

NORTHERN LIGHT

Digest
SEPT. 2019

Grace Communion International Canada / Communion internationale dans la grâce, Canada

Family Stories

I don't know about you, but I enjoy getting together with my family, because inevitably our family gatherings turn to sharing our family stories. I've been blessed to have a family that has, as my daughter says, a strong oral tradition.

I don't know about you, but I enjoy getting together with my family, because inevitably our family gatherings turn to sharing our family stories. I've been blessed to have a family that has, as my daughter says, a strong oral tradition.

I was reflecting on this today as I was working on this issue of Northern Light Digest. Recently a number of church stories have come my way that I found very encouraging. As summer winds down across our country

and we face the autumn season, I wanted to share what our Triune God is doing in just some of our congregations across this country. They are a part of our family stories.

GCI-Prince George BC Celebrates 50 Years

"On July 5, 1969, we had our first church service, Mr. Lyle Simons being appointed as our first full-time minister. Mr. Wilson was here that day as well. The attendance was 68 and Mr. Simons spoke on "Why Take Notes" and Mr. Wilson spoke on "Why Have a Church." The service began at 1:30 pm and ended at 3:25pm. It was a day we had all been waiting a long time for." (*Chronicles of the Prince George Congregation: 1969-1994*; Pg. 24. Etta Mae Critchlow & Jacualine T. Arndt).

Exactly 15 days later the Apollo 11 lunar module touched down. It was also a day everyone had been waiting for. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were the first humans to walk on the moon, while Michael Collins circled overhead in Columbia. Before Buzz stepped out, he read John 15:5 and Psalm 8:3-4 and personally took the Communion Meal. (NASA refused to broadcast that part). The astronauts' calling and journey was an act of faith (in an awe-struck space) and so was ours.

On July 6, 2019, the Prince George congregation celebrated its 50th anniversary at the home of June Warkentine (approx. 25 members/family/friends attending). The Mulledas (Prince Rupert, BC), Pyys (Vanderhoof, BC), and Lindes (Williams Lake, BC) left their mother ship to disembark in Prince George. Our matriarch Betty Chapman (Smithers, BC; now 98 and still driving) was unable to attend but we felt her presence. Bill Hall and Larry Badowski led the worship service, followed by what our congregation does best: endless socializing, food and fellowship. We read out former pastor George Patrickson's congratulatory message and had fun



GCI-Prince George Celebrants

testing the Roy and Sheila Pages' (former pastor) and Chens' (members who have recently moved to Burnaby BC) voice recognition skills in cyberspace (it was probably a tie!). The afternoon ended with some nostalgia (a home movie of a church fun show from 1986, in the Glen Weber and Rod Devries era). Following the party and voyage home, everyone again felt the earth's gravitational pull and splashed down (or crashed!). Yes, the spirit is willing but is often hampered by "old technology." Fleshly batteries need constant recharging!

Larry Badowski
Elder, GCI-Prince George



Calgary's Second Anniversary, with Ross Jutsum the Special Guest

Dr. Ross Jutsum, with new Canadians from the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The relaunched *Grace Communion Church* in Calgary, Alberta celebrated its second anniversary on July 21, 2019. There were over 30 in attendance, including the President of *State of the Heart* Ministries, Dr. Ross Jutsum, and 18 adults and children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, now living in our city. This added much joy to our worship of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour who died for all.

The congregation, meeting in the *Upper Room* of a local community centre, was reminded by pastor David Sheridan of the major changes that took place two years ago after a number of individuals left our GCI congregation in Calgary: a move to Sunday morning, a new location in the heart of the immigrant quadrant of the city, a new pastor, a celebration of communion on a weekly basis and a new-found joy in the Lord.

State of the Heart, founded 22 years ago, is an interdenominational ministry of reconciliation and renewal of life worship dedicated to building bridges in the body of Christ. Ross has led worship and presented concerts in over 1,000 churches and in 170 denominations around the world. On this day he led worship, including musical pieces from two recent CDs – *In Christ Alone* and *Music from the Heart*. A heart-warming segment was having all the children come to the front and use percussion musical instruments to accompany Ross. Members enthusiastically responded to God's love for them with a rousing rendering of *How Great Thou Art!*

The service ended with the cutting of an anniversary cake and a potluck meal – with a grateful heart that Jesus will come again in glory as King of kings over all nations for a worldwide celebration of joy!

David A Sheridan
Pastor, GCI-Calgary

GCI-Montreal English First Community BBQ July 28, 2019

We would like to begin by praising our Lord for the success of our very first community BBQ on July 28 in our new Church neighbourhood, it has been all to His glory and honour. GCI-Montreal English recently relaunched their congregation to a new day (Sunday) and to a new location at the Société d'Aide Mutuelle Canadienne Polonaise in Montréal (Ville-Émard).

It was a truly a group effort that involved many hands, who worked on the furniture and equipment set up, to those planning, preparing and cooking, and inviting people from the street during the event. A wide range of people came to enjoy our BBQ and to fellowship with us. In addition to our members, we had local residents, folks from the Polish and Italian community, and the Director of the Immigration Office. Almost all 288 burgers and hot dogs were consumed.

Ivano Grimaldi
GCI-Montreal English



BBQ Outreach: GCI-Montreal English

Here are some additional comments from Pastor Bill Rabey:

For a small church, the group did a tremendous job and were very happy to bring people into our gathering. We had Karl Moore and others actually flag down some people in the neighbourhood who were just walking by.

Ivano (the member who wrote the update) mentioned he estimated about 50 to 60 people came by during our 3 hour BBQ. A decent number and a good start to getting involved with an outreach in this part of Montreal, and very encouraging to watch the membership get excited and involved significantly in one form or another. They are the ones who do the "heavy lifting" in the area and do most of the work.

The Circle of Hope

Below is an article that was featured on the **Welcoming Ottawa Week** website :<https://welcomingottawaweek.ca/> which listed Pastor Nova Musafiri (GCI-Ottawa/Gatineau) as one of the 10 WOW Ambassadors for 2019 <https://welcomingottawaweek.ca/wow-ambassadors/2019-welcoming-ottawa-ambassadors/the-circle-of-hope/> and included this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6SNo2ygYbw&feature=youtu.be>

WOW Ambassador: Pastor Nova Musafiri
Nominator: Tblets Tesfalidet Tesfamariam

Tblets Tesfalidet Tesfamariam will never forget December 8, 2016, the day she arrived in Ottawa. As she came down the escalator at Ottawa airport, she was greeted by her sister, Tgisti, and members of the sponsorship group from the Grace Communion International Church of Ottawa-Gatineau, including Pastor Nova Musafiri. Pastor Nova pointed to the large picture of Ottawa and said, "Can you believe you are here now?!" For the first time in many years she felt safe.

Tblets had spent five years as a refugee in Sudan after fleeing her homeland of Eritrea, a country that had been at war with Ethiopia. "Life was very difficult in Shegerab Camp, because I couldn't work and I scraped by on what the UN provided," explains Tblets.

The church had sponsored Tgisti and her family a few years ago, and finally Tblets was joining them. "As a family we cannot express

our gratitude in words for what the church has done for us, and particularly pastor Nova Musafiri who played a big role in our sponsorship and settlement," says Tblets. "Pastor Nova and his church did not know us before, but they have shown us true love. It is not only our family, but also people from all over the world, who have been helped to settle and integrate in this wonderful land of peace, rule of law and prosperity."

"Pastor Nova spends his weekends running after newcomers to make sure they are doing fine," adds Tblets. "He orients us about safety and works with co-sponsors tirelessly to make sure newcomers like myself go to school, find employment and participate in the community."

The church has been a Sponsorship Agreement Holder for the last seven years and has joined with constituency groups to sponsor around 120 Syrian refugees and 180 people from other countries. "We have an outreach program to help people with humanitarian services," explains Pastor Nova. In the case of Tblets, she was assisted in finding a full-time job as a cleaner.

"It is not just material things, Pastor Nova really cares," says Tblets. "He is constantly asking me how I'm doing and providing emotional support. I have learned that I need to be like him."

Like Tblets, Pastor Nova will never forget the day he came to Canada – December 8, 2008. Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, he had spent 15 difficult years as a refugee in Kenya. Although he was trained by an international organization to be a nurse, he couldn't continue with the work as it left him sad and emotionally depleted.

"I went through a lot. There were so many people from different countries in the camp on the border of Sudan and Kenya. There wasn't enough support, equipment or medicine. I felt helpless as I saw young children needlessly die. I knew someday I had to make it my mission to help people. In a great country like Canada, we open our doors and help refugees from around the world." Now he leads a church that embodies this mission of love and helping people from overseas, as he notes in an excerpt from a passage in the Bible (Matthew 25:35): "I was a stranger and you invited me in."

"Some people don't realize the strength and important contribution of refugees to our country," says Pastor Nova. "When they are in refugee camps often they don't have the right to work, go to school and move around freely. Once they have these rights, they can easily integrate into our country. Tblets asked me to help her find a job the first week she was here, because she was finally free to work." The majority of privately sponsored refugees find employment at a rate that is higher than Government Assisted Refugees, thanks to a close network that supports them.

Tblets not only has adapted well to her new life, she has come full circle. She volunteers in the church's children's ministry and helps other immigrants by bringing them to appointments, helping them learn about travelling by bus and translating from Arabic. "It's me who has to thank her as she is now giving back and supporting our refugee settlement program," concludes Pastor Nova. Tblets has joined the circle of hope.

Life In Christ Celebration

Over the past weekend, 90 members of Quebec's French-speaking GCI churches gathered at the foot of Mount Orford in Quebec's Eastern Townships region for the annual "Life in the Son" 2019 celebration. The surrounding nature with its spectacular views, the warm sunny weather, as well as the quality of facilities and food added to the spiritual feast of the Word and fellowship.



Mount Orford Celebration Attendees

The theme of this year's celebration was "Peace of mind in a troubled world" and the theme passage was John 14:27.

We were delighted to have Eric and Edna Vautour from New Brunswick as our guest pastoral couple. Eric and Edna have served the churches of Quebec for 7 years, and it was a great encouragement for members to meet them again and reconnect, or to get to know them.

Eric's very encouraging and edifying message on Saturday was entitled: *Receiving God's peace in a troubled world* and focused on our theme's passage of John 14. Immediately after services, participants used gondolas and chairlifts to access the summit of beautiful Mount Orford. Some brave people (and younger) climbed the 853 metres of the mountain on foot.

This visit to the summit was followed by a hearty meal, and fellowship which was very lively and joyful.

After enjoying the site and surroundings on Sunday morning, participants enjoyed an excellent brunch. This banquet of physical food was followed by a worship service. In a message entitled: *Who is in command?* Pastor Roger Labelle outlined Paul's recommendations to Timothy and the church in Ephesus on how to maintain and protect the peace of mind that God gives. The service ended with Communion.

It is with a heart filled with gratitude towards our great loving God and strengthened by this weekend of sharing that we have resumed the journey back to our homes.

NORTHERN LIGHT *Digest*

Vol.8 No.3 Sept. 2019

Bill Hall
**Managing Editor
Layout and Design**

Northern Light Digest is published 4 times annually for members of Grace Communion International Canada. Editorial contributions and comments on any issue raised in Northern Light Digest are welcome although unsolicited materials may not be returned. Please address all correspondence to:

The Editor,
Northern Light Digest
203A 2121 Airport Drive
Saskatoon SK S7L 6W5
or email us at:
northernlight@gcicanada.ca

The new online edition of Northern Light Digest is available at www.gcicanada.ca

Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the Holy Bible, New International Version, © Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Send all address changes to:
Northern Light Digest
203A 2121 Airport Drive
Saskatoon SK S7L 6W5
email:
northernlight@gcicanada.ca

