

CANADIAN MENNONITE

February 13, 2023 Volume 27 Number 3



Pastor Moses Falco
eats a big burger
every Shrove Tuesday,
then gives up meat for **Lent**

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EDITORIAL

The evangelical edge

TOBI THIESSEN

publisher@canadianmennonite.org



Two readers recently wrote to me with concerns. “Over the years that we have received [CM],” wrote a Manitoba couple, “we have detected a constant shift toward liberal theology. . . . de-emphasizing evangelism, Christ’s life and ministry, and his death for our salvation.”

The other person, from B.C., said CM articles cover “many salient topics and issues” but “never refer to 1 Cor 3: 11 [which reads:] *For no other foundation has any one laid than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Surely you don’t need reminders of it?” he asked.

The letter writers raise a fair point. Canadian Mennonites are often uncomfortable with evangelistic practices if the emphasis is on converting people. It’s also true that Mennonites do not spend much time preaching about salvation from sin.

I disagree, however, that articles in this magazine de-emphasize Christ’s life and ministry. On the contrary, articles in these pages show Mennonites deeply committed to Jesus’ way of peace and love, working as communities to bring healing and hope to a hurting world.

Still, given that church attendance is in decline across Canada, it’s reasonable to suggest that we might be missing something.

This issue presents “Witness” by Doug Klassen, executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada. Klassen gives snapshots of Mennonites in five countries. We see that in Ethiopia, thousands of people are joining the church each year through an approach of prayer, baptism and

“strategic evangelism.” In the Philippines, Congo and elsewhere, Mennonites have been powerful witnesses for peace. Their work attracts new believers.

The global Mennonite church can’t have grown to 2 million believers in 86 countries without some kind of evangelism. Perhaps some of this spread has come about through the sort of embodied evangelism that Menno Simons spoke of: “True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant; it clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry, it comforts the sorrowful and shelters the destitute.” Mennonites still hold strongly to that vision of evangelism and discipleship.

Elsewhere in this issue, columnist Joon Park writes how Christian identity has been formed over the centuries from Biblical times until today, always adapting to cultural, social and geographical influences. Park challenges Mennonite churches in Canada to continue adapting to new influences brought to the church by non-European Mennonites.

We are often uncomfortable when challenged to change the way we think or do things. We are bound to disagree with at least some ideas. In some cases, members of the church are deeply divided—not usually about whether baptism should be by immersion or about what kind of hymns we sing. Instead, the deep divide is over fundamental theological ideas such as how our communities welcome LGBTQ+ people or how to express evangelism.

Troy Watson addresses this challenge in his column, reminding us to stay in communion with other Christians even

when they “embody attitudes, values, behaviours and beliefs that, in my opinion, are diametrically opposed to the teachings, character and heart of Jesus.”

This issue contains numerous other articles that show Mennonite faith and practice at work. Senior writer Aaron Epp talks to five Mennonites about Lenten spiritual practices. In our semi-annual Focus on Education, Mennonites schools tell their stories.

In a story by Angelika Dawson, supportive care worker Ashleigh Singleton shares how God transformed her life. “Now I know that my identity is in Jesus,” Singleton proclaims.

In the feature, Klassen challenges us to consider what we are doing in our neighbourhoods to extend the peace of Jesus Christ. Mennonites in other countries are doing so courageously.

As 21st-century Mennonites in Canada, we may need reminders like those of the two letter writers, to be more explicit in acknowledging the motivation behind our faith and practice. If we fail to mention that “Jesus is the center of our faith” to quote Palmer Becker’s *Anabaptist Essentials*, do our actions on Indigenous-settler reconciliation, or the environment, or refugee sponsorship, etc. look any different from those of a secular group?

The Manitoba letter writers said that CM “articles are often not distinguishable from other cultural magazines.” They cancelled their subscription.

I acknowledge those of you who are still reading and thank you for staying engaged. ☯



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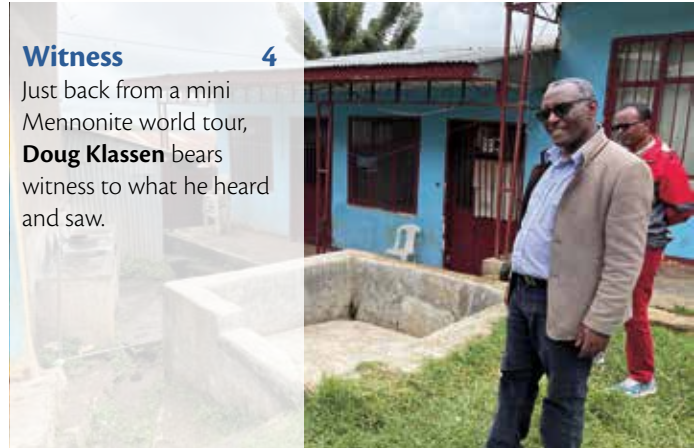
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FEATURE

Witness

From a centuries-old church in Pingjum, Netherlands to a dim library in Tokyo, Doug Klassen tells stories of Menno and Mennonites in five countries

Story and photos by Doug Klassen
Executive Minister, Mennonite Church Canada

I stand on the very spot where it all began, in a former Catholic church in the village of Pingjum, Netherlands. Here, the priest Menno Simons was called to account by his superiors.

He'd been interpreting scripture for himself, pondering deeply the words of the prophets, of Jesus, of the apostles. Menno rejected the dogma of his church superiors. He began teaching adult baptism, and that works must accompany faith. He was branded a heretic and spent the rest of his life in hiding.

I visit the Pingjum church while in the Netherlands for a meeting of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) executive committee in late 2022. As I stand where Menno stood—amidst meetings with Mennonites from around the world—I think of how his teachings, and

those of other early Anabaptists, have travelled across generations and geography

Today, Mennonite World Conference reports more than two million Mennonites in over 86 countries. As I pause in that little church, I'd like to ask Menno: "Did you have any idea? Did you know what would happen when you set down that chalice for the last time and walked away from the official priesthood?"

As travel restrictions eased in 2022, I accepted five invitations to visit places Menno's teachings have reached over the last 500 hundred years. I travelled as part of my job, but it was more than that. I wanted to feel like a humble and open-minded pilgrim. I yearned to be transformed.



The church in Pingjum, Netherlands where Menno Simons stood up to Catholic authorities.



Safari Mutabesha is a Congolese refugee and pastor at a camp in Malawi, pictured at the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Indonesia.



Pastor Endezinaw Tefera next to the baptismal tank at the Asela Meserete Kristos Church in Asela, Ethiopia.

Indonesia

My pilgrimage begins with the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Salatiga, Indonesia last July. Sobering testimonies rend my heart. I met Safari Mutabesha, the son of a Congolese Mennonite Brethren pastor. He witnessed a rebel murder his father in the family home.

Forced to leave Congo for his own safety, Safari ended up in refugee camp in Malawi. He became a preacher in the camp. There, he met the commander in charge of the brutal operation that killed his father. The camp residents know this man, fear him. Safari invited the man to live with him, which he did for three years, during which time Safari ministered to him.

The former rebel commander is now a Mennonite pastor in Malawi. In many ways, the story is far removed in time and space from Pingjum, but in other ways it is not.

Ethiopia

I'm barely back home when my phone pings with a calendar reminder to prep for a trip to Ethiopia with colleagues Norm Dyck and Fanosie Legesse.

I briefly question my sanity: Who willingly goes to a country engaged in civil war? But after two years of travel restrictions, international partners are eager for connection.

The Ethiopian invitation nudges at my inner preacher; I recollect the apostle Paul in Philippi. He discovered some women by a river with open hearts for God. They became co-founders of a church Paul deeply loved.

In Ethiopia, there are not just a few believers by a river, but a vast, flowing river of believers. I'm told the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) baptizes 25,000 people per year, many of them young. Leaders are frustrated by this "slow" pace of growth. There is such a hunger for the gospel right now and church members could be doing more than they are to share it.

I speak with pastor Endezinaw Tefera at the Asela church in the mountains south of Addis Ababa, the capital. For 20 years he wrote sermons on his lap because he had no desk. The people of his church met under tarps held up by poles, delaying building plans in order to devote energies to church planting. This one congregation has planted 47

churches and there are 10 more getting started.

On my trip to Ethiopia I learn that more than 40 Mennonite church buildings in the western part of the country have been burnt down, caught in the middle of ethnically charged violence; some 57 pastors displaced. Yet their people still meet, sometimes under trees next to charred buildings, and they still contribute financially to the conference.

I meet a man back in Addis Ababa who became a street child at age 11. For many years, he had only one aim in life—to return home and kill his abusive father. At the persistent urging of some local Ethiopian Mennonite missionaries, he attended a worship service one evening, and as the choir sang the love of God washed over him in a way that words fail to describe. Today, after years of healing and study, he is one of the key leaders in MKC.

Dyck, Legesse and I ask a group of 50 regional leaders of MKC about their key to growth. "Prayer," they say, "followed by miracles, strategic evangelism and discipleship teaching." It all hinges on prayer.



A room prepared for baptismal class at the Asela church in Ethiopia.

Philippines

The next leg of my pilgrimage leads me to Mindanao province in the Philippines where I meet up with International Witness workers Dann and Joji Pantoja. They lead Coffee for Peace and Peacebuilders Community Inc. (PBCI).

We pull up to a coffee shop; its slogan reads, “Just coffee in every cup.” The wordplay on “just” carries a deeper meaning here. The Philippine military has been in a long-term conflict with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, a group seeking autonomy from the central government. The tensions make life difficult for coffee farmers.

We drive into the mountains where two Indigenous tribes grow coffee. They’ve been caught up in the fighting, trying to eke out a living while fearing for their lives. Safe travel is no guarantee. We’ve sent pictures of our vehicle in advance, alerting guerilla snipers that we are not a threat.

Over a dozen elders welcome us. We are safeguarded by a local power utility with security responsibilities.



Norm Dyck (centre) of MC Eastern Canada and Jeanette Hanson of MC Canada with an Indigenous coffee grower in the Philippines.

After introductions come immediate questions: “Are you here to plant a church?”

“Only if you want us to,” I reply. Applause.

I learn about the challenges they face in growing and selling their crops. I learn how PBCI and Coffee for Peace can provide assistance. We share a feast of locally grown delights with names I cannot pronounce.

We visit another tribe, another elder. Here, a pair of large metal leaf sculptures and a plaque memorialize the names of the 39 people—including 22 children—killed in the 1989 Rano massacre. Those killed were part of a United Church of Christ group that had gathered for worship. The day before the massacre, the Indigenous group had rejected demands for armed revolutionaries of the Communist Party. The massacre was their response. I cannot imagine the pressure they faced. I listen to stories from survivors and descendants of the victims. Buried emotions rise to the surface, a visceral testimony to the deep wounds that remain.

At a military checkpoint on our way back out of the mountains, Dann and our driver are questioned intensely. I learn that the tinted windows in our van triggered concerns we were being kidnapped. The next day an army colonel, decked out in army fatigues, visits us at the PBCI office. His men wait outside.

We chat congenially until he leans in close and picks up a booklet from the table. It's a PBCI training text. He has a request: "I have come here today to seek permission to use what is in this book to train our soldiers in peacekeeping. What you as a Mennonite Church do is far more effective at building and maintaining peace than the approach of the army."

Many wise men and women did the heavy lifting in developing the booklet, drawing on the peace teachings of Menno Simons and Jesus. The teaching is a gift to the church. Now it is a gift to the world.

Japan and Thailand

I head to Japan and Thailand in January 2023, the last leg of my six-month pilgrimage. In Thailand I join a Mennonite Church (MC) Canada learning tour focused on the work of International Witness workers Tom and Christine Poovong. They've established the Friends of Grace network, a rapidly growing group of churches hungry to learn about Anabaptist principles. We've brought a suitcase full of translated copies of Palmer Becker's book, *Anabaptist Essentials*. Menno is here, too.

In Japan, I meet Menno again. Witness workers Gerald and Rie Neufeld from Canada take me to the Tokyo Anabaptist Centre, and into an unlit, unheated room that houses its library. We poke around with flashlights.

High up on a shelf I spy a large, fat book. Could it be? I open the cover, astonished to read its title in German Gothic Script: *Martyrs Mirror*. It is a leather-bound 1814 edition.

MC Canada has had a long relationship with Mennonites in and around



An 1814 edition of *Martyrs Mirror* in the library of the Tokyo Anabaptist Centre.

visit to Pingjum. At the Haarlem church, three members showed me their ancient leather-bound copy of the same Anabaptist classic I saw in Tokyo. I was overwhelmed. In that moment, the work suddenly shrank down to one huge intercultural Mennonite family.

These past months, I followed in the footsteps of the many faithful, some who gave their lives. I found evidence of Menno Simons everywhere, even some "relics," in a sense. More importantly, in every place I went, I found the Spirit of God we have come to know in Jesus Christ.

As I wish I could ask Menno what he thinks about his teachings filtering down to all these people I also want to ask what we as Mennonites in Canada are doing in our own neighbourhoods to extend the peace of Jesus Christ as Menno and many others have done so courageously. ☸

Tokyo, but perhaps Menno Simons has been here longer.

My mind races back to the Haarlem Mennonite Church in the Netherlands. I preached there two days after my



Doug Klassen is Executive Minister of Mennonite Church Canada, based in Winnipeg.

For discussion

1. If you were making a faith pilgrimage, what significant place would you choose to visit? How would you travel there? What would you hope to do or learn there?
2. Doug Klassen tells the story of a former rebel commander who became a Mennonite pastor. How is this story similar to that of Menno Simons? How is it different?
3. What do you find most amazing about the believers of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia?
4. What are some lessons we could learn from the Peacebuilders Community Inc. in the Philippines?
5. What are Mennonites in Canada doing to "extend the peace of Jesus Christ"? What should we be doing?

—By Barb Draper

See related resources at
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OPINION

/// Readers write

✉ Making God manageable

I really appreciate what Ryan Dueck is trying to get at, as well as the powerful responses (“To set a soul aflame,” Jan. 30). When Karl Barth visited European Mennonite Bible School near Basel in 1967, a student asked him if groups like the Mennonites have a reason to exist today. Barth responded that we have a reason to exist if the Spirit is in our midst.

Maybe we have left behind our souls’ deep longing for the sacred encounter with God for something a bit more manageable.

I wonder if a revived theology of the actual presence of Jesus at the table is one of the places that deep hunger can be fed—a table that is radically open and invites all to be transformed by Jesus.

Also, I know this is not what Dueck intended, but I have seen the critique that people with generous and affirming views (at times labelled progressive) of our queer siblings are somehow less filled with this holy fire. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

CHAD MILLER, HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA (RIDGEWAY MENNONITE CHURCH)

✉ Robust ‘progressive’ faith

I appreciate and echo what I see as Ryan Dueck’s concern and hope for churches to be deeply rooted in the person and power of God and the life that extends from that reality, letting it set our souls “aflame” as he says (“To set a soul aflame,” Jan. 30).

I think it’s vital that churches gather and work from that centre, rather than just sprinkling in a bit of vague spirituality within a larger agenda of self/group “therapy” and social concern.

I also especially appreciate Cheryl Pauls’ response (“Response to Ryan Dueck,” Jan. 30), because the prevailing questions for me while reading this article were about categorization. What actually is a “progressive church”? Can they be conflated/equated with Brad East’s “therapeutic church” across the board or just within Dueck’s circles?

Are all progressive churches “therapeutic”? Is being therapeutic a hallmark of progressivism? Is being a progressive church primarily about language (“sin, salvation,” etc. vs. “wellness, affirmation,” etc.), as the examples in the beginning of the article largely focus on? What is progress?

I have no doubt things outlined by Dueck here do exist in some form in churches, but I think greater clarity in these areas of categorization may be helpful.

In some spaces I observe, study and participate in—spaces that would be labelled progressive due to some central commitments—a deep and robust faith in a God powerfully animates and roots much of the life together. And it was out of

great “existential urgency” that many of these spaces were birthed in the first place and continue to find life. I hope Dueck has opportunity to engage and be surprised by some of these spaces in the future, first-hand or in study. Thanks Ryan for the thought-provoking words.

JUSTIN SUN, RICHMOND, B.C (PEACE MENNONITE CHURCH)

✉ In praise of critique

I read with interest the January 16 articles by Will Braun (“The holy paradox of modern Mennonite identity”), Joon Park (“One-anotherness in Christ”) and a letter to the editor from Peter Reimer who points out the objectification of women in the Bible.

To me, there was a common thread: Exclusiveness, patriarchy and misogyny within the traditional Euro-German Mennonite church. In the past decade or more, I have taken a much less active role in the church organization and am less invested from a theological standpoint. It has made it easier for me to identify the aforementioned behaviours.

I recently did a short stint with Mennonite Disaster Service and it was interesting to see some of these traits portrayed to various degrees. I am sure that to the project leadership, it would be entirely out of their scope of awareness.

It is encouraging to see writers and contributors to *Canadian Mennonite* identify where we fall short and not be muzzled by church leadership. To the contrary, they are encouraged to challenge our thoughts and behaviours which will hopefully bring about change.

CHARLIE SMITH, ALLAN, SASK. (PLEASANT POINT MENNONITE CHURCH)

✉ Jesus’ vaccine command

In response to the letter, “Feeling like a pandemic leper” (Jan. 16, 2023): Too often, we do not focus on Jesus as Lord. We are servants with a master. Our opinions mean little; His opinions mean everything. We subjugate ourselves to Him.

During the pandemic, thousands died. And not just those suffering from COVID, but also those unable to access medical care because hospitals were clogged with COVID patients, many of whom were not vaccinated.

What is Jesus’ opinion about this? He has more than an opinion, He has a command—actually two commands, from Matthew 26: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and, Love your neighbour as yourself.

Simply put, thousands of Christians in Manitoba believed they had the right to refuse vaccination. Many of these were Mennonites. That is hardly loving our neighbours as ourselves. We don’t put people we love in harm’s way. Yes, there were uncertainties about the vaccine. Yes vaccination campaigns are a numbers game and some may die from the vaccinations. In

this instance, few died, very few in fact. Still, the point is we bite the bullet and get vaccinated. After all, we're saved so if we die, we go to be with Jesus.

Before you judge me, my wife, too, is immuno-suppressed. She stayed in our house from early 2020 until late in 2022, venturing out only to walk.

My entire family and I are fully vaccinated. I've had five shots, as has my wife. We did the loving thing, and there's been an upside. No one in my immediate family has had COVID. I don't like to speak about blessings—God is not our “blessing dispenser”—but perhaps God blessed us because we obeyed His son.

GREG FALK, WINNIPEG

✉ Carrot soup for the soul

I love everything about the article “Soup to change the world” (Jan. 30) by Maria Klassen. The “everything” includes but is not limited to:

- providing meaningful work;
- using existing facilities;
- hiring folks who need ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program);
- using locally sourced products as available;
- having a variety of soups for a variety of tastes and cultures; and
- selling soups through MCC thrift shops.

My husband Laur and I have the privilege of volunteering for the MCC thrift store in St. Catharines. We love the people and the products and the mission. How lovely to add nourishing and tasty soup to the offerings. We have tried a few and they are great. And they are great gifts for such situations as illness, new baby, moving or just to show love.

Thank you to Maria, *Canadian Mennonite*, Raw Carrot and MCC thrift stores! Love always!

JAN STEVEN, ST. CATHARINES, ONT. (GRACE MENNONITE CHURCH)

✉ Compromise on force

Re: “Conscientious,” which included Mennonite responses to military spending (Jan. 30): Dreams of better solutions to danger and violence issues are great, but they need legs. Mennonite churches don't provide them. Peaceful living and helping others are great, but we must add a balanced approach to safety and stability.

My interpretation of scripture is that Jesus compromised his own ideals by allowing his disciples to carry swords—only as a small show of deterrence, I think, but it demonstrated compromise. Society and the world would fall apart without many forms of security, unfortunately. I think Jesus fully understands this.

Inwardly, we can be pure. Outwardly, we just do what we can, living by many compromises. Far more money and effort could go toward alternative approaches to conflict, but without a credible, comprehensive position, advocates of this have little influence.

Mennonite Church Canada should promote thorough, thoughtful analysis and discussion of all this.

HOWARD BOLT, OSLER, SASK.

Be in Touch

- Send letters to letters@canadianmennonite.org. Our mailing address is on page 3.
- Please keep it concise and respectful. Any substantial edits to letters will be done in consultation with the writer.
- If you have feedback not intended for publication, please contact editor@canadianmennonite.org or at 1-800-378-2524 ext 5.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Mulamba—Marie and Nabintu (twins b. Nov. 14, 2022), to Fiston Mulamba and Uwezo Awezaye, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Deaths

Banman—Abe, 90 (b. May 27, 1932; d. Nov. 26, 2022), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Braun—Anne (Penner), 100 (b. Aug. 27, 1922; d. Dec. 21, 2022) Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Dick—Henry, 99 (b. June 17, 1922; d. March 20, 2022), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Dick—Leona, 96 (b. Aug. 1, 1926; d. Dec. 20, 2022), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Dyck—Jake, 69 (b. July 13, 1953; d. Nov. 21, 2022) Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Enns—Hede, 82 (b. March 13, 1940; d. Jan. 27, 2023), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Franz—Walter, 77 (b. March 19, 1945; d. Aug. 11, 2022), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Jantzen—Miriam, 95 (b. Aug. 12, 1927; d. Jan. 13, 2023), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Janzen—Mary, 84 (b. June 4, 1937; d. April 19, 2022), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Klippenstein—Victor, 91 (b. March 8, 1931; d. Jan. 3, 2023), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Lantz—Lois Jean (Patton), 82 (b. Nov. 6, 1940; d. Jan. 11, 2023), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

McFarlane—Sarah (Leis), 86 (b. July 18, 1936; d. Jan. 17, 2023), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Neufeld—Hans, 88 (b. Aug. 1, 1934; d. Aug. 29, 2022), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Neufeldt—Dennis, 69 (b. Feb. 6, 1953; d. Sept. 7, 2022), Lethbridge

Mennonite, Alta.

Schroeder—Helen (Doerksen), 89 (b. Feb. 27, 1933; d. Nov. 24, 2022), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Schultz—Nettie, 84 (b. April 14, 1938; d. May 26, 2022), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Warkentin—Rudy, 84 (b. Nov. 18, 1938; d. Nov. 30, 2022) Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Wiebe—Gertrude (Trudy), 92 (b. July 27, 1930; d. Dec. 27, 2022), Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wolfe—Frank, 87 (b. June 2, 1935; d. Aug. 8, 2022), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Please send Milestone announcements (within four months of the event) to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including location and name of congregation. For death notices, please include birth date and last name at time of birth.

A moment from yesterday



Henry Gerbrandt (far right) in Mexico ca. 1947. Henry and Susan Gerbrandt began their mission work with the fledgling Mennonite Pioneer Mission, arriving in northern Mexico on Dec. 21, 1945. Because money was scarce, their first Christmas dinner was macaroni and salt.

The work was very trying. Not only did they have to build a house, but they also became the medical professionals in the area. Soon, their co-worker abandoned the mission. The final blow came when they could not renew their visas and were forced to return to Manitoba in September 1948.

They felt they had let down their sponsoring church, the people in Mexico, themselves and God. And they did not feel free to talk about how they felt.

After three years in Mexico, they were back in Manitoba, in debt and depressed. Henry went on to become the field director for Mennonite Pioneer Mission in northern Manitoba, pastor at the Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church and General Secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Text credit: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Conference of Mennonites in Canada collection



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FROM OUR LEADERS

New ventures in faith formation

Kathy Giesbrecht

Reflecting and reshaping is what I have been witnessing congregations doing in the ministries of formation. Across the board, in ministries that engage adults, youth, seniors and children, people are ready to venture into new territory. There seems to be a desire, perhaps prompted by new realities, to flex muscles that were awakened during the past few years. Imaginations are being stretched and increased capacity for flexibility and adaptation are present. The ventures I see congregations embarking on have amazed me and infused my hope for the path ahead.

Challenges vary from congregation to congregation, but for most they have felt the diminished energy for volunteering. One response congregations have had is to share the responsibilities of a valued formation ministry among more people. A variation on “more with less:” more folks involved but each carrying a smaller piece than in days gone by.

A good example of this is inserting Special Sundays into the Sunday School schedule. These Special Sundays are planned and presented by a small group outside of regular teachers. By taking on these Sundays, it spices up the schedule and provides a break for the regular teachers.

When it comes to formation ministries, do our forms still fit our realities and hopes? This question is alive and well among formation/education committees. The pausing and/or adapting of most formation ministries has spurred a revisiting of basic and foundational questions.

I recently listened to a sermon entitled “Authenticity, Axe-throwing: Kyle’s best take on why the cultural waters we swim in means faith barely stands a chance” (longest sermon title ever!). Kyle Penner is one of the pastors at Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach, Man., and this sermon was a bold and brave attempt to explore the cultural waters, consider and confront our current way of swimming, and invite conversation about the very core of our faith. This service can be found on the Grace Mennonite Church website, dated January 8, 2023 (sermon starts at 33:35). People were invited to stay after the service for coffee and conversation, and 50 people took Kyle up on this offer.

During the pandemic, we took ourselves outside more, and found it was good. Congregations are learning that some of their pandemic adaptations are worth continuing and building upon. Taking Sunday School outside.

Gathering small groups around outdoor grills and fire pits. Creating intergenerational learning experiences that happen outside and invite people to bike, walk and rest together on lawn chairs. What began as adaptation has now become a growing part of how we are church together.

As part of my own wondering and investigations, I wandered into a Renovaré webinar entitled “Life as Laboratory: What spiritual experiment might you try in 2023?” Richard Foster and his son Nathan Foster explored a variety of questions connected to spiritual formation including: “What are the benefits of seeing my life as a laboratory?” I was quite captured by this question and metaphor, and almost immediately I began to connect this to congregational life. What if we saw our congregations as laboratories? If we embraced this metaphor, might we be emboldened to expand and extend the ventures we have already embarked on? I think we would. I think we should. ☯



Kathy Giesbrecht is director of congregational ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Et cetera



Goshen College receives Hispanic designation

The U.S. Department of Education has designated Goshen College as a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

This means that for consecutive years the Indiana college has met the criteria of at least 25 percent of its full-time undergraduate students identifying as Hispanic/Latinx, and that it enrolls a high number of students who demonstrate financial need.

Fifteen years ago, two percent of undergraduate students at Goshen identified as Hispanic/Latinx; this semester, the figure is 30 percent.

Source: Goshen College
(Supplied photo)

 THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

The wider church and church budgets

Arli Klassen

It is the time of year when churches—whether local, regional or nation-wide—set their annual budgets. I’ve had interesting conversations in this process.

Many churches are experiencing declining and/or aging participation. A decline in revenue comes with that.

From Africa, one common attitude I hear is: “we are very poor,” funds for the wider church are scarce. Comparatively, many African churches have far fewer resources than other parts of the world. The ability to pay for multiple pastors, a solid building or training for pastors, is limited.

I recently received an email from one pastor who is part of a group of refugees from one African country now residing in a refugee camp in another country. He was asking for financial support. He wrote of his group: “we are entitled” to support from the Anabaptist family of faith.

It is hard to know how to respond.

Danisa Ndlovu is one of the regional representatives for Mennonite World Conference (MWC), connecting with national churches in Southern Africa. He talks with church leaders about their membership contributions to MWC. Under MWC’s “fair share” policy there is space for negotiation in order to arrive at a mutually agreeable commitment.

Danisa recently told me he is loving these conversations! Yes, church leaders talk about budget challenges and how hard it is to fund the wider church. But Danisa encourages them to think more broadly about what is possible. He has been quite successful in getting commitments that exceed what MWC has seen in the past.

I recently had similar conversations with several European leaders who explained that they will give as much as they can to MWC but less than what MWC is requesting. Their rationale is three-fold:

- **the progressive loss** of a generation of faithful older donors;
- **an increase in** less privileged members in their communities; and
- **high heating costs.**

It is hard for these church leaders to negotiate, instead of just contributing whatever MWC requests, as they have in the past.

I hear the same ideas among the church boards I serve on in Canada—a sense of scarcity, with declining resources and high inflation. The conclusion is that they cannot contribute more to the wider church, but have to spend more within

their own communities.

These conversations rarely start from a sense of abundance that God provides for our needs. It is not easy to balance competing priorities, for local congregations, regional churches, our nation-wide church and MWC. There are many ways to rationalize among these priorities. I’ve probably heard all of them in the last 10 years, from nearly every Anabaptist church leader around the world.

Scarcity. Entitlement. Poverty. Decline. Right-sizing. Abundance.

Which approach will you choose?

It is very hard to make budgets work in times of inflation and decline. This is as true in Zimbabwe as in France and Canada. As Danisa says, “pleading poverty is not a good enough reason to not contribute to the wider church.” Let us enter into these discussions and decisions with openness to the Holy Spirit at work in our own community, and also in our collaborative work as the church far beyond our local community. ☞



Arli Klassen coordinates the regional representatives for Mennonite World Conference and is completing terms on the boards of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and MC Canada.

 Et cetera

Manitoba camp receives ‘Zamboni’

Camp Assiniboia recently received an ice-clearing machine—though not the famous Zamboni brand—for the ice rink in their riding barn. The donation to the MC Manitoba camp just west of Winnipeg was made by Gord Rempel of Gord’s Auto.

Source: Mennonite Church Manitoba (Supplied photo)



VOICES AND STORIES

Untidied worship

Anneli Loepp Thiessen

“When we gather for worship, we bring all of ourselves, though some experiences or emotions might feel harder to name. Or maybe we feel pressure to keep them tidied away,” explains Alissa Bender when describing her worship resource in *Voices Together*. Found at #859, “God of Every Place” is an invitation to bring our whole selves to worship, no matter what space we’re in.

Bender continues: “With this prayer, I hope that we can name a diversity of ways that we enter worship and things we bring with us, also remembering that our neighbours may be encountering Jesus differently than ourselves. God welcomes every part of us to worship, and each of us has a next step of discipleship offered to us. Throughout life we discover that neither the mountaintop nor the valley is a place God intends to leave us. In a faith community, we hold each other in the highs and lows as we journey together with Jesus.”

For 12 years, Bender has been pastor of Hamilton Mennonite Church, where she often writes prayers and resources for worship. This prayer was written in 2015 for a MennoMedia bulletin series, inspired by the story of

Jesus’ transfiguration as found in Luke 9:28-37. The story recounts Jesus going up to a mountain to pray with Peter, John and James. On the mountain, Jesus encounters Moses and Elijah and they speak about Jesus’ departure. The disciples see the two men in all their splendor speaking with Jesus. A cloud comes and covers them, and a voice comes from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” When the cloud leaves, Jesus was found alone. The disciples were speechless and told no one what they had seen.

When writing the resource, Bender drew from her experience at seminary years earlier as a group of students nearing graduation planned worship based on the Luke 9 story. “We reflected deeply together on the disciples’ experience and possible emotions in that story, as well as the known and the unknown that was before each of us as we sought to follow Jesus into different forms of ministry. We pictured ourselves as disciples with a variety of responses to this encounter with glory.”

Though Bender’s piece in *Voices Together* was written as a gathering resource, she suggests that it can have other uses in worship. The second half could make an appropriate sending

resource, if the tenses of the verbs were changed: “Some of us have sought you today. . . .” She suggests that “Maybe it’s even a prayer that could bookend your gathering, welcoming all of our humanity into worship and blessing our humanity as we leave, on the path with Jesus.” It is the type of resource that could take on a special meaning for the community when repeated frequently enough to become well known and embodied.

The resource reads: “And in all places, there you are with us, nudging us onward. . . . Meet us all on the path made by Jesus.” Bender’s prayer is a powerful reminder for leaders and congregants that Jesus meets us where we are, and that our full beings—all our anxieties, griefs and joy—belong in worship. ☘



Anneli Loepp Thiessen is a PhD candidate in interdisciplinary music research at the University of Ottawa and was a committee member for Voices Together.

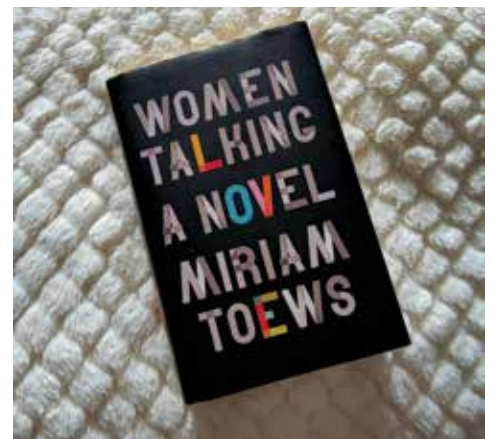
Et cetera

Miriam Toews reaches new heights

The film “Women Talking,” adapted from Miriam Toews’ international best-selling book by the same name, has been nominated for Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay at this year’s Oscars. The book and film are rooted in the mass serial rapes that happened in the Manitoba Colony of ultra-conservative Mennonites in Bolivia.

Tom Power of CBC radio recently called Toews the “coolest Canadian.”

Photo of book by Betty Avery



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

The complexity and simplicity of Christian unity

Troy Watson

Understanding how to pray and work towards unity with all “Christians” has been a struggle for me. How do I seek unity with people who call themselves Christian, but embody attitudes, values, behaviours and beliefs that, in my opinion, are diametrically opposed to the teachings, character and heart of Jesus.

This struggle is by no means new, or unique to me.

In 1860, five years before the United States abolished slavery, the American preacher Charles Spurgeon said he refused to stand in unity or have any kind of fellowship with “Christian” slaveowners. Was Spurgeon wrong to reject unity with “Christian” slaveholders? Is it wrong to reject unity today with “Christians” who cause harm to others?

The Bible teaches Christian unity is a good thing, but it also instructs us not to associate with certain “Christians.” The apostle Paul warns us to have nothing to do with “brothers” and “sisters” in the faith who are undisciplined, greedy, sexually immoral, verbally abusive, divisive, drunkards, swindlers or deviating from sound doctrine.

This teaching actually makes the issue more complicated for me. I mean, how divisive does a Christian have to be, for example, for us to sever ties with them?

In Matthew 7 Jesus says, *beware of false teachers and false prophets*. He instructs us to be discerning, to see beyond appearances, and examine what kind of fruit other people’s lives produce, because not all who claim to be Christians are genuine followers.

He says, *Not everyone who calls me Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven.*

On the day of judgment, Jesus says he will tell many professing Christians, *Depart from me. I don’t know you!*

To be honest, that’s how I want to respond to certain “Christians” sometimes. “Depart from me. I don’t know you. Hey everybody, I don’t know them. I’m not with these people. I’m not one of those Christians.”

Have you ever said, “Yes, I’m a Christian, but not one of those Christians!” Or at least thought it?

The Bible teaches Christian unity is a good thing, but it also instructs us not to associate with certain “Christians.”

As soon as I start thinking this way, I quickly realize I’m in no position to judge anyone else. Is my life really the gold standard of godliness and Christ-like living? Hardly. I’m well aware of the log in my own eye. I have no business viewing others as unworthy of fellowship with the likes of me. Yet, can I really seek unity, in good conscience, with someone who inflicts harm upon others in the name of Jesus?

The call to Christian unity is complicated. Yet, it’s also really simple.

Jesus teaches us that unity is not the result of seeking unity with other Christians, it is the result of abiding in him and being in unity with his Spirit. When we consciously live in tune with the Spirit of Christ, we will naturally share unity with other people who are doing the same.

If you watch an orchestra tune at the

beginning of a performance, you’ll notice the musicians don’t all try to tune to one another. That would be chaos. And futile. Instead, they all tune to the same instrument, the oboe.

Christ is the oboe of our orchestra. In order to be in tune with one another, we need to tune ourselves to Christ. The more we focus on tuning our lives, hearts and minds to the Spirit of Christ, the more unity and harmony we will experience with others who are tuning into the Great Key.

As I seek to follow Christ, it becomes clear I’m called to walk in humility and be generous, gentle and patient with others, including “those Christians.” Especially when I’m confronting them. (In my experience and observation, 9 times out of 10 it’s not the Spirit leading us to confront others, it’s our ego, pride, self-righteousness.)

It’s also clear I’m called to pray for others, including “those Christians.” Instead of judging, mocking, condemning or gossiping, I’m called to pray for them. To genuinely hold them in my mind and heart, and lift them up to the Spirit, desiring their growth and wellbeing.

Sometimes this feels impossible. In those moments, I’m learning to bring my desire to desire their growth and wellbeing, to the Spirit of Christ in prayer, and ask for God’s help.

Yet the truth is, when I actually abide in the Spirit of Christ, unity with all people is a divine reality I experience, not something I need to work towards. ✎



Troy Watson is learning to tune to the Great Key (troy@avonchurch.ca).

RIDING THE WAVES OF INTERCULTURAL CHURCH

Forever hybrid

Joon Park

Niklaus Mikaelson, Valerie Tulle, Lizzie Saltzman, Stefan Salvatore . . . do you know who these folks are? If not, maybe that's because they are not from the Mennonite heritage but from a supernatural world featured in the TV series, *The Vampire Diaries*. These beings are "hybrids," born out of the cross-breeding of supernatural species such as werewolves and vampires.

In this series, hybrids display powerful attributes—super strength, super speed, super senses, etc.—unique to themselves. Upon their transformation, they become immune to all conventional illnesses, viruses and infection, and therefore attain immortality.

I am also a hybrid, though very different than the aforementioned versions. My cultural identity has been blurred and blended over the past 30 or so years of living in Korea, Germany, the U.S. and Canada, as well as traveling in more than one third of the world. It seems that I am a permanent resident alien. Even my motherland, Korea, is no longer familiar. Whenever I visit Korea, I am treated as the other.

When it comes to my religious identity, it becomes even more difficult to pinpoint who I am. For the past years of living overseas, I have belonged to various denominations: Baptist, Presbyterian, Nazarene, trans-denominational and finally Mennonite.

With this hybrid identity, I now co-pastor Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton, where I am an Asian man serving a congregation made up of mostly European Mennonites and Africans whose compromised common language at church is English.

The word hybrid sometimes carries a negative connotation. The term was widely adopted by colonial empires in order to distinguish/superiorize their white races from others. It is connected

to deep-rooted anxiety about racial mixing and intermarriage.

However, thanks to the modern-day cultural critics' re-appropriation of this word, hybridity is being redefined and appreciated as the catalyst for cultural shift and creativity, challenging some people's misconception that homogeneous purity can last forever. Now, more and more people believe the opposite—that the absence of differences diminishes life!

Hybridity is no more than a mixing or fusing of cultural or racial elements. It is the process of integrating different cultures together, an act that opposes existing forms of cultural authority,

Christian identity . . . is a result of countless hybridizations . . .

racial stereotyping and discrimination, according to Homi Bhabha, a leading exponent of this theorization. This process also applies to the Mennonite church.

Even the traditional theological/ecclesiastical arena is influenced by this notion of hybridity, rediscovering Christology that is found in the very identity of Jesus Christ. Incarnation tells it all; God became a flesh, a human; Jesus is both fully God and fully human. In addition to this divine identity of human Jesus, his pedigree at the beginning of Matthew also proves how he has been biologically hybridized. How about our ancestors in the Bible or us, Christians? Christian identity was not born, falling out of the sky one day. It is a result of countless hybridizations of different cultures, religious traditions, ideologies and social locations, from biblical times to today.

And hybridity in the 21st century is now being welcomed even as a concept

for the pastoral mission of the modern-day church struggling with its lost and blurred identity, having encountered the inevitable reality of diversity and plurality. It is a reversal to the traditionally homogeneous white dominant churches, steeped with the mindset of colonial missiology that has an immutable distinction between who is original (conveyors of the gospel) and who is new (receivers of the gospel).

The intercultural church we are now tapping into is not for the entertainment value of seeing people of different cultural backgrounds, or foods or languages together. No, it is to relentlessly pursue another new way, a new

form of hybridized church by open invitation to a true communion of all "differents" and uniques—to adapt a term from Scott McKnight—and reconstructing an interculturally flat community of faith.

Therefore, the hybridization of the church is not a threat to be dismissed or ignored but a God-given gift that should be recognized and celebrated. That is no more or less than to follow the way of Jesus Christ Hybrid and to be the bridges of God for the world. ☞



Joon Park is intern co-pastor of Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton.

NEWS

Mental health worker shares faith story

Angelika Dawson

Communitas Supportive Care Network
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

When Ashleigh Singleton reflects on her life, she sees God's grace in the many turning points that have brought her to where she is today.

"I am so blessed," she says. "I'm just surprised over and over again by how God works."

Singleton describes herself as a gamer and a metalhead. She is also a daughter, sister, friend and a person of deep faith. And when she's at work, Singleton is a Peer Support Worker (PSW) with Communitas Supportive Care Network, formerly Mennonite Central Committee Supportive Care Society.

Singleton supports people on their journey toward mental wellness. It is work she loves.

"Peer support is not a job, it's a blessing. This is where God wants me to be," she says. "I'm mostly working in the psychiatric unit, which is my favourite place. I've met the most incredible people and I can relate to their experiences because I've been there."

Singleton's own journey with mental health challenges began in her early teens after her mother died. This rattled Ashleigh's faith. "I was so angry with God," she recalls.

Singleton's world was turned upside-down, she lost all motivation, including a will to live. It was then that she began to experience the first symptoms of schizophrenia: malicious voices that told her that her mother's death was her fault.

She confided in a trusted teacher and began the path to diagnosis and treatment. It was terrifying at first, but it was also the first step toward health. Although it was one of the hardest things she's ever done, Singleton realizes that making that choice to be vulnerable and seek help was vital.

"There is no shame in asking for help, it's a sign of strength," she says.



COMMUNITAS PHOTO BY ANGELIKA DAWSON

Ashleigh Singleton wears her faith on her arm.

The path back to faith took time. Metal music is a source of expression and comfort for her, especially Christian metal bands like P.O.D. She has reached out to musicians through social media or email and has found encouragement from the interactions she had.

After another difficult season in her life, she reached another turning point on March 5, 2021. "That's the day I rededicated my life to Jesus," she says. "I felt a joy and a peace like never before. I'd always struggled with my identity, trying to fit in. Now I know that my identity is in Jesus."

It was a truly life-changing moment and while all those around her have noticed a profound change in her, she doesn't want people to think that she is a religious fanatic. The transformation is one that has enabled her to see others in a new way.

"This experience has made me more empathetic and compassionate," she says. "I no longer judge people; I just try to see them as Jesus would and be authentic about who I am."

As she reflects on this journey, Singleton sees how God's grace has been extended to her through so many people: the teacher

who listened, the mental health support people who helped her find the right balance of medication, the friends and family who have stood by her even in the darkest times, especially her dad.

"My dad is my hero. When I got my diagnosis, he dropped everything to support me," she says.

It was her dad who suggested that she look into peer support and that suggestion led to yet another turning point. She came to the realization that she was relying on others for her health and blaming God when things didn't go as she thought they should. It was when she made the decision to choose hope and to fight for the life she wanted, that

things really began to change for the better. She hopes that anyone who encounters her story will see her—and anyone living with mental health challenges—as more than their diagnosis.

"I am human," she says. "Mental illness is a health issue like any other, that can be helped with medication, the right support and life-style changes."

If God's grace has been extended to her at each turning point in life so far, Singleton knows that there is more to come, and she is grateful. She is particularly thankful for Communitas and the opportunity that she has to use her life's experiences to help others.

"I'm so happy here. I've made such amazing friends," she says. "Doing this job is a way of giving back and of showing the people in my life that their efforts for me were not in vain." ❧

To hear more from Ashleigh Singleton, see youtube.com/watch?v=hqpQzs09N8c.



To learn more about peer support, visit peersupportcsc.com.

Looking for leaders

Three regional churches hiring executive ministers

Emily Summach

Saskatchewan Correspondent



“We’re looking for someone who can balance spiritual leadership with executive leadership . . . someone who can hybrid

those two areas.” That’s how Arli Klassen, Moderator for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) describes the role of Regional Church Executive Minister, the senior staff position within each Regional Church.

Three of the five regions in Mennonite Church Canada—B.C., Saskatchewan and Eastern Canada—are on the hunt for a new executive minister (EM). MCBC and MCEC have interim people in the role. In Saskatchewan, the seat is vacant.

MCEC has been without a permanent EM since the end of September, MC Saskatchewan (MCSask) since January 2022 and MCBC since the beginning of this year.

The EM job calls for a unique mix of skills and abilities. “Because we need someone who can provide spiritual and executive leadership, that makes it a challenge,” said Klassen, “there are more people with executive skills than pastoral skills. . . . It’s a big challenge to find the right person.”

Terry Stephaniuk, Moderator for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MCSask), emphasized how caring for relationships across the regional and national church levels is a significant part of the role. “They are a pastoral shepherd that connects with congregants, pastors and camps.” All these sorts of people seek ideas and wisdom from the EM. “And that’s just the relationships within MCSask,” he added. “There are also all the outside agencies and partners, plus caring for the staff with the regional office. There’s a lot of relationship tending; the EM role is really about relationship tending and building.”

In the absence of executive ministers, the regional churches have been creative to ensure that crucial needs are met. MCSask has recently shifted their hiring strategy to look for an interim minister, something both MCBC and MCEC currently have. As a stop-gap measure, the regions have also pared down some of the responsibilities to focus on only the most essential tasks, and have passed some of duties that would normally be done by the EM to other staffers or volunteer leadership.

‘We know there are people out there itching to do this kind of work.’

While it would certainly be a relief to fill the vacancies, the sharing of the workload has had benefits for the overall health of the regions. Klassen said, “MCEC recently approved a new identity statement which includes vision, values, and priorities. There is a lot of energy around those statements, and that very positive energy will carry us forward. It’s not just one person’s job! We’re confident in those things to carry us into the future.”

Leaders highlighted that each regional church has its own personality and culture, and that calls for an executive minister to match. “It’s a complicated role,” said MCBC interim EM Kevin Barkowsky. “The person has to be both pastoral, administrative and a team player.” Barkowsky also pointed out that the EM has to “help others in MCBC and MC Canada to respect the needs and wants of all three MCBC groups: the conservative, progressive and non-English churches.”

Stephaniuk spoke about the gifts of Saskatchewan being a smaller region, with

22 congregations, including two house churches and a forest church. “We’re a small, dedicated, passionate group of strong believers,” he said. “I’d say we always welcome new and additional voices. . . . Saskatchewan wants to be full of harmony, on many levels.”

Klassen emphasized that the MCEC position would be perfect for someone who wants to help the church follow God into the future. “We’re looking for someone with a leadership vision for the future, someone to help us discern where God is leading us. Someone who can inspire and bring people along,” she said.

In spite of the challenges, Regional Churches remain confident in God’s good timing. “We know there are people out there itching to do this kind of work,” said Klassen, “you can see the Spirit at work leading us forward; we have to take the steps forward. It’s our job to take the next steps. And to follow God where we’re going.”

Stephaniuk echoed this: “Somewhere along the way the Good Lord will answer the prayers, all in his good time. What’s the lesson to learn from the delay? There will be an answer. The point is that it’s not going to be on our timeline. But we have faith . . . and we are walking the path. Right now we don’t know where that is, but the Spirit is leading, and the Spirit will tell us.” ✎

– *With files from Amy Rinner Waddell*



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OBITUARY

Pianist, professor dies at 90

Esther Wiebe (March 18, 1932 – Jan. 26, 2023)

Esther Wiebe—long-time music professor, pianist and composer—died in Winnipeg on January 26 at age 90.

She is survived by her husband George; children, Robert (Verna) and Peter (Ruth); daughter-in-law Marlene Wiebe; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; extended family and friends. She was predeceased by her son, Tim Wiebe.

Born in 1932 in Plum Coulee, Man., Wiebe was a gifted musician, playing both piano and violin. She was baptized at Bethel Mennonite Church at age 19.

While studying music at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), she met George, whom she married in 1953. They were both hired by CMBC to develop

the music program.

Over the years, Wiebe became an accomplished musician, studying piano accompaniment with Gwendolyn Koldofsky in Los Angeles, composition with Bernhard Heiden in Indiana, and piano and harpsichord in Germany.

A beloved professor with a delightful sense of humour, Wiebe taught music theory courses at CMBC and helped administer the music program. She arranged and composed music for CMBC, the Faith and Life Male Choir and the wider church.

For five decades Esther and George collaborated in training and performing with choirs in Canada and abroad.

After retirement, Esther and George served musically in various Mennonite church contexts, including Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Springfield Heights Church in Winnipeg.

At the funeral, Wiebe's daughter-in-law Marlene Wiebe expressed gratitude. "We give thanks for the gift Esther was to her family, friends and community. She was a devoted daughter, sister, wife, mother and faithful servant of God. We who hold her dear will be forever uplifted by her faithful love and generosity of spirit." ❧

– Adapted from the family obituary



PHOTO BY DAVID LOEWEN. COURTESY OF THE MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

In a scene played out countless times in countless places, Esther Wiebe plays piano as her husband George conducts, in this case in Abbotsford, B.C. in 1986.

House of Friendship opens new facility

House of Friendship
KITCHENER, ONT.

House of Friendship held an official grand opening celebration of its new ShelterCare facility in Waterloo, Ont., on Jan. 19. This renovated former hotel will provide shelter and other supports for 100 men experiencing chronic homelessness, including onsite health care and staffing 24/7. House of Friendship has been operating a smaller shelter program in downtown Kitchener for more than 80 years.

Called ShelterCare, this new model for dealing with homelessness is being watched by other shelter providers in the province. Major funding has come from the Province of Ontario to help buy the property and from the Ontario Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. The Region of Waterloo has also contributed significant capital financing on top of annual operating support.

“We’re thrilled to be able to provide this new approach to emergency shelter in Waterloo Region, as one more piece of the puzzle to address the rising homelessness crisis in our community,” said John Neufeld, executive director of House of Friendship. “By providing

onsite support with trusted community partners, we are helping address many of the complex needs of those experiencing homelessness.”

The building includes 13 fully accessible rooms on the main floor, a dedicated intake space for participants to meet with shelter staff as they arrive, an onsite medical clinic and healthcare spaces, a kitchen and dining room, a housing hub, and space set aside for community partners to provide a variety of services and supports for shelter participants. Gathering areas within the building will also provide areas of connection for participants, helping to build a sense of community—a key factor in supporting those with mental health and addiction challenges.

The new facility will begin with 26 participants who have been supported through House of Friendship’s shelter program in downtown Kitchener. New participants will enter the program through a phased-in approach, in coordination with the Region of Waterloo’s Emergency Shelter network, with a goal of serving 100 men at this location. ❧



HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP PHOTO

Andy Fenske, a former shelter participant, shared a bit of his own journey with homelessness and addiction and his excitement over the new facility.

News brief

Rose Klassen joins MDS
Canada as volunteer manager



Rose Klassen

WINNIPEG, Man.—Rose Klassen of Winnipeg has begun a one-year assignment as volunteer manager for Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Canada. Klassen, a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, is filling in for a maternity leave for Kelsey Friesen who gave birth to her first child, Keziah, on January 18.

Before coming to MDS Canada, Klassen worked as an administrator for Initiatives for Just Communities, a non-profit organization in Winnipeg that works with people living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and intellectual disabilities, and those currently or previously incarcerated. Prior to that, Klassen worked in communications and donor relations for Mennonite Central Committee Alberta and as volunteer manager at 10,000 Villages, both in Calgary.

She is married to Doug Klassen, executive minister for Mennonite Church Canada. They have three children. Originally from Indiana, Klassen has also been part of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary and St. Catharines United Mennonite Church in Ontario.

—Mennonite Disaster Service

A season of Spirit

5 experiences of Lent

Aaron Epp
Senior Writer

Moses Falco is a Mennonite pastor who grew up Baptist, but for six weeks each year, he takes his cue from the Catholics.

At Lent, Falco gives up eating meat—the food that Catholics traditionally abstain from on Ash Wednesday and each Friday in Lent, including Good Friday. Rather than giving meat up on certain days, though, Falco refrains from eating it at all from Ash Wednesday until Easter.

It's something the Winnipegger has done each year since at least 2018. The experience reminds him that although he loves meat, it's something he can do without—unlike his relationship with Jesus Christ.

“Giving up meat for me is a difficult

choice, and it's also a very intentional and conscious choice I have to make every day of Lent,” says Falco, the pastor at Sterling Mennonite Fellowship. “Every time I do, I'm reminded of why I'm doing it.”

Lent—that period in the church calendar leading up to Easter that commemorates the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert—begins on Feb. 22 this year. For many Christians, including some Mennonites, it's a time of fasting and prayer.

The first few years Angelika Dawson observed Lent, she gave up things like coffee or sugar. While that felt like a discipline to the Abbotsford, B.C. resident, who attends Emmanuel Mennonite Church, it didn't feel particularly spiritual. So, in

2003, Dawson gave up criticism for Lent.

Whenever she caught herself being critical of someone else, she would stop herself and imagine things from the perspective of the person she was criticizing.

“If someone cut me off while I was driving, instead of swearing at that beloved child of God . . . I allowed myself to wonder about how that person's day might be doing and [I] offered up a prayer for them,” Dawson says.

This Lenten practice increased Dawson's awareness of her behaviour and intentions, she adds. It made her more aware of God's work in her life and reminded her that everyone is a child of God, deserving of love and dignity.

Dawson gave up criticism for Lent each year from 2003 to 2006, and has done so numerous times in the years since.

“Other years I've given up anxiety or sarcasm; other years I've not done anything, so I haven't been 100 percent consistent,” she says, “but it always feels like a good practice when I do it.”



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Intense prayer

Instead of giving something up for Lent, Twila Lebold finds it easier to add something to her life. For more than five years, Lebold, who lives near Waterloo, Ont., has been part of the Lenten prayer group at her church, Bloomingdale Mennonite.

The group uses the Lenten Guided Prayer resource that the Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Eastern Canada creates each year. Inspired by the worship themes of *Leader* magazine, the resource invites participants to deeper engagement with God through reflection and prayer activities.

The resource also includes an outline for small group meetings in which participants can share about their Lenten journeys.

Lebold describes the experience as intense, but worthwhile. Because the material is rooted in the lectionary texts for the season, it adds to her experience of worship each Sunday morning.

“It helps you prepare,” she says. But it’s also about “intently listening to what other people say, and holding those people in prayer for six weeks.”

Like Lebold, Krista Neustaedter Barg likes to add something to her life during Lent. In the past, the Winnipeg resident, who attends Douglas Mennonite Church, has chosen practices like intentionally connecting with three people early in her day, or baking and delivering food for a different person each of the six weeks of Lent.

“For me, a personal practice is adding something that’s going to enhance my life—an element of joy, an element of connection, an element of hospitality,” she says. “God-willing, those things impact me and make me a better person and a better follower of Jesus.”

Sin

Carol Penner, director of theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College, suspects that awareness about Lent has increased among Canadian Mennonites since MennoMedia started publishing *Leader* magazine 20 years ago.

The quarterly publication offers worship resources for congregational leaders,

including Lenten resources.

Ecumenical relationships and the influence of other denominations has also likely contributed to more Mennonites marking Lent.

It’s difficult to know how many congregations in Mennonite Church Canada talk about Lent on Sunday morning or use the *Leader* materials, though. It’s also difficult to know how many Mennonites engage in some sort of individual Lenten practice.

Penner, who teaches and writes in the area of practical theology, and who served as a pastor in various Mennonite congregations prior to joining the faculty at Conrad Grebel, suspects it’s not very many.

But Lenten practices are valuable, she adds, particularly ones that tap into the aspect of penitence that other faith traditions emphasize during Lent.

“Mennonites tend to not think about sin very much, which is ironic because we used to think about sin all the time,” she says. “There was a real preoccupation with right actions and being quite legalistic with that.”

“I think there is a place in Mennonite worship for us to think more deeply about sin,” she adds. “I think it’s a good thing. I don’t think we need to bash people over the head with that language, but I think [there’s value in] calling people in for introspection and honestly looking at the systems in our society that are sinful.”

Penner writes worship resources and makes them available for free at Leading InWorship.com. In the coming weeks, she will publish a series of confessional prayers to coincide with Lent.

“I don’t personally give up anything for Lent... but I think I do maybe meditate a bit more on these harder things,” she says. “It’s an invitation into looking at ourselves honestly.”

Prepare to celebrate

Whether or not one decides to give up something for Lent, taking time to reflect and repent in the lead-up to Holy Week can make for a rich experience, Penner says. “It’s preparation for Good Friday and Easter.”

Falco agrees. Different periods in the church year allow Christians to collectively express and wrestle with different feelings and emotions, he says. In the case

of Lent, it’s a season in which people can give themselves space to lament, draw back, deal with some of life’s difficulties and perhaps give something up in order to focus on what’s truly important.

Falco says that cutting out meat during Lent enhances his experience of Easter.

“For me, Easter becomes so much more of a celebration because it becomes not only the day I remember Jesus rising from the dead, but it’s the day I give up my fast,” he says. “All of that together fills me with a lot of joy and excitement.”

“We’re connected with those emotions of grief and loss and disappointment and hurt, and all of those things in the season of Lent—we’ve given that to God in prayer,” he adds, “and then at the end of it, [there’s] a big celebration because God comes and offers new life.” ✎

Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Ontario



Charleen Jongejan Harder began a new assignment as associate pastor at Elmira Mennonite Church on Aug. 23, 2022. Previously she had

served with her husband Kendall at North Leamington United Mennonite Church for four years and at Valleyview Mennonite Church in London for more than 10 years. The couple has now moved to the Kitchener-Waterloo area.



Kendall Jongejan Harder became pastor of Shantz Mennonite Church near Baden, Ont., beginning July 5, 2022. He pastored with his

wife, Charleen, at North Leamington United Mennonite Church and at Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, Ont. Both are graduates of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. At Shantz Mennonite he replaces Don Penner who retired in 2022.

Saskatchewan historian receives Award of Excellence

Mennonite Historical Society of Canada

When the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada wrapped up its meetings at Shekinah Retreat Centre near Waldheim, Sask., on Jan. 22, the freezing rain had started. Dick Braun loaded up the 15-passenger van with people going directly to the airport, but it was too late. The laneway at Shekinah was too slippery and he could not get up the long hill. Still, no one missed their flight back home. John Reddekopp and Jake Buhler packed as many as possible into their four-wheel drive vehicles for the one-hour trip to Saskatoon and one of them made a second trip.

Twenty people met at Shekinah on the weekend of Jan. 20-22 for these historical society meetings, representing Mennonite museums, archives, educational institutions and provincial historical societies from across the country. After two years of meeting online, the group appreciated making personal connections. The exchange of ideas among these Mennonite historical organizations is invaluable as it encourages inspiration and collaboration.

This year the Award of Excellence went to Leonard Doell, a Mennonite genealogist, oral historian and collector of community knowledge who has written a number of books and articles. He has also researched local Indigenous land claims and has developed invaluable connections with local First Nations.

Doell was deeply appreciative of the award and pointed out that he was able to build on what others have done before. He thanked the historical society for their work, saying, "Keep up the good work in preserving our history and seeking ways to make it relevant to today's world."

Along with other members of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, Doell was a knowledgeable tour guide as the group visited the original Old Colony Mennonite church in Neuanlage, the museum at Hague, and Stoney Knoll, a place that acknowledges that land sold to Mennonite settlers was actually a reservation of the Young Chippewyan First Nation. The group also stopped in Rosthern to see the former train station

where, 100 years ago, hundreds of Mennonites arrived from the Soviet Union.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada has been working on two commemorative projects. Over the past year, an exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Man. has told the story of the large migration of Mennonites from Manitoba and Saskatchewan to Mexico and Paraguay 100 years ago. Thanks to the hard work of curator Andrea Klassen, this exhibit is now being prepared to travel across Canada. It will generally work its way west through 2023 and go to Ontario in 2024.

The other big project happening this summer is commemorating 100 years since thousands of Mennonites arrived in Canada from the former Soviet Union. Henry Paetkau, the chair of this centenary committee was happy to announce that there are nearly 60 people signed up for each of the three legs of the train trip from Quebec City to Abbotsford, B.C. Generous donations have allowed them to subsidize about 30 young adults on the trip.

"This is very exciting, and it will impact the dynamics of the tour," said Paetkau. "There will be some young adults on each leg of the tour and that will enrich the conversations."

Other on-going projects supported by the Canadian historical society are the Mennonite Archival Information Database (MAID) and the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO). Various Mennonite archives are also work at digitizing periodicals and other records to make them available to the public.

The executive committee of MHSC includes Conrad Stoesz, president; Laureen Harder-Gissing, vice-president; Jeremy Wiebe, treasurer; Linda Klassen, secretary; Bruce Guenther, fifth member. ✎



PHOTO BY GRAHAM SCHELLENBERG

Conrad Stoesz (left), president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada presents the Award of Excellence to Leonard Doell.

T-shirt honours fierce biblical women

Aaron Epp
Senior Writer

A new T-shirt celebrates women of the Bible who often get overlooked.

The shirt features 11 phrases, including “Teach like Junia,” “Preach like Mary,” “Lead like Esther” and “Risk like Ruth.” Rianna Isaak-Krauss, co-pastor at Frankfurt Mennonite Church in Germany, created it while pregnant with Noa Jubilee, now five months old.

“I was on Etsy looking for fun clothing for babies, as millennial parents do, and found really terrible Christian T-shirts for girls [with phrases] like, ‘Wait like Hannah’ and ‘Serve like Martha,’” says Isaak-Krauss, 31. “The only images that capitalism has for women [are] doing laundry and waiting around, and I thought that sucked.”

in Winnipeg, Man. and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind.

A liberation theology book club she belongs to was reading *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to The Women of the Torah and the Throne* by Wilda C. Gafney.

“Through these discussions we discovered many incredibly fierce women in the Bible.”

At the same time, Isaak-Krauss remembered one of her professors at AMBS, Rachel Miller Jacobs, encouraging students to use active verbs while leading worship to emphasize that God can and does take action.



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Arlyn Friesen Epp, director of CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre in Winnipeg.

Three other sources provided further inspiration for Isaak-Krauss, who grew up in Fresno, Calif., and was educated at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU)

Isaak-Krauss also recalled a class she took with theologian Carol Penner at CMU's Canadian School of Peacebuilding, where Penner introduced her to women

in the Bible that she had never heard of. Isaak-Krauss learned that typically in lectionaries, women do not show up as often as men because they are not the main characters in the stories. If a lectionary draws from a longer text, the verses which name women are often cut out.

“It makes sense that we don't know many of these Bible stories about women,” Isaak-Krauss says. “[But] I want to change that. I believe that stories shape us.”

The T-shirt is already having an impact. Last August, Isaak-Krauss wore one to Freakstock, a Christian festival in Gotha, Germany, organized by members of the Jesus People movement. A woman saw the shirt and approached Isaak-Krauss with tears in her eyes. As a child, she aspired to be a pastor, but that dream was smothered in her young adulthood when an elder in her church told her there were no biblical women in leadership roles. She believed him and became a social worker.

“She told me that she wished that she had some of these role models in her church growing up,” says Isaak-Krauss.

Isaak-Krauss began selling the T-shirt online last year. When Arlyn Friesen Epp came across it on social media, he arranged to sell them at CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre in Winnipeg, where he is the director.

“I was drawn to the design, I was drawn to the overt feminist reading of honouring women's stories of the Bible and [I was drawn to] its bold statements,” Friesen Epp says. “[It's] very invitational.”

Isaak-Krauss didn't have any particular hopes when she first created the T-shirt. “I just wanted a T-shirt for myself, to be honest,” she says. But now that they're available to the public, she hopes people realize there are many radical stories in the Bible that include women—so many, in fact, that she has 11 more phrases that didn't make it onto the T-shirt.

“Let's keep telling these stories of badass biblical women,” Isaak-Krauss says. “And let's keep using strong, active verbs so that we're not always forming girls to be passive.” ❧

The T-shirt is available for sale at CommonWord.ca.



Youth come together to learn about peace

Story and photo by Barry Bergen

Rockway vice-principal Josh Hill leads over 100 junior high-aged youth from southern Ontario in the concluding session of an event called “Come Together: Work For Peace.” The event took place at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate on January 24 and included sessions led by Theatre of the Beat, examining art and peace; Josh Hill, exploring peacemaking; and Rockway staff looking at robotics. It was sponsored by Rockway and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. ☸



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Mennonite mission?

The evolution of an 'evangelizing tribe'

Paul Schrag
Anabaptist World

In her new memoir, *The White Mosque*, Sofia Samatar describes Mennonites as “something that seems very odd, at least at first: an evangelizing tribe.”

This tribe, she says, “travels the world to spread the universal love of God, and at the same time maintains the occult power of its family names, its language, its traditions, its alphabet of bone.”

As a Mennonite without one of the powerful names, Samatar observes that Mennonites implicitly make a contradictory invitation: Join us, even though you can never fully be one of us.

planted the seeds of Anabaptist churches that thrive today: the 370,000-member Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, the world’s largest Anabaptist conference; the 52,000-member Brethren in Christ Church of Zimbabwe; multiple groups in India (254,000), the Democratic Republic of Congo (200,000) and Indonesia (107,000); and many more Global South countries with smaller numbers.

As Samatar observes, quoting the poet Julia Kasdorf: “The most representative Mennonite is an African woman.”

For that woman, a Mennonite is simply a member of a certain kind of church. She doesn’t need to solve the North American problem of “Mennonite” being defined as both a church and an ethnic group (as evidenced by people who identify as Mennonite but belong to other churches or no church).

North American Mennonites are trying to be less tribal. Antiracism has become a key part of this effort. Our inclusive goal has expanded beyond eliminating ethnic privilege (being considered “more Mennonite” if your ancestors were Mennonite) to becoming a church where people of colour feel just as much at home as white people do. Much work remains.

What about evangelizing, the other part of Samatar’s duality? As writers from Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) make clear, the gospel mission encompasses broad purposes.

It has always seemed odd that in church-speak the word “mission” traditionally meant trying to win souls or gain converts. Any journey or effort with a goal is a mission. So too with mission motivated

by religious faith. Christian service that promotes human well-being—making life more abundant, as Jesus said in John 10:10—is no less a mission than planting a church.

Mission work that doesn’t involve proselytizing still motivates many people (though denominational service programs have declined). Diverse acts of service—advocating for immigrants, giving medical care to the underserved, promoting peace in places of conflict, rebuilding houses after natural disasters—all follow Jesus’ example of meeting people’s physical as well as spiritual needs. All are legitimate ways to share one’s faith.

In every form of sharing, the relationship must be one of equality—walking alongside, or “witness as with-ness,” as MMN executive director Mike Sherrill says.

In 21st-century postcolonial mission, there’s no place for the “white savior” mentality: the rich Westerner who knows all the answers. Today, few North Americans want to be that kind of missionary—or, for the most part, to evangelize at all. The very idea seems an imposition. Who am I to suggest someone adopt my beliefs?

It’s been said—by André Gingerich Stoner, a staff member of Mennonite Church USA about a decade ago—that Mennonites love service, flirt with peace and are allergic to evangelism. Is there still a place for evangelism in the traditional sense?

If Westerners don’t want to proselytize anymore, others will.

In a 2018 article in *The Atlantic*, Yale Divinity School professor Lamin Sanneh said Christians in the Global South “are not burdened by a Western guilt complex, and so they have embraced the vocation of mission as a concomitant of the gospel they have embraced: The faith they received they must share.”

As Christianity shrinks in North America, the descendants of converts may need to turn around and evangelize us. ❧

Paul Schrag lives in Newton, Kansas and serves as editor of Anabaptist World, in which this article first appeared. Reprinted with permission.



(PHOTO COURTESY AMOS CHIN)

Amos Chin, left, and two Mennonite colleagues baptize young people in rural Myanmar.

Not that anyone would come right out and say this.

How does the tension inherent in being an evangelizing tribe play out in Mennonite mission work?

Clearly, the worst-case scenario—that the tension dooms the mission—has not happened. There are many success stories.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, missionaries from Europe and North America

Music copyright in an age of online church

Maria H. Klassen
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

The COVID pandemic brought many changes—some obvious, others not so much.

Before March 2020, many church musicians sang and played hymns and songs regularly in their worship services. For those singing from hymnals, no additional permissions were needed. However, for songs under copyright and being projected to a screen, usage was reported to Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) or One License. CCLI has their standards on how often usage is

reported. One License requires reporting every week on Friday before a song is used on a Sunday morning or at another event.

Then in 2020, many churches shifted to recording and streaming their services. This meant that any song used in that broadcast needed to be in public domain (meaning not under copyright) or be covered by a streaming license. If it was not covered, then the church had to find the copyright holders and request permission from them directly.

Suddenly, there were songs and hymns

which the church had been singing for years out of a book, that could now not be used by the musicians in live streamed services. This made it difficult for music leaders and volunteers to prepare music for worship services.

Emily Fieguth, office administrator of Niagara United Mennonite Church, realized that something had to be done to make choosing hymns easier. She says, “The team who compiled *Voices Together* did an amazing job creating a wonderful spreadsheet of songs that are



NIAGARA UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH ARCHIVES PHOTO

Emily Fieguth working in her office with the different hymnbooks.

available online with all the licensing details.” Working with this spreadsheet as a template, Fieguth set out to create a licensing spreadsheet for the other Mennonite hymnals in a similar manner. (See the “Resources” section at voices.togetherhymnal.org for more.)

This was no easy undertaking. Fieguth spent hours during the summer and into the fall cross referencing hymns from *Sing the Story, Sing the Journey, Hymnal: A Worship Book, Worship Together* and *Voices Together*. Her next step was to track down individuals or publishers who held the copyright to these hymns. Most were easy to find online. Others were found through personal contact with musicians in the community who knew someone who knew someone else, and so on.

The first big challenge in taking on this project was that the contact information on the copyright holders listed at the back of each hymnal was not up to date. Since publication, many have moved or changed phone numbers. Some writers have passed away, and some have married and changed their names. Some publishers have amalgamated, and copyright has been transferred to another publisher.

Fieguth is requesting help in finding the copyright holders listed on this page.

The second challenge was discovering that there were songs and hymns in the hymnals that should have been listed in the license holders’ systems. For whatever reasons, they were not there, and the publishers have been contacted, the issue brought to their attention, and they are adding these songs and hymns.

MennoMedia, the publisher of the hymnals, is thrilled to have the list and information that has been collected. They have known that this information is needed, but as the hymnal committees have disbanded, there has not been anyone willing to take on this project.

Amy Gingerich, executive director of MennoMedia, says, “Copyright work is not for the faint of heart. It’s always a laborious process, much like searching for a needle in a haystack. And once a book is printed, copyright information on specific songwriters immediately becomes out of date. We are so grateful to Fieguth for her dogged pursuit of compiling all this

copyright and licensing information for congregations.”

MennoMedia will be making the spread-

sheets for hymnals available through their website when they are completed. ☺

Licensing songs for live streaming

If you can help contact these copyright holders, please contact Emily Fieguth at office@redbrickchurch.ca.

- Walter Klaassen
- Jean Janzen
- Howell Elvet Lewis
- Piers Morgan
- Doreen Clellamin
- Ruth Duck
- Alice Parker
- Jean Wiebe Janzen
- Gordon B. Tweedy
- Jacek Gaiuszka, O.P.
- Bradley P. Lehman
- Caleah K. Pence
- Charles Wesley
- David T. Koyzis
- Dorothy Howell Sheets
- Doug & Jude Krehibiel
- Earnest A. Payne
- Edith M.G. Reed
- Arthur E. Rusbridge
- Frank W. Price (Estate of)
- F. Bland Tucker
- Francisco F. Felciano
- Rabindranath Tagore
- Seong-Won Park
- Claude Fraysse
- Paul R. Gregory
- Joan A. Fyock
- John Jacob Niles
- John L. Horst (Estate of)
- John W. Arthur
- Jonathan Shively
- Julia Smucker
- Larry Warkentin (Estate of)
- Lawrence F. Barlett
- Leith Fisher
- Lily Chapel
- M. Lee Suitor
- Mary E. Byrne
- Martin Shaw
- Mortimer Arias
- Niko Njotorahardjo
- Patricia J. Shelley
- Peter Davison
- George Black
- Peter Tongeman (Estate of)
- Richard D. Brode
- Richard Wilbur (Estate of)
- S.C. Ochieng Okeyo
- Jose Aguiar
- Phil Hart
- Martin Seltz
- Philip E. Gregory (Estate of)
- Thomas J. Williams
- William J. Gaither
- J.W. Shore



Are Canadian Mennonites too progressive for their own good?

Next CM online event

CM Staff

What sets apart faith-based justice work from secular causes? Do we lack spiritual depth? Are we too progressive for our own good?

Ryan Dueck, Cynthia Wallace and Peter Haresnape will join *CM*'s Aaron Epp to discuss these questions during *CM*'s next online event, March 8 at 8:00 p.m. EST. (Register at canadianmennonite.org/events.)

The event arises from an article by Dueck and five responses—including one from Wallace—published in the Jan. 30 issue of *CM*.

Below are excerpts from Dueck's and Wallace's reflections, a response by Haresnape, and questions each participant hopes to explore.

Ryan Dueck

Pastor, Lethbridge Mennonite Church



One of my abiding critiques of the progressive church circles I inhabit is that they often lack what I call existential

urgency. God is, we think, very interested in our positions on social issues and is very eager to affirm our journey through various constellations of identities, but God is not so much interested in sin or salvation or judgment or deliverance or the kind of love that breaks down in order to mend.

This God is not so much about anything that could set a soul aflame.

Aside from this blend of faith being flat-out boring, I also believe it is a recipe for failure.

To be clear, a gospel that does not include a robust vision of social engagement is no gospel at all. But God is so much more than this. . . . To put it bluntly, the God-as-therapist or God-as-activist-in-chief isn't particularly working. There are



blessed exceptions (thanks be to God!), but in general terms . . . we are a church of mostly aging white liberals, at least in many parts of the country.

My question: The article I quote in my reflection claims that 20- and 30-somethings have often been “preached right out of the gospel” with the best of intentions. Does this resonate with your experience? Has the preaching and teaching of more progressive churches given young people a faith that’s pretty easy to leave behind?

Cynthia Wallace

Associate professor, St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan



Most of us in North American Christianity have been formed in the binary tensions between faith and works, judgment and love, salvation as everlasting life and salvation as justice, Jesus as Lion and Jesus as Lamb. We pendulum-swing between them as individuals and generations. . . . So those of us who grew up in legalistic fundamentalisms may find ourselves taking the same legalism into progressive activist spaces, still politely sidestepping the radical disruptions of grace.

But the most vibrant faith I have encountered rejects the dichotomies: it holds them together in a provocative both/and. This faith is unabashedly delighted by God’s mercy, and it is passionately committed to justice, which it recognizes as love writ large. It is earthy and practical and at the same time rooted in spiritual disciplines like contemplative prayer. It is honest about human failings—sin, both personal and structural—because it usually

emerges from a familiarity with hardship. It is gracious and non-defensive and the opposite of coercive, but it also says, Listen, I have known the depths, and I have met Jesus on the road, and my heart burned within me.

My question is: What do you envision as the way forward? What practices, both personal and communal, do you think would help folks re-integrate spiritual fervour with social action?

Peter Haresnape

Pastor, Toronto United Mennonite Church



One of my Church & Ministry classmates opened her weekly reflection with the apology: “It’s quite boring, sorry.” Spellbound and inspired, I listened to a life story of service, care and nurture, marked by commitments to God, to her husband and as a parent. She spoke of the gifts she had been given and her growing confidence to offer them, caring for the sick and frail, mentoring others and bringing a sense of peace, hope and joy in leading worship. She named gifts of music, visitation and cooking.

I was not bored. She shared nothing rare or remarkable, but her telling was infused with a focus on discerning right action, asking honest questions, and finding God’s presence in the matter of common life.

Are progressive churches, therapeutic churches, boring? Probably, but you don’t have to be bored. Ryan feels a lack of existential urgency in church. My experience differs—crisis and pain rub shoulders with beauty and yearning, while human frailty and fragility invite us to draw on the grace and love with which God has

welcomed us all. Frustration, bewilderment, exhaustion—yes, but seldom boredom.

At the 2022 Cahoots Festival, Ashe Van Steenwyk described her response when the disordered play of children upsets congregants. She encouraged us to treat that moment of annoyance as a reminder that we came to church seeking something Holy. Can boredom help us feel the holy dynamic within the seemingly mundane?

My question is: What are your concerns around boredom within the life of faith? How does boredom impact your community’s experience of church? ☞

To register for the March 8 online event see canadianmennonite.org/events.



News brief

MennoHomes announces name change

MennoHomes, an organization that builds and rents affordable housing in Waterloo Region, Ont., officially changed its name to Beyond Housing. The name change indicates that the organization does more than offer housing. They also provide community support workers and nursing support.

Tenants are encouraged to build connections within the broader community. Along with the name change comes a new website, beyondhousing.ca.

Beyond Housing provides homes for 230 households in Kitchener, Elmira, Waterloo, St. Jacobs and Wellesley. Due in part to government grants and private donations, Beyond Housing rents out units beginning at 60 percent of the average market rates.

The organization is currently working on a 28-unit addition to Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors in St. Jacobs. Construction is expected to be completed by the summer of 2023. Of the \$2 million capital campaign for the project, \$1.4 million has already been raised.

—CANADIAN MENNONITE STAFF

Grebel alumni change the world with tech

Farah Jurdi

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

Like many Conrad Grebel University College alumni, Dale Brubacher-Cressman considers it important to make an impact on the causes he stands for. “My upbringing in the Mennonite church, extended into university life at Grebel, fostered in me a sense of responsibility and desire to make the world a better place.” Brubacher-Cressman graduated with a degree in Systems Design Engineering in 1987 and now invests in tech companies that fight climate change.



CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO

Grebel alumnus Jared Baribeau works on tech related to the manufacture of zero-waste textiles.

UWaterloo’s innovation eco- system encompasses a mosaic of ideas, perspectives and experiences, and Grebel—which is affiliated with UWaterloo and operates a residence for UWaterloo

students—encourages students to branch out and enrich the world around them. These diverse communities work together to help build vitality and passion in students that inspires them to work toward good causes.

“At PeaceWorks, my team and I look for new and innovative ways to achieve results with less resources,” said Scott Bauman, a 2007 computer engineering graduate who lived at Grebel. PeaceWorks is an IT company with many non-profit clients. “It motivates me, knowing I’m working for an organization that is purpose-driven more than it is profit-driven.”

Some Grebel alumni are designing ways to help save the planet—from Cole Atlin’s contribution to nuclear technology advancement to Jared Baribeau’s work to attain zero-waste textiles.

“Conversations and classes at Grebel dramatically broadened my mind on what activism can look like, and helped expose me to how change happens,” said Baribeau.

Also working on one of humanity’s most pressing issues, Neil Brubacher, a recent engineering graduate, uses his knowledge of machine learning to shape a richer understanding of climate change and arctic life. “I also credit the rich opportunities for interdisciplinary thinking and context-building fostered by many years in the Grebel residence community,” said Brubacher.

Technology is a way to globally share knowledge and information.

“Making lives easier is the name of the game,” said Kevin Willms a 2012 computer science graduate, and former don in the Grebel residence. He is currently the senior manager of Cloud Operations Reliability Engineering at

D2L, a learning platform that enriches education through accessibility.

Grebel works to cultivate the next generation of scholars, entrepreneurs and leaders. ❧

News brief

Mennonite studies program cut

Abbotsford, B.C.—The Mennonite studies program at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) will be discontinued, the university has announced, due to lack of enrolment.

In 2009, the Mennonite Faith and Learning Society cooperated with UFV to establish a Mennonite studies certificate program at the university, noting the significant heritage and history of, and contributions by, Mennonites in B.C.’s Fraser Valley. A multidisciplinary and multi-faith program in Peace and Conflict studies was part of this initiative.

At a meeting on Dec. 14, 2022, the UFV Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC) voted to recommend discontinuation of the Mennonite Studies certificate. “This program is no longer attractive to students despite the changes that were made and is currently only sustained by directed studies,” said a memo from Dr. James Mandigo, chair of the APPC.

It was noted that one student who declared intention to complete the program will be accommodated.

—AMY RINNER WADDELL WITH FILES FROM THE ABBOTSFORD NEWS AND FRASER VALLEY CURRENT

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Service through art

Menno Simons Christian School
CALGARY, ALTA.

Menno Simons Christian School is proud of alumna Eugena Lee (‘20) who won first-place in the National Remembrance Day Poster contest held by the Legion National Foundation. After studying the Korean War in her high school social class, she became inspired to learn more about her grandparents’ experiences during the Korean war. Then artistic inspiration took hold.

After labouring 150 hours in the summer of 2021, she completed her painting. It depicts the expression of gratitude crossing barriers of age and language in the hug of a Korean woman and a Canadian veteran who fought in the Korean War.

“In May of this year, I received a letter notifying me that I had won first prize in the Senior Colour Poster category at the national level,” Lee said. “A month later, as a result of winning first place, I was invited to Ottawa to represent Canada’s youth at the National Remembrance Day ceremony on November 11th.”

There, Lee laid a wreath as a member of the Vice Regal Party, which included the Governor General, the National Silver Cross Mother, the Prime Minister, the Chief of Defense Staff and the Dominion President of the Royal Canadian Legion.

“During my school Remembrance Liturgy on November 8th,” Lee said, “a veteran and a member of the local legion presented my school with a plaque acknowledging my achievement. I received my individual plaque with a scholarship at the Silver Cross Mother’s luncheon in the Fairmont Château Laurier in Ottawa on November 10th. My poster will be displayed at the entrance of the National War Museum for one year.”

While in Ottawa, Lee visited the Senate Chamber, House of Commons and the National War Museum. “I got to meet and talk with many important people in Canada,” she said. Lee sat next to Governor General Mary Simon at a luncheon. “It was a great opportunity for me to talk about my artwork and future as a young

Calgarian,” Lee said.

She said the project was meaningful to her because it “represented the sacrifices of hundreds of Canadian soldiers who fought for keeping peace in South Korea, and the everlasting impact they made on South Korean people’s lives,” including those of her grandparents.

She also learned she could serve her community through art. “While I was in Ottawa, I witnessed how my artwork can comfort and connect people,” Lee said. “It made me aspire to help people who are in pain emotionally and mentally through art.” ✎



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCI

This poster by Eugena Lee won a national Remembrance Day contest.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Hmong students graduate from AMBS

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

Six Hmong-speaking students in Southeast Asia graduated with an online certificate program from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The group met in-person three times between 2019 and 2022 with video calls after that. A final session last summer included a graduation ceremony.

Leadership was provided by Jonah Yang (MA 2018) of North Branch, Minnesota in partnership with David B. Miller from the seminary's Church Leadership Center. ☘

PHOTO BY MEMEE YANG

Pictured are Chia Chue Yang (left front), Chue Chang, Leng Yang and LouYang XioungHer. In back are David Miller and Jonah Yang. Two graduates are not pictured due to security concerns.



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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

MDiv student reflects on AMBS experience

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

Ian Funk, pastor of Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship, anticipates graduating in 2023 from the Connect program of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) with a Master of Divinity degree. Students can complete the distance-friendly program online with weeklong visits to the seminary's Elkhart, Indiana, campus once or twice a year.



PHOTO BY PETER RINGENBERG

What influenced you to study at AMBS?

Funk: When asked why I'm studying at AMBS, I often say that I need at least two good sermons, and I only have one. I'm only sort of joking; really, I only have one good sermon. I may tweak it or pad it with a new anecdote, but my sermons, at best, are a variation on a theme: God is love.

In 2015, I was a letter carrier with Canada Post by day and an opera singer in the evening, but then my church graciously invited me to be their pastor. When I answered the call, this singing mailman had to go back to school. I needed to equip

Ian Funk

myself to serve my community well—and I needed to find that second sermon.

I began my Master of Divinity at a local university. It was a fantastic school. The professors were excellent, and I found myself in a vibrant, diverse cohort of classmates. I soon realized, however, that as a pastor whose identity was intimately tied to my Mennonite community, I needed to attend a school that could guide me to be the Anabaptist pastor I was to become. I switched to AMBS in August 2016.

Tell us about your experience.

Funk: In AMBS's learning community, I've felt like I shared a common practice, an understanding of how to gather and experience church, a sense of communal worship and discernment. This was familiar to me, and it's been important for me to learn and grow in this context—in a place that makes sense to me and matters to me, a place that is warm, welcoming and supportive.

But it hasn't all been familiar. AMBS is a diverse and increasingly global community that understands that there is no one way to be Anabaptist. This has made it an ideal place for me to do the difficult and gratifying work of learning where I fit within the Anabaptist mosaic and why Anabaptism matters to me, my community and the world.

I'm not sure I've found my second sermon yet, but I like to think that the sermon I now have is more rooted and resourced, informed, sensitive, aware and relevant. My years at AMBS have changed me and my sermon, and I feel blessed. ✎

Rockway's umbrellas are given new life

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate
KITCHENER, ONT.

What do you do with 103 broken umbrellas? You make something new, of course!

After Rockway Mennonite Collegiate's crazy "Someone to You" video project, the school found itself with a challenge. The all-school video created during the pandemic was an important project for building community that involved 350 umbrellas. But, as predicted, a number of the beautiful red umbrellas were damaged

through the countless openings and closings required to capture the film.

"We certainly didn't want them going straight to the landfill," says Sara Wahl, computer department head and director of the project, "so we got creative!" Through the ingenuity of lead "seamstress" Laurie Yantzi, assistant to the principal, Wahl and Yantzi devised a plan to sew the broken umbrellas into a bunch of new items.

Each umbrella makes one draw-string

backpack, two flags for their athletics department, and four streamer flags that Rockway plans to use at special events. "All that's left over when we're done is a remnant smaller than a ruler! It's amazing."

Rockway has hosted several "sewing parties" to transform the umbrellas and have some fun along the way. Students helped with the dismantlement, and several faculty and staff members have come out of retirement to help with the

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

recycling efforts.

“Even the metal was repurposed,” explains Wahl. “The metal springs inside went to our Robotics program, and the rest of the handle was recycled

as scrap. It was a beautiful ending to an already beautiful project.” Want to join in? If you love to iron, cut, or sew and live in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, Rockway is looking for volunteers to help complete the transformation! Contact

volunteers@rockway.ca to learn how you can be involved. ☘

To see the video and its story, go to canadianmennonite.org/stories/rockway-music-video.



PHOTO BY SARA WAHL

These weather-proof backpacks were sewn from Rockway's repurposed umbrellas.



PHOTO BY JEN HOFFMAN-BAILEY

Before and after. Rockway has been able to repurpose 103 broken umbrellas.

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Thomas Beech – Rockway Class of 2022
University of Guelph, Bachelor of Arts and Sciences

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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

RJC helps a Ukrainian family settle in Canada

RJC High School
ROSTHERN, SASK.

When Linda Rudachyk brought Vlad Malezhyk for his first tour of RJC High School, she teased him on the walk to the front door. “Vlad, you’re gonna sing. Do you sing?” she asked. He was certain the answer was no.

Vlad arrived in Canada in June. After

enduring a month of bombing at his home in Ukraine, living in the basement with no heat or running water, his family fled, staying in Romania for two months before coming to Canada. Vlad didn’t speak much English and had not really enjoyed school back home. When Linda, who coordinates

the sponsorship group that brought Vlad’s family to Rosthern, suggested that he would be in choir at RJC he repeatedly told her “no.”

At the first concert of the year in September, there was Vlad singing in the choir. And that’s just one small change. Since starting at RJC his family noticed that he’s happier than he had been. Vlad’s dad Pavlo Malezhyk said that he’s had some difficult years with remote school during COVID, then the displacement from the war, so it has made a difference for Vlad to be with other students his age.

“He’s got some social experience now,” said Pavlo. “Much nicer than it was his last half year.”

Since coming to RJC, Vlad enjoyed activities such as the retreat to Christopher Lake or going tubing. And he’s been more positive about the classes too.

“They tell us that he didn’t like school any days of his life until he came into RJC,” said Linda. Pavlo suspects this change is because, compared to Ukraine, RJC has a less rigid and more holistic approach to education, and it feels like teachers are more invested in a relationship with students.

The connection between Vlad’s family and RJC began before they arrived in Rosthern. Once the sponsorship group found a house to fit the family, they needed to get it fixed up quickly. Linda called the school and asked if RJC could send students to help with yard work and painting.

Vlad’s family is one of three that this sponsorship group brought to Rosthern. And while it has been a lot of work, their arrival has been a blessing to the community.

“I would say, without a doubt, that we have loved every minute of it,” says Linda. “It’s just been nothing but a blessing for us.” ❧



RJC HIGH SCHOOL PHOTO

Vlad Malezhyk is enjoying school at RJC High School.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

MCI builds community

Janna Wiebe

Mennonite Collegiate Institute
GRETNA, MAN.

Tucked away in the small town of Gretna, in the most southern part of Manitoba, Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI) can feel like its own little world for those who study and teach there.

Its remote location has many advantages, including a long-standing dormitory program that allows students from all over the province and world to attend and form their own diverse, close-knit community. The pandemic, however, highlighted just how important it is for MCI students to connect with the wider community, and prioritize opportunities to connect to the communities around us.

“A unique feature of MCI is the community that is created, and the opportunities students have to serve others,” says principal Jennifer Klippenstein. “My hope

is that through these experiences, and in sharing God’s love with each student that walks through our doors, they are encouraged to embrace and live out the words of Jesus in *Matthew 22: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind, and love your neighbour as yourself.*”

Service opportunities have proved to strengthen relationships within the MCI community, and with our neighbours. In fairer weather, MCI students covered Gretna’s streets in a town-wide garbage cleanup. In December, MCI’s Faith & Culture committee initiated a drive for Operation Christmas Child, gathering funds and supplies for their shoebox program. Together, the student body raised enough to send 29 boxes to those in need.

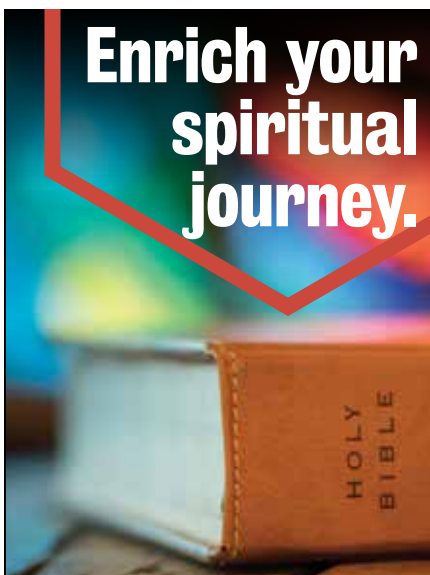
Students also embraced their artistic side and made over 100 Christmas cards for tenants at the senior’s care home in

neighbouring Altona, then delivered them door-to-door. “I liked giving people their cards and seeing them light up,” said Rhea Letkeman, a grade 11 student. “One lady came out of her room afterwards just to thank us, and it was cool to know that we had touched someone’s heart.”

MCI also embraces hosting members of the community on site. This fall, 60 proud grandparents of our students joined us for a morning of worship, games and lunch on Grandparent’s Day. We anticipate attendance from communities all over Manitoba to gather this March for *Little Women: The Musical*.


Last year’s musical hosted nearly 2,000 audience members for four performances. This longstanding tradition brings together students’ families, alumni and the wider community to experience what MCI has to offer. We continue to be grateful for the MCI community, and these connections to communities around us. ❧

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Conrad Grebel University College



MCI student Rhea Letkeman designs a Christmas card.

MCI PHOTO

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

WMEMS 'helped my son grow and thrive'

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary & Middle Schools
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary & Middle Schools (WMEMS) has created a safe and nurturing place for my child to learn and grow.

My son started grade five at WMEMS in 2021. He had been at another school in Winnipeg for the previous two years and was struggling. Doing homework was a big struggle for him and a big fight for us. He constantly complained about math and refused to do activities outside the regular school day.

The hardest part for us as his parents was watching him struggle to make friends. He had one friend in grade three before they were split up between the three large classes that made up his grade. The classes were so large that he was overwhelmed and barely talked to anyone in grade four.

Before we arrived at WMEMS, current parents contacted us to say their kids were my son's age, and they wanted to give them a chance to meet before school started. So he made friends before school even started. Then when he arrived, every student already knew his name, because the teacher had told them already the year before. His class had just 18 kids, and by the end of his first week he knew most of their names and already had four good friends.

Concerned about his academics, we approached the teacher shortly after school started to ask how he was doing. The teacher had already noticed his struggles with math and had taken steps to reduce his workload while pairing him with the student service teacher to get some extra help. We were incredibly impressed with the care the teacher took and continued to take throughout the year.

Today, our son continues to grow as a student and as a person. He has picked up a love for cooking thanks to the home economics class he takes. He has many friends that he likes to play and work with.



WMEMS PHOTO

Friendships are an important part of school.

And he just came back from a two-night trip, something he refused to do before this year.

WMEMS's small classes, caring teachers, and fantastic community have helped my son grow and thrive. We are grateful that we chose to send him to this

school and for the incredible teachers that have made a difference in his life.

*—written by a WMEMS parent.
WMEMS is a K-8 school with campuses in Fort Garry and St. James.*

Calendar

Nationwide

Feb. 1-28: The Great Winter Warm-Up. MCC encourages volunteers to make comforters.

British Columbia

Feb. 24: LEAD conference at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond. Theme: "Centred-set church." Speaker: Mark Baker.

Feb. 25: MC B.C. annual general meeting, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

March 4-5: Lenten Vespers with Abendmusik Choir at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, 7:30 p.m. (4) and St. Philip's Anglican Church, 7:30 p.m. (5). Donations to Menno Hall project at UBC.

April 21-23: MC B.C. youth impact retreat, at Camp Squeah, Hope.

May 6: MC B.C. women's day.

May 21: MC B.C. arts fundraiser for Indigenous relations, at Heritage Hall, Vancouver.

Oct. 13-15: MC B.C. women's retreat.

Alberta

March 17-18: MC Alberta annual delegate sessions, at Springridge Mennonite Church, Pincher Creek.

April 22: MC Alberta all committee meeting, at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury.

Saskatchewan

March 11: MC Sask annual delegate sessions at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon. For details and to register, go to mcsask.ca/event/8602.

March 17: Shekinah rib night fundraiser, St. Patrick's Day edition. For more information go to shekinah.ca.

Manitoba

Until March 4: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery at CMU exhibit "Grief and Grievance: Sites of Change" featuring "Protest" by Briony Haig and "The Grief Project" by Barb Bottle.

Feb. 19: "New Blood," a play about reconciliation featuring poetry,

music, and contemporary and traditional dancing, at Jubilee Place, Winnipeg. For more information, visit mennochurch.mb.ca/newblood.

Feb. 22: CMU virtual open house, online at 6:00 p.m. Register at cmu.ca/future/experience.

Feb. 22 to March 29: CMU Xplore classes: Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

"Opera and Christianity" with Nolan Kehler. "Beings in Time: The challenges of living our best in contemporary society" with Paul Redekop at 10 a.m. "Walking Together" with Neill and Edith Von Gunten at 11:30 a.m. Visit cmu.ca/xplore for more information.

March 3-4: MC Manitoba annual gathering, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg. Theme: "Re-imagining Church Together." For more information visit

mennochurch.mb.ca/gathering.

March 10: CMU campus visit day, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Register at cmu.ca/future/experience.

March 28: CMU open house at 10:00 a.m. with come-and-go guided tours at the campus. Register at cmu.ca/future/experience.

March 29: CMU virtual open house, online at 6:00 p.m. Register at cmu.ca/future/experience.

April 26: CMU virtual open house, online at 6:00 p.m. Register at cmu.ca/future/experience.

July 14-15: The Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies and the University of Manitoba present "The Russlaender Mennonites: War dislocation and new beginnings" centenary conference to mark the arrival of Russlaender from the Soviet Union to Canada.

July 15: "Singing our Journey: Sangerfest 2023," at the Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall. Sign up to sing in the mass choir celebrating the centenary of the Russlaender immigration to Canada. For more information, visit mhsc.ca/soj.

Ontario

Until Feb. 28: Brubacher House Poetry Project seeks German Mennonite poetry. Email submissions and an author statement to

brubacherpoetryproject@gmail.com. A public reading will be held in the spring.

January to May 10: MCC Ontario presents "Applied peacebuilding skills certificate program" online, every other Wednesday. For more information, visit mcccanada.ca/get-involved/events.

Feb. 28: MC Eastern Canada presents "Becoming a restorative church: Theology, leadership and accountability, for pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders, in English and French, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

March 9-11: MCC Ontario presents "Rooted in right relationship: With one another and creation," a peace and justice student seminar, in Ottawa. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3Wzxcui>.

March 18: Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo March break open house for prospective students. Learn more at grebel.ca/events.

April 1: Menno Singers presents "Rachmaninov's Vespers," at Trillium Lutheran, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.mennosingers.com.

April 18: MC Eastern Canada presents "Living the Gospel as a diverse group of believers," an online workshop on cultural integration, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

April 28-29: MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, in English and French. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

May 5: Menno Singers presents its "Spring Concert," at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.mennosingers.com.

May 11: MC Eastern Canada presents "Becoming a restorative church: Embodying our safe church policy." A hybrid event, in English and French, at 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, and on Zoom, from 7 to 9 p.m. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

June 3: MC Eastern Canada presents "Being a restorative church: Creating brave and accessible space." A

hybrid event, at Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, with French on Zoom, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

Online

Feb. 15: Church-to-church conversation between Doug Klassen of MC Canada and Desalehn Abebe of Meserete Kristos Church, Ethiopia. 12 noon EST. Register at mcec.ca/events/.

Feb. 22 to March 29: CMU Xplore classes on Tuesdays. "What are Two Swords Good For?" with Mary Schertz of AMBS at 9:30 a.m. CST, "A Mediator Explores Conflict" with Wayne Plener at 11 a.m. CST. Visit cmu.ca/xplore for more information.

Feb. 23 to March 30: CMU Xplore class "What are human beings, that God is mindful of them" with Marcus Peter Rempel on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. CST, "Grieving Well" with Wilma Derksen on Thursdays at 11 a.m. CST. More details at cmu.ca/xplore.

March 8: Canadian Mennonite online event, 8 p.m. EST on Zoom. "Are we too progressive for our own good?" with Aaron Epp, Ryan Dueck, Peter Haresnape and Cynthia Wallace. Register at canadianmennonite.org/events.

March 17: Mennonite World Conference online prayer hour, 10 a.m. EST. Register at mwc-cmm.org/OPHmar23.


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 visit, canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



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Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
Feb. 27 <i>Focus on Camps</i>	Feb. 13
March 13	Feb. 27
March 27 <i>Focus on the Arts</i>	March 13
April 10	March 27
April 24 <i>Focus on Books & Resources</i>	April 10
May 8	April 24
May 22 <i>Focus on Mental Health</i>	May 8
June 5	May 18
June 19	June 5
July 3	June 19
July 17 <i>Digital Issue</i>	July 3
July 31	July 17
Aug. 14 <i>Digital Issue</i>	July 31
Aug. 28	Aug. 14
Sept. 11 <i>Digital Issue</i>	Aug. 28
Sept. 25	Sept. 11
Oct. 9	Sept. 25
Oct. 23 <i>Focus on Education</i>	Oct. 6
Nov. 6	Oct. 23

Fresh zeal

Having defied Catholic authorities, Menno Simons walked out the door of this church in Pingjum, Netherlands in 1536, presumably full of a Spirited new zeal.

Mennonite World Conference representatives from around the world visited the church during MWC executive committee meetings in December.

PHOTO BY DOUG KLASSEN

