



Board of Elders of the Canadian District of the Moravian Church in America

DISTRICT DISPATCH

NEWSLETTER

November 2020

President's Remarks

Waiting ...

It's closer to Advent and Christmas and we remain in this time of waiting. Waiting for the Joy and Calm as we remember the birth of our Saviour. Waiting to again gather together with our Sisters and Brothers and sing praises to our God. Waiting for the movement of the Holy Spirit to be made evident in our lives and in our world. Waiting for this worldwide pandemic to end.

And yet we see the work of the Spirit in our lives as we tend to our fellow travellers – weary from the journey, willing to receive kindness from others, and wondering about what's next. And here we are, God's people, chosen to be the means through which care, and attention, and love are expressed in this world. And the source of our energy and willingness to rise again to the meet challenges of our days? The indwelling Holy Spirit and life-giving energy of our loving God and redemptive work of our Saviour empower each of us to serve people we meet each day. Darkness ends at Light, night ends at daybreak. There is hope. God bless us all.

Worship during Pandemic

Many thanks to the leadership folks at our congregations and related groups. The creative ways our clergy leaders have shown care and nurture for one another is complimented by their sure and certain message of hope that we have in our Lord. The video world has linked us in new ways and for that we are thankful.

Board leaders have paid careful attention to Provincial Guidance documents, which are updated with new directions to respond to this worldwide pandemic. The August publication of our Moravian Church in Canada "Reopening Churches During Covid-19; Discernment and Guidance" provided a framework for church leaders to consider. This disruptive change creates a context for decision making for our leaders, and they remain careful stewards of our entities always putting safety first.

As always, ongoing risk assessment continues to be central to the way we function. Opening with restrictions has been a challenge, just as remaining closed has been a challenge to our faith groups. Future decisions will incorporate what we know and anticipate and, of course, will be subject to change.

Budget Time and Church Council

Church Council meetings being planned for the New Year will likely be online as we continue to do the work of the Church. Ratification of those on-line decisions can be made at the next in-person meeting. During this unpredictable time District leaders chose to plan for a status quo budget rather than predict possible outcomes. Budgets are always subject to change.

The 2021 District budget reflects careful decreases in expenses and minimal reductions in income. The per-capita increase of \$2.35 reflects fewer congregational members to support District expenses. The increase to Van-Es supports camp staffing that was previously part of the District assessment.

Governance Task Force

From our 2016 District Synod came a recommendation "to review and take appropriate actions of governance and financial relationships between BECD Moravian entities". Members of the Task Force have recommended that BECD accept the report of professional consultants who provided findings and recommendations of the Task Force's scope of work. From that work with Moravian Entities there is an action plan that responds to governance and financial responsibilities. The meetings and consultations have been done for the cross-border transactions - paperwork must be completed to satisfy CRA in the event of an audit. More information will be provided as we approach our upcoming District Synod in May 2021.

Canadian District Synod 2021

Our upcoming Synod has been set for Friday to Sunday, May 21-23, on the long weekend. The District Synod planning group is meeting to set the agenda and host a special synod by video conference rather than in person. This mirrors the plans of the other Districts of the Northern Province.

Bruderheim

There remains hope for a negotiated settlement of the ongoing dispute between the Bruderheim Community Church and the Moravian Church Northern Province. The appeal of the 2018 decision was recently denied and so the ownership of the property remains with the Moravian Church holding that property in trust for a Moravian Congregation at Bruderheim.

Alberta Churches:

Christ Moravian Church Goes Virtual and Real!

As all of our congregations reacted to the early March issues of ceasing public worship, gatherings and events, Christ Moravian Church leadership looked at the creative possibilities of being church in a virtual yet real way.

A creative worship team was formed with several of the principals being:

Video Editor- Steve Blackwell,

Music Coordinator- Heidi Gohdes,

Video and Audio Coordinator- Jeff Pratt

Worship Coordinator- Rev. Steve Gohdes

Along with CMC Executive Board support and the input by the Fellowship of Elders, Christ Church began weekly worship videos on March 22, that have continued to this point with plans to continue into 2021. These worship videos have several essential elements in their planning. Worship within the setting of the CMC sanctuary, but including cameo features of parishioners real lives; Music that is singable at home and creates the sense of being with one another in song; Worship themes and expressions that are central to the Christian life of today amidst the pandemic; and the inclusion of many congregational folks in the weekly videos (one week some 30 CMC folks were seen on the video). We have recognized that this experience of worship touches almost 95% of the congregation with several folks receiving weekly DVD's in order to "go to church".

A wonderful unforeseen by-product of the weekly worship video are the many "out of town" and "new CMC Moravians" who are regularly attending and experiencing this simple time of worship via the internet or CMC website. One of Pastor Steve's greatest thrills is to receive an "out of town" note or letter from someone who has come to church on-line. The love and the joy of Christ's amazing grace and peace finds its way into the hearts and lives of those we don't even know in a personal way...yet! As Rev. Gohdes concludes these worship videos with the special blessing..."Go now in the peace of Christ", we know the peace of Christ gets extended to God's people amidst these unique times.

Edmonton Moravian

EMC is continuing to worship over zoom and small online gatherings for study. We look forward to sharing resources and videos with Edmonton area congregations.

Good News

On November 1 Pastor Ian announced that Eileen has accepted a call to serve Palmer Moravian Church in Easton Pennsylvania, so the Edwards family will be on their way back East in the new year. The timing depends on the work visa process for Ian; he'll receive an appointment to service in the Eastern District and be open to call once they are back in the Lehigh Valley.

Good News continues to worship virtually, with a recorded video being put out along with a Zoom worship on Sunday mornings. We managed to get two in-person gathering in before the Covid numbers went up in mid-October, our plan is to resume once the numbers come back down.

Good Shepherd

Good Shepherd has been having in person services since Thanksgiving, but due to rising numbers of Covid in Calgary, we have decided to go virtual at least till the end of the year, and will be making a decision to go back to in person services when cases show significant decreases.

We are grateful to the team of people who are putting in the effort to making our recorded services wonderful reflections of who we are as a community as well as glorifying God in our common work.

We will be having in person Christmas Eve service in addition to our online service, but it will be smaller numbers with all safety protocols in place.

Millwoods

Millwoods Community Church continues striving to provide the best streamed worship experience we can. We normally have 30 devices streaming our services on Sunday morning, and there's no way to tell how many people are watching each device. Currently, 15 pre-registered people, including the worship team, are allowed in the building for a service. We have a large volunteer team without which our services would not be possible. We are excited to work with our sister congregations to create content for our Christmas services this year. Right now, we are working to provide Christmas gifts to moms who have fled abusive relationships and are starting a new life with their children at a local women's shelter. This is a simple reminder that they are loved, cared for, and not alone, especially during this transitional period in their lives.

Rio Terrace

During the last several months, the people of Rio Terrace Church have truly learned about the importance of social connection with our faith communities. Social Isolation has become apparent and we feel a call to re-think how we connect and relate, in healthy, meaningful ways.

During the season of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, we will be running a **Winter Patio**, appropriate for physical distancing, built around our ice cream stand. You are invited to come and relax in a beautiful outdoor space, physically distanced with friends, without the expectation of buying anything. On Sunday afternoons, between 3:30 pm - 8:30 pm, we will offer hot chocolate and cookies from the Ice Cream Stand.

Illuminight will be held on Sunday, December 13, from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm. Luminaria kits will be available for sale the week leading up to illuminight, and proceeds will benefit Jasper Place Wellness Centre. While our illuminight traditionally features horse-drawn wagon rides, and festivities inside the Church, this year, we will invite people to walk the neighbourhood and visit the pocket parks throughout, to take part in passive, seasonal, and responsible activities. Hot Chocolate and Cookies will be made available from the Church's Winter Patio.

For **Christmas Eve**, we will distribute trimmed beeswax candles to our members and neighbourhood, along with some words to traditional Moravian Christmas Carols and information about our livestream and children's program. The Christmas Eve stream will become available at 4 pm on Christmas Eve, and some passive programming will be available outside of the Church building after dinner.

Starting in January, Rio will share in **neighbourhood-based spirituality**, built around the specific neighbourhoods where our members and friends live. We will go for neighbourhood walks, in particular in Rio Terrace, Riverbend area, and Jasper Place, to study, listen to, and pray for our neighbourhoods. Then, we will take part in a neighbour-based book study of Peter Block's famous work, *The Abundant Community*, and discern how we can support the City of Edmonton's *Abundant Communities Initiative*. If you are a member of another Moravian Church in Edmonton and would like to take part in this work, you are very welcome to do so. Contact Pastor James at jlavoy@gmail.com, or (780) 487-0211.

Rio Terrace Church would also like to thank our **Church Administrator, Connie Head**, for her four years of service to Rio Terrace Church, and we congratulate her on her retirement at the end of December!

Ecumenical linkages

The Moravian Church in Canada has observer status with the Canadian Council of Churches and will continue to engage with other denominations as a forum to influence our communities for good. In another effort, the Lutheran, Anglican, and Moravian Churches in Canada have agreed to explore full communion partnerships that mirror the connections among these denominations in the USA. As we enter into this work, we will keep you updated.

Board of World Mission News:

Mission Stories

To: Congregations & Members of the
Moravian Church in Canada

From:

Donna Gordon, Canadian Moravian Mission Society Chair

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A lot has happened in our world since the last Canadian Moravian Mission Society (CMMS) report in May 2019. We have all had to make adjustments during the global pandemic and our churches have learned to do things differently. The same has been true for the work being done by the CMMS and the Board of World Mission (BWM) as the attention has shifted towards helping with food shortages and medical needs caused by the pandemic.

The CMMS has very little funding of its own. It makes recommendations to the BECD for how to spend monies held in the Moravian Mission Development Fund (MMDF). The income in the MMDF is dependent on what churches contribute to Common Ministries. Declining income has impacted the amount of funds that can be dispersed for mission projects. In addition, the decision by the UCP government to discontinue the Community Initiatives Program (CIP) grant has greatly reduced the amount of support that can be provided to the Moravian Institute in Rajpur. Although these funds have been reduced, it is encouraging to note that a number of congregations and individuals continue to support mission causes in their own way. The following is a list of activities since May 2019:

Short Term Mission Support:

- Short term mission support of \$250 each was given to two young adults from Christ Church, Bryan and Mark Gates, who travelled to the Virgin Islands in late June of 2019 to attend Convo. The CMMS does not usually support Convo participants, but this trip had a strong mission component which included rebuilding a school that was damaged during devastating hurricanes.
- Two youth and their chaperones came from Labrador to attend VanEs camp in July 2019. One participated in the upper elementary camp while the other joined junior high camp. The MMDF provided \$1000 towards this project.
- Short term mission support of \$250 each was given to Trina and Ken Holmberg for their mission trip to Nepal in the fall of 2019.

Haiti Project

With the Alberta Government CIP grant no longer available, plans to support a multipurpose building for a school and church headquarters in Haiti had to be cancelled. In addition, the President of the Jamaica Province who is in charge of supervising Haiti, reported that their plans had changed with regard to the needs in Haiti.

Moravian Institute in Rajpur

Thanks to the generous denotations of individuals and congregations, the Fall 2019 Emergency Fundraising Campaign raised \$37,787 to support the Moravian Institute in Rajpur. This more than made up for the anticipated \$25,000 that would have come from receiving the CIP grant. Ongoing support is still needed for this important Moravian educational program in India.

Donors to the Rajpur Foster Child project should have now received the report sent out by the Rajpur coordinator, Steven Brese. In this report, Steven states that the "financial situation at the Moravian Institute is precarious". The cost to employ quality teachers has risen, and "donations are necessary to adapt to the COVID world, maintain safe and healthy practices and continue the high level of education and spiritual support that the Moravian Institute offers." In the spring of 2020, \$2000 from the MMDF was donated to help the Moravian Institute cope with the pandemic. For further information or to donate, contact Steven at rajpur.fpp@gmail.com.

Support for BWM Projects

In an effort to promote self-reliance and long-term viability, the BWM is gradually moving away from providing subsidies to partner provinces and is replacing this with project grants. Mission partners can apply for grants to meet the specific needs of their area. Donations to the BWM may be designated to a specific project or to the mission grant program to be dispersed as needs arise. \$2,000 from the MMDF was donated to the BWM to help fund mission grant projects. An additional \$1,000 was donated to the Armando Rusindo Mission Foundation, a partner of the BWM that supports the work of the Moravian Church in Cuba.

Since the pandemic began in the spring of 2020, funding requests from mission partners for general projects have been almost non-existent. Instead, our mission partners have asked for help to cope with food shortages and medical needs brought on by the pandemic. \$4,000 was donated from the MMDF to BWM Disaster Response to help with these needs. More information about the work of the BWM can be found at www.moravian.org/mission.

Synod 2020

Proposed plans to discuss the identify, purpose and organization of the CMMS in preparation for the spring 2020 Synod were postponed due to the pandemic. This may again be brought forward once plans are finalized to conduct a special Synod in early 2021, virtually or otherwise. At this Synod, it will necessary to find a new CMMS chair as Donna Gordon has decided not to let her name stand for a second term.

A special thank you goes out to the current members of the CMMS:

Steven Brese (Rajpur Representative), Korel Dawkins (Edmonton), Ian Edwards (Good News), Joice Ehrenholz (Rio Terrace), Donna Gordon (Christ Church), Brenda Jones, (Millwoods), Lana Miller (Good Shepherd), Pat Wolf (Christ Church)

Camp Van-Es

Camp Van Es thanks our community for your support over these last several months. The nature of Camp and its facility offerings is such that it is based around *being present* - and Covid restrictions very reasonably limit this. We were not able to hold a summer camp this year, and many of our regular user groups have put their in-person gatherings on hold. We thank everyone who has been generous with their giving to Camp Van Es and assure you that we are eager to re-open as public health restrictions subside.

At the moment, we are planning a new effort, the ***Van Es Sunday Ski and Soup***. On Sunday afternoons, from January 17 - March 21, several trails at Van Es will be groomed for XC/Nordic skiing and snowshoes will be made available. Come explore our trails in a wintry setting! At 4 pm, Soup dinners and small vesper gatherings around the campfire will be held. Volunteers are needed to provide hosting, as well as vesper leadership. If you would like more information about these Sunday afternoons, please contact Rev. James Lavoy, executive director for program, or visit VanEsCamp.com.

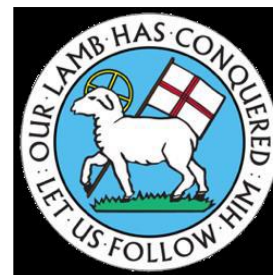
We are excited to announce **SUMMER CAMP DATES!**
June 30-July 3, Primary Camp (Completed Grades 1-3)
July 4 - July 9, Intermediate (Completed Grades 4-6)
July 11-July 17, Jr High (Completed Grades 7-9)
July 18 - July 24, Sr High (Completed Grades 10-12)

This year, camps will feel familiar, with hopeful partnerships with both Edmonton Public School Board and the Anglican Church in Canada. More details are forthcoming. We are also looking to hire several young adults to become paid, camp staff for the four weeks of Camp, with a possible connection to Birch Bay Ranch to extend summer work experiences. If you are interested in working at Camp, please contact Rev. James Lavoy, executive director for program, at jlavoy@gmail.com.

July 9 - July 11, we'll have a Post-High Retreat. Young adults aged 19-25 are invited to come for a weekend of nostalgia, fun, community, and spiritual formation.

September 3 - 6, we will have a Family Camp, celebrating Camp Van Es' 80th Anniversary. Families are welcome to come for the weekend in tents, RVs, cabins, Unity Lodge, or commute in, for a weekend of camp activities and celebration. More details are forthcoming. See you at Camp!

Rev. James Lavoy *He/Him*



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