



## this issue

Mental Health during Covid

Nature Pilgrimage

Going back to School

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In December 2020 it is rather shocking to look back at the nine months that we have lived with Covid, when in the spring of this year we thought we would be out of the woods by summertime. Now we know enough not to try to make any predictions, but rather to focus on how to live in the present - trying to do our best at living in a Covid world.

This issue of the newsletter will, we believe, present a hopeful picture of how our Emmanuel community is succeeding at maintaining a vibrant, active congregation, by adapting creatively to the demands that are placed upon us. Members of the Emmanuel family, of all generations, are doing a fantastic job of keeping everyone linked together.

In this issue we have stories about how people are living with Covid, how teachers and students are experiencing the return to school. We have observations on the US election by people who voted in it.

*If you have items for publication, suggestions or comments, please send them to:*

[newsletter@emmanuelunited.ca](mailto:newsletter@emmanuelunited.ca)

To help you plan your time going into the winter, we have reviews of books and recommendations for television watching this fall. We hope you will find this issue of the newsletter informative, fun and even inspirational. Stay healthy. Stay safe.

Phyllis MacRae

December 21, 2020



*Banner photo by David Wray*



## FROM BRIAN'S DESK

One of the Retirement Home companies had an ad in the paper this week inviting people to come and spend the winter with them. In the current environment it doesn't sound like an appealing idea but who knows? Which brings me to the Apostle Paul. He ends his first letter to the Church at Corinth with his travel plans, telling them that in all likelihood he will come and visit them and 'even spend the winter' with them. Probably in one of those first century retirement homes, eh?

Lots of folks find winter difficult; the trees are barren, the ground covered in snow, the sidewalks often slippery and the air cold. It's enough to depress even the most hearty of us. And if you have mobility issues then winter is a very tough season. If you are struggling with a chronic illness or a mental illness, if you are in long term care or locked down in a retirement home, winter is a very tough season.

And this year add the quotient of the pandemic and it becomes as one candidate for US President said recently, 'a dark winter.' Yet Paul was excited about the possibility of seeing the Corinthians, of spending time with them, and the weather wasn't all that bad, an average high of 18C and plenty of rain. He wanted time for an extended conversation, time to reason with them about the new life in Christ, time to listen to their concerns, and time to provide them with leadership and direction.

My brother-in-law who normally takes his trailer to the southern US is opting out this year and told me this week that he is stock piling fire wood for the staycation at home this winter. Finding a routine will be important this winter, talking to friends on the phone, watching worship on our computers and Zooming with colleagues and friends will give us a taste of the social and personal. But it won't be like any winter we have known before and it may indeed be a 'dark winter.' And yet, our life as community of faith continues, our commitment to follow in Jesus' way continues, and our responsibility for living God's mission in our world continues, and with Paul we can hunker down and 'even spend the winter' with you. Thanks be to God.

Brian



## PASTORAL CARE

### Dealing with Mental Health during Covid

Mental Health is one of those things that isn't fully appreciated, until it's challenged. This pandemic is set to challenge many of us, especially as winter sets in. It will become harder to socialize and participate in activities. But we can augment our toolkit for Mental Health!

What are the ways we can become more resilient mentally, you ask?

Let's start with the basics; choosing healthy food, getting plenty of exercise and good sleep hygiene are an important beginning. Healthy food as unprocessed as possible, maximizing vitamins and micronutrients. Exercise in the winter - could be a walk, snowshoe or cross-country ski. Choose how you enjoy moving your body and make it fun. Winter can be quite invigorating if the right clothes are worn; "no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing". Sleep hygiene is having a regular sleep schedule and no electronics a couple hours before going to sleep.

The Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) can guide us in developing the mental health resources that serve us. Let's talk Love. Love is a powerful force; God's gift to us. How might life change if we focused on love and nurtured how love might show up in our lives. This could be love towards ourselves in the form of self-compassion, or love towards one another. Why not let judgement go, and enjoy the abundance of Love?



Joy can be intentionally found. How about deciding each day to take time for something that brings you Joy? A phone call or a cup of tea that takes more time to prepare but tastes extra good because there are rich spices and honey in it. Maybe Joy comes with cooking a new dish for family, from Pinterest's vast array of recipes. A Gratitude practice identifying three things you are grateful for each day can remind us of the good things in our lives.

What about Peace? Using mindfulness we can enjoy the present moment, bringing Peace. We can observe our many emotions and try to understand what they are saying to us. Why do we feel angry? How can we work through this emotion to find peace in understanding it? Patience and kindness can enrich our lives and others, in the world. A kind act can make a difference in someone's life and have a domino effect. Goodness, gentleness and faithfulness can bring us spiritual growth. Listen carefully for the feelings when someone close is communicating with you.

I am wishing all this for members of the Emmanuel faith community this winter.

Roxanne Delmage

Pastoral Care Coordinator



# SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

## An Update from the Transition Team

This is a brief report on the latest activities as part of the Shaping Our Future Together project. It provides the highlights of the successful congregational workshop held by Zoom on November 4 and plans for the next steps before completing the Project in early 2021.

The Transition Team is very pleased with the results of the conversations to date. Two types of results have come forward. First, several ideas have been identified for follow-up experiments by groups within the congregation. We see these as experiments to try out, to learn from, and to consider as additions to the life of the congregation.

Second, we have noted many higher-level observations about our congregation which have emerged to date. Here is an update and a few highlights about each.

### 1. Congregational Workshop - Developing Ideas for Experiments to Try Out

A congregational workshop was held by Zoom on November 4 for the purpose of developing ideas which had emerged from the conversations to date that warrant further development. Prior to the workshop, the congregation received a compilation of the ideas harvested to date and a note describing how ideas could be tried out on an experimental basis. The workshop was attended by 33 members of the Emmanuel congregation including our consultant Rev. Joe Ramsay and five members of the Transition Team.



The workshop opened with a presentation describing the activities completed, a list of eight general areas of interest selected from the conversations by the Transition Team, and the arrangements for setting up Zoom Breakout groups to develop the selected ideas further. Notes were taken in each Breakout group by individuals recruited in advance.

### Notes from Breakout Groups and the Transition Team's Proposed Follow-Up Actions

Participants selected an area of interest and were placed in one of six breakout groups. After a 30-minute discussion and a quick break, the participants returned to their breakout room or entered a different room for a second 30-minute discussion. The group was asked to develop the idea further and suggest follow-up actions.

1. Worship on Sunday: Ways of doing things differently

Observations:

- Appreciate our streamed services but could look into new ideas as they come along.
- Missing the 'personal' connection in streamed worship services through the chat function.
- Consider a larger number of different people taking part in the service
- Bring in guests from across the country using pre-recorded videos
- Learn about how to use the new video equipment to open new possibilities.

Follow-Up: Forward these suggestions to the Worship Committee.



2. Worship through the week: Alternative ideas about worship, different types, styles, content

Observations:

- Suggested Title: *"Personal Spiritual Connection for our Pandemic Time"*.
- Re-create the cottage style groups of no more than 10 people
- Check in with each other, share in worship, and share personal journeys.

Follow-Up: Develop this idea further by a working group.

3. Faith in Action: Support to the interests and expectations of the youth and young adults

The Transition Team commends the excellent youth initiatives underway now by the Christian Development Committee.

4. Faith in Action: Learn about the beliefs and practices of other faith groups

Observations:

- The objective is to learn more about other faith communities by inviting a recommended speaker.
- Perhaps part of a Sunday service or a mid-week evening event.

Follow-Up: Forward to the Heretics.

5. Faith in Action: Reaching out to engage the members of the Emmanuel family together

Observations:

- There is a need for vehicles to become more aware of personal challenges or difficulties people are going through so that we can reach out to them.

- One barrier is that we no longer see people physically in church, or even on chat in on-line services, so we don't know who is missing.
- Consider how we could have people come into the church for In-person small-group social meetings, and talk about some of the barriers we face now during COVID-19.
- It might be possible for the Keeping in Touch Committee to help.
- There might be room to expand these connections
- Could have the participants of this Breakout group attend a KIT meeting to discuss ideas.

Follow-Up: Actions: Forward this information to the Keeping In Touch Committee, consider having people involved in this BreakOut group attend a KIT meeting.

6. Faith in Action: Deepening our understanding of, and building relationships with, Indigenous people

Observations:

- Interested in developing partnerships with indigenous organizations in the Ottawa area.
- Identified the Odawa Native Friendship Centre, the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, and an Ottawa-based Inuit organization (Inuit Community Centre), and Indspire as possible partners.
- Should start by identifying their needs and then find a way that we could work with them to address their needs.
- Consider creating an Indigenous Action Committee to provide a focal point for Emmanuel

Follow-Up: Forward these notes to the Social Action Committee for their follow-up. could reach out to the Woodroffe Right Relations Group.

7. Faith in Action: Expanding our outreach to local faith partners, global and social justice partners



Observations:

- Raise awareness amongst members of the congregation about who our partners are, the importance of what they do, and why we support them.
- Consider “trade fair” where each of our partners could have a table to present themselves and their organization.
- Interview our key partners through videos and present those during a service.

Follow-Up: Actions: Present “Minutes for Local Partnerships” during worship services, write an article in an upcoming newsletter profiling the roles and activities of each of our partners. Forward to Social Action and Global Partners for follow-up.

8. Faith in Action: Act on our environmental concerns

Observations:

- This Breakout group was not chosen by workshop participants.

## 2. Gathering Higher-Level Observations

Gathering the higher-level observations from the conversations so far is being undertaken now by the Transition Team. Many of these observations confirm what we already know about Emmanuel, such as the strong endorsement for Sunday worship in community. Others have revealed how people in the congregation prefer to work together, for example by participating in small groups for worship and discussion. Others underline the importance of personal face-to-face contact and how much this part of congregational life is missed during the pandemic restrictions.

These observations will be brought forward early in the New Year.



## 3. Next Steps

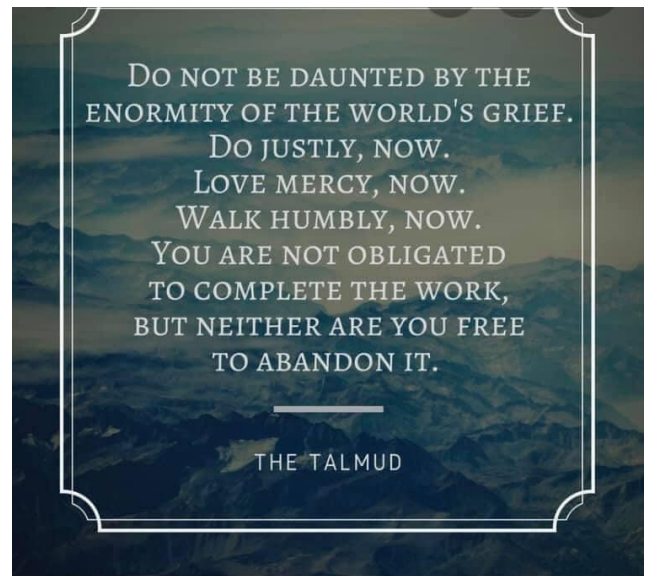
The combination of new initiatives to try out and the identification of the higher-level outcomes from the Shaping Our Future Together Project will be the core of the final report.

The Transition Team would like to hear from you about anything we have overlooked, or if you have further ideas for enriching the life of Emmanuel. Please contact any member of the Transition Team.

Thank you for your interest in the Shaping Our Future Together Project.

Transition Team

Chikwa Zahinda, Graham Campbell, Janice Péron, Phyllis MacRae, Val Dowd, with Rev. Joe Ramsay



# THE LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY

## FALL NATURE PILGRIMAGE

*(Photos by Roxanne Delmage)*

The Nature Pilgrimage at Emmanuel usually happens in fall and Spring. This Spring was unique (no explanation necessary). The Pilgrimage was a work in progress. It was initially planned for the Baxter Center, but was soon moved to Vincent Massey Park; closer for simplicity in these more complex times. Nyla, Jill and I reflected on safety protocols, weather, numbers, a date to go, or cancel, sound requirements, and Communion; so many details.

On October 14, it was a glorious fall day; with vibrant orange and red trees in our midst. The theme was a “Like a Healing Stream”, with the Rideau River right there.



*Photo: Roxanne Delmage*



*Photo: Joyce White*



The music enhanced the Program. We reflected on water in Scripture, and its' central role in life. Communion, by Rev Brian, had individual servings of "bread and wine" and was very meaningful. There were walks taken to the rapids near Carleton University, and Hogs Back Falls.

Fourteen of the Emmanuel Community gathered to share the Joy of Creation, especially water, and remind us the leaves of fall can teach us to prepare, reflect, and let go. Come next year!

Roxanne Delmage



*Photo: Roxanne Delmage*



*Photo: Irene Bakker*





## LIFE AMID COVID

It was with a strange feeling that we said good bye to our family on the patio last week-end. Frank and I wondered if after sitting for 1½ hours with chilled fingers and toes whether there would be another this year.

We have been so very grateful for each and every visit that we have had from May until now, but the stark truth was in the air as the temperature read in the single digits.

For some time we have gone from month to month believing perhaps the next month would put us in a more hopeful place of controlling the virus. Common sense and the scientists now tell us, “we won’t be sitting at a family Christmas meal nor will we be attending a Christmas Eve Service in the church. We are in this reality for the long haul.”

For each of you reading this, you are already experiencing the difficulties that cold weather and covid present in your lives, but I hope you can flip the coin to see it’s other side.

Winter brings beauty as the newly fallen snow shines like millions of sparkling diamonds, not one like the other; it and isolation provides time to crack the spines on those many books on the shelf and do crafts that have been waiting to use that multi-coloured glitter. Winter calls for lots of rich recipes for hot steaming soup on the table every noon. Gone are the salads in place of good old comfort foods. All of this of course is predicated on having eyes to see. I and 3 other folk that I know of from our church family experience macular degeneration. All I will say is, “say thank you each and every day for the sight that you have”.

The bread maker begins to make its appearance each Monday morning and since there is no garden to tend to, the sheets and pillow cases deserve a pass over with the iron. There just wasn’t any time in the summer for ironing, but there really was no need; clothes hung outside provide a fragrance of sheer delight when you nestle your face in its material. That was so much better than an iron.

You will notice there just isn’t too much to extol about covid, however, there really is some goodness. I have noticed how much more friendly people are. When I was out, people that had never spoken to me would stop at a distance and have conversation. I have so enjoyed seeing all the birds in the back garden, many more than usual. Some of the stores would offer a 7am opening for us seniors. That was truly a gift. I had an expansive project to reshape two of the gardens this past summer. I should say I had the help of a young person to do most of the work; I just filled the holes with the plants. As hard as I tried I pushed my back beyond its limits and so now I am paying a heavy price. But just imagine how glorious it is all going to be in the spring. Even covid-19 won’t be able to stop its beauty from expressing its self. Perhaps Joan Chittister is right when she asks the question, “Is our purpose in life to make beauty possible?”

Anything that can transcend the mundane gets a yes from me.

So, Covid-19, one day you will be but a sad memory that has taught us lessons we needed to learn like people and nature are who and where we need to wrap our arms around and give thanks.

Patty Kavcic



## BACK TO SCHOOL DURING COVID

### My New School

*(Photos by Christina Clark-Kazak)*

I started a new school called Au cœur d'Ottawa this year. It is part of the Ottawa Catholic francophone school board. I attend in person five days a week. It's not much different than going to school normally except we have to wear masks and social distance.

Au coeur d'Ottawa is a new, alternative school near Immaculata High School. I take a shuttle bus from the Ottawa General hospital.

The school uses a teaching method from Finland and encourages outdoor learning. For example, we go to Springhurst Park a lot to do regular schoolwork, like math, science and art. Sometimes we also do yoga or go snowshoeing. One time we even saw a baby turtle!

We have Spanish lessons during lunch at least once a week. This is because the school is part of the International Baccalaureate program.

I'm really enjoying it so far.

Anahita Kazak



*Anahita and Sam*

### Back at school

It's fun being back at school in person. I hope others also are having fun at school.

I go to Riverview Alternative School (in the OCDSB). I walk home by myself. It takes me 10 minutes.

Our school team name is the River Wolves. We like to have dance parties every Friday. We play outside a lot. There's a tightrope that the teachers bring out sometimes!

I love it at my new school - gym, math, science, art. We wear masks except when we're eating and we have fresh air.

Rustom Kazak



*Rustom*



## A Support Staff Perspective on Schooling during Covid-19

School is not the same as back in March, when we first went 'remote'. At that time, we were following the constantly changing advice from medical experts regarding transmission of this virus, and in the interests of protecting our students, schools in the OCDSB (Ottawa Carleton District School Board) were closed from the March break until the middle of September.

I work at Pleasant Park Public School, with about 415 students now attending in person and perhaps 100–120 remotely.

To say things were challenging for the end of the 2019-2020 school year would be a gross understatement. For months now, it's been like playing in a strangely bizarre game of Calvinball, with the goalposts being moved with more frequency than a politician's promises....

I'm in a weird situation, actually having two roles (and two unions): my primary role is as a librarian (support staff, OSSTF), while my secondary role is as a supply teacher (in French, though also qualified to teach in English, ETFO - OCOETA). In the winter, I had the lovely option of picketing with two unions, and also crossing the picket lines of those same two unions. Very surreal, for an old Union person, but one that both unions supported, as I joined whatever picket I could. This was truly the 'winter of our discontent', as we started our job actions in the fall, and were ready to continue after the March break.

Then Covid-19 erupted into our area, and the world changed forever.

Our picket signs were stored, as we struggled frantically to create remote learning, with no real direction from the Ministry of Education.

My role, during this time, was primarily to research hundreds of websites in French and English, and make recommendations to the teaching staff for supports as they strove to create a meaningful educational experience for our students. The learning curve for technology was incredibly steep, and we rolled out various programs, to varying degrees of success. It's hard to create something wholly from scratch when you're not really familiar with all the technology, and to try to cram in both the rewriting of half of the school year along with your own learning of how to effectively use technology that is unfamiliar... well, that's more than tough.

Still, we managed to make it work.

And then, in June, we waited for some direction from the government.

In July, we still waited for some direction from the government, other than 'create three methods of delivering the curriculum: one wholly remote, one wholly in-person, and one that is a hybrid.'

These plans, created by the individual school boards around the province, were to be submitted by the 1st of August.



However, three days before this deadline, the government decreed how things were going to be -- without actually consulting the school boards that had been working for weeks to create plans. This was somewhat discouraging to the people who had been developing these plans... Imagine being asked to plan an event, only to have the rug yanked out from under you a couple of weeks before the start date....

Still, we persevered. School did not open as scheduled, as the actual number of students who elected to go to an online learning module far exceeded the estimates. Most schools scrambled to try to fit the proverbial square peg into a round hole, in order to cope with the goalposts being moved one again.

And as soon as we had things in place, things were changed once again -- and again, and again.

Things are more than stressful at the school lately, with six (non school-transmitted) cases of Covid-19 so far in the first couple of months of school, but our health and safety protocols are working, as we do *\*not\** have community transmission of the virus. The cases are isolated, though for precautions, classes, education personnel and bus cohorts considered as 'high-risk contacts' self-isolate for two weeks, which leads to a lot of supply teachers and support staff in the schools.

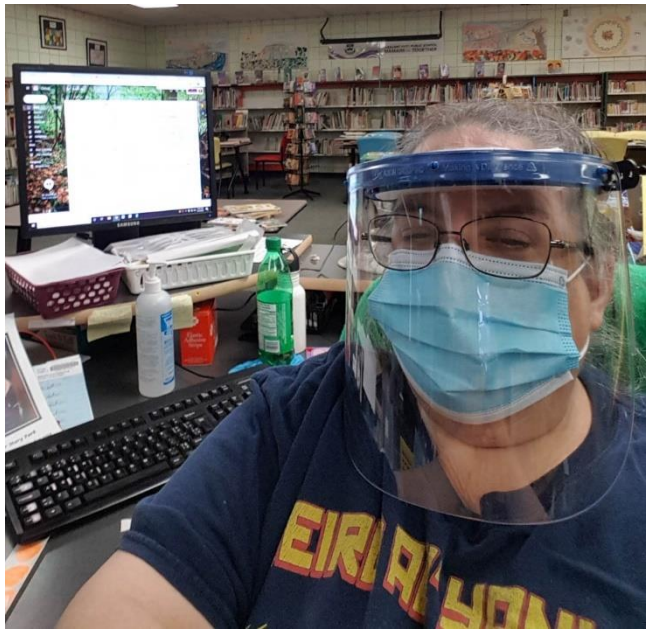
I'm very lucky that I've got a grand bubble, with shielding at my desk and pretty good social distancing in place, as the library is closed to the students. It's the auxiliary staff room, as we can only fit 6 people at a time (from a staff of about 45) in the staff room proper. However, I don't think we've had a single day when everyone assigned to the school was actually present in the school since we reopened. It's like a revolving door of supply folk, and I'm pretty sure that's the same in every other school (and much worse in a few), and even though I work half-days, I'm exhausted by the time I get home. In case of emergency, I'm 'available' to supply teach at my school, but the uncertainty of things means I'm not rushing to solicit supply work. That's unfortunate, because I do love teaching, but at 60 years old, with asthma that is really aggravated by the masks and shields, and a less-than-stellar immune system, I'm not particularly eager to put myself in a precarious situation if it can be avoided. I do whatever I can to support my colleagues, and help them find materials to help as they adjust to a completely different way of teaching.



*FoodBank Drop-off with Pierre and Janice Péron*



It's been an incredibly stressful time; participating in job actions last winter; being forced into a situation that goes against the recommendations for restarting school; living in a world where some people are so selfish as to not observe the recommendations and thus endanger everyone touched by their sphere; living in a world where caring about the economy is more important to the politician than caring about each other.... But we \*are\* in this together, and together we can work miracles. I'm hopeful for the future, and trust that we'll work together to keep our kids and their families as safe as possible. God grant us the patience to endure!



Maggie Park

## HUMOUR

The devil whispered to me, "I'm coming for you."

I whispered back, "Bring pizza."

Me: (sobbing my heart out, eyes were swollen, nose red): I can't see you anymore. I am not going to let you hurt me like this again!

Trainer: It was a sit up. You did one sit up.

Having plans sounds like a good idea until you have to put on clothes to leave the house!

It's weird being the same age as old people.

When I was a kid I wanted to be older...this is not what I expected.



## BACK TO SCHOOL 2020

Well, we are back to school in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, and things are going pretty well so far. It is of course very different, but there are a lot of positives that go along with the new protocols and practices that have been put in place. Attending school for 4 hours straight in one class/subject is a long time, but it actually works pretty well for Phys-ed and Health (and no, I don't make the kids run around for the full 4 hours, haha). I am able to alternate between Phys-ed and Health activities, and I try to keep Mental Health and Health & Happiness for Life as the prevailing messages throughout.



As you may have heard already, most high schools have their year divided into “Quadmesters” instead of “Semesters” and we only see the students face to face for 12 days TOTAL, and the other 12 days we have them in our class, they work from home. Students have our class every other week throughout the two months that we have them (they have a different subject that alternates with ours on the off weeks). Each student will have two courses in a Quadmester. For example, one week is Science, and the next week is English, and they alternate weeks for two months. And during a week of one course, students alternate days that they are in school face to face and at home doing your lesson that you prepared specifically to do for home study. Sound confusing – yup, it took us all a while to figure it out! In a normal year, we would have students every day for a 75min period for a semester that consisted of approx. 85 days, plus an exam week.



## A Typical Day

Our first block is outside for 45min to do our warm up that consists of activities on the field, track, or local neighbourhood paths. Then we head into the gym for an hour to hour and a half for some distanced sport skills such as badminton, ringette, volleyball (against the wall), or basketball, with outdoor breaks in there too. We are not allowed to play any team games where students get too close to each other, so I have been coming up with new games to play from a distance i.e. Human Foosball Soccer, Zoned Ringette, and Human Rock Paper Scissors.



Students are not allowed to touch the same objects as others with their hands, so we have to be creative with our activities in order to have a well-rounded, quality Phys-ed program. The big learning curve, besides coming up with new activities and new ways to teach/practice skills, has been having to sanitize EVERYTHING that hands have touched at the end of each session i.e. badminton goggles, rackets and birds, volleyballs, basketballs, etc. Some days we go out for a nature hike in the woods where we combine physical activity, learning about nature, and learning about various mental health strategies at our stops along the way. Mental health activities often include things such as: mindfulness, de-stressing, self-care and self-love, focusing on highlights/positives, deep breathing, focusing on nature, relaxation techniques, focusing on variety and diversity in nature and relating that to the human population, and so on.



Shelly Collins? Is that you?

After our morning Phys-ed sessions we have an OUTDOOR distanced snack break (while I sanitize equipment), then we have a Google Meet in our portable with the cohort that is at home that day (that is when I have to gear up as in the photo below – mask, safety glass &/or shield). We go over health lessons and I answer questions during this time that usually lasts approx. 30-45min. After that we head back outside for another outdoor block of soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, scavenger hunts, and coming up next is orienteering! We focus on skills and modified games where applicable. Then I send the students home for their last block of learning where they work on more Health activities & assignments until the end of the school day.





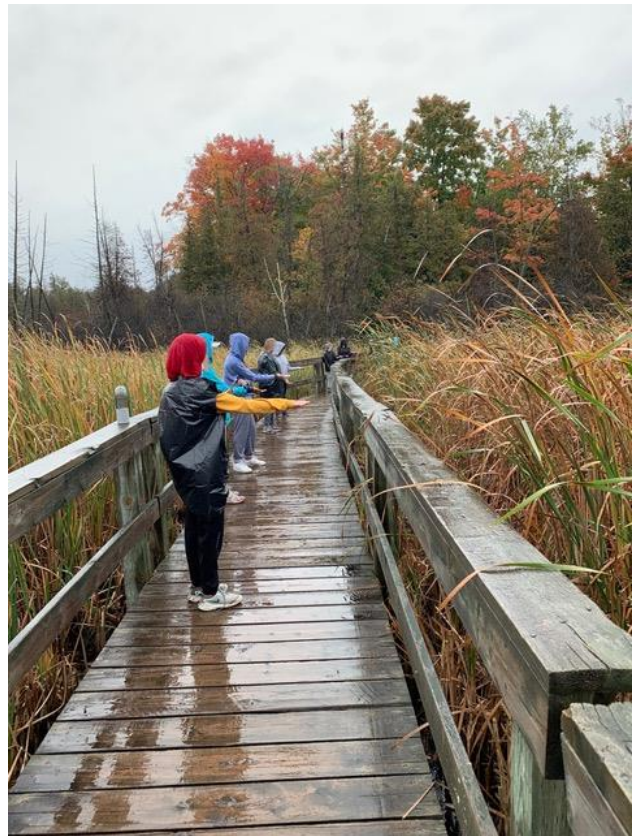
At the same time as I'm teaching, I have another cohort at home working on a days worth of lessons that I sent out to them at 8am. This cohort at home has 2 blocks of exercising and 3 blocks of health during their "Learn at Home" time.

They can ask me questions during our synchronous Google Meet each day, or email me and I can answer during the last block of the day.

### **Positive Aspects of This New Way of Teaching & Learning**

Although a lot of negatives have been mentioned about this new way of learning, there are a lot of positives to this new way of teaching Phys-ed & Health (not ideal of course, but I am trying to focus on all the good things that have come out of it):

- We get to do things we did not have time for in a single period in the past (we went on a 2 hour hike the other day, as the students kept wanting to take the longer routes 😊)
- I get to spend more time during the day with these students and connect with them.
- I have my own portable that no one else uses!! I got to decorate it too!!
- We have SMALL class sizes (10 in one cohort and 12-15 in the other...depending on who shows up, haha)
- So far, I have been much healthier this Fall, as most people are being more thoughtful about when to come to school and when to stay home (staying home when sick so it doesn't spread - hey, there's a new concept!)....and we all have to wear masks!



- We get to spend a lot of time outside (this may be a draw back come the fridge weather, haha)
- We get a whole gym to use with only 10-15 kids in it - talk about space!
- Halls are not crowded
- No class changes (you have one class and that is it!)
- No more close talkers in my space, haha – they have to keep their distance now!
- I get to see people out in our “portable village” or as we like to think of it “cottage country.” We can chat from a distance as more people are getting outside for mask breaks, fresh air, and a bit of exercise as the walk around the track or outside the school building
- LOTS of outdoor time in nature (if we so choose...which I do!)



- More flexible schedule day to day (if we need more time to do something then we can take it, and if we finish early we move onto something else – no bells to follow during the day)
- Students can take mask breaks when they need to (we have to wear them whenever indoors), but we do not have to wear them outside as long as we are distanced (and I remind them frequently to keep their distance!)
- Students and parents had a choice as to whether they attended “In-School” in this new “Hybrid Model” (every other day in school, and every other day at home), or learning from home 100% of the time by enrolling in the Virtual High School.
- Ian gets to eat his lunch outside with his department each day (that will likely stop come the colder weather)!
- Never a dull moment – very “interesting” times! 🌀



## Drawbacks

There are a few:

- Not a lot of time for students to learn, practice, and retain information and skills – This is a big one (especially for more traditional classroom courses such as Science, Math and learning a new language)
- Having to prep two full days of work for one day - one cohort in class, and the other working at home (that is exhausting)
- Very short Quadmesters and we only see the students face to face for 12 days TOTAL, and the other 12 days that they are “in” our class, they work from home. So, students are in our class for 24 days in total at 5 hours each day.
- We don't get to stay connected to these students for very long (2months, and only 12 days face to face and 12 days at home)
- Teaching Health over Google Meets (yeah, Sex-ed is a little more challenging and concerning to teach online – eek!)
- Not being able to touch common objects like volleyballs or basketballs



- Sanitizing so much stuff (and students are not allowed to)!!!
- Teachers have two Quadmesters of one course and two Quadmester of two courses (those Quads are absolutely insane as you are now prepping for two different lessons for 5 hour days everyday). The Quad that teachers only have one subject to prep is more manageable.
- Having to connect with the cohort at home each day while you are still teaching the cohort in class can get tricky. Google Meets and other technology have become part of our daily routines.
- So many emails!!!
- As they say, “Building the airplane as we fly it” Directives often come out last minute and we have to change what we are doing or add to it...that can get overwhelming at times, when you thought you finally figured this new system out!



Overall, things are going far better than we expected and the way the OCDSB is handling High School is great in our opinion. The students only have one class a day and do not have a lunch break when they are at school, and therefore do not mix with other classes or cohorts. Classes are quite small, and typically max out at 15, but are often smaller than that. And students are spread out at every other desk or greater in a classroom. Hand sanitizing stations are in each classroom and each entrance to the school, and students are instructed to sanitize on the way in and out of each room. Students can eat when they like (but are asked to do so outdoors in my class).

The OCDSB and the staff involved, has put a great deal of thought, planning, time and effort into creating a safe return to school, and staff are trying to implement the new learning strategies to the best of our abilities while trying to keep a positive, SAFE, and overall healthy and enriched learning environment for all of our students (while still having some fun in there too! ).

I hope you all are staying healthy and entertained, and are able to get out and enjoy some of this lovely Fall weather we have been having so far.

Shelly Collins

*(Photos by Shelly Collins)*



## STEWARDSHIP 2020

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our Stewardship drive-through! The packages that haven't been picked up will be mailed to you, and the filled out pledge cards can be returned through the church mail slot.

We hope that you will complete the electronic version survey of your interests, skills and services, as it is a monumental task to transfer data from the paper forms into digital format by hand. If you go to:

<http://www.emmanuelunited.ca/survey2020.php>, or **click on the "Survey 2020" link on our web page**, you can click on any items that are of interest to you, then click on "submit".

It may not seem as important to fill out these forms this year with our church still closed, but we live in the hope of gathering again for worship. Each of you, and the gifts of yourselves are the foundation of our faith, whether in our congregation, or in your home and community.

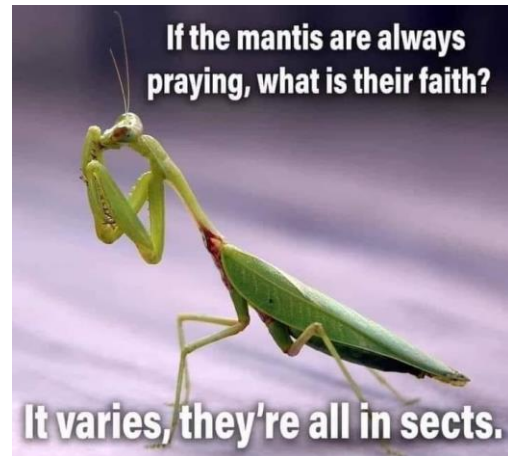
We pray for the blessings that will sustain you through these strange times.

Many thanks,

Sandra Copeland  
Stewardship Coordinator



Photo: Joyce White



## How a Community Health Centre Responds to a Pandemic

*(Photos by Jeannie Page)*

South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre has been serving the area of Ottawa South for over 35 years. Some members of Emmanuel United Church were original founders of our CHC. We provide inter-professional services, including health care, social services, home supports for seniors, support for pregnant and nursing mothers, counselling, newcomer support, nutritional advice and healthy activities for youth and seniors. We are particularly mandated to serve people with barriers to access to services, for example because they don't speak English or French, don't have transportation or childcare, or don't know where or how to access services.



On a typical fall day a year ago our Centre would have been hopping, with parents and children in the play group, a crowd of people in the waiting room for medical appointments or to meet with an Intake worker, clients waiting to see a community connections worker about an immigration matter, a volunteer orientation session in the boardroom, a breastfeeding support drop-in meeting in one room and a seniors exercise group in another.

What a difference 9 months under lock down can make. We are still providing services, but in such a different way. Many of our medical and counselling visits are now being done virtually, by telephone or videoconference. Our Early Childhood Educators held some groups outside when the weather was nice and are leading playgroups and telling stories over Facebook. Our Registered Dietitians are offering baby food workshops on Zoom. Over 70% of our staff are working from home, and although there are still some in person visits to the Centre, there are many empty desks and empty meeting rooms.



Since the beginning of Covid-19 we have pivoted our services to meet the needs of the community in a frightening, isolating time. Early on we realized that many people who were self-isolating had difficulty getting groceries, especially seniors and families on low income. We partnered with ET Café, on the main floor of our building to purchase and deliver staples and fresh fruit and vegetables and redeployed a couple of staff each week to deliver groceries. This filled a need until community partners were able to organize and coordinate food security initiatives. Now we are partnering with Operation Ramzieh to deliver hampers to needy families.

We normally have people come to the Centre to pick up back packs filled with school supplies in August, but this year due to Covid staff mobilized to deliver 244 backpacks to 115 families in our area. We have also recently delivered Chromebooks to families with youth who need them for on-line school classes.



Some of the areas hardest hit by Covid-19 in the city are in our catchment area. Ottawa Public Health wanted to do Mobile Covid Screening in these neighbourhoods, where there was high density housing and large families. They didn't understand why they had low numbers of people coming for testing. They needed our knowledge and experience in community development to engage with residents in advance, in multiple languages, and persuade them of the importance of testing, contact tracing and self-isolation. We deployed a group of staff, along with staff from Ottawa Housing and Big Brothers Big Sisters to go door-to-door, delivering masks and information to folks about how and when to get tested, where to access food, counselling, school supplies and computers for their children, who were studying from home.



As a Community Health Centre, we continue to meet the needs of our community effectively and efficiently. It is challenging and stressful for our front line staff, who have to constantly worry about protecting themselves with the proper PPE, and still be there for our clients, who are equally challenged and stressed, financially, physically, and mentally. We want to be there for the isolated senior, who needs a ride to her medical appointment; the woman living with violence with nowhere to turn, and the single parent who catches Covid-19 and has nobody to take care of their children so they can self-isolate and recover.

We are still offering regular services like foot care and flu shot clinics, as well as innovate programs, like our “Your Friendly Neighbour” program, which matches immigrants and refugees with volunteers for weekly visits, by phone or video conference. If you would be interested in volunteering to support a newcomer to learn about Canadian culture, please contact Fatima, at [fatimao@seochc.on.ca](mailto:fatimao@seochc.on.ca).

For more information about South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre, check out our website at [www.seochc.on.ca](http://www.seochc.on.ca).

Jeannie Page

Human Resource & Privacy Officer  
South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre



*Jeannie in her office*





## Reflections on the US Election

Great despair! Lamentations and “gnashing of teeth”! That was my November 4 morning! It was such an enormous disappointment!

The final “call” on Nov 7 that Biden had won came as we landed in Vancouver on our way to our other home. Happy? You bet! But not dancing in the streets! Without the Senate there can be little prospect of significant progress. Trump has shown how much damage can be done by Executive orders, and some of that can be undone, but big health care change, Covid relief for the low income workers, refugee and immigration reform - all seem almost impossible.

It has been all too easy to dismiss those who turned out in such huge numbers for Trump rallies- but the record-breaking number of actual votes can't be so easily ignored. Pejoratives were readily exclaimed! How could anyone support him! The chasm between sides seems bottomless! The numbers have never been so large and so divided. Like most Californians I hardly know any pro-Trump folks. We all live in our bubbles of like-thinkers. We all, regularly, exclaimed over some horrible new Trumpism. We know that Fox “News” deliberately is structured to bring emotional highs from beating up on those who present different views. (I have a great and very credible book on that topic if anyone is interested!) But none of those were in our bubble! We extolled those who try to show both sides- even when we complain that in so doing they give credence to false information.

So- How do I “love my neighbors” when the Trump voters seem so vastly different? Well, that's the ethical/moral challenge isn't it! Could Jesus really mean THESE others?

Pasadena Presbyterian Women are studying Psalms and recognizing that many Psalms start with naming, crying out!, the laments and “telling God all about it “. That is prayer! And expecting God to share the grief and bring you to a new awareness. That is what I hope for.

I shared these concerns with some of our Pasadena friends. We talked about the many ways in which we surely must find shared values, and ways to be good neighbors. The consensus was that churches should take the lead in bringing people together to build bridges over the chasm. Churches are actually the place where you can find Republicans in Pasadena! It will be hard to find ways to live up to the challenge. I hope we can.

Areta Crowell

Pasadena, California



# A CONVERSATION WITH EARNEST VINSON ABOUT THE US ELECTION AND OTHER MATTERS

By Phyllis Macrae

*Two weeks after the US Presidential election, and one week after it became clear that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris had succeeded in winning enough of the states to be named President and Vice President Elect, Earnest Vinson and I sat down for a chat on Zoom. Earnest was born and raised in Louisiana, USA and has lived in Canada for 22 years. He remains a US citizen and therefore was able to vote in the Presidential election. I asked him to discuss his views about the results of the election.*

**PM: Is this the first time you have voted by mail in a US election?**

**EV** Yes it was the first time. It was a little bit painful because I moved to Canada 22 years ago, and when I left the States, I really left the States. I didn't want to do anything with the States. And that was that.

**PM Did you consider becoming a Canadian citizen?**

**EV** Yes. I was actually going to renounce my citizenship. And then when I spoke to an immigration lawyer he said, well if I did want to go to the US to visit, the US border authorities might not allow me to enter. So, to make a long story short, this is the first time I voted in a presidential election since I moved to Canada.

**PM: Why did you decide to vote this time?**

**EV** In 2016 there was no one to vote for. I thought it was just a joke that the guy (Trump) was going to get elected. Then it wasn't a joke. I started getting anxious. Then I said to myself, OK, we're going to give him a chance to see what he will do. You have to give people a chance, right?

But over and over again he took two steps forward and 3 steps back. He would do something good. Then he would do 12 bad things, in my opinion.

So after 2016, we were going to have to go through it. And then it started getting a little bit scary. I said, Oh my God, this guy can say anything he wants to, do anything he wants to and it looks like he's getting away with murder.

It was just something personal. Because remember, Phyllis, I grew up in a racial southern Louisiana and I saw with my own eyes White people get away with murder all the day long. They had money or they knew somebody important. They just walked away from it, right? So I knew what this world can be like. We might have eight years with this guy, and if I don't get out and vote, I can't say anything about him. And I went on Facebook and I saw this thing from Barack Obama, right out of the blue. He was saying "Hey, you need to vote". But you had to make sure you followed all the rules and got all the necessary documents.



My parents don't have passports and other documents. But this election there were people who would go and help people like my parents get registered to vote. They said, "You have to do this and you can't get it wrong because this is going to be important."

I had been in Canada for 22 years, and I didn't even know where I was last registered. But I knew that this time it was going to be worth it to make the effort. I have a lot to offer, but I had a lot to lose. No matter where you are in the world, people tell you that you can't complain if you didn't vote.

My parents have always voted over the years. My mother couldn't read or write so she would mark her vote with an X, and she put 1947 because that was the year she was born. Now she can read and write but she still puts "Mary Vinson, 1947".

**PM: Why was this election important to you?**

**EV** I thought it was personal to me with my parents living in the States, in the bayou, and their only news station is Fox News. And I told you a few months back that my cousin, his wife and his two daughters got Covid. And nobody could do anything about it. So this was personal and that's why. I wanted to vote this time.

**PM: How do you feel about the election results and a Biden Presidency?**

**EV** So, here's the thing. All my life growing up in Louisiana, I felt I could never celebrate when good things happened. You could never let your guard down. For example, when I was 16 I got my first car. Now a white kid with his first car, would go out and drive all around without a care in the world.

But if you were a black kid and you just got your license and if you went out three times in a row in your new car, the third time, you always got pulled over by the cops just for anything. So you couldn't celebrate. You were always looking over your shoulder or in the rear view mirror.

So how do I feel about the results? I can't celebrate the results. Because right now we live in a world where this guy says anything and everybody believes him. You have so many million people who voted for him and seem to believe everything he says. So I will not feel good about the election until Inauguration Day and Biden is actually President. I'm scared that someone might do something to Joe Biden.

**PM: How do you feel about the four years of the Trump presidency?**

**EV** There are some things that he did that I liked. But I think he did them by fluke.

I was in the military earlier in my life. So when he said we're going to bring the military people home from Afghanistan, I liked that. Everybody wants to hear that because nobody wants his son or daughter overseas in a combat zone. So he reminded me of a guy who's living with a battered woman.



He tells her all that she wants to hear to make her feel good, but then he beats her up. And then she makes an excuse for him.

And then we know before long she's going to end up dead, right? That's the worst case scenario. But we know it. And that's how I looked at this guy for four years.

**PM: Do you understand why so many Americans voted for Trump and continue to support him?**

**EV** OK, here is my answer for that. I firmly believe that in the world as a whole, there are more uneducated people than educated people.

In the United States not everyone has the right or the opportunity for a formal quality education. When you look at statistics on education, the southern states, especially Mississippi and Louisiana, are the lowest in levels of education in the country.

Also there is a lot of racism in the US. Social media now exposes the closet racists. Camera phones now pick up everything so you can't hide it. But now Trump has given those closet racists the right to come out of the closet and be bold about it.

One time when I went home to Louisiana I got a wake up call in Louisville, Kentucky. I was with my daughter Veronica. We stopped at an "All You Can Eat" KFC. On our way back to the car we met these kids, not even over 10 years old. They shouted at us, "Effing N...!".

It scared me and I yanked my daughter's arm and started running for the car because Canada had made me forget about all that stuff.

The first thing that this guy got voted in on was when he started talking about "Crooked Hillary" just to get people's mind off the real thing because he's got smoke and mirrors going on. He's still talking about "Crooked Hillary" four years later. What does Hillary have to do with his presidency?

He knows if he says "Crooked Hillary" or "Barack Obama", he is going to get people fired up. And I hate to say it like that. That's why I keep my mouth shut and I don't say anything on social media

But so many people are dumb and so many are racist. That's why I think so many people voted for him.

**PM But there are also people in the US who are not not stupid and are actually quite well-off, well educated, middle class and upper middle class people, mostly white. There are a lot of people that are well-to-do and educated who voted for Trump.**

**EV** Unfortunately I feel that they lose their credibility as educated people when they vote for Trump. With smarts and with education comes responsibility. So that's why I say there are no smart people who voted for Trump.

Canada is right next door. All they have to do is look at what Canada is doing about Covid, and take the best practices and say, "Hey, look, here's what they did in Canada and this is what worked. Let's try to improve on it."



**PM: What do you think about the way the election ran in the States?**

**EV** I thought it was doomed from the start. This is a guy who never loses. He's never wrong. He puts blame on everybody else. He can't take responsibility for anything.

He went off playing golf and then hid for six, seven, eight days. I thought he might be suicidal.

**PM: But what did you think about how the elections ran, with all the states having different rules? They had the biggest voter turnout in decades - 72.1% of eligible voters cast ballots. That's impressive in any country.**

**Did you feel confident about the way the elections were run and the results they produced?**

**EV:** Please nobody mess up. That's what I was thinking all the time. But there were these heroes. Like Stacey Abrams, a Black woman in Georgia who led an organization to register over 800,000 black voters in Georgia. In general they did a really good job of getting people to register to vote across the country.

But Trump has still been talking about how everything was illegal and fraud in the election. Many people still believe him. So I will be cautious about the final results of the election, until the Inauguration of Biden.

**PM: Do you think about trying to bring up your parents to Canada?**

**EV:** Yes I think about that. They're getting up in age. But the problem is my parents are both "felons". (They have criminal convictions). I'll just tell you a little story here. You know how in Canada people get financial assistance from the government? Like Sue did when she went to university.

But in Canada the assistance is given in cash. And then you decide how to spend the money. In the US people are given food stamps, not cash. And the stamps can only be used for actual food, and you can't use them to buy necessary items like toiletries, supplies that are not food. So you also need cash.

So here's what happened to my mother. We went to the A and P grocery store. She had \$200 in food stamps but no cash. A white woman was standing by the store entrance. She asked my mother if she had food stamps and she offered to give my mother \$100 in cash for her \$200 in stamps. This was illegal. But my mother agreed and took the cash.

And guess who was charged with an offence? My mother was convicted of a crime and did two years in prison for that. So she is a "felon".

The whole time I have lived in Canada and Ottawa I have never had any interaction with the police. My kids ask me why I never drive over 100kph on the Queensway.



**PM:** Well, we need to wrap this up. You seem to be pretty discouraged. Do you feel any hope?

**EV:** Well right now I'm hopeful and I pray that when everything is certified, it's real.

**PM:** Good luck with your Mum and Dad. And thanks so much for taking the time to tell us your stories.

**Epilogue December 10:**

**EV:** I called you today to tell you how anxious I still am about the results of the election. People keep telling me, "Earnest, don't worry. It will all work out OK."

But look at everything that is going on in the Supreme Court with 18 states trying to overturn democratic votes in other states. That's why I will continue to be stressed out and anxious until Biden is finally sworn in as President.



*Earnest's Parents*



*Sue and Earnest*



## BOOK REVIEWS

### *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles

This is a piece of fiction to settle down with for a long leisurely read on these dark evenings. It is filled with humour and scene after scene about life both before and after the Bolshevik revolution, so interestingly written, you will be tempted to reread certain scenes.

At the beginning of the book Count Alexander Rostov is declared an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin.

His life inside the busy hotel unfolds in fascinating detail, as some of the most important events in Russian history unfold outside. We are quickly drawn into Rostov's enclosed world and see events big and small interpreted through his eyes.

Reviewed by Tonia Tunnacliffe



### **Emmanuel's Vegetable Garden**

This summer the vegetable garden was planted and cared for by Pat Harris and Alison, Katie and Val Lines. We grew lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, carrots, squash, zucchini and green beans. We tried growing peas, but this year the squirrels ate all the plants. We were able to make three small donations of produce to the Russell Heights Food bank.

Val Lines



## *The Skin We're In* by Desmond Cole

This true accounting by Canadian journalist and activist, Desmond Cole, is very easy to read and follow, but for me as a person of white privilege, it is very hard to stomach.

Desmond has written a book that retraces the year 2017, month by month, to illustrate what happens in Canada regarding race-related activity. His native country, Sierra Leone, had white settlers take the land—the same as in Canada—so he relates strongly to many of our Indigenous issues. They are addressed in various places throughout the book.

For example:

January 2017 included the protests by Black Lives Matter Toronto regarding the acquittal of policeman Andrew Doyle, who had shot and killed Andrew Loku in 2015. (The protesters were attacked, beaten, and gassed). It also tells of John Samuels who was attacked by police in his art gallery—who lost his gallery space and spent 2 years to get a criminal charge overturned. He had been doing what all the white gallery owners had done, none of whom were charged.

The February 2017 segment tells the story of Symone, a 6 yr old girl in a Mississauga school, who was shackled by police. It also included Nancy Elgie, a white elected rep in York Region, who, after a public meeting on equity issues, called a black woman the “N” word. Desmond described racism (on p.37) as “broad sympathy toward some and broader skepticism toward others”

The book continues in this fashion to highlight instances of differential treatment, mostly in the Toronto region; but, it also references the Abdirahman Abdi case which recently dominated the Ottawa media.

I have been studying this book with a group of United Church folks (black and white) from 2 churches in Halifax. Throughout it all, we have been encouraged to think about “Where is God in all of this? How is the Spirit moving” It has been interesting to see the journey of minorities in Canada compared to the Israelites in scripture.

The rest of the book continues detailing injustices against Blacks, Indigenous people, and immigrants in Canada. Throughout the book, Desmond Cole shows how decisions made throughout the history of Canada have forged the injustice that is built into all of our systems. In addition, so many of the people who were attacked, arrested, killed, were not criminals, but in fact, suffered from some kind of mental health disorder. Our police are not trained to handle these situations. There is a lot to learn from this book! When you read it, try to put yourself in the shoes of Desmond Cole.

The Ottawa Public Library has 49 copies of the book plus 24 audible copies, and 30 ebooks.

Review by Jill MacLean





## *Unbelievable* by John Shelby Spong

(Harper Collins 2018) 287 pages plus bibliography and indices.

Dr. John Spong, the retired renegade Episcopal bishop of Newark NJ, now 89 years old, declared that *Unbelievable* was to be his last book. Its last chapter is subtitled "This I do believe." The Emmanuel Thursday morning "Heretics" group have made a study of the final word of this Christian iconoclast.

In recollection of Martin Luther, and in anticipation of another Reformation, Spong presents twelve contemporary "theses" — not to be nailed to the door of Newark Cathedral, but in a convincing text directed at a lay Christian readership.

Conventional Christianity has been beset by scientific enlightenment which has rendered the literal reading of scripture untenable and has challenged the fixed definition of such transcendent realities as "God", "Christ" or the "Good." A dualistic relationship between humankind and a remote, theistic, tractable divinity is abjured. Concepts such as original sin, the Virgin Birth, Biblical miracles and Atonement (as in expiation) are given their proper metaphorical or parabolic significance, where any exists.

The Resurrection is assigned, with the help of St. Paul, to all of humanity. An anticipated coming Kingdom of God is reclaimed by an evolving "present." Today's ethics and religious practices are to be founded, not on ancient codes, but on eternal principles, and formulated relative to modern situations.

*Unbelievable* is to be read by anyone who is dissatisfied with their present statement of faith.

Reviewed by E. Russell Smith



Don't be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt on you for years.

I'm getting tired of being part of a major historical event.

We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it!



## *All Things Consoled* by Elizabeth Hay

A very satisfying read mirroring our own experiences on many levels.

In this memoir Elizabeth Hay relates a personal journey beginning with relocating her parents from London Ontario to a nursing home in Ottawa. In the unfolding of the story we witness the drama of her parents' end and the greater drama of being their daughter.

It sounds like a depressing read but it is surprisingly uplifting, filled with candour and humour. I read with unflagging interest her insights about herself and her upbringing as she assumes responsibility for this once dynamic pair as they reach the end of their lives.

Reviewed by Tonia Tunnacliffe



*Ed and Cathy Borza dressed for dinner at their residence in November*



*Hardworking Richard Johnston taking care of all the domestic tasks while Phyllis recovers from her broken shoulder*



## The Skin I'm In

*thoughts on White privilege through the lens of  
Indigenous Rights and Black Lives Matter for  
All-Our-Relations*

Clever wise Snake  
has split his skin several times -  
cast off the old, too-small  
restrictive skin  
in exchange for freedom.

The skin I'm in  
is fraught with  
unearned privileged,  
problematic -  
laden with responsibility.

The skin I'm in has become tight,  
restrictive.  
I long to shape-shift  
into my other skin of feathers  
where spirit's truth is more perceptive.

If I could unzip my skin,  
step out, offer mine to you,  
would you shed your skin  
so I could wear yours  
for a while?

And while we're busy  
exchanging skins, would we notice  
the nakedness of thought,  
our flesh and blood and bones  
prominent beneath our skins?

Perhaps together, without our skins,  
we can find a galaxy  
where we might transform ourselves  
during the long, cold winter  
and emerge in Spring, translucent, renewed.

© Carol Makalah Grace Scott  
unpublished 2020 collection



*Thou Shalt Wear a Mask!*



## **I Believe In The Sun**

I believe in the sun  
even when it is not shining  
And I believe in love,  
even when there's no one there.  
And I believe in God,  
even when He is silent.  
I believe through any trial,  
there is always a way  
But sometimes in this suffering  
and hopeless despair  
My heart cries for shelter,  
to know someone's there  
But a voice rises within me, saying hold on  
my child, I'll give you strength,  
I'll give you hope. Just stay a little while.  
I believe in the sun  
even when it is not shining  
And I believe in love  
even when there's no one there  
But I believe in God  
even when he is silent  
I believe through any trial  
there is always a way.  
May there someday be sunshine  
May there someday be happiness  
May there someday be love  
May there someday be peace....

Author unknown

Written during WW2 on the wall of a cellar by a Jew  
in the Cologne concentration camp

Submitted by Phyllis MacRae



*Photo: Camille den Boer*



## LIFE WITH COVID-19

Canadians abroad were told to return home immediately – March 23 deadline!

Russ had planned to return, as usual, late April – in time to get his tax returns completed. I planned to stay longer in Pasadena to attend granddaughter Claire's graduation with her MSW -a big landmark event in her life! His health insurance seemed to be ending with that decree...what to do? Although born in Canada I am an American citizen - would I be allowed to enter with the border officially closed to all Americans? He decided to take his chances and stick to his original plan. Then graduation was "postponed indefinitely" -so we decided to return together, thinking my entry would be more readily permissible if coming with my husband!

SO, with trepidation, we arrived at the airport. We were questioned, but airline staff raised no red flags. The airport and the plane were effectively empty- hardly anyone around, there were about 30 passengers on a 300+ plane. In Toronto the immigration officer looked at my passport but noted "born in Canada" and passed me through with a cheery comment! What a relief!

The 14 day quarantine passed uneventfully – Russ's family arranged food for us and then we used the grocery store shopping services to stay out of stores for weeks.



The spring and summer were for us as for everyone – waiting impatiently for summer and expected relief from the shut-down. We waited long past the usual time for cottage opening, then went with assurances of no contacts! My sister's family, usually all there with us, would not come when we had to share any boat rides – a necessary way to access our island cottage! Eventually things relaxed enough to spend time together, safely distancing outdoors. The same rules applied to visits with friends on the lake, including Janet and Graham Campbell, Marg and Bob Armstrong. Our American neighbors could not come – a big loss! But it was saddest of all for my "kids" in LA who could not come! This was the second time in his life that my 61 year old son was not there! It was the first year ever that no one else was visiting overnight!

We really appreciated all the Zoom gatherings- both with Emmanuel friends, Heretics, Men's Breakfast, and committees - and church services, as well as the same with our Pasadena church. Sundays became very busy as, without choir eating up the time differences, we connected with both services, sometime adding my daughter-in-law's too!

Now, we face the same anxiety as we return to Pasadena – will Russ be allowed in? Again, we trust that my husband will be able to return to our home!! We will know by the time you read this.

We look forward to continued connection with Emmanuel from our Pasadena other home as long as much of our congregational life is online and zoom! For that we are thankful.

Areta Crowell



## CAMPING DURING COVID

2020 was shaping up to be an exciting year of camping and travel.

Plans were in place to travel to Father Hennepin State Park in Minnesota for a gathering of travel trailer owners in June, with numerous stops around Lake Superior in both Canada and the United States. Plus trips to explore covered bridges in Pennsylvania and Vermont, and three week-end trips in Quebec.

In addition, we had two family weddings to attend in England and Toronto. An August trip to the Stratford Festival. A conference in BC at the end of September. And, the highlight of the year, Liz's "bucket list" trip to the RBC Heritage Golf Classic in North Carolina.

Then the pandemic hit ... and all of these plans were placed on hold.



*Photo: Candian Press*

It quickly became apparent that foreign travel was out of the question, and even travel to other provinces was not likely. So, we waited, and stayed safe.

Eventually, word came that private campgrounds would be allowed to open, but only for seasonal campers. Then "transient campers" such as ourselves were allowed to camp but with restrictions. Most campgrounds were only open for self-contained trailers, showers were closed, and some campgrounds even kept their washrooms closed. So, much as we prefer camping at provincial and national parks, we took what was being offered and booked some KOA's in Mallorytown, Ivy Lea and Kingston. For the first time, we also tried out the Grenville RV Park in Johnstown to watch the freighters pass by along the St. Lawrence River. Fiona joined us while she waited for teachers to be allowed to return to their schools.



Our younger daughter Sarah, now 21 and a recent graduate, had been hoping to be hired back at Bon Echo Provincial Park as a Discovery Staff for the summer but, when they did re-hire, they did so with limited numbers in their staff accommodations and without running any interpretive programs. Luckily, she was offered a place at Murphys Point Provincial Park and spent most of her time removing dog-strangling vine and monitoring dragonfly populations.



*Sarah with Lily at the Lally Homestead, Murphy's Point Prov. Park*



By the time that we booked a week-end to join her, it seemed that most of Ontario had decided that this was the year to try camping and almost every site was booked, even mid-week.

Undeterred, we grabbed one of the last three sites and used the occasion to do some new things in the area. We explored the locks along the Rideau Canal, discovered the Sunflower Bakery in Perth, and enjoyed a curry chicken pie from the Perth Pie Company.

They say that everyone has coped with the pandemic in their own way. For us, Thanksgiving came early as we were again reminded of the importance of faith, family and friends.

David Wray

*(Photos by David Wray, except where noted)*





## LIVING WITH COVID

Covid19 changed how we spent the summer of 2020. For the most part, my children and I have been locked up at home ever since March Break. My job search was a big task. Back in March we were hopeful that things would return to normal by summer, but things have turned out differently and we soon realised that normal never existed.

The sudden change of life meant that for them, school had to be switched from in-person learning to online school which they have been doing ever since the pandemic began. At first it was not easy, but with time school became manageable online for them. It was all fun and games when the pandemic started in March, since it felt like an extended March Break and an early summer vacation at home at the same time. However, then summer came with humidity which we managed to get through with fans and lots of ice cream.

For the most part, Sifa, Idi, and Koko stayed at home, while since July I started working in Montreal on an occasional contract with the Canadian Red Cross in their Covid19 program. We are going through school, life, and work on a daily basis. During the summer, there wasn't much going on but we didn't even manage to take a family photo. Idi was stuck at home with his sisters since his soccer practices and games were unfortunately cancelled. Currently, with online school underway (for Sifa and Koko) and in-person learning for Idi, we have gotten back into the new system which is going well at the moment.

We hope to be back together with our Emmanuel friends soon.

Mamy Zahinda



## GLOBAL PARTNERS

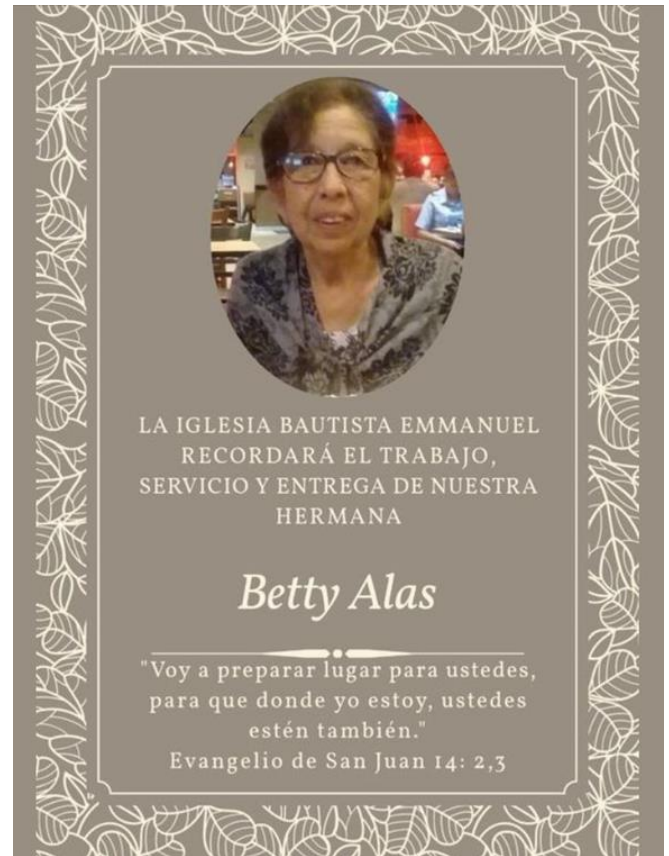
Many Emmanuelites may remember Betty's smiling face from the kitchen at Centro Gabriel in San Salvador. We received this message from Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel this past week:

"Emmanuel Baptist Church communicates the passing of our beloved sister and collaborator Betty Alas. She was in charge of the food area of the Gabriel Peace Center for many years and attended many delegations from abroad and churches in our country.

Sending our affection to her entire family, we know she is rested next to our heavenly father and now serving at the table of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I will prepare a place for you, so that where I am, you may be too. John 14:2,3"

Jim Lamb



*Children attending the Christmas vacation bible schools which are led by our Salvadoran partners at Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel in their mission communities. Donations from Emmanuel United support these activities for children and youth*



## MORE HUMOUR

Life is like a helicopter. I don't know how to operate a helicopter.

Chocolate is God's way of telling us he likes us a little bit chubby.

It's probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.

Marriage Counselor: Your wife says you never buy her flowers. Is that true?

Him: To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers.

Never sing in the shower! Singing leads to dancing, dancing leads to slipping, and slipping leads to paramedics seeing you naked. So remember...Don't sing!

My wife asked me to take her to one of those restaurants where they make the food right in front of you. So I took her to Subway and that's how the fight started!

During the middle ages they celebrated the end of the plague with wine and orgies. Does anyone know if there is anything planned when this one ends.

I don't think the therapist is supposed to say "wow," that many times in your first session but here we are!

If 2020 was a math word-problem: If you're going down a river at 2 MPH and your canoe loses a wheel, how much pancake mix would you need to re-shingle your roof?



# EMMANUEL ACTIVITIES CARRY ON DURING COVID



*Quilters meet at a distance*



*Olga's last day painting at Emmanuel*



*Active Artists of Emmanuel*



## YOUTH AND FAMILY EVENTS – FALL 2020

**Labour Day Monday, Sept 7 – Amazing Race – Elmvale Edition** – A race to explore Elmvale Acres and take photos of things from a bug to something really old (Stewart H was the subject photographed by one group for this item!), photos of team members doing specified activities, as well as bring back various items and answer some biblical knowledge questions. Ten teams participated with enthusiasm!

**Sunday Sept 27 – Urban Hike** – We walked 5km from Tunney's Pasture, past the mosque on Northwestern Ave, through the woods near St. George school, along the Ottawa river, past the stone sculptures at Remic Rapids and back through Hintonburg to gelato at Stella Luna. The weather was warm and the companionship was great!



### **Thanksgiving Monday, Oct 11 - Old Testament Trivia and Candy Extravaganza**

Ellen drew an Old Testament Timeline in the parking lot and gave a great overview. Teams were then given specific events from the Old Testament and were asked to prepare a short skit to present to the entire group. The teams were very creative! Ellen asked sets of knowledge testing questions to make sure we were paying attention and showered those who answered correctly with Halloween candy.



**Friday November 13 – African Dancing for Youth** – Nine youth joined an instructor in the Hall to learn some African Dance moves. A great chance for them to get together and have some fun!

**Sunday November 22 – Family Advent Preparation Event** – 25 people braved the cool temperature and gathered in the parking lot to make tin can lights (using hammers and nails), ornaments from tree rounds (using hammers and nails), and advent wreaths with materials prepared by Sandra Copeland (no hammers involved!). There was a group game, a hunt for puzzle pieces to make pictures of people waiting for Jesus to come, and a short worship. Val Dowd provided homemade cookies and hot chocolate – delicious!

Ellen Brohman



## NEW CLOTHING BRAND LAUNCHED BY TWO BROTHERS

Back in pre-Covid times when I was in grade 9, I had an idea of creating my own clothing brand. However, I never got the opportunity to invest time into the idea since I was always busy with school and sports. With soccer practices and games canceled and school being mostly virtually online, quarantine gave me the perfect opportunity to do what I have always wanted. I spoke to my big brother Chrispin, about how I wanted to create a clothing brand of my own. I was tired of wearing other people's products from Nike, Adidas, Puma, etc. My goal was to build a brand for not only myself but for the community. A brand that would unite people together with fashion, A brand that would be for everyone. Chrispin liked the idea. We brought it up to the rest of the family who gave us their support and have been helping Chrispin and me every way that they can.

Now that the idea was out in the open, we needed to find a name for the clothing brand. The name was easy to get since Chrispin had a business that had never progressed called VGK. We both decided to reuse the name VGK for the new clothing brand since it fitted all the aspects of the brand. VGK means unity, leadership, and the pursuit of personal growth and improvements. These qualities were exactly what I was going for and it suits perfectly the goal of the clothing brand.

As of now, the brand has started gaining roots. Rebecca, Chrispin's girlfriend, helps with the marketing of the business and everyone else contributes by helping with the promoting and advertising. VGK is mostly online through our website [www.vgkfashion.com](http://www.vgkfashion.com) and through our social media platforms @vgk.fashion. The ultimate goal is to build a physical VGK storefront.

Idi Zahinda

Idi is a grade 12 student at Lester B. Pearson Secondary School. Chrispin works in Ottawa.



Idi and Chrispin Zahinda



## PASSAGES AND BLESSED EVENTS

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

Curtis Porter Salter, July 25, 2020

John Clarence Douglas Hay, September 28, 2020

Robert John (Bob) Halliday, November 30, 2020

### **Baptisms:**

Jasmine Leila Paquette daughter of Nicholas Paquette and Chantal (Coleman) Paquette

October 18, 2020

Jaxon Hermann son of Cody Herman and Shaelynn Harris

October 18, 2020

Felix Jan Norman den Boer son of John den Boer and Camille (Audet) den Boer

October 18, 2020



*Nicholas and Chantal with Jasmine*



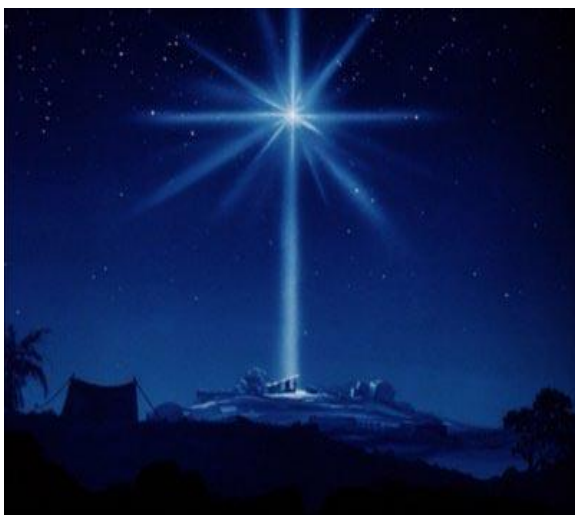
*Baptism of Jaxon Herman*







*Camille and John den Boer with Felix and Rafael-René*



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](#)

### **Advent Star**

Today I'll clean my windows  
in preparation for Solstice  
and winter's womb-like dark  
(many would say to amplify  
available shafts of sunlight  
during these shortening days)

And so it is!  
But I also clean  
to maximize moonlight  
from Grandmother Moon  
as she makes her rounds  
offering fertile dreamscapes.

If I'm really lucky,  
Orion will accompany her  
on her cyclical blessing ...  
so today I'll clean my windows,  
for who knows when that Advent Star  
of Hope might suddenly appear!

© Carol Makalah Grace Scott  
unpublished 2020 collection



## WATCHING TV DURING COVID THIS WINTER

### Queen's Gambit - Netflix

Many of us at Emmanuel have enjoyed watching movies and television series on the streaming service Netflix during Covid time. Some people do not have access to Netflix but can watch good television and movies on other streaming services and networks. Also, many good movies and videos are available through the Ottawa Public Library.

My first recommendation for watching a television series on Netflix is ***The Queen's Gambit***, portions of which were filmed in and around Cambridge, Ontario. This is an extremely popular limited mini-series produced on Netflix and was released in October of this year. ***The Queen's Gambit*** is an opening move in the game of chess. This series is the fictional story of the life for about 15 years of a young chess prodigy called Beth Harmon. She lives in Lexington, Kentucky, and the story runs from the mid-1950s into the 1960s. Beth is orphaned and is taken to live in an orphanage in Lexington at around the age of 8 or 9. She discovers the game of chess from the custodian of the orphanage who stays in the basement of the orphanage and plays chess by himself. He is a kindly and solitary character, an older man who understands her interest and curiosity in chess and begins to teach her. He quickly discovers that she has a genius for playing chess and he teaches her the basics of the game. He introduces her to the chess club (all boys) at the local high school.

The story moves forward from Beth leaving the orphanage in her early teens, when she is adopted by a very odd childless couple who live in Lexington. The relationship between Beth and her adoptive mother becomes very close, and the mother appreciates Beth's talents and becomes her manager and promoter in the chess world. The story continues through Beth's early career in chess as a teenager and then, as she becomes very skilled and wins chess tournaments, she moves up in the chess-playing world becoming an international sensation. There are a lot of interesting characters in the film who are the friends of Beth in the chess-playing world. One of the interesting parts of the story is the fact that Beth is the first girl and then young woman in the field of chess competition, both in the United States and internationally. For Beth herself, being a young woman is a non-issue, and she does not understand why other people, for example the editor of Life magazine, think it is important that she is a woman.



The writing of the story and the acting in the series are top-notch. One of the major issues in the story as Beth gets older is her addiction to drugs and alcohol, which started when she was a child in the orphanage. As was not unusual in orphanages in the fifties, the children were given tranquillizers to keep them calm, and this continued for a number of years until the thinking about children's health changed and this was stopped. With Beth the damage has been done; she has become addicted to tranquillizers and this continues on when she moves out of the orphanage and into her life as a teenager and young woman.

This series is currently the most popular mini-series produced by Netflix. Beth's story is believable and totally engaging. The depiction of the style and culture of the 1950's and 60's is spot on. The growing tension of Beth's life and career as she moves up to chess stardom while struggling with addictions and loneliness make gripping viewing.

Reviewed by Phyllis MacRae

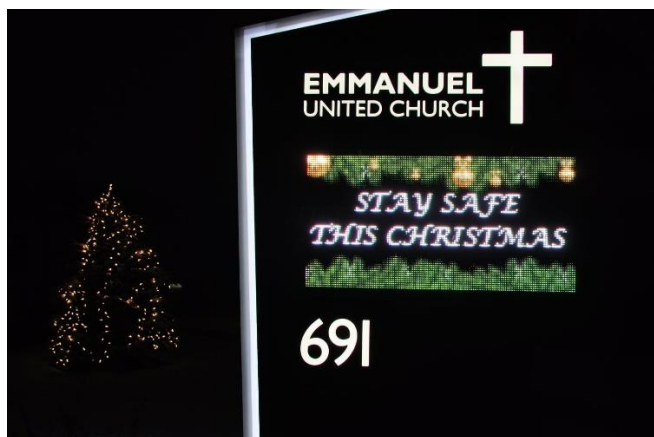


Photo: David Wray

## The Crown - Netflix

My second recommendation for winter viewing on Netflix is series 4 of the Netflix production of **The Crown**, which became available in November. Some of you may have watched the previous three series of **The Crown**, which tell the story of the royal family in Britain starting from the earliest years of the young Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip. The first series runs from 1947 to 1955.

**The Crown** is a work of historical fiction and some people may get frustrated watching it because the writer of the series has taken liberties of fiction depicting the internal behavior and personality of characters whom we think we know very well from real life. However, we don't really know anything about who they actually are as real people, because of the privacy that surrounds the Royal Family.

The series is set around actual historical events that we know: the marriage of Charles and Diana, the war in the Falklands, the life of various prime ministers – Winston Churchill with the young Queen and Margaret Thatcher with the Queen in her middle years.

All of the four series to date have been wonderful television watching. The actors playing the roles of the members of the royal family are excellent and make you feel like you are watching real people. The filming in lush settings like Buckingham Palace and Balmoral Palace (although stand ins are used for the real palaces) and the highlands of Scotland where the family is hunting stags are beautifully filmed. The writing of the story is tremendous, and the acting is spectacular.



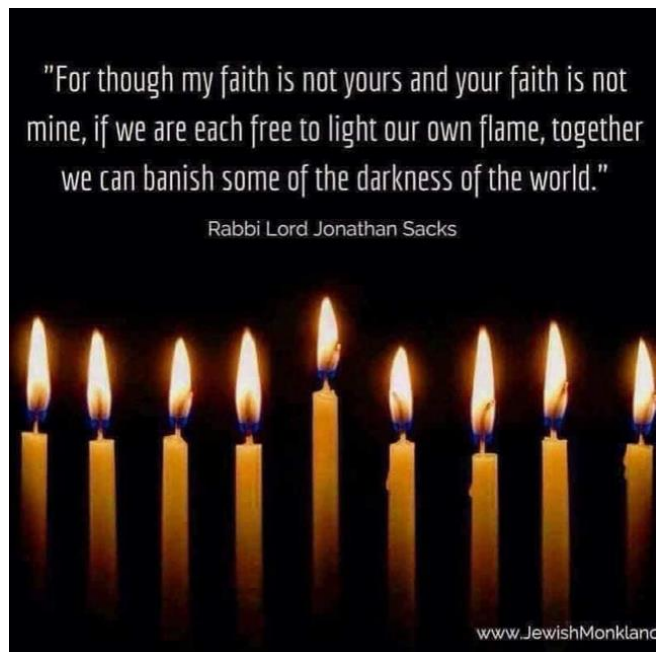
The new series covers historical elements that we are aware of, such as the relationship between Charles and Diana. However, there are other episodes which show parts of the family history of which most of us were not aware and are very interesting. We learn about some elderly cousins of Princess Margaret and the Queen. A shocking story that most of us knew nothing about.

The film is in no way a documentary; it is a fictional story based on real people and built around real events. The interactions between the members of the family - the Queen and Prince Phillip, the Queen and Prince Charles and other people are the fictional part of the story, and some of these interactions and relationships will cause viewers some difficulty or discomfort. In Series 4 in particular the deteriorating marriage between Prince Charles and Princess Diana is absolutely stomach-turning to watch.

Series 4 covers the years 1979 up to 1990 and presents in detail the relationship between Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the Queen. Because the production takes a relatively long time to develop the story (10 episodes), we are able to understand in depth the relationship between these major characters.

I recommend that anyone who is interested in a really good story with wonderful acting have a look at **The Crown**. It does not matter if you are a fan of the Royal Family or if you are a monarchist or a republican; the story itself is very gripping. In addition to following the fascinating story of the individuals who make up the Royal Family, the series **The Crown** also explains a great deal about what the institution of the Crown means in our constitutional monarchy.

Reviewed by Phyllis MacRae



## BEING AN INDIGENOUS ALLY DURING A PANDEMIC

I invite you to consider the challenge, and, yes, the advantage of being caught up in the midst of this pandemic. Like you, my ability to gather in community with free-range movement has been severely restricted, but during this time perhaps we are also presented with fresh opportunities to read, discuss, zoom-in, and develop greater awareness of the on-going challenges for Indigenous peoples and Mother Earth. Perhaps this is an opportunity to re-commit to becoming more active allies.

Back in the Spring, my newsletter article addressed the tense weeks when the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and their people were resisting the expansion of the TMX pipeline. Many of us weighed in on whose "rights" should be upheld: the government and pipeline contracts backed by a strong policing presence, or Indigenous Land Defenders who attempted to repel the forced entry through their territory, with potential environmental degradation and increased threat posed to Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people due to the creation of massive "man camps".

Now, 9 months later, we are still in the midst of a pandemic. The Indigenous focus has moved from West to East, this time regarding Mi'kmaq lobster fishers and their right to a moderate livelihood. As outsiders we tune in to various media sources and offer "expert" armchair opinions of whose side to be on.

We might be quick to jump into the role of judge and jury whenever extraction contracts, economics, and governmental oversight butt up against threats to the environment and Indigenous ancestral rights.

This article is not my assessment of who is "right", or whose rights should be upheld. What I hope to offer is a reflection on the multi-generational pain, systemic racism, and undercurrent of discrimination that has been perpetuated through colonial policies and practices as outcomes of the Indian Act, broken treaties, stolen lands, and the intentional marginalization of the original peoples across this country of many Nations. One might consider there has been a 500+ year old pandemic that has threatened the very survival of the spiritual and cultural practices of the many, diverse Indigenous Nations, which also contributed to serious environmental degradation.

My heart has been opened wider (broken, actually) by personal stories shared during this pandemic by three Indigenous young adults who I met through the Katimavik program here in Moncton. They told me of the impact that colonial policies have on their lives, and their experience of having to leave homes in remote regions at the vulnerable age of 14 in order to be boarded in larger centres in order to attend high school.



They spoke of some of their friends who couldn't stick it out and returned home before completing their diploma, or who turned to substance abuse or self-harm out of loneliness and the rampant discrimination experienced within the dominant society, often compounded by confusion of how to navigate within the imposed culture.

Of the three, Shania is the only one who has been able to retain her Cree language, having been partially brought up by her great-grandmother on the land during her formative years. Her kokum refused to speak English to her, so she retained fluency in her first language, even though most of her family only converse in the language that was imposed through residential and day-school policies. Retention or reclamation of Indigenous languages, culture, and spiritual practice is a daunting one!



*Carol with Katimavik indigenous youth at St John rally in support of Mi'kmaq fishers*

The stories of racism that these three Indigenous young adults shared with me, right here in Moncton, 2020, is not only heartbreaking, it is all too familiar for them, their families and peers, whether temporarily living here in New Brunswick, or living/working/studying in other Canadian urban communities.

When I hear of racism being perpetuated within society, as personally experienced by my young Indigenous friends, I try to imagine what it is like to be a descendant of multi-generational trauma.

I try to imagine what it means to be a Christian ally in 2020 during this era of racialized tension. Perhaps by following the example of the One who showed us how to live from a centre of Love and inclusion, we will be better able to participate in decolonization by taking a pro-active stance against systemic racism. In 1986 (34 years ago!), the United Church of Canada issued a formal apology to Indigenous peoples for our denomination's role in residential schools. In 2015, the UCC adopted the TRC Calls to Action for the church. Perhaps we can walk beside Indigenous peoples as they seek ways to resist the colonial culture that continues to challenge their rights and makes it difficult to reclaim language and culture that have been all but eradicated. May we become more effective allies of our Sisters and Brothers, and indeed of Mother Earth, by using our time well during this pandemic, to gain greater heart-awareness in order to participate in the advancement of reparation and Reconciliation.

Carol Scott



## EMMANUEL'S SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS MARKET

On December 12 the First Emmanuel Virtual Christmas Market wound up when 65 orders were collected in a Drive-Through in the parking lot. Roughly 15-20 volunteers helped make this initiative a success by organizing, building the on-line order form, soliciting products for the sale, advertising, baking, donating, making crafts, collecting, packing and delivering the orders. Spirits were high on Saturday as Emmanuel members rolled up in their cars, wearing masks, displaying order numbers and popping their trunks open. Joyce White rang a bell when cars rolled up. Rustom and Anahita Clark-Kazak manned their 2-way radios and volunteers brought out the packages to each car. Even though visits were brief, everyone enjoyed the chance to see members of the Emmanuel family in person and in masks for the first time in many months.

This first attempt at an on-line Christmas market was a great success - both in raising funds for our Global Partners and Christian Development projects, and as an opportunity to bring members of our family together to have fun in the Advent season. Many thanks to all the volunteers who contributed to make this a success.

Phyllis MacRae



## GIFTS TO DEMPSEY SHELTER FOR MEN

Organized by Janice and Pierre Peron, Emmanuel has contributed 35 bags of gifts for homeless men who are being housed at the Dempsey Community Centre. This initiative was planned by the Social Action Committee in combination with the November Food Bank collection. The Dempsey Centre responded to the need to shelter homeless men to avoid the spread of Covid in the downtown shelters. Thanks for the generous donations from the Emmanuel community and to the work of Janice and Pierre and the Social Action Committee.

This initiative was instigated by Areta Crowell, and the Social Action Committee extends our thanks to her for this.

Phyllis MacRae



*Typical contents of a gift bag*



*Gifts ready for delivery to Dempsey*



*Labels for the gifts*







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