



Presbyterian Youth in Action



The Canada Youth (CY) 2018 community gathered at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont., from July 2 to 7, and once again celebrated the opportunity to be awakened, engaged and encouraged through God's word and by God's people.

The event brought together 365 participants with representation from each synod. Eighteen international guests from four countries (Ghana, Taiwan, Malawi and Lebanon) were also welcomed into the community.

Worship at the event was a highlight for many of the participants. The community gathered each day for worship and it was not uncommon to have participants lined up, waiting for worship to begin—indeed a unique Presbyterian experience! The preaching team of the Rev. Emily Bisset from Calvin Presbyterian Church in Toronto, and the moderator, the Rev. Daniel Cho from St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Toronto, was exceptional and very well-received by the participants. Music leadership

was provided by the Rev. Reuben St. Louis and friends.

CY events continue to be a wonderful opportunity for youth, young adults and leaders to connect; to celebrate and affirm not only their faith, but also their unique witness as Canadian Presbyterians. This remarkable event is made possible by the financial support provided by *Presbyterian Sharing* and is augmented by generous gifts from the Ewart Endowment Fund and personal donations. Many youth groups, congregations, presbyteries and synods provide funding to their participants.

Volunteer leadership gifts were given so generously by so many! Planning Team members, community life deans and chaplains, event staff, advisors and denominational staff gave willingly of their time and talent throughout the planning process and the event itself.

Check out the amazing images from Canada Youth at presbyterian.ca/cy-images

Stirred Up at CY2018

*By Abigail and Noah Law
from Eckville, AB*

My name is Abigail Law and this was my first year at Canada Youth. It was an amazing experience as I was able to try new things, meet new people and create lasting memories.

I had heard from my brother Noah a little bit of what CY was like, but any expectations I had were definitely surpassed. I wanted to be able to have the same kinds of experiences he had, and it really was a fantastic week. I had the good fortune to meet some of the international visitors from Malawi and Taiwan; as well as some Canada Ministries' guests from Surrey. I had the opportunity to learn about them, their culture and their homes, as well as to teach them a little bit about ours. I know I surprised one of the people from Malawi when I told him that Canada had different time zones (he didn't know that was

a thing) and that the far north only had about one hour of daylight in the winter, whereas it was the land of the midnight sun in the summer. It was interesting to hear how different lifestyles are in each of the different countries.

CY really gave me the opportunity to meet Christian people my age who share similar beliefs. I'm from a small town that doesn't have many Presbyterian youth, so having so many of us in one place was a nice change. I think CY is important because it allows faith to be seen in action. You can hear what people are doing in their communities and churches as well as see how it is affecting people. I valued my time there because it let me see a part of the church I don't feel like I've seen before. CY has certainly impacted my faith because I feel more connected within the church. I was able to sense God's love around me through others' ac-

tions, words and the light shining in them. I feel like my eyes have been opened and I have seen God's work in a new and fun way.

My name is Noah Law and CY 2018 was the third CY that I have been to—and there was no doubt that it was my favourite one yet. I enjoyed rekindling old friendships and making new ones with people from across Canada and from different countries. One of my favourite parts of CY is the music. Whether we are up dancing at Morning Energizers, singing during worship or listening to the songs performed at the Talent Show, music is everywhere. I also love the evening activities. The planning team comes up with different games every night and they never disappoint. This year we got to play jumbo versions of board games, become secret agents solving the missing case of Rexy, and be entertained

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MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

“Kids These Days!”



By the Rev. Daniel Cho,
Moderator of the
2018 General Assembly

At one time or another some of us have probably uttered the words, “Kids these days...!” It was likely meant in an innocent, tongue-in-cheek way as a response to something we saw or heard from a “young” person. It’s all relative—what do we mean by “kids”? Are they children? Teenagers? Young adults? Or does it refer to anyone who happens to be younger than we might be? Whatever our understanding, my message is dedicated to this young generation that sits in the pews on Sunday mornings, but whose presence isn’t always felt as it should be.

I started some 30 years ago in ministry as a youth pastor. I loved those days—it was full of energy, not necessarily because I was energetic but because the natural energy of the youth rubbed off on me. The relationships we enjoyed were genuine as was their faith expression. They “told it like it is.” Anyone who’s planning to work with youth had better brace for some bluntness. Once, I was a guest speaker at a youth retreat, and after the first service during a break time a young girl plopped down in the seat next to me and, foregoing the usual pleasantries, gleefully declared, “Hi, I’m Jean... you’re weird!” Believe it or not, she meant it as a compliment, and I received it as such. I venture to say that to be called “weird” is somewhat of a badge of honour when it comes from a junior highschooler!

Even though I was a leader, it was the youth who taught me so much about authentic ministry and relationships just by being themselves. I didn’t realize how much I had learned from them until I was several years out of youth ministry. That experience in many ways shaped the attitude and tone with which I try to relate to others, urged me to be clear in how I communicate the Christian faith in my preaching and teaching,

and modelled the need to sustain our sense of spiritual passion and vision as people of God (Joel 2). For that, I am so grateful.

In these last few months, I’ve had the wonderful privilege of participating in a variety of events and activities involving the young people of our church. Lifting up this youth generation is a highlight for my moderatorial year and so it’s been especially gratifying to meet so many of our younger members and join in their activities.

One of the events included Canada Youth 2018, where I was one of the preachers. This was a tremendously successful event with hundreds of participants all across Canada, from B.C. to the Atlantic provinces, along with the largest international youth delegations to date. There was such a strong positive response to all the offerings there, including the workshops, discussions, services, music, activities and so on. Everyone soaked up the whole experience. I got to know several of the youth and hear their stories of faith, family, personal struggle and hopes for this church of ours. This is what I consider the most meaningful takeaway for me—being invited into their lives, and sometimes into their pain. But even in the midst of this struggle and discouragement they didn’t allow it to define them or their faith. CY meant something to them and that’s why it was important for so many of them that they be there. It taught them that their church is a safe and welcoming place, where relationships really matter, are cherished and celebrated. I was very moved and encouraged to share that time with them.

There was also a two-day youth consultation organized by International Ministries (see page 17). It brought together about 20 young people in a variety of leadership roles or who had taken part in an international program. These were extremely gifted, theologically articulate, committed young women and men of deep faith who shared their experiences and discussed the potential roles their generation can have in our denomination, both locally and internationally. I was so impressed with the depth and maturity of their faith and also very moved by their genuine desire to find more opportunities to serve God in and through the church. Their understanding of the Christian mission and the passion and sagacity with which they personally endeavour to discern it belies their youthfulness. I was utterly impressed with all of

them and filled with hope for our future.

Other experiences include late-night talks with the Young Adult Representatives (YARs) at General Assembly. I learned of their backgrounds, heard their faith stories and fielded smart questions about the polity, process and programs. They were very keen and curious about all things Presbyterian and they displayed a faith marked by an attitude of continual spiritual seeking. Although my time with them was limited, it was so encouraging.

I also had the chance to visit Camp Kintail in western Ontario. It was so wonderful to see such excitement and joy in their faces at being with friends in the church and sharing meaningful time in a beautiful setting, learning about how to be the people of God. Often, I’m reminded of how camp experiences can profoundly impact young people. How many count Christian camp as laying the foundation for their vocational calling? The list includes several past moderators, including myself, and scores of ministers and elders. Let there be no doubt that camps shape the hearts of young people for the kingdom and incline their ear to hear the voice of God.

As part of my wish to highlight the youth this year, my international trip to Malawi in early September included two young representatives along with my wife, Esther, and the General Secretary, the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald. We visited with our partners and saw the work of PWS&D in the Blantyre and Livingstonia Synods. And for the first time, the Committee to Advise with the Moderator now includes two young people who sit as full members. In all these examples we have reason to give thanks for the involvement and perspective of youth.

As God’s people we are inextricably connected to one another in faith and communion. As Paul tells us, we all are members of the body who confess the one Lord. I see young people as a gift for the church. And these gifts will only be further nurtured by the more seasoned members and leaders.

So, let us be encouraged to foster one another’s growth in the kingdom so that they may continue to have assurance of their faith, conviction of their passion, stewardship in service and love of their neighbour. I, for one, am confident that they will be up to the challenge.

“Wow...kids these days!”



The moderator with young adult representatives at General Assembly.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Re, Chris Clarke’s Letter to the Editor regarding military flags in the sanctuary:

While it is certain that troops in WWI and WWII suffered, and the flags are an indication of that suffering, the only testament that the church should require is the suffering of Jesus for love’s sake. In no way is the suffering of military troops to be equated with Jesus’ suffering. For the former suffered for imperialist war and for nations’ sake, whereas Our Lord suffered so as to bring all of that—war and nation alike—to an

end. All military and national flags should, thus, be removed from all Presbyterian churches, and any alliances with Canadian military regiments brought to an end, while all padres resign and no longer bless war of any kind. Flags are certainly to be replaced, as are our national allegiances, and only by the suffering love of Jesus, which calls all war-making and all violence to end. We remain Christians, first—and Canadians, a distant second—committed to loving all nations’ enemies. —Joshua Weresch

Oops!

The “Just Wondering” article in the summer 2018 edition stated that only ministers of Word and Sacraments are permitted to administer the Sacrament of Baptism. That is incorrect. Book of Forms 201.4 states, “Where a presbytery discerns that there is no minister of Word and Sacraments available

to administer the sacraments (both the Lord’s Supper and Baptism) in a pastoral charge, it may commission a ruling elder or a member of the Order of Diaconal Ministries to do so on the following terms:” Four terms are listed. We apologize for any concern this error may have caused.

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The Facebook of the Church



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

It's a mistake to idealize the early church as a golden age. *Living Faith* says that "The Church is Christ together with his people...in constant need of reform because of the failure and sin which mark its life in every age." The church, even at its best, has faults and flaws.

The legend is told that Saint Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra (i.e., Santa Claus) became so enraged during a debate with his opponent, Arius, at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 that he struck him on the face. Nevertheless, we are told that the members of the early church practiced a kind of fellowship that distinguished them from the brutal world around them.

Acts 2 records that early Christians "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. All were together and held everything in common. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all people. And the Lord added to their numbers daily."

Aristides, living in the second century, described how people were persuaded to become Christians because of the tender love and respect shown them by their Christian masters, parents and neighbours. Tertullian wrote around AD 197 that the generous deeds of love enacted by Christians led people to brand them as a positive social force. "'See,' they say, 'how they love one another'... 'See,' they say about us, 'how

they are even ready to die for one another.'" And even if, as St. Augustine reportedly said, Tertullian spoke with more enthusiasm than accuracy, there was evidently something compellingly distinct about the way early Christians spoke and acted that attracted new members in droves.

Recently, at a dinner party, a fellow guest asked what I did for a living. When I said I was a minister, she took out her phone and began to surf the net to read about The Presbyterian Church in Canada. She found these words from the mission statement of the church in the "Who Are We" section of the PCC website:

- Our mission, in a world where many do not know the gospel, is to tell the biblical story in ever new and creative ways.

righteousness, justice and reconciliation in the church and in the world and to hear, respect and cherish all God's children.

- Our mission, in a world of limited resources, is to use God's gifts wisely and fairly for the good of all.
- Our mission, in a world of many nations, peoples, denominations and faiths, is to learn from one another and work together for the healing of the nations

Soon everyone at the table had their phones out and were reading comments on a Facebook page loosely associated with the PCC. I grimaced as the diners groaned and scoffed at some of the bitter comments they read; someone began singing "And they'll know we are

the goals and objectives we have set for ourselves and, presumably, to also help us tell the gospel story, point to the redemptive work of Christ in the world, show respect and cherish God's people.

The church is slow to harness technology for the good news of the gospel and the extension of the Reign of God. But we easily "conform to the patterns of the world" and join the bandwagon of bad news and behaviour that flourishes on Facebook, Twitter and in the comment sections of web pages. There is little the President of the United States could teach some of us in the church about the egregious use of social media. (*Egregious* literally means "outside the flock" and once meant outstanding and illustrious but has taken on a negative connotation and could be taken to mean *antisocial*.)

There was an instructive moment at General Assembly this year when the Young Adult Representatives indicated they felt that, generally, the commissioners of the Assembly did not deal with each other respectfully, on some topics. I wonder how they would have reacted if they were to read some of the Facebook postings by some church leaders. I suppose it's counter-intuitive to quote twice in one article about the use of technology by someone writing nearly 2000 years ago. But Tertullian is eternally instructive when he wrote "from the nature of their conduct may be estimated the quality of their faith. In their discipline we have an index of their doctrine" (from *Prescription Against Heretics*).

While there are number of Facebook group pages associated with the PCC, visit the official PCC Facebook page at facebook.com/pccconnect

- Our mission, in a world wounded by sin, is to point to the redemptive work of Christ and the life-changing presence of the Spirit.
- Our mission, in a world burdened with anxiety and apprehension, is to provide a place of sanctuary, tranquility and renewal in the name of the One who said, "I will give you rest."
- Our mission, in a world where many are oppressed, excluded or ignored, is to call for personal

Christians by our love" in ironic and mocking tones. And then a guest said reflectively, "I have sometimes thought I would like my children raised with the moral teachings of Jesus, but I read this stuff and I would never want my children exposed to this kind of negativity and behaviour. I am happy we aren't involved in a church."

The PCC's strategic plan says that we will all attempt to use technologies to facilitate the achievement of



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Moderator of 144th General Assembly:
The Rev. Daniel Cho



Presbyterians Sharing

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FEATURE (cont'd)

Coming Down the Other Side of CY2018



By the Rev. Dr. Blair D. Bertrand. Blair missed his first Canada Youth this year because he is currently doing youth ministry in Malawi. His favourite leadership role at CY was being an usher in 2000. Well, that and doing liturgical dance. Since then he has written small group curriculums, been the keynote Youth Ministry Track speaker, was a Dean and served on a couple of planning teams.

I've been to the top of mountains and it is true, there is nothing quite like summiting. Getting up has not been easy. You've had to contend with mountain weather, which can move from stormy to sunny in moments. The climb puts strain on your body, even more depending on how much baggage you carry. Sometimes the relationships you thought would carry you let you down, and people you didn't expect to count on come through for you. But, when you get to the top, all of this makes the experience that much richer.

People are often surprised that coming down is as hard, maybe even harder, than going up. The weather continues to be unpredictable. On the way up, your muscles take the strain; on the way down, your feet and knees are pounded with each step. Relationships begin to change as people anticipate getting to their cars and heading back to their "real" life. The danger and pain and change you experience on the way down can cast a shadow back onto that summit mountain-top experience you just had.

An experience like Canada Youth 2018 can be like summiting the mountain. Perhaps there has been a part of the experience that is remarkable, giving you a new view into God, yourself or others. Many

find worshipping God with passion contrasts significantly with their congregational experience. Others find really good friends who are their age, something that they struggle to find back home. Just getting to CY can be an eye-opening experience for some who have not travelled in Canada very much.

Now that it is over, you've been to the top, here is some advice for coming down:

1. Embrace the experience. There is a tendency for those who have not been to the top of the mountain to make it sound like it wasn't as important as you might think. Older and "wiser" people will warn younger people that the experience will not last, that it is simply a flash in the pan and therefore you shouldn't value it. Frankly, this advice usually has more to do with the older person than with your experience. For whatever reason, and I can think of about half a dozen rational ones from wanting to protect you from disappointment to not experiencing God at work in their lives, these older folks confuse your experience with what they experience at this point in their lives.

Whenever I'm tempted to give bad advice to a young person I remember myself at 16. I went to a Christian camp and fell in love twice. The first was with Jesus, a relationship that still drives my entire life. The second was with my future wife, a marriage that is going on 24 years. At 16, a mountain-top experience changed my life by giving me a real relationship with God and with my life partner. I'm not saying that each person at CY has that kind of experience but it is possible, and we should never take away from the power of it. Embrace the power of the experience.

2. Let the experience stay in the past. There is a real danger though that in embracing the experience we try to reproduce it in our everyday lives. Or that we stop embracing our everyday lives because we simply want to get back to the mountain top. In the first case we try to replicate the experience that we had and in the second we work to get back to something that we can never actually return to.

Metaphorical mountain tops are important, at least for me. I found God and my wife there. But I can't live my life with God or my now marriage on the mountain. I give thanks for the experience but also recognize its limits. It is a moment, a wonderful one that can redefine life, but a life is more than a moment.

3. Bring down the truth. What can we do with a moment like CY? We can have our horizons expanded. When you look out off a mountain top the world looks much bigger than it did at the bottom. Once I go down I can remember that. There is now a network of friends and relationships that were developed at these times. My world is a bit bigger now. Equally important is that we can see God at work in much bigger ways than what we experience at our local congregation or place. Maybe your faith in Christ became real at CY. That doesn't go away when you return home; it changes but it does not disappear. When you come off the mountain, bring down with you the truth that you are connected to a much wider body of people and to a God greater than you'd imagined before.

Coming down can be hard. Savour the views at the top; let the experience move you; live out the hard-won truths you discovered.



CY has certainly impacted my faith

Continued from page 1

by a very talented juggler/comedian. Each CY also has a talent show and a party to show off participants' talents and dance moves. CY has a dedicated themed day every year and this year it was based on food security and what that means. There were workshops through the afternoon for people to learn more about food security, and how we can use it to help our communities. The themed days are another of my favourite parts of the program and makes CY different from other events. Spending a week at CY is a choice that I will always make because every experience is different from the last and each CY teaches me more about God and how the church and God can help us here at home, as well as those around the world.

CY is such an important event be-

cause it shows that there is a future for the church. It shows that there is still a generation of people that want faith to be a major part of their lives and want to meet others with similar thinking. Being from a small town in Alberta, it has been difficult at times to show my faith-side but at CY, I have no fear. Everyone chose to be there because they want to meet other people who also have no fear. This year was my first year in the Discipleship Track and at first I was a little skeptical about it, but one thing I learned is that we need to place faith first and make the rest of life fit around it. CY will continue to be a major part of my faith journey, and a major part in my making connections with people throughout different levels in the church.

FEATURE (cont'd)

A Youth Ministry Perspective

By Chelsey Joudrie, youth leader

CY is where people of all ages come together to worship, play and eat lots of ice cream!

For those of you who do not know about Canada Youth (where have you been?) this will be news, and for those of you who do know about CY, this will be a recap. Canada Youth is a five-day Presbyterian conference that takes place every two years at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont. The youth and adults stay in the dormitories and get to experience a taste of university student life, quite literally, as we eat in their cafeteria every mealtime!

There were four different tracks: Youth Track (for those who had graduated grade 9), Discipleship Track ages (ages 19–25) and the Youth Ministry Training Track (ages 18+). There was also a new track created this year called the NEXT Track, which was designed for congregational leadership, that met for the last three days of the week. Each day included energizers, small groups, keynotes, workshops, free time, worship and recreation. It was a full week of love for people and love for God!

The theme of Canada Youth 2018 was “Stirred Not Shaken, Faith Activated,” taken from II Timothy 1:3–8. When we returned home, I wrote a message for our Canada Youth church service about being stirred at CY. I talked about being stirred at the fact we had 14 youth representing Bethel Presbyterian Church from little rural Scotsburn, Nova Scotia. I talked about being stirred when our youth didn’t run off to recreational activities but stayed to sing and do the actions to “My Lighthouse,” and ended up starting a movement when others joined in. I mentioned how I was stirred every time I saw them interacting with new people and creating new friendships. I was stirred watching our youth taking part in leading music at worship and participating in readings. I couldn’t have been any more proud of the 14 youth from our home congregation and all of the other participants at Canada Youth. Their enthusiasm, excitement and love of worshipping God to this day gives me goosebumps.

A word that you hear time and time again during CY at worship, in workshops and/or in conversations is hope. CY gives all of its participants hope. Hope that the church is indeed still alive and well. Hope that the Holy Spirit is in fact working through our youth, and

our youth are feeling empowered by that. How encouraging is that?!

There are many things that I hope for our youth as we journey in faith together. Four of my top things are the obvious: a relationship with God and Jesus; a love and respect for one and all; for them to know how loved they are, and; to know that they are never alone, no matter what they are going through. Sometimes as a youth worker (in whatever capacity) you wonder if you are getting through. Sometimes you may wonder if what you’re saying and doing is actually resonating with them. Through Canada Youth, you get to watch your youth living out what you have been telling them all along! What you have been hoping for them all along. How reassuring is that?!

So what does CY have to offer? I could go on and on about the importance of Canada Youth to all who have attended and will attend. But as I have

“CY gives all of its participants hope. Hope that the church is indeed still alive and well. Hope that the Holy Spirit is in fact working through our youth, and our youth are feeling empowered by that.”

limited words to express my unwavering commitment and advocacy to CY, I will say this: it offers our youth independent faith formation. It offers a larger experience than we can offer at home. As one of my youth’s parents, Laura Rowan, said, “It offers a chance to see that there are many more people like them all across Canada. Kids who are interested in church, in worshipping God, in singing and praising.” It offers a chance to make some really great lifetime friends. It offers a chance for our youth to use their leadership skills. It offers our extroverted, outward enthusiastic youth a platform to be themselves and to engage and share with others. It offers even our quietest, introverted youth to have a safe platform to use their voices. The fellowship here is like no other, a completely inclusive, non-judgmental space where everyone can become comfortable enough to be themselves and to push past what

is their usual comfort zone. How empowering is that?!

Canada Youth offers our youth an opportunity to participate in worship in a way unlike many of them have ever experienced before. It gets them excited about church and being the church. Doing the Canada Youth church service at Bethel the Sunday after CY, all of our youth wanted to participate, and wanted to take part in any way possible, without any fuss. They all felt confident in their ability to lead the service. I believe God was on the move at worship at Canada Youth and now our youth want to share that movement with others.

On the bus trip home (and yes, participants from the Atlantic Provinces travelled over 23 hours on bus, there and back; and yes, it is the best and not-so-best experience!), I debriefed with the youth about what their favourite things were about CY. At first, I was expecting to hear things such as recreation, ice cream or the everyday abundance of chocolate milk, and as wonderfully amazing as those things were and as much as our youth enjoyed them, at the top of their lists were worship and creating new friendships! How amazing is that?!

For me, this was my sixth CY and I have been lucky enough to participate in all the different tracks. Without a doubt I would not be the youth leader, Christian or even person I am today without the experience of Canada Youth. I watched our youth join together in community; I watched them be stirred during every single activity. I watched them be changed by their experience. One of my youth ministry goals is to have as many youth as possible experience what my kids did this year. I believe in the power of community, fellowship and Canada Youth and I think you will, too!

If you are a newbie at youth ministry, like I was two years ago, or if you are well seasoned at working in youth ministry, or if you have some years under your belt, you all can and will gain so much by not only encouraging and supporting your youth to attend, but by attending yourself as well.

You think your youth like you now? Let me tell you, after the bonding experience and the happiness they’ll feel at having been there, they will thank you for the rest of their lives that you convinced them to attend. So, what are you waiting for? Start getting them excited! Start fundraising! And let’s see Canada Youth 2020 be the biggest and best year yet!



A Life-Changing Decision

By Amanda Henderson-Bolton, a veteran CYer, and one of the intrepid Rec leaders at CY2018

When I was in my last year of high school I heard about a new youth event called Canada Youth 2000. I was getting ready to graduate and my friends and I thought it would be a great chance to have one more trip together before we headed out across the country for university. So we signed up, then loaded onto a bus and began the trip from Nova Scotia to St. Catharines. We did not know what to expect when we arrived, but I remember being blown away by the entire experience.

I attended a small church in rural Nova Scotia that I loved, but it is hard to compare to a national conference! Worship that first night was incredible. It incorporated different learning styles and visuals, all in a room jam-packed with other people my age. I experienced my faith in a new way. To be surrounded by my peers from across the country, who gathered to worship and learn and play was an amazing experience. I will never forget the impression the communion service made on me that week.

The second thing that really caught my attention was the recreation. I had never seen anything like that on such a big scale. On carnival night, as my friends and I explored all the games, lights and music, we thought it was the most incredible thing ever. Who knew the Presbyterian Church in Canada had access to so many cool things!?! We loved going out to recreation each night because we never knew what to expect.

The last aspect of Canada Youth that really had an impact on me was the workshops. Canada Youth was where I explored my call to both mission and ministry. I got to pick out the workshops that I found interesting and was able to learn and experience new things. I didn’t know what to expect from Canada Youth going in, but it ended up having a huge impact on my life in the best way possible.

It can be hard growing up and feeling

like there is no one else in the world like you and that your home church is just an isolated little piece. Canada Youth draws people from across this incredible country. It is still to this day one of the most important things I do. Part of who I am is because of Canada Youth and it is a lot of what encourages me in my ministry. I have made friends from coast to coast through my time here. It is a place where participants are encouraged spiritually and a time when we see the youth of the future engage in their faith now. For me, it was, and is, where I experience God in powerful and unique ways.

I didn’t picture myself as having a role in the planning of Canada Youth, but 13 years or so after my first CY experience I received a call that changed my life again, and I became part of the Canada Youth leadership. If you had told me back in 2000 that I would one day get to come back and help by out with this incredible event for youth and young adults, I never would have believed you! It is one of the most important things I do in my ministry. I am encouraged watching our young people thrive as they actively engage in their faith—sometimes in new ways. It is a place where we are stirred spiritually and have our lives broadened. Each time I watch the talent show and see our young people share their gifts, speak honestly, and display their talents I am blown away by their diversity and passion. Getting on that bus in 2000 was one of the best decisions I ever made. You won’t regret it, either!

My prayer for Canada Youth is that it continues to bless, encourage, challenge, motivate and strengthen the lives of our young people, their leaders and our churches. May we never stop being inspired by our youth and their enthusiasm. May Canada Youth continue to be a place where we can meet God face to face. Somewhere among the guitars, cotton candy, pool noodle games and henna, we get to meet God in the everyday moments. I pray that continues for years to come.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Young Adults Representing

Each year, approximately half the 45 presbyteries of the PCC are invited to send a young person, 16–25 years of age, to the General Assembly as a Young Adult Representative (YAR). This is an opportunity for YARs to be introduced to the proceedings of an Assembly while making new friends. YARs are granted the privilege of participating in discussions. And while they do not bear responsibility for decisions taken at the Assembly, they take on an advisory role that allows them to express opinions on recommendations that are of particular interest to them before commissioners vote. In this way the commissioners are “advised” by the YARs.



The Young Adult Representatives at the 2018 General Assembly in June.

By the Young Adult Representatives at the 2018 General Assembly

At General Assembly, the Young Adult Representatives (YARs) presented their experiences visually, standing in a line and stepping forward if they agreed with the statements read. Some of the statements were: Step forward if you prayed for God's instruction. Step forward if you felt the YARs and their advisory votes were respected and taken seriously. Step forward if you felt like this was a safe environment to share your opinion, even if your opinion was in the minority. Step forward if the way the sederunts unfolded made you proud

of the behaviour of the court.

As YARs, we found we had differing positions on the topics discussed at General Assembly, but we still found harmony and community with each other because we are all children of God. Some of us felt disempowered by the discussion and decisions of the week. There were times we felt unheard. But we all left the Assembly feeling hope for the future of the church.

During the four days at Assembly, we came together, not as individuals but as children of Christ. The only thing we knew in the beginning was that we love Jesus

and that is good. Is that not all we need? But then we started talking about our beliefs, and oh boy you know what comes next—we did not agree.

We say now that we had different thoughts and experiences. Yet no matter what question we posed to each other we returned to stand side by side. We respected each other, we supported each other and did not take anyone's space. We stood side by side, in Christ, with each other.

Together with love, with Christ, with God and with each other, we are one.

Leaving Assembly, we know that these commissioners love Jesus and therefore love me and you—and is that not what we need?



The YARs give an advisory vote during Assembly.

Zaria Dulvy, Presbytery of Cape Breton
 Morgan McKay, Presbytery of Pictou
 Jacqueline Cleland, Presbytery of New Brunswick
 Joseph Ragbir, Presbytery of Montreal
 Aaron Head, Presbytery of Ottawa
 Robbie Ott, Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough
 Chukwuemeka Kalu, Presbytery of West Toronto
 Kathleen Tigwell, Presbytery of Barrie
 Samuel Shivcharan, Presbytery of Hamilton
 Lauren Fulton, Presbytery of Paris
 Anna-Marina Giurin, Presbytery of Essex-Kent
 Mark Dyck, Presbytery of Winnipeg
 Matthew Yakemchuk, Presbytery of Assiniboia
 Spence Wiseman, Presbytery of Peace River
 Abigail Law, Presbytery of Central Alberta
 Cordell Storey, Presbytery of Kootenay
 Nate Hartley, Presbytery of Westminster
 Soul Chin, Presbytery of Western Han-Ca



Our Prayer

Gracious Lord, we thank you for this time of togetherness and for the General Assembly for gathering us.

We pray for the Rev. Daniel Cho, our new moderator, as he travels and represents The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

We pray for Stephen Kendall and Don Muir in the General Assembly Office as they carry out the work of General Assembly.

We pray for the commissioners who have put time and thought into their decisions.

We pray that the people who have heard or seen our presentation understand the message we are trying to convey, and we encourage them to be open with the youth and young adults they come in contact with.

Oh Lord, we pray that you stay with each and every person who

attended the 144th General Assembly. We pray that they return to their communities empowered and filled with hope as we continue our journey as a church in Christ in harmony.

In your name we pray, Amen.

Thank you to everyone who welcomed us to General Assembly and allowed our voices to be heard.

INTERNATIONAL

Life Under Occupation: Calling the Church into “Costly Solidarity”

By Amy Zavitz, PCC EAPPI mission staff

“The Holy Land is the best place to lose your faith,” a preacher said during my first worship service in Jerusalem. I was sitting in a pew with individuals from around the world. We had just arrived in Jerusalem as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), unsure of what our next three months would hold, but knowing that none of us would leave unchanged.

We were preparing to venture out to our placements, to begin the work we were sent to do. Our mission as Ecumenical Accompaniers was to witness life under occupation, to engage with and support Palestinians and Israelis pursuing a just peace, and work to change the international community’s involvement, urging them to adhere to international law and work for justice in the region. We use the model of accompanist as the framework for the work that we do. This model is guided by International Humanitarian Law and requires both a strategic local presence and international pressure in order to be effective.

EAPPI has teams across the West Bank and East Jerusalem. I spent my three months working in the Jordan Valley, a fertile strip of land along the Jordan River. Comprised mostly of rural communities and largely out of public view, Palestinians in the Jordan Valley are some of the most oppressed communities in the West Bank.

In April I arrived back in Canada from EAPPI and nearly every person and community that I met asked me to “share their story,” “tell the truth back home” or “speak of the injustice.” To tell of the home demolitions, the settler violence, the children in prison; to share about the forced displacements, the military harassment, the lack of access to water, land, education, livelihood and worship; and to speak out against the Israeli

EAPPI was created in 2002 by the World Council of Churches based on a letter and an appeal from local church leaders in Jerusalem to create an international presence in the region. Sixteen years later, there is a continuous presence of 25–30 volunteers on the ground to provide protective presence and witness life under occupation. Upon returning home, Ecumenical Accompaniers share their first-hand experience within their church and civil society networks to advocate for a just peace in Palestine and Israel, based on international law.

occupation, the dehumanization and the persistent violence.

In the Jordan Valley, we would frequently report on cases of Israeli settler harassment and violence against Palestinians, stories such as this one:

Earlier this year two Israeli settlers approached Bassam (name changed), a 16-year-old boy in the Jordan Valley who was herding and tried to steal his sheep. The livelihood of the family is reliant on the ability to graze their sheep; like many other Palestinians in the Jordan Valley, access to their land is paramount. When the boy resisted, the settlers followed him and called five more to join. They followed him to his community and beat him with iron bars. When his mother ran to help, they hit her as well. The police were eventually called, and the settlers faced no consequences.

Their family lives in constant fear. When we would go visit the family, we were offered a cup of tea and were told about their experiences. The mother of the boy said to us, “Can you imagine what it feels like to be unable to protect your children? They are the most precious thing we have.” The father of the boy said, “Israel is talking about democracy and human rights, but we don’t see this on the ground. I don’t have any rights. We live in injustice.”

Stories like this are not unique. I could speak of Yasmin, a nine-year-old girl who was struck and killed

by a settler car. I could write about Ahmed, an eight-year-old boy who was physically assaulted by a settler as he was walking home from school. I could tell many more stories like these, but I did not hear of one where the settler faced consequences.

I can share stories of Palestinian children who are imprisoned on suspicion of throwing stones and labelled as terrorists. I can share accounts of how these children are taken from their homes in the middle of the night, psychologically and physically tortured into confessing without a parent or lawyer present. I can cite the 99% conviction rate of children in Israeli military courts.

Palestinians in the West Bank must face the complexities of daily life, navigating through checkpoints, roadblocks and an overall permit regime that settlers do not. For the past 51 years, Palestinians have lived under military control, while settlers live under Israeli civil law. Meaning, Palestinians, legally, have very few rights. And in practice, from what I’ve seen, arguably have no rights at all.

Stories such as these speak of the reason that settlements are illegal under international law under the Fourth Geneva Convention. For Palestinians, settlements result in threats to physical security, loss of property and livelihood, lack of access to basic services, and inadequate, or nearly nonexistent, law enforcement to en-



Access restrictions for Palestinians.



Waging peace. PHOTO CREDIT: EAPPI NATASHA D.



An EAPPI member witnessing a Palestinian home demolition.



Palestinians crossing through a gate to access their agricultural lands that have been divided by the separation wall.

sure their safety. They result in vastly unequal legal and political systems between the occupied population and citizens of the occupying state.

We are much more likely to hear about a Palestinian attack on an Israeli rather than an Israeli attack on a Palestinian, whether military or civilian. This creates the perception of an entire people as being violent. And yes, there are a minority of Palestinians who have engaged in violent resistance; but we must remember, these are cries to the world. They are outcomes of 70 years of oppression while the world stood by. Violence is loud, and violence gets the attention of the media. The voice of nonviolence is quiet, but it is persistent and resilient. Nonviolence is the language of the Palestine that I know, but non-violent resistance requires the world to listen and take action.

During these three months the preacher’s words kept coming back to me. I would walk throughout the

Holy Land, literally where Jesus walked, and see so much pain and suffering. I felt angry, sad and hopeless. But I also had moments of joy and moments where I have never felt closer to God. But these moments did not happen in biblical ruins, they did not happen in the dead stones. I felt it among the living stones, the people of the land.

We are in an impossible moment. The global church is called into “costly solidarity” with the local church, to boldly accompany those facing injustice. A ministry of presence cannot be passive, it must speak out in the face of oppression. Accompaniment is daring, by speaking truth to power. We are called into God’s mission. A mission of justice, a mission of peace, a mission of hope and a mission of love.

To participate in this program, go to presbyterian.ca/missiontrips

Settlements are Jewish-Israeli only cities, towns and villages that have been established in the occupied Palestinian Territories (and the Golan heights). According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, settlements are in violation of international law. **Settlement outposts** are settlements that have, in theory, been established by individuals without the authorization of the Israeli government but benefit from services that Palestinians are denied and backing from the Israeli military. Those living in settlements are Jewish-Israeli citizens, called **settlers**.

PRESBYTERIANS SHARING

Together, We Are Christ's Church



First stop for international Youth in Mission participants from Malawi and Taiwan at our nation's capital.

By Heather Chappell,
Stewardship and Planned Giving

Children and youth are valued members of the body of Christ, with gifts, insights and wisdom to share. They are not the church of tomorrow—they are the church of today. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is committed to welcoming and nurturing young people on their faith journey.

It's not easy being young in the church today, and young people often feel isolated in their congregations. Gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing* support programs like Canada Youth, which brings together hundreds of youth, young adults and youth leaders from across our denomination to enjoy and celebrate their vibrant faith. A CY2018 participant shared, "Who knew Presbyterians could have this much fun when they get together to worship God?" Over 4,000 people have attended Canada Youth since its beginning, and its impact has been felt across the denomination.

Each year, Young Adult Representatives (YARs) between the ages of 16–25 attend General Assembly on behalf of their presbyteries. This is a unique experience, giving participants an opportunity to experience the inner workings (including the joys and frustrations) of the wider church, meet people from across our denomination, and most importantly, keep the concerns of youth in front of the larger Assembly. It is hoped that YARs will return home with a new sense of God at work in our church

and in the world (see page 6).

The PCC's Youth in Mission (YIM) program engages young people in the mission and ministry of our denomination as they accompany Presbyterian mission partners in Canada and internationally through short-term mission experiences. Participants share in the mission of the church, serve others, experience personal growth, learn new skills and grow in faith. These opportunities change lives. Kathleen MacIsaac travelled to Ghana through YIM in 2017. She shared, "My time in Ghana taught me the enjoyment and fulfillment one can find in doing God's work; how you can worship anywhere, even under a tree on a starry night; that having a faith that works means having perseverance through hardships and finding that much more enjoyment and appreciation for the good times. I am thankful for the experience and all that I have learned along the way." As part of the YIM program, 16 young adults from partner churches in Malawi, Lebanon, Ghana and Taiwan were thrilled to visit PCC ministries, worship with congregations and attend Canada Youth 2018 (see page 17).

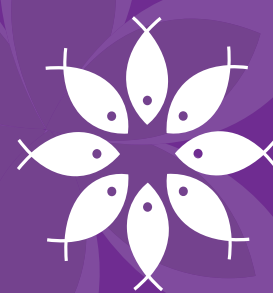
Through gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*, we walk in partnership with ministries like Winnipeg Inner City Mission (WICM) in Winnipeg. WICM provides a safe space for children and youth through after-school programs that are geared toward education, self-esteem and relationship building. Participants receive nutritious snacks, guidance on home-

work, positive peer relationships and loving mentorship from adult supervisors. WICM also runs a Learning and Play program, which uses play to help young children build self-esteem and gain important pre-kindergarten knowledge, while teaching caregivers how to nurture and teach their children at home in a way that promotes literacy and learning.

These are just a few of the ways that gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing* are supporting children and youth across our denomination and beyond. There are many more: The Indigenous Drekey children in Taiwan are learning about their culture and language through Bible translation; youth at Knox church in Weyburn, Sask., are participating in an exciting new music ministry; Christian Education leaders are finding inspiration at the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators' yearly conference...all through gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*.

Ministry with children and youth provides opportunities to build relationships and grow together in faith. After a week spent at Canada Youth in July 2018, the PCC moderator, the Rev. Daniel Cho, shared, "We're very thankful for all our youth; let's continue to encourage, challenge and pray for them... Because together we are Christ's church!"

Presbyterians Sharing supports the mission and ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Visit presbyterian.ca/sharing to learn more.



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EVANGELISM

Cyclical PCC: A Church Planting Initiative

By Jen de Combe, Associate Secretary of Canadian Ministries

The PCC is faithful to a vision of the church where ministries thrive, disciples are called and God is adding to our number every day. This is a bold vision, but God is already calling leaders to plant new and innovative churches.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has partnered with Cyclical Inc, a church planting network connected with the PC (USA), to launch a nationwide initiative designed to encourage leaders to take first steps toward church planting. This initiative moves leaders through a three-step process of discernment, call and vision, that could lead to establishing with a presbytery a sustainable new ministry.

Step 1 – Discerners: Participants will join others from presbyteries that are also considering planting a new worshipping community and will be matched with a coach to help refine a vision for this new ministry. The activities involved in this phase of the process include developing a vision, identifying partners and gathering a church planting team.

Step 2 – Starters: This phase will begin the work of starting a new worshipping community. Starters meet with others who are also beginning new worshipping communities and will continue to work with a coach

to help them take steps toward living out the vision God has placed in their hearts. In this phase, participants will finalize the vision with the presbytery, continue gathering a church planting team, develop an initial vision for administrative structure and personal health of the leadership team, move toward sustainability and begin public worship.

Step 3 – Churches: In this phase, leaders stabilize the vision and work to establish administration and financial sustainability. They begin to think about next steps into the future.

Are you being called?

God calls diverse people to be involved in church planting: young and old, lay and ordained, experienced and just starting out. You may have the gifts and skills to answer this call. Are you ready to find out? If yes, then we invite you to go online to fill out a registration form at presbyterian.ca/cyclical-pcc or contact Canadian Ministries at canadianministries@presbyterian.ca.

Church planting is a ministry of the whole church. Alongside those who are called to lead new worshipping communities, we need people who will pray for the leaders, champion the emerging ministries and encourage leaders in their communities to explore this exciting call. If this is an initiative that you find exciting and would like to support but aren't feeling called to lead, we would also love to

hear from you.

How do I get involved?

Step 1: You communicate your interest by filling in a basic information form online at presbyterian.ca/cyclicalpcc. This will be the beginning of a longer application process.

Step 2: A group of up to 40 potential new worshipping church community leaders will attend a discernment event designed to help them determine how they might better sustain or prepare for this important ministry.

These events will happen in early 2019 in two locations:

Vancouver: January 23–25, 2019
Toronto: February 27–March 1, 2019

Step 3: Participants with identified gifts will gather at a spring event to begin building a network of church planters and be trained in the principles of starting new worshipping communities.

Step 4: Participants will be grouped into teams of approximately 10 participants and assigned a coach. These teams will meet online monthly and will support each other as they move through the cyclical process.



FAQs

What is a new worshipping community?

- A community that focuses on gathering new disciples of Jesus Christ
- A community that explores forms of gathering disciples in ways that fit our changing cultural context
- A community gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament
- A community that seeks to join God's mission in the world
- A community that develops sustainability in leadership and finances

I have no experience in church planting. Can I be considered to be a participant in this process?

Yes! God calls a wide range of people to serve. This process will help you discern if God has gifted you for this type of ministry.

I am not ordained, but I feel I have the gifts and passion to become involved. Can I take part?

Cyclical PCC welcomes participants from all backgrounds to participate.

I'm currently serving as a minister of a congregation. Can I take part?

Yes! The hope of this initiative is to gather many different types of leaders and to start different forms of worshipping communities. We imagine that God will encourage leaders to start parallel appropriate ministries and we believe that God will call our established churches to start new churches.

I'm already involved in a new worshipping community. Can I still get involved?

Yes! This initiative is designed to encourage and support those who sense a calling to start new worshipping communities as well as those who are already involved.

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Details about the confidential, safe and respectful process
presbyterian.ca/listening

HOW TO SHARE?*

rainbowcommunion@gmail.com
1.800.619.7301 ext. 300
Rainbow Communion | P.O. Box 40113
Waterloo Square, Waterloo, ON N2J 4V1

- Obtain a copy of the Welcome and Consent brochure
- Share your story in person, in writing or orally, by phone or teleconference
- Listening Spaces will only be available until **June 15, 2019**

*For those who either serve with Rainbow Communion or those who share their stories, who might otherwise be subject to discipline with respect to the PCC's stance on same-sex relationships, censure has been suspended indefinitely in order to allow them to participate freely and honestly. (A letter verifying participation will be provided.)

JUSTICE

KAIROS Announces Women of Courage Program

With files from KAIROS Canada

KAIROS Canada is an ecumenical partnership of 10 churches and religious organizations, including the PCC, working together in faithful action for ecological justice and human rights.

Recently, KAIROS announced a renewed collaboration with the Government of Canada to deliver the Women of Courage: Women, Peace and Security program in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Philippines, South Sudan and the West Bank. Global Affairs Canada will inject \$4.5 million over five years to support the work of five grassroots women-focused organizations that help to heal female victims of war, while empowering them to be peace builders.

Matching funding from Global Affairs Canada by 25 per cent, KAIROS will invest \$1.3 million into this program of transformative psycho-social counselling, legal accompaniment and human rights training for women survivors of war and agents of peace.

KAIROS Canada Members

The Anglican Church of Canada
 Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace
 Canadian Religious Conference
 Christian Reformed Church in North America (Canada Corporation)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
 Mennonite Central Committee of Canada
 The Presbyterian Church in Canada
 The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF)
 Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
 The United Church of Canada

KAIROS' Women, Peace and Security program will empower women to contribute to inclusive, equitable and sustainable peace with justice in conflict zones, where women are at particular risk.

The program resonates strongly with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, which identifies gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as the best way to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. The feminist policy also identifies women, peace and security as core action areas.

Historically, women have played a key role in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in building and sustaining inclusive and just peace, a role recognized in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). According to research by Inclusive Security, peace agreements have a 35 per cent greater chance of being more effective and durable when women are key players in drafting them.

Yet men's voices and experiences

continue to dominate peace-building processes. From 1992–2011 only two per cent of chief mediators and nine per cent of negotiators in peace processes were women, according to research from the International Peace Institute.

KAIROS' Women, Peace and Security program will support five of its long-term global partners: Ecumenical Voice for Peace and Human Rights in the Philippines (EcuVoice), Héritiers de la Justice (DRC), South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), Organización Femenina Popular (Colombia) and Wi'am: Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center (West Bank).

Despite limited funding, these partners have persisted in their programs in contexts of extreme human rights and humanitarian crises, and KAIROS has maintained strong relations of solidarity, providing moral, financial and advocacy support.

Today, KAIROS and its global partners welcome this renewed opportunity to work with Global Affairs Canada on women, peace and security, particularly in the context of the feminist policy. This program, which



An Organización Femenina Popular (OFF) workshop for women in Colombia.

requires critical support from donors to secure the KAIROS 25 per cent match, will allow partners to reach many more women and significantly boost their efforts to build sustainable, just and equitable peace in countries that have suffered some of the worst and most protracted wars in the world.

To learn more about KAIROS, go to kairoscanada.org



An OFF sign reads, "Women, don't be quiet! Your silence nurtures violence."

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JUSTICE

A Green Outreach Story of Scottlea Community and Prayer Garden

Karen Lethbridge, Convener of Scottlea Community Garden Committee, Scottlea Presbyterian Church, St. Catharines, Ont.

Scottlea Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, Ont., is a small church with a big heart that reaches out to the surrounding community in creative ways. The members of the church recently decided to use the large property behind it in a way that would benefit both the community and the church.

Some of the families that live near the church dwell in high-rise apartment buildings and lack the space to grow their own fresh vegetables, even though they would love to do so. Among these families are many newcomers and recent immigrants to the city of St. Catharines. In the spring of 2018, we created a com-

munity vegetable and prayer garden, building 20 raised beds that we offered to 20 families. Right after Victoria Day in May, gardeners sowed their vegetable and herb seeds and we now see that the plants are thriving beautifully. The new gardeners and their family members often come to the garden to care for and harvest the fresh vegetables that are nurturing their bodies, minds and even spirits. We try to share God's love by calling the vegetables they grow "life." The gardeners and their family members eat not just vegetables, but God's life in the vegetables.

This community garden outreach has allowed our members to get to know people they would not otherwise come into contact with. In this way, we are trying to discover the practical needs of the wider community, needs for which the church

might be able to develop new outreach ministries in the future. The garden project is a tool through which both community and congregation can become one in the unity of God's love—growing vegetables, and building trust and one-on-one friendships.

We all hope and pray that the garden will continue to be productive and successful, and that it will draw some of our new friends to participate in the life of Scottlea in the fullness of time. There is also a sense in which this garden project functions as holistic Christian education for all ages. It is a way for members of the church to translate the Gospel of Christ into a very practical, down-to-earth ministry that allows them to integrate their Christian faith into their daily lives and also develop their leadership skills and spiritual gifts.



Toward (Un)Common Ground: Music, Worship and Reconciliation

By Chris Fischer, Pastoral Musician at Knox Presbyterian Church, Guelph, Ont.

On Friday, June 1, Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre in Puslinch, Ont., near Guelph, hosted the fourth annual Music and Worship Conference for musicians, clergy and lay leaders from across the ecumenical spectrum. This year, the theme was: "Toward (Un)Common Ground: Music, Worship and Reconciliation."

The planning group included myself, Bruce Weaver (a lay Anglican, and Guelph-based Haudenosaunee elder, of the Mohawk Territory of the Bay of Quinte), Deacon Scott Knarr (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and coordinator of the Music for the Spirit program at the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory), Dr. Gerard Yun (Assistant Professor of Community Music, Wilfrid Laurier University), and Theresa McGregor (Anishinaabe, and member of the *Mino Ode Kwewak N'Gamowak* / "Good Hearted Women Singers" drumming circle in Kitchen-Waterloo, Ont.).

Over the course of several meetings, our team crafted a day that would evolve within the shape of a circle: a non-threatening, egalitarian model for a day of music, ceremony, teaching and sharing. We, as planners, got to know one another as people, and not only as musicians or

teachers or facilitators. This deeper collaboration of ideas and expertise influenced our work on the day of the conference in a way that allowed participants to embrace song and story, and to share in the building of relationships with Indigenous people and Indigenous spirituality with the potential to develop further when they return to their local congregations.

Gerard facilitated a collaborative, shared musical improvisation with everyone as we arrived in the conference hall. This created an atmosphere of openness to new ideas and experiences. After the reading of the Crieff territorial acknowledgement by staff member Fiona Van Wissen, Bruce and Theresa led a smudging ceremony, followed by the sharing of the traditional Seven Grandfather teachings; Bruce offered the teachings, with songs interspersed (chosen by Theresa and two other members of the *Mino Ode* drumming group). People overall were respectful and open to being stretched outside their spiritual comfort zones, and this reality was welcomed and embraced by our First Nations guests, who were more than willing to engage with non-Indigenous people in an authentic spirit of relationship-building and reconciliation. It was evident to all that there was an appreciation of the commonality between Indigenous spirituality and Christian values, and that this could provide a real basis for

churches to reach out to their Indigenous neighbours and nurture local partnerships in the future.

During the lunch break, we all had the opportunity to indulge in conversation and explore the beautiful grounds of the Crieff Hills property. In the afternoon, we reconvened for a presentation by Scott and other guests from Six Nations testifying to the positive impact of the community children's and youth music program called Music for the Spirit. After this, Theresa and her colleagues led us all in singing, drumming and a joyous, enthusiastic round dance. Everyone left energized and excited to begin, or to continue, their own journeys on the path to healing and reconciliation with their Indigenous brothers and sisters. Our Indigenous guests were extremely positive in their feedback, and we look forward to following up sometime in the coming year.

I am so grateful to the staff at Crieff, especially Fiona; to my fellow event planners and leaders, Bruce, Scott, Gerard, Theresa, and our other co-presenters Amanda, Rachel-Lee, Richelle and Caroline; to the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington (Allan Stewart, treasurer) and particularly to Justice Ministries' Healing and Reconciliation Seed Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, without whose financial support this exciting event would not have been possible. Thank you all!



Throughout the day, Rachel, Amanda and Theresa of the *Mino Ode Kwewak N'Gamowak* (Good Hearted Women Singers) shared their gifts for singing and drumming.



The focus of the event was on how church music leaders can encourage their congregations to think about reconciliation and build relationships with the Indigenous communities.

LEADERSHIP

The Way Forward: Questions for the Church

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

During this last leg of my life I have had time to review my long life as a minister of the Presbyterian Church and editor of the *Presbyterian Record*. I have asked myself whether I have contributed anything valuable to my fellow human beings and wondered why during my time The Presbyterian Church in Canada has continued to decline. That has been particularly mystifying to me when I have seen so many talented men and women drawn into the service of this church.

In response to this decline a number of possibilities have been offered. Some say it is simply a response to the materialism and hedonism of our times. Others see it as simply the up and down cycles that the church in history has always experienced. While others declare it is simply the price of being a faithful Christian denomination. I am sure that all of these explanations have some truth in them.

However, I have begun to wonder if we in the church have not in some measure been the authors of our own demise. Not because we have been unfaithful or foolish, although we too often are, but because of those things we treasure and love about our church. Let me give a couple of examples.

We pride ourselves in doing things “decently and in order.” Those who operate outside the box are looked upon with suspicion. To be a Presbyterian one must be prepared to operate decently and in order. Add

to this the insistence that nothing should be done unless we can see it written in black and white in the Book of Forms. But where does this leave the role of the Holy Spirit who always seems to be initiating surprises and calling us to walk in new ways and paths? In our denomination the Holy Spirit would seem to be the forgotten or neglected person of the Trinity.

Even more importantly, we have exchanged “faith” for “belief.” Simple faith in Jesus Christ and a desire to be a disciple and follower of Jesus has been exchanged for a list of required beliefs, whether contained in one of the ancient creeds or confessions or in modern social norms regarding such things as sexual orientation. In doing this, have we become like Esau in the Old Testament, exchanging our birthright for a mess of pottage?

Or are we like the early Christians in Jerusalem who maintained that to be an authentic Christian one must not only have faith in Jesus but also be circumcised. Paul roundly condemned these folk, declaring that faith alone in Jesus was sufficient to be considered an authentic Christian. Have we, perhaps unknowingly, become like them in our generation? Have we placed too much emphasis and invested too much energy in getting it right and believing certain things and failed to nurture the spirituality that modern people often feel, have difficulty expressing, but do not find in the church?

We like to refer to ourselves as a confessional church. We rely heavily on the creeds and confessions of the historical church and often



forget that they are products of their times. In the early church creeds and confessions were barely known. The only one we can be confident about in the New Testament was the simple declaration, “Jesus is Lord.” It was several centuries later that creeds and confessions made their appearance as the church attempted to define what Christians should believe or how we should respond to a perceived heresy in the church. I would argue that we should not view them as permanent features of Christianity for every time and age, nor should we require present day Christians to be tied to them in a slavish manner. They are valuable to see how some Christians responded to the issues of their times.

I appreciate Brian D. McLaren’s comment in his book, *A New Kind of Christianity*: “...the challenge of modernity was to prove that we’re right and they’re wrong. But I think

we have a different challenge in postmodernity. The question isn’t so much whether we’re right but whether we’re good. And it strikes me that goodness, not just rightness, was what Jesus said was the real issue—you know, good trees produce good fruit, that sort of thing. If we Christians would take all the energy we put into proving we’re right and others are wrong and invested that energy in pursuing and doing good, somehow I think more people would believe we are right.”

I was recently asked to conduct the wedding of one of my nieces. In the course of our initial conversation she offered the following, “My fiancé and I are not religious but we are spiritual.” In the past I have been sceptical of such assertions, realizing that to be spiritual today can mean almost anything. But I have begun to wonder if I have been wrong. Perhaps I have underestimated the activity of the Holy Spirit, who we claim is abroad in the world working with believers and unbelievers. Instead of discounting claims about being spiritual I should instead see them as the promptings of the Spirit. I should take them more seriously as both a challenge and opportunity to help such folk enhance and nourish their promptings to be spiritual.

I think Henri Nouwen put his finger on it when he said, “I am afraid that in a few decades the church will be accused of failing in its most basic task: to offer people creative ways to communicate with the source of life.”

It is true that to be considered spiritual can mean almost anything. But at a minimum it should be seen as a form of protest against how people see much of what passes for Christian faith in the church today. It is also an expression of something that many feel is essential to human

life and the desire to express their faith in a variety of ways and still be considered an authentic Christian.

A theologian from my generation, Paul Tillich, described God as “the ground of our being.” Saint Paul, in attempting to engage the Athenians, told them that God was not far from any of them and that in fact, “In him [God] we live and move and have our being.”

My simple plea as we move into the future and attempt to engage the present generation is that we rely more on the guidance of the Holy Spirit and less on past traditions and practices. Presbyterian practice often seems to concentrate not on the Trinity of God but only on the Father and Son and neglect the Holy Spirit. Often we are suspicious and even fearful of those we feel rely too heavily on the Spirit, including those who speak in tongues. As a result the experimental in our faith is downplayed in favour of the historical and doctrinal.

We sometimes decry fundamentalism. But we are all fundamentalists in one sense or another. That is, we hold certain beliefs we would not compromise on, ones we consider fundamental to who we are. My view would be that we be fundamentalist in as few areas as possible. I would like to take the position of the early Christians who in their great variety were held together by their faith in Jesus as Lord, or as one person put it—we should be committed to Christ and for all else be uncommitted. By emphasizing what people must believe to be a Christian rather than simple faith in Jesus and a commitment to follow him, we limit people’s freedom to express what following Jesus means to them, while severely limiting any role for the Spirit. In fact it is basically this that we require of new members, faith in Jesus and a determination to be his disciple. Perhaps this approach should be extended to office bearers in the church as well.

This would not limit the debates we have in the church, including the role of gay people in the church, but it would help to put the discussions in their proper perspective. The discussions would be seen as issues about which Christians might disagree, but all of the faithful will still be recognized as full participants and followers of Jesus.

W. H. Auden put it this way: “He is the way. Follow him through the land of unlikeness; you will see rare beasts and have unique adventures.” I wonder if our approach to the faith limits our ability to see rare beasts and have unique adventures.



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LEADERSHIP

Inter-What?



The Rev. Shaun Seaman, Trinity Presbyterian Church in Kanata, Ont.

You mean you have never heard of an Inter-Mission? You are not alone! For some reason, the majority of congregations, sessions and professional church workers across this fair land have not heard of them. And it's little wonder. After all, the opportunity for an Inter-Mission was only instituted by The Presbyterian Church in Canada in January 1993—25 short years ago.

The Acts and Proceedings from General Assembly 1992 states that an Inter-Mission is a 10-week break from full-time ministry, intended to be a time for the sake of self, not for the congregation, the church or for acquiring academic credentials. There is to be a five-year period of employment in the denomination before an Inter-Mission may be granted. During the Inter-Mission, the professional church worker continues to be paid. The minister on Inter-Mission is responsible for covering pulpit supply costs during their absence and

some Presbyteries have allowed their members to use their Continuing Education allowance for this. Some presbyteries are even including Inter-Missions in calls to ministers coming into their presbytery.

Inter-Missions have been referred to as the PCC's Best Kept Secret. Most ministers, congregations and sessions in our denomination do not know about it. Many Clerks of Presbytery do not know about them. The topic has never been on the agenda of most presbyteries across the country.

To hear of professional church workers going on stress leave is not uncommon across our country. To hear of ministers leaving the profession is not uncommon. To hear of clergy marriages and pastoral ties breaking down is not uncommon. This is not to say that Inter-Missions are the magic solution. But there are times in the life of a professional church worker when "time away" would prevent individuals and congregations from imploding. Clergy are known for their devotion to the pastoral care of the members of their congregation. Frequently, we are not always as good at self-care.

As to why this program is not widely known, I have no idea. But I do know that, now and again, we all need time away from our leadership and pastoral responsibilities. We need time to slow down, to reflect, to get restored and renewed...for life and for service.

It is my hope that presbyteries, colleagues, congregations and sessions learn about and talk about this important opportunity called Inter-Mission.

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GATHERINGS



On June 24, cake was served after the Induction Service of the Rev. Laura Hargrove at First Presbyterian Church in Brandon, Man. Clerk of Session Flo Lockhart is pictured with the Rev. Laura Hargrove.

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Celebrating ministry: On June 3, 2018, after Sunday worship, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Ottawa gathered for a “church family” picture, then a celebration luncheon in the lower hall. After 17 years of service and ministry, the congregation bid a fond farewell to the Rev. William Ball and his wife Christine Ball. We send our love and all God’s blessings with them as they begin a new ministry at Mill Woods Presbyterian Church in Edmonton. PHOTO CREDIT: Candy Lariviere.



St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Carluke, Ont., participated in the Ancaster Heritage Days Parade by creating a float reflecting the parade theme “Happy 30th Anniversary Fieldcote Memorial Park & Museum.” St. Paul's received a trophy for the best theme-related float. The float depicted St. Paul's worship from 1846 vs. worship in 2018. Fun was had by all!

GATHERINGS



In May, Chippawa Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont., sent a team to the local food bank's Go-Kart Grand Prix Fundraiser for the ninth year. This year's team came away with both first and second places in the race, and the trophy for Most Pledges Raised. Chippawa Presbyterian Church has won Most Pledges Raised for all nine years it has participated in the race. Pictured above is the Rev. Doug Schonberg with the trophy and the racing team.



Savour the Summer was a community event organized by Trinity Presbyterian Church in Carp, Ont., that took place every Thursday for the month of June. With food trucks, live music, games, face painting and visits by community service providers like the police, the event was fun for the whole family.



Children from St. Luke's Presbyterian Church in Salt Springs, N.S., were busy chopping vegetables to help farmers in Guatemala grow more on their land. The youth cooked and served up bowls of soup for a stone soup fundraiser in support of PWS&D's Farming for the Future initiative. Exceeding their goal, the small congregation raised \$340—more than enough to help a family have nourishing food for the future.



On May 6, North Caradoc-St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Strathroy-Caradoc, Ont., celebrated their 165th Anniversary with a wonderful worship lead by the congregation's minister, the Rev. Michelle Butterfield-Kocis, with musical guests Amabile Boys Ensemble, an enjoyable lunch and an impressive congregational picture!



Sixteen young adult representatives from PCC partner churches in Ghana, Lebanon, Malawi and Taiwan visited Presbyterian ministries, met congregations and experienced life in Canada prior to attending Canada Youth 2018 at Brock University.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Review of *Seven Fallen Feathers*

Review by Cathy Finlay, Elmvale
 Presbyterian Church in Elmvale, Ont.

Seven Fallen Feathers:
Racism, Death, and Hard Truths
in a Northern City

Written by Tanya Talaga
 House of Anansi Press Inc., 2017

In *Seven Fallen Feathers*, Tanya Talaga tells the stories of Jethro Anderson, Curran Strang, Paul Panacheese, Reggie Bushie, Robyn Harper, Kyle Morrisseau and Jordan Wabasse. From 2000 to 2011, they each left remote communities in the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation to attend secondary school in Thunder Bay, Ont. This book explores the many unanswered questions surrounding their deaths. Talaga is a wonderful storyteller. She grounds and connects the biographies of these students in a history of colonial mistrust and racism, treaties, the Indian Act-

and the Indian Residential Schools System. In doing so, she helps readers to understand how events from many generations ago have contributed to the vulnerability of Indigenous students in Thunder Bay.

Talaga describes how the failure of the British Crown (and later Canada) to fulfill their responsibilities outlined in the Robinson-Superior Treaty (1850), the Robinson-Huron Treaty (1850) and Treaties 3, 5 and 9 (1873-1930) continues to adversely affect the lives of Indigenous peoples. Federal funding for schools on reserves falls well below the funding available for the same services offered by provinces and territories across Canada. Inadequate funding and a lack of appropriate secondary schools on reserves is one reason children leave their communities to attend school in Thunder Bay.

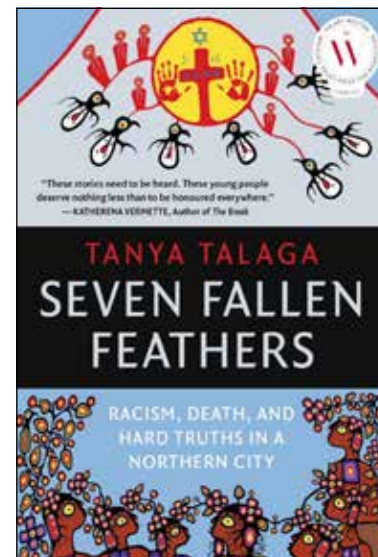
The quality of elementary education available on fly-in reserves varies, so students arriving in Thunder Bay for secondary education face expectations they are often unprepared to meet. Other obstacles are created when students move from a small community surrounded by family to a large city where the students often board with strangers. Supervision levels vary. The city offers many distractions and little support for teenage students who are away from home for the first time.

When Talaga interviewed Alvin Fiddler (Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation) for *Seven Fallen Feathers*, he suggested that Talaga also tell Chanie Wenjack's story. Fiddler believes the experiences of all these students started far in the past and that they are part of the legacy of broken treaties and residential schools.

When Chanie Wenjack was nine, he flew away from his parents and his home in Ogoki Post (in Northern Ontario) to the Presbyterian-run Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School near Kenora, more than 600 km away. Chanie was starting grade one. He was taught his lessons in a second language, of which he knew only a few words. In 1966, when Chanie was twelve, he ran away from Cecilia Jeffrey, and died from exposure while trying to return home. *Seven Fallen Feathers* includes a chapter about Chanie Wenjack and readers are reminded throughout the book of the similarities between children attending residential schools and children from fly-in communities attending high school far away from home.

As Presbyterians and Canadians, we need to know Chanie Wenjack's story and the stories featured in *Seven Fallen Feathers*. Despite living in Ontario, I frequently found myself flipping to the map to locate the communities of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. I wondered: How could that escape my

geography and history lessons in the past? Talaga's extensive notes and index were helpful, and her suggested reading list offers possible directions for further learning. While I was angered and saddened while reading this book, I am aware that I need to know the extent of the damage caused by colonization to begin healing. This book is pivotal in that learning.



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INTERNATIONAL



Participants of the young adult consultation.

Young Adults Voice Their Hopes

By Glynis Williams, Associate Secretary of International Ministries

On May 19–20, 2018, International Ministries of the PCC national office hosted a consultation for young adults on mission, supported by *Presbyterians Sharing*, with the theme: This is Your Church, Your Voice Matters: What is Your Vision?

International Ministries is focusing on nurturing new leadership in the church by engaging young adults in short-term, meaningful internship opportunities and supporting them as they discern Christ's call in their life. Having recently coordinated two successful Young Adult Internships with PCC partners in Malawi and Hungary, International Ministries realizes the exciting potential of working with young adults. The members of this demographic, ages 18–30, are known for their flexibility, love of innovation, collaborative work ethic, strong cultural intelligence and their desire to make a meaningful difference in the world—all positive assets when serving as “living links” between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and our global partners.

“Young people are seeking; they are searching for meaning and for ways that they can serve their communities and get international experience, do things that feel valuable and contribute to society,” shared one participant.

“We are not just the future of the church; we are present in the church. We also have a voice,” said another.

To strengthen the engagement

of young adults in the church, a two-day consultation was hosted at the PCC national office with 14 young adults from across the country and staff of the Life and Mission Agency. Participants had

“It was so great to be with other people who genuinely care about the future of the church.”

—Youth participant

the opportunity to share their ideas, passions and concerns for the church, and more broadly, for the world. Lively discussion took place about how “mission” has been understood historically, and on current approaches to mission in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Consultation participants unpacked how churches can be more receptive to young adults and how we can co-create thriving ministries and live out God's global mission.

One of the most encouraging themes that came up during the consultation was that young adults are “longing to belong to a community” and they would like that community to be the church. The participants in the consultation enthusiastically voiced a desire to be fully, effectively and actively involved in the life of the PCC.

The consultation highlighted a “gap” in church ministry. The participants explained that many congregations focus on children, youth and family ministry, leaving young adults without programs that include them or that address their challenges in life.

For the young-adult generation, life can be overwhelming. Uncertainty about the future, career opportunities and faith life cause anxiety and stress. The consultation participants were clear in asking for networks that would support them on their faith journey and provide guidance when facing the challenges of day-to-day life. We heard a call for communities of faith to listen to young adults, to understand the unique challenges facing their generation, and to work with them to create networks. “Why is there nothing for me at my church after youth group?” lamented one consultation participant.

Involvement of young adults in church life means utilizing their energy, gifts and perspectives, and sharing opportunities to lead, network, connect, learn and serve.

The young adult participants shared their hopes to build a church where diversity is celebrated, there is concern for social justice, there are opportunities to participate in God's global mission expand, there is emphasis on authentic community, we see openness to change, there is more focus on intelligent theology, and engagement through relevant worship is the norm. The young



A breakout discussion group.



Morning worship.

adult participants believe that the wholeness of this vision, which is rooted in love, support and connection, could be realized if they were given more of a voice in decision-making and opportunities for leadership.

A report of the consultation and the recommendations is available through International Ministries. In the end, the young adults who participated in the consultation expressed feelings of encouragement, affirmation and appreciation for having a platform to share their thoughts and voice their ideas for envisioning a bright future for the church.

The young adults who participated are men and women of faith who inspire hope for a future Pres-

byterian witness in our churches. Their expectations of us as a denomination are expressions of hope and declarations of belief that the church will be relevant in an ever more complex world.

For the consultation facilitators, it was a great joy to meet and hear the thoughts of the 14 young adult participants, some of whom accepted the invitation without knowing anyone else. By the end of two days, there was a genuine desire for new friends to stay in touch, and they expressed hope that they would meet again. There was also much laughter, earnest discussion and careful listening to diverse opinions. It was clear that singing and worship were meaningful and joyous...and that faith matters.

Internship Opportunity

Are you a young adult between 21 and 30 looking to engage in God's global mission and connect with the global church? Are you interested in living abroad for 12 months learning about challenges and serving alongside international PCC partners?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is accepting applications for the Young Adult Internship program. These internships are voluntary, but include assistance with housing, transportation and a stipend to cover food and other necessities. If you are interested in exploring this opportunity, please contact Lily Ko (lko@presbyterian.ca) including a resumé, a letter of interest and an explanation of your affiliation with The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Urgent Needs Mount in Many African Countries

By Karen Bokma, PWS&D
Communications Coordinator

An unprecedented number of people across the African continent are in need due to natural disasters and violent conflicts. While we may not hear about these crises in the mainstream media, they are no less real. So many are being affected by disasters not of their own making.

Ongoing violent conflict in both Sudan and South Sudan has caused widespread trauma and left many without the necessities for survival. In Darfur alone, over one million people remain internally displaced due to violent clashes between armed groups and the government that have been going on for years. PWS&D has committed funds to an ACT Alliance project, providing relief in the form of water, sanitation, shelter and education to around 450,000 people in need.

The Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is in the grip of violence as well, and families have had no choice but to leave their homes and possessions behind in search of safety.

Kapinga Abeti was separated from her husband and three of her children after a militia group attacked their home in Kasai. Now displaced, she and her other children are sheltering in a church and receiving food packages of flour, beans, oil and salt, which is helping to keep them alive.

In parts of Somalia, environmental disasters are taking a toll. Above-average rainfall has caused flash floods in some areas, while drought persists in others. Forced to leave their homes, hundreds of thousands of families are facing malnutrition and disease, and are in desperate need of food, drinking water, sanitation services and shelter.

Since rains failed for the second consecutive year in Somalia, Barwaqa Mohamed Ahmed has been able to feed her children only one meal a day. Part of a community of pastoralists, Barwaqa and her family move with the seasons—taking their livestock to fresh water and green pastures wherever they can find them.

Two years of consecutive drought means having to travel farther and farther in order to feed and water their animals. Seeds planted in dry



Mothers wait to have their children screened for malnutrition in Somalia. Children will receive therapeutic food treatments if diagnosed as malnourished. PHOTO CREDIT: WILL SWANSON

ground have not grown without rain to nourish them.

Through a PWS&D-supported program to screen young children for malnutrition, Barwaqa learned that two of her three children are malnourished. They are now receiving fortified peanut paste and nutrient-enriched food to help regain their strength and weight, ensuring they grow properly.

With the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and ACT Alliance, PWS&D is responding to meet the immediate

needs of the hungry and displaced. In partnership with these ecumenical networks, PWS&D is able to respond in parts of the world where we do not have existing partnerships. Contributions to the project also go much further, as matching funds are accessed whenever possible as part of our response.

To contribute to the relief response, visit WeRespond.ca/ donate and mark your donation "Africa Relief."



Kapinga Abeti's village in DRC was attacked by militia and she was forced to flee from her home. She and her children are receiving food packages that are helping them survive. PHOTO CREDIT: MCC/MULANDA JUMA

Join in the Ride for Refuge!



Team Lightning Bolt from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Markham raised over \$2,300 at the Ride for Refuge in Toronto in 2017.

By Anna Muir, PWS&D
Communications Assistant

Where there's a wheel there's a way—by riding your bike, you can help create lasting change for families living in vulnerable communities across the globe.

On Saturday, September 29, join PWS&D in the Ride for Refuge—a cycling and walking fundraiser with locations across Canada—in support of mothers and babies struggling to access medical care in poor regions of Malawi and Afghanistan.

Participants, choosing to either

walk 5 km or cycle 10, 25 or 50 km, will raise funds and awareness for PWS&D's maternal, newborn and child health project. Your participation will help sustain vital work—by training doctors and nurses, providing medical equipment and building up health facilities in remote communities—this project is saving lives and delivering brighter, healthier futures.

With support from the Government of Canada, dollars raised for this project are matched 4:1, making your support go even further. There is still time to register! Visit WeRespond.ca/rideforrefuge.

Tell the Canadian Government "I Care"

By Karen Bokma, PWS&D
Communications Coordinator

Many Canadians who donate to help people around the world cite their thankfulness for living in Canada as one reason they give back. Helping global neighbours is important to them personally—and they want their country to do the same.

Recognizing the vital role that Canadian aid plays in making the world a better place, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, along with its members, are launching I Care—a campaign that urges Canadians to let the government know that they support ending global hunger and extreme poverty.

International aid has played an important role in addressing poverty, and significant progress has been made. Globally, extreme poverty has been cut in half since 1990. In the past 25 years, the number of hungry people globally has decreased by almost 100 million. Maternal deaths have declined by 45 per cent worldwide.

Yet, more needs to be done. One in 10 people are still undernourished. Eight hundred women still die every day from pregnancy and childbirth complications. Many continue to struggle with extreme poverty.

While aid is not the only tool necessary to end global poverty, it is a central piece to achieving poverty reduction. Canadian aid provides immediate assistance in times of crises and invests in opportunities for people living in poverty to improve their livelihoods and realize their human rights.

In the past, Canada has been a leader in responding to the needs of people in the developing world. However, Canada's aid as a percentage of its national income has been slowly declining. The decline comes despite continuing massive needs in the world.

A previous Foodgrains Bank postcard campaign—called Good Soil—generated around 25,000 postcards to the prime minister, sharing that signers believe Canada should be contributing more of its overall aid budget to global agricultural development to help small-scale farmers. Many Presbyterians participated in that campaign.

Through the newly launched I Care postcard campaign, Canadians are encouraged to sign a postcard addressed to the prime minister, letting him know that they care about Canada's role in ending global hunger and poverty and that they sup-



Copies of the I Care postcard are available from PWS&D.



In 2017, Canada contributed 0.26% of its Gross National Income to helping the world's poor—that's \$0.26 for every \$100 of income.

port Canada contributing generously toward these goals.

For more information and to order postcards, visit WeRespond.ca/i-care.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

A Mother's Perseverance Changes Attitudes Toward Girls' Education in Afghanistan

By Anna Muir, PWS&D
Communications Assistant

Zarina felt frustrated by the deeply-held belief in her community that there is little need to educate women and girls.

"Our community firmly believes that girls were born to stay within their home," she explains.

This belief is shared across many parts of Afghanistan. This, compounded by economic constraints and long distances to schools, continues to keep girls at home and away from the classroom.

But Zarmina wanted more for her daughters and the other young women and girls of the community.

Taking a Stand for Women and Girls

PWS&D has been working with partners in Afghanistan to bridge the gender divide and help women and girls gain the skills they need to one day obtain employment and help

overcome poverty.

In addition to providing necessary classroom supplies and training teachers, PWS&D helps educate communities about the importance of sending children, especially girls, to school.

Gender equality training has been key to increase support for girls' education among communities and improve attendance rates. This training was what spurred Zarmina to take steps to get other families motivated to send their children to school.

"It was after the training that we realized it is our responsibility to enrol our children, boys and girls, in school," shares Zarmina.

Zarina and a few other mothers started a committee to share what they had learned during their training. Together, they helped mothers, fathers and village leaders understand that attending school is a basic human right for girls and boys, and one of the most powerful tools

for eliminating poverty.

Before Zarmina's committee started their work, 70 per cent of families in the village resisted girls' education. As a result of their advocacy, this number has been reduced to about 15 per cent.

Because of Zarmina's courage and determination, something that once seemed unthinkable is possible—empowering girls to become leaders and help communities prosper peacefully.

"I really feel proud that I have been effective in serving my community and convincing my people to send their children to school," says Zarmina. "The committee members will most certainly continue meeting community people and working for this cause. We hope that one day there will be no child out of school, not only in our community, but in the entire country."

In the struggle to improve access to education in Afghanistan, cultural norms that limit opportunities for

women and girls are significant obstacles. Over the next three years—advocating for the right to an education and training teachers—PWS&D will help over 14,000 students, many of them girls, get the most from their studies, discover their passions and contribute to the peaceful development of their country.



More families are sending their daughters to school because of gender equality training run by PWS&D partners in Afghanistan. PHOTO CREDIT: COMMUNITY WORLD SERVICE ASIA



Training teachers to improve instructional methods and create a nurturing environment for students is another way PWS&D's girls' education project is improving school attendance. PHOTO CREDIT: COMMUNITY WORLD SERVICE ASIA

World Food Day

By Anna Muir, PWS&D
Communications Assistant

World Food Day—October 16—is a day to raise awareness and action for those who struggle against hunger and malnutrition.

Every day, one in nine people around the world go to bed with an empty stomach. Hunger finds families for a variety of reasons—poverty, conflict, oppression, illness. One significant factor pushing vulnerable communities further into poverty and hunger is an increasingly precarious climate.

Extreme weather patterns—a consequence of climate change—create challenging circumstances for farmers working to harvest plentiful crops and earn livable incomes. Prolonged drought and unpredictable, heavy rains deteriorate healthy soil and devastate crops.

PWS&D is responding in collaboration with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and global partners to teach farming practices that adapt to these circumstances. Techniques that help nourish soil and require less water empower farmers as they work to combat hunger in their communities.

Behind many homes in Badin, Pakistan, covered tunnels made from recycled logs provide a moist, nurturing environment to grow plants

like tomatoes. This was a revolutionary concept for Ahmad, a farmer participating in a project benefiting 650 drought-affected families. "I appreciate the efforts of PWS&D for providing the opportunity to explore this technique," he says.

In backyard kitchen gardens, tangled vines teeming with beans, peas and cucumbers are the result of clay pitchers buried in the soil. When they are filled with water, which seeps through cracks, old pitchers become tools for irrigation.

In Nicaragua, irregular rainfall is less of a problem for Rosa since she learned to store water and start seedlings in cups for better plant growth. Rosa's family and 336 others can better meet their needs thanks to this training.

After learning how to dig canals around his plot, Charles from Haiti can stop heavy rains from washing away his sweet potatoes. "My yield is much bigger," he reports. This technique and others like it are lifting over 4,000 families in three communities above hunger.

Families are improving their diets and well-being in Malawi too. Along with hundreds of other farmers who have learned to rotate different crops on one single plot, Chomex is seeing results. This practice has improved his soil's fertility, the capture of rain-

Simple, sustainable farming techniques make a world of difference in the fight against hunger.

fall and crop yields.

Global failure to tackle the impacts of climate change will affect us all, but it's the world's poorest who will continue to suffer most, trapped in cycles of poverty and hunger.

A sustainable source of food opens the door to abundant life, and sometimes, it's the seemingly simple solutions that can make a world of difference. Together, we can help ensure that farmers benefit from training that gives them hope to rehabilitate their land and provide for their families.

This World Food Day, learn and share about PWS&D's response to hunger. Visit WeRespond.ca/world-food-day-2018 to download resources, read about projects and lend your support.

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



Farmers in Pakistan learn to use clay pots for irrigation through a PWS&D-supported project. PHOTO CREDIT: COMMUNITY WORLD SERVICE ASIA



Chomex (centre) works on his farm with his sons Mzee and Aron in Edundu, Malawi. His family benefited from the crop rotation and composting practices they learned from the PWS&D-supported Malawi Farmer-to-Farmer Agro-Ecology Project. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Follow Me Conference Brings Refugee Sponsors Together

By Rob Shropshire, PWS&D Refugee Program Coordinator

For two days in mid-June, the Follow Me conference brought together 19 people from across Canada, who are involved in or interested in refugee sponsorship, to the national offices of the denomination in Toronto. Drawing on Matthew 4:19, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people," the gathering was named Follow Me—Our Journey as PCC Refugee Sponsors. The conference theme was prompted by the journey of millions in our world who travel to find safety from conflict and persecution, but also the journey we make when encountering them, as we too are challenged to move, to act, to reach out and to change.

Wonderful resource people shared with those gathered. Dóra Kanizsai-Nagy of Kalunba Szociális Szolgáltató

Nonprofit of the Reformed Church in Hungary and Chen Brill Egri of Amnesty International-Israel spoke of the severe challenges faced by asylum-seekers in their countries. Both have been involved in campaigns that have altered minds and hearts and called on their governments to respect migrants' human rights. They shared their realities while offering encouragement and hope in difficult environments—allowing participants to reflect on their own experiences of racism and xenophobia, and of resistance to newcomers, sometimes in their churches, their communities or online.

Glynis Williams, associate secretary for International Ministries at The Presbyterian Church in Canada, shared about the world refugee situation and the plight of asylum seekers hoping for safe haven in Canada. Their stories are those of people in

real need, which go beyond the images we see in the media. She talked about ways that Presbyterians can engage with these newcomers, can walk with them and tell their stories. It is difficult for asylum seekers to speak up as they fear that it would jeopardize the possibility of being accepted in Canada.

Staff from the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program made a detailed presentation on managing expectations when sponsoring refugees, as well as on the power imbalance between sponsors and newcomers, and the rights of those we sponsor to self-determination, privacy and equity. Sponsors need to facilitate, empower and promote self-sufficiency.

Beyond excellent presentations, participants in the gathering stressed their appreciation of this opportunity to share sponsorship experiences, while being reminded of the delicacy



Dóra Kanizsai-Nagy of Kalunba Szociális Szolgáltató Nonprofit of the Reformed Church in Hungary and Chen Brill Egri of Amnesty International-Israel discussed challenges facing asylum seekers.



Follow Me conference participants from across Canada gathered to learn and share about refugee sponsorship.

of engaging with newcomers.

Participants committed to following up after the gathering: sharing information with their session or committee, reaching out to local immigrant and refugee settlement agencies, using resources from the

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, promoting awareness of asylum seekers in Canada and getting more involved in supporting their settlement. And they left behind one request—that we repeat the experience every two years.

Refugee Sponsorships Bring Joy to Congregation

By Terry Collins-Williams, Refugee Program Coordinator at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa

For the past four decades, St. Andrew's Church in Ottawa has had the privilege of being involved in refugee sponsorship, ever since The Presbyterian Church in Canada entered into its first sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada to bring refugees fleeing the chaos of Vietnam. Since that time, St. Andrew's has helped settle about 90 refugees in Ottawa.

Our more recent experience has involved three sponsorship undertakings over the past five years—all involving the settlement of refugees from the Middle East. A family of five from Iraq, who as members of a Christian minority sect had suffered persecution in their native country, had the added misfortune of being trapped in the Syrian civil war after initially seeking refuge there. Due to the disruption of that violence, it took four years from the time we undertook their sponsorship to welcome them to their new home in Ottawa.

Next, we sponsored a family of three fleeing the conflict in Syria. Their

case was facilitated by the Canadian government's initiative to fast track the processing of Syrian refugees in 2015 and 2016.

Most recently, we entered into a joint arrangement with Knox Presbyterian in Ottawa to sponsor an extended family of six. St. Andrew's sponsored a single woman in 2017, and our partnership with Knox allowed her to accompany her sister and brother-in-law, as well as their three children to come to Canada.

Refugee sponsorship has taught us the importance of: empathy, to understand the concerns and needs of those we sponsor; respect, to treat new arrivals as equals deserving every chance to re-establish their lives in a new and unfamiliar environment; and of communication, to establish trust with those we sponsor and coordinate the efforts of our sponsorship team within the church. Each undertaking requires detailed preparation and we benefit from the guidance and advice of the sponsorship team at PWS&D. We have also learned to rely on the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program whose template for sponsorship planning proved to be an invaluable tool for us.



A young girl, sponsored by St. Andrew's, with her teacher.

In June, I had the good fortune to attend PWS&D's Follow Me refugee sponsorship conference—another learning tool. It was a wonderful opportunity to both hear from experts and exchange experiences with representatives of other Presbyterian congregations dedicated to assisting refugees.

St. Andrew's refugee program is dependent on the generosity of many church members who donate their time, goods and financial support. We have received contributions from people outside our congregation who



Along with refugee sponsorship, PWS&D supports partners providing critical care for refugee and migrant families fleeing Syria, Iraq and other conflict zones. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY/ACT ALLIANCE

have heard of our work with refugees and want to assist. In addition, there are programs and organizations within St. Andrew's working to promote refugee sponsorship, including the proceeds from our Fair Trade Table, open after services two Sundays a month, and regular contributions from the Women's Guild and Mission and Outreach Committee.

At St. Andrew's, we look forward to submitting a new refugee sponsorship application next year. In the meantime, we have initiated a program to provide tuition assistance to some refugees who recently arrived in Ottawa to help them pursue post-secondary educa-

tion opportunities.

Both the congregation and those sponsored face many challenges in the combined effort to ensure a successful transition to a new life in Canada. Education and employment-related training, health care needs and adequate and affordable housing are all daunting priorities.

The reward comes in knowing that we have been able to help them find a place of refuge—in seeing the tentative smile of an eight-year-old girl as she takes her first skating strides on the ice, or in congratulating a teen who has graduated from high school in a new country with a new language.

NEWS

After-School Outreach Ministry in Kelowna



Children and youth workers at Thrive.

By Jenelle Mitchell, member, St. David's Presbyterian Church in Kelowna, B.C., and Jennilee Greig, Director of Thrive Out of School Care

Each day after school at St. David's Presbyterian Church in Kelowna, B.C., a group of children are seen playing with adults alongside them. At St. David's, out of school care is special: it's an outreach ministry. We do this through our partnership with a registered Christian charity that runs Thrive Out of School Care in partnership with local churches.

God planted a seed in Kelowna 11 years ago. A young Christian woman, Jennilee Greig, responded to God's nudging and began an out of school program with a difference, and the difference is reflected in its mission statement: To provide safe and exciting out of school care, where children thrive through relational monitoring, interaction with nature and creative opportunities for personal growth of mind, body, soul and spirit.

Thrive Out of School Care begins

with a commitment to meet the needs of families and elementary-age school children with quality programming that inspires children to work with Christian leaders whose goals are:

- To provide active, nature-based activities
- To provide programming that focuses on values and leadership development
- To mentor the children within spiritual values
- To inspire children and families to know Jesus in an organic, relational way.

The Thrive Out of School Care program began as an outreach to the community in one local church, but has steadily grown into partnerships with the five different churches in Kelowna, B.C., and the nearby town of Enderby.

At St. David's, we started our partnership as a ministry by providing the required space and utilities at cost. The first part of our ministry was to provide prayer support for the staff, the children and their families. We

St. Andrew's Kitchener Choir Performs at Carnegie Hall



St. Andrew's choir members in front of the concert promotion poster at Carnegie Hall.

By Sarah Sturtevant, Carnegie Hall Trip Coordinator, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kitchener, Ont.

Douglas Haas, Director of Music for 50 years at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kitchener, Ont., was thrilled to receive a surprise phone call in May 2017. A representative from Distinguished Concerts International NY (DCINY), a concert production company that organizes and promotes concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York, was on the line. The DCINY talent acquisition scout said she had viewed a YouTube video of our Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra's Easter presentation of Handel's Messiah the month before. She told Doug she believed St. Andrew's was one of the finest church choirs in Canada and asked if he'd like to collaborate with DCINY on a performance in the legendary Carnegie Hall the following June.

Most choirs submit audition tapes

then began a practice of individual church members supplying a nutritious snack one day each week. We also began inviting families to our Shrove Tuesday pancake supper and provided special event meals for the families during the year.

For the children to become familiar with the church, we began taking them into the sanctuary for story times, and our music director taught the children about our grand piano, the church organ and singing Christmas carols, which are no longer celebrated in schools.

We are now looking to extend our

for these prestigious "gigs," so it was amazing to be hand-picked from cyberspace! St. Andrew's Sanctuary Choir was the only non-American choir invited to perform in this portion of the concert.

St. Andrew's readily accepted the invitation from DCINY. What followed was an intense year of trip planning and rehearsals.

As part of St. Andrew's Carnegie Hall DCINY Residency, in the two days leading up to the performance, 25 members of the St. Andrew's choir had a wonderful and educational experience working with two gifted American conductors, Kevin McBeth and Andy Waggoner, from Missouri.

Concert day arrived and our St. Andrew's choir joined voices with a 250-voice massed choir called Distinguished Concerts Singers International, which, along with the Distinguished Concerts Orchestra and special guest soloists, performed nine spirituals by iconic American church music composer,

Mark Hayes, on June 17, 2018. These spirituals were a part of Mark Hayes' "Spirit Suites" and included a beautiful arrangement of "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me," commissioned in memory of guest conductor Kevin McBeth's mother. The concert also featured the New York premiere of Mark Hayes' arrangements of "Deep River" and "Ain't That Good News."

Carnegie Hall's packed audience certainly expressed their appreciation heartily after each of the nine spirituals were performed. All the music was moving, delightful and such fun to sing with a full orchestra and incredible soloists.

Twenty-five of St. Andrew's Sanctuary Choir singers, including four St. Andrew's choral scholars, experienced the unmatched thrill of receiving a standing ovation at Carnegie Hall at the conclusion of the "Spirit Journey" concert. For the choir at St. Andrew's in Kitchener, this will remain a wonderful memory for a lifetime!

church service, as they grow up we pray they will know they have a place in the body of Christ. To them Thrive is church. They go to church five days a week. Parents often tell me that when they drive by Thrive on the weekends the children say, "There's my church!"

To learn more about the Thrive program, visit thrivekelowna.com or on Facebook at Thrive Out of School Care. Any church in any part of Canada interested in such a ministry should check out discoverthrive.ca or contact Jennilee Greig.

NEWS

New President of the Canadian Council of Churches



The Rev. Stephen Kendall leading in a Canadian Council of Churches worship service.

By Barb Summers,
Communications Office

The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) recently announced that the Rev. Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, has been elected and installed by the Governing Board as President of The Canadian Council of Churches for a three-year term.

"I am very honoured to be in this role," Stephen said. "I think that the CCC is one of the places that gives

a good glimpse, a tangible experience of the unity of the Christian Church, and this is a precious thing. I'm looking forward to nurturing this, working together with our Governing Board and our member churches to strengthen and deepen this unity... I count it a privilege, in my position with The Presbyterian Church in Canada, to have been involved with the CCC for 20 years."

To learn more about the CCC visit councilofchurches.ca.

Doors Are Open in Brockville

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

First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., has participated in local "Doors Open" events for many years. This year, because of logistical challenges, the local event was not held. So, the Ontario Heritage Trust organized a smaller "pop-up" event in Brockville on June 23, consisting of eight historically significant sites. First Church's building, constructed in 1879, and which is listed in the Ontario Registry of Historic Places, was one of the locations chosen.

While a steady rainfall kept numbers down, enthusiastic volunteers from First Church welcomed 40 visitors to see the beautiful sanctuary and learn more about the history of the congregation, which was originally founded in Brockville in 1811. The current building is the third of its kind



Doors are open at First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont.

on the site, and the sanctuary seats 750 people. In addition to Sunday worship services, the sanctuary is a very popular venue for concerts and recitals in the community, as it features excellent acoustics and an 1894 Casavant Frères organ.

Meeting the Neighbours on the Parking Lot

By Cathy Sosnowsky, West Vancouver
Presbyterian Church, B.C.

The first-ever Parking Lot Party at West Vancouver Presbyterian Church emerged from two impetuses: one, a desire to invite the neighbours by, and; two, to celebrate a year of our children's choir initiative.

Because we were throwing a neighbourhood party, two of our planning team members, Jean Lawrence and Joanne Wallis, were able to obtain a \$500 grant from the West Vancouver Community Foundation, an organization that promotes neighbourhood relationships, especially cross-cultural events. The grant was used to help pay for our major expense: the renting of a Bouncy Castle, which, with supervision and insurance, cost \$448. This feature was well worth it, bringing in children from neighbouring schools and entertaining our own little songsters.

In reference to cross-cultures, we had our new minister, the Rev. Heinrich Botha, flipping South African pannenkoek all day long. Besides the free pancakes, we offered free hot dogs (courtesy of a member, Doug Rosenkrans, president of 7-Eleven Canada). We know that we had at least 96 attending, as that was the number of hot dogs ordered, and eaten!

Another member, Randy Cunningham, got together a brass band for the occasion. Dancers learned Latin American dance numbers from Heather Dunn. We had a bake sale and



The Rev. Heinrich Botha expertly flips his South African "pannenkoek." PHOTO CREDIT: NORTH SHORE NEWS



Members of the Sanctuary Choir and our community children's choir perform a kazoo song.

a plant sale (by donation). Beverages were served inside so guests could get some relief from the blazing sun of June 16. Face painting, children's games and Pilates lessons were also offered in the lower hall.

This was intended to be a fun-raising, not a fund-raising event, but we were pleased to break more than even and have enough funds left to plan the second-annual Parking Lot Party in 2019. The neighbours will be expecting it!

From A Seed, A Tree May Grow

By Gary Schellenberger, elder at
Avonton Presbyterian Church, Ont.

I remember back some 50 years ago having a conversation with the minister at Avonton Presbyterian Church (near Stratford, Ont.). We stood out on the lawn between the manse and the church building. It was a beautiful morning. During our conversation, the Rev. Bisset (our minister from 1960 to 1977) revealed to me that he felt most in touch with God in the early morning when he arose and looked out the back. He gestured toward the piece of property that was facing the sunrise in the east. This bit of land had once been a gravel pit that was now growing scrub trees.

Over the years, since that conversation, some of those scrub trees



Worship in the Woods on May 13, 2018, at Avonton Presbyterian Church, with the Rev. Catherine Calkin preaching.

have grown into a small grove of very large trees. Every time I look at this area, I'm reminded of that morning, many years ago, with the Rev. Bisset. He planted the seed and the seed grew within me.

The congregation eventually helped to clean the grove up, and we have

been able to have that worship service in that grove and realize what he imagined some 50 years ago. Not only that, but the bush area is now used for Vacation Bible School and Sunday school games, for a quiet area for visitors to sit for a moment, or to wander through and pray.

NEWS

Women's Group Returns to St. Matthew's After Eight-Year Absence

By Lynne Allan, Thistle Club co-chair and elder at St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L.

St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L., once again has a women's group. Some 62 years since it was established and eight years since its last meeting, The Thistle Club is back.

It was November 1956 when 10 of the younger women of the congregation met to form what would eventually be named the Thistle Club. The church's older women were already members of the White Heather Guild, formed some 18 years earlier. Both groups focused on fellowship and raising money for the church.

From the beginning, fundraising was high on the agenda of Thistle Club meetings. The first tea and sale of handiwork was held in the home of one of the founding members before the club was a month old. It set the stage for years of dessert teas that included sale tables laden with baked goods, preserves, handiwork and crafts—labour-intensive events that earned the Thistle Club the reputation of serving “a good cup of tea.”

As years went by and the younger women of the congregation became the older members of the church, and membership of the Thistle Club dwindled, it became obvious major fundraising events were too much for

the club to undertake. Meetings were discontinued in 2010. The Thistle Club folded.

Fast forward to 2017. The idea of re-establishing the Thistle Club had been on the minds of several former members, more for fellowship than anything else. But it wasn't until the congregation was called upon to participate in the PCC General Assembly's Strategic Plan that it became obvious a group was needed to take the lead in fulfilling St. Matthew's commitment to the plan. On April 9, 2018, the Thistle Club was reborn and became that group.

It was a happy coincidence that the same number of women that established the club in 1956 attended the April meeting. It is also special that two of the founding members are members of the present-day club.

While fellowship remains a very important part of the Thistle Club mandate, there will be no more fundraiser dessert teas with sale tables of crafts and baked goods. Instead, the women are taking the lead on the St. Matthew's Community Outreach Program, which is the church's commitment to the Strategic Plan.

The support of the rest of the congregation means much has been accomplished in a short time, keeping in mind there is a service at St. Matthew's only once a month. A collection of non-perishable food had al-

ready been started and that project fit in well with the Community Outreach Program. After just five services, 315 items had been delivered to the local food bank.

The Thistle Club's first official project is a Community Clothesline erected in the sanctuary. The congregation is encouraged to hang new adult socks and underwear from the line. Three months later 95 pairs of socks and 69 pairs of underwear have been given to the Salvation Army's Family and Community Services division in Grand Falls-Windsor.

When a need for caps and mittens for newborns and incubator blankets for premature babies was identified at the local hospital and the children's hospital in St. John's, the knitters and sewers of the group got busy. In the days between the May and June meetings, 57 caps, 57 pairs of mittens and 32 incubator blankets were produced. Not only did church members give freely of their skills and materials, but a friend of a club member wanted to help and when her sister visiting from Alberta found out, she did, too. Talk about community outreach!

Before breaking for the summer, the Thistle Club reached out to the churches of other denominations in Grand Falls-Windsor. Letters were written to the eight women's groups of the other churches, informing them of the club's return and offering support



1956
These 10 women gathered in November 1956 to form The Thistle Club of St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Grand Falls (now Grand Falls-Windsor), N.L. Two of them are members of the present-day club.



2018
The Thistle Club of St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church, Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L., has been reactivated after an eight-year absence. Ten women, the same number that established the club some 62 years ago, came together in April with a mandate of fellowship and commitment to General Assembly's Strategic Plan.

for an event they may be planning that will benefit a cause in the community or further afield. Response to the letter has been positive and the Thistle Club expects to be involved in at least one ecumenical project in the fall.

While much is accomplished during the monthly meetings, the Thistle

Club isn't all work for members. After the meetings are adjourned, the fellowship that fosters co-operation and brings community outreach projects to fruition continues with a catch-up, a cookie and a cup of coffee or “a good cup of tea.” Some things never change.

Carvings from the Past in Kingston

By Barb Summers, Communications Office

Restoration work in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kingston, Ont., led to the discovery of signatures from the past in the ceiling above the sanctuary and around the church.

The restoration work involved work on the cupola and stained-glass windows as well as refurbishing the chandelier. The stained-glass windows were taken out as part of the restoration project and doing so

exposed the handwriting of previous tradesmen, dating back almost 100 years. The first signature comes from T.J. Milo, who painted the outside of the cupola on July 18, 1924. What followed was a series of signatures from workers until 1984.

Additional signatures were discovered around the chancellery that date back to the 1800s. The surprise signatures have all been photographed in order to preserve their stories.

St. Andrew's has a rich history in the community and recently celebrated its 200th anniversary. Two



A signature from T. J. Milo in 1924.

Fathers of Confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald and Oliver Mowat, as well as famed Canadian author Robertson Davies, attended church services

at St. Andrew's. Queen's University was founded by the church 176 years ago.

But St. Andrew's isn't just looking back. The congregation is growing and expanding into the future. Other completed renovation projects include building stairs up to the bell tower, making two new sets of stairs to the choir loft to match the original wood, and installing new LED lighting over the chancellery. The church organ and church clock have been restored, and accessibility improvements include the installation of a wheelchair-accessible washroom and two lifts.

“It's exciting to maintain this place of beauty in the centre of the city, but also just to feel we're welcoming future generations,” the Rev. Andrew Johnston said.



Scaffolding in the sanctuary of St. Andrew's during restoration work.

REFLECTIONS

A Meditation for Canada Youth on Exodus 3

By Stephan Goslinski, a student, artist and member of Melville Presbyterian Church in Toronto. Stephan was a participant at Canada Youth. His blog can be found at brokenmirrorsart.wordpress.com

In a morning keynote at Canada Youth, Andrew Root directed me and a roomful of other youth ministry workers to a surprising example of youth ministry: Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Specifically, he talked about one instance where the incredibly intelligent-bordering-on-arrogant Bonhoeffer was rendered speechless and “small” in the face of a crying child’s question about heaven.

Root’s point was that, while some of us may be expert theologians, the act of ministering to another child of God can make us sense the holy ground we’re standing on—and make us feel small in relation to God’s majesty. What really struck me, though, was how this sense of smallness is not negative.

Thinking back on times when I’ve felt similarly, this feeling often comes with fear, and it also comes with wonder. Just like looking up into the night’s sky, in comparison to which



Original artwork by Stephan Goslinski.

we are a tiny speck, looking at God’s majesty encourages us to wonder about the mystery of life, and to ultimately take solace in the fact that that same unimaginable bigness is infinitely invested in wee tiny us.

Like Moses, a shepherd, hiding his face from a burning bush, we aren’t worthy to be in the same place as something that awesome, but we are. This is holy ground, and Jesus has called us to stand here with him.

And the Story Continues

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

Today, a young lady almost didn’t stop at my dining room table at my Senior’s Residence. But I recognized her and called out, “Courtney, is that you?” Yes, it was. And clinging to her hand was a small child of about two or three.

I’m afraid my eyes filled with tears and I asked her: “Do you remember sitting with your mom in church and a man nearby making faces at you, trying to make you smile?” At the time, she had been about the age of her small daughter beside her. “That was my husband,” I said. “And I gave him a talking to about not paying any attention to the sermon, but he just couldn’t resist trying to make you laugh.”

She did remember, and I looked down at the little one beside her. How my husband would have loved to try to make that one giggle. He just loved kids.

It is sometimes scary for the elderly in the church to see fewer and fewer children and middle-aged adherents walking through the doors. We all worked so hard in the past and our energy level has diminished

so much... Who will be there for this new little one?

I thought back to a man I met on the street patting his dog. It was one sweet dog and I asked if I could pet it, too. He nodded and then looked at me and said, “You taught me Sunday School years ago.” I couldn’t remember his face, for I had taught dozens of little boys and girls. We had a great chat before we parted. It gave me hope for the future and a belief that trusting the Lord needs to be applied a bit more to our lives. It is a somewhat disturbing world out there.

Teary-eyed, I laughed with Courtney as we shared a few stories. It was such a special moment. It made my day as I recalled those Sundays when I sat in the choir and looked down on my husband as he leaned over a church pew, grinning and laughing at that little girl—a girl all grown up with a babe of her own. I was glad he had been part of her memories of the church. Life does go on, and although as seniors we cannot do what we used to, we must continue to do what we can do by placing our complete trust in the Lord; that his purpose will be revealed, and the church will survive as long as families keep alive his message of love and redemption.

Locking Up and Looking Back

By the Rev. Robert Adams, Knox Presbyterian Church in Mitchell, Ont.

Standing on the lawn beside Knox Presbyterian Church, we looked up and imagined what it must have been like to work on the roof of the church when it was being built 125 years ago. We have been doing a lot of looking up at Knox recently—and looking back. Over the past two months we have been engaged in the process of replacing the roof on the church building. Today, roofers use lifts and harnesses to ensure that they are safe and secure as they work. Standing on the lawn that afternoon, however, we imagined what it must have been like to work 50 or more feet up in the air with no safety equipment at all. So many things have changed in 125 years!

In June 1893, the cornerstone for a new church was laid on the northeast corner of the foundation of what was soon to become the new home of Knox Presbyterian Church. Traditionally, the cornerstone was an important element of any build-

ing. The masons would take great care to ensure that the cornerstone was square. Once this square stone was in place, the builders would use it to ensure that the rest of the building was square and true by taking measurements off the cornerstone.

Celebrations such as a 125th anniversary of a building make us mindful of how things have changed over the years, but also how they have remained the same. In 1894, when Knox Presbyterian Church was completed, Mitchell would have been a bustling industrial centre with mills and small manufacturers, with horses as the main source of conveyance for both people and goods around town. A photograph taken shortly after the building was completed shows boardwalks lining the streets around the church. As we note all that has changed in the past 125 years, we are also aware of all that remains the same: 92 St. Andrew Street is still the home of Knox Presbyterian Church, and much of the building remains unchanged from when it was completed in

1894. Step through the doors of Knox Church today, and your eye is still drawn heavenward by the high, arching ceiling; the pastel-coloured windows still glint like jewels in the sun.

What faith those people must have had to construct such a building—their very best dedicated to God, who gives us every good thing. Surely it was a leap of faith to produce a building that, when it was originally constructed, sat over 500 people. The price tag of \$10,000 would have seemed like a king’s ransom back in the day; and yet, in faith, the members of Knox Church moved forward to build a home where God would be worshipped and praised—and we are the beneficiaries.

In those 125 years since the present Knox Church was built, there have been two World Wars, the Great Depression, other lesser economic shocks, the FLQ Crisis, and the events of Sept. 11. Yet through it all, Knox has remained the source of hope for many who have gathered



Replacing the church roof.

to hear the testimony of God’s great love for us, revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Faith is that sure foundation, upon which many people have built their lives—the one sure thing in a changing world.

With faith in God, people have found a sense of hope and purpose within the walls of Knox Church and have been inspired to go out into the world and touch the lives of others with the love of God. Through every change, this one thing is true: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).



The sanctuary of Knox Presbyterian Church in Mitchell, Ont.

REFLECTIONS

Home is Where the Heart Is

By the Rev. Shelly Chandler, Knox Presbyterian, New Westminster, B.C.

It's been a nine-year journey. Nine years since I first felt a call to ministry. I won't bore you with the details, but I will say that the journey began in beautiful Vancouver, B.C., nestled between the Coastal Mountain Range and the Pacific Ocean. And just last week, the road I've been walking on for these long years led me up over the peak of Mount Thom to a place on the Atlantic Ocean called Pictou, N.S.

As with any journey, this one was filled with many transitions. A first call means an exciting new beginning: new people, new community, new home, new ministry. But new beginnings mean endings as well. Emotions compete as we look to our

future and extract ourselves from our current lives and communities. For me this meant trips to special places in my life: the lake I spent many summers on, the fishing community that meant so much to my grandmother, the Abbey where I met God on many occasions for discernment. It also meant visiting each worshipping community that I have been a part of since becoming a Christian. From the church where I was baptised to the retirement community that I've been serving for four years, I needed to honour each community and their contributions to my faith formation.

Although the journey to this place has been long, I've never been alone. God has ensured that I was accompanied by many, many people along the way. Say-



The worshipping community at Dunwood Place, a retirement community run by the Presbyterian Senior Citizen's Housing Society in New Westminster, B.C. Dunwood celebrated their 40th anniversary serving the seniors in New Westminster in September 2017.

ing "thank you" and "goodbye" (for now) was an emotional experience as joy and sadness mixed together. I have been richly blessed by the relationships that God has provided me with and when I was ordained earlier this month it was a wonderful celebration of Christ's love and community.

These West Coast communities have taught me much about Christ's love and mercy. They have taught me that if our hearts are in Christ, then we can face the challenges of life together as a community. They have taught me that each

small action, done in love, can have enormous impacts on the lives of others. They have taught me about the heart of Christ. And so, if home is where the heart is, and my heart is in Christ, then, though I left my home on the West Coast I am now at home on the East Coast. For Christ has now called me to serve the good people of First and St. Andrew's here in Pictou, Nova Scotia. I am excited to begin my ministry in this place and learn what the good people in these communities have to teach me as we grow together in the love of Christ.



Ordination of the Rev. Shelly Chandler on July 8, 2018, at Gordon Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, B.C., along with the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls (left) and the Rev. Cal MacLeod.

You Give Them Something to Eat

By the Rev. Hugh Appel, retired minister living in London, Ont.

The encouraging front-page article of the 2017 summer edition of the *Presbyterian Connection*, about St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Bramalea, Ont., caught my attention. The congregation was looking for a special way to celebrate their 50th anniversary and had come up with a plan to reach out to those who didn't know Christ or who had dropped out of church.

Their goal was to bring in 50 people who would consider making their church a place to worship. On the day of the celebration not only 50 people but 61 people came forward to profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Can you imagine the joy in that congregation?

When I read about this I couldn't help but think, with all the talk about a declining denomination, that I needed to talk to the minister, the Rev. Barb Molengraaf. She explained that it was not an easy task, but that all the hard work done by dedicated people was blessed in a great way. As a result of



the increase, they have started two morning services.

When I graduated from Knox College 42 years ago I was appointed to a church in Burnaby, B.C. The congregation had great people to work with and they were supportive. Although the building was only 12 years old, the roof was leaking and destroying the interior. The mortgage had not been paid for some years and the Presbytery wanted to close it. My question was, how can church growth be possible in an area

where less than 4% of the population worships, including Christmas and Easter?

At my ordination a friend preached and had chosen the text Matthew 14:16: "You give them something to eat." The miracle of Christ feeding over 5,000 people. The large crowd wanted to hear Jesus and no doubt witness some miracles. It was getting late and the disciples thought it was time to break it up and for the people to go home. However, they soon learned that Jesus had a differ-

ent idea, which to them seemed impossible. He asked them, "You give them something to eat." No doubt the disciples thought, "Are you kidding, Jesus? We just don't have that kind of money."

Just send the people away? Can you imagine future leaders in the church sending the people away? Is the task of the church not to feed the people? Is Jesus Christ not the living bread?

It was something we had to learn in Burnaby. Jane, my wife and partner would say, "There is a reason why God brought us all the way across Canada to serve him here." How true. While I was cutting the grass in front of the church one evening, a man walked by with his dog and asked, "Is this church open again?" It had been closed for some months prior to our arrival. I told him it was. The next Sunday he showed up with his wife and they stayed. I baptized him sometime later. We realized that the feeding had started, which I believe is the most important part of my ministry. To share new hope in Jesus Christ, who offers us the gift

of salvation.

Today, we look at the church and realize that growth is not happening too much. While serving the congregation in Burnaby, things were far from easy, but the congregation kept growing. We received a congregation of about 16 people. We sold the building and were able to pay off the debts. The congregation kept growing as Christ blessed the living bread. We served that congregation for four years instead of the two-year appointment.

I remember visiting a church in the village of Leaskdale, Ont., where they were getting close to closing. However, God sent them a minister who served the worshippers with the living bread. A few years after his arrival they were blessed with the building of a new church and an attendance of over 500 people, plus a Sunday school of 150 children. We need to pray that God's Holy Spirit will help us to grow and feed the people, making sure they are fed instead of going home empty. "You give them something to eat" should be our calling in Christ.

JUST WONDERING...



By the Rev. Don Muir,
General Assembly Office

Submit your questions to
connection@presbyterian.ca

I recently turned eighteen and I have a question about text messaging. I text with all my friends and sometimes I use “OMG.” Is that wrong? I was always taught not to take the lord’s name in vain but everyone does it. In case anyone reading this article doesn’t know it, OMG is an abbreviation for “Oh my God!”, “Oh my gosh!” or “Oh my goodness!” These three letters are commonly used, especially while texting, to express astonishment. I assume, in this instance, the writer is thinking of the first example. Does this expression use the lord’s name in vain? The scriptures describe God as the life-giving creator. Job discovered that God is great, mighty

and awesome in the true sense of that word. The psalmist sees God as a shield and fortress—a protector. Other passages say God is holy, merciful, salvation and light. God is love, peace and hope. One might think it is a bit lopsided to invoke the name of this astounding God to emphasize amazement at, say...the colour of your friend’s hair. “OMG - your hair is so purple!” Nevertheless, I suspect most who type OMG are doing so with unbridled enthusiasm and not with the intension of using God’s name in vain. I also suspect God is big enough not to be offended by such exuberance. At least that’s a POV to consider.

My church recently asked if I’d like to consider taking on the role of an elder. I’m honoured to be asked but I’m a little uncertain because I don’t fully understand what an elder does. Could you sum it up for me?

I’m glad you’re pondering God’s will for you within your congregation. The discernment to this high calling also includes your session that considers the readiness of any elder candidate, and the congregation that expresses its opinion of a candidate’s suitability by voting for them, or not, in an election. The word elder comes from the Greek πρεσβύτερος (pres-boo’-teros). In the Bible it can mean “a mature person” or to someone holding a leadership position within the church. See Acts 14:21–23, for example. The Book of Forms, the governance guidebook for our church, explains that the session (made up of the minister and elected elders) is responsible for “the supervision and oversight of all associations of members and adherents connected with the congregation...” (Section 109.1). For example, the session cares for members and adherents, encourages Christian education and wise use of time, gifts and other resources and so on. Section 132 states that elders should be “committed Christians, who regularly attend worship, are of sound judgment and upright character, and are knowledgeable about the government of the church.” *Living Faith*, one of our subordinate standards, describes the elder’s role concisely. “Through the office of ruling elder, men and women are ordained to share with the minister in the leadership, pastoral care, and oversight of the congregation.” May God guide you in this decision.

I have a question about the Lord’s Prayer. When I went to my sister’s church, which is also Presbyterian, I notice they say “forgive us our sins.” At my church we say, “forgive us our debts.” Why would the prayer be different? More Greek. And I’m not a Greek scholar, but according to my research, verse 12 of the Matthew 6:9–13 version of the Lord’s Prayer, reads, “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (New Revised Standard Version).

OBITUARIES

Read all obituaries online at presbyterian.ca

Dr. Ruth Elizabeth Alison
Elder at Glenview Presbyterian Church in Toronto and Union Presbyterian Church in Halton Hills, Ont. Oncologist and first female president of the Canadian Cancer Society. Deceased May 26.

The Rev. Dr. George Malcolm Sr.
Former minister in Hamilton and Cobourg, Ont., and Lachute, Que., and former missionary in Taiwan. Deceased July 28.

The Rev. Wallace Inglis Little
Retired minister who served for 50 years in Manitoba, Ontario and Malawi. Deceased July 24.

The Rev. Ernest J. Zugor
Minister Emeritus of Calvin
Hungarian Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. Deceased May 7.

The Rev. Kaja Muhn
Former Associate Minister with Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church. Deceased June 7.

The Rev. James Peter Jones
Ordained by the Presbytery of Montreal. Former minister in Manitoba and Ontario. Deceased July 14.

Faith Vais
Wife of the Rev. George Vais. Deceased July 27.

Beatrice Boyd Firth
Active in Christian ministry and mentoring. Deceased July 5.

The Rev. Lloyd Murdock
Former minister in Nova Scotia and Ontario. Deceased June 21.

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New Glasgow, First (full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces
River John, St. George’s – Toney River, St. David’s (full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces
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Prescott, St. Andrew’s –
Spencerville, St. Andrew’s (part-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario
Renfrew (full-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario
Bracebridge, Knox (full-time minister) – CNEOB (Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda)
Grand Valley, Knox (part-time minister) – CNEOB

Huntsville, St. Andrew’s (full-time minister) – CNEOB
Toronto, Fellowship (part-time minister) – CNEOB
Hagersville, St. Andrew’s (part-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
London, New St. James (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
North Pelham, First – Rockway (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
Woodstock, Knox (part-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
Sylvan Lake, Memorial (full-time minister) – Alberta and the Northwest
Creston, St. Stephen’s (full-time minister) – British Columbia
Vancouver, Kerrisdale (full-time minister) – British Columbia

The word *debt* is a translation of ὀφειλήματα (of-i-lay-mah). Literally, it means “that which is owed.” *Debtors* is ὀφειλέταις (of-i-let’-ace), and means “one who is indebted.” In the context of the prayer, these words take on a broader meaning. Being in debt to another person is a

kind of offense. Therefore, the prayer asks God to pardon our wrongs even as we forgive the wrongs owed to us by others. The Luke 11:2-4 version of the Lord’s Prayer, uses another word in verse 4. “And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.” The word translated as “sins” is ἁμαρτίας (ham-ar-tee’-ah), which means “missing the mark.” Missing the mark becomes a failure...or a sin. The prayer asks God to forgive us when we miss the mark even as we forgive those who are morally indebted to us. All that is to say, both “debts” and “sins” are correct interpretations; however using sins, as in the ecumenical version of the Lord’s Prayer, provides a clear sense for today’s reader of what Jesus taught his disciples.

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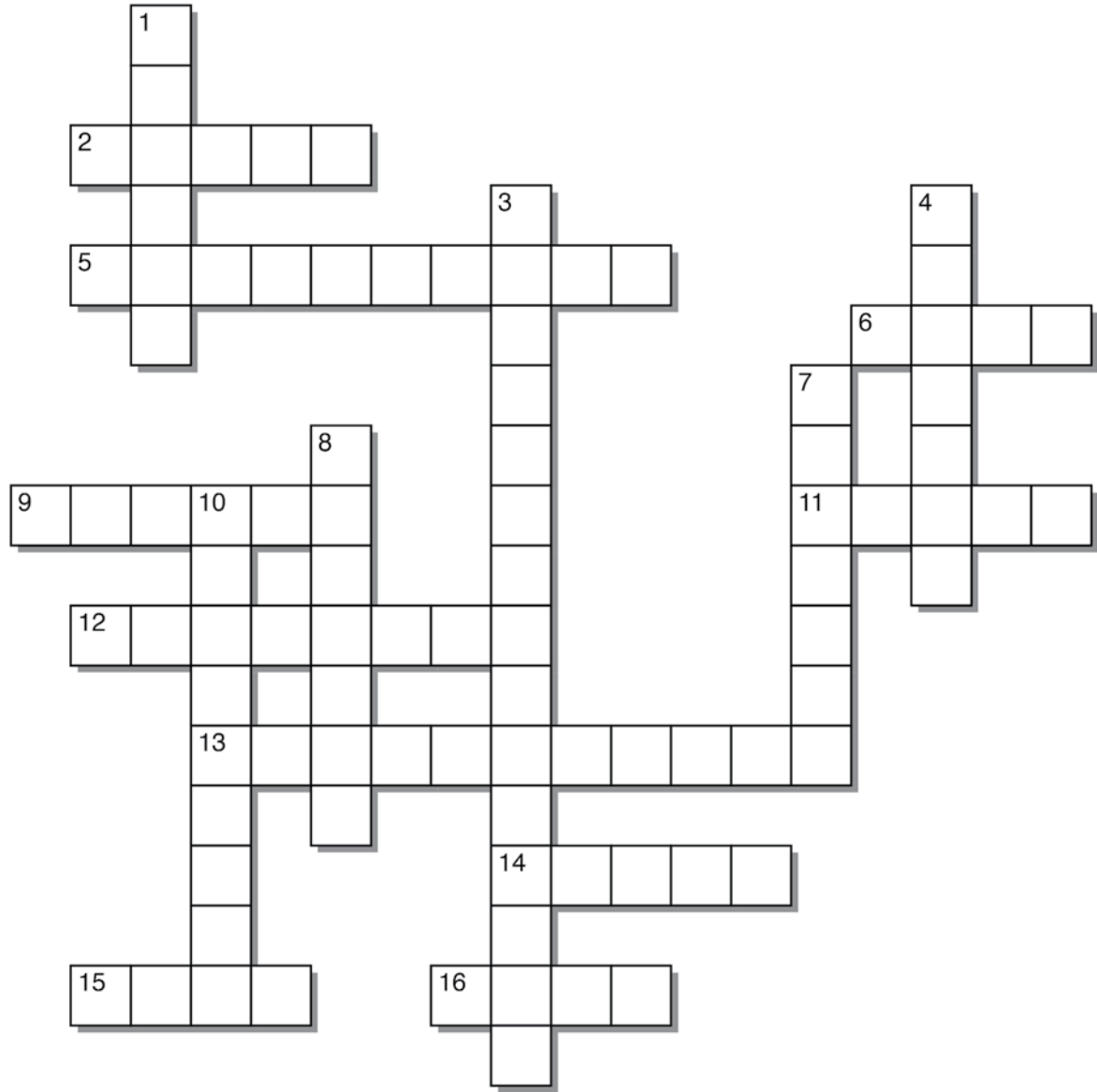
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Looking forward to what God has in store for us next

SMILES

Crossword *Test your knowledge of church trivia with the clues below.*



- ACROSS**
- 2. What Sarah did when she heard that she was to have a child.
 - 5. The Gospel of Mark tells of the cure of a man named _____ healed by Jesus as he is leaving Jericho.
 - 6. Son of Rebecca whose name may mean “hairy.”
 - 9. As a boy, Jesus went missing but was found in the _____.
 - 11. Canada Youth 2018 was held at _____ University.
 - 12. Living Faith 4.2.1 states that the Spirit enables people to receive the good news of Christ, to repent of their sins, and to be adopted as _____ of God.
 - 13. A “CYer” is a nickname referring to someone who attended _____.
 - 14. The first name of the son of Abraham and Sarah.
 - 15. _____ is the mother of six of Jacob’s sons, and a daughter named Dinah.
 - 16. The third son in the story of Adam and Eve.

- DOWN**
- 1. “Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times” is a phrase found on the walls of “30 Rock” in New York City in reference to technology, and is a quote from the book of _____.
 - 3. The name for young people identified by presbyteries to attend the General Assembly are Young Adult _____.
 - 4. YIM stands for Youth in _____.
 - 7. Her name, which means “bee,” was a prophet of Yahweh, mentioned in chapters 4 and 5 of the Book of Judges.
 - 8. The name of a national church policy designed to protect vulnerable people: _____ with Care.
 - 10. Mentioned in Acts 18 and Romans 16, she was “a fellow worker in Christ Jesus” with Paul.

Quotation Location: Youth



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

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1 Timothy 4:12 | But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.” |
| 1 Samuel 17:33 | For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth. |
| Matthew 18:5 | Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth.” |
| Mark 10:14 | Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. |
| Psalms 71:5 | Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. |

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