



this issue

Canada's Foodgrains Bank

United Church celebrates 100 years

Our Chipembi Connection

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Most of a year has gone by since we last published an edition of our Emmanuel Newsletter. Life and the church have been very busy. Being busy is a sign of a vibrant, flourishing church congregation. We continue to have many volunteers who are working with passion and commitment to carry out all the activities and initiatives in which we participate and benefit from. When you are enjoying some of these many initiatives - Sunday worship, music, coffee and conversation, Friday seniors exercise, Tuesday morning conversations, book club, Teleos, mens breakfast, family activities, youth programs, turkey dinners and so many more - take a moment to think about and appreciate the Emmanuel volunteers who make all this happen. All our lives are richer for their commitment and contributions.

In this edition of the newsletter we highlight some of these many congregational activities.

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

newsletter@emmanuelunited.ca

We have two stories that highlight our visits with our Global Partner in Chipembi Zambia. Emmanuel members continue to be active in our United Church Region - EOORC- and our cluster of South East Ottawa neighbouring congregations. Members of our community have informed us about social initiatives in the larger world - The Goma Fundraising Initiative and the work of the Canada Food Grains Bank.

A highlight for the United Church in our Region was the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada, founded in 1925. On June 15 hundreds of United Church members came together at the EY Centre in Ottawa to sing, pray and celebrate together.

Enjoy this issue.

Phyllis MacRae
Editor

July 23, 2025



FROM GRANT'S DESK

Spring Newsletter Reflection

Yesterday, as I was spending time with my partner, Brian, he drew attention to the beloved house plants on the end of the dining room table next to the window. "This seems to be the place where they get the most light. Look how much they are sprouting here," as he pointed out the extension, the new growth, in the stems and leaves.

Spring, to me, is like this: the growth that takes place in nature, the new travel opportunities that come as more and more snow disappears and the lightening of spirit that comes with reduction in feelings of isolation. "The sunshine is a real mood-lifter, isn't it?," I often like to observe.

Emmanuel United Church's energy keeps growing as we continue to journey as a welcoming and inclusive church.

We are committed to ongoing learning about each other: all of our origins, all of the cultures we represent, all of the ways that we are welcome to express our sexual and gender identities. We continue to do what we can to support each other in difficult times knowing that our needs are great while our resources are finite.

When I was growing up and had enough interest to be with my dad in the vegetable garden, we would always plant small seed in the ground even before the frost season was over. June 21, the Summer Solstice, was the beginning of the frost-free season. Then, tomato plants could come out of the indoors and the greenhouse. Onions and rhubarb would start to come to life in rich greens and an early harvest was even possible.

What we harvest at Emmanuel United Church is a strong sense of relationship. What we do takes constant care and effort. We nurture and nourish each other with mutual respect and as Indigenous wisdom teaches us, we listen and be present to one another. In doing these things, we hope we keep being as Christ teaches us to be. All are welcome here because we are constantly committed to growing our relationships together.

May God bless you in this post-Pentecost season of renewal.

Grant



FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Emmanuel as an Oak Tree

At Emmanuel, our congregation can be likened to an oak tree. Just as the oak stands resilient and strong, so too does our community of faith. The oak tree is a powerful symbol for Emmanuel, embodying the qualities we strive to uphold.

The oak tree's deep roots which penetrate the earth symbolize the strong connections we share within our community of faith. These roots anchor us, providing stability through shared experiences and collective wisdom.

The trunk of the oak rising tall and proud represents our aspirations to grow and reach new heights supported by a sturdy foundation of mutual support and commitment.

Its branches extending far and wide, reflect our outreach to those in need, offering shelter, comfort and hope.

And in every rustling leaf, we see the individual contributions of each member, creating a vibrant community of faith and service.

Just as the oak tree stands resilient against fierce winds and storms, so too does our community of faith stand strong amidst life's trials and tribulations. We thrive in new and exciting ways thanks to the energy, passion and compassion of our community of faith.

Reflecting on my time as Chair of Council, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to serve such a remarkable community. The dedication and wisdom of our Council and Executive members has been a source of strength and inspiration providing us with a solid foundation on which to build the life of our congregation. And Emmanuel has such amazing volunteers – an incredible group of people continuing to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world – each integral to the fabric of who we are as a community of faith.

May we continue to stand strong, like the oak tree, thriving in unity and purpose.

Keith Jeacle

Chair of Council

This is my church. *It is composed of people just like me. It will be friendly if I am. It will do great work if I work. It will make generous gifts to many causes if I am generous. It will bring others into its fellowship if I bring them. Its seats will be filled if I fill them. It will be a church of loyalty and love, of faith and service, if I who make it what it is, am filled with these. Therefore, with God's help, I dedicate myself to the task of being all these things I want my church to be.*

Source: Unknown



FROM THE PASTORAL CARE PROVIDER

Meditation on Wintering – A Sacred Pause

"To winter is to be rooted in your own place, to trust that even in the absence of visible growth, life is working beneath the surface."

For this mediation on wintering, I have been inspired by Katherine May's text – *Wintering- The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times* (2020). Katherine May is a British author best known for her exploration of the emotional and psychological aspects of life through the lens of nature and the seasons.

As winter settles in with its quiet, cold embrace, you are invited to slow down and engage with the season's more deliberate pace. Nature itself offers you a sacred lesson: trees shed their leaves to conserve energy, and seeds lie dormant beneath the frosty earth, awaiting the warmth of spring. As Katherine May writes, "Winter is not the death of life, but the preparation for the return of life."

For Katherine May, this pause in nature offers a powerful invitation for you to rest, reflect, and reset—rather than continuing the relentless cycle of striving. In our fast-paced world, this kind of rest can feel counter-cultural. Yet, winter teaches you that rest is not a luxury but a necessity. As May also writes, "Rest is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Without it, we are like trees that have not been pruned—unfit for future growth."

In a world that constantly equates worth with productivity, rest can seem like a luxury you can't afford, or even an indulgence. But in truth, it is in these moments of stillness that you replenish your energy, restore your creativity, and nurture your well-being. "Rest is not a retreat from life; it is the very space where you prepare to re-enter the world more fully, with renewed purpose."

Let this season of wintering be a threshold to something new as you are invited to turn inward, creating space within yourself to hear the subtle stirrings of your soul. Resting in the peace of God's presence, let this time be a pause, trusting that just as the earth's stillness nurtures new growth, so too does your own interior stillness cultivate the seeds of transformation within you.

In conclusion, John O'Donohue has written, "The great companion of winter is silence; it is the space in which we find our deepest strength and renewal." May your wintering be a time of resetting and renewal.

Ron



THE LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY

FROM THE YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORKER

Children and youth have been busy here at Emmanuel.

We had three youth who participated in confirmation lessons once a month until the spring, when they were confirmed in the church shortly after Easter. The three youth were Jah'Mari Currie, Russell Collins and Mya Sorg. The sessions were led by Val Lines and Amelia Brohman with some special guest appearance from members of the congregation who supported these three young people along the way.

In December we had 8 kids perform in our Christmas pageant on December 24th, led by Crispin Zahinda and Sean Currie. They spent months practicing their lines at home and after church and executed an incredible performance in front of over 100 people! Our children's choir had their first recital on our Christmas Even Family Service where they sang the song C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S (words by Jenny Lou Carson, music by Eddie Arnold) led by Ashley Roy. They too, had spent months learning this song and it showed!

January was a little quieter because of the hard work the kids did in December but February was busy! Our first event in February was on the 1st. Kids aged 10+ were met at the church at 1:00pm to head to Balena park for a skate, then at 4:00pm they went to Southminster United Church to participate in Worshiplude. Worshiplude is a winter worship and fellowship event for youth and young adults. The kids had the opportunity to meet and connect with youth from all over the province and Quebec.

21 days after Worshiplude, on February 22nd we hosted a Family Winter Fun Day! Families joined us for an afternoon of tubing followed by a provided dinner at the church then a comes cafe in the evening.

Amelia Brohman



Some of our Youth and Young Adult Activities - Fall 2024/Winter 2025

Habitat for Humanity – Young Adult Build

A group of five drove to Coburg Ontario at the end of August, 2024 to help the Northumberland Habitat team with their work on seven townhomes in the village of Baltimore just north of Coburg. We volunteered there for three days; our assigned task was to put up drywall. We worked with seasoned local Habitat volunteers and on one of the days, youth from a local trades school program. It was the first time that our young adults had put up drywall or even used a drill - they enjoyed the opportunity and got pretty good by the end of the third day! We're grateful to the wonderful welcome from the Northumberland Habitat team and to Trinity United Church in Coburg, who let us sleep on their floor and use their kitchen.



Halloween for Hunger – Tween Event

Halloween for Hunger is an event in which groups can collect food for local food banks around Halloween. On October 26, youth from Emmanuel canvassed houses in the neighbourhood around the church with flyers describing the initiative and a list of possible donations. People were very supportive, and our wheelbarrow overflowed with donations. Thanks to our neighbours for their generosity!

Afterwards, we shared a meal together at the Shantymen's dinner, then watched part of a movie about the life of Moses, played games and watched another short movie.

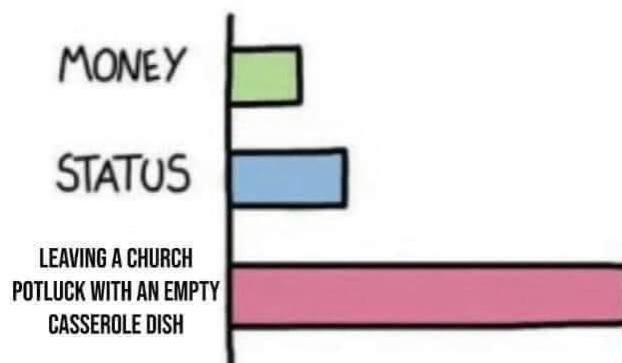


Worshiplude 2025

Tweens and teens gathered at Emmanuel on February 1, 2025 and walked to the local outdoor skating rink at Balena Park to skate together. It was the first time skating for some of us! After a snack and some board games at Emmanuel, we drove to Southminster United Church for the Worshiplude event organized by EOORC. This is a worship and social event for youth from all over our region as well as groups from as far away as Quebec and southern Ontario. There was a pizza supper (served by adults from Emmanuel) followed by a worship service.



WHAT GIVES PEOPLE FEELINGS OF POWER



Family Winter Fun Day – Feb 22, 2025

A group of 24 people consisting of families, tweens and adults drove to Domain L' Ange Gardien about 40 minutes northeast of Ottawa for an afternoon of snow tubing. The tubing runs and the weather were perfect – lots of snow from the snowstorm the week before and -5C temperature. After many fun runs down the hill, we drove back to Emmanuel for a supper of chili and/or mac and cheese followed by some board games. A great fun and fellowship day!

Val Lines



EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH: A Commitment To Community

This article was written by Richard Johnston and published in the March edition of the Riverview Park Review. It is part of a series of stories about the Riverview Park neighbourhood called: "Open the Door. Let's Explore". This article is republished here with the permission of the editor Carole Moulton.

Phyllis



Emmanuel United Church has been an integral part of the south-east Ottawa community for over 60 years. Initially meeting at Vincent Massey Public School in the late 1950s, the Congregation embarked on the construction of a two-story building, located at the corner of Smyth Road and Botsford Street, in 1962, and commenced worship services there later that year.

This building, now called the Christian Education (CE) Hall, was significantly renovated in the early 2000s and now features an up-to-date large scale kitchen, audio visual equipment, modern offices, and meeting rooms of various sizes. In the early 1980s, the building footprint was greatly expanded by the addition of the Sanctuary building, which was constructed immediately adjacent to (and connected with) the CE Hall. The Sanctuary is hexagonal in shape, topped by a six-sided roof that culminates in a sky-light.



Emmanuel has been the frequent beneficiary of thoughtful & inspired clerical leadership. Rev. Wilbur Howard, who served as Minister of Emmanuel from 1970 to 1980, was Moderator of the United Church of Canada (UCC) from 1974 to 1977. The Moderator is the elected governing officer and spiritual leader of the UCC. The Congregation has, throughout Emmanuel's existence, reflected a large & active membership. Dr. Anne Squire, long-time Emmanuel member, also served as Moderator from 1986 to 1988. Our current worship leader is Rev. Grant Stuckless, who came to Emmanuel in 2022.

Many of Emmanuel's activities reflect the traditional view of what is popularly regarded as the role of the church. For children and teens, there is an active Sunday school and a one-week summer activity called Camp Awesome. Music plays a large role in worship: the Senior Choir accompanies Sunday service; also performing on a monthly basis is JAM, a youth oriented collective of singers & players.

A book club, a weekly discussion group, a monthly Friday film night, and a quilting group are some of the many activities that members of the Congregation enjoy and participate in. Non-church members are welcome to participate.

Today, many of Emmanuel's activities are focussed on community, both in a local and an international context. Affordable housing is an ongoing preoccupation: the Multifaith Housing Initiative (Veterans' House, the Haven, Dream Lebreton) receives ongoing financial support and participation; membership in the Ottawa Mennonite Refugee Association (serving refugees and asylum seekers); and historic connections to Habitat for Humanity projects in the Ottawa region and internationally (El Salvador, Louisiana).

Emmanuel is an Affirming congregation that actively supports the LGTBQ community. Once a month, the Rainbow Hub welcomes LGTBQ youth. For more information, contact Rainbowhubottawa@gmail.com.



For over 30 years, Emmanuel has worked in partnership with Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel in El Salvador. In addition to financial support, Emmanuel folks have travelled to El Salvador on many occasions to build houses, share worship, and support local activities.

Also, Emmanuel has a sister church in the village of Chipembi, Zambia. Congregants have funded the cost of materials & participated in constructing an ablutions block and upgrading the rural health centre. Emmanuel youth annually participate as counsellors in Camp Chipembi, a church camp for local children.

In partnership with the Ottawa legal community, Emmanuel provided both funding and hands-on construction labour in the building of a cement-block school in Munenga, Zambia. Initially constructed as a single classroom, in 2012, a second classroom and a house for the teacher have since been added.

Indigenous relations have been an ongoing focus of congregational activity. Emmanuel recognizes Red Dress Day each May and Residential School Remembrance Day each September. The congregation has participated in learning trips to Kitiganzibi First Nation, near Maniwaki, Quebec, and trips to Haida Gwaii, in British Columbia. Emmanuel supports Inuit artists through Isaruit Inuit Arts and an Inuit games and sports program for youth.

Refugee sponsorship commenced in the late 1970s with the South Asian boat people. East European and Syrian families entering Canada have received assistance from Emmanuel. Over the past 10 years, several African families have received Emmanuel sponsorship to settle in Ottawa. Church involvement starts with the paperwork required by the federal government and continues through the provision of accommodation and financial support for their first year in Canada. Approximately 50-60 persons have been assisted by Emmanuel over the years.

These are some of the many church-related activities that reflect the community focus of the Emmanuel Congregation. For additional pictures and information about the activities set out in this article and to discover more about the life of Emmanuel, please go to the church web-site at emmanuelunited.ca.

Prepared by Richard Johnston



HUMOUR

Do not seize the day. This will startle the day and may cause it to become aggressive and give you a nasty bite.

Instead approach the day calmly without making eye contact, pet it gently, and slowly enfold it in a careful embrace

If the day shows any signs of resistance to being engaged with, it is likely to turn on you. Back off and return to bed.

Credit - The Unitarian Universalist Hysterical Society



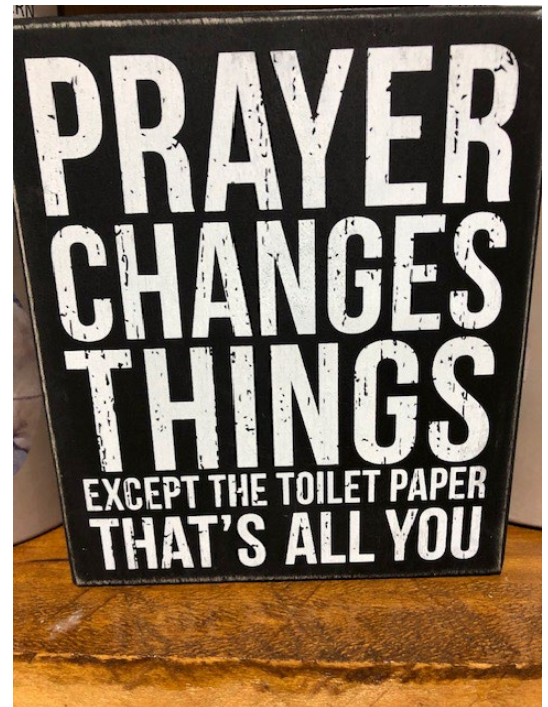
Credit – Strange, Silly or Stupid Signs

New Pastor Warranty

It has come to our attention that the pastor you received was shipped with a slight defect—
They are not psychic. Because of this, you must observe certain procedures to ensure optimum performance.

It is necessary to inform them of any members who are hospitalized. If someone you know is in need of prayer, the pastor must be told or they won't know. If you are in need of a pastoral visit, you will get the best results if you ask for one.

We regret any inconvenience this may cause.



CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

On November 18, 2024, Emmanuel hosted a visit from members of the Canadian Food Grains Bank. This event was initiated by Emmanuel member Bill MacLeish. A number of interested people from Emmanuel and also those who are active in other congregations in support of the CFGB gathered for lunch in the CE Hall.

The United Church of Canada is one of the denominations that has supported the Bank for many years. Many individual congregations are also members and supporters of the Bank.



The Government of Canada provides funding support to the organization and matches donations.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies working together to end global hunger. We work with locally-based organizations in developing countries to meet emergency food needs, achieve long-term solutions to hunger and work to foster informed action by Canadians and governments to support this international cause.

The United Church of Canada is one of the denominations that has supported the Bank for many years. Many individual congregations are also members and supporters of the Bank. The Government of Canada provides funding support to the organization and matches donations. Across Canada 12,000 individual congregations, part of the 15 Canadian Christian denominations, support the work of the Foodgrains Bank.

The Bank raises money to support the purchase of food supplies for communities in Africa and other parts of the world where food insecurity is a major problem. In Canada many farmers support the program by growing crops which are then sold and the proceeds used by the Bank to buy food overseas. Much of the support for the Bank comes from farmers and congregations in the rural areas of Canada. The work of the Bank is less well known in the urban areas of Canada, and in urban congregations.

The Government of Canada has been an important partner of the Foodgrains Bank since it began. Today, the Foodgrains Bank is one of two primary channels for the Government of Canada's funding for food assistance. Through the Government of Canada's support, the Foodgrains Bank's 15 member agencies are able to leverage donations from individuals, churches and businesses up to a ratio of 4:1 for food assistance in the developing world—up to \$25 million each year.



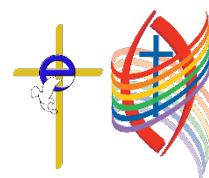
At the Emmanuel event we heard presentations from Henry Reinders, Ontario/Quebec Regional representative, and two project staff, Roseline Mukonoweshuro and Farai Gumasai, who work on Nature+, a local project of the Tsuru Trust in Zimbabwe. This project receives support from the Foodgrains Bank.



*Bill MacLeish, Emmanuel's champion
of The Canada Food Grains Bank*

The Foodgrains Bank is one of many agencies active in fighting food insecurity internationally that has raised concerns about the harmful impact in communities which have recently lost significant US food aid support due to the sudden cuts to the essential programs of USAID (United States Aid for International Development). These cuts are immediately causing great harm to people in these countries and communities in the developing world. Anyone who would like to learn more about the Foodgrains Bank, or would like to donate can find information on: foodgrainsbank.ca or on the website of the United Church of Canada.

Phyllis MacRae



100 ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA: JUNE 10, 2025

As we all know, this year we have been celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada which came into being on June 10, 1925. For those who aren't familiar with the history of our denomination, the United Church of Canada, after several years of intense discussions, consultations and negotiations, was formed on June 10, 1925 as a merger of four protestant denominations:

The Methodist Church of Canada, the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, two-thirds of the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the Association of Local Union Churches, a movement predominantly of the Canadian Prairies. In 1968, the Canadian Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined the United Church of Canada. (Wikipedia). The Methodist and Congregationalist churches came into Union by a decision of the denomination. The Presbyterian Church of Canada allowed each congregation to make this decision individually. That is why there is still a Presbyterian Church of Canada as a denomination in Canada with congregations in Ottawa and across Canada.

At Church Union in 1925, the total combined membership of the new denomination was about 600,000. Membership peaked in 1964 at 1.1 million. Since this period the United Church of Canada, like all mainline Christian denominations in Canada, has declined in membership and number of congregations.



Photographer: Curtis Perry

Photos from the EOORC Celebration on June 15

According to UCC national statistics for 2023, the UCC had 2451 congregations and 325,315 members in 243,689 households, of whom 110,878 attend services regularly. (United Church of Canada Statistics 2023). The 2021 Census of Canada found that 1 million Canadians self-identified with the United Church, which remains as the second largest Christian denomination in Canada, following the Roman Catholic Church. (Wikipedia)



Across Canada during June of this year, there were many services and celebrations of the 100th Anniversary of Church Union. On June 8 a national worship service and celebration took place at Gower St United Church in St John's NL (see: https://www.youtube.com/live/bh4sW1kdpWo?si=r03rS_JMhfWg8_Yg)

A new Century Bible was consecrated with the signature of Moderator, the Very Rev Carmen Landsdowne. The original Century Bible was consecrated in 1925 and has been signed by all the Moderators since then. The new Bible is an English translation of the Mohawk Bible that was produced by the United Church several years ago.

On Sunday June 15 the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region (EOORC) held a service of worship and celebration at the EY Centre in Ottawa. (see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57q9_Wxf9p8)

Over 1400 people from across our large Region attended in person, including 27 members of Emmanuel. Others from Emmanuel viewed the streamed service. There was a mass choir of about 200 singers.



Rev. Peter Woods led the band



Some Familiar Faces at the EOORC Celebration!

Music was provided by an instrumental and vocal ensemble led by Rev Peter Woods. The Choir sang an introit composed for the occasion called Love Each Other, which was the theme of the service. A lively play area was provided at the back of the large room for young children and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves. A number of youth and young adults participated in the service by leading prayers and reading from the Scriptures.

The sermon, "Proud Past- Hopeful Future" was given by the Hon Rev Dr Robert Oliphant PC, MP, United Church Minister and Member of Parliament. Dr Oliphant acknowledged the faults of our past history and held up the accomplishments and achievements of which we are proud.



Rev Janet Casey, Minister of Kanata United Church, led the organization of the event. She stressed the importance of learning from our past history and going forward with hope and learning.

The service ended with participation by all in Communion that was served by a large team of church members.

In addition to the worship service there was a fascinating historical display of items contributed by congregations. Emmanuel contributed the framed portraits of our two Moderators, the Rev Wilbur Howard and Anne Squires. Joan Foster Jones contributed to an anniversary quilt project made up of squares provided by many quilters.

Phyllis MacRae



The Hon. Rev. Dr. Robert Oliphant gave the sermon



The Historical Display



More Familiar Faces!



The Anniversary Quilt - can you spot a familiar design?



EOORC Educational Event “Creative Sparks” - March 1, 2025

On March 1st an educational and information event was held by EOORC on Zoom. Between 60 and 70 people attended from across the Region. An opening worship was held. Then Rev. Cindy Casey spoke about the upcoming United Church of Canada 100th anniversary event to be held at the EY Centre in Ottawa on June 15th, a mass worship service and celebration.

Colleen Calvert, Janice Peron and Phyllis MacRae attended from Emmanuel. Participants had a choice of 15 different presentations about interesting new initiatives being carried out by congregations.

Rev Kimberley Heath from Wall Street United in Brockville – seniors program grant

Rev Kimberley familiarized us with the New Horizons grant from the Government of Canada for seniors' programs. The grant can go up to \$25,000 for such topics as volunteerism, mentoring, elder abuse, inclusion and capital assistance. Projects last exactly 52 weeks and seniors must play a lead role. The priority is to support healthy aging, promote diversity, inclusion and financial security. Wall Street United focused on helping seniors become digitally engaged, enhancing fitness, and created a “make and take” food program in their commercial grade kitchen. It has been very successful and a second grant has been obtained.

Sue Hutton from Spencerville United Church– Revitalizing your Annual Meetings

Sue talked about how to integrate the annual AGM & the Worship Service as a way of bringing life to annual meetings. She told us how Spencerville UC decided to adapt their regular worship service format and provided an outline of their last combination AGM/Worship service. Sue stressed the importance of making sure AGMs aren't just business meetings, that it's important to recognize and celebrate what the congregation has accomplished over the past year, both successes & failures.

Rev Molly Bell from Orleans United Church– New Sunday School Curriculum

Rev Molly shared her experience using GROW.ORG, a new Sunday school curriculum. This curriculum lets the church use its program for free for the first month. Each month has a theme. Though it is not based on the lectionary, they have found it engaging, theologically appropriate and easy to learn to use.



In the breakout discussion group a participant shared their experience using the “Spill the Beans” curriculum. It is from Scotland. It is sensitive to the Christian year & has many options for activities. Some aspects can be adapted for use during worship. It is sent as a digital file that is downloadable after payment.

Phyllis MacRae, Emmanuel UC – South East Ottawa United Church Cluster

Phyllis talked about the isolation many United Church people have felt since the demise of Presbytery. The South East Ottawa Cluster of five congregations located near to one another has been meeting for several years. Some facilitated sessions were held at the beginning to talk about potential sharing of activities. A Potluck supper was held on three occasions to bring people together, as used to happen in Ottawa Presbytery each month.

Currently a planning group of 12-15 people has been meeting to develop a statement of purpose for the Cluster. Each congregation is now consulting with their councils to determine priority initiatives or activities for the Cluster. The ministers of each congregation have been meeting monthly for coffee. They share their experiences in ministry and plan worship activities together. In 2024 a Lenten lunch and learn study series was hosted by the different congregations. On Pentecost Sunday a combined worship service took place at Glebe St. James United Church.

Some participants from rural area churches expressed interest in forming a similar cluster that would not be focused on amalgamation, which is a general fear in some rural areas.

Daniel Addai Fobi from Kitchissippi United Church – God’s Beloved Cluster

GOD’S BELOVED is a group of LGBTQ men who are refugees who have fled their homes and churches in parts of Africa. They are applying to be admitted to Canada as refugees on the grounds of their persecution as LGBTQ people. They have been warmly welcomed by the congregation of Kitchissippi United Church in Ottawa. The group meets every Sunday and holds a potluck meal once a month. They now have about 40 people in their group and 30 have become members of the Kitchissippi Congregation. They really appreciate the Christian behaviour they have



Rev Eric Hebert Daly, Executive Minister of EOORC, presented an initiative from Rupert United Church in rural Gatineau – Blessing community members

In the Rupert community a group of indigenous leaders from a nearby First Nations community participated in a blessing service before they departed on an important trip. This offer from the congregation became an opportunity to introduce people from the non-church community to what the church can do for them. Other such opportunities to reach out into the community were shared in the group discussion. Non-church people are often afraid to come into churches. We discussed ways of being relevant to the community and to meeting people where they are living and working. We discussed how to share our faith story. This can be very difficult, even with other members of our congregations.

We also learned about EOORC's MODERATOR NOMINEE: Rev KIMBERLY HEATH from Wall St. United Church in Brockville

For further information on any of these topics, please contact Janice, Colleen or Phyllis.

Janice Péron



THE STORY OF EMMA DOWD

Emma Dowd has worked as Emmanuel's Office Administrator since January 2024. Emma and her brothers Andrew and Rowan grew up at Emmanuel with their parents Val and Sean Dowd.

When Emma was born in 1993 the family lived in a house on Botsford St across the street from the church. Emma's mother Val had grown up in the Baptist church and was a member of the Baptist congregation on Pleasant Park Rd. Her father Sean grew up in the Roman Catholic church. Both Emma and Andrew were baptised in the Catholic church. Later when the family started to attend Emmanuel, Emma's younger brother Rowan was baptised at Emmanuel. Doreen Hewlett was Emma's mentor when she was confirmed at Emmanuel.

Emma and her brothers were very involved in the many children's and youth activities led by Christine Williams and others in the 1990s and early 2000s.



Christine Williams in El Salvador, 2012

She attended Sunday School and remembers going on the family ski trips in the Laurentians where she learned to snow board.

Emma loved the hikes in the Adirondacks and the many camping trips. Emma attended Camp Awesome first as a camper, then as a leader. She remembers leaders Samantha Harris and Brett Jaecle and others.

Emmanuel also provided opportunities for Emma and others to travel on youth trips to New Orleans, to build houses with Habitat for Humanity in Slidell, LA. There was also a memorable trip to El Salvador to work with our Global Partner Iglesia Emmanuel Bautista (IBE). On the trip were Becca Johnson, Heather Page, Adam Ashe, and Amelia Brohman from Emmanuel, as well as youth from Bells Corners and Rideau Park United Churches. The adult leaders included Christine Williams, Leon Page, Camille den Boer and Cam Johnson.



The group that traveled to Zambia in 2017 to take part in Camp Chipembi. Emma is on the right



The Emmanuel group worked with local community members on building irrigation systems for farmers in the countryside. They worked on building 10 irrigation systems in 3 rural communities.

Emma was a part of two trips to Zambia in 2017 and 2019 to take part in Camp Chipembi. Emmanuel provided so many great opportunities for her and the other young people.

Emma went to school at Vincent Massey Public School and then to Hillcrest High School for grades 9-10. She attended Merivale High School for grades 11-12 and was a part of their specialist arts program focusing on communication, graphic design, and photography.



Helen, one of the Zambian Camp Chipembi leaders with a camper in 2019



Emma, Rowan, and Amelia with campers at Camp Chipembi 2019

Emma studied at St Francis Xavier University in Antigonish Nova Scotia where she studied English. After taking an Art History course in her first year she was inspired to broaden her study of the field; there are many museums and cities around the globe that are now home to a 'bucket list' of works of art that she hopes to visit. Emma transferred to Carleton where she completed her BA in English and Art History.

Art and photography are important aspects of Emma's life outside of her work at Emmanuel. She has taken classes at the Ottawa School of Art, the School of Photographic Arts Ottawa, and studio classes at university. She has done printmaking at the OSA. Recently she has been doing some out of doors painting with the Ottawa Plein Air Painters' Group. They meet on Facebook and then meet together in a chosen outdoor location to paint together. She paints in watercolour and oils, and paints portraits, landscapes and still lifes. She sometimes paints portraits on commission.



She likes the challenge of capturing the emotion in portraits. Emma uses her design skills to make posters for movies and other Emmanuel events, and she designs the monthly packet. Emma enjoys travelling when she has the opportunity. In 2019 she and Rowan travelled to Italy, going from Rome to Seville to Florence to La Spezia to Ravenna to Venice to Lisbon, Portugal, and ending the trip by visiting their father who now lives in Vigo, Spain. She has also visited her brother Andrew and his partner in Golden, BC, where she did some painting. In April and May she travelled to London, England for one week with her mother and her aunt, and then went to Normandy, France for another week. In London Emma planned a week of visits to art galleries and museums, concerts and plays. In Normandy they visited the historical WWII sites as well as locations frequented by the impressionist painters such as Etretat and Giverny.

Phyllis MacRae



Emma in the Gatineau Park on a fall hike



Emma and Andrew in the Eastern Townships



Norman Williams and Andrea Burness on a canoe trip down the Barron River that Emma was a part of in 2015





A watercolour and pencil study of the Cape D'Or in Advocate, NS



A watercolour of an Iris



An Oil Painting in a field, looking at Isle Haute, beyond the Advocate Harbour, NS



CHITEMBI YOUTH TRIP AUGUST 2024

This past August, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to return to Chipembi, Zambia with Emmanuel to be a youth leader for Camp Chipembi 11. I first travelled to Zambia in March of 2016 as the youngest member of a partnership visit. I recall being hesitant to go as I would miss a week of school and travel without my parents for the first time, which is daunting for a teenager, especially when the travel was to the opposite side of the world. Thankfully, I was convinced to go, and once I arrived, I became enamoured. On that first trip, I got to tour schools in and around Chipembi, which was a profound experience for me as a high school student. I remember being in a classroom at the Chipembi Girls School after a discussion of the similarities and differences between Canadian and Zambian education and having to explain that I would unfortunately not be staying for the remainder of their school year to learn with them. I was also fortunate to stay with and learn from Omega Bula at Makumba farm on that first trip – something I will forever cherish. The stunning scenery, the warm hospitality of the people, and the deep sense of community at Chipembi United Church left a lasting impression, and I knew that I wanted to return.

So, when I was approached in March last year and asked if I would be interested in being a youth leader at Camp Chipembi 11, I was thrilled. Not only would I be returning to Zambia, but I would also have the opportunity to expand on my experience by taking on a leadership role.

I was eager to represent Emmanuel alongside Erika Langner and Xavier Lamb, both of whom I had grown up with in the church. I was also incredibly excited to share this experience of partnership with the travellers from Bell's Corners United Church, Angela, Reverend Lorrie, and Roz. We were welcomed to Makumba farm with great warmth by Mwai (Omega's son) and Naomi Bula. It was amazing to see the changes in the farm over the last 8 years. A new, larger insaka, which is a covered gathering place, was built recently. A new guest house had also been built, which we were lucky enough to stay in.

And just before we got there, a second water tower had been installed, a precious addition in these times of drought. We had a couple of restorative days of rest at the farm, and soon the farm was energized with the arrival of the Zambian youth leaders for camp planning, and the whirlwind of camp began. The next few days were filled with learning, camp preparation, shared meals, and moments of laughter as we worked, played, and bonded, creating a strong sense of community before camp started.



The new guest house at Makumba Farm





Inside the new Insaka at Makumba Farm

Each day at camp started in the sanctuary, where all campers and leaders gathered for singing and prayer before splitting into groups. I was one of the leaders for the 9-10-year-olds, and it was a joy to share bits of Canadian culture while learning from them. The days were packed with crafts, games like soccer and parachute, and even a midweek sports day with balloon games and a leaders' relay race. The camp concluded with Parents' Day, where campers proudly showcased what they had learned.



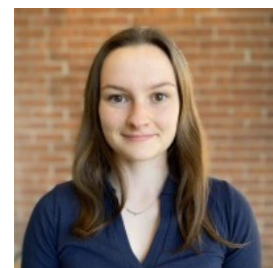
Erika, Annie, Naomi, and Roz enjoying a sunset after a day of camp planning



At camp, I got to see just how valuable this experience is for youth in both our communities. Seeing the joy on the faces of campers throughout the crafts, games, and bible study was wonderful, and getting to share bits of Canadian culture while learning about Zambian culture was a privilege.

Alison Lines

All photos by Alison Lines



Camp planning session for songs and music



Lunch with the Zambian leaders in the new Insaka



DOREEN HEWLETT 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

On May 10 Emmanuel celebrated the 90th birthday of Doreen Hewlett together with Stuart and her daughters.



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP VISIT TO CHIPEMBI, ZAMBIA , MARCH 2025

In March 2025 Emmanuel and Bells Corners United Churches carried out a Global Partnership visit with our Partner - the Chipembi Congregation of the United Church of Zambia. Emmanuel and Bells Corners share a joint partnership with the Chipembi congregation. In March five members of Emmanuel took part - Keith Jaecle, Brenda Asche, Rev Grant Stuckless, Andrew Collins and Kati Munro Collins. They were joined by 6 members of the Bells Corners congregation.

At the end of November, 2024 the idea of making a pilgrimage to Zambia was floated to the congregation. Although I knew there was a Global Partnership in place, I wasn't too familiar with what it was all about. My parents had previously visited Zambia to visit with the partner institutions, and my niece and nephew had also visited to participate in the leadership of Camp Chipembi, but that was the extent of my knowledge.

After some, admittedly brief, family discussions, it was decided that my wife Kati and I would join the 2025 Chipembi pilgrimage. This was my first visit to Africa and I wasn't really sure what to expect. Upon arrival in Lusaka on March 7, we were met by our host Mwai Bula and our drivers Solomon and Benico. Lusaka, by all appearances, is a bustling city similar to many other I've visited over the years. The biggest difference was the lack of power, meaning many traffic signals were not operational, and that the mall we visited for dinner had the lights go out at 7pm (as well as the elevator and escalators).

The next day, Saturday, after some shopping for souvenirs at the cultural village of Lusaka, and supplies at the grocery store, we set off on the 2 hour drive to Makumba Farm in Chipembi. Chipembi is a rural community located some 80 km northeast of Lusaka.



Arrival!



It wasn't that far a distance, but the last several kilometers were on decidedly rough dirt roads. As we were driving to the farm, we saw countless people walking and cycling the streets. As there were no apparent buildings in sight, we had the question of where people were going, and indeed, where they were even coming from.

Once we arrived in Chipembi, it was clear it was in no way similar to the bustling city of Lusaka. As we drove through, the various partner institutions were pointed out. First was the Chipembi Girls' School, next to the Church building. Around the corner, and a little ways down, we passed the Health Clinic, the Day School, and finally the Agriculture College. Those were the largest structures visible from the road, and the rest of the buildings were small concrete residences and shops.



In Rural Zambia



The Church Doors

We drove through to Makumba Farm where we were warmly welcomed by everyone, including the elders Mama Jennifer, Mama Rose, and Mama Grace. They are the sisters of the late Omega Bula, mother of Mwai. We then had a time of formal introductions where we met the leaders of the institutions, and were able to introduce ourselves. This was followed by a time of rest where we settled into our accommodations for the week, and eventually had a great meal. We also found that the power restrictions extended to the farm, where electricity would be turned on around 10-11pm and would be off by 5 or 6 the following morning.

As our arrival was on Saturday, the next morning it was time for church. The service was a celebration of International Women's Day. It was led by women from the church, and included a sermon by the Deaconess from the Girls' School.



As we were to discover, music is a huge part of the local culture. The service featured the church choir, the praise (youth) choir, one of the choirs from the Agriculture College, and the choir of the Chipembi Girls' School Alumnae.

After church, we were honoured to be invited to the memorial and headstone unveiling of the late Omega Bula. Omega was instrumental in starting the partnership between Emmanuel United Church and the Chipembi groups, which eventually expanded to include Bell's Corners United Church. The memorial included prayers, eulogies, and of course, more music. Omega is interred in the family plot that is in a corner of the Makumba property, along with her father and many relatives.

The next day was our chance to visit the Chief Chamuka VI of the Chamuka Chiefdom, which encompasses Chipembi. Chief Chamuka is one of the traditional hereditary chiefs of Zambia. The Chief explained some of his goals, many of which included expanding women's rights. This included ensuring women's property rights, so that upon a man's death, the surviving wife can keep the property and not be turned away as other (male) relatives lay claim to the property. He was also responsible for banning child marriage within the chiefdom.



At the grave of Omega Bula

Next to the palace was another of the Chief's projects. The "One-stop Centre against Gender Based Violence" a place where anyone who experiences gender based violence can find resources to assist them. There are nurses, who can provide birth control and pregnancy tests; and paralegals who can give legal advice and refer to the appropriate authorities. There are also counsellors to talk with any victims. Unfortunately, the clinic is very busy, with an average of close to one drop-in each day. It is assumed that this is a small sampling of the actual need as many may not have a way of getting to the clinic, and others, especially men, may be too ashamed to make use of it.



On Tuesday we visited the Chipembi Health Clinic. This was nothing like what one would expect a medical clinic to look like in Canada. It was essentially a central open courtyard with rooms opening off it. There is minimal privacy, and the furnishings, including beds and wheelchairs did not look particularly comfortable. We were not able to see the birthing room as it was actively in use. The birthing unit gets significant use as it is no longer legal to have a home birth, due to complications being frequent and the clinic being potentially a long distance from the homes.



The Chipembi Health Centre

If advanced emergency care is required, the closest hospital is about an hour's drive away, which means a two hour round trip for the ambulance to get to the clinic and back to the hospital.

There was a vaccine room with a fridge that was powered by a partnership-funded generator (which was turned off temporarily so that we could hear). There was also a lab where basic lab tests could be performed, including for HIV. A new lab room was in the process of being completed, to significantly increase the available lab space.

We also presented the medical clinic with some suitcases of medical supplies that were put together by the Ottawa chapter of "Not Just Tourists" (<https://njt.net>).



Not Just Tourists' Gift of Suitcases containing Medical Supplies



Wednesday saw us going to the Agriculture college. The director, Patience, welcomed us and described the college. The student body of about 400 students is predominantly female, and hails from all walks of life. Many students are single parents, are recovering from addiction, come from abusive or broken homes, or are otherwise disadvantaged. We were then welcomed by the students themselves as we joined them for their morning gathering. They have three separate choirs, each of which graced us with their wonderful music.



Our visit continued with a tour of the campus, starting with the residences. They intentionally showed us two of the worst buildings. Each residence was about 400 sq feet and housed four to six students. The two we saw were in a severe state of disrepair, including broken fixtures in the bathrooms, bare wiring to the hotplate in the kitchen, and peeling paint throughout.

We then toured through the farm. We saw the herd of cattle, which was the only livestock on the farm. They used to have pigs, but they were lost due to the swine flu. There is also a desire to buy some laying hens, but there are no funds available at the moment. We then went to the fields where we saw different demonstrations on planting various crops, including maize, tomatoes and squash. They also showed their compost pile, which was layers of manure, greens, and roughage. They have sticks inserted into the compost, which when removed are noticeably hot to show that decomposition is indeed occurring. It takes about six weeks to go from a five foot pile to usable compost.



We finished our tour with the fish ponds, which were still under construction. The lack of available pool liner plastic meant that they were unlikely to be finished any time soon.

The Day School (the public school provided by the Government of Zambia) was our destination on Thursday. We arrived to find all of the senior students gathered on the front lawn in front of the classrooms. There was a brief introduction, including an impromptu speech from Mama Jennifer who gave a brief description of her own story in an effort to show how anything can be accomplished by anyone, including women.



The visitors, who included the Chief and the local councillors, then gathered in one of the classrooms. Introductions were made of the various staff members and the Chief gave a speech about the importance of education, and the importance of protecting the girls. With that we walked across the property to the site of the new girls' dormitory. With picks and shovels in hand, a number of us took part in the groundbreaking for the new residence. Girls are particularly vulnerable as they walk upwards of two hours each way to school, along desolate roads that offer plenty of hiding places for predators.

The dormitory will be designed to hold about 150 girls in a 300 sq metre space and will be built with the help of funds from the Ottawa congregations' partnership. The school is hoping to get a grant from the government in order to build an additional building to house a matron to assist in watching the girls.



After the groundbreaking we headed back to the classroom, where a number of students presented some of their poetry and spoken word. It ended with a traditional dance. After the entertainment, we were provided with a meal courtesy of the school.

On Friday we visited the Chipembi Girls' School. The Permanent Secretary of the Zambia Ministry of Education was visiting, so the members of the partnership tagged along for his tour. The visit started with a light breakfast in the staff lounge. We then went on a tour of the agricultural part of the school. It started with a look at their methane capturing tanks. They have an underground concrete cistern into which they put manure and water. The methane is released and captured underground. A pipe carries the methane to the nearby demonstration kitchen where it is burned as fuel for the stoves.



Reading a Poem in Class

We then walked over to their greenhouses where they are engaged in hydroponics. They are growing mostly leafy greens such as lettuce, spinach, and kale. They can harvest an entire crop within a couple of months of starting. We then walked over to the chicken coop. The girls explained the experiments whereby different chickens were given different diets and the results were recorded.

The tour ended in the auditorium, where some light snacks were available. There was a plenary where Albert, the school director, went over how the school is adjusting to the new curriculum that is being phased in. The new curriculum has several pillars, including sciences, agriculture, business, and religion. Schools are allowed to focus on specific pillars and the Girls' School has chosen to focus, perhaps unsurprisingly, on agriculture.



Kati presents a gift to Chief Chamuka on behalf of the Ottawa churches



The Permanent Secretary explained his vision of holding up the Chipembi Girls' School as a model school for the entire country. It's not clear how that might work as the Girls' School is a private school that relies on tuition from the students. The government has promised free education for all children, and the public schools, including the Chipembi Day School, are struggling with significant overcrowding and lack of funding.

After the plenary, it was back to the staff room for a hot lunch. After lunch, we finished with a gathering in the nearby church where the Permanent Secretary gave a speech to the assembled students. Due to the acoustics, I didn't catch a lot of what was said, but there certainly was some confusion from the students when the Permanent Secretary was asked about the free schooling that the government was providing (remember, this was a private school).



The Permanent Secretary



A Local Woman and Child

Every day after visiting one of the institutions, we held a debrief at the farm. This was a time of reflection to discuss what we had seen during the day. Where had we seen God that day? Where did we see Hope? Love? Joy?

The conditions we saw were hard, compared to what we are used to here in Canada. Walking was a prevalent way of getting around, even when long distances needed to be covered. The lack of electricity during the day made it difficult to prepare meals, unless over an open fire. Many of the creature comforts we are used to were not available: washing machines, microwaves, and even grass to play on.



Even with that, everywhere we went, we saw the love of God as He was working through His people to improve the lives of the Chipembi people, whether it be educating the children, healing the sick, or protecting the vulnerable. As we walked through the streets of Chipembi, we saw the joy on the faces of children. They would often run up to us to hug us and walk with us, even if it meant walking the wrong direction; one day several children walked a hundred meters with us towards the school, even though they were supposed to be heading home.

On Saturday we were able to take a break from visiting with the various institutions. Albert, from the Girls' School, brought us all to visit the Chaminuka Game Reserve. Here we went on a quick safari, where we saw lions, cheetahs, impala, elephants, and zebras. There was also one lone warthog way off in the distance. We then had a wonderful buffet lunch.

This was followed by a boat cruise. Unfortunately, we didn't see many animals from the water. We wrapped up the day with a cheese tasting, tasting various cheeses that were made on site.

Our final day in Chipembi started with us arriving at church around 9am for a 10am service that was going to start around 11am. It was actually early and started by 10:30. It was Youth Sunday so the service was led by the youth of the church. Two of the youth leaders of the Camp Chipembi were involved with the service. Musenge organized the service, and Phyllis was one of the music leaders/soloists. In addition to the church youth choir, we were again joined by one of the agriculture college choirs, meaning yet another music filled service.



At the Girls' School



After church, we loaded up and headed back to Lusaka. Mama Rosemary invited us to dinner at her house, so after an afternoon rest, she sent the bus from her school (The Faith and Hope School) to pick us up. We made a stop at the school where we were able to tour their new addition. The new building included a cafeteria for all 600 students, a gymnasium, a small library, and a handful of classrooms. The building is completely off grid and is powered by solar energy.

The location of the school is in the slums on the outskirts of Lusaka. After driving through a relatively modern business district, we made a quick right turn and saw a massive change to cinder block buildings piled one on top of the other. Despite the harsh conditions, the neighbourhood was very vibrant, with people milling around in front of businesses for the evening.

After touring the school, we carried on to dinner. Mama Rose lives only a few minutes from the school in a two story house that is still under construction. From the second story you can apparently see the school, although it was dark when we arrived so we couldn't see much.

Another amazing meal ended and we drove back to the hotel. The next day would see us flying off to enjoy a more touristic view of Zambia. We returned home to Ottawa on March 22.

Andrew Collins



Mom Jennifer, Mom Rose and Mom Grace with Mwai Bula, the son of Omega Bula



A Local Woman with her Children



WHAT'S A CLUSTER AND WHY DO WE WANT TO BE PART OF ONE?

A reflection by Rev Paul Dillman, Minister at Riverside United Church at the Cluster Epiphany service on January 12.

Good morning and welcome to the Southeast Ottawa Cluster Epiphany Service. This annual service started about 15 years and only recently has expanded to include Glebe St. James and we are grateful to be here today.

When the United Church of Canada restructured in 2019, one of the hopes was that clusters of communities of faith would form to find ways to support one another and collaborate in ministry where opportunities arose.

This is a challenging goal because we have a very congregational understanding of being church. Each congregation has its own culture, specialities of ministry and way of being. And yet, we all recognize that congregational life has changed and is changing.

A few years ago, there was an effort to build a Southeast Ottawa Cluster of churches and a lay person from each congregation was recruited to be part of a steering group. A few planning and visioning events were held and some common areas of congregational identity and priorities were determined.

All five of these congregations are Affirming Ministries. There was common interest in pursuing collaboration on refugee work, youth ministry, food insecurity, truth and reconciliation.



The Rev. Paul Dillman

Some work has happened, but the pandemic and other pressures have limited the ability to enact the vision imagined. A few pot luck suppers have happened as we seek to get to know one another as individuals and as congregations.

For several months, the Ministry Personnel of the cluster have been gathering for a monthly coffee time. Out of these conversations, Lenten programs for 2024 were shared and there was participation across congregational lines. A more modest roster was offered for Advent.

We are still discerning how being a cluster might work and how to coordinate efforts.



We need ideas for how collaboration might enhance our common goals of being communities of faith and serving the community. It is wonderful that today, the ReconciliAction Working Group at Glebe-St. James are inviting those who are interested in working on Reconciliation with Indigenous People to gather over coffee today to see what Reconciliation work might be done as a cluster. That is great example of how we can explore possibilities of collaboration.

As we live into the future, change will continue to be part of our lives. As congregations of the United Church in Southeast Ottawa how can we, and how will we, respond to how the Spirit is at work in our midst, inviting us to imagine new and renewed ways of living out the call to Deep Spirituality, Daring Justice and Bold Discipleship?

Rev Paul Dillman

Minister, Riverside United Church

UPDATE ON THE CLUSTER

Since our joint service on Pentecost, the cluster planning group has continued to meet once a month. The group of about 12 people is composed of the ministry personnel of the five congregations and a number of lay volunteers from each one. A small team of three volunteers, including Val Lines and Phyllis MacRae, met in February to draft a statement of purpose and suggest a simple organizational structure for the cluster. This proposal was agreed to at the May meeting. Members of the group have proposed that interested members from the congregations would find it useful to get together to share their current practices and suggest collaboration in the areas of communications and technology, initiatives for seniors and pastoral care and children and youth programs. In June the administrative staff of the five congregations gathered for a first meeting at Riverside United Church. They will continue to meet as a group to discuss mutual interests.

The ministry personnel continue to meet for coffee and fellowship each month.

A group of five congregations in the west of Ottawa have begun discussions to form a UCC Cluster in their neighbourhood.

Phyllis MacRae



PASSAGES, MARRIAGES AND BLESSED EVENTS

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

Edna Wright	March 17, 2024
Don Ford	July 25, 2024
Carolyn Brown	July 30, 2024
Albert Richardson	August 11, 2024
Gordon McElveney	August 15, 2024
A (Graeme) Elliott	August 15, 2024
Bruce Hodgins	August 29, 2024
Shirley Macguire	October 2, 2024
Helen Binks	November 28, 2024
Doris Smith	December 12, 2024
Eva-May Hamilton	December 17, 2024
Audrey Mather	January 7, 2025
Cathy Borza	March 17, 2025

Marriages:

Katheryn Mary Lines and Brian Ross Coleman September 7, 2024

Births:

Joy Jean Pastuch-Edwards - January 7, 2025
to Kristine Solvason-Pastuch and Brandon Edwards

Arya Amani Zahinda - January 30, 2025
to Chrispin and Rebecca Zahinda



Kristine and Brandon with baby Joy



Chrispin and Rebecca with baby Arya



BE THE CHANGE -

A FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE TO BRING AID TO REFUGEES OF CIVIL WAR IN GOMA, EASTERN CONGO (DRC)

On January 10, a team of Emmanuel members and their friends launched a fundraising and educational campaign to support the many thousands of refugees from the on-going civil war in Kivu Province, Eastern Congo (Democratic Republic of Congo). In June 2024 Chrispin Zahinda made a visit to the Goma area to learn for himself about the situation of the refugees. On his return Chrispin and Sean Currie formed a team of Ottawa volunteers who are working to raise funds to assist the refugees, who have been living in dire circumstances for many years. The mission of the group is to “improve living conditions and restore hope to those affected by these hardships.” The group intends to deliver essential supplies like food, water, medical supplies and other necessities to the refugee encampments.

The organizing group to raise funds for Goma includes members of the VGK Network, Ottawa Youth, Emmanuel United Church and the Congolese Youth Community of Ottawa-Gatineau. At the campaign launch on January 10 about 30-40 people attended. They enjoyed delicious food, music and speakers who provided information about the refugee situation around Goma. (www.VGKfashion.com)

The History of the war in Eastern Congo

The history of the war in Kivu Province and Eastern Congo is long and complex. The war between the forces of the Government of Congo and a number of rebel groups, backed at different periods by the neighbouring countries of Rwanda and Uganda, has been going on since the first Congolese War of 1996-97, followed by the second Congolese war in 1998-2007.

Phyllis MacRae



The January 10th Gathering at Emmanuel



Most of the fighting has been about attempts to control the city of Goma and the eastern region of Congo*. UN Peacekeeping forces (currently including a small Canadian Forces contingent) from southern Africa and other countries have supported the Congolese Defence Forces for many years. The refugees displaced by the lengthy civil war in eastern Congo have been living in desperate circumstances, badly in need of humanitarian aid from the United Nations and other international aid organizations such as USAID.

Recent Events

In January 2025, a renewed offensive by the March 23 Movement, a major rebel group, was successful in taking over the City of Goma from the Government forces and the UN Peacekeeping troops. The Government of Canada has withdrawn the small Canadian force of peacekeepers as their security could not be guaranteed. 20 peacekeepers were killed in the recent battles. As a result most of the refugees who had been living for decades in the large refugee camps around Goma were displaced once more into Goma and surrounding areas. This is reported to be one of the largest groups of internally displaced persons in the world. See Human Rights Watch†.

The recent disturbances and displacement of thousands of people has made it even more difficult to get needed relief to the refugees.

Chrispin has recently learned that the Goma refugees are already experiencing increased hardship due to the loss of essential humanitarian support they had been receiving from USAID programs, now being cut off.

Progress

Since the campaign launch of January 10, and the follow up event on April 18, Chrispin and Sean and their team have achieved success in finding a way to channel funds raised in Ottawa and at Emmanuel to a church active in Congo through the Global Partners initiatives of the national United Church of Canada. In this way, the team hopes to be able to provide tax receipts for Revenue Canada for donations to the campaign. Chrispin's uncle Chikwa Zahinda and Emmanuel member Ellen Brohman have provided important practical assistance in making these connections. Donations can also be made through Emmanuel United Church by etransfer. envelope.secretary@emanuelunited.ca

This is an impressive initiative to respond to a great humanitarian need, created and led by young people from Emmanuel and the Ottawa community. If you wish to support their efforts, contact:

Chrispin Zahinda: czahinda@gmail.com

Sean Currie: s.currie@live.com

Phyllis MacRae



* Search for 2025 Goma Offensive on Wikipedia or click on the following link:
<https://w.wiki/oUHc>

† See Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/13/dr-congo-m23-drives-displaced-people-goma-camps>



NEW BOOK

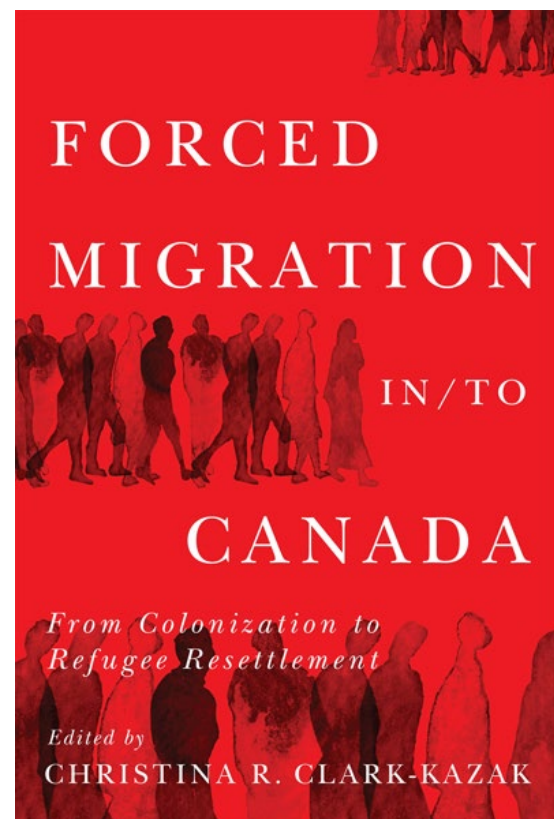
Forced Migration in / to Canada by Christina R. Clark-Kazak;
McGill-Queens University Press

A new book, *Forced Migration in/to Canada: From colonization to refugee resettlement*, is available at the Emmanuel library. Edited by Emmanuel member Christina Clark-Kazak, the volume includes 28 chapters by 38 contributors from across Canada, including Indigenous and refugee authors. It covers a wide range of topics including Indigenous displacement, slavery, trafficking and refugee resettlement with particular attention to diverse experiences of migration because of gender, age, race, class, and disability. Intended to be a comprehensive resource for researchers, students, journalists, policy-makers and the general public, the book is also free to [download as a PDF](#). A French language translation and adaptation with examples from francophone contexts will be published in early 2025.

Phyllis MacRae



Christina Clark-Kazak



Winter Reigns

Dawn doesn't break, it bends,
to a pewter shade of icy black.
Pines and spruces hiss and rattle.
Glazed and naked maples quake.
Inside the cedars, sparrows prattle.

The halfway hazard of December
finds the sleeping city unprepared.
Commuters hunched in tired surrender
crunch across the crust to cars
and set out risking fender-benders.

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REFLECTIONS ON BEING AN AMERICAN IN PASADENA TODAY

I am beyond horrified by what Trump has brought. Disbelieving would be too easy. It is all too believable. He promised to do just what he is now doing. But I can't say that it was totally predictable because Trump has exceeded my worst fears. For example, the "offers" Elon Musk has made to public servants to quit early as a way of reducing the workforce. The immediate layoffs of many Inspectors General of departments and agencies. Threats to close the Department of Education and the shutdown of the USAID agency for international aid to the world which does essential work with non-profits around the world such as feeding refugees and famine victims and encouraging education for girls in Afghanistan. It is all unbelievable!

One of the distressing cuts that is of concern to the Churches is funds that support better gun control. The Churches have taken a lead in this campaign. This is a post from "*March for our Lives*", an organization founded after the Sandy Hook school shooting in 2012:

After years of organizing and pressure from gun violence prevention groups like *March for our Lives*, we achieved a huge win in 2023 in the creation of the White House Office for Gun Violence Prevention (WHOGVP).

Trump has closed this office.

The WHOGVP accomplished a lot in the 16 months of its existence, including:

- The Department of Justice issued the most comprehensive guide ever released on the secure storage of firearms;
- The Department of Education awarded more than \$280 million to hire and train school mental health professionals;
- The Office provided \$250 million in funding for community-based violence prevention initiatives;
- Office staff connected with local officials to identify survivor and victims needs after shootings and worked with federal agencies to provide resources to impacted communities.

After all this dismantling of US agencies, we now have the President's proposal to remove all Palestinians and take over Gaza to build resorts as "the Riviera of Gaza". Who could believe that Elon Musk would have been given such immediate, obvious control to make personnel and policy changes to these agencies?

And on top of this "Trumpastrophy", we are living in the midst of fire devastation. No one could have predicted the extent of the damage in Los Angeles County. It will be a generational marker for the Century. I have seen the TV coverage, the pictures of block after block completely destroyed. Going into the nearby Eaton fire area and actually experiencing it personally was different. It left me completely dismayed, sick to my stomach. We could have lived in that community.



Some friends lost their homes. Others have a house standing surrounded by the debris of their neighbours' homes. They can't come home until their home is completely cleaned. The refrigerators have to be destroyed because the ash and smoke have destroyed the coils. The mattresses must be professionally cleaned (and probably discarded too). Is it worse to come back to that surreal landscape and try to cope with the (hopefully) rebuilding next door?

There are also racial justice concerns regarding the level of support for rebuilding since most people are under-insured. The Black community was very disproportionately impacted. Most of the destroyed homes were Black-owned. This is the result of old racist policies here and in all of the USA. Housing was approved for loans and insurance in predominantly white, not Black, areas. The trauma will be with us for a very long time.

In summary, I find I am living in a state of constantly "holding my breath". I feel the stress, but how much worse must it be for my friends? I think they cope by ignoring the news and concentrating on what is at hand.



Neighbours Gone

There is a mass of paperwork and big decisions to make. I'm just watching them but am very glad I don't have to do anything in order to stay in my home.

The rest of the country seems to shrug its shoulders to rejoice in what Trump is doing. Disasters are always something "over there", so no real worry! But California doesn't have the luxury of shrugging it all off. Every Trump move affects this community directly. I must continue to hope that the arc of history will bend towards justice, while doing what I can to help it along.

Areta Crowell



Devastation



All photos by Areta Crowell

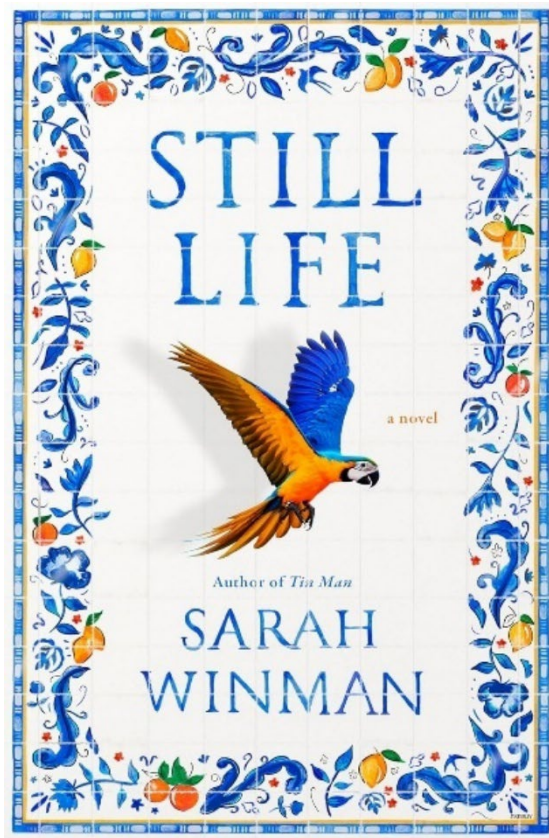


BOOK REVIEW

Still Life by Sarah Winman; Penguin Canada

Still Life made me laugh many times and tear up quite a few times. It's a big-hearted story with memorable characters that begins in Italy toward the end of World War II, goes on to center on a pub in east end London, and the majority of the rest of the book takes place in Florence, Italy. It ends in 1979. The story involves characters of varied personalities that through love and circumstances become a chosen family. There are fantastical elements such as a talking parrot and a man with lucrative dreams which add to the humour and interest of the story. I enjoyed a second reading of the book even more than the first and still laughed and wiped away tears just as much as I did with the first reading. This is a book for lovers of historical fiction with an interest in art and culture.

Doreen Squires





A Welsh Garden. Photo by Jon Jones



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