

CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 27, 2022 Volume 26 Number 13



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EDITORIAL

Acting 'a little strange'

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Executive editor



“When you learn to follow Jesus, you will act a little strange.” This memorable line comes from a song by Mennonite singer/songwriter Bryan Moyer Suderman. Besides being an earworm, this simple song encourages children, youth and adults to consider what their lives will look like as they’re learning to walk in the way of Jesus.

The refrain says, “When you learn to follow Jesus, you will act a little strange; / people stop and take a look.” (You can hear the whole song on Spotify or connect with Suderman through his website at smalltallministries.com.)

Recently, while working around the house, I found myself humming this tune. Then I sat down to read a book by respected Anabaptist scholar and author Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire*. Published in 2016, this book tells the fascinating story of Christ’s followers in the first four centuries after his life on earth.

Living under the power of the Roman Empire, these early Christians acted “a little strange” compared to the society around them. They gave allegiance to a Lord who wasn’t the emperor. Demonstrating the good news of Jesus, they cared for the local outcasts and people who were poor or ill. They ignored the social class boundaries and gathered to share meals where rich and poor, women and men, were treated equally. They withstood physical torture for the sake

of their faith, even confronting death in the gladiators’ arena.

A striking feature was their visible expression of love. Tertullian, an early Christian author and apologist, noted that those around the Christ-followers commented, “See how they love one another!” Kreider writes, “The Christians were creating an alternative community that had nonconformist approaches to common social problems” and that “visibly interesting behaviour” intrigued and attracted people on the outside.

So, who wants to be weird? Is “countercultural” still a descriptor we Mennonites want to claim today? Article 10 in *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* asserts that “Christians are strangers and aliens within all cultures.” That article describes the church as “God’s nation, encompassing people who have come from every tribe and nation.”

Point 5 in the commentary states, “The church is called to live as an alternative culture within the surrounding society. . . . The church lives within the dominant culture yet is called to challenge that culture’s myths and assumptions when they conflict with Christian faith.” Some “myths” mentioned are individualism, materialism, militarism, nationalism, racism and sexism.

Suderman’s song describes some distinctive ways Jesus’ contemporary disciples might behave:

- “**Instead of gimme**, gimme, gimme gimme lots of stuff, / we share so everyone can have enough.”
- “**Instead of workin’**, workin’, workin’, workin’ all the time, / you know, we even

take a day of rest.”

- **When somebody makes** us really, really mad, instead of getting even, / we forgive.”

Some Mennonites have memories of past teachings about distinctive clothing or other superficial ways in which we were supposed to differ from our neighbours. But the countercultural essence of the gospel goes way deeper and is applicable to Christ-followers in all centuries and locations: respecting and valuing all people, practicing an extravagant generosity, and living in a mode of peacemaking and forgiveness. All these actions are undergirded by a trust in the God who walks alongside us even today.

How is your faith in Jesus causing you to “act a little strange?” What unusual actions might God be calling you—and your faith community—to do?

Upcoming issues

The next issue of *CM* will be one of three digital-only issues for the summer. The July 11, Aug. 8 and Sept. 5 issues will not appear in print but will be available to all digital subscribers, via email. If you already receive a digital version of the magazine, these will automatically come to you. If you receive only the print issue but want to read the digital issues as well, through the summer and beyond, you can add that option at canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/digital or email office@canadianmennonite.org. There is no extra cost to current subscribers.

Correction

In the June 13 issue, the cover and inside photos (on pages 15-16) of the Indigenous-Mennonite Encounters conference held at Conrad Grebel University College were taken by Margaret Gissing. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error. ❧



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PHOTO BY CHAD BENDER

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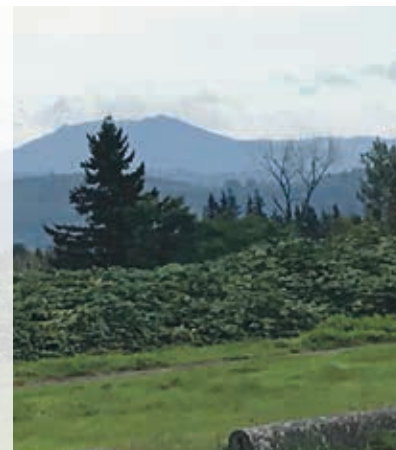
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FEATURE

We gratefully acknowledge . . .

Land acknowledgment can be bridge with Indigenous Peoples

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent



PHOTO BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

Although Mt. Baker is located in Washington state, traditional Salishan territory, its presence is part of Abbotsford, B.C.'s skyline. Abbotsford is home to the Matsqui First Nation, affiliated with the Stó:lō Nation.

In recent years, whether attending church meetings or public or community gatherings, Canadians may have heard opening words similar to these: “We gratefully acknowledge that we are meeting today on the traditional, ancestral territory of

[local Indigenous group].”

Especially since the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) report and Calls to Action published in 2015, Canadians have tried to acknowledge wrongs done over the years to Indigenous Peoples. One step in

this process is recognizing that all of Canada was once inhabited solely by First Nations peoples before it was settled by others.

The idea for making land acknowledgment statements may seem new, but it dates back to the tradition of Indigenous nation-to-nation protocol in visiting and welcoming. “It was common practice among Indigenous people to acknowledge being on each other’s territory,” explains Bridget Findlay, coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee B.C.’s Indigenous Neighbours program. Findlay also works alongside the Indigenous Relations Task Group of Mennonite Church B.C.

As congregations consider their use of land acknowledgments, many issues arise. Why make such statements at all? What is the proper wording? How and when will it be used? Is a mere statement adequate and what are the implications of making it?

While many people appreciate the effort to make public land acknowledgment statements, the practice is not embraced by all. Findlay says the reasons for objecting to the practice are varied.

“Some people don’t like the term ‘colonization’ and just want to move on from the past. Others have been concerned that in making the statement [about Indigenous land claims], legally it could be used by Indigenous people to reclaim the land, and people worry that they will lose their homes or be forced to return to their family’s country of origin.” Others think that Indigenous people get enough recognition—why should we highlight that culture above all others?”

Last year, Mennonite Church B.C. developed a land acknowledgment with non-specific geographic wording so it could be used anywhere in the province. It reads as follows: “We respectfully and gratefully acknowledge that we gather on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral lands of Indigenous First Nations.”

The MC B.C. Indigenous Relations Task Group prepared the statement and presented it to the Leadership Board last fall. It is now posted on the MC B.C.

website and letterhead and was used to open this year’s MC B.C. annual general meeting.

Several congregations in MC B.C. have also made efforts to acknowledge their presence on what was once Indigenous territory.

Langley Mennonite Fellowship

Langley Mennonite Fellowship’s land acknowledgment says: “We respectfully and gratefully acknowledge that we gather on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral land of the Kwantlen and Stó:lō Nations.”

Land acknowledgment for the congregation dates back to 2016, when Brander McDonald was Indigenous Relations staff person for MC B.C. “At the MC B.C. annual meeting in February 2016 he encouraged and challenged congregations to be more engaged in the work of reconciliation, especially as the 94 Calls to Action from the TRC had been released the previous year,” recalls Henry Krause, who was Langley’s pastor at the time. “He said that the least we could do as congregations was to adopt a land acknowledgment statement to recognize the First Nations.”

The land acknowledgment statement is printed in the church bulletin and other documents and can be found on the church website.

According to Tim Beachy, the current board chair, “In the beginning, we simply inserted the land acknowledgment in our weekly bulletin. A bit later the acknowledgment was verbalized during our weekly services. While the document was started by a small group, it quickly moved to full and regular use. I do not believe it has ever been recalled forward for a ‘decision.’ It is an assumed and valued practice.”

The observance of the Lord’s Supper is also a place where the congregation uses a form of land acknowledgment. Pastor Ian Funk says, “For the past five years we have added a practice to our communion in which we recognize the land and history of the place we are journeying [through] with Jesus, through bread and wine. This changes from month to month, but there is

always a component of recognition.”

Peace Mennonite Church

The land acknowledgment used by Peace Mennonite reads as follows: “Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, British Columbia, humbly acknowledges that our activities take place on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam Nation. We are grateful to our hosts for their hospitality and commit to respect and stewardship with them this land Creator God has made and given us for that purpose.”

Lorne Brandt was a member of Peace Mennonite Church’s missions and service committee a couple of years ago and pushed for the congregation to make the land acknowledgment statement. “I consulted Tsawwassen Band elder Ruth Adam and Hummingbird Ministries Mary Fontaine (Cree),” Brandt said. “They were both against muddying the waters by bringing too many Christian-sounding words into it, even though both are Christian.”

The idea at the time of adoption in 2020 was for the statement to be used at general meetings and perhaps be added to the church website and/or bulletins. It was not originally intended to be used in Sunday morning worship but, Brandt notes, “Actually, many of our worship leaders are now using the statement or a variation of it at the beginning of most of our worship services.”

Emmanuel Mennonite Church

Just over two years ago, members of Emmanuel’s missions, peace and justice committee began exploring the idea of adopting a land acknowledgment statement. An extensive process involving the Abbotsford congregation followed in the form of pulpit announcements, bulletin announcements, information sessions, face-to-face meetings with local Sumas and Matsqui bands, and input of ideas from individuals.

Eventually, this statement was passed by the church in 2019: “As a faith community, we believe that the earth is a gift from God, the Creator. Together with the first people of this land we are called to be stewards of this earth that



PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER

A sign at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., was unveiled in September 2017 acknowledging the traditional land of the local Indigenous Peoples. It mentions the arrival of the first Europeans in the 1800s and expresses the intention of Mennonites today to “work on building a new covenant relationship with our Indigenous hosts, neighbours, and friends.”

sustains us, and we are grateful for the privilege. Therefore, we acknowledge with deep gratitude our presence on the unceded, traditional, ancestral homeland of the Matsqui First Nation, affiliated with the Stó:lō Nation. While the land is an important part of our faith, we recognize that it has always been at the centre of Indigenous life, culture, and spirituality. May we treat this land and all its people with respect as we strive for peace and right relationships with all who share it.”

However, at the Emmanuel annual meeting in February 2020, some members wanted clarification about how and when the statement was to be used. A majority said they preferred it not be used every Sunday. Then the process was put on hold during the pandemic that ensued.

At a congregational meeting on June 15, a motion was passed to have the

land acknowledgment be used on the church’s website, in the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Sunday service, and in any other Sunday service, at the worship leader’s discretion.

Relationship building

Land acknowledgment is a first step in recognizing local Indigenous Peoples and learning more about them and their culture. Before a church group moves forward with a land acknowledgment, Findlay says, they should ask why they are doing it. “What do you hope listeners will get from it? How will it be used? The whole idea is: it’s supposed to be honest, authentic, from the heart, showing respect to the Indigenous people who live here. Rote recitation doesn’t come across well. If it takes a year to develop a statement, that’s fine. And if you make a statement and don’t do anything

else, it doesn’t mean a lot.”

Findlay says that fostering respect and relationship building are the most important thing in relating to Indigenous Peoples. She suggests that it is courteous to contact the local band to get their feedback on the wording of the land acknowledgment statement.

“It’s important to do your homework, to establish whose territory you are on,” she says. “Often, it’s multiple [groups] because traditional territories overlap. Furthermore, just establishing a land acknowledgment can be an icebreaker, a helpful step towards reconciliation as people learn more about Indigenous Peoples and their culture.”

Findlay has prepared resources to help church groups learn more about and prepare land acknowledgment statements, including sample statements. For more information, contact her at bridgetfindlay@mccbc.ca. ❧

❧ For discussion

1. Bridget Findlay says it was common practice for Indigenous people to acknowledge being on each other’s territory as part of nation-to-nation visiting and welcoming. Who were the Indigenous people who lived in your community before your people arrived? Where have you heard land acknowledgements read?
2. What do you understand to be the purpose of land acknowledgements? What are the implications of making such statements? What are some injustices to Indigenous people that land acknowledgements hope to address? Why might a land acknowledgement make some people feel uneasy?
3. Part of the Emmanuel Mennonite land acknowledgement says, “May we treat this land and all its people with respect as we strive for peace and right relationships with all who share it.” What has been the traditional Mennonite attitude toward land? In what situations have we been respectful stewards of the land? Are there times when we have disrespected the land and its original inhabitants?
4. Findlay says that fostering respect and relationship building are the most important things in relating to Indigenous people. How has this been happening or not happening in Canada in the last number of years? What could your congregation do to learn more about Indigenous people in your community?

—By Barb Draper

See related resources at
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/// Readers write

✉ Keep on keeping on

After many years of supporting the withholding of military taxes and volunteering with Conscience Canada Peace Tax Trust Fund (CC), I have at last retired from the board.

We have not yet achieved our goal: that it be legal in Canada for conscientious objectors (COs) to war to have their military taxes go towards peace-building purposes.

People with humanitarian values find it unacceptable that their money is used to recruit young people and train them to destroy people and property. Canada fits their soldiers into the war machine and deploys them in military engagements. This results in destitute refugees and soldiers suffering from severe PTSD.

When knowledgeable people say the government will never pass a private member's bill granting COs the right to not pay military taxes, and when we look back at over forty years of trying and failing to achieve that goal, we ask ourselves if there is any point in Conscience Canada continuing its efforts. Discouragement is setting in.

But I had an epiphany of sorts: those who keep their income below taxable level by donating to charitable organizations are getting exactly what CC has been aiming at. We are not paying for Canada's military while living an environmentally friendly lifestyle; we help lift up the poor and educate towards peace and justice, not only in Canada but in more troubled places around the world. Our money is doing the "alternative service" which our CO fathers were allowed to do when they rejected military conscription. Peace-minded organizations can issue tax-deductible receipts and grow their capacity to do life-enhancing work. Hooray!

So, go on, Conscience Canada—continue to promote the commitment to the nonviolent resolution of international conflicts. Help people to pare away unnecessary and harmful parts of our western lifestyle and beef up investment in human development. What is there to be discouraged about?

MARY GROH, KITCHENER, ONT.

✉ Denying pain relief lacks compassion

Re: "My cousin couldn't manage the pain," May 16, page 30.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this article by Amy Rinner Waddell. It touched me deeply for a variety of reasons.

We live with this untrue and unkind myth that all pain can be managed by medication and support. Some pain cannot be. In my humble opinion, to deny a person pain relief, which happens to end their life, lacks compassion and knowledge.

Arun Bhaskar, a consultant in pain medicine and president of the British Pain Society writes in a blogpost in the BMJ medical journal: "The reality we must accept is that there is a significant minority of terminally ill patients whose suffering cannot be controlled by even world-class palliative care. Can we not consider providing those patients with another option that would allow them to determine their limit and decide to shorten their suffering in a dignified, swift, and painless way?"

I feel strongly that when one has a terminal diagnosis, one should be offered palliative care at home and/or at hospice when care needs require it. And one should be given the option of medical assistance in death at any time in the process. I do not want anyone to die by suicide—possibly painfully—alone.

I have appreciated medical assistance in living. I may appreciate medical assistance in dying.
—JAN CARRIE STEVEN, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

✉ Sacred reciprocity with all life is needed

Re: "Lonely without insects" column, May 16, page 11.

This is a lovely and important message, well-crafted and engaging. The statistics are startling enough on their own. To me, the sustainability crisis is so far beyond the usual technical "solutions" that are trotted out. Nothing less than a change of heart in the direction of living in sacred reciprocity with all life is called for.

BLAKE POLAND (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Get over being called a 'settler'

Re: "'Identity politics' further 'societal polarization'" letter, May 30, page 7.

I was born in Canada, and I have never homesteaded, lived in a sod house, broken the land with a plough or trapped beaver. But I'm still a settler because I have benefited from the settler activities that my European immigrant ancestors engaged in.

It's rather like someone who has inherited a stolen piece of valuable art. They might say, "I didn't steal it, and my parents didn't steal it . . . it was my great, great, great grandfather who stole it." But if that person still possesses the artwork, then they are complicit in the long-ago crime, because they continue to

benefit from its theft.

By the same token, someone who moves to Canada in 2022 from Ireland, Pakistan, Poland or Nepal is a “settler” just as I am. They have settled here, and they have settled into one of the highest standards of living on the planet due to prior settlers (going back centuries) having taken land from Indigenous Peoples and prospering under government systems and religious institutions that sought cultural genocide.

So, for people who don’t appreciate being called “settlers,” I would say two things:

- Ask yourself how you have benefited from colonialism.
- Aren’t there bigger issues in the world to deal with than getting bothered by someone calling you a “settler”?

MARK MORTON (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ **Living by faith means not making decisions in secret**

Re: “Indigenous relations work revamped, reduced,” May 30, page 14.

I am saddened, feeling more crystallized in my ponderings, that for all the sales talk we muster about our relational theology, spirituality, inclusiveness and reconciliation, decision processes still seem to be too heavily modelled on dispassionate, sometimes heartless, business/accounting reality checks, where affected people are too often excluded from the discernment process.

If we live by faith, ought not our corporate activity clearly reflect it, first and foremost, by open, inclusive contemplations, deliberations and conversations toward decision-making, with an eye toward “justly” living in deed?

It could be argued that having our deliberations and enactment of decisions shared by all, builds more faith in the process, and brings unity, even in shared pain or grief. It also brings a deeper sense of shared responsibility for the outcomes when they hurt. It requires less secrecy.

This pattern of so-called confidentiality, privacies, etc., serves to maintain control and manage liabilities. It rarely reflects our professed confidence in listening to the Holy Spirit, whose precision in discerning powers exceeds even the sharpest scalpel, or in modern terms, surgical lasers.

This worldly model is not limited to national or regional bodies only. It pervades our entire body, such that, at times, when we have difficult topics to discern, we tend to hunker down to “in camera” models, seeking not Christ-likeness so much as limiting liability risks.

CLARE NEUFELD (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ **‘Mountain of God’ a special song**

Re: “Going to the mountain” column, May 30, page 10.

We are singing this song in our church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. I have always loved the wide invitation it offers.

CHAD MILLER (ONLINE COMMENT)

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

/// **Milestones**

Births/Adoptions

Falco—Heidi Paz Elaine (b. June 8, 2022), to Jessica and Moses Falco, Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Muns—Lydia Anderson (b. May 14, 2022), to Hannah and Paul Muns, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Katherine Charette—Breslau Mennonite Church, Ont., June 5, 2022.

Cassidy Kasdorf—Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 15, 2022

Weddings

Dykstra/Loewen—Julie Dykstra and Victor Loewen, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 4, 2022.

McKenna/Sawatzky—Katie McKenna and Lucas Sawatzky, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 15, 2022.

Deaths

Bergen—John G., 90 (b. Aug. 27, 1931; d. June 3, 2022), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Enns—Frank, 86 (b. March 27, 1936; d. June 3, 2022) Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Guenther—Wilhelm (Willy), 81 (b. June 5, 1940; d. May 17, 2022), Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hamm—Walter, 86 (b. Feb. 22, 1936; d. June 1, 2022), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Jaeger—Anneliese, 48 (b. Oct. 12, 1973; d. May 18, 2022), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Plett—Martha, 94 (b. June 7, 1928; d. June 8, 2022), Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Receiving a life-giving word

Elizabeth Wall

When God's story connects with our story, the Holy Spirit is at work, bringing life. As author Anne Lamott says, "I do not at all understand the mystery of grace—only that it meets us where we are but doesn't leave us where it found us."

In Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), Jesus listened deeply to her story and respected her. She felt seen, heard, known. Because of that, she trusted him and was open to receiving the gift he offered, something better than the status quo. He revealed himself as the Messiah and offered her a life-giving word which brought her hope and joy. The encounter changed her whole life.

How does it change our lives when we are respected, deeply listened to, seen, heard and known? We experience dignity, value and hope. There were many reasons for a Jewish rabbi to reject the Samaritan woman, but Jesus did not let any of those reasons stand in the way of giving her dignity, value and hope.

At our congregation's recent Pride and Diversity Sunday, I related the story of a life-changing conversation I had

with a religious leader when I was in my twenties. At that time, I wasn't so sure about how God felt about queer people. This was the mid-1980s, when people were dying from AIDS. Some of them were my friends and it was common to hear this epidemic blamed on the "sinful homosexual lifestyle." Even though I had gay friends and did not have a problem with their being gay, I was wondering if that was a problem for the church, or for God, especially when I started having questions about my own sexual orientation.

At the time, I was attending a United Church in Toronto and had a private talk with my minister about these questions. If I'm not straight, is it a problem for God? Is it a sin I would have to conquer? Is it a problem for the church?

His immediate response was that there was nothing that would keep God from loving me and that I was welcome in the church too. I can't tell you what a relief it was to hear that! From that time on, I have never again had to question whether God would love me because of it, or whether I belonged in the church because of it. Because I also knew some

gay Christians I respected, it helped me to understand that these two things were not mutually exclusive.

I went into that conversation with trepidation, but I must have had some hope too, and openness to hearing what that minister would tell me. Thank God—truly—the word he gave me was life-giving. For me, that was a life-changing conversation.

What does the life-giving word sound like? Maybe something like this: Whatever your questions are, whatever your life situation, whatever barriers you think might be between you and God, know that God created you with love. Jesus wants to be in relationship with you. And the Holy Spirit guides us to create life-giving relationships with one another. ☸



Adapted from a sermon given on June 12 at Edmonton First Mennonite Church, where Elizabeth is a lay leader. She also serves as secretary of Mennonite Church Alberta.

A moment from yesterday



A large audience gathered for one of two "Women's Section" meetings at the Mennonite World Conference held in Kitchener, Ont., in 1962. The women met to consider the conference theme, "The Lordship of Christ," from the perspective of personal faith and the home. They also heard presentations on women's service in women's organizations, on congregational and church boards, and through work and professions.

Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing

Photo: *The Canadian Mennonite*/Mennonite Archives of Ontario



 THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

These are our people

Arli Klassen

We welcomed two babies and their families with words of blessing and commitment into our local congregation today. The wide-eyed babies took in all the people watching them and waving at them, with our pastors saying “Look, these are your people!”

We welcomed three adults as new members into our local congregation today, by transfer from the congregations that had nourished them for many years. We heard their faith stories, and the words of recommendation from the congregations that they came from. “Look, these are our people!”

We joyously celebrated the baptism of an adult who grew up in our local congregation, a person who had learned to know God more over the years, and who chose to say “Look, these are my people!”

We welcomed a visitor from eastern Congo, a Mennonite pastor, the father of a young family in our congregation who had not seen each other for 16 years. He confidently exclaimed, *en français*, that he knew this congregation: “Look, these are my people!”

Some of these new people in our congregation are Hispanic Mennonites. Some are Swiss Mennonites. Some are

Congolese Mennonites. Some might not use any of those labels. All declared, “Look, these are our people!”

Each of these individuals is connected to our local congregation by at least two generations. Each has children, or grandchildren, or parents (in-law) or grandparents already rooted in our local congregation. I am intrigued that family relationships carry so much value, and yet at the same time each person could declare, together: “Look, these are all my people!”

What makes it possible for each adult and each family to confidently stand (even with trepidation) in front of all of us and declare their commitment to follow Jesus together with us all? It is not an easy thing to do and is certainly countercultural in a time and context when official “membership” in many things is waning. (Except for loyalty to your sports team—then it is easy to publicly declare one’s loyalty and encouragement.)

I loved being part of the joyous response to each person—babies and adults. This is what it means to be a community of faith together! It is a commitment, a public declaration of belonging, with affirmation and encouragement from the entire community.

I wonder: If I were to visit the Mennonite church in Colombia, or the one from rural Ontario, or the one in eastern Congo where these newcomers came from, would I also be able to declare: “Look, these are my people!”?

I will be in Indonesia by the time you read this. Will it be easy to declare at the Mennonite World Conference General Council and Assembly: “Look, these are our people!”? We will struggle to understand each other’s languages. We will know different worship songs. We will try to understand our diverse cultural contexts and how they impact our worldviews and our spirituality. We will interact with church leaders who wish we would be far more unified in our theology. It will be a challenge.

And yet, I go to Indonesia, proclaiming publicly and with joy: “Look, these are my people!” As a person who is not rooted anywhere, who moved around throughout my childhood and adult life, I delight to know that I belong. These are my people. These diverse people are my people. My theological understandings do not match many of theirs. My preferred worship style is somewhere in between many of theirs. And yet, I belong. So do you. Look, these are our people! ☞



Arli Klassen is a member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, and a staff member with Mennonite World Conference.

Et cetera



AMBS plants oak sapling

On June 3, a clone of a daughter of the ancient Chortitza oak was planted on the campus of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind. The original 700-year-old oak tree in Ukraine was a beloved gathering place for Mennonites of the Chortitza Colony, the first Mennonite settlement in Russia (1789). Planting the tree are Lyle Preheim of Freeman, S.D. (right), and Randy Detweiler, AMBS development associate. Preheim created the clone by grafting a cutting from a daughter tree in Kansas onto a bur oak sapling. The tree planting was followed by a dinner and presentation on the Chortitza Colony by Walter Sawatsky.

Photo credit: AMBS | Source: AMBS

VOICES AND STORIES

A tune finds words

Anneli Loepp Thiessen

When we opened the portal for submissions to *Voices Together*, the new Mennonite hymnal, the committee received over 2,000 submissions from songwriters, text writers, and composers from around the world, many of whom were Mennonite.

A few years into our process of screening the submissions portal and many other published sources, the committee noticed a glaring imbalance in the gender of contributors, with more pieces by men than by others. To mitigate this imbalance and to elevate the voices of underrepresented contributors, I went through the submissions portal again, giving special attention to pieces by women, especially Anabaptist women, which might have been overlooked.

One of the exciting discoveries was a tune by Charlene Gingerich (formerly Nafziger), a Mennonite pianist and composer living in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. She had submitted a tune with no lyrics. Immediately compelled by the tune, committee member Katie Graber pursued writing a unique text to accompany Gingerich's lyrical tune. When the new song was brought to the committee anonymously, it was ranked highly and made the cut for hymnal inclusion. The result is No. 603 in *Voices Together*, "Still

My Soul."

Gingerich says "I was a part of a small group that gathered every other week on a Tuesday morning to sit in silence for 20 minutes and then share what we heard before we headed out for our day. On one particular morning, this song came to me in complete form during the quiet. I sat and played it for the group and then went home and recorded it on my phone, to keep a record of it." It is evident that Gingerich is a gifted pianist; the accompaniment part is both lilting and easy to listen to, while containing a forward sense of momentum and drive.

As a member of the hymnal text committee, Graber was especially attuned to the need for resources that address mental health. She heard this soothing yet compelling melody as a way to present lyrics that embody the experience of anxiety. The circular text does not give a resolution but invites the singer to repeat the prayer as a constant reminder of God's presence: "Still my soul, calm my roaming mind. / Give me peace, may my heart unwind. . . .When my thoughts won't let me go, / I'll sing to you: oh, still my soul."

The music captures this tension. It features a m/M7th chord, which is not a common occurrence in hymnody.

Gingerich says: "It is an uncomfortable pairing—a major triad stacked on top of a minor triad in the same chord. It shouldn't work. We see these chords as such polar opposites. And yet—it does." Singers can hear this chord, marked Ebm (maj7) in the first two lines with the words "Give me peace, may my heart unwind" and later with the words, "worry" and "storms."

Gingerich continues, "It's a beautiful tension that doesn't even feel like tension because it is ascending towards the end of the phrase. A common goal. It's a part of a sequence, and we can trust that it is leading us somewhere."

When teaching this piece to a congregation, leaders might find it helpful to have a soloist or small ensemble sing it through once. A piano accompaniment, essential for experiencing the rich harmonies, is available in the accompaniment edition of *Voices Together*.

"Still My Soul" is a demonstration of how texts and tunes can work to complement each other, building upon the same energy to share a common message. (View a recording here: bit.ly/3Oiz4be). ❧



Anneli Loepp Thiessen is a PhD candidate in interdisciplinary music research at the University of Ottawa. She is co-director of the Anabaptist Worship Network and was a committee member for *Voices Together*.

Et cetera



"Never Forgets Peace" repurposes firearms

A sculpture made of disabled firearms is being sold by silent auction through the month of June to raise funds for the Mennonite Church U.S.A. Justice Fund. Bryan Miller from Beth-El Mennonite Church in Colorado Springs, Col., created this piece titled, "Never Forgets Peace," and shaped like an elephant head, using guns turned in to RAWtools, a peace organization that forges tools out of weapons. Miller says, "Joining the weapons into a majestic creature may help remind us to look beyond the obvious and find emerging goodness all around us." The Justice Fund gives grants to MC U.S.A. congregations to dismantle racism and build peace.

Source: Mennonite Church U.S.A.
Photo courtesy of MC U.S.A.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

My opinion on opinions

Troy Watson

I recently heard a comedian say, “Everyone has an opinion on everything these days.” He continued, “When I was young, it wasn’t that way. People had maybe six opinions. Sometimes you’d meet a guy with, like, eight opinions, and you’d think, ‘Man that guy’s opinionated.’ But on average people had about six opinions. And most of them were about food.”

I’m not sure people are more opinionated nowadays, but we definitely have more, and larger, platforms on which to share them. Having opinions is natural, but repeatedly sharing them tends to reinforce our assumptions and deepens

People rarely refuse my invitation to talk more about their opinions.

Sometimes as they keep talking, they start evaluating their own opinions more thoughtfully. Sometimes they become “preachy,” so I ask them more specific questions, to try to understand why they think that way or why they think others need to hear their opinions. Ultimately, I’m interested in getting to know and understand the person, more than their opinions. People fascinate me. People’s opinions, not as much.

I’m trying to be more humble, inquisitive, curious and creative. For example, if I’m in a conversation about trees, my

need to be open, but we can be so “open minded” the notion of truth evaporates. In its gaseous state, truth dissipates and disappears from our lives.

The other extreme is to filter the flow of truth through our fixed opinions. Our opinions are like ice, solidified understandings and assumptions. They are no longer malleable to fit changing contexts. Our opinions can pile up and become a dam, a wall of ice, preventing the flow of truth into our lives.

I like this analogy. As a result, I’ve tried to hold my understanding of truth lightly. Not to the point that it evaporates and has no substance, but loosely enough that it doesn’t solidify and inhibit the fluid flow of truth into my life.

It’s not that I don’t have opinions. Of course I do. I write a monthly opinion piece in *Canadian Mennonite* after all. However, I’m selective on what opinions I share and who I share them with. I’m learning to “stay in my lane.”

To stay in your lane means refraining from sharing opinions on subjects of which you have insufficient knowledge or capacity to speak competently. Reading a few blogs, articles or books on a subject doesn’t make us qualified to speak authoritatively about it. I exchange opinions with some trusted friends, but that’s about it. In most settings, I’d rather ask questions, because I value learning and growing over trying to prove I’m right. ❧



Troy Watson is a pastor at Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont., troy@avonchurch.ca

Our opinions can pile up and become a dam, a wall of ice, preventing the flow of truth into our lives.

the rut of our current thought patterns. We become more and more convinced our opinions are facts, incontrovertible truths, especially when others agree with us, or when people we’ve labelled as clueless fools or the scourge of humanity disagree with us.

I’m trying to develop a habit of asking questions instead of sharing my opinions. I’m not talking about trick questions or “gotcha” questions that are intended to prove a point or make someone else look wrong, ignorant or villainous. There are times and occasions for such questions, I suppose but, more often than not, they’re not helpful. Honest questions, on the other hand, that reflect a sincere desire to understand something or someone better, create space for meaningful connection and authentic dialogue. They create space to learn and grow.

If someone shares an opinion I disagree with, or one I don’t understand, my default response is, “Say more.”

curiosity makes me wonder what else there is to know about trees. Humility helps me accept I don’t know everything about trees and stay open to others’ knowledge and experiences. Being inquisitive compels me to actively investigate and ask thoughtful questions. Creativity allows me to imaginatively contemplate trees from other angles and perspectives, or with a different lens. To observe them poetically, metaphorically and philosophically, for example, as well as pragmatically and scientifically.

Humility, inquisitiveness, curiosity and creativity open us up to the flow of insight and inspiration. They help us learn, expand, and see with new eyes. They strengthen our child-like wonder and make the world and other people more mysterious and interesting.

One of my mentors told me that truth is like water. It is fluid. It flows into us and nourishes us. Like water, truth has substance, but it is malleable and changes shape in different contexts. We

COVER STORY
PERSONAL REFLECTION

Large bequest 'threatened to swamp us'

Shantz Mennonite Church dedicates its new building

By Don Penner
BADEN, ONT.

Shantz Mennonite Church held a dedication service on Sunday, June 5. It was intended to be for our new facilities, but in truth, it was primarily a rededication of ourselves. Like other followers of Christ, we have been aware that God is calling the church to a new beginning—one that reestablishes its centeredness in a way of life where all are beloved, welcome and authentically known. The word “all” is key.

God has been at work at Shantz Mennonite, seeking to convince us that we are loved and believed in—that we are enough. That is no small leap of faith given the prosperous community we live in, with its emphasis on success and self-sufficiency.

Eleven years ago, an interim pastor noted that our congregation was pressing up against a ceiling of sorts. An unusually large youth group was taking us to the limits of our building. Looking back, some might say we were also coming to the edge or limits of our faith. In the following years since her comment, we found ourselves with several opportunities to step out of the boat of our self-reliance, reaching for the strong hand of the Lord in the midst of waves of turmoil and change.

One enormous wave that threatened to swamp us was that of being the recipients of a large bequest. We were gifted several million dollars by the estate of Enid and Harold Schmidt, longtime members of the congregation. The back story is that Harold had been a very successful businessman, owning several farms, along with a telephone company or two. He died first, leaving Enid to decide in her will how to direct their accumulated wealth.



PHOTO BY KEN OGASAWARA

Mike Shantz, co-chair of the build team, speaks to the congregation in the new sanctuary of Shantz Mennonite Church.

She chose to designate half to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and half to her congregation.

As the bequest money started to come in, we had many conversations about what to do with it. We wrestled with giving it all away, recognizing there were great needs in our world. We also named our fear that this money could cause conflict and division among us. Perhaps our worst fear was mishandling it, reaping shame from the community looking on.

Through much prayer and discernment, we began sensing God wanted us to run with this windfall—first of all to see it as a sign of God’s confidence in us to work together with heaven. That thought was both deeply affirming and hugely intimidating. Who were we to be worthy of such trust?

What we have learned is that it was never about us being more deserving. The money would become an experiment in learning to let go of our fears and need to be in control, learning to trust the Spirit as well as each other.

We were led to do three things: 1) give ten percent of the principal away to support refugees in crisis; 2) give away the interest earned on the principal (we developed a process that receives applications and engages the congregation in learning about the projects); and 3) to use no more than fifty percent of the principal toward a new facility.

The congregation’s participation in each of these choices has been huge and holy. It has required great amounts of time and energy to learn to discern the way. In the process, new talents and wisdom emerged, thanks to the Spirit providing the right people for the needs of the moment.

At the dedication of the new building on June 5, church leaders thanked pretty much everyone in the congregation of about 120 for their participation in the many planning teams overseeing the design, finishing, and furnishings. The overall principle each group worked with was to create a space that would feel welcoming, especially to the community. Early comments affirm the thoughtfulness of the layout and its usefulness.

The large gym is especially drawing interest as a venue for sports and family celebrations. The multipurpose room is loved by the women’s community Bible study group. The sanctuary, with its many half-round “pillars” installed for acoustic purposes, is proving to be a joy to sing and listen in.

Our vision is to bring people together, build relationships, and reflect the values of our faith in God, and we are doing that by creating space for the community to join us for pickleball, volleyball and vacation Bible camp. There is a need for meeting venues in our area, and events such as reunions, conferences, weddings, recitals have been booked. Our intent is not to run a side business as a rental hall; it is to expose people to our kindness, warmth, and reliance on God.

We at Shantz Mennonite Church are humbled by these gifts and give God the glory! ✚

Don Penner is pastor at Shantz Mennonite Church.

NEWS

Anxiety and hope co-exist

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan youth engage with climate anxiety at day-long retreat

Story and photos by Emily Summach
Saskatchewan correspondent
NEAR WALDHEIM, SASK.

It is true that the impacts of climate change on the planet's future are unfairly shouldered by youth and children. Mennonite Church Saskatchewan made space for youth to explore that burden together. Seventeen young people attended a day-long retreat, "The Climate is Changing: Now What?" held at the Shekinah Retreat Centre near Waldheim, Sask., in early June.

Zach Dueck, interim youth minister for MC Saskatchewan said planning a retreat around the topic was an easy choice, "At the beginning of the school year some of the youth had been expressing their anxieties surrounding the climate to their youth leaders, and at a MegaMenno event in November we asked the youth to write down some of those anxieties and what they were concerned about to help us better define the topics we were planning to discuss. While we did get some specific questions, the biggest response we noticed was just a general sense of dread. So, it didn't really feel like it was much of a decision, it was more of a response to what our youth are concerned with right now."

Brenda and Wayne MacDonald of Wildwood Mennonite Church in Saskatoon were the guest speakers. The MacDonalds were initially surprised by their invitation to speak.

"I don't have a PhD in this," laughs Wayne. Yet the timing couldn't have been more providential.

"I was attending an online event about climate change geared towards women," said Brenda. "We heard a lot of wonderful speakers and in the last session, in a Zoom breakout room, one of the questions that was posed was, 'What can we do? What steps can we take?' and I thought, 'We can talk about climate change, because avoiding the topic isn't going to do any good.'" That same day, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan contacted the couple about leading a retreat about the topic.

The MacDonalds didn't expect to solve the problem of climate change in one day. "It's a one-hundred-cups-of-coffee issue," laughed Wayne.

They did want to encourage the youth who came. "We wanted to respond to eco-anxiety, and hope that the kids leave with a feeling of empowerment. There are things they can do. Young people have influence," said Brenda.

As part of the retreat, students were invited to write responses to the questions, "I am anxious because" and "I am hopeful because" in regard to climate change. The response cards were hung on a tree limb during that Wayne had



During a retreat addressing climate anxiety MC Saskatchewan youth shared their hopeful feelings about the planet's future, on tags.

created. The intention was to offer both the anxieties and hopes as prayer to God.

Many of the students had one foot planted on more typical teenage concerns, and the other on the weighty climate concerns. Students stated they were excited to be together in person, spend time outside and play games. The retreat aimed to address both sides by discussing climate issues, playing outdoor Dutch Blitz with a giant deck of cards, and roasting a hot dog lunch around a campfire.

Zoe Schellenberg, a student from Osler Mennonite Church, had this to say: "We're talking about climate change and anxiety at church and school. It's the biggest current issue, I think, because we're the ones to change it. Being out here at Shekinah and nature makes me appreciate it more too. I'm scared about the responsibility, but I'm also hopeful because a lot of people care about climate change. I think it's good to care more when you're younger, and to be learning about it now when we're young. We have more time to accept what's happening to the environment and to try to change things than someone who's maybe older."

Nora Bergen-Braun, also from Osler Mennonite Church, echoed Schellenberg's thoughts: "I'm feeling a bit panicky about climate change, but it's good to hear that there are things you can do, and lots of people are doing those things." ❧



Zoe Schellenberg passes a giant Dutch Blitz card to her friends during a youth retreat.

'Evening for Ukraine' raises \$220,000

Peace Mennonite Church, MCC collaborate on fundraiser

Mennonite Central Committee B.C.
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

A fundraising dinner to help people affected by the current war in Ukraine began with a man who had vivid memories of leaving Ukraine as five-year-old in the mid-1940s. The man phoned Gerd Bartel, a well-known member of Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, asking the simple question, "What can we do to help people in Ukraine?"

That call coincided with planning by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C. for its annual spring dinner and constituent events, the first ones since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Bartel, in turn, contacted Wayne Bremner, MCC B.C.'s executive director, and advancement director Jet Takaoka, saying, "We have an idea for an event to help people in Ukraine." A small, dedicated group from Peace Church began meeting with MCC B.C. personnel to plan and recruit.

The result was "An Evening for Ukraine" on May 7, hosted by Peace Church and MCC B.C. Approximately 300 people attended a Ukrainian-themed dinner that included the music of Lorin Friesen and Helen Suderman; a presentation of MCC's history in Ukraine; and response to the crisis from MCC Canada board chair Ron Ratzlaff; and a moving prayer for peace led by Bremner.

In one of the more moving moments of the evening, the audience was asked, "How many of us trace our family roots, our parents, or grandparents, to Ukraine?" Easily two-thirds of the people in the room responded with raised hands. The sense of connection with people suffering and the desire to help in the face of calamity were palpable.

The result was more than \$220,000 given to fund MCC's ongoing relief work with people displaced by the violence in Ukraine.



PHOTO BY JET TAKAOKA

Violinist Lorin Friesen entertains attendees at a Ukrainian fundraising banquet at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C., on May 7.

"The results of that evening were beyond what we at MCC could have accomplished just by ourselves," said Takaoka. "It is incredible what can happen when a few committed people come together at a grassroots level to do good in our world. The generosity we saw that evening is humbling."

The man who made the initial phone call declined the opportunity to speak that evening. "It would be too emotional," he said. Like so many of his generation, quiet anonymity is to be preferred. But his simple call will mean help and hope for countless people from Ukraine whose lives have been turned upside down. ❧

News brief

Anabaptism at 500 announces advisory group members

Harrisonburg, Va.—In February, MennoMedia put out a call for members to join the advisory group for the new venture. Anabaptism at 500. Nearly 50 qualified people applied, and eight were chosen to serve for the next three years. The advisory group will offer expertise and perspectives in various meetings and subcommittees and ensure that Anabaptism at 500 remains in close conversation with the varied congregations that MennoMedia serves. The group's first meeting was held on April 28, 2022. "We want to pay close attention to what the church is looking for—not just as we work on the Anabaptist Bible, but for all the projects related to Anabaptism at 500," said John Roth, project director. The advisory group was chosen to represent a wide range of congregations and people. The eight advisory group members are Sarah Augustine (Yakima Valley, Wash.), Sandra Baez (Kitchener, Ont.), Korey Dyck (Winnipeg, Man.), Dennis R. Edwards (Chicago, Ill.), Gerald J. Mast (Bluffton, Ohio), Jonny Rashid (Philadelphia, Pa.), Sara Wenger Shenk (Waynesboro, Va.), and Lisa Weaver (Madison, Wis.). They will serve alongside three MennoMedia staff members: Joe Hackman, John D. Roth and Mollee Moua. "We hope this process will enable a wide range of folks to share in the Anabaptism at 500 vision, and that doing so will contribute to the renewal of the Anabaptist-Mennonite church today," said Roth.

—MENNOMEDIA



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CMU celebrates the Class of 2022

Largest graduating class sees 108 degrees conferred

Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG

After two years of outdoor ceremonies and air hugs, the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) community gathered at Bethel Mennonite Church on April 30 to observe this year's graduation in a more familiar way. Finally, CMU was once again able to host an indoor convocation ceremony, also livestreamed online, and reception. With a total of 108 graduates, the Class of 2022 is CMU's biggest graduating class ever.

Many of this year's graduates have done a significant portion of their degrees during the COVID-19 pandemic. "They have been called out together, and in their lives of vocation we honour all that we have learned and received and heard and seen in them," Cheryl Pauls, CMU president said in her opening remarks.

Odelia Duffus (BA, Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies) delivered the undergraduate address. She reflected on the graduating class's journey together: participating in chapels, supporting the CMU Blazers, adapting to the pandemic, promoting anti-racism. "We have been able to move forward despite the unknown and have shown that we're capable of doing what has not yet been done," she said.

Kim Rempel Smith (MA, Theological Studies) delivered the graduate address. She listed the many obstacles master's students faced during the pandemic: studying with children at home, going to class in the middle of the night when they couldn't get visas to come to Canada, and doing work alone on a screen. "I have witnessed our incredible perseverance and resilience and I have witnessed our commitment to supporting each other," she said.

Dr. Terry LeBlanc received the 2022 CMU PAX Award, along with his wife Bev LeBlanc, and delivered the commencement address. LeBlanc is the founding

chair and current director of NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community, formerly known as the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies. LeBlanc reflected on the current age of information—the sheer amount of it that overwhelms us—and asked the graduating class: "How do we apply what we have come to learn, the information we've been given, the knowledge we've acquired, the understanding of that that we now possess? How we use it requires wisdom."

Derksen, 21, hails from Wymark, Sask., and has been involved in a myriad of extracurriculars throughout her time at CMU. "This award is meaningful because it recognizes my academic achievements but also my participating in the CMU community, which has fundamentally shaped my character," she says.

Klassen, 22, grew up in Calgary, Alta., and now lives in Winnipeg. His accomplishments are many, from athletic awards to getting a scientific paper published and giving a presentation at a conference. "I



PHOTO COURTESY OF CMU

CMU president Cheryl Pauls with 2022 President's Medal recipients, Levi Klassen (left) and Naomi Derksen.

Pauls awarded President's Medals to Levi Klassen (BSc, four-year, biology) and Naomi Derksen (BA, four-year, arts and science), in recognition of their qualities of scholarship, leadership, and service.

am endlessly impressed by the talents and accomplishments of my classmates, so to receive this award among them is an incredible honour," he says. ▮

MC USA delegate assembly widens the circle

Resolutions call for broader inclusion of LGBTQ+ people and those with disabilities

Mennonite Church U.S.A.
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Delegates at Mennonite Church USA's (MC USA) special session of the Delegate Assembly, May 27-30, passed three resolutions that help to remove barriers for LGBTQ+ people and those with disabilities. They also adopted a fourth resolution, "For Justice in the Criminal Legal System," for denominational study.

Support for the resolutions varied. Delegates unanimously approved the "MC USA Accessibility Resolution," which calls the church to "recognize and seek to remove the barriers to belonging . . . that prevent individuals with disabilities from participating in church life."

"A Resolution for Repentance and Transformation," which calls the church to repent for harm done to LGBTQ+ people and calls for broader inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, passed with a thinner majority at 55.7 percent. (It can be viewed at mennoniteusa.org under "Resources.")

Both are called "church statement resolutions," which are not binding on congregations or conferences, but the statements provide an opportunity for discernment, education and advocacy while still acknowledging dissenting voices, according to the denomination's "Guidelines for Developing Resolutions."

The document "Clarification on Mennonite Church USA Polity and the Role of the Membership Guidelines of Mennonite Church USA" an "organizational resolution" that directly impacts church polity, was approved by 82.8 percent of the delegates.

This resolution retires the denomination's "Membership Guidelines," which, among other things, prohibits pastors from performing same-sex covenant ceremonies. It also calls the church to "commit to the difficult work of being church together amidst our differences, working at biblical



MENNONITE CHURCH USA PHOTO

Delegates at the MC USA special session of the Delegate Assembly gathered to make decisions about further inclusion of LGBTQ+ people and those living with disabilities.

justice and reconciliation where there is conflict."

"This weekend, we did the demanding work of struggling together as the body of Christ," said Glen Guyton, executive director of MC USA. "We will continue to live into our renewed commitments of following Jesus, witnessing to God's peace and helping those we encounter to experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit."

Mennonite Church USA is the largest Mennonite denomination in the United States, with 16 conferences, approximately 530 congregations and 62,000 members. The Delegate Assembly is the most representative decision-making body in the denomination. ❧

News brief

Saskatchewan churches partner for reconciliation education

Rosthern Mennonite Church and Eigenheim Mennonite Church, both located near Rosthern, Sask., recently hosted a weekend-long joint event, "Speaking Truth, Pursuing Reconciliation." Over 30 people from the two congregations attended. Rachel Wallace, pastor at Eigenheim Mennonite Church, said the event was a response to pandemic limitations. "In the past, our two congregations have co-hosted a CMU Portable event, but those aren't happening right now. So, education committee representatives Gwen Ens and Jeanette Hanson, came up with this alternative." The weekend's speakers included: Randy Klassen, Indigenous Neighbours Coordinator with Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan; therapist Theresa Driediger, and Elaine Sutherland from the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. The weekend concluded with a joint worship service.

—BY EMILY SUMMACH



PHOTO BY TODD HANSON

MCC representatives Heather Peters (front left) and Randy Klassen (front right) led participants in the Kairois blanket exercise.

MCC responds to its entanglements with National Socialism

By Rick Cober Bauman and Ann Graber Hershberger

Over the past several years, numerous historians have highlighted how different Mennonite communities in Europe before and during the Second World War were entangled with and even actively participated in National Socialism, with some Mennonites helping to perpetrate the Holocaust. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) intersected with this broader Mennonite history in multiple ways. In 2021, MCC asked 12 historians

from Canada, the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Paraguay to help us better understand MCC's actions during this part of our institutional history, with summaries of their research published by MCC this past fall.

MCC is grateful for the efforts of these 12 historians and others who have conducted extensive research in many archives, including MCC's records.

Thanks to these historians' writings, MCC has grown in its understanding of the complex ways that MCC's relief efforts with Mennonite communities intersected with National Socialism.

MCC's humanitarian work during this period did not always reflect MCC's core values. MCC worked with pro-Nazi Mennonites like Benjamin Unruh in carrying out humanitarian efforts in the 1930s and 1940s. Some MCC workers in wartime France were slow to take action to protect Jews under threat from pro-Nazi forces. After the war, as part of MCC's humanitarian efforts to help displaced Mennonites from the Soviet Union and the Danzig area migrate to Canada and South America, MCC workers promoted narratives that presented these

Mennonites as separate from and victims of Nazism, when in fact the majority of these Mennonites had been entangled with National Socialism in multiple ways.

MCC grieves and repents of the harm caused by MCC's actions and inactions during this period. MCC is committed, in collaboration with external consultants, to better telling MCC's history in its complexity and to taking reparative steps over the coming months and years. These steps will include:

- **Providing financial** support for ongoing historical research into MCC entanglements with National Socialism as well as other oppressive systems such as racism, colonialism and sexism.
- **Reviewing and** updating how MCC narrates its post-Second World War refugee resettlement efforts, to incorporate findings from recent research.
- **Renewing MCC's** determination to act against antisemitism, as part of MCC's broader anti-racist commitments, with training for MCC staff to understand, name and confront antisemitism.

MCC today has regularly reviewed processes in place to help ensure that its relief, development and peacebuilding projects and communications reflect MCC's core values. MCC reviews and assesses all initiatives and partnerships against these core values, seeking to be faithful to its mission of relief, development and peace in the name of Christ. ✎

Rick Cober Bauman is executive director of MCC Canada, and Ann Graber Hershberger is executive director of MCC U.S. To read more about MCC's findings, visit bit.ly/3zDMn1W.



MENNONITE HERITAGE ARCHIVES PHOTO

Benjamin Unruh was instrumental in helping Mennonites flee the Soviet Union in the 1920s. In the 1930s he lived in Germany and negotiated with the Nazi government on behalf of MCC regarding a debt the relief organization owed.

/// News brief

Trinity holds hymnal dedication



Calgary—Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary held a dedication service for the *Voices Together* hymnal on Sunday, May 29. It was released in 2020. Laura Boehr Wiebe, the worship leader, offered words of encouragement to the congregation saying, “We want to recognize that individuals may have different responses to the hymnal or individual songs within it, including an acknowledgment that for some, singing is not a primary spiritual expression. And for some, singing is not even comfortable. We recognize that some of the songs in *Voices Together* may be harder to receive, perhaps because of musical style, language, theology and other aspects of the song. We recognize and celebrate that while we might not sing some songs, they might be sustaining for other people and other faith communities. At the same time, we want to be open to receiving the gifts that are awaiting us inside this hymnal from the wider church through worship and song.” The congregation then shared the songs they were happy made it into the new hymnal. Some favorites included “For We Are Strangers No More,” “The Peace of the Earth Be with You,” “Come Away from Rush and Hurry,” “Praise the Lord, Sing Halleluiah” “In the Rifted Rock I’m Resting” and “Rain Down.”

—STORY AND PHOTO BY JESSICA EVANS

/// News brief

Church fundraises for solar panels

“For me, this project is a way to show that it’s possible to be the church and carry out the church’s mission in a way that is more environmentally sustainable,” says Aryton Blank. Blank is a recent graduate of the alternative energy technology program at Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and a member of Edmonton First Mennonite Church. The congregation had originally discussed the idea of installing a geothermal loop system to replace their aging furnaces, but members decided that it wasn’t the right time for that project. However, for some time there had been interest in installing solar panels. Blank provided his expertise to the conversation, and the church sought ways to raise money for the project. “We believe that as Christians, we have an obligation to protect the earth that God gave us. So, by using solar panels for our electricity instead of fossil fuels, we can reduce our carbon footprint and our impact on God’s world,” says Blank. “Reducing our footprint is important to protect our world and help contribute to reducing the effects of climate change.” So far, they have raised almost \$67,000 of their target of \$150,000. Most has come from individual donations.

—BY JESSICA EVANS

/// News brief

East Zorra celebrates 20 years of parish nursing

Tavistock, Ont.—East Zorra Mennonite Church celebrated 20 years of its parish nursing ministry on May 29. This ministry was implemented in 2001 by former pastor Elsie Epp, now living in Winnipeg, and it was an honour to have her, and her husband Delmer, join the congregation for this celebration. Jean MacDonald, a member of the congregation, was hired as the first parish nurse and she continued in that role for more than 20 years, supported by a health-ministry team from the congregation. Through the years, they have planned a variety of health-related education events for the congregation and the community. As a registered nurse, Jean has supported many members as they sought advice for their health concerns. They have appreciated her prayers and the spiritual support that were part of the visit. At the end of June, Jean will retire, and Heidi Wagler will take over as the parish nurse. Jane Kuepfer, a former interim pastor, currently in the role of Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging, was the guest speaker at the event. Her message, “Looking forward together, with new questions for health care, for Christ-followers, for God” was based on the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1-16 and Psalm 73:26 which says; “*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*” Following the morning service, the congregation enjoyed a picnic lunch outside. It was a wonderful opportunity to re-connect with others as for many it was the first in-person event since the beginning of the pandemic. The congregation was truly blessed by this celebration!

— BY ELAINE LEIS



PHOTO BY BETHANY KROPF

Elsie Epp (left), Jane Kuepfer and Jean MacDonald have played important roles in the parish nursing ministry at East Zorra Mennonite Church.

'Generous of them to help us'

56 Saskatchewan cattle producers get hay from MDS Hay West

By John Longhurst
Mennonite Disaster Service

For Cornelius Beveridge, a cattle producer in Maple Creek, Sask., hay provided by the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Canada Hay West project arrived at just the right time.

"It got us through the cold spell around Christmas," he says of a two-week period when temperatures hovered around -30C. "The cows were happy to have food to stay warm," he said, adding, "Without that hay we would have had to sell some of our cattle."

Beveridge, who farms with his wife Heidi, was one of 56 producers in Saskatchewan to receive hay from the MDS Hay West project. Through the project, farmers in Ontario—where crops last year were good—donated excess hay to farmers dealing with drought in Saskatchewan.

"It was quite generous of them to help us," says Beveridge, who had about 200 cattle over the winter. "Every bale of hay I received was priceless. I am grateful they remembered us."

Ike Epp of the MDS Saskatchewan Unit echoes that sentiment. "It's great that farmers in Ontario were willing to help us out west," he says, recalling the hay that went the other direction in 2012, when farmers in Saskatchewan sent hay east to farmers in Ontario experiencing drought.

Epp was also gratified to be able to help so many farmers this year, even if he wished they could have helped more. "Like with any disaster, the problem was bigger than we could address," he says. But those who received hay "appreciated our efforts."

Lester Weber helped organize the project for MDS Ontario. "We are extremely humbled and grateful for the generosity of all the farmers who donated hay and time to make this project a success," he says. "It was important for us to do if we actually believe in Christ's

teaching that we should do to others as we would have them do to us, since they shared with us back in 2012."

Epp and Weber also acknowledge the support of Hutton Transport, which trucked most of the hay to Saskatchewan from Ontario while charging less than usual rates.

As for Beveridge, he is casting a hopeful eye to the future. "Right now we're okay with the snowfall in April and the amount of rain since then," he says. "I'm hoping for a better year this year."

The cost of the Hay West project was \$345,000. A total of \$86,600 was donated by MDS supporters, while farmers in Saskatchewan paid a total of \$158,300 toward trucking costs. The remaining \$100,100 is being provided by MDS Canada from its reserves. ❧



MDS CANADA PHOTO

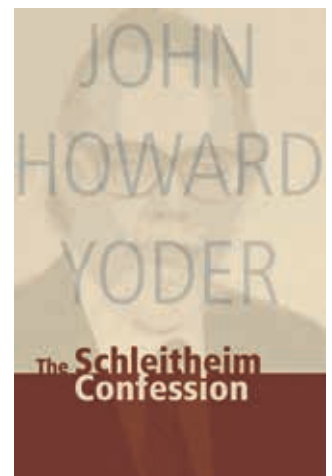
Donated hay from Ontario is unloaded in Saskatchewan.

News brief

John Howard Yoder books declared out of print

HARRISONBURG, VA—Herald Press will no longer be printing books by John Howard Yoder. Effective June 30, all John Howard Yoder books, with the exception of his translation of the *Schleitheim Confession*, will no longer be available from Herald Press. "Yoder's books have been important volumes for readers over the years, and his writings helped shape and define Anabaptist thought and practice for many years," says Amy Gingerich, Herald Press's publisher. "However, we feel it is the right decision to take these volumes out of print." Herald Press has continued to wrestle with Yoder's long-term sexual harassment and abuse of women, and how to respond as a publisher. In 2013, the decision was made to include a statement in Yoder's books. While that decision seemed appropriate at the time, Herald Press now feels it is prudent to stop selling and promoting his works, based on this history.

—MENNOMEDIA



Calgary church learns about its neighbourhood

Story and photo by Jessica Evans
Alberta correspondent
CALGARY, ALTA.

As part of a five-week series focused on land, place and community, members of Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church went on a walk through their neighborhood. The original idea for the series came from Diana Mansell, an active member of the worship committee, while the idea to go on a community walk originated with Walter Hossli, church council chair.

“Earlier this year one of our worship committee members put forward the idea that we put together a series that’s aim is to get to know our neighborhood better. We are a church that comes from all over and outside of Calgary to meet in a building in the neighborhood of Renfrew,” says pastor Lauren Harms.

At the beginning of each session, Harms reads a land acknowledgment, as she believes that the church also needs to understand the people who have lived there before, honouring and celebrating the land on which the church stands and the people of all nations who live work and play in the area today.

“A part of my own interest has been in various coursework that has been aimed at decolonization and strengthening Indigenous ways of knowing,” says Harms. “The focus of this often begins with getting to know that land we are on—knowing the stories of place that have come before us.”

The first session began with a contemplative exercise about place. To give the congregation a visual idea of their neighborhood, Harms showed a short video of a bike tour through the community. The second Sunday they had guests from the Trellis Society, a nonprofit organization just down the street. Naya Jamal

and Heather Pawson told the group about the programming that Trellis provides, including after-school programs for kids and youth as well as camps during the summer.

The third Sunday, Mary-Grace Linton, president of the Renfrew Community Association, updated the church on current events and issues in the community. The fourth Sunday, David Swann, a Calgary MLA who cares deeply

She plans to familiarize herself with other organizations in the area such as the Women’s Centre and to meet residents in the neighborhood who are working to improve the place where they live.

Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church is not new to building a sense of community. The church building hosts Calgary’s newest performance and art space, under the name Theatre 1308. After receiving a grant to build an elevator, the church decided to

increase their accessibility efforts and provide a space to host events. Not only does this space bring in revenue for the church, but it also allows them to make connections with artists, poets and musicians within the community.

Church volunteers help host the events. Harms says, “We are serving beverages at the bar, cleaning bathrooms, making sure the event is running smoothly. It is so interesting to see how the space can be used, and it is so cool to see church members light up about it.”

Congregants plan to volunteer for a Stampede event alongside the Renfrew Community Association

this summer and are looking forward to the busy season at Theatre 1308.

“We ask: ‘What does this community care about and how can we support those things?’” says Harms. “If they need a voice of another group that cares, we will be there.”

“We would also like get to know other church communities in our area,” she adds. “Churches are shrinking but, if we can combine forces, that would be amazing.”

Does she hope to gain new members for their small congregation through their efforts? Harms responds, “If that brings people into our church on Sundays, that would be cool too.” ❧



Nathan Hawryluk points out facts about local development during Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church’s walk through their Renfrew neighborhood.

for neighborhoods and place-based activism, led a conversation about the ways people live out their values in their neighborhoods.

On the last Sunday of the series, Nathan Hawryluk, a city planner who lives in Renfrew, led members on a neighborhood walk, pointing out interesting historical facts and current issues related to city planning and development.

Harms says, “I think making connections in the community is so important. It is so helpful for me, as a pastor, to get to know the amazing resources that are close to us, and the hope is that we can also support some of these organizations.”

PEOPLE

Rural remnant, earthy sensibilities

The journey of a Mennonite shepherd

By Will Braun
Senior Writer

Ernie Hildebrand intended to spend his life farming along the banks of the Cypress Creek, where he grew up in south-central Manitoba. And while Hildebrand, now 80, and his wife Judy currently live less than a mile from where Ernie played as a boy, a pastoral calling took them on a 23-year journey away from those creek-side sheep pastures.

The story is told in Hildebrand's memoir, *Guiding Diverse Flocks: Tales of a Rural Mennonite Pastor*. The flocks included 250 Suffolk sheep; human flocks at Osler, Sask., Springstein, Man., and Mather, Man.; then, finally, another flock of the fluffier sort.

While Hildebrand depicts a "carefree" childhood during which there was "little distinction between work and play," two of the more memorable scenes in the book are dimmer episodes from his youth. At age 11, a combine drove over half his face after he slipped while jumping onto the

machine. When a group of cousins stopped by the hospital to see the recuperating, and somewhat misshapen, boy, Hildebrand was met "by a sea of pained faces and utter silence." Hildebrand recalls: "The reality of my facial disfigurement was sinking in."

Some years later, neighbour Peter Thiessen drives to the end of the 50-acre field Hildebrand is seeding to tell him that his 15-year-old sister Linda has died. The family had been to the hospital in Winnipeg the day before to say their goodbyes. Linda had succumbed to cancer.

"I remember Mom saying that she wished she had never had children," Hildebrand writes, "our family life had changed."

But overall, the book is one of glad endings.

Hildebrand's story harkens back to the rural roots of Canadian Mennonites. It will resonate with anyone who has had a team of horses run away on them, or attends a church at which the Thanksgiving Sunday display includes wheat from a member's field.

While Mennonites have urbanized rapidly, roughly 40 percent of Mennonite Church Canada congregations are still rural. Though the majority of church institutions and denominational decision-makers are now urban—including essentially all newcomer congregations—the rural reality is still a key component of our diversity.

For Hildebrand, country life was the context of all his pastoral work. In his mid-twenties, a thin financial farm outlook coincided with increased church involvement. The Hildebrands ended up at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) in Winnipeg and then pastoral ministry at Osler Mennonite. Seeing grain trucks pass his office window during harvest time was an adjustment. "Pastoral work didn't seem to be real work," he writes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERNIE HILDEBRAND.

Ernie Hildebrand on his farm south of Crystal City, Man.

Hildebrand's five years in Osler were marked by his leadership of a local citizens' group that fought a public campaign against a proposed uranium refinery in the area. After three years of work, they won. But the issue, including Hildebrand's involvement with church youth engaged in the protest, created growing unease in the congregation. Despite support from church leadership, Hildebrand resigned, in hopes of alleviating tension. He later worried that no other church would hire "such a political/radical pastor."

A subsequent six-year stint at Swift Current Bible College—though rewarding—also ended amidst turmoil. Numerous faculty members resigned in the face of a push for reforms by conservative elements in the constituency. Hildebrand felt wounded that no conference leaders defended their faculty friends.

From there, the Hildebrands ended up at Springstein Mennonite, east of Winnipeg. Hildebrand writes candidly and graciously about successfully navigating inevitable tensions, including a readers theatre that led to a "boycott" by some seniors.

Overall, it was a "healing" time for Hildebrand and a "good match." Still, over time, "restlessness," slumping morale, and other opportunities brought him back to the creek-side pastures of his youth and



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERNIE HILDEBRAND.

Ernie Hildebrand, standing, with his brother David and the farm dog on Cypress Creek.

a part-time position at nearby Trinity Mennonite in Mather, Man. Hildebrand gave attention to both human and woolly flocks for eight years until retiring from church work in 2002.

In response to the memoir, Erin Morash says, “Pastors are their collective life experiences.” She appreciated Hildebrand’s candour about the role of a rural pastor. Morash has been a pastor for 17 years at the Crystal City, Man., church that Hildebrand attended in his youth and again now. She also served a much larger church in Winnipeg.

Living and pastoring in a town of a few hundred, Morash says people notice what you drive, where you buy groceries, and when you go to the city, which Morash does regularly, in part to shed her work role, which is difficult to shed in town. “Everyone needs privacy,” she says, and boundaries are “tricky.”

Hildebrand says some people related more freely with him when he became a former pastor. Morash noted that Hildebrand is “honest about the freedom that retirement from ministry gives him when it comes to sharing the parts of his theology that might have been hard for the majority of an average congregation to digest.”

Morash says one benefit of rural pastoring is that she knows more about her parishioners than she did in Winnipeg, in part because she sees people in the rest of their lives—at work, with extended family, at the post office, and in the coffee shops, which she visits weekly (men’s on one side of the street, women’s on the other). She learns about people’s needs. And the contextual familiarity is especially helpful when supporting people in times of crisis.

She also knows about people’s feuds, including the long-standing ones. Hildebrand writes that in each of the four rural churches he has been part of he knew of decades-old conflicts related to land transactions between members. Morash says, “Communities find ways to build bridges around these feuds” because it is too costly not to.

The broader Mennonite family (“conference”) is vital to her congregation, says Morash. It is “part of their identity” and necessary for their survival.

Hildebrand’s story is likewise embedded

Rural-urban stats

- **About 40** percent of the 204 MC Canada congregations are in rural or small-town settings.
- **In MC Saskatchewan**, 15 of 22 congregations are rural.
- **Of the 13** current members of the Joint Council that governs MC Canada, one lives rurally. A tension for Joint Council is that they seek cultural diversity, and rural churches and the population in rural churches is almost exclusively white.
- *Canadian Mennonite* has two rural staff writers, and four of 11 board members live rurally.
- **In 2021**, 73.7 percent of Canadians lived in one of the 41 cities with a population greater than 100,000. (Statistics Canada)
- **From 2016** to 2019, over 90 percent of immigrants to Canada settled in a city of 100,000 people or more. (Statistics Canada)

in the broader Anabaptist story, centred for him in the belief in “following Jesus in life,” the church as a “fellowship of believers,” and dedication to “the way of peace.”

Toward the end of his story, Hildebrand expands this circle to include the influence of writers Marcus Borg, John Spong and Richard Rohr, whose writing on mysticism opened up for Hildebrand “the elements of wonder, awe, and mystery of all that surrounds us.”

“God is in everything,” he continues, noting that all life and growth, starting in the womb, requires nutrients from the earth. From God. Then, with the earthiness of a farmer, a twinkle of mysticism, and the sensibilities of a shepherd who often stood next to a hole to speak the words of “dust to dust,” Hildebrand says: “I proclaim that I came from God (the earth) and in death I return to God (the earth). I’m satisfied with that. I trust I’ll face death with this peace.” ❧



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 Anabaptist Mennonite
Biblical Seminary

Meet the speakers for Gathering 2022

By Virginia A. Hostetler
With files from Mennonite Church Canada

Three guest speakers will engage the theme of witness at Mennonite Church Canada's Gathering 2022, to be held in Edmonton, Alta., from July 29 to August 1.

The theme of the event is "We Declare: What We Have Seen and Heard," and is based on 1 John 1:1: "We declare to you... what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life."

John Boopalan will speak at the opening worship session on July 29. He is assistant professor of biblical and theological studies at Canadian Mennonite University, in Winnipeg, Man. He is the author of the book *Memory, Grief, and Agency* and the series editor of the *Politics of Scripture* that offers commentary on texts from the Revised Common Lectionary on the website politicaltheology.com.

Boopalan has lived in India, the Middle East, and the United States and says he loves cooking and believes in the wonder-working power of God, food and laughter.

He says, "I focus a lot on bodies in my research—how they move for or against others, what makes them act and react, how bodily movements can be transformed towards the ends of healing and justice. . . . Embodiment is the crux of the Christian message. The gathering's theme of seeing, hearing, and bearing bodily witness, therefore, are quite exciting to address and unpack."

At the morning session on July 30, **Cheryl Bear** will address the plenary. Bear is from Nadleh Whut'en First Nation and is a respected voice on behalf of Indigenous peoples living in Canada. She is a founding board member of NAIITS, an Indigenous learning community, and is an associate professor at Regent College. She currently serves as director of community ministry at First United Church in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Bear is an award-winning singer/



John Boopalan



Cheryl Bear



Kara Carter

songwriter who shares stories of Indigenous life through story and song. She has released three albums, which have received three Indigenous People's Choice music awards, two Covenant Awards and a Native American Music Award.

On Saturday evening, she will also lead in a time of story and song.

Kara Carter will address the gathering in the final session on August 1. She is the lead pastor of Wellesley Mennonite Church in Wellesley, Ont. She is a PhD candidate at Martin Luther University

College, Waterloo, Ont., researching pastors' lived experiences with barriers and facilitators as they lead cultural, organizational change. Kara is examining how God's people are being invited to "go local," to join with God in their neighbourhoods to further God's mission.

"The church that many pastors were trained to lead no longer exists," says Kara. "Structures that once served the church well are not serving the church effectively and yet a replacement organizational structure is not clear. . . . Gone are the days of 'build it and they will come.'" She continues, "The church needs a new story. I believe, as we journey together, a new story will become evident."

Gathering 2022 will provide the opportunity for members of the nationwide church to re-examine what it means to tell the Good News and to share and hear stories of bearing witness to the gospel of peace. ❧

Registrations are still open for attendance both in person and online. Visit mennonitechurch.ca/gathering2022.



We Declare
what we have seen & heard

Gathering 2022 Edmonton, Alberta
July 29 – August 1, 2022

Join us on Treaty 6 territory as we re-examine what it means to tell the Good News and bear witness to the Gospel of peace.

 **Mennonite Church Canada**
Our nationwide community of faith

'A positive presence in Montreal'

Luke Martin retires as director of Maison de l'amitié

By Annika Krause
Montreal, Que.

In the middle of Montreal's Plateau-Mont-Royal neighbourhood is a small and much-loved community centre, the Maison de l'amitié (MA) or House of Friendship. This unassuming brick building is a bustling place, fueled by the desire for community and social change. On any given day you will see people wandering in to volunteer or to benefit from the variety of services that this centre offers. And at the heart of it all is Luke Martin.

Martin, recently retired, was the director of MA for 21 years. In fact, he has been so enamored of this community that he has been helping cultivate it since he was 15 years old, as a humble participant. In the mid-1980s Martin chaired MA's board of directors. In 1993 he was hired as a receptionist and, under the wing of then director John Docherty, he became assistant director and started developing programming. When his predecessor stepped down in 2000, Martin stepped up to guide the operations.

His tenure as director, which ended last month, was full of creative initiatives and social impact. He has nurtured people's gifts, given them opportunities to change their neighbourhood, and mentored and inspired the current community leaders who work at MA today. His mentality around working together to effect positive change has drawn people in, and he leaves his post with a group of inspired and soulful people to take the helm.

Martin's list of accomplishments is long, though he is too humble to say so himself. In conversations, he always points out that it is relationships that have built up the centre. But, as his co-workers would tell you, it is his guidance and willingness to work alongside people that have brought many of MA's projects to fruition.

One major accomplishment is language classes. MA ran French classes, with the

support of Immigration-Québec, to help refugee claimants learn French. When the majority of refugee claimants coming to Quebec shifted to French-speaking people from North Africa, Martin started English language classes to help them find employment. Eventually, MA took charge of its own French classes, which meant less funding but also fewer restrictions.



Luke Martin (left) hears accolades from Dora-Marie Goulet, whom he has mentored at Maison de l'amitié in Montreal.

The language classes are predominantly taught by volunteers, so they can be offered at an incredibly low cost, with a discount for refugee claimants and those on welfare. There were even, briefly, Mohawk language classes, created as an act of reconciliation with the Indigenous people whose land the community centre is on. Recently, with oversight from Dora-Marie Goulet, the project has grown to include Spanish and Portuguese language classes.

Martin has also built relationships between the community centre and the municipal government. He helped initiate farmers' markets, got MA involved in an annual plant distribution project, and helped local businesses connect with their representatives during the pandemic. Moreover, MA partners with RIVO, an

intervention network that works with people affected by organized violence. Martin is currently the president of the organization's board.

While Maison de l'amitié started as a project of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, it no longer receives funding from the regional church and is now focused on local ownership, with local church involvement. There are seats on the board allocated to Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, which shares the building with MA.

When asked about what he wanted the larger church to know, Martin said two things. First, he encourages the church to be involved by sending youth groups to do service projects with MA, and by sending students to live in the residence that occupies the top floor of the community centre. Second, he wants to pass on his thanks for the direct and indirect support the broader church has given. "Your support for MA has impacted so, so many lives ... [MA] has been such a positive presence in Montreal."

A retirement party for Martin was held on June 10 and many people had wonderful things to say about him. There was no shortage of terms like "mentor" and "brother" used by those who wanted to express their gratitude for all the work he has done and all the relationships he has built within this community. Martin has created a space for people with a wide variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds as well as abilities, fostering an environment where everyone is welcome and valued. What a legacy to leave behind!

The new director, Pierre Martin (no relation to Luke), has big shoes to fill. ✎

To learn more about Maison de l'amitié, visit en.maisondelamitie.ca.



/// Staff changes

Pastoral changes at Vietnamese church

Tan Bui, pastor of Vietnamese Christian Church (VCC) in Abbotsford, B.C., is completing his ministry there in mid-June. His ministry with VCC was for one year. Tan and the family plan to travel to the East Coast. Phuc Vo and Thuy Cao, who both have pastoral backgrounds in Vietnam, are coming from Edmonton to serve with VCC. They will be mentored by Nhien Pham and Ken Ha, reaching out to Vietnamese people in Abbotsford while also working at other jobs to support themselves. "The Vietnamese Christian Church has some remaining funds that we can assist them with for the ministry for a couple of years," says Ken Ha. "Please pray for Phuc and Thuy to get employment in Abbotsford at this time. Thank you for your prayers and love for the Vietnamese immigrants."

—AMY RINNER WADDELL



/// News brief

Anabaptist pastor arrested, charged with sexual assault



MEETINGHOUSE FILE PHOTO

BY DALE D. GEHMAN

Bruxy Cavey was a featured speaker at the 2015 Mennonite World Conference assembly in Pennsylvania.

Bruxy Cavey, a longtime pastor at The Meeting House, an Anabaptist megachurch based in Oakville, Ont., was arrested by police in Hamilton, Ont., on May 31, charged with sexual assault. He was subsequently released to appear in a Hamilton court on June 27. In March Cavey resigned from his position as senior pastor of the Be in Christ (BIC) congregation after an investigation into alleged sexual misconduct. The BIC Church of Canada has revoked his ministerial credentials. The Meeting House has received multiple allegations of clergy sexual misconduct in recent months, relating to more than one former pastor. It is not clear whether any of these complaints are connected to Cavey's sexual assault charge. The church has appointed a third-party victims' advocate to listen for and respond to additional complaints. Cavey has been a featured speaker at several Mennonite events including Mennonite World Conference Assembly in 2015, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada delegate assembly in 2017 and the annual conference of the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries in 2020.

—CANADIAN MENNONITE STAFF

/// News brief

Two students from Canada among 2022 AMBS grads

• **Adela Friesen Wedler** of Edmonton graduated from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., on April 30, with a graduate certificate in theological studies. She plans to continue volunteering in her congregation, First Mennonite Church, and in area churches, seeking to apply her seminary lessons there. Wedler previously earned a bachelor of education with a major in music from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and a licentiate in music in piano performance from the Western Board of Music, also at the University of Alberta. "Christian theology, Christian and specifically Anabaptist history, and Christian worship have always been a love of mine, and I have studied on my own through working with the church, reading and attending workshops," she says. "When I retired from teaching, I had the opportunity to study these in a more formal setting [at AMBS]."



• **Yeshiwas Amsalu Muleta** of Ottawa also graduated from AMBS on April 30 with a master of arts in Christian formation. He also was selected to receive this year's Award for Excellence in Christian Formation from the seminary's Church and Ministry Department. In the near future, he looks forward to engaging multicultural churches in North America as God opens opportunities. For the long term, he is equipping himself to be a bi-vocational minister in underserved communities of Ethiopia. Muleta previously earned a doctor of medicine degree from the Gondar College of Medical Sciences at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. His home congregation is the Ethiopian Evangelical Church in Ottawa, which is part of the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches Fellowship in Canada. "The campus life, the welcoming and friendly international community of students, the open-minded and respectful professors and the amicable campus staff were sources of excitement during my stay at AMBS," he says. "The courses I took deepened my insights and my understanding of Christian faith, gave me the opportunity to understand other perspectives, and helped me to be more intentional in my doing."



—AMBS

/// Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Manitoba

Judith Friesen Epp was ordained for ministry on May 8, 2022. She is co-pastor of Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, where she has served for seven years. Her ordination service (pictured) took place in-person at the church and online via live stream, supported by her congregation and led by Michael Pahl and Karen Schellenberg (executive minister and co-director of leadership ministries, respectively). Friesen Epp earned a master of arts degree in religion and culture from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont. Before pastoring at Home Street, she worked in adult education and community development.



PHOTO BY MATT VEITH

Marcus Rempel was ordained for ministry on May 29, 2022, in the sanctuary of Saint Julian's Table, an ecumenical worship circle in Beausejour, Man., that is the worshipping community of the St. James Anglican parish (pictured). Rempel has been the pastor for two years. He also works with the Indigenous family wellness program at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. He earned a bachelor of theology degree



PHOTO BY PETER REMPEL

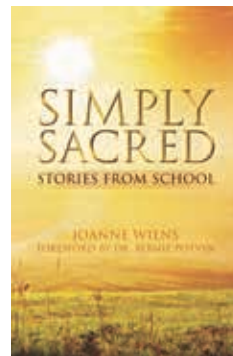
from Canadian Mennonite Bible College and is currently working on his Master's of marriage and family therapy at the University of Winnipeg. The online and in-person service opened and closed with traditional Indigenous drumming songs by Jedediah Swampy; it was presided over by executive minister Michael Pahl and Pastor Marla Langelotz.

Mark Von Kampen concluded his ministry at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, on June 3, after serving there for 31 years. He started at the church in 1991 as a full-time associate minister with a focus on youth. He moved to half-time and a focus on young adults and worship in 2003, when he began working as chaplain of the Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association at the University of Manitoba. He is continuing his work in that position and is discerning what is next on his vocational path. Besides earning a master's degree in landscape architecture, he also completed a master's of divinity degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

/// News brief

Former principal pens *Simply Sacred: Stories from School*



CALGARY—During the COVID-19 pandemic, Joanne Wiens, the principal of Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary from 1996 to 2009, turned to writing as a project to pass the time. From a series of notes she had made during her time at Menno, she saw a theme emerging in which God was working in the good times and in not-so-good times. And she also saw scripture woven throughout her writing. This project turned into a book called *Simply Sacred: Stories from School*. These stories are not only memories from her time at school, but a reminder that even the most ordinary day will always hold sacred moments if people just take the time to look. In Chapter 14, she writes: "The first weeks of school are resplendently, exhaustingly busy. On top of that which beckoned us in the hubbub on those initial days, seasoned teachers kept an eye on the door. We waited to see which of our newly minted alumni would return first. It happened every year. Someone who had moved on to high school was keen to come back, to check in, to fill us in on how things were going in their new reality. They wanted their story to still be connected to our story. It was always a moment of privilege to know that, when they walked through our familiar doors and saw our faces, they felt at home." Visit simplewords.ca to hear more heartfelt stories or to get a copy of the book.

—MENNO SIMONS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Promotional Supplement

/// News brief

AMBS scholarship supports visual arts

Elkhart, Ind.—**Kajsa Herrstrom** is the latest recipient of a scholarship that supports seminary studies integrating spirituality and visual arts. The Worship Arts Scholarship is offered by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), one of its 100 endowed scholarships. Herrstrom, a masters of divinity student from Champaign, Ill., says, “I have been on a lifelong artistic and spiritual journey. I wouldn’t always have articulated it that way, [but] I became much more intentional about integrating the two when I started my studies at AMBS.” The endowment for this scholarship began in 2001, with gift from Barbara Peterson of Elkhart, Ind., an artist who took a long view on how she could make a difference. In addition to creating worship banners and teaching visual arts at AMBS, Peterson, along with her husband Duane, donated stocks to the seminary to establish a scholarship that would support students who are preparing to use visual arts in ministry or theological studies. When Barbara died in 2013, memorial gifts in her honour added to the endowment. And to mark the scholarship’s 20th anniversary in 2021, Duane made an additional contribution. The seminary’s goal for the Worship Arts Scholarship is to raise \$20,000, so that the scholarship can support 10 percent of the tuition cost for one student for one year.

—ANABAPTIST MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY



PHOTO BY JASON BRYANT

Scholarship recipient **Kajsa Herrstrom** is in the front row, third from left.

Digital issues for the summer slowdown FROM **Canadian Mennonite**

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

If you already receive digital delivery throughout the year, you **do not** need to sign up again.

To add digital issues to your subscription, at no extra cost, please visit canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/digital.



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UMEI students connect with God through creation

By Sonya Bedal

“I am here. I am open. God is with us.” These three simple sentences were repeated by students at UMEI Christian High School in Leamington, Ont., to begin each chapel service during the school’s Deeper Faith days.

The guest speaker, Wendy Janzen, is the eco-minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada as well as the leader and pastor at Burning Bush Forest Church, an outdoor worshipping community in Kitchener. She works with congregations to empower them in their worship and witness with their communities, engaging in the important work of caring for God’s creation.

Wendy’s three days at UMEI were spent doing just that, through three expanded chapel services as well as classroom workshops. The students and teachers gathered outside, listening to Wendy speak while huddled around a campfire. Each service began with a grounding exercise, followed by scripture and words from Wendy, and then a solo, silent walk around the grounds, ending with a sharing time as a community. The concept follows Mary Oliver’s simple poem “Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.”

Students and staff felt encouraged, empowered and blessed by the time together as a community.



Students gather outdoors for chapel services during the Deeper Faith days at UMEI Christian High School.

“UMEI, like all Mennonite schools, is a place to combine solid academic learning with profound growth in our faith and relationship to God,” remarked teacher and chapel coordinator Chani Wiens. “Not only did our time with Wendy educate UMEI students about creation care, it also deeply rooted this care as an integral part of our relationship to the Creator.”

“Throughout the Deeper Faith days, I found a unique understanding of how to connect with God without a roof between myself and the sky God created,” reflected Grade 12 student Raylene Schartner.

Schools Directory featuring UMEI

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/// Upcoming

MC Canada discounts live-streamed sessions

Mennonite Church Canada is offering member congregations a discounted registration fee of \$150 to view Gathering 2022 sessions on the August long weekend. Individual registration fees have also been reduced to \$75. "This is the first time that we're making our nationwide gatherings a hybrid event, and so we really want as many people as can make the time to participate," says Doug Klassen, executive minister of MC Canada. The lowered fees are an effort to boost viewership for the virtual event "We Declare: What we have seen and heard." Registrants will log onto Pheedloop, a virtual event software platform, to view worship and plenary sessions, to participate in online workshops and to network with other registrants. Sessions will be live-streamed from Edmonton (MDT). Recordings of the main sessions will be available on Pheedloop throughout the weekend. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3zvKpRd>.



—BY MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

program in Timmins. Contact info@mcco.ca for more information.

Sept. 17: Toronto Mennonite Festival at Willowgrove Farm, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Oct. 14: Diverse Paths: A Low German Networking conference to learn and explore cultural nuances of Low German speaking community at Conrad Grebel University College.

Oct. 27: MCC hosts The Power of Partnership: An evening with Malcolm Gladwell at Bingemans Conference Centre, Kitchener, 6 p.m. Visit mcccanada.ca/get-involved/events for more information.

International

Sept. 29-Oct. 2: Mennonite/s Writing 2022, at Goshen College, Ind.

Theme: "Thirty years of Mennonite/s Writing: Responding to the past, creating the future." Keynote speakers include Casey Plett, Julia Spicher Kasdorf and Steven Rubin, and Beth Piatote. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3yGxQ4Y>.

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

/// Calendar

Nationwide

July 29-Aug. 1: MC Canada Gathering 2022, in Edmonton. Theme: "We declare what we have seen and heard." Registration is now available for the in-person and virtual event at mennonitechurch.ca/gathering2022.

July 31-Aug. 4: MC Canada National Youth Gathering at Camp Valaqua, Water Valley, Alta. Theme: "Amplify! Giving voice to what we have seen and heard." For more information, or to register online, visit mennonitechurch.ca/amplify.

British Columbia

Oct. 14-16: MC B.C. ladies retreat at Camp Squeah, "Alive in Christ: Body, Mind and Soul" with Laurel D. Hildebrandt. Register at www.mcbc.ca.

Saskatchewan

Sept. 17: Shekinah Move-A-Thon, a day of fundraising and fun to support the work and mission of Shekinah Retreat Centre. Updates coming soon.

Manitoba

to Sept. 10: Views from Manitoba,

1890-1940 photo exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery at CMU featuring photos by four Manitoba Mennonite photographers.

Sept. 18: Camps with Meaning fundraiser, Pedal Dash Paddle adventure race to help with Covid recovery. More information at ringupthecash.causevox.com.

Sept. 29: Book launch for *Walking Together: Intercultural Stories of Love and Acceptance*, by Edith and Neill von Gunten. Event will be held in person at CommonWord and by live stream at 7:00 PM (CDT).

Ontario

July 3: Detweiler Meetinghouse hosts the Fair Wind Celtic Quartette with vocal and instrumental Celtic music of Ireland, Scotland and England at 2:30 p.m.

Aug. 14 to 26: Ontario Mennonite Music Camp, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Open to students who have finished grades 6 to 12, with a leadership-training program available for students who have finished grades 11 or 12. For more information, or to register, visit bit.ly/34Hb3ch.

Aug. 22-26: MCC Ontario is hosting a True North Learning Tour with Indigenous Neighbours

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Employment Opportunity
Executive Editor

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) invites applications for the position of **Executive Editor**.

The Executive Editor guides the publishing of *Canadian Mennonite* in print and online. Available **October 1, 2022**, the successful candidate has a strong vision for what *Canadian Mennonite* can contribute to the church as a source of information, inspiration and interconnectedness.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate holds a degree in communications or other related field, in combination with experience working in journalism, and will be a member of a Mennonite church.

Location: Previous editors worked at the head office in Waterloo, but remote work arrangements are possible.

CMPS is an independent, non-profit corporation, established in 1971 in Waterloo, Ontario. Our mission is to educate, inspire, inform and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada.

See www.canadianmennonite.org/employment for full details.

Application deadline: August 5, 2022



FACULTY POSITION IN PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES



Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo invites applications for a full-time tenure-track faculty position in Peace and Conflict Studies that involves undergraduate and graduate teaching, scholarship, service, and community education. The successful candidate will have general teaching and scholarship expertise in Peace and Conflict Studies or related fields. **The appointment will begin July 1, 2023. The College will begin reviewing applications on October 15, 2022.**

The College is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified persons. Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority. For further information about the College, department, position description, and application procedures, see www.grebel.ca/positions

 **CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**



Employment Opportunity Executive Minister (MC B.C.)

Mennonite Church British Columbia (MC B.C.) is looking for an **Executive Minister (EM)** to work with the MC B.C. Leadership Board to shape and implement the mission and vision of MC B.C.

The EM will help foster and sustain spiritually vibrant congregations and develop and mentor leaders. The chosen candidate will be someone who assists in shaping, defining, and cultivating MC B.C.'s Anabaptist vision of faith for today. The EM will build healthy connections, grow community, and meaningfully engage with our culture and God's world in transformative ways.

Ideal start date is Fall 2022, for handover with current EM.

Find the job description here:
mcbc.ca/resources/employment

The application deadline is **August 30, 2022.**

Please send cover letter and resume to emstg@mcbc.ca.

All interested are encouraged to apply, and only the applicants that meet the expectations of the role will be contacted.



Employment Opportunities Pastoral Team

Inviting applications for two pastoral positions for a combined FTE of 1.5 - 2.0.

First Mennonite Church is excited to build a new pastoral team that works along with our church community to help us grow as a community of grace, joy, and peace. We are a multi-generational, urban church of approximately 180, with Anabaptist theology and principles guiding us. God has called us to be an inclusive, affirming, Christian community. Congregants are actively involved in church ministries and programs. The new pastoral team will share pastoral responsibilities in a manner that fits with their skills and gifts.

For information or to apply, please contact: Ruth Friesen, Search Committee Chair (ruthdavisfriesen@gmail.com, 780-910-2573) or Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, Mennonite Church Alberta Executive Minister (execmin@mcab.ca, 780 994-1021).

More information about First Mennonite Church is available at: edmontonfirst.mcab.ca.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
July 11 <i>Digital-only Issue</i>	June 27
July 25	July 11
Aug. 8 <i>Digital-only Issue</i>	July 25
Aug. 22	Aug. 9
Sept. 5 <i>Digital-only issue</i>	Aug. 22
Sept. 19 Focus on Money	Sept. 2
Oct. 3	Sept. 19
Oct. 17 Focus on Education	Oct. 3
Oct. 31	Oct. 17

Advertising Information

Contact
1-800-378-2524 x.224
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PHOTO ESSAY

New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale returns

by Ken Ogasawara

After virtual events during the pandemic, hundreds of quilt and relief sale enthusiasts gathered in the old arena at the New Hamburg, Ont., fairgrounds on May 28 to watch over 200 quilts being sold by auction to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario. The quilt auction alone raised \$159,000. ☞



PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER



PHOTO BY SHOUA VANG

The spring rolls made by First Hmong Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., are a popular item every year. Many hands prepared and cooked the tasty treats on site, and over 5,000 spring rolls were sold.



PHOTO BY KEN OGASAWARA

On May 27, nearly 200 folks stuck around at the end of a rainy Friday for a hymn sing, something that will surely become an ongoing tradition. Mark Diller Harder, pastor at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, led everyone in singing ten hymns which rang out across the fairgrounds and were enjoyed by neighbours nearly a kilometre away.



PHOTO BY SHOUA VANG

Everly Vang meets Winnie, one of the therapy dogs brought by St. John's Ambulance service to bring joy to thousands who attended the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale.