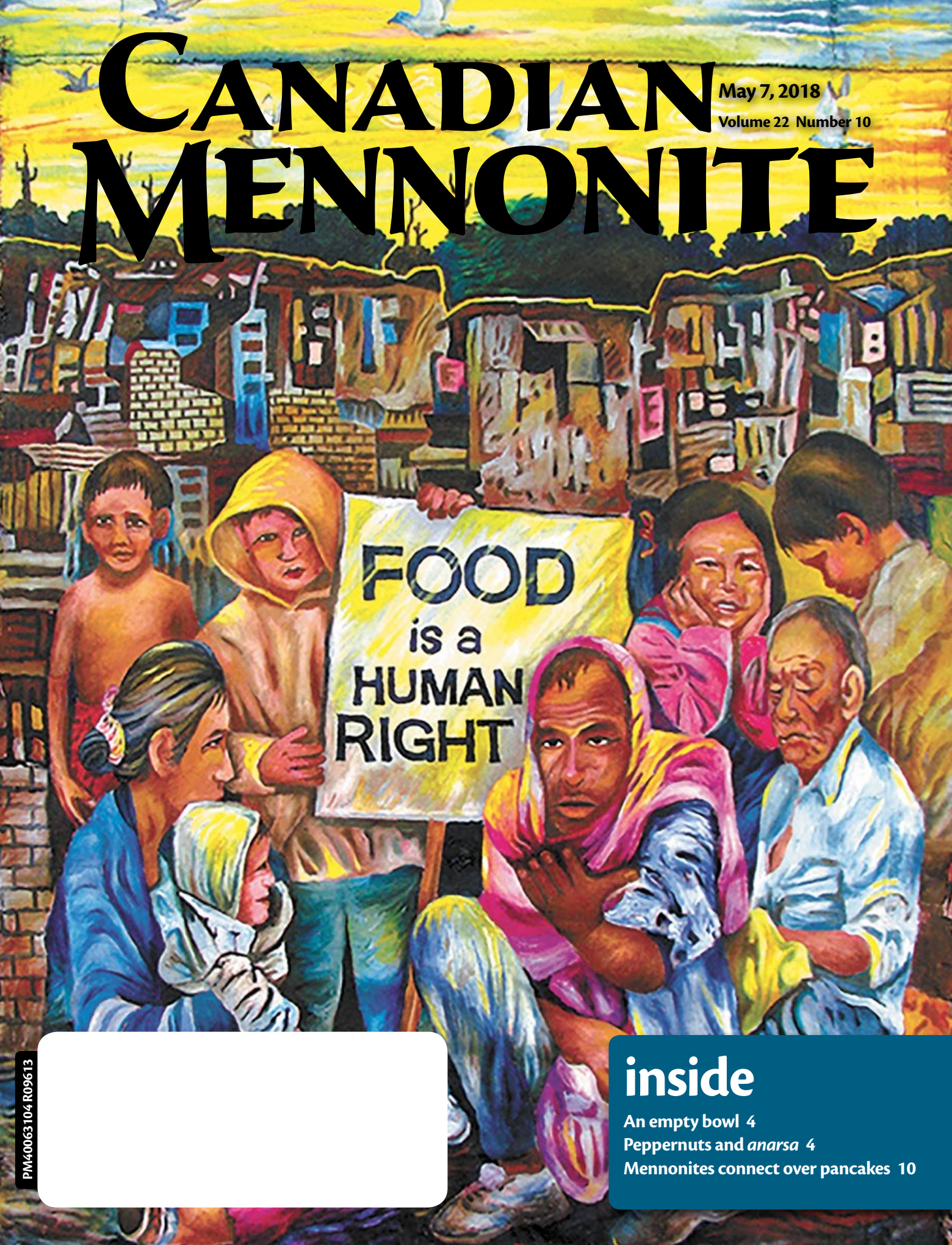


CANADIAN MENNONITE

May 7, 2018

Volume 22 Number 10



FOOD
is a
HUMAN
RIGHT

inside

An empty bowl 4

Peppernuts and *anarsa* 4

Mennonites connect over pancakes 10

EDITORIAL

Gifts of the table

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Recently, my husband and I sat with friends at a table in an Ethiopian restaurant. As we dipped pieces of *injera* (sourdough flatbread) into the tasty sauces, we reported on our lives: a new business, a new grandchild, past school experiences, current professional realities.

Consider what happens when people gather around the table:

- **WE EXPRESS** gratitude. The colours, textures and tastes of our food call us to thank the Creator for the fruits of the earth. We praise the cook and we ask God to “bless the hands that prepared this food.” At holiday meals, we gaze around the table, thankful for the love of gathered family and friends.
- **WE OFFER** and accept hospitality. Over the past several years, members of my congregation have been building friendships with people from the local Turkish community. This past Epiphany, they served us their traditional Noah’s pudding; our church shared Christmas cookies with them. The exchange of food was a way of saying, “I welcome you and want to be your friend.”
- **WE BUILD** and strengthen community. The church potluck table helps us get to know brothers and sisters in the church, beyond the casual greetings in the church foyer. As we eat, people of different generations and walks of life connect with each other. We make enough food to share so that guests who show up without a dish feel welcome to join us.



• **WE REMEMBER.** Early in our marriage, my spouse and I were invited to supper at the home of nearby acquaintances who served taco salad—a dish we had not encountered before. It was an evening of great conversation and the start of a long-lasting friendship. Whenever I eat taco salad, I think with fondness of those friends.

Jesus understood the power of a memorable meal, exemplified by the last supper he ate with his disciples. “Do this in remembrance of me,” he instructed them, as he distributed the bread and wine. Ever after that, the church has remembered the life, death and resurrection of Jesus through the communion table celebration.

• **WE RECEIVE** strength for the journey. In *Take This Bread*, Sara Miles tells the story of her coming to faith. An atheist, she walked into a church one Sunday and, on an impulse, accepted the bread and wine of communion. That act introduced her to the living Christ and to a welcoming faith community. Accepting the invitation to be a guest at Christ’s table launched her into organizing a food ministry for people of her city. Through the sharing of food, Sara identified her calling and gained strength to live it out.

In some mysterious way, communion becomes more than a morsel of bread and a swallow of grape juice. Sharing in those elements with other believers is an affirmation of our sometimes tenuous faith. Gathered at Christ’s table, we accept nourishment for our life of discipleship. “And we accept

bread at this table, broken and shared, a living sign. . . . This is the place where we can receive what we need to increase: God’s justice and God’s peace” (“What is This Place,” *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 1).

We live in in a time when differences threaten to divide the church; the theological positions we cling to and the boundaries we construct can push us apart. We are tempted to dismiss, exclude—or ridicule—those whose positions differ from ours. It’s easy to just walk away from the table.

What would happen if, instead, we stepped toward each other, ready to accept the gifts that the table offers? Maybe we could set aside our theological debates for a time and instead host regular potlucks that intentionally include people with whom we disagree. There would be no agenda other than respectful conversation around honest, tasty food. A time to give and receive hospitality by sharing the stories of our lives. At the meal’s end, a communion table would nourish us all for the steps ahead.

Introducing Donna Schulz, Saskatchewan Correspondent

Donna lives in Rosthern with her husband Leo, an insurance broker. The couple’s two adult children reside nearby in Saskatoon. Donna



and Leo are members of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, where Donna currently serves as a deacon and teaches adult Sunday school. One of her most gratifying volunteer experiences has been teaching English to the Syrian couple her church sponsored a little over a year ago. When she’s not attending Mennonite Church Saskatchewan events or writing about them for *Canadian Mennonite*, Donna enjoys quilting and scrapbooking, reading and listening to music.

ABOUT THE COVER:

‘Food is a Human Right’ is the title of Filipino artist Bert Monterona’s painting that was featured in the November 2015 issue of *Anabaptist Witness*, which focussed on food issues. Inspiration for the work was Amos 5:11-12, 14 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Two articles from that same issue, ‘An empty bowl’ and ‘Peppernuts and *anarsa*,’ begin on page 4.

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contents

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Tobi Thiessen, Publisher, publisher@canadianmennonite.org

Virginia A. Hostetler, Executive Editor, editor@canadianmennonite.org

Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Betty Avery, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Aaron Epp, Young Voices Editor, youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising Manager: D. Michael Hostetler, advert@canadianmennonite.org,

toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Correspondents:

Will Braun, Senior Writer, seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org

Amy Dueckman, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org

Donna Schulz, Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, Manitoba Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org

Dave Rogalsky, Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org

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An empty bowl 4

'Why would you make just enough?' This question posed by feature writer **KAYLENE DERKSEN's** mother is at the heart of the relationship of hospitality and food. In a companion piece, **MARLENE EPP** reflects on how food can 'express our spirituality,' no matter what culture we're from.

Mennonite arrested at Kinder Morgan pipeline protest 19

STEVE HEINRICHS, MC Canada's Indigenous-Settler Relations coordinator, was among a group of religious leaders arrested and charged in Burnaby, B.C., on April 20.

Caring for creation one ice cream pail at a time 20

The **HEPPNER MUELLER** family of Altona, Man., limits their garbage to one pail every two months—or pays a \$50 fine to charity.

Foodgrains Bank brews climate storm on Twitter 22

Senior writer **WILL BRAUN** reports on the effect a tweeted article linking Canadian agriculture to greenhouse gas emissions and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank had on the organization, its donors and grain producers.

A must-see for all Canadians 24

VIC THIESSEN praises *Indian Horse*, a film about residential school abuse and hockey, saying, it's 'the responsibility of every Canadian to watch this groundbreaking film.'

Young Voices 27-29

'Wrestling with challenging texts,' by **RACHEL BERGEN.** 'Working together for the common good,' by **ANNIKA KRAUSE.**

Regular features:

For discussion 7 Readers write 8 Milestones 12

A moment from yesterday 12 Schools Directory 24-25

Online NOW! 26 Calendar 30 Classifieds 31

Gifts of the table 2

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER

Wandering in the wilderness 8

RYAN SIEMENS

The message and the messengers of salvation 9

RYAN JANTZI

Mennonites connect over pancakes 10

CARL HANSEN



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD FEATURE

An empty bowl

BY KAYLENE DERKSEN

“Everything in the world is about to be wrapped up, so take nothing for granted. Stay wide-awake in prayer. Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything. Be quick to give a meal to the hungry, a bed to the homeless—cheerfully. Be generous with the different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it: if words, let it be God’s words; if help, let it be God’s hearty help” (1 Peter 4:7-10, The Message).

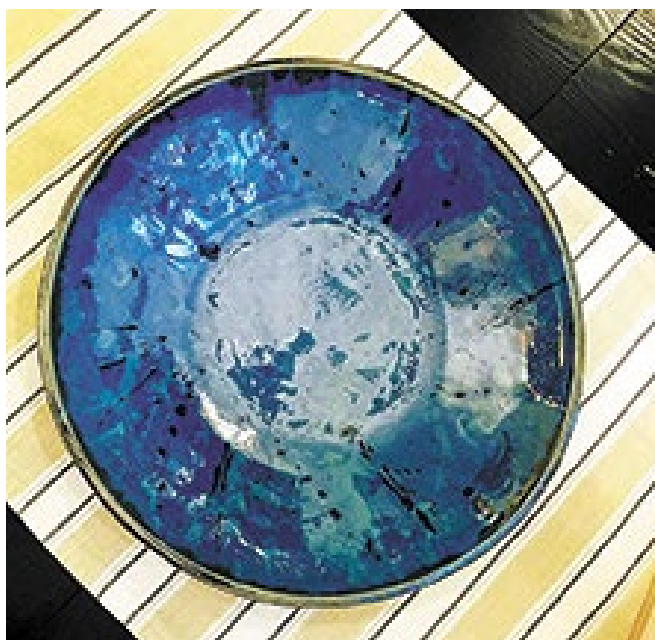


PHOTO BY KAYLENE DERKSEN

These verses are pretty standard Anabaptist stuff. The world won’t last, so keep praying. Love and serve others—especially food—as if your life depends on it, because it’s God’s way of building God’s kingdom. This is Hospitality 101. It’s what I cut my teeth on. My parents made it look easy and even exciting.

Growing up in my family of 10, you would have thought there were enough mouths to feed, bodies to clothe, stories to listen to and people to love. But apparently it wasn’t so. Although my family was not wealthy by anyone’s imagination, we always seemed to have extra—mostly extra food and space at our table. This is where learning hospitality began for me. And this is where I began to see that hospitality is hard.

My quintessentially hardworking Mennonite farmer parents were lovers of God and lovers of people, in that order. They believed that God had called them to love those around them. Their neighbour could be anyone, and hospitality was to be shown to all.

Our farm was set along a country road and butted up against a small forest. It was just a dairy farm of no great consequence, with about 100 head of cattle; 50 chickens, depending on the time of year; a dog or two; and some feral cats. We had pigs, but they were not regular guests. The odd sheep, ducks and even a horse graced the

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Peppernuts and *anarsa*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARLENE EPP

I recently learned to eat *anarsa*—a sweet, rice-based treat—while travelling in India visiting with Mennonite women, and learning about their religious lives and food practices. It was late February, but I was told that Christians in India normally prepare *anarsa* at Christmastime as a seasonal and festive treat.

I couldn’t help but reflect on the similarities between this Indian speciality and peppernuts, one of my

own culture-based Christmas foods. I concluded that the ingredients, preparation and taste of the particular foods that I—a Canadian Mennonite woman—and my Indian Mennonite counterparts eat are quite different, as are many aspects of our cultures, but that the purpose and meaning surrounding such foods actually hold much in common.

(Continued on page 6)



'Soup and Pie' by Manitoba artist Margruite Krahn was featured in the November 2015 issue of Anabaptist Witness that focussed on food issues. She cites the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as her inspiration. The work hangs at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

farmyard when I was a youngster.

We were pretty much like our neighbours, except we were Mennonites surrounded by Catholics. We and our neighbours had the same kinds of animals, same plantings of crops, same kind of manure, same weather and the same smells. But there was one noticeable difference in our house. People would stop in. They would drop by unannounced. They came in cars, on bikes and even on foot. And it never seemed to matter what was going on when they arrived, because my dear parents would roll out their version of the red carpet.

I often heard Dad say, "Mother, let's set another place at the table," or, "Didn't you just bake bread this morning? I'm sure

there's an extra loaf." Mom never cooked just for the 10 people she loved the most. She always planned ahead for more. "Why would you make just enough?" This is red carpet talk.

If anyone came by on a Saturday, they could expect pancakes and eggs for breakfast, thick and hearty potato soup for dinner—what others might know as lunch—and homemade deep-dish pizza for supper. We were rural people; there were no light meals in our home. Proper stomach-filling dinners were never questioned, and the calories were easily metabolized in time for a sure-to-be-hearty supper. Afternoons were often interrupted with cookies, glasses of milk or coffee.

But rolling out that red carpet takes lots

of time and is mostly inconvenient. Farms are busy places, especially with that many children!

Although Mom and Dad were both raised in fairly conservative traditions, they never let their backgrounds keep them from friendships beyond their borders. I remember the particular warmth shown to a couple who visited fairly often on weeknights. And while the house was always crazy with children, and the day's work had all but exhausted my parents, a quick salad dressing cake would miraculously appear, still warm in its pan. Fresh coffee was brewed, cream and sugar came out, and, alongside it all, an empty bowl. This empty bowl was a sign of welcome on the part of my father and a

(Continued on page 6)



A plate of anarsa.

(Continued from page 5)

compromise on the part of my mother.

John and Frankie came to our home because they knew that they would be welcomed and that the little empty bowl would be waiting for them.

As soon as their car was heard pulling into the driveway, Dad would go out in his line-dried clean jeans and a T-shirt worn butter-soft with use to meet John and Frankie. They only lived three miles away but they were greeted as if they'd travelled the entire day.

John was a lanky Elvis-type guy with tight jeans, pointy black boots and a

pompadour, while his wife wore stylish open-toed platform heels. I could see her red toenails and tanned feet. Frankie was bottle-blonde, tanned and lipsticked, and had the best posture I'd ever seen. This pair could not have been more different from my parents if they'd tried.

"Come in, come in." "Oh, Rhoda, you shouldn't have!" And off to the dining table they went. I always watched from the sidelines, partly because I was in awe of the ease my parents had with these flashy people who talked a lot and looked so glamorous, and partly because I wanted cake.

They began to talk and laugh. John,

teasing Mom that cake is the only reason he came to visit; Frankie, defending Mom and asking Dad for house-building tips. Such fun they were.

I never observed any discomfort on anyone's part. Even when the visitors were lingering in a chocolate-cake coma over their coffee, and their cigarettes came out. The conversation went on as our house filled with second-hand smoke and the little bowl filled with butts. They knew this was not my parents' style, but they were welcomed, nevertheless. No wonder they came.

Every time after they left, there was

(Continued from page 4)

In our human yearning to express our spirituality in everyday practices, and vice versa—to sanctify our daily tasks—we have managed to connect certain moments in the Christian year with the customs and practices of our cultural foodways. These subtexts in the Christian message have, I think, given women a sense of presiding over the sacred, especially in the past, when their ecclesial roles were limited.

During the Christmas season, my mother has always made peppernuts, a traditional northern European cookie that is small and spicy, either hard or soft. My grandmother made them too. One of my male colleagues bakes them in mammoth batches, and as a seasonal workplace custom they are eagerly anticipated by all of us: Anabaptist, neo-Anabaptist and non-Anabaptist alike.

These Christmastime peppernuts carry no explicit religious meaning nor is their consumption required of a practising Mennonite, but they do link me to the cultural and also religious past of my grandparents in Ukraine.

When Mennonite refugees, mostly women and children, fled their homes in the Soviet Union in the midst of the Second World War and found temporary safety in Berlin, they were fearful and hungry. However, Mennonite Central Committee workers were able to arrange for ingredients and the use of an oven so that women could prepare more than a thousand little sacks of peppernuts for the gathered refugees on Christmas Eve. It was a sign of hope in the midst of despair, a sign that God had not abandoned them.

In addition to experiencing a wide array of delightful dishes and warm hospitality during my brief tour of Mennonite communities in India, I discovered that *anarsa*, like peppernuts, is made for special festive times of the year, especially Christmas. I first learned about *anarsa* from a group of women in the Bihar Mennonite



Neeta Solomon prepared various dishes, including anarsa, for Marlene Epp, who visited India to interview Mennonite women there about their food practices.

Mandli in Jharkhand state.

Lily Kachhap described the time-consuming process of making *anarsa* that begins with several days of soaking raw rice, then drying and grinding the rice finely to powder; then it is mixed with sugar or *jaggery* (unrefined cane sugar), and optional ingredients like coconut, nuts or dried fruit. The mixture is formed into flat or round shapes and then fried in oil.

I learned quickly that, as with peppernuts, there are many variations according to the style and preferences of the cook. In fact, the debates I witnessed about preparing *anarsa* were as animated as the discussions about the "authentic" way to make peppernuts at my Mennonite workplace, if not more so.

One woman declared that every Christian home would have *anarsa* at Christmas, while another said that when Mennonite women began making it in the weeks of Advent, their non-Christian neighbours began to come around hoping for a taste. These Indian Mennonite women came to associate their *anarsa*-making with a

much cleaning to be done. Smoke removal is not easy. Mom fussed over the smell. Dad looked helpless. Hospitality is hard.

That small farm tucked along a forest's edge is no longer my home, and I no longer live in the country. None of my trappings are similar to the simplicity of the pasture full of Holsteins, a backyard full of tall pine trees, or a night sky unmarred by too much electric light.

I live in a city now and I've been a city dweller for most of my adult life. However, even in my world of higher convenience and less space, I do have the ability to cook and I have embraced the importance of the

religious season, just as I did with my peppernuts.

While peppernuts and *anarsa* are different in their cultural origins, taste and ingredients, they are very similar in meaning for Mennonite women of different ethnicities.

For faith groups that are tied to particular cultural traditions, whether contemporary or ancestral, food holds extra meaning as a material and spiritual entity that ties us to our religious beliefs and our cultural identity. The preparation of both peppernuts and *anarsa* carries this purpose and conveys love—for God, for the birth of Jesus, for the labour of his mother Mary, and for the people with whom we share these Christmas treats.

It may not have been a coincidence that shortly after I first learned about *anarsa*, while travelling the jam-packed roads of Jharkhand, I saw a large truck with this slogan in large letters on the back: "Cook food. Serve love." It looked pretty Anabaptist-Mennonite to me.

Marlene Epp is professor of history and peace and conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College at the



University of Waterloo, Ont. A longer version of the article was originally published in the November 2015 issue of Anabaptist Witness.

Mom never cooked just for the 10 people she loved the most. She always planned ahead for more. 'Why would you make just enough?' This is red carpet talk.

table. Mom and Dad instilled in me their love of God and their love of people, and I am learning the courage it takes to be truly hospitable. I believe that God has asked me to be available to love whomever is placed in my path. I am learning the surrender that such love entails.

This love and level of hospitality that my parents modelled involves hosting guests who have no respect for my personal space and no concept of their own. It involves the smell of body odour, cigarette smoke and shoes removed too late in the day. Sometimes it means having a visitor at my table who refuses anything green or healthy, unintentionally insulting me and my endeavours to prepare and serve whole foods. Sometimes this hospitality leaves me exhausted from the late nights, many questions and hours of listening. And sometimes it means I try too hard.

When I get to the point of being entirely

poured out, I read further in I Peter 4:12: "When life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner."

Daily, I put out my own empty bowl on my dining table, as a sign of welcome and of compromise. As a sign of the difficulty and also the joy I experience on this journey towards hospitality, on this journey of learning to love those around me. ❧

Kaylene Derksen is the development director at Eastern Mennonite Missions in Salunga, Pa. The article was originally published in the November 2015 issue of Anabaptist Witness.



/// For discussion

1. How often do you invite people to share food at your table? Do you find hospitality energizing or fatiguing? Do you agree with Kaylene Derksen that "hospitality is hard"? Is hospitality something we need to be trained to do?
2. Derksen writes, "I have embraced the importance of the table." What do you think she means? Can you think of situations where you have experienced "the importance of the table"? What is the connection between God's kingdom and hospitality? Derksen leaves an empty bowl on her dining room table as a sign of welcome and compromise. What compromises have you made when offering hospitality?
3. Marlene Epp writes that Christmas peppernuts link her to her family's religious and cultural past in Ukraine. Do you have traditional foods that connect you to earlier generations or to a particular community? Is it important to have special foods served only on holidays like Christmas and Easter?
4. Do you agree that food can have a special meaning that ties us to our beliefs and cultural identity? What foods might represent the Mennonite experience in Canada?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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✉ Resurrection feature re-opens old wounds

RE: "IS BELIEF in Jesus' resurrection necessary?" feature, March 12, page 4.

The final sentence in Michael Pahl's feature notwithstanding, both the title and content turn out to be an occasion to re-open wounds from the splitting apart of congregations over the very question of the resurrection. I have myself been wounded by such an event in which the definition of resurrection was cited as one reason for a split.

We use the terms "belief," "doubt" and "faith" loosely, as if our understanding of what they mean is obvious and held in common. A question like, "Is belief in Jesus' resurrection necessary?" is rendered absurd for

FROM OUR LEADERS

Wandering in the wilderness

RYAN SIEMENS

This past weekend, I was invited to one of our small rural congregations to help it discern the future.

The concern, as expressed by the congregation, is that if the status quo remains, the church will have to close its doors in a couple of years. Some options were presented: cut pastoral time from the current half-time, go until the reserve fund is dried up, or transplant the congregation to a larger population centre in the hope of inviting new people.

In my visit with each member, there was sadness and lament at the thought of having to let go, and an underlying current that somehow closing means failure.

Last fall, I attended a workshop in Montreal put on by the New Leaf Network, a Canadian-based church-planting group, that helped provide context for the dramatic changes taking place within Canadian society. It was helpful



to hear that what we are experiencing in rural Saskatchewan is shared across the Canadian expression of the church.

Being in a nearly 200-year-old church in downtown Montreal served as a reminder that, during the 1960s, the Quiet Revolution swept across Quebec as Québécois turned away from the church en masse. There were no fights, no splits. People simply walked away. And as the movement away from Christendom spread further across the nation, those of us who remain are left bewildered. Where do we go from here?

Under Christendom, one of the functions of the church was to help maintain societal order. Now that we have lost that role, we are left wandering through the wilderness, wondering where are we going? Where is Moses leading us? And, like the Israelites, our desire, our temptation, is to go back. We believe that God has simply brought us out here to die.

Wilderness journeys are usually

unwanted and uninvited. Yet, throughout the history of God's people, they have played a significant role in shaping our identity and calling. The Israelites had them. Jesus did too. And then recently it dawned on me that wilderness experiences eventually come to an end!

For the Israelites, it meant entering into the Promised Land. For Jesus, it meant a clearer understanding of his call and mandate. When Jesus left the wilderness, according to the Gospel of Luke, he went to the synagogue, as was the custom, and when the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, he read, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*"

I don't know how long our current wilderness journey is going to be. The Israelites experienced 40 years; Jesus, 40 days. But my hope and trust is that one day this wilderness journey will come to an end. And as we make our way there together, by God's grace and guidance, we will receive a clearer understanding of who we are called to be.

Ryan Siemens is executive minister of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

this very reason. “Believing in” and “believing that” are disparate concepts which, unfortunately, we too often treat as one. “Believing in” the resurrection is different from “believing that” Jesus bodily rose from the dead.

A part of the problem for me in articles like this is the assertion that it’s theology that’s being done here, when, in fact, it’s not theology at all, but apologetics. True theology would focus on “the God of all things,”

not just the “God of my things,” and so the point theologian Karl Barth raises in his essay, “Evangelical theology in the 19th century” in *The Humanity of God* strikes me as highly relevant: “Productive theologizing [is] possible only from a lofty place ‘above’ Christianity.”

The last sentence in this feature might be a usable

(Continued on page 10)

KINGDOM YEARNINGS

The message and the messengers of salvation

RYAN JANTZI

It is truly remarkable that through hell and high water, the good news of Jesus has arrived to me, today, in 2018, in Canada. This is a miracle of God.

Through persecution, the gospel has persisted. Despite the frequent destructive misuse of the message for coercion and power, the good news has carried on. Not only has it reached me here, today, but it has spread throughout the nations of the earth. Jesus wasn’t kidding when he said the harvest would be great. He wasn’t kidding when he said he would build the church, and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Thanks be to God that he has been faithful, and that Jesus has not been overcome!



It’s interesting to think of those very first bearers of the message. Ten of Jesus’ first twelve disciples were martyred for the gospel message they proclaimed. These followers were so utterly convinced that everyone, everywhere, needed to confess Jesus as Lord, that they marched toward their death in order to spread the word. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside-down in Rome. Thomas was speared by local religious authorities in India. Matthew was run through by a swordsman sent by an Ethiopian king.

These people believed wholeheartedly in this story, the reality of who Jesus is. They believed he was the king of the universe. They believed he had taught them to live and love in a new radical way. They believed he had forgiven sin and defeated the power of evil through his death and resurrection. And they believed that all people must be invited to confess him as the one true king. Had it not been for these passionate convictions, the good news of Jesus would never have made it beyond Palestine. It never would have escaped the

would not have scattered as deliberately as they did. The gospel would not have spread throughout the nations.

As we navigate the often pluralistic society we find ourselves in, it can be tricky. We’re tempted to conform or shift our views in order to be as peaceful and accommodating as possible. If at all possible, we’d rather not ruffle any feathers or proclaim that we have something the world might be missing. However, we need

Had Jesus merely been a good moral teacher, or a character in an esoteric story with spiritual meaning, those first disciples would not have carried that message to the point of their death.

first century. It most certainly would not have made it to me in the 21st century!

Does our faith today look like the faith of those who got the ball of Christian history rolling? Had Jesus merely been a good moral teacher, or a character in an esoteric story with spiritual meaning, those first disciples would not have carried that message to the point of their death. Had he not actually risen from the dead or merely been one of a buffet of spiritual options, they

to ask ourselves the following question: If the earliest disciples believed in the version of Jesus that I believe in, would the good news of Jesus have ever made it out of the first century?

Ryan Jantzi pastors Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite Church, Ont., where he’s fascinated with exploring the interplay between traditional church and new expressions of mission.

(Continued from page 9)

text for a church banner, but I doubt it would do more than encourage us once again to pick at our navels, and contrast and rank the quality of the lint. Believing in Christ and the crusade that bears his name can spare no time for chronic, ubiquitous inward-gazing.

GEORGE EPP, ROSTHERN, SASK.

✉ Doubt is 'not the way of Christ'

RE: "IS BELIEF in Jesus' resurrection necessary?" feature, March 12, page 4.

The author of this article did a reasonably good job of presenting the subject of the bodily resurrection of Christ until he came to his conclusion.

The verse of scripture that he makes reference to is

GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

Mennonites connect over pancakes

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY CARL HANSEN

It was more than 20 years ago when two Mennonites from Germany travelled to Ethiopia to explore the possibility of doing mission work with the Mennonite church there. After two weeks of searching for Mennonites in Addis Ababa, they finally located the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) office and received directions to a Meserete Kristos Church congregation, where they could attend a Sunday morning service.

Imagine their surprise when the service turned out to look and sound more like a Pentecostal service than what they were used to. There was loud music and singing, clapping and dancing. There was loud enthusiastic preaching accompanied by loud "amens" and emotional ululating responses. At times, everybody prayed at once, with some shouting to drive out demons.

"This couldn't be a Mennonite church!" they said to themselves.

The two men from Germany represented the Aussiedler Mennonites—immigrants who moved to Germany from the former Soviet Union beginning in the 1970s. Their church services are very orderly, and congregations tend to be quite conservative. The men were Heinrich Savadsky, an Aussiedler Mennonite, and



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARL HANSEN

Shimeles Retta, a former refugee, teaches Ethiopian church leaders with the support of Mennonites in Germany.

Shimeles Retta, a former Ethiopian refugee who had married a German wife. The Rettas had been Catholics, but after a new experience with Christ, they joined the Aussiedler in Germany.

After the lively church service in Ethiopia, Retta began taking photos, which made the Ethiopians nervous. Bedru Hussein, an elder in the church, approached them and, with a certain degree of suspicion, asked who they were, why they were taking pictures and what they wanted there. When they explained, Hussein invited them to meet in his office on Monday, as he was the general secretary of the national church.

At the office, Hussein described the

Meserete Kristos Church, but Savadsky remained sceptical, still thinking they had the wrong church. But then a former cook, who had years of experience serving early Mennonite missionaries, came in, bringing the customary morning tea to the various offices. Along with the tea, he served his specialty, some pieces of rolled-up white pancakes. When Savadsky saw the thin pancakes, rolled up in the traditional Mennonite way, his eyes grew big and excitement lit his face. Now he knew he had found Mennonites!

Since that meeting, a long-lasting relationship has emerged between the German churches and Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia. Under the leadership of Retta and his wife, work teams from Germany have built dozens of churches, offices, Kindergartens and a discipleship training centre. Funding has enabled scholarships for church leaders, support for several hundred evangelists, and assistance for children and others in need.

Food and hospitality can play an important role in connecting people from different cultures, regardless of worship styles.

Carl Hansen served as director of development for Meserete Kristos College for many years. Now living in Virginia, he still stays in touch with and supports the college and church in Ethiopia. More information about Evangelium Mission Ethiopia can be found online at em-ethiopia.de.

To view the recipe, visit canadianmennonite.org/mennonite-pancakes.



Matthew 28:17. “*And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some were doubtful.*” With those three words, “some were doubtful,” the author’s last few comments, along with Barb Draper’s “For discussion” questions, legitimize doubt.

We all may have moments when we doubt. But we know that if we allow doubt to have a legitimate place in our thinking, our careers, sports teams or leadership, we will not stay the course for very long. We may have questions about certain things or may feel the need for corrections, but that is not doubt.

John writes in his gospel: “*These things have been written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.*”

He did not say that he writes these things so the doubters have a valid reason to go on in their doubt.

Paul never left a legitimized place for doubters in his presentations. He states that the doubter is, of all people, the most miserable.

James called doubters double-minded people, and they are always wondering why they have no peace.

Persecution in the Scriptures and throughout the ages very rapidly sorted out those who loved Christ and those who did not. *Martyrs Mirror* is a source of many testimonies of how the believers were separated from the doubters.

We can legitimize, sanitize, popularize and institutionalize doubters. We can even create a new category of church membership for the doubter—call them the Doubterites—but it is not the way of Christ.

DAVID SHANTZ, MONTREAL

✉ ‘God judges differently than we do’

WITH ALL THAT is going on concerning sexuality, it all comes down to this—“The Fall of Man” as recorded in Genesis 3—and that should be it. Nothing more. The Fall is the one and only reason Christ came to us. All of us have been dented by the “first Adam.” We now need the “second Adam,” and that’s who Christ is!

We cannot find perfection in any church we join, whether it’s “affirming” or not. It cannot be done. If

you happen to join a church that has an open mind, go with it. Follow your own faith and be open to others, since they are struggling too. But keep in mind that God judges differently than we do.

Here’s what I’m going to do: Follow Christ the best way that I can, and help others the best way that I can, no matter what they practise or believe. I have no authority whatsoever to judge who is wrong or right. None.

But I will follow and “lock in the Son,” who I know has died for us.

JIM DEMERS, WINDSOR, ONT.

✉ A heart full of compassion

IT WAS FIELD day, a day to celebrate another year of study with either softball or volleyball. After the young ladies had a successful win, they must celebrate by rushing to the ice cream stand. Only one young lady chose to sit all by herself on the park bench. Her friends responded, “Didn’t your father give you an allowance to spend?”

After a moment of silence, she answered, “Yes, he did, but as I was walking through the park I noticed an old man sitting all by himself, and he looked so lonely and sad, so I gave him my allowance.”

“You gave your allowance to an old bum? Maybe he was just waiting for a handout!” they responded.

As the girls told their fathers what their friend had done, the men seemed to see it from a different point of view, so they simply took a collection among themselves, and the young lady had more money than she had in the first place.

In her silent way, she had shown compassion to someone who could be lonely and might be hurting.

We will always have people in our society who have compassion for others who are poor and deserve compassion. The church is really God’s kingdom on earth to exercise compassion and agape love.

JACOB UNGER, BOISSEVAIN, MAN.

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/// Correction

The final quote in the “Singing into the future” article, April 9, pages 25-26—“When I hear the singing, something stirs in my heart, and I know that these are my people and this is my church”—should have been attributed to Marilyn Houser Hamm. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Campbell—Sophie Anna (b. March 7, 2018), to Zoe Cressman and Ian Campbell, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Epp-Koop—Talia Susanna (b. March 17, 2018), to Stefan and Laurel Epp-Koop, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Klassen—Mathis Ikenna (b. Feb. 8, 2018), to Luke and Chaz Klassen, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Neal—Emery Ursula Anysa (b. March 13, 2018), to Josh and Anysa Neal, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Rojas-Chan—Amaru Eirik Pui Lok (b. July 29, 2017), to Alrika Rojas and Alfred Chan, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Marriages

Bernardin/Friesen—Adam Bernardin and Larissa Friesen (Emmaus Mennonite, Wymark, Sask.), at Fort Gibraltar in Winnipeg, Jan. 12, 2018.

Iera/Kroeker—Tony Iera and Candace Kroeker (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.), at Spruce Woods Estate Winery, Harrow, Ont., April 7, 2018.

Deaths

Berg—Peter, 82 (b. Sept. 5, 1935; d. April 4, 2018), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Brandt—Nicholas Penner, 18 (b. July 1, 1999; d. March 23, 2018), First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Enns—Jerry, 64 (b. Oct. 15, 1953; d. Feb. 9, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—Elma, 84 (b. Feb. 2, 1934; d. March 11, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gerbrandt—Irma (nee Toews), 88 (b. June 20, 1929; d. April 17, 2018), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Kroeker—George, 92 (b. May 10, 1925; d. March 13, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Lehn—Anita Louise (nee Janzen), 77 (b. May 21, 1940; d. April 11, 2018), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Roth—Mildred (nee Gingerich), 76 (b. Feb. 5, 1942; d. March 30, 2018), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Schellenberg—Alice (nee Peterson, Heese), 90 (b. Aug. 28, 1927; d. March 4, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Toews—Ruthe, 84 (b. May 16, 1933; d. April 7, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wiens—Irene (nee Thiessen), 92 (b. June 29, 1925; d. March 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



Under the watchful eye of a Kitchener, Ont., store owner, a teenager browses the record collection. Shortly, she will slip one into her bag, and the owner will catch her in the act of shoplifting. This photo of a simulated crime is part of a slide show produced by the Access Project, a program of community education sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario's innovative new Victim-Offender Reconciliation Project in the late 1970s. The project explored alternatives to the criminal justice system by promoting reconciliation between victims and offenders. What can today's "social innovators" learn from these past experiments?

Text: Laureen Harder-Gissing

Photo: MCC Ontario / Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

VIEWPOINT

Transformed by the Spirit to be Christ's witnesses

STORY AND PHOTO BY TEWODROS BEYENE

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

In the mid-1960s, there was a movement throughout Ethiopia among the youth in high schools and college campuses. Believers who were committed to prayer, based on the Scriptures, started witnessing in schools, offices and on the road.

The major prayer request was the thirst for filling by the Holy Spirit, the promise given by God the Father, as written in the Bible. These young people also had a strong passion for lost souls. Our faithful God answered these prayers and poured his Spirit on many of the believers.

Meserete Kristos Church (MKC), one of the largest Mennonite church bodies in the world, had a membership of a little more than 5,000 when it went underground during the time of persecution by the Marxist military government. And it was during this time of persecution that the church flourished and started experiencing dramatic growth.

Believers, transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, were bold enough to witness to Jesus Christ, share their faith, and live a life of holiness that condemns sin and calls on sinners to repent.

As in the time of the Israelite oppression by Pharaoh, the more the Christians were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread. Local churches were planted by young believers who were committed



A worship service at Central Legetaffo Meserete Kristos Church, Ethiopia.

and ignited by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Many home cells were formed for Bible study and prayer meetings.

Although the Marxist government put many restrictions on Christians, the gospel of Jesus Christ could not be stopped. Many believers, including MKC church leaders, were imprisoned. The MKC statistics, after 17 years of persecution, showed a tenfold growth.

That growth has continued. Today, by the grace of God, MKC is growing, with more than 20,000 believers added to the church by baptism every year.

Filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, the disciples of Jesus Christ in the Book of Acts "turned the world upside down with their teachings." Being transformed by the Holy Spirit, they spread the gospel boldly, and many were converted to Christianity. The Holy Spirit transformed these people and also made

them witnesses.

The word "witness" in Greek is "martyr." Although it is used today as a designation of those

who have suffered death in consequence of confessing Christ, "martyr" originally meant being a witness.

When we think of being transformed by the Holy Spirit, it is a life that is transformed for the cause of the gospel—to be an instrument for the work of God's kingdom. A martyr lives for the master, not for himself or herself, or even for a group interest.

We are transformed by the Holy Spirit to serve God by proclaiming the work of God, the good news of Jesus Christ for his glory: *"But you are a chosen people, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light"* (1 Peter 2:9). ❧

Tewodros Beyene of Ethiopia is a member of Mennonite World Conference's Faith and Life Commission.

When we think of being transformed by the Holy Spirit, it is a life that is transformed for the cause of the gospel—to be an instrument for the work of God's kingdom.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Celebrating what was, anticipating what will be

Rural congregation bids farewell to old church building

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

“We celebrated 108 years of life in that building,” said Ed Bueckert, referring to Zoar Mennonite Church’s sanctuary in Langham, which faces imminent closure.

About 110 members, former members, friends and neighbours gathered on April 22 to celebrate the congregation’s history and the life lived in the old building. Members from across the age spectrum reflected on experiences that had been meaningful to them through their life in the church.

Litanies of thanksgiving, lament and confession helped worshippers acknowledge God’s blessings through joyous times as well as God’s faithful presence through times of pain and challenge. Following the worship service, members and guests visited and reminisced over a fellowship lunch.

Mennonites from Kansas, Minnesota and the Dakotas settled in the Langham

area around the turn of the 20th century. In late 1910, 14 families under the leadership of Nicholai Toews established Zoar Mennonite Church. Zoar, according to Genesis 19:18-23, is the name of the small town where Lot and his family found refuge following the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the same way, the congregation came to see its church building as a place of refuge and comfort through the years.

According to the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, the group that worshipped in Langham was initially part of a larger congregation in two districts—Langham and Waldheim: “Though separated by a significant distance of over 40 kilometres, the two districts had family and church ties from their similar origins in the United States.” The two congregations formally separated in 1960, but each retained the name Zoar.

In 1911, the Langham congregation



erected its original church building. A 1943 renovation added a choir loft and a second entrance. When nearby Bethesda Mennonite Church disbanded in 1948, many of its members joined Zoar Mennonite, necessitating a second renovation in 1954. This one added six Sunday school classrooms and a basement library. Two decades later, in 1974, a two-storey addition on the west side of the building contributed a large foyer, a pastor’s study, a nursery and a library on the main floor; six Sunday school rooms upstairs; and a kitchen and washrooms in the basement.

In 2011, moisture in the church basement, and the resulting black mould, started to be a problem. “People were getting sick,” said Bueckert, who is the congregational chair.

The cost to renovate the basement seemed prohibitive, as old wiring and plumbing were not up to current building standards. And even if the congregation chose to renovate, he added, “In the end, we’d still have a 108-year-old building.”

Eventually, the church decided to erect a new building on the same site. Construction began in the fall of 2017. In keeping with the congregation’s smaller demographic, the new sanctuary will accommodate around 80 worshippers. The congregation expects to move into the new building in early summer.

Although the old building has been a



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZOAR MENNONITE CHURCH

Mary and Emery Ens, at the pulpit, reflect on life in the old Zoar Mennonite Church building in Langham, Sask. Sheila Wiens Neufeld is seated at the piano and Valerie Wiebe is standing beside her.

'A rich storehouse of treasure awaiting learners'

Scripture best discerned in community, according to seminary prof

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.



MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
SASKATCHEWAN PHOTO

The old Zoar Mennonite Church building in Langham, Sask., will be closing soon as the congregation moves into a new building on the same site. The original building served the congregation for 108 years.

refuge to this congregation for over a century, the concluding paragraph of its recorded history, shared during the closing service, reminds readers that the church is not a building but a people: "Zoar Mennonite, grounded in its rich story, built on the foundation of Jesus its Lord, is now catching new winds of the Spirit, to be reborn in new ways. We are embracing a new time in a familiar place to be the beloved people of God, a light in our world." ❧

Scripture and community were the focus when Mennonite Church B.C. members gathered at Level Ground Mennonite Church in Abbotsford on April 14 for Reading the Bible Together.

Resource person Tim Geddert, a professor of New Testament at Fresno Pacific University's Biblical Seminary in California, called the Bible a "rich storehouse of treasure awaiting learners."

In his first session, "Scribes who are becoming disciples," Geddert talked about both scribes and disciples in Jesus' day, the "scribes" as experts and know-it-alls, and the "disciples" as lifelong learners. "One of the biggest enemies of discipleship is thinking we know it all," he said, urging listeners never to think that they understand everything, but to be lifelong learners.

He told of his own faith journey, from thinking he knew everything about the Bible and had all the answers, to realizing that "all reading is influenced by perspectives."

"If we can avoid the temptation to think we have finally got everything figured out, we can be set for on a life-long quest of learning over and over again," he said. "And we can also learn to disagree respectfully, because we can see why other people

interpret texts differently than we do."

Geddert's second session dealt with how people read the Bible. He said many believe that it's as simple as reading a Scripture passage, taking it literally and applying it directly to all life situations.

"There is, in fact, a great deal in Scripture that is not simple and straightforward," he said. "A lot that needs careful discernment and sometimes hard work, a lot that is open to serious dialogue and a lot that can quite easily lead to very diverse conclusions."

Reading and interpreting Scripture together, in the community and for the community, was the focus for Geddert's third session. He said that it is important to read the Bible communally because "first and foremost . . . most of Scripture was written primarily to address communities, not to address individuals. Reading as a community is reading as the authors intended the texts to be read." He used Acts 15 as an example of how the early church used Scripture to discern together answers to moral and ethical questions. ❧

The text for all of Geddert's presentations is available online at mcbc.ca/conferences/.



Fresno Pacific University professor Tim Geddert, right, gives a presentation on Reading the Bible Together at a seminar for Mennonite Church B.C. leaders and congregants at Level Ground Church in Abbotsford on April 14.



Building shalom

International Witness worker Joji Pantoja speaks on life in the Philippines

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Joji Pantoja and her husband Dann serve in the Philippines as Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers. Following the Sept. 11, 2001, attack in New York City, Dann in particular felt called as a Christian to work at building peace with Muslims.

Speaking at the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada offices on April 4, Joji explained that they assumed they would be going to Pakistan or “one of the other ‘stans’” but then remembered the Muslims in their own homeland of the Philippines.

At the time, they were at home in Vancouver with their family, including grandchildren. Dann was studying theology and focussing on shalom.

Joji had been a successful financial planner there, and when Dann started talking of going overseas, she wondered why, since she could have spent the rest of her life comfortably running other people’s fortunes. But God challenged her, asking if she wanted to spend her life making others rich.

Together, they wanted to find a church with a peace theology. Soon they found themselves at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C., now one of their supporting congregations, together with Toronto United, Leamington United, Waterloo North, and East Zorra Mennonite churches, all in Ontario.

The Pantojas went to Davao, a city on the southern island of Mindanao, in 2006, to train others in peacebuilding. Their goal is to have worshipping communities that build and promote peace in all 81 Philippine provinces by 2025. They already exist in 33.

When the Pantojas come to a community, they begin by listening and meeting with various groups, including the rebels and military, spending up to two years on this part of the process. In time, they teach shalom, which they stylize as harmony with the Creator, with self/being, with others and with creation itself. They

build on Jesus’ great laws—love of God, and of others as the self—not hiding their Christian perspective, whether the people they are working with are Christian, animist, Muslim or atheistic. This openness is welcomed, especially by Muslims.

After two years of watching Dann work in the Philippines, Joji informed him that unless economic support was developed for the marginalized people with whom they worked, there would be no peace. She began researching ideas on how the people could become self-sufficient and came upon the idea of coffee-growing.

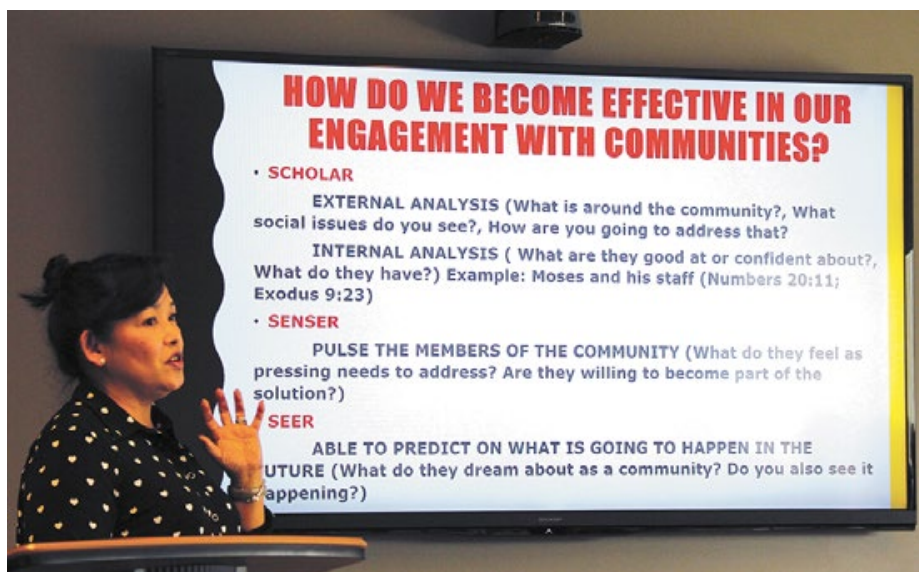
Coffee for Peace teaches farmers the whole cycle of coffee, including planting, growing, harvesting, processing and marketing. Existing farmers become trainers, much as existing peacebuilders become trainers in peace.

The work with peacebuilding goes hand in hand with coffee-growing, and 25 percent of the gross income of Coffee for Peace goes to develop new communities. Coffee-growing helps to keep mountainsides from eroding in the increasingly violent storms like Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Currently, they are building two more coffee processing areas and they have more than 600 farmers involved. Coffee for Peace and Peacebuilders Community have both won numerous international and national awards, with President Rodrigo Duterte personally giving Joji one of the Inspiring Filipina Entrepreneurs awards in 2017.

When asked about Duterte, who is generally painted as a violent populist who has personally carried out extrajudicial killings of drug dealers, Joji rolled her eyes. Shrugging her shoulders, she commented, “He is not perfect. He loves the poor, hates corruption, and loves the Indigenous peoples.” She pointed out that “he is not rich. He came from an unknown school, so good luck on getting things done.”

The Pantojas are working to make their work sustainable. The current three-year support helps, and they are maximizing this time in their work.

“The work is scalable and transferrable,” she said, calling it a mix of Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Economic Development Associates and Witness work. ☺



Joji Pantoja speaks on April 4 about her and her husband Dann’s work in the Philippines, building worshipping peace communities, and developing Coffee for Peace to create income for marginalized people.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

When strangers become neighbours

Saskatchewan Mennonites worship with Indigenous community

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

Music continues to be the catalyst for growth in the relationship between Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and its Indigenous neighbours.

On Earth Day, April 22, Mennonites and members of the Muskeg Lake community gathered for An Afternoon of Song at Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic Church in Marcelin on the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

The program opened with a drum group and dancers from the Big River First Nation. Harry Lafond of Muskeg Lake welcomed guests and explained the meaning of the Cree songs and dances. Dolores Sand, also of Muskeg Lake, offered a brief meditation on how people are all connected to one another and to the earth.



PHOTO BY JASON GOODING

Ben Pauls, left, of Zoar Mennonite in Waldheim, Sask., leads an ensemble of 15 singers from a number of MC Saskatchewan congregations during a joint worship service at Muskeg Lake Cree Nation on April 22.

Ben Pauls of Zoar Mennonite Church in Waldheim led an ensemble of 15 singers representing at least five other MC Saskatchewan congregations. Songs such as, “Send Forth thy Spirit that the Face of the Earth May be Renewed,” based on Psalm 104:30, echoed themes of resurrection and new life.

The closing hymn, “We Are One in the Spirit,” took on profound meaning as Indigenous and settler peoples alike sang, “We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,” and then literally joined hands in a round dance around the sanctuary.

MC Saskatchewan’s Walking the Path Committee, of which Lafond and Pauls are members, planned the event as a follow-up to last summer’s successful “Shared land, shared song” gathering. Lafond wanted to see the two communities sing together again, but this time in a worship setting.

“For me, it was a step closer into the heart of the community, the heart of the people,” said Pauls. “To be invited back to let the relationship grow was exciting.”

Leonard Doell, another Walking the Path member and Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan’s Indigenous Neighbours director, agreed with Pauls. “It was really a special time,” he said. “The fellowship was really good.”

The fellowship that began as people sang together continued around the table as they shared a potluck meal. Pauls sensed that as these groups broke bread together, “significant connections were made.” He added, “Strangers become neighbours as we take our small steps of faith.” ❧



PHOTO BY TODD HANSON

A ‘blessing dance’ opens a joint worship service at Muskeg Lake Cree Nation in Saskatchewan on April 22.

God at Work in the World
Mugshot

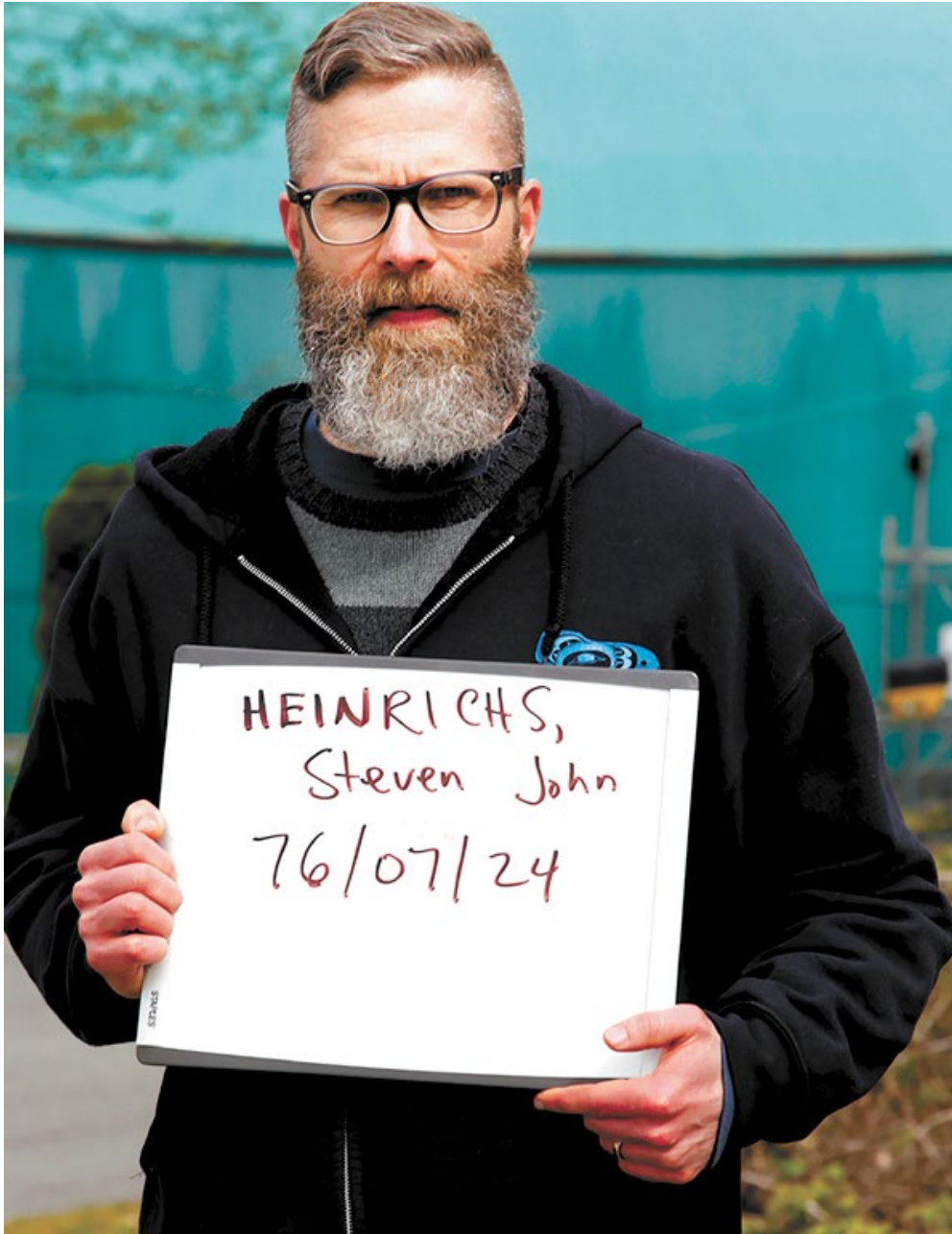


PHOTO BY JENNIFER OSBORNE

Proving that discipleship can sometimes be costly, Steve Heinrichs, MC Canada's Indigenous-Settler Relations coordinator, was arrested during a protest of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline along with other religious leaders in Burnaby, B.C., on April 20. He faces criminal and civil charges for contempt of an order prohibiting protests at the site and an injunction issued by the B.C. Supreme Court.

Mennonite arrested at Kinder Morgan pipeline protest

Indigenous rights, climate change prompt action

BY AMY DUECKMAN / ROSS W. MUIR

B.C. Correspondent / Managing Editor

Three Mennonites were among the faith leaders who blockaded the entrance to Westridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby, B.C. for several hours on April 20, protesting the planned expansion of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline system.

Among them was Steve Heinrichs of Winnipeg, originally from Burnaby, who was arrested on criminal and civil charges for contempt of an order prohibiting protests at the site and an injunction issued by the B.C. Supreme Court.

“We wanted to prevent vehicles from getting into the workplace and continuing construction,” he told *Canadian Mennonite*. “We knew we were doing something against the law of the land, in our sacred tradition of obeying God rather than men.”

Representatives from Tsleil-Waututh First Nation had invited religious leaders to join them in opposing the project, and as Mennonite Church Canada’s Indigenous-Settler Relations coordinator, Heinrichs felt moved to respond.

While RCMP officers read the injunction, the protesters sat on the ground in front of the terminal entrance. They responded by quoting articles 25 to 29 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which state that Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands and territories they have traditionally occupied, including rights of conservation and protection of the environment of these lands.

Heinrichs said local Indigenous people are not supportive of the pipeline project and, at the very least, are asking for proper dialogue.

“The Supreme Court of Canada has declared that the federal government has the duty to consult with First Nations on projects that have potential impact on

their lands,” he said. “They believe it poses a threat to climate change and the watershed. The work they’re doing is on behalf of us all. We’re all enmeshed in a system that relies on fossil fuels.”

Heinrichs clarified that “arrest” for him did not involve being taken to jail in handcuffs; he was photographed on site and served with papers to appear in court on April 24.

The two other Mennonites protesting were Johann Funk, former Conference of Mennonites native ministry worker and Christian Peacemaker Teams member, and Henry Krause, former pastor of Langley Mennonite Fellowship and former MC Canada moderator.

Krause said he thought it was important to respond to the call for church leaders to walk alongside Indigenous people in their opposition to the twinning of the Kinder Morgan pipeline. One of the main concerns, he said, is that the pipeline construction goes against the rights of Indigenous people to be involved in “free, prior and informed consent” about Indigenous land, as outlined in the UNDRIP declaration.

“Given that [MC] Canada has been supportive of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and said yes to affirming and living into the ‘Calls to Action,’ and given that [MC] Canada has also repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, it is important for the church nationally and regionally to ‘put feet’ to the decisions that we have made,” Krause said. “I am concerned about the building of the pipeline through this First Nations land without respect for their concerns about the environmental damage that this will cause.”

Heinrichs hopes that Mennonites in Canada will continue to pray for and support Indigenous peoples in the work they are doing to oppose the pipeline expansion.

“We don’t have to have it all figured out,” he said. “Just be present and praying. Be curious. If you’re able to form a position, join us. Take courageous steps. God’s inviting us into a conversation of faithfulness.”

Not all First Nations think alike

But an April 16 story by Vancouver news radio service News1130.com reported that not all First Nation communities want to see the pipeline expansion stopped: “According to Kinder Morgan, 51 First Nation communities, including 41 agreements in B.C., have signed comprehensive mutual benefit agreements with the company. The number represents every First Nation along the pipeline route and 80 percent of communities in proximity to the pipeline’s right-of-way.”

“Some First Nation leaders have voiced their concern with provincial groups seemingly speaking for every community,” the story continued. “Cheam Chief Ernie Crey said the public must be careful of ‘environmental groups who want to red wash their agendas under an Indigenous flag.”

Reaction to two *Canadian Mennonite* posts on Facebook on the weekend of April 21 to 23 regarding the religious leaders’ arrest was divided.

Herb Klein posted: “I am deeply disappointed in the stand they have taken. The protesters never think of all the economic benefits flowing from this project to the people of B.C. and First Nations communities. Very disappointing!”

Marcy Robinson responded: “I disagree. These folks are looking at the bigger picture. You must have children and grand [children]. That is what they are thinking of with these protests, not just fast gain for this generation. Well done; you folks [are] brave!” ❧

EARTH DAY STORIES



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONNIE HEPPNER MUELLER

The Heppner Mueller family with their waste from 2017. Pictured from left to right: Kaija, Aria, Connie, Rick and their dog Juno.

Caring for creation one ice cream pail at a time

Family of four limits garbage to one pail every two months

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE
Manitoba Correspondent

People hear every day about garbage mountains growing, icebergs melting and species going extinct. With every plastic bag and old cell phone people throw away, they are contributing to the problem. The average Canadian produces 777 kilograms of garbage a year, as of 2009.

But one family is striving to challenge the norm and get off this conveyor belt to destruction. The Heppner Muellers of Altona, Man., limit their garbage to one ice cream pail every two months. If by the end of the two months they have more trash than they can fit in one bucket, they donate \$50 to charity.

Connie Heppner Mueller, a teacher at W. C. Miller Collegiate in Altona, says the family of four began their waste journey

when they watched *The Clean Bin Project*, a documentary about people in Vancouver trying to live waste-free for a year, and heard about a couple in Ontario who limited one year's waste to a single garbage bag.

"At first, these challenges seemed impossible, but they planted a seed in us and slowly we were reducing our waste," she says. "Then it felt like it was time to do something that would push us further."

The family, which attends Seeds of Life Community Church in Altona, a Mennonite Church Manitoba congregation, started by aiming to fill no more than one ice cream pail per month. At the end of each month they do a garbage audit, which means they sort through all the garbage

they have collected, identify what they're throwing away, and take a picture. After a while, they discovered by accident that they could stretch their goal to one pail every two months. Heppner Mueller says she disliked doing the garbage audit, so she often put it off for a long time. "All of a sudden two months had gone by and we still hadn't filled it!" she says.

That doesn't mean they don't still face obstacles, though. Every few months the bags from their dog's food put them over the limit because they haven't been able to find garbage-free dog food. Even past choices affect them, like a damaged 10-year-old barbecue cover that now has to go to the landfill. Heppner Mueller says their waste challenge has caused them to think differently and to make more environmentally conscious purchases than they did a decade ago.

The family roots their project firmly in their faith. God has given them this beautiful playground, she says, through which they experience joy and wonder, adding that since it takes care of them, they are called to return that care.

People need to be environmentally conscious so they have less impact on the earth, she says, and they also need to get reconnected to the natural world. "I think technology, and maybe even living in the north, . . . separates us," she says. "It's time



The Heppner Mueller family's 2017 waste, contained in one garbage bag.

EARTH DAY STORIES

to remember that we are connected.”

One of the challenges of reducing waste is that it can take a lot of effort and time looking for garbage-free fruit or soap in bulk, for example, requiring visits to multiples stores instead of just one. Yet Heppner Mueller says this has also created relationships: “We have had to have conversations with farmers or with store owners and, you know, 99 percent of those conversations have been really positive, and people are just encouraging and cheering us on, and maybe changing their own habits too.”

The family members also document their journey on social media, posting a photo of each garbage audit and other tips and questions from their project. They decided to go public with their experiences not because they wanted to show off their project, but to spark conversation and get more people thinking about their own personal waste.

“We’re still on the journey of taking steps but we’re certainly not perfect yet,” she says of their efforts. “Sometimes we make compromises and say, okay, yeah, we’re having chips today, and it came in a foil lined bag and that sucks.”

But people have told her that her family’s story is more accessible because they do still eat chips and take steps that seem attainable to those following their journey.



Juno with the family’s ice cream pail designated for garbage.

She says people in her community have started asking her questions, like how to compost and what can be recycled.

Awareness is the first step to waste reduction. Heppner Mueller advises people to start with a garbage audit and pick one thing to eliminate from their trash can. ❧



Connie Heppner Mueller stands behind an extra pile of garbage that amounted to more than all the rest of their 2017 waste combined, due to garbage left behind by workers during a small renovation and a downsizing of old keepsakes. She says that without it, the first picture isn’t quite truthful.

/// Briefly noted

MCC thrift shops celebrate Earth Day

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Thrift Shops across Manitoba celebrated Earth Day on April 21 by putting all the proceeds from the day’s sales towards MCC’s agroforestry work in Haiti. They raised more than \$11,300 through customer purchases across Manitoba. This will supply fruit trees to Haitian communities that are affected by deforestation and soil erosion, improving food security, preventing soil erosion and promoting sustainable natural resource management. Camilo Azila-Wiebe, manager of the Selkirk MCC Thrift Shop, said thrift shoppers often don’t know what the funds are used for, so many were interested in this project. “Some people . . . weren’t even aware it was Earth Day, so they were kind of excited then that they could make a bit of an impact by shopping thrifted stuff,” he said. Thrift Shops already promote environmental sustainability on a regular basis by providing a place for people to take used items instead of sending them to the landfill, and encouraging the “reuse” principle by buying used items. Azila-Wiebe also finds places to donate old clothes and dishes in Winnipeg when the local shop doesn’t have success selling them, in order to still find a good home for them.

—BY NICOLIEN
KLASSEN-WIEBE



CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK PHOTO BY VALERIE GWINNER

Kenyan farmer Mary Mutua uses conservation agriculture principles promoted by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Her fields are healthier and more advanced than neighbouring crops. These methods are a way to increase resilience to climate change.

Foodgrains Bank brews climate storm on Twitter

Some donors and farmers reconsider their contributions to food relief organization

BY WILL BRAUN
Senior Writer

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank walks a fine line on climate and walks it well. A recent and rare slip demonstrated the tensions it, like the rest of us, must navigate.

The Hill Times, an Ottawa newspaper aimed at political insiders, wanted articles on global food issues. The Foodgrains Bank helped arrange for such articles by contacting outside writers. A staffer then retweeted one of the articles, noting a tie-in to the Foodgrains Bank. The article said, “Canadian agriculture relies heavily on fossil fuels,” and, “the whole world pays a price for Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions, including some of the poorest regions of the world.”

Some Foodgrains Bank supporters saw this as an attack. And Twitter was there to field their grievances.

“Wow, guess I better rethink where I donate,” tweeted one farmer. “I think a reply, retraction and apology from [the Foodgrains Bank] is appropriate,” tweeted another who also contemplated reduced support. “You’ve earned the respect of mainstream agriculture. Don’t blow it,” wrote an Ontario farmer and former professor. Even the previous federal agriculture minister, Gerry Ritz, weighed in: “Who is running Foodgrains? They seem desperately out of touch with who actually does the work to supply them.”

Of course, Twitter will be Twitter. Jim Cornelius, the Foodgrains Bank’s executive director, posted a response online stating that the article didn’t reflect the organization’s policy, and the tweeters moved on. But underlying tensions remain.

The Foodgrains Bank—which serves as one of two primary channels for Ottawa’s funding for food assistance, and has indeed earned the respect of mainstream agriculture—stands between a group of people whose thin livelihoods are further threatened by climate change and, on the other side, well-to-do Canadian farmers who may or may not believe that climate change is happening, is caused by humans or is exacerbated by Canadian agriculture.

As reported by CBC in April, an Abacus Data poll found that on the question of whether “human-caused climate change is real,” 38 percent of Canadians believe the evidence is either inconclusive or non-existent. I expect the percentage among farmers is well north of 38. But that is both a guess and an oversimplification.

A greater sticking point may be that most people who raise climate concerns—including the writer of the *Hill Times* article—do not demonstrate an understanding of Canadian farmers. In an urbanizing world, farmers tend not to feel understood or appreciated. This sentiment runs deep.

Farmers also tend to be independent. Add to that the fact that they are indeed dependent on fossil fuels. Then add wealth. Most “family farms” are multi-million dollar businesses. And they give millions to the Foodgrains Bank.

Finally, throw in some religion and good old-fashioned animosity towards Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the tax-happy easterner who probably could not tell a combine from a swather, and you get a good-hearted, independent-minded, misunderstood minority with a lot to lose not taking well to urban desk riders telling them they are contributing to global hunger instead of “feeding the world.”

But that is not to say farmers do not notice and respond to climatic realities in their own practical ways. A climate denier is much more likely to be on the bill at a farm conference than David Suzuki, but there may well also be workshops on practices that reduce what others might

call climate impacts. It's complicated. And volatile.

One can see why the Foodgrains Bank retreated with haste, deleting its tweet about the article. But it can only retreat so far.

Farmers it works with overseas repeatedly tell the organization that the climate is changing. Partner organizations, which have a broader view than individual anecdotes, say the same thing. Cornelius notes in a phone interview that the Foodgrains Bank also compares these observations with available data, and this has created a "consistent" picture.

When it comes to climate impacts, the Foodgrains Bank has a front row seat. One of its pamphlets on the matter is blunt: "Climate change is causing suffering among the people we work with—people whose lives depend on growing food in an increasingly precarious climate."

While one farmer and Foodgrains Bank supporter I spoke with was clearly uneasy with this sort of language and the "anecdotal" evidence behind it, Cornelius does not back away from it in any way, saying the Foodgrains Bank has an "obligation" to share stories of how climate contributes to hunger.

But he says the organization leaves it up to others to decide how to respond. While he says there is important work to be done in terms of mitigation, the Foodgrains Bank's intentional focus has long been on how to help farmers abroad adapt to climate change. That is the organization's area of expertise and the area in which it feels it can be most effective. It does not tell Canadian farmers how to farm.

Cornelius notes that such a focus would "create a lot of division among supporters."

The chosen approach is pragmatic, perhaps in keeping with a very pragmatic constituency.

In some ways, the Foodgrains Bank and its donors walk the same fine line we all do. We fear losing what fossil fuels offer us. We cannot begin to imagine it. Whether we hide behind climate scepticism or bold calls to action, we almost all seem to avoid truly significant change. And the finest line may be convincing ourselves we are still generous and caring. ❧

Food Cupboard provides emergency help in Wellesley

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WELLESLEY, ONT.

Four years ago, while part of a missional leadership group, Kara Carter, pastor of Wellesley Mennonite Church, received news from the local school parents advisory group that there were children who were coming to school hungry.

She shared the need with the local ministerial, which explored the issues of food security with regional government officials, Wilmot Family Services and the Waterloo Region Food Bank. Since transportation from the village to urban food bank locations was an issue, the ministerial decided to work at providing a "food cupboard" to provide bridge supplies to local residents.

Christa Gerber, the Wellesley Community Food Cupboard's director, reports that, after being open for more than two years now, 20 community members volunteer to keep the service open on Mondays from 10 a.m. to noon and on Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Outreach workers have 24/7 access.

The Cupboard supports 50 adults and 95 children on a regular basis. It also helps students head back to school by supporting a "back pack" program that provides school supplies and lunch snacks

to nearly a hundred students. And the Wilmot Family Resource Centre runs a "lunch crunch" program in the space, providing lunches to up to 15 students every Monday morning.

But Carter sees the deeper connections growing between local congregations of many denominations who work together rather than against each other. And many local agencies are working together with the congregations. This is a case of "listening to a need in the community, [figure out] how to help, and expand the circle of support," she says. It's "listening to the needs of the families who are using it."

Gerber adds, "We would love to not need to have this program in our community. It is troubling that so many working families are unable to cover all expenses every month. As a community, I am happy that we are able to help where we can."

The Food Cupboard is located at 146 David Street in Wellesley, right across the road from Wellesley Mennonite Church. MennoHomes, which owns the property, supplies the space for the cost of the building's utilities. ❧



WELLESLEY MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO

Kara Carter, pastor of Wellesley Mennonite Church, left, stands with Christa Gerber, chair of the Wellesley Community Food Cupboard Committee and of the Wellesley Mennonite Church Mission Committee.

ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

A must-see for all Canadians

Indian Horse.

Directed by Stephen Campanelli. Written by Dennis Foon and Richard Wagamese. Starring Sladen Peltier and Forrest Goodluck. A Devonshire Productions/Screen Sirens release.

Rated 14A.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Only in the last decade has the extent of Canada's mistreatment of its Indigenous peoples been widely recognized. The most horrific example of this mistreatment was the residential school system that saw 150,000 Indigenous children taken from their families in an attempt to forcibly assimilate them into white Christian culture by driving out Indigenous languages, spirituality and cultural traditions. While this tragic story has been told in a few documentaries, there have been few attempts to relate it through the medium of narrative film.

The recently released *Indian Horse*, directed by Stephen Campanelli, not only corrects that lack but does so with a power and urgency that few Canadian films have achieved. Based on the 2012 novel by Richard Wagamese, who died last year, *Indian Horse* tells the story of Saul Indian Horse, an Ojibwe boy in Northern Ontario, from age six in 1959 through early adulthood in the late 1970s.

Despite his grandmother's desperate attempt to hide him from the authorities, the young Saul is caught and forced into a Catholic residential school. There, Saul (played by Sladen Peltier) experiences and witnesses the kind of cruel, abusive behaviour from teachers (in this case nuns) that led many students to take their own lives. One particularly heinous method of discipline is a small cage in the dark, dank basement of the school. But Saul connects to one of the priests, Father Gaston




(Michael Huisman), who takes an interest in him and introduces him to hockey (on TV).

Practising on his own in the early mornings, with frozen horse droppings for pucks and borrowed skates that are much too big for him, young Saul quickly masters the sport, which becomes not only an escape from the school's cruelties but the focus of his life's path.

As a teen (Forrest Goodluck), Saul is invited by the coach of a small-town Indigenous team (Michael Lawrenchuk) to live with his family and play for his team. Father Quinney (Michael Murphy), the school's principal, reluctantly allows Saul to leave. Saul flourishes in his new loving home but he also experiences the racism of white players and white

(Continued on page 26)

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Schools Directory featuring Conrad Grebel University College

Engineering for peace

By Aurrey Drake
 Conrad Grebel University College
 Waterloo, Ont.

What role do engineers play in building peace around the world?

Systems Design Engineering student Jared Baribeau is exploring this question as he concludes his final year at Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo.

A core value of the College is active peace-making, and with partners like the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement (CPA), students like Jared have access to extraordinary resources, connections and capital to facilitate peace-related projects. "Having the Centre for Peace Advancement right nearby has been a wonderful resource. There's all sorts of expertise here to tap into," explains Jared.

It was through the CPA that Jared was introduced to Demine Robotics, a local start-up that creates robotic landmine excavation systems, specifically for use in Cambodia.

A historically slow and dangerous task, the extraction process is expedited by the semi-autonomous vehicles while keeping the operator out of harm's way. What started out as a fourth-year student design project has evolved into an opportunity to positively impact the world.

"Graduating here in Canada at Grebel and the University of Waterloo, we find ourselves in a position of immense opportunity to right the wrongs out there," said Jared in his valedictory address. He intends to seize this opportunity and looks forward to joining the Demine Robotics team after graduation.

Conrad Grebel University College is a thriving residence and academic community, affiliated with the University of Waterloo and founded by the Mennonite church. The

College's mission is to seek wisdom, nurture faith, and pursue peace and justice in service to church and society.



CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO
'Graduating here in Canada at Grebel and the University of Waterloo, we find ourselves in a position of immense opportunity to right the wrongs out there,' said Jared Baribeau in his valedictory address.



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Displaced Somalis receive school kits, comforters

For Somali families returning home after years in refugee camps, practical gifts bring hope.

canadianmennonite.org/somalis-school-kits



Nepal church celebrates growth

A congregation in Surunga, Nepal, celebrated the inauguration of a new building. Gifts from the worldwide Anabaptist church body helped it happen.

canadianmennonite.org/nepal-church



New Centre for Resilience open for business at CMU

A new CMU centre aims to help businesses and non-profit organizations work together at social and ecological challenges.

canadianmennonite.org/cmu-resilience-centre



AMBS and Grebel to offer sequential degree for pastoral formation

Mennonite theological educators are responding to the reality that students prefer seminary education closer to home.

canadianmennonite.org/sequential-degree



(Continued from page 24)

townspeople, reminding him of his past.

Still playing well as a young adult, Saul (Ajuawak Kapashesit) comes to the attention of an NHL recruiter (Martin Donovan) and begins playing for the Toronto Monarchs, where he finds yet another form of racism. This will be the final straw, leading to an ending that makes it clear we are not watching a sports film.

Indian Horse features spectacular cinematography and some fine acting. Peltier and Goodluck stand out in particular as the younger Saul. The screenplay is generally well written, although the twist at the end is a questionable choice. The direction and acting are occasionally uneven, but *Indian Horse* is an admirable effort for a small Canadian film.

In the end, however, it's not the quality of the film but its story, that is of utmost importance. It's a story that every Canadian needs to know because, in spite of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we have been blind to our racism for far too long and need the power of narrative film to help open our eyes.

Racism and the mistreatment of Canada's Indigenous peoples did not end with the last residential school in 1996. It remains Canada's hidden shame, as witnessed in the struggles on our reserves to have clean drinking water and adequate housing, in the slow response to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and in our country's ongoing efforts to extract resources from Indigenous lands without consent.

During the last century, Mennonites in Canada have often been complicit in this racism—I, for one, grew up with racist attitudes toward Indigenous people in Winnipeg—even as some of our leaders led the way in promoting a better understanding of, and respect for, our Indigenous neighbours. This is surely the path that Jesus calls us to take.

So I am not just recommending *Indian Horse*, but suggesting it is the responsibility of every Canadian to watch this groundbreaking film. Don't be scared off by the 14A rating. The film deals with adult themes, but there is no graphic violence, sex or language. ✎

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Wrestling with challenging texts

Students use creative projects to express feminist perspectives on Bible and theology

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WINNIPEG

Most upper-level university classes end with a final essay, not a photography project, prayerful meditations or a “yarn-bombed” tree. Sheila Klassen-Wiebe, however, took the road less travelled for Feminist Perspectives on Bible and Theology.

Last fall, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) offered this feminist theology class, which was taught by Klassen-Wiebe, an associate professor in biblical and theological studies. Students had the option of doing a creative project rather than a traditional final essay.

The class, which approached the Bible and theology from a feminist perspective and the lived experience of women, was an attempt to look for “whispers of God’s word and good news, but really challenging the oppressive parts of Christian texts and Christian tradition,” she says.

The creative project, she explains, was a recognition that not all people learn the same way or show what they’ve learned in the same way. It was also a way to shake up traditional academia. “I encouraged students to express their learnings in ways that were not your typical, left-brain, write-an-essay type of way,” she says. “It was another way of trying to nudge us out of the ruts.”

Many of the students took up the challenge, including Laura Carr-Pries, who created a worship resource exploring different images of God, including God as midwife, God of wisdom, Mother God, Creator God

and God in community. She says her project was an exploration of the images of God that aren’t traditionally invoked, as well as a way to delve more deeply into her own personal theology, which was formed in church and at home growing up.

“I grew up in a place that’s really intentional about how we describe God, so I wanted to explore that more for myself,” she says. “We use language and metaphors all the time to talk about God, but so often we resort to what we know—Father God, Shepherd God—and what can happen when that can be shifted and opened up a bit more?”

Alyssa Sherlock did a Humans of New York-style photo project involving portraits and quotes. Her project explored themes of perfectionism, self-image and faith among women she knows. One key lesson from her project was the importance of faith in a loving God in women’s paths to self-love, including her own, she says.

“All of the women struggle with self-acceptance, and their faith is a huge way they accept themselves as not perfect,” she says. “Images of God of being very relational, loving you unconditionally, loving you as you are, were very important to these women.”

Erin Froese and her classmate Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe “yarn-bombed” the CMU campus with crocheted squares. Together with a group of other students, the pair

(Continued on page 28)



PHOTO BY ANNA GOERTZEN LOEPPKY

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, left, and Erin Froese pose with their crocheted work.



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

*Laura Carr-Pries created a worship resource in the CMU course, *Feminist Perspectives on Bible and Theology*.*



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Alyssa Sherlock created a photo project exploring themes of perfectionism, self-image and faith.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN FROESE

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe and Erin Froese 'yarn-bombed' a tree on CMU's campus as part of a project exploring ecofeminism.

(Continued from page 27)

crocheted and discussed feminism, and then hung the squares on a tree outside one of CMU's residences.

"We wanted to engage in the art of crocheting, which has often been seen as women's work and not really valued as an art because it is so physical, like the act of creating clothing and blankets," Froese says.

The project explored ecofeminism, which is the understanding that the domination of women and of nature are interconnected, and that liberation for either isn't possible without getting to the root of the systems that oppress both. "It was symbolic of bringing together non-human creation and something that has stereotypically been women's work, to reject patriarchal structures," she says.

While not the first feminist biblical and theological studies class to be offered at CMU, the course is one of a few. Students found the non-traditional takes on the biblical canon to be refreshing.

Carr-Pries believes it's important to

consider the perspectives of those who are typically silenced in academia and in the world, including women, people of colour, and people of different sexualities and gender identities.

"This course itself gave a lot of food for thought and discussion," she says. "It helped give a language to begin to ask questions and have conversations about challenging texts, which I think is really important. Our creative projects, as well as course content, [have] given us insight [into] how to engage with the Bible, and take theology seriously from our lived experience," she says, adding, "I have never talked so much about a class outside of the course itself."

Sheila Klassen-Wiebe says the class was "a gift," and that the creative projects inspired her: "These projects gave me hope. It was amazing, the creativity, the thoughtfulness, the insight that these students put into these projects, of connecting what they were learning in class with real-life matters." ❧

VIEWPOINT

Working together for the common good

Participating in interfaith dialogue is a meaningful way to engage with the world

BY ANNIKA KRAUSE

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNIKA KRAUSE

Participating in Celebrating Our Diversity Now showed Annika Krause that there are many young people who desire to have conversations about faith and religious practices.

This past March, I participated in an interfaith dialogue for young people in Vancouver, hosted by the Armenian Diocese of Canada.

The week-long event, entitled Celebrating Our Diversity Now, was a time of sharing between different religious and cultural groups. Every day, a small gathering of young adults and clergy sat around a table engaging each other and breaking bread together. The faith communities were each given a

chance to offer what they thought people should understand about their faith and practices, and to answer questions from the other communities.

Prior to this event, similar dialogues happened in Montreal, Toronto and Calgary. In Vancouver, the faith communities present around the table included Orthodox Christian, Anglican, Catholic, Buddhist, Sikh, Baha'i, Mormon, Islam, Hare Krishna and several others.

Mornings were dedicated to teaching sessions. In the afternoon, clergy sat on a panel and laypeople asked them questions. This was a unique opportunity, and questions were asked that would usually make people uncomfortable. People asked about Islamophobia, open and closed communion, holy books, gender and sexuality, community growth, and life after death. Despite these potentially volatile topics, people mostly asked questions with a spirit of humility, and people mostly responded with a spirit of generosity.

I saw this both as a participant and a presenter. Together with Tim Kuepfer, pastor of Chinatown Peace Church in Vancouver, I made a presentation about what it means to be Anabaptist.

I shared about the early Anabaptists splitting from the Catholic Church and choosing not to follow Martin Luther. This was my first time speaking on Anabaptist beliefs to a group of people who were not themselves Anabaptists. I had to sift through everything I wanted to say and pick out the essentials. I touched on adult baptism, communion, anticlericalism, pacifism and martyrdom.

Tim spoke on what it means to be Anabaptist today. He talked about what it looked like for him to grow up Amish-Mennonite, showing pictures of how his wife's head coverings changed the longer she was away from the Amish-Mennonite community, until she made the choice to remove it altogether. He also spoke about where in the world Mennonite populations are growing most, and how we, as a diverse group of people, practise our faith today.

I was amazed at how open people were to talking about difficult topics. People acknowledged their own ignorance about each other and asked the different communities to correct their beliefs.

Throughout the conversations many people talked about similarities between different faith groups, and how that could lead to collaborations. Two of the key similarities were experiences of oppression and a desire for peace.

The Armenian Orthodox participants talked about the Armenian genocide, the Muslims talked about Islamophobia

today, the Baha'i representative talked about religious oppression in Iran, and I talked about religious oppression of Anabaptists. Most communities had very strong connections to religious discrimination. Expressing that brought many of us to a deeper understanding of each other.

Every community expressed a desire for peace, many describing what we would understand as shalom. While not all groups considered themselves pacifists, each group expressed a desire to live together in harmony. I don't simply mean co-existing, but interacting with and learning from each other.

The purpose of Celebrating Our Diversity Now was two-fold: for faith communities to come together and share with each other, and to begin talks about having a national interfaith group for young people in Canada. This ambitious goal is just in the beginning stages, but the opportunity to engage with young adults across Canada on issues such as freedom of religion and social justice is certainly intriguing.

Dialogues are one way to engage with the world around us in a meaningful way. This type of engagement prevents us from viewing people who think and believe differently as "other." It was great to have an intentional and safe space to share and learn about religious diversity in Canada. It showed me that there are many young people who desire to have conversations about faith and religious practices. All that's needed is a forum.

While this initiative is in its infancy, it is worth keeping an eye on. It has potential to bring together people who would otherwise have never known each other. It's a great place for young people to share with and learn from each other about the diversity in our country, and how that can be a blessing if we choose to work together for the common good. ❧

Annika Krause, 30, is a member of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver.



ARMENIAN DIOCESE OF CANADA PHOTOS

Representatives from a variety of faiths gathered in Vancouver in March for Celebrating Our Diversity Now, an interfaith dialogue.



Celebrating Our Diversity Now was a time of sharing between different religious and cultural groups.



Constantinos Economos, parish priest at St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Vancouver, speaks at Celebrating Our Diversity Now.



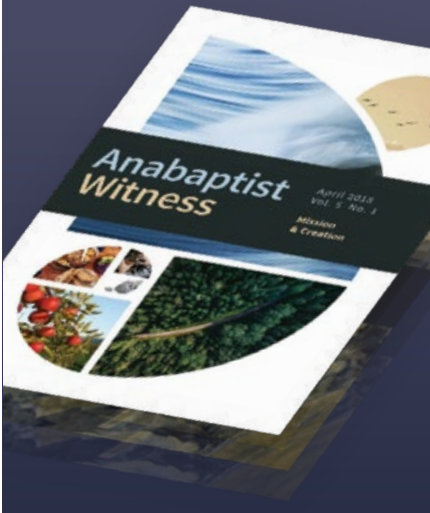
'It was great to have an intentional and safe space to share and learn about religious diversity in Canada,' writes Annika Krause.

Anabaptist Witness

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Calendar

Alberta

May 14-16: MC Alberta's Faith Studies at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary. Theme: "Young adults and the church." Speakers: Peter Epp, Irma Fast-Dueck and Anika Reynar. (14,15) Public events at 7 p.m.

June 1-2: MCC Alberta charity auction and sale, in Didsbury. Events begin with supper at 5 p.m. on June 1 and end at 3 p.m. on June 2. 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, visit mcawomen.com.

June 13: Heritage retreat at Camp Valaqua, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Theme: "Perception in our calling, service and every day." Speaker: Thomas Coldwell, MCC Alberta executive director. For more information, visit mennonitechurch.ab.ca/.

June 16: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon. For more information, call 403-637-2510.

June 17: Camp Valaqua garden party. For more information, call 403-637-2510.

Saskatchewan

May 25-27: SMYO junior high retreat.

Manitoba

May 17: Third annual Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies lecture, at the University of Winnipeg's Manitoba Hall, at 7 p.m. Speaker: Rebecca Janzen of the University of South Carolina. Topic: "Unexpected connections: Mennonites in Mexican media."

May 25-26: MCC Manitoba hosts its annual SpringFest at its Winnipeg office, starting at 10 a.m. each day. Includes plant sale, quilt show and sale, relief kit packing and barbecue lunch. For more information, visit mccmb.ca/springfest.

May 25-27: MC Manitoba's Camps with Meaning hosts Birding Retreat No. 17, at Turtle Mountain Bible Camp. Registration deadline: May 12. For more information, call Paul Friesen at 204-837-4175 or Robb Nickel at 204-475-1904.

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.

Ontario

May 12: "Paddle the Grand" fundraising event in support of Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, at 3 p.m. For

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MENNONITE CREATION CARE NETWORK

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.

May 31-June 3: "Discovery: A Comic Lament," a show about land, love and loss, starring Ted Swartz and Michelle Milne: (31) at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener; (1) at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo; (2) at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran

Church, Cambridge; (3) at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden. All shows at 7:30 p.m. For advance tickets, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/discovery.

June 12: 52nd annual chicken barbecue and pie auction fundraiser, at Hidden Acres Camp, New Hamburg, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Advance tickets required. To reserve a ticket, email info@hiddenacres.ca.

June 23: MennoHomes' Out-spok'n for Affordable Housing bike-a-thon, beginning at Elmira Mennonite Church. Options for hikers, cyclists and motorcyclists. For more information, call Dan Driedger at 226-476-2535.

U.S.A.

June 22-24: Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship annual gathering, at Bluffton (Ohio) University. Theme: "Stories of healing." For more information, or to register, visit mennohealth.org/gathering.

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



Classifieds

Advertising Information

Contact
D. Michael Hostetler
1-800-378-2524 x.224
advert@canadianmennonite.org

Employment Opportunities

 **North Kildonan Mennonite Church** Employment opportunity

North Kildonan Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba invites applications for a half-time **Faith Development Pastor**. The successful candidate will be working with the Sunday school, youth and young adults at NKMC and will report to the Lead Pastor.

To learn more about us, go to www.northkildonanmc.com. Email your applications to Jeff Zacharias, at jnzachar@gmail.com. Deadline for applications is June 8, 2018.

Community Mennonite Fellowship
Employment Opportunity

Community Mennonite Fellowship, in Drayton, Ontario, is looking for a part-time (15 hours per week) **Youth Worker** to join our staff team.

Primary responsibilities include oversight of our senior and junior youth ministries and supportive oversight / resourcing the young adult leaders in our young adult ministry. A full job description is available on request.

The successful candidate will be passionate about their personal relationship with God, excited about ministry to youth and young adults, and committed to making disciples of Jesus. Inquiries and resumes may be sent to: pastor@cmfdrayton.ca.

Carman Mennonite Church
Employment opportunity

Carman Mennonite Church in Carman, Manitoba, invites applications for a **full time-lead pastor**. Start time is negotiable.

We are a multi-generational congregation with an average of 120 attending worship services. We seek a pastor to lead in helping us grow as followers of Jesus Christ and who is committed to Anabaptist theology. Strengths in leadership, preaching, and pastoral care are essential.

All inquiries may be directed to rneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca. Church profile and job duties are available from the same contact.

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

<http://goldenwestsites.com/carmanmennonitechurch>

 **First Mennonite Church Edmonton** Inviting applications: **Full-time pastor**

We at First Mennonite Church Edmonton are a multi-generational, urban church of approximately 180, guided by Anabaptist theology and principles. God has called us to be an inclusive, affirming, Christian community. Members and adherents are actively involved in church and community ministries and programs.

Preaching, worship planning and pastoral care are all important to the congregation, but we recognize that some pastors might excel more in some areas than others. Master of Divinity/Theology or equivalent training or experience is desirable.

More information is available on the church website: edmonton1st.mennonitechurch.ab.ca and at Mennonite Church Alberta: www.mennonitechurch.ab.ca

Inquiries, resumes and letters of interest may be directed to the chair of the search committee Adela Wedler at mwedler@shaw.ca

Forming Leaders for the Church

Canadian Mennonite University's Graduate School of Theology and Ministry



1 An Anabaptist – Ecumenical Learning Community

CMU and GSTM are rooted within Anabaptist Christian faith commitments and welcome a diverse spectrum of students. Students from many streams of the Mennonite-Anabaptist family study together with those from evangelical, mainline, and global church backgrounds.

2 Theological Formation on a University Campus

The inter-disciplinary context of a Christian university opens important learning opportunities that broaden theological education and ministry formation. CMU's commitment to undergraduate Biblical and Theological formation also provides a significant gift to the church.

3 Seminary Education in a Canadian Context

Within a secular culture, Canadian churches face opportunities and challenges including indigenous reconciliation, refugee settlement, inter-faith witness, and mission. Given significantly changing denominational structures, GSTM's commitment to theological training, pastoral formation, and vocational preparation equips church leaders for ministry in Canadian contexts.

4 In-Depth and Flexible Graduate Programs

A supportive learning community helps students invigorate the Christian traditions from which they come. Students enter GSTM programs on a full- or part-time basis and via on-site, distance (live-stream), and intensive course options.

Master of Arts: Concentration in Christian Ministry

for students preparing for pastoral ministry, chaplaincy, missions, or work with parachurch organizations; this includes an integrated, supervised ministry experience.

Master of Arts: Concentration in Theological Studies

for students preparing for diverse pastoral or parachurch ministry roles, PhD studies, or work in various professions.

One-Year Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies

for students seeking a deeper Biblical and Theological grounding to meet individual learning and ministry needs.

5 Accessible Tuition and Generous Bursary and Scholarship Support

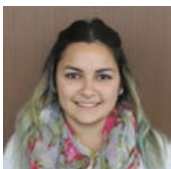
GSTM offers quality learning at an affordable tuition cost. GSTM tuition is approximately 40% less than the average seminary tuition cost in Canada.



My GSTM studies have enabled me to dive into questions of my faith and form a deeper connection with God. I've encountered refreshing insights into theology and the church that I've been able to share in diverse settings.

CMU's one-week intensive and online courses, alongside courses with the Canadian School of Peacebuilding, give the needed flexibility and opportunity for someone from a distance to be a part-time graduate student while in full-time pastoral ministry.

Doug Klassen (Current GSTM student, MA Theological Studies; Senior Pastor, Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, AB)



I find myself going home excited about what I'm learning because I see my learning actually affecting not just my work, but my life in general—my conversations, the way I go about my day. My experience in the GSTM is transforming me into a more faithful

leader. I find inspiration in my professors as people who are living out what they say they believe. This gives me such hope and encouragement.

Andrea De Avila (Current GSTM student, MA Theological Studies; Associate Pastor, Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, MB)



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For more information phone: **204.487.3300**
or contact Karl Koop at **kkoop@cmu.ca**