

Beyond the Congregation – September 27, 2015

EVENTS – LOCAL & BEYOND

- **Vespers Service Celebration of Ministry - Jeff Steckley** September 27, 4:00 p.m. at Hillcrest Mennonite Church. All are welcome.
- **Sixth Annual Contemporary Music Sing** Sunday, September 27, 2:30 p.m. at Detweiler Meeting House, Roseville. Songs from Sing the Journey/Sing the Story Hymnbooks (Supplements to Hymnal: a Worship Book). Led by Mark Diller Harder. A freewill offering in support of Meetinghouse operations will be held. Everyone welcome. More information: Sam Steiner, 519-884-1040.
- **Wanner Mennonite Church** invites you to come out September 28, 7-9pm. to hear about life in Syria from Shamrose, a Syrian cultural group. Learn about Syrian culture and the hardships currently faced by Syrian residents. We'll also discuss what's involved in sponsoring a Syrian refugee family and the many ways that people can contribute to this effort.
- **Rockway Mennonite Collegiate invites parents, teenagers, pastors, and other interested persons** to attend an evening discussion on "Mental Wellness," to be held at Rockway on Wednesday, September 30 from 7 – 8:30 p.m. Dr. Melissa Hofstetter, a clinical psychologist from Los Angeles, California and is licensed toward ordained ministry in the Pacific Southwest, Mennonite Church, USA, will be the keynote speaker for Rockway's Spiritual Emphasis Week. Hofstetter will give a summary of her 3 chapel addresses, as well as provide an opportunity to share and support each other on the challenges teenagers are facing today regarding "Mental Wellness." Rockway is grateful to the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, who are sponsoring the evening session.
- **Feminist Bible Study** - Hosted by PiE - Pastors in Exile, this weekly drop-in group for all who identify as women (whether 16 or 96 years old) will journey into the interconnections of faith and feminism. This fall we will be reading the book of Ruth together and exploring what this ancient story has to say about living fabulous, faith-filled, feminist lives in the 21st century. Join us on Thursday evenings from 7-9 at Erb St. Mennonite Church. Starts October 1st. Bring a friend! Bring a bible! Bring a mug for tea! For more information contact Jessica Reesor Rempel (jessica@pastorsinexile.org or 519-577-3452).
- **KW Perimeter Cluster Ladies Breakfast** Oct. 3 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church. Registration 8:30; breakfast 9:00. Tickets available from Eleanor McKee, Dale Wombwell or church office.
- **MCC Ride for Refuge** October 3 Join us as we huff and puff our way to the finish line in the Ride for Refuge, a walking and cycling fundraiser. Locations offered across Ontario or choose the Ride Anywhere option! More info at mcco.ca/events
- **Community Memorial Service** Sunday, October 4, 2:30 p.m. at Detweiler Meeting House, Roseville. Service will provide opportunity for persons with connections to the Roseville Cemetery at Detweiler Meetinghouse to reflect on the cloud of witnesses that have gone before us. The brief worship service will be led by Scott Brubaker-Zehr, pastor of Rockway Mennonite Church. The service will be followed by an informal "cemetery walk" highlighting some of those buried in the cemetery. A freewill offering in support of Meetinghouse operations will be held. Everyone welcome. More information: Sam Steiner, 519-884-1040.
- **New Horizons is a group for zoomers, boomers and seniors.** Get informed, be inspired, socialize and have fun! Meetings are 10:00-11:30 at Maryhill Community Centre. Oct 8 – Lindsay Benjamin, Cultural Heritage Planne, Region of Waterloo on "Conservation of Cultural Heritage in the Region of Waterloo". Admission \$2.
- **Live Concert for Youth** with THE COLOR on Thursday October 8, 7pm at the Crosshill Mennonite Church. A night of fun, entertainment, and worship. Bring a food or cash donation for a local food bank for admission. Contact Mike at CrosshillConcerts@gmail.com for details. Everyone is welcome! Visit www.thecoloronline.com to find out about the band.
- **Book Launch "Sons and Mothers – Stories from Mennonite Men"** Thursday, October 15 at 7:30. Conrad Grebel Chapel. Reception and book sales to follow. Admission is free and all are welcome.
- **House of Friendship Fundraising Dinner** Saturday, October 17 at Rockway. "The Legacy of Community Leadership" with Bryan Larkin – Chief of Police Waterloo Region, Laura Manning – Executive Director Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, Berry Vrbancovic – Mayor City of Kitchener. Tickets \$75/person. For details see poster on bulletin board.
- **Empty Bowls for Haiti** Saturday, October 17, Seatings at 5 pm & 7 pm - \$25, Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden Ontario potters donate the bowls, local restaurants and organizations donate the soup and you keep the bowl! This event supports MCC Ontario and its commitment to sustainable change in Haiti. For tickets and more info, please call 519-696-2484 or 519-662-2066.
- **Youth Unlimited Fall Banquet** October 17 at Cedar Creek Community Church in Cambridge. Entertainment by Timmy Boyle, Comedian. Tickets \$40/person or \$220/table. Online: www.yfccambridge.com or email jeff.syfc@gmail.com
- **Woolwich Community Services Annual Bowl-a-Thon** for the prevention of family violence, Saturday, October 17 at Elmira Bowl. See poster for details and pledge sheets and how you can help.
- **Rockway Spaghetti Supper** Friday, October 23, 5-7:00 pm. Let us cook you supper! Adults \$14, 6-12 year olds \$8 or \$44 for family of 4 or more. Fundraising is in support of Grade 10 class trip to Quebec City.
- **Rockway's Premier Fundraising Event...Entertainment Gala 2015** Saturday, Oct. 24, 5:30-9:30. The Entertainment Gala is the NEW version of the traditional Dinner & Auction Extravaganza. Your Gala ticket includes a formal dinner, Silent & Live Auction and a Broadway Show comedy hour with Comedian Matt Falk. Tickets \$80/person. On sale until October 14. See poster on hall bulletin board.
- **End of Life Choices: Who will speak for you?** Presented by Jessica Hutchison, Community Engagement Director, Advance Care Planning Education Program and Tracey Cronin, Lawyer, Woods, Clemens, Fletcher & Cronin Law Office. Friday Oct. 30, 10:15-11:15 at Woolwich Community Health Centre. Info: Joy 519-664-3534 x230

MCC – MCCO – MCEC – MDS – MEDA – MC CANADA – MSCU – MDS - MCRS

• **MCC Ontario Fall Conference** Saturday November 14 from 9:00 - 3:30 Bethany Community Church, St. Catharines
Mennonite Central Committee works to bring relief, development and peace in the name of Christ around the world and here in Ontario. Fall Conference is your chance to see, hear, and experience first-hand how MCC is changing lives and communities through peacebuilding. Join us for fascinating seminars, powerful storytelling, interactive activities and more!

This year, we will be joined by Rami Shamma, an international partner with MCC. Rami currently works as a Program Manager in the Lebanese NGO Development for People and Nature Association which aims at reaching a non-violent democratic society where individuals enjoy all their rights and freedoms without discrimination. He is also a Trainer on conflict transformation, active citizenship, communication, needs assessment, municipal work, and youth engagement in public life. Rami's story is one you won't want to miss.

MCC is introducing our new Junior Peacebuilders Program for children ages 4 -10, so bring the kids along for an awesome day!

Plus, you'll enjoy a special Thrift On the Go pop-up shop with great clothes and accessories, with all proceeds supporting amazing projects around the world and here in Ontario. There will be a special art exhibit featuring the work of MCC Ontario program users and volunteers, and classic activities like comforter knotting with our Material Resource staff.

• **MCC Refugee Response** - Leave or stay? Many Syrian and Iraqi families face that question as international humanitarian assistance dwindles and the conflict continues to rage around them. MCC is looking for churches or groups to help sponsor refugees and for donations to support our work with refugees and displaced people in the region. Learn more about sponsorship at mcccanada.ca/refugeeresponse. Donations to the humanitarian response in Syria are eligible for matching dollars from the Canadian government. Donate at mcccanada.ca/syria-iraq or call toll-free 1-800-313-6226.

• **Refugee Sponsorship Information Sessions**

1:00 or 7:00 pm on Oct 5 in the Community Room, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener

Is your church, community group or neighbourhood association interested in learning about refugee resettlement and sponsorship in Ontario? Attend one of these information sessions to learn the roles and responsibilities of sponsoring groups and how MCC can partner and assist you as we respond to the current refugee crisis. Please note, these information sessions will also be available via web conferencing. More info at mcco.ca/events.

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support – “He was like an angel to me...”

The refugee crisis in the Mediterranean and Europe and the desperation of so many seeking safety is compelling and horrifying. Refugees take a dangerous road to find safety, hoping to build a new life asking only for a safe haven. The thanksgiving offered for the simplest of supports MCRS offers them, is truly humbling.

MCRS assists refugee claimants through their legal claim and settlement process. Right now we are responding to the current Syrian refugee crisis. In the past Canada's response to tragedy has been swift and generous. We welcomed 60,000 people from southeast Asia in 1979-80 and airlifted 5,000 people from Kosovo in the late 1990s. Canada has accepted only 2,374 refugees from Syria during the current crisis. The desperate stories of Syrian refugee claimants coming through MCRS offices right now are heart wrenching; it is so difficult for them to escape Syria, leaving everything to travel here. In fact, even when they arrive, the reality is that fewer refugees are being allowed into Canada at all. It has become harder to get here, harder to get in and much, much harder to stay.

This makes *Halil's story even more extraordinary. Halil is 16 years old, a young man from Syria. His town was overrun by ISIS and they threatened him with death unless he joined them. His family, desperate to keep their son safe, used all their money and bought him a ticket to Turkey to stay with relatives there, already refugees. Halil, now safe, was still desperately worried about his family left behind. Daily, he would go to a local park to be alone. One day, as he wept, overcome with frustration, an elderly man approached him in friendship and he shared his story.

One day the man said, 'I want to help you. Give me your Syrian Passport.' Hesitant, Halil spoke to his parents. They were extremely worried, but said, 'Son, go ahead, maybe he can help you, but please, be careful!' Halil trusted the stranger, and a few days later the man gave him his Syrian passport, a Swedish passport, and two plane tickets; one to Canada and one to Jordan. He took Halil to the airport and said, 'Check in for the flight to Jordan using your Syrian passport, but do not get on the plane! Come back and re-enter Turkey pretending to be a Swedish tourist on your new passport. Then use the Swedish passport to leave Turkey again and get on the flight to Canada.'

Amazingly, this worked. Halil arrived in Canada, and was able to claim refugee status. Halil says in wonder, 'This man, he is like an angel to me.' Halil was lucky to receive such kindness. But how many other youth are taken advantage of, smuggled, or worse as they try to escape from war and danger?

When he calls his mother he hears the sound of bombs falling in the background, and his little sister, crying. His father has disappeared and the family doesn't know where he is. He is frantic to bring his family to safety in Canada, but it can take more than 2 years to bring family members here through Canada's slow family re-unification process.

Every year around Thanksgiving we consider how grateful we are for our loved ones, and the safety and stability that we enjoy here in Canada. Every year around Thanksgiving, we also meet people who walk through our doors with stories of great injustice, and often great bravery and strength. Our work at MCRS ensures that refugee claimants arriving in Waterloo Region experience welcome, compassion, inclusion, and justice. And refugee claimants need your help.

Please donate online at www.mcrs.ca, post a check or telephone us at 519-571-1912 ext 4. and join us in supporting those who must leave their homeland because of persecution and war. We cannot do this work without your financial partnership and your prayers — thank you for joining us in this work.