

Minutes for Mission 2020

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 2020

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Minutes for Mission 2020

“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





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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.

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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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Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Mission & Service at a Glance..... | iv |
| A Practical Guide to Speaking about Mission & Service | vi |
| Message from the Editor | vii |
| Weekly Minutes for Mission..... | 1 |
| Lenten Prayers..... | 10 |
| Advent Communion Liturgy..... | 50 |

Legend/Index



Global Mission & Service 1, 8, 14, 19, 20, 23, 28, 31, 35, 40, 42, 46, 47, 53, 54, 55, 56



Canadian Community and Justice Work 2, 12, 17, 18, 26, 30, 38, 41



Theological Education and Vocation of Ministry Support 3, 43, 45



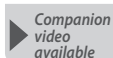
Faith Formation 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 21, 24, 29, 32, 34, 37, 48, 49, 52



Support to Local Ministries 9, 13, 16, 33



National Indigenous Church 22, 25, 27, 36, 39, 44



Stories with companion videos 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 53

French: **FR** 1, 5, 13, 36, 37, 39, 40



Minutes in French (online only)

Une minute pour la mission : récits (en ligne seulement)

5, 6, 7, 9, 10–11, 13, 14, 22, 31, 39, 40, 50–51

Visitez le site egliseunie.ca/ressources/vie-en-paroisse/fond-mission-et-service.

Mission & Service at a Glance

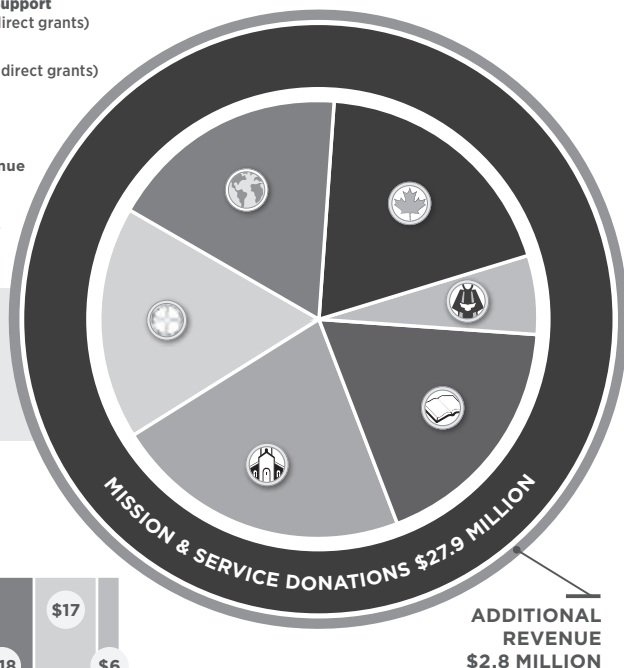
BUDGETED 2019 MISSION & SERVICE REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES (\$27.9 MILLION)

-  **1 Global Mission & Service**
\$4.8 million (\$2.9M in direct grants)
-  **2 Community and Justice Work**
\$5.4 million (\$1.2M in direct grants)
-  **3 Theological Education and Vocation of Ministry Support**
\$1.7 million (\$1.2M in direct grants)
-  **4 Faith Formation**
\$4.9 million (\$0.3M in direct grants)

-  **5 Support to Local Ministries**
\$6.2 million (\$1.5M in direct grants)
-  **6 National Indigenous Church**
\$4.8 million (\$1.9M grants)

Detailed expenditure and revenue for 2018 Mission & Service is online at united-church.ca (search Mission & Service 2018).

SEE THE STORY of Mission & Service funding for the work of healing and reconciliation online at stewardshiptoolkit.ca



OUT OF EACH \$100

- \$18** goes to global Mission & Service
- \$19** to community and justice work
- \$6** for theological education and vocation of ministry support
- \$18** for faith formation
- \$22** supports local ministries
- \$17** supports National Indigenous Church

OUR MISSION & SERVICE SUPPORTS

- 79** Mission & Service global partners in **21** countries
- 20** Canadian ecumenical networks
- 58** Community ministries across Canada
- 31** Chaplaincies on campuses and in hospitals

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- at **7** theological colleges and **3** education centres
- 89** Healing Fund and Justice and Reconciliation projects with Indigenous communities in Canada
- 81** Vision Fund projects with youth
- 20** Local congregational grants
- 197** Embracing the Spirit innovation grants

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 sign the United Nation's Principles of Responsible Investment.



1 Global Mission and Service: 18% of Mission & Service

Peace and justice work undertaken in cooperation with a range of global partners from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

2 Community and Justice Work: 19% of Mission & Service

Ministries from across Canada that heal, reconcile, advocate, and provide housing, employment training, mental health treatment, and pastoral care to Canadians living on the margins. This includes community and social justice ministries and chaplaincies.

3 Theological Education and Vocation of Ministry Support: 6% of Mission & Service

Funding for seven theological schools and three education centres that educate and equip future leaders for the church we are becoming. This includes recruiting new ministers, funding theological schools and education centres, providing student education bursaries, and continuing education of ministry personnel.

4 Faith Formation: 18% of Mission & Service

Ministries with children, youth, and young adults; United Church camps; as well as stewardship and intercultural and diverse ministries

5 Support to Local Ministries: 22% of Mission & Service

Supplying 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 ongoing support to ministers and communities of faith; Mission Support Grants for congregations; and renewal and new ministry support through the EDGE Network and the Embracing the Spirit program, which provide grants, coaches, and mentors. Now in its third year, the Embracing the Spirit granting program is receiving more requests for grants as well as stories of how grant recipients have flourished.

6 National Indigenous Church: 17% of Mission & Service

Indigenous ministries and justice, including The Healing Fund; the Justice and Reconciliation Fund; advocacy in Canada; support of Indigenous communities of faith; and nurturing of the faith formation relationship of Indigenous youth and settlers as we all work together to live in right relations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MISSION & SERVICE, VISIT

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.



A Practical Guide to Speaking about Mission & Service

Here are five simple points that I suggest you make about Mission & Service in 2020:

1. **The church restructuring can strengthen Mission & Service:** Our gifts to Mission & Service will continue to fund only our mission and ministry. Congregations can phase in their assessments without putting their congregational, outreach, or Mission & Service support at risk.
2. **We know where our gifts go and how they make a difference:** Our gifts will continue to fund the important partners that we have all grown to love. The pie chart on page iv shows where our gifts are put to work, and *Minutes for Mission* tells us the stories directly, one partner at a time.
3. **Our gifts have the broadest possible impact:** One gift to Mission & Service supports the work of all our programs and partners across Canada and around the world. Fellow church members make all the important decisions about how much funding is provided to each area of ministry.
4. **Our gifts are efficiently managed:** The church is governed by our fellow church members who manage our mission and ministry work. Based on Canada Revenue Agency definitions, the management and administration costs of the General Council Office are just over 13 percent and fundraising costs are 3 percent, resulting in a total of just over 16 percent.
5. **We are in trusting relationships with our Mission & Service partners:** As a church, we have established strong, long-term, trusting relationships with the organizations we fund. When we provide core funding, we know it will be put to the best possible use. When we respond to an emergency, the response will be through our partners. When we assemble a gift catalogue, we ask our partners for ideas to spark the generosity of our members.

Blessings,



David Armour
Director of Philanthropy





Message from the Editor

For the third year we are using the scripture “love your neighbour as yourself.” You may wonder why we made this decision. It is because loving our neighbours is at the core of who we are as people of faith. This is the greatest commandment, and now more than ever we need to reflect on who our neighbours are. We live in a fractured world filled with suspicion of others who may not look like us or talk like us. But this fear speaks to the core of what we are called to do. Jesus called us to love our neighbours as much as we love ourselves, to openly accept and understand them. The world needs us to share our love for neighbours. The world needs our example of what it means to be part of a family of faith. We are like instruments in a symphony: each instrument has a unique voice, and when those voices are joined together, they make a beautiful harmony.

Within the new structure of The United Church we have an opportunity to clearly share the story of Mission & Service. This year, our stories focus on the ways we change lives: stories of people who would not have survived without our Mission & Service ministries, and stories of transformation. Like the last two years, we are sharing stories of past overseas personnel, faithful saints who laid the foundation for mission & ministry in the United Church today. One of those saints is a woman who influenced my life and made me the passionate Mission & Service enthusiast I am today. I hope you enjoy these heartfelt stories of how your gifts to Mission & Service are changing and saving lives.

Blessings,



Ruth Noble

Mission & Service Engagement Coordinator





▶ Companion
video
available

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Healthy Babies in Gaza



The clinic, marked by a small sign, is located on a small side street in Gaza. The exterior is pockmarked by bullets and mortar fire. Five years ago, Israeli and Palestinian forces fought in this street. Today, mothers and older siblings hold babies and small children, some squirming, some sleeping, while waiting for medical care.

The Shija-ai Clinic is one of three clinics operated by the Near East Council of Churches. It is also one of the few places that still functions in Gaza as medical resources become scarce. It monitors the weekly, monthly, and yearly development of 22,000 children. Even before they are born, their mothers come to the clinic for prenatal care. The staff say that about 38 percent of the children have serious anemia and need the iron supplements that are available only at the clinic. Doctors and nurses carefully chart each child's weight and growth, and physiotherapists play gentle games with the children to see how they are developing physically and psychologically. The staff and mothers work together on treatments and programs to keep the children healthy despite their dire surroundings.

Gaza's 1.8 million people are locked in on all sides by Israel and Egypt. Unemployment is over 50 percent, nutritious food is expensive, and at any moment, air strikes can happen. Trauma is a daily experience for these children and the staff who treat them. Nevertheless, the doctors and nurses continue to heal and support the children in their care.

Thank you for your gifts to Mission & Service, which help fund this clinic through our Mission & Service partner, the Middle East Council of Churches' Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees.

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.





Holding Space for Life

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries to hold space for those who otherwise would be lost and unknown.

A simple candle is lit in the chapel at First United Church in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. The gathering on unceded Coast Salish traditional territory is acknowledged. We honour a community member who has died from drug poisoning. There have been too many.

People in our neighborhood have come for many reasons. In spite of living on or below poverty incomes, in inadequate housing or rough on the street, they have made this community their home. In a relatively small footprint of land, people know and care deeply for one another. Today the church opens its doors to hold space for affirming life.

Across Canada, more than 12,800 opioid-related deaths occurred between January 2016 and March 2019. Eighty-two percent of accidental opioid-related deaths involved fentanyl or fentanyl analogues. Likely every church and community that reads this Minute for Mission has been affected by drug poisoning. Vancouver's inner city has been profoundly shaken by this pandemic. Public education, access to harm reduction supplies, and safe consumption sites have begun to slowly reduce the numbers. We advocate for change in drug policy, increased housing, easier access to treatment facilities, and more supports for those who struggle with mental illness.

On this day we honour a person much loved in the community. Your support for Mission & Service allows First United and other community ministries to continue a ministry of seeking justice and holding space for life.

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Easing Past Ills: Tatamagouche

It's a beautiful spring day in Nova Scotia, and at Tatamagouche Centre people are scrambling through the underbrush looking for special plants—plants to settle a tummy ache or headache, or plants to help ease many of life's daily ills.

Under the careful watch of Judy Bernard-Googoo, a Mi'kmaq healer, everyone is learning a few of the basics from centuries of Mi'kmaq traditional healing. Judy learned it from her mother, as did her mother before her. Now, Judy wants to share her knowledge with others. "We are all one people," she says.

At Tatamagouche, mending the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is a high priority. By openly sharing their traditions and learning together about the plants and herbs that are the basis of traditional Mi'kmaq healing, which creates a window into Mi'kmaq culture, they will build bridges of understanding.

"Everything is done with respect. You have to respect the plant, take only what you need, and always give thanks to the Creator for providing these healing medicines," explains Judy. "You have to be careful; there are a lot of plants that can hurt you. It's like going to the drugstore—you have to make sure you choose the right medicine. That's the knowledge I have that I want to share."

Your gifts to Mission & Service help support programs at education centres that bring people in communities together to learn.

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Special Days at Camp Whitney!

Mission & Service provides grants to United Church camps like Camp Whitney in Alberta, where children between the ages of 6 and 15 can explore their relationship with God, nature, and each other.

So what should kids expect at Camp Whitney? According to the staff, there are no typical days. Each day is special and packed with fun for each camper. One activity is God Talk, where campers get to know more about the Bible in exciting and enjoyable ways. Campers can also take part in sports such as archery, swimming, or canoeing or get involved with arts and crafts or drama. There's time to relax on a beautiful beach, have fun playing outdoor games, enjoy nature, and gather around the evening campfire to sing and share stories. Most of all, Camp Whitney is a place for Christian fellowship and to make friends.

We are thankful that Mission & Service is part of camping ministry. Camps are important places for children and youth to explore their faith and develop leadership skills.

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Celebrating Black History Month



Black History Month is a time to honour and celebrate the contributions of Black people in Canada and to look at the past while giving thanks as we look forward to the future. The history of Black people in Canada is part of the history of the United Church.

In 1907 Union Congregational Church formed in Montreal when Black railway porters and their wives came together to worship with dignity. This was something they were not able to do in other congregations because the church was created during a time of legal segregation: Black people could not worship as equal participants.

Nowadays, the United Church continues to work toward its commitment to be an intercultural church, although many in our congregations still encounter Black isolation and segregation.

Many congregations in diverse parts of Canada do not reflect their community. There is a clear lack of education around what it truly means to be intercultural, and there is a sense among some people of being singled out as different. Many Black people do not feel welcome at church, which should be a sanctuary from racism.

Thanks to your gifts for Mission & Service, a group called The Journeys of Black Peoples in The United Church of Canada was formed. The group strives for integration, offering help to those who come from outside the church to find a home within the church.

We have come a long way from the days of slavery and segregation, but we still have a long way to go. This Black History Month, let's take the time to learn about the saints who have gone before us and their impact that is still felt today.

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.





What Is Camp?

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When you first arrive at Pearce Williams Camp in Fingal, Ontario, you immediately encounter a feeling of the sacred. Walking around the grounds, that feeling transforms into the knowledge that God is up to something amazing here. Pearce Williams is a place where there is room for all to be cradled in God's love.

At the camp, children gain self-esteem, confidence, independence, and many more life skills that will help them succeed. Summer camp helps children develop into leaders, thinkers, and doers; it helps them discover who they are away from their everyday lives. Above all else, camp gives children a fun space to grow.

Mission & Service supports United Church camps like Pearce Williams.

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A Way to Heal



Thanks to Affirm United and Mission & Service, the Living Apology Project gave many a place to heal and to learn. Seeing the poems, laments, stories, and pieces of art created by people affected by the 1988 decision to accept LGBTQIA2S+ people as full members in The United Church of Canada was therapeutic for some; for others, it conjured up memories of anger and fear.

The late Former Moderator Anne Squire shared the first reflection on the Iridesce website:

My secretary once handed me a letter, saying, “I don’t want to give you this, but I have to.” It was from Elizabeth, outlining her work in the church; she said the last straw was the possible ordination of gay and lesbian people. She ended with “My prayer is that you will be stricken with AIDS. Yours in Christ, Elizabeth.”

Another day a big box arrived with no indication of the sender. One of my staff said, “Don’t open it; it might be a bomb.” I said, “We can’t live in fear this way.” Inside were two 10-inch cubes of acrylic; embedded in each was a metal rod that had been bent into a Greek letter. One was Alpha and the other was Omega. When someone asked what this meant, I said it meant that God was with us at the beginning of our life and will be with us at the end. I also felt that it meant that God was with us in this divisive project and would help guide us.

To answer that hurtful letter now, I say, “Yes, Elizabeth, I do have aids but not the kind you are talking about. My aids are Affirm, my family, my friends, and my faith.”

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A Chicken Farm in Kenya

Farmers learn best from one another. The Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) supports farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange through interactive model farms. OAIC is one of our long-standing Mission & Service-funded global partners. The farmer-to-farmer project would not exist without your gifts to Mission & Service.

The model farms in West Pokot, Kenya, give rural farmers opportunities to physically demonstrate and teach each other appropriate technologies and new methods. Depending on what's being tested or showcased, the demonstration farm could have different types of crops and crop varieties, livestock or poultry breeds, fertilizer treatments, or technology such as drip irrigation.

The practical learning sites have proven popular with the younger generation, who want hands-on involvement in the changes. More primary schools are actively engaged with 4K clubs—clubs that teach children how to grow crops—in Vihiga County, Kenya.

One of OAIC's initiatives is to promote chicken farming to farms that are subject to extreme weather or aren't large enough to raise cattle. Women in particular have taken to raising chickens to boost their household income and also for the eggs, a good source of protein for their families.

Well-presented demonstrations enable farmers to see for themselves how the new technology works; small-scale farmers adopting new methods are taught how to cope with and manage ongoing agricultural challenges, climate change, and food insecurity.

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Supporting Ministers Financially

The Financial Assistance Committee of The United Church of Canada oversees nine funds to support ministry personnel and lay members during times of extraordinary financial hardship, personal or vocational assessment, post-secondary education, and sabbatical leave. Three funds are supported by Mission & Service.

The Support and Advocacy Fund provides financial assistance for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and Two-Spirit ministry personnel who are experiencing difficulties in maintaining employment in the church because of their known or perceived sexual orientation or identity.

The Personnel Emergency Fund provides financial support to a pastoral charge to fulfill their obligation of salary continuance to ministry personnel and congregational designated ministers who are on administrative leave or suspension, as part of a disciplinary process.

The Fund for Survivors of Sexual Misconduct assists with the costs of counselling for two distinct groups. First, ministry personnel who are survivors of sexual abuse are supported to stay in active ministry while participating in therapy. Second, individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct in a United Church context are provided with financial contributions toward the cost of counselling to enhance their healing. One recent recipient says, “It has been a long journey. I am deeply grateful to The United Church of Canada for caring about victims of sexual abuse. I hope for my own healing and for the healing of others.”

Your gifts to Mission & Service help support ministry personnel, lay individuals, and pastoral charges with important financial assistance during difficult circumstances.

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Lenten Prayers

These invitations to silent reflection can be used during personal devotions or as a part of worship during Lent. Allow for a full moment of silence that could be broken with a sound (such as a bell), a song (such as “Me Alone,” More Voices 118), or an invitation to prayer.

Lent 1, March 1: Who Is Jesus?

One: Jesus asked his disciples,

Two: “Who do people say that I am?”

One: Who is Jesus to you? How would you describe Jesus to someone who knows nothing about him?

(Silent reflection)

**All: While in the wilderness,
we long to learn more about who you are, Jesus,
our companion and our friend.
Amen.**

Lent 2, March 8: The Kin-dom of God

One: Jesus said,

Two: “Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

One: What are the qualities of children that you most admire? What may be blocking you from the kin-dom?

(Silent reflection)

**All: While in the wilderness,
sustain us with glimpses of
the kin-dom to come.
Amen.**



Lent 3, March 15: With You Always

One: Jesus promised,

Two: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

One: Do you feel the presence of Jesus in your life? How? When have you felt totally alone?

(Silent reflection)

**All: While in the wilderness,
remind us of your constant presence,
as we journey toward you.
Amen.**

Lent 4, March 22: Finding Rest

One: Jesus said,

Two: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

One: What do you need a rest from? When and how have you found rest?

(Silent reflection)

**All: While in the wilderness,
lead us to places of comfort and rest,
when we are tired and weary.
Amen.**

Lent 5, March 29: Hoarding Treasures

One: Jesus said,

Two: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

One: What is your relationship with stuff? What are your most treasured items, and why? What treasures are stored in your heart?

(Silent reflection)

**All: While in the wilderness,
we give thanks for the treasures we take with us,
the ones deep in our hearts.
Amen.**

by Alydia Smith





A Tiny Baby

The chaplains of Michael Garron Hospital in Toronto have to respond to many situations. Here is one story from a United Church chaplaincy student about her time in the pediatrics ward:

I remember the first time I saw her. I had to put on a gown, mask, and gloves to go into her room. This tiny baby, hooked up to so many tubes, smiled up at me. She had so much trust in her eyes for a baby who had been abandoned by her parents. She'd had two heart surgeries and was now recovering. Each day she grew stronger, and soon most of the tubes had been removed and we no longer needed to mask and gown. What she needed most was human contact, so I would spend time each day holding her, talking to her, and watching her smile and coo. When she was three months old, her parents came back to reunite with her. They had many meetings with social workers, and I was included in those conversations. Her parents had been refugees who came to this country with their seven children; when the baby was born with Down's syndrome and many health problems, they panicked and left her at the hospital to be cared for. When the day came for this tiny, beautiful baby to leave with her parents, staff said goodbye to her, and many of them were in tears. After she left the hospital, we sat around and shared stories and grieved together. It was a very profound moment in my ministry.

Mission & Service supports chaplaincy in hospitals, universities, and prisons.

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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Camino de Emaús



Camino de Emaús is a vibrant ministry serving hispanophones (mainly from Chile) and francophones in Montreal, thanks in part to support from Mission & Service.

In recent years Camino de Emaús created a wellness program geared to seniors called Camino de Oro, or Golden Path. They organize outings, fitness and dance classes, wellness workshops with guest speakers, and other activities to foster community and combat social isolation.

Camino de Emaús also recently exhibited its memory museum and participated in commemorating those whose lives were lost or forever changed by the coup in Chile on September 11, 1973. Several people shared photos and thoughts of lost loved ones and also called for everyone to continue to work together, with respect and tolerance, to show solidarity not only with Chile but also with other causes closer to home, as there is still much to improve in Chile, Canada, and the world.

Camino de Emaús is a faith-filled community that welcomes those in need of healing and support.

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Protecting a Child's Rights

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Emmanuel Dennis Ngongo was 13 years old when he came across the Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children's Rights (KAACR) through his school's Child's Rights Club. KAACR is a long-standing Mission & Service global partner. When his parents were transferred to another district and he had to change schools, Emmanuel wrote to KAACR to get help in launching a new club.

Kenya has dire statistics on violence against children. Rape, abuse, and child labour occur widely in both rural and urban areas. For many young people, the situation is made worse by their inability to speak out at school or within their communities.

KAACR, a network organization established nearly two decades ago, serves as a platform for like-minded youth to engage in communications and advocacy on ending violence against children in Kenya. Using channels such as WhatsApp and social media, KAACR has reached at least 200 young men and women, many of whom have amazing stories to tell about their transformation. They share ideas and propel change at regional, national, and international levels. Their primary mandate is to champion children's rights everywhere; they believe every child should be protected.

Emmanuel was so inspired by his experiences with KAACR that he launched the Child's Rights Defenders Movement with other peers in 1999, which was hosted by KAACR. He later worked for KAACR as an advocate protecting girls from female genital mutilation and early marriage, and in general youth development work, where he coordinated Youth Employment Summit sessions in Kenya and throughout Africa.

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.



White Privilege



Our gifts for Mission & Service work to create opportunities to understand what it means to be an intercultural church. Here is a story about one of those opportunities.

Beth Baskin, Program Coordinator, Social Analysis and Congregational Engagement, in the Church in Mission Unit of The United Church of Canada, reflects on White Privilege:

As someone who supported a delegation to the Global White Privilege Conference in May 2018 and supports the White Privilege Working Group, I spend a lot of time thinking about it.

White Privilege is the norm that allows me to go through my day without really having to think about what I do or say. The systems work pretty well for me. This is a problem.

The problem is that I (and lots of others) can go through life ignoring racism and the resulting oppression and exclusion. I will be a poorer person for the lack of diversity and understanding in my life and faith, but really, unless I go out of my way to be in relationships with those whom the systems exclude, I can live in my White bubble. This choice will give me occasional pangs of sadness for the oppressed but have no real consequences for my day-to-day living.

It is my job and the job of the White Privilege Working Group, among others, to ask the questions that lead us to understand others' cultures and experiences. We must find real, tangible ways to change our church to honour and incorporate ways of being, knowing, and deciding that are not the dominant church norm.

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Planting a Path to Reconciliation

Twenty-eight years ago when it was founded, Faith United Church in Kingston, Ontario, bought land near Highway 15 with the vision of creating a church building. Meeting in a local high school, they eventually decided to put their energy into being a caring community rather than into a building. Then, during the last year, Faith United began a time of discernment around the land. The members of the congregation felt inspired to walk a path of peace and offer the land as a place of healing.

The church and the Indigenous peoples of Kingston are currently in conversation as they collaborate on how to create a space where all can find healing. Talking over tea and shared meals, they are exchanging ideas on how to come together in friendship. Currently they are considering creating a garden for reflection and reconciliation that contains Indigenous sacred medicine plants.

Thanks to a grant from the Justice and Reconciliation Fund, supported by your gifts for Mission & Service, the Indigenous peoples of Kingston and Faith United Church members are able to move forward.

“We open our eyes now,” the Elders and congregation members shared in a report on the initiative. “We aren’t blinded by hopefulness and naïveté: we know our vision for this piece of land is grand in size and workload. We also know that when we walk together in a good way, when we root the process in ceremony and healing, we are acknowledging we aren’t walking this path alone. Together we can. Together we will. One step along the path of peace.”

May it be so!

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Windsor Downtown Mission



The Downtown Mission of Windsor, Ontario, provides food for the body, nurture for the spirit, shelter for the homeless, advocacy for the impoverished, and opportunity for human growth—all through its outreach program.

This faith-based, not-for-profit organization focuses on serving and advocating for men, women, and children who struggle with poverty and homelessness. Whether it's providing emergency shelter, a hot meal, or a food pack for an individual or a family, the Downtown Mission is there with faith and caring.

Thanks to a grant from Mission & Service, The Downtown Mission opened its doors in 1972 when a group of forward-thinking individuals at Central United Church started a coffee program for the area's homeless men. Called the Open Door Lounge, it had a maximum capacity of 28 and served coffee and donuts.

More than 40 years later, the Mission continues to give thanks for the support of the community and of Mission & Service that has enabled it to grow and meet the needs of those it serves by offering a wide and diverse range of services. Many people's lives have been changed as a result of the love, care, and respect they received from The Downtown Mission during difficult periods they faced. A little help made a great deal of difference.

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Dalhousie University Chaplaincy

Dalhousie University Multifaith Chaplaincy in Halifax, Nova Scotia, offers students a safe place to get a meal on a Monday night. Your gifts to Mission & Service have created this “sanctuary on campus.”

The chaplaincy feeds between 40 and 60 students each week, many of them international and exchange students. “They enjoy the opportunity to share safe space and to meet other students,” United Church Chaplain the Rev. Robyn Brown-Hewitt shares. “Food insecurity is huge among students in Halifax.”

Robyn goes on to share, “The other predominant part of what I do here is private one-on-one counselling. Students suffer from a wide and intense variety of mental/spiritual health challenges.”

Robyn wants to make sure everyone knows that she and the Chaplaincy Committee can’t do what they do without Mission & Service support. Thank you for creating through your gifts a place of welcome for Dalhousie students. University can be lonely, and your gifts make these students feel like they are not alone.

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Access to Clean Water



Water is sacred—a gift of the Creator and a source of life. Clean water is a cornerstone of public health and a fundamental human right. In 2015, United Nations member states established 17 goals essential to sustainable development. The sixth goal is the availability of clean water for all.

Access to safe drinking water is one of today's most pressing environmental issues. Large numbers of people have no access to water and lack adequate sanitation to keep water sources clean. According to UN statistics, millions of people die every year from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation, and hygiene. More than two billion people are currently living with the risk of reduced access to freshwater resources. By 2050, at least one in four people is likely to be affected by a chronic shortage of fresh water.

The United Church of Canada, as a member of the World Council of Churches, joined with other churches in the Ecumenical Water Network, a Mission & Service partner. The EWN brings churches together in faith-based advocacy for the preservation, responsible management, and the equitable distribution of water for all. On-the-ground Mission & Service partners like People's Action Forum in Zambia and the Moravian Church in Nicaragua play important roles in establishing community access to water—from digging boreholes to providing training on pump maintenance and protection of the water supply.

Your gifts to Mission & Service help bring the provision of clean water to all people closer to reality.

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.





Past Overseas Personnel: Caroline Macdonald

As we begin Asian Heritage Month, we look back to one of our past overseas personnel, Caroline Macdonald (1874–1931), a missionary to Japan. Born in Wingham, Ontario, she graduated from the University of Toronto in math and physics. She became the first National Secretary of Japan's YWCA in 1904 and worked to establish hostels for girls in Tokyo. Caroline studied theology in Aberdeen, Scotland, from 1910 to 1911, and after 1913 she became deeply involved in work with prisoners and their families. She was sent to Japan thanks to the support of the Overseas Mission Board, a precursor to Mission & Service. Her prison reforms live on today in Japan.

Her strong sense of prison reform led her to strike up a friendship with Ishii Tokichi, who was sentenced to death for murder. Caroline wrote the preface for his book, *A Gentleman in Prison* (1922), from which this excerpt is taken:

During the days of waiting he took up his pen to write down the circumstances which led him into crime, and the story of his repentance. He worked night and day until his task was finished, for he did not know when the end might come. I saw him for the last time just a few days before his execution and his face was radiant; but of that day and of the end I shall write when the man has told his own story. The sequel is merely the translation of the manuscript I received from him through the prison authorities, and is reproduced, as far as possible, with the same straightforward simplicity as the original. I have not hesitated to depart on occasions from the literal translation, but I think I have not departed from the spirit.

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Loved by Generations: Sherbrooke Lake Camp



Many people who attend summer camp come from a long line of campers, following in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents. That is one of the amazing things about camp—it's loved by generation after generation. Our gifts for Mission & Service make United Church camps possible.

United Church camps are like a quilt created from many different pieces of fabric, all different colours and textures. A family quilt tells the story of the family who created it. From a scrap of fabric from a toddler's dress to lace worn at a fancy family gathering, each quilt piece recalls images of fun times together. It is no different for a camp family, where memories are sewn together to become the very fabric of the camp.

Sherbrooke Lake Camp in New Ross, Nova Scotia, began in 1964. The children and youth who attended then are now the parents and grandparents of today's campers. The camp also offers a two-night Family Camp. By gathering people to have fun and give thanks for creation and community, camps like this one can transform people for the better! Thank you for making this possible.

At Sherbrooke Lake Camp:

We believe in kids.

We are a safe space to learn.

We believe everything is possible.

We think big, but simple.

We play until we can't.

We are the place to explore faith.

We inspire and motivate listening to spark understanding.

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Wampum-Neechi Program 2019

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available

Our gifts for Mission & Service make the Wampum-Neechi program at Five Oaks Education and Retreat Centre in Paris, Ontario, possible. This week-long program brings together 10 Indigenous and 10 non-Indigenous youth (ages 12–14) for six days in the summer. They forge new friendships across cultures, enjoy summer days together, and learn about Indigenous (Haudenosaunee and Cree) history and cultural values.

The project's vision is for these young people to be continually engaged in activities, workshops, and play—all in a creative, learning-enriched, fun, and safe environment. Wampum-Neechi creates a positive space for friendships to grow, which in turn fosters healthy dialogue, reconciliation, and relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The adventure includes these activities:

- a trip to Kana:ta Village, a cultural centre
- spending the day in Six Nations of the Grand River
- learning Haudenosaunee and Cree songs
- learning about the church's role in residential schools and ongoing work toward reparations, healing, and reconciliation
- rafting on the Grand River, swimming in the pool at Five Oaks, and learning traditional arts, crafts, and games

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Searching for Peace in the Korean Peninsula



Over 65 years ago, the Korean War ended in an armistice agreement. The agreement created the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ: a place where the two parts of the country can come together. The two parts of Korea, North and South, have very different political and economic systems and ideologies. Some may think the differences are too great for the two countries to overcome and unite.

Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada supports partners like the National Council of Churches in Korea that are working to unite both countries through a path of peace. There have been non-violent gatherings at the DMZ as well as walks for peace.

We are thankful to be in partnership with Korean Voices for Peace and the World Council of Churches, which lift up the plight of families who are divided and a region that is still in conflict. The United Church is part of Korea Peace Now! Women Mobilizing to End the War, a global campaign to get a Korean peace agreement by 2020. We pray that reunification will take place and are thankful that we are able to support this path through our gifts for Mission & Service.

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Our Generation

At Toronto Conference’s annual meeting in 2011, youth delegates presented a vision for the future of their church and their place in it. The result of those first ideas was a song that has since inspired many people. Thanks to a Mission & Service Vision Fund grant, the group was able to record it, and that amazing and inspirational song—“Our Generation”—has become the theme song for the Mission & Service music video.

Seven youth delegates came together one Friday evening to practise their instruments and vocals for a Saturday recording session at Black Earth Music’s Area 51 recording studio in Shelburne, Ontario. When they arrived at the studio the nervous excitement was thick in the air, especially when they were introduced to their producer, Michael Jack, who has produced records for Rush and Pink Floyd. But as the recording sessions went on, thanks to Michael’s encouragement, the group became more confident in the process, creating space for the creativity of voices and instruments to become part of the song. The group supported and encouraged each other to experiment vocally and add guitar riffs.

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Remembering Alvin Dixon



As a church we continue to work toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Mission & Service supports this work through your gifts for the National Indigenous Church.

We are thankful that we have Elders like Alvin Dixon to lead us on the path of reconciliation. Alvin, a residential school survivor, was taken from his community and sent more than 500 kilometres to the Alberni Residential School. Alberni was a United Church of Canada–run school where many children suffered sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. Alvin was beaten when he spoke his Indigenous language of Heiltsuk rather than English.

Alvin survived the school, earned a university degree, and later counselled fellow residential school survivors. He also found comfort in the Christianity he learned at the school. Alvin became a leader in the path of reconciliation. He was a Caretaker of the Indigenous Circle, a Mission & Service–supported program. As an activist in the United Church, he helped guide us to an apology to Indigenous peoples and to becoming a driving force behind the demand for a public inquiry into conditions at the residential schools, which led to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Alvin died from cancer in 2014 at the age of 77, but his legacy of activism lives on in the work of reconciliation.

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Second Chances

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries like Stella's Circle. People come to Emmanuel House at Stella's Circle for a variety of reasons. Some have experienced mental illness or addiction, and others have suffered emotional stress or trauma or had a conflict with the law. The staff and volunteers at Emmanuel House are dedicated to helping them move forward in their lives.

Emmanuel House is a 14-bed, residential counselling centre in St. John's, Newfoundland, where people of all genders live for four months at a time. They participate in group and individual counselling on topics such as addiction, recovery, mindfulness, trauma, and personal effectiveness skills. Residents also participate in therapeutic yoga, recreational activities, and household chores. Emmanuel House was the home of Stella's Circle founder Stella Burry.

The staff assist residents with concrete issues related to their adjustment back into the community and being able to live independently. Many receive help finding safe and supportive housing or obtain employment assistance. The approach at Emmanuel House is a strengths-focused recovery model.

Ivy Lundrigan is a social worker at Emmanuel House. She expresses what it means to work with residents:

I am always in awe of the strength, resilience, and courage that come through these doors. Sometimes they don't have much hope when they arrive, but with support and guidance, they are able to move forward with their lives. I'm grateful to be part of that process.

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Making a Home Whole Again



Fairfield, a historic village in Bothwell, Ontario, was first settled by the Lenape people on May 8, 1792. It was established by Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit (*El-na-pow-way Lah-ka-weet*) ancestors and the Moravian missionaries who lived among the group for generations. For the past 74 years, Fairfield has been operated as a historical park and museum by The United Church of Canada through a grant from Mission & Service.

In May 2019, the United Church returned a significant piece of land to the Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit people of Delaware Nation. A ceremony was held on the site to officially execute the land transfer.

“I think the community is going to be really proud of getting that piece of property back because it’s part of who they are,” said Chief Denise Stonefish. “That will make our home whole again.”

“I actually view it as the people whose story it is are finally getting to tell the story,” said Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, a regional council Executive Minister.

But both Stonefish and the United Church recognize it took the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to bring the transfer to fruition. We are thankful that Mission & Service has played a part in the Truth and Reconciliation process within The United Church of Canada. “The Truth and Reconciliation Commission involved all of us viewing ourselves as treaty people and understanding how broken the relationship was between Indigenous peoples and Settlers, and how all of us have a role to play in the care and tending of that,” said Stadelbauer-Sampa. “The United Church is deeply committed to being honest with ourselves about our colonial past.”

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A Safe Home

Down a long road behind a large fence in Nairobi, Kenya, is a safe house for LGBTQIA and Two-Spirit refugees from Uganda, Somalia, and South Sudan, supported by Mission & Service partner Pembizo Christian Council. The refugees who live here dream of a day they are resettled in Canada or another country where they can live freely without fear of imprisonment.

While the group waits to be resettled, they have named themselves Nature Network and spend their time creating art. Whether it is movies, dance, or vlogs to post on Facebook, the group always puts their best foot forward.

In 2017, a small group of Mission & Service pilgrims visited the safe house and received a warm welcome. When some of the visitors shared that they were LGBTQIA and Two Spirit and were openly in relationships, the residents cheered, since that's what they'd been praying would be possible for them one day.

We are thankful that in The United Church of Canada there are opportunities to sponsor and support LGBTQIA and Two-Spirit refugees.

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Awesome and Awe-Filled: Camp Bimini



Put friends first to make friends last—
On this you can depend.
Through thin or thick, you'll be my pick—
You'll always be my friend.

Bimini friends are always friends,
Who always will be near.
Through Jesus Christ we're a family
To last all through the years.

Since 1947, Camp Bimini has been offering memorable camping experiences for all ages. Adventures in nature, sports, crafts, music, swimming, campfires and more encourage staff, campers, and volunteers to play, laugh, learn, love, sing, grow, teach, create, and simply be.

The well-being of children and adults is linked to the amount of time spent in nature: The more time spent outdoors, the better off people are. At Bimini, God's creation is vibrant and dynamic, an awesome and awe-filled place and space.

The camp is energized for the upcoming season and all that it will be offering. They are energized, too, for what our campers, staff, and volunteers will be sharing with one another. Friends are always nearby, and times of discovery and opportunities to do both familiar and new things are always there. Everyone looks forward to all the adventure, discovery, fun, and friendship. When you are at Bimini, you are repeatedly reminded that you are indeed a precious child of God. The camp hopes everyone experiences that "Bimini friends are always friends."

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Community Ministries Make a Difference

The term “partnership” can describe a wide range of relationships undertaken by the church. The work of the church is accomplished through working with others—some full ministries of the church, including community-based organizations, as well as through relationships with organizations and coalitions we know as national partners. Mission & Service supports partnerships with community ministries across Canada.

In addition to congregations, the church includes ministries such as camps, campus ministries, and community and social justice ministries that support people seeking basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, advocacy services, and spiritual guidance. There are over 60 community ministries.

Community ministries are often full ministries and expressions of the church, while some have developed into community-based organizations that partner with a variety of local government and non-governmental organizations. Through these relationships, the church is able to faithfully and more fully make a difference in the lives of vulnerable people. These ministries call the church to risk new forms of life and membership, to be willing to be transformed by those on the margins of society, and to join them as the place where God is present and active.

Through partner relationships, the church engages in advocacy and justice, research and policy, education and theological reflection, congregational engagement for justice-making, and community support.

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video
available

Protecting the Children



Imagine growing up in a place of conflict where you live in constant fear of violence. This is what it is like to grow up in Gaza. As a church family our hearts cry out for those who live in fear every day. Mission & Service supports Defense for Children International–Palestine, which offers programs for children in that region.

Members of the Abu Arar family were on their land across the street from their residence in the Zeitoun neighborhood in northern Gaza. Around 6 p.m., a rocket struck the area, severely injuring 19-month-old Saba Mahmoud Hamdan Abu Arar. The child died around 7:30 p.m. from extensive shrapnel wounds. Her aunt and the fetus she was carrying were also killed. A three-year-old sister and other family members sustained injuries.

Based on evidence gathered from the scene, witnesses, and experts, Defense for Children International–Palestine concluded the blast was the result of a misfired rocket fired by a Palestinian armed group nearby, and was not caused by an Israeli forces strike.

Incidents like this one happen often in Gaza. Israeli and Palestinian forces have been in conflict for decades, and as in many conflicts, children are often the victims. We give thanks for the work of global partners like Defense for Children International–Palestine, which offers programs for children to express in art what they are experiencing, and activities that help them just be children.

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Widening the Welcome

The United Church of Christ USA is a full communion partner of The United Church of Canada. Every few years, it organizes a national conference called Widening the Welcome (WtW) jointly hosted by its Disabilities Ministries and Mental Health Network. The conference is one way for the church to become more accessible. The event is packed with speakers, worship, workshops, and networking opportunities.

For the WtW conference in November 2018, The United Church of Canada sent a small delegation of people with disabilities, and their allies. They were all committed to the United Church's desire to become a more open, accessible, and barrier-free church where people with disabilities can fully participate in all areas of the church's life.

The United Church of Canada offered financial support for people to attend the conference, which was possible through Mission & Service. Some delegates would not have been able to attend without this support.

The delegates found the conference an amazing learning experience and came back from it transformed and even more passionate about disability ministries. One of them said, "I came back with strong enthusiasm to share this knowledge with my church and promote accessibility in The United Church of Canada." Moved by the conference, other delegates have created and led worship and offered educational sessions in their own ministry contexts. Through Mission & Service, people of The United Church of Canada have been inspired to make the church even more open, accessible, and barrier-free for all!

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Growing a Green Legacy



Our gifts for Mission & Service fully support the Embracing the Spirit grant program for communities of faith with innovative ideas.

Westmount Park United Church in Montreal, Quebec, has been able to grow its initial grant into a Faith in Nature vision of the church—a belief that nature connects us all. As well as monthly Climate Cafés and a cooperative garden on its front lawn, Westmount Park advocates for the environment in its local community.

Ginkgo biloba trees have become symbols of hope for Hiroshima survivors because the trees grew leaves again after the atomic bombing of 1945. In partnership with Green Legacy Hiroshima, a Japanese organization that shares seeds across the world for a nuclear-free planet, Westmount Park was one of three faith organizations that received ginkgo seeds that are growing into strong trees. The physical existence and history of those seeds tell a powerful story, and their very presence provides a living link between the people of Hiroshima and Montreal—and Westmount Park United Church.

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Touch the Earth

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the work of The Healing Fund as we walk together in a path of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

We have learned that intergenerational trauma runs deep. The legacy of Indian Residential Schools continues to affect every generation as Indigenous parents struggle to educate their children in the ways of their people.

In spring 2018, six youth travelled from Winnipeg to Sagkeeng First Nation in Fort Alexander, Manitoba, to attend a Zam-mi-nan aki (“Touch the Earth”) cultural retreat at the world-renowned Turtle Lodge. At the three-day retreat, Elders taught the youth some of their traditional teachings to reconnect them with their culture.

Educating young people about their history, culture, and land and having them participate in a sweat lodge, ceremonies, and activities under the guidance of Elders is an incredible way to help youth gain confidence and leadership skills. They also helped to produce a documentary video about the retreat, and talk about their experiences with community members and children.

Josephine Kakegumick writes, “I learned so much—it really opened my eyes. I want to change myself for the better. I want to know who I am, I want to learn my language, I want to start dancing more, and I really want to connect with my culture more. I’ve never realized how much I need to heal and have some time to myself.”

We are thankful that through our gifts we can offer opportunities for healing to young people experiencing intergenerational trauma.

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LGBTQIA and Two-Spirit Youth

Our gifts for Mission & Service support partners around the world where being LGBTQIA or Two-Spirit is punishable by death or imprisonment. Here is a story about one of those partners.

In Jamaica, the Larry Chang Centre provides housing to young adults who would otherwise be homeless. The youth shelter provides a safe space and supports mental and physical health and well-being; it also provides access to education and skills training and helps the young people get essential documentation and ID. Outreach to youth at risk is critical, as well as working to increase sensitivity among providers of related health and education services. Church support for the shelter has had a positive impact on the developing ecumenical and public conversation on the importance of dignity, rights, and inclusion.

Your gifts to Mission & Service have made a real contribution in the global work of LGBTQIA and Two-Spirit rights and care for individuals facing oppression, discrimination, and risk because of their sexual orientation.

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Unique Teachers, Unique Students

Companion
video
available

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Many of the Plains, Dakota, and Nakota peoples have a sacred connection to the horse. For them, the horse holds immense cultural and spiritual significance, and its energy is a powerful catalyst for change.

The spirit of the horse was certainly present among Indigenous youth from Plains Presbytery in Saskatchewan Conference during the equine-assisted learning (EAL) program at Cartier Farms in Spruce Home, Saskatchewan, a Healing Fund project that's also supported by Mission & Service. Ten young men participated in the week-long leadership program in July 2018. The tools and strategies the EAL facilitators and Traditional Knowledge Keepers used would help the young men grow into strong Indigenous adults.

By interacting with these incredible animals, the young men brought innovation, strength, and energy to everything they did at the farm. Despite the injustices that Indigenous youth face every day, the skills these young people took home helped them understand their place in the circle of life and equipped them with the inner resources to strengthen it.

The EAL program acknowledges the need to support young people as they deal with difficulties in life stemming from systemic racism and intergenerational trauma. For Indigenous youth, the trauma from colonial oppression continues to reverberate powerfully in their lives and circumstances. The impact from the Indian residential school system and other colonial practices is still felt today. The EAL program is a place for Indigenous youth to begin their healing.

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.



Rendez-vous in Review



What could be more energizing than a room full of 600 young people? How about a room full of 600 United Church of Canada young people! Rendez-vous brings them together for worship, service, prayer, community, and learning. Thanks to your gifts for Mission & Service, Rendez-vous is able to happen every three years in a different part of the country.

Following events held in Toronto, Winnipeg, and Montreal in previous years, in August 2020 the fourth iteration of Rendez-vous was held at the University of Calgary. Buses, planes, trains, and automobiles filled with youth converged on Calgary for three jam-packed days. Some participants arrive excited to renew relationships made at previous youth events. Some arrive anxious, not knowing what to expect. Some arrive struggling and in need of a safe place to find acceptance. All leave knowing that they are not alone, that The United Church of Canada has a place for them, and that they are beloved children of God.

When they return home, they are exhausted and full of stories. Listen to their stories and encourage them in both difficult and joyous times. Tell them that you invested in them through your gifts to 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.



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Deaf Ministry in Newfoundland

Mission & Service has been supporting the Deaf ministry in Newfoundland and Labrador for 33 years.

In 1987, the School for the Deaf in St. John's wrote a letter to the local presbytery requesting pastoral care on behalf of the United Church. Beverley Ares, a lay delegate, was asked to consider the role. She was interested but concerned that she didn't know sign language. Nonetheless, she answered the call, first as a volunteer and then as an employee. Beverley began learning American Sign Language and also took courses in theology. She was a quick study. Over the next 23 years she served the students and their families as an interpreter at worship services at First United Church in Mount Pearl, as a faith formation leader at the school, as an advocate for the Deaf community, and as a pastoral care provider and friend.

But by 2010, enrollment was greatly declining and the provincial government decided to close the school. Thanks to the vision and commitment of a local ecumenical committee, the Deaf ministry continued. Today, Beverley and others continue to provide community, worship leadership, and pastoral care to the Deaf community in and around St. John's. Thanks to the support of local churches and Mission & Service, individuals like Beverley have made a real difference in the lives of many Deaf children and adults and their families.

Nancy Emberly, a former student, says, "While I attended church regularly as a child, I didn't understand who God was until I met Beverley." Nancy is now a teacher and has replaced Beverley as the coordinator of Deaf ministry in Newfoundland.

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National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering 2019



Our gifts for Mission & Service support the important work of reconciliation with Indigenous members of The United Church of Canada. One of the programs Mission & Service supports is the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering. Many Indigenous members met on the territory of the Chippewas of Rama near Orillia, Ontario, in August 2019 to discern and decide on the structure and priorities for the self-determining Indigenous church within the United Church.

This fourth National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering provided opportunities for listening to and discerning the Creator's plan, visioning, spiritual nurture, mutual accountability, inspiration, education, youth development, and expressing the voice of the Indigenous community on spirituality and ministry.

Using the *Biidaabin** (“first light of a new day”) process of education, reflection and discussion, discernment, and decision-making, participants created and named a new national Indigenous church organization, elected a new National Indigenous Council, appointed a National Elders Council, and set priorities for the next triennium. The National Indigenous Council is an intergenerational group that includes two youth leaders.

As the planning team declared in its vision statement, the gathering would “inform, transform, and manifest healing and vitality. This is our act of decolonizing.” This vision and the decisions made at the gathering will help the Indigenous church to speak with a strong voice as its members continue to live into right relations.

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.

*Pronounced be-DAH-bin.





Disabled Farmers in Cuba

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Mission & Service–funded global partner the Cuban Council of Churches has united two goals in a pilot project: encouraging sustainable farming and creating churches that are more inclusive of people with disabilities. Twenty families in four provinces in Cuba receive farming support and pastoral care. Farmers diversify their skills, gain more autonomy, and improve their families’ resilience.

Ernesto González, the project coordinator, is an agronomist who lives with partial paralysis. He offers support to farmers who may have visual impairments, intellectual disabilities, damaged hands, or other challenges, explaining that the project meets a need for inclusion while supporting economic improvement.

An important part of the project includes participants giving back to their communities and to other people living with disabilities. This way, strengthening family economies also involves building a social economy—one built on collaboration rather than competition. For example, one man who has an intellectual disability works with his parents to produce a variety of vegetable crops, and then they share some of their produce with a seniors’ home. Other families raise sheep, goats, or pigs.

“Our emphasis is to support these people first with what they want to do,” says Ernesto.

Funds raised through the Gifts with Vision program of the United Church are used to provide small grants so families can buy seeds, small animals, or whatever they need to improve their farms.

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Bissell Centre Offers Hope and Housing Help



Our Mission & Service grants for community ministries like Bissell Centre's Outreach Housing Team offers hope for a safer, more prosperous future to many people like Joe. Joe had been living on the streets when he first moved to Edmonton to be closer to his children. His first visit to Bissell Centre was for a shower and clean clothing. Afterward, he found a group of people sleeping under a gazebo together, using an electric blanket covered by a tarp to keep warm at night. "We slept under there, huddled together, just hoping to wake up in the morning," he said.

But after being robbed and left to freeze one night, Joe needed to make a change. Bissell Centre's support workers helped him find an affordable apartment and piece his life back together. "There were some nights when I wasn't sure if I'd survive. If it wasn't for Bissell Centre, I'd probably have frozen out there," he says. "But now, I'm okay. I have my kids and family back, and I have a lot of support. And I have a beautiful home to call my own." He has a job, and he volunteers at the Centre to give back to the community. None of this would have been possible without Mission & Service.

With additional support from Gifts with Vision, over 45 people housed through Bissell Centre's Outreach Housing Team were given a gift when they moved into new housing last year; items such as pots and pans, utensils, and linens made them feel more at home. Funds were also used to purchase bus tickets to help people get to apartment viewings, secure new identification, or obtain a criminal record check.

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Access to Education in Zambia

Women for Change is a Mission & Service-funded global partner that empowers girls and women through education. Access to education is a major challenge in Zambia, especially in rural areas where the majority of people live below the poverty line. An estimated 500,000 children of primary and secondary school age are not enrolled in school. Rural children, especially girls, are more likely to drop out of the school system or never be enrolled at all. Traditional attitudes toward women, poverty, early marriage, gender-based violence, lack of sanitation facilities, and the decision to use scarce resources to educate boys rather than girls all block girls and women from fully participating in educational opportunities.

When the United Church Women heard stories of girls and women in Zambia, they wanted to help and decided to support Women for Change as their major project for three years.

The people behind Women for Change know that it takes more than just money, books, and shoes to motivate girls to remain in school. There are few role models, particularly in rural areas—women who have received higher education and can inspire girls by showing them the difference an education can make.

With the support of United Church Women and through Mission & Service, Women for Change will focus on programming to create opportunities to give girls and young women living in rural areas the encouragement they need to remain in school.

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Taking a Leap of Faith



Our gifts for Mission & Service support theological education in seven theological schools across Canada. Emmanuel College in Toronto is one of them.

There is a certain energy when you enter Emmanuel College that is difficult to pinpoint. The energy could be from the history of students and faculty, many of whose pictures hang in the corridors, or it could be the energy of the current student body, a diverse interfaith group studying for ministry, teaching, or lifelong learning.

Like many United Church theological schools, Emmanuel is a place to explore and challenge long-held beliefs. The process for those who are studying for ministry has many paths to navigate, from interviews with regional councils to internships and meeting all the requirements of their courses. That is where the faculty come in, educators with a special pastoral side that is not found in other university settings. Theological colleges can become places that feel like home, and that is truly where the energy comes from—the feeling of care and respect between students and professors.

What a gift it is to support students and colleges like these! Thank you for your gifts that create a welcoming and caring environment where students can explore and take risks.

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.





Sharing Circle Lifts Indigenous Voices

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries as well as Healing Fund projects like the weekly sharing circle at St. Matthews Maryland. This community ministry offers health and wellness programs to meet basic needs and help families thrive.

One of the programs is a weekly sharing circle led by an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, followed by a simple lunch. One participant describes her experience there:

The Elder opened the sharing circle with a prayer and lit some sage, one of the traditional medicines used by Indigenous peoples. When sage is burned, the smoke cleanses a person's body, mind, and spirit so they can put aside their worries and be present. Also, it is believed that smoke can carry a person's prayers to the Creator.

Once the circle opened, we all took turns sharing anything we wanted. The Elder taught us about the Anishinaabe Creation Story, and later we talked about what we learned.

After the sharing circle we had lunch. The bannock was delicious! I was happy to chat with one of the Indigenous participants who was a long way from home on the west coast of British Columbia. She first came to St. Matthews Maryland three years ago looking for services, and the warm reception encouraged her to return for programming. Eventually, she started to volunteer and built her confidence as a helper.

I was grateful to them for providing such a safe place for the participants to build relationships, learn about health issues, and support their goals for health and wellness.

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We Love Our Ministers!



The Rev. Bronwyn Corlett shares this reflection:

When my father was sick, my minister visited. The minister didn't stay long—just long enough to let us know we were cared for, thought of, and prayed for. We were not alone.

After I was in a car crash, I visited my minister to share my fear, anxiety, and confusion. My minister listened and asked questions. Not too many—just enough to let me know I was heard, I was okay, and I was prayed for. I was not alone.

Our ministers are present in the big moments: baptisms and funerals, weddings and divorces, celebrations and crises. They are there in the everyday moments: visiting, witnessing, and walking with us. They remind us of God's presence while we wrestle with life, faith, and love. Ministers are not perfect or infallible. They each have different gifts from God and are called to unique service.

Thank you to our ministers. Thank you for the sermons, the prayers, and the visits. Thank you for the times you leave your own families to sit with someone else's. Thank you for your leadership and your late nights. Thank you for answering God's call and living it out in The United Church of Canada.

Thanks to our gifts for Mission & Service, ministers are supported through training at theological schools and education centres and through continuing education.

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Young Palestinian Refugees

Imagine living in a refugee camp with minimal rights to work, own property, or travel. Imagine families living in that camp—parents, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren all together. Imagine if those families could see no end to the cycle of poverty and violence they were experiencing living there. That reality is what Palestinians in 12 refugee camps in Lebanon have been facing for 70 years.

The camps themselves are overcrowded, and the infrastructure is deteriorating. More Palestinian refugees displaced from camps in Syria have added to the cramped living conditions. Youth, many rebellious and frustrated, are particularly affected by the overcrowding. Seeing no future, many of them drop out of school or are recruited by violent extremist factions in the camps. Mission & Service partner the Joint Christian Committee for Social Service in Lebanon, part of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, is working to change that dynamic with a program for children aged 11–15 called Children on the Go.

The program offers an alternative to the growing culture of violence by providing at-risk youth with other ways to creatively express themselves and imagine a positive future. The program teaches conflict resolution and gives young people the skills to resist social pressures to resort to violence. And just as important for their future, the youth are given practical vocational training. They are then able to make a meaningful contribution to their families and their communities, learn skills, and gain the respect of peers, parents, and community.

Your gifts to Mission & Service help build resilience and a culture of peace in the midst of conflict in the refugee camps of Lebanon.

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A Mish-Kid of China: Betty Gale



The United Church of Canada has a rich history of saints who have gone before us but whose influence is still being felt. For many in the west end of Toronto, it was one strong, kind woman who showed those who encountered her just what amazing things Mission & Service can do. Betty Gale (née Thompson) was one of these saints. Betty grew up in China as one of several “mish-kids” born to missionary parents in North China. She returned in the 1930s, after nursing training in Canada, at the urging of Dr. Robert McClure, and it was there that she met and married Dr. Godfrey Gale.

They had their first child, Margie, just before the Japanese invaded China in 1941, which led first to house arrest and then three years of interment in POW camps around North China. Betty kept a journal of her family’s time during the war, detailing the poor treatment and horrible conditions of the buildings they lived in. But even during the worst times, Betty was always able to find something funny or hopeful to share.

The Second World War took its toll on the missionaries. Years later, Betty and Godfrey gave a painful account of the illness and death of Eric Liddell, a Scottish missionary and athlete in the 1924 Olympics, another mish-kid who had returned to China to work within his family’s mission. His story became famous in the 1981 movie *Chariots of Fire*.

The missionaries’ passion for making a difference in the lives of people in other parts of the world, as well as at home, has inspired many to follow in their footsteps. Betty and Godfrey’s story and passion live on in those they have influenced. Thanks to Mission & Service, they are part of a great cloud of witnesses that The United Church of Canada of today is built on. We will remember them!

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.





Transforming Young Lives and the World

Inspiring young people to make the world a better place is the vision of The GO Project, a ministry of Islington United Church in Toronto. Since its inception in 2007, the project has welcomed more than 1,500 staff and participants in its children- and youth-focused ministries. Not only have the lives of young people been transformed, but Spirit-filled young people have also returned to their communities and their churches to help change the lives of others.

In the words of one young adult staff member,

The GO Project is unlike any other experience I've had or heard of. Working as part of an organization that is focused on faith in action for such a diverse group of people and communities has taught me so much about myself, my faith, and the world around me. The GO Project takes what we as Christians may have learned from a fairly young age about faith and puts it into practice on the street in a way that is accessible to anyone and everyone.

The GO Project has begun creating a new generation of both lay and ordered ministers within The United Church of Canada. Your gifts to Mission & Service have provided various grants to The GO Project and have indeed made the world a better place.

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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Experiencing Magic at Camp McDougall



There is no place like camp for campers and staff alike to live life to the fullest, experience the beauty and wonder of creation, and build meaningful relationships. Thanks to your gifts for Mission & Service, campers can continue to have meaningful experiences at camps like Camp McDougall in Thessalon, Ontario.

The Camp McDougall staff strive to have a positive effect on the lives of the young people spending time there, and they recognize the importance of their role in this experience and provide guidance, entertainment, leadership, example, and friendship. Making the most of this opportunity creates the ultimate camp experience for everyone.

As a United Church camp, Camp McDougall is an entity both rich in tradition and dedicated to encouraging new ideas. Throughout the years, many people have contributed a great deal of time and effort to make the camp what it is today. Board members, staff members, counsellors, and even campers have the potential to contribute to the ongoing development and success of this organization.

Camp McDougall is blessed with the raw materials for a great summer: a fantastic location on the shore of Lake Huron near Thessalon, Ontario; an enthusiastic and capable staff; and most important, lots of excited campers ready to experience the magic.

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Advent Communion Liturgy

As we come to this table,
we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ,
a banquet prepared for everyone.
All who seek to be nourished and sustained
in the journey of faith,
all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to peace and justice,
are welcome here.

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts in prayer.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise.

Let us pray:

*(The following prayer was inspired by “Blessed are you, gracious God...”
by William Kervin and Lillian Perigoe in Celebrate God’s Presence,
page 276. Used with permission.)*

Blessed are you, Breath of peace,
Giver of all life,
Source of love that knows no boundaries.
Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began;
throughout the ages, your song of liberation has inspired us with your
hope for a world where
 those considered last and least are first and most, and
 all work together for peace.

As we wait and watch for your coming among us,
we proclaim your goodness.

(All sing: “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” Voices United 1)



God of hope, make this bread the means of our rebuilding,
this wine the medium of our transformation,
this table the foundation of our renewal,
and this community the place of our rebirth. Amen.

At this time, we remember Jesus,
Who, on the night before he died,
took a loaf of bread,
gave you thanks, broke it, and said,
“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”
Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying,
“This is the new covenant; remember me.”

Make us, while many, one.
Make us, though broken, whole.
Make us, despite death, alive.
And so we pray:
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Sharing the Bread and Cup

The body of Christ,
the Bread of life.
The lifeblood of Christ,
the cup of blessing.

Let us eat and drink together
for our strengthening in the faith,
and for the sake of the world.

Communion is served.

Prayer after Communion

**We thank you, God,
for breaking into our world
and pouring into our lives and our experiences.**

**We thank you, God,
for this meal of thanksgiving
and the stories of love, grace, and hope that it tells. Amen.**

by Alydia Smith





Growing at Golden Lake Camp

Our gifts for Mission & Service make United Church camps places where many lives are transformed. Let us hear from Amy, a young adult leader at Golden Lake Camp in the Upper Ottawa Valley.

This year will be my second as Program Director for Golden Lake Camp and my fourth year in total. I started my GLC journey as a volunteer, spending two and a half weeks there my first summer.

I could go into lots of detail about all the amazing things I experienced—the equally amazing staff and campers I met, the personal and spiritual growth I went through, and the deeper connection with God I fostered—but I don't think you want to hear an essay-length story! In short, by the end of my time volunteering I had been having so much fun that I didn't even remember to cash my honorarium cheque. The Executive Director (the one-and-only lovely Beth Payson) told me the following summer when I applied for a permanent position how I had kind of messed up the budget that year by not cashing it...whoops!

Working at GLC literally (and I don't use that word lightly) made my life better, and I've met some lifelong friends there. The atmosphere and love in this place are infectious, and you truly make a noticeable difference in children's lives.

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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Leading the Way



Mission & Service-funded global partner the World Student Christian Federation–Africa Region gives university students a place to come together in education, faith, and activism.

WSCF-Africa empowers and connects responsible young leaders around the world on their path to change tomorrow. It encourages a culture of democracy to mobilize youth to become proactive in society, promoting positive change through dialogue and action between different traditions and cultures.

At a gathering, one of the World Student Christian Federation members shared these words:

As young people, we ask the churches not to spread hate speech or judgment but to preach love, peace, and acceptance for all people as God’s creation. We ask our churches to take part in interfaith dialogue, to start building relationships with members of other faiths, so that we may come to understand their beliefs and accept them as brothers and sisters. We ask our churches to acknowledge that we cannot master the truth; we can only approach the truth. Only God holds the truth. As the present youth, we are the church of the future. Because of this, it is important for the churches to communicate with us and to ensure that our opinions are heard. It is part of the role of churches to promote human dignity and to serve the common good.

We are thankful that Mission & Service is in partnership with the World Student Christian Federation and its vision of changing the world for the better.

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.





Providing Quality Education in Zambia

In 2015, the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which named 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty. Goal 4, quality education, is critical for communities to develop innovative solutions to daily challenges.

According to UN statistics, over 265 million children worldwide are not enrolled in school. Access to education is a challenge in many parts of the world, particularly in rural areas, and it's one that Zambia's Mission & Service partners Women for Change and People's Action Forum are tackling.

Women for Change encourages girls and young women in rural Zambia to stay in school. The group works with national and community leaders to develop an understanding of the importance of education for all young people. It works with families, offering livelihood training to help address the economic issues that may be keeping girls out of school. It also works with teachers to support girls who return to school, and with communities to break down the cultural and social norms that sometimes prevent girls from completing their education.

People's Action Forum (PAF) also works with rural communities in Zambia to help them see how their resources can be used to improve local education. Collaboration between schools and local communities has turned schools into hubs of community health and development, including providing safe community water supplies. Through a mentorship program called Girls Action Forum, PAF helps girls succeed by providing the skills, space, and encouragement they need to thrive.

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Humanitarian Aid for Rohingya



No person should ever be persecuted because of their religion or culture. No one should have to struggle daily to find enough food, a place to sleep, or simply a place to exist, yet that has happened repeatedly to the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. For decades they faced religious and ethnic persecution, which escalated in 2017. They were tortured and killed in Myanmar, and their homes and villages were burned to the ground.

Almost a million escaped to the town of Cox's Bazar in nearby Bangladesh to what became, in November 2018, the largest refugee camp in the world.

ACT Alliance, a Mission & Service global ecumenical partner, is on the ground at the Cox's Bazar refugee camp distributing humanitarian aid in the form of food, shelter materials, warm clothing, hygiene kits, safe water, and emergency medical help.

ACT Alliance also hosted the organization Clowns Without Borders to share the importance of hygiene in a fun way. The Cox's Bazar camp is located in a floodplain; mix that with almost a million people and the result can be a variety of diseases, some of them life-threatening. Thanks to ACT Alliance, many of the Rohingya refugees are able to keep disease at bay by using the skills they were taught and the hygiene kits they received.

Through our gifts for Mission & Service, lives are truly saved every day in Cox's Bazar camp.

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.





Fighting Human Trafficking

The Diocese of Durgapur of Mission & Service partner the Church of North India has a vision: Transforming Communities, Changing Lives. Since 2011, the Diocese has been doing just that with the Anti Human Trafficking Program in North and South Dinajpur Districts.

These areas are both sources and transit points for human trafficking. Two key parts of the prevention strategy are training youth, children, and their guardians to recognize human trafficking, and teaching them ways to protect themselves and help others from being trafficked.

The primary reason for trafficking is poverty. Traffickers lure parents with promises of education, a better life, and money. In some cases, parents are given cash in return for sending their children to the traffickers. But instead of the better life promised, children are put to work in brick kilns or carpentry units or as domestic servants, indentured labour, beggars, or sex trade workers. Traffickers are also involved in harvesting organs.

Through the Diocese of Durgapur, the Church of North India organizes awareness sessions with community leaders, guardians, and youth who may be directly approached by traffickers. The training includes sharing stories from trafficking victims as well as making them aware of the laws intended to protect victims and prosecute traffickers. Through a growing network of community relationships, the Diocese works with local leaders and authorities to stop this abhorrent trade.

Your gifts to Mission & Service help save adults and children from being trafficked.

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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