



PRESBYTERIAN Connection

The Presbyterian Church in Canada • presbyterian.ca

ISSUE 24, WINTER 2022

World Council of Churches Assembly



The World Council of Churches 11th Assembly flag. PHOTO CREDIT: MARCELO SCHNEIDER/WCC

By Lori Ransom, former animator for Healing and Reconciliation and PCC delegate for the World Council of Churches 11th Assembly

“Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity,” was the theme of the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC). I was privileged to attend the Assembly as a delegate from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, along with the Rev. Amanda Currie. Both of us also attended the Indigenous Peoples Pre-Assembly. We were among 800 delegates from 352 member churches and some 4,000 people in total who descended on Karlsruhe, a mid-size city tucked within the southeastern corner of Germany near the famous Black Forest, about 90 minutes from Frankfurt Airport by train.

The Moderator of the Assembly, Dr. Agnes Abuom, said that, “At its best, the assembly is a spiritual celebration of the power of God’s love to renew our minds and hearts so that we may become a countercultural force driven by solidarity with the most vulnerable people and God’s creation.” In my view, the Assembly succeeded in providing worship experiences for participants that inspired and renewed enthusiasm for ecumenical cooperation. Within an extraordinarily beautiful modern space, open to the outdoors, somewhat euphemistically called the “Prayer Tent,” we were treated to services twice daily led by people from different Christian traditions. Services featured music from many parts of the world and illustrations of biblical texts through movement and drama.

The Assembly and Pre-Assembly were packed with speakers and activities. Yet, there was a commonly shared concern about the state of the planet.

The climate emergency, the climate crisis, an existential crisis, the need for reconciliation between the people of the earth and all of creation resounded in session after session. *We are running out of time* was a refrain in one of the public statements adopted by the Assembly, which articulated how action to prevent catastrophic heating of the planet must be taken before the next Assembly in approximately eight years time. However, I’m left feeling that all the words, and the energy behind the words, are insufficient to influence those decision-makers in the private sector as well as the public sector who



Participants at the WCC Assembly. PHOTO CREDIT: ALBIN HILLERT/WCC

can make real change. I am left wondering what it will take.

Reflecting on the Assembly’s theme, perhaps we needed to spend much, much more time reflecting on Christ’s love for the planet and on Christ’s love for all peoples and what that means in relation to the decisions we make about the regulation of our common life together. Alas,

much of the event focused on other elements of the Assembly’s theme—unity and reconciliation—rather than on the meaning of Christ’s love.

We were honoured to receive the President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and to hear from other more locally based German political and ecumenical leaders.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Meeting the Manitou Asinîy Stone



The Rev. Bob Faris with Leonard Weasel Traveller (Bastien) (left) and Fred Campiou (right).

*By the Rev. Dr. Bob Faris,
Moderator of the 2022 General
Assembly*

Like most people gathered in the General Assembly this year, I had no idea what the Manitou Asinîy Stone was. Then came the invitation for me to visit the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod, that also involved me speaking at an Inter-faith Pride service, I was asked to participate in a conversation about the Manitou Asinîy Stone with Indigenous leaders as well as members of Grace Presbyte-

rian Church in Calgary, Alta., and the presbytery. I found out that the only caveat to organizing this conversation was that I would be willing to listen. It was conveyed that that was my only intention and I hope I stayed true to that promise.

I was put in touch with Chandra Mannix, a person from Grace I had never met before. She was the facilitator of the conversation, I was told. I was not prepared for the depth of commitment, passion and political acumen I was about to encounter! The project

of repatriating the Stone to Indigenous stewardship has become all-consuming for Chandra.

A bit about the Stone: it is the largest intact meteorite ever found in Canada, which fell to the surface of the Earth near present day Hardisty as much as four billion years ago. It is almost pure iron. It had great significance for Indigenous peoples and was considered to be a sacred being that was deeply connected with the buffalo hunt. It is Canada's only spiritually recognized place of healing at a meteor landing site (much like Mecca for the followers of Islam). In 1866, it was taken by Methodist missionaries who considered it to be a hindrance to the conversion of Indigenous peoples to Christianity. After being kept at a mission station for a time, it was transferred to Victoria College in Cobourg, Ont., then to Toronto when the college moved and to the Royal Ontario Museum. It was transferred to the Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton in 1972, where it continues to be held.

When we gathered in a large circle in the basement of Grace Church, we heard that story. In fact, scientific facts about the Stone were presented from an Indigenous astronomer, Rob Car-



The Moderator, the Rev. Bob Faris (right), with Clayton Kootenay, member of the Lead Team for the Repatriation Project and CEO of the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre in Edmonton, at the current site of the Manitou Stone at the Royal Alberta Museum.

dinal, who is a lead member of the Repatriation Project. We also heard the Indigenous wisdom about the Stone from Leonard Weasel Traveller (Bastien), former Chief of the Piikani Nation, Representative of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Spiritual Leader and Primary Elder of the Manitou Asinîy-Iniskim Repatriation Project; and from Blaine Favel, former Chief of Poundmaker First Nation, Former Grand Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan, Leader and Visionary of the Manitou Asinîy-Iniskim Repatriation Project; and from Fred Campiou, Cree Representative for Treaty 8, Spiritual Advisor and Ceremonial Elder of the Manitou Asinîy-Iniskim Repatriation Project.

We heard how Indigenous peoples had prophesied that disaster would befall their nations if the Stone was removed, and how that indeed did happen with the decimation of the buffalo. We heard how the removal of the Stone was the removal of the focus of a meeting place that had gathered different nations to find ways to live peaceably together. We also heard the many ways in which the colonial project and mindset had destroyed traditional Indigenous ways and had ignored traditional Indigenous wisdom, to the detriment of all.

We learned of the various attempts that had been made in the past to repatriate the Stone and how they had not been successful. We also learned about how this new initiative was moving forward and the ways in which it had brought people together to

find common purpose in repatriating the Stone. We learned of the vision of a centre, designed by the world-renowned Indigenous architect, Douglas Cardinal, to be constructed near the actual landing place, where the Stone can be placed and where people can once again gather in a sacred space to seek ways to live together in peace.

I could not help but think at the time—and have continued to reflect on—how honoured I was to sit in that circle. We met in a church—a place that is considered to be part of the destructive force behind the attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples. We were privileged to meet with Elders and Wisdom Keepers and members of the Horn Society, who have responsibility for many traditional spiritual practices. We were reminded that our gathering should be centred in prayer to Creator, Creator of us all.

We could have not been invited into that circle...but we were. And we engaged in a practice of listening and learning, which took us one more step along a path that we all hope will lead to healing. At the end of our time together, we recognized that even though we did not meet in the presence of the Manitou Asinîy Stone, its gift of gathering people to find ways to live peaceably together was at work among us—a gift of the Spirit. And I believe it will continue to work among us as we respond to the invitation to bring our support to this initiative and others on the path to healing.

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FEATURE

We Cannot Be Silent”

A Joint Statement from the World Council of Churches about Gender-Based Violence in Faith Communities

By the World Council of Churches, oikoumene.org

In a joint message on gender-based violence, sexual abuse and faith communities, 26 World Council of Churches (WCC) Thursdays in Black ambassadors lament that the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence continues unabated—and call on faith communities to prevent such violence in their own spaces.

“As ambassadors for Thursdays in Black, and in our various leadership capacities, we have witnessed the increase in domestic and gender-based violence, including child marriage, in many countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, arising out of necessary movement restrictions and economic uncertainty,” reads the statement. “With the rise of digital communication, there is increased online sexual abuse and harassment with devastating effects on individuals, families and communities.”

The statement urges us all not to be silent. “We lament that far too many times, those who bravely come forward to share their stories are not believed, are shamed, are blamed, or are ignored... Too many times we have seen victims silenced and perpetrators unpunished.”

The ambassadors note that they are heartened by the global growth of the Thursdays in Black movement and the visible solidarity shared across faith traditions to overcome rape and violence.

“We call on our faith communities to take the next step in practical action to ensure such violence does not happen in our own spaces,” the statement reads. “Following the WCC central committee recommendation, we invite all faith communities to state their commitment to overcoming sexual and gender-based violence, clearly and publicly, including the policies and steps they will take when abuse is reported.”

Access to support and justice for survivors must be integrated in our responses, the ambassadors urge.

“We welcome religious and theological reflection and education, which interrogates our holy scriptures on the relationships between men and women and masculinities and femininities, our understandings of gender and gender identity, and our relationships with all people as part of humanity,” the text reads, concluding, “We encourage all people of faith to join us in Thursdays in Black to raise awareness and advocate for a world without rape and violence.”

Read the full statement at oikoumene.org.

Thursdays in Black is a global movement that strives for a world without rape and violence.

In every country, gender-based violence is a tragic reality. This violence is frequently hidden, and victims are often silent, fearing stigma and further violence.

We all have a responsibility to speak out against violence, to ensure that all adults, children and youth are safe from rape and violence in homes, schools, work, streets—in all places in our societies.

The campaign is simple but profound: **Wear black on Thursdays.** Wear a pin to declare you are part of the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence. Show your respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence. Encourage others to join you.

Often, black has been used with negative racial connotations. In this campaign, black is used as a colour of resistance and resilience.

Share your Thursdays in Black photos on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram using hashtags #ThursdaysinBlack and #WCC.



Communities and individuals of all faiths, and those who profess no faith, were invited to make a powerful, international statement of their commitment to end rape and violence by contributing to a large tapestry exhibit called “Waterfall of Solidarity and Resistance” for the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which took place August 31 until Sept. 8, 2022. Brazilian artist Janine Marja Schneider assembled all the pieces and finalized the exhibition. The tapestry is designed as a waterfall with messages and images from around the world. In addition to the WCC Assembly, it is intended to be displayed at other prominent locations, from the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva to the United Nations in New York. PHOTO CREDIT: MARCELO SCHNEIDER/WCC

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Connection

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

Barb Summers, Editor
Sarah Curd, Managing Editor

Thank you to all volunteer contributing writers. For submissions, questions and feedback, please email connection@presbyterian.ca or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 243.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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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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Moderator of the General Assembly:
The Rev. Dr. Bob Faris

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



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



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

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

FEATURE

Continued from page 1

President Steinmeier spoke very forcefully against Russian aggression in Ukraine and took the opportunity to criticize Russian Orthodox church leaders for supporting the Russian government. The WCC had discussed and decided not to exclude Russian Orthodox representatives from the Assembly, so they were present to hear Steinmeier's criticism. Also present, of course, were delegates from Ukrainian churches. The WCC's decision to support the Russian Orthodox presence underscores the WCC's beliefs concerning the importance of maintaining unity, connection and opportunity for conversation and bridge building even in situations of deepest conflict, when lives are literally at stake. The Assembly, to its credit, passed a detailed statement calling for an end to hostilities and rejecting "any misuse of religious language and authority to justify armed aggression and hatred."

Steinmeier and his colleagues from Germany also spoke to the theme of reconciliation. The President reminded his audience of "the murderous antisemitism incited among and by Christians over centuries—in Germany but not only here." He suggested that "the security of the Jewish community—in Germany, in Israel, in the nations of the world—must be one of the tenets of all religions." With this in mind, it was not surprising that later in the Assembly, representatives of German churches expressed concern over suggestions that the WCC describe Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands and settlement policy as a form of "apartheid," language which has been adopted by human rights organizations such as Amnesty International. Unfortunately, delegates interrupted the statement because it ran long. Even more unfortunately, Assembly moderators waited a day before explaining to us that they had given pre-approval to the German churches to take extra time. Here I think the Assembly's scheduling got in the way of a healthy discussion. The Assembly ultimately adopted a statement, *Seeking Just Peace for All in the Middle East*, which maintains the unity of its body by acknowledging that member churches have different points of view on the use of the apartheid term in this instance, while also strongly calling for an end to settlements and demanding justice for Palestinian peoples.

The message from the Indigenous Peoples Pre-Assembly

offered a cautionary note on the theme of unity, observing that:

The dominant discourse on reconciliation and unity has largely been responsible for the domination and suppression of Indigenous communities, and other marginalized communities. Christian unity, in an Indigenous context, has often meant little more than conformity to the colonial way of life, and the dissolution of Indigenous, land-centred identity.

Indigenous views on protecting creation, given their land-centred identity, informed much of the conversation at the Pre-Assembly. This led also to discussion about preserving and recovering Indigenous world views and the relationship of Indigenous spiritual beliefs to Christian beliefs. The Pre-Assembly message reasserted Indigenous agency and capacity "to formulate Christian theologies that have relevance, authenticity and integrity." The theme of Christ's love reverberated in the message as Indigenous peoples recalled that:

God was present in our lands and among our peoples before the colonizers arrived. When Christians brought the Bible to us we recognized the voice of our Creator in Jesus' teachings. But we did not hear a call to reject our identities. We heard God loves us. God loves our cultures and our languages and our spiritualities. God knows us and God loves us as spiritual beings in relationship with each other and with all of Creation. Our cultures are libraries of ancestral memory. Our languages which uphold our sacred relationship with our lands are storehouses of ecological well-being.

Action by Canadian delegates ensured that the Assembly made a full statement on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, based largely on the message from the Pre-Assembly.

The Assembly afforded opportunities for all Reformed church participants, as well as for all North American participants, to gather. It is noteworthy that while climate justice was the top issue identified by Canadians at the Assembly, when all North American responses were considered, the subject of "racism, white privilege and white supremacy" ranked as the top issue. The related subjects of Christian nationalism and growing social polarization and division also ranked highly. The full Assembly also made a formal

statement of concern on these threats to civil society.

One of the best summaries of how Christians might respond to the challenges of our times to demonstrate Christ's love in the pursuit of unity and reconciliation was given by Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the fifth and closing "thematic plenary." Reflecting on his experience at this summer's Lambeth conference, Welby said: "We found our way forward by being honest, by admitting we do not agree, without excluding one another." His was a call to love each other, when loving each other seems harder than ever, and a call to keep talking, keep working together, through our differences, as we address the crises of our time, especially the crisis facing our very existence in creation. I had missed Welby's address at the time, but I'm happy to say that it may be viewed online, along with many other segments of the Assembly at: oikoumene.org/assembly/assembly-live.

In closing, I'll offer a postscript concerning what I found most meaningful about the Assembly: the opportunity to connect with others, with fellow Presbyterians from Canada and around the world, with Canadians from other churches, and with fellow Christians.

I had missed hearing Justin Welby speak, because I was having a conversation with Hamish Galloway, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. He explained that his church is wrestling with matters of human sexuality and he was eager to learn from our experience in Canada. On the previous day, I had missed another plenary, while I spent time with a young man named Benjamin Jacuk from Alaska, who is researching Alaska's experience with boarding schools, America's Residential Schools. Ben spoke to Presbyterian participation in the mission history of his part of the world. And, on a special Sunday trip to Heidelberg, I chatted up a storm with Iriini Thabet, a woman of similar age who was a delegate from the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. We discovered that we had an enormous amount in common and became fast friends. I will carry their memories, and those of many others I met, along with the inspiration I drew from my time in Karlsruhe to keep faith with Christ's love in working for reconciliation within Canada and with all God's creation.



The opening prayer service of the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. PHOTO CAPTION: PAUL JEFFREY/WCC



Women dance and sing at the women and men's pre-assembly. PHOTO CREDIT: ALBIN HILLERT/WCC



Prayer service held in the Saint Stephen Church in Karlsruhe, with songs from Taizé, observed by a group of young people gathered for the Ecumenical Youth Gathering. PHOTO CREDIT: ALBIN HILLERT/WCC



Delegates vote on consensus items during the opening plenary session. PHOTO CREDIT: MIKE DUBOSE/WCC

JUSTICE

Is it Time to Change the Climate Conversation?

Written by Katharine Sisk,
Justice Ministries

The world is changing because a warming climate and its effects are increasingly being experienced in Canada and around the world. God loves creation and we are called to care for creation. But it can be difficult and even uncomfortable to discern how that principle translates into action.

It is easy to forget our mutual and interdependent relationship with creation. Too often, we see ourselves as superior to, or disconnected from, the rest of the natural world. This can lead to a sense of entitlement to control, use and abuse nature. For years I have used the language of “environmental stewardship” or “caring for creation” to describe a Christian understanding of the relationship between people and the natural world. But I have become uncomfortable with this language because it seems to problematically reinforce the human-centric notion that creation is a hierarchy, where humans are superior to, or even entirely disconnected from, the rest of creation. In the context of climate change, I think this language has failed to communicate the life-and-death, even existential, nature that the crisis presents.

The church has not been silent: statements on ecological justice span decades and include theological principles that emphasize the integrity of creation and humankind’s responsibilities to limit our impact on the natural world as a part of an ecological justice ethic. For example, in 1990, General Assembly adopted a report about global warming, recognizing that it “represents one of the most serious global environmental challenges to the health, security and

stability of human life and natural ecosystems,” (A&P 1990, pp. 415-6, 62) and in 2010, recognizing that “our climate is a public good” (A&P 2010, pp. 390-405, 17, 39).

Churches in the global south, where climate crisis impacts are acute, have spoken out. The 2004 General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (a predecessor of the World Communion of Reformed Churches), in a truth-to-power moment, identified the causes of global economic injustice and ecological destruction in its *Accra Confession*. The causes include:

- unrestrained competition, consumerism and the unlimited economic growth and accumulation of wealth;
- the idea that ownership of private property has no social obligation;
- the idea that capital speculation, deregulation of the market, privatization of public utilities and national resources, unrestricted access for foreign investments and imports, lower taxes and the unrestricted movement of capital will achieve wealth for all;
- the idea that social obligations, protection of the poor and the weak, trade unions, and relationships between people, are subordinate to the processes of economic growth and capital accumulation.

For the full text, see wrc.ch/accra/the-accra-confession.

The *Accra Confession* correctly notes that these values are incompatible for followers of Jesus. This is not a message directed to governments: it is from churches in the global south to churches in the global north. This document was

uncomfortable for many in the church in 2004 and I suspect it still causes discomfort today. However, we *must* have uncomfortable conversations if we actually intend to address the climate crisis.

What is an example of an uncomfortable conversation? A group of academics, scientists and activists, spurred by insufficient collective global action, came together with the goal of changing the course of climate crisis conversations. International agreements such as Kyoto, Copenhagen and Paris, while taking important steps toward developing a framework to limit greenhouse gas emissions, avoided talking about limiting, and even ending, the production of products that drive the growth of greenhouse gas emissions that in turn are warming the global climate. Recognizing this gap, work began on a proposal for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT). If decades of climate talks have not addressed the enormous gap¹ between the emission levels of existing and already-approved fossil fuel extraction projects and the actions and policies needed to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius (we’re already more than one degree warmer²), these academics, scientists and activists are accurately identifying a need to change the conversation. That is a difficult conversation.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has not endorsed or commented on a FFNPT. Does our church need to commit to a serious discussion that includes this type of proposal?

The church has supported the call for a just transition to a low-carbon economy, which includes the necessary supports for people who are impacted by this transition



and particularly for those working in the oil and gas industry.

But our political, and even our church conversations typically do not extend beyond talking about curbing greenhouse gas emissions. And as I think about my three-year-old son, who is growing up in a world that is warmer than the one I grew up in, my sense of urgency drives me to ask the question—do we have time for

more of the same? Or do we need to change the conversation?

FOOTNOTES

- 1 UNEP, *Production Gap Report 2021*, October 20, 2021, unep.org/resources/report/production-gap-report-2021
- 2 IPCC, *Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Assessment, Summary for Policymakers*, ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1

For information and resources about climate justice, visit the Social Action Hub at presbyterian.ca/social-action.

Journey to Christmas



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JUSTICE

Overdose Awareness Day at St. Paul's, Hamilton

By the Rev. J. Mark Lewis, Interim Moderator, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont.

On Wed., August 31, 2022, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church hosted an Overdose Awareness Day event for the city of Hamilton, Ont. Forty community agencies were represented and about 300 guests attended. The event included educational speakers and displays, as well as training on how to use both injectable and

nasal spray Naloxone.

Between 2016 and 2021, 29,052 people died of opioid overdoses in Canada. In the year 2021 alone, 7,560 Canadians died of an opioid overdose—that's 21 Canadians per day.

During the Overdose Awareness Day event, attendees learned about the various factors that have contributed to the public health crisis. These factors include:

- A misunderstanding of the

addictive risk of prescription opioids;

- Psychological, social and biological risk factors, such as genetics, mental health, early life experiences, trauma, poverty, lack of secure housing and other social determinants of health;
- Stigma toward substance use disorders;
- Frequent opioid prescribing and the prescribing of high dosage amounts for pain

relief;

- Lack of awareness and/or access to alternative treatments for pain;
- Use of prescription opioids by individuals to whom they are not prescribed, such as friends and family members;
- Lack of access to prescription opioids, coupled with limited education around safe drug use, leading to illicit opioid use;
- Saturation of illegal drugs that are laced with fentanyl and its analogues; and
- A lack of comprehensive care to respond to all the mental and physical health needs of an individual.

The event also featured a Truth Hearing in which community and church leaders, including the Rev. Dr. J. Mark Lewis of St. Paul's, listened to people who have struggled with opioid addiction. The direct personal experiences revealed in the Truth Hearing made it clear that trauma, poverty, hunger, homelessness and stigma all had a direct relationship to opioid

addiction.

St. Paul's has been home to Hamilton Urban Core's Consumption and Treatment Site since early 2022. The facility provides safe injection sites as well as counselling for medical concerns, employment, housing and mental-health concerns. It hosts up to 27,000 visits per year. On Sept. 29, 2022, St. Paul's participated in a ground-breaking ceremony for Hamilton Urban Core's new permanent facility, which will open on Cannon Street at the end of 2023. St. Paul's will likely continue to be a satellite site even after the permanent facility opens.



New Home for Hamilton Consumption and Treatment Site



The proposed new building.

By the Rev. J. Mark Lewis, Interim Moderator, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont.

On Sept. 29, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont., hosted the ground-breaking event for the new home of Hamilton Urban Core. St. Paul's has been the host of the Hamilton Urban Core Consumption and Treatment site since 2021. The new facility at 430 Cannon Street is scheduled to open in November of 2023. It will be a two-story 26,000 square foot building that provides primary health care, community health

and harm reduction services, as well as mental health and addictions counselling, meal programs and more—all in one location.

For more than 25 years, Hamilton Urban Core has been addressing health inequities, such as poverty, racism, discrimination, unemployment and homelessness, which is faced by too many community members, neighbours, friends and families in Hamilton's city core. St. Paul's is thankful to be a supporter and partner with Hamilton Urban Core in the work of guarding the equality, dignity and worth of all people.



The Rev. Dr. J. Mark Lewis speaks at the ground-breaking event. PHOTO CAPTION: HUC STAFF.

LEADERSHIP

Intentional Community at Ruth House



*By the Rev. Jeff Crawford,
Canadian Ministries and
Crieff Hills Retreat Centre*

The pandemic has been creating huge challenges for every Christian community. Thankfully, it is presenting the church with fresh opportunities for ministry, too. For Crieff Hills Retreat Centre, a mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, it led to the creation of a new Intentional Community. Located in Ruth House, a five-bedroom home on a secluded part of the 250-acre property, residents can stay for up to 12 months in a private room, filling their days with a combination of rest, work and service.

Shared life is a powerful way of breaking out of the individual isolation that is so prevalent in our age. Although participants prepare their own meals and create their own daily schedule, a weekly group meal and informal worship gathering provides a steady community rhythm. Led by the Rev. Dr. Kristine O'Brien, the Crieff Executive Director and a Starter in Cyclical PCC, the gatherings are joyful and informal, with plenty of time for faith-filled questions and conversations. There are plenty of informal gatherings as well, whether that is over a cup of tea at the breakfast table, or a glass of wine before supper. "We are creating space for God's transforming power to be at work in people's lives," explained Kristine. "And we know that requires a slower pace where genuine relationships are fostered."

In the summer and fall, residents of the community invite the neighbourhood to gather at monthly bonfires. Individuals, couples, and even local youth groups have come to connect

with others amid laughter and smores. An online weekly book group that started from within the community also welcomes participants from beyond its walls and has proven to be a safe place to ask hard questions about faith and the church.

At first, the community had only one resident, but now it has grown to a steady stream of people who come for three, six or twelve months. Some are on sabbatical or intermission. Some are in a time of vocational discernment. Others have come simply to explore a healthy rhythm of work and rest. All of them find ways to offer their gifts to the wider mission of Crieff Hills by pulling weeds in the gardens, working in the facility's dining room or serving alongside housekeeping staff. A short application and interview help to ensure that residents are ready for their stay and have a solid plan for getting the most out of their experience. As the community continues to evolve and emerge, Kristine receives support from Cyclical PCC network, which hosts monthly online gatherings, provides missional leadership assessments, monthly one-on-one coaching and an annual learning event.

The goal of the Intentional Community is to offer healing, growth and deepening faith through an intentional period of time away. That aligns with the overall mission of Crieff Hills Retreat Centre, which strives to offer opportunities for people from all walks of life to connect with the divine and find renewal. Both ministries are rooted in an understanding that Sabbath is an essential and life-giving Christian practice.

Through the generosity of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wel-

lington, and support from Cyclical PCC ecosystem, this new worshipping community is marked by hospitality, learning, worship and compassion. The rural setting of farm, fields and forest offer the perfect location for participants to reflect, pray and draw close to God's creation. For those who may be interested in participating, more information is available at crieffhills.com

Some books from the monthly book club that are influencing the life of the community:

- *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* by Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove and Enuma Okoro
- *The Power of Ritual: Turning Everyday Activities into Soulful Practices* by Casper Kuile
- *The Whole Language* by Gregory Boyle
- *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor
- *In the Shelter* by Pádraig Ó Tuama
- *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall-Kimmerer
- *Faith After Doubt* by Brian McLaren

In 2021, The Presbyterian Church in Canada provided a grant of \$150,000 to Crieff Hills Retreat Centre.

Wellness Fund Offers Retreats at Crieff Hills

During the pandemic, Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, Ont., was able to support almost 20 re-

treats for frontline and health-care workers who needed rest and rejuvenation during a time of chaos.

Acknowledging the need for rest and rejuvenation during ongoing challenging times, a new Wellness Fund has been established that offers support for low-cost retreat programs and bursaries for those who need restful opportunities most. The Wellness Fund will allow participants to immerse themselves in nature to relax, restore and renew, all while having a room to stay in and meals provided to them. Anyone is eligible for the Wellness Fund,

however those with financial need, frontline health-care workers, BIPOC and the 2SLGBTQAI+ community will be prioritized.

To help support the Wellness Fund, gifts of \$20 or more (marked "Wellness Fund") can be made online at crieffhills.com/support/donate or by calling 519-824-7898. Tax receipts are available.

Crieff Hills was created through the generosity of Col. J.B. Maclean and continues to thrive because of many faithful donors and volunteers. For more information about Crieff Hills Retreat Centre please visit crieffhills.com.



The husband-and-wife music duo of Druzie Music performed at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre on August 7, as part of a fundraising concert to raise money for the Wellness Fund.

LEADERSHIP

What Are We Waiting For?

Advent Reflections with Canada's Leaders of the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Churches



Every Monday during Advent, the national church leaders of The Anglican Church of Canada, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The United Church of Canada will release an ecumenical Advent meditation as well as conversations that will reflect the four Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love, while addressing the challenges facing Canadian churches.

Every Thursday during Advent, listeners will be invited to join in a live discussion, via Zoom, with one of the leaders on that week's Advent theme. Attendees will be able to ask questions during the online conversation.

Participating church leaders:

The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate, The Anglican Church of Canada

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson, National Bishop, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

The Rev. Dr. Robert Faris, Moderator, The Presbyterian Church in Canada

The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen

Lansdowne, Moderator, The United Church of Canada
Schedule for the live online discussions, Thursdays during Advent:

December 1: Hope, "Signs of the Time" – Bob Faris in conversation with Susan C. Johnson about the church in the 21st Century. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many trends that all Canadian churches are experiencing. All the churches face shrinking membership and a changed position in communities across the country. Can we read the signs of our own times to understand where we are being called to be the church?

December 8: Peace, "Finding the Good Path" – Bob Faris in conversation with Carmen Lansdowne about truth telling and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Three of the churches represented here ran Residential Schools. The recovery of hundreds of unmarked graves in Kamloops and in many other locations has once again shocked all of us into hearing the truth that Indigenous peoples have been

telling for decades. What is the path forward?

December 15: Joy, "God's Love Includes Everyone" – Carmen Lansdowne in conversation with Bob Faris about the inclusion of all in the church. For decades, all churches have been engaged in discussion around the inclusion of 2SLGBTQI+ people. All four participating churches have taken steps toward greater inclusion, but the discernment continues. What does it mean to include everyone?

December 22: Love, "The Cost of Discipleship" – Bob Faris in conversation with Linda Nicholls about the church's public witness in a rapidly changing social and political context in Canada. At times, the church is called to take positions that are not in tune with popular opinion or with other church partners. When should the church take a prophetic stand, and are we willing to pay the price to witness to the gospel?

To receive the meeting link for each event and receive email reminders for each week's upcoming events, visit presbyterian.ca/ecumenical-advent.



The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate, The Anglican Church of Canada



The Rev. Dr. Robert Faris, Moderator, The Presbyterian Church in Canada



The Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Moderator, The United Church of Canada

Guder Scholar Program in Missional Leadership

By the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart,
Professor of Mission Studies at
Vancouver School of Theology

This past August, six pastors who are in their first 15 years of ministry were selected to gather in Vancouver at St. Andrew's Hall as participants in the Guder Scholar Program. Named for the Centre for Missional Leadership's Senior Fellow, the Rev. Dr. Darrell Guder, the program received applications from across North America. Through a selection process, the diverse and gifted set of six leaders were invited to participate in a three-day intensive retreat to explore key themes for the missional church today.

This year, the theme was "Missional Leadership for an Online Church." The six participants (four from The Presbyterian Church in

Canada, one from the Christian Reformed Church and one from PC-USA) engaged in pre-learning with both online conversations and through reading the book *Following: Embodied Discipleship in a Digital Age* written by Jason Byassee & Andria Irwin. Participants' travel costs were covered through the generous support of the Cork Fund at St. Andrew's Hall, and the Guder scholars stayed in the St. Andrew's Hall residence for the week, allowing for some free time to explore the beauty of Vancouver in the summer.

In our time together, the ministry team of the Centre for Missional Leadership—the Rev. Albert Chu, CML Director; the Rev. Dr. Tim Dickau, Program Associate; Andrea Perrett, Associate in New Witnessing Communities; and the

Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart, Dean—offered teaching times on the theme of Online Church. One day we had a "field trip" downtown to Coastal Church to learn more about their multi-site-campus approach to ministry, as well as their innovations regarding online church during the pandemic. In between the teaching times, the Guder Scholars enjoyed great meals, good conversation and even a Vancouver Canadians baseball game!

Interested in joining us next year? The August 2023 Guder Scholar Program will begin accepting applications in January 2023. The theme for next year is "Missional Leadership and Evangelism" with our good friend Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison from Perkins School of Theology as our guest speaker. While we always



receive more applications than there are spots available, if you are in your first fifteen years of ordained ministry, please apply by going to standrews.edu.

The Guder Scholar program is part of the ministry of St. Andrew's Hall, a college of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, called to discern and equip the future church that God is bringing.



STEWARDSHIP

Cultivating a Habit of Generous Giving

By Jim MacDonald and Karen Plater, Stewardship & Planned Giving

Every Sunday, an offering of gifts is collected. Whether the plate is passed around in person or virtually, collecting “tithes and offerings” is central to Christian worship.

Making an offering to God appears at the very beginning of the Bible. Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham and Jacob all make offerings. In Genesis 28, the concept of the tithe (10%) appears when Jacob vows to return a tenth of all he has been given back to God.

Leviticus outlines as many as 14 different types of offerings, with specific details on when, how and where they are to be given. Some are the best of the first items harvested or animals born, while others are a percentage of the harvest. Some are burnt on the altar and others gathered as the harvest is counted. Some are freewill offerings, others are in response to festivals like Pentecost and Passover or from the spoils of war. Offerings are made as a way to build peace, as atonement for sin and purification from disease. Once collected, they are used in different ways: to care for

the poor, the travellers, the fatherless and the widowed.

The Bible doesn't tell us exactly how the tithes were implemented. Leviticus 27:30–33 calls for 10% of the harvest, flocks and trees. It is interesting to note that this offering was a tax on landowners, farmers and herdsmen and it isn't really mentioned with respect to other professions. The proceeds were primarily used for the Levites and priest to have food to survive. If this is combined with the other tithes and offerings described in Leviticus, Israelites could have been giving as much as 20–30% of their income.

In the New Testament, Jesus called out religious leaders for turning their tithes into a show of righteousness while simultaneously exploiting people. While he commended the giving, he reminded them not to neglect “the weightier matters of the law,” namely “justice and mercy and faithfulness” (Matthew 23:23).

We are told Jesus was angered by the corruption in the temple and that he threw the collectors and sellers out (Luke 19:45–48). Shortly after, he noted that a widow—who the temple should have been caring for and protecting—was more faithful in giving all she

had than the ones who gave to gain notice (Luke 21:1–4). Today, leaders in a congregation are challenged to ensure that the gifts given to God are effectively and efficiently used to do God's mission.

Jesus talked about care for the poor. To expose how money can become an idol, Jesus told the rich man to sell all he had and give to the poor (Mark 10:21). Jesus encouraged opening up the banquet to those who could not pay (Luke 14:13–14). He said the main difference between those recognized in the kingdom of God and those unknown would be whether they cared for the stranger, fed the hungry, visited the sick (Matthew 25:31). Christ gave all he had—his life—for the sins of the world.

In Acts and the Epistles, we see that giving was an important part of the early church as they strove to follow the teachings of Jesus. Giving was a response to God's love and it was taught that you weren't supposed to just give money—you were to live your life in a way that reflected God's mission. People sold their possessions and the proceeds were distributed as needs arose (Acts 4:32–35). For the offerings collected by Paul, we are told people gave joyfully and generously, despite experiencing extreme poverty (2 Corinthians 9:8; 1 Corinthians 16:1–3; Galatians 6:6). The offerings supported people in mission and ministry and cared for the poor.

So, How Do We Give Today?

There is no exact prescription of what, when and how to give; however, there are principles that we can glean so that our gifts reflect the heart of the law. Giving is voluntary and should inspire joy. We are reminded in 2 Corinthians 9:7 to “give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Some Christians choose to contribute 10% of their income (before or after tax—it's up to the giver) in the spirit of the tithe. For some, that's an unrealistic goal,



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STEWARDSHIP

Reflections of True Giving

By Vivian Ketchum, originating from Wauzbusk Onigum Nation of Northern Ontario and now a member of Place of Hope Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Man., and former Life and Mission Agency Committee member

Vivian Ketchum regularly shares her experiences of day-to-day life on Facebook, chronicling her journey to healing and reconciliation and her perceptive and often humorous insights on life. She has experienced homelessness and recently

graduated with her GED, finally helping her secure employment with a living wage. Recently she shared her experiences with giving.

June 13, 2020

Me: I have so much food. I feel so safe. I work hard to put food in my home.

The Voice: Vivian, you need to give.

Me: No, I am good.

The Voice: There are others going without.

Me: There are food banks and other organizations out there. A



Vivian Ketchum.

sense of smugness settles in with my reply.

The Voice: There is that mother who can't find a babysitter. An elderly person who can't get around. That homeless person who is too scared to go to a soup kitchen.

Me: I can feel my smugness slipping away. I don't feel a sense of safety as I look at my cupboards.

The Voice: You need to share what you have been blessed with.

Me: If I give, I won't have that much for myself. My needs are important. My household is important.

The Voice: More important than "love thy neighbour"?

Me: Any resistance to giving slips away with those words. I walk over to my full cupboards and take out some to give away. My heart and mindset are replaced with true charity.

The Voice: I will put people in your path for you to share your blessings with.

Me: As I share my blessings with others, I notice my cupboards never seem to empty. Now as I look around my cupboards, instead of saying "I feel safe" I can say "I feel truly blessed."

Peace.

September 21, 2022

Checked my kitchen food supplies. I have the fixings for a nice beef stew. I was gifted lots of vegetables the past week. I also

picked up lots of free potatoes. Gave a few pounds to a friend. Asked her if she needed more potatoes. "No, no, I have lots now," she tells me. That is what I like about giving to friends. Give them more than they expected. You want bread? I give them loaves of bread with a tub of margarine and other sandwich fixings.

I still don't fully understand this giving part. I give freely and willingly. I check my heart after I give. Any begrudge-ness? Any reluctance on my part? Any regrets? Nope. Just a simple joy. I don't have much, but I realize that the little I do have is considered plenty by others who have less than I do. Four walls, a roof over my head. A comfy bed with blankets. If my cupboards are bare, all I do is ask and food is gifted to me.

I give freely of my food. Yet my cupboards don't go bare. That is the part I don't fully understand. It amazes me.

Continued from page 9

and others might find it too low. But the idea is that we:

- give in response to what we are given
- are intentional about giving
- give a proportion of what has been given to us
- and make it a regular habit

These principles are interwoven into our daily lives and routines and are part of our celebrations and festivals. It is a way we worship and honour and love God.

In addition to giving, it is important to pay attention to issues of justice when spending money. Support local where possible. Look for items that are fairly traded and sustainable so that the money you spend has a positive impact on the economy, environment and people involved in the production of what you buy.

Where Can We Begin?

If you haven't made it a regular habit to give part of your income, you can begin by cultivating a habit of giving.

Steven J. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, says developing a habit happens when "knowledge, skill, and desire" intersect. So, decide that you want to be intentional about giving regularly. B.J. Fogg, a behavioural scientist at Stanford University who developed a methodology called *Tiny Habits*, explains that the best way to form a habit is to take the behaviour you want, make it tiny and then nurture its growth. According to

Fogg, you can create an "anchor moment" to help you begin, like getting ready to go to church or opening the link for online worship. Then you remember your habit: putting money in your offering envelope or clicking the donation button. You then celebrate your habit by saying a prayer of thanks to God for giving you the ability to give.

Proportional giving means you give according to your income, though it assumes you have a living wage. Many people divide their budget between wants and needs to help identify discretionary funds. Think about what you are willing to sacrifice to share with others. Some find they can choose to drink water instead of buying a case of pop, or make meals at home instead of going out to eat. Some choose to watch a movie on Netflix instead of going out to a theatre, and shop at clothing exchanges or reuse stores. Small changes may allow you to have more than you think. Again and again, studies show that people who have lived on the edge of society usually still find funds and goods to share and are the most generous per capita givers.

However, what happens when unexpected expenses come up? This current period of inflation is particularly difficult for people who are on fixed incomes, or whose income hasn't increased as rapidly as their expenses. If you don't have any funds left



after paying for your needs and feel you can't give money at this time, don't. Be at peace. Paul emphasizes that, "If the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have" (2 Corinthians 8:1). If, by the time rent and groceries are paid, there is nothing left over, or you even find yourself in a deficit situation, remember that in the Bible, there was no tithe on the poor. Beyond that, freely accept help from others. You can give and pay it forward when you are able.

When considering what to give, everyone can also consider their time and talents. These days, congregations and charities alike struggle to attract volunteers to participate in the mission and ministry programs that they want to accomplish. Your gift of time may be worth more than a gift of cash.

Giving a portion of our income

back to God is an act of worship and thanksgiving. Regardless of the size of your gift, plan to give regularly and in proportion to your earnings. This giving is something we do out of love for God and love for our neighbour.

Jesus says, "Where your treasure goes, there your heart goes also" (Matthew 6:21). You don't even have to believe to give. The very act of putting a gift in the offering plate does something to change our hearts. Inviting people to give is a way of opening hearts and souls to the message of the gospel and allows us to participate in God's mission of caring for the bodies, hearts and souls of others.

Jesus said the two most important teachings in the Bible were to love God and love our neighbours. When looking at your resources—time, talent and treasure—ask how they are fulfilling these teachings, and you can be sure that you are partaking in God's mission.

Where Should I Give?

There are so many organizations asking for donations that it can be difficult to know which to choose. Where you give is for you to decide, so look for causes that implement God's mission. The offerings in the Bible were used to support mission and ministry and to care for the poor—regardless of religion, culture, gender or sexuality. Remember the Good Samaritan.

Many people decide on an amount they want to give to the congregation they regularly attend to support its ministry, and an amount to support charities outside the church. Look carefully at what has touched your life and give accordingly. Make sure you research the charities you support—including your own congregation! Learn how and where they spend their funds and if they use good stewardship practices. You can also increase the effectiveness of your gift and learn more about what it is supporting by volunteering your time. For many charities, volunteers who donate their time help them increase the impact of gifts they are given.

Consider administrative costs, but remember that these are necessary to ensure good stewardship of funds. Administrative costs can be difficult to compare between charities, as each may interpret "administration" a little differently. Most reputable charities will allocate 10–20% to the running of the charity.

What's most important in deciding where to give is the impact your gift will have—so read their reports, check out their website and ask lots of questions. By pooling our gifts together—whether through the congregation, the denomination or other charities—God is able to accomplish many things we could never do on our own, and often beyond our imagination.

STEWARDSHIP



How Canadians Give

by Karen Plater, Stewardship & Planned Giving

Canadians donated \$10.6 billion to charities in 2020, according to Statistics Canada.¹ The money came from 5.1 million people, representing 20% of tax filers.

While fewer people gave, those who did, gave more. 48,000 (0.6% of tax filers) fewer people gave in 2020, compared to 2019. However, the overall amount given in 2020 increased 2.7% over 2019 and the median donation increased by 9.7%. The increase in size of gifts prevented charities from experiencing steep declines in revenue.

Analyzing Giving Trends

The median donation of Canadian givers was \$340, so people who gave more than \$6.53/week were in the top 50% of donors. Those who gave \$20+/week were in the top 29%, and \$96+/week were in the top 1%. A person giving 5% of their \$60,000 annual income gave \$58/week, putting them into the top 15% of donors. In this light, it is easy to see that many who give in congregations are part of the most generous people in Canada.

The older the age group, the more likely a tax filer was to give larger donations. Those aged

65+ gave \$9 out of every \$20 donated. Their median donation of \$550 was more than double the \$260 given by the 35–44 age group.¹

Analyzing donations made between 2006 and 2019, CanadaHelps² believes the decline in the number of donors is not simply a consequence of COVID-19 but continues a longer-term trend. Interestingly, the groups giving less weren't the people we would think have less disposable income and are most vulnerable to increases in cost-of-living. Families with incomes less than \$20K increased their giving by 2.8%, whereas families with incomes \$150,000+ decreased their rate of giving two times greater than lower-income families.

Generation X saw the most significant decline in giving when comparing giving rates by age, even though younger Millennials faced steeper housing and cost-of-living expenses compared to previous generations.

These statistics don't include people who give but don't file tax returns, don't report their gifts, or don't have receipts because their gifts were too small for a receipt, were given through crowdfunding platforms not linked to registered charities or were given at check-out counters. These donations

are not insignificant—according to the 2018 Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, they can amount to another \$2 billion.

The only age group more likely to donate in 2020 compared to 2019 was donors aged 0–24, whose gifts rose by 19.1%. While the impact on the total amount of gifts was low because their median donation was \$50, this is a good sign for the future. The GSS showed that while youth (15–24) had the lowest amount of charitable donations, this same group had the highest participation rate in volunteer activities. Whether they gave or not, many young people expressed their generosity by volunteering, fundraising, attending protests or spreading the word about a charity or cause.

The survey also showed that younger Canadians who haven't yet given financially, intend to give

in the future and have higher levels of trust in charities compared to older generations.² Congregations wanting to engage younger people should also know that they are knowledgeable givers. They expect digital engagement and look for more cost-effective ways to give (like e-transfers and gifts of securities). And while mental health is a top cause supported across all generations, younger generations prioritize climate change and racial justice. In comparison, older generations prioritize medical research and treatment, senior care, and poverty in Canada.

Encourage Giving

CanadaHelps projects that giving in 2022 could drop by as much as 12% due to the pandemic, inflation and other challenges. At the same time, a growing number of Canadians are expected to turn to charities for assistance. It is,

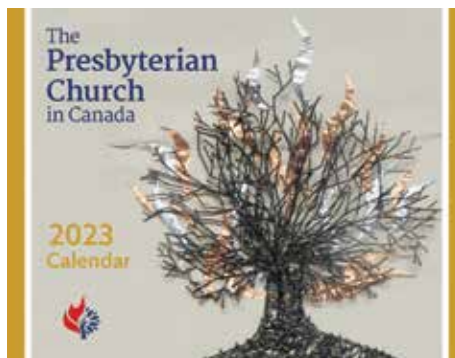
therefore, as important as ever to encourage people to explore what scripture teaches about giving. People who are already generous by society's norms can learn how to give more, and those who have never given might begin to nurture this aspect of Christian discipleship. It's never too late to discover the joy of generosity.

In their study, CanadaHelps found that more than 80% of every generation strongly agreed with the statement, "I have a role to play in making a change in the world." The key to connecting with all generations is to help them see how their gifts are making a difference and why it matters.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Statistics Canada: www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220412/dq220412d-eng.htm
- 2 CanadaHelps 2022 Giving Report: canadahelps.org/en/the-giving-report

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- Generation Z** (born between 1997 to 2012)
- Millennials** (born between 1981 and 1996)
- Generation X** (those born between 1965 to 1980)
- Baby Boomers** (those born between 1946 to 1964)

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Vacation Bible School Fun with the St. John's Summer Team

By Rebekah Dieleman, Certified Child Life Specialist. Rebekah has been involved in the summer student program at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont., since 2017

The summer student program at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont., serves our congregation, and surrounding churches in our community, by assisting with the summer camp programs and providing support for children with special needs.

Initially funded by a grant from The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Creative Ministry to Children & Youth Fund, this year support also came from the Presbytery of Oak Ridges Youth Fund and the

Canada Summer Jobs program.

The 2022 summer team included four university/high school students—Kayla Gunn, Adam Howe, David Howe, Brooke Wappel—lead by Program Director Rebekah Dieleman. The team led Vacation Bible School (VBS) camps at St. John's Presbyterian, and many churches across the region, who resumed in-person programming this summer.

This year, our team kicked off the summer by leading two weeks of VBS at St. John's Presbyterian. Over 30 children and nine youth volunteers from the community attended our camps, and we provided one-on-one support for four children with special needs. Our program was called "Monumental: Celebrating God's



Greatness." The days were filled with music, Bible stories, crafts, games, science experiments and team activities. We included theme days that correlated with that day's Bible story as well as daily verses for the children to learn. Each week also included a water day with fun outdoor team-building activities for the children to enjoy. It is always so rewarding to see the children's excitement

grow throughout the week as they learn more about God and make memories with their new friends at camp. We also love to see their confidence grow and we provide many opportunities for the children to lead in helping with worship and prayer.

Following the weeks of camp in our own church, the summer student team served at Bradford Baptist Church, Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, and Trinity Anglican Church, to assist with their VBS programming, including providing one-on-one support to campers.

By running our VBS programming, our main objective is to teach children about Jesus in a fun and interactive way, creating space for them to build upon their faith and their relationship with

God. We also want to create a camp environment that is positive, supportive and encouraging to all our campers. We place a big emphasis on creating adaptable programming that is inclusive for the developmental needs of all children, to allow everyone the opportunity to attend camp. This is achieved through planning and training a strong team of leaders that motivate and encourage one another. With our summer student team, we have the opportunity to provide this care at our VBS, as well as help to provide adaptable programming at various summer camps in our community. The hope with this initiative is to create inclusive camp programming that welcomes all children and families in our community.



Outreach to Post-Secondary Students in Windsor

By Pastor Sbalini Sankarlal, leadership team, University Community Church in Windsor, Ont.

In the early part of the winter, University Community Church in Windsor, Ont., began an outreach program to the students at the nearby university and college. One mission goal for our church is to be a home away from home for students, starting with making connections with them.

What better way than over meals! During Covid we began

providing "take away" meals for students, twice a month. It was great to meet the students and learn more about them. But the brevity of the moment was not enough. Students and the people of UCC wanted to converse more with each other. So, in the spring when the pandemic restrictions were lifted, we held our first in-person sit-down meal, and it certainly was a success.

We served well over 150 students, even though we anticipated 75! For our second meal, we served over 160 students. We



continued during July and August, serving more meals once

a month (including takeouts). We have had many congregants

volunteer to serve, mingle, wash dishes, make coffee and, of course, clean up. One of the fruits of this endeavour was in seeing the students offer to help in the serving and clean up. We have enjoyed serving shoulder to shoulder with them and will continue to do so in the future. We are excited to see how Jesus will continue to lead us to bear fruit from this outreach.

The meals are provided by Feeding Windsor-Essex, a mission group with a goal to ensure all people in Windsor-Essex receive healthy, well-balanced meals, regardless of socio-economic barriers. We are happy to know that by partnering with them, we are also supporting their mission as we carry out ours. We give thanks to The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Avondbloem Experimental Fund for the funds needed to help launch this program.

Our goal is to continue meeting and eating once a month, broaden it to include professors, faculty and staff, invite speakers, and more.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Supporting “Days for Girls” in Nottawa

By Gloria Phillips, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Nottawa, Ont.

It took six hours and more than 30 volunteers, but the South Georgian Bay, Ont., team of “Days for Girls,” met their goal of packing more than 600 Days for Girls kits in one day, thanks to the help of volunteers from the community and youth from the Pathfinders group. Behind the happy faces pictured are the many boxes that represent their day’s work. But what this picture doesn’t show are the countless hours of work that went into preparing the components that go into each Days for Girls kit.

Days for Girls was founded by Celeste Mergens in 2008. At the time, Celeste was assisting at an orphanage in Nairobi, Kenya. In the wake of post-election violence, the population at the orphanage had swelled from 400 children to 1,400. When Celeste asked about the menstrual health practices of the girls at the orphanage, she found out that many of the girls spent several days each month sitting on cardboard in their rooms. This was the beginning of Days for Girls. It was a long journey from the original reusable feminine hygiene pads that Celeste and her team of volunteers invented, to the kits that are distributed today. There have been more than 30 modifications through the years, but in the

years between 2008 and 2021, more than two and a half million women and girls in 145 countries have benefited from the idea that began in an orphanage.

Chris Weston became involved with Days for Girls after seeing a random post about the organization one day on Facebook. As a woman and a retired teacher, Chris was drawn to Days for Girls because of the opportunity it provided for young women to remain in school full-time—many were missing a week or more of school every month. With a passion for education, Chris saw an opportunity to combine her love of sewing with skills learned from her years of teaching.

Knowing she would need support to begin a Days for Girls group in our area, Chris approached her friend and neighbour, Karen Milne, a member of the church and a retired teacher and skilled sewer. Together, they formed the South Georgian Bay Team of Days for Girls.

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Nottawa, Ont., has provided a home for the South Georgian Bay Team of Days for Girls since the fall of 2016. The group is part of Emmanuel’s Donate-A-Day program, which includes both Days for Girls and making milk bag mats for Milk Bags Unlimited. It was a slow start for the SGB Days for Girls Team. The volunteers were few, but they were dedicated, so the group began to



grow in numbers.

The group continued to grow through the pandemic, which brought new challenges to the team, as it did to all of us. They quickly adapted to these challenges, moving their sewing to their homes and seeing a fundraising opportunity in making face masks. (Much of the money for the supplies needed for the kits comes from fundraising.) In addition to making masks to sell, the team donated almost 700 masks to local charities. They also made 100 isolation gowns, which were donated to the local hospital, the hospice and three nursing homes—all while continuing to sew components for feminine hygiene kits from their homes.

Today, the team is back at Emmanuel Church, where they meet on the first and third Friday of each month. On those days, the ladies work together, diligently creat-

ing the components that go into each kit—the shield, the liners, the carry pouch and a drawstring bag made of cotton with the Days for Girls label sewn on the front.

With the sewing completed, the next task was purchasing underwear (two for each kit), washcloths (one per kit) and hotel-sized bars of soap (one per kit). The last item for the kit is a care and use instruction card.

On September 10, 34 women and teens gathered at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church with the goal of assembling all 600 kits. When they finished at the end of the day, they had not only met their goal, they had exceeded it by 83 kits! 683 kits were packed and ready to be delivered to World Vision in Mississauga for distribution wherever most needed.

Since their inception in 2016, the South Georgian Bay Team of Days for Girls has also sent 50

kits to the Dominican Republic (2018), 160 kits to the Days for Girls Refugee Project (2019), 60 kits to Wollo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2019), 161 kits to Lebanon (2020), 43 kits to Wollo (2020), 50 kits to Haiti (2021) and 542 kits to World Vision Canada (2021).

Each kit costs between \$15 and \$20 to make and financial donations are always gratefully accepted and can be made through CanadaHelps at canadahelps.org, under “Days for Girls Canada” and choose the “South Georgian Bay, Ont.” option.

Days for Girls provides holistic menstrual health education, increases access to menstrual products and advances global menstrual equity through partnerships with governments and health coalitions. Learn more about Days for Girls International at daysforgirls.org.

Knit and Knatter in Uxbridge

By Anne Phillips and Melanie Beattie, St. Andrew’s-Chalmers Presbyterian Church in Uxbridge, Ont.

The pandemic has been a difficult time for everyone, and while we’ve had our share of challenges at St. Andrew’s-Chalmers Presbyterian Church in Uxbridge, Ont., it also became the perfect opportunity to reflect upon who we are as Christians and how we

can put our faith into action. It was because of this time of self-reflection that we developed our mission statement: Acting in faith, we offer care and community to all. We realized how important a sense of belonging is, not just within the walls of the church but well beyond into the community.

St. Andrew’s-Chalmers Presbyterian Church has been home to the Loaves and Fishes Food Bank for the past 30 years. Last

winter, a caring person donated some warm hats, mittens and scarves to the Loaves and Fishes Food Bank for their clientele. This bred “a germ of an idea” for the start of a Knit and Knatter group.

The congregation began a seven-week program where people from the church could meet to knit hats, mittens and scarves for clients of the Food Bank. Since the local United Church was destroyed in the devastating tornado that struck

Uxbridge, their church members were invited to join us as well. Word of the group soon spread and incited members of the local community to also join. When the program was announced, a non-knitting member of the congregation donated \$50 to purchase wool, and there have been other donations of wool as well.

The knitting has been going well, and we will have plenty of winter items ready for the clients

of the Food Bank. But this has not been the only benefit of starting the group. People have been enjoying being together again and being able to share a cup of tea and some conversation. We have already been asked if Knit and Knatter could start up in the new year. At the time of writing, the decision has not yet been made, but it would be safe to assume that, at the very least, this will be an annual fall event.



MISSION AND OUTREACH

Legacy of Faith and Hope Lives on in Exeter

By Dorothy Henderson, member of the former Caven Presbyterian Church in Exeter, Ont.

When the members of Caven Presbyterian Church in Exeter, southwestern Ontario, made the painful decision in 2021 to close their church because of declining membership and resources, there were tears and sadness.

For 158 years, the solid yellow brick building, with its imposing steeple set high over the Ausable River, had been home to hundreds of joyful worshippers and lively children in Sunday School programs and day camps. The church walls had embraced joyful couples in weddings, seen the baptisms of their children and heard the cries of mourning when a beloved member died.

While a church may be described as “only a building,” it is so much more: church buildings

provide sacred space where insight, comfort and God’s care are evident. Caven Church offered fellowship, Bible study, spiritual nourishment for people of all ages, hundreds of shared meals, music, benevolent gifts and laughter. Is it any wonder that the members mourn this loss in their lives and community?

It brings some comfort to know that the proceeds from the sale of the church building are helping three groups: the national church, Camp Kintail and a local hospice in Exeter called Jessica’s House, named after a local university student, Jessica Hamather, who died of a rare form of cancer in 2015 at the age of twenty-two.

On Sept. 22, 2022, members of the former church gathered at Jessica’s House to present a cheque for \$74,374.72. Several people from the church continue to volunteer at the hospice, bring-



Front from left are: Jessica’s House coordinator of volunteer and bereavement services, Grace Winbow, Donna Perry, Bill Wheeler, Dorothy Henderson, Bernice Thompson, John Henderson, Keith Strang and Jessica’s House community relations and fund development coordinator, Bre Thompson. Back from left are: Barb Dalrymple, Sandi Strang, Marten Dykstra, Laurie Dykstra, Carol Finlayson, Murray Finlayson and Elsie Willis. PHOTO CREDIT: EXETER LAKESHORE TIMES-ADVANCE.

ing comfort and peace to those in the final stages of life, and offering grief and bereavement support to residents and their families.

The gift to Jessica’s House was inspired by the legacy, courage and example of a former Exeter woman, Dr. Margaret Strang Savage, whose life was defined by healing and faith. Margaret grew up on a farm outside Exeter where her nephew, Keith Strang, and his family—all of whom were members of Caven Church—still live.

Margaret’s faith was nurtured both in her family and within the embrace of Caven Church, where her grandfather was a founding member.

After graduating from medical school in 1929—the only woman in her class—Margaret Strang

was appointed by Presbyterian Home Missions as the physician for Alberta Peace River Country where, it is reported, this diminutive woman with an unquenchable spirit, made her rounds on horseback.

In the mid-1940s, she was appointed by the Women’s Missionary Society as a doctor to John Neil Hospital in Cold Lake, Alberta. In addition to her medical duties, Dr. Strang Savage served as a minister and established youth groups: Sunday School, Trail Rangers and Wolf Cubs. Her awareness and knowledge of the plight of abused women led to the establishment of the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre in Cold Lake, Alberta, in 1982.

To say that Margaret Strang Sav-

age is a hero in The Presbyterian Church in Canada is no exaggeration. Her courage, determination and indomitable faith left a legacy of hope and healing. Although the congregation in which she was nurtured is now dissolved, it gives the former members comfort and encouragement to continue her healing ministry by supporting Jessica’s House Hospice in the community where Margaret grew up.

Equally satisfying to the former Caven members is the awareness that they’re able to offer help to Camp Kintail after the immense difficulties of Covid restrictions over the past two and a half years. Caven Church had a long and meaningful relationship with Camp Kintail; several former ministers served on the board, and the women and children of Caven participated in many Kintail events.

In a letter of appreciation, Kintail’s Executive Director, the Rev. Theresa McDonald Lee, said: “Having spent a few years at Caven, I know how much children, music, and gatherings mattered in the life and ministry of the congregation. We will sing the faith all day long and we will gather groups of children, young adults, and adults to learn and grow together. In these and many ways, we will work to continue the strong legacy of faith found at Caven with the campers at Kintail.”

Worshipping in a Nightclub

By Austin Penner and the Rev. Jeremy Bellsmith, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Nanaimo, B.C.

In September, a new worshipping community started in a Nanaimo nightclub. UpperLVL is the result of a nightclub deejay who came to know Jesus Christ.

Austin came to Nanaimo to play college baseball. After graduating, he became a landscape crew leader by day and a deejay/music producer by night. For over five years, he deejay’d at a local nightclub until the pandemic closed things down. During his years of deejaying, Austin developed an alcohol addiction and started abusing drugs. They numbed his constant striving and the heavy emotional baggage he

carried. He neglected his mental health until a heartbreak broke him. That rock bottom was in the summer of 2021.

From the bottom of that well, he started hearing echoes from above. These hints were metaphorical breadcrumbs he could follow. Some of them were coincidences too incredible to be random. Other happenings were so beyond his control they were difficult to ignore. For four months he experienced synchronicities, signs and wonders that led to clearer and clearer spiritual insights, until he began to read the Bible. Then he started to understand that One being was at the source of these things: God, revealed in Jesus Christ.

Finally, on a dark December day, Austin surrendered himself.



Austin Penner at UpperLVL nightclub.

He’d never stepped foot in a church, except maybe for weddings and funerals. But after moving to a new house, he passed St. Andrew’s Presbyterian every day on his way to work. He felt a pull to go there. After watching the live stream over Christmas break, he took the plunge and walked through the door in January.

That’s where he first met the Rev. Jeremy Bellsmith. They convened every week for months after that and have become spiritual friends as they talk about God and pray together.

Austin’s heart still felt heavy for his friends, and for those in the nightclub scene who were

having spiritual experiences but didn’t know it was Jesus they were experiencing. He couldn’t just walk away, and in talking with Jeremy, they began to wonder if they could bring the gospel into the nightclub scene.

Austin and Jeremy floated ideas like a group Bible study with Austin’s close friends or hosting a “Gospel Night” at the club. But soon it became clear that church planting really is the most effective form of evangelism. It would allow them to walk alongside others and gently point them to Christ. So, they began planning for a church in a nightclub—UpperLVL was born.

The liturgy is shaped by the nightclub experience. The main audience is those who have left the church or have no experience with it but are comfortable in the nightclub. The music is loud, and the talks are biblical, pointing to Jesus as the clearest demonstration of God’s love. The discussions are rich!

Jeremy and Austin were immediately supported by St. Andrew’s, and have partnered with Cyclical, The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s church planting arm. They are also generously supported by the Presbytery of Vancouver Island.

Austin says, “The first official UpperLVL Worship gathering landed exactly one year after I got sober by grabbing the Hand that pulled me out from that busted well of sin.” Already, we’re starting to see signs of people open to Jesus Christ as the One who had been reaching out to them all along.

Please pray for UpperLVL, that many more may discover God’s love in Christ. For more information, visit upperlvlworship.ca.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Knox Stratford Creates Bold Opportunity

Written by Bob Verdun, Member of Knox Presbyterian Church in Stratford, Ont., and submitted by the Session of Knox Stratford

A church is the congregation, not the building in which we gather. That article of faith is being fully put to the test by the members of Knox Presbyterian Church in Stratford, Ont., who voted overwhelmingly to sell our entire property and use the funds to rebuild our ministry to the community without either the aura or the burden of owning our heritage building.

All Christians understand that we are practicing our faith wherever we meet, which makes ownership of a meeting house non-essential. Fortunately, for the next decade at least, the congregation of Knox Stratford will continue to worship in what had exclusively been our sanctuary. However, it is now owned by a visionary

developer who has boldly reconceptualized the worship space as a multi-purpose facility, currently shared with Knox Stratford and more than a dozen local arts organizations. Our congregation is the leading tenant, blessed with very favourable terms for this next decade of rebuilding.

Major changes will be made to the sanctuary, but it will continue to host one of the finest pipe organs in Canada. Pews will make way for more comfortable seating, and substantial improvements will be made to accessibility, washrooms, sound equipment and lighting. Signage will change, but this fortress of faith will continue to be a dominant landmark that boldly proclaims the historic character of Stratford's main street.

All of this is a greater blessing than was anticipated when our congregation faced the hard reality that we were quickly ex-



hausting our reserve funds and no longer able to pay a full-time minister or maintain our building. At least two other heritage churches in the heart of Stratford have already fallen to the wrecking ball, so we were determined to preserve our prominent physical embodiment of more than 175 years of Presbyterian witness in Stratford.

Four years of serious study, consultation and negotiation by our appointed Task Group produced a generous offer from a local developer who is active in the community and has deep Christian roots. His commitment to preserve the prominent architectural features will assist in his negotiations with the City of Stratford for a new development on the rear portion of the congregation's

property.

The developer also has the strong support of the community's arts organizations. A key part of the redevelopment plan arose from the Task Group nurturing a meaningful relationship with the Stratford Arts and Culture Collective, an umbrella organization for the groups who need a suitable location for their myriad types of performance. (The Stratford Festival's world-class theatres have very limited availability as well as very high rental costs.)

The developer has paid the Knox congregation the full-appraised value of our property. The congregation is investing the funds to ensure we can properly support a full-time minister while we also revitalize and expand our community programs, such as

supporting the Stratford Connection Centre with lunches, and especially our Cancer Care mission that provides wigs and head accessories to patients from Southwestern Ontario.

Our congregation is now formally beginning the search for a dynamic leader who is keen to minister to the people and visitors of a small city known to the world for its prowess in dramatic communication. This is an inspirational opening for a candidate with vision and purpose to rebuild a congregation for today's challenges and opportunities—well-backed by a solid financial foundation.

Our focus will include ministerial outreach to the unique cohorts in the local population. There are growing numbers of theatre-lovers who have retired to Stratford and are looking for more than theatre to enrich their lives year-round. Increasing ranks of professional artists are making their home base in Stratford, and they are also interested in a deeper form of community involvement, especially the performers and theatre craft workers who have young children.

As Knox becomes a thriving centre of artistic interaction and performance, it will be an ideal setting to share the Good News of the greatest story of all time.

Pumpkin Festival in Bolsover



By Elaine Anderson, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Bolsover, Ont.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Bolsover, Ont., was a happening place on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022.

It was a beautiful fall day; a perfect day to bring the family out to a Pumpkin Festival, complete with barbecued hot dogs (Brian A. was the official cook), drinks for the children and free freshly

brewed coffee for the adults (thank you, Lynne H.). While everyone noshed on their lunch, the painting area was busy with children choosing their favourite free pumpkin from over 200 pumpkins in the grove. (Thank you, Janet M. and Sharron W. for organizing and supervising this event.) Many new artists were discovered that day and all the children went home with their treasure in hand. It was wonderful to see so many families out and about enjoying

family time together.

St. Andrew's Bolsover is famous for its bake sales, and this year was no different. The pumpkin pies were a huge hit—especially since Thanksgiving was only a week away—but other big bake sale hits were the cookies, squares, loaves and cake. We were all sold out by 3 p.m. Thank you to everyone who donated their favourite baked goods, and thank you to Rosemary W., Eileen M. and Lynne H. for your time spent selling all the delicious goodies!

A preserving demonstration was held inside the church at 1 p.m. Elaine A. showed how to make red pepper jelly to about 10 interested ladies. There were jars of jelly available for sale at the bake sale table as well.

Our goal for the day was to raise funds for a Ukrainian family that lives in the area. With the proceeds from our food sales, we were able to write the family

a \$1,000 cheque. Thank you to all who donated to our mission of the day.

We are grateful to everyone who helped organize and plan this special day. It was our first Pumpkin Festival endeavour, but probably not our last.



MISSION AND OUTREACH

KiDs Worship is an Exciting Music Adventure with God and Others

By Wanda Mann & the KiDs
Worship Team

“Come, let us sing to the LORD!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock
of our salvation.”

—Psalm 95:1 (NLT)

On October 1, the first KiDs Worship Concert was held at Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ont. It was a great time with lots of fun and excitement for all who attended! This worship concert had been a long time coming. After a season of so many lockdowns and, in turn, slowdowns of the production of the KiDs Worship album, we were ecstatic to finally be able to worship with kids once again in person. It was the perfect kickoff to fully launch the “All Around” KiDs Worship Album. Kids from different cities, churches, back-

grounds and schools came to join in with us. It was so wonderful to see the kids, their parents and grandparents enjoying worshipping Jesus together.

There was one story in particular from this time that stood out. At the concert, there was an 11-year-old boy who had never attended church before. His grandparents brought him. The three of them joined in dancing during the praise songs, listened to the testimonies shared, and watched the videos about the Story of God. At the end of the concert, on the way home in the car, this boy asked his grandma, “Who is this Jesus guy anyway?” She laughed and told him more of who Jesus is. She emailed us later and said, “This is such a GREAT way to teach children about Jesus! We loved the concert!”



Why KiDs Worship?

KiDs Worship was created for the purpose of leading kids to Jesus. We are passionate about advancing the Kingdom of God, raising up another generation of worshippers and songwriters, and crafting songs that exhibit the attributes and goodness of God to the children of our day.

So many young people are

*The power of
worship music is
incredible, for the
Holy Spirit inhabits
praise and flows
through the life that
is living the lyric it
sings about.”*

—Wanda Mann

struggling with hurt and loneliness and don't know that God is good and totally loves them. They don't know that Jesus is the answer and that he wants to give them an over-the-top, amazing life forever.

It's our hope and passion to give the younger generation something that will help them grow in love and surrender to Jesus, rooting them firmly in their faith and convictions, helping their hearts and minds establish who God is and who they will follow. It's also our hope that children will do this with great joy!

What's next?

Our next KiDs Worship Concert will be held at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford, Ont., on Saturday, Nov. 19 at 4 p.m. Feel free to contact St. John's or us for more information: kidsworship.ca or stjohnpresbyterian.ca.

We believe there is a young generation who wants to encounter, experience and express

themselves to God. KiDs Worship has come out of that hope. Kids are amazing and totally worth investing in!

Want to know more?

To learn more about who we are and what we are doing, please go to our website. It is our desire that you will worship along with your kids wherever you are. You will find these songs, videos and charts on our website to help you engage with children in worship. Be sure to check out our blog and shop while you are visiting the site, too! There are more resources that we can send to you to help further equip you to better serve the kids in your particular area.

We are looking to book more KiDs Worship Concerts in the New Year. If you would like for us to come to your church or event, please contact wanda@kidsworship.ca or send us a message on our website at kidsworship.ca.

RECOGNITIONS


Remembering an Elder in Caledon

By Claude Presbyterian Church

Claude Presbyterian Church in Caledon, Ont., is deeply saddened by the death of William David Horton. He was our organist for over 25 years, a long-time elder, and the editor of his famous weekly

church newsletter, “The Scroll.” Bill served as our Clerk of Session for many years. We could always count on him to fully engage in initiatives such as food drives and preparing meals for Evangel Hall.

During the time that Bill put messages on our roadside

church sign, his message “There are some questions that can't be answered by Google” became a staple of church sign compilations that still circulate on the Internet.

Bill and his wife, Mary, were indispensable volunteers of the

Brampton Civic Hospital Volunteer Association and were granted awards for their outstanding contribution to the hospital.

We rejoice in Bill's great contribution to our church and our lives. He was a great blessing to each and every one of us!

MISSION AND OUTREACH

The Evolution of a Post-Christendom Christian Congregation and Sanctuary

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

In 2007, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Picton, (a town of 4,000), embarked on a journey of renewal, beginning with a discussion of identity. How could this aging, shrinking congregation in the heart of Prince Edward County, Ont., (a destination for retirees, wineries, tourists and boutique hotels) be reborn to meet the needs of the twenty-first century? A task force spent the summer looking again at the ministry of Jesus and concluded that we needed to move forward with curiosity, creativity and courage.

Between 2008 and 2019, we launched and ran a Ten Thousand Villages Fair Trade store on Main Street; founded Reaching for Rainbows, an after-school program serving vulnerable girls aged 6–9 (now in its 12th year); renovated our sanctuary and removed the pews; established a public labyrinth and a community garden on the property; and installed the Wisdom of the Universe mural by Métis artist Christi Belcourt on our back wall.

All of these initiatives supported our commitment to connect with and serve the wider community in keeping with Jesus' mandate to love our neighbour. We continued to be an aging, shrinking congregation; nevertheless, we were energized by all of our community partnerships and ministries.



Before and after shots of the sanctuary at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Picton, Ont.

By the fall of 2019, it became clear that while our property served a larger post-Christendom vision, and, as a result was visited daily, our sanctuary was dated and, even without pews, was not aligned with our progressive ministry and our vision. And therefore, we engaged Dr. Doreen Balabanoff, designer and stained-glass artist, who met with the congregation for a workshop in February 2020. She heard us say the following:

"We come to St. Andrew's to renew our strength and vision so that we can go back out and contribute to the world beyond it."

We also shared with her that our favourite sacred spaces were not inside but outside on the lakeshore, in the forest, on a mountain. Our sanctuary had no natural light and no access to the "sanctuary of earth and sea and sky." We wanted our "indoor sanctuary" to connect us to the cosmic



sanctuary, because we believe that the entire cosmos is a window to the Mystery we call God.

Here is how Dr. Balabanoff described our vision:

Reimagining St. Andrew's: A regenerative sanctuary space connected to nature and cosmos opening up to a future grounded in spiritual wisdom and engaged with community.

In August 2020, she provided us with her recommendations that revealed a space totally transformed by skylights, paint and the removal of stained-glass windows at eye level—these to be replaced with coloured blown glass.

In July 2021, while replacing the roof we installed the skylights. In August 2022, the sanctuary was completely repainted in a warm white, including the walnut-stained beams. We wanted the space to be dominated by colour and light—not dark wood. The stained glass has not been re-

moved (yet).

The transformation is stunning. During the day, the space dances with sunlight filtered through trees, clouds and stained glass. The sanctuary now speaks to a Christian identity that is more inclusive and connected to the creation and cosmos, and therefore, more connected to the Creator.

When we began the conversation to transform the sanctuary in 2019, we could not foresee two events that would change our community forever: COVID-19 and the complete gentrification of Prince Edward County. As a result, many in our community are disenfranchised because of food insecurity, the lack of housing, mental health and so on. We believe that this renovated space can now better serve as a place in support of community well-being.

With the renovation complete, we are ready to hire, with help from Presbyterians Sharing, a

Community Engagement Coordinator to further facilitate community partnerships in order to populate this sanctuary/safe space seven days a week. At the same time, the congregation continues to age and shrink. This is the post-Christendom and post-Covid reality.

What did we learn? Many things; but most challenging is the attachment that we have to our sanctuaries. The rebirth of a sanctuary is not easy, because it requires that we be reborn; it requires a commitment to a vision that is bigger than "church"; it requires acknowledging all the ways that we attach ourselves to furniture and architecture, even when these things imprison us to a former era and a former theology. However, our sacred stories encourage us to be a pilgrim people, a resurrection people, and a people reborn. We have learned that much dying is required in the midst of this sacred journey.

*Come build the church not
heaps of stone,
But friends of Jesus Spirit-
blown.*

—Brian Wren

For more information, insight and crazy stories about the journey of transforming a traditional church into a Community Hub, please contact the Rev. Lynne Donovan at rev.lynne@sympatico.ca. Follow the activities of the church on Facebook: St. Andrew's Picton.

RECOGNITIONS

130 Years in Innisfail, Alberta



On August 28, the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Innisfail, Alta., gathered to celebrate their 130th anniversary in the community, and 132 years of ministry in Central Alberta. Seventy-five years ago, the congregation rallied to rebuild after a fire destroyed the second church building. The

church, now located at 4715 – 50th Ave., is the third home for the Presbyterian community.

For the celebration, the congregation received greetings from the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, and Innisfail Mayor Jean Barclay, among others. Following worship, the crowd gathered for food and fellowship.

The congregation's minister, the Rev. Charles McNeil, said it was a wonderful celebration that provided an opportunity to acknowledge a remarkable history as well as the strong spirit of the congregation that braved challenges throughout its time as a worshipping community.



RECOGNITIONS

The Retirement of the Rev. Dr. Douglas Rollwage



The Rev. Dr. Doug Rollwage, Assistant Minister the Rev. William Henbest, Minister Emeritus the Rev. Dr. Gordon Matheson, and Dana Rollwage.

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

Following a lengthy ministry career, the former moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Lead Minister of Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I., the Rev. Dr. Douglas Rollwage led World Communion Sunday worship for the final time on

Sunday, Oct. 2, 2022.

On that same evening, the congregation of Zion Church held a special service of Recognition, Reflection & Thanks for Dr. Rollwage and his wife, Dana. With numerous recorded greetings from friends and colleagues across Canada, including the Rev. Dr. Stephen and Patty Farris, the Rev. Geoff Ross, the Rev. Karla Wubbenhorst, James Seidler and

former Principal Clerk the Rev. Stephen Kendall. Those in attendance also heard from a number of the congregation's members as well as staff.

Letters of gratitude and respect were read that came from the Rev. Dr. Robert Faris, Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada; Charles Greaves, Moderator of the Atlantic Provinces Synod; and the Rev. Bradford Blaikie, Moderator of the PEI Presbytery. Quoting from Dr. Faris's letter: "Respect for and attention to scripture has always been of primary importance to you and has informed your engagement. It is in these dialogues that the work of the Spirit is done, and I am grateful that you have pushed me, and others, to think more deeply and to listen more carefully in order that we all have a broader perspective and an openness to the thoughts and experiences of all God's children."

Music Director Faye Barrett selected three of Doug's favourite hymns, including "Praise My Soul the King of Heaven," "Now Thank

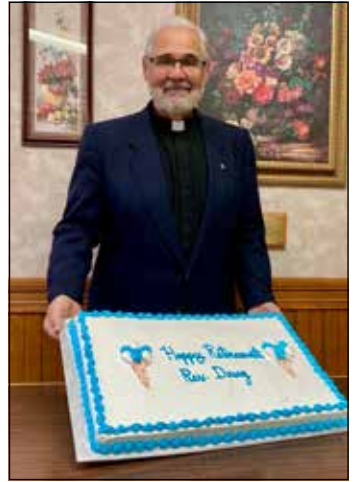
We All Our God" and "For All the Saints." The evening began with a full organ rendition of "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" and was followed by the Zion Sanctuary Choir singing "United in Christ."

The evening's message was delivered by Zion's Assistant Minister, the Rev. William Henbest. Following the service, a reception was held in Coles Hall, where members were able to share their "Doug" experiences and give thanks to him and Dana for their dedication to Zion Church.

As a form of gratitude, the congregation commissioned a painting of Dr. Rollwage's favourite stained-glass window within Zion Church from church member and highly accomplished artist, Ken Spearing.

A tremendous crowd was on hand for the service and the congregation was delighted to host over 200 families watching online. The service can be viewed anytime through Zion's YouTube channel at youtube.com/watch?v=2xZaV_oVz9Q.

Charles Greaves, in his writ-



The Rev. Dr. Doug Rollwage.

ten greetings, expressed what all in attendance were feeling when he stated, "We are thankful that you have so effectively answered the Call to be God's Servant over the many years of your ministry, sharing your abilities with many as you presented God's Word to His people. Thank you. May your new path continue to show God's Love as you minister on."

Celebrating 200 Years in Toney River

We Want to Hear from You!



Share your thoughts on the **Presbyterian Connection** newspaper at:

presbyterian.ca/connection-feedback

Survey closes December 31



Mona MacDonald and Joyce Brown, life-long members of St. David's Presbyterian Church in Toney River.

By Mona MacDonald and Joyce Brown, St. David's Presbyterian Church in Toney River, Pictou County, N.S.

On Oct. 23, 2022, St. David's Presbyterian Church in Toney River, Pictou County, N.S., celebrated its 200th year. The history of St. David's dates all the way back to the early 1800s when the Church of Scotland sent a minister to the



Sample pages from the 200th Anniversary commemorative document.

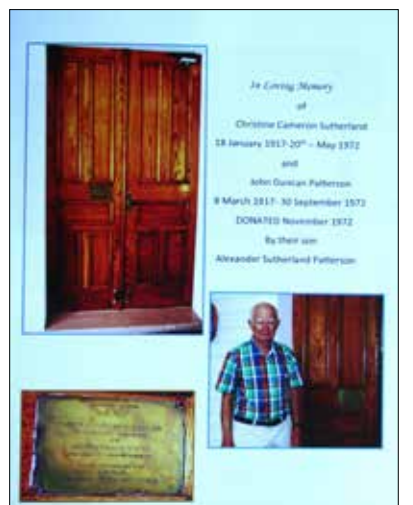
area in 1817, and in 1822, St. David's became the first congregation organized in the community.

To commemorate the occasion, we have published a 70-page document, containing 170 photos, that paints a brief picture of where our church has been and, perhaps, where we are headed. Initially, our intention in creating a commemorative document was to simply share photographs of numerous artefacts in the church,

but we soon discovered that there was a bigger story to tell behind these important artefacts, so we had to dig deeper. Many parts of St. David's interior, including doors, stained-glass windows, baptismal fonts, the communion table, Bibles, hymn books and even cabinets, were dedicated in memory of loved ones who once played an important part in the life of the church. Our wish is for future generations to recognize

and remember the significance of each artefact, each object, and each piece of furniture that so lovingly fills the space in which we worship each Sunday.

Excerpts from old logbooks dating back to 1850 were also included in the commemorative document to help tie the past to the present. Multiple copies were printed and made available to church members. It was definitely a "labour of love!"



RECOGNITIONS

Celebrating the Centennial Year at St. Andrew's, Islington: 1922-2022



By Joyce Dove, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Islington in Etobicoke, Ont.

It is difficult to recount 100 years of being a church in one small article. The church is thankful and very fortunate that many people from the past have kept adding to and building on our archives. They contain a lot of information, pictures and documents from the past.

St. Andrew's started as Islington Presbyterian Church in September of 1922. Services were held in Islington Public School for two years until a concrete block basement church was opened.

The church has much to be thankful for but it hasn't all been easy times during our 100 years. The Depression, WWII, a number of congregational splits, the Union of 1925, two major road reconfigurations in the area, a pandemic and redevelopment in the Six Points area have all impacted the church and congregation.

St. Andrew's has been a beacon in the Six Points area of central Etobicoke. The church is known to be a very welcoming and friendly place. It has always had a strong emphasis of supporting missions, missionaries and mission partners. The church has always offered a variety of programs and activities for all ages as faith building opportunities. Prayer has been a very important aspect of the church as well. St. Andrew's

has been pastored by many fine ministers. They have served our church well, faithfully preaching the Word, engaging the congregation in spiritual formation.

In 1952, a bigger church building was needed due to the growing congregation. This was built on the same property and the name changed to St. Andrew's, Islington. During construction, the worship services were held either at Wedgewood School, Butler's Funeral Chapel or the Islington Fire Hall. The church was designed after Tillsonburg Presbyterian Church in Tillsonburg, Ont. In 1966, an addition was made to provide more space for Christian Education purposes. This addition included a multipurpose gym, several classrooms, a kitchen, a parlour and washrooms.

St. Andrew's has celebrated our one hundred years during most of 2022 with monthly anniversary Sundays. Our guest minister in January 2022 was the Rev. Dr. Dan Scott, the then moderator of the PCC. Other guest preachers have either been former ministers, ministry students and missionaries from our past. The guest minister at our final anniversary service in October 2022 was the Rev. Dr. John Vissers, who grew up attending St. Andrew's.

We are thankful for how God has been faithful to the church. He has guided us for 100 years and will continue to guide us forward.



Clergy and elder representatives from the Presbytery of Oak Ridges along with guest clergy speakers. PHOTO CREDIT: ROGER POTTS

Ordination and Induction of the Rev. Robert Hayashi



The Rev. Robert Hayashi and the search committee at Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church. PHOTO CREDIT: ROGER POTTS

By Susan Johnson, Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church in Richmond Hill, Ont.

It was a wonderful day of celebration at Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church (RHPC) in Richmond Hill, Ont., on Sunday, Oct. 2. The Session and congregation of RHPC welcomed their new minister, the Rev. Robert Hayashi, his wife, Susan, and his father, Ted, into their church family.

The Session and congregation are grateful to the Moderator and Clerk of the Presbytery of Oak Ridges, the Rev. Joan Masterton, as well as the Rev. Dr. Jeff Loach, who officiated the service, members of presbytery who provided their support, and the clergy who participated in the service, including: RHPC interim moderator, the Rev. Rick Manafo, the Rev. Don Muir (Deputy Clerk of the PCC), the Rev. Dr. John-Peter Smit (Regional Minister for the Synod of Central Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda), the Rev. Debora Rolls (minister at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Peterborough, Ont.), and the Rev. Dr. John Vissers (former principal of Knox College, Toronto). Also in attendance at the ordination and induction of the Rev. Robert Hayashi were Richmond Hill MP Daisy Wai and Richmond Hill Mayor David West, along with many distinguished guests from the community, neighbouring faith communities and choir members from Unionville Presbyterian Church.

Following the service, a reception was enjoyed by all.



A blessing over the Rev. Robert Hayashi. PHOTO CREDIT: BILL VANDERBOOR



Participants in the ordination and induction of the Rev. Robert Hayashi. PHOTO CREDIT: ROGER POTTS

NEWS



The Rev. Marianne Emig Carr and the Rev. David Hooper. PHOTO CREDITS: DAVID MCILVEEN PHOTOGRAPHY



The Caintown Chorus.

New Pastoral Charge in Seaway-Glengarry Presbytery

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

On Sept. 25, 2022, the creation of the new Brockville-Caintown Pastoral Charge was formally completed with the induction of the Rev. Marianne Emig Carr, minister at First Presbyterian Church, Brockville, as the minister of St. Paul's, Caintown.

The Induction Service, held at St. Paul's Caintown, was led by Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry Moderator, the Rev. David Hooper, and Donna McIlveen, Clerk of Presbytery. Scriptures were read by Bruce Hynes. The message was preached by the Rev. Robert Adams of St. John's, Cornwall, and the Charge was delivered by the Rev. Ian Johnston. Special music was provided by the Caintown

Choir and Chorus, with accompanist Barbara Morrison. The service was attended by St. Paul's and First Presbyterian congregants, members of the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry and members of the community and was followed by a reception in the St. Paul's Church Hall. Congratulations to all on this exciting new partnership in ministry!

WICM Appoints New Executive Director



Beverly Burkard.

Beverly Burkard is the new Executive Director for Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM), replacing the current E.D., Ruth Magnuson, who retired at the end of November. WICM is a recipient of grants from Presbyterian Sharing and is a Presbyterian outreach ministry committed to providing a healthy

community for children, youth and families living in downtown Winnipeg. Their mission is to embrace all people in Winnipeg's inner city, inspire life-long learning, and build social and personal well-being.

Beverly began her work on October 17. She is a fierce advocate and community volunteer who brings a wealth of experience working for charitable and not-for-profit organizations, including Sage Journey, Agape Table, and the Red Road Lodge, as well with the Canadian Cancer Society. Since 2009, Beverly has dedicated herself to social services activities, working alongside, and on behalf of marginalized, vulnerable and often homeless people.

New Associate Secretary of Communications

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

The Life and Mission Agency is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Callie Long as the Associate Secretary for Communications. The appointment took effect on Oct. 3, 2022. In this role, Callie will connect with all the committees of the church to support and inform their work.

Callie brings a broad constellation of skills and much experience to this role. She is a collaborative communications professional and a former journalist with a background in faith-based communication in Canada and internationally. Callie's experience includes a term as a media consultant for the World Health Organization, a senior producer for the United Church

of Canada's national TV program and as a Communications Officer for the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance (World Council of Churches).

Callie has a Ph.D. from Brock University in the Interdisciplinary Humanities Program and an M.A. in Intercultural and International Communications from Royal Roads University.

Callie's approach to communications focuses on the power of stories and how the stories we tell can shape and add meaning to our lives. She is looking forward to "supporting the communications priorities of the PCC, including the institutional and theological messages from the General Assembly and its committees, and the mission work as expressed through gifts to Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service & De-



Dr. Callie Long is the new Associate Secretary of Communications at The Presbyterian Church in Canada national office.

velopment."

The Life and Mission Agency looks forward to the many contributions Callie will make to the continuing ministry of Christ through the work of the Communications department.

Advent Reflections

With the Leaders of the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Churches

This Advent, join the Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, PCC Moderator, along with Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran and United Church leaders for "What Are We Waiting For?" an ecumenical Advent series of devotions and conversations. Every Monday during Advent, a new meditation will be posted, and every Thursday, a live online discussion will take place with one of the participating church leaders.

Learn more, register and watch the recordings at: presbyterian.ca/ecumenical-advent



NEWS

The Presbyterian College's Global Student Community

Adapted from The Presbyterian College Newsletter

If you walk into a Wednesday chapel service at The Presbyterian College Montreal, Que., you will find yourself invited into worship and prayer within a vibrant and diverse community of Christians from all over the world. In the last several years, The Presbyterian College has become an increasingly global community, with many of its students coming to study from outside Canada. The opportunity for students to study in a multicultural institution with those of different backgrounds and perspectives is deeply enriching and invaluable for theological formation. It reflects the reality that we are indeed part of a global church.

Through his time as Principal (2014–2020), the Rev. Dr. Dale Woods took proactive steps to promote a global community at PC. Under his leadership, the College established the Faith to Faith fund, which provides significant

financial support to international students who have demonstrated a capacity for church leadership in their own context. In 2015, Dr. Woods visited the Presbyterian Church of the Cameroon, where he met two promising leaders who later came to study at The Presbyterian College.

Current Principal Roland De Vries commented that “Dale’s ministry paved the way for the formation of a truly global student body at the College. Today we continue to build on the legacy as we reach out to, and support, international students who want to be equipped for service through theological education.”

One of the current international students at the College, George Berberian, comes from an Armenian background and grew up in Aleppo, Syria; he was raised in the Orthodox tradition while also attending Protestant Sunday School. George first felt the call to ministry during his time of mandatory service in the Syrian military. After nearly four years of service, George left the military

to pursue a Bachelor of Theology degree in Beirut. When he had graduated from that program, he then moved to Turkey where he ministered to its Muslim population, sharing the gospel in Armenian, Arabic, Turkish and Persian. In 2021, George completed a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies from Nyack College and Seminary, New York.

Another important member of the College’s international community is ChungChih Hong, who comes from the Indigenous Pinuyumayan tribe in Taitung County, Taiwan. In her home country, ChungChih spent 15 years as a lay leader in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. She also earned her Master of Arts in Theology at YuShan Theological College and Seminary, a seminary for Indigenous students in Taiwan. Now, ChungChih is pursuing a Ph.D. in the School of Religious Studies at McGill with a concentration in Gender and Women Studies and is active in the worshipping community of The Presbyterian College. She is

particularly interested in exploring her role as an Indigenous woman in the church. ChungChih has spent the last five years living in Montreal with her husband, Looh, and their children.

The continuing diversity of the College also includes those who have longstanding ties to The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Julielee Stitt grew up on a farm in the Ottawa Valley, where she attended the Fort Coulange Presbyterian Church with her family. She is a current member at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Kingston, Ont. Julielee’s educational background is in journalism; she has spent the last several years in writing and communications positions in the Ottawa Valley, Winnipeg and Kingston. While living in Kingston, Julielee became very involved at St. Andrew’s. Her experience there, along with her love for people and their stories, inspired her to begin a Master of Divinity degree at The Presbyterian College this year.

Living and studying together as a diverse and global community

means paying special attention to who we are, how we speak, and how we listen to each other. We follow the risen Jesus together, and find our unity in him, but we must also attend to our assumptions about one another and to our assumptions about what discipleship, worship and service “should” look like. This means that intercultural learning is becoming an increasingly important component of our life together, learning about the dynamics of power and about deeply embedded cultural assumptions that influence our relationships. The goal of this is to shape us more authentically as those who belong together as one in Christ.

Gift and challenge—those two words are perhaps always a good way to describe the life we share as God’s people. When the accent is on “gift” we are focusing on the wonderful way God blesses us as a global community. When the accent is on “challenge” we are focusing on what it means to treasure and care for the gift God gives.



ChungChih Hong and her family.



George Berberian.



Julielee Stitt.

New Development in Bradford

HonourKind Properties recently announced that it will be moving forward with a site-plan application to build a state-of-the-art, family-scale, 42-unit intimate care home for seniors facing cognitive challenges on the south property of The Elden of Bradford, Ont. and St. John’s Presbyterian Church lands.

“We are thrilled and very excited to launch this important project, which focuses on an intimate, friendly environment for seniors who are facing cognitive challenges like Alzheimer’s to get the care and support they need

in Bradford,” said Dale Beasse, president of HonourKind. “Our team consists of experienced, caring individuals whose passion is to address the growing needs of our seniors to access housing and support.”

“The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury has worked diligently to attract seniors housing projects, whether retirement homes, bungalows, apartments or condos,” said Mayor Rob Keffer. “This new memory-care home will be a fantastic contribution to ensuring seniors can get the housing and support they



Pictured (left to right) St. John’s minister, the Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, Bradford Mayor Rob Keffer, HonourKind Properties president Dale Beasse (holding a photo of project renderings), Deputy Mayor James Leduc and Councillor Ron Orr.

need to continue to age in our community.”

“It’s great news that a new home for seniors with memory challenges is coming to our town. We’re thrilled to launch this new model and for the new jobs that will be created,” said Deputy Mayor James Leduc.

The 42-unit project will be moving forward with a site-plan application in the near future. HonourKind Properties is run by the team that delivered The Elden, and seeks to be the inspiration for integrity, kindness and innovation in quality cognitive care.

GATHERINGS



WellSpring Presbyterian Church in Murray River, P.E.I., held a First Responder Thanksgiving Sunday on Oct. 9. Members of the Murray Harbour and Murray River fire departments joined the Rev. Dr. Lonnie Atkinson at the event.



On Sept. 11, Weir Maclure (who turned 95 years old) and the Rev. Dr. Lonnie Atkinson shared their birthdays at WellSpring Presbyterian Church in Murray River, P.E.I.



“It’s A Miracle” was the theme of summer camp one week at Gale Presbyterian Church in Elmira, Ont. Throughout the week, campers heard many miracle stories and participated in activities that connected to each miracle. One miracle that we learned about was “Jesus Feeds the 5,000,” which is about sharing, and so we asked campers and their families to donate food throughout the week. The campers also decorated reusable fabric bags that will be given as a gift to families who use the local food bank, along with the food that was collected.



The congregation of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Pictou Landing, N.S., welcomed five new members on Sunday, Oct. 16. The Rev. Bonnie Langille presided over the service. Pictured left to right are Anna Rushton, JB Fraser, Robin Langille, Kathy Graham and Samuel Graham.



The Community Meals program at Knox Presbyterian Church in Weyburn, Sask., started up again on Nov. 6, 2022. The program will run every Sunday until March 26, 2022. This year, the format has returned to in-person dining, which was done prior to the pandemic. Soup, chilli and stew, along with coffee, a bun and dessert, are served in Knox Fellowship Hall to all those in the community who wish to partake. The program was started by Knox and has expanded to now include donations and volunteers from most of the churches in Weyburn.

GATHERINGS



Point Edward Presbyterian Church in Point Edward, Ont., celebrated 150 years of ministry in June 2022. A photo was taken outside the church and the congregation made sure to have cake! Pictured are Marge Muller, the Rev. Shirley Murdock, former minister, and the Rev. Dick Eric van Dorsten, current minister.



Pictured is the Sunday School class at Community Presbyterian Church in Almonte, Ont. The children enjoyed a snack following their lesson “Love Your Neighbour,” based on the story of the Good Samaritan. During their lesson, the children divided into teams and wrapped the “wounded one” with toilet paper bandages, which created a lot of laughter.

Vancouver School of Theology in B.C. hosted Julian Davis Reid Sept. 22–23 for presentations of his stellar program, Notes of Rest. Julian Davis Reid is an artist-theologian who uses words and music to invite us into the restful life we were created to live. Students, faculty and staff were renewed on these quiet days away. The event was hosted in our tech-savvy Epiphany Chapel. Visit juliandavisreid.com to learn more about the artist and his work.



St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Simcoe, Ont., hosted two community BBQs—one on July 29 and the other August 26. Both events yielded greater than anticipated outcomes—serving approximately 800 burgers, combined. Community engagement could be recognized through acts of kindness and hearts of service. Numerous volunteers exhibited the love of God as observed by smiles, compassion, prayer and ministry. God's love emanated throughout both evenings! We are humbly grateful to all who participated and contributed to the success of these events.

Dedication of this wooden Celtic cross took place on June 26, 2022, in the hall of West River Presbyterian Church in Durham, N.S. Previously, it hung in the sanctuary of St. Luke's Presbyterian Church in Salt Springs, which closed in November 2021. The cross was designed by Jean Irving and crafted by Glenn Horton. This day was also a gathering to celebrate a wonderful six and a half years of ministry together in the West River Pastoral Charge, and the retirement of the Rev. Mary Anne Grant. Pictured left to right: Clifton Wood, Cynthia Parks, the Rev. Mary Anne Grant, Lorraine Tobin and William Ross, all elders and Clerks of Sessions of the West River Pastoral Charge in Pictou County, N.S.

Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C., held a local Show & Shine on Labour Day weekend in the church parking lot. Over 35 cars and other road vehicles played a part, and almost 100 people came to check them out or grab a quick bite to eat. There was every style of vehicle—from new and classic Corvettes, to motorcycles and RVs! The Rev. Teresa Charlton even entered her toy Fiat in the show for fun! And some owners allowed church members to hop inside their vehicle for a photo op.

GATHERINGS



On Oct. 2, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Mission, B.C., celebrated their 75th anniversary with a wonderful sit-down dinner, the sharing of stories and a video montage.



Although Hurricane Fiona damaged the church building and fellowship hall of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Pictou Landing, N.S., the congregation still decorated the church to honour Orange Shirt Day—National Day for Truth and Reconciliation—on Sept. 30. The congregation had to miss one Sunday worship service due to the storm but was able to gather for a Harvest Sunday worship service on Oct. 9. Following the storm, the parking lot at Bethel Church was used as a staging area for power line crews as they worked to restore electricity in the area. Members of the congregation donated to, and helped the Pictou Landing fire department host a barbecue lunch for the crews. (Notice the top of the bell tower missing.)



Winnipeg Inner City Missions in Manitoba, supported by The Presbyterian Church in Canada through gifts to Presbyterians Sharing, was awarded the Centennial Community Improvement Association's Neighbourhood Beautification Award for the third year in a row for our gardens at A Place of Hope Indigenous Presbyterian Church! We are so proud of the hard work that our residents have put into making our space a beautiful home.



Denyse Wozencroft, office coordinator at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Guelph, Ont., "socks it" to the Rev. John Borthwick during the Socktoberfest Campaign. For the month of October, St. Andrew's was a drop-off location for new and gently used socks, which will in turn be handed out during the winter months by Your Downtown Guelph Friends, a grassroots community support group. The goal this year had been set at 10,000 socks and, by the looks of the Rev. John's "nest," they were well underway!

GATHERINGS



Over Thanksgiving weekend, the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont., did their part to make sure that Thanksgiving meals in the community did not go without that essential meal staple: potatoes. On Saturday morning, members of St. Andrew's handed out 300 bags of potatoes, totalling 3,000 pounds, to residents of the community for free.

For the first time since COVID-19 shut down the world, Fall Fest happened in Québec City, Que., in late September. This annual event is intended to introduce people—especially English speakers—to things of interest to Anglophones in the area. As has been the tradition, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church had a table at the event, which proved to be very popular. Members of the congregation were present to answer questions, and this year, we offered homemade treats to people passing by. Among the people pictured in the photos are Keely Hunter, Katherine Bleeker, Skyler Giguère and Gina Farnell.



On Sept. 16, a special retirement celebration was held to thank principal clerk the Rev. Stephen Kendall for his faithful service to the national office and The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Former moderators, national office staff and other special guests were in attendance to wish Stephen well in his retirement.



Staff members at the national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada took part in Orange Shirt Day and marked the event with a special worship service.

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, a donation of fresh vegetables was made to Halifax West Ecumenical Foodbank from Calvin Presbyterian Church in Halifax, N.S.



Members from Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., took part in the Women's Wellness Weekend at Cairn Family of Camps in Baysville, Ont., which ran Sept. 23–25.

GATHERINGS



A celebration for Elizabeth Grant was held on Oct. 23, 2022, at First Presbyterian Church in Brandon, Man. Elizabeth has been leading the choir as music director for 50 years. Past and present choir members gathered for pictures and presentations. Everyone enjoyed tea, coffee and cake.



On Oct. 16, 2022, members of Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., took part in the “virtual” option of the Toronto Waterfront Marathon by having a 5K walk through the neighbourhood in support of Evangel Hall Mission (ehm). The congregation raised nearly \$1,000. Congregation member and ehm board member Kin Chan participated in the half-marathon and nearly raised another \$2,000. Congratulations to everyone who took part!



The congregation at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., enjoyed a fall fair on Oct. 15, held in partnership with Mosaic Home Care and Resource Centre.

This October, friends of The Gathering Place Presbyterian Church in Port Colborne, Ont., took up the challenge of creating something on a blank canvas. Stoney Creek artist Chelaine Sakalauskas staged our first ever Paint Night and gently led us as we put paint to canvas—many of us for the first time!

GATHERINGS



The Rev. Mark Lewis addressed a gathering of members and adherents from St. James Presbyterian Church in Stouffville, Ont., on Sept. 13. The former PCC moderator was gathering information for the New Beginnings program, which St. James entered into this fall.



At St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Markham, Ont., lunch has always been a focal point for both members of the congregation and the community at large. Unfortunately, like so many other things, COVID-19 dealt a blow to those fellowship gatherings. The good news is that the hibernation is now over, and our two popular monthly lunch gatherings are up and running: Lunch & Mingle, a Thursday gathering extended to the community, and the Let's do Lunch program, a Sunday event after the service that's also open to the community. There is no doubt that food is a great icebreaker when it comes to making new friends and reaching out to others.



On Sunday, May 8, 2022, retiring Clerk of Session Doris Thompson was honoured for her 20 years of faithful service. On behalf of the Session of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ancaster, Ont., the Rev. John Read presented Doris with a plaque in recognition of her service. Pictured with Doris and the Rev. Read are (front row, left to right) Session members, Janice Orovan, Diane Robb, the Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs, the Rev. John Hibbs, Nancy Serafini and (second row) Linda Bleue, Evert Nieboer, Walter Owsianik.



On Sept. 25, members of the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Lindsay, Ont., held a special celebration to honour the retirement of the Rev. Bob Quick. He and his wife, Cathie, were presented with a beautifully refurbished original St. Andrew's pew.



On Sunday, Oct. 9, the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ont., held a Thanks-GIVING service during which food donations were collected from members as part of an initiative of the mission and outreach team. Altogether, the congregation donated 437 pounds of food to The Sharing Place, the local food bank.



Participating in Port Colborne's September Harvest Fest celebrations has become an annual event for The Gathering Place Presbyterian community in Port Colborne, Ont. This year, there were crafts for kids and books for grown-ups (with the added enticement of an invitation to join our book club). It was a beautiful autumn day!



Members of Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., recognized Orange Shirt Day—National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, with a special worship service on Sunday, Sept. 25.

INTERNATIONAL

Cutting Edge of Mission Award 2023

By the Rev. Gordon Timbers,
a member of the Cutting Edge
of Mission committee and a
participant in the Ecumenical
Accompaniment Programme in
Palestine and Israel



A section of the separation wall between Israel and Palestine. PHOTO CREDIT: AMY ZAVITZ, INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Being on the cutting edge of anything is to be in a place of risk. It is also generally a place of great need. Taking those risks and meeting those needs requires creativity, courage and determination. This has been true for the individuals and organizations that have been recipients over the years of what was the Dr. E.H. Johnson Award and of what is now known as the Cutting Edge of Mission Award.

Since 1982, this award has been presented to highlight the work of people and organizations that think outside the box through prophetic voices that call for justice and corrective action. In some cases, they are lone voices, speaking at great personal risk and sacrifice. The award presentation each year at General Assembly gives a view into some of the challenges faced by people around the world. This is also an opportunity to learn about and support those who respond in those difficult situations with courage and creativity. The award includes a \$10,000 monetary gift

as a tangible encouragement.

Participants in recent PCC study tours to Palestine-Israel have learned that the trauma caused by the ongoing Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory has had an enormous cost, both to those imposing and maintaining the occupation and to those experiencing the restrictions and humiliations of the occupation every day. It was a great encouragement to also learn of an organization whose members come from both Israeli and Palestinian societies and who are committed to working together for forgiveness, peace and reconciliation.

At the 2023 General Assembly, the Cutting Edge of Mission Award will be made to the **Parents Circle–Families Forum**, a joint

Israeli-Palestinian organization of over 600 families, all of whom have lost an immediate family member due to the ongoing conflict arising from the occupation. The organization seeks to utilize all resources available in education, public meetings and the media to spread their message. Their work is grounded in the conviction that getting to know the personal and national narrative of the “other” is an important step toward reconciliation. Teams of Palestinian/Israeli parents together go to schools and other venues to tell their stories and share their hopes for a future of peaceful coexistence.

They seek to influence the general public and the political decision makers in both national communities to choose reconciliation and the path of peace over

violence and war. This is not easy because the seven-decades long conflict has created a legacy of fear and animosity that is often directed at those who seek dialogue with “the other.” Believing that the physical and emotional distances between the two conflicted communities prevent both sides from hearing and understanding its counterpart, the PCFF initiated the Parallel Narrative Experience, which brings together groups of Israelis and Palestinians to learn about each other’s personal and national stories through workshops and dialogue activities.

One effective means of communication is the Facebook page for PCFF, which is bilingual in Arabic and Hebrew. It is the PCFF’s main digital asset, with more than 40,000 followers able

to access information about the PCFF’s activities, references and its responses to relevant current events. As well, followers can learn about PCFF members’ media appearances and any other activity related to the message, core beliefs and ongoing work of PCFF.

Every Palestinian and Israeli member of the Parents Circle–Families Forum has lost someone to the conflict who was loved and whose loss continues to bring sorrow and anguish. The website of the PCFF (theparentscircle.org) provides personal stories of Forum members, about their loved ones who are no longer present, about the journey from pain to hope, and about choosing reconciliation and partnership. PCFF invites anyone who has lost a family member due to the conflict to join them, so that together, Palestinian and Israeli grieving families can continue to work to prevent further bereavement, and to create dialogue, reconciliation and peace.

Those attending the 2023 General Assembly, in person or online, will have the deeply meaningful experience of hearing two members of the Parents Circle–Families Forum give their powerful personal stories of hope in action.

A Visit to Canada from the Rev. Dr. Billy Gama



Preaching at St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Church in Kars, Ont.



The Rev. Dr. Billy Gama, General Secretary in the Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi, with the Rev. Liz Chan.

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

Jesus Christ calls us to faithful engagement in God’s mission in the whole world—from our backyard to halfway around the world. Joining together with church partners and Christian agencies outside Canada, the PCC walks with them, learning from their experiences and praying for each other.

Now that the worst of Covid appears to be (mostly?) past, we can visit, pray and learn together with international partners in person again. Earlier this year, we had the great pleasure of welcoming a delegation from the Presbyterian Church in Ghana to the PCC national office for meetings and

fellowship, along with the Session of the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church in Toronto.

From Sept. 9 to 17, 2022, we were very honoured to receive the Rev. Dr. Billy Gama, who is the General Secretary in the Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi. Blantyre Synod was established in the 19th century by Scottish missionaries and now includes 1.8 million members in 800 local congregations.

Dr. Gama received degrees in French and theology before obtaining a Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. In addition to serving in rural and urban congregations, Billy Gama has been a special advisor to the



Billy and the Rev. Glynis Williams,
Associate Secretary of International
Ministries.

President of Malawi. He also happens to be the author of a book entitled *The Role of the Church in Politics in Malawi*. This year, the Rev. Dr. Billy Gama was elected and confirmed as a member of the Central Committee for the World Council of Churches.

Billy began his visit to Canada in Ottawa and worshipped at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Kars, Ont. He travelled to Toronto with the Rev. Dr. Blair Bertrand, who was on the way to teach at Zomba Theological University in Malawi. Billy spoke with staff about projects and issues



The Rev. Dr. Billy Gama and the
moderator of the PCC, the Rev. Dr.
Bob Faris.

of special interest to the Presbyterian Church in Malawi: climate change, theological education, youth, pastors’ salaries and the church’s response to Covid in Malawi. General Secretary Gama and the Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, current moderator of the General Assembly, met to talk about the context of their ministries and overlapping interests.

Happily, Mr. Gama’s visit coincided with the party at national office to celebrate the ministry of Stephen Kendall as he retired as the Principal Clerk of Assembly.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Breaking Cycles of Poverty

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

Diego is an eight-year-old boy who looks for recyclable materials in a landfill in Guatemala. It's also what his parents do to earn a small amount of money every day to put food on the table.

Veronica is a 15-year-old girl in Malawi expecting her first child. The baby's father has abandoned her. She's terrified that she'll be forced to drop out of school because she's pregnant.

In too many places in the world where poverty is handed over from one generation to the next these situations are more the norm than the exception. PWS&D works with locally based partners to change the cycles that keep people in poverty. We start with the premise that everyone has the basic right to sufficient food, a safe shelter, a healthy environment, access to health services, affordable and quality education,

and a livelihood that allows for life with dignity.

When we support schools, as we do in Guatemala, we help boys and girls gain the foundational skills to potentially learn trades that can give them a living income. Educated girls become less vulnerable to early marriage and pregnancy, increasing their chances at escaping poverty. Studies have shown a direct link between years of schooling and age of first pregnancy—when a woman has more education, she will delay pregnancy and have higher income earning potential.

When youth have access to vocational training, then career opportunities like nursing, tailoring, mechanics or accounting become possible—jobs with more predictable and higher incomes. They will no longer have to seek daily work as labourers in arduous conditions. They will access quality food more easily, and



In Guatemala, students receive an education at Francisco Coll School, improving their prospects for the future.

will be able to afford health care services when needed. Cycles of poverty are broken and whole families rise out of poverty.

Increased access to information is a key strategy in people's empowerment. Helping children go to school, training youth with vocational skills, or reacquainting farmers with sustainable farming practices all lead to greater opportunities and higher income-generating potential. This is the focus of much of the work of PWS&D's partners.

Diego has had the opportunity to go to the Francisco Coll

school in Guatemala, supported by PWS&D. Though his family benefited from the income he contributed, his parents agreed to his attendance with the hope that his schooling would allow him to get into a trade that would give him a safer and more reliable income than scavenging in the dump. PWS&D has recently enhanced its support to the school by providing scholarships to students pursuing secondary and post-secondary education with the goal of breaking the cycles of poverty that they have been born into.

In Malawi, girls like Veronica can join mothers' groups, where they can also participate in savings groups. These groups empower girls to continue their education, receive vocational training or access loans to improve their livelihoods. With PWS&D's support of these initiatives, Veronica has been able to get on her feet despite the factors that seemed to be working against her.

These stories demonstrate how cycles of poverty can be broken and how PWS&D's partners work at finding sustainable ways out of poverty.

Assessing to Respond in Guatemala

By Emma Clarke,
PWS&D Communications

A key part of designing sustainable development programs is asking, "What might be preventing someone in this community from living a full, healthy life?" This can be done through a situational assessment: a systematic process that gathers data from community stakeholders and uses the data to determine how to respond most effectively to the greatest needs.

In 2021, PWS&D completed a situational assessment in Guatemala with our partner *Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas*. In existence for over 30 years, this organization provides vocational support to Indigenous women, while also helping them develop greater self-esteem and leadership skills. PWS&D has a long history of working with *Fraternidad* to help women build their spiritual, social and economic ca-



In 2021, PWS&D studied the causes of food insecurity in Quetzaltenango region through partner *Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas*.

pacities. Our work is coordinated in shared partnership with the United Church of Canada.

When food insecurity takes root

The assessment studied the needs of families in three com-

munities in Quetzaltenango region. For many of them, food insecurity is a daily reality. Food insecurity means a family does not have consistent access to nutritious food. It can be caused by many factors: for example, inability to find regular employment,

low wages combined with high food prices, and low food supply within a community. And it can cause terrible hardships, such as the loss of a child due to severe malnutrition, or separation between family members who leave seeking higher-paying work.

The findings from the situational assessment revealed that many Indigenous families farm their own food from very small plots of land. Between eight and 10 acres of land are necessary to produce enough food to feed an average family. In Quetzaltenango, each family has an average of 5.8 acres of land—whereas women-headed households have access to just two acres each.

This, combined with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent hurricanes Eta and Iota, has caused many in the region—and almost four million people in Guatemala—to be food insecure.

Help needed

One of the major needs in Quetzaltenango region is training on how to produce more food, and how to get better nutrients from what is available. Together with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWS&D is planning a response to address this need. It will support people living in Mam and Quiché, two of the three municipalities studied.

The new food security project will focus on female-headed households and will include training in agroecological methods to improve farmland, both now and for the future. The response will also help families produce food through kitchen gardens and diversify their diets through a higher variety of crops.

Based on the knowledge that when someone is hungry it is difficult to live a healthy, active life, PWS&D's new response to hunger in Guatemala will seek to holistically help 400 families.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Pakistan Flood Response

By Karen Bokma,
PWS&D Communications

Pakistan is consistently ranked among the 10 countries most vulnerable to the effects of global climate change. A heavier than usual monsoon season and glacial melt following a severe heat wave have created devastating flood conditions in much of the

country. According to the United Nations, "The global climate crisis has contributed to these terrible floods and caused unprecedented human suffering in Pakistan."

By September 2022, Pakistan had received almost three times the normal yearly rainfall, and as much as one-third of the country was under water.

An estimated 33 million people



Luqman, a grade six student, has not been able to leave his home or attend school because of the floods. PHOTO CREDIT: CWSA

have been affected, with 6.4 million requiring urgent humanitarian assistance. At least 1.8 million homes and over 17,000 schools have been damaged or destroyed.

One Meal a Day

"We mostly eat one meal a day. The meal consists of some flour we cook together with chopped onions, chiles and rarely tomatoes. We cook it all together because we do not have enough firewood or fuel, so we cannot waste it on cooking separately," shared Tejan, a widow and mother of 11, who is currently sharing her home with multiple families.

PWS&D's partner in Pakistan, Community World Service Asia, is implementing an emergency food

assistance project for affected communities in the Khairpur district of Sindh province. This project is receiving support from Canadian Foodgrains Bank and its members, as well as matching funds from the Government of Canada.

Monthly cash assistance will be provided to 5,700 families for four months to help them meet their food needs. Cash transfers are an effective way of addressing hunger—allowing people to make their own decisions about food for their families that is nutritionally and culturally appropriate, while also supporting local markets.

No One to Play With

Thirteen-year-old Luqman hasn't

been able to go to school since July. The grade six student attended his neighbourhood school and was proud of his academic achievements, but the school has been closed for months.

Missing school and his friends, Luqman is frustrated in his house, which is surrounded by up to 10 feet of contaminated water. His mother and grandmother do not allow him to wander too far from home due to a growing number of snakes and the high probability of skin infections caused by the contaminated water. This is the same water the family must use for cooking and bathing.

To help address issues related to water and sanitation, as well as essential services such as medical clinics, PWS&D is providing additional support to Community World Service Asia through the ACT Alliance.

To mitigate the risk of communicable and waterborne diseases, improved access to sufficient and clean water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene is being provided in high-risk communities. Culturally appropriate, secure gender-appropriate toilets and washing facilities will also be provided.

To support this ongoing response, please visit WeRespond.ca/Pakistan-floods.



Mobile health clinics are educating communities on the prevention of waterborne disease. PHOTO CREDIT: CWSA

Flood Relief in Merritt, B.C.

By Steve Filyk and Klaas Broersma,
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
Kamloops, B.C.

Nearly every spring in Merritt, B.C., advisories warn people that the waters of the city's two river systems will rise. Often no major flooding is experienced, except in lower lying areas. That was the case for June of 2021. The following fall, it was a different story!

In the Fraser Valley and the south-western interior of B.C., "atmospheric rivers" led to catastrophic flooding and mudslides, with all major transportation corridors (highways, bridges and railways) destroyed. The cities of Merritt and Princeton were hit hard as the rivers burst their banks on Nov. 15, 2021, damaging infrastructure such as roads, bridges and sewage treatment facilities. Over 300 houses and mobile homes were impacted by the flood waters that spilled into basements, crawl spaces and over some of the main floors of



Outside Judy's condemned trailer.

these homes.

The flooding damaged walls and floors, as well as appliances, furniture and other personal items. Often electrical and plumbing also needed repair or replacement. The floodwaters also left behind a thick layer of sediment (clay, silt and sand and other debris) that had to be removed, often by hand.

The cost of repairs ran into the tens of thousands of dollars for

most homeowners. Many didn't have insurance to cover the damage, and government flood relief was limited and difficult to access.

An initial contribution of \$2,000 from PWS&D allowed St. Andrew's to partner with the Kamloops Salvation Army to provide Christmas hampers to families in need. However, this spring, recognizing continuing need, St. Andrew's received additional support from PWS&D to assist

those who were still rebuilding. This was done in partnership with a local Merritt congregation, Nicola Valley Evangelical Free Church (NVEFC), who had boots on the ground and were best able to judge personal and community needs.

Judy's* trailer was destroyed in the flood, and now she's living in a motorhome. She was one of 20 individuals and families who were selected to receive a gift of \$2,000. Judy was overjoyed to hear about the support she was receiving through PWS&D. When handing her the card with the cheque, she burst into tears of gratitude. A card was later received from her by the church, thanking the entire congregation.

Dean* is a newcomer to the Merritt community, who deals with a number of challenges. Since the flood damaged his house, Dean had been living in a donated RV. At the same time, he was facing a recent diagnosis of kidney cancer. Pastor Steve was able to pray



Dean's Home, now designated a tear-down.

for Dean and his many challenges during our visit, when we dropped off his card and cheque.

Having these funds available increased St. Andrew's involvement in the surrounding community and has deepened our own understanding of the sustained impact of natural disasters. It was a privilege for us at St. Andrew's to be the conduit of love and financial support received through PWS&D from Presbyterians across Canada. Your contributions to Flood Relief in B.C. have made a tangible difference to many lives.

*Names changed for privacy.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

New Project Support



In Haiti, PWS&D is supporting farmers as they learn new techniques to improve food security and livelihoods.

By Stephanie Chunoo,
PWS&D Communications

Have you ever wondered how PWS&D helps people in different countries? Discover how your generosity is supporting several recently approved PWS&D projects.

Haiti

In Haiti, PWS&D is continuing work with farmer-owned cooperative associations to improve food security and livelihoods. Farmers will learn about: protecting soil against erosion; better organic matter management; the use of cover crops to improve soil quality; how to produce organic fertilizers. All of this will help mitigate some of the effects of climate change. In total, over 3,000 households will benefit from the project, led by Mennonite Central

Committee Canada through their local partner, Partnership for Local Development.

Ethiopia

Conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia continues to impact many, especially as fighting has spread to neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions. PWS&D is providing emergency food assistance and psychosocial support for three months to 1,800 households in Amhara region. This is possible thanks to Tearfund Canada and their local partner.

Zimbabwe

The Binga District in northern Zimbabwe is currently experiencing high levels of food insecurity due to recent poor harvests. To respond to this vital need, PWS&D is supporting an eight-month

Ukraine Response Continues

By PWS&D Communications

It's been almost one year since Russia invaded Ukraine and the war began. Millions of Ukrainians were forced to flee their homes and required urgent humanitarian assistance.

Presbyterians from across Canada have responded generously to the need, allowing PWS&D to get financial support out the door very quickly. As of October 2022, over \$815,000 has been given to support those affected by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

PWS&D, through ACT Alliance, has provided support to Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA)—assisting those displaced within Ukraine, as well as those who had fled to Hungary. Refugees, and those internally displaced, have received food and shelter support, as well as cash assistance and emergency mental health and psychological care.

Additionally, PWS&D provided food assistance in the form of cash transfers to families in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania, through Canadian Foodgrains

Bank member ADRA Canada, allowing donations to be matched 4:1. With priority given to the most vulnerable households, including women and single-headed households, children at risk, and gender-based violence survivors, families are able to use cash assistance to purchase food and other essential items.

Olha's story

The assistance has been crucial for families like Olha Fomenko and her husband, who are trying to carry on with their humanitarian work in a Russian-occupied area of southern Ukraine. The couple takes care of people whom, Olha said "...have been abandoned even by their very own family." They provide shelter, food and clothing.

The war has made it difficult to continue their work. Worried, Olha turned to HIA for assistance, and she received an aid package to help her care for those in need. Olha still worries about what tomorrow will bring, but she takes comfort in knowing she has support from HIA.



Food and shelter support remain key components of PWS&D's response to the conflict in Ukraine. PHOTO CREDIT: ACT ALLIANCE/ANDRAS HAJDU

Recently, PWS&D initiated support to farmers through the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia. Farmers will receive fertilizer that they are unable to afford, which will enable them to grow crops this coming year. This collaboration is possible with the organizing support of former PCC mission staff, David Pandy-Szekeress.

As the war continues, need remains high. PWS&D continues to work through local partners and ecumenical networks and coalitions to respond. Thank you for your generous support!

food assistance project split over two phases—four months of food-for-work, followed by four months of unconditional food assistance. In the food-for-work

phase, households will work on community projects and be provided with a monthly food basket to cover the majority of their food needs. This program is led

by Mennonite Central Committee Canada and their local partner.

These projects are all receiving matching support through Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Supporters Get Moving in Journey for Hope

By Emma Clarke,
PWS&D Communications

This October, supporters throughout Canada laced up to make a difference in the first ever PWS&D Journey for Hope.

"As the nine Gale Riders set off to cycle 17 km," commented Darlene Vandermeij, leader of the team from Gale Presbyterian Church in Elmira, Ont., "God blessed us with beautiful sunshine. The most beautiful part was a trail beside the Grand River where we witnessed many geese and the beauty of nature that God gives in trees, plants and bushes."

This new fundraiser builds on the passion of those who have biked, walked or done other activities over the past seven years with the Ride for Refuge, in sup-



Supporters in Edmonton, Alta., walked and played games to raise funds for the first ever Journey for Hope.

port of PWS&D's food security and maternal, newborn and child health programs. This year, over \$24,000 has been raised to support PWS&D's ongoing food security response.

The Rev. William Ball, of the Edmonton Lakeland Amblers, reflected on the many ways people were involved at his church. "Most of us gathered at Day-spring Presbyterian Church,

where people put together as many puzzles as possible in two hours, played cribbage, ping-pong and Dungeons and Dragons. Another group set off along the picturesque White Mud Creek Ravine trail."

A global crisis

The world is currently experiencing an urgent food crisis, triggered by climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts around the world, including the invasion of Ukraine. "Frankly, we were already falling short of meeting our food-security targets, prior to 2020. However, the situation is now critical," testifies UN General Assembly President Abdulla Shahid. One of the things that can help, he explains, is securing "sustainable agriculture."



In Victoria, B.C., the Together in Motion team celebrated the beautiful weather as they got moving for food security.

PWS&D works with Canadian Foodgrains Bank and our global partners to help people in marginalized countries rise above hunger. Together, we provide farmers with training and farm inputs so that families have more nutritious food to eat. We also provide emergency food relief in the wake of disasters. The funds raised through Journey for Hope support this essential work.

Passionate about food security

This issue of global hunger hits close to home for Darlene, who shared, "The Journey for Hope

project of global food security is something everyone on the team and all those who donated to Gale Riders earnestly wanted to support."

The passionate response from riders, crafters and donors in the four provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan), where the Journey happened, is only growing. "First-timers expressed their enjoyment of the activities and willingness to repeat the experience," commented William, while in Victoria, B.C., Laura Kavanagh was encouraged by the "great team effort from everyone."

RECONCILIATION

Creating a Safer Space in Calgary

Committing to the Ongoing Journey of Truth, Healing and Reconciliation



Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta. Before July 2021 and after August 2022.



By Amy Dunn Moscoso,
Grace Presbyterian Church
in Calgary, Alta.

When red paint was splattered on the doors of 10 churches in Calgary—including Grace Presbyterian Church—it was shocking and eye-opening. The act took place in the early morning hours of July 1, 2021, following announcements of unmarked graves of Indigenous children on the grounds of former Residential Schools. The red paint forced many of us to view the church through new eyes, seeing it as an institution born from and shaped by a Euro-centric colonial culture that caused devastating loss—of land, culture, relationships and, heartbreakingly, of thousands of children. Churches could not hide behind denominations.

Few people in the congregation at Grace see the front doors as a canvas for expression. As in many church communities with historic, over 100-year-old churches, the front doors have accumulated meaning over time, through years of emotional memories of weddings, funerals and Sunday services for congregants. The red paint showed the doors

through different eyes that hold diverse emotional memories—which include trauma and grief over physical, sexual, emotional abuse and the death of children.

The congregation of Grace decided to hold difficult conversations on the front steps of the church, within view of the red paint, with Indigenous peoples, the congregation and the community. The city of Calgary and a number of national media outlets took an interest. Grace (which is Presbyterian, after all) formed a committee.

Steps were taken—there was a service of lament around Orange Shirt Day, a Blanket Exercise, a book study and a lecture on the Doctrine of Discovery. The work was often joyous, yet extremely uncomfortable at the same time, populated by feelings of grief, shame, anger, fear and frustration, but also with feelings of hope. There have been steps forward and steps back, but the work focuses on relationships.

In the autumn of 2021, Grace engaged an Indigenous artist to explore the possibility of designing murals incorporating the red paint. Congregational consultation began and revealed many

strong feelings about the doors.

In August 2022, while Grace was exploring the possibility of murals, an opportunity arose for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod and Grace Presbyterian Church to host a meeting on the repatriation of an object sacred to Indigenous peoples in Alberta. This Sacred Stone, known by many names, including Manitou Asiniy (Creator's Stone), awâsis kôhtakocihk kîsikohk (the child who fell from the sky) and the Shining Rock, was believed to protect buffalo herds, and is a 145-kilogram meteorite that landed near Hardisty, Alta.

In 1866, Manitou Asiniy was stolen by the Rev. George McDougall, a Methodist missionary, to draw Indigenous peoples into Christianity. Over 150 years, the stone passed from missionaries through Canadian institutions to the Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton, where it is located on long-term loan.

An event called, A Conversation on Repatriating the Sacred Stone, was scheduled at Grace the morning of August 29. As people arrived, they soon noticed that the red paint was painted over with a tan colour. CCTV footage revealed that at 2 a.m. that morning, two unknown people in hoodies painted the doors. A discussion ensued, but focus returned to the repatriation meeting.

All sat in a circle, including Elder and Chair of the Manitou Asiniy-Iniskim-Tsa Xani Center, Leonard Weasel Traveller (Bastien), who is also Former Chief of the Piikani Nation and Representative of the Blackfoot Confederacy; Elder Fred Campiou, Cree Representative for Treaty 8, Spiritual Advisor and Ceremonial Elder of the Manitou Asiniy-Iniskim Repatriation Project; members of the Horn Society; the Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, Moderator of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada; members of presbytery; Indigenous project supporters; and Presbyterian church elders. People shared why the Sacred Stone was important to Indigenous peoples and how repatriation would support healing. Repatriation work had been ongoing for 20 years.

That night, Grace's Session

decided to repaint the front doors their original colour. First, there would be an Orange Shirt Sunday gathering of prayer and ceremony for the congregation and community on Sept. 25. The gathering included education on smudging, provided by Chinook Winds Indigenous Minister, the Rev. Tony Snow of the United Church of Canada, and the Rev. Jake Van Pernis, Associate Minister, Engagement and Service, at Grace Presbyterian Church. The media covered the story again.

On Orange Shirt Day, Friday, Sept. 30, 2022, Grace collaborated with the Stardale Women's Group, a group that works with Indigenous girls and women in Calgary. This collaboration took the truth, healing and reconciliation work of Grace into the Beltline community, where neighbouring businesses and associations took part. The Stardale Drummers (all young Indigenous women) performed and shared a film called *The Road* in which the drummers told first-hand life stories. Afterward, several of the drummers answered questions and discussed the shared experience of being targeted by human traffickers while walking to and from school because of their race and gender and of being subsequently met with an expected apathetic response from the authorities. The girls expressed their fear not only of being kidnapped, but of having their disappearance be dismissed by the police as delinquent behaviour. Elder Leonard Weasel Traveller (Bastien) attended the event—having just signed an agreement to repatriate the Sacred Stone with Alberta's then-Premier Jason Kenny.

Grace's work continues. Next steps include ceremony, storytelling and art. One small sign of progress came from a recent "open mic night" at Grace. An Indigenous artist drummed and sang. He mentioned that he "felt safe enough to come in." It was heartwarming to hear that he felt Grace was a safe space for him—regardless of the colour of paint on the front doors.

How to Help

People often ask, What can I do? A popular resource shared with the congregation of Grace is the



Leonard Weasel Traveller (Bastien), also the Former Chief of the Piikani Nation and Representative of the Blackfoot Confederacy; Elder Fred Campiou, Cree Representative for Treaty 8, Spiritual Advisor and Ceremonial Elder of the Manitou Asiniy-Iniskim Repatriation Project; the Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, Moderator of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



The Rev. Tony Snow, Indigenous Minister, Chinook Winds Region, United Church of Canada, teaches about smudging at a gathering on Sept. 25.



An event in honour of Orange Shirt Day at Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta.

Decolonizing Pledge for non-Indigenous peoples that lays out concrete steps any one person can take. (Find it online at gracechurchcalgary.com/community/reconciliation.)

In a spirit of respect and truth, Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., honours and acknowledges that we live, work, play and worship on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai and Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Stoney Nakoda Nations (Bearsaw, Chiniki and Wesley), the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.



Stardale Girls Drumming group.

RECONCILIATION

Evening Worship for Reconciliation



The Rev. Susan Brasier and Shait.

By Keith Randall, elder, the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal, Que.

Sept. 30, 2022, marked Orange Shirt Day and Canada's second National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in response to both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the discovery of unmarked graves of Indigenous children at the sites of

former Residential Schools. Although Quebec did not declare the day a statutory holiday, the Native Women's Shelter led thousands of Montrealers through the streets of downtown. Additionally, the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal, Que., held an evening worship service to honour the day—one of the only churches in Montreal to do so.

Intertwining the common be-

liefs of Christian and Indigenous spiritualities, the worship service featured both gifted Innu singer-songwriter, Shait, along with a "pop-up" choir made up of St. Andrew and St. Paul's choristers, congregation members and folks from the neighbourhood who wanted to participate. Senior pastor, the Rev. Dr. Glenn Chestnutt, led worship. PCC moderator, the Rev. Dr. Robert Faris, came to Montreal in support of this initiative and offered the Prayers of the People. The highlights of the service were the lighting of 215 candles and Shait's reflection of growing up as a child of a Residential School Survivor and his journey to Christ.

"This service responded to our obligation as Presbyterians to the Truth and Reconciliation [Commission] Call to Action #59: educating our congregation and sharing the lament of our Indigenous



"Some found the orange shirts hanging from a tree outside the church disturbing," said the Rev. Susan Brasier, "and that's not a bad thing. What we came together to grieve is highly disturbing."

siblings. The large attendance and the sense of God's presence were more than we could have ever expected," reflected Associate Minister of Community Connections and Care, the Rev. Susan Brasier. The Rev. Susan Brasier accompanied a group of members as they worked tirelessly to overcome a number of obstacles to create this profound worship experience.

The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul's long relationship and journey of faith with the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry in Saskatchewan has inspired many members to reach out to the local Indigenous community who are seeking the



The Rev. Dr. Robert Faris, Moderator of the 2022 General Assembly.

reconciliation that has been so long awaited.

The service may be viewed in its entirety on the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul's YouTube channel at youtu.be/pOSqUD9s0Eg.

The Road to Healing, Hope and Reconciliation

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

Following the discovery of unmarked graves of Indigenous children on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia, the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry in Ontario began a journey to learn more about The Presbyterian Church in Canada's history with the Canadian Residential School system in an effort to move toward healing and reconciliation. The presbytery also took to heart the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action #59, which calls upon churches who are parties to the TRC Settlement Agreement to "develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of Residential Schools, and why apologies to former Residential School stu-

dents, their families, and communities were necessary."

The presbytery was blessed with the presence of the late Rev. Dr. Cheryl Gaver during the initial portion of this journey. During regular presbytery meetings, the Rev. Dr. Gaver provided education sessions for the court on the PCC's history with the Residential School system, as well as conducting webinars and worship services throughout the presbytery. But the presbytery felt called to step outside of meetings and church buildings and take positive steps toward healing and reconciliation with local Indigenous peoples.

At the recommendation of the Rev. Dr. Gaver, the presbytery contacted the Native North American Travelling College (NNATC), based at the Mohawk Akwesasne Nation (Kanien'kehá:ka) near Cornwall. Working together with the NNATC, the presbytery organized a full-day event, entitled "Healing, Reconciliation & Hope," to bring together

Presbyterians and inhabitants of Akwesasne to learn, reflect and build relationships.

On Sept. 16, members of presbytery and local congregations travelled to the NNATC. Guided by the NNATC Manager, Iakonikonriosta, the group spent the morning on a guided tour of the NNATC museum, learning about Mohawk culture, traditions and history.

The group partook in a traditional Mohawk meal while hearing about the experiences of Mohawk journalist, Doug George-Kanentiio, who survived the Mohawk Residential School in Bradford—and proudly claimed to be one of the few students expelled from that school!

Finally, the attendees enjoyed music and dancing with two young Mohawk men, who taught us Mohawk social songs and dancing—and they did a very good job in encouraging a group of mature Presbyterians to dance together!

The presbytery is planning its



next steps in working toward healing and repairing relations with the Mohawk people, which includes creating and building relationships and learning more about how much we have in common as siblings in Christ. The presbytery knows this is just the beginning of this road to reconciliation and is grateful for the guidance of the PCC Justice Ministries staff and the support of the Healing and Reconciliation Seed Fund.



Hearing the history of Mohawk songs from Mohawk Youth. PHOTO CREDITS: DAVID MCGILVEEN PHOTOGRAPHY

RECONCILIATION

One Congregation's Journey toward Reconciliation



On October 9, 2022, Armour Heights Presbyterian Church hosted a hybrid learning event led by Margaret Sault, Educator and Historian for the Mississaugas.



Antonio Siracusa and Molly Cornell.

Harris Athanasiadis, Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont.

Who does the land belong to? Armour Heights Presbyterian Church is in urban Toronto. The cost of land in Toronto in dollar figures is at a premium, only surpassed by Vancouver. Like many institutions in Canada, we have a land acknowledgement we use and update periodically, but how much do we know about the history of the land and how it was acquired? How much do we know about the First Peoples named in our acknowledgements? If we don't know very much, how can we honour such acknowledgements as meaningful statements rooted in some genuine understanding?

Over a year ago, the congrega-

tion organized a committee to look at how we could respond to some of these questions. Through various activities, mainly done online during the time of Covid, and through the means of various books, films and podcasts, we facilitated online gatherings to share, discuss and try to learn a little more about the true history of our broken relationship as Canadians and church folk with the First Peoples of the land.

It hasn't been easy. It has been painful, too—even threatening for some of us who have been settled on this land for several generations. And yet, as followers of Jesus, we have embraced the truth that healing toward reconciliation is absolutely necessary and urgent. The ongoing announcements of unmarked graves related to Residential Schools only makes the urgency more necessary.

Most recently, we were privileged to have a special guest lead us in a day-long workshop. Margaret Sault is a member of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, a historian and, for the past 45 years, a land claims researcher and negotiator on behalf of the Mississaugas with the federal government. While much of the land now called Canada

is subject to treaties (Toronto is Treaty 13 land), and other parts are unceded lands, how much do we know about whether and how agreements between Indigenous peoples and European settlers were established and how fairly they were negotiated? How much do we know about any outstanding land claims that pertain to the land we inhabit and how negotiations (if there have been any) have been going?

I, like others present for Margaret Sault's talk, was overwhelmed by the enormity and complexity of what is happening behind the scenes as various nations of First Peoples are seeking a modicum of decent compensation, control and input on how various lands that make up Canada are settled and cared for.

While various First Nations inhabited the lands around Toronto since before settlers arrived, the Mississaugas are the Treaty holders with whom settlers sought to negotiate treaties for access to the land specific to Toronto. As treaty holders, however, they were also treated to the deception and greed of first the British and then Canadian governments.

The "Toronto Purchase" as it has been called, for instance, sought to acquire much of what we call Toronto today. In language unfamiliar and foreign to Indigenous leaders, a promise of payment was made for what was then a little over 2% of the value of the land. More land was taken than actually stated. The Mississaugas were to maintain their fishing and hunting rights. Not only were these promises not kept, but signatures were forged (later affixed to an unsigned document). After 1800, the growth of Euro-Canadian settlement in To-

Armour Heights Presbyterian Church, armourheights.org,
Presents:

**"THE HISTORY OF THE
MISSISSAUGAS
AND THE TORONTO PURCHASE"**

(Toronto is Treaty 13 Land and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation are the Treaty Holders)

Saturday, October 1, 2022
9:30am - 3:00pm
Hybrid Event Online and In Person, 105 Wilson Avenue

**Workshop led by Margaret Sault, Educator
and Historian for the Mississaugas**

Gathering: 9:30am
Morning Session:
10am-noon
Lunch
Afternoon Session:
1pm-3pm



To register, please contact estone@armourheights.org, 416-485-4000



Participants joined in person and online from all parts of Ontario.

ronto made it increasingly difficult for the Mississaugas to continue to make a living, and so they relocated. Today, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation reside 125 kilometres Southwest of Toronto. Detailed information about the history of the Mississaugas of the Credit is available online at mncfn.ca.

So what is all of Toronto now worth (if we are talking about dollar amounts)? In 2010, a little over 200 years after the Toronto Purchase of 1805, a settlement was reached between the Government of Canada and the Mississaugas for \$145 million. While this may seem like a large sum, it is a smidgeon of what the land is

worth. By learning about the history of the land and First Peoples, we are better able to seek new relationships of respect and reparation in a journey of healing and reconciliation.

We are so thankful Margaret shared her wisdom, grace and leadership on a Truth and Reconciliation Day weekend. We've already edited our land acknowledgement and will continue to do so as we continue to learn more about the land and its true history. We also look forward to building our relationship with the First Peoples of the land. So, how about you and your congregation? How are you learning about the land you live and worship on?



The Rev. Harris Athanasiadis, Irene Faiz and Wanda Fischer.

RECONCILIATION

Land Acknowledgement as a Holy Moment

Central Presbyterian Church Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with gratitude and respect that Central Presbyterian Church is located on the traditional territories of the Anishnaabek and Haudenosaunee peoples. This land is protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to share and care for the lands, air, and waters around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We recognize that we must learn about the rich history of this land to better understand our role as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers. We are all treaty people.

By Sara Traficante, Gwynneth Simpson, Beth Carey, Racial Justice in Canada Team, Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont.

In 2021, Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont., received an Innovation Grant from The Presbyterian Church in Canada to begin a peer-led adult discipleship study group exploring issues of racial justice. The group endeavours to grow our knowledge and understanding of racial justice through a theological perspective, so that we may better witness Christ's love for the world.

In late January 2022, our congregation held its first "Racial

Justice in Canada" team meeting. We met bi-weekly online. After a few meetings, it was evident that we needed to focus on Indigenous justice. We quickly understood that we must increase our knowledge and understanding, so that we could be better equipped to engage in learning with the congregation. We were keenly aware of the ground-penetrating radar search results from the Kamloops Indian Residential School, and that a similar search would soon begin with our neighbours at the Mohawk Institute in Brantford.

Our reading assignments and discussions included the topics of the Doctrine of Discovery, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission's

94 Calls to Action, the PCC's responses and confessions over the years, and the discovery of unmarked graves at Residential Schools. We also participated in a virtual tour followed by a Q&A session about the Mohawk Institute Residential School, which is now part of the Woodland Cultural Centre.

Central Presbyterian Church has already acknowledged the land upon which it stands, yet as our own insight deepened, we realized that our first task would be to update our church's Land Acknowledgement Statement to reflect our more complete understanding. Our Racial Justice Committee did considerable work in investigating other land acknowledgements, both faith-based and secular, and consulted PCC resources for guidance. Furthermore, we felt it was important to consult our local Indigenous community. We reached out to Sheila Maracle, who is a recognized Mohawk leader and educator in Hamilton. With generosity, she shared her intimate knowledge and wisdom, enabling us to ground the acknowledgement in our local community, and its historical context, and thus to grow our understanding that, "We are all treaty people."

On June 19, 2022 (National Indigenous Peoples' Sunday), members of the congregation and those gathered stood as our new Land Acknowledgement was unveiled and spoken—an acknowledgement of human-to-human relationships with those

who were here before us, and an acknowledgement of non-human relationships and the responsibilities of mutual kinship based on the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant. This moment was holy, repentant and prayerful.

The Land Acknowledgement plaque unveiled is now prominently displayed where we first enter our church building. It is also published in our weekly bulletin and on our church website.

Our new Land Acknowledgement Statement includes a guide that helps provide a basic understanding of various terminology as well as additional resources: cpchamilton.ca.

We are not letting this go. We are continually seeking to listen, to know and to understand. To honour Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we decided to hold a learning event at Central. On Saturday, Oct. 1, we welcomed Stanley (Bobby) Henry to lead a presentation on Moving Towards Reconciliation: Taking the First Steps. This event was generously supported by the PCC's Justice Ministries. We invited our congregation, neighbouring churches and the wider community to participate. Bobby is from the Ball Deer Clan and is a member of the Cayuga Nation, one community of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Bobby is a Ph.D. student in Trent University's Indigenous Studies program. His doctoral research explores Haudenosaunee culture-based education in secondary education



Stanley (Bobby) Henry speaking at Central Presbyterian Church with Brock University's Spirit Bear.



and how Haudenosaunee culture-based education can sustain Cayuga language for adolescent learners. He is also an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University.

Through questions and group discussions, Bobby led us on the first steps of our learning journey. With the help of Entiohahathé'te, Brock University's Spirit Bear of the Reconciliation Ambearrister Program created by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear), Bobby shared with us his Cayuga language, knowledge, life experience, insight and expertise with generosity, humour and kindness. Bobby invited us to delve deeper, to see our common history with different eyes. All of us present were challenged and motivated to share one thing we learned, one new insight, with at least 10 people who were not present. Sharing our learning changes us as we journey toward the reconciliation we yearn for. "We are all treaty people."

Raising the Treaty 4 Flag in Weyburn



An Elder relating horrific stories about Residential Schools.

By Kathy McFadden, Knox Presbyterian Church in Weyburn, Sask.

To show respect and acknowledge Truth and Reconciliation, and to recognize Culture Days in Canada, the Treaty 4 flag was raised by Chief Connie Big Eagle from Ocean Man First Nation at City Hall in Weyburn, Sask., at 11 a.m. on Sept. 26, 2022.

The Fellowship Hall at Knox Presbyterian Church in Weyburn, Sask.—which is right behind City Hall—was the venue for the lunch-

eon. Approximately 100 guests were entertained with a "Drum, Dance and Eat" concert put on by the children from Ocean Man Education Centre.

Grace was delivered by an Elder and the hamburger soup and Bannock was made and served by the Métis Women's Group and volunteers from Knox Church. The event was an important step toward healing for our community, as we continue to show compassion and mercy for all those affected by colonialism.



The flag raising at City Hall.

COMMITTEES

Welcome and Not Welcome:

The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Response to the Arrival of New Ethnic Groups

*By the Special Committee
re. Petitions 1 and 2, 2021*

The question of welcome/not welcome has been with The Presbyterian Church in Canada throughout its history. The first Presbyterian arrivals in Canada engaged with the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island in a range of ways. Some Presbyterians did so in good ways, while many other Presbyterians sought to assimilate and colonize the Indigenous peoples who were the original inhabitants of the land. This article asks about the welcome offered to the waves of new immigrants who came to Canada following the creation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1875.

Canadian Presbyterians sought to welcome these newly arriving groups. Efforts were made to have Sunday morning worship in the languages of the immigrants. In 1923, 23 different languages were being used in worship in Presbyterian congregations in Canada. It was one thing, however, to offer worship in the language of the immigrants and another to allow various ethnic groups to bring their cultural expressions of Christianity into the life of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

In 1903, a bold experiment began with the Ukrainian commu-

nity that had poured into Canada during the previous decade. The Independent Greek Church (Greek because it used the Greek Orthodox liturgy) was created as a denomination within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Using a liturgy dating back to John Chrysostom and preaching a Reformed theology, the Independent Greek Church grew to 40,000 members who worshipped in Ukrainian. They had their own synod that functioned as a presbytery, although it reported to the General Assembly and not to a synod. By 1912, the experiment was over, largely because the growing bureaucracy of the denomination could not imagine a way to manage the Ukrainian-speaking synod outside the regular systems of the church. The Independent Greek Church was absorbed into the regular structures of the church and the bold experiment in welcome was over.

In the 1950s, immigrants from Hungary started to arrive in Canada in significant numbers. Hungarians had been in Canada since the 1880s, many of them part of the Reformed Church. They established congregations like the one at Bekevar, Saskatchewan. As The Presbyterian Church in Canada saw the new wave of immigrants coming, a memorial on "Usages and Practices

of Hungarian Churches" was brought to the General Assembly. The committee charged with responding brought a motion to the 1953 Assembly laying out a policy that would move Hungarian congregations "gradually to conform to Canadian practices" (A&P 1953, p. 90). The welcome offered was limited; the Hungarians would eventually conform to the patterns and practices of the Canadian church. In the process, pieces of the identity of the Hungarian Reformed Church would be reshaped to conform to the dominant culture and in some cases that identity would be lost.

The first Korean congregation in The Presbyterian Church in Canada started in the chapel of Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, in 1967. The Korean presence in the denomination grew rapidly through the subsequent decades. When Korean pastors and elders attended presbytery meetings, they found the meetings unwelcoming. Translation of the discussion into Korean was not offered. The meetings had a focus almost entirely on business, whereas spiritual fellowship and relationship-building were central to the Korean experience of presbytery. Leaders within the Korean churches came to feel they had no place in the English-speaking presbyteries. The mar-



ginalization they experienced in the wider Canadian culture was also experienced within the Presbyterian Church. As a result, a request was made for separate Korean presbyteries and the Han-Ca Presbyteries were established in 1997. The Han-Ca Presbyteries came into being in part because the wider Presbyterian Church could not find ways to become a welcoming place.

This brief history reveals the challenges The Presbyterian Church in Canada has had with offering welcome. Real welcome, true hospitality, as described by Jesus, invites the hosts to become guests. The host lives into the precarious position of being the stranger, the guest, in order that the guest can have a place to be at home.

The Special Committee on Listening, Confession, and Associations was established by the 2022 General Assembly to hear stories

of welcome and not welcome, so that a more complete picture of The Presbyterian Church in Canada's hospitable and less-than-hospitable actions and attitudes can be revealed. To that end, the committee very much hopes to hear from individuals and groups in the church who have stories to tell of marginalization and of welcome, of being cared for and of being ostracized. Stories of what individuals themselves experienced and stories of what people witnessed are welcome. To tell your story, please contact the Special Committee at special.committee.pcc@gmail.com. This email address is confidential; it is accessed only by the Rev. Linda Park and the Rev. Peter Bush, co-conveners of the committee.

For more information about the committee, or to tell your story, contact the committee through special.committee.pcc@gmail.com.

What Does the Trustee Board Do?

By the Trustee Board

The Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is usually unnoticed among the committees and boards of the church. But over the last couple of years, the Trustee Board has had more visibility as matters linked to the board's work have been topics of discussion at General Assembly. This article outlines some of the work and responsibilities of the Trustee Board.

The Trustee Board has a membership of up to 15 people—11 members plus the Principal Clerk, the Chief Financial Officer, the



Convener of the Assembly Council (or their designate), and the Convener of the Pension and Benefits Board (or their designate). Unlike other boards and com-

mittees in the church, members of the Trustee Board serve for a six-year non-renewable term. The name is the Trustee Board (not Board of Trustees), because it is

the board as a single entity that is the trustee, rather than being a collection of individuals who are trustees.

Given the complexity of the investment portfolios maintained by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Trustee Board created the Investment Advisory Committee (IAC). The IAC is a subcommittee of the board. It is made up of members and non-members of the board, including people with work experience in capital markets, investments, accounting, audit, pension, law and risk management.

The IAC provides investment

advice to the Trustee Board as it manages two funds: the Consolidated Fund and the Pension Fund. Each fund has a Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures (SIP&P) that governs the investment strategies and risk limits of these funds. The board contracts with professional investment managers to do the actual investing of funds. The investment managers are in turn evaluated by a professional consulting firm on contract with the board. All of this is so the Trustee Board can exercise its fiduciary responsibility of ensuring that the church's money

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COMMITTEES

Discerning Together: Who Sits on the Denomination's Committees?

By the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald,
 General Secretary, and Terrie-Lee
 Hamilton, General Assembly Office

One of the jokes we tell about our Presbyterian form of church polity and government is that we do everything by committee.

Q: How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Eight. One is commissioned to change the bulb and seven duly nominated and elected members are named to a subcommittee, with approved terms of reference, that will study and report back at some future meeting of the appropriate committee.

We laugh about it, but people can feel real frustration and pain with the church's structure and the way we do things. And sometimes, many people working together in committees, commissions and courts leads to conflict. But for all the weakness of our system of committees and courts, the alternatives are arguably worse. Without committees, decisions might be left to one or two people working with limited experience and without much input or transparency. As Joan Gray and Joyce Tucker write in their book, *Presbyterian Polity for Church Leaders*, "The decisions which we make together will most often be better than the decisions which any of us could make individually."

Christian life and life in the church is lived out in community, and the church discerns the mind of Christ and the guidance of God's Spirit not as individuals, but as a community. Working by committee is how we discern the way forward together. The Rev. Dr. Tony Plomp, a former Clerk of the Assembly, wrote that, "We are responsible for and accountable to each other. We are called to be together, to make decisions together, to work together, believing that through such communal activity, subject to the Word of God, God's Spirit speaks to us and guides and directs us."

The PCC has 14 national committees or boards that are called "standing committees of the General Assembly." The church is blessed with many talented people who have energy and many gifts they are willing to

share with the church through standing committees. Roughly 150 individuals appointed by the General Assembly populate standing committees and a few more hundred are members of subcommittees.

Who is eligible to serve on a standing committee?

Any professing member of the PCC (a member, ruling elder, diaconal minister, minister of Word and Sacraments) may be nominated by or seek nomination through and with the endorsement of a Session, presbytery, synod or standing committee.

How long can someone be a member of a standing committee?

There are some exceptions, but normally, members remain on a standing committee for a three-year term with the option of serving a second three-year term.

How many standing committees can one sit on at a time?

A person can be a member of only one standing committee at a time.

Who decides who gets named to a committee?

Ultimately, the commissioners at General Assembly each year decide the memberships of the standing committees. The commissioners consider a slate of names presented by the Committee to Nominate Standing Committees. After the commissioners have discerned together, they vote to adopt the report and any changes that have been proposed and accepted by the commissioners.

Who names the members of The Committee to Nominate Standing Committees?

The members are appointed by the General Assembly on nomination by synods.

How does the Committee to Nominate Standing Committees gather names to present to the General Assembly?

Each year, the committee corresponds with the standing committees and boards to learn the skills particularly needed on the committees.

General Assembly Standing Committees

Assembly Council

Ensures the work of the church is carried out and communicated between General Assemblies. The council makes recommendations concerning national policies, budgets and denominational vision.

Church Doctrine Committee

Reviews doctrinal issues and makes recommendations to the General Assembly for determining and declaring the church's doctrinal positions.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee

Facilitates and maintains relationships with ecumenical and interfaith councils, committees and consultations, while developing strategies concerning peaceful and respectful ecumenical and interfaith education and work.

Committee on Church History

Encourages an appreciation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Reformed heritage.

International Affairs Committee

Makes recommendations to the General Assembly on matters of international concern, communicates with the Government of Canada on matters of international concern and helps Presbyterians be aware of important international issues for study, prayer and action.

Life and Mission Agency Committee

Provides resources to the church that envision innovative models for ministries, provides grants, nurtures international church partnerships, responds to disasters, assists refugees, supports development projects, aids communication, works with Indigenous ministries, plans youth events, explores issues of faith and justice and offers guidance for discerning vocations for ordained ministry.

Maclean Estate Committee

Oversees the property, staff and endowment fund of Crieff Hills Retreat Centre, while supporting and promoting its programs.

National Indigenous Ministries Council

Grounded in self-determination and the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples, the National Indigenous Ministries Council focuses on Indigenous Peoples, strengthening relationships with the church, promoting Indigenous ministries and Indigenous justice. The council is accountable to Indigenous Peoples within the church and is guided by the wisdom of their Elders; and as a standing committee, it is accountable to the General Assembly.

Pension and Benefits Board

Oversees Pension and Benefits administration, monitors the solvency of the Pension Fund, recommends changes to its constitution to the General Assembly and files required documents with the Pension regulatory authorities.

Trustee Board

Under authority of the Parliament of Canada and the Legislatures of all 10 provinces, holds properties, enters into contracts, invests funds, issues annuities, establishes pension plans and executes documents on behalf of the church.

Theological Colleges

Knox College Governing Board, The Presbyterian College Board of Governors and St. Andrew's Hall Board provide consultation, support and guidance regarding the colleges' faculty and programs.

COMMITTEES



Continued from page 37

In the autumn, the committee communicates with Sessions, presbyteries, synods and standing committees calling for nominations and supplying them with the information that is needed to participate fully in the nomination process.

Nominations must be submitted with biographical information and reasons explaining why the person is recommended to a particular standing committee for the committee's consideration.

The committee reviews the names that have been submitted by Sessions, presbyteries, synods and standing committees in light of the needs and mandates of the committees. After prayerful and careful consideration, the committee prepares a slate of nominations for the General Assembly.

In its work, the Committee to Nominate Standing Committees is to carry out its duties with discretion, fairness and balance, seeking to build up the church, to reflect the ethnic diversity of the denomination. The committee is to take special care to ensure that there is a balance between ministers and laity, regional representation, gender, and will strive to include the cultural diversity of our church.

Participating in the church's work of discernment

Serving on a committee can be a lot of work, but it is rewarding. Being a member of a standing committee provides excellent opportunities to learn how the church works, to meet people from across the country and to be part of the church's vital work of discerning how the church can serve God faithfully in the world that God loves.

It is vital that all parts of the church participate in the nominat-

ing process. If you know someone who has gifts to share with the church, seek their permission and nominate them through the Session or presbytery in order to be

considered for membership on a standing committee of the church.

Nominations are to be submitted to the General Assembly Office by **Feb. 28, 2023**.

Nominations for Trustee Board Membership

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is seeking a new volunteer member for its Trustee Board.

The members of the Trustee Board have a diverse range of expertise, including: accounting, audit, business administration, banking, church administration, church doctrine, finance, financial planning, governance, healing and reconciliation, human resources, investments, legal, missionary, real estate, risk management and social justice.

The Trustee Board has the power to:

- Borrow on behalf of the church
- Invest the funds of the church
- Establish and maintain a pension plan
- Transact annuities, contracts, negotiable instruments, property and real estate

The Trustee Board meets four times a year (March, May, September and November). The maximum term for a member of the Trustee Board is six years. The Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada was incorporated by a Special Act of Parliament in 1939. Members of the Trustee Board must be an active member within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. New appointments are done in June by the General As-

sembly, as facilitated through the Committee to Nominate Standing Committee. The first Trustee Board meeting for this posted position will be Sept. 2023.

Nominations for new members of the Trustee Board should be submitted to the Committee to Nominate Standing Committee, The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Nominations are done through either the Session of a Presbyterian congregation, a presbytery or a synod. Nominations can be sent c/o Terrie-Lee Hamilton, Senior Administrator, General Assembly Office, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, thamilton@prebyterian.ca. **Nominations must be submitted by Feb. 28, 2023.**

We are looking for a candidate who has a legal background that includes an understanding of the policies and governance of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (including the Book of Forms) and the relationship to the general law of Canada—both common law and civil law. As well, they must have experience and knowledge in the following areas of law:

- Property law, especially Real Property law
- Trusts and Estate law
- Fiduciary law
- Securities and Banking law

Trustee Board Responsibilities

Continued from page 36

is invested in a manner that a prudent person would do.

The various funds and endowments of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are the largest source of the money in the Consolidated Fund. Additionally, about 120 congregations, church groups and Presbyterian-related institutions have also invested funds in the Consolidated Fund. The total Consolidated Fund—including all unit-holders—was about \$204 million on June 30, 2022, up from \$121 million in December 2011.

The Pension and Benefits Office of the church collects the contributions to the Pension Fund from employers (congregations, colleges, missions, national boards, etc.) and from employees (ministers and other staff who are part of the plan), but it is the Trustee Board who guides the investment of these funds. The Pension Board projects its requirements in paying pensions into the future, and those projections help the Trustee Board shape the investment policy and procedures of the Pension Fund over the course of time. The Pension Fund had \$312 million in assets as of June 2022, up from \$176 million in December 2011.

Recently, Canadian Presbyterians have expressed an increased interest in better understanding the investments the church holds. Over the last number of years, the Pension Fund has gone beyond investing in stocks and bonds. Newer asset classes include investments in infrastructure projects, such as wind farms and highways, as well as real estate. The bulk of the investments, however, remain in stocks and bonds.

The Board has received presentations about ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) and how those concerns may impact the investment decisions

made by the investment managers. Since the church invests in pooled funds rather than directly buying a company's stocks, having a match between the philosophy and commitments of the Board and its investment managers is essential.

The 2021 General Assembly asked the Trustee Board to move toward having 5% of the Consolidated Fund invested in Indigenous enterprises by 2026, if not sooner. Shifting over \$10 million into Indigenous enterprises takes research, planning, and a thought-through strategy. The IAC is doing that work as it determines the best investment managers to work with on this important development. The IAC will then be ready to make recommendations to the Board for action.

The board is also in conversation with the International Affairs Committee of the General Assembly about limiting the carbon footprint of the investments the two funds make. These shifts require careful research. For example, a shift from fossil-fuel based industries to solar-powered industries means depending on solar cells of which China is the world's number one producer. Much of the silica China uses in their solar cells is mined by a labour force made up largely of Uyghur people, who work under conditions that can be best described as forced labour.

The Trustee Board takes seriously its role in managing the investments of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It seeks to be wise, discerning and prudent as it exercises its fiduciary responsibility. In this way the Trustee Board desires to fulfill Jesus' instructions: "Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Resources for the Season

Find prayers, liturgies, devotionals, family activities, videos and other resources for Advent and Christmas at: presbyterian.ca/advent

WOMEN

Reaching Out, One Pocket Prayer Shawl at a Time



Norma Wilson from Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ont., with her October supply of 300 shawls.

By the Synodical Pocket Prayer Shawl Committee, Women's Missionary Society

Based on the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) motto from Matthew 28:19-20, to make disciples of all nations, the Southwest Ontario Synodical is passing God's faithfulness through pocket prayer shawls, which, at the time of writing, are being sent to many countries around the world.

WMS Council President, Cathy Reid, who is also a member of London Presbyterial, shared the gift of a pocket prayer shawl

given to her at a Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada executive meeting. London Presbyterial members took to the idea and over 100 mini-shawls were knitted as favours for the 2020 Synodical annual meeting. However, due to Covid restrictions, the meeting did not take place, so the shawls with a prayer attached were mailed to members who attended online.

The idea of a Synodical Pandemic Pocket Prayer Shawl Project was initiated! WMS members and friends took up their knitting needles or crochet hooks,

patterns were shared and little prayers were created to attach to the shawls. The project started slowly at first but, at the time of writing this article, some 1,500 have been sent. In the beginning, women of some auxiliaries gave the shawls along with a prayer to graduates in their congregations.

The feedback has been overwhelming!

One young husband and father facing cancer kept his pocket prayer shawl with him each time he visited a specialist, faced a test and eventually surgery for Glioblastoma, an aggressive and rare brain cancer. He recently gave a testimony regarding his recovery.

A grandmother sent a shawl to her granddaughter in Greenville, South Carolina, as she opened a bridal shop just before Covid hit. The granddaughter phoned to thank her and say that the shawl was on her desk where she could read the prayer. The grandmother visited the shop this September and the business is thriving!

A couple from one congregation moved to the Maritimes during the peak of Covid, so a shawl went with them as a prayer for safe travels and protection from



Boys in Guatemala with their prayer mats from the Connect group.

the Covid virus.

Some 40 shawls/mats were delivered to a group of teens in Guatemala learning carpentry from Anthony, a volunteer from Paris, Ont., working with Power at Work, a Canadian organization. The idea of the gift to the teens came about when members of Connect, a small group from Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ont., had received key chains with Christian wooden attachments. So the group thanked the boys with the gift of prayer shawls.

As the Medical Supply Depot in Stratford, Ont., began collecting donations for war-torn Ukraine, Jean Aitcheson was approached about adding pocket prayer shawls to the containers being shipped. Jean was delighted with the idea. Soon Mary Duffin was researching translations in Ukrainian for members to attach to the mini-shawls, mats, squares and quilts. Mary began receiving packages of shawls to take to the depot at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. A need was realized for donations to Cuba, so Mary provided Spanish translations. Donations are being collected for



Prayer shawls tucked in with a box going to Ukraine.



shipments to South Sudan and Zambia, with prayers in English attached.

In a recent chat with Mary, she expressed enthusiastic thanks to those members and friends from Southwestern Ontario Synodical involved in this worthwhile outreach.

Continuing to Care



The North Pelham/Kirk on the Hill/Rockway WMS.

By Margaret Rice, President of WMS Niagara Presbyterial

The North Pelham/Kirk on the Hill/Rockway WMS, the last remaining group of the Women's Missionary Society in the Niagara Presbyterial, disbanded in June 2022. A poem was written by Diane McMillan to recognize this event, while looking forward to what is to come.

Closing WMS

Another door
In our missions has closed,
God understands our sadness
And this path we chose.
But God has a plan
To nourish the seeds
Planted through mission

For others' needs.
We can step out
And continue to give
Help where it's needed
For others to live.
Don't shut the door
And just walk away,
God needs our commitment
For another day.
As children of the cross
We are disciples too,
God's light shines forever
In the sharing we do.
Our mission can flourish
One day at a time,
If only by giving
A nickel or a dime.
So utter these words
In faithful prayer,
By telling the Lord,
That we continue to care.

WOMEN

“Senior of the Year” in Stratford

Jean Aitcheson, local volunteer and member of the Women’s Missionary Society (WMS), was presented with the “Senior of the Year” award by the city of Stratford, Ont.

Having spent 53 years as a registered nurse, Jean now volunteers with the Stratford Mission Depot, which, for 27 years, has been accepting donated medical supplies that would normally be tossed out to landfill. Instead, volunteers pack and send the supplies to people in need around the world. Currently, shipments are made to Ukraine, Cuba, South Sudan, Zambia and Sierra Leone. Many of the shipments also contain miniature prayer shawls, made by Presbyterian WMS

group members, with a prayer written in Ukrainian, Spanish or English. Many donated supplies come via contacts of Presbyterian churches throughout the Synod of Southwestern Ontario. The work at the depot increased in February in response to the war in Ukraine. Thankfully, the great warehouse space at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Stratford made it possible for the depot to meet the increased demand.

Jean has led and participated in 38 short-term mission trips to Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Guyana, Malawi, the Philippines and Bangladesh. She has also mentored mission participants who have gone on to form

their own mission trip teams to Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Within the community of Stratford, she’s a member of the Festival City Stratford Club and an active Rotarian, who holds several Rotary awards, including the “Service Above Self” award in 2017—one of 120 given yearly around the world by Rotary International.

There are many more local charities and organizations that Jean supports, not to mention she is an active member of Avonton Presbyterian Church and serves as president of the church’s WMS group.

Thank you, Jean, for your generosity and selflessness!



Pictured (l to r) is former Stratford mayor, Dan Mathieson, councillor Kathy Vassilakos, Jean Aitcheson and recently elected mayor, Martin Ritsma.

BOOKS

A Review of *Dreaming in Grey*

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

Dreaming in Grey
Written by Dorothy
Brown Henderson
July 2022

This is the fourth novel by Canadian Presbyterian, Dorothy Brown Henderson. It centres on five generations of one family living in Markdale and Grey County, Ont., between 1935 and 2009.

The main characters in the novel are all fictional and part of the extended family, with one exception. Tales of Grey County’s most famous politician, Agnes Macphail, the first woman elected to Canada’s House of Commons and founding member of the CCF, are woven throughout the narrative. We learn of her causes, such as fighting for pensions for sen-

iors and worker’s rights.

Although most of the characters in the story are fictitious, many places and events described in the narrative are not. Even Markdale’s famous Chapman’s ice cream makes a brief appearance. Black settlers who once farmed in Grey County and then suddenly disappeared are discussed several times. Questions are asked about why all traces of this settlement are gone. Historic events, like the construction of the railway station in Owen Sound, are worked into the story.

The novel moves back and forth between two members of the main family, Sara and her grandmother Ruth.

Sara is nine years old when she is traumatized by the sudden death of her mother. She must then assume responsibilities no nine-year-old should have to carry. Her father’s main interest and

focus is on municipal politics. He is constantly in conflict with Sara’s eldest brother, Kep, who Sara loves and admires. Sara assumes large responsibilities for two younger brothers, one of whom is an infant.

We are taken through the 1930s and ‘40s, the hardships of the Great Depression and the second world war, through Sara’s grandmother and her memories. We learn that Ruth marries her childhood sweetheart who then betrays her by impregnating a young woman who had come to help out on the farm. But the marriage survives and Ruth and William, her husband, adopt the baby when he is born.

Henderson has a passion for good food and cooking. Her first book was a cookbook. So it’s no surprise food plays an important role in her stories. Kep develops a passion for food and cooking



is filled with mystery and intrigue and secrets that will only be revealed in the final chapter.

Also, anyone who is interested in history, particularly as it pertains to Grey County, will be drawn in by this story. Henderson grew up on a farm in Grey County and her appreciation for the land and the people of the area shines through.

But what does the author hope you will get out of reading this novel? It is, she says, “a tale of a family defined by loyalty, betrayal, rigidity, resilience, longing, and above all dreams.” It “explores how family, place and dreams shape our lives. Prepare to laugh and cry. In the end you will feel you are part of this family.”

Dorothy has written three previous novels: *The Season of Strawberries* and *Happy are Those*, both about a young woman minister, and *Dr. Bloom’s Event*, about a Jewish surgeon in London, Ont.

Dorothy lives in Waterloo, Ont., with her husband, John. She has enjoyed a variety of careers: music teacher, mental health worker, Christian educator and Presbyterian minister.

from the medieval age, and eventually goes off to study in the culinary program of George Brown College in Toronto. The author includes two recipes for the adventurous reader to try—Kep’s Lenten Heathen Quiche (adapted from the medieval era) and Pioneer Apple Pie out of the Old Grey Highlands Kitchens.

Who should read this novel? Anyone who enjoys a good tale of the trials and temptations of family life, which will likely reflect aspects of your own family, will appreciate this novel. The story

Share Your Thoughts

There’s still time to complete a short feedback form on the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper. Do you have thoughts and opinions about our denomination’s free newspaper?

Share them at: presbyterian.ca/connection-feedback

Survey closes Dec. 31



BOOKS

Read, Wonder, Listen



By Laurie Watt,
Communications Coordinator,
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
in Barrie, Ont.

At St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Barrie, Ont., when the pandemic locked the church doors, we gave children copies of *Read, Wonder, Listen: Stories from the Bible for Young Readers*, written by Laura Alary and illustrated by Ann Sheng. The book is a collection of 105 Bible stories that allowed parents to be teachers as well as learners with their children.

As part of Knox College's staff, Dr. Laura Alary serves as a guide as she takes students on journeys of discovery and teaches as she helps deepen their knowledge. But her influence extends beyond the college's walls and the students she encounters. She fosters the imaginations and curiosity of children and all those who read with her books with them by retelling classic Bible stories.

"Before reading or telling a Bible story to children," Laura said, "I say to them, 'The light of Christ helps us understand what we read in the Bible.' That is a simple way of saying that we interpret the words on the page in light of what we know of the teachings and actions of Jesus."

Wondering and listening—and writing books since she was a child—Laura Alary has gathered some of the better-known Bible stories into one book, published in 2018. *Read, Wonder, Listen* retells well-known stories from different perspectives and different times and places, which raises different questions. Laura pointed out that Bible is incredibly diverse and requires different lenses to read and interpret.

"Before I began to write this book, I had to deal with a number of large questions: Which stories should I include? From whose

point of view? I had to establish criteria for inclusion and a goal."

She also explores the vibrancy of what has been recorded in the scriptures thousands of years ago.

"The Bible is not a static text, but an ongoing conversation. What ideas have been misunderstood? What ideas have to be stretched?"

In Luke 2, when Jesus is in the temple, he listened and asked questions of the teachers. He shared his ideas. Those are things any child can relate to. Laura kept that in mind as she retold the stories. She recognizes all of us have a desire to be connected to others, to creation and to God.

Ultimately, she wanted the book to be inclusive, truthful, peaceful and open.

"Where am I in this story?" she tells readers to ask themselves. "Where does it connect with my life? That is the work of the child and the Spirit. I like to prod that along."

Sometimes that means telling the story from a different character's perspective. "I want to make room for the characters and points of view that were left out. Is there a way to include them? Would the story sound different if someone else was telling it?" Then she began to explore, using her education in the classics and theology, her experiences in the Montessori method and her years of making books, even out of craft paper when she was a child.

For example, Alary wondered what Noah's wife would think of the practicalities of life on the ark.

"(Noah's wife) raises practical concerns. What about food? Camels and clams don't eat the same things. Who will do the cleaning?"

Those questions fire up the imagination and the interaction with the story. Alary encourages the reader to step into the time and place of the character and experience the story. She makes the characters and their experiences more relatable so the stories have more power.

"Stories can cultivate imagination," Laura said. "Stories can stir empathy. We step into the reality of someone else's existence. They have the power to shape our hearts, minds and attitudes."

As she writes, she asks herself—and encourages her readers to ask themselves—what is this story doing to me?

In the story of Cain and Abel, readers experience something many of them will know—sibling rivalry—in another time and place.

"Sometimes it's the hardest texts that generate the best conversations," she said, knowing as the mother of three, kids wonder, Why is everything so unfair?

"Sometimes I ask questions directly and sometimes I tell the story in a way that encourages kids to ask their questions."

Alary's works include books that tackle truth, illness and dying, space exploration and the interconnectedness of life on earth.

How Do I Pray for Grandpa? Is another book by Laura Alary that explores the uncertainty a young girl named Miriam experiences as she watches her grandfather's health fail. The book explores prayer as Miriam finds ways to see and speak to God.

And as a theologian, Laura journeys with us through the ecclesiastical seasons. This series features Laura's book, *Look! A Child's Guide to Advent and Christmas*, which explores Advent through the eyes of a child who eagerly waits and looks for a surprise behind each day in an Advent calendar. The series also includes a guide to Lent and Easter, *Make Room*, and a third one, *Breathe*, which explores Pentecost.



A book signing at St. Andrew's, Barrie, with author Dr. Laura Alary.

"My son said, 'Are you going to write another one in this series?', and I said, 'No, I've worked through the liturgical year.' Then I realized yes, there is a pretty significant gap. The Lenten book goes up to Easter Day then stops."

She's working on another book that journeys through the 50 days of Easter, and links to *Breathe*.

"The Spirit is the energy that connects all things. We are all cells in one body."

And interestingly, at Knox College, where today's theologians gather with tomorrow's, there's



a growing picture and children's book collection.

Children's books are a great place to start to read, wonder and listen to what the Spirit has to say.

The Guder Scholars Program

The Centre for Missional Leadership (CML) at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver
August 1 to 3, 2023

Theme: "Missional Leadership and Evangelism"
with Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison, SMU Perkins School of Theology



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REFLECTIONS

Equal Protection by Law from Violence for Canadian Children

By retired Naval Captain George Zimmerman, who served in the Canadian Armed Forces from 1972 to 2010. He has served as a Reserve naval officer and then, for 30 years, as a Regular Force Chaplain. A Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Zimmerman is currently serving St. David and St. Martin Church in Ottawa, Ont. This article was first published in the Hill Times, Ottawa, July 19, 2021.

Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada should be repealed because it denies Canadian children the same protection from violence afforded adults. The horrific discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves of Indigenous Canadian children on properties of schools funded by the Government of Canada and administered by Christian church groups has rightfully shocked Canadians. The discovery becomes especially egregious when one realizes that the very laws that facilitated this atrocity remain part of the Criminal Code of Canada despite many internal and external efforts to repeal the offending Section. Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada allows for the physical punishment of children. The atrocities perpetrated on Canadian children of Indigenous families demonstrate how the narrative that lies behind this law can lead to the dehumanizing objectification of children to the point of callous abuse and desecration of their bodies.

Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada must be repealed as soon as practicable to show that Canadians today place the safety of our young as a top priority.

World class studies, repeatedly published by leading peer reviewed journals in psychology, psychiatry, education, athletics, and child development, have clearly shown that physical punishment of children, as allowed under Section 43, does nothing to instill the self-control and personal discipline needed for well-being of productive functioning adults. The evidence further shows there is significant risk of dangerous harm to the well-being of children being disciplined with physical punishment. Finally, there are well-researched more effective interventions that use positive



non-violent methods of needed discipline in raising children.

The studies are definitive. It is no longer a matter of the evidence; it is a matter of what now must be done in the light of that evidence. The result of this evidence of harm and violation of children's human rights led the United Nations in 1990 to adopt the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes protection of children from all physical punishment. It is worth noting that Scotland, Wales, New Zealand, Germany, France, and Australia are amongst those who have taken the issue seriously. Inexplicably, Canada continues to lag behind 62 countries that have, to date, reformed their laws and developed public education to preclude the physical punishment of children. It is also sad that Canada lags behind developing post-colonial nations on this issue. For a current list of nations see *Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children* (endcorporalpunishment.org). Canada appears to be offering lip service only.

Since 1989, there have been 17 private member's bills placed before the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate to repeal Section 43. All have failed. Canadian non-government organizations, with no real progress, have for years urged repeal. In 2004, the Children's Hospital of

Eastern Ontario partnered with six national child well-being organizations to publish the *Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth*. The *Joint Statement* is a seminal review of the research that convincingly documents the strong link between physical punishment and lifelong harm of children. Such efforts have not yet seen repeal of Section 43 or concerted public education by the Government of Canada urging positive parenting using non-violent discipline.

The *Joint Statement* has been widely seen in most sectors. Its recommendations for the repeal of the law and more education on positive parenting are evidence based. The related direct connection to the narratives of colonial powers and the physical punishment of children, which horrified the Indigenous peoples of Canada, have also been well researched. See the 2020 publication *Decolonizing Discipline* (Michaelson and Durrant, editors, 2020). As does the *Joint Statement*, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2008 urges repeal of Section 43 (Call to Action #6). The TRC identified Section 43 as not only a real danger to children, but a hated symbol of the harm done in Residential Schools.

Perhaps one source of the resistance in Canada to the elimination of physical punishment as

a means to discipline our young comes from religious people with rigid dogmatic thinking. Some of these, pointedly, are congregants in the same religions which ran the Residential Schools. A most common defence of physical punishment as a means of discipline comes from small highly vocal groups who cite scriptures but have no academic understanding of these ancient texts.

This resistance does not stand up to scholarly scrutiny. It is an emotional-based opinion based on outdated narratives. The evidence against the value of physical punishment of children is as incontrovertible as is the evidence showing the dangers of the non-use of seat belts, smoking, and exposure to second-hand smoke. Thankfully, even if slow in coming, there has been a steady movement in the long-standing theological Christian faith groups who are reforming their positions on the physical punishment of children. Consider *A Christian Theological Statement in Support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #6* (2017) produced by an ecumenical team comprising Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and United Church of Canada scholars.

Worldwide, there is a well-organized multi-faith organization dedicated to eliminating the physical punishment of chil-

dren called Churches' Network for Non-violence. Recently, the Church of Scotland declared its position in favour of positive non-violent discipline while opposing physical punishment as a means of discipline.

At home, the United Church of Canada was an early endorser of the *Joint Statement*. Most recently, The Presbyterian Church in Canada carefully studied the issue over three years. In 2018, St. David and St. Martin Presbyterian Church in Ottawa not only endorsed the *Joint Statement* but requested that The Presbyterian Church in Canada consider doing the same. With the approval of the Presbytery of Ottawa, who also endorsed the *Joint Statement*, the request was passed to the national church for consideration. The PCC responded with a professionally researched church report, publicly available, in support of the *Joint Statement*, calling for the repeal of Section 43, and advocating for better education about child rearing with non-violent interventions as a means of teaching self-control. The governing body of the national PCC, the General Assembly of 2019, received the report but sent it back for another look at the evidence supporting the recommendation to endorse the *Joint Statement*. After a second examination of the literature, the research com-

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- Langley, Langley** (60%-time minister) – British Columbia
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- Victoria, Trinity** (full-time minister) – British Columbia
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- Calgary, Westminster** (full-time minister) – Alberta & the Northwest
- Grande Prairie, Forbes** (full-time minister) – Alberta & the Northwest
- Presbytery of Edmonton-Lakeland** (regional minister) – Alberta & the Northwest
- Fredericton, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces
- Fredericton, St. Andrew's** (transitional minister) – Atlantic Provinces
- St. John's, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces
- Sydney, Bethel** (full-time minister) – Atlantic Provinces
- Amherstburg, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
- Dundas, West Flamboro** (80%-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
- Forest, St. James** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
- Hamilton, Chedoke** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
- Innerkip, Ont.** (full-time interim minister) – Southwestern Ontario
- London, St. Laurence** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
- London, Trinity Community** (half-time stated supply minister) – Southwestern Ontario
- Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
- North Pelham** (Fenwick) & Lincoln, First Presbyterian & Rockway Presbyterian (full-time minister) – Southwestern Ontario
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- Kingston, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda
- Markham, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

- Milton, Nassagaweya** (full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda
- Mississauga, Erindale** (full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda
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- Toronto, York Memorial** (half-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda
- Unionville, Unionville** (full-time minister) – Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda
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- Montreal, Snowdon Korean** (full-time minister) – Quebec & Eastern Ontario
- Montreal, Taiwanese Robert Campbell** (full-time minister) – Quebec & Eastern Ontario

OBITUARIES

Read all full obituaries online at presbyterian.ca

- Patricia Mary Hasselfelt**
Deceased August 1, 2022
Barrie, Ont.
- The Rev. Ian Cameron Glass**
Deceased August 7, 2022
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
- Hazel Sophia Smith**
Deceased August 14, 2022
Parksville, B.C.
- Dr. Clarabeth McIntosh**
Deceased August 25, 2022
Vancouver, B.C.

- 戴妙姝 Tina "Miao Shu" Lin**
Deceased September 13, 2022
Toronto, Ont.
- William Alexander (Sandy) MacDonald Henderson**
Deceased September 14, 2022
Toronto, Ont.
- The Rev. Dr. Alex McCombie**
Deceased September 16, 2022
Cambridge, Ont.

- Maurice Mawhinney**
Deceased September 24, 2022
Toronto, Ont.
- The Rev. Bertus de Bruijn**
Deceased October 1, 2022
Lacombe, Alta.
- Béatrice Johnston**
Deceased October 12, 2022
Kingston, Ont.
- The Rev. Garry Morton**
Deceased 2022
Gananoque, Ont.

Protect the children

Continued from page 42

mittee came to the same conclusion and published an even more compelling report for the General Assembly of 2021. That report is perhaps the best produced by a long-standing Christian faith group and makes a compelling read. In June 2021, the General Assembly agreed to endorse the *Joint Statement* and agreed to lobby the Government of Canada in favour of repealing Section 43. Further, it agreed to commend the *Joint Statement* to all congregations of the Church as a starting tool for education on effective parenting. The report opens by stating "Children and youth are gifts from God and bearers of the Kingdom. The well-being of children and the care of their bodies, minds and souls should be at the forefront of the church's pastoral care." This report and its adopted recommendations are important for several reasons. It shows leadership in reforming Christian practices worldwide. It demonstrates reasoned flexibility by faith groups of the "reformed tradition" when exposed to

new evidence revealed by modern research. It demonstrates again that doctrine in faith groups can be descriptive and not prescriptive. If a church can reform itself, then so can the nation. Given the shocking discoveries regarding the Residential Schools, Canadians, rightly, have been asked to reflect on the historical narratives and rethink those narratives. The physical punishment of children as a means of discipline is an erroneous outdated narrative. Even a cursory examination of the literature shows that repealing Section 43 has nothing to do with political stripe or position. The need for its repeal and improved education about the rights of children today is particularly pressing. The time for all parties to add to their agenda the repeal of Section 43 is now. Canada must affirm that, despite our past behaviours, we will now prioritize the raising of successive generations of well-adjusted, respectful, productive, and creative Canadians.

Forbes Presbyterian Church is seeking a minister to lead, accompany and nurture the congregation in their discipleship of Jesus Christ; to explore, find blessing and discover daily enrichment in the fulfillment of God's plan for our lives.

We are searching for a minister who is energetic, outgoing and a good listener. The candidate must help us with spiritual growth and be a life-long learner in the areas of Biblical studies and societal change.

Pulpit Vacancy

Forbes Presbyterian Church in Grand Prairie, Alberta



If this is an opportunity for ministry in which God's Spirit is encouraging your further interest, please request our Congregational Profile and additional information from our Interim Moderator.



Contact John Dowds, Interim Moderator at: jfkdowns@gmail.com

JUST WONDERING...



My congregation wants to do a land acknowledgement to honour Indigenous peoples and their presence on the land. I was asked to prepare this. Where do I begin?

My congregation wants to do a land acknowledgement to honour Indigenous peoples and their presence on the land. I was asked to prepare this. Where do I begin?

Answered by Katharine Sisk, Justice Ministries

One of the most important reasons a congregation gives a land acknowledgement is because The Presbyterian Church in Canada participated in a system—Residential Schools—that perpetrated great harm and was designed to erase Indigenous identity. Drawing attention to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, and the treaties that were intended to guide a sharing of land and resources between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, is one small but important way we can disrupt that legacy. Here are some things to consider.

Learn about treaties

Is your church on land that is subject to a treaty or treaties? When was it signed and by who(m)? How has—and how hasn’t—the treaty been lived up to? If there isn’t a treaty, what nations have lived on, or held the responsibility for caring for that land? There may not be a single or straightforward answer, but these questions will point you to the kind of information you will need.

Begin with a simple statement

I acknowledge that the national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is on Treaty 13 land (the 1805 Toronto Purchase Agreement), which is held by the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation.

Check your sources

Always try to consult with Indigenous communities in your area. Band Council websites, Indigenous cultural centres and Friendship centres are great resources. Online maps, such as native-land.ca, and education centres with Indigenous studies programs and student centres can also be useful. It’s okay to start with an acknowledgement prepared by someone else, such as your city or municipal council, but don’t stop there. The most important thing you can do is consult with Indigenous peoples and organizations wherever possible. Part of the process of a land acknowledgement is putting in the work to learn.

Let the practice grow—engage with curiosity and embrace complexity

What is communicated in a land acknowledgement is likely to change over time, particularly as a group collectively deepens its understanding of colonization and the need for churches to intentionally unsettle entrenched norms that reflect the racist idea that European Christians knew better than Indigenous peoples what was needed to live and thrive (this idea underpinned the Residential Schools system and the policy of assimilation in Canada). An acknowledgement can articulate some of these ideas and it is important to name the harm the church has done.

I acknowledge the church’s role in colonization: that as a church, we have been involved in colonial practices and structures that profoundly harmed generations of Indigenous peoples, families, and communities.

Commit to truth, healing and reconciliation

Addressing the intergenerational harms of anti-Indigenous racism is not something that will happen overnight. But we have guidance in the form of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action, and the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which outlines 231 Calls for Justice. And we have the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. The Declaration’s principles are the minimum standard of what is needed for the well-being of Indigenous peoples. An acknowledgement can express the church’s covenant, with God’s guidance, to walk humbly in better ways.

I reaffirm our calling and commitment to truth, healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and ask for God’s guidance as we seek intentional actions to end anti-Indigenous racism and uphold the dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples.

- Additional resources:
- The PCC’s Social Action Hub presbyterian.ca/social-action
 - The PCC and the Doctrine of Discovery: presbyterian.ca/dod

A minister by any other name... Can you settle something for us? What is the correct way to use a minister’s title? Is it “Rev.” or “the Rev.”?

Answered by the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary

The Reverend/Rev. is a style of address used in front of the name of clergy and ministers in various religious traditions. But ultimately, people get to choose how they are addressed. The generally accepted practice is to put “the” before “Reverend” or “Rev.” in writing. Frequently, the “the” is incorrectly dropped in ordinary speech.

Increasingly, it is common to hear ministers referred to by placing simply “Rev.” in front of their first name. For example, people will say “Rev. Chris said we should love one another” or “Get the communion chalice for Rev. Sandy.” While common (and perhaps preferred by some clergy), strictly, this use is widely considered to be technically incorrect as “Rev./Reverend” appears to function more as an adjective in this use, rather than an honorific style.

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I’m a new grandmother and very proud and looking forward to my granddaughter’s baptism. My son-in-law isn’t keen on a baby’s baptism and thinks we should wait until she’s older, but I think the sooner the better. Is there a specific age that a child should be baptized according to the Presbyterian church?

Answered by the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary

Congratulations on becoming a grandmother and we hope you will send photos! There is no specific age or stage of development when children should be baptized. Traditions of the Christian Church understand features of baptism differently. Some traditions believe that one should be baptized only after making a conscious decision to be a disciple of Christ. In these traditions (Baptist and Pentecostal, for example) people are often baptized as teens or adults.

children are beloved by God and are part of the church and believe that baptism is meant for those who profess their faith and for their children, who they promise to raise in the faith of Jesus Christ. Infant baptism emphasizes the grace of God and God’s initiative in loving us before we are even aware of anything other than ourselves and our wants and needs. In infant baptism, we see the truth that we are loved in spite of our insights, ignorance and abilities. We also believe that people baptized in infancy are then called later in life to make personal professions of Christ. This is an excellent opportunity for your family to speak with the minister in your congregation about the meaning of baptism.

Other traditions, including the Presbyterian tradition, emphasize the reality that