



## Compassion and Justice for Refugees



On Sept. 29, 2018, the Ride for Refuge annual fundraiser took place in Pierrefonds, Quebec.

By Paul Clarke, Executive Director  
of Action Réfugiés Montréal

"Now I know I am not alone."

These were the words of a guest who attended our Refugee Rights Day event in April. We had invited people seeking refuge and other friends of Action Réfugiés Montréal to gather to celebrate the fact that Canada is a country that provides protection to people who fear persecution. As is the case every year, more than 175 guests joined us in solidarity. A few days earlier, the man quoted above had asked Canada for refuge. I saw him again at World Refugee Day festivities on June 20.

Action Réfugiés Montréal was founded in 1994 by the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, who currently serves as Associate Secretary, International Ministries, at the PCC church offices in Toronto. It began as and continues to be a joint ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Anglican Diocese of Montreal. Glynis had a vision that people seeking protection in Canada could count on the accompaniment of those who cared

for them and cared about them. And that the ministry would be supported by people of faith. From very humble beginnings, the one-person organization now has six employees running four programs, including our newly established monthly Men's Group. We are proud of our website at [actionr.org](http://actionr.org).

Uniquely, we visit people detained for immigration reasons at the Immigration Holding Centre in Laval. This former prison is operated by the Canada Border Services Agency. Action Réfugiés Montréal has an agreement to visit inside the common rooms of the facility. We provide legal information to the refugee claimants we meet. We provide moral support to over 400 people and give away over 1,000 long-distance phone calling cards every year, allowing them to connect with family and friends. We were so pleased that the PCC Women's Missionary Society provided a grant to support this phone card ministry this year. We meet mainly men, but also women and some children. In Matthew's Gospel, we are called to welcome strangers and visit peo-

ple who have been imprisoned. Our detention program has been doing precisely this for 25 years.

Once people are released from detention, we stay in touch if they reach out to us. We have recently started a Men's Group in collaboration with another community organization. We gather the men once a month for an activity and a meal. I have learned that people from other countries are often experts on a soccer pitch! We have discussed banking, elections and the best ways to integrate into Canadian society. One young man we met in detention has been faithfully attending our monthly meals. He was very worried about his upcoming hearing to assess his application for protection. He came by our office on the way to his appointment and we tried to give him hope. Off he went to his meeting. He texted a few minutes later: "I have acceptance!" (sic) He came back to the office a little later, because he wanted to celebrate with the people he called "his family."

For many years we have welcomed newcomers through our Twinning Program. We match women who



Action Réfugiés Montréal staff gathered at a sugar shack event when they introduced 55 newcomers to maple syrup.

have lived a refugee trajectory with Montreal-area female residents. They meet regularly to help strengthen a social network for the newcomer. We hold many group activities to introduce the women to life in Montreal, and to promote friendship, solidarity and mutual understanding. We have learned this is a two-way intercultural street. As one local participant who wanted to help has told us:

"Spending time together has been an excellent way for our family to practice French, but it has also created a real sense of gratitude and understanding. At dinner time, we now go around the table and each person in our family talks about something that they are grateful for—I believe this sense of empathy that is being instilled in my children and in our

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## Shoulder-to-shoulder with refugees

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family is something that I owe to my experience with Action Réfugiés' Twinning Program."

Over 1,200 people have been sponsored to arrive in Canada, thanks to our refugee sponsorship program. Over the years, people from several countries, including Afghanistan, Burundi, Eritrea, Iraq and now Syria, have been given the opportunity to live in a safe land. We now have two full-time employees preparing documentation, arranging rigorous follow-ups and integration accompaniment for over 100 people yearly. We help reunify families that have been separated. Some people we met in detention contact us years later, wanting to sponsor family members who have also fled persecution.

In the last three years, 22 congregations of multiple denominations have been involved in refugee sponsorship; this accompaniment is a way for us to proclaim to local communities that the church is ready to walk shoulder-to-shoulder with refugee people. We receive many requests to speak in university classrooms, churches and public meetings, and we accept as many as we can. We are always proud to state that we get core funding from The Presbyterian Church in Canada through Canadian Ministries; it is a badge we are proud to wear.

Over the years there have been many successes: many families reunited and friendships made. Refugee claimants were accepted thanks to information we provided or links to community services. One year at our Annual General Meeting, a woman sponsored five years earlier stood up to celebrate that she had recently graduated with a nursing degree; others come to the office to introduce us to their Canadian-born children. One



(Left to right): Paul Clarke, the Rev. Lara Scholey (St. Columba by-the-Lake Presbyterian Church in Pointe-Claire), the Rev. Sarina Meyer (Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Beaconsfield), the Rev. Elisabeth Jones (Cedar Park United Church in Pointe-Claire).

woman told me that she wished it was legal to change her name to "Canada"!

We have many challenges. Not all people we seek to sponsor are accepted. We have many more cases to submit than we can reasonably make time for. Governments can change the number of cases we are permitted to submit without consulting our office or the people desperate to sponsor loved ones. We accompany claimants whose files are rejected by federal authorities. Many of the people we meet endure forced separation from family members for many years: when people flee their country, they often leave behind a spouse and children. Many people have difficulty finding meaningful work or employment with wages that provide a dignified life.

We live in a time when some people question the capacity of our country to welcome people who have lived forced migration. In 2018 our slogan is Words Matter, People Matter. Many words are being used to describe people who seek protection from persecution and violence. Some phrases are helpful, others

less so. To reflect our commitment to recognize the dignity of each person, we have started to use the phrase *refugeed person*, instead of simply *refugee*. At Action Réfugiés, we are committed to never losing sight of the fact that when we are discussing refugee policy we are talking about human beings not very different from you and me. We know that you feel the same.

Our funding comes from many sources. In addition to core funding, we have many individual donors; we request and often receive funding from foundations and some corporations. We are blessed with funds through the Presbytery of Montreal as well as Gifts of Change; we receive support from numerous individual congregations every year. We have been helping *refugeed people* for almost 25 years because of the faithful, prayerful support of many people. We are so thankful for Glynis Williams' vision and are proud to continue this ministry.

Refugeed people in Canada are not alone. You are with them.

## A Prayer for Refugees

by the Life and Mission Agency

God of life and freedom.

When Abraham's family wandered,  
when Moses took refuge in the desert,  
when the Hebrew people fled into the wilderness,  
when the Israelites lived in exile,  
you called to them,  
with words of comfort and promises of hope.

In Christ you crossed the border.  
You put on frail flesh,  
were born and lived your life  
always on the move in a dangerous world.  
From your first night you slept in a bed and  
a place that was not your own.  
You and your family fled terror and  
found refuge in foreign lands.  
You were always the guest in the homes of others.  
You were not always sure of your next  
meal or where you would sleep.

We remember before you  
those whose lives are more like yours  
than we can imagine or care to acknowledge:  
those who are without homes,  
who have been uprooted from their  
communities and countries,  
who have had to flee for their lives,  
who have left families and friends,  
who live precarious lives.

We pray for your protection and care for  
those who suffer and must take refuge  
because of war, politics, natural disaster,  
status, race, gender, sexuality, and faith.

We mourn and are angered by the loss that  
marks the lives of so many: the loss of dignity,  
respect, security, community, and family.

You have called us to be citizens of your kingdom.  
We pray for the people of this country  
and in the church,  
that we may not be indifferent or naïve,  
afraid or overwhelmed,  
discouraged or blind to hope and options to help,  
or silent in the call for justice.  
Open our hearts and our doors to the stranger,  
to the widow and the orphan and  
all that are dear to you,  
and strengthen us to witness to the  
love of God for all people.

Amen.

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MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

# The Power and Politics of Christmas

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

The politics of Christmas are harrowing—not the gift giving or the inevitable collisions with beleaguered family and friends in this busy season, but the stories of Jesus' birth. It was an illuminating exercise when I took a coloured pencil and underlined the names, words and events associated with power and politics that appear in the Bible's Christmas stories. The result was that insights that were always lurking in the shadows of the text suddenly came to life in vibrant colour, and it now becomes impossible to ignore how immersed in power and politics Christmas is.

At least nine political authorities and a government-enforced census are mentioned in just the first three chapters of the Gospel of Luke. The Christmas story in the Gospel of Matthew adds a few more references to political authorities as does the story of some directionally challenged star-struck visitors who skulk home via a secret path to avoid being co-opted into the lethal schemes of Herod the Great. The magi escaped Herod's snares—not so the children slaughtered by him when Herod exterminated all the male children his soldiers can find in a vain attempt to fend off a future challenge to his civil authority by the infant Christ. Herod's homicidal decree made political refugees of Jesus and his parents who sought sanctuary in Egypt—the region from which Moses fled centuries before when he was threatened with death after he confronted the raw power of Pharaoh. Even before Jesus arrives on the scene revolution is in the air. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and John the Baptist sing and sermonize about God's intention to overturn the social order that underpinned and reinforced the politics, relationships and daily life in the Roman Empire. The Baptist will lose his head as a result of the political denunciations he makes against another king, Herod Antipas. Even the Christmas angels are political agitators wheeling in the night sky; their Christmas carol begs the question: what powers and structures must pass away to make room for this new eternal reign initiated by the birth of a homeless king nestled in a food trough?

Ministers should stick to the Bible and keep their noses out of politics;



haven't you ever heard of the separation of church and state? This is the question we are asked by unhappy church members when a committee of the church or the moderator of the General Assembly makes a statement, writes a letter to the government or offers a prayer related to global warming, mining, the treatment of Palestinians under the current government of Israel, our work with refugees, and ethical investments.

The *separation of church and state* is a phrase that slipped across the American border. It's an expression of sentiments written by the deist Thomas Jefferson who is famous for, among other things, rewriting the New Testament but omitting the miracles and resurrection of Jesus. Separation of church and state prohibits the state from interfering in the free exercise of religion by its citizens. It has nothing to do with muzzling the church or keeping ministers, moderators and the church quiet about the government's laws and practices when they are unjust and contrary to the gospel's justice imperatives to protect the weakest among us, to deal fairly with each other, to protect the dignity of all people and to reject discrimination and tyranny. According to our own standards, Presbyterians in Canada, "reject all doctrines which assume, whether on sectarian or on secular grounds that the Church's life should be or can be completely dissociated from the life of the Civil State" (*Declaration Concerning Church and Nation*).

During World War II and in its af-

termath, Presbyterians were thinking about the responsibilities and relationship of the Christian church to the state and also how it was that some Christians and churches in and outside Germany could have tolerated or supported Hitler and the spirit and programs of the Third Reich. After extensive work and debate, The Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted *Declaration Concerning Church and Nation* in 1954 and it is now one of the subordinate standards of the church which elders and ministers must accept at ordinations, inductions or admission to sessions. The document is short and worth reading, studying and thinking about; its contents may contain surprises. (*Declaration Concerning Church and Nation* can be found at [presbyterian.ca/od](http://presbyterian.ca/od) or in Appendix E of the Book of Forms.)

Christmas is dense with meaning. One of the things Christmas signifies is the advent of the new governance present in the flesh and blood of God's son, who preaches the politics and economics of the Kingdom of God. "The church and state are intimately related, with the manifold overlying concerns and common responsibilities..." and of course "Christians must always do their utmost to honour the civil laws, and to fulfil all statutory obligations whether financial or personal" (*Declaration Concerning Church and Nation*). Compared to most of the world's citizens, Canadians are fortunate to have the governments we have had in the past 150 years. Churches in Canada are free from

undue influence by the government and we enjoy special protections and exceptions under the law. The church also cooperates with the government through Global Affairs Canada, which partners with Presbyterian World Service & Development and grants funds to help us support programs in developing countries. The church joins with other departments of the government in discussions about healing and reconciliation in Canada. Occasionally, governments are ahead of the church and create laws or encouraged practices that are more gracious and just than the church—women voted in the House of Commons as of 1921; it wouldn't be until 1966 that they could vote at session or presbytery meetings—which is a mystery worth pondering in our hearts. But then there are other times when the Kingdom of God is at odds with the economics and governmental policies of the day, so the cross and church must speak words of truth to the powers of the flag and nation.

Christmas is political. Christian faith is political. If they weren't, their scope of meaning would be narrow and flimsy. Christ's call to faithful living includes public and private life, political and personal power, local and global governance, body and soul, creation and economics. And thank God for that, because otherwise Christian faith devolves to the sentimental and wouldn't make much difference in the world God loves. Perhaps *Joy to the World*, the carol by Isaac Watts, provides the best pledge of allegiance to the highest of all powers: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!, Let earth receive her King...He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness..."

The church could remain silent on political matters. But it wouldn't be a very broad or authentic expression of the faith gifted to us. Instead, we have the opportunity to join our voices with the great chorus of reform with Jesus and his mother Mary and John the Baptist, the host of Christmas angels, St. Augustine, St. Catherine of Alexandria, St. Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jr., St. Óscar Romero and Desmond Tutu all singing in the dawning of a new day.



**Presbyterian Connection** is a quarterly newspaper published by the national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

**Barb Summers:** Editor  
Thank you to all volunteer contributing writers.  
For submissions, questions and feedback, please email [connection@presbyterian.ca](mailto:connection@presbyterian.ca) or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 243.

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



## Presbyterians Sharing

*Presbyterians Sharing* is the national church fund that supports the overall mission and ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper is funded in part through gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*.



**PWS&D** is the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

# Considering Humility



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

My friend “Jeremy” is a Korean minister and one of the nicest, most humble people I know. He once shared a story about a time when he was sort of “called out” on his humility—not that it wasn’t genuine but that it was *too much*. As the story goes, Jeremy was at a church dinner at a member’s home along with a colleague, an older respected Korean minister. The host invited Jeremy to sit in the sofa chair while others sat on the floor. Feeling a bit guilty about this kind “pastoral power” he politely declined and instead insisted on sitting on the floor to allow someone else to have the chair.

The older colleague gently admonished him in private and said that he should have accepted the chair. The reason was that through the particular lens of Korean culture, for him as a minister to accept that offer would be “normal.” But as a meek, submissive and docile person to begin with, he didn’t do himself any favours in the eyes of others by lowering himself *even more* and compromising

any perceived authority.

Jeremy agreed with this admonishment and actually spent several years processing this incident. This reverberates with a Jewish proverb about healthy humility: “Don’t make yourself so small that you’re not that great.” Ever since Jeremy’s conversation with the elder minister, he questioned his long-held understanding and practice of Christian humility and its relation to power.

The usual definition of humility is “a low or modest view of oneself; not assertive, arrogant or proud.” This makes perfect sense and is at least compatible with the biblical view. The Apostle Paul cautioned the Roman Christians “not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment” (Rom 12:3). Even Paul considered himself “the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle” (1 Cor 15:9).

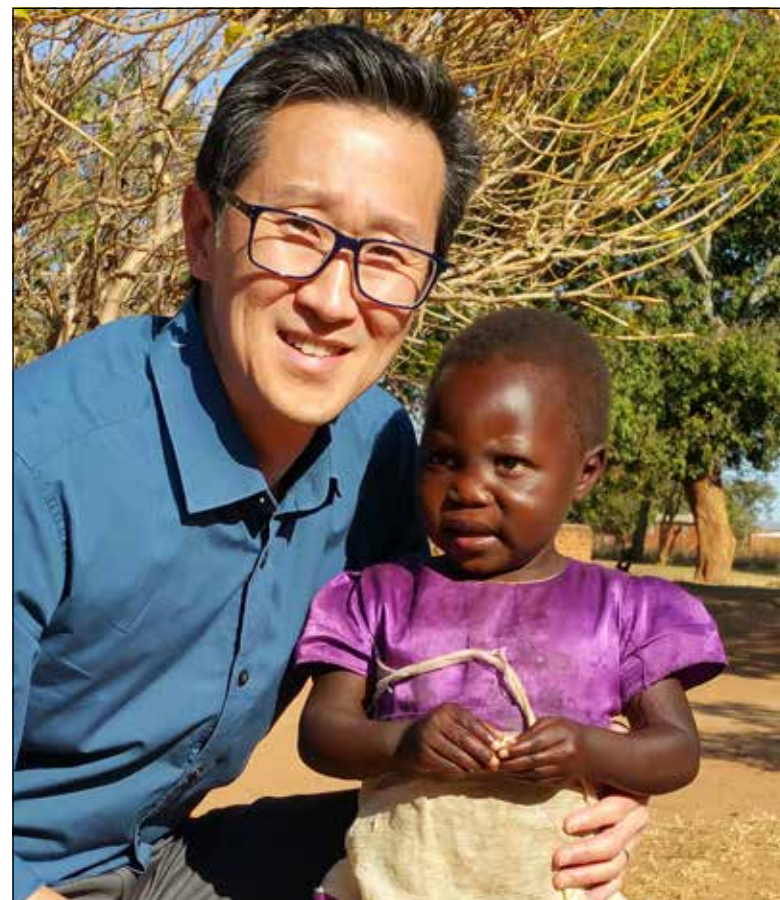
But is this all there is to humility? Is it strictly a self-focused action of letting go of power, lowering oneself before others and allowing them “go first”? Is this all that Jesus meant also when he spoke of being humble like a child? (Matt 8:4).

During Advent we enter into reflection on God’s gift, the giving of the Christ-child for the world and for our lives. We hear the biblical narrative of the promised One who will be called *Emmanuel, God with us*. We take to heart our profound need of this gift, to accept Christ and allow him by the Holy Spirit to change and transform us. But the gospel message is more than simply a platform for individual focus. Its proclamation stretches far beyond merely a roadmap towards

personal self-improvement. It’s not calling us just to be better versions of ourselves by becoming more virtuous, friendly and humble. It is inviting us in a compelling way to shift our frame of mind, our focus, our attitudes, our ultimate concerns—indeed our entire orientation away from our “selves” and embrace the new vision of God’s kingdom.

But being humble on one level doesn’t always mean one has rejected power. Jesus was tempted with power and fame even as he communed intimately with God in preparation for his ministry. We, too, are susceptible to the seduction of power and privilege. In fact, it’s possible to be personally humble but wish the church to be an institution of power privilege. But the gospel tells us that Christ came naked, helpless, and was born in the humblest of settings. In both content and form the gospel speaks to the humble nature and character of God for us: “He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8).

Our acceptance of God’s saving work through Jesus Christ transforms us not just in the personal sense of conversion but by a *constellation* of change—both we and the multiplicity of our relationships are changed. Knowing the heart of God through the gift of God’s Son connects us with all that God loves and is concerned about. And now we can’t help but value the valueless and poor, lift up the broken-hearted, prize kindness and mercy, be forces for justice, be hope in the face of hopelessness, love the unlovable, and yes, think of others more highly



The Rev. Daniel Cho making friends during the moderator’s visit to Malawi.

than ourselves. To quote C.S. Lewis, the truly humble man “... will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.” So our idea of humility isn’t about putting a notch in our ethical belt; rather, it’s about humility being at the very core of who we are in Christ the Redeemer for the world. And our awakening to this reality reflects the constellational change at work within us.

Our life of faith then is not about privileged status based on the power of Empire, but it’s grounded in the manger, in true humility. Faith doesn’t serve to distinguish us, one from another, but it fosters a place where all find common identity and life in Christ. For Christians, humility goes deeper than just being a posi-

tive personality trait. It’s what gives authentic servanthood its confirmation—the kind of servanthood that recognizes all people as brothers and sisters; that exemplifies the heart, love and ministry of Jesus himself.

In Jesus, God came to be with us, to save us, dwell with us and restore us. In true humility we are invited as a community to live as the beloved sons and daughters of God. This is the gift of Christmas.

In tribute to the late Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message* version of the Bible, I am glad to share these words:

*Glory to God in the heavenly heights,*

*Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Re: John Congram’s article “The Way Forward: Questions for the Church”

I read with interest John Congram’s article. He seems to argue for the very un-Presbyterian position that the church ought to adopt a minimalist creed, maybe just “Jesus is Lord.” Of course, members have always been asked only a credible profession of faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord. Office bearers are expected to have more understanding of the church’s theology and are required to accept sincerely the doctrines handed down to us over the past 20 centuries. The Holy Spirit has been at work leading the church into deeper understanding of the truth of God’s Word, not get-

ting us to jettison our heritage.

It’s interesting that this sort of debate about whether we need to be right or good (a false dichotomy) is actually quite old. Donald MacVicar, first Principal of Presbyterian College, had to deal with it in the late 1800s. He wrote, “In the same breath with which they...denounce dogma, they call upon men to follow Christ. But apart from dogma, how are we to know anything of the Christ we are told to follow?” He continued, “We do not say, as is sometimes hinted, that creeds are to take the place of the Saviour, or that men must master a system of theology in order to enjoy eternal life... The malefactor who was saved on the cross was

not a master theologian, and there are millions in glory with him today who never heard of the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Athanasian Creed, or the Westminster Confession of Faith... But while all this is true it is equally certain that there is no merit in knowing and believing little or nothing. To have a meagre, shabby creed with a few vague and ill-defined articles is nothing of which to boast, but something of which to be ashamed. The man who can find little truth to believe must be lamentably ignorant, indolent, weak-minded or sceptical... It is not a matter of indifference what a man’s creed is, because it defines the nature of the Saviour in whom he trusts and exerts a powerful influence upon his

own character and conduct.”

Throwing the confessional character of the church overboard is not the solution to our problems.

—John Vaudry, Pembroke, Ont.

### Re: Joshua Weresch’s Letter to the Editor, Issue 7

Reading Joshua Weresch’s letter regarding military flags and his call for all padres to resign, it is clear he misunderstands the role of military chaplains. Military chaplains neither bless nor endorse war. My husband is a military chaplain, and his role is to provide pastoral care to the members of the unit he serves, in the same way a minister provides pastoral care to the members of a

congregation. Chaplains provide a Christian witness to those who might otherwise never hear the Gospel. Our congregation has seen the difference chaplaincy makes when soldiers and their families come to faith in Jesus Christ because of the faith and work of the padre.

In an increasingly secular society, and in a nation where the impact and influence of Christianity is waning, we should thank God for the men and women of faith who willingly serve as chaplains to our military and share the Gospel with those under their care. They are truly living out Jesus’ command to “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

—Paula Hamilton, Charlottetown, P.E.I.



## PRESBYTERIANS SHARING

# Transformed by Generosity

By Karen Plater,  
Stewardship and Planned Giving

I've been reading Mark Petersen's book *Love Giving Well: The Pilgrimage of Philanthropy*. It's a powerful book and reminds me that growing in generosity is a countercultural journey in a society that celebrates the accumulation of stuff and too often celebrates "me" and "more." Petersen proposes that the best antidote to consumerism and materialism is to give generously to others. It's something we can all do. Everyone has something to share.

One of the encouraging things about working in the PCC's Stewardship & Planned Giving office is experiencing generosity—and seeing these countercultural messages—first-hand.

I see generosity in congregations that strive to support our common ministry through *Presbyterians Sharing*. It is exhilarating to see their gifts flow in, particularly at year end.

I also see generosity when I read stories and reports about ministries supported by these gifts. In this issue, you can learn about Action Réfugiés Montréal, where financial gifts are complemented by dedicated staff and volunteers who work hours beyond their call, giving selflessly to help people who have been traumatized by war, oppression and displacement. Greeting refugee claimants with a listening ear, a phone card and sound advice on how to navigate Canada's complex refugee system is another countercultural message in

our increasingly polarized world.

I often see Presbyterians coming together to generously give time out of their busy lives. As they brainstorm, share their opinions, mentor to one another and make decisions on issues ranging from church doctrine to architecture to finance to justice, these volunteers generously help our church act as one in faith and hope.

Encouraging generosity was one of the topics of a recent PCC stewardship webinar. (You can find the webinars online at [presbyterian.ca/webinars](http://presbyterian.ca/webinars) including previous recordings.) As we examined how we might talk about money in the way that Jesus does, the webinar reminded us that the New Testament doesn't have laws about giving, but challenges us to learn to give with the same wholehearted generosity that we see in Jesus. We talked about some biblical principles behind ways to give and were encouraged that the tithe—the practice of giving 10% of your harvest to God—can be a wonderful benchmark for intentional, regular and proportional giving. When asked about whether to tithe on net or gross income, the presenter suggested to start with the lower, work to the higher and keep going!

As we rush towards Christmas, I wonder how generosity can make the season more meaningful, when already I feel tired just thinking about the decorating, baking, shopping and special church services that will emerge. At times the magic of

gift giving—which is supposed to be a generous act—is lost among the frantic rush. Perhaps the key is remembering that Christmas isn't about what we buy, but how we live our lives to reflect Jesus' generous life of love. I am reminded that while Jesus spent time alone in prayer and reflection, we most often find him hanging out with people—listening, serving, healing, helping, walking with people and contemplating together the big questions in life. Maybe reclaiming the generosity of the season means letting go of the obsessive "to-do" list and slowing down to take time to be together in community. Talk about countercultural!

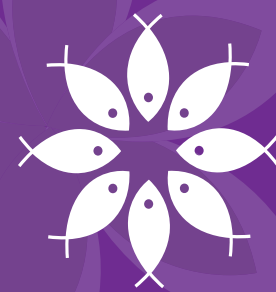
Being together in community is really at the heart of *Presbyterians Sharing*. When we join together to share Christ's message, as we equip one another, support one another, speak out for the voiceless, care for people, welcome the stranger and teach about love, faith and hope, we are proclaiming the good news of the Gospel. And somehow God works through us, and Christ's love shines through. Maybe that's the most countercultural message of all.

Wishing you a Christmas filled with the joy of generosity and the gift of God's grace and peace.

**Presbyterians Sharing supports the mission and ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Visit [presbyterian.ca/sharing](http://presbyterian.ca/sharing) to learn more.**



Ken MacQuarrie (centre) chair of the Stewards by Design committee, mentored a team from Fort St. John Presbyterian Church in BC.



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## A CHRISTMAS STORY

# Keeping Christ in Christmas

By Bruce Templeton, Clerk of Session at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in St. John's, N.L., member of the PCC Trustee Board and Investment Advisory Committee

One day, Santa Claus opened a most interesting letter that had been sent to the North Pole. The letter was from a little boy named Nicholas and it read:

*Dear Santa, can the reindeer fly backwards, because I need to go back in time?! I have a special teddy bear that I need to give to someone a long time ago. Please help me, Santa. Your friend, Nicholas.*

Santa was intrigued. He knew that while he and the reindeer had timeless lives and hoped for a long and happy future, he had never tried to go back in time and see families in the past. For help, Santa went to his faithful source who always had the right solution and, of course, that source was Mrs. Claus. Together they went out to the workshop and asked to see the elves who worked in the creative department. Santa told them of the boy's desire to give his teddy bear to a child in the past and he asked them if they could build something special in order to fulfill Nicholas's wish.

Within a few weeks, the drawings were complete and a model was built for Santa to test. It was a Time Machine! Oh, what fun!

Santa was very excited when he contacted young Nicholas with the news, and arrangements were quickly made for the delivery. When Nicholas woke up the next morning, there it was! And Santa had attached a note with the simple question: "May I come, too?" With Santa as the navigator, together they would set the course. And Nicholas would let Santa know when they had found the place where he wanted to leave his teddy.

Join Nicholas with Santa now and jump aboard the time machine. It is big enough to take us all! Buckle your seat belt and go back through time to help Nicholas find the special home for his teddy bear.

### Santa pushes the buttons for 1932

"Let's go, Nicholas," said Santa. "I have a surprise for Teddy. Let's go to a party, where he can meet his relatives. Maybe there will be some honey!"

With a *woooooosh*, the time machine went back to 1932. Together they crossed the Atlantic to the Staplegrove, Taunton, England, 160 miles southwest of London.

Nicholas and his teddy jumped out of the time machine and wandered into the woods between the local church and the Staplegrove Boy Scout Hut. All of Teddy's friends were there and they heard sylvan voices sing, "If you go down in the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise." Nicholas and his teddy had just joined the first ever Teddy Bear's Picnic.

"Oh, Santa, that was wonderful and I surely would love to leave Teddy here, but let's keep going, for I know there are other places back in time. Come on, Teddy. Let's go back to the time machine."

### The origin of the teddy bear in 1902

*The doors opened in 1902, and Nicholas had a tight hold on his teddy. They had arrived in time to find the 26th President of the United States, Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, out on a hunting trip.*

After three days of hunting, other members of the party had spotted bears, but Roosevelt hadn't. Now what? The President's bear hunt would be a failure! The next day, the hunt guides tracked down an old black bear. The guides tied the bear to a willow tree and called for the President. Here was a bear for him to shoot! But Roosevelt took one look at the old bear and refused to shoot it. He felt doing so would be unsportsmanlike.

Word of this hit newspapers across the country, and political cartoonist Clifford Berryman picked up on the story, drawing a cartoon showing how President Roosevelt refused to shoot the bear while hunting



Above and right: Bruce Templeton in action.

in Mississippi. The original cartoon, which ran in the Washington Post on Nov. 16, 1902, shows Roosevelt standing in front. A bear cub then appeared in other cartoons Clifford Berryman drew throughout Roosevelt's career. That connected bears with President Roosevelt and his nickname became "Teddy Roosevelt."

Next, an enterprising retailer in Brooklyn, N.Y., candy shop owner Morris Michtom saw the original cartoon of Roosevelt and the bear and he had an idea. He asked his wife, Rose, if she could make two bears and he put them in his shop window. Michtom asked permission from President Roosevelt to call these toy bears "Teddy's bears." The rapid popularity of these bears led Michtom to mass-produce them, eventually forming the Ideal Novelty and Toy Company.

At about the same time, a German company, Steiff, started making stuffed bears. Margarete Steiff was a victim of polio at 18 months old and confined to a wheelchair her whole life. She earned her living by sewing, first by making stuffed elephants, then other animals.

In 1903, an American business owner saw a stuffed bear she had made and ordered 3,000 of them for the U.S. market. She had them made, all by hand! These bears, which also came to be called Teddy Bears, made the international connection. The Steiff Toy Company was on its way and is still in business today. In 1907, just four years later, the Steiff company produced 974,000 bears, all made by hand.

Nicholas's teddy was shaking with excitement as they walked back to the time machine. Teddy was thrilled. He had traced his family tree back to the very beginning and he thought of staying there to learn more and to



share in this family reunion.

But Santa and Nicholas told him that there were more stops to make, so this curious little bear climbed aboard as they prepared for their next destination.

### Austria in 1818

*The time machine doors opened Christmas Eve at about 9:00 p.m. on a picture-perfect Christmas winter scene. They had arrived in the small town of Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Austria. Santa and Nicholas (still holding Teddy) buttoned up their coats and walked down to a small church and listened as a story unfolded.*

The cold winter-night scene was beautiful. The stars were out, there was snow on the ground, there was no wind and the silence was shared with the jingle of sleigh bells on horses and the sound of the river babbling through the town.

Two men were standing outside St. Nicholas Church and they were about to make a very tough decision. They had just discovered that the little organ in the old church was broken and they'd decided that they had no option but to cancel the Christmas Eve service because they had no music.

A woman came along and started talking to the two men. It was so beautifully quiet and she listened as

they gave her the news about the service. She looked at them both and said, "We can't cancel the service. It is such a silent night, yes, even a Holy Night."

With that comment from the woman, one of the men, Father Joseph Mohr, ran toward the church and he urged Franz Gruber, the organist and music director, to join him.

"Franz, Franz, get your guitar."

A few hours later, at midnight, Father Joseph Mohr held a single piece of paper in his hand. Franz Gruber strummed his guitar, and Mohr, the tenor and Gruber, the bass, sang for the very first time the German song:

*Silent night, holy night,  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Just after midnight, Nicholas, by now a tired little boy, cradled his bear and he and Santa prepared to head further back in time. "We are nearly there, Santa," Nicholas sleepily murmured. "I can feel it."*

**AD 280 in Lycia: St. Nicholas** *Woosh*, and the time machine opened to the year AD 280 to the town of Patara, in the country of Ly-



## A CHRISTMAS STORY



cia. Today, we call it Turkey. It was here where a little boy was born to an older couple. The father was called Epiphanius, the mother Johanna, and they named their child Nicholas, meaning victorious. They were a Christian family and young Nicholas received a good education, but his parents died when he was quite young—first his father, then his mother—and he was an orphan by the age of nine.

His parents had left an estate and Nicholas was looked after by five priests who acted as his guardians. As he grew into his teen years, Nicholas became more and more aware that while he had the financial resources to do almost anything, there were many families around him who had much less. Nicholas tried to figure out how he could help others without anyone knowing his identity and he asked his friend, Priest Phillip, how he should go about it. Priest Phillip suggested that he quietly share his wealth.

As an example, there was a merchant named Shem, who was a widower with three daughters. The custom of the day was that a female could only go into marriage with a dowry. Shem was unable to provide a dowry for his daughters. So, when Nicholas was sixteen, he went out quietly late at night and looked through the window of the family's simple home. There, on a clothesline, hung to dry before a fire were three pairs of woollen stock-

ings. Nicholas quietly reached into his pocket and put two silver coins in each of the stockings. This was a large amount of money and provided the dowries for the three girls.

The story of a mysterious spirit who gave generously to those in need spread through the town. Sometime later, a pair of crutches mysteriously appeared for a girl who could not walk.

Nicholas had found his vocation. At the urging of his guardians, he studied in Alexandria to become a priest and years later was appointed the Bishop of Myra.

News of Nicholas' generosity continued to spread throughout the world. And ever since his death on Dec. 6, AD 343, the date has been celebrated as St. Nicholas Day. Later, he became the patron saint of children and seafarers, and many of the stained-glass windows in old world churches depict St. Nicholas with three (Trinity) of something—for example, there may be three children, three bags of coins or three ships.

*Our boy Nicholas was now very tired. He had finally found the saint for whom he was named. He could think of no one better to have his teddy bear and so he walked over to him.*

*"St. Nicholas, I have come a long way with Santa and I have a present for you. You are such a generous man and you do so much for others and I would like you to have my teddy bear."*

*St. Nicholas took the bear and gave boy Nicholas a warm embrace. Then, to the great surprise of our little friend, St. Nicholas said to him and to Santa, "You must go on."*

*St. Nicholas took the boy by the hand and they joined Santa at the time machine. St. Nicholas asked that his spirit come along on this final trip. And so the time machine set off for its last destination in the year 4 BC with the boy Nicholas, the Spirit of St. Nicholas, Santa and Teddy all aboard.*

### Bethlehem: the beginning

*Little Nicholas pushed the last button on the time machine and it wasn't long before the doors opened to a small town. The night was clear and they could see the stars. It was very quiet and quite late.*

St. Nicholas lit his lantern and he led the way down a path past busy, crowded inns. Soon they came across a humble barn, and inside there were animals and a man and woman with a new baby. There were also wise men and gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The wise men (also called Magi) were named Balthazar, (a Babylonian scholar), Gaspar (an Indian scholar) and Melchior (a Persian scholar).

Little Nicholas looked into the manger at the small child. All was calm, all was bright.

Quietly he walked forward with his teddy that St. Nicholas had returned to him and asked the baby's parents if he could give it to the child in the manger. With their permission, he placed his teddy next to the baby.

Nicholas had fulfilled his mission. He had come with the Spirit of St. Nicholas and Santa and their voyage was complete. The wise men turned and nodded their approval. And Mary and Joseph smiled their appreciation.

While St. Nicholas has always been an important part of holiday celebrations, on that special night, little boy Nicholas vowed that he would "Keep Christ in Christmas" forever.



## Serving Santa

Bruce Templeton and Santa have been close friends in St. John's, Newfoundland, for 40 years. Over a period of 30 days, they have about 50 visits together to the Santa Claus Parade, the Flight to the North Pole (where 18 children fly on a real plane to meet Santa in the North Pole) and multiple other locations. They visit seniors' homes where Santa met a 103-year-old resident and later Santa held a 600-gram baby in Paediatric Intensive Care in the children's hospital.

Bruce has been selected by his Santa colleagues and is the only living Canadian of the 24 inductees in the world in the International Santa Claus Hall of Fame. He has written three books and some of the proceeds for his first book "The Man in the Red Suit" were matched by Rotary and the Gates Foundation and they purchased 300,000 doses of polio vaccine through the World Health Organization.

What started as Bruce being a seasonal actor has become much more, and he is called to hospitals and to seniors' homes to bring cheer and hope. Before entering the room and being uncertain of what he will find behind the door, he has a prayer with St. Nicholas and asks that Nicholas "go and prepare the way for me."

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

# Letter from the Special Committee of Former Moderators

*By the Rev. Daniel Cho, Moderator of the 2018 General Assembly and the Rev. Peter Bush, Convenor of the Former Moderators Committee*

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been struggling for some time with the place of the LGBTQI community within The Presbyterian Church in Canada and our appropriate response as a denomination. Unsure of how to move forward without causing further divisions and tensions, the 2018 General Assembly decided to make an unprecedented move: to assign the task of finding a way forward to twelve former moder-

ators of previous General Assemblies with the mandate "to propose a way ahead that allows the mission and ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to continue" and to report back to the 2019 General Assembly with its proposals.

The Special Committee held its first face-to-face meeting Sept. 28–29, 2018. A following meeting took place on Nov. 22 and additional meetings are set for Feb. 1–2, 2019.

The members of the committee entered the meetings with the expectation of a respectful conversation, even as we are aware of the deep pain and significant divisions present

in the church. We ask as well that as Presbyterians in Canada, our conversations with one another be marked by respectful language. Heeding the Apostle's advice to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), may we use words and tones that aid respectful conversation rather than words and attitudes that enflame and anger those with viewpoints different from our own. It is possible to have a conversation between people of divergent opinions in which the differences are acknowledged but the tone remains respectful. We would encourage such a conversational style in the church. May we choose to highlight our com-



The Rev. Daniel Cho, current moderator, along with former moderators during a gathering of the special committee.

mon commitment to following Jesus, humbly recognizing that none of us knows exactly where the Triune God of grace may lead the church, while remaining hopeful that together we can find a way forward as we seek to follow him who is our Living Way (John 14:6).

The Committee members, in order of their moderatorial year from earliest to most recent, are: the Rev. Dr.

Jean Morris, Dr. Wilma Welsh, the Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, the Rev. Dr. Cheol Soon Park, the Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, the Rev. Dr. Rick Horst, the Rev. Dr. John Vissers, the Rev. Dr. David Sutherland, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris, the Rev. Dr. Karen Horst, the Rev. Doug Rollwage, the Rev. Peter Bush and the Rev. Daniel Cho (ex-officio).

The full letter can be found at [presbyterian.ca/moderators-letter](http://presbyterian.ca/moderators-letter)

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

# Life and Mission Agency Seeks Leader for Ministry & Church Vocations

*"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received" (1 Peter 4:10).*

Ministry and Church Vocations (MCV) is the department of The Presbyterian Church in Canada responsible for discerning, preparing and supporting leaders serving in ministry.

The PCC is seeking a dynamic leader for the position of Associate Secretary of MCV. This is an opportunity to join a team who encourage one another and are inspired by the opportunity to strengthen and equip ministerial leaders to worship and serve God and to participate in Christ's ministry in the world.

The key responsibilities of the position of MCV Associate Secretary include: engaging the church in theological reflection about ministry; developing programs and equipping

the church for the discernment and support of ministers; formulating policies and procedures pertaining to ministry and serving as a confidential resource regarding the implementation of those policies, including the sexual abuse and sexual harassment policy; carrying out the duties of the position in such a way as to enhance the image and reputation of the church as a servant of Jesus Christ and ensuring that the resources of the church are used to their maximum potential.

To be effective in the position, the church is seeking an individual who has a clear sense of calling to ministry as an imperative of the gospel, strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work collaboratively and establish rapport with clergy and members of the church. Because of the specialized nature of the work of the department as it relates to ministers of Word and Sacraments, the incum-



Part of the work of Ministry and Church Vocations involves running Guidance Conference for potential new ministers. Pictured above is the August 2017 Guidance Conference.

bent must be an ordained minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

*Living Faith* reminds us that "All Christians are called to participate in the ministry of Christ. As his body on earth we all have gifts to use in the church and in the world to the glory of Christ" (*Living Faith* 7.2.1).

Do you know someone who would be an excellent candidate for this position? Are you feeling called to pursue this exciting opportunity to use your God-given gifts and participate in Christ's ministry in the world through the position of Associate Secretary of Ministry and

Church Vocations?

The deadline for nominations and applications is Jan. 4, 2019. For further details on the position of Associate Secretary of Ministry and Church Vocations and the nomination and application process, please visit [presbyterian.ca/mcv-leader](http://presbyterian.ca/mcv-leader).



## EVANGELISM

### Presbyterian Evangelism Today: Relationships that Change the Story



2018–2019 Evangelism Network Cohort (left to right): the Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock, the Rev. Andrew Campbell, the Rev. Gabriel Snyman, the Rev. Roberto DeSandoli, the Rev. Jonathan Hong and the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart.

By Jennifer de Combe and Emily Hill,  
Canadian Ministries

When Paul and Silas met Lydia, a woman whose heart had been prepared by God to receive the good news of Christ, they found a partner in the ministry of evangelism. Through one Spirit-driven encounter by the river in Philippi, Lydia became a follower of Jesus, a sharer of the good news, and a key player in establishing a Christian community. Upon hearing the good news, her story was forever changed and so was that of the apostles, whose ministry began to take root in Europe.

This story from Acts 16 became the focus text at a recent gathering of the Presbyterian Evangelism Network. The network, supported by Canadian Ministries, aims to train, coach and support PCC ministry leaders to start evangelism initiatives with their congregations in their local contexts. In discussing Acts 16, this year's cohort reflected on the long journey the apostles took before they met Lydia; the Holy Spirit led Paul and Silas through many regions and opened—but also intentionally blocked—routes along the way. This led the gathered ministry leaders to ask:

- Where is the Spirit leading us, as Presbyterians today, to witness to our faith?
- Where are we being redirected in our ministry and asked to follow a different route?
- Who is Jesus preparing for us to meet and accompany as they accept God's invitation into relationship?

Building evangelistically fruitful ministries is contextual; congregations need to prayerfully consider

where they are being called to go in their communities, who Jesus is inviting them to get to know there, and how he is inspiring them to share God's life-giving love. Like Paul and Silas, it is important that we be open, flexible and faithful in our following of the Holy Spirit, confident that God will lead us to the Lydias he has prepared.

This year's cohort expressed a genuine enthusiasm for the evangelistic mission of the church. Over the next year, they will be intentionally cultivating this enthusiasm as they engage in faith-sharing endeavours both personally and with their congregations. These endeavours will take many shapes: creating worship opportunities in public spaces, connecting with local post-secondary students, taking plunges into community life (volunteering in school programs, taking part in a theatre club, etc.), and hosting events that bless the community.

These initiatives need your prayers. Please pray for the ministry leaders in the Evangelism Network and their congregations as well as you own congregation. Ask:

- That God will draw us into deeper relationship
- That God will stir up the curiosity of explorers
- That God will make us aware of the opportunities for conversations
- That God will give us a passion to share the good news

Canadian Ministries would love to hear from you. If you are interested in the work of the Evangelism Network or are looking for resources to share the gospel in your context, please contact us at [canadianministries@presbyterian.ca](mailto:canadianministries@presbyterian.ca).

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## INTERNATIONAL

# Crossing Frontiers in Cuba

By David Lee, Knox College student and Youth Pastor at St. Timothy Presbyterian Church in Toronto

As part of the Mission Practicum curriculum, Knox College sends students for an exposure trip to Cuba. International Ministries, through funding from Presbyterians Sharing, has been financially supporting this initiative since 2008. In February 2018, two faculty members and 11 students, including David Lee, participated in the trip.

"An important component of the educational training for the Knox College students, church leadership in training, stems from their immersive, intercultural experience through their trip to Cuba. Experience has told us that our working partnership with the seminary in Matanzas and International Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been invaluable. The growing importance of this partnership cannot be stressed

enough." — the Rev. Dr. Dong-Ha Kim, Interim Director of Academic Programs, Knox College.

For a long time, I have had misgivings about the idea of Christian mission and its practices. Much of it stemmed from my personal experience of a mission trip in high school and since then I have shied away from participating in mission trips in the church. It seemed as though mission was solely undertaken for the sake of evangelism, which manifested in a subtle form of proselytism. Engaging in a personal relationship with a specific agenda in mind, rather than one's own genuine interest in the other, did not sit well with me.

Taking part in ecumenical discussions with the faculty and the students at the Matanzas Theological Seminary gave me the opportunity to reflect on and re-evaluate my understanding of mission.

I believe mission should never

be done for the sake of evangelism; rather, I believe the latter should flow out of the former in a mutual and organic process led by the Holy Spirit. To borrow the definition coined by the South African missiologist David Bosch, in our mission we "cross the frontiers"; in our act of moving closer to the world, we cross various ethnic, cultural, geographical, religious, ideological and social boundaries. And in this sensitive and delicate task we engage in the practice of evangelism—a genuine *encounter* with the other—not for the sole purpose of religious conversion, but for the sake of truly knowing the other. I believe it is in this mutual, life-giving encounter that both parties of the encounter are enriched and transformed.

In Matanzas, we attended a worship service at a house church one evening. None of the students had any idea on what to expect as it was our first time visiting a house church. Even though we were the ones who had moved into the physical space of the residents' apartment, we were graciously welcomed and blessed by their generous hospitality. It did not matter whether or not we were two groups of different denominations; the residents embraced us without judgement. We simply prayed, shared, sang and ate together with joy and gratitude. Although brief, it certainly showed me the beauty and the power of living out the good



Knox College students outside of El Seminario Evangelico de Teologia in Matanzas, Cuba.

news of Christ in community. It also prompted me to reflect on the spirit of hospitality and generosity that we embody within our own praxis: Are we truly gracious, open and present for the other in our posture as witnesses of Christ?

When Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman at the well, he invited her by asking her to give him a drink (John 4:7). Not only did he violate the established custom between men and women, he closed the invisible distance dividing two groups of people. By initiating the personal encounter with the woman, Jesus affirmed her humanity and freedom and empowered her to give as well as to receive. In his simple yet powerful act of witness, Jesus allowed for a mutual and

loving encounter to emerge, and he ultimately brought healing, restoration and transformation. It all began from a place of great empathy, love and genuine interest in the other.

This short visit to a foreign land was one of the most memorable and rewarding experiences for me—particularly in my understanding of mission, evangelism and its praxis. Now I see mission as that which springs from a place of *repentance*, with a mindset of openness and a spirit of *humility* and *discernment*. As we navigate our way through the diverse landscape of faith and culture, I believe this experience is a must for all future ministers. Mission is not our own undertaking but God's. We are merely the participants.

## Canadians Ministering to Koreans

By International Ministries

On Sept. 22, the Rev. Glynis Williams and Lily Ko of International Ministries attended the opening of an exhibit of Canadian missionaries to Japan who ministered to Koreans. Vision Fellowship has created a museum dedicated to Canadian missionaries to Korea and they recently added this new exhibit to honour missionaries ministering to Koreans in Japan. The PCC's history with Korea began in 1893 with the Rev. William J. MacKenzie, who went as an independent missionary. Then, in 1898, the PCC sent the Rev. Dr. Robert and Mrs. Lena Grierson as missionaries.

The PCC has been sending mission staff to Japan since 1927 and our partnership with the Korean



The Revs. Bob and Priscilla Anderson, former mission staff to Japan, greeting guests.

Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) goes back 91 years. The Rev. Robert (Bob) Anderson, who served in Japan intermittently for 16 years from 1966–1998, was invited to

preach at the opening worship. David McIntosh, currently supported by the PCC in Japan, and the Rev. Byung Ho Kim, General Secretary of KCCJ, were also in attendance.

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## PRESBYTERIAN WRITERS

### So, Tell Me a Story

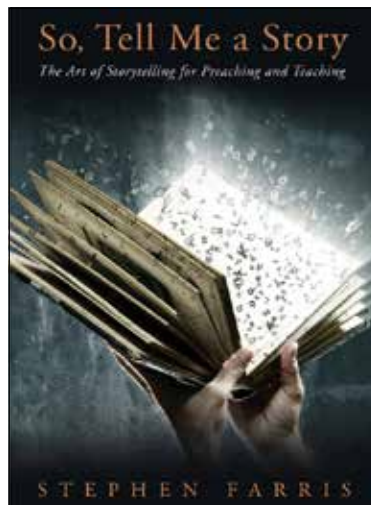
*By the Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset, Calvin Presbyterian Church in Toronto*

*So, Tell Me a Story: The Art of Storytelling for Preaching and Teaching*  
Written by the Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris  
Cascade Books, 2018

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris has been shaping and forming preachers for the church for decades. While I was a doctoral student, I had the privilege of being Stephen's teaching assistant and I heard him tell many of the stories that he has gathered into this new compendium and guide to storytelling for preachers and teachers. We used to laugh, as there were times when

just as we were walking into class, Stephen would turn to me and ask, "Have I already told the story of (so and so and such and such) in this class?" As Stephen says in the introduction to his new book, "If a story is worth telling once, it's usually worth telling again...and again."

Students of Dr. Farris, of which there are certainly hundreds, will recognize these stories and be happy to have this new preaching resource for the refreshment of their own preaching. Congregation members who have had the privilege of hearing the Rev. Farris preach, of which there are certainly thousands, will enjoy having them in print and being able to reflect



on them again. (Stephen even invites people who are not in the business of preaching and teaching to read the book simply by skipping from story to story.) And, for all of us, there are

new stories in this collection and a fresh way of understanding the art of storytelling in service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Farris reminds his readers of the power of stories. He invites preachers and teachers to carefully consider how to best unleash that power. Such a skill requires proper interpretation and framing (but not overinterpretation, which can ruin any story!). A preacher must ensure that the story accentuates or illustrates sound scriptural exegesis and solid theological reflection rather than allow it to be twisted to fit a sermon or stealing the limelight. He teaches that things such as oration, timing, details and positioning are central to the art of storytelling. The Rev. Farris discusses how and when to use personal stories

along with the ethics of telling stories that are not our own. Stephen takes us on a journey through the church year, providing a wealth of stories that fit its seasons and theological themes, such as grace and the sacraments.

The stories in this book are playful and fun, serious and sad, hopeful and thought-provoking. Through them all, Stephen invites us to add our own stories and to engage others in the gift of telling and receiving stories. Stories are meant to delight, teach and persuade. These three functions, as noted and adapted by Farris, have been the hallmarks of rhetoric for many centuries. In service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, stories may well be unmatched in accomplishing all three. And this resource for preachers and teachers is sure to do the same.

### A Journal of Contemplative Prayer

*By the Rev. W. Alex Bisset, Westminster and Riverdale Presbyterian Churches in Toronto*

*A Journal of Contemplative Prayer: 100 Prayers for Personal Devotion*  
Written by Katherine Burgess and A. R. Neal Mathers  
Worship Resources Publishing, 2018

"Prayer," as Katherine Burgess and Neal Mathers note in the preface to their recent book, "is a conversation with God." The prayers these two ministers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada have compiled represent some of their own conversations with God.

Mathers and Burgess write that while some of the prayers included could be adapted for use in public worship, the book is not intended for Sunday services. The focus is on individuals, not congregations. The tone is therefore more personal than what normally is heard from the pulpit, and the pronouns are "I" and "me" rather than "we" and "us." In this way, the



**The Rev. Katherine Burgess and the Rev. Dr. Neal Mathers.**

book serves as a reminder that prayer is sometimes something that we do alone with God.

The prayers themselves, half of which were written by Mathers and half by Burgess, cover a wide range of topics and times: morning and evening, Wednesday and Sunday, winter and spring, Halloween and New Year's, birth and death, back to school and graduation, work and retirement, fear and despair, joy and grace. There are prayers of confession and repent-

ance, and prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving. Some of the prayers focus on the world around us, while others look deep within us. In this way, the book proclaims that everything, good and bad, big and small, every aspect of human life, is the right and proper subject of our prayers.

The authors suggest that each of the prayers be read more than once, and that where a writer's conversation with God in the printed prayer ends, the reader's conversation with God begins. They encourage readers to engage God in conversation in their own words as a response to the printed prayer in the book.

Perhaps most importantly, through their emphasis on prayer as conversation, Burgess and Mathers encourage each of us to approach individual prayer both as a time of speaking to God and as a time of listening for God to speak to us. They remind readers that a conversation never means that one party talks while the other party simply listens.

Let it be so. Amen.

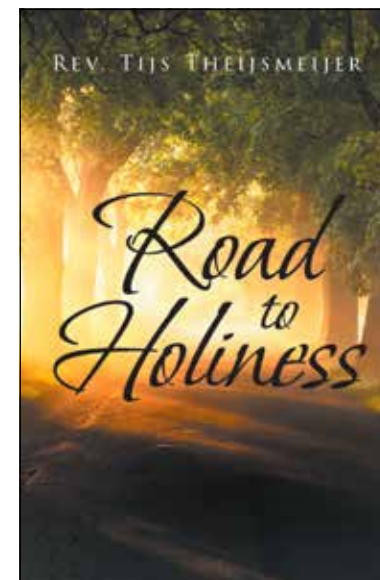
### Road to Holiness

*Road to Holiness*  
Written by the Rev. Tijs Theijsmeyer  
Christian Faith Publishing, 2018

When he began working as an ordained minister, the Rev. Tijs Theijsmeyer (St. Catharines, Ont.) found that helping people in the congregation grow spiritually was one of the most challenging areas of work. The path to spiritual maturity is a long and complex process that takes a lifetime of work and attention. As a means of helping people find their way along the road to a rich experience of Christian spiritual maturity, Theijsmeyer has written a helpful book based on the Gospel of John entitled *Road to Holiness*.

Theijsmeyer understands that we each begin our journey towards greater spiritual maturity with ingrained cultural and family patterns, not all of which align with Christ's teachings. Questioning and examining these practices in light of Jesus' teachings is an essential part of authentic and vibrant spiritual growth. As we learn new ways of thinking and behaving, Theijsmeyer explains that rich possibilities open up our lives: prayer life transforms from monologue to a dialogue with God, we learn to recognize the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and we develop new spiritual strength that helps us face and overcome obstacles that would have previously sent us running for cover. At the same time, our ability to love deepens and is enriched so that we can appreciate and enjoy God's creation and creatures in important and new ways.

Spiritual growth takes time and effort, but the rewards are significant as we come to participate actively in the unfolding of the Kingdom of God



in the here-and-now of this world, while preparing us for our eventual arrival in the next.

*Road to Holiness* is meant to be a guide and so the book will not answer all the questions it raises. The book may be useful in a small group setting for Bible Study or spiritual growth. Tijs wisely carves out the space for the reader to do the hard work of spiritual growth within the uniqueness and support of their Christian community.

As Theijsmeyer explains, "The idea for the book sprang out of an ecumenical Bible Study on John that I was leading in 1987. The participants encouraged me to put this material into a written form and that was one of the stimulants to begin a 30-year process. I worked on it two weeks a year for most of my ministry while on study leave attending the tower scholar program at Knox College."

**For more information, visit [christianfaithpublishing.com/books/?book=road-to-holiness](http://christianfaithpublishing.com/books/?book=road-to-holiness).**

### The Season for Strawberries

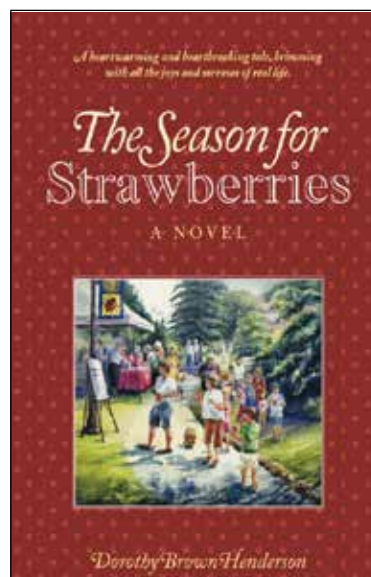
*The Season for Strawberries*  
Written by Dorothy Brown Henderson  
Wood Lake Publishing, 2018

*The Season for Strawberries*, originally a self-published novel and later reissued by Wood Lake Publishing in May 2018, was written by Dorothy Brown Henderson, a long-time diaconal minister in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The novel is based in the fictitious village of Milburn Corners in the Owen Sound area where Henderson grew up. While the characters are also fictitious, Henderson said that the book includes many ref-

erences to real locations in the Owen Sound area.

The book's protagonist, Aleda, is a feisty 42-year-old single pastor who gets herself into a number of predicaments. The story takes place in May 2002 and, in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks, Aleda struggles with the meaning of life. "It really focuses on all the characters and challenges that make up a community," Henderson said. The story involves a tragedy that shakes the village to its core.

**For more information, or to order a copy, visit [woodlakebooks.com](http://woodlakebooks.com).**





## JUSTICE

# Learning about Canadian Indigenous Spirituality

*By the Rev. Amanda Currie, Minister at First Presbyterian in Regina, Sask. She is the past Convener of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee and currently serves on the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches*

The Strategic Plan of The Presbyterian Church in Canada encourages engagement in healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Active participation in the work toward reconciliation is part of living our church's 1994 Confession and our response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

In particular, we should note Call to Action #60 in which we are called to recognize the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right. Through our church's participation in the residential school system, we contributed to the banning of Indigenous languages, cultural traditions and spiritual practices. We presumed to know better, and in our cultural arrogance tried to suppress practices whose value we were then incapable of perceiving.

The PCC's 2015 "Statement on Aboriginal Spiritual Practices" notes that "It is not for the PCC to validate

or invalidate Aboriginal spiritualities and practices. Our church, however, is deeply respectful of these traditions... [and we are] committed to walking with [Indigenous] people in seeking shared truth that will lead to restoring right relations."

The 2018 General Assembly affirmed the recommendation to encourage Presbyterians and congregations to seek to learn more about Canadian Indigenous Spirituality. Such learning could take place through dialogue with Indigenous elders and communities, as well as through reading, attending public events or inviting guest speakers to share with your congregation about Indigenous culture and faith practices.

The goal of learning about Indigenous Spirituality is not for non-Indigenous Presbyterians to adopt such practices. We should be careful not to engage in cultural appropriation. Neither is the goal to engage in apologetics or attempt to convert an Indigenous representative who is not also a Christian.

The first goal is simply to get to know and appreciate our Indigenous neighbours in the communities in which we live throughout Canada. Another goal is to support our Indig-

enous neighbours in rediscovering and reclaiming the spiritual practices, languages and cultural traditions that our church assisted in attempting to wipe out.

Resources for learning:

*Canadian Presbyterian Indigenous leaders, teachers and clergy:* Our denomination is blessed by the ministries and leadership of several Indigenous people who can be excellent resources for our learning. Learn about and experience how they have incorporated Indigenous spiritual practices, such as drumming, singing, dancing, smudging and particular prayer forms into Christian worship.

*Indigenous Elders in your local community:* Invite a local elder to share from their own experience about the cultural and spiritual traditions of their particular community. Invite them to tell some of the stories of their tradition. Be sure to check and follow local protocols when you ask an Elder to share with you. A gift of tobacco is usually in order, and there may be other protocols. If you are not sure what they are, just ask. An honorarium and travel expenses should be considered as many Elders are giving increasing amounts of their own time.



Indigenous drummers at the Truth and Reconciliation Event in Edmonton 2014.

*Teachers/professors of Indigenous Studies:* Check with your local universities/colleges to see if they have an Indigenous Studies program or course offerings. You may want to take a course, or simply invite a professor to offer a lecture with local churches.

*Read:* Collect fiction, poetry and nonfiction for your local church and encourage your local library to do the same. You may be surprised to find your local library already has many excellent resources. Here is a short list of reading material.

- *The Knowledge Seeker: Embracing Indigenous Spirituality* by Blair Stonechild
- *The Reason You Walk: A Memoir* by Wab Kinew
- *Indian Horse* by Richard Wagamese
- *Our Story: Aboriginal Voices on Canada's Past* by Thomas King and Tantoo Cardinal

**If you have other suggestions, please share them with the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee.**

## Churches and the Opioid Crisis

*By Justice Ministries*

In the winter of 2018, Justice Ministries received an overture regarding the opioid crisis in Canada. A response was adopted by the 2018 General Assembly.

Canada's opioid crisis refers to the current overdose emergency caused by the use of fentanyl and other opioid-class drugs and has led to an unprecedented number of deaths. Some people struggling with addiction first access opioids as prescribed medical treatment, others access opioids through illicit channels. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, Canada has the second highest (behind the United States) rate of opioid use per capita in the world.

In 1996 Health Canada approved OxyContin (oxycodone) to relieve moderate-to-severe pain. This decision was a watershed moment. Purdue Pharmaceutical, maker of OxyContin, launched a marketing campaign to promote the drug and generated \$31 billion USD in revenue from sales in Canada and the United States. Doctors prescribed the drug

for less severe conditions. In 2015 alone, doctors wrote enough prescriptions for one in every two Canadians.

Purdue was sued by several municipal and state governments in the United States. In 2007, Purdue pled guilty to criminal and civil charges that they misled government regulators, physicians and patients about the harms and dangers of the drug. In 2012, Purdue removed OxyContin and replaced it with a more tamper-resistant alternative drug, OxyNEO. At the same time, provinces limited coverage of opioids in drug plans. When medically prescribed opioid sources were limited, the market for illicit opioids soared.

Justice Ministries spoke with Presbyterians to learn how different communities have been impacted by the crisis, and how they are responding. These are some of those stories.

Winnipeg Inner City Missions assists people with drug and alcohol addiction on a daily basis. The staff and volunteers minister to low-income people, many of whom are Indigenous, and many of whom are also living with the legacy of residen-

tial schools. The Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin, former executive director, writes: "The drug and alcohol crisis is a part of our daily experience. Staff and volunteers must have the adequate personal capacity to deal with any crisis as it arises. Fentanyl is being laced into everything it seems and more people are dying from overdosing. Our people are dying out here and it is directly related to colonization and the residential school legacy. We bear witness that generational trauma is real and devastating."

Claudette Young is an elder at Callingwood Road Presbyterian Church in Edmonton. During a family crisis nine years ago, she sought family supports for parents with children struggling with addictions. Finding no appropriate supports locally, she contacted an American group called Because I Love You (BILY) and started an Edmonton chapter. Ms. Young is its executive director.

BILY is a non-profit organization that creates spaces for families in crisis to meet with, and support, other families in crisis. There are no fees. Parents of

children, teens and adults of all ages who are struggling with addictions, mental health, criminal activities, etc., come to share their stories, seek comfort, support and advice from other parents in similar circumstances. Groups are mentored by parent volunteers who provide support during, and outside weekly meetings. There is a facilitated youth group for teens and their parents. One focus of the youth program is to build self-esteem and teach interpersonal communication skills. Additionally, BILY operates a 24-hour hotline supported by volunteers. Callingwood Road PC provided funding and other support to set up a BILY group in Edmonton and continues to support BILY. In response to the fentanyl crisis, Parkland County (west of Edmonton) requested a chapter of BILY for their community, which was established in May 2017.

Ms. Young notes that hundreds of Albertans have died and are continuing to die every day. Each of these individuals has value and worth. She encourages churches to take action: "You don't have to have a personal connection for this to be an issue in



your community." She challenges church members to do what they can and to consider how church facilities can be used to support families in crisis.

Verne Gilkes is a church elder at Knox Presbyterian Church in Vankleek Hill (halfway between Ottawa and Montreal). A retired police officer, he is concerned about the opioid crisis and, after consulting with his minister, the Rev. James Douglas, convened a community meeting on March 27, 2018, where speakers addressed different aspects of the opioid crisis.

Read the full report on the crisis adopted to the General Assembly in the 2018 Acts and Proceedings (pp. 351–360). The report includes more background information, stories and suggestions for congregations to respond to the opioid crisis in their communities.



## JUSTICE

# Why is the 1994 Confession Important to the Church Today?

By Katharine Sisk, Justice Ministries

The year 2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the church's Confession—to God and to Indigenous people—regarding its role in running residential schools. Many Presbyterians will be familiar with two schools run by the PCC and named in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement: Birtle Residential School in western Manitoba and Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School near Kenora, Ont.

One aspect of the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was to create a public record of the schools and

the experiences of students: that students' stories may be acknowledged and honoured after being unheard for so long. Acknowledging the PCC's full history is important—the church ran 11 schools. They are named here so we do not forget this legacy. This is important for both accountability and for healing.

In Christ, we can find the right relationship with God, and with each other. In Christ, we are called to a ministry of healing and reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:17–20). Our 1994 Confession is a covenantal commitment to this ministry. But words are only as powerful as the mind, spirit and behaviours that animate

them in each one of us. Senator Murray Sinclair, former chair of the TRC, said: "It is in our daily conversations and interactions that our success as a nation in forging a better place will ultimately be measured. It is what we say to and about each other in public and in private that we need to look at changing."

Presbyterians are walking toward reconciliation. To walk in a good way, we must build ongoing relationships of mutual respect and love of neighbour between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This is how we can live out the covenant of our Confession.

## Get Involved

Throughout 2019, Presbyterians are invited and encouraged to lift up the Confession: in prayer, in study, in mission and ministry. Write a sermon. Share a reflection. Are you artistic? Share an original picture/song/expressions. Are you

a teacher? Work with children and adults to find out why they think the Confession is important today. Are you an organizer? Plan a conversation with members of your congregation. Whatever your activities may be, share it with the church.

Four sermons will be published in each issue of the *Presbyterian Connection* in 2019. Other reflections, stories and submissions will be online. In 2019, share with the church how you are walking toward reconciliation.



The Regina Indian Residential School in 1907. PHOTO CREDIT: PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF SASKATCHEWAN



Phil Fontaine, then Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, is presented with the PCC's Confession in 1994 by the Rev. Dr. George Vais, Moderator of the 1994 General Assembly.



Phil Fontaine, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, at the 2014 General Assembly.

## The PCC Operated 11 Schools

Details extracted from a "Brief Administrative History of the Residential Schools & the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Healing and Reconciliation Efforts" by the PCC Archives, Sept. 2010

**Birtle Residential School** began as a day school in 1884 and was converted to a boarding/residential school in December 1888. **Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School** opened in 1902 at Shoal Lake, 45 miles from Kenora. A new school site was built closer to Kenora and opened in 1929. The PCC ran both schools until they were transferred to the federal government in 1969. Following Church Union in 1925, responsibility for the schools remained uncertain until 1927 when responsibilities for the schools were resumed by the PCC.

**Ahousaht Residential School**, B.C.—a day school opened in 1896 that took boarders in 1903 when it was classified as a residential school; **Alberni Residential School**, B.C.—a day school opened in 1890 and became a boarding/industrial school in December 1892; **File Hills Residential School**, Sask., opened in 1888; **Portage la Prairie Residential School**, Man., opened in 1886; **Round Lake Residential School**, Sask., opened in 1884. Each of these schools continued to operate under The United Church of Canada after union in 1925.

**Stoney Plain Residential School**, Alta., opened in 1889. The school was closed in 1893 and the mission was transferred to the Methodist Church in 1894.

**Crowstand Residential School**, Sask., opened in 1889 and closed in 1915 when a new day school called Cote Indian School opened in its place in 1916. **Muscowpetung** (later known as "Lakesend") **Residential School**, Sask., opened in 1888. The school site was moved in 1890. It closed in June 1894 but was reopened briefly in 1895 before closing in 1896. **Regina Industrial School**, Sask., opened as an Industrial School in 1891 and closed in 1910.

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## GATHERINGS



Last November, the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Port Colborne, Ont., ran a “radnelaC tnevda esreveR—Reverse Advent Calendar.” Instead of opening a calendar door each day over Advent, we collected for the local Food Bank and Clothes for Kids. Also, we did it in November so items would arrive in good time for the holidays. We are continuing with the “radnelaC tnevda esreveR” again this year and always trying to think of other new ways to reach out to our community.



When the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario decided to go to a commissioned Synod to do its business, it also decided to hold an Educational/Fellowship event every two years. So from Oct. 16-17, 2018, we had a retreat at Gimli, Manitoba. Gimli is a fishing and cottage community on Lake Winnipeg. The Synod is grateful to the Regional Resourcing Funds of the PCC that enabled this retreat to take place.



Over the weekend of Sept. 29-30 (*Presbyterians Sharing Sunday*), Knox Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Ont., welcomed the Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin into our midst to speak about her work at Place of Hope Presbyterian Church and Indigenous ministries. This included a talk on Saturday and worship on Sunday. In the picture, Dr. Mullin is teaching the children about the four directions.



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



On Oct. 24, the three Presbyterian congregations of Knox Holstein, Knox Normanby and Amos Dromore and surrounding community members celebrated 10 years of Prayer Shawl Ministry and the giving of 740 prayer shawls and lap quilts. Pictured above (left to right): Dee Castaldi, Terry Walker, Diane Orr, Lori Charlton, Lou Keith, Hilda Echlin, Joan Studzinski, Brenda Calder.



The Arthur Circle at Knox Presbyterian Church in Goderich, Ont., is a group of friendly women who meet monthly for fellowship together and to support the work of mission through the Women's Missionary Society. They decorated the church sanctuary for Thanksgiving with non-perishable food items collected from the congregation, which were later donated to the community's two food banks.



After raising over \$800 in donations for PWS&D's water projects during Vacation Bible School last summer, the children at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Markham, Ont., presented PWS&D with a hand-crafted cheque.



The Rev. Shelly Chandler was ordained on July 8, 2018, at Gordon Presbyterian Church in Burnaby, B.C. Shelly is pictured above with the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls (left) and the Rev. Cal MacLeod (right).



## GATHERINGS



The General Assembly Design Team meet at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre on Oct. 19–20 to begin to discern a theme for the 2019 General Assembly. Pictured above are Tristan Gerrie, the Rev. Hugh Donnelly, Patty Farris, the Rev. Don Muir, Terrie-Lee Hamilton, the Rev. Pat Dutcher-Walls and the Rev. Kristine O'Brien. Missing from the photo are Jane Swatridge, the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, the Rev. Stephen Kendall and the Rev. Nancy Harvey.



St. Marys Presbyterian Church in St. Marys, Ont., marked a major milestone on Oct. 21 when we welcomed Barb Summers from the Communications Office as guest speaker for our 170th Anniversary. There was special music and we enjoyed fellowship over food following our worship. Throughout the coming year, we will continue to celebrate this amazing anniversary each month. We began with the sponsorship of a room at Camp Kintail. We will welcome the Presbyterian Young People's Society (PYPS) to a worship service in November. We will gather with the three families sponsored collaboratively over the past three years, enjoying international foods from all of our different heritages. We are praying about what God is calling us to in our years ahead. Our church building and even our name has changed over the years, and there are different people in our pews. But our desire and commitment to sharing God's love and the abundance God has blessed us with will carry on for many more years to come.



Gale Presbyterian Church in Elmira, Ont., celebrated its 150th anniversary on Oct. 21, 2018. During worship, our choir gave a special musical presentation and our Sunday School class presented the time capsule they are working on. As well, Gale commissioned an artist to paint a picture that commemorates Gale's past and present. Praise be to God!



On Oct. 21, a celebration was held to install the Rev. Kristine O'Brien as the new director of Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, Ont. Pictured above is Kristine (centre, right) with members of the Maclean Estate Committee: (left to right) the Rev. Gord Timbers, Moira Forbes, the Rev. Neil Ellis, the Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, David Phillips, Anne Church, Jim Allen.



St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Simcoe, Ont., celebrated their 225-year anniversary on Oct. 20. The congregation marked this important event with a potluck dinner, games and a special worship service led by D.C. MacDonald Scholarship winner, Choi Young Tae, who is also a third-year student at Vancouver School of Theology, St. Andrew's Hall. The D.C. MacDonald Scholarship Committee was established in memory of the Rev. D.C. MacDonald, former moderator of the PCC in 1983, who served as St. Paul's Minister from 1955 to 1970. The scholarship is awarded annually to a candidate for pastoral ministry from one of the three Canadian theological colleges in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. The first scholarship was awarded in 1993. Elder Mike Cobb presented Choi Young Tae with a cheque for \$5,300.



Kirk on the Hill Presbyterian Church in Fonthill, Ont., was blessed once again to host the Canada Youth International Students at Sunday morning worship service on July 8, following the activities at Brock University. Pictured here are the youth participants and the Rev. Calvin Lewis. Kirk Youth Leader, Lyn Emmons, and Youth in Mission Coordinator, Matthew Foxall, were instrumental in arranging this. One highlight of the gathering occurred after the service when organist Robert Young invited one of the Taiwanese visitors, who was also an organist, to try out the organ. With the group gathered around, he chose to play a spirited rendition of *O Canada*, to which spontaneous applause erupted following the performance.



## GATHERINGS



On Thanksgiving Sunday, our congregation at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hillsburgh, Ont., brought veggies for our youth to clean, dice and add to five different soups with special biblical titles. They served the soups on Harvest Sunday after the service for a free-will offering, raising \$250 that was used to buy food cards for those in need in our community. There is no joy like sharing!



On Sept. 16, 2018, Haney Presbyterian Church in Maple Ridge, B.C., celebrated the body of Christ with our first Home Coming Sunday, to gather our extended church family together. Following worship, we enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by the Ladies Fellowship. You are the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12.27)! Pictured here are and Don Thain and Dick Lyster enjoying ice cream, and others enjoying the lunch.



Paul Ku and Colleen Bolton of Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, in Richmond Hill, Ont., helped serve up pancakes at a breakfast fundraiser for PWS&D last May, hosted by the mission and outreach committee and Richmond Hill Doors Open. PHOTO CREDIT: SNAPD RICHMOND HILL



New beginnings participants at the Presbyterian Church of St. David in Halifax, N.S., took a moment to pose for a photo. Pictured above are (front row, left to right): Siobhan Harris, Erin Hope, Jillian Hope, Allison Hope and (back row): the Rev. Iona MacLean, interim moderator, Judy Henderson, Davida Mackay.



On Sept. 28, national office staff wore orange shirts to commemorate survivors of the residential school system. Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity to raise awareness of the legacy of residential schools and the impact it's had on Canada's Indigenous communities.



September is an exciting time for children! On Sept. 18, the children of Caven Presbyterian Church in Exeter, Ont., enjoyed their Bible story and a hot dog after biking to a nearby splash pad, then rode back to the church to celebrate two birthdays with ice cream and cake and made "Welcome to the family of God" signs to share with the youth and adults.



The congregation of St. Andrew's-Newton Presbyterian Church in Surrey, B.C., celebrated their 100th anniversary this spring. The congregation is growing into the future, installing a new sound system, flat screen and new lighting for the sanctuary and fellowship hall.



## GATHERINGS



Chippawa Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont., regularly partners with Habitat for Humanity Niagara. Typically, we will provide lunch for the teams of volunteers. In September, this included lunch for Scott McGillivray of HGTV. On Oct. 2, Chippawa Presbyterian sent a team of 12 to work for the day, installing trim. These 12 volunteers also raised funds for the build. The amount requested was \$2,700 and the team, with the strong backing of the congregation, raised \$3,370.



Caledonia Presbyterian Church in Caledonia, Ont., held their first textile recycling drive on Saturday, Oct. 13. The town was invited to collect clothes, rags, shoes, belts and other items. Broken shoes, mismatched socks, torn and stained items were all accepted for this recycling drive, resulting in nearly 1.5 tonnes (over 3000 lbs.) diverted from our landfill sites. It was a successful stewardship and environmental mission project, which will most likely become an annual event.



This Elvis Presley look-alike crooned “When the Storms of Life are Raging” to a despondent Jonah at the Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C., annual Vacation Bible School in late summer. This year’s theme was “Jonah has a Whale of an Adventure!” Also, we captured a Best Friends Forever moment, as two participants from this year’s Vacation Bible School recognized each other from last year’s event.



A transformative faith experience occurs at the Cairn Family of Camps in Baysville, Ont., every summer. Campers come together to experience, learn and practice creating and sustaining a supportive community centred on sharing Christ’s love.



Once again this summer, St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont., teamed up with First Christian Reformed Church to offer a fun-filled week of camp—right in our own backyard! This is a wonderful program offered through Cairn, one of our Presbyterian camps in nearby Baysville. We welcomed 30 campers, and for the first time had a waiting list. Our activities included inventive crafts, singing new as well as familiar songs, active (very active!) games, and learning and growing in Christ. We ended the week with a great water day, including a water slide that was enjoyed by all. We are grateful for the two counsellors from Cairn who, with our team of dedicated volunteers, ensured that the campers had a wonderful week. We look forward to next year!





## GATHERINGS



The congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kitchener, Ont., gathered to wish a happy retirement to the Rev. Dr. Mark Lewis, lead minister, who served the congregation for 12 years. Gifts were presented to Mark and his wife, Donna Fitzpatrick-Lewis, during morning worship on Nov. 4.



On Sept. 14 and Oct. 26, First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., welcomed campers to the first two PA Day Camps of the school year. On September 14, the campers walked down to the banks of the St. Lawrence River for the rededication of a local memorial to those who have served in wars. They were treated to a flyover by the Canadian Air Force Snowbirds Precision Flying Team. In October, the campers visited our local fire station and learned about fire safety, firefighting equipment and firefighter training. First Church will host four more camps during the school year. Thank you to all our volunteers and the support of the First Church congregation for this outreach in our community!



A wonderful anniversary celebration was held, appropriately, on All Saints Day, Nov. 4, at Haney Presbyterian Church in Maple Ridge, B.C. In a service led by the Rev. Paddy Eastwood, the congregation commemorated three historical dates: 143 years of Presbyterianism in Maple Ridge, the 60th anniversary of the first Haney Presbyterian Church building, and the 35th of our current building. Century-old items from our earlier churches were on display for the occasion... And yes, of course, there was cake!



## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

# Champion for Change

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

When I was in high school, I already wanted to make a difference in the world.

I joined my local Development and Peace group and started working to raise awareness in our church to global challenges. We organized events such as a "hunger dinner"

where some people were randomly chosen to have a feast while others were forced to fast. Everyone had paid the same amount for the dinner—only to experience the world's inequalities first-hand.

Every fall, we planned educational activities and awareness-raising campaigns in an attempt to bring more justice to this world. Every spring we

redoubled our efforts to raise funds in support of our partners overseas—to provide a life with dignity to those who couldn't meet their basic needs.

Now, at PWS&D we are aiming to build a movement of Champions that reminds me of my early days. We want to energize our supporters by working through local champions who will share the good news of PWS&D's

work in their congregation, school or community.

Imagine having the opportunity to share about the transforming work PWS&D does around the world and how we can engage to make a difference.

There are exciting new resources in store for Champions, including monthly webinars and our brand-new handbook. You will be among the first to learn of the latest appeals responding to the world's disasters. You will hear about how PWS&D projects are transforming lives all over the world. You will be part of the PWS&D team—playing a vital role on the journey toward a more sustainable, compassionate and just world.

If you are passionate about PWS&D and want to help promote our work in your congregation, presbytery, school or community, sign up by going to [WeRespond.ca/be-a-champion](http://WeRespond.ca/be-a-champion). There you will find all of the information you need.

On Oct. 21, I spoke at St. Columba Presbyterian Church in Belleville, Ont. I celebrated with the congregation the launch of their new Advent project, raising funds for South Sudan. I also challenged them to name a PWS&D Champion. One congregation at a time, we hope to build a network of Champions from coast to coast—knowing that the most effective way to share the good news stories of PWS&D is in person.

One more way to take action is



Minister of International Development Marie-Claude Bibeau with Guy Smagghe after she was presented with 8,000 postcards sharing that Canadians care about ending global poverty and hunger.

to sign a postcard letting the prime minister know that you care about Canada's role in ending global poverty and hunger. Through the "I Care" campaign, Canada can do more for the 815 million people who go to bed hungry.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank supporters and staff delivered 8,000 postcards to the Minister of International Development, Marie-Claude Bibeau, on World Food Day (Oct. 16) and told her that this is just the start. Many more cards need to be signed.

**For more information and to order postcards, visit [WeRespond.ca/i-care](http://WeRespond.ca/i-care). We'll be glad to send them to you—our new Champion for Change!**



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## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

# Breaking the Cycle of Malnutrition in Somalia

By Karen Bokma  
Communications Coordinator, PWS&D

Madina Abdi has been dealing with hunger for a long time. In the Gedo region of Somalia where she lives, consecutive, cyclical droughts have compounded ongoing food insecurity, jeopardizing fragile livelihoods.

During a previous hungry period, two of Madina's children were admitted to a nutrition program after being diagnosed with acute malnutrition. They received the therapeutic food they needed to recover and are now doing well.

Madina helps support her family through a small retail business. She sells vegetables and other food stuffs. With the knowledge she gained from the nutrition program and the small profits from her busi-

ness, Madina could afford healthy food for her family.

But the small gains the family made were threatened once again when Madina gave birth to twins who were born underweight. Through a PWS&D and Canadian Foodgrains Bank-supported project, Madina learned how important exclusive breastfeeding is to shield infants from disease and ensure a safe food source—and she's determined to follow through. Given the precarious food situation in the home, Madina herself is now at risk of malnutrition, which would also negatively impact the babies. In order to prevent this from happening, and to ensure that she can continue to breastfeed, the project is providing a family food basket to Madina, and other mothers in situations like hers.

As Madina shares, "My business is

down since I delivered because I am taking care of my babies now. But I know it will pick up again. It has given me hope in life and I will be able to care for my children."

As a result of the project, at their most recent checkup, Madina's twins were assessed as healthy and having gained weight. To make sure the positive progress endures, the project team will continue to support her to ensure she is getting the necessary nutrition for both herself and the twins to remain healthy and strong.

While Madina's family has been able to address their food security issues, many in her community are not.

In July, PWS&D issued an urgent appeal to respond to needs in many countries in Africa. An unprecedented number of people across the continent are in need due to natural

disaster and violent conflict. We do not often hear about these crises in the media, but they are very real for the hundreds of thousands who are impacted on a daily basis.

Generous Presbyterian contributions from across the country are already making a difference for families like Madina's, but more needs to be done. Please respond with us to help provide critical assistance to families in need. Visit [WeRespond.ca/africa-appeal-response](http://WeRespond.ca/africa-appeal-response).

**PWS&D is a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a coalition of 15 church-based agencies working together with the common goal of eliminating global hunger. This project was undertaken with matching support from the Government of Canada.**



Families in South Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are receiving emergency food and non-food aid through PWS&D and its partners. PHOTO CREDIT: CFGB/MATTHEW SAWATZKY



A mother with her child who was recently screened for malnutrition. The child received treatment from a PWS&D-supported project in Somalia. PHOTO CREDIT: WILL SWANSON

# Mission and Musings in Ghana

By Susan Viegas, PWS&D Committee member and member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Toronto

In September 2018, I had the privilege of accompanying Kristen Winters, PWS&D's Africa Program Coordinator, on a monitoring and evaluation trip to Ghana. As a newly appointed member of PWS&D's committee, this was a fabulous and timely opportunity to experience first-hand the amazing relief and development efforts in which our church is engaged.

In Ghana, women and men accused of witchcraft and people living with disabilities face many barriers to living healthy, happy and dignified lives. PWS&D is working with the Presbyterian Church in Ghana (PCG) to break these barriers and help vulnerable members of society build brighter futures.

The PWS&D-supported Gambaga Go Home project, which we visited, helps support alleged witches so they can return to their communities and improve their lives and livelihoods, free from discrimination.

I say "alleged" because people who are accused of witchcraft—mostly older women and a handful of men—are done so under very nebulous terms. Accusations are swift, and the victims—who may be tortured or killed—sometimes take their

own lives out of fear of reprisals or run away and seek shelter in camps under the supervision and authority of a local chief.

There are currently five such camps in the north of Ghana, with a total of about 400 inhabitants. The Gambaga project works to promote the rights of these marginalized people through community advocacy and access to health care and improved sanitation and hygiene.

The program also teaches vocational skills such as the manufacturing of shea butter, soaps and jewelry to sell to local villagers. Because of this support, many are able to eke out a living and provide for themselves and, in some cases, their extended family.

I was moved by the plight of these women but equally moved to find out how our support has saved so many lives and had a positive impact on families.

One woman I met told me that what gave her strength for the past 30 years was knowing that her savings through the project were helping to send her children and grandchildren to school so that they could have better lives.

Through sensitizing communities about respect for human rights, mental illness, disabilities and other health issues that are often mistakenly attributed to witchcraft, the pro-

ject aims to eradicate accusations of witchcraft and the banishment of people from their communities. May our continued support and advocacy efforts ultimately render these camps unnecessary in the very near future.

Kristen and I also visited the PWS&D-supported Community Based Rehabilitation Centre (CBR) in Garu, which, for over 40 years, has focused on improving the quality of life for people living with disabilities.

The project supports people with disabilities by providing schooling and vocational training to strengthen livelihood opportunities within their communities. In 2017, farmers with disabilities were trained in techniques to improve crop production and provided with varieties of improved seeds. Some farmers received training in livestock production, agroecology, and business development to boost income generation.

To increase financial literacy and access to local credit, self-help groups and community savings and loans groups were established, and members received training. To promote improved health outcomes, the project also provides training on sexual and reproductive health issues, conducts HIV testing, assesses children for disabilities, and advocates for inclusive education in communities and schools.

Kristen and I had a chance to meet with a group of women with children affected by cerebral palsy. One mother felt she had no choice but to abandon her severely disabled child. Through the program though, she was able to find support through a network of other mothers who shared similar experiences and helped her overcome challenges. This woman was also taught about proper hygiene, nutrition and how to better communicate with her child. She is now an ardent advocate for the rights of people living with disabilities.

The Garu project will directly impact about 25,000 lives in Ghana over a five-year period, ending in 2020. The team is absolutely amazing and so very committed to improving the lives of their clients. I am grateful to have spent some time visiting their facilities.

Ghana is an incredible country—almost 80% of the population of Canada lives in an area 42 times smaller! Ghanaians are a warm and friendly people with big hearts. No matter where we went, people gave willingly whatever they had, including three guinea fowl, a rooster, several yams, loads of peanuts—and one goat! I have been so very enriched by this experience and I hope for the continued success of PWS&D programs to improve the quality of lives in Ghana in exponential ways.



Through the Gambaga Go Home project, many women are able to earn a living and better provide for their families because of vocational training.



The Garu Community Based Rehabilitation Centre in Ghana provides tricycles to people living with disabilities so they can improve their mobility.



While visiting the Gambaga Go Home project with PWS&D's local partners in Ghana, Susan Viegas and Kristen Winters are presented with a goat.



## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

# Celebrating Presbyterian Refugee Sponsorship

By Michelle Ball, former Refugee Program Assistant, PWS&D

It was over three years ago that I started working as part of the staff team at Presbyterian World Service & Development, supporting refugee-sponsoring groups across Canada. When I arrived in September 2015, it was a unique time in Canada's efforts to welcome refugees. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had announced the government's intention to resettle 40,000 refugees to Canada in just a few months, and Presbyterians were calling our office in record numbers to ask how they could help. It was a busy and exciting time to come on board to support Presbyterians as they responded to this great need.

Now, three years after Canadians sponsored refugees in huge numbers, it feels like a different environment. Presbyterians continue to be very active in sponsorship, but in the broader community it can sometimes feel like this is a time of polarized

opinions on the presence of refugees in our communities.

The global refugee crisis continues to grow and our ability to respond can sometimes feel like just a drop in the ocean. Nevertheless, I believe that the work of sponsoring groups from the Presbyterian Church and others has been instrumental in maintaining open and welcoming communities for refugees in Canada. More than 200,000 privately sponsored refugees have arrived in Canada since the program began in 1978, and communities of faith like the Presbyterians have been instrumental in the program's success.

Through working with Presbyterian refugee sponsors, I have come to see this program as a unique opportunity for the church to live out its commitment to justice. The generosity of taking on a refugee sponsorship is an incredible act of faith, especially since it's not always easy! New sponsors navigate a complex application process and wait many long years for refugees to arrive, followed

by the work of walking alongside newcomers to Canada.

Sponsors assist with settling into a new home, appointments with doctors and schools and social workers, financial support for 12 months, and assistance in navigating the often dizzying cultural and structural barriers that newcomers face. Despite its challenges, I see refugee sponsorship as an incredible invitation to bring strangers into our lives—to be changed by our relationship with them and to offer a radical kind of hospitality.

I've been reflecting on my experience over the past three years in part because in October I'm wrapping up my work with Rob Shropshire, PWS&D's refugee program coordinator, and others at The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I'm moving on to a different role, working with refugees outside the church, but I leave with gratitude for the time spent working with dedicated congregations across the country in our communal effort



Michelle Ball with a group from the Synod of Saskatchewan in October 2016.

to respond to the needs of refugees. I've enjoyed seeing the photos sent to our office of refugee families finally arriving at the airport and hearing of your experiences together.

Thank you to everyone involved in this effort for allowing me to celebrate the joys and hard work alongside you in helping to bring refugees to safety and new homes here in Canada. Keep up the great work!



Biniam Goitom, Michelle Ball and Rob Shropshire, PWS&D's refugee team in June 2017.

## Third Annual Ride for Refuge Benefits Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

By Anna Muir,  
Communications Coordinator, PWS&D

Putting passion into action, 30 PWS&D supporters hit the streets of London, Toronto, Brampton, Waterloo and Hamilton in the Ride for Refuge on Saturday, Sept. 29.

The Ride for Refuge is a nationwide cycling and walking fundraiser that helps charities collect money for the displaced, vulnerable and persecuted.

For the third year in a row, PWS&D participated to raise funds and awareness for the maternal, newborn and child health program in Afghanistan and Malawi. Five teams of dedicated cyclists, walkers and their sponsors contributed over \$9,000 to the project through the event.

With additional support from the Government of Canada, these funds

will be matched at a rate of 4:1, for a total value of \$45,000. This means that funds raised will go even further to help pregnant women, mothers and their newborns get the care they need to survive childbirth and stay healthy.

The Rev. Daniel Cho, minister at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Toronto and Moderator of the 144th General Assembly, cycled 25 km with Team PWS&D at the Ride for Refuge in Toronto. This was Daniel's second time participating with PWS&D, but this year's event felt even closer to his heart.

"I just returned from Malawi and saw up close how our support is doing no less than saving the lives of newborns and mothers, and improving their well-being in leaps and bounds," he shared. "Remembering the people that I met, and all the fac-

es imprinted in my heart, made the Ride that much more meaningful and moving for me."

Long-time PWS&D supporters Femmy and Grant Birks also reflected on recent experiences in Malawi during their Ride for Refuge experience. The couple cycled 25 km in Waterloo as part of Team PWS&D.

"Back in the spring we went on the PCC Malawi mission trip," shared Grant. "We learned a lot and came away appreciating all the work that PWS&D, along with their Malawian partners, are doing. When we saw that PWS&D had formed a team, we wanted to join. We really enjoyed the ride and are happy to have been able to contribute to this ministry."

To date, the Ride for Refuge has brought in over \$36,000 for maternal and child health over the past three



Femmy and Grant Birks cycled 25 km on Team PWS&D at the Ride for Refuge in Waterloo, Ont.

years. This support is vital to sustain a program that ensures birth attendants receive proper training, health clinics are stocked with supplies, medicine is more accessible, women and girls are empowered to claim their rights and entire communities are educated about the importance of maternal health.

By improving access to maternal



The Rev. Peter Ma, the Rev. Daniel Cho, Moderator, and Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director, before their 25 km bike ride at the Ride for Refuge in Toronto.

and newborn care, we are helping to shape more prosperous communities and a more sustainable, compassionate and just world.

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

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## Take the Advent Challenge!

During the Advent season, we celebrate God's amazing gift—Jesus! Inspired by God's overwhelming generosity, we too can work to make a difference for our sisters and brothers across the globe.

PWS&D is challenging individuals and congregations to complete the Advent Challenge. To take the Advent Challenge, each week of Ad-

vent, read the story on the back of the PWS&D Advent liturgy, complete the weekly challenge and share the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love that enable abundant life.

In the midst of poverty, injustice and disaster, the Christ light shines. To help create bright futures through the Advent Challenge, visit [WeRespond.ca/advent-challenge](http://WeRespond.ca/advent-challenge).





## NEWS

# Style and Fashion Meet to Support an Innovative Initiative

By Rebecca Sherbino,  
Raw Carrot Co-Director

What do 100 ladies and gents in top hats, flapper dresses and feathers do on a chilly September day? Head out to support a great cause, of course!

On Sept. 9, 2018, a fashion event was held with the proceeds going to the Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise. The event was a Roaring 20s Tea & Fete (Garden Party), where people were encouraged to don vintage costumes and enjoy High Tea and an intimate vendor marketplace in support of a local ministry at Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ont.

The Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise is an initiative that was started in 2014 to provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and mental health illness through cooking gourmet soup. The co-founders of the Raw Carrot saw a need in their own church congregation to provide something more than just a donation or grocery card to individuals who were struggling to make ends meet on their monthly disability stipend. Instead of coming to the church monthly to access the church benevolent fund, they wanted to create an opportunity where people didn't need the benevolent fund.

Raw Carrot founders, Colleen Graham and Rebecca Sherbino, felt that people needed more than just a handout, they needed a Hand Up through employment! They are passionate about advocating that people with disabilities want to participate in community life, feel valued for their contribution to something meaningful and experience the dignity of honest work—there is just not a lot of opportunity to fit their unique talents and skill set. That's where the Raw



Left to right: Rebecca Sherbino, Raw Carrot Co-Director; Milan Novakovic, Sr., representative for MPP Will Bouma; Susan Ritchie, Fundraising Organizer; Colleen Graham, Raw Carrot Co-Director; and MP Phil McColeman.

Carrot comes in. The social enterprise employs people on the Ontario Disability Support Program to cook tasty handcrafted soup that is sold in the local community. Although the Raw Carrot is a ministry of the church (with the church providing the commercial kitchen facilities), it operates like a business or "social enterprise" where the employees are all paid a minimum wage salary through sales of soup.

The initiative has grown beyond the walls of the church, and there are now three Raw Carrot locations (in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee of Ontario and Mt. Forest United Church) in Kitchener and Mt. Forest, employing 16 individuals, with a vision to continue to grow and provide more employment.

The Garden Tea & Fete was organized primarily by two avid Raw Carrot supporters, who wanted to dig in and help promote the Raw Carrot locally and to raise some funds. This is the second High Tea event that they have held in support of the enterprise.

The affair was a "roaring" success, with almost 100 people in attendance, including local dignitaries. MP Phil McColeman, himself the father of a child with physical and intellectual disabilities, opened the event with a moving speech supporting the creation of local job opportunities for individuals with disabilities and the ensuing dignity, pride and purpose that comes from having a job.

In all, over \$4,000 was raised through ticket sales with all of the proceeds going to support the Raw Carrot. Funds will be used to launch an online store that will provide home delivery of gourmet soup to people in the Paris-area, with a vision to increase sales of soup, which will then be able to employ additional staff and give current staff more hours of work.

**The Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise is a ministry of Paris Presbyterian Church and is supported, in part, through a Specialized Ministry grant from The Presbyterian Church in Canada.**

## A Spirit of Joy and Gratitude in Unionville

On Sept. 23, the Rev. Marty Molengraaf and the Rev. Grace Chang shared the pulpit at Unionville Presbyterian Church celebrating the one-year anniversary of the Mandarin-speaking congregation and the 34th anniversary of the English-speaking congregation. We joined together in a spirit of joy and gratitude for our strong relationships, for the building of new relationships and for the presence of God's love found in our connection with one another.

This past May, we had a time of celebration and recognition of the incredible work Grace is doing at UPC. As well as a worship service each Sunday and a bible study during the week, she is involved with a number of small group studies and supports our extensive ESL program. Grace also works with the Mandarin "Health and Happiness Seniors' Choir," which helps to further our endeavour at UPC to become a hub for the support of seniors in our immediate community of Unionville, Ont.



The Rev. Marty Molengraaf and the Rev. Grace Chang.



Beach time.



Enjoying Celtic music.

## Presbyterian Music Camp

By Ruth Anne Robertson, Presbyterian  
Music Camp Committee Convenor

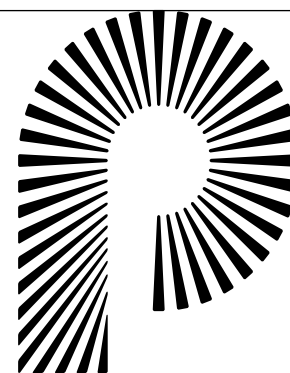
Presbyterian Music Camp is a camp for families and individuals who enjoy music and spending time growing in Christian community. It is a place to grow musically and spiritually, a place where people of all ages can learn new skills and share their gifts with one another. This year, our week-long camp ran from Sunday, Aug. 19 to 26. We had 127 campers (including visitors) attend PMC at Camp Tamarack, in the beautiful Muskoka region of Ontario.

The 2018 theme, *Seeing the Forest Through the Trees: It's Time to See the Big Picture*, enabled us, as a community, to take time out of our own individual realities to examine different aspects of our lives. We used a daily theme of "Taking Time Out" to explore themes such as: Taking Time Out from Work, Taking Time Out for Family, Taking Time Out in Suffering, and Taking Time Out for Celebration. We encouraged one another to take time to step away from routines, search for purpose and make space for God in our lives. Our final Sunday worship

service encouraged us to take what we had reflected upon back to our day-to-day lives and work on seeing the bigger picture amid the daily details of our busy lives.

We enjoyed a wonderful week using our theme, times of worship, workshops and activities as tools to grow together in community. Our evening programs included Campfire, Live Band Karaoke, Variety Night, Coffee House, Movie Night and Dance Night. The workshops available included: camp choir, children's choir, concert band, children's games, cherubs, relaxation, children's crafts, adult crafts, singing for non-singers, several levels of guitar, several levels of ukulele, show choir, garage band, jazz band, Celtic group, banjo, bagpipes, beginner recorder, contemporary Christian music, sound improvisation, sport of the day, drama improvisation, parent & tot music, advanced choir, and drum circle.

Considering attending Presbyterian Music Camp? Please visit our website at [musiccamp.ca](http://musiccamp.ca) for more information. We have been in existence for more than 40 years and run our week-long camp the last full week of August every year.



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## NEWS

# Honouring Indigenous Wisdom with Stunning Public Mural

By the Rev. Lynne Donovan,  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,  
Picton, ON

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Picton, Ont., is home to the largest Indigenous mural on a church in Canada. The congregation was given permission by award-winning Métis artist Christi Belcourt to reproduce her Art Gallery of Ontario commissioned piece, *The Wisdom of the Universe*, on its north exterior wall.

The work has been reproduced by Toronto muralist Jason Rouleau and began on Oct. 9, 2018. The 37' x 36' mural took the MuralForm team six days to complete.

The purpose of the project is to pay tribute to the ancient wisdom

within the Canadian Indigenous community—a wisdom that invites us to treat the earth and all of its creatures as sacred.

Ms. Belcourt's artist statement concludes with this profound proposal: "Perhaps it's time to place the rights of Mother Earth ahead of the rights to Mother Earth."

"We are deeply grateful to Ms. Belcourt for articulating this timely vision. Her work as an activist and an artist has challenged us as Canadians to rethink our relationship with the earth and with one another. We hope this mural will serve as a concrete symbol that we as a community both recognize and honour the Indigenous wisdom represented in *The Wisdom of the Universe*," said the Rev. Lynne Donovan, minister at

St. Andrew's. "It also serves as an invitation to the wider community to appreciate the interconnectedness of all living things."

In lieu of payment for the use of the image, Ms. Belcourt requested that St. Andrew's make a contribution to the Onaman Collective, formed in 2014 by Ms. Belcourt and other Indigenous artists for the express purpose of connecting Indigenous youth to traditional knowledge, language and Elders. St. Andrew's has raised \$2,000 to support this work.

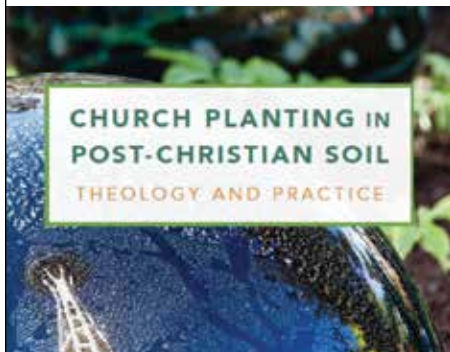
While the exterior wall has been transformed, the interior walls of St. Andrew's were populated with an exhibit featuring four Mohawk artists Janice Brant, Rebecca Maracle, Doug Brant and Stephen Loney. "We are taking small steps," said The



The captivating mural on the north wall of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Picton, Ont.

Rev. Donovan, "towards listening to the voice and vision of our Mohawk neighbours. We have much to learn and much to unlearn." For more information, visit [standrewspicton.com](http://standrewspicton.com).

## Call for Papers Christian Witness in Cascadian Soil CML Conference May 10 & 11, 2019



### Share your experience of Christian Witness in Cascadia!

The Centre for Missional Leadership at St. Andrew's Hall is delighted to host an academic conference in May 2019 focused on Christian Witness in Cascadian Soil. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Christopher B. James, Assistant Professor of Evangelism and Mission at Dubuque Theological Seminary and author of *Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil* (Oxford Press, 2017). Papers should be 1,500 words in length and focused on one of the following three areas:

- Connecting with Cascadian Neighbours
- Worship & Missional Vocation
- Witness & Formation Beyond Worship

When: May 10 & 11, 2019

Where: St. Andrew's Hall,  
6040 Iona Drive,  
Vancouver, BC V7R 2H8

Time: Friday, May 10 • 9 am-9 pm  
Saturday, May 11 • 9 am-3pm

Other: Papers to be submitted to Dr. Ross Lockhart ([rlockhart@standrews.edu](mailto:rlockhart@standrews.edu)) by March 1, 2019 - subject line: Call for Papers. Papers approved for presentation will be notified by April 1, 2019.

[www.standrews.edu/cml](http://www.standrews.edu/cml)  
604.827.2097



# Serving a Free Community Lunch in Nanaimo

By Elaine Toole, St. Andrew's  
Presbyterian Church in Nanaimo, B.C.

Ever thought about serving a free community lunch from your church? In 2010, it came to light through the City of Nanaimo's Social Planner that the area around our church had many single-parent homes with socio-economic issues. Our church is situated across from a Secondary School. It wasn't long before St. Andrew's Presbyterian Nanaimo had a Lunch Program up and running.

We started out on a bimonthly basis, to see how it would be accepted—by our congregation, as well as the surrounding area. We soon realized that it needed to be run on a weekly basis, so we advertised for volunteers and quickly enlisted 43 volunteers—from our church, from 10 other churches in Nanaimo, as well as community members. Some of the volunteers—aged from 40 to 95—have been with us from the beginning.

Each week we make three 18-litre pots of soup and 22 loaves of sandwiches. Through Loaves and Fishes (our city's food bank) we are able to access food from their Food For You Program supplying us our bread needs each week. Sometimes we can access ground beef or chicken for our soups, but we do purchase the sand-



Left to right: Rosie, Randi, Susan, John, Faye, Elizabeth and Yvonne.

wich filling.

Financially, we have had donations from our own congregation, other churches, grants from the United Way, the City of Nanaimo and from our local Mid Island Co-op. We set out a Donation Box, and there is always some money left in it. Leftover soup is sold, sent home to shut-ins, donated to Out of the Cold programs and a women's shelter. Leftover sandwiches are offered to Loaves and Fishes for their clients. Nothing goes to waste!

How do we set up, you may ask? Teams are scheduled to do specific tasks each week, including set up of the hall, chopping veggies for the soup, making sandwiches, soup and beverages, cleaning up afterwards, and much more. We have a coordinator who does the scheduling, and

a treasurer who keeps tabs on our expenses, etc. It is amazing how efficient we have become.

Rarely a week goes by that we don't have someone new attending the program, be it for the food or for purely a social reason, as many live alone. It is a chance to socialize in a safe environment. Everyone is grateful, and many will come back to the serving window to say thank you as they leave. As our association with the school increased, students from the Life Skills class now help to fold weekly bulletins, tidy up the brochures in the church pews, and do some light dusting.

Since its inception to the end of June 2018, we have served approximately 41,000 lunches!

All of us are blessed by this humble offering to our community.





**NEWS**

# Orange Shirt Day in Uxbridge



Recognizing Orange Shirt Day in Uxbridge, Ont. PHOTO CREDITS: STUART BLOWER

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

Orange Shirt Day, on Sunday, Sept. 30, in Uxbridge, Ont., was an all-day affair this year. Orange Shirt Day is a chance to come together in a spirit of reconciliation with our Indigenous sisters and brothers. After last year's event, more people wanted to get involved. As a result, the day began with a joint service with St. Paul's Anglican Church at St. Andrew's-Chalmers Presbyterian Church. We were fortunate to have Matthew Stevens, Cultural Coordinator for the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, participate in the service and drum for us. A special program for the children also focused on Orange Shirt Day and saw the children learn to make bannock among other things. Coffee hour saw people from both congregations join together for fellowship and bannock.

Following this, people from the congregations and the community joined together for a walk to Elgin Park. Our safety was ensured by Durham Regional Police who were able to bring

their Indigenous cruiser. At the park, we learned from and enjoyed the presentation by Jacob Charles and the Ashunung Singers and Dancers. While this was happening, children were able to learn about Indigenous issues and crafts through a program organized by the Uxbridge Public Library staff. The weather did not cooperate for the outdoor event in the park, but approximately 100 hardy souls were there to learn and be entertained.

In the evening, we gathered at the Anglican Church for a catered dinner followed by our two speakers, Matthew Stevens, Cultural Coordinator for the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and the Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister for Indigenous Services. The most encouraging takeaway from this event was the support we received from the community and the people who have told us they want to be involved next year. Each year we have tried to provide the educational component to the event as we seek ways to understand, learn from and reconcile with our Indigenous sisters and brothers.

# Crieff Hills Offers Training in Spiritual Direction



The recent class of graduates from the Jubilee program for spiritual directors, having completed both classroom and practical learning over the course of two years, including a week at Crieff Hills in October.

By the Rev. Kristine O'Brien, Director, Crieff Hills Retreat Centre

Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, Ont., owned and operated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, has recently partnered with Ontario Jubilee to offer practical education in the art of spiritual direction. It is an ecumenical program rooted in the Christian contemplative tradition and is open to everyone from all walks of life, including both clergy and lay people.

Spiritual directors are trained companions who accompany people on a spiritual journey and help them grow

closer to God. Meeting one on one, they offer an opportunity to explore God's presence in everyday life. It is an ancient spiritual practice meant for anyone who wishes to deepen their relationship with God and can take place once, weekly or monthly. Usually spiritual directors charge a modest fee.

Training to become a spiritual director at Crieff involves two courses: Phase 1 is a 16-month course which invites the exploration of one's own spirituality, focusing on skill development in listening, discernment and contemplative living. Phase 2 is a 15-month practicum in spiritual

direction, focusing on acquiring the skills needed to accompany others on their spiritual journey. Each course includes two five-day residencies at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre with several assignments completed at home throughout the year. All leadership is provided by experienced spiritual directors.

For more information, visit [crieffhills.com/partnerships](http://crieffhills.com/partnerships).

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## NEWS

# Newfoundland Minister Marks 60th Anniversary

*By Lynne Allan, elder at St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L.*

Sixty years to the day since his ordination, the Rev. Dr. Ian S. Wishart marked the occasion in a most appropriate place: he was in church, leading the service and celebrating communion with the congregation of St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L.

Born in 1930 and raised in Toronto, Ian was ordained there on Sept. 30, 1958, in St. Andrew's Church, having earned an Honours BA in philosophy and history from the University of Toronto in 1954 and a Bachelor of Divinity (Honours) from the University of Edinburgh in 1957. The year before his ordination he was a guest student at the University of Göttingen in Germany, attending lectures and seminars on theology and philosophy.

Ian left Toronto for Saskatchewan, where he served St. Stephen's Church in Regina from 1958 to 1965. When he arrived, there was a congregation but no church building. Services were held in a school. A house was purchased for use as a manse and services were moved to the basement, which was set up with seating and a lectern. Sunday School was held in the bedroom. Ian remembers, "I had to tell them they had to

build a church because I wanted to get married." A church was built, he and Jean Law were married in 1963, and their son was born before they left Regina two years later.

Returning to Toronto, Ian became assistant minister at Calvin Presbyterian Church from 1966 to 1970 during his first two years at Knox College, undertaking graduate studies and earning a Master of Theology (Honours). He and Jean spent two more years in Toronto, where their daughter was born. He lectured at Ewart College and York University before answering the call to serve another church, this time in Newfoundland.

The family arrived in St. John's in 1972. Ian served St. Andrew's (The Kirk) for 26 years, retiring in 1998. Sadly, his wife Jean had passed away 10 years earlier. He has made the oldest and most easterly city in North America his home ever since. He is a long-time member of the Rotary Club of St. John's and has served as Provincial Command padre for the Royal Canadian Legion.

Ian would retire a second time, in 2008, after taking on the responsibilities of interim moderator of St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church, Grand Falls-Windsor. For years he conducted his service at The Kirk in the morning, then drove the 430 kilometres to Grand Falls-Windsor for



Debbie Hynes, Clerk of Session, and Bob Thompson, Board of Managers chair, presented the Rev. Ian Wishart with gifts to mark the 60th anniversary of his ordination during a luncheon held on Sept. 30 in the minister's honour at St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L.

an evening service, returning the next day. At first it was two or three times a month, but it soon settled into once a month and sometimes he would arrange for another minister to take the St. Matthew's service. When he retired from The Kirk the services at St. Matthew's changed to morning from evening, but that didn't lessen the distance he had to drive to Grand Falls-Windsor from St. John's.

When another interim moderator took over services at St. Matthew's

in 2008, Ian retired...or so he thought. It was only six years later when he was called upon to resume monthly services in Grand Falls-Windsor. It's because he did and continues to do so that the church exists today. He says insisting on the continuance of St. Matthew's is among the many challenges he has faced in the past 60 years. Other challenges include opening all offices of the church to women and ensuring the independence of the Presbytery of Newfoundland.

There have been many highlights along the way, among them chairing the Committee on Church Doctrine, which oversaw preparation of Living Faith, published in 1984, and writing its introduction. In 2010, Common Order was published, a book of services of worship he compiled and edited. Parts of Living Faith form the basis for some liturgies and prayers in Common Order. Receiving an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from Knox College was another highlight of 2010.

A trip to India in 1989 stands out in his mind and Ian's inspiration to write a Christmas poem each year resulted from that trip. It was in Chennai (known then as Madras) that he came to know of Dr. Chandran Devanesen and met his wife Savithri Devanesen. They were founders of the charity Roofs for the Roofless, a partner organization of Presbyterian World Service & Development. After Savithri was widowed, she started writing an annual Christmas poem and the two exchanged poems every year up to her death in 2015.

Ian talks about stepping back from conducting services at St. Matthew's, allowing someone else to take the congregation under his or her wing as interim moderator. No doubt one day he will retire...again. In the meantime, he is wished all the best in his future endeavours and adventures.

## A Special Celebration in Dartmouth

*By Cheryl Weeks, Clerk of Session, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Dartmouth, N.S.*

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Dartmouth, N.S., hosted a gathering on Saturday, June 9, 2018, at Brightwood Golf and Country Club to honour its minister, the Rev. Dr. P.A. (Sandy) McDonald, on the 50th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament and his 50 years as minister of St. Andrew's.

Dr. McDonald was ordained at Knox Church in Stratford, Ont., on May 31, 1968. He was appointed by the Board of Missions to St. Andrew's & Iona, Dartmouth and

Musquodoboit Harbour beginning on Aug. 25, 1968. He was inducted as the minister of St. Andrew's and Musquodoboit Harbour in June 1976. Dr. McDonald faithfully serves the people of St. Andrew's and they are deeply grateful for his leadership in the work and witness of St. Andrew's.

He has served as the Clerk of the Presbytery of Halifax & Lunenburg for 47 years and presently serves as Co-Convenor of the Camp Geddie Committee, a Camp of The Synod of the Atlantic Provinces. He served as the Moderator of the 129th General Assembly, as a member of the Board of Knox College for 12 years and as a member of the Life and

Mission Agency Committee for 12 years.

Dr. McDonald has had four Knox College student interns and has provided fieldwork supervision for the Atlantic School of Theology Presbyterian students. For 19 years, he served as a Police Chaplain for the local Police Service and has been on the Dartmouth Sportsplex Board for 28 years. He has also served on the Nova Scotia Board and as President of the Canadian Bible Society and on the Board and as President of the Institute of Pastoral Training.

Sandy is married to Christine, formerly from Winnipeg, and they have three children, Ian, Heather and Laura, and five grandchildren.



The Rev. Dr. Sandy McDonald and members of his family.



## NEWS

# Zion Church Ordains New Term Elders

By John Barrett

Beginning in 2008, Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I., began phasing in the Term Elder system within their session, rather than Life Service. As such, a number of Life Service elders have been retiring each time new Term Elder elections have taken place. It is hoped that the conversion to a fully "Term Service" session will be complete in the year 2021.

On Oct. 14, 2018, Zion Church ordained seven new Term Elders and welcomed back into active service Douglas MacDonald who was both a former elder and Clerk of Session.

Also of interest was the ordination of Emma Stetson who, to the best of our knowledge, is the youngest elder elected to Zion's session in the 172 year history of the congregation.

With the addition of these eight new elders and following the nine retirements of both Term and Life Service elders, the Zion session now consists of 24 active members. Meeting monthly and at other times when required, the session of Zion Church is a vibrant and progressive group of committed Christian leaders who collectively possess a true love and commitment to God's work and the people of Zion's congregation.



From left to right: (back): John Barrett, Clerk of Session, John Farquharson, Brian Higgins. (front): Jaycee Sabapathy, Dr. David Sabapathy, Cathy MacDonald, Eleanor MacDonald, Emma Stetson, Douglas MacDonald, the Rev. Douglas Rollwage, Lead Minister and Moderator of Session.

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## NEWS

## Vacation Bible School Creates Belonging

By Ty Ragan

At Centennial Presbyterian Church in Calgary, the free Vacation Bible School that has resurged over the last six years has removed barriers so that any child who wants to can participate. My daughter, Justina, has been there every year.

What is belonging? It is like a Vacation Bible School, even if it is only for 15 hours once a year. It is a congregation that exists in one of the most economically and culturally diverse communities in Calgary. It is

about multiple generations discovering and learning through shared gifts and talents, whether it is singing, dancing, puppets, arts and crafts, gardening, French or science—and I am sure I have missed a few. It is a shared experience for a dad and his daughter, a generation apart.

For me, the free VBS as a kid helped in crafting a life mission of making a better world, one simple act of kindness at a time. And for my daughter? She can't wait to volunteer herself one summer—she is rocking her world through her own acts of



During the week's wrap-up, kids created a feast in cooking-science and shared it with their family and friends. Pictured here is Justina, holding up a sheep place card.

kindness and belonging.

Remember, if you want to create belonging it starts with removing the barriers we impose upon ourselves and living fully with the gifts and talents already present. Then watch what happens over the decades.

## Celebrating Our Name Day



Jousting at St. Giles'.

By the Rev. Herb Hilder, St. Giles' Presbyterian Church in Prince George, B.C.

Many congregations celebrate their anniversary. At St. Giles' Presbyterian Church in Prince George, B.C., this year, we decided to celebrate our name day. Yes, we know St. Giles' official day is Sept. 1, but we decided to wait until the end of September so we could include families who were still on holiday before Labour Day.

We guess that the founders of our congregation, being homesick Scots, named the congregation after St. Giles of Edinburgh. We decided to research the stories surrounding the life of the real St. Giles who lived first as a religious hermit and then as Abbot of a Benedictine monastery before AD 1000.

Greatly honoured in medieval Europe as a protector of those with chronic diseases and disabilities, we decided he was a "good fit" for the mission and ministries of our congregation. He was honoured as the patron of nursing mothers, those with disabilities and people in vulnerable circumstances. Our church building is across the road from a regional teaching hospital. We often welcome visitors staying in the cancer treatment lodge and on day passes from the psychiatric ward.

Families of longer-term patients from out of town make a connection with us.

Our celebration began a couple of weeks early with a bulletin board describing the life of St. Giles, the history of St. Giles Cathedral and photographs of as many St. Giles congregations in Canada as we could readily find. On Sept. 28, we had a special service in which all the hymns were taken from medieval sources, the prayers highlighted the work of hospitals and health professionals. The lessons focussed on the church's ministry to the chronically ill. Then we adjourned for our version of a medieval festival.

Our lunch dishes drew on authentic medieval recipes. We had a "jousting competition" in which adults and children galloped toward each other with pool noodles. One of our members made tabards and helmets, which occasioned much laughter. A collection of other historic games proved popular with all ages.

Again, we had researched popular entertainments of the medieval period. And we decorated the hall with the authentic insignia of barons who signed the Magna Carta, the Knights Hospitallers of St. Lazarus and St. John of Jerusalem.

We all agreed it was a fun way to begin the fall season.

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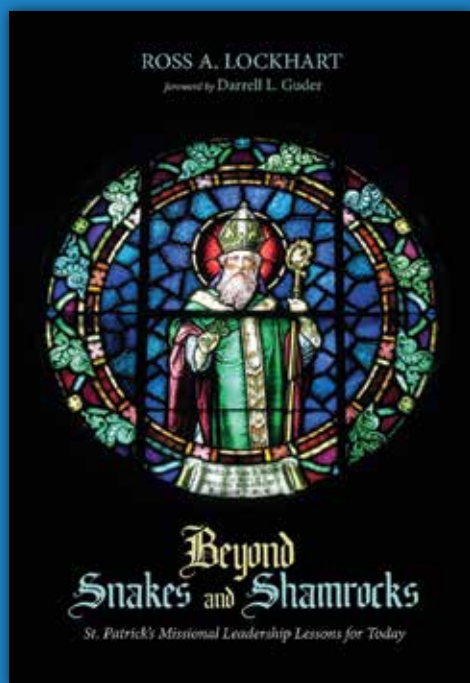
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Lockhart explores the question of what lessons a missionary to a pre-Christian culture (Hibernia/Ireland) might be helpful to us as missionaries to a post-Christian culture (North America).

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## NEWS

# Honouring Those Who Served in WWI at St. Paul's

*By Rachel Braithwaite, Office Administrator, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont.*

On Nov. 11, 2018, 100 years had passed since the signing of the armistice that officially ended WWI. As a tribute to all Canadians who served in this horrific struggle, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont., was proud to take part in the Bells of Peace initiative and rang its bells 100 times at sundown. The hope is that all who heard the bells stopped and focused on the loss and sacrifice both on the battlefield and at home. The war to end all wars left an indelible impression on Canada.

According to the Canadian War Museum information, some 619,636 Canadians enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the war, and approximately 424,000 served overseas. Close to 61,000 Canadians were killed during the war, and another 172,000 were wounded.

Many more returned home broken in mind and body. The Dominion of Newfoundland suffered 1,305 killed and several thousand wounded. Of the more than 172,000 Canadians who reported wounds during the war, medical authorities classified approximately 138,000 as battle casualties. Of the wounded who survived, 3,461 men and one woman had a limb amputated. No reliable method existed for tracking or treating psychological casualties, but authorities identified over 9,000 Canadians as suffering from "shell shock."

Bells call us to wake, to pray, to work, to arms, to feast and, in times of crisis, to come together. A BBC News article reported that the ringing of church bells erupted spontaneously across the UK on November 11, 1918, as an outpouring of relief that four years of war had come to an end.

The Bells of Peace initiative was designed to emulate that moment of

remembrance in honour of our veterans who served in WWI. The bells at St. Paul's are very impressive and were actually used first on Sunday, Nov. 11, 1906. Eleven bells make up the chimes, the largest one weighing 2,100 pounds and the smallest one 300 pounds. The total weight is 9873 pounds.

The Cross of Sacrifice, erected in 1921, commemorates the fallen men and women of the congregation. The large Celtic Cross is considered to be one of the most beautiful war memorials in the country. It was carved in Scotland and is similar to the ancient crosses in Iona where Christianity was first brought to Scotland from Ireland by St. Columba. The arms of the Cross are truncated, and the column tapers from its base to the apex. A circle symbolical of a crown or wreath surrounds the arms. In Scotland and Ireland, some of these ancient crosses still remain.



The Cross of Sacrifice at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton.



Inside the bell tower.

# All Are Welcome at St. Andrew's Scarborough

*By the Rev. Monica McClure, Associate Pastor, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Scarborough, Ont.*

A pastoral patch of land nestled in the midst of the bustling city of Scarborough, Ont., is home to a thriving three-hundred-plus member Christian congregation, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The church's mission has been to share God's love in this country-like setting for over two hundred years. The first church building was erected in 1819 on land donated by David Thomson, who settled here from Scotland in 1799; it lies adjacent to Thomson Park.

Seventeen pastors have been called to St. Andrew's, beginning with the Rev. William Jenkins, and including both the current pastor, Duncan Cameron, and the first associate pastor, Monica McClure.

St. Andrew's is known for its excellent preaching, its warm welcome and its programs for all ages. Two services on Sunday morning pro-

vide a diverse music program and programming for Kids' Church and Youth Group. Next spring the church will host an "Alpha program" where one can explore life, faith and God in an informal, friendly environment. There are also a variety of social activities, often revolving around food, such as Burns' Night and St. Patrick's night. The Pastoral Care program maintains contact with those unable to attend worship services; it supports families in caregiving, and those who are grieving. The Pastoral Care luncheons include a Communion Service, food, fun and fellowship.

St. Andrew's is pleased to support the work of Evangel Hall, an inner-city mission in downtown Toronto. This Mission works with the marginalized and homeless. St. Andrew's is also actively supporting the Pikangikum infrastructure project, which provides indoor plumbing for homes in this remote First Nation Community. During the Syrian refugee crisis, churches in this presbytery, includ-



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Scarborough, Ont.

ing St. Andrew's, sponsored five families to come to Canada and give continuing support through the LinC program for Syrian refugees.

This year, St. Andrew's celebrated its bicentennial with many special events. The kickoff service in September 2017 was modeled on an early 1800s outdoor church service and many people came in period costume. Food and fellowship followed to the delight of everyone.

The year-end banquet was like a grand homecoming, bringing people with past connections together



The outdoor kick-off service for the bicentennial celebrations.



Associate Pastor Monica McClure and Pastor Duncan Cameron at the outdoor kickoff service for the bicentennial year of celebrations.

for great fellowship. The highlight of the culminating bicentennial worship service on June 10, was the presentation of a specially commissioned

anthem "We Will Share Your Love, Oh Lord." For those looking for a Christian faith-based community to belong to, all are welcome at St. Andrew's!



## NEWS

# Music Heals

By the Rev. Dr. Brian Fraser,  
Brentwood Presbyterian Church  
in Burnaby, B.C.

The kids and elders were dancing prayers around the piano at Brentwood Presbyterian Church in Burnaby, B.C., on Oct. 21. Mary Fontaine, founding director of Hummingbird Ministries, dedicated the instrument that will sit on our church porch, inviting anyone passing by to play it with all the soul they can muster. If they read the poster on the piano, they will know that they are supporting healing and reconciliation with our Indigenous peoples.

In her sermon at the dedication service, Mary talked about David dancing before the Lord with all his might. In the dance, he expressed his gratitude for God's reconciling grace with wild abandon. We read Psalm 150 and imagined this big band of instruments filling the temple with songs of joy and praise. That sense of the way music brings meaning and significance into our lives as a gift of the Creator is what Hummingbird is trying to pass on to the children in their drumming and dancing program.

That program needs financial support. So, we're raising money at \$20 per key. And here's the pitch: we'd love to have you participate. You can buy a key, a black octave (5 keys), a white octave (7 keys), or a whole octave (12 keys). You can donate at [canadahelps.org/en/charities/hummingbird-ministries](http://canadahelps.org/en/charities/hummingbird-ministries). Just note in the message box that the donation is for



Members of Brentwood PC along with Mary Fontaine.

the Brentwood Piano on the Porch. If all 88 keys are sold, Hummingbird gets \$1,760 to enhance its children's and elders' music programs.

Brentwood is a small congregation on Canada's secular west coast with big aspirations to use its space and resources to do justice, be kind and walk humbly with Jesus Christ in the service of the Commonwealth of God. We perform benefit concerts for Hummingbird Ministries, host the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, and convene conversations about how to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This "Piano on the Porch" idea could happen in any congregation. Upright pianos are being thrown away every day. They are too big for many living spaces, especially in our urban centres. So, find a piano mover



Mary Fontaine and her drum.

and have them bring the piano to the church instead of to the dump. Paint it, decorate it, and make it available (in reasonable weather wherever you are) to the community to make music. Raise money and contribute that



Dancers and the piano.

money to healing and reconciliation work in your region. You can find out more about what The Presbyterian Church in Canada is doing at presby-

[terian.ca/healing](http://terian.ca/healing).

If we can be of any help in bringing a project like this to your congregation, we'd be happy to help.

## Summerside Breakfast Supports Community

With files from The Journal Pioneer

On October 20, Summerside Presbyterian Church in PEI served a full hot breakfast, complete with eggs, pancakes and coffee to help raise money for community members in need of relocation.

"Communities are at their best when we come together," said the Rev. Brad Blaikie, who was pleased to see every seat in the hall quickly

filled. "It's a way of living out the Gospel. Jesus calls us to care for those who need help, so this is an excellent example of the church at large stepping up."

Heritage Park, a nearby trailer park, was set to close on Nov. 30. All funds raised from the event will be divided equally among residents to help them move their homes or find new places to live.

"Churches are not often known

for working together that well and often, but this is a perfect opportunity to join alliances and help those in need," said Cory Somers, lead pastor of Summerside Baptist Church. "We are supporting this church and what they are doing to bless the residents of Heritage Park."

Mayor of the city of Summerside, Bill Martin, helped serve eggs with the help of Katharina Mueller, who is running for council.



Lead pastor of Summerside Baptist Church Cory Somers, from left, joins forces with Reverend Brad Blaikie of the Summerside Presbyterian Church to raise money for the residents of Heritage Park. PHOTO CREDIT: THE JOURNAL PIONEER



## REFLECTIONS

# Be Still

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

I went out do to my regular errands on a Sunday morning with my bank card in my pocket to pick up a few items. Inside the store I wandered about, casually tossing items into my basket. I have done this routine so many times. Buy the required items and head to the cashier. She gives the amount I owe and then I take my bank card to pay. Again, all in my regular routine on a weekend. I use the tap feature on my bank card. I was about to pick up my bag and leave the store. Then a message came up on the debit machine. Decline. I tap my card again. It was declined again. My first reaction was embar-

rassment and then as I left the store without my purchases, I began to get worried. Thoughts that someone had accessed my bank account. I rushed home to check my bank account online. I couldn't access my online account. Unavailable.

I had no ready cash on hand. What if my account was emptied? What if I had no way to buy groceries or pay bills for the next while until this was sorted out? It felt weird being in a financial crisis. I had relied on my card to get me my required items. If I needed cash, all I needed to do was go to the ATM. Now that was gone. My financial security blanket.

My situation with my bank card was similar to when our faith hits a crisis in our lives. We go to church every Sunday and pay our tithes. Attend Bible studies and be prayerful. All just actions until our faith is truly



tested. A death in the family. Job loss or something major that tests us. We head to the church to pray, but the doors are locked. We call our friends to be supportive, but they are not available. Our community security blanket is gone.

We head home to pace back and forth. Pondering the "what ifs" in the

crisis. What if I got him to the hospital sooner? What if I spent more time with my spouse than being at work? There is more time spent thinking about the crisis than about our faith. All the actions of being godly, like our church attendance and Bible studies, are forgotten in the midst of our crisis. Our faith is forgotten. Our faith is

shaken.

We need to stop and be still. Our strongest resource during a personal crisis is the bended knee. Our hands folded in sincere prayer. I remember the early days after I lost my son. The cloud of pain and tears of my loss all around me. I was so focused on that. Until one day I was standing in my dining room. I heard or sensed the words: *Be still*. My pacing stopped and I got down on the floor. It wasn't enough to be on bended knee. My loss and grief had me splayed out on the floor. Screaming and weeping out my grief over the loss of my son. This went on for a few minutes. Then I was still and quiet on the floor. Giving all my hurt and pain over to God.

A peace came over me. The faith that I had forgotten during my crisis was coming back to me.

During a personal crisis we need to remember our faith walk and not just the physical tools of our walk. The physical tools may not always be there for us. We need to be still and know that He is with us.

# Faith That God Will Be with Us



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

I was tired, dead tired, and all I could do was look out the window of the hotel. Six hours of driving, two of them within the city, had just taken the stuffing out of me.

I was deeply grateful that I was but a passenger, but it has been three years since I had left the confines of my own hometown and I was therefore three years older...not quite as up to it as I used to be.

Of course, there were some positives to anticipate...three days visiting with the great-grandchildren and a much-loved grandson and his wife. That was the icing on the cake. The children were adorable (of course) and noisy, which really didn't bother me a bit. At the Grade One, Two and Three levels, I communicated pretty well. The two-year-old was too busy trying to run the whole house to bother with me. I could see myself in one of the girls who didn't hesitate to

jump on a bike, helmet on her head, and tear up the sidewalk. Oh yes, history does repeat itself.

But my most special memory will be the afternoon we went for ice-creams. I stood at the counter and asked each child personally what they would like. They didn't hesitate to tell me, and the staff person just kept punching in the orders. "Sorry if that was confusing," I explained. "These are all members of my family and I am the great-grandma."

She insisted I did not look old enough and it took the edge off the cost of the ice cream, which came to nearly forty dollars.

I watched as they sat at a corner booth, a smile on every face and sheer delight from the two-year-old child as she dipped deeply into her little dish of ice cream. The joy of watching them all gulping and grinning will be a much treasured memory.

I wonder if God feels like that when seeing us enjoy the blessings laid on us...family, food, fellowship and best of all faith... Faith that God will be with us always.

God had spoken to me earlier in the day, when I had gazed out the hotel window, wondering if I could gather enough get-up-and-go to handle the next few days. I looked out, and like a small message, a lone goose glided by the window. I shook my head, but if God wanted to remind me that He cares about the sparrows that fall,

I guess God could send a Canada goose to remind me... Then a few seconds later a plane showed up in what had previously been an empty sky. I love planes—they remind me of me and my late husband's 10 years in the air force. God knows

that. I started to smile as I felt my tiredness lift, and then a large truck came down the street. Across its side, my maiden name was printed out. It is not a name you see often and certainly not printed on the side of a truck. Wow! God was speaking

to me personally. I started to laugh. God has such a sense of humour at times. I whispered a "thank you" and turned away from the window... My lethargy had lifted, and I knew that God had great plans for me, I just had to take a deep breath and go for it.

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

Special **LGBTQI** Listening Committee of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

## Rainbow Communion

### SHARE YOUR STORIES. WE ARE LISTENING.

All people (LGBTQI, allies and others) are invited to tell stories of harm done due to homophobia, hypocrisy, heterosexism and/or transphobia within and by the church, and to share their stories of God's grace experienced in Christian ministry in spite of those challenges. With permission, these stories will form the basis of a report making recommendations to the PCC to strengthen the church so that all are welcomed as Jesus Christ welcomes us all.

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- > Obtain a copy of the Welcome and Consent brochure
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\*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.)



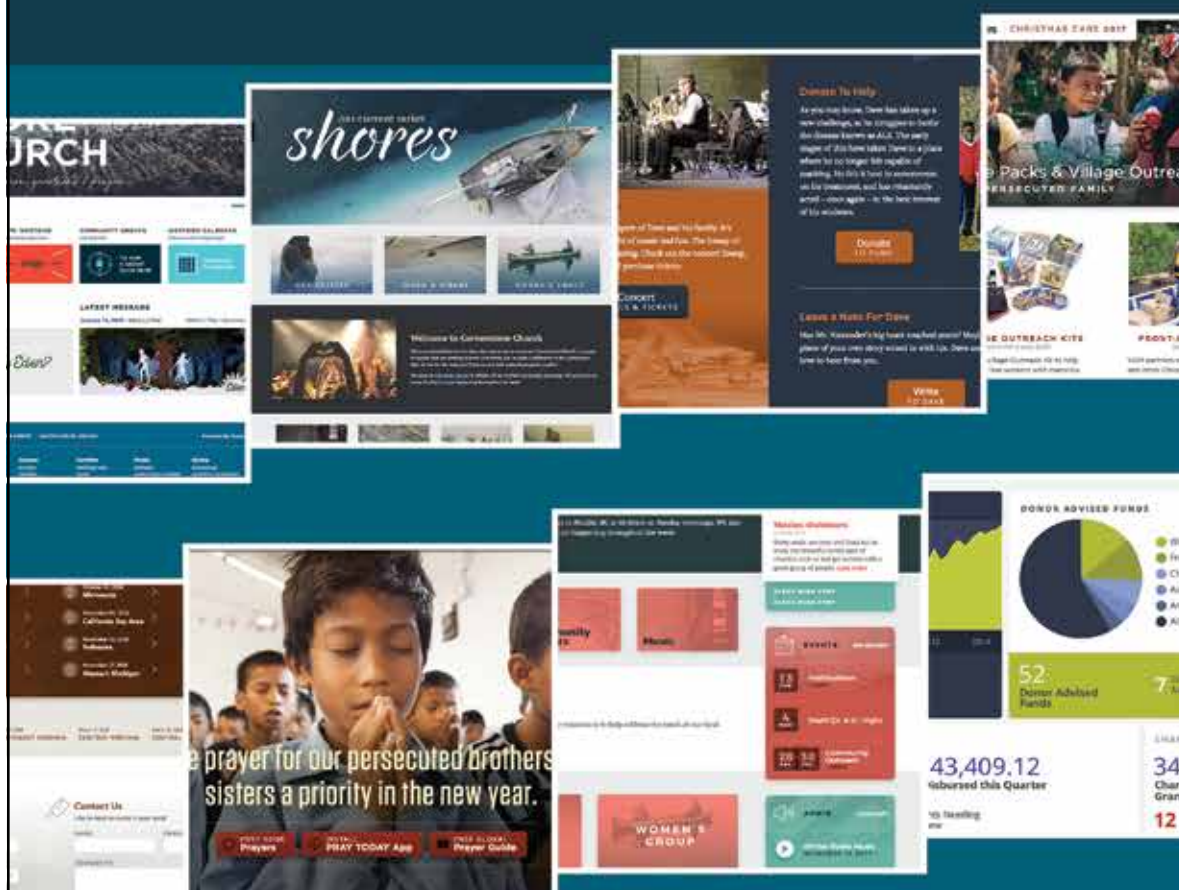



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## JUST WONDERING...

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

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

**I have heard that there are differences in the birth story of Jesus. Which version is the one we are supposed to use?** You heard right, there are a number of different versions of the story of the birth of Jesus. The longest story with the most familiar images of Christmas, such as Gabriel visiting Mary, angels in the sky calling to shepherds, and the Holy Family staying in a stable because there was no room in the inn come from the Gospel of Luke.

The visit of the wise men appears only in the Gospel of Matthew, who also emphasises the role of Joseph more than the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of Mark has nothing to say about the birth of Jesus; his story of Jesus' life opens with the beginning of his adult ministry initiated at his baptism. The Gospel of John tells a very different kind of story; his is a majestic and cosmic narrative that is more focused on the identity of Je-

sus than on the circumstances of his birth. All the accounts are different as they emphasize varying aspects of faith and the treasured meaning of the life and ministry of Jesus to the original unique community for and within which the stories were recorded and for us today. We use all the different stories in Scripture in conversation and in comparison with each other, so we can have as broad a picture of the vastness of God and as lively, rich and textured a faith as possible.

**I'm just wondering, why doesn't national office start more new churches?** The responsibility for starting new congregations is in the hands of the presbytery because they are responsible for the pastoral oversight of congregations. Presbyteries also know and understand best the local needs as well as the style and form of congregation that would be most appropriate. The denomination works in partnership with presbyteries and new congregations by providing discernment tools, training, advice, coaching and financial resources to help with the minister's stipend and costs associated with evangelism and buildings, etc.

## OBITUARIES

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

### Jacqueline Darch

Wife of the late Rev. Dr. Peter J. Darch. Deceased September 18, 2018.

### Edward Frederick Bell

Active member of The Presbyterian Church in Canada both locally and nationally. Deceased October 22, 2018.

### John Clarence Morrow

Elder at Knox Presbyterian Church in Burgoyne, Ont., since 1979. Deceased July 19, 2018.

### Audrey Nettleton

Member at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto and active member of the Women's Missionary Society. Deceased September 19, 2018.

### The Rev. Larry Robert Paul

Former minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Perth, Ont. Deceased October 5, 2018.

## PULPIT VACANCIES

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

### New Minas, Kings (full-time minister)

– Atlantic Provinces

### River John, St. George's – Toney

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

– Atlantic Provinces

### Malton, St. Mark's

(full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

### New Market, St. Andrew's

(full-time minister) – CNEOB

### Orangeville, Tweedsmuir

(full-time minister) – CNEOB

### Toronto, York memorial

(part-time minister) – CNEOB

### Hagersville, St. Andrew's (part-time

minister) – Southwestern Ontario

### North Pelham, First – Rockway

(full-time minister) – Ontario

### Waterdown, Knox (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

### Surrey, City Centre Church (full-time

minister) – British Columbia

### Vancouver, Kerrisdale (full-time

minister) – British Columbia

### Cornwall, St. John's

(full-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

### Howick, Georgetown

(part-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

### Prescott, St. Andrew's –

Spencerville, St. Andrew's

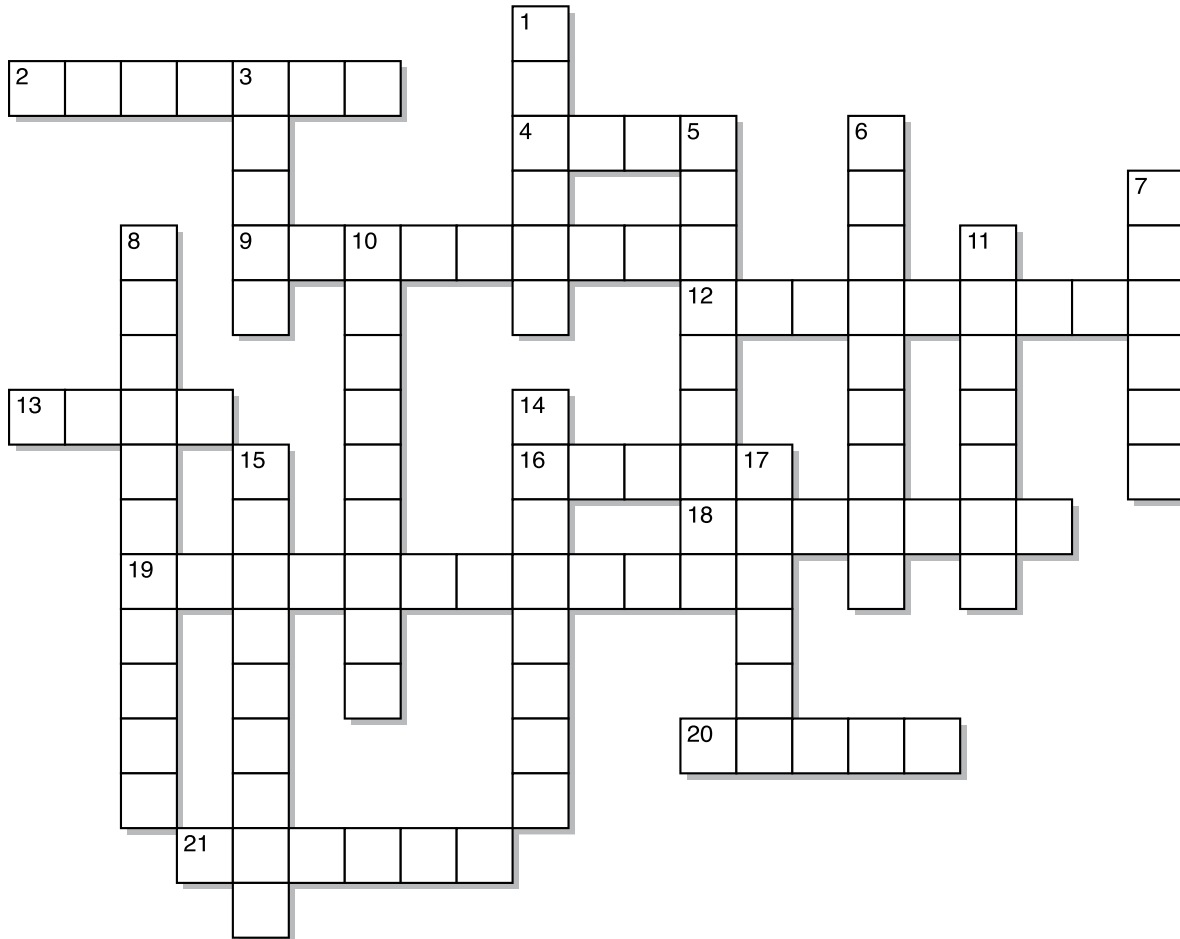
(part-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario



SMILES

Crossword

Test your knowledge of refugee sponsorship  
with the PCC and in Canada with the clues below.



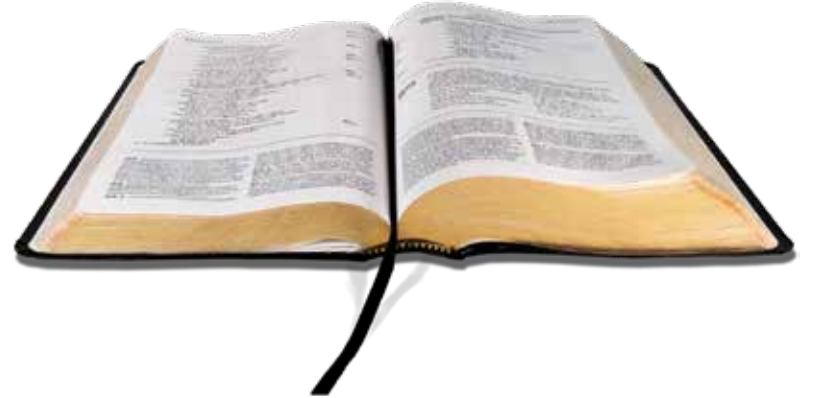
DOWN

- To banish or remove a person from a country.
- Refugee Rights Day in Canada is marked each year on the fourth day of this month.
- There are currently over 300 refugee claimants being held in \_\_\_\_\_ in Montreal.
- The medium- to long-term movement of people, either within a country or from one country to another.
- A person who has fled their home and is seeking protection from another country while waiting for their refugee claim to be evaluated is considered an \_\_\_\_\_ seeker.
- Since the 1970s, Presbyterians have been helping former refugees build new lives under the PCC's \_\_\_\_\_ program.
- This PCC representative may write letters to the Canadian government on refugee issues on behalf of the General Assembly.
- A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political opinion, or in order to escape war or abuse of human rights.
- Justice Ministries and the International Affairs Committee have often brought refugee issues to the General \_\_\_\_\_ for advocacy action.
- Internally \_\_\_\_\_ people are those who have been forced to migrate within the borders of their own countries.
- Canadian Ministries supports the refugee sponsorship and advocacy work of \_\_\_\_\_ Réfugiés Montréal.

ACROSS

- A term used to describe the kind of refugee sponsorship where sponsors agree to provide financial assistance, orientation and emotional support to refugees for 12 months after their arrival.
- The acronym for the department of the PCC that congregations can contact for information and support regarding refugee sponsorship.
- A person who chooses to leave one country to settle permanently in another.
- PWS&D helps supply \_\_\_\_\_ kits containing critical items such as food, clothing, shelter materials and blankets for people living in refugee camps.
- Each year, World Refugee Day is recognized on the 20th day of this month.
- Canada is currently accepting the most number of refugees from this country.
- The month in which we observe Citizenship Week to welcome new Canadians and reflect on and celebrate the rights and responsibilities all Canadian citizens share.
- The transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another state that has agreed to admit them and grant them a permanent home.
- An acronym for the organization originally created to address the needs of refugees in Europe displaced by WWII that now works in more than 130 countries to protect 68.5 million refugees and internally displaced people around the world.
- A place of safety and protection.

Quotation Location: Caring for the Refugee



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

Acts 20:35

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 10:17-18

... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me ...

Hebrews 13:2

O God ... you note trouble and grief, that you may take it into your hands; the helpless commit themselves to you; you have been the helper of the orphan.

Matthew 25:35

In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Psalms 10:14

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

The Little Laugh

Provided courtesy of Robert Revington,  
student at Knox College in Toronto



A rich man decided he wanted to eat some steak. His staff asked him how he wanted it prepared. After thinking about it for a moment he said, "Matthew 25:21!"

("The Master said, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'")

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

- |                  |              |                |
|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 11. REFUGEE      | 4. PWS&D     | 10. MODERATOR  |
| 12. EMERGENCY    | 2. PRIVATE   | 8. SPONSORSHIP |
| 13. JUNE         | 17. ACTION   | 7. ASYLUM      |
| 16. SYRIA        | 15. DISPLACE | 6. MIGRATION   |
| 18. OCTOBER      | 14. ASSEMBLY | 5. DETENTION   |
| 19. RESETTLEMENT | 11. REFUGEE  | 3. APRIL       |
| 20. UNHCR        | 9. IMMIGRANT | 1. DEPORT      |
| 21. REFUGEE      |              |                |



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