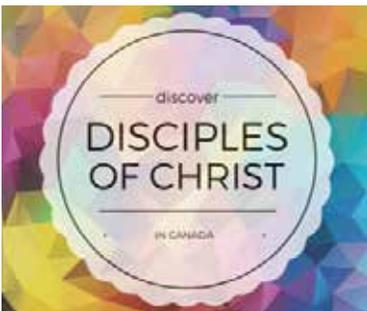


The Canadian Disciple



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

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July/Aug Prayer Partners

Jul 22 Mapleton Church of Christ, Mapleton, ON
Pastor: Janet Anstead

July 29 Word of Life CC/Eglise Parole de Vie, Joliette, QC
Pastor: Oscar Wakenge

Aug 5 Canadian Regional Assembly, Guelph, ON
(Staff, Board members)

Aug 12 Église Évangélique Mahanaïm De La Rive Nord
Pastor: Jean Daniel Francois

Aug 19 Broadway Disciples UC, Winnipeg, MB
Pastor: Noël Suministrano

Aug 26 Campbell Stone UC, Calgary, AB
Pastor: Danah Cox

Special prayer requests:

- Families & spouses of our pastors across the country. It is a great work our pastors do, to care for our congregations, but they also care dearly for their partners & family. Pray for them – for healing, health, guidance, strength, and courage.

Building Excitement...Building Beloved Community

We are only a few weeks away from our All Canada Convention / Regional Assembly in Guelph, Ontario this August 2-5! The registrations are in, the committee is hard at work to get everything in order...and things are taking shape.

The theme of our gathering is “Building Beloved Community” and is based on John 13:35: “By this you will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Not only does this text and the theme guide our time together as we learn, fellowship, worship, and celebrate together, but it is intended to help guide our Region as move into God’s dream for us as part of Christ’s church in Canada. Your call is to build the beloved community... community that reflects the self-less nature of Jesus Christ, community that is dedicated not to self-preservation but to nurturing and encouraging new life all around it.

I am feeling like the Christian Church DoC in Canada is in a familiar place. We have a whole bunch of faithful people across this country who have been courageous and dedicated followers of Christ all of these years but now are facing true hardship – plummeting budgets, financial insecurity, losses of buildings, needing pastoral leadership that builds relationships & teaches courageous leadership, no money to hire leaders, aging congregations, you name the issue, it is in our church. Our communities feel embattled on all sides across our country. It’s not an easy thing to be the church right now. We are at a crossroads...a time when the church is not flourishing. When it no longer sits at the centre of society. When people are suspicious and five generations now are unfamiliar with the old stories, have never or rarely step foot in church buildings, and Christianity has been relegated to the margins. It doesn’t matter if you are in the big city or on the shores of a tranquil river...we are worried...we have questions...we are unsure...we are trying to be faithful, to continue on, but this re-inventing stuff is hard. We have been and will continue to be faithful...but often don’t know the way forward...what we know worked in the past doesn’t anymore and we are scared.

We know things must change...but the path ahead is not clear. Or at least that is what we first think. In reality, the path was carved out eons ago...the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the roadmap. Jesus’ lessons and life are the signposts and directions. And we, my friends, have been equipped from time to take this journey. All we need to do, is take the first step.

Building Beloved Community...continued

Let me introduce to you the concept of Beloved Community. Beloved community is not a new idea. Josiah Royce first coined the term in late 1800s. Dr Martin Luther King talked of beloved community all the time during the civil rights movement in the 1960s and saw it as the ultimate goal of humanity. Beloved community is the community that does not tolerate hunger, homelessness, poverty, violence, exclusion, or violence of any kind. It instead embraces everyone with compassion, radical welcome, inclusion, generosity, wholeness, healing, peace, justice, and love. It is a modern understanding of the Kingdom or the Reign of God...the world that God desires. The Beloved Community is essentially the children of God together, being, living, working, walking in the footsteps of Jesus. It lives the radical, transformative love of Jesus Christ as he did. It is the community that declares all are welcome, and lives it every day. It keeps at its heart the love of God for all creation.

GK Chesterton declared that the reason the concept of beloved community is not often found in our world and especially among our churches is "not that it has been tried and found wanting...but it has been found difficult and not tried." The three biggest threats to beloved community are oppression, militarism, and materialism. It is too easy to fall in love with our power, privilege, rights, buildings, stuff, all of the things we have gotten used to, all the things we have worked hard for...and forget that we are not called to amass treasure...but to be rich in love, compassion, justice, kindness, and relationship.

As children of God we are called to BE something different in the world. We are called to BE Christ for those who are hurting, excluded, lonely, suffering, and dying. We are called to be light in the darkness...not of our own power, but filled with the light of the Holy Spirit, the Illuminator of all things. We are to be houses and places and communities of welcome and healing in a world that is suffering. We are to be a cup of cold water for a dry and thirsty land.

My friends, it is far past the time for us to catch the Spirit's fire! It is far past the time for us to put aside the things that keep us from shining the light of freedom, healing, and life in our world! It is time for us to let go of all of the stuff, processes, and ways of being that keep us from living into the call to be children of God, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.

I pray for us a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know in our heart of hearts that a building does not make us a church ...that we will build now together beloved community...community that will not tolerate hunger and homelessness, poverty and injustice. I pray that we will be build beloved community that does "the hard work of reconciliation, redemption and being in right relationship with one another." I pray that we will build beloved community here that works to "transform opponents into friends." I pray that we will build beloved community that puts love and trust and compassion over fear and hatred and animosity. I pray that we build beloved community across this great nation...taking a leading role in building on the foundations of our forebears, for a new generation who are looking for home, community, and belonging.

Be the fullness of Christ in all that you do so that all may know of Christ's love. The beloved community is you...not any structure...you, me, each of us. And each of us builds God's community with every prayer, every selfless act, every moment of service, every relationship we nurture...I pray for us wisdom, courage, and eyes that see that we are a special people...with a unique opportunity to continue to be builders. We are children of God...made of the same stuff as the One we follow. Join with me in prayer and celebration to have been called to this great task, partners with the Most High God, to change our communities, towns, cities, provinces, nation...into the Beloved Community where all are welcome and the Light of Christ shines for all! - Jen

Jammin' With Jen and Jane

Jen: Well Jane, I understand you are studying again!

Jane: Actually Jen, I've never stopped, but yes, I have embarked on a new adventure.

Jen: You are already a member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists with credentials through the Canadian Association of Spiritual Caregivers. Are you pursuing more studies in Pastoral Counselling?

Jane: In a way, Yes. Much of Psychotherapy is practiced in a secular manner. After my ordination I pursued certification in Pastoral Counselling because I wanted to be able to journey with people acknowledging their own faith practices and beliefs as a source of strength. As many of our readers have experienced there is a deeper side to faith than just going to church and adhering to the beliefs of a denomination. Since the turn of the millennium, there has been a growing interest in spirituality both inside and outside of the church. Many people have lost touch or never knew God and want to reconnect with the safety and assurance they knew when their life was more attuned with God.

Jen: Okay. So what are you studying? And where... and how?

Jane: I'm just finishing my second year of Doctor of Ministry Studies in Spiritual Formation at Tyndale Seminary and College. People from many Protestant denominations and from around the world come together twice a year for intensive residencies. In between the face-to-face sessions, we meet through conference calls to discuss the readings and assignments. The first year involves studying historical and cultural developments in spiritual practices culminating with a spiritual autobiography.



Jen: Spiritual Practices. You mean like prayer and meditating with a passage from the Bible? Or going on a retreat?

Jane: Yes, That and a lot more. Some people may have heard of a Labyrinth, a way of walking and contemplating over a longer distance, but in a closed space. One of the most famous labyrinths is a Chartres Cathedral outside Paris. For those who are in Toronto, there is a replica behind the Eaton Centre beside the Church of the Holy Trinity.

But there are many other ways of slowing down and getting in touch with the small voice inside us. The spiritual aspect of the arts and crafting has been recognized, as has gardening and photography. A free on-line resource that people can access is called PRAY DEEP, available from the author at <https://www.kathrynshirey.com/pray-deep/>. A family friendly resource available through Chalice Press is called, Faithful Families by Traci Smith.

Jen: So where does all this study lead.

Jane: The academic study along with supervised practical client hours leads to credentialing as a Spiritual Director. It won't be any surprise to you that my interest is the Spiritual Formation of Children. I co-lead a monthly Family focused Food, Faith and Fun event at St. Joseph of Nazareth Church in Brampton. I am in the process of developing the Action Research Project based on a hybrid model of Young Children and Worship used in some Disciple Churches and Messy Church, a church start experience from England.

Jen: Where can people get a hold of you if they have any questions?

Jane: As always I'm available at janepekar@rogers.com or my cell phone is 647-242-6352.

A Letter from Jen

Dear Friends,

The past year has been one filled with great change and struggle for me personally. I thank you for your patience and understanding as I have worked through some deep pain. I know many of you have many questions (not the least of which is why has the Canadian Disciple stopped coming!?) and I am thankful for the respect and space you have given me. For the many who have been waiting for responses to questions, visits, calls, etc., I appreciate more than you know your patience. For the many who have kept myself and family in your prayers, I am humbled and grateful for your care. I ask only for your continued prayers and grace. Healing has begun, but it is a long process.

I am grateful for a strong and compassionate board who have worked through some significant challenges in the Region over the past year, all the while holding me with arms of love and grace. As we enter into our third year together in service, I am so very thankful for their collaboration, willingness to lead, and vision for Christ's church here in Canada.

I am looking forward to the coming year with a fervent hope that all of our congregations commit to work together as one body to help one another through the tough times we share. I urge all of us to build and nurture the relationships we share with one another. And I humbly ask that you pray for one another and support one another as often as you are able. There are many of our leaders and congregants who are struggling right now...your faithful prayers are so urgently needed. Friends, let us get back to work of nurturing the spirit within, and recommit ourselves to growing deeper in love with the One who loved us first. Peace, Jen

Prints of Peace: Bringing Love Wherever We Go

Want to help make a difference while at Convention? One of our great legacies at the Regional Assembly is to engage in local mission – to leave footprints of love behind us no matter where we meet. This year we are encouraging ALL ATTENDEES AND ALL CONGREGATIONS to bring along or send food gift cards in \$10, 20 or \$25 denominations to give to Chalmers Community Services Centre to give to people in need in the Guelph area. Let's see if we can raise \$2500 in gifts for this great ministry!

In addition, pls make some space in your luggage for TEA! That's right! Chalmers has an urgent need for tea for its food pantry...so bring some along in its original packaging. Let's make a difference in Guelph! Shine some love all around as we meet to celebrate, learn, and worship together!

And for those who are unable to attend – you can still do a drive for gift cards in your own congregation!! Just send them along with someone who is attending – OR mail them Christian Church (DoC) in Canada, 86 Glasgow St N, Guelph, ON, N1H 4W2. If you are couriering your gifts, please send them to Jennifer Garbin, 1024 Windermere Road, Windsor, ON, N8Y 3E4 before JULY 27 and she will bring them along.

Regional Minister's Travel Schedule

July 14-15: Campbell Stone & Q Faith Community,
Calgary, AB
July 17-18: College of Regional Ministers,
Birmingham, AL
July 22-26: General Council of the United Church of
Canada, Oshawa, ON

August 2-6: All Canada Convention & Pastor's
Retreat, Guelph, ON
August 12-26: Global Ministries Pilgrimage to
Ghana and South Africa
Sept: Somos Uno, Montreal, QB
Oct 5-8: OCYF Fall Weekend, Disciples Conference
Grounds, ON

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.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

CANADIAN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY



WORKSHOPS

AUG 2-5 2018 UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
CANADADISCIPLES.ORG/ASSEMBLY



Miriam, Mary, and Mary Magdelene - The Three M's: Models of Leadership in the Church

Rev. Janet M. Anstead and Awit Marcelino

Exploring Women in the Bible in order to empower and transform leaders for today.



Getting to Know Disciples of Christ

Rev. Dr. Jen Garbin

A great refresher on what Disciples believe, how they organize, and where they trace their roots. Have a question about our identity, history, or why we are the way we are? Now is your chance to explore some answers!



Disciples Justice Advocacy and Public Witness

Rev. Ken Brooker-Langston

Discussing ecumenical and interfaith justice advocacy, and the role the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) plays.



Social Media and Church

Tim Campbell

In this fun, brief 45 minute workshop-seminar, we'll explore: why be on social media, who's there and fun features applicable to churches. Bring your questions as we will have plenty of Q&A.



Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness with Wisdom from Jesus and the Buddha

Darlene Brewer, PhD

In this workshop we'll reflect together on the practice of cultivating fearlessness and compassion in today's world with insights from the teachings of Buddhism and the teachings of Christianity. In our time together I will give an introduction to these concepts and practices and then we will share the wisdom of the group as we discuss our own spiritual practices.



Bringing All Ages Together in Worship and at Home

Olivia Bryan Updegrave

1 out of every 10 teenagers will still be in the church in their twenties. Why? What happened? What didn't happen? What can we do to change this trend? Who stayed? Why did they stay? Over the past 15 years lots of research and study has been done to help explain the reasons behind those leaving the church building and those leaving their faith entirely.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

CANADIAN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

WORSHIP | EDUCATION | FELLOWSHIP



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