

Minutes for Mission 2018

Stories about the work of the Mission & Service of
The United Church of Canada | L'Église Unie du Canada



*Loving Our
Neighbours*

Minutes for Mission 2018

Images for every Minute are available online!



*Weave the stories of God's mission
into your life—
find photos, videos, and more online to
enhance your Minutes for Mission!*

- ▶ Reflect on these stories as part of your daily devotions.
- ▶ Include them in your congregation's worship.
- ▶ Share them with all ages.



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stewardshipstoolkit.ca/mission-service.

Minutes for Mission 2018

“...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:30-31



Loving Our Neighbours



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The United Church of Canada
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www.united-church.ca



Minutes for Mission is published every year as a resource for the people of The United Church of Canada to connect with the work that their gifts for **Mission & Service** enable.

Minutes for Mission is available online at www.UCRDstore.ca/m4m.

Extra copies of this booklet can be ordered while supplies last.

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CH11062 (Booklet)

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Heartfelt thanks go to every person supporting **Mission & Service** ministry and programs. Your generous gifts and good work are great acts of compassion, community, and hope. Thank you to each of the writers for the weekly Minute for Mission—your stories connect us all with God's mission.

We welcome your comments and stories for the next edition of *Minutes for Mission!*

E-mail: ms@united-church.ca



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Cover image: © Digitalstormcinema | Dreamstime

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Minutes in French (online only)
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11, 14, 17, 18, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 32, 35, 48
Visitez le site www.ucrdstore.ca/m4m.

Mission & Service at a Glance

BUDGETED 2017 MISSION & SERVICE REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES (\$27.7 MILLION)



1 Global Mission & Service
\$5 million (\$2.9M grants)



2 Community and Justice Work
\$3.4 million (\$1.8M grants)



3 Theological Education and Vocation of Ministry Work
\$2.2 million (\$1.6M grants)



4 Faith Formation
\$7.7 million (\$0.3M grants)



5 Support to Local Ministries
\$6.8 million (\$2.9M grants)

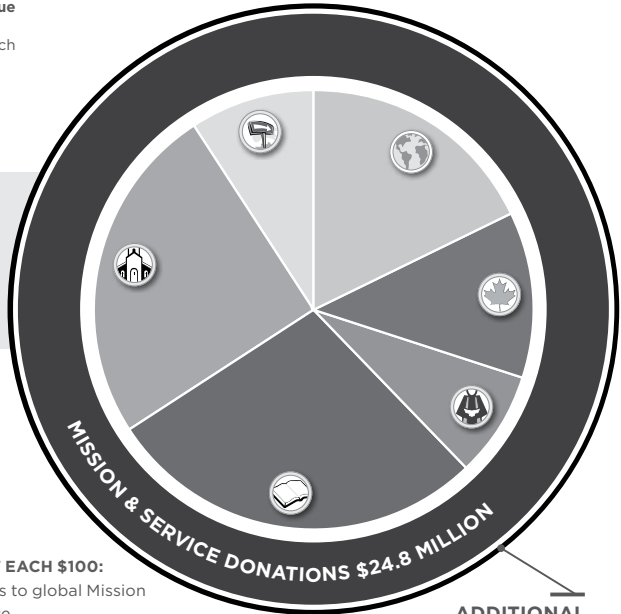


6 Conference Leadership
\$2.6 million (\$2.6M grants)

Detailed expenditure and revenue for 2016 Mission & Service is online at united-church.ca (Search Mission & Service 2016.)

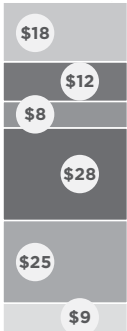
SEE THE STORY

of **Mission & Service** funding for Indigenous ministries and the ongoing work of healing and reconciliation.
stewardshiptoolkit.ca



MISSION & SERVICE DONATIONS \$24.8 MILLION

ADDITIONAL REVENUE
\$2.9 MILLION



OUT OF EACH \$100:

- \$18 goes to global Mission & Service
- \$12 to community and justice work
- \$8 for theological education
- \$28 for faith formation
- \$25 supports innovation and local ministries
- \$9 supports leadership in Conferences

MISSION & SERVICE DONATIONS: \$24.8 MILLION

- Giving for Mission & Service: congregational, UCW, and individual gifts
- Giving through wills and other planned gifts for Mission & Service
- Giving for Mission & Service also comes from and through The United Church of Canada Foundation

ADDITIONAL REVENUE: \$2.9 MILLION

- Additional revenue is designated for specific Mission & Service partners and programs.
- Other revenue sources include retail sales, investment income, and unrestricted donations.

The General Council Office of The United Church of Canada complies with the Imagine Canada Ethical Code and the Canadian Council for International Cooperation Code of Ethics. The United Church is the first denomination in Canada to become signatory to the United Nation's Principles of Responsible Investment.



**1 Global Mission & Service:
\$5 million—18% of Mission & Service
(\$2.9 million in direct grants)**

Mission & Service supports 92 global partners on urgent issues that impact people's daily lives, including food and water security, health, education, access to land, human rights, peace, and justice initiatives. Global programs build capacity in local communities and respond to humanitarian crises. This program area also includes initiatives that connect the people of the United Church and Mission & Service global partners.

**2 Community and Justice Work:
\$3.4 million—12% of Mission & Service (\$1.8 million in direct grants)**

Mission & Service supports ministries that heal, reconcile, advocate, provide housing, food security, employment training, mental health treatment, and pastoral care to Canadians living on the margins. This includes community and social justice ministries, chaplaincies, The Healing Fund, and reconciliation initiatives between Indigenous peoples and settlers.

**3 Theological Education and Vocation
of Ministry Work: \$2.2 million—8% of
Mission & Service (\$1.6 million in direct
grants)**

Mission & Service funded programs educate and equip future leaders of the church we are becoming. This includes recruiting new ministers, funding for theological schools and education centres, providing student education bursaries, and educating ministry personnel.

**4 Faith Formation:
\$7.7 million—28% of Mission &
Service (\$0.3 million in direct grants)**

Mission & Service supports programs that strengthen discipleship and develop lively lay leadership. This includes programming for ministries of Indigenous peoples, children, youth and young adults, United Church Women, support for LGBTQ+ people and networks, as well as stewardship, ethno-cultural, intercultural, and diverse communities in ministry.

**5 Support to Local Ministries:
\$6.8 million—25% of Mission &
Service (\$2.9 million in direct grants)**

Mission & Service gives financial and programming support to congregations as they transition in ministry, minister in remote communities, or experiment with new ministries. This includes pastoral relations and on-going support to ministers and communities of faith; mission support grants for congregations; renewal and new ministry support through the EDGE Network; and the Embracing the Spirit program, which provides grants, coaches, and mentors. Now in their second year, Embracing the Spirit grants for innovation have increased.

**6 Conference Leadership:
\$2.6 million—9% of Mission & Service
(\$2.6 million in direct grants)**

Mission & Service supports Conferences as they provide leadership and resources to presbyteries, ministry personnel, and local ministries. In this time of transition, British Columbia and Toronto Conferences have generously returned their Mission & Service-funded Conference grants so they can be shared with the 11 other Conferences.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MISSION & SERVICE, SEE

www.united-church.ca | www.stewardshiptoolkit.ca/mission-service

The United Church of Canada acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast, are on traditional territories of Indigenous peoples. To discover the treaties in your area please go to www.native-land.ca.

Our vital, innovative, and healing ministries are supported by generous Mission & Service donations.





Message from the Editor

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Mark 12:31

The Beatles’ song “All You Need Is Love” is on my mind. The song is about love being everything you need and at the centre of our doing, singing, knowing, playing. While the song is short on details of what that looks like, scripture provides examples: the man who cares for the one who has been beaten and robbed; the woman who provides hospitality for the disciples.

What does it mean today to love our neighbours? Perhaps the starting point is to acknowledge that people all over the world are our neighbours. People we will never meet because of distance or different circles of community, people who share space with us but whom we do not actually see, and people we know and love—they are all our neighbours. The Mission & Service stories in this issue of *Minutes for Mission* focus on stories of loving our neighbours near and far.

Our gifts for Mission & Service enable ministries that truly fulfill the great commandment. Whether it is an act of service or advocacy, Mission & Service ministries speak and act lovingly of the dignity of all humanity and creation. To see with a compassionate gaze and offer compassionate service and advocacy—that is at the heart of our Mission & Service.

May these stories draw you closer to each other.

Blessings,



Cheryl Curtis
Manager, Mission & Service Giving



Displaced People



Our gifts for Mission & Service support displaced people. The widespread displacement of people is a crisis around the world.

In 2014 the United Nations High Commission for Refugees reported 19.5 million refugees—those fleeing their homes across international borders—and 38.2 million internally displaced people—those who remain within their own country but cannot return to their homes. Throughout 2015, many more undocumented people were displaced as refugees or were internally displaced due to natural disasters, including here in Canada. More than half of refugees and displaced people are under the age of 18.

Through Mission & Service, the United Church and our partners are addressing the needs of displaced people in many ways:

- Mission & Service provides for the basic needs of displaced people. As the number grows globally the need for resources for housing, shelter, medical assistance, and education also increases.
- Through refugee sponsorship, congregations and community groups are working hard to provide the emotional, financial, and practical support refugees need to positively integrate into Canadian society. Mission & Service funds the refugee sponsorship program staff that assist congregations.
- Congregations respond to immediate needs of refugee claimants entering Canada. Mission & Service funds the national program staff that provide advice and guidance to congregations.
- Mission & Service funds the United Church's participation in the Canadian Council for Refugees so that we can advocate with the Canadian government on refugee-related issues.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





Family Resources Close to Home

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries for families, like this ministry in Nova Scotia. In 1986, Fairview United Church in Halifax opened a family resource centre in its building. The programs the church initiated focused on providing education and support in a safe and welcoming environment.

Let's hear from one long-time participant, now board member Tia Forsythe, about the centre's lasting impact:

"I first heard of Parent 'n' Tot (as it was called then) when we first moved here in 2006. While my husband went to work every day, it was hard for me and my three children to make connections.... I was told there was a great playgroup, so off we went.

"It is a decision I am thankful for every day. My children made friends that they still are connected to over 10 years later. I met people who became my support system in the city.... I have been privileged to watch not only my children grow and achieve amazing things, but also the children they met all those years ago.

"The Family Resource Centre has had to move out of the church to a new, larger building. Programs and services offered today include advocacy and referrals, health and wellness, youth, preschool, adult skill development, health and safety, pre-kindergarten, parenting skills and support, and community partnerships.

"I want to say a big thank you to Fairview United Church and also to the people of The United Church of Canada. Through your generous gifts to Mission & Service, you are making a true and lasting impact on communities and in the world, in Jesus' name."

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



Fresh Start



Our gifts for Mission & Service support new ministers.

United Fresh Start is a program offered by the General Council Office through trained presbytery-based facilitators. The goal of the program is to nurture the pastoral relationship between a minister and key congregational leaders, especially at the beginning of a pastoral relationship after a new minister is called or appointed. Over two years, a facilitator works through pieces of the United Fresh Start curriculum with the minister and key congregational leaders to facilitate effective leadership, cooperation, mutuality, creative problem solving, and potential reductions in conflict.

“The program enables shared learning and growing as a tool for strengthening and enhancing the new ministry relationship,” reports Bob Wallace, a facilitator in South Alberta Presbytery. Brenda Watt, a facilitator in Foothills Presbytery, says, “I have watched relationships and attitudes be transformed with renewed enthusiasm and awareness. I have experienced creativity and collaboration emerge from inspired participants who are willing to step outside of their comfort zones and their typical boxes to seek new ways of reflecting on, behaving, and leading in their relationships with others. I am especially grateful for Mission & Service funding and to our church leadership for having the foresight to bring this program into our midst!”

A vibrant ministry that shares in God’s mission of love with our neighbours is often rooted in a healthy pastoral relationship. Thanks to Mission & Service for supporting United Fresh Start and other programs for vital ministry personnel and their healthy pastoral relationships.

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Celebrating United Church Women

Our gifts for Mission & Service support United Church Women.

Since the union of the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) and the Woman's Association (WA) in 1962, for 55 years UCW members have lived out their mission to

- love God
- foster Christian commitment
- be faithful
- embrace spirituality
- promote respect and love for all God's creation

We celebrate the extraordinary devotion of these ordinary heroes who have

- raised money for Mission & Service (over \$134 million)
- advocated for human rights in Canada and internationally
- cared for the sick
- promoted cooperation and leadership
- fed the church and community
- joined protests
- studied the Bible
- written letters to politicians and government leaders
- provided fellowship and service
- supported the ministry of global partners, especially the Morogoro Women's Training Centre in Tanzania, where birth attendants are trained to go out into communities and offer a healthy start for newborns as well as care for the mothers
- laughed, loved, and made room for women of all ages

Please offer your gratitude for UCW and join them in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



A Passion for Learning



Our gifts for Mission & Service support girls, human rights, and learning.

On a Kenyan mountain surrounded by farms is the Jerusalem Secondary School for Girls. The school is supported by Mission & Service global partner the Organization of African Instituted Churches. It is a safe place for young women who are escaping child marriage and the threat of female genital mutilation, or female circumcision.

The students share with pride their commitment to completing their education—students like Philomena. Philomena was able to complete primary school before her father sold her into marriage when she was 16. While her husband never forced her to undergo female genital mutilation, his family pressured her to do so. When her husband died, she was told by his family that she would now need to undergo the procedure or they would throw her out and keep her four children. In fear, Philomena and her children ran away. She returned to her home village, where her mother welcomed her and the children into her home. Philomena's mother heard about the school a short walk away and encouraged her daughter to go to it. Philomena was able to get a scholarship, and while she spends her day in class, her mother takes care of her children.

Philomena is beginning her final year of secondary school and looking forward to going to university, where she will study education. Her dream is to become a teacher because she believes that education is very important. The Organization of African Instituted Churches supports the school by providing scholarships and contributing to the salaries of three teachers.

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Like a Family

Our gifts for Mission & Service create safe spaces where people can come together as family. Bissell Centre in Edmonton is one of these places. The stories in today's Minute for Mission were first shared on its blog.

Bissell Centre offers people living on the margins food, shelter, and a feeling of belonging. Most people who visit the centre can immediately tell that the people there have a special bond with one another. Diane, a long-time volunteer, describes the connection she feels. "When I don't come, I miss the people in the Drop-in Centre. They're always stopping us and talking to us," she says. "It's like a family."

The phrase "like a family" is often used by staff, volunteers, and especially the participants themselves. Here are some of the ways Bissell Centre has shaped people's sense of family.

Kayla shared that "Bissell Centre has given us a sense of belonging, tradition, and foundation to start from. The staff has encouraged us to grow and always gives us something to look forward to."

Judy says, "I don't know what I would have done without all of the staff at Bissell Centre. Look! Now I am sitting in my own home. I consider *all* of the staff to be my family."

The community at Bissell Centre has grown and changed for over 100 years, thanks in part to the support you have provided through Mission & Service.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



Children's Rights



Our gifts for Mission & Service support children's rights in Kenya. Near Lake Victoria, the Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children's Rights works in schools in the area, creating a child ambassador program that seeks to live out the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Javan was 11 years old when he lost both of his parents, leaving him to look after his younger brother. He had to leave school to sell mangoes and oranges to raise money to keep his younger brother in school. When Javan was 12, he heard about the child rights program. He was so inspired by what he heard that he worked to get himself enrolled in this program. Soon he was back in school.

Through the partnership of the Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children's Rights and Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada, we are thankful that Javan and his brother are able to continue their education. Javan will soon be going to university to study to become a medical laboratory technician, and his brother is now in high school. Our gifts for Mission & Service made this possible.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



Photos for every Minute are available online at
www.flickr.com/photos/UnitedChurchCda



Lenten Prayers

For each week during Lent, ask a different person to share a short testimony, prepare a brief video montage, or include a time of silent reflection on the theme question before leading in the prayers inspired by the Revised Common Lectionary Year B readings for Lent.

Sunday, February 18, 2018—1st Sunday in Lent

Personal testimony, a video, or a time of silent reflection on the question: What are you looking for?

God of the journey, we wander through the wilderness hoping to find *[insert what you are looking for]*. As we search, may we be strengthened by your presence, our water in the desert, our rainbow after the storm. Amen.

Sunday, February 25, 2018—2nd Sunday in Lent

Personal testimony, video, or a time of silent reflection on the question: How has believing in Jesus changed your life?

We wander through the wilderness seeking to be transformed in *[insert areas of life where you are seeking transformation]*. As we prepare, may we be comforted by the God who names and claims us, the Christ who offers us deep peace, and the Spirit who breathes into us new life. Amen.

Sunday, March 4, 2018—3rd Sunday in Lent

Personal testimony, video, or a time of silent reflection on the question: How have you grown in the faith?

God of the journey, we wander through the wilderness, worn from our growing pains *[name places where you are growing and feeling stretched]*. As we learn your ways, help us to follow your commandments, discern your wisdom, and proclaim your glory. Amen.



In worship, this time of reflection and prayer could be used during the Children's Time / Learning Together or before the scripture readings. The questions correspond with the United Church Lenten devotional book Why I Believe available through www.UCRDstore.ca.

Sunday, March 11, 2018—4th Sunday in Lent

Personal testimony, video, or a time of silent reflection on the question:
What gives you courage and strength in your faith?

God of the journey, we wander through the wilderness, thirsty and in need of nourishment [*insert places where strength and courage are needed*]. As we search, sustain us with your loving presence, lift us by your grace, and save us from our time of trial. Amen.

Sunday, March 18, 2018—5th Sunday in Lent

Personal testimony, video, or a time of silent reflection on the question:
How do you share your faith?

God of the journey, we wander through the wilderness with companions and sojourners who [*share ways that others have shared their faith*]. As we travel, write your law in our hearts, teach us wisdom in our guts, and draw ever closer to us. Amen.

Sunday, March 25, 2018—6th Sunday in Lent/Palm Sunday

Personal testimony, video, or a time of silent reflection on the question:
What are you struggling with?

God of the journey, we arrive in Jerusalem with mixed emotions [*share struggles that you are working through*]. We celebrate the One who comes in the name of the Lord, and we cry with the One who will be lifted onto a cross. Stay with us God, until our journey is through. Amen.

Alydia Smith





Everybody Is Like Everybody Else's Family

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries across Canada.

Anticipation builds as the children and youth wait for the muffins they made to bake. Different ages and backgrounds, everyone joins together on this summer day at the London Community Chaplaincy.

"I love the community with the kids. Everybody is like everybody else's family," says summer counsellor Ashley deBakker.

The chaplaincy provides advocacy and support for families who face the challenges of living in poverty in two housing complexes in London, Ontario. The summer programs for children and youth are part of the year-round mix aimed at helping children learn while having fun. Drop-in programs allow children to learn crafts, like making beaded animals, and play cooperative games.

"We teach kids so they don't get left behind in the summertime, so they don't forget what they learned in school," says Jorge Bostamaste, Summer Evening Program Coordinator. He is describing the Summer Reading Buddies program, where children are partnered one-on-one to help improve their reading skills.

Sydney Franzmann, Summer Camp Director, describes Alphabet Soup, a summer program for children in grades 2, 3, and 4 to better their reading: "Like school, but in a fun way."

United Church of Canada Mission & Service support is key for London Community Chaplaincy, says Chaplain Pam Cullen, Executive Director. "It becomes one of our main funders for the year."

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





Building Resilience and Hope in Indigenous Children

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the important work of The Healing Fund. Let us hear a story of how The Healing Fund is building resilience and hope in Indigenous children and youth.

Pimicikamak Cree Nation (pronounced as pim ih chik uh mak) is a Cree-speaking Indigenous community north of Lake Winnipeg in Cross Lake, Manitoba. Pimicikamak means “where a lake lies across the river.” The community initiated a three-day suicide prevention strategy by inviting Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to their community to create art with their children, youth, and families.

Using an Indigenous framework called Circle of Courage, the project was created to promote strength, resiliency, and healing among the participants by fostering their sense of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Through various creative arts such as drum-making, storytelling, painting, singing, songwriting, music, and comedy, participants were recognized for their talents and gifts. It strengthened the participants’ relationships with each other as well as their relationships with adults and Elders in the community. With guidance from the artists, the youth were also able to build their leadership skills by helping coordinate parts of the project. Every evening, participants generously shared their artwork with the community, thus creating a narrative of healing and hope. Our gifts for Mission & Service support this and other healing initiatives.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





Thank You from Green Bay

Our gifts for Mission & Service support congregations in transition or in remote locations.

Green Bay South Pastoral Charge is a grateful pastoral charge. In the midst of beautiful Notre Dame Bay in Newfoundland and Labrador, this scenic three-point pastoral charge has been receiving financial support from Mission & Service for a number of years. The small charge is spread over 40 kilometres, with one church accessible only by water. Over the years, a Mission & Service-funded mission support grant has enabled the pastoral charge to adjust to declining numbers and build up its ministry. It anticipates being self-supporting in the near future.

The generosity of the United Church has sparked the members' own compassion and kindness. They are generous givers and support Mission & Service. They see first-hand the benefit of being a recipient and feel compelled to grow the wonderful ministries that we support together as a denomination.

During each Sunday service, a Blessing Can is distributed among attenders. People can express their gratitude, name a blessing, and offer a donation. These dollars are set aside as additional donations to specific Mission & Service partners through the Gifts with Vision program. Board chair Lloyd Colbourne says that members enjoy this time of thanksgiving and appreciate being able to grow their ministry and mission. He adds, "We want to thank all the congregations of the United Church for supporting us when we have needed it. We appreciate the opportunity we have to share our gifts, in gratitude." Our gifts for Mission & Service accompany churches such as Green Bay.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



All You Need Is Love!



Our gifts for Mission & Service are making a difference in communities across Canada. Let us hear the impact one community ministry is having.

The Jane Finch neighbourhood has been painted as one of the toughest areas of Toronto. While there are many instances of violence, especially rampant gun violence, there is also a lot of love. The community bands together to make a better place for their children, and at the centre is the Jane Finch Community Ministry. The ministry works with partners to encourage youth to discover that there is a brighter future for them beyond joining a gang.

Community Minister Barry Rieder has been at the Jane Finch ministry for over 22 years. He marvels at the privilege of being able to walk with the community, and he shares how he loves being able to see children grow from babies into youth and young adults.

The community ministry invests in youth through literacy programs, scholarships, and advocacy with the Toronto Police Service. One program is the Unity Barbecue. Founded by community member Andrea Tabner, it brings together members of rival gangs and the Toronto police as a way to demonstrate unity in the community.

With 110 nationalities and over 70 mother tongues spoken in the neighbourhood, coming together as a community is often challenging. Through educational programming, gatherings, and advocacy, the Jane Finch Community Ministry offers hope to youth and community members for a better way of life.

We are called to love our neighbours! Your gifts for Mission & Service show that love every day at Jane Finch Community Ministry. Thank you for your ongoing gifts, and if you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith.





Ecumenical Accompaniment in Palestine and Israel

Disponible en
français!
▶ Companion
video
available

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel.

In 2002, the World Council of Churches developed the program to create an international presence in the face of Israeli occupation. Since then the United Church has sent over 25 ecumenical companions who have been posted in many regions of Palestine and Israel.

From February through April 2017, a United Church of Canada Ecumenical Accompanier was posted in north Israel. There they primarily monitored agricultural gates—counting the number of Palestinian farmers granted access to their land and noting whether the gates were open during their allotted times. During a visit, the Ecumenical Accompanier took United Church staff to a Palestinian park, where Palestinian families enjoy picnics and fresh air. The simple act of picnicking there is a protest against the occupation, and claims land that is (for now) Palestinian. Two Israeli settlements sit atop the valley ridge overlooking the park. The once-flowing river is diminished to a stream, as pipes route water over two kilometres to the Israeli settlement.

Ecumenical Accompaniers take a risk participating in the program. They also face a context very different than life in Canada. Many return to Canada informed and ready to advocate for a just peace and an end to the occupation. Mission & Service allows United Church Ecumenical Accompaniers to accompany the mission and ministry of the World Council of Churches in occupied Palestine. They share first-hand experience to inform their local community of faith, civil society, and government of the realities of occupation. Our gifts for Mission & Service accompany partners in the midst of occupation.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



Access to Safe Water



Our gifts for Mission & Service provide water. Water is a gift of God and a fundamental human right. Getting water remains a gruelling chore for many in the Global South, who may spend much of their day hauling water from distant sources to meet their families' needs. Access to water affects every part of daily life. Mission & Service partner People's Action Forum is working hard to address these challenges in rural Zambia.

From 2015 to 2016, People's Action Forum tripled the number of boreholes it was able to drill from 10 to 30. It says, "The list of needy communities is always longer than what can be provided in any given year. Every single additional well that can be provided keeps a community from waiting another whole year on the waiting list." Boreholes are often drilled close to community hubs like schools, making access as broad as possible.

Near the town of Mumbwa Chipo, the primary school has 620 children enrolled. Head teacher Fredah Kafuti talks about the positive difference a borehole drilled by People's Action Forum has made. Before the borehole was drilled, staff and students had a four-kilometre walk to the closest water supply. Now students have ready access to safe drinking water and have been able to establish small vegetable gardens for the school feeding program.

Fredah says, "These are vulnerable children. They live in poverty, which makes the school's feeding program crucial. Education will give them a chance for a better life." The borehole, she added, is helping the school serve that most important purpose.

Mission & Service is making a difference in rural Zambia.

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Organ Donation across “Enemy Lines”

Our gifts for Mission & Service support health and peace and the breaking down of barriers to peace. In the Holy Land, bringing ordinary Israelis and Palestinians peacefully together is extremely difficult in such a tense and violent environment. But the International Christian Committee in Israel (ICCI) does just that.

Along with Palestinian girls’ empowerment programs in Arab towns in Acre, the ICCI brings Palestinians and Israelis together through a variety of programs, from academic conferences to supporting inter-ethnic organ donation. As Hussam Elias, ICCI’s Executive Secretary, says, “Arabs and Jews are not ‘doomed’ to live together but *should* live together.”

The medical expenses related to organ donation in Israel are covered by the state; the ICCI raises awareness and organizes conferences to break down the social barriers and conflicting ideas about organ transplants that have been in place across cultures. Often, people only want to donate within their own ethnicity.

As a result of the support of the ICCI and other organizations, Israeli and Palestinian families come together in very unique, life-giving situations. One Arab youth was killed in a car accident, and his family donated his heart to a Jewish person; when the boy’s mother met the recipient, they hugged, and she said it felt like she was hugging her son. In another case, a Jewish family donated the liver of a relative to a young Arab man. When he got married, he invited his donor’s family, and the wedding photos show them all together as one big family.

As a piece of anonymous street art in the city of Haifa says, “This is for the organ donors, reminding us all that we won’t be strangers for long.”

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Mission & Service 101



Have you ever wondered what Mission & Service really is? Where did it come from? Well, I am going to tell you!

Mission & Service is how we live out the call of the church to do God's mission.

Mission & Service wasn't always called Mission & Service. Before 1925, the three original denominations that joined to create The United Church of Canada—Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists—saw mission as an important part of church life and supported it in many ways.

Since church union, the name for the way we support the mission and service of the church has gone through many changes: first came the Woman's Missionary Society along with the Home and Global Mission Boards, then the Missionary and Maintenance Fund, and later the Mission and Service Fund. Now, it is simply the Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada.

Mission & Service is not a separate fund within the church. It is the foundation of how we offer healing and hope in a hurting world. Mission & Service supports education programs; women's empowerment; food, housing support, and advocacy to alleviate poverty; assistance for theological students, lay leaders, and camping; congregational support; healing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; youth programming like Rendez-vous, and much more!

Mission & Service is the heart and soul of The United Church of Canada. If you already give, thank you so much. If you do not give, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith! Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





Bringing Kids to Nature!

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Our gifts for Mission & Service support inner-city programs for children, like Camp Cosmos run by Montreal City Mission.

An 11-year-old girl has new respect for her 9-year-old brother with special needs thanks to the environmental summer day camp.

Eden Haber, Assistant Director of Camp Cosmos, learned about the experience from their mother. Before the camp, the girl felt ashamed of her brother, says Eden. At the camp she was able to see how he interacted with other campers and how they enjoyed being with him, and her attitude changed. “She came out of the camp saying she was proud to have him as her brother.”

This is just one example of how Camp Cosmos brings together children: those with special needs and those without; kids who have lived in Canada their whole lives and refugees who arrived a month ago; children from different economic backgrounds, cultures, and faiths. “It’s a good opportunity for kids to integrate with other kids,” says Eden.

An environmental focus is fundamental. It’s reflected practically, as the camp tries to achieve zero waste through recycling and composting. “These kids are growing up downtown and don’t have a tangible connection with the environment,” says Eden. The camp provides that. Campers learn through ecological games, organic gardening, outings in nature, and visits to local farms.

Montreal City Mission, through Camp Cosmos, offers children and youth an appreciation of nature and a place to learn leadership skills that will help them become caring adults working for a better world.

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Supporting People Entering Ministry



Our gifts for Mission & Service support theological education and support systems for the vocation of ministry. Let's hear this interview with Alana Martin, a candidate for diaconal ministry.

When did you know you were called to ministry?

I started to feel a sense of a call when I was a teenager, but didn't start discerning what that really meant for me until I was a young adult. Growing up, my mom was studying to be a diaconal minister and through that exposure I felt a strong connection to that type of ministry.

What is it about diaconal ministry that spoke to your call?

Education, service, and pastoral care—I feel so called to the ministries diaconal ministers are commissioned to. I also know my ministry will benefit greatly from the diaconal training program.

What are you most excited about in your training for ministry?

The hands-on practicality of the program, the intense learning circles, and being in the program with other students across The United Church of Canada sharing in community together.

What would you like to say to the people who give to Mission & Service?

Because of your generous donations, students at the Centre for Christian Studies are able to deepen their theological study and ministry gifts. I am truly grateful for your support and your endorsement of us to become and continue to be leaders within the church.

Our gifts to Mission & Service support theological schools across the country and people studying to enter ministry in the United Church.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





A New Approach to Farming

Our gifts for Mission & Service change lives around the world. Our global partner the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) is addressing the problem of severe drought by creating a conservation agriculture program. The conservation agriculture model uses mulching, crop rotation, and minimal tilling, combined with water harvesting and management, to move toward the ultimate goal: local food security.

The NCCCK works with Kenya's National Drought Management Agency and advises the agency of needs in drought-stricken areas. The agency then reports to the national government on areas where help is needed. The Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) is doing trials and experiments on technologies in partnership with the NCCCK to determine the varieties of drought-tolerant maize and legumes that are the most suitable for growing in parts of Kenya. The NCCCK/KALRO partnership started as a result of Mission & Service support of conservation agriculture. Now they share best practices and enjoy a collaborative work relationship.

Farmers appreciate the support this project has received from Mission & Service. In Tharaka Nithi County, a place characterized by perpetual food insecurity, more than 800 households have participated in the conservation agriculture project. These households "will forever be grateful to the partnership between NCCCK and The United Church of Canada," says the NCCCK's General Secretary Peter Karanja.

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A Life of Giving in Action

Our gifts for Mission & Service support overseas personnel like Catherine Christie. We give thanks for their calling and for their giving hearts!

At a recent worship service where Catherine was preaching, she declared, “Here is your Mission & Service giving in action!”

A Bedford, Nova Scotia, native, Catherine recently returned to Canada after many years in Korea serving with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) and the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK). Among other tasks, she assisted with English-language communication work to facilitate relationships between the PROK and its partner churches around the world.

The PROK has a central focus on working for justice for all, particularly for those most vulnerable and those who are marginalized; gender justice; justice for the earth; reconciliation and reunification of the divided Korean people; and peace for the Korean peninsula, the Northeast Asia region, and the wider world. Deeply committed to the international ecumenical movement, Catherine worked within the PROK in active solidarity with some 30 partner churches and organizations.

Catherine has a deep passion for the reunification of Korea. She has also been a strong voice for female empowerment in Korea. These two passions led her to participate in a walk in the demilitarized zone between the North and South of Korea with other women activists to illustrate the need for connection between the two regions to bring justice to the entire Korean society. We are thankful that, through Mission & Service, overseas personnel like Catherine have been given the ability to inspire and empower.

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Embracing the Spirit

Our gifts for Mission & Service support innovation in ministry.

As a jazz saxophonist, Peter Woods knows that live music performances are spiritually moving events for both the performer and the audience. As an ordained minister, he has always wanted to connect his performances more overtly to faith communities and spiritual growth.

That is now happening, thanks to funding from Embracing the Spirit, a Mission & Service-funded learning network and innovation fund. The program fosters new forms of ministry—including drum circles, outdoor labyrinths, arts festivals, and community cooking classes—along with supporting existing faith communities through connection and collaboration.

When Embracing the Spirit was launched at the Skylight Festival in 2016, Woods and his Evensong Ensemble were there to perform. They were later granted an innovation grant, allowing the group to develop professionally, combining the power found in the contemporary jazz-pop concert experience with the progressive theology of the United Church.

“Support from Embracing the Spirit is making that possible,” Woods says. “People have never stopped seeking spiritual nourishment in a musical setting. The music is a vessel and is one part of a message about love and acceptance in the world.”

He notes that Evensong also hopes to connect with other musicians as the United Church seeks to be a credible presence in the Spiritual but Not Religious world. “We want to be part of the conversation” he says, “and funding from Embracing the Spirit is making that possible.”

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A Sweet Program of Empowerment

Our gifts for Mission & Service support innovative programs like the cake-decorating program at Tamil United Church, Toronto.

Tamil United shares space at the former Wilmar Heights United Church with the Toronto Southeast Presbytery office. The congregation worships and offers programming for the surrounding community. The program was started by one of the women of the congregation, Ruth, who has her own cake-decorating business and found there was a need among women new to Canada who wanted to start their own businesses.

Vilvan Gunasingham, Chair, Tamil United Church, shared that this program has become an effective social justice outreach to women who are single mothers, unemployed, or underemployed, who now are able to support themselves and their families. Many of the women who took the course now work at major grocery stores decorating cakes in the store bakery. The program also provides a place of welcome to people new to the community.

Your gifts for Mission & Service make possible programs that offer hope to new Canadians.

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100 Years of Being the Change

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Our gifts for Mission & Service support the long-standing ministry of St. Columba House, a community ministry that is an important constant in the lives of those who are living on the margins in Montreal.

The year 2017 marked a very important milestone in the history of St. Columba House. Who could have imagined in 1917 that, a century later, the ministry would be celebrating 100 years of offering healing and hope to the most vulnerable members of the Pointe-Saint-Charles community?

From its beginnings as a place that only provided hot meals, to its current status as a leader in changing public policy in Montreal, St. Columba House has transformed many lives. It is now an organization on the cutting edge of emerging needs and innovative responses through its environmental programming. This includes a community gardening program, where participants develop their own balcony gardens, and beekeeping programs that allow participants to learn how to interact with bees at the ministry's own rooftop beehive.

St. Columba House, in partnership with United Church Ministries, Montreal City Mission, and Québec Presbytery Justice and Global Ecumenical Relations Committee, has also created the Green Church project to engage ministries in its ecological practices.

Together through our Mission & Service support we can celebrate with St. Columba House all the lives that have been transformed and look ahead to innovation for the future. We give thanks for its 100-year history and look forward with it to the next 100 years!

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Moving Forward in Our Intercultural Work



Our gifts for Mission & Service support the intercultural journey of learning and practice. Carmen Ramirez shares her story today.

“It has been great to be a part of the United Church’s intercultural work. One highly effective branch of this work is the Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry (DUIM) program, which has helped church leaders and community members develop tools and foster attitudes to engage their own contexts. The program has been a life-changing experience for both the participants and the facilitators.

“As a facilitator for DUIM I have been able to learn more about dominant culture individuals and their experience. This has made me a more patient and understanding person. I have realized that we are all not in the same place in our intercultural or faith journey.”

Similarly, one participant had this to say about the program: “I am looking forward to using many of the tools in a variety of my ministry contexts. This includes home in Kahnawake as we engage in relationship building outside the reserve; Montreal City Mission, where we work ecumenically; interfaith encounters with a wide variety of marginalized communities; through my work on right relations with our presbytery; working with my home congregation on relationship building with a variety of cultural groups; and my ongoing work with the Muslim Association of Canada. My heart and head are full of ideas, possibilities, and opportunities to engage the various ministries where I work.”

The DUIM program allows people to move forward in their intercultural work. Our gifts for Mission & Service make this journey possible.

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Reconciliation

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the work of reconciliation with Indigenous brothers and sisters.

The Mohawk words “Akwe Nia”Tetewá:neren” (in English, “All My Relations”) were added to The United Church of Canada’s crest in 2012, recognizing that we are all connected to each other and all of creation.

A recent visit from the Uniting Church in Australia’s Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress demonstrated the truth of this phrase. The visit was part of a dialogue on reconciliation between our two countries and churches. A return visit from Canada took place in March 2018.

The Australians arrived in Vancouver, British Columbia, and after exploring its urban Indigenous context, were scheduled to fly up the coast to the Indigenous community of Bella Coola. The United Churches there had worked to ensure a meaningful visit, but wildfires intervened. Concerned that the community might need to provide refuge for those displaced by fire, everyone reluctantly decided to cancel the visit.

Several phone calls later, friends in Peepeekisis and Carry the Kettle First Nations in Saskatchewan helped out with “Plan B.” The warmth with which the visitors were received was overwhelming. In Peepeekisis, after a brief service in the beloved old church, everyone was invited to a community feast, where the Australian guests participated in sacred ceremony. At Carry the Kettle, a visit to the annual powwow turned into the Australians being part of the Grand Entry—an incredible honour, and an experience that most will likely never have again.

This happened because of a simple recognition, that no matter how far apart we are, we are all connected; we are all relatives.

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An Investment in the Future



Our gifts for Mission & Service, together with emergency funds and Gifts with Vision, enabled us to build a church-run high school in Haiti.

The opening of a new secondary school in Duplan, in the hills above Port-au-Prince, was the high point of celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the Église Méthodiste en Haïti (Methodist Church in Haiti) in February 2017. The United Church of Canada financed 80 percent of the cost of building the seven-room structure following the massive earthquake that hit Haiti in 2010, destroying or damaging many schools and churches and killing between 225,000 and 300,000 people.

The shiny yellow building housing the new secondary school is bursting with 215 students and 19 staff. Already, Edzair Paul, who heads up the Methodist school system, is dreaming of adding computer and science labs, as well as a playing field so students don't have to compete with motorbikes as they play soccer on the dusty road near the school.

Education was the church's calling card to Haiti. In 1817, the first president of the Republic of Haiti authorized the first Protestant missionaries to come to the island nation on the understanding that their work would include providing schooling in the newly formed country. Today, the Methodist Church runs a system of 105 primary schools, 15 high schools, and a teachers' college, as well as three vocational schools. With children in some areas travelling two hours by foot over rocks and boulders to get to school—sometimes without having had breakfast—the need for a major investment in education is clear. Mission & Service makes these schools accessible to families with limited incomes, an important investment in the future of Haiti.

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Radical Welcome

United Church partner Affirm United offers a process, the Affirming Ministry Program, to help all ministries truly welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Our gifts for Mission & Service support the Affirming process. Our planning and conversations are made possible by your support for Mission & Service.

Any ministry in the United Church can become Affirming, but so far there are no Affirming outdoor ministries or camps. Camping experiences can offer spaces filled with friendship, faith, community, and a deep appreciation of God's diverse world. But sometimes differences can create barriers. Campers or staff with diverse ethnicities, economic statuses, sexual orientations, and gender identities or expressions can be pushed to the side, even unintentionally.

This year, to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the church's 1988 decision to welcome LGBTQ+ people into full membership and ministry, all United Church outdoor and camping ministries have been invited to consider becoming Affirming. In an exciting pilot project, three United Church camping ministries have agreed to test the Affirming Ministry Program and to work with Affirm United to develop a process that can easily be used with all outdoor ministries.

In the future, we hope to hear more words like these from a camper at the United Church's Camp Kidston in Nova Scotia: "[Here] I felt truly safe and free to be who I am. I began to understand that I am part of creation, a reflection of the Divine—all of me—acceptable and loved."

We hope that our United Church Outdoor/Camping Ministries will publicly and intentionally embrace all differences.

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Economic Empowerment for Indigenous Women

In Guatemala, our gifts for Mission & Service support the ministry of the Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas (FPM), or Women's Network of Maya Presbyterians, which provides Indigenous women in the area with microcredit loans so they can set up their own businesses and become economically independent.

One group FPM supports is called Nuevo Esperanza (New Hope). Located just outside Quetzaltenango, the women in this group make chocolate and operate a bakery and a small restaurant. Guatemala has one of the largest Indigenous populations by percentage in Latin America. Argelia Poz, Executive Director of FPM, says it is important to work with Indigenous women to improve their families' economic well-being and to strengthen the voices of women in church and society.

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Hope under Occupation

Our gifts for Mission & Service support Palestinians in Gaza. About 1,300 Christian Palestinians live in the Gaza Strip, enduring three wars in five years along with their Muslim neighbours. Israel controls the land, sea, and air around Gaza, with one crossing into Egypt through Rafah controlled by Egypt and monitored by the European Union in coordination with Israel. The Near East Council of Churches (NECC) works in Gaza with both communities, focusing on providing education and health care to a population under blockade.

In Gaza City, the NECC operates apprenticeship programs for young men and women to develop skills such as fashion design and aluminium engineering. Yet even these programs are adversely affected by the blockade. For example, not all the materials needed for aluminium housing are allowed into Gaza.

The NECC also operates three primary health care clinics in Gaza, serving over 150,000 people. The clinic in Shijaia (built with contributions from Canadian churches and CIDA, among others) was destroyed in 2008 during Israel's Operation Cast Lead and has since been rebuilt. At these clinics, patients receive primary health care, antenatal and postnatal care, malnutrition and anemia treatment, psychosocial support particularly for children, family planning services, and dermatological care. The latter was recently introduced due to the high prevalence of skin diseases as a result of the effects of war and the poor water quality in Gaza.

Through these programs, the NECC gives hope to a civilian population facing blockade, unemployment, poverty, and frequent wars.

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Compassion in Life and Death



We celebrate that our gifts for Mission & Service have supported Wesley Urban Ministries, which has been offering support for the homeless, refugees, and working poor of Hamilton, Ontario, for over 30 years.

In downtown Hamilton sits a building that looks like any other apartment building, yet when you enter the front doors of the Ferguson Street Centre of Wesley Urban Ministries, you are greeted with the sights and smells of hospitality. Here, meals are served, the coffee and tea are always on, and usually there is a board game that you can join. Journeying from the hum of conversation on the first floor up the stairs, you will encounter a simple room, the chapel. On one wall is a beautiful painting of Christ's life and the cross, along with plaques bearing names. The names tell stories to those who knew these people, stories of addiction and homelessness, but also of friendship and care.

One name on the wall is that of a young man who found a family at Wesley Urban Ministries. People from the community came together in the chapel to say goodbye to him, a man taken too early in life. A few months after his death, a woman came to the centre asking about him. She was his mother and had been searching for him. She was taken to the chapel, and when she saw his name and heard that he had died, she sat and prayed. The staff spoke to her about how many people had come to his funeral and how he was loved in the community. She was so thankful to Wesley Urban Ministries for loving her son and being in his life.

Wesley Urban Ministries is present for those on the margins in life and in death, and their compassion makes a huge difference.

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Feeding Body and Soul

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Our gifts for Mission & Service, alongside our emergency appeal funds, support Haitian farmers in the wake of Hurricane Matthew.

On the night of October 3, 2016, Hurricane Matthew tore through the southwest region of Haiti. Powerful winds and torrential rain washed away fields, livestock, and homes and ripped roofs off houses, churches, and schools. The only bridge linking the region to the rest of the country was destroyed. Suddenly, farmers who had been exporting agricultural produce could no longer feed even their own families.

People of The United Church of Canada responded generously. The money raised was divided among Mission & Service partners in Haiti: the Methodist Church in Haiti, ACT International (an ecumenical emergency and development coalition), and the Institut Culturel Karl Lévêque (ICKL). \$25,000 was directed to ICKL, a popular education and development agency that is a long-time United Church partner. ICKL used these emergency funds from the United Church to purchase rice, maize, beans, and cooking oil and to truck it over nearly impassable roads to communities where people had gone for days without food or shelter from the heavy rain. The food was distributed not only to groups associated with ICKL but also to the wider community. “They were hungry, too,” the farmers say.

It is this spirit of cooperation, mutual support, and self-sufficiency that ICKL encourages and nurtures through its training and group animation workshops that are supported by our ongoing gifts for Mission & Service. Mission & Service supports our ongoing partnership with ICKL and its work that feeds both body and soul.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





The Struggle to Ban the Bomb

Our gifts for Mission & Service support work with advocacy organizations like Project Ploughshares in its efforts to abolish the use of nuclear weapons.

Hiroshima could happen again. The doctrines, actions, and postures by those who embrace the purported benefits of nuclear weapons perpetuate, rather than renounce, nuclear weapons retention. Today, more than 15,000 nuclear warheads continue to threaten civilization. Even a limited nuclear exchange would bring about devastating humanitarian consequences.

The primary rationale for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons rests in the possibility that a catastrophe could occur, by accident or design, and would likely involve greater numbers of vastly more powerful bombs than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Until all nuclear weapons are eliminated, an entirely preventable risk lingers.

Canada boycotted the most recent effort to advance nuclear disarmament—a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons—just as the U.S. had asked. Yet apprehension about Canada’s stand is shared by Canadian civil society experts, academics, former diplomats, and a host of prominent citizens.

The use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable, and the goal of their complete elimination is not negotiable. This is why Project Ploughshares has engaged civil society partners and government officials in Canada and beyond to emphasize the urgent need for nuclear abolition and the gravity of the nuclear weapons threat.

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We Found Our Home

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries across the country, including this one in North Bay, Ontario. The Community Homeownership Action Group Project, also known as HOAP, extends its heartfelt gratitude to the people of the United Church for continued support through a Mission & Service-funded mission support grant.

We are currently working with our 13th family to become stable homeowners. One family member shared with us this story: “When I was a child we moved constantly, never in one house for more than two years. Our son will have a solid home. His room will be his room. He will have roots that I never did. For me, having rented all my life, I have never felt at home in a place. Now I do.”

Another family shared their story: “When we found our home, we put in lots of hard work for renovations. With the help of Project HOAP and some great volunteers, we completed the renovations and were able to move in by early spring. We were worried about the house not being safe, but HOAP had lots of knowledge about what would be needed and took the time to explain everything to us. The program helped us to purchase what we needed to complete the renovations.... It was fantastic to see the outcome.”

Alisha Matheny, coordinator of Project HOAP, says, “Families in our program are hard-working and motivated to accomplish the goal of homeownership; however, without our organization and the support we receive together from the United Church, the obstacles would be too great to overcome. It is a privilege to participate in a program that works alongside its participants to create meaningful change in their lives and our community.” Mission & Service makes this possible.

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Safe Haven, Stepping Stone

Our gifts for Mission & Service create community and support people living on the margins.

Centre 507, located at Centretown United Church in Ottawa, is an adult drop-in centre and support service that describes itself in its motto: “Safe Haven, Stepping Stone.” Each day, 100 or more people—many facing such challenges as homelessness, poverty, addiction, mental illness, unstable housing, chronic unemployment, and physical abuse—come into the centre seeking a safe and friendly environment.

Daniel Hayward is a former chaplain at Centre 507. He reminisces about his days journeying with the people who drop in: “A lot of coffee and many games of chess! I remember listening to a man who had been released from prison in Kingston, got on the bus to Ottawa, and ended up right away at 507, which is two blocks from the bus station. A young woman came in looking for support; she was pregnant and had been rejected by her church. Parents would arrive, searching for adult children who could be on the streets in Ottawa. A volunteer from a local United Church would repair clothing for grateful participants.

“I led memorial services for participants who had died. One man had no family or money at all and received the solitary burial provided by the government, but the people of Centre 507 and Centretown United showed up so that he would not be alone. Centre 507 staff, volunteers, and participants make a great effort to ensure that no one feels abandoned.” Mission & Service cares for these neighbours.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





Across Turtle Island

Our gifts for Mission & Service support ecumenical partners like KAIROS, which seeks justice and offers ways for faith groups to live out the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In March 2017, 45 people from many different backgrounds—Indigenous and settler, young and old, teachers and counsellors, medical staff and faith leaders—gathered with one common goal, to learn how to facilitate the KAIROS Blanket Exercise at the Saskatoon Friendship Centre, Treaty 6 territory.

Those gathered were committed to living out the Calls to Action, especially as they pertain to education around the impacts of colonization. The KAIROS Blanket Exercise is a rich, complex, and emotional experience of sharing the history of colonization. It tells the story that we are not fully taught in school. The new facilitators committed themselves to carrying the experience into their communities.

The Blanket Exercise can be very powerful for participants. Together, the group learned ways to navigate the anger, tears, and painful revelations that can be brought to light by the experience. The 45 new facilitators listened to the words of the Elders, laughed, and shared together, promising to support one another. The group left with open hearts and open ears, ready to share the good news of truth telling and reconciliation.

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Spiritual and Practical Care in the City



Our gifts for Mission & Service support Indigenous ministries in downtown Toronto.

The urban Aboriginal population in Canada has increased dramatically in recent years, with the overwhelming majority of the country's 1.2 million Indigenous people living off reserve. Toronto Urban Native Ministry has a heart for Indigenous people living on the margins of city life. Founded in 1996, it reaches out to Aboriginal people in precarious life situations: on the streets and in prisons, shelters, hostels, and hospitals. An ecumenical organization that integrates Christian and Aboriginal spirituality, Toronto Urban Native Ministry provides counselling and spiritual care as well as referrals to community services.

Working out of Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, it offers everything from spiritual mentorship to sharing circles for Sixties Scoop survivors—Indigenous people who were taken from their families and placed in predominately White foster homes between the 1960s and 1980s.

Worship services are held every Sunday morning and offer an opportunity for Aboriginal Christian worship. This is a time of storytelling, prayer, and sharing of a meal or activity led by an Indigenous Anglican priest or United Church of Canada minister. Chris Harper describes Sunday mornings at Council Fire as wonderfully unique: “Individuals come with such amazing, wonderful, colourful life experiences. The services are diverse and responsive rather than liturgically sequential. Every Sunday is an adventure.” Sacred gatherings like these offer connection and healing while honouring the Creator and all of creation. For urban Indigenous people living off reserve, they fill a vital need for spiritual and cultural community.

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Training Effective Leaders

Our gifts for Mission & Service support theological training at seven schools across Canada and three education centres.

In the beautiful south end of Halifax, Nova Scotia, there is a small university whose commitment is to “serve Christ’s mission by shaping effective and faithful ordained and lay leaders and understanding among communities of faith.” The Atlantic School of Theology (AST) was formed in 1971 through the joint vision and forward thinking of its three founding parties—the United, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Churches of Canada. The school is located on the site of Pine Hill Divinity Hall, which had provided theological education since 1878. Thanks to its board of governors, faculty, and staff, and the support of the three founding parties, Atlantic School of Theology continues to train, support, and prepare leaders to face the unique challenges of ministry in the 21st century.

Kim Curlett is a candidate for ordination in the United Church and a Master of Divinity student. “AST was my first choice for theological education because of its commitment to ecumenism and interfaith dialogue,” she says. “To me, effective leadership in the church today means that we are not only able to educate and care for our local congregation, but that we are also able to engage with our neighbours outside the church walls with respect and a deep sense that we are all children of God. It is with this understanding that we are truly able to be Christ’s hands and hearts in the world.” Mission & Service makes theological education for students, clergy, and lay worship leaders possible. Thank you for your generous support.

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Caring for Children in Gaza



Our gifts for Mission & Service support the Near East Council of Churches in caring for children in the midst of the shattered infrastructure of the Gaza Strip.

Of particular concern are children suffering from malnutrition and anemia, both treatable illnesses. The clinics in Shijaia, Darraj, and Rafah estimate anemia and malnutrition affect about 10,000 children in these areas from newborn infants to age six. If treated in time, 60 percent of the children will fully recover.

Parents and children are welcome to come to clinics, and the Near East Council of Churches also runs outreach programs for families who need services and can't get to clinics. In addition to the 10,000 children treated for illness, clinic staff will be able to carry out about 22,000 well baby checks per year. Children with more complicated diagnoses are referred to advanced diagnostic and therapeutic services.

The reality of living in the Gaza Strip is harsh. There are shortages of drugs. The Near East Council of Churches reports a shortfall of about 40 percent in essential drugs needed for mother and child health services. The exposure to health risks has increased, including the spread of communicable diseases, food insecurity, and psychosocial issues. The economic impact of the ongoing blockade and other factors means families have much more limited capacity to contribute to medical costs.

Mission & Service makes it possible for the Near East Council of Churches to address the challenges of providing medical care to children in the Gaza Strip.

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Advocacy in Action

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries like Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry, which advocates for those on the margins of society in downtown Regina, Saskatchewan.

The ministry has been advocating for low-income individuals and families for almost 50 years and is the only community organization in the province to offer welfare advocacy services. Designated lay minister and advocate Bonnie Morton shares her passion for the work of Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry:

“The people that we serve at the ministry need more than money; they need services and programs that will help them improve their skills and abilities so they can better compete in the job market.

“A young man came to me because he had been cut off welfare. He had told his social worker that he did not have a grade 8 education and couldn’t hold down a job. The government worker kept placing him in work positions that he continued to fail at. The last job was in construction. He couldn’t read a measuring tape, and his fellow employees made fun of him. He came to us for help, and we appealed the decision to cut him off welfare. We were able to show that no one had listened to him, and we got him and his family back on welfare with retroactive payments. About four years later, this man came back to share with us that he had earned his grade 12 diploma, had gone on to graduate from a technical school with a certificate in engineering, and had just been offered a job. He is still working and hopefully will never have to depend on social assistance again.”

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A Place to Find Tangible Help

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries like Back Door Mission in Oshawa, Ontario.

Adrian, Sherri, and their young daughter are just three of the people whose lives have been changed by the ministry of the Back Door Mission. When Adrian lost his job due to a work injury in 2015, his disability payments were inadequate to the challenge of providing for his family. After Adrian and Sherri's mortgage foreclosed and they lost their home, they turned to a homeless shelter and then emergency housing before being forced to live in their car.

At risk of losing their child for violating the regulations of the Children's Aid Society, the couple agreed that the mother and daughter would move into a local women's shelter. While this family has faced crisis after crisis, with the support of Back Door Mission it is finally finding ways to navigate the social assistance network.

For more than 20 years, Back Door Mission has helped to relieve the burdens of poverty and social dislocation experienced by those living in economically depressed circumstances in Oshawa. Over 100 people come to the doors of its downtown facility every day.

Its drop-in centre offers a welcoming space three afternoons a week where people can find shelter, companionship, and a snack or light meal. Says Don MacLeod, chair of the board, "The drop-in program provides an opportunity for community within a socially disconnected and often stigmatized population, and a place to find tangible help. This is a place where the poor, generally physically or mentally disabled in some form, can find friends and the experience of belonging."

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Thank You to Our Ministers

Our gifts for Mission & Service support ministers in their training, continuing education, and pastoral relations and provide resources to engage in ministry.

The United Church's 2006 statement of faith, A Song of Faith, notes that "to embody God's love in the world, the work of the church requires the ministry and discipleship of all believers." I invite you to wonder for a moment: What are the ways that a minister has helped this community of faith embody God's love in the world? Today, we offer gratitude for the many ways that our ministers help to embody God's love in the world through their leadership and ministry.

Thank you for the creative ways you proclaim God's message of love in worship. Thank you for the sacred moments you facilitate in the celebration of baptism and communion. Thank you for the ways you invite people of all ages to grow and deepen in faith. Thank you for the encouragement to participate in God's mission in the community and the world. Thank you for the loving care and prayers that you offer in times of joy and sorrow. Thank you for the vitality, faithfulness, and passion of your leadership. Our gifts to Mission & Service support our ministers, and we give thanks.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



**Photos for every Minute are available online at
www.flickr.com/photos/UnitedChurchCda**



Rebuilding Community in the Philippines



Our gifts for Mission & Service, together with our emergency response for Typhoon Haiyan, support the agricultural program of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP). In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan destroyed large parts of Philippine infrastructure, affecting the economic base of many communities.

The Visayas region in Central Philippines, a predominantly agricultural area, was hard hit by Haiyan. Ninety-five percent of fruit trees were uprooted, livestock were killed, and crops were destroyed. Also destroyed were many families' hopes for feeding their families and making a living. As part of the recovery process, Mission & Service partner the UCCP is working with agricultural communities to restore livelihoods.

Working with community-based organizations, the UCCP developed a plan that identified the most appropriate livestock to distribute to local families. Basic veterinary skills and training help farmers ensure the health and welfare of the animals they receive. Home solar lighting kits are being distributed to communities. For some, this was the first electrical light their home had ever had.

A third component of the plan is helping farmers plant and harvest aerobic rice, which uses less water and requires less labour than traditionally grown rice. Given the right conditions, seed is easily saved from year to year, and a growing season can have two harvests.

Our emergency response provided a robust short-term response to start the rehabilitation. Through Mission & Service, our ongoing support ensures that these programs grow and develop to create resilient and sustainable farming communities in the Philippines.

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Drought in Kenya

Our gifts for Mission & Service support global partners in their day-to-day work through long-term change and emergencies.

Our global partner the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) works on gender justice, microcredit, sustainable agriculture, and programs to address the extreme hunger caused by drought. Listen to this reflection from a participant in the Mission & Service Global Pilgrimage to Kenya on the visit to an area hardest hit by extreme hunger:

“We left the office of William Lokira, Minister of Agriculture, and made our way up a winding mountain road. The minister’s words were still fresh on our minds: ‘Please help my people.’ We saw dry lands, sparse and skinny livestock, and we saw the hardship in people’s eyes. After driving through dry riverbeds, we saw a lot of people running toward a large truck. This was a government water truck delivering water each day.

“OAIC is working in this arid region to support agriculture and food security, including empowering female small holder farmers to advocate on their behalf to impact legislation. Indicators show that when women are at the centre of projects and decisions there is significant progress toward food security. Dry riverbeds, the plea to ‘help my people,’ the daily water truck, the hope shared by the farmers—these images stay with us. Our gifts for Mission & Service make this hope of a better tomorrow possible.”

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Empowerment, Discernment, and Community!



Our gifts for Mission & Service support events like the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering, where Indigenous communities can come together in solidarity and faith.

For several decades, Indigenous communities of faith have gathered nationally to discuss matters of self-determination, spirituality, and their relationship with The United Church of Canada. These gatherings are a forum for listening to one another and discerning Creator's plan for mission and ministry.

The 2017 Gathering took place July 27–30 on the Treaty One Territory (Pinawa, Manitoba). A Sacred Fire burned throughout the Gathering, with four Fire Keepers guarding it at all hours of the day. Participants came from across Canada—including youth, Elders, and ecumenical guests—as well as from the Moderator's Dialogue on Reconciliation.

The Very Rev. Dr. Stan McKay offered a Bible study, where participants reflected on biblical passages alongside the seven Sacred Teachings of Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility, and Truth.

Dr. Shauneen Pete, an educator from Saskatchewan, spoke of her experiences working in academic institutions on issues of workplace equity, institutional racism, and cultural competency. Connections were made between these issues and the work of reconciliation. Dr. Pete praised events like the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering that dig deeper into the issues and empower participants.

We are thankful for gatherings like the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering, and we celebrate that, through your gifts for Mission & Service, communities can look forward to the next Gathering in 2020.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





From Hopeless to Hopeful

Our gifts for Mission & Service support counselling programs like The Counselling Centre in Brandon, Manitoba.

The Mission & Service support provided by The United Church of Canada helps to fund Project Hope, a program that provides professional counselling free of charge to those who are economically impoverished, such as non-status Indigenous clients, children, and seniors, who make up roughly 40 percent of the city's population.

“These are people who would otherwise fall through the cracks,” explains Executive Director Heather Karrouze. She tells the story of a mom and three kids who recently fled an abusive relationship and are living in a hotel. “If it weren't for Project Hope, they wouldn't be getting counselling,” she says. “Project Hope provides counselling support to the mom and her boys; to the pensioner who has lost his wife; to the non-status Aboriginal whose family is far away, up north.

“A number of years ago, the Brandon Counselling Centre began to explore ways to shift the disturbing trend of domestic violence it was hearing about in its counselling sessions. The centre created Building Bridges, a 12-week program for men to explore what makes for healthy relationships. Since starting the program, the counsellors have seen a small shift in their counselling sessions toward decreased domestic violence. The shift is slow, but there is progress.

“It is our vision to help people go from feeling hopeless to being hopeful, from feeling diminished to being empowered,” says Heather. “Those [Mission & Service] dollars translate into lives being changed and, in some cases, being saved.”

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Rebuilding Schools in the Philippines

Our gifts for Mission & Service support Indigenous peoples in the Philippines.

The Lumad are Indigenous peoples of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. Many Lumad communities have established their own schools, looking for help from government, non-governmental organizations, and church groups. Mission & Service partner the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) is collaborating with the Lumad peoples in this work.

These people have faced a high level of persecution from the Philippine military, including forced displacement and extrajudicial killings. Lumad schools have been used as temporary military camps, shelters and, in some cases, for weapon storage. Traditional Lumad territory is rich in natural resources, and encroachment on their land has contributed to these people being displaced.

In the midst of these challenges, the Lumad peoples continue to support schools through the Save Our Schools Network or SOS. The SOS network works with others, including the UCCP, to support a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive approach to education. The schools provide free, high-quality education to Indigenous children. Currently there are 205 Lumad community schools serving almost 6,000 children. More schools are needed! Other communities need new classrooms and support for operating costs, including teachers.

Mission & Service supports schools that help lift people and communities out of poverty and build leadership for the future of the Lumad peoples of the Philippines.

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Rendez-vous 2017: Be the Church!

Disponible en
français!

▶ Companion
video
available

Our gifts for Mission & Service support programs for youth like Rendez-vous.

In August 2017, close to 600 youth, young adults, and youth leaders gathered in Montreal to sing, dance, learn, and be inspired to share their voices with a world and a church in desperate need of hearing them. Rendez-vous is a national United Church get-together that happens every three years in different locations around Canada.

Rendez-vous 2017 met in Montreal at Concordia University. The theme was “Be the Church.” The conversations were passionate as youth and young adults explored their faith on a deep level. There was an inclusivity among participants, as the many who had never been to Rendez-vous were quickly included in groups that had bonded over the years.

Each day began with gathering music, often top-40 dance hits that got the group moving, followed by inspiring speakers. These included Paola Márquez from Colombia, who spoke about how supporting Mission & Service is the best way to make a huge difference; Aidan Legault, who talked about using our voices for change; Rodger Nishioka, who shared his wisdom and humour each day; and Moderator Jordan Cantwell, who shared a message of hope for the church. Inspiring music came from Rick Gunn and the band ReGenesis and singer Coco Love Alcorn. All who gathered left at the end of the four days inspired and ready to truly be the church!

Thank you so much for making gatherings like Rendez-vous possible through your gifts for Mission & Service.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



“Yes, You Can”



Our gifts for Mission & Service provide opportunities for teachers like Melissa Carter to work at Los Quinchos School in Managua, Nicaragua. Here is her reflection:

“I have not come here to change their culture; yet I still maintain that school can be a powerful environment to positively affect self-confidence and to empower these young, bright faces to take on new challenges. One walk around my neighbourhood unveils the fact that they already overcome daily difficulties I can only imagine; they are strong and resilient.

“I try to lead by example. My Spanish is not fluent, but I am trying to communicate daily. I am committing many errors, which sometimes elicits teasing responses, but I roll with it and tell them it is part of the learning process.... I challenged a grade 11 English class to tell me about their weekend in five sentences. Let me point out that very rarely are they asked in their English class to produce their own phrases about their own lives, and here was this crazy Canadian asking them to share about their weekend. As I walked around, many of them were able to produce simple sentences. Regardless of errors in syntax, I used lots of positive reinforcement, as well as smiles, high fives, and fist pumps to both encourage them and hopefully make them realize that ‘Si, tu puedes’ (‘Yes, you can’).

“I savour the daily interactions with the students, for it is in those interactions that I learn about who they are and what they hope to accomplish. And maybe, I can help them learn some English or make them realize that they, too, can fulfill the dreams they currently hold as well as the dreams they have yet to discover.”

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Advent Candle-Lighting Liturgy

This Advent Wreath Candle-Lighting Liturgy is based on the Revised Common Lectionary readings for Year B and inspired by the seven Antiphons of Advent (the Great O's), traditionally used between December 17 and December 24.

Sunday, December 2, Week 1, Hope

As the people of God, we search for hope....

[Light the first Advent candle and/or watch the Advent Unwrapped "Hope" video found at www.adventunwrapped.ca.]

As the people of God, we cry out to the Radiant Dawn: Come quickly to shine on us; Come quickly to brighten our path; Come quickly to restore our hope. As the people of God, we sing. *[Sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," Voices United 1, verse 1 or verse 6.]*

Sunday, December 9, Week 2, Peace

As the people of God, we search for peace....

[Light the second Advent candle and/or watch the Advent Unwrapped "Peace" video found at www.adventunwrapped.ca.]

As the people of God, we cry out to the Sovereign One (the Ancient of Days): Come quickly to comfort your people; Come quickly to share the good news of God-With-Us; Come quickly to make a clear path for righteousness and peace. As the people of God, we sing. *[Sing: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," Voices United 1, verse 7 or verse 1.]*





Sunday, December 16, Week 3, Joy

As the people of God, we search for joy....

[Light the third (or pink) Advent candle and/or watch the Advent Unwrapped “Joy” video found at www.adventunwrapped.ca.]

As the people of God, we cry out to the Rod of Jesse (or Root of Jesse): Come quickly to inspire the dreamers; Come quickly to bind up the broken-hearted; Come quickly to testify of God’s great work with shouts of joy. As the people of God, we sing. *[Sing: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” Voices United 1, verse 4 or verse 1.]*

Sunday, December 23, Week 4, Love

As the people of God, we search for love....

[Light the fourth Advent candle and/or watch the Advent Unwrapped “Love” video found at www.adventunwrapped.ca.]

As the people of God, we cry out to the Key of David: Come quickly to make a home among us; Come quickly to lift us from our lowliness; Come quickly to proclaim greetings of love and good favour. As the people of God, we sing. *[Sing: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” Voices United 1, verse 5 or verse 1.]*

Alydia Smith





Bakery Blessings

Our gifts for Mission & Service enable people to flourish.

In China, the Amity Foundation offers programs for people on the margins—people like Zhou Jian, a 34-year-old baker who has been working at the Amity Bakery since it opened in 2007. As a child, Zhou Jian was placed in an institution where he stayed until 2004, when he was given the opportunity to live at Amity Foundation’s Home of Blessings for those who are developmentally challenged. When he arrived at the home at age 21, he did not understand the concept of words or numbers. Slowly, under the loving care of Amity teachers, he mastered these skills. Zhou Jian was then ready to take on another challenge by working in the bakery. He has grown in skill to become one of the main bakers.

Zhou Jian is constantly learning new techniques, proudly mastering each new challenge. He displays so much pride in the mouth-watering baked goods he produces that he has become the face of the Amity Bakery. His smiling face can now be seen on billboards and posters around China!

At the Amity Foundation’s 30th anniversary celebration in 2015, it was Zhou Jian who welcomed everyone and invited the guests to taste the cake that he and the other bakers had so lovingly prepared. We are thankful for the loving way that the Amity Foundation offers developmentally challenged individuals like him the opportunity to live out their passion for creating and learning. As we live out our faith of loving our neighbour, we do so in celebration of Mission & Service global partners like Amity Foundation.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.





Nursing in the Korean Context

Our gifts for Mission & Service support overseas personnel like Marion Pope, a registered nurse who served with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) in South Korea for 36 years.

“Hold the gospel and culture in creative tension.” These words of her teacher, Dr. Katharine Hockin, guided Marion, who became a well-known and respected teacher and writer about mission.

“Our questions relate to the struggle to reconcile the truth we see in the gospel with the values of the culture in which we are living and working,” says Marion. “Those going to partner churches overseas are all trying to learn how the gospel is understood and being lived by the people of that partner church.... We were not being sent out to change others or to achieve an end. We were being sent out to learn, work, and live with other people under the direction of the church to which we were sent.”

As a nursing educator, Marion took this challenge seriously and taught the traditions of Korean nursing, which had been replaced by Western medicine. “[Marion] gave us insight into how to develop nursing in the Korean context: ‘Don’t just borrow from the West,’ she told us. ‘Use your own Korean perspective.’ We learned from her that Korean nursing has much to offer. Her influence is still being felt,” notes Professor Lee Won-Hee of Yonsei University College of Nursing.

Says Marion, “Everything I have done and taught and lived in Korea and Canada was my attempt to reflect the missiology I was taught by Dr. Katharine Hockin and the diaconal ministry taught at the Centre for Christian Studies.”

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Spiritual Healing

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the work of community ministries like Our Place Society in Victoria, British Columbia.

In a nurturing atmosphere of home and family, Our Place serves Victoria's most vulnerable: people who are addicted and homeless, the working poor, those who are mentally and physically challenged, and impoverished elderly people. This remarkable inner-city centre relates to the people who use it as family members, not clients, with an emphasis on creating a compassionate, caring community.

Our Place tends to its family members' physical needs, serving over 1,600 meals a day and providing hot showers, clothing, health care, and an overdose prevention site. It also cares for people's spiritual needs. "For people who live on the streets, there is a lot of grief and death," says Grant McKenzie, a staff member. "We need to be able to connect with people on a spiritual level."

In 2017, Our Place hired a First Nations spiritual leader who can better connect the centre to the 30 percent of its members who identify as Indigenous. Don Beacham is a Cree man from Norway House reserve in Manitoba who is steeped in Indigenous spiritual teachings and traditions. He connects with the Indigenous population through hosting healing circles and smudges, through drumming and song, and through his warm, caring presence. With the smudges, he says, "people feel lighter" because "they know they are cherished, cared for, and prayed for in that moment."

With your support, Our Place Society is able to focus on creating sacred and healing community.

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Serve God Gladly



Our gifts for Mission & Service support programs that empower women in the developing world.

At the Morogoro Women's Training Centre in Dodoma, Tanzania, there is a sign that reads, "Serve God gladly." Morogoro has been a Mission & Service global partner since the centre's creation in 1979.

The centre offers a variety of courses, from legal advocacy to agriculture to maternal health. The goal is to empower women to make a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Over the past five years, United Church Women have supported the Traditional Birth Attendants program at the centre. Five hundred women have graduated from this program and are now able to assist mothers to give birth safely in communities that often lack a clinic or hospital. Traditional Birth Attendants, or midwives, play a significant role in reducing maternal and infant mortality through pre- and post-natal care and birthing techniques. Mothers and their children are alive thanks to this program and to the vision of the Morogoro Centre.

Our ongoing gifts for Mission & Service enable core support for the Morogoro Women's Training Centre.

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Photos for every Minute are available online at
www.flickr.com/photos/UnitedChurchCda





Thank You!

We cannot say it enough: Thank you! Thank you for your gifts for Mission & Service—together we are transforming lives!

We all know the statistics of how many community ministries, theological schools, congregations, and global partners are supported by Mission & Service, but what about the stories behind the numbers?

The young man in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, who told us he would be dead without Emmanuel House, or the middle-aged man in Hamilton, Ontario, who has a home for the first time in his adult life, or the women of Kenya, who are empowered to feed their families through a bull exchange program—these are just a few of the many stories of how Mission & Service mends the world!

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



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Preaching Using Minutes for Mission

How about preaching Minutes for Mission? People consistently tell us that the *Minutes for Mission* booklet is the most effective Mission & Service resource they use. That got us thinking: Are there other ways to use this wonderful resource beyond the traditional reading before the offering? Sure there are! Here are some other ways to use Minutes for Mission during the sermon/meditation time in worship.

- **Take a Minute for Mission that speaks to you personally,** find an appropriate scripture text, and expand on the story. To research the story further, start with The United Church of Canada's website, www.united-church.ca. If that does not prove successful, try an e-mail or call to your regional Stewardship and Gifts Officer or the Mission & Service Giving team at the General Council Office. Find a downloadable list of these staff at www.stewardshiptoolkit.ca/contact.
- **Select a Minute for Mission from each of the six program areas of work** (see *Mission & Service at a Glance*: www.stewardshiptoolkit.ca/mission-service). Give an introduction and highlight each of the stories, separated by moments of silence/reflection. Involve different readers, and include prayers and appropriate hymns. As a visual, you might project the pie chart and photos found in *Mission & Service at a Glance*, or hand out paper copies of this resource to people with their bulletin. Encourage people to take home the information. Consider a special offering for Mission & Service.



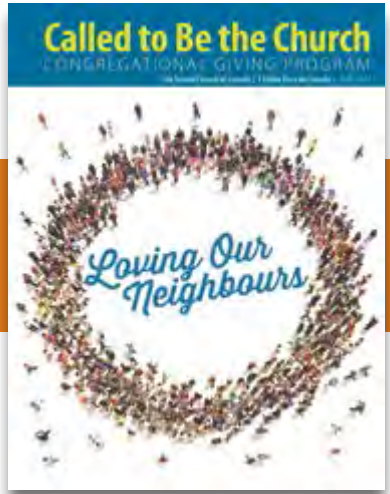
- **Select a scripture text that speaks about living out our faith** (e.g., Mark 12:30–31 or Micah 6:8). Create a sermon that focuses on how we as a denomination live out our faith every day and give powerful witness to Christ’s love, compassion, and longing for justice. Use two or three Minutes for Mission videos. These vignettes could be separated by either short personal reflections or by repeating the questions: Who is my neighbour? What does it mean to love your neighbour? What does God require of us? Consider concluding with one of these videos: *Perfect Little Thing* or *Let Your Whole Life Speak* (both found on www.stewardshiptoolkit.ca and available for download).
- **Choose two Minutes for Mission, one from a Mission & Service-supported ministry near home and the other from farther away.** Tell the story of how through Mission & Service we are making a difference in people’s lives in Christ’s name. It may be helpful to choose selections where we are helping people help themselves and their community. Speak, for instance, about the difference between charity and justice (for example, giving a person a fish to eat for one day versus teaching a person to fish so that they can provide for themselves and their family for a lifetime.) Make sure to include an invitation when you preach on Mission & Service. Invite people to join you in making a real difference in people’s lives by giving to Mission & Service.



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