

SUMMER 2020

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# EMCCTOGETHER

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada

## The Church scattered & gathered

Over the last several months we have seen the world come to a screeching halt. But God has not stopped His work...



(continued from cover)

I can look out my window today and see something that I've seen every year at this time. A round yellow flower. And not just one round yellow flower, a bunch of them. Dandelions. I used to look at them as a weed to get rid of, but today I am seeing them as a sign the world has not stopped.

Plants are emerging, flowers are blooming, grass is growing, trees are budding, animals are running around. Bees are buzzing, ants are marching, and yes, dandelions are showing their yellow faces. If left unchecked, those yellow flowers will soon turn to fuzzy seeds that will scatter and disperse all over the neighbourhood.

We often think of the church as a gathering place. It is the assembly of people who believe. But in this challenging time when the church cannot be gathered it can be scattered to carry the good news. You and I are the scattered church!

In Acts 8:1 it says, "And Saul (later Paul) approved of his (Stephen's) execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."

This same Paul later continued the movement and saw the church scattered to the world. "For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory

of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory." (Col. 1:27 NLT)

Can our desire to be the scattered church be just as strong as our wish to gather together? I don't know about you, but I have talked to my neighbour more in the last 2 weeks than I have in the last 15 years. Let's not only desire to be the church gathered, but also the church scattered. ■

Submitted by Brian Archer

# EMCC PARTNER UPDATES

Jean Winker

## **EMMANUEL BIBLE COLLEGE** KITCHENER, ON

In light of COVID-19, EBC closed their Campus in late March and rapidly transitioned to online classes. Dr. Stephen Roy, President and Dean, commended the staff, faculty and students for their flexibility and for finishing well.

EBC's Leadership Team, staff and faculty have been working collaboratively to find the best mode of education for Fall 2020. For the sake of the health and safety of their entire community Fall 2020 classes will be online. As provincial guidelines change and gathering sizes increase they hope that before the Fall semester concludes, some small in-person gatherings of smaller classes may be able to meet in a physically distanced manner. Being a community is a huge part of what it means to be at Emmanuel and the school intends to do its very best to provide this, even though it may look different than usual. They hope the campus will be open in some capacity in September, depending

on what is permitted by the Ontario Government. Interested individuals may audit a course at Emmanuel for only \$200 (50% off for current students and alumni). Auditing allows participation in a community of believers in the online classroom setting.

"We want to assure our community that every effort is being made to provide the best education possible while taking into account the safety of our students, faculty, and staff," says Dr. Roy. And to all friends of EBC, he says, "Thank you for your ongoing interest in the work of the College. We value your prayers and support."

[Review the course schedule here.](#) For future updates, specific programs and classes visit [emmanuelbiblecollege.ca](http://emmanuelbiblecollege.ca).

## **ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE** CALGARY, AB

About 6 years ago RMC moved to offer all of its education via a distributed learning model which means they primarily deliver learning online. With this being the case, the pandemic has not slowed the College down, but

actually they have seen an increase in students applying and their current student base has increased their participation in taking courses. They do offer live, classroom setting courses, done in conjunction with partners. The next one will be in Barrie, ON. A change in restrictions in Ontario has made it possible to go ahead with this course and a professor will fly out to teach it.

RMC's method of delivering education means students can start at any time, needing only an internet connection, and can work whenever they wish, and at their own pace. Course facilitators are available to help if needed.

"Rocky Mountain College would not be able to develop Christian leaders that are so desperately needed now without the assistance and prayers of our supporters. We are honoured that so many would be so supportive. Thank you." – Robert Harris, RMC Enrollment & Marketing Director

Visit [rockymountaincollege.ca](http://rockymountaincollege.ca) to sign up for a free course or view all their courses and programs.





Loved by all ages, camps work hard to provide programming and events that feed the soul, refresh the body and nurture deepening friendships.

A dig through our archives turned up no instances of lengthy interruptions in ministry to kids, families and groups during the history of the six camps related to EMCC - until this year. All six camps have greatly curtailed or cancelled summer programming, and are planning, while waiting to see what the next phases of openings will allow in the fall. Here is a summary of what's happening at each one.

### **CHARIS CAMP** CHILLIWACK, BC

All overnight camps at Charis are cancelled for this summer. Nor will there be Day Camps. Darren Duncalfe, Executive Director, would appreciate your prayers for wisdom as they navigate, and that financial needs will be met. Most of their staff has been laid off. They hope they will be able to host some small daytime events during the summer, but do not yet know. Charis had just completed renovations of the dining hall when the pandemic struck, and no one has used it yet. They had an excellent team lined up, and were ready to go. "God knows the way through," says Darren.

Please check [chariscamp.com](http://chariscamp.com) for news as the summer progresses.

### **RIVERS EDGE CAMP AND RETREAT CENTRE** CREMONA, AB

COVID-19 restrictions meant Grandcamp, a program for grandparents and grandchildren had to be cancelled and Family Camp may be moved to July or August. Although all overnight camps and guest groups had to be cancelled as well, Rivers Edge will offer Day Camps for those up to 19. These last months have been stressful for kids too, and since they are within a feasible distance to offer this, they will do what it takes to be able to connect with young people, sharing the love of Jesus with them and giving them the opportunity to be with friends. Compliance at this time means no more than 50 people on site, with 2 counsellors per 8 campers and an extra crew to clean and sanitize. The Camp's ministry has grown substantially in recent years. Some future hopes: A move toward year round Bible Camps: some in each of 4 seasons with a variety of types, such as Culinary Camps and others, all with a Christian theme; Rivers Edge Retreats: around topical Christian themes; Equine Assisted Learning: Using horses to provide therapeutic activities for individuals; Guest Groups: This already exists but the Camp will work to provide more of what is needed to attract specialty groups such as Music Camps, Horse-Riding Camps. The Camp appreciates your prayers. Thirty-one staff members were laid off. And pray that God will help the Camp to meet financial obligations. Fall programming is not yet certain. Please check [riversedgecamp.org](http://riversedgecamp.org) for updates.

### **WHISPERING PINES CAMP** ELKWATER, AB

Denver Knodel began as Director of Whispering Pines in January, along with his wife Julie and baby boy Elyas. Both have been campers, and later staff at Whispering Pines camp. There will be no kids camps in operation this summer, but they have launched a 'Do it Yourself Family Camp.' They can host several family groups for 10 weeks, with room for physical distancing between the groups. They have options for tenting, RV's, or cabin rentals. The Camp will provide self-led devotional packages, tailored to families and couples as well as activity and craft ideas. Each group will be responsible for preparing their own meals, will have their own washroom facilities assigned, and can enjoy campfires. Denver and Julie

would appreciate prayer for enough volunteer help and energy to run this unique family camp. Also, prayer that fundraisers would be successful and for wisdom and God's favour as they look to the fall. They have bookings for September and October, but it is still too early to know the outcome. See [whisperingpinescamp.ca](http://whisperingpinescamp.ca) for news and updates.

### **ECHO LAKE BIBLE CAMP** FORT QU'APPELLE, SK

Chris and Monique Strachan are the Executive Director Team at Echo Lake Camp. They are the only staff, usually running with volunteer help, so layoffs have not been necessary. All kids, youth and family summer programming has been cancelled. Their distance from larger centres ruled out Day Camps. They are permitted to have up to 30 people on site and intend to launch a volunteer work bee camp, (SERVE@ELBC) that will run Jul 6-26. They are taking applications to be sure to stay within the allowable numbers. Volunteers will assist with work projects according to their skills, such as painting, maintenance, and cabin building. They would appreciate prayer that in the fall they will be able to host overnight rental groups and retreats. Revenue from these streams is highly important to sustainability. Camps will be addressed in Phase 4 in Saskatchewan and until this information is released at an unknown future date they will not know if they will be allowed to do this. Echo Lake plans to launch a major fund raising campaign in the coming weeks to recoup funds lost this spring and summer so they can be ready when the time comes to fully open their facilities to ministry. See [elbc.co](http://elbc.co) for updates

### **CAMP MISHEWAH** KILLALOE, ON

All kids and youth camps are cancelled this summer as ON Government directives do not permit overnight camp programs. Because of restrictions in place, the decision was made to cancel family camps as well. Jeanette and Steve Balzer, Managing Directors, are onsite to run and monitor the grounds. Seasonal sites are allowed to be open to trailer owners. The public washrooms will be open by June 19. As of July 1 campsites and cabin rentals will be available and the lakeside suites are already open. There will be no meals served and programs and group

meetings have been canceled, but families are welcome to book a stay at the camp. The waterfront will be open for swimming and canoe rentals but will not be supervised. Mishewah is not a winterized camp and closes at the end of September. Jeanette and Steve would appreciate your prayers for strength, wisdom, and for camp financial needs.

For news and updates check [mishewah.ecmcamps.ca](http://mishewah.ecmcamps.ca)

### STAYNER CAMP AND CHRISTIAN RETREAT CENTRE STAYNER, ON

Kyle Moore is the new Managing Director at Stayner Camp, and has just moved to Stayner with his family earlier in June. His first season will be a quiet one, devoted mainly to learning the ropes and future planning, as it was necessary to cancel 5 months of programs and retreats involving overnight guests. As of Friday, June 5 the Camp has opened up their washrooms and are now open for all camping, trailers and cottages. The Lodge and other facilities on site are aiming to open by July 1. They will not be offering Day Camp. Vigilant cleaning of bathrooms and physical distancing will be in place. A small number of staff are on site. The Camp is hopeful they will be able to host overnight retreats in the fall. Please pray for wisdom in making decisions that are in line with evolving restrictions, and for enabling to get through this difficult time financially. For updates about the fall retreats please see [stayner.ecmcamps.ca](http://stayner.ecmcamps.ca). ■

## PART OF THE EMCC FAMILY... IN ENGLAND

Jean Winker

EMCC has credentialed ministers scattered throughout seven provinces across Canada... and one in England.

Sam Paul and his wife Vasanthi emigrated to England in 1993 in response to an invitation to pastor from a group of Sri Lankan Tamil people in Surrey, a densely populated urban centre. The couple's two girls are now grown and married and live nearby. And they have two grandchildren to enjoy.



Vasanthi and Sam Paul

In 1999 Pastor Sam moved on, and planted a new independent evangelical church in Surrey called New Grace ministries. In addition to his years of pastoral experience, he had previously worked with Back to the Bible and Bible Club Movement and learned much from both of these organizations, but he also recognized the need for a formal credential. It was when speaking with his friend, Pastor Solomon Arumainayagam from our Christian Family Worship Centre in Toronto that he came to hear of The Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada. Introductions were made, and in the due course of time he was able to be ordained with EMCC in 2011.

Pastor Sam serves a church of approximately 90-100 Sri Lankan Tamil and Indian Tamil families. His passion is next generation ministry and they have developed Gravitare, specifically designed for children, teenagers and young adults. During the pandemic Gravitare, worship, prayer meetings and Bible study groups are all meeting by Zoom. Ordinarily they utilize a rented space. And these days he is connecting more often with

the congregation by phone. Another area of ministry that he is excited about is a ½ hour a week Tamil TV program that he is able to offer under the umbrella of New Grace Ministries.

Sam would be grateful to his EMCC colleagues for prayer for his congregation and their various ministries. He relates that in their area openness to the Gospel is seldom seen amongst those holding fast to their traditional religion. And amongst those who have abandoned their religion and adopted a secular viewpoint there is little interest in exploring a new one.

As is the case for many churches during the pandemic, finances are also a pressing issue. Even so Sam is trusting God for the future. "We are totally depending on God," he says. "I have always believed God will provide and I am thankful to still be able to do church work." ■

## Resources

for our leaders

Through Enrich, the expertise of leaders within EMCC is unleashed to enrich the lives and leadership of their peers.

[emccenrich.ca](http://emccenrich.ca)



# EMCC FINANCES

Submitted by Nathanael Ong

Thank you for your faithful partnership! Your commitment and continuous generosity is highly appreciated, especially in such a time as this. Our National Team members were greatly encouraged when we received a letter that states:

*Enclosed please find a cheque... We felt that it might be of more help to you to receive it as a lump sum now... the Lord has blessed us, and we feel that it would not be right to leave the funds in our bank account, when they could be put to better use.*

Yes! The God we serve is faithful. He can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.

We invite you to rejoice with us, and to pray with us, with these items in mind:

1. Our Revised Annual Budget is \$1.03M. To date, we've received \$342,000. This consists of Common Cause Contributions received from 73 churches, 10 individual Kingdom Investors and other incomes. But the shortfall remains at \$688,000.
2. Our World Partners Annual Budget is \$1.139M. To date, we've received \$363,361. A shortfall of \$775,639.
3. As a support to our churches and church staff, EMCC has waived two months of premiums on health and dental benefits. Thanks to Pauline Zondervan for her outstanding leadership in this area.
4. We saw first-hand how God orchestrated the sale of Highland Centre during COVID-19.
5. Through technology, we continue to carry out our duties and responsibilities. Many of us are much busier than pre-COVID-19. ■

**The World Partners team** thanks God for the resilience of our brothers and sisters around the world. The Global Church is remaining hopeful and being used by Christ as agents of blessing during the spread of COVID-19.

Please pray that our Canadian churches will participate in global mission WITH the Global Church, who seek partnership with brothers and sisters across the globe; may we not see our involvement only as sending out workers, teams and money, or helping the less fortunate. Rather, may we see our involvement also as learning and connecting and being engaged in Jesus' mission together!

There are countless stories that cause us to say, "The Lord has done this, and it is amazing to us." (Psalm 118:23, CEV)



## A LOOK BACK AT REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Jean Winker

Many will remember the wrenching image of a three-year-old Syrian boy, Alan Kurdi, whose lifeless body washed up on the shore of a Turkish beach in September 2015.

For Mindemoya Missionary Church on Manitoulin Island, Ontario, those graphic moments of news coverage sparked the beginning of their journey into refugee sponsorship.

Sarah Quackenbush, a member of the Mindemoya congregation, spoke at length about the sponsorship of, at first five, and within the next few years another three families from war-torn Eritrea, an East African nation. In all, people from five small communities on Manitoulin Island banded together and welcomed 38 people to a new start in Canada.

### How they prepared to welcome refugee families into their community

In October of 2015, Sarah and her husband Ben began an application with Mennonite Central Committee to sponsor a family. "The beautiful thing was that at the same time we were researching and starting the process, others around us were saying they too desired to be obedient to Jesus and to be His hands and feet, and they joined in."

There were conversations in homes, churches and places of work, and many were asking how Manitoulin could help. They posted information in community newspapers, and people came out of the woodwork with donations. Due to this amazing response and desire to help, they were initially able to apply for five refugee families. Five Manitoulin families each created a core team of 6-8 people, one team in each of five different Island communities where the refugees would settle. The group leaders were from Mindemoya Church. The majority of the group members were motivated by their faith. Still, many others in the communities also stepped forward and did whatever they could to prepare for the coming families.

Having applied for the first five families under the Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) Program, the UNHCR identified the refugees, and the Government

of Canada provided up to six months of income support through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). It was up to the church, as the private sponsors to provide another six months of financial aid and up to a year of social and emotional support. Along with the financial support, the church provided housing with all the necessary furnishings, English as a Second Language instruction, clothing, help for each family to navigate school and health care systems, banking and budgeting, and cultural experiences. In short, everything they needed to know to embrace life in their new country.

Two Eritrean families were already living on Manitoulin during the sponsorship process. Both made themselves available for translation and cultural integration. One of the teenagers spoke fluent Tigrinya, the language of the refugee families. The core teams would also take responsibility to teach skills that would lead to eventual employment. And, of course, daily hospitality, emotional support and friendship were significant needs. Families six, seven and eight were members of the original five families. It was important for the families and to the sponsorship group that families stay together; some family members hadn't seen their parents and siblings for over 12 years. Between 2016-2019 these additional families arrived on Manitoulin through private sponsorship.

## Addressing the risk of refugee sponsorship

On February 16, 2016, the sponsors drove to the Toronto Airport with excitement but also nervousness to welcome the first families. There was some apprehension. "What do we have to offer?" "We're in over our heads." "They don't want to come to Manitoulin, to isolation." They knew it was a risk.

"But," says Sarah, "The truth is – to follow Jesus is to follow Him into the unknown, into the risk, into the uncomfortable, because that's where Jesus meets you. That's where it is obvious that our trust is in God, and it's where He is present and working."

One of the families had spent 15 years in a Refugee Camp, and another had lived there nine years – days were all the same, living in a tent with a dirt floor and meagre food rations, few possessions, little hope.

That first day back on Manitoulin after the Toronto trip, Sarah and Ben had the special joy of welcoming a young Mom and her two young children into their home for two weeks until their home was ready. They formed a bond in that time, and over the next year, they did life together. "Whatever we were doing, they were with us. Our family grew by three."

The folks on the Island needn't have worried about what the newcomers would think about their new communities. As time went on, the families often remarked that Manitoulin was the perfect place in which to start. Small towns made it easier to get around, and everyone knew who they were and was eager to help. The children were fluent within a few short months. The

schools and the medical community extended their support. One man from the Mindemoya congregation taught driving skills to everyone interested.



## How refugee sponsorship changed lives

Now, in 2020, five years later, all of the newcomers have left Manitoulin and have settled in various places across Canada, but many are still in close touch with the people who served and loved them on the Island. One, who was a young teenager when he arrived, is now in College and will have the chance to someday do what he wants to do, not what he has to do to survive. And one family who arrived as Muslims has come to know Jesus and are enthusiastic believers.

In a letter, one of the new families says:

*I would like to say thank you very much for what you did for me since I arrived to Canada and continue to still do for me. You have given me light in my life... It was a big stress relief to live so closely to our sponsors. This gave us a great start to life in Canada. I am happy and so are my kids. Because of the sponsorship, the kids were able to participate in sports and activities I didn't even know about. We all learned to skate and share Canada's beloved sport of hockey... I can't find the words that I want to say from my heart, only God knows what you mean to me.*

## The joy of following Jesus

Was it hard work? The sponsorship process and everything else that went along with integrating and nurturing the families? Absolutely it was.

## But what if they had not done it?

Sarah says,

*If we hadn't been obedient to Jesus' calling for us, if we hadn't opened our home and life up to these families, we would never have shared in the joy of a mother who had tears in her eyes the first time her son*

*played hockey with his team. We would never have been able to laugh along with the families as they zoomed down the snowy hill on toboggans. Or had the overwhelming pride of seeing Romme, a young man go off to College. Or rejoiced when a Muslim family of 7 came to saving faith in Jesus.*

They would not have seen eight families, with restored hope, fresh confidence, and new skills launched in their new country. "It has been an incredible experience in which God allowed us to partner with Him. We felt the presence and nearness of God throughout it all. The work pales in comparison with the joy of following Jesus." ■

If you want to learn more about, or are considering getting involved in sponsoring refugees, contact our Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator at [refugeesponsorship@emcc.ca](mailto:refugeesponsorship@emcc.ca).



## Thanks for making our first World Refugee Campaign so rewarding.

It has been life-giving to hold space for this conversation about EMCC people who are engaging with near and global neighbours. We know that there are always ways to keep improving, by listening to you.

## 4 Ways You Can Continue In Step.

**Learn.** Start with the information on our website (below).

**Pray.** Being mindful of refugees' gifts, not just their needs.

**Serve in your community.** Offer and receive hospitality and friendship with neighbours, Join a Friendship Circle, volunteer as a mentor, or get involved in ESL, with Immigration Services or New Canadian Agencies. Sponsor refugees through your church, or together with other churches.

**Give.** [EMCC's Refugee Fund](#) assists refugees and the churches sponsoring them.

More details and stories can be found at [worldpartners.emcc.ca/instep](http://worldpartners.emcc.ca/instep).

## EMCC TOGETHER

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