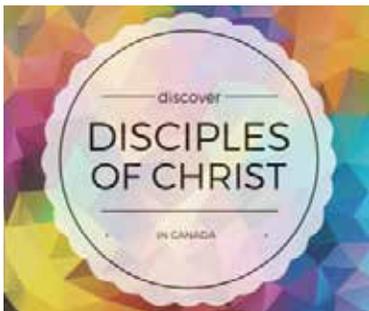


# The Canadian Disciple



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

Published: Nov 24, 2016 (Guelph, Ontario)



## November/December Prayer Partners

**Nov 27** McKernan Christian Church, Edmonton, AB. Pastor: Ed Stover

**Dec 4** Guelph Christian Church, Guelph, ON

**Dec 11** CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING for Regional Ministry in Canada

**Dec 18** St Thomas Christian Church, St Thomas, ON. (pastoral search)

**Dec 25** Happy Family / Famiglia Feliz, Montreal QC. Pastors Juan Carlos & Julia Rodriguez. (restarting their ministry)

### Special prayer requests :

- Please remember Rev Tom Rutherford & wife Diane in your prayers as he is in hospital again.
- A number of our congregations are in discernment around their pastoral leadership, with some preparing for search & call. Lift them up in this time of transition.
- Keep the US in prayer as they work through many deep issues.

## This Advent: BE HOPE!

Friends in Christ,

If ever there was a time to wait on God, it is now. If ever there was a time to pray for the four gifts of the Advent season: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, it is now. These are the times for which the church has been called, equipped, and sent. The message of HOPE that we proclaim from our pulpits and from dozens of bright advent wreath lights across our country, is the message our world has needed for millennia...and especially now.

The message of hope written about in Isaiah, to a people who are languishing in exile, is a message of a jealous God, eagerly and earnestly reaching out to its children. "Remember your God!" "Come home!" "Know that I am your God and you are my people!" (loosely based on multiple passages of Isaiah, but particularly Isaiah 60:19-22). These words, proclaimed by the prophet are powerful words, words of life that answer the cries of longing. Words of rebirth that usher in a new age of redemption, reconciliation, & re-membering. Words that tug at the aching heart strings of the oppressed and remind them they are beloved & their suffering has not gone unnoticed. Words that convict the oppressor & the unjust and demand that compassion rule the heart, & wisdom the mind, & justice the hands & feet. This is the message of Jesus the Christ, the son of the Living God! That we, his children, his disciples, bring hope swiftly to the waiting hearts of the marginalized, hungry, displaced, homeless, lonely, invisible, & imprisoned of our communities and world.

At the dawning of this new year (and yes, my friends, Advent is the first weekend of the new year in our calendar!!)...how will you live out the message of HOPE? How will your life be a bright flame of hope for those around you? How will your community stand with those who are oppressed and suffering, being embodied hope in the world? These days of Advent are not mere waiting in complacency and inactivity. No! These days of Advent are a time of preparation...a time of healing and restoration, of putting into action all of the lessons we have learned, all the wisdom we have gathered at the foot of our Saviour. It is a time to allow Hope to flow with reckless abandon from our very lives. The songs of the Hope of Jesus Christ, of new life, rebirth, home-coming, release from captivity, fullness of life, and love everlasting, are songs the world around us aches to hear. Listen to the voice of the one crying in the wilderness...Listen! Hear! Be hope! Peace, Jen



## Some News from the Quebec Churches

What a month it has been! Fast on the heels of my visit to the Maritime congregations came a quick weekend with our Quebec congregations. My friends, what a time we had! The Quebec area has been a conundrum for us for many years...trying to figure out how many congregations and who was there, how we could support, and how best to organize and equip for their success in ministry. After the weekend spent with these congregations, I believe we are on the right track and I ask for your urgent and regular prayers for the work God is doing through these amazing people. What follows is a brief update on my time in La Belle Province.

A request came from our Quebec churches to the rest of Canada: Please come and visit us! Please make the effort to come by and worship with us, call us, write to us. We want to be part of the greater body of Christ. We will come to you as we are able, but hope that you will come and visit us in our home congregations! (contact information for all of our Quebec congregations is available on our website [www.canadadisciples.org](http://www.canadadisciples.org))

### Église Évangélique Mahanaïm De La Rive Nord



Pastor Jean  
Daniel Francois

In September, your Regional Board and the College of Christian Churches in Canada helped get Pastor Jean Daniel Francois to the New Church Planter training in Indianapolis. Pastor Daniel has a great group of people, in his predominantly Haitian congregation, and has a great vision for

serving in the area of St Vincent (Laval). Being a talented musician, Pastor Daniel is hoping to start giving music lessons and offering his congregations store front space for children to come and learn to play an instrument and learn about God's love for them. There is not much for children to do in the area around the church, which sits not too far from Laval's prison. Pastor Daniel hopes to lead his congregation to serve the area through music, relationship, and the love of God for all. Please keep Pastor Daniel and his wife, Judithe in your prayers

as they lead this dynamic congregation in a new vision for the future.

### Église Chrétienne de la Pentecôte Missionnaire des Prières (Disciples du Christ)



Pastor Lucien Mezidor

There is no doubt when you walk into House of Prayer that this is a house of God! Worship is enthusiastic, energetic, and leaves you feeling that you have been blessed beyond measure. This large Haitian

congregation meets in a rented space in a strip mall...but has almost 6,000 square feet of space! While they are still developing some areas, there is lots of room for worship, prayer, offices, kitchen, classrooms, and gathering spaces. Pastor Lucien Mezidor has been the pastor here for over 13 years, and is a dedicated Disciple. He has been instrumental in supporting and nurturing many new Haitian pastors and communities in the Montreal/Laval areas and outside the province. His growing congregation is filled to overflowing with young and old alike, lots of passion, and a clear mission to serve the Haitian community and the greater Laval area with love, companionship, and deep spirituality. Please keep Pastor Lucien and his family and congregation in your prayers as they continue to seek God's will in their development. In addition, Pastor Lucien will be working closely with our Regional Minister to develop a strategy and support system for the Quebec area in the coming months. We are thankful for their strong witness in Laval and for the new leaders who are rising up among them. *(continued on page 3)*



## Quebec Churches...(continued)

### Église Parole de Vie / Word of Life Church



Pastor Oscar Wakenge w wife Françoise (& Jen)

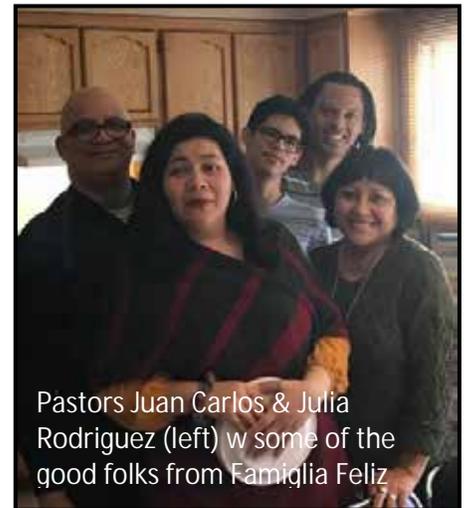
Please give a warm welcome to our newest Disciples congregation, Word of Life, in Joliette, Quebec! This dynamic and diverse congregation is led by Congolese Disciple (born and bred) Pastor Oscar Wakenge. Pastor Oscar and his wife Françoise have eight children and have welcomed in all kinds of people into this amazing community, from all over the world. On the day I worshipped with them, there were people in attendance from Rwanda, Tibet, Togo, Benin, Central African Republic, Congo, South Africa, to name a few. Many of the congregation have come to Canada as refugees and found a home here in Quebec. Worship is dynamic and joyful with great singing and a fabulous band. Many children from babes in arms to young men and women finishing high school are eager to meet new people and are quick to laugh and make one feel the love of God in this place. Word of Life is excited to become part of the Disciples of Christ in Canada and we hope you will join with the Board in welcoming them.



### Famiglia Feliz Christian Church

A few years ago, Pastors Juan Carlos and Julia Rodriguez left Alberta to come to Quebec to help with a new church plant. Shortly thereafter, we lost touch and had a hard time finding out where they were. While in Quebec, I had the privilege of meeting with Pastors Juan Carlos and Julia with the help of the new Interim Minister of the Obra Hispana (Hispanic Ministries) of the DoC, Pastor Lori Tapia. Pastors Juan Carlos and Julia had reached out to Pastor Lori and she in turn got in touch with me to chat about how to reconnect and “restart” our relationship with Famiglia Feliz. It has been a long

road for this compassionate and dedicated team of Pastors. Pastor Julia suffered a serious illness and was unable to work for some time. Please hold her in prayer as she continues to



Pastors Juan Carlos & Julia Rodriguez (left) w some of the good folks from Famiglia Feliz

recover. The congregation, we learned, had closed, but has restarted as a new church. We are excited to have Pastors Juan Carlos and Julia back in the fold and are looking forward to walking with them on this journey with their new congregation. While I did not get a chance to visit with Famiglia Feliz, I will (hopefully) in January. There is some great work happening here! And lots of potential for more on the horizon. Please keep this new work, with all of its joys and challenges, in your prayers.

### A Note in Closing

We are beyond blessed here in Canada to have these dynamic, growing, and dedicated Disciples’ congregation in Quebec. The gifts for ministry our Haitian, African, Asian, Hispanic, and other French speaking congregations hold within their communities, is remarkable and diverse. God is

good! The different styles of worship, beautiful languages and imagery from a variety of cultures, and their unique expressions of the holy, God, beloved community, and the Gospel are being used in their respective communities to reach a population that longs for community, relationship, and the love of God.



Pastor Juan Carlos (left) w Fritz Gerald Joseph (up & coming leader at House of Prayer), Pastor Lori Tapia of Obra Hispana, and me in the back

It is not easy being church in Quebec and they face many challenges from landlords, government, and local society, which are decided “anti-religious”. Please take the time to get in touch with these congregations and let them know you are with them in their journey. For those who do not speak/write in French, do not worry! There are strong English speakers in each community to translate your messages of solidarity, welcome, and fellowship.

(Watch our Facebook page for regular updates, photos, and videos about our congregations as RM Jen travels through our Region. Its an easy way to connect with other Canadian Disciples, plan visits, and learn more about the rich diversity of Christ’s church here in the “frozen north”!)



## “Brush With the Spirit” Welcomed as New Church Plant in Calgary



Many who were present at the All Canada Convention in Milton, Nova Scotia this summer, may have had a chance to attend an intriguing and innovative seminar led by Pastor Danah Cox of Campbell Stone United Church (Calgary). In a

conversation after the convention, Pastor Danah and I talked about his dream of building Christian community using this format/model of food, art, and theology. In a brave move, Danah took the plunge and headed to Indianapolis for New Church Planter training (thanks to the Regional Board and the College of Christian Churches in Canada for supporting this!). Out of this time, Danah was able to work out some of the details and begin to fashion a viable plan for an innovative and highly creative

(and we think effective!) new ministry in downtown Calgary which will be called “Brush with the Spirit.” Campbell Stone United Church likewise, made a courageous decision to help launch this new initiative, with the help of the Region. While there are details still to work out, please celebrate with Danah, Campbell Stone, and your Region, yet another new ministry here on Canadian soil! Join your prayers with the leadership team and your Regional Board that this venture will be a light and a testament to the love of Jesus Christ in the Calgary area (and potentially beyond!) starting in January 2017. All kinds of details can be found here <http://andychurch.org/brush-with-the-spirit/> or by getting in touch with Danah at [danahcox@me.com](mailto:danahcox@me.com).



### An Invitation to Support the Ministry of Your Region This Christmas

Dear Friends, the Christmas offering is the primary source of funding for all of the ministry efforts of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada. You will find a bulletin insert at the end of this edition of *the Canadian Disciple*. Please share with your congregations, and encourage one another to support the work your Region undertakes on your behalf. 100% of funds STAY IN CANADA and are used to start new congregations, find pastors, encourage growth & development, youth & young adult initiatives, train leaders, and equip congregations for transformation. Be part of this great work across Canada! And thank you for your gifts!!

## Canadian Region Welcomes New Staff



We are pleased to welcome Devin Hogg onto our Regional team as Administrative Assistant to our Regional Minister. Devin will be working out of the Guelph office one day a week, helping with scheduling, communication, website updates, and various

other administrative tasks. Originally from Carnarvon, located in the Haliburton Highlands, Ontario, Devin has lived in Guelph for the past 8 years since starting university. At the University of Guelph he completed a Bachelor of Arts, specializing in Political Science. At the Guelph campus of Conestoga College he completed a

diploma in the Office Administration-Executive program. In recent years, he has been actively involved as both a student and alumnus with Guelph Campus Ministry at the University of Guelph, and as a coach and Administrative Director at the Start2Finish Willow Road Running and Read Club in Guelph. In his spare time, Devin practices Tai Chi, swimming, downhill skiing, and running. Devin is also an avid practitioner of contemplative prayer and meditation techniques. He enjoys movies, television, shows and books, especially in the sci-fi/fantasy genre. He loves hanging out with friends and family and discussing politics, philosophy, history, science, and theology.



## NIRF Women's Gathering

On September 23-25, 2016, five Canadian Disciples women – Janet Fountain (Maritime Area), Richelle Himaya, Sarah Himaya, and Grace Ingal (Central area), and Awit Marcelino (Western Christian Fellowship) - attended the NIRF (Northern Inter-Regional Fellowship) Women's gathering in Bethany Beach, Delaware. NIRF includes Canada, Capital Area, Michigan, Northeast, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

This gathering included worship services, workshops on Disciples ministries and programs such as Disciples Women, the Disciples

Women's Endowment Fund, Woman to Woman WorldWide, and Just Women magazine, and workshops on grief support, using social media for your church, and many more. This gathering also included a Mission First workshop, a Bible study field test for Just Women magazine, and the commissioning of a NIRF Young Women's group. In various worship services, workshops, and in the



L-R: Sarah Himaya (Hillcrest), Janet Fountain (Milton), Awit Marcelino (BDUC/Sugarbush)

newly-formed NIRF Young Women's group, our Canadian Disciples women provided leadership. Worship Services – Sarah Himaya, Social Media Workshop – Richelle Himaya, Bible Study – Awit Marcelino, Commissioning of Young Women (Laying on of hands and blessings) – Janet Fountain. This was a great gathering to participate

in and provide leadership for. Out of this gathering, young women from these regions have committed to communicating with one another throughout the year to plan a NIRF Young Women's gathering either before or after the 2017 General Assembly in Indianapolis. We also commit to visioning how we can collaborate with one

another in our communities in the coming years.

We would like to recognize and thank Janet Fountain for her encouragement for young women from our region to participate in NIRF, and for her vocal support for the creation of a NIRF Young Women's group. Her love, encouragement, and friendship has been unwavering and we are truly grateful for her! Love and light, *Awit Marcelino*

# Christmas Offering



Supporting the Ministries of Our Region  
December 11 and 18, 2016

Dear Friends, Over the past six months, your Region has worked hard on your behalf to equip, support, & encourage all of the above ministries, initiatives, & efforts. We are continuing to build, on the foundations of the past, a Canadian church that answers God's call to disciple a new generation, drawing wide the circle of Christ's love. We are your partner in ministry, supporting & extending the work of your congregation to God's glory. Your generous gifts ensure that this vital work will continue with the funds it needs to flourish. If you have never given to Disciples Mission Fund in the past, I thank you for responding to the urgent call for new partners. If you have given in the past, thank you for your dedication to Christ's church across Canada. Without you, our work becomes limited. With you, our potential, with God's grace, is limitless. I pray you will join in this ministry with your financial support & prayers. May the Peace of Christ fill your homes & congregations this Advent, Christmas & always. With gratitude, Jen Carbin, Regional Minister, Canada

Your Support Equips, Grows, Connects & Blesses Many!



We celebrate:

Two Xplor residents

*Four new church starts\**

Six Quebec pastors together

Two strong youth fellowships

Two new church planters trained

Ten issues of *The Canadian Disciple*

Twenty-two courageous congregations

Five focus areas for growth & development

Five congregations doing pastoral searches

Two **A** rea transformation workshops presented

Seven volunteers involved with ecumenical work

Five Western area leaders planning for the future

ONE NEW SUPPORT TEAM FOR QUEBEC CONGREGATIONS

*Two amazing camping facilities reaching 100s of youth & children*

Six Disciples studying & under care of the Committee on Ministry

**Fourteen different nationalities represented (and counting!)**

Thirty active and retired pastors, chaplains, and interns

One new Board excited & praying for growth & renewal

Three Canada-wide ecumenical gatherings

**Five (and counting!) languages spoken**

One new Congolese congregation

One new Canadian outreach fund

(\*Two new starts have been approved, two are pending)



**“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given... And his name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Is. 9:6)**