



Serving Those in Need with Love and Compassion

By Barb Summers,
Communications Office

How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? (1 John 3:17)

On the shores of Lake of the Woods in the northern community of Kenora, Ontario, there is a place of refuge for people who are forced to face the harsh, cold Canadian winter with little shelter or security.

Anamiewigummig is an Ojibwe word meaning "house of prayer" and it's the name of Kenora Fellowship Centre, located on the traditional territory of Treaty Three of the Anicinabe Nation. The centre serves all who come through the doors and extends a welcome and services to the patrons. The patrons come from a variety of circumstances and backgrounds, with the majority being Indigenous people carrying the scars of Canada's residential school system. There were five residential schools operated in this territory and the impacts are still being felt. Addiction, homelessness and mental health concerns are just a few of the issues at the forefront, and all are greeted with warmth and kindness. Patrons are offered a meal, a safe place to rest, companionship and a sense of belonging.

A History of Helping

Operating since the 1960s, Kenora Fellowship Centre started as a meeting place for residential school students and their families. A residence

The five residential schools in the Kenora area were: Cecilia Jeffrey, St. Mary's, Fort Frances, McIntosh and Pelican Lake.

was needed for family members to stay when they came to the community for visits, leading to the creation of the centre. When Cecilia Jeffrey School (operated by the PCC until 1969 and then by the Government of Canada) closed in 1976, the centre became a ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada that served as a gathering place for former students and other members of the surrounding First Nations. The PCC ran the original Cecilia Jeffrey school, which was located on Shoal Lake 39 Island. It then closed and moved into Kenora. Over the years, Kenora Fellowship Centre has evolved into a place for all people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, facing poverty and homelessness.

The present-day building was constructed in 1971 and currently functions as a drop-in centre. The centre also offers meal programs, transitional and room-and-board housing, a mentorship program, and helps provide people with basic necessities. At the centre, patrons can take part in sharing circles, supported by elders, and receive spiritual care.



Kenora Fellowship Centre in Kenora, Ont., is a place for all people facing poverty and homelessness.

Ecumenical worship services are provided throughout the year to share the gospel, encourage one another and build relationships. Occasionally there are drumming activities and the sharing of traditional foods. These services reflect mutual respect for Christianity and traditional Indigenous spirituality. The centre is open 365 days a year and all services are provided for free. There is a laundry service, a place to have a shower and public bathrooms. Perhaps the most important service offered is the opportunity to stay in a safe place—something many patrons don't have regular access to within the city.

The centre's mission statement is simple: *Clothe the naked, help the helpless, feed the hungry, love the unloved, guide the lost.* It is a clear call to action, a clear message of service to those most in need.

Kenora Fellowship Centre is a ministry with The Presbyterian Church in Canada supported by donations to Presbyterians Sharing. The centre is also supported by the Presbytery of Winnipeg and they seek out partnerships with other local organizations. The centre has led and coordinated



several reconciliation events and welcomed participants of the PCC's 2017 Healing and Reconciliation mission tour.

Yvonne Bearbull is the Executive Director of the centre and has been serving there since early 2013. "We believe that each person has a story to tell," Yvonne says. "Each person has the ability to recover from past hurts. We believe in reaching out to people and offering them opportunities for development and encouraging holistic self-care."

A Safe Haven

"They live very difficult lives," Yvonne says of the patrons who come into

the Fellowship Centre. Many have nowhere to go at night and they are exhausted from facing the cold without shelter. Many express feelings of despair and hopelessness. For some, the centre is the only place they have, the only place they are free from harm and danger. "We are a safe haven."

At Kenora Fellowship Centre, people are met with dignity and respect, something too many have had withheld from them. Patrons are often discouraged and frustrated. Yvonne notes that all these feelings end up coming out somewhere. Sometimes they take it out on each other; mostly they take it out on themselves.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

The Journey Home



By the Rev. Daniel W. Cho, Moderator of the 144th General Assembly

"Gimme your wallet...I have a knife!"

I was accosted a few years ago inside a restroom at a large outlet mall along Interstate 79, north of Pittsburgh on my way home from Virginia. It was just the two of us in there. He snuck up behind me, held me by the collar and stuck the blade at my right kidney. At first, I thought it was just a joke—maybe someone playing a prank—but as soon as I turned my head, I realized it was no joke. Now things were different. I was carrying over \$200 cash! My immediate thought (besides being really miffed that this guy may have poked a hole in my favourite T-shirt) was, "He is NOT going to get my money!"

The irony here is that I've been doing martial arts my whole life, and I was returning home from an intensive martial arts training camp in Virginia that I attend every summer. So now...I'm angry. I reacted immediately (whether wisely or not) and there was a very brief tussle. It seemed the young, perhaps inexperienced mugger didn't have the stomach for any-

thing more than an easy payday, so he turned and ran out the door. I gave chase but he got away. A police report was filed and I haven't heard anything since. The good news is, there was no hole in my shirt.

Another unfortunate tale in my travels happened this past November on the way back from my moderator's trip in British Columbia. My wife, Esther, and I were flying back to Toronto on the red-eye flight. A woman in her seventies was seated next to me. From the start of the flight she wiggled, bounced and adjusted her sitting position constantly. Every now and then I could hear her talking to herself in an irritated tone. But then she turned to me and accused me of touching and "poking" her! I assured her I was doing absolutely no such thing. At one point around 3:00 a.m., while everyone was sleeping, she suddenly yelled at me at the top of her lungs to stop poking her. Then she proceeded to wind up and with all her might whack me with her elbow! I was stunned and incredulous, but I remained calm. Whatever the cause was for her bizarre behaviour I didn't want this to escalate further. I called over the flight attendants, who did what they could to address this very awkward situation.

In both these incidents I found myself asking, "Why can't I have an easy journey back home? Is that so much to ask?" After all, I was totally innocent of any wrongdoing and yet I was somehow a singular target of misdeed. It's not fair; it shouldn't be this way.

During our journey through life, the road that we travel isn't always smooth, fair or intact. Sometimes the

road is jagged, cracked and broken. I suspect many, if not all of us, know this. And yet at times we might catch ourselves thinking that if we're just good enough, spiritual enough, if we pray hard enough, if we remain faithful enough, if we think and do all the right things that Christians ought to, then everything will turn out right. There is a part of us that is susceptible to the belief that we are spiritually entitled to a victorious pathway, a pleasant journey and a successful outcome, since we are God's people, and so God must be on our side.

After all, don't I have reason to expect a positive journey through life as a decent, God-fearing person? Shouldn't I yield results in my life commensurate with the moral and spiritual effort I put in to following God's ways?

But the reality is that the terrain of the faith life isn't always smooth. It is marred by hardship, discouragement, pain and brokenness. This is the very picture Jesus painted for Peter, following Peter's affirmation of his love for the resurrected Saviour: "Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go" (John 21:15–19). According to early church tradition and apocryphal accounts, Peter died by inverted crucifixion in the year 64 under Emperor Nero. Even for an apostle of Christ the road was anything but smooth or comfortable. Knowing this, Peter accepted his ministry.

Jesus' giving of himself to his disciples was illustrated powerfully in the



Last Supper. Just as he was prepared to be "broken" in physical suffering and death, he gently invited the disciples to receive the broken bread as representative of his own life. As they then received the broken bread they in turn remembered and accepted Christ's brokenness as their own. They now are prepared to minister to others in this spirit and practice of communion. Not only is this a metaphor for their lives of service but it's also ours. Jesus calls us, blesses us, then invites us to take of himself and the bread which is broken, accept the broken bread as a mirror of our lives of faith, then know that we can commune with others through the journey to wholeness from a place of our common brokenness. And every time we do this, we proclaim that Christ is present.

As The Presbyterian Church in Canada, we are called to one body, one Spirit, one faith. Of course, it would be wonderful if the road in living out this calling could be forever smooth and easy. But we know this isn't always the case. Our journey as a church has seen its share of dips, turns, fractures and cracks along the way.

But as Jesus invites his followers to embrace brokenness—his, their own and of life itself—he also desires us to see it as a gift. As God's gift, the path of pain, struggle, imperfec-



tion and brokenness is paved toward wholeness. There is a Japanese concept called, *kintsugi*, which means, "golden repair." It refers to the repair of pottery with lacquer mixed with gold. The pieces of a once broken object are held together by streams of gold shining radiantly yet meekly. The sign of repair is not hidden; rather it's made more prominent because now the object is imbued with more value. The brokenness isn't diminished, it is embraced. The scars of crucifixion too were not hidden but bared. They became characteristic of resurrection life itself.

As a church, may we embrace all gifts wherever they may be discovered. Those fractures along the road might very well provide the path toward greater wholeness and communion and inspire us all to "bear with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Appreciation for The Way Forward

I can only speak for myself, but I cannot overstate how much I appreciated John Congram's article (*The Way Forward: Questions for the Church*, Fall 2018). As much as it may disturb some, and we cannot underestimate the implications beyond John's article, the questions raised are absolutely essential if Christian faith and theology are to have any integrity. We cannot hide behind tradition (including creeds and scripture) and hope to convince the world that we have a valid message. The reality of our society is such that few people will listen to us if what we say and do is based on what the church has told us we

must say and do. Seems to me that the one we profess as Lord faced something similar if the gospels have any credibility, at least in my thinking. Thank you, John, for the risk you took writing the article.

—Nick Vandermeij

Response to John Vaudry

In John Vaudry's response (Winter 2018) to my article (*The Way Forward*, Fall 2018) he makes a good point that creeds and confession are important. However, in making that point he ascribes to me things I did not actually say, namely that I was advocating jettisoning our heritage and throwing our confessions overboard. What I argued for was see-

ing creeds and confessions for what they are: at best signposts along the way, not hitching posts. We should not deify our doctrine and make it more important than it is meant to be. Here I also note that both good and bad creeds can play this role. We remember that bad creeds once supported slavery and apartheid, and some still support keeping women in their places and gays in limbo. By the way, I doubt that the early Christians would agree with John that "Jesus is Lord" is a minimalist creed.

—John Congram

The PCC and Residential Schools

It was reassuring to see the good

coverage in the "Justice" section of the latest issue of *Presbyterian Connection* (Winter 2018) given to the subjects of Indigenous Spirituality, the Church's 1994 Confession and residential schools operated by the PCC.

With respect to this last topic under the heading "The PCC Operated 11 Schools," readers may conclude that this was the full extent of the church's involvement in the schooling of Aboriginal children during the late 19th and into the 20th century. The eleven schools identified in this piece at the bottom of p. 12 were, however, all "residential" schools, and while it is absolutely essential for the church to acknowledge the

extent of its involvement in Canada's residential school saga, what should not be overlooked or left unstated, I believe, is the fact that the PCC operated a number of Indian Day Schools as well.

During the research I did for my recent book, *The Regina Indian Industrial School: Historical Overview and Chronological Narrative*, I came across references to at least seven Day Schools operated by our church for the Department of Indian Affairs: two in Manitoba (Okanese, Swan Lake), three in Saskatchewan (Mistawasis, Sault Mission, White Bear) and two in British Columbia (Dodgers Cove, Ucluelet).

I do not know the specific years

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Living Without Fences

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

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau said sharing a border with the United States was like sleeping next to an elephant and no matter how friendly and even-tempered the beast, we are still affected by every twitch and grunt. The elephant to the south of us is currently very restless and twitching and grunting a lot about barriers and walls. And it's not only the US that is concerned with building fences along its borders. Barriers go up as xenophobia, racism and populist nationalism rise. Europe has, or will soon have, more barriers on borders between countries than during the Cold War. Studies done by the political scientists Ron Hassner and Jason Wittenberg reveal that of the more than fifty fortified boundaries built since the end of the second World War II, half were constructed between 2000 and 2014. And the new walls being built are longer and more formidable.

Walls are meant to prevent trespassing. But walls are not always merely neutral deterrents—they are sometimes built to scare, threaten and terrorize. In places like Israel-Palestine, walls divide communities, separate family members and cut farmers off from their land in acts of cruelty that break people's spirits.

Since the ancient days of the Church, theologians have sometimes referred to Jesus as The Symbol. *Symbol* literally means "to throw together." Jesus is the one who brings together forces that have long been separated, sometimes even disparate, incompatible, irreconcilable forces.



Christ as The Symbol has an ongoing ministry of reconciliation that stands against the powers of sin and evil, which constantly work to separate and divide. At the moment of crucifixion, the writer of the Gospel of Matthew records that the temple curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple was destroyed, signifying that, among other things, the division between God and humanity had been overcome and were at one. Icons of the resurrection show Christ emerging from the grave, united with Adam and Eve by joined hands as he hauls them up from the dead amid the wreckage of the breaking walls of Hell that divided God and creation, neighbour from neighbour, and life and death.

People of faith do well to question the worldly wisdom that says, "Good fences make good neighbours." Truth be told: living without fences and walls is the hallmark and ideal of Christian community living. In the words of the old hymn: "In Christ there is no east or west" or in the words Paul wrote to the Galatians concerning baptism: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have

clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." It's difficult to say where to draw the boundary regarding the implications of Paul's baptismal creed but perhaps we could agree that the shadows of his words are longer rather than shorter and that perhaps that means that the barriers that separate rich and poor, wise and foolish, liberal and conservative, gay and straight, young and old, Indigenous and settler, prisoner and free, traditionalist and innovator, this world and the next, the living and the dead have all been knocked down and we are all one in Christ.

In fact, it is not good fences that make good neighbours. Rather, we are more truly and authentically neighbours when we live without any fences and protective buffers, we have to be more consciously careful with each other, more considerate, more respectful, more protective and loving of each other.

Paul's words to the divided community rent and severed by conflict

at Corinth are instructive: he says Christians are to live together with an attitude of love which is patient, kind, humble, and which does not keep score. We are instructed to tear down the fences constructed of resentment, insistence or irritability. All of Paul's words in Corinthians 13 are a description for how to live without fences. They are a prescription for how we can work and worship together.

Years ago, I participated in a funeral in rural Quebec for a faithful Presbyterian man whose beloved and loving wife was an equally devout Roman Catholic. The elderly local French priest, who had been asked to participate in the funeral by the man's widow, and I arrived at the cemetery ahead of everyone else. While waiting for the friends and family to arrive for the burial, we two clergy—from different Christian traditions and separated in age by more than 45 years—made casual conversation across the divide of language—he in his broken English and me with what little French I could muster. Looking around the cemetery I asked the priest about the cemetery wall that appeared to have been damaged and I asked when the reconstruction would be done. "Mais non!" said the priest. "Not reconstruction but wall destruction! Yesterday, I called the workers to come to the cemetery and knock down the wall between the Catholic and Protestant cemeteries because of the burial today. A wall: so bad! There are no walls in heaven or between the living and the dead or this world and the next since Christ died and rose from the grave, so now, no walls separating the church."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

during which these Day Schools functioned, and it may be that one of two were eventually expanded into residential schools. Nor do I know whether this is the total of Day Schools the PCC operated, but in the interests of full disclosure, and the furthering of reconciliation, would it not be timely for the church to acknowledge (perhaps in a subsequent issue of *Presbyterian Connection*) the extent of its involvement in Indian Day Schools as well? —Douglas Stewart

Thank you for your comments, Douglas, and you are right—the PCC operated several Day Schools. Research is currently underway on

this topic and more information will be provided in a future edition of the newspaper.

Until then, you may be interested to know that on November 30, 2018, Crown-Indigenous relations minister, Carolyn Bennett, announced an agreement in principle to settle a Canada-wide Indian Day Schools Class Action suit that will provide compensation for former students of day schools as well as \$200 million for healing, wellness, language, culture and commemoration. Following the announcement, CBC reported that "about 200,000 Indigenous children attended federally operated Indian Day Schools across the country beginning in the 1920s.



A mother and her baby along with students at Swan Lake Day School in December 1914, photo courtesy of the Presbyterian Archives.

Indian Day Schools were operated separately from Indian Residential Schools and were not included in the 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement." These Day

Schools include a number in which The Presbyterian Church in Canada had a role in the operations.

Stay tuned for more details on this subject, coming soon.



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Barb Summers: Editor
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The Presbyterian Church in Canada

50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301
connection@presbyterian.ca
presbyterian.ca

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The Rev. Daniel Cho



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Emotional and spiritual wounds

Continued from page 1

Yvonne expresses a genuine love for the people she serves, and yet acknowledges how incredibly challenging her work can be. Yvonne and the staff face innumerable struggles and obstacles in their work. “The things we have to deal with [at the centre] can be overwhelming,” she says. People coming into the centre have all kinds of pain and challenges. Some are traumatized by the inter-generational impacts of residential schools. Some are struggling with addiction and substance abuse. Some are scarred by emotional and spiritual wounds. Some are wrestling with anxiety and depression and other mental health conditions. All are dealing with the crippling burden of homelessness and poverty. The quality of life is low, and the stresses people face are high.

“It’s such an honour and privilege to allow ourselves to be impacted by our walk here, by the people, to have them feel they can trust us to continually come back. But it’s hard to see people deteriorate.”

Death is an ongoing reality at the centre. Living a hard life on the streets often leads to a shortened life span. The Fellowship Centre offers a sense of family to many who have come to know it as home and watch out for each other. The reality of illness, transiency and recurrent hospitalization often leads to premature death. It’s not always easy to let others know when someone has died. As well, dealing with grief on the street has its own difficulties and lack of awareness.

Out of respect for patrons who have passed on and, in an effort to provide a space for pain to be expressed while having support people available, staff began a memorial wall



A firepit gathering at Kenora Fellowship Centre.

to share news and honour the memories of those who have died. The section is growing far too quickly. Individuals are dying at an alarming rate, especially among Indigenous populations.

A Heart of Pain

It would be impossible to have an honest discussion about homelessness without acknowledging discrimination and the effects it has had on Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. From systemic discrimination that limits access to basic services, to individual assumptions that are made about people who struggle with addiction and mental health issues, breaking down those uncomfortable walls is crucial. It’s much easier to throw our hands in the air, cast judgement and write people off, but God calls us to do otherwise. The staff at Kenora Fellowship Centre know this.

Compassion and empathy are crucial to building community and a sense of belonging at the centre. Administering kind, attentive care to visitors isn’t contingent on certain behaviour changes or actions. Staff don’t place expectations on



Volunteers from First Presbyterian Church in Kenora helping out at a lunch in support of Kenora Fellowship Centre.

the patrons that come through their doors—the expectations are placed on the staff themselves to be the loving, supportive people they are needed to be.

“We respond to a heart of pain and suffering by offering a caring, supportive and accepting environment.”

Yvonne explains that the need to develop strong relationships with the

guests is important because it allows for trust to be developed. When trust is there, patrons can fully take part in the services offered.

Staff at the centre try to do a lot of best practices based on their own experiences. They are always reviewing how to do things better, to better respond to the continuously growing needs of the community.

Fanning the Flames

One of the activities at the centre that Yvonne has seen a strong response to is the use of fire and firepit activities. For many Indigenous people, fire is sacred. It is a time of reflection and prayer, and it can help them connect to their land and people. Elders take part in the firepit prayer services and it becomes a beautiful time for all to come together. It is a time for participants to connect with Creator God, share their hearts and make their offerings. The fire has a cleansing, purifying effect.

Yvonne says that the firepit is especially powerful with the youth at the centre. Many youth have taken on the responsibility of becoming the fire keeper during the healing gatherings. They respect the fire and the fire-tending process, and they become a positive support to others. “There is nothing that I could have

Chanie Wenjack was an Anishinaabe boy and only 12 years old when he ran away from Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in 1966. Chanie’s attempt to return home to his family led to his death on the side of a road from hunger and exposure. Chanie’s story captured media attention in 2016 when the late Gord Downie created the graphic novel, “The Secret Path,” which featured Chanie’s story.

Learn more about Chanie and the PCC’s reconciliation efforts at presbyterian.ca/chanie

done to make that happen,” Yvonne said. “It’s such a privilege to see people change for the better.”

Keeping the Doors Open

Ensuring funding is available to continue operations is a major challenge for Kenora Fellowship Centre. Thanks to the grace of God, work continues, but the struggle is ongoing.

“People are living in horrible conditions in a community that doesn’t understand them. They face many barriers to health and wellness,” Yvonne says. Keeping the doors open to these people is the top priority.

“...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”
(Matthew 25:35)

Grateful for the Support

“I’m really grateful for the support that we receive from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Winnipeg Presbytery, First Presbyterian Church in Kenora and all the congregations that have taken an interest in the work that we do. I don’t think they realize how it makes us feel when we open the mail and there is a message of support from a congregation and we learn that they have decided to support us. I don’t think they realize how much it means that they value what we do. I would like to say thank you to all of them.”



Prayers for the staff and patrons of Kenora Fellowship Centre and donations for the essential services provided are desperately needed. There are no easy answers in how to deal with the generations of pain and suffering caused by residential schools. There are no easy answers in how to support people struggling with mental health issues, substance abuse, homelessness and poverty. And there are certainly no easy answers to questions about how to eradicate racial and cultural discrimination. But God’s call to us is clear and concrete: help those in need.

Through Kenora Fellowship Centre, we can help provide food and shelter to some of the most vulnerable people in Canada. We can surround them with love and prayer and help raise them up. Together, we can show God’s love to one another.

“My heart is touched a lot by what happens here. My heart has been broken many, many times. But I am grateful my heart can still be broken.”



To make a donation to Kenora Fellowship Centre, go to presbyterian.ca/donate and designate your gift as “Kenora Fellowship Centre.”

Prayer for Kenora Fellowship Centre

By the Rev. Barbara Pilozow, member of the Healing and Reconciliation Advisory Committee and minister at St. John’s Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg

Holy and great Creator, we stand in awe of the abundance of beauty found in lakes and streams, snow and ice, sky and stars, creatures and plants, sun and moon, atom and universe. All this you have fashioned for our sustenance and delight and we are humbled by the responsibility placed on us to preserve and enjoy it. Yet we ignore the guidance of your Spirit resting upon us and resist living according to your will. We act in ways of superiority, thinking we know best, not listening to the words or acknowledging the pain of our brothers and sisters made in your image. Have mercy on our unwillingness to learn and understand.

God of power and glory, you call us to action according to our gifts and abilities. We give thanks for those who answer your call in amazing and challenging ways. We pray for Yvonne Bearbull, giving thanks for her faithfulness, her compassion and the love she shares with those who come to the Kenora Fellowship Centre. These are people whose lives are dependent upon the meals, the transitional housing, the spiritual care, the laughter and tears shared in the companionship offered by the Centre’s community. Uphold Yvonne and give her strength. During days of grief and despair, of which there are too many and too often, give her comfort and confidence with your presence.

We pray for the elders, residential school survivors, who make themselves available to reclaim what has been lost and to provide leadership and guidance to those struggling with a legacy not of their choosing. We pray for the staff who with time and talents work beyond available resources to meet the many needs of the people.

We pray for more volunteers, more resources, more opportunities and innovative ways to do the work that needs to be done. Urge us to generosity.

Brother Jesus, teach us the ways we are to walk with Indigenous people along a path of reconciliation. We know so many of the guests of Kenora Fellowship Centre are overlooked by society. Give us hands to help, ears to hear and hearts to love.

In your name we pray, Amen.

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PRESBYTERIANS SHARING

The Power of Partnership

By Karen Plater,
Stewardship and Planned Giving

"A threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12b).

Presbyterians Sharing is partnership.

Since I began working for The Presbyterian Church in Canada over 20 years ago, I have seen the value of partnership. Partnership with presbyteries. Partnership with congregations. Partnership with international churches. Partnership across denominations. Interfaith partnership. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a connectional church. We value collaboration and dialogue—sharing and learning together.

The projects and programs we support in Canada are guided by partnership with presbyteries. They identify vital ministries in congregations and specialized ministries that impact communities in their region. Because of this partnership, congregations and ministries are able to launch new and innovative initiatives—often too risky for them to try on their own. Read about the *New Beginnings* program on page 22.

Equipping and empowering congregations creates opportunities for learning and sharing with one another. The Heart Garden described on page 24 is inspired by the healing and reconciliation efforts of our national church. Congregations are developing and revitalizing their presence on the web with help from the Communications office (see page 29).

Internationally, we engage with

local partners who design, guide and implement mission and ministry accompanied by PCC grants and people. Each partnership has developed out of unique historical circumstances and a common view that together we can share the gospel message in ways we could not do on our own.

Ecumenical structures like the Canadian Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches allow us to collaborate with other denominations on common goals and speak with a common voice—sharing the faith, hope and love which is embodied in the gospel message. As partner churches, we are building relationships of love and compassion. Read about the blanket exercise and reconciliation efforts being done through KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice initiatives on page 13.

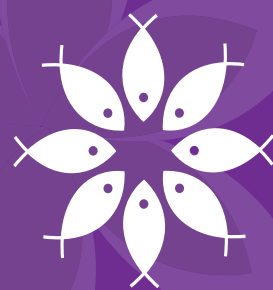
Partnership is people. In partnership there can be strength and energy and encouragement. But it can be hard work. It requires process: meetings, memos, discussion, reflection, decision-making. And people have different opinions, different ideas and different ways of learning and working. We need to be willing to listen, to see things from a different perspective and to reflect on our own position and sometimes to modify it, in order to find a way forward. Dr. Nick Bauman, mission staff in Nepal, reflects on the dynamics of partnership in his blog at presbyterian.ca/baumann: "One of the frustrating things, and simulta-

neously one of the gifts of being in a place like this, is the fact that we are here only for a short time and in many ways will only be a small blip in the history of this place. I am occasionally frustrated by cultural differences in the hospital or at home but in these moments I have usually been able to remind myself to step back, remember who I am, and my role. Hopefully this has helped me to be supportive of my Nepali colleagues in their leadership roles, as they confront situations or problems which will be solved, or remain unsolved, long after we've left."

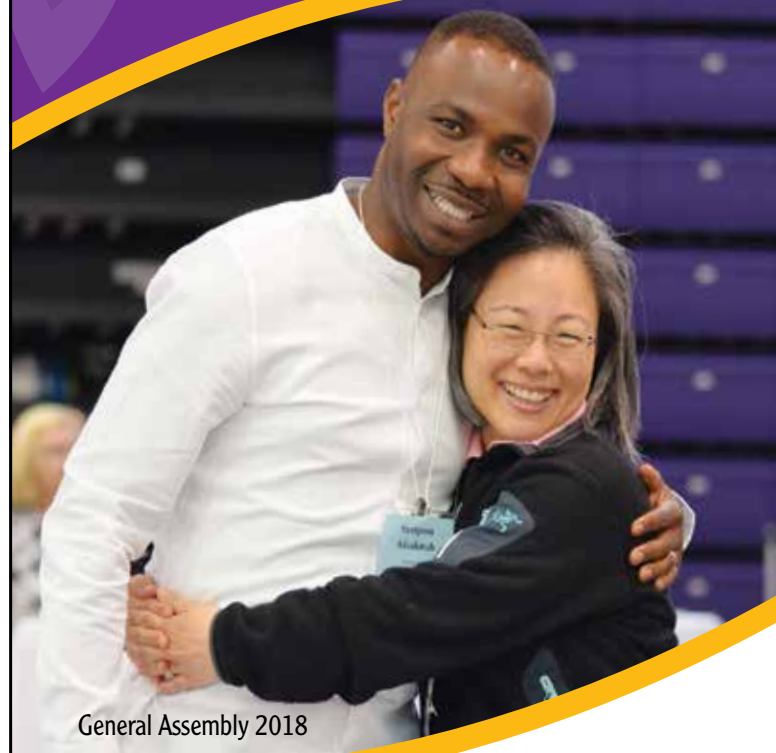
Partnership is potential. Working together allows us to do things that we wouldn't be able to do individually. At its best, partnership is a journey of interdependence, mutual learning and sharing. Through the ups and downs of long-term partnership, we can see God working through our common efforts as we grow in our understanding and practice of God's mission in our communities and in the world.

As you turn the pages in this newspaper you will learn from people of faith working together to share hope and love. It is happening because of your partnership with congregations across Canada.

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Exciting stories of faith, transformation, reconciliation and changed lives—and so much more—are the results of our shared gifts. Your commitment to Christ's continued mission and ministry through the church is vital to the work that we are doing together."

—The Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald,
General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency

"We have seen the faithful hand of God at work. We are very grateful for the ongoing support of our church, the Presbytery of Paris, and The Presbyterian Church in Canada—all of whom have supported and encouraged us to move ahead and expand. Their endorsement has been invaluable to confirm where God is leading us."

—Rebecca Sherbino, the Raw Carrot

"PWS&D has given me an opportunity. In addition to helping my community, it has been an opportunity for growth for me and my family. I have a good income."

—Lucia, PWS&D livestock project, Guatemala

Thank You!

By Stewardship and Planned Giving

Every year it is a blessing to witness the generosity and faithfulness of Presbyterians across Canada as they support the work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 2018, congregations, individuals, groups, foundations, estates and the Women's Missionary Society and Atlantic Mission Society generously gave over \$8,978,152 million to support the PCC's mission and ministry.

In 2018, \$6,623,151 supported the PCC's overall mission and ministry through Presbyterians Sharing, with

an additional \$222,878 designated for special international and Canadian projects. \$1,809,087 was given to Presbyterian World Service & Development for international development, relief and refugee programs, with an additional \$323,036 in legacy gifts for their Loaves & Fishes fund. The PCC is grateful to those who left a legacy to our mission and ministry through bequests totaling \$553,166.

Your gifts supported outreach, evangelism, research, connection, reflection, leadership, worship and transformation. Because of you, lives were changed.



In 2018, you helped Presbyterians Sharing

- renew and expand congregations
- accompany international partners with mission staff and grants for Bible translation, Christian education, leadership development, theological education and evangelism
- support three theological colleges
- bring people together for Canada Youth
- implement justice initiatives in Canada and around the world
- support Indigenous ministries and work toward healing and reconciliation
- equip congregational leaders through webinars and workshops
- ...and so much more!

In 2018, you helped Presbyterian World Service & Development

- respond to the Rohingya crisis, ongoing conflict in Syria, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and provide emergency assistance in many other countries
- provide access to maternal health services
- assist farmers in Africa, Asia and Central America
- support congregations and groups filing applications to sponsor refugees
- ...and so much more!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Life and Mission Agency Seeks Leader for Justice Ministries

"...and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

Justice Ministries is the department within The Presbyterian Church in Canada that supports congregations and courts of the church to respond faithfully to the justice imperatives of the gospel.

The PCC is seeking a dynamic

leader for the position of Associate Secretary of Justice Ministries. This is an opportunity to join a team who encourage one another and are inspired by the opportunity to strengthen and equip members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to sow seeds of hope and promote peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

The key responsibilities of the position of Associate Secretary of Justice Ministries include: engaging the



church in theological reflection and action on justice issues; supporting a faith and justice network to encourage the participation of Presbyterians in justice initiatives; working collaboratively to integrate healing and reconciliation with Indigenous people dynamically in the life of the PCC; actively participating in policy development and public engagement to add the voice of Christian faith in public discourse on issues of social justice;

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.

The deadline for nominations from presbyteries and applications is March 8, 2019. For further details please visit presbyterian.ca/justice-leader or contact Ian Ross-McDonald by email to imcdonald@presbyterian.ca.

LEADERSHIP

Grace Presbyterian Church Leans into Discomfort to Overcome Barriers

By Tyler Williams, Grace Presbyterian Church, Calgary

In 2016, Grace Presbyterian Church faced a challenge. Two long-serving and much-loved ministers had accepted calls, one to another congregation and one to care for her father. Within a few months of each other, the lead minister and one of two associate ministers left the Calgary Church.

Ministers who have served a congregation for multiple years become woven into the fabric of the community. They become part of the community's identity and create a real sense of familiarity and comfort. When they leave those communities, it's like pulling thread from a blanket. Their absence leaves holes. The blanket doesn't feel as warm and doesn't cover as well as it used to; the wind can blow right through it.

The departure of long-time leaders can leave a community feeling exposed and vulnerable. It can be a very uncomfortable place. And since people don't tend to like feeling vulnerable, they often take steps to protect themselves. There's a tendency to patch the holes as quickly as possible.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada recommends a period of interim leadership during which the congregation can take time to reflect on their identity and discern a path for the future. They ask churches to lean into vulnerability and discomfort trusting that God will meet them in those places. If a congregation can resist the urge to fix things quickly and can be present to discomfort, they can learn a lot about themselves.

Grace welcomed an interim minister for a time, but Grace's remaining associate minister, the Rev. Dr. M. Jean Morris, stepped up to take on the role of Interim Executive Minister. This step was important. The newest of Grace's ministers, Dr. Morris had been a part of Grace's community for a few years and provided the congregation with the stability it needed to continue leaning into discomfort for what would become a nearly three-year process of visioning and minister searches.

During the visioning process, internal committees and external consultants worked together to interview and survey individuals and groups within the congregation. Throughout the process, Grace's session and congrega-

tion continually returned to a passage of scripture, Ephesians 4: 1–7, 11–16:

I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

We must no longer be children tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine... But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

These words from Paul encouraged Grace Church to explore where the congregation was strongest and felt they were living up to their calling, and where they needed to apply their gifts and even grow up. One of the clearest answers came when the consultants gathered a report on the surrounding community: Calgary's Beltline neighbourhood. Although Grace had been physically present in the community for over 100 years, the report identified there was little community awareness about Grace and few connections between the church and the neighbourhood.

If you've never seen it, Grace Church—the actual building—is a sight to behold. High sandstone walls supporting intricate stained-glass windows, heavy wooden doors and a circular sanctuary are just a few of the most notable features. Inside this

building, the congregation of Grace has met weekly for over 100 years. Within these walls is where generations have grown in their faith, supported each other in community and raised their families.

Grace's features, both structural and communal, have a way of making one feel comfortable. Feeling at home in a church is a good thing, but as the research about Grace's congregation and the surrounding community came into focus, it became clear that those comforting features had become a divide. From the outside, high walls and heavy doors were beautiful but imposing. From the inside, a safe and comfortable community became a type of armour, and venturing out into the unfamiliar neighbourhood felt like an increasingly vulnerable act.

None of this was intentional. It just happened as the congregation and community grew and changed; drifting apart from each other.

The congregation of Grace identified a need to step out of the building and engage the gifts of its members to serve the neighbourhood, the community as a whole. They spent the remainder of the interim period discerning how they might do that. A renewed vision focused on the transformative power of God's grace, and the mission focused on building an internal community that was inspired to love neighbours and effect social change. A reorganization brought fewer and smaller committees, allowing for quicker decision-making and response time, and would welcome three new ministers to join the Rev. Dr. Jean Morris. Each minister would have a portfolio—a specialization.

In the fall of 2018, Grace called the Rev. Dr. Nick Athanasiadis, Lead Minister, Vision Worship & Discipleship; the Rev. Maren McLean Persaud, Associate Minister, Children & Youth; and the Rev. Jake Van Pernis, Associate Minister, Engagement & Service, to join with the Rev. Dr. M. Jean Morris, now the Associate Minister, Pastoral Care. Together these four ministers make up Grace's ministry team. They are tasked with leading Grace into the renewed vision and mission, and through each of their areas of focus to strengthen the congregation and empower them to build a connection with the community.

Although the approaches Grace turned to are not new and have been



(Left to right): the Rev. Maren McLean Persaud, Associate Minister, Children & Youth; the Rev. Jake Van Pernis, Associate Minister, Engagement & Service; the Rev. Dr. Nick Athanasiadis, Lead Minister, Vision, Worship & Discipleship; and the Rev. Dr. M. Jean Morris, Associate Minister, Pastoral Care.

used by many different churches, they represent a significant shift for Grace. That shift represents a commitment not to be bound by the building or to rest too long in the comfort of the congregation—to return to them regularly for encouragement and growth, but to commit to being present to, and seen by, the community.

For any church or community that has taken steps to be truly seen, or any individual who has spoken up at a meeting when they preferred to be silent or shared their art or writing with a new group of people, you know the gut-wrenching nervous anxiety of standing in your own vulnerability. Having let go of masks and armour, you are now open to judgement and criticism—but importantly you are also open to real connection and belonging.

This willingness to be seen is what the congregation of Grace has committed to, both individually and corporately. They are breaking down their own barriers to the community. Unsure whether each day will bring criticism or welcome. They are committed to seeing the community and being seen by the community.

The Rev. Dr. Nick Athanasiadis said it this way, "The church, and in particular congregations, are called to be in the world, in the community, in a transformative way. For us, this means becoming vulnerable, by listening, by paying attention to discern where the vital need is, by opening our doors, going outside and letting those who are outside come in. In that interaction and through this relationship, we may be converted in ways we cannot yet imagine."

Grace is still in the early stages of these changes, but already there have been great opportunities. An English Language Learner program has been running for a while but is now fully subscribed—the program receives little advertising beyond word of mouth and welcomes many different faiths and cultures. Stronger working relationships with local organizations (one supporting homeless youth, and another one sheltering women escaping



Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary.

from sexual exploitation) have created unique opportunities for partnership. Grace has also joined with a local school to support families by contributing to food programs that feed hungry students.

These projects and programs have been reinvigorated by the shifts in Grace's mission and vision and by the efforts of the congregation and ministers to nurture the existing points of connection. While that's been happening, other groups within Grace have been trying to forge new connections and foster new relationships. There's increasing awareness about some of the challenges within the community, but also an appreciation of just how vibrant the community is, and the incredible work being done by other individuals and organizations in responding to those challenges.

Grace Church isn't sure where all this will lead, which is true of any experiment. There are outcomes and opportunities the congregation is hoping for, but there are potential risks as well. What is certain is the commitment to lean into the discomfort that comes with making ourselves visible, and trusting that, as the people of Grace move through the community and meet their neighbours, they'll discover God is already there and at work. Grace's job will be to ask, "How can we serve?"

DIACONAL MINISTRIES

A Profile in Diaconal Ministries

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been educating and designating people to do diaconal ministry for over 100 years. The Order of Diaconal Ministries encompasses those designated for service in a broad range of ministry, including Christian education, pastoral care and social ministries. The women and men who have served over the years as diaconal workers have had varied and intrepid adventures. Many of them were tested in areas and circumstances that were difficult and ground-breaking. Their ministry has a lasting and important legacy in the PCC and the world. Below is just one reflection from one of the members of the Diaconal Order.



Margaret Ross (far left) in 1935.

Margaret (Christine Ross) Williams: 1908–2013

Margaret was designated to the Order of Deaconesses on April 7, 1935, by the Presbytery of Pictou, N.S. For the remainder of her long and extraordinary life, she joyfully served in a Christian leadership role in several Canadian provinces as a school teacher, youth worker, Women's Missionary Society organizer, worship leader, organist, soloist and choir director; minister's wife (the Rev. J.W. Williams), library assistant at Knox College, women's shelter worker, hospital visitor, church elder and parish librarian. On her 103rd birthday, she was honoured by the Ottawa Presbytery for completing her 75th full year of

service in the Order of Deaconesses.

Margaret wrote an article in 1987 of her time travelling as Deaconess-at-large in Nova Scotia: "Once, as I was travelling in late autumn, I got off the train at the wrong stop. It was evening, very dark and no street lights. When I found the boarding house that the Station Agent had directed me to, the lady in charge said, 'We have 23 men here building a new road. Our rooms are all taken, but since there is no place else, you can stay overnight. I will put a cot for you in my sewing room.' I was very grateful, though a bit uneasy when I noticed the sewing room door was a curtain. However, I went to sleep pondering the Deaconess Psalm and didn't waken until I heard the men at breakfast in the next room discussing me. Was she a travelling teacher? Was she selling magazines? No one guessed a Deaconess. From my experience at that time, I think it quite possible that none of them had ever heard of a Deaconess."

Statement of Diaconal Ministries

Adopted by the 124th General Assembly, 1998

Diaconal Ministers are called to be servants of Jesus Christ.

We believe in a ministry that is spiritual, dynamic, creative and a practical enactment of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We work collegially in leadership, open to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to equip and enrich others for Christian life and service.

We envision a ministry rooted in the life and worship of the whole people of God, which emphasizes Christian Education, Pastoral Care and Social Services.

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HISTORY

Pictou's Mountaineering Minister

Written by John Ashton, a self-employed historical author living in Bridgeville, Pictou County, N.S. Reprinted from The News, Pictou County, N.S.

This Pictou-born Presbyterian minister was called "one of the most enthusiastic mountain climbers in Canada" and was instrumental in forming one of the first amateur mountaineering organizations in our nation.

The Alpine Club of Canada today, "is the leading organization in Canada devoted to climbing, mountain culture, and issues related to alpine pursuits and ecology. It is also the Canadian regulatory organization for climbing competitions, sanctioning local, regional and national events, and assembling, coaching and supporting the national team."

The Rev. James Chalmers Herdman was born in the manse of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church to parents the Rev. Andrew W. Herdman and Elizabeth Walker of Scotland in the year 1855. The young James was heavily influenced by his father to become a minister.

"His desire to follow religion was formed early in childhood and strengthened with years. Stories of his youthful piety and sensitive moral nature were plentiful in those days in Pictou. His parents frequently found him alone in his room in the dark, kneeling beside his bed speaking to God in prayer. Fond of outdoor games, he would only engage in clean sport and would refuse to play if bad language was used by any of his companions. This early, principled belief would carry on through his entire life and would benefit any person, group or congregation that the Rev. Dr. James Herdman was involved with.

"Because of a slight speech impediment, his father tried to dissuade James from continuing in a ministry career and encouraged him to enter on a business vocation. James's "heart was set on being a minister and pleaded with his father to give consent." The Rev. Andrew Herdman stated, "only if you gain a bursary within a reasonable time period." This task seemed impossible, but through sheer determination and obedience "set himself to work to this end, and with great joy when, to the surprise of all, he stood first in the list of competitors."

And off to Dalhousie University for his bachelor of arts and then onto Edinburgh University in Scotland, where he obtained his master of arts and bachelor of divinity. "He was a favourite with his fellow students and when he was leaving for home, they

gave a dinner in his honour."

"On his return to Pictou he preached for his father at St. Andrew's Church... [and] made a deep impression in his native town."

In 1878 James Herdman was called to Campbellton, N.B., where he was ordained and married Wilmina Loudon of Bathurst. While in New Brunswick, the Rev. Herdman was known to regularly visit backwoods lumber camps "in order to preach and administer ordinances to those out of the way." In 1885 he and his beginning family moved to Calgary, Alberta, where the Rev. Herdman became minister of the newly formed Presbytery and help organize the fledgling Knox Presbyterian Church "just after the turmoil of the Northwest Rebellion." He would remain at this post for 30 years.

Because of his well-liked disposition and hard work ethic, Rev. James Herdman would have great influence on Western Canada. He helped found and organize the Western Canada Historical Society. In 1901 "under the leadership of Rev. Herdman, lay men and women turned their attention to the under-privileged and often misunderstood members of the early Chinese community." The result was the establishment of the Chinese Presbyterian Church (later the Chinese United Church). He also helped create and establish Western Canada College, Calgary.

The Rev. Herdman would also have a brush with the famed outlaw the Sundance Kid (Harry Longabaugh) and an eventual member of the notorious Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch. In the early 1890s, the Sundance Kid was on the run from authorities in United States and ended up in Alberta, where he stood as best man at a wedding. The young couple were married by the Rev. Herdman.

His leadership efforts did not go unnoticed, and in 1902 "he was appointed to the position of superintendent of Home Missions for Alberta and British Columbia." Having the opportunity to travel the Rocky Mountains afforded the Rev. Herdman the opportunity to hone his passion of mountain climbing.

The Canadian Rocky Mountains have always challenged the adventurous side of men and women for centuries. It was an obstacle that had to be mastered in order to join Canada as a nation in 1867. In the 1870s surveys of the Rockies began to find the most affordable and best route to develop the Canadian Pacific Railroad to British Columbia, a gesture promised by the Sir John A. MacDonald government. With

the continuous work of the Geological Survey of Canada, the Rockies would be mapped and photographed. Encouraging great interest for mountain-climbing tourism in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Rev. Herdman was hooked.

A group of avid mountaineers formed the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) in 1906. Arthur Wheeler had been trying to organize a mountain climbing club in Western Canada since 1901. With the encouragement of the Rev. Herdman and journalist, Elizabeth Parker, the founding ACC meeting took place in Winnipeg on March 27 and 28, 1906. Other clubs had been formed in Europe and United States. Unlike organized clubs at that time period, the Canadian association would permit women to become members. Mr. Wheeler became ACC president, Elizabeth Parker, secretary, the Rev. Herdman became vice-president with Sir Sanford Fleming as ACC's first patron and honorary president.

Interest in the new group quickly grew with membership. In 1907 The ACC produced the first of a continuing newsletter called the Canadian Alpine Journal. In its inaugural issue was an article penned by the Rev. James Herdman called "The Ascent of Mt. Macoun." Today the journal

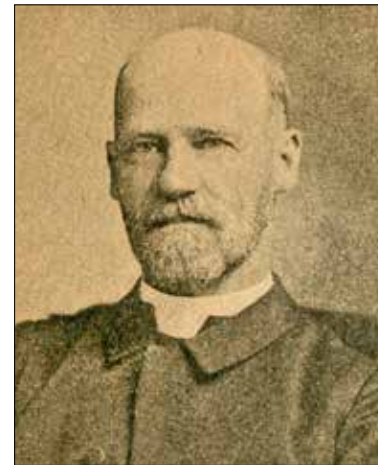
is distributed all over the world and reports on achievements in climbing, mountaineering and exploration of mountains.

The Rev. Herdman is mentioned in the journal many times, as well several books published on the topic of the Canadian Rockies and mountain climbing. Mention is also made of the mountaineering Minister on several occasions as was one of the first individuals to conquer several of the Rocky Mountains.

"August 14, the Rev. J.C. Herdman made the first ascent of Mt. Macoun (9,988 feet) and was accompanied by the guide Edouard Feuz. The trip was made in 13 hours."

And in 1907 a report was given on the first ascent of Mt. Begbie and "was achieved by Rev. Dr. Herdman, Rev. J.R. Robertson, Rupert Haggen and guide Edouard Feuz."

Sadly, in 1909 the Rev. Herdman would have to curtail his mountain climbing, as well his religious duties because of sickness and passed away on June 7, 1910, at the age of 55 years. Tributes poured in all across Canada and James Short of Knox Church wrote: "Unfailing courtesy was one of the Rev. Dr. Herdman's outstanding qualities. His ripe scholarship, well-balanced judgement, his wisdom and knowledge of



The Rev. James Chalmers. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN ARCHIVES

people and affairs and his modesty all combined to make him an ideal counsellor of people. His was a life that did much to mould the West."

The Rev. James Chalmers Herdman was buried at the Old Banff Cemetery, nicely nestled in the Rocky Mountains.

Historical Research: Alpine Club of Canada, Glenbow Museum, Calgary; Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff; *Presbyterian Pioneer Missionaries*, Hugh McKellar, *Lethbridge Herald*, 1910; *Pictonians at Home and Abroad*, the Rev J.P. MacPhie; *The Guiding Spirit*, William Lowell Putnam and Andrew J. Kauffman; *Southern Alberta Pioneers*; *The Great Glacier and Its House*, William Lowell Putnam, University of British Columbia; campingcanucks.ca.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vancouver School of Theology Announces Leadership Award

By the Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, Principal, Vancouver School of Theology

The Vancouver School of Theology (VST) recently announced a new leadership award. The Principal's T-E-G Award (Thoughtful, Engaged and Generous) is an award for leading practitioners in the Christian faith to be nominated and recognized by VST for their contributions.

The VST Principal's T-E-G Award is not restricted to alumni or affiliates of VST, but rather is an expression of VST's stature in the wider community, with a strong and growing reputation for leadership development, innovation and change.

This award is intended to have a continuous presence in the community through the annual support of its founding donors and others who also recognize the importance of the VST Principal's T-E-G Award. For 2019,

this award will be at least \$3,000 as a result of other contributions already received. Annual contributions and those earmarked to endow this award will be gratefully accepted.

Along with the financial acknowledgement, the recipient(s) will be invited to assume an active presence with VST in leadership initiatives. The VST Principal's T-E-G Award will be presented as part of the annual convocation ceremony in May (May 13, 2019).

Nominations for the inaugural recipient of the VST Principal's T-E-G Award are welcome until March 30, 2019. The award is open to all full-time ministry leaders within the first ten years of full-time employment. Candidates will be known for their exemplary leadership and contributions in Christian ministry for the 21st century, reflecting the virtues of being thoughtful, engaged and generous in keeping with the mission of

VST. Nominations should be directed to the VST Principal's Office: klee@vst.edu. Successful recipients may receive this award once.

Nominations should include an overview of the candidate's ministry contributions and community impact, as well as a biography. In addition, all nominations should be accompanied by a minimum of three (3) letters of endorsement. Successful candidates will be selected by a committee, including the Chair of the VST Board of Directors, VST Chancellor, VST Vice-principal and the VST Principal. Ministry experts external to VST may also be called upon for input.

The Vancouver School of Theology welcomes students from many Christian communions, other faith traditions and Indigenous communities, while celebrating its core relationships with the Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada and United Church of Canada.

INTERNATIONAL

Parliament of the World's Religions

By Rev. Mark A. Tremblay, Knox Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta.

The Parliament of the World's Religions met in Toronto from November 1 to 7. In attendance were almost 8,000 people representing over 120 religious traditions from around the world, ranging from Anglicans to Zoroastrians. The meetings consisted of assemblies, plenaries, workshops and opportunities to worship. The weeklong event provides the opportunity to connect with people, to find common concerns and to be encouraged by the global efforts to strive for justice, all the while expressing the love that seems to be present in all religious traditions. It is challenging to put into words the experience of selecting from 1,200 events to attend over a seven-day period. One could be busy from 7:00 a.m. until 10:30 p.m. without a break.

The Parliament offers six different tracks; it's possible to follow one track or select events across following different tracks.

- The Women's Track: the dignity of women across the world's wisdom traditions
- Countering War, Hate and Violence Track: peace and love, not war, hate and violence
- Climate Action Track: care for our earth, responsibility for our future
- The Indigenous Peoples' Track: the spiritual evolution of humanity and healing our mother earth
- The Next Generations Track: interfaith has no age, youth voices for change

terfaith has no age, youth voices for change

- Justice Track: advancing concrete change toward a just, peaceful and sustainable world

Additionally, there were special sessions on interfaith understanding, the Parliament's Global Ethic, the Charter for compassion, science and religion, and sharing sacred places. World-class scholars and activists participated in and led the workshops. The Sikh community hosted a *Langar* (a Punjabi word for kitchen) every day where they provided a free vegetarian meal for anyone who wanted it. It was a display of outstanding hospitality.

One of the draws to hold the Parliament in Toronto is the fact that it is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world and it is also home to the largest diverse Indigenous population. The host Haudenosaunee Nation arranged and organized a rich track including ceremonies, informational workshops and sharing stories that included people from many different nations. Non-Indigenous people were provided the opportunity to hear stories, experience and learn about different ceremonies. The land is the source of language, problem solving and ceremony for Indigenous people. The land and our responsibility to it forms the unifying principle of the people who live on the land. Christians have long forgotten this. Ignorance of the land, along with our forgetting our responsibility for it, may not be a part of our scriptural

tradition but it stands as a distinctive feature of the colonizing Christianity of which we are heirs. Much of the Parliament was a reminder of the work we need to begin in decolonizing our theology and practice. The first step is accepting that we have a colonized theology.

The plenary on reconciliation asked the question: How can those who are divided be reconciled so that radical change will lead to inclusion and love, to greater justice, to sustained peace and to a flourishing world? Part of the plenary gave testimony of Canadians on what has occurred in terms of seeking understanding (truth) and advancing harmony (reconciliation), ways in which the process has succeeded and failed, and what its prospects are for the future. The second part of the plenary examined reconciliation in other divided regions, cultures and religions of the world. It explored the role that reconciliation plays in generating and continuing change. Simply put, the global religious community acknowledges that we are all called to participate with God and each other in reconciling, healing and caring for all forms of life and for every part of this earth that we share and occupy together.

Reconciliation can mean many things and it can be controversial. Reconciliation between people will not occur until there is reconciliation with the land—to a starving child, bread is justice. Love and justice without action are mere words. Some of the other



(Left to right) the Revs. Mark Tremblay (Alta.), Lynne Donovan (Ont.), Gwen Ament (Ont.), Joye Platford (Man.), and Daniel Cho (Ont.), Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

comments expressed hope for ways of involving those who have been marginalized in law making, that we might find ways of enforcing human rights violations, that injustice is unacceptable and environmental degradation should be criminalized. One speaker further questioned who benefits from reconciliation, and stated that concepts of reconciliation should stand in the way of privilege; to humanize these ideas, these political and justice issues and to help illustrate the humanitarian crisis of migrants and refugees, Warsan Shire's, *Home*, was read. Her concluding words are haunting:

no one leaves home until home is a
sweaty voice in your ear
saying
leave,
run away from me now
i dont know what i've become
but i know that anywhere
is safer than here

The diversity of Canada's largest city provided the context for the Parliament's theme, *The Promise of Inclusion and the Power of Love: Pursuing Global Understanding, Reconciliation and Change*. The model of inclusion,

instead of exclusion, of equality rather than hierarchy, was refreshing. It was a reminder of Jesus' words in Matthew that those who are not against us are for us. Inclusion, at the Parliament, was a reminder of our responsibility to all the other living beings with whom we share this planet and to the earth, air and waters on which we depend. It was inspiring to see women and men from all parts of our world, some with very different religious backgrounds, united in concern over the ways people, animals and resources are exploited through an unjustified sense of privilege, hatred, war and economic activity. What could be more important, in these days, than being united with others to combat the sources of poverty, the environmental crises, injustice and the renewed threat of nuclearization? It was an experience of the power of love. The Parliament's statements are worth reading, reflecting on and talking about in studies and sermons.

Further information about the Parliament can be found at parliamentofreligions.org

Making a Difference in Nepal

By International Ministries

After two years in Nepal, Dr. Nicholas (Nick) and Rebecca (Becky) Bauman, and their children, returned home to Orillia, Ont. on February 2, 2019. Appointed by International Ministries as mission personnel to the United Mission to Nepal (UMN), they have shared their gifts as a general surgeon and an occupational therapist at the Tansen Mission Hospital and the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Centre.

Unlike a Canadian hospital setting, Nick was exposed to unusual illnesses and injuries, for children and



Dr. Nick and Becky Bauman and their children.

adults, that required surgical intervention. Often surgery is just the first step to health or learning to live with a disability. Choices are few in Nepal if you are unable to farm or do manual labour, which was the case of Dan Bahadur. Dan was left paraplegic after



A Christmas party at New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center in Tansen, Nepal.

an accident. His wife Kumari was now a nurse to her husband, mother to an infant and a caregiver for her elderly father-in-law, and the only breadwinner. A daunting task. This scenario is the reason why the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center was founded

in Tansen, assisting people like Dan and Kumari to rebuild their lives. For others with social and mental illness challenges, the Centre offers a caring and safe environment. Kumari was introduced to an activity making star ornaments from scraps of fabric and

earning an income. Becky encouraged Kumari over many months, as she learned this new skill and adapted to their new life as a family.

Working alongside Nepali colleagues, Nick and Becky Bauman have experienced the joys and challenges of life in a very poor country. Reflecting on their time in Nepal, Becky writes that "It has been a good time in our lives as a family, knitting us closer together, and has given our children a little reprieve from the pace of Western life. As anticipated, it is hard to know whether our work has made that elusive 'difference' that everyone is seeking to make. It is heartening to think that God is at work in this organization, in all the people here, and our time is a small bit in a bigger work." A colleague at UMN thanked the PCC for sending them: "The Bauman's have been much appreciated in Tansen, and they will certainly be missed. Thank you for sending them to UMN!"

JUSTICE

Indigenous Ministries Endowment Fund

By the Life and Mission Agency

There are eight dynamic ministries within The Presbyterian Church in Canada that exercise faithful and important ministry primarily with Indigenous peoples and communities. Together the leaders of Anamiewigummiig – Kenora Fellowship Centre (Kenora, ON), Winnipeg Inner City Mission and Place of Hope (Winnipeg, MN), Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry (Saskatoon, SK), Mistawasis Memorial Church (Mistawasis, SK), Edmonton Urban Ministry (Edmonton, AB), Hummingbird Ministry, (Vancouver, BC); Cedar Tree Ministry (Vancouver

Island, BC); and Cariboo Region (Nazko, BC) comprise the National Indigenous Ministry Council which meets throughout the year to discuss matters of common concern.

In 2017, the General Assembly the Assembly approved the creation of a new fund entitled the Indigenous Ministries Endowment Fund, which is intended to support the work of ongoing, long-term ministry with Indigenous people. We are hopeful this fund will help support and sustain not only the existing ministries but new and evolving Indigenous ministries in Canada as these may emerge over time.



(Left to right): Cathy Lindsay, the Rev. Germaine Lovelace, minister at First Church, Kenora and Colin Wasacase at Kenora Fellowship Centre.

To help support this important work through a donation, visit presbyterian.ca/donate and select "Mission Priority Funds."



June 21, 2018, marked the official day of celebration to recognize and honour the achievements, history and rich cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada. In celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day, Hummingbird Ministries partnered with Mosaic church in East Vancouver to host a community festival. The Hummingbird Dancers were one of the celebration's highlights.

COMMITTEES

Stewards of the Church's Funds

By Tim Herron, convenor of the Trustee Board and Investment Advisory Committee

Ten years ago, stock markets showed that investing was not for the faint of heart. Many in the press termed the downturn "the Great Recession." Daily news about the financial markets didn't get better until March 2009. By then, most markets were down 30–60% from their peaks in 2007 or 2008. I was not on the Trustee Board or a member of the Investment Advisory Committee at that time but I'm sure many people associated with the finances of the church felt great concern for its funds.

Today, we look back on the bottom of that market and see what might be termed the greatest "up market"

and the biggest drop in interest rates since the 1980s, and possibly the 1930s. After watching and observing the disruption in 2009, The Presbyterian Church in Canada decided to do a full governance review of the funds it oversees. The Pension Fund at that time was \$175 million and the Consolidated Fund was \$100 million. As of December 2018, the PCC Pension Fund is \$285 million and the Consolidated Fund is approximately \$200 million. Governance of both funds meets standards set out by the Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures and a series of legislative acts.

The role of the Trustee Board is to oversee all real estate and investments of the PCC. The Investment Advisory Committee (IAC) provides



investment recommendations to the Trustee Board about the management of the two funds. Both the Trustee Board and the IAC are good stewards of those funds on behalf of the PCC pensioners, the church and many congregations who are unit holders of the Consolidated Fund.

The Trustee Board has 15 members, the majority of which come from across the breadth of the church as well as the convenor of the Pension Board, the convenor of the Assembly Council, the Principal Clerk of the Assembly, and the CFO of the PCC. The IAC is comprised of

nine members with backgrounds in investments, accounting, legal and pension management.

When I spoke to the General Assembly in 2017, I cited tenants of good stewardship that I learned from Warren Buffet of Berkshire Hathaway. Buffet always talks about his two rules of investing: Rule #1: Don't lose money, and rule #2: Remember rule #1. In 2018, I spoke to the Assembly about what we might refer to as Buffet's third rule, which states, "It takes 20 years to build a reputation, it can take five minutes to ruin it."

Now more than ever, board members are under scrutiny to be knowledgeable about the financial landscape and products that go into the portfolios. We have the church's money managers update the committee and share any insights on the markets they invest in. This past year, the committee discussed governance issues and heard presentations about infrastructure, private debt, private equity and other alternative investments as well as global equities and fixed income.

Both the Trustee Board and IAC are being challenged by new issues, previously unseen. These issues include increased costs of compliance by regulators, costs of running the plan and types of investments with dif-

ferent cost structures like Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs). Risks come in all shapes and sizes. Volatility can be your friend or foe. At the end of 2018, we watched as markets gyrated up and down in large numbers and in unusual ways.

Recently, we commissioned a committee to discuss and plan an Asset Liability study. This study could take up to 18 months. While it is a complicated process, we have a diverse group of committee backgrounds. Currently, the Pension Plans of the United Church and the Anglican Church are well into their Asset Liability studies. We have reached out to them and I am pleased to say they are willing to share their experiences with this exercise.

We have embarked on a cost review of all of our services. This is also a good governance practice for the board to have reviews done at least once every 4 to 7 years.

We know the pension investments today need to fund payments now as well as 20 to 30 years down the road. Short-term thinking can lead to adverse results. Today we have twice as many 100-year-olds in Canada taking pensions compared to 2001.

I am honoured to convene both the Trustee Board and the IAC. One lesson that I learned over 30 years ago is that "down markets" are temporary and "up markets" are permanent. The Toronto Stock Exchange Index in 1988 was about 3,300 points and the Dow Jones Index was 2,100 points. Today the indexes are 15,000 and 25,000 respectively. That doesn't include reinvestment of interest payments or dividends.

We continue to watch, listen and learn. The next 10 years will not be a repeat of the last in the financial world.



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RECONCILIATION

When Will It Be Enough?

By the Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin, Thundering Eagle Woman, Bear Clan, minister at Place of Hope Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, former director of Winnipeg Inner City Missions, recipient of the PCC Woman of Faith Award (2017)

The Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada was presented to Mr. Phil Fontaine, then the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, on October 8, 1994, at The Forks in Winnipeg by the Moderator of the 120th General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. George Vais, and former President of the Women's Missionary Society, Kay Cowper. We are now approaching the 25th anniversary of when we came before God and our Indigenous brothers and sisters with our confession.

The Residential Schools System existed for 130 years. The last school only closed in 1996. And the residential schools are only one piece of the whole process of colonization that has been in action for 500 years. The ongoing, antiquated Indian Act, and the treaties that are not being acknowledged or honored are an ongoing problem. The '60s scoop is a more recent piece of the mosaic. Some of the same kind of behaviour can also be seen today with the current policies of the child and welfare agencies. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls draws attention to

disturbing levels of violence. Attention should also be drawn to violence against Indigenous men and Two Spirit people. It seems the reality of injustice toward Indigenous people keeps on repeating itself over and over again in Canada.

At the time of our public confession, I was just two years into ordained ministry and struggling to reconcile being a Presbyterian Minister of Word and Sacraments and being a Traditional Anishinaabekwe. It would have been easier to choose to live out my faith one way or the other, but I refuse to choose! I believed that Jesus would not ask me to choose. And so, I needed to reconcile within myself, with my God and with my people both European and Indigenous.

My process of discovering about who I am personally as a mixed blood person with European and Indigenous Spiritual ancestry has uncovered a lot of painful truths. My understanding of racism, discrimination and oppression toward Indigenous people historically and in the present has deepened—as have my sorrow and anger.

I am writing to you to bear witness that the legacy of colonization and the residential school system still presents itself in serious and complicated brokenness today. That brokenness of Indigenous Spirit manifests itself through anger, violence, illness, addictions, dysfunctional families

and dysfunctional power structures. Generational trauma is difficult to resolve, but not impossible.

Living and working where I do, in the inner city of Winnipeg and in a ministry focused on Indigenous people, I can without a doubt say that the past is not the past yet and healing will take several generations. People keep asking me “How long will it take Margaret?” and “When will it be enough?” “It” refers to our confession and our efforts to reconcile. Only our Creator knows the answer to those questions. All I can say is that clock time certainly works differently than God's time, and we will see when these things unite. My best guess is that it will take another three generations at least and that it will be “enough” when personal, social and economic justice is accomplished in the minds of the Indigenous people. That accomplishment will only be possible with the Creator's help. “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6b).

Historic injustice has so many insidious effects. Indigenous people today carry with them a justifiable shield that comes up between them and non-Indigenous people at sometimes the smallest slight or glance or word. That involuntary response makes it very difficult to try to rebuild trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Thankfully, I have Indigenous and European roots and



The Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin.

to be fully both, as God intends me to be, I am committed to the reconciliation effort by virtue of my DNA. I cannot escape myself, so I must continue to try.

Quite frankly, Canada's treatment of Indigenous people has been, and still is, troubling to say the least. Over the past 25 years I have been constantly faced with the guilt of inadequacy as I see that no change was occurring in things that I believed to be most important, like justice and equality. I am thankful that God, my Elders, Pastors, and Spiritual Directors have encouraged me to be patient and to stay involved. “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

Over the past 25 years, as I stubbornly became who I was meant to be, I also wanted to be a part of creating a church that could accept the

responsibility for the harm done to Indigenous people in the past and in the present. Accepting responsibility for a past that was not our doing, and a present that seems way beyond our control is not easy, but it is essential to walking together with Indigenous people of this country toward reconciliation and a new way of being that is built on trust and respect.

Now I am beginning to sense that we are on the cusp of something special as our national church begins to come to terms with our unjust history. I believe that today's children, youth and young adults are on the leading edge of a new dynamic between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in our country. I don't know what that new dynamic will look like yet, and it will most certainly be messy getting there, but I have profound hope in Jesus and the Great Spirit who will direct our path. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

The confession is essential to us becoming what we are meant to be. It enables us to look an Indigenous person, family or community in the eye and take full responsibility for the harm the church and society has done them. That is the only way we will be taken seriously. Only then can we begin work on rebuilding trust and slowly restoring good relationships that will allow us to move forward, in a good way, together.

Shame and guilt are not yours to carry for historical injustice. Carry a Godly sorrow and get involved.

Reconciliation in Action

By the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Gaver, Presbytery Ministry Animator for the Presbyteries of Ottawa and Seaway-Glengarry

I was part of the organizing committee for KAIROS 9th Covenant Chain Link event that was held in Ottawa in October 2018. The theme was *Reconciliation in Action: Reconcili ACTION*. The workshops had two goals: to learn what different churches in the Ottawa region are doing to move forward with reconciliation, and to provide a useful summary of strategies and lessons learned that can be helpful for churches interested in moving forward but not knowing how or where to even begin.

The first day was open to youth from across Ottawa and Cornwall, and there were about 80 who attended. The keynote speaker was Theland Kicknosway—he's 15 years old and just got back from speaking to the United Nations in Geneva, Swit-

zerland. Theland is an Indigenous youth as well a singer, and a grass and hoop dancer. He also does annual runs for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls as well as transgender and Two Spirit people; he ran from Ottawa to Kitigan Zibi in northern Quebec. He's the youngest ever to receive the Inspire Award. Theland talked to the group and taught volunteers some basics in hoop dancing.

The Blanket Exercise done was different from the usual KAIROS one. It started with trading among Indigenous people themselves, so we could get a sense of what they had, how they interacted with one another, and how vibrant their cultures were. It also showed first contact, where Europeans traded and interacted generally positively with the people, then it moved on to the more traditional aspects of the Blanket Exercise where the impact of colonialism, dis-

ease, residential schools, Indian Act, etc., are presented. The youth also led the debriefing—including mentioning other times when we discriminate based on other things and not just Indigenous people. I loved how it didn't focus just on the past but looked toward the present and future.

On Saturday, Oct. 20, about the same number of adults attended the second day. Justin Holness was once again the emcee. Elders Victoria Boucher, Senator Gordon and Sally Webster opened the event. The keynote speaker for Saturday was Max FineDay, recognized by CBC Saskatchewan as being one of the top 40 change makers under the age of 40 in the province. He spoke about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in terms of a marriage relationship: (a) the dating/honeymoon stage started at first contact and lasted until treaties started to be signed; (b) the marriage



Taking part in the Blanket Exercise.

turned abusive with the Indian Act, residential schools, '60s scoop, etc.; and (c) we are now in the marriage counselling phase where we are trying to stop the abuse and sort out what needs to be done to save the marriage.

Events and workshops were geared toward adults. About 26 people attended the *Church & Reconcili ACTION: The Rick Balson Memorial*

Workshop (morning session), which had speakers from three denominations talking about what their people are doing to develop relationships with Indigenous people and communities. About 24 people attended the afternoon session, which had speakers from four denominations (including Presbyterian) talking about challenges and what they have learned about building relationships with Indigenous people and communities.

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PRESBYTERIAN WRITERS

Let Us Prey

Let Us Prey: The Plague of Narcissistic Pastors and What We Can Do About It

Written by the Rev. R. Glenn Ball and Dr. Darrell Puls
 Cascade Books, 2017

At any time in North America, roughly 20 per cent of congregations are in conflict. And while there are multiple reasons for conflict, the personality style of the minister can sometimes be one of the causal factors.

Using data gathered from their broad original research, and illustrated by true stories, the Rev. Glenn Ball (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Brandon, Man.) and Dr. Darrell Puls (Dean of Academic Affairs at Gather4Him Christian College of Kennewick, Washington State) provide an unflinching but sensitive investigation and analysis

of the effects ministers exhibiting features of a Narcissistic Personality Disorder have on their congregation in *Let Us Prey*.

Their study connects conflicts found in the church and congregations to the mental health and personality style of the minister. Often, narcissistic pastors appear shallow and grandiose and will generally have deep needs for power and adulation. They may exploit the people around them in the service of the fantasies of unlimited success and triumph. Frequently these pastors have little or no empathy for the people they are to serve, are envious and entitled. Revenge, anger and a tendency to center decision-making around themselves, while denying responsibility and manipulating information and circumstances, are common features of these pastors. While they



are often charismatic speakers and leaders, the evidence shows that they commonly have shallow spiritual lives and spend little time preparing sermons and engaged in learning or personal devotion.

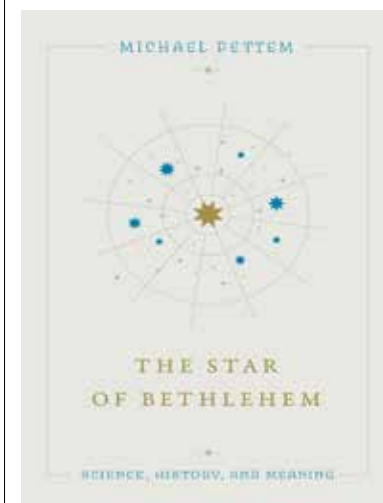
Ball and Puls provide insight into the prevalence of narcissistic pastors in the church and the kinds of congregations they are often found in. The authors sketch out some tell-tale signs congregations might identify as well as wise practical advice about how to mitigate the effects of

a narcissistic pastor.

The consideration of the narcissistic congregation in this book is also relevant. While healthy people and organizations accept they will not succeed at everything and are imperfect, narcissistic congregations rationalize and refuse to take responsibility (even blame satanic forces) for their circumstances. Other congregations will claim uniqueness and are often paranoid and isolated.

Let Us Prey may be a helpful resource for some congregations. Reading and learning from this book with a gracious spirit, an open mind, a caring heart and a sophisticated understanding of the complex matter of character will also be essential for all readers; only careful testing and assessment by a professional yields anything approaching a reliable diagnosis. Non-professionals should take great care to avoid the dangers of making uninformed accusations and wild charges.

The Star of Bethlehem



The Star of Bethlehem:

Science, History and Meaning

Written by Michael Pettem

Available in electronic format from Lexham Press

The story of the star of Bethlehem fascinates our secular society. At Christmas, cards and manger scenes display it, planetariums feature special presentations on it, and department stores use it in their advertising. Many websites are devoted to it. Yet, anyone wishing to understand it better will have difficulty finding a good explanation of what the star was and what it means in its context. *The Star of Bethlehem: Science, History and Meaning* fills this need, and does so in an innovative way.

The book leads the modern reader on a voyage to ancient Babylon, Israel and Greece to learn how the people of these ancient lands understood stars, and how they sought to draw meaning from them. We discover from them that the Star of Bethlehem is to be found not in what we might think of as spectacular, but rather in what they saw as auspicious. Most significant for them were the complex motions of the moon and planets.

The Star of Bethlehem equips the modern reader to hear the story just as its first audience would have heard and understood it. It provides detail on how Matthew constructed his gospel, how first century people understood stars, the role of stars in the Bible, and most importantly how stars functioned in early Christianity's understanding of the mission of the Messiah. The book closes with a retelling of the story in modern terms.

To learn more about this book, read the chapter summaries or order an electronic copy, go to starofbethlehembook.com

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REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship Corner: The Many Roads to Sponsorship Success

By Wilma Lamb-Stewart, Leamington Area Ecumenical Refugee Committee

Wilma Lamb-Stewart is chair of the Leamington Area Ecumenical Refugee Committee (LAERC). In November 2018, as a panellist at the Canadian Council for Refugees fall consultation, she described the successes and challenges of refugee sponsorship in a smaller community, explaining how LAERC has been able to sustain interest and momentum over many years. The full transcript can be found at WeRespond.ca/LAERC.

The Leamington Area Ecumenical Refugee Committee (LAERC) was formed in 2005. An Anglican minister and a Mennonite medical doctor, while out golfing at a course along the north shore of Lake Erie, decided that instead of just talking about the terrible plight of refugees around the world, they would do something. They spoke to a group of local ministers and subsequently, seven churches, including Knox Presbyterian, in one of the southern-most towns in

Canada, each pledged a donation of \$5,000, chose a representative to serve on a committee and agreed to work together to sponsor one refugee family a year.

So far, we have sponsored 19 family groups—that's 84 people, babies to grandparents, plus 14 Canadian babies born here.

People like to help and feel they are doing something good so we easily get stoves and fridges, washers and dryers, dressers and beds and bedding, tables and chairs, couches and coffee tables, cutlery and china, clothing, etc. Local businesses loan us vans to pick up the families at the airport. A local dentist does the first assessment and any work needed for each new family, for free.

With hope of a bright future for their children, the newcomers become happy and healthy. They participate in community activities. They've developed their own worship services in the churches of the sponsors. One group has formed a choir and has musical groups that perform for fundraisers and to celebrate In-

ternational Women's Day. One has an active youth group with members aged 15 to 30. They attend LAERC events and donate generously to help the next arriving family.

One of the main challenges for LAERC, and for everyone sponsoring refugees, is housing. So far, we have been extremely lucky because the local funeral home had purchased a large, brick home beside their business, for future expansion, and has rented it to LAERC for \$400 a month. This has enabled us to sponsor larger families and they, in turn, have been able to save enough to buy a house. This arrangement will come to an end in 2019 and we are already realizing that there will be no housing in town for large families so we will have to limit our sponsoring to families with only two or three children. We would love to have a "LAERC House," but as yet haven't figured out how to achieve this goal.

The people we have sponsored are doing well here in Canada. Eighty per cent of the adults are employed full-time, all but four families have



LAERC volunteers and sponsored refugees gather at their 2018 Christmas party. PHOTO CREDIT: LAERC



LAERC volunteers share a meal with one of the refugee families they sponsored. PHOTO CREDIT: LAERC

purchased homes in various areas around town, all but the last family have purchased vehicles. Some have opened their own businesses and hired employees.

These successes have been a positive factor in the acceptance and integration of the newcomers. The townsfolk see the newcomers as people just like themselves—neighbours. Their kids go to the same school, play on the same team, ride the same bus. Their skin may be a different colour and they may wear

different clothes but they are friends.

For 14 years, we have had a core group of ten very involved, dedicated members who are always seeking ways to make life better for our newcomers. Over time, we have never had any difficulty recruiting new members. The churches have stayed very supportive, but members also come from the community. This is the advantage of a small town. Everyone knows about the LAERC group and that we help refugees and they want to be a part of it.

A Community of Support in Goderich

By Karen Bokma, PWS&D Communications Coordinator

For Knox Presbyterian Church in Goderich, Ont., refugee sponsorship has been a big part of their history. Their participation dates back to the 1970s, with the arrival of the Vietnamese boat people.

But the more recent iteration of refugee sponsorship started in 2015. It began, as it did for many other congregations, with the photo of a young Syrian boy lying dead on a beach.

Moved by the tragic image, the Rev. Ken Knight, a retired minister living in Goderich, offered the financial support necessary to bring a refugee family to Canada. Though the money was available, a group of volunteers was needed to come together to facilitate the process.

At that time, support was high in communities across the country to sponsor Syrian refugees, and Goderich

was no different. Knox's sponsorship committee decided that they would support the sponsorship of not one but two families.

To accomplish this, it was important to the congregation to involve the entire community in the process. They advertised the initiative throughout Goderich. An initial community meeting brought together 50 people interested in sponsoring a family to Canada. Many continue to be involved to this day.

The community then came together to raise the necessary resources. Children's music performer Fred Penner held a concert where a free-will offering was taken. An elegant Middle Eastern dinner was catered by a member of the organizing committee. Food and clothing drives ensured necessary supplies would be available for the families once they arrived in Canada.

While raising the necessary funds took a lot of work, having enough



Volunteers from the Knox sponsoring group at the celebration thrown by the Syrian families on Mother's Day.



The Alali family, who were sponsored by Knox Presbyterian Church in Goderich, arrived in Canada in 2017.

time was often a greater challenge. As Debi Vanderstelt, lead coordinator for the Knox sponsorship group, shares, "It's a lot more work than you think it's going to be!"

While the volume of work was high, it was incredibly rewarding.



Ken Knight with the first family sponsored by Knox.

"The families are amazing. We have received so much hospitality from them," says Debi. "Smiles were always in abundance, even when things weren't easy."

Since 2015, Knox has sponsored two families. In January 2016, a

family of three arrived and in 2017, a family of seven. All of the families are doing well in Canada.

General Coach, a local business that manufactures trailers and mobile homes, has provided jobs for a large number of Syrian refugees, including those sponsored by Knox. One of the families has been able to purchase a home in Goderich.

None of this would have been possible without the community of volunteers who came together—the sponsoring group at Knox, volunteer drivers who brought the sponsored families where they needed to go, people who spent time playing with the children, retired teachers who helped with tutoring, and a congregation that provided prayers and financial support.

The community remains passionate about sponsorship. Knox continues to pursue opportunities to sponsor the relatives of the families who have already arrived.

Ultimately, for Debi, the most rewarding aspect is knowing what a difference the community has made. "We know that we have given these families a good start in Canada."

GATHERINGS



On Saturday, Oct. 20, the Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald spoke to an attentive audience who had gathered as part of the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario meeting held at Knox Presbyterian Church in Vankleek Hill, Ont., to hear him speak on the book he co-authored with Brian Clarke entitled *Leaving Christianity*. The group was keen to hear the insights Dr. Macdonald had gleaned from his research and to brainstorm ideas on how to be effective churches in the new reality, including ways to move forward making use of this information. Many questions were asked and answered, several round-table discussions ensued and many “ah-ha!” moments were noted. PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID MCGILVEEN PHOTOGRAPHY



St. James Presbyterian Church in Forest, Ont., celebrated 150 years of Christian worship during 2018. Not content with a single occasion, it was decided to celebrate throughout the year. The congregation rose to the challenge with virtually all groups and many individuals sponsoring projects; and there ended up being 24 different events, including concerts, special speakers, a commissioned hymn, a peace garden, monthly historical displays, a trivia night, a cookbook, fashion show, car rally and supporting a local school breakfast program. One of the highlights of the year was having the Moderator of the PCC, the Rev. Daniel Cho, as guest speaker for the Anniversary service in October, along with his lovely wife. It was a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate, both within the church and to the community at large, our pride in and love for St. James as we look toward the future.



On Dec. 12, Knox Presbyterian Church in Victoria, B.C., hosted their sixth annual Christmas concert in support of PWS&D projects improving food security in vulnerable countries. A selection of Christmas carols performed by the congregation's own A Balm In Gilead Band brought in just \$1,300 for PWS&D.



Sharing the light of Christ with others, the children at Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary, spent time before each Sunday school class passing around an offering plate to collect money for PWS&D. Together, the group raised \$510—enough to deliver fruit trees, an important source of nourishment, to about nine hungry families in Guatemala.



From Sept. 19 to 26, the Ontario Presbyterian Choir continued its ministry of music by visiting congregations throughout north central Ontario, touching the hearts of many. One choir member reflected: “The Holy Spirit was present in our singing in a way that perhaps hasn’t happened so strongly in the past, and that that was very much felt by the congregations we sang in.”

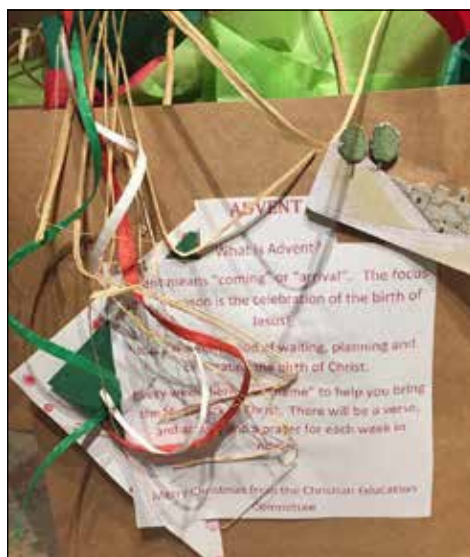


The youth of First Presbyterian Church in Pictou, N.S., led a wonderful, reflective Advent Vespers service focused on Mary's story, followed by a time of fellowship where Santa showed up. Pictured with Santa are Luke MacDonald, Rachel Rowan, Klorissa Farnsworth, Kelli MacDonald, Molly Rowan, Myles Farnsworth, Sadie LeBlanc and Riley Boulter.

GATHERINGS



The children at Knox Presbyterian Church in Vankleek Hill, Ont., explored how Jesus rescues us through life's storms during a shipwreck-themed Vacation Bible School last summer. Following Jesus' example, the children raised \$1,025 for their mission project in support of PWS&D's Sunday School Challenge, Farming for the Future, which helps families in rural Guatemala grow more and better food to eat.



The Christian Education committee recognized that families want to stay connected with Paulin Memorial Presbyterian Church in Windsor, Ont., but can't always make it to church on Sundays. Heather, Beth, Lisa and Carla put together Advent "take out" Sunday School bags filled with crafts, prayers and family activities to prepare for Christmas.



Knox Presbyterian Church in Ottawa was pleased to host the Moderator of the PCC, the Rev. Daniel Cho, at worship on Sunday, Jan. 20, to help celebrate their 175th year of ministry. The event kicks off a year-long observance of this special milestone. Under the spiritual leadership of the Rev. Jim Pot, the congregation continues to be involved in their downtown community through their strong witness and faithful service. Pictured above, top photo, are (left to right) Debbie Campbell, the Rev. Jim Pot, Esther Cho, the Rev. Daniel Cho, Grace Pot, the Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock, Hugh Dimock.



Stamford Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont., celebrated their 235th anniversary on January 27, 2019. Originally, the congregation consisted of about 10 pioneer families meeting together in one another's homes. Over the years, Stamford Presbyterian has been used not only as a place of worship but also as a school and a hospital, and it has been through the war of 1812. The congregation has allowed generations of people to gather to hear the Word of God, sing praises, share a meal and laugh together. The anniversary was marked by a visit from the moderator, the Rev. Daniel Cho, and his wife, Esther. Following the service was a lunch and time for fellowship and fun. Pictured above are the Revs. Anita Van Nest and Daniel Cho during children's time discussing how God knits us all together as individuals and also together as a community, past, present and future.



The Christmas services at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ajax, Ont., involved many activities to celebrate the season, such as carols, a Christmas concert, a special family service and communion by candlelight.



The Congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Olds, Alta., celebrated their 125th Anniversary of witness and mission on June 24, 2018. The Rev. Fiona (Wilkinson) Swanson, a former minister of the congregation, preached at the service.

GATHERINGS



On the last Sunday in November, the congregation of Knox Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Ont., gathers in our Fellowship Hall after worship service for the Annual Gingerbread House Making Family Event. All the houses are pre-made for the children by event organizers Deb Settle and Sharon McEdwards. The children decorate them with their parents and grandparents and take them home afterwards. Every year the children look forward to this popular event.



The Thistle Club of St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L., is blessed to have two of the club's founding members on its roll where they have been since the club was formed in 1956. Louise Baird (seated left) and Betty Baird-Cross (seated right) both recently celebrated their 85th birthdays. Their fellow club members celebrated with them at the January meeting. Standing (from left) are Margaret Scott, Eleanor Scott, Christine Burden, Debbie Hynes, Jessie Penney, Heather Saunders and Gail Arnold. Missing from the photo are Sheila Baird, Donna Rice and Lynne Allan.



David's Place is a weekly outreach mission of Saint David's Presbyterian Church offering food and fellowship to the under-resourced of Halifax, N.S. Volunteers happily wear their new David's Place t-shirts, a Christmas gift from one of our group. Kneeling, Phyllis Morrison. (Left to right) Mary Lou Crowell, Valerie Macdonald, Gwen Larsen, Gary Smith, Barb Smith, Nancy Tindall, Roderick Macdonald, Helen Fraser, Interim moderator the Rev. Iona MacLean, Mike McPhee, Johannah Roberts.



Halifax's Saint David's Presbyterian Church hosts a weekly drop-in and luncheon for about 50 guests, and each year holds a Christmas dinner for their guests. We provided a Christmas dinner along with gifts and groceries into the new year for eight families in Halifax. This year, our stockings overflowed, and we offered treats in gift bags. At the gift-wrapping party, Gary Smith won a prize for the most innovative wrapping and Phyllis Morrison won for best costume. Pictured above, Nancy Tindall and Phyllis Morrison stuff gift bags, and Clerk of Session Valerie Macdonald and members Amy Minnikin, Paula Minnikin, and Nicole Watkins Campbell celebrate the end of the wrapping party. Paula and Amy lead the project each year.



Claude Presbyterian Church is a small congregation located in Caledon, Ont. This fall we celebrated our 175th anniversary. Looking for something simple to do, we decided to collect warm socks for Evangel Hall and set 175 pair as our target. Folks outside of the congregation joined in, including Marnie and Michel Rogers, owners of the Inglewood Village Store, who set up a box in the store to receive socks from their customers. It wasn't long before over 500 pair of socks had been donated to this project. In the attached picture, the children of the Claude Sunday School are seen showing some of the socks.



The Rev. Kenn Stright, former minister at Saint David's Presbyterian Church in Halifax, and his wife, the Rev. Jeanne Stright, spent two weeks in October as guests of Zolozolo Presbyterian Church in Mzuzu, Malawi. In 1998, Kenn met Mwawi Chilongozi at a World Council of Churches Assembly in Zimbabwe, and they have been friends ever since. In the meantime, Mwawi was ordained as a minister and is now the pastor of the Zolozolo church. The Rev. Chilongozi completed a master's in theology at Stellenbosch University in 2017, supported by the PCC.

GATHERINGS



At a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon Buffet for staff at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, Ont. in December, Sara and David Robertson enjoyed the desserts prepared by Lori and Crieff Hills kitchen staff.



Called to respond to those trapped in cycles of hunger, displacement and distress in South Sudan, the members of St. Columba Presbyterian Church in Belleville, Ont., raised funds to improve water, sanitation and hygiene in conflict regions. During Advent, children and their families from the congregation put a coin in a bucket each time they used clean water—either to brush their teeth or wash dishes. By Christmas, members of the congregation had filled their buckets, raising over \$2,200 for PWS&DI.



West Toronto Presbytery had two celebrations recently. At the December 2018 presbytery meeting (held at Weston Presbyterian Church) we installed the Rev. Fred Stewart as General Presbyter. He is responsible for working with and encouraging congregations toward health and vitality. Also, this fall we have had—we think for the first time in the PCC—co-moderators. Both are elders; Nana Adwoa Asare (Ghanaian Presbyterian Church) and Janet Brewer (Runnymede Presbyterian Church). In the photo (left to right) is Nana Adwoa Asare, the Rev. Fred Stewart and Janet Brewer.



In recognition of World Food Day last Oct. 16, the Sunday school class at Stamford Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont., helped prepare a soup lunch in support of PWS&DI projects to combat global hunger. At \$5 per meal—complete with homemade biscuits and freshly churned butter—the group raised \$250 for PWS&DI. “The smiles on our young people’s faces was priceless!” said the Rev. Anita Van Nest. “They asked, ‘When can we do this again?’”



Carols at the Kirk is an annual ecumenical event, where all five churches in the town of Pictou, N.S., come together for worship and fellowship. The churches that take part include First Presbyterian Church and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. The most recent event took place on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 25. Each church’s choir performed several pieces with all choirs coming together for a combined effort in the finale. Approximately 350 people turned out for the evening. Nearly \$1,500 was raised through a free-will offering to support a local charity. It was an event of AWE-some proportions where God’s presence was profound!



Jan. 13 was a day of celebration at St. David’s Presbyterian Church in Campbellville, Ont. We honoured the 95th birthday of long-time member Corrien Sytsma with cake. Corrine Colling, Board of Managers Convener, and Brad Boehmer, Clerk of Session, ceremonially burnt the mortgage for our addition. All this as 2019 marks our 150th year serving our community.



The congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Regina had a Manger Scene Photo Booth at our Annual Advent Party. People were invited to be part of the manger scene, and costumes were provided for those who wanted to be “authentic.” It was a lot of fun and, as you can see, folks got right into it!

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

A Responsibility to Better Care for God's Created World

By Andrea Perrett,
PWS&D Committee Member

In November 2018, Andrea Perrett—PWS&D committee member and lay missionary at West Point Grey Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, B.C.—joined Kristen Winters, PWS&D's Africa program coordinator, and Anna Muir, PWS&D's communications assistant, on a monitoring and evaluation trip to Malawi.

As I was preparing for my trip to Malawi, the 18th lowest ranked country on the Human Development Index, one of the items on my to-do list was to mentally prepare myself to be challenged with my own relative wealth and privilege.

I had expected that I would be faced with a rich, young, ruler moment where I would be convicted to sell all my belongings and donate the money to the poor.

During the trip, I definitely was challenged by the level of systemic poverty in Malawi. However, it turns out that the area I found most challenging was my responsibility as a Christian to better care for God's created world.

During my time in Malawi, I was surprised by how frequently people talked about climate change. Of course, climate change is an issue

that we love to talk about in Canada. There is hardly a day where the environment does not make the news, and as individuals, we do our part to reduce our own impact.

However, for the majority of Canadians, climate change is not something that overtly affects our daily lives. In Malawi, it can really be a life-and-death situation.

During the three weeks that I spent in Malawi with PWS&D, the topic of climate change came up in a variety of situations.

For example, the youth clubs that we visited, which help teach adolescents about sexual and reproductive health, integrated messages about caring for the earth into their programs.

Advertisements on the radio educated people about the effects of climate change, and communities would tell us how climate shocks, such as droughts or floods, were occurring with increasing frequency and severity.

With 80 per cent of people in Malawi farming, making the most of their crops is essential. Reduced yields due to droughts or floods due to climate change can make the lives of already vulnerable people even more difficult.

While climate change is a big issue, throughout the trip, I also saw hope that things can change.

After using the same farming methods for decades, Malawians are willing to try new techniques to reduce their environmental impacts and improve their own tolerance to the effects of climate change.

One of the initiatives that PWS&D supports with members of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank is conservation agriculture, a no-till and low-input method of farming that helps farmers revitalize soil and increase their yields. This method helps crops survive volatile conditions and withstand environmental impacts.

During the trip, I saw farmers use conservation agriculture and reduce their own impact. One way they did this was by making their own fertilizer using locally available materials, instead of relying on commercial fertilizer.

I also met farmers who learned to improve soil conditions by growing a mix of crops, such as legumes with their maize, to help return nitrogen to the soil.

Many farmers also showed us how using mulch as ground cover helps reduce soil erosion and ensure fewer nutrients are leached from the soil.

All of these techniques lead to improved crop yields, which means families can grow enough food to eat and have a more sustainable food



In Lasha village, a lead farmer from a PWS&D-supported self-help group gives a conservation agriculture demonstration.



With her grandchildren in tow, Annie Nyungwe from Mwentitanga II village, outside of Karonga, Malawi, presents her mulch-covered field.



Andrea Perrett and Kristen Winters visit the village of Kaluhoro, Malawi, near Ekwendeni.

source.

Since returning to Canada, I have been more aware of my own impact on the environment. While I might not be experiencing the immediate effect, having seen how climate change impacts the most vulnerable, I am motivated to do even more to reduce my impact on the environment and take better care of God's creation.

Climate justice is a key pillar of the new ACT Alliance Global Strategy and will be an increased focus of work for PWS&D. Additionally, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, with the support of the Government of Canada, aims to have 50,000 farmers using conservation agriculture in Africa in the next two years.

Igniting the Power of Women and Girls to Decide Their Futures

By Anna Muir, PWS&D
Communications Assistant

International Women's Day is observed each year on March 8. As well as a day to celebrate the accomplishments of women around the world, it is a reminder of the role we have to play to ensure a future filled with hope and equal opportunity for women and girls.

Women's empowerment is a driving force behind much of PWS&D's programs. For a more sustainable, compassionate and just world, all people—women and men—need to be empowered to make the world a better place.

Through PWS&D, our church has helped women in vulnerable commu-

nities go to school, achieve economic independence, access prenatal care and advocate for their rights.

Still, there is much to be done. A significant challenge that remains for women and girls, especially in poor communities, is access to information and services for reproductive health rights.

This is a significant issue in many parts of India, where early marriage is a common practice. Girls forced into early marriages are taken out of school and made vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections and early pregnancy. In Bihar, one of the poorest states in India, PWS&D is working to raise awareness of sexual and reproductive health and provide women and girls with a network of support,

empowering them to decide their own futures.

This support is helping girls like Poonam. At just 13 years old, she learned that her parents had arranged for her to be married in a few months.

At a PWS&D-supported information session that addresses issues of gender and sexual and reproductive rights in her village, Poonam shared her worries about her marriage with the session leader, Meera.

The following day, Meera arranged to meet with Poonam's family to teach them about the negative impacts of early marriage.

Because of the information Meera shared, Poonam's mother and father now understand how important it is for their daughter to stay in school, so



PWS&D is working to raise awareness of sexual and reproductive health and provide women and girls with a network of support, so they can decide their own future.

she can grow up as her own young woman, and not only as a wife and mother.

The wedding has been postponed, and a joyful Poonam is completing her schooling.

It is proven time and again that empowering women helps improve economic growth and development—part of this empowerment must be the ability to access health services and make decisions about their bodies.

Together, we are ensuring women and girls everywhere are empowered to break down barriers to equality and access what they need to im-



In India, PWS&D is working to ensure health, education and safety for women and girls.

prove their lives and the lives of those around them—not just on International Women's Day, but every day.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Partner Spotlight

By Anna Muir,
PWS&D Communications Assistant

"I more than love my work—it's my passion and my mission."

Cantave Jean-Baptiste lives and breathes his work at Partenariat pour le Développement Local (PDL)—a Haitian organization he established in 2009 and now leads as executive director. Through programs that fight hunger, illness and injustice in Haiti, PDL is helping communities improve their well-being and take control of their sustainable development.

PWS&D works with local partners in Haiti to address malnutrition and gender-based violence and help farmers build resilience to climate change. In a recent partnership with PDL through membership in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWS&D is supporting a three-year project help-

ing 2,500 farmers grow more and better food to feed their families and communities through sustainable agriculture practices.

What was it like growing up in rural Haiti?

My father was in charge of a small parish in our village, so we weren't poor. But in our remote village, there were no schools. I am one of eight children, and none of us could go to school. But when I was nine, my father advocated to build a school in our community. He got the land, got help to build the school and then they got a teacher. This is where I began my education. I was able to go to high school, and after that, I studied agronomy at university.

What is a typical day at work like?

It's crazy. I work day and night, seven days a week. I am a driver, program coordinator, proposal writer and director. But when I am in the field, I am a technician working directly with the farmers—that's my favourite part. It feels really good to sit down with a

group of farmers and talk about their life. I like to be in their environment, understanding the way they cope with deforestation, a lack of water and their economic environment. Since forming this organization, I can better understand the life of a farming family.

You're very passionate about your work. What keeps you motivated?

My family was fortunate. We could access food. We could go to school. I want to share my gifts and help others. I am motivated when I've helped someone discover that they have the ability to earn a living, produce their own food, and become actors in their own lives and leaders in their communities. When you have a leader, you can know the important work will continue.

Why is it so important to continue support for this project?

It's important to help communities in Haiti understand that it is not the job of outside organizations to change their situation, it is their job. We at PDL and PWS&D can help start the



Cantave Jean-Baptiste on Parliament Hill with Minister for International Development Marie-Claude Bibeau.

process by giving people knowledge and confidence that they can make a difference. When I go into the field and ask a farmer what they think about a situation, they are surprised, because they are so rarely asked. They don't have a voice in their future. Through this work, we are helping marginalized people find their voice.

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

I like to read, practice my spirituality and watch tennis, soccer and basketball.



PDL founder Cantave Jean-Baptiste has spent years working with farmers in rural Haiti.

Partnering for Success

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

When I think of partnership, there is one strong principle that comes to mind—one that I learned from Bishop Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop. That principle is the Great Law of Life which, simply stated, is that "all of life is responsible to the rest of life." While this Great Law applies strongly to caring for the integrity of Creation, for me it also relates well to the concept of partnership. I am responsible to care for you as much as you are responsible to care for me. This is the mutuality that we aim to achieve in partnership relations.

One of PWS&D's strengths lies in

its partnership model. PWS&D does not have offices or staff of its own overseas but works with like-minded partners to achieve our mission and to realize our vision of a more sustainable, compassionate and just world.

While the inequality in privileges and control over financial resources can make this quite challenging at times, we actively seek to level the playing field to learn from one another.

One powerful way that PWS&D does this is by including partners as integral members on its governing committee. Over the last five years we have had partners from Haiti, Ghana, Guatemala, Pakistan, Nicaragua and Malawi on our committee.

They have voting rights and help to develop strong policies and practices for PWS&D. Moreover, they speak in churches and share their stories so that Presbyterians in Canada can hear first-hand how their work is making a difference.

I am often asked how we choose the partners and places where we work overseas. The answer lies in our church's history but also in strategic alliances developed over the years. Most of our partners are either church-based or led by Christians who are motivated by the Gospel to reach out to "the least of these" in order to help them have dignified lives.

Some collaborators are the development and relief departments of partner churches, while others may be Christian councils. Some partners



Staff members from PWS&D partner CEPAD speak with agriculture promoters in rural Nicaragua.

may be secular organizations driven by the same principles and a common vision, such as our partners in Haiti.

Most importantly, our partners are chosen because they reach out to those in need without regard for their religious affiliation, ethnic background, political opinions, gender, age or any other factor that could lead to discrimination.

PWS&D chooses to work with partner organizations that have a broad reach and can adapt to changing circumstances. Working in a partnership model instead of running our own operations in the field results in significant efficiencies and strengthens local institutions. A partner may work in some communities for a few years, achieve great progress, and assess the needs in other communities to begin new programs. This allows us to serve new communities while working with the same partners.

Last fall at the ACT Alliance's General Assembly I met with some of our partners from Nicaragua, Malawi, Ghana, Pakistan and India. As partners we sit together at the same global tables in a common spirit of service in the light of the Gospel.

Water and Sanitation Project Saves Lives in South Sudan

By Karen Bokma, PWS&D
Communications Coordinator

In the world's youngest country, years of civil unrest have displaced large segments of the population. The United Nations estimates that there are 1.75 million internally displaced people (IDP) in South Sudan.

As the conflict enters its fifth year, the humanitarian crisis is only getting worse. Ongoing violence and sustained economic decline have left people with less ability to weather threats to their health, safety and livelihoods.

The displacement of such large groups of people has led to high prev-

alence of waterborne disease due to poor and unequal access to safe water and sanitation services.

In response, PWS&D is implementing a water and sanitation project through fellow ACT Alliance member, Norwegian Church Aid. Working with those who have been displaced, as well as the vulnerable communities who are hosting them, the project will support the elderly, child-headed homes, pregnant and lactating mothers, people with disabilities and extremely poor individuals.

To improve the quality and access to safe drinking water, 20 existing water points will be repaired so they are usable. Communities will also receive



In South Sudan, where conflict has been ongoing for five years, accessing water can often be dangerous for women and girls. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY

support and training on hygiene and sanitation issues, including how to help prevent the spread of waterborne disease.

Widespread illness is just one of the many consequences of ongoing conflict. Gender-based violence is also an issue of great concern. In South Sudan there has been a serious escalation of violence against women—ranging from rape to demands of sex for food and the increased prevalence of child marriage.

These risks can be exacerbated particularly when it comes to accessing water and sanitation services. As such, gender-based violence prevention has been integrated as an impor-

tant component of PWS&D's water and sanitation project.

By placing water and sanitation points in areas that are safer and more accessible to women, the project is helping to decrease gender-based violence. Women are involved in the planning and implementation of the project—allowing them to advocate for themselves.

Women of reproductive age will also receive targeted hygiene kits with washable sanitary pads, underwear, soap and other sanitary equipment to ensure that they have the supplies they need when menstruating, mitigating the need to have to go to potentially unsafe areas to access supplies.

NEWS

New Beginnings: A Congregation's Experience

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

"What is God calling our congregation to do and be in this time and in this place?"

This question is posed by *New Beginnings*, a pilot project of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in which the Presbyterian Church of Saint David in Halifax has been participating since March 2018. *New Beginnings* is a process of prayer, study, conversation and discernment. Faced with a rapidly changing downtown environment, a 19th century building in need of repair, unexpected financial challenges and a generally aging congregation, Saint David's is at a crossroads. We are grateful for the opportunity to engage in this important reflection on who we are and where God is leading us.

Saint David's has a history of generosity and commitment to mission. Every Friday morning the church is home to David's Place, an outreach ministry to as many as 70 people in need of a good meal, companionship and some food bank support. There is also the annual Christmas families project that provides not only Christmas gifts and a Christmas meal, but groceries through the holidays and needed items like carpenter's tools to help families get back on their feet. We work ecumenically in support of the Out of the Cold Shelter and Sunday Suppers, which has provided more than 25 years of meals to Halifax's vulnerable. We also have a growing music ministry in worship for which we provide space for concerts that draw in people from the community.

The congregation dates from 1925 when it purchased the current 1860s building from the Methodists. A hall was later added. Saint David's has recently entered into a land-lease development for a residential/commercial building on the property that used to house the church hall, offices and meeting rooms. When the construction is completed, Saint David's will have office space and washroom facilities in the new building. The sanctuary has been renovated to provide some of the meeting/fellowship space lost with the hall.

New Beginnings at Saint David's began with Appreciative Inquiry sessions in March, 2018. People were excited to recall and celebrate our strengths and joys. We then moved through the phases of Assessment, Facilitator Training and Small Group Meetings. Five small groups met through May and June, exploring four themes: what makes a vital congregation, assessing the congregation and its neighbourhood, what it means to



(Left to right) Davida Mackay, Nicole Watkins Campbell, Gary Smith, Judi Henderson, Barbara MacKeigan, the Rev. Iona MacLean.

be driven by mission, and discerning future options. During the summer of 2018, we met in person and via phone with the Rev. Ian Fraser, our coach assigned to us by Canadian Ministries. He challenged us to pull together a report drawn from the small-group conversations. In September, at a special service and luncheon, we presented the report to the congregation for information and reflection. The outcome of this process was the realization that we need and desire to "re-vision" our mission in downtown Halifax.

Charts were posted in the meeting area outlining truth statements compiled by each small group in the categories of: Passion, What We Are Best At, and Resources. During the September lunch conversation, members of the congregation seemed to be in general agreement with the points outlined in the presentation. In a conversation with the congregation in October, the members gave specific agreement to proceed with the project.

The next phase is consultation with groups, agencies, business associations and other services in our neighbourhood to listen and learn where the needs and gaps are and how Saint David's can best be a caring, responsive, effective presence in downtown Halifax. With assistance from the Mission Fund of the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces, we engaged a facilitator from a local consulting group with experience in assisting community organizations, including churches. He helped us formulate the questions for dialogue with the community and facilitate the community meeting that took place in February 2019.

Through the series of meetings, conversations, emails and bulletin notices, the small-group leaders continue to ensure that the congregation is connected and updated about the project. This is not a quick process, but it is not meant to be quick. We are

learning much about our community and perhaps even more about ourselves as a congregation.

Over the next few months, with the leading of the Spirit, we pray the shape of our "re-visioned" mission will become clear so that we can take steps to implement it. The valuable *New Beginnings* experience of people talking together in small groups inspires the hope that some version of this pattern will continue in the congregation as we consult one another and gather

in times of worship, companionship, spiritual nurturing and development.

Through the process so far, there has been a kind of buzz in the congregation, combining an understandable sense of nervousness with a sense of eager anticipation. The conversations have been lively, passionate, creative and ultimately hopeful. We enjoy identifying what we are passionate about, what we are best at, and realizing the depth of resources we actually have in music, worship, facilities and gener-

ous people. We have been challenged to rethink how we live as a congregation in the community and to see ourselves as disciples of Jesus more than as members of an institution.

New Beginnings is designed and offered by Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation, a non-profit organization based in the United States that has worked with hundreds of congregations in transition in the U.S. and Canada. Canadian Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, in co-operation with Hope Partnership, is developing the process for our denomination. Since Saint David's was invited to be part of this pilot project, we are providing feedback to Canadian Ministries through Jen de Combe, Associate Secretary, and Hope Partnership through its facilitator, Rick Morse. We are grateful for their wisdom and support as we seek to discern what God is calling us to do and be, in this time and place.

The New Beginnings project has now moved out of the pilot phase and is available to congregations across the country. For more information, please contact Canadian Ministries by email to canadianministries@presbyterian.ca or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 290.

Remembering Those Who Served at Knox, Burlington

By Kathy Kelly, Knox Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Ont.

Knox Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Ont., has two different honour rolls decorating the back wall of the sanctuary. These honour rolls list the members and adherents from Knox who volunteered for active service with Canada's fighting forces during the First and Second World Wars.

If you take a close look at the scrolls, you will find that 30 members had enlisted for service in the First World War, while the second scroll has the names, neatly printed in calligraphy, listing the 60 men and women who were called to action.

The Second World War honour roll also has a number of stars affixed next to some of the names, designating those who died while serving Canada either in the war zone or as a result of afflictions suffered overseas.

There are eight stars on the scroll, but only seven of them had any affiliation with Knox. Extensive research has proven that James Creighton Watt was never part of the Knox congre-



gation, although his wife Grace and son James moved from Calgary and joined Knox a year after he died. While not affiliated with Knox, the staff of Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary have indicated that James C. Watt is on the honour roll of that church.

And so, while on Remembrance Day we read out the names of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, Knox created another visual monument to

honour those from this church whose names were read out on Remembrance Sunday. A series of wooden crosses, crafted by Gary Evans and Trevor White, bearing the names and ranks of each of those Knox servicemen and -women was placed along James Street so that not just those attending Knox, but all of Burlington, could pay tribute to those from this church who died in battle.

NEWS

A Bold Vision for Accessibility

By the Rev. John Read, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ancaster, Ont.

In January 2015, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ancaster, Ont., faced an important decision. A special committee that had been exploring options for making the church building accessible presented the congregation with a bold vision. The proposed renovation was a striking design from a local architectural firm that would resolve the many accessibility issues and present a fresh, welcoming face to the community.

The challenge was that it would cost \$1.3 million, meanwhile the congregation had just entered a pastoral vacancy. St. Andrew's isn't a big church either, with roughly 140 members and a modest annual budget. Yet they are rich in leaders with vision.

The session, under the leadership of their new interim moderator, the Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs, felt that God was calling them to take on this challenge. After several false starts toward accessibility in the previous

decade, they felt it was a case of "now or never."

Though there was certainly some trepidation, the congregation voted to step out in faith and move ahead with the project. A fundraising team was created and sought out the services of a professional fundraising consultant who determined that the project was feasible. In October 2015, the fundraising campaign was approved, and the project vision was rolled out: Opening Doors: Renew, Reach Out, Rejoice.

It was a few months after this that God brought me into the process. I was in the middle of discerning a call and accepted an offer to interview with St. Andrew's in December. The member of the search team who greeted me when I arrived was eager to highlight the concept drawings of the new accessible entrance, and I was impressed by the vision of the church leadership to take on a project of this scale during a vacancy.

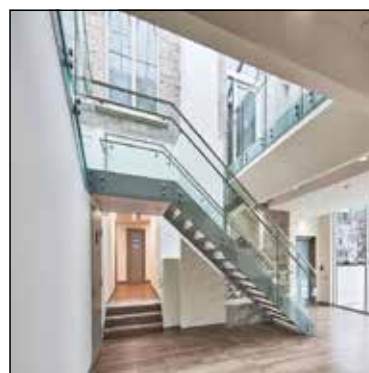
The Sunday I preached for the call in January 2016 was also the Sunday the fundraising campaign

was formally launched. At the end of April, the team announced that we had raised just over \$900,000 in gifts and pledges. The congregation was absolutely astonished, and so were the people we talked to at the *Stewards by Design* conference we attended a month later in May. By the end of the year that amount rose to \$1.1 million.

Then the real work began. Building upgrades that were needed before the main project could begin stretched over several months in 2016. After that came the process of securing loans from the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation and obtaining building permits. Construction on the new accessible lobby and elevator finally began in the summer of 2017.

But as with most construction projects, especially those involving old buildings, there were numerous complications along the way. At times it seemed like construction would never end, but the renovations were completed in November 2018. It was a long journey, but well worth it. A building that was tired, inaccessible and largely invisible to the local community is now fresh, welcoming and hard to miss.

St. Andrew's received a glowing write up in the *Hamilton Spectator*, and several hundred people came through the building during a community open house on the last



weekend of November. We've started seeing more first-time guests at worship, and our Christmas Eve service was the best attended in years.

We are very thankful for all the ways that God has blessed us through this journey. There was amazing leadership from the whole Access Project Team, but we are

especially grateful for the expertise, wisdom and tireless efforts of Team Leader, Evert Nieboer. We are also indebted to our Fundraising Chair, Randy Raphael, and the abounding generosity of the members and adherents of the congregation. We now have almost 95% of the total project cost of \$1.6 million covered by gifts and pledges.

And yet, the renewal of St. Andrew's has been about more than just a building project. Since 2016 we have invested in strengthening our music ministry and making our worship service more accessible to those new to our church. We have also begun running the Alpha Course to bring spiritual renewal to current members, and to open the door to people inviting their friends and neighbours into a conversation about life, faith and meaning.

Finally, we've heard God calling us to make the work of the Access Project that of the whole church. Our new vision is Opening Doors: To Jesus, To Our Neighbours, To Go Out into the World, and we've adopted a five-year strategy to enable us to Renew, Reach Out and Rejoice.

A step of faith taken four years ago has opened the door to God providing new opportunities in the life of St. Andrew's and we are hopeful for what the next stage of our journey will bring.

Summerside Celebrates New Church Building and Mortgage-Free Status

By Al MacIntyre, Finance and Property Chairperson, Summerside Presbyterian Church in P.E.I.

Our church is now mortgage-free. Faith in our future, generosity and hard work have brought us here.

Thanksgiving Sunday, 2018, marked the seventh anniversary of the first service held in our beautiful new church. Many of you will recall the challenges we faced as we began the process. First of all was a series of congregational meetings where the decision was made to replace our existing church building with a new structure. Committees were struck with the goals of exploring a new design as well as financing and funding options. These two processes were probably the most difficult and time-



consuming of all.

Once the final design was approved by the congregation, we also had to make a major commitment to

fund the \$1.4 million project. Looking back, there certainly was a tremendous amount of faith and optimism displayed by many people, both past

and present, who strongly believed in the future of Summerside Presbyterian Church. With little trepidation, all available resources both in cash assets and real property were committed to the project. Even with this commitment, however, additional funding was going to be necessary. A mortgage of \$240,000 had to be secured in order to complete the project. It took the combined efforts of many, many people who pledged additional financial support to make our new church a reality.

It is with a great sense of gratitude, therefore, that we announce the final payment on our church building was made recently. We are now mortgage-free!

To celebrate this truly amazing accomplishment in the span of just



The Rev. Brad Blaikie (left) and Bill Collier, Presbyterian Church Building Corporation.

seven years, a special service and fellowship time was held. Members of the congregation were delighted to have Bill Collier, General Manager, Presbyterian Church Building Corporation, bring greetings from the PCC and to cut the cake! What a great journey!

NEWS

Environmental Team Embraces Garden Program

By the Rev. Stephen Brown and Nicole Flynnne, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Tweed, Ont.

Readers may recognize Nicole, a young woman in our congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Tweed, Ont., and a key player in our garden program. Her smiling face shines out at you from the *Presbyterians Sharing* posters distributed last year. Nicole was posing with Dr. Cindy Blackstock who had just won the Cutting Edge of Mission Award at the 2017 General Assembly.

I am excited about our garden program. To many larger churches that have had garden programs this may seem like small steps, but for a quiet little rural church, this process has been huge.

We began with a small group of environmentally minded people getting together to brainstorm ideas for our church and our greater community to better integrate with God's creation. They did some great work and when Nicole and her mother, Kathy, joined in it blossomed even further. We realized that we had a congregation of gardeners within a farming culture. We knew we did not have the age or critical

mass in the congregation to take on some traditional projects, but this we could do—so we dipped a toe in the water and it was a massive success. We got a great response from our community in terms of beautifying our main street, but the thing we were surprised to realize is that we could take a bite out of food insecurity and the loneliness experienced by seniors in our community by expanding something that felt so natural.

Now our Environmental Team is beginning to look at and engage with other justice issues—especially those surrounding Indigenous truth and reconciliation. It has been incredible to see it all come together and I very much look forward to seeing what God has in store for us next year. I hope the message you take away is that God gives us all gifts—the trick is valuing them and listening for what God wants us to do with them. Without further ado, Nicole:

St. Andrew's Tweed has a pollinator and vegetable garden in front of the church. The garden reflects the inside of our church...on the outside. It shows what is happening in the church and brings it out. The garden is organized, neat and tidy with lots



Nicole Flynnne in her St. Andrew's Environmental Team t-shirt.

of colour, showing what the people are like in the church. The garden reflects God's love in the beauty of the colours and the gracefulness of the flowers and pollinators who dance around.

The garden is still in progress; we need a place for people to sit and ponder. We want the garden to be a peaceful place. We also plan for the garden to be accessible and accepting, open to all—a place where the community can gather.

A group of people from the congregation created an Environmental Team out of their concern for God's Creation. The object is to help people understand environmental issues and offer suggestions for people to try at

home. One of the projects was to create a Little Lending Library, where people from the community are invited to take a book or leave a book as they desire. The Environmental Team also hosts Worship in Nature and low-environmental-impact events, such as a potluck games night at the church.

During a monthly meeting, a discussion occurred about the grass area on the church grounds. Some people from the church were talking about increasing our garden to spruce things up. The team wanted to help more than just adding colour, they wanted to make the garden a useful resource for the whole community. The team planned a pollina-

tor and vegetable garden, one that offered plants for the pollinator species to enjoy as well as vegetables for distribution in the community.

A Heart Garden was created to demonstrate our active involvement in reconciliation with Indigenous people. We plan to put wooden painted hearts throughout the garden to remember the Indigenous people who were lost, but not forgotten, in the residential schools.

Planning, planting and preparing the garden was a lot of fun. We got to know each other better and, even though we are a variety of ages, we shared our abilities and put them into action to demonstrate our uniqueness within the garden.

A Creative Approach to Healing & Reconciliation

By the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Gaver, Presbytery Ministry Animator, Presbyteries of Ottawa and Seaway-Glengarry

Last spring, I met with the Rev. Laurie McKnight, minister of St. Paul's-Eastern United Church in Ottawa, and Patrick Wilmot, After School Program Coordinator for Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, in order to organize a different type of Healing & Reconciliation initiative. Instead of beginning with a discussion of resi-

dential schools, we decided to start by simply learning more about each other and doing things together.

Our first event took place on June 2, 2018, at Knox Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. The topic was Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples: Journeying Together—Celebrating Differences. We looked at some misconceptions that we tell about each other and learned about each other through our stories.

Our second event was Nov. 24:



Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples: Discovering Our Symbols of Life. We began with Patrick sharing a First Nation's Mi'kmaq symbol that was important to him. He invited us to discover how we interact with one another by walking on this floor-sized symbol. Struggling to keep our balance, we had to rely on one another, hold on to one an-

other, and even isolate ourselves to give more space for others to come on-board. The exercise served as an ice breaker and also introduced us to the world of symbols and their meanings. After a short presentation on how these symbols impact us, we then broke into small groups to create a personal symbol that reflected what is most important to

us through painting, sculpting and journaling.

We're starting small—between 10 to 20 people have attended each event. Our next activity is planned for the spring, when we bring our symbols back to the group and create a huge mosaic that incorporates both Indigenous and non-Indigenous symbols in some way.

NEWS

Preparing for Christmas in Prince George



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

On Thursday before Christmas, members and friends of St. Giles' Presbyterian Church in Prince George, B.C., enjoyed our second annual Advent and Christmas "quiet reflection evening." This was the last of a series of Advent programs planned by local churches and offered to the community as an alternative to more "busy" activities leading up to Christmas. Our contribution was a family-friendly evening of self-guided prayer activities. Participants were invited to proceed at their own pace through a number of stations that focused on the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy, love, gift-giving and receiving, and our needy world.

We deliberately set a quiet mood. The lights were lowered; a TV screen showed a festive, flickering fireplace; the air was gently scented with simmering pots of Christmas spices. We removed most of the chairs from our sanctuary to make space for the centrepiece of the evening. We laid out a 20-foot square labyrinth containing five stopping points. At each point, an activity encouraged reflection on one of the themes. In the centre, the manger scene invited: "What can I give Him, poor as I am?" (A line from Christina Rossetti's poem, "In the Bleak Midwinter.") Participants were invited to leave a slip of paper before the manger, upon which they wrote a spiritual commitment they could make for the days ahead.

In addition, we set up tables with finger labyrinths, a place to sniff frankincense and myrrh, and an intercessions station. Our small lounge was set up as a Christmas story corner with seasonal books suitable for children and adults.

In our hall, participants could finish the evening by making a personalized ornament to take home as a gift for someone special. We set out hot spiced cider and cookies as an encourage-



ment to linger for conversation. Parents told us they appreciated the supportive atmosphere in which to model aspects of celebration other than presents and Santa Claus. Adults who came appreciated the opportunity for deeper conversation than is usually possible during after-worship coffee time. Because the evening was planned as part of an ecumenical effort, we all enjoyed the opportunity to visit with members of other congregations.

A New Nine Lessons and Carols Service

By the Rev. Katharine Michie

Back when my husband and I were young, beginning ministers, we planned the Christmas Eve services we had seen before: carols, scripture lessons, a sermon and a congregational candle-lighting ceremony. We quickly concluded this style of service did not meet the needs of many of those we welcomed on Christmas Eve. Parents of excited young children struggled to keep them calm, especially during the sermon. Passing the candle flame along the pews seemed hazardous, not just for children, but also for seniors with shaky hands. We ministers held our breaths, worrying that worship-



A child places a piece from the Nativity set.

pers would burn their hair or clothes! Then one of our members started to use portable oxygen. We needed to plan a new kind of worship. The service needed to engage all generations; to be welcoming to visitors, even those who do not normally go to church; and above all, it needed to be safe.

Years later, we still use those principles as we plan Christmas worship. We enjoy plenty of candles, all displayed at the front—away from easy reach. We sing the carols most likely to be known to visitors. We read Nine Lessons that explore the prophecies of the coming Messiah, the birth of Jesus and the meaning of his coming. In recent years, we have assembled a Nativity scene. As the pieces are placed, we reflect on the various pieces in three- or four-sentence "sound bites." Together, they add up to a short sermon on the meaning of Jesus' coming as Saviour. However, the sound bites are short enough for squirming children to manage while being thought-provoking for adults. (We hope!)

Recently, we have drawn from the style of Godly Play, the Sunday School curriculum developed by Jerome Berryman and Sonja M. Stewart. It is an extension of the insights first

revealed in Young Children and Worship. Berryman's lessons include what he calls "Wondering Questions." Our comments include reflective questions about the Christmas story, such as: "I wonder what went through Mary's mind just before she said yes to Gabriel," and "I wonder what it sounded like when the angels praised God on the Bethlehem hillside."

We were fortunate to have talented members of St. Giles makes us a wonderful (and large!) Nativity set from local pine. Each piece is sturdy for children to handle and polished to a silky sheen. As worshippers arrive, children and visitors are invited to choose a piece from a basket in the lobby. At the appropriate time, they bring them forward to place in pre-numbered positions in the scene. Our makers determined that each child should be able to have that special experience of worship. Therefore, they made us lots of pieces. There are shepherds and shepherd boys, as well as plenty of animals, including sheepdogs and even barn cats. As we helped the little ones place their pieces, it was moving to see the expressions on their faces. We saw joy, wonder, engagement—all the elements of true worship.



NEWS

HOPE Community Church: The Vision, Its Conception and Birth

By the Rev. Bernie McGale, HOPE Community Church in Welland, Ont.

On Oct. 29, 2018, it was announced to the world via newspaper, that Knox Presbyterian Church in Welland, Ont., had changed its name to HOPE Community Church. The name reflects the vision that the church's elders received from the Lord—HOPE: A House of Prayer for Everyone. It emphasizes that we are here for the community of Welland and Niagara.

This event just didn't happen overnight. It has been a 20-year process of seeing the Lord's vision, letting it be formed and then, at God's timing, letting it come forth.

The vision began on the first Sunday I preached at Knox as their newly inducted minister. That was Palm Sunday, and the text was the cleansing of the Temple in which Jesus declared "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56:7, Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17).

We firmly believed that this command to be a house of prayer was our calling. But what does that look like? Our first step was to become a praying session. The session has been praying together every week ever since. At first it was awkward, but with practice, patience and the presence of the Holy Spirit, we began to understand that we were engaged in listening prayer: listening to the voice, guidance and direction of Jesus as he built God's church. The biblical verse that guided us at

the time was John 5:19, when Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise." And how did Jesus know what the Father was doing? By listening to the Father. That is prayer.

At the same time, Knox had always been an evangelical congregation, emphasizing the command to make disciples. While we studied and explored scripture, we discovered that Jesus' ministry was shaped by prayer and driven by the Holy Spirit (as Jesus was praying in Jordan when the Holy Spirit came upon him in bodily form). This led to implementing a discipling focus of understanding to the work and person of the Holy Spirit, and the need for the receiving of the Holy Spirit in order to be effective witnesses to the Good News of Jesus (Acts 1:8). Tying this to prayer, our vision statement became: A house of prayer for everyone, everywhere, every day. Our purpose statement became: Pray (pray with hope), Care (care for those who need hope), Share (share the hope of Jesus), and our Mission Statement became: disciples making disciples.

We have four simple areas of ministry: Hope for You (focused on personal discipleship of love-learn-do), Hope for Everyone (focused on congregational ministry of pray-care-share), Hope for Welland/Niagara (focused on outreach and evangelism to make disciples) and Hope for the Nations (focused on



praying victory over the darkness in the world). The Lord has led us to re-focus our worship service in line with the House of Prayer concept that we saw in scripture: teaching (Luke 19), healing (Matthew 21), praise (Matthew 21). Our Sunday morning worship service focuses on Praising the Lord, Preaching the Word and Praying for Healing, Deliverance, Freedom and Victory.

A barrier we encountered was that of our church name. We had noticed over the years that "Knox Presbyterian Church" was a disconnect for some people. The name became a stumbling block. The Lord gave us guidance and direction that we needed to become HOPE Community Church: A House of Prayer for Everyone. The congregation voted in favour of this at a congregational meeting on Aug. 19, 2018, and the presbytery approved it on Sept. 19.

The unveiling of the name is the birth of a renewed identity in that it declares what we are: we are a peo-



The Rev. Bernie McGale.

ple of prayer who want to share Jesus Christ with the world around us, and the way we are going to do that is first through prayer, then by caring for them and then sharing the opportunity to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

I use the analogy of birth because the name is simply an description of what we are. When a child is born, the doctor or somebody says, "it's a boy" or "it's a girl." The Lord has said, as we are born again, "it's HOPE Community Church." Now the task of session is to discern from the Lord how the Spirit wants this "baby" to grow up in the knowledge of Jesus and become all that God wants us to be.

This has been a 20-year journey from conception to birth, and it has been both exciting and challenging.

But we hold to what Jesus said: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail." Jesus is, indeed, building God's church and that has given us much hope.

What has been essential in this journey is the commitment of the elders: committed to Jesus, committed to God's vision, committed to praying it into reality and committed to leading the people forward into its fullness in Christ Jesus. I am convinced that without the elders' support and engagement, none of this would have happened. We are a Presbyterian church, built upon the mission and mandate of Jesus and carried out by the elders.

To learn more about our congregation, please visit hope-community-church.org

Alexandra Johnston Appointed to the Order of Canada

Canada's Governor General, Julie Payette, recently made over 100 new appointments to the Order of Canada. It is a broad and diverse list that includes Canadian authors, Indigenous leaders, athletes, business leaders and theatre directors. Among those named to the level of officer of the Order of Canada (the second of three levels) is Presbyterian Alexandra "Sandy" F. Johnston.

Sandy grew up in Brantford, Ont.,

where her father, the Rev. Dr. G. Deane Johnston, was minister of Central Presbyterian Church. She received a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in 1964. The subject of her dissertation was English medieval religious drama. Her teaching career began at Queen's University in Kingston (1964–7). She then returned to Toronto and served as a professor of English at Victoria College until 2004 and was the first woman to serve as principal of

Victoria College from 1981 to 1991. In 1975, Sandy founded an international research editorial project called Records of Early English Drama that has been described as "one of the miracles of modern scholarship." The research has completely changed the scholarly understanding of English drama before Shakespeare. She is the editor or co-editor of six books and monographs.

Sandy was awarded with an hon-

orary Doctor of Laws degree by Queen's University in 1984, an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by the Presbyterian College in 1991 and an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Victoria University in 2014. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Sandy was nominated for Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2017, and she attends Rosedale Presbyterian Church in Toronto.



Presbyterian Alexandra "Sandy" Johnston was named to the Order of Canada.

NEWS

The Memorial Angel Service

By John Barrett,
Zion Presbyterian Church, P.E.I.

Twelve years ago, a group of interested members at Zion Church in Charlottetown approached the session about a special evening service that they wanted to develop and that continues today. The name of the program was the Memorial Angel Service.

During the time leading up to the service, members of the congregation and the community are invited to submit names of friends and family who are no longer in our presence. While not mandatory, most people submitting names also feel moved to make a donation to the church Memorial Fund. On the evening of the service a very tall, undecorated, beautifully lit Christmas tree is placed at the front of the sanctuary. Immediately prior to the service, those in

attendance pick up the “angels” that have been prepared for them with the name of those being remembered written on the angel itself.

Throughout the service, which consists of readings and special selections from the various church choirs, congregants are invited to come forward during the singing of each carol to place their angel on the tree. What develops is a program that includes not only the order of service but all the names of those being remembered as well as those who are remembering them. Additionally, all deceased elders of the congregation are remembered with angels that are placed by small (costumed) young angels from the congregation. By the conclusion of the service there are literally hundreds and hundreds of angels on the tree; a tree that serves as a wonderful memorial throughout the entire



Advent season.

Originally planned as a one-time event, the popularity of this moving and beautiful service has now continued for 12 years and, while it was never the intent, the service has contributed substantial revenue for the Memorial Fund, and some wonderful renovations to our church facility have taken place as a result.

If you would like more detailed information as to how to hold your own Memorial Angel Service, including an order of service and a copy of the program, please contact John Barrett, Clerk of Session, at john@veseys.com, who would be happy to help.



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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.

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

HOW TO SHARE?*

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

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

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



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NEWS

Celebrating 180 Years in Inverness



The congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Inverness, Que. PHOTO CREDIT: FLORA REID

By Sheilagh Brown

It was a beautiful autumn afternoon for celebrating 180 years of ministry in Inverness, Que. The occasion brought visitors to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church for whom Inverness remains near and dear to their hearts. To help us celebrate, the Rev. Barbara Fotheringham conducted a special service on Sept. 16.

Since 1982, we have been a shared

ministry of the Presbyterian Church and the United Church. A choir of community members—from Ste-Agathe, Thetford Mines, Kinnebar's Mills, Saint-Jacques-de-Leeds and Inverness—assisted with singing, while James Allen, Lise Bilodeau and David McBurney provided the music for the celebration.

A special guest was piper William Hives, accompanied by his wife, Morag. They are currently living in

Quebec City and William originates from Inverness, Scotland. William played the bagpipes before the service as visitors entered the church. His music was also greatly enjoyed at the reception hall afterwards.

The exterior of the church was renovated for the 175th anniversary and the interior is in the process of getting a makeover for its next anniversary. St. Andrew's celebrates every three weeks on Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

Vancouver School of Theology Honorary Degree Recipients

By Ian Sheh,
Vancouver School of Theology

The Vancouver School of Theology (VST) recently announced its 2019 honorary degree recipients. This prestigious degree is open to individuals who exemplify the values of VST, and who have made significant contributions through the integration of theology and practice of ministry in one or more areas of theological scholarship, ecumenical dialogue, the life and ministry of the Christian community, and interdisciplinary scholarship involving theology with other fields.

Dr. Kate Bowler of Duke University and Duke Divinity School is a leading researcher in the history of North American Christianity. Building on her research, Kate has authored several books, including *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel*, and *Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved*. Originally from Winnipeg, her work is impacted by the terrible irony as a scholar on name-it-claim-it Christianity to fall ill with stage-four cancer in her early 30s. As a frequent writer for the *New York Times* and podcast contributor, she addresses the most difficult questions of life. Her voice in these efforts is wise, funny, profoundly moving and compellingly Christian. Without seeking it, Kate has emerged as an essential evangelist for our day.

Trevor Ferguson is an elder in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, an educator at Concordia University (retired) and one of Canada's premier writers. He has received an exemplary critical reception at home and abroad. His novels examine the tragedies, joys and travail of human life, intersecting conflict and sexuality with themes of wonderment and faith. Among his works are *The River Burns* and *City of Ice*, the first of a crime series under the name John Farrow. He is also an acclaimed playwright with productions in Canada in French and English and in New York. In his work, the grammar of transgression and redemption form the crux of the story; in this way, he has been the witness to the gospel in the public sphere.

Douglas MacAdams, QC, ODNW (Order of the Diocese of New Westminster) has made various contributions to the life and ministry of the Anglican Church of Canada in parish-



Dr. Kate Bowler.



Trevor Ferguson.



Douglas MacAdams.

es, in the Diocese of New Westminster and throughout the Ecclesiastical Province of B.C. and Yukon Territory. Provincial Chancellor to three of the Archbishops of British Columbia and Yukon, Douglas has tackled delicate and contentious matters of church jurisdiction, property ownership and canon law. A lawyer since 1974 and Queen's Counsel since 2001, Douglas has focused on resolving disputes. At the foundation of Douglas's work, both in the church and in his legal practice, is his deep commitment to his faith and his seeking to express that faith day by day in the practicalities of life in the church and in the work of resolving disputes for clients.

Golden Rule Posters Circulated Worldwide

By Paul McKenna, Scarboro Missions, Toronto, Ont.

Scarboro Missions is a Canadian Roman Catholic Mission Society based out of Toronto that seeks to serve God through more contemporary mission paths. Their Golden Rule poster, which promotes interfaith dialogue, has gained international renown as an educational and interfaith resource. Over 2.5 million have been circulated worldwide.

The International Golden Rule Day takes place every year on April 5. To download copies of the poster, go to scarboromissions.ca/golden-rule.



NEWS

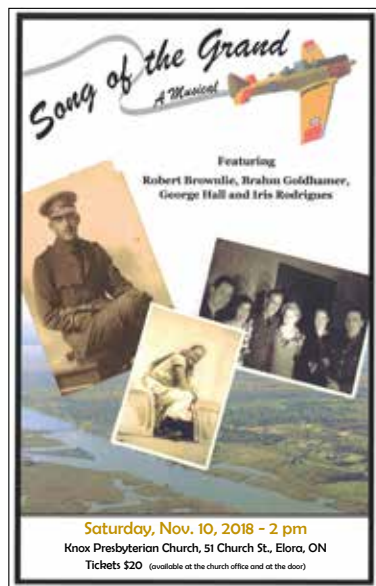
Reflecting on War in an Elora Sanctuary

By Ian Rankine, retired elder, Knox-Elora Presbyterian Church in Elora, Ont.

Song of the Grand, a story of love and war that happened along the banks of the Grand River during the Second World War, came to Knox-Elora Presbyterian Church in Elora, Ont., last year as part of our commemoration of the anniversary of the ending of the Great War of 1914–1918.

Every small town and great city has heard the same story told, with different names, perhaps, but with the same sacrifices. Look on any church wall and you will see the names— young men and women, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives—who paid the ultimate sacrifice so we can live in peace and love.

The musical tells the story of two friends: Michael, an RCAF pilot and David, a naval officer, who joined the Allied forces in Europe. They recently married their school sweethearts,



Joan and Mary, who are sisters.

Prior to the performance, a presentation—using photographs from the Wellington County Museum and Archives related to the story of war-time in Elora, Fergus and Salem during and after both the First and Second World Wars—told of the cenotaphs



The cast of *Song of the Grand*, (left to right): Bob Brownlie, narrator, Iris Rodrigues, soprano, George Hall, baritone, Susan Hall and Brahm Goldhamer, accompanist and vocals.

erected, legions established, letters sent and telegrams received, hospitals, schools and factories at war, and honours conferred posthumously.

While November is the traditional time to remember the war and the ex-

periences of those who served, surely reflecting on war and peace in our sanctuary in this era of perpetual war is appropriate at any time in our liturgical cycle. Remembering war, praying for peace, working for peace and aid-

ing war refugees need not be and is not restricted to one day or month of the year.

For more information about *Song of the Grand*, contact George Hall at songofthegrand@gmail.com

Ballot for Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly

Two names appear on the ballot for Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly: the **Rev. Amanda Currie**, minister at First Presbyterian Church in Regina, and the **Rev. James. T. Hurd**, minister at Parkwood Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. Ballots have been sent to presbyteries for members of presbytery to vote. The Committee to Advise the Moderator will count the ballots on April 1. To learn more about the nominees for moderator, including their bios as well as answers to questions about favourite hymns and what it means to be a Presbyterian in Canada today, visit presbyterian.ca/nominees2019.

The 2019 General Assembly will convene Sunday evening, June 2, 2019, in Waterloo, Ont., until June 6. To learn more about the approaching General Assembly, visit presbyterian.ca/ga2019.



The Rev. Amanda Currie.



The Rev. James T. Hurd.

A Makeover for Mywestminster.ca

By Debbie Jones, Web Master, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, Ont.

In March 2018, I attended the “Digital Communications Best Practices” workshop that was given by Barb Summers, Associate Secretary of Communications from the national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Among the many things that I learned was that the PCC had a system called PCCWeb that was available for hosting church websites (free of charge!) and the Communications Office can help churches build better websites. I also learned that we were not alone in our challenges to effectively use the web and social media.

The website at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Ottawa was old and not accessible on mobile phones. The church secretary was updating the website, but no one was responsible for overseeing its maintenance, design and development of content. We also were not taking advantage of the PCCWeb platform and resources that are now available and funded by our Presbyterians Sharing gifts. In June, Westminster contacted Barb to request assistance in building a new website. By using the PCCWeb platform,



and with the assistance from the Communications Office, we were able to launch the new mywestminster.ca website in December.

The next steps are to:

- Work with the congregation to improve the website design and publish timely information on the many programs, events and activities;
- Establish a process to update the website;
- Recruit church web team members (technical support and content development); and
- Update the Westminster Facebook page.

This was an iterative process that took about six months. The Communications Office led the technical construction, while I took the lead on the content. Via email and weekly phone

meetings, we improved the design and content over several months. With some lessons from Communications Office staff on WordPress, I can now update the website with their ongoing support.

We did not build the perfect website. Our goal was to build a “good enough” website that we can continuously improve. Hopefully, PCC-Web will offer more training and create a PCCWeb support group for church web masters to network and help one another.

Finally, my sincerest thanks to the Communications Office at national office of Barb Summers, Sylvia Brade, Diane Walmsley and James Laurenson. It was a pleasure working with all of you and the best part is that it’s not over. We’ve only just begun.



Grants to support mission and ministry initiatives in the PCC are available:
presbyterian.ca/funds

NEWS

Jesus, Jazz and Worship

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

It all started with a little congregation in Burnaby, B.C. In 2009, there were only 15 members. Many felt that Brentwood Presbyterian Church was simply too small to survive. Better to close the congregation and pass the resources on to others. But they were wrong!

An interim moderator and an interim minister who believed in the congregation provided revitalizing leadership and led them through a visioning process: "Nourishing souls to flourish in the grace of Jesus Christ." The congregation grew into this vision with an emphasis on their hospitality and love of music in their worship, learning, fellowship and service. They found leadership to help them implement their vision. They imagined an innovative missional neighbourhood and they began to experiment with ways to connect with and contribute to those neighbours.

The neighbours we reached out to were musicians, especially jazz musicians. They don't live in the immediate neighbourhood, but they needed a space to perform, practice, compose, connect and contribute. And we had great space for music. We improved it by getting a decent grand piano, changing the front of the church so there was more open space, replacing the pews with comfortable and movable chairs, commissioning an energizing new logo, engaging a jazz pianist/composer to be our director of music, putting in a new sound system and beginning Jazz Vespers services every Wednesday night. This alternative mid-week service is a complement to our more traditional forms of worship, learning, fellowship and service. It's an opportunity to sow seeds of the reconciling love God revealed to us in Jesus Christ and nourish those seeds to germinate.

As we listened to the musicians and dug more deeply into the dynamics of jazz, we were drawn to Christopher Small's idea of "musicking." He looks at involvement in a musical event as a ritual through which all the participants explore and celebrate the relationships that constitute their social identity. Jazz Evensong is a space where the community of jazz and the community of the church of Jesus Christ are connecting. Small's work has provoked us to explore our mission as "churching."

As we welcome people into our space of grace each week for the ritual of Jazz Evensong, we affirm on our bulletin cover that God, the Crea-



Miles Black (piano), Dave Robbins (drums) and Russ Botten (bass) played Oscar Peterson's Easter Suite for Jazz Evensong during Holy Week.

tor, is laying down the bass line, that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, is calling the melodies, and that the Holy Spirit, the Energizer, is jamming with the harmonies of joy. We invite the musicians to play whatever they want, respecting what they can bring to the service. Then we pick up an insight from their music and explore it in the light of the Christian story. Over the past couple of years, Brentwood has composed a summary of the Bible's story of God reconciling the world to himself in Jesus Christ. The Brentwood Declaration (brentwoodpc.ca/brentwooddeclaration) is printed in the bulletin each week so people can take it away, ponder it and pursue what provokes them in expanding conversations with us.

What we see ourselves doing in this musicking at Brentwood is entering into conversations that invite participants to consider the significance of what Jesus Christ is doing to expand the Commonwealth of God. It's dialogical evangelism, the impact of which is in the hands of the Holy Spirit. We assume that the Trinity is already at work within the jazz community. Our privilege is to provide the physical, emotional and spiritual space for the Spirit to make the message of Jesus more apparent and to form people to be more conscious contributors to God's Commonwealth. If, as The Presbyterian Church in Canada states in *Living Faith*, the core truth of the Gospel is God's reconciliation of the world to

himself in Jesus Christ and God's entrusting of that message to us (2 Cor 5:19), then jazz worship services are rich in possibilities for witnessing and discipling.

To dig deeper into how Jesus is encountering people through jazz in worship, we pulled together about \$30,000 in grants for a Jesus, Jazz and Worship project. We received money from the Canada Summer Jobs Program to hire four young jazz students to do the initial interviews. They generated over 100 pages of interview summaries about how musicians, ministers and audiences/congregations construct their experience of jazz worship services. We are continuing to do interviews this spring. We received a Vital Worship Grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc.) to convene gatherings with people engaged in jazz worship, culminating in a major consultation taking place from May 23- 25, 2019. The Conference Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is helping with that consultation. These various kinds of conversations have already led to changes in the ways we offer Jazz Evensong into a new Meditative Jazz service once a month, and to closer collaboration with the other seven churches that are doing jazz services on a regular basis in the Vancouver area.

This is still very much a work in progress, but then what "churching" isn't these days? We are finding that



Laura Zerebeski's logo for Brentwood captures the vibe of our little space of grace.

there are lessons from the musicking of jazz for the churching of Brentwood, as we grow into our mission of justice and kindness with humility. We're discovering new dimensions of our calling every week as jazz finds itself welcome in Christ's sanctuary at Brentwood.

Now, 45 people participate regu-

larly in witnessing and discipling through Brentwood, at least 10 of whom have become involved due to our connections with the jazz community. Our impact on our circles of influence has expanded significantly and we look forward to where the Trinity Trio will lead us in years to come.

Brentwood Presbyterian Church gratefully acknowledges significant support through loans and grants from The Presbyterian Church in Canada of approximately \$30,000 for this ministry initiative.

NEWS

Ringin a Bell at Crieff Hills

*By the Rev. Kristine O'Brien,
Director, Crieff Hills Retreat Centre
in Puslinch, Ont.*

In the office, we keep saying that we need a bell so that we can ring it every time we receive good news—and since I began as the new director at Crieff Hills last September, we have had some really good news indeed. Along with beautiful stories of guests who have been blessed by their time here, we have also received a number of generous donations. One of them arrived in November from a woman named Dr. Ruth Elizabeth Alison.

By all accounts, Dr. Alison was a remarkable woman. When she died in May 2017, she left behind a legacy of service, leadership and faith.

After graduating in medicine from the University of Toronto in 1952, Dr. Alison went on to practice oncology at Princess Margaret Hospital for thirty years. For decades she led

the CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training) program at Glenview Presbyterian Church in Toronto and was an elder both there and at Union Presbyterian Church near Georgetown, Ont. Even in retirement she shared her faith and herself, becoming a hospital chaplain

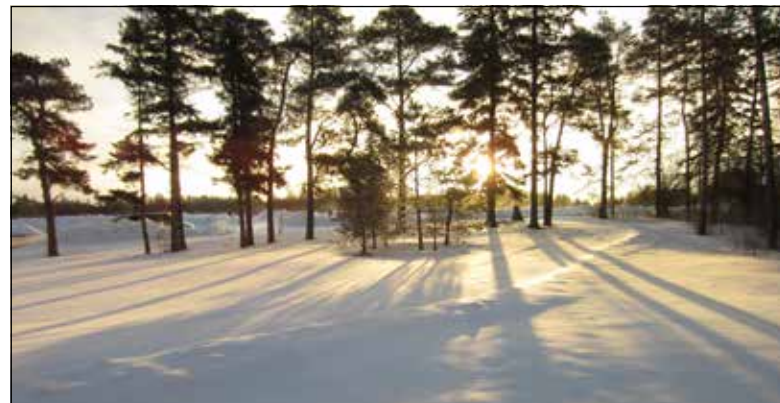
for a time, and firmly supported the retreat centre's ministry. In both her professional and personal life, she believed in, "ministering to the whole person," and understood the importance of warm hospitality. "Students, strangers, friends and those in need

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in Mississauga.

Dr. Alison had a special connection with Crieff Hills. She served on the Maclean Estate Committee for two terms beginning in 1990, acting as the committee's convener

have found an open, welcoming door wherever Ruth Alison has lived," wrote the *Presbyterian Record* in 1997, as a part of the Faces of Faith series. ("Faces of Faith: Dr. Ruth E. Alison," The Free Library, 1997 *Pres-*



A winter sunset at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre.

byterian Record 16 Jan. 2019, the-free-library.com)

When she died at age 91, Dr. Alison left a large financial gift for Crieff Hills. It will be used to tackle an urgent and very practical project: replacing our original septic systems. The work will take two years to complete, mainly around the retreat houses, and will ensure that we meet the 2022 deadline imposed by the Ministry of Health. We are so grateful.

A project like this one made possible by Dr. Alison might not sound very exciting, and yet it is a significant

investment in ministry. When the facilities at Crieff Hills are well kept and comfortable, people are able to find rest and renewal in their time here. Visitors can listen for the still, small voice of God or delight in the gift of Spirit-filled community. They find an open, welcoming door.

We may not have a bell to ring in the office, but we are definitely rejoicing. Dr. Alison was a faithful woman throughout her life and has now left a legacy that will nourish the faith of others. That is something to celebrate!

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Photo courtesy of Passion Play 2020 Oberammergau.

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REFLECTIONS

Speak Up for the Environment

By Robert "Roy" M. Strang, Ph.D.,
member of Fairview Presbyterian
Church in Vancouver

A recent Special Report (2018) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group established under the United Nations to monitor climate change science, makes it very clear that the world is heading towards disaster unless industrialized countries make significant changes in our current use, abuse and mismanagement of the natural environment.

Burning fossil fuels, deforestation, exploitation of non-renewable resources and ocean acidification all combine to amplify natural fluctuations in climate so that erratic and more severe weather patterns will become "normal," to the significant detriment of creation and human life. Evidence is already accumulating that this is neither an idle threat nor self-serving scare-mongering but is indeed happening. The challenging target to avert catastrophe is to limit increased warming to not more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

In 2015, Pope Francis released a trenchant encyclical, *Laudato si'* ("Praise be") on care for our common home. He decried environmental degradation, irresponsible development and rampant consumerism, which together result in exacerbated climate change and global warming. This message echoed the encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, issued in 1963 by Pope Saint John XXIII which, though focusing on militarism and the Cold War, also addressed the questions of rights and obligations of individuals and the state.

Despite these scientific and religious warnings, there is more talk than action towards ameliorating the situation and reversing the seemingly inevitable trend towards a crisis. Leadership should come from the political realm but surely our church establishments should also be speaking out strongly. They have their mandate and a moral responsibility from the first line of Psalm 24, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it," and in Genesis 2:15, "The Lord God took the man and put him

in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." Personally, I can't believe that "having dominion" (Genesis 1:26) is license to exercise uncritical misuse.

Apart from the Pope's encyclical there does not appear to have been much forceful or significant contribution to this discussion by equivalent religious bodies far less any exhortation to pay serious attention to the warning signals in our own or other denominations. Undoubtedly, some individuals have spoken up, but where are the formal declarations from the denominational equivalents of a papal encyclical? It's easy but unproductive to speculate on the silence of our courts. Can committees, sessions, synods or assemblies not speak up and be heard? What thinking leads us to fail to speak up loudly and clearly for the long-term well-being of God's creation as Pope Francis did?



A note from the PCC:

Many church organizations and church leaders, including those in the PCC, have been outspoken advocates on behalf of God's creation. The World Communion of Reformed Churches, of which the PCC is a member, held a General Council in Accra, Ghana in 2004, out of which came "The Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth." This statement was adopted by the delegates of the 2004 General Council and states, "matters of economic and environmental justice are not only social, political and moral issues, they are integral to faith in Jesus Christ and affect the integrity of the church." The statement describes the woundedness of people and creation because of environmental degradation and unjust economic systems.

Within Canada, there are several faith-based organizations advocating for climate justice and for the environment. The Canadian Council of Churches and KAIROS advocate for policies and programs to address climate change and environmental degradation. Moderators of many Presbyterian General Assemblies have done likewise.

More information about The Presbyterian Church in Canada's statements on caring for creation, climate change and environmental degradation can be found in the Social Action Handbook at presbyterian.ca/justice.

Christian Witness in Cascadian Soil

Friday, May 10 & Saturday, May 11, 2019

The Centre For Missional Leadership, St. Andrew's Hall



"Good News from the None Zone: Four Practices for Joining God in Post-Christian Soil"

A Keynote Presentation by
Dr. Christopher James

Dubuque Theological Seminary
Friday, May 10, 7 pm

"The Theological 'Why' of Church Planting"

Lecture by

Dr. Darrell Guder

Centre for Missional Leadership Senior Fellow
Friday, May 10, 9 am

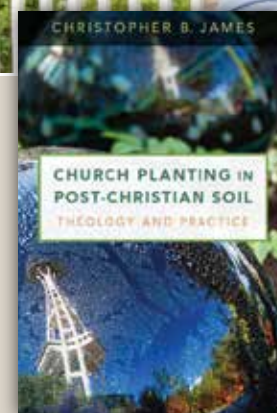
"Beloved Community as Missional Witness"

Lecture by

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Centre for Missional Leadership Senior Fellow
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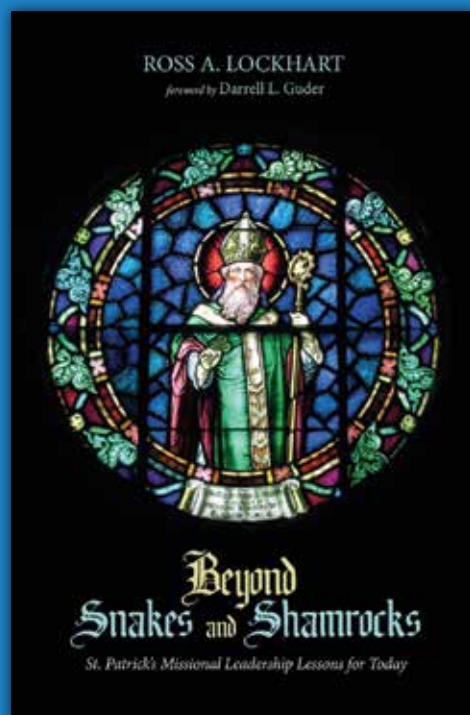


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Professor Ross Lockhart has published a new book that will be helpful for small groups and Sessions within The Presbyterian Church in Canada entitled, *"Beyond Snakes and Shamrocks? St. Patrick's Missional Leadership Lessons for Today"*.

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).

With reflection questions after each chapter, many PCC congregations will find this a timely resource for faithfully engaging the question of Christian witness in a changing Canadian landscape.

Order your copy today
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REFLECTIONS

The Rich Man Who Will be Saved

By Dr. David W. T. Brattston from Lunenburg, N.S.

A man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth (Matthew 19:16, 21–22 NIV).



and vainglory, and in contempt of the rest of mankind, as if they had done something superhuman. After ridding himself of the burden of wealth, a person still might have the lust and desire for money. After abandoning it, he may grieve on account of the absence and the feelings of regret.

It is far better for a man who possesses capital to not be in straits about money for himself, and also to give assistance to those for whom it is necessary! If no one had anything, how could anybody give anything?... How could anyone give food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless, if he had previously divested himself of material possessions?

So let no man destroy wealth, but the passions of the soul, which are incompatible with the better use of wealth. So that, becoming virtuous and good, a person may be able to make the best use of riches.

—Translated by the Rev. William Wilson in *From Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 2. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.)

Christians have sometimes understood this passage from Matthew as a command that believers must be poor in order to be authentic members of the church. But Clement of Alexandria gives us a different picture. He writes, in essence:

Jesus does not bid him throw away his property; but bids him banish from his soul his notions about wealth, his obsession and the anxieties, which are the thorns that choke the seed of life. If it were a great thing or desirable to be destitute of wealth, people who have nothing at all, and beggars for their daily bread, who do know not Christ, would be most blessed and most dear to God, and sole possessors of everlasting life.

What is the Son of God teaching here? It is not the outward act, but something else indicated by it, greater, more godlike, more perfect: the stripping off of the passions from the soul. For some people who despised external things relinquished and squandered their property, but this intensified the passions of the soul. They indulged in arrogance, pretension,

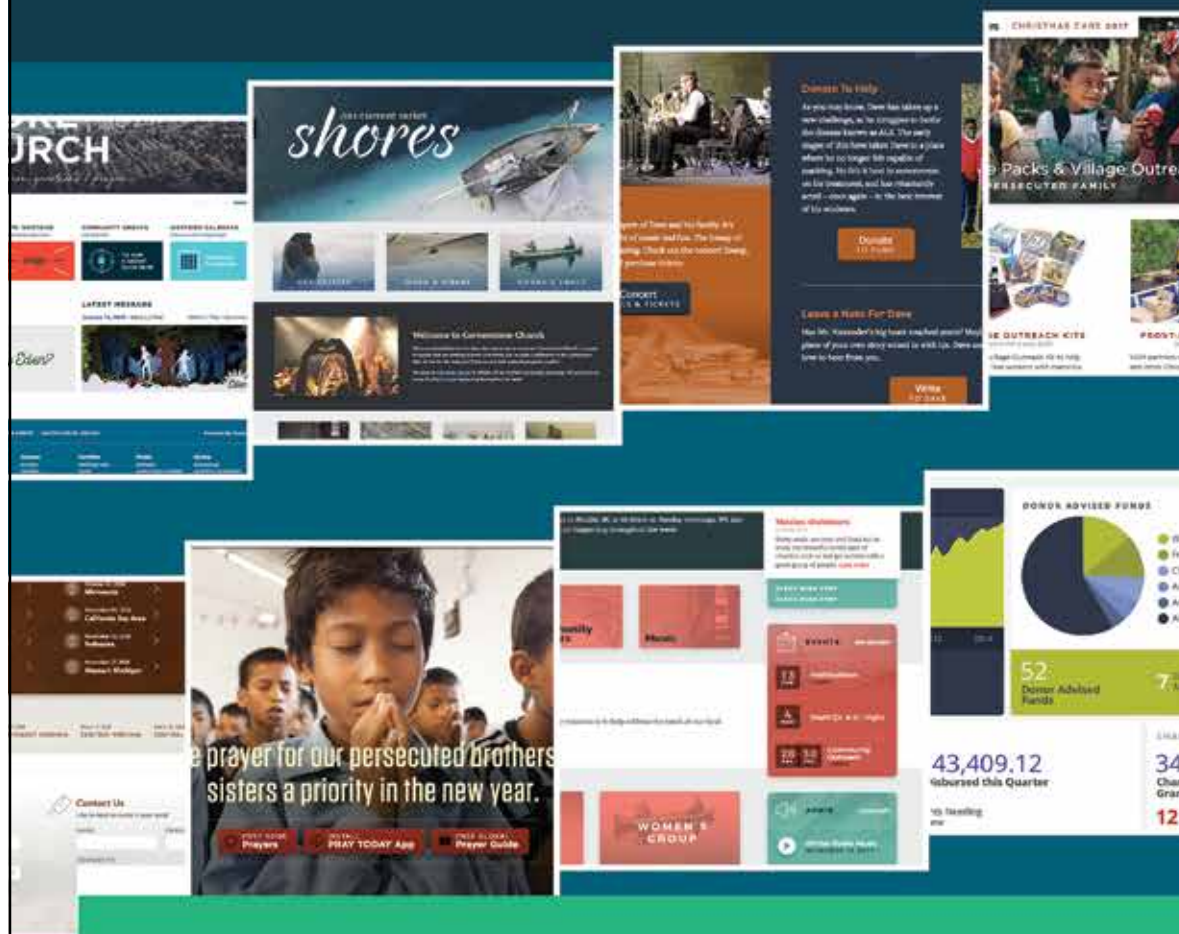
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REFLECTIONS

Undercover Minister

By the Rev. Scott McAndless, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hespeler, Ont.

I am very grateful for the opportunity that was given to me this past spring to take a ten-week intermission from my duties at St. Andrew's.

I have been a full-time minister in The Presbyterian Church in Canada now for 26 years. That means that for over a quarter century (and a very large portion of my life) all of my work and all of my professional efforts have been directed toward the building up and maintenance of the church. All I have done, most everything I have engaged in, has all been with one underlying assumption: this has to be good for and helpful to the church.

I don't complain about that—it is what I signed up for after all—but I do note that, when you look at the world from that one point of view for such a long time, it begins to limit your perspective. I believe that I needed a new perspective on the work that I do and that was not going to be possible without taking an extended period of time away from the church to get the church out of my head.

And so I felt that it was important that I take the first several weeks of my intermission to completely avoid any thought of the Christian church. I did not attend any worship services. I did not read the news from the church or anything else related to the work of the church. I simply avoided

it entirely. It is literally something that I had not been able to do for years and I do believe that it helped me to gain new perspective on the church and its life.

In fact, I was kind of amazed at how easy it was to put the church completely out of my mind and out of my life. That is exactly how the vast majority of people in our society today live.

And the first thing I realized is that I don't think that they are missing it. Oh, I am quite sure that there are many people who are suffering, needlessly, because they lack the knowledge of the good news of God's grace, forgiveness, power and strength. Even more important, they are missing out on the opportunity of living out that grace and truth in an active community, whether they realize it or not.

But I didn't miss, and I expect that most people don't miss, the things that we tend to spend so much of our energy on in the life of the church. They don't miss the pressure to conform to other people's ideas of what it means to be a Christian. They don't miss the worrying about the loss of traditions or the resistance to change. They don't miss all of the worries about institutional maintenance. It makes me wonder whether sometimes we are just spending too much of ourselves on the things that matter least in the church.

But, even as I spent time away from the church, I felt the importance of my faith. I continue to love and to cherish



the Bible which, for me, is the source of so much that is good. I think that one of our problems is that the church has tried to keep the Bible to itself—to use the Bible only to serve its own needs and its own purposes. I felt the need to free the Bible from the church to bring it closer to those people who do not feel as if they belong in the church. That is one big reason why, during my intermission, I spent a fair bit of time working on a project to try to bring the Bible (in particular, the stories of the Bible) to people outside the church. I created a podcast called “Retelling the Bible,” in which I retold some of the great stories of the Bible without worrying about whether or not the way I was telling the story would be completely acceptable to the church. I just enjoyed the stories of the Bible as I saw them without worrying about whether my interpretation might be judged wrong by some Christian institution somewhere. I greatly enjoyed being able to approach the Bible with such freedom and I think it brought something valuable to me, something that I have been able to share with others and I will continue to do that as I continue to publish, now on a monthly basis, my podcast.

Having spent several weeks away from the life of the church, I finally felt that it was time for me to re-approach

the church, but this time as an outsider. I spent the next several weeks of my intermission visiting churches. This is something that I have almost never been able to do in my life. I have never come to a church as an outsider. And I wanted to share with you some of the things that I learned by doing so.

First and most important of all, I very quickly realized how difficult it is to do such a thing. I did not find it easy at all to approach a church where I didn't really know anyone and didn't really, at least initially, want to know anyone. I just wanted to go and see what it was like, and it was extremely difficult even to walk through the door each time. Some of this was for some very practical reasons. I wasn't used to how things are done there or even where to go. In one case, I walked in a door and immediately got lost, took a wrong turn, and then ended up walking out a back door by the river, almost too embarrassed to try to go in again. These kinds of experiences underlined to me just how hard it is for people who haven't been to church in a long time (or maybe not ever) to actually show up when the church is open.

I observed that churches often seem to operate under one big assumption. We assume that, if we can put on a good program—if we have

an excellent worship service or music program or children's program or whatever it may be—that people will just come. I call it the “Field of Dreams” assumption: “If you build it, they will come.” That may have once worked, but my experiences have shown me that it doesn't anymore. When new people show up among us on their own, I hope you recognize that it was probably not easy for them to do so at all. And I hope that you realize that there are many more people who simply will not come on their own. Many studies show that the only way that most people will come to a new church is if they are not only personally invited but also actually accompanied through the door. This is something that we all need to be thinking about as we work on church life and growth.

There was another thing that I noted in my visits. I noted that when congregations were at their most formal—when they were sticklers for their own forms and traditions—was when I usually felt most uncomfortable and out of place. It was when (either intentionally or unintentionally) that formality broke down that I felt most welcome and started to enjoy myself. This made me realize that formality in churches is something that we mostly do to please those who have been there the longest. Long-time members are most comfortable when everything happens formally, but a strong and growing church cannot exist only for insiders. Informality (whether planned or not) often gives visitors the message that we are not hung up with ourselves and that we are comfortable enough with who we are to laugh, make mistakes and forgive each other with love. Just something to think about.

To subscribe to the podcast, go to retellingthebible.wordpress.com

The Painting Man Cometh

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

A whole year has passed since I first walked through the double doors into the entrance of my new retirement home. This will probably be my last home, so I am making a point of searching out its pleasures.

This morning the view out my window is of fir trees laden with snow. But then, I live in Alberta and in November we expect snow. It was snowing gently the first day I walked through those doors a year ago too. I have seen the seasons come and go and have watched the march of

time change certain aspects of living in my new residence.

Yesterday staff lit the dining room fireplace...what a lovely gesture. It was -23C outside and the warmth from it drew several residents to the circle of soft chairs. It warms not only the room but seems to relax everyone. Some folks read and some share their stories with others.

This new home of mine is like an enormous library...not of books but of people that have lived fascinating lives of hope, heartache and happenings that would mesmerize you.

I am so glad that I had the chance to share this last year with my new friend Bee. She came to this country

as a War Bride and oh, the stories she told me and of course I told her my stories too. The last time we talked outdoors, sitting in the sun, was to be our last little visit. Her place at the table nearby was empty one morning, then one day, the cushion on her chair was no longer there. I hugged her daughter the morning she came to clear out her things. She was taking her mom to Palliative Care. I cried. I knew I would not see Bee again.

Well, that isn't quite true. Bee had shared her faith with me. What a wonderful thing to listen to another's story of their relationship with the Lord. We were Christian sisters af-

ter that first meeting and gentle hugs were often our morning greeting.

This is an efficient and well managed place, and now it is someone else that will live in Bee's room and today the “Painting Man” arrived and headed down to her room to re-paint the walls. There is a finality about seeing him walk down the corridor. You know that another friend has left your residence. It is a sign of the times.

You could be sad about your loss but it is heaven's gain and I know that her next new home will be painted with the love of the Lord and Bee will one day welcome me with a happy hug.



JUST WONDERING...

Submit your questions to
connection@presbyterian.ca

Is there any kind of a rule about having a cross in a church sanctuary? Usually I see one but at our church there is only an organ at the front. It seems to me we should have a large cross as well.

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

It sometimes feels like there are many rules and regulations that we must follow to ensure everything is done correctly and we get church "right." And of course, there are some standards of faith and practice we all agree to live with and by. However, there are fewer essential "shoulds" than we all imagine and there are no rules about what kinds of decorations or objects we can or cannot have in the sanctuaries of PCC churches. Some sanctuaries in the denomination are very plain and simple and feature no symbols, pictures, stained glass or crosses. On the other hand, some of our sanctuaries have beautiful images, elaborate carvings, multiple symbols and lots of colourful banners. The session of each congregation has the responsibility and authority to decide how the sanctuary is to be decorated and which objects are to be placed in the sanctuary and where and when and why. Speak to your elder or write a letter to the session if you have a question or suggestion about how things might be changed or before making any donations intended to enhance the sanctuary.

Where does the money go when a church closes?

Answered by the Rev. Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk, General Assembly Office

The decision to dissolve or amalgamate a church is always difficult and usually comes after exhaustive efforts to keep it open, much prayer, and lots of heartbreaking emotional and spiritual work.

When a church closes (is dissolved by the presbytery), the assets are vested with the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. This is according to the Act to Incorporate the Trustee Board, which was adopted by parliament in 1939 and subsequently in each province.

The Trustee Board then has an obligation to use the proceeds of those assets for the benefit of the church. It takes the advice of the church about how to use them and General Assembly provides the advice in the form of Assembly decisions from time to time.

Currently the distribution formula is as follows:

- 50% of the proceeds of the assets go toward the Pension Plan Solvency Fund until \$2 million is reached.
- 10% go toward a Native Ministry Fund until \$400,000 is reached.
- 40% will be returned to the presbytery based on a mission plan.

Unless the Assembly adopts another allocation plan, once the above goals are reached, the formula will

revert to the original distribution which would make 70% available for the presbytery's ministry and 30% for other aspects of the church's ministry—primarily to help presbyteries begin new congregations.

When two or more congregations amalgamate the situation is quite different. Then, the amalgamated church takes on all the property of both churches. If property is going to be sold, then a mission plan is prepared showing how funds not needed to deal with any indebtedness will be used both locally and beyond to further Christ's mission. A commission of Assembly Council reviews these mission plans with the presbytery.

There is a policy and guide that explains the dissolution and amalgamation process and provides useful resources and information available at presbyterian.ca/downloads/40008.

A friend of mine attends a United Church and she told me that the United Church was formed by an amalgamation between Presbyterian churches and churches from other denominations. Why didn't all the Presbyterian churches join?

Answered by the Rev. Dr. Stuart MacDonald, Professor of Church and Society, Knox College

As one would expect, there were multiple reasons why many Presbyterians chose not to join the proposed United Church. But you wisely ask, why didn't all Presbyterian churches join? That introduces a related but different series of issues.

The Union of 1925 was a bold vision. For many, it was too bold. It is one thing to ask different kinds of Presbyterians to come together, as they did in 1875, but it is something else entirely to ask Christian traditions as different as Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Methodist to join together. There were major differences in theology between these groups; yet, in coming together, everyone was asked to give up what had gone before in order to create this new United Church of Canada. In other words, to join the union the Presbyterian church had to cease to exist. For many individuals, this was simply more than they could accept.

Presbyterians, individuals and in groups, organized to oppose the union, gave their opinions at the time. For many, the proposed benefits of the union were simply not necessary or worth it. Presbyterian identity is one way of expressing their reasons for not wanting to join the union.

The reason churches didn't join

had to do with the civil law at the time. For the United Church to be created, legislation had to be passed by both the provincial and federal governments. Congregations were given the opportunity to vote whether or not they wished to go into the proposed United Church; this was a change from the original idea, that all congregations were to go into the United Church but might later vote themselves out. Because not all congregations held votes but simply went into the union, vote tallies do not answer all our questions as to support across the nation. What became clear as The Presbyterian Church in Canada continued after June 1925—and fought to continue to use that particular name—was that continuing Presbyterians were about one-third the size they had once been and were concentrated in Central Canada and parts of the Maritimes. The denomination had been strong across Canada, including in the Prairies. After 1925, this was no longer the case.

OBITUARIES

Read all full obituaries online at presbyterian.ca

The Rev. Ken Borden

Former minister in Toronto and Calgary. Deceased Dec. 1, 2018.

Dr. Tamiko Corbett

Former moderator of the PCC (122nd General Assembly), deaconess and active member of the WMS. Deceased Dec. 11, 2018.

The Rev. Wallace Eric Whyte

Former minister at Melville Presbyterian Church in Scarborough, Ont. Deceased Dec. 27, 2018.

The Rev. John Charles Ferrier

Former minister from Weyburn, Saskatchewan. Deceased Dec. 21, 2018.

The Rev. J. Douglas Gordon

Former military chaplain and retired minister who served congregations in Ontario and New Brunswick. Deceased Dec. 19, 2018.

Margaret Reynolds

Elder at Knox Presbyterian Church Morrisburg and active WMS member. Deceased Dec. 30, 2018.

PULPIT VACANCIES

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

New Glasgow, First

(full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces

New Minas, Kings

(full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces

Avonmore, St. Andrew's – Finch,

St. Luke's-Knox – Gravel Hill, St.

James-St. Andrew's

(part-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Ottawa, St. Giles

(full-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Ottawa, St. Timothy's

(part-time minister) – Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Grand Valley, Knox

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

Toronto, Fellowship

(part-time minister) – CNEOB

Waterloo, Knox

(full-time minister) – CNEOB

Campbellford, Norwood and

Warkworth, St. Andrew's (full-time minister) – CNEOB

Goderich, Knox

(stated supply half-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

Lucknow – South Kinloss

(full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

Sarnia – St. Andrew's

(full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

Waterdown, Knox

(full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario

Sylvan Lake, Memorial

(full-time minister) – Alberta and the Northwest

Abbotsford, Calvin

(full-time minister) – British Columbia

Surrey, City Centre Church

(full-time minister) – British Columbia

Vancouver, Kerrisdale

(full-time minister) – British Columbia

JOIN THE
CELEBRATION!

Knox College's 175th Convocation

May 8, 2019, at 7:30 p.m.

Celebrating 175 years (1844-2019)
with an eye to the future

SPECIAL LOCATION:

One Spadina Crescent

*Knox College's home from 1875 to 1915;
now the John H. Daniels Faculty of
Architecture, Landscape, and Design*

CONVOCATION ADDRESS:

Dreamers

by the Rev. Dr. Luke Powery

*Dean of Duke University Chapel;
associate professor of homiletics at Duke Divinity School*



KNOX COLLEGE

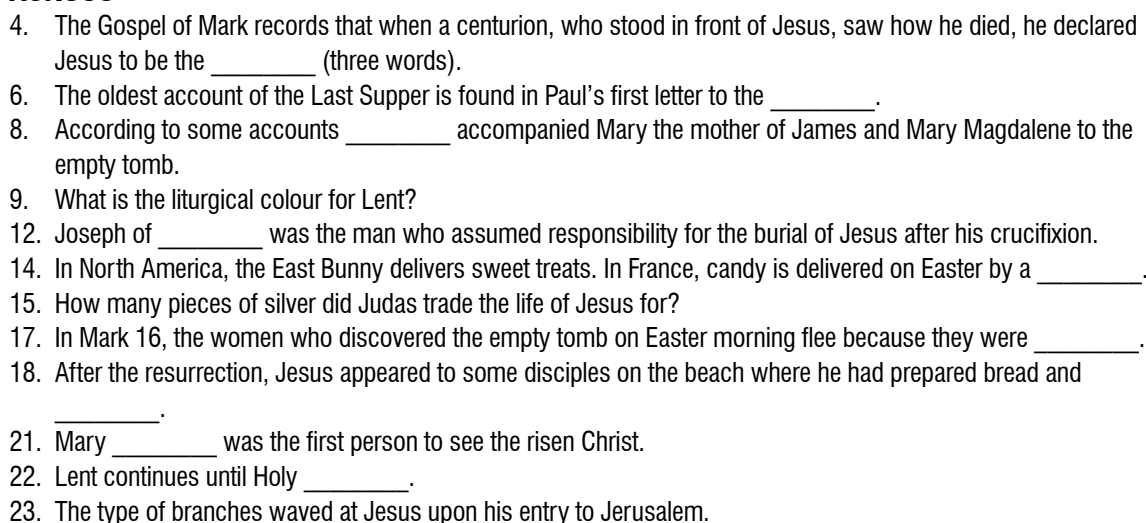


DUE TO LIMITED SEATING,
FREE TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:

knox.utoronto.ca/convocation



Test your knowledge of Easter and Lent with the clues below.



DOWN

1. PASSOVER
2. THORNS
3. DONKEY
4. FORTY
5. SABBATH
6. PILATE
7. LAZARUS
8. WEDNESDAY
9. TWO

ACROSS

10. SON OF GOD
11. CORINTHIANS
12. SALOME
13. PURPLE
14. BELL
15. THIRTY
16. AFRAID
17. FISH
18. MAGDALENE
19. THURSDAY
20. PALM