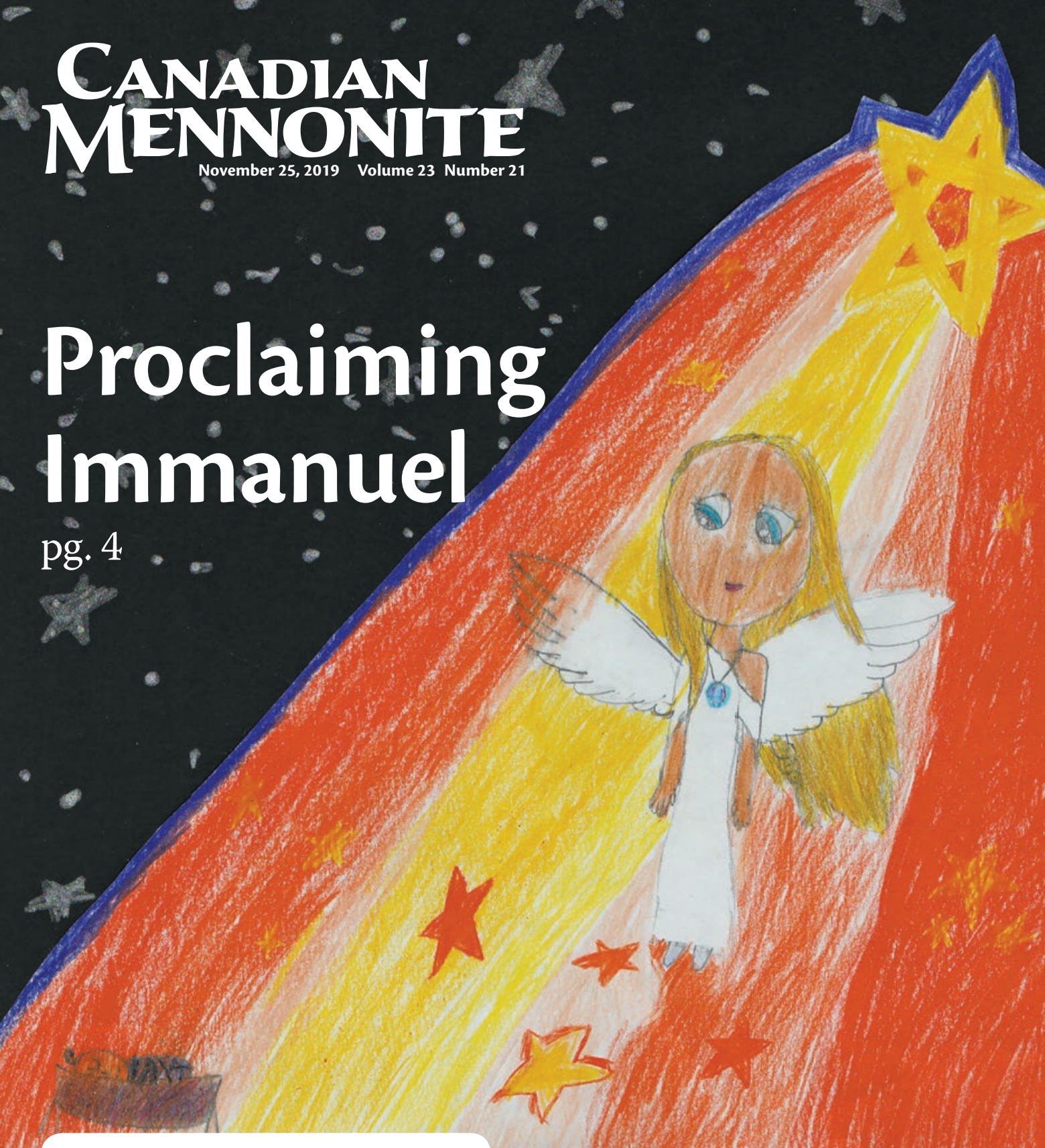


# Proclaiming Immanuel

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## EDITORIAL

# What shall I wear: Sport coat or cardigan?

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER  
Executive Editor



Recently TV sports personality Don Cherry lost his job for making disparaging comments to “You

people,” which viewers and the company that employed him interpreted to apply to newcomers in Canada. The airwaves, newspapers and social media feeds were clogged with opinions about the outspoken commentator’s remarks. His trademark outfit: flashy sport coats.

Not being a sports fan, I know little of the flamboyant sportscaster’s history and views. But I’m troubled when someone privileged to garner such a large audience lumps whole groups of people together and then casts condemnation at them. Make them an impersonal blob and it’s easy to assume that everyone in that group thinks, believes and acts in exactly the same way. Then you have ammunition to reject or even hurt them. And you can instigate others to do the same.

That got me thinking about Fred Rogers. Yes, the soft-spoken host of the children’s television program *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. Wearer of the simple cardigan sweater.

When my children were young, they connected with the gentle man and the other denizens of his television neighbourhood. In each episode, Mr. Rogers spoke directly to the camera in such a way that you felt he was talking directly to you, as a special person. His messages were ones of comfort to a young viewer, from “You can never go down the [bathtub] drain” to “I like you as you are, exactly and precisely.” With his large TV

audience listening in, he reflected on feelings like fear and anger, reassuring each child that these were common emotions and that people, young and old, had the capacity to deal with their emotions in healthy ways.

Last year our family watched the new documentary, *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?* The award-winning piece highlights the unique work this broadcaster did in contrast to the loud and fast-paced children’s programming of his time. The documentary demonstrates Fred’s high respect for each individual child, a respect that he extended to each adult as well.

“The best thing we can do is to help somebody know that they’re loved and capable of loving,” he once said. “Knowing that we can be loved exactly as we are gives us all the best opportunity for growing into the healthiest of people.”

Of course, Fred learned the lesson about this kind of loving attention from an ancient master. Ordained as a Presbyterian minister for his broadcasting ministry, Fred put into practice the example he saw in Jesus.

The gospels show a Jesus who held a child on his lap and pointed to the reign of God. The teacher who discussed theology with a Samaritan woman and met secretly with the Pharisee Nicodemus. The healer who took time for a blind man, a hemorrhaging woman and a deceased little girl. The one who gently called a cheating tax collector to account and reminded a stone-throwing mob of their own individual sins. The master who called each disciple by

name and, near the end of his life, washed each of their dusty feet.

In the everyday times of our life, we face the great temptation to treat people as batches of humanity: the baby boomers, the millennials, the evangelicals, the progressives, the critics, the supporters, the insiders, the outsiders, the sinners, the pure ones. But who wants to be relegated to being a tiny point in a large crowd?

What does it mean for you and me to reject the “you people” mentality and instead treat each person as worthy of our attention? Maybe we can take the wearer of the cardigan as an example of how to listen to and respect each one of our neighbours.

Colossians 3:12-14 uses the metaphor of clothing, encouraging Christ’s followers to treat all as beloved children of God. No. 38 in the *Sing the Journey* songbook expresses it this way:

“Beloved, God’s chosen, / put on like a garment / compassion, forgiveness and goodness of heart. / Above all, before all, let love be your raiment / that binds into one every dissonant part.”

As this issue of *Canadian Mennonite* goes to press, a feature film on Fred Rogers is about to be released in Canada. *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* is based on the story of Mr. Rogers and his friendship with a journalist. I plan to go see it.

The simple cardigan or the flashy jacket? We can choose. ❧



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## FEATURE

# Proclaiming Immanuel

The proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ is at the very heart of the Christmas story, and it has been from the very first

By Jodie Hatlem

I was eight years old. That year, the Sunday school Christmas pageant was going to be a no-fuss event. All the kids were going to stand up in a line, each of us reciting a memorized verse from Luke's Christmas story.

*"And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."*

That was my line. I was disappointed!

My best friend, the pastor's daughter, got to say the most phenomenal line in history: *"And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'"*

But I was stuck with the most wooden and clunky line in the whole narrative. From song to prose. From angel armies to a band of dirty shepherds. From the heraldic singing

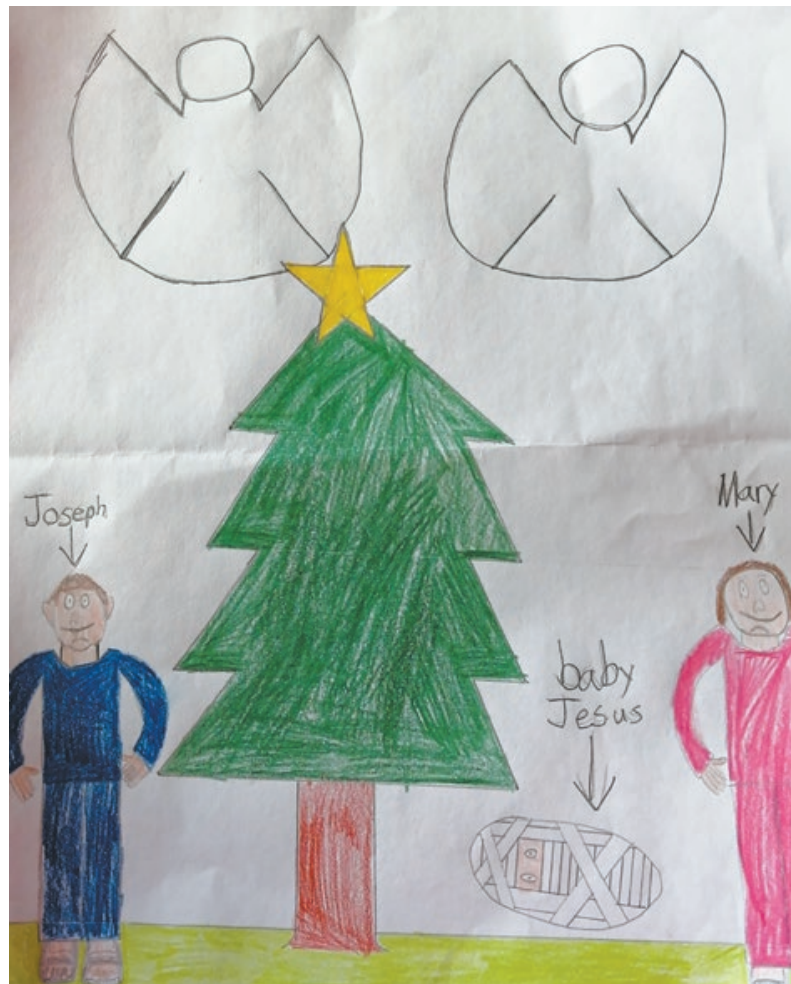
to throaty midnight shouts. From divine revelation to human proclamation.

As an adult reading this story, though, I am particularly struck by that line about the shepherds making known abroad the saying which was told to them concerning

this child, even though I still think it sounds a bit clunky.

The passage nails a central movement in the shepherds' experience of that very first Christmas. It was their transition from: "O, Come Let Us Adore Him" to "Go, Tell it on the Mountain." From seeing to recounting, and from adulation to proclamation!

I imagine the pounding of their feet, heavy breathing, running, walking and running again, breathlessly, through the deep darkness and night air. The shepherds believed that the world had changed and, with burning lungs and sweating brows, they went into the fields, taverns, inns, hovels and houses to



'Nativity scene,' by Colin Lane, a Grade 6 student who attends Crystal City (Man.) Mennonite Church.



proclaim this revolution.

What did they shout? I'm not sure. I suppose that the Messiah was there. I am certain they were greeted with looks of incredulity. Perhaps, some hearers were angry that they had been wakened from a sound sleep, some eyeing the shepherds suspiciously, looking for signs of drunkenness or prankishness or madness. A few, perhaps, were curious.

When I imagine the scene, Christina Rossetti's poem "In the Bleak Mid-winter" comes to mind: ". . . frosty wind made moan / Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone / Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow. . ."

I imagine the shepherds running on ground hardened by frost, their laboured breaths visible in the night air. Of course, the snow and ice don't fit into a historical or geographical sense, but the winter scene expresses a metaphorical truth about the harshness of the world into which this baby had entered, frail and vulnerable, as all babies are. A kind of cold and bitter poverty. Shepherds living in the fields, their lives filled with the capriciousness of imperial edicts, the unkindness and inhospitality of strangers, the massacre of innocents, the displacement of people from their homes and kindred.

This world is still familiar to us after 20 centuries of stony sleep, as thousands

of children are kept in tent cities along the U.S. southern border, and many people are starving in the Middle East. For motives as petty and insipid as Herod's or Pharaoh's—just so a ruler can hold onto a certain kind of power a little bit longer.

It is pretty much a Christmas tradition to remark that there is no peace on earth, no goodwill towards humankind. To say that the world was transformed, that it has turned at Christmas time, seems to deny its revolutions of 2,000-plus years. The turning and turning and turning of a weary world. And whether we think that

the world is much the same as it has always been, or that it is something altogether new, there still seems to be little room for the kind of proclamation that is so central to the Christmas story: "Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!"

Mary, the mother of Jesus, speaks eloquently in her revolutionary announcement: "*He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty*" (Luke 1:51b-53).

The proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ is at the very heart of the Christmas story, and it has been from the very first. From the time of the prophet Isaiah come his words to weary mortals, from a weary God: "*The Lord*

*himself will give you a sign. Look, a virgin, a young woman, is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.*"

What is the place of proclamation in our celebration of Christmas? How do we proclaim this ascendancy of a new king? How do we go and tell about a world that is about to turn? What does it mean that, everywhere we look, things seem to deny the lordship of Bethlehem's baby?

Part of this Christmas proclamation is hope. Not optimism that things are going to go our way, not a confidence in our abilities or in our connections. This



'Jesus here and now,' by Sean Lane, a Grade 4 student who attends Crystal City (Man.) Mennonite Church.

proclamation is not a pie-in-the-sky hope, a painkiller that takes the harsh edges off our collective despair and frustration. Proclamation is a restless hope, a striving hope, a moving hope. The kind of hope that does not explain away present injustices but instead renders them unbearable.

Christmas proclamation is the promise that in Christ's name all oppression shall cease, that thorns will no longer oppress the ground, that the slave is our kin, that the Saviour reigns. The Christmas proclamation is not just a promise that the Saviour will reign, but it is the affirmation that the Saviour does reign. At Christmas, we must proclaim not only the coming of—but the actual arrival of—the revolution. The future is here and now: in our city, on our street and here in our church.

*"This will be a sign for you: You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."* Yes, indeed. This baby wrapped in swaddling clothes is a sign of hope and promise. But this baby is more than just a sign. He is the real, historical, physical presence of God with humanity. Jesus Christ is not just a sign that God will be with us, but that God is with us.

This is revolutionary. This is evidence that the world has turned. Everywhere we look, we see signs of the kingdom, some as small as a mustard seed; others, a marvel to our eyes.

The world has long been weary of the proclamation that Jesus is supreme. Through centuries of history, when empires ruled in Jesus' name, that declaration wasn't necessarily so good. Do we really want to belt out to the world: "Receive your king!"?

We live in a world, and among a host of Christians, who rightly doubt the wisdom of proclaiming, "Jesus is Lord." But then there are these pesky biblical texts around which we've ordered our convictions on peace and justice, grace and mercy, salvation as liberation. These texts unswervingly announce the reign of God in Jesus as being for every tongue, tribe and nation.

The Christmas song, "O, Holy Night," was controversial when it was first

written. Author Placide Cappeau de Roquemaure was known in his small French community for being against slavery and for being a socialist. Because of his reputation, local people read the song's text with the suspicion that it contained an insidious, revolutionary message. This is the salvific message of this Christmas carol: "Truly he taught us to love one another / His law is love and his gospel is peace / Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother / And in his name all oppression shall cease / Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we / Let all within us praise his holy name / Christ is the Lord, O praise His name forever / His power and glory evermore proclaim."

How do we proclaim the revolution that is Immanuel, God with us? How would our Christmas celebrations change if we began to think of them as proclamations? How would they change if we began to think of them as signs that surely God is with us—all of us?

Maybe seeing our celebrations this way would change the tone with which

we said: "Merry Christmas." Maybe it would change our Christmas merriment—and who we invited to the party. If we saw our celebrations as proclamation, would that perspective change the gifts we gave? Would it change who we gave presents to?

And this shall be a sign unto you. Immanuel! A new world is coming; it is already here.

During the Christmas season, and as we prepare to enter into the New Year, let us ask ourselves: "How can I live in such a way that my life is a sign of God's kingdom?" Let us live in such a way that our Christmas singing makes worldly powers nervous and petty potentates a bit uneasy. Let us live in such a way that our living proclaims Immanuel. ❧



*Jodie Hatlem is a pastor at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont. Adapted from a sermon she preached there on Dec. 23, 2018.*

### /// For discussion

1. What memories do you have of Christmas pageants, either from when you were young or more recently? How elaborate were they? Why do some churches go to a great deal of effort to carry on this tradition? How effective are pageants in proclaiming the lordship of Christ to the world?
2. Jodie Hatlem suggests that the characters in the Christmas story lived in a harsh world. What people today are experiencing displacement, lack of hospitality or capricious imperial edicts? What does the message of "Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns" mean to them and how might it be different for those who live in greater comfort?
3. Mary's song is revolutionary with its reference to scattering the proud, bringing down the powerful and sending the rich away empty. How can our Christmas celebrations also proclaim this revolution?
4. Hatlem writes, "This baby in swaddling clothes is a sign of hope and promise," because it indicates the "physical presence of God with humanity." Where do you see evidence that Christ is reigning now? Where are the signs of hope and promise in the world today?  
—By Barb Draper

## /// Readers write

### ✉ Planting forests versus fearing the future

**Re: “Faithful practices on a dying planet,” and “Planting trees, nurturing a dream,” Sept. 30, pages 4 and 16, respectively.**

I was astounded by the contrast between the despondent lament offered by Gerald Ens in his apocalyptic forecast of the future cloaked in a facade of biblical justification, and the joyful stewardship of Wayne and Carry Dueck on their forested land in Saskatchewan.

The latter article spoke to me, as our family also has a 325-hectare woodland here on Vancouver Island. We are capturing the carbon load of 400 homes and vehicles, as well as providing clean water for salmon and trout; and a home habitat for deer, elk with impressively huge antlers, roly-poly black bears, wolves and the occasional cougar. And, like the Duecks, we have shared this love of creation with hundreds of school children, service clubs, out-of-country visitors, university forestry students and land owners.

I challenge Ens’s prophesy that the Earth is dying, on both spiritual and secular bases. In Genesis 9:11, God promises he will never destroy the Earth by flood again. If such a promise is made, do you think he had his fingers crossed under his robe and said to himself, “but free will has a lot of demons”?

And Ens echoes the fatalistic fear that “my three-year-old son may not live past 30.” But by every indicator, life for the majority of people on Earth is improving. Life expectancy, infant mortality, eradication of disease, food production and poverty have all shown positive metrics.

He also says we must guard against “the heroic despair . . . that even if the human species seems likely to perish, the planet will survive.” I find nothing heroic about such a spurious claim. The planet has undergone cataclysmic changes, such as entire continents wandering about, the reversal of the magnetic fields, impacts from meteors and geological upheavals beyond our imagination. Yet the sun comes up and goes down, the geese migrate, the rain falls on parched land.

HAROLD MACY, COURTENAY, B.C.

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

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Enns**—David Calvin (b. Sept. 17, 2019), to Tom and Leanne Enns, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Epp**—Audrey Lisabeth (b. Sept. 13, 2019), to Kevin and Emma Epp, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Lazarko**—Michael David and Thomas Christopher (b. Aug. 22, 2019), to David and Jackie Lazarko, Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

### Marriages

**Kirkland/Pollard**—Kristen Kirkland and Stephen Pollard, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Oct. 19, 2019.

### Deaths

**Cressman**—Elaine, 89 (b. Aug. 26, 1930; d. Sept. 30, 2019), Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Driedger**—Mary (Bergen), 94 (b. Oct. 9, 1925; d. Oct. 23, 2019), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Dueck**—John G., 93 (b. Jan. 25, 1926; d. Oct. 3, 2019), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Epp**—Maria, 83 (b. June 11, 1936; d. Nov. 4, 2019), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

**Friesen**—Evelyn Alice (Bartel), 93 (b. May 28, 1926; d. Nov. 3, 2019), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

**Gazley**—Annemieke (Mieke), 67 (b. Feb. 23, 1952; d. Oct. 15, 2019), Brussels Mennonite, Ont.

**Janzen**—Elizabeth, 76 (b. April 25, 1943; d. Oct. 4, 2019), Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont.

**Klassen**—Rudy, 81 (b. Oct. 8, 1938; d. Oct. 29, 2019), Morden Mennonite, Man.

**Klassen**—Rudy John, 86 (b. May 16, 1933; d. Oct. 25, 2019), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Loewen**—Rita (Braun), 74 (b. April 6, 1945; d. Oct. 24, 2019), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Ross**—Ruth (nee Wagler), 83 (b. Jan. 25, 1936; d. Oct. 14, 2019), St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

**Tissen**—Nadejda (Nadia) (nee Loewen), 85 (b. Jan. 6, 1934; d. Oct. 21, 2019), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Zehr**—Ruth, 84 (b. Oct. 9, 1934; d. July 14, 2019), Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, 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

## ‘Where there is no vision . . .’

Tim Wiebe-Neufeld

“Not another visioning process” was a common reaction when I presented the idea of a year of visioning and discernment at Mennonite Church Alberta’s 2018 annual delegate sessions. The restructuring of MC Canada meant a shift in responsibilities for MC Alberta, and a focus on congregations as the centre of mission. What do these changes mean for our regional church’s 12 congregations and our ministry together? What is God calling us to be and do as we move into the year 2020 and beyond?

While there were good reasons for a visioning process, the negative reactions were understandable. Some cited a history of congregational or denominational processes that produced little hoped-for transformation. Few people could name tangible results or positive outcomes of past experiences. Others saw visioning as an overused business process, one they had seen used in their workplaces with dubious results. Many spoke of reports and binders now collecting dust on forgotten shelves or

buried deep in storage boxes. Why would this effort be any different?

Why indeed? Foundational to an effective visioning process is to understand the reasons for embarking on one in the first place. If we cannot state clearly the reasons for what we do, why bother? One pastor offered Proverbs 29:18 in support of the process: “*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*”

Over the course of our yearlong Vision 2020 process, support has grown. Three things contributed to the fading of initial misgivings:

- **First was the** guidance of Betty Pries of Credence & Co. Through consultation and teaching, she helped MC Alberta see renewal as a spiritual journey for individuals, congregations and as a regional church family.
- **Second was engagement** by many individuals and congregations. Several of these incorporated prayers for the process into their worship services or individual devotional times. Most congregations were represented at each

of three visioning weekends. Guided conversation at these events identified a sense of God’s call surrounding prayer practices, core commitments, deep spiritual longing, community character and ministry directions.

• **Third, and perhaps** most importantly, our visioning year has concluded with the presentation of an action plan. Our final visioning weekend marked the beginning of the next phase in our life together, which will be guided by the theme “Encountering, embracing and embodying Christ.” Over the next three years, we will focus on what this calling means in our individual lives, in community and in the world around us.

It will take commitment to ensure the outcomes of our visioning process are not left to languish on a shelf somewhere. But I am encouraged with where our visioning process has led us and I’m hopeful for its continued direction for our future. I pray for God’s guidance as we live into being the people God is calling us to be. ☩



*Tim Wiebe-Neufeld is MC Alberta’s executive minister. For more information about MCA’s Vision 2020 process, visit [mennonitechurch.ab.ca/](http://mennonitechurch.ab.ca/).*

## A moment from yesterday



Mennonites lived in Prussia/Poland for more than 400 years, but our understanding of the Mennonite experience in this area requires further study. This is the former Mennonite church at Rosengart (now Rozgart), near Elbing (now Elblag). Peter Klassen (1930-2019) has worked hard at shedding light on the Mennonite experience in Prussia. He was born in Crowfoot, Alta., and baptized in Tofield, Alta. He graduated from the University of British Columbia and then did further PhD studies in California. He taught at Fresno State University for about 40 years. His published works include two books on Mennonites in Prussia and include this photo.

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Mennonite Heritage Archives /  
Lawrence Klippenstein photo collection



[archives.mhsc.ca](http://archives.mhsc.ca)



## THIRD WAY FAMILY

# Choosing forgiveness

Christina Bartel Barkman

In my work with single, high-risk mothers and women who experience abuse in intimate relationships, many conversations about forgiveness have arisen. I recently shared about choosing the path of forgiveness and I could instantly feel the tension rise. Their bodies shifted, their breath became short, their brows furrowed.

I could sense right away that they felt I was going to talk about letting their ex-partners off the hook and minimizing the wrong done to them. One woman said, “Yes, but if someone has ruined your life, it’s not so easy.”

Exactly right, I thought. Not easy at all! But yet absolutely necessary in order to experience healing and peace.

Many of us carry deep pain and find forgiveness to be quite impossible. There are hurts that feel like they’ve cut to the very heart of our being. There are wounds that are painfully slow to heal. When sharing about forgiveness, I tread carefully on the cracks and fissures we’re walking on. Encouraging someone to choose forgiveness is not done lightly.

Yet Jesus himself, who forgives all, for all, calls us to forgive. Forgiveness is at the heart of the gospel, and if we are to live lives that shine forth God’s good news, we have to learn the ways of living

that make for peace.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in his *The Book of Forgiving*, writes: “Without forgiveness we remain tethered to the person who harmed us. We are bound with chains of bitterness, tied together, trapped. Until we can forgive the person who harmed us, that person will hold the keys to our happiness; that person will be our jailor. When we forgive, we take back control of our own fate and our feelings. We become our own liberators.”

Carrying resentment towards someone who spoke hurtful words, or harbouring anger against someone who deeply wronged you, keeps you down, makes you feel insecure, unsettled and anguished, and prevents you from experiencing peace in your being.

When we choose to forgive, we can be filled with peace, and experience wholeness and the fullness of God’s gift to us. When we are free from the bondages of resentment, pain and hurt, we are better able to be a blessing to those around us, loving others from a place of security and inner well-being. When we love from a place of peace, our family notices, our friends notice and the world notices.

*The Book of Forgiving* offers a

four-step forgiveness process to free ourselves from a cycle of hurt and retribution: tell the story, name the hurt, grant forgiveness, and renew or release the relationship. The first two steps are important for the healing process of forgiveness, as attempting to forgive without telling your story and identifying the hurt can turn into an over-rushed and ill-fated process. Once a sincere forgiveness has been granted, we can choose to release the relationship or creatively pursue a new relationship out of the suffering, one that’s often stronger because of what it has endured.

In his book *Forgiving As We Have Been Forgiven*, Celestine Musekura summarizes forgiveness as followers of Jesus in this way: “Forgiveness is the gift that I have freely received and that I should unconditionally give. As a forgiven sinner, I am called to forgive. As a redeemed saint, I must not subject myself to the bondage of unforgiveness. In his grace, God did not allow me to sink into unforgiveness but called me to be an instrument of hope, healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.”



Christina Bartel Barkman, with her four little ones and her pastor husband, seeks to live out Jesus’ creative and loving “third way” options.

## Et cetera

### Shelf of Literature promotes theological conversation

The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Shelf of Literature aims to promote theological conversation and Anabaptist identity among members of Mennonite World Conference.

- Eight books have been selected as of 2018.
- The first five books (2002-06) were supported by Good Books and Pandora Press.
- *From Anabaptist Seed* (2002) was translated into 16 languages.
- *What We Believe Together* (2007) is available in seven languages.
- Since 2007 only two books have been chosen: *Life Together in the Spirit*, by John Driver (2015), and *God’s People in Mission*, edited by Stanley W. Green and Rafael Zaracho (2018).



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 THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE
 

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# We belong to each other

Arli Klassen

It was Sunday morning on a Mennonite Church Canada Joint Council meeting weekend. We divided up into three groups to visit three different congregations and then we regrouped over a late pizza lunch to hear about the visits.

The first few people began their reports by saying how good it felt to recognize someone in the congregation—a distant family member or someone they went to school with—and how good it felt to be known and welcomed by someone as they visited their assigned congregations.

But then a few others spoke up about their visits. One of the persons called Lee said she knew no one in the congregation she visited, and no one recognized her. The other Ly also said she knew no one in her assigned congregation, and she could tell by looking around that she was the only Asian face in the entire building. Their sense of welcome when they knew no one, and were not welcomed in the same way, was experienced quite differently from those who were recognized by even just one or two people. How do you feel that you belong if no one recognizes you?

Then we went on to talk about the

experiences that stood out for each of us in the congregations we worshipped at that Sunday. For many of us, it was the personal sharing that touched us, as part of the sermon or sharing time, or another part of the service. We each took away personal stories, connecting with people about the pain and the joy being experienced in those congregations. We delighted in seeing the Spirit at work.

Do we have to be recognized by someone in order to feel welcomed and that we belong? Is that what it means to be church together, beyond our own congregations? Do we expect to feel that we belong when we visit another MC Canada congregation, even when we don't know anyone?

I know that sometimes it's too hard to be welcoming, even within our own congregational communities. As an introvert, I'd rather talk to a few people I know well than to try to make connections with people I don't know very well. It takes effort and intentionality to make connections. And yet, one of the beautiful things about a church community is that it's a place where we are known across generations and cultures, and where we belong. Our stories are known by someone. How do we make sure everyone is welcomed and belongs?

MC Canada is not just a network or conference of congregations, but we are church together, as regional churches and a nationwide church. I wish we needed each other more and knew more of each other's stories, so that we might have a more visceral understanding of belonging together.

César García, Mennonite World Conference's general secretary, says that, as Anabaptists, we do not have a strong theological understanding about being church together beyond our local congregation, unlike Catholics or Anglicans. For many of us, our commitment at our baptism is to follow Jesus in the context of membership in a local congregation. Does our baptism and membership make it clear that we are members with one other, linked to each other in our regional churches and our nationwide church, and through MWC to all the other Anabaptists?

Being church together beyond our local congregation has to be more than recognizing someone from school or family gatherings. We belong to each other, all of us. ☸



*Arli Klassen is a member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.; moderator of MC Eastern Canada; a member of the*

*MC Canada Joint Council; and on staff at MWC. In this column, Arli speaks for none but herself, and even that perspective might shift depending on the day and context.*

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 Et cetera
 

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## MB Herald going out of print

After 58 years of encouraging and uniting the Mennonite Brethren family across Canada, the *MB Herald* will cease publication of its print magazine at the end of 2019. Due to decreasing revenues, a depleted reserve fund, and low *Herald* readership, the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches executive board eliminated funding for the *Herald* in its 2020 budget. Delegates approved the budget at the Oct. 23, 2019, annual general meeting. In the coming months, a new communications strategy, which “adjusts to the Collaborative Model of governance and focuses on multi-modal online communication,” will be developed, and the website—[mbherald.com](http://mbherald.com)—will continue sharing news from MB partners. The *MB Herald* began as a weekly black-and-white magazine in 1962.

Source: *MB Herald*





## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

# Unlearning 'Christianese'

Troy Watson

“Christianese” is what some people call insider jargon Christians use to talk about God and faith. One of the primary problems with Christianese is that it doesn't make sense to outsiders. Someone once compared it to legalese, which has its place and purpose, but is confusing and meaningless to people who aren't lawyers.

Christianese often takes the form of pat answers and clichés. Like superficial statements athletes say during sports interviews. When athletes say they need to “bring their A game” and “give 110 percent,” they aren't really communicating anything. Overused clichés are just as empty and meaningless when we're talking about God.

Finally, Christianese does more harm than good when talking to most Canadians today. It's more likely to trigger old wounds and painful memories from their religious past than communicate good news.

I'm convinced that we must unlearn Christianese and learn anew how to speak about God and faith. We must dare to share our faith journeys and God experiences with honesty, clarity and humility.

For example, when we say things like “I met Christ,” or “I was born again,” what do we really mean by that? What exactly happened when you “met Christ”? Were you in a church service worshipping with others? Were you alone in prayer? Were you gardening or hiking or grieving? And what happened exactly? Did you actually see Jesus? Did you hear a voice? Did you have a vision? What do you mean by “You met Christ”?

Many Christians haven't thought through what they mean when they use Christianese terms. The main reason we use such phrases is because it's how we've been taught to talk about God and

faith. However, we also use our group's language to reinforce our sense of belonging to the tribe. Jargon is a prime way our tribe separates the sheep from the goats.

For instance, I was talking with a stranger a few months ago and mentioned being “led by the Spirit.” The

when I sensed a presence in the room with me. You know that feeling you get when you become aware someone is in the room with you or staring at you. I'd never felt anything like this while praying before, but this presence was as real as anything I've ever experienced. I can't explain it, but I knew it was Jesus. I

**You shouldn't say 'I met Christ' if what you really mean is 'I accepted certain theological beliefs about Jesus as true and now those beliefs are central to my worldview.'**

person smiled and told me he now knew I was one of them. A few weeks later, I used a feminine pronoun for God and that person smiled and told me she now knew I was one of them.

We all tend to identify who is in our tribe by the language we use. We also use language to communicate to others what tribe we identify with. As a result, our God talk can be inadvertently careless and disingenuous.

It's important to be mindful and honest when we talk about God and faith. You shouldn't say “I met Christ” if what you really mean is, “I accepted certain theological beliefs about Jesus as true and now those beliefs are central to my worldview.” They are both legitimate and meaningful statements, but they are different occurrences.

Of course, many Christians say “I met Christ” to refer to an actual encounter. However, it's important to describe the experience in your own words instead of relying on Christianese clichés.

Here is how one person briefly described their Christ encounter. (You'll notice they share how the experience impacted and changed them. This increases the clarity of their description, in my opinion.)

The person said: “I was alone praying

suppose I knew because I felt love fill the room. Peace surrounded me. Joy erupted within me. I felt as light as a feather. I've never felt so free. I've sensed Christ's presence with me ever since that day.

“Whenever I pay attention to his presence with me, the same peace, love and joy arise within me. Not always as intensely as that first experience, but knowing he is with me always lightens my spirit and helps me get through whatever I'm facing.”

It might surprise you how many people are interested in hearing about your faith journey and your God experiences when you share them honestly, clearly and humbly. Humility is key, though. Humility means sharing your experiences without expecting others to experience God the same way as you. It also means being open and receptive to other people's stories, experiences and thoughts on God, and regarding them as legitimate as your own. ☸



*Troy Watson is slowly learning how to talk about God and faith without using Christianese.*

## VIEWPOINT

# The coming of the kingdom

John Klassen

Since the late 18th century the overall standard of living increased tremendously, and the poor began to share in the material abundance of earth.

The words of Jesus in Matthew 13 use the language of matter: food and nutrition: *“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field,”* and, *“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about 60 pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”*

These nameless characters of the kingdom of heaven are people whose actions reflect the materiality of everyday life. They planted seeds and worked the dough. They baked bread and they caught fish. They owned estates, rented out property, prosecuted delinquent renters, and negotiated wages and workloads.

Christians believe that Jesus came to deliver humans from famine, misery, hunger and early death. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was so confident that she used the past tense for something that would happen in the future, in the life of her unborn son: *“He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.”* Yet the majority of people at that time remained poor and the rich continued being rich.

What is remarkable about the last 200 or so years is the growth and development in material, cultural and social life. The pace of growth accelerated when two German scientists, Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch, mass produced goods. In Haber and Bosch’s case, it was ammonia, the main component in nitrogen-based fertilizers. Soon low-cost fertilizer became abundant and available to the world. This increased the production of food.

In Europe and North America, ambitious and energetic facilitators looked for ways to help people help

themselves.

Technology also contributed to the increase of food. Two hundred years earlier, it took 25 people all day to harvest and thresh a tonne of grain. Today one person with a combine-thresher can do it in six minutes. It used to take an hour to milk 10 litres. Today a modern milking machine can do it in less than a minute.

Another area where material life has improved is in water quality and general cleanliness. Wherever people live, we contaminate earth and water, and spread bacteria, viruses, parasites and worms. The outbreaks of cholera in London in the mid-19th century encouraged people to investigate preventions and cures.

Dr. John Snow observed that cholera broke out where people lived in low-lying areas and where they dug wells for drinking water. He concluded that germs were carried not by air, but by water. This led local governments to prohibit wells in wet lands. They introduced filtered and chlorinated water, along with sewer systems and garbage collection. Snow’s examination of the material environment resulted in extending and saving lives.

The greatest lack of water existed in sub-Saharan Africa, where women and girls spent much of their lives carrying the precious liquid from distant wells to their homes. It is estimated that, collectively, African women and children spent 40 billion hours per year carrying water. But local wells meant girls had time to go to school, develop careers and earn incomes. Recently 90 percent of females in Northern Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Western Asia have been released from carrying water duties.

Since the 19th century, the worldwide mortality rate among infants dropped 74 percent, and early deaths among the

overall populations dropped 43 percent. Eventually these trends were evident throughout the world. Literally billions of people got safe water. Today, 96 percent of the world’s urban population and 84 percent of its rural population have access to clean water.

Life expectancy is ultimately the clearest measurement of progress. Two-hundred-plus years ago, no country had an average life expectancy of more than 40 years. The majority lived in extreme poverty. But the improvements in food supplies, clean water, medical knowledge, technology, and washing hands with chlorinated water, reduced the death rate of mothers dying during birth by almost 90 percent. In the last 70 years, the world in general is seeing a significant improvement in infant and child mortality.

Mennonites were on the front lines in this monumental effort to increase life’s length and quality. In 1920, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was organized to give aid to Mennonites in Ukraine. MCC requested permits to bring three tractors to Mennonites in the new Soviet Union in order to help in farming. The Soviet Union agreed, provided that MCC also helped non-Mennonite Russians.

The Mennonite Foodgrains Bank was created to send food aid that would lead to sustainable agriculture around the world. And Mennonite Economic Development Associates was formed by Mennonite entrepreneurs to help people in developing countries build stronger businesses.

Bill and Melinda Gates, business magnates and philanthropists, express what could be a slogan for the coming age: *“All our lives have equal value. We are impatient optimists working to reduce inequality.”*

The expansion of nutrition, cleanliness and human dignity, and the overall improvement in life, can be seen as the reflection of the image of God at work. For this we praise and thank God. ❧

*Originally presented in a longer format at Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, Vancouver.*



# 'Jews, Mennonites and the Holocaust'

Story and Photo by John Longhurst

Winnipeg Free Press

WINNIPEG

About 80 years ago, Jews and Mennonites lived peacefully together in the Ukrainian city of Khortitsa. Then the Nazis came, and everything changed.

In 1941, before the invasion, Khortitsa had about 2,000 Mennonites and 402 Jews out of a population of about 14,000. A year or so later, the Jews were all gone, killed by the Nazis.

Did the Mennonites know what happened to their neighbours? And did some help with the killings? Those were the questions addressed on Nov. 5 at a public lecture entitled "Jews, Mennonites and the Holocaust."

The event, which was attended by an overflow audience of about 175 people, featured Mennonite historians Aileen Friesen, executive director of the D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation, and Hans Werner, a retired professor of Mennonite history from the University of Winnipeg.

Friesen, who spoke about the experience of Jews and Mennonites under the German occupation, began her presentation by noting that the last major massacre of Jews in the region occurred in 1942 in the nearby city of Zaporizhzhia, across the river from Khortitsa.

About the same time as 3,000 Jews were being murdered, Mennonites—who were treated well by the Nazis because they were seen as ethnic Germans—were celebrating their newfound liberation from communist oppression at Easter church services.

"The image is stark," she stated, of how Mennonites benefitted under German occupation while Jews were "subjected to unspeakable violence."

While most Mennonites didn't participate in the genocide against the Jews, some did collaborate, serving as mayors, police or other officials. Some were also members of local security forces that rounded up and murdered Jews.

For decades, Mennonite scholars "have struggled with issues of collaboration," she



**Wally and Millie Kroeker of River East (MB) Church talk to presenter Aileen Friesen, right, at 'Jews, Mennonites and the Holocaust,' a public presentation at the Asper Jewish Community Centre in Winnipeg on Nov. 5.**

said. But the recent discovery of records from the former Soviet Union provide "concrete evidence" of Mennonite participation in the Holocaust.

Since much of the new material comes from Soviet interrogation records from after the war, it has to be "treated with caution," she acknowledged. But together with other historical records and recollections, it is "clear" some Mennonites aided the Nazis in killing Jews.

In his presentation, Werner dealt with the way Mennonites have remembered their wartime experience in the Ukraine.

Referencing memoirs written by Mennonites after the war, he noted that the Holocaust usually only makes cameo appearances. Most focus on Mennonite life before the Russian revolution, the subsequent loss and displacement under the Soviets, and their own suffering during and after the Second World War.

These memories are coloured by how the German invasion of Russia was "a relief from Soviet oppression," he said, adding that they also fit neatly into "Cold War logic" after the war, when the Soviet Union was seen as the enemy.

Some memoir writers who mentioned the Holocaust promoted a sense of "equivalence between the killing of the Jews and Mennonite suffering [under the Soviets],"

he said, or they blamed the Nazis for their deaths.

Dan Stone, co-chair of the program committee for the Jewish Heritage Centre, summed up the presentations by saying it "was exciting to see the Mennonite community looking at its past and giving praise where it is deserved, and blame where it is deserved."

He praised Friesen and Werner for "facing the past directly and honestly," and for taking a hard look "at what actually happened, without fear of what they are going to find."

During a Q&A period, the two were asked why it has taken so long for this story to be told.

Werner replied that it is partly due to a new generation asking questions of their parents and grandparents, and also because some are feeling a need to tell their stories before they pass away.

It's also "not a good story" to tell, he said, noting that even he was nervous speaking about it in a Jewish community centre.

Friesen added that it is also happening because of new historical records that have just become available in the last 10 to 15 years. "Now we can put things together," she said.

At the end of the evening, Dan Klass, a member of the Jewish community whose parents came from the Khortitsa region to Winnipeg in 1913, noted the similarities between that community almost 80 years ago and Winnipeg today. Like back then, Winnipeg is a mix of Mennonites and Jews, he said, noting that relations between the two communities are good—despite this terrible history.

"We should celebrate and cherish this, and make sure Winnipeg is a place where it never happens again," he said. ☸

*Originally published in the Nov. 7 Winnipeg Free Press. Reprinted with permission of the author.*

# Many people, one church

*Congregations meet for joint peace service*

By Henry Neufeld

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
VANCOUVER

**O**n Peace Sunday, Nov. 10, five metro Vancouver Mennonite Church British Columbia congregations gathered for a service of unity with a focus on peace. They met at Peace Church on 52nd, formerly known as First United Mennonite.

In welcoming worshippers, Pastor Lydia Cruttwell of Peace Church on 52nd said: “This means that this service will have some parts that are familiar and some that are new . . . and that is a good thing. It is good for us to . . . discover how we

of multilingual groups, Scriptures were read in English, Spanish, German, Korean and Cantonese.

“Hearing the Scripture read again and again allows me to take a moment to meditate on it, or perhaps it is the languages themselves, the reminder that the kingdom of God embraces every tribe, tongue, nation and people,” said Cruttwell.

Using Micah 6:8—“*What does the Lord require but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your*

creation and thousands die of opioid overdoses, elderly Canadians are being scammed, and people have to work multiple jobs to pay rent and provide food.

“We are called to do justice, to defend the oppressed, to lift up the powerless, to make choices that help those in need,” Cruttwell said, adding, “We are called to be people whose lives are marked by mercy and compassion towards friend and family, and strangers and enemies.”

Believers need to follow the high calling of steadfast love, she said. “We are called to work for peace now. It will be a struggle, but with Christ we can do it.” Her prayer was that Christians not settle for an absence of violence.

In responding, appreciation was expressed for the sermon, and it was pointed out that war veterans often hate war the most.

Reaction to the service was positive. “It’s important to recognize the different perspectives in Vancouver churches,” said a congregant. Another said, “I loved this. It brought back memories of when this church was this full every Sunday.”

The idea for the joint service came from Point Grey’s Janice Kreider at a regular church leaders meeting. The intent was to celebrate and worship together, to strengthen relationships between congregations and to promote the Anabaptist commitment to peace. An inter-church committee from Chinatown Peace Church, Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Peace Mennonite Church, Point Grey and Peace Church on 52nd planned the event.

Working together is not new for these congregations, though, as they jointly operate a refugee food bank based at Sherbrooke Mennonite. Some of the offering went to support Mennonite Church Canada workers in the Philippines. ☸



PHOTO BY SUE KIM

*Scripture is read in five languages at Peace Church on 52nd on Nov. 10.*

are similar and how we are different, and to be reminded that we are all united in one body by Christ, the Prince of Peace.”

A new feature for some was the interactive discussion time following the sermon. Led by Rosie Perera, it’s a regular part of services at Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, allowing worshippers to respond to the sermon and to comment on aspects of the message that impacted them.

The service, led by Chan Yang from Point Grey, featured Cruttwell as the morning’s speaker and a choir from several congregations. With a rich representation

*God*”—as her text, Cruttwell asked, “Is there peace?” She noted that the cessation of violence is only a first step. “We cannot experience wholeness if we are suspicious or fearful of our neighbours,” she said. “Micah offers oracles of judgement and also of hope.”

In Micah’s day, the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. “This got Micah mad,” she said. “Shalom includes the presence of justice and wholeness.” The situation is unchanged today, she said, explaining that Canadians benefit from the temporary labour of migrants who can’t stay in Canada, that Canadians are killing God’s



# 'People who love people with the love of Jesus'

*Mennonite Disaster Service closes project in Grand Forks*

Story and Photo by John Longhurst

Mennonite Disaster Service  
GRAND FORKS, B.C.

**“W**e came as strangers. We leave as friends.”

That’s what project director Peter Thiessen said at the Oct. 2 closing celebration of the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) project in Grand Forks.



**Peter Thiessen, co-director of the Mennonite Disaster Service project in Grand Forks, B.C., passes the ‘baton’ on Oct. 6 to Gabe Warriner, co-pastor of River Valley Community Church, which hosted MDS in the community. Says Thiessen: ‘We recognize we are only in a community for a season. It’s like a relay. We are glad to do what we can to help people rebuild their homes and restore their lives. But we can only take it so far before we leave. Then we hand off the baton to the local church to follow up with the people we served.’**

Before the flood, he said, Grand Forks was just a place for him and his wife and co-director, Susan, to drive through. Now, after many weeks spent in the city, “it is a place to stop and see our new neighbours.”

Thiessen was addressing representatives from city hall, local businesses, the long-term recovery team and area churches, along with people whose homes were rebuilt by MDS, at the event, held at River Valley Community Church.

During the six months MDS was in the city, he said that more than 200 volunteers from five provinces, seven states, Mexico and Germany restored 15 homes, giving more than 16,000 person-hours of free labour.

“Now they have gone home, but they take the story of Grand Forks with them,” Thiessen shared. He went on to thank local businesses and suppliers who worked with MDS, and the caseworkers who identified people in the community most in need of MDS’s help.

“We couldn’t have done it without you,” he said.

In response, Chris Marsh, the deputy recovery manager of Grand Forks, thanked MDS, saying, “This has been a hard year for so many in Grand Forks; . . . the help of MDS was humbling. We couldn’t have done it without you and the other agencies that came alongside.

“Day-in and day-out, you gave. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”

The celebration included comments from Gabe and Rachel Warriner, pastors of the River Valley church.

“So often the church struggles and fails to be the outstretched arms of Jesus,” Rachel said. “To them, the church appears irrelevant, unnoticed and unimportant.”

But once in a while, she continued, “something special happens. Every now and then an opportunity presents itself, and the miracle and wonder of people surrendered to the love of Jesus causes the communities we live in to be transformed.”

The flood of 2018 was one of those opportunities, allowing the city “to see and experience first-hand what the church was designed to look like: People who love people with the love of Jesus.” ❧

## News brief

Fourth Symphony of Hymns a success for MC B.C.



**Calvin Dyck leads the audience in singing ‘I Know Not Why God’s Wondrous Grace’ at the fourth annual Symphony of Hymns, which raised \$8,478 for MC B.C.**

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Although it began only three years ago, the Symphony of Hymns is already a fall tradition to which many in Mennonite Church British Columbia look forward eagerly. In 2016, the MC B.C. Finance Committee was seeking a fundraising event that would engage congregational interest. Music is a Mennonite tradition, and the committee thought a musical event would provide a natural opportunity for people to praise God as they express their love for music and remember traditions of the past. Symphony of Hymns 4, held at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond on Nov. 9 and Level Ground Mennonite Church in Abbotsford on Nov. 10, continued the tradition this year, raising \$8,478 for Canadian and world ministries. Local violinist and conductor Calvin Dyck has been a part of all four events, along with a group of instrumentalists and vocalists. This year’s program featured singer Crystal Hicks and pianist/singer Gail Suderman interspersed with performances by the musicians onstage and congregational singing. Gerry Grunau, chair of the finance committee, says, “Each year the Symphony of Hymns has been a communal worshipful experience with many expressions of support and encouragement. Our intention is to continue with future Hymn Sing events.”

—STORY AND PHOTO

BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

# Joy in congregational singing

By Henry Neufeld

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
VANCOUVER

*"I turned the key and the stillness of the morning was shattered by the uneven rumbling of the engine. Everything was ready for the day's work. In a few minutes, the pickup would drive onto the farmyard and empty its load of Mexican labourers. But for now I was alone. I eased the clutch out and the tractor lurched forward, pulling the portable packing shed behind it into the orchard. Then, as the sun's rays appeared over the Sierra-Nevada, illuminating the vast San Joaquin Valley, the beauty of this new day struck me. Over the incessant chug, chug, chugging of the old tractor, I burst into song: 'When morning gilds the skies, my heart awaking cries, May Jesus Christ be praised!' So I ask you, 'Why do we sing hymns anyway?'"*



Those were the opening comments by Curtis Funk, pictured at left, in a recent sermon at Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship. A retired Wheaton College music professor, Funk interspersed his comments about the value of music with congregational hymn singing and Scripture, stressing the importance of corporate worship. "We sing not only because of the admonition to do so, but because it is a unique corporate experience, an activity we all do together," he said.

Singing together, he said, is one of the best mediums for worship because, "though we participate individually, we do it corporately." He pointed out that combining various harmonic parts and instruments heightens the experience.

"True worship directs us toward its object: the Lord. It is God-directed; not primarily admonition or testimony, but praise for God's presence and direction in our individual lives and in our community," he said, quoting Psalm 96: "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. . . . Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness, tremble before him all the earth."

Funk grew up in small-town Alberta, attending a Nazarene church and knowing little about his Mennonite heritage or music. He was introduced to church music at Tabor College in Kansas.

"I was a member of . . . the Concert Choir," he said. "Our work for that term included . . . Brahms' 'German Requiem' with the choirs from the other two Mennonite colleges—Bethel and Hesston. I shall never forget the dress rehearsal. As an 18-year-old, I experienced a moment

that I can only describe as "transcendent. "When we were singing the (Brahms) text 'joy everlasting shall be upon their heads,' it seemed like time stood still. And it seemed like the entire choir and the conductor were experiencing this together. I was transported into another reality. It was an experience . . . beyond my normal experiences of life . . . something I could not explain. I believe we all long to have 'peak experiences' like this in worship. . . . These kinds of experiences are what draws us back again and again to this room, to these people, to our great God."

Funk said, "I will admit to a type of idolatry: the music is usually more compelling than words. It is the music that draws me in, that lifts my spirits. The ascending melodic line touches our emotions and we are moved . . . especially when we sing with understanding."

He described a moment from a recent Sunday service that moved him. "Singing 'The Love of God is Greater Far' [was] familiar, and not normally transcendent for me. But the verse with the image of writing down the dimensions of God's love—picturing the sky as our stationery and having an ocean full of ink to write—what a transcendent image. I could barely sing."

For Funk, music, especially when he participates, becomes a vehicle that can best be described as sublime, "a moment of such excellence, grandeur or beauty as to inspire awe. And almost the only time that happens now in church is in the singing of hymns."

"For me, hymns should point to the central message of our Christian faith: Jesus is Lord!" he said. "We sing as Jesus-followers, and declare that he is

Lord!

"Despite my admitted love of the music over words, words are important. They carry more explicit meaning than do the combination of sounds we call music."

A good marriage of music and text can produce a profound sense of worship, he said. ❧



PHOTO BY JEAN LEHN EPP

**The Mennonite Church Eastern Canada youth retreat 'Escape the ordinary: Make your mark!' ended with youth making a mark on each other's feet or arms as a sign of their commitment to live into God's calling to make their mark in the world. Ritch Hochstetler, president of ULead Inc. of Goshen, Ind., a leadership training non-profit, challenged the youth and their sponsors to embrace their potential to create change.**



# Advice amidst the climate change crisis

*Book teaches how to make personal ecological changes*

Story and Photo by Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG

In a time when millions are striking in the streets, trying to convince government leaders and corporations to take action against climate change, a book to help people take direct action in their own lives has been released.

Shawn Klassen-Koop, together with Montana-based permaculture expert Paul Wheaton, published *Building a Better World in Your Backyard: Instead of Being Angry at Bad Guys* last month. The 176-page book explores concrete steps people can take to decrease their environmental impact.

The volume covers a multitude of topics, including food and diet, lawn care, grey water recycling, purchasing power and energy efficiency.

Whether people live in an apartment, house or a rural homestead, this resource is for everyone, Klassen-Koop said at a book launch event at McNally Robinson Booksellers in Winnipeg on Nov. 2. “The hope with this book is to provide tangible solutions to people who are passionate about these things.”

Around 70 people attended the launch, where Klassen-Koop read excerpts from the book before hosting a Q&A session.

The 27-year-old writer began working

on the book in February 2018 and has spent almost two years writing, editing and meeting with Wheaton over the internet. He said the biggest challenge of the project was staying excited and encouraged after working on it for months and months, which then turned into years.

Klassen-Koop lives in Winkler, Man., and attends Pembina Mennonite Fellowship in Morden. He was the associate program director of Camps with Meaning, Mennonite Church Manitoba’s camping ministry, from 2015 to 2017, and he worked as a staff member for many summers before that. “I worked at camp for many years and it changed my life. It’s where I started caring about nature,” he said.

Apparently others care, too. When Klassen-Koop and Wheaton started an online fundraising campaign to cover costs like printing, shipping and promotion, they were blown away by the response. They far exceeded their financial goal of \$9,000, receiving \$154,000 from more than 2,500 donors, which they put towards production costs of the book.

“I’m really happy to have it out,” he said. “It’s been really encouraging seeing the response from people, seeing people making changes in their lives, and the

reviews have been coming in really well, and that’s all very encouraging.” ❧

*Building a Better World in Your Backyard: Instead of Being Angry at Bad Guys is available for purchase or loan from CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre (commonword.ca).*

## News brief

### Mennonite Church Alberta members publish fifth book



CALGARY—Hugo and Doreen Neufeld, pictured above, published *The North End Lives On*, their fifth book, in October. Books were available for sale at this year’s Mennonite Church Alberta Vision 20/20 event held in Calgary. According to Hugo, the book is a continuation of their first book, *The North End Lives*, and “consists of short stories telling the amazing experiences we were privileged to have in living with and being loved by [Hamilton, Ont.] North Enders. To witness God changing lives, including our own, is both sobering and exhilarating. A few of the stories in this new book are told by people currently immersed in the work of the Welcome Inn Community Centre, which continues to impact the [low-income] Hamilton community.” The Neufelds, who are now members of Trinity Mennonite Church in DeWinton, Alta., lived and ministered in Hamilton’s North End from 1971 to 1989, where they raised their three small children. Their hope is that “others will read the book and be changed in their attitudes, as we continue to be,” said Hugo.

—STORY AND PHOTO BY JOANNE DE JONG



**Shawn Klassen-Koop read from *Building a Better World in Your Backyard: Instead of Being Angry at Bad Guys* at a launch event at McNally Robinson Booksellers in Winnipeg on Nov. 2.**



# ‘Jesus Christ calls us to be one’

*Dialogue with Catholic and Lutheran partners deepens the meaning of baptism for Mennonites*

Story and Photo by Janet Bauman  
Waterloo, Ont.

**A**fter five years of meetings by an international commission of Mennonites, Lutherans and Roman Catholics on the topic of baptism, John Rempel, the commission’s Mennonite representative, presented a trilateral report from that dialogue at an event called “One Baptism? A Symposium on Baptism and the Christian Life,” at Waterloo North Mennonite Church on Nov. 8.

Pastors, denominational leaders, professors and some students from Conrad Grebel University College attended the Anabaptist Learning Workshop event, sponsored by Grebel and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

Framed around scriptures emphasizing the image of the church as one body with one baptism, the symposium began and ended with times of worship. In between, Rempel summarized the report and then invited three people, one from each tradition, to respond. They formed a panel that fielded further comments and questions.

Mennonite World Conference (MWC)

engaged in the trilateral dialogue because “Jesus Christ calls us to be one.” Participation was seen as a way to build on previous reconciliation efforts between the denominations, nurturing mutual understanding and cooperation.

Rempel’s presentation followed the structure of the 90-page report, first exploring three main themes:

- **The relationship** of baptism to sin and salvation.
- **The celebration** of baptism and its relationship to faith and membership.
- **The living** out of baptism in faithful discipleship.

He then articulated the cherished convictions that each tradition has preserved, and what gifts and challenges they provide to the others. He emphasized that it was an opportunity to “look at our own traditions through the eyes of our dialogue partners,” and, ultimately, “to help one another grow in faithfulness to Jesus

Christ.” Several convictions were seen as mutually enriching:

- **Baptism is** God’s initiative. God is the active agent and faith is a gift of God’s grace. We are “responsible to that gift of grace.”
- **Baptism is** a beginning step. The goal is to awaken faith and discipleship, which is a lifelong journey.
- **Sacramental theology** helps us appreciate the “absolute gratuity of God’s saving action.”
- **This conversation** has awakened a need for a stronger theology of ministry with children.

Rempel ended with proposals from the report for Anabaptist-Mennonite churches to consider, including:

- **Accept the** authenticity of other baptismal traditions by receiving members from those traditions without requiring rebaptism.



*Cristina Vanin, second from left, responds to feedback at the ‘One Baptism? A Symposium on Baptism and the Christian Life’ event during a panel discussion. Also pictured, from left to right: John Rempel, Mary (Joy) Philip, Anthony Siegrist and facilitator Jeremy Bergen.*

- **Enrich the practice** of parent/child dedication.
- **Provide occasions** to remember our baptism.

In responding to the trilateral report, and to questions and comments from participants, the three panelists broadened the conversation.

Cristina Vanin, a professor from the Roman Catholic tradition, suggested that the “yes” of baptism, whenever it happens, is an “important moment in a life commitment that requires a community” to share in the faith formation.

Using the metaphor of an estuary, where waters from different rivers empty into the water of a bay, Mary (Joy) Philip, a Lutheran professor, suggested that where different traditions meet is a productive place with rich possibilities for new growth, when God is trusted as the active agent.

Anthony Siegrist, pastor of Ottawa Mennonite Church, was drawn to the sacramental theology of the Catholic tradition, seeing it as a way for Mennonites

to “recover a deeper sense of God’s grace.”

As one way to process what was heard, participants were asked to reflect on practical considerations around baptism from a pastoral perspective. They included:

- **Youth often** delay baptism, saying they are not ready because they do not have their faith figured out. “Is there room for faith the size of a mustard seed?” one person asked.
- **How should** pastors respond when people ask for baptism without church membership?
- **What does it** look like to support parents in raising their children in the faith?
- **What does** baptism mean for people who cannot articulate their faith intellectually or verbally?

The symposium also included time to reflect on the rituals of initiation. Sarah Kathleen Johnson, worship resources editor for the new *Voices Together* collection, shared resources being developed for baptism, child dedication, welcoming new members and reaffirming baptismal

commitments. She noted how ecumenical conversations have inspired and clarified the resources.

César García, MWC’s general secretary, described the process going forward. The intent is for the Faith and Life Commission of MWC to present this document at its next gathering, and for churches to study it and provide feedback. While it might help to shape Anabaptist-Mennonite identity, García said, “We are not looking for a unified practice of baptism.” It will also challenge Anabaptist Mennonites to have the conversation around respect for other denominations, he said.

It was acknowledged that, while the proposal to accept the baptism of other traditions without requiring rebaptism seemed to be an acceptable practice by the churches represented at the symposium, the group in attendance was not representative of Mennonites in Ontario, let alone around the world. Pushback from others within the MWC family is anticipated and is seen as valuable for ongoing dialogue and discernment. ❧

## Shaping Faith in a Digital Culture

A joint conference of Pastors and Leaders 2020 and Deep Faith

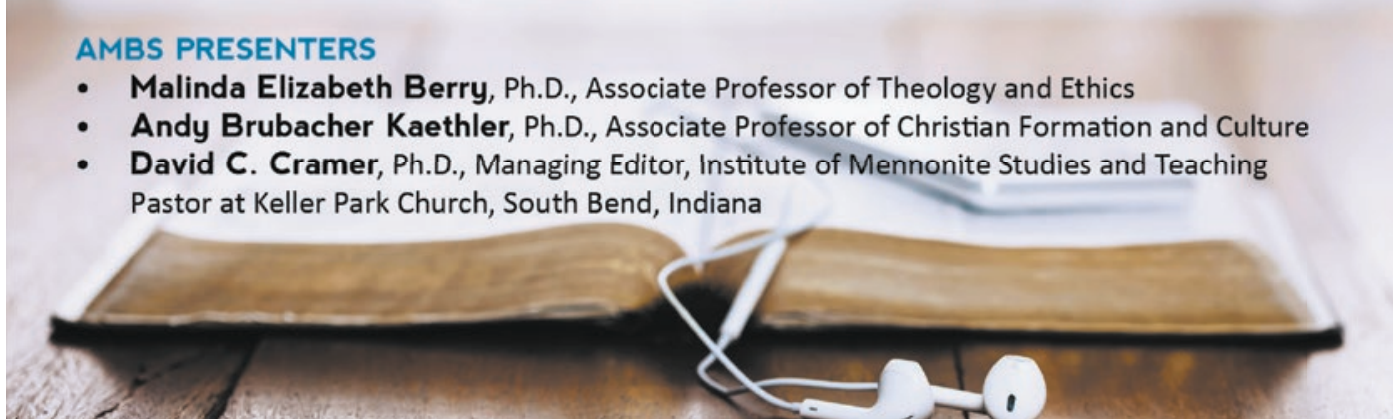
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 7 p.m. – THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 12:30 p.m.

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana • [ams.edu/pastorsandleaders](https://ams.edu/pastorsandleaders)

Join other faith leaders in thinking theologically about living, worshiping and playing in digital spaces. **Karen-Marie Yust**, M.Div., Th.D, author of *Real Kids, Real Faith*, will join AMBS faculty members to explore practical ways both to participate in and challenge digital culture.

### AMBS PRESENTERS

- **Malinda Elizabeth Berry**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics
- **Andy Brubacher Kaethler**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Christian Formation and Culture
- **David C. Cramer**, Ph.D., Managing Editor, Institute of Mennonite Studies and Teaching Pastor at Keller Park Church, South Bend, Indiana





# A blessing for years and decades to come

Voices Together committee holds final meeting

Story and Photos by MennoMedia  
WATERLOO, ONT.

A stack of paper containing 780 songs and a binder of 320 worship resources greeted each member of the *Voices Together* committee when they arrived for their 10th and final committee meeting in early October.

worship and song collection was sung while the group was together, meeting at Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo. All new songs were sung in full. Each worship resource was read in its entirety, and works of visual art were



Committee members pictured from left to right, front row: Tom Harder, Shana Peachey Boshart, Anneli Loepf Thiessen, Katie Graber, Amy Gingerich and Benjamin Bergey; and back row: Adam Tice, Sarah Kathleen Johnson, Doug Klassen, Cynthia Neufeld Smith, Allan Rudy-Froese, Mike Erb, Bradley Kauffman, Paul Dueck and Darryl Neustaedter Barg.

In nine previous meetings, the committee had discussed content to include in this new worship and song collection for the Mennonite church. But this was the first time committee members saw selections all together. The committee spent five days of their meeting singing and worshipping through it, followed by two days discussing the selections.

“Because all new songs and worship resources were anonymized in the first three years of our discussions, Meeting 10 was the first time everyone saw who wrote the different pieces,” said Bradley Kauffman, *Voices Together’s* general editor. “Our work until now has been on computer screens, so it was momentous to be able to see and hold hard copies of each piece.”

At least one verse of each song that the committee plans to include in the new

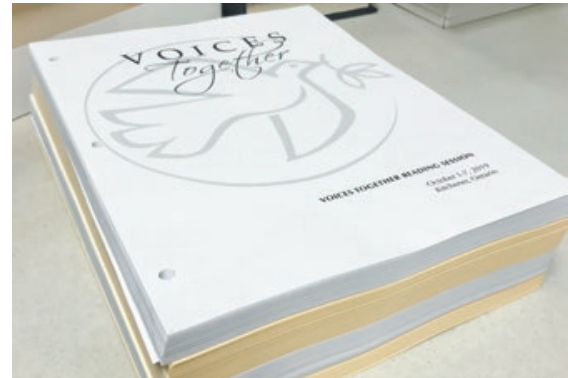
viewed as a series.

“Every single song and worship resource represents so much work around our circle to even get them to this draft point,” Kauffman said. “So much research and detail work come together to make just one page in *Voices Together*.”

The committee has included 13 volunteers as well as Kauffman. A steering committee of staff from Mennonite Church Canada, MC U.S.A. and MennoMedia have also been part of the process.

“We all brought different gifts, and each of our gifts was clarified in this process,” said Anneli Loepf Thiessen of Ottawa. “It has been hard work but has also been personal devotion.”

The goals of this final meeting were to:

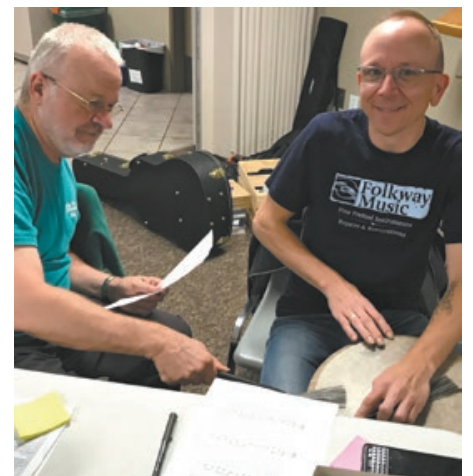


A stack of 780 songs greeted members of the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee when they arrived for their final meeting.

- **Affirm** the collection that is *Voices Together*.
- **Identify** a small set of needed changes.
- **Equip** committee members to understand why each song or worship resource is included and to be able to tell its story.
- **Celebrate and** bless the good work that has been done.

“Look at the images and structures in these songs and worship resources. What do they say about what we believe?” asked Allan Rudy-Froese of Elkhart, Ind., and Waterloo. “We are singing and proclaiming new ways of being and organizing the world around God.”

“It is energizing to see the thousands and thousands of decisions we’ve made show up on the page,” said Sarah Kathleen Johnson of Toronto, the worship resources



Committee members Tom Harder and Mike Erb provide accompaniment for the singing.





**Benjamin Bergey, Katie Graber, Anneli Loepp Thiessen and Cynthia Neufeld Smith test out different versions of a piano accompaniment for a song.**

editor. “While recognizing that we must continue to work on all kinds of balance, the larger stories that *Voices Together* is telling are beginning to emerge.”

Committee members came prepared to share about one worship resource and one song that has been meaningful in this process.

Mike Erb of New Hamburg, Ont., lost a brother to suicide two years ago. Adam Tice of Goshen, Ind., the text editor, had a dream of standing with Erb in that experience. “I dreamed that the committee was together, and Mike wanted to sing something for us. When I woke up, I wrote down what I could recall from the dream and refined it over the course of a few

days.” That song about grief and loss is slated for inclusion in the collection.

Darryl Neustaedter Barg of Winnipeg highlighted the deep and collegial relationships among committee members and the ways they have worked together well amid different personal preferences: “We all genuinely like and respect each other, and that has made our process work well. It is hard to imagine not meeting every few months.”

At the first meeting in September 2016, Kauffman invited the committee to adopt a process that would value relationships above specific decisions. That has guided the group throughout its work. Kauffman was thanked by committee members for his wisdom and direction, and the ways he modelled a healthy give-and-take for the team.

“Our final meeting was one of those mountaintop experiences that can leave a person transformed forever,” said Paul Dueck of Winnipeg. “I will forever be grateful for the privilege of being part of this journey with colleagues whom I now call friends.”

“I was able to experience not only the committee’s brilliant musicianship, but the deep faith and devotion that each member brings to this holy and monumental task,” said Doug Klassen, executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada, who participated in the first two days of the final meeting. “At many points my

voice wavered as I was overcome with mystery and wonder.”

The committee has now spent at least 50 days at in-person meetings between September 2016 and October 2019, with additional in-person meetings for sub-committees and editors. Over the last 12 months, the committee’s Zoom internet communications platform has averaged 52 hours per month of activity.

“This is an incredible volunteer effort,” said Amy Gingerich, executive director of MennoMedia. “Their dedication to the church through this project will bless all of us in years and decades to come.” ❧



**Sarah Kathleen Johnson and Doug Klassen discuss the visual art that will be part of *Voices Together*.**

*Voices Together will be published next fall by MennoMedia. To learn more, visit [VoicesTogetherHymnal.org](http://VoicesTogetherHymnal.org).*



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# Seeing is understanding

*Saskatchewan Mennonites changed through China learning tour*

By Donna Schulz  
Saskatchewan Correspondent  
ROSTHERN, SASK.

**“E**verything about China was not what we thought.”

Delilah Roth’s words seem to capture the feelings of many in her group.

Delilah and husband Brian Roth were part of a group of 25 Canadians and Americans who travelled to China on a Mennonite Partners in China (MPC) learning tour led by executive director Myrri Byler and associate director Jeanette Hanson. Ten of the 25 were from Saskatchewan, and, of the Saskatchewan group, six, including the Roths, were members of Rosthern Mennonite Church.

Hanson, who is interim director of Mennonite Church Canada’s International Witness program, serves with MPC from her home in Rosthern. She and husband Todd were MC Canada Witness workers in China for many years.

The tour spanned three weeks from Oct. 6 to 26 and included visits to many well-known tourist destinations, such as the Great Wall of China, the Terracotta Army

of the Qin dynasty and the Buddhist grottos of Binglingsu.

While these ancient structures made by human hands fascinated many participants, others were captivated by China’s natural charms. “The countryside took us by surprise,” says Bev Epp. “It was beautiful.”

“We went some places many Chinese people haven’t been to,” says Brian Roth, noting the Chinese people are just beginning to discover their own country.

But this wasn’t a commercial tour, so participants also met many of MPC’s partners and saw many MPC-supported projects.

One such project, a preschool for hearing-impaired children and the Chinese woman who operated it, made a lasting impression on Ralph Epp. “[Mennonite Central Committee] supported her to start her first preschool,” he says. “She now runs three preschools and they are government-funded,” he says.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
CHINA LEARNING TOUR PARTICIPANTS

**Rosthern Mennonite Church members who travelled to China with MPC had the opportunity to reconnect with Yixian Wang (Shelley), front centre, who volunteered in Rosthern through Mennonite Central Committee’s International Volunteer Exchange Program two years ago. Pictured from left to right with Shelley: Brian Roth, Delilah Roth, Jeanette Hanson, Ralph Epp, Bev Epp, Nancy Epp and Betty Rudachyk.**



**Betty Rudachyk, right, holds hands with a Tibetan woman.**

“This is an ongoing program that no longer needs our support.”

Asked what their visit might mean to the Chinese people they met, Bev Epp notes, “They were proud to show us their country and excited to talk with us,” but “they don’t want to be like us.”

“China doesn’t need us,” says Delilah Roth. Nor does the Chinese church need Christian missionaries.

Ralph Epp says the Chinese church numbered 700,000 when missionaries were forced out of China during the 1960s Cultural Revolution. By 1979, when Christians were allowed back into the country, the church had grown to three million. “The church managed to grow in spite of there being no missionaries present,” he says.

Although the Chinese church may be self-sufficient, it appreciates meeting



Christians from other parts of the world. “They feel so excited, like they are not alone in the world,” says Hanson. “They get a glimpse of the worldwide body of Christ, something they seldom get to see.”

The purpose of the tour was to introduce China to North Americans.

“MPC sees a part of its mandate is peacebuilding work, and the exchanges and connections we make between east and west are a part of that,” she says. “There is so much misinformation about China, and even fearmongering. The best way to combat that is to let people ‘see for themselves’ and meet real Chinese people and get a glimpse into their lives.”

MPC’s work goes both ways, however. “We work on the same things when we bring Chinese university professors and others to North America,” she says. “I think that visits, exchanges [and] hosting each other change how we view the ‘other.’”

“Tours like this really change the way we think about mission or witness in the world,” Hanson says. “You can’t connect with someone directly and continue to see them as someone [who] is just in need of our help. You see them as a person with gifts and resources [whom] we can learn from and share with.”

Nancy Epp admits the tour changed her way of seeing. “We think we’re so open-minded,” she says, but meeting Chinese people and seeing their country first-hand caused her to exclaim, “Whoa!

Did I get this wrong!” Observing the way Chinese Christians invite their friends to church, she says, “We need to learn from them.”

Delilah Roth says her China experience “reminds me that I’m still stereotyping.”

Ralph Epp recalls the words of a monk in Tibet who pointed out the many candles in the monastery’s worship areas and said, “Light is knowledge; darkness is ignorance.” On this trip, he says, “I got a little light. It changed some darkness for me.”

Delilah Roth agrees. “This changes my thinking,” she says. “It took seeing to get the understanding.” ☸



*Saskatchewan participants on MPC’s China learning tour include, from left to right standing: Scott Collier, Pat Mar-Collier, Henry Funk, Brian Roth, Bev Epp, Ralph Epp, Betty Rudachyk, Delilah Roth, Erna Funk and Nancy Epp. Kneeling in front of the group is Jeanette Hanson, MPC’s associate director and tour leader.*



*East meets west over the ubiquitous cell phone. Brian Roth, left, uses his phone to communicate with new friends.*

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# A song of gentle persuasion

*Composer Stephanie Martin puts a new twist on an old fable*

By Joelle Kidd

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
TORONTO

In May 2017, when Stephanie Martin stepped down as conductor of Toronto's Pax Christi Chorale, the award-winning Toronto-based amateur choir with Mennonite roots, the choir gave her a going-away present.

"Instead of getting me a crystal bowl, they gave me a commission to write a piece," she says.

Martin, who had been conductor of Pax Christi for 20 years, had come to realize that there was "nothing I'd rather do" than compose music. The choir's commission represented the kick-start of a compositionally focused career for the performer and conductor, a dream she finally felt able to pursue.

The culmination of this gift came on Nov. 2, when Pax Christi performed the world premiere of Martin's new oratorio, *The Sun, The Wind and the Man with the Cloak*.

The commission was pretty open-ended, Martin notes. "[Pax Christi] wanted to add something to the canon of choral music from our own time, looking at a topic with modern eyes." Martin began thinking of Aesop's fable about the sun, moon and man, which she had known from her childhood.

The story often "turned up at the right time in my life," when making difficult decisions," she says. "It poses a choice to every person: Deal with conflict by freaking out and being violent," like the wind, "or take a compassionate view of things, and be more like the sun."

In the fable, the sun and wind make a bet on who can be the first to force a man to remove his cloak. The wind blows as hard as it can, but the man just holds on tighter to his cloak; but when the sun shines down on his head, the man gets so warm that he takes of his cloak of his own volition.

To bring the story to life and give it a



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE MARTIN

**Stephanie Martin, composer and conductor emeritus of Pax Christi Chorale, had her oratorio *The Sun, the Wind and the Man with the Cloak* premiered in Toronto on Nov. 2.**

modern twist, Martin turned to librettist Paul Ciufu, with whom she collaborated on an opera, *Llandovery Castle*, last year. Tasked with fleshing out a short fable into a contemporary tale, Ciufu delved deeper into the character of the man.

In the original fable, "the man is kind of this anonymous victim of these two great creatures acting out their ego," says Martin. In this revisiting, the audience learns more about the character: why he's on his journey, and the story behind his cloak.

Through a libretto workshop, the creators also settled on shaping the elemental protagonists. The blustery wind is sung by a male voice, the compassionate sun by a female. "We went into it thinking, 'Is this a trap? Are we stereotyping gender roles?'" Martin muses.

But in the end, after trying it with the roles reversed, all agreed that Ciufu's instincts felt right. The characters, the wind in particular, can also be read as "a thinly-veiled metaphor for current politicians," Martin adds.

Like her previous work, the new piece

touches on themes of pacifism and response to conflict. This update stays true to the fable's original moral, "persuasion is better than force," but focusing on the human protagonist adds a twist, Martin says: "In our story, it's the human being that comes out victorious because he's able to withstand these god-like pressures."

Martin found the composition process enjoyable. Working with the source material of a fanciful retelling of an ancient Greek story gave her a lot of room to explore varied musical styles. The libretto has both emotional and humorous parts, she adds. "It's both sides of theatre, and I think that's what makes theatre really special."

Martin also says that she wrote it to be performable by other community and school choirs. "I hope this will have a life beyond this performance," she says. She has already had interest from a group in the United States.

In the Nov. 2 premiere, the solo parts were sung by four professional opera singers: soprano Allison Walmsley; baritone Brett Polegato; tenor Asita Tennekoon; and mezzo-soprano Catherine Daniel, who had one of the main roles in Martin's opera last year.

Martin was also conscious of taking on a "universal topic" in the new piece. "Older [chorale] repertoire is biblically based, and others can't get in on it," she says. "This has a strong ethical moral but doesn't exclude anyone from singing."

Pax Christi Chorale was founded 33 years ago, with a membership originally drawn from Mennonite and Brethren-in-Christ communities, before quickly expanding to singers from many different faiths and walks of life from all over the Great Toronto Area. ☼

# #BetterTogether

*Mennonite Church Alberta continues to explore God's call in its Vision 20/20 process*

Story and Photo by Joanne De Jong  
Alberta Correspondent  
CALGARY

**L**ike all Mennonite Church Canada regional churches, MC Alberta continues to pray and discern God's call, moving forward after the nationwide restructuring a couple years ago.

Representatives from across the province met at First Mennonite Church in Calgary on Nov. 1 and 2 to hear the final results of the four-phase discernment process called Vision 20/20.

Attendees didn't know what to expect, so there was a sense of anticipation as MC Alberta unveiled a huge banner with the new vision statement: "Encountering, embracing, embodying Christ, in life, in community, in the world." This banner will be made available to all regional church congregations to hang on their walls, as they walk forward into a new three-year plan.

The idea put forward was that congregations will focus on encountering, embracing and embodying Christ in life during year one, in community during year two, and in the world during year three.

Participants were given sheets with lists of more than 30 practical suggestions on how to encourage congregations to live out the vision in year one. Each church represented at the event was encouraged to spend time together discussing how to implement the vision as individuals, church committees, congregations and

at the regional church level. Suggestions included asking a person to be a spiritual friend, planning a monthly alternative worship service to help the congregation meet God in a new way, and beginning committee meetings with one-minute personal sharing by each person, followed by prayer.

Although conversations were lively, there was some concern that there might be resistance. One participant wondered if taking too much time to share and pray together at a committee meeting may reduce efficiency.

Betty Pries, the Credence & Co. facilitator, suggested that the opposite would be true. "If we nurture prayer, we are more ready to hear each other," she said. "When we hear each other, we are more efficient in our decision-making."

Churches were eager to get going, but the official launch won't be until the annual MC Alberta meeting next March. Congregations were encouraged to initiate a "soft launch" through sharing the revealed vision and beginning to talk about what they would like to do.

The year-one focus will be on churches discovering ways to reclaim prayer and spiritual disciplines, remembering that they are beloved. During the leaders forum on Nov. 1, Lois Epp of Trinity Mennonite

Church in DeWinton said, "If we haven't experienced God, how can we help others find him?" This was one of the main themes of the weekend: the importance of encountering the mystery and love of Christ in people's personal lives.

Another central theme was the importance and blessing of being the body of Christ. At the leaders forum, people were asked to share why they thought church matters. Answers included the need to share stories, to be accountable and to hear others testify that God is real.

Later that day, participants were each given a stone to emphasize that together they are a body made up of living stones.

During her sermon on communion, Pries shared her concern that the church has lost the "heft" of communion and the sense of the mystery of the table where Christ invites us to "Take. Eat. This is my body, broken for you. Take. Drink." All came forward to receive the bread and the cup while singing the song, "We Become What We Receive."

Laura Wiebe of Trinity Mennonite shared how, as she approached the communion table, she saw Christ with hands outstretched and she experienced a feeling of being beloved. When she reached the bread and the cup, she said she saw her hand in Christ's as she stood next to him. As the song continued to play, she said she had a sense of having received love and belonging, and now she was able to give that to others.

The conference ended with each person turning to a neighbour and saying, "I'm glad to do church with you."

Then each person picked up a stone to take home as a reminder that they are part of a special community of living stones. When Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, MC Alberta's executive minister, got home from the event, he placed his stone in a fish bowl so he wouldn't forget. ☸



*An exciting part of Vision 20/20 was the unveiling of the vision statement on a huge banner that will be available to be hung in every MC Alberta congregation. Holding up the banner are June Miller, MC Alberta's communications coordinator, left, and Heather Klassen of Foothills Mennonite Church. Facilitator Betty Pries is in the background.*



# Peacebuilders Community Inc. helps earthquake victims in the Philippines

By Katie Doke Sawatzky  
Mennonite Church Canada

In the last half of October, the island of Mindanao in the Philippines experienced three earthquakes, one of which reached a magnitude of 6.6. According to a Nov. 11 report from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, 24 people were dead, 535 were injured and two people were missing.

According to the Philippines government, 260,000 people have been affected by the earthquakes overall, with nearly 55,000 people temporarily living in 69 evacuation shelters and another 57,000 evacuated outside of the shelters. A total of 37,519 structures were damaged, including around 36,000 houses and 1,400 schools.

Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Dann and Joji Pantoja minister in the area and are safe, but they continue to feel aftershocks. They have been visiting different areas in their region and documenting the extent of the aftermath.

In an email, Dann said the Indigenous community is traumatized: “Their homes were destroyed. They had to evacuate from their lands, which were declared unsafe by government authorities. Their land is their life, identity and livelihood. . . . Now, they are not allowed to go back to their

ancestral lands. They will be staying in evacuation sites indefinitely.”

Current daily challenges for the Pantojas, include focusing energy on relief and “short-term interventions,” rather than “development and long-term transformation.”

“We will have to suspend our Vision 2025 [their mission to have a peace-and-reconciliation team in each of the Philippines’ 81 provinces by 2025], which used to be Vision 2015, then 2020, due to a series of super-typhoons and all-out wars in the past decade,” he said, speculating, “Perhaps we’ll have to adjust again to Vision 2030?”

In a video posted on the Pantojas’ blog (waves.ca) on Nov. 4, Dann interviewed Davina Silyador, a Manobo woman from Sayaban who fled her home during a



PEACEBUILDERS COMMUNITY INC. PHOTOS

*The PeaceBuilders Community Inc.’s field operations team accompanied a Philippine Relief And Development Services team to deliver a thousand relief packs to the earthquake-affected families in Ilomavis, who mostly belong to the Obo Manobo Indigenous People.*

landslide caused by the earthquakes. “We were trapped from all sides,” she said. “Landslide, rocks coming towards us. . . . ‘Lord,’ I said, ‘if this is our end, please bring our families together. Whatever happens, please bring us together.’ Praise God, I was able to reach my family.”

In the video, Silyador took Pantoja into one of the evacuation site’s tents, where five families were taking shelter. He communicated that it was very hot in the tent and that there were no toilets yet.

In a Nov. 7 blog post from the Pantojas, photos showed people gathering to receive relief packs in the village of Ilomavis. Children gathered together and coloured on the cement floor.

The Pantojas said that needs for water, rice, canned goods, tents and sleeping mats are still ongoing. ☸



*A home destroyed by the late October earthquakes on the island of Mindanao.*

# Knitting project portrayed as pilgrimage

The Knitting Pilgrim *illustrates commonalities of the three Abrahamic faiths*

Story and Photo by Barb Draper

Editorial Assistant  
FLORADALE, ONT.

The audience was absolutely amazed when Kirk Dunn finally revealed his “Stitched Glass” knitted panels at the end of his one-man show, *The Knitting Pilgrim*, held at Floradale Mennonite Church on Oct. 26. The performance described his 15-year knitting pilgrimage of making three panels in the style of stained-glass windows representing the three Abrahamic faiths.

Hearing his story gave extra meaning to the intricate symbols in amazing colours shown on the panels that were each 1.5 metres wide by 2.75 metres tall. When Dunn invited the audience to come to the front for a closer look at the end of the show, the stage was quickly crowded.

The idea of using his ability to knit to begin conversations about the religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam came in 2003, at the time of the Iraq war. After overhearing Christians in a church kitchen describe Islam as a religion of hate, he wondered what he could do for peace. Inspired by stained-glass windows that in medieval times were used to tell Bible

stories, Dunn began to develop a concept. He believed that knitting is accessible and could be a good conversation-starter.

In the performance, Dunn quipped that he was an actor and knitter who could not make a living with either skill. As he told his story of how he came to put together his “Stitched Glass” project, he was self-deprecating and always credited his wife with encouraging him to continue when he was ready to quit. The frequent chuckles from the audience showed that he is a very effective storyteller.

Throughout the show, the panels were covered with white drop cloths that served as screens for showing pictures of his knitting journey. He learned to do complicated knitting with multiple colours, and he apprenticed for a month at the Kaffe Fassett Studio in England.

Dunn received an Ontario Arts Council grant for his proposal of a knitted-art installation. He decided that each panel would have the major symbol of each religion with positive aspects of the religion inside the symbol and negative aspects

around the outside. He began with a full-scale drawing of the Christian panel, which he then converted to a computerized pattern. Although he had projected 10 months in his grant proposal, it took him four years to complete just the first panel. When it was done, he rolled it up and put it in a cedar chest.

The second panel took even longer because he had to do research on Judaism. Many times he wanted to quit, plagued with questions and fears, but, with encouragement from his wife, he continued on.

The five pillars of Islam have similarities to Judaism and Christianity, said Dunn of the third panel, pointing out that all of them profess faith in one God, pray, encourage charity and fasting, and make pilgrimages. “We have so much in common,” he said.

When the final panel was finished, he was exhausted but felt the project was not complete until it was publicized. He couldn’t understand why no art gallery was interested in showing it until someone explained the art world to him: If you have never sold your art, it has no value.

When he applied for a Canada Council arts grant, he was told that “knitting has no profundity.”

Believing that “Stitched Glass” needed to be seen in order to fulfill its mandate of initiating interfaith conversations, Dunn was disheartened.

When President Trump issued a travel ban on Muslims, Dunn was ready to again consider how his art might be used for peace. He put together a proposal for showcasing both his acting and knitting skills in a one-man show that would bring the “Stitched Glass” project to audiences. He called his show *The Knitting Pilgrim*, and this time his grant application was successful.

His own journey with the project was a kind of pilgrimage. It took him 15 years and, in the end, it was a humbling experience. “All I know is how to knit and ask questions,” he said.

Because a generous donor from Floradale Mennonite Church covered the cost of the show, an offering was taken for the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support in Kitchener, raising more than \$3,100. ❧



A few people linger to talk to Kirk Dunn, left, and to examine his ‘Stitched Glass’ knitted artwork after his performance of *The Knitting Pilgrim* at Floradale Mennonite Church on Oct. 26.



# Expiring City

*Macau photo exhibit portrays home of Mennonite Church Canada witness workers*

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe  
Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG



## EXPIRING CITY: A MACAU PHOTO EXHIBIT

**M**ichael Veith grew up across the world in Macau, where his parents were Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers. This November, seven years after moving to Canada, he launched a photo exhibit featuring the city where he was raised.

Titled *Expiring City*, the show ran at the gallery space at Forth Café in Winnipeg, where a launch event took place on Nov. 1, with *Canadian Mennonite* staff in attendance suitably impressed.

Macau is a “special administrative region” of China, located along the south coast, about 40 kilometres west of Hong

currency, language and borders would stay the same for 50 years. This agreement expires in 2049.

Michael’s parents, George and Tobia Veith, moved to Hong Kong in 1990 with MC Canada Witness, where they worked with the local Mennonite church. They moved to Macau in 1996, when the community asked them to plant a church there. In 2015, George and Tobia moved to mainland China, where Tobia now teaches English at a university and George develops requested Anabaptist resources for churches in the region.

Michael moved to Canada in 2012 to

The collection featured 20 photographs portraying the blur of traffic, city skylines and the faces of people going about their daily lives. It also included a piece made up of a series of 99 photos of different mailboxes.

“I think the theme comes down to . . . the words ‘serenity’ and ‘frenzy,’” Michael says. “I had a whole series of photos with some blur to them, and I wanted to show those photos because it’s a cool effect, but also it’s a way of showing that theme of change and speed.”

He was also drawn to photos that showed people just sitting or walking

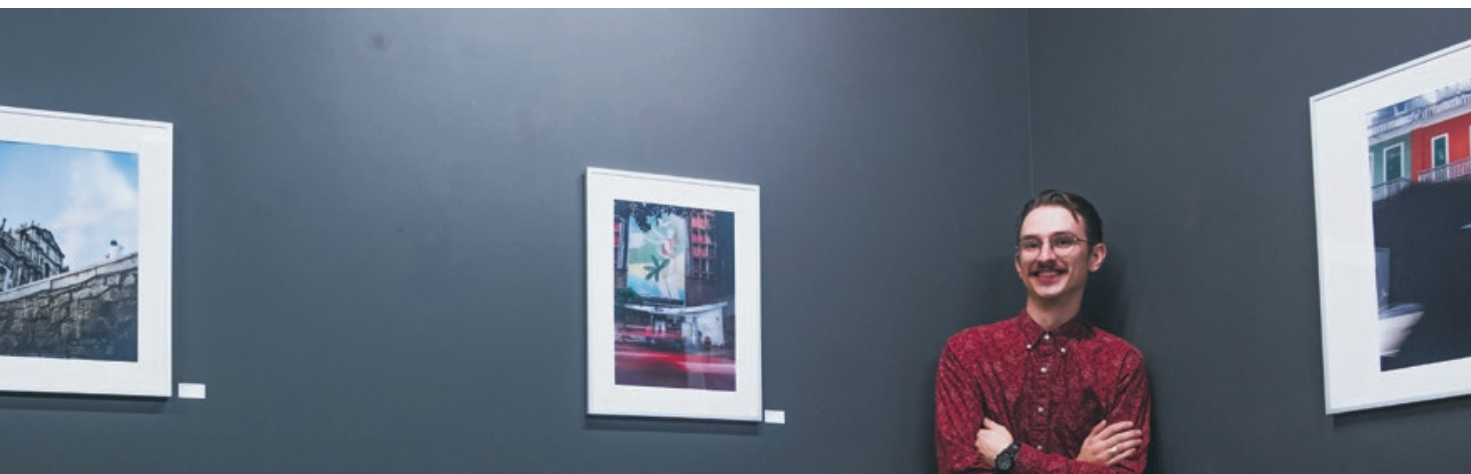


PHOTO BY MATTHEW VEITH

*Michael Veith’s photo exhibit on Macau, Expiring City, was held in Winnipeg’s Forth Café from Nov. 1 to 7.*

Kong, and is the most densely populated region in the world.

“Ruled by the Portuguese for over 450 years, Macau developed as a uniquely Eurasian city,” he describes in the introduction to his exhibit. “From its eclectic architectural heritage, distinct Macanese people group and mosaic of culture, Macau is a shifting kaleidoscope of east and west.”

In 1999, control of the city was given back to mainland China, under the agreement that Macau’s distinctive government,

study at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. After visiting his home city in February 2019, he decided to create an Instagram account, where he could share his photos of Macau, both from his years living there and his most recent trip.

“I had shot a photo on expired film and I made the caption, ‘An expiring city on expired film,’ and that really stuck with me,” he says. *Expiring City* became the name of his Instagram account and his exhibit.

through a frame. “That dual nature is how I kind of see Macau, where there’s a frenzy to it, but there are also pockets of peaceful moments that you can experience,” he says. ☘

*Turn the page for more Macau photos.*

*Although the show has closed, Michael Veith will continue sharing his photos of Macau on his Instagram account at @expiringcity.*



### EXPIRING CITY: A MACAU PHOTO EXHIBIT



*'7:12 PM (Good Morning),' 2019.*



*'A Sleepy Backwater,' 2019.*



*'Stone Skyline,' 2019.*



*'Between Flux,' 2019.*



## EXPIRING CITY: A MACAU PHOTO EXHIBIT



*'Frenzy and Envy,' 2019.*



*'The Myth of Lusotropicalism,' 2012.*



*'The Sigh,' 2019.*



*'Facade Ponderings,' 2013.*



### /// Staff change

#### MC Eastern Canada mission minister to retire



**Brian Bauman**, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's mission minister, will retire at the end of 2019. "I am grateful for the knowledge

and experience that God has granted me through the last 16 years," he says. Working with troubled teens is where Bauman began his ministry in 1975 with Mennonite Central Committee in Winnipeg and St. John's, N.L. Two years later, he was student chaplain at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ont. He entered full-time ministry as pastor at Preston Mennonite Church in Cambridge, Ont., where he was ordained in 1987. He and his wife, Nancy Brubaker, moved to California with their family and co-pastored First Mennonite Church in Reedley from 1988 to 1994. After a short break from congregational ministry, Bauman moved into the position of conference minister at Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference in California, also working in the area of church planting. It was here that he received a call from David Brubacher, then executive minister of MC Eastern Canada, to return to Southern Ontario as the mission minister. "Brian's entrepreneurial approach to church planting, of being 'church' more broadly, and his heart for newer immigrant groups, were strong reasons we called him to this position," says Brubacher. "I think it is fair to say that the current dynamic initiatives in [MC Eastern Canada] mission are in large part the result of those strengths." Bauman has served the regional church since 2003. Norm Dyck replaces him at the beginning of 2020.

—MC EASTERN CANADA

### /// Staff change

#### MC Eastern Canada names new mission minister



**Norm Dyck** has been named Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's next mission minister, replacing Brian Bauman, who is retiring

at the end of this year. David Martin, the regional church's executive minister, says of Dyck's appointment: "Norm's many roles within the church position him well to lead us on mission. Norm has been a pastor for 15 years, and has served as the executive secretary of church engagement with MC Canada. Additionally, he was chairperson of both the [MC Eastern Canada] Mission Council and the MC Canada Christian Witness Council." A key component of mission minister will be guiding the church outward into the world while declining resources and membership inclines the church to withdraw. "Over the next decades, the church will face challenges that will test our resolve to continue to love while holding to truth," says Dyck. "If we love alone without truth, eventually someone will ask if you really care, because love alone is not motivation to action. The flip side is also true; people enraptured by the truth can be of no earthly good to the rest of us. If you become so certain of something that it causes you to love another less, then the truth that you are clinging to is not of the Lord. Leadership is found in the balance." Since the announcement of Dyck's appointment earlier this year, he has continued in his current role as mission engagement minister, working alongside Bauman, whom he has long considered a mentor. Dyck is a member of Listowel (Ont.) Mennonite Church and he lives in Listowel with his wife Rose and four sons.

—MC EASTERN CANADA

### /// Staff change

#### MC Eastern Canada executive minister to resign next year



**David Martin**, in his letter of resignation to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's Executive Council, wrote, "the time is right for a change in leadership." He will conclude 15 years of service as the regional church's executive minister in July 2020. Arli Klassen, MC Eastern Canada's moderator, says of Martin's tenure: He came to the regional church with 25 years of experience as a pastor, "but even that was not enough to prepare him for the challenges to come." MC Eastern Canada has "grown into an increasingly intercultural body that reflects what Canada continues to become: a rich, multilingual, multicultural family," she says. During Martin's time, the regional church has welcomed between two and four new congregations each year at a time when many denominations have been shrinking. Martin also participated in the restructuring of the regional and nationwide church. As MC Canada and MC Eastern Canada move into a new era of collaboration, they have begun to identify shared priorities and directions based on the rich growth and changes that have occurred in the church. In his 25 years of pastoral ministry, Martin served three congregations in Ontario: Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church in Waterloo, Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham, and Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener. He chaired MC Eastern Canada's Leadership Commission from 1998 to 2000 and was on the regional church's Executive Board during that time. He also chaired the Conrad Grebel University College Board from 1986 to 1992.

—MC EASTERN CANADA

### /// Staff changes

#### EMU names new academic deans

HARRISONBURG, VA.—Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) has named long-time campus leaders to three new academic dean positions, effective July 1, 2019:



**David Brubaker** is the new dean of the School of Social Sciences and Professions. He has directed and taught in EMU's MBA and

MA in Organizational Leadership programs. In addition to various other roles since beginning at EMU in 2004, he has been a practicum director, academic director and member of the leadership team for the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding.



**Sue Cockley** is the new dean of the School of Theology, Humanities and Performing Arts. She has served at EMU since 1996.

During that time, she has directed the adult degree completion and MA in Organizational Leadership programs, and has been dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary and of graduate and professional studies. She will continue as seminary dean.



**Tara Kishbaugh** is the new dean of the School of Sciences, Engineering, Art and Nursing. At EMU since January 2004, she has

chaired EMU's biology and chemistry departments since 2013. An organic chemist, she has taught chemistry courses and seminars on ethics, land use and food chemistry. In addition to various committee and council roles at EMU, she has served on the undergraduate council executive and chaired the pre-professional health services and intellectual life committees.

—EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

### /// Staff change

#### Tri-County Mennonite Homes hires new CEO

**Steven Harrison** takes over as Tri-County Mennonite Homes' new chief executive officer, effective Nov. 11, replacing Steve Lichty, who is retiring at the end of this year. Harrison brings extensive experience in the health care system in Ontario and across Canada, most recently as a vice-president of the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network. He offers senior leadership experience in primary care, acute care, developmental services, home care, mental health and clinical education. He received his PhD from the University of Toronto in medical anthropology and community health. "My role will be to serve not only the residents and clients of today, but also those of tomorrow," Harrison says. "Over 50 years ago, wise decisions were made that allowed [Tri-County] to be the organization it is today. Thoughtful, measured, responsive and determined efforts have led to this point in time. Decisions we make today will determine the course of the next 50 years." His first priority, he says, will be to meet staff, residents, clients, volunteers and family members at all four divisions (Aldaview and Nithview Community, both in New Hamburg, Ont.; Greenwood Court in Stratford; and Corporate Services).

—TRI-COUNTY MENNONITE HOMES



### /// News brief

#### National Council of Persons with Lived Experience appoints new chair



**Ken Reddig** of Pinawa, Man., has been appointed as the new chair of the National Council of Persons with Lived Experience and

its representative to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) national board of directors. Reddig is a former housing worker with the North Eastman Regional Health Authority and past director of the Eden Foundation, where he worked with Manitoba Housing to develop a 45-unit housing project for people living with mental illness. As executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, he led programs in refugee resettlement, immigration and Indigenous issues, among other social programs in Manitoba and internationally. Retired since June 2013, he sits on numerous mental health boards and committees, and on the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service board that owns and operates *Canadian Mennonite* magazine. He has also served on the CMHA board of directors for three years. Reddig holds a BA in education, a master of divinity degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and an MA in Canadian history from the University of Manitoba.

—CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

### /// Staff change

#### Pastoral transition in Manitoba



**Bryce Miller** finished his position as lead pastor at Jubilee Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on June 16, after serving there for three years. He and his family moved to Ritzville, Wash., where he began the role of pastor at Menno Mennonite Church on Aug. 3. Miller holds a master of divinity degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He and his wife Emily have two children, Luke, 3, and Anna, 2.

—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE



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**Encountering Different Perspectives**

Having taught in Grebel's Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program for 13 years, Old Testament Professor Derek Suderman observes that new students are often surprised by the wide scope of student perspectives in the program. Not only do students study theology for different reasons, whether exploring vocations of ministry and service, for personal enrichment, or as a stepping stone for further studies, but they also come from a diversity of faith backgrounds and beliefs.

Suderman notes that he is grateful that the MTS student body is not uniform because a lot of learning that happens in the program occurs through student interaction with peers. Suderman explains that the program's open nature is inspired by its Anabaptist roots and strong foundation in the Bible. "Because Anabaptism has historically been a minority view, I think there's an inherent openness and a possibility of hospitality for different perspectives."



"Mennonites have often thought of themselves as counter-cultural. In our setting, I think one of the most counter-cultural things we can do is to study the Bible as though it matters," he notes. "People can go for days, months, even years, without moving outside of our culture. This is one of the great strengths of the Bible. Since it does not emerge from our time and place, it provides a unique opportunity to consider our own setting with new eyes."

"I'm interested in the process of transformation. In my view, success is not that a student agrees with me," Suderman adds, "but that they've deepened their understanding and gained an appreciation for a variety of viewpoints. Today's church urgently needs people who genuinely understand each other and seek to work together, rather than simply denouncing the other side's approach. Because the program welcomes different perspectives, it challenges students to articulate what they believe and why they believe it—a vital part of growing one's faith."

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— Paul Plato, MTS student

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— Glenda Ribey, MTS student





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A woman who was in Berlin when the wall fell asks: Do we live in a more peaceful world today?

[canadianmennonite.org/blog/ll-berlinwall](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/ll-berlinwall)



### Prayer and the lumberjack

Read an excerpt from *Speaking of God: An Essential Guide to Christian Thought*, a new book by Ottawa Mennonite Church pastor Anthony G. Siegrist.

[canadianmennonite.org/blog/as-prayer](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/as-prayer)

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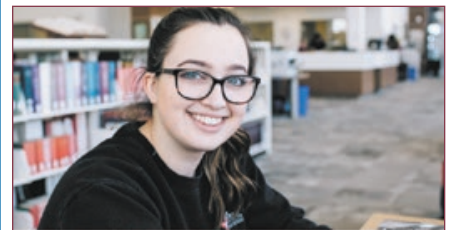
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Schools Directory featuring Mennonite Collegiate Institute

# Removing our masks

By Jesse Wiebe (Grade 11)  
Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Man.

As head of the student Christian Life Committee, I had the opportunity to help plan one of the main events of our school year: the Christian Life Retreat. I was thrilled to be a part of the work that goes into making it such a memorable event.

During the last week of September, MCI students and staff, along with three staff children, headed off to Red Rock Bible Camp in the Whiteshell. It's the highlight of the year for many students, as we get to know each other more in a super-fun environment.

Our sessions were great this year, too, and they helped our school to grow closer together.

Retreat speaker Peter Epp ('98) spoke on masks and how we are all a part of God's story. He went through the whole Old Testament sharing story after story of how masks

were what held people away from God until Jesus came to take our masks away.

We were challenged to remove any masks we wear, from pride to perfectionism, to shyness. Many students accepted the challenge by becoming real and vulnerable with one another.

Three students—Max Wiens (Grade 12), Melody Odekunle (Grade 12) and I even shared about the masks we have worn—and continue to wear sometimes—in a session that helped to open up the conversation.

(To watch a video, visit [youtube.com/watch?v=IX1myDCjx7s/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IX1myDCjx7s/).)

The retreat was a great way to kick off the year. I hope the masks we all wear continue to fall off, and that more students feel comfortable enough to be vulnerable at MCI.



MCI PHOTOS

Grade 10 students Nancy Peters and Candy Ho enjoy their free time out on the water.



The voices of MCI staff and students fill the chapel space every morning and evening as they gather to sing and share stories.

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## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Until Feb. 8, 2020:** "Faces of Jesus," a Metzger Collection exhibit, at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford. Open Wednesdays, Fridays and the second Saturday of each month, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Saskatchewan

**Dec. 8:** "A Very Shekinah Christmas," at the Shekinah Retreat Centre, at 2 p.m. Includes a Christmas-themed photo booth, carolling, and at a concert, at 3 p.m., with the Coro Nova Choir and soloist Vic Krahn.

**Dec. 19,21:** RJC Christmas concerts: (19) at Knox United Church, Saskatoon; (21) at RJC at 7 p.m.

### Manitoba

**Dec. 7:** "Choose Your Own Adventure Trip" raffle, in support of Mennonite Heritage Village. Five trip options to choose from. To purchase tickets online until Dec. 6, visit [bit.ly/mhv-affle](http://bit.ly/mhv-affle).

**Dec. 7:** CMU Festival Chorus and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra present Handel's "Messiah," at the Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit [my.wso.ca/messiah](http://my.wso.ca/messiah).

**Dec. 7,15:** Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church Adult Choir and the Exaudi Chamber Choir present Bach's "Magnificat": (7) at Evangelical Mennonite Church, Steinbach, at 7:30 p.m.; (15) at Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, at 11 a.m.

**Dec. 9:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate holds its Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 16:** BachStreet presents "I'll be Bach for Christmas: A night of Comical Music," at One88 Princess, in Winnipeg's Exchange District, at 7:30 p.m. To reserve tickets in advance, email [rachelannawpg@gmail.com](mailto:rachelannawpg@gmail.com).

### Ontario

**Until April 24, 2020:** The Grebel Gallery, Waterloo, presents "The Cultural Life of Drones: KW Drone Dialogues," created by Sara Matthews, which explores the myriad ways

drones are embedded in people's everyday lives. For more information, call 519-885-0220 x24204.

**Dec. 1:** Lifted Voices will sing Christmas music at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

**Dec. 7:** Conrad Grebel University College hosts its "Make-a-Difference Market," a Christmas shopping fundraiser that includes fair trade and local vendors, a food and bake sale, silent auction and live music, at the College, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Dec. 7:** The Grand Philharmonic Choir presents Handel's "Messiah," at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m.

**Dec. 8:** Menno Singers perform "Haste Ye!—Christmas Anthems," with the Menno Youth Singers, at Trillium Lutheran Church, Waterloo, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**Dec. 15:** Pax Christi Chorale presents jubilant choral masterworks by Bach, Vivaldi and Durante, at St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [paxchristichorale.org](http://paxchristichorale.org).

**Dec. 15:** "Sing-along Messiah," with Menno Singers, orchestra and soloists, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**Dec. 20-22:** Listowel Mennonite Church presents "An Advent Journey Marketplace." Tours take place: (20,21) from 7 to 9 p.m.; (22) from 2 to 4 p.m. and from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**Dec. 21,22:** St. Jacobs Mennonite Church presents "The Worst Best Christmas Pageant Ever," a Christmas comedy for the whole family, at the church at 2:30 p.m. each day. For tickets, call 519-664-2268.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements by mail 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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## OnGoing

### Life and death in the era of drones

WATERLOO, ONT.—The Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement has launched its latest Grebel Gallery exhibit, "The Cultural Life of Drones: KW Drone Dialogues."



Created by Sara Matthews, associate professor in global studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, the exhibit explores the myriad ways that drones are embedded into daily life, as well as ideas about the kinds of life and death that drones make. Matthews employs installation and documentary photography in this site-specific exhibition as a way of generating dialogue about the logistics and practices associated with drone technologies in Waterloo Region. "The intent," says Matthews, "is to create a conversation about the ways in which drone technologies contribute to the making of culture and how these relations might be apprehended via an aesthetic lens." Her multimedia installation transcends the boundaries of traditional art, inviting community members to explore their assumptions about the use of drones. To learn more, call 519-885-0220 x24204. The exhibit, which opened on Nov. 14, will run until April 24, 2020.

—CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## Classifieds

### Employment Opportunities



#### Employment Opportunity Lead Pastor

Westwood Community Church in Winnipeg, MB is seeking a full-time Lead Pastor. The Church was founded in 1979 with a current attendance of approximately 150. Westwood serves all ages, has a blended worship style, is raising up young leaders, and hosts many community events.

The Lead Pastor will be responsible to facilitate the development of WCC's vision and lead the Church toward the vision. The Pastor will do this primarily by setting the spiritual tone, by biblically oriented preaching and teaching, and by equipping the Church toward maturity in Christ. The Pastor should be committed to the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith and to living a lifestyle consistent with that confession.

For more information, please visit our website at:  
[www.westwood.mb.ca](http://www.westwood.mb.ca)

Interested applicants should submit a resume with references to [wccpastorsearch2019@gmail.com](mailto:wccpastorsearch2019@gmail.com). We are looking to start processing applications at the beginning of 2020.



#### Employment opportunity Wellesley Mennonite Church 0.5 FTE Associate Pastor

As Wellesley Mennonite Church discerns God's calling we are seeking a 0.5 FTE Associate Pastor who will focus on music, worship, youth and children's programs and Christian Education.

The successful candidate has or is receiving training or has experience relevant to this position. This individual models a Christian understanding of the Anabaptist Mennonite faith.

The Associate Pastor works within a team environment that is led by the pastor. Start date is negotiable with the goal of filling the position early in 2020. Applications are being accepted until the position is filled.

For more information please go to the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada website [www.mcec.ca/ministry-opportunities](http://www.mcec.ca/ministry-opportunities) or contact [pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca](mailto:pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca).

[www.wellesleymennonite.ca](http://www.wellesleymennonite.ca)



#### Employment opportunity

The position of **Professor of Pastoral Care and Director of Contextual Education** is open. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, is hiring a full-time professor to start July 1, 2020.

Preferred qualifications: Ph.D. or equivalent; expertise in pastoral care, strong organizational, interpersonal, intercultural, and communication skills; preparedness to oversee ministry placements and chaplaincy requirements, and the ability to inspire students in face-to-face and online learning environments. See a full job description at:

[www.ams.edu/jobs](http://www.ams.edu/jobs).

#### Employment opportunity

##### Executive Minister

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for Executive Minister. The Executive Minister will be a leader who inspires and leads pastors and congregations across the MCEC community of faith. Primary areas of responsibility will include strategic planning, promoting the health and spiritual vibrancy of Anabaptist congregations, and leading a staff team as they make disciples, grow congregations, and form leaders.

The applicant for this full-time position will be a strong team builder and a skilled communicator with excellent listening skills. They will work with the senior staff team to create and realize MCEC's strategic plans.

Applicants will have a demonstrated commitment to Anabaptist theology and a love for Christ and the church. Experience with senior leadership teams and spiritual leadership would be an asset. Experience in intercultural settings and the ability to speak more than one language would be an asset.

The start date is flexible but preferably Summer 2020. Resumes are accepted until January 3, 2020. MCEC also welcomes nominations for this position.

The Search Committee will be holding Focus Groups prior to interviewing candidates to get input from the community.

For more information, the full position description, or to submit an application or nomination contact:

Arli Klassen, MCEC Moderator  
Brent Charette, MCEC Operations Minister  
Email: [search@mcec.ca](mailto:search@mcec.ca)





# MDS responding to Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas

*Will support efforts of local churches in that country*

By John Longhurst  
Mennonite Disaster Service

**F**or Kevin King, the destruction left behind in the Bahamas by Hurricane Dorian on Sept. 1 was “unbelievable.”

“As far as one could see, everything was destroyed or damaged,” says the executive director of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) of his early October assessment trip to that island country. “People were traumatized.”

King visited the two northern islands, the Grand Bahamas and Abaco, that received the most damage. The visit was made under the terms of an agreement with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) that allows MDS to take the lead in response to an international disaster requiring expertise in reconstruction and repair, if MCC decides to relinquish its lead role.

As a result of the assessment, MDS has decided to contribute donations received for Hurricane Dorian to two church-related groups working in that country. A total of \$78,885 will be given to the Bahamas Methodist Habitat and the Salvation Army. The funds will be used for materials, training, generators and other ways to assist with their recovery and reconstruction efforts. Additional funds could be made available in the future.

“It’s a very unusual situation for us,” says King, noting that MDS only works in Canada, the U.S. and U.S. territories like Saipan or Puerto Rico.

As a result of the assessment, King says the best way MDS can help is by supporting local organizations in the Bahamas. “Groups that are helping are overwhelmed,” he says. “They can use our support.” With local people who know the situations on the ground willing to volunteer, he says, “The best way we can be of assistance is by supporting their efforts.”

Of those who donated, King says he is grateful. “The donations from people across North America show once again how we want to respond as Christians to those affected by natural disasters,” he says.

Dorian made landfall in the Bahamas on Sept. 1 as a Category 5 hurricane. It was the worst storm to ever hit the island country. Damage is in the billions of dollars, and at least 65 people were killed. ☞



MDS PHOTOS

*The effects of sustained 290-kilometre-per-hour winds for two hours can be seen in the Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian slammed the island nation on Sept. 1.*



*With funding from Mennonite Disaster Service, volunteers remove debris from a church in Marsh Harbour, Abaco Island, in the Bahamas, after Hurricane Dorian.*



*Workers discuss damage with a resident in Marsh Harbour, Abaco Island, in the Bahamas.*