



Messy Church Camp Day at Kintail



Submitted by the Messy Church Camp Day Team

The Messy Church Camp Day took place at Camp Kintail, in Goderich, Ont., on May 21, 2022. This Messy Church event, which was a collaboration between Camp Kintail and four Presbyterian congregations (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Stratford; Avonton Presbyterian Church; Knox Presbyterian Church, Holstein, which is a three-point charge with Knox, Normanby and Amos Dromore; and Lucknow Presbyterian Church) had been a

long time in the making, originally having been scheduled for May of 2020 and rescheduled three times because of the pandemic.

The 90+ registrants ranged in age from three to over 85. "The Great Adventure—The Story of Jonah" was the theme for the day, and the variety of activities that were offered centred around it. This collaborative, creative, fun-filled, intergenerational event nurtured faith development. Participants could take part in as many of the following activities as they wished: high ropes, rock-wall climbing, nature hikes, the

labyrinth, six different craft options, Gaga ball, beach activities, marshmallow toasting, archery, slingshot practice, playing on the slide, learning steps to the "Jonah Rap," and attending an ecological justice centre that focused on water pollution. Enthusiastic camp staff led the activities that required their expertise. Messy Church leaders provided the crafts and the ecological justice centre. Mary Duffin from St. Andrew's, Stratford, led a session for Messy Church leaders in the afternoon. Ed McGugan from Lucknow PC

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MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Hard Truth



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

We learn from an early age that we should tell the truth. Telling lies is wrong, as is remaining silent when the truth needs to be told. However, those childhood lessons become less clear as we grow and truth telling becomes more nuanced. We often say that we cannot handle the truth or that the truth would be too much for someone to bear. We understand that telling the truth often depends on our own place in a situation, how we perceive what is happening, and our relationships with others.

Yet, in most of our lives, we have experienced moments when we have had to own up to the hard truth, when the nuances and the carefully crafted explanations and the silences are no longer ad-

equate, and in fact exacerbate the lie that will not go away. We have to recognize the lie for what it is and accept the consequences of having hidden it, and face whatever the future might bring with the exposure of that lie. We need to make a confession.

In our church, as in other churches, we are having to come to terms with some lies that we have been told, and that we have told, that have been at the root of the oppression and exclusion of many people and groups. At the General Assembly this year, a confession was offered to LG-BTQI people for the harm that has been done to them in the church, and for the theological justification that has been developed to enable that harm to continue. The church has lived with the lie that some people, because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, have not merited God's love and grace in the same way as others and that they have been given, at best, a second place status within our communities of faith. We have had to name that lie and to recognize the harm that has been done, and continues to be done, because of it. We have also had to outline the steps that need to be taken to ensure the harm does not continue. For many, I know, telling this truth has been difficult and finding the way forward even more so.



We have also been coming to terms with the lie that God's love and grace are not extended equally to people who do not identify as white or are not of European origin and have been thusly racialized. The long history of European colonialism, and its intimate connection with Christian mission and evangelization, has in many ways normalized racism within our churches and has often made us blind to the ways in which racialized people have been marginalized and oppressed. The work of

the Special Committee (learn more on page 34) that is responding to the calls to address systemic racism in the church, and the longstanding work of the Life and Mission Agency and its call for the development of an anti-racism covenant, are signs that we are moving to address this evil and the harm that has been done and continues to be done. We need to be reminded that racism and its theological justification has a long history in the church, which has been as much at work in Canada as it has in other parts of the world. It is deeply embedded in us, and in our attitudes and relationships, privileging some simply because of the colour of their skin, and disempowering others.

The truth about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples has also confronted us in recent years. We are finally addressing the underlying doctrines that have enabled Indigenous peoples to be ignored, decimated, assimilated and forgotten, particularly the so-called Doctrine of Discovery (learn more on page 8). Papal decrees in the fifteenth century gave justification to the conquest and exploitation of lands and peoples that were being reached by Europeans. Since the peoples of these lands were not Christian, it was deemed to be just to eliminate them, or convert them by force in order to Christianize the world. This was the beginning of five centuries of attack upon Indigenous peoples and the taking of their land. The Residential Schools were a

significant part of this attack and we have had to recognize as a denomination our role in supporting government policy and in giving the theological justification for this to happen. The denunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* by the General Assembly on 2019 were important steps on this journey. The continuing refusal of the Roman Catholic Church to denounce these doctrines, even after the Pope's historic confession this year, means that there is still a long way to go in addressing what lies at the root of the injustice perpetrated against Indigenous peoples by both state and church.

Most often we do not want to address these hard truths. We want to get on with building up the body of Christ, giving life and purpose to our local congregations and finding ways to be the church in the context in which we live. Yet, until we address these truths, and the lies that we have lived with for centuries, it will be impossible to build the church on a solid foundation. When we face these truths, the church will be different from what we have known and that frightens us. However, it will be a place where we begin with the truth of God's love for all and where all will be enabled to share gifts and to shape what it means to be communities of faith in the way of Jesus. Let us pray to have the courage to continue to recognize the hard truth and to continue to be transformed into the people and communities God calls us to be.

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For more information or to refer someone from your congregation to this program, please contact Rev. Susan Brasier at

sbrasier@standrewstpaul.com or call (514) 842-3431

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SUNDAY WORSHIP 11:00 A.M

FEATURE



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volunteered to share his expertise with those trying their hand at archery.

A late morning rain came down while we were enjoying a bountiful lunch provided by Camp Kintail, but it didn't dampen our enthusiasm. Instead, as the "showers of blessing" rained, we sang the "Thank-you Lord" grace and enjoyed the delicious meal, visiting with people we knew and making new acquaintances.

Outdoor afternoon activities proceeded as planned. When these activities ended, we met inside for the Celebration (worship service) and the closing campfire—it was too wet to use the outdoor chapel and the campfire site in the Meadow. The Rev. Jen Sokolowsky and the camp counsellors used an interactive approach to tell the story of Jonah. They also reminded us of how each of the day's activities related to the story. Lots of campers volunteered to participate when they were asked to play the role of different characters during the storytelling. Kintail staff members performed the Jonah Rap with the audience clapping or dancing to the beat. Prayer followed by campfire songs brought a wonderful day, where we felt God's presence and blessing, to a close.

Camp Kintail and/or Messy Church were new experiences for some families. A local mother

wondered, "How could I live so close and not know about this place?" Newcomers were interested in exploring the camp and hearing about day and overnight camps, Kirk in the Cedars, Sunday Suppers, as well as volunteer and employment opportunities.

The Rev. Jen Sokolowsky, Associate Director for Weddings, Rentals and Faith Formation at Camp Kintail, provided leadership. Grants from the PCC Creative Ministry with Children and Youth Fund and from the Synod of Southwestern Ontario's Creative Ministry Fund made the registration fee and transportation accessible for families. We greatly appreciate these grants. Families paid \$10 per person for registration and received financial assistance with mileage. Flame 'N Bricks, a pizzeria in Lucknow, donated \$2 from each pizza sold during their rebranding weekend to support the Messy Church Camp Day. A total of \$500 was donated by Flame 'N Bricks to Camp Kintail.

By the end of the inaugural Messy Church Camp Day, people were interested in coming back for a 2023 Messy Church Camp Day at Kintail. A date has been set for Sat., May 20, 2023. We're planning some fundraising events to reduce the cost of registration to make it accessible for everyone who would like to attend.



Presbyterians Sharing facilitates special grants to help camps with property maintenance, share resources and best practices, and be trained in best practices for anti-racism and creating LGBTQI+ inclusive environments.



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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.



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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.

LEADERSHIP

Vacation Bible Camp 2022 Dreams Come True

Submitted by the Rev. Trish Archibald, St. Andrew's-Knox Presbyterian Church in Fort Erie, Ont.

One of the highlights of summers gone by at St. Andrew's-Knox Presbyterian Church in Fort Erie, Ont., was always Vacation Bible School—or “Camp” as we prefer to call it, as kids are usually tired of “school” come summertime!

It was always a lot of work, but a lot of fun, and always very rewarding to know that each summer we had shared the good news of God's love and welcome to those in our neighbourhood.

But, in recent years, our congregation found that it was becoming more and more of a challenge to find Vacation Bible Camp volunteers to help with games, sports or even crafts—although we've always had lots of offers to help in the kitchen! Finally, someone said, “We're just getting too old for this kind of...fun!” Everyone agreed. Our hearts were willing, but our other parts...not so much.

But we hated to give up on the idea of hosting VBC.

We knew we were likely not the only church facing this dilemma, and we soon discovered that most of the churches in the Presbytery of Niagara were in a very similar position. We all wished we could still do what we had once done, but it didn't seem possible—at least not without help. That got us thinking.

Inspired by the *Kintail on the Road* model, the Rev. Trish Archibald of St. Andrew's-Knox and the Rev. Cherie Inksetter of St. Giles Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines made a proposal to the Presbytery of Niagara in early 2022 for financial backing of the development of our own regional travelling summer VBC program. Presbytery enthusiastically agreed to cover the training and development costs as well as half of the payroll anticipated for

three full-time summer staff positions. The remaining payroll and material costs, such as for craft supplies, etc., would be assumed by the seven churches throughout the presbytery who had each committed to host the VBC program for a week.

For this pilot project, we decided to revamp an existing older curriculum we had available, with the creative guidance of Chris Vizari from Chippawa Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls and Lisa Schmauder from St. Giles, St. Catharines. The main challenge was to ensure that the curriculum material had enough flexibility built in to make it easily adaptable to each location's needs and preferences. Some churches had 20 campers, while others had 60. Some sites had conventional Sunday School rooms and a gym for use in case of rain, others had less typical facilities, like the storefront property that is home to the Gathering Place Presbyterian Church in Port Colborne, where they prayed hard for good weather, but were prepared so that any day could be water day!

During the first week of July, the three summer staff members—Sadie, Jay and Ronin (university and high school students from the area)—were immersed in an intensive training program, where they worked on becoming well acquainted with the curriculum material by practicing on a test group and making site tours of all seven church locations that stretched from the shores of Lake Erie to Lake Ontario.



From July 11 to August 26, the VBC team travelled and spent a week at each host church, running the camp with the support of local volunteers and site coordinators. As you can imagine, this task required the staff to be creative, flexible and gracious in order to be able to adapt as needed to a new environment, a new group of volunteers, and a new group of children each week!

The Presbytery of Niagara's investment made this project happen, and the hard work of the developers Chris and Lisa gave it shape, but it was the partnership between the staff and the host churches that made it work. Everyone involved clearly had a heart for this rambunctious, and often life-changing ministry. In a time when we are frequently having to find new ways to do things, truly, it was collaboration that created Vacation Bible Camp 2022 and made dreams come true in the Presbytery of Niagara!



LEADERSHIP

Applying for Grants from Public and Private Funds to Support Ministry

Applying for grants from foundations or municipal, provincial or federal governments can help supplement a congregation's income. When applying for a grant, it is important that the applicant understands its purpose and vision and how the congregation's program meets the funding criteria. Many congregations have been successful at accessing grants to support their ministry, even from secular organizations.

By *Jim MacDonald and Karen Plater, Stewardship & Planned Giving*

In February 2021, Keith Pacey, the Finance & Stewardship Team Leader at Calvin Presbyterian Church in North Bay, Ont., applied for the Ontario Grant to Support Anti-Hate Security Measures for Faith-Based and Cultural Organizations for 2021/2022. This grant provides funds to help faith-based and cultural organizations increase safety and security measures for the facilities they rent or own. The grant requires that applicants host regular gatherings of religious, spiritual or cultural significance as one of their primary activities. Grants of \$5,000, \$7,500 or \$10,000 (based on the

organization's annual revenue) could be used for upgrades to enhance the security of the building, security assessments and/or to host an event which responds to a hate-motivated incident.

With their income level, Calvin PC was eligible for a \$7,500 grant. They applied for a grant to use toward the cost of more secure doors.

To receive the grant, the congregation needed to attest that Calvin PC was in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and hate-related laws under the Criminal Act and that all funds would be used for eligible expenses occurring between April 2021 and March 2022. To complete the application, they also needed:

- A legal organization name

- A Canada Revenue Agency business identification number (the 15-digit charity registration number)
- A certificate of land title or current lease agreement
- Material showing Calvin PC's primary activities, including the nature and frequency of gatherings
- Articles of Incorporation or letters patent (see sidebar below)
- Revenue Calvin PC reported to the Canada Revenue Agency for 2019
- The organization's bank account statement or a void cheque

Documentation Required

Keith used Calvin PC's Charity



other ministry initiatives. Because it was an attestation grant, the government provided it on the understanding that the congregation would use it for eligible expenses. The project can already be completed before the grant is applied for and approved, as long as it falls within the specified date range and is used for eligible expenses. Calvin PC applied in March of 2021 for doors that were installed in July 2021, but the final approval for the grant didn't come until March of 2022. If the congregation finds it cannot use the complete grant for eligible expenses, they need to return any unused funds.

Record Keeping

The congregation doesn't have to submit receipts for payment, but must keep them for seven years as they could be audited to prove that all of the funds were used for eligible expenses. If the audit identifies funds used for any other reason, the congregation has to return any funds used for ineligible expenses to the government.

Congregations that applied for and received money in one grant cycle are eligible to apply for the grant in subsequent years. After the success of the 2020/2021 grant, Calvin PC applied for another \$7,500 for the 2022/2023 grant cycle to help cover the cost of new windows.

To find your congregation in the Government of Canada List of Charities, visit bit.ly/3cOAFbA, find your church and click on the link to the Detail page.

The deadline for the 2022/2023 Ontario Grant to Support Anti-Hate Security Measures was Aug. 31, 2022. Visit ontario.ca/page/available-funding-opportunities-ontario-government to see current government grants in Ontario. Congregations in other provinces can search for grants with their respective governments.

Detail Page from the Canada Revenue Agency Charities and Giving website to show Calvin PC's charitable status and charitable registration number. Their most recent T1030 form showed their 2019 revenue, which determined the level of funding they were eligible for.

The congregation's mission plan and vision statement showed that Calvin PC's primary activity is to host regular gatherings of religious, spiritual or cultural significance.

Finally, to prove that the church "owns land," Keith found a "Parcel Register for Property Identifier" on the Service Ontario website that showed that the property owner's name was "The Board of Trustees of Calvin Presbyterian Church." He also found a document registering a mortgage from 1994 and a document showing that Calvin purchased the lot next door to the church property in the early 1980s. (Every church's journey to prove land ownership will be different. Most municipalities have registries of deeds that can be searched.)

Using the Grant

By helping Calvin PC cover the cost of the purchase and installation of the doors, the government grant helped free up money for

Proving Your Congregation is a Legal Entity

Keith couldn't find Calvin PC listed in the province's business registry, so he knew it wasn't a corporation or a sole proprietorship and he contacted the PCC national office to ask where he might find Calvin Presbyterian Church's "articles of incorporation" or "letters patent."

From the General Assembly Office, he learned that The Presbyterian Church in Canada is an association of unincorporated congregations and the denomination's Trustee Board is the incorporated body for all congregations. Individual congregations are all governed by the denomination's constitution as outlined in the Book of Forms, so they don't need to be incorporated.

A congregation is defined in the Book of Forms under section 139 as "a company of persons, together with their children, associated in a particular locality for Christian worship, instruction, fellowship and work, with the sanction of a presbytery."

Instead of incorporation documents, Keith provided a letter, supplied by the presbytery clerk, which certified that Calvin Presbyterian Church is a congregation in good standing within the Presbytery of Algoma and North Bay and The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The letter was accompanied by a copy of the page in the most recent Acts and Proceedings that states the congregation's legal name and address.

For a sample letter that your presbytery can adapt to certify your church is in good standing, contact Jim MacDonald at 1-800-619-7301 ext. 257 or jmacdonald@presbyterian.ca.



Presbyterians Sharing equips congregation with ideas and best practices for online worship, starting new ministries, congregational renewal, evangelism, financial sustainability, fundraising, management, faith formation and discipleship.

JUSTICE

Climate and Change



Forest fires threatening a nearby city.

By Allyson Carr, Justice Ministries

As I write this article (mid-July), numerous countries are experiencing record-breaking heatwaves. This is leading to increased hospitalizations and deaths from heat stroke and other heat-related health issues. Effects of record-high heat had been a major concern in Canada this year, but now that is the case for countries across the globe as well. Whether the consequences are a melted museum roof and buckled roads in China, temperatures in India that topped out around 49 degrees Celsius, or forest fires in parts of Europe, Canada and the US, the scorching effects of these heatwaves are beginning to show—and people are starting to talk more openly about environmental factors. In response to fires that broke out and destroyed numerous homes amid record heat and dry conditions in the UK, the BBC reported that the mayor of London called it “the busiest day for the fire service in London since the Second World War” (July 21, 2022).

The ways in which the global

climate is rapidly changing significantly impacts people throughout the world. Catastrophic drought and flooding have severely impacted farmers, increasing food insecurity. This, combined with supply chain issues, which are also impacted in part by climate change, are driving food prices up across Canada and internationally. The war in Ukraine has, of course, increased food insecurity as well. Homes have been destroyed, adding to a burgeoning housing crisis in Canada and elsewhere. The Insurance Bureau of Canada has said the floods that hit British Columbia last year were the single costliest weather event in the history of the province. Around 14,800 people had to be evacuated while the floods were ongoing. These are just a few examples of how we know that catastrophes related to climate change aren’t only predictions for the future—they are already here.

Disasters caused by our changing climate have profound effects, not only on those whose homes or livelihoods are lost or damaged, but on everyone in the community and all connected communities.

They increase overall vulnerability to poverty, food insecurity and homelessness, to say nothing of the physical and mental health costs. Indigenous people, racialized people, those who are pregnant or have disabilities or who live in northern or remote areas are significantly more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, though all people are likely to be affected in one way or another. In short, a climate crisis is not only an environmental emergency, but also a human emergency.

It would be easy to feel hopeless and powerless, but we are called to hope and to act. We can and should all work to personally reduce our carbon footprint and thus help lower the emissions contributing to climate change. But individual action, as important as it is, will only get us so far. What is needed are sustained international and corporate commitments to reduce the effects of global warming and climate change.

Collectively, we are not powerless. We must, however, acknowledge that we are in an unfolding emergency and respond accordingly. It will take concerted effort to curb climate change from worsening (for example, through significant legislation that lowers carbon emissions, cuts down on plastic production and transitions to a just, green economy) as well as a commitment to make adaptations to the changes that are already happening (for example, by improvements to infrastructure and dikes, changes to building codes and increasing the resiliency of conservation areas and forests).

An important part of Christian witness is to love, honour and



care for the integrity of creation, which God called “very good.” Without doing so, we cannot fully live out the commandment to love God—harming creation is surely not a way of showing love for God or for our neighbour, whom we are also called to love. The church has spoken on the need to act justly in the shadow of the climate crisis through, for example, urging the difficult but necessary actions of a “just transition” to a low carbon economy and asking all national PCC committees to look at how frequently they meet in order to see if there may be opportunities to reduce carbon consumption (A&P 2021, pp. 411, 38). The PCC has also instituted a

“Creation Care Levy” on travel to the General Assembly (A&P 2018, pp. 363–368, 13–4). These actions are only a start, and we will need to see how we can continue improving on that start—but our individual and community actions must be accompanied by national and global efforts.

This article draws on and updates elements from the 2022 section on climate in the Justice Ministries report to the General Assembly. To learn more about a just transition, or to find educational or advocacy resources on climate issues, see the Ecological Justice page of the Social Action Hub: presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/ecological-justice.



Presbyterians Sharing helps congregations advocate governments and communities for urgent responses to the climate crisis.

Responding to the Addictions Public Health Crisis

By Katharine Sisk, Justice Ministries

On Friday, May 13, 2022, Canadian Ministries and Justice Ministries hosted the Symposium on the Addictions Public Health Crisis: Equipping Churches to Respond Well. Held online, the symposium focused on the opioid crisis, a national public health crisis that affects people in all communities and across all ages and socioeconomic groups.

Between January 2016 and September 2021, 26,690 people in Canada died from opioid overdose. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened this situation—in its first year, there was a 95% increase in deaths from overdosing (particularly involving fentanyl), compared to the year before. What is imperative to understand is that this crisis is not driven by people who use illicit or street drugs.

At the symposium, Dr. Pamela Leece, Public Health Physician at Public Health Ontario, provided an overview of the crisis and talked about public health principles to reduce harm and save lives. She also talked about a range of public health policy responses—from harm reduction actions, such as needle exchange and supervised consumption services, to information sessions about decriminalization and safer supply

policies (e.g., What are they? What has been their impact?). Throughout her presentation, Dr. Leece emphasized that policies and programs must resist stereotyping and stigma and be developed in consultation with affected communities.

Another presenter at the symposium was Natika Bock, the Community Impact and Investment Coordinator for the United Way, B.C., and the Kamloops

Community Action Team Chair. Community Action Teams were established in partnership with the B.C. government to develop action-oriented, community-level strategies to address the overdosing crisis. The Kamloops Community Action Team emphasizes culturally appropriate and trauma-informed initiatives with Indigenous people.

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JUSTICE

Working Toward an End to Racism

By the Life and Mission Agency

The Presbyterian Church in Canada confesses that the church is called to reject and oppose racism. In *Living Faith* 8.4.6, we say that “[J]ustice opposes prejudice in every form. It rejects discrimination on such grounds as race, sex, age, status or handicap. Justice stands with our neighbours in their struggle for dignity and respect and demands the exercise of power for the common good.”

It is notable that *Living Faith* calls us to both reject and oppose, since opposing goes further than simply “rejecting.” Rejecting racism entails calling it out when one sees or hears it, saying it is wrong and showing it won’t be tolerated—and, certainly, taking those steps is necessary. Opposing racism, however, requires taking an active stance against racism. It means intentionally working to identify, challenge and eliminate racism in all the ways that it occurs—in attitudes, practices, systems and structures. This active stance is often referred to as “anti-racism.”

In 1972, The Presbyterian Church in Canada affirmed that, “racism practiced by the white-skinned against their darker-skinned brothers is one of the world’s basic problems, and a blatant denial of the Christian faith.”

This statement rightly acknowledges racism as a society-wide evil that is incompatible with the Christian faith. And yet, institutions in Canada, including the church, have racially biased principles and practices that privilege some and harm others. Such racially biased principles and practices are part of systemic racism. The only way to overcome systemic racism is to intentionally

and actively work to end it.

This year, the General Assembly adopted a motion that will begin the process of working to make the PCC an anti-racist church. Supported by the Life and Mission Agency, the process will begin this year with significant consultation. It will review the church’s history and policies and begin preparing an anti-racism covenant and accompanying strategies. The progress made at this preliminary stage of the process will be reported to the next General Assembly. We cannot comprehend the work that will be required to eliminate racism in the church and become an anti-racist church without having a clear picture of our past.

In order to move forward, we must know and remember the past and deal openly and honestly with it. One of the first steps in doing so is to review what The Presbyterian Church in Canada has said and done, and when it has been silent concerning racism in Canada. Looking at what the church has said must always be done in the larger context of the church’s actions, which includes what the church has not done.

Though the church has not lived up fully to the calls for love, justice and discipleship, there is much the church has done with regards to rejecting and opposing racism. A historical review, beginning with the 1960s, was conducted and submitted to the General Assembly; it can be found in this year’s report of the Life and Mission Agency. The review is intended to help ground the church in its history, so that what now needs to be done—and where to begin this work—is clear. As the report states, while speaking against racism in some areas, the

church continued to be shaped by racism in others, notably in running Residential Schools. All of this is important to remember as the church begins to work on an anti-racism covenant.

Racism is multifaceted; that is to say, it operates at institutional, societal and individual levels and can flourish even without individual intention. In fact, people who do not hold overtly racist views may be completely unaware of their participation in racist systems, which contributes to the continuation of racism. Consequently, the denomination’s work to oppose racism must include learning: coming to recognize racism and to comprehend the complex ways that it confers advantage to some racial and ethnic groups to the detriment of others. The learning will be continuous and ever-changing, as the way racism is perceived and spoken about in public discourse evolves. Therefore, the understanding of racism held by the PCC will need to be similarly dynamic and open to change.

Since The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a community of people, there is every reason to expect that racism continues to operate within the life of the church and its ministries. Having good belief statements is important—this denomination affirms Christian teaching that all people bear the image of God and that Christ died for all. But holding this belief does not preclude racism. Opposing racism must begin by recognizing it for what it is. The work before the church will require pastoral conversation, listening within and among church communities, and within that dialogue, discerning the various ways that racism is being expressed. Identifying,



An anti-racism covenant would involve:

- developing a robust theological framework for understanding racism and this denomination’s response to it, including how our response is grounded in our faith commitments;
- providing an educational resource for Presbyterians to improve their knowledge and understanding of racism and to inspire their commitment to anti-racism endeavours;
- providing a basis for decisions about resource allocation among possible anti-racism projects;
- guiding the denomination in achieving coherence, consistency and accountability with regard to its anti-racism efforts.

confessing and addressing instances of racism in The Presbyterian Church in Canada will entail prayerful diligence, seeking the mind of Christ, and an openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It will mean listening to and learning from those within and outside the church who have lived experience of racism, in order to determine the best ways for the church to oppose racism.

The urgency and importance of anti-racism work in Canada are

calls for The Presbyterian Church in Canada to move forward with deeper understanding and strengthened commitment. Reports on this work will be printed by the Life and Mission Agency in future editions of the Presbyterian Connection newspaper to support the church as it works through hard and critical questions about this essential work.

For more information see presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/anti-racism.

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The Rev. Glen Sampson and Norma Aucoin of the Northern New Brunswick Regional Ministry (PCC) spoke about the specific challenges of the crisis in their rural context, such as a lack of access to services, and some of the ways several churches are working together to respond.

The church has said that effective responses to the opioid

crisis need to remove shame and stigma and address the suffering of people. They must acknowledge that addictions are caused by numerous factors that are often beyond the control of any one person, community or level of government. The church has advocated for safe consumption/injection services as life-saving, harm-reducing programs. Con-

gregations have been encouraged to consider having a naloxone kit on site and acquiring proper training for its use.

More information, including access to a recording of the speakers’ presentations, is available online on the Social Action Hub: presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/health-and-well-being.



RECONCILIATION

The Doctrine of Discovery



The Calls to Action booklets, published by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, which include the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 10 principles of Reconciliation, 94 Calls to Action and 46 articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. PHOTO CREDIT: NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION.

By Allyson Carr, Justice Ministries

You may have been hearing about the Doctrine of Discovery recently in the news or at your congregation. This past June marked three years since The Presbyterian Church in Canada formally repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 46ii (A&P 2019, pp. 35, 368–377). But what is the Doctrine of Discovery, and why is it important that churches repudiate

it? What does repudiating it really mean?

The Doctrine of Discovery refers to a set of concepts developed from a series of papal bulls (decrees) issued around the 15th century. These decrees—the two most frequently cited are titled *Dum Diversas* and *Inter Caetera*—provided theological and legal backing to European monarchs to seize non-Christian lands and enslave non-Christian peoples “in perpetuity” (forever). To support such endeavours,

European monarchs also relied on the legal concept *terra nullius*, which is Latin for “empty land.” Specifically, land could be deemed “empty” and therefore treated as available for European occupation and ownership even if it was already occupied by Indigenous people—provided that the land in question was not being put to supposedly “civilized” use, which the European powers could define as they saw fit. These two concepts—the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*—are some of the major engines that powered colonial expansion.

The idea that European colonial powers had a right to appropriate lands and possessions and treat Indigenous people as undeserving of land rights stems from this doctrine and these concepts, and heavily influenced the legislation that eventually governed Indigenous-Crown relations. They also profoundly shaped the system of Residential and Day Schools in which the church was complicit, as well as other church policies and practices. It is for this reason that repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery and its associated concepts is so important.

Repudiating is not just a one-time act; but is rather taking a stance that what these doctrines and associated concepts stand for are repugnant. These concepts are underpinned by racism and greed. In the centuries following the passing of the papal bulls, the attitudes that the Doc-

trine of Discovery and *terra nullius* nurtured manifested in different ways, including enslavement, disenfranchisement of Indigenous peoples' lands and resources and attempts at assimilation into the “majority” culture. Both the blatant and casual racism that Indigenous people continue to face in Canada and around the world can be traced back to the attitudes that were enshrined in the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*. All such things should be repugnant to the church, which is why acknowledging our complicity in being shaped by such concepts and working to redress them is so important.

Only by recognizing the immense harm these concepts have caused—and continue to cause—can we work to stop them and address the harm. Doing so is an important part of the work of reconciliation and “decolonizing” the church, meaning literally working to undo the influence of these harmful concepts which are clearly incompatible with the gospel.

As stated in the 2019 report on the Doctrine of Discovery to the General Assembly: “The Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* as embraced and taught by the church is a failure of the church to believe and live the gospel. We reject this doctrine...because we believe this doctrine is contrary to the will and way of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, act in ways consistent

with our Confession, with the living faith we profess and with our calling to be agents of reconciliation as disciples of Christ.”

Though doing so is not easy, repudiating what is incompatible with the gospel is ultimately life-giving, and, in any case, is required to give faithful witness as part of the body of Christ.

You can find more information about the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, including the 2019 report to the General Assembly, an educational video and study questions, a webinar and other material on the PCC website at presbyterian.ca/dod. More information can also be found on the Indigenous Rights page of the Social Action Hub at presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/indigenous-justice.



Presbyterians Sharing helps congregations be intentional about supporting efforts of confession, truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and communities.

Orange Shirt Day: September 30

Friday, Sept. 30, is Orange Shirt Day, a day for communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation in recognition of the harm that the Residential School system did to Indigenous children's sense of self-esteem and well-being, to hear stories of Residential School Survivors and

to imagine a better future.

Orange Shirt Day grew out of Phyllis Webstad's memory of her first day of school at the St. Joseph Mission Residential School in British Columbia.

When six-year-old Phyllis excitedly arrived at school wearing a shiny orange shirt from her

grandmother, the teachers took it away. Phyllis said, “The colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared.”

Phyllis went on to earn diplomas in Business Administration and Accounting. In 2017, she was awarded Thompson River University's Distinguished Alumni Award for her unprecedented impact on local, provincial, national and international communities through the sharing of her orange shirt story.

In 2021, September 30 was also named the National Day for

Truth and Reconciliation and was officially ruled a federal statutory holiday to honour the lost children and Survivors of Residential Schools, as well as their families and communities. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation involves public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of Residential Schools as a vital component of the reconciliation process.

On September 30, you're encouraged to wear an orange shirt to help take part in reconciliation. Congregations are encouraged to make time to mark Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and consider inviting a Survivor to speak to



your parishioners on this day. You can also visit the Social Action Hub to learn more about Residential Schools at presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/indigenous-justice.

Visit orangeshirtday.org to learn more about the Orange Shirt Day initiative and find out about events taking place near you.

Prayer for Orange Shirt Day

God of love,
 We open our ears, hearts and minds to the stories of Residential School Survivors. We give thanks for the courage of Survivors to tell hard truths. Help us to learn from our past as we commit to walking in new ways toward reconciliation.
 Amen.

RECONCILIATION

Anniversary of Announcement Regarding Unmarked Graves

By Justice Ministries

On May 27, 2021, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation released news that ground-penetrating radar had located 215 unmarked graves on the grounds of the former Kamloops Residential School in Kamloops, B.C. Over the last year, many more unidentified burial sites have been found at other former Residential Schools. The devastating pain and sense of loss brought on by these announcements are shared by all who have lost family, friends or community members to Residential Schools.

In deep sorrow, we invite churches to hold a moment of silence to honour the lives of chil-

dren who were forced to attend the schools, and those who died because of the schools.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada operated 11 Residential Schools at 12 sites. The harm they did to generations of students and their families did not end when they closed; rather, their legacy of trauma continues today. This trauma is not limited to Survivors, but is also borne by members of their families and communities, as well as the families of those who had died in the schools, over generations. As a church, we are deeply sorry for the harm we have caused. We know we cannot undo these harms, and that words must be accompanied by meaningful action. In humility and lament,

with God's guidance, we continue to seek healing and work for reconciliation in ways that uphold the dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples.

Additional information about the role of the church in running Residential Schools is available on the Indigenous Rights page of the Social Action Hub at presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/indigenous-justice.

You can also learn more about the Honouring the Children Fund (presbyterian.ca/honouring-children-fund), which is for initiatives related to searches at the sites of former Residential Schools operated by the PCC and healing for Indigenous communities affected by those schools.



The National Indian Residential School Crisis Line is available for any former Residential School students and others needing support at 1-866-925-4419.

Prayer of Repentance and Lament for Unmarked Graves

Creator God of love and justice, Comforter of those who mourn,
You created us each for love and relation, and You love all you have created.
And yet the land on which we live and worship
has not always borne testimony to love and relation.
It also attests to unmarked graves at the sites of former Residential Schools,
in which so many of your churches participated;
It bears witness to Indigenous children, each precious and loved,
who never were able to return to their families
from the schools where they were taken.
We acknowledge the actions of your church and our sinful complicity
in running Residential Schools where children died.

We repent for the pain, trauma and ongoing harm we have caused,
and ask for the will and wisdom to act to end that harm.
We pray for healing for all the children's families and communities,
for whom news of any unmarked graves found brings fresh wounds.
Comforting God, we ask that you bring healing in the communities
and families of all who experienced Residential Schools;
and give comfort and strength for all those grieving loved ones taken.
God, you call your followers to walk humbly and do justice,
we ask for help for your church to live out repentance and reconciliation,
and to help us hear you calling us to the love that brings healing amidst grief.
Amen.

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PRESBYTERIANS SHARING

Grants: A Tool for Ministry



The Raw Carrot soup kitchen, a ministry that provides meaningful employment opportunities for individuals living with disabilities and mental illness, receives funding from Presbyterians Sharing.

By Karen Plater,
Stewardship & Planned Giving

Providing grants to support ministry and mission is a significant part of the Presbyterians Sharing budget.

Grants from Presbyterians Sharing help launch new congregations and faith communities, support congregations engaging in renewal and fund strategic Presbyterian ministries that serve refugees, newcomers to Canada, sex workers and people with addictions, mental health issues, disabilities or other barriers to social engagement. A small percentage of grants supports small and remote congregations/pastoral charges with strategic reasons for helping sustain their ministries. In November, a grants committee meets to pray and reflect on what ministries might receive grants for core support from Presbyterians Sharing for the following year. (All these applications are approved by the presbytery before they are submitted.)

Presbyterians Sharing also provides grants to the three Pres-

byterian theological colleges and helps ministers and lay leaders sharpen their skills by facilitating their participation in conferences and gatherings—both virtual and online.

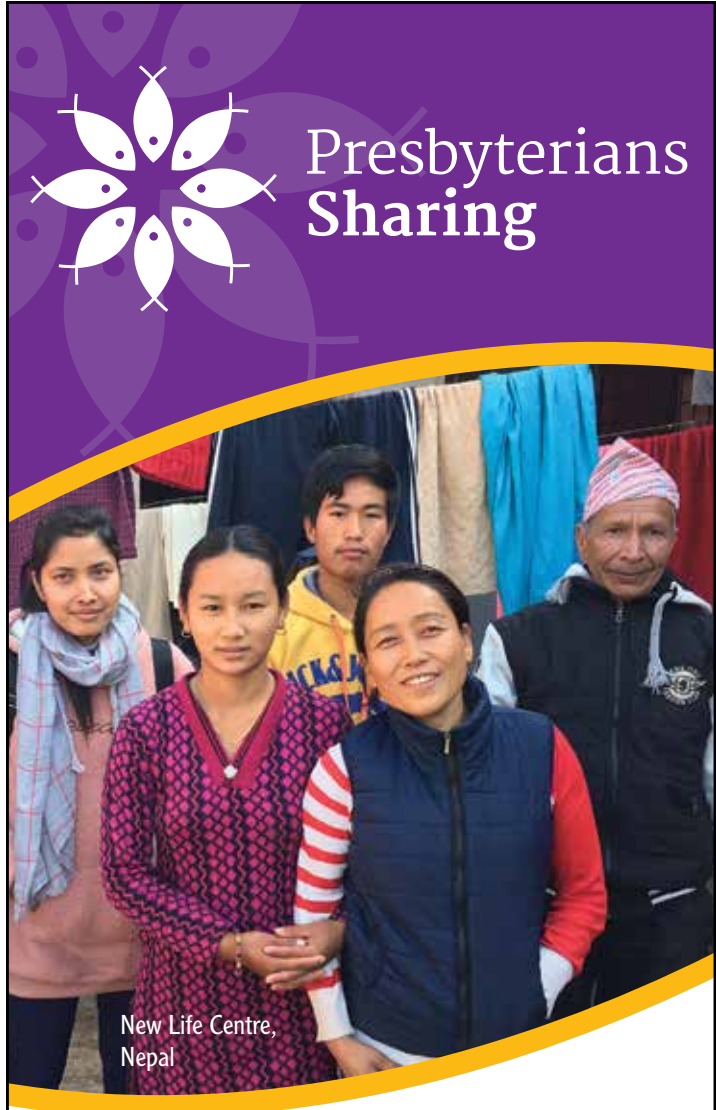
Regional Resourcing grants support regional staff and/or run educational programs by presbyteries and synods. This fall, the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario is planning a retreat to help members explore post-pandemic ministry. Western Han-Ca Presbytery is holding a seminar to equip elders with tools and ideas in conflict management. The Presbytery of Pictou is planning a workshop on trauma, grief and loss conducted by a social worker who worked with families affected by the Portapique mass shooting. In Westminster Presbytery, a summer urban camp will use original songs to engage children in faith formation.

In addition to grants provided from Presbyterians Sharing, national office staff administer grants from legacy and designated funds. In the recent past, congregations have received support

to help run innovative discipleship and public witness programs and to purchase or upgrade technology. Presbyterian camps received special grants for training in anti-racism and to create an LGBTQI inclusive environment. Congregations have received grants for experimental projects, creative ministry with children and youth, and leadership skills for rural and remote ministries.

While Presbyterians Sharing has the funds to support congregational and regional ministry in many different ways, congregations, presbyteries and synods have also been successful in obtaining grants from local, regional and federal governments and foundations. Read about the success of one congregation on page 5. The Stewardship department, with funds from Presbyterians Sharing, is happy to help congregation work on grant applications.

Grants are one tool that allows us to engage in mission and ministry across Canada and around the world. When we give our gifts to God, God accomplishes amazing things.



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NEWS

Making People Smile in West Vancouver



Nan Deichmiller (above right), owner of Flowers by Nan, delivered 50 mugs of flowers to the church, with the help of the volunteers, including Jean Lawrence (left).



Jean Lawrence about to hand out the mugs of flowers to the happy recipients.

By Jean Lawrence, Elder and Communication Team Member, West Vancouver Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, B.C.

Teleflora's "Make Someone Smile" week is a charitable project where florists and volunteers deliver bouquets of flowers in iconic "smiling"

yellow mugs to lucky individuals in the community. Nan Deichmiller, a florist who owns Flowers by Nan in West Vancouver, participates in this event. This year marks her return to the project since the interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. In previous years, she chose to donate her bouquets to a

local care facility, but this year, she picked West Vancouver Presbyterian Church (WVPC) as the fortunate recipient.

As our congregation has been worshipping with the neighbouring St. David's United Church for the past seven summers (including two only-online years), Nan

was delighted that the initiative this year involved both congregations. She is a member of West Vancouver Baptist Church. At the end of each year, Nan donates 10% of the amount WVPC congregation members spend on flowers for memorial services and In Memoriam, etc., back to the church.

It took Nan two days to assemble all the bouquets and, after supplying them to congregations, elders and members from both WVPC and St. David's took the extra mugs of beautiful flowers to people shut in or recovering from recent surgery, which made everyone who received them smile!



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

In October 2020, Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., became a satellite depot for the Calgary Food Bank, supplying 15 hampers per week to residents of the Beltline neighbourhood, where the church is found. There is high need in the area—3% of the demand from the Calgary Food Bank comes from the Beltline (only the neighbourhood of Forrest Lawn has a higher need at 4%). Offering hampers at Grace saves users a trip to the main Calgary Food Bank, which is seven inconvenient kilometres away, taking over an hour to access by public transit.

Prior to the pandemic, demand for food hampers was stable. There was even a dip in demand when government benefits kicked

Increased Demand for Calgary Food Bank Hampers

in. However, when those benefits ended, demand for the Emergency Food Hamper program surged by 44% between 2020 and 2021. During the first three months of 2022, the demand was 24% greater than the first three months of 2021. To help meet the demand, the Calgary Food Bank asked satellite locations to increase weekly hamper loads.

Grace shifted to accommodate the increased need by increasing the weekly hampers from 15 to 20. Program Coordinator Marlene Doherty said it was an adjustment that volunteers embraced to support neighbours in need. "Over time, we have built relationships and understand their particular needs." The offerings now also include donations of laundry soap, dish soap, etc., so people can save funds for other items.

As the cost of housing, utilities and food increases, demand for the Calgary Food Bank is expected to grow. Maria Topolnyski, Program Coordinator for Calgary Food Bank, explained that, "All too often, food is the first thing cut from family budgets, and while we

are working to meet the needs of Calgarians, we cannot do it alone. Through community supporters like Grace Presbyterian Church, we can fight hunger and its root causes together."

Jan Dewar volunteers at the Grace satellite location and said that it was a way to stay connected during the pandemic, when many volunteering opportunities were restricted, while supporting the community around the church. "It's a pretty simple task, sorting and assembling food hampers, but it means a lot to households who might be struggling through a tough time in their lives. Participating, even in a background way, lessens my sense of isolation," she said. "I can't fix the reasons why someone is turning to a Food Bank, but I can, in a small way, make it easier for their household to have enough food while they deal with other things in their life."

Grace's mission is to grow disciples of Jesus Christ to love our neighbours and effect social change, and that means being a good neighbour. "Neighbours help each other," Jan said. "We are

part of the neighbourhood. What should we do? Be who you are; use what you have; do what matters. What do we have? We have a building. We have a near-downtown location. We have volunteers and wonderful facilities staff that are all about solutions. They figure out how to adapt the space and make it work safely for everyone. It's great to be surrounded by that positivity."

Thursdays are Food Bank Day at Grace, a day when volunteers, community members and organizers come together over food as neighbours.

For more information on the Calgary Food Bank, visit calgaryfoodbank.com and for more information on Grace Presbyterian Church (and volunteering opportunities!), visit GraceChurchCalgary.com.



NEWS

Worshipping Amidst God's Creation



An outdoor baptism.

By the Rev. Michael Burns, minister at Burns Presbyterian Church, Mosa, in Glencoe, Ont., and chaplain for the Southwest Middlesex Fire Department

Burns Presbyterian Church, Mosa, in Glencoe, Ont., has been worshipping outside (weather permitting, of course) during the months of July and August over the years. It all began in 2006 when the congregation undertook extensive restoration work inside their historic sanctuary and were unable to worship there for a number of months. Session decided to worship outside instead of in the basement fellowship hall.

On the first Sunday in July in 2007, after the restoration had been completed and the congregation was back worshipping in the sanctuary, they looked at each other and asked, "Why are we holding our services indoors on such a beautiful day?" The congregation has been worshipping outside every summer since.

Burns is blessed to be on the original ten-acre glebe with five acres still used for the church and manse and the other five rented to a neighbouring farmer as pas-



The church building for Burns Presbyterian Church, Mosa.

ture for beef cattle, so it is also a beautiful setting for worship. The outdoor service is usually held on the large lawn under the shade of several large walnut and maple trees, or, when the grass is too wet, on the gravel parking lot which is also shaded.

Our outdoor worship has become well-known in the local area, and we get a number of visitors every Sunday from other congregations as well as people vacationing in the area or coming home for a visit. In fact, our summer services often have larger attendance numbers than the rest of the year. Last year, it seemed to rain most Sundays over the sum-

mer, so we extended our outdoor worship through September.

We ask people to bring their own lawn chairs but we always have a few extras for those who forget. We plug a microphone and a portable keyboard into our powered amplifier and preach from a barnboard pulpit that has a weathered cross behind it. Hymn books are transferred from the pews to a shelving unit strapped to a dolly and a beach mat is laid out for the children's story.

This summer, we put a special emphasis on inviting others to come to our outdoor worship—I hesitate to say post-pandemic (...wish I could!), but the past two years of pandemic measures have shifted people's habits, even when it comes to church attendance. We are learning that intentionally inviting others—members, adherents and neighbours—whether it is a personal invitation or a general invite posted on social media, has increased our attendance.

Many of us are hesitant to invite others to church, but inviting others to sit outside on a summery Sunday morning seems easier. So if you're ever in the area...



Outdoor worship at Burns Presbyterian Church, Mosa.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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NEWS

HEARTS for Haiti in Fergus

By Krista Hall, Committee Chair for HEARTS, a mission of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Fergus, Ont.

For over 30 years, the HEARTS Committee at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Fergus, Ont., has been assisting in aid to Haiti, specifically around the city of Cap-Haitien. Initially, this work began in the late 1980s with the church sending food, clothing and pharmaceuticals. In the mid-90s that transitioned to supporting schools and feeding children in the surrounding community. Now HEARTS (Haitians Educated And Ready To Serve) sends financial aid to four schools. Each school is run by a local principal and provides affordable education to students, a weekly food program, opportunities to write state exams, and job opportunities for educators and staff.

The funding that HEARTS provides to the Haitian schools is made possible through ongoing monthly donations and various fundraisers. The largest fundraiser is the annual 5 km run/walk held in October. For the last two years, the event was held "virtually" with participants running/walking on their own, either outside or on their treadmill. Despite the unusual conditions, it was still a successful event. The run/walk garners sup-



The 2021 run/walk was held virtually with dozens of participants completing their 5 km run or walk on their own time. Members of the HEARTS Committee got together for their own 5 km walk along the traditional event route. Participants are (front row, left to right): Pam Starratt, Carolyn Woods, Sandra Woods, Krista Hall and Neal Shepherd. (Back row) Sarah deLange with sons Scott and Jackson, Annette Grasman, Carter Woods, Jane Cooper, Jim Hall and Erin Shepherd.

port throughout the community of Fergus and Elora. Local businesses help advertise and often donate to the prize table. Corporate sponsors cover more than the needed

costs of running the event, so that the entire amount of money raised by runners/walkers goes directly to the schools in Haiti (and then some). Local citizens participate

in the run, spreading awareness and supporting the cause. The run/walk usually draws in \$9,000 to \$12,000. This year, HEARTS is excited to host the event in person

once again.

More information about HEARTS and the schools they support can be found at standrewsfergus.com/haiti.



The Rev. Robert Royal chatting with a mom while her daughter checks out the "Sticker Station." The puppy was also treated to a cookie. PHOTO CREDIT: SUE PHILLIPS

Chats & Prayer in Newmarket

By the Rev. Rev. Robert Royal, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newmarket, Ont.

The "Lawn Chair Ministry" at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newmarket, Ont., was conceived out of a need for churches to be creative with pastoral visits during the pandemic. For this reason, one of our ministers has been visiting with parishioners

outside on a lawn or patio. Yet as the pandemic continues, churches have been closing, re-opening and closing again. What's to be done?

In 2021, with Christ's Great Commission leading the way, the "Chat & Prayer on Main Street" became an extension of the Lawn Chair Ministry. Thanks to a generous member of the community, Brad Jones (who runs a karate

dojo in downtown Newmarket), we have been able to position ourselves and offer pastoral care for three hours on Newmarket's Main Street every Saturday from May through October.

The purpose of this ministry is to better engage with the local community where they are. Many passersby have said, "Isn't it nice to see the church takin' it to the street."

NEWS

Celebrating the Queen's Jubilee in Saanich, B.C.



Save the Queen,” accompanied by a musical ensemble who played throughout the afternoon, and so we were also able to sing, “I Vow to Thee My Country” and “Jerusalem.” The party ended with the singing of “O Canada.”

A lady from the community offered and lent us her silver tea service, all beautifully polished.

There was a mass of English goodies, including cucumber sandwiches, scotch eggs, trifle, scones with strawberry jam and cream, just to name a few of the delightful treats we all enjoyed.

Our church supplied the basics and the guests brought different things to share, just like they did at the street parties in England for the Queen's coronation (it rained that day, too).

“Her Majesty” also was present for the celebration, in the form of a cardboard cut-out, as seen in some photos. The cut-



By Janet Smith, Clerk of Session, Saanich Peninsula Presbyterian Church in North Saanich, B.C.

On Sat., June 4, the congregation of Saanich Peninsula Presbyterian Church in North Saanich, B.C., held a parking lot party in cel-

bration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We advertised the event on the community notice boards, and the local newspaper wrote a half-page article about the upcoming festivity. The party was all set up in the parking lot and was scheduled to begin at 3:00 p.m. Sadly, the rain came and everything had to be moved inside.

Around 150 people took part in the event. We decorated with Union Jacks, balloons and bunting—red, white and blue was the colour code for the afternoon.

We began by singing “God

out of Her Majesty was probably photographed more than anyone else on that day, not to mention during the weeks preceding the party as she greeted everyone to

the church.

The event was a lot of work but a great deal of fun for all who attended, and it was very much appreciated by everyone.

Growing Hope in Bracebridge

By the Rev. Dr. Heather Malnick, Knox Presbyterian Church in Bracebridge, Ont.

The Mission Committee at Knox Presbyterian Church in Bracebridge, Ont., is thrilled to be able to provide fresh produce to supplement the menus of local residents. In April 2020, the committee began an Emergency Food Box program to address the issue of food insecurity in the region. The program provides healthy food products along with basic household goods to anyone who may be in need. The committee had hoped to one day be able to supplement the boxes with fresh produce, and thanks to a Community Enhancement Grant from the District of Muskoka, eight raised-bed community gardens were built, and the first seeds were planted this spring.

Local residents are tending and harvesting four of the gardens, while the Mission Committee is caring for the other four gardens,



Cindy Chilton, chair of the Knox Mission Committee, along with member Sharon Veitch.

using the produce to supplement the Emergency Food Box program while also donating some items to the Manna Food Bank.

Visit knoxbracebridge.ca if you'd like more information about the Emergency Food Box ministry or the Community Garden Project.

Losing the Kitchen in Quebec City



By the Rev. Dr. Katherine Burgess, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Quebec City, Que.

What to do when your church loses its kitchen?

Due to the extensive renovations being carried out at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Québec City, Que., we have temporarily lost the use of the Kirk Hall, which was our gathering place for coffee after worship on Sunday mornings. However, we are nothing if not resourceful, and we agreed that, as soon as Covid restrictions permitted, we would figure out a way to have post-

worship fellowship.

Since there is available space behind the pulpit, we are putting that to good use as a temporary storage area for coffee and supplies. We thought that we had a working refrigerator, but after leaving cream in it for a week, we realized that maybe it wasn't keeping things cold. Fortunately, there is always powdered coffee creamer, which works just fine.

The next thing to do is to retire our coffee urn, since we no longer need to brew 30 cups of coffee on a Sunday morning. We will put it away safely until it will be needed once again.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Music Outreach in Victoria



By Dawn McLean, Project Coordinator for the Outreach Team at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Victoria, B.C.

with the School of Music staff and students began. We provided an in-person site tour of St. Andrew's and the sanctuary for UVIC music staff. We introduced the UVIC educators to the staff at Ballet Victoria who already share space at the church. We hired a violin student on a contract to book practice times in the sanctuary for students. The practice times were blocks of time available during the week, agreed to with the St. Andrew's Music Director. A St. Andrew's volunteer meets the students (masks and protocols in place), lets them into the sanctuary, stays and listens to the practice with a book or perhaps goes for a walk, and then sees the student out of the church at the end of the practice.

During the spring of 2021, an online meeting took place between several volunteers, staff and Session members at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Victoria, along with a professor from the University of Victoria (UVIC) School of Music. We explored ways of sharing the sanctuary with some UVIC music students who don't have access to a practice space or an opportunity to perform in front of a live audience during the pandemic.

The St. Andrew's group decided to apply to the local Victoria Foundation for a Covid Recovery Grant. Our objectives were to provide practice space to music students, provide live audiences for the emerging musicians when the time is right, offer an opportunity for St. Andrew's volunteers to support young people, and encourage the congregation and wider Victoria community to come back downtown again.

Our music outreach grant submission was accepted and the process of building a relationship

Music and art are great fits for a beautiful heritage downtown building like St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The acoustics are excellent.

The music outreach project is under the umbrella of Mission and Outreach. The Chair is a Session member. Another member reports to Session on the progress of the project. The Treasurer monitors the finances. Updates in our Link newsletter have kept the congregation informed of the project.

So, we just got going in the Fall of 2021 and then Omicron arrived with a vengeance. The Fall was slow for the many reasons we all know. We did manage to have a Christmas Music performance with students (under provincial health protocols), led by Professor Adam Con, an organist and choir director at UVIC. The concert can be seen on St. Andrew's YouTube channel.

In January and February, the project was postponed due to Omicron. To restart and re-energize we decided, along with two



UVIC strings professors who are also members of the internationally known Lafayette Quartet, to have two concerts—one April 3 and the other May 1, 2022. The students began practicing in the sanctuary again in March, and Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. was confirmed as the performance time for ongoing concerts.

Volunteers cleared the stage after Sunday service and replaced the communion table, lectern, etc., after the performance. Volunteers also welcomed the audience, hosted the students and ushered attendees, all according to provincial health protocols for concerts. St. Andrew's tech volunteer has been a huge support, continually supplying videos of the performances to the professors, so that they could later watch and review them with the students. The church's newsletter included pictures and updates from concerts on St. Andrew's website.

On Sun., July 3, 2022, St. An-

drew's was the downtown venue, allowing 22 strings students from western Canada to perform as part of Quartet Fest West, a two-week in-service program at the UVIC School of Music. A quintet and three different quartets comprised of cellos, violins and viola all performed classical pieces. The finale was a clarinet, viola and piano performing eight music pieces. Some students had not performed in front of a live audience before.

The outreach project is set to begin practice times again on the 18th of September, with performances in November and December. We live in hope that the virus will not hold things back. If so, the project will adjust in order to keep going.

Feedback has included: "The music was glorious"; "Such passion and beauty"; "These students are a joy to listen to as they play classical and other music"; "A relaxing way to spend a Sunday afternoon."



Maki Yamagata, violin player, and Alex Chernata, clarinet player. They are both part of the Finnerty Trio, along with Jany Lu, not pictured. PHOTO CREDIT: DOROTHY REIMER

Comfort Doll Ministry in Dorchester



Submitted by Dorchester Presbyterian Church in Dorchester, Ont.

The "Izzy Doll" project has been an important ministry of Dorchester Presbyterian Church in Dorchester, Ont., since 2018.

Izzy Dolls are small woollen comfort dolls that are knitted by individual women and children in the congregation and community.

They are sent with the Canadian Armed Forces on peacekeeping missions in countries impacted by war or natural disasters, providing members of the Canadian Armed Forces with a special way to greet and help children feel at ease in their presence. The dolls have even accompanied Dorchester PC member, Norm, on a past mission trip to Peru.

In early July 2022, the congre-



gation sent off 431 newly knitted dolls—marking a total of 1,554 Izzy Dolls created with love and shared in hope. Pictured are a small sampling of the dolls included in the July shipment.



Dorchester Presbyterian Church member, Norm, holding the Izzy Dolls on a past mission trip to Peru.

RECOGNITIONS

Honouring Marie Logan in Beeton

By Lynn Rouledge, Clerk of Session, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Beeton, Ont.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Beeton, Ont., recently recognized long-serving member Marie Logan for her tireless efforts to the church community over the past number of decades.

Marie was born on a farm in Caledon East, Ont., on July 4, 1941, the youngest of four children. She has been a Presbyterian all her life.

Marie went to Orangeville High School, and, following graduation, she spent one year in business college in Toronto before starting work with Donald Inspection, a building inspection firm. It wasn't long before she met her future husband, R.J. Logan. R.J. and Marie loved to go dancing and, in the early days, they would attend the community get-

together and dance the night away. They married in 1963.

Marie has been active in the community all her life. She is so knowledgeable about the history of our area. And, as with other farm families, was a part of the community activities that took place.

Marie joined St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in October of 1964, shortly after they were married. That's right—she's been a member for 58 years. Over that time, Marie has been an integral part of our church, holding nearly every job. She has been a member of all the church committees and also taught Sunday School, and was Clerk of Session for several years. She even donated the Calhoun painting of the church, which is located on one of the columns downstairs.

Marie was inducted as an elder at St. Andrew's in 1970—it was



Marie Logan, long-time member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Beeton, Ont.

the first time a woman was elected to Session. That was a very special time in our history, as women were fighting hard to be recognized as capable and worthy of trust in traditional male roles.

Marie has arranged our participation in the World Day of Prayer for as long as we can remember. We count on her to keep us involved in such important activities.

For many years, our go-to per-

son for organizing dinners and fundraisers has been Marie. She knows exactly how much food to prepare for receptions in the church and has managed the charges for rentals of the sanctuary and hall. Her food preparation and baking are legendary.

Marie was also leader of one of our two teams who prepared dinners for the Beeton Rotary Club when they were active. Marie is always prepared with craft items to sell at the Christmas Bazaar or other sales. And every year that the Beeton Fair has been held, Marie has entered baking, crafts and other competitions. She has a long list of first and second place wins for these entries. What an accomplished craftsman, cook and baker!

Marie is tireless in her work, and never complains about workload or the life problems that she has faced, such as R.J.'s illness,

where she was the chief caregiver.

When St. Andrew's was looking for a mission project to support, Marie brought to our attention the Widow's School in Nigeria. This school helps women whose husbands have passed away. When that happens, the wife and children can no longer live with the husband's family. The widows need to obtain a livelihood so they can support themselves and their children. The Widow's School teaches them skills they can take with them to earn enough money to support their families. Relatives of Marie—Donna and Cheryl Pridham—are long-time missionaries to Nigeria. They have amazed us with their courage and commitment to this lifelong service to others and we are proud to provide support for their cause each year.

Thank you, Marie, for your incredible service to the life and ministry of St. Andrew's, Beeton!

A Moment of Appreciation: the Rev. Glynis Williams

At the 2022 General Assembly, a Moment of Appreciation was held for the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, Associate Secretary of International Ministries, before her retirement this fall. Glynis has served as Associate Secretary for 10 years. Prior to that, Glynis was the founder and Executive Director of Action Réfugiés Montréal, an organization that helps refugees begin new lives in Canada.

Sincere thanks and appreciation were expressed to Glynis for her years of service to Christ at



the PCC. "Glynis's love of Christ's church and all of God's people has really been the foundation of her life's work and over the last 10

years as Associate Secretary of International Ministries," said the Rev. Cindy Stephenson, Convener of the Life and Mission Agency Committee.

"I sincerely believe that people matter and relationships matter," Glynis said in her address to the Assembly. "With our shared belief in Jesus Christ, I give thanks for the opportunities that we share with our global friends. We need each other. I am deeply grateful for this work. Thank you all and thanks be to God."

Transitions at National Office

- **Stephen Kendall** finished as Clerk of the Assembly on July 1.
- **Victor Kim** began as the Clerk of the Assembly on July 1.
- **Oliver Ng**, Chief Financial Officer, has announced his retirement this coming year.
- **Glynis Williams**, Associate Secretary of International Ministries, is retiring as of September 30.
- **Barb Summers**, Associate Secretary of Communications, will be stepping back from this role to focus on serving as Editor of the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper.

Changes in Canadian Ministries

To give her children an opportunity to experience life in France, know their relatives in France better and to improve their French language skills, **Jen de Combe**, the Associate Secretary of Canadian Ministries, Life and Mission Agency, will be spending a year in France. During the year, Jen will be working remotely on a part-time basis. In these abbreviated hours, Jen will be working on administrative and leadership development projects that can be done from France. Jen will also return to Canada during the year to participate in some educational and strategic planning events. The remainder of the projects that Jen is normally responsible for will be picked up by Presbyterians working on contract to ensure things continue to run smoothly.

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RECOGNITIONS

37 Years of Ministry at Forbes



By Carol Rigler, Forbes Presbyterian Church in Grande Prairie, Alta.

The congregation at Forbes Presbyterian Church in Grande Prairie, Alta., celebrated the retirement of the Rev. George Malcolm on June 12, 2022. Enjoyed by 130 people, it was a day of fellowship for family and friends that included lunch and a program of music, tributes, stories and best wishes.



The Rev. George Malcolm received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Knox College in Toronto on May 11, 2022. Our congregation was blessed to be able to celebrate this special achievement with George and his family online and later congratulate him in person.



A special gift was presented to George during his final service at Forbes on June 26, conveying the following inscription: "In appreciation for your faithful and dedicated service to our church community. Your ministry makes a difference in so many lives and is deeply appreciated."

The following words of appreciation were shared as part of a tribute read to George during his last service: "George began his ministry in Grande Prairie 37 years ago, April 1985. He has a mind that is like a sponge. George absorbs everything! He is a master at multitasking. His incredible memory allows him to retain, explain and use material creatively in leadership, teaching and inspiring sermons. George balances family life, community involvement and church involvement. He remembers everything and answers all

our questions. When there is a problem or question, we know we can 'Ask George.'"

George has always been a great storyteller, so it was no surprise that his last Sunday included story time with the Sunday School children, along with a special event where the children received awards.

The choir sang "Give Me That Old Time Religion" and "Precious Memories," and concluded with his favourite song: "It Only Takes

a Spark to Get a Fire Going," which was sung at his ordination 42 years ago.

A slideshow presentation highlighted pictures of the congregation over the years. This goodbye was made easier knowing that George and Janice will remain in Grande Prairie and still be able to enjoy the many friendships they've made over the years.

Congratulations to George and Janice! Thank you for always being there for us!



Achieving a Lifetime Goal

On June 30, Vivian Ketchum graduated Grade 12 as a mature student at the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre, which had been a lifetime goal. Vivian is a member of Place of Hope Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Man., and a former member of the Life and Mission Agency Committee. She originates from the Wauzhushk Onigum Nation of Northern Ontario.

"I was inspired to complete my Grade 12 by my late son, Tyler Ketchum," Vivian explained. "He passed away in 2011 from a brain tumour. During his short illness, he told me I must carry on and not to grieve for him too long. Going back to school was my way of honouring his last wish. To carry on."

In addition to her diploma, Vivian was awarded the Union Station Community Contributor Award for positively contributing to the community through exceptional service.

"Vivian lives up to the spirit of this award through her active volunteerism, community activism, and the role that she has played within the school and larger community assisting others to find their respective voices," wrote Aaron Bernarroch, school principal. "Vivian is a noteworthy graduate of the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre and we are confident that she will continue to make a positive impact in the community along her journey."

Vivian felt supported by her community to continue her education. "I appreciated the support and thank those who walked with me on this educational journey."

Congratulations, Vivian!

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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Newspaper Questionnaire

Our denomination's popular newspaper has been in print for five years now and we would like your input on how we can continue to make the newspaper something that you learn from, cherish and enjoy. Thank you for participating in this short survey. Your feedback is extremely valuable.



This survey can be completed below and mailed to the office, or you can complete the survey online at presbyterian.ca/connection-feedback.

What is your overall impression of the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper?

Needs Improvement 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

How are you currently subscribed to the newspaper?

- Print version
- E-version only
- Both print and e-version

If you use the e-version, what is your preferred online newspaper format?

- Flipbook (the digital format currently available at presbyterian.ca/connection)
- PDF
- No preference
- Unsure

Is there a format you would prefer to access for reading the newspaper online?

How do you feel about the overall length of the newspaper?

- Too short Too long
- Just right Indifferent

How do you feel about the frequency of distribution?

- Too often Too infrequent
- Just right Indifferent

Are you aware that all Presbyterian congregations in Canada are invited to submit photos and articles for the newspaper?

- Yes No

Please select the areas of the newspaper you read the most.

- Feature stories
- Message from the Moderator
- Leadership
- Justice
- Healing & Reconciliation
- Mission and Outreach
- Congregational News
- Presbyterians Sharing
- General Assembly
- International
- Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)
- Gatherings photos
- History
- Book Reviews
- Reflections
- Just Wondering questions
- Other: _____

What do you feel are some of the strengths of the newspaper?

What do you feel are some of the weaknesses of the newspaper?

Do you read or use the Prayer Partnership insert?

- Usually Sometimes Never

If you read the Prayer Partnership, which parts do you read or use?

- Daily Prayers
- Mission Moments
- Social Action Spotlights

Are any parts of the Prayer Partnership used in worship at your congregation?

- Yes No

If yes, please describe how the Prayer Partnership is used during worship.

Do you have suggestions for improvement or other feedback you'd like to share about the newspaper or Prayer Partnership?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!
Please return to:



Barb Summers, Editor
Presbyterian Connection Newspaper
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
connection@presbyterian.ca
1-800-619-7301



GATHERINGS



Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., held a Rainbow Friendship Bench dedication to the community with Mosaic Home Care and Community Resource Centre on Sunday, June 19. The event included an outdoor picnic and celebration to kick off the start of Pride month and celebrate Armour Heights' partnership with The 519, an organization dedicated to the inclusion of LGBTQI2+ communities.



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., held their annual Strawberry Festival on June 18. Members of the church made strawberry crepes, served ice cream and shortcake, and sold jars of jam. The event included musical entertainment, a bake sale, a silent auction, a used-book sale and a special children's section. Many visitors toured the historic church during the festival as well. A lot of effort by both volunteers and the community went into making this year's Strawberry Festival a success.

GATHERINGS



On May 29, Bob Alexander (on trumpet), along with 17 members of the big band "The Milleraires," raised the spirits of West Vancouver Presbyterian Church in B.C., and \$8,000 for PWS&D's campaign for humanitarian aid for the Ukraine crisis.

As the photos show, mother and daughter, Shirley Pearson and Heather Dunn, got into the groove of the music, as did Interim Moderator, the Rev. Wolody Sosnowsky and his wife, Cathy.



For several years, Knox Presbyterian Church in Conn, Ont., has had a public display of Nativity scenes. Noticing the increased interest in barn quilts on buildings, Knox commissioned a barn quilt to be created in keeping with our theme of Nativity scenes and displayed year-round. It is now part of the Wellington County Barn Quilt Trail. On Sunday, June 26, 2022, at Knox's 156th Anniversary, the Rev. Jim Wyllie dedicated the barn quilt to the service of God. He pointed to the Nativity in the middle of the quilt and said, "For this church has made room in their hearts for Jesus."



Five elders at First Presbyterian Church in Stellarton, N.S., were honoured in June for their years of service to the church. Pictured left to right in the group photo are: the Rev. Charles McPherson (minister), Scott Johnston, Evie Fraser, Bill Fraser, George MacKenzie and Susan MacLeod (clerk of Session). Missing from the photo is Doug Ross, who was unable to attend the service.



Thursday's coffee time at First Presbyterian Church in Brandon, Man. During this special time, a happy group of ladies enjoyed coffee and treats with Dorothy McHarg, who served as the hostess and provided refills.

GATHERINGS



A special choir luncheon at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Barrie, Ont.



The congregation at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newmarket, Ont., was proud to announce that their minister, the Rev. Robert Royal, was appointed as Chaplin of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #426 in Newmarket. Pictured (left to right) are Gillian Cousineau, Secretary (who is on stage at the back); Ted McCarron, President; Tom Pearson, Sergeant-at-Arms; Crystal Cook, Second Vice President; the Rev. Robert Royal, newly-appointed Chaplin; Linda Hautala, First Vice President; and Ian Smith, Past President.

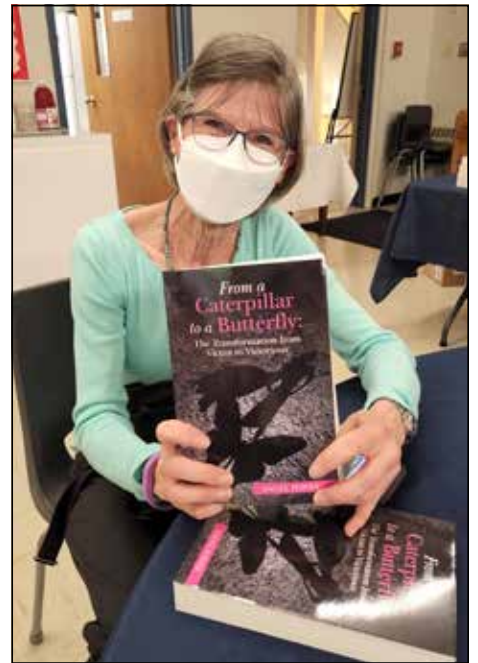


Celebrating "Fun Friday" at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Barrie, Ont., with food and games.

GATHERINGS



This spring, The Presbyterian College in Montreal, Que., hosted an encouragement conference for pastoral leaders. Attendees had the opportunity to find rest and renewal through meditative and collaborative art, scripture and live music. We are grateful to the Rev. Dennis Edwards, Phil Irish and Chad Linsley for their contributions to this conference. Pictured are conference participants creating a piece of art based on a passage of scripture, as well as participants using a hand-mixed paint colour to paint a portion of the body of Christ, and worshipping at St. Jax Centre.



A book launch was held at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., on June 10 for a new book written by Angel Power entitled *From a Caterpillar to a Butterfly: The Transformation from Victim to Victorious*. Angel is pictured signing copies of her new book (above). Also pictured (left) is the Rev. Deb Stanbury, Community Chaplain and Executive Director of ARISE Ministry, which strives to empower individuals targeted by the sex trade or who are at risk of sexual exploitation.



On June 26, the congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Brandon, Man., celebrated the baptism of Dundee, daughter of Ben Hwang and June Jung, and granddaughter of Sheila Scott. Dundee was baptized on this day by the Rev. Laura Hargrove.

GATHERINGS



Durham Presbyterian Church in Durham, Ont., participated in the Homecoming Parade in the 150th anniversary celebration of the town this summer.



At the beginning of May, the congregation of Burlington East Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Ont., celebrated the retirement of the Rev. Bruce McAnsh after nearly 11 years of ministry. Pictured are the Rev. Bruce and his wife, Donna, cutting the cake.



Niagara Presbytery's Vacation Bible Camp—"To Mars & Beyond"—toured five churches this summer, starting with The Gathering Place Presbyterian Church in Port Colborne, Ont. Although The Gathering Place has no Sunday School of its own, 28 children signed up—some with a church background, some with none. It was five days of snacks and slime; Bible stories and bugs; fitness and fire trucks; owls, lava lamps and rockets!



Members of the Ewart College class of 1979 were able to visit together this summer in Ontario. Pictured are Janie Goodwin from B.C., the Revs. Marty and Barbara Molengraaf from Kitchener, Ont., Dr. Marion Barclay from N.S., and Anne Vandermeij Harauz from Guelph, Ont. Reminiscing on memories of days at Ewart and sharing life stories brought much laughter and joy. Ewart was a Christian education college in Toronto, Ont., that later merged with Knox College at the University of Toronto.



Youth members at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Fergus, Ont., with the help of adults from the congregation, held a drive-by chicken dinner fundraiser, with funds going toward a mission trip to El Salvador planned for March 2023. Over the last year, the youth of St. Andrew's have raised funds to support a soup kitchen and provide desks for an adult education classroom in El Salvador.

GATHERINGS



The Camp in Your Own Backyard event at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., was back to being an in-person gathering this summer! It was a fun-filled week all about compassion to go with our super slogan of lovingkindness. We enjoyed a water day, baking, planting a small garden for ARISE Ministry and many more fun activities.



Members of Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., took part in the Toronto Pride Parade on June 26. A picture of the Armour Heights' members who were unable to attend was laminated and brought to the event. The Rev. Dr. Robert (Bob) Faris, minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Toronto and Moderator of the 2022 General Assembly, along with Katharine Sisk of Justice Ministries, can also be seen in the photos attending the parade.

GATHERINGS



It was standing-room only for the 49th annual Sacred Music Night at St. James Presbyterian Church in Stouffville, Ont., on May 13. Proceeds from the concert event went to ALS Canada, in memory of John Doner, as well as to the Stouffville Student Music Scholarship Fund.



On Sun., June 12, the Presbyterian Women of St. James Presbyterian Church in Stouffville, Ont., surprised their minister, the Rev. Joan Masterton and her husband, Scott, with an after-church celebration in honour of their 50th wedding anniversary. Congratulations to Joan and Scott!

Summer fun at Camp Geddie in Merigomish, N.S.

GATHERINGS



Photos from the Community Art Show & Sale held at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., on Sat., June 4.



On Saturday, June 18, 2022, the congregation of Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church in Richmond Hill, Ont., along with the Rev. Duncan Jeffrey, his wife, Paulette, and their family, enjoyed a reception held in honour of the Rev. Duncan Jeffrey's 13.5 years of ministry at Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church. At the reception, there was a special cake cutting and entertainment was provided by the Sean Stanley Trio, a jazz musician group, with some participatory sing-a-long numbers. A good fellowship time was shared by all. PHOTO CREDIT: ROGER POTTS

GATHERINGS



Easter was made even more joyful for Westminster Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., when 13 new members joined the congregation. Pictured in the group photo (left to right) starting with the front row are Peggy Schieman, Mike McAllister, David McAllister, Kaye Pearsall and Lloyd Pearsall; pictured in the back are Elaine Kyle, Lorraine Pittman, Rebecca Stotts, George Allen, Shetin Adams and Linda Leewah. Not pictured are new members Emma Amponsah and Elisabeth Parkkari. This is even more remarkable as Westminster’s pulpit is currently vacant. The celebratory service was presided over by our General Presbyter, the Rev. Dr. Jean Morris.



The Bin Painting Project at Knox Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., was conceptualized as a means for which different parts of the community could work together to create something vibrant and lasting. This collaborative project was made possible by Calgary illustrator and designer Laurel Dziuba, who enlisted a group of students from Sir James Loughheed School to help design and paint two new murals outside of Knox—one on the metal outdoor garbage bin and the other on the on-site storage container at the church. The Rev. Mark Tremblay praised the mural painting project for providing “a more welcoming environment on the property that will be seen by the many people who walk, drive and ride by every day.”



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HISTORY

The PCC's Policy on Taiwan, 1996



The gathering of the 4th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. PHOTO CREDIT: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARCHIVES

By the Rev. Peter Bush,
History Committee

In recent months, the Chinese government has strongly reasserted its claim that Taiwan is not an independent country, but rather is a province of China. The Chinese government has backed up those words with military exercises and fighter jets flying on the edge of Taiwanese airspace. This is not new: in 1995–1996 the Chinese government engaged in similar actions. The Presbyterian Church in Canada, at that time, through the General Assembly, addressed the question of Taiwan's independence as a nation.

At the General Assembly held at the University of Waterloo in June 1995, the Rev. Michael Tai, of Parkview Presbyterian Church in Saskatoon, introduced an additional motion to the report of the International Affairs Committee. It read: "...that greetings be sent to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan expressing our [PCC] support for

the right of Taiwanese people to advocate independence and to determine their own future." The motion was adopted.

This recommendation came some nine months before the first democratic presidential election was scheduled to take place in Taiwan on March 23, 1996. Having a democratically elected government on the island, which China considered to be a renegade province of China, was not welcomed by the Communist Party of China. Michael Tai had brought this matter to the floor of the Assembly. Originally from Taiwan, he was aware both of the threats being made by China and of the deep connection between the PCC and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT).

In the months leading up to the March 1996 election, the International Affairs Committee of the church sought to balance the competing voices of partners in Taiwan and partners in China. As the committee said clearly in its

report to the 1996 General Assembly of the PCC, "The PCT's enthusiasm for independence is not shared by the PCT's siblings in the China Christian Council (CCC). On the issue of Taiwan, the CCC's position is that 'Taiwan always has been and always will be a part of China.'"

The PCC sought to find a way through these competing voices, both of which were partners of the Canadian church. The PCC was forced to navigate a way through this complex international context. The PCC was being asked to respond not only to the request from the PCT to recognize the independence of Taiwan from China, but also to support the right of the PCT and other Taiwanese denominations to have full standing in ecumenical contexts like the World Council of Churches.

All of this was brought into sharp focus by China's "increasing military intimidation of its neighbours." In the weeks leading up to the 1996 presidential elections, China massed as many as 400,000 troops of the People's Liberation Army in the coastal region facing Taiwan. Every day for a month, China launched missiles over the waters of the Taiwan Straits.

The Assembly adopted a statement on "The Presbyterian Church in Canada and its Partners in Taiwan and China" which, in part, read:

"1. The PCC has a long-standing, valued relationship with both the PCT and the CCC. We intend to maintain those relationships, not at any cost, but in a way that is consistent both with our respect



A photo from 1927 of a church opening in Taiwan. PHOTO CREDIT: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARCHIVES

for the autonomy and sensitive political situations of our partners and with our Church's expressed commitment to justice, human rights and the growth and nurture of our partner churches...

"3. The PCC upholds the right of populations in de facto independent political entities to determine for themselves the political and social systems under which they will live.

"4. The PCT is committed to the principle of self-determination for the people of Taiwan and is working hard to achieve independent status for Taiwan in the family of nations. The PCT is also taking every opportunity to consolidate its position as an independent, autonomous Church within the worldwide ecumenical community...

"5. The push for Taiwan's independence brings the PCT hard up against the CCC's position (and the People's Republic of China's position) that Taiwan always has

been and always will be a part of China and that the matter of Taiwan's independence is not even open for discussion...

"8. ...We have never officially endorsed political independence for Taiwan, but we have consistently upheld the right of the people of Taiwan to freedom of speech including the right to advocate independence."

The 1996 General Assembly sent greetings to both the China Christian Council and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and adopted, "That the Church's policy on Taiwan in the above statement be affirmed." In the end the church walked a narrow line, upholding the right of the people of Taiwan, including the PCT, to "advocate independence" from China, the church did that without endorsing the political independence of Taiwan.

Note: Quoted material from A&P, 1995, p. 72 and A&P, 1996, pp. 290–292.



A poster in a Taipei, Taiwan, subway system marking the birth of Alethia University (originally Oxford College—named for Oxford County, Ont.), an institution of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

\$700,000 for Ukraine, and Worsening World Hunger

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

In John 21:17, Jesus instructed Peter to “feed my sheep”—the last words that Jesus spoke to the apostles after his resurrection. While these words are generally interpreted as an encouragement to provide spiritual nourishment, it is hard not to think that people need first to have the necessary physical nourishment to allow for spiritual development. Jesus always wanted his followers to be well-fed. Remember the loaves and fishes episode?

Food ministry is central to many in the church, ensuring that those who have very scarce resources still have access to the food they need. At Presbyterian World Service & Development, food security has been a central theme of our work for many decades, and our membership in Canadian Foodgrains Bank continues to give us the opportunity to multiply our reach and to provide emergency and sustainable access to food where most needed.

As we enter the fall months, we prepare for World Food Day (October 16)—a day intended to increase awareness of world hunger and to inspire solutions for change. According to the latest

reports from the United Nations, in 2021 there were 150 million more people facing hunger compared to two years earlier.

The climate emergency alone is creating challenging conditions for farmers in so many places. Higher temperatures, unpredictable rains, droughts and floods make farming even more difficult and lead to crop failures. The situation was already dire during the beginning of the pandemic as restricted movement and disrupted supply chains created new challenges to the agricultural sector everywhere.

Then came the invasion of Ukraine and the resulting food scarcity in so many low-income countries that depend on Russia and Ukraine for wheat. Food prices have skyrocketed, making it very difficult for people with low incomes to afford even the most basic food items. It is estimated that the war in Ukraine has caused an additional 13 million people to suffer from hunger. While food prices have gone up here in Canada, think of Ethiopia where the cost of a food basket to feed a family rose by 64% between 2019 and March 2022, according to Carol Thiessen at Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

With higher food prices everywhere, our capacity to respond to hunger needs has decreased. The same amount of money can no longer feed as many people, which means we need to increase budgets simply to maintain current levels of assistance, not even to increase it.

We are so grateful for our membership in Canadian Foodgrains Bank and for the collaboration with the Canadian government that multiplies our funds and helps us reach out to as many people as possible. PWS&D is currently leading a food assistance project in Pakistan. In Sindh province, close to the desert, we are helping people get through another season of crop failures due to persistent droughts.

The Humanitarian Coalition’s appeal to raise money for those experiencing hunger provided an additional opportunity to access matching funds from the Canadian government and generate resources to respond to places that are neglected.

While the need in Ukraine is obviously great, the current spotlight on the war-ravaged country has pushed many other dire situations off the radar. The neglected emergencies in Yemen and the Horn



In Sindh province, Pakistan, PWS&D is leading a food assistance project to ensure people have food to eat in the face of persistent drought.

of Africa are of great concern to us. While we are so grateful for the generosity that has enabled PWS&D to raise over \$700,000 to respond to the Ukraine crisis, our hunger crisis appeal generated just under \$55,000 for all other international crises. This highlights how much more difficult it is to raise funds for situations that are not making the news.

“Feed my sheep,” said Jesus, and this is the challenge in front of us. We can each play an important part. Your continued support to PWS&D will help us to sustain assistance in places that are not in the spotlight, but where needs are also great. Thank you.

To support ongoing hunger needs around the world, visit WeRespond.ca/hunger-crisis.



Families who were forced to leave their homes due to ongoing drought in Somalia struggle to make ends meet in temporary camps for internally displaced people. PHOTO BY: MOHAMED ABDIHAQIM/ACT ALLIANCE

Chasing Away Hunger in Haiti



Emmanuel Joseph has access to food year-round after applying conservation agriculture techniques to his farm in Haiti.

By Emma Clarke,
PWS&D Communications

Two out of three people who are experiencing acute food insecurity—an inability to consume adequate food, which puts their life at immediate risk—are rural food producers, according to the

United Nations.

For decades, small-scale farmers throughout the world have directly experienced the effects of climate change. Long droughts have prevented their crops from growing. When rain comes, floods have often washed away their seeds and soil. Tragically,

reduced yield creates a cycle of food insecurity for farmers—with recent higher costs of seeds and fertilizer making the problem even worse.

PWS&D is responding by supporting farmers and their families. From training farmers on how to increase crop yields to how to best care for their land, PWS&D’s work in agriculture and sustainable livelihoods is equipping people to grow crops that can stand up to unpredictable climate conditions.

Emmanuel Joseph is a farmer in Haiti. At 62 years of age, he has experienced changes to his land for decades. When Emmanuel joined a farmer’s collective supported by PWS&D in 2013, he began to learn conservation agriculture practices like rotating his crops and composting. Now, his garden produces more and better food year-round, and his wife is

consistently able to bring produce to the market to sell.

PWS&D’s work also supports farmers by bringing them together to learn from each other’s experiences and pool their earnings for better credit. Training sessions focused on nutrition help families learn to maximize the nutrients they get from the food that is available.

For Wilner Nezil, this made a big difference. Together with other farmers, he learned how to better maintain the health of his soil; and he planted a line of moringa trees that protect his more vulnerable plants from the blowing wind. The yield from his garden now includes corn, peas, yams, taro, squash, okra and spinach, which allow Wilner and his family of six to have a variety of nutritious meals.

Projects focusing on food secu-



Wilner Nezil’s family of six now has regular access to nutritious food because of what he learned through a PWS&D-supported project.

ity benefit farmers and their loved ones by providing education and resources to help achieve better results, both now and for the future. “I thank God,” Wilner said, “my life has improved thanks to all of the group’s activities. Thank you for providing training that will help me chase away hunger.”

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Refugee Sponsorship Update

By Biniyam Goitom, Refugee Program Coordinator

As in other aspects of our lives, the prevalence of COVID-19 in the past two years has had an adverse effect on the overall work of refugee sponsorship. As such, in 2021 and 2022 the refugee desk has observed a slight decrease in the number of requests from congregations and presbyteries to sponsor named refugees from overseas through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.

During this period, application processes by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the various Canadian visa offices abroad have significantly declined. While processing has picked up pace since, the Sponsorship Agreement Holders association (of which PWS&D is a member) continues to call on IRCC to further speed up application processing times than what has become a norm.

2021 Sponsorships

In 2021, the PCC's allocation from IRCC allowed us to submit sponsorship applications for 81 people—a number which matches the capacity for what the refugee sponsorship team can currently handle. By the end of December, the applications for 81 people, plus two additional individuals (a total of 83), were submitted. This was made possible through the effort and dedication poured into this ministry by sponsors at a time when the whole world was grappling with COVID-19. The last quarter of 2021 was also when we saw increased arrivals of refugees, compared to 2020, when there were none.

2022 Sponsorships

This year, there has been a significant delay from IRCC in allocating the global cap for sponsorship to the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organizations, such as the PCC. Normally, IRCC allocates these spaces to SAHs within the first two months of every year, but this year we waited until July before allocations were confirmed.

IRCC has stated that this delay in allocating annual quotas is due



A Syrian family sponsored by Beaches Presbyterian Church arrives in Canada in November 2020.

to other priorities, especially the situation in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees, as well as Afghan refugee applications.

A current major concern of the refugee sponsorship program is the considerable delay in application processing at IRCC and the various Canadian visa offices overseas. IRCC has reported a historic backlog—a little over two million applications for different streams of immigration, including refugee applications, are being processed with limited capacity and resources. IRCC is reportedly taking measures to deal with the delays and backlog of applications, but in the interim many lives are caught in the system.

In the days of COVID-19 and processing delays, the uniquely Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugees program seems to be challenged on all fronts; the courage, determination and welcoming hearts of Canadians proves that hope is still alive even in times when it feels like it's fading away. Hope is indeed required for those who are in dire circumstances as they wait to start a new life.

If you are interested in learning more about refugee sponsorship, PWS&D's sponsorship staff are ready to assist. To learn more or to support this ministry, visit WeRespond.ca/refugee-sponsorship.

An Education for Aline

By Stephanie Chunoo, PWS&D Communications

In Malawi's Phalombe district, 14-year-old Aline lives with her parents and three siblings. When she was in grade nine, Aline began attending Neno Girls Secondary School, where PWS&D provides scholarship support for students in need.

In part due to their own lack of education, Aline's parents are only able to generate income through their small-scale subsistence farm. A series of climate challenges, including unpredictable rains and droughts over the years, made things difficult for them financially. They survive by taking on day labour at other farms, which hardly ensures they meet their basic needs.

Consequently, Aline's parents could not afford to pay her school fees and contemplated withdrawing her from school. But, after reviewing the family's financial situation, as well as Aline's school

performance and behaviour, the school selected Aline to receive a bursary.

Since then, Aline has been doing very well in her courses and hopes to pursue a nursing career in the future. Attending boarding school at Neno allows Aline to focus on her studies without the burden of domestic responsibilities like fetching water and caring for young siblings. For the family, it is both a short-term sacrifice and a long-term investment to have Aline in school.

Filling in the Gaps

Around the world, as many as 48% of girls are out of school. In primary school alone, this means that 15 million girls are out of school, compared to 10 million boys.

PWS&D knows how imperative it is to educate girls. Working with local partners in Malawi, Guatemala and Afghanistan, we are working to help more children access opportunities to create



PWS&D-supported Neno Girls Secondary School provides opportunities for marginalized students to receive an education.

brighter futures.

The importance of education for a child's future can't be overstated. Education provides children with the ability to navigate the world with social-emotional skills, stability, opportunities and self-confidence. The benefits of education for girls extend not only to them individually but to their future families. According to the UN, a child born to a literate mother is 50% more likely to survive past the age of five. And every extra year of education reduces the probability of infant mortality by 5-10%.

75 Years of Practical Compassion

By PWS&D Communications

More and more families around the world are facing food insecurity due to COVID-19, conflict and climate change. As the situation becomes increasingly precarious, we remember with gratitude how Presbyterians have responded with their prayers, their financial support and their presence during past crises.

The following is an excerpt from Practical Compassion, PWS&D's new book commemorating 75 years of the church's

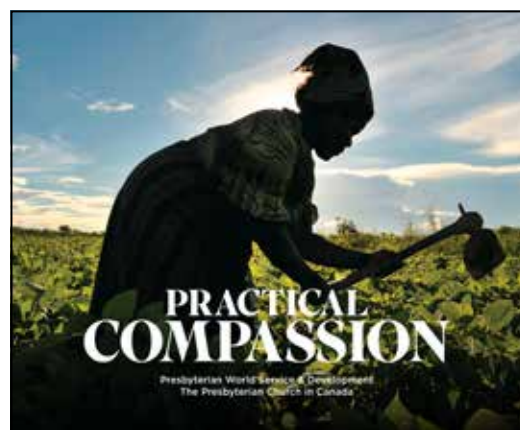
work in development, relief and refugee sponsorship.

A famine made worse by political unrest gripped Ethiopia between 1983 and 1985. Over a million people died and 400,000 were left as refugees. Presbyterians raised \$250,000 for the Africa Famine Appeal, and also accessed government matching funds, reaching Ethiopia as well as 24 other African nations affected by famine. PWS&D's ecumenical partners brought emergency food relief, emergency shelter and medi-

cal care, eventually growing into long-term development projects around conservation agriculture and sustainable food production. "I remember going to Montreal for the launching of a cargo ship, Happiness

Il, which was taking a load of grain to Ethiopia," recalls Jean Davidson, PWS&D's first director. "We were invited to the bridge to have a look as the last of the grain was loaded. David Kilgour, then a sitting MP (also Presbyterian), was there in his parliamentary capacity. So were several other inter-church folks. There was a brief service, blessing the cargo on its way and the crew taking it there."

Grain is no longer shipped to Ethiopia (or other food insecure countries). The last such shipment was in 2005. Now, local commodities are sourced instead. It's a change, according to Sam VanderEnde, who worked in Ethiopia since 1994 as Canadian Foodgrains Bank's regional representative, that allows for respect, dignity and empowerment of the local population.



To learn more about PWS&D's work over the past 75 years or to order a copy of Practical Compassion, visit WeRespond.ca/Practical-Compassion.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

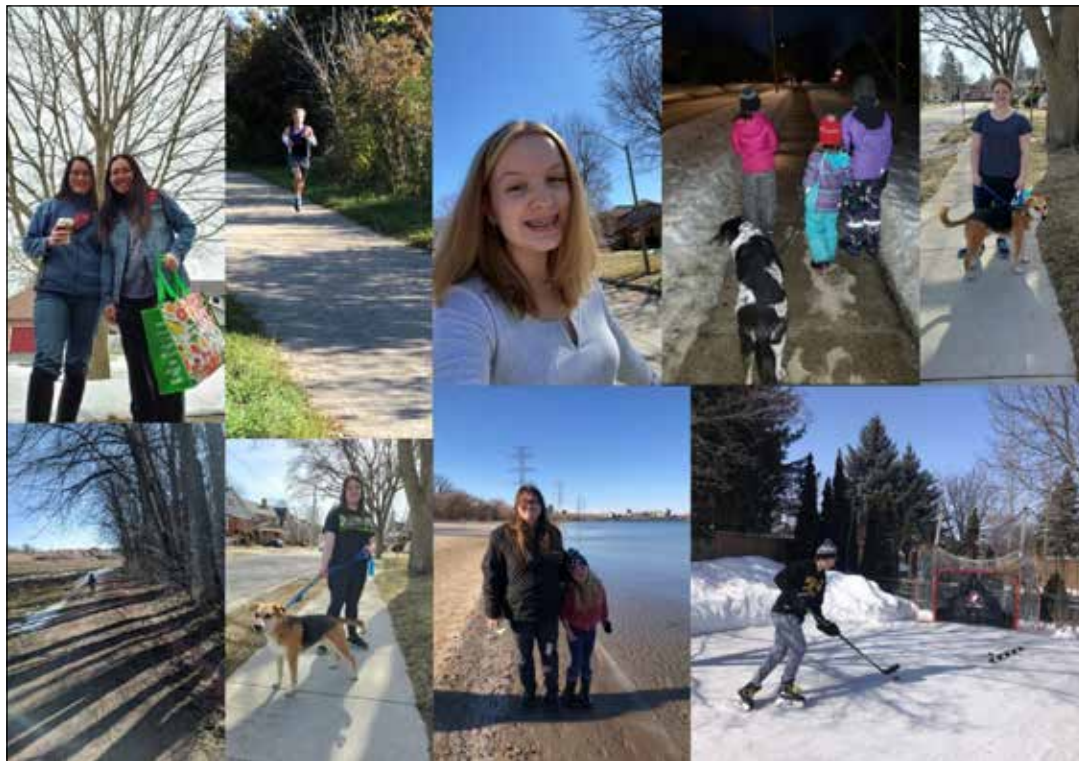
Thank You, PWS&D Champions!

By Emma Clarke,
PWS&D Communications

“We have managed to keep the needs of people who live with food insecurity, and the ways we partner with our brothers and sisters [through PWS&D] before our congregation,” said the Rev. Anita Van Nest, PWS&D Champion and minister at Stamford Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, Ont.

Despite the challenges of the past few years, Champions like the Rev. Anita have continued to engage their congregations. They join a long line of people who, throughout PWS&D’s 75-year history, have supported efforts toward a more sustainable, compassionate and just world.

Looking back, the Rev. Anita recalled the World Food Day challenge her congregation undertook in 2020. “I asked everyone to consider their favourite dinner and then make it, donating the amount that dinner cost between PWS&D and our local food bank.” Many members of Stamford became chefs for the day, challenging each other to guess who



Knox Waterloo community members raised support for food security by collectively travelling 814.4 km in their 2021 Walk-&-Roll-a-Thon fundraiser.

made which meal—with several cooks even entering photos of their dishes in a contest in the local newspaper. It was one of the many ways in which churches

across Canada commemorated World Food Day that year, and Stamford’s fundraiser contributed \$900 toward PWS&D’s work in food security.

Food needs around the world have also been top-of-mind for the congregation at Knox in Waterloo, Ont. They started the year 2021 with a visit from Henry

Reinders, Ontario Regional Representative for Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a coalition through which PWS&D is working alongside other churches toward ending global hunger.

Carole Clyde-Ellis, Knox Waterloo Faith Formation Coordinator, shares that the children in the congregation did a bean-growing project as a reminder “that all people should have equal access to food and that there are ways they can help work toward food security.” Then, Knox Waterloo came together for a walk-a-thon, clocking 814.4 km and raising over \$3,000 for tools, training and other support PWS&D provides to sustainably address global food security.

Whether baking goods to raise funds for relief work, praying together with their congregation, sharing announcements during Sunday services or writing letters to the government, seeking action on important humanitarian issues, PWS&D Champions, ministers and other dedicated Presbyterians have continued to make a difference—and we want to say thanks!

Join PWS&D’s Journey for Hope

By PWS&D Communications

In a world filled with need, we have a chance to create positive change—and it’s as easy as taking a walk, reading a book or going for a bike ride!

On Saturday, Oct. 1, join PWS&D in the Journey for Hope. This year we will be raising funds for PWS&D’s food security programs around the world.

This event was previously hosted by Ride for Refuge and managed by the Blue Sea Foundation. In response to changes in the structure of Ride for Refuge, PWS&D has decided to create our own event—Journey for Hope. In many ways, this will feel like past Ride events, especially the ones local groups have hosted throughout the pandemic. PWS&D will support participants by providing team donation pages and other necessary materials.

We are encouraging supporters to cycle, walk or choose from a variety of activities that can be done at home or virtually. Choose from spelunking, knitting, danc-



A team from London, Ont., gets ready to ride in support of PWS&D food security programs.

ing, volunteering and much more to raise funds and awareness.

This year, we’ll be raising funds for PWS&D’s food security projects around the world. Right now, 50 million people living across 45 countries are facing emergency levels of hunger. Stress on global

food systems could lead to 323 million people facing acute hunger in 2022.

The effects of climate change, conflict and COVID-19 have combined to create a situation where action is essential. World hunger rose by an unprecedented 18%

last year. Progress made to reduce world hunger in recent decades has largely evaporated.

Your participation will help train farmers on how to increase crop yields, improve nutrition and deal with the impacts of climate change. Farmers and their families

also learn how to market and sell their products, providing an income that can be used to access health care, purchase nutritious food and send their children to school.

Visit WeRespond.ca/Journey-for-Hope to learn more and join the journey.

INTERNATIONAL

An Update from PCC Partners in Ukraine

By Sándor Zán Fábrián, Bishop of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, Ukraine

The Reformed Church in Transcarpathia is an officially registered church in Ukraine. It is organized into three dioceses/presbyteries in which there are 108 congregations, led by 75 pastors. The Reformed Church has 64,000 members—nearly 8,000 are youth members—who participate in religious education, and about 1,500 are children who are attending confirmation preparations. The church runs a number of educational programs, including 18 kindergartens, four secondary schools and a Roma school program. It also maintains a children's home, a seniors' home, and two rehabilitation centres for children living with disabilities. A number of vital programs and services operate out of the church's Diaconal Centre, including a bakery and social kitchen's network. There are various ministries within the Reformed Church that provide volunteer fire brigades, support for people struggling with addiction, as well as a home care service. Other facilities under the church's care include three conference centres and church headquarters (the Bishop's office), which oversees the administration and coordination of all these activities, programs and services in the church.

Unfortunately, the war that broke out in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, as a result of the Russian invasion, caused great damage to the life of the parishes. Many fled the country out of fear of the war and being drafted into the military. Many elderly people, young mothers and their children were among those left behind.

Since the war broke out, the region of Transcarpathia has hosted more than 400,000 refugees and internally displaced people in various institutions, private accommodations, kindergar-



Ljuba, director of a foundation that works with the Reformed Church of Transcarpathia, in the city of Irpin, which is close to Kyiv in northern Ukraine.

tens and schools. The Reformed Church has lovingly welcomed and taken care of many of these refugees and internally displaced people, providing them with daily care in the facilities of the church. Refugees are invited to weekly worship services conducted in the Ukrainian language, and are also provided with Hungarian-language education by members of local parishes, whose mother tongue is Hungarian.

The Diaconal Centre of the church sends weekly humanitarian shipments with in-kind donations to the interior parts of Ukraine. The Centre's bakery bakes and distributes hundreds of loaves of bread every day for those who have found shelter in our facilities and local congregations. The social kitchen's network provides over 100 additional hot meals a day to the elderly and disadvantaged families.

In cooperation with representatives of Protestant churches in Ukraine and a Ukrainian charity, we have been able to regularly send non-perishable food to war-torn areas in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Borodyanka, Irpin, Sloviansk and many other places. We are always shocked and disheartened by the pictures and videos we receive from our local colleagues who have witnessed first-hand the destruction of buildings and areas by bombing and shelling. So many people need help and support.

The pastors of our local parishes are doing their best to make sure that those left behind—the elderly, disadvantaged families and orphans—are cared for. Prayer meetings for peace have been organized in the congregations, along with summer camps/day confirmation camps that members of the church and refugee children can take part in.

Our pastors also carry a heavy burden, but by trusting in God, they try to remain in their local communities and continue serving faithfully, for which we are extremely grateful. Churches have been weakened by the war due to many members fleeing the region for neighbouring countries, which is a great concern for our future. The spiritual, mental care

and education of those who have remained at home is an even greater burden and challenge for the congregations and church leaders.

The Reformed Church in Transcarpathia is working to ensure the survival of the parishes and educational institutions. Unfortunately, the war has presented our community with huge challenges that are beyond our human and financial capacities. One of these challenges is that, as of September 1, 2022, the state will require educational institutions to be properly equipped with bomb shelters/bunkers in order to be allowed to remain open. We are now working to ensure that our kindergartens and schools meet the state requirements so that they can start in September without any disruption to educational services. This is the only way to save our educational system and the only hope that members of our community remain in their homeland.

On top of this, since the mother tongue of our members is Hungarian, we have already been facing many difficulties and restrictions due to the abolition of minority language rights and the language law. The outbreak of war has put an even greater burden on the people of this area, who have always had to struggle to survive as a minority.

The most important and critical asset of our social ministry is that our pastors and their families stay in Transcarpathia and that local parishes coordinate efforts to take care of all those who suffer from the war: the elderly, the sick, large families, those living with disabilities and all the internally displaced persons who cannot return to their homes. Many families have been torn apart and are struggling. We carry emotional and physical burdens. We put our hope in the Almighty God, who has a plan for us even in this time of war.

We are grateful to all those who have contributed in any way to help us continue the ministry entrusted to us. May God's rich blessings be upon all our brothers and sisters, and all our partners and donors, whether individuals, churches or organizations around the world.

May God bless our lives and help us to end the war as soon as possible and to embrace a time of peace.



INTERNATIONAL

An Open Letter to President Joe Biden



By Dr. Bernard Sabella, Executive Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches' Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, Jerusalem

Dr. Bernard Sabella is a Palestinian academic, a sociologist formerly on the faculty of Bethlehem University. He is the Executive Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches' Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), a partner organization of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, whose family was displaced in 1948 during the Palestinian Nakba. Dr. Sabella's graduate work was completed in the United States, focusing on gathering statistics on the shrinking population of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land.

DSPR is an agency established by the churches in the years immediately following the creation of the state of Israel, to provide services to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza, in Jordan and in Lebanon. DSPR's mission is to promote the socio-economic development and rights of Palestinian refugees and other marginalized

communities in the Middle East. At the 2016 General Assembly, Dr. Sabella was honoured with the Cutting Edge of Mission Award. He is a leader in the Palestinian Christian community, calling for a resolution of the conflict based on Christian values—a respect for justice, opposition to violence, and love of enemies.

Dr. Sabella issued the following open letter when the US President Joe Biden visited the Middle East in July 2022.

Mr. President, As an elderly Palestinian of the Catholic faith, my spirits are dampened.

I have grown up in a Catholic family that has experienced the Palestinian refugee crisis following the Arab Israeli War of 1948. My refugee parents, living together with 4 children in one congested room, in contrast to the small independent house they had in Qatamon prior to 1948, insisted on the best private education for my siblings and me in Catholic schools, part of the private educational scene in Palestine prior to 1948 and after.

Because of a good education and upbringing, I was able to pursue university education in the USA, on a scholarship from the US Embassy in Amman, Jordan. This opportunity enabled me to carry on the legacy of my parents, Zachary and Marguerite, and to offer our children, my wife Mary's and mine, the possibility of a good education here and abroad.

I taught at the Catholic University of Bethlehem for a quarter of a century, and I came to appreciate how Palestinian college

students are earnest in achieving a good education themselves. My Ph.D. advisor, the late Murray Milner, Jr. from the University of Virginia, who hailed from Texas, visited the Bethlehem University campus back in the eighties and he remarked that, except for the way the Palestinian co-eds were attired, you would think that you were on any US college campus.

I have worked with the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees of the Middle East Council of Churches for the last twenty-two years. I touched the pain of Palestinians and others displaced and refugees across the Middle East. In my refugee work, some of the outstanding partners are Churches in the USA; Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, the Disciples of Christ (the Christian Church), the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church, to name some. These churches and their members have been touching the pain of Palestinians since 1948, and their solidarity has uplifted the spirits and healed the bodies of thousands of Palestinian refugees throughout the years.

In 2006, I was privileged to be elected a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council on the quota reserved for Christians from the City of Jerusalem.

And yet, Mr. President, despite all these life accomplishments and the contributions that the US education and American church support have given us, my spirits remain dampened.

My Palestinian compatriots and I have always been hoping for a fair hearing from the successive American Administrations. We

have been dealt with unjustly and we expected, with the ideals that your great country calls for—justice, democracy, and equal rights—that there would be insistence on these same values when dealing with our rights so long denied.

We are left with no optimism that a fair, just, and lasting solution to our predicament will come out of US policies on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Strategy and power, rather than the values of fairness and justice, appear paramount in determining political positions. At times, we Palestinians question whether the USA applies double standards in its dealings with different countries, occupations and conflict situations.

I am not discounting, Sir, that the conditions of Palestinian life and their improvement are an essential area of concern, as has been stressed repeatedly by American Administrations. But allow me, Mr. President, to quote the biblical verse: "One does not live by bread alone" (Matthew: 4:4). The spirit yearns for the kind of words and actions that would tend to the wounds of my people.

The ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, the expansion of illegal settlements, the intermittent martial confrontations in the Gaza Strip, the daily killings of Palestinian youngsters, the expropriation of vast stretches of land that dislodge thousands of Palestinians out of their natural habitats and the continuing intimidation and harassment of Palestinian children and farmers by settlers, protected by the Israeli army, all point to a situation of no exit. Not even the Church and its properties are immune

from the acts of settler groups, as happened in Jaffa Gate with properties belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem.

Mr. President, the other day a young Palestinian footballer on Palestine television said in plain Arabic: "We are a people that want to live, like other peoples. We want to enjoy playing football and to have a taste of the good life." Likewise, Palestinian workers who get up as early as three in the morning each day to make it through crowded checkpoints to arrive at their work by seven would tell you that they labor because they love their families, and they want their children to have opportunities that they themselves did not have.

We aspire for freedom from occupation and to be able to live like other nations in our own state. We also cherish a vision for Jerusalem, as the Heads of Churches stated in a November 1994 statement:

"We invite each party to go beyond all exclusivist visions or actions, and without discrimination, to consider the religious and national aspirations of others in order to give back to Jerusalem its true universal character and to make of the city a holy place of reconciliation for humankind."

With the dampened spirits that weigh upon the hearts of my Palestinian compatriots and my own heart as you visit with us these coming days, the least of our expectations is that you listen to Palestinian voices who yearn for peace and justice. The hurt we feel inside us should be healed if a future of peace is to reign at some point in the future in this troubled land.

Visitors from Taiwan



Susan and Frank with Joy's brother, John Randall.

Two visitors from Taiwan recently visited Canada to take part in the memorial service for the late Joy Randall on July 16 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Cobourg, Ont. Joy was a nurse who served at Changhua Christian Hospital in Taiwan for over 35 years. She was a missionary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada appointed to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Joy passed away on July 10, 2020, but due to COVID-19, friends and family couldn't celebrate her life until this summer. The Rev. Dr. Paul McLean gave the homily

during the service.

Changhua Christian Hospital sent two representatives. The Rev. Frank Ching-fa Chen, Director of the Pastoral Department, and Susan Shu-chen Chang, Director of the Nursing Department, attended the memorial service and shared stories of Joy with friends and family.

On Sunday, Frank and Susan participated in worship at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., where the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, was preaching.



The Rev. Frank Ching-fa Chen, Director of the Pastoral Department, and Susan Shu-chen Chang, Director of the Nursing Department, Changhua Christian Hospital, Taiwan, at the headstone of the late Joy Randall.

COMMITTEES

The Thin and Thick of It

By the Special Committee
on Petitions 1 and 2, 2021

The 2022 General Assembly gave the Special Committee on Petitions 1 and 2, 2021, another year to listen to stories of Welcome and Not Welcome, of racism and hospitality, of marginalization and engagement within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We welcome people to tell their stories—stories of what they have experienced themselves and stories of what they have witnessed. The telling of these stories is scary, yet sacred work—and the Committee is honoured that individuals would share these stories with us.

The Committee will add these stories to those we have heard over the last year as we develop a statement of confession about the racism and marginalization present in The Presbyterian Church in Canada at both an institutional level and at an individual level. This statement of confession will be presented to the 2023 General Assembly.

If you would like to tell your story to the Committee, you can contact us at the Committee's secure email address: special.committee.pcc@gmail.com, or you can write to us at Special Committee, c/o 325 St. George St. W., Fergus,



Ont., N1M 1J4. We welcome written accounts, online conversations, phone calls, and, given your location and comfort level, even in-person storytelling. All stories will be kept confidential.

Our report to the 2022 General Assembly suggested some ways to go forward as a church which seeks to be a community of people who live out the vision of Revelation 7:9: "[T]here before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb [Jesus Christ]."

The church is to be a place where all people who follow Jesus, regardless of language or ethnicity, regardless of race or clan, regardless of tribe or nation, are drawn into one community by their praise

and worship of Jesus Christ. How do we turn those words into something more than words?

The concept of thin relationships and thick relationships has been applied to a number of contexts. The idea is this: We all have thin relationships with some people; we know their name and their occupation, and maybe the car they drive. But we don't know the person's favourite restaurant, their preference in music or their dream vacation—such relationships are thin. A thick relationship, on the other hand, means a great deal is known about the other person, including their hopes and dreams, and even their fears. The relationship is full of details, shared experiences and stories; it is a thick relationship.

Thin relationships lead us to

think of the other in stereotypical ways. The person is the job they have or the car they drive, so that when they say something we find disagreeable, we dismiss not only what they have said, but are also dismissive of them as a person. In thick relationships, the differences we have with the other person are seen within the whole context of the relationship. The other person holds views we disagree with, but we have spent enough time together to discover they are a great person despite the disagreements.

Apply this idea to the marginalization present in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Clergy, congregational leaders and congregations in the PCC frequently have thin relationships with clergy, congregational leaders and congregations from ethnic and cultural backgrounds other than their own. We say: "Those are the Ghanaians," or "That is the Korean pastor from St. Andrew's." Rather than: "Let me introduce you to some of the people from the Ghanaian congregation," and, "That is the Rev. Kim, they are a great person; you should get to know them." Once the view of the other person moves from seeing them as part of a thin, surface-level "they" to a thick "I know them" understanding, the entire relationship changes; the

ways we speak to each other and about each other changes.

The responsibility for beginning the work of building thick relationships across the cultural lines in the church lies with the dominant culture in the denomination. Clergy and congregational leaders of European descent are called to make the first move toward building thick relationships, committing themselves to continually working on this. This can be done, for example, by getting to know the Korean-speaking congregation in the same community; inviting the African-Canadian pastor, who serves a dominant culture congregation, to have coffee; sitting with people of a different culture than your own at a presbytery meeting; holding presbytery retreats, where the various ethnicities present are intentionally mixed together; and so on.

The Special Committee challenges clergy and congregational leaders of European descent to reach out and cross the lines of cultural division in an effort to build thick relationships with individuals and congregations culturally different from themselves.

For further reading, we recommend *Faithful Friendships: Embracing Diversity in Christian Community* by Dana L. Robert (Eerdmans, 2019).



Meet the New Committee Convener of Assembly Council

Hi! My name is **Cherie Inksetter**, and I am the minister at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, Ont. I have been serving there since 2012, and I love what I do! I have been involved in the courts of the PCC since becoming an elder at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Carluke, in the Presbytery of Hamilton, many, many moons ago. I have been active in all levels of the church—most recently at the presbytery level, as clerk for the Presbytery of Niagara. I formerly served as Moderator of the Synod of Southwestern Ontario and served on the Assembly Council for the last three and a half years.

I have lived in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas all my life and am blessed to have most of my family here as well. I have three amazing children, who each have an amazing partner, and I have one grandson, Eli, who is the light of my life! I'm honoured to serve The Presbyterian Church in Canada as the Convener of the Assembly Council as we work for the benefit of the entire church.

New Resource: Baptism and Marriage Register

New hardcover Baptism and Marriage Registers are now available to order from the PCC for a cost of \$30 each. This book is for recording baptisms and marriages and is designed for congregations and ministers adhering to either of the two protected definitions of marriage.

Throughout, the language reflects the church's decisions on language and practice that should include all people. There are blank lined pages at the back of the book that can be used to record funerals and other pastoral rites.

Individual pages are free to download on the presbyterian.ca/certificates web page, available in English and soon to be available in French, Korean, Arabic and Chinese.

Orders can be placed by visiting presbyterian.ca/order or calling 1-800-619-7301 ext. 331.

Baptism and Marriage
Register



COMMITTEES

The Benevolence Committee

The Benevolence Committee of The Presbyterian Church in Canada oversees the administration of benevolent and bursary funds that have been entrusted to the church. In addition, the Committee acts as the appointers of the Fund for Ministerial Assistance.

Benevolences

Income from various benevolent funds supports an average of 15 persons who received a monthly stipend in 2021. In addition to these gifts, and, at the request of the Pension and Benefits Board, benevolent funds fortify 10 retirees with a pension supplement. There are also times when a servant of the church experiences a one-time financial need; for instance, the costs associated with such matters as mental health support. Money from these funds was also designated to assist those who seek counselling as a result of experiences of racism and harm done to them in the church related to sexuality and gender.

Bursaries

There are 31 bursary funds with



a total capital of \$2,969,358. Approximately \$80,000 of income from these funds was awarded to 25 candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacraments in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In addition to the regular student bursaries, \$22,500 was disbursed to three doctoral candidates from the Cameron Doctoral Bursary Fund.

Bremner Fund

The Benevolence Committee also distributes income from the Bremner Memorial Fund, established in 2009 through the generosity of Ronald and Muriel Bremner, in memory of Ron's parents, J. Murray and Catharine Bremner,

who were long-time Presbyterians. Each year, this fund supports different projects of priority in the church, such as the search for unmarked graves at the sites of former Residential Schools, ministries with Indigenous peoples and relief work in Ukraine.

The Fund for Ministerial Assistance

The Committee also oversees the administration of the Fund for Ministerial Assistance, which was established by an anonymous gift in 1951. Following the death of the donor, the fund was renamed the Honourable Norman M. Paterson Fund for Ministerial Assistance. Senator Paterson

and his wife, Eleanor, maintained a lifelong interest in the ministers of the church and their families. They hoped that their gesture might encourage others to respond with generosity. The decisions of the appointers are governed by the terms of the original indenture that stated gifts were to be made available to eligible married ministers or ministers with financial responsibility for children. To be eligible for benefits from the fund, the income of the family—not just of the minister—must be less than \$10,000 above minimum stipend (including applicable increments). All eligible ministers receive a foundational gift of \$800 each year and, likewise,

all eligible children receive foundational gifts of \$800 each year. The number of recipients fluctuates during the year; however, in the period between Oct. 1, 2021, and Dec. 31, 2021, 18 ministers received gifts with additional gifts distributed for the support of 32 children. In addition, eight ministers on long-term disability received Christmas gifts.

Congregations and individuals make gifts to these funds each year. Letters of deep gratitude are received from recipients expressing how much it has meant to them, not only to receive much-needed financial support, but also to know that the church cares for their needs.



Presbyterians Sharing

More than 240 people serve on 34 committees, sub-committees and working groups, which are supported by gifts to Presbyterians Sharing.

MUSIC

Celebrating 50 Years of the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus

By Katherine Allen, Secretary, Ontario Presbyterian Chorus

As a member of the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus (OPC) for 32 years, my thoughts opened up many wonderful memories of how we have spread God's message through our music, and the lasting friendships that were formed. We have experienced great adventures, and each person who has been a part of the chorus will have their own story to tell.

On the sunny Saturday afternoon of June 4, 2022, members of the OPC met in person for the first time in two years—a long

overdue occasion, due to the pandemic. The excitement of seeing one another spilled over as we gathered at the Markham Bible Chapel to celebrate 50 years of spreading God's Word through song. But it was also a bittersweet meeting, because we had come to a very difficult decision earlier in the year—the OPC would disband, effective this day. While conversation was shared over refreshments, we reminisced and sang... It was wonderful to be able to sing as a group again. Alastair McCallum, Director, recounted the history of the choir and told a few anecdotes from our travels across Canada and

overseas to Ireland, Scotland and Switzerland.

To give a brief history: In 1972, the Presbyterian Men's Chorus was formed under the leadership of Cyril Redford and Roy Hamilton. In 1984, the women wanted to sing as well, so the Covenanter Singers was formed. In 1989, under the initiative of the late Ian Woods of Toronto and the late Catherine Walker of Stayner, the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus was formed. In 1991, Alastair McCallum became the music director and has been instrumental in creating a wide repertoire of gospel music ever since.

Since that time, the chorus



Alastair McCallum, who was the music director for the chorus.

has performed a regular concert schedule in churches and seniors' homes, including anniversary services, from September to May each year, throughout Southern Ontario and farther afield to Ireland (1991 & 2012), Scotland (1994), Maritime Provinces (1997 & 2015), Northern Ontario (2001 & 2018), Western Canada

(2004), Newfoundland (2006) and Switzerland (2009).

Here are a few of the many highlights from some of our extended tours:

We performed for the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, Grace and Ian Campbell, in Inveraray, Scotland. The Duke gave us a personal tour of the castle, which was interesting as he told stories about almost every painting on the wall, as well as his life.

In Ireland in 2012, Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant, in honour of Her Majesty's Jubilee, was present when we sang at West Presbyterian Church in Ballymena.

While on these tours, we have met with mayors of some of the towns we visited.

In 1991, we sang in Kilkenny Castle to raise funds toward the building of a Presbyterian church. In 2012, we sang in Kilkenny Presbyterian Church—there were still 12 of us in the OPC who had been present back in 1991 during the fundraiser.

PENSION & BENEFITS

Staying Connected with Pension and Benefits

By the Pension and Benefits Department

As the world continues to modernize, organizations strive to be two steps ahead by implementing new ways to communicate and stay connected.

The Pension and Benefits department of The Presbyterian Church in Canada has worked to implement ways to strengthen communication with active members, retirees, congregational treasurers and presbyteries over the past few years. During the pandemic, it became apparent that new strategies were needed to enhance our online presence and to reach the PCC membership electronically with timely news, information and updates.

We have recently made the decision to increase our online presence through social media, in the hope of reaching a larger demographic. While the Pension and Benefits web pages, located on The Presbyterian Church in Canada's website, continue to be

monitored and updated with new information, we have also turned to integrating with the PCC's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts to promote upcoming Employee Assistance Program (EAP) webinars, newsletters for members and retirees, and other new resources.

EAP Webinars

Each year, we promote a series of four webinars available to employees of the church. These webinars are offered as part of our Employee Assistance Program and touch on various topics from personal development to finances and estate planning. These webinars are promoted throughout the year by email and newsletter, and, starting in the fall, will also be promoted on social media, aiming to reach more active members.

Newsletters

The Window and Contact newsletters continue to be enjoyed by active members and retirees.

The Window newsletter, a

newsletter for active members of the Pension and Benefits plan, is emailed out twice a year, and provides up-to-date information on the pension plan, changes to the benefits plan through Sun Life, as well as fun lifestyle articles.

The Contact newsletter, a newsletter for retired members of the pension and benefits plan, is printed, mailed and emailed out once a year. This newsletter features insights on any new details or changes to the pension plan, updates on health and dental changes through Sun Life and much more.

The newsletters are the preferred choice for communicating any plan updates throughout the year and will continue to be promoted on the PCC website, as well as promoted on social media going forward.

New Resource for Treasurers

In the spring of 2022, the Pension and Benefits department developed a new resource for treasurers,



The Treasurer's Guide to Pension and Benefits. This resource was designed to help consolidate various forms and information into one convenient booklet to help bring some ease to this very important role.

The Treasurer's Guide to Pension and Benefits provides information to treasurers, whether they are new to the role or have been in the position for many years. It includes resources, such as: Maximum Qualifying Income (MQI), Pension and Benefit Rates, Minimum Stipend and Allowance Schedule, remittance forms and

much more. This guide will be updated annually and sent out to all treasurers by email.

We would love to hear from you!

The Pension and Benefits department enjoys communicating with our active members, retirees, congregational treasurers and presbyteries. As we continue to implement new ways to communicate, please feel free to contact Pension and Benefits at pension@presbyterian.ca with any questions, inquiries or feedback to help us continue to serve you!

MUSIC (CONT'D)



A photo taken of the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus in 2014 at Jubilee Presbyterian Church in Stayner, Ont., celebrating 25 years (1989–2014).

Continued from page 35

When we toured the Maritimes in 1997, we were invited to sing in Wolfville, N.S., where the minister in New Minas was seeking to raise funds to build a church, and whatever offering was taken up was to be matched by the presbytery. We had the opportunity to sing at Kings Presbyterian Church in New Minas in 2015 when we returned to the Maritimes.

It was very humbling for those of us who were part of the OPC on these two occasions to help build new ministries and to see the lasting results of our efforts decades later.

We sponsored two presentations by the Société De Chant L'Helvétienne Male Voice Choir from Gorgier, Switzerland, held in Jubilee Church in Stayner and at Armour Heights Presbyterian

Church in Toronto.

We took part in two benefit concerts for Evangel Hall, including their 90th anniversary held at Convocation Hall.

For a couple of years, we participated in a mass choir for the Big Sing at Roy Thompson Hall, presented by the North York Salvation Army Band.

As we look back on our years of choral singing, it feels as if

we'd opened up a book of memories—each chapter taking us on yet another journey in Canada, or to Ireland, Scotland and Switzerland. We have had an amazing 50 years of journeying, creating lasting memories, embracing adventures and praying together. It has helped us grow in our own faith.

Every time we sang together, we planted seeds into the many souls who were perhaps in



Polly Jardine and Katherine Allen, members of the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus, taken at a celebration on June 4, 2022.

need of hearing God's message through music. Our ministry of music has even meant a lot to our own choir members—having shared many fond memories of our journey together, we have formed a strong bond of friendship as a family of Christians.

We wish to express our gratitude to the churches who had hosted us over the years. A very special thank-you to Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., for generously offering us their space for rehearsals.

WOMEN

Bursting Forth in Joy

By Shirley Miller
Women's Missionary Society

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS) Paris Presbyterial ventured forth on June 4 to spread



some joy to ease Covid hardships of the past two years. With the theme "Bursting Forth in Joy," 30 members and friends searched their closets for some stylish outfits and traditional attire to wear

as they celebrated their coming together!

Women from Knox Presbyterian Church in Woodstock, Ont., were the welcoming hosts who transformed the church's dining room into a worship/meeting centre, a small dining area and a large centre for the display of prepared lunch boxes for a silent auction, which gleaned \$600 to PWS&D for Ukraine relief.

Adding to the spirit-filled day were singsongs led by the Rev. Mark and Susan McLennan, welcomes by president Judy McIntosh and hosts Susan McLennan and Elaine Stevens, greetings from Cathy Reid, Council presi-



Pictured (left to right): Judy McIntosh, Paris Presbyterial President; Margaret McGugan, SWO Synodical President; Cathy Reid, WMS Council President.

dent, and Margaret McGugan, Synodical president, and a worship and memorial service led by the Paris auxiliary. Kudos to

Deb Melnyk (Simcoe) and Marybel Brenneman (Embro), whose creative talents and organizational skills made for a fun-filled event.

Updates from WMS Synodicals Across the Country

With the COVID-19 restrictions of the past two years, it has been difficult to maintain active membership of Women's Missionary Society (WMS) groups. However, communications between all levels of the WMS has increased as members became more familiar with the Internet and online meetings. The following reports highlight how women in synodicals and presbyterials have adapted to the restrictions or, as they lifted, gathered for in-person meetings.

After a break of three and a half years, the **Synodical of Quebec and Eastern Ontario (QEO)** met online in March with our special speaker, the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Gaver, who gave a wonderful, educational, "new-to-many-of-us" illustrated talk on part of her PhD thesis, entitled "Introduction to Indigenous Cultures." Tragically, Cheryl died just a month later in April. She had so much to teach us!

We then had our Annual General Meeting in April, again online, when we were able to update each other on our Presbyterial activities. As in most Presbyterials across the country, many groups are closing; however, we are encouraging group "orphans" to find and join other groups. This has become so much easier with people meeting online since it doesn't matter where we live. God is working in us and through us in new ways, while supporting God's work is still paramount in the hearts of WMS members.

In the early part of the pandemic, we sent out a questionnaire to all Synodical members to find out what was the general feel for what people wanted – or didn't. As expected, mainly due to poor or non-existent internet connections, people did not care for online meetings, although most were willing to tolerate them, recognizing that it is an excellent way to keep connected. Communication between all levels of the WMS was considered extremely important, as was the desire to hear more about mission throughout the world and for Bible-related studies and workshops.

Since the questionnaire was distributed, members have become more familiar with meeting online and are acknowledging the benefits, but we are still looking forward to meeting in person.
—Catherine Blatch, President, Synodical Quebec and Eastern Ontario

The Central Northwestern Ontario (CNOB) Synodical annual meeting was held on April 23, 2022. Our speaker was Nora Carmi. She enlightened us on what is happening in Palestine and Israel. Our installation of officers was by Cathy Reid.
—Janice Terry CNOB Synodical President

The Women's Missionary Society **Synodical of Southwestern Ontario** works within our boundaries which stretch from Sarnia to Kincardine to Hamilton, Ont., with the intent to strengthening our bonds

in fellowship to others in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The theme for this, our 75th anniversary, was "Justice for All Women" and our keynote speaker was Dr. Allyson Carr, Associate Secretary of Justice Ministries of the PCC. Allyson's topic was, "What does justice for women mean? And which women?" Allyson explained the three major threats to justice for women in Canada as being poverty, gender-based violence and colonialism. When these threats are removed from women's lives, justice for women will improve dramatically. What would really help women see justice is to provide a guaranteed liveable income, improved access to safe housing and to encourage power for the common good.

The Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee brought greetings and a report from Camp Kintail north of Goderich, Ont.

The in-person gatherings of the Presbyterials of London and Paris met in June. London at Backus-Page House Museum and Agricultural Centre run by the Tyrconnell Heritage Society, and Paris- Knox Presbyterian Church in Woodstock hosted the Paris' annual meeting themed, "Breaking Forth in Joy."

During Covid, those who knit and crochet made mini prayer shawls, sending them to shut-ins and the sick throughout the synodical. Recently, these mini prayer shawls have reached across borders by way of the Stratford Medical Missions Depot

in Stratford, Ont., (a non-profit organization) to include the people in the Ukraine and Cuba who receive a mini shawl along with a tangible prayer translated into their language. This small idea of charity now tallies over 1,400 mini prayer shawls distributed, and the number keeps growing.
—Margaret McGugan, President, Southwest Ontario Synodical

Manitoba, Northern Ontario Synodical (MNO) has no functioning synodical executive. Ina Borger is the contact on Council Executive and follows the meetings online. She is a member of the Margaret Hamilton Auxiliary at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Man., which includes one member from First Presbyterian Church. Ruth George from First Presbyterian Church in Thunder Bay was our representative at Council in 2022.
—Ina Borger, Synodical contact

The **Saskatchewan** WMS disbanded several years ago but three women from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Saskatoon come together for lunch regularly. Marina Onclin and Arline Sanderson, former representatives from Saskatchewan Synodical on WMS Council, meet with a faithful member, Bernice Shih, to discuss WMS activities. Arline shares information from WMS online gatherings.

A generation ago, the WMS was a way of life for very many rural **Alberta** women. Farm chores

were worked around meeting times and raising money to fund overseas projects became almost an obsession. Across the entire province, these grandmothers, mothers and daughters all knew each other, and Synodical get-togethers were such a highlight for them.

Today, there are no active WMS groups in Alberta, but many former members are interested in hearing about ministry at home and abroad. Sandi Churchill and Lisbeth Duncan, as well as the Let's Come Together series, attempt to spread that information. In October of this year, a Book and Bake Sale is planned in Calgary to raise funds for the work of the WMS.
—Lisbeth Duncan and Sandi Churchill, contacts

British Columbia no longer has a functioning executive as many groups have disbanded. Susan Trapp is the contact on the WMS Council Executive. Kay Mori, from the WMS group in Kamloops was the B.C.'s Synodical delegate to Council this year. Several women regularly meet at Fairview church for coffee, four of whom have taken part for past five years in a Ride/Walk for Refugees.

A newsletter for former WMS members and mission-minded women has been a lifeline to 34 people on the contact list. News is supplied and Dot creates edits and distributes the newsletter. For information regarding the B.C. Newsletter, contact Dot at wmsobc@gmail.com.
—Susan Trapp, B.C. contact

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of *The Parables of Jesus the Galilean*

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

The Parables of Jesus the Galilean: Stories of a Social Prophet
Written by Ernest van Eck
Eugene, OR: Cascade Books,
2016

In June of 2022, the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada appointed Ernest van Eck to the position of principal of Knox College, the denomination's largest seminary. He comes to Canada from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, where he taught New Testament and administered academic programs. For the first 21 years of his church career, he served as a minister in two congregations.

As an historian of both the college and the denomination, I was curious about his approach to Christian faith and witness, to the church, and to its leadership. I found strong indicators of that in his 2016 book on the parables. As you will find in this review, I think he will bring some provocative inspirations and insights into our matrix of being ambassadors of God's forgiving and reconciling love.

In a denomination where our

focal point of authority is Jesus Christ as the living Word of God, witnessed to in the scriptures through the continuing illumination of the Holy Spirit, van Eck's explorations of who Jesus really was in his first-century Jewish Galilean sociopolitical, religious and economic setting is instructive. This is especially true as we reformulate our faith in light of our confession to God and our Indigenously kin in 1994 that we have misrepresented Jesus badly for far too long. A similar confession was made to our LGBTQI+ kin by the same Assembly that appointed van Eck.

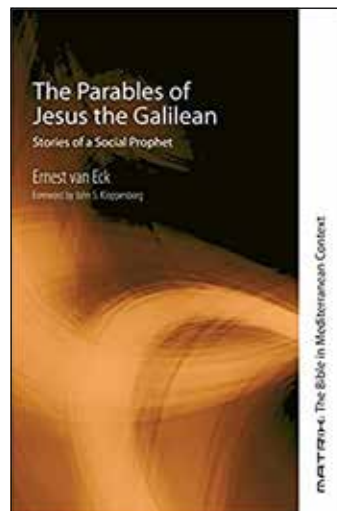
Van Eck is perceptive about the South African context within which he considers that question of who Jesus really is. It is one of "corruption, nepotism, bribery, the fabrication of academic qualifications to get appointed and the plundering of the treasury for personal gain" (5). Into this matrix of human dynamics, the real Jesus comes as a "social prophet." Here's van Eck's conclusion of this thorough study of 11 key parables:

In first-century Palestine (27–30 CE) the elite (Roman and Jewish) shaped the social experience of the peasantry, social control was built on fear, and the relationship between

the ruling elite and the ruled was one of power and exploitation. Because of this, the peasantry lived at the edge of destitution. In this exploitative situation Jesus spoke in his parables of a new and different world—the kingdom of God. His parables were political stories about God's kingdom, 'not earthly stories with heavenly meanings, but earthly stories with heavy meanings,' exploring how human beings could respond to an exploitative and oppressive society created by the power and privilege of the elite. (314)

This political theology, richly informed by his social scientific approach to interpreting the scriptures, aligns well with the framework for prophetic social engagement that our denomination has formulated in its Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation. The specifics of our concerns about taking away all occasions for tyranny by ensuring full participation that enables full responsibility are different from those in the mid-1950s when the declaration was approved, but the core trajectory of allying with God's acting for justice, kindness and humility remains.

For van Eck, two themes run through all the parables of Jesus



that are rooted in the prophetic tradition as recorded in the Hebrew scriptures, especially in Second Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea and Micah. They are inclusivism and social justice. These qualities of living together are happening now, in and for this world, through the telling of the parables as "performative acts." Through the work of the Holy Spirit, this happened when they were first told and continues to happen in every telling.

It is worth highlighting how van Eck draws on the conversations among literary and biblical scholars regarding the power of words to actually generate different realities. It fits well with van Eck's conclusion that we are reading accounts of the reign of God actually being established through the telling of the story. In the telling and hearing of the story, the kinship of the world is being expanded as God desires. Kinship is a central theme for van Eck. In a 1994 article on the baptism of Jesus in Mark, he used the word "kin-ify" to point to what God was doing for humanity in the Christ event.

We are heirs of Jesus, the storyteller, and of the ways in which those stories open up providential possibilities for a different world that manifests a kinship of justice and inclusion. The missional question van Eck's work poses for me is how faithfully, wisely

and effectively we are aligning with the kinship that our Creator desires, that are revealed most clearly in the speech acts of Jesus that are performed by the parables, not only when Jesus spoke to them, but also when we speak/hear them.

The criteria for that ongoing evaluation of our allying with God's caring for creation in The Presbyterian Church in Canada in particular, as well as in the church universal, is the degree to which we are communities of ambassadors of the message of God's forgiving and reconciling love in Jesus Christ for the whole world. Our denomination's subordinate standard, Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief (1984) identified this summary (2 Cor 5:19–21) as the "central affirmation of the great truth" of the gospel. We emphasized that, in Jesus, God got "involved in the grim fabric of life" in "a world that to an astonishing extent shared many of the same problems we do now" (3). Van Eck's careful socio-political analysis of the first-century Galilean realities out of which and to which Jesus spoke enriches our understanding immensely in allying with God's caring for creation in the context of our own realities in twenty-first century Canada.

In this attempt to begin to appreciate what van Eck might contribute to our theologizing about our allying with God in caring for creation in our Canadian context, I have glossed over the depth of scholarship that fills this book. It is illuminating and constructive. The book will be a constant companion for us at Brentwood Presbyterian Church in 2023 as we take another look at Jesus' parables, spending a month on each parable that the congregation chooses.

I encourage all of you reading this review to find a way of companionship with van Eck in reading the parables afresh.

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JUST WONDERING...



We heard at General Assembly that the national office has hundreds of millions of dollars in reserve. Why aren't we using these funds, for crying out loud?

Answered by the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary

The Presbyterian Church is blessed with resources of many kinds. The financial resources that the denomination has received from estates or has reserved for certain purposes, are invested in what is commonly called the "Consolidated Fund." The consolidated fund is a large investment fund governed by a Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures and administered by the members of the Investment Advisory Committee who have extensive investment and related experience.

At the end of March 2022, the total amount the national church had invested in the consolidated fund was about 130 million. That number is the total amount found in hundreds of smaller individual funds designated for certain purposes. For example, the denomination has bur-

sary funds for theological students, funds to support ministry with children, funds to support ministry with Indigenous people, as well as funds to start new churches, host conferences, support ministry done with international partners, support development projects overseas through PWS&D, and to support camps, coaching, education events, ministry in rural congregations and to complete certain capital projects.

Some of the funds were received from wills in which people designated funds from their estate for certain purposes. For example, there is a fund created by a will that supports ministers with low-income families, and a fund for ministry in the province of Quebec. The terms of other funds were set by the denomination itself for things like the creation of new congregations and helping a seminary in Malawi buy books for its library. These funds are reviewed regularly to ensure that the terms and purposes of the funds are relevant or whether the funds could be used in other ways. The church's funds are used as much as possible within the terms of the funds to support ministry in Canada and around the world. In this regard, the funds are overseen by committees and the church's auditors and reported each year in the Acts and Proceedings. Many of the exciting things reported in this newspaper each quarter are possible because they are supported by the funds the national church has at its disposal.

The other 114 million dollars in the consolidated fund belong to congregations and bodies, like synods or seminaries. The national church has no control over the use of these funds. Rather, they are used according to the policies and decisions of the congregations and ministries that own them.



I've noticed in the past couple years that more people are coming out about their sexual orientation or gender identity at church. How can I respond well when someone chooses to come out to me?



Answered by Carragh Erhardt, Sexuality and Inclusion Program Coordinator

People come out at various ages, in all sorts of life situations and for many different reasons. Since each LGBTQI2+ person's experiences and needs are different, there is no one-size-fits-all script for how to respond when someone comes out. The following ideas may help ministers, elders, youth leaders and other ministry leaders prepare to have pastoral conversations with people who are coming out.

First, coming out is often a pivotal moment for an LGBTQI2+ person; it can feel daunting and many people spend a considerable amount of time planning how they'll come out and imagining how they'll be received when they come out to different people. If someone chooses to come out to you, it's typically appropriate to thank them for their trust and for letting you get to know them better. Expressing your gratitude can also help reassure them that you care about them and that they can continue to talk to you about their gender identity or sexuality.

Listening attentively and asking supportive questions is an integral pastoral care skill, in general, and is especially important when someone is coming out. How are they feeling about coming out to you or others? What hopes and fears do they have about coming out? What can you and others at church do to support them? What questions do they have about what coming out might mean for their life, relationships and faith? You do not need to have a perfect response for every possible ques-

tion, concern or scenario they raise in that initial conversation, but demonstrating that you're there to support them in their journey is a valuable gift you can offer.

When coming out at church, LGBTQI2+ people may express fear of being rejected by God. You can reassure them that The Presbyterian Church in Canada affirms that all people, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity, are equally beloved by God.

Remember that everyone has a different timeline for coming out and they might be open about their gender and sexuality in some parts of their lives but not others. Respect their decisions about when to come out and do not tell other people unless you are asked to or given permission.

Sometimes, part of responding well is being able to make appropriate referrals to organizations in your area that provide supports and community for LGBTQI2+ people and their families. Getting familiar with local services and resources that are available is a good step in preparing to connect individuals to a broader network of care when they come out.

Lastly, coming out is about more than one conversation. When someone comes out to you, ensure that you follow up, especially if the person is in an earlier stage of coming out and still getting comfortable with their identity. As a church leader, responding with grace and continuing to be a supportive presence in someone's life after they come out can have a very positive impact on their coming out journey and long-term well-being.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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