

CANADIAN MENNONITE

March 26, 2018

Volume 22 Number 7

‘Is God still messing with us?’

MC Manitoba discerns how to live into
its mission at annual delegate gathering
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EDITORIAL

The business of church

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I like to attend congregational business meetings. Yes, that includes reading my congregation's annual report booklet. Although I've never been a delegate at a churchwide conference, I do like to attend them—or even livestream them. Are you a church nerd too?

This is the season when regional churches gather delegates to participate in their annual business sessions. (In case you're not a church nerd, "regional church" is the current term for what Canadian Mennonites used to call conferences or area churches). Our last issue carried a report of the Mennonite Church B.C. gathering, and you'll find two more regional church reports—Manitoba and Saskatchewan—on pages 14 and 16 in this issue.

At annual meetings—for congregations or broader groups—we look back and consider the highlights of our life in the past year. We hear reports on significant activities our group has accomplished and we make decisions about efforts for the coming year. Financial reports help us see how our collective offerings are used in ministry.

I believe these "business sessions" of the church are a vital part of being church together, along with our regular worship, our service projects and our church fun times. So why do these meetings matter—to church nerds and others?

An ideal annual meeting invites us to consider how we see God was at work in our midst over the past year. It reminds

us to celebrate God's faithfulness, manifested as we went about our tasks and assignments.

By reading and hearing the annual reports we can catch a glimpse of this community's vision, how the group sees itself involved in God's mission in the world. If I were a newcomer in a congregation, I would ask for a copy of the annual report; I would attend the next annual meeting. These would help me decide whether this is a community I want to join.

An annual meeting provides us with the opportunity to celebrate the work of the dedicated volunteers and staff who helped our church accomplish its goals. Gathered, we can encourage each other toward ongoing faithfulness, and we can take seriously a call for us, as individuals, to be involved in the work of the church. (Wouldn't that make the nominations committee happy!?)

Although some people tune out during financial reports, they point to the priorities—spoken or unspoken—to which the group is committed. How did our church allocate its money over the past year? Which projects did our church support? Where did we cut our giving? Why? The proposed budget charts a path for the coming year. It is also an invitation to you and your household: How might you set goals for your own financial giving to the community efforts? (Now the finance committee is cheering!)

Church business meetings should

be more than about dry reports. There should be opportunity for questions, suggestions and challenges. In the context of these meetings, we can learn how to have public conversation, to listen and speak respectfully when we don't agree. We can learn how to make decisions as a group, even when opinions vary and goals clash.

You may have other thoughts on annual meetings—of congregations, charities and larger church bodies. We'd love to hear about your experiences. Drop us a line.

By the way, Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) is conducting its annual meeting on April 28, at 4 p.m., at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary. CMPS is the non-profit corporation that publishes *Canadian Mennonite*. The meeting is public, but voting is limited to CMPS members (individuals who donated at least \$25 in 2017 and who register by April 20). You are welcome to attend.

Introducing Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor

Ross has taken a circuitous spiritual path to reach the Mennonite world. He was baptized as an infant in the United Church, raised as a Fellowship Baptist, and worshipped in Nazarene, Convention Baptist, Alliance and independent evangelical congregations, before moving to Kitchener-Waterloo in 2005 to take on the role of managing editor of this magazine and then joining First Mennonite in Kitchener with his wife Diane later that year. When he's not editing the content of *CM*, he can be found reading, listening to blues and jazz, or watching art house movies.



ABOUT THE COVER:

During this year's Mennonite Church Manitoba annual delegate gathering, held earlier this month at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Dorothy Fontaine and Rick Neufeld remember those from the regional church who passed away in 2017. See story of the gathering on page 14.

PHOTO: DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG, MENNONITE CHURCH MANITOBA

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Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD FEATURE

'A neighbour to all who come'

Three urban Mennonite churches reach out to their local communities

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. CORRESPONDENT

FIRST UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



*'We're starting to build momentum here ... to build relationships and have good conversations with people who wouldn't otherwise come to our church building.'
(Pastor Lydia Cruttwell, First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, of the reason for a youth drop-in centre)*

Mennonites have always been known as a migrant people, whether moving from Switzerland to North America, from the Netherlands to Prussia and Ukraine, and from Europe to South America and eventually to Canada.

A significant move mainly in the last few decades, however, has been the migration from rural areas to cities. In 1951, only 20 percent of Mennonites in Canada were urban, with 65 percent being rural/farm dwellers. By 1981, those numbers had nearly reversed. Today, 51 percent of Canada's 200,000 Mennonites are urbanites, with only 23 percent living in rural communities or on farms.

First United Mennonite Church

Located on East 52nd Street in Vancouver, First United is one example of how an urban congregation changed considerably in the last few decades. The congregation was established in 1947. Following the Second World War, new job opportunities abounded, and Mennonites flooded into the city. From fewer than 100 members in 1950, the congregation swelled to up to 500 in the 1960s through to the early '80s. Growing young families meant a large Sunday school, club program and children's choir.

Not only was German the dominant language at First United, the area around 52nd Street became known as "Little Berlin" because of the many German-speaking people living there. A large number of the congregants lived very close to the church. Neighbourhood was community.

Various factors—including the high cost of living, as Vancouver is now the most expensive city for living in North America—have gradually driven younger people out of the city, resulting in declining church membership. A Spanish congregation was established at First United in 1986, reflecting a change in the neighbourhood. Currently, the congregation has 204 members, with weekly attendance around 65.

These days, the area around the church has a much more diverse ethnic makeup than it did a generation ago. First United has responded to welcoming newcomers by establishing a drop-in centre

/// Of note

The 10 largest cities in Canada—Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Ottawa, Edmonton, Mississauga, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Brampton and Hamilton—all have Mennonite Church Canada congregations except Brampton, which is situated in an area of southern Ontario with a number of nearby Mennonite congregations.

CHINATOWN PEACE CHURCH PHOTO



'Our vision is to . . . learn how to love our neighbourhood.'
(Pastor Tim Kuepfer, Chinatown Peace Church, Vancouver, of the reason for removing the iron gate and wall surrounding the building)

JUBILEE MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



'How can you love nature if you don't hang out in it?'
(Pastor Anna Marie Geddert, Jubilee Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, of the reason for a tree dedication)

two afternoons a week for neighbourhood children in grades 5 to 9. The Wednesday program is an informal time of relating through snacks and play, including video and board games, and basketball in the parking lot.

According to Pastor Lydia Cruttwell, those attending are from "a whole mix of cultural backgrounds—Filipino, Punjabi, Spanish, Native, Korean, Bangladeshi, Afghani—some who've been in Canada for years and some who've just arrived recently and are still learning English." About 20 to 30 children attend these weekly activities.

The Thursday Talks program is a bit more structured, focussing on exploring faith through storytelling, learning about God and making good choices. Between five and 15 regularly attend this program.

While First United's church members used to run these youth programs, growing the program was difficult with a limited number of volunteers available on weekday afternoons. Thanks to a generous donation in a former member's will, the congregation has been able to fund a community engagement worker position for the last few years.

"Our current community engagement worker is a man named Chris Banfield who's very passionate about connecting kids and their families, as well as homeless folks on Fraser Street," says Cruttwell. "Chris has also made connections with a youth pastor at a nearby church, who comes out for the Thursday Talks program and connects really well with the kids through his stories and sharing."

Last fall, First United also began hosting community dinners, usually once a month on a Thursday, inviting families of the drop-in centre children, people who live near the church and students who attend English classes held in the church's education building. It also hosts a community garden and supports Welcoming Newcomers Kingcrest, which helps immigrants through English-language learning.

"We're starting to build momentum here . . . to build relationships and have good conversations with people who wouldn't otherwise come to our church building," says Cruttwell. "This is a great chance to know and be known by those around us. And it's a great way for us, as church folks, to connect with and

support one another as well."

Chinatown Peace Church

Elsewhere in the city, Chinatown Peace sits on East Pender Street in the heart of Canada's largest Chinese community. Formerly known as Vancouver Chinese Mennonite Church, it changed its name earlier this year to be more inclusive of the neighbourhood. With the area undergoing gentrification and other changes, the congregation wants to maintain a reputation for seeking authentic relationships with those nearby.

"We've taken on the motto 'Being a living room for Chinatown,'" says Tim Kuepfer, the church's English pastor.

A Cantonese-speaking congregation meets separately.

The 40-year-old church building has replaced its wooden front doors with more inviting glass ones and has removed the fence around the property, originally put up to discourage vagrants and drug users. Although opening the space means there is now more garbage around the building, it also allows for a new project of community garden boxes.

"We are intending to grow vegetables

together with our neighbours this summer, and hopefully also share and eat them together,” says Kuepfer. “We’re not sure how this is going to turn out, as there is quite a lot of homelessness and drug activity around the church, but we hope our neighbours will buy into what we are hoping to do, and that there will not be too much vandalism of the plants or boxes.”

Inside the building, pews have been replaced with chairs, allowing for more flexibility for congregational fellowship. A video on the church’s website (chinatownpeace.ca) describes its mission and welcomes visitors.

“Our vision is to be a community of authentic relationships in which we learn how to love God, love one another and love our neighbourhood,” explains Kuepfer.

Chinatown Peace has also planned a banquet for 70 to 100 bicycle couriers, cyclists who run parcels between office buildings in downtown Vancouver. Kuepfer describes the group as a “tight-knit and somewhat marginalized community,” and the congregation hopes to make some continuing longer-term connections already established over many years by Mennonite volunteer Herb Reesor, who has been sharing bread with the couriers once a week.

Jubilee Mennonite Church

The city of Winnipeg is home to 20,000 Mennonites, the largest concentration in Canada.

Jubilee is situated in a low-income neighbourhood of North Kildonan surrounded by subsidized housing units, single-parent families, newcomers to Canada and a large Indigenous population. With an attendance of 70 to 80 people, the congregation is not large, but its outreach in the community is sizable. It holds joint membership with Mennonite Church Canada and the Mennonite Brethren.

According to Anna Marie Geddert, the community outreach pastor, Jubilee has established itself as a presence in the community with the attitude of “God is already working in the neighbourhood. How do we as churches follow?” While

churches used to be community-based, observes Geddert, this is no longer the case, and many North American churchgoers probably don’t know the names of even eight neighbours around them. She sees herself as a bridge between church and community.

Programs Jubilee offers include an emergency food pantry and a clothing exchange. Circles for Reconciliation bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples for conversation, and church members periodically do prayer walks in the neighbourhood.

A Neighbourhood Grounds group organized by local women welcomes anyone interested to come for coffee and visiting. At Christmas time, the church sponsors a community dinner and hosts an afternoon high tea, to which those attending bring a new, nonviolent toy as their admission. Neighbourhood parents can then purchase Christmas gifts at the church’s “toy boutique” for a nominal price.

Jubilee has intentionally chosen to utilize the green space on its property

for recreation and gardening rather than expansion of church buildings. “How can you love nature if you don’t hang out in it?” Geddert wonders. Children who live in nearby low-income Manitoba Housing units appreciate the play space, and 30 community garden plots make for good habits of growing and eating nutritious food. The church has also built a fire pit, further encouraging group gatherings and fellowship.

Geddert says that Jubilee is firmly invested in its community but is less concerned with numbers of people coming to church programs than with the impact those programs have on people. She believes that establishing relationships takes time, and sharing the gospel is best done through hearing each other’s stories.

“I love these people,” she says of the neighbourhood residents. “I want to be in relationship with them. It is Jesus who taught me to love. We want people to know that God loves them. We know God is calling us in the neighbourhood and we want to be a neighbour to all who come.” ❧

❧ For discussion

1. Over the last 50 years, Canadian Mennonites have become more urban. How has this movement from rural to urban areas affected your congregation? How are city churches different from rural ones? Do urban churches have more opportunities to serve their neighbourhoods? Do rural churches know more of their neighbours?
2. Amy Dueckman mentions many different ways that First United Mennonite Church and Chinatown Peace Church in Vancouver, and Jubilee Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, have reached out to their local communities. Which of these programs would you consider trying in your congregation? Which would you find most challenging?
3. Do you think these congregations expect their community service ventures to increase attendance at their church? What expectations do they have? What is necessary for a service project to be sustained long-term?
4. How does your congregation reach out into the community? How important is it for churches to serve the local community? Are there projects from the past that your congregation has discontinued? What are some new possibilities for your congregation?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

✉ It's important to listen well

RE: "THE SKILL and soul of listening," and "What kind of Mennonite?" (Feb. 12, pages 16 and 2, respectively).

The Bible refers often to listening; Proverbs expounds the value of listening and so do Jesus, Paul, Peter and James. But social media bombards us with all sorts of information so that it becomes difficult to listen critically and be able to discern what is fake news and what is truth. This can easily lead to premature conclusions and judgment. To pass judgment without listening carefully can be hurtful.

When I was still teaching and had difficult students, I would consult their counsellor to find out about their

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FROM OUR LEADERS

'Our missionaries'

JASON MARTIN

More than a decade ago, my family and I were privileged to serve as church planters in southern Italy. We were Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers seconded to what is now Virginia Mennonite Mission, and were financially supported by many friends, family members and our home congregation, Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont.

One instance comes to mind when I felt like my church "claimed" the mission work my wife and I were doing. During one of our Canadian visits, I attended the visitation of a church member's father-in-law and was introduced, "This is Jason Martin. He's one of our missionaries."

My heart was so warmed by being affectionately claimed as "one of 'our' missionaries." This feeling I experienced as a young mission worker more than a decade ago articulates well the intention of why MC Canada is transitioning to a more "relational" funding model. The nationwide church wants to see its



congregations and individual members more fully engaged in its International Witness ministry.

For many years, Canadian Mennonite congregations have given generously to support the nationwide ministry and also the International Witness ministry. Historically, our funding model has been that churches gave designated and non-designated funds out of which international and national programming was supported.

"[T]his is a challenging time," noted John Longhurst in his Jan. 16, 2017, *Canadian Mennonite* article, "Staying afloat in a sea of change." He cited numerous challenges facing Mennonites and many denominations seeking financial support for their programming: "aging and shrinking donor base, waning denominational loyalty, changing attendance patterns, increased competition for donor dollars and growing secularism," among others.

Given these challenges, MC Canada is inviting congregations to continue generous support of both its nationwide and International Witness ministries.

A significant change in how our international workers will be supported going forward is that they will each be required to raise a minimum of 50 percent of their budget. The remaining will be provided through general budget giving.

This funding model is not new for MC Canada. A form of relational funding is already happening through Witness partnerships when congregations designate funds for their Witness partner. Workers currently receive designated donations by their partner congregations; that funding is considered part of the 50 percent "relational funding" goal that the workers are being asked to raise.

My wife and I had to raise 100 percent of our support and were helped so much by our mission support team that consisted of fellow church members. We shared our call to serve God with former co-workers, friends, family and local churches, and invited their prayerful and financial support. It was not easy to personally ask for funding, but we did it and were not alone.

This year, Witness workers have already begun to share stories from their international ministry contexts with churches and individuals, inviting relational support. Will you and your church partner with one of these workers?

Jason Martin is director of MC Canada's International Witness program.

(Continued from page 7)

background. When I returned to the classroom after that inquiry, I could listen and relate differently to them.

True listening is an art and it requires skill. We should not only listen with our ears—but also with our heart and even with our eyes—to read the body language of the person facing us, which will reveal his

or her attitude and emotions.

I once stepped onto a bus and saw a young man alone in the back row, his head in his hands sobbing. I sat down quietly beside him. After a short while he looked at me questioningly. I spoke kindly to him and he told me his story. I listened intently and gave him some encouraging words. When he left, he thanked me for listening.

FAMILY TIES

Acting like adults

MELISSA MILLER

In a phone conversation with a friend, she reveals her struggle with an event she is planning. Given that the gathering will be held in a small space, there are a limited number of people she can invite. After telling me whom she thinks she will include, she speaks of others, those left off the guest list. “I feel badly because they might be hurt,” she sighs. “I’m not sure what to do.”

In a flash, I’m transported back to junior high and the seemingly endless dramas of female friendships accompanied by jostling of emotions, positions, alliances and fractures. “It’s not like we’re 13,” I sternly remind my friend, trying to help her regain her well-won adult perspective. We cannot contort ourselves around other people’s imagined feelings, I tell her. Trying to do so is like chasing a zigzagging rabbit that always eludes us. My friend graciously receives my advice, and we turn to other matters.

Belatedly, I realized my remarks were aimed at myself as well. The previous week I caught myself stewing as I cleaned house in preparation for a visit from another friend, a “neat” friend. Even as I made the effort, I knew that a few swipes of a dust cloth and vacuum brush weren’t going to propel me into her league. My home will never be as tidy, as dust-free, as thoroughly clean as hers. Nor should it matter.



My tidy friend and I are not the same person. We have different personalities and preferences; we make different choices. She cleans for tension relief, something I found unbelievable until I lived with her. I learned from her, and still put into practice some of her strategies. On most days, though, if I have to choose between baking cookies or washing windows, I’ll pick baking. If I have to choose between conversation over tea or chasing the dust bunnies, I’ll pick conversation. While I sometimes wish my home looked more like hers, I realize it’s a fantasy wish, not supported by my actions. Fortunately, not one of my friends visits me because of my housekeeping skills.

The deeper conflict isn’t about the shininess of our floors or the neatly folded towels. The deeper conflict is about how I compare myself to those around me; it’s about how I measure my worth.

Perhaps there will always be an unsettled part of me that looks around with the anxious eyes of a teenager and deems myself to be lacking.

It’s about insecurity and too-critical judgment. It’s about a feeble ego, the kind of things that teenagers wrestle with, and that we think we leave far behind as we add years of living.

Perhaps teenaged angst doesn’t completely resolve itself; perhaps we carry experiences and feelings from previous

decades along as we age, notch up wisdom and gain a longer view. Perhaps there will always be an unsettled part of me that looks around with the anxious eyes of a teenager and deems myself to be lacking. Perhaps in time, that younger, less-formed part will grow quieter, calmer, more accepting of herself and her human foibles.

The Apostle Paul was ever ready to coach fledgling Christians towards growth. I offer this paraphrase of Ephesians 4:29: “Avoid negative, immature thinking and speaking. Give yourself over to words and actions that encourage and build up, not just those around you, but you as well. Be graceful towards yourself and others.”

Might we recognize the harm of silly comparisons? Might we seek freedom from insecurity? Might we trust God who formed us in love and sustains us throughout our lives? Might we rest in

God, the ground of our beings and the sphere within which we are complete? Peace, Gentle Reader, peace.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mymts.net) has a passion for helping people develop healthy, vibrant relationships with God, self and others.

And there is listening expectantly to our inner voice, which often reveals truth and solutions that we could not detect with our mind. Recently, a friend of mine told me, “I am so glad I can tell you anything that concerns me, and you listen to me.”

We may make a difference in the life of a person if we are able and willing to listen.

HELMUT LEMKE, VANCOUVER

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Dyck—Evie Jane (b. Feb. 12, 2018), to Stephen and Sarah Dyck, Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—Silas Roger (b. Feb. 13, 2018), to Abby and Jaron

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GOD, MONEY AND ME

Buried treasure

HAROLD PENNER

Lately, I have had several conversations with people about downsizing or simplifying their estates. Some talk about rearranging their financial affairs to make life easier for their executors someday. Others face the physically and emotionally demanding task of moving from the homes they have lived in for many years to smaller, more manageable accommodations.

Furniture, accessories and various collections accumulated over a lifetime are sorted, re-homed or discarded. Reality TV promotes the fantasy of valuable items being discovered amongst the jumble, but downsizing our possessions rarely leads to unexpected riches. However, a little investigation when simplifying your finances might reveal some overlooked treasure, and a new opportunity for generous giving.

Just like downsizing a home, simplifying our finances requires us to take stock of what we own, and decide how we want to manage it. Demutualized life insurance shares are an often-overlooked financial asset that needs to be considered. Demutualization is the process by which a mutual company owned by groups of members changes to a joint stock company owned by shareholders.

Several years ago, four major life insurance companies (Sun Life, Manufacturers Life, Canada Life and Clarica Life)

demutualized, and all current policyholders were issued shares in the new corporation equivalent to the accumulated value of their policies. At the time, some people took advantage of tax rules that allowed them to donate these shares to charity and avoid paying tax on the capital gains. Others sold their shares, and used or invested the proceeds in other ways. However, a substantial number of people took no action at all, simply allowing their policies to convert and their shares to remain untouched. Those individuals may still have shares in their names being held by a third-party broker or trust company.

When simplifying your estate, it's a good idea to review what life insurance

When simplifying your estate, it's a good idea to review what life insurance you held prior to 2000....

you held prior to 2000, and whether you may still be the owner of demutualized shares from those insurance companies. If you're not certain, you can always contact the insurance company and ask how to confirm your ownership of any demutualized shares. If you discover you do have some shares, you'll have some exciting options to consider:

• **YOU COULD** sell your shares, but it is important to talk to your accountant or tax professional about the tax

implications before doing so. You received the demutualized shares at zero cost, so if you sell them you will incur a taxable capital gain.

• **ALTERNATIVELY, YOU** could seize this discovery as an opportunity for generous giving, and donate the shares to charity as an in-kind donation.

Selling might give you a little extra money today, but donating your shares could make a long-lasting impact on the people or causes that you support.

Shares donated in-kind provide a welcome asset boost to the charity of your choice, and also avoid the tax on capital gains associated with selling your shares.

Perhaps you know you want to donate the shares to charity but you aren't sure exactly where you want to direct your giving? Donating your shares to Abundance Canada and placing the proceeds from the sale in a donor-advised planned giving fund allows you to take more time to make this decision. The consultants

at Abundance Canada are ready to help you evaluate your options and guide you through the donation process.

Harold Penner is a gift planning consultant with Abundance Canada. For more than 40 years, Abundance Canada has effectively helped Canadians with their charitable giving in their lifetime and through their estate. To learn more, visit abundance.ca or call 1-800-772-3257 to arrange a free, confidential, no-obligation consultation.



(Continued from page 9)

Friesen, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Jantz—Corbin Lennox (b. Feb. 13, 2018), to Oliver and Chantel Jantz, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Jantzi—Hazel May (b. Feb. 27, 2018), to Nick and Kelsey Jantzi, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Miller—Oscar Donald (b. Feb. 5, 2018), to Nick and Dara Miller, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Monette—Nash Emerson (b. Feb. 21, 2018), to Russ and Amber Monette, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Taylor—Jackson Edward (b. Feb. 5, 2018), to Paul and Stephanie Taylor, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Marriages

Pederberg—Nora Pederson and Matt Schellenberg, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 31, 2017.

Deaths

Balzer—Hilda, 94 (b. Oct. 14, 1923; d. Feb. 28, 2018), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Dirks—Marie (nee Kroeker), 95 (b. June 18, 1922; d. Jan. 31, 2018), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Friesen—Susie (Sue), 97 (b. Sept. 30, 1920; d. Feb. 16, 2018), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Klassen—Trudy, 85 (b. May 29, 1932; d. Feb. 12, 2018),

Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Krueger—Paul Gerhard, 70 (b. Feb. 13, 1948; d. Feb. 22, 2018), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Neufeld—John, 82 (b. Feb. 8, 1936; d. Feb. 25, 2018), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Tubb—James Brian (Jim), 69 (b. Nov. 24, 1948; d. Feb. 3, 2018), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Wiens—Jacob, 89 (b. Dec. 6, 1928; d. Feb. 14, 2018), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Wiens—Katie (nee Dyck), 83 (b. March 27, 1934; d. Feb. 6, 2018), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Willms—Margaret (nee Martens), 94 (b. Sept. 29, 1923; d. March 2, 2018), Springridge Mennonite, Pincher Creek, Alta.

Willms—Hilda (nee Goerz), 85 (b. Aug. 20, 1932; d. Jan. 28, 2018), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by email to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

A moment from yesterday



Mennonites learned how to harness the wind while in the Netherlands, and used this knowledge in the 16th and 17th centuries in Prussia, where wind-powered mills were primarily used to pump water to drain land. Between 1876 and '78, four windmills were built in the Steinbach, Man., area by Mennonites. This one was built in 1877 and was moved in 1879 to nearby Rosenort, where there were more favourable winds. The mill was taken down in 1920 once gas-powered mills took over from wind power. Windmills, like grain elevators, became iconic symbols on the Prairies.

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Jake Peters Photo Collection / Mennonite Heritage Archives



archives.mhsc.ca



PHOTOS BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

During the Sixties Scoop Apology Engagement at Edmonton's Amiskwaciy Academy on March 1, survivors were invited to paint their experiences onto canvases for others to see.



VIEWPOINT

What does 'sorry' mean?

DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
ALBERTA CORRESPONDENT

“Sorry” is a very Canadian expression, but what does it mean?

To the more than 200 Sixties Scoop survivors gathered at the Amiskwaciy Academy in Edmonton on March 1, the word is problematic. The hearing is the last of six events held across Alberta by the NDP government in an effort to make an upcoming government apology meaningful.

Government officials and members of the public gathered to hear stories of Indigenous children taken from their homes in the 1960s and widely scattered into adoptive or foster homes. While ostensibly done for the good of the children, in many cases racism, lies and an insidious goal of assimilation created new issues and magnified existing problems for the families that were ripped apart.

For children, the loss of language, culture and family connections has left a legacy of pain and unending identity crisis. For parents whose children were taken, broken hearts added to the brutal legacy left by the residential school system.

What can hearing a government official say “We are sorry” possibly mean to a 50-year-old woman who believed she was unwanted and has just learned that her mother called social services daily asking where her baby was?

What apology can mean anything to young people who, courtesy of the Scoop, experience racism in the dominant culture because they look Indigenous, and racism in the Indigenous community because they sound white?

What regretful official sentiment can possibly assuage the pain of life-altering lies? The March 2 issue of the *Edmonton Journal* tells the story of Suzanne Wilkinson, whose mother was told she was stillborn and whose adoptive parents were told she was willingly surrendered.

What can any saying “sorry” do to for the trauma suffered by an 11-year-old who was abducted by social services while playing in her front yard? Does the word excuse the fact that the foster home turned out to be abusive as well as culturally foreign?

The stories being told by Sixties Scoop survivors are hard to hear because the old wrong is vividly gut-wrenching and the wounds from it are still open. Survivors in the sharing circles regularly mop their eyes and add the tearful tissues to white paper bags that will be collected and ceremonially burned to honour their pain in the eyes of the Creator.

It's hard for those listening to understand that such blatant injustice was ever believed to be the best thing for the children.

In light of the stories, an apology can never be adequate recompense. It is crucial to listen to what survivors say they need, and to give back more than words. Many survivors are unsure of, and unready for, an apology, having experienced a long history of broken promises by many governments.

At Amiskwaciy, however, a spark of hope is evident as participants work toward defining a meaningful apology. The fact that the current government is listening carefully to survivors and working collaboratively with the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta is significant.

Survivors clearly say that words are meaningless unless actions and policies change, such as accessible supports for re-uniting families, counselling, compensation, anti-racism initiatives, revamped child and social services, and education of the non-Indigenous population.

If it comes with real action, an apology will become meaningful. Perhaps “sorry” can mean a hopeful beginning for change this time around. ❧

VIEWPOINT

The way of the open palm

Peacebuilding at the United Nations

THIEN PHUOC QUANG TRAN

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE / MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

Growing up as a preacher's son, I was immersed in Christian values. Every memory I have revolves around the Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Ho Chi Minh City. I learned the way of Christ: to love my neighbours and to give to the poor.

In Vietnam we have a philosophy called "the way of the open palm." The palm facing up is a non-threatening gesture, reminiscent of the pleading gesture of a beggar. The person being addressed will not feel threatened by the gesture, and it is used universally as a way of greeting. As a Christian, I am also familiar with the image of God's open hands.

When I first came to New York City to start my one-year internship as the Mennonite World Conference/International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) intern at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) United Nations Office, I had a reality check.

At the UN, people talk about imposing sanctions on North Korea, military interventions in Syria and conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I was depressed; there were too many atrocities and they were too horrific.

I realized, unfortunately, that the people in power often find it easier to destroy than to build, to oppress than to understand. When we turn on the TV, we see an arms race, conflict and nuclear threats. Most people think that military strength ensures peace, but in reality it only brings fear and destruction. Major countries find the idea of exercising their power alluring: with power and wealth, they can protect the weak, help the poor and bring "security to the world."

Little do they know that the more they try to impose their will on others, the more resistance they will create.

But there is hope.

There are many people who yearn for peace and they are working hard, day in and day out, to bring real peace to the world. The people of MCC are a part of this group, as am I. And our method is the way of the open palm.

I'm inspired by Doug Hostetter, the director of MCC's UN Office, who has lived this philosophy of peace all his life, including during the Vietnam War. Instead of bearing guns and bullets like many soldiers, he came to my country with MCC, bringing books and pencils to help Vietnamese students learn how to write and read their own language. He lived in the community and earned the trust of the Vietnamese people he met there.

Today, when most of the people tend to stay away from North Korea, MCC is



MCC PHOTO BY DIANA WILLIAMS

Thien Phuoc Quang Tran poses at the MCC United Nations office in New York City with a sign that reads, 'Arriving, I feel hopeful.'

there to bring food and medical supplies to people in need. We try to be the voice for displaced people from Latin America and war zones in the Middle East. Although small, our presence is vital to encourage dialogue.

This is what I believe being a Christian means. With open minds we welcome people. With open hearts we share their pain and suffering. And with open hands we work with them to bring peace to this world. It's not easy, but I'm pleased to be a part of this effort to help "God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven." ❧



MCC PHOTO BY DOUG HOSTETTER

Thien Phuoc Quang Tran is pictured in the Security Council hall of the United Nations in New York City.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

An 'Easter Fools'
Day' rant

TROY WATSON

When I first heard that Easter falls on April Fools' Day this year, my mind immediately thought about how many people think I'm a fool for believing in the Easter story. I can hear them scoffing, "Do you believe in the Easter bunny too?"



be his last. All day Easter Sunday he partied like it was 1999. He explained, "If the proclamation 'He is risen!' doesn't make you want to grab a drink and get up and dance, you don't understand what it means. I'm sorry, you just don't get it!"

This reminded me of something a friend shared a few months ago. He was walking home around 11p.m. one Saturday night after a prayer meeting. He noticed it was unseasonably warm and a lot of people were outside laughing, having a good time with friends around patio tables and backyard bonfires. He

plan an Easter celebration that's meaningful for introverts and extroverts? How do we throw an Easter bash that won't terrify the bashful? How do we make sure it's enjoyable for all ages?

Then the answer came to me. "Who cares!" Seriously. Every year, fewer and fewer people care about our church services. If this rate continues, nobody will be showing up soon anyway.

I'm convinced that we need to spend less time planning worship services and more time preparing ourselves. Our religious pageantry is ultimately meaningless, and possibly annoying to God (Amos 5:21-23). The best thing we can do

This brought to mind all the people I've known over the years who've abandoned the Christian faith because they came to see Easter as a joke, a hoax or a cruel prank that exposes believers for the gullible fools they think Christians are.

As I continued to contemplate "Easter Fools' Day" I recalled the words of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians saying "the message of the cross is foolishness" (1:18) so "you need to become a fool to be truly wise" (3:18), and remember "those of us who follow Jesus are the greatest fools on earth if the resurrection isn't true" (my paraphrase of 15:13-19).

At this point I switched gears and started reflecting on April Fools' Day. I smiled, thinking about how fun and refreshing April Fools' Day is. How it brings a sense of levity and excitement. How it's the same event year after year, but you never quite know what to expect. You can't predict what lighthearted surprises it may bring.

I wondered why Easter doesn't bring this same sense of cheerful anticipation. All too often Easter feels hollow, lifeless and monotonous. Certainly not as energizing as a good April Fool's Day prank!

This stirred up a memory of an old Irish priest I became familiar with during my university days. He loved Easter. It was his favourite day of the year. He celebrated each Easter as if it might

All too often Easter feels hollow, lifeless and monotonous. Certainly not as energizing as a good April Fools' Day prank!

said, "I felt the Spirit saying we Christians need to learn how to party. We need to practise the discipline of having a good time and inviting our neighbours. One of the gravest sins of the church is that we've made following Jesus boring."

In my spirit, I sensed he was right. But I affirmed his revelation reluctantly. You see, I'm an introvert. I don't like to party. Mingling in a crowd of people in someone's backyard or living room, or anywhere else, is not my idea of a good time. My happy place is being alone with God in the middle of a forest or in a kayak on a quiet lake. Regardless of my personal preferences, the Spirit continues to challenge me to move out of my comfort zone and practise neighbourly hospitality.

All this to say, my mind eventually started wondering if our Easter service should be a lively party. If so, how do we

is prepare our whole beings to be expectant, aware and responsive to the living presence of the Spirit of Christ in our midst.

My highest hope for people attending worship gatherings at Avon Mennonite Church is that they don't find what they were expecting, namely, the same old thing. May people be cheerfully surprised to experience God in a new way. Or surprised by the insatiable hunger for Divine Presence growing within them. Or surprised at how the "foolishness" of God is starting to make more sense than the "wisdom" of humanity around them. Or surprised that the victorious God of Easter is also the hilarious God of April Fools' Day. ☸

Troy Watson (@TroyDWatson) is a pastor of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford,

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

COVER STORY

'Is God still messing with us?'*MC Manitoba discerns how to live into its mission at annual delegate gathering*

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

"Is God still in the business of breaking into people's lives? Is God still messing with us?" asked Brian Bauman during the opening worship service at Mennonite Church Manitoba's annual general meeting. Bauman, MC Eastern Canada's mission minister, called the people of MC Manitoba to discern where God is working in their church and what they are doing about it.

More than 110 delegates representing 32 congregations from across Manitoba gathered at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on the first weekend in March to respond to this call and discuss how to "Live into our call," the theme of the 2018 gathering.

A point of concern preceding the meetings was the proposed \$2-million regional church budget for 2018, which is \$450,000

more than last year. This is because MC Manitoba is now asking churches to combine the funds they used to send to the regional and nationwide churches individually and send them all to MC Manitoba.

Some questioned the \$425,000 allotment for MC Canada since the nationwide church's role has been significantly reduced over the past year. Ken Warkentin, MC Manitoba's executive minister, says this is because the regional and nationwide churches have been underfunded in the past and because there is still much work to support. Besides the money for MC Canada, MC Manitoba proposed to allot \$100,000 for Canadian Mennonite University, \$65,000 for new regional church staff, and \$10,000 for delegate costs to the next MC Canada assembly.

An original proposed budget had been

passed at last November's delegate meeting. However, since then a revised proposed budget was created that contained a \$40,000 increase in congregational giving. Some congregations have said that they won't be able to match last year's contributions or meet the regional church's revised proposed budget. MC Manitoba has decided to defer hiring a church engagement position until it has a better sense of what the congregational donations will be.

When it came time for a vote, the revised proposed budget was passed with only one delegate opposed.

In addition to church business and worship, delegates took in various workshops, covering a variety of topics such as medical assistance in dying, MC Canada and International Witness, MC Manitoba's relationship with CMU, and the future of Camps with Meaning.

A workshop exploring regional church priorities guided the collective vision for the rest of the meetings. Board members Alex Tiessen and Katrina Woelk encouraged participants to rank the seven priorities presented by the MC Manitoba board and staff at last fall's delegate gathering. What seemed to be just an explosion of different colours all over the chart turned out to have patterns and themes. Congregational health and formation of Christian/Anabaptist character were given top priority. Advocacy, education and mission were somewhere in the middle. Wider external linkages, worship and fellowship events, and additional concerns were concentrated at the bottom.

Richard Klassen, another board member, said the scale is a hopeful sign that the regional church is facing the future in the same direction.



PHOTO BY DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG

Donna Slobodzian of Springstein Mennonite Church was one of many delegates and attendees at this year's Mennonite Church Manitoba annual delegate gathering in Winnipeg to rank the seven priorities for the regional church.

Dorothy Fontaine, MC Manitoba's director of mission, reported on recent developments at Camps with Meaning. Last September, four new cabins were completed at Camp Assiniboia, and Camp Moose Lake was sold to Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine, a French school division in Manitoba. All delegates approved the construction of a dike, drainage ditch and pond at Camp Assiniboia that was funded by government sources. The next steps to develop the camp also include a new maintenance shop and moving Camp Moose Lake's picnic shelter to Camp Assiniboia. Camp Koinonia continues to operate under the management of a team of dedicated local residents.

Kathy Giesbrecht, associate director of leadership ministries, reported that its biggest investments this year were on youth, young adults and their pastors. Events included a youth/young-adult pastors retreat, winter youth retreats and continued support of the University of Manitoba's "Menno Office," a safe space for students to discuss faith, eat meals and hang out. Giesbrecht reported that the programs MC Manitoba is putting time and energy into are bearing beautiful fruit, since "youth and young adults are investing in us, too."

Changes in staff and church memberships were also recognized at the gathering:

• **JANET PETERS** is the new Camps with Meaning associate program director, filling the space left by Shawn Klassen-Koop.

• **BLUMENORT MENNONITE CHURCH** in Gretna and Graysville Mennonite Church ended their relationships with MC Manitoba and MC Canada.

• **NIVERVILLE COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP** and Winnipeg Chinese Mennonite Church are in the process of leaving the regional and nationwide churches.

• **ROSENFELD BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH** closed its doors last year.

• **GERALD GERBRANDT** was installed as MC Manitoba's new moderator, replacing Peter Rempel. ❧

❧ Staff changes

Pastoral transition in British Columbia

• **SAMUEL WONG** has been ministering as senior pastor at Richmond (B.C.) Peace Chinese Mennonite Church since last September. The congregation worships in Cantonese and meets in the building of Peace Mennonite Church. Wong received a master of ministry and leadership degree from Ambrose Seminary in Calgary. He previously served at Surrey (B.C.) Chinese Baptist Church from 2012 to 2017. He is married to Phyllis Chung and has two children: Sarah and Philip.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN



Pastoral transitions in Saskatchewan

• **ANDREA ENNS-GOODING** has been hired by Zoar Mennonite Church in Waldheim as its full-time pastor. She served most recently as program director at Shekinah Retreat Centre, also in Waldheim. She has a bachelor of arts degree, with a music major and theological studies minor, from Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

• **LOIS SIEMENS** has been hired as spiritual care coordinator at Bethany Manor, a Saskatoon seniors housing complex established by 12 Saskatchewan Mennonite congregations and owned and operated by Saskatoon Mennonite Care Services Inc. She holds a master of divinity degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Most recently, she served as pastor of Superb Mennonite in Kerrobert, Sask.

—BY DONNA SCHULZ



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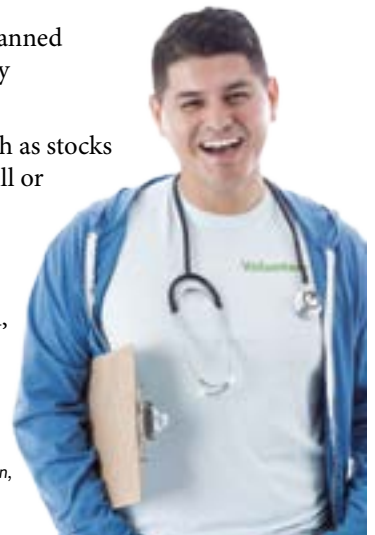
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Giving the bucket list a 'deeper' meaning

MC Saskatchewan begins yearlong focus on spirituality

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SWIFT CURRENT, SASK.

Deepening. The word resonated throughout Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's 2018 annual delegate sessions.

While a budget and elections were most definitely on the table, delegates at the March 9 and 10 sessions also witnessed the culmination of the yearlong Refresh, Refocus, Renew process, in which the regional church engaged consultant Betty Pries to help them set a course for the future.

Speaking at Zion Mennonite Church in Swift Current, Pries reflected on Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan. After volunteers presented the story dramatically, she asked her audience, "With whom do we identify?"

Many identify with the Samaritan, and while it's good to aspire to this level of compassion and generosity, privileged western readers may be missing the point of the story, she suggested. "By identifying

with the Samaritan, we come out as heroes," said Pries. "What happens when we see ourselves as people who save others rather than those who need saving?"

Alternatively, she challenged her audience to identify with the wounded man, and to see the Samaritan as a Christ figure. Perhaps when Jesus told the first hearers of the parable to "go and do likewise," he was really saying, "Go and allow yourself to be vulnerable, to be cared for by someone who is distasteful to you. Go and allow yourself to be cared for and transformed by me," she said.

"What would it mean for MC Saskatchewan to become like this?" she asked before urging her audience to "get in touch with your vulnerability, your brokenness. Recognize Jesus in people you dislike. Allow yourself to be healed by God's great love." But at the same time, she said, "Become like the Samaritan. Look after those in need of healing."

Both interpretations are needed, according to Pries. "MC Saskatchewan longs to be transformed and to be an instrument of transformation in the world," she said. "To love God with heart, soul and mind allows us to be transformed by God, and to love our neighbour as our self is to allow God's love to transform the world through us."

During the March 10 morning session, Pries looked back on the Refresh, Refocus, Renew process. She cited author Frederick Buechner, who said, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

The world's deep hunger, she said, is profound loneliness and longing to belong. It is a yearning for inner rest and a desire for meaning. By contrast, the church's deep gladness is a sense of meaning, purpose and belonging. "We believe in a God to whom we belong and in whom we also belong to one another," she said.

MC Saskatchewan delegates approve budget

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SWIFT CURRENT, SASK.

Delegates approved a budget of just over \$605,000 at Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's annual delegate sessions, held March 9 and 10 at Zion Mennonite Church.

New items include \$127,000 designated for the nationwide church, \$50,000 for Canadian Mennonite University and \$10,000 for Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Thanks to a bequest, the regional church ended 2017 with a surplus of just under \$100,000. The surplus will replenish the church's reserve fund, which had been depleted in recent years.

Delegates also approved the Youth Farm Bible Camp's plans to build a year-round riding arena to further its horse program. The arena is expected to cost \$285,000, but the camp hopes to have half of that amount raised before construction begins this summer.

Moderator Ken Warkentin of Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon is stepping down after serving one term. Deputy moderator Terry Stefaniuk of Osler Mennonite Church will move into the moderator's role, while Sharon Schultz of Eyebrow Mennonite Church will assume the role of deputy moderator.



Friends or foes? Visiting regional church executive ministers Tim Wiebe-Neufeld (MC Alberta) and David Martin (MC Eastern Canada) are part of a band of robbers attacking an innocent traveller, played by Ben Martens Bartel, during a dramatic reading of Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan.

If Buechner's statement is indeed true, she said that "MC Saskatchewan's deep gladness and the world's deep hunger [represent] a profound missional moment, both in our pews and in our world."

The Refresh, Refocus, Renew process began last March with a survey asking members to share what MC Saskatchewan means to them.

In April, members of the regional church's 28 congregations met with Pries to engage the survey results and ponder what it means to be the church in the 21st century.

During the summer months, congregations entered a season of listening and prayer, seeking God's direction for their regional church body.

At a second gathering last September, participants discerned together that God is calling MC Saskatchewan in three specific areas. The Refresh, Refocus, Renew reference group eventually articulated these three callings as:

- **DEEPENING** our walk with Christ.
- **DEEPENING** our walk with each other.
- **DEEPENING** our walk with our neighbours.

The regional church will spend the next three years implementing these three themes, one theme each year, in ways that will engage individuals, committees, congregations and the whole of MC Saskatchewan in various ways.

For Year One (2018) the regional church will focus on "Deepening our walk with Christ." The reference group is offering members suggestions in the form of two bucket lists. Bucket No. 1 contains ideas that require less energy, while Bucket No. 2 contains ideas that demand greater energy. Members will be encouraged to choose items from each list and to evaluate their experiences after six months. ☘

For more photos, visit canadianmennonite.org/2018-sask-ads.



☘ Briefly noted

Haka Chin translation of *Confession of Faith* blessed, sent to Myanmar

KITCHENER, ONT. — Forty-five people, including Mennonite Church Eastern Canada pastors, congregational leaders and staff, along with many members of Chin Christian Church, gathered for the Feb. 13 blessing of the Haka Chin translation of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* at 50 Kent Avenue. The blessing—which had everyone in attendance praying audibly at the same time—took place just hours before copies were taken to the Chin state in Myanmar by Pastor Yoel Masyawong of Grace Lao Mennonite Church in Kitchener, and Jehu Lianching of Myanmar Missions International and a former pastor of the Kitchener Chin congregation. Distribution of the *Confession* took place over the last two weeks in February while the two pastors preached and taught in Southeast Asia. Translated by Cung Bik Lian, a member of Chin Christian Church, and edited by Lianching, the project was overseen by Lisa Williams, MC Eastern Canada's director of communications. At the celebration, Lianching said he hopes to get the *Confession* into the hands of as many Chin as possible, since he believes it contains important lessons for them to grow in Jesus.

—**STORY AND PHOTO**
BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Jehu Lianching, left, is thanked by Brian Bauman, MC Eastern Canada's missions minister, for editing the Haka Chin translation of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*.*



Psalms of lament in times of violence

Don E. Saliers delivers Sawatzky Visiting Scholar Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

What do we do with Psalm 137? While “Sing us one of your songs of Zion” (verse 3) rings in Christian minds as a sign of deep grief, the accompanying “Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!” (verse 9) strikes most as exceedingly difficult.

Don E. Saliers, currently theologian-in-residence at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Ga., gave the 2018 Conrad Grebel University College Sawatzky Visiting Scholar Lecture on Feb. 15, speaking of the absence of these and other difficult words from Christian liturgy and the lectionary.

An accomplished theologian, liturgist and musician, Saliers led the audience in singing some difficult psalms and noted that when the church fails to sing them, it loses a focus on lament and on the reality of life. Fully two-thirds of the Psalms are of lament and complaint, he said. “How shall we pray to

God with our hearts aching?” he asked, if the church skirts around these difficult words.

His focus was not on simple grief, but the lament of facing injustice in the world near at hand and far away. Speaking just after the killing of 17 students and staff at a Florida high school, and while wars of rape and pillage rage in many countries, he encouraged the audience to “wrestle with the psalms, again and again.”

“Scripture lies in wait for us,” was his frequent refrain, suggesting that if the church regularly used the Psalms, including those of lament and complaint, it would have more of a heart for the wounded and suffering within its walls and around the world.

He also noted, though, that while many psalms complain and lament, many of those same psalms contain the memory of God having been at work in the past. These verses of memory respond to the question, “Will I

have hope again?” with a resounding “Yes!”

But, not all psalms include a resolution, he said, reminding the church that not all problems are resolved, putting to shame the insistence of the “prosperity gospel” preachers and their facile solutions and healings.

While some spiritualize the calls for vengeance in psalms 137 and 139, others, like hymnist John Bell of the Iona Community in Scotland, are using them to keep their hearts open to the suffering in the world. ❧

Staff change

New MCC Ontario executive director appointed

• **JOHN HEAD** has been appointed as the new executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, effective immediately. He replaces Rick Cober Bauman, who transitioned to executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Canada last fall. In 2014, Head came to MCC Ontario as associate executive director, focussing on operations. Since the departure of Cober Bauman last fall, he has served as interim executive director. He brings to the role a deep faith and vast experience in organizational leadership that has been well demonstrated during his time at MCC Ontario, and especially evident over the past few months. Prior to his current role, he held various senior finance and human resources roles in private industry while serving as elder and home church leader at The Meeting House, a Be In Christ congregation, and voluntary treasurer of a non-profit organization. “I am honoured to have been selected,” Head says. “I’m eager to get started officially and continue to learn more about MCC. I look forward to supporting staff and meeting the many people who help make our work so meaningful, and our many generous supporters.”

—MCC Ontario



Don E. Saliers, right, discusses his 2018 Rodney and Lorna Sawatzky Visiting Scholar Lecture, ‘Psalms in a difficult time: Rhythms of lament and doxology,’ with Glenn Brubacher, a retired pastor and counsellor, on Feb. 15 at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

GOD AT WORK IN US

VIEWPOINT

Evangelical social justice

Oscar Romero's message for Mennonites

WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

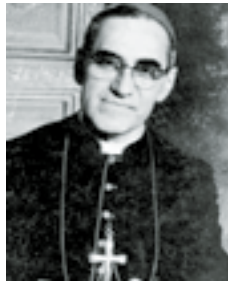
I find the Catholic process of declaring saints un-Anabaptist and weird—especially the part about verifying miracles—but the Vatican's latest candidate for sainthood is someone who has shaped my own Mennonite faith.

In February 1977, the established powers in El Salvador, a nation of death squads and deep church-state-oligarchy ties, settled on Oscar Romero as a safe choice for Archbishop of San Salvador, leader of the Catholic Church in that country. Romero was reserved, scholarly and not given to liberation theology. As the poor knew too well, he was status quo.

Until the status quo became spiritually untenable for him. Less than a month into Romero's time as archbishop, Rutilio Grande, a priest and friend of his, was shot along with two peasants travelling with him. Grande stood with the poor who were organizing against big landholders, and the powerful didn't like it. Romero had not been particularly sympathetic to Grande's views, but a fellow priest and two other members of his flock had been assassinated.

Grande and the two peasants are now buried between the front pew and the pulpit in the tiny church in the village of El Paisnal. In 2003, I visited the quiet church, hosted by Grande's nephew, the priest there at the time. Beside the road outside the village, a monument to the three martyrs sits nestled in a sugar cane field.

I had been reading about Romero while backpacking through El Salvador. I



**Oscar Romero,
Archbishop of San
Salvador**

doubled back, compelled by my reading, to visit sites of importance in his life.

After the death of Grande, Romero went directly to the countryside, where he conducted a funeral mass that night. He quoted Jesus: *"Whatever you did to the least of these, you did to me."*

There, among the grieved peasants, the simple people of his flock, began his conversion and his own path to

martyrdom. He was changed not by politics or theological argument, but by the suffering poor. From that day on, he walked with the poor. He carried their pain and hopes in his heart.

He declared that the following Sunday there would be only one mass held in the whole country to commemorate Grande. The powers bristled.

At that mass, broadcast nationwide by radio, Romero said, "The one who attacks one of my priests, attacks me." But most of the sermon was pastoral, offering words of solace, calling the church to unity and calling all to faith in "the one force that can save: Jesus who speaks to us about true liberation."

Romero did not become a predictable leftist ranter. At the funeral mass, and later, he admonished "social movements," stating that their efforts would be "feeble, revolutionary, passing, violent," if they did not understand the centrality of love and the need for conversion of hearts.

For the next three years, Romero preached, travelled the country and dealt with bitter tension within the church. As violence increased, each Sunday he

would read the names of those killed and "disappeared" that week.

He addressed the elites and right-wing perpetrators of violence in a pastoral voice and with uncommon confidence: "Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, especially those of you who hate me . . . you who have hands stained with murder, with torture, with atrocity, with injustice—be converted. I love you deeply."

He also addressed the leftist guerrillas and their sympathizers, continually calling them to renounce violence and to not get lost in purely temporal goals.

He was at once intensely political—bringing the church into the concrete realities of history—and resolutely apolitical, refusing to align with interests vying for worldly power. "Hope is not found," he proclaimed, "in money and power—neither on the left nor on the right."

He confessed his weaknesses: "How timid I have felt before you," he said to those gathered in the cathedral. He called people to prayer. He urged everyone, including mothers whose children had been "disappeared," not to hate.

And he expressed and demonstrated his unbounded pastoral devotion to the poor, although he admonished them, too, for instance, not to indulge in "drink" and "bad habits."

On March 24, 1980, an armed man silently entered the back doors of the chapel on the grounds of the San Salvador hospital where Romero lived. As Romero concluded his sermon, the assassin fired and killed the archbishop.

Only two weeks earlier, Romero had said to a reporter: "I have often been threatened with death. If they kill me, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people. . . . I offer my blood to God for the redemption and resurrection of El Salvador."

Travelling through rural El Salvador, I saw countless murals of Romero, many accompanied by this quote: "The beloved archbishop died, but he so clearly lives on, having nurtured during his life that which no bullet can touch." A saint indeed. ☿

For more information and photos, visit canadianmennonite.org/saint-romero.



ARTBEAT

'That's the Spirit'

Carolyn Good featured in WalterFedy art show

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

KITCHENER, ONT.

Talking birds, paper and rose petal beads, walking jewellery, found-art sculptures. With these and other works, Carolyn Good's recent show at the WalterFedy-Architecture, Engineering, Construction offices on Queen Street in Kitchener showed off her Mennonite roots of reusing and recycling.

Good, a member of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, has long worked with paper beads strung together with wire to make brooches. Now her creations walk or are lit up in dioramas enclosed in found filing drawers.

Birds made of found materials are preparing to speak of the environment in

an upcoming online journal of art, with voices such as that of Fred Redekop, pastor of senior ministry at Poole Mennonite Church, near Milverton, Ont.

Good has been creating art her whole life, having designed a quilt with her grandmother as a youth and eventually completing a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pa. ❧

To learn more about the artist, visit anyflip.com/liss/ucmb.



Paper bead and found materials walk across the table, or form birds that will talk.




Paper and rose petal beads form this walking sculpture.



Not your grandmother's apple doll, this one is doing yoga to stay supple.



Carolyn Good 'lights up' one of her sculptures of found materials and paper beads.



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The Anthropocene revisited

Annemarie Rogalsky contemplates art in the human landscape

Story and Photos by *Canadian Mennonite*
HARRISTON, ONT.

Annemarie Rogalsky, a member of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., had a solo show of her landscapes at the Minto Gallery in Harriston during the month of February. Of her images, she says:

“I am interested in nature that is accessible to everyone. That is, nature in the city or the bits of parkland and wilderness we set aside within driving distance of it. Painting is a way of reflecting on nature and how we humans are part of it and interact with it to live.

“What I paint and how I paint are both important to me. Slowly building up the paint stroke by stroke complements the narrative the painting tells. It helps me see that there is a rhythm to being alive.



Annemarie Rogalsky presents her artist's statement at the opening of her solo show 'The Anthropocene Revisited' at the Minto Gallery in Harriston, Ont., on Feb. 4.

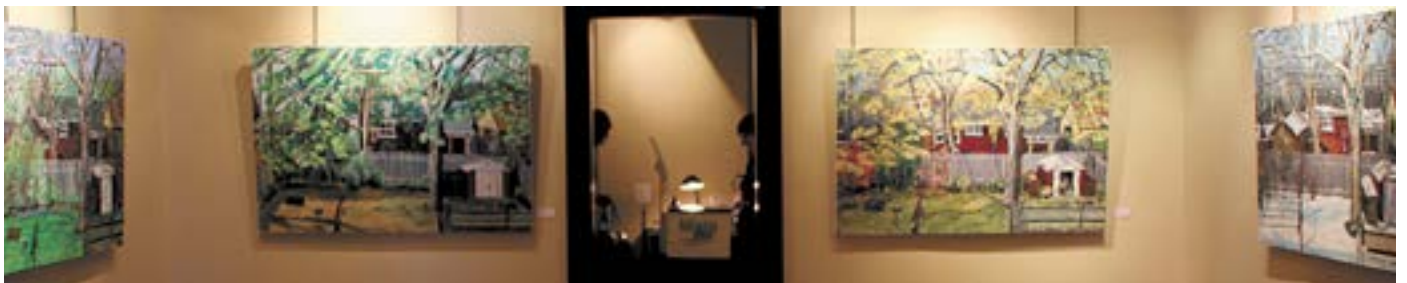
“A few of my paintings are reflections of our contemporary human culture of technology and image within image. Can we store nature, control it and shape it? Is it ours to manipulate as we see fit? Do women and girls have a voice on how we use and nurture nature? Nature nurtures us. Will we have it in the future?”

“The seasons come and go, and repeat in a cycle. So do our lives. We have times of great achievement. We have times of rejuvenation and times of decline. There are times when what we do is very fruitful and times when we kind of harvest what we set in motion long ago. There are times when life feels cold and fallow. We may even feel useless and hopeless that anything we do is of any worth.

“So I paint in a slow stroke-by-stroke way, building up the forms on the canvas. . . . The hope is that, looking at the images I produce, it produces thoughtfulness and greater creativity and hopefulness in the lives of those who come to see my art.”



'Death and Life.' A stump rotting away at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp speaks of a life well lived and a death creating new life.



Annemarie Rogalsky's Waterloo 'Hinterland' paintings, a four-season cycle, at her solo show 'The Anthropocene Revisited' at the Minto Gallery in Harriston, Ont., in February.



'Hope Realized.' This painting focusses on a swamp at Rondeau Provincial Park in southern Ontario. Of no intrinsic value, it harbours the only Canadian nesting site of the Prothonotary warbler. Reflecting on this scene begs the question about hierarchies of values.



'The Case for Persons.' This painting commemorates the 1929 British Privy Council decision that, in spite of male wording in the British North America Act, women were indeed persons.

Gospel songs with an edge

Jess Reimer and Jeremy Hamm explore faith and doubt on *Down the Valley*

BY AARON EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Jess Reimer recalls the first time a friend told her about Jeremy Hamm, the man who would become her musical partner and husband.

"I remember being excited there was a guy who wasn't a senior citizen who was into bluegrass like me," she says.

When the two met in 2002, they connected immediately. "Within 10 minutes, we were playing bluegrass songs together," says Reimer. "We were smitten right away."

The most recent fruit of the duo's musical labour is *Down the Valley*, which they released last November.

Reimer wrote most of the 11 bluegrass-folk songs that appear on the album while living with Hamm and their three children in La Rivière, a small village in southern Manitoba's Pembina Valley.

On songs like "I Want to Believe" and "Knockin'," Reimer and Hamm—who attend Pembina Mennonite Fellowship, a

house church that's part of Mennonite Church Canada—explore their faith.

"Writing gospel is what I love," Reimer says. "I like to put an edge in my gospel songs."

On "I Want to Believe," Reimer expresses her desire for a stronger faith in the midst of her doubts. "I think a lot of people go through periods of feeling alone in their faith, or questioning it, or not quite knowing how to connect to it, and I think that has gone into my gospel songs," she says.

Her songwriting is also informed by the unconventional life she's lived—unconventional, at least, given the culture of the small, predominantly conservative Mennonite southern Manitoba city where she grew up.

"I've lived life to the fullest probably," she says. She's done a lot of travelling and had a child on her own prior to meeting Hamm.

Her father Doug is a retired University



PHOTO COURTESY OF JESS REIMER

Doug Reimer, left, Jeremy Hamm, Tim Osmond and Jess Reimer perform at Winnipeg's Times Change(d) High & Lonesome Club.

of Manitoba English professor who taught Reimer and her brothers to think for themselves.

When Reimer was a teenager, she came home from a youth event, upset because the speaker had said that rock music like U2 is part of the occult. "Don't worry," her father told her. "There's no such thing as hell."

“I grew up with this very different, not oppressive relationship with religion,” she says. “That has shaped all my perspectives, and I think there’s a place for that.”

Reimer has always had a special relationship with her father. The two used to perform together as the Doug and Jess Band. He also appeared on Reimer’s two solo albums, 2010’s *Sweet Darling and Sorrow* and 2014’s *The Nightjar and the Garden*, the latter of which was produced by Bob
(Continued on page 25)



YOUTUBE PHOTO
 Jeremy Hamm and Jess Reimer have been playing music together for more than 15 years.

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(Continued from page 24)

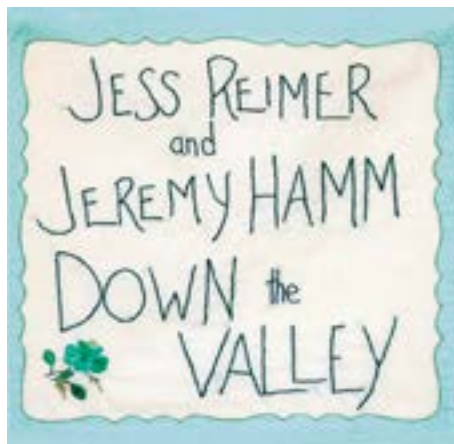
Wiseman, a founding member of Blue Rodeo.

“In any kind of family band, the genetics make it so that your voices work together in a way that’s pretty rare,” Reimer says. “Singing with my dad is easy. It’s like sleeping or breathing.”

Although Reimer and Hamm have toured across North America in the past, they are looking forward to keeping things local for the foreseeable future. She works part-time playing music for patients in a local hospital and also teaches English as an additional language. She and Hamm are currently in the process of moving their family to Winnipeg, where Hamm, a luthier, recently moved his business.

They have a show scheduled for May 12 at the Krahn Barn in Neuberghthal, Man., and they hope to perform at a few folk festivals in southern Manitoba this summer.

“And I want to make another bluegrass record,” Reimer says. “So, we’ll just keep doing what we’re doing.”



- Listen to Down the Valley at jessreimer1.bandcamp.com.
- Visit facebook.com/jessreimer.
- Watch Reimer and Hamm perform on YouTube at bit.ly/down-the-valley.



ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

MCC may allow exception to ‘lifestyle expectations’

The boards of Mennonite Central Committee Canada and U.S. reviewed their current policy on LGBTQ personnel, and a petition calls for an update.

canadianmennonite.org/mcc-lifestyle-expectations



Scholars uncover hidden stories of the Holocaust

A report on the recent conference on Mennonites and the Holocaust, held at Bethel College, Kansas.

canadianmennonite.org/holocaust-stories



Canadian Mennonites and Anglicans meet for first dialogue

MC Canada leaders and lay people met with their Anglican counterparts to share perspectives and build relationships.

canadianmennonite.org/mennonites-anglicans



AMBS conference models practices for sustaining faith and hope

“For such a time as this.” Pastors and leaders heard words of encouragement to help sustain faith while facing adversity.

canadianmennonite.org/ambs-sustaining-hope



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PROMOTING *Peace Innovation*

Kindred Credit Union (Kindred) is excited to sponsor this four-part series featuring the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement (CPA). This first segment highlights the Peace Innovators Scholarship & Mentoring Program, one way in which the CPA is collaboratively and creatively advancing peace and involving community members in its unique approaches to peacebuilding. In future segments, we will showcase the CPA's engagement with peacemaking in the arts, social innovation, and research.

The shared convictions of global Anabaptists express beliefs that moved Kindred's founders to form a credit union with a radical vision for expanding mutual aid. Living out that vision today motivates us to connect values and faith with finances inspiring peaceful, just, and prosperous communities.

One of the ways we live out our purpose is through our partnership with the **KINDRED CREDIT UNION CENTRE FOR PEACE ADVANCEMENT** at Conrad Grebel University College, which is affiliated with the University of Waterloo. The CPA is a dynamic space on the university campus, home to peace-oriented innovators, and established organizations from the region's vibrant peacebuilding field. The CPA stands as a bridge between campus and community, academics and practice, and faith and justice.

For Kindred, inspiring peaceful communities means building healthy relationships through reconciliation, restoration, creation care, and building understanding locally and cross-culturally. The **PEACE INNOVATORS SCHOLARSHIP & MENTORING PROGRAM** is an example of a unique program that reflects this element of Kindred's purpose.



The Peace Innovators Scholarship & Mentoring Program is an initiative for grade 12 students who are passionate about working for peace. This program is supported through a partnership that includes Kindred, the CPA, and The Ripple Effect Education (TREE), a member of the CPA's Epp Peace Incubator program.

POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

Lena Schreyer (pictured) from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate is leading one of the Peace Innovators' inaugural projects. She is exploring ways to tap into the power of positive thinking to harness personal passion and promote self-acceptance. Working within the student community at Rockway, Lena is building her organizational and public speaking skills while advancing her project's mission. Learn more at beecuz.org.



A Spring Showcase will be held at Conrad Grebel University College on May 5, bringing together 2018 Peace Innovators participants, mentors, partners, and active peace-focused community members.

Students who will be entering grade 12 in the fall are invited to apply for the 2019 Peace Innovators Scholarship & Mentoring Program. Applications will be accepted until May 18. Please get in touch to learn more about this exciting opportunity!
web: uwaterloo.ca/centre-peace-advancement/peace-innovators
email: tre.education@uwaterloo.ca

A biblical call—to justice and peacebuilding

Jessica Reesor Rempel's faith journey has led her to work with young people on the fringes of faith

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Jessica Reesor Rempel enjoys bringing people together and helping them find meaning.

She recalls an incident just before Christmas a few years ago, when she was thinking about going into ministry. She was home with her siblings and their partners on the family farm in Markham, Ont., and everyone was about to go for a walk. She suggested they bring along a lantern, saying that it would both light the way and be symbolic of Jesus Christ bringing light into a dark world.

When her sister teased her, saying, "Stop making everything so meaningful," she had an epiphany.

'I thought, oh yeah, that's what I feel God calling me to do: to point out the meaning that exists in everything, and to support and empower people as they go deeper into what it means to be alive.'
(Jessica Reesor Rempel)

"I thought, oh yeah, that's what I feel God calling me to do: to point out the meaning that exists in everything, and to support and empower people as they go deeper into what it means to be alive," Reesor Rempel says.

Today, she is the co-pastor with Pastors in Exile (PiE), a non-profit organization that bills itself as an Anabaptist-rooted movement connecting young people in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., and the surrounding area "with vibrant faith



experiences outside and inside of church walls."

For her, working with PiE is an expression of desire to work for peace and justice—a desire the 29-year-old has had for many years. A childhood experience that had a great impact on her faith journey is when her father, a farmer, and her mother, a social worker, moved the family to Haiti for a three-year term with Mennonite Central Committee. The Gulf War was happening at the time.

"That really came out of their belief in . . .

nonviolence," she says. "They thought that, as pacifists, if we really believe in peace, we can't stay on our farm and pray for it. We have to do something concretely."

"That made the Bible come alive for us," she adds. "[My parents] were very clear that they were there to live out the gospel."

The impact of the family's time in Haiti stayed with her as she moved into her teen years. She says she was acutely aware that "the world was a place where poverty and

(Continued on page 28)



PHOTO BY JOHN REMPEL

Jessica Reesor Rempel co-founded Pastors in Exile in 2015.



PHOTO BY JACQUIE REIMER

Jessica Reesor Rempel leads a session at PiE's recent Winter Camp for Grown-ups' retreat.



PHOTO BY DAVE KLASSEN

'I don't think anyone else has a job quite like this,' says Jessica Reesor Rempel, right, pictured with PiE co-founder Chris Brnjas, left, and Tamara Shantz, centre, PiE's current pastor.



PHOTO BY JOHN REMPEL

Jessica Reesor Rempel lives in Kitchener, Ont., with her husband Steven and their daughter Anna Julian.



PHOTO BY DAVE KLASSEN

Participants worship in Victoria Park in Kitchener, Ont., at an Easter sunrise service organized by PiE.



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Josh Heida first began editing films as a high school student in Kenora, Ont.

(Continued from page 27)

injustice and oppression existed.” She felt compelled to learn about different parts of the world. “A really powerful scripture for me in my teen years was this idea of Jesus calling Peter to [step] outside the boat. I really felt that call to get out of my comfort zone in terms of my faith.”

She has travelled to places like Zimbabwe and Guatemala, where she saw that those facing problems in other parts of the world were people just like her. “It helped me see the privilege I have, and to feel that call—which I feel is a biblical call—to justice and peacebuilding.”

After earning a bachelor’s degree in peace and conflict studies at the University of Waterloo, Reesor Rempel began working at a shelter for women and trans folk. “It was in that space that I first encountered, in some ways, the depths of poverty and oppression that people in my own community face,” she says.

She co-founded PiE with Chris Brnjas in 2015 after earning a master of divinity degree from Emmanuel College at the Toronto School of Theology. PiE seeks to address some of the injustice and oppression that exists in Waterloo Region. It’s a vibrant ministry that currently facilitates a watershed discipleship group, a feminist Bible study, a support group for LGBTQ persons, and a contemplative group for men wishing to reflect on masculinity and the #MeToo movement.

PiE recently held its third annual Winter Camp for Grown-ups retreat and organized a workshop for young adults

interested in learning how to preach, and will offer a variety of Holy Week events, including an Easter sunrise service.

Reesor Rempel and PiE’s other pastor, Tamara Shantz, provide spiritual care for those connected with PiE, and they facilitate a community blog at pastorsinexile.org/blog, where young adults can express their thoughts about faith.

“I don’t think anyone else has a job quite like this,” Reesor Rempel says. “I really like how it connects my life’s journey, being so passionate about justice and living out the gospel in these practical ways, as well as my vocation, which is to draw people together to have meaningful moments, to find God in the mundaneness.”

She enjoys working in church contexts and says that many churches in Waterloo Region are doing important social justice work. For now, though, she is happy working with an organization that is not directly located within the church’s walls, one that young adults who are questioning their faith and where they fit in can find refuge.

“[PiE] can be that in-between space to hold them where they are at in their journey and also look forward to how they might incorporate into another church [and] intergenerational context moving forward.”

She offers a word of encouragement to young people who are trying to figure out if they still fit into church, or if the Christian faith is for them: “Keep asking [questions]. Keep looking for people and contexts where you belong and where you’re accepted for who you are.” ☞

Christian media production done right

Josh Heida talks about his work as an editor on the new documentary, The Fantasy Makers

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

When *The Fantasy Makers*, a new documentary, premiered at Winnipeg’s Real to Reel Film Festival last

month, the credits included the name of a young Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) student: Josh Heida.

Heida, 24, worked as an assistant editor on the documentary that explores the impact fantasy pioneers C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and George MacDonald had on popular culture. Having grown up in Kenora, a small city in northwestern Ontario, he first got involved with the documentary 11 months ago when he started an internship at Refuge 31, the company that produced the film.

David Balzer, a professor at CMU, helped arrange the four-month internship with Andrew Wall, co-owner of Refuge 31 and the writer/director of *The Fantasy Makers*. When the internship ended, Wall hired Heida to stay on as a contract worker.

"It's really good," says Heida, who graduates next month with a bachelor's degree in communications and media. "I have lots of freedom to kind of tackle the work the way I want to."

It's been especially meaningful for him, because prior to studying at CMU he had a few negative experiences in the media industry. After high school, he enrolled in a film production program at a college in northwestern Ontario, but left after a-year-and-a-half because, he says, he had trouble fitting in with the culture of the program.

He spent the following year working full-time at a small TV station in his hometown, where he shot and edited video, and directed a live morning show. The job provided valuable learning opportunities, but ultimately Heida's time at the station ended with a disagreement over pay.

"That kind of soured me on the whole media industry for a while," he says, adding that his experience at Refuge 31—which previously produced the documentaries *The Last Objectors* and *Burning Ember: The Steve Bell Journey*—has been different. "Working for Andrew, I feel like there's a mutual respect and trust between the both of us as far as work, and it feels good to be working on projects that actually say something as well."

Heida doesn't separate his faith from his work, and he wants to be involved in media production that is meaningful.

He points to Focus on the Family and Pure Flix, the television and film studio behind the *God's Not Dead* film series, as examples of production companies that are doing it wrong. "Having [your] kid

growing up watching Pure Flix is probably more dangerous than having them watch violent or explicit content," he says.

Most Christian media sacrifices good storytelling in favour of hitting people over the head with a positive message, he says. Good films, on the other hand, speak a common truth to a broad audience. They say something rather than simply affirming the viewer's stereotypes and prejudices.

So who are the Christian creators producing content that Heida respects?

"The people who are getting it right generally don't label what they do as 'Christian media,'" he says. "[They are] people who let their faith inform what they're doing, and it's reflected in the work without closing it off to everybody but a select group."

He points to Lewis, Tolkien and MacDonald as examples. All three were committed Christians who made important contributions to popular culture through fiction like *The Chronicles of Narnia* series of books, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *Phantastes*, respectively.

"Narnia's a little more allegorical and Christian-themed than *The Lord of the Rings*, but both of them hold messages that are true . . . that are accessible not only to Christians, but the world at large," he says. "Rather than retreating from culture, [their work] engages with it. It steps up to the plate rather than quitting the team and forming its own league."

The Fantasy Makers wasn't quite finished when it premiered at the Real to Reel Film Festival, so Wall, Heida and their colleagues are busy completing it and preparing it for release. Heida encourages people to visit refuge31.com for updates.

The film features interviews with scholars, writers, filmmakers and fantasy lovers from around the world, and he says people will learn a lot from the film.

"Hearing [the interview subjects] talk about how many things influenced the writings of works like *The Lord of the Rings* and *Narnia*, and how deeply rooted they were in a larger tradition of fantasy literature that came before them . . . [is] really interesting," Heida says. "There's a lot more behind these stories than most people realize in terms of influences and history." ❧



PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY OF JOSH HEIDA
Jon Ted Wynne portrays C.S. Lewis in a scene from The Fantasy Makers.



The Fantasy Makers features an interview with English poet, priest and scholar Malcolm Guite.

Calendar

British Columbia

April 14: Reading the Bible conference, at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
May 5: Women's Inspirational Day, location and time to be announced.

Alberta

April 28: Canadian Mennonite benefit concert by the Janzen Boys and Art Koop, at the Cardell Theatre, Calgary, at 7 p.m. To reserve seats, email office@trinity.mennonitechurch.ab.ca.
June 1-2: MCC Alberta charity auction and sale, in Didsbury. For more information, visit mccreliefsale.com.
June 8-10: MC Alberta women's retreat at Sunnyside Retreat Centre, Sylvan Lake. Speaker: Rachel Miller Jacobs of AMBS. Theme: "Ordinary

forgiveness. To register after April 1, visit mcawomen.com.

June 30-July 1: Springridge Mennonite Church, Pincher Creek, is celebrating its 90th anniversary. All past and present congregants are invited. RSVP to delwillms@gmail.com. For more information, visit springridgemennonitechurch.ab.ca.

Saskatchewan

April 11: Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham, is serving a waffle supper, from 5 to 7 p.m.
April 13: The Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan presents "And When They Shall Ask," a docu-drama about the Mennonite sojourn in Russia from 1788 until the present, at Bethany Fellowship Centre, Saskatoon, at 7 p.m.
April 22: Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham, will hold its final service in the 1910 building, in preparation for its

move to a new one, at 2 p.m., followed by lunch.

April 28: Spring Banquet in the Wood fundraiser for Parkland Restorative Justice, at 6 p.m. at the Prince Albert Wildlife Federation. For more information, email heather@parklandrj.com.

Manitoba

April 21: CMU spring choral concert, in the Loewen Athletic Centre, at 7 p.m.
April 28: Women's retreat at Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Theme: "Resilience Road: Solidarity, steps and strategies for travelling well." Speaker: Moira Somers. For more information, email eprempel@gmail.com.
April 28,29: Faith and Life Women's Chorus and Male Choir present their spring concert, Send Forth Thy Spirit; (28) at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.; (29) at Steinbach Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

May 11: Opening of an exhibit by Gabriella Aguerro at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit gallery.mennonitechurch.ca.

May 14: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate bursary banquet, at the Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg. For more information, visit westgatemennonite.ca.

May 30: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate junior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

May 31: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate senior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Aug. 21: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual fundraising golf tournament, at Bridges Golf Course, Starbuck. For more information, visit westgatemennonite.ca.

Ontario

Until April 13: Conrad Grebel University College's Peace and Conflict Studies program celebrates

UpComing

MCC encourages alumni reunions in 2020

Sometimes you just need to relive the old stories with people who have been there. The centennial year of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in 2020 could be a good time to connect with other people who served in the same country or same area of the world as you did. To encourage planners, MCC offers a reduced rate for MCC alumni reunions in 2020 at MCC's Welcoming Place and guest houses in Akron, Pa. The Welcoming Place has large and small meeting rooms, and the guest houses have individual rooms and baths that surround a central social space. MCC also can assist planners with contact information of alumni who have given permission to share that information. In addition, MCC can suggest MCC speakers and provide reports on current MCC work. For more information, including rates, email alumni@mcc.org.
 —Mennonite Central Committee



MCC PHOTO BY ANNA YODER

MCC alumni gathered at the Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale in Hutchinson for coffee and a time of fellowship. Pictured from left to right are three alumni who served in Bolivia and who attended the gathering: Ray Reimer (1976-78), Archie Schmidt (1968-70) and Jeanne Strausz (1970-74).

UpComing

New play to tackle sexual violence in the church

With the recent #MeToo movement having shed light on the pervasive nature of sexual harassment, assault and abuse, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, in partnership with Theatre of the Beat, hopes to foster this conversation in church communities across Canada this fall. "The faith community is called to take the lead on tough issues like this," says David Martin, MC Eastern Canada's executive minister. And as a social justice theatre company, Theatre of the Beat has never been one to shy away from tough topics. The working title for this new piece is #ChurchToo, an obvious nod to the #MeToo movement and a call for the church to be brave and honest in naming the widespread nature of abuse. The company is working with a collective of nine writers from across Canada and the U.S., each of whom will be tackling various themes in relation to the topic. The intention is that the breadth of experience coming from these diverse voices will help to address the depth of the themes. Theatre of the Beat will premiere the play this September in Kitchener, Ont., and is currently accepting bookings for the show across Canada from September to November at theatreofthebeat.ca.
 —Theatre of the Beat / MC Eastern Canada



its 40th anniversary with Beyond Essays: Approaching Peace Education Differently, an exhibit of art-based PACS assignments completed by students over the past decade.

Until May 2019: Sites of Nonresistance: Ontario Mennonites and the First World War exhibit of letters, photographs and documents from the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

April 7: Conscience Canada annual general meeting, at Conrad Grebel University College, at 3:30 p.m. Speaker: Tamara Lorincz. Topic: "The climate costs of Canada's new defence policy."

April 10: Kindred Credit Union annual general meeting, at Creekside Church, Waterloo; registration begins at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7 p.m.

April 13-15: Dinner theatre at Floradale Mennonite Church: "Family ties through thick and thin: The story of a family losing the older generation," by Barb Draper; (13,14) at 7:30 p.m.; (15) at 2:30 p.m. For dinner tickets, call the church at 519-669-2861.

April 20: Conrad Grebel University College's Peace and Conflict Studies program celebrates its 40th anniversary with "Pursuing peace: Stories from home and abroad," at the University of Waterloo's Federation Hall; alumni networking at 5:30 p.m., followed by a gala dinner at 6. Keynote speaker: Bob Rae, former Ontario premier. For more information, or to register, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/pacs-gala.

April 28: Pax Christi Chorale presents "The Creation" by Haydn, at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit paxchristichorale.org.

April 30: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale promotion dinner, at Bingeman's Marshall Hall, at 6:30 p.m. Speaker: Sarah Martin Mills, founder of Growing Hope Farms. Tickets available online at nhmrs.com.

April 30 or May 1: Spring seniors retreat, at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, with speaker Marianne Mellinger. Theme: "Green and full of sap." For more information, or to register, visit hiddenacres.ca.

May 4-6: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp spring work weekend. For more information, or to register, email the camp at fun@slmc.ca.

May 5: Menno Singers presents Come Joy and Singing, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m.

May 5,6: The Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their spring concert, "Beauty is God's Handwriting: (5) at UMEI, at 7:30 p.m.; (6) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For tickets, call UMEI at 519-326-7448.

May 12: "Paddle the Grand" fundraising event in support of Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, at 3 p.m. For more information, or to register, visit slmc.ca.

May 12: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp annual general meeting, at Wagler-Carr Farm in West Montrose, at 6 p.m. For more information, or to register, email the camp at fun@slmc.ca.

May 12: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp fundraising concert, featuring Rescue Junction and the Little Mannheim Band, at Mannheim Mennonite Church, Petersburg, at 7 p.m. For more information, call 519-634-5551.

May 18-20: Family camp at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, with special guests Bryan and Julie Moyer Suderman. For more information, or to register, visit slmc.ca.

May 25-26: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, at the New Hamburg fairgrounds. Featuring the largest charity quilt sale in Canada. For more information, visit nhmrs.com.

Nova Scotia

June 7-9: Mennonite Church Canada is looking to help sponsor women and men from across the nationwide church to attend this year's North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies' symposium, White Supremacy, Racial Conflict and Indigeneity: Toward Right Relationship, at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville. For those interested in attending, email Steve Heinrichs at sheinrichs@mennonitechurch.ca.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by email to calendar

calendar@mennonite.org.

For more Calendar listings online, visit canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



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Employment Opportunity



Employment opportunity
Lead Pastor

Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, is inviting applications for a **FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR**. Start time is 2018.

We are a congregation with approximately 200 in attendance for worship, and we seek a pastor to lead in growing people as intentional followers of Jesus and missional servants to our community. The pastor we seek will be committed to Anabaptist theology with strengths in leadership, evangelism through community engagement, preaching, teaching and pastoral care.

Inquiries, resumes and letters of interest may be directed to: pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca

To view the Pastoral Profile, visit <https://mcec.ca/jobs/lead-minister>

The search committee will review and process candidates as they come forward until the position is filled.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRACE KANG /

TEXT BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Grace Kang, artist-in-residence at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, spent the Lenten season creating an art installation for Palm Sunday. Kang's installation features a lot of hanging prints depicting many different kinds of feet, all surrounding a large ceramic artisanal bowl. The project is based on the theme of feet and foot washing. 'The most stripped down message is that everyone has a place in God's family, at God's table, no matter where your feet have been,' says Kang. 'I've often felt like a person on the margins, and the day I felt God tell me that there was a place for me at his table was one of the most profound moments of my life. I just want everyone to feel that with my installation.' The art was to be unveiled on Palm Sunday, March 25, because all the feet symbolize the people gathering to see Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey and the foot washing that happens with his disciples in the following week. Bethel Mennonite started its artist-in-residence program in 2016 to recognize and nurture the gifts of its congregants and to open up new ways of worship. Along with creating art, Kang is currently pursuing her master of Christian ministry degree at Canadian Mennonite University.

God at Work in the World Snapshots



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

At 105 years of age, Paula Dyck, left, a resident of Mennonite Nursing Homes in Rosthern, Sask., may be Canadian Mennonite's oldest subscriber. And although her eyesight no longer allows her to read the magazine on her own, she enjoys hearing her daughter, Velma Harder, read it to her. When asked why she likes to hear the stories, Dyck says, 'It's so important to know what's going on in the broader church,' adding, 'I enjoy when [my daughter and I] can discuss what we're reading.'