



this issue

A Visit from El Salvador

Remembering Bob Armstrong

The Pilgrimage to Haida Gwaii

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

We have been a bit slow in getting this winter issue of the newsletter out to the congregation. Please forgive us. Life gets in the way in a busy congregation like Emmanuel. In December we ran into a blizzard of activities with Christmas concerts and seasonal celebrations, and the arrival just before Christmas of the second of two Zahinda families in Ottawa in 2023. In this issue we have news of our Global Partners in Chipembi, Zambia and in El Salvador to tell you about, including a memorable visit to Emmanuel from Pastor Miguel Tomas Castro and Lydia Castro in September.

We also welcome our two new staff – Ron MacDonald, Pastoral Care Provider, and Amelia Brohman, Leader of Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministry. And we remember long time Emmanuel member Bob Armstrong.

Jon and I wish all our readers a Happy and Healthy year in 2024.

Phyllis MacRae
Editor



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

newsletter@emmanuelunited.ca



FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

Seasons

"In the bulb, there is a flower..." (Natalie Sleeth, 1986)

This beautiful hymn, number 703 in Voices United, takes us through the seasons. The line, "in the cold and snow of Winter, there's a Spring that waits to be," is the lyric set that reminds us of where we are now at this time of year.

Yet, as the days go by and the pages of the calendar turn, the message of God's presence is the same. Our Creator, God, continues to be revealed in strength and love. Loved ones, our relations, help to carry us through any difficult times, reminding us that our God keeps showing us that eternal and everlasting presence that is love.

Steadfast and strong through all the seasons, the Creator's presence continues each and every day in the year. Eternal and everlasting love are a constant. This is assured. Prayer can keep us mindful that God is near, but so can companions on our journey: family and friends. Love exists to never change, reminding us how we are to both be love for each other and to share that same love.

Emmanuel United's continuing call is to keep our doors and hearts open. We maintain a constant awareness to welcome each other and to be a welcoming presence for each other, always, regardless of where we come from or what we look like. We are called to reflect God's love both in our church and in our world.

As the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas have led us through the season of Epiphany and now to the seasons of Lent and Easter, may our Creator God also go with us. May God's love be a constant for us, through all of the seasons of our year and our living.

Rev. Grant Stuckless
Minister of Worship and Pastoral Care
Emmanuel United Church



FROM THE PASTORAL CARE PROVIDER

A Celtic Meditation on 'The Breathing Presence of Hope'

by Ron MacDonald, Pastoral Care Provider

Over the years, I have grown in my fascination for Celtic spirituality. I have come to believe my fervent interest in the "way of the Celts" goes beyond mere fascination—it feels like a soulful resonance, perhaps accentuated by the echoes of my surname, MacDonald.

In my inaugural Meditation for the Emmanuel Newsletter, I would like to share with you a Celtic spiritual reflection on '**The Breathing Presence of Hope**' as we move through Advent, Christmas and into the New Year.

The Celtic spiritual path is deeply entwined with nature, mysticism, and a reverence for the divine in the mundane. This is beautifully brought out in the following quote by John O'Donohue, an Irish poet, theologian, mystic, in his book – *To Bless the Space Between Us*.

Within the grip of winter, it is almost impossible to imagine the spring. The gray perished landscape is shorn of color. Only bleakness meets the eye; everything seems severe and edged. Winter is the oldest season; it has some quality of the absolute. Yet beneath the surface of winter, the miracle of spring is already in preparation; the cold is relenting; seeds are waking up. Colors are beginning to imagine how they will return. Then, imperceptibly, somewhere one bud opens, and the symphony of renewal is no longer reversible. From the black heart of winter a miraculous, breathing plenitude of color emerges.

As I meditate on 'The Breathing Presence of Hope,' inspired by the words of John O'Donohue, I'm drawn to appreciate how the changing seasons, marked by solstices and equinoxes, speak a remarkable message of **Hope**.

I recognize how **Hope** is not just a distant light on the horizon. It is not just 'an idea.' It's not even a historical event. Rather, Hope breathes in me. Hope is in my DNA. It is not reversible.

With faith, I trust in this 'breathing presence' to guide me, to provide solace in difficult times I may encounter and encouragement to continue my pilgrimage 'in hope.'

As I conclude this meditation, I would like to share this with you:

The breathing presence of Hope in the changing seasons draws our hearts to the message of Advent – hope, peace, joy, love. It is a message of how Hope breathes in all of us.

As we immerse ourselves in the joyous and hopeful spirit of Christmas, we open our hearts to the transformative power of this breathing presence of Hope in our lives. In the upcoming New Year we are inspired to seize the opportunity for a fresh start and the promise of new beginnings – wherever we are in the human journey.



May this meditation serve as a gentle reminder that, much like our trust that seasons will change, we can also trust that this breathing presence of Hope is our constant companion, guiding us into the light, reassuring us that all will be well.

In the spirit of John O'Donohue, may our community be a haven of hope, where hearts are uplifted, souls are cared for, and the promise of a brighter future is woven into our shared journey.

Whatever comes, the great sacrament of life will remain faithful to us, blessing us always with visible signs of invisible grace. We merely need to trust.

From: To Bless the Space Between Us, by John O'Donohue.

Ron MacDonald



PASSAGES, BLESSED EVENTS AND NEWCOMERS

We remember the following members of our Emmanuel family who passed away in the summer, fall and winter:

Audrey Taylor 31 August, 2023

Robert (Bob) Armstrong October 5, 2023

Cam Reid November 4, 2023

Margaret Stymiest November 10, 2023

Doreen Humphry November 25, 2023

Mary MacDonald January 23, 2024



FROM THE YOUTH WORKER

Message from our new leader of Children, Youth and Young Adults

My name is Amelia Brohman and I am the new leader of Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministry here at Emmanuel United Church. In this role I will provide dynamic leadership for ministry to children and families, to teens and to young adults. I will work closely with the Christian Development team and other members of the congregation to do this. A goal of mine is to mend the intergenerational gap that exists here at Emmanuel.

I have been attending Emmanuel since 2004 and have been a member of our church since grade 9. Emmanuel has been a pillar of my life from early on. At Emmanuel I have often had the opportunity to connect with my faith and global partners. I have been involved in a mission trip to El Salvador and led a church camp with my peers for a village of over 100 children in Chipembi, Zambia. Mixed in between there have been countless church camps, the 30-hour famine, canoe trips and movie nights.

Life gets busy, but Emmanuel has always been a constant in mine. It has been a place where I can always come back to find a sense of faith and community.

I am excited to be in this new role where I can support the people of Emmanuel, mend divides and give back to what I so greatly feel a sense of belonging to.

Amelia Brohman



EMMA DOWD. OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

We welcome Emma Dowd to the position of Office Administrator at Emmanuel, following on from Pat Harris. Please take the time to drop by the office and say hello to Emma.



Emma at the Fall Fair



NEWS AT MULTIFAITH HOUSING INITIATIVE FEBRUARY 2024

DREAM LEBRETON

This is Multifaith Housing Initiative's newest affordable housing development – situated between Ottawa's new Ādisōke main public library, which is under construction, and the Pimisi LRT station. As part of a larger development, MHI will own and operate 130 units, ranging from 1-3 bedrooms, with priority given to five groups: Indigenous households, veterans, new immigrants, women and children, and adults with cognitive disabilities.

In support of this exciting new development, MHI is launching the Dream Lebreton Capital Campaign, with a goal of raising \$1.5M. As MHI considers our own commitment to truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and the fact that the community will be built on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation, we are dedicating 30 units to Indigenous households. Funds raised from this campaign will support the development of these units. EOORC will launch a region-wide campaign to support the Dream project in the New Year.

Emmanuel contributed a donation of \$2000 to MHI's Dream Lebreton campaign in 2023.

VETERANS HOUSE CANADA has been established as a new separate charitable organization. It is a spin-off from the MHI Veteran's House project. VHC has a new Executive Director, BGen (Retd) Alan Mulawyshyn (Mully). In November 2023 Mully transitioned from his previous role as Deputy Executive Director of Multifaith Housing Initiative, where he worked with Executive Director Suzanne Le for two years. VHC has a Board of Directors. Plans are under discussion to use the original Veterans House – The Andy Carswell Building in Ottawa – as a model for affordable housing for veterans in other large Canadian cities – Toronto and Edmonton are under consideration.



Dream LeBreton - Artist's Conception



THE ANCHOR

A new housing initiative is underway in Nepean. This is a new collaborative neighbourhood project created by The Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, Julian of Norwich Anglican Church and Multifaith Housing Initiative. The Anchor's primary guiding objective is to create a collaborative community that maximizes land use for the purpose of social good and quality of life. The property, located at the corner of Merivale Road and Rossland Avenue, will be comprised of approximately 75 units of affordable housing, a community garden, public greenspace, community gathering space, and space for worship.

MHI is always on the lookout for more volunteers to help with fundraising, serve on committees, do translation, and volunteer for events such as the annual Tulipathon in May each year. Check the website for more details on how to get involved: www.multifaithhousing.ca

Janice Péron



Edna Wright with Theresa Clarke on the occasion of Edna's 98th birthday

"For though my faith is not yours and your faith is not mine, if we are each free to light our own flame, together we can banish some of the darkness of the world."

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks



www.JewishMonkland



FAMILIES' AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Our wonderful summer students this year were Loli Zahinda and Vanessa Brohman. Some of their work included providing lunches for seniors, maintaining the vegetable garden, helping with planning and preparations for our camps as well as working at them, cleaning and organization in the kitchen and downstairs Sunday school rooms and storage areas, and working on the church inventory for the Finance committee. One of their favorite activities was making buns for senior's lunches using Patty Kavcic's recipe - they liked them so much they made them twice!



CAMPS

Camp Emmanuel was held July 4-7. There were 12 campers aged 4-11, 7 Junior Leaders in Training (in Gr 6-8) who prepared all the snacks, and 8 counsellors; plus 4 adult leaders. The camp theme was 'Travelling the Seas with Paul'. The daily stories included virtual stops in Antioch, Phillippi, Malta and Thessalonica. We shared stories from Paul about how God's love is for everyone; God gives us friends to help us in hard times; God has given everyone a special ability; and God wants us to encourage each other.

The campers enjoyed games, crafts, songs and snacks. Water days were a favorite again. The camp was also a great opportunity for our teens to gain work experience and they blossomed with the responsibility.





Our **Cook and Canoe Camp** held in the last week of July had 5 youth and 2 adult leaders. We camped at our usual site at Lac La Peche and enjoyed the jumping rock near our campsite as well the one near the picnic/parking area. Thanks to Ian Collins and David Burness for accompanying us and helping with camp logistics. David took us on a wonderful explore of a different part of the lake.



FALL ACTIVITIES

An all-age hike took place at Calabogie peaks on Sept 16. We took one wrong turn and had to back track a bit, but it was a glorious day and the views from the top were amazing! Some of us stopped in Arnprior on the way home for Dairy Queen. Thanks to David Burness for helping to organize the day.



A tween and teen evening was held on October 29. We had indoor games, shared a meal, had an outdoor scavenger hunt, carved pumpkin, and made slime to ooze out of them. It was a very fun evening!



LET'S STAY TOGETHER SUNDAYS

Our first 'Let's Stay Together Sunday' was held on Nov 12. After a lunch of Subway sandwiches, people went to a very interesting discussion on gender issues led by Emily Sams-Harris; or took part in an Afro-Beat dance class; or activities for younger kids.

Our second Sunday was held on Dec 10. Lunch was soup and rolls, followed by a choice of decorating gingerbread houses, taking part in a Carol Sing led by Theresa and Joan Foster-Jones or working on a Christmas craft led by Carol Campbell. About 75 people stayed for the community lunch. Some beautiful gingerbread houses, greenery centerpieces and wonderful music was created.

Val Lines



EMMANUEL PURSUES RECONCILIATION THROUGH ISARUIT INUIT ARTS

Ottawa has the largest urban Inuit community in southern Canada – possibly as large as Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, which has 7,500 residents. Unfortunately, most are poor and many are homeless. Trauma is a common experience, yet many are talented artists. Isaruit Inuit Arts is a not for profit Inuit-run organization that offers local Inuit the chance to practice their art, and commune with others in their own language in a safe place. As a relatively young organization, started in 2017, they are open to new partnerships. After contacting some of the better-known organizations in Ottawa, Emmanuel's Social Action Committee concluded that Isaruit offered us the best opportunity to build a meaningful, mutually beneficial relationship in the spirit of reconciliation. Our partnership with Isaruit has gradually developed as we follow their guidance and build trust.

One of their initial requests was to identify members of Emmanuel who would be willing to keep in touch with an Inuk from time to time – for example, take them for coffee or lunch – so that person feels there is someone out there who cares. Lynn Solvason and Russ Pastuch took up the challenge and met occasionally with an Inuk woman on the staff of Isaruit and her son. We were then able to find a permanent construction job for her son. Colleen Calvert provided a walrus skull with its two tusks, a large elk antler, a moose antler, a deer skull with antlers, and a deer hide from her husband Richard Russell's collection, which were greatly appreciated by the Isaruit carvers. We also donated tools, helped out with rides, and even provided a few driving lessons. Perhaps most important, we identified someone to offer advice on Board operations and governance and to help Isaruit obtain charitable status. Emmanuel was then able to provide financial assistance in the amount of \$2,250. While modest in size, this was greatly appreciated as Isaruit waited patiently for promised government funds to materialize.



Aglak Petty Piece takes a break in April while working on a large beaded project



Aija Komangapik working with Asenath on sealskin scraping with an ulu Aija



2024 promises to further strengthen our relationship. In January, Isaruit was ready to partner with us in leading a session at Let's Stay Together. They explained the cultural importance of the seal oil lamp or qulliq, and showed us how to make our own. In January the Emmanuel Council agreed to the proposal to allocate funds from recent bequests received by Emmanuel to provide \$20,000 for the weekly Inuit games/basketball/music sessions started up for Inuit youth every Sunday afternoon. And, with funding finally coming in from Heritage Canada, Isaruit is looking forward to more financial stability and a chance to pursue their many ideas and dreams.



A woman tends a Qulliq oil lamp



Asenath Kannutaq working on the specially designed seal skin scraping board, and aggvvik at Isaruit



Members of Emmanuel are encouraged to drop in to Isaruit any day, between 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The best time is probably the first Friday of the month when art and crafts are on display between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. Their amazing leader, Bev Illauq, will be glad to welcome you. Isaruit is located in the old Rideau High School at 815 St Laurent Blvd. Check out their wonderful website at www.isaruit.ca. Don't hesitate to contact Phil English at penglish407@gmail.com for more information. He would be happy to join you for your first visit to Isaruit.

Phil English



Elisapee explaining knitting techniques to an Isaruit participant



"Alright, does everyone have sound?"





Mark, Justin, Lina and Gideon Zahinda who arrived in Canada on July 1, 2023



Hilde Reynolds with her daughter Judy MacDonald. Hilde is a founding member of Emmanuel and Judy is a founding member of the Sunday school at Vincent Massey School



Grant is a Sens Fan!



A VISIT FROM PASTOR MIGUEL TOMÁS CASTRO AND LIDIA MENDES

Since the fall of 1987, Emmanuel United Church (EUC) members have travelled to El Salvador to visit our partner church Iglésia Bautista Emmanuel (IBE) in San Salvador. Like-wise members of IBE have travelled to Canada to visit EUC and other partner churches in Ontario. As part of that tradition, last February, the Global Partners committee invited Pastor Miguel Tomas Castro and his wife Lidia Mendes to visit us. We determined that a 3 week visit would enable Miguel and Lidia to visit Emmanuel United in Ottawa, partner churches, the National Council office and the East Central Ontario Region of the United Church, and spend a week with their daughter and her family in Terrebonne, near Montreal in Quebec.



Meeting with an MP



Dinner Together

Miguel and Lidia arrived in Canada on September 7. They travelled to the East Central Ontario Region where Miguel preached in churches in Brighton and Kingston on two different Sundays. They met with members from other churches to talk about their work in El Salvador and a potential visit to El Salvador next Spring by members of that region. In Toronto, they visited the National Council Office (NCO) of the United Church to discuss plans for meetings with members of parliament while they were in Ottawa. Miguel also preached at a chapel service at the NCO.

They arrived in Ottawa on Sunday, September 18 where they were hosted by Betsi and Malcolm Collins. On Monday, they spent time with the pie makers at Emmanuel participating in one of the ways that fund raising is done for our global partnerships. That afternoon Miguel and Lidia met with Rev. Grant to discuss the partnership and opportunities for sharing. That evening, the Global Partners committee and past chairs of the committee dined with Miguel and Lidia at the Colonnade.



On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, part of the days were spent in meetings with members of parliament for the Conservative, Liberal and NDP parties as well as senior management from Global Affairs Canada to discuss the human rights situation in El Salvador and the how to raise the profile of those issues with the Canadian government. The human rights issues in question stem from the an emergency measures act that was enacted almost a year ago. The act has enabled the government to imprison citizens without due process. While that has solved a lot of the gang violence, it has also affected many innocent citizens who had nothing to do with the gangs. It also enabled the government to imprison the Santa Marta 5, a group of individuals who have been protesting mining that has been taking place in El Salvador as well as lobbying for rights to clean water (which the government is planning to privatize). The meetings were arranged by Christie Neufeldt of the UCC National Council Office and Laura Avalos, Convenor of the Americas Policy Group, Public Service Alliance of Canada.



A meeting with United Church of Canada staff



Miguel with Jeannie and Grant



Coffee at Three Sisters Café

On Tuesday, Miguel and Lidia dined with members of the EUC Christian Development committee at the home of Val and Blake Lines and discussed each other's initiatives (eg. Vacation bible schools) and respective challenges.

On Wednesday, they met with the EUC Indigenous Relations group at the 3 Sisters Café to discuss the history of colonization and the current situation in Canada and El Salvador.



On Thursday, they met with members of the EUC Social Action committee at the Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Center. Most of the time there was spent on a tour of the food bank where they learned about the community that the food bank serves and how they go about providing that service. Our host there, Patricia Lau, was fluent in Spanish and so the tour was given in that language.

On Thursday afternoon, Miguel and Lidia paid a pastoral care visit to Marg and Bob Armstrong. The Armstrongs, along with Rev. Bill Smith, were on the very first visit by Emmanuelites to IBE in the early 1990's.

On Friday, they spent the day with Rev. Peter Woods from MacKay United. Peter had visited El Salvador in the early 1980's before he went into the ministry and has had a long friendship with Miguel and Lidia. Also on the Friday and during the rest of the week Miguel and Lidia were able to visit some of the Salvadoran ex pats living in Ottawa.



Patricia Lau gives a tour of the Rideau-Rockcliffe CRC food bank to Pastor Castro and his wife Lidia Mendes



Miguel with Margaret Armstrong



Gathering at Potluck Supper

On Saturday, they spent some time at the Global Partners Fall Festival and afterward the pot luck supper where there were able to spend time with members of the EUC congregation as well as more Salvadoran ex pats. A wide variety of food was enjoyed and a good time was had by all.



On Sunday, Miguel preached at our Sunday worship service with translation via Zoom from Terrebonne, by his daughter Lidia Maria. During the service, he was presented with one of the pieces of art work created at the Fall Festival the previous day. Following the service and lunch at the Bienvenido Latin Market on St. Laurent Blvd. (where their papusas and tamales received Miguel and Lidia's stamp of approval) they drove with Jim and Myrna Lamb to their daughter's home in Terrebonne.

On October 1, after a good visit with their daughter's family, they flew back to El Salvador with an unexpected stop or two along the way and eventually arrived safely home.

Jim Lamb



Jim Lamb presenting the Emmanuel art poster to Miguel Castro



GLOBAL PARTNERS FALL FESTIVAL

On Saturday, September 23rd, Emmanuel's Global Partners Committee held a fall festival to (re-)engage the church community with our partners in El Salvador and Zambia. Under a sunny sky, a carnival atmosphere was created with international snacks and fair specialties like cotton candy, popcorn and corn on the cob. Live music by Emmanuel's JAM, Adriana Trejo, and Dan Perkins' Celtic band added to the festive ambiance. Rustom Kazak made balloon hats, animals and flowers for festival attendees.



Rustom the Balloon Man!



The Community Art Project

A highlight of the Global Partners Fall Fest was a community art project, led by Emma Dowd, who has served as a leader at Camp Chipembi, Zambia, and has participated in a mission trip to Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (IBE) in El Salvador. She created a beautiful canvas in three parts: for Emmanuel, IBE, and the United Church of Zambia, Chipembi congregation. Each piece had a dove and birds from the three countries outlined in stained-glass style, which participants were invited to colour in with acrylic paint markers. This created a wonderful focal point for conversation and creativity across different generations and artistic abilities.



The date coincided with the visit of IBE Pastor Miguel Tomas Castro, and his wife Lydia to Ontario. This gave Emmanuel members an opportunity to interact informally with the Castros. The fellowship continued over a potluck dinner with Salvadorian community members.

Emmanuel's global partners committee is grateful to the many volunteers who made the festival a success. For more information on our on-going partnerships or to get involved, please contact our chair, Keith Jeacle.

Christina Clark-Kazak



Enjoying the Fall Festival



Members of the Salvadoran Community



Emmanuel Musicians



PURCHASE OF DRUM KIT FOR CHIPEMBI YOUTH

Emmanuel United Church and Bells Corners United Church jointly contributed to the purchase of a drum kit for the Chipembi Congregation. The youth and young adults in Chipembi are very excited, since this is something that has been a priority of theirs for some time.

Keith Jeacle



Unwrapping the new drums



Presenting the drums to the Chipembi congregation



New drum kit



GRAHAM'S CHRISTMAS READINGS : MEMORIES

A festively decorated Sanctuary was the site of a sold-out evening of Christmas Readings held on Friday, December 1, 2023. The program was in honour of Graham Campbell and a tribute to the special Christmas memories he gave to us over the years with his *Evenings of Christmas Readings*.

Graham presented the very first *Evening of Christmas Readings* back in 2012, with Laurence Wall from CBC Radio as MC for the occasion. It was a series of readings from the classic – *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.



... *"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.*

"Bah! said Scrooge. "Humbug!" ...



The "*Readings*" then became an annual tradition to mark the beginning of the Advent season at Emmanuel, every year through 2015 and every second year thereafter until 2019. Graham had been planning a program for 2021, but with COVID restrictions still in place, it never took place.

Hallie Cotnam from CBC Radio was back once again as MC for the occasion. She took over the role of MC in 2013 and presided over the event each of the years since.



MC Hallie Cotnam and Julie Henderson



The program drew on some of the favourite readings from previous Evenings of Christmas Readings, - Dave Cooks the Turkey, Wombat Divine, The True Meaning of Crumbfest - as well as stories from the program Graham had been planning for 2021 – A Parent's Christmas Eve, A Christmas Mistake, An Old Cowboy's Wish for Christmas. Stories that brought back memories of Christmases past, and some that perhaps created new memories. Stories that might lead one to think about Christmas a bit differently, bringing back feelings about the real meaning of Christmas rather than the superficial trappings.

We had a great line-up of readers for the evening – Jon Jones, Jennifer Mogridge, Bob Gander, Hallie Cotnam, Kirsten Jeacle, Dave Langner, Nicholas Langner, Joan Foster-Jones, Carol Campbell, Brenda Ashe, Richard Johnston, Ian Collins, Myrna Lamb and Jeffrey Campbell (Graham's son).



Cowboy Ian Collins



The Campbell Family

Julie Henderson performed "O Holy Night" one of Graham's favourite carols, and the "Four J" carolers (Julie Henderson, Joan Foster-Jones, Jim Lamb and Jon Jones) sang other traditional carols.

And of course, what would an Emmanuel event be without "food" – traditional home baking favourites from Emmanuel kitchens served during the Intermission and enjoyed by all.

What a truly wonderful evening!

Since Graham was so instrumental in the retiring of the debt on the renovation of the CE Hall, it was only fitting that proceeds from this event would be applied to reduce the outstanding debt from the renovation of the front entrance.

As our Emmanuel cowpoke "Ian" read in "An Old Cowboy's Wish for Christmas":

"Memories, 'Ol Pard, are all I want on Christmas Day."

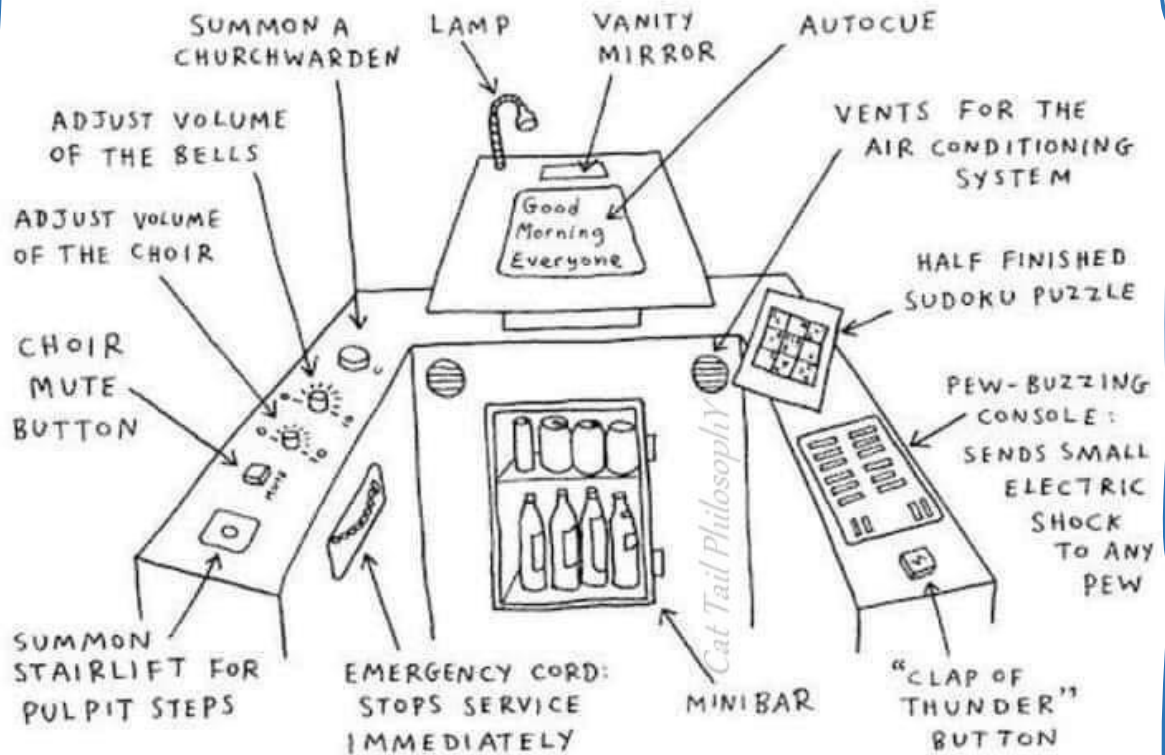
Thank you Graham, thank you for the Memories!

Keith Jeacle

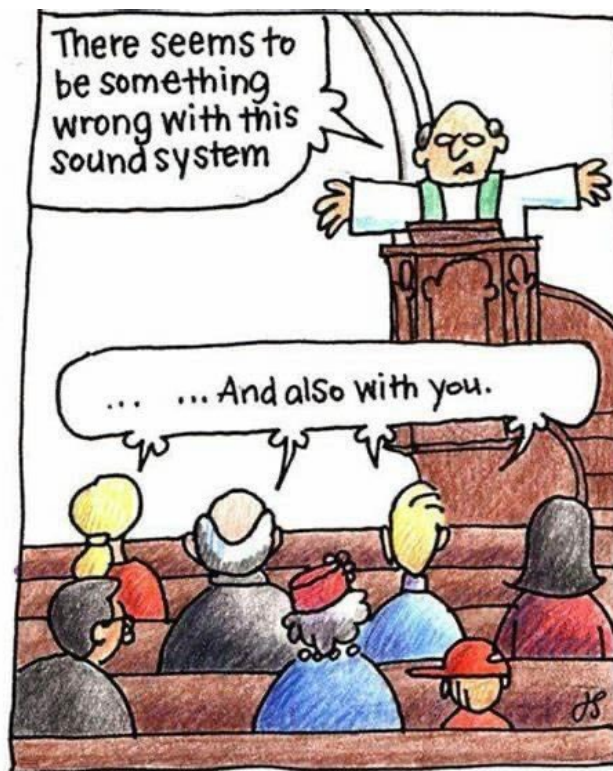


THE PULPIT

THESE ARE THE TYPICAL CONTROLS



CartoonChurch.com



HAIDA GWAI 2023 – THE SIXTH AND FINAL PILGRIMAGE OF RECONCILIATION

When We Went

This pilgrimage, originally scheduled for July 5-12, 2020, was rescheduled to 2021 and 2023 due to COVID 19. Sixteen people journeyed westward and arrived July 2, 2023, for an action-packed week.

Where We Stayed

Haida House, wholly owned by the Haida Nation, on the banks of the Tlaa'la tidal river, an hour north of Skidegate. We were lodged in seven newly-built cabins just behind the sand dunes at Hecate Strait. It's a slice of paradise – the river, the forest, the dunes and the ocean, with eagles and ravens.



Betsi Collins and Patricia Fairbairn



Haida House



New Cabins



Who We Met



Paul Rosang, Cultural Interpreter



Xiila Gujaaw, Cultural Interpreter



Mary and Sonny Russ. Sonny is a former Haida Watchman (Tanu) and Mary is a formidable cook





Artist Cori Savard



Cori's Canadian Mint Gold Coin



Raven head carving





Gwaii and Jaalen Edenshaw working on a new pole in their carving shed



Gwaii Haanas Legacy Pole carved by Jaalen Edenshaw and raised at Windy Bay in 2013





Davidson Family Performance in Old Massett



Davidson Family Performance in Old Massett



What We Learned

It was an amazing and one-of-a-kind educational and experience.

We learned about:

- the richness of monumental poles and cultural treasures at the Haida Heritage Centre and Haida Museum;
- how winds and incoming tides affect boat travel on Hecate Strait;
- the effects of smallpox in Haida villages – 90 % loss of population;
- Haida resilience in the face of colonization to reclaim their culture, language and traditions with Elders mentoring youth;
- how Haida artists and carvers are incorporating traditional knowledge and stories into their stunning pieces and their willingness to share;
- the importance of teaching children the Haida language and Haida cultural practices;
- the majesty of the forests, beaches, hills and rivers;
- the importance of kinship in family and clans that give every person a place of belonging in Haida society;
- the variety of traditional Haida food from the sea and forests;
- when loved ones pass away, how quickly clan and community members gather to support the family;

- how COVID has changed normal life on Haida Gwaii and required almost daily changes to our plans and itinerary;
- building community and one's faith when traveling with a group; and
- the importance of taking one's keys before locking a vehicle in the ferry lineup to go home ...

We appreciate the hospitality and willingness of Haida House staff to share their stories with us and to make our stay as comfortable as possible, not only this year, but on the previous five pilgrimages. Hawa'a! (Thank you!).

Norman Williams and Keith Jeacle

In Memorium

Benjamin Ray Davidson 1976-2020

**Gifted Haida Artist, Cultural Ambassador,
and Friend**



HAIDA GWAII BANNER

Following the pilgrimage to Haida Gwaii in 2019, two banners depicting the logo of Haida House were created. Haida House is where Emmanuel pilgrims stay during their visits. One banner was presented to Haida House in the summer of 2023 - the first visit since pre-COVID days. It was received with gratitude and will hang on the wall to the right of reception at the stairs - one of the most visible locations in the lodge. The second hangs in the Emmanuel sanctuary. The banners were created by Joan Foster Jones during Covid.

The logo represents a raindrop with a salmon egg inside - water being the elixir of life and the salmon egg representing life.

Joan Foster-Jones



*Receiving the banner from Emmanuel July 2023:
Norman Williams (left), Haida House Staff
member Leona Ridley (centre), Haida Tourism
Manager Kathy James (right)*



OMRHA GROCERY CARD FUNDRAISER FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In December, The OMRHA Grocery Card Fundraiser sold over \$80,000.00 in cards from Farm Boy, Loblaws/Independent, Metro/Food Basics and Shoppers Drug Mart.

In 2023 Emmanuel members purchased a total of \$37,650 in grocery cards. That translated into fundraising of \$1,882.50 for OMRHA, Ottawa Mennonite Refugee Housing Association.

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church also broke their record for sales - over \$20,000/month.

This fundraiser is coordinated by six churches and one synagogue, Temple Israel.

The churches are Glebe St. James United, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic, St. Thomas the Apostle Anglican, Emmanuel United, Ottawa Mennonite Church, and the Quakers. Carleton University English department and a few neighbourhood groups are also involved. It has over 220 individual participants.

It is a Win-Win program as the participants pay nothing extra, but get 100% of the value of the cards they buy. The 5% is paid to OMRA by the grocery stores.

Thank you to all who make this program work. It provides OMRA with about \$50,000/year, all of which goes into rent subsidies for newcomers.

Please consider joining this initiative. For more details, contact Janice and Pierre Peron, Emmanuel's coordinators.



Beni, Landa and Eli Zahinda with their mother Claire Ntazongwa. They arrived in Canada on December 14. The older son, Alpha, arrived in April.



NKOSI SIKEL EL IAFRIKA– GOD BLESS AFRICA

A SYMBOL OF DEFIANCE, HOPE AND SOLIDARITY

Note: this article is from speaking points that Chikwa used when he introduced this song at the Sunday service on February 4.

Nkosi Sikelel iAfrika is the title of a poem written in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga, a 24-year-old methodist teacher from South Africa. Originally written in Xhosa, the English translation of the title is Lord Bless Africa.

The poem was turned into a hymn in 1899 for a student choir to celebrate the ordination of a black Methodist pastor.

This hymn mixes Methodist hymnology with African praise singing and African beliefs in cleansing.

To bring African culture and spirituality into Methodist Christian worship in 1897, at age 24, in an occupied land, is itself outstanding.

Sontonga does not ask for a *blessing* for himself, his tribe, or his country. He asks for a blessing for Africa. Sontonga was espousing what was to become Pan-Africanism.

He refers to Africa and its people, their traditional leaders, and especially their land and livestock that had been taken from them.

It is a struggle song that evokes unity, defiance, and hope. It carries an exhortation to act in the best interest of Africa.

Nkosi Sikelel iAfrika was sung in 1912 during the first meeting of what later became the African National Congress (ANC).

In 1925, the ANC adopted it as its official anthem.

When Mandela and his co-accused were being led to prison after the Rivonia trial in 1964, South African people spontaneously sang Nkosi Sikel iAfrika outside the courthouse.

More than any other song, it has come to symbolize the struggle of all Afro-descendants around the world today.

Whether it is sung in Zimbabwean Shona (Ishe Komborera Africa) or Swahili (Mungu Ibariki Africa), which is Tanzania's national anthem, it conveys defiance and resistance along with hope and solidarity.

Chikwa Zahinda.

The following is a link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/288r0Mo1bFw?si=krXJ35bcSzDxsZzO>



NKOSI SIKEL' IAFRIKA – GOD BLESS AFRICA, THE CONTEMPORARY VERSION

WRITTEN BY ENOCH SONTONGA, WITH ADDED VERSES BY SAMUEL MQHAYI

Nkosi Sikeleli Africa
Malup hakanyiswu phando lwayo
Yiswa imithanda zo yethu
Nkosi Sikelela
Thina lusapo lwayo

God bless Africa
May her glory be lifted high
Hear thou our prayers
God bless us
Us Your children

Nkosi Sikeleli Africa
Malup hakanyiswu phando lwayo
Yiswa imithanda zo yethu
Nkosi Sikelela
Thina lusapo lwayo

God bless Africa
May her glory be lifted high
Hear thou our prayers
God bless us
Us Your children

Woza Moya (Woza, Woza)
Woza Moya (Woza, Woza)
Woza Moya oyingcwele
Nkosi Sikelela
Thina lusapo lwayo

Come Spirit
Come Spirit
Come Spirit Holy
God bless us
Us Your children
Lord, we ask you to protect our nation
Intervene and end all conflicts
Lord, we ask you to protect our nation
Intervene and end all conflicts
Protect us
Protect us Lord
Protect us, Protect our nation
Protect Africa

Morena boloka sechaba sa heso (sa heso)
O fedise dintwa le matswenyeho
Morena boloka sechaba sa heso
O fedise dintwa le matswenyeho
O seboloke (O se boloke)
O seboloke morena
O seboloke sechaba, Sechaba sa Heso
Sechaba sa Africa

Seen in Church Bulletins or Announced at Services

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.



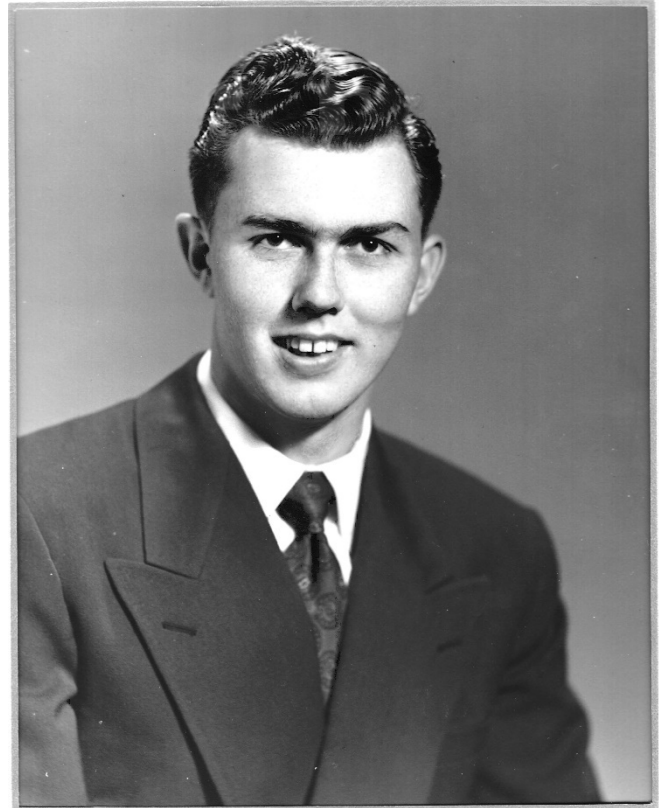
A PERSONAL APPRECIATION OF BOB ARMSTRONG

I have known Bob Armstrong all of my adult life. My own life is tightly wrapped with memories of Bob - and with Marg. Those memories are almost inseparable. So I can't write about Bob without Marg.

I don't intend to duplicate what can be found in the biography which has been distributed. This is my personal story about Bob.

Marg and I met in our freshman history class at McGill University in Montreal, and soon became best friends. The next year, when I started dating Clarence Crowell, whom I later married, I also met Bob. Bob and Clarence were sharing lab space as they pursued their doctorates in Physics at McGill. They had met and become friends and tennis partners while working as research assistants at the National Research Council (NRC) in Ottawa. They were in the same specialty field at that time. Their McGill Eaton Lab partnership expanded to include the Student Christian Movement (SCM). There they shared a Synoptic Gospels study, a foundational experience in theology for Clarence as it was for Bob.

SCM also had a regular supper club, which soon featured Bob's beef dinners. Bob's culinary skills were extraordinary in those frugal days -roast beef dinner for only \$1.00. Amazing! I later learned that he gained a lot of those skills working on the lake ships out of Port McNicholl as well as getting recipes from his mom. Those summer jobs paid off handsomely for the SCM members.



Bob's high school graduation photo

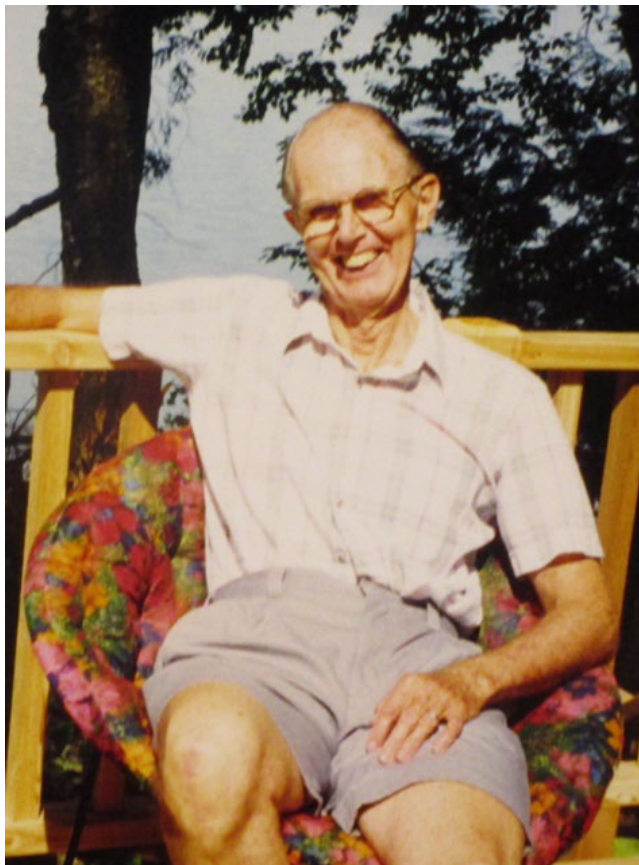
It wasn't long before Clarence and I decided that Bob should meet Marg. Bob was happy that Marg lived close enough to the campus that he could walk to meet her and walk back after taking her home. He didn't want the long streetcar rides which Clarence took to date me. SCM became an important feature of their romance and lives.



Marg and Bob married in 1956, before Bob had completed his PhD. They lived near the McGill campus until he finished. After graduation they moved to Ottawa where Bob returned to the NRC in an official research position. Clarence and I were in Montreal but stayed best friends with Bob and Marg. I remember visiting them in Ottawa often. Once we four took our toddlers out to see the tulips. But most of our time together was at our cottages at Eagle Lake, near Perth, Ontario. At first, while we still lived in Montreal, and later after we moved to New Jersey and then to California.



Wedding photo



Bob at the cottage at Eagle Lake

Eagle Lake and their family cottage were of deep importance to Marg's family and then to Marg and Bob and their children. Bob and Marg had honeymooned in her family's cottage on Eagle Lake. The family believes that his introduction to the cottage, while they were dating, included digging a large hole for the outhouse. That cemented Marg's parents' happiness with the impending marriage. For Bob, it was simply the beginning of a lifetime of cottage fixing, working, and enjoying a wide range of water and woods experiences. It certainly did not deter him. He knew from that first chore what cottage life on an island entailed - constant challenges logistically and technically.



How did Clarence and I in Montreal come to spend so much time with Marg and Bob on this lake so far away?

My parents bought an island on Eagle Lake thanks to Marg's early thoughtful suggestion that their cottage be loaned to my parents. They fell in love with the island experience and that lake. Our family cabin was the result. That in turn led to our families' sharing summer times ever since. Eagle Lake and Armstrongs were summer forever. I saw Bob at the lake every summer until he was 92.

There were countless occasions of everyone swimming off our swim rocks and then, as they grew older, the kids daring others to jump off the cliffs at their island. All the kids enjoyed canoeing and sailing together, and on and on. Then, weddings and grandkids. Tight bonds and lots of kid stories.

Bob introduced us to solar power for our cottage. He gave Clarence a solar panel he had used on his boathouse for our first connection for our early cell phone. Clarence learned a lot about many things from Bob over the years, including cottage life.

Bob maintained his theological interests which the SCM had nourished. He became a leader in developing the Ottawa School of Lay Theology - later the School of Theology and Spirituality. Bob chaired that Board for over 10 years.

Bob also was instrumental in building the Emmanuel - El Salvador connection.

He was a very supportive husband to Marg in all the community development work she did - including the Russell Heights Community Center and building health and legal support networks in the community.



One highlight was his support of her political campaign for the provincial legislative seat in Ottawa South. That took a lot of support.

In recent years, after marrying Russ, I came to see Bob's theological wisdom at Heretics. It was great to have my personal experience, in those years, of his gentle presence and contributions to that group. He did not dominate the discussion, but when he spoke, we listened. I know he did much for the community at large and the church community in particular. I heard about his work only after I moved to Emmanuel. He never spoke about all these contributions while we were at the lake. It was later after marrying Russell and joining Emmanuel that I learned that Bob did everything at Emmanuel over the years. Whatever he was asked to do, he did.

It was a joy when Marg and Bob moved into our apartment building. Russ and I could just go up and down a few stairs to get together for Happy Hour or dinner. Bob even was our mailman in winter months. When we were in LA he emptied our mailbox and saved our mail. These last years added a great deal to my appreciation of Bob.

Bob was a great man in so many ways - generous, thoughtful, modest. I cherish my 70 years of Bob's friendship. He was a gift to me, as to many others.

He lives on in my heart.

Areta Crowell



RON MACDONALD, PASTORAL CARE PROVIDER

Just prior to Christmas 2023, Emmanuel welcomed our new Pastoral Care Provider, Ron MacDonald. Ron and his partner Annemarie moved to Ottawa from Stratford, ON in 2020. Relocating to Ottawa had been on their radar for a couple of years. The impact of COVID restrictions made their move opportune. A bonus of their move was to be in the same city as three of their four daughters, who were already established in Ottawa.

Ron's early life in Welland, ON

Ron grew up in Welland, ON, the youngest of 5 boys (he is a twin), with two younger sisters. His parents moved to Welland from Nova Scotia in the 1940's. His father's family were Artz/MacDonalds from Nova Scotia and his mother's people, also from Nova Scotia were Murray/Kostuk. Ron's mother's father was a migrant from Eastern Russia. The exact location is not known. The family were strong Presbyterians. Ron's dad was an elder in the church. Ron and his siblings sang in the choirs and attended Sunday school. He describes himself as a "cradle Presbyterian".

It was at St Andrew's Presbyterian church, where Ron developed his musical talents and learned to play the pipe organ. In fact, Ron's attraction to the organ as an instrument appeared early in his childhood. He shares the story about how his passion for playing the organ led him to find a way to get into the church after hours to play.



At the time he was only 13/14. He discovered that if he left a back door of the church unlocked from inside, he could later on return (always on a Sunday) and gain entry to the building. Once there he could play to his heart's content. Ron is probably the only teenage break and enter artist to target a church pipe organ. Fortunately, the elders and his parents never discovered his teenage un-Presbyterian exploits.

University years in Ottawa

In the early 1970's, Ron graduated from high school in Welland and moved to Ottawa to enroll at Carleton University. Ron completed a BA in philosophy at Carleton. He then studied for a qualifying year for a Masters' degree in philosophy at the University of Ottawa.



After one year of this program, he moved to the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, where he completed a BEd degree. While at the University of Ottawa, he also held the position of Music Director at St. Paul's Eastern United Church. By this time, Ron considered himself to be a 70's "counter-culture guy", and he developed a hankering to travel somewhere 'far away'. He was inspired by his grandfather's sense of adventure and courage to leave Russia to travel to Nova Scotia as a young man.

Teaching in Papua New Guinea

In 1978, after graduating from Teacher Education, Ron found an advertisement from the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) for volunteer teachers in Papua New Guinea. Following his grandfather's travel urge, he took up an offer of a contract with CUSO to teach English in Papua New Guinea.

He fell in love with Papua New Guinea (PNG) and ended up spending 7 years working as a teacher in several schools. His first four years were spent teaching English in government high schools on CUSO contracts. Then he returned to PNG as a contract teacher in Roman Catholic mission schools in the 1980s. His experience in the Catholic Church and the mission schools had a profound impact on him. He was introduced to the Catholic liturgy and was drawn to the rituals of worship and the mass, so different from his Presbyterian upbringing. While teaching at a mission school run by the Christian Brothers order, Ron became a Roman Catholic. He was very engaged in music teaching and led a boys' marching band.



Ron with students from Mt. Haugen High School on weekend walkabout



The mission schools were boys' residential schools, attended by children from the region. Ron enjoyed most of his experience as a teacher in the close school community. However, he ran into the problems often experienced by those who work in remote church-operated residential schools. One day one of the students confided to Ron that he was being abused by one of the other teachers – one of the Brothers. Apparently other boys were also victims. Ron spoke to the mission priest about this disclosure.

After a lot of controversy, tension and disruption in the church and school community, the Brother in question was transferred to a school in another district. This experience was unsettling for Ron. Soon after he decided to return to Canada.

Divinity studies in Toronto and marriage

In the mid 1980's Ron came back to Canada and settled in Toronto. There he undertook to study for the Roman Catholic priesthood. He was motivated to join the Dominican priesthood and studied at St Michael's University at the University of Toronto where he completed a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree. Just as final plans were being made to enter a religious order, his life took another turn. He met, fell in love with and married Annemarie Petrasek. Annemarie is also Roman Catholic and was a teacher in the Catholic school system.

Ron and Annemarie married in 1988. Ron taught for two years in Toronto at a Catholic boys' high school. He taught world religion, philosophy and religious studies. In 1990 Ron and Annemarie decided that they wanted to move away from Toronto. It was expensive to live in the city and they had started their family with their first daughter Joanna and didn't want to raise their children in the big city.

Life in Stratford

In 1991 the family settled in Stratford ON and Ron began to teach in a Catholic secondary school. He taught religious studies and music. In Stratford the family grew with three more daughters – Julia, Megan and Marta.

Ron not only taught at St Michael's Secondary school, he also began to work at St Joseph's Roman Catholic parish as part-time Director of Liturgical Music. He oversaw the music program of the parish, which involved 6 volunteer choirs. He led the children's choir and also played the organ. In 2002, Ron was hired as full-time Pastoral Minister and Director of Liturgical Music role. At this time, he retired from school teaching. Annemarie returned to full-time teaching in the elementary schools.

Ron's responsibility as Pastoral Minister involved adult faith formation, leading elementary school retreats which he designed, leading a Lectio Divina group and of course managing the church's liturgical music program. He initiated a children's summer Faith Alive camp and led a poverty awareness trip to the Dominican Republic.



More studies

Ron has a strong academic drive. In 2002-03 he began another program of studies towards a Doctorate of Ministry at the Toronto School of Theology and St Michael's College. His subject was singing in the Reform Catholic Liturgy, post Vatican II. Specifically, he focused on "The Pastoral Dimension of Singing in the Reformed Roman Catholic Liturgy". He pursued this program of study and graduated with his Doctoral degree in 2009. For the next several years while he continued to work in Pastoral Ministry/Liturgical Music at St Joseph's church (which amalgamated with another congregation in Stratford), Ron taught part-time in the education faculties at Western University and at Wilfrid Laurier University.

He also taught an on-line additional qualification course on teaching in Roman Catholic schools with the Continuing Teacher Education Department of Queen's University.

Relocating to Ottawa

In 2020 Ron ended his nearly 30 years of working with St Joseph's parish and he and Annemarie decided to relocate to Ottawa. The move gave Ron the opportunity to make some significant decisions regarding his association with 'institutional' religion. Ron accepted that he had become disaffected with 'institutional religion' as experienced in the Roman Catholic Church.



Ron's doctoral studies and research made him more aware of how the ritual practices of worship, singing being an integral ritual practice, were geared more to the preservation of the viability of the institutional church than supporting the worshipper in their journey of faith. His experience was that the liturgy of the church did not reflect enough "the liturgy of the world". At this time, Ron refers to himself as "a graduate of institutional religion" and he has embraced his graduation as an opportunity to take full responsibility for his Christian faith life.

In moving to Ottawa, Ron did not intend 'to join' a church. So for the first couple of years in Ottawa, Ron devoted his time to writing, teaching online with Queens Continuing Teacher Education Department and gardening. Annemarie is a practicing Jungian psychoanalyst. Their daughters are pursuing their careers in Ottawa.

Joanna works at the Rideau Foundation, founded by former Governor General David Johnson. Julia is a medical doctor working on a residency in Pediatric medicine at the Northern School of Medicine in Thunder Bay at Lakehead University/CHEO, Megan is a practicing midwife, and Marta is applying to St Paul's University for a Master's program in spirituality and counselling.

Coming to Emmanuel

After Ron and Annemarie had been in Ottawa for a little while, Ron's daughter told him, "You have gifts that you are not using". Searching on the Internet, Ron found the newly refurbished Emmanuel website and discovered that we were searching for a Pastoral Care provider.

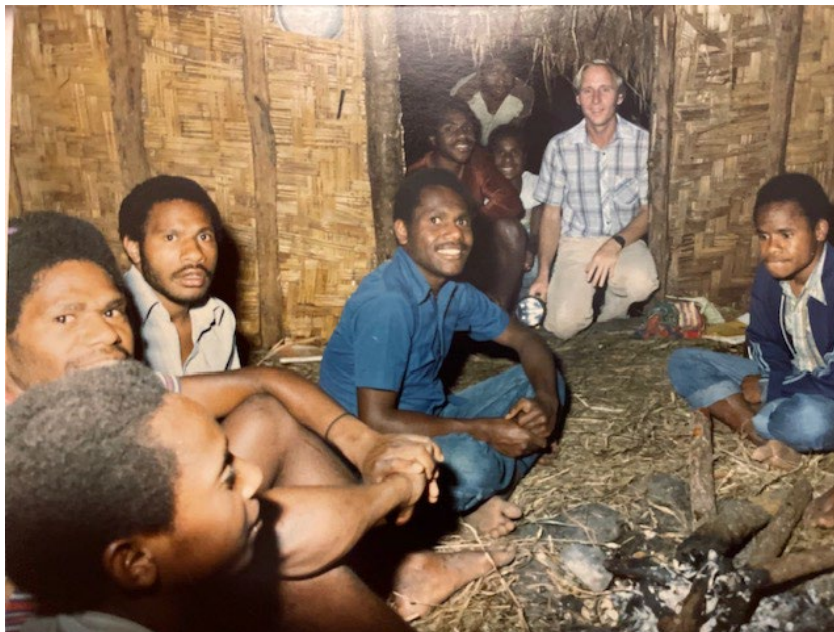


His daughter encouraged Ron to pursue the position believing that he had pastoral gifts to bring to this position and that her Dad would be energized by working with people in pastoral care. Ron is an extrovert. Once at Emmanuel, Ron has found the congregation, Reverend Grant and the Pastoral Care Team to be very welcoming and supportive. He appreciates how Emmanuel is a progressive Christian church community. He is impressed with the designation of Emmanuel as an 'affirming' community. He is inspired by how the Gospel can speak to the present moment in the lives of congregants at Emmanuel. As Pastoral Care provider, he is now committed to further understanding 'spirituality and aging' as he provides pastoral care to aging members of the church community.

Outside of his work at Emmanuel, Ron enjoys physical activities in the outdoors – hiking, biking and cross-country skiing. He is making every effort to work out regularly at Movati. He daily plays the piano and enjoys listening to vocal music. His family has a 2,500 square foot garden plot at Just Food, a community gardening network in Blackburn Hamlet. He spends time writing – memoirs and musings and a fictional story, *Distraction*. He is a reader and particularly enjoys writers and talks by spiritual leaders such as Irish priest John O'Donohue.

We welcome Ron to Emmanuel and look forward to getting to know him better as he grows in his relationship to our community.

Phyllis MacRae



Ron making a farewell visit to one of the students' traditional houses at Fatima High School



AMELIA BROHMAN: EMMANUEL'S LEADER OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Everyone in the Emmanuel community recognizes our new Children, Youth and Young Adult leader Amelia Brohman. Amelia grew up in Emmanuel from a young age along with her 3 brothers - Alex, Joel, Charlie, and sister Vanessa. Amelia's parents are Brad and Ellen Brohman.

Early life

Amelia was born in Media, Pennsylvania in January 1994. At the age of 2 weeks Amelia was adopted by Brad and Ellen Brohman and her dad picked her up in Philadelphia and brought her to Victoria BC, where the family had their home. Her older brothers were also adopted in the United States. Alex, born in 1990 was adopted at age 6 months. Joel, born in 1992 was adopted at 4 weeks of age. Later on her brother Charlie was adopted in South Africa at three years of age and her younger sister Vanessa was adopted from Toronto at the age of 2 years.

Amelia's dad Brad was born in Ottawa but moved with a military family and grew up in Squamish BC. Her mum Ellen grew up in Oshawa ON and Brad and Ellen met while studying at Queen's University.

Amelia's early years were spent in Victoria until 2001 when the family moved to Ottawa and Amelia entered grade one. Amelia went to Featherston Public School for her elementary years, and later to Hillcrest High School.

Amelia was into all kinds of sports at school – track and field, soccer, volleyball and football. Her dad used to be a long - distance runner (1500 km) and was in running clubs. He recognized that she was very fast by nature. He encouraged her to start running in clubs. She started when she was in grade 6 and was in competitive running clubs in grades 7 and 8.



Emmanuel Canoe Camp



In 2008 her coach, Lyndon George, started a new competitive running club – CANI Athletics Club. It was a small, high performance club. Amelia ran with the club from 2008 to 2018. The club upped the level of her coaching. Amelia had a competitive running career for 10 years and ran at the regional, national and international level. She was on Team Canada in August 2013.

While at Hillcrest HS Amelia competed in track for the school in the OFSAA (Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations) competitions. She medalled at the OFSAA competition in grade 9. She ran all year round – in the winter, indoors. Indoors she specialized in 60m, and outdoors in 100m and 200m sprints. Running is a very specialized sport. It is like an art form as takes discipline in mechanics and breathing. The only indoor year- round covered facility in North America is the 400m track at Louis Riel HS.



International track meet – Amelia is the third from the left



University years

Amelia graduated from Hillcrest in 2012 and studied at Carleton University from 2012-2017. She studied criminology and criminal justice, concentrating on law with a minor in psychology. At Carleton Amelia travelled with her club to race meets in Florida, Boston and New York City and across Canada. While she was at Carleton the university did not have a track team, although the University of Ottawa did. In her last two years at Carleton, a track team was started, and Amelia took part in the team. It was new and not yet very competitive. While she was in high school Amelia had been scouted and was offered multiple athletic scholarships in the USA. However she decided to remain in Ottawa with her family and where she was doing very well with her coach.

Growing up at Emmanuel

Amelia grew up at Emmanuel with her brothers and sister and took part in the many children's and youth activities. She attended Camp Awesome as a camper and then as a staff leader. In 2009 she travelled to El Salvador with other youth. Norman and Christine Williams led the group. While there the group worked on building a water irrigation system. In 2019 Amelia took part in an Emmanuel visit to our partner in Chipembi Zambia. Working with Chipembi young people, the Emmanuel youth were leaders at the annual Camp Chipembi vacation bible school.



At a project to build water irrigation in El Salvador



First Job

In 2017 Amelia graduated from Carleton. She was hired as a correctional officer by Ontario Correctional Service and began to work at the regional correction centre on Innes Rd. Correctional officers were responsible for “the care, custody and control” of the male and female inmates. The work was tough and exhausting, both physically and mentally. As an officer she “saw some scary things.” As in most prisons, there were a lot of drugs and fighting. The officers were put in dangerous positions. Amelia says it was not a lifestyle and career for the long term and there was a high turnover among the officers. Although the pay was good, there were many emotional problems – addictions, PTSD and other health issues – among the prison staff. For many officers the job was a good segue to employment with the OPP and Ottawa Police Service.

In 2022 Amelia decided that work in corrections was not a good long-term career option. She began to work for a lighting installation company, and she changed her career path and began to work as an electrician. She is now employed by True Beacon electrical contractor. Her work involves installing solar panels and generators. The employer is sponsoring her as an apprentice. After 5 years and 9000 hours, she can be certified as an electrician. During her five years of apprenticeship, she will enroll in a training program over 4 semesters at Algonquin college.



At Camp Chipembi, Zambia



Running career

In 2018 Amelia stopped track competition after 10 years. She felt she had had a successful career in competitive sport and had not had any major injury. She wanted to change her relationship with running. Her coach encouraged her to join the club to be their first female coach and role model. Now she is working three times a week for 2 hours as a coach working on the development of young athletes.

A new experience at Emmanuel

In her active life at Emmanuel, Amelia is one of a minority in her age demographic as most people her age are not engaged in a church community. Amelia feels that the generational gap between youth and older people is greater at Emmanuel than when she first became involved as a child and youth. During Covid Emmanuel lost people in both the younger and older age groups. She observes that there are fewer activities for youth than there were when she was a teenager. She wants to encourage the generations to come together. She feels that youth and young adults do want to stay in the church community, but they need to find more meaningful activities and opportunities.

For a while she worked with three Emmanuel youth in a collaborative confirmation program that was being shared with Rideau Park United Church, but it has now ended. On Family Day weekend in February, there will be a weekend away at Sharbot Lake. She would like to encourage more activities in evenings and on Sundays that incorporate the generations.

The youth are often not visible in the Sunday services, but they are very active in other church activities. She feels that church does not have to take place only in "church hours". It is not up to the youth to demonstrate that they are attending church.

Emmanuel feels like home

Amelia is very enthusiastic and energized about her new job as Children, Youth and Young Adult leader because Emmanuel feels like home to her. She is a familiar face to the community members of all ages. Having grown up in the congregation, she meets people she knows and loves. It has been useful to her "having taken a step back" from active church life, and now rejoining the community in this active role. Emmanuel is very happy to have Amelia with us in her new position.

Phyllis MacRae

An angel asked God what he was doing.
"Making Canadians" God said.

"Awww, they're so nice!" said the Angel.

"Oh yeah? Watch this" said God as He dropped a hockey puck.



BOOK REVIEW

Rebel Queen by Michelle Moran; Atria Books

Michelle Moran is an American author based in California. She taught in public schools for six years, and during that time used her summers to travel extensively around the world. She has written eight bestselling historical novels including *Cleopatra's Daughter* and *Nefertiti*.

Rebel Queen is an historical fiction novel which narrates the tale of Queen Lakshmi of India through the eyes of one of her female guards, Sita.

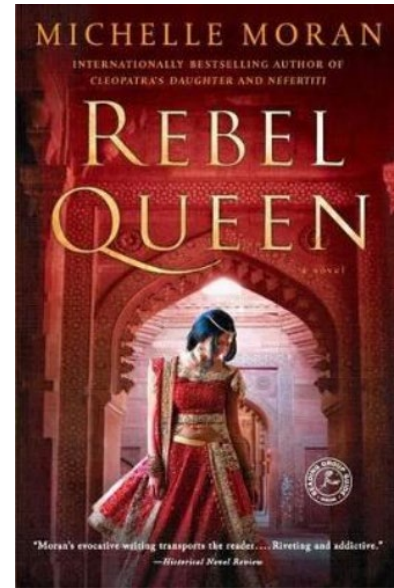
Queen Lakshmi ruled the kingdom of Jhansi in northern India during the mid-nineteenth century, and offered an astonishing resistance to the mighty British invasion of India at that time. Her gallant story has become epic in the minds of Indians; Queen Lakshmi is an icon in India, just as Joan of Arc is in France, and Queen Boudica, in England. The story of how Queen Lakshmi came to power in her male-dominated world and how she managed to wield it is a fascinating one.

Sita's story is even more fascinating. Sita is a fictional character, but her experiences are based on life in India at the time, as well-researched by the author.

Sita was born to a family of modest means in a remote village. Food was basic lentils and beans, and girls and women had to keep to their own homes.

Sita's house had a courtyard with a tree that she could sit under, which she enjoyed. She also enjoyed watching the boys playing outside and yearned to join them.

Unusually for that time and place, Sita's father gave her all the education he could in both the literary and martial arts. Sita's father then encouraged her to try out to become one of the Queen's guards.



We follow Sita through the challenges she faced along the way of becoming a Queen's guard and then working as one. Along the way we learn about the back story of some of the other women of the queen's guard, and of Sita's grandmother and sister. All very different paths which are worthy of interest in their own right.

I love historical fiction, and to me *Rebel Queen* is historical fiction at its best. I heartily recommend it.

Evelyn Perkins



Humming Birdness

Four sources on the feeder;
only one is occupied, and yet
the rest are out of bounds.

A fresh contender must resign
or force the present occupant
to yield its rank, and fly.

A stubborn thirsty third
may drive them both away.

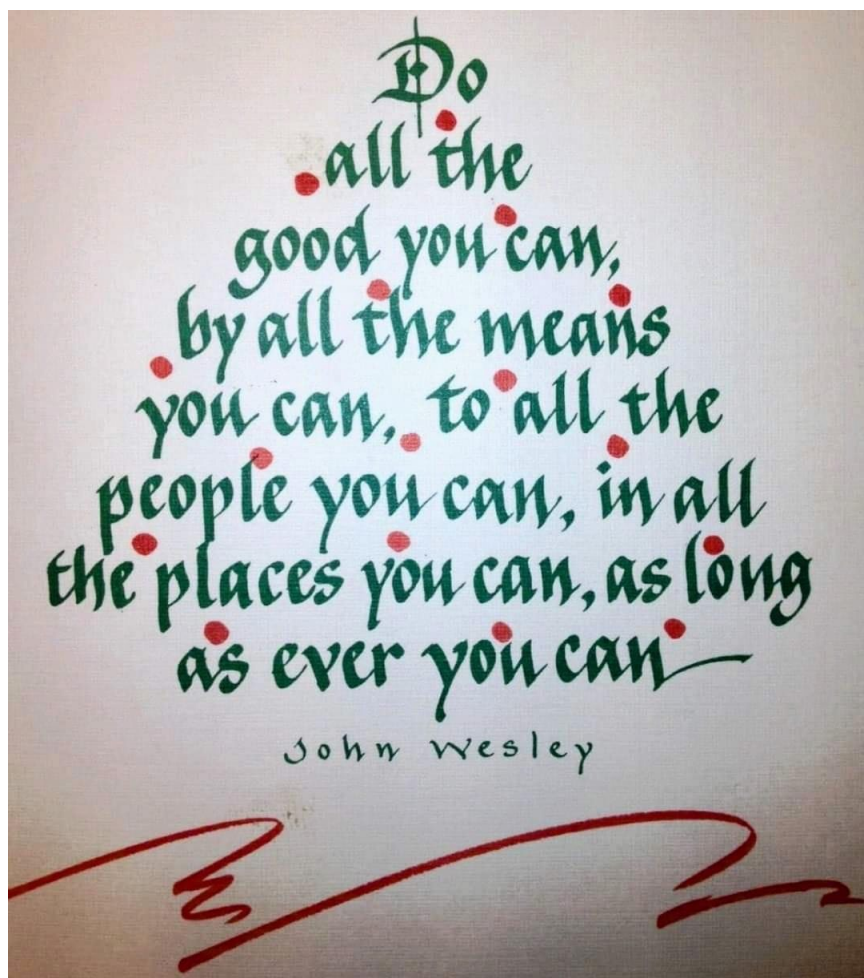
This chamber should provide
for some accord across the aisle.

Why must one cede power,
let any would-be in, who might
preempt connected benefits?

While these two agitate,
some other party might invade
and flick a crucial coin.

© E. Russell Smith 2023





Emmanuel United Church

691 Smyth Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 1N7
613.733.0437 ph
613.733.0125 fax
www.emmanuelunited.ca



Editor: Phyllis MacRae
Publisher: Jon Jones
Proof reader: Richard Johnston

