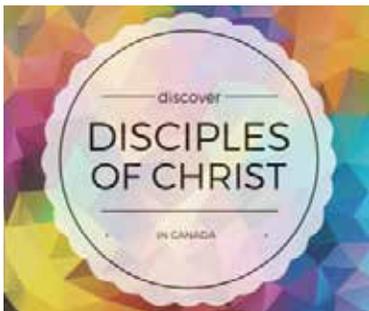


The Canadian Disciple



A Publication of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada

Published: January 26, 2018, (Cambridge, Ontario)



Jan/Feb Prayer Partners

Jan 28 Word of Life CC/Eglise
Parole de Vie, Joliette, QC
Pastor: Oscar Wakenge

Feb 4 Église Évangélique
Mahanaïm De La Rive Nord
Pastor: Jean Daniel Francois

Feb 11 Broadway Disciples UC,
Winnipeg, MB Pastor: Noël
Suministrano

Feb 18 Campbell Stone UC,
Calgary, AB Pastor: Danah Cox

Feb 25 Milton CC, Milton, NS
Pastor: Russell Prime

Special prayer requests:

- New church plants that are currently in discernment across the country. Pls pray for pastors who are considering this work /call
- Pastors and their families
- Lay leaders in all of our congregations who are vital to ministry
- Faithful around the world who are persecuted for their faith and witness
- Leadership of the DoC as we discern the path forward

Setting Sail

Dear Friends in Christ,

I remember listening to Rev Dr Sharon Watkins' sermon at the General Assembly where she became our first ever female General Minister and President over 12 years ago. She spoke eloquently and faithfully about the state of the church in an age of rapid change and shifting context. Although I don't recall exactly every word she spoke, one image has stayed with me throughout these 12 plus years, that we are not all in the same boat. Each of our congregations are in their own boat...but we are all in the same water. And each of us is responsible for working together in our boat to get to where it should be going. We have everything we need (even if we think we don't!). Some are at the oars and ready to go, some are working on fixing a hole or two, some are struggling to get everyone on board and ready. But not all of us in the flotilla, are facing the same direction.

I remember her talking about where we were headed. Too often, she said, we look towards the horizon and see what looks like sunset. But in fact, what we are seeing is the dawn. The sun is rising on a new day for the church. And somehow, each in our own boats, we must follow the light that shines from the heart of God, allowing ourselves to be guided and lead by the Gospel. And we are better when we all set sail towards that new dawn together.

Friends, we face some great challenges here in Canada. Each of our Areas find themselves in unique seas, unique contexts, which do not easily translate to other Areas. Each of our congregations, likewise, are and will experience different challenges, opportunities, and situations. But we are all equipped with exactly what we need to set sail and follow the light of Christ into a new dawn for Christ's church. We have amazing leaders, strong congregations, enough resources, deep faith, true community, and a passion for justice! We have a faithful God who has not and will not abandon us! We hold light within us, that reminds us that God's dream for humanity is that we all be one, that love conquers hate, that resurrection is real, and that nothing can prevail against the love of God for all creation. We have this polar star, unity, that pulls us together, encourages us to celebrate our diversity, and opens our hearts and eyes to see each other's gifts and those of our partners, so that together, we can be a visible testimony to the power of God's love. (cont)

Setting Sail (continued)

Let us set sail together! Celebrating our past and the deep roots that we share, learning from each other new ways of being, and supporting one another when the seas get rough.

Your Region is here to assist in getting all our congregations ready for the voyage, to help keep lines of communication open, to share resources to help us achieve the goals Christ has set before us, and to encourage each of us to minister in whatever way we are gifted and called.

I believe 2018 will be a banner year for the Disciples of Christ in Canada! We are not alone, nor

are we forsaken! The God of Abraham, Israel, Jacob, Esther, Mary, and Sarah, and countless others is the Admiral of our fleet and guides towards a sunrise of hope, purpose, and joy. We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. We are called not to be spectators in this world, but active participants in the great work of God to make all things new.

May the peace of Christ, the companionship of the Spirit, and the love of the Creator fill your lives and your ministries now and always. – *Jen Garbin, RM*

Truth and Reconciliation at Milton Christian Church

The shape of healing in Milton, Nova Scotia is a circle. For the past three years Milton Christian Church (Christ's Disciples) has hosted a healing circle for area residents. In an effort to address past wrongs to the Mi'kmaq nation and the present damage to both the Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq residents, people have been meeting weekly at the parsonage for a healing circle.

When I first started to attend Milton Christian Church I was delighted to find there was other Mi'kmaq in the congregation. In getting to know these folks I have heard many horrifying stories of the abuses toward natives in this rural and otherwise gentle community. I have heard stories such as; native children being refused pick-up on the school buses, to the murder of a mother protecting her children in the 1970's where no charges were laid.

The people at the church and in the community at large were not responsible for any residential schools. Most may not even be responsible for the hatred perpetuated on natives. However if a person turns a blind eye to these wrongs are they not just as guilty. There are many ways we as a Christian community can reach out and bridge the ignorance that feeds this dark wolf.

One way being implemented in Milton is the Mi'kmaq healing circle. People from all walks of life native or non-native are welcome to attend.

Everyone is accepted in the spirit of the Mi'kmaq ancestor's belief that everyone is a human being no matter what racial or national boundaries have been put upon them.

A circle begins with a drum song, the welcoming song. Everyone there is then smudged. Smudging, similar to what we read in the bible is the burning of certain herbs (incense) to cleans those attending and create an atmosphere of truth and honesty. After there is a prayer asking the Creator to walk with us on this journey and help us to speak from our spirit.

All of us carry some damage throughout our lives, some more than others. We remember some of the hurts and losses in our lives and others have been forgotten, buried in our subconscious to haunt the actions of our everyday lives. It is these hurts that lead to substance abuse, anger and violence, power and control issues, low self-esteem, and on a milder note the inability to lead happy lives.

In a circle an attempt is made by the participants to find these hurts and cast them out. We cannot forget what has happened to us but we can give it perspective and understanding thus overcoming it. The human beings in the circle are asked to speak to various native teachings and in doing so are able to discover who they are and who they are not. During the circle an eagle feather is passed around. When one is holding the feather they are the only one

allowed to speak. More importantly the others in the circle are given the responsibility of listening. As we speak we become aware of whom we are and as we listen we shape what we think. Hearing the problems of others helps us to understand our own.

As the leader of the circle it is my task to guide the circle, not teach. I am there to take them down a path of self-discovery based on their own needs. Native teachings are used as our vehicle, to drive these discussions, as well as being the tools we carry with us on life's journey.

I guide the group with the Seven Grandfather teachings and the Medicine Wheel teachings. For thousands of years these basic principals have stood to guide moral behaviour and promote social harmony among native peoples. The Seven Grandfather teachings are; Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility, and Truth. They are a nice bunch of words but as words that we read on a page they have little value. In order to make them part of who we are we must, through discussion, look at each word individually taking the word apart and putting it back together in relationship to whom we are. If you take a minute to think about the word love you soon come to realize that it has many meanings to us and the word humility, well, what does that mean?

A discussion on the Seven Grandfather teachings focuses on one word at a time. This can take up the whole session and even overlap into other sessions. As we discuss each teaching we begin to not only discover what each word means to us but more importantly discover the impact it has on our lives and the hurts we have suffered. We learn from listening to other's stories how we can heal ourselves and make the changes that will put us on the good road.

It is the same with the medicine wheel teachings which are many; the medicine wheel is divided into four quadrants; north, east, south, and west. For example one of the teachings of the Medicine Wheel is the four aspects of self we try to keep in balance, Spiritual, Mental, Physical, and Emotional,

another is following the good road, Strength, Honesty, Sharing, and Kindness.

There is also the retelling of Mi'kmaq stories. These parables are intended to give an understanding of who we are in relationship with ourselves, others, and the natural world around us. In the Mi'kmaq creation story we see the first being Glooscap encounter his grandmother, his mother, and his nephew.

Through these encounters we come to understand that the Grandmother represents the wisdom of the elders. The Mother represents the nurturing, love, and the respect that is due women. The nephew shows us that the child is the strength of our future who learns from what they see, putting the onus on us to lead exemplary lives, showing the children how to become good adults.

The circles end with another drum song, the song of farewell. This song/prayer is to give thanks for this healing fellowship and to end the circle with honour and respect.

After spending three years learning our traditional ways from the elders I was told that I should now share it with others. Milton Christian Church has given me the chance to share what I have learned. It has given me the opportunity to do mission in helping the community and it has given me permission to address truth and reconciliation by honouring and reviving, the traditional teachings.

The Good Road, or as it has been called The Red Road or the Sweetgrass Road is an endless journey, a journey that once begun is walked our whole lives. Like all roads there are pot holes, detours, and wrong turns. It is through the teachings that we are given a map to keep us on this good road. As a Mi'kmaq and a Christian I know I have been blessed by the Lord to find myself where I am, and doing what I am doing.

Tahoe and Amen, Crow Eddy

-- Crow Eddy, Deacon at Milton Christian Church, Milton,
Nova Scotia

Check out a brand new blog by Canadian missionary,
Emmanuella Joseph, currently serving in Morocco!
<https://www.strivetoinpire.org/>

Scott's Story

I had been on the Spiritual path for many years and in my recovery I had found a God of my understanding. It wasn't Jesus.

I had studied many Spiritual concepts, Religions and Philosophies. I was also trying to commit to my Step 11 practice. I experimented with many meditation techniques and some were very effective, however I could not keep up with the practice or devote myself to any one of them for any significant length of time.

That was until I discovered Centring Prayer. It suited my temperament and I was willing and able to give it the necessary commitment. It became, and still remains, my primary devotional practice. The paradox of course was that the practice comes from the Christian Tradition, and I had no desire to identify myself as Christian or follow any of the precepts of Christianity. Or any religion for that matter. I guess you could say I was spiritual but not religious.

The Jesus of my understanding at that time was a mystical person not unlike the Buddha, with teachings that were largely metaphoric. I liked to say that, "The Buddha points the way to enlightenment. Jesus points the way to salvation, and the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous points the way to peaceful, happy, contented sobriety."

I had the Mystery of the Divine all sown up in a clear, easy to understand, neat little care package that suited my recovery just fine. I had many deep and profound spiritual experiences that kept me motivated to continue my walk with the God of my understanding. I even had a very real experience of Divine Love. "Wow!" I thought. "That's what those Christians are always on about."

One Sunday morning during my morning Prayer time I was prompted to attend church which I was not at all happy about, however, I have a credo by which I live and that is,

"Relax, take it easy, live one day at a time, and if The Great Spirit prompts you to do something, you move your ass."

I did attend church that morning. I put on a clean shirt and showed up at a Pentecostal Church that I passed by everyday. I got there just before 10am because I assumed that would be what time church would start. I shook some hands, kissed some babies. Stood up when asked to, sang along and prayed. The experience wasn't entirely unpleasant and I was relieved when my Higher Power didn't ask me to go back.

Some time passed and I remained on the trajectory I was on and was happy to do so. Then the awful day came when, during my morning prayers, I was told very clearly and very specifically, "Jesus Is who he says he was."

I was determined not to share this information with anyone lest what remained of my now fragile spirituality be completely shattered.

Then I was invited to Q. I had friends there. I knew it was partially based on 12 step recovery and I felt I might be able to contribute something. I felt safe enough to reveal my revelation (I think they were more excited about it than I was). I attended meetings and all the retreats. When asked to do something, I didn't say no right away. I was baptized, and eventually became a member of the leadership team.

What I contributed to Q was but a fraction of what I received in return. I was given a spiritual family. I was given encouragement and support during difficult life situations. Most importantly, I was allowed to be wrong. I was allowed to hold on to my pre-conceived ideas about Jesus and about Christianity and about the Bible. As long as I respected other people's values I was allowed to do Church badly until I learned to do it better.

What my life is like now? Well, I'm convinced Jesus loves me. He wants to have a relationship with me. He cares about me, not because I'm good but because he's good. I worship him not because he needs to be worshipped but because I need to love him with all my heart and all my mind and all my Soul.

He never intended to start a religion that's not what he's about. It's what Lucifer is about. He wants to be worshipped, he wants religion, he wants to divide and conquer. He hates us. He hates us because the God most High holds us in such favour.

he sent, and that Holy Spirit is the Restrainer that keeps the Darkness from utterly prevailing.

I love my friend.

-- Scott, member of Q Faith Community

(to read more faith stories from the Q Faith Community and learn more about this vital ministry in the Western Area, visit their website www.qfaithcommunity.com)

Share your story! Inspire others! Proclaim the good news! Send submissions to rm@Canadadisciples.org

News of the Family



<<<<<< Pastor Noel Suminrado at the pulpit during Week of Prayer for Christian Unity celebrations in Winnipeg, MB



Children's time at Broadway Disciples United Church, Winnipeg, MB >>>>>>



<<<<<<< The Christian Women's Fellowship of Wyndholme Christian Church, Dartmouth, NS, celebrates with a Christmas dinner out



Sugarbush Christian Church, Guelph, ON, says farewell to church planter and pastor, Jen Garbin, at the end of December 2017 >>>>>>

For the past few months, Milton Christian Church, Milton, NS, has been hosting theme dinners to bring together the greater community, provide opportunities for people to enjoy a beautiful evening out, and use their gifts of creativity and hospitality to serve their area! These pics are from a recent "Evening in Paris" themed dinner



REMINDER! February is Week of Compassion Month! Please download your free resources at www.weekofcompassion.org And support this vital ministry!

Regional Minister's Travel Schedule

Below please find Jen's tentative travel schedule for the next few months.

January 30-31: Canadian Church Leaders Retreat, Mississauga
February 4: St Thomas Christian Church, St Thomas
March 23-25: OCYF Sno-Fun Weekend, Mapleton
April 14-17: General Board Meetings, Des Moines, Iowa
April 17-20: College of Regional Ministers, Des Moines, Iowa

Looking for new music for worship? Visit <http://davidledwardsmusic.com/sheet-music-psalms/> for a selection of original Psalms for use in worship!

If you would like Jen to visit or preach at your congregation, attend a board meeting, annual meeting, lead a workshop or retreat, please contact the office at mail@canadadisciples.org. Please keep our RM in your prayers as she travels in the coming months.



Faithful Disciples like you have answered God's call to build the church in Canada for more than 200 years. With courage and vision, women and men from coast to coast to coast, of all walks of life, have made this church shine like a beacon of God's love. They have funded education, new leaders, mission, new congregations, and outreach across this great land. We work & minister under the shade of the trees they planted. Now it is our turn to plant new seeds. Your gift to the Region brings God's love to thousands. Give generously today. May God bless your gifts!