

CANADIAN MENNONITE

July 23, 2018
Volume 22 Number 15

Faith remains

pg 13



PM40063104 R09613

inside

- Remembering my baptism 4
- Good food ministry 24
- Rhubarb runs out 26

EDITORIAL

Thank you for letting us know

TOBI THIESSEN
PUBLISHER

“I enjoy the magazine very much. Will you keep printing it? I don’t have a computer,” wrote a reader in British Columbia this June. She was responding to our spring fundraising appeal. A reader in Ontario also said, “We do not have a computer, so we enjoy the printed *CM*.”

Thank you for letting us know!

These two respondents were not alone. Another person wrote, “... the only way I get info about the Mennonite church is in the *CM* via mail. I can’t drive and we don’t have a conference Mennonite church here, so please keep the magazine coming.”

Meanwhile, there are other voices who urge us to “go digital or go home” (I paraphrase). We hear you.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the spring letter, sent to print subscribers in May. Hundreds of you sent in donations and comments, raising \$50,000 for our ministry to connect Mennonites across Canada in conversations about faith and life, both in print and online. We are grateful for every comment and every financial gift because it gives us insight into what people value—or do not value—in this magazine.

People tell us that they use *CM* articles as topics for adult education classes or small groups at church. Another cautioned us to not to get too academic. “We are not all students of CMU,” she wrote. A good

reminder. Thank you.

Some people sent notes of encouragement and affirmation. “What we appreciate so much ... is that you cover the varied bases so well. This gives the reader a wonderful understanding of what Anabaptists believe,” wrote one person.

Another said, “the magazine keeps me in touch with churches, workers and volunteers across Canada and around the world. It’s good, in fact, inspiring, to hear how other Anabaptists are living out their faith.”

This is certainly what we strive towards. Thank you very much!

Concerns are just as valuable. In the letter, I wrote that *CM* wants to increase its involvement on social media, to “actively encourage and moderate conversations about faith and life.” A couple of people challenged whether this was possible. Social media is infamous for uncivilized discourse and allowing false information to spread. Someone asked what guidelines we would use for moderating such conversations. This is a critical question. Still, there are many Mennonites who happily converse on social media, including on issues that pertain to the church. It is appropriate for us to be involved.

In this digital age, when people get information and connect with one another in many different ways, *Canadian Mennonite* can play a role in sharing



information across different streams. Stories that we print or post on the website might lead to conversations on social media, which might spark ideas for new stories that we publish for the web or print audience. In this way, even as our church family might have different preferred media, we can offer some continuity and points of connection between the streams.

A reader from Saskatchewan said, “We value the information [*CM*] gives us about what is going on in our conference, in various congregations and abroad. It widens our horizons and truly does offer ‘a thread of continuity.’”

Thank you for letting us know.

Next issue August 27

Please note that the next issue will be dated August 27. We use the slower production cycle in the summer for staff training, technology upgrades and vacations. We will return to the biweekly cycle in September. In the meantime, feel free to visit *CM* on the web, where new stories will be posted, and add your voice in a comment there.

Introducing Michael Hostetler Advertising representative

Michael Hostetler’s first selling experience happened in his early teens, when he sold ads for a magazine he and friends in Brazil published as a school assignment. Later he went on to sell ideas, leading to the creation of projects such as the Sisters & Brothers production, *The Radicals* and Nazareth Village in Nazareth, Israel. Advertising in *Canadian Mennonite* helps communicate the work, vision and mission of church members and organizations, and so Michael sees advertising in *Canadian Mennonite* as part of the magazine’s “vision and mission.” Michael loves travel, people, culture, and photography.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Ibrahim Nseir, pastor of the National Presbyterian Church of Aleppo in Syria, stands at the site where his church building once stood. In 2015 a new building was erected and the church continues to distribute MCC aid, including comforters and kits. Read the full story on page 13.

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO:

CANADIAN MENNONITE,
490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5,
WATERLOO, ON, N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite @CanMenno

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Paid obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/

Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

Mission statement: To educate, inspire, inform, and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada as it shares the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. We do this through an independent publication and other media, working with our church partners.

Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

Area churches and MC Canada financially support 38 percent of *Canadian Mennonite's* annual budget.

Board of Directors (by appointing body):

MC Canada: **Doreen Martens, Henry Krause, Rod Wiens, Elmer Hildebrand;**

MC B.C.: **Annika Krause;** MC Alberta: **Arthur Koop;**

MC Saskatchewan: **Larry Epp;** MC Manitoba: **Ken Reddig;**

MC Eastern Canada: **vacant;** CMPS: **Lois Epp, Ally Siebert, Bryce Miller**

Board Chair: **Henry Krause,** hakrause@telus.net, 604-888-3192

Head Office Staff:

Tobi Thiessen, Publisher, publisher@canadianmennonite.org

Virginia A. Hostetler, Executive Editor, editor@canadianmennonite.org

Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Betty Avery, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Aaron Epp, Young Voices Editor, youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising Manager: D. Michael Hostetler, advert@canadianmennonite.org,

toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Correspondents:

Will Braun, Senior Writer, seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org

Amy Dueckman, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org

Donna Schulz, Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, Manitoba Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org

Dave Rogalsky, Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org

One-Year Subscription Rates

Canada: \$46 + tax (depends on province where subscriber lives)

U.S.: \$68 **International (outside U.S.):** \$91.10

Subscriptions/address changes:

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

(web) canadianmennonite.org

(phone) 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221

contents

JULY 23, 2018 / VOL. 22, NO. 15



Remembering my Baptism 4

Kevin Derksen, pastor at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, reflects on the meaning of baptism, saying that "baptism is not over once the water has dried."

Buildings crumble but faith remains 13

In spite of damage to their church buildings, Christians in Syria have a strong faith and find hope when they distribute MCC comforters, kits and cash allowances, writes **Emily Loewen.**

Creole-speaking congregation joins MCEC 18

Assemblée de Grâce of Montreal was accepted as an emerging congregation, reports **Dave Rogalsky.**

Ending with hope 23

Henry Paetkau retires after 45 years of service in the church, reports **Dave Rogalsky.**

Growing community one song at a time 25

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld tells the story of two congregations' success with a children's musical.

Encountering hospitality in India 28

In reflecting on her experiences with Serving and Learning Together this past year, **Sara Wyngaarden** suggests that accepting lavish hospitality is something like accepting God's grace.

Regular features:

For discussion **6** Readers write **7** Milestones **11**

A moment from yesterday **11** ServiceLinks **27**

Online NOW! **30** Calendar **31** Classifieds **31**

Thank you for letting us know 2

TOBI THIESSEN

Regionalism is coming. No thanks! 7

DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG

Food and love are entangled 8

MELISSA MILLER



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

Remembering my baptism

Baptism is not over once the water has dried.

BY KEVIN DERKSEN



*For all the rich and wondrous
New Testament descriptions
of what happens in baptism,
mine seemed to fall flat.*

I was baptized on an Easter Sunday morning, in the midst of a beautiful service celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. By the first rays of morning light, we greeted each other with the familiar refrain, “He is risen!” and “He is risen indeed!” We sang the big, old Easter hymns. We heard the good news preached: that Jesus, who had died, the Son of God who took human flesh, had been raised by the power of God that overcomes even death. We were reminded that the God who raised Jesus had called and chosen us too, and had invited us to receive adoption into the family of God.

I made my way to the baptismal tank at the front of the sanctuary to be immersed, as was the custom in my home congregation. As I entered the water, two pastors there beckoned me forward. I took my place between them, looking out toward the smiling faces of a congregation that had nurtured me in faith and in life. Now they were promising to uphold me as a brother in the journey of Christian faithfulness that lay ahead. I affirmed before them that I believed in Jesus and was committed to following him. The pastors put their hands around my arms and my back, and in the name of the Triune God, they lowered me into the water. They buried me with Christ in those waters of baptism, and then they raised me up out of the water into the new resurrection life.

Through this death and rebirth, I was joined to the body of Christ, to the people around me who cheered and applauded as I stood dripping. And, I was joined to Christ’s body around the world. Once I had dried off and changed my clothes, I gathered with my brothers and sisters to receive the bread and the cup that welcomed me into a communion of saints stretching back for centuries.

Then and now

This is how I tell the story now. But I wouldn’t have told it this way at the time. Back then, my baptism was a bit of a disappointment. I had spent the years leading up to that day waiting for something—for what I couldn’t quite say. I felt that my faith was missing some level of depth, or passion, or sparkle, and I hoped that maybe baptism would make the difference.

My baptism Sunday came and went, and I didn’t feel any



PHOTO BY MARCIA SHANTZ

Maya Morton Ninomiya was baptized in the Saugeen River at Riverstone Retreat Centre near Durham, Ont., in June 2016 by Wendy Janzen and Kevin Derksen, pastors at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

different. That “something” I was waiting for did not appear to come. For all the rich and wondrous New Testament descriptions of what happens in baptism, mine seemed to fall flat.

I’m sure I didn’t fully grasp that I was being baptized into the death of Christ, as the Apostle Paul puts it in Romans, and I can’t say I felt that I was being reborn into newness of life. Did I comprehend John’s words that the baptism of Jesus is baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire? I doubt it. Did I claim Peter’s description of my newfound calling to proclaim the mighty acts of God who called me out of darkness and into a marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9)? Not likely. Was I actually ready to embrace all those brothers and sisters to whom I was now joined in the body of Christ? Certainly not.

But here is what I ask myself now: Are

any of those things less true because I didn’t understand exactly what was happening or feel my baptism’s full significance in that moment? Does my memory and experience of that baptism really exhaust its meaning for my ongoing life of faith?

It is easy to get worked up about our role in the baptism process: Am I ready to be baptized? Do I understand what it’s all about? Am I doing it for the right reasons?

It is certainly true that baptism requires something from us. We say “yes” to God, we receive the new life God offers, and we commit ourselves to living into this reality. But we can sometimes forget that that God is the primary actor in any baptism story.

A gift from God

Baptism is something God does—it is a gift. God says, “I have called you and chosen you, loved you from before you were even born. Whatever the story of your life, you are invited into the family of God as brothers and sisters to the living Christ. Let me mark you with the sign of this identity and seal you for the life I created you to live. Be cleansed in these waters and receive all that I have for you. I want you, and I will pursue you with tireless love.”

We may not understand what has happened in our baptism, but God does. And God will continue to be with us in the unfolding of this event through the rest of our lives.

Thinking about baptism, I feel torn. On the one hand, I want to say that baptism is not a big deal. It is a beginning to be

celebrated, and we shouldn't get ourselves too worked up with psychological analysis and religious anxiety. On the other hand, I want to say that there is no bigger deal than baptism. It's a matter of death and new life, of truth and identity, of a God who has called and chosen us by grace.

Baptism has long been a central issue for the Mennonite church. Mennonites insist that the church is composed of disciples. We become members of the church by baptism once we have committed our lives to following Jesus and have said that "yes" to the new life God offers.

In our churches, baptism is generally preceded by a time of preparation or faith exploration. We expect that baptismal candidates will be mature enough to understand the commitment being made. But we also recognize that you never can know exactly what you're getting yourself into when you say "yes" to God. Baptism is not for the perfect or for those who have it all figured out. Baptism is not a reward for living rightly or believing rightly. When we are baptized, we confess together with the father in Mark 9: "I believe; help my unbelief!"

Baptism is the beginning, an entrance, a commitment, and a gift to be lived into. It is God's promise of new life in spite of our shortcomings. It is an offering of grace that marks us with God's delight in what God has made. In that sense baptism is not a big deal. It is just what we do when we hear God call our name.

At the same time, there is nothing more important than our baptism. This is a foundational moment for our identity, this death and rebirth into the peoplehood of God. This awesome gift proclaims our calling as God's beloved children! It is a life-changing experience of affirmation. In the baptismal waters, God says to each of us, "You are my beloved child. I made you, and I love you."

In this affirmation is also a reorientation, a turning. The old life is gone, left there in the water. Paul describes how this kind of death prepares us to live now in the newness of Christ's resurrection. Nothing can be more important in life, no calling loftier, no grace more free, no turning more joyful. This is the work of

God, to be received with gratitude and celebrated in praise.

A lifelong process

We all have our own baptism stories and experiences. Some of us will remember a decisive moment of renewal and commitment that continues to have power in our lives. For others, it may be a distant memory of childhood faith hardly connected to the present. Some were baptized as infants and don't remember the water at all. And of course, many of us connected with the church have not been baptized. What do we make of these varied experiences?

These days, the baptism story that keeps coming back to me is that of the Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8. It is a little unconventional by our current standards: a spontaneous roadside ritual with limited preparation and no larger faith community involved. But the Spirit moves, the scriptures are opened, and the Ethiopian says, "Here's some water. What's to prevent me from being baptized?"

Evidently nothing. This makes sense to

me, because a baptism is not over once the water has dried. We have to renew that baptism every day; it takes our whole lives to finish. It is a promise to be lived into, something to be explored and encountered and claimed through the rest of our days. No matter how or when it happens.

That's why I tell the story of my baptism in the way that I do, in spite of how I felt at the time. The work that was begun in me then has not ceased shaping me and calling me. I may not have known all of what I was doing, but God did. Today I view my baptism with humility and gratitude. I remember my baptism and reclaim it daily, because its mark of grace is not finished with me yet. ❧

Kevin Derksen is on the pastoral team at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church, and is a regional ministry associate with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. This is adapted from a sermon he preached in 2011.

/// For discussion

1. How much do you remember about your own baptism and your feelings about it? Did you feel encouraged or even pressured to take that step? How much encouragement should we give to young people to consider baptism? What age do you consider too young for baptism?
2. Kevin Derksen writes that he didn't feel different after his baptism saying, "That 'something' I was waiting for did not appear to come." Do most of us have a similar experience?
3. Are you more inclined to say "baptism is not a big deal" or "there is no bigger deal than baptism"? In what ways is baptism a big deal and how not such a big deal? Has baptism lost its significance in the Mennonite Church? What do you think Derksen means by his comment that baptism "is a promise to be lived into"?
4. Derksen mentions the story of Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8. How would we respond if baptism happened beside the road with no larger faith community involved? Should baptism be more inclusive as John D. Rempel suggests (page 10)? How can we work to make baptism more meaningful for the people in our congregations?

—BY BARB DRAPER

See related resources at
www.commonword.ca/go/1575

CommonWord
 Bookstore and Resource Centre

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, to be kept to 300 words or less, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Calling suicide selfish is uncharitable

RE: "SUICIDE MAY not be painless, but it is selfish," July 2, 2018, page 7.

Victor Huebert writes that suicide "is a very selfish act and inconsiderate of family." Really? Is it also selfish and inconsiderate to die of pancreatic cancer, a brain tumor, heart disease, or leukemia? Mental illness is no more a choice than a physical illness. Depression can result in death, just like any other disease. Calling it a selfish act is surely the most uncharitable thing that can be said about someone taking their own life.

MARK MORTON, KITCHENER, ONT.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Regionalism is coming. No thanks!

DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG

I'm more and more dismayed by the regionalizing trajectory we seem to be on. From national and international politics to neighbourhoods and churches, it feels like we are contracting our boundaries rather than expanding.

To be honest, it's not so bad working in a silo. In fact, there are advantages. One can have real relationships in a tight geographical region, and understanding a limited scope keeps a helpful focus to one's work. But I've been given two interesting gifts that have helped open the door to broader thinking again.



1. THE RECENT CHANGES to our Canadian denominational structure have been very difficult in many respects, but, for the first time in more than 15 years of working for Mennonite Church Manitoba, I have peers outside Manitoba I am required to work with. This has been an incredible gift. Most of the national communications staff are gone, and regional communicators are expected to work together on national agenda. We meet bi-weekly via internet web conference in order to discuss national

matters to be shared with the churches.

Guess what? We don't all agree on how our region should be represented, and there is so much work to be done to make this system a good one. But we are a team, committed to doing what we can. After several months of working together, I look forward to meeting with this group and hearing what is happening in our partner regions.

I'd encourage us all to do what we can to expand our horizons rather than shrink them. There is blessing in this.

2. AS ONE OF THE 13-MEMBER Mennonite Worship and Song Committee creating the new hymnal for our denomination in the U.S. and Canada, I am being stretched further. There are heart songs for our eastern American Mennonite siblings that I have never sung in my life. They know "I owe the Lord a morning song" as well as I know "Gott ist die Liebe." (Spoiler alert: Good chance they'll both be in the new book.) If we were making a Manitoba book only, it would look entirely different and be okay, but this binational work is energizing and will definitely yield a much better product.

I have been recently struck by the gift the Apostle Paul gave us through his insight into the different churches he visited and the way he spoke about the saints and elders in Jerusalem. He didn't always agree with them, but I sense a spirit of respect and generosity. He understood the need for individual congregations to be in relationship beyond themselves.

My faith is enlarged and encouraged by being part of the broader church. I know not everyone has the chance to join national or binational committees, but I'd encourage us all to do what we can to expand our horizons rather than shrink them. There is blessing in this.

Darryl Neustaedter Barg is associate director of communications at Mennonite Church Manitoba, media production coordinator at Canadian Mennonite University and a member of the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee.

✉ Peace process 'keeps people talking while Israel keeps building'

RE: "LET'S TRY talking to the 'enemy,'" June 4, page 10.

When it comes to the situation in Israel/Palestine, talking has been anything but peaceful and benign. What I mean is that "peace talks" have been the

primary diplomatic and journalistic modus operandi for engaging the Israel/Palestine conflict since the Oslo Accords. Any serious observer knows full well that the peace process is a charade, albeit a useful one. It keeps people talking while Israel keeps building.

This intransigence of the Israeli government amidst its enforcement of apartheid is what makes Mennonite Church Canada's stance so important. Russel

FAMILY TIES

Food and love are entangled

MELISSA MILLER

Like many women I know, my mother carries a deeply ingrained impulse to feed others. Once I watched her tend Penguin, her black and white tuxedo cat, clucking and fussing as she prepared and set food before him. To my eyes, the hefty Penguin was doing just fine, and the fuss seemed to be unnecessary. Who knows though? Fussing can be an expression of affection or concern, and perhaps the cat thrived in part because of it.

In our church this summer, we are looking at scriptures of Jesus and food. We hope to chew over these food stories, savour the tidbits that are present in them and delight in Jesus' earthy, lively engagement with people. On one Sunday, the preacher, drawing on several Jesus-food scriptures, noted that food and love are entangled. That caught my attention.

Food and love, from my mother's hands, were inseparable. To love her family was to prepare and serve food for them. Thousands upon thousands of meals. Countless hours of gathering and preserving produce. Tucked within my childhood memories are numbers from each summer—100 bags of corn, 100 jars of peaches, 200 jars of tomato juice, etc.—the fruits of her labours to love her large family through the coming winter. Even today, as my mother lives in a nursing home, she takes great joy in feeding others. For example, she will carry pieces

of fruit from a gift basket in her room to the dining hall to share with others.

Like the cat Penguin, I benefitted from my mother's urge to nurture through food, and I inherited a similar impulse. Few things give me greater pleasure than the hours I spend in my kitchen, preparing a meal—designing the menu, compiling ingredients, dicing, chopping, cooking and baking. And then the culmination! Gathering around the table with friends and family, and partaking of the sensory delights of taste, colour, texture and scent. Food is entangled with love. These experiences draw me closer to God.

Pleasure and love, like that known by a cook and her diners, is close to God's heart.

Jesus, who most clearly represents God

gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart. (Psalm 104:14-15).

I write these words knowing my fridge is packed with summer produce—strawberries, cherries, saskatoon berries and raspberries. New potatoes, beans, lettuce, spinach, basil, parsley, cilantro and mint. Not to mention the full freezer and the overflowing pantry. I am grateful for this abundance, and intend to use it wisely and well. A passion to feed others is a passion to be respected and exercised.

Such a passion draws me to be aware of those lacking in food and in food security. God knows there are many people in my city, in this country and around the world that do not have enough healthy, wholesome food or clean drinking water.



Food and love, from my mother's hands, were inseparable.

to us, often broke bread with others in companionship and friendship. Jesus used food stories to teach people about God. Jesus had so much fun with people over food and drink that he was called a glutton and a drunkard (Luke 7:34).

Jesus isn't the only biblical character who uses food references to point us to God. The psalmist invites people to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). In another song, the unnamed poet waxes about God, the food provider, "[You] bring forth food from the earth, and wine to

Hopefully our passions stretch us to care for the hungry and the thirsty, to work towards a day when there is no more hunger and starvation. When food and love are sufficiently entangled and offered so that all have enough.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mymnts.net) has a passion for helping people develop healthy, vibrant relationships with God, self and others.

Snyder-Penner seems sceptical as to how sanctions can help. He even draws a parallel between grassroots efforts to sanction Israel and the blockade of Gaza. Of course, there is a far more appropriate comparison that can be drawn: the boycott and divestment campaign against South Africa in the 1980s that helped bring down that apartheid regime. Make no mistake about it, the non-violent aims and potentials of a boycott and sanctions movement are plain to see.

Finally, I want to address Snyder-Penner's suggestion that we check in with a local synagogue to open "a difficult if crucial dialogue." I find this recommendation especially problematic. Put simply: North American Jews are not inherently accountable for the State of Israel. He seems to neglect the fact that there are a significant number of Jews in Canada who are opposed to the State of Israel. There are many more who have no connection to Israel whatsoever, positive or negative. These people do not need to answer to anyone about the self-proclaimed Jewish State many miles away. One should never forget that Jews and the State of Israel are not one and the same.

ISAAC FRIESEN, TORONTO

✉ Need to recognize the reality of Israeli occupation

RE: "LET'S TRY talking to the 'enemy,'" June 4, 2018, page 10.

Russel Snyder-Penner's response to the open letter by the working group on Palestine (May 21, page 28) merits more discussion. In general his viewpoint makes extensive use of qualifiers such as, "can become," "may seem," "it appears," "could be," etc. These obfuscate the responses to the reality of Israel's military occupation of Palestine.

It is the occupier that defines the occupied as the "enemy." Israeli organizations such as Rabbis for Human Rights, B'Tselem and Yesh Din and Palestinian groups such as Holy Land Trust, Wi'am and the Tent of Nations are adamant that, "We will not be enemies." Rather than creating an "enemy," the open letter is in keeping with Jesus' approach to occupiers and their collaborators by "taking sides" with the oppressed and their nonviolent struggle.

Snyder-Penner overlooks the geopolitical events that created and maintain the occupation. While Zionists accepted the UN partition agreement in 1948, they ignored Resolution 181 Part B 10 (c) and (d), intended to restrain their ambitions. Clearly, the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians and taking by force another 23 percent of the land designated for a Palestinian state is a violation of the partition agreement.

Snyder-Penner's suggestion of approaching the Jewish

community is constructive because it recognizes that some Jews oppose the Zionist project, others are disturbed by the excesses of the occupation and yet others claim Palestinians have no legitimate claim to the land. I also suggest listening to Palestinians to help weigh the claims made by both parties.

Rajai Ghattas, a refugee from Jerusalem recently stated, "The Palestinian cause is lost. Palestinians have been abandoned by the international community." Silence suggests complicity in Palestinian suffering. At the risk of being labeled an "enemy," the open letter is an expression of MC Canada's solidarity with Palestinians and Israelis in their nonviolent efforts for justice, peace and reconciliation.

JOHANN FUNK, SURREY, B.C.

✉ Bible has stood the test of time

I RECENTLY RETURNED from a business trip to Kenya. Whenever I go, I always spend a few days with Joseph Kiranto and his clan—and his cattle and goats. Joseph has a degree from a Canadian university, but he chooses to live in a traditional Masai way.

Joseph is a Christian and says he uses the life of Jesus and the Bible (as best he can) as his guide for life. After a few days I said to him: "Joseph, most of the people around you, especially outside of your clan, are not Christian. It seems to me, 'the Masai way' works pretty well. I notice they resolve their differences rather easily. Your people seem happy without the modern conveniences we enjoy in the West. Your parents were not Christian. Why would you suddenly decide to follow the teachings of a person from a completely different culture?"

He had to reflect a bit before saying, "It's probably because of the Bible. I'm worried about the future as all our habits and culture are passed on by word of mouth and observation—rather fragile in the modern world. When Christian missionaries first came here, they brought Bibles in the Swahili language. We could read it for ourselves. What Jesus talked about was not much different from 'the Masai way,' so it made sense to accept this Christian way and better insure our future. Reading something in your hand might be more secure than what the old folks say, especially if they don't live with us."

Perhaps there is a message here for Mennonites. It was also the facility of reading his own Bible that provided the impetus for Menno Simons. The Bible has its faults, but its guidance (especially the New Testament) has stood the test of time.

RICHARD PENNER, SASKATOON

✉ Information on pipeline protest available

ON APRIL 20, 2018, I was arrested for praying in solidarity with Indigenous peoples who are trying to protect their lands and our common home from the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. Many are wondering how I, Mennonite Church Canada's Indigenous-Settler Relations director, came to be involved in this action. Some are concerned about how this decision

was processed, and the potential implications it might have. To nurture greater understanding and conversation, I have crafted a Burnaby Mountain Prayer Witness: Background and FAQ paper. You can access it at www.commonword.ca/go/1566.

Grace, peace and continued courage to us all as we discern how to follow the Crucified in this time of global warming.

STEVE HEINRICHS (ONLINE COMMENT)

VIEWPOINT

Response to 'From belief to belonging'

JOHN D. REMPEL

In her article "From belief to belonging" (July 2, 2018, page 4), Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe describes how open communion is on the rise in Mennonite Church Canada congregations due to a concern for inclusivity and welcome. If her survey is representative, then most MC Canada congregations have given up on baptism as the door to communion.

From my viewpoint, there is confusion today about which ordinance is actually the ritual of inclusion. It is not the Lord's Supper but baptism. Is it not really open baptism that congregations concerned with inclusion should be seeking? We invite everyone who is drawn to Christ and the church to be initiated into it. The candidate confesses faith in Jesus Christ and is made a member of his body.

We have erred in the past when we expected mature faith and discipleship of candidates who have only recently come to an owned faith. What candidates confess is that Christ has made a claim on their life and by his grace they intend to live out this claim in the company of other believers. More of the instruction and formation that are necessary for spiritual and moral growth can happen after baptism.

For a community to thrive it needs

both a spirit of vulnerability and unequivocal gestures. By the former I mean an attitude of humility and receptivity to God and neighbour. By the latter I mean that in the midst of life's many ambiguities there needs to be room for an unreserved "yes" to Christ and the body of Christ. For example, a wedding is such a gesture: two partners give each other a clear-cut "yes." For the Anabaptist tradition, conversion and baptism is the biggest "yes" of our lives—from God to us, and then, from us to God. Is part

the Lord's Supper is the renewal of the covenant first made in baptism. On the basis of the article on "From belief to belonging" it would seem that most of our congregations have given up that commitment. (This is not the case in the Niagara region and I wonder if that might be so elsewhere.) In my judgment, those congregations that have given up tying communion to baptism are in danger of giving up a covenantal church.

To separate baptism and the Lord's Supper goes against the grain of the

Our confession of faith teaches that the Lord's Supper is the renewal of the covenant first made in baptism.

of the problem that we think baptismal candidates need to make that affirmation in their own strength, pulling themselves into the church by their own bootstraps?

Here is my question to the people who want to include everyone in the Lord's Supper on the basis of their own determination. Is such a church one in which the loyalty of each participant to Christ and his reign can be expected and counted on in times when faithfulness to the Gospel demands dissent?

Our confession of faith teaches that

Anabaptist understanding of the church and against the practice of the New Testament and post-apostolic church. Separating communion from baptism feels like the final act of MC Mennonite assimilation into liberal Protestantism. It feels like another nail in the coffin of historic Mennonite identity.



John D Rempel is a senior fellow at the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Barkman—Emily Evelyn (b. May 27, 2018), to James and Sarah Barkman, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

Petryschuk—Connor Daniel (b. May 7, 2018), to Ryan and Alecia Petryschuk, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

McKeown—Ephraim Thomas (b. June 23, 2018), to Andrew and Jennifer McKeown, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Alex Charette—Breslau Mennonite at Fraser Lake Camp, Bancroft, Ont., June 9, 2018.

Erin Braun, Luke Gingerich—Breslau Mennonite, Ont., June 17, 2018.

Rachel Willms, Kristina Cressman—St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., June 3, 2018.

Gemma Gerber, Megan Jantzi—Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., at Hidden Acres Camp, June 10, 2018.

Deaths

Dernesch—Irene Elizabeth (nee Harper), 90 (b. Jan. 24, 1928; d. May 31, 2018), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Dyck—Peter, 93 (b. March 22, 1925; d. June 12, 2018), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Epp—Thomas, 32 (b. March 20, 1986; d. June 22, 2018), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—Helen, 84 (b. Aug. 14, 1933; d. June 25, 2018), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hamm—Richard, 62 (b. Oct. 9, 1955; d. June 15, 2018),

North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Harder—Walter, 71 (b. Aug. 5, 1946; d. June 9, 2018), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Klassen—George, 60 (b. Aug. 31, 1957; d. June 25, 2018), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kliwer—Helen (nee Warkentin), 89 (b. Dec. 21, 1928; d. April 6, 2018), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont.

Kroeker—Gladys, 87 (b. Jan. 9, 1931; d. June 3, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Meyer—Antonia Maria (nee Wijchers), 87 (b. Aug. 11, 1930; d. April 27, 2018), Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Papke—Bernice (nee Ackerman), 90 (b. Aug. 5, 1927; d. May 14, 2015), Harrow Mennonite, Ont.

Regehr—Bev (nee Heinrichs), 70 (b. March 30, 1948; d. June 22, 2018), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Sawatzky—Henry, 85 (b. Oct. 3, 1932; d. June 15, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Sawatzky—Nettie (nee Rempel), 97 (b. Dec. 23, 1920; d. April 29, 2018), Oak Lake Mennonite, Man.

Schulz—Menno, 87 (b. Aug. 9, 1930; d. May 15, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Staller—John, 89 (b. June 22, 1929; d. June 25, 2018), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont.

Thiessen—Erika (nee Epp), 102 (b. Sept. 14, 1915; d. March 31, 2018), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Thiessen—Henry, 91 (b. July 7, 1926; d. June 10, 2018), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by email to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

A moment from yesterday



George Bryant (standing) was a long way from the home of his birth when he posed with the Katie and Christian Bender family in about 1917. George was a British home child who arrived from Liverpool in 1907 and was sent to Stratford, Ont., for “distribution” to a local family. He believed his mother had died, but as an adult he discovered she was alive. Over 100,000 British children, either orphaned or removed from poor families, were sent to Canada between 1869 and 1948. George had a good relationship with the Bender family, unlike many home children who were abused and exploited. How many other Mennonite families took in home children?

Text: Laureen Harder-Gissing

Photo: MCC Ontario/Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Mosquitoes are part of life

TROY WATSON

I recently told someone that our family holiday plans this summer included tenting for 10 days in northern Ontario. They replied, “Why on earth would you do that? That sounds awful.” Unfortunately that’s the same reaction I get when I tell certain people I go to church.

I reflected on this last week while our family was camping. We had a blast kayaking, hiking, swimming, listening to loons and watching turtles sunbathe on logs. I couldn’t understand why anyone would think this was awful. Who wouldn’t want to spend time in nature like this?

Granted, the temperature was 36 degrees plus humidity and it didn’t cool down much at night. And one of our tents leaked after a heavy rainfall, soaking my son’s sleeping bag. But it was the mosquitoes, black flies and deer flies that cast a real shadow of doubt on my love of camping. Thousands of bloodthirsty insects launched a diabolical assault on our family that brought at least one of us to tears one evening. It was brutal.

I must confess, I questioned whether camping was worth it that night. For a few brief moments, I considered converting to the non-camping tribe. I didn’t, but I discovered a new appreciation for why some people hate camping.

Camping isn’t for everyone. I still believe spending quality time in nature is essential for everyone’s well-being, but I recognize camping isn’t the only way to do this.

I’ve also concluded that church isn’t for everyone. Over the years I’ve developed an appreciation for why people walk away. I still believe spending quality time with God by yourself and in community is essential to everyone’s well-being, but church isn’t the only way to do this. In its current dominant forms I’m not sure it’s even the best way to do this.

For me, camping and church are about connection. This connection first requires unplugging—unplugging from the grid, the “rat race” and the tyranny of the “urgent” to be fully present. It means disconnecting from the demands and distractions of modern life in order to connect with nature, Spirit and other human beings more intimately. Camping breathes life into my re-imagining what Sabbath might look like in our screen-obsessed 21st century. Except for those devilish mosquitoes!

On our way home my son asked me, “Why did God create mosquitoes?”

As with most of life’s difficult questions, I possess no sufficient answers. As I see it, there’s no use in questioning the purpose or nature of mosquitoes. Their existence is a reality to be accepted and strategically responded to. This goes for most adversity in life.

M. Scott Peck begins his book *The Road Less Traveled* with these words: “Life is difficult. This is a great truth ... once we truly see this truth, we transcend it ... once we truly understand and accept it.”

I must accept the difficult truth that everyone I love will die someday. I can try to avoid the pain and loss of love by not developing deep relationships, but what kind of life would that be? When I choose to enter love, pain and loss come with the territory.

The same applies to church community. Wherever two or three are gathered, there is Jesus in our midst. This is true and amazing, but you can count on egos, politics and drama being present as well.

To engage anything like church or nature fully and deeply, you have to engage the good, the bad and the ugly. When we do this, sometimes we encounter dragons we need to confront. Discernment helps us separate the dragons from the mosquitoes.

In life you face a few dragons and tens of thousands of mosquitoes. You can and ought to slay the dragon, but you can’t eliminate every mosquito. On some level, literally and physically, mosquitoes must be accepted. This doesn’t mean we shouldn’t do all we can to mitigate the affliction they bring. There are things we can do to protect ourselves and others from bloodthirsty entities in every area of life, including the church. And we should. But in order to enjoy all nature has to offer, you have to accept a few mosquito bites. It is nature’s entry fee for getting to sleep under the stars, witness the magic

Camping breathes life into my re-imagining what Sabbath might look like in our screen-obsessed 21st century. Except for those devilish mosquitoes!

of the northern lights or meteor showers or paddle across a pristine lake.

Participating in a Christ-centred faith community has just as many blessings to offer, but they come to us through imperfect selfish human beings. To receive all the church has to offer, you have to accept you’re going to get stung by a few bugs. It goes with the territory. ☼



Troy Watson is a pastor at Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ontario.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

COVER STORY

Buildings crumble but faith remains

Christian churches in Syria distribute relief and hope

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EMILY LOEWEN

Mennonite Central Committee
ALEPPO, SYRIA

In the old city of Aleppo, Syria, Rev. Ibrahim Nseir stands on the pile of rubble that used to be his church. The building where his congregation once worshipped is now a pile of broken stones and dust.

Although its church building has crumbled, the faith of the National Presbyterian Church of Aleppo has held strong through seven years of war. In its new building in another part of the city, the congregation fills the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. Nseir says the conflict has helped the church grow stronger. “Because of the crisis the people started to regather and rethink their priorities,” he says.

Churches in Syria, like Nseir’s, have been strong partners for Mennonite Central

Committee (MCC) in providing relief during the conflict. They reach out to their communities and support those in need, both Christians and Muslims. “During the crisis people forgot their religion and remembered one thing: we are all human beings,” Nseir says.

His congregation is one of the churches distributing shipments of MCC comforters and kits and cash allowances coordinated through the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches.

One family, who now relies on the cash allowances, had to sell their two-bedroom house in 2013 after their only son was kidnapped and held for ransom. The mother estimates the allowance covers about

half of their monthly needs, paying for things like medication and electricity. “I always thank God for the ministry of the Presbyterian church of Aleppo,” she says. “And I ask the Lord to bless those who are giving. The assistance is sustaining us.”

For people who have lived through seven years of war and continue to see much conflict, the support also brings hope. In distributing relief, Nseir tells those in Aleppo that it is a sign that “God is doing a lot in the country; God is not absent.”

In Homs, Bishop Selwanos Boutros Alnemeah of the Syrian Orthodox church says the church’s role in this crisis is to give people hope and a light to move forward. Providing the community with much-needed supplies helps offer that hope. “This light helps them cross step by step through this dark time,” he says. “Our hope came from [MCC], because of you we bring hope to others.”

The Syrian Orthodox Church distributes monthly cash allowances and uses financial support from MCC for their orphanage. MCC also helps the church provide winter fuel.

The Orthodox Church in Homs and the orphanage on the same grounds were heavily damaged in 2012 as an opposition group behind the church traded fire with government forces. The back of the church, the roof of the sanctuary, the orphanage, the courtyard and Sunday school rooms were all destroyed.

The church buildings have now been rebuilt and the congregation continues to worship together. Their faith remains strong, and Bishop Selwanos is optimistic for the future, “We have a big hope that Syria will be set free and be peaceful again,” he says. Knowing that support comes from other Christian churches around the world is especially meaningful.

The head of the development arm of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Homs, who met with MCC staff in February, said that by working together, MCC and the Syrian Orthodox church have become family. He wants to thank the individuals and churches around the world who support MCC’s relief work in Syria: “These people’s generosity and donations are the key to bringing back life to Syria.”



MCC PHOTO BY EMILY LOEWEN

Rev. Ibrahim Nseir (left) holds an MCC comforter made in Europe, ready to be distributed by the National Presbyterian Church in Syria.

UNDRIP: Good news for everyone

Building Bridges event continues reconciliation work

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Canada has violated the rights of its Indigenous peoples ever since the country was born, from forcing thousands of children into residential schools to disrespecting treaties and stealing land. In 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and Canada announced its support for the declaration in 2010. However, there are still many decisions being made in Canada that don't line up with the declaration, such as plans for pipelines in spite of objections by thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Around 70 people gathered on June 22 at the Circle of Life Thunderbird House in Winnipeg to learn why UNDRIP is good

news for everyone. The Building Bridges event with the title, "Good for us all: UNDRIP and the church," was hosted by Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM) and Mennonite Church Canada. It preceded a weekend full of activities celebrating Canada's National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21), including "147: Pathways to treaty relations," another event in which MCM was involved.

A panel of speakers shared their thoughts on engaging with specific articles of the declaration. It consisted of Brenda Gunn (professor of law at the University of Manitoba and expert on UNDRIP), David Driedger (pastor at First Mennonite), Marcus Rempel (author of *Life at the End of Us vs. Them: Cross Culture Stories*) and Lynell Bergen (pastor of Hope Mennonite), and was moderated by Jamie Howison, an Anglican priest and founding pastor of St. Benedict's Table. Geraldine "Gramma" Shingoose, a prominent Indigenous elder and activist in Winnipeg, opened the evening with some words and performed a drum song with her granddaughter Tianna Shingoose.

MCM and MC Canada have run several events on UNDRIP before, focussing on why the declaration was created and the history of the process. "Now it's time to look at our missiology and scripture and start to imagine and engage UNDRIP with those things as well," says Dorothy Fontaine, director of mission at MCM.

The speakers covered a variety of topics, from Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, covered by Gunn, to stories about food and land from Rempel, to Driedger's reflections on respecting the privacy of Indigenous peoples' spiritual and religious traditions.

Bergen identified why acknowledging

treaty land in church is so important. "It can remind us to be grateful for this place, and the people who host us ... to care for the land we are given," she says. "It is an invitation to repentance for our theft of this land from its original inhabitants."

Bill C-262, a private member's bill introduced by MP Romeo Saganash that would ensure that all Canadian laws are in harmony with UNDRIP, passed in the House of Commons on May 30. It now moves to the Senate for approval.

"I think we still need to be vigilant until it's done but it's very encouraging," says Fontaine.

MC Canada and Christian Peacemaker Teams organized a 600-kilometre walk from Kitchener to Ottawa last May to show the government that this bill must be implemented. MP Robert-Falcon Ouellette thanked the organizers in his speech in the House of Commons this spring.

Although Mennonites have walked and discussed, held posters and sent hundreds of postcards to their MPs, there's still a long way to go on the journey of reconciliation. So what are the next steps?

"I think we're all being called to do our own thinking around reconciliation, particularly now in the communities and neighbourhoods that we live in," says Fontaine. It will look different from one community to another. We must familiarize ourselves with UNDRIP and take guidance from Indigenous leaders, elders and grassroots organizations that are already doing incredible work.

"If we enter into things in true partnership, good things can happen. But true partnership requires listening on our part," she says. She suggests participating in every opportunity you can get to learn directly from Indigenous people and build relationships and community together. She says it's essential to understand Canada's history because there are still many myths and misconceptions out there.

At the end of the evening, Gramma Shingoose thanked everyone for the beautiful evening and wished that everyone would share their learning with others. Just before the event, more unmarked children's graves were found at the residential school in Saskatchewan she attended, and she was shaken up. Yet she still came to an



Geraldine 'Gramma' Shingoose speaks to those gathered at the Circle of Life Thunderbird House in Winnipeg. Marcus Rempel (left) was part of a panel.

event run by the church, which had played a major role in residential schools, and she expressed her love for people instead of hostility.

Fontaine says we need to draw our

inspiration from people like Shingoose. “In the eyes of the world, she really is a woman of very little power or political influence, but her declaration of love is like a greater power, and it’s the foundation on which

Christ stood. And we can do no less,” she says. “We need to embrace reconciliation in whatever form or shape it takes with the same kind of love.” ❧

Edmonton store to contribute to Ten Thousand Villages sustainability plan

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
EDMONTON, ALTA.

On June 27, supporters of the Edmonton Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) store voted overwhelmingly to grant its board the authority to gift \$100,000 to the TTV program of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada), in a one-time attempt at a sustainability plan. The Edmonton store was the final partner to agree to the plan that also includes contributions from other parts of the MCC and TTV organizations.

While the concept of fair trade is gaining in popularity, increased competition and continuing fallout after the economic downturn of 2008 are two of the factors causing many TTV stores to operate at a

loss. In addition, stores that began small and were staffed by volunteers have matured as businesses, paying higher rents and requiring more paid staff. On Feb. 6, 2018, MCC Canada announced that 9 of 34 TTV stores across Canada were being closed to reduce losses.

A business plan for TTV Canada, due to be released Aug. 31, will include details on how to increase online marketing and sales, change orders to reflect a 6-month supply instead of 12 months, plan for a significant reduction of warehoused inventory, and a change toward using a third-party distributor.

Two new executive staff, a chief financial

officer and a chief marketing officer, will be hired. MCC Canada has hired Meyers Norris Penny, an accounting and business advisory firm, to assist TTV in developing the plan. If MCC accepts the plan, the Edmonton TTV board will mortgage its Whyte Ave. property, borrowing funds from Abundance Canada with a 15-year repayment plan. The original mortgage was only officially “burned” on April 17, 2018.

The Calgary Crowchild store is likewise waiting for the business plan before giving a final go-ahead to committing funds. Don Neufeldt, who just completed 20 years as treasurer for the Crowchild store commented, “At our AGM, we went to the membership and explained the problem. We asked them to give the board authority to make the final decision after seeing the plan.”

During the Edmonton meeting, Kurt Sawatzky, long-time treasurer for the Edmonton board, wondered about the 20,000 artisans, supported by TTV, if the plan proves unsuccessful. “Could this become a line item for MCC?” Sawatzky asked. Board member Adrienne Wiebe responded that TTV wants to show it is possible to have an alternative economy. “If we can’t make it, it is a failure of an ideal,” she said.

The mission of Ten Thousand Villages Canada is to create opportunities for artisans in developing countries to earn income by bringing their products and stories to markets through long-term, fair trading relationships. ❧



Board members of the Edmonton Ten Thousand Villages store met on June 27 to decide whether to contribute \$100,000 toward a TTV sustainability plan. The board includes (from left) Adrienne Wiebe, Alexandra Ketchum, Robert Proudfoot, Helen Mc Cabe, Kurt Sawatzky, Ghenette Houston, Phyllis Schneider. Not pictured: Kari Morton and Irma Stickland.

Blooming Positive Project responds to theft

Communitas Supportive Care Society
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

In the early summer the staff at Communitas Supportive Care Society arrived at work to discover that someone had stolen the floral hanging baskets from the front of their office building. All ten of them. The discovery was met with anger, outrage, frustration, and disbelief: We should totally do a social media post about this! Who would do such a thing? Why would thieves target a charitable organization that supports people with developmental disabilities, mental health challenges and acquired brain injury? Do the thieves even know what Communitas does? If they did, would it have made a difference?

As staff continued to process their feelings, the conversations about how to respond began to take an interesting turn. Simply replacing the baskets seemed futile and yet it felt like a response was necessary.

That's when some started to ask how we could turn this negative into a positive.

"Several people wondered what the 'Upside-down kingdom' response to this theft would be, asking how we could respond in a way that was healthy and unexpected," says Karyn Santiago, CEO for Communitas. "A few of our creative staff did some brainstorming and we came up with a wonderful solution."

That solution was the Blooming Positive Project: ten hanging baskets of "flowers" created by both staff and people who are served by several of Communitas programs. The challenge was to create flowers using materials that were recycled, reused or repurposed. The flowers also had to be weatherproof since they would be hung outdoors. Along with these creations, participants in the project were encouraged to bring a donation for the food bank.

"We thought if we're going to do something positive, then we should also be conscious of creation care," Santiago explains. "By including a donation to the food bank, we turned the project from something that was simply internal to something that also benefits the community."

After a couple of weeks of creative crafting, ten colourful flower baskets were rehanging where the original ten used to be and a large box of non-perishable items was delivered to the Abbotsford food bank.

"I'm grateful for a creative and compassionate staff team who daily reflect the mission, vision and values of this organization," Santiago said. "This Blooming Positive Project truly turned a negative experience into a positive celebration." ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Kindred sponsors living wage network

KITCHENER, ONT.—Kindred Credit Union is pleased to announce \$10,000 in funding to the Ontario Living Wage Network (OLWN). For the second consecutive year, Kindred's contribution will help fund a full-time program manager. The process to become a living-wage employer can take several months, and an employer program manager is essential for the living wage movement in Ontario to gain momentum. "Kindred Credit Union's leadership and support for the Living Wage Employer Program has helped the OLWN work with employers from across Ontario to implement living wage policies for their organizations," states Greg deGroot-Maggetti, chair of the Ontario Living Wage Network. "In the past year, 40 new businesses have been certified as living-wage employers and hundreds of employees have seen an increase in their incomes." Brent Zorgdrager, Kindred's chief executive officer, and a passionate advocate of the living-wage movement, says, "This dedicated resource helps to ensure that local businesses in more communities across Ontario can move from good intentions to action." —Kindred Credit Union



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNITAS CARE SOCIETY

When ten floral hanging baskets were stolen from the Communitas Supportive Care Society office, the organization responded by creating flowers using materials that were recycled or repurposed. Through creativity, the negative experience was turned into a positive celebration.

Mennonites attend Indigenous theological studies symposium

By MICHELLE MACDONALD AND MICHAELA PRIES-KLASSEN

Special to Canadian Mennonite
WOLFFVILLE, N.S.

The 20-or-so Mennonites who attended the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS) symposium were humbled by the grace of their hosts who welcomed them, without hesitation, into the conversation. They gathered in early June at the Acadia University campus in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, for this symposium on white supremacy, racial conflict, indigeneity and working towards right relationships.

NAIITS was formed to offer Indigenous and non-Indigenous students of theology opportunities to pursue alternative learning and research from an Indigenous perspective. The NAIITS community meets annually to facilitate intercultural and ecumenical dialogue regarding Indigenous expressions of theology, and explores the

social and historical realities that implicate the present-day settler-Indigenous relationships.

The Mennonite role was partly as participants and partly as observers of this charged commentary on the history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations and the ways in which we can pursue reconciliation. NAIITS founder and current chair, Dr. Terry LeBlanc, said more than once, “You are now part of the NAIITS community, whether you like it or not.”

The symposium began with a presentation by LeBlanc, who emphasized the importance of de-centering whiteness in ideology. The various presenters covered subjects related to Indigeneity, theology, and social justice, culminating in calls for everyone to move toward more equitable

societies. Other speakers highlighted their own experiences of colonialism and discrimination against Indigenous groups in their home countries, which showed clear parallels to Canada’s colonial history.

The conversations that were sparked by these speakers were profound and challenging, and the talking circles focused on collaborative learning. Many of the Mennonite attendees shared feelings of gratitude for the learning experiences provided by the symposium, and the conversations continued in a variety of ways outside of the official events and spaces.

Joe Heikman from Saskatoon, shared his realization that “white supremacy is about unchallenged assumptions that my culture, my understanding, my ways of being are better than others—or that my western ways are simply the only ways, and alternatives are unrealistic or non-existent.”

Another core theme of the symposium was the connection between colonization and Christianization. This is a difficult subject to embrace as Mennonite history is wrought with experiences of persecution and resettlement. However, the repercussions that this resettlement had on Indigenous people are undeniable. Given their heritage Mennonites should be able to empathize with the anxiety of displacement and the loss of belonging that Indigenous peoples have experienced.

It is the responsibility of everyone to take steps toward reconciliation, as we all benefit from being in right relationship with each other. By understanding that it is a process and not an event, we can view reconciliation as a dynamic relationship and we can be empowered to continue working on it. It is crucial to view the treaties as an ongoing covenant which require promises to be fulfilled.

If people feel overwhelmed, a good place to start is by reading the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, researching treaties and ongoing land claims, visiting local band offices, or learning about and celebrating Indigenous culture. Most importantly, we must all be committed to repairing and fostering relationships with Indigenous peoples. ❧



PHOTO BY KATHY THIESSEN

During an Indigenous theological studies symposium, held in Wolfville, N.S., the presenters sang a traditional Christmas hymn in English while drumming. Many of the audience members sang along.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

/// Staff change

Mennonite Heritage Village executive leaving after nine years



BARRY DYCK has served as executive director of Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Man., for the last nine years, exercising his passion for Mennonite history and passing it on to the next generations. He took on the role in February 2009, having previously volunteered with the Mennonite Brethren Conference for many years—part of the time as moderator—when he became intrigued with Anabaptist history and began to read books along that line. Dyck feels the achievements under his tenure have been in line with the mission of the Heritage Village—to preserve and exhibit the experience and stories of Russian Mennonites. “Restoring the Waldheim House has been one of the pinnacles of my time here,” he says, referring to the classic Mennonite house barn that is of great interest to visitors. The house—built in 1876, the oldest heritage building on site—was re-thatched and given a facelift last year. Dyck is concerned that heritage skills such as blacksmithing, operating the sawmill and threshing machine, separating milk and spinning wool will fade as older volunteers retire, noting that attracting youth and young families to the museum involves more than simply offering artifacts and displays to teach history. Dyck will leave his position at the end of 2018.

—Mennonite Heritage Village

Creole-speaking congregation joins MCEC

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Westerne Joseph has been in Canada for ten years. The political situation in Haiti meant that he, his wife and their children had to flee, landing in Canada as refugees. In 2010 they received refugee status, making their home in Montreal, where their children have finished high school and attend university. Joseph has Mennonite roots from Haiti, having come to know Jesus in a Mennonite Church there and studying with Mennonite ministers.

Five years ago he founded *Assemblée de la Grâce* congregation of about 75 people, with 30-35 attending weekly.

Michel Monette and Lynn Renaud, leaders of Hochma, a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) congregation also in Montreal, have been active in working with the influx of Haitians claiming refugee status in Canada, fearing that they would soon be sent back to Haiti by the United States government. Through this work, Joseph met Renaud and Monette, who connected them with Brian Bauman, mission minister for MCEC. *Assemblée de la Grâce* (Assembly of Grace) became

an emerging church within MCEC at the April 2018 annual church gathering.

Assemblée de la Grâce uses Creole, a dialect of French, in worship. Now part of MCEC, it also belongs to a group of 30 congregations (also named *Assemblée de la Grâce*) in Haiti, Florida, and soon in Jamaica. They also run a school and orphanage in Lascahobas in the Dominican Republic.

In the five-fold gifting listed in Ephesians 4:11 (pastors, teachers, apostles, evangelists and prophets) Joseph claims that of apostle—going out with the good news of Jesus, establishing new congregations, and growing leaders for those congregations. These are gifts which *Assemblée de la Grâce* and Joseph bring to MCEC.

At the April gathering Joseph spoke of MCEC as a kind of Pentecost with all the nations together, connecting people, and sending people out with the good news. MCEC congregations now use at least fourteen languages in worship each Sunday.///



Pastor Westerne Joseph (facing the camera) sits with members of the Assemblée de la Grâce congregation at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's annual church gathering April 27 and 28. Assemblée de la Grâce was accepted as an emerging congregation during the gathering.

Ma Destinée congregation from Montreal checks out MCEC

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

Marjorie Brutus and her partner Rheau Jean-Claude, leaders of the Ma Destinée congregation in Montreal, were at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's annual church gathering on April 27-28. Invited by Michel Monette, one of the leaders of the Hochma MCEC congregation in Montreal, they were there to check out possible future connections. They watched Assemblée de la Grâce officially join MCEC as an emerging congregation and talked to *Canadian Mennonite* about their work.

Ma Destinée has been worshipping together for less than a year. By April 2018, between 10 and 35 people were gathering for prayer and teaching.

Brutus and Jean-Claude said they feel like, "Mennonites are real people with relationships and love" as priorities. This touched them deeply. The teaching they are focussing on currently is reconciliation through "Three C's: consult with God, consult with self, and consult with the emotional." Their passion is to "right the world."



Marjorie Brutus and her partner Rheau Jean-Claude attended the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada annual church gathering in April.

Both Brutus and Jean-Claude have a background in neuro-linguistic programming and work together at MMB, a consulting and coaching firm. Their website calls MMB a "Christocentric multidisciplinary teaching centre." Neuro-linguistic programming, while dismissed by some, is used to help people change their minds through looking at outcomes of behaviour as compared with hoped-for outcomes.

Brutus and Jean-Claude work from a Christian perspective to help their clients

form goals and character in line with God's desires for humanity. They hope to help leaders to know themselves, deal with habits (change), have realistic goals and be able to steer themselves towards those goals. They see God in the work of transformation, and one of their goals is to help people to develop relationships with God. ✎

/// Briefly noted

Dirk Willems statue commissioned for Mennonite Heritage Village



Jan Luyken engraving of Dirk Willems saving his captor from drowning published in Martyrs Mirror, 1685.

STEINBACH, MAN.—Manitoba sculptor Peter Sawatzky has been commissioned to create a bronze statue of martyred Anabaptist Dirk Willems that will be the focal point of a new peace exhibit at Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. Sawatzky is renowned for various sculptures, including the Seal River Crossing, a 10-metre-long sculpture of nine caribou in downtown Winnipeg. The commissioning of the bronze, life-sized statue involves something of a leap of faith, according to Elbert Toews, chair of the Peace Exhibit Committee. The sculpture and base alone will cost more than \$100,000, and the completed peace exhibit, which will include an interpretive centre and cairn to recognize Mennonite conscientious objectors, will cost several hundred thousand dollars more. Donations are being solicited and can be sent directly to Peace Project at Mennonite Heritage Village.

—BY ABE WARKENTIN

/// Briefly noted

Mennonite World Conference news



- **THE MISSION COMMISSION** of Mennonite World Conference appointed José Arrais of Portugal as a part-time coordinator of networks.

- **THE GLOBAL ANABAPTIST-Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO)** plans to increase articles from the global church. This year Francis Ojwang has agreed to write a series of congregational and biographical profiles from Kenya.

- **THE SECOND GLOBAL Mennonite Peacebuilding Conference and Festival (GMPC II)** will take place at Mennorode, Elspeet, The Netherlands, June 27-30, 2019, and will launch MWC's emerging Global Anabaptist Peace Network (GAPN).

- **MWC IS ONE OF 14** partners sponsoring "Faith Action for Children on the Move—Global Partners Forum," Oct. 16-19, 2018, in Rome, Italy. This forum will bring together Christian faith-based organizations to reflect on their respective contributions to end violence against children.

- **A RECENT FRENCH-LANGUAGE** post on the MWC website by Neal Blough explains considerations for the French Mennonite church to join the French Protestant Federation and its evangelical counterpart.

—Mennonite World Conference release

Evaluation complete for MCBC executive minister

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

An official review of the ongoing ministry of Garry Janzen, executive minister of Mennonite Church B.C. (MCBC), has been completed.

The MCBC Leadership Board released the following statement: "The Executive Committee of Mennonite Church B.C., on behalf of the Leadership Board, contracted with Arrow Leadership to conduct an independent review of the Executive Minister, Garry Janzen. This review was completed in May, 2018. MCBC Leadership Board affirms Garry's ongoing leadership as Executive Minister. The independent review identified four key themes for Garry to concentrate on and identified six areas of responsibility for the MCBC Leadership Board to work on moving forward. We thank everyone who participated in the review."

Arrow Leadership of Abbotsford is an independent organization that is actively

engaged in Christian leadership training and development.

At the February 2018 annual general meeting of MCBC, resolutions had been presented calling for independent reviews of both the executive minister and the leadership board. Both resolutions called for the reviews to be conducted by an ad hoc review committee with one representative from each MCBC congregation, and no participation from any current MCBC committee or the leadership board.

Discussion by delegates at the AGM revealed some dissatisfaction with the two resolutions, including comments that the proposed process was inherently flawed and that the review should be done by an outsider, not MCBC members. Both resolutions were eventually withdrawn from the floor. Moderator Lee Dyck told the delegate body that a system for periodic performance review for Janzen was already

in place.

No review is scheduled for members of the leadership board, as these are volunteer positions. The MCBC leadership board consists of the executive officers (moderator, vice moderator, secretary) and representatives of each of the committees. ❧

/// Staff change

Interim church engagement staffer in B.C.

KEVIN BARKOWSKY has been named to the interim half-time church engagement position at Mennonite Church B.C. In this role, Barkowsky helps support congregations live out their missional imagination, promote biblical stewardship, establish congregational relationships and engage MCBC congregations in a commonly-shared focus on discipleship and peacemaking. Barkowsky began work June 16 and serve while MCBC continues to seek a person to fill the position permanently. Barkowsky, of Gingolx, B.C., is also communications coordinator and administrative assistant for MCBC.

—AMY DUECKMAN



/// Staff changes

Pastoral transition in B.C.

DARNELL BARKMAN of Abbotsford began a term of service as pastor of Yarrow United Mennonite Church in Yarrow, B.C. He is a 2010 graduate of Columbia Bible College with a degree in intercultural studies and is currently working on an MA in peacemaking and collaborative development at Canadian Mennonite University. Barkman and his wife Christina are the parents of four young children and have just completed a six-year term as Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in the Philippines.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN



Providing leadership to Mennonite Church B.C. are: (from left) secretary Mary Berg, secretary; Garry Janzen, executive minister; Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen, vice moderator; and Lee Dyck, moderator; (standing at the microphone).

God at Work in the Church Snapshots

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

More than 150 people gathered to celebrate the Springridge Church on its 90th anniversary in Pincher Creek, Alta., on June 30-July 1. A pig roast and a skit that highlighted the church's history kept celebrants fed and entertained. Organizers felt they had the necessary energy and excitement to plan the celebration now, instead of waiting 10 years for the 100th anniversary.



PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Camp Valaqua summer staff picked up bits of clay to shape into vessels for God to fill at a July 7 dedication service. Tiny canoes, cups, ears, hearts and even an upside-down umbrella symbolize ways they hope God will fill and use them as they interact with campers this summer. The dedication service was led by camp director Jon Olfert and Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, who is the executive minister of Mennonite Church Alberta.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEMINGTON
MENNONITE HOME

Darcy Warren (left), Dan Schnekenburger, Mariel Konrad and Jim Konrad were declared the best mixed team at the 16th annual Leamington Mennonite Home golf tournament held at the Erie Shores Golf and Country Club on June 16. The 148 participating golfers raised \$63,000 which will be used for resident care equipment for both the long-term care home and the retirement residence.



Sherbrooke seeks vision for future

BY AMY DUECKMAN

BC Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Following the resignation of both its pastors last year, Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver looks to the future in determining how it can best serve and minister in its urban setting.

Phil Routley was hired in Aug. 2017 as transitional pastor. “My mandate coming in was to discern God’s vision for the future of the church and look for the [long-term] pastor God was going to lead us to,” says Routley. Earlier this year the church assembled a task force consisting of two members of the church council and Routley to discern what God’s vision is for the congregation. Members used a number of resources, among them studying and discussing the book

Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City by Timothy Keller.

As part of the discerning process, Routley also visited six churches in the area that are effectively reaching out to their community. “At the end of the process we looked at various mandates Jesus gave to his disciples with the great commandment and the great commission in Acts 1:8. We looked specifically at Acts 2:42-47, the first snapshot of what the early church looked like,” he said.

The task force studied the actions and attitudes described in that passage and talked about what it would mean for Sherbrooke. “What it came down to was, ‘We are here

to know Jesus and to make him known by all,’” said Routley. With the changing demographics in the neighbourhood and the exodus of church members from the city to the suburbs and farther into the Fraser Valley, Sherbrooke sees outreach in its immediate community as vital. The church continues in its ministry with the refugee food bank and shares its building with Vietnamese Mennonite Church and a Punjabi-speaking congregation.

In June, the report was presented to the church council and then to the congregation. “The whole intent is that we’ll have lots of discussions over the summer and in September ask, ‘Is this what we believe God’s vision is for the church?’” says Routley.

Sherbrooke also sees upholding the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as important. “We as a church came to a conclusion about what the statement of faith says,” said Routley. “We want to follow what the confession of faith says and make sure that everybody and anybody can always join us. [We want to] make Jesus known, not just known about.”

Want to make a difference in
lives around the world?

MCC CANADA IS SEEKING
BOARD MEMBERS

We need your vision, governance
expertise and commitment
to excellence.

To apply, please contact Joni Sawatzky at
JoniSawatzky@mcccanada.ca

All board members exhibit a commitment to
Christian faith, active church membership
and biblical peacemaking.

 **MCC** mcccanada.ca
Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ



2018
Spruce River
Folk Festival

AUGUST 11, 2018
Spruce River Farm (20KM North of Prince Albert on Hwy 2)
\$10 per person / \$20 for families

SCHEDULE/MUSICAL LINE UP:

- Pipe Ceremony @ 10am
- Presentation by Mary Culbertson @ 11:30am
- Wilbur Sargunamaj @ 1:00pm
- Saskatunes @ 2:00pm
- Danny Paranteau @ 3:00pm
- Jeffery Straker @ 4:00pm
- Strong Sisters @ 5:00pm
- Black Rain @ 6:00pm
- The Wolfe @ 7:00pm

Plus food booths, silent auction and more!

This cultural event is held annually to raise awareness of Landless Indigenous Bands in Saskatchewan. Proceeds will go to MCC's Stoney Knoll Fund.

For more information please contact:
Ray Funk @ 306.764.7903
Leonard Doell @ 306.665.2555
Find us on Facebook: @spruceriver

WWW.SPRUCERIVERFOLKFEST.COM

GOD AT WORK IN US

Ending with hope

Henry Paetkau retires after lifelong service to the church

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

May 31 was Henry Paetkau's last day in the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada office, but he wasn't quite done yet. On June 5, he delivered the final address of the Ralph and Eileen Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training fundraising dinner at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo.

Paetkau ended his career in the church as regional church minister, but his work in many ways goes back to 1970, when he left southern Ontario to study at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg (now Canadian Mennonite University).

In his comments on June 5, he noted that, like many others from the baby boom generation, he wanted things to change, including the church. Quoting *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat, Paetkau said, "Boomers were the last generation to come of age with some traditional edifices still standing, the old ... norms and Christian(ish) [sic] religion ... which gave them something powerful to wrestle with, to rework and re-

act against and attempt to overthrow."

He went to Bible college in Winnipeg to begin an academic career, one which came to fruition in 2003, when he became Grebel's president, a position he held for eight years. Before that, he served as the pastor of Windsor Mennonite Fellowship, Harrow Mennonite Church and Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines, Ont., and as the conference minister for Mennonite Church Canada—45 years of service in total.

In his Lebold address, entitled "What's past is prologue," he noted that many wonder if the church has any future, since the boomers were very effective at tearing down institutions.

"Ironically, in many ways the boomer rebellion eventually succeeded, and now we aging boomers are wondering what happened to the programs and institutions which formed us, we became involved in and supported," he said. "Now we are anxious about what will become of the church in an age of post-institutionalism and

post-denominationalism, indeed, post-Christendom."

But instead of depression and worry, he expressed hope in the future, a Christian resurrection hope that is already being realized. He pointed at four significant developments:

- **YOUNG ADULTS** who are "surprisingly optimistic and interested in being involved in the church," (quoting Andy Brubacher Kaethler, associate professor at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.).
- **NEW EXPRESSIONS** of church and worship.
- **NEWCOMERS** in the church, including new Canadians.
- **NEW FORMS** and expressions of congregational and community ministry.

In a fifth category, he grouped three more changes:

- **THE NUMBER** of women in ministry in the regional church. Among active ministers, that number is now close to 40 percent.
- **A GROWING NUMBER** of congregations that have carefully and consciously moved to inclusion of LGBTQ persons in membership and leadership, including pastoral leadership.
- **PASTORS WHO** are typically staying much longer in a congregation, for a variety of reasons. This longevity appears to benefit everyone. There is very little movement north and south, and not much more east and west.

Paetkau highlighted that, while the church has been good at calling and equipping pastors and teachers, it is time to focus on the other three gifts from Ephesians: apostles, prophets and evangelists.

In closing, he challenged the church as it goes forward to remember that it is the vehicle for the good news to be spread to the world. This is the "hope, promise and opportunity of the church," he said.

Celebrations around Paetkau's retirement included a book of stories, memories and words organized by his daughters Heidi, Shari, Angie and Becky, and a celebration of his ministry held at 50 Kent Ave. in Kitchener on May 15. ☞



Henry Paetkau addresses the final Ralph and Eileen Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training fundraising dinner on June 5, five days after his retirement from MC Eastern Canada.

Good food enhances camp ministry

A mother and her daughter share a passion for cooking and for summer camp

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
WALDHEIM, SASK.

Every summer Melita Penner and her daughter, Denelda Fast, spend a week cooking for summer camp at Shekinah Retreat Centre, north of Waldheim, Sask. They've been doing it for 15 years.

In the early years they volunteered for children's or teens' camps, cooking for up to 65 people each week. But for the past three years, they've cooked for staff orientation at the end of June. Because they're cooking for fewer people (20 to 25 counsellors and counsellors-in-training) they spend the time between meals giving Shekinah's chalet kitchen a thorough cleaning.

"We know each other very well and enjoy working together," says Penner. With regard to cleaning, she says, "We are both organizers."

Fast agrees. "We both have same thought: 'If you're going to do a job, you may as well do it right.'"

When it comes to cooking, though, the women have complementary styles. "I did all the baking, she did the soups," says Fast. "It's easier to do things that are within your comfort zone." Penner admits the differences between them may be generational. "She uses more spices, she thinks I use too much salt," she jokes.

Since camp menus are the same from week to week, Fast says they create their own menu for orientation week, "so that counsellors have a few different things that they won't have during the rest of [the summer]."

Certain foods, though, are synonymous with summer camp at Shekinah. Among them are cinnamon rolls and rollkuchen, deep-fried fritters popular in Russian Mennonite kitchens and traditionally served with watermelon. Fast enjoys preparing these foods because she and her mom work together to make them. She enjoys serving them because campers and counsellors love them. "Their eyes get huge

when they see the rollkuchen," she says.

"One of our goals is to have the food ready on time and to have it look and taste delicious," says Fast. Achieving that goal can be a challenge, however. She says they've had to do a lot of problem solving over the years. "When we have a huge crew [to feed] and we have to make do with not-the-right ingredients or not enough of one thing, [we] problem-solve and make it work," she says.

In recent years they've also learned to cook for a variety of food sensitivities. Lactose intolerance, food allergies, vegetarianism and celiac disease have all made an appearance.

"[It's a challenge] making sure everyone is well fed," says Fast. "We have to have the gamut of food opportunities for everyone to feel included."

In spite of the challenges, they both find the work rewarding. Penner recalls an eight-year-old boy coming to them after a meal with a big smile on his face and asking, "Could you write out the pizza recipe so I can take it home to my mom?" She knows food is an important part of the camping

experience, and it can make the difference between a bad week at camp and a good one. "If children are homesick and think camp is not a great place, [and] you make a meal they enjoy, [then they are] one step closer to enjoying camp," she says.

What keeps the duo coming back to camp year after year? "When rolling out dough we laughingly asked ourselves the same question," says Penner. But she adds, "Christian education for children has always been important to me."

"It's hard work," says Fast, but it's "rewarding creating something that gives people sustenance and enjoyment." She adds, "I love Shekinah and believe in the [staff] and the work they do. It's hard work for them to create an atmosphere of joy and inclusion. We're helping them in their quest [to do that]."

The women have cooked at camp long enough to see campers grow up to be counsellors and, eventually, workers in their own congregations. They marvel at the energy and commitment of these young adults. Penner says, "I'm always inspired by those who have so much energy to give to the camp." And Fast adds, "I see the power of the next generation and think to myself, 'they're amazing, so open and free, displaying their faith and passing it on to campers.'"

At 80 years of age, Penner doesn't take this volunteer experience for granted. "I'm thankful to God for the ability and energy that he gives me to do the work at Shekinah," she says.

"My mom is such a trooper," says Fast. "She keeps up with me."

Both mother and daughter appreciate the time they spend together at camp. They enjoy laughter and conversation, as well as working together companionably in silence, says Fast. Though the days are long, Penner says, "We do get in the odd Scrabble game."

✎



PHOTO BY CRAIG FRIESEN

Melita Penner (left) and her daughter, Denelda Fast, cook at Shekinah each summer.

ARTBEAT

Growing community, one song at a time

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
Alberta Correspondent

At a time when many churches and their choirs are dwindling, music teacher Kim Friesen Wiens created something amazing in Edmonton with the potential to help reverse both trends.

Inspired by the legacy of a church kids club and using funds donated in her grandmother's memory, Friesen Wiens brought together children from her church, First Mennonite, Lendrum Mennonite, and children from the community to produce an hour-long musical called, *In the Image*. Written by Mark Burrows, the production is based on Genesis creation stories and was beautifully presented as a Sunday worship service at Lendrum on April 29 and at First Mennonite on May 6.

Half of the 18 participants in the musical were from non-church families who were invited by their friends to join the choir. One of Friesen Wiens's piano students also

participated along with her brother.

"It blew me away what those little kids could do. They took it ten steps beyond what I imagined," Friesen Wiens said.

The idea for a children's musical took several years to emerge. "Women In Mission [of First Mennonite Church] approached me with funds donated in my grandmother's name and wanted me to use it for children's music," said Friesen Wiens. Her grandmother, Melitta Friesen, who passed away in 2012, had been a much-loved children's choir leader and Sunday school teacher at First Mennonite for many years. She led a number of musicals and was also a popular piano teacher. "One-and-a-half years ago, it suddenly came to me that I should do a musical," Friesen Wiens said.

Planning for the musical involved the challenges of small numbers, busy family schedules, and a participant age range from

pre-readers to grade 6. Inviting both the First Mennonite (Mennonite Church Canada) and Lendrum (Mennonite Brethren) children to participate and bring friends boosted numbers and created good connections between the singers and parents.

Audio tracks and scripts were purchased and sent home with each family, so children could listen and learn at home, minimizing the need for multiple practices and allowing children who could not read words or music to know their parts. Starting in September 2017, the choir met once every other month for 1½ hours, for a total of five practices. "The amount of commitment was perfect," Friesen Wiens said.

The musical created many good experiences including building connections between churches, giving children an opportunity to lead in meaningful worship, bringing community members into the church, providing a fun musical opportunity for children, and teaching the biblical creation story. One choir member told Friesen Wiens, "Now we know what it means to be good stewards of the earth."

A side benefit of the experience for Friesen Wiens was that it bolstered her confidence in inviting people to experience the church. "I had conversations I definitely wouldn't have had ... I was out of my comfort zone. Asking someone to be a part of this, the vulnerability comes out." The whole experience was encouraging as she discovered that families seemed to be looking for opportunities to involve their children, and it was easy for the church children to invite their friends.

Asked what advice she has for other churches, Friesen Wiens was enthusiastic. "Jump in and do it. Find a simple [musical] and just go for it." "Don't shy away from involving pre-readers if you can get an audio track. My Kinders would dance while they did it; they knew all the words and took hold of it."

Kim Friesen Wiens has taught music in Edmonton Public Schools since 2000, and occasionally teaches undergrad and graduate classes at the University of Alberta. She is currently working on a collection of Chinese folk songs in cooperation with the Chinese government, conducts the children's choir at First Mennonite, and teaches piano. ❧



PHOTO BY MICHAEL BUHR

Participants in a children's musical celebrate their God-given creative talents. Kim Friesen Wiens conducted In the Image by Mark Burrows while Wesley Berg accompanied.

Rhubarb runs out

Literary magazine ends with anthologies

STORY AND PHOTO BY WILL BRAUN

On the edges of Canadian Mennonitism lies a disproportionately rich literary tradition. Or perhaps it lies just beyond the edges of our community. In either case, despite the exceptional accomplishments of Mennonite writers, a magazine that has showcased their work died rather peacefully last fall.

Rhubarb, which published 42 issues starting in 1998, notified readers last November that the magazine's 19-year run had come to an end. In a phone interview, Victor Enns, who had been a central figure in the history of the Manitoba-based publication since he and his brother Garry laid the groundwork for it in the 1900s, mentioned three factors that led him to step back: a desire to finally prioritize his own writing, the perennial financial struggles of the project, and personal health complications. No one else took his place.

Hildi Froese Tiessen, who taught English at Conrad Grebel University College for 25 years and guest edited the final issue of *Rhubarb*, says literary journals are almost always poorly funded and driven by passionate, hard-working individuals who "eventually run out of steam." Like everyone I spoke with, she is unrestrained in her appreciation of Victor Enns and the others who gave so much of themselves to the project.

The culmination of *Rhubarb's* run is a 2017 trilogy of attractive book-format anthologies covering the period of 1962 to the present. The earlier date was when Rudy Wiebe's novel *Peace Shall Destroy Many* was published, arguably inaugurating a certain era of Mennonite literature. At the launch of the first issue of *Rhubarb* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 1998, Wiebe spoke about the tensions that surfaced in Mennonite circles following the publication of his contentious novel about the underside of pacifism. Wiebe's book, like much Mennonite writing after it, had raised thoughtful questions about Mennonite beliefs and culture in a literary format and a public venue, uninhibited

by the conventions of Sunday morning.

Wiebe, again like numerous Mennonite writers after him, went on to win the prestigious Governor General's Literary Award—two times in his case. In fact, the writers published in *Rhubarb's* concluding trilogy—some only tangentially Mennonite—have won a combined 16 Governor General's awards. The irony is that a community that gave rise to such literary accomplishment never widely embraced a publication highlighting those achievements. According to Garry Enns, co-founder and long-time board member, subscriptions tended to be in the 400 range. He said subscribers were spread across Canada and into the U.S.; they were young and old, urban and rural, educated and "good farm folk." But they were, in Victor's words, "never enough."

Despite pockets of volunteer passion, creative input and financial support, Mennonites didn't embrace Mennonite writers the way others embraced them, or the way Mennonites embraced their musicians. And, as Paul Krahn—co-editor from 2003 to 2011—says, many Mennonite writers really wanted to be published outside Mennonite circles.

Rhubarb had picked up where *The Mennonite Mirror* left off, inheriting a charitable number and an interest in Mennonite culture and creativity, though, as Garry puts it, with more of an eye forward than back.

To be clear, in this context "Mennonite" refers essentially to a group marked by a particular set of surnames. *Rhubarb* identified as Mennonite and secular, unrestrained by religious propriety. "I like the idea of Mennonites thinking on a certain subject without it being a religious publication," Victor says.

Those winners of prestigious awards are not likely to be sitting in a Mennonite church pew, with some exceptions. Nor were people in the pews likely to be reading *Rhubarb*.

Froese Tiessen says *Rhubarb* writers



The final issue of Rhubarb magazine

were a mix of people still connected to the church and others with little adult experience of church. Among the latter she says, "the overriding sentiment is not so much resistance or rejection, but ambivalence and often a deep sense of loss of a community that sometimes seemed, in their experience, to fall far short of its ideals."

For Krahn, the quintessential question that *Rhubarb* experimented with was whether it was possible to embrace the Mennonite identity and still do good quality art. Speaking by phone from his home in Neuberghal, Man., Krahn said, "we're all both chasing and running away from something."

Many Mennonite writers feel the church was an oppressor, Krahn said. They felt they needed to get away from church to be artists.

But you cannot entirely pull up your own roots. "I've often written out of my own specific world," says Dora Dueck, whose work has appeared numerous times in *Rhubarb*. "You don't stop loving the people who harmed you," she says, speaking about church experience in general not specific events of overt harm. She talks about telling herself in one moment that she doesn't care about troubling realities in the Mennonite church and in the next moment admitting that she does indeed care.

These tensions, in Krahn's view, are the essential grist for the creative Mennonite mill that has churned out a disproportionately high number of accomplished writers. Victor Enns adds to the list of creative tensions that pull between the strong Low German barnyard oral tradition and the strong Sunday morning oral tradition.

As fewer and fewer Mennonites come to know the sweet tang of raw rhubarb dipped in sugar at Oma's kitchen table, the literature changes. As we blend into urban Canadian culture, the tensions will be different. Less distinct perhaps.

Froese Tiessen speaks with enthusiasm about emerging Mennonite writers. In the past, Mennonite literature was often historical and writers started out writing about their youth, she notes. Now they are focussed more on "Mennonite experience

embedded within the broader society, here and now."

Garry says the Mennonite Literary Society, the legal entity that published *Rhubarb* and *The Mennonite Mirror* before it, will remain alive, should anyone wish to revive it in some form.

But *Rhubarb* magazine is no more. The publication, named so brilliantly for a tough, adaptable plant that Victor said could grow almost anywhere Mennonites could and was an important part of Mennonite diets

in hard times, and which Garry characterized as "hardy but a bit sour"—the "perfect symbol of Mennonite culture"—did not survive the winter of 2017-18. As Garry mused, "Maybe we've had enough platz." Maybe hardy and sour is not us anymore. And maybe we don't even know anymore what platz is. ☺

Back issues of Rhubarb are available for the price of postage. Contact mennoniteliterarysociety@gmail.com.

ServiceLinks

Advertisers on this page may designate a 1/6 page ad to a charity of their choice. To learn more, email: advert@canadianmennonite.org

Honesty, Integrity and Good Judgement


Dennis Roth, Ed Nowak and their experienced team are committed to providing you with the personalized, quality service that you need and deserve.

Roth Nowak
INSURANCE BROKERS
AUTO | PROPERTY | BUSINESS

novex

Contact us for a quote:
519-746-1151
service@rothnowak.com
rothnowak.com
119 University Ave. E., Waterloo, ON N2J 2W1

SERVING ONTARIO SINCE 1983

 **Mennonite Disaster Service**

HOW YOU CAN VOLUNTEER WITH MDS:

- Short-term (1—3 weeks): 800-241-8111
- Long-term (1 month+): 866-261-1274
- RV Program volunteers
- Youth volunteers

Volunteers needed for summer 2018:

- Williams Lake, B.C.
- Pine Ridge, South Dakota
- Puerto Rico

HELP RESTORE HOPE!
mds.mennonite.net

sutherlandmark
LAWYERS

Russel Snyder-Penner, LL.B., M.A., Trade-mark Agent
Business Law, Charities Law, Wills and Estate Planning

519.725.2500 russ@sutherlandmark.com

You Value Options in All Other Aspects of Your Life.

WHY NOT WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE?

INVESTMENTS | INSURANCE | ESTATE TAX | RETIREMENT | PHILANTHROPIC

 **EBY FINANCIAL GROUP**

CONTACT US FOR A FREE SECOND OPINION

 **519.725.2006**

 contact@ebyfinancial.com

 www.ebyfinancial.com

Serving Communities Across Canada for 35 Years

Student residence **Montréal**



 **Summer guest rooms**
May-Aug

maisondelamitie.ca
experience@maisondelamitie.ca



Dennis, Ed and the team at Roth Nowak Insurance Brokers proudly celebrate 35 years serving the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Honesty, Integrity and Good Judgement since 1983.

Roth Nowak
INSURANCE BROKERS
service@rothnowak.com

young voices



I snapped one quick pic before they pulled me into the dance! Some of the men are drumming and singing, ladies are dancing in a line on the right, kids are here, there and everywhere!



When your feet are dirty, having them washed by others is a humbling experience.



The pitcher and basin my hosts used for washing the feet of guests.

Encountering hospitality in rural India

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SARA WYNGAARDEN

For the past year, Sara Wyngaarden of Elmira, Ont., has been in India, participating in the Serving and Learning Together program (SALT) of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). This reflection originally appeared on her blog.

Last week I had the privilege of visiting Jharkhand, a state in eastern India where MCC has partnered with local Mennonite church organizations on a food security project in some of the villages. The local staff agreed to show me the ropes, including giving me the opportunity to stay with hosts in the villages themselves. I couldn't have been more excited!

When I arrived at my first host's home, I was greeted by a crowd of people singing, dancing and pounding on drums. A woman sprinkled water on me using a branch of leaves. Children gave me bouquets of flowers and threw loose petals onto my head. This is a traditional village welcome, and I gladly joined the dancers, who led me all the way from the road into their home.

After providing a chair and a glass of water, some women approached me with a jug and a large plate. "In our tradition, when a guest comes, we wash their feet," someone explained. And indeed, this is how I was welcomed into multiple homes where I visited or stayed that week.

Now, I've had my feet washed before. In my home congregation, Elmira (Ont.) Mennonite Church, we practice foot-washing whenever we take communion. It's a reminder that Christ calls us to be servant leaders, interacting with love and humility towards one another (John 13:1-17). I've always appreciated the experience.

But this felt vastly different from that symbolic gesture. These women weren't removing my well-shined Sunday shoes

to reveal my sparkling, rose-smelling tootsies. They were removing my dusty, sweat-stained, well-worn and falling-apart shoes to reveal smelly, calloused feet whose nails could use a good cleaning. And they washed my feet, pouring cool water over the well-tanned skin, gently massaging the well-worked muscles, and tenderly drying ten wiggling toes. What an incredible feeling.

I told my hosts, right off the bat, that I wanted to try everything. I've visited multiple villages this year, so I know that many aspects of "village life" look different from the "city life" I experience in Korba, where I have lived most of the year. I asked MCC for this opportunity because I wanted to actually experience the pace of things—the day-to-day work that people in the village perform. I hoped they would let me participate in any nitty-gritty thing, from sweeping to hoeing to gutting fish. I imagined that I would be working and resting right alongside my hosts from dawn till dusk.

That wasn't exactly a realistic dream, of course. Hospitality is such a central tenet to Indian culture that I knew being treated like a guest was inevitable, especially when staying for just a week. Even after months of living with my host family, it's still a battle for me to help with the dishes! The fact that my hosts in Jharkhand allowed me to do as much work as I did is notable indeed. I had the opportunity to carry rocks and water on my head, catch fish and help with cooking and sewing, among other things.

One of my favourite authors is Max Lucado. At the beginning of *In the Grip of Grace*, he writes what he calls “the parable of the river.” It’s about four straying sons and the fifth who goes out to retrieve them. One of the four who strayed decides to work his way back to his father’s home by building a stone pathway across the river. When the eldest finds this brother, he tells him to leave the project because the river is too long, the task is too great, and besides his father will forgive him. He offers to carry his brother home. The brother refuses, determined to finish his work, to win his father’s favour and earn his mercy. The most poignant line in the parable comes when the eldest says to his brother, “Favour won is no favour. Mercy earned is no mercy.” And we could add one further, “Grace deserved is no grace.”

Sometimes I get confused about God’s grace, thinking I need to impress God through my actions in order to receive it. I think his favour is something to win; his mercy is something to earn; his grace is something of which to be worthy. I want to work for it, sweat for it, get completely dirty and then receive it as a delightfully cleansing bucket bath. But if I had to be deserving in order to be received by God, then his grace would be irrelevant. And if I had to work my own way back to him, well

I would never make it there at all.

That’s what makes our God so incredible. He extends true grace; it is completely undeserved. And he sends his son, Jesus, to carry us home so that we can live in the light of his favour. We need only to say “yes.”

Hospitality isn’t a perfect parallel, but it can certainly involve a lot of grace extended, particularly in a cross-cultural context. I’ve received an abundance of grace from my hosts this year, as I fumbled around their culture, learning like a young child. There was grace for the awkwardness of language barriers and for my cultural faux pas; grace for my bouts of homesickness and my reactions to culture shock; grace for my misplaced energy in some moments and for my utter fatigue in others. And ultimately, they graciously welcomed me into the middle of their lives as a guest, observer and participant for months upon months.

I didn’t come to India to have my feet washed. Quite the opposite, in fact. I anticipated doing much more of the figurative “foot washing” myself. But things haven’t been quite as I imagined. And as I poured buckets of lukewarm water over my head that day in Jharkhand, I pondered, if I struggle this much to receive hospitality for one year, then how can I truly receive

God’s grace, which I need every single day of my life?

It’s a lesson I needed to learn, and to continue learning. God’s grace is not about my worthiness. And good hospitality isn’t either. It’s about the generosity, the humility and servant leadership, the love being expressed by the giver. And so, I remove my shoes, extend my dirty feet, and receive this cleansing water with gratitude and awe. ☺



Carrying water on my head.



A mud, manure and water mixture is used to make and maintain homes.



I caught this fish with my own hands!



Winnowing rice.

**ONLINE NOW!**at canadianmennonite.org**South Korea recognizes rights of COs**

Korean Mennonites celebrated a court ruling that will end imprisonment of conscientious objectors.

canadianmennonite.org/korea-cos

**Bridging the rural-urban divide to help end world hunger**

Grow Hope projects happen when a farmer offers to grow as many acres of a crop as an urban community will sponsor.

canadianmennonite.org/fgb-grow-hope

**Broken glass angels provide hope and jobs**

These glass angels were an idea born out of the rubble caused by an Israeli tank. Today they symbolize hope and peace.

canadianmennonite.org/glass-angels

**Theological conference builds graduate student connections**

Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre's graduate student conference featured presentations by emerging Mennonite theologians and times for prayer.

canadianmennonite.org/tmtc-theology-conference

**Upcoming****Fourth Rooted and Grounded Conference at AMBS**

ELKHART, IND.—Registration is now open for the fourth Rooted and Grounded Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship, to be held Sept. 27-29, 2018, at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. The event is planned for practitioners of creation care, from scholars and food justice activists to urban gardeners and environmental justice practitioners to farmers and church members. Keynote speakers will focus on wisdom literature from the Bible, a moral framework for concern about environmental issues, and how scriptural worldviews can help people take serious action.

More details are available at

www.ambs.edu/

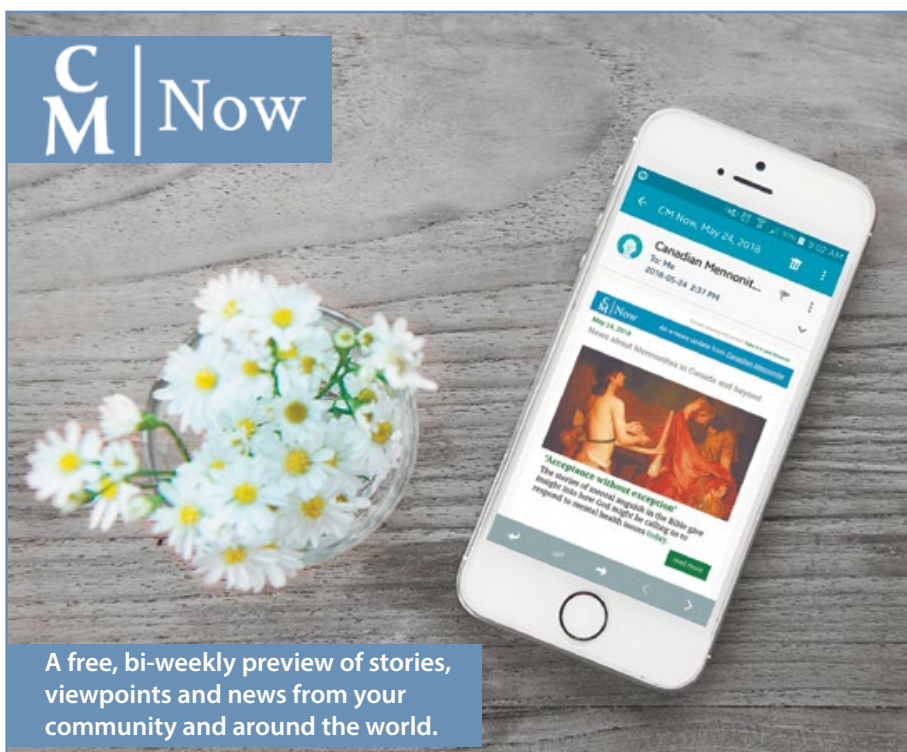
rootedandgrounded.

—Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

**Briefly noted****Foodgrains Bank launches postcard campaign**

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is launching a postcard campaign in support of ending global hunger. Canadians are encouraged to sign a postcard addressed to the Prime Minister, letting him know they support Canada contributing generously toward ending global hunger and poverty. Canada's aid as a percentage of its national income has been slowly declining. Millions of children are dying from malnutrition each year and over 800 million people go to bed hungry. Through the Foodgrains Bank's last postcard campaign, approximately 25,000 Canadians sent postcards to the Prime Minister, letting him know they believe Canada should be contributing more of its overall aid budget to agricultural development to help small-scale farmers. For more information visit, www.foodgrainsbank.ca/icare.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank



A free, bi-weekly preview of stories, viewpoints and news from your community and around the world.

Subscribe online!

canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/cmnow

CANADIAN
MENNONITE

Calendar

British Columbia

Aug. 11: MCBC Motorcycle Ride, 9:30 a.m.- 4 p.m. on the Sea to Sky Highway. Meet at Caulfield Shopping Centre in West Vancouver.

Sept. 14-15: MCC Festival for World Relief, Tradex, Abbotsford.

Oct. 12-14: MCBC Women's retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: Contagious Joy.

Oct. 27: Columbia Bible College fundraising dinner at CBC.

Nov. 16-18: Senior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

Alberta

Sept. 8: Golf for MCC Tofield. More information at www.mccab.ca/golf-tofield.

Sept. 9: Golf for MCC Rocky View. More information at www.mccab.ca/golf-rockyview.

Sept. 15: Golf for MCC La Crete.

Saskatchewan

Aug. 11: Ninth annual Spruce River Folk Festival at Spruce River Farm, north of Prince Albert.

Sept. 16: RJC opening program at 2:30 p.m., RJC gymnasium.

Oct. 12-13: Women's retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Oct. 27: MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

Oct. 27: RJC corporation meeting and homecoming banquet.

Nov. 14: RJC Kiele and Sausage Fundraising Supper at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon.

Dec. 19: RJC Christmas concert at Knox United Church, Saskatoon.

Dec. 21: RJC Christmas concert at RJC gymnasium at 7 p.m.

Jan. 18: RJC Open House and Friday Night Live youth event.

Manitoba

Until Sept. 22: Two new exhibitions at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg: "My will remains: Reflections on chronic illness and disability" by Diane Driedger; and "Ubuntu: I am because we are," by Manny Martins-Karman.

Aug. 13-17: Pioneer Day Camp at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, for ages 8 to 10. For more information, visit education@mvh.ca.

Aug. 21: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual fundraising golf tournament, at Bridges Golf Course, Starbuck. For more information, visit westgatemennonite.ca.

Sept. 7-9: Israel Palestine Law Symposium will explore the rights and obligations of Palestinians, the status of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza and Canada's legal obligations under international law. Co-sponsored by MC Manitoba Working Group on Palestine/Israel. For information go to www.israelpalestinelawsymposium.ca/.

Sept. 22: 34th annual Brandon MCC Relief Sale. For more details go to: mcccanada.ca/get-involved/events/.

Nov. 15-17: The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada's 50th anniversary conference, "A people of diversity: Mennonites in Canada since 1970," will be hosted by the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

Ontario

Until May 2019: Sites of Nonresistance: Ontario Mennonites and the First World War exhibit of letters, photographs and documents from the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

Sept. 7-9: "Building community event" at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Speaker: Sara Fretz. Theme: "The healing power of music." For more information, call 519-625-8602.

Sept. 15: Toronto Mennonite Festival, at Black Creek Pioneer Village, Toronto, at 10 a.m. Includes traditional Mennonite food, crafts, games, music and quilt auction. For more information, visit torontomennonitefestival.ca.

Sept. 24: MCC Ontario annual general meeting, community room, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener.

Oct. 13: Empty Bowls for Haiti event, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, seatings at 5 and 7 p.m. Ontario potters donate the bowls, local restaurants and organizations donate

the soup. In support of MCC Ontario and its commitment to sustainable change in Haiti. For tickets, call 519-745-8458.

New Brunswick

Aug. 26: Petittodiocac Mennonite Church 40th anniversary event.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by email to calendar@canadianmennonite.org. For more Calendar listings online, visit canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



Classifieds

LISTOWEL MENNONITE CHURCH

Employment opportunity Lead pastor

Listowel Mennonite Church is seeking a lead pastor for a congregation which has about 120 weekly worshippers. Listowel is a small town 30 minutes away from Kitchener/Waterloo, Ontario. The successful pastor will have strengths in preaching, teaching, pastoral care and worship leading. We will consider applications until the position is filled. A job description is available at <https://mcec.ca/jobs/pastor-0>

Inquiries, resumes and letters of interest may be directed to pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca.



Mennonite Central Committee

Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

British Columbia

Director of Development and Advancement

This full-time position will provide leadership in developing and implementing strategies that generate awareness, relationships, engagement, support from the MCC BC constituency and the broader public.

Qualifications: 3 years senior management, 5 years fundraising or related experience; excellent communication and interpersonal skills; effective strategic planner & entrepreneurial attitude; servant leader, strong networking ability and familiarity with MCC constituency.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to personal Christian faith, active church affiliation and non-violent peacemaking.

Anticipated start date: September 1, 2018

For full job description and to apply visit: mccbc.ca/openings. For more information, contact Sophie Tiessen-Eigbik, MCC BC HR Manager at 604-850-6639, Ext 1129.

RJC performs Godspell

ROSTHERN JUNIOR COLLEGE
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Every year, as part of homecoming and graduation weekend at Rosthern Junior College, the students present a large-scale musical. This year they performed *Godspell* by John-Michael Tebelak and Stephen Schwartz.

Godspell has been around since the late 1960s and is based on the story of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew. Through parables and lessons, Jesus teaches his disciples about the nature of the Kingdom of God—a kingdom based on love, grace, and community.

Standing ovations from two large audiences indicated that the performers successfully communicated the coming of “the way of the Lord.”

RJC decided to set the show in a playground, complete with a fully functional swing-set, where the child-like innocence and joy of the disciples could emphasise the purity of Jesus’ lessons. Many audience members expressed an appreciation for the emotional impact and high level of performance. ♪



PHOTO BY ROSTHERN JUNIOR COLLEGE

John the Baptist (Nathan Bartel) “baptises” Benjamin Gerwing in the opening sequence, “Prepare Ye The Way Of The Lord.”



PHOTO BY ROSTHERN JUNIOR COLLEGE

Kaitlyn Janzen (centre) leads the chorus in “O Bless The Lord.” The disciples and chorus used their own names for their characters in RJC’s production.