

Give

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Is passing the plate a thing of the past? pg. 6

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EDITORIAL

The zucchini principle

TOBI THIESSEN
Publisher



A woman who was raised in both the Lutheran and Catholic churches is now a member of my congregation. When Shannon described what led her to the Mennonite church, she observed a few differences between how Mennonites and other traditions she knew practise their faith. She said that one difference was that “Mennonites hold on less tightly to their possessions.”

It is an interesting turn of phrase. Shannon did not describe Mennonites as being more generous than others but noted that we are less attached to material possessions.

By holding on to our assets less tightly, we are better able to share with others when the need arises.

In this issue, we present a Focus on Money. Among the several articles on this topic are “Giving in the digital age,” Joanne De Jong’s look at how the digital age affects our offerings (page 6), and “Money and the Menno millennials,” Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe’s investigation into how some young adults are learning to be generous (page 8). Guest writer Lori Guenther Reesor encourages churches to change how they talk about money to better cultivate the next generation of faithful givers (page 36).

Mennonites have resisted the lure of consumer culture, which promotes spending on items for purely personal benefit. Retailers bombard us with slogans to make us think that we are not fully enjoying life unless we buy their product or service. On top of the selfishness that consumerism has

generated, it has also created a great deal of environmental waste. Traditionally, Mennonites have taught that a focus on all this buying for personal consumption is not consistent with a life of discipleship. Jesus modelled service to others and he counselled against stocking up on things.

The standard economic theory that supports consumerism is that everyone is better off when we spend money and buy stuff. There is job creation and economic growth, which lead to more wealth for all. It is obvious that the consumer system also entrenches wealth for the wealthiest and leaves the poorest in society needing more. Nevertheless, much of North American society considers consumerism to be good for everyone, because it is good for the economy.

God offers us a glimpse of some reverse economics that are even more powerful. The more tightly you hold on to an asset, the less value it retains. When you share it, the asset not only appreciates in value, it goes further. Indeed, it multiplies.

At the simplest level, you can imagine having zucchini growing in your garden. You want to use every single one—you are not wasteful, after all—but additional zucchinis become less appealing because you have enough. You can sell the zucchini to neighbours and friends. An economic transaction gives them a zucchini and you some money. The impact is finite but tidy.

But if you give it away instead, the recipient will value it more highly because it is a gift. Not only does the sharing elevate the value of the zucchini,

it deepens a relationship with someone who will probably offer you something in return in the future. They do not have to return the favour, but they probably will. Sharing creates a bond that endures and encourages more sharing. Your household economy expands when you share.

Another example of asset appreciation through sharing is the minivan our family owns. We bought it to ferry around our family of five plus music instruments and sports and camping equipment, among other items. It is valuable to us, but it depreciates with time and will one day need disposal. When we offered the van to our church to transport young people to events, the value of that van increased considerably. Our sharing not only increases the value of the asset for the rest of its life, it strengthens relationships with people in our church and it encourages others to share with the community as well.

When he was on Earth, Jesus showed God’s reverse economics. This is economic expansion through sharing. I can think of numerous examples of God’s overflowing abundance, but the easiest one to point to is the feeding of the multitudes in the gospels. These stories show what happens when people share a few resources. Once begun, the sharing goes on and on. Everyone is fed and there are leftovers. God provides abundantly for us when we hold on less tightly to our possessions. ❧



WIKIMEDIA.ORG PHOTO (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

‘The Miracle of the Bread and Fish’ by Giovanni Lanfranco, circa 1620.



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PHOTO: © ISTOCK.COM/HALOCK

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FOCUS ON MONEY FEATURES

Giving in the digital age

Is passing the offering plate a thing of the past?

By Joanne De Jong
Alberta Correspondent



PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/HALOCK

We are now living in a full-blown digital world. With just one click or voice command we can ask Google for a chicken recipe, order office supplies or give to our favourite charity online.

The 2017 Canada Helps Giving Report states that, “while the number of Canadians making charitable donations seems to be on the decline, online giving has increased 22.5 percent per year on the Canada Helps platform from 2005 to 2015.”

As online giving has increased, this has impacted individual church communities that still pass along an offering plate as part of their worship services. How do empty offering plates affect our visual witness as a people who are called to give generously in response to a generous God?

Brent Charette, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s operations and church engagement officer, says that at his church, Rockway Mennonite in Kitchener, Ont., the plate is “almost always empty due to the increase in automatic withdrawals, free of charge through the Kindred Credit Union.” So when you enter the foyer of

Rockway Mennonite Church you will see a table with two small baskets of stones. Congregants are invited to take a stone and place it in the offering plate to symbolize that “I am a contributing member. I care about this place.”

Len Hjalmarson, transitional pastor of Crossroads Community Church in Chilliwack, B.C., who has been giving digitally for a decade, would like to see the end of the offering plate altogether. He estimates that a quarter of the total church giving at Crossroads shows up in the basket that is passed around at offering time, representing 10 people a week out of a congregation of up to 150 on a Sunday. “The majority of members are giving by automatic withdrawal and are mostly made up of members under 50 years of age,” he says.

Hjalmarson says that one of the main reasons he would like to see the end of the offering plate is to “remove any potential barriers to anyone who has come to worship, especially any visitors or seekers. In the spirit of hospitality, I would like to remove any notion that you have to pay to be here.”

At Chinatown Peace Church in downtown Vancouver,

new believers are encouraged to set up regular giving online, even if it's only for \$10 a month, as part of being a faithful disciple. Its website has a PayPal button that Pastor Tim Kuepfer says had the lowest administration fees that he could find, at 1.5 percent. The church still passes around a bag at offering time, though, and leaders work hard to remember to say thank you from the pulpit to those who give online.

The Commons community church in Hamilton, Ont., receives 90 percent of its donations online. The church is made up of millennials, GenXers and some boomers. Details on how to set up monthly giving, whether digitally or through postdated cheques, are on the church website.

Matt Thompson, part of The Commons leadership team, says anyone under 25 years is cashless and chequeless. "People like everything to be automatic. Car payments. Netflix. So why not giving?" Monthly payments ensure that the church is not forgotten over the summer, and some people who travel or move away appreciate the opportunity to still give. The group collects the other 10 percent of its total giving through a box available at each church service.

So, what's the big deal?

Why not just embrace digital giving? What are people concerned about? It's easy and it's convenient, making it easier for churches to create a reliable budget. It increases overall revenue and encourages younger people to give.

Some people express concerns about the individual nature of giving online separate from community, the disconnect from worship, and the fear of losing a public example for children.

Ryan Dueck, pastor of Lethbridge Mennonite Church in Alberta, says, "I appreciate the convenience of online giving but I worry about disconnecting it from the shared experience of corporate worship. It feels like something is lost when the act of giving is functionally identical to buying a product on Amazon."

At Edmonton First Mennonite Church,

discussions happened around the administration fee that is charged for accepting donations online. Some churches that are with Canada Helps pay around 3 percent in fees. Is this good stewardship? Currently, First Mennonite accepts some e-transfers, since this method is free and convenient.

Kevin Davidson, gift planning consultant with Abundance Canada, strongly encourages people to set up regular giving plans. "So many people are struggling to manage debt, so planning is important if they want to be intentional about giving. Otherwise, there will be too much month at the end of the money."

Although he encourages planned online giving, he also sees the value in physically putting money in the plate. One of his clients who arranged to have all her giving go through Abundance felt strange as the plate passed her by each Sunday. She knew the church was receiving a cheque, but she somehow felt like something was missing. She requested that her cheque for the church get sent to her home so she could physically put it in the plate during Sunday worship. Somehow the physical act made her feel she was part of the community.

Cedar Valley Mennonite Church in Mission, B.C., is a community of 150 to

170, and, according to David Wiebe, office administrator and communications manager, older congregants really do value the physical act of giving in the service, both as an act of worship and a re-commitment to the community.

A debit machine is also available in the library for those who would like to give digitally before and after the service. The church does not pass a plate, but a bag, so no one can see how much physical money is being given, and gratitude is freely expressed from the pulpit. The bag also gives children a chance to participate. Wiebe remembers his mother giving him a quarter every Sunday to put in the offering plate, which was meaningful.

Digital giving and faith

It is good to think about digital giving and how it impacts the living out of our faith. Fundraising consultant Lori Guenther Reesor of Hamilton Mennonite Church says, "Silence around the issue of money doesn't help. Jesus talks about money, and so we can too."

She is a strong supporter of authorized giving and provides three reasons why on her website (lgresor.com):

1. **New givers.**
2. **Summer and vacation giving.**
3. **Bigger gifts.**



PHOTO BY MARCIA SHANTZ
Sandy Shantz holds out the offering bowl for Callum Jarvis as he comes to the front of St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church to give his gift to God.

She also wants to make sure the next generation knows that it is an important part of the future of the church. “Limiting giving to cash and cheques sends a message that giving is only for older people,” she says.

MC Canada is releasing its new website hub in 2020 that will include an opportunity for every congregation to have a giving button on a new church website. This button will not just be available for donations but will make it possible for visitors to sign up and pay for events, and for congregations to fundraise for special projects and track donations.

St. Jacobs Mennonite Church in Ontario has seen an increase in its pre-authorized giving, which has resulted in empty plates. The church

tried creating cards that could be put in the offering that said, “I gave digitally,” but it didn’t really work. Pastor Kevin Derksen wonders if it would have been more effective if the church had room to place the cards directly in the pews.

One Sunday nine years ago, Derksen was visiting Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church and he loved the way it did its offering, so he implemented it at St. Jacobs. Every Sunday, the church has two offerings at the same time. While the adults’ offering plate goes front to back, the children run back to front to put their offering in a special hand-carved bowl just for them.

According to Derksen, “Suddenly offering was more exciting. All the kids run to the front with their offering, re-enacting the celebratory nature of

giving.”

With the rise in one-click digital giving, some feel they have no choice but to go along with the culture, especially when they want to be welcoming to young people who don’t generally carry chequebooks or cash, while others wonder if it is healthy. Is passing the offering plate a thing of the past?

When discussing discipleship, worship and digital giving, it is important to keep asking questions:

- **What are** the pros and cons of digital giving we should be mindful of as followers of Jesus?
- **How can** we nurture generosity in our congregations?
- **How can** we celebrate generosity in our services and with our children? ❧

Money and the Menno millennials

Twenty-somethings talk budgeting, donating and relationships with money

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

As a kid, I grew up with the ritual of walking to the front of my church and dropping a few coins in the donation box every Sunday. But as I was sitting in church several months ago, a hymn playing on the piano and the offering basket passing through my hands, I realized that I don’t donate to my church.

I’ve been out of school for a year now and I have a steady income, yet I still haven’t adopted the practice. Why is that? Other than feeling guilty, I started getting curious about how other people in their 20s manage their money. Not just in terms of giving, but also how they feel about money, whether they



Maya Janzen

budget and how they choose to spend it.

When I start asking Maya Janzen about her relationship with money, she stops me and explains that she is having major déjà vu. “I ask these exact questions to other people,” she says with a laugh.

Janzen, 23, worked this summer as a

research assistant for the Canadian Financial Diaries Project conducted by Jerry Buckland, a professor at Menno Simons College in Winnipeg. She regularly talked with people with low to moderate incomes about their methods of spending, to gather data to improve policy and financial services, and to create financial empowerment for low-income people.

Living in Winnipeg, Janzen attends Charleswood Mennonite Church. Her relationship with money is shaped by her instinct to save it, which she was raised to see as its primary goal. While saving is still a priority, her idea of money has since expanded. She now sees it as the way we do transactions in

our world, a necessity of life.

Janzen has been budgeting for the last five years. She tracks her daily spending with a good old-fashioned pen and paper, marking down things like eating out, concert tickets and other “unnecessary” purchases. Since she was a student until this past spring, when she graduated from university, she still thinks about money in four-month chunks.



Claire Hanson

Claire Hanson, 21, is entering her fourth year of studies at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg and is connected to Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite Church. As a returning student, she has some of the same thoughts as Janzen, but her experience has a key difference. Hanson grew up in China, where her parents were missionaries.

Using the *renminbi*, the Chinese currency, for most of her life, has made it difficult for her to judge how much things cost here. In the age of credit cards and online payments, she says money also feels theoretical. “I don’t really put the numbers together when I pay for something. You tap your card and your money just disappears out of your bank account,” she observes.

She has a general sense of how much she spends per month but doesn’t really budget. She has a couple long-term savings accounts in which she’s saving money to put towards her education.

Ben Borne, in contrast, makes a detailed budget. The 29-year-old from Saskatoon, who attends Wildwood Mennonite Church there, has been



working for years in the public-relations field and is currently the director of strategy at SalonScale Technologies Inc.

Borne puts together a monthly budget and forecasts about two to three months ahead, using an app to track his spending. “I find money to be a bit stressful from time to time because of the rising costs,” he says. “It’s a constant balancing act that . . . I need to be paying attention to quite regularly.”

But he also recognizes that he has a well-paying job and the privilege that comes with that.

In fact, all three young people acknowledge the significant financial privilege they have.

Hearing about different people’s experiences with money has reminded Janzen that she has many advantages, including the ability to live rent-free or get an interest-free loan from her parents if she needed to. “In general, I don’t think about money a lot and I think that goes to show I have enough money to live,” she says. “If I was experiencing poverty, I don’t think that would be the case.”

Hanson has had a lot of support throughout her university education, both from scholarships and money her parents set aside for her. They could save money for her education because living in China meant certain living costs, like food, were cheaper, and they didn’t own a house, so they had no mortgage to pay. “I feel like I’m really lucky that way, that I don’t have to constantly worry about saving enough money for the school year,” she says.

Generally, though, young people today face financial pressure. “They’re graduating with more student debt than previous generations. They’re often buying homes and cars later than previous generations. I don’t know this for a fact, but it seems like it’s getting more unattainable,” says Mike Duerksen, who does fundraising and donor relations as executive director of Generation Rising, an organization that builds schools in Latin America for children born into poverty.

So do young people donate?

In the big picture, they give barely enough to even mention, says Duerksen. Older people, especially over 70 years

old, are still doing the lion’s share of donating. “But that in itself is not particularly different, because we know that really predictably, like for generations now, young people have never given a lot in terms of monetary amounts,” he says, adding that, at about 50 years old, once people establish their careers and their kids grow up and move out, they become predictably more generous with their donations.

It’s not that young people aren’t giving at all, they’re just giving differently, says Gayle Goossen, creative director of Barefoot Creative, an agency that helps businesses and organizations with their branding, digital presence and fundraising.

She says that Statistics Canada gets its information from donations that people have claimed on their income taxes. But some of the biggest donation media don’t give donation receipts, so donations through them can’t be claimed. For example, donors may give a toonie to the Children’s Hospital at the grocery checkout, tweet a certain hashtag to donate a loonie to replant a forest, or contribute to online campaigns like GoFundMe and Kickstarter that raise money for everything from a person’s surgery to a musician’s first album.

“My sense . . . would be that young people probably are giving, but they’re probably not doing it through what would be the official donation channels,” says Rick Braun-Janzen, director of finance at Abundance Canada, which assists people in gift planning.

Whereas this generation’s parents and grandparents gave loyally to their church and one or two specific organizations, young people today don’t have the same sense of loyalty to one entity. “The allegiance to denominations, like where you put money into a pool and the denomination decides what gets done with it . . . is starting to become frayed,” he says.

Young people want to be in control of their money and make their own decisions. They know their values and want to ensure that where they’re donating aligns with them. “They’re probably the most savvy consumers that

we've ever experienced," says Duerksen. "The same applies to their giving."

"As the next generation of donors come along, they're wanting to see a much more direct correlation between the money they're donating and the positive effects those dollars are accomplishing," says Braun-Janzen. Charities aren't doomed, he believes; they just need to figure out how to stay relevant into the future.

This generation also sees giving differently. "They see some of their purchases as being an act of philanthropy, the whole conscious consumerism [movement] they see as part of their effort to make the world a better place," says Duerksen. "Volunteering . . . even things like sharing petitions or getting involved in advocacy, those all rank as giving. There's no distinction between monetary giving or being involved in other ways."

Janzen, Hanson and Borne all consider volunteering time as an equal and important form of donating.

During her first two years living in Canada, Hanson tithed, giving 10 percent of her income to her church, something she hadn't thought about until coming to Canada. She liked that her church supported Mennonite Church Canada Witness projects. "I thought it would be nice to support people in the field now that I wasn't," she says. Although she doesn't tithe regularly anymore, she still contributes annually with her extended family to a service project.

Other than occasional small donations or giving some change to someone in need after her class downtown, Janzen doesn't donate regularly either. Recently finishing school and hunting for a job bring a lot of uncertainty and financial instability, so she currently feels more protective of her money. She rarely donates to her church and she's more likely to donate to other causes, like online fundraisers, that aren't necessarily official charities.

"This logic is probably flawed," she says, "but I think it's my perception that the costs at my church will inevitably be covered by people that I assume are

wealthier in the congregation." She wants to change that and donate to her faith community when her income is stable.

Borne has an annual budget for donating to charity and makes monthly donations to his church and the organizations he cares about through online e-transfers. He gives to his church because it aligns with Mennonite and Christian values, and he views giving money as an act of service and humility. "As long as you're giving something and supporting in some way, whether it's time or money, then really that's all that matters," he says. "It's God's time, it's God's money, and it's all important and valuable."

Borne just finished a three-year term as his church's treasurer. He found it humbling to see the generous gifts that people gave so regularly. At first, though, he caught himself comparing his contributions to other people's donations. But that's not the right mindset, he says, adding, "I guess I don't like

to live in comparison. I think that's the wrong message. It's about supporting what you believe in, and every little bit counts."

Statistics show that "people who are linked to some kind of a faith community, who have seen generosity in play in their formative years . . . are more likely to continue that pattern as they move into the years where they can start to donate money," Braun-Janzen says.

As people of faith, we are people of generosity, and that's not limited by age. This generation is not less compassionate than previous ones. It's just a matter of navigating a changing financial landscape, says Goossen.

"I have great hopes for the next generation," she says. "I'm not going to predict whether [they] give more or less . . . but they will give generously, because we're created with a heart of compassion and generosity, and that does not change with generations." ❧

❧ For discussion

1. Do you give to your church or other charities through electronic methods? Why or why not? How is your giving tied to your worship in your congregation? As a disciple of Jesus, where do you get inspiration to be generous?
 2. How does your congregation make it easy for people to give, whether in the worship service or in other practical ways? What practices in your church might inhibit giving? How are children and youth in your church acquiring a habit of giving?
 3. How do you respond to Lori Guenther Reesor's statement: "Silence around money doesn't help. Jesus talks about money and so we can too"? Do people in your congregation experience unease around money conversations? If so, how might that be lessened? What attitudes and practices might make that conversation possible?
 4. Consider the unique financial challenges faced by both the younger and the older generations. What might the generations teach each other about their relationship to money, generosity and giving?
 5. What message does your church give to congregants who consider themselves poor? Can you identify with the assumption that the wealthier members will be responsible for the congregational budget? What problems might this create?
- By Virginia A. Hostetler

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OPINION

/// Readers write

✉ Reader gives biking story a 'wow'

Re: "Cycling into the future," July 22, page 30.

I enjoy *Canadian Mennonite* very much.

This story really impressed me. Philip Martin had the smarts to see the need for bike safety for his school pupils; he realized how important it was for young people to learn this, and then went to work to fix it.

Thanks to him, and with help from Ella Strathdee and other volunteers, more than 5,000 kids have received these important lessons and are safer when biking on the streets. Wow.

ANNIE SAUNDERS, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ Bringing peace, dignity and hope to those who need it most

Re: "Where does MCC fit in the Mennonite world?" July 22, page 8.

In his letter, Richard Penner rightly highlights that helping others is a core motivator for Anabaptists. For close to 100 years, this call to service has, in part, found practical expression through the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and for good reason.

Impact is the best measure of an organization's value, and MCC's impact around the world is significant. MCC is currently working in close to 60 countries on more than 700 relief, development and peace projects. The breadth and depth of this impact is possible because of the organization's reputation for efficient and effective work that has been built decade upon decade by volunteers, supporters and staff, who continuously and thoughtfully deliver highly valued programs with expert partners. It is clear that those committed to the mission of MCC are impacting the lives of program participants around the world in practical and meaningful ways every day.

There are currently nearly 71 million displaced people around the world—the most there have ever been. The necessary response requires bold action by organizations that attend to the short-term, emergency needs of individuals and families, that help rebuild lives and sustainable livelihoods, and that establish meaningful relationships that help ensure lasting peace for all. This is MCC.

On the eve of the organization's centennial in 2020, there is much to celebrate, but so much more to do. MCC is committed to investing the required time, energy and resources to bring peace, dignity and hope to those who need it most. The work is as urgent as it's ever been, and MCC is taking action.

SCOTT D. CAMPBELL, WINNIPEG

The writer is MCC Canada's director of communications and donor relations.

✉ Subscriber questions digital issues idea

I have received your digital issues this summer but haven't read any of the articles. I don't care to read long articles on the computer.

And people without computers are left out "in the cold" after having paid the full subscription price.

What actually is the rationale for no print editions for several issues? What about your stated objective of connecting people and congregations via *Canadian Mennonite*?

INGRID LAMP, SWIFT CURRENT, SASK.

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



Art Call

Theme: "Jesus here and now"

Due: Oct. 23, 2019

Canadian Mennonite invites elementary and high school students from Mennonite schools and churches to submit artwork for the Christmas 2019 issue.

Works should be dark enough to be reproduced in print. Send digital versions (*at least 300 dpi*) to submit@canadianmennonite.org.

Send paper artwork (*minimum 4 inches by 6 inches*) to: 490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7

Submissions should include the student's full name, grade and the name of the student's school or congregation.

Works selected will appear in the Nov. 25 print issue and online.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Carther-Krone—Theodore Robert (b. July 30, 2019), to Tiffany and Chris Carther-Krone, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Enns—Caleb Oliver (b. July 27, 2019), to Tonya and Jared Enns, First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Good—Josiah Aiden (b. Aug. 16, 2019), to William and Alicia Good, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Hagerman—Orsen Geordie (b. Aug. 7, 2019), to Helen and Geordie Hagerman, Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Horn—Logan William (b. July 31, 2019), to Bryan and Casey Horn, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Martin—Weston Wade (b. July 16, 2019), to Phil and Katie Martin, Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Nash—Thomas Martin (b. July 13, 2019), to Rosanna and John Nash, Ottawa Mennonite.

Plett—Elyse Olivia Loewen (b. July 6, 2019), to Annie Loewen and Paul Plett, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Regier—Arla Katherine (b. July 22, 2019), to Jared and Rachel Regier, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Roes—Ava Laine (b. July 25, 2019), to Kyle and Alison Roes, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

Stothers—Yara Amani (b. July 11, 2019), to Ellen and Joseph Stothers, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wiens—Abigail Violet Derksen (b. July 17, 2019), to Erica Derksen and Mike Wiens, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Baptisms

Ayrton Blank, Sabrina Blank—First Mennonite, Edmonton, June 9, 2019.

Kayla Giesbrecht—Seeds of Life, Altona, Man., June 9, 2019.

Marriages

Baergen/Tse—Sean Baergen and Tiffanie Tse, First Mennonite, Edmonton, June 15, 2019.

Hyde/Sider—Chelsea Hyde (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.) and Brett Sider, in New Dundee, Ont., April 27, 2019.

Kropf/Zuhlsdorf—Brett Kropf and Alyssa Zuhlsdorf, both of East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., in Listowel, Ont., July 27, 2019.

Martin/Weber—Natasha Martin (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.) and Erik Weber, in Baden, Ont., June 29, 2019.

Upfield/Zehr—Joe Upfield and Alana Zehr (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.), in St. Jacobs, Ont., July 14, 2019.

Deaths

Bowman—Anna, 90 (b. May 30, 1928; d. May 18, 2019), Hanover Mennonite, Ont.

Bowman—Blanche Estelle (Rosenberger), 87 (b. Sept. 26, 1931; d. Aug. 2, 2019), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., formerly of Sharon Mennonite, Guernsey, Sask.

Chappell—Lora, 87 (b. Sept. 17, 1931; d. June 22, 2019), Hanover Mennonite, Ont.

Cornies—Helen (Goertzen), 88 (b. Aug. 30, 1931; d. Aug. 13, 2019), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Deziel—Elsie (Brown), 91 (b. Dec. 26, 1927; d. Jan. 29, 2019), Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Dick—David, 87 (b. Aug. 3, 1931; July 27, 2019), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friessen—William (Bill), 90 (b. Oct. 1, 1928; d. July 31, 2019), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Grove—Elizabeth (Betty), 90 (b. June 20, 1929; d. Aug. 7, 2019), Hanover Mennonite, Ont.

Janzen—Wilhelm (Bill), 90 (b. Oct. 22, 1928; d. July 1, 2019), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Mathies—Eleanor, 92 (b. May 12, 1927; d. July 19, 2019), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Nafziger—Lewis, 87 (b. April 4, 1932; d. Aug. 7, 2019), Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Peters—Herta (Bock), 83 (b. May 2, 1936; d. Aug. 3, 2019), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Peters—Tina (nee Warkentin), 98 (b. Aug. 17, 1920; d. June 10, 2019), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., formerly of Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Petkau—Abram J. (Abe), 105 (b. June 21, 1914; d. Aug. 10, 2019), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Sauder—Sydney, 85 (b. Feb. 6, 1934; d. July 21, 2019), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Schlegel—Ray, 78 (b. Nov. 12, 1940; d. May 13, 2019), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Schmidt—Catharine Verna, 90 (b. Oct. 11, 1928; d. Aug. 15, 2019), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Thiessen—Ruby (Driedger), 78 (b. July 9, 1941; d. July 25, 2019), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Tiessen—A. Hazel (Mathies), 90 (b. March 13, 1929; d. July 28, 2019), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Tiessen—Margaret (Froese), 85 (b. Feb. 2, 1934; d. July 7, 2019), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Wiebe—Jacob, 87 (b. June 26, 1932; d. July 16, 2019), Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

FROM OUR LEADERS

A collaborative leadership approach

Garry Janzen

We have a lot of pastoral transitions happening at the moment in Mennonite Church British Columbia. It is a time that has given me pause to think about how we do church ministry and what our pastoral ministry positions look like.

Our church polity manual, *A Shared Understanding of Ministerial Leadership*, mentions the importance of the fivefold ministry. This is taken from Ephesians 4:7,11: “God has given his grace to each one of us measured out by the gift that is given by Christ. . . . He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”

I recently finished reading *Faithful Presence* by David Fitch, who has much to say about what faithful presence looks like for Christ-followers in the close circle of communion, in the home group that has an open door to the neighbourhood, and as we are guests in various spaces in the neighbourhood. He ends by focusing on the fivefold ministry. Fitch observes that “most Protestant churches are still led by a senior or lead pastor at the top of an organizational chain.”

As Jesus’ disciples were “clamouring for their place at the top of the pecking order in the coming new kingdom,” according to Fitch, Jesus calmed them down and replied, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all” (Mark 10:43-44).

Fitch affirms that, “For Jesus, authority in the kingdom would be exercised in no other way. There would be no hierarchy, no coercive power, no one person ruling over and above another person. His model is mutual, shared leadership under one Lord.”

While this model may seem impossible, given our tendency to drink at the fountain of the corporate/business model of leadership, Paul most clearly lays out the model in the fivefold leadership gifts. These gifts are mutual and interdependent. Since no one person can carry out all the gifts in the community, why do we call one full-time pastor to do everything?

Smaller congregations have shifted to calling bi-vocational pastors out of necessity because they can’t afford a full-time salary. What if congregations who can afford a full-time pastor would call several bi-vocational pastors instead, each having one or two of these five gifts? What if a congregation mixed paid staff with volunteer ministry as a way of ensuring that the fivefold gifts are all active?

If a congregation has multiple leadership staff, maybe they would discern the call based on these gifts. As we are looking at leadership changes in our MC B.C. congregations, I am simply looking at the biblical understandings of what we need for healthy congregational leadership and encouraging our congregations to creatively call out these giftings.

Fitch concludes by saying, “The fivefold ministry leaders are never to be above the other gifted leaders. Everyone operates in mutual submission to one another and to the whole congregation.”

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Garry Janzen is MC B.C.’s executive minister.

—A moment from yesterday—



In 1894, Anna Enss (1855-1914), left, and Peter Regier (1851-1925) moved their family from Prussia (now Poland) to Tiefengrund, Sask., where Regier was the founding leader of the Rosenorter Gemeinde and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. His sermon collection includes “odd” names for sermons such as “Sexagesima.” Upon further research, we learn that this is the name for the second Sunday before Ash Wednesday in the Catholic and Lutheran denominations. Further research shows that Mennonites who have lived in Prussia, Russia and Canada have used the church calendar and lectionary to help organize their worship services for generations.

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Mennonite Heritage Archives



archives.mhsc.ca

IN THE IMAGE

Parable of the 'phone incident'

Ed Olfert

A woman I'll call Adelle stops by the church from time to time, looking for food or for a ride to another part of the city. My congregation has supplied me with non-perishable food, toiletry items, and, in colder seasons, toques, socks and mitts, for just such occasions.

There was a time when Adelle hadn't shown her face for a number of months, but suddenly there she sat again on the bench inside the front door. I remarked that she looked particularly healthy, with a clear complexion and eyes. She grinned, totally unselfconsciously, and informed me that she had been in jail.

As the weeks passed, her complexion and her body language reverted back to her former self. She was still polite and pleasant, but she seemed more anxious to have her needs addressed so she could move on.

I recall a day when she appeared with her brother. They told me they were trying to come up with rent money and had a plastic bag of articles to sell. Could I give them a ride? My schedule had time.

Before we climbed into the car, Adelle asked me if I wanted to buy a cell phone, and I told her that I had one. After I dropped them off, I remembered her

question again, and reached into my pocket to reassure myself.

It wasn't there. I went through numerous pockets. By that time, I was again at my office, and the entry area of the church was scoured, then turned upside-down. No phone. A friend came for a visit, but first he had to join in the search.

Someone suggested I check the pawn shops. All stores told me they didn't deal in phones. So I resignedly drove to a phone store and purchased a new one. Fortunately, my data was recapturable, so it was really not a huge deal.

But my mind kept needing to blame Adelle. I felt hurt. I reasoned that her question about whether I wanted to buy a phone was geared toward determining whether I still had mine. If so, the one she had found was fair game. I had assumed that my phone was still in my possession.

I was ready the next time Adelle appeared at Grace Mennonite. After I had given her the food available that day, I reminded her of that "phone incident," and asked her flat out, "Did you take my phone?"

Her eyes opened wider. She looked into my face and she said, "I would never do that to you. You've always helped me!

I would never take anything from you!"

The look of hurt on her features suggested that the subject needn't be broached again. But were her street smarts such that she could feign that look? Was I being duped?

Our relationship continued as before. Once every week or two, Adelle dropped by for a quick request, a quick conversation. Sometimes she was alone, sometimes she had a companion.

A month later, the old phone slid out from under my car seat.

When Adelle next stopped by, I told her that story and asked for her forgiveness. She laughed, and she reminded me that I had been told that she wouldn't take anything from me. She held on to a little power that I could feel for a time in our relationship.

I need to feel Adelle's power over me. I need to be humbled. There was too much imbalance tilted the other way. Thank you, Adelle, for offering a lesson of humility. God calls us from that direction. ❧



Ed Olfert (p2ptheo@sasktel.net) wonders whether God is as evident outside of his world.

Et cetera

'A church for people who aren't into church'

The Meeting House, headquartered in Oakville, Ont., is "a church for people who aren't into church." Part of the Be In Christ Church of Canada, formerly Brethren in Christ, it has 18 regional sites (often in movie theatres) where people gather on Sunday mornings to sing together and watch a teaching video. Small groups meet during the week.

Source: themeetinghouse.com



Bruxy Cavey is the teaching pastor at the Meeting House.

BOOK REVIEW

Help for reading the Old Testament

Fire by Night: Finding God in the Pages of the Old Testament.
By Melissa Florer-Bixler. Herald Press, 2019, 192 pages.

Reviewed by David Driedger
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

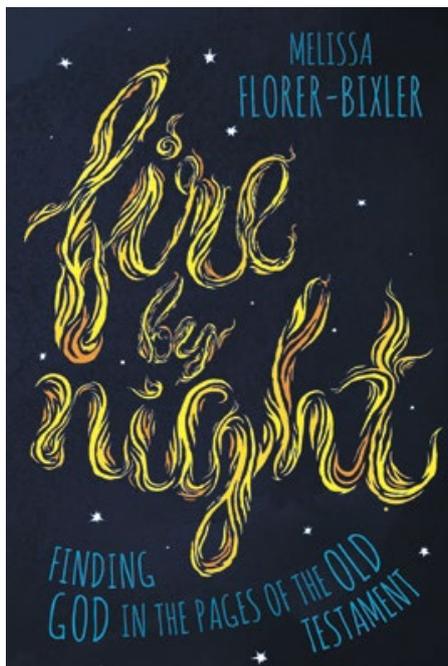
Many conversations about the Old Testament are determined by questions of modernity. What are the facts? What really happened? The facts are then loaded as ammunition in the culture wars of “liberal” and “conservative.” Other questions bring faith to the shoals of doubt on matters of a potentially violent and misogynistic God.

Melissa Florer-Bixler’s *Fire by Night* makes no attempt to avoid or answer these questions but simply invites us along in a slow reading of the Old Testament within her context of faith.

“Whenever we read the Bible, we participate in a history,” she writes. History remains important, but everything is fair game, including questions of what the text itself might refer to, how the text was formed, how the text formed various communities, and how various communities formed and deployed the meaning of the text. And so, with the Old Testament as an invitation to faith, she invites along, as companions, the voices of monks, Muslims, Jews, children, birds, activists, the incarcerated and those deemed disabled, as well as a host of scholars, authors and regular church folk.

With these voices and stories, Florer-Bixler reflects on a range of passages and offers insightful readings of the practicality of Leviticus, the troubling associations settlers might have with Lot in Genesis 19, the role of remembering violence in the story of Jacob and Esau, and the needed places of both darkness and wonder.

Florer-Bixler has a knack for reading redemptively. What distinguishes her writing from others’ is that she does not



appear to approach every text as though there is a “nugget” of redemption always to be found. Rather, there is a trust that the God she is following is indeed a God of redemption, and so it is trust in God rather than an assumption about Scripture that leads her reading.

When reflecting on Lot and his wife in Genesis 19, she gazes long enough at the text and characters to acknowledge her righteous indignation over the evil of Sodom, her dissatisfaction over God’s choice to deliver Lot, and finally her slow acknowledgement of identity with Lot’s wife, who looks back at Sodom, seeing in her a bond to the benefits of structural violence that she too participates in.

We often discard the text once we feel we have found what we are looking for, rather than lingering to allow the

relationship to continue its work. Then, with the larger question of God and violence, she is able to accept, citing Walter Brueggemann, that perhaps God is a recovering practitioner of violence.

Accepting this never-ending task of faithful attentiveness allows one the freedom to continue to acknowledge dislike and rejection of texts that have primarily been used for violence in western history. Perhaps nothing has been more devastating than the relationship between western colonialism and the conquest narrative in the Bible.

Rather than trying to redeem these passages—or tear them out of the Bible—Florer-Bixler offers one of the most succinct and yet, to my mind, helpful responses, by simply saying, “There are other passages.” In many ways this is the maddening and inspiring challenge of a faith intimately linked to this book. There is always more. More before the pages were written, more after the final verse, and seemingly always more going on within the book than we can apply a theology to, or a system of ethics can contain. And so, we watch, we follow, we wait, we sing, we listen, we pray, we discuss, we act, we cry, we remain silent, and we watch again.

Fire by Night is a welcome and recommended addition to how we might understand the beautiful and strange entanglement of faith, life and Scripture. ❧

David Driedger is First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg’s associate minister.

VIEWPOINT

Clothes to match your values

Elise Epp

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

If you wear clothes, then you need to care about how they were made and who made them. Even if you aren't interested in "fashion." Even if it means giving up your favourite stores and finding new ones. Even if you think it won't be available in your budget, style, or size (it is).

How do you get over these hurdles? Connect your clothes with something you're already passionate about.

You believe that workers should earn a living wage

In 1901, Americans spent 14 percent of their household income on apparel, according to the U.S. Department of Labour. By 2003, it had shrunk to 4 percent, and yet we are buying more clothes than ever. The decreasing cost of clothing isn't coming out of the CEO's salary; it's being squeezed out of the most vulnerable workers. As journalist Lucy Siegle said, "Fast fashion isn't free. Someone somewhere is paying."

What to do: **Buy fair trade or B Corp certified.** You have probably stumbled across a fair-trade symbol before, maybe on Ben & Jerry's ice cream or your Patagonia fleece. Fair trade certification means that the garments were made in safe factories, where the workers earn a living wage, often more than what the country legislates. Similarly, B Corporations are certified to "meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency." There are also brands that follow these principles without certification, but this requires research. Try: Patagonia, Ali Golden or Arturo Denim.

You are vegetarian

Whether you are a vegetarian or not, leather is a big polluter. Most leather is tanned using chromium, an extremely toxic chemical, and its waste often flows



PHOTO BY KRISTA HAWRYLUK

Elise Epp's shirt, jeans and shoes are ethically and sustainably made and sourced.

directly into waterways, damaging the surrounding environment.

What to do: **Buy non-plastic leather alternatives.** There are many plant-based leather alternatives, like Piñatex, made from pineapple-leaf fibre, and cork, waxed cotton, recycled rubber and banana trees. People are even starting to make leather-like goods from the bacteria-yeast skin that forms on top of *kombucha* (a fermented black or green tea drink). Try: Nae Vegan Shoes, Ethletic or Allbirds.

You buy organic veggies and farm fresh eggs

Cotton accounts for about 2.4 percent of the world's farm crops yet uses 16 percent of the insecticides, according to the Pesticide Action Network. If you're thinking, "Food goes inside my body and clothes are just on the outside," remember that your skin is your body's

largest organ.

What to do: **Buy organic cotton.** Look for organic cotton certifications like Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and Oeko-Tex. Try: Pact, Eileen Fisher or Rapanui.

You are a card-carrying feminist

Women make up 85 percent of the fashion industry workforce, so improving the working conditions of fashion production workers has a huge impact on the lives of women throughout the world.

What to do: **Buy from companies that actually support women.** There was an uproar when Beyoncé released her Ivy Park clothing line because the clothes, emblazoned with empowering slogans, were produced in exploitative Sri Lankan sweatshops. Feminism isn't just a message. If you want to live out your feminism, it needs to be built in from the earliest stages—for the most vulnerable women in the chain. Try: Sseko, The Outrage or Kirrin Finch.

You minimize your carbon footprint

You ride your bike to work, use reusable alternatives to plastic wrap and bring your travel mug to the coffee shop.

What to do: **Mend your clothes.** Extending the life of clothing reduces the amount that gets made in the first place and the amount that ends up in the landfill. **Or buy second-hand or Tencel.** If you are shopping new, opt for Tencel, which is known as the world's most sustainable fabric. For second-hand clothing, try your local MCC thrift store, Encircled, Preloved or thredUp.

Purchasing ethical and sustainable garments will probably affect how—or how often—you shop for clothes, so it's okay to tackle one thing at a time. But slow fashion isn't just about buying stuff. A lot of the time it's about wearing what you have and making it last. You can do that right now. ☘

Elise Epp is the Manitoba Fashion Revolution coordinator. She lives with her two cat children, Maud and Felix, in Winnipeg. She grew up attending Camrose Mennonite Fellowship in Alberta.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

'Camps make church come alive'

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

It's 10:30 on a sunny August morning and the lodge at Camp Koinonia, near Boissevain, Man., is bursting with shouts and harmonies. People dance and laugh together. The group radiates energy.

If the church is the body, then camp is the heart that pumps life into every corner.

I spent a week this summer volunteering at Koinonia, one of two camps that now make up Camps with Meaning, Mennonite Church Manitoba's camping ministry. I was a cabin counsellor for youth week, a program for campers who have finished grades 9 to 12. Simply put, it was the best week of my summer.

I'm no stranger to camp, though. I worked at all three of Camps with Meaning's locations—Koinonia, Assiniboia, and Moose Lake (before it was sold in 2017)—for five years and was a camper for seven years before that.

But when I returned after three years of being away, the profound reality announced itself loudly in my ear: Camp is an essential part of the church.

In a time when young people often feel disconnected from the church and are leaving in droves, camp is a space for both campers and staff to explore and strengthen their faith. Camp makes church come alive. We walked through the forest, torches casting flickering shadows and worship songs floating up into the night sky. Countless campers stayed around the fire after evening worship to talk about faith and life with camp staff.

Every morning before the campers woke up, staff gathered for prayer, hot coffee set down and hands held, sharing their hopes for the day. I've lost count of the number of times I've heard staff say that camp is the reason they are still part of the church. At camp, in creation, God feels present.

I was also reminded that the camp



PHOTO COURTESY OF NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, centre, with fellow Camps with Meaning staffers Matthew Sawatzky, left, and Emma Berg.

community is a living, breathing, stumbling embodiment of Jesus' love. In this place, everyone is free and encouraged to be their true, unique selves. That doesn't mean everyone is always awesome. Staff are exhausted, campers clash and tempers can fray. But there is also love, support and celebration. Whether they are at their best, their worst or something in between, the people at camp are at their "realest."

But while my heart beats for camping ministry, I fear for its future. Camps with Meaning's camper numbers are steadily decreasing.

Why aren't more people sending their kids to camp and supporting it? Other camps are struggling, too, and are noticing trends:

- **Parents are increasingly** sending their children to sports or music camps because they want them to gain quantifiable skills to prepare them for their futures. Or they're afraid of not seeing their children for a week, so they're signing them up for day camps.
- **And youth are** prioritizing making money and getting experience for careers.

But the people that camp moulds and creates are people who are integral to not only the church's future, but the world's.

Camp provides opportunities for staff, and campers who eventually become staff, to develop crucial leadership skills. From preparing supplies and planning a 60-person canoe trip, to sitting up all night with a homesick camper, taking a trip to the hospital for a broken ankle or cleaning up some pretty gross messes, camp isn't always happy or fun. There are difficult times, but every year staff grow and strengthen in their ability to deal with the challenges.

The vast majority of camping programs happen outside and there is no internet access, and in Koinonia's case, no phone service either. In a world lived online and inside, camp offers a radically countercultural reality: face-to-face interactions, community, teamwork and creation care.

And lots of memories:

- **People plunging** waist deep in squishy mud at the end of a portage on the canoe trip, screaming and cheering.
- **Campers chanting** each other's names in encouragement when they found it hard to keep going during a two-hour hike at the end of a long day.
- **Learning to** swing dance first thing in the morning.
- **Staying up** all night and having difficulty breathing because of tear-inducing, belly-aching laughter.

Through all the overwhelmingly tough situations and frequent outbursts of joy, camp is a place of goodness, a community that is impossible to replicate in quite the same way. I hope and pray this ministry can continue to shine its unique light into the world for a long time to come. ☸

VIEWPOINT

When the youth come calling

Moses Falco

During the last week of July, I had the privilege of leading morning Bible times at Shake: Rattled by the Radical at the Shekinah Retreat Centre in Saskatchewan. It was a highlight of my summer, as youth from Ontario to Alberta came together for worship, learning and fun.

Even more frightening than trying to hold the attention of 120 youth was the fear of being irrelevant and misunderstood. Yet, at the same time, I felt honoured. It was difficult to decide what I should speak about, but after some deliberation I settled on the life and times of Jeremiah the prophet.

I wanted to show the youth how God used Jeremiah to reach the people of Judah before and during the Babylonian exile. God called Jeremiah to try to bring the hearts of the people of Judah back to God after they rejected God and the covenant they made years before. Over and over again, they gave up the commands of God to care for the poor and the oppressed, even sacrificing their own children to false idols—something God never wanted.

The people of Judah wouldn't listen. They kept on their own way, mocking Jeremiah and even trying to kill him. In the end, it was the people of Judah who faced the devastating consequence of being taken from their land into captivity in Babylon. God was with Judah in their exile and never stopped loving and caring for the people. God spoke through Jeremiah to encourage them through that difficult time.

Jeremiah was probably a teenager when he was called to be a prophet. He was young and he didn't think he was experienced or qualified enough for the job. And yet God called him and used him in amazing ways.

I tried to encourage the youth in the ways God might be calling them. Being young doesn't disqualify anyone from

finding their place in God's kingdom. Youth can be leaders, prophets, teachers and influencers, just like Jeremiah. Who says God can't also use youth to bring our hearts back to God?

In the last couple of weeks, youth from Winnipeg, around Canada, and all over the world have been calling on older generations to become allies as they confront our government leaders to do something about climate change.

To be honest, I don't think I've ever experienced the kind of generational anxiety that youth are facing today. They are worried about what scientists



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOSES FALCO

Moses Falco speaks at one of the morning Bible sessions at Shake: Rattled by the Radical.

are saying about climate change and they don't understand why the adults in their lives don't seem to care about them enough to take this seriously. Many youth have been protesting, organizing awareness events, and even walking out of school to strike, in order to get the people in power to listen.

What I hear our youth saying—both inside and outside of our churches—is that we've set a poor example of Christian stewardship and creation care. We're being told that if we don't do something to address our dependence on fossil fuels, we will be in huge trouble. Young people are fearing a future that looks more and more dim for them and their children.

The problem with the people of

Judah, and King Zedekiah in particular, was that they wouldn't listen to the voice of Jeremiah. He became a prophetic voice the people rejected for more than 30 years. By doing so, they rejected the voice of God. It eventually cost them everything.

What if our young people are speaking a prophetic word to us in order to bring us back on track? I understand that many people don't believe the scientific evidence around climate change. I realize it will be tremendously difficult to change our society's dependence on fossil fuels. I know it will take a long time to make our consumption habits more sustainable. But just like the people of Judah, after being confronted by the voice of our young people calling us to repent, we have a decision to make.

We can either brush our young people off by seeing their protests as expressions of youthful passion that will eventually fade once they understand the "real world," or we can stop and listen to the millions of young people around the world calling us to practise climate justice, do a critical self-evaluation of our stewardship practices and make the necessary changes.

Change is the hardest part, but there doesn't seem to be a way around it anymore. If we're not in a place to influence that change, the next best thing is to add our voice in support of our young people as they take this challenge on. 卍

Moses Falco is a pastor of Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg. A longer version of this article was originally published on his blog at mosesfalco.com.



NEWS

'More than restoring a building'

Youth from churches in Ontario and British Columbia build relationships with residential school survivors

By John Longhurst
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
BRANTFORD, ONT.

"It's personal, there are names and faces. It's not just textbook information now."

That's how Timothy Khoo, 16, describes what it was like to meet residential school survivors while volunteering with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) at the former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford in July.

Khoo was one of 13 youth and leaders from Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church who spent the last week of July at the school building desks, tables and benches for a representative classroom and dining hall at the school that was in operation from 1828 to 1970.

The volunteers from the Toronto con-

gregation also helped moved thousands of books and files back to the library, while volunteers from other churches restored a replica longhouse, which is used for educational purposes.

Altogether, 61 youth and leaders from Mennonite churches in Toronto, Kitchener, St. Jacobs, Listowel and Elmira, Ont., and Abbotsford, B.C., participated in the MDS summer youth project.

This year, the project was done in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario and the Woodland Cultural Centre, which operates on the site of the former residential school.

Stella Liu, 13, says the experience was "more in-depth than what we learned in



school, more emotional. I never knew how bad residential schools were."

Jim Zhang, 16, says, "It's great to do something to make up a bit for what happened to Indigenous people. It gives me satisfaction to do something good."

A testament to the horrors

Over the school's 142-year history, thousands of children from the nearby Six Nations of the Grand River, and other First Nations in Canada, were sent to the Anglican Church-run school. While there, they were stripped of their language and culture. Many also experienced physical and sexual abuse.



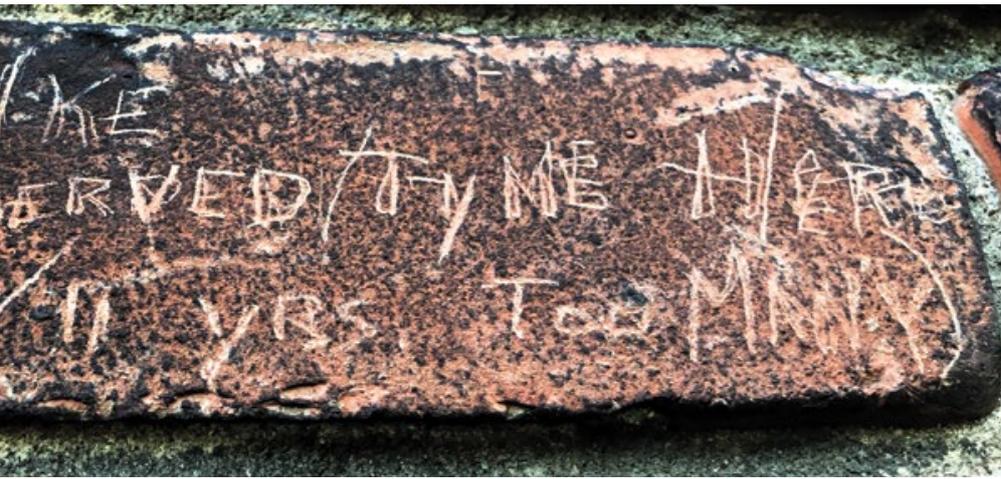
PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST

Timothy Khoo of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church stains a table top.



MDS PHOTO BY NICK HAMM

Crew leader Andrew Thiessen, right, of Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C., and helpers from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church and Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., help move documents and books around the former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ont., this summer.



PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY JOHN LONGHURST

Survivors of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ont., have returned to scratch messages into the bricks. There are hundreds at the back of the building where former students have left their marks, like this one from Franke, who 'served time here (11 yrs too many).'

When it closed, the school was returned to the Six Nations of the Grand River, which uses it as a cultural centre, library, archive and office space.

In 2014, a storm severely damaged the building, rendering it unusable. The community was asked whether to tear it

down or save it. An overwhelming majority voted to restore it as a testament to the horrors that happened there.

To realize that goal, Woodland launched the Save the Evidence campaign to restore the building. Through it, grants were obtained from various levels of government to do major repairs. But assistance was still needed to complete the exhibits.

In 2016, Woodland asked MCC if it could help. "We were honoured to receive the request and asked MDS to partner with us," says Lyndsay Mollins Koene, who coordinates MCC Ontario's Indigenous Neighbours program.

Nick Hamm, MDS Ontario's unit chair, realized it wasn't a normal request for the organization, which usually helps following natural disasters like floods, fires, earthquakes and storms. "It's not a typical MDS disaster response," says

Hamm, "but residential schools were a disaster for Canada's Indigenous people."

For Carley Gallant-Jenkins, Woodland's campaign coordinator, "it was surreal" to see all the work done by the volunteers. "We've been dreaming and planning about this since 2014," she says, surveying the desks, benches and tables built by the youth. "There's still lots to do, but the work of MDS and MCC is helping us reach our goal." The furniture "will help set the tone for the space, showing what it was like when children were sent there."

The dining hall restoration is particularly poignant since siblings who were sent to the school were separated and not allowed to talk to each other. While eating, they couldn't talk to each other, "but at least they could see each other from a distance," Gallant-Jenkins says.

She realizes it wasn't easy for the youth to hear stories like that. "They were hard stories to hear, but so important if we are to move forward together," she says.

'I find it hard to forgive'

Geronimo Henry, 82, attended and lived at the school for 11 years, from 1942 to '53. He started when he was 5.

"It was pretty hard," he says of his time at the school. "I was lonely and sad."

In all the years he lived and studied there, "nobody ever said I love you, nobody hugged me, nobody tucked me in at night," he says. "I never had any of that."

He was also forbidden to speak his language. "They wanted to assimilate us into the dominant society," he says. "I lost my ability to speak it."

Henry wasn't abused at the school, although he got the strap for things like playing when he was supposed to be in bed. "We were all abused, in a sense," he says, "mentally, physically, emotionally."

The lack of love and parental guidance meant he was unprepared for life when he left the school. This included raising his own children. "You can only practise what you've been taught," he says. "Nobody taught me how to love and be a good parent. I was dysfunctional."

Of his experience at the school, "I find

(Continued on page 22)



The former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ont., is currently being refurbished. Over the summer, MCC, MDS and Mennonite congregations from Ontario and British Columbia helped with the work.



Mennonite church youth groups from Kitchener, St. Jacobs, Listowel and Elmira, Ont., and Abbotsford, B.C., helped MDS restore this longhouse at the Woodland Cultural Centre over the summer.

'Compelled by God to do something'

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST
BRANTFORD, ONT.

For Sandy Yuen, doing service with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) was a way to answer God's call to work alongside Indigenous people in Canada—and help youth at her church develop closer bonds.

While attending a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario peace conference last year, Yuen heard about an MDS summer youth project at the former Mohawk residential school in Brantford.

When she learned that MCC was seeking volunteers for the project, Yuen—who has had a long-time interest in Indigenous issues—felt “compelled by God to do something.”

At the same time, as a youth leader together with her husband Jason at Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, she saw it as a practical way for youth in the church to do service and to bond as a group.

The church of about 150 congregants is actually a blend of three different congregations—Mandarin, Cantonese and English—meeting in the same building. As a result, it can be hard for youth who are part of the different groups to get to know each other well. By serving together, she hoped they could develop closer bonds and also do something positive to help others.

At first, she wasn't sure what the response would be. “When I asked for volunteers, I thought maybe five might sign up,” she says. “But 10 volunteered.”

While at the former residential school the last week of July, the youth built desks, tables and benches for a representative classroom and dining hall at the school, which was in operation from 1828 to 1970. They also helped move thousands of books and files back into the library.

Along with the restoration work, they met residential school survivors and heard about their experiences.

“The stories were heartbreaking,” says Yuen. “They were things you can't learn in a textbook.”

Youth also came away with a better appreciation for the importance of service, according to Yuen. “I especially liked how they were around adult role models from MDS, people who are doing service as a way of life,” she says. “By learning about why [the long-term MDSers] volunteer, they can see that service is something they can do their whole lives.”



For Sandy Yuen, a youth leader at Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, doing service with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) was a way to answer God's call to work alongside Indigenous people in Canada—and help youth at her church develop closer bonds.

(Continued from page 21)

it hard to forgive,” he says. “It took my childhood from me.”

One way he finds meaning is by sharing his story with others, like he did when the MDS youth project volunteers were on site. “I ate at a table like this,”



PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST

Geronimo Henry, a survivor of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ont., says of his experience at the school, 'I find it hard to forgive. It took my childhood from me.' He is sitting at one of the new tables built by MDS volunteers from Mennonite congregations in Ontario and British Columbia.



PHOTO BY NICK HAMM

Aidan Morton Ninomiya and Jonah Willms of St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church, front row, and Christian Albrecht and Steve Manske of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., back row, sit in school desks they helped build at the former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ont., this summer.

he says, sitting at one of the tables the volunteers had built, his hands running over the polished wood. “I really appreciate what MDS did. It was great to meet each group, tell them my story and learn about them.”

‘A long journey’ completed

For Nick Hamm, the end of the project was also the completion of “a long journey.”

Getting it off the ground took a long time, but “it’s worth it when you see the end product, both the furniture and the books, but mostly the relationships the volunteers developed with survivors and staff at Woodland,” he says. Altogether, those people “gave us a blessing. Now it is up to us to do something with what we learned there.”

“The project was steeped in a story we are a part of,” Mollins Koene says, referencing Mennonite involvement in running at least three residential schools in Ontario. It was also about “more than restoring a building. It was about restoring relationships between nations and between individuals.” ❧

For more photos, visit canadianmennonite.org/building-relations.



‘And that gives me hope’

Volunteers reflect on their week of service with MDS

COMPILED BY JOHN LONGHURST

Youth and leaders from six Mennonite churches in Ontario and British Columbia volunteered at the former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ont. in July. Here are a few of their reflections:

- **Laura Wagler**, Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, Ont.: Residential school survivors “were so kind to open up and share about their experiences about attending the school. [I learned] how large of an impact the residential school system had on their people.”

- **Charlotte Hale**, Elmira (Ont.) Mennonite Church: “This was really an eye opener for me. . . . [E]ven though the residential schools are closed now, Indigenous peoples are still being treated incredibly unfairly.”

- **Emma Nickel**, Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford B.C.: “During the week, we heard many survivor stories and learned much about the culture. The emotions surrounding these words and traditions are astounding. It made me sad that kids like me were forced into horrible things that hurt them so much. I’m angry it happened, but I’m also hopeful. More people are learning about the residential schools and what happened behind closed doors, and even more people will learn through what we have been doing with [Mennonite Disaster Service]. And that gives me hope.”

- **Malachi Dyck**, Listowel (Ont.) Mennonite Church: “This is a mission for us now, to undo the wrong that has been done, to help heal the hearts we have broken, as Christians, to fight for more land and better treatment of the Indigenous peoples, to eradicate the misuse of the word ‘Indian.’ If we band together, we can make things right.”

- **Clarice Shen**, 24, youth leader, Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church: “For many Chinese Canadians, they aren’t aware of this history. They see it as a European issue. But, as immigrants, we chose to come here, to seek a better life and make Canada our home. We are settlers of a different kind. We have privileges in Canada. As Asian Canadians, we need to think about how history impacts the way we live in Canada today, and as Christians we need to help lift up the original peoples of this land.”



PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST

Clarice Shen stains a new school bench at the former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ont.

Picnics galore!

Church programs come and go, but the picnic remains a staple in Alberta churches

By Joanne De Jong
Alberta Correspondent

Many church programs eventually come to an end, but there's one event that still remains after many decades—and that's the church picnic!

Almost every church in Alberta had a church picnic this summer or was invited to join one, because Albertans love them. Even the bad weather does not deter them, like at Edmonton First Mennonite, where they now set up inside the church just in case, and move outside if the weather is nice. Calgary First Mennonite, which meets at Camp Valaqua, plans a service inside the building and then moves outside, rain or shine, for games.

Games, food, intergenerational fellowship and being outside in God's cre-

ation are always ingredients for a successful picnic recipe.

Pastor Will Loewen of Trinity Mennonite near DeWinton, says, "Picnics are one of the activities that is low maintenance. Just throw out a blanket, bring food, and the kids always love to play! The communal element of eating food and organized play is what makes picnics so popular."

Trinity Mennonite has done a variety of things over the years. Last year it had carnival-themed games like hitting a hammer to ring the bell, sitting on a chair and risk being dunked in water, and a bouncy castle.

Eight-year-old Sebastian Loewen says his favorite activity this year was the wa-

ter balloon game, describing how participants loaded a blanket with water balloons and tossed them up and down until they broke one by one.

Every year, the games change, but there is always a wiener roast and ice cream made with an old-fashioned bucket and turner.

Some picnics are very relaxed, like at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton, where everyone just sits on the front lawn and enjoys burgers and fellowship. This year Holyrood invited the Chinese Mennonites from Edmonton Christian Life Community Church to join in the fun.

Other picnics are more intense, like at Springridge Mennonite Church in



PHOTO BY DEL WILLMS

Springridge Mennonite Church egg toss with Chris Marten and granddaughter Claire.



PHOTO BY JENNA HUNSBERGER

Children participate in the sack race at this year's church picnic at Trinity Mennonite Church near DeWinton. Pictured from left to right: Cole Schellenberg, Nate Lopaschuk and Ruby Loewen.

Pincher Creek, where it is a full-day affair with a potluck lunch and a barbecue supper.

According to Pastor Tany Warkentin, someone always organizes the games, which must include a sack race, three-legged race and running race. This year there was a gumboot toss that involves participants choosing a boot and seeing how far they can throw it. Water balloons, treasure hunts, and a baseball game with a break midway for watermelon, are all part of the fun. Inter-generational games are highly encouraged, including races that involve an older blindfolded person carrying a younger person who gives instructions on how to run through a set course. In the baseball game, kids are given unlimited swings and older people who can no longer run can choose a young person to run in their place.

Although many churches have shifted from calling their picnics "Sunday school picnics" to a more generic "church picnic," the majority held their picnics in June at the end of the Sunday school season.

Edmonton First Mennonite officially marks the end of Sunday school by acknowledging its Sunday school teachers

and having classes present what they have learned over the year. Graduates are also recognized, but, according to Esther Siemens, "the real highlight [is] the water balloons!"

Each picnic is special and unique.

At Calgary First Mennonite, a traditional picnic game involves three people racing on one set of skis that were handmade decades ago by Rudy Janssen Sr. He also made wheelbarrows with saddles. There is always a candy toss, and, of course, no picnic in Alberta is complete without water balloons. Who can toss a water balloon the farthest to their partner without it breaking?

Summer is now coming to an end, but one thing is sure, there will be church picnics galore

once again in 2020. And if you live in Alberta, there will be water balloons! ☼

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Singing, serving and studying

Summer brings new ways to worship for Prairie congregations

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent

When summer comes, many churches experience a drop in attendance. But being fewer in number can be an opportunity to try new forms of worship.

Singing together

Several Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations chose to worship in creative and perhaps less conventional ways this summer.

For the second summer in a row, Eigenheim Mennonite, located eight kilometres west of Rosthern, has invited others to join it for its annual Singing Sunday. Last summer, the church invited Waldheim's Zoar Mennonite; this year, it extended the invitation to nearby Tiefengrund Mennonite as well.

Worship chair Linda Swab says the joint service, held June 30, not only solved the problem of diminished attendance on a holiday long weekend for all three churches, it also fit well with MC Saskatchewan's 2019 theme of "Deepening our walk with each other."

Swab says there was good representation from each of the three congregations, and participants enjoyed a potluck lunch following the service.

Worship focused on service

North Star Mennonite in Drake is located



PHOTOS BY HEIDI MARTENS

ABOVE: Members of North Star Mennonite in Drake build picnic tables for a nearby hospital and seniors residence as part of Sunday worship devoted to service.

BELOW: Members of North Star Mennonite in Drake pack relief kits for Mennonite Central Committee as part of Sunday worship devoted to service.



ed 138 kilometres southeast of Saskatoon. On July 14, while Pastor Dan Graber was on vacation, Lisa Martens Bartel led the congregation in worship focused on service.

"This idea came out of a care group discussion about 'doing' church," she says. "When there was an open Sunday in summer, we took the opportunity to try something different."

The congregation met in the church basement for announcements, offering, Scripture reading and a hymn. Then congregants divided into groups to complete two service projects.

One group stayed in the basement and assembled relief kits for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Graham McDonald, material resources coordinator for MCC Saskatchewan, helped congregants pack towels, soap, toothbrushes and more into pails to create the kits.

The other group went outside to build picnic tables for a nearby hospital and seniors residence.

"The idea was to make hospitality and comfort more possible for residents and their families and friends," says Martens Bartel. "All kinds of tools appeared out of vehicles and the [number] of skilled builders was incredible. In about an



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Three congregations sing together as Eigenheim Mennonite Church hosts its neighbours from the Tiefengrund and Zoar Mennonite congregations.



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Congregants from Tiefengrund and Zoar Mennonite churches enjoy a potluck lunch hosted by Eigenheim Mennonite Church.

hour, volunteers constructed and stained three picnic tables. “It felt good to build them, and was well received,” she says.

Mennos and Methodists

Eyebrow Mennonite, 139 kilometres northwest of Regina, is tiny to begin with. Faced with the possibility of closing for the summer months, Pastor Sharon Schultz approached Seth Freeman, pastor of Eyebrow Free Methodist Church, to see whether the two congregations

might worship together.

When both church councils approved the plan, the pastors prepared a six-week series on the fruit of the Spirit, with each church hosting three services. Each Sunday began with coffee and fellowship at 10 a.m., followed by the worship service at 11. The series culminated with a service on joy, and worshippers shared communion. “It . . . worked really well,” says Schultz.

This is not the first time the Menno-

nites and Free Methodists have worshipped together. World Day of Prayer and Good Friday services are held in one of the two churches, and Remembrance Day and a Christmas carol festival are held in the community hall. Also, for the last few years, on or near Sept. 9, which is Suicide Awareness Day, the community holds a special service focused on mental health.

‘Dwelling in the Word’

Regina’s Grace Mennonite spends the month of August studying a single Scripture text. Pastor Rose Graber calls the practice “Dwelling in the Word.”

This summer’s text was Isaiah 55:1-9. Seated around tables in the church fellowship hall, congregants spent the first Sunday meditating on the text using *Lectio Divina*. Graber invited them to listen for a word or phrase that stood out for them in the text. She then asked them to ponder why that particular word or phrase stood out and what it might mean for them.

The second Sunday was spent in traditional worship, with Graber preaching on the given text.

Congregants responded to what they’d learned on the third Sunday. Graber pre-arranged several responses and then gave opportunity for spontaneous responses from others. In the past, responses have included artwork, poetry and floral arrangements.

On the final Sunday, they dug deeper into the text, once again using *Lectio Divina*. This week’s questions included, “What are you, or what is the world, thirsty for?” and, “What do you spend money on that doesn’t satisfy?”

“Because we’re smaller in attendance,” says Graber, “this gives us opportunity to delve into the Word in a more intimate setting.”

So, whether meditating on God’s Word or building picnic tables, reaching out to other Mennonite congregations or to congregations of another denomination, these churches have discovered that being fewer in number doesn’t need to hinder their summer worship, and, in some cases, may even be an advantage. ☞



PHOTO BY ROSE GRABER

*Members of Regina’s Grace Mennonite Church spent the month of August studying a single Scripture text. Using *Lectio Divina*, they listened to the text, meditated on it and responded in table groups.*

West Hills congregation gets 'messy' at church

By Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Two years ago, West Hills Fellowship, in Baden, Ont., faced up to its small-church realities. It had lost some families for a variety of reasons, and found it challenging to run programs and Sunday morning worship services.

That's when the congregation tried a "messy church" model.

During a sabbatical visit to a church plant on the outskirts of Edinburgh, Scotland, Pastor Sean East and his wife Jacquie observed "messy church" in action. For two Sundays of the month the church met for a regular worship service. On alternate weeks, it did "messy church," inviting families from the community to join in for activities like a picnic and games.

The Easts wondered if this rhythm could work at West Hills.

The 18-year-old church plant was already engaged in ReLearning Community, a journey of intentional discipleship facilitated by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada that helps congregations explore key questions like, "How is God calling us as a congregation?" and, "How are we responding to that call?"

There are no cookie-cutter answers, only an invitation to enter into a rhythm of listening for God and responding by wrestling with what it means to be the

church in the congregation's setting.

Instead of telling itself the story that West Hills had failed as a church plant, ReLearning Community "freed us to tell a different story," says East. The church began "listening for God's voice" and focusing on "what God is asking of us now," trusting that "God can use us now, no matter what our size is."

One of the key concepts of ReLearning Community is that disciples of Jesus have three sets of relationships to balance: "up" with God, "in" with fellow believers, and "out" with the world. With encouragement from Brian Bauman, MC Eastern Canada's mission minister, West Hills took the risk to try a "messy church" rhythm that attends to all three.

The congregation meets for a regular worship service twice a month, attending to its "up" relationship. In between is an "in" Sunday, meeting in someone's home for worship, faith formation and a

shared meal.

On the fourth Sunday, the focus is "out"ward. Instead of a regular service, an event is planned and people in the local community are invited, or West Hills joins in an event that is already happening. This might be a gym night, a nature walk, bowling, a community cleanup or



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WEST HILLS FELLOWSHIP

Children prepare to go for a tractor and wagon ride at a local farm for one of the West Hills congregation's 'out' Sundays.

a trip to a Blue Jays game—events that allow for informal relationship-building.

Congregants are excited about what God is doing "in," "out" and through the church, according to East, who says there are now "more opportunities to engage people." The church gets "invited into people's lives," to walk alongside and know each other better.

The leaders at West Hills have tried to operate from a place of humility, making it safe for people to grieve over the loss of a familiar way of doing church, and tweaking the process of change as needed. East is particularly moved by responses from some members who were uncertain about the changes at first but committed to pray for the new pattern of church that was emerging.

Through the process, the congregation has learned that a church is not the building or its rituals. The church is people. East says that West Hills' measures of success are not membership numbers or dollars tithed, but "whether we have been faithful to what God is calling us to." ❧



The West Hills congregation gathers for worship in a home on their 'in' Sunday.

'Beyond expectations' with the help of God

By Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

"I'm so sad that it's over!" said one young participant after a week of high-energy Vacation Bible School (VBS) activities at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener last month.

That is just what the eight-member intercultural planning committee wanted to hear after its first joint venture of leading VBS for children aged 2 to 11 each morning from Aug. 12 to 16.

First Hmong Mennonite and First Mennonite, both located in Kitchener, have a special 40-year relationship, but this was the first time they teamed up to offer VBS. Seventy-eight children attended, three-quarters of whom were from First Hmong.

The result, according to the planners, was "beyond expectations," a fitting sentiment since the theme of the week was "To Mars and beyond," a mission of learning to do "far more than we can ask or imagine" through God's power "at work within us" (Ephesians 3:20). Each lesson focused on one way to live out God's call, using biblical stories to illustrate five attributes over the five days: faith, boldness, thankfulness, kindness and hope.

At the final assembly, children danced and sang along to music videos projected on the screen. "We are on a mission. . . . We will learn to trust God's power at work in us." When it was over, many of them clambered for the props, posters and other mementos to take home, along with their arts and crafts projects.

Tina Heu, planning committee chair, provided breakfast for all the volunteers each morning, and led a devotional to help the team focus on the theme for the day. This became an important time for friendship, fellowship and encouragement.

For the First Hmong congregation, VBS is a big deal their children look



PHOTO BY BARB BURKHARD

Children make planets at the VBS craft station, on the theme of 'To Mars and beyond.'

forward to every year. But it struggles to find enough space in the building it has owned since 1996. Prior to that, the Hmong Christians worshipped on Sunday afternoons at First Mennonite, one of the sponsoring churches, when they arrived in Kitchener 40 years ago.

With fewer young children, First Mennonite hasn't hosted VBS for years but has the space to do it.

With the well-developed plans and experience of the First Hmong leaders, volunteers from First Mennonite were happy to provide the facility and "come alongside the plans already in place," according to René Baergen, lead pastor of First Mennonite. The joint VBS venture came about after conversations this spring between pastors Chung Vang and Baergen about ways their congregations might deepen their relationship.

The VBS experience was a "wonderful week of making new friends and discovering old connections . . . learning that we are not so different after all," said Baergen.

Gao Hlee Vang, one of the planners, said that VBS is an important way to draw in First Hmong teens and young adults who may not always attend church anymore, but she was also encouraged by some of the retirees from First Mennonite who helped out. She enjoyed how all the generations worked together.

Griselda Bevenborn of First Mennonite was inspired by the leaders from First Hmong, who gave so generously of their time and their gifts out of a genuine love of Christ and a love of children, even when their lives are busy.

A common refrain was, "We can't wait until next year!" ▮



Jan Joyce working in a home in Grand Forks, B.C., damaged by the 2018 flood.

Volunteers needed this fall

Mennonite Disaster Service has an urgent need for volunteers this fall, due to a rise in natural disasters and weather delays this spring. We need weekly volunteers in Texas, South Dakota, California and more.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve a greater number of disaster survivors this season. "Join us in our ambitious endeavor to bring home more people.

To Volunteer
Call 1-800-241-811
mds.mennonite.net

News brief

CMU psychology professor awarded \$100,000 research grant



Heather Campbell-Enns

WINNIPEG—Heather Campbell-Enns, assistant professor of psychology at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), received a one-year grant worth \$100,000 through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). She will use the grant for a research project called "Best practices: Transitions from hospital to community-based settings for rural and remote persons with dementia." One aim of the project is to identify current interventions used to coordinate care for people with dementia when they are discharged from the hospital. Since most of these methods have not been tested in rural settings, the team will select a few interventions and customize them for rural and remote contexts. The grant funds will allow Campbell-Enns to employ student research assistants in Manitoba, and Newfoundland and Labrador, who will compile information on coordinated care interventions. It will mean team members can have face-to-face meetings in each province to better plan future research activities in rural and remote settings. The grant will also help the current team members build connections and partnerships, thereby forming a team that's interested in future research in the field of dementia care. This will enable them to apply for a larger grant in the next few years, which they will be able to use to implement and evaluate one of the approaches to coordinating care across several rural areas in Canada.

—CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

News brief

CMU faculty and team awarded \$119,000 federal grant



Karen Ridd

WINNIPEG—An instructor from Canadian Mennonite University's Menno Simons College and a team of other professors are the recipients of a prestigious federal grant. Karen Ridd, an instructor in peace and conflict resolution studies, received a three-year Partnership Development Grant worth \$119,000 through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. She joins a team of University of Winnipeg professors as co-applicants on the grant. The grant will be used to create a Centre for Prison Education and Research. The team will research prison education, community-based and experiential learning techniques, and prisoner re-entry, using collaborative methods that will engage the community. They will also form a network of researchers, educators and community groups across institutions and disciplines, that will pursue further work in this field and create partnerships between these groups and government agencies to improve education and support for prisoners. Ridd's primary ways of participating in the grant will be teaching Walls to Bridges (W2B) courses and participating in the W2B Think Tank. W2B is a program that teaches university courses inside prisons to equal numbers of incarcerated students and campus-enrolled students. Ridd says there is a growing number of professors in Manitoba who are trained to teach courses in this format.

—CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

'That school kit saved my life'

Recent nominee to MC Canada Joint Council reflects on her journey of faith

Story and Photo by Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Ly Vang was 16 and stuck in a refugee camp in Thailand with a pair of shoes and two sets of clothes. She was lonely and sad. She struggled with suicidal thoughts.

"What is the meaning of living like this?" she complained to God. "Being dead would be better."

One day, though, she noticed a crowd of people around some white visitors who were handing out something. She came closer, pushing forward in the line until she received a small cloth bag with a heart sewn on the front. Inside were two notebooks, an eraser, pencils, pens and a ruler. Her life changed in an instant.

"The heart on the bag spoke to me," she says. "It made me think of the love of God in John 3:16."

"That school kit saved my life," Vang says now. "It saved my faith."

She started to write songs and Bible verses in the notebooks. Soon other people in the camp asked her to write letters for them, as they tried to find lost relatives. She wrote so many letters that her fingers were sore, and she divided the lines with the ruler so she could write smaller and save paper!

"When I received the school kit, I received a ministry," she says. "I felt alive again, useful. . . . I remembered God again."

It wasn't until 20 years later, after she was resettled in Canada, that Vang made the connection between the school kit she received and the Mennonites who supported her Hmong people as recent arrivals in Canada.

She credits the Mennonites for being "willing to hold us . . . like an egg . . . willing to incubate and support us. . . . They



Ly Vang holds the MCC school kit bag she received as a teenager in a refugee camp in Thailand. 'If the person who made this is still alive,' she says, 'I would like to say thank you.'



helped us find a place to worship, initially in Baden, and then at First Mennonite in Kitchener. . . . The way we received care and love from Mennonites . . . made us want to be Mennonite," she says.

In 1996, First Hmong Mennonite Church bought a building of its own. Vang has been involved from the beginning, leading the youth, offering women's Bible studies and providing translation services.

Wanting to encourage the youth to serve others, she took them to the local Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) warehouse to volunteer. Their job was

to pack school kits. That's when she realized the school kit she received so many years before was from Mennonites.

As soon as she got home, she searched through her things and found the bag. She calls it "my miracle bag of life, adding, "I was so poor when I came to Canada that all I carried fit into that bag."

Vang continues to be inspired by the work of MCC. It is "the Word become flesh and alive within us," she says. People can learn so much about the Bible, but she stresses that "the word needs to become flesh."

In Canada, Vang married and raised five children. In that time she also graduated from a business administration program at college. She is now a grandmother and lives in a multi-generational home. She serves on the mission and prayer teams, and teaches adult Sunday school at First Hmong.

Recently she was invited to serve as a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada representative on MC Canada's Joint Council, the board that oversees the mission of the nationwide church. She was surprised to be nominated but she has learned to say "Yes, Lord" when God calls. "God plans ahead. I just follow along," she says, seeing this as another opportunity to serve God's family.

When she dreams about the future of MC Canada, an image from the Book of Revelation sticks in her head. "I see many nations, names, tongues and tribes worshipping God on Earth," she says.

Clutching the school bag she received nearly 40 years ago, Vang reflects back on her journey of faith with deep gratitude. "I appreciate life every day," she says. "God is just an amazing God. God gets me through." ☸

Staging change behind bars

Theatre of the Beat facilitates restorative-justice drama program in a women's prison

By Rachel Bergen
Contributing Editor

Ontario's Theatre of the Beat has a mandate of staging change and creating conversations around social justice issues, but that's also happening in communities beyond the Mennonite enclaves the company brings its plays to.

Once a week, a couple of the members of the theatre troupe provide therapeutic drama classes to the inmates incarcerated at the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ont.

Kimberlee Walker, who is a member of Kitchener's Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, is the founder and one of the program facilitators. She formerly worked as a behavioural counsellor at the prison, supporting individuals in the secure unit who were experiencing complex mental health and behavioural needs.

When her contract ended, she decided to move on from crisis-intervention work, but she still cared deeply about the well-being of people who are incarcerated. She started to dream about how she could use her theatrical skills to support the people at the prison.

"In my master of social work [degree program], I was learning a lot about applied theatre, which is theatre created by and with people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to explore theatrical arts, typically marginalized people," she says.

Walker says applied theatre is pretty new in Canada, especially in women's prisons, so she had to write a proposal and research project to send to the prison administration.

"Eventually they let me try it," she says.

In 2016, Walker launched a pilot theatre program consisting of theatre workshops and rehearsals that culminated in a half-hour play called *The Identity Proj-*

ect, created and performed by people involved in the project. The program's intent was to support meaningful experiences of personal growth and reflection, and to forge a pro-social identity for the participants.

Nathaniel Voll is also involved in facilitating the program. He says it is the highlight of his week and it seems to make a difference in the institution. "The work we do has a positive and restorative impact on the individuals in our group, an impact that trickles out to the eco-

against you," he explains. "In [Grand Valley], theatre is risky and real and imperfect, and it has truly changed the way I see the art form."

Walker says that part of the reason she is involved is to help provide some healing for people: "I think that expressing ourselves through art can be really healing. Although it's a gross understatement, I think hurt people hurt people. Part of restorative justice is also healing for offenders. Being part of a supportive, collaborative group practising restorative justice is important for the people involved."

It is also an important way of bridging gaps across the racial divides of the prison and facilitating friendships that might not exist otherwise.

"I'm doing a lot of mediating," Walker says. "There can be racism and discrimination in prison, because everyone's scared. There can also be an us-and-them mentality."

Walker feels like this work is an expression of her faith. "My faith is about loving people and trying to be non-judgmental in that love, and being open to learning from the other," she says. "My faith makes me

want to love everyone. I see salvation as moving towards healing for creation, for my enemy, for people in prison, for the world."

Coming up, Walker is leading the participants in creating their own play, which will centre around the theme of diversity. ☞

For more information, visit:
theatreofthebeat.ca/restorative-justice-theatre.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIMBERLEE WALKER

Johnny Wideman and Kimberlee Walker are members of Theatre of the Beat and co-facilitators of the restorative-justice drama program.

system of the institution in general, and beyond," he says, adding, "It is important work."

Johnny Wideman, the artistic director of Theatre of the Beat and another co-facilitator, says that is because drama requires vulnerability, something that can be seen as weakness in prison.

"It can be terrifying at the best of times to bare this [vulnerability] in front of a live audience, but in prison, showing emotion in this way, or failing at something, can be seen as weakness and used





PHOTO COURTESY OF GARRY JANZEN / TEXT BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

Participants in the 12th annual Mennonite Church B.C. motorcycle ride pause for a break at Cascade Lookout in Manning Park on Aug. 24. Bikers met in Chilliwack and rode to the Manning Park Resort, where they enjoyed lunch together, before returning via Hope. The group came from Tsawwassen, Ladner, North Delta, Port Coquitlam, Mission, Abbotsford and Chilliwack. Numbers were up to 12 this year, from six last year. 'We had a great time even though we had some cooler temperatures in the mountains, and a couple of rain showers on the way back,' said Garry Janzen, MC B.C.'s executive minister and ride organizer.



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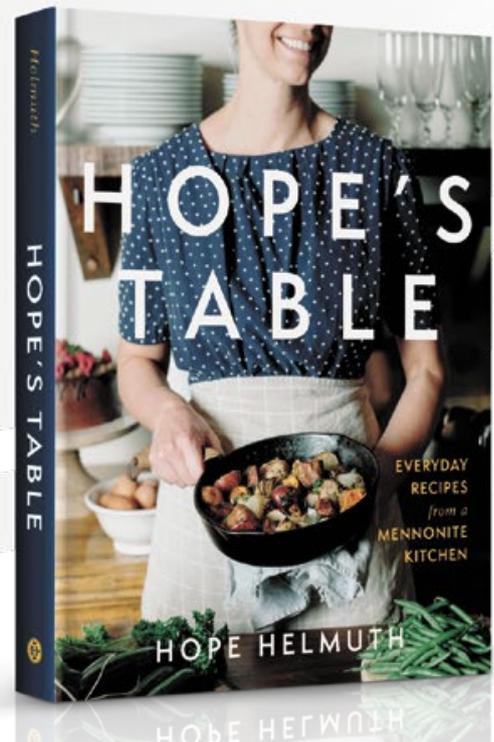
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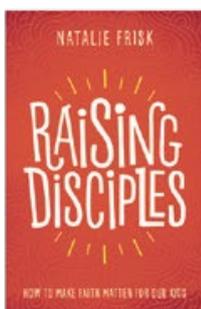
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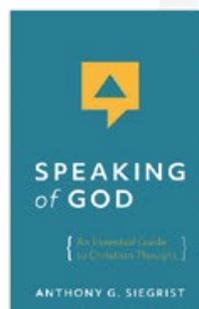
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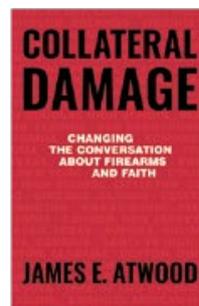
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Collateral Damage

Changing the Conversation about Firearms and Faith

by James E. Atwood

978-1-5138-0486-6. PB. \$20.49 CAD

Gun violence has been called the theological emergency of our time. The church has a moral and spiritual obligation to side with life against death. Will we rise to the occasion?

Mixing friendship with fundraising

Waterloo Region network supports women in developing economies

By Janet Bauman

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

The Waterloo Region chapter of Women Empowering Women (WEW) meets quarterly to nurture connections and friendships, to be inspired and to raise funds that support women in developing economies. As an auxiliary group of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), it supports MEDA's international work of "helping women move into more valued and equitable roles in their economies."

For Nancy Mann, one of the charter members of WEW, it is a meaningful combination. She got excited about WEW at MEDA's 2016 convention, at which she first heard about chapters in the United States. She felt certain there

en in developing countries. WEW participants are then encouraged to donate money to that particular project.

As a retiree, Mann misses the collegiality of the workplace, so she appreciates the network of women friends she has made through WEW's Waterloo Region chapter, as well as the sense of meaningful purpose in knowing that improving the lives of women in developing countries has a profound, positive impact on the well-being of their families and communities. She is so encouraged to hear stories of women learning all aspects of running a business, becoming trainers, mentors and role models for others, and even moving into politics to impact change on a wider scale.



MEDA PHOTO

Nancy Mann, right, who helped to establish Women Empowering Women (WeW) in Waterloo Region, speaks to the group at one of its quarterly meetings.

were women in Waterloo Region who would be interested in forming a similar network. In early 2017, she, along with five other women, launched the Waterloo Region chapter, following a model provided by MEDA.

The group, which is open to all women, meets quarterly to connect socially and learn from a MEDA speaker who describes a project that supports wom-

Mann sees her involvement with WEW as "an opportunity to give back." She says that, in Canada, with its socio-economic advantages and its legal protections for women, there are now many professional women and retirees who have become economically successful and have resources they can share.

While there are many things that could be done with those resources—

travel, home renovations and giving to many other worthy causes—she expresses "immense gratitude for vocational opportunities [she] had . . . here in Canada," and wants to "enable other women . . . to support their families through improved economic opportunities"

MEDA's faith-based foundations, and the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion lenses through which it engages its mission to "create business solutions to poverty," resonate with Mann and WEW's Waterloo Region chapter.

According to Mann, when MEDA's values—such as justice, respect, partnership, dignity, equality and sustainability—are integrated with decisions about economic opportunities, the results are "flagship examples" of development work.

One MEDA project in Myanmar that WEW heard about is called Improving Market Opportunities for Women. Aimed at "increasing women's participation in the country's evolving economy," the project offers business assistance and matching grants to help women who are farming or running shops, to expand their supply chains.

WEW's Waterloo Region chapter averages around 30 women at its meetings, held in the community room at 50 Kent Avenue in Kitchener. Meetings begin with a half-hour of connecting over refreshments, often with an international flavour, before hearing the speaker for the evening, and collecting donations.

For 2019, Kindred Credit Union has offered to match the chapter's donations, up to a total of \$20,000. To date, WEW is nearly half way to that goal, having generated \$9,045 on its own.

There are two meetings left, on Oct. 3 and Dec 5. At the December meeting, Dorothy Nyambi, MEDA's president and chief executive officer, will address the group on the topic of women in leadership. Nyambi, a dual citizen of Canada and Cameroon, has more than 20 years of experience in development work around the world. ❧

Anyone interested in starting a new WEW chapter can contact Vicki Loree, MEDA's marketing manager, at vloree@meda.org.



FOCUS ON MONEY

VIEWPOINT

Why your church needs to talk about money

Lori Guenther Reesor
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

The local church is an excellent place to discuss saving money: Which type of tractor is cheapest to repair or whether a Costco membership is worth it. Mennonites brag about finding a good deal.

During a worship service or church gathering, there will be announcements and requests promoting benefit concerts, fundraising dinners, bike-a-thons or relief sales. A good deal for a good cause: Count us in!

So we do talk about money at church, but we seldom talk about “giving” money to the church. We should. Why? Because the spiritual discipline of giving is a discipleship question and not a budget question.

Does the following story sound familiar? At the end of the fiscal year, the treasurer goes to the front to announce that the congregation is behind budget. The treasurer dreads this, and so do the people in the pews. Another appeal to guilt and obligation. More money comes in. If it’s not quite enough money, the budget shrinks for next year. Problem solved.

If you write a cheque or put your name on an envelope with cash in it, you get a tax receipt in January. Otherwise, there’s not much difference if you give or not. People might personally invite you to their charity golf tournament and thank you for coming, but rarely will anyone ask you directly to give to the church or thank you for donating.

You could easily get the impression that giving to the church is only for older people with chequebooks who know the unspoken rules. And, in fact, most giving to all churches and charities in Canada comes from a diminishing pool of older donors.

So there is a demographic reason to talk about money: Is your church two or three funerals away from disaster? I’d argue, though, that the survival of your local congregation is not the most important reason to talk about money.

Talking about money is a discipleship question. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The spiritual discipline of giving needs our attention so that our hearts are moving in the right direction.

When I meet with congregations that are terrified to talk about money, I reassure them: “Jesus talks about money; we can too.” Silence and secrecy around giving gives money more power than it deserves. If the church doesn’t talk about money, our culture will fill in the gap.

Relying on the unspoken expectation, ‘You give because you should give,’ does not work for baby boomers and younger generations. Churches assume that people learned to give at home, that you watched Dad counting out cash from his pay envelope into the church pile first. Some people did, but many people did not.

How do we learn about giving if we don’t talk about it? Listening to generous people share how they learned to give is a joy I recommend to everyone. Generosity can be contagious.

I often hear people cite the “left hand, right hand” story about giving, fasting and prayer in Matthew 6. Their conclusion is that we can’t talk about money at church. However, Jesus talked about praying in your closet, yet we still pray in church.

I understand the “left hand, right hand” story this way: When you give money to the poor—not if but when—don’t brag about it. This is not the same

as giving money to the church. Jesus and his disciples sat and watched how much people put in the treasury at the temple; he commended the widow who gave two small coins. Jesus proclaimed that salvation came to Zacchaeus after Zacchaeus announced that he was giving half of everything he had to the poor and repaying those he had defrauded. Jesus talked about money often, so did Paul. The Book of Acts begins with stories of public giving. The Scriptures supply plenty of money stories to talk about!

Giving is a spiritual discipline like prayer, something believers do individually and communally, spontaneously and regularly. Giving as a communal practice builds up the church. A budget is not a compelling reason to give.

Tell the stories of what wonderful things God is doing in our midst. How does our giving build up the kingdom?

In the body of Christ, the local church is the heart and lungs for all sorts of ministry. When we only celebrate the hands and feet of the body—programs beyond the church—we suggest that giving to the church is less exciting and less important than supporting programs like camp or mission agencies. Tell the stories. Create generous disciples. ☛



Lori Guenther Reesor lives in Mississauga, Ont., and worships at Hamilton Mennonite Church. She is a speaker, writer and

consultant on Christian giving. She blogs at lgresor.com and is currently writing a book about church and money. Read about how to talk about money in the second part of this series in the Sept. 30 issue of Canadian Mennonite.

Generosity in Retirement

Retirement. At twenty, we rarely think about it. At 45, we dream about it. And, at 55 we worry about it. A significant amount of financial planning tends to focus on that time in life when, as the saying goes, we “finally stop working and start living.” But what about our charitable giving? When we retire, does that fall under the “working” we used to do or the “living” we have ahead of us?

Transitioning out of the workforce offers unique opportunities for strategic giving that lay the foundation for ongoing generosity in retirement.

For example, a person selling their business might offset capital gains taxes with a sizeable charitable donation. This donation would be added to an Abundance Canada Gifting Fund, and then the donor could disburse the earnings and/or donated capital to charities throughout retirement.

In the same vein, people downsizing, selling vacation properties, or divesting of a second home can donate some (or all) of the proceeds of these sales into a gifting fund to seed their ongoing charitable giving.

Many people love that retirement affords them the opportunity to travel, and thousands of Canadians choose to spend the cold winter months in warmer climates. However, leaving when the snow falls and coming back in the spring can make managing all the receipts and donations a bit tricky.

Abundance Canada’s Gifting Fund provides the flexibility to schedule when you wish to

PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT



distribute funds. Then, while you’re enjoying the sunny weather or travelling the globe, Abundance Canada will disburse funds to the charities you have recommended. Many retired ‘snowbirds’ find this very helpful.

Giving to charity isn’t
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- Donating publicly traded securities that have increased in value and are held in a non-registered investment account allows you to continue giving generously without having to withdraw cash from your bank account.
- By donating stocks, bonds or mutual funds in-kind, you avoid the capital gains tax you would pay if you cashed them in first and then donated the proceeds from the sale. This is a very tax effective and popular gifting option.

- Many people purchase life insurance policies for a specific season of life, often when they are raising a family. However, by the time retirement comes around, the beneficiaries that would depend on the policy may have become financially independent.

If a life insurance policy is no longer needed, it can be gifted to a registered Canadian charity who will issue an official donation receipt for the fair market value of the policy. An Abundance Canada gift planning consultant can explain more to you about this gifting option.

So, whether retirement is around the corner or years down the road, it’s never too early to start thinking about the future of your generosity. How will you give?



Brad Friesen is a gift planning consultant with Abundance Canada. Abundance Canada works with people of all ages to assist them in achieving their philanthropic goals. We can help you create a customized generosity plan that suits your charitable aspirations at every stage of life. Learn more at abundance.ca.



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Desire infection

Lethbridge pastor Ryan Dueck explores how we might “desire in better ways,” on the CM blog.

canadianmennonite.org/blog/rd-desire



We're all in debt—and it's not a bad thing

On the CM blog, Ottawa pastor Anthony G. Siegrist asks: What's wrong with the phrase “institutional church”?

canadianmennonite.org/blog/ags-debt



A global conversation through books

Translations of Mennonite books are a boon to seminarians and lay leaders in Anabaptist house churches in Korea.

canadianmennonite.org/mwcbooks



Watch: “The Story of MCC Thrift”

The story of Mennonite Central Committee's thrift shops is given a unique retelling in a short new video by Winnipeg filmmaker Paul Plett.

canadianmennonite.org/video/mccthrift

Calendar

British Columbia

Oct. 18-20: “Gifted for purpose,” MC B.C. Women's retreat at Camp Squeah, featuring Kelly Rader. For more information contact info@mcbbc.ca.

Alberta

Oct. 19: MC Alberta Equipping Day event, “Healthy ministry boundaries,” for pastors, congregational leaders and those involved in church ministry programs; at Trinity Mennonite, DeWinton, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Oct. 26: Seventh annual Christian Muslim dialogue, “Heart of hospitality,” at the ACCA Centre, Edmonton at 9:30 a.m.; featuring Neveen Ayad and Scott Sharman. For tickets, visit acwalberta.ca.

Saskatchewan

Oct. 17,18: MC Saskatchewan continuing education days, at the MCC Centre, Saskatoon.
Oct. 19: MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day, at RJC.
Oct. 26: RJC homecoming banquet and corporation meeting.

Manitoba

Oct. 5: Camp Assiniboia Square Dance and Pie Spectacular fundraising event, at the camp, at 6:30 p.m. To donate pies, call the camp office at 204-895-2267.
Oct. 5: Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, host “Faith in form,” a Christian arts festival on writing, visual art and film; featuring Sarah Klassen and Sally Ito; from noon to 6 p.m.. For more information, visit faithinformwinnipeg.com.
Oct. 16: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fall supper. For more information, visit westgatemenonite.ca.
Oct. 18: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery annual fundraiser, featuring the Odanah Youth Choir, Hutterite artist Victor Kleinsasser from Crystal Springs Colony, and artworks from 14 colonies, among others; at 7:30 p.m. RSVP Selenna Wolfe at swolfe@cmu.ca.
Oct. 26,27: Canadian Foodgrains Bank's “Singin' in the grain” fundraising concerts, featuring the Encore Quartet and Canzona: (26) at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.; (27) at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler, at 3 p.m.

Ontario

Sept. 21: “Catalyzing collaboration,” the fifth anniversary celebration of the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement, at Conrad Grebel University College, from 2 to 4 p.m.
Sept. 22: Kindred Credit Union Hike for Hospice, at the Laurel Creek Conservation Area, Waterloo.

Watch Will Braun's

rant on money

the
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Registration begins at 9 a.m. To learn more, visit hospicewaterloo.ca.

Sept. 28: Breakfast celebrating 40 years of The Mennonite Story, at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, 8:30 a.m. with John Ruth as guest speaker. Tickets at mennonitestorybreakfast.eventbrite.ca.

Oct. 2-3: Credence & Co. presents a "Healthy boundaries in the context of ministry" workshop, at Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, featuring Marg Van Herk-Paradis.

Oct. 6: Make a Difference Day, for MC Eastern Canada's junior youth, at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg

Oct. 10: Benjamin Eby Lecture,

at the Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Mark Vuorinen, chair of the Music Department and associate professor. Topic: "Witnessing passion: Musical depiction of minor characters in passion music of Bach, Esenvalds, MacMillan and Pärt."

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



/// **News Brief**

Mennonite Museum hosts movie matinees



Harold Ratzlaff, left, hosts a film series at the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Abbotsford, B.C. Organizers hope both to inform the public and generate conversation about the Mennonite experience through showing a variety of films.

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—It's movie matinee time twice a week at the Mennonite Heritage Museum, with showings of films related to the Mennonite experience. Tickets are free, but registration is required due to limited seating. The award-winning feature films and documentaries shown cover a variety of Mennonite-related topics, including Anabaptist history; Mennonite migrations to, and experiences in, various countries; conscientious objectors; and other topics. Host Harold Ratzlaff selects the films to be shown, with suggestions from Jennifer Martens, the museum's office and volunteer manager. Ratzlaff says the theatre can accommodate up to 30 people. Attendance this summer has varied from a half-dozen attendees to a full house. One movie is shown each week, with viewings on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. A new series will begin in the fall. For more information, and a list of upcoming films, visit mennonitemuseum.org.

—**STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY RINNER WADDELL**



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/// **Classifieds**

Employment Opportunities

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Youth Ministry

The **Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona** is seeking someone to join the ministry of our congregation with a focus on youth. We are looking for an individual that has a deep love for God and is passionate about engaging in meaningful relationships with the youth of our congregation and wider community - providing spiritual guidance, friendship, and a place to feel welcome and safe. Flexibility in duties to be determined based on candidates gifts.

The Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona is a group of ordinary people who share faith in an extraordinary God and follow an extraordinary Saviour, Jesus Christ. We express our love for God through worship, community, and service. As disciples of Jesus, we aspire to be a sign of God's kingdom in Altona and beyond.
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Altona is a bustling rural community, just one hour south of Winnipeg, in the heart of south central Manitoba. www.altona.ca

Inquiries in the position can be made to Andrew Rempel, Search Committee Chair (andrewmrempel@gmail.com) or Kathy Giesbrecht at Mennonite Church Manitoba, (kgiesbrecht@mennochurch.mb.ca).



PHOTOS BY SE YIM / TEXT BY FRED LICHTI

ABOVE: Each year, on a Saturday in July, the 10 congregations that make up the Milverton (Ont.) Amish community hold an auction to raise funds for their parochial schools. Local auctioneers sell everything from quilts, hand-crafted furniture and antiques, to horses and harnesses. The Amish build and maintain their own schools, provide their own curriculum and pay their teachers without any government funding.

Photo finish

BELOW: This year's Amish school auction sprawled across a recently harvested hayfield on the Kuepfer farm north of Milverton, Ont., on July 20. Much like the Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale in nearby New Hamburg, the auction is attended by thousands of locals and province-wide visitors, who come to bid on a wide array of items and to enjoy the food. To learn more, visit bit.ly/2zxxz12.

