



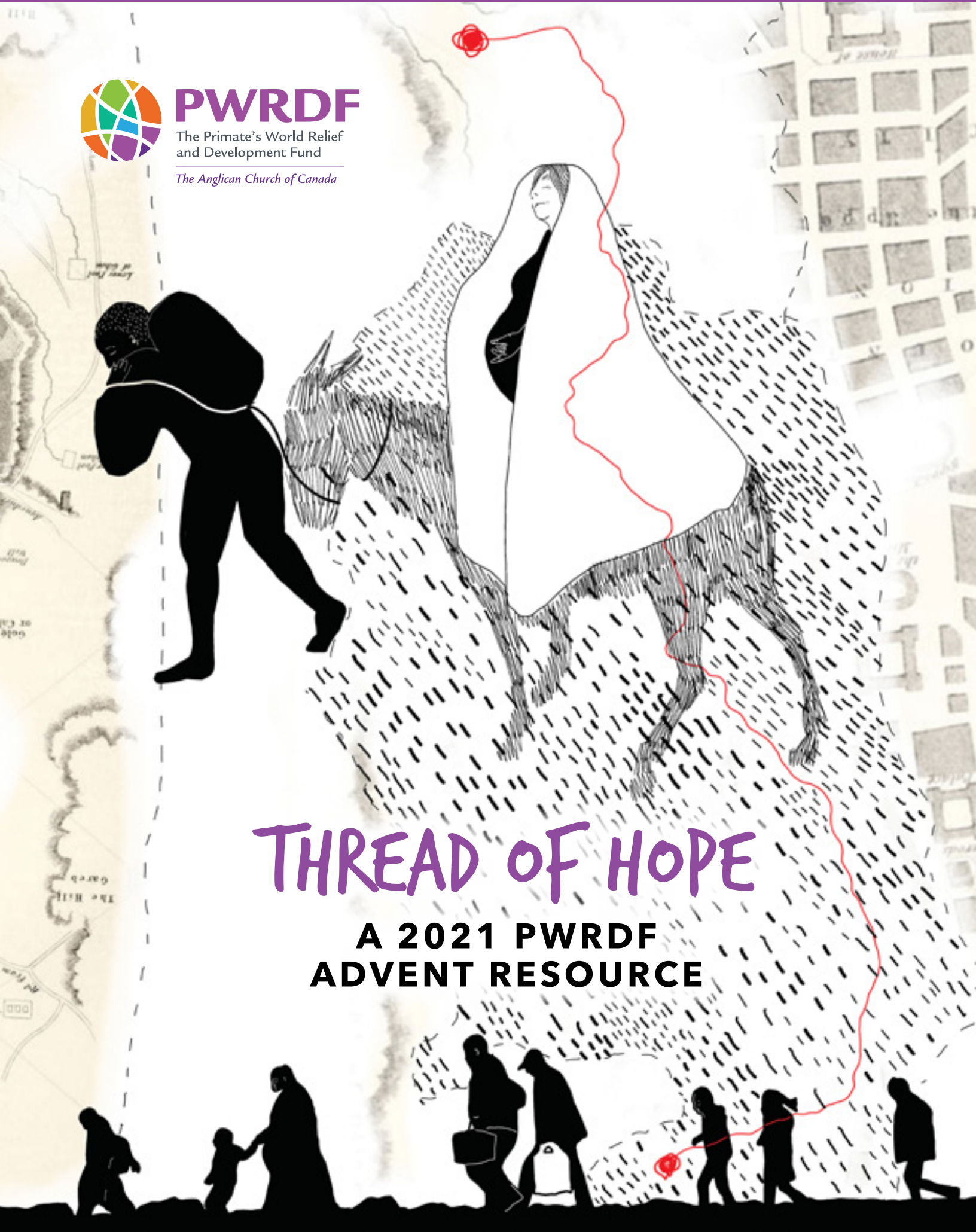
**PWRDF**

The Primate's World Relief  
and Development Fund

*The Anglican Church of Canada*

# THREAD OF HOPE

**A 2021 PWRDF  
ADVENT RESOURCE**



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# OUR CONTRIBUTORS



## FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT: MARTHA TATARNIC

*The Rev. Martha Tatarnic is the Rector at St. George's, a thriving downtown Anglican church in St. Catharines, Ontario in the Diocese of Niagara. Martha's first book, *The Living Diet: A Christian Journey to Joyful Eating* (2019) explores our relationship with food and our body through a Christian perspective. She writes a regular blog for the Anglican Church of Canada that can be found at [medium.com/@mtatarnic](https://medium.com/@mtatarnic). Martha is a member of the PWRDF Board of Directors.*



## SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT: NICK PANG

*The Rev. Canon Nick Pang is a parish priest in Penticton, BC in the Diocese of Kootenay, where he also coordinates the diocesan Refugee Sponsorship Agreement. Prior to parish ministry Nick's educational background was in International Development and Asian Religions, which gave him a helpful lens for thinking about and responding to issues of migration and global inequity. Of mixed Canadian and Singaporean background, Nick has long been interested in theological reflection on the intersection of place and belonging. He has contributed to other seasonal resources for the Anglican Church of Canada including a Marks of Mission Bible Study and an Advent Chapel daily devotional, both through the Diocese of Montreal.*



## THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT: NANCY FORD

*Nancy serves as Deacon to the City out of Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria in the Diocese of British Columbia. Working as Coordinator of Counselling Services for a faith inclusive counselling agency and in private practice for several years accompanied her discernment of vocation to the diaconate. She continues work with Anglican Deacons Canada as Past-president and recently retired as Director of Deacons for the Diocese of Islands and Inlets. Social justice is a passion for Nancy and she continues to work in the areas of substance use, addiction, mental health and homelessness. She feels privileged to have the awareness and advice of her children and grandchildren on social concerns including climate change and reconciliation.*



## FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT: CHERYL KUKURUDZ

*The Rev. Cheryl Kukurudz is the Executive Assistant to the Bishop and Dean of the Diocese of Brandon; Deacon at St. George's Church, Brandon; camp-ministry enthusiast; youth booster/advocate/leader. She stands firm in her resolve for Christ-like kindness, finding her voice when it involves the underdog, whether that be on a local, diocesan, or national level. Cheryl enjoys trying new recipes, sharing her memory for 80s songs and show tunes with her pets (and sometimes neighbours); taking long walks; and, on occasion, being the funny one. She lives in Brandon, Manitoba, with her husband, two teenage daughters and wildebeests of varying size and temperament.*



## ILLUSTRATIONS: ARTA SKUJA

*Arta Skuja is a Latvian artist (MA from The Art Academy of Latvia), a pilgrim on the road and also someone who knows a thing or two about Canada. For several years she lived, made friends and created art in a L'Arche community in Nova Scotia. Arta lives a contemplative life in the countryside, grows her own food and works in textile design, printmaking and contemporary Christian iconography.*

PLEASE NOTE ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS ON THE SUNDAY REFLECTIONS.

# A WORD ABOUT MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS

by Cheryl Barker

*The Rev. Cheryl Barker is the Rector at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Caledonia, Ontario, on the traditional lands of the Mohawk, Seneca, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga and Tuscarora Nations.*

Who are we on the Advent Journey? How is God continuing to communicate with us throughout this season and within the Advent and Christmas story now? How do we respond to that communication and be truthful about ourselves and the world we live in? How does this Advent season help us to build community? These are big questions that we, at all ages, can respond to with open minds and hearts. Meditation and mindfulness moments throughout these Advent reflections encourage us to open our minds and our hearts, using our imaginations to guide us.

Meditation is an exercise of the imagination. For me, meditation engages my relationship with God, my ability to listen, and allows me to delve deeper into my feelings. It can often provide a great understanding of what the situation or feelings are all about. Often, people will say that they can't meditate or they don't know how. While children have an inherent understanding of the ability to imagine, sometimes we grown-ups need a reminder. A preliminary exercise in a group meditation setting would be to ask participants to close their eyes and imagine their bedroom. Ask them to imagine all of the elements of the room. Ask them to see it, without saying anything. Once they can visualize their room, ask them to raise their hands. As simple as that, they have just used their imaginations.

Mindfulness means to be in the present moment and aware. It is best used throughout the day when you want to feel fully engaged and aware of being.

## PREPARING TO MEDITATE

Each Sunday you will find a text to guide you through a meditation on the scripture and reflection provided. You can also listen to the meditation by clicking on the links provided. Find a comfortable place to sit. Take a moment to focus on your sit bones so they are even on each side. Lengthen your spine so it is tall and proud. Roll your shoulders back to open up your chest. Take a deep breath in and slowly let it out. Let your hands settle into your lap, palms facing upwards. Continue breathing in through your nose for a count of four and let it out through your mouth for a count of four. As you continue to breathe allow your body to relax and sink into the place you are sitting.



## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

### IN A DAILY EMAIL

Subscribe at [pwrdf.org/Advent2021](https://pwrdf.org/Advent2021) to receive an email every morning during the season of Advent. PWRDF Story links are embedded in the text.

### AS A COMPLETE PDF

(IDEAL FOR GROUP STUDY)

View on your screen or print this PDF document. You can click on the PWRDF Story links while reading the PDF on your screen.



## WEEK 1: SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS



**READ: LUKE 1: 26-28**

*During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the Angel Gabriel to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord has blessed you and is with you."*

## REFLECT *with Lorenzo Vargas, Program Manager for Communication for Social Change with PWRDF partner World Association for Christian Communication (WACC).*



*Lorenzo Vargas is a communication for development specialist and researcher on citizens' media. A Colombian-Canadian, he directs WACC's Communication for Social Change Program, which supports grassroots sustainable development initiatives in the Global South. He holds degrees in international development and communication from York University and McGill University, and is pursuing a PhD in Communication and Culture at Ryerson University, where he is affiliated with the Global Communication Governance Lab. Lorenzo lives on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples.*

Many of us live in societies where there seems to be more “communication” than ever – emails, social media, messaging, smartphones, and ever increasing digital information capabilities. But real “communication,” which is essential to people’s dignity and community, is constantly under threat. All people require unfettered access to the information and knowledge essential to democracy, empowerment, responsible citizenship and mutual accountability. Everyone must be able to engage in transparent, informed and democratic debate.

But in all societies, communication is stifled by:

- vulnerable and marginalized communities denied access to information and communication
- media monopolies that prevent a diversity of perspective and opinion
- censorship or deliberate misinformation
- misrepresentation, or lack of representation, of groups or communities in the news
- imposition of language and restrictions on the use of indigenous languages.

In this context, WACC works with all those denied the right to communicate because of status, identity, or gender. WACC advocates for full access to information and communication, promotes open and diverse media and strengthens networks of communicators to advance peace, understanding and justice. **Learn more at [waccglobal.org](http://waccglobal.org).**

## MEDITATE *with Cheryl Barker*

▶ Follow the “Preparing to meditate” instructions for guided meditation found on page 4, or listen to Cheryl Barker [here](#).

Continue breathing in through your nose for a count of four and let it out through your mouth for a count of four.

As you continue to breathe allow your body to relax sink into the place you are sitting. Let it be gentle and easy. Notice the rhythm and sweetness of it. Wonder for a moment about the ability you have to nourish your body with the air that flows through you at this moment.

With each breath in you let new energy



in and with each breath out you release stagnant energy. Be aware at this moment that this miraculous God-given ability to breathe is shared with everyone on the planet.

Continue to allow your body to do what it does naturally. Breathe. Place your hands over your heart, in the centre of your chest a little to the side. Feel your heart beating. As you feel your heart rhythms imagine the warmth of your hands radiating into your heart. As you concentrate on that warmth imagine the blood flowing through your body. Visualize it travelling down your chest, down your legs, up again, down and up your arms, travelling into the neck and head. Retrace those steps. I will give you a few moments to sit imagining that warmth flowing through your body. See the life force moving, communicating throughout your body, continuing to breathe, feeling the warmth and celebrating the working of your body. *Pause.*

Now thank God for that rhythm of life that we all share. *Pause.*

After meditation questions:

1. What did it feel like to imagine the rhythm of your blood flowing?
2. Did you feel anything different in your body?
3. How does your body communicate?
4. How does it feel to know that we are all connected by the common experience of how our bodies work?

## MINDFULNESS MOMENT: COMMUNICATION AWARENESS

Take the time to go outside for a walk or just stand in the open air. Close your eyes. Breathe in and out. Concentrate on your breath for a moment. Now listen. What do you hear? Listen deeply to how the world is communicating. Animals, traffic noises, people, factories, nature, even your breath. Listen to how those sounds connect and work together. Be aware of how God is communicating to you in the world. *Pause.* Thank God for the world.



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29

MARTHA TATARNIC

## AWAKENING TO THE CALL

### READ: GENESIS 18:1-5

*The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant."*

### REFLECT

The Advent call on our lives is to "wake up!" Right now, right in front of us, God is speaking into our lives; but often we don't see or hear because we are asleep.

Abraham and his wife Sarah were wide awake when they extended hospitality to three strangers passing by their way. The image of these three, gathered around the meal offered by Abraham and Sarah, has become a well-known image of our Trinitarian God. The life of God is seen as a circle of fellowship around a meal. And at the heart of that image is our own willingness to live life awake, to hear the words of a stranger as the words of an angel sent from God, to respond to God's presence and God's voice with words of welcome and deeds of hospitality.

Waking up has been a feature of pandemic living. COVID has confronted us with truths we need to see and a message we

need to hear: climate change is happening now and threatening life as we know it on this planet; injustice is baked into the very structures of our society, and we can no longer pretend that how we care for the vulnerable doesn't affect us all; our country is built on a story of genocide, and reconciliation and partnership with Indigenous peoples is a path to which we all must commit; vast mental health needs have been triggered by the isolation and anxiety of COVID and the only possible way of responding is in recognizing that we are all in this together. Waking up is one thing, but when the message we hear is so filled with pain and need, where do we find a foothold in order to even begin to imagine how we might respond?

Perhaps what we receive in this angel-stranger encounter is permission to start small, to offer something rather than nothing. We, too, can greet the news of our pain-filled world with words that affirm each other's dignity and actions that nudge us toward a world where all are fed and welcomed.

### PRAY

*Healing, sovereign God,  
Overmatch our resistant ears  
With your transforming speech.  
Penetrate our jadedness and fatigue.  
Touch our yearnings by your words.  
Through your out-loudness,  
draw us closer to you.  
We are ready to listen. Amen.*

- WALTER BRUEGGEMANN





## PWRDF STORY

### PROTECTING THE PÁRAMOS

*by Jeannethe Lara*

The upper Andes of Colombia, between the tree line and the permanent snow line, is home to half of the world's moorlands known as the Páramos, an ecosystem that includes 70% of the country's water sources. Yet despite international and national protection regulations, the Páramos are under threat due to extractive mining activities, as well as regional political and economic instabilities and weak Colombian legislation.

PWRDF is joining WACC (the World Association for Christian Communication) and local organization Grupo Comunicarte in a three-year partnership to promote people-led environmental protection among Indigenous, peasant and Afro-descendant communities across six affected regions. The program will cost on average \$44,000 per year, and will fund weekly 60-minute radio broadcasts. The initiative will establish and train a network of 10 environmental journalists (at least half women) on environmental protection and care practices. The project will also strengthen citizen journalism and support community radio networks working on environmental issues.

Colombia has one of the most developed community radio sectors serving rural areas, with an estimated 450 stations operating. Traditional radio offers a powerful platform where ordinary people own and produce the content; it allows isolated and marginalized communities to voice their concerns and to seek solutions for the protection of the environment in Colombia. Each community radio station has an average audience of 375,000 people. The potential reach is 3,750,000 people.

In communities where moorland ecosystems are particularly vulnerable, the journalists will train five additional local people to help to disseminate information and encourage greater cooperation between the affected communities. The ultimate goal is to generate, foster and deepen a citizen culture of knowledge and care of the Páramos among locals, visitors and tourists. The broadcasts will promote the Páramos as a vital source of water, worth protecting in the fight against climate change.

WACC is a global organization based in Toronto and a pioneer of the communication rights movement since 1968. It is one of the few global organizations working to advance the communication rights of marginalized communities worldwide. As such, it has collaborated with thousands of grassroots communities, while advocating for systemic changes in legislation and policy at the national, regional, and international levels. Like PWRDF, it is a member of the ACT Alliance.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:  
[pwrdf.org/protecting-the-params/](https://pwrdf.org/protecting-the-params/)



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

MARTHA TATARNIC

## AWAKENING TO REPENTANCE

### READ: 2 SAMUEL 12:7-9

*Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight?"*

### REFLECT

King David, like most of our Biblical heroes, comes to us without filter. Although his leadership was revered and the people of Israel longed for a return to his model of marrying political and spiritual leadership so successfully, David's destructive and egotistical tendencies are never covered up or downplayed. In this powerful encounter, Nathan is tasked with delivering angelic news to David, and it is anything but good or pretty. God needs David to hear how far away his own selfish choices have taken him.

Advent calls us to wake up, and Advent also calls us to repent. Repentance is at the heart of the Baptist's preparatory cry, it is at the heart of the Jewish faith, and it is the invitation with which Jesus inaugurates the Good News. The bad news is that we, like David, can get it so wrong. We live with the pain and regret of our own selfish and destructive choices; and we are living collectively with the weeping wounds of how we have set up a world where some win and some lose, ignoring the biological and spiritual reality of how thoroughly one's own

wellbeing cannot be separated from the well being of us all.

The good news is that in this message which is so hard to hear, there is a promise. The promise is that when we do repent – literally, when we turn around – God is there. We are not alone in navigating the road back to wholeness, to peace, to truth, to relational living – with one another, with all of creation, with God – for which we were always created.

Like David, the news that God most needs us to hear is oftentimes ugly. But in the promise of God's companionship and faithfulness, we can turn around with hope, with courage, with love. Irish writer Pádraig Ó Tuama notes that "the Christian faith [should be] ... known as the faith that regularly announces that it has, hitherto, been wrong, and is neither frightened nor undone by discovering error, or misdirection."

### PRAY

*God of watching,  
Whose gaze I doubt and rally against both,  
But in which I take refuge,  
despite my limited vision.  
Shelter me today,  
Against the flitting nature of my own focus,  
And help me find a calm kind of standing.  
And when I falter, which is likely,  
Give me the courage and the kindness  
to begin again with  
Hope and coping.  
For you are the one whose watchfulness  
is steady.  
Amen.*

- PÁDRAIG Ó TUAMA



## PWRDF STORY

### PWRDF DONORS SUPPORT VACCINE EQUITY WITH GENEROSITY AND CREATIVITY

*by Mike Ziemerink*

In April 2021, PWRDF launched the Vaccine Equity Fund so that Anglicans across Canada could contribute to the worldwide effort to vaccinate people against COVID-19. As vaccines have rolled out across Canada, the idea of “paying it forward” has encouraged many to contribute to the Vaccine Equity Fund as they receive their vaccine doses.

“We must ask how we can share the benefits of health care and vaccinations many of us enjoy, with others who need it,” said Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, as she encouraged Canadian Anglicans to pay it forward.

Parishes across the country have gotten involved, finding creative ways to come together and raise money for the Vaccine Equity Fund, while staying safe and distant. One such parish, Church of the Ascension in London, Ontario, set up a drive-thru fundraiser called “Jabba Dabba Do,” a play on Fred Flintstone’s iconic catchphrase.

“While many of us spent the spring obsessing about when, where and what kind of COVID-19 vaccine we would get, the new Vaccine Equity Fund reminds us we won’t truly be out of the pandemic until everyone on Earth has access to shots,” writes PWRDF parish representative Sandra Coulson.

Coulson challenged people who had received at least one jab in the arm to pay it forward with a donation to the fund, which will help provide PPE and other supplies for vaccine rollouts among PWRDF partners.

“Donors were given a prod by being told the estimated cost of their vaccines,” writes Coulson. “And Ascension promised to tie a brightly coloured ribbon around a tree at the front of the church for every donation, as a sign to the community.”

The challenge also went out to all churches in Huron Diocese’s London Deanery, resulting in some generous gifts, including a major one from St. John the Evangelist Church in London.

And so, on June 13 Jabba Dabba Do went into action. The parking lot of Church of the Ascension was turned into a drive-thru where donors could drop off their donations, and even stay for a socially distant chat with friends they had not seen in a while. London Anglican churches had not been open for in-person worship since Palm Sunday.

PWRDF continues to accept donations to the Vaccine Equity Fund.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/pwrdf-donors-support-vaccine-equity-with-generosity-and-creativity/](https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-donors-support-vaccine-equity-with-generosity-and-creativity/)



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1

MARTHA TATARNIC

## AWAKENING TO THE MESSENGERS

### READ: ISAIAH 6:1-3

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

### REFLECT

Scripture describes angelic duties as including: message delivery, spiritual warfare, and praise. Maybe it is helpful, however, to consider how these three activities might be part of one whole, rather than separate and distinct from one another. We need to see the battle against evil and injustice as fundamentally grounded in God’s Word of love, and to hear it as not just being a nice idea but having the capacity to dismantle the powers that enslave and destroy life. And we need to consider that the act of praising God is central to our creaturely freedom—not just to receive God’s love, but to reciprocate with the choice to love God with word and action in return.

When the world went into lockdown, faithful people across our communities responded with corporal acts of loving care: meal programs increased and expanded, heroic lengths were gone to in order to creatively provide for the vulnerable, and people responded generously to compelling invitations to make a difference. But the other thing that happened in lockdown is

that our religious services were declared essential. Even at the height of COVID, we were allowed to continue to gather in small worship groups in order to make sure that our people could still lift up their prayers and praise to God – albeit in a new, mostly online, way.

Online worship is not the same as being together in person. But perhaps it has highlighted for us a freedom that has been all too easy to take for granted – the freedom to express our love for God together and without fear. Perhaps it has highlighted, too, our hunger for the life of worship.

As we consider the COVID time that has been, and as we look forward to the possibility of a “new normal,” I pray that the connection between our collective acts of praise and our lives of generous service will never be anything less than essential. I pray that our offerings will be more generous and life-giving for having been grounded in the mutuality of God’s love.

### PRAY

*You are the peace of all things calm  
You are the place to hide from harm  
You are the light that shines in dark  
You are the heart’s eternal spark  
You are the door that’s open wide  
You are the guest who waits inside  
You are the stranger at the door  
You are the calling of the poor  
You are my Lord and with me still  
You are my love, keep me from ill  
You are the light, the truth, the way  
You are my Saviour this very day.*

(CELTIC ORAL TRADITION - 1ST MILLENNIUM)





## PWRDF STORY

### CUBAN CHURCH LEADER USES TECHNOLOGY TO FEED COMMUNITIES

*by Olga Lidia Reyes; translation by José Zárate*

When the roosters crow very early, Rev. Noel Rodríguez awakes, thanks God for the blessings received in life and asks for a new day full of happiness and joy for all.

“Lord, today I especially thank you for being part of a program that trained me to survive and help my people in the midst of a global disaster.”

After drinking coffee with his wife, Noel begins his work as pastor at San Juan Episcopal Church in the town of Palma Soriano in eastern Cuba. The social isolation generated by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis forced him to maintain contact with his congregation through telephone and social media networks. When the health situation allowed, he visited the elderly, sick and needy people in their homes.

“God is great,” Rev. Rodríguez muses. “A few years ago, faced with a situation such as that experienced since 2020, we would have assumed a reactive position. But, the training received helped us know what to do in the midst of the crisis and how to do it to get ahead.”

Rodríguez is referring to training designed to help during natural disasters such as hurricanes, but that they have been able to apply to the pandemic. COVID-19 has affected the health, economies and nutrition of vulnerable populations in Cuba, generating an urgency for effective responses from the communities, with the support of their own resources. Rodríguez responded quickly, explaining to his people how to grow vegetables, raise animals for meat and preserve food, from their own gardens and facilities of the church. These interventions made it possible to ensure families had enough to eat and could support their sisters and brothers of the San Juan Episcopal Church.

He also created a Facebook page called La Huerta de Noel (Noel’s vegetable plot), and began to share educational materials for other growers related to organic agriculture, gardening techniques and planting by seasons, among others. As he developed his farming skills and practices, Rodríguez told friends via WhatsApp about food preservation methods carrying his message and optimism to other Cuban communities. Rodríguez became the “poster boy” of the Food for All Program, an initiative that the Integrated Development Program of the Episcopal Church in Cuba launched in mid-2020 to improve food security in 40 communities, which directly benefits 1,650 people, 65% of them women.

Rodríguez is also an ambassador for the Impact Innovator of the Integrated Development Program, supported by PWRDF and Episcopal Relief and Development in the United States.

“Very soon I will have the opportunity to facilitate the first course in food security totally remotely, through the Moodle digital platform,” says Rodríguez. “The event will focus on producers in our communities interested in sharing agricultural knowledge and experiences. This was unthinkable before the pandemic, today it is a reality at hand. Thank God for so many blessings.”

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/cuban-church-leader-uses-technology-to-feed-communities/](https://pwrdf.org/cuban-church-leader-uses-technology-to-feed-communities/)



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2

MARTHA TATARNIC

## AWAKENING TO THE "LESSER" VOICE

### READ: LUKE 1:39-45

*In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."*

### REFLECT

I imagine Mary hearing Elizabeth's words to her as a visceral gut punch. Although Mary has heard from the Angel Gabriel and been invited into God's dangerous and seemingly impossible plan, we can imagine that Mary might have been unconvinced that she didn't imagine or dream the whole thing... that is, until this trusted and faithful woman Elizabeth confirms it all with her own angelic proclamation. Mary goes to her in her uncertainty, and perhaps in fear for her very life – after all, she has been asked to take on the risky business of having a baby out of wedlock. Elizabeth doesn't just help Mary to hear God's word more clearly, but she also accompanies this confirmation of God's message with concrete actions of shelter, safety and love.

There are many Advent takeaways in their encounter. Their position as women, and particularly as women with irregular pregnancies, marks their voices as being lesser-than in the world they inhabit. And these so-called

lesser-than voices bring clarity and tenderness to God's plan of salvation. Who are the voices on the sidelines of today's world? This season may we get better at listening – widely and attentively.

Mary and Elizabeth's interaction with one another happens in a context of danger and uncertainty, and yet what shines through is their bravery, their faithfulness in God's guiding hand, their response to the difficult reality of their situation with their own choices for loving care. How can each of us make a choice that is brave, or generous, or loving, or compassionate today? Are we willing, like Mary and Elizabeth, to make that choice well outside of the spotlight, trusting that even our smallest of offerings can participate in God's powerful love?

Elizabeth and Mary needed one another in order to properly hear God and serve God. This Advent, across any barriers of distance and disease, may we find the capacity to reach out to one another and to hear one another's voices as participating in the very Word of God.

### PRAY

*You arise again  
Between us and among us  
Within us and beyond us  
Love without end  
Breaking out  
From the tombs of our times  
The containers of our lives.  
Even death could not contain You.  
Power to begin again  
Power to create anew  
Power to lift us up  
And draw us on  
Power of our power.*

- MARY JO LEDDY



## PWRDF STORY

### THIS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, PWRDF CELEBRATES MIDWIVES

by José Zárate

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed on August 9 every year to raise awareness and protect the rights of the world's Indigenous peoples. This day also recognizes the achievements and contributions that Indigenous people make to improve world issues, such as protecting the environment. The theme for this year is “leaving no one behind, a call for a new social contract, highlighting rights, diversity, participation and inclusion.”

PWRDF acknowledges and recognizes our many Indigenous partners, who since 1997, have carried out initiatives aimed to restore and preserve Indigenous languages, culture and traditional knowledge, as well as healing and health for women, youth programs and providing appropriate counselling on suicide prevention, and access to safe water. All these partners' programs and projects are aimed to ensure the wellbeing for today and future generations.

PWRDF has also supported Inter-Indigenous partnerships and Indigenous cultural and knowledge exchange between Indigenous communities from Canada and Latin America. During these activities, the participating Indigenous groups have identified one key concern: the challenges faced by Indigenous midwives.

In 2017, in response to the request from Indigenous women's organizations in the Americas, PWRDF funded the Indigenous Maternal Health and Midwifery Practices Program. This program is led by KINAL Antzetik from Mexico, CHIRAPAQ from Peru and RYERSON's Aboriginal Initiatives from Canada. It has helped improve maternal health of Indigenous women in the Americas by empowering Indigenous midwives to design, develop and implement strategies and best practices.

In 2018, representatives of CHIRAPAQ, KINAL and RYERSON participated at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), and put the issue of Indigenous midwifery firmly on the UN agenda. Their recommendations on Indigenous midwifery were submitted and included in the corresponding final reports, specifically regarding:

- access to health systems with cultural relevance
- strengthening of Indigenous health systems
- exercising sexual and reproductive rights
- recognition of the knowledge of Indigenous peoples in health matters.

Indigenous midwifery knowledge and practice are critical to preserving Indigenous culture. Language, food cultivation, medicinal plant use and practices are combined in rituals of deep spiritual significance. Indigenous midwifery is not limited to delivering babies; it is directly related to the preservation of knowledge, cosmology and the physical territory of Indigenous people and its future generations.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/this-international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-people-pwrdf-celebrates-midwives/](https://pwrdf.org/this-international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-people-pwrdf-celebrates-midwives/)



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3

MARTHA TATARNIC

## AWAKENED WE SEE

### READ: JOHN 4:39-42

*Many Samaritans from that city believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world."*

### REFLECT

This encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well is often wrongly interpreted as a story about forgiveness. This woman has had many husbands; she isn't married to the man she is currently living with; Jesus calls out her sin and forgives her.

But that's not what really happens. Instead, what Jesus and this nameless woman do is they see each other for who the other really is, and they listen to what the other has to say. This woman has been exploited in her relationships and ostracized by her community; and Jesus sees her for who she truly is: an evangelist with a powerful and trustworthy voice. Likewise, this woman sees in Jesus the Living Waters, the power of God's Holy Spirit bubbling up into the world to quench our deepest thirst. Her piercing insight into Jesus' true identity brings many to faith and spreads Jesus' message well beyond the confines of racial exclusivity.

What we are invited to see, at the end of this first week of Advent, is the ripple effect

of one person's willingness to hear and share the good news. We don't just see the ripples moving outward from this story into the woman's Samaritan village. We also, if we're paying attention, see the ripples that brought us here. There is a connection between the Jesus who speaks to an ostracized woman and the women who raised him. There is a connection between the shelter and inner knowing shared between Jesus' mother and her cousin Elizabeth all of those years before this moment, and the way that these faithful women so obviously shaped Jesus to be brave, to see beyond labels and stigma, and to listen for how God's word will be clarified in the voice of others.

What are the ripples that have most shaped you? Where have you seen faith shine, courage offered in the face of fear, and where has another's voice helped you see the world in a whole new way? May we give thanks for the gift of those ripples. And may God use our own ripples for goodness and truth.

### PRAY

*Almighty God,  
You have brought us through the night,  
And led us to your Living Water;  
Now mark us as your own  
as we take your love into the world;  
There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free,  
male or female anymore:  
Make us all one in Jesus Christ.  
Amen.*

- PRAYER FROM ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA  
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH





## PWRDF STORY

### PARTNER SUPPORT FOR COVID-19 CONTINUES WITH \$2 MILLION GOVERNMENT GRANT

*by Janice Biehn*

The Government of Canada is granting PWRDF \$2 million to continue supporting our partners in Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Mozambique as they keep their communities safe from COVID-19. The All Mothers and Children Count (AMCC) COVID-19 Extension program will run until March 31, 2022, with the 6:1 match ending June 30, 2021.

From 2016-2020, PWRDF's AMCC program made a significant impact on the health of moms and babies. PWRDF donors supported the work of local partners in healthcare and nutrition training, teaching conservation agriculture, building wells to provide clean water, and empowering girls and women. The \$20-million project included a 6:1 funding match from the Government of Canada.

As the AMCC program concluded in March 2020, the pandemic arrived. To preserve the gains that had been made, the government extended the program – and the 6:1 match – for a year. The goal was to enable our partners to respond to COVID-19 and continue improving maternal, newborn and child health. Donors gave almost \$80,000 through the World of Gifts guide, and several other supporters have made gifts, totalling more than \$300,000 at time of publication.

This new grant will cover the entire budget, so PWRDF will not be accepting donations towards this program after June 30, 2021 when the matching period ends. “This grant demonstrates the faith that Global Affairs Canada has in PWRDF and the important work of its partners,” says Will Postma, PWRDF Executive Director. “It is a direct result of our donors’ commitment to improving lives in some of the most vulnerable parts of East Africa.”

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/partner-support-for-covid-19-continues-with-2-million-government-grant/](https://pwrdf.org/partner-support-for-covid-19-continues-with-2-million-government-grant/)



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4

SABBATH

REST

REFLECT

BREATHE

## WEEK 2: REFUGEES ON A JOURNEY



**READ: LUKE 2: 1, 4-5**

*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.*

## REFLECT *with Fkadu and Scott*



*Fkadu was born in Eritrea, fled to Sudan in 2007 and came to Canada in October 2010 as a privately sponsored refugee. He is a husband, a father to three children, a community leader and business owner, and continues to help friends and family members find security and safety in Canada.*

*Rev. Scott McLeod is the Priest Associate at St. George's in St. Catharines, in the Diocese of Niagara, where he is also coordinator of the Diocesan Refugee Sponsorship Initiative. Scott has also sat on the Canadian Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holders' Association national council to represent the Sponsorship Agreement Holders in meetings with Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada. He and his wife have two children.*

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Many people in this world have to move. Some because they want to, most because they have to. It is never easy leaving your land and your people. Joseph and Mary struggled with moving from where they were in Nazareth to Bethlehem – she was pregnant, and it was not an easy journey – they were moving because the governing rulers told them they had to. They didn't know what would happen, but they were following God. And then, after Jesus was born, they had to move more, not because they wanted to, but for Jesus' safety – and the whole time maintaining their faith and hope. Joseph was ready to do what was necessary, and sacrifice what was necessary for his family, to keep them safe and out of trouble.

In Eritrea there are only two Christian denominations allowed – anyone who is from another denomination is put in jail and persecuted. Many people have to move from place to place, and sometimes, they have to leave the country. All of it, not because they want to, but for safety, because they have to. But the whole time, they hold on to hope. When people leave Eritrea they don't know where they will go, they just need to leave.

The father of a family, like Joseph, is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the family, and has to take care of his family to make sure they are safe, and have a safe place to stay and have food. For example, when refugees move from Eritrea to Sudan, they have to change their names because of Sharia law, and the threats of violence and persecution if they do not. But even when they do, they do not lose hope, and faith. And then miracles come in the form of strangers who help bring them to safety in Canada and let them live freely. After they can live freely, after they are safe, then they will help do the same thing and be part of the same miracle for others, because they know what it is like. You can see the love that is shared regardless of whether they are Christian or Muslim. It is very clearly the love of God, the God who walked with them when they had to move when they didn't want to. When we can hold on to hope, when we don't lose hope, then life wins, and God wins over despair, suffering and death. Without hope, people become depressed and give up, and sometimes die. As Christians, we have to live on hope – it is what keeps us





going and what keeps us alive.

Even when we don't know what to do or where to go, then God knows, and we have to listen. When we are unsure of the choices before us, or the choices we have made, we must remember that God's choices are better than our choices – and God chooses to hold out hope, to stay with us, and to love.

## MEDITATE *with Cheryl Barker*

▶ Follow the "Preparing to meditate" instructions for guided meditation found on page 4, or listen to Cheryl Barker [here](#).

Imagine a place. This place is your community, your neighbourhood, your home, your school, your town or city. Now notice around you there are people. They are all the people you know; your family, your friends, people from school, teachers, and people from your neighbourhood. They are all there. Even if you can't see everyone right away you know they are there. *Pause.*

Notice the sounds, the smells, the sights of this place. As you explore and see the people you know, look at their faces. Acknowledge them. *Pause.*

Imagine a stream of energy coming out of your heart and going into the other people's hearts around you. Feel a soft, gentle energy moving back and forth from each of your hearts. Feel this soft energy coming back into your heart. You might see this energy as a colour. It may have a sound. This is a loving energy.

Now as you continue to explore, imagine yourself floating above, looking down and see this energy flowing between all of

the people. Feel this loving energy flowing through everyone and back into your heart. It connects you. Imagine this energy connecting all of you together. Take a moment to really look and see how you are all connected. *Pause.*

Now thank yourself and thank God for the people in your community. *Pause.*

After-meditation questions:

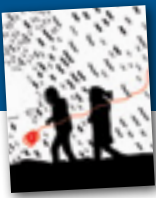
1. What did your energy look and sound like?
2. Was there anyone that you were surprised that was in the group of people?
3. How did it feel to know you are connected to all of these people?
4. Where is God in our connections?  
The energy, the people, the place?

## MINDFULNESS MOMENT: GIVING THANKS – BE INTENTIONAL

Take a moment before a meal. Give thanks for your food. Give thanks for the hands that made it, the people that transported it to the store, the people who grew or packaged your food, the countries where your food may be from or inspired by, and the people who pick up our waste and God's creation that helps break down our leftovers. Give thanks to God.

Now pause and ask for blessings for people that may not have any food, and who may live in a place where the food may be different than they are used to.

Give thanks for how we are connected and give thanks for our ability to welcome all into the community.



MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

NICK PANG

## DISPLACEMENT

### READ: LUKE 2:1-5

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.*

### REFLECT

The story of the Incarnation begins with displacement. It's a story of movement: Mary and Joseph, leaving their home in the north and making their way through the desert to the southern town of Bethlehem, an historic, but little appreciated hamlet. More significantly though, it's the story of the eternal Word becoming flesh, taking the form of the world, the creator adopting the image of the created.

Displacement is always chaotic. For many of us 'home' is where we feel comfortable, safe, where we find ourselves at rest.

But what happens when home is no longer enough? What happens when the stresses of the world push us out, when government mandates beyond our control force us to leave everything we've ever known? What happens when the pain and the suffering of the world become too much to bear and we need to do something, to respond in some way?

The period of Advent is a time of longing, a yearning for home. Not the familiar home of the past, but a new home, a new life, a new encounter with the living God, which is just around the corner. Today, we spend time reflecting on the chaos of the world, exterior and interior, which has driven us away from our home in God.

### PRAY

*O Root of Jesse,  
standing as a sign among the peoples;  
Who knew the agony of displacement,  
And who walked the way  
of one without a home,  
Protect those who are uprooted  
through no fault of their own.  
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.*



## PWRDF STORY

### BORN AN IDP: HOW YOUNG MOTHERS ARE COPING IN ETHIOPIAN SETTLEMENTS

by Janice Biehn

In January 2021, PWRDF responded to an ACT Alliance appeal for Ethiopia's Tigray region with \$35,000 to support the work of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Ethiopia. (On November 4, 2020, a long-standing political disagreement between the Ethiopian federal government and the northern state of Tigray's regional government led to an outbreak of violence. Military action forced people to flee their homes.)

Sophie Gebreyes, Country Representative for LWF Ethiopia, files this report:

*I visited the city of Mekelle in early February. There were eight makeshift Internally Displaced People (IDP) settlements in schools and colleges. When I returned one month later, there were 11, with IDPs arriving every day. Ayder, the ninth camp to open, is already overflowing. There are close to 900 IDPs in the camp, with more than 50% being women and children under five.*

*I was struck by the number of displaced young mothers, carrying their babies and toddlers on their backs. Neguesti arrived at Ayder from Sheglil near Humera in Western Tigray a month ago with her husband Halefom and their four children.*

*Neguesti and her family had lived in Sheglil all their lives, and were determined to stay there. Then a month after the troubles began they were told that they had to leave the region and go back to Tigray, as Humera and surrounding area 'reverted' to Amhara Regional State. Most people went across the Tekezze River, but Neguesti and her family preferred to travel as far away as possible, some 512 km away. At the time, Neguesti was eight months pregnant. When they reached Terkani, a town not far from Humera, she began to feel the pangs of labour and soon gave birth to Tse'are, prematurely.*

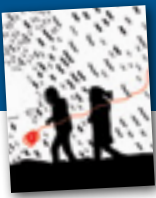
*LWF Ethiopia has been providing emergency distribution of food and cash to displaced families and vulnerable host communities. Neguesti has been receiving direct cash assistance, as well as nutritional supplements through the ACT appeal.*

*Neguesti and Halefom used to be farmers. The night they decided to leave, their house and their crops were burnt to the ground. They fled only with the clothes on their backs.*

*Cradling Tse'are in her arms, her sombre face still bearing the markings of the tragedy she lived through, Neguesti tries to breastfeed. But because she does not have enough to eat, she is not producing sufficient amounts of milk to nurse her baby. She worries what impact this will have on Tse'are's development. One month after arriving in Ayder, food had not been distributed by the Government, the UN or NGOs. They must live off the generosity of the people of Mekelle and the local churches who continue to carry the brunt of the emergency response.*

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/born-an-idp-how-young-mothers-are-coping-in-ethiopian-settlements/](https://pwrdf.org/born-an-idp-how-young-mothers-are-coping-in-ethiopian-settlements/)



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

NICK PANG

## GRIEF

### READ: PSALM 137:1-4

*By the rivers of Babylon—  
there we sat down and there we wept  
when we remembered Zion.  
On the willows there  
we hung up our harps.  
For there our captors  
asked us for songs,  
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,  
‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’  
How could we sing the Lord’s song  
in a foreign land?*

### REFLECT

The feelings that arise from the experience of displacement are many and varied. Surely you’ve experienced the effects of culture shock in your lifetime. Whether that be setting foot on foreign soil for the first time, or simply entering into a new community of people down the street. There can be an excitement that comes with encountering something new, but there might also be a sorrow over the space that’s been lost, a place that’s been changed forever, the home you can never return to, even if you wanted to.

We might wonder if Mary and Joseph ever dreamed of the lush hills of the Galilee as they traversed the barren sands of the southern desert. What type of sorrow might already have pierced Mary’s heart as she wandered from shut door to shut door, considering her child ready to be born? What kind of grief filled the hearts of the Jews as they sat in exile on the banks of the rivers of Babylon? As we anticipate the culmination of history in the return of Christ, we might ponder how God experiences the state of Creation. Where does sorrow continue to pierce God’s own heart? How has God responded to your own sorrow and grief?

### PRAY

*O Lord, Adonai,  
source of our Salvation,  
Who received the sword  
that would pierce your mother’s heart,  
And who waits in silence  
with the brokenhearted,  
Comfort the afflicted  
and those who bear the marks of grief.  
Come and redeem us  
with an outstretched arm.*





## PWRDF STORY

### PWRDF PARTNER POSITIONED TO SUPPORT RECENTLY DISPLACED FAMILIES

*by Christine Hills*

In March, the Myanmar military launched air raids near its eastern border, including an Internally Displaced Persons camp. The violence forced people from Myanmar's Karen State to head to neighbouring Thailand. The Karen people have endured severe conflict for more than seven decades, largely over ethnically based hostilities.

Up to 10,000 people fled their villages, sent into hiding in the jungle and forests near the border. An estimated 3,000 people crossed the Salween River into Thailand not far from Mae Sariang, where the office of long-time PWRDF partner DARE Network is located.

PWRDF issued an emergency solidarity grant of \$5,000 for Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) and DARE implemented the project to come to the aid of those who had fled and left everything behind. They are coordinating with other community-based organizations such as the Karen Teachers Working Group, Karen Womens' Organization and the Karen Environmental and Social Action Network to ensure that any gaps are filled and to reach as many people as possible. Relief locations were on the Thai side as well as a safe location on the Karen side for those forced to remain.

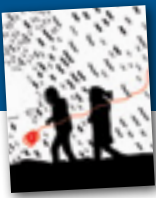
The emergency funds immediately benefited 75 families with 364 members, providing supplies for one month. Families received:

- One sack of rice
- One litre of cooking oil
- One month supply of yellow beans, fish paste, salt, noodles and chilies

"Thank you to all helper and donors for all of your kindness and lending your hand when they face with the difficulty and less of foods with hungry times," said Saw Meh Law, a grandfather from Ta Kaw Hta village in Karen state who has had to move three times to find safety. He sent this message through Law La Say, PWRDF's contact at DARE. "Without your assistance they will really face the hard times."

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/pwrdf-partner-positioned-to-support-recently-displaced-families/](https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-partner-positioned-to-support-recently-displaced-families/)



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

NICK PANG

## HOPE

### READ: ISAIAH 40:28-31

*Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of  
the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow  
weary; his understanding is unsearchable.  
He gives power to the faint, and strengthens  
the powerless. Even youths will faint and be  
weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but  
those who wait for the Lord shall renew their  
strength, they shall mount up with wings like  
eagles, they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.*

### REFLECT

Hope can be a response to grief. Not the antidote or the solution, but a response nonetheless. It wells up often as a mystery of the heart, and it can be easy or difficult to grasp. When you are able to hold it, clutched tightly in your hands, however, hope is a gift that gives strength to the fainthearted and courage to the weak.

For Mary, hope was the starting point. In the midst of the fear of the unknown: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my

spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on his humble servant.” Hope was the promise made to all of creation, for the redemption of the world, and Mary found herself caught up in the middle of it.

Hope is the voice that tells you that the current hardships will not last forever, that morning arises out of night. Hope is the primary positioning of Advent; it’s a breath caught in time, and it’s a first glimpse of safe haven, restoration, home again—not as it once was, but in its changed and changing form. Hope is a promise, the return of Christ, new life for all creation. Where has the spark of hope appeared on the horizon of your life?

### PRAY

*O Morning Star,  
splendour of light eternal,  
And hope of the nations  
You speak the promise of life.  
Come and enlighten  
those who dwell in darkness  
And the shadow of death.*



## PWRDF STORY

### POULTRY FEED PRODUCTION GENERATES INCOME FOR REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITY IN KENYA

*by Janice Biehn*

PWRDF has been supporting the work of the National Council of Churches of Kenya in Kakuma Refugee Camp for many years. This past year we have been pleased to allocate \$48,000 to the Upscaling Community Support Systems for Women and Girls Empowerment project, open to people living both in the camp and the host community.

The initiative builds on past progress to strengthen a poultry feed processing cooperative, using the local plant Mathenge, to foster local economic development. The production team's 12 members (six youth and six women) attended a two-day course at Kakuma where they learned about poultry feed production, explored marketing strategies, and discussed lessons learned. The assorted feed ingredients were procured in two phases to avoid the possibility of ingredients spoiling due to long storage time and the hot climate.

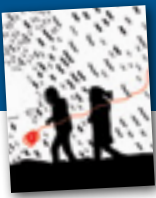
The co-op produces three poultry feed products: chick, growers and layers mash. Each kilo of the poultry feed is sold for between 55 and 60 Kenyan Shillings per kg. The average monthly production is between 1,800 kg and 2,400 kg. Approximately 1,500 people benefit from the project, including the co-op members' families and the poultry farmers who purchase the feed.

The co-op members also carried out important repairs and maintained the machines, including the threader machine that sews and seals the filled feed bags, and the mixture machine. The project facilitated focus group discussions and meetings to assist the group members to candidly discuss issues affecting the group such as marketing strategies, time management, production routine and bookkeeping. Co-op members and NCCCK staff marketed the feed in the town area, and a billboard was created and installed next to the gate to the poultry feed production unit.

The project is ideal because it addresses the economic needs of both the host community and the refugees and keeps the relationship between the two communities in balance in this isolated and deprived region. Since refugees are not allowed to work outside the camp in formal employment, NCCCK's initiatives target the most vulnerable and seeks to improve their livelihoods, health and nutrition. Access to livelihood opportunities and decent work contributes to self-reliance and resilience, which may for young women and girls reduce their vulnerability to gender-based violence, early marriage, pregnancy and/or engaging in sex work.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/poultry-feed-production-generates-income-for-refugees-and-host-community-in-kenya/](https://pwrdf.org/poultry-feed-production-generates-income-for-refugees-and-host-community-in-kenya/)



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9

NICK PANG

## TRUST

### READ: LUKE 1:39-45

*In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'*

### REFLECT

The tricky thing about hope is that it doesn't always translate into reality right away. Sometimes it takes time to mature and to grow. In those moments we rely on the cousin of Hope: Trust. Trust is slower, more ponderous, it takes its time, but the product of trust is strong and reliable. Trust is the rational response to the frenzied emotion of hope. It's a prayer, repeated over and over again, which builds the bridge of relationship, one plank at a time.

I imagine trust is what kept Mary and

Joseph going as they searched for a place to lay their heads. It was a confidence that the God who had brought them to this point wouldn't abandon them in their displacement. In the words of Elizabeth: "blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Trust is what binds us now to Christ. In the long, patient years, turned centuries, as we await the coming of the Lord, trust is what keeps the people of God connected to the promise of the covenant. Today we might ponder the strength, and the resilience of the act of trust, even in the midst of uncertainty and doubt. To hold fast to the promise of God is itself an icon of strength.

### PRAY

*O Key of David,  
and sceptre of the House of Israel;  
In quiet strength  
you carry the faith of your people,  
And repair the breach  
between our hearts and yours.  
Come and lead the prisoners  
from the prison house,  
Those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death.*



## PWRDF STORY

### PWRDF SUPPORTS DISPLACED FAMILIES IN IRAQ RETURNING TO FACE COVID-19

*by Naba Gurung*

In the Iraqi city of Sinjar, displaced families returning to their homes are already faced with public health risks associated with disease outbreaks. The situation is worsened by COVID-19.

PWRDF is contributing \$30,000 to a Lutheran World Federation Iraq project that is providing hygiene equipment, improving access to clean water and raising awareness about COVID-19 prevention. The total budget is approximately \$80,000 and the project will continue through December.

Since June 2020, more than 3,000 families living inside and outside camps in the Duhok governorate started returning home to Sinjar. But the area lacks security, public services and livelihood opportunities. Families are also returning to face a new unprecedented threat of the pandemic.

Families are unable to purchase key hygiene materials and have no access to clean, safe water. COVID-19 is having secondary impacts on the health of women and girls in the community. The outbreak is expected to get worse because of poor health infrastructure while the economy is struggling to cope with this situation.

The project is providing 1,500 hygiene kits to families to protect them from COVID-19. This is especially important after detecting few cases in Snoni sub-district and in Sinjar district.

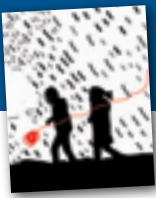
The project will also ensure that families have access to potable water. Boreholes in both communities were destroyed by ISIS so the project will rehabilitate them and renovate underground water treatment facilities in Kujok village in Southern Sinjar. The project will implement appropriate chemical and biological tests at the source and at the households to make sure the water is safe.

The project will also share good health information with returnee families regarding COVID-19 in taking protective measures as per WHO guidelines and instructions.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supports-displaced-families-in-iraq-returning-to-face-covid-19/](https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supports-displaced-families-in-iraq-returning-to-face-covid-19/)





FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10

NICK PANG

## HOME

### READ: EPHESIANS 3:16-19

*I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

### REFLECT

One of my favourite reflections on change comes from Jeanette Winterson's book *Lighthousekeeping*: "[He] taught me that nothing is gone, that everything can be recovered, not as it was, but in its changing form." Home is not always familiar. Sometimes it's brand new: a safe harbour, a place to come in out of the storm, something that's poised to become familiar, given time, and hope, and trust.

Part of the Benedictine heritage of the church is the centrality of the practice of welcoming the stranger. We create a sense of home for one another by creating spaces

flooded with love. Mary, *Theotokos*, God-bearer, became the home for the incarnate Word, and through her all creation became home as well. Of course, the opposite is also true. Advent is the season of anticipation, where we rediscover again that our own true home is held in the heart of God.

As we ponder the twin mysteries of the incarnation and the return of Jesus in this Advent season, may the image of home begin to take shape in your mind. May your appreciation for the journey through displacement, grief, hope, and trust grow deeper and stronger. May you experience the welcoming arms of God, and may you find courage to welcome the stranger home.

### PRAY

*O Emmanuel,  
the hope of the nations  
and our Saviour:  
You have made your home  
within creation,  
And you call us  
to find our home in you.  
Awaken our hearts  
to your kingdom.  
Come and save us,  
O Lord our God.*



## PWRDF STORY

### SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES RETURNING HOME GET MUCH NEEDED FOOD RELIEF

*by Janice Biehn*

Since 2013, civil conflict and violence have forced thousands of South Sudanese to flee their homes. Recently, some have been able to return home, but with little resources to feed their families or earn any income. Partnering with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWRDF aims to accompany refugees and host communities as they return home by providing necessary food relief and livelihood support.

The project is part of a \$10-million grant from the Canadian government to the Foodgrains Bank, who will work with its members to address the impact of COVID-19 on food security in vulnerable populations in six sub-Saharan African countries: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, South Sudan and Zimbabwe. Within this grant, PWRDF has been allocated \$717,000 and will work with Finn Church Aid South Sudan as its partner on the ground.

FCA is an experienced and trusted partner holistically implementing food and livelihood assistance, education, and peacebuilding interventions in South Sudan since 2010. In 2014, FCA implemented a PWRDF food for work project that supported over 10,000 internally displaced people in Mundry county of South Sudan.

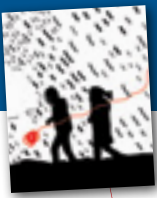
“We are looking forward to working with FCA on this very necessary response,” says Naba Gurung, PWRDF’s Humanitarian Response Coordinator. “The populations in this area are extremely stressed and vulnerable.”

The work will take place in Yei county in Central Equatoria just south of the capital of Juba, and just north of the confluence of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where so many South Sudanese have fled. The project aims to reduce hunger, improve nutrition and contribute to resilience for people affected by conflict and COVID-19. Over the next 18 months, 2,800 households will be supported in learning resilient livelihood strategies that they will be able to sustain beyond the life of this response.

Women will lead and be part of advisory committees that will play key role in design, implementation and monitoring. The committees will introduce and promote Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policy, gender equality, COVID-19 safety protocols and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/food-relief-for-south-sudanese-refugees-returning-home/](https://pwrdf.org/food-relief-for-south-sudanese-refugees-returning-home/)



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

SABBATH

REST

REFLECT

BREATHE

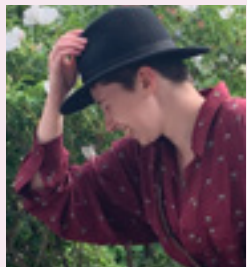
## WEEK 3: RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL



### READ: LUKE 2: 8-12

*That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a feeding box."*

## REFLECT *with Charlotte Lilley*



*Charlotte Lilley has been a member of the PWRDF Youth Council for about four years as the Representative for the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, the Resources Committee Chair (where she assisted in the launch of the a just generation podcast), and most recently as the Youth Liaison to the Board. Charlotte lives in London, Ontario, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Attawandaron peoples, where she is currently in her third year at Western University working towards a Bachelor of Arts.*

Throughout the Advent story, we've heard about people responding to God's call in different ways, from Mary and Joseph, to Elizabeth. This week, we look at the shepherds, visited by angels and called from watching their flocks to go to the stable to see the baby Jesus. Just as we can see so many people in the Advent story responding to God's call, we can also see these calls in our own lives. Especially as we look to the important work of engaging in social justice, it is important to recognize the different ways in which we are each individually called to take part. For one person, this may be learning through reading articles or listening to podcasts. For another it may be posting on social media or writing letters. For someone else, it may be going to protests. Responding to this call isn't always easy — just as the shepherds were frightened of the angels at first, we can encounter obstacles and challenges along the way, but this work needs everyone's different gifts and skills, responding to their own unique calls. So this Sunday and as you journey through this week, take a moment to reflect on the calls within your own life — where is God calling you to be, to engage, or to take part?

## MEDITATE *with Cheryl Barker*

Before we begin this meditation say this prayer: *Jesus, Son of God. Friend. Open my heart to hear.*

Keep this prayer in your mind throughout this meditation.

▶ Follow the "Preparing to meditate" instructions for guided meditation found on page 4, or listen to Cheryl Barker [here](#).

Imagine a place. It is a favourite place that you like to go. Walk around this place. What do you see? Is it warm or cold? Is it nighttime or daytime? Are there familiar smells? What are the sounds you hear? Experience all that is around you. *Pause.*

As you continue to explore, imagine you see someone walking towards you. They are familiar. Imagine it is Jesus. Is Jesus tall or short? Does Jesus have a soft voice or a loud voice? Take a moment to be with Jesus, really seeing and hearing him. *Pause.*

Now imagine that Jesus is small enough to sit inside your heart. See him smiling at you from inside your heart. Hear his voice from your heart.

Feel your heart grow big and bright. Feel





that light travelling through your body. Now say your meditation phrase. *Jesus, son of God, friend. Open my heart to hear.* Say this prayer on your own. Just repeating it when you can. *Pause.*

Be aware of Jesus' presence in your heart. You did a great job of listening and stilling your thoughts so you could be with Jesus.

After-meditation questions:

1. What was Jesus like?
2. What did it feel like to have Jesus in your heart?

## MINDFULNESS MOMENT: COMMUNICATION AWARENESS

Get a piece of paper and make a list of all the things and people you are thankful for. Go beyond the obvious. For example, it is easy to be thankful for what is in front of us but what if we give thanks for electricity, the country we live in, and you can think of many others. Keep your list in a prominent place and add to it each time you experience something you are thankful for.



MONDAY, DECEMBER 13

NANCY FORD

## GATHERING

### READ: LUKE 15:1-7

*Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."*

### REFLECT

The shepherd is one model of Christian leadership. Sadly, it has at times been misused. The shepherd has been interpreted as a powerful and demanding leader. This may have ensured control over the "sheep." However, this approach diminished the sheep, who were in danger of becoming an undifferentiated group with no agency.

The Good Shepherd of my childhood was a mysterious figure, who resided in stained glass windows and storybooks. "Good" children were the equivalent of "well behaved sheep."

Shepherds gather the sheep, but is the

purpose to create a community of like-minded sheep? The parable of the one lost sheep reminds us that gathering must include seeking those who are different or thought to be unacceptable.

When accompanying un-homed and street entrenched people I learned that the most valuable commodity aside from cash was identification. Possessing identification is a double-edged sword. Using it one can access services and money. It also meant one could be found. For some there was a fear of being known by their real name. Many had grown up in multiple foster homes, or group home settings where abuse was rampant. Trust was rare. Declaring one's name could mean a repeated cycle of incarceration and homelessness. If someone chose to share their name, not their street alias, it showed trust, respect and hope.

Gathering only those with similar lifestyles is not the action of a good shepherd. The shepherd is called to seek the lost and marginalized. What does it mean to be gathered when our true name is called? Will we awaken? At this Advent time, will we arise at the sound of our name and join with the blind, the lame, and the homeless?

### PRAY

*Gather us in from unexpected places, O God.  
Help us to leave the confusion of our lives and  
fill us with imagination and love for each other.  
Amen.*



## PWRDF STORY

### UGANDAN PARTNER EMPOWERS WOMEN WITH NEW SKILLS AND EDUCATES COMMUNITY

*by Janice Biehn*

In 2020, PWRDF started a partnership with Rape Hurts Foundation in Uganda. Despite the pandemic – as well as recent political turmoil – RHF has been pushing ahead on this important work to hold workshops and training sessions to prevent gender-based violence and more.

Irene Atim, 28, has been working at RHF since 2015 and is currently a trainer and Case Manager. She is experienced and passionate about the needs of girls and women. “Addressing the problems faced by women is important as a contribution towards the overall UN Sustainable Development Goals,” says Atim.

Atim has “given her all” to the PWRDF-supported project called Reviving Lives and Livelihoods of Women and Youth in Busoga Region in Eastern Uganda, despite the hard times we have been through, writes RHF founder Hellen Lunkuse Tanyinga.

RHF programs confront the many socio-economic-cultural problems that women face with the intention of improving their wellbeing, but also the wellbeing of people under their care, especially children. Unless socio-cultural problems such as sexual and gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, human trafficking and modern day slavery are addressed, women’s empowerment shall remain elusive, says Tanyinga. Atim has upheld this guiding statement and hasn’t wavered from her commitment to it. As one of the trainers, she has reached out to hundreds of women and girls in the last three years.

The RHF team has imparted entrepreneurial skills to women and girls. At the RHF Vocational and Skills Centre in Kamuli, women are learning how to tailor, knit and sew. One of their first projects were face masks, complete with the PWRDF logo! They have kept some face masks for the trainers and participants, but have also sold some at the local market to bring in extra income for RHF.

“These skills not only help them improve their household incomes but also gain financial independence, so that they can live independent of their would-be abusers,” says Tanyinga.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/ugandan-partner-empowers-women-with-new-skills-and-educates-community/](https://pwrdf.org/ugandan-partner-empowers-women-with-new-skills-and-educates-community/)



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14

NANCY FORD

## WATER

### READ: PSALM 23

*God is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.  
God makes me lie down in green pastures.  
God leads me beside still waters and restores  
my soul...*

### REFLECT

The Divine Shepherd of Psalm 23 knows where to find the waterways and the green pastures. This knowledge was crucial for a shepherd. It was important to understand the patterns of streams and rivers. The shepherd would listen to other experienced shepherds, observe the changes brought by the seasons, and watch the impact of the sheep on the waterways.

“Still waters” and “green pastures” are interconnected. One cannot exist without the other. Where they meet is called a Riparian zone. This zone is found next to streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, and wetlands. These are transitional lands, with no definite boundary between the body of water and more upland areas. They are ecologically diverse and deeply interconnected. When they are protected, the forest and vegetation will ensure that nearby streams and rivers aren’t adversely affected by climate change. This ensures all manner of creatures will have access to water and food.

Yet Riparian zones are at risk. They are dramatically affected by land use practices

like industrial agriculture, urban manufacturing water use, and water’s edge buildings. These actions have meant the loss of waterways and interrupted the flow of the streams and rivers. Trees and vegetation have been covered over by asphalt. The inhabitants of the ecosystem have lost their “still waters.” We know changes near a stream or river have implications for the whole ecosystem. Where will the creatures drink? How will trees, vegetation and insects find a way to grow and thrive?

Today we live in a spiritual Riparian zone. Connections have shifted and unexpected questions surround us. How has the pandemic re-shaped our theological “ecosystem?” As we await the coming of God’s child, Jesus, what might that new birth bring to our spiritual Riparian zone?

The shepherds show that listening to our history, observing our reality and seeking new pathways is important. Strength is to be found in seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We may long for the flowing streams of memory, but our souls seek the harmony of a God-driven future.

### PRAY

*O God, may we be patient and seek wisdom,  
assured that you will lead us along new paths  
to still waters and green pastures. Heal and  
inform us as we seek to be loving and attentive  
shepherds within your creation. Amen.*



## PWRDF STORY

### WITH SUPPORT FROM PWRDF, THE LIVING WATERS GROUP IS MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

*The Rev. Martha Tatarnic interviews Archbishop Mark MacDonald*

National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald noted at a recent meeting of Pimatisiwin Nipi (aka Living Waters) that “when we started it was a drop in the bucket, just one small community. Now it is spreading. The support for the gift of water keeps spreading, helping more and more people.”

Actually, when the Pimatisiwin Nipi group started over a decade ago, we didn’t even have a drop in the bucket, we just had a question: “What can we do?” Archbishop Mark heard that question and brought together people from across Canada who were concerned about safe water in Indigenous communities. Archbishop Mark centered our group around four pillars: advocacy, education, partnership and strategic giving.

In 2013, we were able to begin a partnership with the Northern Ontario community of Pikangikum and with PWRDF to install safe drinking water and indoor plumbing in the homes that needed it the most. The generous gifts and training of past years have made it possible in 2021 to bring clean water into more Pikangikum homes. These past fundraising efforts have also provided leverage for Pikangikum to access federal funding for these clean water initiatives.

COVID has posed significant and heartbreaking challenges in Indigenous communities across Canada. More isolation and fewer community resources have been a tragic cost of trying to keep COVID-19 at bay. Now 2021 has seen far too many Indigenous communities bearing the brunt of changing weather patterns – forest fires and flooding – due to climate change. The uncovering of unmarked graves connected to residential schools across this country has also unearthed significant grief. It has made clearer the ongoing multi-generational trauma that exists in Indigenous communities as a result of the forced and systemic removal of Indigenous children from their homes and the horrific indignities to which they were subjected.

I think about Archbishop Mark’s words often, particularly when the brokenness of our country, and the urgent need in Indigenous communities, seem too great to even know where to start. We have so much work to do, there is enormous healing that needs to happen. It is unacceptable that in a country as richly resourced as ours, far too many of our Indigenous brothers and sisters are living without access to clean, running water.

But it is okay for us to start with a drop in the bucket. Don’t be afraid to be a drop in the bucket.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/with-support-from-pwrdf-the-living-waters-group-is-making-a-world-of-difference/](https://pwrdf.org/with-support-from-pwrdf-the-living-waters-group-is-making-a-world-of-difference/)





WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15

NANCY FORD

## FOOD

### READ: EZEKIEL 34: 1-6

*The word of the Lord came to me: Mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel: prophesy, and say to them—to the shepherds: Thus says the Lord God: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.*

### REFLECT

An attentive shepherd would ensure there were enough good pastures for the sheep. They were constantly on the lookout for grazing land to nourish the sheep.

Recently, a newspaper reporter said there was no such thing as food insecurity. He said, “No-one needs to go hungry. There is lots of food available.” Was he correct? Yes and no. There is food, but it is not accessible. The food he referred to can be found through food banks and meals offered by community or church groups. Many places serving hot meals were geared to adult males and are considered unsafe for seniors or families with children.

Food banks rely on donations for their supply of food and other goods. What they have to offer depends on the season or the attention hunger has in the media. Food banks have been a Canadian reality since 1980. Assumptions remain about the life skills and access to appliances, dishes, utensils, and cooking pots of those who go to foodbanks. Accommodation of food sensitivities and allergies is limited, while fresh produce remains a luxury.

Creative programs like community kitchens have attempted to address these concerns. However, they are localized and only accessible to a small number of people. Sadly, the pandemic has shut many of them down.

The othering of those who are food insecure is perpetuated by the myth of the unworthy poor. The effects of intergenerational hopelessness coupled with the familiar ache of hunger is compounded by the trauma of institutionalized begging. This is horribly unjust. Food security should never require humiliation.

In this Advent season, as we prepare for and anticipate the Christmas feast, who among us will shepherd policies to ensure equitable access to food? Who will challenge the neglectful shepherds who have allowed or created such systemic disparity?

### PRAY

*Loving God, help us to ensure that all have dignified and equal access to healthful food. May the experience and memories of hunger find healing through Your love. Amen.*



## PWRDF STORY

### PWRDF SUPPORTING FOOD RELIEF IN ZIMBABWE WITH FOODGRAINS BANK

*by Janice Biehn*

In Zimbabwe, decreased rainfall, poor harvests, reduced opportunities to earn an income due to COVID-19 restrictions and high food prices are adding up to acute food insecurity in 35% of the population.

In response, PWRDF is currently supporting an emergency food relief project, starting January 25 running through to the end of March. Working with DanChurchAid Zimbabwe (DCA), PWRDF was able to leverage \$161,554 from its equity in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and receive a match from the Government of Canada. The total project budgeted is \$843,948.

If it weren't for emergency humanitarian food assistance programs like this one, more families would likely be worse off, says the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis for October 2020 – March 2021. This intervention is targeting the worst affected seven rural wards of Lupane district in Matabeleland North Province. These wards have a combined population of approximately 44,590 people in 8,918 households.

The intervention is providing emergency food assistance to 3,600 food insecure households (18,000 individuals). Food rations include:

- 10 kg of maize meal
- 1.5 kg of bean
- 0.75 litre of cooking oil per person per month

The most vulnerable households are prioritized for food assistance including those headed by children, elderly and women and to families with special needs (e.g. disabled people, chronically ill people, and pregnant and lactating women).

A one-time distribution of fast-maturing sorghum and cowpea seed will help re-establish crop production in 1,450 households, and ensure access to food staples when the assistance ends. The crops will be ready to harvest in April. The program will select and train 140 lead farmers, who will then share their knowledge and skills with other farmers in their neighbourhood.

DCA Zimbabwe works with Agritex (government agriculture extension department) to support the farmers on soil and water conservation techniques and also to train them save seeds for future crops.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supporting-food-relief-in-zimbabwe-with-foodgrains-bank/](https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supporting-food-relief-in-zimbabwe-with-foodgrains-bank/)



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

NANCY FORD

## SAFETY

### READ: PSALM 91

*You who live in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,  
will say to the LORD,  
“My refuge and my fortress;  
my God, in whom I trust...”*

### REFLECT

Day and night, shepherds would be on the lookout for predators. While the night watch could be shared with other shepherds, the responsibility of keeping the sheep safe was always top of mind.

Early mornings were akin to the ending of a night watch in the tent city, across the street from Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria, B.C. The unhoused residents would not sleep until very late at night, even with their own “security” team. The team’s job was to protect them from human predators and tent fires.

Late each morning there was a talking circle. Whoever held the talking stick could speak and those in the circle were required to listen in respectful silence. The speakers might be camp residents, social workers, activists, community advocates, lawyers, neighbours or police officers. In the circle, privilege-born assumptions were challenged, and all who participated learned to listen differently.

Campers became empowered to share their hopes and concerns. They told stories

of the stark reality of injustice and described their daily struggle for belonging and home-fulness. Yet the conversation was not always dark. Most camp residents had hope for the future.

One winter morning as the circle was ending a young man took a paper from his weathered backpack. As it was passed around, he said, “This is for the church.” It was a skilful drawing of the encampment against the backdrop of a nearby cathedral. In the drawing, Psalm 91 lay in the clouds above the cathedral. It soon became apparent that the dividing line between housed and unhoused, between camper and advocate had shattered.

This unexpected shepherd had brought us together. No matter what we thought we did or did not possess, no matter our status or position in society, together we found our true refuge; our shared home was in the shelter of the Most High. Like those shepherds tending their sheep long ago in the hills surrounding Bethlehem, it was as if we had had to be in darkened fields caring for the vulnerable in order to be awake for the coming of the miracle of Love.

### PRAY

*O God, help us to live beyond the differences we think we see in others. Keep us awake and watchful as together we await your coming with joy and grateful expectation. Amen.*



## PWRDF STORY

### REDUCING CLIMATE VULNERABILITY TO IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY IN BANGLADESH

by Christine Hills

During 2020 farmers in Bangladesh faced five floods, unseasonable rain and drought that affected standing crops. Many are Nayakrishi farmers who practise biodiversity-based farming and use community knowledge and technology to address climate vulnerabilities. Waterlogging impeded receding floodwater which in turn caused severe problems for crop cultivation. On top of this, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions made matters worse for food insecure households.

#### **UBINIG (Policy Research for Development Alternative)**

PWRDF is supporting long-term partner UBINIG to decrease climate vulnerabilities that are affecting high-risk farming areas, while increasing food security support.

Nine villages in four agro-ecological zones – Tangail, Pabna, Sirajganj and Cox's Bazar – are being managed at the community level with special attention given to small-scale farming families. Women will take the lead in planning and implementing major activities. Crop loss has caused widespread suffering in spite of persistent efforts to cultivate crops. Communities affected by river erosion and unprotected people in the coastal area comprising 17,460 farming families will benefit from the project.

Four strategic interventions will be made in the villages:

- Three new bamboo-binding or chatkhas projects will take place in two villages to protect the land, prevent soil erosion and flooding, and redirect the river.
- Mangrove regeneration will be implemented in a 3-km area, adding to a 2.5-km long mangrove plantation supported by PWRDF that has helped mitigate the impact of cyclones and soil erosion.
- Farmers in four flood plain and drought-affected villages will conduct farmers field schools with training on crop planning based on the experiences of crop losses during floods and unseasonal rains. Farming families, mainly women, will be involved in seed collection, distribution and crop planning.
- Discussions with local government will take place to address problems of water logging that are caused by new infrastructure in the villages. Local government institutions such as the Union Parishad are familiar to the villagers and will be lobbied to help them solve the water logging problem by constructing culverts or drains, an innovative action on both sides.

The program will run through March 31, 2022.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/reducing-climate-vulnerability-to-improve-food-security-in-bangladesh/](https://pwrdf.org/reducing-climate-vulnerability-to-improve-food-security-in-bangladesh/)



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17

NANCY FORD

## WAITING

### READ: LUKE 2: 8-12

*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”*

### REFLECT

The tasks of a shepherd illuminate the discipline of waiting. To wait requires vigilance and opens space for patience.

In ancient times it was the responsibility of the youngest child in the family to care for the flocks. This was how they could contribute to the family’s wellbeing given they were too young to do other work. They would be mentored by older siblings that had moved onto other occupations. In cultures where sheep provided the basics of milk, wool, and meat, it is interesting that this important responsibility could be given to a young teenager.

Attitudes toward shepherds were the result of twists and turns in the history of Israel. The cultures they had encountered had different models of agriculture and food production. This led to conflict between farmers and shepherds. Farmers felt that sheep and

goats would ruin their crops if they came near their carefully cultivated fields. Shepherds claimed it was their right to graze their flock wherever there was enough food. This had been their practice for centuries. At the time of the nativity, shepherds had lost the argument. They were shuttled off to marginal lands with their livestock. Shepherds were seen as untrustworthy, marginal members of society. They were less worthy of consideration than even the despised tax collectors.

What were the dreams of the shepherds in Luke? Were they yearning for a time when their flocks could roam free again? Was it curiosity about the oft told story of hope of the Messiah? Were they wishing for freedom from the debilitating power of Rome? Or were they caught up in the growing awareness that something was about to change? We don’t know.

As accomplished as the shepherds were in the practice of patience it did leave them oddly vulnerable. Irrespective of their youth and lack of life experience, the habit of waiting and vigilance had grown a precious gift within them. It was patience. It was the patience that allowed room for awe; a gift many of us have lost.

### PRAY

*Blessed and generous Creator, in this Advent season, nurture in us the patience of the Shepherds that in waiting we may hold space for the wonder and awe of your coming. Amen.*





## PWRDF STORY

### AFTER THE FIRE: TERRITORY COPING WITH LYTTON RECOVERY

*by Janice Biehn*

When fire destroyed the village of Lytton and Lytton First Nations on June 30, 2021, the Territory of the People's local priests, wardens and parishioners sprang into action helping neighbours. The Parish Hall at All Saints, Shulus near Merritt stayed opened 24 hours a day to provide a gathering place for families and a place to get a meal. Discretionary funds from Territory parishes, the wider church and an emergency grant of \$5,000 from PWRDF were disbursed. "Those funds were given as discretionary funds to the local parish, so the priest and the Warden and the treasurer and others in the parish have had the autonomy to help people directly," explains the Rt. Rev. Barbara Andrews, who was the territory Bishop until she retired in April 2020, but was appointed Interim Financial Officer just weeks before the fire. "Most of those funds went out as cash for gas, food, meals in restaurants, furnishings and to those who need help with rent."

In the meantime, donors continued to give to PWRDF, totalling more than \$40,000 to date. "We have not requested those funds yet because we know they're going to be really needed on an ongoing basis," says Bishop Andrews. With donations coming directly to the territory totaling more than \$65,000, Bishop Andrews says funding is in place for the short-term. "Right now we're okay, but give us a couple of months and we'll be really ready."

She should know. A veteran of fires in 2017, 2018 and 2019, Bishop Andrews says it doesn't take long before funds from the Red Cross and other organizations run out. "As soon as it's off the front page, people forget about it, and that's where I think the church really shines, because we know the people. Our learning from other fires has been to use the local people on the ground to make decisions. Even sitting in Kamloops, we don't really know how to make those decisions."

After the 2018 fire, for example, PWRDF donations were crucial in helping families replace furniture. "We had a very simple application form that could be signed by anyone in the parish, verifying that the person was in need. The local committee said the priority was the 10 families who lost their houses in the Ashcroft reserve. The Band Council member put me in touch with the community development officer who asked us to hold the funds until they received their new houses. I don't think we declined anyone, and people received \$1,500 – \$3,000 for new furniture."

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/after-the-fire-territory-coping-with-lytton-recovery/](https://pwrdf.org/after-the-fire-territory-coping-with-lytton-recovery/)



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

SABBATH

REST

REFLECT

BREATHE

## WEEK 4: THE WORD MADE FLESH



READ: LUKE 2: 6-7

*While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with clothes and laid him in a box where animals are fed.*

## REFLECT with José Zárate, PWRDF Indigenous and Latin American Development Program Coordinator



*José Zárate is the Coordinator of PWRDF Indigenous Communities and Latin America-Caribbean Development Program. A Quechua from Peru, José has been involved in designing, managing, monitoring and evaluating community projects for over 40 years in Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean. José was adopted by and is a proud member of the Nisga'a Nation, House of the Killer Whale Clan and presented with an Eagle Feather by the Mi'kmaq Nation of Nova Scotia in 2009 denoting gratitude, love and ultimate respect. José has worked with The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund since 1996 and more than 25 projects and programs have*

*been designed and implemented successfully by Indigenous partners, NGOs and community-based organizations with funding support from PWRDF.*

The PWRDF Indigenous Program has been promoting partnerships for over 25 years based on recognition, respect and support for the rights and wellbeing of the Indigenous partners. For Indigenous peoples in Canada, their Indigenous languages represent a significant part of the culture, identity and general wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities. Loss of Indigenous language was greatly accelerated by the Canadian government's implementation of the residential school system from 1879 to 1986, which aimed to systemically eradicate Indigenous languages, cultures, religions, identity, and communities.

With support from PWRDF, the Tlicho Nation in Northwest Territories, has revived and secured the ancestral tradition of taking young people on the land to learn names of plants, medicines, the weather, characteristics of animals and fish, and visit ancestors' graves on traditional burial sites and recover songs and ceremonies from the past. Also, many of the 14 Nuu-chah-nulth (NCN) communities in British Columbia have initiated language immersion camps and resource development projects, such

as dictionaries, apps, websites, books, and inclusion of traditional and cultural learning activities in schools.

In Alberta, First Nations colleges have revitalized and maintained Siksika (Blackfoot) languages by digitizing materials to document, preserve, revitalize, and transmit Siksika knowledge. Lastly, the Kahnawàke Mohawk community in Quebec is carrying out language and cultural activities for the benefit of their children, youth, and the wider community. One creative and innovative program is a puppet show, which has contributed to increasing skills and abilities, as well as fostering oral proficiency and literary abilities in the Mohawk language, among children ages six years and under, as well as for adult learners.

It is inspiring and motivating to witness the determination among Indigenous partners in moving forward with clarity, vision and wisdom to strengthen, restore and preserve their Indigenous languages and to reclaim the Word, to share the Word with Truth, the Truth that will prevail for generations to come.



## MEDITATE with Cheryl Barker

▶ Follow the "Preparing to meditate" instructions for guided meditation found on page 4, or listen to Cheryl Barker [here](#).

We are going to focus on our throat in this meditation and the line of communication that goes from your throat to your head and back. Gently place your hands at the base of your throat. Continue to breathe, visualize times where you have found it hard to find your voice, where it has felt like you have a frog in your throat.

Notice what it looks like when you feel this way. Now invite the frog to come sit before you. Let yourself feel all the feelings you feel when you have a hard time finding your voice. *Pause.*

Tell that frog how you feel. If you feel scared, tell it that, and if you feel angry tell it that. Take a few moments to do this. *Pause.*

Visualize a stream of energy coming out of your throat and into the frog. It is a vibrant energy. Full of light and colour. You might even hear the energy moving. Feel the energy returning to you a different colour. See this exchange go back and forth. *Pause.*

Now having renewed your energy and the frog's energy, I want you to visualize the frog hopping away. See it moving away hopping and jumping. Take a moment to see that. *Pause.*

With this renewed energy experience your throat clear. Your voice strong. Place your hands at the base of your throat one on top of the other. Feel that your throat is clear and simply breathe. With your eyes

still closed and your hands still on the base of your throat look gently up to the left corner of the room you are in. Feel a gentle stretch in your neck and throat. Take a couple of breaths here. Now look gently up to the right corner of the room. Gently take a couple of breaths. Bring your head back to the centre.

Thank yourself for the good work of finding your voice.

After-meditation questions:

1. What did you see and feel when the energy was travelling to the frog?
2. What did your frog look like?
3. What do you want to use your voice for?

## MINDFULNESS MOMENT

Do you have a nativity set? If you don't you can make your own, using anything you have. Have something that represents Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. Some nativities have other parts representing shepherds, the Wise Kings, and animals. Add whatever you like. If you already have a nativity, just take a moment to look at it. Now make your nativity come alive. Consider adding something to it. What could you bring from your home or from outside to make it come alive? Some ideas might be real hay, flowers (real or artificial), glitter (to represent the Holy Spirit), stones, or something that is special to you. What matters the most about adding something to the nativity or creating your own is that you are a part of the Christmas story. Jesus is alive in you. Your voice and truth matter.





MONDAY, DECEMBER 20

CHERYL KUKURUDZ

## INTERPRETING TRUTH

### READ: JOHN 18:37-38

*Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?"  
Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."  
Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"*

### REFLECT

This week, our meditations will focus on Speaking Truths. First, we should consider what truth is – in a biblical sense. Here are a few passages:

- "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)
- "...and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32)
- "Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart." (1 Peter 1:22)

Truth is, simplified, *the way things really are*. These passages lay it out succinctly: Jesus is the truth, the truth will set you free, and truth will result in genuine mutual love – the way things really are.

When Jesus said, "I am the truth," he was making an important statement of being fully human and fully God – God incarnate. We look at how Jesus lived as a man, but without sin. He was fully human, with human emotions. He cared profoundly. He was funny. He was able to teach so that he was

understood on many levels. He got angry. He wept. This is truth. We are to live lives that mirror this truth as best we can in our fallible human way; serving others as best we can, starting from right where we are.

Understanding this truth deepens how we interact with the gospel, and in turn, strengthens our devotion and love toward others. When we view others through the lens of truth, through Jesus' eyes, we can only love. This is the truth of eternal life.

### PRAY

*In this season of expectation  
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah.  
Into the bustle of our lives  
and the hard-to-find moments of solitude  
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah.  
Into our homes and situations  
along with friends and families  
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah.  
Into our hearts, and those often-hidden parts  
of our lives  
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah.  
For beneath the surface of your story  
is an inescapable fact.  
You entered this world  
as vulnerable as any one of us  
in order to nail that vulnerability to the cross.  
Our fears, our insecurities and our sins  
all that can separate us from God  
exchanged by your Grace for Love.  
We cannot comprehend the reasoning  
only marvel that Salvation comes to us  
through a baby born in a stable,  
and reaches out to a world in need. Amen.*

- FROM FAITHANDWORSHIP.COM



## PWRDF STORY

### SHARING FOOD COOKBOOK A LEGACY OF LOVE

by Christine Hills

**O**ne who eats alone, cannot discuss the taste of the food with others. So begins *Sharing Food*, a new cookbook by former Director of PWRDF's Development Partnership Program, Zaida Bastos. For 22 years, Bastos visited PWRDF partners all over the world, learning about their communities and how PWRDF could best support their sustainable development goals. Many times she met partners and members of the community over a plate of food.

"Sharing food with partners made me feel that I tasted a slice of their lives," she says.

Time and again, Bastos returned to the PWRDF office full of stories about the progress of partners and projects. These stories inevitably included the seeds that were being planted and grown in small kitchen gardens, on small farms and in community compounds, and the wonderful food that was the result. No matter where she travelled, gathering around a dinner table to share food, stories and getting to know the people and their communities was a highlight.

Bastos made a promise to herself that before she retired she would share this bounty with others. While on sabbatical in late 2019, and knowing her retirement was planned for December 2020, Bastos collected recipes, reminiscences and photos from her travels and assembled them into a cookbook.

From the Philippines to Burundi, Tanzania to Cuba, partners shared their tables with Bastos. Now readers are invited into their culinary stories. Stir up some Isombe from the Democratic Republic of Congo, a dish of Cuban Black Beans, or a bowl Colombian Mondongo Soup, just a few of the delicious recipes in this cookbook. The accompanying stories accentuate the meaning of working in partnership and the joy of sharing a simple meal.

"It all starts with food" was the anchoring message of PWRDF's food security campaign Fred Says, named for former Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz. These words underscore the importance of food for health, for community and for life. Now for Bastos, her legacy to PWRDF ends with a cookbook.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/sharing-food-cookbook-a-legacy-of-love/](https://pwrdf.org/sharing-food-cookbook-a-legacy-of-love/)



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21

CHERYL KUKURUDZ

## TRUTH TO POWER

### READ: MARK 6:22-29

*When the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests... And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter..." Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.*

### REFLECT

John the Baptist was not someone who faded into the shadows. He stood out with his camel hair clothing and diet of locusts and honey. He also both intrigued and infuriated the Jewish leaders of the day. In speaking out about Herod's rampant corruption and the impropriety of his marriage to his brother's wife, John demonstrated truth. He also saw the truth that Jesus was the Messiah, and told everyone he saw to prepare, to be ready. John spoke truth to power without hesitation, and paid for it with his life.

When we hear the phrase, "Speak truth to power," we may have images of the civil rights movement in the US from the 1950s and 60s, and the role of Martin Luther King, Jr. We may think of Mahatma Gandhi fasting to end colonial oppression, or Dietrich Bonhoeffer speaking out against Nazi rule. In more recent memory, we've seen innumerable women and

men standing up to powerful, well-known sexual predators.

We inherently know truth. We know where Jesus would stand and that's where we are to be, too. We are to courageously stand up to those in authority when we see injustices – stand alongside those who cannot speak or are dismissed by those with societal power. To paraphrase Archbishop Rowan Williams, "Whenever humanity draws a line, you will inevitably find Jesus on the other side of it." We are to stand where Jesus would stand.

These past few years have opened my eyes and my mouth as I watch the political landscape. Where would Jesus be? Who would hold his attention? Would he be standing with the corporations and multi million (billion) aires or would he be fighting for a just wage? Would he be dismissing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and thousands of children buried in Residential School graves? No, he would be weeping with the lost and fighting for justice.

While we who are privileged may not pay for speaking truth to power with our physical lives, we have an obligation to stand up and stand beside those who are oppressed.

### PRAY

*Truth-telling God, your servant John the Baptist came with a challenging message; calling for repentance and lives to be transformed. Those who heard were filled with expectation, waiting for Messiah, and yet ultimately failing to notice his arrival in that humble stable. This Advent season, may we be filled with expectation, as we celebrate the greatest gift of all; your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

- FROM FAITHANDWORSHIP.COM



## PWRDF STORY

### RECONCILIATION STARTS WITH BIRTH

by Janice Biehn

Rev. Lori Calkins remembers the neonatal intensive care nurse clearly. A Métis priest in the Diocese of Edmonton and an Indigenous Cultural Birth Helper, Calkins works with Indigenous Birth of Alberta to accompany Indigenous people through various health and social service needs. Often this means at a hospital, which can be intimidating and full of barriers for Indigenous people.

Calkins was helping a family navigate their way through the NICU. “When we explained that this client needed a trauma-informed culturally safe response, the primary NICU nurse assigned to that family got quite defensive and insisted she had been practising family-centered compassionate care for years. Then she shut down and couldn’t hear anything else. While she may be an excellent nurse, that’s not what this family needed.”

Calkins’ role is to bridge the gap between her Indigenous clients and healthcare and social services providers who at times have labelled her clients non-complaint, combative, absent or lazy. “Sometimes we’re slow to become aware of the way we were socialized. But if we can invite the other care providers into a circle of care we can make an impact.”

The discovery this year of unmarked and mass graves of children at Indian Residential Schools has underlined the systemic racism that was laid bare in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action. Calkins says she is living out CTA #61 – which in part calls for community-controlled healing and reconciliation projects. In 2020, PWRDF gave the Diocese of Edmonton \$10,000 to fund Calkins’ work supporting Edmonton’s Indigenous women, many of whom were struggling, especially during the pandemic.

“All of those harms that were done by the churches and the government, as part of the colonial experience in this country...this work directly addresses those things right from the very beginning.”

Today, Calkins works with Indigenous Birth of Alberta full-time, funded by an endowment and grants, and is an honorary assistant at St. George’s in Edmonton. “It’s a way of life. I’m always on call for a birth. The phone is almost always ringing.”

Many clients access Indigenous Birth of Alberta when they are pregnant or have young children. Calkins describes her role like that of an auntie, someone you go to when you have a question – “not quite a kokhum question – but they can give you guidance to help you ‘walk in a good way.’ As aunties, we work in this gap that exists between what is provided by the healthcare system or children and family services, and the natural supports that they have available in the community. We serve Treaty 6, 7 and 8 territory... Our goal is always to find people in those communities who are doing that work or wanting to do it, and support them and then that can be brought back to life in those communities.

“All of those harms that were done by the churches and the government, as part of the colonial experience in this country, all of those disruptions to our kinship systems, this work directly addresses those things right from the very beginning.

“So my own journey of faith in Creator and back to my culture is all tied up in the work that I do in the community, because it runs parallel.” Perhaps it was a straight line after all.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:  
[pwrdf.org/reconciliation-starts-with-birth/](https://pwrdf.org/reconciliation-starts-with-birth/)



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22

CHERYL KUKURUDZ

## LIVING IN TRUTH

### READ: HEBREWS 11:1-3, 13-16

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible...All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.*

### REFLECT

We hear all the time that we are to be ready, to be prepared for the second coming. In the apostle Paul's epistles to the early Christian communities, the time horizon of that second coming moves from "any moment now" to an evermore distant, undefined future. Meanwhile, in the waiting and preparation, faith must be kept and living out the gospel truth as community increasingly becomes a focus of his writing.

Advent is a time of preparation. Of course, our main thoughts of preparation at this time of year are about the birth of Jesus. But perhaps especially at this time of

year, we find ourselves preparing external things to be ready for the Christmas season, our guests and our families – big dinners, presents, sending cards (do people still send actual cards?), cleaning (oh the cleaning!), when we need to turn the focus inward, to preparing ourselves; our hearts and souls.

This isn't a trite suggestion, it is a necessity that we prepare. It isn't expected that we be perfect; that is an impossibility as we are all sinners. We need to turn our hearts to God, to love him and love others. That's it. That's what is asked of us. Because God loves us, and loves others the same way God loves us, we are able to love others, creating a bond that is more than we can ask or imagine.

### PRAY

*As streets fill with shoppers  
Bright lights and tempting offers  
Christmas songs and children's laughter  
You lead us along a different path  
To a desert river and a Prophetic voice  
A call to repentance  
A call to service  
A call to immerse ourselves  
In living water that will never run dry  
A call to prepare a way in our own lives  
For the Saviour of the world to enter in  
To know the touch of tender mercy  
And rest in your forgiving love  
For your faithful prophets  
And your Living Word  
We give you thanks. Amen.*

- FROM FAITHANDWORSHIP.COM





## PWRDF STORY

### CHICKEN FARMING PROVIDES INCOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN COLOMBIA

*by Janice Biehn, with files from Jeannethe Lara*

**E**sthela Palacios is counting her chickens before they've hatched. As a participant of ECLOF Colombia's 2021 project, "Good poultry practices – The Happy Hen," she has been given an opportunity to earn more money for her family.

PWRDF is funding this project that supports people from rural communities, as they recover from the effects of the pandemic.

COVID-19 significantly affected the local economy, even in the countryside, as restrictions on mobility have made it difficult to get products to market. Crops have been lost waiting to be taken out of the communities. ECLOF Colombia has continued to support rural communities with training and technical assistance and promoting new opportunities.

And thus the Happy Hen was hatched. It is a system of farming egg hens that provides an area proportional to the number of birds so that hens graze freely. It also includes a shed that guarantees safety for hens and therefore reduces animal stress. The hens eat, drink and move in and out of the shed, and also have a comfortable area to lay their eggs.

Esthela lives in Sotaquirá, Boyacá, with her husband, four children, a grandson and cares for her 90-year-old mother. Their family farm includes a small shop. She also grows corn and has two dairy cows which she milks every day, selling the milk to her neighbours. She has already obtained three credits from ECLOF for learning how to produce organic fertilizers, biosecurity protocols in COVID-19 prevention and now in good poultry practices.

The "Happy Hen" training session motivated her to participate in the program, and so she received a credit of COP\$3 million (CAD\$993) to get started. ECLOF granted technical assistance, and supported her adjusting the shed and the hens' grazing area.

"My hens are very pretty, behave well and are already starting to lay their first eggs," Esthela says, adding her gratitude for this project that is giving a new light of hope in her home. She also says that eggs are a hot commodity in her community, so she sells the eggs the same day she collects them.

This program is specially designed for women in rural families. It has a low initial investment cost and can generate additional income as well as improve the family's nutrition. The pandemic has limited ECLOF's ability to fully develop the program, but it plans to do more in the coming months as restrictions eventually ease.

ECLOF Colombia will continue to seek out opportunities that provide income-generating alternatives for rural families amid the challenges still being faced by COVID-19 in the country.

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/chicken-farming-provides-income-opportunities-for-women-in-colombia/](https://pwrdf.org/chicken-farming-provides-income-opportunities-for-women-in-colombia/)



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23

CHERYL KUKURUDZ

## TRUTH IN LOVE

### READ: EPHESIANS 4:14-16

*We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.*

### REFLECT

We have all had to have difficult conversations with those we care about. I'm not talking about those talks when a friend asks what you think of their (poor) fashion choices or when you need to address a hygiene issue with them. I'm referring to those talks that stem from truth, from the teachings of Jesus, who is Truth.

It's important to note that there is no virtue in speaking truth without love. Speaking truth without love is cruel; such is the power of truth. A harsh or condescending correction or teaching will never garner a true change of heart in another, so truth will be lost and relationship fractured.

Retired senator Murray Sinclair, who headed Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), heard the truth spoken

by thousands of Residential School survivors and then spoke the truth, in love, to Canadians: "The road we travel on is equal in importance to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts. When it comes to truth and reconciliation we are forced to go the distance."

Conveyance of truth must be established with trust, with relationship building, with demonstrated evidence through how one lives. It is not a one-off. It is a practiced, witnessed way of living. We must be witness to Christ in all parts of our lives, and in turn, see Christ in all those we encounter. This is much easier said than done. To hear truth, difficult or otherwise, we must trust that it is delivered with love and acknowledge that sometimes, even when we mean something in love, it will go wrong, so we need to be humble too.

### PRAY

*Loving God, prepare our hearts not only for the celebration to come, but also for sharing that Good News with friends, family and work colleagues should opportunity arise. In this Advent season, grant us courage and a real willingness to talk about the love that came down to earth and walked among us. Amen.*

- FROM FAITHANDWORSHIP.COM



## PWRDF STORY

### CELEBRATING, RECOGNIZING AND HONOURING OUR INDIGENOUS PARTNERS

*by José Zàrate*

June is National Indigenous History Month in Canada, a chance to intentionally recognize the many achievements of Indigenous peoples from coast to coast to coast. It's also an opportunity to celebrate the distinct cultures and unique traditions of these Indigenous communities.

For 25 years, PWRDF has formed partnerships with Indigenous peoples, based on equality, recognition, respect and support for their rights, protection and conservation of their natural and cultural resources and on the enjoyment of fundamental dignity and wellbeing.

In 2020, PWRDF established the Indigenous Program Advisory Committee (IPAC). Verna M. Firth, Rev. Manasee Ulayuk, Ellen Cook, Monica McKay, John B. Zoe and Freda Lepine will review and advise on ways forward for partnerships with Indigenous communities. PWRDF reaffirms our commitment of working together with Indigenous communities and to continue providing funding and technical support where able. We are working to secure new funding for our Indigenous work as a result of current strategic discussions and alliances with other funding organizations, and Anglicans in Canada.

In 2015, PWRDF developed a workshop called Mapping the Ground We Stand On. Also known as "The Mapping Exercise," this workshop invites participants to walk on to a map to get a better understanding of settler and Indigenous relations, and the concept of terra nullius. In 2021, this popular workshop was adapted for Zoom and is now available for booking.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to learn about Indigenous communities through learning about the Mapping the Ground We Stand on virtual workshop, and by reading the inspiring stories of some of our Indigenous partners' programs and projects. Let's celebrate their success toward self-sufficiency and self-determination.

- Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitióhkwa Language and Cultural Center (KORL-CC), Quebec
- First Nation Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC), Alberta
- NEDC (Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation), B.C.
- Indigenous Maternal Health and Midwifery Program in the Americas
- Pikangikum First Nation: Water and Wastewater Systems, Ontario

READ AND SHARE THIS STORY ONLINE:

[pwrdf.org/celebrating-recognizing-and-honouring-our-indigenous-partners/](https://pwrdf.org/celebrating-recognizing-and-honouring-our-indigenous-partners/)



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHERYL KUKURUDZ

## DEPTH OF TRUTH

### READ: ROMANS 8:38-39

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### REFLECT

It is the truth that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Lucky for us!

In the Anglican funeral rite, while earth is cast on the casket, the following words are said, “In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ....” Nothing can separate us – not our mistakes, not our families, not our own stubborn will, not even death can separate us from God’s love. Remember – God acts first. God will never desert us. Any separation is on our part. We just need to be open to God’s presence in our lives.

Not our guilt, not our shame, not even on our very worst days can we be torn away from the love of God in Christ Jesus. In fact, that’s when he draws closer – nearer to us. This doesn’t mean that we will never feel guilt, or shame, or have bad days – but

it means that those things don’t win – not even death wins – God’s love is *that* strong.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, let us remember this truth: that loving the world so much, God drew closer to us, nearer to us, entering into our incarnational humanity, living and dying like us in order that we might know ourselves loved.

### PRAY

*Thank you God, for your patience  
with a rebellious people  
loving you one moment and  
forgetting you the next.  
Thank you for your endless love  
which does not give up  
but wants the best for us  
despite our faults.  
Thank you for your promise  
to all who believe  
and put their trust in you.  
And in this Advent season  
may the Baptist’s call  
resound in hearts and minds  
drawing many to the living water  
where they might find forgiveness  
and knowledge of your Salvation.  
Amen.*



## PWRDF STORY

### RIDE FOR REFUGE SHINES BRIGHTLY

by Mike Ziemerink

This year's *Ride for Refuge* did not disappoint, especially for new moms and babies in Mozambique. After having our best fundraising year ever in 2020, we decided to set our sights high with a goal of \$40,000. Not only did we meet that goal, we exceeded it, to make the 2021 Ride PWRDF's best year ever. As of today PWRDF has raised \$47,470 that will go to support the Light for Every Birth project in Mozambique. That is nearly \$3,000 more than our record breaking Ride last year and 118% of our \$40,000 goal.

Out of the 75 charities that participated across Canada, PWRDF is currently ranked 10th. There were 66 participants spread across 15 teams coast to coast, contributing in unique and safe ways, thanks to the ride freestyle option.

Some participants did the classic 25km bike ride through wet weather conditions. Others hiked, walked, crocheted and of course Primate Linda Nicholls returned with her ever popular Hymn Sing, raising more than \$3,800, surpassing her total from 2020. PWRDF's Volunteer Coordinator, Kim Umbach, ran all 42.2 kilometres of the virtual Boston Marathon in support of this year's ride, after training all summer.

This year's fundraising efforts will ensure rural health clinics in Mozambique have light for essential functions, such as delivering a baby in the nighttime. Our partner EHALE will install 50 solar suitcases, a wall-mounted unit that opens like a suitcase and includes phone charging ports, a portable headlamp and a fetal Doppler to monitor baby's heartbeat. The suitcase is connected to a solar panel mounted to the roof.

Olinda Magaia, Executive Director at EHALE, joined PWRDF for a celebration of Light for Every Birth and *Ride for Refuge* fundraising success and spoke about the excitement for the new suitcases that are currently enroute to Mozambique.

"People, after they see what the solar suitcases have done to other communities and their impact, they call me and say 'you have to protect us, you have to bring a solar suitcase to us,'" said Magaia through a translator, about previous solar suitcases installed by PWRDF in 2016 and the excitement for the 50 suitcases currently en route to Mozambique.

Thank you to everyone who participated in and supported our campaign. Thanks to you, clinics in Mozambique will shine brighter than ever. We can't wait to do it all again next year.

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