


CANADIAN MENNONITE

May 25, 2020 Volume 24 Number 11



Open to us a door

pg. 4

INSIDE

- A year of spiritual friendship 19
- Delivering love, one meal at a time 20
- 'Let's go on an adventure!' 30

EDITORIAL

Our fathers

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Executive Editor



Mother's Day is past, and Pentecost and Father's Day are still ahead. In this in-between

time, I've been considering the ways in which we describe God. Humans long to know, to understand and to name God. But how can mortal imaginations grasp the Eternal One?

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Divine Presence manifests itself as a burning bush, a pillar of fire and a cloud of smoke. The New Testament indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit through vivid images: a dove, a gust of wind and a flame of fire.

Female images for God appear in scriptures, but it is only in recent years that Mennonite worship has included some of the divine characteristics traditionally associated with a mother: the creating, the womb-love, the birthing and the nourishing. Some of the newer hymns have expanded our insights into these vital aspects of the Holy One, and we are able to pray to God as a loving mother.

In much of Christianity, a frequent metaphor to describe God is as a father. This image appears throughout the Psalms, Proverbs and the Prophets, and Jesus used it often. For example, the term "father," referring to God, appears more than 30 times in the Gospel of Matthew and almost 100 times in the Gospel of John!

The story of the Prodigal Son (or the forgiving father) captures much of God's nature as a loving parent. (A devout friend of mine claims that if all we had

of scripture was this story, we could understand the entire message of salvation.) The willingness to let one's child make his own choices while absorbing the pain of separation, the patient waiting, the forgiveness, and the joy at restored relationships—all of these depict the best in an earthly father and offer key glimpses into our Heavenly Father.

For some of us, thinking of God as a father brings comfort, as we recall the loving influence of our own fathers. Yes, Dad was not perfect, but we remember his steady presence, his guidance, and his provision. But for others, thinking of God as a father brings discomfort, because they remember a father who was absent, either physically or emotionally, a father struggling with illness or addictions, or a father who wielded power in abusive ways. And there are those among us who long to be fathers but cannot have that life-changing experience. When we refer to the fatherly aspects of God, we must acknowledge these realities.

Years ago, while living in Nazareth, I encountered a striking icon of the Holy Family. They are outside the city, Mary walking alongside her husband. Joseph ably carries the child Jesus on his shoulders. In a painting in a church commemorating the earthly father of Jesus, Joseph stands with the young Jesus at a carpenter's bench, teaching him how to use the tools. A statue nearby shows Joseph standing behind his son, his hand gently resting upon the boy's shoulder.

What might this first-century father

teach the fathers of today? How might the church equip boys and men to live more fully into the high calling of fatherhood? I have seen school programs that help young boys learn how to hold babies and interact with them. In my congregation, young men teach faith formation classes for young children and youth, at the same time cultivating their own abilities to nurture and guide. I know of single fathers who, without a partner, struggle courageously to raise children and who receive advice and support from their community.

As Father's Day approaches, let's remember to support and affirm the fathers in our midst. How might that happen in your community?

Clarification

According to John Woolard, who lived, worked and watched birds in Botswana for many years, the bird pictured on page 22 of the March 16 issue is a cinnamon-chested bee-eater, and not a cinnamon-chested sunbird, as reported in "Cross-cultural challenges and blessings."

Correction

John H. Neufeld was president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College from 1984 to 1997. Incorrect information appeared in "Well rooted, well winged," April 13, page 6. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error. ❧



Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

ISSN 1480-042X

CONTENTS

MAY 25, 2020 / VOL. 24, NO. 11

ABOUT THE COVER:

'I wonder if God opens doors for us to be as present in our neighbourhoods as when we congregate in our buildings for worship,' muses Doug Klassen, MC Canada's executive minister, in our feature "Open to us a door" on page 4.

PHOTO: JANE GRUNAU / SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Bread in many forms 15

In the second of three articles on Mennonite Central Committee's centennial, the focus is on the organization today and how it has grown and changed over the past 100 years.

The 'sewists' of Waterloo Region 18

Nearly 500 people have been part of the "KW COVID-19 Sewn Medical Supplies" project, creating more than 1,200 homemade gowns, 1,500 scrub caps and 600 face masks for frontline health-care workers, reports **Janet Bauman**.

'You and me and our neighbours, together' 20

Garry Janzen, MC B.C.'s executive minister, introduces a new networking app to his condominium in Ladner to help residents stay connected during the pandemic.

To death's door and back 29

Vic Winter of Leamington, Ont., reflects on his six-week hospital stay after he was diagnosed with COVID-19 in early March, and his slow but steady recovery since returning home at the end of April.

Open to us a door 4

"The closing of church doors across the country in mid-March due to COVID-19 restrictions has scattered this body," writes **Doug Klassen**, MC Canada's executive minister. While this has restricted worship together, he sees opportunities for community ministry to arise from the ashes.



Regular features:

For discussion 7 Readers write 8 Milestones 9
A moment from yesterday 10 Classifieds 37
Online NOW! 38 Schools Directory 38-39

A column about plague columns

Brenda Tiessen-Wiens 10

Sunday morning on Zoom Christina Bartel Barkman 11

Too much news? Arli Klassen 12

Embrace the paradox Troy Watson 13

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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

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

Website: canadianmennonite.org

Facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite @CanMenno

Please send all material to be considered for publication to

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

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

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

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

Board Chair, Henry Krause, hakrause@telus.net, 604-888-3192

Canadian Mennonite Staff

Publisher, Tobi Thiessen, publisher@canadianmennonite.org

Executive Editor, Virginia A. Hostetler, editor@canadianmennonite.org

Managing Editor, Ross W. Muir, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Online Media Manager, Aaron Epp, onlinemgr@canadianmennonite.org

Editorial Assistant, Barb Draper, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Graphic Designer, Betty Avery, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Circulation/Finance, Lisa Jacky, office@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising Manager, D. Michael Hostetler, advert@canadianmennonite.org,
toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Senior Writer, Will Braun, seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org

B.C. Correspondent, Amy Rinner Waddell, bc@canadianmennonite.org

Alberta Correspondent, Joanne De Jong, ab@canadianmennonite.org

Saskatchewan Correspondent, Donna Schulz, sk@canadianmennonite.org

Manitoba Correspondent, Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, mb@canadianmennonite.org

Eastern Canada Correspondent, Janet Bauman, ec@canadianmennonite.org

One-Year Subscription Rates

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

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

Subscriptions/address changes

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

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

FEATURE

Open

'... that God will open to us a door
for the word, that we may declare the
mystery of Christ ...' (Colossians 4:3)

door

a

s

u

to

By Doug Klassen

Photos by Jane Grunau

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*



When *Hymnal: A Worship Book* came out in 1992, “What is This Place” was chosen to be the lead hymn in the collection. The first line describes the church building as “Only a house, the earth its floor, walls and a roof . . . , windows for light, an open door.” But when the people enter, “. . . it becomes a body that lives when we are gathered here”

The closing of church doors across the country in mid-March due to COVID-19 restrictions has scattered this body, causing a mad scramble as congregations across Mennonite Church Canada adapted their worship services to an online format:

- **Some offered live-streams.**
- **Others produced pre-recorded** worship services, with leaders standing at a distance from each other in empty sanctuaries.
- **Still others used** virtual-meeting platforms, like Zoom, to connect congregants for sharing and prayer.

While these efforts certainly do not replace face-to-face greetings from friendly ushers, the spirit-lifting sounds of joyful singing on all sides, or the collective sense of God’s Spirit in the

room, they make it possible for congregants to stay connected.

Yet I feel the need to reflect on this moment. I think it is significant. While this scramble to offer digital worship services is understandable, I believe COVID-19 has revealed how “worship-focused” western churches are at the expense of being missional communities. I knew this, but I had not seen it as starkly as I do now.

Most churches offer education, community and service within their body, but worship, by far, is the defining activity for most congregations. When people describe their church, they often talk about how they gather with others on a Sunday morning to sing, pray, read scripture and hear a good sermon. Given our rapid pace of life and the involvements congregants have, Sunday worship is one of the only times that congregations gather, which means only three to four days a month.

Now, with social isolation, how do we maintain our identity as the church when the door has closed on the main activity we do together? Will online worship soon start to feel like Skip the Dishes—the same food but not the same table experience? What does this moment reveal to us about how we practise community?

From Sunday-morning worship to missional community

The prison doors are closed on Paul while he writes his letter to the Colossians. In prison, he prays “*that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ . . . so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should*” (Colossians 4:3-4).

He was probably praying that the prison door in front of him would open, but, more so, he was praying for a new opportunity for the mystery of Christ to be revealed beyond the already gathered bodies of believers.

In late 1999 and early 2000, Robert J. (Jack) Suderman, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada’s Ministries Commission, wrote a series of six articles for *Canadian Mennonite* that encouraged a new understanding of mission for the Mennonite church. The “Re-imagine mission” series revealed how little we had been thinking about mission in Canada, that it was not our reflex to pray for a door to open for us to declare the mystery of Christ with neighbours and strangers.

I believe we have yet to fully embrace this understanding as core to who we are. I say this as one who pastored for 27 years. If still in congregational ministry during this pandemic, I would have been

(Continued on page 6)



(Continued from page 5)

the first to rush to prepare online worship for Sunday morning before leaving a note in the mailbox of the elderly widow three doors down to ask if she needed groceries or prescriptions; or contacting single parents at the end of the block who are now apartment-bound with their children, to ask if they have the devices and internet necessary for the kids to do online school work; or simply calling up others whom I know in the community to ask how they are doing.

I wonder today if our forced social isolation is the door I have been praying for. With no Sunday gatherings, the neighbours and strangers around us become our community. For many of us, this may be uncomfortable and frightening, but I believe reaching out to those in need around us can be a door for deeper conversations around meaning, purpose and belonging.

God did not cause the COVID-19 crisis, but God is able to transform even the most terrible circumstances into redemptive ones. Perhaps God is opening a door for us to reach people in ways that might previously have felt intrusive.

Throughout history, the Christian church flourished during times of epidemics and restrictions. Early Christians created community by

ministering to their immediate neighbours. These communities worshipped together, but the hallmarks of their identity were acts of love and charity to the lonely, vulnerable and suffering. Likewise, in the 20th century the church grew rapidly when church doors were closed in both Ethiopia and China.

Jeanette Hanson, director of International Witness for MC Canada, writes, “When the church buildings in China were completely closed in the early 1950s, Christians continued to care for one another, welcome new believers, and share their faith in their homes and communities. Bibles hidden in walls and gardens were carefully brought out with people that were trusted to understand the gift of the Scriptures. As churches began to reopen in the early 1980s, there was evidence of exponential growth, as believers came together to celebrate being able to worship openly again.”

If this pandemic is a “door for the word,” do we have the courage to walk through it? If we cross the threshold, it might change us in ways we don’t anticipate. It might be so altering that it changes our very idea of “congregation.”

Congregation to parish

“Congregation” is used in both the Old and New testaments, but it was

understood differently than we understand it now. In those times, “congregation” implied a gathering of people living together in one area. When people congregated, there was no commuting, no concept of choosing where to associate or with whom.

Today, particularly in urban settings, we drive past several churches to find a congregation that fits our desires, that has the people we want to meet with. The idea of being missional has not become a lived reality for many of our Eurocentric congregations. As long as we uphold our right to associate wherever and with whomever we want, seeing the local congregation as a mission outpost is nearly impossible, because most congregants live somewhere else. Could this time of restriction force us to rethink our modern understanding of congregation by association, and the congregation’s worship-focused identity?

I believe this is an opportunity for the church to rethink our use of the word “congregation.” In *Practices for the Refounding of God’s People: The Missional Challenge of the West*, the authors suggest that we need to abandon ideas of congregating by association and return to the word “parish.” Parish, a place where people dwell, means that we practise being God’s people together

among the people in our neighbourhood and community. It means tapping in to what God is already doing in each and every one of our neighbourhoods, in the lives and circumstances of the people who are both thriving and struggling in this time.

Realizing that my family and I would not be able to gather with our congregation for a sunrise service this past Easter, we held an Easter vigil in our backyard. Just before midnight, we began with the reading of John 20:1-18, lit a fire in our firepit and then read the Easter homily by St. John Chrysostom—an Easter sermon that resonates deeply with me.

When I posted pictures on social media the next day, several in the area commented or texted me, wanting to join us if we do it again next year. I wonder if there are others in the neighbourhood who have no experience of belonging to a faith community who would want to come. I wonder if God opens doors for us to be as present in our neighborhoods as we are when we congregate in our buildings for worship.

There are times when I am so overwhelmed by God's presence, mystery and goodness, that I can't find words to describe it. I know the gospel as good news. I want that for the neighbours and strangers who live around me as well.

In this time of social isolation, let us share our joys and struggles with our neighbours as much as we share them with our church communities across the city/countryside over Zoom. God opens the door, and God is already at work on the other side of the door, waiting for us to walk through it and join in declaring the mystery of Christ.

Maybe the door for the word that needs to be opened is the front door of my own house. ☯

Doug Klassen is executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada.

Jane Grunau sees doors not only as choices, but as ongoing stories as well, through the past and into the future, out of the place we are, through to the potential God envisions for us. She attends Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.



☯ For discussion

1. What programs or activities, other than Sunday morning worship, has your church put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic? Are there any that might not re-open when the crisis is over? What has your church been able to do for the local community in this time of isolation?
2. Doug Klassen says that “worship, by far, is the defining activity for most congregations,” and “Sunday worship is one of the only times that congregations gather.” Do you agree? How closely is our identity tied to weekly worship? How effective is online worship in holding us together?
3. Klassen suggests that this pandemic could be a door to change. Do you think our society could change in ways that would make sharing the message of Christ more instinctive? Is practical assistance to our nearby neighbours the best way to begin this conversation?
4. How geographically scattered is your congregation? What are the benefits and drawbacks of living in the vicinity of the church building? What are some ways your church could be a blessing to the local community?
5. How can we do a better job of nurturing a sense of community in our local neighbourhoods?

—By Barb Draper

See related Missional Church resources at www.commonword.ca/go/1490

CommonWord
Bookstore and Resource Centre

OPINION

/// Readers write

✉ CM writers are fitting followers of innovators in religious toleration

Re: “Out of holy weakness, mysterious power arises,” March 2, page 4, and “Making things right,” March 2, page 10.

These recent articles in *Canadian Mennonite* demonstrate the reality of commingling two viewpoints that appear completely different but are closely connected. The writers, Will Braun and Christina Bartel Barkman, drew me into their discussion, demonstrating that faith encourages variety and a desire to exist together within one community. They are fitting followers of 16th-century Anabaptists who were innovators in religious toleration.

Braun and his 15 pastoral consultants immediately discover the power of opposite words—“Out of holy weakness, mysterious power arises”—and a need for new words to explain the meaning of the cross and of resurrection.

One of the pastors, Cheryl Braun, discovered from older folks that she did not need to know all the answers to the biggest questions about Christianity simply for the purpose of needing to be right. Similarly, Karen Sheil summed up the benefits of diversity. When you actually go looking, you find there are a lot of different answers.

Diversity of reality and truth exists throughout society and culture, including among our children, as Bartel Barkman tells us. She gracefully expresses her disappointment and pride at her children’s varied behaviours.

Both writers were content to let questions of intolerance, judgment, paradoxes and multiple viewpoints remain safely unanswered. After all, they are the reality of free societies. Commingling of evil with good, and despair with hope, is present everywhere. The beauty of the intermingling reality is that there is no longer any need to judge others.

JOHN KLASSEN, VANCOUVER

The writer is emeritus history professor at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C.

✉ In search of a middle way

China, with a population of 1.4 billion people and with approximately 82,000 infections, was surprised by the novel coronavirus. It stopped the virus through state control, communism and restricted personal freedoms.

The United States, with 330 million people and

more than 160,000 infections (as of March 30), had plenty of advance notice. As a world model for free enterprise, capitalism, freedom and individualism, its rate of infection is increasing rapidly.

It used to be the U.S. that would send aid and doctors. Now it is China. There must be some middle way.

I am very thankful to be in Canada. With a few notable exceptions, there has been cooperation across borders, politics and ideologies. It is heart-warming to see this happen.

There is another large cloud not far away, one that does not respect borders, politics or ideologies. The climate is changing and, dear God, I hope we may flatten that curve, too.

Take care of people. Take care of truth, freedom and democracy. Create new ways.

RAY HAMM, NEUBERGTHAL, MAN.

✉ Pastor praised, criticized for open letter to governments

Re: “Care and change amid COVID-19,” April 13, page 15.

Great letter, and so true. After a flood, we help people rebuild, but not on the flood plain. Government support for people in this country should focus on the most vulnerable and not support those things that are leading to our ecological ruin.

SCOTT ALBRECHT, KITCHENER, ONT.
(FACEBOOK COMMENT)

David Driedger’s petition to the Canadian government under the mantle of jubilee is disingenuous. I wonder if it is little more than a misleading call for a socialist revolution: a proletarian levelling. Let’s look at some historical examples before we tackle the theological substance of his petition.

Shall we take the Russian Revolution of 1917 as an historical example, with its famines, gulags and secret police? How about the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia? Or how about Venezuela, where Nicolás Maduro famously remarked that “socialism is the kingdom of God on Earth”?

Calling on governments to use force to impose a “Kingdom of God jubilee” is perverse. If the Christ of the gospels is to be believed, then the levelling comes not through an imposed, enforced governmental action, but by the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

It was not Herod, that agent of Rome, who brought change, but Jesus and the bewildered followers who rose up, and, disdaining *imperium*, began to live life on Earth “in the Body of Christ.”

Let Driedger's congregation, or my congregation, be that which he calls for. For it is the justice of God that shall bring forth jubilee, not a gussied up Marxism with an imperial-Christian veneer.

WALTER BERGEN (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ **Two 'curves' to flatten**

Re: "Worship service this Sunday is cancelled" front cover photo, March 30.

I reacted with mixed emotion to this cover, but after reading the article I felt a little better because the worship service was not really cancelled but had gone virtual.

I've had occasion to voice my opinion, as a committee member, to secular social-service agencies concerning their organizational reaction to the current crisis. I've pointed out that governments and their funded agencies have adapted quickly and adeptly in terms of vertical communication (revised policies, physical distancing and other from-the-top edicts), but they have performed poorly when it comes to promoting horizontal communication (family to family, client to client). The experts tell us that this kind of peer support is the most important and helpful, especially during turbulent times. So there are two "curves" to flatten: the virus and the bureaucratic.

Churches are a lot like agencies, and they should do the same. Virtual messages are probably not as important as church members and friends talking to one another informally. We forget sometimes that the help from friend and neighbour is as important as the advice from a boss or pastor, especially in a crisis.

PETER DUECK, VANCOUVER

The writer is a member of Peace Church on 52nd in Vancouver.

✉ **Is Jesus our God?**

Re: "The power of paradox," April 27, page 12.

The doctrine of the divinity of Jesus has always been a contradiction for me. The word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible. But John 1:1 definitely appears to make a reference to the divinity of Jesus. But, as I studied John 1, I noticed that the gospel was written to solve a dispute between Jews believing in the law of Moses and Christians; more than 32 times John prefaces his comments with "the Jews."

A pious Jew would believe it to be the greatest affront to elevate a man to the level of Yahweh, but to the Greek culture the word "logos" encompassed the understanding of all things. The Gospel of John,

written in Greek, for a Greek culture, was at loggerheads with old-time religion.

To me, this is the paradox; the gods in our lives mean different things to different people. To have a god in our life could mean to be completely committed to a cause, idea or interest: a sport, political party, money, the Bible or religious denomination.

Maybe, if we unreservedly commit ourselves to the teachings of Jesus, then Jesus is our God.

FRANK HIEMSTRA, STRATFORD, ONT.

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

/// **Milestones**

Births/Adoptions

Falco—Clara Lynn Rose (b. April 23, 2020), to Moses and Jessica Falco, Sterling Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg.

Sebben—Violet Isabel (b. May 3, 2020), to Elysia and Robbie Sebben, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Deaths

Bartel—Siegmond, 83 (b. Aug. 24, 1936; d. March 30, 2020), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Bergen—Annita, 85 (b. Dec. 3, 1934; d. March 31, 2020), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Epp—Kathe (Krahn), 85 (b. Jan. 5, 1935; d. April 23, 2020), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Funk—Mary (nee Neufeld), 89 (b. Oct. 19, 1930; d. April 1, 2020), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Neufeld—Jakob, 93 (b. Feb. 8, 1927; d. April 28, 2020), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Rempel—Anne (Berg), 85 (b. Oct. 13, 1934; d. March 6, 2020), Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont.

Saunders—Anni (Bergen) (nee Thiessen), 96 (b. Jan. 19, 1924; d. March 29, 2020), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Sawatzky—Mary (nee Neufeld), 81 (b. Jan. 8, 1939; d. April 17, 2020), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

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

FROM OUR LEADERS

A column about plague columns

Brenda Tiessen-Wiens

If you've travelled in central or eastern Europe, you may have come across a plague column holding a prominent place in a town square. Plague columns were constructed in the 17th and 18th centuries as a display of public faith in the church and in God. At the time, the Catholic church was experiencing pressures on several fronts: from resurgences of the plague, from ongoing Ottoman invasions, and from continuing conflict resulting from the Protestant Reformation.

Plague columns were designed during the baroque era, so they're impossible to miss. They're meant to invoke awe. Soldiers and saints, angels and demons, intertwining clouds, harps, scrolls and cherubs draw your eye upward to the sky, and ultimately to God. The images can be shocking because they don't shy away from human pain. Images with distorted and agonized faces invoke a sense of reaching to God, or instil fear with their harsh depictions, turning the penitent to God. In contrast, serene images of saints arouse piety and

righteousness, but with the same purpose, to turn one to God.

Whether attracting to God's mercy or repelling from a horrible fate, plague columns are a reminder that the source of salvation is God. Their prominence makes me wonder what acknowledgment we'll make when the risks of this pandemic are over.

The negative impacts we're experiencing from COVID-19 range from minor inconveniences to paranoid purchasing habits, health concerns, plunging investments, job loss, separation from loved ones and, at its worst, death.

People have noted that during this time of disruption there can be positive outcomes as well, and that this can be a time for introspection. This can be a time to dig deep into who we are, so that we can discover what is essential to our faith, to our gatherings and to the communities that we live in. We have an opportunity for transformation as we turn to God to make sense of our experiences.

My own awakening came several weeks ago, when we lost a friend to COVID-19. As I thought about and prayed for my friend and for others who rely on ventilators, I became aware of my breath, and the breath of God, the breath of life in me.

I think that's when I started thinking about plague columns. Since they were built, the role of church and religion in society has changed, as have our expressions of faith, tolerances for diversity and responses to threats.

When this pandemic is over, there will not be a rush to build new religious structures that credit God's saving power. It's more likely that human effort will be praised. But, although our societies have changed and such public displays of faith are rare, the plague column still holds a message for us.

So if you ever find yourself in eastern Europe in the future, look for one. Let it evoke in you thanksgiving and celebration of God's presence and power to transform. Let it remind you of God's breath and the gift of life. ❧



Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, a member of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, is the moderator of Mennonite Church Alberta.

A moment from yesterday



J.J. Thiessen of Saskatoon served in many leadership roles at the congregational, provincial, national, and binational levels most of his adult life. He is quoted in *A Leader for his Times*: "What is the chief need of present day humanity? Depth! Truly, if anything increases from year to year, it is superficiality. . . . With deep concern many of us observe the development of superficiality as evidenced in the press, literature, the arts, education and in politics. While quality diminishes, quantity increases. The focus is on mass production and mass consumption. . . . But how then should we live? Depth is the fruit of a living relationship with Christ, through his Word, through prayer and through interaction with mature Christians."

Text: Conrad Stoesz
Photo: Mennonite Heritage Archives /
Conference of Mennonites in Canada Photo
Collection



THIRD WAY FAMILY

Sunday morning on Zoom

Christina Bartel Barkman

Church is about to start and the Zoom link doesn't work! For some reason it keeps sending me to a YouTube video of "Seek Ye First," and I can't find my church!

I quickly text my pastor husband, who not only leads the service and preaches every Sunday morning, but is also the lone manager of all things technical. And then I see the email with the new link. Of course, he already knows the link led everyone astray because he must have been sitting in a Zoom meeting all by himself, wondering where his congregation was.

We all seem to finally find our way to church and still have 10 minutes or so of "foyer time." While I hold the iPad, wiggly and unsteady due to hyper children grabbing at my arm, my eight-year-old flies his new Lego set across the screen. And then my two-year-old puts his face right up to the iPad so everyone can see his left eyebrow, and he waves an enthusiastic hello to all his friends. After my daughter yells "Hi, Daddy" over and over, and my toddler starts crying in the background, I notice my pastor husband, with one click, has muted the chaos of his kids. Other voices can now be heard. Smart move, Pastor!

Before the service starts, I send my

kids outside, hoping they'll be less inclined to crawl all over me. My two-and-a-half-year-old, having recently learned how to ride a bike, wants to show everyone his new skills. When I point the camera at my little guy, we hear many oohs and aahs and "Way to go!" and my toddler-biker beams. So does his mama.

Last year at this time, we were at Camp Squeah, and he had just learned how to rip around on his strider bike. While the live-on-camera viewing doesn't beat a weekend of biking with our church family at camp, I take the moment to thank God, sun shining on my face, kids running and biking up and down our quiet street, and our church family cheering us on.

Our experience of church and of community has been completely altered, but here we are on the street, sharing this toddler-in-diapers-learns-to-bike milestone together and being the church in a new, unexpected, messy yet beautiful way.

When the service starts, I sit down in my lawn chair, coffee in hand, and participate in the "call to worship" readings. After a song, the screen goes back live to my husband, and while he looks at us, lips moving, I wonder if

something happened to my speaker.

And then I see the uneasy looks in all the Zoom squares as they wonder the same thing. When someone finally tells our dear muted pastor that we can't hear him, he laughs and clicks something and we're back on!

During sharing time I hear stories of birthday visits with grandparents from their retirement home's third-floor balcony, the 40th birthday surprise parade for our friend, and the challenges and joys of homeschooling.

When the service comes to an end, we say goodbye to our friends who are in pyjamas, our friends who are sitting in their backyard, our friends who are in retirement homes, and our friends who are a block away yet feel a world away.

I put down the iPad and don't know what to feel. This is odd. It's community, it's beautiful, and it connects us, yet it is strange and not ideal. As I get used to this new normal, I grieve the real faces and the real touch, yet I'm also thankful for this very real community. ☺



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

Et cetera

MCC volunteers serve in Vietnam during the war



This 1975 photo shows, from left to right: Max Ediger, James Klassen, Earl Martin and Yoshihiro Ichikawa. These Mennonite Central Committee volunteers served in Vietnam during the war and remained even when Saigon fell.

Source: MCC / Photo courtesy of Earl Martin



 THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

Too much news?

Arli Klassen

These are days of information overload. There is so much news to follow! Local, regional, national, international, from this part of the country and from that part of the world.

It is hard to cope with how much news there is, and with how overwhelming it feels. News stories with an emotional catch lead me to tears, regularly and often. Some days I discipline myself to only read the news morning and evening. Other days I keep checking my news apps all day long. Occasionally I get caught up in some kind of engaging activity at home, and I forget about the news completely.

My work with Mennonite World Conference (MWC) means that I want to pay attention to the impact of the lockdowns in India, the election violence in Malawi and the politics in Brazil. We have Anabaptist church members in each of these countries, and the news matters.

But it is a big world! MWC has member churches in 58 countries around the world. I walk alongside a network of MWC regional representatives who live in 12 different countries. I communicate by email with the leaders of all 107 national member churches. I want to know what is happening in each

of their contexts in order to communicate effectively, and provide support and encouragement relevant to their contexts.

But it is overwhelming. Sometimes our world is just too big. Sometimes just our country is too big! There is too much to pay attention to, with the context being different everywhere. There is COVID-19 everywhere. Its impact on communities and countries that have far fewer resources than I do is unimaginably scary. I know just enough to know about inadequate health-care systems, population density and the struggle for daily sustenance.

But I believe God expects us to care about the church beyond our local congregation. I believe God has given us diversity as a gift. Our understanding of God within our own cultural and congregational context is too small. We can only begin to understand the depth and breadth of the love of God when we see God at work in communities very different from our own. We need our local congregation for nurture and challenge. We need the church beyond our local congregation for nurture and challenge, for spiritual growth. Regional church. National church. Church around the world.

These are my tools for coping with a whole world of news, and connecting in meaningful ways with church leaders across the street and around the world:

- **I choose to** read/follow news sources that include tidbits of news from every continent and across Canada every day.
- **I intentionally use** social media to connect in a more personal way with church people far from my own community.
- **I visualize the** people I am connecting with, in their own context, in every email and message I send to them.

I can't pray as I would like, by name, for all the people and places that I connect with around the world. Instead, I use my daily news, my social media connections, and my emails to pause for a moment here and there, to simply "hold up" to God that place or that person. This prayer practice slows me down, and encourages me to give my fears and anxieties to God. I like the practice of visualizing people being held by God.

I need more discipline and more practice as I read the news and I pray. These pandemic days give me plenty of opportunity! ✎



Arli Klassen (klassenarli@gmail.com) is a member of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., and loves to hold the local and the global as close together as possible.

Et cetera

Project Ploughshares issues COVID-19 warning

A joint civil-society statement released in May by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and more than 100 other organizations called upon governments to respect human rights when using digital surveillance technologies to eradicate COVID-19. More than 300 Canadian groups endorsed various guiding principles to ensure that the Canadian government's response to the pandemic fully respects human rights, including in relation to tracking and surveillance measures. The American Civil Liberties Union issued a set of recommended policies "against overreach and abuse" of the smartphone application announced by Apple and Google. The pandemic has caused the suspension of many aspects of daily life and has silenced large segments of the global economy, but the rule of law and human rights must not be allowed to become victims, write Branka Marijan, a senior researcher, and Cesar Jaramillo, executive director of Project Ploughshares.

Source: thestar.com (posted April 23) / Photo by Alejandro Pena (public domain)



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Embrace the paradox

Troy Watson

In 1993, my friend Myron Penner introduced me to Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. I haven't been the same since.

Kierkegaard enlightened me to the power of paradox. At that time I was ready to walk away from Christianity. It had been a long time coming. Then Kierkegaard breathed life into the dry bones of my theology. He did it by immersing me into the waters of existentialism, absurdism and paradox.

This gave me a new lens to see reality with, and Christianity started to resonate with me again. It started to make sense by not making sense. Kind of like quantum mechanics. As theoretical physicist Werner Heisenberg said, "The universe is not only stranger than we think, it's stranger than we can think."

Consider the origin of existence. Either something came from nothing—or something, in some form, always existed. Both explanations are absurd. Much of life and reality is absurd, and so too must our understanding of it be.

Clarifying what Kierkegaard meant by the absurd is beyond the scope of a one-page column, but, in short, his notion of the absurd is that which reason has no power over, that which reason cannot comprehend nor disregard as vulgar nonsense. The absurd is a riddle, a mystery, a paradox that moves us into the realm of faith where, by faith, it ceases to be absurd.

Since my exposure to Kierkegaard, I see life through the lens of paradox. I also see the power of paradox as key to maintaining a meaningful biblical faith. (In my previous column—"The power of paradox," April 27, page 12—I defined the power of paradox as holding two or more seemingly incompatible truths as simultaneously and equally true. When we do this, a deeper hidden truth is revealed.)

For example, let's examine the paradox of grace and judgment in Christianity.

The grace side of this paradox is that there is nothing we can do to deserve God's grace. God's grace, forgiveness and mercy are freely and fully given; they cannot be earned.

The other side of this paradox is God's judgment. According to the Bible, we will be held accountable for every word and deed. We will be judged according

**'The universe is not only stranger than we think, it's stranger than we can think.'
(Theoretical physicist Werner Heisenberg)**

to the perfect will of God and by how we treat others. We will reap what we sow.

These two truths are incompatible. A paradox. And our dualistic minds instinctively try to solve the paradox. My childhood church solved this paradox with what I call "the sinner's prayer loophole." The loophole proposes that we are no longer held accountable for our sins and judged by God if we confess and accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. When we do this, we are covered in the blood of Jesus, which protects us from God's judgment. Jesus' blood serves as a sort of cloaking device that hides our sins so we're no longer judged for them.

There are a number of problems with this loophole. First, if there's nothing humans can do to earn God's grace, mercy and forgiveness, that means confessing and believing can't either—because confessing sin is "doing" something. Accepting Jesus as your Saviour is "doing" something. Believing Jesus died on the cross for our sins is "doing" something.

This makes God's unconditional love conditional upon our acts of belief and confession. It makes God's unearnable grace dependent on us "earning" it by jumping through certain hoops. Sure, confessing and believing are easier hoops to jump through than perfection, but they're still hoops.

Even more problematic is that this loophole is incompatible with Jesus' teachings (Matthew 6:14-15, 7:1-2, 7:16-27 for starters). Jesus clearly states

that only those who forgive others will be forgiven by God. I think it's reckless, and wrong, to assume what Jesus really meant was, "If you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins, unless you accept me as your personal Lord and Saviour. Then everything's good."

The paradox of grace and judgment cannot be resolved. It can only be embraced as paradox, by holding two incompatible truths as equally true. The absurdity of this paradox invites us into deeper waters of faith, where the paradox ceases to be absurd, where a hidden truth is revealed, bringing deeper meaning to our lives, a truth that tends to transform us rather than provide us with answers that are easy to articulate.

Embrace paradox and let it do its thing. ☯



Troy Watson (troydw@gmail.com) is letting the absurdity of life move him deeper into faith.

VIEWPOINT

Web of connections

Jeanette Hanson

In these days of pandemic responses, we are continually reminded by public health officials that our individual actions affect our neighbours and that we are responsible for protecting those around us. We are connected.

This reminds me of the web of connections I witnessed during my ministry with Mennonite Partners in China (MPC).

Over the years that our family lived in China, we had many lessons on the importance of the *Guanxi Wang* (literally translated as “web of connections”). This is a network of relationships one builds in order to get things done and to maintain a strong and stable life. It extends into many areas; good relationships with everyone from gate guards to university presidents help make life easier. When people feel connected to you, they are incredibly generous and helpful. There is a community spirit within these webs that looks out for others. I was fascinated to watch these webs of connection come together to help meet the needs of others.

I witnessed this web in the city of Dazhou, Sichuan, where various groups and agencies, including the church, met the needs of children with physical challenges in rural communities.

During this time, I worked with Pastor Duan, who is an expert in this kind of relationship building. She is the senior pastor of the church in Dazhou, near where we lived.

One evening, Pastor Duan invited several people from different agencies, including me, to a banquet. The banquet setting is the meeting table for people from all walks of life in China. It also signals the beginning of relationship building. It is understood that the relationships around the table must be acknowledged and established first, before people can work together.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEANETTE HANSON

One evening, Pastor Duan invited several people from different agencies, including Jeanette Hanson, to a banquet.

Seven people crowded around the round table laden with food. Mr. Liu was there as director of the Dazhou Speech Therapy Kindergarten. MPC supported students in his school who came from impoverished rural families. Mr. Tang was from the teachers college in Dazhou, where MPC provides foreign teachers. Pastor Duan served on a government committee regarding health-care services with Mr. Liu, Mr. Tang, and Ms. Shi (a government official with whom I had no connection) because of the church-run clinic her congregation began in downtown Dazhou. Mr. Wang and Mr. Zhang of the Religious Affairs Bureau worked with Pastor Duan and me to find financial support to build a meeting space for a small rural congregation. Each of us connected with someone around the table, in some way.

Soon a new connection began to form as Pastor Duan talked about the summer English classes MPC teachers planned to teach in the Dazhou church that summer. Everyone around the table wanted their children to participate. I was amazed at the web of connections around the table.

Then, motioning to me, Ms. Shi asked Pastor Duan: “But how did you bring

this foreign teacher here?” Her tone implied that the church was too poor and backward to have connections to foreign teachers.

“Oh, that’s an easy one,” Pastor Duan replied with a smile. “We have the same Father!”

She explained that the Body of Christ draws people from diverse places together. In some strange way, connected as they are to many other “webs,” this web made perfect sense to these Chinese government officials.

At this time, Mennonite Church Canada International Witness continues to uphold and build new webs of connection around the world:

- **The books on Anabaptist teaching** that South Korea Witness worker Bock Ki Kim has translated from English to Korean are now strengthening the Korean Chinese Christians in mainland China, who are excited about exploring this fresh expression of their faith.
- **Pastor Nhien Pham** of Vancouver is training new church leaders in Vietnam, who send trainers to minister in Cambodia.
- **Believers in Springridge, Alta.**, are praying for protection from the violence threatening their brothers and sisters in Burkina Faso.
- **The commitment of Colombian Mennonites** to work for peace and justice in difficult circumstances is inspiring believers in Abbotsford, B.C., to be more faithful in their walk of following Jesus in the way of peace.

These are examples of lives changed by crossing borders of culture, language and political boundaries. As we see viruses crossing borders and changing lives so easily, may we also see signs of the Spirit of God crossing those borders, spinning webs and making changes that are just as profound. ✎

Jeanette Hanson is director of International Witness for MC Canada. She can be reached at jhanson@mennonitechurch.ca. Donations to International Witness can be made online at mennonitechurch.ca/giving.

Bread in many forms

Chapter 2: Mennonite Central Committee today

By Vurayayi Pugini
Mennonite Central Committee

A century ago, bread was the beginning of the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Relief kitchens in Ukraine (then southern Russia) fed families who had been displaced and were starving. Neighbours from around the world provided loaves of wholesome dark bread.

Now a century later, MCC still works to meet the needs of people who are hungry and sometimes cannot afford even one meal a day. Whereas, 100 years ago you would find bread, today you might see

refugees in Lebanon, where MCC and its local partners are providing vouchers that can be redeemed for food in shops. When people receive vouchers rather than food packages, they can choose what works best for them, providing dignity and a small sense of normalcy.

However, inside Syria MCC partners are providing packages of food that include items such as pasta, cooking oil and chickpeas. In the midst of conflict, sometimes food just isn't available, or it isn't safe to go out to shop. MCC partners are able to

important, provides accountability to local communities. The evaluation process allows people to provide feedback on what takes place in their community. It is also an opportunity for people to see results and celebrate what was achieved together.

Of course, evaluation also helps MCC to learn and improve when a project doesn't go as expected. In one agriculture project in Zimbabwe, smallholder farmers were struggling with a pest: the maize stalk borer. The project was set up to help farmers mix corn with a new kind of grass called desmodium to help repel the pests.

This worked well for those farmers, but MCC learned the pests had been forced into neighbouring fields, eating those crops instead. So the plan was adapted to include a special sticky grass, called napier grass, planted around the edge of the plots. When a stem borer moth lands on the grass, it can't move and gets trapped.

Thanks to monitoring, the project now reduces pests using a system that is affordable, accessible and easy to replicate, while maintaining relationships between neighbours. This pest control practice is now being applied in other projects across sub-Saharan Africa.

Gender dynamics

Over the years, MCC has increasingly recognized the need to understand gender dynamics, and how women and men access and control resources. When considering the impact of gender dynamics before distributing resources, it can challenge systemic inequalities and build efficient and equitable solutions.

For example, during a relief project in the refugee camps of Shasha and Mubimbi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MCC did a gender analysis before deciding what food to include. Corn is an important resource, and women are



MCC PHOTO BY EMILY LOEWEN

Sami and Amina (whose names have been withheld for security reasons) receive monthly food packages from MCC. There are seven members of the family, four children. They live in this rented home in Breike, in the Qalamoun region of Syria. Their family lived in Aleppo and owned a chain of bakeries before the conflict.

rice, beans, cooking oil or even a paper voucher. While MCC's mission is more important than ever, its work has adapted, with increased focus on different forms of relief for different contexts, more robust program monitoring and even gender analysis.

Local innovation

The war in Syria has now entered its ninth year, having displaced millions of people. There are more than 1.5 million Syrian

secure food locally in bulk, which helps strengthen the local economy and provide foods that people are used to eating. There isn't one right way to offer relief. It is important to understand the context and choose the right method.

Monitoring and evaluation

Over a century of work, MCC has also increased its focus on monitoring and evaluation. Program monitoring provides accountability to donors and, equally



Journey

A Missional Leadership Development Program

Cultivate your spiritual formation.

Nurture your leadership abilities.

Deepen your theological perspectives.

Available online.
Register by Aug. 11
ams.edu/journey



Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth

allows young people (grades 10 to 12) to engage their faith questions, develop their passion for ministry and test their leadership gifts.

The program includes:

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

FIND OUT MORE:
Visit ams.ca/explore



MCC PHOTO BY MATTHEW LESTER

In the Mubimbi camp in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nsimire Mugoli and her husband, Chubaka Birhonoka, cook beans and porridge made with ingredients from their emergency food distribution in early February 2020.

usually responsible for preparing it as a thick porridge. But since the camps didn't have grinding mills, MCC realized that if it provided whole corn, the women and girls would have to walk through a forest, 10 to 15 kilometres each way, to find a mill in a nearby community where the corn could be ground.

The journey could expose women and girls to warring parties and sexual exploitation. Or their food could be stolen along the way. The trip would also be physically tiring, and the increased pressure on the mill could lead to conflict between the host community and the refugees.

Hearing that feedback from the community during the gender analysis, MCC decided to provide ground corn meal for the first two months of the project, and then supply a grinding mill that would be co-owned and operated by the refugee and host community groups.

This reduced the burden and risk for

women and girls, while also strengthening relationships between the host and refugee communities, because people in the surrounding area could also use the new mill. It also minimized the harm that could have come from the good intentions of relief work.

One hundred years have given MCC countless opportunities to learn and improve. In these uncertain times, the core work of MCC is more important than ever. And the MCC of today is constantly evaluating and learning to serve in the best way it can.

MCC is thankful for the support of faithful givers that allows it to continue to provide bread, in all its forms, in the name of Christ. ✎

Vurayayi Pugeni is MCC's area director for Southern Africa, together with his spouse, Thelma Sadzamari.

100 YEARS |  MCC

CANADIAN
MENNONITE
Connecting communities in challenging times

Dear MCC friends and supporters,

These are difficult and unprecedented times. I hope you know that you and your families are in our prayers.

MCC is 100 years old and this time reminds me of our beginnings a century ago, when a hurting community reached out for help, and faithful and generous people responded. Remembering that story of generosity and faithfulness, I know that MCC will continue to offer hope and reconciliation today.

MCC is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain committed to sharing God's love and compassion with all in the name of Christ. As a ministry of Anabaptist churches, our work continues around the world. We are scaling up and adapting programs to protect uprooted and displaced people who are especially vulnerable in times like this.

This is only possible because of the generous support from people like you. We are deeply grateful. Thank you.

Yours in Christ,


RICK COBER BAUMAN
MCC CANADA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



P.S. To help stay connected, we've launched a new podcast: *Relief, Development and Podcast*. Check it out wherever you listen to podcasts or visit mcccanada.ca/relief-development-podcast.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



#COVIDKINDNESS

The ‘sewists’ of Waterloo Region

Community effort yields hundreds of gowns for frontline workers

By Janet Bauman

Eastern Canada Correspondent

When Bev Suderman-Gladwell was asked by a physician friend to “leverage her Mennonite connections,” to respond to a time-sensitive need, she had no way of knowing an “extraordinary project” would grow out of that request.

Just over a month later, “sewists” (sewing+artists) from across Waterloo Region, Ont., have sewn more than 1,200 homemade gowns, 1,500 scrub caps and 600 face masks for local frontline health-care providers. They are working on another batch of 200 gowns destined for frontline workers at the House of Friendship’s men’s

shelter, currently operating out of a local hotel to make physical distancing possible. There is no clear end in sight. The requests just keep coming.

Suderman-Gladwell says it has been an “amazing inter-church, inter-faith, community effort.” But she notes that theirs is only “one group doing one corner of this,” citing many other local, provincial and national efforts to sew supplies for health-care workers.

It all started when Suderman-Gladwell’s physician friend, Sophie Wilson, identified the need for homemade, personal

protective equipment for frontline health-care providers, as a stop-gap, emergency measure while industry ramped up production of these types of products.

Suderman-Gladwell, who attends Waterloo North Mennonite Church in Waterloo, Ont., tapped into her network of connections and emailed Mennonite churches to solicit volunteer sewists. It grew from there, spreading to social media. People from all over the region were eager to help.

So many people picked up the ready-to-sew kits on the first day that supplies ran out. The second day, people—following physical-distancing protocols—lined up around a local church in the pouring rain to pick up the next batch of kits.

Volunteers began sewing gowns meant for frontline health-care providers in doctor’s offices, homeless shelters, food banks, medical clinics and midwifery practices, but they soon branched out to also make scrub caps and facemasks. The gowns have adjustable ties, and are washable and reusable. Patterns are provided. Fabric can be pre-cut to make it easier for the sewists.

Requests for the gowns, caps and masks come in from a local physician’s group that Wilson is part of, which also takes care of distributing the finished products.

As one of six organizers, Suderman-Gladwell has seen first-hand the “power of groups.” More than 470 people have connected to the sewing project through a Facebook page, called KW COVID-19 Sewn Medical Supplies. People mobilized groups of sewists in their churches—conservative Mennonite, Unitarian, Church of Latter Day Saints and others—requesting more fabric and patterns than what the organizers could provide at the beginning.

A local quilt shop owner used her



PHOTO BY ANDREA DEERING NAGY

Bev Suderman-Gladwell, right, and her son Nathan model some of the gowns sewed for frontline workers by a group of volunteers in Waterloo Region, Ont. The group has also added scrub caps and masks to the lists of supplies its members are sewing.

Suderman-Gladwell sees incidents like this as ‘providential.’ She says, ‘I choose to see the leading of God.’

contacts to source appropriate fabric. Other retailers donated fabric and notions, like elastic and fasteners, or offered them at discount prices. People donated money. Some offered to pick up and drop off supplies and finished products.

One sewist knew of an athletic wear firm that was going out of business in a nearby town. A cold call to the owner led to a generous donation. He gave them his remaining stock of fabric—enough for 400 gowns.

Suderman-Gladwell sees incidents like this as “providential.” She says, “I choose to see the leading of God.”

Although she admits she doesn’t even like sewing, Suderman-Gladwell sees her role in helping to organize this effort as a way of “putting my faith into action.”

She calls the organizing committee and the sewists amazing people. The whole thing has given her “a sense of purpose,” helping out a sector close to her heart. She recently retired after serving for more than 16 years as a chaplain at Parkwood Seniors Community in Waterloo and knows firsthand the needs of frontline caregivers.

But she acknowledges a mix of feelings as she reflects on what it has been like to be part of such an effort. “Look what we have done . . . from the ground up,” she says, celebrating the effort of so many volunteers.

While she is humbled and deeply grateful for the community effort, she also names “incredible frustration” that six weeks into the pandemic frontline workers are still relying on homemade personal protective equipment. Her heart breaks every time she hears of requests for more gowns, especially in the hard-hit long-term-care sector. ❧

To connect to the group, visit bit.ly/kwccovid-med-supplies.



A year of spiritual friendship

Church tries new approach to building relationships

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

Borrowing the concept of “speed dating,” one Mennonite congregation in Vancouver started a friendship initiative to help its own members get better acquainted.

The leadership team of Chinatown Peace Church agreed several months ago that the church family was not doing well at intentional discipleship. So the team members wondered, “What if we paired people up and provided some content, and said, ‘Just meet together, get to know each other, ask some relationship-building questions, read some Scripture together, talk about discipleship, and pray together?’”

They discerned the spiritual-friendship initiative through a daylong meeting.

“We spent time talking about what healthy discipleship might look like in our context,” says Tim Kuepfer, the English congregation pastor. “We prayed together, ate together, did relationship-building activities together, and tried to listen to one another and the Spirit in the words of each other.”

The church started its year of spiritual friendship at the beginning of this year, just before physical distancing became the new reality.

“One of the big questions for us was whether we should connect the same two people as spiritual friends for the whole year,” says Kuepfer. “But what if they were really awkward together? Or whether we should switch friends up regularly, even if



PHOTO COURTESY OF
CHINATOWN PEACE CHURCH

Using the speed-dating concept, Chinatown Peace Church’s pre-COVID-19 kickoff to its spiritual friendship program was a hit. The congregation hopes to foster deeper friendships through one-on-one mentoring.

that meant less depth in the relationship. We landed on switching up for the first half of the year each month, and then we’re planning to keep friends together for the last six months [July through December].

“Because of our decision to have friends switch up regularly for the first half, we decided to have fun with the idea by really switching up quickly . . . every five to 10 minutes or so with a speed-dating evening. That’s where that reference comes from.”

Church members hope to resume more personal visits once the COVID-19 pandemic is over, with the goal of building closer connections to God through closer friendships with one another. ❧

**‘One of the big questions for us was whether we should connect the same two people as spiritual friends for the whole year.’
(Pastor Tim Kuepfer)**

'You and me and our neighbours, together'

App provides connection

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

Garry Janzen and his wife Diane, who live in a condominium in Ladner, B.C., have found a new way to relate to those around them during the current pandemic: the Nextdoor.ca app.

Janzen, executive minister of Mennonite Church British Columbia, heard about the app from Adam Back, pastor of Peace Church on 52nd in Vancouver, in late April. Back was connecting through Nextdoor with his neighbourhood, and Janzen thought it was a good idea for his own neighbourhood. He emailed a couple of fellow owners in his condo, who had previously set up some social engagements, and they agreed the app could be a great way to be in touch with their condo neighbours, especially in this time of physical distancing.

"I joined Nextdoor in my city, and then I created a group for my condo complex

of 58 units," says Janzen. "One of these neighbours whom I had contacted had a list of 10 email addresses from her previous social connections. I invited these 10 neighbours by email to join the Nextdoor app. I put up a poster on our condo bulletin board, inviting people to send me their email address, so that I could invite them to the app."

There are now seven in the Ladner condo group.

"I send out occasional notes to see how they are doing and ask if they know how their neighbours are doing," Janzen says. "Just today one of our group offered homemade masks that she is making. Hopefully we get more sign-ups and neighbours sharing posts."

Janzen says that his goal is to "encourage our condo to be a strong neighbourhood that cares for each other. The Nextdoor



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARRY JANZEN

Garry Janzen, executive minister of MC B.C., keeps in touch with members of his condo complex through the Nextdoor.ca app.

app is designed to help neighbours check in with each other and help each other out. . . . Nextdoor is simply you and me and our neighbours, together."

The Nextdoor website (ca.nextdoor.com) describes the organization as "the neighborhood hub for trusted connections and the exchange of helpful information, goods and services. We believe that by bringing neighbours together, we can cultivate a kinder world where everyone has a neighborhood they can rely on." ❧

Delivering love, one meal at a time

Youth Farm Bible Camp invites supporters to purchase meals for others

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Sometimes loving one's neighbour means sharing a meal together. But what if physical distancing means that neighbours can't sit at the same table?

Love Thy Neighbour is a new initiative of the Youth Farm Bible Camp that invites local residents to purchase a meal for another family.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began,

the camp, located in Rosthern, has been offering weekly grocery sales as a way of raising funds and keeping its year-round staff employed. In addition to about 60 grocery items, the camp sells one hot meal each week.

Near the end of April, the camp began using social media to encourage people to purchase meals for another household



PHOTO COURTESY OF
YOUTH FARM BIBLE CAMP

Gustavo Araujo rolls out dough for cinnamon rolls at Youth Farm Bible Camp.

as a way of showing love and support. The menu rotation includes roast turkey, pulled pork and barbecued chicken. Side dishes are included. For dessert, fresh

cinnamon rolls are available for an extra charge.

During the first week of its initiative, the camp delivered 12 meals. Executive director Mark Wurtz says Youth Farm is still just getting the word out but adds, “Twelve meals a week would be huge.”

Wurtz sees the meal program as an opportunity to practise reconciliation.

“I gave a meal to someone I was having

a hard time forgiving,” he says. “When you give a meal to someone like that, that relationship gets restored a little bit.” He adds that loving someone in this way “changes your relationship with that person,” because “your heart changes toward that person.”

Wurtz says the meals can be given anonymously but adds, “It’s even more powerful if they know who it’s coming

from.”

Meals can be purchased online and are delivered to homes in Rosthern, Hague and Neuanlage, Sask., on Thursday afternoons. The camp charges a \$5 delivery fee for meals ordered for personal consumption, but gift meals are delivered free of charge, along with a note encouraging recipients to consider giving a meal to someone else if they are able. ☘

Moving with the times

Seniors exercise group goes virtual during COVID-19

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Three times a week, Arnie Nickel leads a 45-minute exercise session for seniors on Zoom, a virtual-meeting app. Participants are enthusiastic and their numbers are growing.

It all began eight or nine years ago, when a small group of seniors at Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon started an exercise group under the Saskatoon-based Forever . . . in Motion program for older adults.

When COVID-19 brought an abrupt end to their regular exercise sessions in March, June Giles’s husband Howard invited participants to an online coffee hour using Zoom as their platform.

Nickel is one of several trained exercise leaders in the group. When he and his wife Lorene participated in one of the virtual coffee hours, group members suggested that he should resume leading exercises online. He was willing, so the virtual exercise sessions began with him as sole leader.

“I haven’t changed it at all,” he says. “I run a 45-minute program as I always have, concentrating on stretching, muscle strength and balance. We do a lot of on-the-spot activity.”

Participants are all over 65 years of age, and some are in their 90s. Most were regular participants before the pandemic, but newcomers have joined, including some friends or relatives from British Columbia and Ontario.



After their exercise session, seniors remain online to visit.

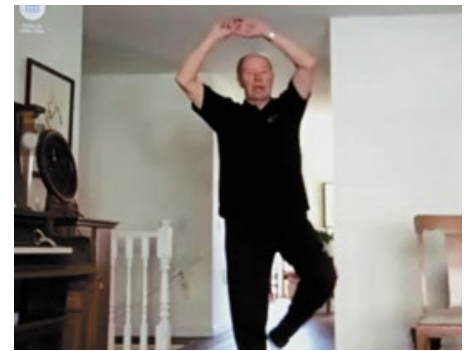
Nickel says that when the group started, 75 percent of participants belonged to the Nutana Park congregation, with the remaining quarter coming from the neighbouring community. Now the numbers are reversed. Only about 25 percent of participants are part of the host congregation, while three-quarters of them live in the community.

Attendance on Zoom “has grown beyond anything we could have imagined,” says Giles. Starting with about 20 participants, the group has grown to average 60.

“The people really want it, and it’s so good for them,” says Nickel, a retired physician.

Many participants are widows living alone. Nickel says that he cautions everyone to exercise with care and always within the limits of their abilities. A fall that could land them in hospital would be devastating.

He also recognizes that regular exercise



SCREENSHOTS BY HOWARD GILES

Arnie Nickel leads a 45-minute exercise session for seniors on Zoom.

is good for him personally. In fact, watching himself lead the exercises on Zoom has helped Nickel improve his own balance.

“You have to [exercise] often if you don’t want aging to catch up with you,” says Giles. “Doing it alone in your basement is just not motivating. You tend to put exercise off. But this great group is enough to even motivate me to work at it.”

While some people are just there for the exercise, others, especially those who live alone, appreciate the virtual coffee time and visiting that follows.

“It’s a very strong social group,” says Nickel. The visiting “is really helpful for them.”

Women have always outnumbered men in the group, but an unexpected benefit to exercising online has been that a number of spouses of female participants have been exercising along with their wives.

“It will be interesting to see if they will come to church once the social distancing is over,” says Giles.

The group meets every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10 a.m. Participation is free of charge. ☘

COVID-19 impact on world hunger cause for high concern

Most vulnerable communities at risk, UN warns numbers could double

By Shaylyn McMahon
Canadian Foodgrains Bank

The number of people facing crisis levels of hunger in the world could double due to COVID-19, the World Food Programme (WFP) warns.

The WFP is estimating 265 million people could experience acute hunger and food insecurity due to lockdowns and

faced acute levels of food insecurity before the pandemic.

“We’re talking about families that need urgent and immediate food assistance, families that are missing meals or even going without food for days unless assistance is provided,” says Jim Cornelius,

executive director of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. “The lockdowns and economic crises are adding millions of families to these numbers. It’s extremely concerning to hear that COVID-19 could double the number.”

“We are hearing reports from our partners and reading many news reports confirming that more and more families are losing their jobs and livelihoods and need immediate help, or they will not have enough food for their family,” he says. “Many people in developing countries live day-to-day, so even a short-term loss of income can lead to severe hunger. The huge economic slowdown around the world is throwing millions of families into a food crisis.”

Just as Canada has deemed grocery stores and the expansion of

service and is working with its members and partners to keep these programs going at this critical time.

“For the most part, our members and their partners have been able to continue providing emergency food assistance for refugees and families already experiencing crisis levels of food insecurity,” Cornelius says. “They have quickly adapted their programs to protect beneficiaries and staff from contracting COVID-19 and to meet the requirements of local health authorities.”

The Foodgrains Bank is also approving funding to renew existing programs and start new ones. In the first two weeks of April, the organization approved \$10 million for vital food assistance programs in Syria, Lebanon and South Sudan.

“In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to provide desperately needed food to help meet the immediate food needs of so many,” says Cornelius.

“At the same time, we are also working with our members and partners to sustain long-term development programs that are designed to address underlying causes of chronic, ongoing hunger,” he says. “While many of these programs have been disrupted and some activities delayed or suspended, we are working to ensure partners are able to continue providing support to the extent possible and can quickly re-establish all their program activities once they are able.”

Canadians who want to respond to global hunger needs amid COVID-19 can visit foodgrainsbank.ca.



MERATH LEBANON PHOTO

In Lebanon, where Foodgrains Bank member World Renew is working with Syrian refugees, personal protective equipment and hygiene kits were distributed to local church partners so they can stay safe as they distribute food to families in need.

economic slowdowns related to COVID-19. According to a recent international report, an estimated 135 million already

social safety nets as essential services, the Foodgrains Bank sees its international food assistance programs as an essential



Chaplain-turned-pianist brightens personal-care home

By John Longhurst
Winnipeg

According to Dr. Bill Thomas, an expert in aging, the three greatest “plagues” facing residents of nursing homes are loneliness, boredom and helplessness—all things unfortunately exacerbated by the current plague of COVID-19.

At Donwood Manor, a personal-care home in Winnipeg, that’s where chaplain Lisa Enns, a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church, comes in.

Enns, who normally runs a mix of chapel services, Bible studies, Sunday morning services and other activities to keep the home’s 121 residents active and engaged, had to pivot quickly when the facility went into lockdown in mid-March.

“It all happened so fast,” says Enns of how overnight she had to cancel all the programs. “There’s none of that now.”

Now she mostly does one-on-one visits, and also helps residents keep in touch with their families by phone or video.

For those who have trouble communicating with family, “it can be something as simple as ‘I just saw your mother, she is smiling and doing well,’” Enns says.

The quick change in routines and practices have left many in the facility scared and anxious, especially those with dementia.

“Not everyone understands why they can’t have visitors,” she says. “They are so missing visits with their family members.”

Residents are also hearing on the news how dangerous things are because of the novel coronavirus, which only adds to the anxiety. At the same time, staff are feeling the stress and everyone is tired.

One new way she is trying to lift spirits is by playing piano—something she never thought she’d be doing as a spiritual-care provider. “It’s a lot of fun,” she says of how she plays hymns while residents listen and sing along from the doorways of their rooms.

The staff also enjoy hearing the music. “It gives a little glimpse of normalcy, of joy,”



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA ENNS

Lisa Enns, a chaplain at Winnipeg’s Donwood Manor, had to pivot quickly when the facility went into lockdown in mid-March because of COVID-19.

she says, adding, “I’m glad now I took all those piano lessons.”

While grateful to be able to help at this difficult time, Enns admits to also being worried and overwhelmed herself. “The work can be exhausting,” she says.

To help her keep going, she draws strength from her family and her congregation at Charleswood. “They remind me I am not alone, that I also need to be replenished and rejuvenated,” she says.

Her goal at Donwood is “to be a non-anxious presence,” adding that her message is, “We are not alone. God loves us, has not forgotten us.”

For Donwood CEO Nina Labun, Enns’s work shows how valuable it is to have a spiritual-care worker at the facility.

“Our goal is to create a place where residents feel at home,” she says. “For many,

nurturing their faith is a way for them to get the feeling of home.”

At this challenging time of COVID-19, Enns also takes a load off of staff who don’t have time or expertise to attend to the spiritual and other issues facing many residents. “Her work is profoundly impactful” for residents and staff alike, Labun says.

For Enns, the work of spiritual care is even more important now. “Without a doubt, ‘We are all in this together’ is more than just a cliché these days,” she says. “God is using us all to minister to one another as we navigate this exceptionally difficult time.” ❧

Originally published in the Winnipeg Free Press. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Century-old photos shed new light on Mennonites

New book portrays village life in Manitoba

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

Hundred-year-old images on fragile glass negatives, discovered in a dusty barn in the heritage village of Neuberghal, Man., open a window to Mennonite life in Manitoba in the early 20th century.

These photographs, along with other archive collections, make up the new book, *Mennonite Village Photography: Views from Manitoba 1890-1940*. The volume is a collaborative effort of the Mennonite Historic Arts Committee, a group that formed in 2017 to work on this project. It is edited by committee member Susie Fisher, curator at Gallery in the Park in Altona, Man.

The book features images, many of which have never been seen before, by four Mennonite photographers from Manitoba:



Johann E. Funk took the cover photo for *Mennonite Village Photography: Views from Manitoba 1890-1940* in 1903.

from the West Reserve, Peter G. Hamm of Neuberghal and Peter H. Klippenstein of Altbergthal; and from the East Reserve, Johann E. Funk of Schoenwiese and Heinrich D. Fast of Gruenfeld (now Kleefeld).

Frieda Esau Klippenstein, a historian with Parks Canada, was doing heritage work in Neuberghal in the 1990s, when someone gave her a box of Hamm's photos. "Looking through them, she realized how important they were not only to the history of the village but to the history of thinking about Mennonite settlement in Manitoba, and what kind of incredible detail they reveal about that early time," Fisher says.

The committee spent several years discussing how to present the photos. Which



MENNONITE HERITAGE ARCHIVES PHOTO

Peter G. Hamm took this photo of a horse and wagon in the 1920s. Subjects unknown.

ones should they choose? Many were cracked or mouldy; should they leave them as is or restore them to their original condition? They decided on a broad range of images that were clear and well preserved, and did minimal editing, removing only blemishes that distracted from the photo.

The book shows what these Mennonite photographers were: artists. In addition to portraiture, “they were also observing their surroundings, being creative with the photos,” Fisher says. “We have quite a few photographers experimenting with things like double exposure, taking photos of their friends having fun. I think it changes the common opinion that Mennonites were sort of drab and dark and opposed to this kind of art. They obviously weren’t.”

Mennonite Village Photography is available now for pre-purchase and will be released in June. An exhibit at the Gallery in the Park is planned for June, but it will move online if restrictions due to COVID-19 continue. It will travel to the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg the following year and the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach the year after that.



MENNONITE HERITAGE ARCHIVES PHOTO

Photographer Peter H. Klippenstein took this portrait in the 1910s. Subject unknown.

Fisher emphasizes that the committee needs purchases and donations to make this project possible, saying, “We’re excited for it to finally get into people’s hands.”

To order Mennonite Village Photography, visit bit.ly/mvp-orders.



MENNONITE HERITAGE ARCHIVES PHOTO

Peter H. Klippenstein took this photo of the Altberghal village road in the 1930s. Subjects unknown.

News brief

Virtual museum features Mennonite-made clocks



PHOTO COURTESY OF KROEGER CLOCKS HERITAGE FOUNDATION

A Kroeger clock, made in Rosenthal, Chortitza, now Ukraine, circa 1900.

Mennonite refugees fleeing war and oppression carried their clocks on long, difficult journeys through Europe and across the ocean to North and South America. These clocks, which were made in what is now Poland and Ukraine, are clearly cherished objects that tell important stories of family history and life in Mennonite villages. Liza Kroeger, a descendant of the Kroeger clockmakers, established the Kroeger Clock Heritage Foundation in 2017 to research, preserve and share the rich history of Mennonite clocks. She wanted to continue the work of her father, Arthur Kroeger, who attended First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and died in 2015. He documented and researched at least 250 surviving clocks, reporting his findings on 55 of them in his book *Kroeger Clocks*, published in 2012. The non-profit Heritage Foundation then created the Virtual Museum of Mennonite Clocks, a website (kroegerclocks.com) that features high-quality clock photographs accompanied by details and stories of each clock and its owners, past and present. Many of these works of art were featured in the Mennonite Clock Exhibition at the Mennonite Heritage Village Museum in Steinbach, Man., which concluded in 2019. Another exhibit is planned for the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg in 2022.

—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Three churches withdraw from MC Eastern Canada

'Theological diversity' leaves Ontario congregations feeling 'out of sync'

By Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Earlier this spring, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada released the following statement: “We announce with great sadness Kingsfield-Clinton and Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite Church, Living Water Christian Fellowship and Maple View Mennonite Church have left the MC Eastern Canada family. After healthy conversation with leadership from each congregation, we mourn their leaving, and we bless and pray God’s best for each of them in their future ministry.”

Kingsfield congregations

Ryan Jantzi, pastor of Kingsfield-Clinton and Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite Church, a family of churches that meets in two communities in southwestern Ontario, provided context for the decision his congregations made to end their formal relationship with MC Eastern Canada and join the Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

In June of 2018, Kingsfield members acknowledged a growing sense that they were “out of sync” with the values and priorities of the regional church. This meant gradually becoming more isolated, which, according to Jantzi, was “not healthy” and “not life-giving.” They longed to be “partnered more closely in mission.”

Church leaders initiated conversations with all households in the congregations, and with MC Eastern Canada leaders. The result was affirmation to “explore other

potential affiliations.” By March 2019, they became associate members of the provincial MB conference, giving both parties a chance to get better acquainted. In January 2020, the Kingsfield congregations held a two-part vote, with just over 80-percent affirmation, to end formal membership in the regional Mennonite church and to join the MB conference, which took place on Feb. 22.

Their primary “concern regarding the Mennonite church landscape” focuses on central convictions around salvation and mission, according to Jantzi. The Kingsfield congregations affirm that Jesus is the only way to salvation, and their sense of mission is evangelical, which they understand to mean that “everyone, everywhere ought to be invited to place their faith in Jesus.” This is “not a departure from who we have been historically,” Jantzi says. Rather, it feels like “the Mennonite church landscape has shifted.”

A secondary concern was that they were not in sync with MC Canada’s journey on sexuality. But Jantzi names that, “even as we hold to the overall historic, traditional teaching on this, we are also adapting in this area.” He says, “We also are on a journey of learning how to care for and disciple those who experience same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria. This is a growth area for us, too.”

The Kingsfield congregations continue to value their Anabaptist flavour but want to hold this “broader kingdom ethic” alongside an evangelical sense of mission.

Jantzi says they look forward to continued relationships through Mennonite partner agencies, and he expresses gratitude for the many “points of blessing” they received while they were formal members of MC Eastern Canada.

Maple View

Maple View Mennonite Church, near Wellesley, also became an associate MB member last June as part of its discernment process. They, too, held a two-part vote, with “strong affirmation” to leave MC Eastern Canada and join the provincial MB conference as full members, which they did on the same day as Kingsfield.

Brent Kipfer, Maple View’s pastor, explains his church’s departure from the regional Mennonite church. He says that “for quite some time” many people at Maple View, which identifies itself as an evangelical Anabaptist congregation, have noticed “more widely varying theological diversity within MC Eastern Canada and MC Canada.”

Specifically he names “understandings of biblical authority, Christology, the essence of the gospel, the nature of mission [and] sexual ethics” as core convictions where this diversity was apparent, saying Maple View longed “to be part of a church community able to offer a greater degree of support and accountability . . . in theology, mission and ethics, than what is currently possible in MC Eastern Canada and MC Canada.”

Kipfer understands that “many across MC Canada know Maple View primarily through [its] 2017 statement on sexuality, ‘Honour God with your bodies,’” which the church paid to publish in *Canadian Mennonite*. He acknowledges that MC Canada’s Being a Faithful Church process,



Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite Church



Maple View Mennonite Church



Living Water Christian Fellowship

which created space for churches to have views on sexuality that diverged from Article 19 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, “spurred Maple View to review its relationship with the denomination.”

But, he says, the congregation’s “concerns about sexual ethics [are] a secondary expression of a deeper theological divergence . . . anchored in a more substantial discomfort with the range of theological diversity in the denomination.”

In a letter to MC Eastern Canada leaders, Maple View stated its “appreciation and blessing to the MC Eastern Canada family of faith . . . [which] extends to MC Canada.”

Kipfer adds, “We have been greatly blessed by followers of Jesus in MC Canada, continue to appreciate them, and joyfully count them our brothers and sisters in Christ.”

Living Water

After repeated attempts to communicate with church leaders, no one from Living Water Community Christian Fellowship, now known as Living Water Fellowship Church, in New Hamburg, chose to make a statement at this time.

MC Eastern Canada

David Martin, MC Eastern Canada’s executive minister, says that the regional church “is very gratified that the changes in our formal relationship with these congregations is taking place on good terms. We are pleased to have had the opportunity to engage with each congregation in frank and helpful conversation. The decisions being made have been taken after careful discernment.”

He adds that the regional church “respects the various decisions that each congregation has made in terms of how they desire to follow their call to ministry. Even though our formal affiliations are changing, we have taken the time to pray together and bless each other. We will continue to pray for each other and ask for God’s blessing on our respective ministries.”

#COVIDkindness

Family works together to make shields for frontline workers

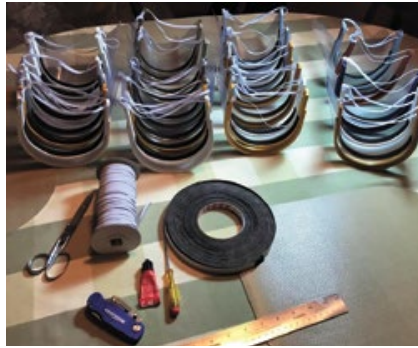


PHOTO BY GEORGE JONZ

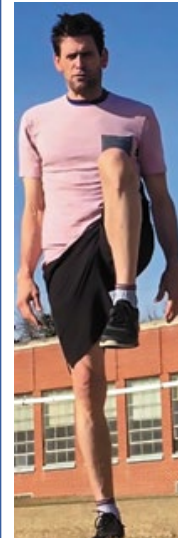
Materials needed to make the shields.

Due to the pandemic, Spark Niagara, a local not-for-profit start-up business incubator in Niagara Falls and Beamsville, Ont., had to close earlier this year. With a growing demand for face shields—and with no other work—the company used its 3D printer to create headbands. Output increased when Spark partnered with another company that has three 3D printers. George and Erika Jonz, members of St. Catharines United Mennonite Church and in-laws to Spark’s co-founder, David Robitaille, began to assemble face shields as part of a family project: Robitaille gets the plastic shields from a company in Hamilton; Kelly, the Jonzes’ daughter, cleans and sterilizes the shields; and the Jonzes insert the shields into the headbands, attach the elastic that goes around the ears, and make sure the shields are fully functional before shipping. The shields are donated to local non-profits that include Heidehof, a local long-term-care home; the St. Catharines fire department; the Niagara Falls fire department and hospital; Project Share; and the Village of Hope, in Jordan, Ont. Through personal contacts, the shields have also gone to the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority in Newmarket, Ont., and the City of Rouyn-Noranda in Quebec.

—BY MARIA H. KLASSEN

#COVIDkindness

Mennonite parodies exercise videos



SCREENSHOT
COURTESY OF BRIAN
LADD

Home Gym No. 22 with Brian Ladd from Holyrood Mennonite Church. This episode is called ‘The flamingo exercise.’

EDMONTON—With what seemed to be an explosion of “serious” home exercise videos, tips and ideas as a result of all the fitness club and rec centre closures due to COVID-19, it occurred to Brian Ladd of Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton that someone should parody it. Why not poke fun and provide friends and family with a little ray of sunshine during these dark times? “I didn’t plan to do a series,” he says. “It started with a one-off video involving a hand truck that our contractors left in our condo.” But it morphed into something more: approximately five fun exercise videos a week, always keeping physical distancing in mind. Workouts take place in empty fields, at a bus stop and in a parking garage, with props such as a shopping cart, box or fan. Each episode has a theme, such as “Pandemic biathlon” or “Creekside shuffle.” A friend’s daughter suggested a flamingo workout, which he attempted in Episode No. 22. As of press time, there were more than 30 episodes that can be seen on YouTube.com by typing “Brian Ladd home gym” in the search bar.



—BY JOANNE DE JONG

News brief

Coffee for Peace employees affected by COVID-19 shutdown



Joji Pantoja

The shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting employees of Coffee for Peace, a social enterprise managed by Joji Pantoja, a Mennonite Church Canada International Witness worker in the Philippines. Pantoja, who is CEO of Coffee for Peace, and her management team decided to temporarily close down the Coffee for Peace Café at the end of March but to keep the post-processing farm operational. In her latest newsletter for MC Canada, Pantoja says her priority is to think of how workers can sort coffee while under community quarantine, and still “survive, eat and stay healthy.” While Coffee for Peace has had to cut salaries, staff continue to receive enough money to help them survive economically. The coffee farm remains operational because its three workers can remain physically distant while still carrying out their work. “Coffee for Peace supports not only its employees but also the peacebuilding work of PeaceBuilders Community Inc., the Pantojas’ peace-and-reconciliation ministry,” says Jeanette Hanson, director of International Witness for MC Canada. To donate, visit mennonitechurch.ca/peacebuildingphilippines.

—MC CANADA



New brief

Hope Unleashed during coronavirus



SCREENSHOT BY ROSS W. MUIR

One of the Hope Unleashed video offerings from Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Mennonite Church Manitoba is building an online library of video resources for worship. Entitled Hope Unleashed, the collection was created for use during the season of Eastertide, but it is relevant to any worship leaders exploring hope, a popular theme during the global pandemic. As pastors and church members try to adapt to leading worship from a distance and often online, the need for resources and assistance has risen. “We heard from pastors that they were looking for this kind of content,” says Darryl Neustaedter Barg, the regional church’s associate director of communications. The collection features everything from children’s stories broadcast from a canoe on the river and songs sung by Camps with Meaning staff, to short sermons by MC Manitoba staff, hymns accompanied by a Paraguayan folk harp and Bible stories acted out with Lego. These contributions from Manitoba’s community of faith aim to foster connection and inspire faithfulness both on Sunday and throughout the week. MC Manitoba launched the video library at the end of April and is gradually adding media to the webpage (mennochurch.mb.ca/resources/hopeunleashed). Content is free for congregational worship use.

—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE



News brief

Spirit of MDS Fund launched by MDS Canada

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Canada’s operations may be suspended until fall due to the pandemic, but the organization still wants to be active in responding to COVID-19. To do that, the organization has created the Spirit of MDS Fund to help Canadian churches respond to people in their communities facing hardship due to the virus. Through the \$100,000 fund, which received unanimous support from the MDS Canada board at its April 15 meeting, Canadian congregations can apply for grants of up to \$1,000 to help with various COVID-19-related needs. This could include replenishing a church’s food pantry, helping a family with emergency bills or rent, assisting seniors to connect with family members, or other practical forms of service. Preference will be given to congregations that are part of an Anabaptist-Mennonite denomination that supports MDS Canada, but applications from other churches will be considered. “I deeply appreciate how MDS is offering to support local congregations with this proposal,” says Doug Klassen, executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada. “This models beautifully how the arms of the church can pull back in to help sustain the torso. This is truly in the Spirit of MDS.” Congregations that want to apply for funding can find an application form online at mds.mennonite.net or by e-mailing somds@mds.mennonite.net.

—MDS CANADA



To death's door and back

Doctors, medical staff, family, church community—all play a role in Vic Winter's continuing recovery from COVID-19

By Zach Charbonneau
Special to Canadian Mennonite
LEAMINGTON, ONT.



PHOTO BY MARILYN WINTER

Vic Winter is back at home with a new outlook and a new beard. He says he is keeping it.

Vic Winter was admitted to hospital in Leamington on March 20. In short order his wife Marilyn was sent home while he was sent to the intensive-care unit at the Windsor Regional Hospital, where he was diagnosed with COVID-19 and placed unconscious on a ventilator to help him breathe as he fought for his life. He wouldn't see his wife again for six weeks.

There was nothing Marilyn could do but fight as well. She was fighting against the fear of worst-case scenarios while navigating the fast-changing landscape of physical distancing regulations, with every instinct driving her to be by her husband's side in his suffering.

Support came from all over. Their children were by their mother's side as fast as they could be, isolating with her at home. The Leamington United Mennonite Church community that Vic had pastored from 2010 to 2018, when he retired, came together to hold a parking-lot prayer vigil.

Marilyn spent her days viewing Vic through an iPad and sending updates on his condition to a list of email contacts. It worsened before improvements were visible. When his heart stopped, and his body began to shake, doctors prescribed paralytic medication, forcing his body to rest while all his energy went to fight COVID-19.

Prayers came in from all over the world in support of the Winters, and their neighbour Bill Doerksen, known for his annual Christmas display, turned on the lights every night in vigil.

Support also came from the medical staff in Windsor caring for Vic, who was one of the earliest cases of COVID-19. "I

was largely being experimented on," he says. On April 29, he was discharged from hospital flanked by clapping and cheering medical staff. Says Vic, "The hospital staff were jubilant when I recovered. One nurse told me, 'We needed this as much as you.'"

'The entire world had changed'

Vic is still not 100 percent. "I am weak like a baby" and "walking is a little wobbly," he says over the phone.

He was prepared for a slow recovery. His doctor told him that it would take



PHOTO BY ZACH CHARBONNEAU

Vic and Marilyn Winter wave as 130 cars filled with well-wishers pass by their house to welcome his return after a lengthy hospitalization for COVID-19.

about three days for every one lying in the intensive-care unit to get his body back to what it was before. But Vic is confident it will all come back because he has got Marilyn as his new physiotherapist. "I took 50 pages of notes from the doctors on how to get him well," she says.

Amnesia is one of the ways the body deals with trauma, and it's a hurdle for Vic to get over, as he only recalls "brief snippets" of his story. "Back in March, I was a little bit ill," he says. "I felt very cold and was shaky. We thought it was a seasonal flu. . . . And that's the last thing I remember between then and six weeks later."

He woke up to a world of physical distancing, isolation and quarantines. "I did a lot of crying in the hospital when I found out what was happening," he says. "I woke up and the entire world had changed."

And although things are looking much better for Vic, he is quick to offer sound and sobering wisdom: "This caught me unawares," he says. "This virus snuck up on me and nearly killed me. . . . To fight this thing off, . . . you'll need your whole body and then a little bit more."

"There is a sense of presence that I felt while I was gone," he says of his ordeal. "I knew subconsciously I was close to the edge and I felt remarkably calm. I had accepted the option of death, but I was happy to come back. I felt a certain comfort, as if I was in God's presence. And

to know that there is an entire community of people holding you up in faith is quite powerful. I knew that I had been carried through this."

"The precautions that have been put in place are excellent," he says of governmental regulations on physical distancing and self-isolation. "I have great worries about the loosening of the regulations. The second wave is going to be worse than the first," he predicts.

Besides his pastorate in Leamington, Vic served as principal of UMEI Christian High School in Leamington from 2000 to 2010, and he was also a lay preacher. ❧

‘Let’s go on an adventure!’

By Joanne De Jong
Alberta Correspondent

Every year Mennonite Church Alberta offers education bursaries to students who attend a regional-church congregation who have successfully enrolled in a Mennonite or Anabaptist post-secondary institution. In 2019, Claire Dueck, a member of Lethbridge Mennonite Church, was one of eight recipients.

Dueck, 18, just completed her first year at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C., having earned a certificate through Quest, Columbia’s outdoor education and discipleship program. The program included hiking, canoeing and rock climbing, as well as courses on how to be a faithful disciple of Jesus.

At Columbia she is known for saying, “Let’s go on an adventure!”

Actually, Dueck’s journey has been one big adventure. Born as a twin in Medicine Hat, Alta., to Ojibway parents and adopted by Mennonite parents of Japanese and German descent, has meant she and her brother Nick had the privilege of growing up in a multicultural home.

“I’ve been blessed,” she says, mentioning how every year she gets to celebrate Japanese New Year and then eat Mennonite foods like rollkuchen and watermelon at



the Mennonite Central Committee sales. Their favourite family movie is *Lord of the Rings*, which they all watch together every Christmas, reinforcing her heart for new adventures.

In June 2019, Dueck embarked on the ultimate adventure, when she was baptized and became an official member of Lethbridge Mennonite. “I didn’t think I was good enough to be baptized, but my dad really helped me,” she says. “He told me I just need to want a deeper relationship with God, and that’s what I really wanted. I knew I couldn’t do it [life] without God, so I said, ‘Here we go. We’re going on an adventure and it will be great!’”

One thing Dueck noticed when she moved to Abbotsford was how the churches all seemed to be so big. “I missed being in a small church,” she says. “At Lethbridge Mennonite I have 50 sets of grandparents



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CLAIRE DUECK

Claire Dueck was a 2019 recipient of a tuition bursary from Mennonite Church Alberta, given to any student attending a regional church congregation who has successfully enrolled in a Mennonite or Anabaptist post-secondary institution.



Claire Dueck, third from left, is pictured with her new friends from Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C.; from left to right: Sarah Trentalance, Julia Derksen, Trever Renshaw and Zach Kitchener.

and they love you. No matter what I do in the church, they say I’m amazing.”

As she reflects over the years, the person she has admired the most is Jon Olfert, the director of Camp Valaqua in Water Valley, Alta. Every summer she goes to camp and has worked or volunteered there for the last four years. “Jon is very kind and the most patient person I’ve ever met,” she says. “He has a really big heart, which is why I love camp. I see that it is life-changing.”

She also loves the camp atmosphere. “Sitting under the really tall trees—it’s

like you're lost in time," she says. "It's the highlight of every summer."

Another person who has made a real difference in her spiritual life is church member Joani Neufeldt. Dueck chose Neufeldt to be her mentor when she was exploring baptism. As a youth leader and Sunday school teacher, Neufeldt "had a big impact on my life," says Dueck. "She taught me to pray and she did a lot of art projects and painting with me, and it really helped my spiritual life. I now like to draw when I hear my dad preaching and it helps

me a lot."

In addition to painting, Dueck likes to read. Her favourite book is *The Running Dream* by Wendelin Van Draanen. She has been rereading the book every year since junior high. The book tells the inspiring story of a runner who loses her leg after being hit by a car and how she overcomes many obstacles.

Dueck continues to wonder which path God will lead her on as she continues to grow. As a child, she thought she would be a veterinarian, but for now she has

decided to return to Columbia in the fall and enter the health-care assistant program. She admits she is still unsure of what she wants to do but she knows she likes helping people.

At the moment, she is a farmer-in-training at her grandparents' farm in Lacadena, Sask., where she rides a tractor and sprays the fields. She is learning new things about growing wheat, peas, lentils and canola.

Never a dull moment for this Mennonite young woman from Coaldale, Alta. ❧

104-year-old reader likes to 'keep in tune' with the church

By Janet Bauman

Eastern Canada Correspondent

L Lydia Ann (nee Horst) Bauman may be *Canadian Mennonite's* oldest reader. At 104 years of age she still reads the magazine in her assisted-living suite at Fairview Seniors Community in Cambridge, Ont. She gets the magazine through nearby Preston Mennonite Church, where she attended until the COVID-19 pandemic closed churches.

She misses church and she misses the people, so she is grateful for the reading material that comes from the church so that she can "keep in tune with it." But she says she reads more slowly now.

She says the COVID-19 health crisis has "mixed up" her life. She misses getting visitors and attending Sunday evening services at Fairview. But, she says, "If it's nice, I go outside. I just love walking!"

Lydia Ann has been a part of Mennonite churches her whole life. She was born on July 20, 1915, when her family was part of the Old Order Mennonite community. In 1923, her family started attending Floradale Mennonite Church, and in 1924 they joined the newly



PHOTO BY LUCY GOSHOW

Lydia Ann (Horst) Bauman is pictured with her granddaughter's dog at a celebration of her 104th birthday in the summer of 2019. CM wonders if she is our oldest reader.

built Elmira Mennonite Church. She met Howard Bauman there at the evening meetings, where he was sometimes one of the speakers.

They were married in 1940. He served as a pastor of Elmira Mennonite from 1945 to 1966. Then they moved to Akron, N.Y., where he pastored Clarence Center Mennonite Church for more than 20 years. They moved back to Elmira, where they attended Zion Mennonite Fellowship until they moved to an apartment at Fairview and made Preston Mennonite their church home.

For now, this life-long Mennonite appreciates any of the ways she can keep in contact with the church, including *Canadian Mennonite*. ❧

Canadian Mennonite would like to know if Lydia Ann Bauman is our oldest reader. If you, or someone you know, is over 100 and still reading CM, we would love to hear from you.



PEACE SEEKING

Develop your passion for God's justice and peace. Discover options from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary!

SEEK THE PEACE OF THE CITY

Serve your current and future communities with the **fully online Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism**. The 46-credit-hour program forms scholars, teachers, pastors and leaders in the Anabaptist tradition to join in God's reconciling mission in the world.

GENEROUS NEED-BASED AID IS AVAILABLE.

ONLINE • NONDEGREE LEARNING

Give seminary a try: Take a short course!
No exams or papers • Six weeks of study

COMING UP: Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible: Oct. 28 – Dec. 15, 2020

LEARN MORE: ambs.ca/grow
AMBS • Elkhart, Indiana, USA

Find free resources for this time of COVID-19:
ambs.ca/hopeandresilience

News brief

COVID-19 sends student art show online



SCREENSHOT BY ZACH CHARBONNEAU

**Natasha Schartner, left,
and Kathe Warkentin**

Kathe Warkentin and Natasha Schartner of Leamington, Ont., met with other high-school students at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., last August, to join the Peace Innovators Scholarship and Mentoring Program. On March 24, they were supposed to kick off their final project, a local youth-driven art show. They had booked the space and started to connect with high schools to gather the artists. But due to COVID-19, they were stopped short. The UMEI Christian High School 12th graders had to work quickly to move their final assignment online, where they received submissions through Instagram to post to their stories. "There were bad and good things," they say. "Because our costs were lower to run the [online] event, we were able to give more money to our charity." Students completing the program received \$500 to be split between their event and scholarship money for their post-secondary education. Of their Peace Innovators experience, Warkentin says, "It taught me conflict resolution and how to overcome barriers." Adds Schartner, "Even within different conflicts . . . we're able to find common ground, and in our project that common ground is art, and we brought people together in a mutual thing, even online." The Instagram event ran from April 7 to 10.

—BY ZACH CHARBONNEAU



SPECIAL UPDATE

Integration and reimagination

Seeking to serve and thrive in a changed world

By Beverly Lapp, EdD, Vice President and Academic Dean

A week after AMBS made the transition to physical distancing, I attended a webinar for theological school leaders titled **Mustering Spirituality and Imagination in these Extraordinary Times**. We were encouraged by the three presenters to name the fear we all have at some level as we face COVID-19. **Willie Jennings**, PhD, of Yale Divinity School urged us not to sequester this fear but to use the classroom space to bring our content along as we help students hold together what this crisis is calling forth in us. **Nancy Lynne Westfield**, PhD, of the Wabash Center noted that in Western academia, many of us were de-formed in separating the mind from the spirit. **Amy Oden**, PhD, of Saint Paul School of Theology proposed that the pandemic is hastening the shift away from over-rationalization to more integration of content, skills and formation in theological education.

At AMBS we have been working at this integration by centering our degree

programs around three modes of learning: knowing, being and doing. With *knowing*, we invite students to immerse themselves in theological thinking and deep study of the Bible. With *being*, students nurture their spiritual and intercultural formation with practices that enable continuing encounters with Jesus and our fellow humans. With *doing*, students apply their learning to work for God's reconciling mission in the experiential components of the curriculum.

As we move through the crises facing the world today, we feel the urgency of integrating knowing, being and doing in new ways. How can we use the strengths of the AMBS curriculum in our degree programs and Lifelong Learning offerings to reimagine how to thrive and serve in a world that will never be the same after this pandemic? This reimaging is taking shape in our learning community; see p. 3 for examples of how students and faculty are adapting, making theological connections between a world in upheaval and our knowing, being and doing.



We each have the opportunity to revisit our commitments and assumptions as we plan for an uncertain future. At AMBS we value personal interactions and embodied experience, and we know there are emotional, mental and physical costs to extended separation. We've also learned — through our 20+ years of experience in offering distance learning — that students can achieve academic success and have profound learning experiences when studying online. We hope and plan to gather safely again on campus in August, but we will give (continued on p. 2)

Top: Yeshie Muleta, an MA in Christian Formation student from Ontario. **Right:** Beverly Lapp. **Credit:** Peter Ringenberg

OUR MISSION

AMBS serves the church as a learning community with an Anabaptist vision, educating followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world.

Integration and reimagination (continued from p. 1)

ourselves fully to the educational and relational opportunities of our online course formats if the need for physical separation continues past the summer.

This text on AMBS's website (amsb.edu/about) reinforced for me the relevance of what we study at AMBS to new and ongoing local, national and global realities: "As followers of Jesus Christ, we grow as leaders prepared to respond to needs in the world today

and tomorrow from a firm grounding in Anabaptist theology that is attuned to global perspectives and contexts — as leaders prepared to share the peace of Jesus Christ, witness to the reconciling power of the Spirit, restore our degraded environment, resolve conflicts, welcome displaced immigrants, nurture relationships of integrity and form communities of shalom."

My prayer is that we would embrace this calling during this extraordinary



time with more assurance than anxiety, more gratitude than despair, and more love than fear. •

Online Easter planning webinar grows out of course experience



The real-life challenges brought about by the pandemic are providing students with countless opportunities to apply learnings from their AMBS courses. One example is a Christian ritual course that sparked not only the creation of a conference workshop but also a webinar for the wider church on planning online worship services.

In 2017, a course on **Christian Ritual in Worship** taught by **Rebecca Slough**, PhD, brought together nine students in a room on campus and six students from a distance by videoconference. Slough, now Academic Dean Emerita and Professor Emerita of Worship and the Arts, initially offered to run separate course sections for each group, but the students at a distance "wouldn't have it," she recalled. "One said, 'This is our future, and we will all have to lead rituals through electronic means during our years of ministry leadership. Now is the time to learn.'"

Slough and her students did learn a lot together. Each student participated fully in the rituals in each class session, and each prepared and led two rituals.

"We made mistakes and had some frustrations with technology, but most importantly, we became imaginative and creative," she said. "The class began to shape how we could lead interactive rituals through a videoconference platform by thinking first from the perspective of the ritual participants."

Two years later, Slough and four of her students drew on their experiences to create a workshop, **Ritual and Distance: The Reaches of Community**, for the March 2020 joint conference of **Pastors and Leaders** (AMBS) and **Deep Faith** (Mennonite Church USA). In the workshop, which three of them led in person and two led via Zoom, they demonstrated what they had learned about creating experiences of real connection and meaningful interaction across geographical distances.

When social distancing practices began across the U.S. a week later, the workshop leaders began to adapt the content for a webinar to equip church leaders. The result, **Planning Easter and Good Friday worship: Fostering meaningful interactions while physically separate**, was hosted March 31

— the week before Holy Week — by the **AMBS Church Leadership Center**. The free live webinar drew 176 participants from Canada and the U.S., and the recording and associated resources at amsb.edu/easter-planning had hundreds of views in April.

"I was feeling a little stressed trying to conceive of how to transfer our Good Friday and Easter services to an online setting," said **Todd Gusler** (MDiv 2014), Pastor of Rossmere Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "Watching the webinar and reviewing the provided documents saved me many hours of lost sleep! My congregation was appreciative and moved by the services."

Michelle Curtis (MDiv 2018), a campus student in the course who also co-led the workshop and webinar, said the course helped her to practice and then demonstrate the social skills required for worshipping via Zoom: "The course prepared me to lead and pastor in the midst of pandemic — by expanding my imagination for what is possible across distance and giving me practical skills to lead and worship through Zoom."

The student leaders also included MDiv students **Melissa Atchison** of Kansas, **Deb Coates** of Washington and **Joyce Peachey Lind** of Virginia. •

— *Annette Brill Bergstresser*

A teachable moment like few others

Experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic as a global learning community is presenting unique opportunities to experiment with and model leadership in a time of crisis — whether it be through “campus care pods” that are tending to the needs of campus residents; weekly Zoom check-ins with the Academic Dean; a student-led initiative to share funds from stimulus checks with students in need through a mutual aid fund; or the creation of a “Hope and resilience” webpage with resources for prayer, preaching, worship, pastoral care, spiritual formation and trauma healing.

In addition to making logistical adaptations to offer all courses and chapel services online during this time, faculty members are integrating into students’ learning processes reflection on the pandemic from theological, peace-building and ministerial perspectives. They’re also incorporating opportunities to practice and develop leadership skills for such a time as this. Examples include:

Janna Hunter-Bowman, PhD, Assistant Professor of Peace Studies and Christian Social Ethics, changed her **Religion and Peace Processes** course to include examination of Christians’ differing theological approaches in response to the pandemic. Students are reflecting on their experiences and exploring transformative ways to engage crisis and conflict constructively during this time.

Rachel Miller Jacobs, DMin, Associate Professor of Congregational Formation, shifted the final project in her **Christian Worship: Theory and Practice** course to be designed for worship via Zoom rather than in person. For her course on **Faith Formation and Spirituality: Family Spirituality**, she plans to engage connections between spirituality, resilience and intergenerational Christian formation in light of COVID-19 as an Adverse Childhood Experience.

Safwat Marzouk, PhD, Associate Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, is teaching a three-session series via Zoom for two congregations in California and Indiana on how to read the Bible amidst pandemic.

Jamie Pitts, PhD, Associate Professor of Anabaptist Studies, was interviewed by **Perdian Tumanan**, an MA: Theology and Peace Studies student from Indonesia, and other Indonesian theologians on “Doing Theology in the Time of COVID-19” for their YouTube vlog, Theology, in May.

Allan Rudy-Froese, PhD, Associate Professor of Christian Proclamation, will address trauma and preaching in his **Preaching** course. In his **Biblical Storytelling** course, students will work on staging storytelling for the camera.

Daniel Schipani, DrPsy, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Pastoral Care and Counseling, adapted his **Pastoral**

Care 2: Systems, Assessments and Interventions of Trauma course to address the multidimensional realities of disorientation and loss related to COVID-19.

Dan Schrock, DMin, Sessional Faculty, is changing his **Spiritual Guidance Practicum** so students will learn to offer spiritual direction by video call as well as in person.

Drew Strait, PhD, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, adapted the final paper in his **Strange New World of the Bible 2** course to focus on what the Book of Revelation has to say to a world under pandemic.

While the AMBS Library already had many resources available electronically for students at a distance before COVID-19, **Karl Stutzman**, MLS, Director of Library Services, and **Brandon Board**, MLIS, Information Services and Online Learning Librarian, extended these services to all students and faculty and developed an online guide to help users access materials.

Information Technology Director **Brent Graber**, MA, noted that practices implemented by AMBS in the past to enable distance learning meant that fewer IT adaptations were needed this spring; the pandemic offered an opportunity to extend and refine these practices. •



Safwat Marzouk, PhD, speaks at Pastors and Leaders 2018. Credit: Jason Bryant

Your support makes a difference

In this time of seismic change, we've shifted some of our ways of functioning at AMBS, but our commitment to prepare leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world remains unchanged. And prayerful, relational and financial **support from our alumni, donors and friends is as vital and needed as ever.**

We invite your prayers for those in our learning community who struggle with the demands of the changes we're experiencing — especially international students who are far away from their familiar cultures. Please also pray for students who plan to begin studies

this fall — and that visas would be granted for international students to come to Elkhart. Give thanks with us for how God is using our employees' experience, expertise and theological imagination to continue to form leaders to respond with compassion and act for peace and justice as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, wherever they may serve.

The current crisis brings both opportunities and challenges. We've shared here about how we're making use of the opportunities we see. We're also very aware of the challenges that lie before us in this time of widespread



trauma and economic upheaval. If you're experiencing an abundance of resources during this time, **would you consider making a gift to support AMBS students and programs before our fiscal year ends on June 30?** Thank you for your support of AMBS's mission. •

— *Daniel Grimes, MPA, Vice President for Advancement and Enrollment*

Grow your leadership skills at a distance

Start seminary studies this fall!

It's not too late to enroll at AMBS for 2020–21. Strengthen your leadership skills in an Anabaptist setting! Non-admitted students get 50 percent off their first course for credit. Check out our upcoming courses:

ambs.edu/onecourse

Study at a distance

- **Master of Divinity Connect** (online and hybrid courses)
- **Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism** (fully online)
- **Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies** (fully online)

ambs.edu/academics

Join the Journey program!

Nurture your leadership abilities. Deepen your theological perspectives. Tend to your spiritual formation. The undergraduate-level nondegree **Journey Missional Leadership Development Program** offers mentor-mentee partnerships, distance-learning opportunities and community support. ambs.edu/journey

Anabaptist Short Courses

Join the forum discussions in these annual six-week online noncredit courses and dig into Anabaptist theology, history and practice. No grades, no papers! CEUs available.

- Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology: Sept. 16 – Oct. 27
- Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible: Oct. 28 – Dec. 15
- Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: Feb. 10 – March 23
- Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication: April 14 – May 25

ambs.edu/shortcourses

Webinar recording: "Exploring your call to ministry"

How do you discern a "call to ministry"? This free webinar features a conversation between David B. Miller, DMin; Andy Brubacher Kaethler, PhD; and Amanda (Beachy) Bleichty, MDiv.

ambs.edu/academics

Church matching grants doubled!

AMBS's church matching grant — which matches contributions that congregations and regional churches make toward a student's tuition costs — will be \$2,000 per year, beginning in 2020–21. We're committed to making theological education affordable and accessible, and to partnering with the wider church to invest in current and future leaders.

anabapti.st/match-grant

Hope and resilience resources

This webpage contains resources for prayer, preaching, worship, pastoral care, trauma healing and spiritual formation suggested by AMBS students, employees, alumni and friends.

ambs.edu/hopeandresilience

COVID-19 updates

This webpage contains information about logistical changes at AMBS in response to the pandemic.

ambs.edu/updates



Anabaptist Mennonite
Biblical Seminary

3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517, USA
800.964.2627 • www.ambs.edu • www.ambs.ca



A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

UPCOMING

MC Canada study conference goes virtual

Plans for inaugural event change to one-day virtual conference incorporating pre-released and live plenaries

By Katie Doke Sawatzky
Mennonite Church Canada

Mennonite Church Canada is moving ahead with its first study conference in October 2020.

Entitled “Table talk: Does the church still have legs?” the conference will examine what it means to be the church and the role of worship. It will be held on Oct. 24 via Zoom, a virtual-meeting platform.

“Our separation as churches at this time is difficult, but it also presents an opportunity to take a step back and think critically about what it means to be the church,” says Kim Penner, who sits on the conference planning committee.

Originally to be held at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont., from Oct. 22 to 24, the conference will now be an online event due to COVID-19 pandemic gathering restrictions that are not expected to lift for months.

The conference is intended for pastors, lay leaders and anyone interested in an academic-oriented approach to discerning the purpose and nature of the church.

“Our lack of in-person worship due to this pandemic has made questions about the nature, identity and essence of the church even more relevant,” says Doug Klassen, MC Canada’s executive minister. “Going ahead with this conference in an online format ensures we still connect as a nationwide community in the fall to discern what church looks like moving forward.”

The conference will consist of four sessions featuring plenary speakers from MC Canada-affiliated universities and colleges:

- **Sara Wenger Shenk**, former president of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., will give the first plenary exploring the nature and identity of the church.
- **Irma Fast Dueck**, Jeremy Bergen, Gerald Gerbrandt and Jesse Nickel will examine the role of worship in the Bible and in the church in the western context.
- **Sheila Klassen-Wiebe**, a New Testament professor at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, will lead a Bible study on the parable of the great banquet in Luke 14.
- **Bryan Born** of Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C., will share what it means to be missional in this time.

Pre-released and pre-recorded plenaries are planned to allow



SCREENSHOT BY AARON EPP

Kim Penner of Kitchener, Ont., is a member of the MC Canada study conference planning committee. She is featured in a video promoting the conference that can be viewed at bit.ly/35Tmryp.

more time for questions and engagement between speakers and participants. A recommended readings list will be released to registered participants leading up to the conference. ☘

More information about the conference and registration will be posted in the coming weeks on the Mennonite Church Canada website at mennonitechurch.ca/tabletalk2020.

☘ Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



Mennonite Church Alberta

Employment Opportunity
Communications Coordinator, 0.5 FTE

MCA is a close-knit community of twelve congregations joined by faith in Christ in a Mennonite perspective. We seek a Communications Coordinator who is a self-starter with strengths in preparing written materials, collaborative work and creative initiative. Skills in working with social media, websites, and the ability to create promotional materials are essential.

For a full job description, see mcab.ca/careers. Inquiries and resumes may be directed to moderator@mcab.ca.

Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal

Employment Opportunity
Pastor (0.5 FTE), start date: August 2020

The Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal is a small, diverse and welcoming congregation in the heart of Montreal. Being the only English Mennonite church in the area, participants come from many parts of Montreal and beyond. With four universities nearby, we are invigorated by students who make MFM their church home while in Montreal.

The Fellowship is searching for a half-time pastor, as our current pastor is retiring (summer 2020). Responsibilities include giving a meditation two Sundays per month, pastoral care and working with the elders group and church council as our congregation seeks God together in the context of this lively city.

To learn more go to mcec.ca/ministry-opportunities or contact pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca.

mfmtl.org

Promotional Supplement



explore


A theological experience for youth (grades 10 to 12) who want to develop their leadership gifts. More at ambs.ca/explore



University

Arts Dialogue Faith Science
Community Music Mentorship
Business Character Practica Vocation
Social Enterprise Peace-Justice

Apply now: cmu.ca



CMU | GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

Master of Arts
Concentration in Christian Ministry
Concentration in Theological Studies

Master of Divinity
Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies

Apply now: cmu.ca/gstm



THE COLLABORATIVE
MBA

Leadership for the common good
Enrol now for August 2020

CMU | CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY cmu.ca/mba



ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org



My CERB story

Calgarian Jonas Cornelsen reflects on the opportunities that the Canada Emergency Response Benefit has provided him.
canadianmennonite.org/cerbstory



Offline during COVID-19

How are Mennonites who don't have internet access staying connected to their churches?
canadianmennonite.org/pandemicoffline



The climate context of a global virus

On the CM blog, former Mennonite Church Canada executive director Willard Metzger wonders how COVID-19 will lead us to respond to the climate crisis.
canadianmennonite.org/blog/wm-justice



Watch: Winter Hour debuts "Letters"

Watch a video for the exquisite new song from Winnipeg singer-songwriter Mike Wiebe.
canadianmennonite.org/video/letters

Many people are struggling with self-isolation. Help *Canadian Mennonite* be the tie that binds.

Donate today at canadianmennonite.org/donate or call 1-800-378-2524



CANADIAN MENNONITE

Schools Directory featuring the Collaborative MBA

The triple bottom line

MBA student learning 'the future of business' at Canadian Mennonite University

By Beth Downey

Tomisin Bolorunduro is a student in the Collaborative Master of Business Administration (C-MBA) program at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). She has lived in four countries on both sides of the Atlantic. Despite already holding a master's degree in banking finance and corporate law, she came to CMU seeking professional development. What she got, she says, went a whole lot farther.

In 2018, Bolorunduro was working on Wall Street, but the work culture left her with a bitter taste in her mouth:

"It was really a dog-eat-dog world in New York," she says. "I didn't want to study somewhere like that; I didn't feel the culture respected who I was or wanted to be. Then I learned about the C-MBA program and was excited about its Christian values."

Bolorunduro says that transformative theory like the triple bottom line, faculty who live what they teach, and the "exceptional" mentorship she has received throughout the program, have helped her develop beyond her expectations.

"The program trains us to think of business sustainability in three areas: people, planet and profit," she says. "Basically, if you treat your employees well, they'll give you good work. Environmentally, we have to ask what we can do now as individuals and organizations



Tomisin Bolorunduro

to curb climate change and improve global resilience. Those things contribute to financial sustainability—profit. This MBA is really geared toward the true future of business."

Following completion of her program at CMU, Bolorunduro aspires to work in the realms of risk assessment and financial crimes advisory.

ROCKWAY
MENNONITE COLLEGIATE

BOOK YOUR TOUR TODAY

admissions@rockway.ca

Rosthern Junior College
Grades 10-12 High School

IMAGINE.
THRIVE.
EXPLORE.
BELONG.

admissions@rjc.ca
rosthernjuniorcollege.ca

WESTgate
COLLEGIATE

Find your place.
Find it together.
Find it here.

Now accepting applications for 2020-2021
Learn more at westgatemenonite.ca 204-775-7111

IMAGINE YOURSELF AT GREBEL

APPLY NOW grebel.ca/futurestudents

Integrating sound academic learning with growth in character, faith and service to God.

MSCS
MENNO SIMONS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

— AN EDUCATION 4LIFE —

403.531.0745 | 7508 Elken Drive SW Calgary, AB T2M 0Y7 | mennonitechristianschool.ca

COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE

EXPLORE YOUR CALLING

COLUMBIABC.EDU

EDUCATION ROOTED IN FAITH.

MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

Come for a visit and discover the difference!

WWW.MCIBLUES.NET | 204.327.5891

WINNIPEG Mennonite
Elementary & Middle Schools
— WMEMS.CA —

Building a foundation for **SUCCESS**

'... that God will open to us a door for the word,
that we may declare the mystery of Christ ...'
(Colossians 4:3)



PHOTO BY JANE GRUNEAU

Backdoor photO