcomed 17 children to the first PA Day Camp of the 2021–22 School Year. The children enjoyed a full day of crafts, stories, music and fun. The camp's mission project was to support the Brockville and Area Food Bank by collecting socks, mitts, gloves, toques and scarves for the Food Bank's clients. Hailie Jack, Operations Manager for the Food Bank, visited and told the campers all about the Food Bank's work in supporting hungry and homeless people of all ages. This is the eighth year of the church's PA Day Camp ministry in the Brockville community, with thanks to God, the congregation and all the volunteers who have supported it over the years.



The Special Committee, re Petitions 1 and 2, at work: the Revs. Peter Bush, Stephen Kwon, Frank Szatmari, Linda Park, Joon Ki Kim, Daniel Scott, Sean Seungho Lee, Mary Fontaine and Sampson Afoakwah.

## GATHERINGS



Through the exceptional support of the PCC Refugee Sponsorship Program, the Minto Refugee Settlement Committee, spearheaded by Knox-Calvin Presbyterian Church in Harriston, Ont., welcomed Ahmad, Henan and their six children to the Harriston community from a refugee camp in Turkey in October 2016. It has been a life-giving journey for the congregation to welcome the stranger into their midst! Now, five years later, in November 2021, the Committee welcomed a second family—Ahmad’s brother Obid, his wife, Nival, and their five children. What a joyful reunion of families! The one with the happiest smile is Henan, who now has someone else who speaks her language. The Committee is so glad for her.



We give and receive so we can give more. That was the case before Christmas at St. Matthew’s Presbyterian Church in Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L. As part of the church’s community outreach program, an outdoor food and clothing drive was held. Non-perishable food items were taken to the local food bank. Donations to the Community Clothesline, which included a basket of socks, undergarments, gloves, toques and toiletries, were presented by elder Lynne Allan to Daniel Kelly, Coordinator of Community and Family Services with the local Salvation Army. Soon after, an email from a knitting group at St. David’s Church in St. John’s arrived, asking if St. Matthew’s could use some knitted items for community outreach projects. When the box arrived, it contained baby sweaters, caps, mitts, booties and slippers. There were 79 items in all, enough to divide among several groups. Lynne couldn’t resist making a little clothesline for the photo op.



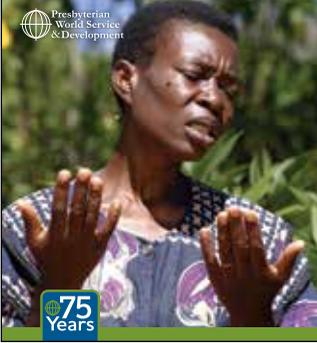
Sgt (ret.) Scott MacDonald



During Veterans Week each year, St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I., hosts an “Honouring Our Veterans” service. In order to observe ongoing pandemic gathering limits, the congregation hosted two back-to-back services. Each service featured special music, an Act of Remembrance, and a drama written and performed by Major Rev. Dr. Tom Hamilton. Each year, Dr. Hamilton researches a different individual who served during a time of war and shares their story. This past November, the story featured Capt. Norman Donaldson, a Canadian Presbyterian, who served with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada in the Second World War. “We owe so much to our veterans, past and present, and it’s an honour and a privilege to be able to share their stories so they are never forgotten.” Pictured left is Major Rev. Dr. Tom Hamilton portraying Capt. Norman Donaldson during the service, and pictured above is Sergeant (ret’d) Scott MacDonald, veteran and elder at St. Mark’s, laying the memorial wreath.

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## GATHERINGS



A special service was held at the Presbyterian College in Montreal, Que., for the installation of the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries as Principal and the Rev. Dr. Karen Petersen Finch as Professor of Pastoral Leadership, which was a service of the Presbytery of Montreal and of the Board of Governors of the College. Pictured in the first image is the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, 2021 Moderator of the PCC; Denise Allen Macartney, Vice-Chair of Board of Governors; the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries, Principal; the Rev. Sampson Afoakwah, Moderator, Presbytery of Montreal. In the second image is the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries and the Rev. Dr. Karen Petersen Finch.



Now that the sanctuary at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in old Québec has been completely renovated, we decided that it was time to have a new Christmas tree. Luckily, we were permitted to open for worship for almost all of Advent and were able to enjoy the tree. We decided to name our tree, "The Giving Tree" (with credit to Shel Silverstein). For the four Sundays of Advent, members of the congregation brought in warm socks, mittens and underwear, which were placed on the branches of the tree. These were then delivered to one of the local shelters. Here, you see members of the congregation assembling the new tree, which was pre-lit, so we don't have to worry about putting lights on it each year. PHOTO CREDIT: THE REV. DR. KATHERINE BURGESS

## GATHERINGS



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Sackville, N.B., found a creative and safe way to get around mask wearing and physical distancing COVID-19 rules for this year's Christmas pageant participants. Youth from the congregation had an individual photo session in which they dressed up on the familiar costumes used over the years and then cut-outs were produced.



**WALK-IN COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic**  
Open to all Lactalis Employees & Ingleside Residents

**St. Matthews Presbyterian Church**      **January 20 & 21**  
**19 Memorial Square, Ingleside**

**No appointment necessary. Health Card required.**

**Booking guidelines:**  
In keeping with the following age criteria, an individual's name and date of birth are required to inform us of the required vaccine type to be given.

**January 20**  
2 p.m. – 6 p.m. 30 years old and over will receive Moderna vaccine.  
6 p.m. – 7 p.m. 12 - 29 years of age will receive adult Pfizer. (If available)\*\* (Minimum age is 12 years old or turning 12 in 2022)  
7 p.m. – 8 p.m. 5-11 years of age will receive pediatric Pfizer vaccine. (Must be a minimum of 5 years on the date of the appointment)

**January 21**  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. 30 years old and over will receive Moderna vaccine.  
2 p.m. – 3 p.m. 12 - 29 years of age will receive adult Pfizer. (If available)\*\* (Minimum age is 12 years old or turning 12 in 2022)  
3 p.m. – 4 p.m. 5-11 years of age will receive pediatric Pfizer vaccine. (Must be a minimum of 5 years on the date of the appointment)

Hosted by Lactalis Canada Ingleside & the provincial GO-VAXX program.  
GO-VAXX Team  
GOVAXX@ontario.ca

On Jan. 20 and 21, the local Lactalis Canada Plant sponsored a two-day COVID-19 vaccination clinic hosted by St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Ingleside, Ont. This was part of our outreach to the community and was very well appreciated by all who attended.



The congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Stittsville, Ont., had some fun with *God's Great Idea: A Cosmic Christmas*, a book written by Laura Alary. The book was adapted and interpreted as a 16-minute video that combined images, special effects and stop-motion animation using LEGO characters, thanks to the help of Thomas Duncan. The video is a wonderful way to tell an incredible story. Watch the video at [presbyterian.ca/cosmic-christmas](http://presbyterian.ca/cosmic-christmas).

**GATHERINGS**



At St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I., a church elder had some fun with the church sign after several snow storms. PHOTO CREDIT: JOANNE MACRAE



The Out of the Cold program was initiated by Knox Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, Ont., in 1995 to offer vulnerable people in the community a welcoming space to gather and have a warm meal once a week during the winter. When the pandemic began, the program was modified to a take-out meal in order to comply with health and safety protocols, and it has been offered in this format ever since. Pictured are the program's dedicated volunteers preparing the take-out meals for distribution; also pictured is a portion of the 600 pieces of homemade baked goods that friends of Knox contributed to the Out of the Cold take-out Christmas meal.

**The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives**

[presbyterianarchives.ca](http://presbyterianarchives.ca)

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- Microfilming and digitizing your records
- Records management practices—how long to keep a record?
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**INTERNATIONAL**

# Access to Information in Malawi

*By the Rev. Dr. Blair D. Bertrand, PCC International Mission Staff to Malawi*

For many reading this article, the early days of the Internet started with a very loud screech while the modem tried to make a connection. It always seemed like a minor miracle when it did. Somehow, through phone lines, our machines connected and communicated to other people's machines. What was amazing then seems quaint now. The phones we carry around have more computing power than NASA had to put people on the moon.

But I can approximate that feeling of connection. One day, I searched the Zomba Theological College (ZTC) library catalogue in Malawi from my office in Ottawa. Over 12,488 km away (give or take a few) I could confirm that the library had a copy of Kwame Bediako's *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*.

From this side of the Atlantic, this discovery isn't particularly noteworthy. Whenever we have a question about something, we whip out our phones and "Google it up!" Coldest capital in the world? Easy. Ulaanbaatar of Mongolia. Google even tells me how long it took to find 4,690,000 (give or take a few thousand) results: 0.57 seconds. Looking up a book and getting a result isn't notable.

However, in Malawi, this ease of access to information is more striking. Glory Muthala, head librarian at ZTC, has been working on an ambitious project for months. Her goal is to take the Microsoft Excel file that has served for years as the library "catalogue" and convert it into a proper library management system. This project will transform a file into a database that many users could use, in person and online. A library is no good unless people can find and use its books. This project aims to make one of the best theological libraries in Malawi accessible to students, faculty and the community.

Glory faces some enormous challenges. Sporadic power outages play havoc with the ancient computers and spotty Internet. Finding affordable software that does what she wants requires resources and expertise. The collection, well maintained but not well documented, is in a cramped space that won't fit the new books coming in. All books, dissertations and journals need to be entered into the system and double-checked. All the while, the library needs to stay open and serve over 100 students and 12 faculty.

The library staff, in fact all 41 employees of ZTC, live in a financially precarious situation. The college often does not meet payroll on time, with the result that people work for months without being paid properly. Everyone, from the principal down to the gardener, does subsistence farming to put food on the table. A project like this seems like a stretch when the basic functions of the school struggle to sustain themselves.

But it is worth it in Glory's estimation. We can never confuse knowledge and wisdom. Just because you can Google it does not mean that you should. Education is the long process of forming people to make wise decisions. Books give voice to more than just facts. Encyclopedias have a place, but deeper thinking requires sustained thinking and writing about why something matters and what it means in the world today.

Books hold that kind of wisdom. Glory wants to ensure that more books get into the hands of students and faculty. It makes them better witnesses to God's presence in the world. We don't just want to know about God. We want to know God. We want to know the grace we find in Jesus Christ. We want the power of the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. This lofty goal of knowing God makes books even more important, for each one witnesses in its own way. To let them languish in obscurity is to silence a great cloud of witnesses.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada



Zomba Theological College, Malawi.

stands with Glory Muthala. With the help of a fund started by former ZTC faculty member the Rev. Dr. Todd Statham, the PCC has supported her efforts. We have paid for extra staff to do the hard work of data entry, for software recommended by a Malawian IT specialist, for a dedicated computer that can act as a server and for extra data so that the Internet can make the work go faster. No

theological library in Canada could do what Glory and her team have done on their budget. But the job is getting done.

A minor miracle—I logged on, searched and found a book that I am teaching on at a small Malawian theological college. Somehow, with Glory's efforts and the PCC's ongoing support, we are more connected than ever.



Glory Muthala, head librarian at Zomba Theological College in Malawi.

## INTERNATIONAL

# The 175th Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, 1846–2021



Former Nigeria missionaries at a party for Alu Ibiam at the Rev. Rick Fee's house in 2004. Back row (left to right): Earle Roberts, John Johnston, Walter McLean, Barbara McLean. Third Row (l to r): Charlotte Stuart, Dorothy Roberts, Margaret Hall, Heather Johnston (married to John), Don MacKay. Second row (l to r): Russell Hall, Mary Lou Johnston (married to Geoff), Geoff Johnston, Alu Ibiam. Front row (l to r): Agnes Gollan, Rick Fee, Bruce Roberts (son of Earle and Dorothy), Marjorie Ross.



A Canairelief plane carrying supplies during the Nigerian Civil War, 1967–1970.



Agnes Gollan and her fellow worker having some tire troubles in 1959. PHOTO CREDITS: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARCHIVES

*By the Rev. Dr. Rick Fee, former international mission staff to Nigeria*

On April 10, 1846, the Rev. Hope Masterdon Waddell, an Irish minister working for the United Secession Church of Scotland in Jamaica, drew together several Jamaican missionaries and, with the support of the United Secession Church, arrived in Calabar, Nigeria, an outpost on the Cross River near the Atlantic Ocean coast. They had been invited by King Eyo Honesty II of Creek Town and King Eyamba V of Calabar, towns which existed under the Charter of the Royal Niger Company of the Niger Coast Protectorate. The shape of the political entity of Nigeria was not to emerge until the Berlin Conference of 1884, another 38 years. This was the nascent beginning of the "Calabar Mission."

The "Calabar Mission" was carried on successively by the United Secession Church, the United Presbyterian Church, the United Free Church of Scotland and the Church of Scotland.

Eight years after arriving, in 1853, at Creek Town, the first convert was admitted by baptism into the church. That convert would eventually become the first ordained minister of the "Nigerian" church.

It was a full 12 years later, on Sept. 1, 1858, with the knowledge and concurrence of the Foreign Mission Board of the United Presbyterian Church in

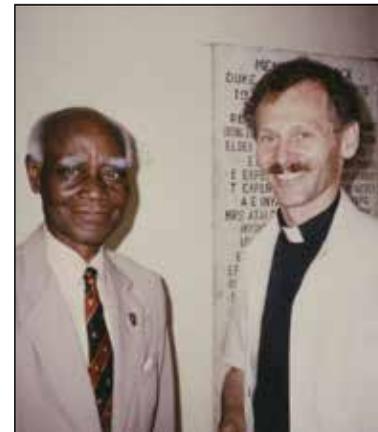
Scotland, the "Presbytery of Biafra" was constituted for the oversight of the congregations which had been formed at Duke Town and Creek Town. It was resolved that the congregations and mission stations united under the superintendence of this presbytery be designated, "The Presbyterian Church in Biafra." On April 9, 1872, the Presbytery of Biafra ordained the Rev. Esien Esien Ukpabio.

In May of 1921, the Presbytery of Biafra was reconstituted as the Synod of Biafra, with two presbyteries, namely the Northern Presbytery and the Southern Presbytery, however still under the church name, The Presbyterian Church in Biafra. It was this church that, on October 19, 1945, became the first independent mission church on the African continent. Its adopted written Constitution declared itself to be an independent branch of the universal church of Jesus Christ. The Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland expressed its concurrence with this action, believing it to be in full accordance with the aim and practice of the Church of Scotland in all its missionary enterprises.

With the recognition of an independent autonomous African church, the Calabar Mission Council (of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland), recognized that the time had come for its responsibility for Christian Education to be undertaken by a body with wide representation of educated African opinion. In May 1946, it transferred all educational work to a body known as the "Education Authority of the Church of Scotland Mission, Calabar." That body was later named the "Education Authority of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria."

The premier educational institution of the Calabar Mission was the Hope Waddell Training Institution, established in 1895, which has garnered a stellar reputation all along the West African coast.

In due course, the Calabar Mission Council, considering it wise that the work remaining under its control should become the concern of the church, resolved to set up Boards for the administration of that work and to then dissolve. The Education Authority and the Hope Waddell Training Institution Board of Governors agreed to the



Dr. Akanu Ibiam and the Rev. Rick Fee in Nigeria.

integration of their work in the life of the Church. The Synod of the Church, in order to effect the integration of the work conducted by all these Boards and Authorities, agreed to revise its own Constitution and to establish a Standing Committee for the exercise of a general oversight of this work.

The Itu Leper Colony was conceived in 1926 and founded in 1928 when a Nigerian farmer, Kalu, went to the "native healer" for medicine. That healer believed the drought in the village was being caused by evil spirits at work. Kalu was accused of causing the drought. With his faith in this culture and traditional religion shattered, Kalu, suspecting that he suffered from leprosy and hearing of a "western" hospital, went down the Cross River to find it. With the motto, "In His Name" the Church of Scotland Itu Leper Colony, Calabar Province, was founded by Dr. and Mrs. A. B. Macdonald. It would grow to become the largest residential leper colony in the world.

While there are innumerable Scottish missionaries who worked in Nigeria—and several who are buried there, the name of Mary Slessor is most often mentioned and known internationally, especially in Nigeria, where she is revered to the point of sainthood even today. Mary Slessor was born in Aberdeen in 1848. She was inspired by the legendary explorer Dr. David Livingstone to work as a missionary in Calabar, Nigeria in 1876. Determined to overcome the challenges of her early years and turning her back on mill work in Dundee, and largely self-taught, she combined her missionary zeal with a practical approach. She did not conform to the colonial attitudes of the day and became one with the people in the way she lived.

Mary Slessor died in 1915 at the age of 67, after working tirelessly against a backdrop of prejudice, traditional cultural practices and opposition. Plagued throughout her years in the tropics by several bouts of illness and constant danger, she lived within several villages of the Efik and Ibibio tribes, learned their languages

**INTERNATIONAL**

Continued from page 36

and traditions, earning their respect and putting an end to many traditional practices, such as the killing of twins. She adopted some of the twins she saved. One missionary at the time of Mary's death stated that Mary was "a whirlwind, an earthquake, a fire and a still small voice all in one."

When Southern Nigeria became a British Protectorate, Mary Slessor became the first-ever female magistrate in the British Empire and a skillful diplomatic emissary. She is remembered in Nigeria as a great Christian woman and someone who became, "The Mother of All the Peoples." She was lovingly called "Ma." A massive statue of Mary Slessor dominates the main roundabout in the city of Calabar. Her image adorns the Clydesdale Bank £10 note. A bust of Mary Slessor has been added to the existing 16 figures of famous men from Scotland's history at The Hall of Heroes at the National Wallace Monument near Stirling. She was, indeed, remarkable.

In June 1952, the name of the church was adjusted to "the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Nigeria." This name was further altered by the Synod in June 1960 to "the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria."

Responding to requests from the Church of Scotland, The Presbyterian Church in Canada began to share in the work of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria in November 1954. First priorities were for youth and women's workers, educationalists and clergy. There would then be an emphasis placed on skills in medicine, agriculture, architecture, theological education and administration.

Never without tribal tensions and having been cobbled together by European colonial powers, the unity of Nigeria, optimistically embraced at Independence in 1960, became increasingly strained. It broke dramatically following tribal pogroms in 1966 and a declaration of secession by eastern Nigeria into the Republic of Biafra in May 1967. Building upon the PCC's well-established and solid relationship with its partner, and with many national leaders in both the Federal Nigerian government and in the break-away secessionist enclave of Biafra, The Presbyterian Church in Canada was well placed to participate in many international attempts to support the people of Nigeria on both sides of the Biafran conflict.

Early peacemaking attempts were made primarily by the Rev. E. H. (Ted) Johnson. He shuttled between the two entities and hosted leaders of both factions in Canada. He lobbied European, United Nations, Vatican and Commonwealth envoys, seeking ways to bring about a peaceful con-

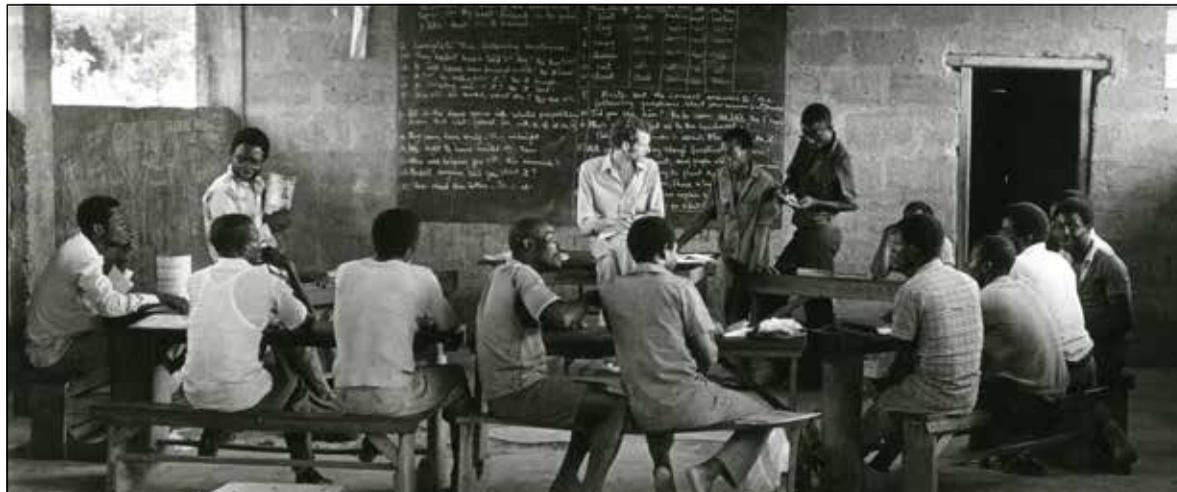
clusion. These efforts dwindled in effectiveness and by mid-1968 it was obvious that humanitarian interventions were increasingly necessary to try to curtail massive starvation and death within the civilian population of Biafra.

Canadian Presbyterian missionaries who had remained within Biafra, Ron and Hazel McGraw, helped manage food distribution as well as medical support and vaccination programs. The Rev. E.F. Roberts and Mrs. Dorothy Roberts were seconded to Christian Council relief efforts out of Lagos on the Nigerian side. Frustrated by the lack of Canadian government intervention in the crisis in Nigeria from 1967 until January 1970, concerned Canadians looked for ways to support humanitarian efforts. With the assistance of Jack Grant, a Jewish businessman, the PCC and Oxfam Canada formed a group called Canairelief. Canairelief ultimately purchased five Super Constellation airplanes, contracted pilots and aircrew, and joined Europeans and Americans in the organization of Joint Church Aid (JCA) in order to fly aid directly into Biafra. (This airline would effectively be known as Jesus Christ Airline.) More can be read about the PCC's work in this regard at [presbyterian.ca/biafra-pcc](http://presbyterian.ca/biafra-pcc).

Having just come through the horrendous Civil War, in January 1971 the Synod of The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria recognized the changes that had taken place in their nation and realized the need for the Church to adjust itself to the situation for effective evangelism. That Synod also agreed to adopt a new structure, including a General Assembly as the supreme court of the Church. It would take 16 years, but the General Assembly was duly inaugurated on August 22, 1987, in Duke Town Presbyterian Church, Eyamba Street, Calabar. The Assembly officials at that time were: the Right Reverend James U. Ukaegbu, Moderator; the Rev. O.B. Ekpenyong, Principal Clerk; the Rev. R.W. Fee, Deputy Clerk; and Mr. Okon Effiong, Treasurer.

Following the Civil War, the United Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Netherlands Reformed Church joined in partnership in mission primarily in medical, church planting and theological education endeavours through the sharing of personnel. The American partnership was carried over to the successor Presbyterian Church (USA).

In 2021, the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN) celebrated 175 years of Christian witness. During his address at the anniversary celebrations, His Eminence Nzie Nsi Eke, (prelate and moderator of the



**Ezzikwo Parish Session Meeting, October 13, 1978, with the Rev. Rick Fee as Moderator. PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID PANDY-SZEKERES**

General Assembly of the PCN) spoke about the founding and history of the PCN. The PCN established several missions (educational and medical) in Nigeria, many of which had valued educational facilities associated with them. "It is on record that most people who laid a solid foundation for (the) development of Nigeria as a nation and, (especially in) the educational sector, passed through or have links with a Presbyterian Institution," the Prelate said.

Presbyterians were also pioneers in Bible translation in Nigeria. The translation of the Bible into the Efik

language in 1862 was the first Bible translated into the vernacular in the over 371 languages spoken in Nigeria. This interest of the church was carried over to the PCC's support of the Abakaliki Bible Translation Trust, which saw the translation of the Ikwo, Ezaa, Izzi Old and New Testaments right up to 2021.

Nigeria has the largest Christian population of any African country. Christians make up approximately 49% of the population, with the majority of Nigerians being Muslim. While most of the Christian population in Nigeria is Protestant, the Ro-

man Catholic Church is the largest Christian denomination.

Today, the problems of nationhood still plague Nigeria. Tribal animosity, religious intolerance, a huge youthful educated but unemployed population, rampant crime and corruption beset each elected government. Democracy has prevailed in the last three rounds of national elections, but no government has been free from accusations of corruption, tribal favouritism and abuse of power. Kidnapping, unbridled exploitation of any and all resources are all factors challenging today's Nigeria.

**Canadian Presbyterian Missionaries Seconded to the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (1954–2009):**

Agnes Gollan	1954–1968
Joan Rochemont	1954–1956
The Rev. Earle F. and Dorothy Roberts	1957–1965; 1968–1970
The Rev. Geoffrey D. and Mary Louise Johnston	1958–1966
Dorothy Bulmer	1959–1973?
Anne Howson and Elsie Taylor	1960–1966
Dr. Roy V. and Catrina Ward	1960–1966
Samuel W. and Hazel Harder	1960–1966; S.W. CCN in Lagos, 1969
Rose Chambers (Nurse)	1965–1967?
Ron and Hazel McGraw (married 1966)	1961–1970
The Rev. M. Roy and Beverly Gellatly	1961–1967
Elizabeth Ann Howson (Mrs. Ian Giffin)	1962–1966
The Rev. Walter F. and Barbara McLean	1962–1967
Murray and Marjorie Ross	1962–1969
Robert and Carolyn Birse	1963–1966
Shirley Dredge	1963–1965
The Rev. John A. and Heather (Erica) Johnston	1964–1966
The Rev. David T. and Nancy Craig	1966–1967; D.T.: July 1969 – 31 Dec. 1969
The Rev. Russell T. and Margaret Hall	1966–1976
The Rev. Alex Zeidman (Biafra relief six months)	1968–1969
John Allan Reoch (Biafra relief)	1968–1969; May – Oct. 1971
Doris Adams (Biafra relief)	1968–1969
The Rev. Robert Dale and Sheila Wilson	1971–1975
Dr. Ronald and Mary Unger	1971–1973
The Rev. Donald W. MacKay	1971–1978; 1984–1990; 1991–1998
The Rev. Richard W. Fee (+ Africa Liaison, 1987–1992).	1977–1992
Dr. Ronald and Mrs. MacLeod	1977–1977
Dr. David and Sheila Irwin	1977–1979
Dale and Carol Wilson	1978–1979
Trevor and Patricia Fowler	1978–1980
Arlene Randall (husband: David Onuoha)	1978–1986; 1991–2009
The Rev. Barry and Anita Mack	1981–1984
James and Kathleen Whitefield	1978–1979
The Rev. Margaret Anne Reid and Dennis Single	1994–1996 (Joint UCC appointment)

## CAMPS

# 50 Years of Presbyterian Music Camp

*By the Rev. Angus Sutherland who, along with his family, has been part of Presbyterian Music Camp for 30 years.*

It was 1972, and excitement was building across the church. The first new *Book of Praise* since the edition of 1918 was due to be released.

The *Book of Praise* committee, chaired by the Rev. Wilf Moncrieff, wanted to promote the new books effectively. They knew that many congregations, wary of change, would hold on to the 1918 edition. One of the options was to host a week-long camp, with the intention of introducing the new book.

The event was held at the United Church camp at Golden Lake, near the south-eastern edge of Algonquin Park. Campers came from Ontario and Quebec and filled the air with enthusiastic singing. It was “a test camp” under the auspices of the Committee on Camping for the denomination, with the express hope, noted on the 1972 brochure, that “it may be the first of many in our church across Canada.”

The first camp began on a Sunday and concluded on the following Sunday. The brochure names a staff of two: Allan Cowle, manuscript editor of the new *Book of Praise*, and the Rev. Gary Morton, who would lead in contemporary songs. Enigmatically, the brochure adds the words “and others.”

Alison Stewart-Patterson of Montreal (later ordained to the ministry) had brought some of her youth group. As she drove them home, the story

goes, one of the young people said to her, “I can hardly wait to go back next year.” Although that first camp had been considered a success, it was the only camp planned. Aware of that fact, Ms. Stewart-Patterson started making phone calls almost as soon as she got home. Largely through her efforts, the camp returned to Golden Lake the following summer.

Because of the Presbyterian Music Camp, the church was encouraged to create its first youth song book, *Praise Ways*, which came available to the church in 1975.

The camp grew and developed in vision and in participation, the latter only limited by the space at the site. In 1990, the camp committee, realizing that they were turning away almost as many people as there were at camp, negotiated for a second camp. The year 1991 saw two weeks of camp, one following the other. The two diverged somewhat in 1993, choosing different themes. Golden Lake was the home of both camps through 1995.

In 1996, the camps moved. One, designated MEO (Montreal and Eastern Ontario), settled at Wesley Acres, near Picton, Ont., and the other, designated SWO (Southwestern Ontario), found its home at Camp Tamarack, near Bracebridge, Ont. The camp at Tamarack continues today, under the auspices of the Synod of Central, Northern Ontario and Bermuda.

As the name makes clear, the primary focus is *music*. And as the camp has developed, so have the

available workshops. At first, there were opportunities for choirs and for learning the basics of guitar, recorder and hand bells. Present-day camps offer five choirs: camp choir, for everyone; youth choir, for teens and early twenties; children’s choir; chamber choir, for those who want something a little more challenging; and show choir, for those who long to move as well as sing. Workshops have expanded to include Celtic, folk, drumming and garage band, and added instruments such as fiddle, banjo and even bagpipes.

But *Presbyterian* is also in the camp name, which means that there is not only music, but also worship in the morning and evening. There are regular prayer and Bible study groups, and occasionally discussion groups. The camp opens with a gathering ceremony and ends with communion.

And there’s the last word in the name: *camp*. What would camp be without swimming? Canoeing, kayaking and tennis are routinely part of the experience, and so are “arts and crafts,” which can take different forms depending on those who take on leadership in any given year. One doesn’t have to be a musician or even be particularly talented musically to enjoy Presbyterian Music Camp.

The first camp did not allow for any campers under the age of eight, but since then the Presbyterian Music Camp has been a camp for people of all ages. Campers have ranged in age from a couple of



Scenes from Presbyterian Music Camp through the years: 1972, 1994 and 2019.

months to some in their eighties, all contributing to the enjoyment of fellowship and music. The camp has also been a camp without barriers. The camp welcomes many people of different denominations, not to mention new Canadians, along with various differently abled campers. All have contributed to the rich fabric of the Presbyterian Music Camp

experience.

Now the Presbyterian Music Camp is celebrating its 50th year of existence—an anniversary that owes everything to those who got the camp started and kept it rolling. Much more could be written about this awesome place, but the best way to find out more would be to come and be part of the experience.

## WOMEN

# WMS Mission Areas



The Montreal holding centre for refugees to Canada.

*By the Women’s Missionary Society*

Every two years, the WMS chooses an international and a national mission program on which to focus our fundraising projects. It is our belief that, working together, we can make a difference.

For the past two years, the WMS International project has been the MIBE Graduate School for Nurses in Indore, India. After heavy rains, the school building’s classrooms were flooded and the nurses’ hostel was damaged. Thanks to WMS donations, a badly needed tin roof has been installed.

Our national project for the past two years was Action Réfugiés Montréal (ARM)—a voice for refugees who arrive in Montreal, and an organization that seeks justice for asylum seekers and refugees. ARM promotes partnerships between refugee and faith communities as well as the public at large for mutual empowerment.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, synodicals and presbyterials have not had in-person meetings, which is where much of the funds were traditionally raised for WMS Together We Can projects.

Two auxiliaries in the Paris (Ontario) presbyterial undertook small



Nursing students at the MIBE Graduate School for Nurses in Indore, India.



projects. St. Paul’s Mission Circle in Simcoe, Ont., built a small replica of the nurses’ school in Lahore with a removable roof, which was placed on a table at the front of the sanctuary. In a short time, donations from the congregation had reached \$1,000 toward the new roof.

The Paris WMS auxiliary raised over \$450 as an energetic member

baked apple pies prior to Thanksgiving. Members of the congregation gave a donation toward Action Réfugiés Montréal for the pies they purchased.

There are many ways a resilient faith will carry us through these difficult times. For information about the Together We Can projects visit [presbyterian.ca/wms](http://presbyterian.ca/wms).

**PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT**

# 75 Years of Loving Our Neighbour

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

In 2022, the church marks 75 years since the mission of PWS&D began. In the aftermath of World War II, with Europe devastated, Canadian Presbyterians felt called to provide much needed relief. From this start, relief became the focus for the first half of our history until there was a push to look at breaking cycles of poverty and contribute to sustainable development.

This year PWS&D will commemorate our history in various ways, and we invite you to look back with us at how we have put Christ's words into action, working with you to love our neighbours around the world, especially those who can use a hand up.

Throughout our history, food has been front and centre in our work, but especially after PWS&D joined the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in 1993. Early in our membership, we were concerned about the famine in North Korea and began sending assistance in collaboration with the United Church and the Mennonite Central Committee. Soon after, the Canadian government authorized humanitarian assistance to North Korea and, for 10 years, PWS&D led food shipments averaging \$5 million per year to alleviate hunger in that country.

Since then, we have provided, and

continue to provide, food assistance wherever it is deemed to be an appropriate response. It is always in a context where people have lost their normal sources of food due to conflict and displacement, drought, floods, crop failures or other disasters. Our goal is to help populations get through a period of food scarcity without having to sell their assets (such as farming tools) in order to feed themselves. Food assistance is always meant to be a short-term bridge to a more sustainable solution.

Ultimately, we want people to have access to food in sufficient quantity and diversity to be able to lead healthy lives. We also aim to improve the sustainability of the sources of food.

As such, we work with partners to promote conservation agriculture techniques that help to increase soil productivity using mostly locally available resources. Farmers learn how to make and use compost, to diversify crops and intermix them, to leave crop residue on the soil, and to not till the soil. As a result, the soil retains moisture for longer, is more resistant to erosion and is more resilient to the increasing unpredictability of rains.

I visited farmers in northern Malawi, often women farmers, who, after being trained, adopted conservation

agriculture practices and saw their harvests multiply three or four times. This had a significant impact on their families' nutrition levels and even on their families' capacity to send their children to school, as surplus produce became a source of income. What I found most impactful was to meet other women who had taken up conservation agriculture practices after witnessing the success of their neighbours—we call that "spontaneous adoption," and it is a great gauge of the success of a project.

Malawi actually provides an interesting case to look at how we can help farmers get back on their feet after disasters. In 2019, Cyclone Idai hit southern Africa, including Malawi, and flooded homes and fields, washing away crops that were about to be harvested.

Thanks to our collaborations with Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Humanitarian Coalition, we were able to provide food assistance to families to get through the months they needed to cover to get a new harvest. Farmers would typically save part of their harvest as seeds for the next season, but in this case, all of it was washed away. Therefore, the project also provided seeds to farmers so that they could plant and harvest, at which point food assistance was no



For 10 years, large-scale food shipments were sent to North Korea to alleviate hunger. PHOTO CREDIT: CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

longer necessary.

We all need food in sufficient quantity and quality. Food sustains us as we live out our lives and share God's love with others. We are blessed to be able to share the abundance provided to us here in Canada so that people who face scarcity elsewhere

are cared for and can live their lives in God's light. PWS&D's mission has always been possible because of Presbyterians from across the country—through prayers and financial gifts. In the name of all those who have been touched by your generosity over the years, thank you.



Farmers in Malawi received seeds to plant after their crops were washed away by Cyclone Idai in 2019. PHOTO CREDIT: CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

## Where Need Arises, We Respond

By Emma Clarke,  
PWS&D Communications

Do you ever wonder how PWS&D is engaged in helping people in a particular country? Read on to see the ways PWS&D is mobilizing donations, as well as support from ecumenical partnerships and the Government of Canada, for several recently approved responses.

### Haiti

In Haiti, PWS&D is responding to continued climate emergencies through the ACT Alliance. The newly approved response is providing access to water, sanitation and hygiene services for entire communities whose water supplies have been con-

taminated due to last year's earthquake. The program is also raising awareness about healthy behaviours like handwashing and proper food storage and is supporting women in 2,000 families who need menstrual hygiene supplies.

### Venezuela

In December 2021, PWS&D began providing funds in response to the food insecurity that many families in Venezuela are facing as a result of ongoing social and political crises. These funds, which are matched through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, are supporting 4,956 individuals with six monthly food baskets full of rice, corn flour, black beans, kidney beans, tuna, wheat flour, pasta,

oats, oil, sugar and salt.

### Sudan

Over the past year, Sudan has experienced a 44% increase in severe hunger. Sadly, 1.63 million people need humanitarian assistance in the face of the country's weakening infrastructure. PWS&D is responding with matching funds through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to provide 1,834 households with vouchers to shop at local markets. Regular distributions throughout the year help families withstand the country's lean season without having to sell household goods or livestock in order to buy food.

### South Sudan

In South Sudan, conflict and climate



An earthquake, followed by Tropical Storm Grace, in 2021 have left many communities in Haiti in need of vital supplies. PWS&D is responding through ACT Alliance. PHOTO CREDIT: THOMAS NOREILLE/ACT ALLIANCE

violence have limited access to food, placing more than half of the population in severe need. PWS&D is responding through MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) Canada to support 800 food insecure households. Some of the country's most vulnerable people—those who have been internally displaced, those returning

after fleeing and those living in host communities—will be provided with sorghum, beans, cooking oil, salt and cash to pay for milling costs. The Government of Canada is providing a 4:1 match for this vital response through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

# High Stakes for Women Aid Workers

By Kirann Bashir and Zubia\* with Zunaira Shams, Community World Service Asia

Women aid workers in Pakistan and Afghanistan play an important role in reaching women and girls, who make up a large part of the population in the two countries, and are often the most vulnerable. Yet, as women working in a male-dominated environment with limited rights, they often face extreme challenges.

### “My goal is to reach those in need.”

Kirann Bashir is a project manager for Community World Service Asia (CWSA), who has been working in the humanitarian aid field since 2012.

“I am responsible for managing and conducting project operations, as well as monitoring and ensuring quality implementation of project activities. I am also continuously coordinating with all relevant stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, government departments and the communities with which we work.”

Kirann was inspired to take up this important work by her role model, Mother Theresa.

“Her dedication to caring for the sick, underprivileged, and disadvantaged encouraged me to become a humanitarian worker.”

Kirann shared her journey:

“I am the first to be working as a

humanitarian worker in my family. My family members did not consider my job safe due to the ongoing attacks on aid workers in Pakistan. However, due to my mother’s strong support, I was able to join the humanitarian sector. It was difficult for my mother to persuade the family’s elders, but she was persistent and never left my side. For this, I will be ever grateful to her.

“Because my job is in Umerkot, I had no choice but to leave my house and live alone. It is very hard for a single, unmarried woman to relocate and live alone in our culture. It was difficult to persuade my parents, particularly my father, that the house I will be living in is in a safe neighbourhood and close to the office.

“Since my profession as a humanitarian worker involves local, national and international travel, another obstacle I faced was travelling alone. Among my family, I am the only woman who lives and travels independently. Many of the young girls in my family look up to me as a role model.

“It was also difficult to prove myself to men co-workers, since men are perceived to be more dedicated, intelligent and capable employees than women. In my early years as a professional, men in the areas where we worked met and listened to the men colleagues rather than us wom-



As a community mobilizer in Afghanistan, Zubia works with students, parents and village members to build awareness of child rights and the importance of education. PHOTO CREDIT: CWSA

en. I have finally been able to gain the trust of the men in the communities I work in and with, and they are now more comfortable talking to me in our meetings as a result of constant open conversation.”

Kirann feels that it is critical to recognize the significant role women can play in socioeconomic development in order to improve society and transform conservative mindsets. For her, the most fulfilling element of her profession is seeing a woman become socially independent, participate actively in decision-making processes and provide for her family, just as she has been able to do.

### Determined to “bring back peace.”

Zubia has been working in the humanitarian aid sector (currently with CWSA) for the past 15 years.

“As a community mobilizer of an education project for a humanitarian organization in Jalalabad, I organize meetings, conduct trainings and coordinate with government officials, teachers, members of the communities, students, parents and village committee members. I build awareness on child rights and promote the idea of quality education for all.”



As a woman, Kiran Bashir (second from left) faced challenges in becoming an aid worker. Despite this, she feels called to continue to highlight the significant role women play in socioeconomic development. PHOTO CREDIT: CWSA

On why she chose to work in this field, Zubia said, “Women in Afghanistan live in constant insecurity. They are not permitted to leave the house alone. Many girls are not allowed to attend school to gain education. As a result, women in Afghanistan have a literacy rate of 30%. I chose to work as a humanitarian worker so that I could inspire women and girls to get an education and build better lives for themselves.”

When Zubia showed the will to work, her father-in-law and brother-in-law opposed her decision. Yet, her husband supported her goals.

“My husband’s earnings were insufficient to cover all our home expenses and meet our family’s needs. I was fortunate to have a supportive spouse who encouraged me to look for work and make a better livelihood.”

On her field experience, Zubia shared, “When we go meet women in the communities, they are initially surprised to see me working so independently and travelling to places. They are also hesitant to share information out of fear and worry for their safety. While some communities are welcoming, we have experienced

some conservative communities who did not allow us to speak to their women. On some occasions, men would ask us how our family allowed us to work so independently.”

Through her work, Zubia encourages parents and community members to increase enrolment of girls in schools.

“CWSA has been working to support inclusive and quality education, especially for girls, in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to ensure that equal learning opportunities are provided to the most vulnerable students. This has largely been through interventions designed to improve pedagogical skills, develop child-centred learning environments, deliver master teacher trainings and mobilize local communities to seek and demand education for all of their children. When I see more girls going to school, I feel proud of the work I am doing. When I see women in key positions or as members of local structures making key decisions, I see the hope of a better future with men and women working side by side for the betterment of Afghanistan.”

\*Name has been changed for security reasons.

Continued from page 39

### Afghanistan and Pakistan

The current instability in Afghanistan has left many people facing heightened insecurity and challenges in meeting their food needs. Now, with winter’s arrival, many families who are stranded far from their homes require urgent support. PWS&D is hoping to start a food assistance project aimed at supporting 2,550 of the most vulnerable households in Afghanistan. Additionally, through our long-time partner, Community World Service Asia, PWS&D is providing funds for 3,000 Afghan refugees in Pakistan to purchase blankets and bedding supplies, as well as warm clothes to stave off the cold weather.

### Yemen

In Yemen, 80% of the population lives below the poverty line. In recent

months, low access to COVID-19 vaccines combined with vaccine mandates and political upheaval have prevented many people from earning an income, making it difficult to meet their daily needs. PWS&D has been supporting a project in this area since 2019 and will continue providing funds to ADRA Canada through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank for an emergency food response that will help 7,800 people. Matching funds from the Government of Canada multiplies the impact of our donations 4:1.

Factors like conflict, deteriorating environment and the COVID-19 pandemic have unique impacts on every family around the world. PWS&D is responding attentively to people’s needs, with your support.

To make a donation, visit [WeRespond.ca/donate](http://WeRespond.ca/donate).



Food insecurity remains high in Yemen. Through Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWS&D will help provide food to 7,800 people. PHOTO CREDIT: ADRA

**PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT**

# Humanitarian Assistance and Development in Pakistan

By Karen Bokma,  
PWS&D Communications

Pakistan—the fifth most populated country in the world—is extremely vulnerable to climate change. The Global Climate Risk Index ranked Pakistan as the eighth most climate-affected country between the years 2000 and 2019. With an economy heavily reliant on agriculture (almost 20% of GDP), even minor climactic incidences can have dramatic effects on food security.

In the last several years, there has been increased severity and duration of both heat waves and rain events. At the same time, water scarcity is predicted to become an increasing reality for the Pakistani population, especially for those who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods and food security, for which irrigation water is key.

One of the areas severely affected by climate change and water scarcity is Sindh province, which is largely arid and semi-arid. As of August 2021, Sindh was experiencing a moderate drought.

The population in Sindh is already vulnerable, especially in terms of food security and nutrition. Rural households in Sindh experience high levels of food insecurity and poor nutritional indicators for children. Umerkot District in Sindh, one of the most affected areas, has been flagged at crisis levels on the Integrated Food

Security Phase Classification.

In response, PWS&D is implementing a project that will provide humanitarian assistance, early recovery and development in this highly food insecure district. With funding from Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Government of Canada, PWS&D's partner, Community World Service Asia (CWSA), will implement a two-year project to support 23,319 people. This is an innovative program where the Canadian government has recognized the need to connect urgent short-term humanitarian needs with longer-term sustainable development results.

CWSA will support rural farming communities in the Umerkot District that are extremely vulnerable. The first stage of the intervention (the humanitarian assistance stage) will provide monthly food support to 1,125 families for a period of six months during the lean period from March to August. During this interval, families do not have any food stocks and without assistance might be inclined toward negative coping strategies, including the selling of livestock or household goods. This makes recovery after the lean season even more difficult.

During the early recovery stage, the same families will receive seasonal seeds for the next cropping season. A mechanism for seed storage will be developed to allow

farmers to save seeds for the next planting season. Women will also receive seeds for home gardens to encourage nutritional diversity. Additionally, training on “climate smart” agriculture will help complement the provision of seeds to ensure farmers can grow crops despite the difficult environmental conditions in Umerkot.

To ensure sustainable development is possible for participants, 300 women artisans will receive additional training, including in digital marketing and access to urban markets. This support for income generation outside of agriculture will encourage gender equity and allow women to earn an income through skills like embroidery.



Monthly food distributions like the one seen here in Umerkot (pictured in 2019) will be provided to 1,125 families to address immediate food needs. PHOTO CREDIT: CWSA

farmers to save seeds for the next planting season. Women will also receive seeds for home gardens to encourage nutritional diversity. Additionally, training on “climate smart” agriculture will help complement the provision of seeds to ensure farmers can grow crops despite the difficult environmental conditions in Umerkot.

Given the increased risks facing many in Umerkot due to climate change, this project—focusing on both emergency relief and sustainable development—provides a holistic response. Ensuring food in the immediate term, addressing a changing climate in farming activities and providing training for additional liveli-

hood opportunities will ensure many families are better able to weather their daily realities. This two-year project, with a budg-



In the Umerkot district of Sindh, Pakistan, a rapidly changing climate means farmers are increasingly affected by heat waves and drought. Water scarcity means it's even more difficult to ensure families have the food they need. PHOTO CREDIT: CWSA

et of \$1.3 million, will be carried out with the generous support of the Government of Canada through Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

ing funds from the Government of Canada will ensure the project has the greatest possible impact.

These food baskets will ensure that households are able to provide nutritious food for their families as they slowly recover from the challenges they are facing during these difficult times, with the hope of better days ahead.

Through ADRA Canada and their local partner, ADRA Venezuela, six monthly food baskets full of rice, corn flour, black beans, kidney beans, tuna, wheat flour, pasta, oats, oil, sugar and salt will be distributed. Match-

## PWS&D Responds in Venezuela

By Stephanie Chunoo,  
PWS&D Communications

Located at the northern end of South America sits Venezuela—a country that has been facing a social and political crisis since 2010. For many Venezuelans, this crisis has affected all aspects of life and has resulted in almost 20% of the population (5.4 million people) fleeing the country.

In 2021, inflation reached a stag-

gering 415%. In addition to the loss of income-generating opportunities, this hyperinflation has impacted infrastructure and public services, making daily survival increasingly difficult for many Venezuelans.

In addition to hyperinflation, an analysis conducted by the World Food Programme showed that acute food insecurity is prevalent throughout the country. Fuel shortages are affecting many states as well, mak-

ing food transportation difficult. This is especially ironic given the fact that Venezuela is an oil producing and exporting country. As a result, malnutrition cases among children are on the rise.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added even more challenges to this already critical situation. With many people losing jobs and numerous restrictions in place, it has become increasingly challenging for many

households to provide for their families.

At the start of December 2021, PWS&D provided support through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to assist 4,956 individuals. Through ADRA Canada and their local partner, ADRA Venezuela, six monthly food baskets full of rice, corn flour, black beans, kidney beans, tuna, wheat flour, pasta, oats, oil, sugar and salt will be distributed. Match-



ing funds from the Government of Canada will ensure the project has the greatest possible impact.

These food baskets will ensure that households are able to provide nutritious food for their families as they slowly recover from the challenges they are facing during these difficult times, with the hope of better days ahead.

## HISTORY

# The 150th Anniversary of George Leslie Mackay's Arrival in Tamsui

By the Rev. Peter Bush, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Fergus, Ont., and editor, Presbyterian History

It was 150 years ago, on March 9, 1872, when the Rev. George Leslie Mackay, Canadian Presbyterian missionary, arrived in Tamsui, Taiwan. That Mackay was in Tamsui was the result of a series of circumstances over which he had little control. He regarded his being in Tamsui as a sign of God's providence.

Mackay, growing up in Zorra Township, Ont. (near Woodstock), had been drawn to follow his hero, Alexander Duff, the Scottish Presbyterian missionary, to India. Plans changed and Mackay was sent to China, but following his arrival on the Chinese mainland he was encouraged to connect with the English Presbyterians working on the island of Formosa (as Taiwan was called at the time). James Maxwell had arrived in Formosa in 1865, starting a mission in the south part of the island. When Maxwell and Mackay met in early 1872, Maxwell encouraged Mackay to focus his energies on the northern part of the island. Following that advice Mackay arrived in Tamsui, his unexpected mission field.

Nicknamed "the black-bearded barbarian," he is frequently called a son-in-law of Taiwan for his marriage to a Taiwanese woman, Tiu<sup>n</sup> Chhang-miâ. Mackay's willingness to immerse himself in the life of the people of Taiwan was matched by a willingness on the part of the people of northern Taiwan to allow him to do so.

Mackay is remembered for his medical work and extraction of teeth, as well as for starting Oxford College (named for Oxford County in Ontario, home to the many donors who made the school possible), now called Aletheia University. In developing educational institutions and engaging in medical work, Mackay followed the missionary methods of the time. But they were not his primary passion. For Mackay, all missionary work, including medical and educational ministry, was secondary to evangelism and disciple-making. The training of Taiwanese clergy was his single most important task. He repeatedly argued only Taiwanese Christians could nurture the growth of a church in Taiwan.

Mackay travelled widely on the island, accompanied by a group of young men with whom he discussed

life and religion, philosophy and the natural world. Blending evangelical conviction with confidence in science's description of the world, Mackay used the wonders of the created world to point to God. For Mackay, creation declared the glory of God (see Psalm 19) and the study of the creation brought those who studied it closer to God.

Mackay's purpose in travelling with these followers was not solely to see them come to faith in Jesus, but to train them as leaders for the Taiwanese church. His journeys became theological retreats, training pastors for the chapels being started in communities beyond Tamsui.

Mackay wrote, "Mission work in North Formosa [Taiwan] is dominated by the idea of a native [Taiwanese] ministry. The purpose is to evangelize the people... The person or the mission that supposes that a good theory must be capable of universal application, and that social forces, hereditary customs, or even climatic influences need not be taken into account, makes a grievous mistake... One reason for a native [Taiwanese] ministry is that it is by far the most economical, both as to personnel and money. Native [Taiwanese] can

live in a climate and under conditions where any foreigner would die... And the cost of a native [Taiwanese] preacher and their family is such, that the contributions of the [local] churches can be made to support a very much larger staff than if foreigners alone were employed."

Mackay identified with the common people of Taiwan in adapting the gospel as much as possible to local patterns of thought and culture. Mackay selectively reshaped western education to fit the immediate practical needs of the Taiwanese preachers.

Mackay resisted attempts by the Canadian church to send more missionaries to Taiwan, concerned the new arrivals would remain distant from the people of Taiwan by being unwilling to eat the food of the people and live in the same conditions as the people of the island. His fears were well founded. As new missionaries arrived, the Canadian Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions ordered Mackay to assist in building a mission compound, and when the houses in the compound were completed, he was instructed to move into the compound. Further, the new missionary arrivals were not willing to travel as Mackay did,



The George Leslie Mackay memorial statue in Tamsui square, Taiwan. PHOTO CREDIT: KIM ARNOLD, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARCHIVES, 2005

preferring to stay more settled in the known context of Tamsui. He had little interest in spending time with missionaries who did not share his entrepreneurial spirit. His vision was for a church in Taiwan that was largely free of the missionaries and western influence. A small team of Canadian missionaries who could not cover all the ministry needs was his plan, for such a situation would create space for Taiwanese Christians to exercise leadership.

Mackay died in Tamsui on June 2, 1901. While his name is not widely recognized in Canada, in Taiwan he is still a highly regarded figure.

# Zion Church Releases Comprehensive History Book



D. Scott MacDonald.

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

Historian and author D. Scott MacDonald has just released a new and revised edition of the history of Zion Presbyterian Church, in Charlottetown, P.E.I., now celebrating 175 years as a congregation. Originally compiled and authored by MacDonald some 25 years ago, the new edition, *Through the Grace of God*, is a greatly expanded history of the congregation, its worship structures, ministers, elders and so much more.

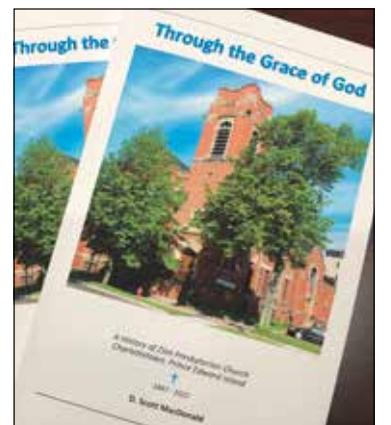
Scott MacDonald is actively involved in Zion Presbyterian Church

as an elder and historian, serving the Presbytery of Prince Edward Island as treasurer and representative elder and is past president and current member of the Seniors Active Living Centre.

Earlier publications that he has also authored include *From Humble Beginnings (a History of the Credit Union Movement on Prince Edward Island 1936 – 2016)*, *Prince Edward Island Then and Now*, and, *Charlottetown Then and Now*—an award-winning book that has received both the P.E.I. Heritage Book Award and the Charlottetown Heritage Award. A member of the national Committee on History, Scott has laboured tirelessly to bring Zion's extensive his-

tory to life and document so many important aspects of its past that could have otherwise been lost.

The significance of this 285-page publication is perhaps best explained through the comments by the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, current moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada: "During my visit earlier this year to Zion Church in Charlottetown, it's evident that this 175-year-old congregation is blessed with a beautiful and historic sanctuary along with a desire to honour its past and take their mission courageously into the next century. The significance of all that came before is aptly chronicled within this new book, *Through the*



*Grace of God*. Publications of this nature are so important to our denomination, and I applaud Scott for his tireless efforts in bringing Zion's past to life."

For those interested in purchasing a copy of this wonderfully written publication, please contact Zion Church Administrator, Dianne White, by email to [dwhite@zionpres.org](mailto:dwhite@zionpres.org) or by calling 902-566-5363. The price is \$14.95 and includes mailing costs to your address.

**HISTORY**

# A Padre on the Battlefield

*By Major Rev. Dr. Tom Hamilton, who serves in team-ministry with the Rev. Paula Hamilton at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I. He is the Senior Reserve Military Chaplain for the 36 Canadian Brigade Group (Nova Scotia and P.E.I.) and is the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service historian.*

When the director motioned to the film crew and said "Action!", it was as if we were transported back in time. Wearing a Second World War uniform, I looked at the camera and spoke the first words of my historical re-enactment: "It happened here on this ground, in this place, it was 31 August 1944—for all of us, it was a day like no other."

We were standing on the ground where Canadian soldiers engaged in combat during the Battle of the Foglia River in Italy. The battle was part of the initial move against the German Reich's last major line of defence in Italy known as the Gothic line. The defenders occupied the high ground and laid thousands of land mines.

The historical monologue was told from the perspective of Padre Laurie Wilmot, a Canadian Anglican military chaplain, who was thrust into the midst of the battle. As the battle began, Canadian soldiers unintentionally detonated German mines and casualties soared: "I heard the first mine explode and...as soldiers ran for cover, more mines were set off... and some were crying out, 'Padre,

help me!'"

Disregarding his own safety, Padre Wilmot knew what he had to do: "I pulled out the Red Cross flag from my thigh pocket and attached it to a switch lying nearby... Then I stood up waving the Red Cross flag...and led the stretcher bearers into the battle."

Thankfully, Padre Wilmot survived the event. He and the stretcher bearers were able to rescue more than 60 soldiers from the battlefield. But there were countless fatalities that day, including another military chaplain, Padre Ken Eaton.

Throughout the Italian Campaign during the Second World War, Canada's military units included many Presbyterians. There were military chaplains like Padre Logan-Vencta, Padre Johnston, Padre Fulford and Padre Rowland. There were also Presbyterians in the ranks, like Private John Bell, who paid the ultimate sacrifice. His widow and seven children grieved for a husband and father who never returned home.

In the aftermath of the Battle of the Foglia River, Padre Wilmot continually relied on his faith in Christ to deal with his own battle exhaustion. He was not alone. Many veterans, who shouldered the physical and mental scars of war, along with many grieving families who were forced to pick up the pieces of their lives shattered by war, did so by reaching out to God.

Presenting a historical drama on the very ground in Italy where Padre Wilmot was sustained by his faith in



**G.D. Johnston in military uniform standing in front of an army vehicle at Senny Bridge in 1942. PHOTO CREDIT: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA ARCHIVES**



**Major Rev. Dr. Tom Hamilton at Padre Eaton's grave in Italy, wearing the Second World War uniform he wore for the historical documentary.**

the midst of battle was a powerful reminder that war, suffering, pandemics—and even death—will never be stronger than God's presence and love.

*A short trailer of Major Rev. Dr. Tom Hamilton's historical monologue is available on the Bravery In Arms website: [braveryinarms.ca](http://braveryinarms.ca). The entire documentary video will be available to watch later in 2022.*



**Presbyterian Padres that served overseas, taken some time between 1943 and 1945. Back row (left to right): W.S. Sutherland, R.C. Creelma, N. Sharkey, C.M. Cameron, D.C. Smith, D.B. Mackay, D.C. Hill, D.P. Rowland. Front row (left to right): W.D.G. Hollingworth, J.A. Munro, G.M. Jamieson, J. Logan-Vencta, G.D. Johnston, A. Mills, Wm. Sutherland, D.E. Flint. PHOTO CREDIT: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA ARCHIVES, DONATED FROM GEOFF JOHNSTON'S FAMILY COLLECTION**

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## HISTORY

# Celebrating 150 Years of St. Andrew's, Aurora

By Robert Revington, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Aurora, Ont.

One evening more than half a century ago, the people of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Aurora, Ont., saw a scandalous sight. In fact, a long-time member recalled that some members of the church "almost passed out" in horror when they saw it. And what caused the uproar?

It was this: the bagpiper at the church's Robbie Burns Night was wearing a kilt...but it had an Irish pattern. Apparently, this was truly shocking for a room filled with Scottish people!

That anecdote was one of many that I came upon while researching our church's anniversary museum exhibit.

In November 2021, St. Andrew's celebrated its 150th anniversary. One of the most exciting parts of preparing for the anniversary celebration was the opportunity to work on a virtual museum exhibit that looked back

on the church's history. We worked alongside staff from the Town of Aurora Museum & Archives, and they did an outstanding job in putting together the exhibit web page. It can be found at [auroramuseum.ca/standrewspresbyterianchurchintro](http://auroramuseum.ca/standrewspresbyterianchurchintro). Let me share some highlights.

From the research that I did on the exhibit, the stories of local colour particularly stand out. One of my favourite discoveries was learning how the church paid for its heat during the cold winters of the 1930s. It was the time of the Great Depression, the church was in debt and money was scarce. They needed an additional source of fundraising to pay the \$12 needed for a ton of coal. How did they solve the problem?

In her memoir, long-time church member Reta Rank explained that they decided to hold crokinole tournaments—"12 tables at 25 cents per person"—in order to cover the heating costs. They played crokinole because, being the good Presbyterians



In November, when St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Aurora, Ont., celebrated its 150th anniversary, Aurora Town Council presented the church with a plaque in honour of the occasion. Pictured left to right: Aurora Councillor Rachel Gilliland, St. Andrew's Clerk of Session Adele Samuel, Pastor Soong Huh, Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas, Knox College professor Stuart Macdonald, Aurora Councillor Sandra Humfries and Robert Revington.

they were, euchre tournaments were considered too sinful!

The old church building (1873–1962) was comparatively spartan. Reta recalled that in the old days, "[T]here was no water in the church. It had to be carried in from the tap almost at the street. We filled wash

boilers [and] heated them on an old cook stove to wash the dishes." One time, a visiting choir from Parkdale all had to walk to a nearby house because the church didn't have its own washrooms!

Another highlight was discovering the church's amusingly passive-aggressive newspaper advertisement meant to raise money for the new building in the 1960s. The ad stated that they implored local Presbyterians "to fulfill their obligations to their church, and thus to discharge their conscience in obedience to the faith they have professed. As the scripture states, faith without works is dead... We therefore, through this advertisement, give the call of the parish to those of our obedience with whom previously we have not been in touch that they may respond as their conscience, if a true conscience, may direct."

In addition, the women of the church held a special "carpet party" to pay for a carpet to cover the middle of the sanctuary. Visitors were lined up down the block and were served tea and dinner at a church member's house. The women of the church could not accept a new church building without a carpet!

Before the new building opened in 1962, their exhausted minister, the Rev. Louis Fowler, was photographed sleeping in a pew. Fowler would later joke: "In the history of Christianity, I defy you to find a single example

where the minister was the first to go to sleep in his own pew." Louis added: "Quite a few have gone to sleep since."

One June day, church members prayed that their strawberry tea would have good weather, but it poured rain all morning. The rain temporarily stopped, but the sky looked bleak. Reta Rank recalled that "just at that time, the Rev. John Locke, the United Church minister, and a former Presbyterian, Mr. Ferris, came by." The Rev. Locke cheekily told the Presbyterians that if they had gone United, they wouldn't have been rained on. Reta replied: "You haven't got enough faith. Come back at 3 p.m. The sun will be out, and we will serve you strawberries on the lawn." And that was exactly what happened!

One of the joys of preparing this exhibit was my correspondence with the daughters of former St. Andrew's minister, the Rev. Homer McAvoy. Homer was the church's minister from 1967 to 1975, and his daughters proudly shared a variety of stories and photos from that time.

Our exhibit has many other humorous stories. Above all, I would emphasize to any Presbyterian church out there—especially one with a major anniversary coming up—to consider looking into your church's past. Dig into your archives, seek out old photos, and reach out to members past and present. You never know what you might find!



The homepage for the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Aurora, virtual museum exhibit, showing pictures of the old Mechanics Hall (where the church met before the original building was built), a painting of the old church building and a photo of the current church building on the same site. The virtual exhibit can be found at [auroramuseum.ca/standrewspresbyterianchurchintro](http://auroramuseum.ca/standrewspresbyterianchurchintro). PHOTO CREDIT: AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

**BOOK REVIEWS**

# New Book Challenges Readers to Reimagine Church

By the Rev. Brendan McClenaban,  
Communications Director, Cyclical Inc.

*Deconstructing Church Planting: Reconstructing a Post-Colonial and Post-Industrial Pneumatology for the Next Generation of Churches*  
Written by Nicholas Warnes  
Cyclical Publishing, 2022

At the turn of the year, pastor Nick Warnes released *Deconstructing Church Planting*, a guidebook for those wanting to explore new ways to start churches. Warnes is the executive director of Cyclical Inc., a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles that helps Christian leaders start new initiatives, including churches.

In North America, there is a layered history of planting and growing churches en masse. But according to Warnes, people who start new churches should think twice before reaching for conventional protocols—i.e., identify a growing suburb, buy a large building and find a charismatic leader. “Starting churches in the West has devolved into a colonizing equation, reinforcing industrial paradigms,” says Warnes, a church starter himself. He is concerned that the way churches were planted in the

late twentieth centuries have led to the difficult situation many churches are in now. The limits imposed by their structure have made it hard for churches to adapt and flex to changing contexts.

As neighbourhoods and communities have grown more diverse, many mainline churches have not, leaving a cultural gap. Though he takes this disconnect very seriously, Warnes is not pessimistic. “I want to critique the broader system of church starting in North America in order to point to a more hopeful future,” says Warnes. He is not the only one bothered by the current status quo. “We’ve long had an inkling that colonial and industrial-age church planting philosophies don’t work in our current century,” says the Rev. Katie Nakamura Rengers, the staff officer for church planting in the Episcopal Church. “Nick deconstructs the adventure of starting new faith communities in a way that invites us to ask what’s truly at the heart of a community of people who chooses to follow Jesus together.”

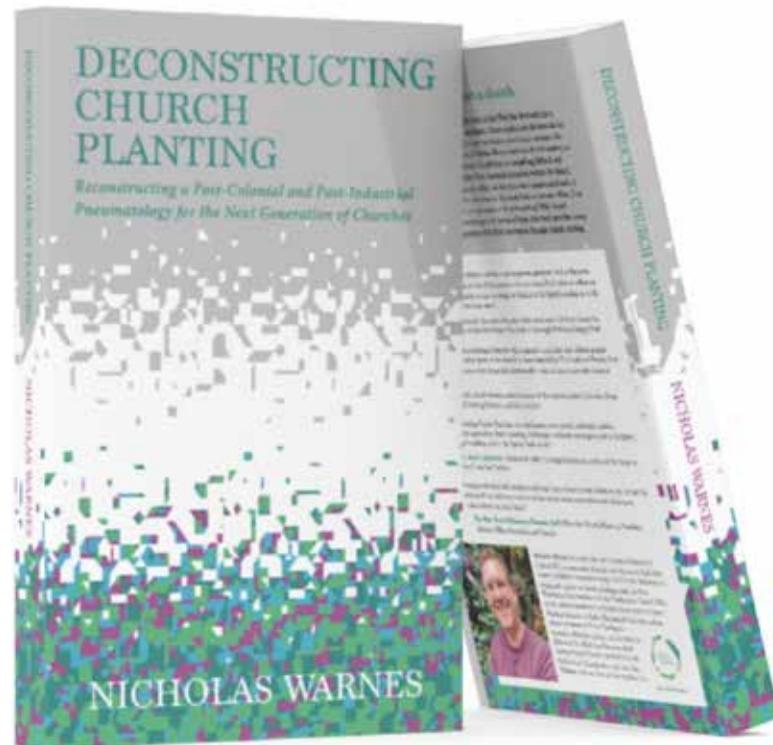
Since starting a church in Atwater Village in 2009, Warnes founded Cyclical Inc., and now serves 1,200 “faithful innovators” around the

world who are starting churches and other ministries. “Faithful innovators are Christian leaders who believe that God’s love for the world is inspiring faithful innovation through the church. They are joining in God’s work creating the future of the church today,” says Warnes.

In his book, Warnes deconstructs the way churches are started, which he claims borrows more from Henry Ford and the assembly line than Jesus. Next, the book lays out a new framework for starting churches based on the biological life cycle. Finally, the book concludes with several chapters from church starters who share their experience of starting a church.

“Warnes calls for a new season of ecclesiastical experimentation that turns away from the mechanistic and modernist approach of church planting in decades past and recovers the necessary missional emphasis on divine agency at work in the church and world,” says Dr. Ross Lockhart, Dean of St. Andrew’s Hall in Vancouver. Lockhart is the founding director of the Centre for Missional Leadership.

In the end, the book hopes to encourage new leaders to step up and start new kinds of churches. “This



is a book for anyone who has experienced the call to plant a church but hesitated because they felt like they didn’t fit the mold,” said Jen de Combe, Associate Secretary for Canadian Ministries in The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

As churches begin a new year, many of them might face the prospect of closing. Warnes challenges us to rethink this as an opportunity to bravely innovate: “When churches reach the end of their life cycle, who will start the new churches, and what

kinds of churches will they start?” You can download the first chapter of *Deconstructing Church Planting* for free at [cyclicalpublishing.com/deconstructing-church-planting](http://cyclicalpublishing.com/deconstructing-church-planting). To learn more about Cyclical Inc., visit [cyclicalinc.com](http://cyclicalinc.com).

The Presbyterian Church in Canada partners with Cyclical Inc. to offer the Cyclical PCC program to ministers, lay leaders and churches interested in exploring ways to start new ministries. To learn more, visit [presbyterian.ca/cyclicalpcc](http://presbyterian.ca/cyclicalpcc)

# A Review of Spirituality in Knitting

By Joan Cruickshank, retired registered nurse and elder, St. John’s Presbyterian Church in Medicine Hat, Alta.

*Spirituality in Knitting: sereKNITy dot calm*  
Written by Lisbeth Duncan  
July 2021

Reflective, spiritual, creative and calming are four words that I would use to describe Lisbeth Duncan’s new book, *Spirituality in Knitting*.

Lisbeth, a mother of three, grew up in Scotland, daughter of a dairy farmer, and so resided in a rural community. Her childhood was uncomplicated and happy.

At a very young age, Lisbeth learned to knit, as did generations of

family before her. Her mother taught her to pray as she knitted, which Lisbeth continues to this day.

This short book is not to be read all at once, but to be kept handy to pick up in a quiet moment and enjoy a memory or two of hers, to perhaps stimulate memories of your own.

It’s a good time to pray for comfort and peace for those who you know need it.

Knitting, while creating something beautiful and special can in itself help us to “stop and smell the roses” when life becomes hectic—crafts, whatever they may be, can do this. These times of creativity and silence can help us be more attentive to God. What a wonderful use of time it is.

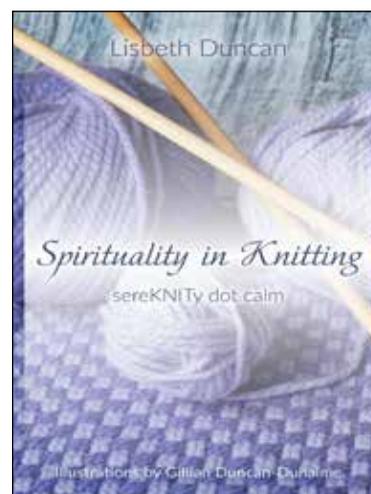
Lisbeth relates many memories of

her past life. As we read through the pages, we can recall experiences of our own, times when we felt God’s presence and God’s peace—some happy memories and some not so happy ones.

This is a gentle book, one that makes us realize that praying and asking for God’s help or involvement can come about at any time during one’s day.

The book reminds us that life doesn’t have to be frenzied. We are allowed to take time for ourselves, and listen for that “small, sweet voice of gentleness.”

Reading these spiritual reflections brings to mind Jesus’ best friends, Mary and Martha. Biblical interpreters have stereotyped these sisters,



as if one has to choose to be like Mary—attentive to Jesus, her heart centred on spiritual things—or to be like Martha, “worried and distracted by many things” (Luke 10: 38–42). Being, versus doing. Mindfulness that finds practical expression.

Lisbeth Duncan shares her thoughts from a unique practice of her faith, for she is both a Mary and a Martha!

The same woman of faith who knits wee bonnets for at-risk infants while meditating on God’s love and compassion for all creatures... is the same faithful one who has served her local congregation as an engaged elder and has moderated (a good Presbyterian term!) her home synod and convened a major council of our denomination.

No uninvolved bystander here! The author’s walk, in service with God, is nourished and inspired by her quiet times of contemplation, often with knitting needles in hand.

As Lisbeth says, “At this time in history, there is so much sadness and turmoil. This memoir seeks to provide hope, promise and tranquility, for those who need spiritual guidance as a distraction.”

So as Lisbeth knits her tiny dolls for children in stressful situations, or prayer shawls for those needing a warm, knitted “hug,” she encourages us to realize that God’s Spirit is active in all situations and times.



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## REFLECTIONS

# When Church Fosters Both Belonging and Bigotry

*The following is an excerpt from Invisible: Theology and the Experience of Asian American Women, written by the Rev. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim. Available to order on Amazon and through other popular bookstores. This excerpt appeared as an article for Sojourners at sojo.net. Used with permission.*

I first attended church at seven years old at the London First Korean Presbyterian Church in London, Ontario.

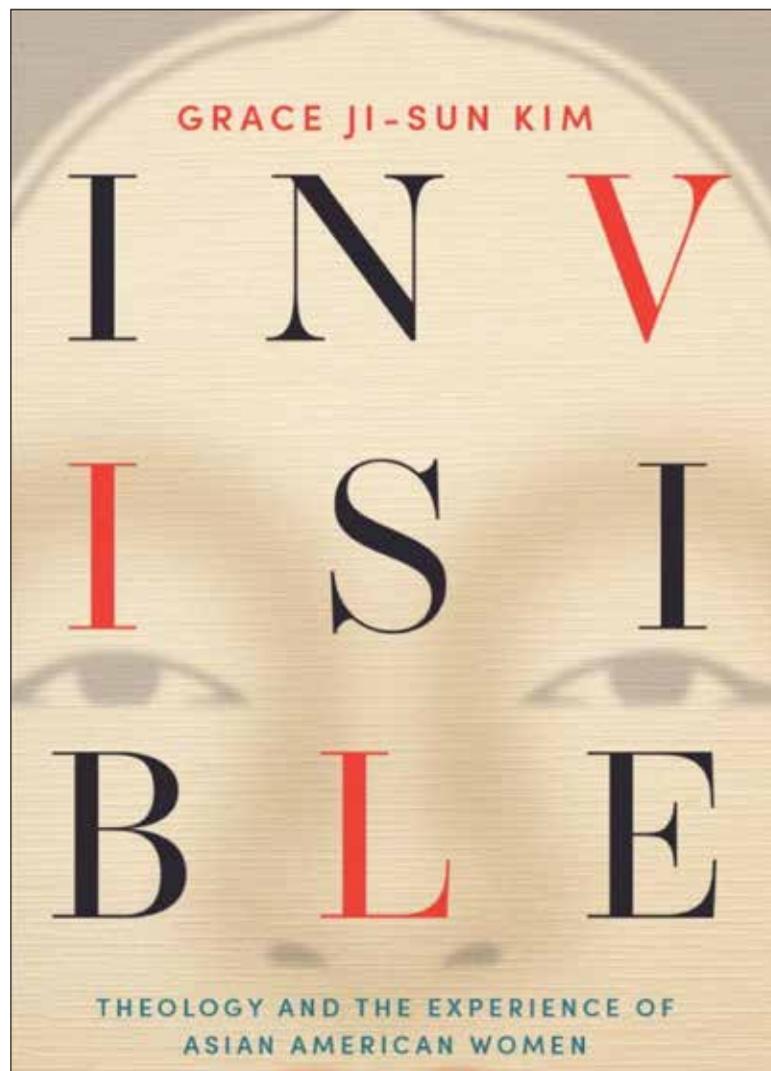
Without friends or many companions, my general uncomfortable demeanour around other kids grew into a helpless awkwardness. At school, I grew complacent in my silent existence, afraid of judgment, often going days at school without speaking at all for fear my accent or broken English would be mocked. No one saw me, and at the time, I reasoned it was better than being seen for the wrong, humiliating reasons. In my empty school days, I daydreamed. I made a habit of fantasizing about being a beautiful white woman—someone who didn't have to try to capture the attention of friends or strangers and naturally gained the adoration of others. In these dreams, I was celebrated, vibrant, and triumphant.

When I met Ms. Kim, a Korean neighbour, it seemed as though I bridged a gap between this fantasy and a more grounded reality. Young and beautiful, Ms. Kim was helpful to all the new Korean immigrants and trusted by the white people who had resided in the apartment complex for decades. My earliest memory of Ms. Kim was meeting her at the doorway of my apartment complex. I remember her long black hair shifting behind the glass as she waved at me excitedly as if she knew me. She swung open the door and called me over, and thinking I was in trouble, I wondered what I had done wrong. When I approached her, she knelt down,

her dark eyes gleaming and her pale, round face glimmering with perspiration. She asked me if I wanted to play with some other Korean kids that lived in the building; she was treating them to some cold drinks and pop-sicles at her house. It was the first time I had been invited to someone else's home. It was also the first time I played with the kids in my building complex. Ms. Kim invited us kids over several times in the week, cooking us roasted nuts and peeling large platters of pears, happily giving all of our parents a much-needed break. She encouraged all the kids in the building to become friends, and for the first time ever, I made a group of friends. This wasn't the only first with Ms. Kim however, because she also took me to church.

Surprisingly, while my parents were not Christian and had no desire to attend church, they did not stop their two young daughters from going to church with a woman who was basically a stranger to them. Back then, my parents trusted anyone who helped feed my sister and me, and they believed we would be safe with Ms. Kim. So every Sunday afternoon for two years, Ms. Kim drove us to church.

When we arrived, there were donuts. This was my first memory of church; it was the thing that drew me in and the thing that kept me coming back. Like jewels in a display case, several unassuming white boxes revealed glimmering glazed, cream-filled, jam-filled and raisin donuts. The sugar-coated twists were my favourite—I still associate Sunday mornings with the taste—so when I got the chance, I ate one right away and wrapped a second one in a napkin for Sunday School. After the service, we had a simple Korean meal of rice, various soups, some banchan (a variety of Korean side dishes made of marinated and fermented vegeta-



bles, fish or meats), and of course, lots of kimchi. During these meals, we would sit with friends in the fellowship hall and socialize. Here, I shyly began to make the friends I have known throughout my life.

For me, these simple rituals offered a rare refuge from the isolation that became commonplace in my regular life. In 1970s London, Ontario, I was faced with the constant reminder that I was alternative, novel, exotic, and peculiar. Whether I was at school or in the grocery store with my family, I felt my acute difference with every interaction. But at church, I was the norm; I was just like everyone else, speaking a hybrid lexicon of Korean and English. At church, I could be with people who looked like me, smelled like me, and ate the foods I ate. It was a deeply happy part of my childhood. Eventually, my parents saw how much we enjoyed our Sundays and our newfound dedication to this practice and decided to attend as well to see what all the fuss was about.

As I get older and reflect on it, I grow more aware of how this early formative experience of the church—riding in Ms. Kim's rickety car, licking sugar off my fingers, and sharing kimchi with other kids—formed my

outlook and perspective of church. This ritual brought me the simple gift of communion, of kinship in a time when isolation crept into my every aspect of living. It was also the beginning of my spiritual awakening, marking the road map for the future of my faith journey. Church began as a place where I sought to find connection. Eventually, it became a place where I could offer others community. As time went on, church began to define how my parents wanted my sister and me to spend our time. The church's most significant influence manifested through the impact of worship and fellowship, providing real, lasting friendships and vivid memories of coming to know God. The church is a refuge for so many who seek community—more specifically, for minorities who desire a common meeting place that encompasses fellowship, worship, family, education, culture, and economy. For many immigrants, the church is where fragmented diasporas connect; in the church, immigrants can bond over their own food, converse in their own language, and share news of employment, their native homes, and their children's education. Church becomes an extended family for immigrants who have lost or left their families and experience discrimination

in the larger community.

My parents couldn't find a place of acceptance in white Canadian society. They couldn't speak English well enough to ever have white friends with whom they could socialize, and ultimately, they never acclimated to non-Korean social life. This was not rare for many first-generation immigrants in the mid-1970s. All my parents' friends were either from church or from the wider Korean community. The church became an embracing ethnic cosmos that reminded them of their homeland—an escape from the larger community that was so distant to them. For immigrants, church can be more than a place of worship. Since we did not have any other family in Canada, the church members became our family, and church gatherings included birthday celebrations, graduation parties, and wedding receptions to which everyone was invited. In some sense, church became one large community where regular family events were extended to all members. However, just as families have complicated dynamics, power relations, and issues, so does the church.

Attending church was the beginning of my faith journey, when I began to understand myself, the world, and God. The racism, discrimination, and xenophobia embedded into my daily life were normalized, swiftly decreasing my self-worth as well as the worth of other Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese kids I grew up with. Helplessly, we tried to see ourselves reflected, but especially in each other, we found only mere echoes of insecurity. This insecurity, which should have been palliated, was deeply felt at church. The normalized discrimination—the effect of institutionalized racism and sexism—that existed at school took a different form at church, morphing into a fully mature, pious, rational kind of bigotry. Then the church was not a haven or an oasis from the difficulties of racism but a place that also practiced, exhibited, and harboured hatred.

My invisibility evolved from a form of self-protection to a more dangerous form of pacification, even comfort. It seemed to me that it was easier to exist passively. But now, I ask myself if it really was. What does it do to the human spirit to be invisible? What does it mean to be invisible? What do we lose as a society when we erase a group of people? This is the ongoing struggle I endured as a child growing up in the church: learning to recognize and validate my own value.



**Be Prepared:** New Emergency Planning Guide for Churches Available

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**REFLECTIONS**

# The Trajectory

*By the Rev. Drew Jacques,  
St. David's Presbyterian Church  
in Campbellville, Ont.*

Happy New Year!

Leading through these times certainly has its challenges as it is not just a time of great complexity, but it is also a time of great disruption. Where we are going will not be the same as where we have been.

While St. David's Presbyterian Church in Campbellville, Ont., has managed to stay open, in-person attendance for Sunday worship is quieter and online attendance fluctuates. But we recently discovered that St. David's has over 300 followers on Facebook. That is a "big" church!

It is no secret that church attendance has been declining for years—decades, in fact. The last year that any of the churches once considered "mainline churches" saw an increase in attendance was 1967.

For decades, the only way people could worship together at church was to travel to a brick-and-mortar building (limestone for the fancy churches, and wood for the rural and remote ones). Moreover, attending church was a 3- to 5-hour commitment on a Sunday morning by the time you washed and got dressed

up in your Sunday best, packed the kids in the car, drove to church, participated in worship and coffee hour, and, finally, went home.

What happened? The culture shifted. It has shifted a few times since 1967. The big shift came with the Internet. A bigger shift is happening now.

We've recently crossed the two-year mark of attending church for 40 minutes or less, at home, on the couch. However, in the world today, attending infrequently or more casually is not a sign of a lack of devotion or a lack of interest in the faith. It is just a sign of a shifted culture.

What are we going to do?

The best place to start is to check our traditional assumptions of what it means to be one of Christ's devoted followers at the door.

One does not need to show up at church in person promptly at 10 a.m. on Sunday to be part of the body. Just because someone isn't attending church frequently doesn't mean that they don't want to connect, be seen and be heard.

Social media has presented us with a new opportunity to give everybody a chance to connect, be seen and be heard. As an old rule of thumb, nobody dared say a word



during the sermon at a Sunday worship service. The future will demand less preaching and more conversation.

If you go all the way back to the days of the early church, the whole notion of attendance as a prerequisite was completely unheard of. The early Christians didn't go to church. They were the church wherever they were: in their villages, their houses, in the streets and in boats.

Jesus didn't say, "Come to church," he said, "Follow me." To

follow Jesus is to connect with others. For the better part of three years, Jesus and the disciples wandered and connected with people from place to place. They had a running conversation.

Then, over the years, being connected as a church became a matter of attendance. But today, that notion is shifting away from trying to draw people to attend, to reaching out and connecting with people where they are, with no expectation of "attendance" in return.

We need to find ways to serve each other beyond the building, new ways that will allow us to hear and listen to everyone's voice and story, whenever and wherever possible.

Where to start? I think the place to begin is to recognize that our mission is to build connections and community, by whatever means possible in the name of Christ. We can't focus on what is passing into history, we need to focus on this. For me, moving this mission forward feels more urgent than ever before.

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**Victoria, Trinity** – British Columbia

**Amherstview, Trinity** (60%-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

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**Elmvale, Elmvalle and Knox Flos** (full-time minister, 2-point charge) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Lakefield, St. Andrew's, Knox** (60%-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Orillia, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Port Credit, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Central Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Toronto, Formosan** (full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Toronto, Knox** (full-time senior minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Toronto, Mimico** (75%-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Toronto, Rosedale** (full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Toronto, York Memorial** (half-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Inverness, PQ** (full-time minister, ecumenical shared ministry)

**Montreal, Snowdon Korean** (full-time minister) – Quebec & Eastern Ontario

**Montreal, Taiwanese Robert Campbell** (full-time minister) – Quebec & Eastern Ontario

**Carp, Trinity** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

**Dundas, West Flamboro** (80%-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

**Innerkip, ON** (interim minister) – Southwestern Ontario

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

**London, Oakridge** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

**London, Trinity** (half-time stated supply) – Southwestern Ontario

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

**Thornbury, St. Paul's** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

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

## OBITUARIES

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

**The Rev. Samuel J. Stewart**  
Calgary, Alta.  
Deceased January 31, 2022

**The Rev. Robert Shaw**  
Strathroy, Ont.  
Deceased December 9, 2021

**Marjorie Grace Durnan**  
Toronto, Ont.  
Deceased December 1, 2021

**Thomas Rankine**  
North York, Ont.  
Deceased November 9, 2021

**Carol Anne Isaac**  
Truro, N.S.  
Deceased October 9, 2021

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