



Knitting the Faiths Together

By Kirk Dunn, elder at
Morningside-High Park
Presbyterian Church in Toronto

I am an actor, writer and corporate consultant, but knitting is my true love (other than my wife, my kids and fellowship-hour egg-salad sandwiches). Alongside all the things we juggle in our busy lives, I've been knitting an unusual project called *Stitched Glass*: three 5' x 8' tapestries in the style of stained-glass windows, which explore the commonalities and conflicts between the Abrahamic Faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

In 2003, I received an Ontario Arts Council Chalmers Foundation Fellowship for \$45,000, and when I cast off the last stitches of the final tapestry in a couple of months, it will have taken me 15 years to complete the project.

When I tell people about the work, they usually say something like, "Wow, that's impressive," followed by, "...and why would you do that?"

Originally, I was looking for a project to lift my hobby out of the category of craft and into the realm of textile art. I was inspired by the colours and imagery of stained-glass windows and fascinated by their original function: illustrating Bible stories for illiterate churchgoers. Having enjoyed a loving and supportive upbringing as a PK (preacher's kid), I have also struggled to square my positive experience of the church with some terrible acts perpetrated by Christians throughout history. What if I were to capture those not-so-pleasant histories along with the transcendent images of piety and holiness—the good alongside the bad? And might the medium of knitting take enough of the edge off those harsh images to allow us to explore them with less defensiveness?

As I considered the positive and negative aspects of our faith, it didn't take much to widen the lens to include other religions as well. Focusing on the Abrahamic faiths brought



Kirk Dunn, creator of *Stitched Glass* and *The Knitting Pilgrim*.

up an interesting question: why have Judaism, Christianity and Islam had such a troubled relationship at times? After all, they come from the same root, and are all religions of compassion, social justice and peace. But some of the terrible things they have done, they have done to each other. I decided to use my project to foster a conversation about what it is that knits us together, and about the fears and misunderstandings that pull us apart.

I began with Christianity—the faith I know best. I researched church history, interviewed clergy and visited the medieval stained-glass cathedrals of France. I had estimated in my Arts Council application that the entire project would take me 10 months, but by the end of the first year, I had yet to put yarn to needles. I had, however, distilled my thoughts into a stained-glass window cartoon (or full-sized sketch), rendered in



Continued on page 2

Finishing touches on the Christian window.

Page 5...
Leadership in
Times of Change

Page 7...
The Message
Turns 125

Page 11...
How to Best Use
our Buildings

Stitched Glass took 15 years to complete

Continued from page 1

pastels. I scanned a photo of that cartoon into a software program for knitters, which imposes a grid over the design. That grid became my knitting pattern.

The tapestry was too large to knit in one piece, so I split it into smaller sections in much the same way a stained glass window is partitioned by comes or lead borders. To achieve the luminescent effect of glass in the opaque medium of yarn, I knit with four to six strands of different coloured yarn at once. As the yarn twists in the knitting, the different hues give the illusion of the play of light through coloured glass. Of course, knitting like this is slow going. One reaches terminal velocity quickly, and the only thing to do is plod along, stitch by stitch. Keeping in mind that there have been our kids and a day job to juggle, it is little wonder that the first tapestry took me four years to complete, and the next two tapestries, a little over five years each.

The impetus behind *Stitched Glass* was always to get people talking: create an opportunity for interfaith understanding and empathy. But, like any story worth telling, there are always obstacles. I could not figure

out how to get the installation seen. I did not train in textile art; I don't have an agent, a gallery selling my art or a body of work. I just have one huge project that's taken me 15 years to complete.

Given that I started my career as an actor, an idea surfaced to write a one-man show that I could perform, using the tapestries as my set. The show, called "The Knitting Pilgrim," uncovers the themes of the installation, and the process of knitting for 15 years, but it also delves into my life as the product of three generations of Presbyterian ministers, and what I've learned from my parents who, together, served the church for over 60 years. It was from them that I learned about compassion and empathy. About the need to accept women and the LGBTQ community into the church. About universalism, and the idea that "everyone gets in." Starting in September 2018, we will tour the textile exhibition and play to theatres, textile and liturgical museums, and places of faith around the world.

September 11, 2001 was only two years past when I started *Stitched Glass*. Unfortunately, I needn't have been concerned that the project



Working on the Judaic window.

might become irrelevant before I'd finished my work. The aftermath of 9/11 continues, and alongside the

advent of politicians who are unfettered in their disregard for "the Other," and the proliferation of social media

with its ability to amplify knee-jerk, and sometimes hateful, commentary, our society has become more polarized and less compassionate. We have moved into an age of high-speed misinformation and away from a time of respectful, empathetic face-to-face conversation.

Are we courageous enough to have that conversation? Both the installation and play have the potential to offend, but that's not my goal. My hope is to create an opportunity to come together to talk. And in doing so, hopefully we can see past our mistakes, faults and differences to acknowledge that we are all the children of God, and are called to love one another and to live in peace, shalom and salaam.

To see more of Kirk's textile work, visit kirkdunn.com. For booking inquiries about *Stitched Glass* and *The Knitting Pilgrim*, visit ergoartstheatre.com. Kirk is thankful for the financial support of the Ontario Arts Council Chalmers Foundation, the Toronto Arts Council and The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Easter Threatens Us with Resurrection

By the Rev. Peter Bush, Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly

"Threatened with Resurrection" is a poem by Julia Esquivel who was exiled from Guatemala during the 1980s. The poem's premise is that the death squads threatened those they killed with resurrection. An excerpt from the poem:

"No, it's not the noises in the streets which does not let us sleep. It is the earthquake soon to come that will shake the world and put everything in its place. Accompany us then on this vigil and you will know what it is to dream! You will then know how marvelous it is to live threatened with Resurrection!"

(*Threatened with Resurrection*, The Brethren Press, 1982)

People around the world are haunted by the hope of resurrection. The Copts of Egypt, the Christian communities in Indonesia, the Karen

people in Myanmar, Dalit Christians in India, Christians in Somalia, and others, all live in the knowledge of the truth of Easter: death is not the end. Knowing that even while human powers threaten to take their homes, their livelihoods, their lives, the risen Jesus is greater than all the threats, greater than all the violence that might be directed against them. The resurrection of Jesus points to the reality that "final victory is assured over all evil powers which destroy and deform life, and that death, the last enemy, is conquered" (*Living Faith* 3.5.2). Death and destruction are not the end. Even when they appear to have done their worst, they have opened the door to the power of the resurrection, for God knows how to get people out of the grave. God raised Jesus Christ from the grave on Easter and God will do it again, raising people to life again. Death and destruction are themselves threatened with resurrection.

Few of us are ever confronted by people threatening to kill us. However, we are all confronted by forces

that seek to "destroy and deform life." This world, where people can work hard but do not advance, where those who are willing are unemployed, where poverty creates isolation, is threatened with resurrection, and the new order that resurrection brings. This world, where greed and selfishness are praised as good, where pride causes the comfortable to cling tightly to "their stuff," is threatened with resurrection, and the equitable sharing resurrection brings.

Few of us know the agony of having a loved one killed for their faith, but we and our loved ones have been harmed by others—called names, ostracized, discriminated against, harassed. This world, where hate runs deep and people say and do things to cause hurt, is threatened with resurrection, and the healing and restoration resurrection brings. This world, where hurts are carried for many years until they become deep bitterness and destructive patterns, is threatened with resurrection, and the forgiveness resurrection brings.



All of us face the fact that we shall die, and death may appear to have the last word. This world, even as death is present everywhere both physically and spiritually, as despair floods lives with apathy and hopelessness, is threatened with resurrection, and the new life that resurrection is. This world, where the wrong we have done causes us guilt and shame, leaving us burdened and broken by our actions, is threatened with resurrection, and the salvation

resurrection brings.

So with the church through all time we proclaim the joyous news: Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

My service as Moderator of the 2017 General Assembly concludes in June and I thank the people of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for their support, encouragement and prayers. My prayer is that we all come to know "how marvelous it is to live threatened with Resurrection!"

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Considering Church Building Strategically

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

In CBC's sitcom "Kim's Convenience," the Korean congregation worships in Queen St. East Presbyterian Church, where I serve as the interim moderator. The church's façade is unremarkable except that three dates appear on the cornerstone. This crowded plaque points to the fact that in the last 140 years the edifice has changed significantly and often. Fences and gates were removed. The entrance has been repositioned and rebuilt repeatedly, and at some point a steeple was demolished and an education wing appeared. The interior of the sanctuary has been remodeled in many ways many times. At least three of the renovations were significant enough to warrant being recorded on the cornerstone.

Churches across the country share Queen St. East's history of change. It seems there was a time when we were more comfortable altering our structures and even moving to new ones as we kept up with changing needs and circumstances. But something shifted and we seem less comfortable thinking about buildings strategically. By the time Queen St. East Church was heavily damaged by fire in the 1960s this congregation, once so used to change, made a hasty decision to repair the sanctuary without taking advantage of the situation to realize a dream to incorporate a housing project into the design. The minister quipped, "The good news is that the church caught fire, the bad news is we are going to rebuild it exactly as it was." When the PCC adopted the strategic plan (presbyterian.ca/strategic-plan) in 2016 and pledged to "explore buildings as tools that set congregations and presbyteries free to pursue faithful ministry" it signalled a new interest in buildings. While it says we will be intentional about how we think about them, it's very hard work.

We have a complex relationship with buildings. On the one hand, they can be places of vibrant worship and study as well as sanctuaries from the psychological, economic and political forces of the world. On the other hand, buildings can be a burden and distraction. We sing, "the church is not a building, the church is not the steeple, the church is not a resting

place, the church is the people," yet we expend endless amount of time, energy and money feuding over the furniture and fretting about bricks and mortar.

With a few exceptions, the Bible is not very interested in buildings. In fact, biblical faith is more mobile than stationary. It tends to value time rather than spaces. Abraham Heschel writes in *The Sabbath*, that, "Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time, to be attached to sacred events, to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year. The Sabbaths are our great cathedrals... The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space."

Celebrating time over space allowed early Judaism to be, in theory at least, nimble and mobile and also relatively free of a fixation with buildings. It's true that Moses instructed the Israelites to create the Tabernacle or tent-sanctuary that journeyed with them through the wilderness. But the Tabernacle was a portable dwelling for God, not for the people who worshipped outside. Most of Jesus's preaching, teaching and praying was done on hills, lakes and highways or

Biblical faith is
more mobile
than stationary.

in the homes of friends and strangers not in synagogues and the Temple. The great revelations in the New Testament took place at a cattle stall, on a mountain and in a garden. Jesus was baptized on a riverbank and the sacrament of Holy Communion was first celebrated in rental space. There is no reference in the New Testament to the church as a building. The first Christians gathered ecumenically with Jewish worshippers in synagogues until they weren't welcome anymore and they moved to meeting in homes, tunnels and tombs.



This Toronto congregation sold this church for redevelopment and joined a Presbyterian congregation in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry.

What of our own worship spaces? For many congregations, having a place to worship is a faithful use of resources. But too many congregations exhaust themselves and their resources maintaining outdated, out-sized and even crumbling buildings, some of which can't meet the ministry needs of today. There are many good reasons we are so attached to our churches. But sometimes, we keep them because it's difficult to know what to do with these much-loved but not much-used resources. This can be a painful situation. But when imagination is paired with courage, inspiration is born. Addressing building challenges can not only further faithful ministry but also generate energy and spark renewal. There are some creative stories in this issue of the newspaper about just some of the possibilities that can arise out of challenges.

Renewal awaits us, even in the midst of loss. One congregation sold its building, remodeled a house to use for worship and used the proceeds from the sale to fund new mission projects it had dreamed of doing. And the congregation used the move to design a beautiful new worship space that nurtured its spirituality and enhanced its worship.

We are summoned to worship God in beauty and truth. Beauty matters but it's undervalued in many of our gatherings and churches—we almost treat beauty as a vice rather than a vir-

tue. Beauty needn't be distracting, ostentatious or fussy. The Shakers, Zen artists and painters like Mark Rothko show us the arresting, centering and spiritual beauty of simplicity.

Church properties are the responsibility of congregations under the care of presbyteries. Decisions about construction must be made locally and mindful of contextual needs and resources. But the heavy work of discernment doesn't need to be done in isolation. Departments at the denominational offices have worked together to create a web page (presbyterian.ca/buildings) with resources to assist presbyteries and congregations as they look at buildings as tools for renewal. Call us if you're looking for ideas and support—we'll do all we can to help in any way we can.

The denomination is rethinking its location in Toronto for some of the same reasons as many of the congregations. In 2015, the Assembly Council gave the staff permission to investigate new locations and the possibility of renting space with other denominations, where we would remain distinct, but benefit from shared amenities. Not only would a new location free us to work more efficiently and possibly realize savings, it would also be a sign that the church is on the move, announcing that we are not entrenched settlers but the free and faithful pilgrims Christ calls us to be.



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Moderator of 143rd General Assembly:
The Rev. Peter Bush



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Presbyterians Sharing— Experiencing Generosity in Action



Participants at the recent Stewards by Design Conference in Orillia, Ont.

By Karen Plater, Associate Secretary,
Stewardship and Planned Giving

"We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly." (1 Thessalonians 1:2)

Thank you! Every year it is a blessing to witness the generosity and faithfulness of Presbyterians across Canada. It is exciting to report that congregations, individuals, estates, the Women's Missionary Society and Atlantic Mission Society gave \$6,922,178 for *Presbyterians Sharing* ministries in 2017. This is truly inspiring. It is just as inspiring to see how these gifts are helping to change people's lives.

The year 2017 brought many new beginnings. Archives launched two online exhibits for the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy, and Canada's 150th Anniversary. Their 30,000 photographs and four million pages of records serve over 3,000 individuals each year.

International Ministries sent: Dr. Nick and Becky Bauman to the United Mission to Nepal; the Rev. Blair and Vivian Bertrand to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian; Jackie Bannerman as a youth intern to the Reformed Church in Hungary; and David McIntosh to the Korean Christian Church in Japan. The Rev. Dr. Takuze Chisulo was appointed principal of Zomba Theological College—the fruition of PCC leadership development support, which allowed him to acquire his Ph.D. in South Africa. Youth in Mission celebrated 30 years, and 20 participants visited mission partners in Ghana, Hungary and Guatemala.

In Taiwan the Ngudradrekai Bible translation was finally completed after 30 years. PCC mission staff the Rev. Dr. Paul McLean celebrated this accomplishment. "Every translator's

desire is to take God's holy and unchanging Word and translate it clearly and correctly into their own mother language. By the grace of God people can now hold and read this amazing Bible."

Grants to congregations like La Communauté Chrétienne Siloé in Montreal are helping to grow congregations and change lives. The Rev. Eloi Agbanou shares, "Our congregation continues to grow and more people are experiencing the life-changing effect of faith in Christ." In addition to the 29 grants—worth over one million dollars—which support ministries across Canada, Canadian Ministries launched a new evangelism coaching network and is piloting congregational renewal programs with the hopes of building and expanding both programs in the future.

The launch of the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper connected thousands of Presbyterians across Canada. A new series of webinars equipped congregational leaders and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was marked and celebrated. Twenty-four ministry candidates attended the Guidance Conference, 18 students graduated from our theological colleges and more than 25 ministers were placed into ministries.

Healing and reconciliation continued to be an important priority for

the church. Thirty-three people visited PCC Indigenous ministries and learned about residential schools on a healing and reconciliation mission trip, 40 shared insights from their congregations and communities at a national healing and reconciliation gathering, and more than 600 people participated in six blanket exercise workshops.

In discussion and debate, the Spirit was alive at General Assembly. One commissioner said, "I was aware of the Holy Spirit's presence! So impressed, encouraged and uplifted with the quiet reverence of the worship team, the prayers of the Moderator and his attentiveness to not only history, but of pressing, present concerns." Communications improved live streaming at General Assembly so that more people could follow the proceedings.

Mission and ministry are very much alive in the world and our church—made possible by your generous gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*.

Watch for the articles on ministries and programs supported through your gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing* throughout this newspaper.



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LEADERSHIP

Leadership in Times of Change

By John-Peter Smit, Regional Minister for Congregational Health, Synod of Central Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

We don't have to look farther than the latest headlines to see that the world is in the midst of a massive crisis of leadership. It is hard to know where to start to tabulate the failings and flaws and quirks and foibles of leaders at almost every level of life. At the same time we face a crisis of followship. Social media is only one reflection of the reality that uncritical loyalty and following the leader for the good of the greater body is a thing of the past.

While we find ourselves at an unprecedented moment in history, at the same time there truly is nothing new under the sun. Moses complains to God, "Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once" (Numbers 11: 11,14,15a). At the same time, the people are grumbling against Moses saying: "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'?" (Exodus



14:11, 12a).

Leadership is difficult. Followship may be even more difficult.

None of this would matter if all was going well in our churches. It isn't. Many of us remain nostalgic for a time when it genuinely was simpler and easier for many in this land. Those days are gone and the strategies and objectives of that era, for the most part, are no longer viable.

So, what to do?

1. Choose wisely. Not all leaders are worth following. We live in an age where, even in the church, discernment is lacking. Not every plan makes sense and not every plan matches our context. As we consider our leaders it is worth remembering that character matters and fruits matter, especially the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23). We often get so caught up in plans and schemes that we fail to consider the significance of habits of faith.

2. Follow carefully, but follow.

Too often we ask for change, while reserving the right not to change. The simple truth is this: we may not know anything about the Promised Land, but we can't stay in Egypt. There are many maxims and principles around this, let me just state a couple:

- If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.
- You can't have growth without change and you can't have change without conflict.

No one (except God) knows what the future will bring; no one (except God) can tell you with authority what the church will look like in even five years. However, with certainty, I can tell you that it will not be what it was and it will not be what it is now. Following means stepping out in faith, knowing that while we may not fully know where we will end up, we only need to travel one step at a time.

3. Remember that it is God's church. On the day after Pente-

cost, not one disciple, not one follower of Jesus had the faintest notion of what was coming for this group of believers who as of yet couldn't even call themselves a church. What God had in mind was so much greater than anyone could imagine. This has not changed. As we face a future that is simultaneously uncertain, yet fully in God's hands, perhaps our greatest challenge is to remember that our first calling is to live for the praise and worship of God. As we accomplish this, by prayer, by immersing ourselves in God's word, by experiencing and sharing God's work in our lives and by worship, we can't help but remember who we are and who is truly leading us!

Leadership author Barbara Kellerman says in her blog that time of stress either make us smarter or more stupid. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes: "Now to him

who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21). In these times of change and uncertainty may we be smarter to remember that what God has in mind for us truly is more than we could ever ask for or imagine!

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Come and celebrate!

Meet the Moderator Nominees



The Rev. Daniel Cho



The Rev. Peter S. Han



The Rev. Mark R. McLennan

Three names appear on this year's ballot for moderator of the 2018 General Assembly: the Rev. Daniel Cho, the Rev. Peter S. Han and the Rev. Mark R. McLennan. Read their bios and an interview with each nominee at presbyterian.ca/moderator-nominees-2018. The Committee to Advise the Moderator will count the ballots on April 3, 2018. The 2018 General Assembly will convene Sunday evening, June 3, 2018, in Waterloo, Ontario.

KNOX COLLEGE 174th CONVOCATION

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Convocation Hall, 7:30 p.m.
University of Toronto

Convocation address by

Dr. Frank M. Yamada

Executive Director of the
Association of Theological Schools

Reception to follow at the College.

All are welcome!



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JUSTICE

Restorative Justice Symposium

By Rebecca Bromwich, President of the Church Council on Justice and Corrections and member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ottawa

The 2017 Restorative Justice Symposium took place November 19–21 in Ottawa in conjunction with Restorative Justice Week. In no small part, thanks to the generous contribution of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the event was a success that gives great reason for optimism for the future of innovation toward a more compassionate justice system in Canada.

It was an invigorating and fulfilling experience to be on the organizing committee for this year's National Restorative Justice Symposium in Ottawa. The symposium was co-hosted by Ottawa's Collaborative Justice Program (CJP) and the Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC) in partnership with



Rebecca Bromwich served as MC for the National Symposium. Chris Ford is a member of the Board of Directors of the Collaborative Justice Program, co-host of the symposium.

Corrections Canada. Working collaboratively, an organizing committee composed of volunteers from restorative justice NGOs, such as COSA (Circles of Support and Ac-

countability) Canada and the Ottawa Restorative Justice Network, as well as Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, among others, set in motion a year of planning that came to fruition with the Symposium. While the Symposium is an annual event, it had not taken place in Ottawa since 2004, and holding the event in the National Capital Region afforded access to parliamentarians, judges, policy-makers and civil servants in a move that is unrivalled in other regions. Registration for the Symposium filled up several weeks in advance of it taking place, and a lengthy wait-list was compiled. The conference was a runaway success by all accounts.

Speakers at the Symposium included Ontario's Attorney General Yasir Naqvi, Supreme Court of Can-



The Hon. Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety.

ada Justice Malcolm Rowe, Federal Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale, Canadian Bar Association President Kerry Simmons and Algonquin Elder Claudette Commanda, as well as hundreds of practitioners, academics, thought-leaders and theologians from Canada, New Zealand, The United Kingdom and France.

The Symposium provided a space for contemplation, collaboration, collegiality and the development of new energy for moving forward with innovation toward new ways of doing justice in Canada. It was also the venue where Minister Goodale announced a multi-million dollar commitment to support COSA National, and where that new national organization—providing support for local restorative approaches to ensure public safety and the accountability



Elder Claudette Commanda, an Algonquin and member of Kitigan Zibi First Nation, provided the welcome to the traditional territory for the National Symposium on Restorative Justice.

of sex offenders—was launched.

As CCJC President, I was able to bring greetings, lead prayer and make visible a PCC presence as co-host of the Gala. It was truly exciting to be in a space where secular, legal and policy work was conducted alongside faith-based discussions and interfaith and ecumenical worship. The Symposium offers a glimpse of inspiring possibilities for a future where church and state are separate but complementarily engaged in the crucial work of empathy, crime prevention, community healing and safety.



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MISSION

The Message Turns 125

By Joan C. Cho, editor of
The Presbyterian Message,
Atlantic Mission Society



"On a wintry February afternoon in 1893," *The Presbyterian Message* was born.

A committee met in Truro, Nova Scotia, to implement a resolution made at the previous annual meeting of what was then called the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. It had been decided to publish a monthly leaflet so that information about missionary work might be better known.

The result of that first meeting was an eight-page publication costing one cent a month, to be known as "The Message." Auxiliaries soon relied on the little paper for study material and children and youth leaders found encouragement and program ideas.

The first editor, Mrs. Robbins, reported the scope of the little magazine two years after it was first published, writing that, "This little *Message* goes from the Atlantic to the Pacific, across Canada, to England, and Scotland, across Southern seas to the New Hebrides, to Trinidad, and we say it reverently, the lonely missionary in Korea welcomed it as perhaps none other did, as a Message from the Home Land."

One hundred and twenty-five years later, Presbyterians are still getting *The Message*. The name of the Society—now the Atlantic Mission Society—and that of the magazine have changed over the years but the purpose remains the same.

In 1925, *The Message* was briefly lost to the newly formed United Church of Canada. It soon reappeared with the familiar masthead but was re-

named as *The Presbyterian Message* and "...thus preserving a name dear to us all, as well as reaffirming our allegiance to the Church of our fathers," the WMS (Women's Missionary Society) Board had decided. (Nevertheless, it is still known to every AMS member as "The Message.")

The list of editors is one made up of women who cared deeply about missions, each making a lasting contribution. **Charlotte (Geddie) Harrington**, editor for 10 years, was the daughter of pioneer missionaries, John and Charlotte Geddie who served in Vanuatu. **Mary Macnab** saw the Society through the difficult days of a world at war and Church Union. **Ethel Shaw** and **Mabel Bannerman** edited the paper during World War II. Editors **Elizabeth MacDonald** and **Sara Cunningham** were both deaconesses and Sara had been a missionary in Guyana. **Joan Posno** and **Janice Carter** brought *The Message* into the computer age.

The affection early subscribers held for *The Message* is very much alive today. Thanks be to God for blessing this mission endeavour and for guiding so many individuals through the years to bring us to this anniversary.

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INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Honoured by the Reformed Church in Romania

Written by the Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace, former Associate Secretary for International Ministries (2003–2012)

In December 2017, the Rev. Glynis Williams, Associate Secretary for International Ministries, and I were in the office of Bishop Istvan Csury, being warmly welcomed to Romania, and briefed on the circumstances surrounding the award that we were there to accept at their General Assembly on behalf of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It was humbling to listen to Bishop Csury speak, with evident emotion in his voice, about

the reasons for this unexpected honour. The Bishop told us that on two very crucial occasions, the Reformed Church in Romania was in a desperate situation and had sought help from many different sources, including other Reformed Churches in Europe, and had been turned down by all of them. When they had lost all hope and had begun to despair of any solution, International Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada came through with help.

Janos Antal, the Ecumenical Officer of the Reformed Church in Romania, Királyhágómellék District, later



The Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace (back row, left) and the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams (back row, right).

expanded on Bishop Csury's words. During the Communist government in Romania (1948–1989), the Reformed Church suffered intense persecution. Church institutions, including more than 500 Reformed Church Schools, were confiscated, and church life was restricted to worship. Since the collapse of the regime in 1989, the Reformed Church in Romania has striven valiantly to rebuild its ministries, and has made much progress. Almost thirty years later, neither the Church nor the country has fully recovered from the damage during the period of Communist rule.

We learned that the government of Romania, which had returned the Lorantffy Zsuzsanna Reformed Church High School in 2003, was threatening to take it back because the Reformed Church had not been able to raise any funds to begin repairs. If the school had been confiscated, any chance of recovering any of the other buildings would have been lost as well.

We were told that the arrears owed to the Reformed Seminary in Cluj-Napoca were greater than I realized when I was the Associate Secretary of International Ministries. Due to a lack of funds, the Seminary was neither able to heat the dormitory, where the theological students lived, nor provide meals. During the Communist Era, when there were only two or three students at a time, The Reformed Church in Romania had been able to provide for its students. But, after the collapse of Communism, when the call went out for students to serve many vacant Churches, more than one hundred students applied. The impoverished and struggling Reformed Church was completely overwhelmed. Thanks to the generosity of a member of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, who had remembered the mission work of the PCC in their will, the situation was saved, and today those once cold



Wall art at the Lorantffy School, which is supported by The Presbyterian Church in Canada through International Ministries.

and hungry students are ministering to churches in villages and towns throughout Romania.

It was very humbling for Glynis Williams and me to experience the very warm and gracious hospitality of the Reformed Church in Romania, to hear Bishop Csury's words of thanks for the partnership in mission between the Reformed Church in Romania and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and to hear about and see for ourselves the incredible blessings that have come out of this partnership. It was also very humbling to receive the Pro Ecclesia Award (Latin meaning "For the Church") at the General Assembly in Szatmár. I received this award because, as the former Associate Secretary for International Ministries, I was able to act as the human face of International Ministries in the decisions made to provide needed assistance at a crucial time in the history of the Reformed Church in Romania. Glynis Williams accepted the same award in the name of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, because, as the present Associate Secretary for International Ministries, she is the current human face



of the PCC for the Reformed Church in Romania today.

Funding for the Lorantffy School and Samuel Home continue to be provided. The Church in Romania is so grateful for the partnership in mission between the two Churches, and wishes to say thank-you and God bless you to each and every member of the PCC, for all that our church does in mission in the name of Jesus Christ.

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INTERNATIONAL

Reflections on Life Lived Under Occupation

By the Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon

Writer's note: I would like to thank the editorial staff of *Presbyterian Connection* for their invitation to write about our recent experience in Palestine/Israel during the time of Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

"The thief comes only to steal and to kill and destroy; I have come that they might have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10 NIV).

My husband, Noel, and I recently returned to Canada after having spent a month just before Christmas in an ecumenical centre in Jerusalem about 10 minutes from the Israeli military checkpoint and the apartheid wall that separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem. What an eventful time to be there. Because of President Trump's ill-advised and ill-timed decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, announcing at the same time plans to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv, it was not a "silent night in Bethlehem." Young Palestinian men, frustrated by a lifetime of setbacks in the establishment of a promised Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, began to burn tires and throw stones at well-armed Israeli soldiers. The result was predictable. Yet, what amazed us was the scene in Bethlehem's Manger Square throughout this troubled time. Just in front of the church, the place where it is believed Jesus was born, a Christmas tree stood tall, full of lights twinkling in the winter darkness. A manger scene was prominent. In Bethlehem, where Christians are a minority, Christians and Muslims were determined to affirm hope and peace amid turmoil. Experiencing such an indomitable human spirit, Noel and I felt a sense of security and acceptance each and every time we walked the streets of Bethlehem in spite of having to go through the Israeli checkpoint to get there. While it has been an experience that we will cherish, it is also a time of deep sadness for us.

We cherish this time because of the hope that miraculously continues to live within so many of the Palestinian people. Because of their resiliency, their determination to re-

main in the land of their ancestors who have inhabited Palestine for thousands of years, their complete removal has not been possible, even though Israel has tried in every way to get them to leave. Ilan Pappé, one of Israel's own historians, now living in Britain, has named this "ethnic cleansing," a policy which usually involves force and includes the erasure of all evidence that the previous inhabitants had ever existed.

Yet despite the now 50 years of Israeli occupation and how it limits fullness of life, so many Palestinians continue to seek the best for their children, to work together for a life of dignity. They established a new university in Bethlehem, Dar Al Kalima, where young people through photography, ceramics, theatre and art reaffirm their rich heritage in this land and renew their identity as Palestinians. They work to rehabilitate children as young as—and even younger than—14 who have been interrogated and tortured in Israeli military prisons. Muslim and Christian Palestinians march and pray together to protest Israeli limitations on their freedom to worship. They support each other when the Israelis announce yet another extension of the now more than 700 km long apartheid wall that will further separate Palestinian family members from one another, their olive trees or the graves where their ancestors are buried. With the help of young people from around the world and their Jewish supporters, annually Palestinians plant new olive trees, replacing trees vandalized by Israeli settlers or bulldozed to clear the ground for yet another Israeli settlement. Many other Jewish groups, albeit still a minority within Israeli society, work in partnership with Palestinians seeking justice and peace. These include, among a growing number, groups such as Rabbis for Peace, B'Tselem, Breaking the Silence, Machsom, Zochrot and Gush Shalom.

We were privileged to visit numerous initiatives, where Christians and Muslims work together to bring life into situations that could otherwise be death dealing. Despite the silence and avoidance of the international Christian community and the absolute support of Israel by Christian



The Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon (back row, second from left) and Douglas Scott Proudfoot, Representative of Canada to the Palestinian Authority, (back row, fifth from left), and the group at Canada Mission, Ramallah, October 2017.

Zionists, Palestinian Christians continue to cling to the hope that we will intervene, that Christian churches around the world will renew their commitment to justice and boldly come to their assistance. Surely their plea is something, which we as Canadian Christians, with our history of residential schools and the stories of abuse and death in them to say nothing of the ongoing problems on reserves and the unjust treatment of First Nations People in

mitment to a just and lasting peace, boldly breaks international law and has been found to be duplicitous—a duplicity that has significantly strengthened the hand of the Israeli government to move ahead in its plan to remove the Palestinians—both Christian and Muslim—from Jerusalem. Where can the Palestinians turn for an honest international broker or, even more devastating, what is there left to broker? We have seen first-hand the increasing num-

ishing homes and leaving families homeless. Presently, over 600,000 Israeli settlers illegally occupy Palestinian land in the West Bank. As an incentive to "settle," Israelis are given a disproportionate percentage of the precious water supply, excellent schooling, no taxes, settler-only roads, etc. We have seen first-hand their increasing boldness, many with semi-automatic weapons slung casually over their shoulders. Perhaps this is a good time to remind ourselves that international law, namely the Geneva Convention, Article 49, makes it illegal for any state to displace those who have occupied it and replace them with their own civilian population. In so many ways the Israeli government, contradicting the democratic values it professes to uphold, simply disregards international law and is not effectively called to account, not only because of the veto the United States holds in the UN Security Council, but also through the silence of so many countries, such as Canada.

"I have come that they might have life and have it to the full." What does that mean in the face of 50 years of Israeli occupation and ongoing oppression? For the Palestinian Christians it means building and then building again with dignity the fabric of their lives, working peacefully to end occupation. It also calls upon us who profess the same Lord and Saviour to remember that his incarnation was lived under occupation, and to follow his lead in boldly proclaiming fullness of life for all and challenging forces that deny life.



"I hope that more people will converse and find the facts, understand the ideology, and convey the impact of what is happening to the Palestinians... Finding courage is a choice that requires action, inspiring others." — Laura Lee Robertson, elder at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hillsburgh, Ont., participant in the PCC-led 2016 Moment of Truth mission study tour.

terms of schooling and safe water, etc., should have at least some basic understanding and empathy. Why are we silent when we know first-hand the pain and suffering that such oppression brings?

Noel and I wonder what is left for Palestinians when the country that has portrayed itself as an unbiased negotiator for over two and a half decades, expressing com-

ber of Israeli settlements ruled illegal under international law (but euphemistically referred to by Israel as neighbourhoods) surrounding every West Bank town and city, forming a choker-like necklace. Over 200,000 Israeli settlers occupy Palestinian land in East Jerusalem, having moved there after the Israeli government displaced community after community of Palestinians, demol-

BUILDINGS

Changing Places: Architecture and Our Missional Identity

Based on a lecture by the Rev. Blair D. Bertrand at Knox College in Toronto, February 2017

Winston Churchill quipped, “We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us” (House of Commons, October 28, 1944). Here lies a profound challenge for the PCC. We built Christendom buildings, shaped them in particular ways, imbued them with our understanding of who God is and who we are in relation to God and they continue to shape us as a Christendom people. The problem is, we don’t want to be a Christendom people. We say that we want to be a more missional people. So, how can God shape us into a missional people within Christendom buildings?

Consider a not uncommon church in eastern Canada. Call it St. Andrew’s. The sanctuary, still in use, was built in 1880. Like many church buildings of the time, it was situated on a main street corner with a tall, stone tower. Inside is a massive Akron-style sanctuary. Attached is a hall, a simple large room with a stage. This building clearly states that God is powerful, a mighty fortress. It follows that God’s people are also powerful, or at least secure, once gathered. Worship is the most important aspect of church life because, at the outset, the only “room” was the sanctuary. This church is immovable. It is the very opposite of a liquid asset and this is recognized by everyone, including the province which has designated it as a historical site. The slate roof will stay a slate roof until Jesus returns.

This is Christendom: a mighty fortress strengthening a gathered people, eternal and immovable. And this is great. Until the world changes. The PCC has allowed Christendom to blind us to the fact that we don’t just worship a fortress God but a God who is on the move. The goal of Christian life isn’t to be powerful or secure, but to be sent and to witness.

When we read the Gospels, we see a pattern of God calling disciples together around Jesus Christ, then equipping them through teaching, often in open spaces like Mat-

thew’s mountain or Luke’s plain, so that they might go out into the world to witness to him. Worship leads to equipping that culminates in sending. We have known this for a long time, but have we seriously considered that our buildings do not give shape to our beliefs?

This is the dilemma we face. How do we transcend the limits of our space to add sending as a fundamental mark of the church? Some will argue that we should sell all the buildings and get down to the real ministry of Jesus. This line of thinking sounds superspiritual but is actually heretical and wrong-headed. Getting rid of and neglecting the material world is a form of well intentioned Gnosticism, a heresy that neglects the reality that God created us with material bodies. We will always exist within physical space because we are physical beings. We must pay attention to buildings because they will always shape us.

If we want to become more missional, sent out as witnesses into the community, then we should spend more time and more money on buildings, because it is the buildings that are shaping us to be less missional in the first place. Consider St. Andrew’s again. Like casinos and malls, which are designed to have clear doors on the outside but are difficult to exit, St. Andrew’s small doors and cramped

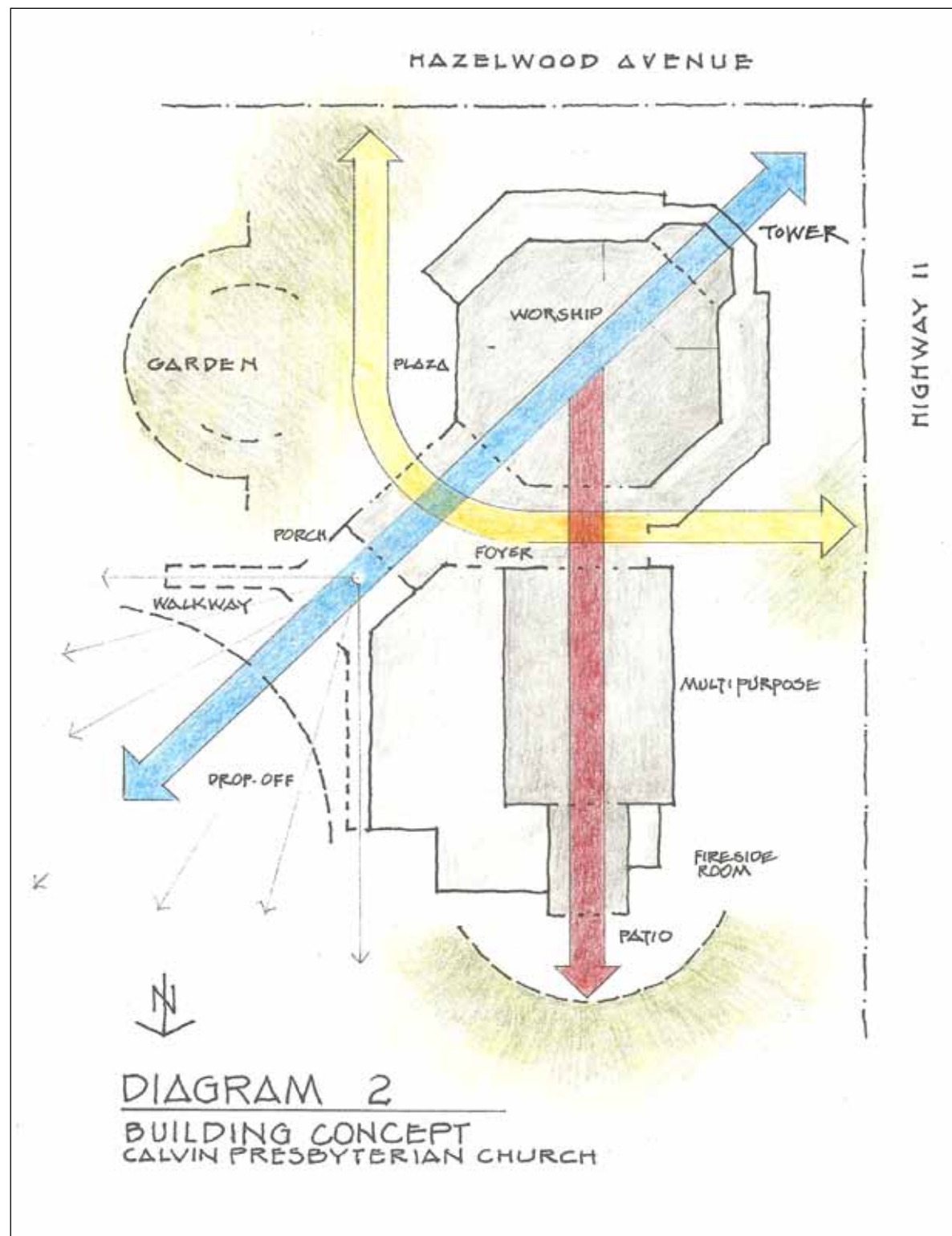
of the leadership in the world will not alter the fact that people find it difficult to get out the door. The problem is not just in our minds, it is in our buildings. To change our mindset

at risk and open up the possibility for deeper change. The old entranceway propped up and contained theological understandings, all of which are now in question because the doorway has changed.

Thankfully not all PCC buildings are like the semi-fictional St. Andrew’s depicted here. There are good news stories, big and small, across the denomination. The congregation that I previously served, Calvin Presbyterian (Abbotsford) built a new building that aligned with their very missional statement of Worship, Live, Share. The statement recognizes the positive heritage of Christendom in the “Worship” but then incorporates the equipping and sending in “Live” and “Share”. I inherited this statement as well as the architect who turned it into concrete plans. The new building is built on these three axioms—Worship, Live and Share.

Make no mistake. This process was hard and the difficulties con-

tinued. I hold up the congregation and its building as one model, but I’m not holding up my leadership in that process. There are no easy road maps for the PCC to help its congregations make this transition. Deep change will always involve charting new territory and risk. When we grieve the loss of old aspects of our buildings we are really facing the loss of an understanding of God. The faithful people of Calvin have had to face the implications of moving from the security of Christendom to accept the risk of a missional mindset. The challenge for the rest of us is to face the reality that our buildings shape us for a time and place, Christendom, that is no longer applicable. The hope is that we can change our places so that we become dynamic witnesses to Jesus Christ.



“If we want to become more missional... then we should spend more time and more money on buildings...”

entranceways make it difficult for the congregation to leave worship. Sending—leaving the building into the community as witnesses of Jesus Christ—is actually hampered by architecture.

Aspects of change management could help solve the problem, but all

will require us to change our buildings. Renovation and redevelopment projects are not the result of the change we want. Rather, they are catalysts for the change. The simple fact that a congregation rips out the entranceway and redesigns it is to place the stability of the congregation

BUILDINGS

How to Best Use Our Buildings

By Jen de Combe and Emily Hill,
Canadian Ministries

As congregations listen to how God is calling them into greater relationship with their communities, the question of how to make best use of church buildings comes up more frequently. For many congregations, buildings are their greatest assets, but, for others, the responsibilities for maintaining a building has become a barrier to ministry.

*“Don’t be afraid
to dream big and
allow your church
room to grow.”*

—The Rev. Jim Smith

Central Presbyterian Church, Vancouver

With a vision for service, Central Presbyterian Church in Vancouver made a bold decision to redevelop their land in partnership with Galilee Presbyterian Church, to create a large complex that includes living space for seniors and low-income housing as well as gathering space for the congregations and community groups.

Building projects require years of praying and planning before the first stone is laid. The Rev. Smith has these words of wisdom for any church looking to redevelop their church building:

- Connect with the community: Churches are at their best when their ministry is directed outwards toward the community. It’s important to consult with the community at every point in the redevelopment process and to take input seriously. Ministry is more likely to be a blessing in the community when it is connected to the people and the needs in the area it serves.
- Communicate: It is impossible to over-communicate your plans within the congregation and to presbytery. People are more likely to embrace the vision and less likely to perpetuate misinformation when there is a lot of clear information.
- Be clear about your vision and expectations: Building projects invariably require partners, whether it be developers or another congregation; the clearer you are upfront about long-term hopes and expectations, the

healthier and more sustainable your partnership will be into the future.

- Consult and hire the best lawyer and architect you can: Building projects are complex and require expertise that most congregations do not possess. Professional advice helps protect the interests of congregations and avoids unnecessary complications.

This inspiring project is entering the final stages and the two congregations, both of which are planning to move into their space in June 2018, are beginning to see the satisfying results of dreaming big. As construction workers recently gathered for a BBQ in the newly completed Community Interface Room, the packed tables, buzz of voices and sight of hungry people being fed was a reassuring vision for many of the good things yet to come.

*“How can we find
ways to make our
church building a
blessing?”*

—The Rev. Janet Taylor

Westmount Presbyterian Church, Edmonton

Even after opening the doors to their new worship and gathering space, which now shares a building with a much needed social housing complex in Edmonton, members of Westmount Presbyterian Church continue to ask how their building can be a blessing to their neighbours. After

years of praying, planning, partnering and pursuing a collaborative redevelopment project that will be opening soon to provide homes for people living on low incomes and refugee families, the congregation is leaning deeper into one of their core values: “We are here for the people of our community and the world.”

The Rev. Janet Taylor explains that, as the congregation returns from a wilderness period in its life—meaning that it was without a stable church home—they will focus their attention on rooting their identity in Christ and recommitting to journeying with each other and their community. After all, it was their courageous response to Christ’s call to reach out to their neighbours that brought about this ambitious project and will allow them to continue growing into the future. The Rev. Taylor encourages any congregation re-evaluating the use of their buildings to ask themselves and their neighbours how their building could contribute to developing a healthy, vibrant, connected and welcoming community. In other words, we need to ask ourselves how our buildings can contribute to building the Kingdom of God.

To learn more about the Westmount project, see page 22.

Considering a church building project? Have a building project on the go? Canadian Ministries wants to hear from you. Email canadianministries@presbyterian.ca or call 1-800-619-7301. For resources to help your congregation consider a building project, go to presbyterian.ca/church-building-resources



Construction at Central Presbyterian Church in Vancouver.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Design Team Shares Ideas for General Assembly

By the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls,
Chair, General Assembly Design Team

If you have or anyone you know has ever been a commissioner to a General Assembly, you know it is a chance to participate in the highest court of our denomination—weighing decisions that will affect our church's life together and work in the world for Jesus Christ. But you may also know that sitting through an Assembly can be both inspiring and tiring. How might this important annual gathering be more efficient

and effective? What practices might encourage the Assembly to worship and work together with respect and appreciation for each other in our calling as Christ's church? These are the questions animating the General Assembly Design Team, a representative group of lay people and ministers from across the country, working together with the clerks and senior administrator from the General Assembly Office.

The team's stated tasks focus on providing the following: overall direction for the location; format and



Opening worship at the 2017 General Assembly.

themes of future Assemblies; effective and efficient means to address business; pulling together working groups for worship and any special events, and; supporting the General Assembly Office and local arrangements committees in preparing for and executing the General Assemblies. Reporting to the Assembly Council, the team has been meeting both through conference calls and in-person every few months for the past year.

Based on team member observations when attending the Assembly and careful reading of evaluations from commissioners to past Assemblies, we noted that the reduction in the length of Assemblies has resulted in a rigorous schedule of sederunts with few breaks. That intense agenda contrasts with the elements commissioners say they find most valuable about Assembly: fellowship, international and ecumenical guests, worship and young-adult and seminary student presentations. This has led the team to imagine ways to help accomplish the business of the Assembly, while creating more spaciousness of timing and a more humane schedule.

Some ideas are simple: include time for mini-breaks during a sederunt for stretching or a song; make appropriate use of table discussion groups to give more people a chance to speak; encourage reports that use visuals and sound to appeal to different learning modes,



Voting at the 2017 General Assembly.

and; format reports to provide a concise report summary that will include a brief introduction to each recommendation. Still other suggestions will encourage the Assembly to surround all its work with times for worship and song, putting into practice ideas from the traditions of our faith—praying and rejoicing continually, glorifying and enjoying God in all we do.

The General Assembly made a decision in 2016 to use one location for Assembly three years in a row to control costs and encourage efficiencies in planning. Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo will be the site as of 2018. This inspired the team to think about developing a three-part theme to provide continuity. We're hoping the theme also coordinates with the key ideas from the Strategic

Plan: visionary leadership; empowering resources and relational connections. A theme and logo for this year are in the works.

The team also spent time talking through how the business of Assembly is accomplished. We noted in our own experience, and on the basis of commissioner feedback, that our current process of decision making with its structures of motions occasionally feels adversarial. We wondered, can we create an atmosphere where more commissioners can speak and in which a more inclusive process of discernment of the will of Assembly is used? We reviewed a report prepared by the Clerks about a consensus decision-making model now used by the World Communion of Reformed Churches, as well as other church bodies, as an alternative to a process of motions and debate. We then used the consensus process during one of our own meetings to experience it first-hand. The team is working with Assembly Council to suggest that General Assembly this year take time to learn about consensus decision making and then sample that process in one of the sederunts at the 2018 General Assembly.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Regina Indian Industrial School

By Mary Jane Hanson, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Saskatoon

The Regina Indian Industrial School (1891–1910): Historical Overview and Chronological Narrative
Written by Douglas Stewart*

This well-written book, based on extensive archival research in Canadian libraries and archives, will help the reader understand Indian Industrial Schools in Canada. While many readers will benefit from reading about the Regina Indian Industrial School (RIIS), operated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, I recommend this book for senior high school and university students.

From archival documents, reports and entries from the school's newspaper, the Progress, we read about the opening of the school in 1891, hiring of the first staff, securing the first students and other events until

the school's closure in 1910. We catch a glimpse of student life as the students learned various trades, including farming, printing, harness and shoe making for boys and homemaking and nursing for girls. Stewart's research also highlights what the PCC hoped to accomplish in operating industrial schools. One example is in a letter from Principal McLeod (1891–1900) to the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs. McLeod writes: "...all influences should be used to break up the reservation and tribal systems" and that "we teach our pupils that they are to continue to love their parents, but perhaps they can show love in a more tangible way by becoming useful industrious citizens side by side with the white man...it [being] their duty to God and the Government to become such persons" (p. 56–57). Great emphasis was placed on religious training,

resulting in 72 boys and girls (p. 64) being admitted to the PCC by profession of faith from 1891–1898.

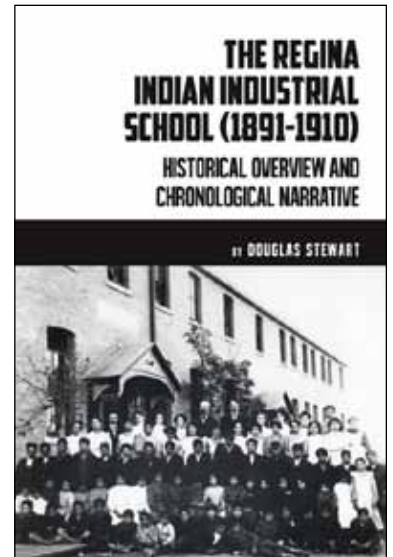
The Proper Name Index will assist individuals looking for specific students and Appendix IV indicates the First Nations from which RIIS students came. Appendix II lists the names of students who died while at school and are likely buried in the School Cemetery, which was given a municipal heritage designation in 2016, followed by provincial heritage status in July 2017.

It is estimated that 20% of RIIS students who were enrolled between 1891–1910 died (p. 30), many from tubercular diseases, while at school or shortly after being discharged. Principal Sinclair (1901–04) believed that student death and illness was the main reason for parental reluctance to send students to RIIS. In 1903, the Reverend W. S. Moore, a missionary at Mistawasis condemned the

RIIS citing reports of students being abused. Further, Moore noted that when he served at Muscowpetung near Fort Qu'Appelle he sent 20 children to the RIIS, 17 of whom "died at the school or left it in a dying condition" (p. 79).

According to Senator Murray Sinclair, former chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "All children buried in this or in any other residential school cemetery in Canada—regardless of their race or ethnicity—are deemed to be casualties of the government's residential school system" (p. 32–33).

Prior to reading this book I was unaware of the extent of illness and death in residential and industrial schools. I believe that we in the churches should erect memorials on the school grounds or cemeteries with as many names of children available so that the children are never forgotten. We might also con-



sider similar ways to honour the First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities that sent children to the schools, never to see them again.

***Douglas Stewart is a member of the PCC's Healing and Reconciliation Advisory Committee. This book is available to order through Benchmark Press.**

Forbearance in the Midst of Conflict

By the Rev. Peter Bush, Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly

Forbearance: A Theological Ethic for a Disagreeable Church
Written by James Calvin Davis, Eerdmans, 2017

We live in a deeply divided world of radical opposites, where opponents describe each other with highly charged language. As James Calvin Davis writes in *Forbearance*: "You either hate women or like to kill babies. You are either a hawk or a peacenik. You either prefer owls to people or condone raping the environment." Harsh language, and the judgements implied by that language, are present not only in North American society but also in the church. That the church is a place of intense debate is not new, Davis argues, noting the range of items addressed in the New Testament, which created the heated debate. The New Testament's solution to these debates is often not to declare "the answer," but rather to call for forbearance. Ephesians 4:2 calls the followers of Jesus to "all hu-

mility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love." Conflict and acrimonious debate lies behind this verse. If everything was peace and light there would have been no reason for these words. We tell people to be patient when they are impatient, not when they are being patient. Church members were called to bear with one another in the midst of conflict.

Davis mines the New Testament for the character traits that make up forbearance: humility; patience and hope; wisdom; faithfulness; and friendship.

Humility begins by recognizing that God is God and we are not God. God knows the answers and while our knowledge is limited. All of our speech about a way ahead must be said with the awareness that we do not know all the answers. If we do not know, then our present view may be wrong. Humility makes it possible for us to have our minds changed.

Patience accompanies hope, as Davis demonstrates. Hope feeds patience: hope that a way through the conflict is possible; hope that the

division will end; hope that God will eventually bring about the reign of God to full bloom. Such hope makes patience possible—learning to wait on God. Hope also makes possible patience with opponents, believing that God's reign will bloom in them as well, in God's time.

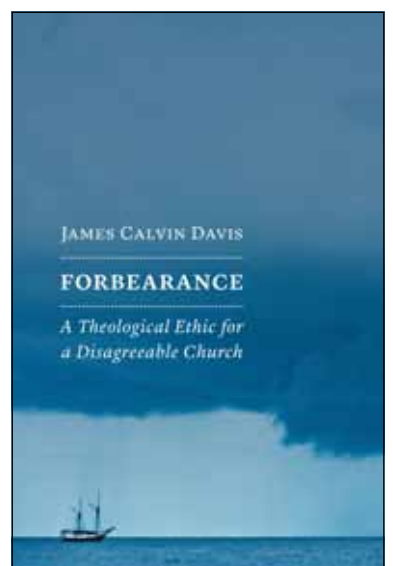
Wisdom is not knowledge, rather it is the ability to hear beyond the rhetoric and the content of the argument to the heart of the matter. Wisdom arises from open listening so the convictions of the other are appreciated, and we can understand how our view fails to address the other's conviction. Davis writes: "Imaginative wisdom invites us to picture a church in which we have more than two options on the issues that divide us" (p. 87).

Faithfulness certainly includes faithfulness to God and to the desires of the Triune God of grace for human beings. Faithfulness also includes faithfulness to one another within the body of Christ, the church. Faithfulness to the promises made in order to be a community of connection and care as a congrega-

tion, a presbytery and a denomination.

Davis accurately reads I Corinthians 13 not as a description of marital love, but of friendship in the church—to bear all things, hope all things—for the other, for the opponent within the church. Jesus said, "I call you friends." If my opponent is a friend of Jesus, and I am a friend of Jesus, then my opponent and I need to figure out how to be friends—a friendship built on our shared friendship with Jesus. Such friendship would have forbearance at its core.

In chapters entitled "Truth" and "Justice," Davis works through the fears that conservatives and liberals within the church raise about the call to forbearance. It would be easy for liberals to read "Truth" and use it against their opponents. It would be equally easy for conservatives to read "Justice" and use it against their opponents. Such action would be a failure to understand what is at the heart of this book. Readers will want to apply this book to themselves, to their ways of speaking and acting, their attitudes and secret conversa-



tions. This book is to be inwardly digested by readers, so that they may begin to practice forbearance.

The church, Davis argues, has an opportunity to be a witness to the world of how people with divergent understandings on deeply contentious issues can remain in community together, dialoging about divisive issues in honest and healthy patterns of speech. The church has the chance to be a public witness to how people very different from one another live in community and call each other friend.

Stories of Mission

CHRIST'S LIGHT IN ACTION

presbyterian.ca/stories-of-mission

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

GATHERINGS



The Synod of the Atlantic Provinces met at Calvin Church, Halifax, on October 16–18, 2017. The Moderator, the Rev. Derek Krunys, expressed thanks on behalf of the Court to the Rev. Dr. David Sutherland (seated) for his faithful service as Synod Clerk for six years; he retired on December 31, 2017. The moderator installed the incoming clerk, the Rev. Jeffrey Murray (left) who began his work on January 1, 2018.



November 26, 2017, was a day of celebration at St. John's, Cornwall, Ont., with the Ordination and Installation of 11 new elders and the reception of two ministers in association.



Ian Madge accepts a gift from Bev Smith, Clerk of Session, on the celebration of Ian's 40th anniversary as organist at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Simcoe, Ont.



Exciting days at Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary! On January 7, the congregation was delighted to witness and celebrate the baptism of 15 members of the Anyuak community within Grace's Church Family.



Knox Presbyterian Church in Guelph, Ont., celebrated their 10th Anniversary in 2017. Pictured are members of the LOGOS ministry. LOGOS welcomes children from JK to Gr. 12 and volunteers of any age. This is an active ministry that seeks to develop strong relationships. Participants eat together and then rotate in groups through Bible Study, Worship Skills and Rec/Play. LOGOS is a joyful way to serve!

GATHERINGS



Sisters Helen Ward and Gertrude MacDonald are shown with the Rev. Charles McPherson, Interim Moderator, at the 200th Anniversary of St. John's Presbyterian Church, MacLennan's Mountain, N.S., on September 24, 2017. Both had been baptized in the church over a century ago; Helen in 1915, and Gertrude in 1917. The guest preacher was the Rev. Richard Sand from Sechelt, B.C. Special music was provided by the Kilted Choir of St. Andrew's in Dartmouth, N.S.



As part of their confirmation process, youth from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Barrie, Ont., put together meal kits and delivered them to people in need. Pictured here are Carter Henry, Macaila Touchette, Amber Urry and Nari Hwang.



Soli Deo Gloria—Glory to God Alone! On Sunday November 12, 2017, the Forest Hill Ecumenical Ministerial in Kitchener, Ont., hosted an ecumenical celebration to God's glory at Calvin Presbyterian Church. The celebration marked 500 years since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. The churches of the Forest Hill neighbourhood did not let history interfere with their act of unity, however. Eight ministers presided, representing congregations from seven denominations: Presbyterian, Lutheran, United, Baptist, Pentecostal, Anglican and Roman Catholic. Worshippers from more than 10 congregations participated in the service. Following the afternoon service, everyone gathered to enjoy a hearty community meal and browse through an historical exhibition.



St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Sunny Corner, N.B., was captured in photograph by a drone in August, following Sunday morning service with the Rev. Blaine Dunnett.

GATHERINGS



The St. John's Presbyterian Church Ladies Fellowship in White Rock, B.C., enjoyed preparing and packing up a very special Christmas Hamper for a single mother of five children in the community. Generous giving from the congregation provided warm new jackets, toys and Christmas dinner fixings that were very much appreciated by the family in crisis.



On November 4, 2017, elders from the Presbytery of Halifax and Lunenburg gathered for a workshop, "Caring for God's People," in a facility nestled into a quiet edge of Shubie Park, Dartmouth, N.S. The park provides many uses, such as walking, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and bird watching. The workshop leader was the Rev. Dr. Jody Clarke, Associate Professor of Theology at Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax.



On Harvest/Thanksgiving Sunday, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Dartmouth, N.S., welcomed four members by Profession of Faith. All four participated in the Church School from a young age and were very active in the Youth Group. They have all attended Canada Youth. Pictured are: Jack Murray, Luke Campbell, the Rev. Dr. P.A. (Sandy) McDonald, Jake Barkhouse, Ross Barkhouse.



First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., celebrated its Women's Missionary Society (WMS) during worship on January 14, as the WMS group concluded its formal activities after 133 years of service and mission.



Food Banks in British Columbia were particularly strained this past fall due to the large-scale fires in the province and the many displaced individuals and families. Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon decided on a Thanksgiving Challenge to "build a church" of food for the local food bank, located in the northern part of the Okanagan Valley.



On Sunday November 12, 2017, the Victoria County Historical Society of Lindsay, Ont., joined forces with three local churches to organize an ecumenical service of thanksgiving and remembrance for the nearly 30 women from the present-day City of Kawartha Lakes who served as Nursing Sisters during the First World War. The service included hymns, anthems, scripture lessons and dramatic readings from letters composed by three local nursing sisters. The Rev. Bob Quick, Associate Minister of St. Andrew's, Lindsay (shown in the white stole), gave an inspiring meditation in which he likened the work of the nursing sisters to the story of the Good Samaritan.



The monthly craft group of the ladies at Elmvale Presbyterian Church in Elmvale, Ont., were pleased to complete, with love, a project for one of the congregation members who had started it but been unable to finish. A presentation of the quilt was made to Nancy and her husband Brad McGrady at Family Sunday during Advent 2017.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Helping Farmers Manage Climate Change in Africa

By Steve McInnis, PWS&D committee member and Canadian Foodgrains Bank board member

The United Nations cited the major causes of hunger in 2016 as armed conflict and climate change. That year, over 800 million people around the world were hungry.

PWS&D responds to global hunger and malnutrition through partners at Canadian Foodgrains Bank. PWS&D supports Foodgrains Bank projects that teach improved farming practices, which help farmers cope with climate change and increase crop production and diversity.

One successful farming practice is conservation agriculture, a method that emphasizes minimal soil disturbance, crop rotation and mulching to retain moisture, while improving soil health and increasing production.

For small-scale farmers in Kenya, training in conservation agriculture with support from the Foodgrains Bank has been transformative.

I recently had the privilege of accompanying a Foodgrains Bank delegation that was visiting agriculture and food security projects in Kenya.

Driving through rural Kenya on dirt roads in the dry season can be like driving on a foggy day, with thick dust clouds forming in front of the vehicle.

Viewing farms on either side of the road as you drive, some of the plant life is coated with dust. Some farms grow nothing but grass because the farmer has given up trying to grow anything but animal fodder.

Following a stretch of unfruitful landscape, it was exciting for me to see a verdant, productive farm—as was the case upon our arrival at Lydia Mueni Ngunge's farm.

Lydia has implemented conservation agriculture practices on her land. She learned the method through a Foodgrains Bank project in her community, where partners provide training in a classroom and use farm plots for demonstration. People called extensionists provide support in the field after training.

Lydia shared that many farmers had declined participating in the training. Even though farmers in Kenya had used conservation agriculture principles in previous gen-

erations, colonizers had taught them to plough their fields in rows and not use mulch. For a subsistence farmer, the risk of trying something different—even if it has been done in the past—is significant, so the colonial legacy continues to this day.

Lydia, however, plans on expanding her plot the next growing season, and shares that many farmers who declined the training are now very curious about her successful crop.

Eunice was one such farmer, initially skeptical when she first heard about it, especially because converting a farm to conservation agriculture is incredibly labour intensive. Eventually, she decided to give it a try—the only one of her neighbours to do so in the first year. As a result, she had a harvest when many others had nothing. She expanded her conservation agriculture plot five times and has become a role model for others in her community.

Unfortunately, challenges faced by farmers in Kenya—unpredictable climate shifts, uncertain rains and poor soil fertility—are shared by farmers the world over. But as Lydia, Eunice and many others have discovered, farming adjustments can have a significant impact.

PWS&D also responds to food insecurity in Malawi, Guatemala, Pakistan and Nicaragua by supporting conservation agriculture and nutrition projects with the Foodgrains Bank.

When we read that Jesus came to bring abundant life, Presbyterians across Canada generously respond through PWS&D to fulfill this promise around the world. By supporting the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and projects that help farmers protect healthy soils, mitigate the effects of climate change and grow more food, our church is making a difference on the journey towards a world without hunger.

We might sometimes feel like the burden of helping people so far away is too great a task. Questions arise about whether aid money actually gets to those in need or if it's siphoned off to others.

However, it was heartwarming for me to see such dedication by program staff in the places we visited, and the impact and change for those



From left to right: Kennedy Gichira, Ken Kim, Jane Wanjiku, Jenninah Kabiswa, Terry Lee Degenhardt, Jim Cornelius, Will Postma and Steve McInnis during a Foodgrains Bank delegation to Kenya. PHOTO CREDIT: COURTNEY KLASSEN, CFGB



Lydia demonstrates the benefits of conservation agriculture on her farm in Kenya. PHOTO CREDIT: COURTNEY KLASSEN, CFGB

receiving our support. For me, it was worth the discomfort of international travel to be able to stand in a farmer's field, see the interaction between the farmer and our partners and hear a farmer share about what a difference this work has made for her family and farm.

PWS&D is a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger. Through CFGB, this project was undertaken with matching support from the Government of Canada.



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John Mbithi, a farmer taking part in the project, happily shares how conservation agriculture has changed his family's prospects. CREDIT: COURTNEY KLASSEN, CFGB

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Demonstrating God's Love in Syria

By Anna Muir, PWS&D
Communications Assistant

Ten years ago, when his life held peace and promise, Akram would have never imagined that he would one day be forced to knock on doors and beg for food for his hungry children.

When ISIS took control of his hometown in Syria three years ago, chaos descended. Violence forced Akram and his seven children to flee to another part of the country.

Akram lost his home, land and livelihood—a cruel reality shared with the over six million Syrians displaced within their own country since the civil war began in 2011.

In his new neighbourhood, the family is safe. But life isn't easy. Akram has mobility issues, making it difficult to work and earn enough to pay rent. Meanwhile, shelter and food prices remain high. Poverty and misery loomed over Akram.

One day, after Akram appeared on his neighbour's doorstep to beg for food, the neighbour asked his pas-

tor to provide some support for the struggling father.

When the pastor asked Akram what he needed most urgently, Akram replied that food for his children was his priority. Akram's prayers were answered when he was brought to a local church that acts as a distribution centre for food aid provided through a PWS&D-supported Canadian Foodgrains Bank project. Akram's family was selected to receive monthly food baskets.

"This food basket is absolutely vital for a large number of displaced and badly affected Syrian families who are unable to stave off hunger," shares the pastor.

Another local church is helping Kamar navigate the uncertainties of life after fighting consumed her hometown in Syria and sent her family to various corners of the country. A widow, Kamar faces health challenges that make it difficult for her to care for her youngest son, Rifat, who lives with multiple sclerosis and is now paralyzed. Aid provided by the



In Syria, PWS&D-supported Foodgrains Bank food aid distributions take place at a local church. PHOTO CREDIT: LSED

church with support from PWS&D is helping Kamar meet her needs for survival.

Since the outbreak of the war in Syria, Christians in the Middle East have faithfully supported refugee families. Partnerships through Canadian Foodgrains Bank allow PWS&D to help equip churches in Syria and Lebanon that are delivering vital food aid and easing the suffering of their war-weary neighbours.

PWS&D is grateful for these partnerships and for the faithful support of Presbyterians responding to those caught in the Syria crisis. Support PWS&D's ongoing response through your church by mailing a cheque to the office, donating online or calling 1-800-619-7301 ext. 291.

PWS&D is a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 churches and church



Food packages and non-food humanitarian aid are crucial for families displaced within war-weary Syria. PHOTO CREDIT: HELEN MANSON, TEARFUND NZ

agencies working together to end global hunger. Through CFG, food assistance projects receive 4:1 matching support from the Government of Canada.



Partner Spotlight: Margaret Msukwa

By Anna Muir, PWS&D
Communications Assistant

Margaret Msukwa has spent much of her life caring for others—lifting up and healing the sick and suffering. Before joining the Livingstonia Synod health department, where she helps manage the Embangweni, Ek-wendeni and David Gordon Memorial hospitals and their programs in northern Malawi, Margaret was pivotal to the success of implementing HIV/AIDS programs in Malawi as well as providing education and psychosocial support programs for orphans and vulnerable children in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda.

Over the course of her life, Margaret has brought 25 orphans into her home to give them a better life. As deputy health director, helping oversee PWS&D's maternal, newborn and child health project, Margaret works for a world where children won't have to grow up without their mothers—where women and babies can access the care they need to survive childbirth and thrive together.

What is your favourite part about your job?

I most enjoy when communities are

empowered to stand alone and address their own issues. We can't always be there for these communities—when they have ideas to improve their health and livelihoods, it is truly wonderful.

Has there been a particularly memorable moment for you during your work as deputy health director?

In a remote community called Msumbe in Malawi, I advocated for a maternity ward. Before the ward came, people living there had to walk 60 km across bad terrain to access the next health facility. For 14 years the community members worked hard to build a small hospital with a maternity ward, but they didn't have enough money to keep it open. I helped support this community to ensure their hospital could open. I saw a community fight for their right to be healthy, and I'll always remember that.

What are some particular challenges you've encountered in your work?

It's difficult to get men involved in their wife's reproductive health, but this is essential. Now, some men are witnessing the delivery of their child.



A child is immunized in Kalikumbi, Malawi, where the maternal, newborn and child health program is helping families stay healthy. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY

One man I spoke to said he was amazed at the process. After experiencing what women go through, he has become much more involved.

Supporting girls is important for reducing teenage pregnancies and maternal mortality rates in communities like Malawi. How can young women and girls be empowered?

Keeping girls in school is so important. Sometimes they drop out for the smallest reasons: they don't have school supplies or hygiene supplies and feel shy at school with boys. We also need more male involvement. We tend to focus only on women when we talk about empowering women. But men are a part of the movement.

Why is it important to support the maternal, newborn and child health project in Malawi?

To lose a mother, there are many consequences—orphans, broken homes, hunger. When we save a mother, we are saving families and communities. This project is protecting life from the beginning, and it doesn't take much to make a huge difference. Access to family planning or the presence of a health worker during delivery is a small change that can have a huge, positive impact on communities.

What do you like to do when you're not working?

I support my husband, Chimwemwe,



Margaret Msukwa during a visit to Ontario in October, 2017.

with our small program called Young Professional Leaders. Through this program, we empower newly graduated youth, teach them professional skills and groom them into potential leaders. When I'm relaxing, I like to read books and the newspaper. I also like to travel in my own country, see the lake and the beautiful animals.



PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Funds Committed to 10 Projects

By Karen Bokma, PWS&D
Communications Coordinator

At the end of 2017, PWS&D contributed funds to several new and ongoing development and relief projects around the world.

Responding with partners at the ACT Alliance:

- Supplementing previous food assistance to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, PWS&D is providing aid to improve living conditions in settlements and camps. Through this project, almost 40,000 people will receive shelter, access

to water and sanitation, and help to recover from trauma, among other urgent needs.

- As a continuing response to conflict-induced food insecurity, this project ensures food, nutrition and livelihood recovery for as many as 180,000 people in South Sudan.

In association with Canadian Foodgrains Bank:

- PWS&D continues to respond to needs created by ongoing civil conflict in Syria. Partners are providing assistance in the form of food baskets and cash vouchers



In South Sudan, beneficiaries collect food packages they received from PWS&D and Foodgrains Bank members. PHOTO CREDIT: MATTHEW SAWATZKY, CFGB/ADRA

in both Syria and Lebanon.

- Three hundred families that have been displaced from their homes in the Democratic Republic of Congo are receiving food, seeds and tools to improve their food security.

- In Burundi, food assistance is providing relief for families facing hunger issues. Training in soil and water conservation is helping families improve long-term food security.

- Seeds are being distributed to 2,000 small holder farmers in Kenya as they recover from drought.
- Two projects in Haiti have received funding. An agro-forestry project is helping to rehabilitate land, as well as improve food security through sustainable agriculture and home gardens. The second project is increasing agricultural production and nutritional diversity by teaching farmers techniques to grow food in a changing climate.

For stories of transformation and to learn more about these and other PWS&D projects, visit WeRespond.ca.



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From the Director's Desk

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

The world has shifted significantly in the last year. We witnessed a number of disasters that brought to the forefront how vulnerable humanity is. First we saw famine in Africa largely due to conflicts in South Sudan and in the region, but significantly exacerbated by drought.

Then we witnessed the dramatic destruction caused by multiple hurricanes that hit the Caribbean and United States. Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the British Virgin Islands and so many more were affected, and it will take months before they can begin to recover from the devastating rains and winds. While Haiti was largely spared from the eye of Hurricane Irma, the cyclone still came close enough to wash away valuable crops.

We saw wildfires go through the interior of British Columbia and California, with tragic consequences for those who lost everything.

Fires were set in countless villages in Myanmar, forcing the exile of over 600,000 Rohingya people into Bangladesh, subjecting them to the violation of their most basic human rights. The Syria crisis continues, with the related persistent humanitarian needs. Yemen also emerged as a humanitarian crisis of proportions hard to imagine—22 million people in need.

In the face of these disasters we look for ways to help. It sometimes feels like there are too many disasters happening and we don't know how to respond. Presbyterians shared their resources generously in 2017, giving



Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh receive food packages through a PWS&D-supported project with partners at Canadian Foodgrains Bank. PHOTO CREDIT: WORLD RENEW

\$486,000 to PWS&D specifically in response to disaster appeals.

Since last April, the ACT Alliance has issued appeals for disasters in the Philippines, Gaza and the West Bank, Angola, Colombia, Ukraine, India, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Myanmar, Syria and the Lake Chad Basin, as well as for the Rohingya crisis.

PWS&D contributed to many of these appeals—pooling our resources with the global community of churches to reach out where most needed. The ACT Alliance also initiated rapid responses to many other crises, usually on a smaller scale. Part of PWS&D's annual budget includes a contribution to the ACT Alliance Rapid Response Fund, so that money is immediately available to a variety of disasters, many of which barely make the news.

As we look at 2018, we know that needs will continue to be great. We hear about the deteriorating condi-

tions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With the largest numbers of internally displaced people in Africa, it is expected that over 13 million people will need humanitarian assistance in that country alone in 2018. We are looking for ways to help in Yemen and hope that 2018 will open new doors. We know that the Rohingya crisis will require the world's continuing support, as will the Syria crisis, which is far from being resolved.

While we may feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of needs, it is comforting to know that we have effective ways to reach out. We are blessed with our membership in Canadian Foodgrains Bank where support from the Canadian government allows donations to be matched up to 4:1. While we can't reach all who are in need, we are definitely able to make a sizeable difference in the lives of affected populations in many of these crises. We also know that food as-



A Rohingya man and his family wait to complete registration in the Kutupalong Refugee Camp in Bangladesh where PWS&D supports members of the ACT Alliance providing humanitarian relief. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY, ACT ALLIANCE



Through the ACT Alliance, PWS&D is helping Syrian refugees improve their access to water, sanitation and hygiene services. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY, ACT ALLIANCE

sistance is not sufficient in most circumstances. Our membership in the ACT Alliance allows us to respond to many other needs, including access to clean water, sanitation, shelter, health care, non-food items and psychosocial support, which helps to provide hope in seemingly desperate situations.

We are a people of hope and the New Year brings new hopes and

new opportunities to respond with PWS&D. Let us not be overwhelmed by the number of disasters in the world, but rather rally together as a Christian community to generate the support that makes life-changing actions possible.



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REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Anticipating Things to Come

By Rob Shropshire, Refugee Program Coordinator and Michelle Ball, Refugee Program Assistant, PWS&D

Love strangers as yourself (Leviticus 19:33–34)

Waiting

At the time of writing, we are waiting to receive notice of our sponsorship quota from the Ministry of Immigration, where we will learn how many individuals can be sponsored by the PCC in 2018.

As always, we are also waiting for news on sponsorship applications in the system. Occasionally, we receive notice that an individual or family has been called for their interview or should proceed with their medical examinations. Better still, we receive the odd “Notice of Arrival” with flight details of the refugees coming to Canada—this is always a cause for rejoicing.

Reflecting and preparing

In 2017, Presbyterians submitted 42 applications to sponsor 78 named refugees—that is, those who are overseas and have been identified for sponsorship by a congregation or presbytery. The number was down from the 117 named refugees we were able to apply to sponsor in 2016; in large part because, for the first three months of 2016, there was no quota on Syrian refugees and interest was at its peak.

Another 14 applications for 67 people were filed in 2017 under the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) refugee program. Again, the number was down from late 2015 and early 2016, when so many people across the country became sponsors. Nevertheless, we can feel good about this response. All told, 145 more single people, parents and



A family that escaped fighting in Syria stands in the doorway of their shelter in a refugee camp in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Through sponsorship, Canadian congregations are making a difference in the lives of refugees. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY, ACT ALLIANCE

children—who had fled persecution or civil war in nine different countries—were in the queue to come to Canada, thanks to Presbyterians' efforts in 2017.

Things to come

We are expecting a number of Blended Visa Office Referred cases to be posted this year, and we encourage

Presbyterian groups to consider supporting these important initiatives to bring vulnerable individuals and families to safety in Canada.

Despite the wait for 2018's quota, we are already preparing for our 2018 case assessment exercise to determine the people we will sponsor. Once again this year, the task group appointed by the PWS&D

committee will review sponsorship requests from congregations and presbyteries from across the country who have identified refugee families and individuals they hope to help begin new lives in Canada. The desire of so many to reach out beyond their communities to welcome newcomers is always both gratifying and humbling.

Thanks go to all those across the country who have welcomed refugees into their communities in 2017. We look forward to working with you to continue to extend this welcome in the year to come!



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THINGS TO WATCH FOR

June 7 to 9

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) will be hosting an
INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE RIGHTS CONFERENCE
 in Toronto to enhance effectiveness in promoting
 the human rights of refugees and vulnerable migrants.

June 10 to 11

A one-and-a-half day gathering of Presbyterians involved in or interested in
LEARNING ABOUT REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP
 on the heels of the CCR event.

We are very excited about both opportunities and hope that many refugee sponsors will be able to participate. Keep checking WeRespond.ca for new information.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Messy Church at Lucknow Presbyterian

By Messy Church Committee Members at Lucknow Presbyterian Church, Lucknow, Ont.

On the fourth Wednesday of every month, the basement of Lucknow Presbyterian Church in Lucknow, Ont., bustles with Messy Church participants who range in age from under one to over eighty. Everyone energetically engages in activities that encourage an encounter with Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

From its 2004 beginning in England, 3,800 Messy Churches currently exist in over 20 countries. Messy Church is church for all ages. It is Christ-centred, with a focus on creativity, hospitality and celebration.

In November 2016, the Rev. David Chung, now the minister at St. Timothy's in Ajax, was our minister. He and others from Lucknow attended a Messy Church event in Stratford, where the seed was planted. Student minister, Nicholas Metivier's leadership made Messy Church a reality last July during his summer in Lucknow. The Lucknow United and the Community Christian Reformed Churches heard about Messy Church and are now sharing in this ministry.

Grant applications to the Synod of Southwestern Ontario Creative Ministries Fund and to the Presbyterian Church in Canada Creative Ministry for Children and Youth Fund were approved. Participant donations cover the cost of the meal each month. The congregation is also generous.

When you join us for Messy Church, you'll be welcomed at the registration table where you'll pick up your passport and be introduced to the Bible theme. During the first hour, you'll participate in as many as you like of the 10 creative activities that will have you using your hands and your mind. These stations are led by welcoming volunteers and include crafts, games and prayer that help to unfold the Bible story.

Playing a co-operative game helps transition from hands-on activities to the Celebration. The multicoloured parachute that Camp Kintail generously loaned for our session on Joseph last August was popular.

During the fifteen minute Celebration, you'll sing songs, and as we explore the Bible Story, it's likely that you'll be asked to participate somehow, somehow.

You'll finish the evening with a deli-



A bubblewrap game reminding participants to care for the earth.

cious meal and warm hospitality. Participants aren't in a rush to leave. In good weather, some cross the street to the park to continue to socialize.

Attendance at Messy Church in 2017 ranged from 32 to 58 people. New people came each month. During the summer, vacationers, exchange students and cottagers joined us. Youth Group members are among the volunteers. Two members of our Messy Church attended the 2017 National Conference in Toronto.

God calls all of us to be involved in mission and evangelism. Lucknow is a small, rural congregation with a vacant pulpit. We are amazed at how the Holy Spirit is moving among us, in the ecumenical volunteers, in the participants and in the community. A planning group member says, "Messy Church has a positive influence on us, as volunteers, renewing and recon-



Making "Thank-you God" creation plaques.

necting us with our own faith through prayer and Bible study."

We're learning to trust and obey God on this Messy Church journey.

Through creativity, hospitality and celebration, all ages are given opportunities to come closer to God and experience his amazing love in Jesus.

First Presbyterian Church (Brockville) Receives YMCA Peace Medal

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

First Presbyterian Church, together with its minister, the Rev. Marianne Emig Carr, was awarded a YMCA Peace Medal during YMCA Peace Week, Nov 20–24. First Presbyterian and the Rev. Marianne received the medal for their work in sponsoring Syrian refugees for resettlement in the Brockville community.

Together with other churches, community groups and the Presbytery of

Seaway-Glengarry, First Presbyterian has been an active part of four different Constituent Groups that have settled 23 Syrian refugees in Brockville and Eastern Ontario. All four sponsorships were undertaken through the auspices of the PCC as the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH).

Many thanks to the YMCA of Brockville and Area for this award, to Rob and Michelle at PWS&D and to all who have worked, and continue to work, to reach out to the most vulnerable in our world in hopes of giving them an opportunity for a new life.



(L–R) Carolyn Poulsen, YMCA Peace Committee member; Emily Wimpenny, Manager, YMCA; Karen Mahon, First Presbyterian Church; the Rev. Marianne Emig Carr; Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, Chair, Refugees for Brockville; Diana Deakin-Thomas, CEO, YMCA of Brockville and Area.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sustainable Housing Initiative

*By Les Young, Clerk of Session,
Westmount Presbyterian Church,
Edmonton, A.B.*

Westmount Presbyterian Church in Edmonton was constructed in the 1950s. Around the year 2000, Westmount began to experience generational change and membership loss. Additionally, the congregation started fretting about the cost of repairs and maintenance when it obtained a building energy audit which revealed that because of the building's construction it would not be economical or visually pleasing to retrofit.

The congregation began to reflect on its future. The Rev. Annabelle Wallace led the congregation through an internal process to identify core values and to express succinctly what each value meant in terms of behaviour and actions, culminating in a mission statement. Westmount owned three contiguous city lots with a public bus stop, an elementary school with a large park across the street in a very desirable community. While the congregation knew it did not have the money, experience, or skill sets to redevelop this land alone it did know that the most pressing need for housing in the city was for large families.



The new entrance to Westmount Presbyterian Church in Edmonton.

Right At Home Housing Society executive director, Cam McDonald, conducted a study of the property. Peter Amerongen of Habitat Studio, a leader in environmentally friendly buildings, volunteered many hours to determine how many, and what style of homes could be constructed alongside a more modest church on the church lots. These men gained a high level of trust quickly, which was fortunate as the project took more than six years to complete.

The congregation was kept aware of the evolution of the business model and building designs. Each

public consultation and briefing with the neighbours yielded improvements until neighbourhood leaders agreed to support zoning changes. Ultimately, the redevelopment replaced all old structures with 16 town homes, four with five bedrooms and 12 with three bedrooms, and a multi-use building with custom-built daycare in the lower level and a sanctuary above. It was constructed to net zero energy costs with solar and geothermal energy sourcing.

While the congregation owns the land, it is leased to The Right At



New housing beside Westmount Presbyterian Church. PHOTO CREDIT: MICHELLE HOOVER, TEMOFYCHUK GERBITZ ARCHITECTS, LTD.

Home Housing Society for 52 years and the Society provides a fully furnished worship space, which the congregation rents. At the end on the lease, the congregation becomes responsible for and owner of all structures.

During the redevelopment, congregational renewal continued under the Rev. Wallace's leadership, culminating in statements about worship, Christian education, mission, outreach and pastoral care.

The new worship space exceeds expectations as iconic arches and the wooden cross from the original

space were refinished and incorporated into the new sanctuary. With these changes the congregation has renewed its worship, advanced its service in the community and nurtured a ministry of justice by caring for creation and people in the community. And new families have sharply reversed the declining enrolment in the adjacent school.

The families that have moved into the housing units are those who have are most in need and the congregation looks forward to serving and welcoming them with the love and kindness of Christ.

Lighting Things Up in Orillia

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

The year 2017 was an exciting one at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont. As we celebrated our 60th anniversary as a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, we took the opportunity to remember the many ways God has blessed us and how God demonstrated faithfulness to us. We enjoyed many special events during the year, including a St. Patrick's dinner, an open house featuring the Artisans of St. Mark's, a pie baking contest, a car rally, boat



cruise and theatre outing. Our Anniversary Weekend in October included a dinner where we welcomed past clergy and congregants, and enjoyed wonderful entertainment by "The Bearded Baritones." At our Anniversary service, we not only welcomed many guests, including Mayor Steve Clark and MP Bruce Stanton, we also dedicated our new LED sign.

This sign is a very welcome addition, as we are tucked away in a subdivision, and many members of our community were unaware of our presence and programs. We were Orillia's best-kept secret! The sign was made possible through many individual donations not only from our members, but also from members of the community, and through the sales



The Rev. Linda Patton-Cowie and local MP Bruce Stanton.

of jams and preserves. Several years ago, a few members decided to start making these delicious treats to help raise money to restore the original church bell. When that project was

complete, they continued their work and we are grateful!

We look forward to discerning what God has in store for us for the next 60 years!

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Organist Holds Fundraising Recital at St. Matthew's

By Lynne Allan, Treasurer,
St. Matthew's Presbyterian,
Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L.

St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church, Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L., was the intimate setting for a Christmas recital in mid-December.

The recital was the idea of Aimee Doiron, church organist, who teaches private lessons to voice and piano students. It was an evening of Christ-

mas music and songs performed by soloists, duets and trios.

Aimee wanted the recital to not only highlight the talents of 27 of her students, but also the history of St. Matthew's, which she told to her students during rehearsals for the recital. St. Matthew's was built in 1910 and is the oldest church building in Grand Falls-Windsor and the first municipal heritage structure to be designated by the town.

As Aimee told the 95 family members and friends who filled the sanctuary, the students were excited about performing in St. Matthew's and to be part of a fundraiser for the church. The proceeds from the sale of tickets were donated to St. Matthew's.

Reaction to the concert has encouraged Aimee to consider St. Matthew's as the venue for another recital.



St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church was filled to capacity for a Christmas recital of voice and piano students organized by their teacher and church organist, Aimee Doiron. Ticket proceeds were donated to St. Matthew's.

Rainbow Communion Listening Committee

Rainbow Communion is a special committee formed by the 2017 General Assembly that has been empowered to invite LGBTQI people to tell stories of harm done to them within and by the church, and to share their stories of God's grace experienced by them in Christian ministry. Those who wish to will be encouraged to share their stories by whatever means is best for them (orally, in

writing or through face-to-face conversations).

Rainbow Communion is working hard to ensure that a confidential, safe, affirming and respectful space is created for people to share their experiences. The Committee will report to future General Assemblies and recommend concrete actions to address and respond to homophobia in the church. The name "Rainbow

Communion" was selected by the committee to intentionally reflect its mandate and purpose.

Communion: the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially when the exchange is on a mental or spiritual level.

Rainbow: A term and symbol often used to represent the inclusion of the full diversity of people and empha-



sizing the inclusion of persons who identify as sexual and/or gender minorities.

The committee is in the early stages of preparing to hear experiences and will soon send information, inviting those who wish to be heard to connect with Rainbow Communion.

Co-Conveners: The Rev. Dr. Bob Faris (Toronto, Ont.), Ms. Sue Senior (Waterloo, Ont.)

Members: The Rev. Dr. Tim Archibald (New Minas, N.S.), the Rev. Joseph Bae (Thornhill, Ont.), the Rev. Dr. Jean Morris (Calgary, A.B.), Ms. Sydney O'Brien (Oakville, Ont.), Ms. Bassma Younan (Aurora, Ont.)

Visit the Rainbow Communion web page at presbyterian.ca/listening or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 300.

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

Ensuring Church Unity



Front row (L-R): Cheol Soon Park, Marty Molengraaf, Don Muir, Jinsook Khang; Middle row: Alexandra Johnston, Stephen Allen, Yong Wan Cho, Min Basadur, Richard Seong-Keun Kim; Back row: Paul Johnston, Germaine Lovelace, John-Peter Smit

By John-Peter Smit, Synod of Central
Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

On February 16, 2018, representatives from both Han-Ca presbyteries, the Life and Mission Agency,

the Church Doctrine Committee, the General Assembly Council and the General Assembly Office met with Min Basadur of Basadur Applied Creativity to address two petitions received by the 2017 General As-

sembly that seek to preserve the unity of the church. The group worked together to develop and answer the question "How might we use these petitions to advance the unity of the church?"

Church Photos Needed



Help us celebrate the beauty of our church spaces.

Send in photos of your church's stained glass windows for the PCC's 2019 wall calendar.

presbyterian.ca/stained-glass

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Book Launch: *Leaving Christianity*

A book launch for *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945*, written by Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald, took place on February 1, 2018, at Knox College in Toronto.

The book explores why Canadians started to walk away from organized Christianity in the 1960s and how that defection became an exodus.

During the post-war boom of the 1950s, Canadian churches had attendance rates even higher than in the United States, but the following decade witnessed emptying pews. Canada's civil society has depended on church members for support, and a massive drift away from churches has had profound implications for its future.

In the book, authors Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald write about the nature and extent of Canadians' disengagement with organized religion, and assess the implications



Authors Stuart Macdonald (left) and Brian Clarke at the book launch.

for Canadian society and its religious institutions. They illustrate how the exodus that began with disaffected baby boomers and their parents has become so widespread that relig-

iously unaffiliated Canadians are the new majority.

Leaving Christianity is published by McGill-Queen's University Press, mqup.ca.

Glenview Presbyterian Church Wins Heritage Award

The new north entrance at Glenview Presbyterian Church in Toronto has attracted the attention of architects and heritage buffs. At a ceremony on October 23, 2017, Heritage Toronto presented the William Greer Architectural Conservation & Craftsmanship Award to Glenview and the architects for the project. The citation for the award congratulated Glenview for "embracing the accessibility needs of its community while caring for a beautiful heritage building, providing full access to a landmark."

The completed project includes accessible walkways and entrances, accessible washrooms and an elevator that allows access to the three levels in the church buildings. "The new exterior blends in with the old. The new door is the front door for the congregation and the whole neighbourhood, seven days a week," says the Rev. Laurence De-Wolfe. One goal of the project was



Heritage Toronto's award presentation.

to provide the community with accessible meeting spaces. "The new door tells everyone our door is really

open, whether you walk, run, move in a wheelchair, push a walker or a stroller, or even ride a bike."



Money for Free

By John-Peter Smit, Regional Minister for Congregational Health, Synod of Central Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

Canada's Search Engine.

A few years ago, I discovered this search engine and periodically I go and search. Recently I found an account with over \$7,000 in it belonging to a closed congregation in our presbytery. The trustees of the denomination have been able to reclaim this money for ministry! I even found a dormant bank account belonging to my brother-in-law.

Take a look, you never know what you might find. Search your name or your church's name. Try the name of your town or key words like "Presbyterian" or "youth" or "camp" or "Sunday School." You will be amazed at how many forgotten funds still exist and I promise you will have fun doing it!

The search engine is found at: https://ucbswww.bank-banque-canada.ca/scripts/search_english.cfm

Happy hunting, and please let us know if you find something!

One of the sad realities of an Internet World is the increase in phishing scams. Every day I receive spam that tells me how much money I will receive if I just give the sender my banking information. It is sad that people still fall for these scams.

I have discovered a way in which you might find, not free money, but lost money through the Bank of Canada website. You may be aware that, in Canada, if a bank account goes unclaimed for more than ten years it is transferred to the Bank of Canada. The Bank of Canada is required to keep accounts of less than one thousand dollars for thirty years, while larger accounts must be kept for 100 years. You may not be aware that you can search for and recover these accounts through the Bank of

50 Years of PCBC

The year 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC). In that time, the PCBC has made nearly 240 loans to congregations and camps, totalling \$54,000,000. Loans arranged at very favourable rates through the Royal Bank have helped build new churches, restore and renovate old buildings, and assisted congregations as they made general repairs or built additions.

With its sister corporation in British Columbia, the Presbyterian Extension Fund, the PCBC not only arranges loans but offers advice on budgeting and building projects that have brought new life and supported important mission. The Corporation keeps connected with ministries

across the country by visiting loan recipients, as well as through the directors of the Corporation, who come from all eight synods in the PCC.

Many of the good-news stories from coast to coast that have been reported in *Presbyterian Connection* in the past year have seen their projects come into fruition, in part, with support and loans through the PCBC. Calvin Church in Abbotsford, B.C., and WellSpring Church in P.E.I. (Summer edition, 2017) are two of the most recent recipients. The number of loans for new projects has increased in the last few years and Bill Collier, Director of PCBC, is excited by all the life he sees welling up in the church.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Devastation Follows Wildfires in BC

By Shannon Bell-Wyminga, part of the missionary team of the Cariboo Presbyterian House Churches.

It was dark as night by 3:30 in the afternoon on Saturday, August 12, 2017. We knew something bad was coming.

Smoke had been thick in the air for several days around the Quesnel West fire camp, west of the Nazko River, central British Columbia. It had hung in the air for days around the Nazko Valley School and Community Centre where camp was set up. I was glad that most in the Nazko Valley had taken heed of the evacuation order 11 days earlier and were no longer there to breathe in the smoke. However, about a third of the community remained in their homes, hoping to do whatever it took to protect their homes, livestock and livelihoods, which were all uninsured. Those of us on the Incident Management Team who remained in camp waited for the word that we were going to pack up the camp and evacuate. Just in case, I began to pack up my personal belongings from my little community centre office where I had been living since my husband, Jon, and I had evacuated our own home.

The air became deathly still and the sun was no longer visible through the darkness and smoke. On the phone, a friend who was home to protect his ranch told me, "This seems apocalyptic." It was the only appropriate description. It was truly the calm before the storm.

A few minutes later, the Commander made the call and we all sprang into action, packing up a complex camp with trailers full of equipment, food trucks, dining tents, computer gear and full kitchen. Shortly after, the firefighters began to arrive from the front line to pack up their personal tents and gear, and we formed a long convoy of vehicles leaving the valley to a new camp site 45-minutes closer to town and further from the fire. As I drove up the hill out of the valley, I passed by friends' homes, our little library, the local store just renovated and re-opened by the band, the lake and campground run by the community, and I thought about all the friends and neighbours that I was leaving behind. I wasn't able to warn them that the camp was evacuating and things were going to get bad. I didn't know if I would ever again see any of these places and people I have



Shannon Wyminga-Bell (front row, third from left), Community Liaison for the Plateau Fire, with the Structural Protection Team.

grown to love over the past two decades. I wept with the weight of the community on my heart.

That night, a fire storm unlike anything the seasoned firefighters had ever seen, swept through our area taking with it cabins, a home, a ranch, timber, fencing, wildlife and the livelihood of some of our community. Several people left that night and no one lost their lives. Overnight the West Quesnel fire complex doubled in size, joining several fires together and was later renamed as the Plateau Fire. It ultimately was the largest fire in BC history, encompassing over 5,200 square km.

In the end, our community was evacuated for between 40–45 days. School was not able to open until October and the students and teachers borrowed space from a school in town for the month of September. Those who had evacuated went home as soon as was allowed but the summer had been lost. Though everyone was grateful that the majority of the community was still intact, there was much to grieve.

It was nearly Thanksgiving before I had the opportunity to drive out into the midst of the fire perimeter and go to see what was left of familiar places. I wept again at the devastation that some of our friends have to drive through every time they go out, and even from the windows of their homes. The land will not be the same again in my lifetime. It may be difficult for some people to understand the depth of the grief our community feels but living here gives us a deep connection to the land. It is part of us and we are part of it. We feel the pain of the earth in the scorched land and lost resources and wildlife.

After returning home, you don't just "get back to normal." People

were overwhelmed with the implications of the lost summer. There had been no preparations for winter—no gardening, no berry picking, no hunting or fishing or canning meat fruit and vegetables, no gathering medicines or cutting firewood. For those with access to grocery stores and bank accounts, this may not seem so bad, but our community relies on these summer activities to survive the winter. Then there is the emotional impact that lingers. Loss of the sense of safety and security, grief at losses of the land, family time, the unsettledness of being out of one's home for weeks all take a long time to overcome. These are just some of the symptoms of trauma. In speaking with someone from Samaritan's Purse who has been involved in recovery in the Fort McMurray fire, the full impact of trauma lasts and sometimes doesn't even come to the surface until a year or year and a half after the event. That means that we haven't even faced some of what people will be dealing with emotionally yet.

However, our community is resilient. Throughout the fire season, we pulled together and were grateful for those who helped one another in practical ways. Since returning home there is a desire to ensure that everyone has what they need, and some of those who lost the most are the ones giving the most of their time and energy for others. This summer, we will all work to help rebuild the home that was lost and seek to support those who lost livelihoods. It was a privilege for Jon and me to be able to hand funds raised through PWS&D to those most devastated. There were many tears of gratitude shed as our neighbours opened envelopes with cheques that would help get them



The remains of a ranch in Nazko BC. This family received help from PWS&D.



5,200 square km of land was encompassed in the Plateau fire alone near Nazko, BC.

through the next month or two. They knew that the body of Christ, God's people, really cared for them.

It was a relief when I finished working at fire camp at the end of September. However, the intensity of the work continues without me being employed by the BC Wildfire Service. As we try to recover from the summer, we have a lot of work to do to prepare for the coming fire seasons. The great need right now as we have had temperatures hovering around -35°C, is for firewood to heat homes. The Red Cross continues to try to help people with major losses but it is a slow process. There is a great need for counselling for some and for funding and organizing the community to develop emergency plans, firefighting crews and equipment, and to address needed changes in government policies for rural communities in these situations. It feels overwhelming. At the same time, what a wonderful opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus and share his love for a hurting community! This is what we are called to as followers of Jesus—to walk through the fire with people who need to know of his love. Isaiah 43 assures God's people, "When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. The flames will not set you ablaze."

This is just the story of my experience. Across the Cariboo Presbyterian Church, there are many stories to be told about the summer of 2017. Almost every house church in our congregation faced evacuation or



Fire near Sheridan Lake, BC.

ders at least once over the summer. The congregation was scattered but ministry continued in evacuation centres and borrowed spaces, in helping people move livestock and possessions and hosting those who were displaced and so many other ways.

If you would like to read more stories, check out the Northern Lights Christmas newsletter found at cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca

Through Presbyterian World Service & Development, the PCC provided over \$23,000 to support families in the Presbytery of Kamloops who experienced high levels of loss and destruction due to the wildfires.

Supported by
Presbyterians Sharing

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REFLECTIONS

Handling Change

By Patricia Schneider, elders at Forbes Presbyterian Church, Grande Prairie, A.B.

I was shocked recently when I found out my name had come to the top of the priority list for senior accommodation. I'd been on that list for two years.

"Can you move in two weeks?" questioned the young woman on the phone. I knew if I replied in the negative, I'd probably go to the end of the line. "Okay," I bravely answered, my mind already making up lists of things that would have to be looked after.

And so the journey began. Sorting through things that had been set aside for years, reliving events of the

past, making tough decisions and finally saying, "This is all I can take, it's not a very big room." I had been given a "couples" room, with the understanding if a couple needed it, I would be moved to a different room when one became available. (They promised they wouldn't put me out in the cold.)

So I settled in. The room overlooked the parking lot, but I did have the winter/southern Alberta sunshine visit me each day. It was okay. Food was good, staff friendly, but I was experiencing a very different lifestyle. I had been a pretty busy widow for 10 years, though I had noticed my strength waning somewhat but I had carried on. But time tests all of us, and I knew I wouldn't



want the responsibility of the house much longer, so I not only bit the bullet, I swallowed it whole.

And oh, I prayed for guidance. My Bible Study group now has a special room to meet in on Fridays and that worked out well, with coffee being provided. There was a whole wall of books to read in the residents' library and there was a lovely circular fireplace to sit around and shoot the breeze with whoever dropped by. I felt I could settle in until spring.

Then the knock came on the door.

"Sorry, but we've got to move you," one of the staff explained.

My heart nearly stopped. I'd been there less than three weeks!

So I packed up again...not really arguing with the Lord, just asking "Why?", but knowing that God has a purpose for all things, even traumatizing moves. At least this one would be just down the hall and around the corner. The questions piled up in my mind... What about the view? I had cataract surgery three years ago and nothing caused my heart to

warm more than the view of trees and sky. "Where was this room facing? This was a large complex with three different wings."

Eventually the room was opened up for me. It had been painted and cleaned, and when I looked out the windows, there was no sun filtering in—it faced north-west. Then I looked across the snow covered field and saw that the adjoining homes were bathed in beautiful sunlight. And I realized that was okay, I could be happy seeing others warmed by the sun, even if I wasn't experiencing it myself.

As life slips by and the things you once enjoyed are taken from you, bit by bit, it is good to look at life and realize that the joy others are having can be your joy, too. I no longer ski down long slopes, but feel a thrill when I see others on TV doing just that.

There are changes as the years pass, but God knows exactly what is best for you and he blesses you as you move forward into each new experience, for he says, "Go with the strength you have, I will go with you."

Planting Seeds of Hope: Pollinator Gardens

By Fiona van Wissen, Crieff Hills Community

Looking for ideas for intergenerational events this spring? Consider planting a pollinator garden at your church or in your neighbourhood. It will look beautiful, benefit the environment, and attract regular visitors—mostly the six-legged type like bees and butterflies!

Gardens are great for involving children, too. Little hands love to dig in the dirt and water plants! Older children can photograph the flowers and identify insects they find. Benches and bird feeders are fun to paint and help to create an outdoor space that families can enjoy together. Teens might also build raised garden beds with benches, offering a place to rest.

After planting your garden, invite the neighbours to join you in dedicating the garden at a neighbourhood picnic, a church BBQ or a Father's Day strawberry tea!

Why do we need pollinators? Without pollinators, many plants cannot produce seeds and fruits. While some plants are wind pollinated, others rely on pollinators to move pollen from one part of the flower to another to fertilize the plant. Pollinators are essential for apples, pears, cucumbers, melons, berries and many other fruits and vegetables. Many pollina-

tor populations have declined significantly in recent years. These declines in pollinator populations have been noted around the world.

How many different pollinators do you know? Many people think of bees and butterflies, but other pollinators include moths, flies, wasps, beetles, ants, bats and hummingbirds. Even mosquitos can pollinate flowers like goldenrod and orchids! And there would be no chocolate without midges—flies the size of a pinhead that are the only known pollinators of the tiny intricate flowers of the cacao tree.

What can you do? We can help pollinator populations by planting shrubs and flowers that provide pollen and nectar for local pollinators. Please consider adding pollinator-friendly plants to your home garden this year or even in a planter.

Some things to consider in choosing plants for pollinators:

- **Diversity:** Provide a variety of flower colors and shapes to attract different pollinators.
- **Flowering Time:** Choose plants that flower at different times of the year to provide nectar and pollen sources throughout the season.
- **Native Species:** Did you know that flowers bred to look stunning are sometimes sterile and of little use to pollinators? Na-



tive plants or heirloom varieties are best. Native plants will attract native pollinators and can serve as larval host plants. When thinking about moths and butterflies, we often forget their caterpillars need food, too. Many people know that milkweed is a host plant for Monarch caterpillars, but there are many other insects that depend on one specific type of host plant to raise their young.

Want to learn more about pollinator gardens? There are lots of resources online, and be sure to check out what other churches are doing or get some advice at your local garden centre.

St. George's Presbyterian Church in London, Ont., has recently planted a very large pollinator garden and offers tours to community groups. Church volunteers enjoy showing guests the areas they seeded and educating others about pollinators. Jan Shepherd McKee initiated the project and was amazed by how quickly large numbers of native bees found the flowers right after they were planted last spring. She also stresses the importance of maintenance for the first four years to enable the native species to become established. Be sure to visit this garden if you are in the area.

You are also welcome to visit

Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre, owned by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and located an hour west of Toronto. Crieff Hills has several pollinator gardens, including a Monarch Garden by the Conference Hall steps, a large endangered butterfly habitat at the amphitheatre and a new pollinator garden at the entrance to Maclean Hall, thanks to a grant from TD Friends of the Environment and the dedicated Crieff volunteer gardeners.

While visiting the pollinator gardens at Crieff Hills, you might spot Monarch caterpillars munching on swamp milkweed, Baltimore Checkerspot Butterflies seeking out the white turtlehead flowers, American Lady Butterfly caterpillars nestled in leaves of pearly everlasting, and Giant Swallowtail Butterflies gliding around the hop trees at the amphitheatre.

What might you see in your neighbourhood this spring? Find out what happens when you plant a pollinator garden! Happy Gardening!

Check out Greening Sacred Spaces for some great resources on Pollinator Gardens: greeningsacredspaces.net. June 18–24, 2018, is Pollinator week! Visit pollinator.org and pollinationcanada.ca for more information.

JUST WONDERING...



Have a question you need answered? Submit them to connection@presbyterian.ca

The flags in our sanctuary are falling apart. Some would like to replace them and some say the flags should not be replaced because of the separation of church and state. What is right?

Flags serve many purposes. A white flag proclaims surrender while the Jolly Roger identifies pirates. Institutions and nations have flags that usually depict something of the land or work they represent. Let's assume this discussion is about Canadian flags in Canadian Presbyterian sanctuaries. A report to the 2001 General Assembly (p. 306) points out that flags represent countries and causes with limited and exclusive appeal. The flag of Canada, for example, embraces Canadians but excludes others. "...The Presbyterian Church

in Canada, must forever have an inclusive open-door policy that invites all who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour to belong regardless of their political or national allegiance." Others might believe the Canada flag symbolizes respect for Canada and our Christian duty to pray for those in authority. Weighing these important considerations, sessions may decide what flag, if any, is placed in their church. As an aside, the Declaration of Faith Regarding Church and Nation, a subordinate standard of our denomination, states in one paragraph, "Jesus has ordained the Church to serve him in the proclamation of his word, in the administration of his sacraments, and in the life of faith which works by love. He has also in his grace ordained the State to serve him in the administration of his justice and benevolence, by discerning, formulating, and enforcing, such laws and policies as will promote the

well-being of all its citizens and curb license, discord, and destitution."

Our congregation is talking about selling its manse. Someone said we can't sell it without permission from the national office because it belongs to The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Is that right?

It's a misunderstanding that the national office owns all Presbyterian property across Canada and must grant permission before any of it can be sold. A congregation's building, manse and other property belong to the congregation as long as the congregation exists. A congregation may sell its property with the approval of the session, congregation and presbytery. Approval is generally based on how the assets will be used for the congregation's ongoing ministry. If the congregation is ever dissolved by its presbytery, the congregation's assets vest with the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, according to church and civil law. Currently, presbyteries may apply to the Trustee Board for the return of up to 40% of the assets of dissolved congregations. The remaining 60% supports a Native Ministry Fund and the needs of the Pension Fund.

We are planning to renovate our sanctuary. Can the Church Architecture Committee help us?

The Church Architecture Committee is made up of architects and church members experienced in building projects. It exists to help congregations construct new buildings, renovate existing buildings, erect additions and the like. The primary function of the committee, which is accountable to the Assembly Council, is to review proposed architectural drawings. Comments are sent to the congregation that may recommend alternative construction ideas or confirm that the drawings are fine in terms of design, public safety and cost effectiveness. The committee provides a free and impartial "second set of eyes" that can result in useful ideas and long-term cost savings. Once satisfied with the drawings, the committee reports to the congregation and presbytery. Depending upon the scope of the project, loans from the Presbyterian Church in Canada under the Lending Fund may be conditional upon receiving a satisfactory response from the committee. See the committee's website at presbyterian.ca/gao/assembly-council/coca.

OBITUARIES

Read all obituaries online at presbyterian.ca

George Philips

Long-time elder at Memorial Presbyterian Church, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. Deceased November 26, 2017.

The Rev. Andrew "Drew" Burnand

Former minister at Montreal West Presbyterian Church and member of the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod. Deceased December 27, 2017.

The Rev. John Duncan Blue

Former minister in congregations in Cochrane, Peterborough and Timmins, Ontario. Deceased December 31, 2017.

The Rev. David Smith

Former minister of Knox Presbyterian Church in Victoria, B.C., active member at St. Columba Presbyterian Church, Parksville. Deceased December 22, 2017.

Gillan Jackson

Elder at Central Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, former member of Life and Mission Agency Committee and Assembly Council. Deceased December 29, 2017.

The Rev. Evan Harris Jones

Former minister in Sarnia, Hamilton and London, Ontario. Deceased February 10, 2018.

PULPIT VACANCIES

To see all pulpit vacancies, visit presbyterian.ca/vacancies

Fredericton, St. Andrew's (full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces

Montague, WellSpring (full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces

Pictou, First and St. Andrew's (full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces

Howick, Georgetown (half-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Renfrew (full-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Bracebridge, Knox (full-time minister) – Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda (CNOB)

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

Toronto, Clairlea Park (part-time minister) – CNOB

Toronto, York Memorial (half-time minister) – CNOB

Brandon, First (full-time minister) – Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Bayfield, Knox (part-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

Leamington, Knox (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

Calgary, Centennial (full-time minister) – Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, St. Andrew's (lead minister) – (full-time minister) – Alberta and the Northwest

Edmonton, Mill Woods (full-time minister) – Alberta and the Northwest

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Salmon Arm, St. Andrew's (part-time minister) – British Columbia

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KAI THE BARBARIAN THE GEORGE LESLIE MACKAY STORY

A play

Written by: William Butt

Directed by: Edward Daranyi

Musical Director: Daniel Van Winden

George Leslie Mackay, the "Black-Bearded Barbarian," was the first Canadian Presbyterian missionary in northern Taiwan (1871-1901). Dedicating his life to providing medical and dental support, as well as sharing God's Word, Mackay is an inspiration to the missions movement and remains a national hero in Taiwan.

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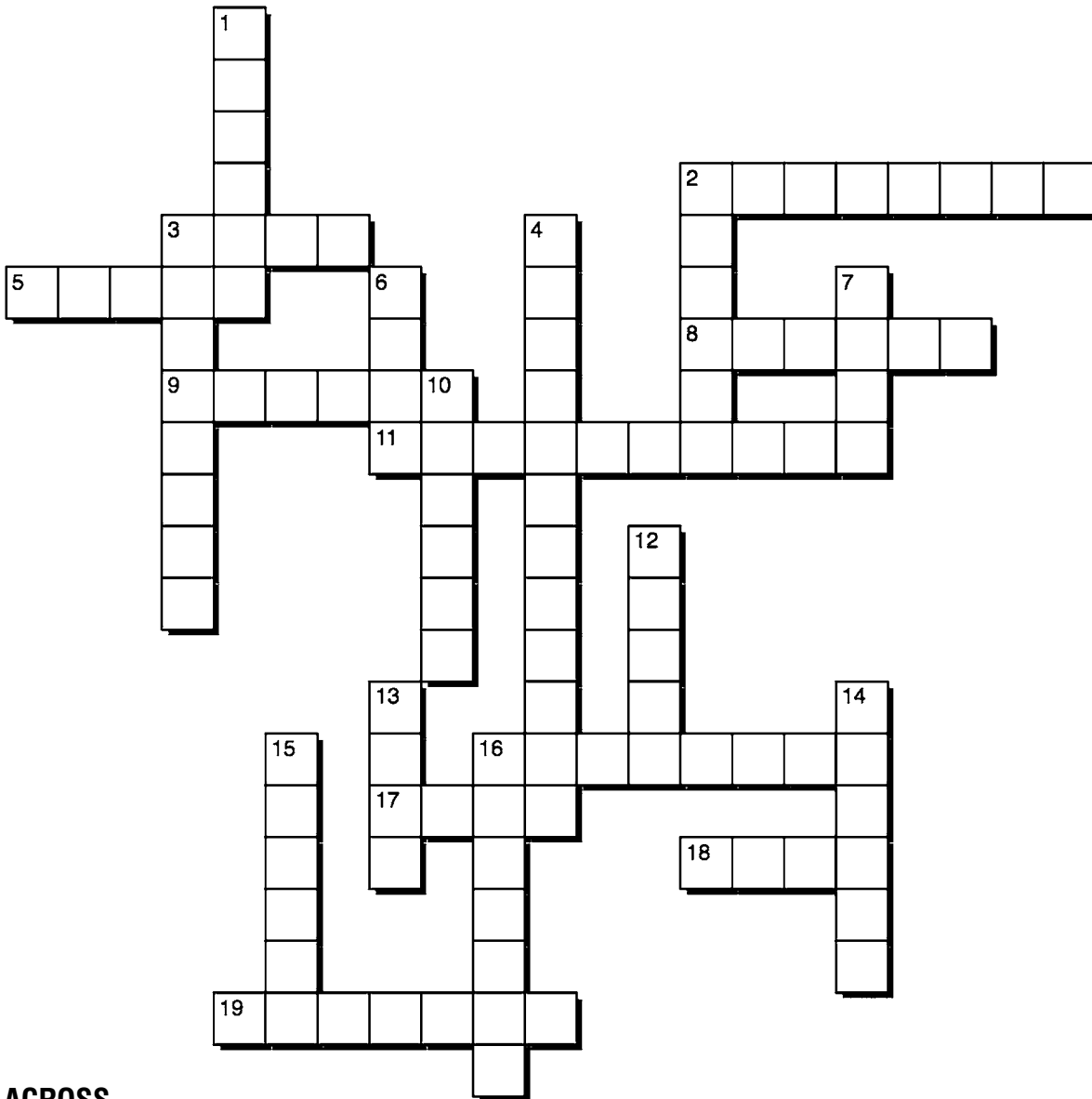
Supported by a grant from



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

SMILES

Crossword Test your knowledge of church trivia with the questions below.



ACROSS

2. One anglicized version of the Hebrew for "Praise the Lord."
3. Often numbered and rented to families as a means of raising funds for the church: _____.
5. Where gifts to and from God are exchanged in a sanctuary: _____.
8. In the Book of Luke, these were used rather than palms (branches).
9. This person helped Jesus carry his cross: Simon of _____.
11. Meaning *residence* or *dwelling place* in Hebrew, the _____ was the portable tent where God dwelled with the Israelites in the wilderness.
16. The French word for Easter (*Paques*) recalls the Old Testament feast of _____.
17. First person at the tomb of Christ after resurrection.
18. Jesus washing the feet of the disciples appears only in the Gospel of _____.
19. From the Latin word for *lattice*, the _____ is where the Lord's table and pulpit are located.

DOWN

1. Noah was told to build the arc with _____ wood.
2. The poles of the Tabernacle were made of _____ wood.
3. Food traditionally eaten the day before Lent begins.
4. The first day of Lent is _____.
6. Sanctuary item meaning *spring* or *fountain* in Latin: _____.
7. From the Latin word for boat, an early Christian symbol, the _____ is the main seating area in a church building.
10. According to legend, the name of this Christian festival is derived from the name of the Anglo-Saxon goddess of fertility, symbolizing rebirth and dawn.
12. This disciple shared dishes with Jesus at the last supper.
13. In Revelation 21, the Temple is replaced with God and the _____.
14. The altar of the Temple was made of _____.
15. One of two Old Testament characters who appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.
16. A traditional Lenten treat with three holes, recalling the trinity in the shape of crossed arms folded in prayer.

Quotation Location: The Lord's House



Draw a line connecting the scripture reference with the correct quotation, then check your answers in the Bible.
(NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION)

Matthew 7:24

In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

Hebrews 3:4

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.

1 Peter 2:5

For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

John 14:2

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

Psalms 127:1

... like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS

DOWN
1. Gopher
2. Acacia
3. Pancakes
4. Ash Wednesday
5. Elijah
6. Font
7. Nave
10. Easter
12. Judas
13. Lamb
14. Bronze
15. Elijah
16. Pretzel

ACROSS
2. Alleluia
3. Pews
5. Altar
8. Cloaks
9. Cyrene
11. Tabernacle
16. Passover
17. Mary
18. John
19. Chancel