

CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 21, 2021 Volume 25 Number 13



People and staff of the St. Andrew's Long Memorial Clinic in Kitimat, British Columbia, in 1962. In that year, nurses pulled their children out of the school following the death of a student. The United Church of Canada Archive, Kitimat

- Hundreds of healing initiatives and projects have been funded through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and many other independent programs and initiatives have been created throughout Canada to heed the healing objective.

Not just a walk in the park

Angelika Dawson learns from her
Walk in the Spirit of Reconciliation, pg. 14

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EDITORIAL

Precious lives

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Executive Editor



The unmarked graves of several hundred Indigenous children. A

deliberate act of violence against a Muslim family out for a stroll. In recent weeks, new reports have again shown how entire groups of people suffered because of their ethnicity or beliefs. (Sadly, by the time you read this, there may have been more.) In response, people across the country have reacted in shock, grief and anger at a society that allows this violence to happen—again and again.

“We believe that God has created human beings in the divine image,” asserts the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. “God formed them from the dust of the earth and gave them a special dignity among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God, to live in peace with each other, and to take care of the rest of creation” (Article 6).

Humans are imbued with a God-given dignity, each one valued as a precious child of God, and deserving of respect, safety and love. This belief undergirds the gospel of peace we Anabaptists claim to follow.

Yet, ignorance and hatred surround us, leading to these indignities against God’s children. Historical wrongs were committed against human beings who were lovingly created as a reflection of the Divine. Present-day violence cuts previous lives short and unleashes fear in entire communities.

No one can restore the lives that were

cut short by racist systems and hateful actions. Seeking and telling the truth is important. Apologies and financial compensation may help ease some difficulties for survivors. But these acknowledgments will never equal the precious lives lost.

One characteristic of violence in all its forms is that it dismisses the value of people who were created by God. The challenge—for people of faith and goodwill—is to re-affirm that lost dignity and to strive diligently against the harmful attitudes that continue to fester.

In response to the discoveries in Kamloops and the attack in London, Ont., many have engaged in symbolic actions, through virtual and physical demonstrations of support. We have witnessed flags at half mast, orange t-shirts, and impassioned social media posts. There have been tears and prayers of lament. Flowers, teddy bears and children’s shoes symbolized the caring of our communities.

But these are only first steps. What can we do, beyond symbolic acts, to honour and protect the dignity of each child of God? We are called to stand up against fear and hatred in more concrete ways.

As individuals, we must remember that each of us is prone to the same attitudes that we despise in others. We need to examine, honestly and carefully, our own tendencies to devalue people who are different from us. We can resolve to listen deeply to the experiences of those who have been targeted. We can learn how to push back, with

wisdom and determination, against acts of hatred.

We pray for those caught up in violence. Most certainly we pray for the victims. But the Bible instructs us to pray also for the “enemies,” specifically the people who have caused the pain, and the ones tempted to cause pain through words and deeds.

It is time for our churches and institutions to move beyond the words of land acknowledgements. How are we teaching anti-racism to people of all ages? Are we connecting with other people of faith to work on behalf of marginalized people in our communities? Maybe it is time to revisit the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and to study the ones addressed to churches and faith groups. Do our policies, programs, and practices value and promote the rights of all people? If not, what needs to change?

Together, let’s consider how we will respond to acts of hatred against God’s beloved children. May the Almighty give us courage.

Coming up: digital-only issues

Starting with the next issue, *Canadian Mennonite* will begin the summer practice of offering three online-only issues. The July 5, August 2 and August 30 issues will not appear in print but will be available through email to all digital subscribers. If you already receive a digital version of the magazine, these will automatically come to you. If you receive only the print issue but are interested in seeing the digital issues as well, through the summer and beyond, you can add that option at canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/manage or email office@canadianmennonite.org. There is no extra cost to current subscribers. ☸



Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

ISSN 1480-042X

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Gemma Brandt learns about residential schools on the May 29 Walk in the Spirit of Reconciliation event along a portion of the Discovery Trail beside the Fraser River in Mission, B.C. Read "Not just a walk in the park" on page 14.

PHOTO BY ANGELIKA DAWSON / SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Please send all material to be considered for publication to

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO: Canadian Mennonite,
490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7

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

Published by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service. Regional churches and MC Canada appoint directors to the board and support 38 percent of *Canadian Mennonite's* budget.

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One-Year Subscription Rates

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

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

Subscriptions/address changes

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

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

FEATURE

Creating a cultural shift

How safe-church policies and awkward conversations can change the way we respond to abuse

By Donna Schulz

Saskatchewan Correspondent

Abuse. It's one of those topics that can stop a conversation dead in its tracks. Yet those who work in the area of abuse response and prevention say that talking about it—before it happens—is precisely what the church needs to do.

When there are no known cases of abuse demanding a church's attention, it may be tempting to feel complacent or to rest in the belief that the church is a safe place.

Heather Peters is coordinator of restorative-justice programs for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan and a member of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's Safe Church Too working group. She cautions against complacency. "In reality, we know that abuse is so prevalent in our society," she says. "It would be naive to think it's not happening in our churches."

Jaymie Friesen, who works in the area of abuse response and prevention with MCC Manitoba, agrees with Peters. "Sometimes churches forget," she says. "Just because we haven't had a clergy-sexual-abuse issue [that doesn't mean] that [abuse] isn't an issue here." She adds, "We know the statistics: one in four women and one in six men have experienced abuse. If people think it isn't a problem, it's because they're not talking about it."

Talking about abuse—how to prevent it and how to respond to it when it happens—is never easy, but its difficulty will be compounded if the conversation happens for the first time during a crisis. Peters urges churches to have difficult conversations before an abuse case is disclosed.

"We need to be having these conversations now before we have a crisis," she says, pointing out that responses

aren't always the most helpful or thoughtful when people are in survival mode. "We need to be putting in policies and practices that lay out how we're going to react—to have a culture where we know we can have these hard conversations, and to have a plan in place for if and when a crisis happens," she says.

A good place to begin

Some congregations have given thought to this in the form of safe-church policies.

Marilyn Rudy-Froese, who is church leadership minister for MC Eastern Canada, says a safe-church policy is a good place to begin, but that churches must then live into it.

"Making sure people know what it is [and] actively keeping that awareness of keeping the requirement" are ways of living into the policy, says Rudy-Froese, as are knowing "who are most vulnerable among us" and "working at healthy relationships."

Friesen agrees that it's important to have good policies in place. Safe-church and sexual-harassment policies are good places to start, but, "policies are only good insofar as they are talked about and applied," she says. "[They have] to be part of a bigger cultural shift."

The cultural shift Friesen speaks of is what MC Saskatchewan's Safe Church Too working group is hoping to foster.

Heather Peters speaks of growing or creating a culture that lifts up the voices of those who have been harmed. "Often church leaders don't feel well equipped or resourced if people come to them with situations of abuse," she says. "As a group we wanted to provide resources for church leaders—not to have all the answers, but to know where to find support and answers."

Susanne Guenther Loewen is co-pastor of Nutana Park



Heather Peters



Jaymie Friesen



Marilyn Rudy-Froese

Mennonite in Saskatoon and serves with Peters on the Safe Church Too working group. She sees theology as an important piece of this cultural shift. The way in which certain ideas are taught or preached can influence people's attitudes toward them.



**Susanne
Guenther
Loewen**

"Abuse has not been considered a peace issue," she says, "which prompts the question of whose experience is informing our peace theology. Who gets to decide what's an important peace issue?"

Guenther Loewen cites Carol Penner, who does research in the areas of Mennonite peace theology and abuse issues, saying, "We celebrate conscientious objection to war, but what about conscientious objection to family violence?"

Discipline and forgiveness

Guenther Loewen also wonders about forgiveness. "Are we preaching cheap forgiveness that doesn't require us to do the hard work of lamenting and healing harms?" she asks. "Is it the type of forgiveness that's more about silence and protecting reputations, or is it about accompanying those who have been harmed?"



**David
Driedger**

David Driedger is associate minister of First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. Together with Friesen, he has written the "Guide for Responding to Congregational Sexual

Harassment and Abuse," which will soon be available through MCC. Driedger agrees that the church's theology—what is taught in Sunday school and what is preached from the pulpit—can help shape the culture.

One area in particular that came up for Driedger and Friesen, as they worked to develop their policy, was church discipline.

"Most people have a negative association with church discipline," he says, "but there need to be boundaries." When Driedger speaks of church discipline, he isn't talking about punishment, but



ISTOCK PHOTO BY STEELALEVI

"How we talk to and treat each other matters and communicates the love of God. Sometimes in church we have to be willing to have hard conversations—to talk about what healthy relationships look like—not just about how we sexually relate, but how we speak to each other, and how we treat those on the margins."

rather about establishing clear boundaries and holding people accountable when they cross those boundaries.

The importance of boundaries

As faith formation minister at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Carmen Brubacher knows the importance of boundaries. "We cross boundaries all the time," she says. "It's about being aware that I am crossing boundaries and [making sure it's] okay with whoever I'm with."

To teach children about boundaries, Brubacher's congregation uses the Circle of Grace curriculum offered by Dove's Nest. The curriculum, which Waterloo North uses for three weeks each year, teaches children to distinguish between safe and unsafe secrets, to identify trusted adults in their lives, and to know how to respond to situations they're not comfortable with.

"I hope Circle of Grace has made that space easier to step into," she says, but she admits, "The growing edge is

bringing it to the wider church." Before the pandemic began, the congregation tried to have an annual focus on healthy relationships while the children were using Circle of Grace.

Toxic masculinity and patriarchy

Elsie Goerzen and Lydia Fawcett work in abuse response and prevention with MCC B.C. They offer support groups for both women and men who have been involved in abusive intimate-partner relationships. They believe that the needed cultural shift can't happen unless the church dismantles patriarchy.

"Lydia says we swim in the waters of patriarchy," says Goerzen of her colleague. "We need to have a higher view of women in the church, with full inclusion in all levels of leadership."

And Fawcett asks, "What are churches doing about toxic masculinity? Our society is not helping men have healthy



**Carmen
Brubacher**



**Elsie
Goerzen**



**Lydia
Fawcett**

masculinity.”

Friesen sees education around healthy masculinity as an important opportunity. “The church has not done a great job of that,” she says, noting that “toxic masculinity has its own version in our Mennonite spaces. We need to be looking at ways men, too, have been harmed by patriarchy.”

Friesen, who offers workshops on abuse prevention to faith communities and organizations, says she has noticed that “churches with female leadership tend to prioritize these types of programs.” She adds, “Gender equity is really important in terms of insights that are brought [to the discussion].”

Starting the hard conversations

Whether the conversation has to do with patriarchy or gender equity, healthy masculinity or establishing boundaries, it boils down to how people relate to one another.

“How we talk to and treat each other matters and communicates the love of God,” says Rudy-Froese. “Sometimes in church we have to be willing to have hard conversations—to talk about what healthy relationships look like—not just about how we sexually relate, but how we speak to each other, and how we treat those on the margins.”

Having conversations like these can make people feel awkward and uncomfortable. But the awkwardness and the discomfort are worth the effort if the conversations equip the church to respond in helpful, healing ways when situations of abuse arise. And they are doubly worth the effort if they create a culture that prevents abuse from happening in the first place.

Intentional, albeit difficult, conversation, coupled with relevant and well-thought-out policies, are what’s needed to make the church a safe place for everyone, say these individuals.

“We can’t guarantee that there won’t be harm, but the more robust our policies are and the more attention we pay to [them], the less likely there will be harm,” concludes Rudy-Froese ❧

Whether the conversation has to do with patriarchy or gender equity, healthy masculinity or establishing boundaries, it boils down to how people relate to one another.

Resources

- **Mennonite Central Committee’s** Abuse Response and Prevention website (abuseresponseandprevention.ca).
- **Mennonite Central Committee’s** “Abuse: Response and Prevention” guide for church leaders (<https://bit.ly/2SSD9M6>).
- **Dove’s Nest’s Circle of Grace** curriculum (<https://bit.ly/3z2BuUw>).
- **Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment** website (www.netgrace.org).
- **Theatre of the Beat’s Unmute** play website (theatreofthebeat.ca/unmute).
- **Lori Anne Thompson**, a Canadian woman who was abused by the late evangelist Ravi Zacharias, discusses the nature of abuse, predation and victimization in a March 8, 2021, interview with Glen Scrivener (<https://bit.ly/2TAFCEh>).

—COMPILED BY DONNA SCHULZ

❧ For discussion

1. Can you think of examples of abuse that have happened in your community, family, congregation or wider church body? Why do you think abuse is so difficult to talk about? What are the biggest challenges in dealing with this issue?
2. Does your congregation have a safe-church policy? What are the advantages of such a policy when a crisis erupts? Does your church carefully follow the mandates in its safety policy? Has our society experienced a “cultural shift,” so that we now understand the importance of safety policies?
3. Susanne Guenther Loewen says, “Abuse has not been considered a peace issue.” Do you agree? How has the church historically dealt with family violence? Do you know of examples where someone was pushed to forgive someone else, without appropriate recognition of the harm done?
4. Jaymie Friesen uses the term “toxic masculinity.” What do you understand this to mean? How well has the Mennonite church adopted gender equality?
5. Marilyn Rudy-Froese says it’s important to talk about what healthy relationships look like in order to reduce abusive situations. What are some ways we can have these conversations in our families and in our churches?

—By Barb Draper

See related Safe Church Policies at
www.commonword.ca/go/1513

CommonWord
Bookstore and Resource Centre

/// Readers write

✉ Columnist thanked for his 'encouragement and inspiration'

Re: "Are you okay with okay?" April 26, page 11.

What a fantastic reflection by Troy Watson. I am glad that he assumed this message was for someone, and that he let all of us who read *Canadian Mennonite* consider it for ourselves. It certainly was an encouragement and inspiration for me. I am moved by all of his articles, but this one stood out to me as particularly inspired. Thanks.

GARRY JANZEN (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ 'Stand by me' touches reader's heart

Re: "Focus on Mental Health" section, May 10, pages 27 to 30.

Thank you for the three excellent articles on helping non-professionals deal with this maligned and misunderstood health issue.

I was particularly struck by "Leonard's" story and quote about the role of the church in "Stand by me" on page 27: "... had enough prayer to rub the hair off the top of my head . . . putting things in God's hands is an excuse people use sometimes not to do anything practical themselves." Harsh but well said.

It is my view that Anabaptist Christians are blessed with a particular *gestalt* to advance the best of mental-health science and practice with a compassionate and egalitarian approach, but we also, at times, forget to celebrate our significant successes already.

There are corporate success stories like Shalom and More Than a Roof and Communitas in B.C., to name only a few, but there are many more families and individuals who have structured their lives around family, friends and strangers who have mental-health challenges.

We must also remember that mental-health problems often follow, or are worse with, those with developmental disabilities, in particular, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), the greatest developmental problem in the western world. Our response has been to "medicalize" the issue or, when too severe, to institutionalize the problem.

A fairly recent provincial study revealed that, at any point in time, more than half of all inmates in prisons had an FASD diagnosis. This is a tragedy that is beyond measure. Our 25-year-old son with FASD has been spared the vagaries of the justice system on three occasions. Although I was a former parole officer and parole board member, I consider

alternatives to prison to be more humane and practical.

And yes, "Leonard," we must continue to learn to do the day-to-day things to actualize our prayers.

Let's all help to negate the notion that there "is no balm in Gilead."

PETER A DUECK, VANCOUVER

The writer is a member of Peace Church on 52nd, Vancouver.

✉ Treat highly loaded term 'fascist' cautiously

European fascist parties were led by ruthless and theatrical leaders (Mussolini, Hitler, Franco), who basked in the adoration of crowds in mass meetings. Was there ever such a Russian Mennonite leader: Johann Cornies or P.M. Friesen? Any of the successful industrialists? Can you imagine one haranguing a frenzied Mennonite assembly at an annual conference meeting?

Fascists unashamedly endorsed violence (brown shirts, street rowdies) against any opposition. They believed that war was an essential part of any vigorous and enduring society (social Darwinism). I don't believe the *selbstschutz* (self-defence units) is an example of this view; it was a reluctant and desperate result of circumstances, not of an ideology.

Fascists had no place for the handicapped, social deviants and members of what they considered weak or inadmissible social groups (gypsies and Jews). Now we are all aware of the tragic results. In Russia, Mennonites established Maria, a school for deaf mutes (Nazis came and shot the pupils), and Bethania, a mental health hospital. Mennonites also gave material and medical assistance to Russian families when the soldier husband/father was killed or wounded, like in the Russo-Japanese war.

Regarding Jews, many lived in Russia, and Mennonites were fully aware that Russians despised them. The stories in *Onse Tjedils* recorded the experiences of Mennonite medics during the First World War and found no attacks or criticism of Jews. In Johann Cornies's day, Mennonite farmers were even called upon to help improve farming skills of Jewish settlers.

As a grad student back in the 1960s, I recall when "fascist" was a term used to attack and intimidate anything and anyone certain radicals disliked. No one wants a return to that kind of situation. To be accused of being fascist is a serious blow to any individual, institution or social group. Let's tread carefully.

AL HIEBERT, COLDSTREAM, B.C

/// Paid Obituary

Peter Fast

Aug. 27, 1928 - May 28, 2021

Peter Fast passed away suddenly at home on May 28, 2021, at the age of 92. Peter was a good-natured, thoughtful, and open-minded person who loved the company of friends and family. He had a wide range of talents, including music and languages. He will be remembered by many as a pioneer winter cyclist, an engaging and respected professor at CMBC and CMU, and a member of the birding community.



He was born to David and Agatha (Schroeder) Fast on August 27, 1928, in Memrik, Ukraine. The Fast family immigrated to Canada in 1930 and settled in the village of Chortitz (now Randolph), Manitoba. Farming was difficult work, but he reminisced fondly about the family's routines and challenges during those years. However, his interests took him elsewhere. After completing high school, he became a permit teacher in 1949, attended Normal School in 1951, and graduated with a B.A. from United College in 1956.

It was during these years that Peter met Vera Suderman, and they married in 1956. Education and travel became dominant themes in the life of the newlyweds, first teaching in Loon Straits, and then moving to Elkhart, Indiana, for seminary, and Princeton for an MDiv. These were formative years for the Fast family. Jane and David were born, and the family accepted an assignment with MCC in Java, Indonesia, from 1962-1965 where Peter taught New Testament in the Malang Seminary. During this time of political upheaval, he was on a delegation of Christian Ministers in dialogue with the Sukarno government. Later, he would serve on the Commission on Overseas Missions. The experience in Indonesia was formative, broadening Peter's worldview and setting a course for his career.

The family returned to Canada in 1965 due to health challenges and political instability in Indonesia. Peter attended the Toronto School of Theology in 1965-66 and was offered a teaching position at CMBC in August 1966. He would stay there, teaching Pauline studies, New Testament Greek, and World Religions, until his retirement in 1999. During this time Peter also took sabbaticals at Oxford (1973) and then Jerusalem (1980-1981).

In the words of Irma Fast Dueck, Associate Professor of Practical Theology at Canadian Mennonite University, Peter had a "theological imagination," perceiving God and the church "to be more than the boxes frequently placed around them. The message of hospitable inclusion in the letters of Paul (Jews and Gentiles together) inspired him." He was ahead of his time, advocating for being more welcoming toward LGBTQ2+ Mennonites and supporting human rights in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Retirement sparked new interests for Peter. He would become a passionate birder, spending many hours exploring the fields, forests, lawns and marshes of Manitoba with his binoculars, teaching those around him to appreciate the natural world. He also dedicated many years to creating a transliterated and translated version of his relatives' correspondence from the collectivised farms of Ukraine and the Siberian Gulag, which he completed in 2012. He loved music, was a dedicated concert-goer, and life-long supporter of the arts.

Peter is survived by his wife of 64 years, Vera Fast (nee Suderman); siblings Erna, Victor (Rebecca), Katie, Helen (Waldo), Marg, Betty, and Rudy (Lorna); his children Jane Fast and David Fast (Katheryn Kebe); and his grandchildren Adrian Werner (Nicola Schaefer) and Andrew Werner (Lesya Holowczenko). He is predeceased by his parents David (1979) and Agatha (1996), and his siblings Hans (1938), Hedy (1976), Art (1990), (Helene, 2004), Irene (2017), (Abe, 2011), and brother-in-law Egon (2020).

A memorial service will be held when it is possible to gather to remember a life well lived. In lieu of flowers, please donate to Canadian Mennonite University.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Desfosses—Maverick Myles (b. May 2, 2021), to Kirsten and Eric Desfosses, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Enns—Henrik Edison (b. May 11, 2021), to Matt Enns and Katie Crockett, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Johnson—Leif Andrew (b. March 10, 2021), to Rachel and Callaway Johnson, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Knight—Hayden Brooks (b. May 28, 2021), to Tim and Danika Knight, Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Simmons—Frieda Pearl (b. March 2, 2021), to Sarina and Beau Simmons, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Deaths

Epp—Henry, 93 (b. Feb. 18, 1928; d. May 19, 2021), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Epp—Hilda (Voth), 90 (b. Feb. 27, 1931; d. May 13, 2021), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Martin—Eileen (Gingrich), 91 (b. Nov. 4, 1929; d. May 27, 2021), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

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

FROM OUR LEADERS

A pastor's struggle

Rick Neufeld

I'm surrounded by a legion of internal voices telling me I am not the pastor I should be. I'm not enough of a leader, not caring enough, not informed enough, not clear, not decisive, not doing enough. My soul cowers at the possibility that the roaring cacophony in my head is correct. Our current moment in history has laid bare my insecurities, deficiencies and anxieties of being a pastor.

I am not alone.

In the middle of a pandemic, I find myself worrying about another epidemic quietly spreading across North America: pastor burnout.

Already in 2014, *Forbes* listed "pastor" as the fifth most difficult leadership role in North America. An April 2021 WayBase survey of Canadian churches found that half of church leaders were struggling in at least one significant area of their life during COVID-19; only 13 percent described themselves as thriving.

Pastors have had to navigate new ways of gathering people for worship, adhere to changing restrictions, and find fresh ways of providing pastoral care and discipleship opportunities.

However, it's not just the challenge of implementing new methods for ministry that is wearing on pastors. It is also the new relational challenges.

As pastors scramble to reimagine systems and structures to facilitate the work of the church by utilizing new methods and technologies, they find themselves navigating intense differences of opinions. Conversations about reopening church buildings are more contentious than expected because of the politicization of the disease. Conversations about racial equality—which have always been difficult, but in some contexts ignorable—are now front and centre, and impassioned. The loss of a shared sense of reality and the prevalence of conspiracy theories threaten our congregational life together.

Dealing with any one of these issues would be a lot to handle for any leader, but all of these issues have collapsed into one moment. As a result, pastors are finding themselves exhausted, frustrated, uncertain and stretched thin.

Every conversation I have with counsellors, coaches, consultants and spiritual directors lays bare just how tired pastors are. Some have left their

positions while others are retiring early. Some are talking quietly about it with spiritual directors and family. I fear that what we are seeing in this moment is just the beginning. What if the real impact won't be seen for another year or two?

I don't say any of this to peddle in fear-mongering. Instead, I draw attention to this reality with the hope that clearly articulating our current situation will help to avoid a default future that will arrive if we change nothing. A default future where the church is more divided and unable to come together in moments of social crisis with the creativity of the God of resurrection hope. By understanding better our current reality we can find the energy to change course and move toward something new. In this case, a more sustainable vision of ministry for pastors.

Inherent in this work is grace. Pastors and congregations need to extend grace to themselves and to each other. There are times to work and times to rest. Times to give and times to receive. Times to know what to do and times to admit that we don't. May we, as ambassadors of the grace of God, allow this grace to cover us as well. ☩



Rick Neufeld is the director of Leadership Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba.

A moment from yesterday



Breaking with its usual formal style, *The Canadian Mennonite* decided to print a candid photo of church leaders in 1958. While lining up for the typical serious group photograph, United Mennonite delegates in Virgil, Ont., were interrupted by a young girl unselfconsciously swinging a hula hoop. The caption cheekily observed that "conferences sometimes also go in circles" but hastened to add that the choice of image had no "symbolic meaning."

Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing
Photo: *The Canadian Mennonite* /
Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

 THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

Lament and love

Arli Klassen

Once again news headlines are about how the church has failed. News about residential schools fill our newsfeeds, schools generally run by churches and funded by the government, with decades of separating families and leaving wounds of trauma for seven generations.

Mennonites want to know, “Were we involved?” (See 2010 CM article online at <https://bit.ly/3gjm2uL>.)

That is part of the question, but the bigger issue for all of us is that the church, the broader church, is not only complicit but a lead actor.

On the other hand, news about sexual misconduct cases by leaders also fill our hearts with pain, whether in the church or beyond. They demonstrate abuses of power that are far from our Anabaptist understanding of leadership.

The institution-builders of the last century left long-lasting harm to our broader society and to the church. It is easy to start thinking of the church as a harmful and hopeless institution, and I know many people who do.

I believe it is our time for lament and repentance for the harms done by the church. We have much work to do, hopeful work.

I also still believe that the church is a

compelling movement of the Holy Spirit, transforming our lives through the community that is the church, and transforming society. I continue to hope in the church, as a movement of the Spirit.

Faithful church-goers are generous, particularly with people in need. The Canadians who volunteer with, and contribute the largest proportion of their wealth to charitable organizations, are church-goers, according to a recent report by the Canadian Council of Christian Charities.

Churches are also strong advocates addressing systemic issues beyond the generosity of individuals, families and their communities: Racism. Sexism. Colonialism. Climate change. This work is important.

As Anabaptists, we use many images of the church:

- **Menno Simons emphasized** a Pure Church, a church without spot or wrinkle, with an emphasis on holy living.
- **For the last 100 years or more**, Mennonites have been known as one of the Historic Peace Churches, with an emphasis on non-resistance.
- **In the 1960s**, Harold Bender talked about the Church as the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Community of

the Holy Spirit.

- **The idea of Missional Church** has moved in and out of favour, emphasizing that the church’s mission is to serve beyond itself.
- **As Mennonites, we are so congregational** that we barely understand Church as Communion beyond our own congregations.
- **Messy Church is** another newer way to think about gathering together in ways that are less structured and more intergenerational.
- **We are being called into Intercultural Church**, where we learn to need each other across cultures, in order to better understand the depth and breadth of God’s love, and to be a witness that the Spirit is indeed unifying us as one body.

As Mennonites in Canada, these are a few of our favourite things: peace and justice, healing and hope, ministry of reconciliation.

I wonder which of those images or phrases about the church work for you? Which image or phrase are we, together as one body, moving towards? What is God calling us to become?

I long for the church to be known as people of love. *“Faith, hope and love abide, and the greatest of these is love.”* ❧



Arli Klassen is a member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., and serves on the executive councils of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and MC Canada.

Et cetera

Language guide aims to build inclusion and respect

Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN) has created a guide for language used when writing and speaking about disability and people with disabilities. ADN’s vision statement: “Faith communities are transformed when individuals with disabilities and their God-given gifts and experiences enjoy full inclusion in the Body of Christ.” The guide recommends using terms that reflect the preference of those who are disabled. To download the guide, visit <https://bit.ly/3fSJ0Ke>.

Source: Anabaptist Disabilities Network



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Being, doing and becoming

Troy Watson

I'm sure you've heard the sayings, "We are not human doings, we are human beings," "Just be," or "Stop doing and start being."

I appreciate the sentiment behind these statements, but what do they mean? What does it mean to stop doing? Stop doing what exactly? Everything?

Your lungs breathe, that's what they do. Your heart isn't just being, it's beating, pumping blood and oxygen to your body. That's what it does. Doing is not an option in life. Neither is being. It's not an either-or scenario, it's a both-and reality. So what does it mean to stop doing and "just be"?

I think the issue being addressed in these statements is the direction of flow. The call to elevate "being" above "doing" is not that we should stop doing things, but that our "doing" should flow from our "being," not the other way around.

If your identity, worth, meaning and purpose flow from what you do, then you are essentially a "human doing." When you function as a "human doing," your relationships, work-life balance, goals, desires, values, priorities—everything in your life—is going to be out of whack, because the direction of flow is off. Your sense of being isn't supposed to flow from what you do. What you do is supposed to flow from who you are.

Your "doing" is only healthy, life-giving and true when it flows from your being. This means what you do and, more importantly, why and how you do it, is determined by, and is an extension of, who you are. You don't get your identity and value from what you do. What you do has value and purpose because it flows from your being, from who you are.

This means our identity, value and purpose are independent of what we do. What we do is intended to be dependent on, and flow from, one's

intrinsic value and true essence. When you live this way, your "doing" has integrity because it's in line with who you truly are. When your "doing" flows from your "being," your behaviour, words and attitudes reflect and manifest your true essence.

This way of life is one of the goals of

is the goal.

The growth journey is not necessarily about doing less, it's about becoming who we truly are, and letting our doing flow from our true centre. Growth is discovering and manifesting your true essence. This is key. You can't "just be" if you don't know who you really are.

Most of us don't have a clear sense of who we are. Very few of us are in tune with our true essence because few of us are willing to do the inner work required to discover and manifest our true essence.

the way of Jesus. The process of moving towards this goal is called growth.

Very few of us fully live this way. Most of us don't have a clear sense of who we are. Very few of us are in tune with our true essence because few of us are willing to do the inner work required to discover and manifest our true essence. That's why so many of us try to find our identity, value and purpose in what we do. It's easier.

This is also why, when we meet someone, one of our first questions for them is, "What do you do?" We've been conditioned to discern other people's identity, value and purpose based on what they do. But not just other people. Without our "doing," we don't know who we are either.

This isn't to say what we do isn't important. We should take healthy pride in what we do. We should value and find fulfilment in our "doing." The goal of growth isn't to cease our "doing." The goal of growth is that our "doing" flows from our "being," our true essence. Someone with a clear sense of who they are may very well do more than the average human being, but all their "doing" will have intention and integrity. It will flow from their true essence. That

The call to "just be" is somewhat misleading. The focus is really on becoming.

"Becoming" is the process of discovering and embodying your true "being," your true essence. This is a journey that will take our entire lives.

Few of us arrive at pure being. I'm not even sure what that looks like. So, instead of saying "Just be," I would say, "Just grow," because growth is about becoming who you truly are. Then, as you grow, let your "doing" flow from your growth, from the process of discovering and manifesting your true essence. ☼



Troy is a pastor of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

The Damascus Road Initiative

Katherine Kandalaft
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

This year marks a devastating milestone. It is the 10th anniversary of the war in Syria. This dreadful war has resulted in the deaths of a half-million people and is the largest displacement crisis since the Second World War.

More than half of Syria's pre-war population has been forcibly displaced. To put that into perspective, the number of people who have been forced to flee from their homes is equivalent to the combined populations of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Of the more than 13.4 million displaced Syrians, approximately half have fled the country, becoming refugees, and the other half are scattered within Syria.

Samih Saltah is one such forced migrant. On three occasions he narrowly escaped execution at the hands of extremists. And, like one-in-four Syrian families, his home was severely damaged. By the time we met in Lebanon in 2018, he had been living precariously as a refugee for almost five years. His family was still internally displaced within Syria.

Fast forward to 2021, and Samih is now my husband. We live in Canada, where he was granted asylum, and where I have since migrated to. Sadly, his mother and two siblings remain in Syria.

This World Refugee Day (June 20) we paused and reflected.

Last year, after a period of intensive and intentional prayer, God spoke into my heart. He called me to support inclusive development and peacebuilding in Syria, a war-ravaged country where 80 percent of the population now lives in poverty.

As this work must be undergirded by prayer, I sought the support of my



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHERINE KANDALAFT
Katherine Kandalaft and Samih Saltah are pictured in Byblos, Lebanon, in December 2018.

congregation, Peace Church on 52nd in Vancouver. I was invited to lead a webinar on the topic before launching a prayer ministry for Syria, which gathers over Zoom for about 30 minutes on the third Thursday of each month. The prayer ministry is a small fellowship of Mennonite Christians from across B.C. and further afield. Each month, we unite for a structured liturgy, a special prayer focus and a shared time of prayer. In both English and Arabic, we uplift the people of Syria. Our group receives prayer points from local churches in Syria and Mennonite Central Committee field staff.

In May, four months into our prayer ministry, God graciously prepared for us a path by which to engage practically as well as prayerfully. I was on a walk with my friend and fellow prayer ministry participant, Susan. She noted an opportunity to sponsor refugees interned in Australia's inhumane immigration detention centres and their families in Third-World countries.

I raised this with Samih as soon as I returned home. That same day, he and I commenced our task of forming and

facilitating multiple refugee-settlement teams, which will serve as welcoming communities for our refugee neighbours. These private sponsorships are funded by Ads-Up Canada and administered by Mosaic's Operation #Not Forgotten (<https://bit.ly/3vZJt35>). We expect to welcome our first newcomers toward the end of the year.

And finally, the preparations for the work in Syria continue. The time is right for restoration. Indeed, although 60 percent of Syrians are now experiencing food insecurity, and 90 percent do not have access to safe drinking water, the country was previously almost entirely self-sufficient in terms of food production and water management. While more than half the population is in dire need of medical care, and critical shortages of medicines are now commonplace, the country previously boasted universal healthcare and produced 90 percent of its own pharmaceuticals. With widespread damage to infrastructure, irrigation and supply chains, and an economy in crisis, the country's improved security conditions are now enabling food-production recoveries and opportunities to rebuild.

The vision for what I am calling the Damascus Road Initiative is to embody the love of Christ through nurturing inclusive development and peacebuilding for all individuals, families and communities in Syria. This long-term project will support enterprise and value-chain development, with a focus on strengthening food security, water management and health systems. We are currently concentrating on strategic planning and building collaborative partnerships.

This World Refugee Day Samih and I took time to pause and reflect. We have embarked along the Damascus Road. It is a path of transformation. ❧

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Food and Deuteronomy 24

Jasmine Wiens
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Considering what it means to eat as Christians touches every food group.

Canadian Mennonite recently featured a lively conversation on factory farms and Christian practice. Sandy and Jason Yuen's March 29 article focused on factory farms. Theo Wiederkehr's April 26 article focused on farming practices more generally. But what about the people who grow and harvest our fruits and vegetables?

We, as Canadians, often like to think of the plight of migrant workers as an American problem, but it's our problem, too. In part, this is because of the large amount of food we consume from the United States.

Seth Holmes vividly describes the suffering of migrant workers in the States in his book *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, ranging from poor housing to dangerous exposure to pesticides and a lack of medical access.

Reports show that Canada's industrial agriculture sector is also guilty of exploiting migrant workers, and that fear-based environments on large-scale industrial farms discourage such workers from reporting human-rights violations that occur. (*Read the the United Food and Commercial Workers Canada's 2020 report on migrant workers at <https://bit.ly/2TJ0sbr>.*) Of course, consumers play a significant role in this, demanding that farmers produce food for us as cheaply as possible without considering the true cost.

This stands in stark contrast with Deuteronomy. The Old Testament book gives special attention to the vulnerable, who it describes as the alien, widow and orphan, three groups who were likely landless. It gives instructions to Israel in Deuteronomy 14:29 and 24:19-21 about how to care for the vulnerable, making sure they have enough to eat, are



PHOTO COURTESY OF
ELIM MENNONITE CHURCH

Tomatoes and beets make up a small portion of the garden harvest donated to Grunthal's food bank by members of Elim Mennonite Church in Grunthal, Man.

treated justly (24:17), and are included in celebrations (16:11,14).

In particular, Deuteronomy 24:19-22 addresses the risk of exploiting people through agriculture. The passage gives specific instructions for agricultural practices, making provisions for the vulnerable to collect produce that remains in the fields after the harvest. Land-owners are not to go back over their land to collect what they missed. These are not just suggestions; if the Israelites do not follow the instructions, they risk losing their land. Deuteronomy is clear that the Israelites do not own the land, by describing it as given to them by God, an idea repeated throughout the book. Because God gave them the land, God can take it back as well.

Deuteronomy paints a picture of caring for our neighbours in the field and shaping the food system to include care of the vulnerable. However, we, as consumers, have ignored the vulnerable in our fields. As a city dweller, Deuter-

onomy's vision feels out of reach.

However, there is an alternative way at work in my home congregation, Elim Mennonite Church in Grunthal, Man. Like many people in rural communities, members of Elim grow large gardens. They keep what they need and share the rest with friends, neighbours and the local food bank. One congregant hosts a community garden on a piece of his land near the edge of town. Another member and his friend sell their garden produce, donating the proceeds to the food-bank. The local grocery store even allows these two to sell their extra produce at a stand just outside the store. It is a small and seasonal food system, but one that cares for the community just as the Book of Deuteronomy imagines.

Thinking about the migrant workers whose hands have held our vegetables, I am easily overwhelmed by the consequences of our modern food systems. However, the alternative way that can be seen at Elim offers an invitation for us to compare notes on how our communities love our neighbours through the food on our plates. It challenges city-dwellers like myself to grow some vegetables, take part in a community garden plot, or join a Community Shared Agriculture program or meatshare.

Food systems can bring people together or push them apart, and this summer season offers us a gateway to participate in food systems that care for the vulnerable, our neighbours. ❧



Jasmine Wiens is a member of Elim Mennonite Church in Grunthal, Man. She is a recent graduate of Duke University Divinity School in Durham, N.C.

COVER STORY

More than just a walk in the park

Angelika Dawson
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Just days before the Walk in the Spirit of Reconciliation began, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation discovered the remains of 215 children at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. The news made the walk all the more poignant for those who participated, including me and my husband John.

Walk in the Spirit of Reconciliation was established in 2015, after the closing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Ever since, people from the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, the Fraser Valley and beyond have dedicated the last weekend in May to walk in recognition of the many Indigenous people who suffered systemic abuse through the residential school system.

In order to adhere to COVID-19 restrictions, this year's event was a "virtual" walk. Participants were encouraged to walk with those in their "bubble" and were given a choice of seven different routes to complete over the weekend. Those not in the area could choose to walk in solidarity in their own location. This year, 274 people participated in the event, with walkers from B.C., Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and a few in the United States.

On May 29, John and I joined friends to walk a portion of the Discovery Trail along the Fraser River towards the Mission Bridge. One friend was walking for his Indigenous sister, who was adopted into his Mennonite family as part of the "60s Scoop" in Manitoba. Another friend, an Indigenous woman, shared that her mother and grandmother had gone through the residential school system and that it had deeply impacted her family. The youngest member of our group was a Kindergartener, who shared with us the story that her father had read



PHOTOS BY ANGELIKA DAWSON

Angelika and John Dawson at the site of the former St. Mary's Residential School in Mission, B.C.

to her the night before about Indigenous children who were not allowed to speak their own language. Along the way, we met other participants, all recognizable by their purple T-shirts; they all commented on the impact the Kamloops discovery was making on their walk.

The next day, John and I chose to walk through Heritage Park in Mission, to the site of St. Mary's Residential School, which has its own dark history. We walked past the remains of the original 1863 buildings. The newer school, built in 1961, operated as a residential school until 1985; it was the last residential school in the province. In 2005, the land and the buildings were returned to the Stó:lō people.

It was quiet as we walked the grounds. We could not help but think of the children whose remains had been found in Kamloops, and we wondered if

such horrors might lie beneath our feet. We wonder what revelations are still to come.

In the days that followed our walks, John and I talked about our experience. We had both participated in the TRC events in Vancouver in 2013, and remembered how difficult and humbling it was to hear the stories of abuse from Indigenous people brave enough to tell them. The news of the children's remains brought this back to us with a heaviness.

I confess that in the time between the TRC and this year's walk, I have not done nearly enough. I had not learned the history of St. Mary's until this year. I have not read the TRC's 94 Calls to Action. I have very few Indigenous friends. I do not know enough about the Stó:lō people on whose traditional territory I live.

Both John and I agree that it's time for us to do better, to educate ourselves, to re-learn our history, and to support organizations that work for healing and reconciliation. Because, at the end of the day, I want my Walk in the Spirit of Reconciliation to be more than just a walk in the park. ☘



Susan Olivier, left; Cyndy, Joel, Gemma and Gareth Brandt; and John Dawson stop to have their picture taken during the Walk in the Spirit of Reconciliation event on May 29.

MC Canada, ecumenical groups mobilize around Bill C-15

Legislation ensuring Canadian law consistent with UNDRIP needs to reach royal assent soon

By Katie Doke Sawatzky
Mennonite Church Canada

“I don’t think that anybody can relax until we actually hear the words ‘royal assent.’ I think we have to be all over this,” says Jennifer Preston, general secretary for Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), the peace and social justice agency of Quakers in Canada.

said the Conservatives are still trying to delay action by overwhelming the standing committee with witnesses.

“This is tolerated by the government, and it shouldn’t be,” Sinclair said in the webinar. “They should exercise their legislative authority to ensure that while there are fair hearings relevant to the bill, that it is processed before this session ends and an election is called.”

The bill passed in the House of Commons on May 25 and was passed on to the Senate, where it needs three readings and then royal assent, the final stage of the legislative process, by June 25, which is the last day that the Senate will meet before

summer recess.

CFSC, along with Mennonite Church Canada and numerous other faith organizations, is part of Faith in the Declaration, a coalition committed to supporting the implementation of UNDRIP. In May, the coalition submitted a brief to the senate committee reviewing Bill C-15 and has written a letter to members of parliament.

“Given the historic role of churches in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, it’s vital that faith communities support the rights articulated in the Declaration,” says, Steve Heinrichs, MC Canada’s director of Indigenous-Settler Relations. “The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called us to this work, together with all Canadians. That’s why we wrote the Senate. Bill C-15 is about decolonizing and transforming Canadian laws so that we can bring healing to the nations.”

He adds, “If Declaration legislation doesn’t get through this time, I’m not sure when we’ll get another chance. So now’s

the time to act. Together, we can make it happen!” ❧

News brief

MC Canada joins MC B.C. in lament

Mennonite Church Canada wrote to its nationwide constituency on June 1: “We join our siblings in Mennonite Church British Columbia as they lament the discovery of the remains of 215 children buried at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. . . . This news of the discovery of children who died at the Kamloops school, and therefore were never able to come home again or to be buried and grieved by their families, is heartbreaking. As regional and nationwide church communities, we grieve together with all the families and all those who have been impacted by the news of these deaths. We pray for all those who have memories and scars from their time in residential schools and for those who have been retraumatized by this discovery. Given the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action (<https://bit.ly/3pCcf7u>), we not only want to pray but also act in ways that can move in the direction of healing and reconciliation. We especially think of calls 48, 49, 59 and 61, which call for education, financial commitments and other meaningful ways in which practical help and reconciliation can be engaged. MC B.C. has listed actions for its members to consider (<https://bit.ly/3pvwOm3>) and invites our nationwide family to join them in action and prayer.”

—MC CANADA



Preston is referring to Bill C-15, “An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (UNDRIP). Much like its predecessor, Bill C-262, which was filibustered by Conservative members of the Senate and died on the table in June 2020 on National Indigenous Peoples History Day, Bill C-15, if enacted, would ensure that the Government of Canada takes measures to ensure that Canadian laws are consistent with UNDRIP. The government would also need to establish an action plan that outlines implementation of the Declaration’s principles.

Unlike Bill C-262, which was a private member’s bill put forward by Cree MP Romeo Saganash in 2015, Bill C-15 is a government bill, which means the opposition does not have the same powers to delay it. However, in a webinar hosted by Faith in the Declaration on May 4, Murray Sinclair, the former Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) commissioner and senator,

Churches stay connected with seniors

Story by Maria H. Klassen
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

As the pandemic continues, all in-person church programs have been cancelled and new ways of staying connected have been established. Sunday School and youth events have gone online. Committee meetings are on Zoom. Sunday morning worship services are accessed in various ways.

As not all seniors have a computer, staying connected has been challenging. Now, more conversations with seniors are taking place over the telephone than in person. New and creative ideas have become the norm.

Vineland United Mennonite Church has a seniors group called Vintage 55, which meets monthly for lunch and to listen to a speaker; it has not met during the pandemic. An intergenerational event planning team is active in keeping every household in the congregation connected. The team delivered 250 brown bags of goodies, including chocolate and other candy, at Christmas, reminiscent of Christmas brown bags of long ago. A Valentine/Friendship mailing, filled with word games and puzzles, came in February, with daffodils delivered in April. Sending cards via “snail mail” and making telephone calls are ways of staying connected. Quilting in the auditorium continued when the province was not in lockdown, with a limit of 10 senior women working at a distance on individual quilt frames, following all the provincial guidelines.

Pastor Louise Wideman says, “Zoom has not been used for corporate worship at all. Worship services are offered through livestream only.” She electronically sends out a congregational sharing note every Wednesday and Saturday. Those with a computer print it out, to share with those living close by who are not online.

The First Mennonite Church in Vineland has an extremely small group of seniors,

who are regular participants in weekly Zoom worship services, and occasional Zoom educational sessions. All programming is intergenerational. Pastoral staff and deacons are connecting with individual seniors on an ad-hoc basis.

St. Catharines United Mennonite Church has an active Seniors Fellowship, which is not meeting during lockdown. The pastoral team, as well as the Care and Connect Ministry that consists of a group of church members, connects with seniors on a regular basis via telephone calls during this time.

According to Pastor Randy Klaassen, “Seniors with access to internet devices use them for worship services. Those that do not have internet access, but have cable service, have made it a practice to watch Niagara United Mennonite Church’s worship services regularly on Sunday mornings.” A drive-in worship service was held on May 30, with about 65 people attending, sitting in their cars during the service.

At Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines, it has been a priority to provide intentional access to meaningful worship experiences through audio recordings, written outlines, weekly emails, delivery of a printed copy of the service or a CD to read and listen to. One of the People Care Network team members sends encouragement note cards to dozens of people, mostly seniors. Pastoral care is done almost entirely by telephone.

At Niagara United Mennonite, services on Sunday morning are on cable TV, alternating between English and German. The Women in Service group members have continued to quilt in their own homes. The ladies breakfast group continues to meet by email. Linda Friesen sends out invitations and adds a theme for the breakfast meeting. Responses in the form of stories



PHOTO BY LOUISE WIDEMAN

Daffodils were delivered in April to Vineland United Mennonite Church families.

come to her, and she then forwards these stories to each woman via email. At the designated breakfast hour, each woman eats at home while reading these stories. Friesen says, “It is a way of keeping the group alive and connected while we wait for in-person times.”

At Bethany Mennonite Church in Virgil, worship services are livestreamed. Unfortunately, not all members are able to connect in this way. According to Pastor Herb Sawatzky, all pastoral care has become a phone ministry for people of all ages. This is a practice he would like to continue after the pandemic. Quilts continue to be made by individuals in their homes. Zoom coffee time happens every Sunday following the worship service on YouTube. This started in February of this year and is open to everyone, but it is mainly the 50- to 90-year-olds who take part, sharing about themselves and their families. ❧

'I feel happy that I am helping the community'

Resettled refugees offer support from the front lines during COVID-19

By Jason Dueck
Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Refugee resettlement provides a new start for the families and individuals who have had to flee their homes due to conflict or disaster. Each of the 13,000 refugees who have been resettled in Canada through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada over the last 42 years has been offered a new opportunity. But when refugee sponsorship is reduced to only that, Canadians miss a much bigger truth—newcomers enrich their lives, too.

Every person who has the chance to start life in Canada brings with them a unique personality and experience that only adds to this country. During the pandemic, a number of newcomers have stepped up to the front lines and are serving their neighbours in whatever capacity they can.

Ali Mansour

Syrian refugee Ali Mansour landed in Canada in March 2020, mere weeks before the pandemic would cause widespread



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALI MANSOUR

Ali Mansour was resettled in Canada in March 2020, just weeks before the pandemic led to widespread lockdowns and travel restrictions. He works for The Canadian Shield, a personal protective equipment (PPE) manufacturer in Waterloo, Ont.

lockdowns, quarantining and travel restrictions. He quickly found a job at The Canadian Shield, a manufacturer of personal protective equipment (PPE) based in Waterloo, Ont.

"I love the co-operation, friendly people, mutual respect and healthy measures in place to protect staff and products," says Mansour about his job. "I feel happy that I am helping the community in facing this pandemic. This is the community that saved me and supported me so that I could continue my life in peace and love."

Shadi Alkhannous

Shadi Alkhannous arrived in Canada from Syria with his wife Sultana and children Ghazal and Hussein in October 2016. They



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHADI ALKANNOUS

Shadi Alkhannous runs the take-out and delivery counter at the Alnoor Halal Food Market in St. Catharines, Ont., serving meals like shish tawook, chicken shawarma and beef kabab. He and his family have been living in Canada since they were resettled in 2016.

have since added a new member of their family, their son Mohammed.

Within a year of arriving in Canada, Alkhannous found a job as a meat cutter in a grocery store called Alnoor Halal Food Market in St. Catharines, Ont. Last year,

he found an added layer of success when the store opened a take-out and delivery counter, offering meals like beef kabab and chicken shawarma.

He says he simply likes to help people however he can. He and his wife have helped a number of other newcomers find sponsors for family members still living as refugees and they often meet newcomer families at the airport to assist with translation and other support.

"When people call me, I'm happy to do what I can for them," he says. "I do the same as people did for me when I came new."

Yodit and Tsegereda

Yodit Habtemariam works as a personal support worker at a retirement home in London, Ont. She arrived in Canada from



PHOTO COURTESY OF YODIT HABTEMARIAM

Yodit Habtemariam, right, arrived in Canada from Eritrea in 2018 and now works at a retirement home in London, Ont., as a personal support worker. She poses for a photo with some of her co-workers who asked their names not be used.

Eritrea in May 2018.

She points to the Bible to inform why she believes the hard work of people like her on the front lines is so important, particularly Jesus' call to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, in Matthew 25.

Tsegereda Tsegay was sponsored for resettlement from Eritrea in Canada in 1987 and works at the same retirement home with Habtemariam. She loves working with the elderly, and says that being a front-line worker for seniors is her honour because each of her residents is vulnerable and deserves to be protected. ❧

Mennonite Heritage Village adapts through pandemic

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent
STEINBACH, MAN.

Although the Mennonite Heritage Village (MVH) may look like it's frozen in time, it has adapted impressively to the challenges of the 2020s.

The MHV is a 16-hectare, open-air museum in Steinbach, that makes a turn-of-the-last-century Russian Mennonite street village come to life. Recently, though, it's been empty. The pandemic forced it to close for a good portion of the past year and cancel its in-person gala dinner, a major annual fundraiser. The launch of the upcoming exhibit, Mennonites at War, has been postponed numerous times.

"We miss our visitors," says Andrea Klassen, senior curator. "The museum's mission is to preserve and exhibit the history of Russian-descended Mennonites, and you can preserve the history but you can't exhibit it really without visitors . . . that's an integral part of who we are."

Instead of being defeated by the multitude of obstacles thrown at them, the MHV staff asked, "What are some of the possibilities?" They became very busy. The museum led crafts, told stories and hosted local musicians for 10 weeks through Manitoba's Safe at Home online programming. They gave a virtual tour for TourMagination, an Ontario travel agency organizing an online tour of Mennonite archives and museums across North America. They sent resources to school groups that would normally be visiting on field trips and hosted an online speaker series in which local historians spoke on themes of the upcoming exhibit.

"We were really happy to be able to bring a little bit of the museum into the home," says Robert Goertzen, program manager.

These initiatives created unexpected opportunities. After the TourMagination event, Klassen received emails from people across Canada and the United States interested in the village. "You suddenly

start to think of your audience in a very different way," she says. By connecting with their audience in new ways, suddenly the MVH was reaching people who otherwise wouldn't have visited the museum.

When the MHV was open to in-person visitors, like during their Pioneer Days last summer, its numbers had to be smaller, but

the quality of engagement deepened, says Goertzen. "We heard it time and again that our interpreters and our pioneer skills demonstrators enjoyed the leisurely interactions," he says. "I think that whole idea of slowing down our pace a little bit and rather than trying to get thousands of people through our doors, rather valuing



PHOTOS BY JERRY GRAJEWSKI, GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF, INC.

The Chortitz Housebarn is one of the Mennonite Heritage Village's signature heritage buildings. It will undergo a major restoration this summer, for which the MHV is currently raising funds. Its goal is 50 percent of the renovation costs—just over \$22,000.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE HERITAGE VILLAGE

This newly constructed pergola and the Dirk Willems statue will make up the new Peace Exhibit, along with the Dirk Willems Peace Gardens and pond that are being developed this summer. When it is complete, this area of the MVH grounds will feature interpretation about the Mennonite theology of peace, contemplative places for visitors to sit and rest away from the bustle of the main street in the village and more trails for walking.

each interaction, I think that’s something that will bring people here repeatedly.”

The village is also tackling some projects for which it may not have had time during a normal bustling season. This summer it will be restoring the Chortitz Housebarn, fixing the foundation and painting the signature building, which was one of the first brought to the museum grounds. Government grants have made this project possible and have helped the MHV post a surplus even after a year of losses.

The MHV is also finishing construction of a timber-frame pergola to accompany the Dirk Willems statue that was installed a few years ago by a community group wanting to spotlight the Anabaptist peace position. Klassen says this peace exhibit, which will also include interpretation, a garden and walking paths, will create “a peaceful, more contemplative space for people to come and think about what peace means, what the Mennonite position historically on war and violence has been.”

The new exhibit opening on July 10, Mennonites at War, will also help visitors reflect on this topic. It explores the Mennonite response to war and violence over 500 years through four main themes: martyrs, migrants, objectors and soldiers. A 360-degree virtual tour of the exhibit will become available once it opens (<https://bit.ly/3xaPvOs>). This is a new medium for the museum, which will help reach its expanded audience and show the exhibit regardless of what restrictions are enforced.



The new Mennonites at War exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Village is currently scheduled to open on July 10 (subject to public health restrictions in place at that time) and will run until Nov. 14. It will be available to view in-person and in a 360-degree virtual tour..

“From a curatorial point of view, I think it’s been a really steep learning curve for us,” says Klassen. “It’s not such a bad thing to be forced to consider new ways of

approaching your programs and exhibits. But we would like to get back to normal as well. . . . We will be very happy to welcome people back again.”



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Taking delight in creation

Saskatchewan pastor invites others to join him for monthly outdoor worship

Story and Photos by Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
WALDHEIM, SASK.



Participants sing together at the beginning of their worship time during forest church, held at Shekinah Retreat Centre recently.

Why does God rest after creating the world? According to Curtis Wiens, it isn't because God is tired and needs a break.

Wiens, who is pastor of Aberdeen Mennonite Church, posed the question during an outdoor worship service at Shekinah Retreat Centre on June 6. About 30 adults and children representing at least seven Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations met that afternoon for what Wiens simply called "forest church."

Citing the book, *Making Peace with the Land: God's Call to Reconcile with Creation*, by Fred Bahnson and Norman Wirzba, Wiens suggested that God rests after creating the world in order to delight in creation. By resting, God sets an example for people to also take delight in creation.

"Delight in Sabbath marks the moment when we find whatever is in our presence so lovely and so good that there is no other place we want to be," write Bahnson and Wirzba. "All we want to do is soak it up, be fully present to it, and cherish the goodness of the world God has made."

Wiens shared his appreciation for this understanding of Sabbath rest as he proposed to the group his idea of gathering at Shekinah one Sunday each month, year round, to worship God outdoors and enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

"I wanted to gather a community of all ages who wanted an opportunity to worship outside," said Wiens. The Japanese practice of forest bathing has shown that being in nature has physical, spiritual and mental-health benefits, he said, noting, "It's easier for some people to connect with God outside rather than in a conventional church building."

Wiens said he hopes that a regular worship gathering held at Shekinah, but not hosted by Shekinah, would be a way of supporting the MC Saskatchewan camp and its staff.

Camp counsellors, who have only a day-and-a-half off each weekend, aren't likely to want to spend two hours of that going to church, he said, adding, "Maybe this would be an opportunity for staff to have a truly worshipful experience that doesn't have to be a burden on them."

Wiens would also like to see the forest church be a way for the Shekinah camp community to connect throughout the year. This would include summer staff as well as campers, who may come for a week in the summer and then feel disappointed that they have to wait a whole year to connect with God in the same way again.

"This is an ideal worship setting," he said of the Shekinah property. "I imagine this as a place where we could reach out to others who either have church connections and are looking for more of this type of thing, or some people who maybe don't have formalized church connections and want a community setting to connect with God in."

Wiens said that, although it is possible to have a worshipful experience by oneself in nature, one is less likely to feel motivated to get out there. Meeting with a community of worshippers can be both motivating and encouraging.

"Maybe you'll even meet someone who shares the same desires as you to connect with God in a way that maybe church isn't doing it for you, not completely," he said,

adding that, even though he is a pastor, he still feels this desire.

The church, said Wiens, is in a time of transition and change. He thinks that the forest church may be a more organic way of inviting people to be part of the church rather than expecting them to buy into a church structure that isn't part of their background and history.

"There's a lot of baggage that comes along with the church, even just knowing the language and how to behave," said Wiens, "whereas [at forest church] you can run off and jump in a puddle or wander away—there's no decorum."

If the forest church continues to meet beyond the summer months, Wiens said he expects that it will grow and shrink with the seasons.

He said that, although the idea and initiative were his, he wants the group to set the vision for the community. Based on feedback from participants during and immediately after the time of worship, Wiens said he is hopeful that others will want to bring their own creativity to the group. ❧

News brief

Bethel Church holds outdoor service, prayer walks

LANGLEY, B.C.— On April 25, Bethel Mennonite Church in Langley held its first in-person service since last November. Members gathered outdoors in the parking lot under umbrellas. "It was a wonderful time of reading Scripture, prayer and communion, and was such a blessing to be able to gather again," said an entry on the church website. "We also had an online Zoom gathering at the same time, with sharing, prayer and communion. It was encouraging to know that the church was gathering in different ways at the same time, and we know many more would have liked to attend!" Indoor in-person gatherings are still not allowed, according to the Provincial Health Officer, but walks are allowed, so the Bethel Outreach Committee is inviting the congregation to meet outside together, whether at home or in a park, to pray for each other and the church community.

—BY AMY RINNER WADDELL



BETHEL MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO

Despite rainy weather, members of Bethel Mennonite Church in Langley, B.C., enjoyed meeting together outdoors on April 25.

News brief

Neighbourhood kindness at the Picket Fence Pantry

As the pandemic continues, creativity shines through. Last October, Jolien and Curtis Carter, members of Niagara United Mennonite Church, saw an opportunity in their St. Catharines, Ont., neighbourhood which they adopted and adapted. A Halloween event happening in the park next door had tables set up with treat bags. The Carters decided to set up a table with pantry goods and hygiene supplies, available free to anyone who needed them. Then hung treat bags from their picket fence. On May 6, the Picket Fence Pantry opened to the public in the same spot, with hours of operation between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays. The pantry provides bags of ingredients to make a meal with the recipe included, local produce, and various hygiene supplies, such as toilet paper, soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, among other items. People can donate what they want, or see a list of items that are needed and donate accordingly.

—BY MARIA H. KLASSEN



PHOTO BY JOLIEN CARTER

The Picket Fence Pantry set-up in St. Catharines, Ont.

Relief sale and auction adapt to pandemic restrictions

Sale grosses over \$120,000, Featured quilt, restored tractor were the top sellers

By Janet Bauman

Eastern Canada Correspondent
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

The New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale (NHMRS) that raises funds for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) had to adapt and innovate once again, as pandemic restrictions in Ontario prohibited large gatherings for the second year in a row.

A live general auction of miscellaneous goods and experiences was held online on the evening of May 28, while the popular quilt auction was held virtually the next day. There were 556 bidders.

The featured quilt, called “Springtime in Ontario,” was created by Helmuth Renske, and was the top-selling item, fetching

\$8,300. This award-winning quilt, made by Renske 20 years ago, features 15 panels of hand-applied flowers common in Ontario. Renske did the applique and embroidery work by hand. Minerva Clemmer did the quilting.

The top-selling non-quilt item—a restored Allis-Chalmers D14 tractor—sold for \$4,500. Four quilts in the auction were sponsored by businesses that agreed to match the selling price with a donation. The auction grossed more than \$120,000.

Participants in the 2021 Run for Relief-Run it Your Way were encouraged

to set up a fundraising page and have donors support their efforts to run, walk, bike, paddle, bird watch, or otherwise move in support of MCC. They got Run it Your Way kits that included a water bottle, snacks and MCC swag. Four random kits included a “golden ticket” containing a gift certificate for a local eatery.

Several participants paraded through the streets of Tavistock, Ont., collecting donations for MCC as their way of completing the Run for Relief. They included Jim Brown, pastor of Tavistock Mennonite Church, who pulled parishioner Roy Lichti in a red wagon. Lichti



PHOTO BY KEN OGASAWARA

This feature quilt, sold by auction virtually for \$8,300, was the top-selling item at the 2021 New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale.



PHOTO BY JOHN REIMER

This restored Allis-Chalmers D14 tractor was the top-selling non-quilt item at the recent online relief sale.

held out a container on a two-metre pole to collect funds. He promised to cut off his ponytail if they raised \$2,500, and Brown agreed to dye his beard if they raised \$3,000!

Erma Bauman, age 92, also joined the Tavistock parade. She has made more quilts and blankets for MCC than she can remember. She is the mother of Rick Cober Bauman, MCC Canada’s executive director.

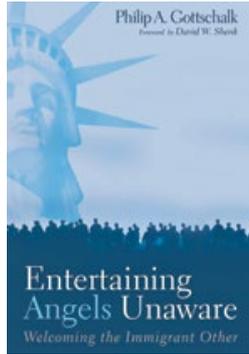
Another innovation this year was to encourage supporters to purchase “NHMRS-in-a-Box” to recreate a favourite part of the relief sale: eating. The pre-ordered boxes, containing two commemorative ceramic mugs, a fresh pie and freshly ground coffee from Baden Coffee Company, proved to be a big hit, selling out in just a few days. ☘

News brief

Entertaining Angels Unaware challenges perceptions about immigrants

LANCASTER, PA.—Do people really see who's at their door? Or do they see who they expect to see? Philip Gottschalk, an Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) worker, says much of what people see when they look at the "other"—the immigrant, the refugee—depends on what they are prepared to see and expect to see. He believes there's a war going on about perceptions. In his new book, *Entertaining Angels Unaware: Welcoming the Immigrant Other*, the seminary professor challenges those perceptions and presents a Christian response to immigration. "The biggest misconception I see is that immigrants and refugees are dangerous and will become terrorists, or that they want to flood western countries and eventually take over," he says. "Most immigrants and refugees are fleeing war and abuse. Most, including Muslims, hate extremists like ISIS. Many have lost their homes, their cities and their relatives to extremists. Immigrants and refugees are looking for safety and a future." *Entertaining Angels Unaware* is meant to answer misconceptions, present facts, and put a face on real people who are basically more like North Americans than they are different, he says, hoping that his book inspires people to help immigrants and refugees in a "realistic and doable way." Published in February 2021 by Cascade Books (Wipf and Stock Publishers), the 244-page book can be purchased at wipfandstock.com.

—EASTERN MENNONITE MISSIONS



News brief

Kindred launches new website

KITCHENER, ONT.—Kindred Credit Union launched its new website, kindredcu.com, last month. Developed in partnership with Central 1, the website is built on a new, agile platform, offering a strong foundation for future digital development with the promise of much more to come. "Kindred is committed to expanding access to existing and new members alike," says Ian Thomas, chief executive officer. "By offering an enhanced digital banking experience, we're inviting Ontarians who wish to connect their values and faith with their finances to experience 'banking with purpose' wherever they're at." Kindred's new website is rich with content to help members become more knowledgeable about their finances, boost their financial confidence, and start on the path to building a stronger financial future. In addition, with a clean, modern design and intuitive navigation, kindredcu.com now reflects the latest accessibility standards. "Working in partnership with Central 1, we're reaping the benefits of collaborating with a valued partner who's committed to driving innovation across the Canadian credit union sector," Thomas adds. Expanding its digital solutions, the credit union already offers digital membership opening, along with an enhanced mobile app; these will be followed by digital lending and other services throughout 2021.

—KINDRED CREDIT UNION

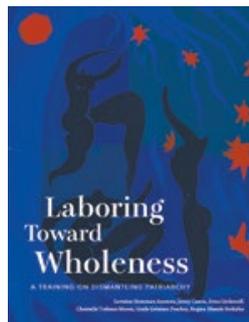


News brief

MC U.S.A. Women in Leadership introduces dismantling patriarchy curriculum

The Women in Leadership ministry of Mennonite Church U.S.A. has released a new Bible-based curriculum that explores the roots of patriarchy, which is described as a social structure in which men hold power over others. Entitled *Laboring Toward Wholeness: A Training on Dismantling Patriarchy*, the curriculum addresses the history and impact of systemic patriarchy—and looks at how God calls followers to respond through an intersectional lens. "Laboring Toward Wholeness" invites us to consciously question what we've been taught the Bible says about God, men and women, and the ways we've traditionally functioned in religious contexts," says Jenny Castro, one of the writers of the curriculum and a former coordinator of Women in Leadership. The curriculum is composed of a comprehensive facilitator's guide and a participant workbook. Topic headings include: "Patriarchy is Alive and Well," "Patriarchy Affects Us All—Men Too," "What Does the Bible Say?" "What Can I Do?" and "God Calls Us to Act." "Laboring Toward Wholeness" offers a different perspective, rooted in the experiences of women of colour who have lived, worked and worshipped among Mennonites for years, embracing this faith tradition as our own," says Castro. "It dares to imagine what is possible when we all are invited to contribute to shape our collective faith and values." To learn more, visit <https://bit.ly/3vKY2Hs>.

—MC U.S.A. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



PEOPLE

'It was a wake-up call'

Jim Shantz reflects on Indigenous work with MCC Alberta

By Joanne De Jong
Alberta Correspondent
BON ACCORD, ALTA.

At the end of May, the Tk'émłúps te Secwépemc Kukpi7 First Nation discovered the grave site of around 215 children at a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C. Like many people, Jim Shantz, former Indigenous Neighbours coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta says, "It was shocking but not surprising."

Shantz, who retired from MCC Alberta in 2020, says that his work with Indigenous people has been life changing—"almost like a learning tour that never ends."

It began in 2004, when he attended an Edmonton social-justice event at which the speaker showed the participants a map. Having graduated with a degree in geography, Shantz always had a special interest in maps, but this map was different. "It was not the map itself, but what was behind the map," he says. It showed the 139 federal-funded residential schools sprawled across Canada, with 25

being in Alberta. As he heard about the abuse that occurred in these schools—beatings, rape and even murder—it was a wake-up call to a history he never knew.

June is National Indigenous History Month, a time to honour the history, heritage and diversity of Indigenous people in Canada. Honouring the history means facing the truth of what has happened.

With regards to Indian Residential Schools, Shantz referenced Justice Murray Sinclair, who said that, although the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) documented the



This is where the girls lined up to brush their teeth at the former Blue Quills Indian Residential School. Children were referred to by numbers, not by names.

deaths of more than 6,000 students, the true figure is more likely to be over 25,000. The TRC had been told that 50 students died at the Kamloops Indian Residential School which has now proven to be under-estimated.

Shantz says that educating Mennonites in the constituency and building relationships were two main goals of MCC's Indigenous Neighbours program. This included preaching, leading congregations through the Kairos blanket exercise, and hosting learning tours to the University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills in St. Paul, Alta.

The building was formerly a residential school, one of the harsher ones, which the community requested to take over when it closed in 1970. After repeated cries, "Indian control of Indian education," and a 21-day sit in, the federal Liberal government of the day released the school to seven First Nation bands: Beaver Lake, Cold Lake, Frog Lake, Whitefish Lake, Heart Lake, Kehewin, and Saddle Lake.



PHOTOS BY SUZANNE GROSS

A 2018 learning tour sponsored by MCC Alberta at the University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills, formerly a residential school.



A look inside the University nuhelot'jine thaiyots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills, formerly a residential school, during an MCC Alberta learning tour in 2018.

According to Shantz, 40 Mennonites have toured the former residential school. Inspiring was the story of a resilient community that chose to redeem the school rather than tear it down. The majority of the staff were once students there. One woman told how, as a child, she was forced to stand in a corner for a half-day for speaking Cree. Now she teaches at the university.

According to the university, "As an Indigenous non-profit educational institution, a prime objective . . . is to promote a sense of pride in Indigenous heritage and reclaim traditional knowledge and practices."

Looking back over the years, one lesson that has stuck with Shantz is respect for the land, trees and animals. Now when considering decisions to be made on his land, he tries to look at it from an Indigenous perspective: When beavers are making a mess of the trees, should they be killed or let be? Is using a gas-powered lawn mower a faithful act?

Although he is retired, Shantz is still committed to walking with his Indigenous brothers and sisters. "We need to mourn with those who mourn," he says. He has noticed that when people are confronted

with Indigenous history, they tend to react angrily, with denial or guilt. The challenge is to be an ally, he says, to walk together with compassion and to advocate.

Shantz says that Mennonite Church Canada suggested wearing an orange shirt recently in solidarity with those who are grieving over the children who died in Kamloops. He wore it to Prairie Gardens, where his wife works. His shirt did come up in conversation, and he was grateful for the opportunity to share his experiences.

As for the church, he suggests that there

is a lot to be learned from Indigenous spirituality. "We tend to focus on our vertical relationship with God," he says. "The Indigenous remind us that the horizontal relationship is also important."

A favourite quote he saw on a T-shirt at a Poundmaker Performance Festival reads, "See our places, hear our stories and celebrate our strengths." Shantz encourages everyone to learn what they can about Indigenous history and to honour the TRC's 94 Calls to Action as part of being a faithful disciple of Christ. ❧

/// News brief

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **Janet Bauman** joined the pastoral team of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church in a half-time role, in April. She earned a bachelor of theology degree at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University) in Winnipeg, and a masters of theological studies degree at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont. Previously, she had a career in teaching, mostly at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener. She recently trained in spiritual direction through the Jubilee program. She is also the Eastern Canada correspondent for *Canadian Mennonite*. She looks forward to walking alongside people on their faith journeys.



• **Donna Kerfoot** began as pastor of Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira, in March. She earned a bachelor of religious education degree at Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener, Ont.; a master of divinity degree from McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ont.; and a master of theology degree from Wycliffe College (Toronto School of Theology). She taught theology courses at Emmanuel and lay ministry courses at Wycliffe. Other areas of ministry include teaching at churches, volunteering with Out of the Cold shelters for the homeless in Kitchener and fundraising for World Vision Canada. She looks forward to serving others as a minister of Christ.



• **Lloyd Oakey** began as interim associate pastor of East Zorra Mennonite Church in Tavistock, in April. He has 40 years of pastoral experience that includes chaplaincy; church planting; and helping churches build, renovate and work through other transitions while focusing on Christ. He has pastored in various Ontario locations, including Niagara Falls, New Hamburg, Mount Bridges, Ayr and, most recently, as a supply pastor at Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira. He earned a bachelor of theology degree at Master's College and Seminary in Peterborough, Ont., and likes to take continuing education courses, including recently the Transitional Ministry Course from the Amigo Centre in Sturgis, Mich.



—CANADIAN MENNONITE

Shalom Counselling celebrates long-serving leader

By Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

On June 6, around 100 people gathered virtually to say shalom to Wanda Wagler-Martin, celebrating her 24 years of leadership as executive director of Shalom Counselling in Waterloo, Ont. Wagler-Martin concludes her role there this month.

The agency's mission is "Helping people grow toward peace and wholeness" by "providing therapeutic counselling, consultation and education programs that integrate emotional, relational and spiritual dimensions, for individuals, couples, families, groups, churches and communities."

Board members and colleagues expressed appreciation for Wagler-Martin's

wisdom and integrity, her trusted leadership, careful listening and attention to detail.

Local politicians offered their congratulations and thanks, citing the value of her leadership in growing awareness and services around the needs for mental-health support in Waterloo Region. Gratitude and best wishes were also read from representatives of partner agencies in the area who valued her guidance and leadership in the field of faith-based counselling services.

In addition to her work at Shalom, Wagler-Martin was a sought-after speaker and teacher in local churches.

She thanked the board for inviting her into work that she realizes she was "meant



PHOTO BY FRED MARTIN

Wanda Wagler-Martin was honoured on June 6 at a virtual celebration of her 24 years of leadership as executive director of Shalom Counselling in Waterloo, Ont.

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to do," even though she was young and inexperienced as a leader at the time she was hired.

She was recognized for her positive attitude towards the people she worked with. She was often heard claiming that she worked with "the best board" or "the best colleagues."

She led the organization through years of growth, including a building project that gave Shalom a home of its own, after sharing space at Erb Street Mennonite Church for many years.

A Counselling Care Fund that the agency set up to provide counselling subsidies for anyone who needs support, has been renamed Wanda's Counselling Care Fund as a way to recognize and honour her dedication to providing affordable and accessible counselling to people from all walks of life.

Wagler-Martin will be succeeded by Susan Schwartzentruber, who was serving as the clinical director at Shalom. ❧

News brief

Pastoral transitions in Manitoba



PHOTO BY DAVE HODGE

In attendance for the ordination for pastoral ministry of Erika Enns Rodine, centre, at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on May 23, were, from left to right: Rick Neufeld, Mennonite Church Manitoba's director of Leadership Ministries; and First Mennonite's ministers: David Driedger, Mark Von Kampen and Kathy Koop.

• **Erika Enns Rodine** was ordained for congregational ministry on May 23. She is associate minister of First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, where she has been doing youth ministry since 2010. She earned a bachelor of arts degree in Anabaptist history and biblical and theological studies from Winnipeg's Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), and is currently continuing her studies in CMU's Graduate School of Theology and Ministry.

• **James Schellenberg** began as interim associate pastor of Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, on May 1. He will serve in this position until the end of 2021. Schellenberg comes to the role already familiar with the congregation; Douglas is his home church and he was its associate pastor from 2003 to 2009. He spent most of his career as a teacher and moved to pastoral ministry in his 50s. After his time at Douglas, he became lead pastor of Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and then worked with Mennonite Central Committee's program for Low-German Mennonites, before retiring. This interim position comes after the resignation of Adam Robinson, who served Douglas as associate pastor since 2009.

—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE



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Watch: Four songs instead of a sermon

A Stratford, Ont., pastor lets music do the talking following the discovery of the remains of 215 children at a former residential school in B.C.

canadianmennonite.org/foursongs



Things are not as they appear

Michael Pahl explores four biblical texts that call readers to look for the reign of God in the small and insignificant things of life.

canadianmennonite.org/blog/appear



One piece at a time

A Mennonite Central Committee partner in India is supporting the resiliency of women who have survived abuse.

canadianmennonite.org/barrackpore



Congregations need to talk about generosity

Read a review of the new book, *Growing a Generous Church: A Year in the Life of Peach Blossom Church*.

canadianmennonite.org/gagreview

Digital issues for the summer slowdown

FROM

Canadian Mennonite

The magazine will print one issue in July and one in August during our annual summer slowdown, but subscribers are eligible to receive a digital issue by email in two-week intervals.

If you already receive digital delivery throughout the year, you **do not** need to sign up again.

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CANADIAN
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Courageous Imagination

MCEC 201-50 Kent Avenue Kitchener ON N2G3R1
www.mcec.ca

MCEC is on a courageous imagination journey of listening for God's direction together through prayer, scripture and storytelling. Here is what we have heard so far:

- We need to be intentional in laying down our own agendas so we can fully hear God's leading as we move forward together in God's calling.
- We need to trust God in this process by being willing to take risks and make mistakes.
- It feels like MCEC is ready to live more courageously for Jesus and is open to changes that we may not have been before.
- MCEC is diverse and we love that! In order for us to continue to grow we need to work harder to create and maintain deep, respectful relationships that result in mutual transformation.
- We long for connections between congregations and between each other.
- We want to engage with the world around us by having meaningful and hard conversations about things that matter. We need to approach these issues from a biblical basis and with our Anabaptist values of non-violence, peace and justice.

Who are we together? How is God calling us as the church together? How do you feel God is calling the church to respond and adapt to the changing local and global context?

Email us at courageousimagination@mcec.ca telling us your responses and which statements above most resonate with you. See www.mcec.ca for Courageous Imagination updates and events.

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 Who are we together?
 What is the Church that
 we are becoming?



Craig Frere
 Episode 3:
 Trusting God
 on our Journey



Andie Joseph
 Episode 7:
 Connecting Youth and Faith

“Jesus calls us to make disciples. We need to add new ways of doing church so we can be **faithful** in that call.”
 - Craig Frere

“Our **liberation** is bound with each other's liberation. Working for your well-being is also working for my **well-being.**”
 - Kim Penner

“When Jesus comes back we're going to be people of **beautiful** colours, backgrounds and speaking different languages. It will all come into **harmony.**”
 - Andi Joseph

PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT

Peace behind prison bars:

How peaceful reconciliation set one man truly free

By Renata Buhler

Zebron Mwale harboured a bitter grudge against his neighbour, Mary Mweemba. After all, it was thanks to her that he was stuck in prison. Mary had reported him to the police for growing cannabis, a crime in Zambia.

Zebron had plenty of time to ruminate on the conflict between them before he finally confronted her. That opportunity arrived one day when Mary accompanied Zebron's family to visit him in prison.

Face-to-face with the person who sold him out to the authorities, Zebron could have said any number of venomous things. Instead, he seized the opportunity to seek reconciliation.

"I talked about the need to end the quarrels... to put them to an end and live in harmony," says Zebron.

So what changed during Zebron's time in prison? The answer lies with the people he spotted wearing small white pins with an image of a baobab tree at Choma Correctional Facility. They are members of the prison's peace club. The idea intrigued Zebron, so he joined.

"After the message of peace club anchored well in my heart, I quickly learned about the need to break the chain of revenge," says Zebron.

Peace club members learn how to identify conflicts in their own lives and practice peaceful ways to resolve them. Rather than attending a one-off class, they meet regularly to encourage each other as they work to change their ingrained patterns of behaviour.



Zebron Mwale holds the badge that signifies his peace club membership. He joined MCC's peace club while in prison and credits it with changing his life. MCC photo/Amanda Talstra

Peace is more than a wish. It takes time, effort and practice but the results are extraordinary. Peace club members see how peaceful conflict resolution benefits them and how they can use it to benefit others too.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has supported peace clubs like this one since 2006 when they were first implemented in three Zambian schools. The program has since grown to 436 peace clubs in more than a dozen countries. The Zambian government took notice of the program's success and worked with MCC to adapt the peace club model for use throughout the country's correctional services system, including at Choma Correctional Facility.

This program has proven life-changing for people like Zebron. Besides reconciling with his neighbour, Zebron also secured a pardon and was released from prison due to his improved behaviour.

But the transformative power of peace didn't stop there. "When I was released, I found out that I was missing something," says Zebron. "That prompted me to think about a peace club in the community so that we can continue talking about restoring peace and justice."

When he needed volunteers to run the community peace club, Zebron knew just who to ask. His neighbour Mary—the person who once turned him in to the police—now serves as the vice chairperson for the peace club alongside Zebron.

That's the power of peace in action.

For MCC, peace is more than a wish. It's our work.
To learn more, visit morethanawish.ca



Calendar

Take Our Moments and Our Days.
Register online at mcab.ca/events.

British Columbia

Ongoing: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. is calling on local Anabaptists to participate in a collaborative storytelling project. Share your COVID-19 story/artwork/experiences for this first of its kind collaborative project at <http://aht.libraryhost.com/>. Take a look at the submissions! Still shy about uploading? Send your submission via email to archives@mhsbc.com and it can be added to the project on your behalf.

Alberta

Every Monday to Thursday: Congregants from across MC Alberta are invited to join a Zoom group for morning prayer on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7:30 a.m. MST, and evening prayer on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9 p.m. MST, for about 15 to 20 minutes, using

International

July 1-4, 2022: Mennonite World Conference's Global Youth Summit, in Salatiga, Indonesia. Theme: "Life in the Spirit: Learn. Serve. Worship." To learn more, visit mwc-cmm.org/gys.

July 5-10, 2022: Mennonite World Conference's global assembly, in Semarang, Indonesia. Theme: "Following Jesus together across barriers." For more information, visit mwc-cmm.org/assembly/indonesia-2022.

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



Classifieds

Employment Opportunity

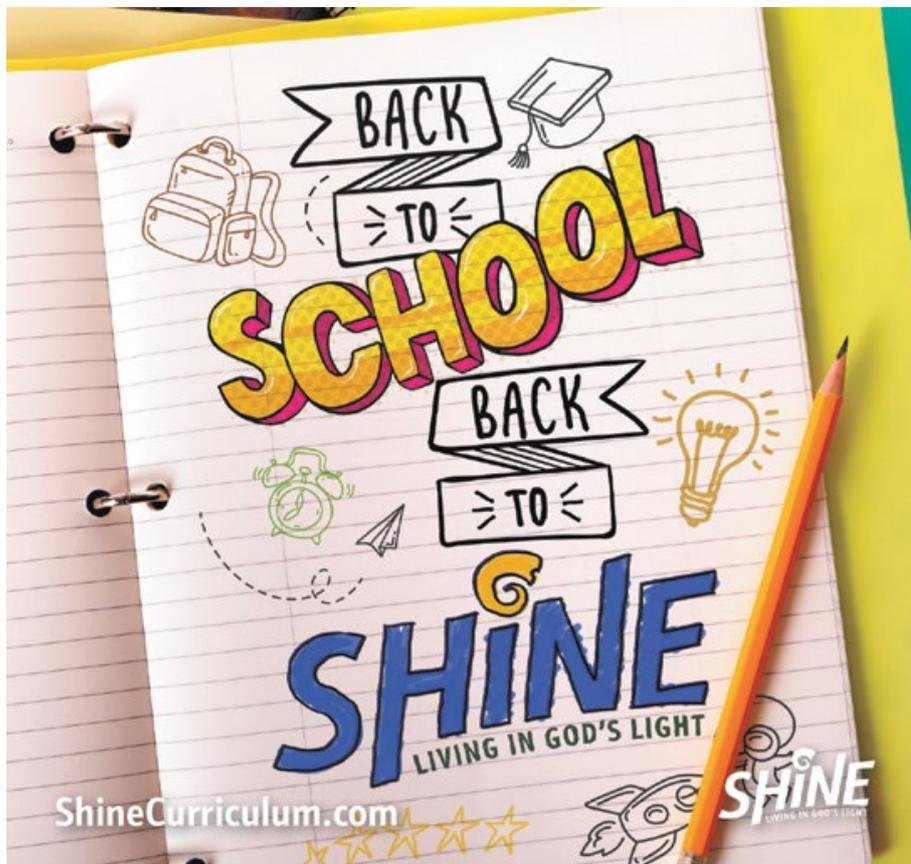


Employment Opportunity
Church Engagement Minister
0.5 FTE

MCA is a caring community of twelve congregations joined by faith in Jesus Christ in a Mennonite perspective. We are seeking a Church Engagement Minister who embodies that faith with demonstrated gifts and experience in engaging collaboratively with individuals, congregations, and financial supporters from diverse cultural contexts and theological perspectives. Supported by MCA's Executive Minister, the Church Engagement Minister engages with congregations and individuals to deepen their understanding and participation in three key ministry areas:

1. The mission of the church at the local, nationwide, and international levels;
2. Relationship-building within MCA and between MCA congregations;
3. Growing financial support for individual congregations, MCA, and MC Canada.

For a full job description, see mcab.ca/careers.
Inquiries and resumes may be directed to moderator@mcab.ca



CANADIAN MENNONITE

Employment Opportunity

Circulation and Finance Administrator

Canadian Mennonite seeks a full-time Circulation and Finance Administrator to work at the head office in Waterloo, Ontario, starting July 5, 2021.

The Circulation and Finance Administrator supports the smooth running of our office and the magazine's publishing activities.

To see a full job description and apply, go to: www.canadianmennonite.org/employment.

Promotional Supplement



explore

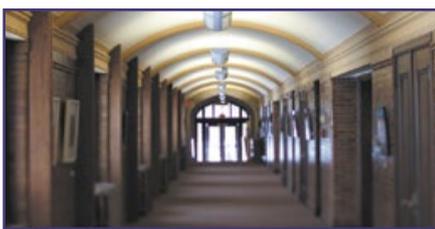
A theological experience for youth (grades 10 to 12) who want to develop their leadership gifts. [More at ambs.ca/explore](http://ambs.ca/explore)



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Photo finish



PHOTO BY ALICIA GOOD / TEXT BY CHARLEEN JONGEJAN HARDER

Leamington Mennonite families are beginning to realize that the land that was their salvation came at a cost to Indigenous homes, land and freedom. The discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the residential school on the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation has unleashed grief in the church and in the community at large. Natalia Good of North Leamington United Mennonite Church visited the sacred fire of the Caldwell First Nation at their band office in Leamington, Ont., to sit with them in grief and listen to stories being read to the spirits of the dead. She later wrote in chalk: "Every child matters. 215 children. They didn't deserve this and they're just some of many. The last residential school closed in 1996. Someone born that year would be 24/25. This is not an issue of the past." The sacred fire was to burn for 215 hours.