

Connections Summer 2018



COMOX VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Joint Services

July 22	CVPC	10:30 am
July 29	St George's United	10:30 am
	505 6th St Courtenay	
Aug. 5	Comox United	10 am
	250 Beach St. Comox	

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

In February I received a call from Jen De Combe, the associate secretary for Canadian Ministries. Canadian Ministries is a department of the national church that works with congregations to support and equip congregations for faithful and vibrant ministry. She was wondering if CVPC would be willing to participate in a pilot project. The department was looking to develop different visioning curriculum from the United States and modifying it to a Canadian-Presbyterian context. When I shared this opportunity with the Session we felt it was a chance we could not turn down. Not only would we be using a curriculum that thousands of churches have used to help them vision and grow, but we would be giving feedback to the national church. There are eight churches participating in this pilot project. Four are participating in a program called Re-vision and four, like us, are participating in New Beginnings (NB). I am so grateful to the four facilitators, Bill Kennedy, Marion Lade, Jeanne Webb and Corinne Wester. They have worked so hard! Thank you to everyone who was able to participate in the small group sessions.

We are now facing the next phase and the facilitators continue to work hard! They will be spending time throughout the summer reviewing

notes from all the small groups and writing a report. The leaders' guide for NB is very clear that this report "should be "received" by the congregation, not adopted. We are only asking the congregation to acknowledge the conversation and what was learned from it. Any further action items will come up in later meetings using the appropriate decision making process." This report will be presented to the congregation on Sunday Sept. 23rd. What is already unique about this process is that we are not only using the NB program but we have also been assigned a coach. Our coach is the Rev. Ian Fraser, a retired minister from Montreal. He will work with us if and when we look to implement a project/program. As we continue through this experience I encourage you to give us your feedback. We have been given a great opportunity, not only as a congregation but one that could impact congregations in the future.

I have also found the **Covenants of Presence** to be a really useful tool. This covenant was shared at each small group session and there are many items on this list that are useful for our everyday interactions. Think of ways that this covenant can be used not only throughout the NB process, but throughout our life together as a church.

Covenants of Presence

- **Be fully present, extend and presume welcome.**

Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow. Welcome others into this space and presume you are welcomed as well.

- **Listen generously.** Listen intently to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. As Quaker Douglas Steere writes, “To listen another’s soul into life, into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest gift we can offer to another.”

- **Author your story.** We all have a story. Some might say, “I don’t have a story” or “a story worth telling,” but you do. You must claim authorship and learn to tell it to others.

- **We come as equals.** We don’t all have the same gifts and graces, but no person’s gifts and graces are more or less important than another’s.

- **It is never “share or die.”** You will be invited to share stories in pairs and in a large group. The invitation is exactly that. You will determine the extent to which you want to participate.

- **No fixing.** We are not here to set someone else straight, right a wrong, or provide therapy. We are here to witness God’s presence and movement in the sacred stories we share.

- **Suspend judgement.** Set aside your judgements. By creating a space between judgements and reactions, we can listen to another person, and to ourselves, more fully.

- **Turn to wonder.** If you find yourself becoming judgemental, cynical or certain about what you know, try turning to wonder: “I wonder why she shared that story or made those choices?” “I wonder what my reaction teaches me?” “I wonder how my story connects to their stories?”

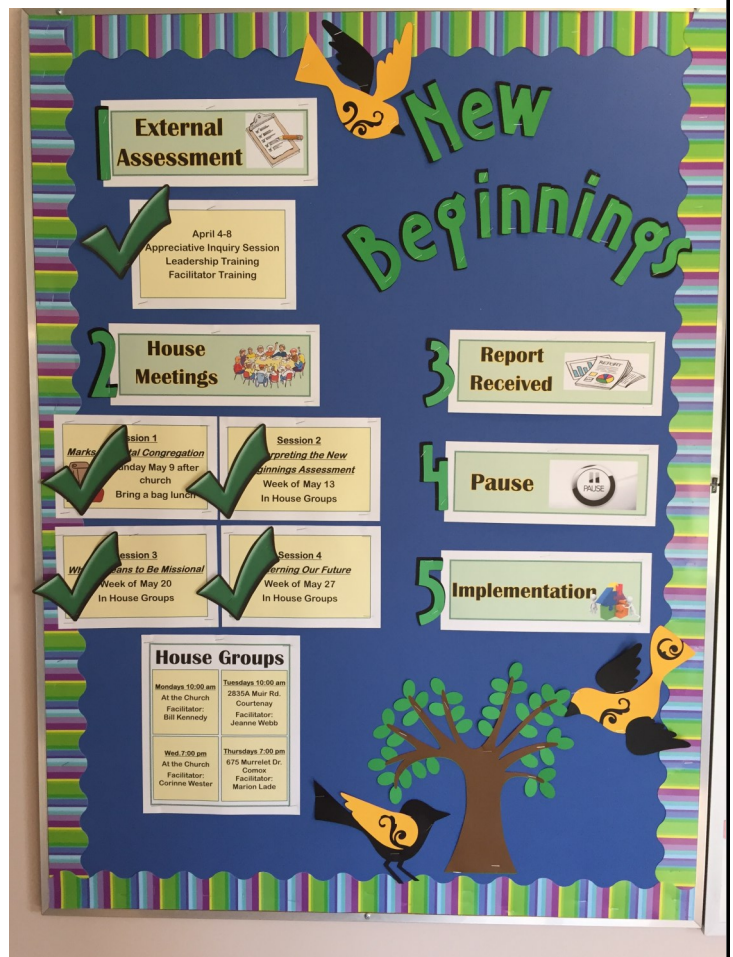
- **Hold these stories with care.** There are many people who will benefit from the stories they hear during our time together. Imagine hearing another as you would listen to scripture—attentively, mindfully and open to the holy.

- **Be mindful and respectful of time.** We all have something important to share and the spiritual discipline of time invites us to focus and make particular choices about what to share and how much to share. It also helps us to create the space.

- **Practice confidentiality care.** We create a safe space by respecting the nature and content of the stories heard. If anyone asks that a story shared be kept in confidence, the group will honour that request.

- **Believe that it is possible to emerge from our time together refreshed, surprised and less burdened than when we came.** Believe that this time can provide renewal, refreshment and possibilities; that seeds planted here will bloom in time to come.

Adapted by the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) from the Center for Courage and Renewal’s Circles of Trust retreats and Margaret Wheatley’s Turning to One Another.



LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY UPDATE

MARCH 5TH-7TH, 2018

Marion Lade, Life and Mission Agency Rep

This LMA meeting was held at National Church Office, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto.

I will begin by highlighting agenda items other than Departmental reports. Following meeting formalities – we welcomed two Co-Convenors of the Rainbow Communion – a listening committee established by 2017 General Assembly (GA) to create a safe space for LGBTQI persons and others to tell of their experience in the Church and report back to GA in 2020. For me – and I understand from others – this was an incredibly moving presentation that has touched me deeply and given me much to reflect upon. I am open to discuss my thoughts personally rather than putting into print.

There were opportunities throughout the meeting days to join with National Church staff for times of meaningful Worship and Communion; coffee breaks; discussions, photo ops and on one evening - dinner at the home of Rev Rick Fee (previous General Secretary of LMA) along with LMA staff.

Additionally over our meeting time, we had conversations via Skype with various people working in the field.

First was **Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin**, Executive Director, Winnipeg Inner City Mission. Margaret spoke of the successes and challenges of this work.

Nick and Becky Bauman, and their 4 children, are fulfilling a two year appoint-

ment at United Mission Hospital, Tansen, Nepal. Nick is part of the medical and surgical team as well as teaching post-grad students enrolled in Medical Doctorate in General Practice. Becky initially worked on settling the family into life in Nepal and three of their children into school (their 4th child is 17 months old). As an Occupational Therapist she is finding ways to serve and connect with community.

Linda Patton-Cowie, our third and final Skype participant, was part of the Healing and Reconciliation Mission Trip that took place in June, 2017. Thirty-three members of the PCC visited Winnipeg Inner City Missions, the Kenora Fellowship Centre, Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church and Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry – four of the ministries with Indigenous people supported by Presbyterians Sharing. They also visited sites of the Presbyterian-run Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora and Shoal Lake, and Birtle Residential School in Manitoba. Throughout the tour, participants deepened their understanding of the history and legacy of colonization and the church's role in running residential schools. For Linda – she found herself asking three questions – “Where did I see reconciliation?” “When did I see reconciliation?” “What does reconciliation require of me?” Perhaps important questions for all of us!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM LMA PROGRAM

SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION AND THE DEPT's UNDER LMA:

LMA Program Support & Admin -

Canada Youth – July 2nd – 7th, Brock University, St. Catharines. Theme – “Stirred Not Shaken...Activated Faith.” Action – Encourage churches to support youth from other congregations if no one is going from theirs. Jenn is part of leadership.

Leading with Care – Possible change coming that will eliminate need for record check every 5 years for ruling elders.

Strategic Planning – Ongoing monitoring.

Human Resources: There have been many staffing changes – but here are two significant ones:

Stephen Allen, Assoc. Secretary of Justice Ministries retiring June 30 after 20 plus years. This position will most likely not be filled until March 2019.

Rev. Susan Shaffer, Assoc. Secretary, Ministry and Church Vocations, will retire in summer 2018. She will be sorely missed by staff and students. Permission has been granted to begin the search for a new Associate Secretary.

Canadian Ministries -

Renewal Programs - Jen deCombe highlighted that in her 2 ½ years as Associate Secretary of Canada Ministries, she has been contacted each week with a request on best ways to assist congregations where declining

membership is ongoing. To respond to this need, Canada Ministries has initiated two renewal programs for review to 8 congregations within the PCC – New Beginnings and Vision. Both programs take congregations through a year-long process involving discipleship, coaching and group discernment. Special attention to gathering a diverse mix of congregations in terms of geography, leadership and context of ministry. Based on responses of the 8 participating congregations, intent is to adapt and make these renewal programs available across Canada. We at CVPC are one of the 4 congregations selected to review and become familiar with New Beginnings. Personally, I see this as an exciting opportunity for us, not only to review and enhance ministry for us in the Comox Valley, but also, in the long run, assist other Presbyterian congregations across our country.

Evangelism Initiative – Creating a program to encourage evangelism. Participants receive one-on-one coaching over next year to help launch an evangelism initiative in congregations. Feedback will help create program other congregations can participate in.

Children and Worship – Has been adapted and is now used in Messy Church; inter-generational worship; worship in nursing homes and worship with adults who live with a

developmental disability. Training opportunities are available in all provinces to provide ongoing support and resources. (Is this something we could try – i.e., worship with adults/ nursing homes?)

Supporting Ministry Grants – LMA has identified funding priorities as follows: -

- *New congregation development
- *Renewing ministries.
- *Specialized ministries Aboriginal, inner city, Francophone
- * Sustaining ministries – rural and urban

Communications –

Digital Operations – provides access to resources and materials e.g. official church documents and policies, news announcements and special events.

280,000 hits on website in 2017 with over 7,000 looking up PCC through a Google search

Online Chat – allows visitors to PCC website to live-chat with staff of Communications Office. Plan for 2018 to continue to increase this service and improve usability.

PCCWeb – service to congregations, groups, presbyteries and synods that allow set-up of website free of charge and funded through gifts to Presbyterians Sharing. Currently host 127 sites.

Online donations – In 2017, the PCC system processed over 2,000 transactions with a total of nearly \$250,000 in online gifts. Upgrading in 2018 to allow for more user-friendly experience.

Facebook – nearly 2,000 likes in 2017. Has a 4.6 out of 5 star rating.

Twitter – nearly 1,500 followers on PCC's @PCCConnect Twitter page.

Parasource Marketing and Distribution for sale and distribution of PCC resources. New order form to be launched this year.

PCPak – distributed to congregations 3 times per year. Contains materials from various agencies of the church to educate, equip and inform denomination.

PCCConnect E-Newsletter – Over 2,000 current subscribers.

Presbyterian Connection Newsletter – currently 16,500 copies are printed and sent to congregations.

International Ministries – In co-operation with partner Churches and agencies throughout the world, the PCC participates in worldwide mission. ***Two-thirds of the world's Christians now live in the global south, the majority in Africa.*** International Ministries nurtures relationships between the PCC and overseas partner churches and organizations in three main areas. The department actively recruits, prepares and supports the mission personnel appointed by LMA for service with our partners. Secondly, understanding that developing leaders is as important for our partners as it is in Canada, we support leadership development through theological education and other training. Thirdly, we also support partner churches by helping

to fund programs and special projects. If you are interested in a listing of the mission personnel; ecumenical partnerships; ecumenical organizations; 2017 partnership events; and leadership and other development grants – please let me know.

Justice Ministries -

Responding to Truth and Reconciliation

– TRC published 94 calls to action outlining how churches, governments and Canadians can address the legacy of residential school system and participate in reconciliation. Several calls are directed to churches. Visit <http://presbyterian.ca/healing/trc-calls-to-action> to learn how the church is responding.

Sexuality – Suffice to say there are strong feelings on both sides with regard to ordination of homosexuals. 2017 General Assembly agreed to defer a decision until 2020 with a plan to use these years for discussion to take place at all levels of the Church. Sessions were asked to respond by January 2018 to a questionnaire. Two committees are tasked to prepare reports – *Church Doctrine* and *Life and Mission*. Also, as noted previously in this report, Rainbow Communion was empowered to invite LGBTQI people to tell stories of harm done to them within and by the church and to share their stories of God's grace experienced by them in Christian ministry. A final report is to be

brought to 2020 General Assembly. (Note – This was a major topic at this year's General Assembly held in early June. I understand that a recommendation was approved that Moderators of the General Assemblies back to 2005 will form a Committee to discuss and report back to the 2019 General Assembly. Marg Carr was a delegate to this year's General Assembly).

Opioid Crisis – refers to the current overdose emergency caused by use of fentanyl and other opioid-class drugs which have led to deaths (2,800 in 2016 – expected to be 4,000 in 2017). Some people become addicted from prescribed medical treatments others through illicit channels. Some Churches are taking action – i.e., a Presbyterian church in Edmonton became the only chapter of the American support group in Canada – Because I Love You (BILY). Here are some other examples of what some Churches are doing: being a safe deposit site for needles; procuring a naloxone kit and let the homeless know it is available in an emergency; reaching out to those who are addicted; hosting public info events on the opioid crisis. In case you were not aware, drugs and opioids are an issue in our community!

Some other working groups – Poverty Reduction in Canada; Genetics, Faith and Life Sciences Working Group

(Canadian Council of Churches); Ecology and Creation Care to name a few.

I would think you can do so under PAR as well!)

Ministry and Church Vocations – assists the Church to discern, prepare and support professional leaders in ministry. The department supports discernment about candidacy for ministry, supporting the nurturing and development of professional church leaders; facilitating a profile referral system; coordinating the work of the Committee on Education and Reception; establishing and identifying resources to support crisis intervention and conflict resolution; creating and interpreting policies; engaging in theological reflection about ministry; and serving as a resource and sounding board to ministers and church courts on the foregoing.

Presbyterian World Service and

Development – There is no assessed amount to be submitted each year by congregations to PWS&D (there is for Presbyterians Sharing). In 2017, PWS&D contributed to just over \$7 million worth of development and relief programs where most needed around the world - \$3.49 million in development and \$3.67 million in emergency relief programming. This includes the various matching fund opportunities secured. This was done with a total of 2.7 million in donations. I have a breakdown of where the funds were applied if anyone is interested. (Note: You can contribute to PWS&D under “Other” on your offering envelope!

Stewardship and Planned Giving – The department provides expertise, advice and encouragement to help congregations and specialized ministries encourage a culture of generosity through developing strategies for annual undesignated gifts; small and large project-driven gifts; major gifts and legacy gifts as well as volunteer opportunities. Various printed resources are available to help equip and empower congregational mission and stewardship programs. In 2017, Presbyterians across Canada gave over \$10.96 million to support the work of the PCC. \$6,937,903 went to Presbyterians Sharing; \$2,720,597 to PWS&D; \$208,809 to special projects of the denomination; \$536,062 to undesignated bequests; and \$558,692 to PWS&D’s Loaves and Fishes fund (legacy).

As a point of note – as far as Presbyterians Sharing is concerned – the allocation for 2017 was based on 10% of a congregation’s dollar base. With a total of 852 congregations – 846 active and 6 inactive (amalgamated or closed); and based on the 10% dollar base:

94 congregations (11%) gave above the 10% allocation. Collectively they gave 20% of gifts from congregations for a total of \$246,518 above 10%.

73 congregations (9%) gave at the 10% goal. Collectively they gave 14% of

gifts from congregations.

679 (80%) gave less than the 10% allocation. Collectively they gave 66% of gifts from congregations.

6 congregations who were inactive gave \$78,033.59. \$75,000 came from the selling of St. James, Winnipeg. In 2016 these congregations had given \$21,742.

I know this report is long – but I wanted you

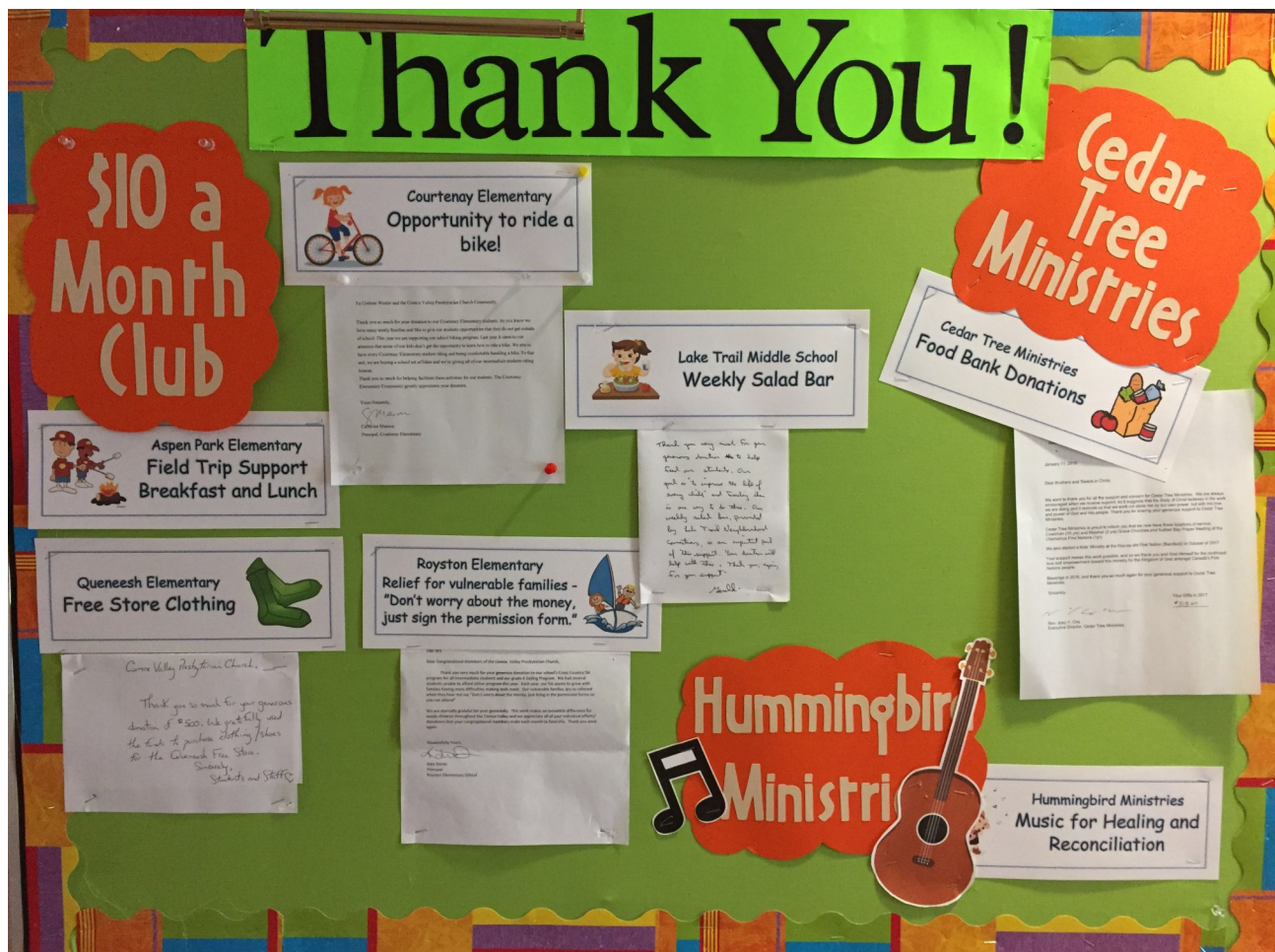
to be able to share in not only the great work taking place in community and across our country – but also globally by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Lots to celebrate and as always - lots of challenge!! Please feel free to connect with me re any questions, thoughts!

Respectfully submitted

Marion Lade, LMA Rep, February, 2018

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

The **Mission Committee** would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation for their ongoing support of the projects we undertake. We hope that you have taken the time to read some of the lovely thank you letters we have received that are posted on the bulletin board. Our congregation is able to serve both our local and wider community in so many ways thanks to your generous support.



Situating Palestine Study:

During the season of Lent members of the congregation joined together to learn more about the Israel-Palestine relationship in a five week study written by the Revs. Drs. Noel and Dorcas Gordon.



Easter Sunday outdoor service at Jane's Farm, April 1, 2018.

