

# NORTHERN LIGHT

*The Official Newsletter of*

## **The Cariboo Presbyterian Church**

PO Box 156, Lac La Hache B.C. V0K 1T0

Visit our website: <http://www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca>

**Editor: Jon Wyminga**

**Winter Edition 2014**

### **Annual Report for 2013**

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#### **2013 Missionaries' Reports**

##### **Changes in Seasons & Transitions in Mission**

The Cariboo mission is at a transition point. As we look ahead to 2015 we anticipate the retirement of David and Linda Webber and are conscious of the changes that will bring to our ministry. In order to make the transition a smooth and healthy one, we have brought on a new (but not so new) member of the pastoral team. As of August 1, 2013 for the next year and a half, the Cariboo team will include three full-time positions. Bruce Wilcox, an elder on the session and designated lay missionary, has answered God's call to full-time ministry. He will be working alongside David Webber to continue the current house church services while exploring new ways of reaching out in the Southern communities. When David retires, Bruce will continue on doing the ministry that has been in David's capable hands for a quarter of a century. With this newsletter then, you will see three missionary reports, not the usual two.

##### **2013 In Retrospect: David Webber**

As I write this, it's the last day of 2013. Lac La Hache is covered in ice fog and I can't see a thing out the window. I know it's sunny above the fog, I can see the brightness up there somewhere, but if I don't look up it's just a sea of fog. It seems to me to be a metaphor for facing a new year as a person of faith. What will 2014 hold for me, for my family, for this faith family of house churches that I am part of? I haven't a clue really; I can only look up not ahead.

The year just past, that I can comment on. It's been a year bursting with mission activity and it's been a year of full of change. Our house churches still continue, some with small groups, others that are bursting at the seams. Someone asked me when I was speaking at the Atlantic Mission Society's annual

meeting in September, how big are your house churches. My answer was: "anywhere from 2 or more people, that's where Jesus promised to be in the midst of." One house church meets with almost 50, another 35, another 25, and some are just a couple of families. I have long since given up the counting of noses to measure success. It is all about faithfulness, not fullness. I am far more interested in the quality of the fellowship within and the effectiveness of the ministry that flows out of each house church. That being said, for those who want to crunch numbers we still function with 15 mission points serving about the same number of folks as last year, that really hasn't changed (see our stats in the 2013 A&P).

What has changed is the effect of our continued work at growing our leadership from within the *laos* or people of God. We now have 2 lay missionaries commissioned to preach and celebrate communion, Ginny Alexander and Bruce Wilcox. Bruce left his work as a lumber grader in August and started full time as a pastor and teacher with responsibilities at Lac La Hache, Carefree Manor, Canim Lake and Forest Grove. The Lac La Hache house church has experienced exciting revitalization with this change. Bruce has also been appointed the chaplain of the Forest Grove Legion and has started a new house church on Sunday evenings at the legion. He has worked hard to reinstitution the Coffeehouse at Lac La Hache on a bimonthly basis. Ginny Alexander continues her work of being a lay missionary at large, often filling in for Bruce or me. She is also the Session liaison person with our KidSpace, TeenSpace and 13-93 missions at Bridge Lake, which is all overseen by Elaine Adams. Pat Lytton is the dynamic leader of KidSpace.

Another lay leader, Reg Steward is our house church leader for the Macalister/Springhouse/

Williams Lake house church, which has been on the move. It has outgrown the homes of most folks and now meets at the Youth for Christ building, a converted home in Williams Lake. I am not sure what this group will call itself now, we already have a Williams Lake House Church, which I provide leadership for along with Sheridan Lake and McLeese Lake.

We have spawned all kinds of leadership as we have been developing, many that I have not named personally. Four more that I will mention are young adults from within our midst in training for full time ministry. Mark Carter has been accepted by the Presbytery as a candidate for ordained ministry and plans on attending Regent College. Mary and Jimmy Noble are nearly through the B.A. in Ministry program at Prairie Bible Institute. And Jason Ruschensky is at the point of starting an undergrad degree. Keep them all in your prayers

Some change is harder to process. For instance, Shannon Bell and Jon Wyminga at Nazko have come to the place in some of their mission work where they have felt a need for change. The Session has instructed them to take the next couple of months to recalibrate, to continue doing mission where it's effective but to also discontinue some mission where it has seemed to not be effective. This period of recalibration is meant to refocus our efforts in house churches and mission points, particularly as it applies to work with First Nations people. A real high point for Jon and Shannon in 2013 was their involvement with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, both locally as well as regionally in Vancouver in the fall. It was a tremendous kairos moment, an opportune parcel of time or moment ordained by God for a specific ministry to happen at the hands of the Holy Spirit. Increasingly we are beginning to understand that mission with First Nations people needs to be kairos motivated and measured rather than the usual chronos time which is highly scheduled and programmed. I think that this understanding is what the recalibration mentioned above is bringing us too (see Ephesians 2.10)

I could go on and on and given a chance I would. But I will leave it here and thank everyone for their tremendous support of this mission in 2013. It is bearing much fruit, and oddly as it does, it continues to operate never knowing if funds will see us through another year. That's where mission support in terms of prayer and gift comes in.

**Memories and Reflections of 2013: Bruce Wilcox**

Looking back on 2013, Jackie and I have been blessed with opportunities to worship with and connect more with folks in the house churches all the way up to Macalister, especially since August 2013, when fulltime ministry began for me in the Cariboo Presbyterian Church. The main ministry points for me continue to be Forest Grove and the Canim Lake areas, Carefree Manor in 100 Mile House and Lac La Hache, where Jackie and I have been living since September.

When the president of the Forest Grove Legion asked if I would be their chaplain in November, we really sensed God opening a brand new door for ministry for us there. Not long after accepting this chaplaincy, the Legion committee in December enthusiastically endorsed my request to have Church services right there in the Legion on Sunday evenings. We have since folded the Canim Lake House Church into this new, more central location. Forest Grove hasn't had Church services for a long while, and the early response there is tremendously encouraging for all of us. We've been seeing new faces pretty much every week, including from the Canim Lake and Bradley Creek areas. Some are longtime and mature Christians, others are new to all of this. We already sense the Lord binding us together more and more in wonderful ways in His love and through His word. We won't be too surprised if the Lord eventually brings one or more house churches out of this ministry at the Forest Grove Legion.

We have been likewise blessed with slow but steady growth at our Lac La Hache Community Church. Getting to know new folks the Lord has been bringing to us there, re-connecting with brethren we already knew, and worshipping together has been such a blessing! We have many dedicated, prayerful and enthusiastic brethren who help out with everything including fixing things around the Church, plowing the snow for us, playing special music, helping out at Coffeehouse outreach, bringing or baking yummy treats for us every week, setting up a Facebook page and doing "P.R." for the Lord and our Lac la Hache fellowship. Most importantly we hold one another up in prayer, and we pray for the Lord's ministry here in Lac la Hache and elsewhere.

In pondering the amazing grace of God, it strikes me that my whole younger life, which was the "night-life" every weekend, was spent mainly in the bars of these same two communities of Forest Grove and Lac La Hache. There was one at each end of Lac la Hache and the other was the Forest Grove Legion!

Drinking way too much, and just general dissipation. And if anyone would have told me or any of my blood-shot eyed friends, of which there were many, that I would one day be ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ in these places, and that church would actually be *in* the Forest Grove Legion, well, it would have literally seemed more realistic to say that I would fly to the moon!

But come to think of it, if God takes us right back to the very “scene of the crime”, back to the places of our greatest failures, follies and jackass moments, (which for me also include flying an airplane through the powerline at Forest Grove) - it shouldn't be all that surprising. If it seems a little scary at times (and it does), we remember that Jesus also gave His disciples the courage to go right back to the scene of their most awful failures. He said to them, “You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). People knew them in Jerusalem, which was where they'd also been exposed as weak and cowardly men, but it was to Jerusalem that Jesus sent them *first*.

It seems that as far as God is concerned, our best witness for Christ may often be where we are known, where we've been defeated, because that is where people will then see the transformation Christ has made in our lives. But really, wherever we are geographically, the Lord has placed us there for His purposes. It starts where we are. How well He can use us to be involved in His work in our own areas, communities, and neighborhoods, we can't even imagine.

This reminds me of the saints in Carefree Manor, who have been through great transitions in their lives, as well as various ongoing trials, but who continue to be such a faithful and encouraging blessing in Christ to us, and to one another, and to their whole environment, where they are. And as well as to many non-resident friends and family that are connected to them, and us. Those who have passed on are really missed, but we praise God for our fellowship and worship together, and in knowing that we will all one day meet again, in our eternal home with the Lord.

## **Nazko & Area Dakelh Outreach:**

### **Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

As the seasons change we are also seeing change in the work in the North among the Dakelh people. The house church in Quesnel was transformed in November 2012 and became a talking circle at the local homeless shelter. We call it ‘Circle of Hope’. A team of three shares the leadership each week as two members of the church and I encourage people to talk about various topics. It was attended sporadically for a whole year when suddenly we developed a solid core of people so that we have a good group each week. Many of them come from our local reserves of Lhoosk'uz, Ndazkoh and Lhtako.

The house church in Ndazkoh is at a point of change as well with attendance dropping off as some people have left the community and others are still struggling with addictions. We are seeking God's guidance as to how to best meet the needs here. We have a great opportunity for witness through funerals and other special events and are honoured as the people invite us into some of the difficult times in their lives.

The most significant event of ministry of this past year, perhaps of many years, was

when we accompanied a group of eleven others from our community to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission National Event in Vancouver. Check out the article later that tells this story.

While it would be nice to be able to say that we have a strong worshipping community built up here, the reality is that this ministry continues to be one of walking alongside the people, being the incarnational presence of Jesus in their midst. We seek to be a living embodiment of Christ's love, pointing to the hope we have in him for healing in our lives.

Working with those on the bottom rungs of our social and economic ladder is a privilege and we are grateful to all those who support us financially and prayerfully so that the good news of Christ's love can reach into the hurting places.



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## **2013 Report from Our Elders**

**Penny McIntosh, Clerk of Session**

The Session of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church met 3 times in 2013. We continued with our reflections on the book *The Shaping of Things to Come*, by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. Mark Carter was formally accepted as a member of the church and was approved as a candidate for ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. A note of our approval and the required documents were sent to Presbytery in Kamloops. Of note Mark is doing very

well in his studies. Since then the Presbytery of Kamloops, which provides us with oversight, has approved Mark as a candidate for ministry as well. The rationale and vision for Bruce Wilcox's ministry was also developed during 2013. Bruce started his ministry with the Cariboo Presbyterian Church in August, and will be taking on the duties of David Webber, upon David's retirement in April 2015.

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### **2013 House Church and Mission Reports (From South to North)**

#### **Sheridan Lake House Church: Jody Malm**

Happy New Year Everyone, may God's blessings continue to be felt by each of you. A year in review for the Sheridan Lake House Church, hmmm, let me think. Generally speaking, it's has been a good year. God continues to work in our hearts encouraging us to grow. We are thankful for our ministers who help us in this area of growing, engaging us in our thoughts and hearts with various teachings from the Bible.

As a house church family, we have grown (fun to snuggle all into a circle). We have a couple of new families who have joined us: the Kennedy's, the Melnychuck's, and the Cameron's. It is great to have new blood; so exciting to share and learn together. This has been nice as we have also had folks like Melissa and Adam move to town (miss them). And then there is our warm weather family whom we get to enjoy *only* in summer.

When we meet on Wednesday nights it is so wonderful to come together; singing, laughing, learning, and praying. It is nice to know that we have family in the Lord, who prays for us daily/weekly. We feel these *prayers* in times of rejoicing (grandbabies born this year), in times of sorrow (family members and friends that have died this year) and in times of embracing members who are very ill. For some of us it has been a year of great thankfulness and for a few of us times of questions, wondering, yet *all* knowing that it is *all* in God's hands and in his time, which is perfect timing.

Thinking about Dave retiring, I came to a scary realization when Dave and Linda took a much deserved holiday. They were gone for a long time, it seemed to me. During this time Bruce Wilcox filled in and came out to meet us all, and his love and

enthusiasm for the Lord won our hearts in no time. So I truly believe that the dedication and love Dave and Linda have for this ministry, is also felt by Bruce and Jackie. This must be huge a relief for Dave and Linda.

We hope that in time the Webber's can put their feet up and their hearts into the next adventure that God has planned for them. Knowing those two, feet up isn't in their vocabulary. Hair straight back and finding a way to encourage people to look at house churches, as a way of life is.

So, hold on to the reins, sit down in your saddle and ride. This year is full of God's love and promise to always be with us. Blessings, jody

#### **"13-93" in Sheridan Lake: Elaine Adams**

*"One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: 'Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.'" (Acts 18:9)*



*Nicki and Elaine*

When looking for a verse to describe the intent of '13 to 93' Act 18:9 made a point. Neither Nicki nor I are silent about our love for the Lord. Nicki shares how God is showing her signs of His presence directing her life to care for her family. Paul encourages me to not be afraid. We meet for dinner, which is usually prepared by the two of us with Val & Duane bringing the dessert, followed by a video by Ray Vander Laan. It makes the once a month Friday meetings a good forum for speaking out about God's love for us.

### **Teens Space in Sheridan Lake: Elaine Adams**

*"...for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."  
(Luke 12:12)*

The challenge with providing a program for Teens is finding a dedicated worker willing to dream up interesting activities. Even after the dream comes the implementation may or may not be up to the Teens' expectations of FUN! Coreen Caldwell is the worker who month after month brings activities which are fun to the local Teens. Coreen planned activities like preparing a community luncheon of soups and biscuits to raise funds for excursions; excursions such as hiking locally or going on a weekend to Barkerville. God is good. He provides opportunities to share His Word in meaningful ways and times. Teens are sensitive to pressures about accepting God and so we wait for God to teach what to say and when to say the message He wants for the Teens.



*Elaine and Coreen*

### **Kids Space in Sheridan Lake: Elaine Adams**

*"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."  
(Philippians 2:4)*

*"So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up."  
(Galatians 6:9)*



*Coordinators of Kids Space from left to right:  
Pat Lytton, Celia Visscher, Ginny-Lou Alexander,  
Bill Adams (Elaine Adams is taking the photo)*

The people in the above photo are Kids Space Coordinators. They often thought of others, especially the children, before they thought of their own interests. They meet once a month to ask God to

bless their plans for sharing His Word in the Interlakes Community. In 2013 Kids Space was held on a biweekly basis with the schedule including teaching a Bible story, dinner, crafts, music and games. After being in existence for over six years (Kids Space started in autumn 2007), the coordinators continue to add FUN! FUN! FUN! to each meeting. Focusing on the harvest helps during those times when tiredness attempted to discourage. Coordinators meetings were a time to rejuvenate bringing renewed excitement and passion for sharing God's love. After all He did promise a harvest and the coordinators continue to seed and plant for God.

### **Canim Lake House Church: Gordon Kellett**

There have been many changes in our house church services here in the Canim Lake – Forest Grove area in the past few months. The most significant change has been Bruce Wilcox taking over as our pastor from Dave Webber in anticipation of Dave and Linda's eventual retirement. The transition has been a smooth and natural one as the ministry progresses and grows. The second significant change, and one that is proving to be very exciting, is moving the church services from my house at Canim Lake to the Forest Grove Legion every Sunday evening at 7:00 pm which occurred at the end of December. Attendance at Canim Lake had dropped to three of us over the past several months – two people from Lac la Hache and me. My mother moved to Carefree Manor in 100 Mile House in July and Tim Beaudoin immigrated to Australia after the death of his father in October, 2012. The response in Forest Grove has been encouraging with about a half a dozen turning out. In addition to that Bruce and I have begun a "sort of" outreach ministry in a café in 100 Mile House which seems to be bearing fruit. I can't say more about that because it is a very hands-on, personal experience.

Now, about myself; From October, 2012 and perhaps before that, until May, 2013 I allowed myself to slip into a very deep depression, the cause of which I am still trying to understand. I stopped leaving my house unless I had no choice. I stopped driving entirely. I stopped bathing and I stayed in my bathrobe all day long. I stopped caring about anything; myself, my family and my friends. The only connection I managed to maintain with the outside world was with my church, and that was not through any effort of my own. I am blessed with having an extraordinary church family. The Webbers and the Simontons continued to support me in prayer

and friendship for months as I steadily declined. Meanwhile, mom fell and broke a hip back in April and after several weeks in hospital she had to move to a motel and finally into a care home because it was no longer safe for her to live in her home.

In May, 2013, my doctor, Donald Street, visited me at home and ordered me into hospital for treatment. Because mom and I were both incapacitated, our neighbours rallied around us to look after our affairs. Anne Johansen and Beverly MacGregor organized mom's move into the motel and later into Carefree Manor. I was in hospital for five weeks before being sent home. The return was made possible by a group of friends. The hospital stay was instrumental in my beginning to recover.

I continue to recover with the prayerful support of family and friends, and while I have been experiencing other health problems I continue to be blessed by God. I am taking care of mom's personal and business affairs and the Lord has opened doors for me to begin to get re-involved in my community.

**Carefree Manor Chapel Service: Ginny Alexander**

*"For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* (Isa. 9:6)

Week by week at 2:00 PM, the precious folk at Carefree Manor gather in the fireside room to hear a message of God's love for them through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Especially meaningful during the advent season were the use of the advent wreath and the exploration of the ways Christ brings hope, love, joy and peace into the lives of those who have come to faith in Him. He is the Wonderful Counselor, both God and human, who by his wonderful birth, life, death and resurrection gives us the hope of everlasting life. He is the Mighty God who, in his great love, imparts to us his wisdom, strength, power, and saving grace; who is able to save us to the uttermost. "The joy of the Lord is our strength," (Nehemiah 8:10). He is Everlasting Father, one with the Father, "the author and perfecter of our faith . . ." (Hebrews 12:2). He is the Prince of Peace-our peace; it is his peace that both keeps the hearts of us, his people, and rules in them.

One of the highlights of the year was a Christmas pageant and carols put on by my students and friends on the afternoon of December 22<sup>nd</sup>. There were fifteen children (and some of their parents and grandparents) who participated in the group singing,

sang solos and a duet. Some also recited the the poem, "Once There Was a Snowman", and led a Readers Theatre entitled, "Baa, Baa Humbug (Have you any wool?)" written by Linda Piepenbrink. The program was followed by a time of refreshments and visiting. A most enjoyable time was had by all!

**The Lac la Hache Community Church: Bev Fry**

I feel honored and blessed to have this opportunity to write a brief summary of how the Lac la Hache Community Church Ministry has touched the hearts of my family. This can be described in a few words - comfort and peace within a down to earth atmosphere. Today many of us live very hectic lives with jobs, running businesses and raising families. It sometimes makes it difficult to keep it all in balance. I've found since my family and I have started to attend the Lac la Hache Community Church we have experienced a source of comfort that has touched our hearts. We love the down to earth service with traditional and renewed hymns, Bible messages/ teachings and the after service fellowship. I feel very grateful to the Lord for bringing us to the little Lac la Hache Community Church and it has been true blessings how Bruce and Jackie have open their hearts to our family. We are just so thankful for the opportunity to learn, live and walk closer with the Lord Jesus Christ. We have so much to be grateful for. ☺

**Lac la Hache Coffeehouse Ministry: Bruce Wilcox**

When Jesus was on this earth as a man, He was known as a friend of sinners. He made contact with people where they were, and as they were - not to judge them, but as He said in John 3:17, that they might be saved through Him. Jesus carries this on today through His continuing incarnated presence on the earth through His Body, the church. The Coffeehouse outreach at the Old Age Pensioners Organization Pioneer Centre in Lac La Hache is one such example of missional, incarnational ministry. Sponsored by the Cariboo Presbyterian Church in Lac la Hache, it provides an opportunity for people not connected with the church to enter an environment where they can rub shoulders with Christians on their own turf, in a venue familiar to them and a way that is not intimidating, but God willing, inviting and comfortable. Even some of the singers and players themselves may not be following Christ, but are still welcome to perform. The only stipulation is that the lyrics are "clean".

Missional ministry is not really for the church, but for the world outside the church. But having said that, when Christians are participating in “the good works that the Lord has prepared beforehand for us to walk in” (Ephesians 2:10), then we get to personally experience and know the Lord in sometimes new and unexpected ways right in the midst of those works, whatever they may be, because they are also His. So by getting prayerfully involved, being missional and just trusting Him for the results, we become blessed in knowing the Lord in ways that simply cannot happen in any other way!

At Coffeehouse we experience a good variety of local area talent, poetry and musical genres, while still making sure that the folks are exposed to the message of Christ through at least some of the songs. At our Coffeehouse in November, there was a very encouraging turnout, especially of local folks. A few who showed up had definitely seen better days, and were somewhat “in their cups”. In observing them it was interesting to notice that their response went from at times quietly sitting and listening, to clapping and cheering loudly and then getting up and dancing a bit. Then at the end of the evening one raised his hands in the air at the conclusion of one of the Gospel songs and hollered “Praise the Lord!” After we were finished he even made a point of coming to the front to shake my hand and offer a sincere thank you to all of us.

I mention this because we know the Lord can powerfully use even mustard-seed faith once it has been planted (Luke 17:5,6). I strongly suspect that many of these folks have never darkened the door of a church building, and that events like this are the closest thing to any kind of intentional interaction with Christians that they’ve ever had. Someone once said that the only Bible many people have ever read is through their observations of us Christians. Let’s be encouraged in trusting Christ in us to continue to make us the people we need to be, as He uses all of us in fulfilling His great commission wherever we are.

### **Springhouse-Macalister-Williams Lake House Church: Reg Steward**

2013 was a year marked by significant changes in our house church. There was a growth in attendance that caused us to look at our ability to meet in the houses available to us. It was determined that a move to the Youth for Christ building in Williams Lake served several purposes. It facilitated the numerical growth, centralized and made consistent the meeting place while retaining

somewhat of a “house” feel as the building is actually a converted home. The evaluation of the meeting place has been ongoing and will continue through 2014 as our numbers settle out. There was an interesting learning point within the move though; house church is not just about the house. It was clear that the foundational elements of a house church can be carried through any facility that is not one of the congregants’ homes. It can be done if there is a commitment to the simplicity of the house church model and we are firmly committed to that. We miss the homes, no doubt about it, but there are so many people and things to consider and put in front of our personal preferences at this time. The Lord will lead us and we will follow. To be honest we were, and some still are, really uncertain about this and continue to examine it with hearts wide open to the Lord’s leading. We have, however, found that the Lord has remained faithful, that the humble setting is valid and valuable, and that the gathering for a meal after the service and the fellowship among our folks is binding, (the fellowship not the food) consistent and real. We have worked to keep the main thing the main thing. We earnestly seek the Lord, are lead in praise by Isaac Steward and the very capable musicians who join and assist in that. We receive feedings on the Word from great preachers through technological import. We pray together and meet needs as they are identified to and for us. Our group has been excited by things like the engagement of Jesse Steward and Stephanie Carter to be wed in August, and driven to our knees by some of the trying things the Lord uses to grow us and show us how much we need Him. We are so grateful for the loving support of each one who is counted among those who gather under our collective banner, every brother and sister in the Lord who upholds and encourages, challenges and supports. I would like to personally thank each one who has and continues to remember us in prayer. Thank you to each one who has taken the time to call in crisis, contribute in challenge, brainstorm in bewilderment and speak words that were a soothing balm, veritable calm in the midst of a storm. You have reminded me and many in our group that though we are spread across this beautiful land, we are a part of that body of the bride of Christ, part of a family, a family that is open to the poor, the hurting and the failures in life. The ability to receive and celebrate salvation through grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone is a treasure beyond imagination. We stand immersed in the imputed righteousness of God. Dave always reminds me when he asks how I am and I say

I am good, that only God is good. How true this is, no one can stand on our merit or record. We do well to remember those mirthful words of our long time pastor, leader and friend . . . only God is good . . . and I will add with great joy that indeed He is good all the time, and all the time God is good.

**Williams Lake House Church: Peter James**

Our dedicated Elder Mary Krajczar has been appointed our first *Elder Emeritus* in recognition of her excellent service to our family of Presbyterian House Churches. God bless you Mary for your years of service.

A special thank you to both Bruce Wilcox and Ginny Alexander for acting as pastor at our weekly services while David and Linda Webber were enjoying a long overdue and well deserved vacation and interesting trip to the Maritimes.

A few of our members were excited to attend a recent Coffee House held in Lac La Hache. If you would like to participate in a fun and enjoyable evening of music, friendship and wonderful snacks we recommend that you attend a future evening at the Coffee House. Stay tuned for the announcement on the date of the next Coffee House. Many thanks to all of the entertainers and volunteers that make these evenings so enjoyable.

Here are some words of wisdom from Psalm 37:1-8; guiding principles to a wonderful relationship with God.

1. Fret not yourself because of evildoers.
2. Trust in the Lord.
3. Do good works.
4. Delight yourself in the Lord.
5. Commit your way to the Lord.
6. Be patient and rest in the Lord.
7. Cease from anger and forsake wrath.

Psalm 37 was the topic at a recent service led by Bob McIntosh which led to a wonderful exchange of views and interesting insights into our relationship with God and with each other.

Finally a word of prayer and blessings to all of those who are in need of God's help.

**McLeese Lake House Church: Mark Carter**

2013 has seen some additions to the house church as well as some losses. Dave and Jessie Chapin and family moved to the Middle East to pursue their life there while a family that moved into the area attends regularly along with a few others couples. John and Cynthia Noble along with their boys still living at home are back in McLeese Lake

and have fit right back in to the house church. Kathy Carter and daughters Stephanie Carter and Lesley Heppner hosted a kids Vacation Bible School this summer. The camp featured biblically centered teaching and music lessons. Each child was able to learn to play an instrument including piano and ukulele. The children gave a performance at the conclusion for their parents, which was well received.

The house church is widely loved by the attendees in McLeese Lake. One member recently expressed how thankful they were to be able to fellowship in such a close community of people. For the month of December and following, the members have been sharing a meal together before each service. The discussion, food, and close fellowship makes for a time of refreshment and encouragement that one cannot help but think is a replication of what occurred right at the beginning of the Christian church. We look forward to a year of teaching, fellowship, outreach, and community inclusion that is so essential to the life and nature of the church.

**Preparing for Full-Time Ministry: Mark Carter**

*As mentioned earlier in this newsletter Mark Carter has been seeking God's leading in a call to full-time ministry in the church. Our elders prayerfully considered and affirmed this sense of call with him and recommended him as a candidate for ministry to the Presbytery of Kamloops of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, who in turn affirm and support his call as he follows God's leading. Please keep Mark in your prayers.*



My journey into student candidacy for ministry began when I asked Dave Webber what the next step was for me in pursuing what I felt God was calling me to. A little paperwork and a sub-committee interview later had me on the right road. That was during winter/spring of 2013. Since then I have been pursuing an undergraduate degree at Thompson Rivers University in Williams Lake. I will be moving on to another university to complete my degree. My educational goal is to complete a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Sociology and then go on to graduate studies at a seminary; Regent seminary in Vancouver being my current choice. When I have completed my studies there, I would like



to return to the Cariboo to engage in house church ministry. I have been part of a house church in McLeese Lake for over ten years now and I see the benefits of this type of church. I want to continue this ministry in any way possible and eagerly look forward to what God has in store for this jar of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7).

#### **Circle of Hope, Quesnel: Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

For a whole year, Volney, Lynda and I arrived each Sunday at Season's House, the homeless shelter in Quesnel, and set up for our talking circle. We hung the Circle of Hope banner out on the street and waited for people to show up to talk. About half of the weeks, no one joined us and sometimes there were one or two people. In the Fall we began to wonder if our efforts were not 'scratching where people were itching'. Then, on the Sunday of our first anniversary of the circle, suddenly six new people showed up! We had cake to celebrate and had a great time of sharing around the circle. Every Sunday since then we have had between six and ten people come to pass around the talking stick. We take turns in leading the topic and the circle each week and we have a great core of people that we can count on being their regularly. Some are residents of the transitional housing, some are homeless and others are middle class or retired and come from outside the shelter's community. We spend at least thirty minutes before the circle starts hanging out in the main lobby of the shelter during soup time just to chat and catch up with people. Many of the folks wandering through for a bowl of soup come from our communities of Ndazkoh, Lhoosk'uz & Lhtako and we hear about how everyone is doing. We have been excited to be able to develop this community of sharing and support.

One of the things that happened in forming Circle of Hope is that we let go of our house church in Quesnel. We recognize the need for the leadership team as well as others to gather on a regular basis for fellowship, worship, prayer and scripture encouragement, so in January we have started a second circle that meets twice a month after Circle of Hope. At this point we are calling it Creator's Circle. We move down the street to the Salvation Army who has allowed us use of their building to gather on Sunday afternoons. This provides what our leadership team needs as well as creating a place for those who might come to faith in Christ through our witness at the Circle of Hope to become grafted into a worship community. We are looking forward to

developing this further this year and seeing where God takes it.

#### **Ndazkoh House Church: Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

This has been a year of transition for the ministry in Ndazkoh and especially for the house church. Over the past several years due to people moving away or passing into Jesus' presence, our attendance has dropped off to only one person besides ourselves during the winter months. We were happy to welcome a couple through the summer months who are building a home in the area, but once the Fall came, they returned to Alberta for the winter. Given that we were at a point of trying to evaluate and 'recalibrate' the ministry here, we felt it was time to let go of the house church here for the present time as it was not meeting the needs of the community. Instead, we will look at other ways to share the love of Christ in building relationships. We are not sure yet where God will lead us in 2014 in terms of specific activities, but we feel it will involve more of a ministry of 'presence' than 'program' as we seek to incarnate the gospel to our community. We invite your prayers as we discern Creator's leading in this.

#### **Nazko Kids' Bible Class: Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

We have some of the greatest kids on earth here in Ndazkoh! Each week we gather for games, snack, songs, prayer, a story circle and crafts. The kids respond with lots of giggles and activity as well as heart-felt prayers and great questions. Through the early part of the year we taught through some of the basic stories of Jesus' life from his birth, life, death and resurrection until at Pentecost we learned that his ministry continues on with us. Through the Fall we began to watch Veggie Tales videos that taught Bible stories. The kids love these characters and we are able to tell them that the stories are real, even if they didn't happen to talking vegetables! After nearly twenty years of leading this program with the kids, we see now that they are really hearing the truth of Creator's love for them and desiring to respond to it. We look forward to what this coming year will bring.

#### **Nazko Teens: Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

An emphasis on relationship with our teens is what we focus on when getting them together for youth nights. Circumstances, travel and schedules didn't allow for any evenings with the youth through the Fall, but in the early part of the year we had the teens to our home a few times for games nights, Frisbee golf and hanging out over pizza. We have only a few teens in the community at this time but we

look forward to getting them together in the coming year to keep the relationships going that were created in Bible Class during their elementary school years.

### **Truth and Reconciliation: Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

In September 2013, Jon and I were privileged to have eight days with people from our community as together we traveled and attended the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's national event. It was probably one of the most memorable things we have done in ministry in the past two decades. These events are but one step along the path to reconciliation and healing between our First Nations and the rest of Canada, but the telling of the truth is powerful and no healing can come until the stories are told and acknowledged, leading to making things right and changing the future. Here's a little summary of what happened for our group.

We left Ndazkoh and Quesnel on Monday, 16 September in three cars. There were twelve of us travelling, and one met us in Vancouver and returned with us, though Jon did not return with us, so we still had twelve going home.

On the first night we were hosted by the congregation of Calvin Presbyterian Church in Abbotsford. We continued on to Vancouver the next morning to attend the Canoe gathering and welcome to the territory. It was very moving to watch dozens of large traditional canoes arriving in flotillas in False Creek and approaching the host nations for permission to come onto the territory. One of the first voices we heard after arriving was of Edward Johns speaking in Dakelh. It made our group proud of their language. Later we went to the grounds of the Pacific National Exhibition to register everyone. Since we hadn't eaten, the men went across town to pick up a key to one of the billets and the women all went for lunch and then for a brief walk around Chinatown. Unfortunately while we were in Chinatown, three bags were stolen from the back of our truck. Sam lost his bag, Marilyn lost all her stuff including her iPad and Vikki lost a bag of tsungi (dried moose meat). We all walked the alleys and parks looking to see if the bags were discarded. Marilyn and I were able to find a police officer and report the theft. It was a heart-breaking evening. Marilyn and I were able to pray and ask God to restore her things.

The next day the TRC began and we all attended various events over the following few days including public statements, sharing circles, workshops and educational areas. We met each morning and evening to transport people to billets

with people from West Point Gray, Vancouver Korean and Coquitlam Presbyterian Churches. At the TRC we all met people we hadn't seen in a long time as well as familiar faces from home. It was a draining week as we heard heart-breaking story after story of the experiences of survivors. At the same time it was affirming for many in our group to hear what was essentially their own stories from others' voices. They were not alone. Each person was moved deeply by what we were hearing. On the last day of testimony, four of our five survivors gave a statement either publicly or privately and we were there to support them.

It wasn't just all hard stuff on this trip though. I thought that the organizers did a good job of balancing the



sad and tough stories and truth-telling with a lot of fun and laughter. There was a concert on Thursday night featuring some great First Nations artists. The next night was a talent contest and Jon Wyminga and Sam Boyd entered. Out of 30 contestants, they came in second with one of Sam's original compositions! They called themselves 'DuNedo', combining the words *dune* and *nedo*. *Dune* is the Dakelh word for the people or a man and *nedo* is the Dakelh word for white person. We had a great cheering section and again it made us all proud to be from Ndazkoh! We had a lot of laughter while we drove and lots of fun with one another through the week.

The saga with the theft turned out well in the end. The day after, I took Marilyn and Sam to Value Village and got them both new wardrobes and tote bags, and then resupplied their toiletries as well. Marilyn experienced God's gracious and abundant provision when a friend of an acquaintance (we didn't even get his last name) who had heard about her story came on the last day to let her know that God had told him to buy her a new iPad. She went home very happy. It was an emotional but joyful exchange. So our prayers were answered in an unexpected way! The only thing that wasn't replaced was the tsungi but we survived! The whole trip was truly worthwhile and brought healing to every member of our group.

I hope that the promise offered by gatherings like the TRC events will not stop in the events themselves. They are simply a step along the way. All of us as Canadians need to come to terms with our



shared history. The tragedy of the residential schools is not just a 'First Nations issue'. It is a Canadian issue. It is our history and all of

us who have come to this land in the past few hundred years continue to reap the benefits of the land that was stolen, treaties that were broken and the genocide that happened through disease warfare and most recently residential schools. This is not something that is just in the past. My friends and neighbours here continue to struggle through the effects of what happened at those schools to themselves or their parents or grandparents. Until we have the attitude of Christ, the humility which will allow us to really look at the truth, listen to the stories and see the brokenness that was caused, we ourselves cannot be whole. In the way of Jesus, to be whole means to first be broken by the things that break the heart of God. At the TRC, our hearts were broken, but now we are left with the rest of the path, what do we do to make things right (and I'm not just talking about money here), to build relationships of trust and respect, and create a community of justice and healing for every one of us. We need to walk that path together.

#### **Lhooskuz (Kluskus): Jon Wyminga**

*"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds he had compassion on them . . ." (Matthew 9:35-36)*

Jesus' tours of teaching and preaching took him to many remote places about the land. As we seek to follow him so does ours. Many of my journeys end with a knock on a door and a visit in someone's home. It might happen here in Nazko. It might happen in Quesnel or Trout Lake, a remote ranching settlement about a half hour north of Nazko. And it might happen in the remote Carrier village of Lhooskuz, or Kluskus to the untrained tongue. When I knock on the door sometimes there's no answer at all, even though I clearly hear something going on inside; sometimes there's a brief chat at the door and sometimes I'm invited in for a cup of coffee. Sometimes we just talk and other times, quite often in fact, we'll open up the Bible, reflect on what God is saying through it and then pray together. Often I try

to read a verse or two in Carrier, the Dakelh language. It gives people an opportunity for people to hear the Scriptures in the language of their heart and it gives me an opportunity to see if my reading has improved. When I ask the response is generally polite but I suspect I still sound like someone with a very thick foreign accent who doesn't understand what they're talking about . . . because that is in fact what I am! In my case I can read the language – barely – but in order to understand I have to read the corresponding verses in English.

Aside from visiting I also try to be aware of the major community events in Lhooskuz and schedule my trips around them. Sometimes they are occasions of grief. In October I was asked to help with a funeral of a young man who died quite unexpectedly . . . unexpectedly at least to most of us including his family. Their last memories of him carried hints that he in fact knew he was quite ill and was quietly saying his goodbyes. Sometimes the community events are occasions of celebration. I was privileged to attend the Lhooskuz School's Christmas pageant and feast. When I came I was able to deliver Christmas gifts to each of the children in the village; gifts that were made possible through the generous contributions of many of you, our supporters.

As we travel to these remote communities and villages in the name of Jesus; as we pay visits and develop relationships we hope and pray the message of Christ's good news and his healing finds its way into people's hearts and lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Punchaw House Church: Anne Migvar**

Hello everyone in the Cariboo House Church circle. We hope everyone is surviving this toe and finger tingling weather. We hold church every two weeks, unless Jon Wyminga is called too far away to make it. It's a three family group. We sing praises to the Lord and study Gods Word and pray for the needs of our group and the whole house church area and see Gods hand working amongst us all. Jon gives us printed out prayer requests that we use to pray for all the needs of the various house churches during the two weeks till we meet again and rejoice over the answered prayers and events of others. We also pray for our neighbours.

#### **The Bush into Cyberspace: Our Online Ministry** **Shannon Bell-Wyminga**

One of the beautiful things about the exploding technology of this generation is how it can

bring diverse people together across geographic barriers. I admit to finding a lot of fun in technology and particularly the internet. It has also become an essential ministry tool for those of us working with youth and kids. Given that none of my partners in ministry shares my enthusiasm for the internet, I've taken on the unofficial role of being the Cariboo's manager of cyberspace. I'd like to share with you some opportunities for you to link up with us on-line.

Web site: [www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca](http://www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca)  
This web site was totally redesigned for us a couple of years ago by Chelsea Webber and we hope you will take a look. On it you can find biographies of the ministry team families; our vision statement; a list of all the various ministry points and when they meet; our past newsletters; a statement of our approach to baptism; sermons; links to videos done on the mission here; prayer suggestions; ways to support us as well as information about purchasing Dave's books. We also have links to other ministries that we have connected with.

Facebook: We have a facebook group to link those in the ministry so we can share news, prayer concerns and generally talk about house church. If you want to check it out, look up Cariboo Presbyterian House Churches on facebook, or follow the link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/328463501966/> If you are part of this ministry and aren't on our group yet, please go to the group page and request to be added!

Blog: Beginning this year, we have a regular blog posted on the Presbyterian Record site called Cariboo Trails and Tales. There is a new post each Monday written by someone in the ministry. To find us, go to: <http://presbyterianrecord.ca/articles/blogs/cariboo-trails-and-tales/> If you are a part of this ministry and want to contribute a blog post, I'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch with me!

Email: Of course, most of you know that the official church email address is [cariboopc@xplornet.ca](mailto:cariboopc@xplornet.ca). This goes to Jon and I, but if you are trying to reach Dave or Bruce, you can try them at their church emails: [webber\\_cpc@bcwireless.com](mailto:webber_cpc@bcwireless.com) or [wilcox\\_cpc@bcwireless.com](mailto:wilcox_cpc@bcwireless.com)

Cyberspace does have its drawbacks, but it also provides us with some amazing opportunities for connecting with one another. Please check these out and we'll see you on the web!

### **World Vision Report: Linda Webber**

I would like to thank all those who support our four World Vision children. I especially would like to thank those who have stepped up their donations in 2013. Our World Vision Children are Rong Xiu Tan from China (age 10); Ferdus Hasan from Bangladesh (age 13); Shrijana Taku from Nepal (age 18); and Paukar Tjorres from Ecuador (age 9)

January 2013 beginning balance.....	\$ 724.40
Money raised in 2013.....	2,622.00
Money sent to World Vision in 2013.....	<u>1,872.00</u>
Balance in account 12/31/13.....	\$1,474.40

### **The Envelope Secretary's Report: Linda Webber**

Ministry wise and financially it's been an interesting year for this mission work. In September 2013 Bruce Wilcox came on full time in ministry work in preparation for David and I retiring in March of 2015. Bruce has added all kinds of wonderful dimensions to our mission work as you can easily tell from this newsletter-annual report. His addition has been definitely of God and the work has prospered like never before because of it. That being said, financially we have not prospered. We did not make our mission givings budget for 2013 by over 25 thousand dollars. Thankfully we had some money saved and our spending was slightly less than budgeted so we made it through the year and we are still able to buy groceries. For that we are deeply grateful to God and to all our mission supporters. That being said, based on our 2013 year we anticipate real financial challenges for 2014. We continue to go ahead prayerfully.

I would like to make special mention of all the individuals and congregations from "far away" without whose friendship, financial support, gifts and prayers this mission would not be able to continue. I am always touched by so many of you who take the time to say we are praying for you in the Cariboo. I find great encouragement in this. If you would like to make a donation in 2014 to this mission please make your cheque out to:

Cariboo Presbyterian Church (and mail to)  
Box 156  
Lac La Hache, BC V0K 1T0

I will send a tax receipt to you in February, 2015. Thank you for your generosity in supporting Christ's Mission work in the Cariboo.