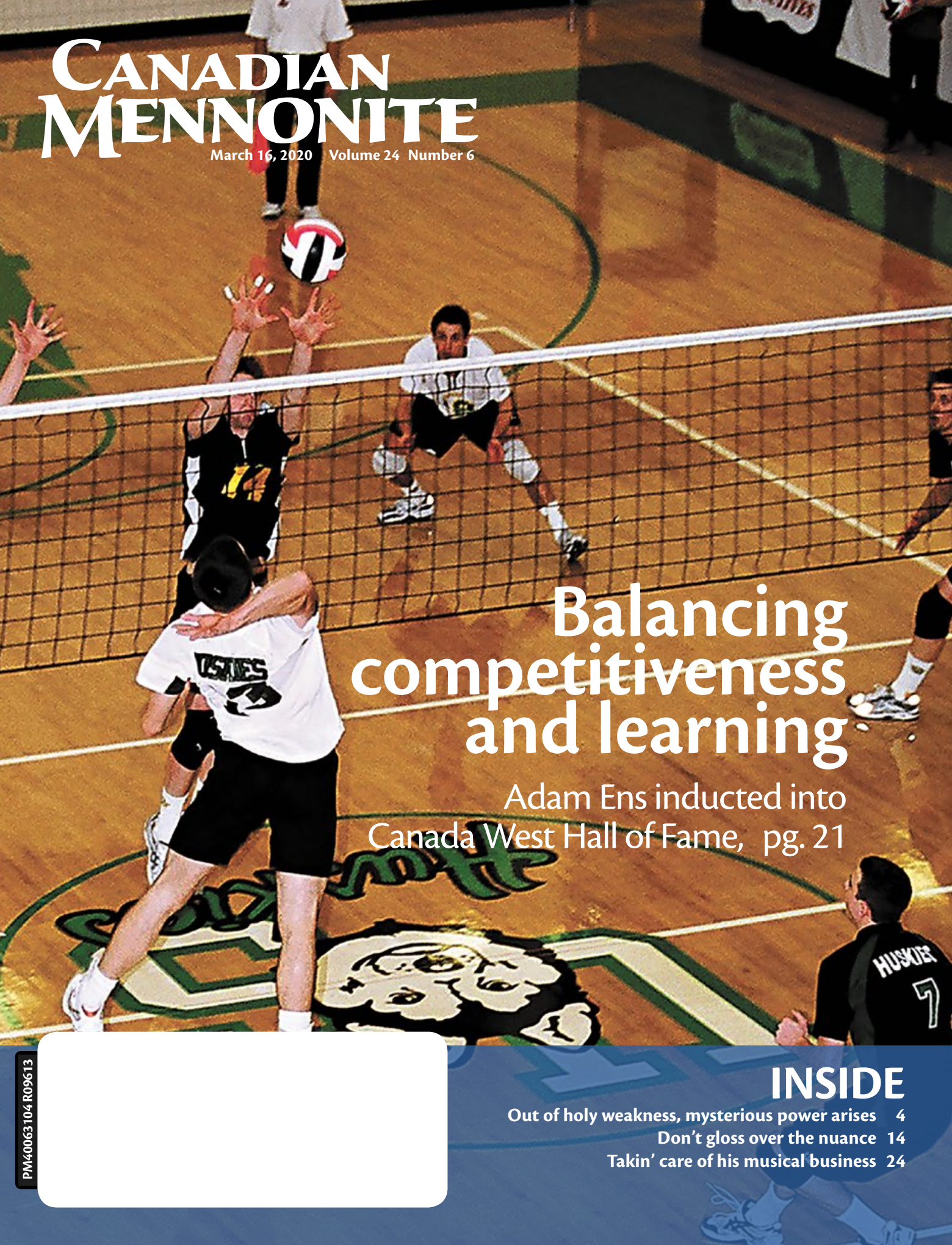


# CANADIAN MENNONITE

March 16, 2020 Volume 24 Number 6



## Balancing competitiveness and learning

Adam Ens inducted into  
Canada West Hall of Fame, pg. 21

PM40063104 R09613

## INSIDE

- Out of holy weakness, mysterious power arises 4
- Don't gloss over the nuance 14
- Takin' care of his musical business 24



## EDITORIAL

# Chequebook and calendar

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER  
Executive Editor



In early March, the church my husband and I belong to held its annual general meeting.

This year there wasn't a lot of discussion, but Paul, the representative of the finance and stewardship committee, got us all thinking.

The financial report is usually done as a "narrative budget," with pie charts showing the various aspects of the congregation's ministry. Up on the screen, we saw the percentages of our donations that had gone toward worship and spirituality; faith formation; pastoral care; community life; initiatives around missions, peace and justice; and the upkeep of our property.

Our congregation met our budget last year—with a bit of surplus—and that felt good! But the 2020 spending plan was increased over 2019, with some expected changes in leadership, cost-of-living adjustments for staff and some new dreams for ministry. There is no guarantee that we can meet that bottom line this year.

Before the congregation voted to approve the plan, Paul reminded us that the commitments we made to give financially actually had greater value than colourful pie charts can show. Behind each of the wedges were countless hours that volunteers from the congregation spent working alongside paid staff to make the various ministries happen. Behind each of those broad categories were people meeting in committees; people making connections with neighbours; teachers preparing Sunday school lessons;

worship planners and leaders; musicians; food preparers and dishwashers; and people caring for our building and the nearby houses the church owns. In each category there were undoubtedly other congregants doing important and maybe hidden tasks.

Paul reminded us that—if we said yes to the money budget—we were also saying yes to all the various activities that money helped our congregation to do. Were we also committed to giving our time and our skills to help that money carry out the church's ministries both inside and outside our walls?

Sitting there, with our stomachs growling for the potluck to follow, we pondered the two types of commitment he was calling us to: the chequebook and the calendar. How had our church made a difference in people's lives last year because we had taken seriously both of these commitments? What more could we do in 2020 with that same—or a higher—level of commitment?

Whether you are guided by a paper calendar or a digital one, or whether your activities require less structure, the way you spend your time indicates your values, your commitments, your priorities. Paid work, study, housekeeping, caregiving, shopping, entertainment, sports: How do these seemingly good things fill the time slots of our days? And which time slots—besides Sunday morning worship—do we give to the ministry of our congregation, our regional church, the nationwide and the worldwide church? Some of us practise the tithing of our income. Do we consider tithing our time?

On page 9 of this issue, Garry Janzen, who serves as executive minister of Mennonite Church British Columbia, wonders about how people might offer their time to help carry out God's vision in that fair province. One person who has shared time and talents generously is Lee Dyck, who served that regional church for the past seven years. At the recent MC B.C. annual meeting, delegates acknowledged her service as she stepped down from the responsibility. (*See top of page 20.*) It wouldn't be easy to calculate the hours that Lee and many other volunteer leaders have given to help Canadian Mennonites carry out our collective mission.

Here's a shout-out of gratitude to the people who intentionally carved out time for the ministry of the church in the past year, whether close to home or in a wider setting. And here's a reminder to those of us who sat back thinking that our chequebook commitment was enough: Time to pull out that calendar. What gifts and skills has God given you? How might your passions be harnessed for God's work in the world? What time slots will you offer to your congregation and to the larger church?

## Clarification

Since the publication of our March 2 issue, the name of the nationwide study conference, originally called "Rethinking dinner: The essence of church," as reported in the page 2 editorial "Structure and identity," has been changed by Mennonite Church Canada to "Table talk: Does the church still have legs?" Watch for details in upcoming issues. ▮



Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

Canada

ISSN 1480-042X

# CONTENTS

MARCH 16, 2020 / VOL. 24, No. 6

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**Adam Ens** in action with the University of Saskatchewan Huskies men's volleyball team sometime between 1999 and 2004. Read more about him in "Balancing competitiveness and learning," on page 21.

PHOTO: HENRY HARMS

## 'In the end, we're all neighbours' 18

Face2Face community conversation at Canadian Mennonite University unpacks the complexities of polarization. CM's senior writer, **Will Braun**, was one of the panellists.

## MC B.C. explores 'connections' 19

Revitalization, expanded ministry, property sale affirmed at annual general meeting.

## Cross-cultural challenges and blessings 22

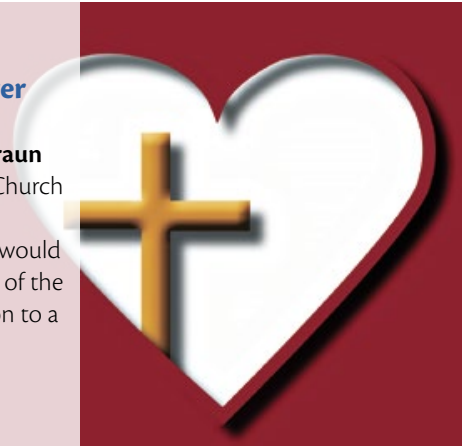
Hope Mennonite Church pastor **Lynell Bergen** reflects on the highs and lows of her sabbatical teaching at Meserete Kristos College in Ethiopia.

## Where are they now? 26

Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers **Greg Rabus** and **Jennifer Otto** have settled back into life in Canada, working in the secular world and worshipping at Lethbridge (Alta.) Mennonite Church.

## Out of holy weakness, mysterious power arises 4

Senior writer **Will Braun** asks 15 Mennonite Church Canada pastors—all women—how they would explain the meaning of the cross and resurrection to a 12-year-old.



## Regular features:

For discussion 6 Readers write 7 Milestones 8  
A moment from yesterday 9 ServiceLinks 28  
Online NOW! 29 Calendar 30 Classifieds 31

## Living into a new imagination Garry Janzen 9

## 'O, you gorgeous man!' Ed Olfert 10

## The gift of imagination Joshua Penfold 11

## CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5,  
Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7

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

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

Facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite @CanMenno

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

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

Readers Write: [letters@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:letters@canadianmennonite.org)

Milestones announcements: [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:milestones@canadianmennonite.org)

Calendar announcements: [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org)

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO: Canadian Mennonite,  
490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7

**Mission statement:** To educate, inspire, inform, and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada as it shares the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. We do this through an independent publication and other media, working with our church partners.

Published by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service. Regional churches and MC Canada appoint directors to the board and support 38 percent of Canadian Mennonite's budget.

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

### Canadian Mennonite Staff

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Advertising Manager,** D. Michael Hostetler, [advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org),  
toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

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

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

**Alberta Correspondent,** Joanne De Jong, [ab@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ab@canadianmennonite.org)

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

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

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

### One-Year Subscription Rates

Canada: \$46 + tax (depends on province where subscriber lives)

U.S.: \$68 International (outside U.S.): \$91.10

### Subscriptions/address changes

(e-mail) [office@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:office@canadianmennonite.org)

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

## FEATURE

# Out of holy weakness, mysterious power arises

By Will Braun

Senior Writer

I could not have predicted the responses I got when I asked 15 Mennonite Church Canada pastors—all women—how they would explain the meaning of the cross and resurrection to a 12-year-old.

When I was 12, the idea of “Jesus dying for my sins” didn’t make sense. I believed it in some sense but I also wondered, although never out loud, that if a price needed to be paid for my sins, why did God, being omnipotent, not hold a celestial sale?

Of the pastors I interviewed, several said that, as kids, they, too, had a fuzzy understanding of the central piece of the Christian story. One said that, although she did not understand the resurrection, she knew that “whatever it is, it works out.” The sad service on Friday was followed by a happy one on Sunday, with icing and sprinkles, in my case.

Several pastors said their understanding has changed over time. Some answered decisively, others wanted time to consider. One, I discovered, did a PhD on the question.

None gave the once-standard answer that Jesus died for our sins. This, despite: “*He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross*” (I Peter 2:24); and, “*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins*” (Hebrews 9:22).

Adherents of the traditional view may find the murk and mystery in this article troubling or sacrilegious. I can say only that the people I interviewed spoke with conviction and passion. Any doubt I have does not extend to the sincerity of their pursuit of God.

## Between old and new

Claire Ewert Fisher, a pastor of Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, told me that we’re caught between “more traditional language,” that “doesn’t always fit,” and the need for new language.

A pastor who asked for anonymity said, “We know what we don’t want it to sound like.”

This was characteristic of many of my conversations. Still, the pastors gave a wide range of answers, with some

common themes.

Echoing others, Ewert Fisher said that with the cross and resurrection, “God chose to demonstrate his love in the most powerful way possible.” Jesus “expended all that he had for us.”

Again touching on a theme, she said the resurrection demonstrates that “death did not have the final word.”

Others added, “Love and life have the final word,” “Love is stronger than death,” and, “Suffering . . . injustice, brokenness, separation are never the final word.”

If people suffering generations of intractable injustice—or my 12-year-old son—asked what exactly this means, I’d stammer. Not everyone gets a Job-like rebound. Yet there is great solace in the proclamation.

## Who killed Jesus?

A hard question to ignore. Did God essentially sacrifice his own son, using the human hands available, or did the powers of the day kill him because he was a threat?

I heard the latter from several pastors.

Lisa Martens of Hope Mennonite in Winnipeg has seen worldly powers eliminate threatening voices. She worked with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Mexico and South Dakota. She came to realize that the central Christian symbol—the cross—is “a torture device” and it has additional layers of meaning for people who have suffered violently.

She relates the oppressive forces she has witnessed and the forces that killed Jesus. “Jesus died because of violence and meanness and sin,” she said. He died because he “challenged the power brokers of the day.” He died “because of sin.”

That “structural sin” persists, she said. People and other living things are harmed because of the exploitative nature of the consumptive world we partake of. Cycles of violence and redemption continue, and our task is to translate Jesus’ “model of great courage” into this age.

**Did God essentially sacrifice his own son, using the human hands available, or did the powers of the day kill him because he was a threat?**

Love's as hard as nails,  
 Love is nails:  
 Blunt, thick, hammered through  
 The medial nerves of One  
 Who, having made us, knew  
 The thing He had done,  
 Seeing (what all that is)  
 Our cross, and His.  
 (C.S. Lewis)



'Love and life have  
 the final word.'  
 (Claire Ewert Fisher)

Her understanding of the cross also makes Jesus the one who empathizes with the suffering. This was another common theme, although usually in terms less visceral than Indigenous people in Mexico gathering in the presence of the cross to commemorate a massacre.

#### What if God was one of us?

"The cross means God knows what it is like to be human and to suffer," said Susanne Guenther Loewen of Nutana Park Mennonite in Saskatoon. Her doctoral work focused on the cross and resurrection. "God came to be one of us," she said.

Patty Friesen of Osler (Sask.) Mennonite spoke about solidarity too, but differently. She described Osler's Good Friday evening service, which is the favourite service of many congregants: People arrive in silence and relative darkness. It is a service of scripture and song. No bulletin, no extras. A pianist and several readers, one of them the voice of Jesus. Throughout the service,

about 15 candles are extinguished by people who come up spontaneously. By the end, Jesus is quiet, the last candle is snuffed, the narrator and pianist turn off their lights, and everyone leaves in silence as the last bits of evening light fade.

She said that people "connect with Jesus in the suffering." They think about their own losses. They find compassion. "We're suffering, and Jesus suffered, too."

"We're so in our head all year long," she said, "and Good Friday lets us get into something else." It addresses spiritual needs, providing comfort, and then with Easter, promise and healing.

Friesen said the confident and triumphant trumpet playing "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," which leads off the Easter service, says more than anything else.

#### Melody, mystery, story

Renee Sauder of Stirling Avenue Mennonite in Kitchener, Ont., recalled how, as a child, she comprehended the

meaning of Easter through song: "As three hundred unaccompanied voices sang celebrative Easter hymns, I learned the promise and joy of resurrection."

Anna-Lisa Salo of Bergthal Mennonite in Didsbury, Alta., said that on Easter, "we stand in the face of mystery," and maybe children understand this best. She said we should "stand in this place of mystery and open ourselves to God." Stated another way: "Know the stories and embed [yourself] in them."

Charleen Jongejan Harder of North Leamington United Mennonite in Leamington, Ont., also sees the cross and resurrection in terms of finding our way into a story. She discussed my question with her 10-year-old son. They talked about other stories that help us relate to the Easter story:

- **Like *Star Wars*.** The dark path is easier and seems stronger, but the light has a deeper strength.
- **Voldemort, the arch nemesis** in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, does not understand the power of love, so

**Renee Sauder of Stirling Avenue Mennonite in Kitchener, Ont., recalled how, as a child, she comprehended the meaning of Easter through song: 'As three hundred unaccompanied voices sang celebrative Easter hymns, I learned the promise and joy of resurrection.'**



everything about love seems foolish and incomprehensible to him. Harry wields the power of love, gaining the ultimate victory.

- In C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, the White Witch thinks she has control, but there is a deeper magic at work.
- In Madeline L'Engle's young-adult sci-fi novel, *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg rescues Charles Wallace from IT, a giant disembodied brain, using the one thing IT does not have: love.

The parallels have limits, and some people will chafe at these comparisons, but Jongejan Harder said that with kids it is important to get out of the head zone and into the story. We can easily get lost and lose each other in theological theories. Of course, that applies beyond youth.

She said she has a deep trust in story, in finding common stories, and in finding our way into the Bible, the grandest story.

### Holy weakness

Narnia never worked for me, but my understanding of resurrection, wanting as it has been, is informed by literature—specifically Northrop Frye, the eminent literary critic. He wrote that resurrection is not a victory in the here and now but a liberating leap to a “dimension beyond the historical,” a whole other ball game.

Some Anabaptist thinkers argue that with the cross Jesus did not ensure a happy worldly ending. He did not overthrow the oppressive Romans, nor permanently boot money changers from the temple, nor make poverty history. He died not with a fist in the air, but with arms spread helpless. Out of holy weakness, mysterious power arises.

Caryll Houselander's gentle proclamation about Easter has stuck with me over the years. She wrote the following as she and others scrambled to tend the injured in London during the terrifying bombing raids of the Second World War:

“It came to me like a blinding flash of light that Christ did not resist evil, that he allowed himself to be violently done to death . . . He knew that the exquisite

## Some Anabaptist thinkers argue that with the cross Jesus did not ensure a happy worldly ending. . . . He died not with a fist in the air, but with arms spread helpless. Out of holy weakness, mysterious power arises.

delicacy and loveliness of the merest detail of Christian life would survive the Passion, that indeed, far from being destroyed by it, it depended on it. And so it is now: that which is holy, tender and beautiful will not be swept away or destroyed by war . . .”

### To nail down meaning

It would be nice to have a clean answer to one of the biggest questions about Christianity.

Cheryl Braun of Glenlea Mennonite in southern Manitoba said it used to really bug her that she didn't. But talking to older folks who find “contentment in simple things,” without needing to be right, has helped free her of the

pressure to pin down an answer.

“You feel like there should only be one answer,” said Karen Sheil of Harrow (Ont.) Mennonite, “but when you go looking, there are a lot of different answers.”

Indeed. Answers in song, liturgy and in books I found mildly interesting as a kid. Comfort, grace, God's nearness, healing, promise and, above all, immense, uncontainable love.

God broke through the darkness, as one young pastor said, and we get to be part of holding the light. God's love will live on. No matter what happens, there is still grace, as Braun said, on the other side.

Christ is risen. ✎

### ✎ For discussion

1. How did you understand the cross and resurrection when you were 12 years old? Has your understanding changed over time? What songs come to mind that express the meaning of the cross and resurrection? Why did early Christians choose the cross as a symbol of Christianity?
2. The substitutionary view of atonement implies that the suffering of Jesus on the cross frees us from punishment. What questions do you have about this perspective? An old gospel hymn says, “There's power in the blood.” What do you understand this to mean?
3. Will Braun asks whether God sacrificed his son using human hands or whether Jesus was killed by the powers of the day. How would you answer this question? How does the meaning of the resurrection change, depending on who was responsible?
4. Can you think of contemporary stories that relate to the Easter story? Would you include the *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Star Wars* or the Harry Potter series?
5. What does the message that “Christ is risen” have to say about “holy weakness”? What are the ongoing mysteries about the cross and resurrection?

—By Barb Draper

## /// Readers write

### ✉ Comments on Wet'suwet'en article divided

**Re: "Who do you support when a community is divided?" Feb. 17, page 20.**

I believe Ross W. Muir covered the recent blockade in British Columbia by the Wet'suwet'en people very well.

What bothers me is that Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is taking sides with those who chose to disobey the law of the land and also ignore the majority of the Indigenous people who voted 80 percent to have the liquid natural gas pipeline built, for their own benefit. The hereditary chiefs have little interest in the well-being of the people; their personal image is their priority.

I have lived on a First Nation in Manitoba. The chief was elected, and I believe he tried to be fair with his people.

The reason the federal government tried to get rid of the hereditary chiefs years ago was to deal with elected representatives of the people. The government was concerned that the money they gave would go to the people, not to those who looked after themselves and their immediate friends/family.

Imagine the loss of all the jobs that will not be created if the pipelines are not built.

The most active apostle of Jesus called the Roman believers to obedience: *"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves"* (13:1-2).

CPT, please concentrate on preaching the gospel, not the social gospel. As Christians, we should deal with truth, not propaganda.

ISAAK EITZEN, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

Frankly, I find this article to be disrespectful of the work CPT is doing. I find CM's position to be oversimplified, uncritical and convenient for white settlers.

CPTers were on Wet'suwet'en territory as invited guests. This was not simply a protest; they were asked to support land defenders in the role of legal observers and were illegally arrested while doing so.

It is important to note the 1997 Delgamuukw decision by the Supreme Court of Canada that affirmed hereditary chiefs hold rights and title over ancestral lands, and not band council members. Like other nations, different people and levels of leadership will

have different interests, but the laws, rights and title of traditional governance still needs to be respected by Canada.

SARA WIEBE, VANCOUVER

Thank you to Ross W. Muir for providing context and perspective to *Canadian Mennonite* readers on the conflict in British Columbia.

Why is it that Christian Peacemaker Teams wants CM readers to donate to voices that have no electoral mandate? The Wet'suwet'en people have resolved these issues in debate and elections. And good faith agreements have been undertaken.

The hereditary chiefs sought an electoral mandate from their own community members, and failed! Who has credibility here?

The government of the day and the Supreme Court of Canada have unleashed a genie whereby some expect to be treated as sovereign entities, even though they have no electoral mandate. This is a basis for tyranny and brigandry. And to treat with brigands is to legitimize theft.

This is a question that must be asked: If the government is not prepared to act for the common good, does it not lose the right to collect taxes? If government will not use peace officers to uphold the common good, does it not forfeit the right to have citizens defer to officers of the law?

These are not inflammatory questions. They are the consequences of principles we hold in common being violated. Once violated, it is only a matter of time before the consequences follow.

WALTER BERGEN (ONLINE COMMENT)

Instead of focusing on divisions in Wet'suwet'en, it is more important for settlers to focus on the Crown's continued usurpation of Indigenous jurisdiction, and how it enforces its claims to sovereignty with violence.

This October 2019 "Red paper" (redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org) is essential reading to understand these ongoing situations.

Also, I'd encourage us to refrain from using protester terminology for those who are protecting the land in keeping with Indigenous laws.

STEVE HEINRICHS (FACEBOOK COMMENT)

*Steve Heinrichs is the vice-chair of Christian Peacemaker Teams (representing Mennonite Church Canada).*

## ✉ Sometimes the best lessons are learned from the fringes

Re: “Life on the geographic fringes of MC Canada,” Feb. 3, page 21.

Will Braun does a straightforward job of capturing some of the creative energy in some of Mennonite Church Canada’s farther flung congregations. What the pastors of these congregations share—in particular about the value of a conference structure—I found to be a valuable message.

Gordon Driedger’s comment, “The primary value of the regional church connection is that it provides a ‘theological home,’” states an important fact about one of the primary responsibilities of the MC Canada conference structure.

The sense of shared values and a shared theology will keep the best of what it means to be an Anabaptist faith community alive, strong and impacting our neighbourhoods and the world beyond.

Thank you to the Nordheim and Petitcodiac pastors for sharing their experience. Sometimes the best lessons are learned from those on the fringes of the mainstream.

JAMES FRIESEN (ONLINE COMMENT)

*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

**Barkman**—Peter Charles (b. Feb. 5, 2020), to James and Sarah Barkman, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

**Bergman**—Andrew George (b. Jan. 15, 2020), to Gary and Heidi Bergman, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

**Gostnikov**—Henry Andrei (b. Feb. 3, 2020), to Eugene and Cassandra Gostnikov, Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

**Muehling**—Elise Corinne (b. Jan. 22, 2020), to Jonathan and Melanie Muehling, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

### Marriages

**Bergen/Wall**—Trevor Bergen (North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.) and Tamara Wall, at Elm Creek Mennonite Brethren, Man., Feb. 15, 2020).

**Good/Horst**—Jeff Good and Lauren Horst, at Community

Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., Feb. 14, 2020.

### Deaths

**Bender**—Eileen Mae (Roth), 83 (b. May 30, 1936; d. Jan. 2, 2020), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Bergen**—Mary (nee Friesen), 87 (b. Dec. 16, 1932; d. Jan. 27, 2020), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Burroughs**—Marie, 80 (b. Feb. 4, 1939; d. Sept. 27, 2019) Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Rabbit Lake, Sask., in Che-mainus, B.C.

**De Jong**—Siegelinde (Hinz), 86 (b. July 31, 1933; d. Feb. 11, 2020), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

**Dick**—John Eduard, 74 (b. Jan. 26, 1946; d. Feb. 12, 2020), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Enns**—Siegfried (Sig), 95 (b. April 16, 1924; d. Jan. 25, 2020), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Epp**—Jacob, 78 (b. Oct. 31, 1941; d. Nov. 5, 2019), Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Glenbush, Sask.

**Hildebrand**—Erna (nee Thiessen), 88 (b. March 23, 1931; d. Dec. 30, 2019), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Hofstra**—Tina (nee Kuper), 97 (d. Dec. 25, 2019), Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

**Lichti**—Elroy John, 94 (b. July 9, 1925; d. Jan. 18, 2020), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Martens**—Abram (Abe), 92 (b. Sept. 9, 1927; d. Jan. 6, 2020), Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Rabbit Lake, Sask., in North Battleford, Sask.

**Neudorf**—Heinrich (Henry), 97 (b. Aug. 20, 1922; d. Nov. 22, 2019), Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Glenbush, Sask., in Saskatoon.

**Neufeld**—William, 86 (b. March 29, 1933; d. Feb. 15, 2020), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Ras**—Rudolf, 92 (b. Dec. 26, 1926; d. Dec. 6, 2019), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Toews**—Willy, 91 (b. March 14, 1928; d. Jan. 10, 2020), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Unger**—Victor, 90 (b. Sept. 8, 1929; d. Dec. 30, 2019), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Von Kampen**—Irene (nee Krahn), 93 (b. Sept. 9, 1926; d. Jan. 17, 2020), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Wagler**—Dora (Nafziger), 94 (b. Dec. 15, 1925; d. Jan. 25, 2020), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Walsh**—Amanda (Driedger), 42 (b. Nov. 19, 1977; d. Feb. 8, 2020) North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Warkentin**—Betty (Lepp), 89 (b. Oct. 18, 1930; d. Nov. 26, 2019), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, 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

# Living into a new imagination

Garry Janzen

Once upon a time, around 35 years ago, God brought into the world some new people. These people have grown up to love Jesus and follow him with all of their lives. They have also responded to the impulse of the Holy Spirit and God's call to serve as leaders in the church. Some of them are pastors. Some are people just interested in making a difference in our world in Jesus-shaped ways. Most of these thirty-five-somethings are busy trying to make life work in this very expensive place in the world known as the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

Many are married with children and work two or three jobs. They are willing to do stuff for the church, but they can't see themselves sitting on a committee for a three-year term that can be up to three terms, for a possible total of nine years. They can see themselves being on a task group for a very specific ministry opportunity with an end date in mind.

We need to take a look at ideas and questions for Mennonite Church British Columbia that may result in these kinds of ministry opportunities. Is the

committee culture of the way we engage in the work of MC B.C. becoming a thing of the past? Is there a future for committees? Can we imagine a different way of engaging that does not mean long-term involvement on a committee? Can the next generation of leaders see themselves being involved in short-term, issue-specific initiatives to achieve a specific goal or outcome?

Some areas of MC B.C.'s vision and purpose that have been identified are:

- **Discerning, nurturing and forming** the church from an Anabaptist perspective.
- **Engaging in service** and missional initiatives, including peace and justice.
- **Connecting congregations** to foster viable communities of faith.

Can these younger leaders see themselves getting involved in any of these areas of interest by taking part in a task force or focus group that works on specific issues or ministries? From my conversations with some of these folks in our MC B.C. congregations, it seems

that the answer is "yes."

Given that many activities have budgets attached to them and require accountability, which until now have been addressed by committees, how do we feel the accountability issue can be addressed in a new structure that is not focused on committees? Is there still a need for a committee to process budgeted activities, or how can it be done?

We've been thinking a lot about meaningful, task-oriented, time-limited engagement that may seem doable for our next generation of MC B.C. ministry. We had a lot of good conversation around theology, missiology and practical involvement this past year. And we're not done yet. What do you think? ☸



*Garry Janzen is MC B.C.'s executive minister. This column is taken from his address at the regional church's recent annual general meeting.*

## A moment from yesterday



The work of community remembering is important work. Archives, historical societies, libraries and museums all have a role in a community to remind us who we are and help point us to where we should go. Sometimes we have been in the wrong and need to change course; at other times we have done well and need encouragement to keep going. In Canada there are Mennonite historical societies in each province from British Columbia to Quebec that meet annually to learn, discuss and build relationships. This photo of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society board in 1984 includes, from left to right, front row: Brian Paetkau, Adolf Ens, Delbert Plett, Victor Doerksen and Doreen Klassen; and back row: Wilmer Penner, Bert Friesen, Bill Schroeder, Margaret Kroeker, Al Reimer, Harry Loewen, Ed Schellenberg and Henry G. Ens

Text: Conrad Stoesz  
Photo: Ed Schellenberg Photograph Collection



archives.mhsc.ca

## IN THE IMAGE

## 'O, you gorgeous man!'

Ed Olfert

I recently sat with a friend for lunch and conversation. I had not seen her for almost three years. At one point she reached across the table, grasped both of my hands in hers, and exclaimed, "O, you gorgeous man!"

If your eyes are sliding down to the small photo at the bottom of this column, perhaps with a bit of furrow on your brow, I understand. Plus, I hadn't spent much time making my hair nice that morning.

The story that connects Sharon\* and me is a novel one.

About 13 years ago, our Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) group opened ranks to make room for Larry\*. He joined a group of core members that numbered about four.

Larry was released from prison as an untreated sex offender, indicating that he had not taken all the programs that the institution required. That meant that, upon his release, his picture was in the media and in the lunch room where I was working at the time.

Larry became a good friend. Larry's stories eventually began to include Sharon, a person who lived in his community. Although Sharon's story included many hard chapters as well, we reminded Larry that he deserved a relationship as much as anyone.

But Sharon's entry into Larry's life complicated our CoSA relationship with Larry. Sharon was intimidated by this group that seemed to matter so much to him. She began to separate him from us. They eventually married, but the CoSA gang wasn't invited.

Larry began to slip back into alcohol addiction. After a drunken spat with Sharon, he spent another eight months incarcerated. Sharon was determined that this relationship would survive. She began to call on us for support.

Larry was never very healthy. He died about three years ago; Sharon was with him. The CoSA group and a few neighbours joined with Sharon to create a funeral. She was concerned that no one would show up, yet the small hall was filled. My sermon needed to be shortened, as so many "Larry stories" were shared.

Sharon became a loner again, not easy to keep in contact with. But when a CoSA volunteer member recently died, I called to notify her about memorial arrangements, and she agreed to meet for lunch.

I was struck by the "Larry stories" that still sat at the front edge of her consciousness. Stories that I had explored, and then gently released over the years, were as real to Sharon as yesterday. She reminded me

of a time when she had settled into a bus, off to visit family, when Larry strode onto the bus, told the driver he would need to wait, because Larry had not yet kissed his sweetheart goodbye. From the tears, I gather that few have referred to Sharon using "sweetheart" language. She remembered his generosity, his laughter, his passion and, mostly, his love for her.

I was awestruck at how fresh the stories had remained for Sharon in her lonely existence.

Sharon told me that she had found a cemetery close to where Larry had lived. It was quiet and peaceful there. There was no charge to inter his remains. I assured her that we would come together whenever it suited her, that we would plan a warm service. At that point, I was pronounced "gorgeous."

Sharon showed me a bronze plaque for Larry. It had taken her three years to pay for it. In August, Larry's friends and his widow will gather to put Larry to rest. I expect there to be a wiener roast. And many "Larry stories."

Doing the work of the church is perhaps not so complicated. It involves listening and caring. ☞

\* Pseudonym.



*Ed Olfert (p2ptheo@sasktel.net) discovers holy wisdom even when he is not pronounced gorgeous.*

## Et cetera

## MCC food distribution post-Second World War



**MCC contributed all of the food supplies being packed by a volunteer in a food box for a needy refugee family in Bremen, Germany. In 1947, 43 workers were responsible for the distribution of 4,116 tonnes of food, clothing and other supplies in Germany.**

Source: MCC / Photo taken in 1947 or '48



## TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

# The gift of imagination

Joshua Penfold

Remember the feeling with such clarity: that furious, terrified, sick-to-your-stomach despair one feels when you are numerous pages into writing an academic paper and the computer freezes and you're unsure if it was saved. Rebooting and reopening the document brings about despair and tears as you discover it's all gone. Every. Single. Word.

These memories surfaced when reading Jeremiah 36. Jeremiah has Baruch write down all the words that the Lord spoke, in an attempt to turn the hearts of the king and the people back to God. But the king takes the scroll and burns it in the fire, unmoved by any of it. God tells Jeremiah: *"Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll."*

Seriously? Ugh. I feel your pain, Jeremiah.

But the scripture says that *"Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe. . . [and] Baruch wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire."* There's no mention of how Jeremiah felt. I wonder if he felt frustrated, as I did the times I've had to rewrite something. Did he kick himself for not making a copy before sending it away, or by God's help

was the second version better than the first? These are the kinds of things I sometimes wish the Bible included to help us better humanize the characters. It's hard to believe Jeremiah would have just rewritten everything with indifferent robotic obedience.

Just as my professor had no idea about the agony involved in rewriting my paper, Jeremiah doesn't tell us, his readers, how he felt about rewriting. A bit of imagination can spark life into a Bible story that might, at first glance, seem a bit dull. I wonder if readers are sometimes afraid or unaware that the Bible and the imagination can be great companions.

Shortly after imagining Jeremiah's feelings about rewriting the scroll, I read this in Jeremiah 38: *"So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud."*

Although this creates a great image of Jeremiah being stuck deep down in the mud, it is silent regarding the process by which he got there. Did Jeremiah simply comply and obediently walk over to the cistern and willingly descend into the

mud, or was there a struggle? Did he try to escape but got overpowered? Did he resist and curse them? Were punches thrown? It doesn't say. I find it difficult to imagine the prophet with fire in his bones (Jeremiah 20:9) just letting himself be taken and discarded without some kind of resistance.

These imaginings may be minor and relatively insignificant in changing how we understand the text, but they reduce the risk of these characters remaining/becoming unrelatable and two-dimensional.

So often we forget that these heroes of the faith experienced the full gamut of emotions, just as we do. Our stories, emotions, joys and sorrows can help us to enter into their stories and emotions, and bring their stories to life. So even if it's something as silly as the frustration of losing a paper when your computer freezes, let your life and your imagination guide you into the stories of scripture. ☼



Joshua Penfold ([penfoldjoshua@gmail.com](mailto:penfoldjoshua@gmail.com)) tries to take time to thoughtfully tinker through the tricky, trustworthy and transformational text.

## Et cetera

### CPT condemns U.S. aggression towards Iran

Christian Peacemaker Teams is among 23 faith groups who have signed on to a statement condemning U.S. aggression towards Iran. Signatories, including Mennonite Central Committee U.S., call on the Trump administration to end military escalation, and on Congress to refuse authorization for war with Iran. The statement reads, in part: "As people of faith, we condemn the United States' dangerous aggression towards Iran, including the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani and the deployment of additional troops to the region. We urge the Administration to step back from the brink of war. . . . As communities of faith, we renounce the escalation of violence, and call on the United States to work towards lasting peace with Iran."

Source: Christian Peacemaker Teams



CPT steering committee members participate in the National Day of Action in Washington, D.C., earlier this year.



## VIEWPOINT

# Report names Jean Vanier as an abuser

Carol Penner

**O**n Feb. 22, L'Arche International released a summary report of the abuse investigation of their deceased founder, Jean Vanier. It concluded he had sexually abused six women over a period of 35 years.

Vanier was a celebrated Canadian theologian and activist famous for his advocacy for people with developmental disabilities. He founded L'Arche, a community-based model of care, now a worldwide organization. He received numerous prestigious awards and honours for his work. He died in 2019.

My first thoughts are for the six victims referenced in the report who said they endured sexual abuse from a spiritual guide. I pray for their healing. I admire their courage in telling the terrible truth about someone who is revered by so many.

Abuse by a religious leader is a life-changing trauma. It often takes a long time for survivors to recognize the abuse, and healing is measured in decades, not years. Most find it difficult to ever trust a spiritual leader again. Many lose their faith in God. Some survivors of pastoral abuse experience anguish so acute they consider suicide.

Vanier was a much-sought-out spiritual director because he was perceived to be a man of integrity. I have two friends who met with him; they told me that just being in his presence filled them with peace because he radiated love.

The six women described emotional, spiritual and sexual abuse. Some of them came to him, like my friends, seeking spiritual help. The report says Vanier sexually coerced his victims using God's name, and that he justified the abuse by claiming that "it is Jesus who loves you through me."

Given that Vanier met privately with thousands of people, it is extremely likely that there are many more victims.



PHOTO BY KOTUKARAN (CROPPED) /  
BIT.LY/GNU-LICENCE

*Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, is pictured in Trosly, France, in 2012.*

The report states that it "does not presume that there were no other cases." We will never know if he abused people who do not have the verbal skills to tell their stories.

Vanier was a big spiritual influence in my life. What drew me to him most of all was that he was a champion of empathy. There is a cruel irony in this, because abusers have a profound lack of empathy for their victims. Vanier objectified women for his own pleasure, oblivious to the hurt he caused them.

The report concludes that he lied about what he knew, and what he did. His lies attest to his self-centred concern to conceal the truth, preserve his reputation and avoid the consequences of his behaviour.

In my work with pastoral abuse, I have observed that it is the magnificently gifted who get away with abuse for decades. Like the banks in a financial crisis, they are "too big to fail." Warning signs go unheeded and victims are silenced. Charisma, intelligence and eloquence are powerful gifts for good,

and, tragically, for evil.

Theologians I know are already combing Vanier's writings, looking to see if there are signs we missed. Is there some flaw in his theology that led to this abuse? How we think and write about God is important, and Vanier's theology needs to be examined. But good theology will not save us from the sin of hypocrisy. Our actions tell our story.

Articles are being written that enumerate Vanier's accomplishments, and how they can be redeemed from this fall. I think it's too soon for that. Right now we don't need lists of all the good he's done. The accolades and awards he received over the decades, his glowing obituaries, and even rumours of canonization, undoubtedly compounded the trauma of those he abused.

And so I chose my title carefully and name here that Vanier did despicable things, and he never repented in a way that anyone could see. In Christianity, our lives are not held in a balance where success is declared if our good outweighs the evil we've done. Instead, we stand before a God who loves the most hidden victims with their burdens of pain, and who looks for a contrite heart. Much will be required from those to whom much has been given.

It horrifies me that Vanier is now on the inglorious list of powerful religious leaders who sexually abused vulnerable people. What gives me hope is the courage of the victims to name what he did as sin, and the fact that the organization he founded exposed this, so that more victims can find their voices. ✎

*Carol Penner is assistant professor of theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. She has written and consulted about pastoral abuse and misconduct.*



## EARTH DAY REFLECTION

# Climate change as spiritual crisis

Douglas Kaufman

**W**hen Luke Gascho and Jennifer Schrock of Goshen College's Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center invited me to help lead efforts to engage Mennonite churches on climate change, it felt like a call from the Spirit. I felt prepared because I had been leading Benton Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., in creation care for 15 years and had just spent a sabbatical studying ecology and theology.

My own interests focused on rivers—for good reason—since our local river where we baptized people sometimes had too much manure in it.

But I'm afraid that I was part of the silence many of us have experienced around climate change. Part of that may be from fears about climate deniers, a voice that the media has amplified. But the other problem with the climate crisis is that it is scary.

As our carbon emissions cause the atmosphere to warm, we experience more and stronger natural disasters, such as droughts, heat waves, hurricanes and flooding.

I was engaged in "soft denial."

"Literal or hard denial" refutes the facts and claims that nothing is happening. When that becomes unbelievable, "interpretive denial" admits that something is happening, but it is not what you think it is. For instance, one might claim the problem isn't carbon emissions, but that it's natural cycles or other explanations that have little basis in scientific observations.

But a broader and, in some ways, more difficult denial is "soft or implicatory denial." We accept the facts, but we deny their social and moral implications. American sociologist Kari Norgaard first noticed this denial of climate change when she spent the warmest winter in Norway in 130 years. Although Norwegians believe climate science and love winter, they rarely

spoke about climate change. It brought up too many uncomfortable and frightening emotions of helplessness, guilt and fear.

It is easy to feel hopeless about climate change. An individual cannot do a lot. It takes large-scale global, social and institutional efforts to make the necessary changes. And yet many of us—for good reason—have trouble trusting these institutions to do the right thing. So it is easier to ignore it, like someone who is in denial about their problem with alcohol.

I find hope in the shift that is happening to see the climate crisis not just as a scientific crisis, but as spiritual and human ones as well. Christian faith can help us confront our fears, despair and helplessness.

## But the other problem with the climate crisis is that it is scary.

Unfortunately, too often the church has either ignored the climate crisis or even fostered denial by false assurances that God will take care of it. If anything, the God I encounter in the prophets, who often connected injustice with ecological disaster, is one who confronts human sin and injustice, not excusing it.

I am inspired by the biblical vision of humanity in harmony with creation rather than conquering it. I am inspired by the good news that, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, a new creation has begun. The Spirit can bring renewal in the midst of our climate suffering. This does not mean confronting the climate catastrophe will be easy or even that the outcome is assured.

I am inspired by the social capital of congregations to address social issues, being places where we peer through our denial and acknowledge what is

happening. I am inspired by our rituals of lament that allow us to truthfully confront harsh realities with hope and trust, strengthening our resolve to do something.

The failure of our politicians globally and nationally to address climate change is evident. So I am also inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders who confronted the denial about racial injustice through nonviolent resistance. King's famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" does not address outright racists, but white moderates whose soft denial kept them from seeing the need for immediate change. King saw that oppressors needed to be provoked to do justice.

While our churches and households need to reduce our carbon footprints, we also need to address our politicians and society, moving us towards no longer tolerating increasing carbon emissions.

We can join with others engaged in the best of nonviolent resistance to confront this injustice towards the most vulnerable, towards coming generations and towards other species.

Finally, I am inspired by the hundreds of Mennonites and others with whom I have discussed the climate crisis, and how many people simply desire to do the right thing. We are shifting and caring more about the climate, and every little and big thing we do helps! ❖

*Douglas Kaufman is a director of pastoral ecology at the Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions, Goshen College, and pastor of Benton Mennonite Church, in Goshen, Ind. He is completing a master of theology degree in ecology from the University of Toronto. Originally posted on MC U.S.A.'s website on Feb. 13, at bit.ly/38WLBgq.*



## VIEWPOINT

# Don't gloss over the nuance

Wet'suwet'en case should cause supporters to face complexity

Will Braun  
Senior Writer

**D**uring a 2012 trip to British Columbia, I spent two memorable hours with Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chief Na'Moks (John Ridsdale), one of the chiefs at the centre of the Coastal GasLink crisis. And I spent time with the elected chief of the Haisla Nation, which now supports the pipeline.

Then, as now, the relationship between Indigenous people and resource development was more complex than many supporters admitted. To gloss over the nuance is to miss the turn-off to the path forward.

I went to northern B.C. in 2012 because a battle was brewing over the Northern Gateway pipeline that would have linked the oil sands to the B.C. coast. I interviewed leaders along the pipeline route.

I met Na'Moks at the Office of the Wet'suwet'en in Smithers. He was congenial, articulate, gracious. And there was a deep fortitude about him.

He showed me their two-storey building. One room was rimmed from floor-to-ceiling with shelves of binders. This was the documentation from the Delgamuukw case, a landmark Supreme Court of Canada battle the hereditary chiefs won in 1997. It fleshed out concepts of Indigenous title and advised governments to work out an arrangement with the Wet'suwet'en.

I learned in two hours what governments and the Coastal GasLink proponents learned the hard way—if you expect to build a pipeline in Wet'suwet'en territory without the hereditary chiefs on board, you are in for a fight. Governments and industry showed astounding ignorance in this regard.

Later in my trip, I found myself in an



*The Haisla Nation community of Kitamaat Village, across Douglas Channel from the planned terminus of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, as pictured in 2012.*

intense off-the-record conversation between a Haisla elder, and Ellis Ross, the elected leader of the Haisla Nation at the time. The main Haisla community of Kitamaat Village is across Douglas Channel from what would have been the terminus of the Northern Gateway pipeline and the planned terminus of Coastal GasLink. Ross was dead set against Northern Gateway and eager for multi-billion-dollar liquefied natural gas developments.

Northern Gateway died because virtually all the leaders, elected and hereditary, from Prince George to Haida Gwaii, were opposed to it.

Coastal GasLink is different. The Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs are largely alone in terms of Indigenous leaders—elected or hereditary—along the pipeline route.

Personally, I believe the free, prior and informed consent of the hereditary

chiefs should be required for Coastal GasLink to proceed. I also acknowledge that other Indigenous bodies have given their free, prior and informed consent.

Some Indigenous rights supporters dismiss the views of the 20 elected band councils that agreed to Coastal GasLink. Not me. There are profound problems with the imposed Indian Act system of governance under which most First Nation councils are elected, but in many places, especially where there is no functioning alternative, elected leaders are the most legitimate representatives of the people. I know some very fine people who serve their people in that imperfect capacity (and some who abuse it). And I note that when the same band councils that agreed to Coastal GasLink were opposing Northern Gateway, allies never questioned their legitimacy.

Crystal Smith, the current elected





PHOTOS BY WILL BRAUN (2012)

*Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chief Na'Moks (John Ridsdale) is pictured in front of documents from the Delgamuukw case.*

leader of the Haisla Nation, supports Coastal GasLink. "I'm tired of managing poverty," she said in a statement last year. "I'm tired of First Nations communities dealing with issues such as suicide, low employment or educational opportunities."

I wish she were opposing the project—I'm not in favour of more fossil fuel development—but I will not dismiss her view or role. I challenge those people who dismiss "Indian Act chiefs" to make that argument to Smith's face. You will lose.

For years I worked with Pimicikamak, an Indigenous nation that opposed construction of hydro dams in Manitoba. Five other First Nations wanted the dams. I spoke with those leaders many times. I was the target of their dirty tricks. But I had to accept their right to their view. And I have to accept

that many Indigenous people opt for large-scale resource developments: dams, oil sands, mines. I have benefitted from industrial development my whole life—fossil fuels, electricity, lumber, minerals. How can I say they can't have their slice of that pie?

Personally, I hope the Wet'suwet'en stop the pipeline. But, at the time of writing this, work had recommenced.

But lurching from one polarized pipeline battle to another may be less useful than a broader discussion of overall plans for reconciliation and greenhouse gas reductions, recognizing that the lines between us and them are blurred.

As the Justice writing the Delgamuukw decision said: "Let us face it, we are all here to stay." That includes Smith, an elected chief; Na'Moks, an hereditary chief; Prime Minister Justin Trudeau; and those Wet'suwet'en supporters in Winnipeg yelling "F-- k the Police!"

By the way, those supporters should know what Na'Moks said in a recent interview: "Under the uniform of the RCMP are human beings." He should know; his daughter is an RCMP officer.

That's how beautifully messy our country is. ❧

*For a longer version of this commentary, visit [canadianmennonite.org/perfect-complexity/](http://canadianmennonite.org/perfect-complexity/).*



**CANADIAN MENNONITE** Your print subscription includes a digital version. Sign up at [canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/digital](http://canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/digital)



**explore**

**Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth** allows young people (grades 10 to 12) to engage their faith questions, develop their passion for ministry and test their leadership gifts.

The program includes:

- 16-day group experience in Elkhart, Indiana, in July
- 100-hour congregational experience with a mentoring pastor

**FIND OUT MORE:**  
Visit [ams.ca/explore](http://ams.ca/explore)



You can make a difference.



MCC BC seeks a **Director of Development and Advancement**. This full-time position will provide leadership in developing and implementing strategies that generate awareness, relationships, engagement, support from the MCC BC constituency and the broader public. All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to personal Christian faith, active church affiliation and non-violent peacemaking.

For full job description and to apply visit [mccbc.ca/openings](http://mccbc.ca/openings). Anticipated start date, June 1, 2020. For more information, contact Sophie Tiessen-Eigbike MCC BC HR Manager at 604-851-7729.

## NEWS

# Requests for MDS help increasing across Canada

By John Longhurst  
Mennonite Disaster Service Canada  
RENFREW COUNTY, ONT.

When Canadians think of natural disasters—the kinds Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) responds to—they typically think of the southern United States or California. That's not surprising, says Nick Hamm, who coordinates MDS Canada's efforts in Ontario.

"Those areas get lots of hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and tornadoes," he says. "It's in the news a lot." But disasters happen in Canada, too, and MDS is increasingly being called on to help.

Since 2013, when flooding hit High River, Alta., the organization has responded to major disasters such as wildfires in Fort McMurray in 2016 and Williams Lake, B.C., in 2017, and to flooding in Grand Forks, B.C., in 2018.

In Ontario, MDS has responded to two floods and a tornado in the Ottawa Region in the past three years. Currently, the organization is working on six houses damaged by 2019 spring floods in Renfrew County, just over an hour west of Canada's capital.

"Each year there seems to be more places in Canada that want our help," Hamm says, noting that MDS also responds to smaller needs in other provinces, too. One of the reasons for the increased activity is MDS's positive reputation among disaster recovery officials.

"MDS is becoming more well known across Canada because of its work," says Hamm. "This means there are more calls for us to be involved in."

In Ontario, the number of MDS volunteer days has more than doubled over the past three years—from 217 in 2017 to 617 in 2018 and 1,430 in 2019. Most of those volunteers in Ontario came from the Orthodox Mennonite, Markham-Waterloo Mennonite, Old Order Mennonite and Amish communities, Hamm notes. "Those people really stepped up," he says.

It also included people like Kevin and

Evelyn Greenwood of Kingsville, Ont. The couple, members of Leamington Mennonite Church, have done MDS service in the U.S. eight times. This time they decided to stay closer to home and volunteered for a week in Renfrew County near Ottawa last November.

"We always set time aside to do MDS," says Evelyn, retired from a career of working with seniors. "This time we decided to do it in Canada."

"It felt good to respond to a need closer to home," says Kevin, a retired teacher, adding that it was also a plus not to have to travel so far. A big difference was the weather—it was colder. "But we survived," says Kevin of their outside work on two houses.

Joe Bless, a member of Vineland (Ont.) United Mennonite Church, also spent time in Renfrew County last fall.

"It was nice to do service in that area,"

says Bless, who has also volunteered with MDS in the U.S. "There are lots of people there in dire straits, too. Without our work, they'd fall through the cracks."

Members of the Renfrew County long-term recovery committee appreciate the help. "We couldn't do this without MDS," says Bonny Johnson. "MDS brought the right people for the job."

"MDS brings to the table something no other organization does," adds Neil Nicholson of how the organization rebuilds and repairs damaged houses. "It really takes a load off of homeowners and provides them with peace of mind."

For Vince Gervais, the Christian aspect of MDS's help "jumps out at me. Every time we ran into a challenge, things came together. That was the Holy Spirit at work."

As Hamm looks ahead, he is hoping more people in the province will sign up to help those whose homes were damaged by flooding in Renfrew County in 2019.

"For people in Ontario, this is a great opportunity to serve close to home," he says of the work that will be done on six homes in the county. "It's a privilege to come alongside people who lost everything and give them back not only their houses, but also their hope." ❧



MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE CANADA PHOTO

*MDS volunteers Tyler Brubacher and Chris Wideman of the Markham-Waterloo Mennonite Church look over plans while building a new house in Renfrew County, Ont.*



# MDS 'saved my life'

By John Longhurst  
Mennonite Disaster Service Canada

**"I** wanted to crawl into a cave and never come out again."

That's how 66-year-old Bill Overton of Renfrew County in eastern Ontario felt in the spring of 2019 when he saw how floodwaters from the nearby Ottawa River had destroyed his house.

"I knew high water was coming, so I did everything I could to keep my house safe," he says.

This included putting up a metre-high wall of sandbags, making sure the sump pump was in working order, and putting all of his belongings up high on counters and tables.

It was to no avail.

"That was the highest water I've ever seen," he says, describing how the deluge overtopped the sandbags and filled his house with a metre-and-a-half of water.

Worse, the house sat in the water for more than a month before the river receded.

Looking at his ruined home, located about an hour west of Ottawa, Overton says, "I was tempted to go out and get drunk," after having been sober for more than 40 years.

"I didn't think I would be able to start over at my age."

But then the local long-term recovery committee chose him to receive assistance from Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), along with four other homeowners in the county's Whitewater Region.

"MDS was a godsend," he says of how volunteers came alongside to build him a new house. "The help gave me a real boost."

While waiting for his house to be completed, Overton, who works in construction, lived with friends, relatives and, during the summer, in a tent on his property.

Last December, during his regular seasonal layoff, he enjoyed working with the volunteers. "It was good to get to know some of them better," he says.

On Jan. 23, Overton's house—raised 2.4



MDS CANADA PHOTO

*Pictured from left to right are Osiah Horst, MDS Ontario Unit member; Nick Hamm, MDS Ontario Unit chair; Jay DeBernardi of the Canadian Red Cross; homeowner Bill Overton; and Ross Penner, director of MDS Canadian operations, at the Jan. 23 dedication for Overton's new house.*

metres above the ground on stilts, well above the flood level—was one of three homes formally dedicated by MDS.

During the ceremonies, attended by MDS Canada staff, leaders of the MDS Ontario Unit, volunteers, local recovery committee members and government officials, homeowners were given a quilt and a Bible. The dedications concluded with a prayer of blessing for their new or repaired homes.

Overton is grateful for those who came to help him when all seemed lost. "MDS saved my life," he says. "I wouldn't have made it without them."

Altogether, a total of 97 volunteers from Ontario, ranging in age from 15 to 81, gave 515 days of work on the five houses. Based on guidelines for establishing the value of volunteering set by the Conference Board of Canada, the time they donated was worth more than \$111,000.

"It was a privilege to help Bill and the others get back into their homes," says Nick Hamm, who chairs the MDS Ontario Unit, one of six provincial units from Atlantic Canada to British Columbia that respond to local disasters in Canada.

"It was great to see such a good response from volunteers in the province."

The project, which ran from October 2019 to January, was made possible with financial support from the Canadian Red

Cross. It was done in partnership with the Whitewater Region Flood Relief Committee and the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Parish of the Pembroke Diocese, which allowed MDS to use a nearby rectory to house volunteers.

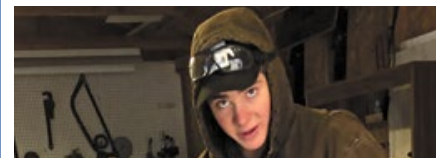
Funding for materials for the homeowners was provided by Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians, a program of the Ontario government. ☞

## News brief

### MDS receives grant from Canadian Red Cross

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Canada's efforts to assist people whose homes were damaged by 2019 spring floods in the Minden, Ottawa and Renfrew, Ont., areas will be enhanced by a grant from the Canadian Red Cross's Community Partnership Program that provides funds for local community programs and support. The grant will be used by MDS for volunteer support—transportation, food and housing—and to purchase a new tool trailer to help with this and other disaster responses in the province, says Nick Hamm, chair of the MDS Ontario Unit. "The support from the Red Cross is a great addition to our efforts in the area," says Hamm, about the work being done by volunteers on six homes. "Together with generous donations from many others, it will help us complete the job and get people back into their houses." This is the third time MDS has helped homeowners affected by flooding and tornados in the Ottawa Region. Houses being repaired or rebuilt from flooding by the organization are being elevated to mitigate future flood damage.

—STORY AND PHOTO BY MDS CANADA



*MDS volunteer Gary Martin, 16, works at a house in Renfrew County near Ottawa. Work in the area has been enhanced by a grant from the Canadian Red Cross.*



# ‘In the end, we’re all neighbours’

*Face2Face community conversation unpacks the complexities of polarization*

Canadian Mennonite University  
WINNIPEG

**H**ow do people respond to the strong rhetoric of polarization that is gripping the world? How can they listen and talk to people that are different from them? And why does it matter if they do?

More than 180 people gathered in the Marpeck Commons at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) on Feb. 10 to discuss these questions. The Face2Face event, hosted by CMU, was entitled “Us and them: How did we become so polarized?”

The event featured presentations by four panellists—Larry Updike, Will Braun, Sandy Koop Harder and Marnie Klassen—and a question-and-answer period moderated by Paul Doerksen, associate professor of theology and Anabaptist studies at CMU.

The main message of the evening? People need to work harder at listening to each other and building understanding.

“That’s sort of how I see polarization: two groups of people yelling at each other with a gap in between,” said Will Braun, farmer, former co-editor of *Geez* magazine, and senior writer for *Canadian Mennonite*. “The only way that I can think of turning down the volume is just to be quiet, put your bullhorn down, go to the brink, jump over, and listen.”

Larry Updike, former radio host for CBC and CJOB, stated that people need to rediscover intellectual humility, emphasize pluralism and encourage a diversity of viewpoints.

Sandy Koop Harder, a professional mediator, partner and business manager for Facilitated Solutions, added, “We need to make a choice to shift away from binary either/or, us and them thinking. . . . We need to be less certain about basically everything. We need to get curious about the other person’s experience and perspective.”

Marnie Klassen, a social theology student at CMU who recently did qualitative



CMU PHOTO

**Will Braun, Canadian Mennonite’s senior writer, left, makes a point to Marnie Klassen during the Face2Face panel discussion at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, on the theme ‘Us and them: How did we become so polarized?’**

research on polarization in the Christian church, has been part of both conservative and liberal congregations. She has been saddened by the judgment she has witnessed from both sides. While all her research participants could identify as liberal or conservative, they could only do so with caveats, because, she said, people are complex beings.

The audience posed sharp, insightful questions: How do you approach the polarization conversation when liberals seem to be the only ones worried about it and conservatives don’t seem to care? How do you make space for multiple viewpoints without compromising your values? How do you deal with the paradox that, in order to be truly tolerant, you can’t be tolerant of intolerance?

These questions were engaged by the panellists, but were ultimately still left floating in the spaces between people. These are difficult conversations and ones that won’t easily be written off. But putting complicated ideas into practice requires hard work.

“Polarization will only increase as long as we continue to associate only with those

who are like us,” said Klassen. “Perhaps [this research] also leaves us with a call to live dangerously, to put our safety at risk by trusting the indefinability of others.”

“My kids sometimes want to dismiss people just the way I did when I was a kid. Maybe the neighbours who farm very differently than us and drive by way too fast in their gas-guzzling four-by-fours,” said Braun. “And then . . . I’ll say something like, ‘You know, guys, someday we’re going to be stuck in a snowbank and that guy’s going to come with his big four-by-four and he’s going to pull us out and we’re going to be really grateful.’

“Because in the end, we are all neighbours.” ❧

*Started in 2013, Face2Face is a series of conversations organized by CMU, designed to engage the community on a wide variety of current events and issues at the intersection of faith and life.*

To view a video of this event, visit [bit.ly/2VmsYyD](http://bit.ly/2VmsYyD).



# MC B.C. explores 'connections'

*Revitalization, expanded ministry, property sale affirmed at annual general meeting*

Story and Photos by Amy Rinner Waddell  
MISSION, B.C.

**"C**onnections: God's church in the 21st century" was the theme when 143 delegates gathered on Feb. 29 for Mennonite Church British Columbia's annual general meeting at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church.

In his opening remarks, executive minister Garry Janzen addressed the topic "Living into MC B.C.'s imagination." He noted that, over the past 20 years, the Mennonite church has moved into a missional church paradigm. "It's a way of being, as opposed to a program," he said.

Janzen listed three key themes as the regional church moves forward:

- **Defining and** engaging an Anabaptist identity.
- **Building connections** and trust between and within congregations.
- **Being a** missional and reconciling community.

Janzen also addressed new ways of thinking about getting church work done. "Is the committee culture becoming a thing of the past?" he wondered. A new way of thinking might be to have people get involved in a specific short-term issue to accomplish a specific goal or outcome. (See *From Our Leaders* column on page 9.)

## New church welcomed

A new MC B.C. connection was celebrated when Vietnamese Grace Mennonite Church was accepted into membership, making it the third Vietnamese congregation in the regional church.

Seven churches involved in revitalization outlined the programs for which they are seeking funding from the Mountainview Fund that was created from the sale of a former church property in 1997, with interest set aside for new initiatives, especially in the Greater Vancouver area:



*Lee Dyck, left, outgoing moderator of MC B.C., reads a final blessing along with Garry Janzen, the regional church's executive minister, at the conclusion of the 2020 annual general meeting on Feb. 29.*

- **Chinatown Peace Church** of Vancouver, which is sponsoring young interns for church work.
- **Living Stones Mennonite Christian Church**, a primarily Chinese congregation with a regular attendance of about 12, and Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship, both of Surrey, for missional coaching and outreach.
- **Living Hope Christian Fellowship** of Surrey would like to extend the ministry of its associate pastor, Bless Len, who is a bridge between the English-speaking and



*Mennonite Church B.C. welcomed Vietnamese Grace Mennonite Church into fellowship at the regional church's annual general meeting on Feb. 29. Pictured with Kevin Barkowsky, MC B.C.'s church engagement minister, right, are Phuc Nguyen and Lam Son Tran.*

Karen communities.

- **Peace Mennonite Church** of Richmond believes it is called to be a people of vision and it wants to appoint a community engagement and outreach pastor to work 20 hours a week.
- **Peace Church** on 52nd in Vancouver, a primarily elderly congregation, is situated in a diverse neighbourhood with many ethnicities. It aims to flesh out its ministry, expand and be good neighbours to those in the neighbourhood.
- **Eben-Ezer Mennonite** in Abbotsford is seeking to bridge the gap between families who drop off children for programs but who do not otherwise engage in the life of the congregation. This plan is to "design, discern, disciple."

## Appraisal, sale of former church land approved

Delegates passed a resolution to approve the appraisal and sale of the property of the former Clearbrook Mennonite Church in Abbotsford. Ten percent of the funds from the sale are to go to support the ministry of MC B.C.'s Indigenous Relations Group. Another 10 percent will go towards uses specified by the regional church's leadership, including increasing the church engagement position and establishing two ministry hubs in Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. The remaining 80 percent is to go to congregations that apply for specific funding for projects that fall within in the areas of revitalization; church planting; leadership training; and service, peace and justice.

With future sale of the property uncertain, a resolution that MC B.C. will "examine, evaluate, and, if needed, adjust the terms of disbursement" for the 32027 Peardonville Road sale funds in 2025 was amended to read "three years after the sale date."

### Other business

A change in leadership was acknowledged as MC B.C. bade farewell to Lee Dyck, who gave reflections and thanks as she stepped down after seven years as moderator. “We are the beloved of God, regardless of race, gender, or who we are,” she said. “I am convinced that a community called ‘beloved’ is possible.” New moderator Gerry Grunau was the former chair of the Finance Committee.

A resolution to combine the Evangelism and Church Development Committee and the Church Health Committee was passed.

### Lead conference news

At the Lead conference on Feb. 28, facilitator Daniel Whitehead led three sessions on “Being human: The church and mental health.”

The first session focused on the necessity of relationships. “Interdependence is a much higher goal than independence,” he said.

The second session was on relating to people experiencing mental illness, care of self, and relating to others socially. “Every experience we have, God is present,” he

reminded those in attendance.

In the third session, Whitehead talked about self-care, which he defined as “any activity that we do deliberately to love and care for ourselves.” He concluded by saying, “You need to take self-care seriously. We must receive love and care for ourselves before we can offer it to others.”

Participants then had the option of attending workshops on depression, dementia, and listening to stories from those with mental-health challenges. ✎

## MC Canada, regional churches launch new websites

By Katie Doke Sawatzky  
Mennonite Church Canada  
WINNIPEG

**M**ennonite Church Canada and its five regional churches all launched new websites over the course of a week in mid-February.

The sites are part of a developing website hub created by Barefoot Creative of Breslau, Ont., that will allow congregations to create their own website, populate it with content from the regional and nationwide websites, and connect with other congregations across Canada as part of a nationwide community of faith.

Doug Klassen, MC Canada’s executive minister, says the new hub will help regional churches and congregations be intentional about connecting with each other and the wider church: “Mennonite

Church Canada and its regions exist to be together what we cannot be separately. This new website will connect us electronically better than we have ever have been. Those who seek and are exploring a connection with the Mennonite church will have an easier time finding their way to us.”

Twenty-one pilot congregations and camps across the regions are currently testing their websites within the hub. Barefoot Creative is providing training sessions, and regional church communicators will come alongside their own pilot congregations to help with testing. After the pilot phase ends, the hub will be open for all MC Canada congregations to join.

“Not only do congregations get to weave

### Website URLs

- **Mennonite Church Canada:** [mennonitechurch.ca](http://mennonitechurch.ca)
- **Mennonite Church Alberta:** [mcab.ca](http://mcab.ca)
- **Mennonite Church British Columbia:** [mcbc.ca](http://mcbc.ca)
- **Mennonite Church Eastern Canada:** [mcec.ca](http://mcec.ca)
- **Mennonite Church Manitoba:** [mennochurch.mb.ca](http://mennochurch.mb.ca)
- **Mennonite Church Saskatchewan:** [mcsask.ca](http://mcsask.ca)

the fabric of Mennonite Church Canada and its regional churches into their site, but they also get to take advantage of a robust system with ongoing technical support and minimal investment,” says June Miller, MC Alberta’s communicator.

As the regional churches and MC Canada continue to live into a new structure, the hub reinforces the idea of congregations being the foundational unit of mission. With easy access to content across the regions, the hope is that congregations will feel more informed about, connected to, and present to each other and the wider church. ✎



Screen grab of the new Mennonite Church Canada website's home page.



## COVER STORY

# Balancing competitiveness and learning

*Adam Ens inducted into Canada West Hall of Fame*

By Donna Schulz  
Saskatchewan Correspondent  
SASKATOON

**W**inning awards is nothing new for Adam Ens. Maybe that's why he expressed surprise when his whole family planned to show up for his induction into the Canada West Hall of Fame.

The induction ceremony took place on Feb. 8 at the University of Saskatchewan, where Ens played with the Huskies men's volleyball team from 1999 to 2004.

According to its website, the Canada West Hall of Fame was "established in 2019 to highlight excellence in university sport across British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba."

During Ens's five seasons with the team, the Huskies won conference titles three times. In 2004, he and his teammates won the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) gold medal. Ens himself scored the winning point in what the Canada West website calls "a marathon five-set triumph over the University of Alberta."

That year, both CIS and Canada West voted Ens as their Player of the Year. And for the third year in a row he was named



PHOTO BY WES ENS

**Adam Ens, with his back to the camera, during his two seasons of playing professional volleyball in France.**

a Canada West First Team All-Star and First Team All-Canadian.

He was also a four-time winner of All-Canadian academic awards for his achievements in the classroom, where he earned degrees in both science and education.

Ens knows first hand that it's not always easy living out one's faith in the world of sports. "Some sports get violent," he says. "That was one of the reasons why I was in volleyball rather than other [sports]."

But even on the volleyball court, being around players who didn't share his faith could be challenging at times. "It took me a lot of years to be okay with the fact that I was different," he admits.

Wanting to enjoy the camaraderie of the team, but still wanting to be faithful to Christ, can be "a hard line for a lot of Christian athletes," he says. "Knowing where to draw the line is not an easy thing."

Team members have to have a close bond with one another, Ens says, adding, "If you're not pulling in the same direction, it's hard." But, he adds, pulling with the team "can pull you away from good choices that support faithful living."

Ens knows what he's talking about. Following his stellar university career, he played professional volleyball in France for two seasons.

"At the highest level [it's] everything for the team, every day of the week," he says. "It's a different mentality when there's money involved. When it's their job and contracts are short-term, they're always wanting to play for the contract."

The experience of playing professionally was both good and bad for Ens, but as he and his wife Sara were having their first

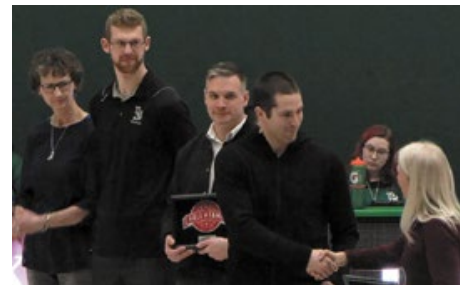


PHOTO BY HENRY HARMS

**Adam Ens shakes hands with a Canada West representative as he is inducted into the Canada West Hall of Fame at the University of Saskatchewan.**

child, they decided to return to Canada.

Ens now lives in Rosthern, where he is a teacher and athletic director at Rosthern Junior College.

In some ways, he says, it was easier to be an athlete himself than it is to watch his three children play sports. As a parent and coach, he tries to strike a balance between competitiveness and learning.

"I'm a competitive person," he says. "I like to win." And he knows that winning is important for his players, too. "It can be tough as a young athlete to stay motivated when you lose consistently," he concedes.

But as a coach, he says, "I'm more happy with seeing development in players than with players who have won."

Ultimately, what Ens wants his players and his children to learn are the time-worn but still meaningful values of good sportsmanship. He says values like "being respectful of all those around you, learning how to learn, determination [and] teamwork," in the end, have even greater value than winning. ❧

# Cross-cultural challenges and blessings

*Pastor spends sabbatical teaching in Ethiopia*

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe  
Manitoba Correspondent

**L**ynell Bergen exchanged the snowstorms and sub-zero temperatures of a Winnipeg winter this year for the warm sunshine and mountains of Ethiopia.

Bergen is a pastor of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and is currently spending a sabbatical teaching at Meserete Kristos College in Bishoftu, Ethiopia.

“I was tired and just felt like I had run out of things to say,” she says. “So I knew I needed to shift my focus for a while.” But she also knew she needed structure, and she couldn’t just spend four months doing self-directed research in a library.

Her husband, Brian Dyck, suggested she teach at the college, which he had learned about when visiting Ethiopia a few years earlier. Soon they were packing their suitcases and boarding a plane, arriving last December. They will be staying until the end of March.

Dyck is the national migration and resettlement coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada and is doing his work remotely, while also connecting with MCC Ethiopia on refugee and migration issues there. Bergen is



PHOTO BY BRIAN DYCK

*Lynell Bergen and Brian Dyck have done a lot of bird watching during their time in Ethiopia. This cinnamon-chested sunbird visited them outside their home.*

teaching two upper-level courses, Introduction to Pastoral Care and Counselling, and Wisdom Literature and the Psalms, with more than 40 students in each class.

“I think my students have learned some

things. I know I’ve learned lots of things,” she says. “I’ve just so enjoyed studying to prepare to teach because that’s really one of the best ways that I learn . . . but it’s also been really frustrating and hard at times.”

This is mainly due to the language barrier that separates her from her students. English proficiency in Ethiopia is low, much more than she expected. “They are very proud of never having been colonized, so they’re fiercely independent people, and it’s wonderful and beautiful,” she says. But since she doesn’t speak the local languages, this has turned out to be a big obstacle in the classroom. In the first several classes, she wondered how they would ever be able to understand each other.

Cultural differences also pose challenges to communication, but those are not a new experience for her. Bergen and Dyck lived in Mthatha, South Africa, from 1999 to 2005, serving with Mennonite Church Canada Witness. They worked with African-initiated churches and ran an informal school for rural communities.

“In any cross-cultural teaching setting



PHOTO COURTESY OF LYNELL BERGEN

*Lynell Bergen teaches a Wisdom Literature and the Psalms course to more than 40 students at Meserete Kristos College.*





PHOTO BY BRIAN DYCK

**Lynell Bergen and Brian Dyck travelled around Ethiopia with their two sons before they began their work. This view was from a hike in Lalibela.**

... there are lots of things that are hard, because we have our cultural assumptions and they have their cultural assumptions," she says. "But I didn't come here to make things easy."

With effort and patience on both sides, comprehension in the classroom has started to progress. The students have become more familiar with her accent, and she now gives notes at the beginning of every class so they can follow along on paper. But it's an ongoing challenge.

She also began to realize that she wasn't getting to know her students because her classes were so large. "That was feeling like a loss for me. I want to get to know these

people," she says. So she started "Coffee with Pastor Lynell" events. She offered to buy coffee for anyone who came to speak with her in English.

She had a lovely visit with three students who came on the first day. The next time, more than 10 showed up. "We sat around and we talked about all kinds of things," she says. "They asked about marriage and what life is like in Canada. They asked me what I thought of Ethiopia, and I asked them why they were studying and what they planned to do."

Sometimes students share stories of hardship, like those who come from areas where the church is still persecuted. They bring these experiences to both coffee time and class, along with their dreams and their thoughts on the church and many other conversations. "It's been a real privilege to begin to get to know them, to hear their stories, to walk with them," says Bergen.

These conversations and relationships, as well as teaching and studying, have been stretching experiences for her, and their impacts will surely follow her home across the ocean. She says, too, that the chance to rest and think in a different way, and have "a break from the routine I was in, or maybe the rut I was in sometimes," has given her a fresh perspective.

"I have heard stories of struggle and hope, which have shaped the church here," she says. "These stories do not necessarily directly shape how I work in my Winnipeg church, but they influence how I see and understand the global church, and what we can learn from each other. The church here is incredibly dynamic, growing rapidly, living in the midst of significant political and ethnic tensions, trying to be a voice



PHOTO COURTESY OF LYNELL BERGEN

**Brian Dyck and Lynell Bergen at Sabahar, a weaving and textiles shop in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa.**

of peace and compassion."

"I do hope that others will consider this as an opportunity, because, to experience God at work in the church in Ethiopia, it's a lovely thing, and I'm grateful to have this opportunity." ❧

To view more photos, visit [canadianmennonite.org/bergen-ethiopia](http://canadianmennonite.org/bergen-ethiopia).



PHOTO BY BRIAN DYCK

**A Sunday sunrise walk led Lynell Bergen, pictured, and Brian Dyck to Chelekleka Lake, about 10 minutes on foot from the school where they are staying.**



# Takin' care of his musical business

*Production scheduler by day, multi-instrumentalist/singer by night (and on Sunday)*

By Zach Charbonneau  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

In the front yard of an average looking home lies a large rock with a landscaped garden bed around it. The rock reads "JAYCELAND" and bears a lightning bolt with the capital letters T, C and B around it. This is the home of the Hildebrand family, where Jay and Monica and their son Mitchel are a typical family who go about their daily routines of work and leisure.

But for Jay, "Takin' Care of Business" (the title of a 1973 Bachman-Turner Overdrive song) doesn't just happen between 9 to 5.

When he isn't working his day job as a production scheduler at Plasman, a global auto parts company, he's plucking, picking, pounding and playing music. It's his way of decompressing after a workday.

But Jay, who also goes by the stage name Jay Richards, thinks music is also a gift worth sharing, something he has been doing since 1991, when he formed Chapter 11 with two friends. The teenaged trio released a cassette and Jay can be seen wearing an original Dark Side of the Moon T-shirt in the black and white cover photo. He has been making music ever since.

Last October, nearly 30 years after his time with Chapter 11, he released *Black Hole Vertigo*, a 10-CD of original songs. All of the music was written and arranged by Jay, a multi-instrumentalist. "It took four years to put together," he says. "I do the bulk of the work myself and I'm a perfectionist," he adds, hinting at why it took so long to complete the project. Monica and Mitchell were also involved, providing photos for the CD art.

Jay likes to try different things with his music and "let the chips fall where they may." On his song "Justified", he writes about a police officer shooting an unarmed man and the subsequent aftermath. It's a song that people regularly want to talk to Jay about. Although he admits the story

is fictional, he also insists it's true. "Pick up any newspaper and it's such a common story," he says with some frustration in his voice.

*Black Hole Vertigo* is Jay's seventh album. He has also released three Christmas albums made up of original and



PHOTO BY MITCHEL HILDEBRAND

**Jay Hildebrand continues to be active musically in church, bringing a creative flair to worship services at Leamington United Mennonite Church, playing piano, bass and guitar, or through solo vocal performances.**

traditional Christmas songs, and a gospel album that includes originals and some well-known hymns.

In 2002, he released *Brotherhood*, a tribute to the emergency service workers who responded to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Like most people, Jay remembers where he was and what he was doing when he heard the news of the planes hitting the World Trade Center in New York. A portion of the proceeds for that album went to the Dennis Leary Foundation to support first responders.

Jay's love of music has been a rock in his life since as early as he can remember. His main source of musical influence as a child was what he found in piano books and during church services.

But he never shut himself out from rock and roll, having heard his dad listening to Elvis Presley, and the sound buried itself deep inside him.

"My musicianship is completely natural," he says. "My grandma gave me lessons privately. She taught me what she knew. I would learn all the songs in the book, and I would move up to the next one, the next one, and the next one."

It got to the point where Jay would add his own embellishment to the music, adding what he felt was missing. "Vocally, I learned at UMEI [formerly known as United Mennonite Educational Institute] from Grade 9 to 12. I was in the church choir and was singing all the way back in Sunday school."

Jay continues to be active musically in church, bringing a creative flair to worship services at Leamington United Mennonite Church, playing piano, bass and guitar, or through solo vocal performances. Christmas and Memorial Sunday are times that he prepares something particularly special.

In 2019 he introduced "A Christmas to Remember," a new original song, as a reminder to see through the commercial trappings of Christmas to the Saviour in a manger.

And during Advent he performed his rendition of Simon and Garfunkel's classic, "Silent Night," juxtaposing current local and global news headlines. "I wasn't sure how that would be received," he muses. ☘

To learn more about Jay's music or to buy an album, email him at [jayceland8@gmail.com](mailto:jayceland8@gmail.com) or visit [bit.ly/jay-richards](http://bit.ly/jay-richards).



# 'Surely, God took care of me'

Story and Photo by Maria H. Klassen  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
VINELAND, ONT.

**E**sther Reesor Saito, a member of The First Mennonite Church in Vineland, celebrated her 90th birthday earlier this year with her family and friends during an open house.

She was born in Markham, Ont., the eighth of nine children. She had a happy childhood on the family farm, attending Wideman Mennonite Church, and the local elementary and secondary schools.



education at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va., graduating with a junior college Bible diploma after three

She came back to Eastern Mennonite College and, after taking a few more courses, she graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in 1961. She briefly worked again at Toronto East General before she took a six-month midwifery course at the Frontier School of Midwifery in Kentucky.

In 1962, she returned to Brazil and did home birth deliveries in Araguacema. It was here that she met Hank Saito, an agricultural graduate, who became her husband in 1965.

After a brief visit back to Ontario at the end of 1965, they returned to Araguacema, where they had built a house. Their oldest two sons were born there. Realizing how difficult it was to establish a cattle farm in the area, the couple decided to return to Canada in late 1969.

Through family connections, they settled in Vineland, where Esther worked at Linhaven, a long-term-care home in St. Catharines, and Hank worked on a fruit farm before eventually buying one of his own.

After retiring from Linhaven in 1990, Esther worked, and then volunteered at the Vineland United Mennonite Home for the Aged. She has been active in The First Mennonite Church over the years, quilting, serving as a member of the church council, teaching Sunday school, singing in a trio, and bringing people to church who are not able to drive,

although she is not as active now as she used to be.

Looking back over her 90 years she says, "Surely, God took care of me." ❧



*Esther Reesor Saito holds a quilt she received from a nursing student friend a few years ago. Her nursing school friends from many years ago still get together every year for a reunion.*

After graduating from high school, she left for Toronto to train as a nurse at the Toronto East General School of Nursing, affiliated with Toronto East General Hospital. It was a three-year course and she lived in residence.

Her first full-time job was at Toronto East General in the operating room. After working there for a year, she continued her

years.

A visiting evangelist planted the seed of working overseas, at which time she dedicated her life to working for Christ. In 1957, after getting her visa, she went to Brazil to work as a nurse with the Amazon Indian Mission. Following language study in Anápolis, Brazil, she worked in a clinic in Araguacema for the next three years.

# Where are they now?

*Witness workers settle in Lethbridge, Alta.*

By Joanne De Jong  
Alberta Correspondent

**W**hen Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Greg Rabus and Jennifer Otto landed in Lethbridge, Alta., in 2018, with their sons Alex, and Ian, they were not sure what their new home was going to be like. From 2012 to 2018, the young family had served as church planters and then community builders together with the Ludwigshafen Mennonite Church in Germany.

In partnership with the local Mennonite church they set up a community centre called Friedenshaus or Peace House. A large part of their ministry was helping with the influx of Syrian refugees by teaching them German and quilting, and by offering monthly potlucks and trips to the park. Teenagers in the church hosted a weekly homework club for the refugees. Both Otto and Rabus said it was exciting to be part of a ministry that really enlivened the 30-member church of mostly over-50-years-olds, and created an even closer community.

Now the family is in a new location, a smaller city east of the Rocky Mountains. The first thing they noticed in Lethbridge in 2018 was big pickup trucks all over the roads, trucks that wouldn't even be able to drive down the narrow German streets. And it was so windy!

But one thing that didn't change was a warm and welcoming Mennonite church. "A German Mennonite church feels just like a Canadian Mennonite church," says Rabus.

"It was hard to come back, but Lethbridge Mennonite Church gave us a soft space to land. They are like a surrogate family . . . showing us amazing hospitality,"



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
JENNIFER OTTO

**A family photo of Jennifer Otto; son Alex, standing; son Ian; and Greg Rabus.**

Otto adds.

The couple officially joined Lethbridge Mennonite this January.

Otto now works as an associate professor in religious studies, and arts and sciences at the University of Lethbridge.

Rabus continues to work with refugees and immigrants at Lethbridge Family Services, part of the Department of Immigrant Services. He says he is "especially inspired to be part of community building across cultures."

So what are the challenges of returning to Canada after a Witness assignment?

"In Germany, our Christianity was out front, so we really had to face our identity and theology," says Rabus.

Shifting from ministry to a secular context has been a challenge for the couple, as faith is considered more private in their current workplaces.

Otto now asks herself, "How do I live out my Christian calling in a professional or secular setting?" Each term, at least one student will ask about her personal beliefs. She answers, "I am a Christian and I attend Lethbridge Mennonite Church."

Attending church without being responsible for everything is a different experience in Lethbridge, yet they are both involved in their new faith community.

"The Mennos in Germany are a small community, but they punch above their weight," says Otto. "Mennonites everywhere are engaged and see themselves as having a higher purpose."

The Mennos in Lethbridge are also very involved in their community. Rabus serves on the Mennonite Voluntary Service Committee and Otto as a Sunday school

teacher and worship leader on a rotational basis.

They face one funny adjustment, as they keep forgetting that the Syrians in Canada don't speak German. A couple of times Rabus has started speaking German when connecting with a Syrian, and it doesn't work. To rectify this, he is currently taking Arabic lessons from a local Lebanese woman.

Change is not always easy. But on the couple's last day in Ludwigshafen in 2018, they got the news that Silvie Kroeker of Winnipeg was willing to come and serve as the coordinator of Friedenshaus. MC Canada is still involved, but new partners are being found to cover the costs.

Finding Silvie "felt like a miracle," says Otto. ❧

## News brief

### Forming friendships at Manitoba youth retreat

The young people of Mennonite Church Manitoba gathered to play, learn and worship together at Camp Assiniboia, near Headingly earlier this year. Thirty-six youth and 12 youth sponsors from seven different churches attended the regional church's junior-youth retreat from Jan. 24 to 26. The theme for the weekend was "friendship," which the group explored in various ways: learning sessions, worship, games, sledding and team development activities. Retreat directors Sofia Bogoya Enns and Johanna Klassen, both Canadian Mennonite University students and Camps with Meaning staff, led the sessions. They explored how to navigate changing friendships, how to be a good friend, and how God is their constant friend. Kathy Giesbrecht, associate director of Leadership Ministries for MC Manitoba, led worship on the last day. She concluded the weekend by inviting everyone to surround each youth group in turn and pray a blessing over them, saying, "When we gather, God is among us . . . good things happen!"

—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE



# 'There was no stopping Doris'

*Pioneering woman honoured at legacy celebration*

By Janet Bauman

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

**T**railblazer, pioneer, role model and mentor. Inquisitive, passionate, open-minded.



PHOTO BY JANET BAUMAN

*Doris Gascho expresses gratitude for what she calls a 'delicious' program at a legacy and birthday celebration in honour of her life's 'unexpected journey.'*

This is how Doris Gascho was described by family, friends, fellow church members and colleagues at a legacy and 87th-birthday celebration in her honour at Waterloo North Mennonite Church on March 1, that featured hymns, special music and many tributes recognizing her "unexpected journey."

Despite heart-wrenching discouragements and frustrations, Gascho "never let anything stifle her ambition," according to the program notes describing her life. "There was no stopping Doris."

Married with three children, she was determined to get an education. She started with correspondence courses, then college courses in early childhood education, and eventually seminary, often working in a related field alongside her studies.

Wondering why "all the important positions were held by men," she began to take on church leadership—and eventually pastoral—roles by the late 1980s. She

was often the first woman in the position, and used her skills, diplomacy and good listening to change people's minds about women in leadership.

In 1994, she became the first female conference minister of what was then the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada (now Mennonite Church Eastern Canada). As a spiritual guide and pastor to the pastors, she travelled by car, bus and train to visit all 96 churches.

She also became "a voice for minority groups," serving as a pastor for three decades, starting in 1987, to a group of Mennonite parents of LGBTQ+ children who had suffered pastoral condemnation. She dared to have some of them share their stories in a worship service at Shantz Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont., where she was pastoring, which seemed revolutionary at the time. She faced some backlash for that choice, but Morio Ogasawara, in a written tribute that was shared at the celebration, said it helped others "fearlessly follow [their] convictions."

Don Penner, who currently pastors at Shantz Mennonite, said she "helped to change the DNA of the church."

Pastor Fred Lichti recalled how Gascho could be an "agent for change" during difficult meetings by offering her trademark comment, "But I was just wondering . . ." which had a way of turning a discussion "upside down and inside out," so that a

new path forward could be found.

Gascho was honoured as a beloved mentor and role model by pastors Melissa Miller, who facilitated the celebratory program, and Marilyn Rudy-Froese, who now serves as MC Eastern Canada's church leadership minister. Rudy-Froese, who was ordained by Gascho, said she "opened the way for those of us to follow."

Given the last word, Gascho quipped that the legacy celebration was "a rehearsal for my funeral," but that no corpse had ever had so much fun! She thanked her family, friends and mentors for the "delicious" celebration, which included refreshments and birthday cake.

People had the opportunity to create a video card, reflecting on the question, "What seeds did Doris plant that bore fruit in you?"

Donations in Gascho's honour went to the Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre in Kitchener, Ont. ☿



MENNONITE ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO PHOTO

*Doris Gascho, front row second from left, was one of the first women to serve on the Executive Committee of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec. In 1978, the committee included, from left to right, front row: Laverne Brubacher, Gascho, Isaac High, Elsie Horst and Vernon Leis; and back row: Joe Nighswander, Abner Martin, Glenn Brubacher, Edward Kauffman and Ralph Lebold.*

/// Staff change

MC Eastern Canada appoints first intercultural mission minister



**Fanosie Legesse** has been appointed as the first intercultural mission minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, a new position within the regional church team. He began his duties on March 1. More than 20 percent of MC Eastern Canada's 104 churches are newcomer or first-generation Canadian congregations. "Intercultural awareness has become a growing edge" of the regional church, says David Martin, executive minister. "It is exciting as we move toward being an

intercultural church, but it also generates some challenges as we learn to integrate various cultural backgrounds. This new role of intercultural mission minister is part educator, listener, mentor and bridge-builder." Legesse will help to foster relationships between—and bring a cultural awareness to—MC Eastern Canada's community of congregations. Raised in Ethiopia, his mother from an Oromo people group and his father from an Amhara people group, Legesse was born into an intercultural reality. He grew up learning two languages, seeing two cultural expressions and

experiencing two different traditions. When he served as an instructor at Meserete Kristos College, his students spanned many nationalities, as well as many people groups of Ethiopia. He most recently pastored at Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira, Ont. Although bridging cultures has always been a way of life for him, he admits that it is hard work. "This is not easy," he says. "It may be exciting on paper, but it is hard work to begin to understand each other. We need to rely on God's leading."

—MC EASTERN CANADA

# ServiceLinks

Advertisers on this page may designate a 1/6 page ad to a charity of their choice. To learn more: [advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org)

**Wes Dueck, B.Th, RRC, CFP**  
Senior Financial Consultant  
(204) 222-1700 ext. 4212  
[Wesley.dueck@investorsgroup.com](mailto:Wesley.dueck@investorsgroup.com)

Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

**sutherlandmark**  
LAWYERS

Russel Snyder-Penner, LL.B., M.A., Trade-mark Agent

**Business Law, Charities Law,  
Wills and Estate Planning**

519.725.2500 [russ@sutherlandmark.com](mailto:russ@sutherlandmark.com)

**Mennonite Disaster Service**

**How you can volunteer with MDS:**

- Short-term (1-3 weeks): 1-800-241-8111
- Long-term (1 month+): 1-866-261-1274
- RV Program volunteers
- Youth volunteers

**Volunteers needed**

- Alberta family camp
- Marianna, FL
- Coastal Bend, TX
- Pollocksville, NC

**NEW**

**HELP RESTORE HOPE!**  
[mds.mennonite.net](http://mds.mennonite.net)

Proudly serving Waterloo Region for 30+ years

Disciplined Investment Strategy | Meaningful Relationships | Independent Solutions

Offering private investment and wealth management services to individuals, business owners, multi-generational families, and charities for over 30 years. We value being an independent, unbiased firm that puts the interests of our clients first, always.

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT | FINANCIAL PLANNING | INSURANCE SOLUTIONS  
ESTATE PLANNING | BUSINESS STRATEGY

Eby Financial | Waterloo, Ontario | 519-725-2006 | [www.ebyfinancial.com](http://www.ebyfinancial.com)

**Student residence** Montréal

**Summer guest rooms**  
May-Aug

[maisondelamitie.ca](http://maisondelamitie.ca)  
[experience@maisondelamitie.ca](mailto:experience@maisondelamitie.ca)



Russ brings experience and expertise to the legal needs of owner-managed businesses, individuals engaged in will and succession planning, and charitable organizations.

**sutherlandmark**  
LAWYERS  
[russ@sutherlandmark.com](mailto:russ@sutherlandmark.com)

/// **Staff changes**

**MWC adds members to its global team**



MWC PHOTOS

**Regional representatives Jeremiah Choi (Northeast Asia), left, Jumanne Magiri Mafwiri and Freddy Iban Barrón Tapia.**

A composer, health manager and auto mechanic—all church leaders—have joined the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) team.

- **Jeremiah Choi** has added the role of regional representative for Northeast Asia in addition to his leadership as General Council delegate for Hong Kong Mennonite Church and his service on the Peace Commission (2018-2021). He began serving as pastor in 1989, helped start Hope Mennonite Church, and currently serves as lead pastor of Agape Mennonite Church in Hong Kong.

- **Jumanne Magiri Mafwiri** adds regional representative for Eastern Africa to the ways he serves the church with his professional skills in health management. He serves Kanisa Menonita Tanzania as a deacon and board member, and is a General Council delegate to MWC.

- **Freddy Iban Barrón Tapia**, a pastor, executive church leader, school director, theologian and automotive mechanic, dons another hat as regional representative for the Southern Cone (Latin America). He serves Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Boliviana as a local pastor and national vice-president. He is director of a mission school, and co-director of a Mennonite leadership development institute, along with his wife, Margrit Kipfer.

**MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE**



**ONLINE NOW!**

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



**Water from stone**

In Chad, water pumps and latrines provide life-giving water for tens of thousands in refugee camps.

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



**Grebel celebrates HeForShe IMPACT**

Folks at Conrad Grebel University College reflect on what joining a gender-equality movement has meant for them.

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



**Watch: Eco-anxiety spurs creativity**

Take a look at a zine series that two Winnipeggers created in response to their eco-anxiety.

[canadianmennonite.org/video/ecoanxiety](http://canadianmennonite.org/video/ecoanxiety)



**Words that bear repeating**

Chapel attendance is up as Canadian Mennonite University embraces liturgy.

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

**Mennonite Roots, Canadian Roots**

An evening of singing, stories and poetry

Come to hear local musician Ian Funk and writers Robert Martens, Barbara Nickel and Louise Bergen Price share their experiences of faith and culture.

Enjoy appetizers and dessert and help raise funds for *Canadian Mennonite* magazine.



Ian Funk



Louise Bergen Price



Barbara Nickel



Robert Martens

**Saturday, April 18  
7 p.m. at the**

**Mennonite Heritage Museum**

1818 Clearbrook Rd, Abbotsford, B.C.

<http://mennonitemuseum.org/>

A fundraising evening for *Canadian Mennonite* magazine

**Tickets \$10 to cover costs.**

Donation baskets available.

For tickets contact:

**Henry Krause**

[hakrause@telus.net](mailto:hakrause@telus.net)

778.877.4596

**CANADIAN  
MENNONITE**



## Calendar

### British Columbia

**April 4:** Walter Paetkau presents "It Takes Raindrops to Fill a Lake" book launch, at the Mennonite Heritage Museum, Abbotsford, at 2 p.m.

**April 16:** "Beyond the will," an estate-planning workshop hosted by the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C., at the Mennonite Heritage Museum, Abbotsford,

at 7 p.m. Keynote speaker: Rhona Konnelly. Pre-registration required by calling 604-853-6177.

**April 17:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. holds its annual general meeting, at Ricky's Country Restaurant, Abbotsford, at 1:30 p.m. For more information, visit mhsbc.com.

**April 24:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. and the Canadian Musical Theatre Company present "Pier 21," a musical by Allen des

Noyers, at the Matsqui Centennial Auditorium, Abbotsford, at 7 p.m. For ticket information, visit mhsbc.com. Held in conjunction with the Mennonite Heritage Museum Gallery exhibit, "New footsteps in Canada."

### Alberta

**June 5-7:** MC Alberta women's retreat.

**June 6:** Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta annual general meeting and spring conference on the theme of "La Crete area and Russian Mennonite history," at the La Crete Heritage Centre; (10 a.m.) meeting followed by light lunch; (1 p.m.) conference featuring Susan Siemens and Colin Neufeldt. For more information, email dmtoews@gmail.com

**June 13:** Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon.

**June 14:** Camp Valaqua garden party.

### Saskatchewan

**March 31:** 28th annual Youth Farm Bible Camp veneniki supper, at Rosthern Mennonite Church, from 5 to 7 p.m.

### Manitoba

**Until May 2:** "Breaking the silence on domestic violence 2," a group exhibition at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg.

**March 28:** Jazz at CMU, in the Great Hall, at 7 p.m.

**March 29:** Guitar and handbell ensembles, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**March 30:** Community Concert Band performance, at the CMU Chapel, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**March 30:** "Religion and family violence: Understanding the challenges and working for change" forum, at CMU, from 1 to 3 p.m. Speaker: Catherine Holtmann, director of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research. Hosted by Breaking the Silence on Domestic Violence.

**March 31:** Open house for prospective students, at CMU, Winnipeg, at 8:30 a.m.

**April 3:** "Spring at CMU," a fundraising event, at CMU, at 7 p.m. Presentation by Mary-Jane McCallum, the 2020 Pax Award winner.

**April 10:** Winnipeg First Mennonite Church Choir presents Brahms's "Ein Deutsches Requiem," at the church, at 7 p.m.

**May 11:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's bursary banquet, at the Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg. For more information, visit westgatemennonite.ca.

**May 13:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's community work day.

**May 27:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's junior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**May 28:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's senior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 6-7:** Canadian launch of new "Voices Together" hymnal, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, from mid-afternoon on Nov. 6 to the evening of Nov. 7, when a community-wide worship fest will be held. Registration will be required. More details to follow.



**Travel. Learn. Serve.**  
Outatown is an adventure to prepare you for the future.

CMU | outatown  
DISCIPLESHIP SCHOOL

outatown.com

## Where We All Belong

### Intersections of Poverty and Inclusion

May 4 - 30 Ambrose University, Calgary, Alberta

Join the Canadian Poverty Institute for the annual **KNOW Poverty Summer Institute**. Come and be part of a unique learning community as we explore ways of building strong communities to eradicate poverty.



For more information, email [povertyinstitute@ambrose.edu](mailto:povertyinstitute@ambrose.edu) or visit [www.povertyinstitute.ca/poverty-studies-summer-institute](http://www.povertyinstitute.ca/poverty-studies-summer-institute)



Come for a month, a week, a day, accommodations available.

## Ontario

**Until April 24:** 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.

**March 21:** Elmira meat canning fundraising breakfast, at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs, from 8 to 10 a.m. Tickets must be reserved in advance. To purchase tickets, call 519-745-8458.

**March 21:** March break open house at Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo, Ont., from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit [uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events](http://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events).

**March 27:** Absent Friends Film Series presents "The Fault in our Stars," a film based on John Green's book of the same name, followed by a discussion afterwards, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. For more information, visit [grebel.ca/events](http://grebel.ca/events).

**March 29:** Menno Singers perform "Creation is a Song: Songs of Water, Wind and Earth," at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**April 20-24:** MCC's meat canner visits Elmira for five days, at the Elmira Produce Auction Centre. To volunteer, visit [elmirameatcanningproject.ca](http://elmirameatcanningproject.ca) or call Keith or Dianne Snyder at 519-669-4084.

**April 26:** Pax Christi Chorale presents the Toronto premiere of "Considering Matthew Shepard," at the George Westin Recital Hall, Toronto, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [paxchristichorale.org](http://paxchristichorale.org).

**April 27:** New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale fundraising dinner, at Bingemans in Kitchener, at 6:30 p.m. To reserve tickets, call 519-745-8458 or visit MCC Ontario's Kitchener office.

**April 27-30:** MCC's meat canner visits Leamington for four days, at the Southwestern Ontario Gleaners facility. For more information, call Marlene Schmidt Gall at 519-329-6462.

**May 2:** Menno Singers perform "Operas in the Aria," with

soprano Sarah Dufresne, at First United Church, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**May 2:** Shalom Counselling spring breakfast event, at Luther Village on the Park in Waterloo, at 8:30 a.m. Keynote speaker: Jane Kuepfer. Topic: "Loving aging: Inspiration for living fully." For more information and tickets, visit [shalomcounselling.org/breakfast](http://shalomcounselling.org/breakfast).

**May 2,3:** Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their spring concert, "Be Light for our Eyes; (2) at UMEI, Leamington, at 7:30 p.m., (3) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For tickets, call UMEI at 519-326-7448.

**May 23:** "You@Waterloo Day," at 10 a.m. Experience what residence life is like at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. For more information, email Rebekah DeJong at [rjdejong@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:rjdejong@uwaterloo.ca).

**May 24:** Hawkesville Mennonite Church celebrates its 70th anniversary with a homecoming service, at 11 a.m. A potluck meal (beverages included) and fellowship time follow the service.

**June 6:** Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, hosts a '60s era alumni luncheon, at 11 a.m. For more information, visit [uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events/](http://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events/).

**June 19:** "Embodying hope, faith and playfulness in caregiving: Practical and spiritual resources for a complicated vocation" seminar, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 9:30 a.m. Keynote speaker: Dr. Janet L. Ramsey. Register at [grebel.ca/spirituality](http://grebel.ca/spirituality).

## International

**Oct. 10-17:** MCC Bolivia 60th anniversary learning tour in western Bolivia. For more information, visit [mcco.ca/events](http://mcco.ca/events).

**To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by email to [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org). For more Calendar listings online, visit [canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar](http://canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar).**



## Classifieds Employment Opportunities



**Employment opportunity  
Pastor (full-time)  
Start date: July 2020**

For more information, to express interest or to apply, please contact Ryan Siemens, MC Sask Executive Minister, at [minister@mcsask.ca](mailto:minister@mcsask.ca), or contact the chair of the search committee at [rosthernmc@sasktel.net](mailto:rosthernmc@sasktel.net) or by phone at 306-232-5577.

## The First Mennonite Church

**Employment Opportunity  
Pastor (full-time)**

The First Mennonite Church (FMC) is a supportive, song-loving, potluck-sharing congregation with diverse perspectives on our Anabaptist roots. Quaintly nestled below the Niagara Escarpment in Vineland, Ont., the FMC draws upon families from across the Niagara Region.

We are searching for a full-time pastor to guide our multi-generational community in faith, discipleship and the Bible. The applicant's ministry among us should be informed by their passion for the church, discerned spiritual gifts and pastoral experience in the following areas:

- Anabaptist theology
- Pastoral care
- Preaching and leading worship
- Developing lay leaders

Inquiries, resumé and cover letters may be directed to Marilyn Rudy-Froese at [pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca](mailto:pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca).



**Employment Opportunity  
Administrative Coordinator (AC)**

The Anabaptist Peace Centre (APC) is looking for an individual to give leadership to its emergence and development. The APC is a new venture in Kelowna, B.C., that has grown out of First Mennonite Church. The centre is a place where like-minded organizations can partner together to share space, and host events and activities that reflect a commitment to justice, equity, care for the planet and reconciliation with Indigenous nations.

### Overview

This position is an exciting opportunity for someone who has an interest in unique ways of engaging communities. The AC will initiate, develop and oversee partnerships and collaborations of APC. The AC will have a foundational understanding of the goals of the APC and ensure that programs reflect principles of reconciliation and justice.

This will be a 0.50 FTE position beginning June 1, 2020.

To inquire or apply, send an email and resumé to the First Mennonite Church Board: [kfmc@telus.net](mailto:kfmc@telus.net) by April 24, 2020.



# Journey to the cross begins with Ash Wednesday service

By Joanne De Jong  
Alberta Correspondent

**D**onna Dinsmore, a pastor of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, preached a sermon to prepare her congregation for the journey towards the cross, on Feb. 23: “We value community as Anabaptists, so why not prepare for Lent as a community?”

She asked congregants to consider giving up their regular seat on Sunday mornings and, if that was too difficult, perhaps they would be willing to move two inches to the right or to the left. The idea was that congregants may get to know new people and give up their comfort “for the good of all.” She also suggested the church



PHOTO BY CHAD MILLER

*Last year's palm branches were burned in the bowl to create ashes for this year's Ash Wednesday service on Feb. 26 at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary.*

give up judging others for Lent, especially those who do not want to change seats.

Foothills had its first Lenten service on Feb. 26, when it celebrated Ash Wednesday. The church burned palm branches from the year before, mixed them with oil and made the sign of the cross on each participant.

Associate pastor Chad Miller said, “By participating in the rich tradition of Ash Wednesday, we jump into something deep and rooted.” He said he sees it as “a time to face our mortality and a time to evaluate our walk with Jesus.” ☞