

God has impacted the lives of individuals and congregations through the collective ministry of the MCEC community of congregations. Together we are extending the peace of Jesus Christ through making disciples, growing congregations, and forming leaders. The following provides you with glimpses into that ministry.

Bible Quizzing **It Does Not End With The Competition!**

A Positive Facebook Message . . .

Jeremie opened his computer after an intense day of MCEC Youth Bible Quiz competition. After months of studying the book of *Luke* with his friends, his team came in second to the other team from their congregation. An all Hawkesville final!

Exhausted and ready to relax, Jeremie opened Facebook. There he started chatting with one of his friends. He filled her in on his day and his friend replied that she did not read her Bible anymore. She knew all the stories, but did not believe because she had too many questions. Jeremie spent the next moments sharing his faith with her and used some of the very familiar stories he had recently studied from *Luke*.

His Bible quizzing coach had told him often that Bible quizzing was more than just a competition. During the months of studying “you learn a whole lot about the Bible and some is bound to stick in your brain.” That night on Facebook, some of the “stuck in your brain” information from the past months of studying *Luke* helped Jeremie to share God’s message with his friend. That conversation meant more to him than the Hawkesville Bible quizzing championship ever could. It was a reminder from God about the real reason for Bible quizzing.

Fostering
Biblical
literacy
in
youth
through
Bible
Quizzing.



making disciples

- Lives impacted through congregational ministry at local levels
- 7 teams of youth studied Luke for Youth Bible Quizzing - a faith formation opportunity for youth.
- Ministry through church development, urban, and service & justice ministries.
- MCEC Vacation Bible School Troupe ministered to 322 children and youth.
- 132 youth and leaders travelled to Caronport (SK), Peace-It-Together Conference (Winnipeg), and Asunción (Paraguay) to participate in wider church events.

Newly Discipled @ Kingsfield, Clinton

Meet Don . . .



“I became a believer in June 2007. I was sitting at a truck stop behind the wheel of my 18-wheeler when I heard a knock on my truck door. A chaplain entered and we began a thoughtful discussion on God and life.

That conversation shifted my consciousness towards faith in my own life. By spring of 2008, I could be seen regularly, with my family, at Kingsfield Clinton, the sister congregation of Zurich Mennonite.

This past spring, I could still see my old life in the rear view mirrors, but the shadow of that life was shrinking with each new day. The church family I have found at Kingsfield Clinton has been unconditionally supportive and loving. Two years after I first stepped into Zurich Mennonite Church to join in the celebration of my grandson's dedication, I officially joined the Clinton church in a baptismal ceremony.”

Kingsfield Clinton is the first of many such communities that Zurich Mennonite Church, an historic, established, rural congregation, hopes to establish and nurture as God directs. Many lives are being transformed. MCEC congregations walk with this exciting ministry through financial and prayerful support.

- 108 youth attended Amazing Peace at Conrad Grebel University College, an event in partnership with MCEC.
- 140 youth attended Winter Retreats
- Task group met for 120 hours to plan Yella! 2010 young adult trip to Israel/ Palestine for 20 youth and 4 Faith Partners. (See story page 13.)
- 276 junior youth and sponsors reflected upon “Caring for God's Creation” at Jr. Youth Breakaway.

making disciples



The Discipleship Circle

Meet Elizabeth . . .

Imagine a world of enforced silence amidst the hustle, bustle, and noise of life. While most of us would welcome a brief encounter with silence, Elizabeth deals with this each day. In 2001 her hearing loss had become so severe that she was forced to leave her job.

Elizabeth began to worship with Jane Finch Faith Community in 2004, and since then her faith has been reawakened with the help and encouragement of the congregation. She has found hope in God's love. She has come to realize that it is not her actions but her choice to commit to a lifelong relationship with God that is important: "Faith brought me life. Because of having life, I have hope."

Today Elizabeth is the chair of Jane Finch Faith Community's ministry team. Recently the pastors at Jane Finch helped her to apply for a cochlear implant and she is waiting, hopeful that her surgery will be booked by spring of 2010.

As chair of Jane Finch Faith Community's ministry team, Elizabeth now helps to foster hope in their people as together they extend Christ's peace to the Jane Finch area of Toronto. Jane Finch Faith Community is an MCEC supported congregation.



“ Faith brought me life.
Because of having life,
I have hope. ”

making disciples

Batman, Moses, Jesus, and Caesar Augustus

Go and Grow Funds to Extend Congregational Ministry

What could Batman, Moses, Jesus, and Caesar Augustus possibly have in common? This question was posed to Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church in the fall of 2009. MCEC's Go and Grow fund, a fund to extend congregational ministry, enabled WKUMC to provide a thought provoking study on the heroes of our faith and the effect they have on our lives today.

Intending to make the Bible more approachable and to enhance Biblical literacy, WKUMC invited their surrounding community to study, engage in conversation, and build relationship as they studied together. Disciples were nurtured and congregations strengthened as they met over five sessions.

"The five evenings we spent comparing the life narratives of heroes in the Biblical world were immensely stimulating. The ecumenical mix of the participants at our location made the course all the more enriching." Karl Dick from Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church shared these words of affirmation with his congregation.

Go and Grow: facilitating healthy congregational life through the discovery and release of God given gifts.



Iglesia Menonita Refugio de Paz

An Exciting Church Plant

“God has a plan for our church at Sherbrooke, QC,” says the spirited Lucy Roca. “We will become a mother church that will have a number of daughter churches.” Since 2006, the church plant in Sherbrooke has grown from one house church to **four** house churches within Montreal, along with the mother church in Sherbrooke.

Lucy, once a refugee from Columbia, is now a licensed pastor with MCEC for Refugio de Paz in Quebec. Sent to Mennonite Church Canada by representatives from the Mennonite Church in Columbia to be a church planter, MC Canada referred her to MCEC and she has since been working in this ministry in Quebec.

With a vision of more churches and a centre to help immigrants new to Canada, Lucy and her community provide love, support, and teaching as the ministry at Refugio de Paz continues to grow.



Worship at Refuge of Peace, a church plant overseen by pastor Lucy Roca. (Lucy pictured second from left.)

Discerning How To Be A Faithful Church

Discernment as the Church’s vocation

“It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task [of discernment], but you are not free to desist from it!” challenged Jack Suderman, Executive Secretary for Mennonite Church Canada at the fall MCEC consultation on the life of the church. “Our vocation is to be the Church,” he continued, “and when we face this vocation squarely, God will lead and guide us.”



Jack Suderman and Sue Steiner skillfully guided the people gathered through a discernment “exercise” to focus on how to discern together as the Body of Christ. Through small group discussions, prayer, and listening to God’s Spirit, a consensus soon developed that encouraged the Church to be a bold, discerning community that is not afraid. When we gather together as a community of congregations, our task is to discern, worship, and grow as a faithful body of Christ.

Prayer and worship - essential in a discernment process.

Supporting Congregations

Walking Alongside Congregations & Leaders

Teachers and students gathered this fall at Crosshill Mennonite Church as Woolwich Community Health Centre held literacy classes for Low German speaking newcomers.

In the mid 1990s, with a building no longer able to meet their growing needs, Crosshill Mennonite Church found themselves asking future focused questions prior to launching their capital project. How might God utilize a new building to reach the needs of the community?

After careful discernment, led in part by MCEC Congregational Ministries Minister, Jeff Steckley, Crosshill Mennonite Church now has a facility that enables them to connect with and serve their community in new ways.

MCEC staff resource and walk with congregations as together we extend the peace of Christ in our communities.



How Might Our Building Glorify God?



Healthy Pastors

Listening for the Sacred

“**L**isten for the sacred” was the invitation given by spiritual director, Miriam Frey, at the MCEC Pastors’ Fall Spiritual Retreat, an annual retreat offered to pastors at the beginning of September. Spiritually healthy pastors are an important component for growing, vital congregations. Pastors who are spiritually attuned are able to help congregations grow in their faith and attend to how the Spirit wants them to participate in God’s mission for the world.

Congregational health is nurtured through many continuing education and learning opportunities made available to pastors and congregational leaders.

growing congregations

- 8 church plants
 - Kingsfield Clinton
 - Quest, St. Catharines
 - Refugio de Paz (4), Sherbrooke & Montreal
 - soulSPACE, Stratford
 - Village International Mennonite Church, Ottawa
- 238 people considered the importance of discernment in the church at the MCEC fall consultation.
- 330 jars of peaches, salsa, tomatoes, zucchini relish, green beans and raspberry jam canned by 12 young adults from 7 congregations - combined event with MCC
- 56 people participated in an afternoon discussion on Hope for the Small Church.
- Go & Grow Fund extends the ministry of three congregations.

Bollywood Christmas

Our Multi Cultural Reality



Saris, bangles, songs, and dance were front and centre this past Christmas as the members of Markham Christian Worship Centre integrated their culture and their beliefs, performing the nativity play Bollywood style. Many Germanic congregations celebrated the holidays with a traditional telling of the story of Jesus' birth. The Mennonite way of life is for some, both a religion and a heritage. Today, increasing numbers of immigrants are adopting the Mennonite tradition.

One of these new Anabaptist congregations is the Markham Christian Worship Centre, a group of Tamil immigrants from Sri Lanka. The building where they worship shares its space with Hagerman Mennonite Church and Markham Chinese Mennonite Church: three cultures, one shared faith. These congregations exemplify the sharing of cultures that the MCEC community of congregations strives for in diversifying our faith community.

Markham Christian Worship Centre, along with eight other congregations, hold emerging church membership status in MCEC. They have a unique relationship with the MCEC community of congregations, receiving intentional nurture and various types of support as they explore full membership within MCEC.

growing congregations

- MCEC resource library updated for easier congregational access.
- Ministering to People with Chronic Mental Illness workshop draws 57 people from 32 congregations.
- 29 pastors begin in new ministry positions in MCEC congregations.
- 110 employees from 54 congregations benefit from Manulife Health & Dental benefits administered in the MCEC office.
- Individual congregational growth throughout MCEC.
- 8 Emerging congregations - in relationship with MCEC but not as full members:
 - Chin Christian Church
 - Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church
 - Markham Christian Worship Centre
 - Rehoboth Evangelical Church
 - The Church of the Living Word in Ottawa
 - The Gathering Church
 - Toronto United Lao Mennonite Church
 - Vision Mennonite Church



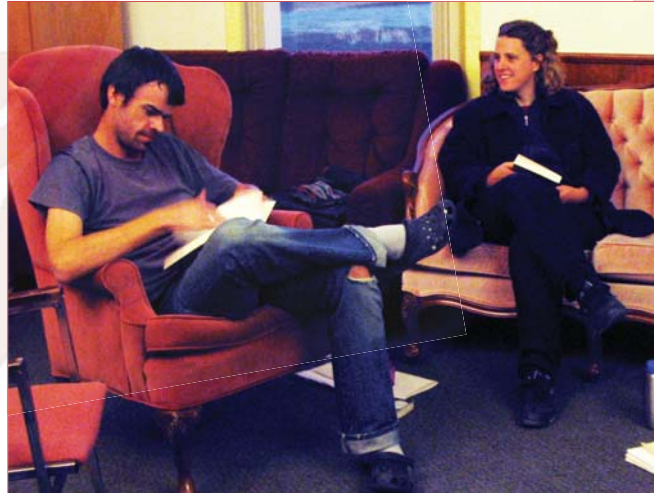
Joy to the World! MCEC celebrates Christmas in new and exciting ways!

Supporting New Pastors To Thrive... Not Just Survive!

Transitioning into Ministry - TiM

“Someone said to me a long time ago that the moment you really become a pastor is in your first congregation. Because of that, it is so important to have good support.” Sue Steiner, one of the coaches for the Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) program continues, “Part of what the TiM program recognizes is that the congregations who receive new pastors have a sacred role in helping to form that pastor even as the pastor ministers in the congregation. It is a two way street.”

TiM is a mentoring program for beginning pastors and the congregations who have called them. Healthy patterns and relationships established in the first few years of ministry are critical to the long term success of beginning pastors. TiM provides a formational experience that will lead to the development of faithful practices and habits for lifelong ministry. Through peer retreats, coaching, mentoring relationships, and support from MCEC staff, the TiM program is a unique model for helping new leaders to succeed.



David Driedger, Hillcrest Mennonite Church, and Juanita Laverty, Hanover Mennonite Church, receive peer support through the TiM program.

“.. the congregations who receive new pastors have a sacred role in helping to form that pastor ...”

forming leaders

- 5 Vacation Bible School Troupe members brought the VBS curriculum to 8 congregations.
- 5 youth worked with 3 adult mentors to plan the Youth Winter Retreat.
- Resourced over 250 active and retired pastors and chaplains.
- 18 beginning pastors participated in the Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) program.
- 86 people from 52 congregations attended School for Ministers.
- 54 people from 22 congregations attended the Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations workshop.
- 4 mid-career pastors were part of a 7-month group on Coaching for Effective Ministry.
- 10 pastors attended a two-day spiritual retreat on Listening for the Sacred.
- 45 pastors attended the Called to Mentor workshop.
- 16 pastors registered for the Before the Wedding workshop.
- 19 pastors interviewed for credentialing.
- 37 pastors met with mentors.
- Interim pastors met 7 times for sharing of support and resources.



Yella 2008
David Harder, kneeling,
is now a part of planning Yella! 2010.

Yella! 2010 Leadership Succession

“During my years of Sunday school and church services, the Bible seemed so theoretical and abstract. Actually going to the places you hear about in the Bible – Galilee, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem – really brought the Bible to life.”

David Harder was a part of the Yella 2008 experience – a young adult learning trip to Israel/Palestine. He is now involved in the planning for Yella! 2010. He continues, “Yella 2008 was such an amazing experience for me that I felt I had to contribute in any way I could to make sure other young adults have the same opportunity to go to Israel/Palestine that I did.”

Twenty young adults and four Faith Partners will be traveling to Israel/Palestine this coming May 2010. One of the significant aspects of this learning tour is that some of the Yella 2008 participants are now serving on the planning task group for the 2010 learning tour. They have offered invaluable contributions, bringing the perspective and lessons learned from the 2008 tour to plans for 2010. This year’s trip includes the addition of Faith Partners – experienced pastors and leaders to walk with the young adults through this life changing experience. Yella! 2010 is an MCEC and Mennonite Central Committee co-sponsored initiative.

Congregational Perspectives on Ordination God’s Spirit Continues To Call

“Bruce’s ordination was an affirmation for the whole congregation that God calls us to use our gifts in the church.” James Nafziger, former chair at Maple View Mennonite Church, shared this thought as he reflected on their pastor, Bruce Satatsky’s, recent ordination (January 2010). Maple View has had a long standing tradition of calling and ordaining pastors from within the congregation by lot. Bruce was their first pastor to be ordained through the current ordination process which involved a time of study and pastoral training, followed by the blessing of the wider church and congregation.

While in the past, Swiss Mennonite congregations used the lot, Russian Mennonite congregations selected their lay ordained ministers by voting. On January 3rd, North Leamington United Mennonite Church celebrated the ordination anniversaries of four lay ministers who had been called from within and ordained by the congregation: John P. Driedger (40 years), Cornelius Driedger (40 years), Paul Warkentin (25 years), and Walter Warkentin (25 years). On that same occasion, they celebrated the 25th ordination anniversary of their current pastor, Bruce Wiebe.

Twelve pastors were ordained in MCEC over the past year and a further seven licensed toward ordination. MCEC supports pastors and congregations in these important milestones.

- 20 pastors new to MCEC.
- 7 youth workers/pastors met monthly for group coaching.
- 12 ordinations; 7 licensing toward ordination.
- 74 pastors and lay leaders toured the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum.
- 6 volunteers assist pastoral reviews and searches
- 4 pastors on sabbatical received financial assistance
- 8 students received financial assistance for education
- 43 Administrators resourced around the church bulletin
- 20 leaders attended the MCEC Leadership Retreat
- 7 delegates appointed to MC Canada Assembly
- Support for church planters
 - Pastor Ash
 - Thom Braun
 - Anne Campion
 - Stefan Cherry
 - Tim Doherty
 - Lucy Roca
 - Troy Watson

GiFT: Growing in Faith Together

Goose Bumps of Excitement!

“This is not just sharing, but discerning and seeking... for the benefit of the larger body.”

I get goose bumps!

Congregations across MCEC worship each Sunday in 13 different languages! Cultural diversity is to be celebrated but can also bring challenges as we seek to be church together. A seed was planted and began to grow this past year. Plans have been set in place for twelve pastors and leaders from MCEC congregations to meet over the next year to learn, encourage, and build relationships through a new MCEC initiative, GiFT – Growing in Faith Together.

Don Penner, GiFT participant: “When you have your head down, going full speed in your own setting, you aren’t paying too much attention to what is happening outside. Here are 12 people who have the gift of drawing apart for five Saturdays in 2010 to share with each other about the focus and purpose of the church. This is not just sharing, but discerning and seeking – a small group praying and studying scripture together who are open to being shown something for the benefit of the larger body. I get goose bumps!”

Worship, Bible study, and sharing will unite these leaders from culturally diverse backgrounds, including Laotian, English, Chin, Ethiopian, Hmong, and Chinese, as they seek to discover an enlarged vision for being God’s people.

Administrative Leaders

Ministering In An Office Near You

The bulletin arrives each week, the calendar completed each month, and the administrative details of the congregation are mysteriously handled. The day to day functioning of the congregation just seems to happen. For many congregations, this appears to be the reality. However, behind the scenes there is often an individual carrying out the tasks required for the congregation to run smoothly administratively.



This past year, administrators from across MCEC gathered around the common theme of the congregational bulletin. “The day was awesome!” writes Anita Gingerich, administrator at Kingsfield Zurich (Zurich Mennonite Church). “It provided a place to connect with others who can totally understand the joys and frustrations of the job.”

Discussion and laughter rose and fell during the day as those gathered shared thoughts and ideas about the church bulletin and its relation to other communication areas within the congregation, for example, the bulletin board, website, or email lists. They further wrestled with issues surrounding transition within congregations, worshipping on a Sunday morning when others may view them as church administrators, and how to clarify lines of accountability.

Each year this important group of leaders comes together for a time of encouragement, continuing education and learning, and renewal.

Anita Gingerich - one of 43 administrators taking in *The Rise and Fall of the Church Bulletin* at MCEC Administrators’ Day.

I'm A Youth Minister - Now What Do I Do?!! *Youth Ministry Coaching*

“**W**hen I first started youth ministry, I was really enthusiastic and had lots of exciting ideas. Soon I found myself wondering ‘Now what do I do? Maybe I don’t know what I’m doing now that I am actually here!’” Susanne Thiessen, youth worker at Faith Mennonite Church, was one of the first youth ministers to experience the group coaching model initiative undertaken by MCEC this past year. Four women met monthly over the past year to share, encourage, and learn more about God’s call to them as they minister to youth. Three beginning youth ministers shared the joys and challenges they were experiencing, as their coach, Anne Campion, celebrated with them and helped to guide and nurture spiritual practices, ministry skills, and pastoral identity of the three young leaders.

As they travelled and met together over the past year, relationships grew and deepened between the three youth ministers, who were all from the Leamington area. This resulted in occasional joint programming between their congregations throughout the year - a direct result of the collegial relationships being nurtured through their coaching experience.

Susanne further shared that not only did Anne meet with the three youth ministers, but she also spent time with each congregation, meeting with their youth ministry teams. Using an appreciative inquiry model, she helped each look at their current youth ministry reality, as well as look ahead to future ministry opportunities and dreams.

The three Leamington youth ministers have now completed their coaching term. There are four more ministers who are currently working with Anne in the second year of this program, receiving support, encouragement and guidance for the important ministry of working with young people in our MCEC community of congregations.



Anne Campion, youth ministry coach, is passionate about supporting youth leaders in ministry.

Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church

A Leadership Profile

“From the beginning, God called me to serve and plant churches. God is alive and has a purpose for my life and in the lives of the Lao people who are called to be God’s people. I was saved by God’s grace and that changed the path of my life.” These words come from the heart of Chinda Kommala, pastor at Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church in Toronto, ON, as he reflects upon the moment in a refugee camp when he realized that God was real.

Looking back, he can clearly see God’s leading and direction throughout his life. A refugee at the age of six, he joined the army at the age of 15, but fled to Thailand at the height of the communist movement. He lived in a refugee camp with his family, where his only solace was found in a church. However, Chinda came to believe that the church was brainwashing him, so he left in disgust. Later, he turned back to God, and organized a new church at the camp with 300-400 refugees. He fought for his sponsorship to Canada, where he was drawn to the Mennonite Church with its message of peace.



Chinda Kommala -
seeking God’s leading.

“I have now had the opportunity to learn more about Anabaptism through leadership courses from MCEC,” Chinda recalls. He is now the pastor at Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church and is also the president of the Lao Mennonite Conference of Canada.

Chinda has recently journeyed to his home country to become involved in a project of hope. God has given him a vision for planting Mennonite churches in Laos, returning him to the original promise and further confirming the calling he received while in the refugee camp many years ago.

MCEC walks with Chinda as a pastoral leader and with Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church as an MCEC supported congregation. We eagerly pray for and anticipate the next steps in the ministry to which God is calling them.

MCEC Facts

- 3M km² of land in Eastern Canada (approximately)
- 23 M people in Eastern Canada
- 14,000 members in MCEC
 - 300+ volunteers in MCEC ministry
 - 240 pray’ers committed to pray monthly for the ministries of MCEC
 - 210 active pastors (congregational, chaplain, interim, specialized)
 - 94 congregations
 - 90 elected volunteers (slate) in 2009 serving in various MCEC councils, *et cetera*
 - 13 languages of worship
 - 12 staff (full and part time)
 - 11 cluster groups of congregations
 - 8 church plants

MCEC Youth Come Together

Youth Travel to Paraguay for Mennonite World Conference

“To me, Mennonite World Conference was much more than just a fun trip,” writes Deborah-Ruth Ferber. “It was a step in my personal development and a lesson in learning to be a young leader in the church.” Deborah-Ruth was one of a group of 44 youth and leaders who travelled to Paraguay this past summer with the MCEC Youth Come Together group. Through seminars, worship, and meeting people from around the globe, perceptions of what it means to be the church were expanded as this group of future church leaders developed an increased sensitivity, awareness, and compassion for the global Anabaptist community. There was overwhelming support from the MCEC community of congregations in terms of financial, prayerful, and moral support. “I am thankful to be part of an area church body that sees these opportunities as a worthwhile investment,” states Anne Campion, group coordinator.



Future church leaders come together for Paraguay.

MCEC Celebrates Local Ministry

Warden Woods Mennonite Church and Welcome Inn Church in Faithful Ministry

MCEC celebrated the Christian presence that two congregations have provided to their communities for many years as they both held their final worship services. Warden Woods Mennonite Church (Toronto) and Welcome Inn Church (Hamilton) officially closed their doors after much discernment and prayer. May God be praised for the lives impacted and changed by the faithful ministry of the members of these congregations. We thank God for leaders, past and present, who served these congregations.



Dancers at a Warden Woods celebration.

A warm community at Welcome Inn.

