



Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage in Ottawa



On May 22, 2024, Presbyterians joined representatives and members from Anglican, Armenian, Lutheran, Mennonite, Quakers, Roman Catholic, United and other churches for the culmination of the KAIROS Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage in Ottawa. The groups gathered in a local park for prayer and to acknowledge the traditional territory before walking together to Parliament Hill, where a vigil was held between the Centre Block and Centennial Flame.

The Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, Principal Emerita at Knox College, representing the International Affairs Committee, and the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, were asked to speak during the vigil.

The Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage



is a global network of churches and autonomous Christian groups engaged in a prayerful show of solidarity with Palestinians seeking a just peace for people living in Israel and Palestine. People

worldwide were invited to walk a portion or all of 41 kms, which is the length of the Gaza Strip, during Lent. Since Lent, the population of Gaza has trekked the length of that region seven or more times to

escape from one dangerous place and situation to another. The global invitation was issued for anyone who wanted to join—church leaders, people of faith, companions who yearn for peace—to walk or

roll as a way to offer solidarity for the people of Palestine and Israel.

Learn more about the event and how you can get involved at kairoscanada.org/gaza-ceasefire-pilgrimage.

Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage and Calls to Action

The following Calls to Action were brought to politicians in Ottawa as part of the Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage. They can be found online at kairoscanada.org/gaza-ceasefire-pilgrimage/calls-for-action.

Across Canada, church leaders, congregations and faith groups organized events for the Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage: Canadian Churches for Just Peace. The initiative—organized by KAIROS Canada and its member churches, which collectively represent more than four million people from communities across Canada—culminated in a pilgrimage to Parliament Hill on May 22.

Church leaders and representatives discussed the calls to action with members of Parliament from all political parties and in a press conference held on Parliament Hill. The calls to action are:

- An enduring and sustained ceasefire.
- Immediate flow of life-saving food, water, aid, fuel and humanitarian assistance.
- Release of all captives.
- End all arms transfers to Israel.
- Ending occupation so a just peace can begin.

Canada has a strong policy base to take leadership on these issues, and there is more that Canada can and should do.

Canada can engage the international community to secure a ceasefire and humanitarian access. It can speak about how international humanitarian and international human rights laws must be

respected. Canada should highlight how international rules require Israel to respect the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice, which calls for a ceasefire and urgent safe passage of humanitarian aid.

Canada can impose a comprehensive and binding embargo on military trade with Israel to avoid complicity in what is being investigated as genocide. The recent Parliamentary motion is not insignificant, but it does not do enough. An effective embargo would apply to both existing and future export agreements, would capture component parts of military equipment and would apply to goods moving through third parties, such as the United States.

Canada can help ease human suffering by increasing its aid envelope, doing more to help refugees needing access to safety in Canada (like the response for refugees from Ukraine) and committing to help build a lasting peace, including ensuring justice for harms and safeguarding of evidence needed for truth and reconciliation.

The group urged Members of Parliament in Canada to support the calls to action for long-term sustainable and just peace in the region, which is so urgently needed for the security, rights and dignity of all Palestinians and Israelis.

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Narratives of Hope and Possibility



By the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls,
Moderator of the 2024 General
Assembly

The church has been issued an invitation this coming year to tell stories and engage our spiritual imagination in the service of our faithfulness and future as God's people. Under the direction of the Assembly Council, a working group has been tasked to consider narratives of hope and possibility to help the church imagine, learn and act upon narratives that could lead to renewal, transformation and vitality for congregations, courts and agencies of the church. However, the task of considering narratives of hope and possibility is not just the responsibility of the working group, but rather an encouragement to all of us to participate. (Learn more about Narratives of Hope and Possibility in the Summer edition, page 17.)

In my role as moderator, and to be helpful to the wider initiative, let me share some of my reflections on narratives of hope and possibility. In a way, you might consider what you, your congregation, your presbytery and your synod are being asked to do is to

“write your own adventure story” that inspires your future. However, as Christians we're being asked to follow Jesus in adventuring where the Spirit might lead us so that we strive always to let our lives, faith and witness be shaped by God.

Many of our stories will be rooted in our heritage and traditions, and in the remembrance of the saints who have preceded us; lots about imagining a future requires remembering the past. We can see this in one of my favourite Bible passages: Isaiah 43. Isaiah's words were addressed to the exiles in Babylon to give them hope for a future they could barely imagine. To wake up his audience, he announces, “Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:18–19).

Isaiah is trying his hardest to give hope to the people by promising “a new thing.” However, even as he says that, the oracle in which this message is embedded is full of references to the “former things”—the creation narratives, the Exodus story, God's history of deliverance and compassion. In verse 20, which follows right on doing “a new thing,” Isaiah proclaims God's promise: “I will make a way in the wilderness.”

Yes, that's new, but it's also as old as the people's narratives of the wilderness wandering on their way to the land of promise. We don't leave our memories or our traditions behind as we consider where the Spirit is leading us now.

That said, much about our storytelling at this moment for the church will ask us to consider how we might try “a new thing”; to consider how new possibilities might be asked of us as the Spirit leads. We might find that we need to change, or the way we do things as a congregation needs a new approach, or new structures, or a new way of thinking and praying. But let's be real—change is difficult.

I am reminded of a cartoon I saw in a Facebook post. In the first cartoon panel, a speaker is asking a group, “Who wants change?” and everyone is smiling with their hands raised enthusiastically. In the second panel, when the speaker asks, “Who wants to change?”, no hands are raised and everyone is glumly looking at the floor. If change hits too close to our cherished identities, or our comfortable ways of doing things, it can feel like an unfair imposition.

This is when deep prayer and thoughtful conversation and collaboration among groups in the church are needed. Our Presby-



terian approach to discernment builds on the understanding that the Spirit works in and through the shared, sustained and prayerful deliberations of congregations, presbyteries, synods and the General Assembly. Considering narratives of hope and possibility at all levels of the church will require exactly that—discernment. It will be difficult, deep and reflective work, but also a path of sharing, joy and, dare we say it, fun!

One final thought about our year of sharing narratives of hope and possibility—don't be shy! Think outside the old boxes! Pray lots!

Use your imagination! Trust the Spirit! We need lots of narratives, reflections and experimentation across the church in many locales and in ways that reflect the various faces of the PCC. Our future will probably not be a “one size fits all” garment, but a rich tapestry of faithful thought, spirituality, prayers, actions, initiatives and experiments. Some congregations are already pursuing interesting ideas. Others are just starting to try on a new thought. All of us are called to follow Christ and be the church Christ needs to live out the love of God for the world.

VST Names the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls Professor Emerita

The Vancouver School of Theology (VST) named the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls Professor Emerita in appreciation of her years of teaching and ministry at VST and in the broader church.

The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls retired as Professor of Hebrew Bible and Dean of the Faculty at Vancouver School of Theology on July 1, 2021. Several decades of students, first at Knox College and then at VST, have Prof. Dutcher-Walls to thank for their introduction to the Hebrew Bible, and lay people from coast to coast have benefited from her ministries of teaching and preaching.



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Reflection on a Visit to the West Bank



In May, the Rev. Christian Perseaud (from the Life and Mission Agency), the Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon (from the International Affairs Committee), the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald (General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency) and Wendy Gichuru (staff with the United Church in Canada) responded to the invitation of partners in Palestine and Israel to visit in order to witness and hear about the worsening conditions there.

During the visit, the group spent seven days in conversation with Palestinian Christians, leaders both in the churches and in civil society, Palestinian non-governmental organizations, an Israeli human rights and Jewish religious group, and visited World Council of Churches offices, UN agencies and met with the Representative of Canada to the Palestinian Authority.

The people the group met with desperately want peace and look for ways Palestinians and Israelis can live together peacefully in the land.

The right of Israel to exist or defend itself was not an issue, as is sometimes reported. What the group heard was people pointing out that the Israeli government has failed to fulfill its obligation under the Geneva Convention to protect occupied people. Therefore, because of their status as subjugated/occupied people, Palestinians need the commitment and advocacy of both the Canadian government and the churches to bring about peace with justice.

The group heard from church leaders and groups that Palestinians feel angry and abandoned after 76 years of isolation, hardship, betrayal and the incremental loss of culture, communities and lives. Well before October 2024, thousands of Palestinians had been killed and millions displaced

and forced into exile.

Palestinian Christians are frustrated at the failure of both the Canadian Government and Christian churches around the world to name honestly and accurately what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank. People associated with UN agencies the group visited say they have not witnessed a situation like what is happening in Gaza today in 30 years of experience.

Local partners challenge the use of terms such as *human rights*, *international law* and *the equality of all*, while at the same time failing to name what is happening in Gaza as genocide and the violence throughout the Occupied Territories as ethnic cleansing. They want the churches and the government to do more in demanding a permanent ceasefire. They want churches and governments to, as happened in South Africa, support boycotts, financial divestment and sanctions to apartheid, and protest crimes.

There is mounting evidence of the Israeli government's stated goal to have the whole land from the river to the sea as a Jewish state with Palestinians "transferred out" or permanently subjugated. Partners asked us to understand that on finishing with Gaza, the Israeli government will turn to the occupied West Bank, based on the increased violence and persecution people are experiencing in that area. They told the group that since October 7, with all eyes on Gaza, ethnic cleansing has begun in earnest with increased killing of Palestinians and incarceration without charge, including many children. Entire villages have been emptied, resulting in displaced families. They point to the area in the northern West Bank set aside for a Palestinian state, now the site of new illegal Israeli settlements.

Palestinians plead for the Canadian government to collaborate more diligently and persistently with international partners to stop the building of Israeli settlements, many of which are so large that the Palestinians call them colonial outposts. The UN has declared the settlements to be against the 4th



Geneva Convention. The Palestinian community implores the group to ask why Canada won't do more to call for the end of checkpoints, building apartheid walls, illegal incarceration of children, home demolitions, and violence targeting Palestinian farmers and Bedouins that forces them to abandon their land. They want Canada to vote at the UN against the occupation and to oppose the increasing number of Israeli laws that enshrine apartheid institutionally in every facet of their lives.

The group heard that clergy are regularly harassed and spat upon, churches are vandalized, cemeteries desecrated, and entry to places of worship is controlled by the Israeli police who limit access. This year, for the first time, Palestinian worshippers in Jerusalem were prevented from going to Bethlehem at Christmas and Palestinian Christians in Bethlehem were barred from visiting Jerusalem at Easter. Government representatives from around the world opted to accompany Christians to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as a means of protection.

"Where is the church? Where is the church's courage and integrity?" they asked. "Why is there little more than silence from

so many of the church's pulpits and public platforms?" "Why is the church not mobilized to do more to challenge the misuse of scripture and theology to justify the perennial sins of racism, colonialism and murder?" These are damning questions, and understandably, partners are drawing damning conclusions about the church's inaction and silence.

The questions that the experience of Palestinians raise for the church are difficult but urgent and the church must respond to them, and inevitably repent of the sinfulness of some of the answers. Local Palestinian partners repeatedly asked the church to name honestly and accurately the unvarnished reality of what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank. They are asking the church not to accept or tolerate euphemisms and indirect speech which, in this case, has lethal consequences.

People asked the church to have the courage to "name things as they are" and not accept euphemisms and lies. Naming things as they are is difficult and uncomfortable work, but people of faith have the resources, moral responsibility and holy vocation to do that work. Truth-telling is never simple; it is usually unpopular and always costs. Simplistic responses and popularity are not gospel priorities, but justice and truth are. Palestinian Christians would have the church engage in risky truth telling, meaningful advocacy, and prophetic action and decisions. Or, as the words on the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem put it, they are asking the churches "to proclaim the gospel of liberation and to lift up a culture of life and hope."



The Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon (centre right) at the pres conference.

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Moderator of the General Assembly:
The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls

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



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A Place of Rich History and Significance

By the Rev. Christian Persaud,
Westminster Presbyterian Church
in Calgary, Alta.

It's difficult to put some thoughts to words because when I think about my time in Israel and Palestine there is a sense of being overwhelmed by individuals' stories of pain and suffering, a post-World War II history of conflict in the region, a watershed moment of October 7, framed with present political ideology on one end and ancient biblical history on the other. And sometimes words are insufficient.

One of the challenges in speaking, listening or writing about Israel and Palestine is that there is so much emotional charge it's hard to hear another perspective without someone assuming you're "anti this" or "pro that." Many of us can think about Canada and the United States as having elected leaders, citizens and religious influence; we can speak about frustrations with politicians and governments as being separate from the people they lead, and the religious perspectives those people hold. But we often don't see this with regard to Israel and Palestine. It seems there is a tendency to treat all Israelis as Jewish people with a democratic government, while all Palestinians are Muslims with a terrorist government. For whatever reason we lump them all together without the ability to think about the children, women, and men as being governed by people who are more focused on personal or political agendas than the well-being of their people.

I, like many others, have not paid much attention to Palestine and Israel before October 7, 2023, despite the long-standing relationships and reports that The Presbyterian Church in Canada has shared for decades. I'm not informed enough to write about the history of Palestine and Israel, or its current politics, but something new for me was the suffering and persecution the Christian minority faces in the Jerusalem area.

Our group met with some individuals with a connection to the Greek Orthodox community. They told us that during excavations they came across catacombs, mosaics and evidence of an early Christian presence. They were told to stop excavating and cover it up. The rationale behind this being that it interfered with Israeli desires for Jewish expansion in the area.

Gates and access to places in the Old City were fascinating to see as a first-time visitor. Some of the stones and gates are hundreds of years old, built upon layer and layer of history, from ancient Israel, to Rome, the Middle Ages and the Ottoman period. There are several open gates into the Old City of Jerusalem, and the notable one that is closed is the Golden Gate, which has been sealed for over 400 years. In Jewish tradition, it is believed that the Messiah will enter Jerusalem through this gate.

It was jarring to go through the winding paths and alleys, built on ancient civilizations, and see barbershops, convenience stores and various shops, and a few minutes later seeing signs for the "Room of the Last Supper." Go-



A portion of the separation barrier along the West Bank.

ing through the twists and turns of streets and walkways, it's clear from seeing signs in Hebrew, Arabic and English, mindful of the Christian, Armenian, Jewish and Muslim quarters, that this is a place of rich history and significance for many peoples. Everyone wants their "piece" of it, and hopes to live in peace with it.

With such strong beliefs and symbolism in proximity, it's understandable there are concerns about access and safety. These are, however, sometimes misused to favour one group. When Pope John Paul II visited, the German Catholic Church was allowed to open the Zion Gate for the papal visit, but afterwards they were not allowed to close it. Previously, Christians used to come for funerals in the area, but after the gate remained open they were not allowed to bring cars in anymore. The general sentiment was that the Israeli authorities bar you from your own areas and open it for themselves.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to practice and preserve a Christian identity in the area. For the first time in many years there was no permission given to go from Jerusalem to Bethlehem for Christmas, and vice versa for Easter. Despite a distance of less than 10 km, these holy cities for Christians are separated by more than barbed wire and checkpoints. Bethlehem, located in the West Bank, is behind a wall that reaches 8 meters high, with watchtowers

and a buffer zone. This was in place before October 7.

The Holy Fire is a special event on the day before Orthodox Easter that takes place at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the site where some believe the tomb of Jesus was located. It is an occasion that draws Christians to the church—but this year was different. We heard from a Christian, who was European, that there were many, many checkpoints over a small area to control the 3,000 Christians who gathered for this event. The Israeli police said they cannot maintain control when the streets are busy, despite the fact that 50,000 Jewish people were in the same area for a festival the week before. Christians were treated violently, some punched by police, and were told they needed bracelets to attend their own church. No Palestinian Christians from Gaza or the West Bank attended this occasion, and despite their absence, the Christians were still persecuted from worshipping freely.

We can spend time arguing about who's right and wrong, we can become numb or enraged by the images on news, or debate what democracy and apartheid look like, but we can also try to look at what unites us rather than what divides us. One person our group met with said, "Being considerate and concerned about other people's problems is what makes us human." Our first Judeo-Christian creation account tells us that humankind was made in God's image. One way to understand this is the relational aspect of our Triune God (perichoresis). It is extremely difficult not to feel aligned with one side or the other, to see one side as victims and the others as perpetrators, or those with power and those without, but when we lump everyone together, or dehumanize the other, we fall short of what God calls us to do.

More often than not, I feel help-

less about the situation in Israel and Palestine. It seems too big of a challenge for one person on the other side of the world to do anything about. The issues seem too entrenched, too long-standing, political, religious, ideological, etc. One person who spoke with us shared that, "The only way to combat religious extremism is to give other options." Perhaps we're called to give other options—not just supporting one government or the other, but helping people whose lives are affected the most. One priest we spoke with was quite frustrated with Western churches. There is a genuine fear that the Holy land will become like a museum—with sites and artifacts, but no people living there. While people are forcibly disconnected and isolated from others, both physically and economically, with a constant threat of being persecuted, it is unfathomable to begin considering how one carries on, but some still have hope.

As our own denomination wrestles with its colonial history, we know there can't be peace and reconciliation without truth and understanding. Perhaps as we learn more about Canada's history and the lives of people affected by actions of church and state, we will see the need to advocate for peace in Jerusalem, in Israel and Palestine, before even greater harm is done.



Graffiti on the separation wall.

Support for Palestine

This year, the General Assembly approved the following support for work in Palestine:

- \$100,000 to support Gaza Food Relief (presbyterian.ca/pwsd)
- \$50,000 be given to the Defence for Children International – Palestine
- \$25,000 given to support the Olive Tree Campaign (presbyterian.ca/olive-tree)

To learn more about the church's response to the situation in Gaza and the West Bank and to read statements written by churches and Palestinian partners visit presbyterian.ca/just-and-lasting-peace.

Peacemaking and Being Children of God

By Allyson Carr, Justice Ministries

Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

Peacemaking is working for a just and equitable end to the causes of conflict or harm, and toward healing and sustainable flourishing for all involved. To do those things, it helps to understand what is causing the conflicts, and what is helping sustain them. All that the church does gives witness; this is why it is so important to take discipleship seriously and to repent and reform when we realize we have done wrong. It is also why working for peace, equity and justice are so important. They are such a significant part of the witness the church is called to. All of this—discipleship, repentance, reform and working for justice and equity—are part of the peacemaking Jesus called us to.

Though the church’s witness has been marred by sin and has not always been aligned with peacemaking—particularly through our role in colonization—The Presbyterian Church in Canada has a history of working for peace and engaging in peacemaking. In 1994, the same year the PCC first made confession for its role in colonization and residential schools, the General

Assembly also adopted a theological statement on peacemaking. This “Theology of Peacemaking” statement not only calls Christians to work to end armed conflict; it calls the church—and all within the church—to address the roots of conflict, which are found in such things as racism, xenophobia, economic exploitation, colonialism, and the impacts of human-driven changes to the earth’s environments and climate.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s understanding of peacemaking flows from that commitment to “examine the root causes” as well as from the church’s commitments to justice, which are laid out in general terms in *Living Faith*. Among other commitments, *Living Faith* states that justice protects the rights of others and is concerned about concrete matters such as employment, education, health, fair laws justly administered, concern for victims and offenders, and requires that courts and penal institutions are just and humane. The justice section closes by noting that justice stands with neighbours in their struggle for dignity and respect and demands the exercise of power for the common good (summarized from *Living Faith* 8.4.1–6).

Pursuing all these things are forms of peacemaking. As we stand with our neighbour in that struggle for dignity and respect

we do the work, with them, of re-humanizing all of us to each other. We do it too in contexts where the powers-that-be would try to de-humanize or make monsters out of whomever those powers label “other” instead of “neighbour.” When we demand the exercise of power for the common good, we support and nurture the creation of contexts for real peace—and justice, and equity—to grow. One of the greatest things the church can contribute to peacemaking today, then, is speaking out against hate and demonstrating the care that comes from loving our neighbour. Wherever hate is allowed to flourish, conflict and violence will have deep wells to sustain themselves; demonstrating love gives communities different, healthy wells to draw from.

Peacemaking and war

Work to address root causes of conflict is what will sustain equitable peace in the long run—but in the short run, where conflict and violence have already taken root, it is crucial to work for an end to armed conflict and war. Where there is war—in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and anywhere—peace cannot exist before a ceasefire is achieved. The PCC’s “Theology of Peacemaking” statement reminds us that: “the Church cannot participate in the justification of human warfare as good and holy. Nor



can Augustine’s [Just War] teachings be used to justify war where ‘collateral damage’ is a code word for children, women and men being killed, injured and sentenced to years of poverty, disability and disease. God does not glorify our wars, nor allow us to freely take joy and satisfaction from defeating our enemy. The loss to our world of human and natural resources is too great” (p. 362, A&P 1994; Statement adopted p. 29).

We are told to judge a tree by its fruits (Matthew 7: 15–17). The fruits of war and armed conflict include not only the deaths of all those killed in the conflict but also trauma that can linger for generations; homelessness; increased hunger not just where the conflict is but also in areas around the world that may depend on food or trade from areas involved in

the conflict; environmental effects and toxins left in the soil from armaments and weapons; destroyed lives, intergenerational anger and broken trust. Wars never solve problems, but they do cause a lot more of them. Peace, sustainable and just peace, is what solves problems.

“Blessed are the peacemakers” Jesus taught us. Like justice, working for peace is a vital part of Christian discipleship. So as we consider the conflicts around us, let us be the children of God that Jesus called us to be: peacemakers.

See “*Peacemaking: A Reflective Resource*,” available as a free download on the Social Action Hub. Go to the “Educational Resources” tab of the Peacemaking page at presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/peacemaking.



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Highlights from the 2024 General Assembly



The Rev. Mary Fontaine, Moderator of the 2023 General Assembly, during opening worship.

By Callie Long and Heather Chappell, Communications Office

The 2024 General Assembly marked a pivotal moment in the denomination's ongoing journey of faith, governance, societal engagement, and healing and reconciliation. Commissioners and guests gathered from June 2 to 6 at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont., to deliberate on and consider issues crucial to the church's mission as it grapples with matters reflecting broader societal changes and internal theological debates.

One crucial matter on the agenda on June 4 was the PCC's apology for its complicity in colonial practices and operating residential schools, presented to the As-

sembly by the Special Committee Regarding an Apology for Residential Schools and Colonization. There was a quiet stillness and introspection after the Assembly's adoption of the apology. The profoundly moving ceremony was followed by singing and prayers, led by the Rev. Stewart Laughing Bear Folster, a National Indigenous Ministries Council (NIMC) member, and the Rev. Mary Fontaine, past moderator and convener of the NIMC. Members of the special committee took turns reading the preamble to the apology, and Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, read the apology in full. The committee then invited the Assembly to participate in a smudging ceremony.

Read the full apology on page 9.

Installation of the new moderator

Earlier in the week, commissioners and guests gathered for opening worship at Knox Presbyterian Church in Waterloo, Ont. Before celebrating Holy Communion, the Rev. Mary Fontaine, minister at Hummingbird Ministries, Moderator of the 2023 General Assembly, and the first Indigenous moderator of the PCC, preached a sermon titled "Building a New Trail Together." Mary reflected on how brokenness can be healed, emphasizing that we must care for one another as we walk this earth together as God's people. She urged the church and individuals to continue working toward healing and reconciliation.

During the first session, the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls was elected and installed as Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly. The new moderator stated that she was humbled and delighted to take on this service to the church and looked forward to a year of greeting old friends and meeting new ones. Pat thanked Mary for the gifts of friendship, care and compassion she had brought to the position of moderator in 2023 and spoke to the commissioners about the talents they have been given to use for God's glory. She



The Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls, Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly.

prayed that they would love, forgive, serve, listen and respect each other as they move through the Assembly together—sentiments echoed again and again during the proceedings, including by the Young Adult Representatives from across Canada, who challenged the Assembly to continue to love one another despite facing differences and changes.

A week of reflection

Worshipful moments of faithful reflection were woven throughout the Assembly's proceedings. On June 3, the morning liturgy and worship was led by the Rev. Frank Szatmari from Calvin Presbyterian Church in Kitchener, Ont., and the Rev. Paul Kang, the PCC's New Beginnings program coordinator. Paul noted that working in the church can be both exhilarating and joyful despite hard work. Still, he urged those gathered not to reduce church work to a task or series of functions, as there is the risk of overlooking the one thing essential to faith: listening to and giving one's full attention to the words of Jesus.

On June 4, the Rev. Jenn Geddes, minister at Comox Valley Presbyterian Church in Comox, B.C., led morning worship accompanied by the choir from Joonim Presbyterian Church in Waterloo. Jenn preached on the importance of connection—even amidst differences and diversity—pointing out that the church's future relies on connections with other churches and ecumenical communities, and anyone seeking faith in this secular world. "Connections will get us through," she concluded. "So let us lean on each other and work together to be the body of Christ in our world."

Working together and walking with each other was a theme also reflected upon in the moderator's report to the Assembly by the

Rev. Mary Fontaine, who thanked all the churches that welcomed her over the past year, making her feel loved and cared for. She spoke of her time as moderator as a learning experience that included much prayer and spiritual growth. She asked that we pray for those who are working to stop generational trauma caused by residential schools, and for healing to happen in Indigenous communities. She also asked that people reach out to Indigenous people in their neighbourhoods, and to be as welcoming to them as they have been to her.

Intense discussion and decision-making

The International Affairs Committee's report to the Assembly addressed several issues of international concern, including climate change, food security and the costly solidarity of standing with Palestinian Christians. The Assembly decided to allocate funds to support olive tree growing projects, the legal defence of children, and famine relief in Gaza.

The Assembly adopted the report by the Committee on Church Doctrine, which dealt with concerns related to the Declaration of Faith Concerning the Church and Nation, marking its 70th year, Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) and whether Living Faith should be a living or historical document, but the Assembly defeated the recommendation that the subordinate standard be considered a living document that can be changed under the Barrier Act.

The National Indigenous Ministries Council (NIMC), comprising eight ministries across Canada, reported on the need for a greater presence and voice for Indigenous people in the life and structures of the church, and a commitment on the part of the church to continue to work in promotion



Guest speaker Rula Odeh, Board Chair of Canadian Friends of Sabeel.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



The Rev. Stewart Laughing Bear Folster, National Indigenous Ministries Council member.



Young Adult Representatives at the 2024 General Assembly.

of supporting truth, healing and reconciliation work.

Ecumenical and interfaith guests

The Rev. Dr. Eui Sig Kim brought greetings from the Presbyterian Church in South Korea, noting that the denomination, with its 10,000 congregations, 2.5 million members and 1,500 missionaries, is forever grateful to The Presbyterian Church in Canada for its constant and ongoing support. The Rev. Dr. Kim presented a plaque of friendship to the moderator.

Guest speaker Rula Odeh, Board Chair of Canadian Friends of Sabeel, was joined by her sister Samia Odeh, an accomplished musician and songwriter, who shared songs to accompany Rula's presentation. The women are of Palestinian Christian heritage, and their father is a 1948 "Nakba" (Catastrophe) survivor from Jerusalem. Rula noted that speaking at the General Assembly gave her much hope and energy. She talked about her family's story, what it means to be dehumanized, and what it means to

practice "costly solidarity." She spoke of the horrors taking place in Palestine and asked that we continue to insist on accountability, including advocating the Canadian government to uphold international human rights law. Rula concluded by saying, "We pray for justice and peace for all—for Palestinians and Israelis alike... It is not antisemitic or racist to call for these things, it's about truth, justice and our values. It's the only way to ensure that Israeli and Palestinian children will have a future full of hopes and dreams they can achieve one day." Samia ended the session with an original song called "Kites," written for Palestinian children with the hope that one day they and Israeli children will fly their kites together in peace.

Father Bodhan Hladio, a priest in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada, spoke about the history of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and of Ukraine itself and the ongoing violence its people have suffered at the hands of Russia. He talked about the current war and the devastation that

it has inflicted, and continues to inflict, on Ukraine and its people. He thanked the PCC for support, saying, "I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank all of you for the overwhelming, prayerful, moral and material support you and your communities have extended to Ukrainian refugees since the war began." He also asked that we continue to support Canada's efforts to help Ukraine defend itself, and the work of government, non-government and church agencies offering humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in Canada.

2024 Cutting Edge of Mission Award

This year's Cutting Edge of Mission Award recognized the work of Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, which aims to equip the church at the local level to support mental health and well-being through community, connection and resources. Sanctuary's resources are developed in collaboration with theologians, mental health professionals and people

with lived experience of mental health challenges. These resources are free to access and help faith communities worldwide to raise awareness, reduce stigma, support mental health, and promote mental well-being.

Sanctuary's CEO, Daniel Whitehead, accepted the award on behalf of the organization and expressed gratitude to the board, staff, supporters and people who have served through their work. Daniel spoke of the remarkable growth and change he has witnessed in the eight years since he began serving as CEO. He has watched it grow from a struggling non-profit in Vancouver, B.C., into an internationally renowned organization, helping hundreds of thousands of people worldwide.

Daniel noted that people living with mental health issues often struggle with stigma and rejection from society, and are branded with labels rather than being seen as beloved siblings in Christ. "We must make more space in our congregations and help people struggling with mental health to find a place in the body of Christ."

He noted that we all need friends to support us in this life and that this award will motivate Sanctuary to continue to fight for those who need a friend in their time of struggle.

The Cutting Edge of Mission Award recognizes individuals and organizations involved in innovative and fresh mission work. Recipients are given \$10,000 to honour their work and assist them in advancing it.

Narratives that Shape Us: an ecumenical panel discussion

The panellists: Rula Odeh, Board Director, Canadian Friends of Sabeel and Assembly guest speaker; Dr. Allen Jorgenson, Professor of Systemic Theology, Martin Luther University College; Moderator of the 2023 Assembly, the Rev. Mary Fontaine; Fr. Bodhan Hladio, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada; and Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls. This diverse group discussed their roots and heritage as a means

Continued on page 8



The Rev. Mary Fontaine, Moderator of the 2023 General Assembly, the Rev. Victor Kim, Principal Clerk, and the Rev. Don Muir, Deputy Clerk, during the first sederunt.



The Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald answering a question during the Assembly Council report.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Tuesday morning worship with the Joonim Church Choir.

Continued from page 7

to illustrate the profound impact these formative narratives have in shaping us. The discussion provided the Assembly with glimpses into the complexity and diversity that underpin humanity and how these narratives can deliver hope and illustrate the intricacies of our connections. These connections include nature and all it encompasses, as Mary Fontaine reminded the gathering.

Father Hladio spoke about how these narratives can be tied to resilience, despite attempts to oppress and deny people their existence. He reminded the Assembly of the maxim: “If you have hope, you plant an olive tree, as it only gives fruit in about 30 years—so, you’re planting it for your chil-

dren.” The Rev. Pat Dutcher-Walls noted that, as a biblical scholar, she was compelled to draw on stories from the Bible as stories from God that give us our identity as followers of Jesus. She explained that these ancient narratives have provided hope to people over time and continue to bolster the determination that can be applied to our contemporary contexts as we seek to follow Jesus and his ways of compassion.

In thanking the panellists, the Rev. Dr. Richard Topping of the Vancouver School of Theology noted that their stories and sharing of formative narratives gave him a profound impression that passing tradition on made for restlessness rather than passivity. While there were undoubtedly

cautionary notes about tradition, he said that he appreciated how these stories were all intensely informed by the belief that we are created in the image of God.

Narratives that Shape Us: table group discussion

During last year’s General Assembly, times were set aside for commissioners to share stories of hope in table groups and reflect on a structure that may help our denomination live out that hope into the future. This year, the Assembly again broke into table groups to focus on an “internal faith conversation” geared to facilitating the denomination’s understanding of how the foundational stories that shape identity help them know who they

are—as a group, as individuals, congregations and presbyteries. The questions for discussion, informed by biblical themes, were how such foundational stories could define a future of hope and what the stories were that made people glad and committed to being a Canadian Presbyterian.

As it had done last year, the Assembly Council will refer to the information presented by the table groups as it reflects on the denomination’s future and develops ideas on how best to support the church’s mission.

The final morning worship was led by the Rev. Kristine O’Brien, Director of Crieff Hills Retreat Centre, the Rev. Hugh Donnelly, minister of Knox Presbyterian Church in Waterloo, Ont., and the Rev. Peter Rombeek, minister at Kensington Presbyterian Church

in Montreal, Que. Peter preached on Exodus 3:1–12, with a focus on the image of the burning bush. He noted that God didn’t appear as the mountain itself but as a scraggly bush on top of it. This imagery ties into the Christian narrative that God is in everything. While it is easier to notice God in churches or other “holy” places, God is also in the ordinary. Peter reminded the Assembly that one can encounter God anytime, anywhere. Putting aside one’s needs allows one to pay attention to ordinary things because they can become holy.

This year’s General Assembly brought commissioners and other participants back together for the second time since the pandemic, once again offering renewed connections, the opportunity to worship together and a chance to reframe how the church thinks of itself, how it tells its story, and what the narratives are that continue to shape us. Several commissioners noted that they experienced a deepening in connections made and a shift in how the PCC views itself. The Rev. Mavis Currie from Knox Presbyterian Church in St. Thomas, Ont., reminded the Assembly during worship: “We have kept this story and held on to it because this is the story of the church... God is still with us on the journey. God will not let us go.”

The 2024 GA web page contains the minutes of the proceedings, links to video recordings of proceedings and presentations, links to photos, full committee reports, and much more. Visit presbyterian.ca/ga2024.

Committee to Nominate Standing Committees

The Committee to Nominate Standing Committees presents names for membership on each General Assembly standing committee. Members of the church serve at the national level on committees and boards where their gifts and skills are most needed and can best be used. The committee coordinates the call and reception of nominations from Sessions, presbyteries, synods and other standing committees.

In its work of preparing and presenting to the General Assembly a slate of names for membership on each of its standing committees, the Committee to Nominate was impressed by and grateful for the willingness of so many members to share their gifts and serve Christ at the national level. The committee was struck by the rich diversity of skills, backgrounds, perspectives and experience within our denomination. The committee endeavoured to complete the standing committees to the best of its ability, and expressed gratitude for those who were nominated.

Dillon W. Hausauer, elder at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Lethbridge, Alta., and member of the Committee on Church Doctrine, wrote: “When I became a member of the Committee on Church Doctrine, I was nervous to join the amazing ministers and seminarians around the table. There is a saying that if you are the smartest person in the room, you are in the wrong room. I certainly felt like I was in the right room! While I have been stretched and grown from this calling, I have also seen how God brought my gifts to this table. My skills of coordination, consensus-building, and communication compliment those of other members, furthering our work. It strikes me that some of the strongest relationships I have developed within the church are with people who are very different to me. Our strengths and weaknesses complement each other, allowing us to effectively serve. The Apostle Paul compared the church to a body, made up of many individual parts, but united. In the same way, we support each other. Whatever your gifts, they were activated in you by God to serve the common good!”

All members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are encouraged to think of those they know who might serve on these various committees so that God is glorified and the work of Christ continues. To learn more, contact gao@presbyterian.ca or call 1-800-619-7301.



Interfaith guest, Fr. Bodhan Hladio of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Apology of the PCC for its Complicity in Colonization and the Residential School System

The Presbyterian Church in Canada originally made a Confession in 1994 for the church's role in operating residential schools and colonization but have realized the inadequacy of that Confession. The Presbyterian Church in Canada humbly offers this apology to the generations of Indigenous people and communities harmed by the residential schools and day schools we operated. Resources to help the church study and reflect on the apology are being prepared and will be posted to the Social Action Hub at presbyterian.ca/social-action.

Introduction

We, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, humbly offer this apology to the generations of Indigenous people and communities harmed by the residential schools and day schools we operated.

We originally made a Confession in 1994 for our role in operating residential schools and colonization but we have realized the inadequacy of that Confession. We apologize for our slowness and the apathy of our response. We are deeply sorry.

We acknowledge the families whose children were taken to schools without telling their families where the children were being taken and who never returned, who remain lost today. We acknowledge with grief the many unmarked graves that have been found and will be found, including at schools that we ran. We remember the children who never made it home.

We apologize for the impact of the genocide of colonization, forced assimilation and racism to which we actively contributed.

Many Survivors and intergenerational Survivors have shared very personal and traumatic experiences in the context of Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings and within the congregations, committees and governing bodies of the church. We acknowledge the strength and courage of Survivors for sharing your experiences in the schools and the heavy burdens you, your families and communities still bear. We acknowledge the pain and difficulty of sharing and reliving the truth of your lived

experience.

We acknowledge that the church's apology itself, as well as the presence of church representatives making the apology, may be triggering, evoking trauma for some by surfacing memories of devastating experiences in residential schools.

Apology

We acknowledge that Indigenous children suffered at residential schools. The Presbyterian Church in Canada ran Ahousaht Residential School in British Columbia, Alberni Residential School in British Columbia, Birtle Residential School in Manitoba, Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Shoal Lake, Ontario, Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora, Ontario, Crowstand Residential School in Saskatchewan, File Hills Residential School in Saskatchewan, Muscowpetung (later known as "Lakesend") Residential School in Saskatchewan, Portage la Prairie Residential School in Manitoba, Regina Industrial School in Saskatchewan, Round Lake Residential School in Saskatchewan and Stoney Plain Residential School in Alberta.

We apologize for taking children from their homes, parents, grandparents and communities.

We apologize for traumatizing parents and communities and taking away their rights to protect their children.

We honour and respect the languages of the land and apologize for punishing Indigenous students for speaking their traditional languages.

We apologize for attempting to eliminate Indigenous identity and Cultural and Spiritual traditions.

We apologize for the abuse Indigenous children suffered, including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and Spiritual abuses.

We apologize for the weaponization of food that happened in the schools and for non-consensual experiments with food, nutrition and medical procedures that were conducted on children.

We apologize for the lost lives, for children who died while at residential schools—from disease, neglect, suicide, attempts to run

away and from violence by teachers, staff and volunteers.

We apologize that the schools created an isolated and unsafe environment where violence was condoned and students learned violence. We regret, and are deeply sorry, that we provided conditions where students could abuse other students.

We acknowledge and apologize for the resulting loss of bloodlines, of ancestors and of people who would not grow to become Elders, the huge loss of culture and future for nations this meant.

We apologize that when children died their parents were not always informed, they were not always returned to their communities and their burial sites were sometimes unmarked or the markers were not maintained and the record of names was not kept.

We apologize for the church's attitude of white superiority, for its assimilating policies and practices, for the racism of treating Indigenous people as less than human and for the ongoing intergenerational effects of our complicity with colonization and the schools that continue to negatively impact families and communities.

We acknowledge that this systemic racism continues to impact Indigenous people, including through: insecure housing;



poverty; forced dependence on social assistance; experiencing lateral and domestic violence, in particular toward Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ people as named in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We acknowledge this has led to hopelessness, mental health crises and the tragedy of suicide, barriers to completing education and to accessing health care. We acknowledge this has led to the breakdown of family bonds that results in children taken into foster care, gang involvement, exploitation, addictions and incarceration.

We are sorry for how long it has taken for The Presbyterian Church in Canada to begin to understand the depth of harm we have caused, and we still have much to learn.

For our complicity in coloniza-

tion and the residential school system, we are deeply, deeply sorry.

We therefore offer five fundamental commitments:

We will continue to listen and learn from Indigenous people, leaders, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, welcoming and engaging voices from both within and beyond The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

We will continue the work of reconciliation, responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the work of reparation that we have begun.

We will respect traditional Indigenous spiritual practices.

We will listen to and tell the truth about the past.

We will work to support Indigenous-led healing and wellness initiatives and be in solidarity with Indigenous people and communities.



The Rev. Mary Fontaine, former moderator, presenting the National Indigenous Ministries Council report to the 2024 General Assembly.

Loan Repayment Successes

By Betty Kupeian, Presbyterian Church Building Corporation

2023 marked a remarkable year for loan repayments within the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC) loan program. Despite the economic challenges of high inflation and high interest rates (and perhaps especially because of the challenges), congregations stayed on schedule with the loan repayments. Furthermore, since the beginning of 2023 to March 2024, five congregations retired their loans well ahead of their maturity dates:

Gale Presbyterian Church in Elmira, Ont., in January 2023
 Church of Saint David in Halifax, N.S., in August of 2023
 Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal in Que., in December 2023
 Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., in February 2024
 Knox Presbyterian Church in Oakville, Ont., in February 2024
 It is uplifting to see how congregations have been enabled to pay down debt during these difficult economic times. I reached

out to the leadership of each of the five congregations looking for words of wisdom arising from their achievements. A common theme: Faith is the first step—faith in the God who has called them. Good leadership is instrumental. Good leadership that keeps the focus on the end goal. The following is a summary of the comments, which I trust will provide hope and inspiration to other congregations.

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David

The Rev. Iona Maclean: “The Presbyterian Church of Saint David is grateful to God for the support we received from the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation in necessary loans and for the great joy in being able to pay off those loans in 2023. The sale of church property to the developer who had been leasing it has opened the doors to full-time ministry again and growth in mission for our congregation in downtown Halifax.”

David MacKay: “I am grateful every day for the PCBC loans, and the opportunity given to us to re-



The congregation at Knox Presbyterian Church in Oakville, Ont., celebrated completing a loan repayment with PCBC.

tire the loans!”

Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal

Renee Guirguis: “I only can think of the Bible verse in Matthew 25:29, ‘To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have abundance. But from those who are unfaithful, even what little they have will be taken away.’”

Ghada Atallah: “Successfully repaid our debt through strategic financial management, prioritizing high-interest debts, and adhering

to a disciplined repayment plan. Despite challenges, the church remained committed to its financial goals, ensuring steady progress towards debt freedom.”

Gale Presbyterian Church

Kim Denstedt: “Gale launched its Voyage of Faith in 2004 and it was faith that gave them confidence in 2006 to purchase land. The Voyage became one of Discovery as they discerned the kind of new facility needed to support their goals and dreams. The process to build and then to finally

retire the bank loan in 2023 was fed by this passage from Mark [6:50–51]: “Don’t be afraid. Then he got into the boat with them.”

Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Greg Smith: “The congregation’s leadership have kept this goal in focus since the day the loan was taken out. The loan was substantially paid off from rental income. It’s a real celebration for all of us at VAPC and especially for those who have seen this through to its retirement.”

Knox Presbyterian Church

Connie Wardle: “Knox Oakville is blessed to have some funds invested, thanks to the hard work and generosity of current and past Knox members. We had about 30% of our loan left to repay as we headed into 2024, and given the current interest rates, our finance team recommended we use some of our invested funds to pay off the remaining balance. We’re so blessed to have a group of prayerful, wise and experienced minds keeping an eye on our church’s finances. It can be tricky to strike a balance between stewarding financial resources for the future and recognizing opportunities to use them well today. Having a team you can trust to make good decisions and bring well-considered recommendations to Session is an asset beyond price.”

The PCBC continues to be present to offer loans and guidance as congregations seek to be good stewards of their building space.

The Big Give in Brockville



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

First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., again participated in the Big Give on June 1, 2024, together with other Christian churches in the area. The Big Give is an annual

event held on the first Saturday in June and is billed as an opportunity for “churches across Canada of all denominations to show their neighbours the unconditional love of God by giving, for free, asking nothing in return.”

The Big Give began in the Ottawa area in 2015 and has since



become a national event, engaging churches of all backgrounds and denominations in extravagant giving. First Presbyterian has participated in the Big Give every year since 2016, even during Covid, where the church blessed the local Food Bank with gift bags.

A total of seven Brockville-area churches participated in this year’s Big Give for the largest event since 2019.

As in previous years, the church hosted a rummage “sale” in the church hall and gave out snack bags of homemade cookies. Over a hundred members of



the community took what they wanted, for free! First Presbyterian Church is looking forward to again holding a Big Give event on June 7, 2025.

Thank you to our volunteers who so faithfully help make the Big Give such a wonderful outreach in Brockville.

The Certificate in Missional Leadership



Pictured (left to right) are the Rev. Albert Chu, CML Director; Andrea Perrett, Associate in New Witnessing Communities; and the Rev. Dr. Tim Dickau, Associate for the Missional Leadership Certificate Program.

By Tim Dickau, Associate, Centre for Missional Leadership, St. Andrew's Hall

How do we help congregations make the sort of shifts that will both help them navigate our secular culture and equip them for meaningful mission? That is the question that we have been exploring in our Certificate in Missional Leadership program at St. Andrew's Hall in Vancouver. We have now run two iterations of the course with participation from over 20 congregations and 150 people across the country. What has been so encouraging is how the participating congregations have begun to engage their neighbourhoods and cities in significant ways, including:

- starting a thriving "chair yoga" group in a city with many seniors
- developing deep dialogue and a relationship with local Indigenous communities
- inviting neighbours to re-design the outdoor space around their building—followed by involving them in re-designing their indoor space
- developing a Glee Club and music festival that has linked a congregation with their small town in a delightful way

Starting in September, the Centre for Missional Leadership (CML) is making some adjustments to the course.

- The certificate is now a one-year program. It takes place on five Saturday mornings over nine months, with coaching sessions between gatherings. Previously, we offered the course over two years, but the length proved to be a barrier for some groups.
- A skills development element has been added to equip congregational leaders with tools that will help them lead their church through transitional times. These skills include training in facilitation, asset mapping, interviewing and creating a community meal.
- There is a concerted effort to include smaller churches, especially those without a full-time pastor. There are a growing number of churches with multi-vocational clergy or no clergy; we want to especially support these congregations in exploring new ways of being a church.

The CML team is excited about the changes we have made and about this next offering of the cer-

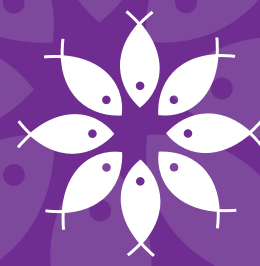
tificate program. While there are other courses out there aimed at helping churches make transitions, we believe we have much to offer at St. Andrew's Hall and the Centre for Missional Leadership. First, we have strong Presbyterian input combined with an ecumenical teaching team. For Presbyterian churches, this brings the best of both worlds.

Second, we have learned from what has been most impactful for congregational cohorts and we continue to refine and improve the program.

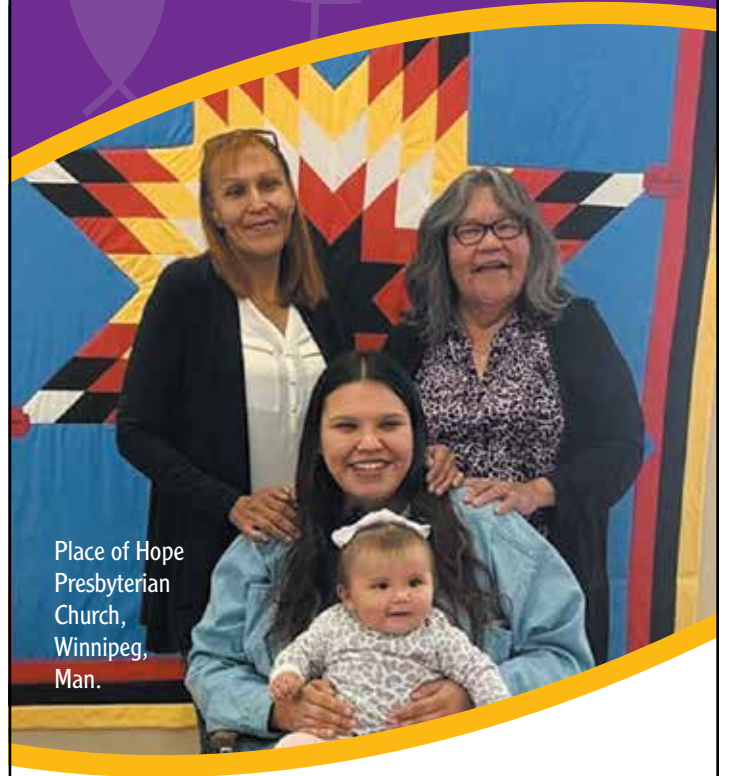
Third, we have learned how to offer this course in a hybrid model, devoting personnel and resources specifically for online groups.

Finally, our team is composed of leaders who have demonstrated outstanding pastoral leadership and robust theological reflection. Most team members are also accomplished authors whose writing also sheds light on this integral mission.

For more information on the course, we invite you to check out the information at equippingformission.ca to view the brochure and register a group (3–10 individuals) from your church. You don't need to navigate the upcoming transitions alone! Join us.



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Canairelief Memorial Plaque Dedication



Members of the Igbo-Canadian community stand by the memorial plaque with Captain Bill F. Libbus and Captain Troy A. Libbus, sons of Load Master Gary Libbus. PHOTO CREDITS: DAVID HARVEY



The Rev. Dr. Rick Fee (left) with members of the Igbo-Canadian community at the reception.



The memorial plaque unveiled.

By Anne Saunders, former member of the Cutting Edge of Mission Committee

We live in times when we are longing for peace, for an end to conflict and suffering, and for leaders who can make this happen—or for ordinary people who will take extraordinary action. On May 11, 2024, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in downtown Toronto, Ont., hosted an event that remembered and honoured a moment in Canadian history when Canadian citizens acted—when Presbyterians acted—to feed people dying of starvation on the other side of the world.

In June 1968, the Nigerian Civil war had been raging for a year. Cut off from Nigeria and the rest of the world, the Igbo people in Biafra were facing starvation, particularly women and children. One hospital estimated seeing 1,000 cases of extreme malnutrition daily. Haunted by their knowledge of this suffering, some Canadian citizens felt compelled to act.

Three men accomplished the seemingly impossible: with no prior aviation experience, Presby-

terian the Rev. Ted Johnson, Jewish businessman Jack Grant, and Oxfam Canada's director Henry Fletcher bought an airplane. Indeed, they started an airline: Canairelief. With that bold venture they joined the Joint Church Aid airlift, flying relief food and medicine into land-locked Biafra. Canairelief made a very significant contribution to the Biafran Airlift, which is credited with saving more than a million lives.

Canairelief aircrew risked their lives nightly, flying Super Constellations, often loaded to their 20 tonne capacity. They defied bombing threats, variable weather conditions, flying in the dark to land on an airstrip that was simply an upgraded stretch of highway designed by a Scottish missionary.

On August 3, 1969, four of those Canairelief airmen died when their plane crashed: Raymond Leveque, Gary Libbus, Don Merriam and Vincent Wakeling. They were between the ages of 26 and 49 years and left behind their spouses and 14 children—some as young as four or five years of age—as well as parents, siblings and friends. Despite the risks, these men had felt compelled to keep flying for the sake of the starving children that the world saw nightly on television.

On May 11, 2024, these men were honoured. The event began with a screening of the documentary by Angela Onuora, *Operation Lights Out: The Story of Canairelief*. While assisting with the

research and production of this film, the Rev. Dr. Richard Fee, former mission staff to Nigeria and former General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, learned about the bravery of Canairelief ground and aircrews. He had opportunity to speak with surviving family members. He learned that the families of the four airmen who had died had been given little detail about the crash or recovery of bodies. Family members had felt alone in their grief and lived for years with many questions.

As a result of these encounters, almost 55 years after the crash, Rick worked with St. Andrew's to organize the dedication service and memorial plaque unveiling. More than 200 people attended, including children and grandchildren of the four Canairelief airmen, some coming from across Canada and from other countries, as well as members of the Johnson, Grant and Fletcher families.

Present were also people like Hazel McGraw who, with her late husband, Ron McGraw, (both former Presbyterian missionaries in Nigeria), had helped distribute food in Biafra; Walter McLean (also a former Presbyterian missionary in Nigeria), who had persistently lobbied the Canadian government during the conflict; and David MacDonald, United Church minister and former member of Parliament, who had flown into Biafra in 1968 on a fact-finding mission.

The dedication service was led by the Rev. Dr. William Ingram, music director Dan Bickle and soloist Allison Angelo. The Most Reverend Colin R. Johnson, former Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, read one of the Bible passages. (The four Canadian aircrew are buried in an Anglican cemetery.)

The Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald gave the homily. "Memorials that stand only to commemorate the past are robbed of their worth and meaning if they are not also

an inspiration for the future, summoning us to act now in the world wherever people hunger and thirst for food and justice," he said. "The church testifies to the transformative love of God when it acts decisively and feeds those who hunger for food, justice and lasting peace in the world God loves, the world Christ died for and rose to give abundant life for."

The memorial plaque was unveiled by the sons of Gary Libbus. Reflections and expressions of gratitude were given by representatives of the Canairelief families and on behalf of Igbo people in Canada and in Nigeria.

The last speaker was Emeka Njoku. On the night of August 3, 1969, as a Biafran Air Force Defence Specialist, he was at the airfield, awaiting the arrival of Canairelief CF-NAJ, ready to receive the relief shipment and to gratefully greet the four airmen whom he knew personally. To him, these Canadian men were Life Savers—"Ozondú" in the Igbo language—risking their lives night after night for his people. Mr. Njoku waited, but the plane never arrived. It was soon located, crashed with no survivors. Grief-stricken, he longed to console the airmen's families, to tell them about his last conversations with them, and about their military funerals and burials. Finally, May 11 gave him that opportunity. Following the service, there were hugs exchanged, questions asked and

answered, and pictures taken, and lots of conversation during the reception, which was overseen by Church Manager Diana Veenstra.

Has there ever been a period in human history when humankind hasn't been longing for action to bring peace in the face of conflict and suffering? On May 11, many of us were mindful of the relevance and timelessness of the Canairelief memorial event. While we gathered in the St. Andrew's sanctuary, thousands of citizens, including some Presbyterians, were walking in the Gaza Cease-fire Pilgrimage.

How to watch and donate

To view *Operation Lights Out: The Story of Canairelief*, go to vimeo.com/ondemand/operationlightsoutmovie.

To obtain a print or digital copy of the Canairelief Memorial Plaque Dedication booklet (suggested freewill donation of \$20), contact the Rev. Dr. Richard Fee at rwfee@sympatico.ca.

To donate to the costs of the Memorial Plaque, send cheques payable to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, c/o Diana Veenstra, 75 Simcoe Street, Toronto, ON M5J 1W9, noting on the memo line "Biafran Airlift Memorial Plaque." For e-transfer or credit card donations, call Diana Veenstra at 416-593-5600 ext. 223. Income tax receipts will be issued in February.



ILLUSTRATION CREDIT: THE LATE DR. DENIS M. CONWAY



Captain Bill F. Libbus (left) and Captain Troy A. Libbus (right) with Emeka Njoku, Biafran Airforce veteran (centre).

Canada Day in Newfoundland



The War Memorial in Newfoundland.

By the Rev. Dr. Ian Wishart, former minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in St. John's, N.L.

Newfoundland buried a soldier from the first world war. July 1, 2024, was a very special day

in Newfoundland and Labrador, apart from its significance as Canada Day.

July 1, 1915, was the day when the Newfoundland Regiment was almost wiped out at Beaumont Hamel in France. The unit was part of the 29th Division of the British army at the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. During June, the Division had been carefully prepared for a coming offensive. The offensive was planned to begin on July 1. Allied troops attacked the German positions at 7:30 in the morning, without success. Within minutes, hundreds of soldiers were killed or wounded. At 8:45, the Newfoundland and Essex Regiments were ordered into the fray. At 9:45, Lt-Col. Hadow, Commanding Officer of the Newfoundland Regiment, reported failure of the attack to British Battle Headquarters. The following day, only 68 of the 778 men of the Regiment answered the call. The rest were dead, wounded or missing in action.

The body of one of those soldiers, recently found buried in France, was exhumed, and on July 1, 2024, the remains were interred back home in St. John's. As a former minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in St. John's, N.L., and now as chaplain of the Royal Canadian Legion, I took part in the ceremonies along with Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Shawn Sampson (Anglican), who committed the coffin of the unknown soldier into the tomb at the Newfoundland National War Memorial.

The National War Memorial was dedicated on July 1, 1924, by Field Marshall Haig, the British army commander, to commemorate the casualties of Newfoundlanders in the first world war. It now also bears memorials to the second world war, Korean war and Afghanistan war. The conduct of the regiment during World War I was such that the present Regiment bears the title "Royal Newfoundland Regiment." This ceremony marked the 100th anniversary of the park.

anniversary of the park.

The Memorial has been reconstructed to renew and refurbish exhibits. Among these is the tomb of the Unknown Soldier of Newfoundland (referring to Newfoundland's status before it became part of Canada). A grave in France on one of the battlefields, where many soldiers of the Newfoundland Regiment laid down their lives, was reopened, and the coffin was sent to St. John's in time for this ceremony.

Several officials and dignitaries attended the event, including Her Excellency Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada; the Honourable Joan Marie Aylward, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador; the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada; and the Honourable Andrew Furey, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. Princess Anne, the Princess Royal who is the Colonel in Chief of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, was due to attend but could not.



The Rev. Dr. Ian Wishart standing by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier after the ceremony. PHOTO CREDITS: ROBERT YOUNG

Grant Money Supports Bradford's Youth and Seniors

By Jim Martin, Clerk of Session, St. John's Presbyterian Church in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont.

When the Federal Government released its Community Service Recovery Fund (CSRF) grant program in 2023, the Session at St. John's Presbyterian Church in

Bradford, Ont., knew what its application would contain.

In 2017, our team began a two-year initiative to do more for the youth of Bradford. It was motivated, in part, by a Simcoe County Board of Education report that 75% of some 10,000 students reported stress and anxiety as their

main concerns. Further research suggested that the suicide rate among those under 20 years of age was the highest it had been since World War II.

Perhaps the biggest societal difference from previous generations has been the negative aspects of social media, such as anonymous bullying, on today's youth. The pandemic delayed our youth programs, but when the Federal Government identified isolation and mental health concerns post-Covid, we knew we could incorporate both objectives.

There are many experts who promote the therapeutic and spiritual benefits of gardening. Our grant built on that concept. We took our existing landscaping and improved it by adding walkways, a gazebo and benches under trees that the residents of the Elden Retirement Home, located next to us, can safely walk on and rest against in the shade.

We put in eight garden boxes and involved our youth in the building and planting of these boxes. One of our members, a teacher, started a project with her class, planting seeds in the classroom and nurturing them until

they were ready for transplanting. The children's handprints, in paint, adorn the boxes they planted. From the start, the young people have known that they are growing vegetables for donation to our local Food Bank. The Food Bank was involved in suggesting the vegetables they could use.

This project has touched on many vulnerabilities in our society today—it has included an inter-generational, diverse group focussed on supporting young people toward a common goal. Our youth are learning lessons and skills that they may carry with them throughout life, including giving to others. Most importantly, common goals create oppor-

tunities for communication, listening and mutual respect. From there, we create a sense of trust and the feeling that each person belongs to something. Above all, it has been fun!

If there is a message for public service organizations, including the various faiths, it is that the heart of your mission lies within your community at the street level. Talk to the shop owners, attend a neighbourhood meeting, visit a food bank—integrate. The philosophy of working together on common interests has been around for a long time. But without finding out what the issues are for your community, the common goals may not reveal themselves.



Patchwork Pride Project in Toronto



Kirk Dunn with pieces of the hand-knit Pride flag.

By Claire Dunn

When two of his three rainbow yarn art installations were vandalized and stolen during Pride Month in 2023, Toronto-based actor, writer and fibre artist Kirk Dunn knew he had to do something different this year—but what? Eventually, he conceived the Patchwork Pride Project—a giant, crowd-sourced, hand-knit Pride flag made of six-inch squares knitted by people from several provinces and as far as the state of California. It was installed outside west-end Toronto’s Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church on June 15, 2024.

Also known as “The Knitting Pilgrim,” Kirk has been knitting since 1988 and designing since 1995. In 1998, he apprenticed

with world-renowned knitter Kaffe Fassett in England, and has since been covered in *The Toronto Star*, *Vogue Knitting*, *Maclean’s Magazine*, the *National Post* and on *CBC Radio*.

Kirk is best known for his one-of-a-kind textile installation called “Stitched Glass,” a triptych of 6’ x 9’ panels designed in the style of stained-glass windows, which looks at the commonalities and conflicts among Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The masterwork was supported by an OAC Chalmers Foundation grant in 2003 and it took Kirk 15 years to complete. The stage play, *The Knitting Pilgrim*, which Kirk has performed over 85 times in Canada, Austria, Germany and the U.S., tells the story of his journey knitting the tapestries.

Kirk’s goal with knitting is to create a gentle, non-threatening way to start empathetic conversations and dispel fear of the other—the very goals of his three rainbow yarn installations: crocheted tree sweaters that went up at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, Ont., Todmorden Mills Heritage Site in Toronto’s East end and Morningside-High Park (MHP) Presbyterian Church in Toronto’s Bloor West Village.

A member and elder at MHP, Kirk was happy to put the rainbow yarn bomb on the church’s 12-foot-around tree. It took months to crochet and went up during Pride 2022. But six weeks



The dedication at Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church. PHOTO CREDIT: GEORGIA KIRKOS

later, Kirk received a call from the police saying it had been vandalized and cut down. Kirk repaired it for re-installation during Pride 2023. This time it was torn down and stolen, not even lasting 24 hours. The police recorded the vandalism as a hate crime. Kirk and MHP received many comments from the community regarding their upset and disappointment about the incident. A crocheter in Georgia contacted Kirk and offered to make a new yarn bomb for the huge tree herself. Kirk took her up on the kind offer.

Todmorden asked Kirk to install a second yarn bomb in 2022. They invited it back for 2023, but the yarn bomb was tagged almost immediately after installation. Kirk reversed it so the spray-paint couldn’t be seen, but the

next day, it was stolen. This year, Kirk dreamt up an outdoor installation that would hopefully be out of vandals’ reach: the Patchwork Pride Project, a giant, crowd-sourced, hand-knitted Pride flag made with 414 six-inch squares. Kirk put the call out over social media and was overwhelmed by the response of 1,176 squares from across the province, country and as far away as the US. In the end, the flag ended up being an incredible 1,008 squares, measuring 12 ft wide x 22.5 ft long.

A Piecing Party was held on Sunday, June 9, at Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church (complete with a rainbow Happy Pride cake), and had about 30 people from the LGBTQI+ and church community madly sewing together all squares, as well as a giant nylon backing to make the flag. It was officially installed on June 15 during the congregation’s Community Yard Sale and BBQ, then dedicated on June 16.

This project has extra resonance for Kirk, given The Presbyterian Church in Canada put out a statement in 2018 about its ongoing reconciliation efforts



Kirk Dunn and Phyllis Goodfellow put it all together.



and repentance for harm done to members of the LGBTQI+ community. MHP sees hosting the installation at its church as part of that reconciliation.

Learn more by emailing Kirk at theknittingpilgrim@gmail.com.

Recollections & Reflections:

150 Years of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

In recognition of the PCC’s 150th anniversary in 2025, the Committee on History is preparing a published collection of stories about where we have been, where we are, and where we are going.

Do you have a favourite memory of singing in choir, attending youth group, going to a potluck supper, attending General Assembly, or anything else that shaped your involvement in church?

What are some of the things your congregation is doing today to share the good news of Jesus in your community? And what are your hopes and dreams for the PCC as it approaches 150 years?

We want to hear from you! Please write to Ian McKechnie, Project Coordinator, at: pcc150book@gmail.com

Submissions will be accepted through December 2024.



Kirk Dunn with 540 Patchwork Pride project squares. PHOTO CREDIT: CLAIRE DUNN

Community Arboretum: Growing Together through Planting New Churches

By Andrea Perrett, Centre for Missional Leadership, St. Andrew's Hall

What do a Cantonese-speaking, radically inclusive, Anglican church startup and a DJ'd nightclub Presbyterian church startup have in common? The leaders of both new churches are part of a Community Arboretum with the Cultivate Collective. While the two congregations might gather in different ways, the Community Arboretum is a place where they can learn from and support one another while they navigate the challenges and joys of starting a new church.

The Centre for Missional Leadership (CML) at St. Andrew's Hall in Vancouver, B.C., has supported leaders of new witnessing communities through a variety of programs over the last six years. In 2023, the Cultivate: Missional Church Planting Collective was created by the CML to further

equip and educate church planters. The Cultivate Collective is an ecumenical network that strives to complement the services of other church planting networks, such as Cyclical PCC. The Cultivate Collective hosts retreats, organizes conferences and runs the Community Arboretum to help equip church planters.

Starting in January 2024, the Community Arboretum, or "Arbors" for short, was one of the first programs started by the Cultivate Collective. The Arbors was grown out of the idea of a botanical arboretum, which is a garden with a collection of trees and shrubs cultivated for scientific or educational purposes. The Community Arboretum therefore desires to gather a collection of ecumenical, innovative church planters from across British Columbia to learn from one another through the process of starting a new church.

The Community Arboretum is grouped into small learning pods,

where the church planters meet several times over the course of a year for competency-based teaching and group-directed learning. The whole Arboretum also comes together for a multi-day retreat for further learning and to build relationships.

Our first two learning pods started meeting online in January 2024, with participants coming from across the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, representing five denominations. Each learning pod is led by a team member from the CML and covers topics related to Missional Practice, Stewardship and Leadership. Andrea Perrett, Associate in New Witnessing Communities with the CML, is leading a learning pod with leaders who are in the first few years of their church plant. Albert Chu, Director of the CML, is leading the other learning pod, which includes participants who are leading church plants that are over five years old.



With the challenges of declining church attendance across Canada, and reduced denominational and congregational support for church planters, it can seem like the soil is very rocky when it comes to planting new churches. However, leaders, such as those who are part of the Arbors, are responding to God's call to start new witnessing communities. They are faithfully joining in with God's work in the world and are creating new communities that witness to the reconciling love of Jesus Christ and provide places of belonging for others to come to build a relationship with the Triune God. While the context each leader is planting in might look different, the Community Arboretum is providing a space for them to connect with, learn from and support one another as they each experiment.

During a gathering in June, one leader from Vancouver Island reflected that they were so relieved and encouraged to have a group of leaders who understood what they were going through. The Arbors create a space where church planters gain new friends and colleagues who are asking the same questions as them, struggling with the similar challenges as them and can understand the difficult work and joys involved with starting something new.

The program has been designed to equip church planters with the skills needed to navigate starting a church in our current landscape. There will be new Arbors starting in January 2025. If you are interested, or would like more information, contact us at cml@standrews.edu or equippingformission.ca.

Alpha Ministry in Vancouver

The CPC Alpha Team, Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, B.C.

Spreading the gospel by congregations is the way forward.

In April 2024, Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, B.C., started a 12-week trilingual Alpha program, which teaches the fundamentals of Christianity. Each of the 12 sessions has been full of surprises as an adventure of facing challenges of decision making in life, understanding the Christian faith, encountering Jesus Christ and receiving the gift

of the Holy Spirit as a gift of grace. We had new registrants in almost each session, conducted in English, Mandarin and Cantonese. The average attendance was 35 and the total number of Alpha guests amounted to 72. The special Holy Spirit weekend attracted 76 people. Amazingly, we had three new converts among the young people.

Helen Chi, Alpha Advisor with Chinese Context of Alpha Ministry Canada, trained the volunteers. Many volunteers of the Mandarin group come from different churches and the volunteers are pastor John Cai, Venus Ng, Michelle Lyu,

Bruce Li—most of them have been attending the weekly Mandarin Bible Study group online every Friday. The Cantonese group consists of pastor Morgan Wong, Grace Wong, Ada So, Frances Ng, Cecilia Chan, Ivy Cai and Lily Yew, our administrator of the whole CPC Alpha Program. The Oakridge Christian Ministry group or English group volunteers are Dr. Garland Chow, Alex Wong, Jimmy Yee, Philip Mark, Dr. Timothy Tam, Dr. Remy Fu and Andrew Wong, our tech manager. Many thanks to Ying Wai Yeong, our official photographer.

The most remarkable experi-

ence was seeing many church people work together in reaching out to our community with the love of Christ. This experience was invaluable and demonstrates how a church should be as a gathered community of hope, faith and love.

The goal of Alpha ministry is to offer the gift of God's grace: for Jesus Christ to dwell in everyone who believes in Him and to become His followers. The church, or people of God, are not the building but a community of like-minded people connected and committed to exalting the name of Jesus for His glory and our good! We need to encounter and see the face of the one who makes all things new.

A highlight of our Alpha Ministry was having several scholars from China coming from different distinguished Chinese universities doing their doctorate program at Regent College's Chinese Study Program, led by Dr. Grace Liang.

During our Holy Spirit weekend at the church, we saw commitments of life to Jesus for the first time, which is so encouraging, witnessed by members of the church. Prayers were offered for healing of sickness and reconciliation of broken relationships among



Dinnertime at our first Alpha session.

family members. Thanks to Pastor Morgan for conducting the altar call with three new converts.

Another big surprise was five children joined in one session and they had a fun experience with Alpha. We had a few testimonies about God's miraculous healing, connecting and meeting friends, and finding jobs in a miraculous way. The success of Alpha Ministry is attributed to the 400+ people praying along with us. Many thanks to the Rev. Robin Ross for making this partnership in prayer across Canada possible. Alpha Ministry at CPC could be a model for other Presbyterian churches to invest in the lives of people in their respective neighbourhoods with the gospel of Christ!

We pray that the light of Christ continues to shine upon us with creativity and innovation to connect the old and the new in the history of Christian doctrine with relevance to content and context as we lead people into communion with God in worship.



Alpha guests, volunteers and church members gathered in the church sanctuary for a group photo on Alpha weekend.

The Raw Carrot Expands Ministry

By Diane Talbot-Schoenboff,
 Director of Communications,
 the Raw Carrot

A decade after Paris Presbyterian Church (now Paris Community Church), in Paris, Ont., and The Presbyterian Church in Canada decided to support a ministry that provided a hand up to people living on the margins in their congregation, the Raw Carrot is now expanding its ministry beyond Ontario.

The Raw Carrot employs people to make handcrafted gourmet foods in church kitchens that are sold online, at farmers' markets and at upscale grocery stores.

The Raw Carrot was founded in 2014 by two women—Rebecca Sherbino and Colleen Graham—who had a heart to help people with disabilities in the congregation, who were relying on a benevolent fund to make ends meet because they couldn't find jobs. The women were inspired by Micah 6:8: "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Co-Founder and Executive Director Rebecca Sherbino is grateful to all those in the community who have supported the Raw Carrot over the past 10 years. "By supporting the Raw Carrot, we're helping build healthier and more vibrant communities through supported employment," she said. "Research shows that work matters to people not only to achieve

financial security but also as an important contributor to a healthy and vibrant society."

What began as a ministry to create jobs by cooking and selling soup has expanded beyond southwestern Ontario into Manitoba, its first out-of-province site. After a decade, the Raw Carrot is now a nationally recognized social purpose organization that has been successfully providing meaningful employment to people across Southwestern Ontario with plans to scale across Canada.

10th anniversary celebration and awards ceremony

On June 13, the Raw Carrot hosted a 10th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Ceremony at the site of their headquarters at Paris Community Church, where it all began. Municipal and provincial delegates joined more than 240 guests, including staff and volunteers, corporate partners, donors and friends to celebrate this significant milestone. The event commemorated a decade of creating supported employment, community and the dignity of work for individuals with barriers to traditional employment.

Deidre Pipher is a member of the church and attended the celebration. She was so impacted by the event that she emailed her impressions to the Raw Carrot team: "The anniversary event was more moving than I anticipated. Being a member of the church, and see-



The 10th Anniversary celebration of the Raw Carrot.

ing the evolution and direction that the Raw Carrot has gone since early days, it was incredible to be part of an evening to celebrate all that God is doing through this ministry. In particular, hearing from individuals who either work at the Raw Carrot or their family members was particularly meaningful. The idea of a hand up, and not a handout is one that is embodied through this ministry.

"I'm a longtime soup purchaser (my freezer always has a variety) and it is certainly rare to be able to purchase a product and then be able to see the direct impact of it. The anniversary evening was a perfect way to bring friends, donors, employees, family members, community members, and partners together to celebrate an incredible milestone. It's not an

evening I will soon forget. Every time I pull out a soup from my freezer, I smile and give thanks for the faces that I can now connect to the ministry."

Throughout the evening, Rebecca and her staff recognized the supporters that have made this initiative possible, including recognition of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Paris Community Church for their substantial generosity over the last decade.

"Without this incredible support from the church," she said, "this would not have been possible or sustainable. We're immensely grateful for the church support."

Hopelessness to hope— isolation to community

During the anniversary celebrations, staff and volunteers shared stories about how the organization began and the impact it's had on them, their families and the surrounding community. During a panel discussion led by Rebecca Sherbino, Janice, a retired site manager, shared her touching story of starting a site to provide a job for her daughter:

"When my daughter started working at the Raw Carrot, she had been unemployed for several years. She was struggling to find the correct treatment for her mental health issues and was completely unable to work in a traditional workplace. She was unhappy, bored and listless. Hearing Colleen Graham talk about supported employment for people living with disabilities was literally an answer to prayer. I could see the possibilities.

"Over the past seven-plus years, Susan (name has been changed) has worked steadily at the Raw Carrot and has picked up other part-time employment too. Supported employment has been the key to success at the

Raw Carrot. She feels successful, and needed, and productive. She knows what her strengths are. She knows she has a lot to offer... Now she can use those skills to do other jobs—house cleaning, gardening and dog walking. She has made friends with our volunteers, and other employees. Employment with purpose is a huge part of having a life with purpose. Now she takes piano lessons, has joined the local Green Team, taken part in Toastmasters for several years, has a plot at the community garden, joined a self-help recovery group, been part of a theatrical production. Her life is full and rich. A big part of this change has to do with the Raw Carrot.

"As a mother of a child who is trying to make life work on ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program), I can tell you that I lie awake at night and worry about how she will survive when her father and I are gone. I have seen firsthand the injustice of a system where people are struggling to survive on a benefit that is so far below the poverty line, it is laughable. With the Raw Carrot, I see the beginning of a solution to this issue, but there is much more to do, and we cannot do it alone. We need supported employment for those who can work in this context. The Raw Carrot has been HUGE in helping me realize that there is hope for people with disabilities to find employment with purpose. And, there is a community out there who is ready, willing and able to help. I am so proud to have been a part of this excellent organization. So, hopelessness to hope, isolation to community, that's what the Raw Carrot is."

To find out how you can join this church-led movement, visit therawcarrot.com or info@rawcarrot.com.



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Uplift Gathering

The 2024 *uplift*: *Audacious Hope* conference for youth, young adults and those who lead them, took place July 3–7 at Brock University in Saint Catharine’s, Ont. The event was co-hosted by The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the United Church in Canada, and included over 300 participants.

Throughout the fun-filled week, events took place that included games, music, a dunk tank, socializing, and meaningful worship and presentations. Uplifting Rendezvous was an activity that offered a fun way to see old friends while building exciting new relationships and memories through play. Early Energy Flow was a morning activity that got everyone pumped up for a day full of workshops and learning throughout the campus. With a variety of topics to choose from, the youth, young adult and leadership streams were kept busy as

participants learned new skills and gained useful information, all while making new friends. Late-night snacks, games, dancing and mingling provided everyone with a safe, comfortable space to build relationships.

Each day was filled with learning, fun and worship. The preachers at daily worship were Adele Halliday, Anti-Racism and Equity Lead at the United Church of Canada, and the Rev. Mitchell Anderson, lead minister at St. Paul’s United Church in Saskatoon, Sask. And each night, musicians, actors and worship leaders led worship in many languages and styles.

The uplift community supported Weavers of Hope with a special offering. Weavers of Hope is a project that was born out of the Seminario Evangelico de Teologia in Matanzas, Cuba. Over 20 years ago, women from the community gathered at the seminary

to weave and knit with yarn and needles provided by seminary donors. Over time, this has provided circles of friendship and much-needed financial resources that assist the women in supporting their families. The uplift community supported Weavers of Hope through financial donations or gifts of yarn and thread. A variety of beautifully made jewelry, home goods and pieces of art, all handmade, were also available for sale. In total, the community raised \$1,041.30 through offerings, sold \$519 in merchandise, and received many yarn and thread donations. Praise God!

Workshops during the event included topics such as practicing peacemaking, songwriting and spoken word, global LGBT advocacy, and artistic expressions. The variety of workshops offered was highly praised.

PCC and UCC participants enjoyed each other’s company dur-



ing their final night together, which included grooving to a “silent” disco, laser tag and glow-in-the-dark games and activities. Participants scattered the halls with glow sticks and face paint, laughing and singing, making new memories.

One last home huddle took place to wrap up the final day when the Presbyterians were alone as the United Church event was one day shorter. Adele Halliday and Mitchell Anderson recapped on the week’s events, preachings and lessons, pointing out how the week at uplift 2024 was comparable to a picnic,

where everyone slowly came together and brought something to the table and shared their knowledge, experiences, love and wisdom with each other.

Thank you to everyone who helped make uplift 2024 such a success, including guest speakers, workshop leaders, volunteers and national office staff. Thank you to all those who shared their skills, knowledge and a helping hand throughout the week to make sure participants left happy and hopeful. And until next time, this isn’t goodbye, it’s “I’ll see you again soon.”



New Beginnings in Stouffville

By Jim Mason, Elder,
 St. James Presbyterian Church
 in Stouffville, Ont.

The congregation of St. James Presbyterian Church in Stouffville, Ont., faced several harsh realities coming out of the COVID-19 lockdowns. Attendance and donations were both down dramatically. Federal government grants that helped us weather the storm had expired.

In late 2021, St. James began the process of self-examination with the creation of a Futures Committee. Attendance at meetings was impressive.

Stouffville is a commuter town one hour northeast of Toronto with a population of roughly 50,000. The congregation was founded in 1859, and the current church building was constructed in 1894.

The committee looked into New Beginnings, a program facilitated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the congregation voted to participate in it.

With the blessing of Oak Ridges Presbytery, the PCC approved St. James entering the program, even

covering up to 90% of the costs.

The New Beginnings program is a 12-month process. During this time, the congregation is expected to gain a better understanding of its context, explore options and make an informed decision about its future direction.

Next, reports were prepared by employees and other officials at St. James. Our assessor, the Rev. Mark Lewis of Hamilton, met with the congregation and church officials, toured the community and our church and filed an assessment.

A New Beginnings “Transformational Weekend” was followed by a series of “visioning” house meetings attended by 22 members.

The hopes and dreams of the congregation were condensed into a report and a future story for St. James. The congregation chose a two-pronged approach to the future: being more missional in our community and redeveloping our property.

Our home on Main Street has made us the envy of many congregations. Our spot on the main drag on the east end of the downtown core provides maximum ex-

posure. We have parking and lots of it. And we have unused real estate, including the vacant lot to the east of the church and, possibly, some of those parking spaces.

But what should we do with that land? And where do we start?

We have no people in our church with a background in this industry. So we turned to our community and our neighbours.

The members of the Redevelopment Team have had a busy 2023–24, listening, visiting and asking questions, including:

- two meetings with our mayor, who encouraged St. James to investigate building housing.
- an on-site meeting with our municipal director of planning and local councillor.
- meetings with town councillors and our MP. Support and offers of assistance in dealing with government incentive programs have been encouraging.
- touring housing projects built by church-based organizations in Markham and Bradford, Ont.
- meetings with two developers who have recently completed projects in our community.
- a series of meetings with the Markham Inter-Church Committee for Affordable Housing (MICAH), which has constructed four projects 20 minutes south of St. James. With its experience and the connections in this field, MICAH has been an invaluable resource, right on our doorstep.

We’ve learned that a five- or



six-storey building would cost roughly \$30 million and generate enough income to be self-sustainable. (We may be able to build up to 10 storeys, according to some municipal officials. Intensification seems like a moving target. We are a five-minute walk from Stouffville’s downtown GO Train station, which could also affect accepted building heights.)

Energy efficiency and conservation through technologies such as geo-thermal heating and cooling, insulated concrete forms and triple-glazed windows make sense now and for the future.

We could put the sanctuary and Morris Hall under the umbrella of the property management company hired to manage the apartments. We’re talking cleaning, maintenance, security and other week-to-week duties currently managed by St. James.

So what’s next? Members of our redevelopment team are to meet with officials from a Toronto consulting firm that specializes in projects like the one we envision



in August. The congregation also voted to sell the church manse in early 2023. With our minister living in a neighbouring community, the manse, located behind the church, was being rented. The receipts from the sale have been invested and the interest is being used to help defray monthly operating costs.

For more information about the New Beginnings program, contact the Rev. Paul Kang, program coordinator, at pkang@presbyterian.ca.



Members of the congregation meeting with town officials.

Indigenous Studies at VST

By the Rev. Dr. Raymond C. Aldred,
 Director of Indigenous Studies
 Program, Vancouver School of
 Theology

The Indigenous Studies Program (ISP), formally known as the Native Ministries Consortium, resulted from like-minded organizations and individuals coming together to answer the call from Indigenous people to hold together Indigenous Spirituality and Identity with the Christian faith. Indigenous communities asked Vancouver School of Theology to help design and implement a way for Indigenous people to earn

an accredited MDiv in an Indigenous way. Over the last several years we have done over 23 in-community training events with Indigenous communities. In almost every one, the desire is for accredited training and VST has answered the call for this accreditation.

The ISP provides a place where Indigenous communities can send people to further the spiritual capacity of Indigenous communities. As a result, since 1984, Indigenous Summer School has been a wonderful experience when ISP students and other visiting Indigenous ministers come to

share life for two weeks. Students come from Hawaii, New Zealand, across Canada and the United States, all intent on loving God and one another wholeheartedly. Summer school is a chance to be taught by the land and the University of British Columbia, situated on the traditional territory of the Musqueam and coastal Salish peoples; like all of creation, it is full of beauty and provides a restful place. Most of our Indigenous students are already working in their communities in a spiritual capacity. Their respective ordinations have ordained some, but all are imbued with gifts that educa-

tion draws forth.

Steve Charleston, an Indigenous clergyperson and Indigenous scholar, wrote that there needs to be places where Indigenous understanding and spirituality can share the same space as Western Christianity, to hold together Indigenous perspectives and newcomer perspectives (see “The Old Testament of Native America”). Vine Deloria wrote there needs to be places of higher learning where Indigenous ways of knowing and being are appreciated and examined (see “Philosophy and the Tribal Peoples”). It’s important to have



places where we can embrace Indigenous identity and study our teachings adhering to Indigenous boundaries and according to principles of Indigenous identity. Cree Indigenous author and educator Margeret Kovach wrote about the importance of taking seriously Indigenous ways of doing things but also academic approaches that are helpful in *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics,*

Continued on page 19

Mentoring: Corporate Trend or Ministry Essential?

By Dr. Adrian Langdon, Director of Programs at the Leadership Centre of The Presbyterian College in Montreal, Que.

Last year, the Barna group reported that pastors are increasingly feeling lonely and isolated. This can lead to burnout as well as a “significant erosion of a number of well-being markers—including pastoral satisfaction, motivation, support and emotional and mental health.” It was especially discouraging “to see few pastors utilizing broader networks of personal and professional help” (see “7-Year Trends: Pastors Feel More Loneliness & Less Support,” at barna.com/research/pastor-support-systems).

There are options available to pastors for personal and spiritual support, including therapists, spiritual directors, coaches, deep friendships and mentoring. With mentoring, there are a variety of forms and programs. From formal post-seminary transitions programs that involve curriculum, reflection and evaluation, to informal one-on-one relationships that happen on an ad hoc basis. All indicators suggest important benefits from mentoring when it is done well and with commitment.

The Presbyterian College in Montreal, Que., has run a mentoring program for 10 years. It has unique characteristics that make it a flexible and organic support for pastors. One of our group leaders, the Rev. Jeremy

Bellsmith, summarized it by describing it as a focus on “formation-in-community.” While there are articles and practices that the group reviews, “the focus isn’t just on the information, but especially on applying that in our ministries.”

Before outlining the program, it is helpful to ask a basic question: Is mentoring grounded in the scripture and tradition, or is it a trend in the corporate world? It is helpful to explore this before suggesting the importance of mentoring today.

Mentoring in scriptural perspective

The rise of mentoring programs for ministers mirrors their use in corporate culture. In the business world, this usually means the pairing of a senior employee with a junior one to advise, accompany, impart knowledge and encourage. An essential component is that one person has more experience and knowledge and can help guide the other in career development.

But the word “mentor” or “mentoring” does not appear in English translations of the Bible. An old-fashioned check of concordances for the NIV, NRSV and KJV translations finds no mention of mentoring. In fact, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word did not come into common use until the mid 1700s. It only began to be used in a business context since

the 1980s. Perhaps we should be wary of mentoring?

What is more, the goals of the corporate world are different than pastoral ministry and church leadership. On the one hand, mentees in corporate culture are looking to get ahead, not to discern their calling or God’s will. They are often looking for a competitive edge to rise in the ranks and pay scale. On the other hand, mentors might be cautious of their junior colleagues and may guard their best ideas and contacts.

Nevertheless, one cannot help but see mentoring patterns in scripture and church tradition. Some pairs are obvious: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Deborah and Barak, and Paul and Timothy. In these examples, one person is the more experienced leader and the other will receive the mantle of leadership.

Heather McCance (formerly a colleague of ours here in Montreal) points out that there are other key features of these biblical relationships: learning, mutual respect and affection, and often a commissioning and sending of the one being mentored. It is also significant that mentors are not making clones of themselves. There is always a differentiation between personalities, leadership skills and new contexts. Joshua goes into the promised land and Moses does not. Paul had intellectual abilities and a drive that Timothy did not have. And differences are good



thing (see *A Mentors’ Manual for Leadership Formation*, Tyndale, 2018; pp. 14–37).

But the Bible doesn’t just have mentoring pairs. Jesus had a large following, but his ministry included the closer 12 disciples. He would also withdraw with smaller groups of disciples. The marks of learning, respect, affection, differentiation and commissioning certainly apply. In fact, perhaps it is best to see mentoring as an intensification of Christian discipleship. One could argue that Jesus called select disciples into closer relationship with him in order to equip and prepare them for leadership in the early church.

We can view the mentoring of pastors in a similar way. It is an intensification of our following after Christ and of our growth in him. Mentoring involves an intentional and committed relationship in which pastors are encouraged, equipped, challenged and supported as they grow in their callings, ministry contexts and connection to God.

“We are in this together”

At a recent gathering of mentoring groups at The Presbyterian College (PC), one group participant blurted out a summary of its importance: “We are in this together.” He was expressing how his group supported him in his ministry and personal growth. The people and format of the pro-

gram enable this support.

The groups are confidential, flexible and non-evaluative, meeting online and outside of the presbytery structure. They have a theme and study relevant books and other materials but are organic enough to respond to the individual needs of participants. Besides having an experienced minister, the program runs with groups of five to eight people, so peer-learning, peer-support and networking are central as well. The groups commit themselves to one- and two-year terms, but the relationships often last longer.

Another important distinction is that members of mentoring groups receive a free registration for the annual pastors’ conference held at PC every May in beautiful Montreal. The groups can finally meet face to face and go out for dinner. The conference includes speakers, worship, workshops, a jazz night, arts and plenty of free time to reflect. In May 2025, the conference will feature Dr. Tod Bolsinger from Fuller Seminary, a well-known authority on Christian leadership.

This fall, The Presbyterian College has a group starting on small-town ministry and another for health-care chaplains. If you would like more information on the program, or know someone who would benefit, visit the mentoring site mstmentoring.ca and contact Adrian at alangdon@pcmtl.ca.

Conversations and Contexts.

The Indigenous Studies Program takes these things seriously, creating a space where learning of the Western world and Indigenous identity are brought together. We provide a collaborative space where we can achieve something together that we could not do if we stayed in our own siloed land.

At the Vancouver School of Theology, the ISP is governed jointly by our partners, who come together twice a year to make sure our Indigenous vision and values remain intact. Our partners include B.C. Native Ministries Council, Episcopal Diocese of Alaska, Henry Budd College for Ministry, Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre,

the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, Hawaiian Cohort representative, Hummingbird Ministries Council, a member of the Musqueam nation (host people), Indigenous representatives from the Catholic Church, the Vancouver School of Theology Academic Dean and ISP students.

Our courses are taught primarily by Indigenous instructors; we have a teaching approach that is developed by Indigenous people with Indigenous competencies. Every student has access to a mentor to help with cultural and ecclesial integration in their particular context. The program is led by an Indigenous director with an Indigenous program coordinator.

In all this the Vancouver School of Theology has faithfully supported and learned and adapted and changed as the Indigenous Studies program has developed.

Of course, the best way to see

what we do at the ISP is to come and enjoy summer school for two weeks in July. Last week at summer school, I laughed when, as a community coming together at noon to worship, my friend’s

Apple Watch warned him our singing was over 50 decibels. A group from many tribes and many nations gathered together in the chapel of the Epiphany, praising the Creator and the Son, Jesus.





Rosemary Mambe, a member of Knox Presbyterian Church in Oshawa, Ont., is grateful for the publishing of her first book, *What I Left for You: Mission of a Turbulent Life*. She's pictured here standing in front of a banner that was made for the 2012 General Assembly.



Knox Presbyterian Church in Elora, Ont., has the unique distinction of being the only church in Canada on a traffic circle. Each Christmas Eve, Knox takes advantage of this feature by surrounding the church with brightly lit angels. Each angel bears the names of friends and family the community wishes to honour or remember. Donations go to the work of the Knox Service Club. The angels are created by Shelley Maitland.



The Charity Challenge is part of the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon. For the third year in a row, Glenview Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., will have a team participating in the 5 km walk or run. This year, this inspiring community event takes place on Saturday, Oct. 19. The goal is to once again raise over \$10,000 for the organizations in the church's Special Fund—Evangel Hall Mission, Portland Place, ARISE, Native Child and Family Services Toronto, the Daily Bread Food Bank and Yorkminster Park Meals on Wheels. Go Team Glenview!



On April 24, the Rev. Milton Fraser, interim moderator, led a memorial service at Community Presbyterian Church in Almonte, Ont., in remembrance of members who had passed during 2023. For each, a tribute was read and a candle lit by a family member.



At the April Presbytery of Oak Ridges meeting, the presbytery presented Knox College with a cheque for \$50,000 as seed money for Knox's new online "Lifelong Learning" project. The funds were derived from the distribution of Caven church's assets, as Caven church was dissolved when it amalgamated with St. Paul's in Nobleton, Ont. When the Bolton Church commenced in 1875, the congregation named the church "Caven" in honour of William Caven, then principal of Knox College. Pictured (left to right): the Rev. Robert Hayashi, Knox Board member; Dr. Ernest van Eck, Principal, Knox College; the Rev. John Borthwick, Director of Lifelong Learning; Murray Stewart, former elder at Caven Church; John Buie, Presbytery Amalgamation Sub-Committee Convener; Derek Mumford, former elder at Caven Church; and the Rev. Rick Manafó, Moderator of the Presbytery Oak Ridges.



On April 21, the Rev. Heather Kinkaid preached on John 10:11–18, "The Good Shepherd," at Community Presbyterian Church in Almonte, Ont. Tim Dack, a member, brought in a Suffolk lamb and brought it forward to show to the Sunday school children. The choir sang the anthem "Like a Lamb Who Needs a Shepherd."



Pictured here (left) is Lenora Arbuckle holding one of the many boxes of tarts that were available for sale at the Tarts Galore Festival held on May 11 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Alma, Ont. Held annually on the Saturday before Mother's Day, the festival is not only a fundraiser for St. Andrew's but for local churches and home-based businesses. St. Andrew's Alma provides the venue and does the advertising, while guests bring their tarts, tables and tents. The second picture above are this year's vendors, which included St. Andrew's Gordonville, St. Andrew's Conn, St. Andrew's Guelph, St. Andrew's Alma and the Alma Bible Chapel.



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Barrie, Ont., held its 175th Anniversary celebrations on Sunday, May 5, 2024. The Rev. Joanne Lee, current minister, invited the Rev. Dr. Rick Horst, who served at St. Andrew's from 2004 to 2019, to be the guest minister. Greetings from past ministers who served at St. Andrew's were read; congregants, assisted by the youth, helped build a LEGO creation as they continued "building on our story," and lunch with cake was served following the service. The congregation is grateful for the temporary worship space in the chapel at Steckley-Gooderham Funeral Home on Sunday mornings, following a fire in the church building in February 2023.



Several special events recently took place at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hillsburgh, Ont. Activities included a car rally, scavenger hunt, dinner fundraiser, golf putting and book sale. There were lots of fun prizes, and everyone had a wonderful time.



The annual meeting for the Women's Missionary Society Southwestern Ontario Synodical was held for the first time at Camp Kintail. Over 70 women took part in two days of meetings.



Calvin Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., along with their partner in ecumenical shared ministry, Deer Park United Church, held its annual BBQ in June to say thank-you to the awesome choir. The Youth Arts Club sang in worship with the adult choir and helped celebrate Pride Month by hosting the first "LGBBQ" with their hand-painted banner, rainbow-coloured desserts, and advocacy/awareness for LGBTQI+ siblings. A wonderful celebration was enjoyed by all!

PULPIT VACANCIES

Submit a listing or review all current ministry opportunities at presbyterian.ca/vacancies



On Sunday, June 16, The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal, Que., joyfully welcomed 40 new members to the congregation from all around the world, including the Dominican Republic, India, Ireland, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Scotland, Singapore, Spain and the United States! It was a memorable day filled with a Father's Day celebration, a presentation on this summer's Vacation Bible School, and a delightful luncheon in the garden, allowing the congregation to acquaint themselves with new members. The congregation eagerly anticipates a wonderful year ahead.



New elders were ordained at St. David and St. Martin Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, Ont., on June 16. Pictured are Esther Ekong (Nigeria), the Rev. Dr. Blair D. Bertrand (PCC mission staff working with Zomba Theological College in Malawi), George Ngigi (Kenya) and Jane Karago (Kenya). The ordination of the elders was conducted using the newly approved Preamble that was adopted by the General Assembly in June (see presbyterian.ca/aandp).



At West River Presbyterian Church in Durham, Ont., long-serving member Norma Wood and member Sheila Reynolds cut the cake as members of the Durham Ladies Guild celebrated their 75th Anniversary with a fellowship gathering after church on June 16. A lovely lunch including cake and ice cream was enjoyed by the joint congregations.



An apartment building fire at the end of April in Bobcaygeon, Ont., resulted in the town rallying together in a variety of ways to support the victims. Knox Presbyterian Church became the hub for donations that included clothes, shoes and bedding. A Give-away Clothing Committee had already been established so they were ready to act. The church was open for the first week in May for people to come and get what they needed. So much was given that excess donations were provided to the Diabetes Association, a nursing home, Salvation Army thrift store in Fenelon Falls, two shelters in Lindsay, as well as a thrift store that supports a shelter. There was also enough for two planned summer clothing give-away events. Pictured helping at Knox are (left to right) Myra Coene, Theresia Ruddock, Debbie Martin, Ruth Eberts and Edith, a visiting friend of Debbie's.



On Saturday, June 22, Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., hosted "Worship Playground," led by the Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis, the Rev. Konnie Vissers and Erin Stone. It was a day of playful exploration, wonder and worship.



On July 7, Coquitlam Presbyterian Church in Coquitlam, B.C., welcomed 26 new members by profession of faith and adult baptism. Interim moderator the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart is pictured with the new members in the sanctuary.



The church school at First Presbyterian in Brockville, Ont., again decided to take part in the PWS&D Sunday School Challenge by selling handmade magnets during the month of June. The children sold the magnets at coffee hour after worship, and raised \$165, which was matched by a generous member of the congregation, for a total of \$330. The proceeds will be directed toward projects listed in the PCC Gifts of Change catalogue. Congratulations to the church school and many thanks to the congregation for its generosity!



The Rev. John Borthwick, Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Knox College in Toronto, Ont., and curator of ministryforum.ca, garnered some important connections on his two-part Western Canada road trip. He visited ministry leaders and preached in congregations in Calgary, and made multiple stops in Saskatchewan, including offering Glitter Blessings at Regina Pride alongside the Rev. Amanda Currie of First Presbyterian Church in Regina. John preached at Knox Presbyterian Church and Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church with the Rev. Greg Smith. John also joined the Presbytery of Assiniboia and hosted ministry leaders from Regina for dinner and conversation.



On Saturday, June 1, the Ministry Forum hosted its first annual Creative Ways: Being Church Today conference at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont. (The next Creative Ways conference will take place on June 1, 2025, in Hamilton.) Keynote speaker Brady Shearer of Pro Church Tools suggested creative ways that social media could be used to share the gospel message. Kevin Coghill of Royal City Mission in Guelph, Ont., told the powerful story of being a church on a mission. David, Ian and Peter, from Two Rivers Church in Guelph, celebrated the vibrancy of their faith community without a building. David Kupp, Ainsley Chapman (Evangel Hall) and Karen Plater (Stewardship & Planned Giving department of the PCC) talked about being good stewards of our church buildings and creatively using them for mission and ministry.



Iona Presbyterian Church in Dartmouth, N.S., has a ukulele group that meets every second Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. They play a variety of music from country to gospel. The congregation enjoys the music when the group plays at a service. Pictured here (left to right) are Ellie Melville, Heather Hollett, Joan MacLeod, Phillip Arseneault and the leader of the group, Nancy Bent. They welcome anyone interested in learning to play the ukulele to join them!



To start the summer, the folks at St. Marys Presbyterian Church in St. Marys, Ont., were introduced to "Flat Jesus" and encouraged to take Jesus with them on their summer adventures. The church school, led by Lily Darling (standing next to the float), introduced the town to Flat Jesus during the Canada Day Parade. The wagon and tractor were provided by Rudy McIntosh.



The Rev. Allyson MacLeod and the Rev. Kirk MacLeod were inducted as ministers of Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I., during a Presbytery of Prince Edward Island service held on June 2. Pictured (left to right) following the service are Gary MacDougall, clerk of Session at Zion; the Rev. Paula Hamilton, interim moderator at Zion; the Rev. Kirk MacLeod; the Rev. Allyson MacLeod; the Rev. Bradford Blaikie, moderator of presbytery; and Debra Lynn Trainor, clerk of Session at Zion. The MacLeods will also minister to Calvin Presbyterian Church in Mermaid, which operates during the summer months. They previously ministered at Keswick Presbyterian Church in Ontario.



There was a time when horses were hitched along the side of Stamford Presbyterian Church (established in 1784) in Niagara Falls, Ont. Today, the congregation is thrilled to hitch a ramp to that same wall to promote accessibility for all at worship services. Cutting the ribbon with the Rev. Anita Van Nest is eldest member Bob and youngest member Piper in May 2024.

Knox Presbyterian Church in Bayfield, Ont., held its annual BBQ, Baking and Book Sale on Saturday, July 6, and it proved to be a remarkable success! The positive energy everyone felt through meeting and serving so many wonderful people certainly made all the difference and contributed greatly to the event's success. The final amount raised, including many generous donations, will go toward accessibility improvements at Knox. It is the congregation's desire to do what they can within the constraints that they have, because accessible spaces and services will allow everyone to enjoy their experience at the "Little church with a great big heart!" Pictured here are Lois Kacsandi assisting a customer, Pieter VanMeekeren at the grill and Deb Cosford at the baked goods section.



The annual Ladies' Retreat first began in 1982, when ladies from the churches in the Presbytery of Westminster, and their friends, organized a retreat at Camp Douglas, the Presbyterian camp located at Roberts Creek on the Sunshine Coast of B.C. The beautiful waterfront campsite and the spirit-filled atmosphere was enjoyed so much that the tradition continued every year until 2019. In 2016, a special 35th anniversary celebration was held. After the shutdown caused by Covid, unfortunately the enthusiasm for the annual retreats diminished, and it was decided they would discontinue. Every year, different guest speakers had led workshops on various themes; cooks prepared wonderful meals; meditative walks followed by Communion were special; crafts and games, skits and lots of singing were enjoyed along with the beauty of God's natural surroundings. A farewell reunion event was held in June 2024. Pictured here is the group from a 35th anniversary celebration retreat in 2016, the final gathering in June 2024, along with meditative walks in the woods, women playing games, and a communion service with the Revs. Joyce Davis, Pat Dutcher-Walls and Bev Shepansky.



Members from Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., took part in the Toronto Pride Parade on June 30, 2024, with Presbyterians from across Ontario!



During Covid and in the years since, Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., moved to live streaming worship and having more online and hybrid gatherings. A group of worshippers in the Calgary area began to take part and now feel connected to the work of the congregation. Now, every year, members from Armour Heights take a trip to Calgary for a communion worship service and in-person fellowship. The most recent trip took place July 6-7.



On Sunday, June 23, North Bramalea Presbyterian Church in Brampton, Ont., dedicated a new church window to recognize elder Rommel Sankarsingh's many years of service. "Great is thy faithfulness" is dedicated to Rommel by the Sankarsingh family. Rommel served as elder since 2006, and as representative elder on presbytery from 2007 onwards. He was also on the Communication, Rental & Maintenance Committees.



Knox Presbyterian Church in Bayfield, Ont., is hosting a "Summer Speaker Series" on topics of interest to seniors and their families. On June 17, Knox welcomed Genelle Reid of the Huron Women's Shelter. Genelle provided an informative and touching presentation on gender-based violence and its impact in rural communities. Huron Women's Shelter serves Huron County and is an invaluable source of help and assistance to many. Their list of offerings includes: safety planning, a 24/7 support line (1-800-265-5506), counselling, referrals to other experts, court support, children's support, resources and advocacy, and more. Pictured here is the Rev. Lisa Dolson (left) with Genelle Reid.

On July 11, as part of the "Summer Speaker Series," Knox Presbyterian Church in Bayfield, Ont., welcomed Shelley McPhee-Haist and Lindsay Otto from One Care Home and Community Support Services of Huron County. Providing services to families in the local community for over 40 years, One Care offers support for older adults and adults with disabilities, helping people remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Knox was delighted to host them. Pictured here are (left to right) Lindsay Otto and Shelley McPhee-Haist from One Care Home and Community Support Services of Huron County, and the Rev. Lisa Dolson.

Elmvale Presbyterian Church in Elmvalle, Ont., recently celebrated the retirement of long-time faithful elder Doug Lambie, who had stepped back from his roles as treasurer and elder at the end of 2023. The Session and congregation thanked Doug at his home for his outstanding service to the church, and presented him with a painting of Doug with his team of horses, who had won the Sulky Plowing Championship in 2014. Thank you, Doug, for all that you have done and continue to do for the church and congregation. "Well done, thy good and faithful servant."



On May 5, Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., celebrated their second annual PIE service at their 10 a.m. Sunday morning service. PIE stands for Public, Intentional and Explicit. It is a way for affirming congregations to be clear about their affirming identity with their members, the LGBTQI+ community and the general public. The guest speaker was Pam Rocker, Director of Alberta's Affirming Connections Network. Pam is a sought-after speaker in both Canada and the US and an advocate for the LGBTQI+ faith community. The service highlighted VAPC's journey and ongoing commitment as an affirming congregation. The event also debuted the church's new public affirming statement that was unanimously adopted by the congregation at their annual meeting this past February. Pictured (left to right) are the Rev. Pamela Scott, Pastoral Associate at VAPC, Pam Rocker of Affirming Connections, and VAPC's minister, the Rev. Greg Smith.



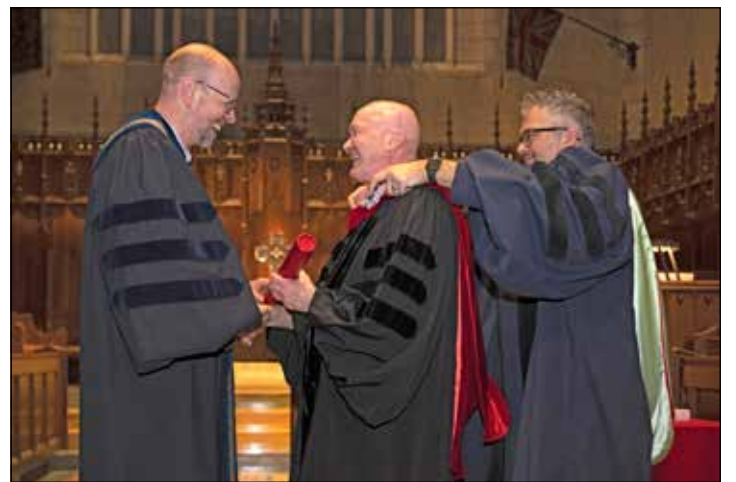
The congregation of Central Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, Ont., celebrated Canada Day a week early on June 23 with a group photo followed by a barbecue and potluck lunch. Central has been in its current location on the banks of the Grand River in downtown Cambridge since 1880, and recently completed a significant restoration project which included replacing the slate roof.



Glenview Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., has been supporting places of healing and hope since 1925, so it was wonderful to be able to host the Summer Outreach BBQ again on Sunday, July 14. The congregation had missed organizing such events during the pandemic and a kitchen renovation. Glenview welcomed friends from Portland Place, Evangel Hall and the Out of the Cold Sunday Dinner program. Food was served at 6 p.m. followed by worship at 7 o'clock. A good time was had by all who participated.



Knox Presbyterian Church in Bayfield, Ont., has a book study and discussion group that meets weekly on the lower level of the church, Mondays at 11:30 a.m. The group's book study on *Shalom Sistas: Living Wholeheartedly in a Brokenhearted World* by Osheta Moore, is now complete. On May 27, the group got together at the church to share a recipe that was provided in the book: red beans and rice. A wonderful lunch was enjoyed! The group would like to thank Osheta Moore for her words of wisdom as she coached them how to be peacemakers. The group is now on to their next book—*Sensible Shoes: A Story about the Spiritual Journey* by Sharon Garlough Brown. The book provides a launching point for discussions. The study often proves to be a transformative experience that allows for learning, creation and discovery, with participants often embarking on emotional journeys and exploring new perspectives. Pictured here are (left to right): Marlene Starkey, Marilyn Elgie, Lynne Price, Heather Robinson, Lois Kacsandi, the Rev. Lisa Dolson and Judith Roy.



At The Presbyterian College in Montreal, Que., two awards were recently given: the first was an Honorary Doctorate that went to the Rev. Ian Fraser; the second was the inaugural Principal's Award for Faithful Service and Distinguished Leadership that went to Donna McIlveen (member of the Order of Diaconal Ministries). Both awards were presented by the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries, Principal.



The congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Whycomagh, N.S., had a busy July. On July 16 and 17, they sponsored a very successful silent auction and a noontime *ceilidh*, as part of the Whycomagh Summer Festival festivities. On July 20, the Ladies Aid and congregation sponsored a very well-attended pancake breakfast, and on July 21, St. Andrew's held their final outdoor worship service of the summer. Teamwork certainly makes everything possible! Ecclesiastes 4:9 (NIV): Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.

The congregation of Paulin Memorial Presbyterian Church in Windsor, Ont., recently undertook efforts to beautify God's house of prayer—with great results!

Standing Together Against Hate

By the Communications Office

The Canadian Interfaith Conversation has issued a statement on behalf of over 60 signatory faith traditions and institutions, including The Presbyterian Church in Canada, to present a common public position adopted by Canada's faith communities on combatting hate against and between our country's religious communities.

The Statement, "Standing Together Against Hate Based on Religious Identity," addresses:

- the imperative for different faiths to work together to provide medical and humanitarian aid to victims of international conflicts;
- the need to create safety and security for all places of worship;
- a call for public authorities to protect people of all faiths from hate and violence.

Full Statement

Canada is home to a vast diversity of people of different national origins, ethnicities, religions and heritage.

But today, we see fear, division, hurt and grief. Even more alarming, we have also seen violence.

At times, these conditions seem to overwhelm or even subsume our common bonds of citizenship, friendship and love for one another.

Yet, there is more that unites than divides us.

Love unites; hate divides. Respect unites; bigotry divides. Dialogue unites; ignorance divides. Listening unites; harassment divides.

None can deny the pain of these days. Yet, we see our common humanity.

Rather than viewing religion as a source of conflict and contention, we know that faith traditions can be the basis for deeper conversa-

tions and increased cooperation, greater understanding and shared activity for a common good.

This is why...

We, representatives of Canada's diverse faith communities, solemnly commit to:

- Work for understanding, for justice and for peace.
- Stand against hate of any kind in Canada. No one should be subject to racism, violence, silencing or retaliation because of religion, indigeneity, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender or nationality.
- Reject any glorification of the perpetrators of violence and those who sow discrimination and hatred, especially in our own communities.
- Urge our adherents never to allow their faith to become a cause for hatred of another human being.

We call on the Government of Canada to:

- Support Canadian interfaith efforts to provide non-secular medical and humanitarian aid to victims—especially child victims—of international conflicts through reputable and trustworthy organizations as a means of advancing peace-building abroad and social solidarity in Canada.
- Ensure that faith communities have the proper resources for the security of their houses of worship, educational institutions—including schools, daycare centres, colleges or universities—community centres and cemeteries.
- Introduce a comprehensive strategy to foster understanding about online hate based on religious identity.
- Ensure, in collaboration with



other levels of government, that hate crime units are informed about hate based on religious identity in every law enforcement service, so that targeted groups can feel safe, heard and respected. To this end we stand ready to offer our assistance.

This Statement of Faith Communities Standing Against Hate Based on Religious Identity has been prepared by the Canadian Interfaith Conversation and is endorsed by its Executive Committee members. It has also been endorsed and signed by 57 additional communities and institutions, including the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Supporting Church Leaders through the Ministry Forum

By the Rev. John Borthwick,
Director of Lifelong Learning at
Knox College in Toronto, Ont.

The Ministry Forum from the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Knox College in Toronto, Ont., is on a mission to ensure that ministry leaders today thrive in their callings. We are passionate about reminding leaders, like you, that you are not alone as you serve in the place where God has planted you. One way that we seek to fulfill our mission is by providing timely and meaningful content that you have told us you'd appreciate. Enter CHURCHx.ca!

When I started as the director just over a year ago, I was told that the task group of the Board of Governors of Knox College wanted to see the lifelong learning program enlivened through a learning management platform. It was hoped that the College's foray into this world would become a sought-after space for a variety of interested ecumenical and denominational ministry leaders.

In my first week at the college, in the spirit of collaboration, I reached out to the Rev. Tay Moss

who, at the time, I knew only as a name on the list of executive members of the Association of Leaders in Lifelong Learning for Ministry and that he was based in Toronto (as ALLLM is a North American professional association). I would quickly discover that Tay's enthusiastic response to my outreach was because he and a team of people from mostly the United Church of Canada had been working on creating a robust and powerful learning management system for the UCC and had a vision for sharing this community ecumenically. The platform was called CHURCHx.ca and had a growing learning community that now has 7,000 registered users.

The United Church of Canada delivers all their continuing education and mandatory training through this platform. Other ecumenical partners, including the Canadian Council of Churches, are joining this amazing space designed specifically with the church in mind. I knew that CHURCHx was the future home of the Ministry Forum's eLearning offerings.

As part of my contract with

Knox College, I was required to do some lifelong learning of my own. In September of last year, I started the Professional Certificate in Learning and Development from Western Continuing Studies. Every week since, with a one-week break in between courses, I have been expanding my knowledge in adult learning theories, instructional design, online course development, and so much more. By the time of this publication, I expect to have completed my certificate and will enjoy a new rhythm of work-life balance that doesn't include homework.

What I've learned is that it takes a long time to create online learning content, especially when you have such a small, but certainly mighty, team working on these kinds of projects on top of everything else we do to connect with ministry leaders today. With dogged determination, we launched Ministry Forum's CHURCHx offerings during General Assembly in June. As we'd hoped, we have been able to connect with the CHURCHx audience, immediately seeing enrolment from various ecumenical ministry



leaders interested in our offerings. Through Ministry Forum, Knox College has become one of the first theological seminaries to join this growing community. We are delighted to see many Presbyterians, including some Knox College alumni, registering with CHURCHx and joining some of our initial offerings. While we will endeavour to keep our offerings free of charge, those who register for CHURCHx will find a wealth of relevant content offered by other partners (both free and paid) by accessing their searchable catalog. With over 300+ courses already on the platform, we were excited that our own Ministry Forum audience could take advantage of such collective wisdom immediately.

We encourage you, as a ministry leader (remembering that

at Ministry Forum a ministry leader is anyone who is following Jesus and seeking to grow in their own faith and connect with others along the way) to check out the e-learning opportunities of CHURCHx.ca. We have created two social media basics courses hosted by the amazing Tim Campell-Smith; and Knox College's own the Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis hosts a course on lay worship. We've also created a space for those who love books: "It's Raining Books, Hallelujah!" We are looking forward to sharing two new courses this fall: Self-Leadership led by the Rev. Dr. Peter Coutts and one on Lay Preaching. You can find them at CHURCHx.ca and by searching "Ministry Forum."

Remember, you are not alone in ministry.

Recognizing 50 Years of Service in Nova Scotia



Charles Greaves and his wife, Linda.

By the Rev. David Coull,
Bethel Presbyterian Church
in Sydney, N.S.

On Sunday, June 23, 2024, Bethel Presbyterian Church in Sydney, N.S., held a special service to recognize

Charles Greaves for his lifetime of service to the church. The event drew a crowd of about 175 people and included welcoming new members and communion.

Charles has been an elder at Bethel since 1974 and clerk of

Session since 1981. Charles served as clerk of Cape Breton Presbytery, and as moderator during the Covid years. He was moderator of the Atlantic Synod, served as a member of the Synod Council and was a member of Assembly Council for seven years. Charles has vast knowledge of the church and its issues at the local, regional and national levels.

Charles knows church protocol. He is very familiar with the Book of Forms and can use this knowledge to steer the Session when difficult situations arise, as they are sometimes prone to do. He has been and continues to be a dedicated member of Bethel and an inspiration to all.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Charles, who has provided unwavering support, wisdom and knowledge to me since my arrival at Bethel in December 2023.

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received” (1 Peter 4:10).

Presbyterian Wins Most Distinguished Service Award

By N. Elaine Nagy, R.P.,
Registered Psychotherapist CRPO,
Certified Supervisor-Educator

For the first time, the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care, Association Canadienne de Soins Spirituels, (CASC/ACSS) has awarded its highest honour to one of its members who is endorsed by The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The CASC/ACSS is the national association that offers education and certification in the fields of spiritual care practice, psycho-spiritual therapy and supervisory education. Most of its members provide spiritual care in health care, corrections or community settings, or engage in spiritual psychotherapy in private practice.

On April 16, 2024, the Verda Rochon Distinguished Service Award was presented to the Rev. Dr. Philip D. Crowell, who is the Spiritual Health Leader/Director at British Columbia Children's and Women's Hospital. He is also a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, Division of Hematology/Oncology, and a Medical Ethics Theme Leader/Educator in the University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine Undergraduate & Oral Health Sciences Programs. In addition, Philip serves as the Spiritual Health Lead for the B.C. Provincial Health Authority, B.C. Cancer, B.C. Mental Health and Addictions Facilities, and the B.C. Forensic Psychiatric Hospital. He also regularly offers Professional Ethics Courses at the Vancouver School of Theology. In his capacity as the Ethics Educator/Leader for the UBC Faculty of Medicine, his teaching addresses the issues of professionalism, ethics, culture, spirituality and resiliency. For a time, he served on the B.C. College of Physicians and Surgeons Ethics Committee with a primary focus on writing the Standards and Procedures for Medicine regarding Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID).

Philip Crowell is a Presbyterian minister, on the Appendix to the Roll of the Presbytery of Westminster. He began his ministry by serving as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Chatham Pastoral Charge in Chatham, N.B., and as the moderator of the Presbytery of Miramichi, after earning his doctoral degree in Philosophy and Ethics from the University of



The Rev. Dr. Philip D. Crowell.

Waterloo.


CASC/ACSS presents several awards each year to those who excel in spiritual care practice and spiritual care research, but the Verda Rochon Award is its highest honour. It is presented to a member of the association who has made a significant contribution to the spiritual care profession and to its professional association.

In presenting the award, Ajith Varghese, who spoke on behalf of the Board of CASC/ACSS, acknowledged the remarkable leadership Philip has offered his colleagues and the spiritual care profession since 2009, when a B.C. hospital system suddenly eliminated all spiritual care positions and departments. At the time, Philip was the chair of the B.C. Region of CASC/ACSS.

Philip was interviewed by the Vancouver Sun and his comments about what spiritual care is became a front-page story. He debunked misconceptions about the role spiritual care plays in health care systems and identified the valuable service professional spiritual care practitioners provide. This led to another interview and a joint statement carried by Global News on the intrinsic value of spiritual care professionals.

Philip and two other spiritual care colleagues were then able to create influential relationships with the Health Minister's office in B.C. Together, they were able to create policy documents that strengthened the relationship between spiritual care professionals and the Ministry, which led to the funding of several new positions.

Many people in the PCC and from other faith traditions and health care disciplines have benefited from Philip's remarkable achievements.



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Recognizing the Rev. Ritchie Robinson

By Charles Greaves, *Betbel Presbyterian Church in Sydney, N.S.*

Born and raised in Cape Breton, Ritchie Robinson grew up in Englishtown, attending St. Mark's Presbyterian Church. He was very much a child of the church and looked toward ministry as a career, having heard the Call of Christ at a young age. His studies prepared him to attend The Presbyterian College in Montreal and McGill University, receiving a Bachelor of Theology from the latter and a Master of Divinity from the former.

After he graduated, Ritchie accepted a call to serve as Minister of Word and Sacraments in Boularderie Island, serving the two churches of Knox and St. James. There, he was first ordained and became "the Rev. Ritchie Robinson."

Not long after, he met and married his lifelong partner, Nancy, who has been a source of strength, guidance and music in his life.

Ritchie served those congregations for approximately 13 years. He then took up the congregation of St. Giles in North Sydney, where

he remained until his retirement. In the last few years, St. Giles became a part of what is now called the Northside Presbyterian Pastoral Charge, and St. Andrew's church in Sydney Mines also came under Ritchie's leadership.

Ritchie was also an able presbyter whose guidance was often sought out during presbytery meetings. He has served a variety of church courts and committees. He is active as a historian as well as cleric and is well known as a man of wit and wisdom.

The Rev. Ritchie Robinson, in many respects, is an exemplar of



At the congregational dinner on June 15.

what it means to be a minister in and from Cape Breton, and to be an individual with a keen sense of one's own roots, a clear view of one's world, and an ever-present hope in the Good News Christ brings, as well as a willingness to laugh, especially at oneself.

A service acknowledging Ritchie's years of dedication and his retirement was held in St. Giles Presbyterian Church in North Sydney on July 7, with members



of his congregations and friends, and lead by the Cape Breton Presbytery. We thanked Ritchie for his devotion to his call and wished him well as he moves into the next stages of his life and his work in new fields in the church.



The Rev. Ritchie Robinson and his wife, Nancy.



At the retirement service with presbytery members on July 7.

Retirement of the Rev. Dr. Sandy McDonald

By Cheryl Weeks, *Clerk of Session, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Dartmouth, N.S.*

On Easter Sunday, the Rev. Dr. P.A. (Sandy) McDonald conducted his last service as minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Dartmouth, N.S., having served as minister for 56 years.

Sandy was born in Stratford, Ont. He received his B.D. from Knox College in Toronto, in 1968. He was ordained at Knox Presbyterian Church in Stratford on May

31, 1968; the Rev. William Weir, minister of Knox, gave the Charge, and Professor David Hay of Knox College preached the sermon.

During his 56 years at St. Andrew's, Sandy also served at Iona Presbyterian Church in Dartmouth for six of those years. And for 44 of the 56 years, he served at Musquodoboit Harbour Presbyterian Church. Sandy was the Moderator of the 2003 General Assembly, a member of Assembly Council for six years, served in the Life & Mission Agency for

12 years and spent 12 years on the Knox College Board. He received his Honorary Doctor of Divinity from Knox College in 1996. Over the years, Sandy was active in the N.S. Branch of the Canadian Bible Society, the Ecumenical Council of Atlantic Canada and the Halifax-Dartmouth Council of Churches. He served 18 years as a Police Chaplain in Dartmouth. He was Chair of the Synod of the Atlantic Province's Camp Geddie Committee for over 20 years and is currently serving in that



The Rev. Dr. P.A. (Sandy) McDonald.

capacity. Sandy continues as clerk of the Presbytery of Halifax & Lunenburg and has served in that capacity since 1970. Sandy and his spouse, Christine, have three children—Ian, Heather and Laura—and five grandchildren.

During the service on March 31, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated, and Sandy presided at the reception of three new members by Profession of Faith, two of whom were Sandy's granddaughter and son-in-law. As clerk of Session, I gave an address on behalf of the congregation and expressed heartfelt thanks for Sandy's many gifts of ministry over the past 56 years.

During the reception, Sandy received seven video messages from ministry students, four of

whom he mentored from Knox College. The congregation's retirement gift to Sandy, a painting of one of the stained-glass windows in St. Andrew's, was a symbol of our deep respect and appreciation for his service; the artist was Guillermo Ortiz from Calvin Presbyterian Church in Toronto. The gift was presented by senior elder Wade MacDonald. Isabelle Young, another one of our elders, presented a bouquet of roses and a gift to Christine from the congregation.

On Sunday, May 5, 2024, the Presbytery of Halifax & Lunenburg held a service to give thanks for Sandy's ministry. The service was conducted by presbytery moderator the Rev. Tom Summers, the sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Iona MacLean, and the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald celebrated the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The moderator of the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces, the Rev. Brad Blaikie, brought greetings and words of gratitude. And the Rev. Don Muir, Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly, brought greetings from the General Assembly Office and gave thanks for Sandy's many years of dedicated service to The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



Sandy and his family.

35 Years in the Celtic Heartland of Ontario



Ian and his wife, Jane.

By Janis Pasco, Clerk of Session,
 St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
 Lancaster, Ont.

The Rev. Ian MacMillan was ordained at the East Lake Ainslie Presbyterian Church, N.S., on August 26, 1988, after he was called to the Lancaster/Martintown Pastoral Charge in Eastern Ontario. Ian has remained in the charge for the past 35 years, making him the longest serving minister at St. Andrew's Martintown, and the second-longest serving minister at St. Andrew's Lancaster.

Coming from Cape Breton, N.S., Ian soon realized that the Glengarry/Cape Breton marriage of cultures was the perfect fit for him. Over the past 35 years, both

Lancaster and Martintown Presbyterian Churches have continued to thrive and grow. Both churches have been in the forefront of Glengarry County by hosting events and worship services. They have also raised money for local, national and international charities such as Presbyterian World Service & Development, refugee sponsorship, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and the Community Christmas Dinner.

St. Andrew's Martintown is well-known for events that are held annually, such as the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, the Easter Breakfast, the Annual Harvest Supper, the Summer Riverside Service and the Advent Carol Service. They are renowned for their bake sales.

St. Andrew's Lancaster has also been vibrant and active. Throughout Ian's ministry, the congregation completed building projects, which included a new church wing for Christian Education space, a choir room and a large meeting area. Popular annual events include the Christmas Eve worship service, ecumenical Lenten services and Tartan Sunday. They have a long tradition of leading a community Vacation Bible School, which hosts up to 100 children every July. The congregation has also invited the community to participate in many events, such as church suppers, bake sales, fashion and variety shows, goods and services auc-

tions, and guest choirs.

The hallmark of Ian's ministry has been his dedication to preaching the word of Jesus Christ. Over 35 years, we have enjoyed many inspirational sermons that motivated us to learn and serve. Ian has become known in Glengarry as a minister who is a Good Shepherd to his flock, a fisher of people, and a person to call upon in both times of joy and times of crisis. He helped our community weather many storms, including the Covid pandemic. A moment of great pride for Ian was being invited to say a prayer at the official opening of the Glengarry Highland Games in Maxville last August. Dressed in his MacMillan tartan kilt, it was a fitting highlight of his final year in full-time ministry.

Retirement celebrations were held in both churches on his last weekends of preaching. In Martintown, the congregation gathered for an old-fashioned homemade luncheon featuring Ian's favourite dishes. Tributes presented included an album with pictures of the entire church family, and a beautiful bagpipe composition written by Rory Blackadder. After this poignant musical tribute, there wasn't a dry eye in the church.

The Lancaster congregation hosted a Saturday afternoon *ceilidh*, inviting the community to a musical tribute to Ian's Scottish heritage and his roots in Cape Breton and Glengarry. It featured



The Rev. Ian Cameron MacMillan at the Glengarry Highland Games in August 2023.

singing, dancing, fiddles and bagpipes, followed by a Scottish tea. After Ian delivered his final message from the pulpit on Sunday, the festivities continued with a catered luncheon with gifts and special tributes.

We wish Ian a blessed and well-deserved retirement. He plans to spend more time enjoying family life with his wife, Jane, and daughter, Emily. You may also find him enjoying nature walks on the Summerstown Trails, feeding

the birds, or playing his favourite sport: curling. We know he will always be sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. A heartfelt thank you goes to Ian for 35 years of dedicated leadership and service to our congregations and to our community!

The two-point charge of St. Andrew's Martintown and St. Andrew's Lancaster are now seeking an inspiring leader. For more information, please see the vacancy posting listed at presbyterian.ca.

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PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Churches Responding Together

By Guy Smagge,
PWS&D Director

It is by working together that we can achieve results beyond our imagination. When it comes to responding to disasters, to tackling inequality and poverty, and especially when it comes to addressing the climate crisis, our church's collaboration with other churches makes a world of difference.

Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) alliances allow us to both multiply our financial impact and to broaden our reach in the world significantly.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

As a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWS&D can access funding from the Canadian government, sometimes without having to contribute any of our own funds. Funds are also accessed from a general account at the Foodgrains Bank that matches our contributions. Matching funds allow resources to stretch farther and have greater impact in communities.

As such, last year PWS&D contributed \$1.3 million from its donations to support projects of a total value of \$8.9 million after matching funds and government funds were added.

There are times when PWS&D wants to support a partner with a much larger project budget than what our resources alone would be able to support. In these cases, we reach out to other member churches at the Foodgrains Bank

and ask them if they would like to support the partner's efforts. With their support we can fund a larger project. This type of collaboration allows members the opportunity to respond in countries or places where they might not have direct partners to respond with.

For example, when PWS&D did food assistance projects in Afghanistan last year, we asked other Foodgrains Bank members if they wanted to contribute to the response, enabling them to reach out in an area where they didn't have their own partner to work with. PWS&D contributed \$33,773 of our own funds and received \$177,317 from other member churches. Those funds were matched with \$844,360 from the Canadian government for a total project budget of \$1,055,452.

There are also times when PWS&D is called to respond in a place where we don't have direct partnerships. We then rely on our ecumenical networks to reach out. (Read more about how we do that in "Strength in Joint Responses" in this issue.) Through the Foodgrains Bank we have supported responses in Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Bangladesh, to name a few. Again, resources are usually matched, increasing the impact of our response.

ACT Alliance

The ACT Alliance is a global faith-based coalition organized in national and regional forums



In Ethiopia, where PWS&D does not have direct partnerships, we are able to respond to urgent food needs through ecumenical partnerships.

operating in more than 120 countries. As one of the more than 140 members, we work together on humanitarian aid, gender and climate justice, migration and displacement, and peace and security to support local communities. ACT Alliance has become the largest coalition of Protestant and Orthodox faith-based actors working on humanitarian, developmental and advocacy issues.

In Canada, ACT Alliance members have formed a Canada Forum made up of ACT members based in Canada, including the Anglicans, Christian Reformed, United Church, PWS&D and the World Association for Christian

Communication. Together, we join our strengths and resources to do advocacy (recently on behalf of Gaza and Cuba) and to support climate initiatives in Africa through a locally led Climate Fund, which was established two years ago. This has allowed us to jointly fund climate initiatives in four African countries.

Increasing impact

Finally, there are two other coalitions requiring mention here: KAIROS Canada and Cooperation Canada. With KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, we collaborate ecumenically in a Women, Peace and Security initiative that addresses issues of gender-based violence in Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Israel/Palestine and South Sudan. We also collaborate on

climate justice work, such as the promotion of the Loss and Damage Fund to assist poorer countries affected by climate disasters.

At Cooperation Canada, we connect with the broader international development community to build our capacity on anti-racism and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. We also unite our voices to advocate for Canada to contribute its fair share as part of the global aid budget.

PWS&D draws much strength from its ecumenical collaborations and we know that it is by joining together with others that we can all be stronger. In the face of the world's challenges, working together helps bring us closer to the just society that Jesus asked us to build.



In Pakistan, PWS&D operated a three-year project to provide food and livelihoods support for marginalized communities. The project was solely funded by a Government of Canada grant.



A food security project focusing on Indigenous women in Guatemala is managed by PWS&D's partner and receives support from other Canadian Foodgrains Bank members.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Empowering Girls in India



Through community awareness sessions, children, parents and community leaders all learn about the impacts of child marriage.

By Emma Clarke,
PWS&D Communications

In Bihar, India, an alarming 80% of girls are forced into early marriages. Not only does this reduce the likelihood that they will complete school, but it makes young girls—married as early as 12 years old—more susceptible to trafficking for child labour and sexual ex-

ploitation. Bihar region also ranks among the states with the highest rates of domestic violence, with 58% of married women reporting instances of violence.

The Karuna Project at the Duncan Hospital aims to empower and protect girls through raising awareness about their rights among decision-makers in households and villages, and lo-

cal government workers. Since poverty is one of the root causes of neglect for girls' rights, the project also provides livelihood and income-generating opportunities for marginalized families.

“I will be a role model to other girls”

Lilawati Kumari is a 16-year-old from Mudwa village who participates in the Karuna Project. In one of the classes she attended, she learned about the negative effects of early marriage, as well as how to advocate against it. Lilawati decided that she would raise her voice against child marriage—both in the community and in her home.

Lilawati's two sisters had both been married at a young age, and her parents were planning the same for her. However, she told her parents that she had other plans: “I want to study and achieve my dreams. I do not want to waste my life like this.”

Lilawati reasoned with them that if they did not stop the marriage, she would call the child helpline and make a report. Despite her stunned parents' continued efforts to persuade her, Lilawati stood her ground and eventually convinced them to stop trying to force the marriage.

Through continued conversations with her parents about child marriage, the laws against it and its effects on girls, Lilawati helped them understand the negative impact of early marriage on a child's life, and on the broader society. They are now supportive of Lilawati as she pursues her education.

Lilawati is excited to bring what she's learned about the rights of women and girls to others in her community. She said, “I have taken the first step in my family and will be a role model to other girls so that they can take a stand against child marriage in their homes and work towards fulfilling their dreams. I will encourage



Lilawati uses what she's learned to speak out against child marriage in the community and in her home.

them to pursue higher studies. Seeing me shine, many people in the community will allow their girls to study and stop early marriages. I thank the Karuna Project for the valuable lessons they are teaching us through these adolescent classes.”

PWS&D is pleased that Dr. Rubel, who leads this project at the Duncan Hospital, will be a global partner representative on the PWS&D Committee for 2024–2025. If you are interested in having Dr. Rubel speak at your church while she is in Canada, contact Stephanie Chunoo at schunoo@presbyterian.ca.

Strength in Joint Responses



PWS&D's ecumenical collaborations allowed us to respond quickly to the needs of people affected by the conflict in Ukraine. PHOTO CREDIT: HUNGARIAN INTERCHURCH AID

By Stephanie Chunoo,
PWS&D Communications

Amid the increasing number of humanitarian crises, you might wonder how PWS&D effectively and immediately responds. Together, with your support and through ecumenical collaboration, we can make a significant impact.

Ecumenical collaborations are partnerships among numerous religious organizations and faith-based groups. These collaborations provide the opportunity for PWS&D to react quickly to conflict or disaster in areas of the world where we don't already have direct partnerships, or our partners are not able to respond.

PWS&D collaborates with well-respected internationally focused organizations, faith-based and secular, to address many of the structural issues affecting communities around the world. These organizations include Canadian Foodgrains Bank, ACT Alliance and KAIROS.

For example, in conflict zones, where providing direct humanitarian assistance may be challenging, our ecumenical partners, through their existing local networks, can reach those communities. These collaborations also allow donations to stretch further, have a greater impact and improve the lives of more people. PWS&D's membership in Canadian Foodgrains Bank also provides access to alternate funding sources, including Government of Canada funds and financial support from other Foodgrains Bank members.

Ecumenical collaborations at work: Gaza

As the war in Gaza continues to cause widespread famine conditions, casualties and injuries to



In Gaza, PWS&D can support the delivery of essential health services through our ecumenical partner's local network. PHOTO CREDIT: DSPR/MAHMUD ELBARAGETHI

tens of thousands, the demand for humanitarian aid only increases. PWS&D, who has supported ecumenical work in Palestine for decades, does not have direct partnerships in Gaza, but has been called to respond. Through our ecumenical membership in ACT Alliance, PWS&D can support humanitarian efforts through the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), an ACT member, in Gaza. DSPR is a department of the Middle East Council of Churches.

Despite ongoing challenges, DSPR has continued to provide as much support as they are able with their local staff and offices in Gaza. For example, in Rafah, DSPR continues to provide primary health and dental care. Services provided include primary health care, dental care, medical laboratory services, pharmacy, mother

and child and health support, psychosocial support, and essential medicines and hygiene kits.

Additionally, families have received cash transfers to promptly address urgent needs, including purchasing water, food and other essentials. These services are critical right now. The plan remains to scale up the response significantly when humanitarian assistance can flow more freely into Gaza.

Ukraine

Since 2022, the conflict in Ukraine has led to significant loss of life, injuries and the mass displacement of civilians both within the country and into neighbouring regions. Infrastructure and housing have been extensively damaged, forcing many people to flee their homes.

PWS&D continues to respond

to those humanitarian needs by supporting projects being carried out through ecumenical partnerships at ACT Alliance and Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Through ACT Alliance, households have received emergency food assistance and emergency non-food items, including hygiene kits and medical supplies. Canadian Foodgrains Bank partners have provided cash assistance to those most in need, allowing them to buy food and other essential items.

These responses are just a few examples of how vital ecumenical collaborations are and how effective our responses can be when we combine resources to work together. In recent months, ecumenical relationships have also enabled therapeutic nutrition for malnourished children in Sudan, food and water and sanitation support for people displaced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and food assistance in Syria, to name just a small sample.

With the help of our partners and your faithful support, PWS&D is not only able to respond immediately but also expand our reach and impact. Our ability to work for a compassionate and just world is made more possible because of ecumenical relationships.

To support this work, please visit WeRespond.ca/donate.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Growing Projects Ripe for Collaboration



A team of volunteers from the St. Paul's Presbyterian Church & Community Growing Project excited about working to end hunger. PHOTO CREDIT: SETH LAW

By Emma Clarke,
PWS&D Communications

A “growing project” is a local initiative with an impact that goes beyond the individual community. Across Canada, growing projects are bringing people together to support those in need around the world.

Growing projects encourage groups of farmers and farm supporters to plant, tend and harvest a crop, sell it on the Canadian market, and then donate the proceeds toward work to end hunger through Canadian Foodgrains Bank and its members. Many farmers donate a portion of their field, but another significant donation is the use of equipment and precious time during harvest season.

“For a small community, in a rural area, this is a way that we can make a difference,” shared the Rev. Sandra Franklin-Law, minister at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Eckville, Alta. Since its founding in 1983, the St. Paul's Presbyterian Church & Community Growing Project has been successful, sending in over \$370,000 in the last 10 years alone to support those in need.

“When we can put in a field of crop, and send in a pretty hefty amount, it makes it feel like we're part of the bigger church.”

Even those who are not farmers get involved: “I contribute by feeding the farmers and running information sessions to make sure that both the congregants of Eckville and the broader community understand what we're doing,” comments Sandra's daughter, Abigail.

Despite worries about things like money to fund the project or what the weather will be like each year—sometimes growing projects are harvested in snow—Sandra reflected, “The triumphs outweigh the struggles completely. At the end of the day, everybody rises above to get the work done. You stand there really proud in the field and think ‘this is a wow moment’.”

The dream for the growing project in Eckville is that it would be able to expand. “People sometimes put us on their mission for a year, and that's it.” Not only would consistent funding commitments help with this dream of growth, but there is also a practical need: “We actually need people to help,” said Seth, the pro-

ject's photographer.

The Presbyterian Church's involvement with the Grow Hope project in Saskatchewan and the Danforth Grow Hope project in Toronto are the first examples of a new trend. Jo Szostak from Saskatchewan explained, “At the Synod meeting in October 2022, when Guy talked about Grow Hope, it lit a spark in me. I was astonished at the 828 million people who are hungry in the world, and it was important to be able to participate in addressing the world hunger crisis.”

Jo's curiosity led to the Synod of Saskatchewan becoming involved in a Grow Hope project that had previously had only Mennonite, Roman Catholic and Baptist involvement. Jo now organizes the Synod's involvement in the initiative.

Grow Hope projects aim to build bridges between urban and rural communities, offering opportunities for urban churches to donate funds to support rural growing projects. Jo explains, “There are a number of different types of growing projects but this one is unique in that it involves both rural and urban folks working together.”

Reflecting on the government matching available through Canadian Foodgrains Bank that allows funds raised to go even further, Jo exudes, “It is really exciting to be part of an initiative that can have such a significant impact.”

Jo is already looking forward to the next harvest, which she expects will surpass that of 2023, when they raised over \$12,000. “So far in 2024, the Synod has received over \$6,000 to assist farmers with inputs—that's enough to fund more than 17 acres of crop.”

Just like her peers in the Eckville project, Jo would like to see more people—specifically Pres-

byterians—involved. “We haven't yet received a donation of acres from farmers through the Presbyterian church, so that's definitely a challenge. We have shared in the acres donated through other denominations. We are young yet, and as we grow, I hope it will become possible to involve farmers in the southern part of the province as well.”

“It is indeed heartwarming to know that we can help ease the hunger of those in the world who have very little food to eat.”

To learn how your congregation can get involved in a growing or Grow Hope project, contact us at pswd@presbyterian.ca.



Growing projects, like the one in Eckville, Alta., are making a difference around the world. PHOTO CREDIT: SETH LAW

INTERNATIONAL

Pioneering Postgraduate Excellence in Malawi

By Gary Brough, Capacity Development Facilitator at the CCAP General Assembly

Malawi's population is increasing quickly, and while cities are growing, much of the population is rural. The beating heart of the church in Malawi remains in villages and remote communities where climate change is threatening the patterns of everyday life, and the pace of development remains cripplingly slow.

Daily life is changing, and the church is rapidly growing. The challenge is to meet this growth and pace of change with clergy trained and equipped for the realities of 21st-century ministry in

the Malawi context. Zomba Theological University (ZTU) is leading the way in developing theological education with the depth and quality needed.

To meet Malawi's burgeoning demand for advanced theological education, ZTU launched its Master of Theology program in February 2022. This initiative has already seen an impressive swell in enrolment, with 56 students pursuing their Master's. But ZTU's ambitions don't stop there. With Ph.D. programs on the horizon, expected to commence in 2025, the university anticipates even greater numbers joining its postgraduate ranks.

These advanced programs are

crafted with a visionary purpose: to nurture future leaders who will steer church and nation through the complexities of modern times. Recognizing Malawi's exceptional human capital, ZTU aims to harness and optimize this potential through rigorous and relevant theological education.

Ruth Pemba, aged 30, is currently undertaking her Master's to advance her work with Scripture Union Malawi, developing Bible reading guides and supporting over 2,000 children's Bible clubs. She explained: "The knowledge I will get here will enable me to help produce resources that are relevant to our context—Bible resources that resonated with Ma-



Construction at Zomba Theological University in Malawi.

lawians' experiences."

Until now, the university has been squeezing postgraduate activities into spaces originally designed for its long-standing undergraduate courses. This affects learners. "We need good classrooms and accommodation," Ruth said. "It will save time and help us focus. Currently, other activities interrupt and delay our studies."

However, this is changing with the ambitious vision of developing a custom-built centre for post-

graduate education. ZTU plans to repurpose underused buildings to create a vibrant postgraduate facility. This centre will feature digitally equipped classrooms, study facilities and accommodation for intensive study sessions for students travelling from across Malawi. The goal is to cultivate an environment that fosters collegiality, creativity and collaboration, ultimately generating transformative ideas and leaders who can make a significant impact.

ZTU has already secured funding to help make this vision a reality. God's provision through existing partners will cover most of the building work. ZTU is now calling on friends of Malawi and champions of theological education to support the furnishing and equipping of these facilities.

To support ZTU, please contact Lily Ko at Lko@presbyterian.ca or donate online by visiting presbyterian.ca/donate-to-im and clicking "Zomba Theological University" from the gift designation drop-down menu.

Zomba Theological University is a long-standing partner of the PCC. The Rev. Dr. Blair Bertrand, Malawi Liaison, assists ZTU with the development of curricula and policies of the university, develops the ZTU library, and encourages research and academic exchanges.



Dorica Nkhata is supported by the PCC in her calling to become a doctor in Malawi.

By Beth McCutcheon, International Ministries

"As you can imagine, this is a surreal moment for me. I am running short of words to describe the feeling. It has been a very long journey. But you believed and walked with me all the way. I shall always be grateful. You have made my dream come true. Thank you!"

Dorica Nkhata's vocational journey began in childhood. In her home village in Malawi, the nearest health facility was close to 30 km away. Seeing the challenges of accessing health care, especially the difficulty experienced by the poor population in rural areas, fuelled her desire to become a doctor.

Dorica did not have the opportunity to go to medical school right after secondary school. Instead,

Supporting a New Doctor in Malawi

she had an opportunity to go to a mission nursing school where she trained for three years to become a nurse. As a nurse, she was posted to Embangweni Mission Hospital, located in a rural area. There, after seeing the shortage of doctors in the mission hospitals, her ambition to become a doctor grew even stronger. In 2017, Dorica was selected to study in the Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery (BMBS) degree program at the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (formerly University of Malawi, College of Medicine).

The Synod of Livingstonia asked The Presbyterian Church in Canada to provide financial support to Dorica Nkhata, a Presbyterian member from Livingstonia Synod, for her study of medicine at the Malawi College of Medicine, situated in Blantyre. And the PCC was pleased to be able to respond positively to the request from the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), and an agreement was signed in 2017. The next stage in Dorica's vocational journey was about to begin.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Knox Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, Ont., have accompanied Dorica since 2017, supporting her in her calling to be a medical doctor. Through the Leadership Development Program of International

Ministries, and with major funding coming from Knox Church, Dorica has been able to see her dream come true.

At the end of 2023, Dorica completed the six-year Program of Medicine and Surgery, and in March 2024 she graduated from university. She is now a qualified

doctor beginning an 18-month internship at Mzuzu Central Hospital, working under experienced practitioners and specialists. Knox Church, through the Leadership Development Program, will continue to support Dorica through her internship.

Following her internship, Dorica will be licensed and admitted to the

medical profession by the Medical Council of Malawi (MCM) and begin practicing medicine in Malawi. The terms of the agreement signed in August 2017 include the requirement that Dorica provide full-time Doctor of Medicine services for five years at the hospital location determined by the Health Department, Synod of Livingstonia.

International Ministries is the department of the Life and Mission Agency responsible for the relationships between the PCC and global partner churches and agencies. Through Presbyterians Sharing, we offer support to build the capacity of global partners. One way we do this is by funding education, primarily in the areas of theology and medicine, but also in other areas when needs are identified by our partners.

Previous Leadership Development Grant recipients include, among others:

- **The Rev. Dr. Takuze Chitsulo**, now Vice-chancellor of Zomba Theological University in Malawi. Chitsulo received support for doctoral studies, graduating in 2016 with a Th.D. from the University of KwaZulu in South Africa.
- **The Rev. Dr. Mwawi Chilongozi**, Secretary General of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), received grants from the Leadership Development Program toward her post-graduate diploma in Theology at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, from which she graduated in March 2017. She is the first woman to serve as General Secretary of the CCAP.
- **The Rev. Lyton Kilowe** of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod, received support for a Master of Business Administration from Malawi Institute of Management. He has recently been appointed to head the CCAP Blantyre Synod Internal Audit Department as well as been asked to lecture at the University of Blantyre Synod.
- This fall, **the Rev. Dr. Ary Fernández Albán** became Rector of Seminario Evangelico de Teologia (SET) in Matanzas, Cuba. For his Th.D. program at the Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto, he was supported by Knox College along with grants from the Leadership Development Program.

To learn more about the Leadership Development Program, contact Lily Ko at lko@presbyterian.ca.

WOMEN

WMS Celebrates 110 Years of Mission and Fellowship

By Sarah Kim, Executive Director, Women's Missionary Society

How does an organization with so much history, like the Women's Missionary Society (WMS), celebrate 110 years? Whatever the program or however the celebration, most certainly it would be difficult, if not impossible, to do full justice in recognizing the many years of mission history. The most important thing is to give thanks to God for the gifts of service, purpose and God's grace for all those years!

The WMS celebrated its 110th anniversary May 5–8, 2024. We not only looked back on our rich history, but also very intentionally and, perhaps painstakingly, looked at our present, before brainstorming about the future with gratitude and humility. Together, the WMS attempted to be honest about the current reality while dreaming about the future.

With much excitement, about 70 members from across Canada came together at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ont., just outside Toronto. Most were long-time, dedicated members who remained connected with the WMS, even throughout the COVID-19 years. With a thirst for fellowship, they greeted each other with joy and enthusiasm. They came with a desire to connect with others who have a similar vision for mission and faith. Seeking God's presence in their midst, these determined WMS members gathered, despite the conditions of aging, some using walkers and canes, others joining virtually, all out of love for the WMS and gratitude for a faithful God!

The program included worship and communion led by the Rev. Mary Fontaine, Moderator of the 2023 General Assembly, who spoke about the Spirit of God. Later, the celebrations included a fun and entertaining presentation of the WMS history, prepared by members of the Southwestern Ontario Synodical.

Dr. Priya John, Director of the

Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI), our partner organization in India, was our special speaker. The motto of the CMAI is "promoting a just and healthy society," and from her presentation it's clear that the CMAI is working hard to promote this message as Christian health-care workers living and working in a Hindu country. Afterwards, Dr. John talked about the late Dr. Pauline Brown, PCC missionary and WMS member, and the work Pauline did in India, which spanned about 70 years. For her many years serving the people of India as a health-care worker, the CMAI had given Pauline a lifetime recognition award.

On Monday evening, Inuit singer Susan Aglukark gave a beautiful and moving performance. She also gave a touching testimonial about her experience with the generational trauma of residential schools. She shared about life as an Inuit person in northern Canada who is also a Christian, but not a churchgoer. She is a tiny woman with a big voice!

Tuesday morning began with worship and the message given by the Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon. Dorcas challenged everyone to think not only about the WMS history but also about how to go forward. Worship ended with the hymn "One More Step along the Road I Go," which has meaningful words for WMS members who are seeking to know where God is leading.

After worship, Dorcas led a panel discussion on the topic of women and mission. The panelists were the Rev. Marion Barclay (former missionary to Ghana, AMS), the Rev. Mary Fontaine (Indigenous, Hummingbird Ministries) and Cathy Reid (Malawi mission, WMS). Each person shared about how she became involved in mission, from a woman's perspective. They demonstrated how they were pioneers at a time when women in the church were not given the same level of recognition as men. We give thanks for these women who, knowingly or unknowingly, brought about positive changes to how mission and ministry is done.



The WMS group photo for the 110th anniversary.

On Tuesday afternoon, two guest speakers gave a presentation on the situation in Ukraine. Elena Risnyk, a refugee from Ukraine and whose husband is a minister of the Reformed Church of Ukraine, talked about her plight as a Ukrainian woman who fled to Canada with her daughter as soon as the war started, leaving behind her husband. Thankfully, her husband was recently able to join the family in Canada. Her story was one of strength, perseverance and faith. Our second guest speaker, Thea van Dixhoorn, shared about the Christian church in Ukraine and Reformed International Theological Education. In a country where the Ukrainian Orthodox church is the dominant majority, the protestant churches struggle to keep the reformed tradition alive.

The day ended with closing worship, which included a short

hymn-sing. As our accompanist Sunju Koh commented, the WMS can sing! Later, Cathy Reid, WMS president, reflected on what the WMS means to her.

After the celebrations ended, the WMS Council met and considered the way forward. Anniversaries can be a time when the past is reflected upon but they can also be a turning point. It was acknowledged that the reality for the WMS is a declining and aging membership. The discussions concluded that council members want to continue forward, keeping the WMS purpose, with renewed energy to be the "hands and feet of Jesus Christ" for as many more years as God allows. There was a recognition that we need to be the "phoenix that rises from the ashes"; that we are no longer threatened with resurrection but that we now rejoice with resurrection!



Cathy Reid, WMS President, cuts cake with former presidents Joan Smith and Janet Brewer, and former missionary Eleanor Crabtree.

Is the future of the WMS bright and promising? Despite the very positive anniversary celebration and council meeting, this is still unclear. But of one thing we are certain—the WMS will go forth with the Spirit of God, singing, "one more step along the road I go," for as long as God gives us life!

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STEWARDSHIP

Reflections on Giving

By Karen Plater,
Stewardship & Planned Giving

What does the Bible teach us about how much a person should give to be a generous disciple of Christ? Should we tithe (give 10% of income)? If so, should the tithe be based on net or gross income? Before taxes or after taxes? Should we take all sources of income into account? Do we include inheritances? What if someone is on a fixed income and expenses keep growing? These are questions I'm often asked when talking about stewardship.

There isn't one correct answer, except maybe "it depends." However, scripture does give us some clues about how to give that, with prayer and reflection, can guide our discernment.

There are many stories of different ways of giving in the Bible. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul writes of sacrificial giving: the churches of Macedonia overflowed in generosity even though they were going through "severe ordeal of affliction" and "extreme poverty." Deuteronomy and Leviticus include stories of offerings given to celebrate festivals, special times of year and milestones. Tithes were given from herb, grain, fruit and vegetable harvests, seeds kept for storage, and herds and flocks taken to market. Both the Old and New Testament share how gifts of land, precious stones and oils were used in God's mission.

What is considered generous today?

Here are three scripture passages I like to consider. The first is Matthew 23:23: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others." This passage reminds me that what I give is important, but so too is what I do with all the rest of my resources, time and money. If I am generous to the church, but take advantage of the vulnerable, oppress people and are mean-spirited, I'm miss-

ing the point.

In 2 Corinthians 9:7, we are told to "give as you have made up your mind." This passage encourages me to be intentional, thoughtful and prayerful about what I give and that my attitude matters, as we are to give "not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." I can remember times when I have given—and been given—a gift reluctantly versus cheerfully. It makes a difference.

Finally, even as Paul praises sacrificial giving in 2 Corinthians 8, he also writes "that if the heart is in it, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have." In other words, God isn't calling us to keep up with our neighbours. God calls us to look at what we have been given and decide what we can give back.

If we are barely meeting our basic needs or falling behind in our expenses each month, we will rightly give less than at other times. We can give financially when we have the ability. There are other ways to give now: time, skills, prayer and encouragement.

Reviewing our expenses and determining which costs are "wants" and which are "needs" can help us see what we have to cover our basic needs (including building up savings), and decide how much we can give to God, and then use what is left to cover non-essentials. The result: we are intentionally deciding what we will give to God, considering all we have been given.

It is important for us to think broadly when we consider giving. Sometimes we can give out of our assets in addition to, or instead of, our regular income. Some people have found that they can give more than they thought by giving gifts of securities. (When securities are given as a gift-in-kind, rather than giving the cash from selling the stocks, the donor doesn't have to pay any capital gains taxes.) Others have given when they have received an inheritance or sold a piece of property. Some include a bequest to a charity in their will, allowing them

to give a gift when they no longer need the income to live. The taxes saved by giving a gift in your will, means people can be generous to their congregation and/or favourite charities and still leave an inheritance for family and friends.

People tell me, again and again, that once they have given an offering, they rarely feel that they don't have enough. Even when hard times come, they are surprised that they can get through it. They might change their spending patterns, find money in unexpected places or be surprised by the generosity and help received from friends, family and even strangers.

During the pandemic, I recall feeling scared that that churches might collapse under the strain



of forced closures and that we'd never worship in public again. Many people feared that mission and ministry programs across the country were going to close. However, congregations pivoted and by the tenacity and generosity of congregational members, offerings were received. The government offered grants and loans that helped businesses—and churches—faced with lower incomes

continue to pay wages to staff. Many communities rallied to support people in different ways. They were challenging times, but the church didn't die, and in fact, new life sprung from the challenges.

God continually surprises and inspires us. We are enough. We have enough. We can cheerfully give out of what we have been given. And that is what is acceptable to God.

WEEKLY PERCENTAGE GIVING GUIDE							
Income		Weekly giving					
Annual	Weekly	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%	15%
12,000	231	5	9	14	18	23	35
16,000	308	6	12	18	25	31	46
20,000	385	8	15	23	31	39	58
25,000	481	10	19	29	38	48	72
30,000	577	12	23	35	46	58	87
35,000	673	13	27	40	54	67	101
40,000	769	15	31	46	62	77	115
45,000	865	17	35	52	69	87	130
50,000	962	19	38	58	77	96	144
60,000	1,154	23	46	69	92	115	173
75,000	1,442	29	58	87	115	144	216
100,000	1,923	38	77	115	154	192	288
125,000	2,404	48	96	144	192	240	361
150,000	2,885	58	115	173	231	289	433

This chart shows weekly offerings as a percentage of income, one way to discern how much to give to the church. For those giving monthly, simply multiply the weekly giving in this chart by 4.33 (there are 4.33 weeks in a month).



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BOOK REVIEW

A Review of *From Sword to Pen*

By Maj. the Rev. Dr. Tom Hamilton. Tom serves in team-ministry with the Rev. Paula Hamilton at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I. He is also a military historian with the Directorate of History and Heritage and is military chaplain to the Prince Edward Island Regiment.

From Sword to Pen: the Life and Works of the Honourable Cyrus J. MacMillan (1878–1953)
Written by Kathleen M. MacMillan
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
Penumbra Press, 2023

Can you think of a polymath within The Presbyterian Church in Canada? A polymath is synonymous with “universal genius”: someone who has a voracious intellect, whose knowledge embraces various studies, and who has contributed meaningful accomplishments across multiple disciplines.

There have been Presbyterians from Prince Edward Island who have achieved noteworthy recognition in singular, dual and even multiple occupations: Lucy Maud Montgomery (author); Sir Andrew Macphail (doctor, military officer, professor, author); and the Honourable Angus MacLean (decorated RCAF Officer, Federal Cabinet Minister, Premier of P.E.I.). But there was another Island Presbyterian whose life's work embodied most of these accomplishments and even more.

The Honourable Cyrus John MacMillan, Ph.D., was an author, professor, academic dean, commissioner on three Royal Commissions, Parliamentarian,

Federal Cabinet Minister, soldier, newspaper editor and ardent advocate for the PCC. MacMillan had significant influence at the national and provincial (P.E.I.) levels; he interacted with prime ministers, presidents, premiers and members of the Royal Family.

In her book *From Sword to Pen: the Life and Works of the Honourable Cyrus J. MacMillan (1878–1953)*, Kathleen M. MacMillan illuminates the extraordinary accomplishments of a person who might be described as a Canadian Presbyterian polymath. The author's monograph is grounded in the personal papers of Cyrus MacMillan that are held in the McGill University Archives. Particular attention is given to MacMillan's own diary, and to the letters he sent to his wife, Margaret (Eaton Brower), during the first world war. The author is a distant relative to MacMillan (a first cousin four times removed) and weaves into her narrative interesting details connected to the MacMillan lineage. Most of all, she brings to life a Presbyterian leader who deserves to be liberated from oblivion.

Cyrus John MacMillan was born in Wood Islands, P.E.I., on September 12, 1877 (conflicting sources list his birth year between 1877 and 1883). MacMillan's education began in Wood Islands in the one room schoolhouse that still exists. In fact, the inspiration for this book came from the author reading a faded copy of MacMillan's obituary on a wall of the old schoolhouse. MacMillan's education continued at Prince of Wales College in Charlottetown, McGill Uni-

versity (BA 1900; MA 1903) and Harvard University (Ph.D. 1909). MacMillan's doctoral dissertation, “The Folksongs of Canada,” and his subsequent writings (including *Canadian Wonder Tales*, 1918; *McGill and Its Story*, 1821–1921, 1921; and *Canadian Fairy Tales*, 1922) exemplified his love of Canadian folklore, history and poetry. In 1909, MacMillan began a distinguished teaching career at McGill University that started as an associate professor and extended for 38 years (chair of the English department, 1923; Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 1940).

During the first world war, MacMillan enrolled as an artillery officer and served with the 7th Siege Battery and 6th Siege Battery in Canada, England and France. MacMillan saw action during the attack at Vimy Ridge (Battle of Arras), and in the Battle of Hill 70.

An ardent defender of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, MacMillan spoke against church union and was a pivotal voice on the international stage, successfully arguing on the floor of the General Assembly in Edinburgh, Scotland, for the Church of Scotland to recognize the continuing Presbyterians as The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

MacMillan served in public office on three Royal Commissions (Duncan Commission, 1926; Royal Commission on Eastern Fisheries, 1928; and Royal Commission on Education in Prince Edward Island, 1928). He also served briefly as Federal Minister of Fisheries (1930). He suffered electoral

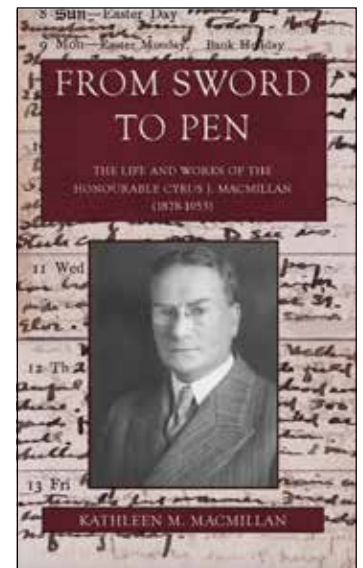
defeat in 1930 but was elected as one of two Parliamentarians for the seat of Queens (P.E.I.) and he served one term (he was defeated in 1945). In office he was Parliamentary assistant to Charles Power, Minister of Defence for Air during the second world war.

In 1947, MacMillan retired from teaching at McGill University. He and Margaret settled full-time into their beloved Arden Cottage, Fortune, P.E.I. MacMillan passed away suddenly on June 29, 1953.

Kathleen MacMillan's monograph is rich in detail and filled with numerous first-person accounts from Cyrus's diary, personal correspondence and writings. Her narrative follows a general chronology of MacMillan's life, but frequently moves between different decades to line up with her chapter themes. At times, this approach can feel slightly awkward and disjointed, and there are a few military, historical inaccuracies.

The author's description of MacMillan's literary writings and publications is exceptionally strong. In the first half of the twentieth century, MacMillan was one of Canada's foremost authors of Canadian folklore that encompassed English-Canadian, French-Canadian and Indigenous traditions. The author provides sensitivity and perspective to this complex subject.

In penning an in-depth overview of the life of MacMillan, the author has also provided the means for ongoing reflection, and study—particularly given the unique status of MacMillan's political, academic and religious



influence. For instance, how did the numerous social interactions of MacMillan (and Margaret) with notable dignitaries influence government or denominational policy? As well, during the church union crisis, did MacMillan's unique voice and talents directly impact congregational voting in favour of the continuance of The Presbyterian Church in Canada? Also, as Parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Defence for Air during the second world war, did MacMillan's experience and expertise influence military policy?

Kathleen MacMillan's monograph admirably illuminates the life of Cyrus MacMillan. It represents an important place in Canadian Presbyterian historiography and will be of interest to a wide range of readers. Kathleen MacMillan has elevated Cyrus MacMillan from relative obscurity to a position of someone who is worthy of recognition and should perhaps even be considered a Canadian Presbyterian polymath.

A Review of *Becoming Lily Kaltyk*

Becoming Lily Kaltyk
A novel by Dorothy Brown Henderson

Lily Kaltyk is a late bloomer. Nearly forty, she still lives at home with her Ukrainian-Canadian mother in the small town of Emerson, Manitoba, where she has spent her whole life. She doesn't have a driver's license, or a romantic partner, or the career as an architect she once secretly imagined. Instead, she's a supply teacher and plays the organ at the local Presbyterian

church—a job that excited her as a teenager but has lost its lustre over time. She feels trapped, lonely and unfulfilled.

The new minister at the Presbyterian church turns out to be the unlikely catalyst for change, but the opportunities in a new life bring stresses and challenges that push Lily out of her comfort zone. In a series of rapid plot twists, the story confronts her with even more choices and tantalizing possibilities.

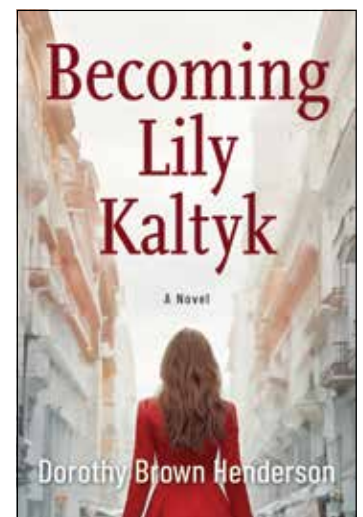
Other characters, including an eccentric next-door neighbour,

a troubled teenager and even a ghost bring their own touch of drama and mystery, but in a less developed way. As the title suggests, this story of self-discovery is ultimately about Lily. Seeing her timidity and fearfulness gradually give way to a new kind of confidence is satisfying, especially for those who identify with her emotional and spiritual struggles. The process of trying on new identities unfolds at breakneck speed, and some feel more plausible than others, but a sympathetic reader can't help but cheer for

Lily as, for the first time in her life, she seeks to tune out the static of other people's expectations and assumptions and listen for her own inner wisdom.

Readers looking for neatly tied-off endings and clear decisions will have to be content with uncertainty. But perhaps that's the point. *Becoming* is a process, not a destination. In the end, we don't know what's next for Lily. But it is fun to imagine.

To order a copy of the book, email Dorothy at dorothybrownhenderson@gmail.com.



REFLECTIONS

College and Cotton

*By the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries,
Principal, The Presbyterian College
in Montreal, Que.*

The title of this piece may generate quizzical expressions. What can these two have to do with each other—college and cotton? Particularly if we are talking about The Presbyterian College, which is a long way from cotton fields and cotton production.

It doesn't take much digging, though, to find a link between these two, which comes by way of someone named David Morrice. Morrice was a wealthy industrialist, originally from Scotland, who immigrated to Canada in 1855 and moved to Montreal in 1863. He was eventually among the wealthiest people in Montreal, and perhaps in the country.

Morrice was also a Presbyterian, and, upon arriving in Montreal, became a member of the Coté Street Church. There, he met the Rev. Dr. Donald Harvey MacVicar, pastor of the congregation. The two struck up a meaningful and collaborative relationship, including in relation to a future college in the city.

The story of Morrice the industrialist is too complicated to

fully recount here. Suffice it to say that by the 1860s he had a controlling interest in many cotton and woollen mills in Eastern Canada. Indeed, by the early 1880s, "David Morrice's firm had established itself as the exclusive selling agent for more than 35 textile mills in Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. In addition to monopolizing the distribution and sale of cotton textiles, Morrice was by this time a major shareholder in several textile manufacturing companies across the four provinces." (From "Marriage, Property, and the Law in a Square Mile Family: The Case of Annie Stevenson Anderson vs. David Morrice, 1884–1885" by Peter Gossage and Lisa Moore.)

The Presbyterian College was established in 1865 and Morrice's friend MacVicar served as the first principal, from 1873 to 1902 (a long tenure!). Among other things, MacVicar presided over the construction of a new college building in 1873, and then over a significant expansion of the facility in 1880. That expansion doubled the size of the building, adding a convocation hall, library, dining hall and dorm rooms. And it was all paid for by...David



The Presbyterian College and Presbyterian College Chapel, Montreal, circa 1960s. PHOTO CREDIT: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARCHIVES

Morrice.

The next question concerns the cotton itself: the source of Morrice's wealth. Where did it come from? Cotton exports from the U.S. dropped off almost entirely during the Civil War (1861–1865), during which other global sources of raw cotton were developed. But after the Civil War, U.S. exports exploded, and it is generally understood that the vast majority of cotton imported to Canada after 1865 had its origin in the American South.

Evidently, after the Civil War, the States and cotton producers

had to revise their approach to planting, harvesting and production. The result was a system of sharecropping, which in the end was little different from slavery for many Black individuals and families. A sharecropper was granted a right to farm a piece of land, with a portion of their revenues paid as rent to the landowner. However, the sharecropper also had to purchase seeds, tools, fertilizer and food. In many cases they never made enough money to pay off their debts, so that these former slaves frequently became trapped in lives of indentured servitude.

"The sharecropper and his family's typical day consisted of long hours working the fields. Rain or shine, sick or well, from dusk to dawn, sharecroppers sowed, weeded, picked, and hauled cotton. By the end of the day, the laborers would return home exhausted. The cycle never ended—the next day, the sharecropper started the process all over again." (From the University of Memphis project "Tent City: Stories of Civil Rights in Fayette County, Tennessee.")

We skip forward almost a century to the 1960s. In that decade, The Presbyterian College worked out an exchange by which it traded its original building to McGill University for a piece of property on adjacent University Street (along with a sum of capital). The college's current building sits on that new piece of property while the former building, a part of which still stands on McGill campus, is today called Morrice Hall.

The inescapable conclusion? Some proportion of the current

physical assets of The Presbyterian College (less than a third, probably, but still some meaningful portion) owe their existence and value to the labour of enslaved Black men and women who cleared the forests and wetlands to establish plantations. Also, a portion of assets are owed to the labour of impoverished Black sharecroppers (and also some poor white sharecroppers), who sustained the cotton industry in the post-Civil War era. College and cotton are more intimately entwined than we would wish.

A difficult question that arises here is whether there should be some attempt at restitution to those exploited for our gain, which is also a politically divisive question. Without denying the importance of that question, we can at least realize that today's college lives very much against the grain of those patterns of exploitation, violence and racism.

At the same time, it seems important to simply name and acknowledge this history. There are few institutions that have escaped involvement in histories of violence, racism and exploitation—and The Presbyterian College is no exception. This is our history.

We could put our realization as follows: When we are in a classroom or in the library or in our offices, we inhabit a space made possible by the horrific history of slavery and sharecropping in the cotton industry. That realization should, all by itself, be enough to animate us toward humility, regret, compassion and a longing to faithfully inhabit Christ's kingdom.

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REFLECTIONS

Put Your House in Order

By Larry Fisher, the Gathering Place Presbyterian Church in Port Colborne, Ont.

The Bible study I take part in recently studied Isaiah 38. When I read the words in verse one “put your house in order,” I closed my Bible and thought about those words for the longest time. I thought about my brother dying in 2010 at age 63 and about the responsibilities of being his executor, and the things he might have done to put his “house in order.”

Getting our house in order is something that we all know that we need to do but we are sometimes not sure of the best way of doing it. Getting our house in order begins with a mindset. We must decide that there is some urgency to arranging our affairs and solving lingering issues.

In John 13–17, we see Jesus putting his house in order. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and said, “For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.” Jesus was preparing the disciples for what was coming and stressed their need to love one another in view of his approaching departure.

It’s interesting that in the Bible there are about 500 verses on prayer and 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses that mention money and possessions. Nineteen of the parables Jesus tells are related to money and possessions. Jesus knows money is a touchy topic to people. When our financial perspective is out of balance, other areas of our life suffer.

Families disagree and argue over estates and possessions. Je-

sus said, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (Luke 12:15).

Peace should be made with God, and our worldly affairs so arranged that we can leave this world without distraction or regret. And I believe that part of getting our house in order is having strong family relationships.

Every person should set their house in order. We are all going to die, eventually. Death is an event that demands preparation. This preparation should not be deferred to the dying moment. We do not always get a warning about what will happen to our health or in our life. Scripture tells us that we must not put off things that are important because we are not promised tomorrow. We must be ready.

When my brother died, I was not prepared for the bank to freeze his bank accounts and demand his will be probated. I was not prepared for the automatic withdrawals for his house and car insurance payments to be stopped when there was more than enough money in his accounts. I was not prepared to receive notices that I had 15 days to pay them, by cash or certified cheque, or they would be cancelled. How was I supposed to do this from frozen bank accounts?

I started to put together a checklist of things needed to be known or remembered when settling an estate to help get my house and affairs in order. I put this together for my daughters to make things a bit easier, and I felt I was fulfilling my obligations expected of me in the Bible by get-

ting my house in order. I believe everyone should have a will prepared and make sure they have their affairs in order.

I was surprised to find that the scriptures mention a will, inheritances and how we are to be prepared for our deaths. I believe God wants each of us to “put your house in order.” You might want to start, if you have not already, by putting a checklist together of estate planning items.



PULPIT VACANCIES

To see all pulpit vacancies, visit presbyterian.ca/vacancies

Atlantic Provinces

- Alliston, WellSpring** (full-time minister)
- Belfast & Wood Islands** (full-time minister)
- Halifax, Church of Saint David** (full-time minister)
- St. John's, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)
- Sydney Mines, St. Andrew's and North Sydney, St. Giles, N.S.** (full-time minister)

Quebec & Eastern Ontario

- Almonte, Community** (full-time minister)
- Beaconsfield, Briarwood** (full- or part-time minister)
- Inverness, Que.** (full-time ecumenical shared ministry)
- Pembroke, First** (part-time or stated supply minister)
- St. Lambert, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)

Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

- Alliston, Knox & Mansfield, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)
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- Brampton, St. Andrew's** (full-time lead minister)
- Guelph, Kortright** (full-time minister)
- Harriston, Knox-Calvin** (50%-time minister)
- Keswick, Keswick** (full-time minister)
- Lancaster, St. Andrew's & Martintown, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)

- Lindsay, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)
- Madoc, St. Peter's** (full-time minister)
- Milton, Boston** (full-time minister)
- South Monaghan, Centreville Harmony** (80%-time minister)
- Toronto, Ghanaian** (interim minister—contract)
- Toronto, Leaside** (full-time senior minister)
- Toronto, Mimico** (full-time minister)
- Toronto, St. Andrew's** (full-time associate minister)
- Toronto, Trinity York Mills** (full-time minister)
- Toronto, York Memorial** (half-time minister)
- Tweed, St. Andrew's** (part-time minister)
- Vaughan, Vaughan Community** (full-time youth minister)

Southwestern Ontario

- Ailsa Craig, Beechwood** (part-time minister)
- Arthur, St. Andrew's and St. Andrew's, Gordonville** (full-time minister)
- Burlington, St. Paul's** (2/3-time minister)
- Dutton, Knox-St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)
- Hamilton, Central** (full-time minister)
- Hamilton, Trinity** (full-time minister)
- Jarvis, Knox** (full-time minister)

- London, Trinity Community** (half-time stated supply minister)
- London, Korean Christian** (part-time children and youth minister)
- Lucknow & South Kinloss** (full-time minister)
- Mosa, Burns** (full-time minister)
- Petrolia, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)
- Presbytery of Essex-Kent – General Presbyter** (part-time minister)
- Stratford, Knox** (full-time minister)
- Tillsonburg, St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)

Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario

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Alberta & the Northwest

- Calgary, Calvin Hungarian** (full-time minister)
- Calgary, St. Giles / New Generations** (full-time minister)
- Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod – General Presbyter** (part-time minister)
- Red Deer, Knox** (full-time minister)
- Sylvan Lake, Memorial** (full-time minister)

British Columbia

- Coquitlam** (full-time minister)
- Surrey, City Centre** (full-time minister)

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has several resources to help people get their house in order. Find information on how to include a charitable bequest in your will and an estate planning guide at presbyterian.ca/stewardship/planned-giving/ways-of-giving-estate-planning. There, you will find a digital copy of *Your Will Planning Guide*, a booklet produced by and available free-of-charge from the PCC. This 32-page document provides lists of important documents that will help your family and/or friends navigate your estate; walks you through why you need a will, what to do to get one, and where to store it; and has space for you to create an inventory of your personal belongings, record important funeral details and more.

Staff in the Stewardship & Planned Giving department are happy to talk to you or your congregation about ways to leave a gift to the church, while still providing an inheritance for family and friends. Call 1-800-619-7301 or email stewardship@presbyterian.ca.

DEATH NOTICES

Read full obituaries online at presbyterian.ca

Donna Marion Mawhinney
Deceased July 11, 2024
Lunenburg, N.S.

Dr. John Derksen
Deceased June 1, 2024
Toronto, Ont.

The Rev. Aurthur (Harry) Henry Winston McWilliams
Deceased May 26, 2024
Ancaster, Ont.

JUST WONDERING...



Submit questions to connection@presbyterian.ca

So what's the big deal about General Assembly?

Answered by the Rev. Don Muir, Deputy Clerk

Every year since 1875, The Presbyterian Church in Canada has called ministers and elders from across the nation to gather for its General Assembly...

Why does our denomination so resolutely invest time and money into this gathering? The answer largely has to do with the fact that we are not a "congregational" denomination...

Sessions oversee everything that happens in the life and ministry of congregations, such as receiving and supporting members,

and encouraging worship and mission through the generous stewardship of time, talent and treasure. Presbyteries, among other things, care for congregations and ministers within their bounds...

The General Assembly is the highest court of our church. One-sixth of the ministers on presbytery constituent rolls and an equal number of elders are commissioned to attend each Assembly...

I tried to submit an article to the newspaper about our church's welcome back autumn picnic coming up, but it wasn't approved. Can someone explain this to me?

Answered by Barb Summers, Editor

First of all, thank you for thinking of the newspaper! We're grateful to all volunteer writers and contributors.

The purpose of the newspaper is to equip the church for service and ministry; educate; provide ideas, programs and best practices for use by other ministries and congregations...

this, we publish articles from events and activities that have already taken place in the hopes other congregations will take the ideas and adapt them to their own context and enhance their own mission and ministry.

There are two problems with sharing news of upcoming events. First is the sheer amount of content. We simply wouldn't be able to include it all.

participate in the church at this level.

For those who have never attended an Assembly, it may seem that the work of the Assembly isn't something that has much impact on the lives of local congregations or members...

Assembly, either by attending as a commissioner or just by reading the reports and recommendations presented at the Assemblies...

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a connectional

an announcement about something happening in Saint John isn't likely going to be relevant to readers in northern British Columbia.

Instead, if you're looking to share news of an event or special celebration to come, you can share your social media posts with a larger PCC audience by tagging @presbyterian_church_in_canada...

church—connected through levels of discernment, worship, pastoral care, oversight and fellowship by which we seek to faithfully understand God's call to us and our response to that call.



Voting at the 2024 General Assembly.

SEEKING A PASTOR
St. Andrew's Church in St. Lambert MONTREAL



Interim Moderator: rdevries@pcmtl.ca