



Lighting a fire in children's faith

Focus on Camps begins on pg. 32

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INSIDE

- A call to strengthen our core 4
- Making food stories meaningful 18
- Who do you support when a community is divided? 20

EDITORIAL

Church stories

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Editor



“The congregation is the foundational unit and expression of God’s work in the world.” That was a

key affirmation in the Future Directions process that led to the 2017 re-organization of Mennonite Church Canada. In this issue’s feature starting on page 4, MC Canada’s executive minister, Doug Klassen, calls for a strengthening of our denomination’s core: the congregations.

The churches in MC Canada number about 210, scattered from British Columbia to New Brunswick. Browsing through the regional church directories, one comes across some unusual church names: there’s Eyebrow Mennonite and Superb Mennonite, both in Saskatchewan. There’s a Sterling in Manitoba and a Stirling in Ontario.

The list includes nine churches with “First” in their name, located in five provinces! One of them is actually called “The First Mennonite Church,” which happens to be the oldest Mennonite church in Canada. It’s in Vineland, Ont.

Some churches include theological terms in their names: Community, Faith, Grace, Hope, and four with Peace in their name. There is a Covenant church, a Jubilee church and a Trinity church. Chosen church names include: New Life, Living Hope, Living Stones, Living Water, Living Word and Level Ground.

Almost every issue of *Canadian Mennonite* carries at least one story of an MC Canada congregation. It would be unwise to draw too many conclusions, but here are a few things their stories show:

- **Church members like** to have fun through picnics, plays, singing, movies and sports. One church unleashed creativity by hosting an art show and another made crokinole boards to raise money for the ministry of International Witness.
- **Congregations help meet** the needs of their neighbourhoods through community gardens and collaboration with food banks. Churches provide welcome to refugees, share space with community groups and sponsor a house for people in recovery.
- **Facing new realities** due to demographic and societal changes, congregations are exploring what their role is in their community. One church re-arranged its worship space to create more connections with worshippers. One church tries “away” activities in the place of every-Sunday traditional worship. Congregations are learning to cooperate with each other through joint education events and other joint projects.
- **Churches depend on** volunteers. One church celebrated the ministry of long-time deacons in its midst. Some churches with part-time staff call on all congregants to pitch in to help make church activities happen.
- **Congregations gain in** vision and vitality when they take active steps to become a place of welcome. An Alberta church prays about reaching out to more Oromo people in their city and beyond. Other churches are deliberate about living as a body comprising people from multiple cultures. Some churches are expanding their welcome to include members of the LGBTQ+ community.

As we hear all these stories, let’s celebrate the longevity of congregations that mark decades of existence. And let’s find ways to walk alongside the congregations facing the hard realization that they may no longer be sustainable.

Sometimes the stories remind us of unfinished business. In the past year, stories told of four churches that decided to end their official connections with their regional church. This news brings sadness but also a challenge. We have the ongoing opportunity to listen to those churches that feel uncomfortable within the MC Canada fold. How do we, as individuals and as congregations, truly hear each other’s concerns, working at a unity that will likely not mean total agreement? Can disparate congregations find ways to strengthen the bonds between them in spite of their differences?

We can pray for each other, taking inspiration from Nordheim (Man.) Mennonite Church, that, although geographically distant from its sister congregations, is taking time to learn about and pray for them on a regular basis. We can seize the opportunity to visit each other’s worship services and to take part in outreach projects together. Maybe our churches can even find ways to have fun together!

Corrections

- **The Asian Ecumenical Women’s** Assembly was held in Hsinchu, Taiwan. Incorrect information appeared in the Et cetera brief on page 11 of the Jan. 30 issue. (The pictured church was in Hualien, Taiwan, however.)
- **Linda Tiessen’s name** was spelled incorrectly in the photo caption on page 19 of the Feb. 3 issue.

Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors. ❧

CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 17, 2020 / VOL. 24, NO. 4

ABOUT THE COVER:

Huxley Phillips, left, Mason Avery and De'Sean Burnette enjoy a campfire at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, Ont. Our Focus on Camps section begins on page 32.

PHOTO: AARON LANTZ / HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP

'Mennonite' ministry flourishes 14

The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers opens up a new location while continuing to ponder its 'Mennonite' heritage and identity.

Congregation goes to the movies 19

Crossroads Community Church members in Abbotsford, B.C., invite their friends and neighbours to watch *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* with them, taking in the wisdom and values of Mr. Rogers.

Reading and remembering 25

Hilda Hildebrand uses *Shine On: A Story Bible* to connect with her aging mother, who is coping with dementia.

Teaching peace across Asia and around the world 26

CMU professor Wendy Kroeker brings her decades of peacebuilding experience to assist Hong Kong churches deal with the fallout of the recent protests there that have sown generational discord.

A call to strengthen our core 4

Doug Klassen, MC
Canada's executive minister, reflects on the relative strengths of the body of Christ's torso (church congregations) and its 'Popeye' arms (camps, schools and parachurch organizations).



Regular features:

For discussion 7 Readers write 8 Milestones 8
A moment from yesterday 9 ServiceLinks 23
Online NOW! 24 Calendar 38 Classifieds 39

Dear MC Saskatchewan: Ryan Siemens 9

'Unusual kindness' Ed Olfert 10

Slow down for nature Randy Haluza-Delay 11

Lessons from the wheel Joshua Penfold 12

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FEATURE

A call to strengthen our core

... because the 'Popeye church' lives in constant risk of debilitating injury

By Doug Klassen
Mennonite Church Canada



PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/ALPHASPIRIT

A year ago I asked my oldest daughter, who was in the middle of a master of physiotherapy program at the University of Manitoba, to help me figure out what was wrong with my left foot. Her assessment was, “Dad, you are messed up. Make an appointment to see a physiotherapist.”

I dutifully went. It turned out that, while I re-shingled my roof the previous summer, I put one of my lower vertebrae out, so that it was pinching a nerve that ran down to my foot. Something in my lower back was messing up the function of one of my limbs. The remedy? Core exercises to stretch, twist and strengthen my abdominal muscles.

I let out a sigh, remembering the days not too many years ago when I went to our local gym in our Calgary neighbourhood at 5:30 each weekday morning. Back then, I trained my core, but, admittedly, I focussed more on my arms and chest. As the kids got older and needed to be driven to early morning volleyball practices, I got

out of the routine and eventually quit.

My body functioned pretty well in the meantime—until I started carrying those heavy bundles of shingles and my vertebrae slipped on that roofing project.

Physiotherapy for the church body

There are a number of metaphors used in the New Testament to describe the nature of the church. Probably the most well-known is Paul’s illustration of the body (I Corinthians 12).

While some other denominations struggle with this passage because of their hierarchical structures, for the Mennonite church this often reads like motherhood and apple pie. We accept this. We are a priesthood of all believers after all; everyone has a role to play and no role is too small or unimportant.

Yet, for the past number of years, I have been wondering if our church body needs some physiotherapy.

I consider the local congregation, our five regional churches, Mennonite Church Canada and congregations

belonging to Mennonite World Conference as the torso of the Mennonite church body. I see Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and its Thrift Shops, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) and other organizations as one of our arms, and I see our Mennonite schools and camp ministries as the other arm.

When I look at the proportions of the Mennonite body, I'm not convinced we're in the shape we should be.

Over the past decade or two, I've seen significant growth in the areas of donor relations, fundraising and program expansions in the arms of our body. As a benefit, all three of our children have attended both elementary and post-secondary Mennonite schools and have spent years at camp as campers and leaders-in-training. They have all been on MCC learning tours that deeply affected their worldviews by demonstrating the ministry of reconciliation (I Corinthians 5:16-20). My spouse has also experienced this in her work with

Ten Thousand Villages and MCC.

So what I write, I write carefully, because I have a strong love for and am deeply invested in each and every organization that is a part of the Mennonite body.

A 'Popeye church'?

Lately, I feel that local congregations are becoming more disadvantaged because they don't have the time, energy or the capacity to increase donor engagement or build programs like our "arm" organizations. I wonder if our church body is growing into a "Popeye church."

Popeye, a cartoon character from the 1930s, had huge arms but a spindly torso. Any physical trainer, physiotherapist or kinesiology student will tell you that this body type is a recipe for injury. The stronger the torso, the greater the capacity to do the heavy lifting.

One winter morning, I went with a friend to an old school "strongman" gym. It was all free weights, atlas balls, I-beams for farmers' walks, and a steel cylinder for the log press. The other three guys there were enormous; one was lifting 325 kilos. Without exception, they were doing heavy combination exercises that strengthened arms and legs, but predominantly they were strengthening their torso, their core.

The focus on core strength allowed them to lift huge amounts of weight, and, as a result, their arms, shoulders and legs naturally grew larger and stronger.

Certainly not everyone should be—or wants to look like—a strongman or woman. But the metaphor is instructive.

In Colossians, Paul talks about Christ being the head of the body. Thinking physiologically, all movement of the

(Continued on page 6)

/// School response

Doug Klassen's vision for the future of the church and its partnering agencies is compelling. Like many other communities and institutions, the church is in the throes of profound transition, and imagining its future is challenging.

That said, the opportunity to envision new forms of partnership lies before us. I think his call for renewed congregational and denominational witness is critical. Alongside, it is vital that our schools be anchored in the church in its local, denominational, ecumenical and global expressions.

In my present context at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), we welcome the widest diversity of students. Some are pursuing lives of ministry in the church or as its lay members. Others do not connect with a congregational body, yet they express yearnings and affinities for the faith, hope, justice and mercy to which the church is called.

Alongside our students, we long for clarity of call and hope from the church. Given what we are facing in our world today, our schools and the students they serve play a critical role in how the witness and future of the church are imagined.

Schools have the capacity to nurture and extend the church's imagination. This will continue only as schools are nourished through a core torso called church.

—TERRY SCHELLENBERG
CMU EXTERNAL VICE-PRESIDENT



/// MCC response

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a ministry of the Anabaptist church. At its best, MCC is strengthening the church torso, not building its own outsized biceps, by:

- **Gathering as a community to tie comforters for families we have never met.**
- **Driving the mother of a Syrian family to English class as part of our congregation's refugee sponsorship**

When congregations engage with MCC, it is not a bench-press lift to make the MCC arm stronger. It is an all-body sharing of God's love that builds a whole and healthy church community ready for more Jesus-following ministry. An MCC that acts otherwise is feeding spinach to the Popeye Doug Klassen describes.

However, that torso of the church body is changing dramatically. We do not know what will emerge as Jesus-followers find new and unusual ways to be the church. This change can make us anxious and fearful. My prayer is that we remember the Jesus Spirit is moving in the world and will find life-giving expressions that we cannot yet see.

I believe that MCC, now celebrating 100 years of relief, development and peace in the name of Christ, will continue to strengthen that changing and emerging church expression. I hope Anabaptist church leaders embrace MCC as part of their workout regime!

—RICK COBER BAUMAN
MCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



(Continued from page 5)

body originates in the head. The head sends a message to the arms and hands through the torso. Consequently, all movement of the arms and hands are anchored in the torso. If you're going to lift with your arms, your torso has to activate every muscle to hold your body stable so that the lift can be performed safely.

The body of Christ called Mennonite has huge arms. MCC is known for working in the non-glitz areas of the world, being the hands of Jesus. While many disaster-relief organizations rush in to help for a bit and then are gone, MDS is often the last to leave, caring for the forgotten people. We have elementary schools, high schools, Bible colleges, universities and seminaries that train Mennonite students, and many from other denominations, to be the church in the world. The number of leaders for the church that our schools and camps have

produced is overwhelming.

I worry about the strength of our core

But it is in our torso—the local Mennonite churches—where this missional energy is generated week after week through worship, group activities and learning the ways of Christian hospitality. Missional energy comes from the local congregations that gather to share stories of God's activity in the world and to encourage each member to be part of it.

The arms reach out to provide relief, development and education that bless, distribute, heal and redeem, and the arms then bring back to the torso testimonies of lives redeemed, justice done, mercy extended, the hungry fed and leaders trained.

I love it that the Mennonite church has huge arms, but I worry about the strength of our core. Every day, Popeyes

fill physiotherapy offices because they are not equipped for the heavy lifting that they are trying to do with their arms. I worry about the number of people volunteering, engaging and financially supporting the arms of the church, while they neglect to pour their time, energy, donations and even estate funds into our local, regional and nationwide church structure.

I believe that it's in the best interest of both our relief, development and peace arm, and our education/camping arm, to have strong, vibrant, healthy core—meaning thriving local congregations. The muscle fibres in the body's core work together in unity to provide strength and support for these organizations, and they are also birthing new fellowships that can uphold our arms in the future.

The practices or routines in the local congregation are critical for the strength of the whole body, and that strength keeps the church out of the physiotherapist's office. When we join in membership, our covenants state that we will "give and receive counsel" to

/// MDS response

While Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) is a service arm of the Mennonite churches in Canada and the United States, we also see ourselves as having a role to strengthen the core of the church in various ways.

We do it by helping local churches live out their belief that Christians should be the hands and feet of Jesus for those who have been affected by natural disasters—both for others across North America and in their own communities—if natural disasters should strike.

We build up and strengthen the body of Christ by bringing together volunteers from different Mennonite denominations and churches across North America, building common bonds of fellowship and friendship between people from different nationalities, ages, walks of life and theological views—all united by a common goal to serve others.

And we do it by giving youth a chance to serve through summer and year-round programs for youth groups and individuals, giving them an opportunity to put their beliefs into action and to grow closer to God and to others.

Our mission is to restore hope for those who have lost their homes due to natural disasters, and through that to strengthen the church's witness in the world.

—ROSS PENNER

MDS DIRECTOR OF CANADIAN OPERATIONS



/// Camp response

I see strong ties between the body and the arms. There is reciprocal support going back and forth between them, and a recognition that we grow stronger when we work together.

One of the challenges that I and other folks in the camping world wrestle with is how do we encourage the individuals—the youth and adults—to take the passion and excitement they have for camp and carry it back into their local churches?

It is hard to take the "high" that is experienced at camp and translate it into a different community. And, because the onus is not just on individuals to carry the passion back into their faith communities, how are churches creating space particularly for the youth to serve and to have a voice? I think it is critical that we figure it out.

Do I have the "magic pill" that will help us balance the strength between the arms and the torso? No. If anything, I'm adding more questions. But, if we continue to put in the hard work required to grow our muscles, I believe the whole body will benefit.

—CHRIS POT

**HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP PROGRAM
DIRECTOR AND CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
MENNONITE CAMPING ASSOCIATION**



each other. Through accountability, we commit to not only being present but making whole-life contributions.

Strong congregations have a practice or routine whereby a culture of call is created. There needs to be places where calls to ministry can be explored. During my 27 years of pastoral ministry, I was continually amazed at the gifts, talents and abilities that God gave the people in those congregations. But those gifts need to be exercised. Like core muscle, the greater the efforts, the greater the church's stability.

Of course, not every congregation can do this on its own. Regional church groups and the nationwide church exist to strengthen local congregations by providing resources, programs and support. Then, like the torso of the human body, when the individual core muscles work together as one, the core can support the efforts of the arms and even help them to increase their size.

Given what we are facing in the world today, our arms need to grow even more to meet the needs. Budgets for our schools, camps, and relief, development and peace organizations need to increase. If they aren't increasing, the root of the problem is likely in the congregations, meaning that we have poor core strength, and, as Paul says, the whole body will suffer (I Corinthians 12:26). Our congregational health is primary to our ability to function as a body and for our future. The Popeye church lives in constant risk of debilitating injury.

Since my family moved to Winnipeg, most of our boxes have been unpacked. One of the few things left to do is to set up a weight room. Before winter arrived, I went up on the roof of our house to evaluate its condition. I need new shingles. Before I start carrying around those 30-kilo bundles next summer, I have to strengthen my core or my whole body will suffer. ❧

Doug Klassen serves as executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada. He attends Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg.



PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/ANRPRODUCTION

The practices or routines in the local congregation are critical for the strength of the whole body, and that strength keeps the church out of the physiotherapist's office.

/// For discussion

1. Have you ever been told by a physiotherapist that you need to strengthen your core muscles? Why is it so tempting to build muscles in the arms rather than strengthening the core? What happens to a body with weak core muscles?
2. What Mennonite institutions (thrift shops, schools, camps, relief organizations) are close to your heart? Do Mennonites tend to have more passion for these organizations than for their congregations? Does more energy and money go into Mennonite institutions than to the church?
3. Doug Klassen writes that he worries about the strength of local congregations. Do you share his concern? Do you think congregations and institutions are in competition with each other? Do you agree that the church is at risk of a debilitating injury?
4. The responses from leaders of Mennonite organizations indicate that they believe they are partners and that they help to strengthen the church. Do you agree? Is the long-term health of Mennonite institutions threatened if the church becomes too weak?
5. What suggestions do you have for strengthening the core muscles of the church?
—By Barb Draper

See related Body of Christ resources at www.commonword.ca/go/1920

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OPINION

✉ Church press seeks to report 'in an honest, balanced fashion'

Re: "Freedom of speech for Christian media?"
Dec. 9, 2019, page 9.

Putting aside for the moment a rather odd expression for division in the church—"bombing the church"—I have difficulty accepting what Kevin Barkowsky seems to say to us in his From Our Leaders column.

Two points are easily inferred from the column:

- **Lay people should** leave sensitive issues to church leadership.
- **Media shouldn't address** controversial issues lest the disagreements be magnified by the debate.

Barkowsky is probably right in saying that controversy is not new to the church, but restoring the core unity of the church and fostering the pursuit of common purpose certainly won't be addressed by stifling conversation about abortion, gay marriage or the death penalty.

Free speech rights are not so much about the right to say whatever you want; they're primarily about freedom from the censorship and suppression of dialogue.

Our media—*Canadian Mennonite*, *The Mennonite* and others—have always sought to report current dialogue in an honest, balanced fashion, and when the discernment on controversial issues is going on among the membership, our media-censoring discussion would most certainly be counter-productive.

If Barkowsky meant to say that we desperately need to learn to dialogue in more respectful, civil ways while keeping our focus on the church's primary mission, I agree totally.

GEORGE EPP, ROSTHERN, SASK.

✉ Are tattoos pleasing to God or good for your health?

Seeing people with tattoos raises this question:
Are tattoos pleasing to God?

An answer to this question is given in Leviticus

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.

19:28: "You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Lord" (NKJV).

The Mayo Clinic describes tattoo health risks in this statement: "Tattoos breach the skin, which means that skin infections and other complications are possible." It elaborates on the specifics of the other complications that are too numerous to share.

This raises the question: Are disobeying God and the health risks really worth getting a tattoo?

PAUL JANTZI, MILVERTON, ONT.

✉ Columnist hits the mark

Re: "Paradoxical faith," Jan. 6, page 12.

Troy Watson's Life in the Postmodern Shift column hit the nail on the head for me. I look forward to reading more about this.

GARY D. BRAUN, CALGARY

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Horst—Samuel David (b. Dec. 19, 2019), to Gerry and Jacqueline Horst, Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Nowak—Brynlee (b. Jan. 13, 2020), to Kory and Chantel Nowak, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

Ropp—Hailey Carolyn (b. Dec. 31, 2019), to Heather and Brent Ropp, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Witzel—Ella Grace (b. Jan. 15, 2020), to Ashley and Jon Witzel, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Deaths

Bartel—Margaret (Regier), 95 (b. June 6, 1924; d. Jan. 20, 2020), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Driediger—Susan (Bergen), 91 (b. April 3, 1928; d. Jan. 17, 2020), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Gervais—Almeda (Shoemaker), 74 (b. May 26, 1945; d. Jan. 3, 2020), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Loewen—Anna, 98 (b. April 21, 1921; d. Jan. 12, 2020), Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Reist—Salome, 96 (b. Feb. 28, 1923; d. Jan. 15, 2020), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Yutzi—Miriam 95 (b. Oct. 10, 1924; d. Jan. 20, 2020), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, 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

Dear MC Saskatchewan:

Ryan Siemens

In 2018, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan began a three-year journey called “Deepening our walk.” In year one, we opened ourselves to encounters with God’s presence by “Deepening our walk with Christ.” This theme grew out of an awareness that, if we desire to live well in this day of turmoil and uncertainty, we need to re-centre ourselves on Jesus Christ, the one who invites us to the table and transforms us more fully into his image.

In year two, we built upon this theme, recognizing that we are not alone at the table. As tempting as it is to individualize our faith, “Deepening our walk with Christ” inevitability leads us to “Deepening our walk with each other.” It’s at the table of the Lord, in the presence of Christ and each other, that we are transformed from individuals into a community—a people no less—who seek together to pattern our lives after Jesus, learning to live and love the way he did.

In year three, we continue to build upon this theme. As important as it is to create this new and transformed community, this is not the “end result” of Christian spirituality. The goal is not to

build or create perfect Christian communities for the sake of themselves. Instead, these communities are created for the sake of the world. “Deepening our

tions in the hope of making the right tweaks, all the while forgetting what it is this container, or “structure,” was created for and called to do in the first place.

The goal is not to build or create perfect Christian communities for the sake of themselves.

walk with our neighbour” is a reminder that the church, be it a house church, a congregation, a regional church or a nationwide community of faith, was created for a purpose, a mission even, so that the world may encounter the transformative presence of Jesus Christ in their lives and communities.

A friend recently commented that, as Mennonites, when faced with stress or uncertainty, our tendency is to go to structure. Let’s call structure our “safe place.” If we could only create the perfect “container,” then we can keep on going.

And so we pull out the outdated constitution, check when we last updated the bylaws—and yes, MC Saskatchewan is in the process of much-needed bylaw changes—and scan over the job descrip-

“Deepening our walk with our neighbour” reminds us to turn our faces toward the world, working for wholeness (*shalom*), joy and reconciliation. To quote Palmer Becker in *Anabaptist Essentials*: “Reconciliation is the centre of our work.” Reconciliation in our relationship with God, with each other and with the world.

While we continue to live in times of significant change in society and the church, may we turn our faces toward our communities, neighbourhoods and world, so that God’s reconciling love and grace may transform us all. ✎



Ryan Siemens is executive minister of MC Saskatchewan.

A moment from yesterday



You can find all kinds of things in the archives, including humour. In a report dated Jan. 25, 1963, Rev. David P. Neufeld wrote, “During the course of the last year I have come to sympathize with a man who was called to be the executive secretary of one of our larger denominations [U.S. Protestant Episcopal Bishop, Stephen F. Bayne Jr.]... When asked how he felt about his new job, he commented, ‘I feel just like a mosquito that flew into a nudist camp... I know what I ought to do, but I don’t know where to begin.’” In 1961, Neufeld (1919-1982) moved his family to Winnipeg, where he became the first executive secretary for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Text: Conrad Stoesz
Photo: Mennonite Heritage Archives / David P. Neufeld
Fonds



archives.mhsc.ca

IN THE IMAGE

‘Unusual kindness’

Ed Olfert

On Feb. 2, I attended a worship service that mattered.

It was an ecumenical service, held as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Here in Laird, Sask., population somewhere south of 300, three churches participated. All are, by most standards, laughably small. And yet, there we were, crowded into tiny St. John's Lutheran Church.

The service began with the Lutheran pastor, Jason, asking for announcements. A woman responded, obviously the crucial person responsible for organizing the post-service potluck. She announced, “We have lots of food! So please phone your family and friends, even if they're not here for the service, to come eat with us!”

An inclusive tone was set, one that resonated for the remainder of the morning. Participants from the three churches joined in welcoming, prayers of pardon and reconciliation, and reading Scripture. Jason referred to Acts 28:2, and held up the image of showing “*unusual kindness*.” That unusual kindness isn't about us, but rather the marvellous work that God is doing through us.

I thought of the Sunday brunch that this tiny Lutheran congregation creates

annually on a cold January Sunday. Church that day becomes a time for flipping pancakes, frying sausages and scrambling eggs. Then, as the two local Mennonite congregations end their worship, they gather at the seniors hall and enjoy brunch with the Lutherans and the rest of the community. Donations are forwarded to the local food bank.

My thoughts about unusual kindness brought to mind a visit with a St. John's friend, someone with whom I rub shoulders at the same food bank. I asked him how large the Sunday attendance usually was. He came up with eight or nine. Jason drives out from Saskatoon every two weeks; on the other Sundays, the doors stay closed. This has been the activity, and more or less the attendance, of the church for decades. There is no feeling of grief, no feeling of despair, but rather a celebration that this faith community chooses to gather in this intimate version of worship.

As the Feb. 2 service carried on, my eyes explored the congregation, the leaders, the sanctuary. And questions came to me: Could we gather, equally comfortably, as a community church? Are three plants, yards, three staff, critical in this tiny and close

community? How might denominational distinctives be upheld? What are the denominational identities that might be threatened? Need they be?

If a distinguishing feature of such a group could be found in Jason's unique description of showing unusual kindness, might there be a common will to love and support each other?

As we crowded into the church basement, I again quizzed Ernie about how this tiny group functions. He chuckled, and suggested that, when something needs doing, someone just appears to do it. If there are bills handed in, cheques are mostly signed and returned. Expenses aren't large, other than a current cemetery refurbishing project that involves significant dollars. In a small group, common resolve is arrived at quickly, and things simply move forward.

What is the lesson for struggling congregations everywhere? Are there bold steps to be taken, new models to explore? Are there theological dissonances that hold us back? Can we gather to discern what unusual kindness might entail, and use that as a pointer towards faithful ecumenical community?

St. Augustine suggests that “love is the highest form of knowing.” On Feb. 2, Jason's theology concurred, and I'm intrigued by the possibilities. ❧



Ed Olfert (p2ptheo@sasktel.net) discovers holy wisdom amid potlucks.

Et cetera



MCC builds housing in post-war Europe

In March 1951, Mennonite Central Committee began the PAX project, a volunteer program for conscientious objectors to help rebuild Europe after the Second World War.

In this 1961 photo, PAX participants are working on a housing project in Salzburg, Austria, to provide homes for refugees from Yugoslavia. When PAX ended in 1973, about 1,180 men had served in more than 40 countries.

Source: MCC / Photo by Wayne Yoder



MIND AND SOUL

Slow down for nature

Randy Haluza-Delay

One of the most profound experiences of my life was when I bought a bicycle at the police auction at the precise midpoint of my two-year term of service with Mennonite Central Committee.

For the first year, I'd walked everywhere, navigating the town's muddy roads, paved walks, tracks through the cranberry bogs and Boreal Shield, across the ice in winter to houses on the point, and the long way around when the ice wasn't there.

That bike changed the way I experienced the world. The bike sped up my world immensely. That probably sounds incomprehensible to the most of us who drive cars. How could a bike be such a speed producer?

The long walks from place to place meant I had plenty of time for thinking, singing (pathetically, as everyone in my congregation knows, but alone, who cared?), praying and observing the world around me at the speed of foot. The bike eliminated almost all of that. I careened from place to place. I felt like I had lost touch with God for that second year.

Speed is the way of life nowadays. Canadian Mennonite University philosopher Chris Huebner draws on social theorist Paul Virilio to say that the speed

of the modern world is among the conditions that magnifies its violence. The practice of slowness and patience is a way of resisting the violent logic of speed, Huebner writes in *A Precarious Peace*. And this patience—mindfulness, we might even say—is the root of peace and communion with God and others.

Since this is *Canadian Mennonite's* Focus on Camps issue, I should tell you that I was a camp director, outdoor educator and wilderness guide for the better part of a decade-and-a-half. The lessons of living with only what you can carry for four weeks have faded into the past for me.

Nature operates at speeds that human nature cannot comprehend—much slower for the most part—which is why it is so easy for us to overwhelm nature's ability to absorb human impacts like pollution and fossil-fuel emissions and landmines. If we pay attention to creation, implies God the Creator (*"in whom all things hold together"*), we have to move at slower paces, paces more amenable to being gentle and caring in all our relations.

Every iota of social-science data shows that economic production has accelerated. We live in a world of speed. The bricks of technological innovation

come crashing through the windows quicker than we can replace the glass and get a semblance of "I'm caught up." Do you remember that obsolete technology of fax machines, or can you recall which social-media platforms have come and gone?

Time in nature slows us down. We notice sunsets, birds floating on lakes or coyotes strolling city alleyways. Time in nature also heals, according to a growing amount of medical research. We are biologically attuned to natural environments more than human-dominated ones. We are also attuned to relations with others in creation—a part of, rather than apart from, the rest of creation. I first saw the words of Isaiah 5:8 at a National Parks exhibit. "Woe be unto you [who do things] until you live alone in the land," the prophet declared.

I am no romantic. Famines, floods, plagues and predators are brutal, too, and modern technology has reduced our suffering. So how do we find a sense of *shalom* that includes all of creation and not just the human portion? ❧



Randolph Haluza-DeLay is a participant at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton.

Et cetera

Katie Sowers makes Super Bowl history

Katie Sowers made history earlier this month as the first openly LGBTQ+ person and the first female to coach in the Super Bowl. The 33-year-old is an offensive assistant coach for the San Francisco 49ers, who lost to the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LIV on Feb. 2. Sowers is also an alumna of two Mennonite colleges in the United States—Hesston College in Kansas and Goshen College in Indiana—the latter of which refused, on the basis of her sexual orientation, her offer to voluntarily coach Goshen's Maple Leafs basketball team after she graduated from Goshen in 2009. Rebecca Stoltzfus, Goshen's president, released a statement on Jan. 22, saying that the college is proud of Sowers and acknowledging that "the way Goshen College treated Katie's offer to coach was hurtful and wrong."

Source: Goshen College



NFL PHOTO

Katie Sowers

TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

Lessons from the wheel

Joshua Penfold

My best friend, Mike, is a potter. Our friendship has afforded me the occasional opportunity to sit at his wheel and try my hand at pottery. I've learned that it isn't easy.

Mike is a good teacher, though, and during my first time at the wheel I was able to fashion a half-decent bowl. There were, however, a few times along the way that my creation wasn't working. My piece would become misshapen, so I would destroy my project, clump up my clay and start afresh. Eventually, I produced something I was pleased with.

In Jeremiah 18, God sends Jeremiah to the potter's house to watch the potter refashion a piece that had been marred, just as I had experienced with my piece. God uses this image to compare Israel to the clay in the hands of God, with the potter saying: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does? Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand."

I wondered if this description eases the harsh language of destruction surrounding the passage. Perhaps God isn't utterly destroying them beyond repair, but, instead, is taking a wayward people, a misshapen vessel, and is refashioning it to create a better one:

Destruction for the purpose of re-creation.

The bowl I made at Mike's studio was glazed and fired, and used by my family for about a year until one fateful morning my daughter dropped it onto the floor, breaking it to pieces. She was so upset and came to me sobbing, completely unable to tell me what had happened. The piece that I had made, that I had once formed and reformed when it wasn't working properly, was now permanently destroyed. The potter cannot reshape the pot once it's fired. I was sad to throw it out.

A few days after reading Jeremiah 18, I read Chapter 19: "Break the jar while those who go with you are watching, and say to them, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter's jar is smashed and cannot be repaired."'"

So much for me wanting to ease the harshness of God's destruction of Israel.

In Chapter 18, God offers Israel a chance to turn from its evil ways, but the people don't allow the Potter to reshape them. Instead, they throw their marred misshapen selves into the kiln, where they are fired into irreparable disobedience, to eventually be smashed and broken.

If I can continue to be mouldable by the Potter, I can be reshaped when I've become marred in some way. If my beliefs, practices and ways of being are fired into permanence in the kiln, I'm no longer able to be reshaped by the Potter and I'm dangerously susceptible to breaking.

But what about when we are smashed and broken? I know—because of the rest of Scripture—that, even in this state of seeming irreparability, God offers redemption and restoration in ways unforeseen in Jeremiah's time.

There's something called *kintsugi*, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery using gold to fuse the cracks. It is a fantastic image of making beauty from brokenness, making precious what was useless.

Could Jesus function as a kind of *kintsugi* in Scripture and in us? Jesus takes what is irreparable and makes it whole again, transforming the cracks into something beautiful and usable once again.

Although they were broken and shattered, God never discarded Israel. I wish I wouldn't have thrown out my bowl. ❧



Joshua Penfold loves reading the weird, wild and wonderful written Word.

Et cetera

CPT prays for justice in Colombia

Christian Peacemaker Teams prays that the Colombian victims of systematic violence, as well as their families and communities, may find the truth, peace, restitution and justice they deserve after spending more than 60 years in conflict. In 2011, Colombia passed the Victims' Law to provide a path to recognize and repair damages to the victims. But due to opposition and a lack of political will to implement the law, most victims have not received reparations. The Constitutional Court has ordered Congress to extend Law 1448 beyond its 2021 mandate deadline and guarantee its implementation. Unfortunately, the current Congress has a political majority of parties that have, since its conception, been against the law's creation and implementation.

Source: Christian Peacemaker Teams



PERSONAL REFLECTION

Ways to say 'I care'

Maria H. Klassen

Most of us know someone who is going through a difficult time in life: a job loss, separation or divorce, chronic or terminal illness, or the death of a family member or friend.

In these situations the people involved have to face the reality of their circumstances. There are steps to go through and they may include denial, anger, bargaining and depression before they reach acceptance. Dealing with grief in any situation can be a very lonely experience.

In such times, we don't always know how to respond. Here are some ways I

have learned that make a difference, simple ways to say "I care" without saying a word:

- **Pray anytime and** anywhere.
- **Buy and send** a card, or design and make your own.
- **Send a written** copy of a favourite song, poem or lecture on your flash drive.
- **Pass on your** favourite CD or DVD, since music, a movie or humour can lighten up a sad time.
- **Pass on a** favourite book or a list of favourite titles or audio books.
- **Bake an extra** dozen cookies or muffins, or deliver a tray of sandwiches, or a meal.
- **Send, or deliver,** a fruit basket or a cookie bouquet.
- **Send a plant** or a floral arrangement.
- **Give some cash** for a pizza or a movie, especially if there is a loss of income.

If you want to go further, and connect, here are some suggestions:

- **Make a phone** call, and listen.
- **Take the person** out for an afternoon or for a meal, and listen. You don't need to give advice or solve any problems.
- **If there are** children involved, and they are comfortable with you, take them for ice cream. Or drop off a puzzle, game, magazine, book or movie.
- **For older children,** take them to a hockey game or out for pizza. Let them talk about their situation if they want to.
- **Offer to babysit,** if the parent have to go for appointments, or if they need time alone.
- **Offer to take** children to appointments.

Most of these life-changing situations take time, so you can:

- **Keep in regular** contact in whatever way seems most appropriate.
- **Offer to come** to the home and fix that broken hinge or leaky faucet.
- **Send a gift** subscription to a magazine that could be helpful or appreciated.

In this age of social media use, there are some available avenues:

- **Send a message** through Facebook.
- **Connect with the person** through Skype, especially if distance is a reality.
- **Send uplifting quotes** through Pinterest.

Socialization patterns change during many of these circumstances, so you can:

- **Invite the grieving** person to go with you to a social gathering, a lecture or shopping, whatever is appropriate in the situation. Let them know they are not alone.
- **Go to appointments** with the person, write down vital information, and do the driving.
- **Do not skirt** the issue. The person you are walking with knows you are aware of their situation. Let them know they can talk about their circumstances. They need someone to listen to them. They do not need advice, and they don't expect you to solve the situation for them.
- **It may be** appropriate to share what has helped you spiritually through your own difficult times. You might go together to a place of worship; share readings from their religion; or connect the person with a priest, rabbi, imam or pastor.

Walk this journey with your grieving friend. Say that you care by listening and by doing. ❧

Adapted and updated from a column Maria wrote for the May 14, 1990, Mennonite Reporter.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNO PLACE

Take the person out for an afternoon or for a meal, and listen. You don't need to give advice or solve any problems.

NEWS

'Mennonite' ministry flourishes

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers opens new location

By Joanne De Jong
Alberta Correspondent
EDMONTON

In May 1981, the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers opened its doors with 1.5 full-time-equivalent employees, one classroom and a little office. It was started by six Mennonite churches in Edmonton that saw settlement services for newcomers were inadequate and felt convicted that God called them to welcome the stranger.

Now the Centre has four locations and more than 250 full- and part-time employees providing 28 programs in the four areas of settlement services, community services, language services, and employment services.

In order to consolidate staff and services, a new, larger building was rented downtown and some of the smaller locations were closed last November. The former main building on 82nd street was purchased by the Centre and is currently being converted into a language school.

Thomas Bumbeh, one of the Centre's board members from Holyrood Mennonite Church, says he agreed to serve on the board because "I really love the vision and mission. It is a way for me to give back after I was a newcomer myself. It's not easy moving to a new country where you have no idea what is ahead of you."

He is helping to organize a Mennonite fundraiser in order to renovate the language school. The classic Mennonite soup and pie event, as well as a global choir concert, will all be part of a series of fundraisers, with the goal of raising \$630,000 through individual and Mennonite partners. But learning English and finding employment are not the only things it does. "Wintergration" helps newcomers learn how to embrace the winter

through outdoor activities. Cooking classes and a choir are enjoyable ways to connect. And newcomers who arrive as engineers can re-certify, and training is given for future accountants.

But is the Centre still considered 'Mennonite'?

Don Baergen, one of the original employees, still works at the Centre after 38 years. He recalls how every new executive director wonders if the Centre should keep the Mennonite name, claiming its removal would make the organization more inclusive. However, he notes that it is the Centre's employees from non-Canadian cultures who insist the name "Mennonite" is synonymous with hospitality and welcome, and therefore should not be removed.

According to Kevin Guenther Trautwein, a Mennonite pastor and vice-chair of the Centre's board, "Mennonites still have the potential to hold over 50 percent of the board seats."

There are now three main Mennonite

churches—Edmonton First Mennonite Church, Holyrood Mennonite Church and Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church—represented on the 13-member board, two of which can appoint two board members and one that can appoint three, leaving six seats to be filled by other churches and organizations. Currently, five seats are filled by Mennonites.

He says that, in addition to the Mennonite concept of welcoming the stranger, "there is a Mennonite ethos around working 'with' and not working 'for' people. [The Centre] tries to hire refugees and work with them, and not impose solutions on their challenges. . . . We are also committed to providing a living wage, which means dignity for people working there—not just for the people we serve."

"We may not use spiritual language, but the values of service and helping people to integrate and use their gifts in society is very 'Menno,'" Baergen says, adding that the Centre is unique in that "it has been a place where the churches and community volunteers could connect through friendship and community. Picnics, family gatherings, birthdays and celebrations have always been part of the [Centre's Mennonite] culture."

Having experienced war and the challenge of settling into a new culture themselves, Mennonites had a natural compassion for newcomers to Edmonton. Their values pushed them to reach out and love their new neighbours in the beginning, with the majority of the initial \$30,000 budget coming from local Mennonite churches. ▮



Don Baergen



EDMONTON MENNONITE CENTRE FOR NEWCOMERS PHOTO

Newcomers learn English at the new Language Learning Centre in Edmonton.

Nutai's Cap and the 'big protest man'

Saskatchewan author publishes a children's book about Innu protests

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON

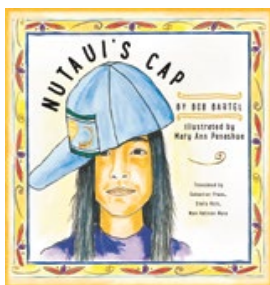
What do an Innu girl from Goose Bay, Labrador, and a retired Mennonite schoolteacher from Saskatoon have in common? The answer is found in a story called *Nutai's Cap*.

The girl—Nanass to her family; Elena Andrew to the rest of the world—is a grown woman now. But when she was 10, she and her family protested low-level military flights that were frightening her people and threatening the wildlife they depended on for food.

The teacher, Bob Bartel, and his wife Dorothy served with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Goose Bay from 1986 to 1989. Part of their job was to support the Innu people in their protests and to photograph and document Innu efforts to stop the low-level flights.

In the 1980s, Canada invited member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to Labrador to train fighter pilots in low-level flying. Flying just above the treetops, supersonic jets could not be detected by radar. The government hoped the Goose Bay military base would become a NATO base. This would dramatically increase the number of flights from almost 6,800 to 40,000 in two supersonic training zones and nine bombing ranges, three of which would test live bombs.

The semi-nomadic Innu people spent their summers hunting around Sheshatshui and Goose Bay. Initially, says Bartel, they wrote letters of protest to the Canadian government. They managed to force a federal environmental assessment, but “some pilots would fly extra low because



they were annoyed with the Innu,” he says.

So the people decided to be proactive. “Their strategy was to walk on the runways in order to prevent flights from taking off,” says Bartel. When the military used razor wire to keep them off the runways, protesters took boards from the fence, placed

them over the razor wire, and walked on the boards to get onto the runways.

Protest leaders were arrested and jailed in Stephenville, Nfld. Bartel was also arrested for loaning the Innu the MCC vehicle he was driving.

Sometime during the protests, Bartel heard the story of Nanass. For 30 years, he says, the story rattled around in his head. Finally, he crafted it into a children's book.

The story begins when Nanass asks Nutai, her father, to take her fishing. Later, while feasting on her catch, the family is thrown to the ground in terror when a fighter jet flies over their camp.

Nutai organizes a protest. People will walk on the runway to prevent planes from taking off. But while they are protesting, the police arrive and Nutai is arrested. As he is forced into the police car, Nutai's cap, bearing the Innu flag, falls to the ground.

After the police take Nutai away, Nanass picks up her father's cap. That night she goes to sleep holding it and dreams of the land.

Not sure how to publish the story, Bartel contacted Camille Fouillard, a friend from his Labrador days. He didn't know it at the time, but Fouillard had since become director of curriculum for Innu schools in Labrador.

Fouillard felt Bartel's story should be part of the Innu curriculum. She asked Mary Anne Penashue, a pre-eminent Innu artist, to illustrate the book. She found translators to render the tale in two Innu dialects. She also lined up publishers and funding for multiple copies of the book to be placed in every Innu school.

Andrew (Nanass) worked closely with Fouillard, giving Bartel suggestions to improve the story's accuracy.

Innu protests didn't stop low-level flights, but they delayed them, says Bartel. When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, symbolizing the end of the Cold War, the push for low-level training greatly diminished. And the advent of drone technology made low-level flights irrelevant.

When MCC closed its Labrador program in March 2019, Bartel returned for a visit. While there, he met Andrew and her parents.

Bartel wondered if the Innu people would remember him. “Rick Cober Bauman [who served under MCC in Labrador with Bartel, and is now executive director of MCC Canada] took me to the home of Elder Elizabeth Penashue and asked her if she remembered me,” Bartel says. “She looked at me and her face broke into a big smile. ‘Big protest man!’ she said.”

“That was worth the trip,” he says.

Seeing whole families protesting together made a strong impression on Bartel. “I saw teenagers taking elders to the bombing range and setting up tents,” he says. “Pilots would have to stop bombing.” Whole families participated, from “babes in arms” to “elders with canes,” he says.

Bartel sees their protest methods as highly relevant today. “Now families are protesting climate change. This was the recipe,” he says, “and [this is] what it will cost.” ❧

Nutai's Cap was published in November 2019 by Mamu Tshishkutamashutau Innu Education and Running the Goat, Books & BroadSides. For more information, including photographs of the Innu protest and videos of actual low-level flights, visit bobbartel.com.



Compelled by Christ to serve

Chapter 1 in the Mennonite Central Committee story

By Laura Kalmar

Mennonite Central Committee

At the railroad stations, the sight was appalling. The moment the train halted it was besieged by living skeletons. From out of the rags were lifted bare arms, the wasted fingers extended toward the car windows in entreaty for food.

“Bread, in God’s name, bread!”

These were the words of A.J. Miller, penned in southern Russia (present-day Ukraine) in 1920. Thousands were suffering in the wake of the Russian Revolution.

Mennonites in Canada and the United States heard the pleas of their distant cousins. “What can be done?” they asked.

Mennonite groups knew they would need to work together to accomplish the daunting task ahead. But inter-Mennonite cooperation had always been hindered by differences in theology, practice, culture and language. It was hard to imagine a jointly owned effort.

Nevertheless, the biblical call was clear: *“As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers”* (Galatians 6:10, NIV). There was no choice other than to respond—to be the hands and feet of Jesus to strangers. To become the living gospel.

Five Mennonite denominations agreed to form a temporary “central” committee to gather and distribute relief supplies. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was born. It was July 27, 1920.

Not surprisingly, this fledgling agency faced obstacles. Clayton Kratz, one of the first three workers sent by MCC to oversee the relief efforts, was arrested by the Red Army and disappeared without a trace. Delays in food shipments meant the first relief kitchens couldn’t open until March 1922. And the local government insisted that MCC clothe and feed all people in need, not just Mennonites.

For 100 years, MCC has upheld the

clear and urgent call to help those in need regardless of nationality, race or creed. It has been a “big tent” under which Mennonites and Brethren in Christ (now known in Canada as Be in Christ) have gathered to work together toward a common mission. And its service has been influenced by a spirit of generosity, tenacity and sacrifice.

Beyond relief

Corn meal, dark bread and warm cocoa. These carefully measured calories were the life-saving rations fed to starving families in the MCC relief kitchens run by Jacob and Anna Funk.

The Funks were part of the masses who knew hunger. They had been forced to sell their wedding rings to buy food, sometimes eating meals of roasted gophers or crows. They said they felt guilty when they received double rations of food. But they knew they needed strength for the strenuous work of overseeing the kitchens.

By May 1922, MCC was feeding up to 25,000 people daily.

The following year, MCC began its first development work, shipping 25 Fordson tractors and ploughs to help farmers plant and harvest new crops.

But, for many, this wasn’t enough to secure a future in the region. It was time to migrate. And so MCC began the work of assisting refugees and immigrants—by the thousands—to Canada, Paraguay and other locations.

The focus on displaced people has been another hallmark of MCC’s work over the past century. Shaped by the biblical call to hospitality and “welcoming the stranger” (Matthew 25:35), MCC has coordinated immigration efforts. It has also worked with communities to provide relief and support for people living in places they don’t call “home.”



MCC PHOTO BY A.W. SLAGEL

An interior view of a refugee train with a family of Mennonites from Schoenwiese, southern Russia (present-day Ukraine).

This work has often led MCC into the halls of Canadian power. In 1922, the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (CMBC, which later became part of MCC Canada) met with Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, securing a place for thousands of Mennonites hoping to immigrate to Canada.

At the same time, CMBC negotiated an agreement with the Canadian Pacific Railway (now CP Rail) for those families to travel on credit rather than paying their fares up front. Between 1923 and 1930, some 20,000 Mennonites came to Canada with the help of CMBC and CP Rail.

Celebrating 100 years

A century later, the work of “relief, development and peace in the name of Christ” continues. There is still much to be done. The need to bring Christ’s love and hope to people around the world is as urgent as ever. The number of displaced people has reached record highs, and a cry for bread still rings in the air. The need to work together remains.

MCC is grateful for God’s leading over the past century, for faithful and generous supporters who have journeyed with the organization, and for knowing the “temporary” committee formed back in 1920 endures today. ❧

This is the first in a series of three articles that will appear in Canadian Mennonite throughout 2020.

To learn more about MCC’s yearlong centennial celebration and how to get involved, visit mcccandada.ca/centennial.



Sharing stories that spell MCC

Osler Mennonite Church marks MCC centennial with creative celebration

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
OSLER, SASK.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and one Saskatchewan congregation got off to an early start in celebrating it.

Osler Mennonite Church chose Jan. 26 as “MCC Sunday,” inviting MCC Saskatchewan executive director Eileen Klassen Hamm to be its guest speaker.

Celebration organizers invited congregants to come to church dressed in their

and compassion with the world:

- **Citing Genesis 1**, she said God’s love is evident in all creation, and in each person. It’s a beautiful but also a broken world.
- **The Emmaus Road** story in Luke 24 suggests that it’s only “when we sit down and eat together that we recognize one another,” she said.
- **Citing II Corinthians 5:18**—“*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself*

buns and cocoa back into the sanctuary for the Sunday school hour, where they shared stories of their MCC experiences.

Kathy and Dick Braun served in Bolivia for six years; Jake and Louise Buhler spent 20 years with MCC in Vietnam and Thailand; Jim and Margaret Dyck served for six years in Nigeria. Steve Guenther also spoke about his three-year service term in Burkina Faso.

Lloyd and Loretta Sawatzky went to Switzerland as a young married couple with MCC’s Intermenno Trainee Program. They spoke about how profound it was for them to visit historical Anabaptist sites in that country.

Closer to home, Charlie Clark talked about his two years with MCC in inner city Winnipeg as part of a restorative justice program at Menno Simons College. And Kaytee Edwards Buhler described her work with the MCC-sponsored Appleby Kids Club in Saskatoon.



PHOTO BY ADELINE COX

Holding up letters that spell Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), members of Osler Mennonite Church demonstrate that the work of MCC is a group effort.

best MCC thrift store clothes. Pastor Patty Friesen said some members joked that “thrift store clothes are all I have in my closet.”

Friesen said, “It was a typical Sunday morning service,” with the focus being on giving thanks for MCC’s 100 years.

Children’s feature presenter Kathy Braun demonstrated that the work of MCC is a group effort. Prior to the service, 25 individuals of all ages received a piece of paper with a letter of the alphabet printed on it. They were asked to come forward and use their letters to spell the words “Mennonite Central Committee.”

“Osler is one of our churches that is thoroughly integrated with MCC,” said Klassen Hamm. “If someone asks me what MCC does, I could tell them that it’s what Osler Mennonite does.”

In her sermon, Klassen Hamm offered three reasons why MCC shares God’s love

through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation—gives Jesus’ followers confidence to “reach out from what we know to what we don’t know,” assured that “God [is] with us now and will be with us in the unknown,” said Klassen Hamm.

After the service, the congregation snacked on buns and hot cocoa, a tangible reminder of some of the very first relief work that MCC did.

In 1922, MCC volunteers set up feeding kitchens in southern Russia (now Ukraine) to feed Mennonites and their neighbours who were facing starvation because of war and famine. Twice a week the people received hot cocoa with their buns in order to get the 790 calories they needed to survive.

What was much needed sustenance for those Mennonites was just a snack for the Osler congregants, and they carried their

Friesen said that hearing people’s stories was powerful. “One person said, ‘I served 25 years ago but I’m still processing that experience,’” Friesen said. “[Another] said, ‘I have MCC in my blood.’ It’s how she shops, how she eats, how she gives her time. . . . I get choked up talking about it.”

Recognition of MCC involvement carried over to the noon potluck meal, during which participants were asked to sit at the table that best reflected how they support MCC. Tables bore signs reading, “I served with MCC Canada and U.S.,” “I make comforters,” “I shop at the thrift store,” and, “I eat at the MCC sale.”

“There was a high level of engagement and recognition of each other’s stories,” said Klassen Hamm, praising the congregation’s plans to compile their MCC stories into a book. “I would really encourage other congregations to celebrate in ways that fit with their experiences,” she said. ☺

Making food stories meaningful

Mennonite farmers tell their stories, spark conversations about food

By Janet Bauman

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Mennonite farmers have a lot in common. They see themselves as stewards of the land, they live with uncertainties, and they take pride in what they produce, but they farm in dramatically different ways.

At the annual Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College, on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, Mennonite farmers shared their diverse stories of food production.

The lectures this year featured a screening of Paul Plett's *Seven Points on Earth* documentary about Mennonite farmers around the world, and a "farmer's breakfast" with five local food producers as guest panelists.

Plett, of Ode Productions, a socially conscious film company based in Winnipeg, worked with Royden Loewen, a University of Winnipeg professor, who was studying seven Mennonite farming communities around the world. Plett focused on one person in each place.

The documentary summarizes the history of Anabaptist-Mennonite migration patterns to explain how some two million Mennonites are now found in 87 countries around the world. Loewen explains how farming became part of their identity and mythology after Anabaptists were driven out of urban areas by persecution and became "disproportionately rural people."

The film features farmers from Manitoba, Iowa, Bolivia, the Netherlands, Zimbabwe, Siberia and Indonesia. They raise a variety of crops—from corn to cassava, and goats to ground nuts—using everything from hand tools to combines, highlighting that there are many different ways to farm.

Plett spent several days with each farmer, inviting them to reflect on the highs and lows of their farm operation, how farming was connected to their faith,

and how current events and issues were impacting their farm life.

Plett said he was moved by the welcome he received by the farm families, trusting him to share an "intimate portrait" of their

has answered."

Good food, good conversation

At the "farmer's breakfast" on Feb. 1, a diverse panel of five Ontario farmers



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER KONKLE

As part of the 2020 Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel University College hosted a farmers breakfast (pictured) and panel discussion, focusing on the way farming, food, family and faith come together in our various lives. The panelists sparked lively conversation as participants shared their stories and experiences.

lives. In exploring their differences, he said he was not "out to judge people," but rather to represent them "with dignity and respect."

An interesting juxtaposition in the film happens when Manitoba farmers Jeremy and Meghan Hildebrandt describe how they don't specifically pray for rain, trying to rely on faith that "God knows our needs" and he will provide.

In contrast, farmer Hetta Dube from Zimbabwe emphasizes the importance of regularly praying for rain. She says that "water is life. . . . I have prayed and God

shared their stories.

Angie Koch, who manages Fertile Ground Farm, an organic Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprise, said that it is important to "connect farmers with eaters" in order to "draw people into their food story." When her farm "make[s] food meaningful . . . it makes it more delicious." She said a "colonial view of land ownership" does violence to the land, and she described ways she tries to work with natural ecosystems instead of against them.

Mark Reusser, a turkey producer and



Paul Plett, right, whose documentary *Seven Points on Earth* was featured at this year's Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel College, chats with Lester Bechtel, who funds the annual lecture series as a way to make the academic world accessible to a broader audience.

vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, described the land as a “perpetual resource if you treat it well,” but “non-renewable” if people don’t.

Lloyd Frey, who operates a dairy farm and grain elevator with his family, noted how, in his lifetime, farmers have been able to double their volume of production and feed more people.

Sarah Martin-Mills is the founder of Growing Hope Farm, a volunteer-run, social enterprise growing fresh food that gives hands-on experience to at-risk youth and women prisoners, and donates its profits to Mennonite Central Committee’s food security fund. She sees her farming practices as an expression of her faith and insists that there are creative ways of farming “outside the box” of market economics.

Chris Mullet Koop, a commercial egg producer and grape grower from Jordan, Ont., expressed frustration at the “epidemic” of people who don’t know much about food production but who still judge the process. “We have to tell our story or someone else is going to tell it for us,” he said.

Reusser said that it is troubling “when we use the kinds of food we eat to attack each other.” He suggested that farmers start by setting aside egos and a “doctrine of right farming,” and have conversations with each other.

Koch said it is important to acknowledge that “the way I do it is not the only way to do it.” ☞

Congregation goes to the movies

Neighbourliness aligns with the values of Mr. Rogers

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent



ABEAUTIFULDAY.MOVIE PHOTO

As an outreach event in January, members of Crossroads Community Church of Chilliwack, B.C., hosted friends to view the movie *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* with Tom Hanks as Fred Rogers.

Crossroads Community Church sees its presence in Chilliwack, British Columbia, as a ministry to the surrounding community.

Fred Rogers was a Presbyterian minister who saw his children’s television program, *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*, as a ministry. So when the movie *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, featuring Tom Hanks as the revered public TV figure, was showing at a nearby theatre, Lynn Loewen, the church’s director of children’s ministry, saw it as an ideal opportunity for outreach.

On Jan. 25, the congregation rented a theatre in Chilliwack to show *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* and encouraged members to come and invite their friends and neighbours to view the movie free of charge, popcorn and drinks included. Costs were covered by the church’s outreach budget.

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood is based on the true story of a journalist assigned to write an article about Mr. Rogers. The journalist is at first cynical but

who comes to respect and befriend the TV icon. Kindness, forgiveness and acceptance are key themes in the movie.

“While not specifically a Christian movie, it shows us the way that Mr. Rogers saw and treated others, which is something we can all learn from,” said Loewen prior to the event. “In the Bible, Jesus teaches that our neighbours are not just the people who live in the house next door. . . . Our neighbours are . . . anyone we come across. At Crossroads Community Church we hope that those who attend our event will learn from the movie.”

Crossroads sponsors free community events at least once a year. In the fall it hosts a block party that is open to anyone in the community. Activities include such family-friendly things as a bouncy castle, pony rides and pumpkin decorating.

Although this was considered an outreach event, Crossroads doesn’t host these types of events only to draw people to the congregation, but to show love to community people, whether they choose to attend Crossroads or not. The church hopes to change any negative views of church that non-Christians might have, such as that church people are elitist and not welcoming.

“By hosting these events, we get a chance to meet new people in our community and talk to them face-to-face,” said Loewen. “We get the opportunity to give back and show love.”

The movie outing was considered a success.

“We had 77 people attend, and everyone really enjoyed it!” Loewen reported afterwards. ☞

Who do you support when a community is divided?

CPT calls for church and settler solidarity with Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and land defenders in B.C. natural gas pipeline dispute

By Ross W. Muir
Managing Editor

The province of British Columbia alongside Coastal GasLink are continuing their plans to build a pipeline through the unceded territories of the Wet'suwet'en. The five hereditary chiefs and land defenders of Wet'suwet'en have denied access to Coastal GasLink, fearing the pipeline will cause irrevocable ecological damage," states a call to action for faith communities and individuals that Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) issued on Jan. 30.

"Historically the Christian church, the Canadian state and capitalist industry worked together to colonize Canada and displace Indigenous peoples from their land," the call to action continues. "Today across Canada, many churches are rising up in the spirit of Jesus' message of peace and justice, and learning about the history and reality of colonization, apologizing for their involvement and/or complicity in colonialism, and getting involved in activities that situate their solidarity with Indigenous peoples and not with the colonial state.

"Now is the time to continue that support and take action! This is our chance, as the Christian church, to demonstrate Christ's radical love by standing in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en."

Calls by CPT for action include donating money and food for the hereditary chiefs and land defenders; hosting or joining a solidarity action event; writing letters to B.C. and federal leaders in support of the hereditary chiefs and land defenders; boycotting resource-extraction companies and the financial institutions that back them; and, for those churches in B.C., refusing to "rent space to Coastal GasLink or the RCMP, or to allow their facilities to be used in the service of developing the pipeline . . ."

Solidarity with whom?

Those who haven't been keeping up with the news of late might be forgiven for thinking that "the Wet'suwet'en" and "the five hereditary chiefs and land defenders" mentioned in CPT's call to action are synonymous, and that the community is united with them and their cause. They aren't, though, as a Jan. 27 APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Network Television) news headline reads: "'We've got a real divide in the community': Wet'suwet'en Nation in turmoil." So which "Wet'suwet'en" should churches and individuals seek solidarity with?

- **On the one hand** are the five hereditary chiefs and the land defenders—who, in a Jan. 30 statement, declared: "We are proud, progressive Wet'suwet'en dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of our culture, traditions and [unceded] territories, working as one for the betterment of all."
- **On the other hand** are the elected chiefs and band councillors, whose offices were established under the Indian Act, which, they maintain, gives them authority over their six reserve lands. Five of the six Wet'suwet'en band councils would like the financial benefits from the Coastal GasLink project to improve their communities and the lives of their members, many of whom are hoping to find construction jobs on Coastal GasLink's 670-kilometre pipeline, to be built from the Dawson Creek area of northern British Columbia to Kitimat on the Pacific coast, where fracked natural gas would be processed at a liquefaction plant for shipment overseas.

That turmoil referred to in the APTN article is caused by "misinformed people and organizations in Canada and around

the world . . . fuelling the fire," according to Wet'suwet'en member Troy Young, a 48-year-old father of three who hopes to get work on the pipeline project through Kyah Resources, a company owned by the Witset First Nation. "People are saying the project doesn't have our approval," Young told APTN, adding, though, "No one can say the pipeline doesn't have our backing. We were informed, and people want it."

Gary Naziel, a former Witset First Nation council member when it struck a deal with Coastal GasLink, agrees. He told APTN, "Everybody voted. Everybody had a say. The final decision was up to the council."

In fact, after consultations with Coastal GasLink, five of the six elected Wet'suwet'en band councils—along with 15 other First Nations that have land the pipeline will cross—have signed "benefits agreements" with the company.

According to the APTN article, "Along with revenue from impact benefits agreements

and provincial pipeline agreements, Indigenous businesses will benefit from \$620 million in contract work for the project's right-of-way clearing, medical, security and camp management needs. There is another \$400 million in additional contract and employment opportunities for Indigenous and local B.C. communities during pipeline construction."



UN weighs in . . . then backtracks

CPT's call to action refers to the fact that the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the B.C. Human Rights Commission urged Canada in early January to stop construction on the pipeline until the project has Indigenous consent from impacted communities.

But, on Jan. 16, the chair of the UN committee, Noureddine Amir, admitted that he was “unaware that [Coastal GasLink] had broad Indigenous backing,” and that “the [UN] committee’s role does not include investigating complaints,” APTN reported.

The admission led Karen Ogen-Toews, a former elected Wet’suwet’en First Nation chief and the current CEO of the First Nations LNG (liquid natural gas) Alliance, to declare in an open letter from the Alliance: “The UN committee’s statement and recommendations should simply and immediately be withdrawn [and the committee should offer] an apology to the 20 [First] Nations.” (The Alliance has a financial stake in the project going ahead.)

Where did the division come from?

According to Troy Young in the Jan. 27 APTN story, when the hereditary leaders of the Wet’suwet’en and Gitxsan nations

fought a Supreme Court of Canada case in 1997, “Wet’suwet’en and Gitxsan were successful because we had our hereditary chiefs in sync with our elected chiefs, and everybody had the same concerns.”

But Gary Naziel said that, since then, “elected and hereditary leadership haven’t followed the Wet’suwet’en way of making decisions together. . . . It’s been difficult, because in the past 10 to 15 years . . . our laws are not being followed, and it’s disheartening to see that.”

The division between elected and hereditary chiefs became personal in August 2018, when one of Wet’suwet’en’s strongest pipeline opponents—a hereditary chief—ran for elected office on the Witset First Nation, and was not elected.

“They’ve had opportunities to elect an anti-pipeline government, but didn’t, and that tells the sentiment of the people in the community,” Young said.

The current conflict, which has garnered international attention, flared up on Jan. 4, following a B.C. Supreme Court ruling that permitted Coastal GasLink to begin working again in disputed Wet’suwet’en territory and the RCMP was instructed to enforce the court injunction and keep both sides in the dispute apart.

It was then that “the hereditary chiefs asserted their inherent jurisdiction over the territory by issuing the pipeline company an eviction notice,” APTN reported, adding, “[T]he company complied.”

In its call to action, CPT states: “This injunction violates Wet’suwet’en law; the right to free, prior and informed consent. . . . Also concerning is the RCMP’s demonstrated willingness to use lethal force to enforce this injunction during a militarized raid on the Gimid’ten checkpoint.”

CPT is aware there is a divide in the Wet’suwet’en community, according to Rachele Friesen, the organization’s Canada coordinator. “No community is ever monolithic. But we have to look at the principles of justice and decolonization. While these principles seem vague, we are lucky to have the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a guideline, which requires free, prior and informed consent before this pipeline can be built. In addition, we can look at

the situation with great concern as the state militarizes the area with the RCMP. As people who believe in nonviolence, we cannot stand silent as the RCMP uses force and threat of force against people.”

On Feb. 8, two CP’ers were among 11 arrested during a protest in B.C.

Signs of hope for solidarity?

In a separate Jan. 27 article, APTN reported that the B.C. government had appointed a former federal NDP MP as a provincial liaison with the Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs over this latest dispute. Hereditary Chief Na’Moks repeated a request to meet directly with the premier, which was denied, and Na’Moks said that the hereditary chiefs had “no interest in meeting with [Coastal GasLink],” whom they don’t consider a decision-maker in this dispute.”

But, four days later, the hereditary chiefs announced they had agreed to a week of “respect” talks with the B.C. government. Although Premier John Horgan will not be in attendance, according to APTN, “he said he believes the hereditary chiefs will come around. ‘I don’t expect the leadership to say tomorrow that they love the pipeline. That’s not my expectation. But there needs to be a legitimate understanding that the majority of the people in the region are going to benefit from this, and that’s what dialogue will produce.’”

Na’Moks, though, seems to believe it’s the B.C. government and courts that need to come around. “We will never change our mind on this project,” he is quoted as saying in various APTN articles. “We are the law of the land; we are following our law.”

As an act of CPT-inspired solidarity with the hereditary chiefs, Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg has sent a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau calling on the federal government “to honour the jurisdiction of the Wet’suwet’en traditional governance . . . and publicly affirm the . . . demands of all five Wet’suwet’en [hereditary] chiefs.”

But Troy Young, who is a cousin of Na’Moks, told APTN that he just wishes outsiders—from the UN to well-intentioned Canadians—would understand that “it’s up to the Wet’suwet’en to work out the conflict.” ❧



CPT PHOTO

**‘As people who believe in nonviolence, we cannot stand silent as the RCMP uses force and threat of force against people.’
(Rachele Friesen)**

Mennonite Women Canada disburses its final assets

By Barb Draper
Editorial Assistant

In spite of the sadness involved in bringing the Mennonite Women Canada (MW Canada) organization to a close, Shirley Redekop, the final president, expressed confidence that “God is still at work in our midst—bringing forth new shoots, new growth and renewed purpose among women of faith.”

The final meeting of this nationwide ministry was held in Abbotsford in June 2019, but the final dissolution came on Jan. 31, 2020, after all of its financial assets were distributed.

MW Canada decided to distribute its remaining assets to the regional churches to support women’s ministries, as decided by their women’s organizations. The percentage of the total for each regional church was determined by the percentage of membership in Mennonite Church Canada. Out of total assets of \$102,168, MC Eastern Canada received \$45,976; MC Manitoba received \$30,650; MC Saskatchewan received \$9,195; MC Alberta received \$5,108; and MC B.C. received \$11,238.

The women’s ministry groups in the regional churches expressed gratitude for these gifts. As well as investing in women’s retreats to keep them affordable, there are



CM FILE PHOTO BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

Mennonite Women Canada executive members met for a final time at Gathering 2019 in Abbotsford, B.C. Pictured from left to right: Shirley Redekop, president; Elsie Rempel, secretary/treasurer; and Liz Koop, communications coordinator.

plans to support other women’s ministries. At the regional level, women’s organizations have also dwindled, with working groups taking over from formal associations, so the money is being administered through the regional churches.

For 67 years, MW Canada encouraged regional and congregational women’s groups, as well as supporting female missionaries and theology students. Together with the women’s organization in the United States, MW Canada provided annual Bible study guides to be used by women in congregations.

At MW Canada’s final meeting, Jason Martin, MC Canada’s director of International Witness, acknowledged that, in the past 18 years, the women’s organization had raised \$100,000 for overseas mission workers.

While the MW Canada website is closing, the blog at mennowomencanada.blogspot.com/ will continue so that it can serve as an archive of recent MW Canada activities. All issues of the *Connections* newsletter and the annual report books from 2011 to 2019 can be found there, as well as 483 posts beginning in 2009.

“I will miss our times together as an executive, and will miss meeting women from across Canada at our national gatherings,” wrote Redekop in her final reflection. “Our meetings were times of sharing of our personal joys and concerns, as well as sharing the vision and the challenges. . . . I want to sincerely thank all the committed and passionate executive members across Canada who volunteered their valuable time and energy to their regional women’s organizations and to MW Canada. Thanks also to all of the women who have faithfully supported those in leadership positions, both financially and prayerfully. Your faithfulness will be remembered.”



PHOTO BY KEVIN GUENTHER-TRAUTWEIN

Carol Dyck, centre, leads singing at the second-annual Mennonite-Catholic hymn sing, held on Jan. 31 at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton. Upwards of 140 people from both denominations attended the Bridgefok event.

Pastor's credentials terminated by MC Eastern Canada

By Ross W. Muir
Managing Editor

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada terminated the ordination of Kuaying Teng on Dec. 20, 2019.

According to a press release issued on Jan. 23, the termination of Teng's ministerial credentials as "an ordained minister whose context was overseas" followed the receipt of "a written allegation of ethical misconduct" implicating Teng during his tenure in Laos 14 years ago, and a

subsequent investigation, according to the release.

Under the terms of the MC Canada and MC U.S.A. "Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure" manual (which also deals with other ministerial misconduct complaints), the MC Eastern Canada-appointed investigation team concluded that the accusation against Teng was "credible." The team then interviewed

Teng, who "acknowledged the misconduct," according to the Jan. 23 release. At that point, Teng's ordination was terminated by the regional church.

In a Jan. 27 release, Marilyn Rudy-Froese, MC Eastern Canada's church leadership minister, said of the procedures followed by the investigating team: "The most important part of this protocol is a

(Continued on page 24)



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Take a look inside Mennonite Central Committee's year-long, cross-cultural experience for young adults in this short video.
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An overview of Christianity's ideas about God

Read a review of the recent Herald Press title, *Speaking of God: An Essential Guide to Christian Thought*.
canadianmennonite.org/sog-review



MWC adds members to its global team

A composer, a health manager and auto mechanic—all church leaders—have joined the Mennonite World Conference team.
canadianmennonite.org/mwcappointees



Music leaders sing hymnal preview

Attendees at the Laurelville Music and Worship Leaders Retreat learned new material from the forthcoming Mennonite worship collection.
canadianmennonite.org/laurelville

(Continued from page 23)

clear mandate to proceed with investigations after receiving signed, first-hand accounts of misconduct. This ensures that we do not re-victimize those who have already been harmed, by getting their express consent to having their story used in an investigation. This also ensures due process for the victim. . . .

“Requiring signed, first-hand complaints also ensures that we do not initiate investigations based on second- or third-hand accounts that can’t be verified. This ensures due process for the credentialed person being accused.

“Misconduct investigations are emotionally charged circumstances in which we strive to walk a careful line of respect for all who are impacted, while not doing further harm in the process. The goal is to make the church a safe place for everyone.”

Teng also “went to Laos in 2014 to build a primary school in the village of Sawmill under Mennonite Mission Network,” according to a 2019 article in *Canadian Mennonite*. “This project was financed through a fundraising concert at [the Lao Christian Fellowship in St. Catharines, Ont.], through private donations and donations from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.”

As well, he was a former minister of the Lao congregation in St. Catharines, and he worked with the U.S.-based Mennonite Mission Network “to strengthen relationships between Asian Mennonite churches in North America and the wider denomination [MC U.S.A.] and . . . to promote reconciliation, healing and peace between Asians in North America and their home country,” according to a 2012 feature in *The Mennonite*.

Teng is reportedly in southeast Asia and could not be reached for comment. ❖

49th Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Annual Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the members of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) for the year ending December 31, 2019, is scheduled for April 18, 4:00 p.m., at Mennonite Heritage Museum, 1818 Clearbrook Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2T 5X4.

CMPS is the non-profit corporation that publishes *Canadian Mennonite*. The agenda includes receiving reports from the board of directors, the 2019 financial statements, and election of new directors. The meeting is public, but voting is limited to CMPS members (individuals who donated at least \$25 in 2019 and who register in advance), and board members who represent the regional and nationwide Mennonite Church.

The board of directors as appointed by Mennonite Church Canada and the Regional Churches includes:

- MC Canada: Henry Krause (British Columbia), Rod Wiens (Saskatchewan), Elmer Hildebrand (Manitoba)
- MC British Columbia: Annika Krause
- MC Alberta: Arthur Koop
- MC Saskatchewan: Larry Epp
- MC Manitoba: Ken Reddig
- MC Eastern Canada: Cedar Klassen
- Elected by CMPS: Lois Epp (Alberta), Kathryn Lymburner (Ontario)

To register as a member for the annual meeting, email **office** @canadianmennonite.org by April 9, noting “CMPS annual meeting” in the subject line. The annual report and audited financial statements will be posted at www.canadianmennonite.org, after the meeting.

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Reading and remembering

Using Shine On: A Story Bible to cope with dementia

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

Every week, Hilda Hildebrand drives 100 kilometres from Winnipeg to Altona to visit her mother, Sarah Hildebrand, in the personal care home where she lives. Conversation between the two women doesn't look the way it used to, though, because her mother lives with dementia.

When Sarah began experiencing symptoms, Hilda, 68, started reading to her from *Shine On: A Story Bible*, Menno-Media's illustrated children's Bible. To her amazement, it began to transform the way her mother could engage in conversation.

Sarah, 94, was always a soft-spoken and creative woman of strong faith. She loved to garden and quilt and listen to CFAM radio. About four years ago, around the same time her husband passed away, she started to have difficulty remembering certain things. After she stopped being able to sew, Hilda introduced a colouring book to her, in an effort to find more creative outlets. Sarah used it every day and loved it.

Then, after Sarah had a stroke, it changed everything. It was July 2018, and Hilda and her husband Elmer, who attend Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, were in Ukraine for a Mennonite history tour. When they got a call saying Hilda's mother was paralyzed on one side of her body and close to death, they flew back immediately.

Upon arriving, they discovered, with great thankfulness, that she was not paralyzed. But she did have a blood clot on the side of the brain that affects behaviour. "Something had really shifted in her brain," says Hilda. "Suddenly, this sweet, gentle soul was a very agitated person who could find no sense of peace with anything."

Sarah was staying in the hospital, an unfamiliar place, and she felt like she was being treated curtly by the staff because they came and went in short, bustling

visits. She looked for her husband, who had already passed away years ago, and she started to spiral in her confused and agitated thoughts.

Hilda wanted to comfort her mother, and knew she had always found solace in Bible stories and meditations. But due to her increased memory loss, she wasn't able to do her regular routine of listening to faith programs on the radio every morning and reading the Bible at bedtime.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HILDA HILDEBRAND

Reading *Shine On: A Story Bible* together has been a meaningful experience for mother and daughter, Sarah, left, and Hilda Hildebrand.

That's when Hilda thought of *Shine On*. She used it to capture the essence of complex ideas and stories and to present them in an accessible way. "What I like about it is, on the one side of the book you have a story in a condensed fashion with the biblical references . . . and on the other side of the page is a painting of that scene, somebody's understanding of that in visual essence."

When Hilda began reading to her mother, the effect was incredible. Sarah closed her eyes and began concentrating deeply, something she had been unable to do recently, and she started reflecting on what Hilda was saying.

"Here is a woman who was cycling in this negative place, and all of a sudden she

was reflecting on something with wisdom and thoughtfulness," Hilda says. "It was like the Spirit opened a window into her brain, into her heart, and that's where we would then have this conversation."

Dementia can sometimes make conversation challenging, when people no longer share the same memories together, or common questions, like "How was your day?" can be difficult to answer. Sometimes a picture or a story in *Shine On* would trigger memories from Sarah's life story, or prompt new observations in which Hilda could then participate. "I believe that the *Shine On* book was facilitating in helping us both go deeper in spaces that she clearly needed to go to," Hilda says.

Now Hilda regularly reads with Sarah during her weekly visits. "I try to make it significant," she says. "Around Christmas I'll try to read some of the stories of Christmas. . . . It's my gentle way of putting her in the present that surrounds her." Other times she will bring photos or objects that spark storytelling.

Hilda had to learn to live in the present with her mom, whether that's half an hour or just five minutes. The day after a visit, "if someone were to ask her, what was it you shared, she would not be able to remember the details, but she would remember we had a really good visit," says Hilda. "There was this deep sense of something shared between two people and in the presence of God. I think it has enriched both our spiritual lives."

Hilda mentioned their practice at her mother's care home, and some of the staff have borrowed the book, but she doesn't know whether they have continued with it. She has told some others, too, and hopes it can help people going through similar experiences. "I share it so that it may help someone else with someone they love." ❧

Teaching peace across Asia and around the world

CMU professor brings decades of experience to assist in Hong Kong

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Name any region in Asia and chances are that Wendy Kroeker has done peace work there.

Kroeker, an assistant professor of peace and conflict transformation studies at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg and the academic director of the Canadian School of Peacebuilding, has almost 30 years of experience mediating, teaching and peacebuilding in the Philippines, India, Bangladesh and South Korea, to name a few. She attends Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg.

This is the essential groundwork that prepared her for her most recent trip across the world. In December 2019, Kroeker travelled to Hong Kong with a delegation of Mennonite World Conference (MWC); she is the MWC Peace Commission's peacebuilding specialist, having joined in April 2018. The delegation went to support and provide resources to Mennonite churches in Hong Kong as they live in the midst of intense political turmoil.

Protests have been going on for months in the streets of Hong Kong and have often grown violent. They are causing division within congregations, as people take opposite sides on who is right, and whether or not the church should get involved.

Most of all, the churches are afraid of losing their young people. When the Umbrella Movement protests began in 2014, Hong Kong churches didn't get involved, says Kroeker. The effects of that inaction were drastic, and not just in the Mennonite churches. She met with leaders from four different Christian denominations while in Hong Kong, and they all agreed that about 30 percent of their young adults left the church.

Jeremiah Choi, pastor of Agape Mennonite Church in Hong Kong and a member

of the Peace Commission, requested the delegation as the conflict took centre stage once again when a bill threatening to extradite Hong Kong citizens charged with crimes to mainland China for trial was introduced.

"Youth who had stayed in the church and [Choi's] own children said to him, 'If you don't come to the streets, we're leaving,'" says Kroeker. In a cultural context where conflict is dealt with indirectly, for youth to even utter those statements was a sacrifice.

The Mennonite churches knew they had to do something so their already small community didn't fracture even further. But they didn't even know how to start talking about it. They needed someone to guide them through the process. That's where Kroeker came in.

"I've lived and worked in different parts of Asia for almost 30 years now, and you begin to learn some of the basic patterns," she says. "I know now what questions to

ask and where their rub points and tension points are. Sometimes you need an outsider to just ask the questions that an outsider asks."

Kroeker led more than a dozen workshops and lectures on conflict resolution, peacebuilding and Mennonite Anabaptist peace theology to groups of between 10 and 60 people in Hong Kong. They met in churches, educational institutions, seminaries and people's homes, where the MWC delegation spoke to congregants, pastors, students, community leaders and expat non-governmental organization workers.

Participants considered how the values of their culture affect the way they name and address conflict. They wrestled with their belief of Mennonites as quiet, peaceful people and wondered if they were allowed to do active peacebuilding.

"It's incredibly humbling to be in the midst of people with great crisis in their midst and entrusting you to guide them



PHOTO BY MARIJNE STENVERS

Wendy Kroeker, third from left, is pictured with the Mennonite World Conference Peace Commission. The others, from left to right, are: Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Joji Pantoja, Neal Blough, Andrew Suderman, Garcia Domingo, Adriana Belinda Rodriguez, Kenneth Hoke and Jeremiah Choi. Kroeker and Pantoja were part of the delegation to Hong Kong.

through some questions they know are difficult to ask," Kroeker says.

She used activities and roleplaying, and her infectious energy, to make ideas come alive. "When you're asking, 'How do we do something?' you can't just lecture," she says. "If you can't try it here, you're not going to do it out there. You've got to practise the words if the words are so foreign to you to say."

Kroeker has spent years putting learning into action. She entered the peacebuilding field as an activist and after a while began taking mediation courses. In 1996, she and her husband Gordon Zerbe accepted a Mennonite Central Committee placement and moved to Dumaguete in the Philippines with two little children in tow.

"I got pulled into conversations by locals when they found I had some mediation experience," she says. "[They said,] we need another voice other than armed struggle to achieve our quest for justice."

She spent two years travelling around the Philippines. "I've gone to a lot of dangerous areas," she says. "Met by military with tanks and machine guns, and hiked up to jungle communities and met guerrilla movements. . . . A whole new world opened up in terms of what this work means."

Their family returned to Winnipeg, where she led a workplace mediation program at Mediation Services.

Upon the request of her friends in the Philippines, she returned for another few years to work with the Peace Resource Centre they had started in Dumaguete, dealing with situations of hostility between civilians and government, and interfaith conflict between Muslims and Christians.

She has also taught at the Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute and the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute, where she has been teaching every year since.

Kroeker currently focuses on local action, the topic of her doctoral work, asking the question, "How do you activate on-the-ground local peacebuilders?"

For her, it's a privilege to walk alongside people in the midst of critical times. "It was exhausting, invigorating, stimulating, humbling, all at the same time. You're just in this super vibrant space of big life important questions. For someone like me, it's, like, where else do you want to be?" ❧

Solidarity with a Mennonite church at a crossroad

By Elina Ciptadi
Mennonite World Conference

A joint delegation from the Peace and Deacons commissions of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) visited three Mennonite churches in Hong Kong, other denominations and some educational institutions, to offer solidarity and to respond to the request for further perspectives on Anabaptist peacemaking.

The delegation members included Joji

around them. By visiting them, we get to see what they are experiencing, listen to them, and also encourage them by sharing our peacemaking experience."

Political discussion never quite existed in Hong Kong, a place that has long enjoyed stability and economic prosperity, at least overtly.

"People here were focused on being productive, be it in their studies or at work," said Jeremiah Choi, pastor of Agape Mennonite Church in Hong Kong. "Now they have political aspiration, but politics are dividing the people, including in the church."

Hong Kong is currently experiencing its most tumultuous political situation in decades. Protests in Hong Kong, mostly involving young people, are continuing into a sixth month,

demanding withdrawal of a controversial extradition bill, investigation into alleged police brutality during the protests, full amnesty for those arrested during the protest, declassification of protesters as "rioters," and universal suffrage in Hong Kong. Although the extradition bill has been withdrawn, the protesters are refusing to back down until all five demands are met.

"We ask that the global church support us in prayer," Choi said. "Pray for wisdom for the leaders, the protesters and the police, that there will be a peaceful resolution to this, and that churches can have unity and become peacemakers when some choose to be violent." ❧



MWC PHOTO

Notes of peaceful encouragement are written to those caught up in the political protests in Hong Kong.

Pantoja, the Peace Commission chair and Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker; Wendy Kroeker, a Peace Commission member and an assistant professor at Canadian Mennonite University; Siaka Traoré, Deacons Commission chair; and Henk Stenvers, secretary of the Deacons Commission.

During their time with church members, the MWC delegates listened to the experiences and hopes, and shared some of their own experiences of mediation and reconciliation through an Anabaptist lens.

"We were there to offer solidarity to our brothers and sisters, showing them they are not alone in this trying time," Stenvers said. "Churches globally are not immune to conflicts and the political dynamics

MC Canada announces Global Youth Summit 2021 delegates

By Katie Doke Sawatzky
Mennonite Church Canada

Five young adults—one from each of Mennonite Church Canada’s regional churches—will represent the nationwide church at Global Youth Summit (GYS) 2021 in Salatiga, Indonesia.

The Summit takes place from July 2 to 5, 2021, four days before the 18th Mennonite World Conference assembly. The event is for youth aged 18 to 30 and it provides an opportunity for young Anabaptists to connect and share news, experiences and struggles from different continents and countries, in order to enrich the faith of all. The theme is “Life in the Spirit: Learn, serve, worship.”

The representatives are:

• **Christen Kong**, 26, of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, has been selected as the official delegate for MC Church Canada. She will attend GYS delegate sessions and will be assigned a special GYS project that the five Canadian representatives will work on together prior to the Summit. She was chosen by MC Eastern Canada.



Christen Kong

Kong has an undergraduate degree in environmental sustainability and international development, is a former participant in Mennonite Central Committee’s Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program, and has worked in communications for a community arts organization in Toronto.

“I look most forward to learning how to co-create ways of living together by making meaning out of our differences while encouraging our similarities,” she says. “I want to laugh lots and serve people through prayer. I want to experience what it means to be bold in faith, knowing that a congregation who loves Jesus surrounds us.”

• **Andrew Klassen Brown**, 26, attends Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, where he lives. The MC Manitoba rep is currently a graduate student in Anabaptist studies at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). Having taken the Global Anabaptist-Mennonite History and Theology course, he looks forward to experiencing global Anabaptism in Salatiga.



Andrew Klassen Brown

“I am very interested to explore more deeply the gifts, challenges and blessings the Indonesian community brings to our global Anabaptist-Mennonite community,” he says. He also looks forward to discussing peace/violence, the climate crisis and other world issues with other Anabaptist Mennonites from around the world.

• **Madison Harms**, 18, of Warman (Sask.) Mennonite Church, is a psychology student at CMU. The MC Saskatchewan rep was an avid volunteer growing up, having worked for the Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization, leading worship and retreats for three years.



Madison Harms

She looks forward to sharing her experiences with her church when she comes back. “This will be a great opportunity to learn and experience a new environment and type of worship,” she says.

• **Rebecca Janzen**, 23, of First Mennonite Church in Edmonton, is in her final undergraduate year of biblical and theological studies at CMU. The MC Alberta rep looks forward to connecting with young adults from the



Rebecca Janzen

**‘I want to laugh lots and serve people through prayer. I want to experience what it means to be bold in faith, knowing that a congregation who loves Jesus surrounds us.’
(Christen Kong, MC Canada’s GYS 2021 delegate)**

nationwide and international Anabaptist churches, and welcomes the opportunity to discuss what is working and not working in the church body.

“For the church to move forward, serious reflection needs to be taken, especially observing the younger generation’s perspective,” she says, wondering, “What does the church teach? How much space is there in the church to make change for the better?”

• **Ashley Rempel**, 23, of Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack, is an education student at Trinity Western University. The MC British Columbia rep has been involved in her church community through leading Sunday school and Vacation Bible School, working at Camp Squeah, and now as a youth leader.



Ashley Rempel

“It will be such an amazing experience to interact with Mennonite youth from all around the world whom I normally wouldn’t have the opportunity to meet,” she says. ☸

/// Staff change

Pastor ordained at Japanese church in B.C.



Gerald Neufeld and his wife Rie cut the cake celebrating his ordination to the ministry at Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship on Dec. 29, 2019.

Gerald Neufeld, pastor of Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship in Surrey, B.C., since 2008, was ordained to the ministry at the congregation's worship service on Dec. 29, 2019. Garry Janzen, Mennonite Church British Columbia's executive minister, officiated at the ordination and he based his message on Ephesians 4:1-7. Following the service, congregants invited guests to join them for a celebratory light meal, including traditional Japanese end-of-the-year noodles. Neufeld is a graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now part of Canadian Mennonite University) in Winnipeg, and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (now Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary) in Elkhart, Ind., and served with the Mennonite Board of Missions and the Commission on Overseas Mission in Japan from 1995 to 2008, where he met his wife Rie. He also serves as music coordinator of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford.

—STORY AND PHOTO
BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

/// Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Ontario



Doug Amstutz began as interim pastor at Erie View United Mennonite Church in November 2019. He has experience as a co-pastor with his wife Wanda in the U.S. and at Grace Mennonite in St. Catharines, Ont. He has also served as an interim pastor in a number of MC Eastern Canada congregations, including Crosshill, Rainham, Riverdale and Poole. The Amstutzes spent four years as country co-representatives in Ethiopia with Mennonite Central Committee, working with church partners, including the Meserete Kristos Church, a Mennonite World Conference affiliate member. Amstutz holds a master of divinity degree in pastoral ministry from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.



Laura Mullet Koop began as a one-year, half-time support pastor in November 2019 at The First Mennonite Church in Vineland, Ont. She recently graduated from Martin Luther University College, Waterloo, Ont., with a master of arts degree in spiritual care and psychotherapy. She completed her clinical pastoral education residency with Niagara Health. She is also a trained spiritual director and part of the Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Eastern Canada Network. She has a bachelor of theology degree from Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg (now Canadian Mennonite University) and experience serving in Korea with a Mennonite agency. Previously, she offered both paid and volunteer pastoral leadership during the existence of Quest Christian Community in St. Catharines, Ont., an unconventional, holistic faith community that existed from 2007 to 2018.

—BY JANET BAUMAN

/// Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in British Columbia



Kyle Dyck is the new associate pastor of Crossroads Community Church in Yarrow. Originally from Abbotsford, B.C., Dyck attended Ambrose University College in Calgary. He previously served at Yarrow Alliance Church and, most recently, at Immanuel Fellowship Baptist Church in Abbotsford.



Curtis Fast started as half-time worship pastor at Level Ground Mennonite Church in Abbotsford on Jan. 1. He attended Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford and recently served as worship director of Yarrow Mennonite Brethren Church.

—BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

/// Staff change

MC Saskatchewan hires interim regional minister



Josh Wallace has been hired as Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's interim regional minister for Church Engagement, replacing Kirsten Hamm-Epp for the remainder of her maternity leave. Wallace began Feb. 1 in the 0.3 full-time-equivalent position. In his role, he will attend the weekly student breakfasts put on by the University of Saskatchewan Faith Leaders Council, and will be available to preach and converse with congregations on the theme of "Deepening our walk with our neighbours." For the past seven years, Wallace served as pastor of Warman Mennonite Church.

—BY DONNA SCHULZ

/// Staff changes

Abundance Canada announces new director of finance



Rachel Niessen has been appointed to Abundance Canada's leadership team as director of finance. She will succeed Rick Braun-Janzen, who will transition into the position of director of gift planning at Abundance Canada, a donor-advised public foundation in Kitchener, Ont. Niessen joins Abundance Canada with a wealth of experience in the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. After spending time with accounting firms KPMG and Deloitte, she spent the last eight years as the director of finance at Balmoral Hall School for Girls in Winnipeg. She is an active volunteer in her local community and has conducted several volunteer internal audits for Mennonite Central Committee's Shared Program. She earned an honours bachelor of commerce degree from the University of Manitoba as well as the CPA/CA designation. "I am excited about this opportunity," says Niessen of her new role. "I have wanted to use my finance skills in a faith-based not-for-profit organization for a long time. Abundance Canada's mission and direction is a great fit for me." Darren Pries-Klassen, CEO of Abundance Canada, says, "Given [Rachel's] knowledge of our sector and gift planning, as well as her passion for supporting others, she is an excellent fit for our organization."

—ABUNDANCE CANADA

/// News brief

Menno Simons prof awarded grant to continue community meth response training



Jobb Arnold, assistant professor of conflict resolution studies at Canadian Mennonite University's Menno Simons College in Winnipeg, has received a grant of \$5,000 from the City of Winnipeg's inaugural Community Safety and Crime Prevention Program. Winnipeg is experiencing a methamphetamine (meth) crisis of proportions larger than the city has ever seen, and Arnold is tackling the issue head-on. He developed a community meth response training resource and ran the first sessions with it during the fall of 2019 for organizations like the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and some of the city's crisis social workers. The grant will enable him to continue to deliver training to different communities in Winnipeg, and especially host more workshops to teach people how to train others in these models. He has developed this particular training method to be skills-based, adapting what is already taught in conflict-resolution studies at the college into models of training that will prepare people to understand and manage conflict connected to the meth crisis in Winnipeg. "We're trying to promote community health and flourishing," he says.

—CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

/// News brief

Grebel alumnus honoured for serving community's deepest needs



John Neufeld (BA 1996) has been named Conrad Grebel University College's 2019 Distinguished Alumni Service Award winner. Since 2009, Neufeld has served as the executive director of House of Friendship (HoF), which was started by a small women's prayer group that aimed to respond to the needs of the Waterloo Region community in southwestern Ontario. HoF now supports 42,000 individuals every year with 200 team members and more than 1,700 volunteers. Prior to serving at HoF, Neufeld experienced the benefits of working with foster children and youth at Bridgeway Family Homes. He was awarded the Blazer Distinguished Alumnus Award by Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg, in 2014, and was named in the *Waterloo Region Record's* list of 40 Under 40 in 2012. Neufeld came to Grebel in 1995 to pursue a bachelor of arts degree in social development studies from the University of Waterloo and Renison College after earning a bachelor of theology degree from CMU. He was an active participant in Grebel chapels and community suppers, and fondly remembers lively mealtime discussions that pushed him to grapple with different points of view. The Grebel Distinguished Alumni Service Award recognizes alumni who have made a significant and unique contribution to the church, community, nation or world.

—CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

News brief

Sarah Ehgoetz receives Abner Martin Music Scholarship



Sarah Ehgoetz of Woodstock, Ont., is the 2019 recipient of the \$4,000 Abner Martin Music Scholarship. A graduate of

Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School, Ehgoetz is in the third year of the bachelor of music program at Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) in Waterloo. Sarah attends Shantz Mennonite Church in nearby Baden, where she has sung and played regularly with the youth worship band and performed alongside friends at the church Christmas banquet. In the wider community, she was the piano accompanist of the Children's Christmas Choir at Holy Rosary Catholic Elementary School in Guelph in 2018. She also has volunteered in a high school's developmental education and life skills music classes, while continuing to teach private piano lessons to avid young students in Wilmot Township. At WLU, Ehgoetz is studying music, with a concentration in community music. The Abner Martin Music Scholarship is awarded annually to a deserving student who is affiliated with a congregation in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and is a full-time student in a graduate or undergraduate music program. The next application deadline is Sept. 15, 2020. For more information and an application form, email Linda Janzen, the new scholarship committee chair, at lindajanzen@sympatico.ca. Janzen replaced long-term chair Lewis Brubacher at the beginning of 2020.

—**ABNER MARTIN MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

News brief

Philpott now a Nishnawbe Aski Nation health adviser



Jane Philpott, the former Markham-Stouffville (Ont.) Liberal MP who lost her seat in last fall's federal election, has

accepted a role as special adviser in health care with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), which represents 49 Indigenous communities in northern Ontario, according to a Nov. 21, 2019, *Toronto Star* report. She tweeted the following day: "Delighted to be invited by Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler to be a special adviser on health, and support the critical work of health transformation in Nishnawbe Aski Nation . . ." The former health minister and Indigenous Services minister, who is also a doctor and a member of Community Mennonite Church in Stouffville, Ont., was part of the cabinet that signed an accord known as Health Transformation to transfer health-care responsibilities to First Nations. (Because of her former political positions, Philpott was prohibited from taking a paid position with NAN, which was originally offered to her.) Part of her new voluntary role with NAN will be to address the severe shortage of doctors and nurses in NAN territory—an area roughly the size of France with only one hospital, in Moosonee—and to "drastically improve standards and quality of care," according to *The Star*, which quotes Fiddler as saying, "Jane has always been a strong ally to NAN. . . . She is an invaluable addition to the team . . ."

—**By ROSS W. MUIR**

News brief

Former pastor and missionary dies at age 98



Edwin Brandt of Vernon, B.C., who served in Indigenous communities and as a pastor, died on Dec. 15, 2019. Born in Altona, Man., in 1921,

he spent his growing-up years in Saskatchewan, and attended Herbert and Prairie Bible Schools in Saskatchewan and Alberta. He chose to be a conscientious objector and his alternative service involved teaching at an Indian Day School in northern Manitoba. For 10 years, he served with Mennonite Pioneer Mission, later Native Ministries, part of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, spending five years in Loon Straits, Man., and five years in Winnipeg. He served as a Mennonite pastor at Meadow Lake, Sask., and taught at the Swift Current Bible Institute in Saskatchewan. For three years, he worked in Mexico, serving with the General Conference Commission on Home Missions. In 1980, he founded the Mennonite Church of Vernon, B.C., and served as pastor for 10 years. Throughout his ministry he took many photographs, many of which have been donated to the Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg. He is survived by his second wife, Anne (nee Thiessen), of 55 years, and was predeceased by his first wife, Margaret (nee Enns), in 1963. He is also survived by six children.

—**By BARB DRAPER,
WITH FILES FROM LORNE BRANDT**

FOCUS ON

Camps

Lighting a fire in children's faith

By Chris Pot

Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

Sitting around the campfire after saying goodbye to our final group of campers on the last night of the summer, the staff spent the evening reflecting on the summer and all that happened.

We told stories and laughed about all of the hilarity that ensued over the previous 10 weeks. Sometimes we cried as we reminisced about the impact that our experiences had on us.

And as we spent this final night together there was a strong sense that the group of individuals that started this journey back in June is not just a group of individuals anymore, but a strong community that has journeyed through good times, hard times and everything in between.

It always amazes me how this happens, how a group of strangers can become such a close-knit community in such a relatively short amount of time. But it's neat to see year after year. God is faithful in that he uses each individual's unique characteristics, traits and experiences, and blends them all together to create a team that serves the campers so well.

Last summer we explored the theme of



PHOTO BY AARON LANTZ

Advanced Camper Experience (ACE) campers Seth Bowman, left, Adam Roth, Carter Cochrane, Philip Cressman, I.J. Bellamy, 'Speegon' and Gabriel VanDyk learn about leadership through canoeing.

"What does peace have to do with me?"

We—the staff and campers, led by our camp pastor, Emily Rempel (aka Pinky)—were challenged to think about what peace is and what role it can play in our daily lives.

This exploration involved our staff leading skits about arguing over an apple; singing our memory verses each day to help us remember what the Bible teaches

about peacemaking; and many activities that encouraged us to be better peacemakers as we leave camp.

Pinky also introduced two new unique ideas to Hidden Acres:

- **During one** of our weeks we participated in the Kairos blanket exercise. The unique, participatory history lesson was developed in collaboration with Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers and educators, and it fosters truth, understanding, respect and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

- **The other** idea was the introduction of a Wall of Peacemakers. Throughout each week of camp, Pinky would introduce a new peacemaker, ranging from influential leaders from across the globe, like Gandhi, to local leaders, like Katie Gingerich, who founded The Ripple Effect Education, to our own campers, who each week learned about peace and took the hope and inspiration home with them.

All of this helped to develop a greater understanding of peace and how we can be peacemakers in all areas of our lives. ☘

Living sanctuaries

Joanna Loepp Thiessen

Ontario Mennonite Music Camp
WATERLOO, ONT.

Every night at Ontario Mennonite Music Camp we sing a closing song around the campfire to send campers off to bed. More often than not, it's our favourite tune, "Sanctuary": "O Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true / And with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you." This song became a theme for our time at camp as we sought to be a sanctuary for God's graciousness

and bounty.

In my own life, the idea of sanctuary has been meaningful, and I see the song sung in many community contexts that I enter into. One of those is in my former church in San Antonio, Texas, where we were a sanctuary for refugees by being a safe, trauma-informed space.

At Music Camp, we, too, are seeking to be a safe space for all who enter, no matter

age, ability, gender or orientation. One of the goals for the new Leaders-in-Training (LiT) program was for these brave individuals to be living sanctuaries at camp. We had two fantastic LiTs at camp in 2019.

Some of the opportunities and responsibilities that the LiT campers had included attending a weekend retreat before camp began; leading in chapel planning; planning and leading rec time; receiving

FOCUS ON CAMPS



ONTARIO MENNONITE MUSIC CAMP PHOTO
Leaders-in-Training Isabelle Netherton and Micah Peters-Unrau, standing left and right, are pictured with LiT leader Joanna Loepp Thiessen.

mentorship from staff members; providing assistance and participation in ensembles; assisting in small-group leadership; and getting their “sillies” on while leading campfire.

What stands out for me the most about our LiTs from 2019 was the way that they became sanctuaries in our camp environment. They provided a safe space for campers to process their day, they pushed campers to try new activities, and their personal devotion to God was a model

for our campers and staff.

For me, being able to facilitate holy spaces throughout the day for our LiTs to grow and develop was truly an honour.

The LiT program is a great opportunity to develop leadership skills in an area of specialty, with mentorship from a supervising staffer. The program is designed to incorporate leadership skills, teamwork-building experiences, and growth in faith in the context of an enjoyable musical atmosphere.

We are seeking energized youth who have finished Grade 11 or 12 to join our LiT program this summer. Camp experience isn't required. Join us in fun, fellowship and music. We look forward to creating sanctuaries together. ☸

A path towards reconciliation

By Geralde Reesor-Grooters

Willowgrove
STOUFFVILLE, ONT.

“Now I know what I should have been teaching.”

These are the words of a retired history teacher after participating in a Kairos blanket exercise. As a blanket exercise facilitator, I am often struck by the insights of participants, adults and children alike.

Three years ago, Willowgrove added the blanket exercise to its program in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, more specifically to the call to educate Canadians. With thousands of visitors every year at Willowgrove Day Camp, Fraser Lake Camp, outdoor education and facility rentals, Willowgrove is in a unique position to answer this call.

I love the experiential nature of the blanket exercise. Participants take on the role of the Indigenous peoples, standing on blankets representing the land of Turtle Island. The history of the Indigenous peoples unfolds around them, reflected by blankets and participants being moved or taken away. This powerful activity is always concluded with a talking circle to share thoughts and reflections, and to process emotions.

To provide a natural setting for the experience, it was our goal to host the blanket exercise onsite at Willowgrove rather than visiting school gyms and conference rooms. When the intended building proved too small, Willowgrove received an Ontario Trillium Fund grant to further develop the blanket exercise program and construct a suitable building. We hope to start construction this spring.

As the outreach coordinator for the Willowgrove blanket exercise project, I look after the communication, educational and marketing aspects of this project. My overall focus is to make sure this project happens in a good and respectful way. I am very thankful to receive guidance through



WILLOWGROVE PHOTO

Willowgrove added the Kairos blanket exercise to its program in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, more specifically to the call to educate Canadians.

partnerships with local Indigenous communities, organizations and individuals. It is an honour to walk this path together.

Working on this has been very rewarding and it has inspired me to find more ways to incorporate reconciliation into Willowgrove's programs. ☸

FOCUS ON CAMPS

Jeremy Wiens goes to Snow Camp

By Joanne De Jong
Alberta Correspondent

There are extreme weather warnings throughout the province as the wind chill dips to -40C. Yes, it's cold, but nothing is going to stop Jeremy Wiens from going to Mennonite Church Alberta's Snow Camp, held this year from Jan. 10 to 12 at Camp Valaqua in Water Valley.



Jeremy Wiens

Long johns. Check! Shoes and boots. Check! Doritos to share. Check! Back pack is packed and the 16-year-old is ready to go. It's his fifth year attending the winter camp and he's looking forward to seeing all the friends he worked with at Valaqua over the summer.

"It's kind of like a reunion," he said.

Jeremy serves on the MC Alberta Youth Leadership Team, which is made up of approximately 10 high school students from congregations across the province, whose main responsibility is to plan Snow Camp. Most of the team members are also Valaqua counsellors or counsellors-in-training (CiTs). Last summer Jeremy volunteered at the camp as a CiT.

Once he's on the road with the other brave souls from Edmonton First Mennonite Church, the visiting and fun begins. For Jeremy, a highlight of going to Snow Camp is always the people.

Even though Jeremy and his group arrive around 8 p.m., energy is high, and 45 teens from across the province are ready for action. First, games at the lodge, then a nighttime walk with flashlights, frozen river games, and a devotional and songs around a campfire.

One game is called Pruey. One person has their eyes open and all the other campers have their eyes closed. The goal is to find the person with their eyes open. Jeremy tries to explain it but then says with a smile, "Maybe you had to be there."

Once back at the lodge there's time for a snack and then off to bed.

Before he knows it, it's time for breakfast. Jeremy knows it's going to be a great day because he helped plan it. He is the

"fireman" today, meaning he is in charge of the campfire later on when they will be making s'mores. But now it's time for the first of four teaching sessions led by Donna Dinsmore, the guest pastor from Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary.

Jeremy enjoys the teaching on the Trinity and says it strengthened his faith. He says Dinsmore "challenged us to think about how the Trinity can relate to our church and personal lives. She wanted us to think about which part of the Trinity we connect with the least and then try to develop a relationship with that person."

Good food, worship and teaching, connecting with friends old and new, and lots and lots of games. That's snow camp. "Tag is a lot of fun," Jeremy says, "because it's hard to run away in the snow." And, of course, there has to be a few rounds of giant Dutch Blitz.

When asked if there was a low point to the weekend, he replies that it was when his socks got soaked. He realized his snow pants were hiked up too far so he got snow in his boots. Thankfully, he had an extra pair of socks. When admired for having the foresight to pack extra socks, he confesses, "Actually, my mom packed them."

In the blink of an eye it's Sunday lunch and everyone is roasting their hot dogs around the final campfire and saying goodbye until summer.

Jeremy hopes to attend Snow Camp again next year and offers apologies to



PHOTO BY JON OLFERT

Mikka Kostanecki and Katrina Janssen roast hot dogs during the final campfire of MC Alberta's 2020 Snow Camp, held at Camp Valaqua.

his cabin-mates for forgetting to share his Doritos. ☺

FOCUS ON CAMPS

'Hi, let's go join the rest of the group'

By Jason McDowell
Fraser Lake Camp
BANCROFT, ONT.

Stepping off that bus for the first time can be scary; it can be a big deal. The minds of many are on the edge of uncertainty and fear. If those steps take you into

/// Camping staff changes

New executive directors at Willowgrove and Hidden Acres

Johnny Wideman begins his new role as executive director of Willowgrove Inc. in February, taking over from Miriam Reesor.



Willowgrove runs a day camp in Stouffville, northeast of Toronto, and Fraser Lake overnight camp near Bancroft in north-eastern Ontario. "Willowgrove is home for me," Wideman says. "I grew up as a neighbour to the Stouffville property.... I have created curriculum, trained staff, taught lessons and overseen programming." To take on the new Willowgrove position, Wideman is giving up his role of artistic director with Theatre of the Beat, a company he cofounded, but he will still be involved in a limited capacity as its community liaison.

—WILLOWGROVE INC.

Chris Oldham took over the role of executive director of Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp in New Hamburg last summer, replacing Campbell Nisbet, who had been in the role for many years. Oldham came to Hidden Acres after 12 years in full-time camp ministry, lastly at Camp Kadesh in Saskatchewan. "Camp ministry has been a passion and desire of mine ever since my first camp experience," he says. "I have long believed that the camp is an amazing platform to change the lives of children, youth and adults, and expose those who wouldn't otherwise experience God to him and his Word."



—HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP

the embrace of a healthy community that welcomes you as you are, some magical things can happen. The way I see it, the community of summer camp provides two things for children: independence and belonging.



PHOTO BY JANINI REESOR

This is Fraser Lake Camp's 65th year in operation. It serves 300 campers each summer on 110 hectares in the Canadian Shield.

My experience in school suggested independence and belonging were at odds with each other. To be a part of a group I felt I had to give up—perhaps even be ashamed of—some eccentric parts of myself.

But this was not the case in youth group and at camp. Somehow in those spaces independence and belonging were one and the same. When we played the card game, Mafia, or went on adventures into

the forest, we did not need to fit in to belong. The less self-conscious we were and the more authentic we were, the more the sense of belonging grew within the group. Independence and belonging seemed to fuel each other.

My favourite time during each camp session is the first 15 minutes off the bus. There are always one or two first-time campers unsure which bag is theirs or which cabin group they are a part of. I empathize with this because I was that camper; the counsellors have been, as well. My story ended with a compassionate, understanding camp staff saying a few words which felt like a parachute opening. I remember them to this day: "Hi, let's go join the rest of the group."

Camp is a fantastic, engaging place, with outrageous singing at campfires, kayaking across the lake with your cabin, making it to the top of the rock wall, and having unforgettable devotionals with your cabin group at sunset.

These are not the goals of summer camp to me, though; they are the outcomes of a culture of independence and belonging.

I feel that is the jewel of the Mennonite culture I was blessed to be raised in, and I feel blessed now to foster a new generation. //

Jason McDowell is the director of Fraser Lake Camp.



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Conrad Grebel
University College

FOCUS ON CAMPS

Assiniboia, Koinonia: Similar but different

By Janet Peters
Camps with Meaning

Over the past few years, the structure of Mennonite Church Manitoba's Camps with Meaning has undergone some major shifts. It has gone from a three-camp system to a two-camp model, running spring and summer camps at Assiniboia and Koinonia.

- **Camp Assiniboia**, consisting of 40 hectares of Manitoba river-bottom forest and nestled in one of the many bends of the Assiniboine River, continues to be managed as it has in the past. Year-round MC Manitoba staff take care of housing and feeding our many guest rentals, general maintenance of the facilities and caring for the land.

With the repair and construction of an expanded dyke, which also created a large borough pit, we are also excited to be planning for a new 1.5-hectare lake with a beach and watercraft activities to add to our summer camp program and the shoulder rental seasons.

A capital campaign is also

underway to upgrade and add to the summer and rental program capacities, including moving the ropes course inside the dyke; adding a natural playground; and upgrading the pool and change house; and some new buildings.

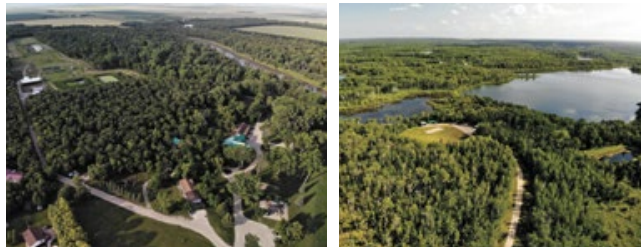
- **Camp Koinonia**, situated on beautiful Max Lake in southwestern Manitoba's Turtle Mountain Provincial Park, regularly makes use of the lake systems for canoeing, overnight camping and extended out-trips during our summer camps.

While still owned by MC Manitoba, Koinonia's year-round operations are now taken care of by a fantastic board of people

from the Boissevain area, which oversees the rental season and maintenance of the facilities and land. This partnership was made official in April 2019, and the Koinonia board has been working to bring new growth to the camp, drawing from old roots of hospitality, sanctuary and adventure.

Summer camp at Assiniboia and Koinonia can at times look very similar and also very different. Both camps are run by amazing young people who bring energy and passion to sharing the Anabaptist faith, challenging and encouraging campers in activities, and connecting campers to creation and the Creator. ☸

Janet Peters is the associate program director of Mennonite Church Manitoba's Camps with Meaning, and she oversees the spring and summer camping program. She loves spending time at both camps during any season!



PHOTOS BY DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG

Aerial views of Camp Assiniboia, left, and Camp Koinonia, right.

Rhythm and Song Camp breaks into rap

By Laura Moolenbeek
Silver Lake Mennonite Camp
SAUBLE BEACH, ONT.

According to camp counsellor Laura Moolenbeek, Silver Lake Mennonite Camp's first Rhythm and Song Camp was an incredible week for campers and staff. Seven- to 16-year-olds came with a huge range of musical experience. They brought a wide range of perspectives to each session. The boys cabin chose to write and perform a rap for their counsellors.

Robert MacGregor, Silver Lake's assistant

director last summer, says, "Silver Lake welcomed a record number of sleepover campers, introduced new camp programs, had a six-night out-trip and invited friends from all over the world to the first New-comer Family Holiday." Last summer was also a record year for day campers. "Our gifted staff put on amazing programs for all camp guests," he adds.

The last night of the Rhythm and



PHOTO BY KAREN CORNIES

Laura Moolenbeek rehearses a rap written by the boys cabin at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. By the end of the week, campers were ready to perform the rap they prepared at the banquet before the whole camp. It was amazing to see kids coming out of their shells and finding common ground in music.

Song Camp was the first night of New-comer Family Holiday. "The campfire

FOCUS ON CAMPS

brought on a powerful feeling of togetherness,” says MacGregor, “as Rhythm and Song campers performed their vocal and drum talents for our new guests. Seeing kids from different camps smile as they clapped along together captured what Silver Lake is all about. It was awesome to see diverse campers have fun as they built new friendships and connections!”

According to a parent, “My daughter arrived home from camp healthy and happy. I was so impressed by her story, told with pride on our car ride home, of her watershed moments at camp. She will remember those moments and take them with her as an empowering experience going forward.”

Silver Lake staff gave generously last summer. One staff put it this way: “To be supported by camp is so special, and being embraced by this community

year after year is an ongoing life-changing experience that adds an immense amount of joy and connection to my life.”

Another staff member reminded us that, “Most of all, campers should come away happy because the entirety of Silver Lake is a labour of love on the part of those that make it possible.”

Staff hope every camper will find a home at Silver Lake, with a deep sense of love, joy and connection with creation, God, each other and themselves. We hope campers will be inspired to live socially just, environmentally sustainable and spiritually fulfilling lives.

Wherever your journey takes you this coming summer, may it be a summer of love, joy and connection! ☘

READY FOR SUMMER?

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- Camps with Meaning
- Camp Assiniboia
- Camp Koinonia
- ONTARIO
- Willowgrove
- Fraser Lake Camp
- Willowgrove Day Camp
- Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp & Retreat Centre

MENNONITE CAMPING ASSOCIATION
WWW.MENNONITECAMPING.ORG

Calendar

British Columbia

Until March 21: "Mennonite Gals Can Paint," an exhibit of watercolour and acrylic paintings by Marilyn Vooy and Irene Enns, at the Mennonite Heritage Museum, Abbotsford.

March 7,8: Lenten vespers with Adendmusik Choir: (7) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford, at 7:30 p.m.; (8) St. Philip's Anglican, Vancouver, at 7:30 p.m. In support of the Menno Simons Centre.

April 4: Walter Paetkau presents "It Takes Raindrops to Fill a Lake" book launch, at the Mennonite Heritage Museum, Abbotsford, at 2 p.m.

April 17: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. holds its annual general meeting, at Ricky's Country Restaurant, Abbotsford, at 1:30 p.m. For more information, visit mhsbc.com.

April 24: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. and the Canadian Musical Theatre Company present

"Pier 21," a musical by Allen des Noyers, at the Matsqui Centennial Auditorium, Abbotsford, at 7 p.m. For ticket information, visit mhsbc.com. Held in conjunction with the Mennonite Heritage Museum Gallery exhibit, "New footsteps in Canada."

Alberta

March 10: Hugo and Doreen Neufeld read from their new book, "The North End Lives On," at Ambrose University, Calgary, at 7 p.m. Music by Art Koop. For more information and tickets, visit northendliveson.eventbrite.ca.

March 20-21: MC Alberta annual delegate sessions, at Edmonton First Mennonite Church. Theme: "Encountering, embracing, embodying Christ in life."

June 5-7: MC Alberta women's retreat.

Saskatchewan

March 13-14: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. To register online, visit mcsask.ca/2020-mc-sask-annual-delegate-sessions/.

Manitoba

Until March 14: Art exhibit at Mennonite Heritage Gallery, Winnipeg, "Mother Earth and Her Lovers: repair and maintenance."

March 6: Music therapy coffee house, at CMU's Marpeck Commons, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

March 7: MC Manitoba annual delegate gathering, at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church

March 15: Mennonite Community Orchestra presents its spring concert, at Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, Winnipeg, at 2 p.m. Works include Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony.

March 17: Finale of the Verna Mae Janzen music competition, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

March 28: Jazz at CMU, in the Great Hall, at 7 p.m.

March 29: Guitar and handbell ensembles, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

March 30: Community Concert Band performance, at the CMU

Chapel, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

March 31: Open house for prospective students, at CMU, Winnipeg, at 8:30 a.m.

April 3: "Spring at CMU," a fundraising event, at CMU, at 7 p.m. Presentation by Mary-Jane McCallum, the 2020 Pax Award winner.

April 10: Winnipeg First Mennonite Church Choir presents Brahms's "Ein Deutsches Requiem," at the church, at 7 p.m.

May 11: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's bursary banquet, at the Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg. For more information, visit westgatemennonite.ca.

May 13: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's community work day.

May 27: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's junior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

May 28: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's senior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.



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Ontario

Feb. 22: Menno Singers present an afternoon hymn sing, at 3 p.m., and an evening hymn service with Matthew Boutda, the 2018 Abner Martin Scholarship winner, at 7 p.m. Both events at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener. For more information, visit mennosingers.com.

Feb. 23: Menno Singers presents an afternoon hymn sing, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit mennosingers.com.

Feb. 28: Grebel MTS ministry forum brown bag lunch for congregational leaders, in Grebel's community education room, Waterloo, from noon to 2 p.m. Topic: "Sexual orientation, gender diversity and pastoral care: New opportunities." RSVP to theological.studies@uwaterloo.ca by Feb. 21.

Feb. 29: ReLearning Community: Niagara taster day, at Bethany Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register by Feb. 14, visit bit.ly/38xBJT6.

March 3: "Lunch and listen: Stories from Israel and Palestine," at MCC Ontario's office, Kitchener, at noon. Bring your own lunch. For more information, visit mcco.ca/events.

March 4: Conrad Grebel University College presents its 2020 Sawatsky Lecture, "Great law of peace: Lessons on life," in the Great Hall, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: is Rick Hill, citizen of the Beaver Clan of the Tuscarora Nation of the Haudenosaunee at Grand River. For more information, visit grebel.ca/sawatsky.

March 6: An evening of jazz in support of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, at Hirut Café and Restaurant, Toronto, at 7 p.m. Featuring the Tom Reynolds Trio. For more information, visit grebel.ca/TMTC/events.

March 6-7: Youth worker retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Theme: "Reimagining youth ministry." Leader: Michele Hershberger.

March 12: J. Winfield Fretz Visiting Scholar Lecture, "Where moth and rust destroy: Archives and the contest over Anabaptist information," at Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, Waterloo, at 7:30

p.m. Speaker: David Y. Neufeld, who holds the 2019-20 J. Winfield Fretz Fellowship in Mennonite Studies. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events.

March 13: "Technology and peacemaking," a Grebel church youth event, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 6 p.m. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events. To register (by March 9), email rjdejong@uwaterloo.ca.

March 21: March break open house at Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo, Ont., from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events.

March 27: Absent Friends Film Series presents "The Fault in our Stars," a film based on John Green's book of the same name, followed by a discussion afterwards, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. For more information, visit grebel.ca/events.

March 29: Menno Singers perform "Creation is a Song: Songs of Water, Wind and Earth," at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit mennosingers.com.

April 26: Pax Christi Chorale presents the Toronto premiere of "Considering Matthew Shepard," at the George Westin Recital Hall, Toronto, at

Classifieds

Volunteers Wanted

The **International Guest House** in Washington D.C. is a special place where Anabaptist Mennonite volunteers live and work together providing hospitality to travellers from all over the world. Openings for short-term volunteers of 1-3 months available beginning June 2020. Room and board, flexible work schedules, and opportunities to engage meaningfully with other people. Current need for a host couple interested in serving 6-12 months. (Hosts receive monthly stipends, health insurance and room with private bath). Connect at igh-dc.com, call 202-726-5808 or email sarafretzgoering@gmail.com.

3 p.m. For more information, visit paxchristichorale.org.

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.



Employment



Employment opportunity
Pastor (full-time)
Start date: July 2020

For more information, to express interest or to apply, please contact Ryan Siemens, MC Sask Executive Minister, at minister@mcsask.ca, or contact the chair of the search committee at rosthermnc@sasktel.net or by phone at 306-232-5577.



Menno-Hof, an Amish-Mennonite information centre in Shippshewana, Ind., is in need of individuals and couples in agreement with Anabaptist values and beliefs to serve as host/hostess for a minimum of one month during the summer of 2020. Responsibilities include conducting tours and some light housekeeping. Two furnished apartments are available on-site. Contact Ruth Miller, daily operations manager:

260-768-4117 or rmiller@mennohof.org
www.mennohof.org



Employment opportunity
Executive Minister

Mennonite Church Manitoba invites applications for Executive Minister. The Executive Minister will inspire and lead congregations and pastors across MCM. Primary areas of responsibility include: promoting congregational vibrancy and spiritual health; strategic planning; leading the MCM staff team in implementing MCM's vision and mission; and relating to MC Canada.

Preferred qualifications: love for Christ and the church; strong team builder; excellent listener and communicator; spiritual leadership experience; demonstrated commitment to Anabaptist theology.

Preferred start date: Summer/Fall, 2020 (flexible). Resumés will be reviewed beginning April 15, 2020.

Applications, nominations or inquiries may be submitted to John P. Klassen, Search Chair:

pastorjohn@winkleremmanuel.com.

More information at:

www.mennochurch.mb.ca/



MCC PHOTO BY SOPHIA BEZOPLENKO

About a thousand comforters were completed at the MCC Material Resources Centre in Winnipeg on Jan. 18, for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Great Winter Warm-up event. Volunteers at more than a hundred locations across Canada, the United States and Europe created a total of more than 9,500 comforters, 3,005 more than the original goal. 'Comforters are an excellent metaphor for the nature of our work around the world,' says Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Canada. 'One square of fabric alone cannot keep the cold away, but many pieces connected together produce warmth against the cold.' To read more, visit canadianmennonite.org/warmupresults/.



Photo finish