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Shaping the Future

The Story of Earnest and Sue

A Pilgrimage to El Salvador

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the spring 2019 edition of *Inquiring Minds: the Newsletter of Emmanuel United Church*.

I apologize for the long delay in getting this new version of our newsletter launched after the retirement of our long-term and dedicated Editor Bob Armstrong. Thank you to Jon Jones who has signed on as the technical manager and publisher of the Newsletter.

Our goal for the Newsletter is to provide a congregational magazine which we can use to highlight stories of events, activities, news of our church family, introductions of new members and families, some humour, some poetry and personal reflections.

If you have items for publication, suggestions or comments, please send them to:
newsletter@emmanuelunited.ca

Members of the Emmanuel community are invited to contribute their articles about issues and events that relate to our church life and to the wider world we live in. We will offer a section for comments, opinions and letters to the editor.

We hope you will enjoy and contribute to the life of our faith community in this magazine.

Phyllis MacRae, Editor

Jon Jones, Publisher



THOUGHTS FROM THE MINISTER

Greetings to all in Christ,

Now in my fifth month with you here at Emmanuel, I'm getting well acquainted with people and ministries alike. It's been a full and exhilarating few months. Sunday worship has been particularly energizing, as the Power Point capability has provided me with the freedom to introduce the art of the ages as it pertains to the Gospel lections. The choir continues to inspire and we are now integrating more aspects of our intercultural community into liturgy. Our Christian Development Committee continues to provide meaningful lessons for our children and youth each Sunday morning. New ministry initiatives are emerging for our young adults. Music Night in early May saw a number of our youth and young adults involved in performing. It gave evidence of the deep pool of talent here at Emmanuel. The many and sundry ministries that take place weekly here at the church is quite something to behold: the Heretics, Take Time to be Wholly, the Quilters, the Art Group, Teleos, Catherine's Tues evening Faith Circle and the numerous Committees to name just a few. We're all truly appreciative of how Pat keeps these activities humming together like a well-oiled machine as she supports and manages the abundance of events that take place here on a regular basis.

The Pastoral Care Team continues to visit and pray for the many seniors who are no longer able to fellowship with us on Sundays complemented by the Keeping in Touch ministry. Carol Scott, who will soon be leaving us as she relocates to Fredericton, NB later this summer, has tirelessly visited the elderly in hospital, retirement homes and their residences. We pray God's blessings on her as she departs. Her ministry has been augmented by additional visits by other PC Team members. Communion has been offered to a number of those unable to attend Sunday Services.

Of significance as well, the Transition Team has begun to deliberate, as future directions for our community of faith are considered. This will encompass consultations with the various committees and groups that comprise Emmanuel United all of which will be complemented by the Ambassador Team—a larger group of dedicated members engaged in supporting this effort. Regular communication with the congregation will be a part of this process. Their activities will be more visible as this vital ministry ramps up in the fall.

It is my prayer that the summer months will prove to be a refreshing time for all. Whether that be traveling abroad or spending time at the cottage, may you return to us in September reinvigorated for the challenges that lay ahead this coming year.



Rev. Dr. Steve Moore



Compassion Faith Series 2017-2018

Did you know that a version of the Golden Rule, which is “to love your neighbour as yourself” Mat 22:39, can be found in most of the world’s major religions? The Golden Rule is a reminder that to love another person we must also know what it means to love ourselves. In other words, in order to have compassion for others, we must also have compassion for ourselves.

The word compassion can be broken into two parts; com - meaning together; and passion -meaning to suffer. A definition of compassion is to suffer, undergo or experience something with another person. Compassion is not pity, but rather it is to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes, to feel their pain as though it were our own, and to enter generously into the other person’s point of view.

This past nine months 20 participants gathered for a twelve-week compassion series based on Karen’s Armstrong’s book “Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life.” During this time, we deepened our understanding of our faith by engaging in the concepts of compassion as laid out in Armstrong’s book.

My goal for the faith series was not only to create a space where participants would feel safe to explore their faith in their own unique way, but my intention was to provide sacred-safe space for relationship building, reflection, imagination, and creativity. Topics such as; understanding the importance of having compassion for ourselves; mindfulness; active listening; embracing Mystery; empathy for others and interfaith relationships were explored. We examined these topics through Bible stories and discussion while engaging in activities such as journaling, reflecting on images, and mindful prayer. There were also opportunities to explore themes through contemporary cultural experiences as demonstrated in videos, movie clips and news stories. The series invited us to look within ourselves for awareness while looking towards others for deeper connection. For instance, during our mindful session we had Yoga practitioner Maureen Fallis lead us in meditation and mindful movement and we fostered interfaith relationship by visiting the Kanata Mosque.

I enjoyed our faith series group. It not only allowed me to demonstrate my passion for exploring faith through engagement and creativity, but it also allowed me to create a sacred-safe space where I witnessed some folks open up to themselves and the group.

Rev Catherine Gutjahr

Editor’s Note: In the fall and winter of 2018-2019, Catherine led a second session of her popular Faith and Spirituality series at Emmanuel.

This year’s series was based on select chapters of Brian McLaren’s book “We Make the Road by Walking”. The group read the accompanying scripture texts and had individual and group reflection, with an exercise related to the topic. The series was well-attended regularly by 12-15 participants.



SHAPING EMMANUEL'S FUTURE TOGETHER -

TWO INTEGRATED TEAMS AND THE CONGREGATION



The Emmanuel congregation recently approved an important project to be undertaken over the next twelve months. Entitled ***Shaping Our Future Together***, the project will enable us to review our current programs and activities and to develop an outlook for the congregation's future. The outcomes will guide the search for a permanent Minister of Worship and Pastoral Care in about a year's time.

This project is both timely and important for the future of our Church. It will help the Congregation land in a good place after having two ministers of Worship and Pastoral Care in the last couple of years. It will be an opportunity to review and assess our understanding of Emmanuel's identity, mission, programs and activities, resources and issues.

There are emerging issues to be looked at: the demographics of the congregation are changing, and there are early signs of diminishing volunteer resources and possible financial strain ahead.

This is also an opportunity to explore new ideas and possibilities for the future. Programs and outreach initiatives may be identified which will enrich our spiritual and congregational life beyond what has traditionally been done. This is also an opportunity to identify programs which are no longer priorities or those which could be reshaped to reflect current circumstances.

We will consider how to use and strengthen our resources to become the community we want to be in 5 years time. Activities will be identified to unify and strengthen our Congregation. We will examine the many types of gatherings that can be 'church' for our congregants now and in the future.

The dialogue during the project will be conducted in a safe and open environment in which everyone feels included, informed, supported and engaged. ➡





Two Integrated Teams

The project will be led by Rev. Dr. Steve Moore, our Supply Minister of Worship and Pastoral Care. Rev. Moore has special training in interim ministry. He also has recent experience helping two congregations to merge and look at their priorities.

Planning and implementation of the project will involve two dozen people drawn from across the congregation. They will be working in one of two closely-integrated groups:

- a Transition Team; and,
- a Resource Team

The members of the Transition Team from the congregation will guide the project, plan and implement events to engage the congregation, and report on the outcomes.

The members of the Resource Team will work closely with the Transition Team. They will provide their ideas on issues and opportunities, will serve as a sounding board as new ideas come up from the congregation and the Transition Team, and will help gather views from the congregation and share them with the Transition Team.

Looking Ahead

The Transition Team will be developing plans over the summer for activities starting in September in consultation with the Resource Team.

We will keep you posted as the work gets rolling on upcoming activities which will involve everyone in the congregation.

We are looking forward to your participation, your ideas, and your comments and suggestions as the project moves ahead. ■

Graham Campbell
Member of Transition Team



THE LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY

ABIGAIL SANCHEZ ROJAS

Congratulations are due to Abby Sanchez Rojas, our piano accompanist who supports the choir and Theresa during practices and in Sunday services. On June 17 Abby will graduate from the University of Ottawa with a Master of Arts degree in piano performance. We thank her for sharing her talents with us in Emmanuel's music life, and wish her all the best in her future career.



ACADEMIC PLANS

Congratulations are also due to four of our young women who are graduating from their secondary school programs and embarking on their challenging post-secondary studies in the fall semester.

Dorcas Bihamba will enrol in the Social Work program at Algonquin College.



Neema Bihamba will enter the Honours Bachelor of Commerce program in the Human Resources Management coop course at the University of Ottawa.



ACADEMIC PLANS (Cont'd)

Adriana Trejo will enrol in the Bachelor of Arts in Human Rights program at Carleton University.



Sifa Zahinda will commence the program in Police Foundations at Algonquin College, leading to Bachelor in Criminology studies at Carleton University.



NEW ARRIVALS

Vanessa Kamembele, the younger daughter of Julienne Bowesi, arrived from Uganda with her two children on March 7, more than 10 years after Julienne's application was first submitted. They had been living in Kampala with Vanessa's older brother and sister while waiting to come to Canada. They are living with Julienne, who is looking to move to a larger apartment. Divine is 4 years old, and Gradi is now 10 months. Divine is attending Junior Kindergarten at Hawthorne Public School, within walking distance of where the family lives. At the age of 4, she already speaks four languages. ➡



Arrival at the airport: Vanessa with Gradi, Julienne, Divine



Divine is enjoying being at school for the first time and already has several friends. Gradi is 10 months old and is benefitting from the car seat that was generously donated through an Emmanuel connection. Vanessa will be attending summer language school in July, but is already keeping herself busy by applying her African hair dressing skills. The family are grateful for the support from Emmanuel, including the donation of a cell phone. We welcome them to Canada and to Emmanuel. ■



Gradi, Vanessa, Divine at Tuesday coffee



First day at school! (Joyce White)



THE FAMILY OF HENRY SORIBA AND KORMASSA SUWOHAI



*Back Row - Steven, Saidu, Dorbor, Kollie, Henry, Gloire, Korlu
Front Row - Stephany, Kortee, Sia, Kormassa, Prince*

This picture of the Soriba Family would have been a perfect fit in the 2018 Pictorial Directory. Unfortunately, the pictures that appear in the directory did not include Dorbor Kollie and Kollie Soriba with their smiling faces in the back row. Dorbor is an accomplished track and field athlete and Kollie excels at basketball. September 21, 2018 marked the 13th anniversary of this Liberian family's arrival in Canada. As newly arrived refugees they attended Rothwell United Church at first, but started coming to Emmanuel when a bus service became available to transport people from the Donald Street area following amalgamation with Eastbrook United Church. Some of you may have seen Kormassa at the Ottawa General Hospital where she works in the Critical Care Surgery Department.

Their eldest daughter Sia and her husband Saidu Koroma also work at the Civic Hospital.

Sia and Saidu Koroma now have four children: Stephany Fobay, aged 14; Kortee Samuel aged 6; Steven Wozie, aged 3; and the new arrival Solomon Naatee, 8 months.

Henry and Kormassa's younger daughter Korlu and her husband Gloire Vagheni have a son, Prince, aged 1 year. At Just Gifts in December 2018, Korlu had a sales table with her African themed art work. She is the published author of two children's books called "Where Mom is From" and "I Am". She has worked very hard on that. In the spring Korlu led the children's story at Sunday service reading from "Where Mom is From".



PASSAGES AND BLESSED EVENTS 2018-2019

We remember the following members of our Emmanuel family who passed away:

Marie David Salazar de Lopez, January 2, 2018

James Cooper Maffre, February 1, 2018

Thomas Doswell, May 3, 2018

Eileen Friend, April 27, 2018

Verna Lillian Johnston May 23, 2018

Edith Marie Fietz, July 25, 2018

Ronald Lonn Nuttall, July 25, 2018

Margaret Viola Bolton, August 4, 2018

Etta May Anderson, August 22, 2018

Earle James MacDonald, November 6, 2018

Van den Ham, Diane, May 26, 2019

Hodgins, Shirley, June 4, 2019

Marriages:

Madison McPherson and Kristian Pronovost, May 23, 2018.

Baptisms:

Solomon Naatee Koroma, January 20, 2019

Rafael Rene Martinus den Boer, February 17, 2019



CHURCH HUMOUR

How many church people does it take to change a lightbulb???

None.....Church people don't change.

And besides.....

My Grandmother donated that lightbulb!!!!



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THE STORY OF EARNEST AND SUE VINSON

Until

Love grows
with each chorus
of dawn's waking birds,
with each blaze of sunrise
splitting night from day.

Love grows
with each bud
bursting open on branch,
clear morning star
pinning hope to sky.

Love grows
with fierce embrace
from this beloved child,
or your connecting glance
from across the room.

Love grows,
... expands ...
as I breathe this moment
feeling vibration of light
exploding through my core.

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2019



Did it ever occur to you to wonder how a young African American man who plays the euphonium and grew up in Louisiana in the Baptist Church came to be a member of EmmanuBells and the Senior Choir at Emmanuel? Well, this is how. (You may need a map).

Earnest's early life in Louisiana

Earnest Vinson was born in Pineville, Louisiana, a town of about 14,000 people about two hours north of New Orleans. He has several brothers and his mum and dad are still living in Wardville, LA. Earnest describes his parents as hard working, and "from the Bayou". His dad worked as a janitor at the school and his mum worked at a nursing home. He went to elementary and high schools in Pineville. His schools were originally segregated but during his school years desegregation took place, and he was bussed to a white school. The kids were all right but the white parents taught racism to their children. The school water fountains were segregated. The white ones had refrigerated water and the ones for blacks had warm water.

At age 16 Earnest was fast-tracked into the U.S Army (JROTC – Junior Officer Training), under the "Buddy Program" (this was during the Cold War with the Soviet Union). He spent grades 11 and 12 in the field during the weekends working for Uncle Sam to earn money because, "Where I was from, you either sold dope or worked at Popeye's".

Earnest graduated from Pineville High School in 1968 and was the first person in his family to earn a high school degree. Because he had been in Band and Choir since grade 5, he earned several scholarships and, because of his early entry into the US Army, he was granted the GI Bill. This meant that his university costs were covered by the military.

After graduation, Earnest decided that teaching wasn't in the cards due to the way kids at inner city schools treated teachers. He worked at a number of jobs, including two years as a policeman with the Sheriff's Office. His being a policeman made his family think he was a "sell-out".

In 1991 Earnest moved to Shreveport, LA on the Red River in Northwest Louisiana. He spent a number of years working in restaurant management. He rose to the level of Assistant Manager, but being a black man living in a historic district in Natchitoches, Louisiana, he could not gain the job of Manager. For a while he moved to different all black communities in Mississippi such as Greenwood and Greenville and several others in the Mississippi Delta. He got a manager's job in a Domino's Pizza, an all-black restaurant. But he missed his family back in Shreveport and so returned there but continued to work for Domino's Pizza. ➡

Earnest Meets Sue

In the 1990s Domino's made the move to computers in its business. Earnest got in on the ground floor of IT (computers). The company bought a supply of new computers but very few people knew how to operate them. The staff had to learn as they went along. As Fate would have it, Dominos contracted with an IT company to give remote support to the staff. Earnest began to work regularly by phone with a young woman on the ICQ Help Desk. At first he thought she was a robot on line, until they began to talk by phone. He soon learned her ID # and the shifts that she worked. So he was able to work with her more frequently. He didn't know her name, nor where she was located, only her ID number. He liked her voice. A lot.

In the summer of 1998, the Domino's manager made a sudden decision that Earnest and the other staff had to go on vacation. Normally they would just get paid out for their vacation time. Earnest had never been on a vacation. He talked to his ICQ Helper and told her he had to go on vacation. "Come to Canada" she said. "Where's Canada?" he asked. He thought about it and went and got a map to find out where Canada was. He called her back and found out her name. Sue Christiansen. She lived in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario. She was a student at Sault Community College in the IT support program. She was doing remote tech support for ICQ. She didn't think he would really come. He did.

Earnest Drives North

In August 1998, Earnest set out to drive to Canada. He had an old car that had air conditioning but no heating. It had water but no antifreeze. He loaded up with jerry cans of gas, water and supplies of food. He had no maps to get to Sault Ste Marie. He drove north to the Louisiana state border, and there he got a map for the next State north. And the next. And the next.

He had 8 or 9 maps marked with yellow highlighter to show the routes north. He drove straight through, stopping to sleep in rest centres. He was afraid of being stopped by the Klan or the police. He carried his gun, as he always did. He had a CB radio and the truck drivers kept him company, and awake.

After two days driving he arrived in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan. He had not really told Sue when he was coming, and they had no cell phones to talk to each other. Earnest had never crossed an international border. He didn't have a passport, but luckily he didn't need one in those years. He drove across the International Bridge to Sault Ste Marie Ontario and left his gun at the Canadian Border Station. It was 5:00 am. ➡

The Soul of the Poet

Grounded on terra firma
yet composed of stardust
and empty space
(half blood and bones
half dreamscape and vision)

The soul of the poet
is not her own,
for she has been pierced
by the arrow of forever -
of mystery and longing.

The soul of the poet
is not his own,
for he has been branded
by white-hot searing
that is not of his making.

No words can capture
the unfathomable depth
of eternity, the stirrings
that quiver inside
each of them.

They can only attempt
to put a few scant words
on a blank page
and wonder if the scribbles
could ever be sufficient.

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Inspired by Russ Smith's book
launch

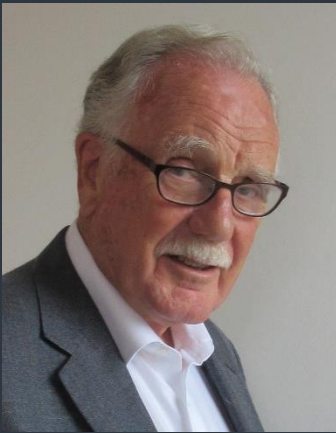
Atonement

can reconcile two humans, but if one offended party is a god there is a problem, one which

sinful Christians have resolved, proposing that the outraged deity has sacrificed his son, in order to

achieve propitiation with himself. Only thus could a divinity indulge the baseness of its own creation.

© Russell Smith 2019



He thought it was likely a bit too early to go to Sue's house. He waited until 8:00 am and then found her house and knocked on the door. He saw children's toys in the yard. A little face looked at him from the upstairs window. Suddenly Sue opened the door wearing her dressing gown. He introduced himself as "The guy from Dominos". She shut the door.

Earnest stood on the doorstep and started to get scared. What had he gotten himself into in this strange country? Then Sue opened the door and invited him in for coffee.

Sue's story

Sue Vinson (nee Christiansen) was born in Freulton, near Hamilton ON, to a family that had immigrated in 1955 from Denmark. Sue's Dad was a truck driver, but had rheumatoid arthritis and became unable to drive a truck. Her mum was a homemaker and had 7 children of whom 5 survived and Sue was the youngest. Her mother spoke no English and her dad very little. When Sue was 11 the family moved to Walford on Highway 17 outside Sudbury where her dad bought and operated a truck stop restaurant. The family lived above the restaurant. She went to school in Massey on the school bus. When she was 13 the family moved into Sudbury as her dad was in poor health and couldn't operate the truck stop. Sue went to High School in Sudbury. When she was a teenager she was active in competitive figure skating in North Bay. At 17 she received an invitation to try out for the Ice Follies. She didn't pursue this however. Figure skating is a very expensive sport to participate in, after horseback riding and hockey, and she could not continue with the sport.

Sue's family had no church background. Sue says that the Danes are mostly Lutheran and attend church at Christmas and Easter.

In her 20's as a single mum with 4 young children, Sue enrolled at Sault College in Sault Ste Marie to train as a computer system support technician. She was the first in her family to go to college. While she was doing a project at school to provide IT tech support on line, she first spoke to Earnest who was working at Dominos in Louisiana. She didn't know who he was, except he was a nice guy who worked at Dominos, who seemed to like to talk to her even though he didn't know her name or where she lived.

Earnest moves to Michigan

On that first trip north, Earnest's first vacation, he stayed in a motel in Sault Michigan and drove across the bridge every day to visit Sue. Her mother and brother were staying with her and her children. Sue showed him around the Sault, Ontario and Earnest thought it was very beautiful and clean. There were rocks that he thought were mountains, and lakes and rivers. →

The people there were different than he was used to. No one seemed to care that he was a black man from the South. No one cared that he was walking around with a white woman and her children. People talked to him. The niceness gave him culture shock. He stayed for a week. Then drove back to Louisiana in three days. When he got back he told everyone that he was going to move to Canada.

One month later in September 1998 he sold up and drove back to Sault, Michigan to stay. He had one trash bag of clothes, his jerry cans of gas and water. And of course, he had his maps.

Earnest and Sue get married

For two years Earnest continued to live and work in Sault, Michigan and drive across the bridge to be with Sue and her family. Earnest worked for Dominos and delivered pizza in his old Louisiana car with no heating or antifreeze. In the Michigan winter the car froze and the water lines burst.

Sue graduated and began to look for a job in the south. She said that the Sault had little to offer for young working people. She got a job in Hull, QC working for Bell Sympatico on the Help Desk. It was a good job. She moved to Kemptville with her four children to get affordable housing. The kids went to school in Kars. Earnest started to commute to Kemptville and Gatineau from the Sault where he was then working for Gateway computers. On his 3 days off he would drive to Kemptville. He picked up hitchhikers. Once he picked up some Christian hitchhikers on Highway 17, and let them drive. They were from "The Fire of God Church" and they sang church songs together.

In 2000, Sue asked Earnest to move to Gatineau, where she was living, to join her and the kids. Earnest was raised a strict Baptist and he told her he was not going "to shack up". They were married in Webbwood, near Sudbury and Earnest moved to live in Gatineau with the family. Sue sponsored him as an immigrant to Quebec, but he couldn't work. He spent two years as a "house daddy" with the kids and volunteered at their school. He found a United Church in Gatineau and attended there for a while. He took the kids to church with him. In Gatineau people didn't care if he was black, but he didn't speak French.

In 2002 he started working at Hewlett Packard who sponsored him for a work visa in Canada. Later he got Permanent Resident status in Canada, but he remains a US citizen. In 2005 the family moved from Gatineau to Kanata as Earnest and Sue thought the girls needed a better group of friends. They own a home in Kanata.

Most of Earnest's career in Canada has been in IT. He has worked for Hewlett Packard, Dell, Compac and was a retail sales manager at Future Shop. Now he works as an IT manager for Canada Post in Kanata.

He and Sue are also very active as Directors in a Tupperware business that they operate together. A lot of the marketing is done on-line. Sue worked for Bell Sympatico for five years, also for Sun Media and Gabriel's Pizza as an operations manager. Now she works full time as a Director for Tupperware. Earnest likes the Tupperware work and says it is fun. His goal is to be the first man to have an all-male team. ➡



Earnest says he knows he would not have had the opportunities he has had if he had stayed in Louisiana. He and Sue and the family have gone back to Louisiana to visit. Sue did not like Louisiana and felt uncomfortable there. She once saw a small child dressed up in a KKK suit with a bucket for donations. She was shocked.

Sue and Earnest's family

Sue and Earnest have a large family. Their two daughters are Sarah and Melanie Gagan. Sarah and her partner of 5 years, Cody Dallaire, just blessed Sue and Earnest with their 2nd grandson Knox Wayne, taking Earnest's second middle name. Knox is four months old. Melanie Gagan and her partner Mark Hall had Earnest and Sue's first grandson Preston Michael Hall, taking Earnest's 1st middle name. Preston is almost two years old.

They also have two sons, John and Anthony Godda. Anthony lives in Kanata with the family and John, the eldest, lives in Australia with his wife Talia. Earnest's daughter Veronica from his first marriage, is living in College Station, Texas with her husband Randall who is in the US Military.

Earnest's first wife, "Mrs. Beth", as he calls her, is also white and is married, and she often comes up from Louisiana to visit Earnest and Sue for the holidays.

In November each year Earnest and Sue like to go on a family cruise, but not without Veronica, "who has cruzin' in her blood" . They have cruised almost everywhere in the Caribbean. ➡



*Back Row - Earnest, Cody, Preston, Mark
Front Row – Sue, Sarah holding Knox, Melanie*



Earnest Comes to Emmanuel

In the summer of 2017 Earnest noticed that Ann Frederking was a Facebook friend of a friend of his from Tupperware. Earnest had many years ago played in a bell choir at the United Methodist Church in Shreveport. He messaged Ann to ask if he could come and watch her bells rehearsal. She invited him to come and ring with them. On a Thursday evening he joined them and started singing the notes that were missing. Margaret Ann Park heard that he had a great bass voice and invited him to come to meet the Senior Choir and Theresa. Since then he plays regularly with the Bells and sings with the basses in the choir, where he makes a big contribution to both ensembles.

For a while Sue came to Emmanuel Sunday services where she liked the welcoming atmosphere and enjoyed videoing the choir and the bells. She posted them on Facebook so Earnest's mother could see that he was in church each Sunday. Sue also worked as a volunteer at the Old Forge Community Centre. She now works there as the transportation manager for the seniors. She is always looking for volunteers to help with driving.

Emmanuel is very fortunate to have both Earnest and Sue with us as members of our church family. ■

Phyllis MacRae



*I know a guy who worked for a better tomorrow
Who comforted his people and wiped away the sorrow
Who spoke up to the injustice like a superhero
Who persevered through the straight and narrow
Who helped people in the rotten borough
Who made a change without a bow and arrow
Who wanted no rewards, absolutely zero
I know a guy, Monsieur Oscar Romero*

Koko Zahinda

April 2019



NEWS FROM THE MARK WALLACE FAMILY IN WARSAW

Greetings from the Mark Wallaces! Here we are in our final year of the three-year posting to Warsaw.

We are expecting Anthony back here from Toronto on December 21st. (2018). He is in his second year of studying math at U of T. He landed a work-study position this fall teaching enrichment math to middle schoolers at a weekly Saturday U of T math camp. He also did some intramural hockey so that provided some breaks from all the studying.

Eloise had a very busy fall, travelling to London, Prague and Budapest for soccer. She has now moved on to basketball for the winter term. She was also cast as "Miss Adelaide" in the high school musical of "Guys and Dolls". It must have been due to all that rigorous training in Junior Choir! She is now directing a play of her own composition for her Grade Ten Personal Project.

Noah had a big transition this year, moving to the secondary campus of the French school, which is on the opposite side of the Vistula river from where we are. He decided two days before school started that he was going to bike the nine kilometers, as long as the weather held. Just in the two years that we've been here, the bike infrastructure had improved so much that, what had been a 45 minute ride for Anthony in grade twelve, turned into a 30 minute ride for Noah. He's now doing after school soccer on Fridays, which includes grades six through nine, and he loves going up against the big guys.

Jeremy has really enjoyed his work at the embassy. Last year he was acting ambassador (Chargé d'affaires) for an extended period of time. In December 2018 he and many members of the embassy team supported the Canadian delegation to the UN Climate talks in Katowice, Poland

As for me, I was very busy all fall with the ongoing development of the school garden at the American School. All the elements were in place before I got there so it was very satisfying starting it all up again. At the moment the cafeteria is giving us about 60 kilograms

of veggie waste per day for the compost and we got a huge pile of garden waste donated over the fall by the landscapers. My role is to go in and get the little guys to turn it all into soil and use it to grow more food. They already had strawberries, raspberries, cherries and herbs that they weren't really using, so it has been very satisfying to go in and get everyone using the space. In December the school hosted a conference of the "Global Issues Network" which coincided with the UN Katowice meetings, and I was asked to do a presentation on the potential I saw for school gardens to play a role in lowering carbon emissions. It was a busy weekend because I was also assigned three high school billets from the Green School in Bali. But it was a lot of fun and I think a lot of good will come out of it. ➡



We hope everyone is well back in Ottawa. We are really looking forward to returning next summer (August 2019) and picking up our lives where we left them in 2016. Best wishes to everyone for a great 2019!! ■

Janet and family, December 2018



*Summer 2018: Back Row - Noah, Eloise, Anthony, Janet
Front Row – Jeremy's mother, Jeremy*



FERAS ATIEH AND HIS FAMILY

On June 14, 2018, the first three members of the Atieh Syrian Refugee family FINALLY arrived in Ottawa. This family was sponsored as refugees jointly by Emmanuel United Church and the Riverview Park Community Association (ITC – It Takes a Community). The parents, Ramez and Nadia, and one brother Ammar arrived first, and the remaining family of 4 arrived later, in early July 2018. It is hard to describe the joyful scene but the attached photo tells the story. Feras, who is the son already settled here and a Canadian citizen, had not seen any family members for over 7 years! No one in his family had met his wife Lama or their 2 year old daughter Stephanie.

The family consists of Ramez and Nadia, their sons Ammar and Azzam (the brothers of Feras), Azzam's wife Kinda and their two children, Alan, a boy now 6, and Acil, a girl of 4. Little Stephanie literally bolted into her grandfather's arms and we thought he might never let her go. They bonded instantly. You can imagine...hugs went on forever and there was not a dry eye among the welcoming party from both sponsoring groups.

Both groups found the wait for the family's arrival lengthy and frustrating. But the final arrival made up for the wait. ➡



Arrival at the airport: Ammar holding Alan, Ramez, Kinda with Acil, Feras, Azzam, Alan Landsberg, Lynne Bezanson, Lama with Stephany, Karin Keyes-Endemann (Nadia is not present)



However, the partners managed not only to raise enough money for the family for the first full year but, through the Art and Photo Sale were able to send rent money to them in Beirut for the last six months when the family resources had run dry. The sponsor group is very thankful for the generosity of all those who donated to this initiative.

For the first year of the family's residence in Ottawa they occupied a lovely 4 bedroom half double for the full family of 7 located near Emmanuel church. The group's volunteers managed to furnish the entire house.

Over the past year, the family has settled very well. All members of the family have been able to improve their English.

Azzam is now employed in construction work, and Ammar, after doing probationary work with an organic food supplier, has now been hired full time.

At the end of June, the one year sponsorship will end, and the family has decided to leave the Hastings Ave house and take leases on two apartments nearer to where Feras and Lama live.

The Riverview Park group intend to remain in contact with the family, even though there will no longer be a requirement to provide support to them.

Lynne Bezanson

Azzam helped to plant the daffodil bulbs donated by Patricia Buckley on the front lawn at Emmanuel last fall. ■

Jon Jones



Ammar, Ramez, Nadia, Acil, Azzam, Alan, Kinda



CHURCH ACTIVITIES

TELEOS RETREAT SPRING 2018

Women's Wisdom

Teleos is a monthly gathering of Emmanuel women with a focus on activating the potential of women from a faith-based, social justice perspective. We meet the last Wednesday of the month, beginning at 7:00 for tea, coffee and goodies, followed at 7:30 by a program related to our lives or the lives of other women. Several topics are suggested at the May pot luck, with various people leading that month's discussion, or introducing the guest speaker for the evening. The topic for each month is advertised in the monthly packet as well as the Sunday bulletin a couple of weeks prior. Every second year the group goes away on a themed retreat.

On April 13, 14, 2018, Teleos members travelled to the Galilee Centre in Arnprior for a spring retreat on the theme of Women's Wisdom, led by our Diaconal Minister Catherine Gutjahr. It was a time to connect with and honour the wisdom that surrounds us, is within us, and is passed down to us. In this lovely quiet setting, we gathered in companionship, with time to worship and reflect.

On the first evening, we shared an object or a photograph of a woman who has shared her wisdom with us in some way. The next morning, we looked for a part of creation that brings us wisdom and connection, viewing "The Tree Connection" video and taking part in another nature activity. In the afternoon, Catherine supplied a wide variety of craft materials so we could make our own Wisdom dolls, as we reflected on the wisdom that is within us, how we share it with others and what we carry with us from our ancestors. ➡





The retreat closed with Communion as we went out into the world, reflecting on how we would carry with us the wisdom of love and hope in our everyday actions.

Here are some observations about the retreat from a few members who attended.

“I name it Teleos Retreat at Galilee Centre on Women’s Wisdom. Wisdom is bright. I like the tea and the quiet place and lighting the candle. I feel connected to my Grandmother in wisdom, in my prayers, in everyday life. I am thankful. I like to be called Grace, my middle name and my Grandmother’s middle name. I liked the dog card (loyalty)—it connected to me. We created our own wisdom dolls to share.” Jessica

“Catherine spread out a wide selection of animal cards and encouraged each of us to choose one the ‘spoke’ to us. The animal cards included a picture and a description of the animal’s habits and strengths as well as a mineral and a plant—as we shared with the group we gained insights about the animals and the aspects of ourselves that identified with or responded to it.” Evelyn



“The Galilee Centre is a sacred place and Teleos is a special group of women with whom I feel safe and accepted. Catherine led us through prayers, worship and discussion and activities that were meaningful and inspiring and helped us to connect with our own wisdom and the wisdom of other women in our lives. A lovely pause for spiritual refreshment in my busy life! Thank you Catherine and Teleos.” Jeannie ■

Joyce White



MESSY CHURCH AT EMMANUEL

“Seeing everyone together, eating together, singing together – the energy” says Koko, a regular attender, when asked what she likes about Emmanuel Messy Church. There is a happy buzz in the room as people arrive and check out the activity stations. At one table they are creating cards for a Mothering person in their life. At another messy table they are painting “rock families” and attaching googly eyes to the colourful stones. Another has word searches about families and yet another station allows you to create two family trees, one for your own family and one for your Messy Church family. In another area people throw dice to follow a path across the room from Bethlehem to Moab.

Meanwhile, Val and her crew are preparing a lovely dinner, something different each time, with a tempting dessert to follow. When we are called to dinner, folks reluctantly leave their activity stations and stand in a circle to sing grace, usually the ever-popular “Jonny Appleseed”. We line up for our food served by friendly kitchen helpers and sit at long tables to chat and share a messy meal.

When everyone is full, we gather again for an interactive game. This month Kelly led us by throwing around a large ball of yarn, telling us to hook it on our fingers and toss it to someone else, till we are all tied together in a messy web of colourful wool. I look around the circle at smiling faces; children, youth, aunts, uncles, singles, parents and grandparents; our Emmanuel family. There is much laughter and a spirit of fellowship. ➡



Finally it is time to go down to the sanctuary for our worship time. We sit in a circle and sing a song – sometimes Jean plays the piano and sometimes Dan leads us on guitar. Then the story teller, this time it was Val, brings a Bible story to life using props and costumes. This time the story was about Ruth and Naomi, who became a family, as we were celebrating Mother’s Day and Family Sunday.

Then a prayer and another song and it is time to go home, Don’t forgot your messy creations!

“I like the dinner and how we get together as a church”, says Eli. “I come for the fellowship” says Sharon. I agree with them both. It is truly intergenerational, and a lovely way to spend an early Saturday evening, from 5 to 7 p.m. Emmanuel hosts Messy Church about 6 times a year, all are welcome and there is no cost. If you’ve never been to one, watch the Life and Work Package for our next Messy Church and bring a friend or family member. We have a great team but we can always use more, so if you would like to help with food, crafts, music, games or story telling, just let me know! ■

Jeannie Page, Messy Church Coordinator



TELEOS AND RIGHT RELATIONS : A CALL TO ACTION

Elder Barbara Dumont Hill has become a friend for the Teleos group in regards to Emmanuel's on-going response to the Calls to Action, as offered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In the Fall of 2016 we had invited Barbara to be the guest presenter for our Teleos retreat at Galilee Centre in Arnprior. During the weekend, she had shared some of her experiences regarding growing up and living as an indigenous person within the current society. She answered many of our questions and explained the significance of several aboriginal spiritual practices ... and we forged a solid connection with her.

Then, during a Teleos evening in March of 2018, we invited Barbara back to speak with us about her work as an Elder during the National Inquiry regarding the MMIWG – the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Barbara had us spell-bound as she relayed stories of the challenges that many indigenous people face due to systemic discrimination, poverty, abuse, and the multi-generational impact on children and grandchildren of the residential school system.

Barbara spoke quietly, eloquently - and from a place of obvious pain as witness to the testimonies she heard during the Inquiry.

We cannot undo the past, but we can be agents of change when we respond as a Community of Faith to the TRC Calls to Action. We can be allies for Indigenous peoples in their quest to reclaim their rights and roles within today's society. Barbara spoke to us as she would to trusted sisters.

When Barbara begins a talk, she asks, "Are you living in a good way?"

May we continually ask ourselves if we are living in a good way, following 'the Way' of Justice, Peace and Love. ■

Carol Scott



Joyce White and Carol Scott with Barbara Dumont Hill



Home

My Root!

A black child
born in Canada
A child,
In an Africa home ,
With different kinds of African food
Have a lot of questions in mind.
Questions like,
Who am I as a person?
Another black child?
My root!
What's so special about my root?
What does it even look like there?
Is the ground orange like in the African movies?
Is everyone in Africa poor like it is on television?
Some times, my mom tells me about her childhood
But I still wonder
What do children do for fun?
No snow to build snowman,
They can't even skate.
No 24 hours electricity to watch Tv.
Question upon Question!
Yet still thirsty for answers
I wonder if visiting my root would answer some of my questions
Then other questions pop up
Can I even cope with the weather?
Will I be able to relate to other kids?
Oh God so many unanswered questions!
Wait!
The book my Auntie wrote!
WHERE MOM'S FROM,
Answers some of my questions .
Gives me some insights about my root.
Families bonding by having a single meal together,
like the bed time stories share by grandma
near a bond fire .
All sounds exciting to me.
Want to know the root of my beautiful dark
skin
The root of this kinky hair
Proud of who I am!
African Canadian

Canada my Home

Africa my root

Stephany Soriba



SPRING PILGRIMAGE MAY 2018: WALK WITH ME

Pilgrimage: to journey to a sacred place as an act of devotion

On May 16th, 2018 a beautiful spring day, EUC pilgrims followed the road of faith, looking deeply into nature at the Baxter Conservation Centre, listening to the river, wind and birds - and experiencing ourselves as part of the web of life. We were reminded that all our world is sacred – and this was a sacred place. We were on a journey into Nature, a journey into Self, and into Divine Interconnectedness. Guided by readings, reflections, prayers, and music, we stepped out of our ordinary routines, breathed deeply - and found we could see the world with new eyes.



We were sent out to relax into total awareness of our environment in great detail- and to experience it in new ways. A huge, gnarled old tree reminded me of our long roots and the ancient history of our faith, while a bunch of daffodils, placed there in love, reminded me of our loving birth stories. Each of our group of 18 found their own part of the environment around us and found their own personal connection to the Divine. ➡



We ended with shared Communion, using the vessels donated by Anne Squire – another reminder of our part in a vast web of life. Stephane reminded us that after the meal in which Jesus broke the bread, the disciples on the road to Emmaus were not at the end of their journey; they could not just rest at home – after they had a wonderful awareness of the real presence of Christ. They were no longer tired, but had to go back to the challenge of the outside world.



As we enjoyed a time 'away' we too would go back to the challenges of our own journeys of faith. We were thankful for the work done by Carol Scott and Nyla Garrett to prepare the day and the beautiful guide-booklets – and very sad that a last minute time in the ER and hospital prevented Nyla from joining with us in such a meaningful journey.



A thankful, refreshed group stopped for ice cream on the way home – another part of the pilgrimage tradition at Emmanuel! ■

Areta Crowell



EMMANUEL AT THE OTTAWA PRIDE PARADE

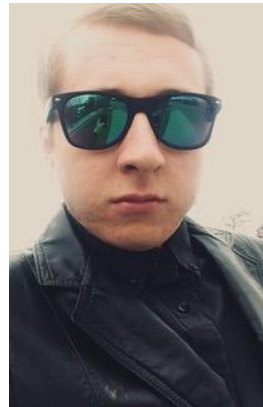
We believe in three fundamental ideologies: diversity, equality and freedom. We believe that all people - no matter their age, origin, gender identity or sexual orientation – should be free and welcome to participate in anything they would like; whether it be their community of faith or the culture of their country. Unfortunately, for too many of those people, their respect and equality had to be earned over a period of trials in our modern history. The most recently notable of those groups is the LGBTQ+ community.

These groups suffered for a long time, because the belief held by the general populace was that, how they would have worded it, “being gay was wrong”. It took time and effort, but most of the world eventually saw these people as what they truly were; not a curse, but a gift.

That is one of the main reasons that the Pride Parades began popping up in many countries around the Globe. Not only were we going to show our appreciation for these people, but we were also going to let them declare to the world that they are proud of who they are, and there is nothing wrong with that.

I had the opportunity to join the Emmanuel representatives to Pride these past couple years. It is an experience hard to put into words. No matter the weather, these people will come out; with bright, colourful costumes, loud music, and floats and banners that just show the world who they are. So many people, from so many different organizations, backgrounds, walks of life; all coming together to celebrate the gift of diversity of these bright, colourful people. ■

Pierre Gilroy, February, 2019



GENERAL COUNCIL 43

Risking Faith, Daring Hope

The 43rd General Council of The United Church of Canada was held at the University of Ottawa Institute of Technology in Oshawa from 21 to 27 July 2018. The theme of the meeting, which gathers clergy and lay delegates from across the country every three years, was, “Risking Faith, Daring Hope.” This was an acknowledgement, I believe, of the enormous changes this Council would usher in – not because we were forced to by declining numbers and finances, as many have said, but as a deliberate and faith-filled effort to re-form our church into a modern, relevant movement in today’s world.

The Council opened with a “Festival of Faith” – a weekend of fun and celebrations, including musical events, games, and information displays. Indeed, there was much to celebrate this year: the 50th anniversary of A New Creed (“The United Church’s gift to the ecumenical church,” said the Moderator), and of the United Evangelical Brethren’s addition to the United Church; and the 30th anniversary of the “Membership, Ministry, and Sexual Orientation Statement.” If you would like to see photos and videos from the Festival, you can find them on a special Facebook page.

There’s something quintessentially United Church about General Council, which was nowhere more evident than in the opening worship. It began with Moderator Jordan Cantwell and the thirteen Executive Ministers of the Conferences asking permission of local Indigenous leaders to meet on their land. Storytellers representing various facets of the church (intercultural, women, conservatives, youth) each presented a short reflection on their love for our denomination. Miriam Spies, a minister with cerebral palsy, gave a truly exhilarating sermon. See it for yourself on the United Church’s YouTube channel!

Each day began with a short worship time, focused on one of the statements from A New Creed. We heard languages and music from around the world, the latter being led by an all-women trio, later joined by a male trumpeter and bassoonist.

The first piece of business was without a doubt the most important: the remits that were issued to presbyteries and congregations for approval after the last General Council were ratified. As of January 1st, 2019, Presbyteries and Conferences would be no more, replaced instead with a more streamlined Regional Council system. Major changes were also approved to the way in which clergy are trained, approved, settled, and managed. ➡



A new way of doing business was introduced at this Council. Instead of bringing every motion to the floor and opening it to the 350-some commissioners for debate, participants were invited to gather in small groups to share information and opinions. If, at the end of these sessions, there was a 90% or higher agreement on the proposals, they were simply passed by the Council without further discussion. This saved lots of time to deal with the more controversial business – of which there actually proved to be quite little.

Ten candidates were nominated for our next Moderator. After several votes, the Council elected Rev. Richard Bott – originally from Marathon, Ontario, and serving in Vancouver at the time of his election. During the closing worship, he compared the United Church to the disciples in the story of the feeding of the five thousand, saying that, like them, we see need around us but often think that we do not have enough – we are not enough – to make a difference. He urged us to trust that what God does with us will be enough to satisfy the hunger of the entire world.



Three people familiar to Emmanuel United were there. I was there to raise awareness of military chaplaincy as a ministry supported by the United Church. Kelly attended as an observer. Stéphane Vermette was the official French-language reporter, who interviewed Council participants and guests, and provided daily reports on the discussions and decisions of the Council. Furthermore, one evening a special play was presented, commemorating the anniversary of the United Church's statement on ministry and sexuality, in which our beloved Anne Squire's name featured prominently.

Risk! Dare! Thanks be to God! ■

Rev Daniel Gilroy

Canadian Forces Chaplaincy



MORE CHURCH HUMOUR

BATS IN THE CHURCH BELFRY

There once were three good friends and colleagues –all clergy leaders in their neighbourhood churches. They regularly met for coffee each week to chat and share the joys and sorrows of leading their respective flocks.

One day the talk turned to the subject of Bats. They found that they all had a history of annoying colonies of bats, roosting in the attics and belfrys of their lovely old churches.

Father Aloysius O'Toole of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church began the complaints.

"We have had bats in our Belfry for decades!!" he moaned. "They are driving us all crazy! One of our parisioners brought in a cat. He was sure that would take care of the problem. But after a year, the cat was happy and fat, and the bats were still driving us crazy!!"

The others looked toward the Reverend Canon Jeremy Braithwaite, Rector of St Albans Anglican Church. "I know just what you mean" he replied. "Our old attic is full of bats, and sometimes they even come out and fly around during the Sunday services. As you can imagine, this is most upsetting for the ladies of the senior choir."

"So, what did you do?" the others asked.

"Well, we got a fellow in who set up bat traps, very humane of course, all over the building. The traps filled up with bats, the fellow took them away to release them, but they still keep coming back!! The Parish Council and I are at our wits end!!!"

The others leaned expectantly towards the Rev Sally MacDonald, Minister of St Andrew's United Church.

"Does the United Church have problems with bats?" they asked hopefully.

"Well," Rev Sally replied, "We used to have a terrible problem just like you. But I just baptised them, confirmed them and married them. And we've never seen a one of them since!!"



PASTORAL CARE BLESSINGS

“Who is my mother, who is my brother ...?” (MV #178). It has been a year and a half since the Interim Pastoral Care Provider position was activated. For many years, those of us from the Pastoral Care Team had already been visiting and offering companionship for people from Emmanuel who have not been able to get out to worship services and other activities, or those going through particularly challenging times. All along, the Pastoral Care Team has continued to visit and care for these folks. So what has been different for me since *specific* hours and a *“part-time staff”* title were added? Not a whole lot. And yet – a whole lot!

Along with the designated responsibility to attend to the needs and concerns that emerge daily and weekly, there is a depth of caring that seemed to be emerging due to the higher volume of requests for accompaniment. Along with responsibility comes blessing. Visiting with such people brought me closer to feeling the connectedness and transparency of our lives. Somehow, in the shared humanity of living, including joys and sorrows, challenges and achievements, I felt a *Presence* that convinced me that *“We are not alone”*.

A pastoral care visit is sort of like being in the midst of living prayer – a time to sink deeper into the struggles and meaning of life, with an almost perceptible feeling that the Spirit of Life and Love is already there, accompanying us.

“Praying for another’s well-being allows God to weave us into that other’s well-being. In this manner we become part of those for whom we pray, and they become part of us ... Prayer is the life-blood of our Christian living. Through prayer, we know ourselves as we truly are: in God’s presence ... God is always present. And perhaps this divine presence invites us into communion.”

(select quotes from Marjorie Suchocki’s book - In God’s Presence)

There are never enough hours in a day or week or month for an Interim Pastoral Care Provider to spend sufficient time with all those who request a visit, but we continue to have a dedicated Pastoral Care Team. We have two caring clergy who have been called to ministry. We have a devoted Prayer Circle that offers prayers for others on a daily basis. ***And we have each other.*** We ***all*** can be companions on the Journey, sharing our humanity, our joys and our sorrows.

May we continue to feel the Spirit of Life and Love embracing us, letting us know that we are cherished and valued. And in our sharing with each other, may we know, with certainty, that we are Beloved and Blessed! ■

Carol Scott



HAIDA GWAII PILGRIMAGE 2018

From July 1-8, 2018, 18 pilgrims from Emmanuel travelled to Haida Gwaii to learn about the history, culture, and issues of First Nations peoples from members of the Haida Nation. This goal was fulfilled through face-to-face sessions with Haida leaders and personalities during the trip.

Crystal, a matriarch living in Old Masset, spoke to us about her leadership role in preserving the traditions and language of her clan and her future aspirations for their growth.

We heard from Andy Wilson, a leader in Skidegate, who co-represented Skidegate on the Haida Repatriation Committee. He volunteered for over 10 years to repatriate ancestral remains from museums in the US. Both of these leaders also shared emotional memories of residential schools with us. It was very difficult for the survivors to share their memories without reliving those experiences.



In Old Masset, Crystal and her grandson Kyle served us fresh homemade fried bread, jam, tea and chocolates.

We listened as Nika, Skidegate's second repatriation representation, spoke passionately about her experience of working on repatriation of Haida ancestors and artifacts.

At the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (SHIP) we learned about their program to preserve the Haida language by recording elders and documenting their language, by producing dictionaries, stories and books. It is with a great deal of the pride that the teacher and his young colleague conduct this work.



At the Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay

On a guided tour of the seven totem poles at Kay Llnagaay, an award-winning Aboriginal cultural tourism centre, we learned about the matrilineal society and the differences between the eagle and raven families. We learned how to read the poles and about the significance of the potlatch as a place to conduct business and politics and to celebrate events in the community. We travelled to Haida Villages and Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve by covered boat and zodiac. →





Ancient Long Houses at Tanu

On our last stop of the day, we enjoyed a wonderful dip in the hot springs at Hot Spring Island.

We had the opportunity to meet local artists. At the “All About U” Gallery, we met owner and artist Ben Davidson. He explained how art is created and the significance of the colours and shapes used in Haida art. Ben spoke about the techniques which have been passed down from his father and grandfather. Some of us also had the opportunity to meet two artists in the carving shed at New Town. They talked about the design and the revival of this line of work.

At Haida House, our home away from home, we were treated to fabulous meals and amazing hospitality every day. Our hosts shared their stories with us as did the waitresses and other workers we encountered.

Each of the Haida people we met shared their values, history, and experiences with us in a sincere and frank manner which was very much appreciated by the group. Thanks to the personal connections and knowledge of our organizer, Norman Williams, we were exposed to a very rich experience. ■

Val Dowd and Graham Campbell



In the Carving Shed at New Town



EMMANUEL PILGRIMAGE TO HAIDA GWAI, JULY 2018

Pilgrimage:

(n) A journey (usually of a long distance) made to a sacred place as an act of religious devotion: The action or practice of such a journey

(v) to travel; to wander; to stay or dwell in a foreign land; to sojourn

Oxford English Dictionary

This past July 2018, I had the privilege of travelling to Haida Gwaii with fellow Emmanuelites. If you attended the Emmanuel Café you will have heard other experiences and what people felt and learned on this pilgrimage.

We heard from a young Haida man who was our interpreter on our Zodiac day to the ancient villages. He was very enthused about his culture, where it came from and where it was headed. There were times when he was positive about the future, saying he would be happy when we were all one colour. And then there were times when he differentiated between 'us' (Haida) and 'them' (the rest of Canada).

At the Cultural Centre we listened to Nika, a lovely young woman who helped with the repatriation of her ancestors along with 3 other Haida people and Norman Williams. Nika was very positive in going forward as well as protecting her heritage, the Haida language and healing traditions.

Pilgrimages are where we learn, seek, see through others' eyes.

I had to leave on the morning flight by myself. While I was getting breakfast at the airport café I witnessed the following:

A Haida woman was at a large table by herself. I put my tea on her table and stood waiting for my food. All of the other tables were taken. It was very busy as there were two flights leaving around the same time.

The 'white' waitress was asking who had ordered a breakfast sandwich. No one responded so the waitress approached the Haida woman at 'my' table and asked if she had order the sandwich on white bread. The Haida replied, in a loud, aggressive voice "I don't know what kind of bread, I just said to make it with whatever you had". The waitress explained that she needed to check to make sure that she wasn't giving her someone else's meal. The Haida woman was giving the waitress grief, saying that she had been waiting a long time for the food. The waitress finally left the plate on the table. As the waitress walked back to the kitchen the Haida woman started calling the waitress awful names and berating her.

At another table a young woman, holding a baby, turned and said to the Haida woman "You don't have to be rude". The Haida lady responded in a loud voice "Welcome to Haida Gwaii". Whereupon the young women replied "I live here. I'm Haida, this is my Nona."

The Haida woman finished her meal and left in a huff. As I left I approached the young woman and thanked her for standing up for the waitress.



As I walked away it hit me like a ton of bricks – the Haida woman was hurting. She had been hurt by us – the Europeans, the church, the schools. And she had not been able to go beyond that hurt. There are many, many others who have not been able to go beyond the hurt.

This is what I saw on my pilgrimage. This is what I learned on my pilgrimage.

Through the experience of the week on Haida Gwaii, with the interaction with Haida people I was able to see and acknowledge this hurt. ■

Mi'gwich, haaw'a

Mary Turnbull



Oreo

My Identity is something that I have struggled with.
I have always known who I was and what I want to be.
As I got older I noticed
That people would tell me the outside doesn't match what society thinks should be
on the inside.
Identity is a precious thing.
It can hold so much to one's mind and for some it takes a long time.
Some are put in boxes they did not give permission to be in.
Trapped in the words of society, filled with ignorance and confusion.
Expected to wear words like a medal.
I never knew even the closest people to me could be so blindly judgemental.
Telling me what I can and cannot be.
How my skin doesn't match how I should act and therefore,
I am 'not black', according to most I am an Oreo.
Black on the outside and white on the inside.
If I asked what part of the cookie you eat first, most of you would say the filling.
It just tastes better.
And, of course, I would be simple minded to be offended or think it's cruel
When they call me an Oreo, like they are thanking me
For not forcing the parts of me that don't sit well in their gut.
To be black do I have to be in handcuffs?
Do I have to look a certain way or communicate like rappers or thugs?
Do I have to grow up in the hood and be able to talk about the hard times?
The answer is no.
I'm sorry but this blackness is mine and I won't hide.
You won't take my identity away. Like the sun I will rise.
So keep your stereotypes and your Oreos to yourself because
The only person who knows how black I am is myself.

Vanessa Brohman



EMMANUEL'S GLOBAL PARTNERS

CAMP CHIPEMBI #5, AUGUST 2018

On August 11, 2018 a group of five departed on a pilgrimage to Chipembi, Zambia. We went as four young adults, and one adult leader, to participate in Camp Chipembi 5. Our leaders included Marjorie Sams, Asha Hughes, Tiffany Lindsay, Mary Turnbull, and myself. Once we arrived we did a four-day leadership development/planning program with the eleven Zambian leaders. Through this planning we came up with this year's camp theme, which was "We are victorious". This theme was used to show the children that they have the strength to overcome their struggles.

On Friday we started our seven days of camp with one hundred excited, enthusiastic, happy children. Seeing all the smiles, and being greeted with many hugs was a great way to start each day. We had a couple of special days during the week. On Sunday the children did a presentation in front of the church. (Chipembi United Church of Zambia).



Kirsten with children at Camp Chipembi

For the presentation they sang some songs, and the oldest group read one of our chosen Bible stories. On Tuesday we had sports day. The children rotated between water relays, parachute, football (soccer), and volleyball. Friday we visited Chief Chamuka. He is a big supporter of Camp Chipembi, and is a huge advocate for children's rights. ■

Kirsten Jeacle

Ed: In August 2019, a group of four young adults from Emmanuel will travel once again to Chipembi to work with the Chipembi leaders on Camp Chipembi 6. The team for 2019 is Ben Ndanze, Amelia Brohman, Rowan and Emma Dowd.



Camp Chipembi leaders and children



A PILGRIMAGE TO EL SALVADOR, MARCH 2019

When I heard about the trip to El Salvador, I was very eager to go. I had heard stories about El Salvador and some of the experiences people had in previous years. I wanted to have my own experiences, and share some of the other experiences too.

We landed at the airport in San Salvador on March 7 at 3.00pm and what got me was the bright sun! I was happy to have escaped winter for a week, and seeing the sun, I wished I could have stayed longer. The moment I landed, my mind was open to learn new ideas, as well as willing to help the people of El Salvador.

Viewing the streets as we drove was very beautiful. The city was very hilly and some of the places where we went seemed very hard to drive. But the drivers were well trained and were familiar with the terrain.

We started off by going to several Oscar Romero sites in San Salvador. Outside the gate to the Romero museum was a mural which represented different things that are valued and treasured by the Salvadorans. We also went to the University of Central America where we learned more about the Jesuit priests who were killed, and their housekeeper who was also killed with her daughter.

We went also to the IBE (Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel) Christian School, Collegia Bautista Emmanuel, where we enjoyed interacting with the children from grades 1 to 12. The school has a good peer group called the Peacemakers. They ensure that discipline is maintained at school and help settle disputes. The students were very happy to interact with Canadians, and some of them wanted pictures since maintaining friendship is very important. ➡



The visit to the IBE School



The best part of the trip that I enjoyed was the building project. We went to a local community in El Salvador called Las Cruces, to help build up a church for the local people. I didn't have any skills in building before, though I was very happy and ready to help. I knew that through Teamwork we would be able to accomplish the task. We started by making fence poles. I enjoyed every bit of it since we could take turns in my small group. The local people were amazed at how we helped them, despite the hot sun. We managed this by taking turns, drinking lots of water and having a rest.

The trip taught me that the little things we do really impact others. I made friends from El Salvador. One of them was Pastor Miguel. He was very welcoming and he never got tired of explaining things over and over again for us. We had a lot of feedback from the people and they appreciate our efforts and partnership that United Churches have maintained all over the years. I got a taste of their foods. I enjoyed eating Tortilla and Pupusa. This made me appreciate other people's culture. ■

Dorcas Bihamba



Building together



Riding back from the building site to our accommodation



EVEN MORE CHURCH HUMOUR

SHIPWRECKED ON A DESERTED ISLAND

A man was shipwrecked after a storm at sea. He was the sole survivor and washed ashore on a deserted island in the middle of the ocean.

He was very resourceful, and even though all alone, he managed to build himself shelter, find food and survive.

One day, after five years had gone by, a large naval ship appeared on the horizon. The survivor signalled the ship with a fire. The ships' crew spotted him and rowed ashore in a boat to rescue him. The survivor was very grateful to be rescued. Before they got in the boat, he asked the sailor if he would like to have a tour of his house that he had built for himself. The sailor agreed and was most impressed to tour the small house, and the church that the survivor had built next door to his house.

"That church saved my life", he said. " I could never have survived all these years without my church."

As they were climbing on board the rescue boat, the sailor spotted a third building on the island. "What's that building? he asked.

"Oh that?" replied the survivor, "That's the church I used to go to."

(Thanks to Rev Robert Merritt)



Haikus of the Third Eye ¹

**You have seen beyond
your own event horizon.
You cannot look back.**

**That inert black hole
won't suck in more. It's resting
for the next big bang.**

**Our Milky Way will
plunge in Sagittarius
in its own good time.**

**Therefore don't die yet.
Spacetime will deform by God's
own algorithm.**

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¹ The Event Horizon Telescope team has released a long-awaited photo of the ultramassive black hole Powehi at the core of supergiant elliptical galaxy Messier 87, 55 million light years away. Powehi means “embellished dark source of unending creation” in Hawaiian. Light left the area around the black hole just shortly before the dinosaurs vanished. Mass of Powehi is equal to 6.5 billion of our Suns. What's more, this black hole is actually dormant. It has sucked up so much material from its home galaxy that it can't take in any more, so it's just sort of sitting there quietly, the way you might after a particularly filling meal. A black hole is a region of spacetime exhibiting such strong gravitational effects that nothing—including particles and electromagnetic radiation such as light—can escape from inside it. The theory of general relativity predicts that a sufficiently compact mass can deform spacetime to form a black hole. The boundary of the region from which no escape is possible is called the event horizon. A black hole is found in the centre of almost all currently known massive galaxies. In the case of the Milky Way, our black hole corresponds with the location of Sagittarius A*.



AU REVOIR!

I've been sorting through paper piles and cleaning up email files in preparation for my Sabbatical move to New Brunswick. As I sift through them, I am immersed in floods of heartwarming memories. In a brief news article such as this, it is impossible to select all the highlights. Perhaps being nourished during significant worship services would be one highlight. Coffee and conversation greetings and hugs with fellow sojourners would be another.

As well as spontaneous conversations in hallways; the trust of sharing and discussions during Teleos, Heretics, and many significant meetings; feeling the depth of Spirit's blessing when light shines through the stained glass window with bands of colours and illumination; music that lifts the soul and makes the heart swell; bedside visits to folks making difficult adjustments to life, where they dig down to find a deeper layer of courage they didn't know was there; meals lovingly prepared by our kitchen folks; faith studies, nature pilgrimages, and workshops which moved us into awareness of God's presence in a fulsome way; deep friendships; deep Spirit-space; deep Mystery.



During the past seven years, I have felt supported, challenged, stretched, and blessed. At first it was like a courting period when we got to know one another - our ancestry, heritage, and traditions providing bedrock; our hopes and dreams providing yeast and bread for the journey. For me, this 7-year courtship has flourished into sustainable love, where I believe that wherever I am, Emmanuel has already taken root in my heart.

As I prepare to gain further insights from the Call of the Ocean, I believe I am not entirely leaving. Emmanuel's fibrous tufts from the past seven years are stuck to me in a good way. May each of you, the readers, be nourished by communion with the One whose nature is Love, and may you continue to follow your hopes, dreams and inner calling to make the world a better place. And may you be eternally blessed! ■

Carol Scott

Ed: Emmanuel wishes Carol all our best wishes as she heads off to New Brunswick for her well earned sabbatical break. We are grateful for every thing that Carol has done for the Emmanuel family - her contributions are too numerous to mention.

We look forward to welcoming Carol back to our family at the completion of her sojourn.



Farewell to our old Emmanuel signs that have served us well for many years. Thanks to Property and Grounds who maintained them. We are greatfull to Russ Pastuch and Pat Harris and many others who have braved all weathers to post information on the wooden sign. We eagerly anticipate the arrival of our brand new, state of the art electronic sign that will tell the world all about what we are doing.



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