



# Community of Christ Canada West Mission Centre

## WHAT'S UP...IN THE CWM

What's Up...In the CWM

Fall 2018



encouraged to look for "God Moments" throughout the week. A particular "God Moment" I had was during a worship service in the temple during IYF and everyone was linking arms and singing "Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on Me". It was really powerful to hear everyone sing and hear the echo of 900 voices through the temple. It was an intense reminder that we are all connected to each other and not divided by language, race or country. Spectacular/IYF was a great experience to dive deeper into my faith and make connections with others in the church, I can't wait to go back next year!

- Kelby Smith, Ribstone

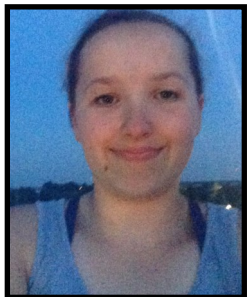


Below - BC Group



Above - Alberta and Saskatchewan group

At SPECTACULAR approximately 1,000 campers and their leaders gather at Graceland University for the largest annual gathering of youth in Community of Christ. All campers have opportunities to participate in leadership and discipleship development, diverse worship, and expression of arts, music, and sports.

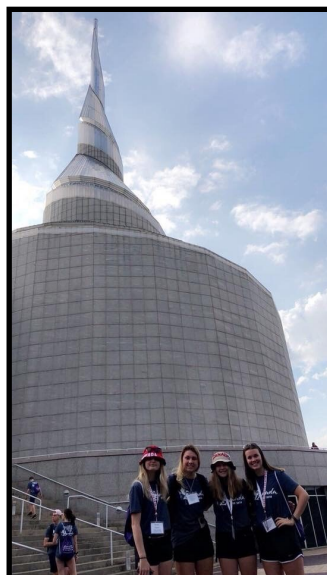


SPEC was so much fun. I threw myself into as much as I could and want to go back for my

next three years. I loved it!  
- Amelia Phelps, Vancouver

I absolutely loved my time at SPEC! My favorite part of SPEC was meeting new people from all over the world and hearing their stories. It was truly an amazing experience.

- Georgia Donohue, Victoria



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I thought SPEC was a fun and an interesting experience. The people were nice and welcoming, and the other campers were cool.

- Zoe Soupidis, Vancouver

During my lovely experience at SPEC. I had so many opportunities to make new friends! As well make stronger connections with my friends that came with me. There was such great wonderful and caring community that everyone should experience.

- Faith Soupidis, Vancouver



## Samish Island Reunion New Dates July 27- August 3, 2018



Many thanks to Shonnet Allen and Shelley Beer for confirming that they will be our cooks again next year. Whew!!!!

If anyone is interested in volunteering for specific roles, and thinking ahead to next summer, please feel free to send an email to me -

chrisinlangle@gmail.com - and I'll start taking names when they come my way. Some of the big roles that can use a little advance warning are:

**Jobs coordinator** - to make sure that all members of our community have opportunity to put their talents to work building community and maintaining our space (or make sure everything gets cleaned up).

**Worship coordinator** - to find presiders/musicians and co-ordinate with speakers to plan fantastic worship services for the week.

**Recreation coordinator** - to plan and execute interesting, new, fun recreation activities for the afternoons - to help maintain our bodies as well



as our minds and spirits

**Teacher coordinator** - to find and assist teachers for all age ranges.

**Creative activities coordinator** - to find and assist leaders for a wide variety of creative activities to help individuals connect to God through their creativity.

Of course, if you are interested in preaching, teaching, cleaning, presiding, or doing anything - please feel free to send me that information as well and I'll be happy to use it in planning for next year.

### Mark Your Calendars NOW!!!!



The dates for CWM Reunion at Samish Island next year are **July 27 - August 3, 2019**, and **Apostle Art Smith** has confirmed attendance as guest ministry already!!!

This is a different week than we usually have, so PLEASE save the new dates now and plan to attend.

The primary reason for the date change is the fact that many of our senior high aged youth will be able to attend the entire week. The previous dates conflicted with SPECTACULAR - the senior high youth camp held each year in Lamoni, Iowa at Graceland University.

The decision to change the dates has been difficult, and I hope that there is enough advance warning that everyone will be able to adjust their schedules to make it possible to attend. Now the hard part starts, lining up guest ministry for next year and doing the advance planning to make Reunion 2019 a great experience for everyone.



Looking forward to seeing you all next year, or sooner.

Chris Phelps

Reunion director 2019



### Victoria

#### Robin and Wilma Duff

We had a lovely 60th Anniversary celebration lunch for Robin and Wilma Duff Sunday October 21st, with 25 family and friends gathered. Robin told us of his courtship of Wilma in a very funny and sentimental speech. Wilma responded in a very sweet tribute to her hubby.



### Winnipeg

#### Confirmation

Beatrice Smetana of Winnipeg, MB on the day of her Confirmation, October 21, 2018 by High Priest Emeritus Gloria Stanton spokesperson, assisted by Evangelist Wayne Stanton. It was a great weekend.





## “Conferences: Times for Coming Together”

This morning, as I am writing, it is snowing in Edmonton. Not a heavy snow. Not our first snow. Just enough to remind us that summer is well behind us and winter is on its way. Winter is experienced in different ways across our geographically diverse mission centre: from the occasional snow in Victoria and the lower mainland of BC, through the very heavy snowfalls in the mountains, to the sometimes long, white, and bone-chilling cold winters of the prairies (although maybe not quite so long and bone-chilling in recent years!). Whatever may be your experience of it, winter is something that tends to unite us as Canadians. We love to enjoy the good times where-ever we are. And we love to tell whoever is getting the bad storm or really cold weather this week, “I am sure glad I don’t live where you live!”

In our church life in Canada West Mission Centre, our conferences provide regular opportunities to come together and mutually remind ourselves that “the church” is more than our Sunday morning services in our fourteen individual congregations.

We will be holding our second annual “Canada West Mission Centre E-Conference” on Saturday, February 2, 2019. This provides us the opportunity to “gather” electronically for a couple of hours without the need to travel long distances to enjoy the fellowship. Watch for details as the time gets closer. And be sure that your congregation elects delegates to represent you in whatever decisions are considered. Last year’s conference went very smoothly for a first-time effort. We know that all congregations have the technology to participate in this event. Plan to use it again to enjoy a mid-winter “reunion” across the vast miles of Western Canada.

Next up will be the Community of Christ World Conference, from April 5 to 13, 2019, at our international headquarters in Independence, Missouri. The theme of the conference is “Discover.” The first three days of the conference will be a celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the dedication of the Independence Temple. The remainder of the week will be the conducting of the business of the world-wide church, with the participation of delegates and members from most of the 60 or so countries in which Community of Christ is currently established. Worship, fellowship, and celebration, all in our colourful multi-cultural context, are important parts of the conference. For details, check the conference website at [www.cofchrist.org/2019-world-conference](http://www.cofchrist.org/2019-world-conference). Recent and future editions of the *Herald* also present information to enable everyone to prepare for Conference. If you are interested in being a delegate from the Canada West Mission Centre, please contact me, [steve@communityofchrist.ca](mailto:steve@communityofchrist.ca), or Debra Donohue, [debra@communityofchrist.ca](mailto:debra@communityofchrist.ca), as soon as you can.

Just to remind you briefly: our next “regular” Canada West Mission Conference will be held from August 30 to September 1 in Edmonton. Our guest ministry will be Danny and Penelope Belrose – who have a long history of friendships across the mission centre. Watch for more details in due course.

Finally, I cannot pass up this opportunity to welcome Sam Smalldon to the mission centre leadership team as our Mission Centre Financial Officer. Sam was ordained to the office of Bishop at our conference in Vancouver in 2017. He brings to the job his professional expertise in accounting and business management, as well as many years of experience on various boards with World Church and Graceland University. I am personally grateful to Sam for taking this on and relieving me of the financial responsibilities. Please join me in welcoming Sam and thanking him for extending his discipleship into this role. See a notice about this appointment on page 5 in this newsletter.



--Steve Thompson  
Canada West Mission Centre President



### Christmas in the CWM

**Vancouver – Sunday December 2<sup>nd</sup> – Dickens Christmas Tea 12:30pm**

**Vancouver Sunday December 16 – Annual Christmas Luncheon 12:30pm**

**Edmonton – Christmas Eve Service 7pm**

**Chilliwack - Christmas Eve Service 7pm**

**Meadow Ridge – Christmas Eve Service 7pm**

## WOMEN'S RETREAT CHILLIWACK

The last weekend in September, Chilliwack hosted a Women's Retreat. The theme was "The Cup of Our Life".

Friday night we gathered to register and meet. We chose a white mug or tea-cup and used permanent markers to draw a design of our choice on our mugs. Our guest speaker for the weekend, Evangelist Susan Oxley, spoke while we decorated our mugs. I used the words she focused on for my mug - WIND, DOVE, FIRE and WATER. The mugs/cups were baked in

the oven and we used the mugs in our sessions for the rest of the weekend.



On Saturday morning, Susan walked us through a few different spiritual practices relating to our Spiritual foundation through Wind, Water, Fire and the Dove. We practiced many ways to pray and discussed how prayer can fill your cup. We talked about meditation and the benefits along with

mindful practices. Some of which have helped me already.

After lunch, we had options on activities to "fill your cup". Rosilyn Coulson and Lisa Neudorf took apples and water out into the downtown area and gave them away while sharing and listening to people's stories. Svea lead a group in assembling lap blankets from crocheted squares specifically designed for use in wheel-chairs. The lap blankets will go to a care home in the Chilliwack area. Some sat by a fire and worked on their journal book "My

Cup Overflows".

We gathered back together for another session with Susan in the late afternoon. Dinner was cooked for us by the Christian Bikers and at both lunch and dinner, a crew of gentlemen from the Chilliwack congregation did the cleanup. Debra Donohue led a session about Coffee and Conversation in the evening which was followed by a meditation led by Brenda Senga.

Sunday morning, we met for worship then coffee with the Chilliwack congregation. Susan Oxley was our speaker for the Sunday service. After the service, we all joined together for a potluck lunch.

Gwyn Beer



## MEADOW RIDGE

We were excited to host a celebration to honour and thank the Windy Willows Environmental Day Care Centre that rents our church basement. We work well together and wanted to thank them, so we arranged an afternoon party with the Fire Department bringing over a truck for the children to be on and we also had a wonderful Clown Ministry. Everyone seemed to have a great time.

Our Pitt Meadows group is holding a six-week class on anxiety by Max Lucado. The book is titled "*Anxious for Nothing*" and the class is held at the Salahubs' home on Mondays at 3:30 pm. We have eleven attending.

We are excited and looking forward to being with several guest ministers to speak on different Sundays and several music specials to look forward to. We so much appreciate the willing and loving hearts of those who give up their time to enhance ours.

The Meadow Ridge Congregation gathers food for the Food Bank on every Communion Sunday, mostly baby food, and for the next few months, we are asking our congregation to donate any warm clothing they no longer use that is still in good shape. The warm

clothing is also collected by the Food Bank.

This year we decide to skip our Worship Service on Sunday Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> and just hold a Christmas Eve Service on Monday Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>. Our hearts and love are open to all at Meadow Ridge and if you are in our area we would love to see you and worship Dearest God with you.

Dale Weiss





## LISA NEUDORF

At the end of September, I attended the BC Women's Retreat. Our theme was "The Cup of Our Life" and on Saturday afternoon, attendees were given a list of activities to fill their cup. One of the activities was to offer apples, oranges and water to the homeless people living in Chilliwack. Rosilyn Coulson-Teng and me both felt led to do this and despite feeling very nervous we headed out "to look for homeless people". It was not as easy as we thought it would be. Rosilyn and I had a couple of encounters but walked for quite a while before we found a park with a number of homeless people.

In the park Rosilyn and I met Claire Miller who asked us to pray for her. Claire's prayer was simple: for her to find a safe place to sleep that night, for her to find a place to live and reassurance someday she would be reunited with her soul mate who died in February. As Rosilyn and I sat with Claire, she showed us a small Bible someone had given her. Claire was excited to show us the pictures. She talked about how pretty and colourful they were and in her next breath she told us how a year ago she would never have "done something like this". Claire was interested in the Bible, so I took the opportunity to share my favourite scripture *The Parable of the Lost Sheep*. We talked about how Jesus loves us and each of us matter to Him and He will take

the time to search for just one person if they are lost. Claire wanted us to continue reading so we read *The Parable of the Lost Coin and the Parable of the Prodigal Son*. Claire was curious and had many questions which we tried to answer to the best of our ability. Rosilyn and I spent about half an hour sitting in the grass talking with Claire and listening to her story. We learned last year her father died from Huntington's disease, her boyfriend died in February, her dog died, she lost her home and she inherited Huntington's disease from her father. Despite this, Claire had hope for a better future, she simply wanted reassurance God loves her and she mattered.

When we said goodbye to Claire, we hugged, and she thanked us for taking the time to talk to her. Words cannot describe how we were moved by Claire's story and our encounter. As Rosilyn and I walked away, we silently processed until we tried to find the words to describe the experience.

Since then, I've repeatedly thought about Claire and considered where God was in this experience. God was with Rosilyn and I as we walked, talked and each time we offered a piece of fruit or water. We knelt down and looked in the eyes of people as

we handed them fruit and water. We saw the hardship, the addiction, the reality those we met have no where to live. They carry their belongings in plastic shopping bags and knapsacks. How were Rosilyn and I viewed? Were we simply a couple of middle aged, well-dressed, white do-gooders who spent an hour handing out fruit and water to only go back to our comfortable lives? Did we make a difference at least for one day?

Our ministry to Claire was listening and validating her as a human being. Claire's ministry to us was cheerfulness and optimism when she had a number of reasons to feel angry and helpless. God wants us to live with our eyes open. To see the people, we cross paths with. The person who looks like me and the person whose appearance or demeanor scares me. To have the courage to act when God plants the thought in our head to say or do something outside our comfort zone. Our world is filled with people who are hurting and yearning for connection. What activity will you do to fill your cup and whose cup will you fill?

Lisa Neudorf  
Camping and Retreat  
Specialist



Dear friends,

I'm pleased to announce to the Canada West Mission Centre the appointment by the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric of Sam Smalldon to serve in a volunteer capacity as mission centre financial officer for the Canada West Mission Centre. Sam will begin serving immediately. The Canada West Mission Centre will have the opportunity to sustain Sam in this role at the next mission centre conference. Sincere thanks to Sam for his willingness to serve in this role.

Steve Thompson has been appointed by the First Presidency to continue serving as mission centre president. The mission centre will likewise have the opportunity to sustain Steve in that role at the next conference.

I am profoundly grateful to Steve for his service in the dual roles of mission centre president and mission centre financial officer since 1 July 2014. I invite you all to also share your gratitude with Steve as you have the opportunity.

I look forward to engaging in mission with this new team.

The official announcement from the Human Resources Department will appear in the coming days, but I wanted the mission centre to have advance notice of this change in roles.

In Christ's peace,

Art Smith





## Edmonton Community of Christ 2018 Community Fun Walk



We are very pleased to report that our Community Fun Walk in support of Youth Empowerment Support Services (YESS) surpassed our fundraising goal for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Hoping to raise \$6,200, we are delighted with the final tally of \$7,195.

May 27, 2018 was a perfect spring day to enjoy a walk through the Mill Creek Ravine Park.

Eldon Watson at age 83 maneuvered his powered wheel chair 6.4 kilometers through the ravine for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year!

Walkers and rollers returned to the Church sporting healthy glows and a little sweat, just in time to have a cool drink, before enjoying the program and a delicious lunch.

Deborah Greibrok linked our Community Fun Walk to Community of Christ Mission Initiative #2 'Abolish Poverty End Suffering'. This was followed by a video about the services YESS provides in our community. You can watch this video on YouTube by following this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/YESSorg>

Following the video, Margo Long,

Executive Director of YESS spoke about the help YESS provides for vulnerable and high-risk youth and young adults in our community.

Margo taught us that when children grow up in unstable and dysfunctional families, they experience repeated trauma and crises. These unhealthy early experiences can literally rewire a child's brain.

Margo went on to explain that although most of the young people who find their way to YESS look like teens and young adults, mentally and emotionally they are much younger; 8-year old's in adult bodies who lack the confidence, experience or support to be successful students, employees or most importantly, family members.

'Walking beside' these young people as they learn the skills needed to become functional adults takes time. It takes time and patience to develop healthy relationships with frightened, distrustful children who have never experienced such.

It takes time to trust that there will be a safe place to sleep every night and food to eat every day. It takes more time to believe that they are welcome at the table and in the community.

It takes time to learn how to do things...to complete tasks such as preparing a salad and mopping the floors; and then to believe that they are capable of being responsible contributing members of their community. It takes time and experience to learn how it feels to be successful, whether at mopping a floor or completing a school assignment.

It takes time, because the brains of these young malleable children have been traumatized and harmed to such an extent that they are unable to think, create, understand, react and respond in the manner our society says is 'normal'.

By 'walking with' skilled, compassionate and trustworthy adults, the kids at YESS learn to trust and become trustworthy; learn to respect and become worthy of respect; learn to set their imaginations free and to believe in their dreams; **learn to love themselves**

By helping to offset the cost of tangible necessities for kids at YESS, Community of Christ helps the skilled staff at YESS 'walk beside' these young people while they acquire the intangible necessities needed to



live healthy productive lives. Thank you.

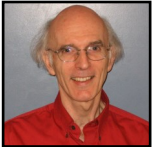
Mark your calendars!  
Community Fun Walk 2019  
is tentatively scheduled for  
May 26, 2019.

Deborah Greibrok





## Peace & Justice: Leaven in Populist Times Part I & II Rod Downing



**Part I** Gustavo has been transformed – forever changed! A true story, there is now, in this case, one less person who will ever be against LGBTQ rights. The recent Mission Conference learned this change came about because of Virginia, canvassing in California for LGBTQ rights, who knocked on Gustavo's door. The partial conversation went almost word-for-word as follows:

**Virginia:** . . . Would you be in support of such {transgender rights} legislation?

**Gustavo:** Oh, . . . no, I couldn't. . . . I'd be worried about predatory men – you know - um, using the law as an opportunity to enter women's bathrooms.

**Virginia:** I see. And why do you feel that way?

**Gustavo:** I'm from South America, and in South America we don't like fags.

**Virginia:** {in a friendly manner} Hmmm. Interesting. I'm gay. (\*1)

**Gustavo:** {quizzical, curious} Oh? (\*2)

Virginia then shares how finding a wonderful partner has been such a support for her in a society that still struggles to accept LGBTQ relationships. Gustavo feels a kinship, telling her that his wife is a disabled person and many people feel sad for him. But he feels that God gave him the gift to take care of her, and that taking care of one another is what matters. Recognizing the similarity of their situations, Gustavo says "Listen, I was probably mistaken" about his earlier comments, and that he would be in support of the legislation.

This transformative dialogue didn't just happen. At (\*1) it is clear that Virginia was well-anchored – she had a solid sense of dignity and self-respect, and thus didn't feel the need to be reactive to Gustavo's off-handed slur. Instead she remained in dialogue, giving a non-threatening affirmation of who she was, which also allowed her to see if there were any cracks of openness to further the dialogue.

And at (\*2) Gustavo showed some slight openness that allowed the dialogue to continue. Again, Virginia's skill showed – she humanized what could have been a

caustic topic. In doing so, it resonated with Gustavo, whose openness allowed him to enter new and freeing terrain.

Slowing down the notion of dialogue, as above, demonstrates how crucial the layer of "inner peace" is to any endeavour. Virginia wouldn't always find such receptive audiences, but she had the skill to maximize chances of success.

In the broader context, it should also be noted that at point (\*1) Virginia could have opted loosely to "speak truth to power", that is, to call out Gustavo for the slur he made. It seems she decided first to check for that sliver of openness, found it and went the transformation route instead. Dialogue is both art and skill, and at least for me, the best I can do is "bumble" my way along, though with God's Spirit of Goodness it becomes a "bumbling forward".

**Populism:** The dialogue sample was given because the Peace/Justice session at our mission conference dealt with "Populism", a slippery term which among other things, creates caustic divisions among people – the complete antithesis of "all created in God's image". Most commonly populism creates the notion of a "pure people" – whether white conservative Americans, traditional British, or "France for the French" – and thus also an impure people. It also focuses on a "corrupt elite" and the "Outcasts" (usually immigrants and refugees).

While Canada is not engulfed in populist dynamics, the pull exists, partly because as noted in the session, part of the underlying cause of populism is global in nature. And the best time to tackle populism is to be proactive, to strengthen healthy dynamics and keep populism from taking root.

The session ended with the above sample dialogue since it remains the key nonviolent resource for change, and the divisive nature of populism desperately needs such bridges.

**Part II:** However, dialogue is only

one resource; here are a few more.

**Global:** At the grand scale we can search out groups trying to reform our global dynamics (e.g., the UN), including our economic dynamics, etc., since badly skewed global dynamics can play a role in populism. Plus, supporting NGOs like World Accord strengthen our global fabric.

**Facts:** Populism has highly distortive dynamics. Firstly, we need to broaden our own sources if we have become "siloed" or in-grown. Secondly, in the internet age, we must recognize that nothing is free and that includes reliable news. We need explicitly to fund reputable news sources to keep good journalists in the field, providing us with solid information and a check against manipulative scripts. Related we can fund fact-checking – populism can swamp us with falsehoods and a deliberate concerted effort is needed to counter this.

**Presence:** While facts are essential to keep us anchored, they often will not persuade. The previous newsletter dealt with bias, in particular Confirmation Bias (once a decision is made one heeds information that supports the stance & downplays other information). Worse, if one is susceptible to the Backfire Effect, presenting that person with facts that contradict their stance, will simply reinforce their stance (this notion is still in debate), akin to "digging in your heels".

Here is where simple presence can make the difference, rare as it can be. For example, a double redemption, an ex-Neo-Nazi Buddhist helps transform Buckley, a Klan member and army veteran who hated Muslims. Caring patience, and yes, it includes bumbling [Washington Post, 20180605]. I could never help Buckley, but "leaven" is about being sensitive to where and to whom God's Spirit calls each of us. Canada is not immune from populism, and now is the time to strengthen the moderate middle and transform or at least diminish the distorters, via God's leavening influence through us. All are beloved by God who wants healing and wholeness for all of us together.

Rod Downing Peace and Justice



## Creating Connection BC - Debra Donohue



I'm told it was gloriously windy on the day I was born, right at breakfast time in April, and 11 days too soon. They were aiming for the 17th and I was born on the 6th. Both my father and my grandpa Robertson (my mom's dad) were born on April 17th. That was the day the first chapter of my life began. There have been many chapters in my life, many different jobs, hobbies, sports and many, many friends. Each chapter has been surprisingly different from the previous one, some unbearably sad, while others made me feel like I was the luckiest person on the planet. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had the variety of experiences and challenges that each of these chapters provided me, and I hope I have learned at least one nugget of wisdom from each of them.



So, it should come as no surprise to me, or you, that another new chapter in my book of life has begun. As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, I started a new position with Community of Christ. My official title is Creating Connection Director BC. I will

be working a little less with the congregations, and a little more with the public in an effort to make meaningful connections. Some of you have already seen my presentation on 'Coffee and Conversation' at the Women's Retreat in Chilliwack, and by the time you receive this newsletter I will have presented to both Victoria and Meadow Ridge. Coffee and Conversation is an opportunity to hold mindful, meaningful and spiritual conversations with people who generally would not want to meet in a church, or place of organized religion.



I know it sounds a little radical, but with the decline in church membership, *in all religions and all churches*, we need to try new ways to reach those who are craving meaningful, mindful and spiritual conversations, but who aren't interested in church because of preconceived notions. The Canada East Mission Centre has been using a website called meetup.com to advertise their Coffee and Conversations, Mindfulness Meetings, Yoga and more with good success and we will start using it too.

Our first 'meetup' scheduled is a Coffee and Conversation for people who want to practice their English, and enjoy mindful conversation. It takes place in the Vancouver church activity hall on Thursdays from 10:30 – noon, beginning November 15<sup>th</sup>. As I write

this, we have rsvp's from four people. Two from the congregation and two more from outside the church who have seen the advertising on meetup.com.

I'm working with some of you to create online groups for meditation, yoga, and meaningful conversation using Zoom a virtual meeting space. Watch for quarterly Nurturing Spirit online gatherings, and a youth online group similar to Community Place in Ontario. Community Place started as an online gathering for senior high youth to connect once a month to maintain their friendships from camp throughout the year. Our plan in BC is to do just that, and to talk about current issues for teens, plan youth group activities, offer input to camps and retreats, and have meaningful conversations with each other.

It's time to start utilizing meetup.com to invite people outside the church to many of our existing activities. For example, we'll be promoting the Nurturing Spirit Retreat, Nurturing Silence Retreat, Weekend of World Religions events and BC Friends and Family Weekend on meetup.com. These are activities we already do, and do very well, that are perfect safe entry points for making connections with new people and providing opportunities for meaningful, spiritual and mindful conversations.

I'll be talking to lots of you in the coming weeks and presenting ideas in your congregations. If one of these ideas sparks interest for you and you'd like to embark on a new project with me, please call or email me at 1-877-411-2632 or [debra@communityofchrist.ca](mailto:debra@communityofchrist.ca). Or just contact me if you'd like more information, I realize there's far too much to explain in this little article.

The next chapter in my book of life has already begun. I hope you'll join me on a few pages.

Debra Donohue  
Creating Connection  
Director BC



# Vancouver

Wow - There's a lot happening in the Vancouver congregation over the next few months. Fasten your seatbelts, it's gonna get crazy in here!

Advent is coming up quick, and Christmas activities start with the annual 'Hanging of the Green' on the morning of November 18th. It gets earlier every year, just trying to decorate the church before Christmas activities start. Pretty soon we'll be setting up for Christmas at the same time as Costco!

Our 4 weeks of Advent each have a different giving focus. The youth will be organizing the offering time each Sunday and will be talking about the issues/organizations that they are passionate about.

**December 2** - the Sunday of Hope - we dedicate our focus and an offering for the Vancouver Food Bank. We will also be hosting a 'Dickens' Tea following the service - guests are always welcome, and you're encouraged to wear your fancy hats.

**December 9** - the Sunday of Peace - we dedicate to the Surrey Women's Centre - and along with the financial offering, we will also be making about 50 gift bags to give to SWC again this year. At 12:30 pm Come join our annual Write for Rights, from Amnesty International. Provide the gift of hope by writing one or more letters on behalf of victims of human rights violations. Light refreshments will be provided, as well as take-home packets for those who can't stay that day.

**December 16** - the Sunday of Love - we dedicate our special offering to World Accord, and after the service we will share in a Christmas Lunch. The church will smell great through the morning, as Turkey and fixings await.

**December 23** - the Sunday of Joy - we focus on the congregation and will be having a service of song with lots of our favourite Christmas carols and songs, because sometimes we forget about ourselves during the season of giving!



During Advent, services start at 11:15, and will likely go a little long - there is simply a lot to get to through the holidays. Guest pianist Bill Costin will be on the piano, so that our regular pianists can participate in the advent choir each week. Rehearsals start at the end of November - and all are welcome. Kat Goheen and Brian Gibson will be leading the choir with rehearsals in both New Westminster, and Langley for those who can make either. Bill is a professional pianist, musical director, composer, arranger and instructor and we are always thrilled to have him with us at Christmas.



At the beginning of November, we will be celebrating the 2-year anniversary of the arrival of the Hashim family. Although our official sponsorship ended a year ago, it is a long-term process to settle into a new life, and the Hashim's are still in our hearts. They attended our 'Soup Sunday' to celebrate their 2nd anniversary in Canada. (We have Soup Sunday every communion Sunday and have a sandwich board out to invite the neighbourhood). There was cake and ice cream provided by Rod Downing. Ali and Wasan are doing well and the kids seem well adjusted to life in Burnaby schools. Ali and Wasan continue

to take English classes and are becoming more proficient all the time.



We'll take a breath and catch up again in 2019.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

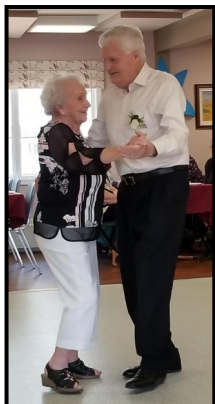
Chris Phelps





## What's up....in Ribstone

Ribstone celebrated 110 years as a congregation in April this year. It was such fun to celebrate with everyone that we have just kept right on celebrating. Eldon and Sharon Dallyn celebrated 70 years of marriage in August. Everyone was invited to share in a lovely afternoon party complete with live music, dancing, visiting, and refreshments. The couple of honor danced more than once during the party.



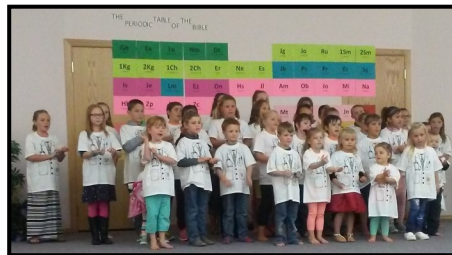
holding a "Cookie Bake-Off". Those of us that have been asked to judge are extremely excited for this meeting.



Because we are "Blessed to be a Blessing" our congregation loves to take collections and make donations to various organizations. This spring we collected items for the Wainwright Food Bank. The month-long collection of food items was delivered to the very appreciative food bank by Darleene, Leila, Emelia, and Isabella. On Mother's Day we had our annual Interval Home Shower, to collect items for the Lloydminster shelter for women. Most women and children go to the shelter to escape abusive situations and often arrive with nothing. On Father's Day another collection of items is gathered for the Men's Homeless Shelter in Lloydminster. Our congregation is so blessed to have many generous people with loving hearts!



Every summer we host Vacation Bible School for one week in August. The children learn about God, learn songs, do crafts, play games, and generally have a fantastic week. This year's theme was a science theme, "Power Lab", and some science experiments were performed to show the power of God. It takes many adult volunteers to host VBS. We are so fortunate to have Courtney McCrae and her group of wonderful helpers that create a fun, safe, and Spirit filled week for the children. On the Friday night we were treated to a concert of the songs the children had learned throughout the



week. This year, as an added bonus, the older group of children performed a very moving mini-drama.

To wrap up summer and mark the beginning of our fall season we held our 12<sup>th</sup>



Annual Truck Pull. This year our truck pull was held on a chilly (4°C) and rainy morning. We still went out and pulled the truck, but we didn't hang around outside for long.

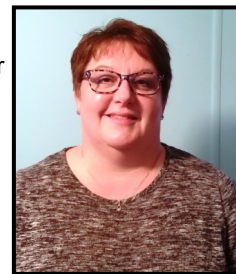
Just in case the weather didn't cooperate at all, Darleene was prepared with "Plan B"; a toy truck that we could use for a mini indoor truck pull. Even though we had the actual truck pull we still went ahead and had the Mini-Pull anyway. This gave some of the folks that didn't want to go outside a chance to participate. We have several pictures of the fun. Some of the folks have hilarious facial expressions while trying to make it look like that toy truck was very heavy. (You'll have to come to Ribstone and look through our photo albums to see all of the pictures.) This picture is of our youngest Sunday School class with their teacher Kathy Watson.



Our group picture for "Truck-Pull Sunday" was taken indoors due to the chilly weather. Thank you, Leila, for taking this photo. This Sunday also happened to be Jersey Day for our congregation. Notice the many sports teams (even Team Canada) represented in our group. (Bottom right)

Several members of our congregation attended camps and reunions, and some of our youth went to IYF and SPEC. We also had a number of people attend WCM Conference (some in Regina and some on-line). And, of course, we have had wonderful worship services and fellowship opportunities.

Joanne Fraser



Our EST (Eager Saints Troop, Grades 1 to 6) and JAM (Jesus and Me, Age 0 to Grade 3) groups took a short break over the summer but resumed meeting in September. JAM began with a "Bible Scavenger Hunt Activity" at the church. The first EST meeting of the fall was a trip to the Provost Bowling Alley for bowling and supper. 24 EST aged children plus family members and group leaders filled the bowling alley for an amazingly fun time. In October the EST group is





## Nurturing Silence Retreat



Imagine it's a grey, cool day, and you are feeling a bit nervous about the work you left undone and whether you packed everything you need, but the autumn tree leaves are on fire, you smell garlic roasting, and your warm cabin is waiting for you.

This is how we arrived at Samish for our Nurturing Silence retreat on October 26th. Everyone was a bit nervous about how the weekend would go, since this was something new. Even those who had been to silent retreats before had never been to one quite like this. And those of us who were "in charge" had never done something quite like this before. So, while there was nervousness, there was also lots of excitement and anticipation for what lay ahead.

We transformed the large multi-use "CFC" into a warm and holy meditation space, transformed a classroom into a cozy listening post, and transformed the usually plain dining hall into a candle-lit space for eating mindfully. It's amazing how just a few candles, some fabric, and

a few found items can make the old seem new.

Our cooks treated us to lots of delicious sights, tastes, and smells in their creative, mostly vegetarian cooking. I enjoyed the notion of treating myself to romantic, candle-lit meals with the Holy Spirit! Such a delight!



Silence turned out to sometimes be easier than we thought it would be, and sometimes be harder. I surprised myself when walking back to my cabin one night, I encountered a deer and immediately said "Oh! Hello there!" I wondered if it was ok to talk to animals at a silent retreat! The deer silently ate apples and stared back at me occasionally while I sat quietly and watched. Watching that

deer was one of the ways I took "a long, loving look at the real". This was one of the ways to look at contemplation that I particularly enjoyed.



Most of the time things just easily moved along without need for words. Meal ingredients were explained on post-it notes, cleanup was done in a meditative and calm way, and there were friends available to give a listening ear if folks needed help getting back into silence.

It was a wonderful time to feel connected to the Spirit more deeply and connect in



community. Please come join us next year! Our Nurturing Spirit retreat is a great place to start if you're nervous about a whole weekend of silence, and then when you're ready, join us for the full Nurturing Silence experience.

Shannon McAdam





## 2019 Camping and Retreat Calendar

**Jan 25-27 Men's Retreat Loon Lake Maple Ridge BC**

**Feb 15-18 CWM Winter Youth Retreat (location to be confirmed)**

**March 1-3 Nurturing Spirit Retreat Samish Island**

**Women's Retreat Prairies (cancelled for 2019 due to World Conference)**

**April 6-13 World Conference Independence Missouri**

**April 26-28 Arts Retreat Samish Island**

**April 28-May 4 Samish Island Work Week**

**May 31-Jun 2 Friends and Family Weekend Samish Island**

**June 7-11 Adult Reunion Hills of Peace**

**June 8-13 Adult Reunion Samish Island**

**Jun 30-Jul 5 Youth Camp Hills of Peace**

**July 6-11 Family Camp Hills of Peace**

**July 13-20 Junior High Camp (12-14 yrs) Samish Island *tentative dates***

**July 13-17 Junior Camp Hills of Peace**

**July 20-27 Spectacular Graceland University**

**July 21-28 Singles Reunion Samish Island**

**July 27-Aug 3 Family Reunion Samish Island**

**August 4-10 Camp Kimtah (15-18 yrs) Samish Island**

**August 11-15 Junior Camp (8-11 yrs) Samish Island**

**Aug 30-Sept 1 Canada West Mission Conference Edmonton AB**

**Sept 13-15 Weekend of World Religions Vancouver**

**Sept 27-29 Men's Retreat Hills of Peace**

**Women's Retreat Chilliwack *dates to be confirmed***

**Oct 25-27 Nurturing Silence Retreat Samish Island**

**To be announced:**

**Weekend of World Religions Calgary**

**Nurturing Spirit Retreat Hills of Peace**

*Dates are subject to change.*

*Please register early to avoid cancellation of your event.*

## Priesthood Retreat Saskatoon

Our theme was 'In the Silence, God's Call To Serve, In the Noise'.

David Lloyd, who serves as a Leadership & Priesthood Formation Specialist for Community of Christ in Canada, was our Guest Ministry. We had 22 people attend and all without exception were very pleased with the weekend. David gave us an overview on the role of Priesthood today and spent a bulk of the time on the Sacraments giving us the latest thoughts and practices from his intense discussions with the President, First Presidency and other relevant people who were asked for input as it applies to today's church. The information and discussions were wonderful and very enlightening as we have changed tremendously, over the years, in our understanding, as a body of Christ to the Church in which we now participate. The retreat was VERY TIMELY, and the participants were very engaged. We had lots of questions, we got lots of answers and it was nice to be reminded of what is "required" versus what is "tradition". The weekend flew by with the same lament that we have many times after these retreats, we could have spent a day or more on each sacrament instead of all the sacraments being discussed in one day. We used as a meditation Hymn 535 in our Hymnal "When God's Call to Serve" which I recommend you read carefully and prayerfully and then "Listen in the silence, listen in the noise, listen for the sound of the Spirit's voice". There was also time for fellowship and we joined at Queen's House (The Catholic Retreat Center) for our evening meal on Saturday evening.



## Priesthood Retreat Saskatoon continued

We have needed the "shot in the arm", as priesthood, that we got in being together this weekend. I would challenge you to carefully engage in such a weekend in your congregations. You never know, the "Spirit" may just attend. Take time from your busy lives (we are all busy all the time)! May the Peace of Jesus Christ go with you!!

MANY THANKS TO  
DAVID LLOYD!

Lloyd Chase Co-pastor Saskatoon Community of Christ.



## Parker Johnson



Greetings –

As I prepare to close out my Community of Christ Seminary experience in a few weeks, I have been reflecting on the past two years of study. I entered this program very green (yet energetic!) in my approach to theology, scripture, and Community of Christ history. I began Seminary with primarily two goals: (1) to gain the knowledge necessary to speak to the authentic nature of Community of Christ to a broad audience of members, friends, and seekers and (2) to re-engage the topics of scripture and theology in a safe, academic environment, free from the hurtful rhetoric I internalized as a member of the queer community. While I feel strongly that I have grown tremendously in both of these areas, I have found my overall progress to be gradual considering my strained relationship with scripture due to historic oppressive policies and theological ideologies towards queer people. Despite this, I see this journey of

re-engagement to be most important in my life and ministry in the church. Feeling comfortable to engage the scriptures and worthy enough to encounter the Divine are foundational elements for any theologian. Rest assured, attending Community of Christ Seminary in 2018 does not gloss over the details of our faith movement's history. Yes, the church has changed immensely



over the years, but the knowledge gained from my time in Seminary has allowed me to speak intelligently with older and younger generations alike about the church of the past, present, and future. It holds great meaning for all of us.

Seminary has brought the Mission Initiatives to life for me. These five life-giving focuses of the church

have long been important to me but learning the ways in which Community of Christ evolved to value these five areas was incredibly impactful for me. This evolution is an ongoing collaborative effort of theological discernment, prayer, historical context, continuing revelation, global community, common consent, and a call to be a prophetic people. Recognizing and appreciating the intentional, organic journey that props up each mission initiative allows me to see mission being made real through the struggles, efforts, successes and failures of the church. We are part of that evolution, and our contributions along the timeline are and will have an impact on this journey. An unanticipated takeaway from the Community of Christ Seminary program was the sense of ownership I have gained for my faith community. I am not simply here to sit in a pew on Sunday mornings, but rather to push, challenge, engage, and speak out to hold us accountable to our own faith and beliefs.

I want to personally thank each and every one of you who supported me throughout my Seminary studies. Your theological knowledge, organizational memory, and passion for this church have inspired me spiritually and academically.

Sincerely,  
Parker Johnson

*Church Mission &  
Young Adult Ministries  
Specialist*





## Four Conferences and a Book Promo

### Mission Conference in Regina 2018

Mission Conference 2018 in Regina was our first mission conference that we were able to live stream class sessions and hold an interactive business meeting with live voting from locations across the Canada West Mission Centre. Although we experienced a few minor technology issues during the business meeting, we learned from those issues and the consensus was that this e-component was a huge success.

Our guest speakers were incredible. President Steve Veazey spoke about our upcoming 2019 World Conference with a focus on some of the major resolutions and held an 'open discussion' session. Apostle Art Smith spoke about the Canadian three thirds strategy and common consent voting at World Conference. John Hamer, pastor of the Toronto Centre Place congregation, joined Art in the Three-Thirds Strategy presentation and teamed up with our own Parker Johnson to teach us how to become more effective with media outreach and exposure marketing. Rod Downing helped us explore how God's Good Spirit is calling us in practical terms to nudge the disruptive, divisive dynamics toward the Peaceable Kingdom and Ken Barrows led the class session 'Plant a Tree! Attending to the needs of today while building for our future.'

All these sessions were recorded and can be viewed on the Community of Christ Canada West Mission facebook page.

### E-Conference

Our next E-Conference will be held Saturday February 2, 2018. We're thinking you should book this weekend in perpetuity for your congregations. The e-conference in February gives us the opportunity to consider some routine items to save time at our conference in September and to vote on any pressing or emerging matters in the mission centre. Please remember to hold a business meeting to vote in your congregation's delegates for this conference by January 13<sup>th</sup>. The deadline to send your list of delegates and alternates to me, Debra Donohue, [debra@communityofchrist.ca](mailto:debra@communityofchrist.ca), is January 19<sup>th</sup>.

### World Conference

World Conference takes place April 5-13, 2019 and our theme this year is 'Discover'. The draft schedule can be found here [www.cofchrist.org/2019-world-conference-schedule](http://www.cofchrist.org/2019-world-conference-schedule). The theme 'Discover' comes from Doctrine and Covenants 163:1: *"Community of Christ," your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.*

This year is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of the Temple, so you can expect lots of celebrations. If you would like to attend as a Canada West delegate, our mission centre will cover your registration fee. Some congregations have set aside funds to assist anyone going to World Conference as a delegate. Check with your congregational financial officers to see if there is a financial assistance program that you can access.

### Mission Conference 2019 Edmonton

As you may know we will be in Edmonton from August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 1st next year for Mission Conference. Our guest ministers are Danny and Penelope Belrose. **Please plan to stay until 3pm on Monday September 2nd** next year for a speakers and presiders workshop with Danny and Penelope. This dynamic duo will help us sharpen our tools for speaking and explore creative worship ideas. Of course, you don't have to be a presider or a speaker to attend, everyone is welcome, especially youth! Keep watching the Weekly Wire and your inboxes for hotel information, youth classes, a young adult activity and more about the workshop.

Want to help out at Mission Conference? Send an email to Debra Donohue [debra@communityofchrist.ca](mailto:debra@communityofchrist.ca), or Mike Bock, Edmonton congregation liaison, [mbbock@telus.net](mailto:mbbock@telus.net) and let us know what you'd be willing to do.

### Profiles, Poems and Prayers

Danny Belrose has just released a new book available on Amazon. You can order it at [www.amazon.com/dp/0984481540](http://www.amazon.com/dp/0984481540)

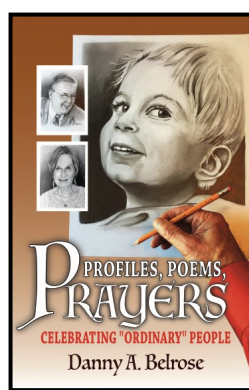
Danny says:

*Despite my familiarity with the creator of this work, I was not prepared for the achievement it represents. It is a collection of poetry, prose, and art celebrating a diverse group of people, young and old, and with a wide variety of life experiences from which are distilled wonderful stories and reflections. Most people represented in this book are illustrated by amazing sketches that capture the essence of their subject--a subtle smile, a wisp of hair, a furrowed brow. Prose and pictures unite to make one feel you know a stranger and see with new eyes a friend.*





Above Left to right 1) Our new Mission Conference banner, 2) Parker and Gregg technology team 3) Debra and Lanette pondering the Graceland 'Cemetery' motion (Steve had a slip of the tongue), 4) President Veazey and Steve Thompson presenting Gloria Stanton with High Priest Emeritus, 5) Apostle Art Smith visiting with a child from the neighbourhood, 6) Fun with Steve Veazey hosted by Dan Esch, 7) our group photo from Mission Conference in Regina.



Left Community of Christ Temple Independence MO, Above Danny Belrose and his new book.

Debra Donohue  
Communications



Community of Christ  
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We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace.

[www.communityofchrist.ca](http://www.communityofchrist.ca)

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Mark your calendars to attend the inaugural

## **BC Men's Retreat January 25-27, 2019**

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**Guest Minister: Apostle Art Smith**

**"Men Talking Women, Gender Non-Binary and Jesus"**

Loon Lake Lodge, Maple Ridge BC

[www.loonlake.ubc.ca](http://www.loonlake.ubc.ca)

Registration information coming soon.

Director: Ed Salahub

[lisa@communityofchrist.ca](mailto:lisa@communityofchrist.ca)



Community of Christ  
Canada West  
Mission Centre