



## 100 Years in Saskatoon



The Anniversary Committee members: Dean Fergusson, Jan Rodda, Sandra Monson, Heather Kolojay, Beth Brimmer, Heather Schouse. Missing: Trung Nguyen, Martha Fergusson, Margaret Munro.

By Janice Rodda, Clerk,  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
in Saskatoon, Sask.

The Anniversary Committee at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Saskatoon, Sask., began its 100th anniversary planning in May 2023 with the focus of celebrating for a year. Our scripture verse to lead us is from Joshua

24:15: "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Our goal throughout has been to nurture new, inclusive paths to reaching our neighbours, whether they are downtown, across the city or throughout the world.

Celebrations began in September 2024, with an outdoor picnic on the church's front lawn. We invited our neighbours and those

passing by to stop for a burger and cake, watch families and children plant the "burning bush" at the entry parking lot garden, and hear more about a new initiative occurring at St. Andrew's called "Downtown Talks."

To encourage our neighbours to see what goes on inside St. Andrew's, the committee and Board hosted several events. This included "A Charlie Brown Christmas" concert, led by Paul Suchan, our organist, who is a talented music composer, performer and educator, along with two other musicians. It was well attended by many, including older adults who could re-live their childhoods.

Children from the church also held a Christmas drama concert, including having a newborn baby only 36-hours old play the role of Jesus as the Christ child! (Timing is everything!)

A Christmas baking appeal was held to raise funds for Presbyterian World Service & Development, and we sold poinsettias to decorate the church sanctuary during Advent. We also hosted a baby shower because we knew that four babies would be born during the months of December and January, which gave us all a sense of excitement that our congregation was growing, too!

On January 19, 2025, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church commemorated its first 100 years with an acknowledgement that the first service was held on January 18, 1925. The congregation honoured the date with a Heritage Service, giving thanks to all who had congregated over the past 100 years to have a Presbyterian presence in Saskatoon. A special worship service was held, and everyone signed in to say they were here, despite the -40°C temperature that January morning. A special 100th anniversary cake was baked by Sonja Wood, and our historical archivist Margaret Munro made sure that there was



Elizabeth Ahiahone putting the final touches on the planting of the burning bush.



Dean Fergusson and his handy helper digging the hole for the burning bush.



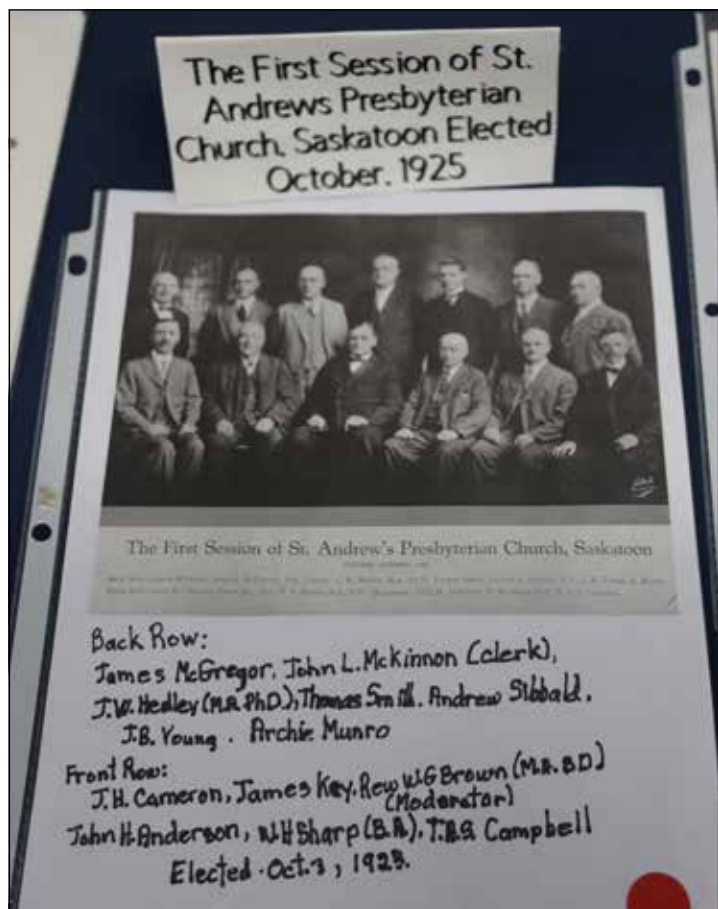
Heather Kolojay with Evelyn, Issac and Naomi Suchan, finished planting the burning bush. PHOTO CREDITS: ANDEM EDEMEKONG.

lots of archival material to look at and review.

Our choir practiced and performed some absolutely wonderful anthems for this celebration year under the direction of our music director, Naomi Suchan. With Naomi's help, we partnered with the University of Saskatchewan Music Department to showcase young musical vocal talent through the leadership of Dr. Betty Allison. On March 21, "Dreams of Love and Spring" songs were sung by Dr. Allison's students. The Anniversary Committee provided the treats for the fellowship hour.

On May 24, we hope to lead a spring outdoor clean-up of the church grounds. Our Homecom-

ing Weekend is scheduled for September 26-28. Friday night is the kickoff event with a guest speaker and dinner from the two food trucks we plan to have in our parking lot. September 27 includes a pancake breakfast and fellowship hour. Later in the day, we will hold our Homecoming Banquet with doors opening at 5 p.m. at the Western Development Museum. Fafa Ahiahonu will be our emcee. Our guest speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart from Vancouver School of Theology. Sunday morning worship will be led by the Rev. Roberto DeSandoli with a fellowship hour to follow. To learn more about this event, email the church at [office@standrewsyxe.ca](mailto:office@standrewsyxe.ca).



The first elected Session at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Saskatoon.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

# In Discouragement: Hope

By the Rev. Dr. Patricia  
Dutcher-Walls, Moderator of  
the 2024 General Assembly

During my year as Moderator, I shared conversations with Presbyterians across the country, both when I preached and when I led the Narratives of Hope workshops to help congregations imagine a faithful future. I was frequently impressed by people's dedication to the gospel and the good of their church. I heard stories of amazing new ministries and thriving congregations that shine as bright lights for the denomination. And I heard many stories of challenge and uncertainty from congregations who are not confident about their future because they are finding themselves older and smaller with little sense of how to regain vitality. What seemed most difficult to bear was the sense of discouragement some of these congregations felt—the long, slow weariness that sees little chance for a different or better situation.

Discouragement can be a difficult reality, but the good news is that there is Good News in God's love for us and for the world, especially in the hope and encouragement of new life possible through Jesus Christ. Consistent throughout scripture is God's word of hope for discouraged people.

In a culture where children were loved and valued members of a household and assured the longevity of the family line, Abraham and Sarah faced great discouragement in their childlessness. The story in Genesis 15–21 relates how Abraham, expressing his dismay by saying to God,



"You have given me no offspring," follows a custom of the time by fathering a child with Sarah's Egyptian slave woman, Hagar. But God made and kept a promise that Abraham and Sarah would have a child of their own, despite their advanced age and in the face of their laughter of disbelief. Their long despair was comforted when the child of promise was born and they named him Isaac, which means "he laughs." Sarah confirmed his name, "Now God has brought laughter for me."

However, not only Abraham and Sarah faced discouragement. The slave woman Hagar was banished from Abraham's household because of Sarah's jealousy and fled to the wilderness with her young son, Ishmael. Dying of

thirst and in utter despair, she laid him in the shade of a bush, then sat apart, saying in her grief, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." But God made and kept a promise for the child of the slave woman as fully as for the child of Abraham and Sarah, saying, "As for Ishmael, I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous." In the wilderness, the angel of God brought hope for Hagar's despair and water for their survival, with the message that God had heard the voice of the boy who would grow to become a "great nation."

In the time of the prophet Elijah, an extended drought brought deadly realities of suffering and starvation (1 Kings 17). At God's command, Elijah sought refuge with a poor widow of Israel's neighbour, Sidon. Discouragement filled the widow when Elijah requested water and bread. With barely any food, she responded: "I am now gathering a couple of sticks so I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." Elijah instructed her not to be afraid, but to make a small meal, promising God's generous provision, that her scant jar of meal and jug of oil "will not fail until that day that the Lord sends rain on the earth." The most vulnerable of people, a single mother, received God's blessing for life in the midst of discouragement when she acted on Elijah's words, feeding both Elijah and her household.

Years of discouragement and despair shaped the existence of God's people after they lost everything—home, monarchy, temple, hope—in Babylon's conquest of Jerusalem. The poetic prophecy of Isaiah of the exile identifies the hopelessness of those displaced and suffering because of international forces beyond their control (Isaiah 40). In despair, they cried, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God." Isaiah named their reality when he addressed them as the weary, powerless and exhausted. However, he brought a word of comfort: their discouragement and exhaustion had been recognized by the Lord, and a new hope for restoration and deliverance would be theirs through God's power and compassion. "Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary."

In the stories preserved in the gospels, many turn to Jesus for healing as he proclaims the reign of God among peoples suffering under the Roman Empire's oppressions. Embodying God's compassion, Jesus taught, touched and healed those most in need of God's care. For the woman who suffered from hemorrhages for 12 years (Mark 5), her discouragement is emphasized: "She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse." In

courage fuelled by faith and desperation, she approached Jesus in a crowd and touched his cloak. To her dismay, Jesus knew that power had gone from him, and he looked to see who had touched him. She fearfully told him the truth. Expecting censure, she received instead the loving kindness of Jesus who commended her faith and confirmed her healing.

Perhaps the most consoling of passages for those feeling discouragement is the long farewell discourse in John's gospel, which remembers Jesus comforting and teaching his disciples just before his arrest and crucifixion (John 14–17). Confronting their confusion and anticipating their suffering, he encouraged their faith through oneness with him and with the Father. He commands them to love one another, as God has loved him and he has loved them. He promises they will not be alone but that the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will teach and guide them. As he does in his post-resurrection appearances, he blesses them with peace: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

These stories may resonate with the discouragement we feel in our own context. Perhaps we say, like Abraham, "we have no future," but then we hear of God's promises of fruitfulness and can dare to have hope. Maybe we grieve like Hagar, praying not to look on the death of our church, but we can listen for the good news that even the most vulnerable find a place in God's future. Like the widow, we may find ourselves trying a few final efforts with little anticipation of survival, but we can act in trust on God's provision for life. Perhaps like the exiles, we fear God does not even see our confusion and uncertainty, but we can hear God's word of hope and be inspired to rise with wings like eagles. Maybe our congregation has endured much and spent all that we have, yet we are no better but rather grow worse. Reaching out to touch and follow Jesus brings healing and hope to even the most discouraged. Held in God's everlasting love, comforted by the presence of the Holy Spirit, we can hear and believe Jesus' words: "My peace I give to you."

### 2025 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Read reports, watch  
recordings of  
worship, browse  
photos, and read  
summaries of events



[presbyterian.ca/ga2025](https://presbyterian.ca/ga2025)





# Recognizing Disinformation and Misinformation



*By Sara Speicher, Deputy General Secretary of the World Association for Christian Communication. Sara presented a webinar for the PCC in April 2025 that defined misinformation and disinformation and offered advice on how to recognize them. After the presentation, Sara answered questions from participants. The following is a portion of that discussion, edited for length and clarity.*

**You spoke in your presentation about how the rapid nature of our news cycle contributes to the spread of disinformation. Do you have any advice about how to resist that sense of urgency when we interact with the news?**

Sara Speicher: We do need to respond quickly on some of these things, but that response may be just a little marker. You don't have to address the whole situa-

tion right away. For instance, you can say, "I really don't think that's a reputable source. I'm going to check." Then you can return to it later. It is a constant judgement. The rule about trying not to put things out there that you might regret later is important. Monitoring our speech is also important.

**How can we tell if something on social media has been posted by a bot?**

Sara: This involves experience and practice. If you see something and think that it doesn't look quite right, pause and look more closely. You can do an image search on Google or copy some of the text into a search to see where else it shows up. There may be lots of spelling mistakes or extra language that make you question the source. Trust your instincts if something doesn't seem right, and go to another two sources to

check whether it's true.

I have my trusted sources and even when I want to share one of their posts right away, I take a pause. I ask myself: If I share this, what is going to be the reaction? Is that the reaction I really want?

**When someone is sharing misinformation or disinformation in a congregational context, how can we respond in a compassionate way without putting people down or further polarizing the conversation?**

Sara: It depends on the context and what the person is saying. Who is the person you are dealing with? One of the principles is that we listen. Show that you respect the person, that you are listening to their concern and that you are not dismissing it out of hand. I think it is important that we always try to reflect how we want people to listen to us as well. In-

vite people to discuss it and investigate it further. Invite people on the journey; don't just tell people that they're wrong. It is about inviting everyone to accompany the result so they can take ownership. It's not about trying to show the other person up or prove that they're wrong or regressive. The message you are trying to get across is that, together, we need to find out what's really true.

We also need to accept that we have different viewpoints. Maybe we won't agree on everything, but hopefully we will still maintain a connection so that on another issue in the future, we can still work together. There's no magic solution, you just have to keep looking at the context you're in and learning what will work.

*Watch a recording of Sara's presentation on misinformation and other leadership webinars at [presbyterian.ca/webinars](https://presbyterian.ca/webinars).*

## Definitions

**Misinformation** is incomplete, inaccurate or misleading information or content that is shared by people who do not realize it is false.

**Disinformation** is false or inaccurate information that is intentionally created and spread to mislead and manipulate people.

A **bot** is a software application that has been programmed to carry out specific tasks. Bots are always automated, meaning that they do not require human interaction or monitoring. However, bots are frequently intended to imitate the behaviour of humans (e.g., a customer service chat bot). While some bots are helpful, some are malicious and are programmed for tasks like spreading spam or collecting sensitive data.

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**The Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald,**  
Managing Editor  
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### Moderator of the General Assembly:

The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls

The national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Petun, Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit Indigenous peoples.



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*The opinions expressed, books reviewed and activities undertaken by contributing writers reflect the broad diversity of experience and opinion in the church. Their inclusion in the newspaper is not necessarily an endorsement by The Presbyterian Church in Canada.*



# Developing an “Eco-System” Mindset



By the Rev. Dr. Pablo Kim Sun,  
Intercultural Liaison

I began my role as Intercultural Liaison for the PCC in August last year, so I'm still relatively new. Over the past several months, I've had the joy of visiting congregations, attending presbytery meetings, and connecting with leaders and members across the country.

Wherever I've gone, I've experienced rich conversations, new relationships and the gift of hearing people's stories. It's a deep honour to be invited into those spaces of trust and sharing.

During these visits, I've been listening and learning about how people understand intercultural ministry, what they hope for, what concerns them, and what they believe my role should be. Much of what I've heard will be shared in my report to the General Assembly, but I wanted to reflect here on

one theme I've been sitting with. It's something I've observed not only within our denomination, but also in conversations with leaders from other traditions, and even in the business world.

It's what I've come to think of as an ego-system mindset.

Now, to be clear, I don't mean this in a negative or judgemental way. This is not about selfishness. It's about how we tend to focus our time, energy, and imagination around the needs and life of our own congregation or ministry, often out of love and a strong sense of responsibility. It's understandable. Many communities are stretched thin, facing uncertainty, and simply trying to sustain what they have.

But what I'm wondering is this: In the midst of this necessary focus on the local, might we be losing sight of the bigger picture? What happens when we begin to think primarily about our own corner of the church, rather than the whole body?

## Moving from ego-system to eco-system

This pattern shows up in many sectors: organizations becoming siloed, protecting what's theirs, and struggling to collaborate meaningfully. And it can show up in the church, too, when we prioritize survival over shared mission, make decisions in isolation, or feel disconnected from one another.

So, what might it look like to shift from an ego-system to an



eco-system mindset?

I use this language not to be trendy, but because it helps me imagine something deeply interdependent and Spirit-led. In eco-system thinking:

- We understand our congregation as part of a larger whole.
- We collaborate across ministries and presbyteries, trusting that shared resources lead to mutual flourishing.
- We develop a culture of mentorship and connection, where no one is left to carry the load alone.
- We embrace change, welcoming new leaders and fresh expressions of ministry with curiosity and courage.

In other words, we turn outward not just for outreach, but for discernment, innovation and support. And this shift is not foreign to us. In fact, I believe it's embedded in the very spirit of Presby-

terian faith.

We are a connectional church. Our polity affirms that congregations are not islands, that we are linked through presbyteries, synods and the General Assembly. At our best, we are guided by shared wisdom and mutual accountability. We discern together, lead together and grow together.

Eco-system thinking, then, is not a departure from tradition, but rather it's a recovery of it. It calls us back to the conviction that our health is tied to the health of the whole church. That thriving is something we pursue collectively, not competitively.

## Making the shift together

This kind of shift doesn't happen overnight. It begins with how we see with our perception. Drawing from leadership reflections like those found in Otto Scharmer's Theory U, I've been thinking about how change begins when we are willing to:

- Suspend quick judgments and become curious again.
- Reflect not only on what others are doing, but on our own posture and habits.
- Practice deep listening, not just to one another, but to the Spirit at work among us.

We don't need perfect ideas to start. We need shared intention, attention and presence. We need to pay attention to what is emerging and ask how we might

respond with openness and faith.

## A humble invitation

I offer these reflections not as conclusions, but as part of an ongoing conversation. I know I still have much to learn, and I remain committed to listening. This article is not meant to say what's wrong, but to name something I've been wondering about and to invite others to wonder with me.

So here are a few questions I'm carrying, which you might also find helpful:

- When we make decisions, do we consider how they might affect the wider church?
- Where might we shift from isolation to deeper collaboration?
- Who are the voices we haven't yet listened to?
- What kind of church are we becoming and how can we help shape that future together?
- What is the Spirit saying to the whole church?
- What opportunities are we missing by not seeing the whole church?

These are not simple questions, but I believe they're worth asking. Because underneath them is a deeper hope—that we might not merely sustain the church, but help it flourish. Not just for our sake, but for the sake of the whole eco-system, for the sake of God's kingdom.



**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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# Grand Opening

More Info: [pcheritagecentre.ca/grandopening](http://pcheritagecentre.ca/grandopening)

**Dedication & Dinner**  
**Saturday, September 20th at 3:00 p.m.**

**Open House & Tea Room**  
**Sunday, September 21st at 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

The role of the **Intercultural Liaison** for The Presbyterian Church in Canada is to help guide the church toward becoming a more inclusive and welcoming community for people from all cultural backgrounds. The diversity within our congregations continues to grow as Canadian society evolves. With nearly half of the population projected to be Black, Indigenous, or people of colour by 2041, it is essential that the church reflect this reality. We want to ensure that as we move forward we are not just a church of diverse faces but one that truly engages with and celebrates the richness of our differences.

Learn more about the work of the Intercultural Liaison at [presbyterian.ca/gao/intercultural-liaison](http://presbyterian.ca/gao/intercultural-liaison).



# Power for the Common Good



By Allyson Carr, Justice Ministries

In *Living Faith*, we hear that justice requires the exercise of power for the common good. More and more, we realize just how interconnected the world is—and therefore, just how “common” (shared, linked) the contexts weaving together our lives are. The effects of an oil or other pollutant spill are carried up the proverbial food chain—and down the proverbial river. Smoke from wildfires can drift hundreds of kilometres from its source to make breathing difficult for people nowhere near the conflagration. Writing this article in April, one sees actions and counter-actions rippling all over the globe as a trade war deepens, impacting people in areas across the world. Cuts made to humanitarian aid can have drastic consequences far from those making the cuts... and yet come back and impact local people, too; the increased likelihood of disease spreading when funding for preventative medicines or vaccines disappears is only one example of that. And as we learned in 2020, pandemics don’t stop at borders.

The many ways that Christians are called to pursue justice today in this hyperconnected world may feel overwhelming, especially in a time where chaos, injustice, war, suffering, violence against vulnerable communities and increasing poverty or hardship seem to be normalized. As with any human institution, the church has often failed to live up to its calling. At its best, though, the church universal acknowledges its role in speaking up for those most vulnerable

in a variety of ways: through the pursuit of projects like the Jubilee initiative, which advocates for international debt cancellation; in advocating for and assisting refugees and welcoming immigrants; in calling for ceasefires and peacemaking where there is war and violence; in speaking out for the rights of those who are vulnerable or targeted by harms like racism, homophobia and transphobia; in calling for an end to practices that are harming creation, which God loves; and in speaking up for the sacredness and dignity of humans as image-bearers of God in the face of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other forms of systemic oppression and death.

The exercise of power for the common good (*Living Faith*, 8.4.6) that the things listed above work to address is, no doubt, complex and can feel paralyzing. But it doesn’t

have to be that way. Each of us can contribute to exercising and sharing power for the common good in our own way. In considering how to act, it is good to remember the words of a famous Catholic author who lived through the brutality of two World Wars: that in such times, “All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us” (John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, 1954). To this, it is good to add: “the time *and the resources* that are given us.”

Individually and collectively, we have more resources than we might first imagine when considering exercising power for the common good—and resources are a form of power. What sorts of resources do each of us have?

- We have resources of *time*: the ability to use our time to support important initiatives such as food banks, refugee sponsorship, and environ-

mental cleanup or climate action.

- We have resources of *skills*: each of us has talents, expertise and energy—passion, care—that we can share through activities like lending our expertise to boards, committees or charitable organizations.
- We have resources of *information*: many of us have networks of friends, family and acquaintances that we are part of. The very best community support initiative, or solidarity event, or educational resource might be available, but if the people who could use them aren’t aware they exist, then those supports are rendered useless. So, sharing important information about new educational resources and community events or upcoming initiatives with your networks, and fact-checking information that you suspect is false, are vitally important tools for exercising power for the common good.
- We have resources of *presence*: sometimes just showing up can be deeply important—whether joining events like peaceful protests, or attending town hall meetings to discuss key decisions that affect the community, or supporting vigils and healing events where community members come together in solidarity to show support for vulnerable community members when something has gone wrong. The more connected people are, the stronger and more resilient communities can become.
- We have resources of *mon-*

ey: of course, money is a resource that people have in varying degrees and not everyone is in a position to share that resource in any given month—but for those of us who are in such a position, even if only in small ways, it is important to do so as benefits disciples of Jesus.

In short, in this time where there is a push in some areas of society to focus inward—to cut overseas development assistance (humanitarian aid), cut down on the number of refugees Canada accepts, cut social programs that support those who are vulnerable, cut ties between friends and neighbours and hunger down, keeping the resources we have close to our chest—it is even more important than ever to exercise sharing our power and resources for the common good. In so doing, we are not simply strengthening our communities and society, we are also living out Jesus’ call to love and care for our neighbour.

## Information sharing: in case you hadn’t heard

There are reflective resources available to help people think through the church’s commitments and their own: see, for example, a study guide released in 2024 on peacemaking (at [presbyterian.ca/peacemaking](http://presbyterian.ca/peacemaking)); and take a look at a new ecumenical devotional on anti-racism called *Journeys to the Well*, released by the Canadian Council of Church’s Commission on Justice and Peace, that features several Presbyterians. You can download it for free under the “external links” tab of the Anti-Racism page of the Social Action Hub at [presbyterian.ca/anti-racism](http://presbyterian.ca/anti-racism).

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# How the Housing Sector is Rallying to Support Churches

*By Ainsley Chapman, Executive Director of Evangel Hall Mission (EHM) in Toronto, Ont., and Redevelopment Advisor (seconded by EHM) with The Presbyterian Church in Canada*

As churches look at the future of their land and buildings, it is easy to feel like this is a massive task that congregations must deal with on their own. But there is an incredible amount of work happening across the country to help churches rethink how the land and buildings they steward could be used to serve God's mission in new ways, particularly in providing housing for people who need support.

As part of my role with the PCC, I speak with congregations about how to access funding for visioning and feasibility activities that can help them make decisions about how their buildings and property could better serve their community. But, as executive director of a Presbyterian mission that serves people who are homeless and provides housing solutions for vulnerable populations, I also spend a lot of time at meetings and conferences with planners, housing providers, developers, architects and research-

ers from across the country who are also interested in serving the social good, particular for housing and community space. So, I want to share a few initiatives that are taking place that can help churches of all denominations see the roles they can play to help communities address the housing crisis gripping our country.

## Communities of Faith working group

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has brought experts in housing, property development, and planning together with faith leaders to talk about the challenges that faith communities often face when they want to participate in redevelopment projects. This group's goal is to identify barriers and solutions to building housing on faith-owned land.

## Zoning reform for faith-based affordable housing

This project looks at what municipalities can do to speed up rezoning approvals to help churches include housing in their redevelopment plans. For example, in the face of its own housing crisis, the city of Barrie, Ont., made significant changes to its

official planning policy to make it easier to rezone land, including land zoned for religious use. This opens up opportunities to increase the amount of mixed-use space and should speed up municipal approvals.

## Heritage status

Heritage buildings can create unique barriers to redeveloping church properties. However, when a project will bring a significant net good to the community, it becomes a form of currency that can be used to negotiate with the municipality. When the heritage status of a building threatens to block a project that will ultimately be a direct benefit to the community or solve a municipal problem like affordable housing, municipalities are far more likely to find ways to remove that block. It can also be helpful to remind a municipality that if they expect church buildings to become museums, they need to fund it.

## Navigator guide: supporting churches with "pre" pre-feasibility

There are over a dozen guides, workshops, online and in-person training programs to help charities and churches learn how to



redevelop their land to include affordable housing and/or space for community work. But realistically, few churches have volunteers able to take on this commitment. There is a lot of work that needs to be done before calling in an architect or developer and CMHC has funded a project to look at ways to train "navigators," or coaches, on how to help churches get ready to *think* about redevelopment.

Churches need to spend time thinking about who they are, what they want their legacy to be, and how they connect to their neighbourhood and wider community. This new program will train and support facilitators and navigators to help churches through this early process, assess their readiness for a project, and consider their options *before* they start spending money on studies or interviewing builders and architects. This is the work that The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Evangel Hall are allowing me to do, and I can help congrega-

tions connect with the experts being equipped by CMHC.

The fact is that most ministers don't go to divinity college and most elders don't volunteer in churches because it's a pathway to a new career in social housing, but many see how this can play a role in God's mission. I'm here to assure you that you're not alone. I'm one of many people across the country who are ready to walk alongside congregations to help them use the land they steward for the greater social good, allowing ministers and church members to focus on what is important to them—mission and ministry.

*Ainsley Chapman, Executive Director of EHM in Toronto, has been contracted by the PCC to help congregations and presbyteries consider options for redevelopment of their church buildings and/or property. Contact Ainsley at [achapman@presbyterian.ca](mailto:achapman@presbyterian.ca) for questions, or to make an appointment for discussion with your church's planning committee.*

## UPCOMING OPPORTUNITY: MISSION PARTNER VISIT IN NEPAL

Looking to participate in God's mission in a new way? Learn how PCC mission partners in Nepal are sharing the good news of the gospel in word and action. Spend time with PCC mission staff the Rev. Lora Nafziger and Mitch Rhodes and see the work they are doing with United Mission to Nepal.

**Dates:** Nov. 17–26, 2025  
(with optional extensions to November 29)

**Cost:** \$4,000/person  
(includes flights, accommodation and food)

**Application deadline:** Friday, June 20

Learn more at  
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## THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE

**Julielee Stitt**  
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**Will Arledge**  
Master of Divinity

**George Berberian**  
Master of Divinity

**Kersaint St-Juste**  
Master of Sacred Theology  
(with McGill University)

**Musa Anto Dauda**  
Master of Sacred Theology  
(with McGill University)

**Elise Bachand**  
Master of Theological Studies

**Sylvie Mayer**  
Master of Theological Studies



**Lydie Guissou**  
Master of Theological Studies

**Fabien Calu**  
Master of Theological Studies

**Warren Beaubrun**  
Master of Theological Studies

## KNOX COLLEGE

**Heonah Do**  
Master of Theological Studies

**Preeti Prabahar**  
Master of Theological Studies

**Christine Park**  
Certificate in Theological Studies

**Timothy Connor**  
Master of Divinity,  
Diploma of the College

**Paul Jones**  
Master of Divinity, Diploma of the  
College

**Rachel Kennedy**  
Master of Divinity,  
Diploma of the College

**Jessica Andrews**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Brenda Jo Dunbar**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Cari Ferguson**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Wendy Hogarth**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Shereen Ishag**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Suk Mei Fiona Lee**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Joseph Jae Hyeon Park**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Maryka Potgieter**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Brook Stacey**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Kevin Steeper**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Leonidas Tampacopoulos**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Andrew Thompson**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Steven Typa**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Scott Walker**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Ginnie Wong**  
Master of Psychospiritual Studies

**Jonathan Cleland**  
Doctor of Philosophy

**Joon Won Kim**  
Doctor of Philosophy

**Ko Woon Lee**  
Doctor of Philosophy

**Dong Jin Park**  
Doctor of Philosophy

**Gordon Brown**  
Master of Theology

## ST. ANDREW'S HALL/VST

**Nehemia Neuhisa**  
Diploma in Denominational Studies

**David Coull**  
Master of Arts in  
Theological Studies

**William Burr**  
Master of Divinity

**Krishna Durbha**  
Master of Divinity

**Afonso Issa**  
Master of Divinity

**Patricia St. James Smith**  
Master of Divinity



**Lucas Bruder de Oliveira**  
Master of Theology

**Andrea Perrett**  
Master of Theology



The Presbyterian College, Knox College and  
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# Indigenous Arts and Cultural Centre in Winnipeg



By Beverly Burkard,  
Executive Director of WICM

Winnipeg Inner-City Mission (WICM) is a community supporting individuals to break free of cycles of poverty. Thanks to financial support from The Presbyterian Church in Canada through the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation, we are creating a revitalized inner-city neighbourhood by renovating the former Anishinaabe Fellowship Centre. For this

project, the team from WICM engaged with the local Indigenous community to define a clear purpose for the derelict building. It became apparent that the community, and the city at large, would benefit from an Indigenous Arts and Cultural Centre to foster traditional and contemporary art forms while providing artists with a place to share their knowledge and skills.

With the guidance of Indigenous Elders, the new centre,



Sweet grass growing outside the Indigenous arts and cultural centre.

which is scheduled to open in mid-June, is destined to be a haven for youth programming, cultural events and creative knowledge-sharing in order to enhance the healing and reconciliation activities WICM undertakes.

Individuals entering the new Indigenous Arts and Cultural Centre (IACC) will experience the natural prairie environment, which anchors the new programming. Visitors will be greeted by our Great Room, a large space perfect for crafting and exhibitions. They will further experience the energy of the performance and rehearsal area, while home-like scents waft in from the kitchen. Collaborating Elders will enjoy a Medicine Room warmed with the familiar aroma of sage, sweet grass and home-tanned moose hide. A specialized sensory room is designed to support the complex emotional requirements of our children and will offer them a tranquil place to find solace and balance among natural seasonal items that will include fur pelts, northern lights

across the ceiling and a water feature. This land-based philosophy will be captured throughout the building, providing participants and visitors with an experience that encourages exploration and nurtures an appreciation for the land, reflective of our Indigenous Ancestors.

The long-neglected side yard at the Indigenous Arts and Cultural Centre has been transformed into a Prairie Education Centre that is home to traditional Indigenous medicines and pollinators to recreate the natural prairie that once grew in this location. Inside this sanctuary is a child-sized tepee, a Sacred Fire and a circular paved gathering space for ceremonies. In the summer months ahead, a Monarch Butterfly enclosure will be built to give our young participants an opportunity to watch this magical transformation. In our tiny corner of the inner-city, children and community visitors will discover a wondrous space to explore as they come to know the original prairie.



Adjacent to the new IACC is a Commemorative Art Garden, designed in remembrance of residential and day school Survivors, the victims of the Sixties Scoop and the children who never returned home. It features a permanent display of original artwork created by 10 Indigenous artists from across Manitoba. A large, raised deck and paved performance area was added to allow WICM to host meaningful outdoor events that will include a Red Dress Day, the Summer Solstice, Every Child Matters Day and Indigenous Veterans Day. These events, set within the beauty and resilience of the artwork, will be surrounded by traditional permaculture fruit gardens filled with raspberries, plums, saskatoons, chokecherries and golden willow. This Commemorative Art Garden creates awareness, provides educational opportunities and meaningful reflection in times of truth telling.

Poverty in Winnipeg's inner-city creates complex challenges that significantly affect health, education, employment and housing, and is an impediment to future opportunities and success. The new Indigenous Arts and Cultural Centre will be a haven from this oppression by providing meaningful Indigenous programming, nutritional meals and safe community in a natural setting. Participants can revive their missing past and discover a future knowing and experiencing the strength of their culture and the richness of their art. The partnership extended to WICM with the PCC and the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation is an inspiring example of a collaboration investing in true healing and reconciliation work.





# Housing Assistance for Retired Servants of the Church

By Betty Kupeian,  
Chief Operating Officer of PCBC

The Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC) is known by many for the loan guarantees it provides to congregations. Perhaps lesser known, but an important service nonetheless, is the housing assistance PCBC provides to retired servants of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Since 1972, PCBC has helped with the housing costs of many retired servants of the church and, at present, it supports several individuals either through predetermined monthly payments or rental accommodations. The amount of assistance varies and is determined by the application form submitted to the PCBC.

Those eligible are retired ministers, missionaries, members of the order of diaconal ministry of the PCC, and their spouses.

Each monthly stipend is calculated by the PCBC Board and is reviewed on an annual basis. Amounts given are based on financial need, and the Board is guided by the information provided in the application. Recipients submit annual updates to notify PCBC if there has been any substantial change to their financial situation. Once an applicant qualifies for monthly assistance they continue to receive payments, adjusted occasionally for inflation, as determined by the PCBC executive committee.

PCBC also owns two properties in Ontario, which are rented

out at very favourable rates. One is a two-bedroom condo in Guelph, the other a bungalow in Tillsonburg. Currently, the bungalow in Tillsonburg is vacant and available to qualified applicants.

## Comments from recipients and their families

"Our family would like to thank the PCBC for purchasing a home in which my parents were able to live following my dad's retirement from active ministry in 1995. The house allowed my parents to live in a lovely home with affordable rent for the past 30 years. They were blessed to have the security and affordability of this home for the remainder of their lives."

"This support for PC servants is vital to many of the 'older'

A house in Tillsonburg owned by the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation.

ministers and spouses who were unable to purchase homes and lived in manses throughout their ministry."

"The PCBC support was an immense help to both my parents as they lived in a Seniors Residence, and it was very difficult for them to meet all their payments. This program made it possible for them to live in a very comfortable and safe place. All the help provided to both my parents until their passing last year is very much appreciated."

"As a retired employee of the PCC, I very much appreciate the assistance from PCBC in obtaining affordable rental accommodation."

"After spending my entire min-



istry in church-provided housing, it was both daunting and exciting for my wife and I to find a place to call our own when I retired. We were able to do this with the support of the PCBC. We really appreciate the gifts received as they both eased our financial concerns and helped make it all possible."

*New applications are currently being considered. To apply, or for other enquiries, please email [pcbcloans@presbyterian.ca](mailto:pcbcloans@presbyterian.ca) or call 1-800-619-7301.*

# 175 Years in Kincardine

By Carole Enright,  
Knox Presbyterian Church  
in Kincardine, Ont.

In 2024, the congregation at Knox Presbyterian Church in Kincardine, Ont., celebrated our 175th anniversary, marking many years of supporting the residents and organizations of the community. The congregation meets in one of the oldest and most beautiful buildings in Kincardine, and we are proud to be a part of the town's heritage.

In early days, the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) started a CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training) group, a Mission Band and a Young Woman's Auxiliary. Today, the church hosts initiatives such as the Good Food Box, United Way's backpack program, children's clothing drive, winter coat drive, VON community meetings and flea markets. The church is also a venue for the Kincardine Community Singers, who hold two concerts each year.

Throughout the year, Knox invites the community to come in for coffee and refreshments. This is a casual drop-in morning event intended for fellowship and

conversation. The complimentary soup lunch is also one of the highlights of the year.

Knox has been a strong partner of Community Living, which began as an organization using the church premises. Today, they use the church for programs such as Baby and Me, and Food Education.

A part of the children's mission is in partnership with Camp Kintail in Goderich. The congregation participates in many ways, including sending a local child to camp and contributing to the camp education program.

The Kincardine Refugee Program has been supported by the local church as well as by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, who is an official sponsor with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

The congregation has a trust fund, which generates money allocated to worthwhile community organizations. In 2024, organizations that were supported by the church included Big Brothers Big Sisters, Community Living and the Knox Scholarship Funds for a student going into social sciences.



The Rev. Dan West and elder Linda Stanley present a cheque to Big Brothers Big Sisters, which allowed them to send children to Camp Kintail.



An anniversary dinner with master of ceremonies Barry Neilson and elders Lix and Gord White.

In association with the Kincardine Scottish Festival, the congregation held a "Kirkin' of the Tartan" service in early July to honour the clans who originally settled in Kincardine. On November 11, there was a "Ringing of the Peace Bell" service, where the memories of Kincardine's finest were honoured in word and song.

Our anniversary year was jam-packed with a host of community-oriented events. Five lunch and dinner events were held, including the annual Malawi Breakfast that raised funds to be sent overseas. Several successful musical concerts were added and included the Ballaghs, the Chatham Tenors and the Burlington Welsh Male Chorus. In September, the church held its 175th weekend with a special dinner and service.



Knox Presbyterian Church in Kincardine, Ont.



# Oakridge Explores the Power of the Holy Spirit

*By Jacqueline Cleland, pastoral care and outreach coordinator for the Oakridge Christian Ministry, part of the Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church, B.C.*

The vibrant hues of John August Swanson's "Pentecost" seemed to dance in the Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church's sanctuary as the Oakridge Christian Ministry recently concluded an inspiring sermon series led by the Rev. Dr. Richard Topping. Over three Sundays, the congregation engaged in the exploration and discovery of the transformative

presence of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Topping, President of Vancouver School of Theology and a recipient of grants for his research on the Holy Spirit, brought a wealth of knowledge and passion to the series. His insights, drawn from a deep study of Reformed Theology, allowed the congregation to look at the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's role in our lives with a fresh perspective.

The series began on February 9 with a sermon titled "The Comfort and Challenge of the Spirit," delving into John 14:15–24. Dr. Topping illuminated how Jesus'



**The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping at Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church.**

promise of the Holy Spirit provides solace and a call to action. As *Living Faith* (4.3.4) states, "The Spirit blesses us with various gifts. We seek to discover those gifts and use them for our Lord."

The following week focused on "The Gifts of the Spirit: Christian Service" from 1 Corinthians

12:1–13. The congregation was encouraged to remember that "faithful service is a sign that the Spirit is present" and that these gifts are poured upon all believers to build up the church and serve the world.

The series culminated on March 2 with "The Fruit of the Spirit: Christian Character," based on Galatians 5:16–26. Dr. Topping emphasized the Spirit's role in sanctification, reminding us that "where the Spirit comes, gifts are used in love for the common good, Christians are sanctified (made holy) for service that

builds up, heals and matures in faith." It was exceptionally impactful as we participated in communion, focusing on the work the Holy Spirit could do in us and others.

Throughout the series, Richard shared powerful truths that resonated deeply within the congregation. He reminded us that "we need the help of the Spirit to become the people God made us to be." He also emphasized the importance of kindness, stating, "The Spirit's work in us, at the top of the list, is to make us kind," and that "God is perpetually, relentlessly kind."

The series was not simply a lecture but an interactive experience. Following each service, attendees joined Dr. Topping for coffee and a Q&A discussion, fostering a deeper understanding and personal connection with the material.

Richard's research, supported by the Reid Trust and a bequest to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, is poised to create a deeply faithful and relevant body of material to be shared in imaginative and engaging formats.

Within the Oakridge community, this series on the Holy Spirit has undoubtedly ignited a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of God's animating power. We are grateful for Dr. Topping's insightful teachings, and we look forward to growing in faith and service.

The PCC provided \$14,500 toward the Rev. Dr. Richard Topping's grant, a large portion of which came from the **Conference Support Fund**. The purpose of this fund is to assist groups that hold conferences in Canada related to ministries of the PCC. To learn more about the various funds from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, visit [presbyterian.ca/funds](http://presbyterian.ca/funds).

## A Joint Prayer of Peace for Korea

The year 2025 marks a very important moment in history as The Presbyterian Church in Canada celebrates its 150th anniversary, and the United Church of Canada (UCC) celebrates its 100th anniversary. The UCC's history traces its roots to the PCC, which began to establish churches, hospitals and schools in Korea in the 19th century. We continue to be in solidarity with the churches in Korea, asking for global ecumenical solidarity as the country struggles not only from the divided Korean peninsula but from deep societal divisions that are tearing the country apart. As friends in Christ, we offer this prayer.

God of peace and justice,  
you call us to love and to be  
peacemakers among your people.

God of unity,  
in a world struggling with divisions and conflicts, we pray for the people of Korea where so

many remember and suffer from the division that tore the country, families and friendships apart. And where today so many living in South Korea experience the excruciating pain of divisions between rich and poor, divisions in politics, and on understanding of gender and sexuality. And these divisions also exist in your churches and distract from the church's mission, which we mourn in sadness.

Comforting God,  
we pray for healing of the profound pain Koreans call *han*. May your Spirit intercede with sighs too deep for words as you tend to the pain of loss, sadness and injustices.

God of the nations,  
we pray for your wisdom and guidance to help build societies with governments based on truth, integrity and dignity that support people. And by your Spirit, strengthen your church to be

your faithful body in the world to speak of your love and seek your justice. And let your will be done among us and let your peace and

the politics realm be established on earth as in heaven so that all your children know your love, peace and justice, and sing praises

to you. We pray in the name of Jesus who showed us your radical and unfathomable love for all of us. Amen.





# Navigating Life's Potholes

*By Jacqueline Cleland, pastoral care and outreach coordinator for the Oakridge Christian Ministry, part of the Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church, B.C.*

In *The Screwtape Letters*, author C.S. Lewis shares a reflection where the senior demon advises tempting humans with trivialities and distractions rather than outright evil. There was the understanding that frustrations like potholes do a lot more to keep us from Christ than outright sin. It feels like this was a topic that the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls touched on with her sermon for the Oakridge Christian Ministry (a part of the Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church) on Sunday, March 30. We were blessed to hear her speak from the scriptures Psalm 100 and Philippians 4:4–13, focusing on her topic “Rejoicing in the Lord Always.”

The purpose of the sermon was shared not only in words but in navigating the potholes of our own worship. In her inspiring sermon, Dr. Dutcher-Walls shared personal reflections on her trip to Malawi as the Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. One of the stories that stuck out to us strongly was that of her skilled driver, the Rev. Hastings Phale, who helped her get to various destinations across the country despite the incredibly challenging roads.

During her sermon, Pat recounted her experiences traveling through Malawi. She vividly described the state of the roads, riddled with numerous and often significant potholes. However, she highlighted the remarkable skill of

her driver. With careful maneuvering, anticipating each dip and jolt, the driver expertly navigated these treacherous conditions, ensuring she arrived safely at her destinations. This experience can serve as a powerful metaphor for the journey of life.

Just as the roads in Malawi were unpredictable and bumpy, our lives are often filled with unexpected “potholes”—challenges, disappointments and setbacks that can easily throw us off course and cause frustration as they also keep us from being where God is calling us to be. The skilled driver, in this analogy, represents the wisdom and guidance of God, in whom we must place our trust and reliance to navigate the difficulties we encounter.

The sermon’s message resonated deeply with the local context, particularly given a recent shared experience within our own community: a significant power outage the day before the service. This unexpected disruption caused widespread inconvenience. Technology failed, routines were upended and plans had to be adjusted. Yet, in the midst of this frustration, the congregation found a small moment of resourceful joy as they adapted to using the foyer television (that typically shares the outreach messages) to show videos and presentations.

This seemingly minor event mirrored the larger theme of the sermon. Just like finding an alternative during the power outage, life’s disruptions, though frustrating, can present opportunities for adaptation, reliance on basic resources, and even unexpected

moments of connection, pointing toward God’s constant presence and the possibility of finding solutions even in the dark.

Dr. Dutcher-Walls recounted her visits to several Malawi partners, who serve in mission for the country’s poorest. With resources from both Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service & Development, ministries in Malawi are helping to support and educate ministry students for their callings as ministers, provide health care for women and children, vaccinate children and adults against diseases, provide funds for school uniforms so children can attend school, help farmers irrigate their crops, respond to natural disasters like floods, and bring good news to prisoners through Bible studies and provision of medicine, clothes and sleeping mats. She also shared about her experiences preaching and attending worship in Malawi, noting that every service she attended had several choirs leading enthusiastic singing—and the singers always danced their joy in the Lord. The churches in Malawi are lively, thriving places, filled with scripture, music, dancing and rejoicing despite incredibly difficult circumstances and deep suffering experienced by many people in the country.

Pat skillfully connected the experience of the church in Malawi to the powerful message of Philippians 4:4: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” She emphasized that this call to constant rejoicing isn’t a naive dismissal of life’s difficulties. Rather, it’s about cultivating

a deep, abiding joy that is rooted in our faith in God, a joy that can sustain us within and through those very challenges. The sermon underscored that even when faced with the “potholes” of life, whether they be significant hardships or minor inconveniences, our foundational joy in God remains a constant source of strength and hope.

Following the inspiring sermon, attendees shared that the post-service discussion was deeply profound and impactful. In addition to speaking further about Malawi, questions from the group focused on how we read the Bible. Pat shared further wisdom and insights, picking up on her teaching vocation as a professor of the Hebrew Bible. She encouraged the attendees to read the

Bible while considering its social and cultural background to add insights to the meanings conveyed in the text. She brought out the idea that the work of the Holy Spirit guided the storytellers and authors who kept the traditions alive over hundreds of years for the texts that eventually became the Bible we now know.

Ultimately, the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls’s sermon on March 30 served as a timely reminder that even amidst the inevitable “potholes” of life, as vividly illustrated by her Malawi trip and our local power outage, we are continually called to “Rejoice in the Lord always.” May we all strive to cultivate that enduring joy in our daily lives, trusting in God’s guidance through every bump in the road.



## Position Opening Organist and Choir Director

Knox Presbyterian Church, Kincardine, Ont.

Knox Kincardine is seeking someone to be the organist and choir director, effective September 1, 2025. Duties include playing the organ for worship services, rehearsing and conducting the senior choir, and maintaining the organ and the grand piano. This position is for 10 hours/week. Remuneration to be negotiated.

**To learn more or to apply:**

**Mike Chreptyk**

chreptyk@gmail.com or 226-974-5166

**Leslie Ray**

lesliewelwood@hotmail.com or 519-955-1731

To learn more about Knox Kincardine, visit  
[pccweb.ca/knox-kincardine](http://pccweb.ca/knox-kincardine)



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# Finding Hope in an Uncertain Church Landscape

*By Rachel Kennedy-Proctor and Sara Traficante, Ministry Forum Interns at the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Knox College*

Rachel Kennedy-Proctor, an M.Div student at Knox College in Toronto, and Sara Traficante, a Master of Psychospiritual Studies student, both served as interns for the Ministry Forum, an online platform serving Christian ministry leaders. During their time as interns, Rachel and Sara supported Ministry Forum events, created content for the Resource Hub, co-hosted Ministry Forum podcast episodes and collaborated with the team.

At the heart of the Ministry Forum internship, we learned that we are truly not alone—not in a toxic-positivity, fake-nicety sort of way, but in a deeply vulnerable way that is interconnected in our

faith communities. We have heard over the course of this year how churches feel lost, exhausted and unsure of where to plant their feet next. We are in a time of uncertainty in the church because we feel like much of what we know and what has shaped our identity for the past hundred years is changing. We look at the empty pew beside us, and the lonely choir stalls in front of us, and we reminisce about the good ol' days. We remind ourselves about everything that we are losing—but what if we imagined what we are gaining? What if we let ourselves imagine?

That's what the Ministry Forum has let us interns do—imagine. Imagine a church that isn't weighed down by the financial burden it takes to run a church building. Imagine a community of faith that feels safe enough with each other to become deeply vul-

nerable. Imagine a denomination that is not alone.

The beauty of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is that we have a wide range of theological interpretations of scripture. If we truly believe that our strength as Christians is the diversity of the body of believers, then that includes a seat at the table for all understandings of this good news. Ministry Forum has taught us that when the world wants us to choose sides (right or left, progressive or traditional, contemporary music or hymns) we must hold steadfast to the "third space" that Jesus calls the church to be—a space where progressive and traditional, conservative and liberal, traumatized and healing, lost and found, are all welcome. This space actively resists with one hand, drawing a boundary that says "no" to those who sow violence, oppression,



Rachel Kennedy-Proctor, Sara Traficante and the Rev. John Borthwick.

exploitation and dehumanization; but, at the same time, it holds the other hand palm-facing up and outstretched, recognizing the humanity of all. This is the hard work of the church moving forward, for it's not going to be a quick fix. Like our Creator who got down in the dirt, we're going to need to get our hands dirty.

But how do we go from here to there? How do we go from deep lament to a hopeful future?

From a psychospiritual perspective, we assess the sacred loss and spiritual traumas that appear in our own lives, congregations and spiritual care practices. What once felt sanctified without reproach is now shifting and changing. Although these

are painful moments that have a lasting effect, they are also opportunities for spiritual healing and growth. Adapting by engaging in lifelong learning pulls our gaze away from struggle and loss toward refreshing and renewing our ministry skills and our inner spiritual life. Learning helps us reach out to each other to grow our community of ministry leaders and create a network for support.

This is what happens when you join the Ministry Forum community! You become connected to our denomination across Canada. Through our podcasts, weekly emails, resource hub, conversational opportunities, Creative Ways Conference and life-long learning events, all are welcome to expand their knowledge and community. Stepping out in faith can feel scary, but, "fear not, [we] will not leave you alone."

Ministry Forum is here for church leaders, every step of the way. Ministry Forum strives to help prepare and strengthen leaders to inspire vibrant communities, think deeply, live authentically and lead courageously, guided by our shared commitment to spreading the good news of Jesus.

Learn more about the Ministry Forum at [ministryforum.ca](http://ministryforum.ca).

## Where Families and Faith Meet

*By the Rev. Kyle Dore, St. John's Presbyterian Church in Grimsby, Ont.*

Family Worship is a growing intergenerational worshipping community rooted in the vision and leadership of St. John's Presbyterian Church in Grimsby, Ont. With joyful partnership from local Anglican and Baptist volunteers, we've welcomed over 95 individuals—80% of whom do not attend our Sunday morning services. Our monthly gatherings follow an engaging liturgy: community circle, child-friendly scripture teaching, a hands-on outreach project, a shared meal and unstructured playtime. Every gathering ends with a time of sending, where families complete a project to bless a local group, such as:

firefighters, teachers, librarians or health-care workers.

In a recent survey of Family Worship participants, three things stood out. Families return because they experience a deepening sense of community, they find that Bible teachings are shared in a very accessible way, and they value the monthly opportunity to bless the broader Grimsby community. Grown primarily through personal invitation and word of mouth, Family Worship is a warm, accessible space where faith and family meet.

### March gathering: comfort bears for the hospital

In March, families assembled stuffed animals as comfort bears for patients at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby. Rec-



Families of all ages working together to share joy and care by creating comfort bears for patients at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital.

reational therapist Claire Hutchinson explained how the bears would bring comfort to patients with dementia, providing a familiar presence and even a sense of purpose for them. She expressed heartfelt gratitude for the children's kindness in remembering some of our community's most vulnerable seniors. The bear-making event took place in the worship space of St. John's, now located within Trinity United Church, and was a beautiful reminder that small hands can share Christ's big love.



The Family Worship outreach is made possible by a generous grant from the **New and Renewing Ministry Fund** of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The New and Renewing Ministry Fund supports ministry leaders and congregations as they open themselves to discerning God's vision and exploring new opportunities to live out Christ's mission.



# A Reflection on Interculturality



The hustle and bustle in Kildonan Hall.



Yiming hosting the calligraphy workshop.



"It's just like playing with Legos!" said Ethan, aged seven.



"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."



Eva and Edwin taking the trivia quiz. The answer is D: Air is not one of the Five Phases.

By Aaron Law, the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal, Que.

"Which of these belongs to the four elements from Nickelodeon's *Avatar: The Last Airbender* but not the Five Phases 五行 in Chinese cosmology?" A: Metal, B: Wood, C: Earth, D: Air.

You would have encountered this question on our culture trivia quiz if you took part in the Lunar New Year party at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal, Que., on February 1. The evening began with the Lord's Prayer in our languages of worship. The cadences of Mandarin, French, Korean, Spanish and English filled the hall, ending in unison with *Amen* 阿們. We

launched into the festivities with our dumpling-making workshop, followed by a potluck dinner. Our church family brought an array of dishes, featuring Yangzhou-style fried rice, tteokbokki, chapati and Olivye salad, just to name a few.

The celebrations continued with various Chinese cultural activities. You would have puzzled over lantern riddles, learned the moves to *Baduanjin* 八段錦, read about the life of Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇, tried your hand at mahjong, maybe even brought home a blessing in Chinese calligraphy. We finally ended our lingering conversations late into the night, hurrying home to prepare for Sunday worship the next morning.

The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul holds deep Scottish roots in Montreal, sitting at the edge of the Golden Square Mile. In the same Kildonan Hall where I had my first taste of haggis (and Laphroaig, a Scottish whiskey), we have celebrated the Lunar New Year together for the past three years. We are a multi-cultural church: one day each year we proudly carry the flags of our national heritages as a display of our ethnic diversity. Still, every Sunday, the Union Jack hangs silently over the faithful voices singing "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er

the Sun." The regimental colours of the Black Watch recount a tale of heroic sacrifice; the pillars that bear them up also hold up ample space—space for other stories to unfold.

What will these other stories be? Our party planning team, consisting of Hongkonger, Taiwanese and Chinese organizers, had a serious discussion after this year's celebrations. Ought we keep the name Lunar New Year in the spirit of openness, or should we change it to Chinese New Year out of transparency and authenticity? It was a difficult conversation; we have inherited a complicated cultural history of race, ethnicity and national identity. As immigrants, the fabric of our faith communities is riddled with tangles and snares like this.

An intercultural church, according to our denomination's Intercultural Liaison the Rev. Pablo Kim Sun, is a church that enriches one another by sharing cultural aspects, seeking mutual relationships and building a community that reflects diverse ethno-cultural worldviews. It is a place where everyone can fully be themselves. In weaving our own stories into a shared Presbyterian

tapestry, it takes great courage and faith to be boldly intertwined with others who confront similar questions of identity, belonging and dignity. God has brought our passion for the faith, our beauty of diversity, and our talents and fruits into the church; we who are new wine know the comforting embrace of new wineskins. We can welcome others generously as we ourselves have been generously welcomed into this church.

The day following our Lunar New Year party, we brought out our leftover dumplings after Sunday morning service. We quickly finished them before rushing to our congregational hymn sing that afternoon. "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God." The Rev. Kim Sun shared this with me: God has led into our church-

es a diversity of people, and God is calling us to live community beyond the ways that we know, to participate in this work of liberty that the Holy Spirit is doing. God has shaped this church into an open vessel; we faithfully anticipate God's overflowing blessings for us.



Emma and her takeout blessing.



Baduanjin exercises, led by Sophia.

## Book Signing with Marie Wilson

By Katharine Sisk, Justice Ministries

On February 24, about 70 people gathered at the Friends (Quakers) Monthly Meeting House in Toronto, Ont., to hear Marie Wilson read from her new book, *North of Nowhere: Song of a Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner*.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was critical in establishing a public record of the experiences of Survivors of residential schools. The Commission generated 94 Calls to Action for all areas of society, including the church, to work toward reconciliation, and called for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples to be the framework for reconciliation. Marie was one of three Commissioners of the TRC who served with the late Honourable Murray Sinclair, head commissioner, and Dr. Wilton Littlechild.

Marie was interviewed by author and journalist Cynthia Reyes about her book. The conversation was friendly and frank. They spoke about Marie's motivations for writing the book, talking about how it offers a counterpoint to ongoing denialism in Canada about the negative impacts of residential schools. Marie reflected on events that had taken place throughout the TRC's mandate and read passages from her

book, often recounting public statements that Survivors had shared with the Commission. The event was co-hosted by the Anglican, Presbyterian and United churches.

To learn more, read *North of Nowhere: Song of a Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner* by Marie Wilson. As well, read the TRC's 94 Calls to Action. Information about the TRC is with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (nctr.ca). To learn more about the church's commitments and ongoing work toward truth, healing and reconciliation, visit the Social Action Hub's Indigenous Justice page (presbyterian.ca/indigenous-justice).



Marie Wilson and Cynthia Reyes with event coordinators. Pictured from left are Sara Stratton, Cynthia Reyes, Marie Wilson, Dawn Maracle, Katharine Sisk, Allyson Carr.



# Designing Spaces to Fight the Loneliness Epidemic

By Ainsley Chapman, Executive Director of Evangel Hall Mission (EHM) in Toronto, Ont.

One of the biggest challenges we are facing in Canada is a pandemic of loneliness—and those who are most impacted are seniors. It's an issue that we see in our Evangel Hall Mission (EHM) residences in downtown Toronto. Over 130 people, mostly seniors, live in two buildings. Since the pandemic, we have been trying to reactivate social programming to help tenants reconnect with their neighbours and community—but an interesting thing happened that left us scratching our heads.

The Portland Place building was built in the 1990s, and has this wonderful community feel. Turnout to social activities is high—and always enthusiastic. But two blocks away, in the newer Adelaide Building that opened in 2006, it always seems difficult to recruit tenants to social clubs

and activities. We have the same staff and programs in each building, tenants have the same needs, and tenants in both buildings have struggled with loneliness. So why is it easy to build community in one building and difficult in the other? An “A-ha!” moment happened at a housing conference I recently attended that shed some light on this issue.

Simply put, the Portland Place building layout offers a big welcoming entrance and encourages tenants to gather and feel comfortable in shared spaces. This sense of place and community is called “placemaking.” Meanwhile, the Adelaide Residence's design focused on maximizing the number of apartments, while the community space is small and out of the way. It also explains why it's been a lot easier to use the Portland Place space to build stronger connections to the wider neighbourhood. The space is a polling station for elections,



An EHM tenant at this year's annual BBQ.

which gets tenants excited to vote. It's been used by the local MPP to host barbecues for tenants and help with an emergency Meals on Wheels program. Sessions from the community police, the local pharmacist, fire prevention and health education teams are always well attended.

The idea of designing buildings to foster relationships among neighbours is not new. But, since the pandemic, architects and planners like Happy Cities in Vancouver and Halifax, and Smart Density in Toronto, have been radically rethinking how we design buildings and spaces to achieve many social purposes such as encouraging physical activity and healthy living, using green space to strengthen our connections with nature, decreasing physical barriers with accessibility design, and promoting social connections and gathering.

Canada is also looking at how communities internationally are doing this. Projects in Copenha-

gen, New York City and London have shown that a placemaking design for a building can create a physical environment where people can thrive socially and even spiritually.

Another reason why there is interest in placemaking is because as churches close, as aging community centres are torn down, park seating is removed in an effort to discourage people who are unhoused from congregating, and big chain coffee shops remove their seating, there are fewer and fewer places for people to meet informally. The new downtown library in Calgary included a coffee shop and large seating area for just this reason. Across the country, churches, non-profits, small entrepreneurs, and municipal services like recreation centres and libraries are breaking away from their silos and are working

together with planners to look at their spaces and neighbourhoods differently. And when community groups coordinate and create vibrant hubs within a geographic boundary, it opens doors for more public transportation to and from the area—critical for people who can't drive.

And in a post-pandemic world where we are facing a crisis of loneliness, it's critical for us to be designing churches, apartment buildings and community spaces in a way that encourages people to come together. So, as EHM explores what a new worship/community space and residential building could look like, the first thing we will ask the planners and architects is how will the design communicate to the community that *All Are Welcome*, and how will it encourage tenants to love their building and neighbours?



Alan cooks for tenants at a tenant BBQ.

# Uniting Over the French Table

By Emma Carlson, the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal, Que.

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal, Que., hosts French Table at 6 p.m. We gather over a simple meal to practice our French conversation skills. But beneath the surface, there is something incredible happening.

When I first moved to Montreal nearly two years ago, I was studying at an anglophone university and worshipping at an anglophone church. Despite living downtown in one of the largest cities in *la francophonie*, I felt totally disconnected from the French language. The idea for the French Conversation Table arose out of a desire to

step into the culture and language that surrounds us daily.

When I reflect on the French Table, I find myself in awe of God's divine providence. We started with no budget and few expectations. If we had five people attending, we would have considered it a success. Our first night, we had eight people. At our second meeting, 12. We regularly welcome more than 15 people and have never had fewer than five, even in a snowstorm. Most of our participants are immigrants. Many are new to Montreal. For them, learning French is often a social and economic necessity, and an essential part of the journey to becoming Canadian. In offering an opportunity to practice French, we are also able to offer space for community, connection

and intercultural exchange. As we ladle out soup and pass around freshly made bread, I've come to appreciate that we're not just feeding people physically—we're nourishing the soul. The French Table has become the embodiment of the call to welcome in the foreigner and the stranger.

The story of the French Table is one that is playing out in the larger church. We are an anglophone church nestled in the heart of the francophone city. Our congregation is increasingly multilingual. The French Table helps bridge the gap between our anglophone congregation and the francophone community that it exists in, so that we don't stand apart from this community, but as part of it. And in doing so, it allows us to offer people outside the church a



Practicing French language skills.

glimpse of what Christian community is. Many of our regulars are people who were not a part of our congregation. We've had a number of people where the French Table was their first interaction with our faith community. And for more than one participant, it was the first time they had ever stepped inside a church. Some of these people have since joined our larger church community, both for Sunday worship and service projects.

In the blossoming of this ministry, God has opened opportu-



nities beyond our expectations. Our church has been enriched by the diversity and vitality that these evenings bring, reminding us that mission doesn't always require grand gestures—sometimes, it starts with listening, sharing a meal and speaking a new language together.



# PIE Day and the Call to Belonging



The Rev. Laurie McKay at PIE Day.



Pam Rocker in her lemon suit, in honour of her favourite pie—lemon meringue.

*By the Rainbow Team at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta.*

On March 14, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., hosted Pam Rocker, Director of Affirming Ministries, for an evening of conversation and fellowship marking "PIE Day" (National Affirming Day). While math lovers celebrate "Pi Day" (3.14—the 14th day of the third month), faith communities across Canada embrace the pillars of affirming ministry with PIE Day, as they acknowledge a commitment to being Public, Intentional and Explicit. It's a day for affirming all gender identities and sexual orientations in the life of the church.

In the weeks leading up to PIE Day, the Rainbow Team at St. Andrew's hosted a rock painting night, where youth and adults gathered to paint supportive messages on rocks to adorn the entranceway of the church. As a faith community, St. Andrew's Calgary is on a journey toward being more public, intentional and explicit about affirming the identities of two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people and becoming a safer space for all. Pam's visit was another intentional step in our learning journey.

The Rainbow Team was thrilled to be able to host Pam and a

group of around 40 youth and adults from St. Andrew's and the wider community for the March 14th event. Pam carefully set the framework for what she so thoughtfully describes as the "really tender conversations" about queerness and faith and identities that intersect, noting that while she uses the term "queer" she acknowledges that the term doesn't work for everyone (particularly folks who are in the 50+ age range) because it was a term that has been used against people and can be very painful. Throughout the evening, as we got to know Pam through her stories, teaching and careful language use, we were reminded that if we are to take the call of Jesus seriously, we need to ask, "What does love look like?"

Pam began the evening by asking each of us to consider, "How do I want people to treat my family?" and "How do I want people to treat your family?" as we welcome people into the church. While it's true that many faith communities are welcoming, Pam cautions that, at times, that welcome may come with the message that the church community has the power to welcome someone or not, which may lead people to "leave fragments of themselves behind." Affirming communities, on the other hand, say yes to who the person is already, and give the message that "I see who you are and it's beautiful." This distinction between being a welcoming community and being a community that affirms the identity of newcomers and community members is rooted in the life of Jesus—a teacher who consistently moved toward those on the margins until the margins disappeared.

Moving toward the margins may not always be comfortable. "Be vulnerable first," Pam suggested as she gave an example about how to be invitational and not make assumptions when meeting others. "Hey, my name is Pam, my pronouns are she/her what are yours?" She went on to say, "Pronouns are a template for connection and spiritual practice." She proposed, "I don't know everything about a person unless they tell me. It allows us to practice humility. It reminds us that how we've been conditioned to label or view others is not always correct."

Pam invited participants to sit with that discomfort, to treat it not as a problem but as a spiritual practice. "If some people are comfortable all the time," she

said, "that means some people are uncomfortable all the time." Faith asks us to hold discomfort to create space for others to be seen. Humility means getting curious about why we feel at ease in certain spaces and why others may not. It means resisting the urge to speak over pain with quick answers and instead asking, "What is there for me to learn by not saying anything right now?"

"Jesus made people in positions of leadership uncomfortable all the time," Pam reminded us. His way was not about gatekeeping belonging but about dismantling the "lifeboat mentality," as Pam put it—the idea that there's only room for some. Jesus' life shows us that we are already saved, already loved, already whole. The work of affirmation, then, isn't just about inclusion—it's a faithful response to the call to love God and neighbour fully.

PIE Day asks followers of Jesus to consider: What does love look like here? For those who are willing to get curious about why they've been comfortable, for those who are willing to make themselves uncomfortable, for those who've had to hide parts of themselves to feel safe, this



A rock painting event.

evening offered us an opportunity to imagine a kind of church where everyone can bring their full, beloved selves. Publicly. Intention-

ally. Explicitly. If your congregation is interested in participating in PIE Day, you can find fun and free resources at [pieday.ca](http://pieday.ca).



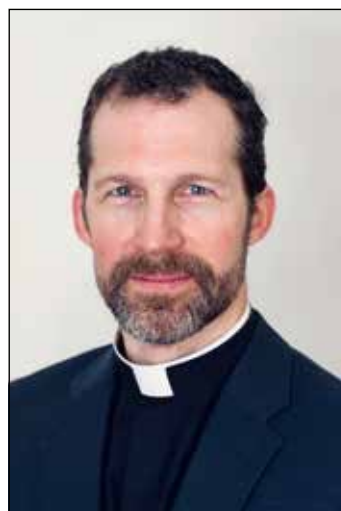
The group gathered for PIE Day.

## Moderator-Elect: The Rev. Jeff Murray

The Committee to Advise with the Moderator will present the name of the Rev. Jeffrey M. Murray as the nominee for Moderator of the 2025 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. General Assembly will take place June 1–5 at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont. To learn more about GA2025, visit [presbyterian.ca/ga2025](http://presbyterian.ca/ga2025).

Jeff began ministry at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Sackville, N.B., following his ordination and induction on Feb. 28, 2007. He continues to minister in Sackville and raise his four children. Jeff holds a Bachelor of Humanities from the College of Humanities, Carleton University; a Master of Divinity from Knox College, University of Toronto; and a Master of Arts from the Atlantic School of Theology.

Jeff has served a term as president and board member of Concilio Prison Ministry, Springhill Institution. He was chair of



The Rev. Jeffrey M. Murray.

the Program Committee for St. Luke's Renewal Centre at the Springhill Institution, where inmates may experience healing, personal growth and a new vision for life. For seven years, he volunteered with Sackville Fire & Rescue, serving as chaplain, firefighter and president of the Firefighters' Association. He

served on the Board of Open Sky Cooperative, which supports young adults living with mental health challenges or social disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder. He was also a founding member of the Sackville Refugee Response Coalition, which came together for four years in response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis.

In service to the PCC, Jeff has been moderator for the Presbytery of New Brunswick and the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces and served as clerk for the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces for six years. On the national level, he was on the Grants Committee of Canadian Ministries, served on the Committee on Church Doctrine, was a listener in the Atlantic region for the Rainbow Communion, a Young Adult Representative resource person at a few General Assemblies, and he is currently serving his second term on the Assembly Council.



# New Beginnings in Orangeville



Providing coffee on the street.

By Jennifer Astop,  
Canadian Ministries

After participating in the New Beginnings program, a renewal initiative that helps congregations discern God's call for their future, Tweedsmuir Memorial Presbyterian Church in Orangeville, Ont., experienced a powerful transformation. They shifted from being a "membership-focused" congregation to a "discipleship-focused" one, reigniting their sense of purpose and deepening their commitment to living out Christ's mission as described in Matthew

25:35–40: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

The Presbyterian Church in Canada offers the New Beginnings program to provide congregations with an intentional, year-long process of transformation and discernment. With up to 90% of program costs covered through available grants, churches are supported as they gain a better

understanding of their local context, explore new possibilities and options, and make an informed decision about their future direction. Each participating congregation is also paired with a trained coach who walks alongside them throughout the journey.

One of Tweedsmuir Memorial's elders Ellen Sinclair said, "It's not like we didn't support missions before New Beginnings, but the program stirred a new sense of purpose in us. It inspired us to remember our 'why' and motivated us to look more and more outside our church at the community we are meant to serve."

As a result of going through this program, Tweedsmuir Memorial is now putting its faith into action by exploring new and innovative ways to serve and engage with the community. In addition to organizing food drives, they have launched a laundry supply drive for local shelters. They are also experimenting with street and neighbourhood ministries, including a community meal program and a "Coffee on the Street" initiative, where volunteers set up a coffee bar outside the church and offer coffee and conversation to people passing by.

The congregation also runs a "Sharing Our Abundance" program during the summer months, where they set up a produce table outside the church, stocked with congregants' home-grown vegetables, offered for free. They also provide free, fun-filled community meals promoted to the neighbourhood and area school kids who won't receive school breakfasts on statutory holidays. The meals include a Good Friday breakfast, Labour Day hot dog lunch, Family Day pasta night and March Break Chili lunch. For the first time ever, a group of congregants joined in the Coldest Night of the Year event, a fundraising walk in support of local charities that serve people experiencing hurt, hunger and homelessness.

The new beginnings at Tweedsmuir Memorial are leading to a deeper community connection and a renewed sense of mission.



Serving the chili lunch.



Patrons of the chili lunch.

*Is your congregation looking to deepen its connection with the community or more fully live out its mission? Discover how the New Beginnings program can support your church in entering a vibrant new season of ministry. Contact Beth McCutcheon, program coordinator, at [bmccutcheon@presbyterian.ca](mailto:bmccutcheon@presbyterian.ca) to learn more.*

# Doors Open at Glenview

Submitted by Shannon Wiggan,  
Glenview Presbyterian Church  
in Toronto, Ont.

This year marks the 100th anniversary for Glenview Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., and to celebrate our long, proud history as a community hub in North Toronto, we are taking part in "Doors Open Toronto" on May 24 and May 25. Glenview strives to be an open, welcoming space and wants to be intentional about inviting people into our building.

Doors Open Toronto started as a Millennium Project in 2000 and has attracted more than two million visitors since inception. The idea started in Europe, and Toronto was one of the first North American cities to participate. The concept has since spread across the U.S. and Australia. Sites are chosen for their heritage, urban design and/or architectural awards. Glenview has been recognized for its beautiful interior and exterior, successful

adaptive "reuse features" and historical preservation through renovations. Our involvement this year will highlight that Glenview is not only a place of worship, but a place with varied programming, enjoyed by culturally diverse people. Over 150 Toronto buildings and sites will participate in Doors Open.

The theme for Doors Open Toronto 2025 is "Play!" From sports to music to theatre, the City of Toronto is encouraging participants to find creative ways to address this year's playful theme through the visitor experience. Glenview is thrilled that some of our renters have agreed to participate. Volunteers will be giving tours of the building; there will be performances by Dramaway and the Yonge Street Players; a Scottish Country Dance presentation; and a Pickleball demonstration. These family-friendly activities will be great ways to incorporate the theme.

Plus, we will have exhibits that



Team Glenview will once again participate in the Toronto Waterfront Marathon.

showcase the incredible work that Glenview supports. We will share opportunities to get involved with "Out of the Cold," which is hosted at Glenview during the winter, and promote some of the places of healing and hope that we support through our Special Fund, including Evangel Hall Mission, ARISE, the Daily Bread Food Bank and Yorkminster Park Meals on Wheels. We also hope to feature

projects supported by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, made possible through support of Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service & Development. We want to show how volunteerism and acts of service are our faith in action.

In October, "Team Glenview" will once again participate in the TCS Charity Challenge, part of the Toronto Waterfront Marathon. We

walk and run to raise money for our outreach and mission activities. Taking part in this inspiring community event is another way Glenview reaches out to individuals both within and beyond our congregation, inviting them into discipleship.

Come and visit us! Doors Open Toronto is free of charge. Willing volunteers and broad participation will make this a successful event.





**York Region Police Chief MacSween.**

*Submitted by Susan Johnson,  
Clerk of Session, Richmond Hill  
Presbyterian Church in Richmond  
Hill, Ont.*

The York Regional Police (YRP) of York Region, Ont., created a Regional Interfaith Council. YRP has identified and gathered community leaders from all faiths with the primary objective to enhance

# YRP Interfaith Council

mutual understanding, respect and co-operation between organizations and diverse religious communities. By engaging in open and transparent dialogue, the council aims to celebrate the Region's diversity, address and bridge cultural and religious differences, enhance trust, and build a more inclusive and supportive Region of York.

The Rev. Robert Hayashi of Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church was invited to join the YRP Chief's Regional Interfaith Council. The inaugural meeting was held on Monday, March 3, at the YRP's headquarters in Aurora.

The Council includes several other members from faith communities, along with members

of the Senior Leadership Team of YRP that is comprised of the Chief, the four Deputy Chiefs, and several Superintendents and Inspectors. Also in attendance were other members of the Headquarters personnel, including staff psychologist, members of the Diversity and Inclusion Unit as well as staff from other administrative functions. The Council itself numbered over 50 people.

At its first meeting, a presentation was made by Dr. Yehuda Kurtzer, President of the Shalom Institute, and Professor Abdullah Antepli, Vice President and Provost of Community Engagement at Duke University with a dual appointment as Professor at Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy

and Divinity School. They spoke on the challenges facing their own communities as well as faith communities at large during the ongoing conflict in Palestine.

The Interfaith Council in its plenary session then discussed how communities of faith can stand

together, and for each other, in times of political crisis when certain members of the faith community continue to face increasing discrimination and threats to their personal and congregational safety. Further meetings are to be scheduled in 2025.



**Dr. Yehuda Kurtzer and Professor Abdullah Antepli.**



**A group photo taken at the March 3 Inaugural Meeting.**

# One Thousand Quilts of Comfort and Care



**Quilter Joni Ermter, Kim Joiner and the Rev. Chris Joiner at the presentation of the 1,000th quilt.**

*By Andrew Manuel,  
Grace Presbyterian Church  
in Calgary, Alta.*

On Sunday, April 13, the sanctuary at Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary, Alta., was transformed into a vibrant display of community and compassion. Beautifully



**Tara Grant, a member of the Grace Quilters.**

draped from the balcony were numerous hand-stitched quilts, all lovingly created by the Grace Quilters—a dedicated group of volunteers who have quietly and faithfully sewn warmth, hope and care into every corner of Calgary and beyond.

This beautiful display marked an extraordinary achievement: the completion of the 1,000th quilt. To celebrate this meaningful accomplishment, the milestone quilt was presented during the service to the Rev. Dr. Chris Joiner, Grace's lead minister, and his wife, Kim. Long-time quilter and group organizer Joni Ermter made the presentation, representing the

entire quilting group with gratitude and joy.

## A ministry of comfort

The Grace Quilters ministry began in 2005 with a vision tied to a special celebration: to mark Grace Church's 100th anniversary by creating 100 quilts in a single year. Not only did the group achieve their goal but they made 101 quilts, with the final one now permanently displayed on the wall along the church's north side stairway.

From those early days with 15 members, the group of Grace Quilters has grown to include 20 active members, some joined by daughters and even granddaughters, making it a truly multi-generational ministry of love and creativity. Meeting regularly in the church's boardroom, they sew and assemble quilts for various recipients.

Their quilts have offered tangible care and encouragement in moments of celebration, sorrow and transition. Over the past two decades, the quilts have been given for baptisms, comfort and healing, and to RESET Calgary graduates—young women

exiting lives of sexual exploitation. They've also provided over 300 quilts to families in Mexico through the Rotary Club's house-building initiative, ensuring that each family begins their new life with a gift of warmth and dignity.

## Stitched with purpose, given with grace

While some quilts stay local—shared with those grieving, recovering or needing a reminder they are loved—others have gone far afield: to refugees from Ukraine, Malawi, the Brenda Strafford Centre and Indigenous Elders. The Grace Quilters have given over 1,000 quilts in their nearly 20 years of ministry.

Most of the fabric used is donated, and additional costs for batting and finishing are covered through fundraising and designated pastoral care funds. The quilting group operates as a mission arm of the church, grounded in the belief that God's grace can be shown in small, everyday gestures—like wrapping someone in a hand-sewn quilt during a time of crisis, celebration or transition.

"We love what we do," said

Joni Ermter. "It's so heartwarming to see the smile on a recipient's face as they receive one of our quilts."

## 1,000 quilts and counting

The Sunday display featured quilts in various colours, patterns and sizes, highlighting the creativity and generosity that define this ministry. While the 1,000th quilt marks a significant achievement, the Grace Quilters remain active and committed, with plans to continue their work into the next chapter of their mission.

The Grace Quilters' ministry has become vital to the church's outreach, reflecting Grace Presbyterian Church's core commitment to serving compassionately and responding to real needs, one stitch at a time.



**Brenda Bjolverud, a member of the Grace Quilters.**



# Learning with Monty Mouse

By Susan Currie, Parish Social Worker for Place of Hope Indigenous Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Man.

"Monty, Monty, Monty Mouse has come from far away; He brought his house; he brought his book And he has come to play!"

Every Sunday afternoon at Place of Hope Indigenous Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Man., pre-school children meet on the carpet after our welcoming songs are sung. They know the song by heart and are excited to see Monty and his friends.

Monty is an adaptation (with

permission) of the Moe the Mouse program created by Margaret Chesterman and Anne Gardner, speech-language pathologists for the B.C. Aboriginal Child Care Society. These speech specialists observed that children, and especially Indigenous children, had some difficulty with certain language sounds. So why not make learning fun by using animals, which are important in most Aboriginal cultures.

Nuu-Chah-Nulth First Nations is on an island off the west coast of Vancouver Island, B.C. In their culture, the mouse is known as "the messenger" because the mice foretold the coming of an earthquake. Moe the Mouse became the program's ambassador. The program was adapted later, using animals native to Manitoba.

As a trial run, before purchasing the whole program, Janet Simpson from Prairie Presbyterian Church and I decided to introduce Moe's cousin, Monty, to our children's program. Monty was a hit and played a big part during Covid when he made home visits, delivering masks, soap, books and a craft to help occupy

the preschoolers.

When Place of Hope Indigenous Church had to change locations, it became difficult to run a children's program. After much thought and prayer, it was decided to use the time just after the welcoming songs to have Monty visit with the children. The children had been learning about the Seven Sacred Teachings and

the Fruit of the Spirit. So, Monty made a deal with the children that he would teach them about his friends and the language sounds if they would teach him about the Seven Sacred Teachings—and fruit. (Mice love fruit!)

Monty made a guest appearance at our last Christmas concert. He interrupted the Rev. Margaret to ask what was going

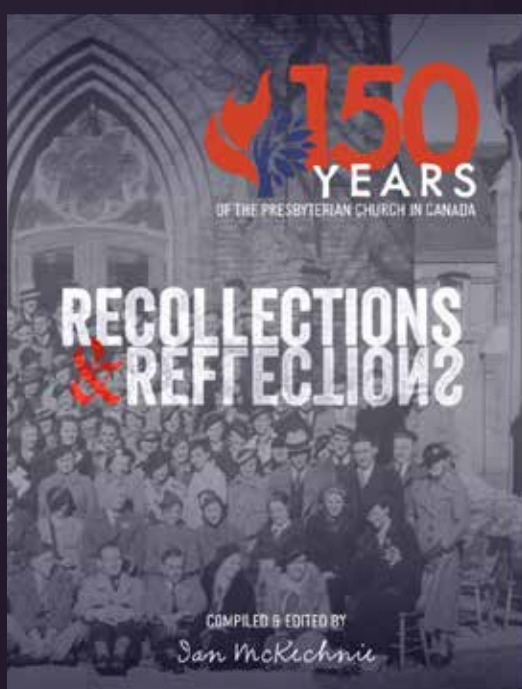
on. Why were his friends wearing funny clothes instead of sitting on the carpet singing to him? She told him to watch the concert and then she would explain. At the end, when she called Monty to answer his questions, all the pre-school children, without prompting, ran to the front, sat down and started singing Monty's song! The Rev. Margaret carried on, explained about Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and asked Monty if he had something to say. Monty replied, "'Ma ma' is the sound my friend the moose says and 'Mary' has that sound and so does 'Monty,' by the way."

The Rev. Margaret answered him, "You're right Monty, and so does 'Margaret.'"

"One more thing," said Monty. "I saw some of those Seven Sacred Teachings in your concert. I saw *courage* when my friends walked to the front and did their part. I saw *respect* when everyone listened and did what you told them to do. Most of all I saw *love*—love for the Rev. Margaret, for the teachers and for God."

"You sure did, Monty. You sure did!" said the Rev. Margaret.

Every week, animal stuffies and finger puppets encourage our children (and adults!) to learn literacy skills and speech sounds, as well as traditional and Christian values, while taking part in imaginary play. This non-threatening, fun environment is producing unexpected yet positive results.



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## Recollections + Reflections

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# Finding Hope and Purpose at APCE Annual Event



The Peabody Hotel Duckmaster guiding his flock at the APCE annual event.

*By the Rev. Jill Turnbull,  
Westminster Presbyterian Church  
in Smiths Falls, Ont.*

Attending the Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE) Annual Event 2025 in Memphis was more than just a professional development op-

portunity—it was a deeply moving and hopeful experience. It reminded me why we do what we do in the church and offered a much-needed dose of encouragement in a time when ministry can often feel isolating and uncertain. From the moment I arrived, I was struck by the warmth and

energy of the community. There's something powerful about being surrounded by people who share a common calling—people who love the church, who care deeply about the faith formation of all ages, and who are wrestling with the same challenges and joys that come with this work. The conversations, whether in workshops, over coffee or in the lobby of the hotel were honest, inspiring and filled with grace.

The venue itself added a layer of fun and charm to the week. Held at the historic Peabody Hotel, the conference provided not only comfort and hospitality, but also a touch of whimsy. Each day, families gathered in the grand lobby to watch the famous *march of the ducks*, a tradition that brought smiles to everyone's faces—including mine. It was a beautiful, lighthearted reminder of joy and wonder, even amid deep and often heavy conversations about ministry and justice.

What surprised and comforted

me most was discovering just how much we share across national borders, even at a time like this. Whether in The Presbyterian Church in Canada or the Presbyterian Church USA or our other APCE partners, many of our ministry contexts echo the same themes: smaller congregations, shifting generational dynamics, creative discipleship models, and the ongoing call to be churches of welcome, justice and deep formation. It was encouraging to hear these stories and know that we're not alone—that our struggles and hopes are mirrored by faithful leaders across North America.

One of the most meaningful aspects of the conference for me was its clear focus on justice and inclusion. This wasn't just a theme tucked into one or two sessions—it was woven into the fabric of the entire event. The worship services, keynote addresses and workshops continually pointed us back to the gospel call to stand with the marginalized, to create spaces of



The Rev. Jill Turnbull and "Elvis."

true belonging and to resist systems that harm or exclude. It was both a challenge and a comfort: a reminder that our work matters because it participates in God's larger work of healing and liberation.

I came away from APCE not only with new ideas and resources for ministry, but with a renewed spirit. In a season where many of us are carrying exhaustion, doubt, or the ache of ministry transitions, this gathering felt like a communal breath. We were reminded that we are not alone—that across the country (and beyond), there are others faithfully tending the fires of Christian education, formation and discipleship.

What struck me most, though, was the joy. The joy of singing together in worship, of celebrating one another's gifts, of hearing new voices and seeing new possibilities for the future of the church. Amid the hard and holy work of ministry, APCE gave us space to laugh, learn, play and believe again in the transforming power of God's love.

I'm grateful to the organizers, speakers and fellow attendees who made the APCE Annual Event 2025 such a vibrant and hopeful experience. I returned home with my heart full and my imagination sparked—ready to continue the work, knowing I am held in a much larger, Spirit-filled community of companions on the journey.

The **Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE)** is made up of those who are serving or who have served in educational ministries as ministers, professional or volunteer educators, or students in the Presbyterian Church USA, the Reformed Church in America, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Moravian Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The purpose of the APCE is to advance educational ministries in the church and increase the ongoing witness of our faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. APCE encourages professional recognition through certification and/or designation, provides opportunities for improvement of professional skills, supports personal enrichment, actively advocates for church education, serves as a channel to and from denominational structures, and recognizes achievements and innovative contributions of church educators.

The PCC is actively involved in the APCE and its annual events. Dr. Tori Smit, Christian educator and former Synod of Southwestern Ontario staff member, currently serves as Co-President. The Rev. Jill Turnbull represented the PCC at the APCE event along with the Moderator, the Rev. Pat Dutcher-Walls, and Jessica Foy, Christian Education and Youth Program Coordinator.

## Jewish-Palestinian Event in Richmond Hill

*By Susan Johnson, Clerk of Session,  
Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church  
in Richmond Hill, Ont.*

On March 11, in Richmond Hill, Ont., Ministerial Colleagues (comprised of Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, St. Matthew's United Church, Richmond Hill United Church, St. Mary's Anglican Church and St. Christopher's Anglican Church) hosted a Jewish-Palestinian Lenten event called "Bridging the Gap" at St. Matthew's United. This was a panel discussion moderated by York University professor Randal

Schnoor (founder of "Bridging the Gap") with Eli, a Jewish student, and Razoul, a Muslim student, each sharing their views on how the unsettling and unconscionable situation in the Gaza Strip is affecting them, their families and friends.

The event was well attended by the congregation and friends, and everyone enjoyed a light supper (hosted by Richmond Hill Presbyterian, St. Matthew's and Richmond Hill United) before the discussion started.

The two students demonstrated compassion and respect for one

another. They articulately addressed their points of view on this emotional and sensitive topic. Attendees viewed this as a very worthwhile and informative event.



Professor Randal Schnoor, Eli and Razoul during the "Bridging the Gap" discussion.







Congregants of First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., took pictures at their Easter Sunday service. The church school children performed “Easter Egg-citement,” where they shared the Easter story through scripture and symbols contained in the eggs. Two of the elders also gave a dramatic reading from the women at the tomb. It was a joyful and uplifting Easter celebration!



On January 12, the congregations of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church and St. Paul's United Church, who are joined in an ecumenical shared ministry in Fredericton, N.B., were pleased to participate in an infant baptism of Susie Akwar at Saint Andrew's. The proud new parents—Humphrey and church elder Cat—were supported by Humphrey's mother, Denise, who paid a special visit from the Republic of Cameroon in Central Africa in time for the birth and baptism. A well-attended welcome reception took place following the service, and all enjoyed a special cake decorated for the occasion.



On Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025, the Rev. George Paraskevopoulos of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in New Liskeard, Ont., presented Elder Emeritus certificates to Sarah McCaig, Andrew McCaig and Mac Hamilton. All three served their Lord well, offering extraordinary and faithful devotion to the leadership, pastoral care and oversight of this congregation for more than 40 years. And even though Sarah, Andrew and Mac officially let go of their duties to Session, they each continue to serve at St. Andrew's in other ways, for which the congregation is grateful. To show appreciation for all that these elders do, a special lunch was held after worship with cake.



On March 29, the congregation of Calvin Presbyterian Church in Halifax, N.S., held an auction—that included a special dessert—to raise money for Camp Geddie, hoping to raise enough to buy life jackets for campers. It was an extremely successful event, raising approximately \$3,000.



Erindale Presbyterian Church in Mississauga, Ont., celebrated Family Day on Feb. 16 by hosting its first Family Fun Day. Every game in the book was on hand. And it was fun to watch kids ages 5 to 92 play Connect 4, Twister, Crokinole and more. Musical chairs was a great hit (literally and physically), with the kids having the clear advantage of more speed and agility! The event was a lovely, casual way to get to know each other better.







Bethel Presbyterian Church, Pictou Landing, N.S., had a very busy week to begin the Season of Lent. On Shrove Tuesday, members hosted a free supper for the community. Families were treated to sausages and pancakes with special toppings like strawberries, oranges and bananas. The Burning Bush Atlantic Mission Society (AMS) group met the following day and welcomed guest speaker Roman Torres (top left) from Coady's Place, a housing co-op in New Glasgow that provides affordable housing for members of the community. Treasurer Ruth Hopkins presented him with a cheque for \$1,000 as part of the Burning Bush AMS mission project, Caring for the Unhoused. As well, the AMS held the annual World Day of Prayer worship service on Friday and welcomed several other groups from the area. World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who join in prayer and action for peace and justice. The theme for 2025 focused on women from the Cook Islands. Pictured above (top right) are Robin Langille, Ruth Hopkins and Joni Roper, who prepared for the service wearing crowns of flowers representing women of the Cook Islands. A display table was set up with items that represented the region.



Jean Goodfellow, a long-time and devoted member of Knox Presbyterian Church in Dunnville, Ont., celebrated her 100th birthday on Dec. 13, 2024. As well as partaking in a week-long celebration that included a luncheon at the church, Jean also participated in the Annual Christmas Parade held in Dunnville. She was driven by family friend Kevin McKee.



The "Sunday Strollers" Team (consisting of members from First Baptist, St. Paul's Anglican and First Presbyterian, Brockville, Ont., churches) took part in the Brockville edition of the Coldest Night of the Year walk on Saturday, Feb. 22. Team members walked distances of either two or five km to reflect some of the myriad challenges faced by unhoused people in the community. So far, over \$1,000 has been raised to support programs offered by the John Howard Society of Kingston & District, and Connect Youth, in their service to the vulnerable population. Well done, everyone!!  
PHOTO CREDIT: CATHERINE ORTH



During the cold month of March, 20 hardy people from St. John's Presbyterian Church in Medicine Hat, Alta., walked to Banff—in the church gym!! Over six weeks, the group met every Monday for the weekly trek, finally reaching their destination. They were rewarded on the last day with a medal, coffee and goodies. All had a great time!



On Sunday, March 9, at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church in Toronto, the Honourable Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, presented 13 members of the Royal Commonwealth Society with the King Charles III Coronation Medal. The Rev. Keith McKee, newly retired from St. George's Presbyterian Church in London, Ont., received this medal for his work with the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition. Over the last nine years, Keith has judged hundreds of essays and promoted the competition throughout Canada. Keith was greatly surprised and humbled by this honour. He also took part in the Commonwealth church service. PHOTO CREDIT: JORDAN HATHERLEY





An exciting event happened at St. Andrew's Memorial Presbyterian Church in Port Credit, Ont., in December 2024—15 new members joined the St. Andrew's church family! Pictured here (left to right, back row) are Samjose, Guill, Ebenezer, Lynda, the Rev. Sean Foster, Rae and Shankamali. Front row are Manasi, Lynette, Angela, David, Lindsay, Sheila, Vineeta, Deepthi, Annina. This was an inspirational moment in the life of the church.



Congregants at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Lethbridge, Alta., had a joyful Easter Sunday celebration. It was a truly special day—not only did they celebrate the sacrament of baptism for children, but there was also a beautiful dancing ceremony performed by a family from Cameroon. The ceremony is a meaningful tradition, a way of expressing their gratitude and joy after baptism. After the service, everyone gathered to enjoy cake and fellowship. It was a wonderful way to end a memorable and Spirit-filled morning.



On March 27, the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Knox College in Toronto, Ont., had the honour of hosting “Tending Tomorrow,” the 2025 Lois Stewart Klempa Lectureship. The lectureship provided an opportunity to learn from four leading Canadian women homiletics. The full-day event showcased the Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis from Knox College, the Rev. Dr. HyeRan Kim-Cragg from Emmanuel College, the Rev. Dr. Sarah Han from Tyndale Seminary, and the Rev. Dr. Joni Sancken from Vancouver School of Theology. The speakers reflected on the current state of preaching in Canada and shared bold, hope-filled directions for the future. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all attendees, the Klempa family, the Ministry Forum and the dedicated organizers who made this event possible.



Prior to the annual meeting, the Presbyterian Church of Saint David in Halifax, N.S., held the Men's Soup contest. The four chefs were Simon Blake (far left), who was this year's winner with his Squash Apple soup, Neil Macdonald, Bruce Dow, and the Rev. Antonio Siracusa. Two of the men are wearing their David's Place aprons, which they recently received as new volunteers of the congregation's Friday morning hot meal program.





A full and fun day was had at the PA Day Camp held at First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., on April 11. Despite the damp weather, 18 campers and helpers enjoyed a day of craft projects, a visit to the Brockville Public Library, music, games and stories! Campers also welcomed Pipsy Thomson from QueenCare, which is a Brockville agency supporting women and their families from pregnancy to postpartum. The campers learned about the work of QueenCare and how they can help support their own parents and families, too. Many thanks to all the volunteers and Christian Education team who do such a great job with the camps!



St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Bramalea, Ont., again chose February to share the love and warmth by giving socks, socks and more socks! A total of 328 pairs of socks were collected from the congregation. Along with many pairs of gloves and hand-knitted hats, the socks will be delivered to Evangel Hall Mission in Toronto. This undertaking was spearheaded by the congregation's Mission & Outreach Team. Pictured here (left to right) are members Mary Lynne McIssac, Ann Baptist, Stella Opoku-Serebour and Elspeth Park. Absent is Melinda Singh Seonarin.



First Presbyterian Church in Brockville, Ont., again hosted its annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on March 4, serving fluffy pancakes with real maple syrup, ham, sausages, baked beans, fruit salad, tea, coffee and juice. A wonderful turnout helped to support congregational outreach and table ministries, which assist the vulnerable and marginalized in the community. Many thanks to everyone who helped out! The event was a sweet way to start off the season of Lent!



At the worship service on Sunday, Feb. 23, the Rev. Marianne Emig Carr, Interim Moderator at Knox Presbyterian Church, Riverview, in Iroquois, Ont., blessed the 30+ knitted lap blankets lovingly created by June Graham (pictured) and other members of the congregation. The lap blankets will be given to homebound church members and to local seniors and long-term care facilities, along with the prayers of the congregation.



Melville Presbyterian Church in Brussels, Ont., celebrated their 170th anniversary on Nov. 9 and 10, 2024. Cutting the cake at the anniversary service are Mary Douma, Melville's eldest baptized member; the Rev. Carolyn McAvoy, former minister and guest minister; and Brian Armstrong, Melville's second eldest baptized member. On the Saturday night, a delicious dinner and dessert was served in the lower level to a crowd of 100 people. This was followed by musical selections by Paul McLaren, sprinkled with highlights from the Rev. McAvoy on what she has been up to since leaving Melville. On the Sunday, the Rev. McAvoy preached to over 100 members, former members and friends. Janna Dodds was the soloist. A delicious lunch and fellowship-time followed. Many thanks to the organizers of the weekend and to all who helped make it so successful.







The congregation at North Bramalea Presbyterian Church (NBPC) in Brampton, Ont., came together with the congregation at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Brampton for the induction of the Rev. Byron Kappes as the new minister of Word and Sacraments at St. Andrew's. The Rev. Byron (back row, centre) has a special connection to NBPC as he was the former music director before becoming an ordained minister, so the congregation was delighted to welcome him back to the Presbytery of Brampton.



First Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Man., celebrated its 100th Annual General Meeting. An excerpt from the church's history (1925–1950) captures it well: "...these were years of continual struggle, of sometimes heart-breaking disappointment. They were also years of determination and, above all, of faith..." We remember and celebrate gifts of faith while looking to the future with trust and assurance. Pictured here are the Rev. Barbara Pilozow, stated supply minister, and Betty Trevenen, Clerk of Session.



On Friday, April 11, members of North Bramalea Presbyterian Church in Brampton, Ont., presented "When Jesus Walked Among Us," an Easter performance composed of scripture readings, story and music. The event was well attended.



On Sunday, Aug. 25, 2024, the congregation at St. David's Presbyterian Church, Vankoughnet, in Bracebridge, Ont., celebrated their 135th anniversary with their special guests the Olde Tyme Gospel Band, who led the service with a great selection of music and hymns. A bountiful lunch followed, with a special anniversary cake, which Irene Boyes is pictured with. A history of St. David's (1889–2024) has been printed in time for the anniversary. Written by Graydon Boyes, it chronicles the many activities and people involved in the church's long history. This rural church has served the community throughout its existence, thanks to the dedicated service of the Session, the Board of Managers and interim moderators. The present interim moderator is the Rev. Dr. George Vais.



North Bramalea Presbyterian Church in Brampton, Ont., recently welcomed members of the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada, Toronto District, for their annual Divine Service.





On Passion Sunday afternoon, April 13, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Warkworth, Ont., was pleased to welcome Brian Finley and the Westben Festival Chorus, along with soprano Aemilia Moser and baritone Dante Mullin Santone, for their concert performance of "Requiem, Rise & Shine." Conducted by Donna Bennett, the choir performed Gabriel Fauré's Requiem and several other selections. This photo captures the audience's applause. It was a meaningful outreach opportunity, bringing the congregation and community together through music, commemorating the Passion of Christ. A portion of the ticket proceeds was donated to PWS&D in support of global relief efforts.



On Sunday, Sept. 15, 2024, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Warkworth, Ont., welcomed two new professing members through adult baptism. Pictured (left to right) are elder Doug Carlaw, Denise Ferguson, the Rev. Jay Song, Pamela-Lynn Wason, elders Judy Mallory and Marie Glover. For both Pam and Denise, St. Andrew's marked their first experience receiving Holy Communion. The entire congregation extended a special and warm welcome as a spiritual family.



On March 2, the congregation at North Bramalea Presbyterian Church in Brampton, Ont., enjoyed Pancake Sunday, which was a wonderful time of fellowship, along with delicious pancakes.



The Rev. Ian Morrison was recently recognized for his 33 years of service on the Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation. He's pictured here at the last annual meeting before he retired. He has been a pillar of wisdom and deep care for the church and will be missed. Pictured seated are: (left to right) David Phillips, Chair of PCBC; the Rev. Ian Morrison; and Betty Kupeian, Chief Operating Officer. And standing: Loran McVittie; Nancy Thornton; Doris Eaglesham; and the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency.



The Rev. Elizabeth McLagan celebrated her 103rd birthday on Feb. 28, 2025. A member of Langley Presbyterian Church in Langley, B.C., she retired from Presbyterian church ministry while at Bradner's Presbyterian Church in B.C. She's pictured here with Sharon McKenzie, a friend from the WMS White Rock group. It was another special birthday for Elizabeth!





This past winter, the moderator, the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls, led a special retreat for a small group of leaders at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, Ont. The PCC women were moved by global events and social currents, and set aside time to gather women's prophetic voices and create opportunities for conversation and courage. The event was relaxed, honest and, best of all, hopeful.



On March 16, three new elders were ordained at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Amherstview, Ont.: the Rev. Bob Docherty, Marilyn Trudeau and Sandra McKeigan. Pictured are the Rev. Henna Kim (centre right) and Clerk of Session Bill Barry (far right) with elders Bob Docherty, Nancy Armitage, Marilyn Trudeau and Sandra McKeigan. The Holy Spirit brought these wonderful people to Trinity.



The Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee, church elders and the congregation at Knox Presbyterian Church in Bayfield, Ont., are pleased to announce that the Rev. John Bannerman will be providing stated supply for the next year. The Rev. Bannerman will preach three Sundays per month as well as provide pastoral care, visit with members and have designated time in the office. His contributions will be invaluable not only to the Knox congregation but to the community as well. The fourth Sunday, Knox will have pulpit supply. A warm welcome goes out to the Rev. Bannerman from all at "the little church with a great big heart"! Pictured here is the Rev. John Bannerman (centre left) with Knox elders (left to right) Jim Thompson, Brenda McLean, Judith Roy, the Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee and Deb Cosford, following the Palm Sunday service held on April 13.



For those following Charlotte the Church Mouse's adventures and storybook series, Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C., hosted a "mock wedding" on Valentine's Day to continue Charlotte's adventures and welcome many in the community interested in the delightfully zany story. The Rev. Dr. Teresa Charlton presided, Carol MacBain was the organist, and over 60 guests attended. An announcement was written by Wendy Scales with help from Moyreen Tucker, both from Knox Vernon. The announcement began: "The union of Charlotte Church Mouse and Louis Fieldmouse Esquire was a classic event. Charlotte was a city mouse at Knox who went on vacation to Paris where she met Louis. Their whirlwind romance led to a classic mouse union on February 14." Wendy was formally the Lifestyle column writer for a daily paper in Kamloops, busy during the summer season reporting on local weddings. A wedding album is being prepared for publication. To pre-order, call or text the church at 250-307-2127.



Once a month, after attending First Presbyterian Church worship service, the Rev. Henry and Sarah Hilderbrant travel 1.5 hours from Brandon, Man., to Birdtail Reserve. Henry conducts a service there and tells the children's story. Lunch is enjoyed by everyone following the service.





On Sunday, March 16, Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., welcomed 20 new members through baptism and profession of faith.



On March 22, Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., hosted a women's retreat. Thirty-five participants explored their "inner child" through meditation, play, art activities and community building.



On Sunday, April 6, folks from Armour Heights Presbyterian Church (AHPC) in Toronto, Ont., took a field trip to the Art Gallery of Ontario to explore Indigenous Art, guided by AHPC docent Barbara Keilhauer.



As part of Holy Week activities, Knox Presbyterian Church in Vernon, B.C., added 21 plaques to their Memorial Wall. The wall, started prior to Covid, was designed as an alternative to receiving ashes on church grounds. Not only does the Knox Session welcome church family members to add names, but families of the wider community outside the church as well, recognizing that while many may choose not to have a formal funeral, they still desire a means to honour loved ones. Relatives were invited to attend a short outdoor service where the names on the plaques were lifted up and blessed, followed by a small reception. People from Kamloops and Vernon attended, as well as some from Ontario, who attended online.





The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly, visited the congregation of Korean Christian Church in London, Ont., on Feb. 9, and shared a message of hope and joy. Pictured here is Pat sharing her message at the English service, then Pat shaking hands with congregants after the Korean service. Also pictured is Pat with the Rev. Dr. Donghwi Son, Session members and the choir.



The congregation at First Presbyterian Church in Penetanguishene, Ont., recently celebrated Shirley Spearn, who was an elder for 40 years and clerk of session for 22 years. They have been blessed by her service and wish her well in her retirement.



The Friday morning Craft Group at Dayspring Presbyterian Church in Edmonton, Alta., knitted nine beautiful lap blankets this winter and donated them to the Good Samaritan Southgate Care Centre for the benefit of some lucky residents. This crew of nine dedicated and talented women also filled five large boxes with handmade toques and scarves, plus some donated mittens and socks, and delivered them in January to E4C, an organization that provides for those in need in Edmonton's inner city. Every year, this group goes above and beyond to provide these types of comfort items to those who could use them most, and they share their love in every stitch! Shown here are two long-standing members Audrey Tod and Pat Baird with some of the wonderful creations.



On Good Friday, congregants at Living Faith Community Presbyterian Church in Baxter, Ont., placed a white linen shroud on the floor in front of the pulpit. During service, Bible passages were read describing Jesus heading to the cross. After each short reading, an element was added. The cross was carried in and laid on the shroud, and a verse was read. Then a sign was hammered to the cross. Another verse was read, then flowers and herbs were placed on the cross, and finally the cross was wrapped up. On Easter Sunday morning, the shroud, flowers and herbs were placed on the Communion table. It was a moving, powerful experience.



Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, Ont., has begun hosting farm volunteers through the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms program, which links international visitors with organic farmers, promotes an educational and cultural exchange, and builds a global community conscious of ecological farming practices. Pictured here is farm manager Ryan with the first two volunteers this spring, Reuven and Lena from Germany.





The congregation of Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church (RHPC) recognized member David Rosevear for his contribution and dedication to the ministry of music at RHPC for over 30 years, including filling in many times as organist. He recently retired from active membership on the Worship and Music Committee as well as his organist duties. A certificate of recognition was presented to David during worship service on Sunday, March 23. Pictured with David as he receives his certificate are the Rev. Robert Hayashi (left), Clerk of Session Susan Falla-Johnson (second from right) and Beth Stanbury, convener of the Worship and Music Committee. The celebration continued in Wallace Hall, where everyone enjoyed a time of fellowship and, of course, cake! Above, David is pictured with members of the Worship and Music Committee and Choir.



On Sunday, April 6, Knox Presbyterian Church in Bayfield, Ont., held their annual meeting. The Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee led the congregation in Sunday worship and then moderated the meeting afterwards. The church's Annual Report was reviewed with the congregation, followed by a Q&A. After the meeting, there was a lunch that included cake, of course! Coincidentally, fellow parishioner Grace Fisher was celebrating her birthday that day, so the congregation gathered around and sang "Happy Birthday"! Pictured here are the Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee (left) and Grace Fisher.



On Sunday, Feb. 23, the congregation at Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church (RHPC) celebrated Meg McCrae's 100th birthday (actual date was Feb. 28). Meg participated online, as she has been doing for several years. This was the first 100th birthday celebration that is known of at RHPC. Meg was a very involved member for over 60 years along with her husband, the late Jim McCrae. She had been an elder, member of the Pastoral Care Committee and a member of the Women's Association. Meg contributed and attended many functions, including Christmas bazaars, rummage sales and Christmas galas. She is also the proud mother of two sons, Alex and Don, who were able to celebrate with her. A truly remarkable woman!



Palm Sunday weekend at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ont., included palm cross making on Saturday and Easter cookie decorating, and a palm branch parade on Sunday.



On March 15, the Mission and Outreach Committee and friends at Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church (RHPC) in Richmond Hill, Ont., hosted a St. Patrick's Day Pancake Breakfast. A fun group enjoyed being leprechaun helpers/servers to a well-attended gathering of diners in William Wallace Memorial Hall. This community pancake breakfast fundraiser was in support of the church's Capital Projects Fund to help with the manse renovations. It was also the start of the RHPC Lenten/Easter fundraiser of non-perishable food items and/or financial contributions to the local food bank. Both initiatives were very successful. Over \$600 was raised for the Capital Projects Fund and over \$900 in financial contributions for the food bank, as well as two bins full of non-perishable food items. Pictured here are leprechaun helpers Mima, Rosemarie and Nikki; and Keith, who was a leprechaun server.



On April 27, the congregation at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Medicine Hat, Alta., was privileged to acknowledge the grace and commitment of Judith Ferguson in the service of St. John's and our Lord. Judith became an elder at St. John's in 2016 and Clerk of Session in 2019, offering a steady presence and leadership during challenging times such as the pandemic lockdowns. Judith resigned as elder in April, a decision that was greeted by sadness but also with deep gratitude for her service and with joy that she will continue to be an integral part of St. John's. Pictured here are the Rev. Heather Carlson, Judith Ferguson and Joyce Engel.



## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT



### IMPACT 2024

In 2024, PWS&D and our partners undertook

**57** projects in **22** countries.

**132,233**

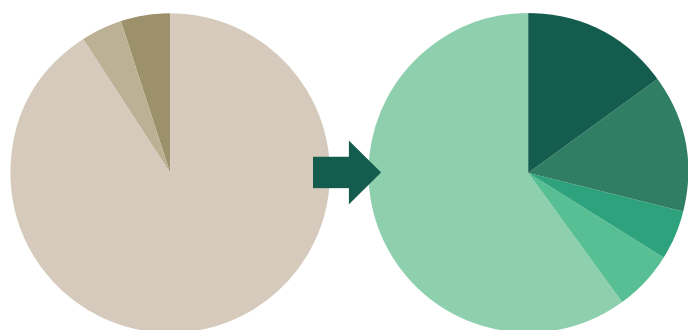
people participated in health, food security livelihoods and human rights projects

**110,259**

people received food, water and sanitation, and other emergency assistance.

PWS&D contributed to **\$7.8 million** worth of development and relief programs — **\$3.1 million** in development and **\$4.7 million** in relief.

This was possible because of **\$3.6 million** in donations from members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, including **\$1.4 million** in legacy gifts to the Loaves & Fishes fund and **\$420,000** to our Canadian Foodgrains Bank account.



**For every dollar PWS&D spent in 2024\***

**92%** Development and relief programs (see following chart)

**4%** Education and fundraising

**5%** Administration

\*This chart represents the full value of PWS&D programming in 2024—including Government of Canada matching funds through Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

**Program funds were spent on:**

**Food security 15%**  
**Health 14%**  
**Human rights 5%**  
**Livelihoods 6%**  
**Relief 60%**

# Cutting the Love to Our Neighbour



Food assistance, like that shown here in Pakistan in 2022, was supported by the Government of Canada through Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

By Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Director

Every child of God is born in a time and place they have not chosen. For some it means being born into a situation with abundant access to goods and services, while for many it means being born in an environment where mere survival is a daily challenge, with a great scarcity of access to goods and services that help us to live with dignity.

We are living in turbulent and challenging times. The economic systems the world had come to lean on since World War II have been shaken significantly by decisions made with seeming disregard for those who will bear the consequences. Usually, changes to those systems are carefully thought out, the potential conse-

quences analyzed and debated, and final decisions voted on. We are witnessing unilateral actions that directly affect millions, if not billions of people, with a level of insensitivity unheard of in my lifetime.

In January 2025, the President of the United States announced a 90% freeze on all U.S. foreign aid, with few exceptions. Most of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, like Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and others, were immediately cut off from U.S. aid. Forty percent of the funding for global health disappeared overnight. This action creates hunger and misery at a scale that is unimaginable.

For someone like me, and for thousands of development and relief professionals who have dedicated their lives to trying to make progress on eliminating poverty and hunger in the world, these recent events are devastating. Progress, while slow, had been made to achieve some of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We were lobbying our governments to increase the budget envelopes for international cooperation so that we may one day reach the goal of 0.7% of GDP. Canada never reached much more than half that target. But we will not stop the fight, it will just require so much more work to get back to where we were even at the beginning of 2025.

Some countries like the UK,

Sweden, Germany and Belgium had already started making some cuts to aid, but none like those made by the United States in January. People by the hundreds of thousands are literally being given a death sentence. While this may sound alarmist or sensationalistic, it is absolutely real.

When people lose access to medications that prevent them from dying from AIDS, when children do not receive vaccinations that protect against infectious diseases, when refugee camps cannot provide food and clean water to people, their chances of survival are drastically reduced and, for many, this is a death sentence.

Cutting aid is exactly the opposite of what Jesus commanded when he said to love our neighbour. Here in Canada, we know that federal political parties are also questioning the value of Canada's already very modest aid budgets to address poverty and humanitarian needs in the world. Some suggested building a military base in the north instead with those budgets, as if it was an "either/or" situation. We know that we can be well as a country and still contribute our fair share to those who are less fortunate. We know that God has provided a planet of abundance with enough for all.

Let's not fall into the either/or trap, thinking that "either we help marginalized people in Canada, or we help people in other countries." We know that Canada can do both. What is missing is the political will to prioritize the needs of the most destitute in the world.

As Christians we have been shown the way by Jesus, and we are called on to act. As PWS&D, we raise our voice alongside hundreds of like-minded organizations, faith-based and others, to remind the Canadian population of the importance of international cooperation.

This work is needed more than ever and so is your support. Canada, and Christians, can lead by example and rise to the new challenges put before us. Together we can model what it is to love our neighbours—the ones we can see and the ones we can't see but who desperately need our solidarity and support.



PWS&D provided vital maternal and child health care in Malawi from 2011–2020 with support from Global Affairs Canada. PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY/PWS&D

To download or order the full 2024 Impact Report, visit [WeRespond.ca/Impact2024](https://www.werespond.ca/Impact2024)



## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

# Emergency Relief Makes a Difference

By Emma Goldstein,  
PWS&D Communications

In the face of unbelievable suffering and loss of life in places like Gaza, Somalia, Yemen and Sudan, it can be tempting to say, “I don’t think there’s anything I can do to make a difference.” Christ, who has promised abundant life, has also called God’s people to action in support of those in need. Generous support from Presbyterians across Canada helps make the following projects possible.

### Somalia

Ongoing conflict between the Somali government and al-Shabaab militants, prolonged droughts and floods, and agricultural instability caused by the climate crisis have left many families in Somalia without enough food to eat. The impact is felt the most by children, with 1.7 million children under five years old acutely food insecure. In Gedo region, over 40% of children are malnourished.

PWS&D is responding through

the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, with matching funds from the Government of Canada, by helping to provide life-saving nutrition for vulnerable children and breast-feeding mothers in areas largely unreached by other humanitarian support. Children are receiving ready-to-use therapeutic food, and if needed, being referred to a stabilization centre, which can provide more intensive care. While they are there, their caretakers also receive meals.

The ripple effect of the food security work in Somalia extends beyond the treatment centre to local communities. During home visits, families are being trained on infant and young child feeding. For those living in camps for internally displaced people, nutrition services are being made accessible right where they are.

PWS&D also supported a multi-faceted response through ACT Alliance. The response helped communities by providing cash transfers to people affected by flooding, by rehabilitating water points, and by providing shelter and other non-food items.



Children with malnutrition and their caregivers wait to receive nutrition services at a PWS&D-supported clinic in Somalia.

### Yemen

In Yemen, 4.5 million people remain displaced from their homes due to ongoing internal conflict. Without access to their usual livelihoods, many people are eating smaller or less frequent meals, consuming lower-priced, less nutritious food, or taking on debt to purchase food.

PWS&D’s response through Canadian Foodgrains Bank is to provide nutritional baskets made up of food sourced from local markets. Through these baskets, families who often can only meet about a fifth of their own nutritional needs have enough healthy food to last each month.

Additional aspects of the response include providing house-



As part of a PWS&D-supported response in Yemen, food baskets are helping families meet their needs. PHOTO CREDIT: ADRA YEMEN

holds with water filters to prevent water-borne diseases that have a detrimental effect on people’s nutrition and health. As well, training is provided on how to create solar thermal cooking devices that will allow families to get the most out of the food they have.

### Sudan

The issue of food insecurity, especially adolescent severe malnourishment, is also affecting the people of Sudan, with conflict and climate change some of the main exacerbating factors. Almost a quarter of the country has been displaced from their homes, and they are in need of health, nutrition and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) support.

Through ACT Alliance, cash assistance is reaching 3,195 households, of whom 2,000 are internally displaced and the remainder are refugees. Water taps that enable safe water for drinking, cooking and bathing, as well as latrines, are helping to protect the health and safety of almost 30,000 people.

In addition, PWS&D is helping local partner Trócaire sup-

port 14 health centres and three stabilization centres throughout the country, which are assisting those unable to meet their food needs. Presently, the most pressing need of these facilities is for more nutrition supplies—to stock the shelves that are emptied as support goes out to families seeking help. The project, which receives support through Canadian Foodgrains Bank, is helping by providing therapeutic food and other supplies to the centres.

### Respond with us

There is an ever-increasing need for life-saving emergency assistance around the world. The massive cuts in foreign aid from the United States and many European countries, along with the climate crisis and continued political instability, will only exacerbate already desperate situations in the coming months and years. But the work of our partners is making a tangible difference. Supporting the emergency responses of PWS&D is standing alongside people caught up in some of the worst conditions imaginable.



## Journey for Hope

**Save the date—September 27, 2025!**

Gather your friends, family and congregation and join PWS&D’s Journey for Hope. Cycle, walk or roll and help those affected by food insecurity.

Visit [WeRespond.ca/JourneyforHope](https://www.werespond.ca/JourneyforHope) for more information!





## PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

# Refugee Sponsorship: Looking Ahead

By Biniam Goitom,  
Refugee Program Coordinator

In 2024, PWS&D's refugee program submitted applications to sponsor 93 individuals, primarily Afghan refugees. Applications were also processed for refugees who had to flee persecution, threat of arrest because of their political opinion, and war from Myanmar, Ethiopia, Iran, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea and Syria.

Since the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2022 and the subsequent dismantling of democratic institutions, both the Canadian government and private sponsors, including PCC congregations nationwide, have dedicated considerable effort in assisting Afghan refugees. As a result, thousands of Afghan refugees were able to be resettled in Canada. We are deeply grateful to the PCC congregations for their compassionate support in welcoming those seeking safety.

### Cuts to immigration numbers

In November 2024, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced the



A family from Myanmar, sponsored by First Presbyterian Church in Thunder Bay, Ont., arrives in Canada in 2024.

temporary suspension of the Group of Five and Community Sponsorship streams—part of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. This pause is in effect until the end of 2025 and is subject to review after one year. This announcement does not affect sponsorships undertaken by a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organization like the PCC. It will, however, affect the overall number of refugee application submissions and the huge backlog of applications within IRCC.

IRCC's annual global cap announcements were also made at the end of 2024. The global cap numbers reflect a reduction in spaces allocated to all immigration streams, including refugee sponsorships. The projections indicate a decrease from previous years in the number of refugees arriving in Canada.

### Helping congregations sponsor refugees

The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program—a cost-sharing

initiative where the government provides financial support for the first six months and sponsoring groups cover the remaining six months—works with refugees who are referred to Canada through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In these instances, the sponsorship group cannot name who they will sponsor.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Presbytery of Essex-Kent, PWS&D has established the Refugee Support Fund to assist con-

gregations and presbyteries who would like to sponsor refugees under this program but may not have the full financial means to do so. To support congregations interested in sponsoring refugees under the BVOR program, PWS&D has funding available to assist sponsors with the cost of settlement for the remaining six months.

*If you are interested in sponsoring refugees through this program or in learning more about the Refugee Support Fund, please email [sponsorship@presbyterian.ca](mailto:sponsorship@presbyterian.ca).*

# School Support Changes Lives in Malawi

By Stephanie Chunoo,  
PWS&D Communications

In Malawi, Mulanje Mission Hospital supports children who have been orphaned or are vulnerable due to HIV and AIDS. With assistance from PWS&D, the program

evaluates and identifies those who would benefit most from health and education services. In addition, the program extends its support to the families of vulnerable children through a livestock-keeping initiative, which helps provide nutrition and income for

the children and their caregivers.

One of the participants, 22-year-old Benedetta January, shared how the project has changed her life.

"When I was young, I thought life was just normal until I started realizing how tough it was for my mother—a single mother—to take care of five children, especially with me being a person with a disability. My mother struggled to feed us; sometimes, we would go to bed without eating. The house we lived in was thatched and leaked during the rains.

"My mother's experience of caring for me as a person with a disability was incredibly challenging. She had to carry me on her back to school, go home to cook for us and then come back to pick me up since I didn't have a wheelchair. Sometimes, I couldn't attend classes.

"My mother met a lady who ran the Apatsha Private Primary School, which had a program for orphans and vulnerable children from Mulanje Mission Hospital.

She instructed my mother to register my name for the project.

"The project gave me hope. It has supported my education from primary school up to completing university. While in college, I was provided with a wheelchair.

"The project not only supported me with school but also provided nutritional support and access to free health services. Additionally, the project supported me by giving me a goat.

"Very soon, I will be graduating with a bachelor's degree in social work, thanks to the support from the project. The goat I received multiplied, which greatly assisted us financially at home. My mother was able to buy basic items for our household.

"I have been sharing my story with friends, especially at college. My goal is to become employed and give back to the community through my services. I aim to support my friends with disabilities so they can also become educated. Additionally, I want to

improve my family's life and support my brothers and sisters in their education.

"I am so grateful; the project has changed my life. Very soon I will be a graduate because of the project. I thank God and the lady who introduced my mother to the project."



Benedetta January participated in a project that supports orphans and vulnerable children, and where she received a wheelchair along with the support to finish school.

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Assistance is available for a limited number of out-of-province Champions.



## STEWARDSHIP



# Charitable Donors in Canada

*By the Rev. Lori Guenther Reesor, speaker, writer and stewardship coach. Lori blogs at lgresor.com, and is the author of Growing a Generous Church: A Year in the Life of Peach Blossom Church*

Statistics Canada recently released data on Charitable Donors in 2023, based on income tax filings. This post examines four aspects of the data: the number of donors, the size of donations, the age of donors, and the income level of donors.

### Number of donors

There were more donors in 2023 than in 2022. Good, I guess? But fewer donors than in 2019. When you live and work in the charitable sector, it's easy to think that everyone gives. But they don't. Only 17% of Canadian tax filers in 2023 had charitable receipts. It's true that they can pool receipts with their partner, save them for another year, etc., but even considering that, it's apparent that many people don't give in a receiptable way.

### Size of donations

Of those 17% of tax filers who claimed charitable donations, the median donation amount was \$390. That's the midpoint: half of people gave less and half gave more. Donors who give \$20 weekly to their place of worship

(\$1,000/yr) are way above that and people who give thousands are in the stratosphere. An ordinary congregation is anything but ordinary from a statistical perspective—it's full of extraordinarily generous people.

### Age of donors

Donors are older than Canadians generally. The median age of a Canadian donor is 56, whereas the median age for Canadians generally is 41. That's a really large difference. Older donors give the most as a block.

For every \$100 of charitable giving in Canada in 2023, 50% of the total amount donated comes from people 65 and up. And 69.7% of the total amount donated comes from donors 55 and up.

### Income of donors

Philanthropy usually concentrates on getting large gifts from high-income people. Higher income people give bigger amounts, but they are not the most generous, based on proportional giving.

The StatsCan data shows that the largest segment of donors—1,048,780, to be precise—are in the \$40,000 to \$59,999 income bracket. That's not the biggest pot of money, but the most donors. In addition, as a proportion of income, they, together with people who have

incomes less than \$40,000, are more generous than anyone else.

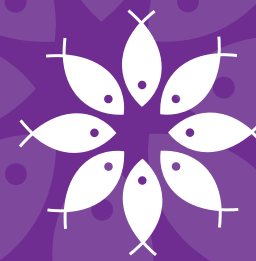
David Lasby's recent analysis for Imagine Canada notes that many higher-income donors didn't start out as higher-income donors; they began as middle-income donors and kept giving as they moved into a higher income bracket (p.20). This rings true in the many testimonies I've heard from older donors who began giving when times were tough and never stopped. I worry about the impact on the charitable sector if these donors are not replaced.

### Income inequality

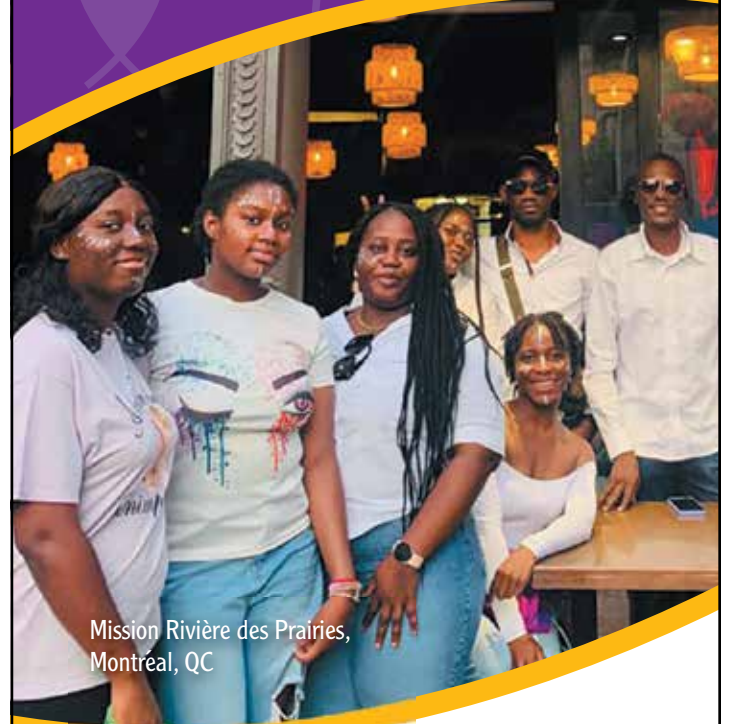
I was struck by the income inequality as I looked at income and donation levels. Almost 7 million tax filers had incomes under \$20,000. Another 7 million people had incomes over \$20,000 but less than \$40,000. Huge demands on food banks attest to a structural inequality that no amount of food banks will solve.

### Summary

Canadian donors are older. Only 17% of Canadian tax filers claimed donation receipts. The typical Canadian donor donated \$390. While higher income Canadians donate larger amounts, Canadians with incomes under \$60,000 are the most generous proportional givers.



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## WOMEN

# WMS Brockville Presbyterial

*By the Rev. Marianne Emig Carr,  
Press Secretary, WMS Brockville  
Presbyterial*

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS) Brockville Presbyterial held its annual meeting



Singalong time!

at Knox Presbyterian Church in Morrisburg, Ont., on April 1 (no fooling!). In attendance were 20 members of the local constituent groups. The meeting opened with worship led by Catherine Blatch, president of the Synodical of Quebec & Eastern Ontario.

The morning business session reviewed the following: written reports from the various executive portfolios; updates regarding presbyterial finances; and reports on the work, study and mission being done by the presbyterial's three constituent groups—Morewood, Morrisburg and St. Paul's Goforth. The Rev. Marianne Emig Carr then led a study session

about the global ecumenical initiative "Jubilee 2025—Turn Debt into Hope," which is being facilitated in Canada by KAIROS Canada and the Canadian Council of Churches. Jubilee 2025 is advocating for systemic change to address global economic inequality and to cancel the burden of unjust debt on low-income countries, especially in the Global South.

After a delicious lunch and a lively singalong, the attendees heard from WMS Executive Director the Rev. Sarah Kim, past Council President Janet Brewer, and current Council President Cathy Reid (online), who spoke about their recent visit to Nepal to

learn more about the work being supported by the WMS through their "Together We Can" project. This was followed by a Q&A.

The Presbyterial Executive for 2025 was installed by the Rev. Feras Chamas of Knox Morrisburg. Janet Jones, presbyterial president, expressed her thanks to those who helped organize the Annual Meeting, and to everyone who continues to do the work of WMS.

The meeting closed with singing and prayer and lots of enthusiasm for the work of the WMS! The Presbyterial Executive will begin organizing a Fall Rally later in 2025.



The Rev. Marianne Emig Carr.



Attendees at the WMS Brockville presbyterial.

# Maitland Presbyterial Spring Rally

*By Caryl Scheel, Maitland  
Presbyterial Executive*

"The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith; the fruit of faith is love; the fruit of love is service; the fruit of service is peace."

This quote from Mother Teresa was the theme of the Spring Rally of the Maitland Presbyterial of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS), hosted by South Kinloss Presbyterian Church in Lucknow, Ont., on April 12. Twenty-six members were registered, and one guest attended the afternoon meeting.

After dessert and tea, president Donna Sutton welcomed all and constituted the meeting with our WMS Purpose and Aim, and Norma Raynard took the roll call.

Our speaker was Audrey Bos from Blyth Christian Reformed Church, who lives in Belgrave, Ont., and has served as a volunteer with a part of the Reformed Church of Canada that focuses

on providing funding and volunteer humanitarian aid after natural disasters.

Audrey's mission took her to Washington State after an "atmospheric river" caused record rainfall and disastrous flooding in 2023. She remarked that the average age of the volunteers was 72! As one of the younger members of the team, she took on the task of replacing flooring and served as a driver of the larger vehicles as they hauled supplies and equipment to affected homes. This type of mission relief work is certainly a strong service in our Christian walk of faith.

The Wingham Goforth group prepared a worship service that was delivered by Joanne Lenips on the theme of "Service," with several scriptural references to the book of John. Donna Sutton led the In Memoriam service, starting with the singing of "Those Hearts That We Have Treasured." Memorial thoughts were for Isabel Arbuckle (Wingham), Mary



Maitland Presbyterial Executive for 2025 (left to right) Caryl Scheel, Mae Raynard, Betty Johnson, Donna Sutton, Joanne Lenin.

Campbell (Wingham), Isabell Young (Wingham), Ruth Buchmeier (South Kinloss) and Sharon MacDougall (South Kinloss).

The presentation of last year's reports were seconded and passed. Following the presentation of the nominating report and

Election of Officers for 2025, led by president Donna Sutton, the Rev. Robert Royal installed the new officers and closed with prayer.

New business mentioned that the upcoming synodical will be held at Camp Kintail on April 22–

23, 2025. Wingham Goforth issued an invitation to the Fall Rally in Wingham later this year.

After Lucknow gave courtesy remarks to South Kinloss for hosting this day, the event closed with prayer, and everyone headed home in the brilliant sunshine.



## REFLECTIONS

# A Canadian Cleric's *Cri de Coeur*

By the Rev. J. Andrew Fullerton,  
Elmwood Avenue Presbyterian  
Church in London, Ont. This post  
appeared on "The Present Crisis" a  
blog by the Rev. Philip J. Lee, found  
at [medium.com/@pjlee\\_39329](https://medium.com/@pjlee_39329)

The last time the United States of America tried to take Canada by force, it didn't go well for them. "We have met the enemy, and they are ours," said the American naval commander Oliver Hazard Perry, as he faced and defeated British warships on Lake Erie in 1813. He spoke too soon. In 1814, British soldiers invaded Washington and set fire to the White House. The war soon ended. Ever since, the Canadian mouse and American elephant have lived placably side by side.

Heedless of this history, Trump 2.0 insists that Canada should now become America's 51st State. At first, this was a bad joke. Now, it's not so funny.

"Are you considering military force to annex Canada?" a reporter asked Trump.

"No," he replied. "Economic force."

The punitive tariffs he would impose on Canada and Mexico (never mind his stratagems against Panama, Greenland and Gaza) are the tactics of a bully. So much for "free trade"! This is not civilized diplomacy. It's one man wielding a wrecking ball on established norms and values.

What should God's people do when a belligerent bully borders them?

### False prophets and true

Long ago, when Babylon rattled its sword and prepared to invade Jerusalem, Jeremiah warned his people to repent of their own injustice and idolatry. Dark days were coming. They'd never defeat Babylon with tit-for-tat bullying tactics. Nor would God magically rescue them. They must repent. They must realign their lives with the God of Israel, to hunker down and be faithful, come what may.

Nobody wanted to hear Jeremiah. They thought, "We're not the problem, Babylon is! Get off our backs!" So, nobody believed Jeremiah. In fact, they scorned him. They preferred Hananiah, a false prophet who'd bewitched God's gullible people with happy lies.

He assured them that God would defend his people from disaster, even disasters of their own making. Their manifest destiny was to be God's elect nation, wasn't it? Nothing could possibly be their fault. God would make Israel great again.

But God did not. Hananiah had peddled a populist lie. Israel went into exile.

Many Christians believe that God sent Donald Trump to make America great again. Some mega-church MAGA pastors say you cannot be Christian if you do not support Donald Trump. This is rank heresy. "Blood and soil" nationalism has once again hijacked Christianity, shouting "God is with us!" But that's a populist lie. In their minds, nothing can ever be their fault. The enemy is always somebody else.

Is it, though? Walt Kelly, the creator of the cartoon strip "Pogo," famously inverted Oliver Hazard Perry's words. "We have met the enemy, and he is *us*."

### The church's *raison d'être*

There's a tragic sense in which this is true, not just of the MAGA church, but of Canada's mainline Protestant churches, too—or what's left of them. Our own smug complacency is our own worst enemy. We, too, want to believe that nothing can ever be *our* fault.

Rick Mercer's TV show "Talking to Americans," poked fun at American ignorance of all things Canadian, as if Canadians were naturally superior, as if they couldn't be just as easily pilloried. Now we laugh with scorn at "those stupid Christian nationalists" who support a Trump White House. Does Trump want to seize Canada as the 51st State? Well then, we'll boo the "The Star-Spangled Banner" at hockey games. That will show them!

This is all too cheap and easy. Calling Americans "evil" or "stupid" to gain the nodding approval of *bien pensant* compatriots doesn't make us good or wise. Slogans of moral outrage count for nothing.

Rather than virtue-signalling, shouldn't we be practicing the virtues? I don't mean, "niceness." Nor do I mean "mounting the barricades" in postures of

protest, whose only effect is a feeling of self-righteousness. No, I mean the difficult disciplines that derive from Christ's Word and Sacrament—the life, thought and feeling that flow from true participation in the Body of Christ. This—not one-upmanship in a game of clashing ideologies—is the source of all truth and virtue.

This is also the church's real *raison d'être*; not morality and politics, but worship. Of course, morality and politics matter! But they're downstream from a primal encounter with the God who addresses us in Word and nourishes us in Sacrament.

If we insist on beginning with our politics and only then turn to God to back it up, as MAGA Christians do, we fall into idolatry, too. Instead of being a sanctuary of divine encounter, the church becomes the instrument of an ideology.

Christian morality and politics must flow from the divine calling that precedes them. The encounter must come first, temporally and logically. And it must be renewed again and again, every Sunday at the very least. That ought to be non-negotiable.

### The perennial Protestant problem

Protestants no longer believe in the church's *raison d'être*. Did we ever? Or have we just lost the stomach for a demanding, divine encounter? It would seem so. Here's the Protestant problem. This is why we're our own worst enemy.

The mainline Protestant church in Canada more often resembles a Religious Recreation Centre than a Sanctuary for God's Word and Sacrament. We still speak of "worship services." But are they? The holy "vertical" dimension of worship has been wholly flattened into the horizontal. The disturbing sense of the presence of God is kept strongly at bay. Is this because our pulpits are filled with latter-day Hananiahs (false prophets), peddlers of false consolation? Yes, I think so.

The vanishing few who still attend a worship service in a mainline Protestant church in Canada rarely adopt a posture of confession and adoration before God. Instead, we relax in our comfort-



able pew, waiting to see what the minister and choir have in store for us today. Their performance aims to be emotionally uplifting, an endorsement of people like us, and at the very least amusing—"a strange combination of lecture and concert," as Robertson Davies said of Presbyterian worship in his youth. We either like it and return next week, or we hate it and never come back. The one thing we haven't done is give ourselves over to the worship of God. We weren't even given the chance.

No longer brooding and scolding, Presbyterian ministers grin from their pulpits like Cheshire Cats, eager to placate and pander to their dwindling congregations, entertaining them with cheap, sentimental preaching, juvenile hi-jinks in place of solemn liturgy, and hype for community projects that are really only meant to make us feel good about ourselves.

"God loves you!" shouts the mainline Protestant church, as though there's nothing more to be said, no repentance to perform, no depth of faith to explore, no meaning to be sought in our suffering, no risks to take in the world, no discipline of prayer to acquire, no cross to shoulder each day, no nourishment in the Word, and no healing grace in the bread and cup, received with a trembling hand.

### Entry into exile

Philip Lee is right to point to Gnosticism as the Protestant's chronic heresy and perennial temptation. I would add this one, too: we mistake having an opinion for having faith and having *politically correct* opinions for a righteous way

of life. But it's not a way of life. This is not how the divine truth, encountered in Christ's Word and Sacrament, embeds itself in human life—in our knowledge, morality, politics, aesthetics and all the seeds of human culture. It's just a set of opinions, that's all.

Too many Protestant ministers peddle Hananiah's lie that nothing can be our fault. We're Canadian. We're Protestant. We're Progressive. We're the Good Guys! God *must* be on our side, right?

Who can believe this anymore? Show me the form of life that bears this out. Is it any wonder that a shallow church peddling cheap grace has nothing convincing to say, and no better way of life to live than to amuse ourselves and scowl at MAGA Christians in a posture of self-righteousness?

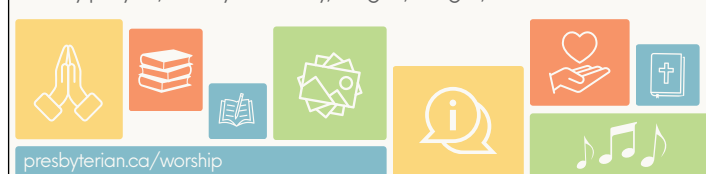
God will not make the mainline Protestant church great again. In Canada, Protestantism is a vanishing ghost of its former self, and the time is soon coming when it will be no more. The failure began in the sanctuary. It always does. That's why the prophets railed against idolatry. But it's too late for us now. We no longer have the strength, depth and intellectual moxie to mount a faithful, prophetic, theological critique, in word and deed, of the Christian heresy of Trumpism. Who would take us seriously if we did? Would we?

Sure, let's nod and tell each other how bad MAGA is. But don't let's think that our doing so makes us righteous. Jeremiah knew. We're heading into exile. Do we have what it takes to repent, to hunker down and be faithful, come what may?

Perhaps the "enemy" is us.

### RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP

Daily prayers, weekly lectionary, liturgies, images, and so much more!





# Reflecting on My Father's Mission Work in Labrador

By Joan Montgomery

My father, the Rev. A.P. Montgomery, a Presbyterian minister, was also part of the Moravian Missions in Makkovik, Labrador, in 1952. His journal entries from this time are full of enthusiasm, pride and joy, as well as a level of despair at the poor conditions and circumstances he encountered.

He had taken a while to get there. Plans were thrown back by World War II. The war had been cruel to my dad. After his ambulance was bombed in North Africa, it led to a long stay in a field hospital where he fell ill with a parasitic disease that later led to diabetes, which led to the near blindness he mentions in his letter below. But never defeated, the Presbyterians in Montreal found him a position and he was later ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian church.

## Letter From Makkovik

*I arrived here the beginning of July 1952 from Nain. The first three weeks were spent in going over the place with the Rev. Fred Grubb, who was then resident missionary. We traveled by motorboat to several of the outlying fishing stations where I was introduced by the Rev. Grubb to*

*the people with whom I would be working.*

*At the end of July, I made a trip out to St. John's, Newfoundland, for the purpose of meeting Mrs. Montgomery and our children, and the two schoolteachers Misses Benigna Burger and Lore Enslin. It was a happy reunion for us. We were delayed in St. John's for about two weeks waiting on the SS Kyle, on which we sailed for the coast.*

*The time spent in St. John's was profitable. I had the opportunity of speaking on behalf of the mission at several places. At the Temple, headquarters of the Salvation Army in St. John's, I addressed a large audience on the history and work of the Moravian Mission in Labrador. One point that was mentioned during the address was the difficulty of heating the school. As a result, two large oil heaters were purchased by the Salvation Army and presented to us for the school. These have been installed, and they were invaluable during the winter.*

*In the St. John's Presbyterian Church, the people listened with interest to an address on the work of the Mission here. Many of them have helped greatly with gifts of clothing—much of it new—to be*

*given to the people and money was subscribed for the purpose of enabling us to purchase a new boat for Makkovik. The old boat, the John Cunningham, had to be condemned, it was unsafe to travel in. The new boat is a cabin cruiser of 30 ft and with a speed of about 15 knots. The cost to the mission was \$600, the remainder being contributed by friends in St. John's. It is expected that I will go to St. John's when open water comes for the purpose of bringing the boat to the coast. A doctor will also be making the trip with us, and he will stay here for a week or two for the purpose of checking over some of the people and giving medical advice.*

*We arrived here on September 1st. After seeing my wife and children and the schoolteachers settled in, I immediately started a trip around the fishing stations. At each, a service was held and the sick attended to. On my return, there was plenty of work to be done. Many of the paths through the woods required repairing and there were several repairs to be done to the school and the house in which the teachers were to live. The wharf at Makkovik had broken down and this too requires a lot of work, so much indeed that it might be easier to build a new wharf. During September, we had a visit from the Rev. FW Peacock. He stayed for two days and we had a nice time of fellowship and he gave me some valuable advice.*

*It was at this time that stores started to come in for the winter and a considerable amount of time is taken up handling freight and straightening things out for the winter. I had had 15 hens coming earlier but the dogs tore open the hen house and we lost them all. I had six more brought in and these have all survived the onslaught of the enemy. The services were well attended this month but only the future can tell what the result of the sowing will be.*

*October saw the formation of a rural Council. A public meeting was held and the purpose of such a council was explained. Members of the council were elected by vote, and it was agreed that under the direction of the council we would try to get a community hall, a new road through the vil-*



Three commissioners at the 88th General Assembly held at Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto in 1962 (left to right): the Rev. A.P. Montgomery, Corner Brook, Newfoundland; the Rev. I Raeburn-Gibson, Galt, Ontario; and the Rev. Joseph Cathcart, Englishtown, Cape Breton, N.S. PHOTO CREDIT: THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARCHIVES

*lage, a new wharf and, if possible, a sawmill for the purpose of commencing logging operations. A grant of \$600 was given by the provincial government for road work. The road has been cleared but it will have to be spring before it can be levelled off. We are hoping to encourage people who are living in isolation in the bays to come in and settle in the village.*

*There is work to be done here at logging and we would like a larger community. The new road is being built around the back of the present line of houses, and this will permit other homes being built on the inside of the road giving us a double row of houses without interfering with the woods that surround the village. For raising funds for the village hall, a concert was given by several of the people and later a social was held and we have so far raised about \$100. Then, those who were working in the woods were asked to bring in a log with them each time to build up a stock of timber for the hall. We are endeavouring to accumulate some timber in such a way for the wharf.*

*During the Christmas period, a considerable number of people came in from the bays and we had some fine services. There were parties for the children in the boarding school and also in the Mission house. About this time, I had some trouble with my right eye and on January the 1st I had to go out to hospital. I was almost blind in the right eye. Just before Christmas, one young man had come to us and said that he had been giving considerable thought to the sermons in church and as a result of that he had decided to surrender his heart to the Lord Jesus. He felt he wished to serve the Lord and desired to know if it would be possible. We had a long talk and a time of prayer together. His education has been very elementary but since that time he*

*has been taking evening courses with Miss Burger. During my visit to St. John's, the decision of the boy was brought up before the Women's Missionary Society of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and a resolution was passed at which it was decided they will adopt the boy and endeavour to have him educated and later sent to a Theological Seminary, possibly in Montreal.*

*At the beginning of February, we had a serious outbreak of the flu in this area, indeed the epidemic spread all along the coast. I made a trip to Cape Harrison, at this time. Conditions at this place were very serious. There was scarce one person who was not ill; the majority of the people had pneumonia. There was no food in the village in some houses, not even flour with which to make bread. The Welfare Officer for this District was with me but he is only allowed to give \$10 a month relief in cases of illness. This would not have purchased the fresh meat and vegetables that were necessary for the sake of building up the strength of the people; indeed, such commodities are not available even if one had plenty of money.*

*I sent an appeal to a minister friend with the United States Air Force in Goose Bay and the response was wonderful. A plane was sent over with fresh meat and other foodstuffs were dropped by parachute. I attended to the medical treatment of the people and had a time of prayer at each house. Here in Makkovik, it was very much the same and we had to close school and church for a period of two weeks. Fortunately, we had no deaths in this area although I understand that there have been several deaths in other communities. I believe that part of the reason was due to the wonderful response of our American brethren to our appeal for help.*



Joan Montgomery, wearing a sealskin jacket, and her brother, Stewart.





The Rev. A.P. Montgomerie (far left) in Makkovik.

At Easter, I had again to go out about my eye, this time to Toronto. This time it was discovered that the eye trouble was due to a ruptured blood vessel beside the retina and that there was a clot of blood which was distorting the retina. The blood vessel is healing now, and it is expected that the blood clot will dissolve through time and I will get the sight back. While in Toronto and Montreal, I had the privilege of addressing several meetings and preaching to churches on behalf of the Mission, and it is hoped that groups

will be formed in each for the purpose of supporting the mission by prayer and by gifts of money and other things; indeed, I am hoping that as a result of these contracts we will be able to form a Canadian Association in Aid of Moravian missions.

We now have an active women's meeting here in Makkovik. The women meet in the sitting room of the manse each Tuesday evening. Men, even although they are the women's own, are not admitted. I believe they have been sending gifts of sugar to

some of the ladies aid meetings in the home churches. Then too they are being encouraged to do some knitting and work for the school; best of all is that the women are really keen on the service and it is a means of bringing them in touch with the Lord Jesus. They have a short address at each meeting, which is given by Mrs. Montgomerie.

We are in the process of organizing a Scout trip for the older boys in the village. Most of them are keen on it and we believe it is but another way in strengthening

their moral life, and we hope will help them to keep out of mischief. For the older girls, we would like to establish a troop of Guides or Canadian Girls in Training; the problem is obtaining a suitable leader. We feel they should have their own leader in these fields. In church matters too we are endeavouring to have the people take a greater share in the hope that those who are members will realize their responsibilities in Christ and that they are saved to serve. We had the joy of leading one man to Christ in February; he is one of the leaders of the village and a man who has never joined the church or made a profession of faith. He should be a big help in the work and we pray that his testimony may be the means of helping others to make a better stand for the Lord Jesus.

In school, the health of the children has been fairly good and, apart from the flu epidemic, attendance has been good. We thank the teachers for carrying on although sometimes they must find the task of teaching the children very difficult. There are so many things in the schoolbooks that have no equivalent here in Labrador and it must be difficult for the children to understand and for the teacher to give a clear picture of what is meant.

There is a movement toward Hopedale at present, where there is quite a lot of work to be obtained and where the wages

offered are very good. This will probably come to an end in September this year and then there will be a return of the people. A copper mining project is commencing in the Kippakok area and it may be that in the near future there will be more work for the people in that area.

This has been a very mild winter. It has been fortunate for us that it was so. The sealing was a complete failure and there were not even partridges to be had all winter, hence the shortage of fresh meat. Had this winter been of the usual severity I do not know what would have happened to the folk.

Already the ice is very thin and soon we will have open water and another season commenced. We pray that it may be a time of spiritual and material prosperity for all, and we ask that you will join with us in this ministry.

Special note:

I particularly wish to express my sincere thanks to the teachers, Misses Chalk and Benigna Burger for the wonderful way in which they helped during the outbreak of the flu in Makkovik: for a considerable part of the time I was absent in St. John's and the teachers took the burden of the work upon themselves and great credit is due to them for their efforts on behalf of the people and the mission.

—A.P. Montgomerie

## PULPIT VACANCIES

### Atlantic Provinces

**Alliston, WellSpring**  
(full-time minister)

**Dartmouth, Iona**  
(part-time minister)

**Dartmouth, St. Andrew's**  
(full-time minister)

**St. John's, St. Andrew's**  
(full-time minister)

### Quebec & Eastern Ontario

**Almonte, Community**  
(full-time minister)

**Beaconsfield, Briarwood**  
(Full- or part-time minister)

**Inverness, PQ** (full-time ecumenical shared ministry)

**Lancaster, St. Andrew's and Martintown, St. Andrew's**  
(full-time minister)

**Manotick, Knox**  
(full-time minister)

**Ottawa, St. Paul's**  
(full-time minister)

**Pembroke, First** (part-time or stated supply minister)

**St. Lambert, St. Andrew's**  
(full-time minister)

**Stouffville, St. James**  
(full-time minister)

### Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda

**Cobourg, St. Andrew's**  
(full-time minister)

**Grand Valley, Knox**  
(part-time minister)

**Harriston, Knox-Calvin**  
(50%-time minister)

**Keswick, Keswick**  
(full-time minister)

**Lindsay, St. Andrew's**  
(full-time minister)

**Markham, Celebration**  
(full-time minister)

**Midland, Knox**  
(full-time minister)

**Milton, Boston**  
(full-time minister)

**South Monohan, Centreville Harmony** (80%-time minister)

**Toronto, Ghanaian**  
(interim minister – contract)

**Toronto, Mimico**  
(full-time minister)

**Toronto, St. Andrew's**  
(full-time associate minister)

**Toronto, St. David's**  
(part-time minister)

**Toronto (Scarborough), St. Andrew's** (full-time minister)

**Vaughan, Vaughan Community**  
(full-time youth minister)

### Southwestern Ontario

**Glencoe (Mosa), Burns**  
(full-time minister)

**Hamilton, Central**  
(full-time minister)

**Hamilton, Trinity**  
(full-time minister)

**London, Korean Christian**  
(part-time children and youth minister)

**Moore, Knox & Mooretown, St. Andrew's** (part-time lay minister)

**Moore, Knox & Mooretown, St. Andrew's** (part-time minister)

**Presbytery of Essex-Kent – General Presbyter**  
(part-time minister)

**St. Thomas, Knox**  
(full-time lead minister)

**Tillsonburg, St. Andrew's**  
(full-time minister)

## DEATH NOTICES

Read full obituaries online at [presbyterian.ca](http://presbyterian.ca)

**The Rev. Blake William Walker**  
Deceased April 11, 2025  
Huntsville, Ont.

**Jean Marilyn Boyne**  
Deceased April 4, 2025  
Listowel, Ont.

**The Rev. Dr. Gerard Bylaard**  
Deceased April 1, 2025  
Oshawa, Ont.

**The Rev. Arthur M. Pattison**  
Deceased March 28, 2025  
Ottawa, Ont.

**Margaret Macsween Smith**  
Deceased March 21, 2025  
Georgetown, Ont.

**Edna Christene Fraser**  
Deceased March 3, 2025  
New Glasgow, N.S.

**The Rev. Dr. Gordon Johnstone Matheson**  
Deceased March 3, 2025  
Charlottetown, P.E.I.

**Anne Morton**  
Deceased March 2, 2025  
Hamilton, Ont.

**The Rev. Glen Sampson**  
Deceased February 6, 2025  
Truro, N.S.

**Robert W. Bates**  
Deceased January 22, 2025  
Stayner, Ont.

### Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario

**Regina, Norman Kennedy**  
(full-time minister)

### Alberta & the Northwest

**Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod – General Presbyter**  
(part-time minister)

### British Columbia

**Campbell River, Trinity**  
(full-time minister)

**Surrey, City Centre**  
(full-time minister)

**Sooke, Knox** (full-time minister and church planter)



# The Value of Defending Faith for the Church Today

By Dr. Robert Revington, author and president of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History, who has been teaching at the Vancouver School of Theology

In the 19th century, Knox College had a professor named William Gregg, whose title was “Professor of Apologetics and Church History.” Here, I want to emphasize why “Apologetics” should be more important for the PCC today. The term “Apologetics” refers to the attempt to offer an intellectual defence of the Christian faith. As one example, this can include attempts to defend the reliability of the New Testament, but it is not limited to this. Faith is quite different from reason, but maybe Presbyterian preachers (and even Sunday school teachers and parents) should devote more time to giving people reasons for the hope that is in them.

I am not an ordained minister, but I have a Ph.D. in Theology and have had the privilege of preaching in many churches. A couple

of years ago, I spent part of a sermon discussing some points where there was evidence that the New Testament was historically accurate. I didn’t think that what I said was particularly remarkable. But after the service, an elderly woman said to me: “I’ve been going to church for 70 years ... and this is the first time anyone has given me evidence that the Bible is reliable.” Now, this woman’s church has had some excellent ministers. Yet maybe this is a sign that there is a broader issue for the church to think about. Granted, there is more evidence for some things in the Bible than others. We shouldn’t become biblical literalists, but if churches neglect these questions, people will get their answers from other places—and not always from the best sources.

We want to preach good news, but there is a lot of “fake news” about Christianity out there. Media figures will make unsubstantiated comments about religion. Popular books such as *The Da Vinci Code*



present wildly inaccurate pictures of early Christian history. Although preaching should engage with what the text says or how it can be applied to our lives, there is also room to discuss why we should believe. This is a bit like how Paul or other early Christians used prophecies from scripture to argue that Jesus was the Messiah. Except today, we might be answering different questions.

Let me give some examples of things preachers could work into their sermons. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus corroborates the New Testament by discussing Jesus, James the brother of Jesus, and John the Baptist. Another Roman historian named Tacitus affirms that Jesus was crucified by Pontius Pilate. Archaeologists have also found an artifact from the ninth-century BCE called the “Tel Dan Stele” which refers to the “house of David.” So, there is ancient

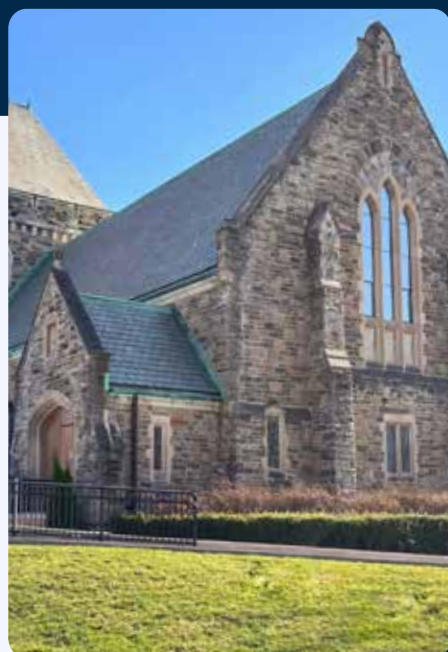
archaeological evidence that supports the family line of David. Alternatively, Colin J. Hemer’s book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* gives reasons as to why Acts has historically reliable information. Sometimes it’s in the little details. For example, Hemer defends the historicity of the sea voyages described in Acts because “the detailed accounts of winds and weather, the correct placing of ports, and the natural association of the voyage with the ships and conditions of the Alexandrian corn-fleet, are too specific and circumstantial” (329). Luke’s travel observations fit the places they visited and in passages such as Acts 20:14-15, the sequence of places Luke and Paul visit “is entirely correct and natural” (125). The names of the people Paul visits fit each geographic location (239). Likewise, Acts may reflect eyewitness testimony because it shows accu-

rate knowledge of things such as “the locations of insignificant places in Crete” or “the nautical manoeuvres and the topography of the Maltese shore” which “are not only theologically irrelevant, but hard to explain except as vivid experience” (389).

In another case, John 19:34 describes how the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus’ side and water and blood gushed out. A doctor could conclude from this that the crucifixion caused so much stress on Jesus’s heart and lungs that they had accumulated clear fluids, resulting in what are known as pericardial and pleural effusions; this is the “water” John saw. In short, the author of the Gospel of John could not have understood the modern medical explanation behind what he saw, but his record makes sense with medical evidence.

Or consider this: in the gospels, the first witnesses to the Empty Tomb in the resurrection story are women. This isn’t a detail you would want to make up in the ancient world, because women weren’t considered to be reliable witnesses.

Finally, offering intellectual reasons for faith can have *pastoral benefits*. The woman who said she had gone to church for 70 years told me another thing: hearing there are good reasons to believe in the Bible gave her *real* hope that she could see her late son again. In short, maybe “Apologetics” can be another way of preaching the good news—and maybe even to evangelize.



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To order a copy, visit [suzanne-wilkinson.com](http://suzanne-wilkinson.com).



## JUST WONDERING...

**Our congregation has a unified budget that supports the mission and ministry we do in our community, country and around the world. Last year, we had total receipted donations of \$250,000. However, over \$100,000 was designated gifts and our operating budget had a deficit of \$25,000. The total gifts would eliminate the deficit, if they were all undesignated. What would you suggest?**

*Answered by Karen Plater,  
Stewardship, and the  
Rev. Lori Guenther Reesor*

This is the classic good news, bad news scenario when it comes to church finances. Let's use an imaginary Knox as an example. First, the good news.

People at the church give generously. They contributed over \$150,000 for the congregation's ministry AND over \$100,000 to special projects last year. People support the newcomer family, the local food bank where several members volunteer and the youth drop-in centre.

Next, the bad news:

Knox is running a \$25,000 deficit. General giving is not meeting the budget. Understandably, the church finance people at Knox are perplexed. They wondered if they can *decrease* designated giving by diverting some of the special project funding to the budget. What if, instead, they asked how the church can *increase* undesignated giving?

How can Knox encourage designated gifts to fund a special project, while still funding the ongoing ministry of the church? The answer is to tell stories, ask questions and pray. But first, what's a designated gift?

### Designated gifts Q&A

Q: What if someone makes a gift for choir robes, but the church doesn't have a choir?

A: Problem. A designated gift can only be used for the purpose specified. (See the Gift Acceptance Policy template in the charity handbook from Canadian Centre for Christian Charities.) This is why an undesignated gift is often the most helpful gift.

Q: If I make a designated gift for the food bank can the church use that for their operating budget?

A: No, that money can only be used to support the food bank.

### Undesignated and designated gifts: A quick guide

Undesignated gifts go to the general support of a church or charity. It's the default setting. You make an undesignated gift when you send an e-transfer with the note field blank or write a cheque without a note in the memo line.

Pre-authorized gifts are typically undesignated also. Undesignated gifts keep churches and charities humming. Bless your heart for trusting your church or charity to use the gift wisely!

Designated gifts are gifts for a specific purpose. You make a designated gift when you send an e-transfer to your church with "food bank" in the note field or write a cheque to your church that says "food bank" in the memo line. Bless your heart for supporting a cause you care about!

### Community: everyone contributing to the same project

Special projects make a wonderful introduction to giving for kids and adults who are learning generosity. Common causes build community, and designated gifts offer local people and new attenders an entry point for involvement. Regular members will dig deeper to support something close to their heart over and above their undesignated gifts.

The challenge is that people who give designated gifts might not give to an undesignated budget; so, we want to encourage *both* ways of giving. In order to increase general giving, Knox needs to talk about the impact of undesignated gifts.

Designated gifts tend to be more tangible, and designated giving stories are easy to tell: "Thank you for your gifts to buy new freezers for our local food bank. We raised over \$4,500 and we are so grateful we can help our neighbours." You might show a photo of the freezer and even plan a field trip to volunteer. Generosity helps our hearts grow bigger.

You can tell stories about the budget, too! (But avoid using the word "budget".) Giving to the budget feels less exciting than

buying a freezer but people need to know what their undesignated gifts are supporting just as much as they need to understand why the freezer is important. Tell stories—and do it often.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada website (presbyterian.ca/worship-resources) has weekly "mission moment" PowerPoint slides. Start here. For example, on April 20, the photo was of Mengeshe from Ethiopia. Then, make a second slide showing someone answering the phone at Knox and a third slide showing Knox's minister at the front door of the local hospital.

### Slide One – Tools and Seeds in Ethiopia.

The photo shows Mengeshe from Ethiopia:

We thank God for the faithful generosity of people at Knox. Your gifts are shared with our wider church, which helps people in many places. Your generosity through Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank provided seeds and tools to Mengeshe in Ethiopia to help rebuild his livelihood after conflict.

### Slide Two – Tools at Knox.

Photo of someone answering the phone at Knox:

We thank God for the faithful generosity of people at Knox. Your ongoing generosity to the ministry of this church supports our ministry throughout the week, which continues beyond our Sunday worship. This is not just a telephone. This phone is a prayer hotline. This phone is a crisis support number for referrals to community services. Knox helps our neighbours by offering grocery gift cards and helping them navigate which food bank can help them. Our telephone is a tool for ministry

throughout the week, supported by your gifts to Knox.

### Slide Three – Seeds at Knox.

Photo of the minister at the front door of the hospital:

We thank God for the faithful generosity of people at Knox. Your gifts support our ministry throughout the week. The Rev. Garcia doesn't like to brag about how hard she works, but her ministry is more than preparing for Sunday worship. She makes hospital visits and encouraging phone calls. She prays with people. She plants seeds of hope and shares God's grace with people in difficult times. The Rev. Garcia supports our congregation and our community through your gifts to Knox.

All three slides demonstrate how generosity enables tools and seeds locally and in Ethiopia. You could end with a note of thanksgiving: Our ministry at Knox extends beyond these four walls and blesses many people. We are grateful that when we share, God multiplies our gifts. Thanks be to God!

There are many possible moments for mission. Insurance can be seen as an expense, or it can be a tool: with insurance, Knox has Sunday school, a youth group on Friday nights and Girl Guide sleepovers. A heating system enables hospitality and so does a coffee maker.

The PCC also has stewardship moment slides to make talking about the spiritual discipline of giving a regular part of worship. Encourage intentional and proportional giving. Ask people at Knox to "step up"—if they are giving at 1%, move to 2% of income. That would double their gifts! The PCC has a bulletin insert that shows what proportional giving looks like. New givers can choose an amount they can afford, give regularly and

see what happens! It's a joyful experiment, learning to trust God and discovering that everyone can afford to be generous in some way.

### Ask questions

In addition to telling stories, ask questions. Congregations can learn from their giving data, which can be done without knowing names of donors. For instance: How many designated givers vs. undesignated givers? Are they the same people? How many new undesignated givers this year? How many new designated givers this year? Are there any people who gave designated gifts who have become undesignated givers?

Knowing this information can help you tailor your stewardship program and see where generosity is growing in your congregation.

You may also want to consider budget items that receive designated gifts. People who don't give undesignated gifts may help send a child to camp, for example, freeing up undesignated gifts to support other things. Remember, when someone gives a designated gift, it opens the door to having a conversation about the difference that undesignated gifts make as well.

### Prayerful imagination

A budget is a profoundly theological document that reveals what the church thinks is important, which is why it's worth much prayerful discussion. People at our imaginary church of Knox have always prayed. And so, a closing prayer:

*Lord, help us to be generous.  
Help us know how much to give  
and which causes to support.  
Help us to share what you have  
given us with our neighbours.  
Help us to be generous like you  
are generous. We thank you for  
your gifts of grace, which are  
new every morning. Amen.*



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JUST WONDERING...



Submit your questions to [connection@presbyterian.ca](mailto:connection@presbyterian.ca).  
Questions answered by the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary

Why do we call the worst and most sorrowful day of the year when Jesus was killed, “Good Friday?”



There is something jarring and contradictory about calling such a cruel day “good,” isn’t there? Friday of Holy Week commemorates the day when the Word of Life goes down to death and the sun does not shine, the earth quakes and the veil of the Temple is torn, signifying the mystery, terror and significance of Christ’s death. “Good” in this case means “holy,” which is why Good Friday is sometimes called Holy Friday.

??

Why is the burning bush the logo and *nec tamen consumebatur* the motto of The Presbyterian Church in Canada?

In his commentary on the Book of Acts, John Calvin noted about Acts 7:30, which refers to Moses’ encounter with God in the wilderness, that the burning bush was an appropriate image of the church. Calvin observed that the church experiences the “fire of persecution,” but is preserved “from being consumed to ashes.” Perhaps the custom of Reformed Christian communities using the symbol of the burning bush, which goes back to France and the 1580s, was inspired by Calvin’s reflections.

While the Church of Scotland’s emblem has born the Latin phrase *nec tamen consumebatur* (translated from Latin as “... but it was not being consumed”) since the 1690s, many in the PCC are surprised to learn that it wasn’t until 2014 that the

General Assembly approved a recommendation that the “burning bush” and *nec tamen consumebatur* be authorized as an official symbol and motto of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is perhaps worth noting that both the report and recommendation advocate for the burning bush and *nec tamen consumebatur* to not be an official symbol and motto of the PCC. Different times, contexts and expressions of the church reach for new symbols even as we rely on what has nourished us in the past. The latest version of the burning bush the denomination uses—and that ministries are welcome to download and use freely—is found at [presbyterian.ca/logo](http://presbyterian.ca/logo). The web page also includes logos for Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service & Development.

150th Anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

The year 2025 marks the 150th anniversary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada as we know it. Several books, projects and special events have been planned for this year to mark 150 years of Christ’s continued ministry through the PCC.

When we marked the 100th anniversary of the PCC we also produced many resources. Among the special initiatives the church engaged in 50 years ago was creating a book of sermons (available on the 2025 anniversary web page) and a hymn writing contest. People were invited to write and submit hymn texts “praising God and thanking him for his presence and guidance in the church.” Over 175 entries were received from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. The winning entries were presented at the General Assembly and appeared in *Praise Ways*, a new hymn book produced at that time.

The first prize of \$100 was won by V. Isabel Jones, Ph.D., who was a member of First Church, Regina, Sask. Dr. Jones taught German for many years at Cardiff University in Wales, then later on at the Regina campus of the University of Saskatchewan. Her father was a minister of the Church of Scotland, and she had once been an elder of the Presbyterian Church in Wales.

The second prize of \$50 was awarded to Helen Goggin, who was then the director of Christian education at Knox Presbyterian Church in Oakville, Ont., and later taught at Ewart College, and retired as the Professor of Christian Education at Knox College.

Other prizes were awarded to Travis Grimes of First Church Winnipeg, Man., where her husband, Conrad, was the organist. The judges also awarded a prize to the junior choir of Knox Church, Ottawa, Ont., under the direction of Lilian Forsyth.

The text of *At Last Has Dawned* by V. Isabel Jones, which was awarded first prize, is printed here. The tune the hymn was suggested to be sung to was *Sine Nomine* by R. Vaughan Williams (see hymn 611 of the Book of Praise). The hymn was also a suggestion for the worship planner that is available for use on the anniversary web page.

Visit [presbyterian.ca/150](http://presbyterian.ca/150) for listings of resources and events to mark the PCC’s 150th anniversary.

At Last Has Dawned...

At last has dawned this long-awaited year,  
When through our land exultant strains we hear,  
Uplifted voices, singing true and clear,  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

But not with human power alone were wrought  
The wonders which these hundred years have brought;  
God’s strength at all times was invoked and sought.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

At times of deepest suffering or loss,  
God in compassion helped us bear our cross,  
Our lives with His own image to emboss.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

As spring the earth with verdure new attired,  
When winter’s reign had yielded and retired,  
So faith, resurgent, flagging souls inspired.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

As voice and instrument together peal,  
An everlasting covenant let us seal,  
Till God His final purpose shall reveal.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!