

Minutes for Mission 2017

*God is creative and self-giving,
generously moving
in all the near and distant corners of the universe.
Nothing exists that does not find its source in God.
Our first response to God's providence is gratitude.
We sing thanksgiving.*

—From *A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith*
of The United Church of Canada

*We Sing
Thanksgiving*

Minutes for Mission 2017



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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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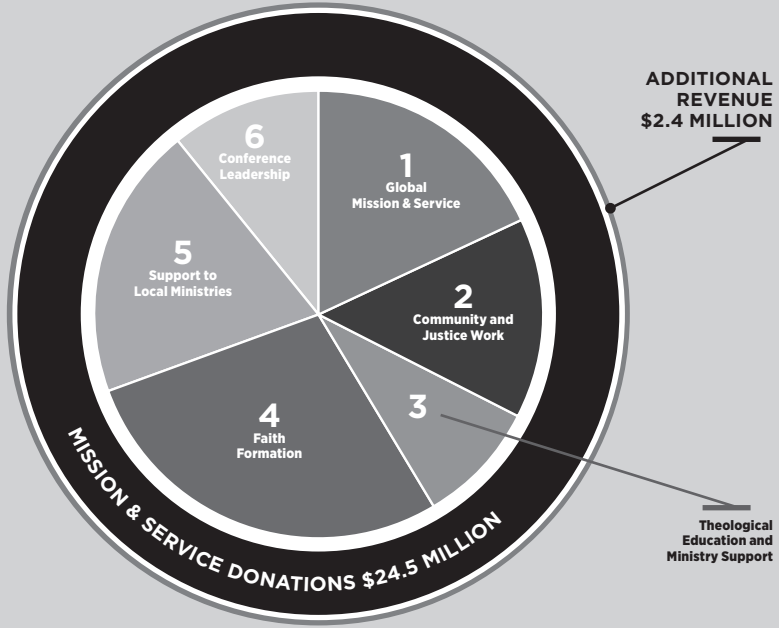
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Mission & Service at a Glance

FORECASTED 2016 MISSION & SERVICE REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES: \$26.9 MILLION



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Global Mission & Service
\$4.9 million (\$3.1M grants) | 4 Faith Formation
\$7.5 million (\$0.4M grants) |
| 2 Community and Justice Work
\$3.9 million (\$1.9M grants) | 5 Support to Local Ministries
\$5.3 million (\$2.4M grants) |
| 3 Theological Education and Ministry Work
\$2.4 million (\$1.7M grants) | 6 Conference Leadership
\$2.9 million (\$2.8M grants) |

MISSION & SERVICE DONATIONS: \$24.5 MILLION

- Annual giving for Mission & Service: congregational, UCW, and individual gifts
- Giving through wills and other planned giving for Mission & Service: bequests and life insurance gifts
- Annual giving for Mission & Service also comes from and through The United Church or Canada Foundation

ADDITIONAL REVENUE: \$2.4 MILLION

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

Draws on capital reserves are used to fund governance and help balance the budget.

The General Council Office of The United Church of Canada complies with the Imagine Canada Ethical Code and the Canadian Council for International Cooperation Code of Ethics.

The United Church is the first denomination in Canada to become a signatory to the United Nations' Principles of Responsible Investment.



**1 Global Mission & Service:
18.2% of M&S funds**



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

**2 Community and Justice
Work: 14.5% of M&S funds**



Supporting community and justice ministries, engaging marginalized communities, and seeking right relationships across Canada; includes the caring work of hospital and university chaplains, the Aboriginal Healing Fund, programs related to Indigenous justice and right relations, and support for Canadian ecumenical partners

**3 Theological Education
and Ministry Support:
8.9% of M&S funds**



Funding for seven theological schools and two education centres, training for lay leadership, educating ordained and diaconal clergy, and providing student education bursaries

**4 Faith Formation:
27.9% of M&S funds**



Ministries with children, youth and young adults, the work of the Aboriginal Ministries Circle, as well as stewardship, and intercultural and diverse ministries

**5 Support to Local Ministries:
19.7% of M&S funds**



Supplying core operational funding to congregations where required, pastoral relations support, providing grants and capital funding, and sharing resources and expertise with local ministries and networks to address important issues

**6 Conference Leadership:
10.8% of M&S funds**



Funding to support Conference staff as they provide leadership and resources to presbyteries, ministry personnel, and local ministries

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MISSION & SERVICE, SEE

www.united-church.ca

www.stewardshiptoolkit.ca/mission-service





Message from the Editor

The theme for *Minutes for Mission 2017* comes from A Song of Faith, the United Church's 2006 statement of faith: **We sing thanksgiving.**

When we sing thanksgiving we are singing a song of gratitude for God's presence in our lives and world found in community ministries, global partners, theological training, camps and retreat centres, communities of faith, and the justice and healing work of reconciliation. We sing thanksgiving because we know that as the United Church's A New Creed says, "We are not alone, we live in God's world."

In the life of The United Church of Canada, we are faithfully trying to sing of thanksgiving as we live into this time of transition. One of my favourite book series is *Harry Potter*. The books are filled with wonderful characters, including Fawkes the phoenix. According to legend, phoenixes are fiercely loyal birds, immensely strong, and have healing powers in their tears. They are best known for their ability to catch fire and rise again from the ashes. The United Church is going through its own renewal, and while we are transforming ourselves, we can be assured that we will stay firmly grounded in God's mission that we support through Mission & Service.

This year we have added a number of stories about our past, of missionaries, an army chaplain, and our Mission & Service history. The ripples from all who have gone before us are still being felt. I hope you enjoy these stories. We sing thanksgiving for God's presence in our history and in this time of renewal and transformation.

Blessings,



Ruth Noble

Mission & Service Engagement Coordinator



Opening Doors



Our gifts for Mission & Service support people with disabilities. Let us hear a story of a gathering in Lima, Peru, with the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network. The Rev. Sharon Ballantyne attended the 2015 gathering and reflects on that experience.

“As a minister who is totally blind, I was the only Canadian representative, sent to listen, learn, and share. I sat among nearly 30 new friends from across Latin America. We learned about persons with disabilities and left feeling mobilized, energized, and committed to transformational change. Many people were eager to tell me stories about how their communities have been positively impacted by Mission & Service and showed a deep gratitude and thanksgiving for the ways Mission & Service transforms communities in Latin America.

“Gatherings like this one help those in ministry to offer a different interpretation of scripture and new understandings of what it means to live with a disability. Persons with disabilities, their families, and other allies are often ignored, isolated, lonely, and excluded. This conference went a long way toward opening doors to those living with disabilities.

“Participants at this gathering are now better equipped to remind communities of faith of Jesus’ model of love and inclusion for all people. We need liturgies that reflect full inclusion and use inclusive language and activities that ensure everyone can participate.”

We sing thanksgiving for Mission & Service partner the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network, which is committed to the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in church and society.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





A Warm Welcome

Our gifts for Mission & Service support food and a place of welcome. Let us hear a story of a community ministry supported by a Mission & Service grant.

A warm welcome awaits anyone who walks through the doors of Chalmers Community Ministry in Guelph, Ontario.

Guests can look through the shelves of the food pantry and choose their own food, from canned goods to fresh vegetables to dairy products and eggs. The experience gives each person a sense of dignity. The clothing room follows the same principle, with guests choosing their own clothes in a bright room with racks of clothing carefully organized.

On Monday and Tuesday mornings the clothing room doubles as a café. Guests and volunteers gather over coffee and baked goods to complete the week's jigsaw puzzle. There is a lot of laughter, says Administrator Diana Sterenberg. "Volunteers are even known to have a bit of fun by walking off with the last piece of the puzzle!"

The café started when the volunteers perceived a feeling of isolation in the guests, many of whom lived in nearby rooming houses. What guests needed as much as food and clothing was a sense of community. "Everyone loves to come to the café!" Diana exclaims.

We sing thanksgiving for Chalmers Community Ministry, which offers food and a place of welcome.

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video
available



Truth and Reconciliation from Canada to El Salvador

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the work of reconciliation. Let us hear a story about reconciliation in El Salvador.

El Salvador is no stranger to violence. After a civil war that lasted over a decade, peace accords were signed in 1992. But the country is now dealing with an unprecedented rate of murder and gang violence.

Miguel Tomás Castro is a pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, a Mission & Service partner in the capital, San Salvador. He heard about Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission during one of his visits to Canada and was inspired to create a Conference on Peace and Reconciliation in his own country.

In March 2016, a United Church delegation, including Moderator Jordan Cantwell and Charlene Burns of the Aboriginal Ministries Circle, travelled to El Salvador to take part. At the conference, Charlene shared her story as an Indian residential school survivor, quoting Justice Murray Sinclair in saying, "The truth was hard. Reconciliation will be even harder."

However, as Charlene said when referring to her people and to the people of El Salvador, "We are the generation to choose the path of life for the future of our children and grandchildren and those who are yet to come, the right path, a path toward peace and reconciliation."

We sing thanksgiving for the work of reconciliation.

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Campus Ministry

Our gifts for Mission & Service support university students on campus. Let us hear the story of one of our Mission & Service university chaplaincies.

In the centre of the University of Guelph in Ontario is Raithby House. The childhood home of George Raithby, it served as a manse and then became his home when he was a professor at the university. It is now the home of the university's Ecumenical Campus Ministry and the Multi-faith Resource Team.

The office of the United Church chaplain, Andrew Hyde, is on the top floor. Andrew has been part of the team for a little over a year. He and the other chaplains offer a safe space for students who are struggling with grief, mental health issues, identity issues, and homesickness. Students have often left home for the first time and find it challenging to be away from everyone and everything they have ever known. At the Ecumenical Campus Ministry they can find a place of welcome.

The addition of Andrew Hyde to the chaplaincy team marks a return of the United Church presence at the University of Guelph, a highly visible one that connects with the student population.

We sing thanksgiving for the support of university students on campus!

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Quinte Deaf Fellowship



Our gifts for Mission & Service support the Deaf community in the Quinte region. Let us hear a story of this ministry.

The Quinte Deaf Fellowship is an outreach ministry that provides essential spiritual services to the Deaf community of the Quinte region of Ontario, which has one of the highest per capita populations of Deaf people in Canada.

The 20 or so members meet weekly in the chapel space at Bridge Street United Church in Belleville. Helen Bickle, a designated lay minister, offers leadership to the group. They dream of one day having their own space for Bible study, support groups, social events, and prayer meetings. Many who attend the Fellowship are on social assistance and therefore do not have a lot of disposable income to help the church with its dream.

We are thankful that through support from Mission & Service the Fellowship is able to continue its important ministry. Most of the grant the Fellowship receives supports Helen, whose leadership is vitally important as the Fellowship expands its vision and outreach.

Members continue to reach out to the community, the city of Belleville, the province of Ontario, and national ministries with the Deaf to form partnerships. This ensures the continuation of this vital ministry that offers so many people a place of welcome. Quinte Deaf Fellowship has become a spiritual home for many in the Deaf community.

We sing thanksgiving for the Deaf community in Quinte!

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Black History Month

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Our gifts for Mission & Service support racial justice and our intercultural journey.

As we begin Black History Month or African Heritage Month in Canada, let us celebrate the many contributions of Black people to Canadian society and to the United Church.

Let us take time to remember African-Canadian history, the struggles and the haunting legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Black people have been part of the United Church from its beginning and continue to play a vital role in the church today. We celebrate this history by sharing the story of Union United Church in Montreal, Quebec.

This church was created in 1907 and was known as Union Congregational Church. From the start Union led the way in reaching out to the Black railway porters and their families who were segregated from the rest of Montreal, offering them a place of worship and a place to call their own.

We sing thanksgiving for the foundation of Black people who have led the way toward The United Church of Canada becoming an intercultural church, a church where all are welcome!

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Hope for Syrian Refugees

Our gifts for Mission & Service support refugees. Let us hear a story of hope from a refugee camp in Jordan.

As a result of the Syrian refugee crisis, millions of refugees have fled to neighbouring Jordan and Lebanon. In both countries, as well as Syria, ACT Alliance is responding to needs like food security, water, sanitation, education, and psychosocial issues.

Zaatari Refugee Camp in northern Jordan is home to 80,000 Syrian refugees. ACT Alliance members are using educational programs geared for teenagers and young adults to give these refugees hope and provide them with the skills they'll need to rebuild Syria when the war is over.

One 23-year-old refugee who has participated in three programs—computer skills, life skills, and youth initiatives—wants to use what he's learned in the camp to build a new Syria without violence or terrorism. Other courses offered include non-violent communication and conflict resolution, English language skills, and hairdressing.

Some refugees' lives are completely changed in Zaatari. One man, Mohammad Allo, arrived in the camp scared, single, and unemployed. Now he works for ACT Alliance member the Lutheran World Federation as a psychosocial facilitator, got married in the camp, and has a second child on the way. "We are not terrorists, as the stereotype goes. We don't want to be stereotypes," he says.

We sing thanksgiving for the hope carried in the resilient lives of refugees.

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Rendez-vous!

Our gifts for Mission & Service support youth and young adults. Rendez-vous is a place where leaders can be inspired and, in turn, inspire youth and young adults in their communities!

Dancing, singing, praying, playing, laughing, and learning—these are all elements of Rendez-vous 2017. Hundreds of youth, young adults, and their leaders will gather at Concordia University in Montreal in August 2017 to celebrate faith.

This will be the third event. Rendez-vous was held in Toronto in 2011 and in Winnipeg in 2014. Each one has a different theme and a regional flavour. The common thread is the energy and enthusiasm that youth share and take back to their local communities of faith and regions of the country.

Participants at Rendez-vous offered some of the following feedback:

“My home group and our leaders were amazing. Rendez-vous wouldn’t have been the same without the connections, support, and love!”

“I was moved by the diversity and courage of all speakers and appreciated that there was something for everyone.”

“Youth events are extremely important because they give the youth a community to connect with and a sense of belonging with other youth.”

We sing thanksgiving for Rendez-vous! Our gifts for Mission & Service offer youth and young adults a place to gather in community.

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The Church in China



Our gifts for Mission & Service support global partnership and theological engagement. Let us hear the story of the United Church delegation to the church in China.

We give thanks that The United Church of Canada answered an invitation from Mission & Service partner The China Christian Council to witness together and accompany one another in God's mission. The group of 22 United Church people from across Canada saw first-hand the experience of the Chinese church.

Moderator Jordan Cantwell led the delegation. "This visit opens a window for deepened church-to-church engagement and presents an opportunity for the United Church to understand China through encounters with Chinese Christians," she said. The visit also recognized the existing partnership between our churches, building on a long history of mission and ministry together in China. It was another step in continuing our faithful journeys toward unity, justice, and peace.

Delegates saw the blessings of the church in China and the challenges it is addressing. They shared from their unique perspective the challenges and opportunities of the United Church.

"We return with the friendship and blessing of the Chinese church and a deepened commitment to sharing God's great works in our diverse and varied Canadian contexts," said participant Betsy Anderson.

We sing thanksgiving that Mission & Service helps build relationship and partnership for God's mission of justice and peace.

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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 5

Who Is Jesus?

Voice 1: Jesus asked his disciples,

Voice 2: “Who do people say that I am?”

Voice 1: 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 12

The Kin-dom of God

Voice 1: Jesus said,

Voice 2: “Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Voice 1: 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.**



Voice 1: Jesus promised,

Voice 2: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Voice 1: 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.**

Voice 1: Jesus said,

Voice 2: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

Voice 1: 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.**

Voice 1: Jesus said,

Voice 2: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Voice 1: 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.**

Alydia Smith





Equipping a Child for School

Our gifts for Mission & Service support education. Let us hear a story from one of our global Mission & Service partners who works toward full inclusion of all children in Indian society.

For most Canadian children a day off school is a cause for celebration. But for many children in India, an education is something they can only dream of.

India remains a divided society with a clearly defined caste system. People in the lowest caste experience widespread discrimination and are often limited in the kinds of jobs open to them. They are usually relegated to low-paying and unstable work. Most families in these castes, many of them headed by women, live below the poverty line. Poor families struggle to survive. For many, survival depends on all members of the family working, including children. The most basic of school supplies are beyond their means, as are school uniforms and fees. In spite of government support programs, the school dropout rate for children living in poverty continues to increase. Imagine being stopped from continuing your education for the sake of a school bag, a notebook, a pen, and a geometry set.

Recently, the Human Rights Advocacy and Research Foundation supported 520 children living in poverty to continue their secondary school education. Thanks to this support, 302 girls and 218 boys received basic school supplies, and their uniforms and school fees were covered.

We sing thanksgiving that, through working with others, Mission & Service changes the dream of an education into a reality for children in India.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



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Helping Refugees

Our gifts for Mission & Service support refugees. Let us hear a story of one of our partners.

Since 2012, Jordan has received over 1.5 million refugees. Large numbers of Syrian and Iraqi refugees have sought safety in the country. The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)-Jordan is part of the ongoing response to this crisis.

MECC-Jordan approaches aid to refugees through a lens of Christian moral duty and human dignity. Referring to them as guests rather than refugees, the council insists that everything that is given is of high quality. Just because the newcomers are vulnerable and in need does not mean they should receive only what's left over. Rather than giving food parcels and clothes, MECC provides vouchers so people can choose what they want based on their needs.

MECC-Jordan also helps local churches that are receiving refugees, such as Our Lady of Assumption parish in Amman. Father Boghos Nahabedian opened his church hall to recent refugees, and later, with the assistance of MECC and other organizations, helped them settle in the area. Social programs for adults and children are also offered to enhance a sense of community.

“Every prayer, thought, and donation is making a difference,” says Wafa Goussous, Director of MECC’s Jordan office.

We sing thanksgiving for the ongoing work of the Middle East Council of Churches and its commitment to supporting refugees in Jordan.

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Racial Justice

Our gifts for Mission & Service support racial justice. Let us hear a story about this important work.

Working toward racial justice in church and society is a lifelong journey. We must be open to learning from each other, with each other, and with the Spirit, so that we continue to break down barriers and build just institutions.

We need to work together for racial justice within our church. The United Church's online racial justice workshops are one step on this journey. Because we believe that we are a "whole people of God" with a "priesthood of all believers," racial justice workshops are open to everyone in the United Church.

These racial justice workshops help participants engage in self-examination around White privilege and internalized racism, as well as analyze the systemic nature of racism in the church and wider society. They offer our ministry leaders tools to begin or continue the work of racial justice in local ministry contexts.

We sing thanksgiving that our gifts for Mission & Service encourage continuous learning and provide resources for justice and right relationships.

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Care for Creation



Our gifts for Mission & Service support care for creation. Let us hear a story of this work.

In 1987, while El Salvador's civil war raged on, displaced villagers started to return home. People from the village of Santa Marta returned determined to live in a new way. They decided to share land instead of holding individual plots. Education became their top priority.

They set up a community organization called ADES (*AH-dess*)—the Santa Marta Economic and Social Development Association. They built a school that now graduates almost 100 students each year. Almost half go on to post-secondary institutions. ADES created a community radio station and a community bakery to produce bread at an affordable price.

ADES is a social movement that functions as a non-governmental organization with a goal of achieving social and ecological justice in rural El Salvador.

Farmers receive training and support as they adjust to practices that respect the earth and restore the land, avoiding expensive external inputs like chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Several greenhouses help to increase production and diversify crops. Over time, the scope of ADES's work has expanded to farmers in other villages. ADES works with other organizations to address the challenges presented by mining companies, hydro-electric projects, and industrial-scale farming.

We sing thanksgiving for Mission & Service partners like ADES that support sustainable farming practices and care for the earth.

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A Congregational Giving Program

Our gifts for Mission & Service support congregational stewardship programs. Let us hear a story about the current congregational giving program.

How can we help congregational leaders encourage their churches to support both local mission and the ministry of The United Church in Canada and around the globe? How could that support help everyone to live faithfully every day?

Responding to these questions, the United Church created *Called to Be the Church*—an annual resource to help congregations fund their dreams and make a difference in their community and in the world through Mission & Service.

Creative folk from across our church collaborated on worship services, sermons, and learning programs to do three things that will help build support for our mission here and as a denomination. The *Called to Be the Church* congregational giving program helps to

- **inspire** people to see not just where the money goes but also what generosity accomplishes
- **invite** people to join others in making a difference in the lives of many, near and far
- **thank**, to model gratitude for all the gifts we receive from God

This giving program is available for all congregations to access in print and online. It is easily adaptable for all to build and sustain generosity in their communities.

We sing thanksgiving for congregational stewardship programs that inspire, ask, and thank!

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Human Rights in the Philippines



Our gifts for Mission & Service support human rights. Let us hear a story from the Philippines.

“The prevailing situation of the Philippine society is even worse when seen through the prophetic eyes of the church. There is major ongoing social unrest in our country today,” says the Rev. Jerome Baris of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

Mission & Service partners the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines are actively involved in advocacy for human rights.

Human rights violations are widespread, with thousands of activists being intimidated, “disappeared,” jailed without charges or trial, or killed. These people have stood for the rights of the Filipino people, including Indigenous people, who are often involved in land disputes with the government and corporations, particularly around mining.

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines are calling for peaceful resolutions to conflicts and for assurances that the people most affected will be included in the discussions. They condemn violent responses to communities trying to determine their own futures.

We sing thanksgiving for Mission & Service partners walking with people in the Philippines in their struggle for human rights.

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God's World Needs Leaders

Our gifts for Mission & Service support theological education. Let us hear a reflection from the Rev. Bronwyn Corlett, Ministry and Recruitment Program Coordinator, on what it means to answer the call to ministry.

- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- What is the right way to grieve?
- How do we retell gospel stories in a responsible and inspiring way?
- What does it mean to offer a ministry of presence?
- Can you explain how Paul's theology evolves throughout his letters?
- Can you explain how your own theology has evolved over the years?

These are just some of the questions theological education wrestles with. I know my biggest take-away from my theological education was a deeper understanding of how little I knew and the incredible importance of lifelong learning. Challenging assumptions and questioning convictions helps to break open scripture and faith and bring the gospel to life. At other times, the incredible wisdom of those who have come before shines through and lights up the importance of understanding and respecting our history and tradition.

To deepen our awareness of what God is calling us to, we need to engage in theological education to discern and deepen our understanding of what it means to be a part of the body of Christ today.

We sing thanksgiving that our gifts support theological schools and education centres that provide training and continuing education for all who are answering God's call!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Five Oaks Farewell



Our gifts for Mission & Service have supported Five Oaks Education and Retreat Centre for decades. We give thanks that we have been part of the education, sanctuary, and playfulness of Five Oaks through the NEOS Youth Ministry Program, guided retreats, youth confirmation programs, and summer day camps. Let us hear this message from the Board of Directors.

The news that Five Oaks was ceasing operations in November 2016 was extremely difficult to hear. Letting go of what once was is never easy; but what if, in letting go, we make space for God to present the next opportunity—a new possibility for something amazing?

We celebrate all that was received by the many who visited Five Oaks and found rest and education in its meeting spaces. Many formed lifelong friendships from their time there and found their spirits were nurtured in ministry so they could minister to others.

We give thanks to Bev Oaten for founding such a sacred place. Thank you for over 60 years of ministry! We give thanks for the staff who have offered leadership and hospitality to the many people who have gathered within the walls of the education centre.

We are hopeful that the time for healing and self-nurturing will be a time for the legacy of Five Oaks to transform and grow. It is our hope that, through seeking new ways to be, Five Oaks may be transformed. We are thankful for the past, for the many gifts of Spirit, and we look forward to the future!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Camp Caterpillar

Our gifts for Mission & Service support safe spaces for children. Let us hear the story of one such place, Camp Caterpillar on Candle Lake, Saskatchewan. Fran Forsberg shares her experience.

“Being a mom of three gender-variant children I was afraid to give my children the experience of camp. I was afraid that my children would be singled out as weird, bullied by staff and other children for the simple fact that they do not fit into the gender norm.

“I asked around, and after being refused twice, I was told by the Rev. David Kim-Cragg about Camp Tapawingo. A member of the board took my request to the board the following week. One week later not only did I get a resounding YES, I also received the news that Alison Starks (A.J.), a Director for Camp FYrefly, had agreed to run the camp.

“I met with A.J. Both of us were very excited at the prospect of this camp for children ages 7–13 who happen to be transgender and extended the invitation to their siblings as well. Twenty-two children, transgender, two-spirit, and cis-gender, arrived at Camp Caterpillar.

“They formed friendships. They were assured that they were safe, accepted, and valued for their authentic selves. These young humans continue to support each other through e-mails and texts.

“I speak for all the parents; we are thankful for A.J. and her staff, who are LGBTQ+ . I read one comment from a boy who is 11 and trans: ‘I had the best time of my life at camp!’”

We sing thanksgiving for LGBTQ+ camps like Camp Caterpillar!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Missionary, Moderator, Faithful Follower



Our gifts for Mission & Service support overseas personnel. We celebrate the Mission & Service foundation of missionaries like Dr. Robert Baird McClure!

The thick file on Dr. McClure at the United Church Archives contains many newspaper articles, images, and personal stories about this incredible man. He went from being the child of missionaries, to a doctor in China in the 1930s and 1940s, to the first lay Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

By all accounts, Dr. McClure had a sparkle and a passion to make a difference in the world. Many people have spoken of the way he inspired them to go into ministry or become medical missionaries across the globe. His legacy of caring for and about people lives on even today in Canada and in China, where he is still revered.

McClure went wherever there was a need, often doing so by putting himself in danger of becoming a prisoner of war in China during World War 2, or contracting infectious diseases such as typhus. He laid the foundation of social justice as a way to live out our faith.

We make a difference when we answer God's call. Dr. McClure called many to make a difference, and his calling inspires us today! We sing thanksgiving for those who have inspired us to be part of a global church.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Reaching Out to Migrants

Our gifts for Mission & Service support programs for migrant workers. Let us hear a story from Korea.

Canadians think of our country as a multicultural society. Migrant populations arriving in Korea are a relatively new phenomenon. In 1997 there were only about 380,000 foreigners living in Korea. By 2011 that number had increased to 1.4 million.

Some migrants are coming to Korea to work, especially in small- or medium-scale factories. Others are arriving as marriage migrants. Whatever their reason for coming to Korea, Mission & Service partner the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) is welcoming newcomers and helping them adjust to the realities of life in a new land.

The PROK is responding to the many social service needs facing new immigrants by

- providing cultural orientation and language training
- helping immigrant workers understand their rights and advocating for workers when those rights are not upheld
- helping workers who become ill or unemployed
- staffing hotlines for marriage migrants who find themselves in situations of domestic violence and abuse

The PROK's Migrant Workers Centre addresses needs that are as many and varied as the people they serve.

We sing thanksgiving for the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, our Mission & Service partner that reaches out to people in need!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



London Community Chaplaincy



Our gifts for Mission & Service support community chaplaincy. Let us hear a story about one that is changing lives.

Anchored in faith, the staff of London Community Chaplaincy in Ontario walks with the communities of Southdale and Limberlost, building relationships and offering hope, presence, opportunities, and support to people living in poverty.

Countless volunteers help with programs that enrich the lives of the many children who are impacted by poverty. London Community Chaplaincy walks with the families in a non-judgmental, loving way.

What draws children to the programs? Perhaps it is the wonderful meals or the nutritious snacks. Maybe it is the music and art they can explore. It could be the nurturing relationships they develop with the staff and volunteers. Whatever the reason, staff and volunteers are glad they come! They hope they are planting seeds of hope so children can imagine a future bigger than what they may know living with the daily challenges poverty brings.

The London Community Chaplaincy may not be able to take away many of these challenges, but staff and volunteers can listen and share a bus ticket, a food card, or some food to make the day a little easier. Most importantly, the chaplaincy is a presence in the lives of many of the resident families, and through the chaplaincy, you, our supporters, are present as well.

We sing thanksgiving for London Community Chaplaincy programs that change lives!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Asian Heritage Month

Our gifts for Mission & Service support intercultural programs in The United Church of Canada.

May is Asian Heritage Month. The month provides a continuing opportunity to prayerfully reflect on the contributions of Asian Canadians to our church and Canadian society and to honour and celebrate this important aspect of Canadian history.

In church and society, Asian cultures and traditions are broad and diverse. Comprising many language groups, cultural traditions, histories, and ways of expressing faith, Asian Canadians have many ways of being.

In the United Church, there are Chinese Cantonese-, Chinese Mandarin-, Korean-, Tagalog-, and Tamil-speaking congregations; all of these are expressions of our intercultural church. One way the United Church seeks to honour Asian Heritage Month is through worship, and each year, new resources for worship are created to lift up different aspects of Asian heritages.

Asian Heritage Month is not limited to the contributions of Asians in Canada. The United Church has strong ties to Mission & Service partners throughout Asia who are addressing human rights abuses wherever they occur as part of building a world of justice for all. Critical issues for the region include peace building and upholding the rights of communities to healthy environments in the context of resource extraction projects, such as mining.

We sing thanksgiving that Mission & Service supports our intercultural journey.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



A Call to Leadership



Our gifts for Mission & Service support theological schools like St. Andrew's Theological College in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Let us hear the reflection of Principal Lorne Calvert.

“Our United Church of Canada has initiated a new campaign to attract people to ordered ministry under the theme ‘God’s World Needs Leaders.’ As a college whose mission is to offer justice-driven education for Christian leadership, we welcome this undertaking.

“Our ministers are responsible for leading, guiding, and supporting the community of faith in the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. They touch people’s lives at various points of joy, pain, celebration, and vulnerability in a variety of ways—by leading in worship, by providing pastoral care, by standing with those who suffer, and by working for justice and peace.

“With the help of St. Andrew’s alumni the college is being equipped with new technology to provide our students with the best possible options for online and distance learning. We are reaching out to establish new partnerships locally and internationally for educational opportunities. Through the work of our faculty beyond the classroom we offer cutting-edge theology and scholarship.

“We seek to be the affirming, justice-driven, and welcoming community that we are called to be. All of this we strive for because God’s world needs leaders.”

We sing thanksgiving for the commitment of United Church theological schools that our gifts for Mission & Service support!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





The Healing Fund Is Changing Lives

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video
available

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the work of healing and reconciliation. Let us hear a story of how The Healing Fund is changing lives.

The Liqwiltach Elders' and Youth Culture Group hosts events and learning experiences in the Campbell River area of British Columbia. Led by volunteer June Johnson, the group connects residential school survivors with local Indigenous youth to provide learning experiences that revitalize culture and language.

These experiences also provide a space for youth from different communities to share their oral histories and traditions, which are once again being passed down from generation to generation.

One of the learning experiences uses button blankets. As the group grows and travels to different communities, it needs financial support to make new blankets and masks. The blankets are adorned with unique family crests. Each mask signifies a particular dance. A mask dancer teaches the youth the dance and mentors them through the dance process.

These events, acknowledged by The Healing Fund Council and supported through your gifts for Mission & Service, help people reconcile the residential school experience and restore Indigenous languages and cultures in Indigenous communities.

A Liqwiltach Elder noted, "I am happy that our children are learning the culture, and you see the pride they have to show off their dances. It gives them the sense of belonging, of who they are and where they come from."

We sing thanksgiving for the gifts of The Healing Fund.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



A Historic Land Transfer



Our gifts for Mission & Service support healing and reconciliation. Let us hear a story of one ministry and a historic event in Moraviantown, London Conference.

We give thanks that in April 2016 land was transferred from The United Church of Canada back to the Delaware Nation. The land is known as Fairfield and has become a national historic site with a history dating back to the 1700s.

In June 2015 the Executive of London Conference had been directed to continue its ongoing discussions with the Delaware Nation concerning Fairfield. In the spirit of reconciliation the conversation was about two parcels of land the United Church had owned and that were connected to the early village, including the burial grounds of the Delaware Nation up to the 18th century.

As we work toward reconciliation, the actions of London Conference are to be celebrated as important moves toward partnership.

The land will remain a historic site as well as a Canadian Foodgrains Bank field, with the addition of an interpretive centre to share the story of the Delaware, particularly their experience at Fairfield.

The museum is a testimony to a time of safety, nurture, and peace between two cultures in the past. It is a symbol of the United Church's efforts toward healing and reconciliation in the relationship between these two cultures in the present.

We sing thanksgiving for the heart of London Conference in its work toward reconciliation!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Help for Children in Congo

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Our gifts for Mission & Service support children harmed by civil war. Let us hear a story from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Marie was 11 years old when she was raped and became pregnant. Her story is that of many girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The country's citizens have been traumatized by a long-standing and brutal conflict. During the civil war that ended in 2003, 5.4 million people died. Localized conflicts continue. Millions of people have been uprooted and displaced.

Many social services are not provided by the state, so hospitals and schools are run by churches, like Mission & Service partner Église du Christ au Congo, Department of Women, Children, and Family.

This partner has long supported unaccompanied children, many of whom are survivors of sexual violence. Some 150 of these children are gathered at PRENAO Light School. There they continue their education and get help dealing with the traumas they have experienced. Students and teachers receive a meal each day.

PRENAO also supports young girls who are mothers, like Marie. They learn a trade or skill that gives them an opportunity to earn a living and make a life for themselves and their children. They also receive psychological support. Marie is one of the girls PRENAO has helped. She now has eight-year-old twin boys. Through PRENAO she received an education, support, and trauma counselling. Her sons now attend PRENAO while Marie continues her studies at university.

We sing thanksgiving for our global partners, who are transforming lives.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Qu(e)rying Religion



Our gifts for Mission & Service support university students on campus. Let us hear a story of one space for University of Toronto students.

“Faith and queerness have not always been natural friends,” says the Rev. Ralph Wushke, chaplain at the Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Toronto.

In 2005 the chaplaincy created Qu(e)rying Religion. The program creates a safe space for students of all faiths to explore gender identity, sexual orientation, and religious belief. It has grown to become a meaningful and life-giving program for students.

When students arrive at university it is often the first time they are able to explore who they are. Many come from tight-knit communities and find that at university they are free to explore their identity as well as their faith.

Qu(e)rying Religion holds pub night discussions on such topics as online dating, gender identity, and coming out to friends and family, and it hosts seminars and workshops on queerness and faith.

We sing thanksgiving for the support of safe spaces for university students on campus.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Thank You to Our Ministers

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the continuing education of ministers as well as those in the discernment process. Let us hear a story from the Rev. Bronwyn Corlett, Program Coordinator for Ministry Recruitment, reflecting on the role of ministers in life's joys and sorrows.

“Life is full of ups and downs that we have the privilege to share with our communities of faith.

“Thank you to our ministers who have answered God’s call to lead in our communities of faith and continue to answer God’s call again and again. Thank you for living out your call in The United Church of Canada. Thank you for being present in our big moments: baptisms and funerals, weddings and divorces, celebrations and crises. Thank you for visiting, witnessing, and walking with us. We appreciate your reminder that God is with us while we wrestle with life, faith, and love.

“Thank you for your various gifts and unique service. Thank you for putting your own problems and pains on hold while you hold ours. Thank you for the sermons, prayers, visits, theological reflections, and worship. Thank you for the times you leave your families to be with someone else’s. Thank you for your faithful leadership.

“Thanks to our gifts to Mission & Service, we support our ministers through training and continuing education at theological schools and education centres. Mission & Service also provides support through pastoral relations at presbytery and Conference.”

We sing thanksgiving for the commitment of those who minister to communities in times of joy and in times of crisis.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



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A Home at Last



Our gifts for Mission & Service support people on the margins. Let us hear a story of the impact Wesley Urban Ministries makes daily in changing lives.

Roger finally has a home after many years of struggling with addiction and mental health issues. He lives in a one-bedroom apartment in Hamilton, Ontario, that is part of the housing project of Wesley Urban Ministries. Roger is a personable, kind, and honest soul who has found a home in a community where he is fully accepted.

The building that houses the apartments and a day program is one of several Wesley sites. The day program has been operating since the 1970s; the housing is a more recent addition. Mission & Service has supported the work of Wesley Urban Ministries for decades, helping the ministry to offer housing, a meal program, and support for refugees from around the world. It has helped more than 1,000 Syrian refugees find a home in Hamilton.

One member of the day program spoke about coming there since the 1970s when guests had to sleep on the floor. He now comes to have a meal and connect with the community.

We sing thanksgiving for Wesley Urban Ministries, which offers welcome and a place to call home.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





A House of Welcome

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Our gifts for Mission & Service provide refuge. Let us hear this story.

The solid door opens to a place of warmth and welcome for young women between the ages of 16 and 30 who find themselves on the street for a variety of reasons. Naomi House in St. John's, Newfoundland, a part of Stella's Circle, is the former home of the founder and namesake of social worker Stella Burry.

A large portrait of Burry looks on as the women eat together around the large oak table. Burry worked with The United Church of Canada to introduce community development to the people of St. John's in the 1930s, and her legacy is still making a difference today.

The staff of Naomi House offer emergency help, housing, and employment support to young women. The rooms the women stay in are simply furnished, yet there is a sense of comfort and safety here. Sitting in the dining room, the chatter and laughter of the two young women who are preparing the afternoon meal fills the hallways.

Naomi House has been mending the lives of young women for decades.

We sing thanksgiving that together through our gifts for Mission & Service we can change lives and mend the world!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Skylight Festival



Our gifts for Mission & Service support innovation. Let us hear a story about this festival.

The Skyclight Festival emerged out of the collaboration of a small ecumenical group of people who are passionate about arts, faith, peace, and justice. They wanted to create an open space for people of many backgrounds to come together to explore faith while engaging in art and being inspired by speakers and seekers of justice.

In the summer of 2015 Skyclight Festival ran a pilot weekend event that was a resounding success and by all accounts was an incredible experience for many! July 2016 marked the official launch of the festival.

The 2016 Skyclight Festival is where the innovative initiative known as Embracing the Spirit was launched. The program is supported through Mission & Service. Headed up by a team from EDGE Network, it celebrates innovation. We are thankful for creative spaces like Skyclight Festival that nurture hope, joy, and transformation, offering diverse communities a place to connect arts, faith, and justice.

We give thanks for spaces that enliven innovation in our church. We sing thanksgiving for the Skyclight Festival.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





You Visited Me

Our gifts for Mission & Service and our gifts for emergency appeals support people recovering from disasters. Let us hear a story of recovery from the Philippines.

In the Philippines, Typhoon Haiyan destroyed homes, farms, communities, and livelihoods in November 2013. Immediately after the storm, Mission & Service partner the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) began working with affected communities to meet emergency needs for shelter, food, and water.

UCCP leaders were also planning long term for how the church could work with community members to rebuild better homes, re-establish communities, and restore people's livelihoods. Much of this years-long work has begun.

Losing their boats meant fishers could not earn a living or provide daily food for their families. With the support of the people of The United Church of Canada through Mission & Service and through extra support through the emergency appeal, UCCP has been able to replace some of those fishing boats, restoring hope to many communities.

In farming communities, UCCP has introduced a new variety of rice that requires less fresh water and responds well to traditional and readily available fertilizers. In other communities, UCCP is lighting the way with micro solar power units that can provide enough energy for basic household lighting.

We sing thanksgiving for Mission & Service partner the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and its work that supports rebuilding lives.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Chaplaincy in Kingston



Our gifts for Mission & Service support chaplaincy. Let us hear a story of the many avenues of support for chaplaincy in Kingston, Ontario.

Kate Johnson has been supported through Mission & Service in many ways, in theological education and in her work as a prison chaplain, including her time as part of Kingston Community Chaplaincy. We celebrate her many gifts that have been lived out through Mission & Service-supported ministries!

After completing her undergraduate studies at Lakehead University School of Social Work, Kate studied at Queen's University School of Religion (formerly Mission & Service-supported Queen's Theological College). She received a Master of Divinity with a concentration in restorative justice. Currently Kate serves as a member on the board of directors for the Mission & Service-supported Kingston Community Chaplaincy.

A firm believer in the value of interfaith dialogue and community building, Kate brings people together from other faiths and within the prison system. The Kingston Community Chaplaincy offers programs for families and those currently in prison and provides support when prisoners are released. At the core of the chaplaincy is the belief that when crime happens, it is not only the victim and offender who are affected but also the whole community. Kingston Community Chaplaincy seeks to promote healing and safety for all people in an atmosphere of learning how to live together in community once again.

We sing thanksgiving for the many ways Mission & Service supports chaplains.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Paying It Forward!

Mission & Service supports and develops leaders. Let me share with you a letter that Nora Sanders, General Secretary of The United Church of Canada, received from one such leader. In the letter the Rev. Park Young Ju, chairperson of East Seoul Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), shared the story of the scholarship she received from the United Church.

“I was very glad to see you at the 100th General Assembly of PROK. At the moment of exchanging between our two denominations, it reminded me of the scholarship I received from The United Church of Canada in 1989 for my Ph.D. course at Ewha Women’s University.... I give my deep thanks to you.”

The United Church of Canada and the PROK have been in partnership since 1953. The relationship between the two has been a special one, with overseas personnel and gifts such as the scholarship that Park received. In 1989 our gifts for Mission & Service funded scholarships for those who would not otherwise be able to continue their studies, to develop leadership within the PROK.

Park has been ministry personnel of JamSil Jubilee Church since 1999, as well as the only woman chairperson among 25 presbyteries in the PROK.

With the letter, Park enclosed a scholarship gift for the same amount that she received. As we celebrate her gift, we also celebrate how our gifts for Mission & Service support and develop leaders.

We sing thanksgiving for the leadership of the Rev. Park Young Ju and for gifts given in gratitude!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Bissell Centre and Childcare

Our gifts for Mission & Service support community ministries like the Bissell Centre. Let us hear a story from Stuart Jackson, ministry personnel at Chalmers Castle Downs United Church, about the behind-the-scenes story of a *Mandate* magazine cover.

The cover of the 2015–2016 Mission & Service special edition showed a father and son who are part of the Bissell Centre’s family support program in Edmonton, Alberta. The background of the cover photo is an alphabet quilt.

For more than 50 years, a group of women at Chalmers Castle Downs United Church has been meeting monthly for tea and fellowship. Twice a year, the group holds a Bissell Baby Shower to support the centre’s well-baby program. The women bring hand-knitted baby sets, hand-tailored children’s clothing, blankets, diapers, toys, and one year, a quilt to donate to the program. Two staff from the Bissell program attend the tea to receive the gifts with thanks.

Participants sit in a circle as the gifts are opened and passed around. It is a wonderful time of sharing between the church and this Mission & Service-supported community ministry!

We sing thanksgiving for the many people who support Mission & Service and offer gifts of time, talent, and treasure to the Mission & Service-supported ministries closest to home. What we do together none of us could achieve alone.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Educating Girls in China

Our gifts for Mission & Service have supported many overseas personnel. Let us hear the story of Laura H. Hambley, born in Port Perry, Ontario, in 1877. Laura was a member of the Woman's Missionary Society appointed as a teacher to West China in 1904.

By all accounts a strong woman, Laura's major contribution was in girls' education. She overcame widespread resistance in a city in China to build a four-storey girls' school. She gathered architectural plans from across Canada, then created the plan for her school. Starting with a handful of students, enrollment grew as more and more parents saw value in their daughters receiving an education.

During World War 2, when the school housed 200 girls, Laura and the staff were faced with the threat of being bombed by Japan. To keep them safe, Laura took her girls from the city up into the mountains to an old monastery.

Laura spent 40 years educating the girls in the city. She was also a successful advocate for ending the practice of binding girls' feet. When she left in 1943 for the long journey home, the entire city came out to wish her well. They had high esteem for their beloved "Han Jaousa," her Chinese name, which in English means "Hambley Teacher."

We sing thanksgiving for missionaries who offered their life in service with global partner churches. Mission & Service is built on the foundation of their vision and witness!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





A Vibrant Youth Program

Our gifts for Mission & Service support programs for children and youth. Let us hear a story of The GO Project.

“The GO Project has taught me so much about faith and social justice, but I didn’t even notice I was learning because I never thought you could have that much fun while learning!”

Those are the words of a youth who took part in The GO Project youth mission program. For nine years, The GO Project has been offering a vibrant experience of church to youth and children.

The first program happened at Islington United Church in Toronto, and it’s been an adventure ever since. First offered for youth, GO now also offers summer camp programs for children as well as a young adult intentional community.

The GO Project has youth programs in Halifax, Vancouver, Saskatoon, and St. John’s, in addition to the Toronto site. The youth live in community and work alongside volunteers at community ministries in the host city. Youth who have participated in The GO Project leave with a strong sense of community and a passion for leadership.

We sing thanksgiving that, through our gifts for Mission & Service, children and youth continue to grow in faith and community, able to offer leadership that can mend the world!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Preparing for Ministry

Our gifts for Mission & Service support theological schools. Let us hear a reflection from Principal Richard Topping, who shared some reflections in the fall newsletter of the Vancouver School of Theology.

“In theological education we are trying to make preparing for ministry in the name of Jesus as difficult as it ought to be. I have thought a great deal about why ministry is so hard—secularity, post-Christendom, multiculturalism, shrinking church, opportunities to golf.

“My friend Will Willimon has persuaded me, however, that it is Jesus’ fault. He is really hard to follow—I mean ‘pray for your enemies, bless those who curse you.’ It is hard to get formed for that for life. But as Tom Hanks, who played a baseball coach in the movie *A League of Their Own*, said, ‘If baseball was easy, then everyone would do it.’ It’s the same with theological education.

“We want our graduates to be engaged people, folks willing to get involved in the world, not just wait for the next.... Our theological ethos is designed to nurture practitioners who are making a difference in the world for God and the gospel. It is the DNA of VST to get involved in the big challenges the world faces.”

We sing thanksgiving for the gifts of Mission & Service that support students who are discerning their path to ministry through the inspiring guidance of theological schools such as the Vancouver School of Theology.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Engaging Difference



Our gifts for Mission & Service support intercultural programs. Let us hear the story of the Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry program (DUIM).

God is calling us to find new ways of being church together. It is not simply a matter of continuing with traditions we have become comfortable with and allowing others to join us. Rather, our intercultural vision calls us to be aware of who is at the centre and who is at the margins and to empower those at the margins to lead us into change.

The church's intercultural vision is about more than inclusion—it's about radical welcoming. When we affirm and welcome a variety of expressions of faith, it deepens our understanding of God and of one another.

DUIM is an interactive program for church leaders. It is offered by our partner the Canadian Churches' Forum and shaped, in part, by the United Church. Bursaries are available for United Church participants to help offset program costs.

DUIM is offered in different locations across Canada several times throughout the year and is tailored to the intercultural realities of each local context. Participants discover how to nurture faithful relationships across difference, gather insights on cultural relevance, and deepen understanding and awareness in their faith communities.

We sing thanksgiving that our gifts for Mission & Service support this exciting time of Spirit-led questioning, experimenting, and mutual learning.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Displaced People

Our gifts for Mission & Service support displaced people. Let us hear a story about one of our partners in Kenya.

Around the world tens of millions of people are forced to flee their homes due to natural disaster, violence, conflict, and persecution. Some are pushed across international borders and become refugees. Others remain in their own country but cannot return to their homes.

Ripped from homes and livelihoods, most displaced people have difficulty meeting the most basic needs of shelter, food, and clothing. They have experienced severe trauma and need psychosocial support. Some face serious health problems. Host communities, often already facing widespread poverty, are further challenged with the addition of many more people in need.

Mission & Service partner the National Council of Churches of Kenya works in collaboration with others in two Kenyan refugee camps that house refugees from Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and other countries. In existence for more than 20 years, these camps are becoming “generational”—children are born and raised in the camps and know no other life.

We sing thanksgiving that through Mission & Service we are able to support our partners in offering displaced people the basic necessities of life.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Dr. Reinerio Arce Celebrates Decades of Solidarity

Our gifts for Mission & Service offer long-term support and solidarity around the world. Let us hear a story about decades of solidarity with Cuba.

In May 2016 United Theological College in Montreal, Quebec, presented Dr. Reinerio Arce with an honorary doctorate. Dr. Arce took the opportunity to thank The United Church of Canada for its decades of solidarity. “We will not forget your friendship,” he said. “Even as it becomes easier to relate directly with the U.S. churches, we need you to be with us.”

He recalled shipments of food in the late 1990s through 2001 organized by the United Church through its membership in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank during a time of drought in eastern Cuba.

As Cuba renews its relationship with the United States, Cuban church leaders are saying thanks to Canadian churches that have accompanied them through nearly six decades of a U.S. embargo.

Reinerio Arce is a past-president of the Cuban Council of Churches and former rector of the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas—both Mission & Service partners.

We sing thanksgiving for Mission & Service support of the church in Cuba!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Food Insecurity

Our gifts for Mission & Service offer self-sufficiency and hope. Let us hear a story from the West Bank.

Life is a constant struggle for Palestinian Muslims and Christians living in the West Bank. Separated from family living in Israel, Gaza, or further abroad, many also face land confiscation or are unable to reach their land to work it because of Israeli restrictions on travel. Those who want to build new agriculture-related structures rarely receive permits from the Israeli authority; if they build anyway, they are subject to demolitions.

In the West Bank, the Near East Council of Churches has developed a food security program focused on families who have lost land and property due to the Israeli occupation and illegal settlements. Through this intervention, a family receives three main components. First is material for a shed for livestock. As part of the project, the family must contribute by building the shed, often with the help of the community. Second, they receive five fruit trees that are about four years old, and third, they receive 12 chickens, two pregnant sheep, and enough feed for 100 days. Training and support are also provided.

These supplies give those struggling to feed their families the ability to become self-sufficient, providing milk, eggs, fruit, dairy products, and meat for their own needs while also having enough left over to trade or sell at markets.

We sing thanksgiving for global partners who are bringing hope and vitality to Palestinian families in the region.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Nations Uniting



Our gifts for Mission & Service support the journey toward reconciliation. Let us hear a story of one of our Mission & Service partners in Ohsweken, Ontario.

In the Six Nations First Nations community in southern Ontario sits a simple white building. For over five years Nations Uniting has offered a place of community and provided educational workshops to the surrounding communities on and off the reserve at various locations up and down the Grand River.

Healing Circles and Grandmothers' Teas are times of quiet sharing, with each person in the circle getting a chance to talk or ask questions and, most importantly, to respectfully listen to one another's stories of life. As people listen, they learn from one another.

Nations Uniting also uses the Blanket Exercise developed by KAIROS Canada to bring to life teachings and reflections of forgotten Canadian history.

The number of Sharing Circles is increasing as other churches hear about what Nations Uniting is doing and yearn to know more about their First Nations neighbours.

We sing thanksgiving for the programs of healing and reconciliation offered through the Mission & Service-supported ministry of Nations Uniting.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Breaking Down Stereotypes

Our gifts for Mission & Service support peace and justice work. Let us hear a story from Lebanon.

What will it take to bring peace to the Middle East? Mission & Service partner the Middle East Council of Churches believes it includes creating opportunities for youth to relate to one another across differences and to reject judgment and stereotypes.

The realities of the region mean that Christians and Muslims live in a state of heightened tension and potential conflict. In Lebanon these tensions have been exacerbated by the influx of a large number of displaced persons, many from Syria, who have stretched to the breaking point communities' capacity to cope.

The Middle East Council of Churches plans to bring together groups of youth aged 15–22 in Lebanon. The youth will meet with one another to discuss, work, and play together to lay the foundations for new and positive ways of understanding and seeing one another beyond traditional boundaries and barriers. The experience will give participants real and practical models for Muslim–Christian dialogue in their own communities.

We sing thanksgiving for the ways that Mission & Service is in the Middle East helping to change hearts and minds for the sake of peace and justice.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



A Chaplain and Church Planter



Our gifts for Mission & Service have supported training for ministers and building churches. Let us hear the story of one man who made a huge difference in many lives!

The Rev. Dr. Waldo Edward Lovel Smith was a United Church minister, author, navy chaplain, professor, and church planter who is remembered fondly by former students, veterans, ministers, and parishioners. The ripples of his commitment can be felt today.

During World War 2, Waldo was granted a leave from his pastoral charge in Grafton, Ontario, to serve as chaplain in the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade in Canada, England, and Italy. He was awarded the Military Cross for rescuing John Matheson in 1943 while serving in Italy. Waldo carried John from where he lay on the ground to a field hospital. John Matheson is the man who helped Canada choose the flag design we love today.

After the war, while teaching at Queen's Theological College, Waldo used support grants to create many churches in the developing communities around Kingston, Ontario. One that is still a thriving congregation today is St. Andrew's By-The-Lake United Church. Waldo formed the congregation in a nearby school in 1951. With support from the Missionary and Maintenance Fund (now Mission & Service), the church was created in its current location with student minister leadership until 1957, when it called its first full-time ordained minister.

We sing thanksgiving for the giving hearts of those who have answered the call to chaplaincy.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





EDGE Social Innovation Challenge

Disponible en
français!
▶ Companion
video
available

Our gifts for Mission & Service co-funded the first bilingual Social Innovation Challenge in Montreal, Quebec, in May 2016. Let us hear about that event.

Le défi : Innovons ensemble brought together more than 80 people excited to share their innovative ideas to make a difference in their communities and the world. Participants spent time with coaches to prepare their one-minute pitches. After 35 ideas were pitched to the assembled crowd, everyone voted for their top three ideas.

The following morning 11 projects moved to round two, but in the spirit of community and collaboration, everyone was invited to stay and participate. There were opportunities to network, learn, and help the finalists perfect their next pitch. The second round of pitches allowed the innovators three minutes to present their ideas to the judges.

The judges came from a variety of backgrounds. They offered feedback to the presenters and then gathered to select the winning ideas.

The United Church was well represented, with five projects initiated by United Church ministries, three of which made the final round. These included Mission & Service–supported Montreal City Mission’s idea, a kindness map; La présence, pitched by Mission & Service–supported United Theological College; and Dans les pas du Sauveur—an initiative with widows and orphans in Ivory Coast—pitched by l’Église Unie St-Marc, which won the People’s Choice Award.

We sing thanksgiving for the many ways Mission & Service partners create innovative ministry!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



UCW Works to End Child Poverty



Our gifts for Mission & Service support the United Church Women Child Well-Being Initiative. Let us hear a story of the ways the Prince Edward Island UCW are working to end child poverty.

What important message could a colourful cloth doll give? A powerful one! Just ask the members of the Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly, who each recently received a handmade doll from the PEI UCW Presbyterial Child Poverty Committee with a message reminding them that all PEI children deserve to have their basic needs met.

The members were genuinely interested in the dolls and commented on the uniqueness of each one, some with personal comments such as “I have a sweater just like my doll!” But better yet, the UCW committee was assured that politicians understood the intent of the dolls—to be a concrete reminder that over 22 percent of children in that province live with poverty every day and that the responsibility of government is to do all it can to eradicate poverty.

This is only a beginning, as the UCW works continually to monitor progress in this area and hold government to account until child poverty has been eradicated in Prince Edward Island. This initiative is part of a nation-wide UCW strategy to address child poverty. Across Canada, United Church Women continue to be huge supporters of the Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada.

We sing thanksgiving for UCW’s work to end child poverty.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Training Birth Attendants

Our gifts for Mission & Service support midwives and healthy babies and mothers. Let us hear a story from Tanzania about this important work.

Four hundred and ninety-four women from across Tanzania, East Africa, and 16 training sessions in collaboration with the Tanzanian Ministry of Health: these are the latest totals for training traditional birth attendants (midwives) reported by Mission & Service partner the Morogoro Women's Training Centre. The collaboration, which is made possible with the support of United Church Women, is part of an overall strategy to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates in Tanzania.

The women have been named by their community and range in age from early 20s to over 70. Some have worked as traditional birth attendants for decades. Some completed high school, others some grades in elementary school. A few have never attended school. All have developed a wide range of skills on the job and faced many challenges in the course of their career. Some live close to a health clinic or hospital, where they can readily refer high-risk cases. Others live many kilometres from the closest medical centre over difficult and sometimes impassable terrain.

Molen Abdul has been delivering babies for 47 years. She welcomes the additional training and says, "This work is very important to me. It is like it keeps the clock of life ticking."

We sing thanksgiving that Mission & Service is helping to improve the health of women and babies in Tanzania.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Advent Candle-Lighting Liturgy

This Advent wreath liturgy focuses on the theme of Advent Unwrapped. Visit AdventUnwrapped.ca for ideas, suggestions, and videos that complement and augment this liturgy.

Advent 1: Hope

One: Come now, O God of Hope.

All: **We are your people.**

One: Pour out your Spirit on all who long for your gift of hope...
(Allow space to name people, places, or particular situations.)

All: **As we watch and wait for God with us, Emmanuel.**

(Light first Advent candle.)

Sung response: “Come Now, O God of Peace (O-So-So)” (*Voices United 34*)

One: Whom will you share God’s gift of hope with this week?
(Moment of silence)

Sung response: VU 34

(Optional: Open a Hope gift box and pass out the contents during the second singing of VU 34. Gift ideas could include: Hope gift tags, seeds/pine cones, star stickers.)

Advent 2: Peace

One: Come now, O God of Peace

All: **We are your people.**

One: Pour out your Spirit on all who long for your gift of peace...
(Allow space to name people, places, or particular situations.)

All: **As we prepare for the child who will lead us toward love and justice.**

(Light first and second Advent candles.)

Sung response: “Come Now, O God of Peace (O-So-So)” (VU 34)

One: Whom will you share God’s gift of peace with this week?
(Moment of silence)



Sung response: VU 34

(Optional: Open a Peace gift box and pass out the contents during the second singing of VU 34. Gift ideas could include: Peace gift tags, painted river stones, candles, dove stickers.)

Advent 3: Joy

One: Come now, O God of Joy.

All: **We are your people.**

One: Pour out your Spirit on all who long for your gift of joy...

(Allow space to name people, places, or particular situations.)

All: **As we celebrate and reflect on your awesomeness.**

(Light the first, second, and third [pink] Advent candles.)

Sung response: “Come Now, O God of Peace (O-So-So)” (VU 34)

One: Whom will you share God’s gift of joy with this week?

(Moment of silence)

Sung response: VU 34

(Optional: Open a Joy gift box and pass out the contents during the second singing of VU 34. Gift ideas could include: joy gift tags, pre-wrapped and allergen-free candies or treats, happy-face stickers.)

Advent 4: Love

One: Come now, O God of Love.

All: **We are your people.**

One: Pour out your Spirit on all who long for your gift of love...

(Allow space to name people, places, or particular situations.)

All: **As we sing of your goodness together.**

(Light all four Advent candles.)

Sung response: “Come Now, O God of Peace (O-So-So)” (VU 34)

One: Whom will you share God’s gift of love with this week?

(Moment of silence)

Sung response: VU 34

(Optional: Open a Love gift box and pass out the contents during the second singing of VU 34. Gift ideas could include: love gift tags, heart-shaped stones, heart stickers.)

Alydia Smith



Microcredit Funds Hope



Our gifts for Mission & Service support microcredit programs. Let us hear about one of these programs in Kenya.

Women with disabilities living in urban slums and rural areas of Kenya face multiple levels of discrimination and struggle to earn a living. Mission & Service partner the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) has partnered with the organization Women Challenged to Challenge to address the issues of poverty these women face.

EDAN is a ministry of the World Council of Churches committed to the full inclusion of people with disabilities in church and society. Its goal is to break down the walls of fear and prejudice that prevent these people from having rich and meaningful lives. EDAN lives out this goal in different ways around the world.

In Kenya, EDAN and Women Challenged to Challenge have established a revolving loan fund that gives women with disabilities access to modest business loans. The loans, averaging US\$50, allow women to run their own small-scale businesses. These range from a vegetable stall in a local market to selling used clothing to making food to sell. No matter the business, what the loans provide is opportunity—opportunities for women to improve their families' lives and to provide shelter, food, clothing, and an education for their children.

We sing thanksgiving that Mission & Service is supporting women with disabilities in Kenya to improve their families' lives.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





Conflict Resolution in the Midst of Violence

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the work of resolution in places of conflict. Let us hear a story from Palestine.

In Bethlehem, the largely Christian-Palestinian city of Jesus' birth, Wi'am strives to build a just society through mediation, conflict resolution, and non-violence. Its premises are bordered on one side by Israel's controversial separation wall (deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2005) and on another side by a street that often sees confrontations between Palestinian protestors and Israeli soldiers. Rocks, tear gas canisters, rubber bullets, and live ammunition sometimes land in Wi'am's garden. "Simply being present here is an act of non-violence," Programme Manager Imad Nassar says.

Wi'am, a Mission & Service partner, works with all sectors of Palestinian society, Christian and Muslim, women and men, from schoolchildren to the elderly, addressing issues such as domestic violence, economic empowerment, peer relationships, and living under occupation.

In its work with schools, Wi'am teaches children and young adults the skills they need to mediate conflict in non-violent ways and how to live and work in a society under the constant stresses of occupation. Since starting its workshops, there has been a significant decrease in violence in the schools it has been working in. Former students talk about how Wi'am changed their lives, gave them confidence, and put them in situations where they met Israeli students like them on neutral ground—often the first time they'd met Israelis who weren't soldiers.

We sing thanksgiving for the conflict resolution and mediation of Wi'am supported through Mission & Service.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Supporting Local Churches



Our gifts for Mission & Service offer support to congregations. Let us hear a story from central Newfoundland.

Worship is at 3:00 p.m. at Northern Arm Pastoral Charge, a four-point pastoral charge. Its members feel this is a convenient time for worshippers to gather. It also gives folks of other traditions who are curious a good opportunity to check the church out.

Northern Arm is a warm, welcoming pastoral charge of The United Church of Canada on the beautiful Bay of Exploits. Worship is held in one of its beautiful churches each week.

The charge receives a Mission Support Grant funded by Mission & Service. At the end of each year, if any funds are left over, Northern Arm makes a donation to Mission & Service in the spirit of gratitude to pay it forward.

We sing thanksgiving for the giving heart of communities of faith whose gifts for Mission & Service change lives and offer hope!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!





New Beginnings after Civil War

Our gifts for Mission & Service support rebuilding after conflicts and natural disasters. Let us hear a story from Guatemala.

The Nebaj region of rural Guatemala suffered through three decades of civil war that ended in 1996. Here, the Guatemala Conference of Evangelical Churches (CIEDEG) is training more than 400 Indigenous women in human rights, citizen participation, and economic empowerment through farming.

The women have seen changes since the training. Their confidence has grown; they are no longer afraid to voice their opinion and some have even run for political office. Training encourages women to not just know their rights but also to exercise them. Says Veronica Gomez, CIEDEG's Gender Equality Program Coordinator, "Not only do they have a voice, but they also have a vote."

The agricultural development project has reduced malnutrition in the community's children and provided a new source of income for families. CIEDEG organizes local women into groups and provides each with seeds and materials for a greenhouse. Through these small cooperatives, the formerly displaced communities are becoming self-sufficient.

We sing thanksgiving that, through Mission & Service, communities are able to rebuild and experience peace!

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Mission & Service through the Years



June 10, 2017, was the 92nd anniversary of The United Church of Canada. In the beginning, some Presbyterian churches along with the Methodist and Congregational churches in Canada came together in Mutual Street Arena in Toronto.

Mission & Service has always been at the core of the denomination. It has had different names, but the function has always been the same: to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God to answer the call to mend the world.

We have come a long way in understanding our place in the world and how to make a difference—from the Woman’s Missionary Society and Home and Global Mission Boards to the Missionary and Maintenance Fund that we now call Mission & Service.

With this evolution we have also transformed how we live out our mission in the church, from sending missionaries to being in partnerships to a more holistic view of Mission & Service. We no longer think that God’s church has a mission; rather, God’s mission has a church.

We sing thanksgiving for your support of Mission & Service ministry and programs with people on the margins in Canada and around the world. Together we have done far more than we can ever do alone.

If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!



Drama: A Shoebox Filled with...

Skylar, Taylor, and Bailey, dressed in winter clothing, enter excitedly.

Bailey: Hey, look at all the shoeboxes! I wonder what's in them? Maybe we could give whatever is in them to people in need.

Taylor: Their problems are probably bigger than anything these boxes could hold. But let's see. *(Opens a box and holds up the words "justice and partnership.")* Justice is treating people fairly. Partnership is doing things together. To do justice, we need to be equal partners!

Skylar: But I heard about a program where people fill shoeboxes with toys, school supplies, toothbrushes, and stuff. That doesn't sound like partnership to me.

Taylor: That's because it's not. Partners would work with someone to fill each box—they would work together.

Bailey: Sometimes all the kids who get these shoeboxes really want is food, a roof over their head, and a job for their mom or dad. Instead they end up with stuff they don't need. Let me open a shoebox! *(Opens one and holds up the Gifts with Vision giving catalogue.)* Hey, what's this? *(Looks through it.)* Wow! There's a gift in here for youth to get warm winter clothes, a well project in the Congo, and lots more!

Skylar: My turn to open a shoebox! *(Opens one and holds up the Minutes for Mission booklet.)* Hey, this book has stories of all the ministries we support with Mission & Service! These are our partners. This is how we can do justice.

Bailey: That's cool, but I always liked shopping for those shoeboxes. It was fun to fill a shoebox for someone else.

Taylor: You know what? We can do both! We can support our local toy drive as well as Mission & Service, or we can give a Gift with Vision gift. We have so many ways to celebrate Christmas!

