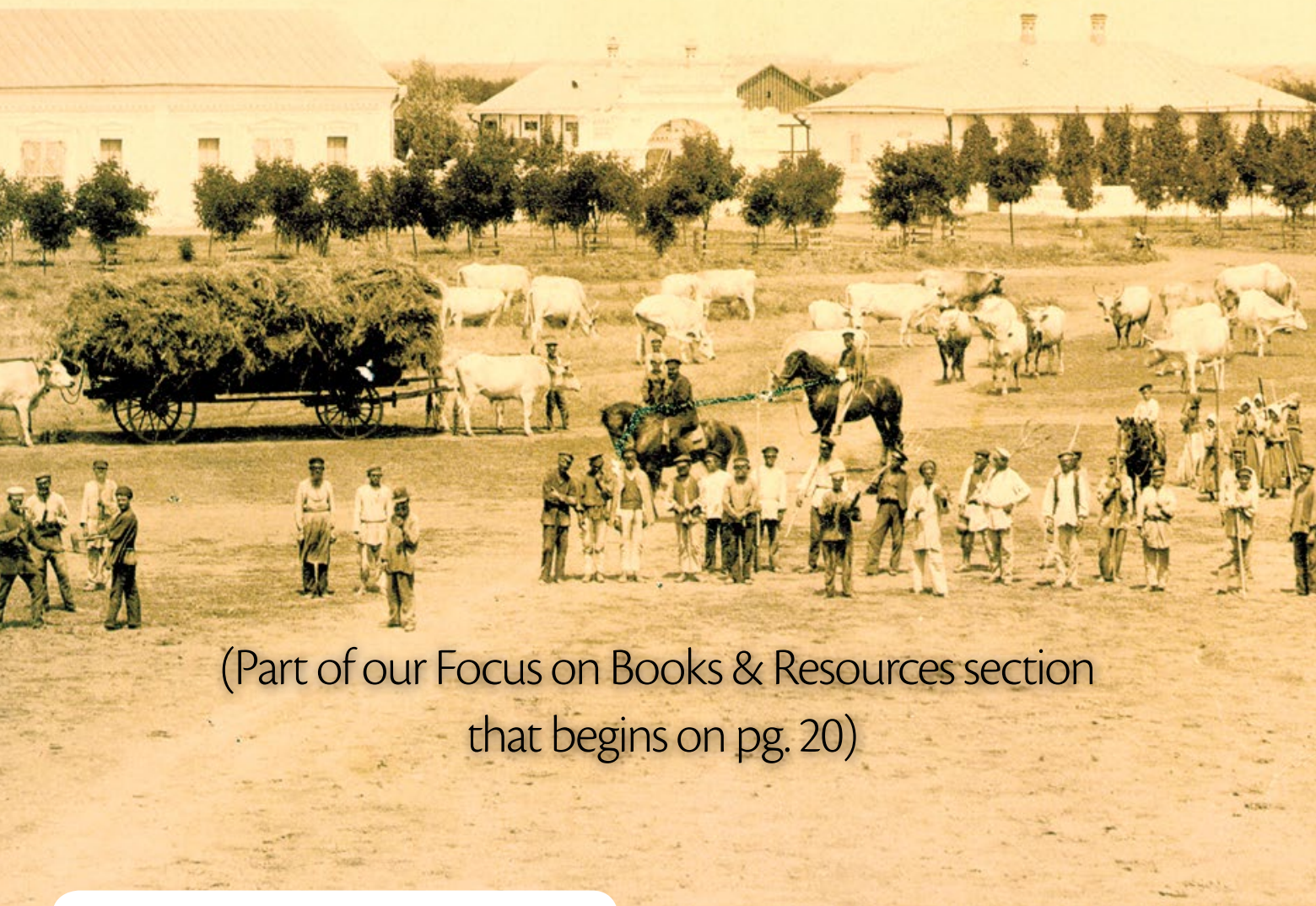


# CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 15, 2019 Volume 23 Number 8

## From power to pathos

*The Russian Mennonite Story in pictures*



(Part of our Focus on Books & Resources section  
that begins on pg. 20)

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## EDITORIAL

# First impressions

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



**C**onfession: I once shooed a visitor away from “my” bench at church. (I was saving a spot for my husband.) Fortunately, the visitor stayed and I could apologize for my thoughtless act.

My family has stories of times when we, as visitors, felt anything but welcome at a new church. Once, my husband and I were guest speakers. As we tended to the display we had brought, we suddenly realized that the scheduled potluck was underway. We wandered down the empty hallway to discover that people were already eating. We had to scrape the bottom of the dishes to get enough food! At another new church, we asked someone about the location of the adult Sunday school class only to receive a vague gesture toward one end of the unfamiliar building.

Then there was the time we showed up at a church to be greeted by a door sign announcing the worship was following the “summer schedule,” with no indication of the actual service time. Once, at the glass door of a new church, I was unsure how to enter, since a man was chatting with friends, his back to the door, blocking my way. We’ve encountered icy walkways and conflicting information on church websites. We’ve attended entire worship services at new churches without being greeted—either before or after—by one single person.

In the well-known “sheep and goats” Bible passage, Jesus is clear about the people we should care for. He praises the “sheep”: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35b). Visitors to

your church are strangers who represent Jesus himself.

Some positive welcome stories: Receiving translation help in churches with languages unfamiliar to us, and an offer to get a church mailbox on the second Sunday our family visited a service. Recently, when I visited a church alone, a member met me at the coat-rack and invited me to sit with her in the service. Although we have no great singing abilities, on the first Sunday visiting another church, my husband and I received an invitation from a man nearby to sing in the church choir!

Visitors showing up at your church are seeking a simple recognition that they matter to you. Maybe they are even considering making this their church home. In either case, a few things can make that first visit welcoming:

- **Make sure** there are friendly greeters at the main entrances to the church and that greeters direct visitors to the correct spots.
- **Your church’s** public announcements should include specifics about the location of events: for example, exactly where coffee is served.
- **Keep your** church website and social media presence up to date. For some, your online presence will be the first point of connection.
- **If your** church aims to offer a welcome to folks from the LGBTQ+ community, display symbols or printed statements indicating that. Consider having at least one washroom that is not gender-specific—and post signs to it.
- **Invest in** a quality sound system for those who are hard of hearing. (No, your

un-miked voice is not loud enough.)

- **Install** a ramp and a lift or elevator for those with mobility issues. Make space in the worship area for wheelchairs and walkers.
- **Consider how** your worship space and service serve families with children. Also, have a room where parents and young children can go, if needed. Give directions to it.
- **During informal** times, be deliberate about introducing yourself to visitors. Find out something about them and introduce them to someone else with whom they might have something in common. Or tell them about a program your church offers that might interest them.
- **Make your** contribution to the church potluck large enough so you can tell an impromptu visitor that there’s enough food for them. Then invite them to your table.
- **Do not** make visitors stand up and introduce themselves in a public setting. If you’re sitting near them, ask them privately if they’d like to be introduced. If so, you can do the public introduction.

Our actions of inclusion carry out the biblical command to welcome the stranger. That is enough reason to be welcoming. But if we “do” welcome well, those first impressions might lead visitors to stick around and become “one of us.” That’s even better!

For one church’s story of welcome, see today’s feature, “God has swept us together,” on page 4.

## Goodbye

At the end of March, we bade adieu to Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, who has served as *CM’s* Alberta correspondent since 2000. On page 19, you can read about some of her contributions to the magazine over the years. We offer Donita a hearty “thank you!” and wish her well in her ongoing communications ministry.



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## CANADIAN MENNONITE

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

Website: [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)

Facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite @CanMenno

### Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: [submit@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:submit@canadianmennonite.org)

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Board Chair, Henry Krause, [hakrause@telus.net](mailto:hakrause@telus.net), 604-888-3192

### Canadian Mennonite Staff:

Publisher, Tobi Thiessen, [publisher@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:publisher@canadianmennonite.org)

Executive Editor, Virginia A. Hostetler, [editor@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:editor@canadianmennonite.org)

Managing Editor, Ross W. Muir, [managinged@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:managinged@canadianmennonite.org)

Online Media Manager, Aaron Epp, [onlinemgr@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:onlinemgr@canadianmennonite.org)

Contributing Editor, Rachel Bergen, [contribed@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:contribed@canadianmennonite.org)

Editorial Assistant, Barb Draper, [edassist@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:edassist@canadianmennonite.org)

Graphic Designer, Betty Avery, [designer@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:designer@canadianmennonite.org)

Circulation/Finance, Lisa Jacky, [office@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:office@canadianmennonite.org)

Advertising Manager, D. Michael Hostetler, [advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org)

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

Senior Writer, Will Braun, [seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org)

B.C. Correspondent, Amy Dueckman, [bc@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:bc@canadianmennonite.org)

Saskatchewan Correspondent, Donna Schulz, [sk@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:sk@canadianmennonite.org)

Manitoba Correspondent, Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, [mb@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:mb@canadianmennonite.org)

Eastern Canada Correspondent, Janet Bauman, [ec@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ec@canadianmennonite.org)

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

## FEATURE

# God has swept us together

The journey of reconciliation at Holyrood Mennonite Church

By Werner De Jong



PHOTOS BY HELENA BALL

*Holyrood Mennonite Church's puppeteers, pictured left to right: Pastor Werner De Jong, Helena Chokpelleh, Zach Chokpelleh and Joanne De Jong.*

**Embracing people of other cultures in our congregations provides a natural bridge to the wider church, something that is critical at a time of increasing nationalism. This embrace stands as a witness to the world that unity and reconciliation among diverse peoples is possible.**

**N**ear the beginning of J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy, Frodo speaks memorable words to his fellow hobbit Sam about the adventure that lies before them: "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to." While their odyssey was fraught with risk, the journey was well worth it, with both characters being transformed through their participation in the mission to assure that darkness did not consume their world.

Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton is a multicultural congregation consisting primarily of older traditional Mennonites and younger West African immigrants. Together, we are participating in the adventure of becoming one body. The journey is never boring.

We began our common journey with no clear idea of where it might take us, yet we are finding ourselves transformed into greater Christlikeness through walking the way of reconciliation together. We are learning to integrate two very different cultural groups into one church body. There have been gifts and struggles along the way.

After worship one Sunday, a senior member of our congregation told me, "I just want you to know that I don't like the African music. . . . I prefer the theological richness of the songs in our Mennonite hymnal."

Immediately I tensed up, but his next words warmed my heart: "Having said that, I want you, as our pastor, to ensure that we, as a congregation, never stop singing the African songs, because it's not just about what I want. As a multicultural congregation, we must be hospitable and make space for each other."

Our journey began in 2001, when Holyrood sponsored four young Liberian men as refugees. Today, 40 percent of the congregation of about 100 active members, with an average Sunday worship attendance of about 70, consists of West Africans, primarily from Liberia.

Shortly after I arrived as pastor in 2006,

I asked one of our Liberian members, "Why did you stay in this church once you arrived in Canada?" His answer was instructive: "We did visit other churches in Edmonton, and every church welcomed us. . . . But it went no further than that. Holyrood was the one church that invited us to use our gifts to help serve the congregation. The reason we are here is because we not only want to be welcome, we also want to participate."

Today, we have six elders, four of whom are African. We have western and African preachers, Sunday school teachers, worship leaders and ushers. Our efforts to incorporate different peoples into one body have brought three main gifts.

### **Global church engagement**

Embracing people of other cultures in our congregations provides a natural bridge to the wider church, something that is critical at a time of increasing nationalism. This embrace stands as a witness to the world that unity and reconciliation among diverse peoples is possible.

Through our Liberian members, we have been in partnership with two related Liberian Free Pentecostal groups since 2008. In 2010, I was honoured to be the keynote speaker at the annual national conference of the Free Pentecostal Mission of Liberia. The conference ground we met on was riddled with bullet holes, and many church members had been killed on that very land. The theme for the conference was chosen specifically in light of our partners' new understanding of what a Mennonite speaker might have to offer: "Jesus is our peace, for he has knocked down the dividing wall between us."

The blessings of the partnership flow both ways. Holyrood hosted two return visits from a Liberian Pentecostal pastor, and her teaching has been both inspiring and challenging, encouraging us to trust God, seek God in fasting and prayer, depend on the Holy Spirit and engage more in evangelism.

### **Spiritual renewal**

Our African members contribute

vibrancy and passion to our worship services, especially when it is the African team's turn to lead the singing. They engage their entire bodies in worship, clapping, dancing and raising hands. Over the years, a few traditional Mennonites have learned to clap as well. Some even sway a little!

Holyrood's African members enrich the congregation through their strong faith in God's goodness and strength. Having survived a civil war, they display a faith that is not merely intellectual belief in the existence of God, but active trust and conviction that the God who was present in severe trial can be counted on to be present in any life situation.

To witness such faith is a blessing to those of us who have grown up in a sceptical secular society. We benefit greatly from encountering strong enthusiasm for prayer and from hearing regular testimonies about answered prayer.

In our experience, African spiritual vitality energizes a missional impulse, integrating the interior life of devotion with the exterior life of action. It is common, for example, for Holyrood's African members to invite friends to church. At a time when many churches in the West are in numerical decline, we can learn from our global brothers and sisters' passion for bearing verbal witness to their faith in Jesus.

Of course, learning from each other's spiritual traditions flows in both directions. At Holyrood, many of our western members volunteer time to serve their neighbours in practical ways at the food bank, the Mennonite Central Committee thrift store, or Habitat for Humanity. We also emphasize, and seek to live out, the traditional Anabaptist values of working for peace, justice and reconciliation in our relationships.

Our African members have expressed appreciation for this Anabaptist peace emphasis, and they have shared some of it with their fellow Africans in the city.

### **Strengthened community life**

In a world often divided along racial lines, nothing warms my heart more than to witness the genuine and mutual affection between Holyrood's diverse members.



Our congregational life has become a school of reconciliation, in which we are all learning to respect and appreciate people who are different from us, to see the good and the potential in each other, and to recognize each other as cherished brothers and sisters in Christ. When we serve our neighbours together as a visible community, our actions are a witness that reconciliation is a reality in Jesus Christ.

### Not without challenges

As enriching as our journey has been, the way has not always been smooth. No adventure worthy of the name is without challenges.

Various sources of friction include our different ways of prioritizing time, our different understandings of the relationship between money and friendship, and our divergent worship styles.

Less frequently, questions arise about theological differences. Because of these things, a few members from both sides of the congregation left and joined mono-cultural congregations.

For the large majority who have chosen to remain together, our common journey requires a good measure of humility, forbearance and generosity on all sides, as we lay aside personal preferences in favour of the common good, we are patient with each other's strange ways, and we give each other sufficient space to express our God-given gifts.

In practical terms, we have found it helpful to address our differences head on. One fall, we dedicated each week of our adult Sunday school class to comparing Canadian and West African cultures. It was the best-attended class in my years at Holyrood, a sign of our desire to know each other better.

The other significant challenge is related to power, especially with respect to how we make decisions in the congregation. In western culture, people readily think in terms of their own individual needs, and most people feel empowered to express their opinions as individuals. In West African culture, people think first in terms of the needs of the community and tend not to express individual opinions. Instead, they look to their leaders to express the voice of the community.



*One of Holyrood's music teams. Pictured from left to right: Cajetan Ngede, Gordon Baergen and Dorothy Chokpelleh.*

At Holyrood, this dynamic is most evident at our congregational meetings, which are often poorly attended by our African members, apart from a few leaders. Those Africans who are absent understand that their voice will be heard through their leaders, while the westerners wonder why so few African members are present. It is good for westerners to understand that the voice of one African

leader at such meetings likely represents the voices of many others.

We are glad that God has swept us together into our shared adventure. We are being blessed, challenged and transformed by the gift of each other. We need each other, and we are learning to appreciate and depend on each other.

It is a privilege to participate together in God's mission, to shine the light of God's reconciling love into a world darkened by division. In an increasingly multicultural world, the future of the church is multicultural, and we are grateful to be part of it. ☸



*Werner De Jong is pastor of Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton.*

*Adapted from an article he wrote in consultation with*

*Holyrood's adult Sunday school class. It appeared in the Fall 2018 issue of Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology. Reprinted with permission.*

### /// For discussion

1. How much cultural diversity is in your congregation? Are you comfortable worshipping with people of a different culture? What does it take to be hospitable and make space for another culture? What do you see as the blessings and challenges of cultural diversity?
2. The Bible says that the church is one body with many members (Romans 12:4-8, I Corinthians 12:12-20). Do you understand these passages to mean that congregations should accommodate everyone from a different culture? Why might traditional Mennonites be hesitant to have someone from a different culture serve on their board of elders?
3. If you were on the new hymnal committee, how would you choose which songs to include? Can stoic Mennonites be taught to appreciate clapping and other movements during worship? How do "traditional" Mennonites express emotion?
4. When a cultural group is transplanted to Canada, what is the preferred culture of the children? What factors determine the point at which the language of the home becomes English? What do you expect to happen as our church and our world becomes more multicultural?

—By Barb Draper

See related resources at  
[www.commonword.ca/go/1507](http://www.commonword.ca/go/1507)

**CommonWord**  
 Bookstore and Resource Centre

## /// Readers write

### ✉ Mennonite camps exist outside of Ontario and Manitoba

Re: “Focus on Camping,” Feb. 18, pages 23-28.

One might think from reading these stories that no Mennonite camps existed west of Manitoba. We know that’s not the case, so maybe a better title would have been “Focus on Camping in Eastern Canada.”

LINDA WIEBE DICKINSON, AIRDRIE, ALTA.

*Editor’s note: Canadian Mennonite solicits material from Mennonite camps across the country and publishes or posts online the stories we receive.*

### ✉ Einstein quote was originally written in German

Re: “Einstein on the Bible,” Feb. 18, page 11.

The maturity of *Canadian Mennonite* is indeed praiseworthy!

What readers of “Et cetera” might not be aware of is that Einstein conducted all of his correspondence and his professional work in the German language while in the United States.

HEINRICH [HEINZ] BERGEN, REGINA

### ✉ Women Talking is ‘a human story . . . a work of art’

Re: “Author Miriam Toews a ‘two-trick’ pony” letter, March 4, page 7.

Miriam Toews’s book *Women Talking* resonated with me. Her background information was this: In the Manitoba Colony in Bolivia between 2005 and 2009 many girls and women were sexually attacked in the night by some men in the colony. Eventually eight men were convicted in a Bolivian court and received lengthy prison sentences. Toews constructed her novel “as a reaction through fiction to these true-life events, and an act of female imagination.”

In her story eight multigenerational women from

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two families gather to discuss their course of action. They come up with three responses: Do nothing, stay and fight, or leave. The women discuss big ideas and frequently they digress as they struggle with their pain and anger, and also the demands of children and animals on the farm. They believe in pacifism, they sing hymns and pray, they practise foot-washing. The Mennonite colony structure is a patriarchy and women’s rights are less than men’s. Do they have the right to their own thoughts?

What does it mean to be a practicing Mennonite? Does it mean adult baptism, pacifism, shunning, being separate, being perfect? All the brands of Mennonites share the Menno Simons story. Some are more “liberal” than others. Does that mean we have little in common with other human beings in a conservative setting?

I think Toews has given us a human story. Her book is a work of art; she deals with a heartbreaking subject with wit, humour and imagination.

EVELYN HOEPPNER, MORDEN, MAN.

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Grunau**—Alex Benjamin (b. Feb. 19, 2019), to Corinne Klassen and Darren Grunau, Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg.

### Deaths

**Goerzen**—Gerhard, 92 (b. July 30, 1926; d. March 5, 2019), Harrow Mennonite, Ont.

**Good**—Vera, 103 (b. Nov. 13, 1915; d. March 19, 2019), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Janzen**—Ernest Rudolph, 81 (b. May 11, 1937; d. Feb. 23, 2019), Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont.

**Lepp**—David, 98 (b. Oct. 20, 1920; d. March 17, 2019), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

**Letskeman**—Helen (nee Fehr), 77 (b. May 9, 1941; d. March 11, 2019), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Schell**—Edith Sider (nee Jewitt), 93 (b. Feb. 18, 1926; d. Feb. 25, 2019), Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

**Snyder**—Doug, 77 (b. April 14, 1941; d. March 10, 2019), St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

**Steckley**—William Lloyd, 90 (b. June 28, 1928; d. Dec. 2, 2018), Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

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

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## Whose are we?

Cathrin van Sintern-Dick

“It isn’t the authority which is given to me, but the authority under whose I am,” was the answer of a friend when I asked, “So what is it like to wear a clerical collar?” In other words, it isn’t so much who I am, but whose I am, to whom I belong and under whose authority I reach out and speak from.

As pastors, chaplains or church leaders, we can be challenged by the authority given to us, while, at the same time, honouring the one under whose authority we truly are. From there, we engage with the people and communities around us.

Lent invites us to go deep, deeper into ourselves and into the relationship with the One who took up the cross for us. “Whose am I?” can become a question for those considering or entering ministry. It can also be a question for pastors who find themselves between positions or who are discerning a call into a specific ministry setting.

For me, this question came up when I

retired from pastoral ministry in 2012. I was asked if I was “done with ministry.” I wasn’t sure. I had been ordained twice, once in Germany and once in Canada. I had served two churches in two different countries on two different continents in two different languages. I loved ministry. So, was I done? Can you ever be done with ministry? Apparently not.

There were friends and colleagues along the way who engaged me with ministry on different levels, to feel it out, to see if it still worked for me. I am thankful for the opportunities they provided. Ministry still worked for me. First, with a call to chaplaincy and later with the appointment to be a regional ministry associate with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

In both roles, the question of whose we are can be asked and answers can be sought out. It is not the same as the “What would Jesus do?” movement of my youthful years. It is not about impersonating Jesus and falling short, but about an

awareness of where we are coming from and where we want to go. I come to both of my roles with an understanding that we make mistakes. And that we are part of institutions that aren’t perfect because we are not perfect. But, as challenging as ministry can be at times, we can be resilient, and we can grow, learn and initiate change, because we know whose we are.

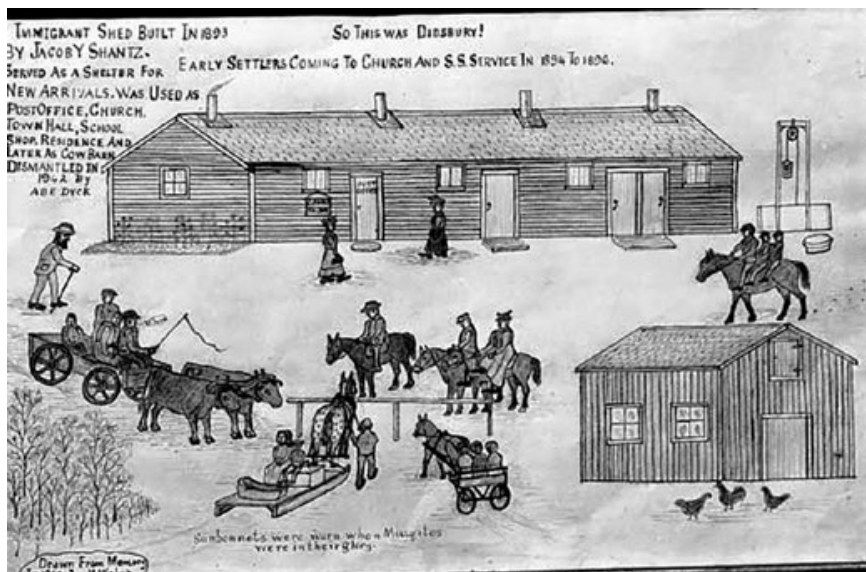
In the coming weeks, we move together towards the cross, reaffirming the presence of the resurrected Christ in our midst, and therefore reaffirming whose we are. ☿



*Cathrin van Sintern-Dick is a regional ministry associate for MC Eastern Canada. She is part of the church leadership*

*team that supports pastors by providing pastoral care, connections and resources across the regional church’s community of congregations.*

## A moment from yesterday



Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing

Photo: David L. Hunsberger / Mennonite Archives of Ontario Mission Photo Collection

In 1893, Kitchener, Ont., businessman Jacob Y. Shantz secured land from the government and railway, and he promoted the Didsbury, Alta., settlement to eastern Mennonites. The West was a great unknown to many, who felt they would never see their westbound relatives again once they departed for the land of “buffaloes and Indians.” In 2016, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, in the pages of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta newsletter, would wonder, “Who lived on the family farm east of Didsbury before we did? . . . Why am I not aware of their stories?” In 1950, M. Weber drew from memory the shelter that greeted the first settlers to the district.



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## IN THE IMAGE

# Holiness doesn't demand perfection

Ed Olfert

**T**owards the end of 2006, I burned out as a full-time minister. I had failed to find adequate supports for my introverted spirit in an extroverted role. I chose not attend the church while it made decisions about future directions and leadership.

With a bit of a shock, I realized during the year away from the faith community that the role of church for me had largely been filled by the Circle of Support and Accountability (CoSA) with which I'd had a decade of history.

We started the first Circle in Prince Albert in 1997. We didn't have rules and a constitution; we just did what felt right. As a result, 10 years on, every offender that we had taken on remained among us. We now had six released offenders and eight volunteers. Those were exciting years, as we watched longer-term Circle guys take on responsibility for supporting the newer members. We also laughed a lot, which made meetings fun places to be. Most of the guys had offended sexually, yet, given a setting of trust, they offered their best.

As I realized that this crew had taken on that spiritual role, in which I was loved, supported and, on occasion, held accountable, I proposed to them that we celebrate that in a service of communion. Most of

the offenders were uneasy, having little or no history to help them understand what that meant. But there was also significant trust, as we assured them that this could be an important way to understand the significance of our community.

A fellow volunteer, Tina, agreed to help with the preparations. One offender simply was not comfortable with participating—who knows what his church story entailed—and he left.

Tina set up a pitcher of juice and a tray of crackers. She reminded me that, in her tradition, the elements are transformed into the actual body of Christ. That was tested a little when the guys came in from outside, and one of them, Mike, charged across the room, telling us loudly how thirsty he was, poured himself a tumbler and slugged it back. A life sentence beginning in his teens had not served Mike well with social delicacies. Our ability to laugh served us well.

After I explained how communion was talked about in the Bible, Tina and I took turns offering individual blessings. Each one present, offender and volunteer alike, was told about the particular gifts and strengths that he or she brought to make this Circle strong and holy while being offered juice and crackers. Each one was invited to respond, and it became a

time that was larger than the individuals gathered. Although the offenders present represented around a century of incarceration, tears mixed freely with laughter and embraces. It remains a strong memory. Recently, two of the people present suggested that it was the most powerful communion experience they could recall.

What has happened to the guys? In the last 13 years, two have died. Another married and started a family. One fellow experienced a traumatic event on the job, unrelated to his offence history, and is on permanent disability. Another is out of the province but stays in touch. An older fellow is working on repairing broken family relationships.

The offender who could not be present at our service is again incarcerated. There remains a level of trust that he seems unable to surmount.

When we offer holiness, it is returned. That's how I understand our creation, each one, in God's image. Thankfully, holiness doesn't demand perfection. ☯



*epheo@sasktel  
es to be energized  
ation.*

## Et cetera

### House of Commons, House of Prayer

Before each sitting of the Canadian House of Commons, and before the chamber is opened to the public and media, the Speaker reads the following prayer: "Almighty God, we give thanks for the great blessings which have been bestowed on Canada and its citizens, including the gifts of freedom, opportunity and peace that we enjoy. . . . Guide us in our deliberations as Members of Parliament, and strengthen us in our awareness of our duties and responsibilities as Members. Grant us wisdom, knowledge and understanding to preserve the blessings of this country for the benefit of all and to make good laws and wise decisions. Amen."

Photo by Adam Scott / Prime Minister's Office



## WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

# MW Canada theme puts words into action

By Janette Thiessen  
Mennonite Women B.C.

“**W**omen walking together in faith“ is such a fitting theme as I observe life around me this Easter season. The “walking together” part, which carries echoes of the two disciples sharing concerns on the road to Emmaus, draws me in and certainly includes upholding our sisters in prayer, particularly during challenging times. On so many occasions people I know have needed prayer, and the call went out for church friends and family to join together in prayer. Significant answers resulted.

Recently, a prayer regarding a broken marital relationship was answered the very next day. God is so good.

That’s not to say prayers must be answered quickly or in the way we want them answered, but the way in which God answered this one was encouraging to me.

so to speak. For the older women experiencing loss or serious health challenges, prayer support is crucial on their journey.

It’s comforting to share our stories and know that others resonate through similar experiences. It reminds us that we are not alone in our journey and that we can draw strength from the mainstays of our Anabaptist faith: Jesus is the centre of our faith; community is the centre of our lives; reconciliation is the centre of our work.

Another aspect of walking together in faith is speaking into each other’s lives. This often happens in church settings, where women gather in small groups for common purposes, such as Bible and book studies, card-making and quilting, coffee chats, and moms-and-tots gatherings. As relationships build to a depth that allows for deep personal connection, the result can be faith sisters who are able to offer support during difficult times by sharing wisdom and advice, and especially praying for each other.

Preparing and serving meals for church functions and funerals—perhaps not as common these days as in the past—is another way women work together in the life of the church. Service is our faith evidenced, and it’s easier and more fun done together with others. Camaraderie is built when working towards a common goal.

In addition, our verbal and physical expressions of support are often enhanced at wider social gatherings such as the annual MC B.C. gatherings for Women’s Day on May 4, and the annual retreat from Oct. 18 to 20 this year.

Also this year, there’s the added bonus of hosting Mennonite Women Canada’s annual meeting, in Abbotsford, on June 30. These events are opportunities for women to spend time together, relax and get away from our busy day-to-day lives, as well as to be resourced and encouraged by keynote speakers.

As we move forward through our lives, let us, like the Emmaus disciples, be receptive and open to recognizing when God provides new opportunities for us as we enter each day, and let us continue walking together in faith. ☸



*Our verbal and physical expressions of support are often enhanced at wider social gatherings.*

God is also quite creative in answering our prayers in ways we can’t even imagine. So I share these words to stress the importance of women supporting each other on their faith journey, especially through prayer, because it is vital to our well-being.

The local church is one of the main ways for women to congregate and support each other. This happens on a weekly basis as we gather for worship on Sundays, a chance to connect with each other. And when we ask “How are you?” let’s let that be heartfelt and allow time for an honest answer. For the young women, just knowing there are others experiencing life similarly is encouraging and helps them to “just keep swimming,”



*Janette Thiessen is Mennonite Church B.C.’s office administrator and MW Canada’s B.C. representative.*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

## Gathering 2019 is for the whole family

By Heidi Epp

I have many fond memories of attending our annual national events over my lifetime, beginning in my youth at Great Treks and then as a young adult at assemblies. I remember creative and inspiring worship; animated, even heated, business meetings; and, most significantly, making personal connections with my faith community from across the country.

Now we have restructured, and many of us are wondering what this means for our gatherings, and our relationships with each other. What can you expect at this gathering?

Gathering 2019 in Abbotsford, B.C., is for everyone in the family. We want to gather to connect with each other, to hear each other's celebrations, griefs, struggles, hopes, doubts and creativity. We want to hold each other in prayer, but also physically, by shaking hands and embracing over coffee. We want to hear the dreams that God inspires in each of our generations. This gathering is being planned intentionally to bring everyone in the family together, of every age and in every stage of their spiritual journey. We want to celebrate the family that God has



called us to be. This includes activities like an intergenerational crokinole tournament on the evening of June 28, at which participants will be paired with someone from another province. There

will be special trophy awards for this tournament. Families who play together hear each other better.

There is a children's program planned to complement the adult sessions, including teaching, worship and music, and creative indoor and outdoor activities. The children will share some of their experiences in the combined worship time on the morning of Canada Day, July 1.

Youth will bus to Camp Squeah near Hope, B.C., on June 29 and stay overnight. This is an opportunity for them to have their own time to connect, go hiking and swimming, and to engage in conversation about their thoughts on what it means to be "the church."

On the evening of June 29 and the following afternoon, workshops for adults will be offered, as well as several field trips for adults, families, youth and young adults to local sites and ministries. On

the evening of June 30, there will be a coffeehouse geared for young adults but open to all those young at heart!

Finally, July 1 will conclude with a worship time for everyone to celebrate all that God is calling Mennonite Church Canada to be. We will bless each other in and continue to grow in our faith, and in our relationship with each other and the world.

To do "church" is really to do "family." Family is an inclusive, sustaining gift from God. So let's open the windows and doors of our imagination and let the Spirit breathe into us as a family. That means we need everyone at the table! ☸

Registration will soon be open for Gathering 2019! Visit [ignitegathering2019.ca/registration](http://ignitegathering2019.ca/registration).



Heidi Epp is the event planner for Gathering 2019. She is an active member of Yarrow United Mennonite Church and conductor of The Fraser Valley Children's Chorus and Yarrow Community Choir.



## Et cetera

## Butterflies on the border

Walls take many forms. The walls the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) borderlands delegation saw at the Arizona/Mexico border were made of concrete and metal, meant to deprive people of their rights or shut out the tired, the poor, the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free." In contrast are brightly painted murals on the wall near ports of entry. On Carol Leland's mural, butterflies depict the freedom of flight migrants should have. Members of our delegation left the border feeling an urgency to tell the truth and find creative alternatives as we work toward a more just, welcoming and less brutal society that builds—not more militarized walls—but more doors.



By Peggy Gish / Christian Peacemaker Teams



## BOOK REVIEW

# Should we fear the future of technology?

*Braving the Future: Christian Faith in a World of Limitless Tech.* Douglas Estes. Herald Press, 2018, 222 pages.

*Deus in Machina: Does God Work Through Technology?* Daryl Culp. Privately published, 2018, 125 pages, ISBN 978-0-9953081-2-1.

Reviewed by Barb Draper

BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

**H**ow should Christians respond to the technology that seems to be taking over our lives? Should we welcome new technology as beneficial or should we be afraid of the future it will bring? Two new books, *Braving the Future* by Douglas Estes and *Deus in Machina* by Daryl Culp, explore these questions.

Estes, a former pastor and associate professor of New Testament at South University in South Carolina, recognizes the potential for harm in unlimited technology but he cannot hide how fascinated he is with technology's possibilities. He makes several comments about how much our lives have been improved with scientific knowledge and writes, "I wish I could peer ahead and see the good that humanity will have achieved by the 22nd century." He comes from a basic assumption that, while technology has the potential for negative consequences, it is generally positive.

Culp, who has a PhD in theology and teaches at Humber College in Toronto, is more doubtful. He recognizes that ever-expanding technology has provided benefits, but he is much more cautious about what the future will bring, and he raises

more ethical concerns about the final results of such things as genetic experimentation and artificial intelligence. His basic premise is that, while technology can be beneficial, it needs to be used with care because of its great potential for harm.

While both books explore the topics of virtual reality, gene editing, artificial intelligence, intelligent robots, nanotechnology and cyborgs, *Braving the Future* describes each of these topics with greater detail. Estes also spends a chapter describing brain-computer interface and seems intrigued with the idea that someone's character could be saved for posterity on a computer. He wishes he had access to his grandparents' memories through electronic storage rather than only photographs.

Although the books express it in different ways, both authors see expanding technology as a quest to be like God. While Culp warns that we need to be aware of this flaw at all times, Estes sees it as more of a potential problem—people in the future might resort to faith in human technology rather than having



faith in God. Both assert that ultimately it is God who is all-powerful.

At the end of his book, Estes admits, "The more we use technology and commit to technology, the

more it makes us less human." But he is captivated by technology and does not see it as an imminent danger. He looks forward to technological progress.

Culp writes with greater spiritual awareness and argues that technology actually changes how we relate to the world. He writes, "Technology separates us from our environment because it places us in a position of mastery." He points out the importance of maintaining good human relationships.

Readers who are intrigued by the future of technology should find Estes' book interesting because he is up on the latest technological marvels and writes in an easy-to-read style. Culp takes a more philosophical approach and asks deeper questions. Regarding the question about whether technology is good or bad, they generally agree that the answer is, "It depends." ❧

## Et cetera

### Diversity with a drawl: *Once Round the Barn*

I used to be too good for country music. Then I landed in the country. I still like CBC radio, but my dial sometimes drifts to backwoods, Bible Belt, southern drawl country. It makes me cringe but it also humbles my liberal heart. It takes me beyond my granola-loving, belt buckle-less, supposedly inclusive niche. That's the same niche populated by most influencers in our denomination. It's time they tune into a more diverse form of diversity. For my three-minute rant around the old barn, check out [canadianmennonite.org/barn](http://canadianmennonite.org/barn).



—By Will Braun

# People helping people helping people

*MDS, MC Eastern Canada, MCC Ontario help Montreal church with renovations*

BY JANET BAUMAN  
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Every night, from November to April, volunteers from Hochma Mennonite Church in Montreal open its doors as a warming centre for some 40 people who are experiencing homelessness. The church wants to become a licenced shelter operating year-round, but its building needs roughly \$200,000 worth of renovations to bring it up to code.

church to help Hochma fit that vision. Disasters “come in different forms,” he says. Inspired by Hochma’s “social justice in action,” Hamm and three other MDS volunteers from Vineland (Ont.) United Mennonite Church provided skilled labour, while MC Eastern Canada provided funds for materials. The crew of volunteers also delivered 30 quilts from Mennonite



*Peter Kroeker, a Mennonite Disaster Service volunteer from Vineland (Ont.) United Mennonite Church, works on the exit stairs during renovations at Hochma Mennonite Church to bring its basement homeless shelter up to code.*

Brian Bauman, mission minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada put out a call last December for skilled volunteers to help Hochma with the renovations. Nicholas Hamm, the Ontario Unit chair for Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), saw the notice in his church bulletin and recognized an opportunity for a unique partnership.

While MDS typically responds to natural disasters, part of its vision is to “inspire and equip every Anabaptist congregation to respond in Christian love to those affected by disasters, including in their neighbourhoods.” Partnering with the regional

Central Committee Ontario, to replace worn bedding used in the shelter.

Hamm described how he “let God open the doors for us,” marvelling at how all the pieces fell into place for the project to go ahead.

The MDS volunteers spent a week in March renovating the church basement so it can serve as a licenced shelter and qualify for additional funding. The basement needs proper bathrooms, a shower, laundry and kitchen, as well as an exit that meets the fire code. The MDS crew worked in two areas: preparing the furnace room for a new furnace; and framing, drywalling and rebuilding the basement exit to comply to the building code. Two of the volunteers returned later in the month to complete the work on the exit area.

Hochma takes its name from Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the low-income part of Montreal where the church is located. Hochma also means “wisdom in action” in Hebrew.

The church has a history of responding



PHOTOS BY NICHOLAS HAMM

*Silvain L'hereault, Hochma Mennonite Church's shelter coordinator, gives a thumbs-up in thanks for the 30 quilts from Mennonite Central Committee Ontario that will be enough to carry the ministry through the season and allow it to discard some of its threadbare bedding.*

to needs with Christian love. It began in 2004 with a desire to care for physical as well as spiritual needs. Recently, the church was active working with a wave of refugee claimants, mostly Haitians, because they feared being sent back to Haiti from the U.S. Hochma became an emergency centre, helping 500 refugees in three months, until other established organizations could get caught up and the flow of refugees slowed.

The husband and wife team of Michel Monette (unpaid) and Lyne Renaud (paid for 16 hours a week) helped establish Hochma and offer pastoral leadership, while running their own information technology company. Renaud envisioned the church as a café, a safe place to talk and walk alongside people. Hochma began offering a Sunday morning breakfast to people in 2013 and opened the shelter in 2016.

Monette describes the work of the MDS volunteers as “such a great blessing” because Hochma won’t need to spend as much money on the renovation, and it will speed up the timeline for completing the project. “For me,” he says, “MDS means Mennonite Disciples in Service.” ❧

# Deconstructing racism

*Workshop challenges participants to move from multiculturalism to antiracism*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONNA SCHULZ  
Saskatchewan Correspondent  
SASKATOON, SASK.

**T**here were two Lego sets and two groups of participants. The first group to assemble its toy would be the winner, but it quickly became apparent that the playing field was not level.

Group 1 made the rules, and the rules stated there was to be no talking and that the men in the group weren't allowed to help construct the toy. In addition, Group 2 was not allowed to use the instruction manual.

The exercise was featured during a workshop hosted by the Micah Mission. Entitled "The awakening: Indigenous voices in restorative justice," the two-day workshop was held in late March at the offices of Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

The Micah Mission is an ecumenical organization offering restorative-justice programs to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals in Saskatoon. It is supported, in part, by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

Hired in July 2018, Stacey Swampy is Micah's Indigenous Awareness Program facilitator. As workshop emcee, Swampy shared his own story of more than 20 years in what he called "the system," from growing up in foster care and group

homes, to young offender care, to the adult correctional system.

He said he found healing in "going back to the teachings [of the elders], forgiving myself and cleaning my house up." Now his long-term goal is to help others in the system.

Other workshop presenters from a variety of backgrounds offered insights into systemic racism, Indigenous life roles and loss of culture, to about 15 participants.

Becky Sasakamoose-Kuffner introduced the Lego exercise as part of her presentation: "Shifting the lens: From multiculturalism to antiracism." A former policy analyst with the federal government, Sasakamoose-Kuffner now works as a race relations consultant for the City of Saskatoon. She introduced herself as part of the Sixties Scoop. Growing up, she was told that her birth parents selflessly relinquished custody of her so that she could be raised in a loving family.

When she met her Indigenous, biological father years later, she learned that this was not true. Her father's family had wanted to raise her, but social services had taken her away and put her in foster care.

At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission national event held in



*Stacey Swampy, the Micah Mission's Indigenous Awareness Program facilitator, tells his story of life within the system and of healing, at a two-day workshop entitled "The awakening: Indigenous voices in restorative justice."*

Saskatoon in 2012, Sasakamoose-Kuffner shared her story. She also learned that her experience was not unique. "Tens of thousands of babies were removed from their families," she said. "There was a lot of trauma. I realized that very kind, loving people could be part of a very racist system."

While the Sixties Scoop may be a thing of the past, racism is not, she said. "We know racism continues to exist because the outcomes are so disparate between Indigenous and settler peoples," she said. Saskatoon has become a city that does multiculturalism really well, she said, but multiculturalism doesn't go far enough. "What are we doing to eliminate racism beyond going to Folkfest?" she asked.

"Race, according to original race theory, refers to categories and hierarchies that society has created to describe groups of humans mostly based on physical features," she said. "The problem with this definition is the word 'hierarchies.'" The difficulty lies not in the differences between people, but in the values placed on those differences, she said.

The Lego exercise was more than just a fun—or, for some, frustrating—activity. Sasakamoose-Kuffner told participants that the exercise mirrors what happened in the residential schools. The "no talking" rule was reminiscent of the rule in residential schools forbidding Indigenous children



*Group 2 succeeds in assembling its Lego set.*





**Becky Sasakamoose-Kuffner believes that racism can be overcome with a 'concentrated and deliberate change of policies.'**

to speak their own languages.

The expected outcomes were the same for both groups in the Lego exercise, but

Group 1 had instructions, while Group 2 didn't. Similarly, in the residential schools, Indigenous students were expected to learn the same things in the same way as their settler counterparts, even though the ways of knowing and teaching were foreign to the Indigenous students, she said, adding that these were "societal constructs designed for some to succeed while others continued to struggle."

In order to overcome racist structures, she said, "We must look at adopting an antiracist pedagogy." But, she cautioned, "Indigenous people ought not to be responsible for eliminating racism. It ought to be institutions and organizations, top down, [implementing] actual concentrated and deliberate change of policies."

History has shown that, "when policies changed, then attitudes and beliefs changed," she said.

For Sasakamoose-Kuffner, it's a matter of some urgency. "Racism isn't politically or economically sustainable," she said. "It's imperative that we do something about it."

It may be up to institutions and organizations to implement antiracist policies, but that doesn't mean that individuals are powerless to effect change. "Inform yourself, stand up against racism, reflect, listen, share, believe, don't be afraid to ask questions," she concluded. ☸

For more photos, visit [canadianmennonite.org/deconstruct-racism](http://canadianmennonite.org/deconstruct-racism).



## 'A place to belong'

*Neighbourhood ministry is about more than food*

BY AMY DUECKMAN  
B.C. Correspondent  
VANCOUVER

**F**ood may be what draws people to the basement of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church every Thursday morning, but it's not what keeps them coming. It's a feeling of family, a place to call home.

Thirty years ago, Sherbrooke began partnering with Mennonite Central Committee's food bank to distribute food to refugees. Food ministry is still the key component but it's just one part of the outreach ministry today. Bags of groceries are still distributed and baked goods are donated by Cobs Bread, but coffee, tea and conversation are now also a part of the Thursday morning gathering.

According to Yohan Sanchez, Sherbrooke's community pastor, over the last two years the ministry has evolved into more of a community outreach and is one of the first points of contact in the neighbourhood. About 70 percent of the participants are refugees, with the other 30 percent coming mostly from the area surrounding the church, which has become more and more diverse.

He says the church doesn't have to advertise for participants; those already coming advertise well enough by word of mouth: "There are people [attending] who don't even live in Vancouver; they come [from] as far as Surrey and Langley to be part of this." People keep coming, he says, because they have found "a place to belong."

Additionally, the volunteers no longer come only from Sherbrooke. "Right now, we have volunteers from 73 different churches, including students and professors from the University of B.C. and people from the neighbourhood, church or unchurched," he says. "We don't call ourselves church, we say we are a family, very diverse, very multicultural. Jesus is the foundation of everything we do."

The group, with a core group of about six families, periodically enjoys a meal together prepared by various volunteers. Sanchez says that people are glad to share their gifts of cooking or in whatever way they wish to serve.

"It's a powerful ministry," he says. "Most



PHOTO BY YOHAN SANCHEZ

**Members of the Sherbrooke Mennonite Church's food-bank outreach ministry enjoy a Christmas celebration together. Participants say the gatherings help them feel like a family.**

churches in our city are concerned with how to [increase] numbers; they're not focused on those who are marginalized." He notes that many people at Sherbrooke were immigrants themselves, so the desire to minister to newcomers is strong.

Sanchez believes that some people don't feel comfortable in a traditional church setting, and that places such as the refugee food ministry create a space where Christians walk alongside people, and they can feel at home without having the basic gospel message changed. "What makes the church attractive is the uniqueness of the program," he says. "God is doing something here." ☸

# Come to the table

*Workshop participants test drive communion resources for Voices Together*

STORY AND PHOTO BY JANET BAUMAN  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

**F**or two evenings in March, Sarah Kathleen Johnson led an Anabaptist Learning Workshop focused on the ritual of communion, at Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener. Johnson, who is the worship resources editor for *Voices Together*, the Mennonite worship and song collection currently being developed, led participants from several churches in exploring communion from a variety of perspectives.

On the first evening, she led the group in reflecting on personal experiences of communion, as well as meals in the Bible. She also took the group on a journey through the history of communion since the second century, and explored five theological layers of meaning expressed in communion.

On the second evening, she had participants test out the material on communion that is being considered for the worship resources section of the new worship and song collection. In small groups, participants explored several different models of communion services, such as global celebration or solemn memorial. Each group was asked to apply the same three questions that the *Voices Together* committee

asks of every song or resource under consideration:

- **What are** the merits?
- **What are** the drawbacks?
- **What possible** changes would you recommend?

There was also time in the workshop to explore some of the urgent questions around communion theology and practice, such as how it relates to baptism, how children are included, how often it occurs, and how inclusive it is across Christian traditions. The workshop participants represented churches with a diversity of experiences, perspectives and practices. Some practise an open table; some offer an alternative for children, such as grapes or pretzels; and some continue to invite baptized members to the table while offering a blessing to children and unbaptized youth and adults.

The participants reflected on other tensions that arise around communion. If reconciliation with each other is important for a community, should it occur before coming to the communion table or does participation in communion move people



*Sarah Kathleen Johnson, far right, talks with participants, from right to left, Eva Cressman, Carl Bear and Carrie Martens, at the two-part Anabaptist Learning Workshop worship clinic she led on communion at Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., in March.*

toward reconciliation? Considering the experiences of believing, behaving and belonging, in what order should they occur, and which ones are necessary before baptism or communion?

Johnson encouraged churches to provide clear communication whenever communion is offered, and to discern a “consistent local practice,” allowing people to live into and become formed by the practice. While that doesn’t mean doing it the same way every time, she cautioned that if a church experiments with too many different forms, the “logistics can get in the way of meaning.”

To conclude the workshop, Johnson facilitated communion using an informal structure that invited reflections and sharing from the participants. It was an opportunity to experience how the resources under consideration for *Voices Together* can live and take shape. ❧



PHOTO BY ZACH CHARBONNEAU

*Sarah Kathleen Johnson, left, a member of the committee responsible for compiling the new Voices Together hymnal visited Faith Mennonite Church in Leamington on March 2, where church leaders from four local congregations were eager to sing and learn about what goes into crafting a hymnal. Accompanying the singers were Greg Trepanier, centre, and David Metcalfe (and saxophonist David Belch, not pictured). Johnson wrapped up with an informative lecture on the history and use of contemporary worship music in congregational worship.*

# Test your Mennonite IQ

COMPILED BY WILL BRAUN, SENIOR WRITER

In the next issue, we will present simple profiles of Mennonite organizations for those people who want to be connected to the larger Mennonite community but get lost in the acronyms and restructuring. Here is a quiz to pique your interest. Answers below.

**1. Who is the current executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada?**

- A: Willard Metzger
- B: Calvin Quan
- C: Mrs. Giesbrecht
- D: Henry Paetkau
- E: Doug Klassen

**2. How many congregations are there in Mennonite Church Canada?**

- A: 117
- B: 217
- C: 317
- D: God is not into math

**3. What does BFC stand for?**

- A: Becoming a Faithful Church
- B: Being a Faithful Church
- C: Blessed Futures Commission
- D: The Low German acronym for LGBTQ+

**4. How many countries have more Anabaptists than Canada?**

- A: 1 (Why does the U.S. have to beat us at everything?)
- B: 2
- C: 4
- D: God is not into national boundaries

**5. Name the locations of two of the last four Mennonite World Conference global assemblies.**

**6. Who is Glen Guyton?**

- A: Executive director of MC U.S.A.
- B: The first Mennonite to play in the NHL
- C: General secretary of Mennonite World Conference
- D: Author of *The Clothed Anabaptist: The Bible, Belief and Bonnets*

**7. Name the entity associated with each logo.**



**8. Name at least 7 of the 10 people pictured.**



**Mennonite IQ Answers**

1: D. Henry Paetkau is the interim executive minister. He took over from Willard Metzger. Doug Klassen takes over as permanent executive minister in June. Calvin Quan is the moderator of Mennonite Church Canada (a non-staff position; essentially chair of the board). Mrs. Giesbrecht is our prediction for next executive minister.

2: B. The Mennonite Church Canada community consists of 217 congregations. If you answered D, we will not say you are wrong.

3: B. BFC stands for Being a Faithful Church. If you got it wrong, don't feel bad; we mistakenly called it Becoming a Faithful Church in a recent issue of the magazine.

4: C. According to Mennonite World Conference data, the U.S. has 500,000 Anabaptists; Ethiopia is next, with 311,000; then India, with 257,000; then the Democratic Republic of Congo, at 226,000. Then Canada, with 149,000. If you answered D, we will not say you are wrong.

5: Harrisburg, Pa., U.S.A. (2015); Asunción, Paraguay (2009); Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (2003); Calcutta/Kolkata, India (1997).

6: A. Glen Guyton is executive director of Mennonite Church U.S.A.

7: From left to right: Mennonite World Conference; Mennonite Church Canada (also regional churches, MC U.S.A. and MennonMedia); Mennonite Central Committee

8: In order: from left to right, top to bottom: César García, general secretary, Mennonite World Conference. Menno Simons, the guy who put the Menno in Mennonite, literally. Miriam Toews, Mennonite writer. Rudy Wiebe, Mennonite writer. Cheryl Pauls, president, Canadian Mennonite University. Jane Philpott, former Liberal politician and a Mennonite. Glen Guyton, executive director, MC U.S.A. The late Peter and Elfreida Dyck, prominent Mennonite elders of yesteryear. Sara Wenger Shenk, president, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Calvin Quan, moderator, Mennonite Church Canada.



## PEOPLE

# Mennonites advocate for Bill C-262

BY RACHEL BERGEN  
Contributing Editor  
WINNIPEG

From changing their profile pictures and holding rallies, to baking bread embossed with messages of support, young Mennonites are standing up to call for a private member's bill to be passed.

Bill C-262 was brought forward by Romeo Saganash, the federal MP for the Quebec riding of Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou. It calls for the government to enshrine the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into Canadian law.

According to Saganash, C-262 is more than just a bill. "Bill C-262 is not just about reconciliation, it's also about justice, it's also about human rights for the first peoples of this country. That's why it's important to urge senators to pass this bill before the writ drops [to end the current session of Parliament]," he said.

Saganash travelled across the country to drum up support for the bill and feels heartened that so many senators and MPs have heard from their constituents about the bill, he said at a recent stop in Winnipeg.

"We've crisscrossed the country two years ago in support of the bill. Everywhere we went there was an overwhelming support for Bill C-262. We've held town hall meetings from the Maritimes right up to Tofino, B.C.," he said.

The bill has yet to pass third reading in the Senate, the step it must take before becoming law. A number of advocates worry that if the bill doesn't make it to this stage before Parliament is recessed in June, it might die.

## Mennonites advocate

That's why Mennonites across Canada are trying to create momentum to send a message to the government that Indigenous rights must be protected and enshrined in law before the summer.

One of those people is Allegra Friesen Epp, a fourth-year Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) student who is doing her practicum with Mennonite Church Canada's Indigenous and Settler Relations program.

Friesen Epp was involved in planning the rally at CMU that drew hundreds of supporters on March 26. In the weeks leading up to the rally, she made announcements in her home church of Home Street Mennonite, called up past supporters and invited them to attend, and organized logistics with CMU.

For Friesen Epp, her advocacy and faith are linked.

"My faith plays a huge role in how I see the Christian call to work for justice, to care for those on the margins. Jesus'

ministry was very much [about] spending time with the outcasts and those that society had deemed unimportant and were passed to the edge of society," she said. "I see it as essential to my faith that I advocate for the rights of those whose rights have been denied for so long"

Joel Kroeker is trying to get the message out about Bill C-262 in a really tangible way.

The member of Wildwood Mennonite Church in Saskatoon runs a local business called Baeker Kraeker, where subscribers can get a loaf of sourdough bread every Tuesday or Thursday, four times a month.

But unlike other loaves, his bread makes a statement. Every week, he makes a stencil to place on loaves and dusts flour over it to leave a message on his bread. "It's usually focused on an issue of justice, or social issues, or selfcare, or mental health," he explains.

He made stencils in support of adopting UNDRIP, passing Bill C-262, and in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en First Nation that is fighting to keep a pipeline from going through its traditional territory.

Along with the bread, he writes a longer Instagram post with questions he hopes people ponder as they eat the bread. It's like food for thought.

"The reason I do the stencils is that the feedback I've gotten from my subscribers is it helps them enter into dialogue with their families. They don't know how to open up the dialogue about it with their children, and it helps," he said, adding, "It felt like a calling on my heart to put reconciliation out into the public discourse, to have people talk about it more. As I started doing the bread stencils, Indigenous issues is something I made stencils of the most."



PHOTO BY MATTHEW SAWATZKY

Approximately 700 people rally at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg on March 26 for the Canadian government to pass Bill C-262.

For Steve Heinrichs, the director of Mennonite Church Canada's Indigenous-Settler Relations program, seeing Mennonites taking up the cause of advocating for UNDRIP is heartening. "Adopting and implementing the UN declaration, it's

not just about Indigenous people," he said. "We want everyday people who are not Indigenous to be involved, too."

Heinrichs believes that UNDRIP is the blueprint for reconciliation, and a bill that essentially proposes that the declaration

enshrined in law outlines a path forward. ❧

For more photos, visit [canadianmennonite.org/c262-rally](http://canadianmennonite.org/c262-rally).



## Correspondent hitches her horse to a different wagon

Canadian Mennonite bids farewell to Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

BY BARB DRAPER  
Editorial Assistant

After more than 18 years of contributing to *Canadian Mennonite* as the Alberta correspondent, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, who has developed a fondness for horses over the years—especially CD—has resigned from her reporting position to take on an increased role with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta.

When she began as a correspondent on Sept. 1, 2000, replacing Neil Funk-Unrau, her very first story was about the new camp directors at Camp Valaqua. It is not surprising that this camp has been close to her heart, since she and her husband Tim served as directors at Valaqua for eight years before she began her *CM* assignment.

During most of her time as the Alberta correspondent, Wiebe-Neufeld also served as a co-pastor at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton, and her writing often reflected the heart of a pastor. She wrote with compassion about people suffering from poverty (Dec. 18, 2006), chronic pain (May 27, 2013), mental illness (May 22, 2017), or the aftermath of suicide (May 21, 2018). She often challenged her readers to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, not by lecturing but by exposing her own deep struggles to do the right thing (Feb. 12, 2018).

Alberta's cycles of lean and fat economic times have been reflected in her stories. In 2006, there were stories about churches building additions and immigrants struggling to find housing, but by 2018 she



PHOTO BY MELANIE CUMIN

**Longtime Alberta correspondent Donita Wiebe-Neufeld is pictured with CD, her beloved horse. Over the years, she wrote around 385 stories, features and news briefs.**

was describing Alberta's anxieties over the pipeline debate. At the same time, she also wrote many articles showing that Mennonites in the province were concerned about their relationship with Indigenous people, and that they took creation care seriously.

Another ongoing series of stories by Wiebe-Neufeld dealt with the relationship between Muslims and Christians. A respectful dialogue began in Edmonton in 2002 after Muslims came to MCC Alberta to check out this organization that was sending blankets to Afghanistan. The annual dialogue continued and has now expanded to Calgary.

Her feature articles gave thoughtful perspectives on current issues affecting people in the pews. Among these topics have been how organized sports affects the

church (Feb. 4, 2008), whether Christian organizations should use lottery funds (April 19, 2010), the importance of safety policies for congregations (April 30, 2012), how the church is changing (April 28, 2014), and how to go about closing a congregation (Feb. 12, 2018).

After an MCC learning tour to Israel/Palestine in 2008, she reflected on her experience in a longer piece, providing excellent photos to help tell the story (Sept. 15, 2008). This was one of her first cover photos for the magazine. Another feature, which warranted not only the front cover but also a two-page photo spread, dealt with empty churches in Montreal (April 28, 2014).

Over her 18-year career with *Canadian Mennonite*, Wiebe-Neufeld provided 11 cover photos and about 385 stories. Some dealt with annual events such as Songfest, relief sales, youth snow camps and historical meetings, while other stories were about momentous happenings, such as the Fort McMurray fire or the flood in High River. She also provided many personal profiles of how Mennonites in her province have gone the extra mile.

Alberta stories have been well-covered under Wiebe-Neufeld's time as correspondent. Dan Graber, the former MC Alberta regional church minister, says, "Donita was always on the lookout for stories, events and even pertinent theological issues to share. Plus, she was always eager to take pictures." ❧

## FOCUS ON

## Books &amp; Resources

# CommonWord shares books by the dozen

*Bookstore and resource centre connects nationwide church with materials*

BY NICOLIE KLASSEN-WIEBE  
Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

Still a hidden gem for some, CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre is a well of resources for the Mennonite community and beyond. One of the ways it shares these materials and guidance is through its “Cheaper by the dozen” program.

This bulk-loan initiative lends 12 different resources to a church for an extended six-week period, during which time they can be circulated throughout the congregation. The process is made easy with due-date slips and a prepaid return label included in the package, which can be mailed to a church or a home address.

The program began in 2007 as a way for church librarians to preview items before buying them, or to supplement their libraries, which under limited budgets couldn't afford unlimited books.

“It's a way of bringing CommonWord to our congregations,” says director Arlyn Friesen Epp.

Doreen Nickel, a member of Langham Mennonite Fellowship in Saskatchewan, says the program enables her to access many different books by Mennonite authors from a reliable source, instead of trying to hunt them down on her own. She says her fellow congregants enjoy the contributions they have been receiving every six weeks since 2009.

CommonWord has processed 290 orders and circulated 3,500 titles through the “Cheaper by the dozen” program since it began. Thirty-five MC Canada congregations, representing each regional church, have used the program.

What people might not expect is that it's totally free. CommonWord will ship to any MC Canada congregation across Canada at no cost. Churches and groups outside of the nationwide church can also take part if they pay a membership fee.

Mennonite Church in Waldheim, Sask., says the lack of expenses gives her the opportunity to explore and test materials with the congregation before purchasing them, which helps her ensure books in the church library are relevant to readers and they don't lie untouched on the shelves.

There is no resource centre quite like CommonWord close to Schmidt, so the “Cheaper by the dozen program” gives her congregation access to books and resources it wouldn't otherwise have, without travelling all the way to Winnipeg.

Schmidt got her church involved in the program in 2008, and has since made 90 orders and seen more than a thousand titles circulated through the congregation. She displays the books in the church library and congregants can check them out to take home. She likes to choose her own titles from the list on CommonWord's website.

CommonWord staffers are also happy to curate a selection for participants upon request. Nickel receives books chosen by staff and enjoys discovering books she wouldn't have heard of or picked otherwise. She receives a wide variety, from children's books and novels, to educational resources.

“Some books have come back that have been the same, but basically they've been all different books that we've had access to,” she says of the 74 orders she has made. “They just send me a box of books, and it's a nice surprise for me, too, when I look in the box and see what's in there.”

Friesen Epp says that churches

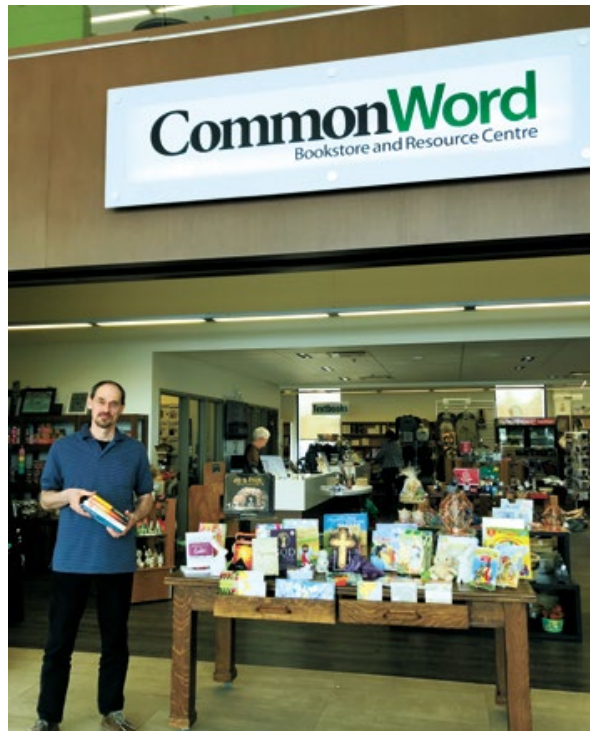


PHOTO BY NICOLIE KLASSEN-WIEBE

*Arlyn Friesen Epp is the director of CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre, located in Canadian Mennonite University's Marpeck Commons.*

Although it is a free loan program, Friesen Epp encourages congregations to purchase items through CommonWord as well, noting competitive prices and the ability to special order any titles not in stock.

Wally Schmidt, who attends Zoar



## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

sometimes request books on a certain theme, whether it be for a Sunday school series, book study, or a time of discernment and transition a church may be going through. “Because we add quite a few items on a daily basis, there’s plenty to choose from,” he says.

Not only does this program equip individual congregations based on their needs, it connects churches with each other across the country. One of CommonWord’s mandates is to create a nationwide Anabaptist identity, and resources have the power to do that.

“Who we are as a people, who we are as a nationwide church in an age of regionalism and individualism, could really start forcing us apart,” he says. “I think shared



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMONWORD  
BOOKSTORE AND RESOURCE CENTRE

**CommonWord’s ‘Cheaper by the dozen’ program sends 12 books to Mennonite Church Canada congregations anywhere in Canada, free of charge, on a six-week loan.**

resources and shared access to resources

can build community and identity and strength.”

CommonWord is the gathering point for materials from Mennonite publishing sources, churches and materials congregants are writing and creating themselves. But it’s also the point of distribution for these materials, so different regional churches can learn from and use each other’s materials.

“Part of the reason we want churches engaged is so people are then aware of, and free to, share their own materials as well, so we gather those home-grown community development materials from our churches that can then be shared further,” he says. “There’s room for expansion. We would love this [program] to grow.” ❧

## Readers ‘zoom’ to discuss *Unsettling the Word*

*Online book study a hit at Toronto United Mennonite Church*

BY JOELLE KIDD  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
TORONTO

In a large city like Toronto, attending a church small group or Bible study may not be feasible for those with families or busy schedules. But Toronto United Mennonite Church has found a technological solution.

Congregants recently completed a six-week book study based around *Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization* and conducted remotely by video conference.

“I think it was Tim’s idea to do it at 9 p.m. on the basis that parents could take part after they put their kids in bed,” says study leader Peter Haresnape, in reference to Tim Schmucker, chair of the church’s Mission and Service Committee. “And that really works for me. . . . I kind of like that idea, that even if I’m at an event I can get home, have a cup of tea and [lead the study].”

Haresnape, a contributor to *Unsettling the Word*, created a study guide for the

book as part of his work as general secretary of the ecumenical Student Christian Movement.

“This is a great book. People put a lot of work into it. I don’t want to see it just put on the shelf or people read it once. . . . I wanted to create a resource that people would use to study it together in groups,” he says.

The online video conferencing format has required some creativity in adapting the study guide, he says. During the first session, they did a screen share of the text of the book, but when it was suggested that most people had a copy of the book, they switched to using their cameras. “I feel like I’m actually really connecting with these people, instead of just speaking into the void,” he says.

Shannon Neufeldt, a church member who took part in four of the six sessions, thought the video conference format worked “surprisingly well.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER HARESNAPE  
**Peter Haresnape led the six-week study using video conference software.**

“I have used video conferencing for meetings at work, and somehow this seemed to flow even more smoothly. . . . I think it was helpful that a number of people in the group have known each other for years,” she says.

It also made things much more convenient. “I had trouble dedicating an hour or hour-and-a-quarter, and there is no way I could have added the better part of two hours to that commitment to travel to the church and back, or to someone’s place across the city,” she says.

The content of the study also worked well for her busy schedule, she says, since the book’s “short, accessible chapters” meant there was no requirement that participants do any reading in advance. “Peter led with the idea that everyone had something to contribute, no matter how familiar they were with the subject matter.”

In some ways, not being in the same room may have enhanced the group dynamic, Neufeldt says. “There was a little

## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

chat at the beginning as people arrived, but nowhere near the distraction of getting a group together, settled and quieted when you get together in person.”

Those who needed to step away for a moment could just turn off their microphone and video without distracting others.

The “chat” function in Zoom, the video conferencing software that was used, also proved helpful to enhance the side conversation and share additional information, she says.

“Peter introduced the idea of saying or writing ‘ouch’ if any comments were personally offensive to us, as a way of letting people know that a comment hurt even if it was not intended that way,” she says. “No one used this tool, but I think talking about it was helpful awareness raising, and the option to write it, I think, would be helpful for people who have a hard time breaking into conversation.”

Each session began with a territorial acknowledgement and a prayer, Haresnape says. The group then read through a chapter of the book and corresponding Bible passage before discussing the material.

“One piece that has been really exciting, probably the most exciting of these sessions, has been when people have brought their own experience, their relationship to Christianity, into the conversation, particularly as people have spoken from their different settler perspectives. People who are settlers on the land, who are not European in origin, or who are recent immigrants,” he says. “I’ve had a few experiences just honestly hearing people share their stories in a way that they wouldn’t have done it if we hadn’t decided to do this particular study.

“And we couldn’t have created a study to share those stories if these Indigenous [writers] in this book . . . hadn’t provided

this,” he adds.

The hour-long sessions had between four and 12 participants.

Neufeldt says that she would certainly consider participating in another study by video conference. “I think Peter is a really good study leader, and that helps regardless of the medium . . . I think group study is significant for the growth and health of a congregation, and this seems like a viable media for our era.”

The initial idea was for the study to run for six weeks, which has now been completed. They may continue in the future, Haresnape says, adding, “I would love to do it. I think it was a great experience doing it, and reading with that level of care,” he says. ❧

*Unsettling the Word is available on [commonword.ca](http://commonword.ca), along with Haresnape’s study guide,*



## Translation valuable to Swahili-speaking pastors

*Tanzanian bishop, Canadian author collaborate on pastoral resource*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOYCE MAXWELL  
Eastern Mennonite Missions  
SHIRATI, TANZANIA

In mid-February, 50 Tanzanian Mennonite Church leaders, under the guidance of Palmer Becker, a Canadian Mennonite author and teacher, studied spiritual leadership, pastoral care and Anabaptist essentials using a translation of Becker’s book *Begin Anew: Christian Discipleship Seminars*.

The training sessions were hosted by Bishop Chris Kateti of the Shirati Diocese of the Tanzanian Mennonite Church, who had organized the translation of *Begin Anew* and printed copies for the workshop participants, with the financial assistance of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Tanzanians primarily speak and write Swahili, meaning that for materials to be useful they must be translated.

Kateti estimated that about half of the pastoral couples in the diocese attended. Participants walked, bicycled or took public transportation to the workshop that began on Feb. 14.

As in other dioceses, Shirati typically hosts training for pastors and spouses twice a year, although many do not have the international component that this one did.

In July 2017, Kateti, a newly ordained bishop, along with three other Tanzanian Mennonite Church leaders, participated in the Mennonite Church U.S.A. convention



**Palmer Becker, centre, leads a workshop session in Tanzania in February. Also pictured are Debbi DiGennaro, Eastern Mennonite Missions’ regional representative, and translator Baraka Amolo Ouso.**

in Orlando, Fla., where he met Becker.

The Tanzanian Mennonite leader and

## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES



**Begin Anew, authored by Palmer Becker, and its Swahili translation, Anza Upya.**

the Canadian Mennonite pastor, author and teacher had already been in communication about translating *Begin Anew* into Swahili. Impressed with Becker's credentials, Kateti invited him to Shirati to present his materials to Tanzanian church leaders.

Kateti said he wanted to build the capacity of "my team," meaning the pastors, deacons and spouses in his diocese, to become strong leaders and to provide pastoral care.

For participants, the workshop gave not only an opportunity to learn and study, but also to praise and worship each evening, to meet and interact with church leaders living in the area, and to relax and

rejuvenate in the welcoming atmosphere of the diocesan headquarters—a one-storey building around a grassy courtyard shaded by an enormous fig tree—that comprised church offices, dining hall and amenities.

Pastor Jakob Okeno, in his 60s, is responsible for a *jimbo* (church district) comprising five churches. Speaking through an interpreter, he described how, following a career teaching at the elementary-school level, he became a church leader: first an elder, then a deacon, and finally a pastor. He credited pastoral training like this one with giving him the tools to live with others peacefully and with knowing how to coach church members.

Also speaking through an interpreter, Beddina Okeno, Okeno's wife, described her role as an advisor to her husband and, in addition, as hostess to church workers. "When visitors come to our house, I give them hospitality until they have finished their ministry," she said. She described doing evangelism "close by." She explained that, while her husband travels throughout the *jimbo*, she, as the homemaker, relates to people in the vicinity of their home.

The diocese recognizes the tension this travel may have on the relationship

between an itinerant pastor—almost always the husband—and spouse. Therefore, the spouse is recognized as an equal partner in ministry.

Kateti anticipates that pastors might use Becker's newly translated book for further training of church leaders in their home districts. "We have his materials, so we can continue using them," he said.

Becker told MC U.S.A. in 2015 that he wrote *Begin Anew* as a resource for anyone seeking to "make life-changing commitments to Christ, to the church, to spiritual disciplines, and to a ministry in the church or mission in the world." The resource, he said, "is for anyone interested in growing in Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective, regardless of his or her background or previous church experience."

Response to the 2014 publication was so positive that it has been translated into several languages, and Becker has presented the materials in seminars in China and Ethiopia, among other countries. He initially decided to give four years of time to developing and introducing the materials. Now, over 80 years of age, he continues to be committed to this project.

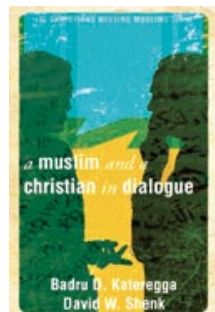
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### News brief

#### Herald Press releases second edition of *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*

Millions of Muslims and Christians are neighbours, and they believe that they worship the one and only God. Yet they seldom witness to each other. In *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, which is part of the "Christians Meeting Muslims" series, a Muslim (Badru D. Kateregga) and a Christian (David W. Shenk) attempt to witness and listen. The issues they deal with are profound. Kateregga and Shenk open up on the basic questions of the human situation and confront similarities and differences in Muslim and Christian responses. In recent years, Muslim-Christian interactions have too often been antagonistic. In the pages of this book the authors pioneer another way: authentic dialogue between friends.

—MENNO MEDIA

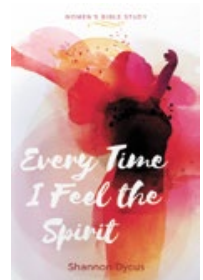


### New brief

#### Women's Bible study guide comes to an end

Ever since 1992, Mennonite Women Canada and Mennonite Women U.S.A. have published an annual Bible study guide designed to be used for all types of women's meetings or for personal study. In Canada, a free copy has been given to each congregation upon request, with more available at cost. The 2019 edition will be the final one, as women's groups have increasingly struggled to find leadership and funds to support their projects. The Bible study guide was a joint project of women in the United States and Canada, with a writer from Canada every three years. The 2018 guide, *Everyday Worship*, was written by Carol Penner. Other recent Canadian writers have been April Yamasaki, Rebecca Seiling and Patty Friesen. The final edition, *Every Time I Feel the Spirit* by Shannon Dycus, will be available after June 1. The future of Mennonite Women Canada will be discussed at a lunch on June 30 as part of the Mennonite Church Canada gathering in Abbotsford, B.C.

—FROM MENNONITE WOMEN CANADA 2018 REPORT BOOK





## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

## PHOTO ESSAY

# From power to pathos

*Text and photos from The Russian Mennonite Story: The Heritage Cruise Lectures by Paul Toews with Aileen Friesen, published by the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies in 2018 (therussianmennonitestory.com)*



*Selbstschutz members from the villages of Blumenort, Tiege and Orloff in 1918. During a period of violent lawlessness, Mennonites organized themselves into self-defence units.*

“The story of Mennonites in Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union and the Soviet successor states is relatively short, beginning only in 1789. Despite this brief history, our memories of Mennonite life in this region are etched with deeply contradictory images.

“On the one hand, we remember a resplendent culture marked by elegance

and sophistication—and celebrate an idyllic pastoral existence.

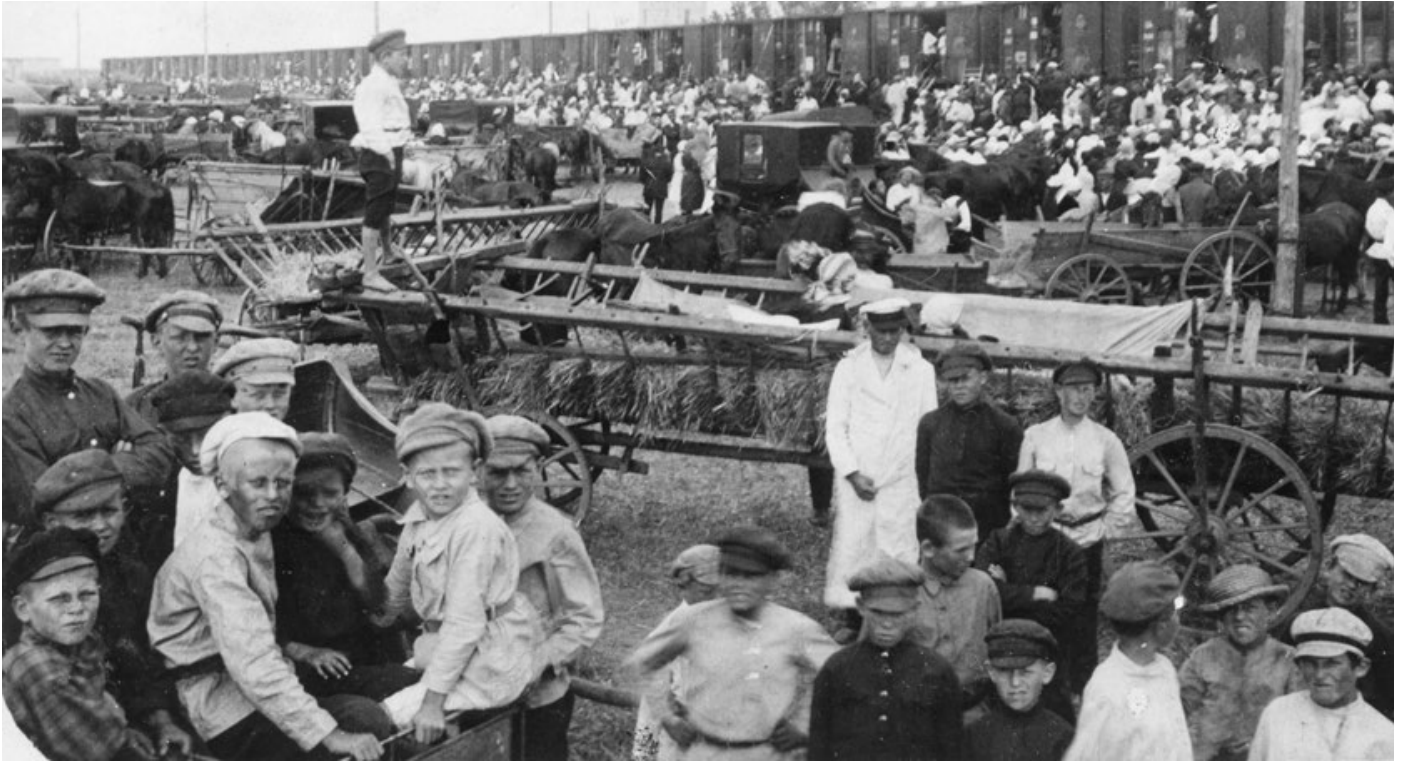
“But memories of a very different kind are also deeply embedded in our imagination—scenes of waste, destruction, and pillage; of fields, villages and factories laid bare; accounts of starvation, torture, and death—that are almost too horrific for us to remember.”

*On these pages and the front cover we share a selection of the nearly 100 striking, often surprising, images in The Russian Mennonite Story. Used with permission. Captions adapted from the book. Photos are from the Mennonite Heritage Archives, Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, and Bethel Mennonite Library and Archives.*



*The Martens family at their home in Ruckenu.*

**FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES**



*The Lichtenau (Svetlodolinskoe) railway station served as the point of departure for many Mennonites who left the Soviet Union in the 1920s and for those who were sent into exile in subsequent years.*



*Mennonite women posing with bicycles.*



*С. Терешниковъ*  *ДЕССА.*  
ДЕРЖАВСКАЯ УЛ.

*Peter M. and Susanna Friesen.*



## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

PHOTO: FLICKR.COM/ROMANBOED



# Spring 2019 List of Books & Resources

## Theology, Spirituality



*Beating Guns: Hope for People Who Are Weary of Violence.* Shane Claiborne and Michael Martin. Brazos Press, 2019, 288 pages.

Using the image of turning guns into garden tools, Claiborne and Martin explore how destructive gun violence has been and provide hopeful stories of how this carnage could be reduced. They examine how guns became so prevalent in American culture and give suggestions for change.



*Braving the Future: Christian Faith in a World of Limitless Tech.* Douglas Estes. Herald Press, 2018, 222 pages.

As he considers the relationship between God, people and technology, the author looks at such things as gene editing, artificial intelligence, brain-computer interface and nano-technology. While warning of dangers, he is intrigued by technology and how it

makes our lives better. A free downloadable 10-session study guide is available.



*Deus in Machina: Does God Work Through Technology?* Daryl Culp. Privately published, 2018, 125 pages, ISBN 978-0-9953081-2-1.

Culp examines the world of technology, including virtual reality, thinking machines and biotechnology. While recognizing that technology can have great benefits, he argues for caution, declaring that human relationships are of utmost importance and that hubris is always a danger.



*Faith and Toleration: A Reformation Debate Revisited.* C. Arnold Snyder. CMU Press, 2018, 106 pages.

The text in this booklet is from the John and Margaret Friesen Lectures and the J.J. Thiessen Lecture Series given at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, in 2017. Snyder examines religious toleration by and

for Swiss Anabaptists in the latter part of the 16th century, concluding that tolerance is an ongoing issue for the church today.



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

The author, pastor of Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church, takes stories from the Old Testament and reflects on how they impact lives today.



*Flee, Be Silent, Pray: Ancient Prayers for Anxious Christians.* Ed Czewski. Herald Press, 2019, 142 pages.

As an evangelical Christian in North America, the author found himself very anxious and fearful. He tells the story of how he learned to use prayer and contemplation to move beyond his anxiety and gives many suggestions for learning how to use contemplative prayer.



*The Great Reckoning: Surviving a Christianity That Looks Nothing Like Christ.* Stephen Mattson. Herald Press, 2018, 211 pages.

Mattson examines American civil religion that feeds on fear and grasps for political power, and he declares that we need a revival and must turn to Jesus as the centre of our faith. A free downloadable study guide with questions for each of the 10 chapters is available from Herald Press.

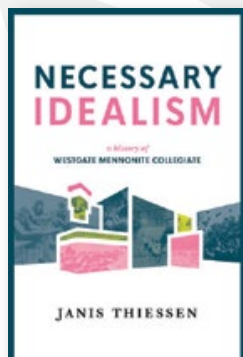


*Jump Into the Story: The Art of Creative Preaching.* Ray Friesen. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019, 262 pages.

A former pastor, Friesen shares 20 of his creative sermon ideas, not for readers to use, but as sparks for further creativity. At the heart of each idea is a story that is often an old story in a new form.



*Mennonite Ethics: From Isolation to Engagement.* J. Lawrence Burkholder, edited by Lauren Friesen. Privately published with Friesen Press, 2018, 650 pages.



NEW from **CMU PRESS**

**Necessary Idealism:**  
**A History of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate**  
**Janis Thiessen**

A splendid institutional history of a private Mennonite high school, this volume undertakes a careful, historical examination of the school's history and is a significant contribution to the history of ethnic and religious private schools in Canada.

247 pages; \$24.99

Order from [CommonWord.ca](http://CommonWord.ca) or call 1-877-846-1593



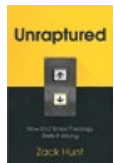
## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

Burkholder, who died in 2010, raised questions about social responsibility and Mennonite involvement in the broader society in the 1950s, when the church was not ready for that discussion. This book collects four of Burkholder's manuscripts. His writings are still relevant as the church continues to struggle with questions of nonviolence, power and justice.



*The Pastor Wears a Skirt: Stories of Gender and Ministry.* Dorothy Nickel Friesen. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018, 159 pages.

One of the early female pastors ordained in the Mennonite church reflects on her personal story and the process of how the Mennonite church came to accept women as pastors. She writes with humour, honesty and warmth.



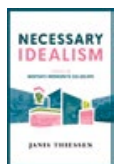
*Unraptured: How End Times Theology Gets it Wrong.* Zack Hunt. Herald Press, 2019, 255 pages.

Hunt tells his own story of how he was captivated by dispensationalism and "end times" theology, and of how he came to see that this approach is a distortion of Christ's message and misinterprets the Book of Revelation. It is not a difficult read and the theology he advocates is quite Anabaptist.

## History

*Beyond the Village Circle: Narratives by Mennonite Women From Bolivia.* Martha Hiebert. Self-published, 2017, 99 pages.

These 16 short stories about women living in Bolivia were collected by Martha and Isbrand Hiebert. The book has also been translated into German. It is available at CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre.



*Necessary Idealism: A History of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate.* Janis Thiessen. CMU Press, 2019, 247 pages.

Using archival material as well as many interviews, a former teacher tells the story of this private Mennonite high school in Winnipeg that

celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2008. Organized by theme rather than timeline, the book offers a detailed history of the school's challenges and achievements.



*On the Banks of Jacob's Creek: The History of the Scottsdale Mennonite Churches.* Daniel Hertzler. Cascadia Publishing House, 2019, 168 pages.

Herzler, an editor at Mennonite Publishing House from 1952 to 1990, has put together a history of the publishing organization and the three Mennonite congregations in Scottsdale, Pa. He includes anecdotes and 80 photos.



*Sketches From Siberia: The Life of Jacob D. Sudermann.* Werner Toews. Privately published with Friesen Press, 2018, 153 pages.

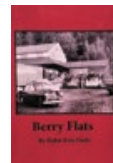
Jacob Sudermann was a teacher and artist who was taken from his Mennonite community during the Stalinist purges and died in a Siberian gulag. His biography is pieced together from his letters and artwork sent to his family, as well as his sister's memoir. It is available through CommonWord.

*Strangers and Pilgrims Vol. II: How Mennonites are Changing Landscapes in Latin America.* Kennert Giesbrecht. *Die Mennonitsche Post*, 2018.

This English-language version gives an updated history of Low German Mennonites living in colonies in Latin America and includes maps and colour photographs. It is available from the office

of *Die Mennonitsche Post* in Steinbach, Man., at [office@mennpost.org](mailto:office@mennpost.org) or 204-326-6790.

## Other books



*Berry Flats.* Helen Rose Pauls. Privately published, 2017, 132 pages.

This collection of short stories provides a glimpse into life in the Mennonite villages of the Fraser Valley in the 1940s and '50s. The stories are fiction but the setting is real, as shown by the many photographs of the time. Copies are available from [ehpauls@shaw.ca](mailto:ehpauls@shaw.ca).



*Captive.* Donna J. Stoltzfus. Schiffer Publishing, 2018, 126 pages.

This little novel explores complex family dynamics and other relationships when a Mennonite family in Virginia uses German prisoners of war to harvest their tomato crop. Set in the mid-1940s, this fictional story is based on true events. It is told from the perspective of a 13-year-old boy, making it suitable for younger readers.



*Crash Landing, The Long Road Home: A Memoir.* Liz Jansen. Privately published, 2018, 252 pages.

A mature woman's solitary motorcycle tour across Canada becomes a journey of discovery not only of her Mennonite ancestors but also of her own spiritual past, as Jansen struggles to

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**FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES**

understand her parents, grandparents and the Mennonite faith she rejected as a teenager. It is available at LizJansen.com.



*Finding Father: Stories From Mennonite Daughters.* Mary Ann Loewen, ed. University of Regina Press, 2019, 166 pages.

Thirteen women writers, eight of them Canadian, reflect on their relationships with their Mennonite fathers, giving the reader a glimpse into their growing-up years and the Mennonite world of 50 years ago. It is a companion piece to an earlier book, *Sons and Mothers*.

*Old Order Mennonites of Ontario: 33 Frequently Asked Questions.* Del Gingrich.

Privately published, 2018, 90 pages.

The author has lots of experience in answering questions about the Old Order Mennonites of Ontario as the long-time manager of The Mennonite Story, an interpretative centre in St. Jacobs. He and photographer Joe Lepold are retired principals from schools with many Old Order children. The book is available at [mennonitestory@stjacobs.com](mailto:mennonitestory@stjacobs.com).



*The Pastor-Congregation Duet.* Gary Harder. Privately published by Friesen Press, 2018, 282 pages.

Harder reflects on his experience as a pastor and the relationship between a pastor and

congregation. He shares some of his own journey and discusses what things make the relationship harmonious or discordant.



*The Pie Lady: Classic Stories From a Mennonite Cook and Her Friends.* Greta Isaac. Herald Press, 2019, 174 pages.

The stories in this collection centre around women, food and faith. Each of the 32 chapters includes one or two recipes mentioned in the story. The author is a Mennonite from Kansas, but some of the stories are about Canadians. While the story settings are mostly rural and this is part of the Plainspoken series, the “pie ladies” do not seem to be Amish or Old Order.

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**Resources**



*Mennonite Low German Dictionary: Mennonitisch Plautdeutsches Wörterbuch, Revised Edition.* Jack Thiessen, privately published with Friesen Press, 2019, 500 pages.

This is an updated and revised version of a Low German dictionary compiled by Thiessen and first published in 1977 and 2003. This revised version was a joint project with Ernest Braun and Gerhard Ens. It is available at the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Steinbach, Man.



*Upside Down Living: Parenting.* Katherine and Peter Goerzen. Herald Press, 2018.

*Upside Down Living: Prayer.* Kelly Chripszuk. Herald Press, 2018.



These booklets are part of a Bible study series that deal with questions from today's culture. Each guide includes six sessions with questions to get discussion started. ❧

—COMPILED BY **BARB DRAPER,**  
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

Many of the featured titles on the book list are available for purchase or to borrow from *CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre* in Winnipeg. For more information, visit [commonword.ca](http://commonword.ca), or call 204-594-0527 or toll-free 1-877-846-1593.

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[canadianmennonite.org/drc-literacy](http://canadianmennonite.org/drc-literacy)



**A complicated relationship**

On the CM blog, MaryLou Driedger speculates about why Miriam Toews isn't lauded in her hometown, Steinbach, Man.

[canadianmennonite.org/blog/complicated-relationship](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/complicated-relationship)



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## Calendar

### British Columbia

**June 2:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. presents "Immigrant trauma and finding belonging in community: The story of post-Second World War Mennonite refugees," with speakers Marlene Epp and Paul Born, at King Road MB Church, Abbotsford, at 2:30 p.m. Faspa and special music.

**June 28-July 1:** "Igniting the imagination of the church" MC Canada delegate assembly, at the Quality Hotel and Conference Centre, Abbotsford: (28) leaders assembly; (29) business/delegate meeting; (29-1) inspirational conference. Special events for youth and children.

### Alberta

**May 13-15:** Faith studies conference, at Lethbridge Mennonite Church. Theme: "Biblical storytelling: The transformation power of sacred story." Speaker: Pastor Ken Quiring. For more information, email [tim@mennonitechurch.ab.ca](mailto:tim@mennonitechurch.ab.ca)

**May 31-June 1:** MCC Relief Sale, in Coaldale.

**June 7-9:** MC Alberta women's retreat, at the Sunnyside Retreat Centre, Sylvan Lake. Speaker: Irma Fast Dueck. Theme: "The faces of Mary: Companion on the journey." For more information, visit

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**June 12:** Annual heritage retreat, at Camp Valaqua. For more information, email [ruthannagets@gmail.com](mailto:ruthannagets@gmail.com).

**June 15:** Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon fundraiser. For more information or to sponsor a hiker, call 403-637-2510.

**June 16:** Camp Valaqua garden party. For more information, call 403-637-2510.

## Saskatchewan

**May 24-26:** Junior-high retreat, at Elim.

**May 25:** RJC golf tournament fundraiser, at Valley Regional Park, Rosthern.

**June 21-23:** RJC musical, alumni reunions and graduation weekend, Rosthern.

**July 28-Aug. 1:** "Shake: Rattled by the Radical," a gathering for Mennonite youth in grades 6 to 12, at Shekinah Retreat Centre. For more information, visit [prairieyouth.ca](http://prairieyouth.ca). Early deadline for travel subsidies and sponsor discounts is April 26.

## Manitoba

**April 26:** Mennonite Heritage Village Auxiliary fashion show, including dessert and door prizes, at the MHV Auditorium, at 7 p.m.

**April 26:** Spring concert, at CMU, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**May 4:** Exhibitions by Yisa Akinbolaji and Gabriela Aguero open at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg. Runs until June 22.

**May 13:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate bursary banquet, at the Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg. For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit [westgatemennonite.ca](http://westgatemennonite.ca).

**May 15:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day.

**May 29:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate junior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

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

**May 31-June 1:** "#ChurchToo conference, responding to professional sexual misconduct in the church, at CMU. Planned jointly by CMU, MC

Manitoba, MB Manitoba and MCC.

**July 25:** *Discovery: A Comic Lament*, a play about Indigenous/settler issues and moving forward together," at the CMU chapel, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at [Eventbright.com](http://Eventbright.com).

## Ontario

**April 22-26:** MCC Ontario meat canning, in Elmira.

**April 26-27:** MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering, "Deepening our relationship with God," at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden. Keynote speaker: April Yamasaki.

**April 29-May 2:** MCC Ontario meat canning, in Leamington.

**May 4:** Mennonite Mass Choir presents "Celebration," hymns of praise by Mendelssohn, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m.

**May 4,5:** Soli Deo Gloria Singers present "A time for everything under heaven"; (4) at UMEI Christian High School, Leamington, at 7:30 p.m., (5) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For tickets, call UMEI at 519-326-7448.

**May 5:** Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, hosts "Sounds of spring," featuring Bluebird, a Guelph-based women's cappella barbershop quartet, and the Fiddlestix String Quartet from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, at 2:30 p.m.

**May 6-7:** "Understanding conflict: Foundations," presented by Credence & Co, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

**May 8-9:** "Understanding conflict: Advanced," presented by Credence & Co, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

**May 10-12:** Junior youth (grades 6 to 8) retreat, at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, Sauble Beach. Activities include learning new songs from the new *Voices Together* hymnal, creating a music video and worshipping in a Taizé style.

**May 10-12:** "Healthy boundaries in the context of ministry," at Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington. For more information, visit [mcecc.ca](http://mcecc.ca).

**May 26:** Detweiler Meetinghouse community memorial service, at 3 p.m. For more information, call 519-504-4591.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by email to [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).

For more Calendar listings online, visit [canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar](http://canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar).



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