

CANADIAN MENNONITE

MARCH 4, 2019 VOLUME 23 NUMBER 5

Reflections of creation

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EDITORIAL

Moving beyond 'climate grief'

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



Last December, unbeknownst to each other, my daughter-in-law and I bought each other bamboo toothbrushes as Christmas presents. Earlier in the year, she had heard me lament the plastic toothbrushes I was regularly contributing to the local landfill. In the larger scheme, those toothbrushes didn't seem very important, but the long life of those plastic handles was an uncomfortable reality. The bamboo handles can be recycled in our regular green bin collection.

Our planet is in trouble. Unusual weather patterns are leading to extreme temperatures, devastating storms, fierce wildfires and massive flooding. Climate scientists warn us that human beings have little more than a decade in which to change our behaviour before Earth's environment suffers major irreversible damage. A report issued recently by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change calls for "rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure, . . . and industrial systems," in order to curb serious global warming.

If you're like me, you would rather not think about these things. The predictions paint a picture of a dire future for the young people I love. I don't want to imagine what life will be like for the children yet unborn. Faced with the enormity of the environmental problems, and their complex, systemic nature, we doubt that there is much we can do to change the course of disaster.

Fear of that future can easily lead to denial, or panic or paralysis. Knowing that parts of our beautiful planet are

in serious danger, and that we humans continue to spoil our home, some of us struggle with a malady mental health experts have identified as "climate grief" or "apocalypse fatigue."

I don't understand all the science behind global warming, and I don't find it helpful to argue about it. As Christians, we believe that God created this wild and beautiful universe and declared it good, that the Creator loves every part of it, from the most basic mineral and the tiniest of organisms to the vast oceans and the expanse of outer space. We love the Earth, and we take seriously the biblical command to love our neighbours as ourselves. Yet how can we express neighbourly love if we're poisoning the air someone breathes or helping to cause the floods that destroy someone's home?

For years, my household has done practical things to care for the Earth by reducing consumption, recycling and re-using what we can. But it's clear that we need to do much more as a response to global warming.

The place to begin, says Canadian climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe, is to "start with the heart," to speak together of the values we share concerning our loved ones, our local communities and the natural world. Then those shared values can rally us toward concrete solutions.

As individuals, and as faith communities, we can summon the courage and the discipline to move—right now—beyond anxious paralysis to actions of hope for the good of all.

In this issue's feature, beginning on page 4, Anthony G. Siegrist and Scott Morton Ninomiya offer some ideas of how our church communities can work

together on this important task. On page 18, you can read about a Saskatchewan congregation that took the plunge and invested in solar energy for its church building. And, admirably, some avid cyclists brave Winnipeg winters for the sake of personal health and the health of the environment. Their stories are on page 24.

As we seek to love our earthly home and the neighbours God has given us, maybe our task is not as impossible as we think. First, we humbly identify ways in which we have been complicit—either individually or corporately—in Earth's deterioration. Next, we simply take another step toward protecting the Earth. Then another step. And then another.

For Lent this year the organization Citizens for Public Justice is inviting Canadians to participate in the "Give it up for the Earth" campaign by challenging us, between March 6 and April 18, to "give up" some of our personal or household greenhouse gas emissions, inviting others to join us. See more at cpi.ca/fortheearth.

In a TEDx talk entitled, "The disarming case to act right now on climate change," a young climate activist urges listeners to do something concrete. "Once we start to act, hope is everywhere," says Greta Thunberg.

Walking together in faith, you and I can find strength to move beyond paralysis, even if our movement starts with tiny steps. We know that there is always more to learn, more to do, on the path of creation care. The Creator of the universe is walking with us. ☸

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'[T]he Bible makes our obligation clear. God calls creation "good" repeatedly. And that's true even before humans were brought into being,' write Anthony G. Siegrist and Scott Morton Ninomiya in our page 4 feature, 'Reflections of creation.'

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CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Anthony G. Siegrist and Scott Morton Ninomiya offer theological reasons for creation care, as well as practical ways of carrying it out, including 'learning to identify native trees and wildflowers.'



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FEATURE

Reflections of creation

Faith communities urged to engage in climate action to serve and protect God's world

By Anthony G. Siegrist and Scott Morton Ninomiya
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



MENNOPIX PHOTOS BY ROSS W. MUIR

We can find one nature-related thing to dig into, maybe learning the names of all the birds in our area, or learning to identify native trees or wildflowers.

God's creation is now facing unprecedented destruction brought on by human activity. Attentive hunters know this just as well as vegan environmentalists.

Caring for the ecosystems that God created doesn't need to be a divisive or partisan issue. Yet it has come to feel that way. Conversations related to energy have become especially contentious. This is challenging since the generation, distribution and use of energy represents the most significant long-term threat to creation's well-being, including landscapes that many of us love.

The long-term effects of climate change are disastrous, especially for places and people on the margins of geo-political and economic power. The trajectory is so clear that governments and businesses around the world are looking for ways to mitigate the impact of a changing climate.

Given how much is at stake, it's hard to understand why we haven't been more responsible and effective in our approach to energy and its impact on God's creation. It's particularly surprising that communities of faith haven't been more engaged.

At a recent public lecture in Kitchener, Ont., the province's environmental commissioner lamented that during her three years in office she was unaware of a single delegation of faith leaders approaching the provincial government with concerns about climate change. What has caused this perplexing silence?

It may be that faith communities think the issue is too big or too polarizing. We might think that serious climate action is at odds with traditional livelihoods like farming or logging. Or we might think that our communities can't do much to effect change.

Whatever the reasons for our silence, the Bible makes our obligation clear. God calls creation "good" repeatedly. And that's even true before humans were brought into being (Genesis 1:10,12,18,25). Genesis tells us that the humans were created in the image of the One who delights in creation (1:26); it also tells us that humans have been tasked with serving and protecting God's good world (2:15).

Throughout the Torah God teaches people to honour the land that they

steward. For instance, in Deuteronomy 20:19 God instructs the Israelites not to cut down the fruit trees in battle: "*Are the trees people, that you should destroy them?*" It's an odd line for pacifists to read, but it shows that people aren't the only living things that matter.

The Psalms contain many examples of God taking delight in creation (19,24,104).

The prophets also fold creation care into their calls for justice. In the first verses of Hosea 4 human irresponsibility is linked to the devastation of ecosystems.

And let's not forget Jesus' words in Luke 12:6, that speak to God's care for small creatures like birds. This baseline of careful stewardship is recognized by Christians of every stripe.

There is an even sharper edge to the biblical perspective, however. It is the conviction that non-human creation has its own relationship with God. Stewardship and responsibility are important, but these concepts are too tame to capture a biblical theology of creation. Psalm 148 tells us that creation praises God, while Romans 8:18-25 tells us that creation groans to God, waiting for liberation.

Is it too radical to say that humans aren't the only created things that pray? The earth, the biosphere, the innumerable plants and animals all have their own standing before God. None of it is ours. Looking through this biblical lens at our modern lives and the energy they require, it becomes clear that something has to change.

Creation-care leaders

- **Mennonite Creation Care Network:**
<https://mennocreationcare.org/>
- **A Rocha Canada:**
<https://arocha.ca/>
- **Carbon Footprint Calculator:**
<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>
- **Greening Sacred Spaces:**
https://www.faihtcommongood.org/greening_sacred_spaces

A call for creative, collective and transformative action

While personal initiatives are good places to begin, we need transformative and consequential change. Transformative action is the kind that fundamentally challenges the way we think about energy and how we generate it. Christian communities are well placed to facilitate this transformation. They can take creative, collective action that has a substantial, direct impact, and sets an example for our communities at large.

This kind of thing is not new for Christians. The New Testament shows how early churches found powerful ways to counteract harmful norms. They found ways to share across wide economic disparities. They were able to see a common humanity and common status before God despite significant ethnic differences.

Christian communities have been complicit in more than their share of harmful things. Nevertheless, communities of people following Jesus have also provided access to healthcare and education, dignity and freedom for many who lacked them. Communities attentive to God's Spirit have turned things on their head before.

Christian communities can make a difference in the current climate crises. Here are some places to start:

1. Connect to places that inspire our care for creation

We can nurture love for our bioregion (a land and water territory whose limits are defined by the geographical limits of human communities and ecological systems). We can encourage each other to get outside. We can find one nature-related thing to dig into, maybe learning the names of all the birds in our area, or learning to identify native trees or wildflowers. We can learn how First Nations have, and still do, care for these places. Congregational leaders can employ natural images in worship. They can hold church outside, maybe using resources from the forest church movement.

2. Learn from real-life examples

Communities around the world are creating inspiring versions of life that rely on small-scale, decentralized, local energy sources.

A fascinating example is the Solar Mamas social entrepreneurship business model that began in India. It has brought sustainable solar energy to over a thousand communities across the Global South.

Exciting developments are also unfolding in Indigenous communities. The T'Sou-ke First Nation on Vancouver Island is one example that built a large solar-energy system to power the community and earn significant income by selling electricity to the provincial utility.

Various churches in Canada have intentionally "greened" their sacred spaces. A Presbyterian congregation in Edmonton is even initiating the country's first multi-family, net-zero emissions housing project.

3. Create a plan

Each of our faith communities needs a plan. When it comes to energy production and use, we can learn from examples like the ones above. We can plan to become energy producers instead of just consumers. It's important that these conversations engage multiple generations and people of various income levels. These plans don't need to be complicated but they do need to show what a community values and how it intends to respond to the biblical vision of creation care.

4. Connect to local climate action plans

One of the reasons that there is such potential for Christian communities to make a difference is that our churches are part of a whole host of organizational networks. We are connected to institutions of all shapes and sizes. We need all of them to engage this challenge.

What's more, the members of our churches can speak into organizations that have no other faith connection. We are citizens, employees, employers, non-profit volunteers, investors and consumers of both goods and services. We work and recreate in facilities with immense energy needs. Some of us attend institutions with massive endowments. All of these connections can amplify our individual convictions and facilitate transformative action.

5. Advocate for government action

Institutions are important tools for collective action and large-scale transformation.

This includes the political institutions that govern our society. Why doesn't every organization we and our churches support have a sensible energy policy? Why does our municipality, province or country not have a plan to protect the places that we love from the impacts of climate change? It's because we haven't told them this is important to us. Representatives of our faith communities can meet with elected leaders, tell them of our concerns and urge them to take action.

If we are communities that cultivate faith, hope and love, then we can support one another to move beyond the paralysis of inaction. God's Spirit is with us now and will be with us whatever climate change sends our way. In faith we can follow Jesus, who was and is the presence of a Creator who cares for the Earth and its creatures. And we can act, motivated by love for the places where we meet God and the places where God's many peoples dwell. ✎

Visit canadianmennonite.org/creation-care, where you will find live links to several organizations doing important work in this area. We invite Mennonite-related organizations and churches to post links to their own climate action plans there, and to share what your communities of faith have already done.



Scott Morton Ninomiya is a PhD candidate at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Ont., a member at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, and a Mennonite Central Committee alumnus (2000-2006).



Anthony G. Siegrist pastors at Ottawa Mennonite Church and is the author of the forthcoming Herald Press book *Speaking of God: An Essential Guide to Christian Thought*.



For discussion

1. What does your family do to protect the earth, water and air in your neighbourhood? Do you consider the effects on the environment when you go about your daily chores or travel? How has our society improved our waste management in the past hundred years?
2. Anthony Siegrist and Scott Morton Ninomiya write that caring for God's creation seems to be a divisive issue, especially when it comes to energy. Why has this become such a contentious issue? What evidence of climate change do you see? What makes us reluctant to admit the extent of the problem? What fears do you have around climate change?
3. Caring for creation can involve nurturing love for the territory of land and water around us. What are some ways we can do this? How do farmers and gardeners show friendship with the earth?
4. Has your congregation taken steps to "green" its space? Are there homes, companies or institutions in your community that have worked at this? What might be a next step for your congregation?
5. How supportive is your church of local creation-care organizations? What government action would you support in response to the climate crisis?

—By Barb Draper

See related resources at
www.commonword.ca/go/1738

CommonWord
Bookstore and Resource Centre

/// Readers write

✉ Author Miriam Toews a 'two-trick' pony

Re: "Modern ghosts of a horse-drawn scandal: Pt. IV," Nov. 26, 2018, page 18.

Unfortunately, Miriam Toews has only two themes she writes about: fundamentalist Mennonites and the mental illness that runs in her family.

I read *A Complicated Kindness* when it was first published and presented it to my women's book club. I am a practising Mennonite and wanted the women to know that the majority of Mennonites have little in common with the *Kleine Gemeinde* she grew up with.

The Bolivian Old Colony Mennonites of *Women Talking* are not her people. She grew up in Steinbach, Man., in a conservative church, but definitely not Old Colony.

I no longer read any of Toews's books.

RUTH HEINRICHS, REGINA

✉ Who is the true authority over MAID?

Re: "Can we talk about MAID?" Feb. 4, page 11.

As Christians, whom should we look to as the ultimate authority over issues associated with medical assistance in dying (MAID)? The government, fallible church leaders, or God our Creator?

Choosing any authority other than God turns this issue of debate into a subjective matter that easily results in indecision or wrong decisions. But in seeking God and His ways, questions regarding the morality of directly and deliberately causing another person's death are answered simply and decisively in Exodus 20:13: "*You shall not murder*" (NKJV).

We are living in perilous times, when good is often portrayed as evil and evil as good, as with MAID. Isaiah has some hard-hitting things to say about those who seek to override God's values and principles: "*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil*" (5:20), and, "*Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker*" (45:9). We do well to read the passages in their entirety.

One of Satan's ploys is to whitewash immorality with terms that make something that is evil, appear as a good and viable option, as in the case of MAID. The term "helping to ease suffering" used in the context of this article really amounts to "legalized murder." So let's use honest terminology and call it what it really is: murder. This helps to expose the seriousness of the consequences of MAID, because, as God's Word so aptly warns us, the eternal destination of murderers is the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

I thank God for every pastor and Bible teacher who has the courage to stand up and teach the hard truths

on such matters. This is a time when many do not endure sound doctrine, as prophesied in II Timothy 4:3.

ELAINE FEHR (ONLINE SUBMISSION)

✉ Settler. Racist. Thief.

I took the opportunity to travel to the "barn" in the village of Neuberghal, Man., to take in a multi-media presentation made by Steve Heinrichs, the director of Mennonite Church Canada's Indigenous-Settler Relations program. The presentation was entitled "Non-Indigenous, Canadian or settler? Understanding ourselves, our history, in moving toward reconciliation."

He outlined some of the difficulties that First Nations people have experienced in a colonized landscape, in a stolen land, and he challenged us to find ways to improve and reconcile our relationship with First Nations communities.

In general, the question raised by Heinrichs was, "Where do we situate the problem(s)?" He suggested that if we identify as non-Indigenous, or as Canadian, then we might have a tendency to see any problems as "the Indian problem," and not take on responsibility for reconciliation. However, if we identify as "settler," and perhaps even "Christian Mennonite settler," then we are in better position to understand our role historically and are better situated to move towards reconciliation.

To my mind, once we reach the critical understanding that we, as Christian Mennonite settlers, are benefitting from living on stolen land, then we are closer to achieving the most crucial one, the reconciliation form of reconciliation: between Mennonites as a wayward people and our God. It seems that there is much reconciliation work to be done: firstly, the vertical reconciliation between us and our God; and, second, a more lateral reconciliation and right relationship between Christian Mennonite settlers and First Nations people.

Until the reconciliation happens/begins between ourselves and the requirements of a just and loving God, we must necessarily change the adjectives describing our identity to Mennonite, settler, racist, thief, and white supremacist.

PETER REIMER, GRETNA, MAN.

✉ A beautiful way to transition

Re: "Passing quilt' gives dignity in death," Feb. 4, page 13.

What a beautiful way to ease this transition! It reclaims death as a natural part of life, removes our need to "hide" death, and comforts families by affirming that death is a transition into new life. Thank

you for this!

SARA WAHL (ONLINE COMMENT)

Such an inspirational story of great people taking action to bring peace and joy into the lives of the grieving family, while honouring the newly deceased person. Death isn't shameful, yet we often treat it as if it were. This is a beautiful story.

MARLA CARRICO (ONLINE COMMENT)

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Doucette—Katerina Rae (b. Jan. 27, 2019), to Erica and Robin Doucette, Osler Mennonite, Sask.

Neal—Tracen Joshua Harold (b. Jan. 18, 2019), to Josh and Anysa Neal, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Tiessen—Edison Oak (b. Jan. 28, 2019), to Maylin and Darren Tiessen, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Marriages

Baergen/Wiens—Alexandra (Alex) Baergen (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.) and Matthew (Matt) Wiens, in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, Jan. 22, 2019.

Regier/Shantz—Jonathan Regier and Celia Shantz, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., at the Walper Hotel, Kitchener, Ont., Jan. 12, 2019.

Schultz/Strachan—Jordan Schultz (Poole Mennonite, Ont.) and Emily Strachan, in Kincardine, Ont., Oct. 27, 2018.

Shute/Weber—Bevon Shute and Rachel Weber (Poole Mennonite, Ont.), at Poole Mennonite, Nov. 3, 2018.

Deaths

Bell—Robert, 52 (b. Dec. 24, 1965; d. Aug. 17, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Bergen—Helen (Martens), 95 (b. May 20, 1923; d. Jan. 24, 2019), Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Rabbit Lake, Sask.

Driediger—Jacob, 90 (b. Feb. 20, 1928; d. Feb. 11, 2019), North Star

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.

Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Dyck—Olga, 88 (b. Jan. 24, 1930; d. Sept. 10, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Eitzen—Annie (Stobbe), 84 (b. Dec. 25, 1933; d. Dec. 13, 2018), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Epp—Audrey Jean (nee Fretz), 76 (b. Sept. 27, 1942; d. Jan. 18, 2019), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Goerzen—Henry D., 90 (b. Oct. 28, 1928; d. Jan. 11, 2019), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Guenther—Mary, 91 (b. Jan. 8, 1927; d. Aug. 26, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kinzel—Inez (nee Brooks), 86 (b. Aug. 5, 1932; d. Jan. 26, 2019), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Kipfer—Laura, 100 (b. May 27, 1918; d. Oct. 17, 2018), Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Anna, 94 (b. Jan. 31, 1924; d. Sept. 23, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Lage—Rudy, 84 (b. Feb. 20, 1934; d. Dec. 19, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Peters—Louise, 75 (b. June 18, 1943; d. Dec. 19, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Penner—Irene (nee Harder), 83 (b. Nov. 16, 1935; d. Jan. 1, 2019), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Peters—Werner, 84 (b. Feb. 27, 1934; d. Nov. 15, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Rempel—Katherine (Tena) (Unger), 92 (b. May 30, 1926; d. Jan. 11, 2019), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Rempel Sr.—Hans, 95 (b. Dec. 23, 1922; d. Dec. 18, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Siemens—John, 81 (b. Aug. 14, 1937; d. Jan. 15, 2019), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Thiessen—Peter, 78 (b. April 29, 1940; d. Dec. 20, 2018), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Zehr—Mahlon, 89 (b. July 22, 1929; d. Jan. 28, 2019), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.



Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail 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.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Dreaming of future possibilities

Vince Friesen

As we explore new possibilities in our journey with a new church structure, the Mission and Service Committee of Mennonite Church Alberta has been dreaming about possibilities in a variety of areas. Some of these dreams will remain dreams, while others, hopefully, will come to fruition.

Our most significant Mission and Service program in Alberta at present is the North Edmonton Ministries, through which Donna Entz does amazing work establishing relationships between Christians and Muslims. One of our dreams is to establish a similar program in Calgary. We are also dreaming of organizing a Muslim/Christian Dialogue event in Calgary, like the one held in Edmonton.

One area of church growth has been in helping groups whose backgrounds are from Africa establish new churches in Alberta. At present, we are working with

a group of South Sudanese individuals who are dreaming about the possibility of starting a South Sudanese Mennonite Church in Calgary. Some of our existing churches with African connections are also exploring leadership development possibilities in Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Some of these dreams will remain dreams, while others, hopefully, will come to fruition.

In keeping with the new structures of MC Canada, MC Alberta's Mission and Service Committee is discussing ways to assist churches that have partnerships with Witness workers and looking forward to imagining how mission will look in the future.

Another idea or dream that has been proposed is the establishment of a chaplaincy program at the University of Alberta. This would be done in

partnership with some Mennonite Brethren churches in Edmonton. We are also considering becoming sponsors of the Mennonite Central Committee Alberta prison visitation program, as MCC Canada is ending its coordination of this initiative.

These are a sample of the dreams we have about where the future will take us. We are filled with optimism that Christ's work will blossom in our midst, and we pray that a significant number of our dreams come to be fulfilled. ☿



Vince Friesen is chair of Mennonite Church Alberta's Mission and Service Committee.

A moment from yesterday



These Saskatchewan ladies are hovering over baked goods at a sale circa 1964. "Ladies groups" have been significant organizations that have contributed to the social and spiritual well-being of women, their families, communities and beyond. Over time, the organizational structures grew to include local, regional and nationwide organizations. In 1988, the Canadian Women in Mission organization of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada greatly contributed to mission agencies: \$930,000 in cash; 2,737 layettes; 927 health, sewing and school kits; 4,302 quilts; more than 300 kilograms of bandages; 10,000 kilograms of soap; several thousand sheets, blankets and knitted materials; and hundreds of kilograms of noodles, all in one year!

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Der Bote Photograph Collection



archives.mhsc.ca

FAMILY TIES

Can we talk about suicide?

Melissa Miller

A few months ago, a preacher at our church included suicide in his sermon. Philippians 1 was the text, where the Apostle Paul sets out his dilemma between preferring life or death. *“My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you,”* Paul writes.

The preacher spoke of the horrendous prison conditions under which Paul was living, so terrible that prisoners did choose to end their lives. With that information, I understood Paul’s remarks in a new light. In Paul’s context, suicide was an up-close reality. His choice to live because of his love for the people of the community is inspiring.

As a part of his remarks, the preacher included information about where people could go to receive help if they or someone they knew was struggling with mental health or suicidal thoughts. It was a courageous, sensitive pastoral act, drawing from the biblical text to address our current context with compassionate guidance. I give thanks for the many preachers who regularly address “the difficult questions” of our day.

Can we talk about suicide? Some days I think it is one of the hardest things to talk about, nearly impossible. Yet I know that what we cannot speak about holds a great

power over us. If we are unable to speak of the crushing struggle that compels someone to end his or her life, we give it even more power.

Speaking personally, in the bleakest season of my life, I was reluctant to speak of the grey weight I carried. As I dragged through the days and nights, I felt life was not worth living. I did not imagine taking steps toward suicide, but I did dwell too frequently in desolation. “It doesn’t matter if I die,” lurked in the back of my thinking. If I parse my reluctance to speak, it may be because of the strong taboo around such thoughts. It may be doubt that a listener could help. It may be a kind of misplaced pride in bearing burdens stoically. It may be the insidious allure of death itself.

I knew that carrying such feelings alone was harmful, so I made myself reach out to a few people, primarily those who were spiritual guides, people who asked about and reflected on my “God walk,” and rested with me prayerfully in that bleak landscape. Those individuals and the grace of God carried me through.

Gentle Reader, I encourage you in your difficult conversations about suicide and about other topics. Be a person who takes risks in placing your truth before others, in asking keen questions and in listening oh-so-carefully to the answers, tending both

the words that are spoken and the messages underneath the words. Build communities that are open, grace-filled and firmly sustained by the unbounded love of Jesus.

From reader response, I am hearing appreciation for—and critique of—these columns on difficult conversations. I welcome such responses, and urge all of us to engage, bringing our voices and perspectives to the discernment. Difficult conversations need contributions from professionals, pastors and family members who are living out the realities.

Last spring, our church hosted an adult Sunday school series on mental health. On some Sundays we learned from the professionals. On others, we heard stories from people willing to speak of their experiences with mental illness, including suicidal thinking. I was overcome by the beauty and bravery of the individuals who spoke. I was awed by the presence of the Spirit visibly healing and knitting together the body of Christ. In difficult conversations we meet God. ☛



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

Et cetera

‘Comforting’ figures for those in need

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada shipped 63,841 comforters to people in need around the world in 2018. This compares to 51,062 in 2017 and 48,115 in 2016.

(Information from 2017/2018 “Annual Report for MCC in Canada,” page 4.)



KITCHENER (ONT.) FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO

THIRD WAY FAMILY

The beautiful chaos of kids at church

Christina Bartel Barkman

As a mother of four little ones, I find church can be pretty chaotic. For six years while living in Manila, our Filipino church gathered in our home while my kids played around the family room. I usually cooked dinner for everyone, ensured the kids were being fed, and then later I'd put all the kids to bed while the house was still full of the laughter and liveliness of our Filipino church family.

It was a work day for me and rarely

and bring them to church on my own. I've relaunched the Sunday school program and sometimes I'm teaching while watching my active one-year-old.

Monitoring the activities and needs of four kids can get tricky, like the time my four- and six-year-olds were Mary and Joseph for the Christmas Eve concert—not my plan—and I watched in helpless horror from the upstairs nursery as my little girl kept moving the manger farther and farther away from her brother, nearly

in the arms of a loving grandma and she happily carried him around for the rest of the evening. That simple act of love made me feel so welcome and at home.

Church can be a beautiful way to be still and meet with the Lord. It can be a place to rest your weary soul, hear God speak to you and praise his name in song. But it can also be a place where kids are fighting over the baby Jesus, stealing way too many cookies, and running laps through the sanctuary while waiting for Pastor Dad to finish up his Sunday rhythm.

For me, church may not be a place of calm to meet with the Lord but it's a place where we feel at home, where we feel loved and cared for, and where we see God in all the chaos. It is a beautiful picture of the community God calls us to. And whether God speaks to us in the peace of a moving song or the smiles of a wiggly one-year-old lighting up the faces of the pews behind him, God is there in it all and we welcome him into each chaotic and love-filled moment. ☸

But church can also be a place where kids are fighting over the baby Jesus . . . and running through the sanctuary . . .

a time of rest to meet in God's presence. But despite the chaos of the day, I loved watching our church family care for, laugh with and read books to our kids, and I felt God's presence in this immensely. I would not have traded those community gatherings for anything.

While the format of church has changed a lot for me since our move back to British Columbia, it still involves a lot of work, and yet I still wouldn't want it any other way.

My husband is the pastor, so each Sunday I get all four of my kiddos ready

tossing it off the stage! Later, Mary ran away with the shepherds, and there were tremors of giggling all over the sanctuary while Joseph, the now-single dad, sat there lonely, making silly faces!

While there are times I wish I could leave the chaos of my kiddos at home and actually listen to my husband's sermon, church is a beautiful time to create community, and I welcome the loving helpful hands of the many people who welcome our family. The first time we came to our church, while still candidating, my littlest one, seven months at the time, fell asleep



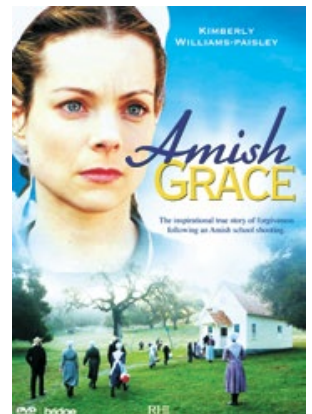
Christina, with her four little ones and her pastor husband, seeks to live out Jesus' creative and loving "third way" options.

Et cetera

One positive result of a terrible event

Russian society has been visited—or inflicted—with Beverly Lewis's novels of Amish gossip and scandal. In China, developments have been different. Two journalists reported that the film *Amish Grace*, which appeared in the U.S. in 2010, made a profound impression on many millions of Chinese. The film tells the story of the Amish reaction to the killing of five and the serious injury of five more of their female children by an armed assailant in an Amish school in Nickel Mines, Pa., in October 2006. The Amish neighbours quickly forgave the shooter's widow and one of them comforted his bitterly weeping father. The Amish community even collected money for the murderer's family. Conclusion: It is often not those Christians with the best TV shows or the most private jets that readily win the ear of a global audience. The most effective missionaries may be those with no intention of being such. It's the personal credibility that counts.

—By William Yoder



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Worship as an act of loving God

Troy Watson



I've run into a number of people who are "spiritual but not religious," who have recently started attending church. They told me they skip the opening worship and just show up to hear the message. When I asked why, one person said, "The music doesn't resonate with me or the world I live in. It often hinders my ability to connect with God, to be honest."

"It's mostly the language," another said. "The words get in the way. The instrumental music is fine, but the lyrics often distract or trigger me. The lyrics make it difficult to be fully present."

Another said, "It doesn't feel authentic. I have a good BS meter, and the music often comes across as kind of fake."

When I asked them to describe meaningful "worship," they all said essentially the same thing: "Creating space for authentic connection with Divine Spirit."

I've asked many church members to describe "good" or "meaningful" worship, and most of them fall into one of three categories:

1. Feelers

Good worship means getting the "feelies." For some, that means feeling joy, excitement, celebration and passion. For others, it means feeling peace, mystery and the blissful spaciousness of silent unknowing.

2. Thinkers

A good worship service means the songs and sermons are thoughtful and theologically sound or intellectually stimulating.

3. Sensors

Good worship engages the physical senses. Worship happens best through physical movement (dancing, a meditative walk, running, gardening, etc.), or multi-sensory experiences (light shining through stained glass, aroma of incense, tasting bread and wine).

We all worship in different ways because we're all different. Genuine worship honours the uniqueness of individuals but it also confronts our individualism. It both affirms who we are and transforms who we are.

Our worship fails to transform us when we're just going through the motions or when our primary focus is on what worship does for us. Too often our worship is about inducing a certain intellectual or emotional state rather than deepening an actual relationship with God. There is nothing wrong with desiring good feelings and intellectual stimulation in worship;

others but it first unites individuals within their personal beings.

Jesus says we must worship "*in spirit and in truth*." Worshipping in truth requires a complete and courageous commitment to truth. The truth of the world we live in, the truth of who we are and the truth of who we sense God calling us to become. M. Scott Peck describes this as "a life of continuous and never-ending stringent self-examination . . . and a willingness to be personally challenged." Worship spends less energy on affirming the truth we already "know" and more on opening ourselves up to the truth God is reveal-

Genuine worship honours the uniqueness of individuals but it also confronts our individualism. It both affirms who we are and transforms who we are.

God wants us to experience joy and peace and intellectual rejuvenation. The problem is, we are prone to become addicted to these intellectual and emotional states. We turn worship into getting our fix. We do not worship because we love God, we worship because we love the feeling or intellectual invigoration or certainty that worship brings.

The Bible teaches us that worship is first and foremost about loving God. Worship is always an act of love. The Bible also teaches that genuine worship involves our whole beings. Worship isn't a compartmentalized activity that only engages one's heart or mind or body. It engages every part of us, every dynamic of our beings.

Genuine worship begins when one's mind, heart, body and soul come into alignment within oneself as we allow our full selves to experience God's love intellectually, emotionally, physically, psychologically and spiritually. Then worship becomes our full response to God's love. As Apostle John declares: "*We love because God first loved us.*" Worship ultimately results in greater unity with God and

ing in this moment that often challenges, transforms and liberates us.

Worshipping in spirit is rooted in awareness of the interconnectedness between our spirits (the centre of our beings) and Divine Spirit. It begins with recognizing God is Present (I Am). Worship is consciously tending to the presence of God who is present with us and within us.

When we come together to collectively recognize and respond to God's presence in our midst, something happens that we don't experience on our own. When we come together to love God with our whole beings, as a response to God's love for us, we experience a oneness with God and one another that is beyond understanding and is profoundly transforming. True worship is one of the most beautiful, vulnerable and powerful experiences humans can share together.

And I believe that it's the kind of worship "spiritual but not religious" people are seeking. ❧

Troy Watson is pastor of Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, Ont.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Danzig-Prussian Mennonites survive Second World War

By Helmut Lemke

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Many Canadian Mennonites have roots in Ukraine, but most of their “mother churches” were in Prussia. Mennonites moved from Prussia to Ukraine at the invitation of Catherine the Great, when military service became compulsory in Prussia.

Many have only a vague recollection of the earlier part of our story: the Danzig-West-Prussian years. Not all Prussian Mennonites left for the opportunities and lure of the Slavic steppes; a large number remained in Danzig and West Prussia, what has now become Poland.

In 1921, the Danzig Mennonite Church had more than 1,100 baptized members, and about 15,000 Mennonites lived in the lowlands of Prussia.

While the Russian Revolution a century ago seriously disrupted the life of Ukrainian Mennonites, the Second World War, now 80 years ago, had a devastating effect on our Prussian cousins.

Hitler wanted to repatriate German people from the Prussian settlements—many of which had belonged to Germany before the First World War—back into the Third Reich, regardless of their current country of residence. He could do this through negotiation with some countries, but when he used military might in Poland, war was declared. German troops invaded Poland not far from villages where we Mennonites lived. Men, and occasionally women, were conscripted, and alternative service was not an option. Obey the conscription order or be shot.

One of my sisters became a Red Cross nurse, another a telephone operator in a military airport, and I was conscripted and sent to the Russian front. Some Danzig-Prussian Mennonite congregations were then without pastors, who had been conscripted, and retired elders took over the spiritual care for these churches.

At the end of the war, Russian troops were entering German territory and took



MENNONITE ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO PHOTO

An MCC worker in Berlin hands a bundle of clothes to a young refugee. Photo is from the early 1950s.

gruesome revenge on the population, including us Mennonites. Hearing about these events frightened us, and many Mennonites started packing to leave. But before many could get away, the Russians raided our and many other farms, took away all our supplies, killed or drove away the animals, and forced my mother and other women to work for them.

By the grace of God, I survived from being shot by a Russian firing squad.

At the end of 1945, the Prussian Mennonites who could not flee were expelled from their homes by Polish police. We, like many others, were supposed to be taken to a Polish labour camp but managed to escape to West Germany. Some of my relatives died from sickness or starvation.

The well-established Mennonite communities in Danzig and Prussia were now not in existence, their members having been dispersed all over the remnant of Germany, just where the refugee commission had placed them.

Young Mennonites started to congregate in youth retreats, formed new relationships, sang, played and studied the Bible together, rebuilt and strengthened their faith, and became a vital part in starting new small Prussian Mennonite refugee congregations in the West.

Canadian and American Mennonites working in Mennonite Central

Committee (MCC) centres in Europe after the war were of great assistance in finding Prussian Mennonites in Polish labour camps. They helped to get them released and resettled in northern Germany. Their volunteers were very well received when they joined or helped in organizing our refugee services.

Cornelius Wall, a retired professor known among us young people as Onkel Wall, was our favourite visitor and lecturer. He understood young and old people, had encouraging words for everyone, and had a good sense of humour. He brought new life and hope into many of our emerging fellowships.

Pax Boys, American young men doing alternative service, lent their voices and helping hands in many situations in our refugee churches. MCC directors invited our congregants to peace and theological seminars and student exchanges with American Mennonite colleges.

We all benefitted from the generous relief work of MCC. Many Mennonite refugees expelled from their homes, allowed only to take along the clothes they wore, or soldiers who came home in a ragged uniform after having worked for long years in a Russian gulag, could select a suit from a Canadian or American donor with a note “In the name of Christ” in one of the pockets.

Slowly, the Prussian Mennonites integrated into the general Mennonite family again. Several Prussian Mennonite families, including my own, emigrated from Germany to Canada or the United States when it became possible and they could find a sponsor. Now one can even find small clusters of Prussian Mennonites in congregations in B.C., in the Abbotsford or Vancouver area, and in other Canadian provinces. ❧

Helmut Lemke attends Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, Vancouver.

NEWS

Prepare for something new and yet familiar

Gathering 2019 theme is 'Igniting the imagination of the church'

By Katie Doke Sawatzky
Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

Over the past three months, in my role as communications officer for Mennonite Church Canada, I have been busy preparing for Gathering 2019, the first event of the “new” nationwide church.

This work is challenging because, much like trying to envision summer in the dead of winter (Regina is under an extreme cold warning as I write), this event is different from past assemblies. It will be something new and yet familiar, like spring after winter's cold or summer after spring rain.

Gathering 2019 will be a reunion of our nationwide MC Canada family in Abbotsford, B.C., from June 28 to July 1. The theme of the event is “Igniting the imagination of the church.” The flame and church in the logo are a reminder of how the Spirit ignited a movement and formed a faithful community to embody God's love for the world. It continues to do so still. Gathering 2019 is an opportunity to hear what the Holy Spirit is doing in our congregations today, so that the hearts and minds of those who gather will be inspired and equipped to imagine what God might be inviting us all to be and do in our various places of life and ministry.

Gathering 2019 is something new. It is a collaboration of MC Canada, MC B.C. and a committee of regional church representatives, planned for our nationwide community of faith. It is the inaugural gathering under the new MC Canada structure, which sees more regionally led planning and initiatives. It is a chance to get to know our MC B.C. family and communities more fully.

What will happen during these four days in Canada's “raspberry capital”?

Each day will be full and meaningful. June 28 is Leadership Day, a chance for pastors and lay leaders to gather and fellowship with each other and guest speaker Elaine Heath.



A former dean of Duke Divinity School, Heath is from the United Methodist tradition. She is passionate about community as

a means of healing trauma, emergent forms of Christianity, and alternative forms of theological education for the church in rapidly changing contexts.

MC Canada's annual general meeting is on the morning of June 29, for delegates selected by the five regional churches. Delegates will hear reports from the three nationwide programs: Indigenous-Settler Relations, International Witness and CommonWord. They will also adopt a budget and elect officers.

From June 29 to July 1 everyone gathers for inspirational worship, workshops and plenary sessions with Heath. Youth aged 13 to 18 are invited to spend the night of June 29 at Camp Squeah. There will be programming and excursions planned for children aged 5 to 12. Childcare for those 4 and under will also be available. Field trips on the afternoon of June 30 will create opportunities for everyone to explore the area and discover how God is at work in MC B.C. ☼

Registration and a detailed program schedule will be available online in the coming months. For now, a helpful Q&A document and more details about Gathering 2019 can be found online at ignitegathering2019.ca.



News brief

Saskatchewan youth search for sponsors in busy shopping mall

SASKATOON—Mega Menno events bring Saskatchewan youth together monthly for times of learning, community building and, in the case of the first event of 2019, looking for their sponsors! A Mega Menno Mall Hunt took place on a busy Saturday afternoon, with nine youth sponsors “hiding” in costumes throughout the mall. Youth were given one hour to find all the sponsors, and had to ask a silly question in order to earn the sponsor's signature on a bingo card. Some sponsors were easier to find than others, with no youth and almost none of the sponsors recognizing “Old Man Hamm.” With prizes for those with the most signatures, a good time and some funny looks were had by all!

—BY KIRSTEN HAMM-EPP



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIRSTEN HAMM-EPP

Youth sponsors in disguise at the Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization's Mega Menno Mall Hunt are, from left to right: Kirsten Hamm-Epp 'Old Man Hamm,' Denise Martens, Gwen Laughlin, Scott Feick, Rachell Zurevinsky, Kelsi Siemens and Michaela Pries-Klassen.

Church of the Way to leave MC B.C.

Granisle congregation has applied to join the Evangelical Free Church of Canada

By Amy Dueckman
B.C. Correspondent

Church of the Way in Granisle, B.C., a member of Mennonite Church B.C. since 1979, has voted to leave the regional church and join another denomination.

In a statement to *Canadian Mennonite*, Pastor Rob Wiebe said: “Church of the Way family has prayerfully and carefully made application to join the Evangelical Free Church of Canada. We certainly appreciate the 45-plus-year connection with MC B.C./Conference of Mennonites in B.C. and all that it has brought along the way. It is time to part company, time to begin a new chapter in the journey that is ministry in Granisle.”

Garry Janzen, MC B.C.’s executive minister, commented on Church of the Way’s departure. “I would certainly want to express our thanks for 40 years in God’s kingdom ministry together,” he said, but added, “Recognizing that the primary reason for leaving is related to the MC Canada [Being a Faithful Church] 7 decision, MC B.C. is disappointed that our [resolution] . . . was not a sufficient response to be able to keep Church of the Way in our



GAMEO PHOTO

Church of the Way in Granisle, B.C., has chosen to leave MC B.C. and has ‘prayerfully and carefully made application to join the Evangelical Free Church of Canada,’ says Pastor Rob Wiebe.

family of congregations.”

The wording of that resolution, that passed 105-52 at the 2017 MC B.C. annual general meeting, reads: “Whereas MC B.C., as a collective body, affirms the MC B.C. covenant, and holds to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, which states that marriage is between one man and

one woman for life: Be it resolved that MC B.C. will continue the existing practice that pastors within MC B.C. will not officiate at same-sex weddings; that MC B.C. congregations will not appoint pastors and those in leadership positions who are in a same-sex relationship. We, as MC B.C. congregations, encourage one another to continue to walk alongside and share the love of Jesus—as we are able and as our gifts allow—with all people, including those who are same-sex attracted and those who are in same-sex relationships.”

Church of the Way began with a Bible study group in 1973 and had its first pastoral couple beginning in 1974. A church building was constructed in 1979, the same year that the group chose the name Church of the Way and officially became affiliated with the Conference of Mennonites in B.C. It is the only house of worship in the village of Granisle and had the distinction of being the northernmost Mennonite congregation in Canada. ☞



PHOTO BY NELSON LEE /
TEXT BY AMY DUECKMAN

On the cold, wintery Sunday of Feb. 10, members of Chinatown Peace Church in Vancouver hand out cups of hot chocolate to people who passed by their church building (at right of photo) to watch the annual Chinatown Spring Festival Parade celebrating the Lunar New Year. Despite the -2C temperatures, 50,000 people turned out for the 46th annual event. This is the second year that members of the congregation have interacted with the community by sharing hot chocolate with passersby.

CPT closes Indigenous solidarity team

By Will Braun
Senior Writer

In order to address a \$265,000 deficit, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) will close its Winnipeg-based Indigenous Peoples Solidarity team at the end of March. While CPT hopes to maintain relationships with its Indigenous partners, three full-time and one half-time positions devoted to the work will end.

CPT teams in Colombia, Palestine and Iraqi Kurdistan will also experience cuts, but not closure. The CPT Europe regional group also works on the Greek island of Lesbos, a key stop-off for people fleeing Syria and other places.

The cuts will help ensure the organization's sustainability, according to spokesperson Caitlin Light. The deficit is the result of a major grant not coming through at the anticipated level, as well as increased stipend costs and a slight drop in donations.

CPT's overall annual budget is in the range of \$1.3 million, with 18 full-time positions and 10 part-timers. About 10 percent of CPT support comes from Canadian donors, with the bulk coming from the United States.

CPT's Indigenous Peoples Solidarity (IPS) work grew out of a 2002 invitation from the Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) First Nation, which was blockading logging trucks northeast of Kenora, Ont. While the relationship with Grassy Narrows has remained key, the work has expanded to include support for Shoal Lake 40 First Nation in Manitoba and public education work in Kenora and Winnipeg.

CPT's origins date back to a speech by Ron Sider at the 1984 Mennonite World Conference, in which he called for a willingness to die in "nonviolent attempts to reduce conflict." Since 1988, CPT has put people of faith in places of overt conflict, often accompanying people who face threats of violence. The work has shifted partially to building relationships with partners and supporting them.

CPT's profile skyrocketed in 2005, when



PHOTO COURTESY OF CPT

Beggogoti and Judy da Silva, front centre, of Grassy Narrows First Nation, are pictured with a CPT delegation.

four of its workers were kidnapped in Baghdad. One of the four, American Tom Fox, was killed; the other three were freed by British and Canadian special forces after 118 days in captivity.

Doug Pritchard was co-director of CPT at the time. He says CPT experienced a temporary spike in donations for a year, but no increase in people signing up to join. The organization had grown rapidly from the 1990s until the kidnapping, but after the brief spike in contributions, the previous growth trajectory flattened out.

Pritchard, who was with CPT until 2011, worked hard at maintaining ties with Mennonites across Canada. He says that over time the organization devoted energy to wrestling with factors beyond Sider's original challenge of bold peacemaking. Those explorations, Pritchard says, "revolved around power dynamics, including racism and sexism, within CPT," an organization "founded largely by white men."

The historically strong ties with Mennonite Church Canada have waned. While MC Canada still appoints a member to the CPT Steering Committee, it no longer handles donations for CPT or issues tax receipts, as it used to. The two organizations signed a partnership agreement in 2010 but, after a change in staff at MC Canada, the church ended its financial relationship with CPT in 2015.

The hostage incident highlighted a potentially related point of dissonance between the two. One of the freed CPT hostages, Jim Loney, came out publicly as gay upon his return to Canada. CPT had previously kept this fact hidden, for Loney's safety. Although MC Canada never stated it openly, this highlighted a difference between the two organizations.

The key link between the two now is Steve Heinrichs, MC Canada's director of Indigenous-Settler Relations, and its appointee to the CPT Steering Committee. Heinrichs has high praise for CPT, calling the organization "a great partner and great friend." He expressed "deep grief and sadness" over the closure of the IPS team.

The larger conversation, he says, is "where CPT is at in relation to the church." For him, the gift of CPT is its expression of the peacemaking gospel within the context of community. Not only does it take an "active nonviolent posture to the bruised and battered in the land," but it wrestles with how to partner and work with people of other faiths, how to work well in Muslim countries, and how to genuinely partner with Indigenous people who are not Christians. Heinrichs sees this as an instructive, prophetic example for the church-at-large.

In terms of work with Indigenous peoples, he says the commitments the churches have formally made, going back to 1987, will require us to enter zones of conflict in peaceful ways. CPT is one group that can help with this, although, of course, its capacity in Canada is now minimal.

CPT is committed to maintaining relationships with Indigenous partners to the extent its Canadian coordinator, Rachele Friesen, can do so, and it hopes CPT reservists can be deployed if requested. ❧

Visit canadianmennonite.org/cpt-ips-closure to read an excerpt of Ron Sider's speech that influenced the creation of CPT.



The final push to pass Bill C-262

Manitoba event on Indigenous rights bill aims to send message to Senate

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Indigenous peoples are still working tirelessly to get the Government of Canada to recognize their rights to the same freedoms that most white settlers take for granted.

Bill C-262 is a piece of legislation that will ensure these changes by enforcing the integration of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into Canadian law. But there are only four months left to get the bill passed.

The private members bill was introduced by Member of Parliament Romeo Saganash of the New Democratic Party in 2016. It passed through the House of Commons, gaining support from the Liberal party, and continued to the Senate. It is currently in second reading and needs to go to a Senate standing committee for further examination before having a third reading and vote, in order to receive royal assent. This all needs to happen before

June 2019, when the Senate concludes its work for this parliamentary session and another election happens.

Bill C-262 is pretty straightforward, says Jennifer Preston, coordinator of the Indigenous rights program at the Canadian Friends Service Committee. It follows the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action that urge the government to fully adopt and implement UNDRIP through a national action plan and a full review of current Canadian law and policy. "The thing that's important about the law is that it repudiates colonialism, which is something that Canada's never done in law yet," she says.

It's also undeniably a Christian issue, says

Christian singer/songwriter Steve Bell. "It's funny how people don't necessarily make the correlation that, because God loves us and we love God, we should therefore love all that God loves," he says. "The fundamental dignity of every human being should be every Christian's almost No. 1 concern in response to the grace of God."

Preston and Paul Joffe, an attorney who specializes in the rights of Indigenous peoples, will be speaking at Canadian Mennonite University's Marpeck Commons on March 26, at 7 p.m., at the invitation of a Mennonites in Manitoba working group.

"For white settler folks who know they'd like to be part of truth and reconciliation but don't know what to do, this is something we can do. It's the least we can do," says Bell, of attendance at the event. But education isn't the only reason. "We need people to . . . send a loud signal to the Senate. This is much deeper than a sheer political issue. It's primarily a moral and an integrity issue. Who do we want to be as Canadians?"



PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER

Richard Bauman supervises the bouncy castle at the Family Fun Day held at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church on Feb. 18. On the Family Day holiday, families were invited to this free event that also included a ventriloquist, magic show, cookie decorating, and lots of games and activities. The congregation was pleased with the turnout, as nearly 300 children and adults from the community attended.

Going solar

Congregation installs solar panels to reduce energy costs and be an example

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON

Wildwood Mennonite Church recently became the first Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregation to go solar. But, as with all major spending decisions, this one wasn't made overnight.

Two-and-a-half years ago, Wildwood joined the Mennonite Creation Care Network. Brenda MacDonald volunteered to be the congregation's liaison. She receives regular bulletins from the network, which she shares with the congregation.

She has also introduced various creation care initiatives. The Lug a Mug campaign encouraged members to carry reusable mugs rather than use disposables. Want Not/Waste Not invited members to participate in Buy Nothing Day as an alternative to Black Friday.

After the congregation studied the network's curriculum, "Every Creature Singing," several members expressed interest in a voluntary carbon tax. When they wondered what they would do with the funds collected, someone suggested they purchase solar panels for the church building.

It seemed like a good plan, but that's not exactly how things turned out. "The voluntary carbon tax was the impetus for the project but it did nothing to help it," says Brenda. With only one donor, the fund raised little money.

The idea of installing solar panels captured members' imaginations. Rather than wait until the voluntary carbon tax fund accumulated enough money to pay for the panels, the church opted for a more direct approach.

Rick Friesen admits that, although there was enthusiasm for the project, "it was not a church-wide program." Bruno Baerg and Ben Borne took on the job of raising funds. The needed funds would be above budget.

Church members, says Friesen, "agreed to let it happen, not necessarily [to] pay for



DRONE PHOTO BY LES KLASSEN HAMM

Wayne MacDonald sees installing solar panels on the roof of Wildwood Mennonite as 'an expression of what we value as a congregation.' The 20 panels are expected to cover 60 percent of the church's energy costs.

it." He adds, "Probably there are people in our group who don't care too much about [environmental issues]. They don't put up a fuss about it, but it's not their thing."

But Brenda's husband Wayne notes that the decision to go ahead with the purchase was unanimous.

Mennonite Creation Care Network has a project fund, says Brenda, but it's only available to churches in the United States. However, the Saskatchewan government was offering a 20 percent rebate as an incentive to people who purchased solar panels. The application deadline was the end of November 2018. The congregation set its fundraising deadline for the middle of August.

"When we reached \$15,000," says Brenda, "we thought we would have to go for our smaller objective." But those who were passionate about the project didn't want to see that happen. "We felt that for a few bucks we would miss out," says Friesen. So they redoubled their efforts until they reached their \$22,000 goal.

The church decided on a 20-panel, 10-kilowatt system, which is estimated to have a 10-year payback. "We looked at

what we had been paying for power and based our goal on that," says Wayne. "We are hoping to get 60 percent of our energy costs covered by the panels."

Friesen notes that this 60 percent will be averaged out over the year. "Obviously in winter we will get less sunlight," he says. "But whatever the church doesn't use [in the summer months] goes back into the power grid, and the church gets some credit for it."

Cutting energy costs wasn't the church's only motivation. "We wanted to do it to save energy," says Friesen, "but also to be an example."

Wayne adds, "We wanted it to be an expression of what we value as a congregation."

Initially, the church had wanted the panels to be installed on the east side of the building so they would be visible from the street. But the company that did the installation recommended they be placed on the west side to collect more sunlight.

When asked what advice they would give to congregations considering going solar, Wayne points out that there are less costly things churches can do to make their buildings more environmentally friendly. He recalls an engineer whom the congregation consulted saying, "Solar panels are the sexy side of [environmental sustainability]. The hard work is done by LED lights, and by making sure you have good weather stripping." He adds, "Small changes can still make a difference."

Friesen points out that Wildwood made a lot of these small changes when it renovated in 2015. "We didn't change the footprint of the building but we changed the interior," he says. "We installed large windows in the south wall, and in places where we do the most we [now] use LED lighting. We did some insulating and changed a lot of windows."

Brenda acknowledges that it's easy to feel overwhelmed in the face of global warming and environmental degradation. But, she says, "Maybe doing these small things helps us to feel less hopeless." ❧

RJC and MCC Saskatchewan celebrate collaborative relationship

Story and Photos by Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan and Rosthern Junior College (RJC) joined forces to host a unique fundraising concert.

Held on Feb. 10 at Grace Westminster United Church in Saskatoon, Global Songs and Sweets featured music and musicians from around the globe. Interspersed between the songs were times of sharing.

RJC teacher Zac Schellenberg and Grade 10 student Danielle Choi spoke of their recent learning experiences with the RJC Imagine program in Winnipeg.

Principal Ryan Wood and alumna Krista Dueck, who now works for MCC Saskatchewan, talked about RJC's collaboration with MCC in the school's annual Alternative Learning and Service Opportunities trip to Guatemala.

And finally, RJC vice-principal David Epp shared about his experience serving in Guatemala under MCC's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program. ☞

Watch a video of the event at canadianmennonite.org/global-songs-sweets.



TOP PHOTO: Richard Janzen led the RJC Ensemble as well as the Global Mass Choir, in which supporters of RJC and MCC Saskatchewan joined students to perform several works, including 'Freedom Come' by Ben Alloway. **MIDDLE PHOTO:** Following the concert, guests enjoyed conversation over coffee and Syrian pastries prepared by Basem Ahmad and Fadia Almasalma, a Syrian couple who have recently settled in Saskatoon through the help of MCC.

BOTTOM PHOTO: The Alsheikh family are Syrian refugees who recently moved to Saskatoon. Accompanied by their brother Abdul on keyboard, sisters Zina and Janna Alsheikh entertained the audience with songs sung in both Arabic and English.



'Ramping up the rituals'

Reclaiming the profound, counter-cultural nature of baptism and marriage

By Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Do Mennonite churches have commitment issues? Why are fewer people choosing rituals of commitment like baptism and marriage?

In an attempt to answer these questions, Irma Fast Dueck spent three days at Conrad Grebel University College last month. First, she delivered Grebel's Bechtel Lecture, "Take me to the waters: Baptism, commitment and the church," on Feb. 7, followed by a panel discussion on young adults and the church on Feb. 8, and an Anabaptist Learning Workshop presentation, "Shacking up: Sex, love and church commitment" on Feb. 9.

In the first part of the workshop, Fast Dueck, associate professor of practical theology at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, had groups identify issues related to baptism and marriage. It soon became apparent that there was a great deal of overlap between the two. Not only do they both involve church rituals of commitment, but they also evoke anxiety over a decline in the number of people who are choosing them, and they generate questions about their purpose, meaning and symbolism:

- **Do I** need to become a baptized member of a church to follow Jesus?
- **Do I** need to be legally married to be in a committed relationship?
- **Doesn't it** make sense to postpone baptism until I have finished my education and I'm not so transient anymore?
- **Doesn't it** make sense to live together for financial and practical reasons?
- **Can I** live up to the high standards that are expected of me in this relationship (marriage or church membership)?

Focusing more directly on the topic of cohabitation—living together in a sexual relationship before, or instead of, marriage—Fast Dueck distinguished



PHOTO BY MATTHEW BAILEY-DYCK

Irma Fast Dueck leads a group activity comparing the commitment issues related to baptism and marriage as part of her workshop, 'Shacking up: Sex, love and church commitment,' last month.

between four different types. Casual cohabitation takes place when partners are not focused on a long-term commitment. Cautious cohabitation is seen as a kind of trial, to make sure the partners are compatible. Committed cohabitation means the partners plan to marry, but for practical reasons they choose to live together until then. Alternative cohabitation reflects partners who do not believe in the value of the institution of marriage. Fast Dueck suggests that it is important to distinguish between these types.

She identified many reasons why the number of people cohabiting in Canada is on the rise, while the number of people marrying is on the decline. Media normalizes cohabiting, and many parents support it as a way to test compatibility. Cohabiting is cheaper and more convenient. In addition, there is now a longer stage of exploration after the onset of puberty, sometimes

identified as "emerging adulthood," characterized by anxiety and delay around making all kinds of major decisions and commitments, including marriage.

During the last part of the morning session, Fast Dueck encouraged "ramping up the rituals" in churches. She says churches need to understand the profound nature of rituals like baptism and marriage, that help people move through significant transitions in life. Instead of using legal or contractual language around these rituals, she says churches should describe them as "a way of being in the world."

At the end of her workshop, she offered a theological reflection on the deeper meaning of marriage. She said that, like other significant rituals, marriage testifies "something about who God is." She described God as *echad*, which in Hebrew means "one or oneness." Despite all the brokenness in the world, God is *echad*. Oneness in a marriage acts as a symbol or sign of who God is. Marriage at its very best can be a "window into the holding together that is God," she said.

She also challenged churches to face their fears and create the space to have conversations around sexuality. Churches need to use spiritual and theological language to talk about sexuality and healthy relationships. She affirms that "there is something sacred about intimacy," and that "there is spirituality deeply rooted in our sexuality."

Young people especially need their church communities to help them reflect on what this means, she said, suggesting that biblical and liturgical resources can help people find language for these conversations.

Her presentation sparked many comments and questions about the practical applications of these ideas:

- **Should churches** bless unions that are not legal marriages? If so, how?
- **How do** churches minister well in the tension between getting hung up on rules and watering things down?
- **How do** churches make people feel welcome and included and yet still emphasize the profoundly countercultural nature of baptism and marriage? ☞

'Taking the plunge'

Youth panel explains what keeps them in church

By Rachel Bergen
Contributing Editor

Christian youth and young adults care seeking church spaces that are authentic, safe and open, but also supportive of their role in leadership.

At least, that's what five people who took part in a youth panel had to say at the 2019 Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., on Feb. 8.

The discussion, "Taking the plunge: Young adults and the church," was led by Irma Fast Dueck from Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. Fast Dueck is a practical theologian who studies youth and young adult church engagement.

The five panellists included members of the local Mennonite and Grebel community. They each said they attend church and are invested in their home communities and Christian groups, bucking the trend that says young adults are losing their faith and leaving organized religion. Still, they're seeking many of the same things as young people who are leaving the church.

A place to ask tough questions

The panel members all said they wish the church was a safer place to doubt, ask tough questions about their faith, and struggle.

Colin Friesen, 28, is pursuing graduate studies at Grebel and attends Shantz Mennonite Church in Baden. He said he's generally had good church experiences but wants more than platitudes as responses to his thoughts and fears. "I never found that the church was a good place for tough questions. Despite wanting to talk about those tough questions, it felt like very few people were equipped to talk about [them]," he said.

He said he would often get vague responses like, "Read your Bible more," and, "Pray about it," which didn't answer his questions or help him find resources to gain greater understanding.

Maria Klassen, a Grade 12 student at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener who attends Breslau Mennonite Church, said she's contemplating baptism. "Right now, I'm at the beginning stages of looking into baptism. I've been questioning a lot of things lately, so I'm glad that church has been a place that has kind of sparked ideas and a place I can come to," she said.

Still, she sometimes feels like she is alone in her questions. "I think we should be more open and authentic, just so we know we're not the only ones thinking these things," she said.

Seeking authenticity

In the same vein, the panel members all expressed a desire for the church to be a safe, authentic place, and for church leaders to model that.

According to first-year student Yeabsra Agonfer, she's looking for a certain church culture. "Being intentional about being vulnerable is something I think is really important in creating a culture where people feel okay with being open with where they're at in life," she said.

According to Jonathan Klassen, Maria's brother, who also attends Breslau Mennonite, authenticity means being honest. "For leaders to admit they make mistakes and aren't perfect. To be

authentic is to be honest and to admit your own faults and where you go wrong," he said.

Community is important to youth

All the panel members said they have felt frustrated with the church and some have doubted their faith at times, but they recognize the importance of their community of faith.

Friesen, who is a father to a 15-month-old daughter, said he wants to model churchgoing to her. "We want that to be a priority in her life as well, or at least see that it's a priority for us," he said. "So we want to raise her in a family where we go to church, and it's our home. It's our home away from home."

Emily Hunsberger, who also attends Shantz Mennonite, said she never realized how much she needed the community. She's involved with Pastors in Exile, a feminist Bible study, and her church. "What fuels my faith is, I need the community of the church more than I ever thought. I've taken it for granted in the past," she said.

Fast Dueck concluded the conversation by naming that she, a nearly 60-year-old, has many of the same needs in church. "They name something I'm guessing a number of us can identify with, and that we all long for together with the church and hope for together," she said. "This is not just an issue of this sort of demographic of people. The good thing is, we all have each other." ❧

Watch the full panel discussion online at youtu.be/xgt9vYDEaOA.



GREBEL PHOTO BY JEN KONKLE

Pictured from left to right: moderator Irma Fast Dueck and panellists Colin Friesen, Emily Hunsberger, Maria Klassen, Yeabsra Agonfer and Jonathan Klassen speak on the topic 'Taking the plunge: Young adults and the church,' as part of this year's Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College.

Bethany Mennonite helps Wells of Hope in Guatemala

By Maria Klassen
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
VIRGIL, ONT.

Before there was a mission trip to Guatemala last month, there was a fundraising lunch of hot chili the month before.

More than a hundred friends and family of the five teenage boys and two fathers going to work with Wells of Hope in Jalapa gathered together on Jan. 27 at Bethany Mennonite Church in Virgil. There were 11 entries in this chili cook-off fundraiser, judged on the basis of aroma, texture, colour, taste and aftertaste. Bragging rights was the prize for first place.

The lunch raised \$1,540 to help cover travel expenses and a \$4,030 donation to Wells of Hope, an interdenominational group with roots in the Niagara Peninsula, started by Ted and Miriam van der Zalm in 2004.

Wells of Hope started by hand digging wells for fresh water, as the local water was contaminated and causing illness, especially in young children. It now uses machines to dig as deep as 250 metres. As this is a specialized process, volunteers no longer dig wells; instead, they work on other projects.

This year's team helped load and deliver



PHOTO BY HERB SAWATZKY

Members of Bethany Mennonite Church shovel gravel onto a truck to transport it to the next well site in the mountains of Guatemala.

bricks to construction sites for building small houses; the bricks are made locally by hand. The team also helped build and install new cookstoves that use less wood and produce less exhaust, which is important, as there are no chimneys in the homes. Their work was high in the

mountains with Indigenous Guatemalan people, who were re-settled there in the 1950s and 1960s, when the government cleared the land.

The Feb. 1 to 9 trip was the second missions trip to Guatemala undertaken by members of the church, according to Pastor Herb Sawatzky.

This was Colton Sawatzky's first trip to a developing country and, after seeing pictures of houses made of cornstalks, he says he is thankful for what he has and would like to share with others. His father Herb had gone on a mission trip earlier, and Colton says it was an eye-opening experience for him, one that changed his dad's perspective.

Evan Vanvliet had been to Ecuador with his family to visit four children that they sponsored there. He has seen poverty, and how differently people in the Third World live from that in North America, and he knows how emotional a trip like this can be.

Ryley Vahrmeyer decided to join his friends Colton and Evan on this trip. After seeing pictures of last year's project, he felt motivated to help.

Samuel Beifuss was more excited than nervous going on his first missions trip. He earned some of the money to help pay his way. Saying that he takes a lot for granted in his life, he felt the trip gave him a better understanding of how others live in the world, and it helped him be more appreciative of his life.

The other adult sponsor was Chris Wiens, who went with his son Jarrod. ☿



PHOTO BY MARIA KLASSEN

Colton Sawatzky, Evan Vanvliet and Ryley Vahrmeyer collect donations during a Jan. 27 fundraiser at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont.

☿ Staff change

Pastoral transition in Alberta

• **Heather Klassen** was ordained at Foothills Mennonite Church on Feb. 10. She works as a celebrant, performing ceremonies such as weddings and funerals for her clients. The church views her work as an extension of the congregation's ministry in its community. Her credentials will be held by Mennonite Church Alberta.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



PHOTO BY RUTH BERGEN BRAUN

Doug Klassen, pastor at Foothills Mennonite Church, and Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, executive minister of Mennonite Church Alberta, ordain Heather Klassen on Feb. 10.

Swords into ploughshares, guns into art

By Rachel Bergen
Contributing Editor

Irian Fast-Sittler spends her days hammering hot steel and welding metals together at a forge in Floradale, Ont.

Recently, the 20-year-old blacksmith created a modern-day take on the analogy from the Book of Isaiah of turning swords into ploughshares. Instead, she turned her grandfather's shotgun into a work of art.

Fast-Sittler created a sculpture she calls "Gun Shy," which was publicly shown for the first time at her home church, Hawkesville Mennonite, on Feb. 17.

The sculpture is about waist-high and the length of a shotgun. It is made mostly of steel, but features roses made of copper and brass, bringing to the artwork a bit of colour.

For her, making the sculpture brought home some of the pacifist beliefs she was raised with. "I think that making this piece just solidified in my mind what I've always thought and believed—that you don't solve issues by shooting someone. I've never

been okay with gun violence, and building this piece hasn't made me an activist or given me any wild ideas but just drove home what I already know and believe," she says.

She was motivated to make the sculpture when Ron Grimes, a family friend, approached her and asked if she'd be willing to turn guns into tools. She took the idea and made it her own. "The more I got into it, the more motivated I got," she says. "It was really cool and rewarding to see it come together."

Although "Gun Shy" will appear in an art gallery later in February, its first public showing was at the church Fast-Sittler grew up in.

Paul Dyck, the pastor of the church, says that he approached her about creating a special service around the sculpture.

"When I heard about it, I said, 'Okay, Irian, we've gotta do this,'" he says. "It's our Prayer for Peace Sunday"

Together with Grimes, Dyck wrote a litany for the service, which draws on the Prophet Isaiah to refer to Fast-Sittler's sculpture as an "icon of peace":

Reader 1

Let us take a tube of steel built to fire deadly buckshot and slugs of lead, and let us create a sculpture of beauty and life. Let us use the power of wisdom and insight; let us harness the raw, brute strength of wrought iron and the subtle beauty of malleable brass.

Reader 2

And let us hammer it into flowers; into roses;



PHOTO BY ELO WIDEMAN

Irian Fast-Sittler sits by her 'Gun Shy' sculpture at its first public showing at Hawkesville (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

and let us cut off the firing pin, plug the barrel, and weld the hammer and trigger. Let us twist strong strands of steel into tendrils of peace; and bloom loveliness all over and around, under and through this weapon; and make it an instrument of peace."

The service also featured a video that Grimes made of Fast-Sittler called "MaidenForge," a Q&A, and short speeches by Fast-Sittler and Grimes.

For Fast-Sittler, showing "Gun Shy" at her home church was like showing it to family. "It was comforting because those people know me and they're a nice group of people that helped raise me," she says. "It's nice to know that I'm able to get up there and tell my story, and they appreciated that. I didn't have to worry that some critic was going to come up and say they hate it."

Dyck says the whole church supports Fast-Sittler. "I hope this gives her a lot of encouragement as a young artist. Anything we can do to raise that profile, that's something we're happy to do," he says, adding that he hopes "Gun Shy" will be circulated around the community, especially in Mennonite circles. ❧



PHOTO BY PAUL DIMOCK

Irian Fast-Sittler works as a blacksmith in Floradale, Ont.

Winter cyclists brave the cold

All-year biking benefits personal health and the environment

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

While a polar vortex and temperatures of -50C with the wind chill attacked Winnipeg, most people scurried from building to building, trying to be outside as little as possible.

All except a select few: the winter cyclists. Snapping on ski goggles and carefully covering every inch of exposed skin, these commuters brave the cold, snow and ice to bike all 12 months of the year.

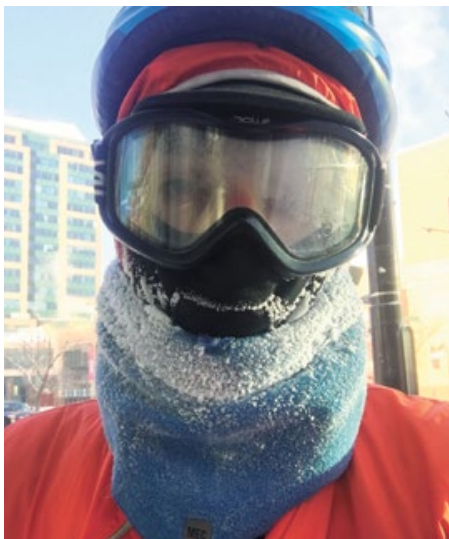
Michael Veith, 25, has been winter biking for four years and uses it as his main mode of transportation, averaging about 10 kilometres a day. "It makes me feel amazing!" he says. "There is nothing like being groggy, waking up and then arriving [at work] feeling refreshed and rejuvenated!"

While many Winnipeggers complain about the seemingly endless and frigid winter, Veith, who attends Home Street Mennonite in Winnipeg, says many of those people just don't dress properly for the weather even when they have the means. When he cycles, he wears multiple layers, gloves, a merino wool skullcap, neck



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICHAEL VEITH

Michael Veith and his sister Marika prepare for a winter bike ride.



Michael Veith, bundled up and frosty, after a winter bike ride.

warmer and ski goggles. The careful preparation cycling demands has helped him take fuller advantage of all winter has to offer and has increased his appreciation for the season.

Val Smith, a member of Charleswood Mennonite in Winnipeg, uses her bike for her regular commute to work, too. The 44-year-old has been winter biking for close to a decade and appreciates how it benefits her mental and physical health. Many people think you need to be a professional athlete or super fit to cycle in

the winter, but she says that's not the case: "I think there are quite a few people for whom it seems like a crazy thing. But it's not! I'm just a regular mom biking to work."

It helps that Smith is part of a supportive community of other winter cyclists who are experiencing the same things. Her husband, two teenage daughters and many colleagues all bike year round, too. It's hard to find winter cyclists who aren't passionate about it, she says.

Emily Hamm, 23, is one of those enthusiastic people. Hamm, who attends

Hope Mennonite in Winnipeg, has been riding her bike almost every day of the week, 12 months a year, for the last two years, although she began exploring winter biking four years ago.

“[Winter cycling] makes my life better,” she says. “I get exercise every day, which helps me maintain better mental health during the winter. I breathe fresh air. I pay attention to the world around me. I choose to commit to fewer things so that it’s possible for me to get to each of my commitments. I have a sense of the earth that I live on because every part of the weather and the ground and the air determines how my ride will go.”

This isn’t to say the freezing journeys don’t have their challenges. Although Smith’s bike continued to perform at -35C, some parts stopped functioning when

temperatures reached -40C, and she ended up having to alternate between walking and biking during a morning ride to work.

Even more troubling is the ice, deep snow and cars on the road, says Veith.

For Hamm, the hardest part is accepting that she could do so many more things if she were to drive everywhere and that she has to change the way she makes choices.

There’s a reason they continue, though.

Besides how it makes them feel, all three cyclists emphasize that winter biking is by far the cheapest way to commute and a way to achieve transportation with zero carbon emissions throughout the whole year.

The key thing about winter cycling is to not give up right away, says Veith. “You have to be committed to trying to find a system that works for you, and then it will be great.” ☞

/// Obituary

Marpeck scholar dies

• William (Bill) Klassen,

born May 18, 1930 in Halbstadt, Man., died in Waterloo, Ont., on Jan. 29, 2019. The son of David and Susan Klassen, he was the middle child in a family of 15. After graduating from Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Man., he studied at Goshen (Ind.) College in the 1950s. After graduating from Princeton Seminary with a doctorate in New Testament, he taught at Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., in the 1960s. He then taught in the religion department at other Canadian universities, finishing his career as principal of St. Paul’s United College at the University of Waterloo. Klassen was known for his scholarship of Pilgram Marpeck, an early Anabaptist leader. Together with Walter Klaassen, he translated and edited the writings of Marpeck, published by Herald Press in 1978. Thirty years later, the two men finished a biography of Marpeck. Klassen is predeceased by his first wife, Marilyn Horst Klassen, and is survived by his second wife, Dona Harvey, and his three children.

—BY BARB DRAPER



/// Staff changes

Metzger takes on senior role with Citizens for Public Justice

• **Willard Metzger**, the former executive director of Mennonite Church Canada, has been hired by Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) to be its next executive director. Metzger comes to this position after 18 years as an ordained MC Canada pastor before moving to World Vision Canada in 2005. After five years developing World Vision’s brand new church relations program, he became MC Canada’s executive director, spearheading the consolidation of the denomination’s five regions, a difficult task, but one that helped put the church in a firm financial position. He has retained his credentials as an ordained pastor through all these moves, and CPJ hopes that will continue in his new position. Besides his career in MC Canada and World Vision, he has been on the executive of the Canadian Council of Churches. “This is an important time in history for people in Canada to partner together and assure an environment that provides justice for all,” says Metzger. “CPJ is a platform that can unite a diverse population for a common cause.” CPJ is a national organization that promotes public justice in Canada by shaping key policy debates through research and analysis, publishing and public dialogue; it encourages citizens, leaders in society and governments to support policies and practices that reflect God’s call for love, justice and stewardship.



—CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

MC Eastern Canada mission minister announces retirement

• **Brian Bauman**, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s mission minister, will retire at the end of 2019. “I am grateful for the knowledge and experience that God has granted me through the last 16 years,” he says. Working with troubled teens is where he began his ministry in 1975 with Mennonite Central Committee in Winnipeg and St. John’s, N.L. In 1977, he was student chaplain at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ont. As God’s sense of call on his life grew, he entered full-time ministry as pastor of Preston (Ont.) Mennonite Church, where he was ordained in September 1987. He and his wife, Nancy Brubaker, and their family, moved to California and the couple co-pastored First Mennonite Church in Reedley from 1988 to 1994. After a short break from congregational ministry, he moved into the position of conference minister at Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference in California, also working in the area of church planting. Bauman has served MC Eastern Canada since 2003. During that time, ministry in the mission office has changed. “The ministry that Brian has led us in these past 16 years has been an important gift that has dramatically impacted [MC Eastern Canada] and the wider church body,” says David Martin, executive minister.



—MENNONITE CHURCH EASTERN CANADA

IN TRIBUTE

A journalist with a special passion for the arts

Margaret Loewen Reimer
March 26, 1947 - Jan. 24, 2019

By Ron Rempel
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

“A student of literature and a Mennonite journalist with a special passion for the arts,” is how Margaret Loewen Reimer introduced herself during a lecture series entitled “Mennonites and the artistic imagination” at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, in Winnipeg, in 1998.

That self-introduction rang true back then, and still does as I reflect on Marg’s legacy after her Jan. 24, 2019, death.

Marg became an editorial assistant at *Mennonite Reporter* in 1973, when Dave Kroeker was editor. After Dave resigned, I became editor and manager in 1979, and worked alongside Marg, initially an assistant and then associate editor, for the next 24 years. (She later served as interim editor and managing editor of *Canadian Mennonite* from 2003 until her retirement in 2005.)

Along with other colleagues and our board, we navigated huge changes—from manual typewriter to computer, from cut-and-paste layout to desktop publishing, from an Ontario-based staff to a cross-country team of writers, from eastern-weighted circulation to a Canada-wide circulation plan. We wrestled with how to write about both “the glory and the shame”—the title of a book by *Mennonite Reporter* founding editor Frank H. Epp—in the unfolding story of our people. We pondered the potential impact of the emerging digital challenge to the print world.

I never ceased to be impressed by Marg’s content editing acumen. With minor tweaks and major changes she helped many writers sharpen what they intended to communicate. This gift was captured

by David Waltner-Toews in one of his poems entitled “The Editor’s Song,” which he read at Marg’s funeral. The opening lines of the poem: “Let us sing now a hymn to the healer / physician of the broken tongue, / judge of the merciful sentence. . . .”

From early on, it became clear that Marg held a special concern for the arts section of our publication and for subjects related to the arts. This interest found expression in reports of writers conferences, book reviews, and profiles of Mennonite poets and novelists, whether Mennonite church members or not.

A number of publications grew out of Marg’s writings in the pages of *Mennonite Reporter* and *Canadian Mennonite*. One series of columns became a publication called *One Quilt, Many Pieces: A Reference Guide to Mennonite Groups in Canada*. This was first published in 1990 and went through a number of updates and revisions, with the last version published by Herald Press in 2008.

A second book brought together a series of short biographies that Marg wrote about 20 individuals who have shaped the Christian and Mennonite tradition. The 1988 volume called *Christians Courageous: Stories for Children from Church History*, was published by Mennonite Publishing Service.

A third book grew out of a “Signs and Symbols” column written by Marg over a number of years. This material was expanded and updated for a volume entitled *Approaching the Divine: Signs and*

Symbols of the Christian Faith, published in 2018 by Canadian Mennonite University.

During a sabbatical from her work at *Mennonite Reporter*, Marg completed her PhD at the University of Toronto in 1993. Her dissertation was entitled “Hebraism in English literature: A study of Matthew Arnold and George Eliot.” She told me that in her thesis defence she was criticized for writing in too popular a vein.

Marg’s ability to make her doctoral work accessible to more than her academic advisers was in full form in three lectures

on “Mennonites and the artistic imagination” presented at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in 1998. They were later condensed into an article in the fall 1998 issue of the *Conrad Grebel Review*.

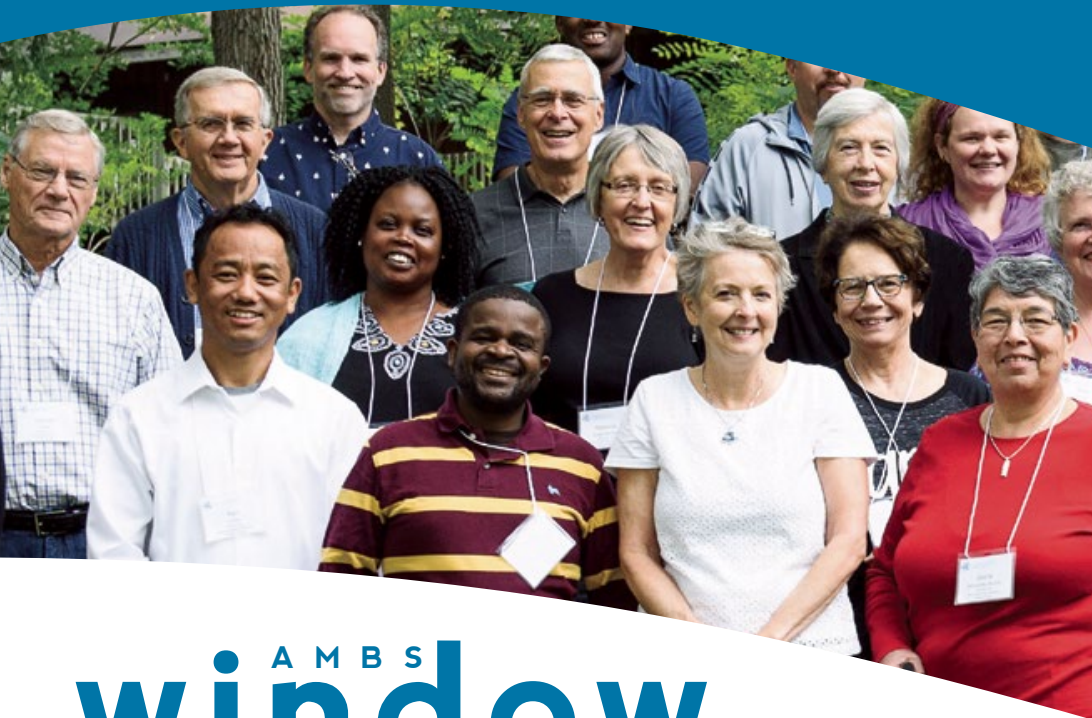
“Ironically,” wrote Marg, “even as art deconstructs or reconfigures meaning, it offers perhaps the greatest

potential for renewed faith. I believe profoundly that the artistic imagination can help us hold together the many clashing realities we live with, to bridge the vast gulf between biblical understandings and the creeds of our own time, between the competing gods of our culture and our personal truths.” The need for such a vision is more crucial today than it was 25 years ago.

Marg was a longtime member of Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., where she played piano, served on the board and various committees, and, according to the obituary read at her funeral, “preached memorable sermons that wove together biblical, theological and literary themes.” In her retirement, she was also one of the coordinators for a number of years of a book club for women inmates at Grand Valley Institution for Women.

She was predeceased in 2010 by her husband, A. James Reimer, who taught theology at Conrad Grebel University College. She is survived by her three siblings, Gerald, Ken and Karen; by her three children, Christina, Thomas and Micah; and by six grandchildren. ❧




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AMBS window

Journey: A real-life story

Leadership development program meets participants where they are

Thousands of miles from their homeland, a group of about 30 South Sudanese women gathers on Tuesdays in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Meeting in each other's homes, they pray for their war-torn country and its people, share about their lives and study the Bible together. **Rebecca Riek**, who came to Canada from South Sudan 16 years ago, helped start the group in 2007 and continues to lead it.

"In my country we are 64 tribes," she explained. "The two largest tribes started fighting, and it has affected all the people of South Sudan. They've become enemies."

Riek's group is intentionally intertribal, bringing together people whose families have experienced years of civil war — both when Sudan was one country (before South Sudan's independence in 2011) and also since South Sudan's civil war began in December 2013. About 400 South Sudanese families now live in Kitchener-Waterloo, a culturally diverse community of around 300,000 people, Riek said. Tensions between tribes in South Sudan can carry over into immigrants' lives in Canada, but Riek's group

works to redefine those relationships.

"We try to just talk about peace, love, unity and Christ," she said, noting that the group is also interdenominational. "We don't have to talk about siding with our tribe. It's working, and it is growing in numbers. It's not only Bible study; it's also like a healing program."

Riek has found support for exploring her call to ministry and leadership through AMBS's **Journey Missional Leadership Development Program**, which she joined in the fall of 2017. The two-and-a-half-year distance-friendly certificate program — designed to develop leaders centered in Jesus Christ for ministries in local churches and communities — includes an undergraduate-level online curriculum, biweekly meetings with a mentor, and one or two Weekend Learning Events on or near AMBS's campus each year.

"The program is opening a new door for my life now," Riek said, "especially a spiritual part of my life, especially in terms of knowledge about who Mennonites are and where they started, because I was wondering how come I connected with the Mennonite Church.

"I kept thinking, 'Yes, God is calling me, but where am I going to start?' But now God is putting it all together. Journey is like a journey with God. It's not just a name; it's a real-life story for me."

Riek learned about Journey in January 2017 while attending an AMBS Pastors Week focused on intercultural congregations. Her friend **Rebecca Yoder Neufeld** (MDiv 1981) had organized a diverse group of people from their church, First Mennonite in Kitchener, to go. After hearing about Journey from **Jewel Gingerich Longenecker**, AMBS Dean of Lifelong Learning, Riek was immediately interested and talked to Yoder Neufeld about applying.

Riek did wonder how her speaking English as a third language would affect her involvement, while Yoder Neufeld was concerned about the time commitment for Riek, who works full time (*continued*)

Above: Rebecca Riek (second row, second from left) and Rebecca Yoder Neufeld (next to her) among fellow participants in the September 2018 Journey Weekend Learning Event at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Michigan. Credit: Jason Bryant

JOURNEY: A REAL-LIFE STORY (continued)

as a personal support worker for people with brain injuries and part time at a retirement home, in addition to parenting six children, ministering in her South Sudanese community and volunteering at First Mennonite. Riek said, though, that joining Journey was the right decision.

"I was surrounded by a lot of people and by love," Riek said. "People pushing behind me, left and right they were telling me, 'You'll be alright, Rebecca.' When you feel somebody supporting you, you are always willing to do it."

As Riek's Journey mentor, Yoder Neufeld said she has been inspired by getting to know her at a deeper level.

"We already had a friendship, but doing this together and driving seven hours to Indiana and back together has given me a wonderful opportunity to deepen that relationship and to be inspired both by Rebecca and by the whole Journey group when we go to the Weekend Learning Events," she said.

Yoder Neufeld has been active for many years in bridge-building roles, serving as a pastor of Hispanic ministry at First Mennonite in Kitchener, working with refugees, doing immigration advocacy, and serving as interpretation coordinator for Mennonite World Conference. She's currently retired and enjoys tending to intercultural relationships at First Mennonite. Even though the Journey course material isn't new to her, for the most part, Yoder Neufeld said it has been good to review. She and Riek also both

appreciate the diversity of cultures, professions and backgrounds represented by the Journey participants.

Because of Yoder Neufeld and Riek's close spiritual work together, they asked to preach together at First Mennonite. The process of preparing a joint sermon that respected each of their preaching styles was a rich experience, Yoder Neufeld said. Riek's seven-year-old son, Isaiah, had also asked if he could lead a prayer with the children, which he did wonderfully, she added, and a feedback group the two had organized was very positive about Riek's leadership that Sunday.

Yoder Neufeld said, "When Rebecca and I debriefed that later, she said, 'You know, what matters is not the compliments; what matters is whether people actually heard the message about prayer and whether it made a difference in their lives.' That to me was also a strong signal that she was clear that this was not about her, but about the message that God wanted to give the congregation. To me that was one of the rich fruits of all of this."

Yoder Neufeld also added that being able to talk freely about cultural differences with Riek has contributed to her intercultural ministry at First Mennonite: "Learning from Rebecca about appropriate and inappropriate ways to relate to African culture — not that all African cultures are the same — and hearing more about her own life have helped me to be more equipped to come alongside other African women in our congregation."

Journey by the numbers

Participants enrolled in September 2018: **17**
(up from **6** in the prior year)

Men: **11**; Women: **6**

States/provinces represented:
California, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Ontario, Wisconsin

Home countries represented:
Belize, Bhutan, Canada, Congo, Nepal, Nigeria, South Sudan, United States

Religious affiliations represented:
Mennonite: **14**
Lutheran: **1**
Missionary Church: **1**
Pentecostal: **1**



Riek recommended anyone feeling a call to ministry or church leadership to find out more about Journey, complimenting Yoder Neufeld as her mentor, the course instructors and the AMBS staff she has interacted with at the Weekend Learning Events.

"When I come back here," Riek said, "I feel I went for vacation, talked with God and came back full of the Holy Spirit, refreshed to start all over again. It's a beautiful program." •

— Marlys Weaver-Stoesz for AMBS

AMBS Window Spring 2019 Volume 29 Issue 2

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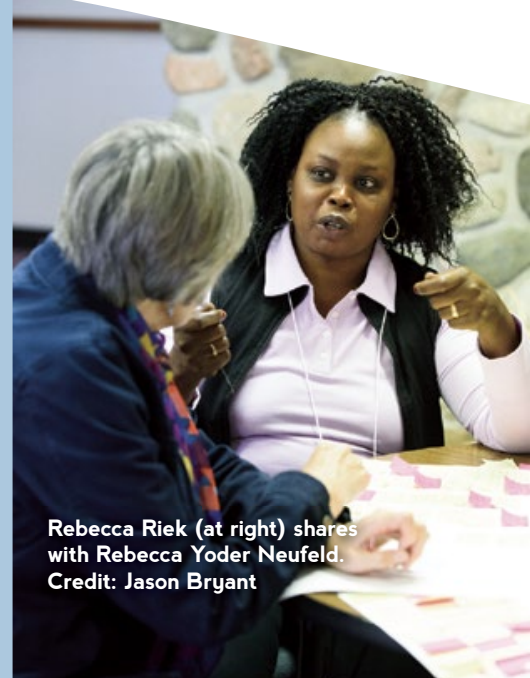
A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

Is Journey for you?

Have you wished for mentors and companions as you follow a call to ministry? In the Journey program, learners and their mentors explore spiritual leadership together in their own context. Whether you're an active congregational member, pastor, church planter or lay leader, Journey can support your growth.

Learners follow an online curriculum focused on spiritual disciplines, theological and biblical studies, character development, mentoring and community, gifts development, and leadership skills.

While Journey represents an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective, the program is open to people of any (or no) denomination. Register by Aug. 6 and save \$100. Learn more: ambs.edu/journey •



Rebecca Riek (at right) shares with Rebecca Yoder Neufeld.
Credit: Jason Bryant



Creating connections — near and far



Michael Unruh is an MDiv Connect student from Wichita, Kansas. He serves as Executive Director of Camp Mennoscah (a Mennonite camp near Murdock, Kansas) and attends Hope Mennonite in Wichita.

Throughout several points in my life, I have sensed a calling to ministry. What began as a simple comment by a member of my church led to working with youth for several summers at Camp Mennoscah, adding a youth ministry certificate onto my undergraduate degree, and eventually to seminary study at AMBS.

Because my undergraduate major was biology, I felt that I lacked the training, not to mention the vocabulary and language, to really fit in with the seminary community. I was relieved to discover that AMBS faculty and other students took in my background and perspective as a valuable part of the community, and I recognized that I was doing the same for them. We meet one another where we are at. Though it's not always perfect to share intense discussion with people from a host of backgrounds, it is beautiful.

After beginning seminary in Elkhart, I ended up taking a full-time job at Camp

Mennoscah back in Kansas. AMBS has extended theological education to me through the MDiv Connect program. It has been such a blessing to continue my education and remain connected to the AMBS community.

Karen Mascho earned a Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies from AMBS in May 2018. She's now on the pastoral team of Joy Mennonite Church in Oklahoma City.



My husband, Steve, and I went from knowing very little about Mennonites to planting a church in Texas in 15 short months. At the suggestion of our conference minister, we enrolled in AMBS's Pastoral Studies Distance Education program. That began our formal education in Mennonite studies. It was such a blessing to have instructors with whom I could discuss ideas and ask questions.

Soon the MDiv Connect program began, and I enrolled. Coming to campus for classes expanded not only my horizons but also my mind. LEAP (Leadership Education in Anabaptist

Perspective, an orientation course) helped me know myself and taught me about other ways of thinking. AMBS's warm and accepting culture helped me feel free to explore new ideas. Theologically, my studies confirmed my pacifist beliefs and provided the necessary biblical foundation that enabled me to discuss them with others.

Due to my husband's health demands, I switched to the Certificate program. (Steve passed away in February 2018.)

AMBS is a place where I regularly met God. Chapel services, class discussions, devotional time, potlucks, talent shows and walking the labyrinth all provided elements of divine fellowship. This was a perfect model of the culture I want to foster in the church, and the examples and instruction I received there will help me in doing so. •

Above: Rachelle Luitjens, a 2018 MDiv Connect alumna from Olds, Iowa, plays Connect Four with her sons. Rachelle completed part of her degree at a distance while pastoring and parenting. **Credit:** Vada Snider. **Inset images:** Jason Bryant

Design your own course of study — from anywhere in the world

AMBS's fully online **Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies** is designed to provide church leaders, bivocational pastors and other professionals with a foundation in theological and biblical study, spiritual enrichment, and fuller integration of Christian faith into their work and ministry. Students can develop a plan of study tailored to their interests in consultation with an assigned advisor.

The 27-credit-hour certificate offers a flexible, multi-

year schedule. Students who are able to come to AMBS for campus and hybrid courses may be able to complete the certificate in less time. Students may transfer up to 12 credit hours from other accredited seminaries and can apply their AMBS credits toward completion of a full degree. Learn more: ambs.edu/certificate

Building on the online Graduate Certificate, the AMBS faculty is at work designing a fully online MA in theology and global Anabaptism. •

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

Equipping church and business leaders across the globe

As a Christian professional, I practiced finance and organizational consultancy work with churches and faith-based organizations for more than 20 years. My work experience revealed that several of these organizations faced leadership and integrity challenges. This awareness informs my passionate desire to facilitate leadership education centered in Christ's peace for Anabaptist communities in Africa.

As a practicing church minister [with a major responsibility to help equip the Mennonite church leadership in Kenya], my desire is to gain authentic Bible-rooted and Christ-centered peace theology that is responsive to Kenya Mennonite Church's mission field challenges. Conflict and violence are the most challenging issues facing our congregants. I therefore feel that Anabaptist-Mennonites' integrative peace-centered approach to doing theology offers the most competent response to my

African mission field context. I settled on seeking admission to AMBS after reviewing several Anabaptist-oriented learning institutions in North America. • — **Patrick James Obonde** of Nairobi, Kenya, is a Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies student.



(l. to r.): Talashia Keim Yoder, MA in Christian Formation student from Goshen, Indiana; Marcos Acosta, MDiv student from Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Patrick James Obonde during orientation week in August 2018. Credit: Peter Ringenberg

Grad students at AMBS

Enrolled in September 2018: **98**

International (outside of the U.S. and Canada): **21** (*the highest number since AMBS began keeping record*)

Canadian: **6**

U.S.: **71**

Women: **54**; Men: **44**

Mennonite or Anabaptist-related: **77**

Identifying with other backgrounds: **21**

Students by program

- Master of Divinity: **57** (of these, **25** are in the MDiv Connect program)
- Master of Arts degrees: **16**
- Graduate Certificate: **4**
- Nonadmitted students: **21** (includes **9** visiting students from other institutions)

Enrolled in an online course: **40**

U.S. states represented by online students: **15**

Countries represented by online students: **Canada, Colombia, Kenya, South Africa, U.S., Zambia**

Living on campus: **30** students, **9** family members, **4** employees/volunteers

Continents represented by students living on campus: **6** (all but Antarctica!)



Anabaptist Witness

Engaging the church in conversations on mission

Anabaptist Witness is a biannual journal focused on mission studies and published collaboratively by AMBS, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. and Canada, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Mission Network. Launched in October 2014, the journal is available for purchase in print and for free online.

The issues are themed, and so far we've covered a wide variety of topics in relation to mission: Anabaptist identity, theology of religions, food, the nature of mission, gender, the Holy Spirit, suffering, creation, and global partnerships. In April 2019 we'll publish our 10th issue, on mission in conflict zones. Upcoming issues treat migration, worship, and Indigenous peoples and land.

In our mission statement, we describe the journal as "a dialogue on key issues

facing the church in mission." The dialogical or conversational nature of the journal comes through in the diversity of voices included in the journal and on the companion blog — in terms of gender, nationality, and church and agency affiliation. We also regularly publish in Spanish, French and other languages, and we sometimes include responses to articles in the journal itself or on the blog.

We'd love to add your voice to the conversation! We publish academic articles, reflection pieces by practitioners, sermons, poetry, artwork, book and film reviews, and blog posts, so there are many ways to get involved. Get in touch with us at www.anabaptistwitness.org. • — **Jamie Pitts, Ph.D.**, Anabaptist Witness Editor; Director, Institute of Mennonite Studies. Photo credit: Peter Ringenberg

2019 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition

AL FUERTES; ROGER AND CYNTHIA NEUFELD SMITH



Al Fuertes
 Credit: Irene Girsang

Al Fuertes of Fairfax, Virginia, a professor with a focus on peacebuilding and conflict transformation in war zones, and **Roger and Cynthia Neufeld Smith** of Jackson, Mississippi, former pastors at Southern Hills Mennonite Church in Topeka, Kansas, are the 2019 recipients of

AMBS's Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition. The annual award honors alumni with an outstanding record of faithful ministry and service.

Al earned a Master of Arts: Peace Studies (MAPS) in 1997, and Roger and Cynthia earned Master of Divinity degrees in 1986 and 1989, respectively.

"This year's award recipients represent the exemplary service we note in the ministry of so many AMBS alumni — in congregational roles as well as academic, peacemaking and mission roles," noted AMBS Alumni Director **Janeen Bertsche Johnson**, M.Div. "Cynthia and Roger, in their 30 years of ministry in one congregation, have shown the fruits of long-term relationships and steady leadership. Al, as a teacher and practitioner of peacemaking in the United States, the Philippines and many other places, is influencing hundreds of people to work for peace and justice in communities that have experienced devastating conflict."

Originally from Surigao City, Philippines, Al worked from 1991 to 1995 as a resident pastor with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines in an ongoing war zone. **Ed Martin**, then regional coordinator for Southeast Asia for Mennonite Central Committee, visited him in 1995 and, after hearing about his work, offered him a full scholarship to earn a master's degree in peace studies. Al began studying at AMBS in 1995, having chosen the seminary largely because of

Ted and Gayle Gerber Koontz, AMBS faculty members (now retired) who had been his professors at the Silliman University Divinity School in Dumaguete City, Philippines, where he earned a Bachelor of Theology in 1990.

"Having been in a war zone for five years prior to coming to AMBS, I was overwhelmed and consumed by so much anger at the Philippine government and Philippine army for human atrocities and all kinds of injustices, militarization and oppression committed against Filipino people," he said.

Al credits AMBS with introducing him to peace studies and peacebuilding, naming "memorable and life-changing courses" taught by the Koontzes as well as now retired professors **Mary Schertz** and **Daniel Schipani**. He also recalled the vibrant and supportive learning community and noted that he has continued relationships from his AMBS cohort, collaborating on projects around the world.

In 2007, Al earned a Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University (GMU) in Fairfax. Now an associate professor at GMU's School of Integrative Studies, he focuses his work and teaching on intercultural and interreligious dialogue, cross-cultural experiential learning, conflict resolution and transformation, human trafficking and smuggling, community-based trauma healing, and refugee and internal displacement, among other fields.

"I am who and where I am today partly because of AMBS through MCC," he said.

Roger and Cynthia not only experienced spiritual and academic growth during their time at AMBS, but also met each other while studying at the seminary, marrying in the AMBS chapel in 1987.

Originally from northwestern Ohio, Cynthia earned her bachelor's degree in music from Bluffton College (now University) in 1976, taught public school music, and then earned her master's degree in music theory from Bowling Green State



Cynthia and Roger Neufeld Smith
 Credit: Jakob Seiferth

University in 1982. Feeling unsatisfied with her life and uncertain about what to do next, she came to AMBS in the fall of 1984 "for a year of discernment." She took organ and piano lessons while at AMBS and ended up focusing her MDiv studies on worship and music. She earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in church music from the University of Kansas in Lawrence in 2000.

Roger, who grew up in central Kansas, graduated from Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, in 1975 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He worked four years as a youth pastor at his home congregation, First Mennonite Church in Newton, and one year as a research chemist in Wichita, Kansas, before testing the "seminary waters" by enrolling in January interterm classes at AMBS in 1981 and 1982.

"As I moved into a leadership role with our church's young adult group and lived in a household that aspired to be an intentional Christian community, I realized that I needed more biblical background and pastoral skills to be a ministry leader," he said. "Though I still had doubts about pastoral ministry as a profession [after the interterm classes], I decided to enroll full time at AMBS to learn how to be a Christian minister."

Roger said his professors helped him gain the biblical grounding and pastoral skills he's used throughout his ministry. (continued on p. 7)

ALUMNI NEWS

ALUMNI NEWS NOTES
DEGREE ABBREVIATIONS

- BDiv: Bachelor of Divinity
- BTh: Bachelor of Theology
- MACF: Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- MAPS: Master of Arts: Peace Studies
- MATS: Master of Arts: Theological Studies
- MDiv: Master of Divinity
- “Alum” designates those who completed 12 or more credit hours but did not earn a degree.

STAY CONNECTED!

The AMBS Alumni Facebook Group features news about our alumni:

[facebook.com/groups/amsbalumni](https://www.facebook.com/groups/amsbalumni)

If you have updates to share, send them to jbjohnson@amsb.edu or post them directly in the Alumni Facebook Group.

ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP
AWARDED

Grant Miller, a Master of Divinity student from Goshen, Indiana, has received the Alumni Scholarship for the 2018–19 academic year. Thank you to the alumni who contributed and are supporting Grant in his studies!

Weldon Nisly (MAPS 1977) of Seattle recently went with Christian Peacemaker Teams to Palestine and Iraqi Kurdistan.

Daniel Liechty (MAPS 1978), Professor in the School of Social Work at Illinois State University, received the honorary title Distinguished Lecturer in Arts and Sciences — the highest honor given within ISU’s College of Arts and Sciences.

Donald Stoesz (MDiv 1981) published *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers’ Use of Scripture: 1874–1977* (FriesenPress, 2018).

Janet Bergen (alum) was named Executive Director of Care Services at Menno Place in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Richard Gehring (MDiv 1991) had a sermon, “Nevertheless, She Persisted,” published in *Preaching as Resistance* (Chalice Press, 2018).

Glenn D. Stevens (MATS 1991) retired from an interim pastorate at Hollins Road Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Virginia, and does occasional pulpit supply.

Brian Dyck (MDiv 1992) was named a distinguished alum of Canadian Mennonite University. He is the Migration and Resettlement Program Coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Canada. He worked with leadership development and HIV/AIDS education among African Indigenous Churches in South Africa (1999–2005).

Susan Kennel Harrison (MDiv 1992) is Coordinator of Spiritual Care for the Hospice of Windsor and Essex County (Ontario) – Erie Shores Campus.

Lee Pfahler (MAPS 1992, MDiv 2013) is a staff chaplain at Goshen (Indiana)

Health, ministering primarily in the outpatient areas of Heart and Vascular Rehabilitation, the Center for Cancer Care, and Day Surgery.

Eric Buller (MDiv 1997) was a summer sabbatical pastor at Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kansas, and is now serving as half-time Interim Pastor at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita.

Elisabeth Kunjam (MACF 2004) is on the Mennonite World Conference Deacons Commission, representing India.

Jeremy Garber (MDiv 2005) is the Academic Advising and Writing Center Coordinator at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, as well as an adjunct instructor in theology. He received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Iliff and the University of Denver in 2014. His book, *Another Way: Thinking Together About the Holy Spirit*, will be published by Wipf & Stock in 2019.

Rachel Siemens (MDiv 2007) began at Carman (Manitoba) Mennonite Church Nov. 1.

Nekeisha Alayna Alexis (MATS 2008) was a speaker at the first Indiana Animal Rights March Sept. 1 in Indianapolis.

Barbara Devereaux (MDiv 2010) was ordained for Christian ministry Nov. 25 at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Indiana. She serves Kern Road and Hudson Lake Mennonite Church, New Carlisle, Indiana, when the pastors are away.

Anna Ruth Hershberger (MDiv 2012) served as Transitional Pastor at Belmont Neighborhood Fellowship in Elkhart, Indiana, until the end of 2018.

Ken Quiring (MDiv 1999), Pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Brandon, Manitoba, and a member of the Network of Biblical Storytellers, gave a presentation on biblical storytelling and creation care stories and presented Scriptures for a number of the worship sessions during AMBS’s Rooted and Grounded Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship, Sept. 27–29, 2018. • **Credit: Perdian Tumanan**



Leslie Homer-Cattell (MDiv 2013) is Administrative Pastor at Community Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Katherine Goerzen (MDiv 2015) and **Peter Goerzen** (MDiv 2015) authored a MennoMedia Bible study series, *Upside-Down Living: Parenting*.

Gabriel Pennington (MDiv 2016) was ordained Oct. 28 at Pleasant View Mennonite Church in Hydro, Oklahoma, where he serves as Associate Pastor.

Asia Frye (MDiv 2017) is Coordinator for Spiritual Life at McPherson (Kansas) College.

Kristine Regehr (MDiv 2017) is living in North Newton, Kansas, and serving as half-time Transitional Pastor at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kansas.

Janette Lyndaker Gallagher (MDiv 2018) began as Interim Pastor of Community Mennonite Fellowship in Corning, New York, July 23.

Mariah Martin (MDiv 2018) was installed Nov. 4 as Pastor of Bonneyville Mennonite Church, Bristol, Indiana.

Several AMBS alumni were presenters at the Nov. 8–10 Women Doing Theology Conference of Mennonite Church USA's Women in Leadership Project. The event was held at AMBS. **Malinda Elizabeth Berry** (MAPS 2000; faculty) was a keynote speaker, and workshop/paper presenters included **Dorothy Yoder Nyce** (MDiv 1981), **Janeen Bertsche Johnson** (MDiv 1989), **Jackie Wyse-Rhodes** (MDiv 2002), **Jean Kilheffer Hess** (MATS 2004), **Nekeisha Alayna Alexis**

(MATS 2008), **Joanne Gallardo** (MDiv 2010), **Sarah Thompson Nahar** (MDiv 2011) and **Bekah York** (MAPS 2018).

DEATHS (dates are in 2018)

Delbert J. Schrag (BDiv 1952), 97, of Forest Grove, Oregon, Nov. 28.

Milton Harder (BDiv 1954), 93, of Goessel, Kansas, Jan. 30.

Richard W. Yoder (BTh 1956), 88, of Goshen, Indiana, Aug. 12.

Frank Ward (BDiv 1957), 89, of North Newton, Kansas, Sept. 28.

J. Lester Graybill (BDiv 1958), 86, of New Holland, Pennsylvania, April 27.

Catherine Hernley Lundberg (alum), 93, of Goshen, Indiana, July 19.

Irvin. M. Detwiler (alum), 86, of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, Nov. 16.

Vernon P. Lohrentz (BDiv 1960), 87, of North Newton, Kansas, Oct. 13.

Peter J. Neufeld (BDiv 1960), 89, of Hutchinson, Kansas, May 31.

Paul Martin (MDiv 1978), 97, of Lititz, Pennsylvania, Oct. 31.

William Shumaker (MDiv 1980), 87, of West Liberty, Ohio, Sept. 5.

James A. Burkholder (MDiv 1981), 84, of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, June 13.

Alice Ruth Pannabecker Ramseyer (MDiv 1985), 89, of Bluffton, Ohio, Nov. 5.

Phil Thomas (alum), 53, of Goshen, Indiana, Nov. 29.

Irene Wiens (MATS 1993), 77, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Aug. 22.

RECOGNITION (cont'd. from p. 5)

Specifically, he named **Willard Swartley's** New Testament classes and **David Augsburg's** family systems course, which he said had a "profound effect" on his life. Cynthia referenced the Bible classes as having expanded her understanding of how the Bible came to be and of how to read it.

The Neufeld Smiths also named the close community they found at AMBS. The K-Group they formed has met almost every year since their graduation.

"The AMBS student community supported and inspired me to learn and grow in so many ways as we shared and discussed and argued and worshiped and confessed our humanity to one another," said Roger. "The experience of such a learning, worshiping, discipling, sharing community gave me a vision for what God's reign might look like no matter what the situation or context."

From 1988 to 2018, the Neufeld Smiths pastored at Southern Hills. Cynthia also taught worship and congregational arts at the former AMBS–Great Plains Extension in North Newton, Kansas (2000–11). Roger served on the boards of the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice, Interfaith of Topeka and the Topeka Justice Unity Ministry Project. He also served on Western District Conference committees and as WDC moderator. The couple now leads a Mennonite Mission Network Service Adventure unit in Jackson, Mississippi.

"Our training at AMBS — in Bible study, theology, marriage/family systems, etc. — continues to serve us well in this new context," said Cynthia, adding that her education and experience are also contributing to her work on the team that's creating the new *Voices Together* hymnal.

● — *Marlys Weaver-Stoesz*

AMBS alumni (l. to r.) **Bock Ki Kim** (MDiv 2002), **SeongHan Kim** (MAPS 2005) and **SunJu Moon** (MDiv 2011) — speakers for the Korean Anabaptist Conference in South Korea in November 2018 — are pictured with **J. Ron Byler**, Executive Director, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. (at right). Bock Ki and his wife, **Sook Kyoung Park**, are planting a Mennonite church in Seoul; helping the Korea Anabaptist Center and Mennonite Church South Korea; and developing Anabaptist resources in Korean through ongoing translation, writing, presentations and workshops. SeongHan helps lead the Jesus Heart Church, and SunJu is director of the Korea Anabaptist Center. ● *Photo provided*





PRESIDENT'S WINDOW

SARA WENGER SHENK, ED.D.

Reflecting on God-with-us across the globe

I recently received a comment about a colleague at AMBS that made me smile: “At an institution full of idealists, [your colleague] is refreshingly down to earth and pragmatic, while also showing again and again how much she cares.”

I’ve worked at a seminary for most of the last 24 years. I know people have a stereotype about seminaries as anything but a “down-to-earth” place. A caricature that unfortunately gets repeated is that seminaries are all about head knowledge and arguments about abstract doctrines. Sometimes folks are intimidated by the thought of coming to seminary, talking with faculty or meeting with a seminary president because they assume we live in some stratosphere of elitist knowledge that’s out of touch and impractical.

This is *so not* true about AMBS. Oh, I know that some seminaries and professors, mostly from previous generations, majored in ideas that seemed to have a life of their own — disconnected from the lives of real people. But what theological education is really about is reflecting precisely

on where God and human beings meet each other in our homes, churches, farm fields and city streets. Jesus Christ is God come to earth: God-with-us. There is no work more intriguing and mind-blowing than pondering, debating, studying and discerning how God has been with humankind throughout history, is with us now and will be with us forever.

And the wondrous work of theology now is that we can ponder how God is with us in an expanding array of globally diverse down-to-earth contexts. AMBS students currently represent 16 different countries. With online study platforms, AMBS is becoming a global Anabaptist seminary, meeting people where they are — in their own contexts and with their own wisdom about how God is with us in Argentina, Australia, Canada, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, Tanzania and the U.S. I can’t imagine any more exhilarating way to grow in faith and knowledge of God-with-us than to do so in the company of down-to-earth people from all tribes and nations. •

UPCOMING OFFERINGS

Anabaptist Short Course
Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology (online, noncredit)
Sept. 11 – Oct. 22, with **Jamie Pitts**, Ph.D.
ambs.edu/shortcourses

Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program (see pp. 1–2)
ambs.edu/journey

Spiritual Guidance Seminars
Prepare for a ministry of spiritual direction through this supervised program led by **Dan Schrock**, D.Min. In 2019–20, Spiritual Guidance Seminar will take place online and on campus. Advanced Spiritual Guidance Seminar will meet Oct. 7–8, 2019; Feb. 17–18 and May 4–5, 2020. ambs.edu/seminars

Visiting preacher and teacher
Invite AMBS Professor **David B. Miller**, D.Min., to teach or preach on topics such as Christian leadership, missional church, healthy boundaries, holistic witness and more. ambs.edu/workshops

“Reading the Bible with Jesus”
Host a workshop with itinerant Bible teacher **Bryan Moyer Suderman**, M.T.S., for 1–2 days of digging into one of the Gospels to gain tools for reading and interpreting Scripture like Jesus did, in light of today’s world. ambs.edu/workshops

!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth
!Explore gives students in grades 10–12 an opportunity to explore ministry and theology, grow in spiritual practices and biblical engagement and listen for God’s call. The program includes a 100-hour congregational internship and a Group Experience (July 9–25). Scholarships are available. Encourage someone you know to apply! ambs.edu/explore

AMBS Intensive Term courses
Hybrid courses (online May 6 – July 19, with one week on campus: June 3–8) include Ethics and Care: Living and Dying with Purpose; Ethics and Practice of Forgiveness; and Christian Leadership in the 21st Century.

Campus Session 1 courses (May 6–23) include Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture; History of Christian Spirituality; Religion, Violence and Peacebuilding; and The Spirit World and the Global Church.

Campus Session 2 courses (June 10–27) include The Religious Other in the Bible; Performing the Faith; and Practicing and Embodying Nonviolence. Nonadmitted students get 50 percent off their first course! Also, check out audit options for AMBS grads.

ambs.edu/onecourse

Trail of Death: A Pilgrimage of Remembrance, Lament and Transformation

June 3–13. Participants in this pilgrimage will trace the route of the U.S. military’s forced removal of about 850 Potawatomi from their ancestral homeland in northern Indiana to present-day Osawatomie, Kansas, in 1838. ambs.edu/trailofdeath

Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies (see p. 3)
ambs.edu/graduatecertificate

UpComing

MCC alumni plan reunions for 2020

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) continues to encourage alumni to plan and hold reunions in 2020 at its Welcoming Place and guest houses in Akron, Pa., as part of the organization's centennial celebrations. Seven such reunions are already confirmed:

- **May 22-26, 2020:** Akron Service Unit, 1986-1996.
- **June 19-21, 2020:** South Korea.
- **Aug. 21-23, 2020:** Ethiopia.
- **Sept. 4-7, 2020:** Akron Service Unit, 1976-1986.
- **Sept. 24-27, 2020:** Salzburg Pax Unit.
- **Oct. 2-4, 2020:** Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- **Oct. 9-12, 2020:** Burkina Faso.

Send a message to alumni@mcc.org indicating the reunion you wish to attend, and your information will be shared with planners. The Welcoming Place in Akron has large and small meeting rooms, and the guest houses have individual rooms and baths that surround a central social space. MCC can assist planners with contact information of alumni who have given permission to share that information. MCC can suggest speakers and provide reports on current MCC work. For more information about planning a reunion, including rates, contact alumni@mcc.org or call 1-888-563-4676.

—MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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WOMEN'S RETREAT WITH SPEAKER EILEEN KLAASSEN
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 Igniting the Imagination of the Church
 June 28 - July 1, 2019
 Abbotsford, B.C.
 A gathering of our nationwide MC Canada family
 Guest Speaker: Dr. Elaine Heath

- Worship and workshops
- Youth events, including an overnight stay at Camp Squeah
- Programs for children
- Leadership Day for pastors and lay leaders
- MC Canada AGM for delegates
- Field trips to local communities and ministries

Find out more at:
www.ignitegathering2019.ca

Join a Peace-Building Holy Land Tour!

Jordan, Palestine, Israel: A Journey of Hope
 Sept. 12 – 23, 2019 with Nelson Kraybill & Audrey Voth Petkau

The Holy Land from a Woman's Perspective
 Sept. 24 – Oct. 4, 2019, with Kathy Bergen & Shirley Redekop

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Why I still believe in going to church

"It's the place where I can consistently be formed and reoriented to what's really important." On the CM blog, Moses Falco writes about the importance of going to church.

canadianmennonite.org/why-church



Voices Together visual art chosen

Read about the 12 visual art pieces that the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee has chosen for the *Voices Together* hymnal, coming out in 2020.

canadianmennonite.org/vt-art



AMBS trains Sudanese-Canadian to make a difference

Find out about an Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary leadership development program that is meeting participants where they are, in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., and beyond.

canadianmennonite.org/amb-s-journey



Church growth stretches Ethiopian resources

Read about the challenges accompanying the joys of growth, as thousands of people new to Ethiopia's Meserete Kristos Church swell the world's largest Anabaptist conference.

canadianmennonite.org/mkc-growth

Promotional Supplement

explore

A theological experience for youth (grades 10 to 12) who want to develop their leadership gifts. More at ambs.ca/explore

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**Canadian Mennonite
48th Annual Fundraising Dinner**



featuring
Accent Women's Ensemble
Directed by Meredith Hutchinson
**Saturday, April 6, 2019,
6:30 pm**
at Mennonite Heritage Village,
Steinbach, Manitoba

Tickets are free but reservations are required.

To reserve your seats:
email office@canadianmennonite.org and put "CM April 6 dinner"
in the subject line, or call 1-800-378-2524 ext 221.

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Schools Directory featuring Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Global diversity makes for unique learning environment at AMBS

By Annette Brill Bergstresser

Students from 12 countries and six continents—all but Antarctica—are calling the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) campus in Elkhart, Ind., home this academic year.

Together with those studying at a distance, they make up a student body that is the most geographically and culturally diverse the seminary has seen since it began keeping records of such data in the early 1990s, says registrar Scott Janzen.

“One of AMBS’s strengths is that our students have the opportunity to study with people from across the world,” says Daniel Grimes, director of enrollment and financial aid.

AMBS’s 98-member graduate student body includes 21 students from outside of the U.S. and Canada, representing Argentina, Australia, Chile, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya,

South Africa, South Korea, Tanzania and Zambia (as of September 2018). Students who are citizens or legal residents of the U.S. and Canada also bring their experiences of having lived, served and learned in various cross-cultural domestic and global settings.

This semester, 26 students, 12 family members and six employees or volunteers are living at AMBS.

Febri Kristiani, a master of divinity student from Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia, and one of 15 international students living on campus, says she sees AMBS as a place where diversity is welcomed and appreciated: “Learning about God and the Bible, and worshipping with others from different cultures and traditions, is life-giving to me. It helps me to learn and encounter God in different ways and to witness the work of the Spirit in another context and culture.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF PERDIAN TUMANAN

AMBS international students visited Sauder Village Living History Museum and Farm in Archbold, Ohio, in August 2018.

Calendar

British Columbia

Until March 31: "Mennonite churches of the Fraser Valley" exhibit, at the Mennonite Heritage Museum Gallery, Abbotsford.

June 28-July 1: "Igniting the imagination of the church" MC Canada delegate assembly, at the Quality Hotel and Conference Centre, Abbotsford: (28) leaders assembly; (29) business/delegate meeting; (29-1) inspirational conference. Special events for youth and children.

Alberta

March 15-16: MC Alberta annual delegate session, at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury. Theme: "Vision 20/20, Phase 3: Discerning God's call." Speaker: Betty Pries of Credence and Co.

May 13-15: Faith studies conference.

May 31-June 14: Common Ground Treaty Walk, from Edmonton (Treaty 6) to Calgary (Treaty 7). For more information, email Steve Heinrichs, director of MC Canada's Indigenous-Settler Relations, at sheinrichs@mennonitechurch.ca.

June 7-9: MC Alberta women's retreat, at Sylvan Lake.

June 15: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon.

Saskatchewan

March 22-23: Women's retreat, at Shekinah Retreat Centre. Theme: "Walking in worship." Speaker: Eileen Klaassen.

March 26: Youth Farm Bible Camp Vereniki fundraiser, at Rosthern Mennonite Church.

April 6: "Thirsting for God" Lenten silent retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

May 24-26: Junior-high retreat, at Elim.

July 28-Aug. 1: Prairie Youth Gathering, at Shekinah Summer Camp. Theme: "Shake: Rattled by the Radical (Jesus)." Open to students from across Canada entering grades 6 to 12 in the 2018-19 school year. Hosted by MC Saskatchewan and MC Manitoba. Information coming soon to prairieryouth.ca. Follow on Instagram @prairieryouth.ca for the latest updates.

Manitoba

March 15: Exhibitions by Melissa Coyle and Sandra Campbell open at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg. Runs until April 27.

March 15: CMU Festival Chorus and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra perform Verdi's "Requiem," at Winnipeg's Centennial Concert Hall, at 8 p.m.

March 26: CMU spring open house, begins at 10 a.m.

March 30: Jazz at CMU, at 7 p.m.

March 31: Handbell and guitar ensembles perform at CMU, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

April 4: Spring at CMU fundraiser, at CMU, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. Featuring the presentation of the 2019 CMU Pax Award to author Rudy Wiebe.

April 6: Canadian Mennonite 48th annual fundraising dinner, at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, at 6:30 p.m. Music by the Accent Women's Ensemble. Reservations required; email office@canadianmennonite.org and put "CM April 6 dinner" in the subject line, or call toll-free 1-800-378-2524 x224.

April 26: Spring concert, at CMU, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

Until April 12: "Gichitwaawizi'lgewin: Honouring" exhibition of artworks by Catherine Dallaire, at the Grebel Gallery, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

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

March 11,12: Grandparent and Grandchild Days, at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. (Same program each day.). For more information, visit hiddenacres.ca.

March 19,26: Worship clinic for Waterloo Region, at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, from 6 to 9 p.m. each evening. For lay worship leaders, pastors and those who want to reflect on worship practice. Instructor: Sarah Johnson.

March 22: "Let's talk tech," at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 6 to 10 p.m. For youth aged 12 to 18, to explore how technology impacts the church and society.

March 23: Worship clinic for Niagara Region, at Vineland United Mennonite Church, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For lay worship leaders, pastors and those who want to reflect on worship practice. Instructor: Sarah Johnson.

March 31: Pax Christi Chorale presents Miziwe . . . (Everywhere. . .), the world premiere of a newly commissioned oratorio sung in the Ojibwe Odawa language (with subtitles), at Koerner Hall, Toronto, at 3 p.m.

April 6: "Following Jesus together as Anglicans and Mennonites, Pt. 1," at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Instructor: Pablo Hyung Jin Kim Sun.

April 6,7: Menno Singers present "Lamentation," a Lenten service: (6) at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m., (7) at Knox Presbyterian Church, Elora, at 3 p.m.

April 13: Women of MC Eastern Canada Enrichment Day, at Floradale Mennonite Church. Resource person: Marilyn Rudy-Froese. Theme: "Travelling companions: We don't

UpComing

New exhibits at MHC Gallery reflect on endings

WINNIPEG—Endings are a central focus of two new exhibits opening at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). "Extensions of death" by Melissa Coyle meditates on death and decomposition in nature, and "Conservatory files" by Sandra Campbell



Algor Mortis from Extensions of Death by Melissa Coyle

reflects on the closure and demolition of the Conservatory and Palm House in Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park. The exhibits open on March 15 and run until April 27. Death has recently been a key topic of conversation at CMU. The university's most recent event in its Face2Face series took place on Feb. 11 and was entitled "Let's talk about death . . . it won't kill you." And more than a hundred pastors from across Canada gathered at CMU during the following two days for Renew, its annual conference resourcing pastors for ministry. Keynote speaker Thomas Long spoke on the theme of "Death, funerals and the Christian hope." All this reflection and discussion on dying can perhaps help people better understand the meaning of living, says David Balzer, assistant professor of communications and media at CMU. This is what Winnipeg-based artist Coyle explores in her new exhibit. "Death is an inevitable process that is essential for life. To have life, there must be death. The human relationship with nature inspires my recent work as I explore the grotesque and beautiful qualities of decomposing wildlife," she says.

—Canadian Mennonite University

know where we are going but we know how to get there."

April 15,16: Spring seniors retreat, at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Theme: "The many faces of Africa. Speakers: Dave and Mary Lou Klassen. (Same program each day.) For more information, visit hiddenacres.ca. (Register by April 8.)

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

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunity

Mission Minister

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for Mission Minister. The Mission Minister will be a leader who inspires, invites and resources church leaders in disciple-making. Primary areas of responsibility will include overseeing church planting, fostering congregational disciple-making initiatives, and building intercultural competency within MCEC.

The applicant for this full-time position will be a strong team builder and a skilled communicator with excellent listening skills. He/she will work with the senior staff team to realize MCEC's mission of extending the peace of Jesus Christ.

Applicants will have previous leadership experience, a commitment to Anabaptist theology, and experience in church planting. Experience in intercultural settings and the ability to speak more than one language would be an asset.

Post-graduate theological training is preferred. The start date is flexible but preferably late Fall 2019. Résumé and current Ministerial Leadership Information form are due by March 15, 2019. MCEC also welcomes nominations for this position. For more information, a job description, or to submit an application or nomination contact:

Brent Charette
MCEC Operations and Church Engagement Minister
Phone: 1-855-476-2500 Ext. 709
E-mail: bcharette@mcec.ca
Web: www.mcec.ca



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Mennonite Central Committee
Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

British Columbia

Employment opportunity
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

This full-time position provides leadership and expertise to the accounting operations of MCC BC and its subsidiaries, and manages the various administrative functions of the organization.

Qualifications
CPA Designation. Minimum of 5 years of accounting experience in a leadership and supervisory role. Knowledge and experience of both for-profit and not-for-profit accounting principles & regulations strongly desired. Strong analytical and communication skills. Ability to coordinate finance and administrative needs in a multi-faceted organization.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to: a personal Christian faith and discipleship; active church membership; and nonviolent peacemaking.

Anticipated Start Date: May 1, 2019
For full job description and to apply visit: mccbc.ca/openings
For more information contact Sophie Tiessen-Eigbrike, MCC BC HR Manager at 604-850-6639 Ext 1129

MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

Mennonite Collegiate Institute, located in Gretna, Manitoba, is searching for a *principal* to start in August 2019.

Our principal must be passionate about our mission, provide effective leadership, promote a vision for Christian education and build community – both within the school and its supporting constituency. We are seeking a person with a strong calling to serve within this dynamic context.

MCI continues to build upon a strong heritage of Christian education, which began in 1889. Our school includes both domestic and international students from Grades 9-12. Approximately one-half live on campus in the school's residence.

To find out more about this exciting position or to submit a resume, please contact the search committee at searchteam@mciblues.net.

www.mciblues.net



A human reflection of creation



PHOTO BY ROSS W. MUIR

‘The earth, the biosphere, the innumerable plants and animals all have their own standing before God. None of it is ours. Looking through this biblical lens at our modern lives and the energy they require, it becomes clear that something has to change.’

**(Anthony G. Siegrist and Scott Morton Ninomiya,
in ‘Reflections of creation,’ pages 4 to 6)**