

Former Mennonite church building vandalized

Owners respond to
the destruction, pg. 16

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EDITORIAL

Behind the scenes

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Executive Editor



Over the years, I've learned that every grand enterprise depends on a certain amount of work behind the scenes, those unglamorous tasks that sustain the public vision but don't get noticed very often. Paying the bills, maintaining the calendar, wiping the kitchen cupboards, watering the plants, taking out the garbage, changing the toilet paper rolls. . . .

Families generally develop understandings about who does household work like this and—ideally—the tasks get divided among various family members, so the load isn't too heavy for just one person. In a congregation, those jobs might fall to the office administrator, the custodian, the trustees, some quiet and conscientious members of the congregation, or maybe even the pastor of a small church. In any case, it's good to stop occasionally and recognize those who work unnoticed on behalf of the larger vision.

Here at *Canadian Mennonite*, you see on every page the bylines of those of us who report and opine. But those news reports, columns, editorials and photos wouldn't be there if there weren't others doing the "housekeeping" tasks that sustain the operation.

One such person is **Lisa Jacky**, who has served as *CM*'s office administrator, while also doing countless circulation and finance tasks. She joined the *CM* team in 2005 and since then has ably performed many behind-the-scenes tasks that have kept



the magazine appearing regularly in front of readers. Among many other things, Lisa has maintained the lists of subscribers, kept the printer and mailing operator informed, mailed thank-you letters to donors, and answered questions arriving via phone, email and letters. Working with the publisher, Lisa prepared the financial reports and applied for grants. She made sure the photocopier was working and the supply cupboard was stocked. Some of these vital tasks were virtually invisible to others on the team.

Lisa is now moving on to new ventures with her family and we wish her well. Here is a public recognition of her consistent and sustaining contribution to the magazine. Thank you, Lisa!

Now sitting at the administrator's desk is **Graham Aberdein**, who brings his own set of skills, along with much professional and volunteer experience. Graham's voice will greet you if you phone the office, and you can reach him by email at office@canadianmennonite.org. We look forward to working with him.



If you want to see the names of others on the *CM* team, turn to page 3 of each print issue, or go online to the Contact Us page (canadianmennonite.org/contact-us). Standing behind the paid staff are the volunteers who make up the board of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service. They bring insight from their respective congregations and professional careers that helps guide our mission and vision. You can see their names at canadianmennonite.org/

about-us. A hearty thank you goes out to them as well.

Whether in the workplace, home or congregation, here's a reminder to acknowledge those who carry out the behind-the-scenes tasks that help everyone succeed. Thank you!

Looking ahead

Canadian Mennonite continues with the summer practice of offering several digital-only issues of the magazine. During the last week of July, digital subscribers can watch for the August 2 digital issue to arrive in their email inboxes. There will be no corresponding print version, but—as usual—we will continue with the behind-the-scenes labour of creating content that is interesting, inspiring and useful. The next print issue will be dated August 16. If you receive only the print version, that means you'll have extra time to savour this current issue or to catch up on your back reading. Or you can add the digital delivery by going to canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/digital and updating your delivery preferences. There is no extra cost to current subscribers.

Corrections

- It was the Zoar Mennonite Church congregation in Waldheim, Sask., that decided in June 2020 to close the church earlier this year. Incorrect information appeared in "This community still exists for us," May 10, page 20. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.
- The church pictured in the June 21 "A moment from yesterday" photo is actually St. Catharines (Ont.) Mennonite Church. Incorrect information appeared in the caption on page 9. The Mennonite Archives of Ontario and *Canadian Mennonite* regret the error. ❧



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PHOTO COURTESY OF PATTY NEUFELD

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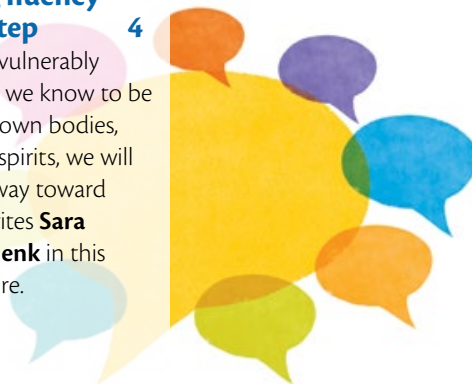
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FEATURE

Learning fluency step by step

How can we discover freedom, honesty and resolve when talking about faith?

By Sara Wenger Shenk

Recovering a lost language or learning to speak a language doesn't happen overnight.

But a desire to learn will unbolt the door—swinging it wide open—and fill our lungs with sparkling morning air.

We can learn to talk about faith in ways that are honest. We can recover winsome beauty that was lost. We can salt our talk with tears and astonishment. We can capture the grief, joy and power of what we long for, believe in, and love—with strange and wondrous sacred words that reach out to each other and to God.

When we vulnerably speak what we know to be true in our own bodies, minds and spirits, we will be on our way toward fluency. We will provide children with anchoring language to resist manipulation by the superstitious scaremongers of the world. We will give ourselves language with the gravitas needed to repent of family-, community- and earth-destroying patterns of living. We will regain moral resolve to help save the world for our children and grandchildren.

Unfortunately, we don't have many models for how to speak in trustworthy ways about faith that don't sound like insider Christianese or religious code speak. Many of the voices we hear in public sound affected, pushy or offensive. Yet people of faith throughout history have demonstrated countless times how sacred language used well can bring out the best of our humanity, inspiring culture and conscience, sacred music and science—mobilizing vast movements of ordinary people to pursue a vision for God's peaceful, just and beautiful shalom.

Rather than faith being something we go mum about, and hold in secret—or, as sociologist Peter Berger is reported to have said, something that is only “done in private between consenting adults”—we can find the resolve to name what we love and lament; to express something true from the depths of our longing; to

acknowledge how hard it is to trust that all will be well, and to describe our desire to know and be known by God.

In my fumbling attempts to speak vulnerably about what I do and don't know of who God is; how we come to know God; and what the Bible, nature and other cultures teach us about God, more often than not, I fail. I'm grateful for grace. Grace to fumble out loud. Grace to fumble forward by daring to break open fresh ways to talk about God.

I offer several principles that, I believe,

Unfortunately, we don't have many models for how to speak in trustworthy ways about faith that don't sound like insider Christianese or religious code speak.

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can guide our shared desire to learn the art of talking about faith—giving voice to what we know and don't know about God.

These are ground rules for learning to talk about faith with authenticity, humility, love and conviction. They will give us the best chance for flourishing in these stressful times. They will provide sturdy ground from which to speak with moral integrity to our children—and to the listening world.

First listen!

To speak about faith with authenticity, we must always first listen. A favourite Scripture that has guided my stumbling ventures to speak is from the prophet Isaiah: “*The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher; that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he awakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught*” (Isaiah 50:4). Speaking with genuine understanding

first and always requires listening. Many spiritual traditions name listening as indispensable to spiritual understanding, calling it by different names: contemplation, meditation, mindfulness, reflection, prayer, silence.

The question of how to become better listeners is the taproot of all that infuses the language of faith with truthfulness. Listening to each other; to our own bodies; to the trees, sky and bees; to the wisdom tradition, the daily news, the Scriptures, and the “still, small voice” that speaks despite the earthquake, wind and fire that threaten to overwhelm; listening for the Spirit.

This undertaking to listen well will involve risk. For those of us who have reasonably reliable primary relationships, security and a faith-based moral framework, the risk may not seem all that great. We've not lived with constant fear and so have the emotional space to wonder and be inquisitive. We can afford to risk expressing what our bodies know, respond to the presence of beauty and follow nudges of curiosity.

But not all of us. Awakening to a desire to see and hear how God is active in our world will be harder for some of us than others. Learning to listen well will require considerable time and patience—among people we learn to trust.

Submit to mystery

Leaning in to listen—whether to the pain of persons I know or to the complexity of the natural world—has deepened my love for God and also shown me how little I really know about God. The odd thing is that the less I presume to know for certain, the more a quiet assurance that I am known and loved grows within—along with a readiness to speak what I believe about God. It may seem ironic, but my experience is in keeping with what the spiritual masters say about how submission to the mystery of God will reveal God to us or open up our awareness of God “hidden in plain sight.”

Another way to describe “submission”

is to reflect on humility—and what it means to be humble in the face of the mystery. A definition of humility that has served me well came from feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether, who said that humility is about accurate or realistic self-knowledge. In other words, it's not about being down on oneself, or passively acquiescing to other strong-willed persons. Being humble is about being honest with oneself—naming one's strengths and limitations, what one is good at and may not be good at, what one knows and doesn't know. I like this definition because it frees me to be honest about what I can say with a measure of confidence and what I don't really know enough to speak about.

The challenge then is to find words to speak the unspeakable. Theologian Rowan Williams reminds us that language is an imperfect means of expressing what we know, which we will always struggle with until “something greater than language is here.” We each, in our own way, along with countless poets, scholars, theologians, sages, mothers and fathers, struggle to find words, metaphors, word images and stories to talk about “the simplest yet most inexhaustible of all subjects, the life upon which all life depends and the embodiment among us of that life in a human life and human words, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.” It is a struggle—but also a marvel—to find words that begin to name the wonder of it all.

It's all about love

Learning to talk about faith will mean figuring out how talking about God is like telling our own love story.

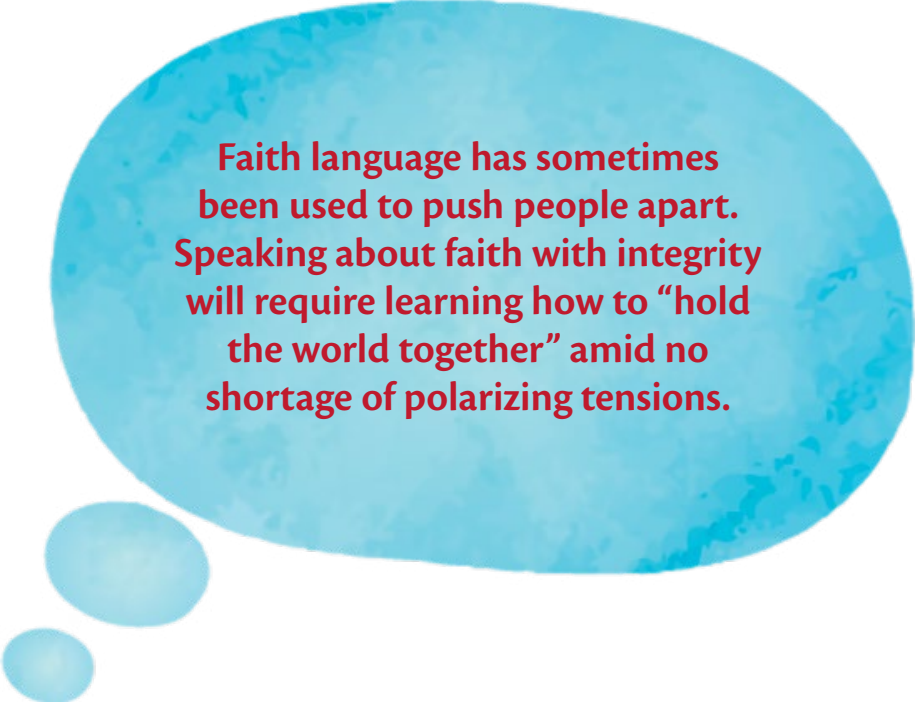
We can speak about faith honestly when we remember that, ultimately, faith is all about being in love—learning to trust that one is loved and to vulnerably offer love in return. As with any love story, however, honest talk will need to grapple with when love is twisted toward selfish ends. Or when love is embedded in a grand delusion about myself, my family, my church or my nation. Any talk of love will need to discern what is true and false, up-building or self-destructive, just or unjust.

A friend, Chris Rice, who is the Mennonite Central Committee United

Nations liaison, posted a Facebook comment soon after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis: “An unarmed black man in handcuffs, pleading to breathe, killed by a white police officer as other officers remain silent and do nothing to intervene. Another terrible injustice in too long a series. Another sign of unhealed sicknesses in the soul of America [myself

both be real with our own convictions and learn from another's convictions. A little humility (or maybe a lot) is required to admit that one has much to learn from how others encounter God.

None of us can have meaningful conversations about faith if we're not willing to gently hold together the tension of opposing perspectives, to ponder the truth



Faith language has sometimes been used to push people apart. Speaking about faith with integrity will require learning how to “hold the world together” amid no shortage of polarizing tensions.

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included]. Love is patient, yes. Yet loving those who do wrong doesn't mean ignoring injustice. Love does not minimize sin or evil. Love is not blind to cancers, which have gone deep into the body politic. Love does not mean pretending that everything is okay. Because love without truth lies. . . .”

When talking about faith, we must tell the truth about love, our disappointment in love, failure to love, fear of love and longing for love unfulfilled—along with the joy of knowing one is beloved and expressing love even toward those it is hard to love.

Hold the world together

Faith language has sometimes been used to push people apart. Speaking about faith with integrity will require learning how to “hold the world together” amid no shortage of polarizing tensions. We can

on both sides of a divisive issue, and to let the tension of the division pull our hearts open to a larger and larger love—an image I learned from education philosopher Parker Palmer.

One of the marvels I experienced while serving as president at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary was observing how students and faculty from across the theological spectrum related to polarizing issues. Together, as a learning community, using the best interpretive tools available, we called on the Holy Spirit to bring us from the different places we stood, closer to each other and to Jesus Christ, in whom “*all things hold together, and through whom “God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things . . . by making peace through the blood of his cross”* (Colossians 1:15-20, excerpted).

Speak from storied, holy ground

Rather than assuming that faith talk is about obscure doctrines, we gain fluency step by step with stories—real stories about the messy, beautiful stuff of ordinary days. The sturdy ground needed to speak is best acquired by coming to know God in conversation with the stories of others different from us, the stories of the saints and the stories of the Scriptures.

We share stories because, while God may seem absent to many of us, some of us have God moments that remain unspoken unless we're invited to describe what we've seen and heard—even if not fully formed, coherent or verifiable.

And it isn't just our own stories that ground faith, friend and theologian Richard Kauffman said to me, but the stories of those who have gone before us—the heroes of faith often referred to as saints and the testimonies that fill the pages of the Bible.

In our desire to discover stories that shed light on what it means to have faith, we are a lot like the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. The two disciples poured out their confusion and despair to the stranger who joined them on the road, lamenting about recent events which involved the crucifixion of the one they had hoped would “redeem Israel,” often referred to as the Messiah or the Christ. The stranger, “beginning with Moses and all the prophets,” pointed out to them all kinds of things about Christ found throughout the Scriptures.

Later, when they discovered that it was Jesus, the crucified Christ, who had been walking and talking with them, they exclaimed: “*Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the Scriptures to us?*”

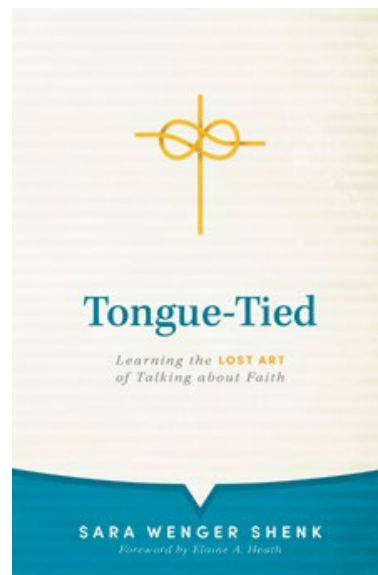
Listening well, leaning into mystery, talking about what we love, and holding our convictions in gentle tension with others' convictions, while standing on storied, holy ground, will restore a greater sense of our shared humanity and desire to know and be known by God. Our children and grandchildren will be blessed—as will the watching world. ❧

Awakening to a desire to see and hear how God is active in our world will be harder for some of us than others. Learning to listen well will require considerable time and patience—among people we learn to trust.



Author Sara Wenger Shenk was formerly president of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and has also served on the faculty and administration of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. This is adapted with permission from Tongue-Tied: Learning the Lost Art of Talking about Faith, © 2021 by Herald Press. All rights reserved.

Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. have designated this book as the CommonRead title for fall 2021. To learn more, visit www.commonword.ca/go/2306.



For discussion

1. In what settings do you feel uneasy about expressing your faith? In what settings are you more comfortable using faith language? What kind of God language was used in your family of origin? Were written and spoken words different?
2. Can you think of examples of “religious code speak”? Why do we tend to use “insider Christianese” rather than using fresh words to talk about our faith?
3. Sara Wenger Shenk offers guidelines for learning to talk about what we know and don't know about God. Why is authenticity or truthfulness so important in these conversations? How do we measure authenticity?
4. “Being humble is being honest with oneself,” says Wenger Shenk, who connects humility with submitting to the mystery of God. Why might it be freeing to recognize our own limitations? How can that help us talk about God in a more honest way?
5. When it comes to faith talk, Wenger Shenk writes, “[W]e gain fluency step by step with stories—real stories about the messy, beautiful stuff of ordinary days.” What are some examples of stories that have touched you? Do you agree that stories are more important than doctrine? How can we encourage each other to tell more stories of faith?

—By Barb Draper

See related resources at
www.commonword.ca/go/2482

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Bookstore and Resource Centre

OPINION
/// Readers write
✉ Beware of pulling up the crop with the weeds

Re: “Author, bookstore owner dispute ‘censorship’ claim,” June 7, page 21.

Censorship versus freedom of speech is a hot topic in the news and, rather than debate thoughtfully about it, we’ve again chosen to quarrel. Censorship, as in the silencing of contrary voices, is everywhere. It’s just that the threshold of what and what kind of speech and writing is ban-worthy shifts in time.

Hull’s is correct; it has the right to sell what it wishes without explanation. Freedom of conscience is also a human right, and Friesen’s book is readily available to anyone looking for it.

In general, I’d be wary of attempting to silence even the most objectionable voices, on the principle that perversity condemns itself. Jesus warned us about pulling up weeds while the crop is growing, lest we destroy the good plants in so doing (Matthew 13:24-30). The way to “censor” bad news is not to drive it out of sight, but to overwhelm it with good news.

I guess it’s the skill of telling wheat from weeds that every farmer, and every Christian, needs to be taught.

GEORGE G. EPP (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ ‘Abuse of power’ more accurate than ‘sexual misconduct’

Re: “Investigations reveals misconduct by influential Mennonite leader,” June 7, page 24.

Thank you, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Mennonite Central Committee for apologizing for the long delay in accountability and publicly recording the harms stemming from Frank H. Epp’s abuse. This progress in applying ethical standards to Mennonite leaders is a welcome reprieve from generations of institutional leaders protecting sexual offenders and enabling further abuse.

As the Mennonite church continues to learn how best to prevent and respond to sexual abuse, it is important that statements such as these identify “abuse of power” instead of relying on the more vague term “sexual misconduct.” The term “sexual misconduct” enables some people lacking understanding of sexual abuse to imply that what occurred was simply extramarital affairs.

The term “abuse of power” more accurately reflects the vast research on the topic of sexual abuse that recognizes offenders are often people with

significant institutional power who coerce and manipulate people who are often much younger and without institutional power. Abuses of power are fundamentally distinct from consensual sexual affairs. Church institutions need to do more to help educate the church about sexual abuse as an abuse of power, not simply an “affair.”

LISA SCHIRCH (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Church places people on pedestals, then tears them down

Re: “Investigation reveals misconduct by influential Mennonite leader,” June 7, page 24.

I am responding to this article regarding the alleged sexual misconduct of an influential Mennonite leader.

Does the public have to open the pages of *Canadian Mennonite* and see an article with an accompanying picture, humiliating another person accused of sexual misconduct? What was the motivation behind publishing this information 35 years posthumously?

What was it that the church did not adequately address when it was first brought to their attention in the 1990s, after the death of the accused person.

The public does not need to know any of the details except whether it was consensual at the time.

There are innocent living family members of the deceased who will experience pain and anguish as a result of this. I believe this requires a public apology on the part of the editor and the parties who provided the editor with this information for the purpose of publication.

The patriarchal and hierarchical system that is endorsed by the Mennonite church is responsible for the problem of sexual abuse. It places people on pedestals, expecting more from them than from “ordinary people.” When they show us that they are fallible human beings, we destroy the pedestal and allow them to come tumbling down, forever tainted. In days gone by, they would hang people in the public square for their transgressions. Now we hang them psychologically and emotionally.

Trauma related to sexual abuse is serious, but the present method of dealing with it will not be conducive to healing, nor will it reduce the incidence. There are positive approaches that can be taken to address problematic sexual behaviours. What needs to be published is how the problem is being addressed and how it will help to bring an end to these traumatic situations.

SUSANNA KLASSEN, TORONTO

✉ Farmers need to ‘really begin to listen’ too

Re: “Germinating conversations,” June 7, page 16.

Growing food is complex. Climate change, biotechnology, animal welfare, animal health, soil conservation, herbicides, pesticides, subsidies, supply management, trade, supply chains, grocery store codes of ethics, food affordability, food availability, food safety, food choice, human nutrition, human health and consumer demands are some of the subjects that make it complex. Each of these could be a germinating conversation on its own.

For almost 40 years, I have been having germinating conversations almost daily with farmers and people working at growing food. I have been fortunate to have these conversations at the kitchen tables of backyard egg farmers in the Philippines, in the dining halls of Hutterite colonies in Western Canada and in the boardrooms of big farmers in the midwest United States.

What I find and hear is far from repulsive. For the most part, these farmers have a deep respect for their land and their animals, and a genuine concern for the complex issues of growing food. I also find that when I have these discussions with people who are not involved in growing food, I must continually

“check” my bias, to ensure that I am open and listening.

I do agree with Will Braun that polarization is perhaps the greatest threat, and that dialogue is essential, but his sarcastic and irrelevant comments—“swaggered off in their shiny 4X4s,” and “the topic of their all-inclusive winter getaways won’t come up”—only serves to increase polarization and discourage dialogue.

I am happy to see that Braun appreciates the incredible privilege he has in choosing his lifestyle and how he grows his food. Many people in the world do not have that choice. Maybe the key to his frustration is to let go of his bias of farmers and how food is grown and really begin to listen.

MARK PETERS, WINNIPEG

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

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Cheung—Theodor (Teo) Wai-Dak (b. June 4, 2021), to Donny Cheung and Marika Pauls Laucht, Toronto United Mennonite.

Horne—Brooklyn Jean (b. June 3, 2021), to Colin and Denise Horne, Bethany Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Megan Haid, Jackson Neeb—Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., June 5, 2021.

Weddings

Kobelsky/Koop—Curtis Kobelsky and Tanya Koop, at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 12, 2021.

Deaths

Fast—Peter, 92 (b. Aug. 27, 1928; d. May 28, 2021), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Heipel—Ralph, 77 (d. May 30, 2021), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Hummelt—Lydia (nee Lange), 84 (b. June 8, 1936; d. April 17, 2021), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kippenstine—Ernest (Ernie), 77 (b. May 30, 1943; d. May 3, 2021), Oak Lake Mennonite, Man., in Calgary.

Musselman—Mary E. (Cressman), 90 (b. Dec. 7, 1930; d. May 28, 2021), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Unrau—Helen, 93 (b. June 14, 1927; d. May 31, 2021), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Wideman—Maynard, 68 (b. July 13, 1952; d. May 22, 2021), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

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

FROM OUR LEADERS

‘It is so good to connect!’

Tim Wiebe-Neufeld

“It is so good to connect with each other.” In my role as executive minister of Mennonite Church Alberta, I have heard this sentiment expressed many times in many different ways. It is a feeling I heard expressed again on a Monday evening in late June as I met with the church chairs from the congregations of the regional church.

Together with moderator Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, we gathered by Zoom to check in with each other, share thoughts and challenges, and support each other. While our pastors have a long history of regular meetings, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of nurturing other connections within our church family. In previous weeks, I had been involved in meetings with other lay leaders, including church treasurers and office administrators.

As we went “around the screen,” it was to be expected that COVID-19 featured prominently in our conversation. People shared how their congregations have been coping with the health restrictions and figuring out ways to safely “be church together.” We heard about efforts to express fellowship



and care when restrictions prohibited in-person gatherings. We learned about different approaches to worship, whether online or in person, within health guidelines. We heard about navigating difficult conversations and differing opinions. We celebrated God’s presence when conversations were guided by a spirit of respect, love and peace.

With Alberta’s pandemic restrictions set to end on July 1, we spent time sharing how congregations were approaching reopening plans. Several challenges were highlighted, including:

- **Acknowledging the need** to mourn losses of the past year, including times when gathering limits meant funerals could not include the full faith community.
- **Navigating the tension** between those eager to fully reopen and those more comfortable with moving more slowly.
- **Recognizing how the pandemic** may have affected the ability of our faith communities to reach out to

newcomers, who may have had a harder time feeling connected.

- **Realizing that some** have found they are able to experience church more fully online than in person, leading to the need to figure out hybrid ways of worshipping and being together.

It was encouraging to hear how congregations were approaching challenges like these, and striving to do so in Christ-like ways.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes: “*We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body . . . promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love*” (4:15b-16).

As I listened to the sharing that day, I experienced a group of leaders striving to faithfully build up the body in love. In the first days of the COVID-19 crisis a video circulated of short clips from Mennonite pastors across Canada, each sharing the simple message, “You are not alone.” The past 16 months of health restrictions have forced us to look for different ways to connect with each other and to be the community God calls us to be.

I am grateful for the many ways God brings people together even during a pandemic, whether for support or for fellowship, whether within our faith family or beyond it. ❧

A moment from yesterday



Hochstadt, Man., near Altona was the location of the first delegate meeting of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) in 1903. A cairn was unveiled in July 1978 at that location to mark the 75th anniversary. On the left is Peter J. Hamm, but who is the man with the beard on the right? The text on the cairn cites Deuteronomy 8:18: “*But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.*” Reporter Dave Kroeker commented in the July 24, 1978, *Mennonite Reporter* that 1978 was the first year the Conference’s budget was more than \$1 million. The CMC is now part of Mennonite Church Canada.

Text: Conrad Stoesz
Photo: Mennonite Heritage Archives /
CMC photo collection



archives.mhsc.ca

IN THE IMAGE

A pretty big leap for Arthur

Ed Olfert

It's Friday. I drive to Rosthern, Sask., and pull in at the Good Neighbours Food Centre, where I will spend the day volunteering. My task, besides praying before the doors are opened, is to deliver groceries to cars, and to offer relationships to everyone I encounter. It's a good fit.

On this day, the action is a bit slow to begin with. Nadine, the director, calls me into her office. She asks if I can give "Arthur" (a pseudonym) a ride to his home community.

I have known Arthur for several decades. He would occasionally appear at Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert, Sask., sometimes in the middle of a service, sometimes during the week. Something, a health issue perhaps, causes Arthur to appear much like a stumbling drunk. His words are slurred, his gait awkward. He demands attention, speaks loudly, laughs often and cries equally often.

On this day, Arthur is sober. But he is in tears. He has just learned that a prominent business person in Rosthern has died, someone who was good to him. Plus, Arthur has been sick, has not been home for weeks and is hungry. "Will you grieve with me?" Arthur asks.

We sit as a hamper of food is

assembled. We load his groceries into my truck and I help him into the seat. His home community is a half-hour distant.

Arthur peppers me with faith-related questions as we drive "Do you believe that Jesus died for me?" From our history of these conversations, I sense that this direction doesn't serve Arthur well, that he keeps circling back to his doubt, his unworthiness.

I try another thought: "Arthur, I believe that Jesus is sitting with me in this truck, that you are living the goodness of Jesus to me right now. I'm learning more about Jesus because I'm with you."

I sense that it's a pretty big leap for Arthur. Nothing in his simple, "Jesus died to save me from my sins" theology has pointed him towards his worthiness, his incarnate role in the Creator's intentions.

As we drive through Arthur's community, he points to a house. "That's where I go to party," he says. His leer suggests that he is trying to shock me.

We arrive at his home. The Indigenous community has recently provided a new home for Arthur and another single man. Arthur takes me on a tour. The white porcelain in the bathroom

sparkles; in the kitchen a simple table is covered by a tablecloth and placemats. The small house is spotless, and Arthur is proud.

We carry his food from my truck. As I turn to leave, I hear the question, "Could you see your way to lend me \$20?"

I'm not surprised. I turn him down, and he responds with dignity.

As I drive back to Rosthern, that long-ingrained response to refuse money to someone who struggles with addictions begins to chafe.

On this same day Good Neighbours Food Centre is surrounded by orange stones, painted and positioned to remind us of the children whose lives ended, now faceless, nameless, on a residential school property. It was a policy rooted in evil, but also a policy that blessed the culture in which I grew up. The fact that I have \$20 in my pocket, and Arthur does not, is directly connected to that policy. I have no doubt that the afflictions Arthur lives with are connected to a residential school experience, his own or generations earlier. Do I need to acknowledge, confront and confess my own colonial attitudes?

Put another way, if I really see Arthur as the presence of Jesus in the cab of my truck, as per Matthew 25, who am I to say no to the Christ? Who am I to judge that I know better? Will I be seated on the left with the worthless goats? ❧



Ed Olfert (p2peho@gmail.com) gives thanks for hard questions.

Et cetera

Graham crackers: A Mennonite treat?

S'mores are a summertime favourite for many people, but not for Conan O'Brien. In a June 2020 episode of his podcast, *Conan O'Brien Needs a Friend*, the late-night talk-show host and comedian expressed his disdain for the campfire confection. During a humorous rant, O'Brien took special aim at graham crackers. "Graham crackers sound like, you know, just—I don't know—it's just, like, a Mennonite treat from the 1870s," O'Brien quipped. Graham crackers do, in fact, have religious origins: they were invented in the 1800s in response to the teachings of Sylvester Graham, a Presbyterian minister who believed that minimizing pleasure of all kinds and following a vegetarian diet were key to the Christian faith.

By Aaron Epp



PHOTO COURTESY OF TBS/TEAM COCO

Conan O'Brien

MIND AND SOUL

Is it moral to bike?

Randolph Haluza-DeLay

What is a bike to you: Exercise? A commuter vehicle? Opportunity for a family outing?

Tool for close-by errands? A connection to simple living? Related to your spirituality?

One day, when the kids were young, I came home really upset from a near-altercation with a car during the rush-hour commute from work. You know who would lose that encounter—not the metal-armoured driver riding some two tonnes of petrol-fuel power. It would be the fragile flesh draped around a little frame of hollow tubes and gears.

The kids had seen me come home fully adrenalized before with complaints about unsafe streets and scary drivers. I used to be a white-water rafting guide; city cycling where there are no bike lanes sometimes feels like that activity. The kids said “If you get hurt because the roads aren’t safe for cycling, you are choosing to put yourself in harm’s way, and that’s wrong!”

They might be right! There are some individual health benefits to cycling, and it is cheaper than driving, but most of the benefits are for the public, such as less pollution and road congestion. That is why cities promote “active transportation,” which includes walking, scooters

and more. These public goods come at increased personal risk. The consequences of an accident would be borne by my family more than society. So the question remains: Is it moral to bike on city streets?

We already talk about transportation in moral terms. I don’t need to repeat the criticisms, stereotypes and heated rhetoric. Every decision about transit fares and routes, bike lanes or space for automobiles, walkability or lowered speed limits on roads is a decision based on competing choices about what is desired or “good.” (Let me also be clear that I absolutely do not ever mean to imply that the choice to cycle is morally better than another person’s choice of any other transportation option.)

However, some research shows that transportation choices rely almost entirely on one variable: “How fast will I get there?” The second big factor is: “What am I used to doing?” That is a morality of habit and individual convenience.

As I prepared this column, someone actually asked, “Could it actually be immoral to design our cities for cars?”

Cars kill lots of people. Directly, there are about 100 fatalities a day from motor vehicles in Canada. Should we be

concerned about 36,000 deaths a year? Motor vehicles also cause death, injury and illness indirectly. They decrease air quality. They increase obesity and generally lower health far more than they improve health. Shall we mention climate change?

But we have designed our cities and society for these direct and indirect not-good outcomes. Normally, we consider it undeniably immoral to deliberately increase opportunities for immoral action.

I know there are counter-arguments. But before you say cycling is an elite activity, cycling might actually lead to greater social justice, as bicycles are used far more by lower socioeconomic classes everywhere in the world. E-bikes are also a game-changer, allowing even an octogenarian in my church to keep up with the rest of us during a charity ride. Still, others will point out that cars add convenience, or say pedestrians or cyclists are sometimes at fault when they collide with an automobile by distracted walking or biking.

The gospel is about joining God to do the good that we think helps all people flourish. Consciously designing how we live and move about for just that purpose is a good moral path. ✎



When not cycling, Randy Haluza-DeLay (haluzadelay@gmail.com) does actually drive a car.

Et cetera

Ethiopian college renamed Meserete Kristos Seminary

Beginning in 2020, students at Meserete Kristos College in Ethiopia began taking online classes toward a master of arts degree in theology and global Anabaptism, working with Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Because the college now offers graduate studies, Meserete Kristos Church changed the college’s name to Meserete Kristos Seminary. It has been a difficult year because of civil strife in Ethiopia and because of the pandemic, but the church believes God will continue to provide.

Source: Meserete Kristos Seminary



2018 FILE PHOTO BY HENOK TAMIRAT

Students at Meserete Kristos College lead worship.

TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

Discovering my dross

Joshua Penfold

I remember singing in various youth-group settings the once popular, and now dated-sounding, worship song, “Refiner’s Fire.” Admittedly, I never really took the time to ponder the metaphor of being refined in the fire. The words “Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver” sounded nice, accompanied with lyrics desiring holiness. It wasn’t until reading the Book of Ezekiel that I actually took time, with the help of YouTube and Wikipedia, to inquire about the refining process.

Ezekiel 22:18 says, *“The house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them are the copper, tin, iron and lead left inside a furnace.”* The passage goes on to talk about God gathering the people in Jerusalem to melt them with fiery wrath. This imagery is potent, but I still didn’t really understand what dross was or how it worked.

I discovered that to refine something you must melt it to its molten state in what is called a crucible.

Again I was taken back to a 1990s Christian song when hearing this word. The band Delirious? has a song called “Crucible for Silver” that I apparently listened to often while never taking the time to learn what a crucible was.

Crucible registered close enough in my brain to crucifix that I had passively assumed it was some kind of religious word related to the cross and I never investigated further. This now seems utterly foolish, and I wonder how many other words, phrases and songs I have either misunderstood or apathetically ignored. It is embarrassing to admit that I focus far more on the music of a song than on the lyrics, especially since I endeavour to write songs myself. I put great value on lyrics in theory, but not always in practice.

I learned that a crucible is actually a vessel (originally clay, but anything that can withstand high temperatures) to melt precious metals. Dross is all the impurities that float above the molten metal, which the refiner then skims off and usually discards as useless waste. So, Israel being called dross is a harsh blow from God. They are the impurities that God must burn and remove as useless waste to keep the silver pure. One thing I haven’t figured out: If Israel is the dross in the passage, who is the silver?

Staying at home under lockdown for work and school, and stuck inside, especially when it was cold, was hard on everyone. In our home, it was especially challenging for me and my daughter

Ruth. We both tend to stubbornly dig our heels in, so our relationship needed some work beforehand, but a concentrated stay at home together became a crucible for me.

Although there are definitely things for Ruth to work on, I specifically recognized within myself some impurities, some dross, needing to be removed. Some of my expectations, approaches to parenting and responses to Ruth haven’t helped our interactions and relationship. It wasn’t until I began journaling about each meltdown, and recounting each step of our altercations, that I began to see this. I was not helping to solve the problem or recognizing my daughter’s needs but just reacting to her reactions and making things worse.

Now, because I am aware of this, I can choose to do the work of separating the dross, throwing out these unhelpful impurities. Hopefully, with some intentionality, humility and guidance from the Spirit and others, I can more honestly and knowingly sing, “Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver.” ❧



Joshua Penfold
(penfoldjoshua@gmail.com) loves the Bible, his daughters and '90s music.

Et cetera

Chief at Abundance Canada receives award

Darren Pries-Klassen, chief executive officer of Abundance Canada, received the Friend of CAGP Award from the Canadian Association of Gift Planners (CAGP) on May 20, 2021. The award recognizes his achievements in promoting strategic charitable giving in Canada. The organization provides training in matters relating to charitable-gift planning and it advocates for tax legislation benefiting donors and charities. Abundance staff are active members of CAGP, and Pries-Klassen served on the national board for seven years.

Source: Abundance Canada



Darren Pries-Klassen

BOOK REVIEW

Congregations need to talk about generosity

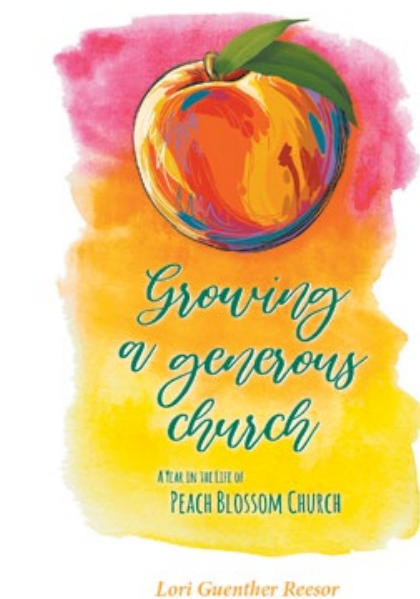
Growing a Generous Church: A Year in the Life of Peach Blossom Church.
Lori Guenther Reesor. Privately published, available at www.lgreesor.com, 2021, 222 pages.

Reviewed by Barb Draper
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

Many congregations struggle with finances, wishing their members would contribute more towards the budget, while assuming that no one wants to talk about money. In her book, *Growing a Generous Church*, Lori Guenther Reesor says this kind of thinking is backwards. Churches should concentrate on generosity, which is an important part of discipleship, and all of us should feel as comfortable discussing generosity as we are talking about prayer.

Generosity is not only about money, she says, commenting that, “generosity is about the size of your heart, not the size of your wallet.” Congregations need to nurture generous giving, whether that is serving others or sharing time, know-how or money. It all needs to be valued. Christians should teach and frequently talk about generosity, encouraging this spiritual discipline in each other. If church members respond by substantially supporting the budget, that is a bonus.

Guenther Reesor describes her book as “creative non-fiction.” Her setting is a fictional congregation she calls Peach Blossom Church. Her characters are fictional, but the issues and ideas they discuss are based on real situations. It is not hard to detect that this fictional congregation is part of Mennonite Church Canada, which she refers to as the National Orchard Church. Many of the chapters involve the monthly meetings of the Big Hearts Breakfast Club at a local coffee shop, while others describe various scenes of



congregational interaction. By telling these stories, the book provides lots of ideas for encouraging generous living.

Generosity is rooted in gratitude, says Guenther Reesor. Because God has lavished grace on us, we need to respond to each other with extravagant generosity. And we need to express gratitude to each other, respecting and acknowledging the gifts everyone brings. This means thanking all donors, not just with a cursory verbal thanks at an annual meeting, but with a meaningful note or letter. She suggests that, if we do not acknowledge the gifts people bring, then we are like the nine lepers who did not go back and thank Jesus for their healing. Churches should not take

donors for granted.

Another theme in the book is the need to tell stories. If giving is done in secret, how can we teach generosity? “Giving becomes contagious when people talk about why they give,” she writes. Testimony encourages giving and is a much stronger motivator than guilt.

Guenther Reesor has lots of other suggestions for congregations, including the merits of easy online giving and pre-authorized giving. She explains the advantages of having a donate button on a congregation’s website. She also identifies the benefits of bequest policies and financial planning help for members. The suggestions are not presented as things that must—or should—be done; readers simply listen in as the people from Peach Blossom Church discuss best practices.

Although there is a plotline and the characters are not cardboard cutouts, the characters and plot are only moderately well developed. What makes the book worth reading is that the information about church finances, stewardship and the importance of teaching generosity is presented through dialogue in an interesting way. It is not a difficult read and many congregations could benefit from having a group study to discuss which ideas they might implement. Guenther Reesor provides discussion questions for each chapter at the back of the book. ❧

The book launch video and a preview are available at <https://bit.ly/3g5ki8v>.



VIEWPOINT

We were created to worship

Mezgebu Tucho

“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 96:9, KJV).

We were made to worship. The truth is that, since God is the creator, and we are God’s creation, we were made to delight in something bigger, something beyond ourselves.

Worship is a sacrifice

Our worship is directed at God and involves sacrifice. Paul wrote to the believers in Rome: *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship”* (Romans 12:1 NIV). The idea of sacrifice calls to mind the Old Testament sacrificial system, in which an animal was sacrificed at the altar to worship God and atone for sin. Now our sins have been atoned for by Jesus, and we are to offer ourselves as sacrifices, our spiritual worship.

We make sacrifices for the things that we value most. We willingly sacrifice our time and money for the things we think will bring us joy. So where is your time and money going? For what causes or pursuits are you sacrificing your life or dollars that God has given you to steward? Your answer determines who or what you worship. You can often identify who or what someone has put in the position of God in their life by asking these questions.

Worship is service

Worship involves submission, service, praise and obedience. The act of worship is intimately connected to the act of service. When you serve someone, you are testifying to the worth, importance and dignity of that person through your actions.

This is true of individual acts of service. John describes the amazing

worship that he saw in heaven: *“Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.’”*

(Revelation 4:9-11).

Worship is praise

In this Scripture, we see the aspect of bowing down in submission, and it also includes words of praise. Your lips are always ready to praise the people or things you delight in. The key to sincerely worshipping God through praise is to sincerely delight in God.

If you find it difficult to delight in God, count your blessings. Begin to

(Revelation 19:10). The primary focus of a Christian’s life should be centred on worshipping God, and everything else will flow from there.

Heart and holiness, wealth and worthiness

The act of worship is a matter of the heart expressed through a lifestyle of holiness. If your lifestyle does not express the beauty of holiness through your love for God, you are not living in submission to God. Our love and submission to God flow from the reality that God loved us first.

It is highly appropriate to thank God for all the things God has done for us. However, true worship becomes shallow if it is solely an acknowledgment of God’s wealth. Psalm 96:5-6 says: *“For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.”* In other words, our worship must be toward the one who is

Worship becomes shallow if it is solely an acknowledgment of God’s wealth.

think of all that God has done for you—the life given to you, your many years on this planet and the gift of eternal life. Thinking of these things should awaken gratitude and a deep, rooted joy.

The outward expression of praise and the inward condition of delight are closely related. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul condemns humanity for worshipping created things rather than the creator God. The Apostle John encountered an angel and bowed down to worship the angel, but the angel told him: *“You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!”*

worthy simply because of his identity as the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent One, and not just because God is wealthy, able to meet our needs and answer our prayers. Let us focus our practice of worship on the worthiness of God and not his wealthiness. ❧



Mezgebu Tucho has been a pastor for 35 years and currently serves the Bethel International Church Edmonton Oromo

Congregation in Edmonton. This article originally appeared in the Summer 2021 issue of Leader magazine, © 2021 MennoMedia. Used with permission.

NEWS

Former Mennonite church building vandalized

Owners respond to the destruction

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
DUCK LAKE, SASK.

“When I first saw it, I thought, ‘We might as well burn it down.’” says Patty Neufeld, of the former Horse Lake Mennonite Church building. “It was really depressing.”

The church building was vandalized sometime during the evening of June 21. Though nothing appears to have been stolen, every window in the 111-year-old building was broken.

That evening a local resident drove by the church and noticed a car in the back of the churchyard. The following day, Neufeld’s mother, Esther Jantzen, received a phone call, telling her that the church had been vandalized. She called the RCMP, who came to investigate.

Police found a number of bricks and rocks that were likely used to break the glass, along with several beer and water bottles. Grouped together in one place, they found a beer bottle, a rock, and a handwritten note that read, “Memories don’t throw away.”

Neufeld says she has no idea what the note might mean or who could have committed the vandalism. She wonders whether it might have been the result of a graduation party in the area.

“They threw lots of rocks,” says Neufeld, “as if they were trying to break out as much of the glass as possible.” Rocks and bricks appear to have been thrown from the outside in as well as from the inside out.

Horse Lake Mennonite Church, which had been a Mennonite Church



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PATTY NEUFELD

Every window in the former Horse Lake Mennonite Church building was broken when vandals threw bricks and rocks through them, both from the inside and the outside.

On the road with MC B.C.

Paying virtual visit to mission workers expands outlook

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

Saskatchewan congregation, closed in 2016 after 74 years as an active faith community. Since then the building has been purchased by Neufeld's husband, Stan, and son, Matthew. Their hope is to preserve the building as a historic site.

"[We] wanted people [who] have gone to the church over the years to be able to come back and see it," says Neufeld, who also hopes that people driving by would feel welcome to stop and pray.

The church is situated on a quiet gravel road about 90 kilometres north of Saskatoon and 20 kilometres north of Duck Lake, the nearest town. Its doors are always unlocked.

This isn't the first time the church has been vandalized. Fifty years ago, the church's windows were broken in a similar incident. Neufeld recalls what happened.

"I remember both of my grandmothers walking out of the church with tears streaming down their faces," she says.

Years later, one of the boys who did it returned to the community as a man and confessed his crime, saying how badly he felt about it.

Over the years, there have been other small acts of mischief, including broken window blinds, damaged books, a defaced Bible and the theft of some cushions.

But most visitors are respectful. There is a guest book in the church, which visitors are encouraged to sign. Neufeld says almost every time she or her husband stop to check on the church there is a new signature in the book. Among the visitors Neufeld knows about is a woman from Duck Lake who goes to the church to play piano.

Neufeld's daughter, Shelly Anne, set up a fundraiser through Facebook to help raise money to replace the broken windows.

"We've had people giving as much as \$200," she says, "and there have been lots and lots of messages. The response has been very supportive, even from people who don't go to church."

Meanwhile, the windows have been secured against the elements and the Neufelds are researching replacement options. Some options are more costly than others, but, as Neufeld says, "Anything we do will be a lot of work as we have to remove bits of glass and putty." ❧

Constituents of Mennonite Church B.C. have had a chance to visit International Witness workers in three countries recently, without even having to pack their passports or suitcases.

In May and June, the regional church sponsored virtual visits to MC Canada workers in China, South Korea and the Philippines. The idea came from Kevin Barkowsky, MC B.C.'s church engagement minister.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF MC. B.C.

"I regularly have the privilege of attending the International Witness Support Zoom meetings, where we talk with our Witness workers live on Zoom from their own houses," he says. "I find it fascinating just to see what the inside of their houses looks like, what they have posted on the walls, and to hear updates on COVID-19 in their country. Each Witness worker has such a unique and meaningful ministry and, as we hear them talk, we can really sense the Spirit of Jesus in them."

One morning Barkowsky woke up early and had an inspiration. He realized that COVID-19 was slowing down, Zoom would be used less and less, and no one had travelled internationally in over a year. Perhaps, he thought, there was a place

for an International Witness "road trip" with pictures and videos, and designed for people who aren't acquainted with the ministries.

"I wanted the general MC B.C. public to experience the intriguing discussions and see the videos and pictures of ministry—and hear the visions and unique messages that God is giving to our workers as they serve overseas," he says.

The first visit was to China with a Cantonese language evening on May 15, and a May 31 event, also in China, with George and Tobia Veith. The road trips continued on June 7 with a visit to the Philippines, with Dann (Lakan Sumulong) and Joji (Lakambini Mapayapa) Pantoja, and concluded in South Korea on June 14, with a visit with Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park. About 25 people took part in each hour-long event.

Jeanette Hanson, MC Canada's director of International Witness, who helped put together the event, believes that one advantage of such events is learning and benefiting from a global family of faith that goes beyond one's own congregation.

"I was immediately excited about it," she says. "We are all feeling grounded these days, and this was a way to look beyond our own circumstances and see life from the point of view of others. It was also an interesting way to show the different ways that MC B.C. is involved internationally. Zoom made it easy to have a short taste of each place."

"We were really pleased at the response of the people attending," Barkowsky says. "They said they enjoyed it and were inspired by it." ❧

B.C. churches welcome in-person gatherings

Religious services allowed again under Stage 3 plan

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

Following the recent move to Stage 3 of the provincial Covid Restart Plan, some Mennonite Church B.C. congregations are gladly worshipping in person once again.

In a letter to member congregations, MC B.C. chair Gerry Grunau wrote: “On June 29, [B.C. Provincial Health Officer] Dr. Bonnie Henry announced that all provincial health order restrictions pertaining to religious worship services are being removed effective July 1. There will be no limit on congregational attendance at worship services. Restrictions on singing have been removed. COVID-19 safety plans will be replaced with the expectation of following a more general

communicable disease prevention plan, which includes the encouragement that those who are sick should plan to stay home.”

Grunau added that this includes lifting the mask mandate while no proof of vaccination is needed. Masks are still recommended in public indoor settings for all persons 12 and older who are not yet fully vaccinated.

Members of Level Ground Mennonite Church of Abbotsford had been taking turns worshipping in person on alternate Sundays with pre-registration required. Pastor Andrew Haak explained to his congregation that with the new regulations, “As our congregation again makes

adjustments, we want to remain diligent and discerning, graciously hold space for those who are excited to return to ‘normal times’ and also for those who are not ready to return at such a fast rate.”

Level Ground will no longer have attendance limits or health-check questions at the door, and it looks forward to resuming singing, while recognizing that all members may not feel comfortable yet with close physical contact.

Peace Mennonite Church of Richmond welcomed worshippers on its Facebook page by posting: “The doors are wide open; no signups, no capacity limits,” adding, “There’ll be singing, there’ll be socializing, and there’s a place for you!”

Sherbrooke Mennonite in Vancouver has recently been meeting in person every other Sunday. It has maintained its Zoom link, as well, while meeting in person, and the attendees on Zoom can be seen on the screen during the sharing and sermon reflection times. On the Sundays when congregants don’t meet in person, services continue to be fully on Zoom.

Cedar Valley Church in Mission has begun worshipping in person, with the goal of “being fully re-engaged with weekly live worship services with online broadcasted services beginning in the fall.” This summer, live worship-band services are planned for July 25 and August 29.

As Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack resumed worship services the first week in July, church leadership stated: “We are excited and grateful for the new opportunities we have in church [we can sing together], but we also encourage you to continue to be respectful and mindful of each other. We are all at different levels of comfort as the restrictions ease, and we want to make sure that we continue to work at serving one another by giving each other space and grace when we are meeting together.”

Grunau’s message to the regional church concluded with this statement: “MC B.C. wishes your congregation many blessings as you resume in-person worship services with your congregation. May God’s comfort and guidance be with you throughout the summer as you embrace the love and grace of fellowship and communion with each other.” ❧



PHOTO COURTESY OF CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Crossroads Community Church, which meets at Cottonwood Cinemas in Chilliwack, B.C., began resuming unlimited in-person services on July 4, one of many B.C. congregations anticipating a summer of return to normalcy.

Ribbon cutting celebrates capital project's success

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

After two years of construction, a pandemic, and a decade of dreaming and planning, Conrad Grebel University College's new kitchen and renovated dining room are complete. More than a thousand donors contributed more than \$4.2-million to the Fill the Table capital campaign to make it happen.

On June 29, the Grebel community gathered virtually to celebrate the completion of the new spaces. Donors, alumni, students, faculty, staff and board members

Construction spoke more about the many people involved and the satisfaction of completing such an intricate project, while alumnus Brian Rudy of Moriyama and Teshima Architects shared about why he was so excited to work on this challenging renovation and building design.

Paul Fieguth spoke on behalf of the Board of Governors, which supported this ambitious and vital endeavour from the beginning.

Each participant cut a piece of ribbon



CONRAD GREBEL PHOTO

Food Services Manager Cheri Otterbein cuts the ribbon in Grebel's new kitchen on June 29.

were treated to a virtual tour and words of introduction and thanks from Marcus Shantz and Fred W. Martin, Grebel's president and director of advancement, respectively.

Savio Wong spoke about his experience as an alumnus and reasons why he joined the fundraising advisory group, while student council rep Mary McPhee shared how happy students are with the new spaces.

Cheri Otterbein, Grebel's food services manager, noted the many people involved in the project and how pleased kitchen staff are to work in such a bright, beautiful kitchen.

Paul Penner, Grebel's director of operations, and Bob Zehr from Nith Valley

in front of their home computer, or in a different area of Grebel, showing how the project stretched out from Grebel into a supportive community of donors.

Ed Janzen ended the service with a prayer of blessing.

"Fundraising for the Fill the Table capital campaign over the last five years has demonstrated the commitment our donors have to help build not only buildings, but community at Grebel," Martin said after the event. "This renovation and expansion would not have been possible without their support." ❧

To watch the virtual ribbon-cutting ceremony, visit <https://bit.ly/3wk1k48>.



News brief

Goshen College receives nearly \$3 million Lilly grant



GOSHEN COLLEGE PHOTO

An aerial view of the Goshen College campus.

GOSHEN, IND.—Goshen College has received a grant of nearly \$3 million (all funds in US dollars) from Lilly Endowment Inc. through the competitive Phase 3 of its Charting the Future of Indiana's Colleges and Universities initiative. The grant will support a five-year plan for expanding inclusive education in Elkhart County through community-engaged learning and partnerships. This Phase 3 grant is in addition to, and builds upon, a \$1 million Phase 2 grant in October 2020, and a \$100,000 Phase 1 planning grant in November 2019, from Lilly. These grants, and others, are building institutional capacity to address the career concerns of both traditional students and those in careers now disrupted. The overarching goal of Goshen College's Charting the Future proposals is to increase educational access, engagement and attainment in Elkhart County for all learners, including at Goshen College, through new educational partnerships with and for the local community. This includes outreach to low-income, school-age students and adult learners, particularly in the predominantly Black and Latino communities of south-central Elkhart and north Goshen. With these grants, the college will develop a new Office for Community Engaged Learning, which will build programs that are educationally rigorous for students, create belonging and inclusion for students historically underserved, and are mutually rewarding for the college's partners.

—GOSHEN COLLEGE

Velo Renovation reimagines construction in the climate-crisis era

Bicycle-based contractors put planet and people before profit

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

If you see someone cycling in Winnipeg, toting behind them stacks of lumber, buckets of paint or even a ladder, it's probably a member of Velo Renovation. They are used to the double takes they get at supply stores.

Velo Renovation is a contracting collective in Winnipeg that prioritizes care for the environment and people over profit. The eight team members do almost all their operations by bicycle and only use motor vehicles when absolutely necessary. They use sustainably sourced, recycled or reused materials whenever possible, and have researched purchasing carbon offsets to mitigate the waste they do produce. They have saved more than 2.3 tonnes of carbon and avoided well over 12,540 vehicle kilometres to date.

Nathaniel De Avila, who attends Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, is Velo's founder and project manager. He has been doing repairs and renovations for more than a decade and is a regular winter biker and reclaimer of discarded food.

He started Velo Renovation, which gets its name from the French word for bicycle, last October because he wanted to see more sustainable choices in Winnipeg's construction market. He formed the collective with friends who had extensive skills but didn't want to work in the relentless structure of the conventional labour market.

De Avila started with the basic practice of doing everything on bikes, something he emphasizes is not a new idea. "Most of the world is doing things on bicycles," he says. "They cart around their entire store to the open-air market, they take their whole family on two wheels or three wheels." He says it is a viable option even in North American winters, where it's still

a novelty for many.

That doesn't mean it is easy.

When Maraleigh Short spoke to *Canadian Mennonite*, the Velo member and Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) alumna, had just been hauling a trailer of paint across the city with her bicycle under the blistering hot sun after a long day. But it can also be a lot of fun; instead of driving through rush hour and construction, trying to stay awake, she and her coworkers might cycle to the jobsite together and arrive having exercised and built community. "The dream is when we all get to do that as a team and then that feels really unique and kind of beautiful," she says.

The collective pushes the boundaries beyond just two wheels. A lot of the work is extending the lifespan of materials.

"The length of time that you're able to use something is the amount of time that you spread the carbon footprint over," De Avila says. "That's actually really important to recognize."

Velo team members remove walls for one project and transform the three-meter boards into countertops for another. They advocate for custom-built cabinets, saying they are stronger and will last longer. They repair stucco instead of putting on brand new siding.

"To make that current siding on the house last another 15 years, you've done a great service to the environment by just not using more," he says.

De Avila spends a lot of energy trying to convince clients not to change anything at all. He often finds himself tearing out something that was meant to last 100 years because someone has decided it doesn't look good anymore. He says people have to consume less and use the spaces and things



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VELO RENOVATION

Janelle Wride, left, and Maraleigh Short are part of the Velo Renovation team. They are also both alumni of Canadian Mennonite University.

they have, instead of buying new ones. It has been challenging for Velo to balance teaching clients to make better choices for the environment, which include making no changes or buying sustainable goods that are far more expensive than their mainstream counterparts, while not putting the collective completely out of work.

For the purpose of Velo is also to be people-centred. The team, which counts a few Mennonite church members and several CMU alumni among them, follows some unusual workplace customs. No work is compulsory, which means workers set their own schedules. They each determine their own wages and are all able to view the business's finances. They strive to work in a way that is sustainable and liveable.

"You get the most effective and best work out of people when they're actually interested in doing the job, and not when they're just showing up because they're



The Velo Renovation collective cycles year round as the primary mode of transportation for themselves and their supplies.

afraid of losing their job,” says De Avila. “In so many ways, we’re not a for-profit company, we’re a for-people company.”

Being for people is intertwined with

being carbon conscious, and not just about paint quality or flooring types. Short says that creating a work environment in which staff get to choose when and what they

work on, and “not prioritizing jobs over ourselves or each other,” is pushing back against the capitalist system, “the carbon monster,” that consumes and wastes at an increasing rate.

Short is looking forward to taking on more projects that align with Velo’s values as the small business grows. “Even within a year it has grown immensely,” she says. “I’m excited to see if we can push that carbon-conscious part even further in different ways and what that could look like, beyond just being a fully functioning fleet of workers on bikes. Which is exciting too!”

Velo is also eager to try new sustainable products, like linseed oil made from flax, and to offer opportunities like youth internships. ❧

MC Canada, regional churches lament for Cowessess First Nation

Canadian Mennonite

“We join our siblings in Mennonite Church Saskatchewan as they lament 751 unmarked graves recently found on Cowessess First Nation, near what was once Marieval Indian Residential School,” stated a press release from Mennonite Church Canada late last month.

The other regional churches did the same, in response to a passionate plea from Ryan Siemens, the executive minister of MC Saskatchewan, to his congregations.

Siemens wrote: “The congregations of MC Saskatchewan sit in a season of grief in the wake of the discovery of a further 751 unmarked graves near a former Indian Residential School close by the Cowessess First Nation. We lament in solidarity with the sorrow of Indigenous neighbours and communities throughout southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba whose children were abducted to the Marieval Indian Residential School. We offer our grief to all those who are impacted by the news of these deaths, and we pray for all those who bear the wounds

of the residential school system, as well as for those who have been retraumatized by this discovery.

“As congregations of MC Saskatchewan, we renew our efforts to understand the impact Indian Residential Schools continue to have on our Indigenous neighbours and seek to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action (especially calls 48-49, 58-61, and 73-75), pursuing a just (re)conciliation where tending wounds fosters the healing and hope of beloved community.

“Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan has developed a list of suggested initial actions you and your congregation might consider in their ‘Lament & Call to Churches: Response to unmarked graves in Saskatchewan,’ published on June 24, 2021. These include:

- ‘If we in our churches do not know and acknowledge the devastating truth of Indian Residential Schools yet, we must do so.’
- ‘If we in our churches do not know

and acknowledge the truth of systemic discrimination in Canada’s legal system past and present, we must do so.’

- ‘If we in our churches do not know about and acknowledge the overwhelming challenges, past and present, facing Indigenous families, women and children, we must do so.’

- ‘If we in our churches do not know about and acknowledge the reality of this nation’s colonial past, including the Doctrine of Discovery and the colonial settlement of the prairies, we must do so.’

“May the Creator’s tender mercy and promise of justice be with all who grieve. In the name of the Crucified One,” Siemens concluded. ❧



Moving from ‘peaceful at heart to peaceful at home’

Book study group explores healthy masculinity

By Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent

For years Don Neufeld dreamed about providing a space where men could explore healthy masculinity from an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective. During the month of June he co-facilitated an online book study for a diverse group of men, using a resource he co-edited with Steve Thomas, called *Peaceful at Heart: Anabaptist Reflections on Healthy Masculinity*.

According to Neufeld, the online gathering of 11 participants and three facilitators responds to the “depth of interest and need” for this kind of conversation.

Neufeld is a social worker with 30 years of experience. In his therapy practice, mostly treating men, he sees “how profoundly men are hurting,” how angry, insecure and confused they are. But when he looked for material to touch these “hurting souls” he did not find much that included a Mennonite peace perspective. So he decided to do something about it. He, along with Thomas, gathered a variety of voices into one book.

In *Peaceful at Heart*, 16 men, including some from minority groups based on ethnicity, class and sexual orientation, address power, patriarchy, privilege, the Bible, peace, spirituality, community and discipleship, inviting men into “difficult conversations” about healthy and unhealthy expressions of masculinity.

One of three women to contribute to the book is Carol Penner, assistant professor of theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont. She asks, “How can we talk about peace and masculinity without talking about intimate partner violence and child abuse,” which is “the elephant in the room that cries out to



SCREENSHOT BY ROD FRIESEN

Clockwise from bottom, Don Neufeld, the editor of *Peaceful at Heart*; David Blow, Mennonite Central Committee program associate, top left; and Rod Friesen, an MCC restorative justice program coordinator, plan their agenda for week four of the book club they facilitate online dealing with healthy masculinity.

be acknowledged and addressed.”

Dan Epp-Tiessen, a semi-retired associate professor of Bible at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, wrote a study guide for the book, which includes a session on abuse and suggestions about how to facilitate the “heavy” topic. The guide contains 10 other sessions, with detailed references to the book and plenty of questions to spark personal reflection, storytelling and conversations.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, Mennonite Men, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, MC Canada and the Be In Christ Church of Canada are all supporting partners of the project. Neufeld is the coordinator of Mennonite Men Canada, (the men’s organization for MC Canada) and Thomas is his counterpart for MC U.S.A.

Rod Friesen, who is also co-facilitating the current book study, is the restorative justice program coordinator for MCC Ontario. He saw the book as a useful

tool for leading conversations in its Circles of Support and Accountability program. Since it is an important calling for MCC to build peaceful communities, Friesen also facilitated a pilot book study with his coworkers, which led to rich conversations.

As Friesen writes in the preface to the study guide, “We saw a need for resources that would encourage and foster conversations about masculinity in healthy ways—and point us to the author of our faith—Jesus.” He says it is an “overlooked area of study within our Anabaptist faith communities.”

Participant George Best says he appreciates how the facilitators create “a safe space for disclosure and trust within the group.” As someone who

worked with men in the prison system, he was looking for insights into violence and the “dynamics of dominance and control” as related to the Mennonite community.

Neufeld and Friesen appreciate the sensitive nature of these topics. Friesen writes in the preface to the study guide: “Conversations around masculinity, especially what has become known as ‘toxic expressions of masculinity,’ have become incredibly polarizing.” It is a “courageous step for men to move into these uncomfortable conversations.”

Neufeld says, “I fully respect the passion and energy of naming centuries of injustice,” including sexism, racism and anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes, and “highly respect the need to privilege women’s voices in that context,” but he suggests that the conversation can’t stop there. He wants men to be invited to the table, “not to take over, but to expand the narrative on gender to include men’s stories.”

He also wants to avoid the pitfall of

men either checking out of these uncomfortable conversations because they feel judged, or “powering up” when they feel challenged. He hopes conversations around gender can evolve into something more collaborative.

The facilitators hope for positive ripple effects wherever the book is studied. Penner’s call in the book to go “from peaceful at heart to peaceful at home” inspires them. As Friesen writes, “These are critical peacebuilding conversations essential for creating safe, peaceable spaces in our churches, homes, workplaces, communities and society.”

The leaders hope to mentor other men to lead study groups in the future. They

are in the process of recording an audio book with Cedric Martin of Theatre of the Beat. And there are plans to develop a curriculum to engage young men.

Also, Thomas and Neufeld are just finishing another self published resource called “Strong, loving and wise: Conversations for men,” which is a series of 70 shorter topic sheets that include questions to spark discussion.

For Friesen and Neufeld, normalizing conversations around masculinity requires humility and listening. Friesen writes, “The book is not necessarily an easy read, but it is an important one—perhaps even a life-changing one.” ❧

❧ New program combines music and peacebuilding



EMU FILE PHOTO

Students participate in a drum circle during a Martin Luther King Day celebration in 2019.

HARRISONBURG, VA.—A new concentration at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) combines the disciplines of music and peacebuilding to equip students to creatively transform conflict and promote intercultural intelligence. This interdisciplinary program will serve those drawn to using music to build common ground in the contexts of global studies, non-profit work, theology, worship, sociology, neuroscience or business administration. The program will include fundamental courses in the music and peacebuilding and development departments—like music theory and theories of social change—as well as additional electives tailored to each student’s career aspirations. Students in the concentration will build a portfolio of goals, objectives and tools for applying their musical talents to peacebuilding and everyday life. This portfolio begins in the first year of studies and culminates in a senior project. Professor Benjamin Bergey is the advisor for the program. This field was the focus of his doctor of musical arts dissertation, and a subject that he studied through training delivered by Musicians Without Borders. “EMU is well positioned to help pioneer this type of program in higher education with our strong programs in both peacebuilding and music, as well as Anabaptist values in general.” For more information, visit emu.edu/music/peacebuilding/.

—EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

❧ News brief

Men weave plastic milk bags into sleeping mats

NEW HAMBURG, ONT.—It takes 250 plastic milk bags to make a one-metre-x-two-metre washable, waterproof sleeping mat. And it takes hours of volunteer work to flatten, cut, loop and weave strips of the bags together. A group of men from Wilmot Mennonite Church has been doing this work for years, sending the finished mats to Christian Aid Ministries in Moorefield, Ont., to be distributed mostly overseas.

The mats are used in medical centres and refugee camps for people who would otherwise be sleeping without a mattress, or even on the ground. The men who weave the mats depend on donations of the four-litre milk bags from individuals, churches and nursing homes. They have a room in the church

basement dedicated to this project. Before the pandemic, two people could work together on one frame to weave the bags into a mat. With pandemic restrictions they were not able to use this space since last summer, but they hope to get back to it in the fall. Meanwhile, they continue cutting bags into strips at home. Stanley Cook even took a frame home and set it up on the dining room table in the Kitchener, Ont., condo he shares with his wife Verda, to continue the weaving. Recently, they were able to deliver 19 finished mats to Christian Aid Ministries, and Stanley has another thousand bags to cut into strips, which he does on a cutting board with a rolling cutter. “It connects me with the community,” he says. “It is my way of contributing to our brothers and sisters worldwide who have a need.” He intends to keep doing this work as long as he can.

—BY JANET BAUMAN



PHOTO BY VERDA COOK

Stanley Cook set up a frame on the dining room table in his condo so he could keep weaving mats out of plastic bags when pandemic restrictions limited access to the weaving room at Wilmot Mennonite Church in New Hamburg, Ont.

New PACS scholarship honours Malcolm X's legacy

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

The vitality of our peace and conflict studies program at Grebel depends on enrolling students with diverse experiences," says Marcus Shantz, president of Conrad Grebel University College. "We are humbled and grateful that our friend Majid Mirza and several other donors chose to establish a scholarship at Grebel, named for Malcolm X, to support Black and Indigenous students in our master of peace and conflict studies program."

This new scholarship is the culmination of the vision and perseverance of Mirza. After hearing a speaker from the Yaqeen Institute speak about Malcolm X, he was inspired to carry forward the legacy.

"This endowed scholarship bearing the name of Malcolm X, and dedicated to the advancement of racial justice as well as interfaith harmony, will serve as a constant reminder of the kind of community we strive to be," says Nathan Funk, outgoing chair of the peace and conflict studies (PACS) program. "Grappling with peace and justice issues means that we cannot afford to have crucial voices absent from the room, and we need to honour the contributions and experiences of Black and Indigenous students."

"I believe Brother Malcolm is the embodiment of speaking truth to power," says Mirza. "In addition, he was the voice of the voiceless." As a result, Malcolm X, or Malik Shabazz, as he was known in the last chapter of his life, was a controversial figure. Mirza says, "... he only changed his opinion frequently because he was constantly striving for truth, and this is an infinite journey."

Mirza has been in correspondence with Ilyasah Shabazz, a daughter of Malcolm X, who endorsed the establishment of this



Majid Mirza

named scholarship.

"It is with immense pleasure and gratitude that we support the Malcolm X Peace and Conflict Studies Scholarship at Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo," says Shabazz, co-chair of the Malcolm X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center. "There is no

better time than now to launch this scholarship, which is established to recognize master of peace and conflict studies students who demonstrate a commitment to social justice, interracial harmony and interfaith dialogue. The focus of my father's life was an unwavering and unapologetic commitment to truth and justice, and we hope that this scholarship will inspire students to live in his footsteps at a time when it is needed most."

Recipients of this award will be students who have demonstrated these commitments through on- or off-campus volunteer activities. A first recipient will be chosen for the fall term of 2021.

"It is exciting to see a variety of supporters from the Muslim faith community step forward to augment this award with generous donations," says Fred W Martin, director of advancement at Grebel. "This support illustrates that the path to peace involves many voices, and welcoming these influences in our peace programs at Grebel is critical to growth and understanding."

In celebration of the creation of the scholarship, students and donors, including Shabazz and Mirza, met virtually to make connections and to share stories of resilience and inspiration. ▮

To learn more, or make a donation, visit <https://bit.ly/2V3Rt5f>.

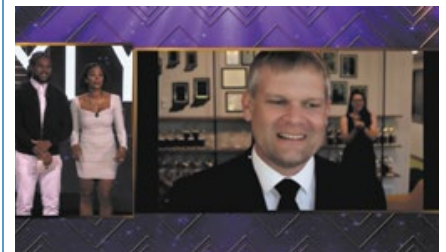


News brief

Goshen wins first Emmy Award

GOSHEN, IND.—Goshen College's FiveCore Media won a National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) Lower Great Lakes Chapter regional Emmy award on June 12, the college's first win out of four nominations. The special live event coverage Emmy was awarded for FiveCore Media's production of the Goshen College Music Department's "A Festival of Carols 2020" during a virtual-awards ceremony. Other nominees in the category were Digital Alchemy in Cleveland and WTHR in Indianapolis. A Festival of Carols is Goshen College's yearly Christmas concert featuring the college's choirs, ensembles and the local Rejoice Children's Choir. The television special aired on several PBS stations in the midwest region. The production was almost solely student-produced under the direction of Kyle Hufford, FiveCore Media's executive director and a Goshen College associate professor of communications. "This Emmy is a testament to the hard work of our Goshen College students and FiveCore staff," Hufford says. "We have been knocking on the door with nominations in the past, but this year the students were finally recognized by broadcast industry professionals for their excellence." Regional Emmy Awards are given in 19 regions across the United States.

—GOSHEN COLLEGE



SCREENSHOT COURTESY OF
GOSHEN COLLEGE

Goshen College wins its first regional Emmy Award.

GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

Grandma's soup expressed love and care

By MaryLou Driedger

My grandmother's chicken noodle soup was the stuff of legends. My father has told me that when he was a young boy, his mother would make chicken noodle soup for people in their village in Manitoba who were sick or had experienced some family tragedy. If it was winter, my father would deliver his mother's soup using a little sled pulled by his dog Rover.

One of my aunts remembers that when her mother was stirring her chicken noodle soup, she would tell her children stories. Another has fond memories of enjoying a bowl of her mother's chicken noodle soup as a nightcap with her father after evening church services.

Grandma's soup was not only a much-loved favourite with her children, but with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well.

How did Grandma Margareta Sawatsky Peters make her famous chicken noodle soup? To find out, I asked her daughters, and they responded eagerly with lots of information.

Grandma only used hens well past the egg-laying stage for her soup. Their heads were chopped off on a chopping block. The feathers were then plucked, after which the hairs on the chicken were singed in an alcohol flame.

It was a matter of some skill to divest the chicken of its innards. Entrails were fed to the barn cats as a treat.

The chicken was cooked in a large pot of boiling water along with peppercorns, star anise, a cinnamon stick, bay leaves and large bunches of parsley tied together with thread.

Grandma made her own noodles, drying them on a laundry rack and saving the water in which she boiled them to starch



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYLOU DRIEDGER

Margareta Sawatsky Peters meets one of her great-grandchildren for the first time.

Grandpa's shirts.

She got flour for her noodles by bringing wheat from their farm to the mill for grinding. The eggs for the noodles came from her chickens, and the milk and butter came from the family cows. Sometimes Grandma would devote an entire day to making noodles, so she would have a ready supply for many months.

According to my aunts, Grandma did not have a written recipe for her soup; she kept sampling it while it was cooking and adding things until it tasted right.

The women of the village of Gnadenthal, Man., where Grandma lived, all made chicken noodle soup for new mothers. After a baby was born, a family received

many jars of soup. In this way the women of the village showed solidarity and support to the new mother, so she didn't have to cook too much while she was regaining her strength.

Giving noodles as a present was also a holiday tradition. Until she moved into a nursing home, Grandma continued to regularly receive noodles as a gift from a niece she helped to raise after her mother died in childbirth, and from a cousin she and Grandpa sponsored to come to Canada after the Second World War.

When Grandma visited me after my sons were born, she came bearing a jar of noodle soup, along with various handstitched items she had made for the babies.

Grandma's chicken noodle soup was a favourite of my younger son. Once, when he was about five, and we were making the 90-minute drive to Grandma's home for a visit, he wrote and illustrated a story about the way his great-grandmother made her special soup. In his story he gave the soup certain magical qualities.

I think Grandma's soup was magic because of the way every spoonful conveyed her love and care for us. ❧

Find the recipe and detailed explanation for this soup at: canadianmennonite.org/chicken-noodle-soup/.



*MaryLou Driedger is the author of the recently published novel, *Lost on the Prairie*, and the librarian at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.*

Living ‘in a prophetic way’

MC Alberta celebrates the ministry and retirement of Donna Entz

Story by Joanne De Jong
Alberta Correspondent

Mennonites across Alberta know her. Her heart for Muslims and those who are newcomers to Canada is well known. She has fed hundreds of refugees and immigrants over the past decade in her little apartment, which is situated in a low-income, multi-ethnic neighbourhood in North Edmonton.

She is Donna Entz, Mennonite Church Alberta’s director of the North Edmonton Ministry. After 11 years of service in Alberta, she and her husband Loren have decided to retire.

On June 27, Mennonites and guests gathered on Zoom to celebrate her ministry with Muslims and newcomers. More than 100 people participated.

When Entz arrived in Edmonton in 2010, she did not know what to expect, but she quickly discovered that Mennonites had already created many open doors.

One of her first experiences was at a Somali rally. Waiting for the event to begin, she was suddenly surrounded by 10 Somali men. They had heard she was a Mennonite and excitedly shared how they had all gone to a Mennonite school in Somalia. For this reason, they wanted to know her. Her relationship with the Somalis flourished.

Then she discovered that local Edmonton Mennonites regularly worked together on projects, including the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. Her work began on the foundation of a collective Mennonite witness, both global and local.

Her philosophy of mission comes from Peacemakers Professing Christ International, a network of Mennonites who engage with Muslims. Its core values, inspired by Eastern Mennonite Mission work in Somalia, were showcased at the retirement event: witness, hospitality, dialogue and peacemaking.

According to Entz, witness was the

overarching theme of her work.

She and her husband chose not to buy a car. They talked to people on the bus, invited people into their home, and served the community in many ways, such as teaching English, starting a community garden and participating in community events.

Entz says that Mennonites have repeatedly told her, “I can’t do witness.” She doesn’t buy that, though, saying Mennonites are all witnesses, whether they want to be or not.

At the farewell event, Sabira Devjee, a Muslim friend, affirmed Entz’s witness, by sharing her appreciation for the scriptural-reasoning group Entz began. Christian, Muslim and Jewish holy books were studied together, as participants witnessed to their perspectives through the lens of their faith traditions.

Entz’s witness was strengthened through hospitality. She highlighted the importance of reciprocity, where the focus is not only on serving and helping, but also on giving up control and receiving with humility.

At the event the story of a Syrian family who flew to Canada, becoming refugee claimants upon arrival, was told. Students in her English-as-Second-Language (ESL) class were invited to their home for a meal. When pita bread was served, the husband picked up the bread and fed it to Entz like a child. After the meal, pictures were shown of the violence and destruction in Damascus while the wife wept.

On a subsequent road trip to a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta meeting, Entz and MCC worker Jim Shantz discussed how to help sponsor Syrian refugees. They dreamed of the synergy possible if Mennonites and Muslims worked together to help bring these refugees to Canada, and they presented this idea to MCC. The result



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUZANNE GROSS

Donna Entz, right, and Doaa Ajani, a Syrian translator, at the “Under Wraps” event held at Lethbridge Mennonite Church in 2017. Mennonite and Muslim women shared about their experiences with head coverings.

was fruitful cooperation.

Dialogue has been a key way that Entz has encouraged Christians and Muslims toward greater mutual understanding. For nine years, she organized Christian-Muslim dialogues with A Common Word Alberta, a working group of Christians and Muslims committed to reducing religious prejudice.

The final dynamic of her ministry was peacemaking. She told of a newcomer who attended her class. It was the first day of Ramadan, and the woman made some strong, negative comments about fasting. “It’s wrong to fast like that,” she said.

Entz invited Muslim students to share why and how Ramadan was important

to them. At the end of the class, the newcomer who had been critical was smiling, saying, “This was really good.”

After a decade working with Muslims and Mennonites, Entz believes that engagement strengthens everyone, and that relating with the religious “other” deepens one’s own faith.

The Entzes plan to move to Winnipeg, where they will share a 100-year-old house with an alternative community and live closer to their adult children.

At the MC Alberta farewell, Omar Yaqub, a young adult, said, “You’ve taught me what service means and how to live in a prophetic way.”

Participants were invited to donate to refugee settlement funds in Entz’s name through MCC Alberta or through the Islamic Family and Social Services Association. ❧



Donna Entz, centre, receives the Community Animator Award from the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition in November 2018. Pictured are volunteers from Palestine, Lebanon, Ivory Coast, Lithuania, Somalia and Pakistan.

Nurturing faith with love, peace, nonviolence and justice

By Jace Jaeden Ellis

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

“University is a place where new struggles and challenges arise, and it is easy to get lost and distracted,” Merveille Mwankin said at the end of her first year attending the University of Waterloo. “As a Christian community, Grebel has helped, and continues to help, me nurture my faith by surrounding me with other believers and providing Anabaptist-Mennonite values such as love, peace, nonviolence, and justice.”

Mwankin is a first-year virtual resident and peace and conflict studies (PACS) student at Conrad Grebel University College. She initially heard of the college from past resident students in her congregation of Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham, Ont.

Through deep conversation, she learned about the many ways to connect and grow within the Grebel community, especially through community suppers, chapel and



Merveille Mwankin

the plentiful student-run events.

“As a Christian Mennonite, I decided to connect with Grebel because I wanted to be in a community where my belief is rooted and where it would allow me to grow spiritually in my faith,” she said.

Although she was a virtual resident living at home, Grebel made Mwankin feel welcome and included as a part of the family. Staff and student leaders frequently checked up on her through phone calls and Zoom meetings. By connecting with the PACS Living-Learning Community, she comfortably expressed her thoughts and formed friendships with like-minded PACS students while they shared their interests in exploring the impact of peace on their own life and the world around them.

In addition, she found other ways to connect with members of the community

through Grebel’s Weekly Waves and fun online get-to-know-you and peace-related events with the PACS Living-Learning Community.

“In these unpredictable times, people are going through a lot of difficult challenges, so staying connected through these events can allow people to get their minds off of the happenings of the outside world and focus our attention more on social bonding and building friendships,” Mwankin said. “Although it is not safe to physically meet in person and connect, the pandemic has taught us other alternative ways to get involved and stay connected with one another through several technological platforms.”

Next year, she plans to live at Grebel in person. Most of all, she said, “I am looking forward to meeting my virtual friends physically in-person, strengthening friendships and building new long-lasting relationships.” ❧



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Staff change

Pastoral transition in Saskatchewan



Len Rempel is the new pastor of two Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations. On June 1, he began serving both Warman Mennonite Church, and Pleasant Point Mennonite in Clavet. Most recently, Rempel was employed for 10 years as chief operating officer of Mennonite World Conference. At the same time, for the past-four-and-a-half years, he served quarter-time as pastor of St. Agatha (Ont.) Mennonite Church. Rempel holds a bachelor of mathematics degree from the University of Waterloo, Ont., and a bachelor of education degree from Nipissing University in North Bay, Ont. He has also taken some master's level courses at both Waterloo Lutheran Seminary (now Martin Luther University College) and Conrad Grebel University College, also in Waterloo.

—BY DONNA SCHULZ



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/// Staff change

AMBS appoints new vice-president, CFO



Deanna A. Risser has been appointed the new vice-president for administration and chief financial officer (CFO) of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., beginning Aug. 1. The appointment took place during the board's April 14-16 meeting over Zoom. Risser, who currently serves as vice-president for finance at Goshen (Ind.) College, will succeed Ron Ringenberg, who will retire in August after 18 years of service. Risser earned a master of business administration degree from Indiana University South Bend and a bachelor of arts in business administration degree from Bluffton (Ohio) University. Between 2014 and 2018, she also took courses in Christian formation at AMBS. A Goshen College employee since 1999, Risser was promoted to her current role in 2016. In addition, she was co-director for a Goshen study-service term in Nicaragua in 2012. Prior to joining Goshen, she served as office manager, bookkeeper and registrar at Camp Friedenswald in Cassopolis, Michigan. Says Risser of the opportunity: "I was attracted to the community and connectedness of AMBS and the opportunity to participate in the seminary's mission of educating future church and community leaders. The Holy Spirit is at work at AMBS. I look forward to continuing to advance this good work and to help lead AMBS to a strong financial future."

—AMBS



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Watch: Expressing hope through dance

A new video showcases an inspired performance by the dance class at Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Man. canadianmennonite.org/lovelydance



Is church online for good?

Gerald Hildebrand, a Mennonite World Conference regional representative, explores the way church has changed in the last 16 months. canadianmennonite.org/zoorch



Celebration in Harrisonburg

MDS volunteers in Virginia gathered for a picnic in May to celebrate the creative ways they have responded to community needs during the pandemic. canadianmennonite.org/mdspicnic



Voices Together and creation care

New on the blog: Mennonite Creation Care Network's Kate Strathdee explores the new hymnal through a creation care lens. canadianmennonite.org/blog/vtcreation

Digital issues for the summer slowdown

FROM

Canadian Mennonite

The magazine will print one issue in July and one in August during our annual summer slowdown, but subscribers are eligible to receive a digital issue by email in two-week intervals.

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CANADIAN Mennonite

/// News brief

Baergen retires after 40 years of serving newcomers

More than 50 cars and 100 people, mostly newcomers to Canada, paraded past the home of **Don Baergen** on May 29, to show appreciation and celebrate his retirement after 40 years of service at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. Cars were decorated with balloons, streamers and homemade signs: "From east to west Don is the best," and "We love you, Don!" Baergen was one of the first employees at the centre back in 1981. The Edmonton Mennonite churches started the organization to serve Vietnamese refugees. He says the centre has been creative and on the cutting edge. He also notes the growth. Beginning with a budget of \$30,000, it now has a budget of more than \$10 million and more than 200 employees. Reflecting on his service, he says, "I have learned a lot about diversity and inclusion from both colleagues and



PHOTO BY GREG LOPEZ

Don Bergen greets cars parading to celebrate his 40 years of service at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. Leaning out of the car is colleague Sara Buczynski.

participants. Working with people from different cultural, faith and socio-economic backgrounds has taught me about respect

and compassion. My listening skills have definitely improved!"

—BY JOANNE DE JONG

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Summer 2021
VOLUME 31 ISSUE 2

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- 3 Meet our new graduates
- 5 Graduates' reflections
- 6 Your gifts at work
2021 graduate awards
- 7 Faculty transitions
- 8 Upcoming offerings



AMBS window

“Focus on the people of God,” Millsaps urges seminary grads

Cyneatha Millsaps, MDiv, told the 21 candidates for graduation at AMBS's May 1 commencement service “not to take anything for granted in this challenging world — to assume nothing.”

Around 60 people attended the service in person in the seminary's Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount; attendance was limited to follow Elkhart (Indiana) County COVID-19 safety guidelines, and nearly 100 percent of the graduates, faculty and guests were fully vaccinated. People on more than 100 devices from Europe and North and South America viewed the event via livestream.

In her address, Millsaps drew upon the story of Peter (a disciple of Jesus and a Jew) and Cornelius (a Gentile) in Acts 10, noting that while the passage is often titled ‘The conversion of Cornelius,’ “it is much more a conversion of Peter — that is, in his attitude and his opinion towards the Gentiles.”

“Our Scripture passage today shows us that it doesn't matter how great a pastor or a leader you become, you can

miss the mark,” said Millsaps, a 2008 AMBS graduate who serves as Executive Director of Mennonite Women USA, Co-Pastor of Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Tolson Center for Community Excellence in Elkhart.

“The church today is stuck, deciding who is clean and unclean,” she said. “For the new leaders, please do not let the systems, traditions and people cause you to miss the people of God.”

Millsaps explained that Peter was so fixated on what he thought he knew that he could no longer see what was possible, adding, “Four-part harmony is great, but you may be called to gospel rap.”

Noting that God prepared both Peter and Cornelius for their meeting, she encouraged the candidates to be prepared to encounter other God-seekers in surprising ways and to watch for what God is doing in the world around them.

“My warning to you is to enter into your new call *not* trying to be what the people of the church already know and believe, but to enter into the world of



Cornelius, looking for people eager to learn, live and worship,” she said. “Spend as much time as you can asking God to show you which way you should go.”

Millsaps drew parallels between Peter's encounter with the Gentiles and today's context. Over the last 20 years, she said, the church has been focusing on its dwindling numbers. People have embraced spirituality but avoided religion. People who have been traumatized by the church have fled it. *(continued)*

Top: The graduates celebrate!
Above: Commencement speaker
Cyneatha Millsaps, MDiv

(continued from p. 1)

“You are about to meet those new Gentiles: two generations of unchurched or barely churched people — people God has been watching and preparing for 20 or 30 years,” she said. She urged them to “focus on the people of God” — on their journey; their desire to connect with God and others; and on “the love and grace and mercy found in Jesus Christ.”

After the graduates received their diplomas, **Jamie Pitts**, PhD, Associate Professor of Anabaptist Studies, charged them to lead in the tradition of Ursula Jost, a 16th-century Anabaptist and prophet: being captivated by God’s beauty and open to having their imaginations enlarged by God; preaching that God is on the side of the oppressed; and retaining steadfast trust in God.

“My charge to you is that you would get your hands dirty in the soil of God’s good earth, and with holy dirt in hand, that you would disrupt the powers that capture creation’s abundance, so that all might partake of God’s blessings and give God the highest thanks and praise.”

Rachel Miller Jacobs, DMin, Associate Professor of Congregational Formation, offered the blessing prayer, praying that God would whisper to each graduate every day, “You are my beloved. In you I am well pleased.”

A video of the service is available at ambs.ca/commencement. •

— *John David Thacker, Annette Brill Bergstresser*



Thirteen graduates were present in person for commencement — with Beverly Lapp, EdD, Vice President and Academic Dean (at left), and David Boshart, PhD, President (at right).

Profile of the graduates

Of the 21 graduates, eight completed part or all of their seminary studies from a distance. Eleven lived on campus for at least part of their studies.

As undergraduates, seven of this year’s graduates majored in religion, Bible, ministry, or peace and justice studies. Three majored in education, and six in other liberal arts areas. Three majored in health-related fields, three in other sciences, and one in business administration. Mennonite colleges and universities with graduates in AMBS’s Class of 2021 include Bethel College (Kansas), Bluffton University, Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College, Hesston College and Meserete Kristos College in Ethiopia.

Three graduates earned previous master’s degrees, including one person — **Pratik Bagh** — who earned a Master of Arts: Theological Studies from AMBS before completing his MDiv.

Three of this year’s graduates have family members who are also AMBS graduates: Pratik Bagh’s uncles, Anil Bagh (MATS 1998) and Prem Bagh (Certificate 1996); **Amy Kratzer’s** father, Ruben Chupp (Certificate 2010); and **Cathy Stoner’s** father, John Stoner (BDiv 1967, MDiv 1997).

Quinn Brenneke gets the award for being most indecisive about starting seminary. He flipped a coin multiple times, and it kept coming up heads! •

— *Janeen Bertsche Johnson, MDiv, Alumni Director*

AMBS Window Summer 2021 Volume 31 Issue 2

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Mennonite Church Canada

BY THE NUMBERS

Graduates by degree

- 15 Master of Divinity
- 2 Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- 2 Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- 2 Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

Graduates by ministry

- 11 serving in pastoral ministry roles or seeking pastoral assignments
- 4 serving in education or research
- 3 serving with social work or church agencies/organizations
- 3 discerning future options for ministry, mission or service work
- 2 pursuing further studies or training

Graduates by demographic

- 13 men
- 8 women
- 7 countries represented — Argentina, Canada, Chile, Ethiopia, France, India, U.S. — on 5 continents
- 9 members of Mennonite Church USA
- 1 member of Mennonite Church Canada
- 5 members of Mennonite denominations around the world
- 3 members of United Methodist or Wesleyan churches
- 1 member of the Evangelical Free Church of America
- 2 members of nondenominational churches

Meet our new graduates!

Each graduate received one of the following degrees and certificates at AMBS's May 1 commencement service.

MDiv Master of Divinity

MACF Master of Arts in Christian Formation

MATPS Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies

Certificate Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

* Candidates who have six or fewer credits left to complete toward their degree

► Candidates who completed a portion of their degree or certificate at a distance



Marcos Acosta

(Presidencia Roque Sáenz Peña, Chaco, Argentina). *MDiv: Theological Studies: Biblical Studies.* Marcos is exploring a ministry assignment.

His home congregation is Iglesia de la Familia in Presidencia Roque Sáenz Peña, Chaco; while studying at AMBS, he has attended South Bend (Indiana) City Church.



► Pratik Bagh

(Kutela-Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India). *MDiv: Theological Studies: History, Theology and Ethics.* Pratik would like to pursue a PhD

or a Doctor of Ministry in the near future. He is currently serving as a

volunteer pastor at an Asian church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and hopes to continue to work in the church as a lead pastor. Pratik's home congregation is Jhilmila Mennonite Church, Jhilmila Mission Compound, Mahasamund, Chhattisgarh. He is married to Shabnam Pratik Bagh, and they have one child.



* Quinn Brenneke

(Fort Wayne, Indiana). *MDiv: Theological Studies: History, Theology and Ethics.* Quinn plans to continue serving as Co-Pastor of

Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart.



Tyler Andrew Brinkman

(Elkhart, Indiana). *MDiv: Theological Studies: History, Theology and Ethics.* Tyler plans to explore a career in which he can continue

his research, writing and possibly teaching. He is married to Crystal Brinkman, and they have one child.



Meredith K. Caldwell

(South Bend, Indiana). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Meredith plans to continue working as a

radiographic technologist while pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Her home congregation is Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend. She is married to Bill Caldwell, and they have three children.



Endalk Degefu

(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia). *MACF.* Endalk is discerning where God is leading him, whether it might be to a pastoral ministry position

in the United States or Ethiopia or to a mission or service assignment in a different place. His home congregation is the Ethiopian Meserete Kristos Church in Addis Ababa. He is married to Tigest Fikere, and they have three children.



► Perry (Alex)

Feldman (Lithopolis, Ohio). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Alex plans to continue serving as Interim Pastor at Lithopolis United Methodist Church.

He is married to Michelle Feldman, and they have one child.

Below: Jamie Pitts, PhD, Associate Professor of Anabaptist Studies, presents the charge to the graduates.





Salomé Haldemann (Strasbourg, France). *MATPS*. Salomé plans to explore pastoral ministry through a one-year assignment in an as-yet-undetermined

Mennonite congregation in France. Her home congregation is the Eglise Evangélique Mennonite de Strasbourg-Illkirch, France. While studying at AMBS, she has attended Fellowship of Hope in Elkhart.



Becky Helmuth (Goshen, Indiana). *MDiv: Christian Faith Formation*. In 2020, Becky ended nearly 16 years of working with *The Mennonite* magazine in Elkhart;

she is looking forward to pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Her home congregation is North Goshen (Indiana) Mennonite Church. She is married to Todd Helmuth; they have two adult children and one high-school-age daughter.



***Mary (Ann) Jacobs** (South Bend, Indiana). *MDiv: Christian Faith Formation*. Ann plans to continue in her role as a Church Relations Resource

and Network Associate with Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart. She is licensed for this ministry by her home congregation — New Life Fellowship Ministry in South Bend — in collaboration with leaders of AMBS, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and Mission Network. She and her husband, Booker T. Jacobs, raised four sons and have 15 grandchildren.



***Joshua Janzen** (Aurora, Nebraska, and Altona, Manitoba, Canada). *MDiv: Christian Faith Formation*. Josh plans to continue in his current assignment as Associate Pastor of Youth Ministry at Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona. He is married to Stephanie Janzen.



>Danae King (Orrville, Ohio). *Certificate*. Danae is exploring options for work in, or in service of, the church. Her home congregation is Orrville

Mennonite Church.



Amy Amanda Chupp Kratzer (Goshen, Indiana). *MACF*. Amy is concluding 18 years of service on the pastoral team of Sunnyside

Mennonite Church in Elkhart and plans to teach music in Goshen Community Schools. She is married to Amos Kratzer, and they have four children.



Henok T. Mekonin (Nazreth, Oromiya region, Ethiopia). *MATPS*. Henok looks forward to continuing to live in Elkhart and work as AMBS's assistant

for the Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism cohort program offered through AMBS's partnership with Meserete Kristos Seminary. His home congregation is Nazreth Western Meserete Kristos. He is married to Misgana Eshete; they have one child and are expecting another this summer.



>Andrew L. Oliver (Vancouver, Washington). *Certificate*. Andy serves half time on the pastoral team of Portland (Oregon) First

United Methodist Church. He wants to continue to explore anti-racism work by reaching out to White Christian Nationalists in his community. He is married to Jodi Oliver, and they have two children.



Catherine G. Stoner (South Bend, Indiana). *MDiv: Christian Faith Formation*. Cathy is currently working as a Recovery Coach for Oaklawn Psychiatric

Center in South Bend. Her home congregation is Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend. She has four children.



Luis Marcos Tapia Rubio (Valparaiso, Chile). *MDiv: Theological Studies: History, Theology and Ethics*. Luis plans to pursue a career in teaching. While

studying at AMBS, he has attended College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.



>Matthew W. Troyer-Miller (Shickley, Nebraska). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry*. Matt plans to continue pastoring at Wood River (Nebraska)

Mennonite Church. His home congregation is Salem Mennonite Church in Shickley. He is married to Elizabeth Troyer-Miller, and they have three children.



****Henry (Hank) Duvanel Unruh** (Newton, Kansas). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Hank is pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. He is currently the

Youth Pastor at First Mennonite Church of Hillsboro (Kansas), and he grew up attending Zion Mennonite Church in Elbing, Kansas. He is married to Erin Unruh.



>Michael Unruh (Wichita, Newton and North Newton, Kansas). *MDiv: Christian Faith Formation.* Michael plans to continue serving as Campus

Pastor at Bethel College in North Newton. His home congregation is Tabor Mennonite Church in Goessel, Kansas. He is married to Lina Unruh, and they have one child.



Amy Lynn Whitehead (Elkhart, Indiana). *MDiv: Chaplaincy.* Amy plans to continue working full time in social work at Lifeline Youth and

Family Services in Elkhart. She also will pursue her next three units of Clinical Pastoral Education, with the goal of becoming board certified, and plans to spend the next year focusing on activities she enjoys such as travel, hiking and photography. Amy's home congregation is River Oaks Community Church in Elkhart.

To learn more about our graduates, see their full bios: amsb.ca/grads

Graduates' reflections

"My learning at AMBS helped me to deepen my understanding of what the Anabaptist way of faith formation means for discipleship, through theological reflection in class lectures and discussions among different front-line ministers from every corner of the world. I am glad that through this experience, I am growing in my professional calling."

— **Endalk Degefu** (MACF) of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

"I really enjoyed being part of a learning community where professors are invested in building relationships with students and walking with them on their paths. With AMBS's integrative emphasis on being, knowing and doing, a lot of learning took place outside of the classroom — in informal conversations with faculty and students, in practice groups and at internships."

— **Salomé Haldemann** (MATPS) of Strasbourg, France

"Being a student at AMBS has equipped me as a leader. ... I feel well prepared to teach theological themes with conviction and to preach with an awareness of the sound doctrine, context, historical development and broader ethical underpinning of a biblical text."

— **Pratik Bagh** (MDiv) of Kutela-Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India

"I have been extraordinarily blessed during my time at AMBS. I had little experience with Anabaptism prior to my study here. I have gained a deeper love for my own Methodist/Wesleyan tradition as well as an even deeper appreciation for Anabaptism and the wonderful Mennonites I have met in my journey."

— **Tyler Brinkman** (MDiv) of Elkhart, Indiana

"AMBS has opened up a world for me as to what the Christian faith means in the 21st century. In the area of peace studies, I have been introduced to theological frameworks I did not know existed. Additionally, my ability to minister in places of hurt and violation has been strengthened through immersion in deep exploration of themes of forgiveness and reconciliation."

— **Andy Oliver** (Certificate) of Vancouver, Washington

"I'm grateful for my journey at AMBS, which has imparted significant learning to me — learning that has deepened my spiritual journey, increased my character, strengthened my confidence in exegeting Scripture, and inspired my love for God." — **Ann Jacobs** (MDiv) of South Bend, Indiana

"AMBS pushed me, shaped me and challenged me as I grew deeper in my relationship with God and my relationships with others. I came to AMBS straight from college; AMBS is the place where I grew up."

— **Josh Janzen** (MDiv) of Aurora, Nebraska, and Altona, Manitoba, Canada

"Through the MDiv Connect program, I was able to build meaningful relationships with my professors and fellow students. It was very helpful to study at AMBS while pastoring, as these relationships and my theological studies improved my pastoral abilities."

— **Matt Troyer-Miller** (MDiv) of Shickley, Nebraska

"AMBS's commitment to academic excellence gave me the chance to grow, learn and explore many different theological topics — engaging with my own tradition and context in combination with Anabaptism."

— **Marcos Acosta** (MDiv) of Presidencia Roque Sáenz Peña, Chaco, Argentina

Your gifts at work!

Donor gifts to AMBS have made the following exciting realities possible:

By the numbers: AMBS student financial stats

- Average amount of student tuition costs covered by need-based financial aid and scholarships in 2020–21: **64%**
- Percentage of degree-seeking students who borrowed to pay for seminary in 2020–21: **6.5%** (6 students of 92) (down from 31.6% in 2013–14!)
- Average amount borrowed in 2020–21 (among the 6 students borrowing funds): **\$6,957**
- Total contributions made by churches toward individual students' tuition costs in 2020–21: **\$59,497**
- AMBS funds available per student to match church contributions toward tuition: **up to \$2,000 per year**
- Number of new scholarships created for 2021–22 and beyond: **3** (Multicultural Church, Ecumenical Student, MDiv Connect Student)
- Total number of scholarships offered to both full- and part-time students for 2021–22: **105**

Your contributions make a tangible difference for students both during and after seminary. If you value forming thoughtful and dedicated leaders for the church like our 2021 graduates, we invite you to donate to AMBS to support current and future students. Thank you! amsb.ca/give

Graduates receive awards



Teaching and Administrative Faculty members presented awards to selected candidates for graduation at a livestreamed Dean's Sharing and Awards Program held April 30. This year's recipients (pictured left to right above):

- **Amy Amanda Chupp Kratzer:** Award for Excellence in Christian Formation
- **Luis Marcos Tapia Rubio:** Award for Excellence in Theological Studies
- **Endalk Degefu:** Award for Excellence in Christian Formation
- **Salomé Haldemann:** Heart of the Community Award
- **Marcos Acosta:** Award for Excellence in Biblical Interpretation
- **Henok T. Mekonin:** Award for Excellence in Global Anabaptist Education Outreach
- (Not pictured) **Perry (Alex) Feldman:** Award for Excellence in Biblical Interpretation

Graduates also received a one-year print subscription to *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* from the Institute of Mennonite Studies; access to the Atlas for Alum database from the AMBS Library; and a complimentary registration to a Leadership Clinic in 2022 from the Church Leadership Center. The Admissions Team presented each graduate with a "golden ticket" — good for one waived \$50 Admissions Application fee — to share with a prospective student. •

Below: Following the commencement service, a reception was held in the AMBS courtyard for the seminary community, the graduates and their guests.



The AMBS learning community is bidding farewell to two faculty members and welcoming another.



In July, **Safwat Marzouk**, PhD, is leaving his roles as Associate Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and Bible Department Chair after 10 years of service.

He has accepted a position as Associate Professor of Old Testament at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, beginning in July.

In addition to teaching, Marzouk co-led “Encountering Egypt: Past and Present” learning tours in his home country in 2016 and 2020. He is a sought-after speaker across the Mennonite Church in the U.S. and Canada and a frequent presenter at meetings of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature.

“Safwat is an engaged and thoughtful scholar-teacher, modeling how scholarship informs teaching and vice versa,” remarked Vice President and Academic Dean **Beverly Lapp**, EdD. “He is intensely invested in intersecting his work as a scholar with anti-oppression analysis and intercultural awareness, and he skillfully engages people across a broad spectrum of educational backgrounds and learning styles. He has the heart and mind of a pastor and cares deeply about the life of the church.”

A prolific writer, Marzouk published his doctoral dissertation, *Egypt as a Monster in the Book of Ezekiel* (Mohr Siebeck, 2015), and *Intercultural Church: A Biblical Vision for an Age of Migration* (Fortress, 2019). His research also has focused on reading the Bible with and through the eyes of migrants. He encourages faith communities to enter into relationships with people who are different from them to foster alternatives to the politics of fear and exclusion.

“Safwat has an uncanny ability to contextualize the world of the ‘there and then’ with the world of the ‘here and now’ in order to empower the church to bear witness to God’s love, peace and justice,” reflected **Drew Strait**, PhD,

Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins. “The impact of his teaching and leadership will be with us for many years to come.”



Ron Ringenberg, MBA, MS, Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer, will retire in August after 18 years of service. He served as Director

of Development and Vice President for Advancement and Administration before beginning his current role in 2015.

President **David Boshart**, PhD, observed that Ringenberg has brought stability to AMBS through his administrative acumen, financial savvy and aspirational vision.

“It’s been a gift to have a VP and CFO who keeps a steady hand on the wheel where the ledger is concerned but when budget requests come, is quick to say, ‘It all depends on what you want to accomplish,’” he said. “I have experienced Ron as someone who is more inclined to free the resources of the institution than to hoard them, as long as freeing them serves the growth of AMBS’s mission.”

Over Ringenberg’s years at AMBS, he and his colleagues have raised more than \$46 million to support this mission. Many of these funds went toward infrastructure projects that he oversaw, such as building the energy-efficient library; refurbishing, building an annex for and increasing the energy efficiency of the Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount; and creating endowments to support the ongoing operations of these facilities.

He also oversaw the transformation of two houses into guesthouses; the razing of six buildings; and modifications to make AMBS’s main buildings accessible to people with disabilities. Four buildings on campus got new metal roofs, and two solar arrays were installed, saving AMBS almost \$20,000 per year in energy costs.

Boshart also highlighted Ringenberg’s skillful handling of the seminary’s finances during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has helped put AMBS on strong financial footing.



In April, the AMBS board appointed **Deanna A. Risser**, MBA, as Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer, beginning Aug. 1. Risser most

recently served as Vice President for Finance at Goshen (Indiana) College (GC).

“Deanna’s references praised her for her character and integrity, attention to her own spiritual growth, deep commitment to church/nonprofit organizational leadership, strong financial management skills and collaborative work style,” said Boshart, search committee chair. “We’re excited about the gifts and experience Deanna brings and eager for her to join us in building on Ron’s legacy.”

Risser earned a Master of Business Administration from Indiana University South Bend and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Bluffton (Ohio) University. She also took courses in Christian formation at AMBS.

A GC employee since 1999, Risser served as an Administrative Assistant, Manager of Business Operations/Budget Analyst, Assistant Director of Institutional Research, and Budget and Financial Reporting Manager before being promoted to her most recent role in 2016. She also co-directed a Study-Service Term in Nicaragua in 2012.

As VP for Finance, Risser led a process that balanced GC’s operating budget, also streamlining the annual planning process and improving financial reporting; developed and implemented an annual capital project and deferred maintenance planning process; refinanced long-term debt; and secured federal funding for campus operations during the pandemic; among other achievements.

“During Deanna’s interview process, her knowledge, experience and love of the church came through loud and clear,” said **Daniel Grimes**, MPA, Vice President for Advancement and Enrollment. “Her collaborative and supportive work style feels like a good fit for our learning community.” •

— Annette Brill Bergstresser

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Upcoming offerings

Rooted and Grounded Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship

Oct. 14–16: Speakers for the fifth gathering will be Laura Meitzner Yoder, PhD, and Timothy R. Eberhart, MDiv, PhD. ambs.ca/rootedandgrounded

Anabaptist Short Courses

Dig into Anabaptist theology, history and practice in these six-week online noncredit courses. Some courses include optional weekly video conversations with professors in real time. No grades, no papers! CEUs available.

- **Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible:** Sept. 15 – Oct. 26, with Susannah Larry, PhD, and Drew Strait, PhD
- **Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology:** Oct. 27 – Dec. 14, with Jamie Pitts, PhD
- **A Worship Leader's Introduction to Voices Together:** Oct. 27 – Dec. 14, with Katie Graber, PhD, and Anneli Loopp Thiessen, MM

ambs.ca/shortcourses

Pastors and Leaders/Deep Faith 2022: Leading in the Wilderness

Feb. 21–24: More information to come!
ambs.ca/pastorsandleaders

Invite AMBS

Faculty and staff are available to speak on topics such as trauma-informed caregiving, intercultural competence, undoing racism, leadership for God's reconciling mission, and more. Ask about virtual visits!

ambs.ca/invite

Leadership Integrity Circles

Join seasoned leaders Betty Pries, PhD, and Rick Stiffney, PhD, in exploring what it means to practice Christ-centered leadership in your workplace. Learn through self-reflection, conversation and spiritual practices.

ambs.ca/leadership

Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

This two-and-a-half-year nondegree program offers mentor-mentee partnerships, distance-learning opportunities and community support. People from any tradition are welcome to apply!

ambs.ca/journey

!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth

Participants in !Explore 2022 will attend Mennonite World Conference in Indonesia with nine Indonesian youth,

explore theological questions and lived faith together, and visit parts of beautiful Java Island. The program — which is open to students in grades 10–12 — also includes a congregational internship. Generous financial support is available for the MWC expenses, and participants receive a \$1,000 stipend. Tap a shoulder!
ambs.ca/explore

Scholarships available

We offer generous need-based financial aid, church matching grants and scholarships for full- and part-time graduate students to help make your education affordable — whether you study at a distance or on campus! (See p. 6 sidebar)
ambs.ca/grow

Take a Semester One course!

(Aug. 31 – Dec. 10) Distance-friendly options include Earthkeeping; History of Christianity in Africa; Luke-Acts: Gospeling Peace Amid Empire; Faith Formation and Spirituality: Youth and Young Adults; Witness Colloquium; and more. Fifteen in-person courses are also available. **Get 50% off your first course for credit!** (nonadmitted students only) Check out our offerings!
ambs.ca/onecourse

Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 18: MCC B.C. Festival for World Relief. Details to be announced.

Oct. 15-17: MC B.C. women's retreat, at Camp Squeah, Hope. Theme: "Our God, our healer." Details to be announced.

Ongoing: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. is calling on local Anabaptists to participate in a collaborative storytelling project. Share your COVID-19 story/artwork/experiences for this first of its kind collaborative project at <http://aht.libraryhost.com/>. Take a look at the submissions! Still shy about uploading? Send your submission via email to archives@mhsbc.com and it can be added to the project on your behalf.

Alberta

Every Monday to Thursday: Congregants from across MC Alberta are invited to join a Zoom group for morning prayer on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7:30 a.m. MST, and evening prayer on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9 p.m. MST, for about 15 to 20 minutes, using *Take Our Moments and Our Days*. Register online at mcab.ca/events.

Nationwide

July 31-Aug 4, 2022: MC Canada National Youth Gathering at Camp Valaqua, Alta. Youth ages 12 to 18 can register individually or as a group. Details coming soon.

Online

Through Sept. 5: Each Sunday, a different congregation in MC Canada is sharing its worship service with

the nationwide community of faith. Link at www.mennonitechurch.ca/worshipservices or at MC Canada's YouTube channel.

Sept. 30-Oct. 2: Conference "MCC at 100: Mennonites, Service, and the Humanitarian Impulse," organized by the Mennonite Studies department of University of Winnipeg. Details: mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events/mcc_at_100/

International

Aug. 19-21: "God's church and mission: A leadership formation retreat," at Rosedale Bible College, Irwin, Ohio, at 7 p.m. Topic: "When you can find sermons, worship music, powerful leaders and even spiritual community online, what's the point of the local church?" Instructors: Matt Cordella, Jeremy Miller and Jeff McLain. For more information, email jmclain@rosedale.edu.

July 1-4, 2022: Mennonite World Conference's Global Youth Summit, in Salatiga, Indonesia. Theme: "Life in the Spirit: Learn. Serve. Worship." To learn more, visit mwc-cmm.org/gys.

July 5-10, 2022: Mennonite World Conference's global assembly, in Semarang, Indonesia. Theme: "Following Jesus together across barriers." For more information, visit mwc-cmm.org/assembly/indonesia-2022.

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



Classifieds

Female roommate sought

Seeking a female roommate on the main floor of a spacious house on Portwood Road in Winnipeg for September 1. Rent is \$450 and includes everything except food. Contact us at loreek@mts.net.

New to Montreal & looking for a church community?

Join us at
Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal
 located in the heart of the city
 Contact - pastor@mfmntl.org

Employment Opportunity



Employment Opportunity Head of Maintenance

Camps with Meaning invites applications for the full-time, permanent position of Head of Maintenance at Camp Assiniboia, just west of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Head of Maintenance is responsible for keeping Camp Assiniboia's site and facilities in good working condition in order to provide excellent hospitality to guests and the summer camp program. The Head of Maintenance oversees the Maintenance Volunteer program, provides supervision to maintenance staff and participates in planning both small and large development projects.

Visit www.campswithmeaning.org: News, for job description, salary range, housing, etc.

Inquiries should be directed to David Hogue, Resident Manager at 204-782-3019. Applications will be accepted until this position is filled. Applicants should send a resume along with the names of three references, in confidence to: assiniboia@campswithmeaning.org.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
Sept. 13	Aug. 30
Sept. 27	Sept. 13
Oct. 11	Sept. 27

Advertising Information

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



Photo finish

PHOTO BY MAXINE BERGMANN / TEXT BY JOANNE DE JONG

Every Thursday, Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary hosts a pop-up farm stand as part of its partnership with the University Heights Community Association. The organic food truck from Broxburn Farms, a plant-to-plate operation east of Lethbridge, Alta., parks for free in the church parking lot while church and community members are invited to bring and hang out on lawn chairs. The farm sells fruit, vegetables and goat cheese along with various sundries.



PHOTO BY SHIM BEACK / TEXT BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

Members of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C., said farewell to two staff members at a drop-in event on June 27. Bob Boehr, the transitional pastor, has completed his two-and-a-half year term with the congregation; and Gerald Neufeld, who has been serving as music coordinator since 2010, is moving to Japan with his family. Pictured from left to right: congregational chair David Leis says words of thanks to Neufeld and his wife Rie, centre, with Erna Janzen looking on at right. A food truck supplied barbecued food for lunch. Despite the temperature in the Fraser Valley that day rising to record-high levels of more than 40 degrees C, many came out to thank and wish the departing staff members well. Highlights of the afternoon were singing "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," and the presentation of farewell congregational videos to Neufeld and Boehr.