

The BLAZER

CONNECTING ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF CMU

SUMMER 2023

| Generous Hospitality
| Radical Dialogue



CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

The BLAZER

Generous hospitality and radical dialogue
...that's what's going on at CMU

CMU is a Christian liberal arts university where faculty consistently challenge students with perspectives and behaviours they may not have previously considered—even to the point of being radical. CMU's comprehensive undergraduate education is defined by its inter-disciplinary approach to academic programming, along with its Anabaptist rooting. The phrase, "generous hospitality and radical dialogue", one of CMU's commitments, defines how many of our alumni practise their vocational work, affecting change in the world.

The 2022/23 academic year, the first since 2019/20 without major considerations given to COVID-19 and the pandemic, brought many reasons to celebrate and to be hopeful for what's in store for 2023/24 and beyond. I anticipate CMU's impact in the world, through its alumni, will exponentially increase, notably with the upcoming introduction of the Bachelor of Social work degree and the graduate level spiritual ministry concentration offered by the CMU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry. In our broken world, it is deeply hopeful to consider what CMU students will do with the intellect, skills, and abilities that will help facilitate the health and well-being (physical and spiritual) of vulnerable persons and communities across Canada.

Despite this hope and anticipation of what's to come, the past year has not been without its institutional challenges. As with many post-secondary institutions exiting the pandemic, the market and other external factors have prompted the need to re-evaluate programs and re-orient priorities. While these changes aren't easy, or simple, for a myriad of reasons, they are milestone events in CMU's timeline. These changes will strengthen the teaching at the main campus, while positioning the university well for sustainability into the future. See page 10 for more on "what's going on at CMU."

I'm excited for you to read about the numerous ways the university's dedication to inspiring and equipping for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society is being lived out by students, alumni, and faculty. With 104 new graduates crossing the stage in this spring's convocation ceremony, the storytelling of generous hospitality and radical dialogue continues to flourish.

Kevin Kilbrei
Director, Communications & Marketing



Table of Contents

- 1 President's Message
- 2 Campus News
- 3 CMU Bachelor of Social Work
- 4 Generous Hospitality
Radical Dialogue
- 10 What's Going on at CMU?
- 12 Monthly and Legacy Giving
- 14 CMU Grad 2023
- 18 Faculty Research and Highlights
- 19 Hearts of Freedom Exhibition
- 20 People and Events
- 22 Alumni News
- 24 Alumni Profiles

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Generous hospitality, radical dialogue

I'm often asked, "What feeds your hope?" Of late I say, "the growing interest in food at CMU." No, we're not developing a culinary program. Not one in agriculture either, even while agriculture and food security figure prominently in many classes in environmental studies, business, biology, biblical and theological studies, peace and conflict transformation, international development, and more. And there's another dimension going on. It's shared food, food that's loved for how it's grown and made.

Food figures into classes and leads to a vibrant discussion, while the students and professor eat together. Here, "setting the table" isn't just a metaphor for topics to be discussed. This happened in winter 2023 through Table Peacebuilding with Dr. Wendy Kroeker and in the course, The Future of Community. And next year's offerings include, Eat, Love, Reflect, with Dr. John Boopalan. John will take the students to a range of tables beyond the university walls where both the class and various hosts will encounter one another through the stunning number of biblical passages where Jesus taught his friends, disciples, and great crowds over a meal.

There's something about eating together that says that relationship matters to the quality of discussion and learning. Generous hosting of one another helps human creatures better understand where others are coming from. In eating together, we enable our shared stories, our laughter, and our tears to emerge alongside insights. Sharing food is a critical dimension to growing empathy, kindness, and care for one another as we embark on the critically urgent and strained questions of this time and indeed of any time.

There's something
about eating together
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complex matter, we would endow the conversation with measures of generosity and grace through shared food? Might it be then that strangers as much as friends would find

Now, setting the table literally is not possible or desirable for every class—it's good to have mealtimes without course work and it's not so good to eat all day long. Still, what if, in the face of every overwhelming, terrifying, destructive, life denying, or merely



ways forward within all sorts of sectors and strains of church and society, ways that transform this era's tendencies towards repelling polarisations? That's what the root change of radical dialogue rooted in generous hospitality means for CMU. Thanks for how you as friends and alumni of CMU teach and sustain that commitment, in the grace of God.

Peace and joy,
Cheryl Pauls
CMU President

Personnel changes at CMU



Lois Nickel retired from CMU as Director of Enrolment Services on February 3, after 12 years of leading CMU's admissions team and ensuring a healthy incoming class of new students each

fall. CMU is grateful for her sense of vocation, dogged commitment, and leadership in fostering relationships with diverse communities.

"You just give it everything, at least I did, because...you want to do your part to keep having students experience the transformation that CMU is. It was both a joy, a privilege, and a challenge to be part of that," she says, reflecting on her career.

"When you work at CMU, for a lot of people you become part of a community and you live and breathe that work—and that's a good thing! My teammates...were my work family."

Nickel is spending time figuring out where she wants to focus her energy next, but she's already enjoying long walks and bike rides. She's looking forward to spending more time growing her already impressive stack of books read.



Michelle Nguyen comes to CMU as the new Director of Enrolment Services, after eight years in the Admissions Department at The King's University in Edmonton, AB. There she served as Senior Admissions Officer and Admissions Information Coordinator. Nguyen also holds a Master of Education in Post-Secondary Studies and

brings a passion and commitment for strategic enrolment management and Christian higher education.

Dr. Alexander Sawatsky will join CMU as Professor and Chair of Social Work on September 1, 2023. Drawing upon his academic work, research, and curriculum development, he will play a significant role in the development and implementation of the new Bachelor of Social Work degree program at CMU. Sawatsky has worked at Booth University College since 2006, most recently as the college's school of social work director.



Dr. Gordon Zerbe retired as Professor of New Testament this spring, a role he began full-time in 1990 at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, one of CMU's predecessor colleges. "I'm extremely grateful for having had this chance to be at this place for that long. It's been very fulfilling and exciting," he says.

Zerbe taught primarily biblical and theological studies, but also courses in peace and conflict transformation studies, anthropology, history, and world religions. He also worked for six years in administration as Academic Dean and Vice-President, Academic. A career highlight was spending two terms as a visiting professor at Silliman University Divinity School in the Philippines.

"What has been interesting is doing things outside of my comfort zone, whether that's been subject matter or teaching overseas," Zerbe says. It makes sense, then, that his first adventure in retirement will be accepting an invitation to teach at Duta Wacana Christian University in Indonesia for six months, with his wife, Wendy Kroeker.



For **Dori Zerbe Cornelsen**, retirement means a new opportunity to grow.

"I look forward to engaging in a way where I can learn, listen, and grow in a different way than what I've done [before]," she says, speaking on the various community volunteer opportunities retirement offers her.

Zerbe Cornelsen joined the CMU team in 2017 as Director of Development, where she supported donor and constituency engagement initiatives and built stronger community connections, among many other tasks vital to CMU's heartbeat.

She says her retirement plan is to not have a plan. She says she's excited to relax, garden, go camping, and spend time with family.

"It's been an incredible privilege to work with people who express generosity," says Zerbe Cornelsen. "Our donors have committed to making CMU a place that is accessible to students, and I'm encouraged that they want to participate in a project that changes the world."

CMU to launch professionally aligned, socially impactful Bachelor of Social Work degree program

CMU is excited to announce the development of a new Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree program, set to launch in September 2024. The program is deeply aligned with CMU's mission and commitments to reconciliation in church and society, as well as Mennonite/Anabaptist traditions of service and community development, and will provide students with the skills and abilities needed to help facilitate the health and well-being of vulnerable persons and communities across Canada.

CMU's BSW program will be designed as a four-year program, with advanced entry in year two. Year one, which is already receiving students for September 2023, offers considerable choice to develop a diverse range of competencies in the arts, sciences, and social sciences. BSW-specific courses will be offered starting in September 2024.

This program promises to deliver professional work opportunities and to prepare students for graduate studies. Students will be equipped as creative, constructive, self-aware, critical thinkers, better problem-solvers, mature leaders, and more effective peace builders—making them a sought-after choice for employers.

"CMU educates the "whole person". Whole person work—understanding the importance of not just physical and mental dimensions but the spiritual as well—is central to social work practice. CMU will graduate social workers who get this and as a result will go on to make a huge contribution in the community."

An extensive BSW feasibility study included broad-based consultation with practicing social workers, social work educators, CMU alumni, current students, parents, and community leaders. There was remarkable and unanimous support in these conversations for CMU developing a distinct BSW program to meet the great and varied social needs of our communities. These consultations also underlined the need and opportunity for this program to reckon with the very real dynamics of systemic harms that both the field of social work and institutions more broadly, including Christian organizations, government, and educational institutions, have historically perpetuated as tools of colonialism.

Demand for another undergraduate social work program in Manitoba is strong, from both a student perspective and from

a job market perspective. Acceptance into existing provincial social work programs in the province is very competitive, resulting in hundreds of applicants turned away each year due to limited program capacities. Demand for BSW graduates for a range of entry-level roles in Manitoba is also strong, with job opportunities outnumbering qualified candidates. In addition, workforce demographic changes and an aging population indicate the need for qualified, credentialed social workers will remain strong into the future.

As CMU is a member of Universities Canada, students can be assured that the program will meet the highest regulatory requirements for work in a range of contexts across Canada. CMU has initiated the process of hiring faculty and an Indigenous advisor who will coordinate a program development council drawn from the community. These hires will ensure that the BSW program is inclusive and culturally responsive to diverse social needs in Winnipeg and Manitoba. Program development, including accreditation processes with the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) and Manitoba College of Social Workers (MCSW), will commence immediately once these roles are confirmed.

Uniquely among Canadian universities, CMU has been providing all students with work-integrated learning opportunities since its inception, offering students the chance to gain real world experience as part of their education. Through strong existing networks and capacities to build new partnerships, CMU is well positioned to provide quality placements that meet CASWE and MCSW requirements and ensure that students apply classroom academics to real world work environments.

Will you help CMU launch the new Bachelor of Social Work degree program? You will not only help offset new costs associated with the launch of this program, you will also be supporting research and development toward other new programs at CMU.

Give at cmu.ca/give



GENEROUS HOSPITALITY

RADICAL DIALOGUE



The word radish comes from the Latin word radix, meaning “root.”

What began as a word for a physical root became a metaphor. The root of a plant is considered its base, from which the rest of the plant grows. So when Western thinkers needed a word for a basis of thought or government, they reached for the Latin adjective radicalis, “of or having roots.”

Thus, radical dialogue, is dialogue that is rooted.

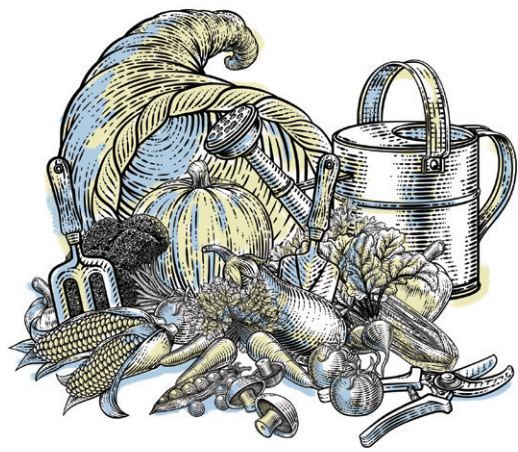
Radish

In 2021, CMU Dean of Student Life, Charlie Peronto, remarked, “To be generously hospitable is to welcome students from across the mental health and physical health spectrum. We make our education accessible, but we also make our education hospitable.”

CMU’s commitment to welcoming generous hospitality and radical dialogue becomes increasingly vital to our community. The first part of the commitment might cause some confusion, as the word “radical” when paired with “dialogue” conjures an image of protest signs and even marches with words shouted into a bullhorn. Where some of that does fit the statement, it is good to recall the roots of the word “radical” (see sidebar), and to realize that this refers to conversations that are grounded, or rooted, as those are the true origins of the word.

In this issue’s feature, we will explore both the generous hospitality and radical dialogue as experienced by alumni and CMU faculty. We will also introduce a new graduate-level spiritual care concentration that embodies this commitment. The hope is to expand on the meaning of this statement and inspire others to engage ...in a radical way.





*Hospitality comes from the roots *ghos-ti- "... the notion of someone whom one has reciprocal duties of hospitality. The word ghos-ti- was thus the central expression of the guest-host relationship, a mutual exchange relationship... a bond of trust between two people that created an obligation of mutual hospitality and friendship that, once established, could continue in perpetuity and be renewed years later by the same parties or their descendants.*

FINDING HEALING THROUGH GENEROUS HOSPITALITY AND RADICAL DIALOGUE

BY JESSE DOLLIMONT (CMU, 2017)

My time at CMU transformed my understanding of both generous hospitality and radical dialogue in so many ways, in both my personal and professional life. As both a certified music therapist and musician, sharing in music with others is most often at the heart of how I experience and participate in both of these things.

I recall the perplexed faces of the faculty who interviewed me for my audition into the music program—wondering what it was about an Anabaptist university

that appealed to someone with no existing connection to (or even frame of reference for) Mennonite faith, culture, or tradition. To be honest, I had absolutely no clue. Nothing but a feeling I followed—into an experience that truly provided the right place for me to learn, to build a beautiful foundation for my future, and to heal a number of wounds I carried from other experiences of relationship, faith, and fractured community. It was experiences of both generous hospitality and radical dialogue at CMU that facilitated this for me.



My experience as a music student at CMU was one rooted in not only challenging myself but in collaborating with others and truly celebrating the gift that music is. In classrooms, in choir, at kitchen tables, in practicums, and in practice rooms, I was called to move beyond efforts toward mastery to a deeper understanding of music as a connector and healer. This was a radical shift for me, and the dialogue around this experience with peers and professors alike changed me as a musician and shaped me as a music therapist. Experiences of music making at CMU were always rooted in expressions and experiences of community, which transformed my relationship with music in a radical way. It taught me to see beauty in every type of musical expression and that meaning is made in the process of music making—not just in the product. I was reminded of the importance of making music for the love of it, and for the love of others.

Even though I came to CMU from different spaces and experiences, I experienced warmth, support, and constant non-judgement that have continued to challenge me to practice generous hospitality whether on stage, in therapy sessions, or around my own kitchen table.

This experience as a music student created a safe container for the radical dialogue to follow as I became more immersed in my music therapy-specific training. When I think about it—the work of therapy is in its own way an experience of radical dialogue, expressions of self-guided by a desire for growth, change, and healing. We talk a lot about unconditional positive regard as essential to establishing therapeutic alliance. What the diverse academic portfolio of psychology, philosophy, and theology offered for me as part of my music therapy training were opportunities to truly practice this and to ask tough questions and explore different lenses through which to understand the human experience. My previous experiences with worship spaces and Christianity had been characterized by rigidity, judgment, and a lack of intra or interpersonal examination. The academic lens gave me opportunity to reflect on and process some of these experiences, and ongoing engagement in radical dialogue in these classrooms helped me conquer the fear of the unknown, of encountering trauma, and of perceived difference or otherness when entering therapeutic spaces or relationships.

Of course, this kind of learning never stops—and engagement in generous hospitality and radical dialogue requires ongoing practice and commitment. For me, the way I express and practice these things truly took shape in my time at CMU—and I remain so deeply grateful for that.

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY ADDS NEW CONCENTRATION IN SPIRITUAL CARE

Beginning this fall, the CMU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry will offer a new concentration in spiritual care. The program will prepare students for chaplaincy work and strengthen CMU's current MDiv and MA programs, which in continuity with CMU's mission statement, serve "to inspire and equip for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society."

Significant developments have culminated in the signing of agreements between CMU, Shared Health (Government of Manitoba), and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to make it possible for students to complete four units of Supervised Psychospiritual Education, generally referred to as Clinical Pastoral Education.

Across Canada, chaplains serve in hospitals, universities,

Christian high schools, long-term care, correctional, rehabilitation and military facilities, and to a lesser degree in corporate and private organizations.

The timing of this proposal has been influenced, in part, by external factors as public health in Manitoba is under considerable stress, which includes the area of spiritual care. CMU is positioned well to deliver this program given its central location in Winnipeg.

A distinguishing feature of the program is its breadth of disciplines and range of faculty expertise. The program builds on CMU's current strengths in theology, psychology, peacebuilding and collaborative development, and will compliment CMU's new Bachelor of Social Work.

SETTING THE TABLE

BY LEANN FRIESEN (CMBC '90)

My time spent at CMBC feels like a very long time ago, so long ago that since graduating, I have raised two children who also graduated from CMU. I have many fond memories of my time there, evident of the strong CMBC friendships that I still have today. I would not have foreseen it at the time, but these friendships and the classes that I mostly attended, were instrumental in helping shape the way I interact with others and the way I have approached my professional life. My work as a nurse has led me to the Middle East and to Winnipeg's inner city before taking me to work in the sexual assault program and finally the Headingly Correctional Centre. All corners of my career have demanded listening, dialogue and ultimately, a focus on creating relationships.

In 2000, my partner James and I, with our two children, embarked on a three-year MCC term to the Middle East. We started off in Gaza but because of the unrest there, we moved to Lebanon for the remaining two-and-a-half years. There we lived in a small Christian village in the Beqaa Valley. Part of my work there was traveling throughout the valley, providing medical care to people in their homes. Soon the neighbors knew who I was and whom I was visiting. It turned out that all of my scheduled visits were in Muslim homes, to which my local Christian friends frequently reminded me that I should rather be taking care of my own people.

After our term was up, a surprising yet meaningful encounter took place. As it was customary for the community to visit those who are leaving, we received many visitors in the last days before we left. By chance, our good neighbourhood friends, who were Christians, came to visit when the family of one of my Muslim clients was already over to say goodbye. I was very nervous about this interaction but in true Middle East politeness, the two parties started talking and seemed to be getting along fine. When my Muslim friends left, one of my Christian friends said to me,

"Those are really nice people." I realized then that just maybe we played a small part in breaking down a wall that day.

After returning to Canada, I worked for the next two decades as a community health nurse in Winnipeg's North End. At our clinic, patients would typically book appointments to see the doctor or drop in to see the nurse for different concerns. During the COVID pandemic, in-person appointments for healthcare became a lot more complicated so trying to get as many people as possible vaccinated in the community became quite a challenge. Some of our patients do not have access to a phone and usually we would wait for these folks to drop in to see us, but during the pandemic that was not an option. So, I decided to pack a bag full of vaccines and went to find those that couldn't come in themselves or didn't know about the vaccines. What I was not prepared for was how grateful many of these patients were that we made this kind of effort to meet them in the back corner of a basement, or when it meant going into a hotel that was in a deplorable state.

On the last day in my community health job, I insisted on following up with a client that hadn't reached out to us in several weeks. It was not uncommon for this client to regularly come to the clinic to read the paper and grab a cup of coffee.



All corners of my career have demanded listening, dialogue and ultimately, a focus on creating relationships.

He would often come into my office to chat, giving me little hints about how he was doing. I didn't feel right leaving the clinic without saying goodbye to him and knowing that he was okay, so I went to his last known address. I found my client on that last day—he would not be visiting the clinic again. At the funeral the family hugged me in thanks for the relationship and support the staff at our clinic offered for their family member.

CMBC was more than a home and a college. It taught me to invite those with less into my life, both in faraway countries and in my own city. It taught me to question and

examine priorities, societal norms, and different religious truths. It taught me that relationship is important, as is putting in the work to make relationships with others meaningful. I am grateful to CMBC for the opportunity to allow me to start asking the real questions, and to begin my own path of inviting people into dialogue even when it makes me uncomfortable. In the path that began at home but was nurtured at CMBC, I hope to keep challenging myself to live a life of generous hospitality wherever my life takes me, always setting the table for those around me and sitting at that table together.

AT THE TABLE: HOW FOOD-SHARING BRINGS PEACE AND RECONCILIATION TO CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

BY MYLES TIESSEN | CMU STAFF WRITER

With various histories, emotions, information, and communication habits that factor in, it goes without saying that conflict is dynamic and complex. But those various dynamics also dictate how we resolve conflict and, most importantly, the types of spaces where reconciliation takes place.

For Wendy Kroeker, Associate Professor of Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies at CMU, that space is the dinner table.



With the new course, Table Peacebuilding, ending its first session this past spring, Kroeker showed a group of eager CMU students how food-sharing signals vulnerability and trust and encourages commonality.

“If we entered into the space of the table, humanity has to be shown,” says Kroeker. According to the research, Kroeker says the intimacy created by sharing a meal builds trust, creates codependence, and improves communication.

With that in mind, the class would meet weekly to examine, confer, and debate various mechanisms of peacebuilding to search for different ways harmony can be achieved.

When I eat with someone, they become family.

They also ate a lot of food.

The different foods the class ate often reflected the material they were studying. When they discussed activism and organizing protests, the students ate chips and other snacks on the couches of the staffroom, emulating the living-room environment where Kroeker says grass-roots activists organize. When one guest came to share their harrowing story of surviving a residential school, Kroeker says the class ate Feast Café Bistro, a local restaurant that serves dishes rooted in traditional Indigenous food.

Kroeker invited eight guests throughout the semester to join the course and lead group discussions and says the profound conversations helped guide the course towards self-reflections on hospitality and hosting. She says, “I know my guests felt they were invited into important conversations.”

Terrance Chan, a student who took Table Peacebuilding, says that learning about the implications of hospitality has been a core theme since the first lesson.

Chan says a lesson highlighting the folk story of stone soup, in which a group of people each share a small amount of their food to make a meal that everyone can feast on, became even more impactful after the class literally took part in making the fabled soup (yes, stone included). He says this act helped demonstrate how sharing food invokes genuine concern for each other.

Chan says, “Sharing food—normally sitting around a table—creates a space, an opportunity, an experience, for people to form a sense of unity, a sense of ‘we’ and ‘togetherness.’”

Kroeker says transformative radical dialogue, even with food, doesn't come easy. She says we must earn our right to have that dialogue by putting something forward that shows our good intentions. “The radicality is not radical because of its antagonism but is radical because of its potential for depth of conversation.”

She says attention to space and, as in the case of the class, food, brings us closer to one another in previously inconceivable ways. Kroeker says, “When I eat with someone, they become family,” which was a common refrain heard in the course.

“I see this [approach to peacebuilding] as a tool that really holds potential for transformation.”



NEW INDIGENOUS OPERA IS A STORY OF GOOD MEDICINE

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE | CMU STAFF WRITER

This fall, Manitoba Opera will be performing the world premiere of *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North*, the first full-scale Indigenous-led opera presented on a Canadian mainstage. It celebrates Métis women, languages, music, and culture, with libretto written by Métis poet and scholar Dr. Suzanne Steele and music composed by Métis fiddler Alex Kusturok and CMU faculty Neil Weisensel.

Li Keur came to life through people gathering, time and again, around tables laden with food and conversation. “...Reconciliation comes through tremendous opportunity for us to enjoy one another's company slowly and steadily, through visit, respectful relationships, and of course what *Li Keur* is all about is the story...story is good medicine,” Steele shared in comments presented at the production's launch.

The opera is sung in Heritage-Michif, French-Michif, Anishinaabemowin, French, and English. Steele travelled 9,000 kilometres by car through the Métis homeland across Canada, hearing people's stories and researching. Weisensel, and students Bryna Link and Hannah Connelly, visited the opera's translators and recorded them speaking the text in their Indigenous languages. Hearing the cadence and pronunciation was integral to composing the music.

From the project's very first meeting with the Manitoba Métis Federation, to the singers and translators coming together for one-on-one study and a feast, it's been ultimately a project of relationships.

Steele and Weisensel sat around the kitchen table of Louis Riel's great-grandniece, Paulette Duguay, eating her galette, drinking coffee, and making music together. “She said something I'll never forget, when we started talking about the project,” said Weisensel, Assistant Teaching Professor of Music. “She said, ‘I actually think reconciliation might be possible, when you're telling me about this project.’”

The opera starts with a legend about the creation of the Métis people and weaves in the story of a young Métis woman learning about her great-great-grandmother's connection to Louis Riel. “I am trying, as all Indigenous women continue to, sew together our cultures, our webs of family, and from the sometimes ugly in this world, make something beautiful,” Steele said.

“Researching and composing this piece has changed how I

work, how I teach, and how I see the world,” Weisensel said. “It's been quite transformative that way, unlike anything else I've ever done.”

The project has permeated his life at CMU—influencing his work to increasingly decolonize and diversify his music theory instruction. He's incorporating work from IBPOC and female composers and looking at music from African countries and the Balinese tradition, to name a few. “I was never taught any of that when I went to school,” he said, explaining he only learned about dead, white composers.



Some of the *Li Keur* team celebrate at the Manitoba Opera's 2023/24 season launch. L-R: Translators Drs. Agathe Chartrand, Lorraine Coutu, June Bruce; composer Dr. Neil Weisensel; and fiddler/composer Alex Kusturok.

The opera also broadened his horizons in the actual process of creating. “I've never worked with another composer on a project,” said Weisensel, who worked on some of the music with Kusturok, who joined the team to write more Métis fiddle tunes. “You think composers always compose alone because that's the way it's always been. But to actually collaborate with somebody...was very refreshing, different, new, and fun,” Weisensel said. “I really learned a lot from [Kusturok].”

Seeing *Li Keur* approach its premiere, after seven years of working on it feels incredible, Weisensel said. The production will run November 18, 22, and 24 at the Centennial Concert Hall in Winnipeg. It features eight vocal soloists, a narrator, Michif choirs, fiddlers, dancers, and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Weisensel himself.

What's going on at CMU? And where's CMU going?

by Cheryl Pauls

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven...A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance. (Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 4, New Living Translation)

Each year the CMU graduating class selects a scripture passage to shape its convocation. I'm amazed and nourished by the wisdom to which each year's class bears witness, calling students forward beyond CMU and blessing the university in its ongoing entrustment. The passage of wisdom literature chosen by the 2023 class is, in every way, timely. These students have studied through a time of pandemic, a time of great care, and radical disruption. They're graduating at a time when church and society see the harsh toll this pandemic time has wrought, a time when people all over seek new eyes to see what is hopeful, trustworthy, and good. Thank you for praying for the 2023 graduates as their vocations continue to unfold, times when the precarity of what we call life is especially apparent and, so too, the abundance of God's grace.

...in our ongoing attention to work-integrated and experiential learning... CMU continues to be ahead on that curve.

And thanks for praying for CMU as the university seeks wisdom and renewal as we walk through this decade. The pandemic times have revealed a paradoxical condition of marked changes in enrolment trends. CMU student retention has increased to stunning dimensions, while incoming enrolment has become more challenging. You'd think it would be easy to just get out there and tell the story of student experiences—how students thrive at CMU...the good that happens through them as they leave—and that this would just catch on. Story-telling work is vital and goes on. Along the way, we see increased barriers to university studies than were common before 2020 and incoming enrolments (domestic and international) have fallen throughout the country. In this context, we need to engage the next generation in their quest for purpose, for hope, and for good change amid the strains and harms that threaten the well-being of many persons and creatures, for guardrails along their paths of life and livelihood. Such quests aren't new for CMU. They are central to the university's mission and expressed, for example, in our ongoing attention to

work-integrated and experiential learning within the broad frame of educating for vocation. CMU continues to be ahead on that curve. Precisely because we were so old-fashioned 25 years ago, we held onto service learning and reframed it as a practicum for every student. This dimension has contributed effectively to healthy career journeys for alumni. Such quests are expressed also in CMU's refusal to approach spiritual life as relegated to private spheres of society; the embodied witness to God's ongoing restoration and reconciliation of all things ever extends throughout all there is.

Yet, this vision and quest also need new forms of expression and of connecting with the hearts and imaginations of young adults today. This is a time to face the challenges of surrounding conditions that have changed in quick and perplexing ways, and a time to discern new possibilities. Here are a few forms of new program developments to date.

CMU has renewed its "curricular commons," the requirements that cross all undergraduate programs. CMU students tend to do very well with drawing links across areas of study. We've also seen a need to be more explicit with this from the outset of university studies. We've designed a first-year class called, Ways of Knowing. It draws on professors from diverse fields and focuses on what universities do best: to think together about real life problems from multiple viewpoints and to relate that thinking together to the students' journeys of program choices as much as life, faith, and career. The big question guiding Ways of Knowing in fall 2023 is, "What are people for?" It's personal, profound, and practical all at once.

CMU is opening a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program. This is big news for CMU and follows a significant feasibility study and discernment process. During 2023/24 we will develop practicum placement opportunities and design the program. By fall 2024 we will be delivering the program; however, since Social Work entry only happens in year two of university studies or later, CMU students of 2023/24 can already begin their studies towards this program.

Over the next few years CMU will also **discern regarding additional new academic programs.** We also are developing additional concentrations within existing degree programs; for example, Spiritual Care (chaplaincy) is a Master of Arts stream in our Graduate School of Theology and Ministry beginning fall 2023.



Where's the rub with new developments and further program renewal? In recent years our students have become well distributed across arts, humanities, biblical and theological studies, sciences, social sciences, business, etc. However, the larger proportion of faculty members are in the areas from which the university emerged from three colleges: Biblical and theological studies, music, and peace and development related areas (the latter areas across our two campuses within both CMU and University of Winnipeg degree programs). To foster a healthy balance of enrolments in all courses, the CMU Board of Governors decided to pursue two changes. The first was a voluntary early retirement program; most of the seven faculty members who responded to this program chose to spread out their total teaching load over the years until full retirement. As such, the number of courses offered going forward is well aligned with a healthy distribution of

enrolments in all areas. The second change involves moving our Menno Simons College offerings through University of Winnipeg to primarily an online format and to focus on the three-year Conflict Resolution Studies program; thus, all faculty offices will be on the Main Campus. These changes have come about in response to recent trends in student enrolment patterns.

We venture forth in the blessing of the CMU class of 2023. Attuned to times of grief and times of joy, I find these graduates refreshingly honest and courageously resilient. As they speak with excitement about next steps on their vocational journeys—not just short summer jobs but longer dreamed about opportunities—I take heart in the mission entrusted to CMU. Thank you for your part in calling CMU to *inspire and equip...in ever new ways...for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society.*



Monthly giving: cultivating generosity at CMU

By Reynold Friesen

At CMU, generosity makes everything we do possible. We know that every gift, no matter how big or small, makes a difference in the lives of our students and the communities they serve. That's why we invite you to join us in cultivating generosity at CMU through monthly giving.

Monthly giving is a convenient and manageable way to support the causes you care about. When you give monthly to CMU, you're not just making a financial transaction or monetary contribution—you're making a critical investment in the future of our students and the impact they will have in the world in which they serve.

Monthly supporters come from all walks of life and backgrounds, ranging in age from 25 to 90+. They live all across Canada and have various connections to CMU. Some are alumni, while others have been touched by the university's mission in other ways. But what unites them is a shared commitment to CMU's vision of equipping students for lives of services, leadership, and reconciliation. By giving

Monthly supporters come from all walks of life and backgrounds, ranging in age from 25 to 90+.

monthly, they ensure that CMU remains a vibrant learning community where students can explore their vocations and careers in the context of rigorous academics, practical skill

development, and meaningful relationships.

Monthly gifts start as low as \$5 or \$10 while some people commit to larger gifts broken into smaller monthly donations like \$500 or \$600. Regardless of the amount, every monthly donation helps offset tuition costs, funds academic programs, and supports CMU's mission and commitments to church and society.

Monthly supporters, like Gina Unger (CMBC '92) and Jeff McMillan, recognize the value of CMU as an institution worth investing in: "CMU is an organization we embrace and support! The careful thought that goes into the variety of courses, programs, and events offered through CMU is inspiring. The calibre of music and education is a gift not only for students but to the local community and beyond!"

So, if you're considering giving monthly, join us now in cultivating generosity at CMU. With just a few clicks on the CMU secure giving webpage at cmu.ca/give, you can start making a difference today. And if you have any questions or want to learn more about the different giving options, Reynold, Carol, and Hilda in the CMU Alumni and Donor Relations Office are always available to help.

Your generosity amplifies CMU's mission and empowers students to make a lasting impact in the world. Thank you for your support!

cmu.ca/give



Legacy giving

By Sandra Koop Harder

When we hear words like "legacy gift" or "philanthropy," many of us assume that these concepts don't apply to us. We may feel that we're not wealthy enough to make a transformational impact through giving.

However, at CMU, we know that ordinary individuals who care about their communities and want to make a difference do leave a meaningful legacy through their giving. Legacy giving isn't just for the super-rich.

A legacy is something that lasts beyond our lifetime and can take many forms. It may be our values, our faith, our commitments to family and friends, our charitable donations, or the qualities we most cherish. One specific way to create a legacy is by writing a will that distributes our

A legacy is something that lasts beyond our lifetime and can take many forms.

We are privileged to have a supportive network of generous donors who make our mission at CMU possible. We are deeply grateful to those who believe in the power of a faith-filled education to change the world and have chosen to include CMU in their wills. These gifts are pooled into a fund that generates interest and is drawn down over time, meaning that one legacy gift can impact the lives of generations of students.

accumulated assets after we pass away. This "Last Will and Testament" is an expression of our deepest beliefs and values.

John Regehr, a beloved faculty member of MBBC, one of

the predecessor colleges of CMU, is an exemplar of this type of giving. He chose to give generously to CMU during his lifetime and through his will. When his estate made a gift to CMU, his daughter Jenny wrote:

"Dad was grateful for the opportunity to give generously to CMU in his lifetime and also through his will. It was such an important part of his own life, and we as children completely supported his wish to support the next generation of students."

We are grateful for those who have shared with us how important CMU was to their loved ones.

We all leave a legacy, whether we realize it or not. What will yours be?

We invite you to consider including CMU in your estate planning to support future generations of students who will make a difference in the world.



For more information on how you may wish to plan a gift for the future, please contact development@cmu.ca or call 204.487.3300.



CMU Grad 2023

Graduates reflect on the generosity of community

By Myles Tiessen



Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) celebrated the accomplishments of 104 graduates as this year’s academic calendar came to a close with the convocation ceremony at Bethel Mennonite Church on April 29, 2023.

The graduates were honoured with the presentation of diplomas or certificates by CMU President Dr. Cheryl Pauls before a building full of family, friends, faculty, and staff.

“CMU is gifted by the unique range of people and communities who entrust themselves to learn together,” said Pauls in her opening remarks.

Each year, the graduating class decides on a Bible verse reflecting the wisdom and experiences of their time at CMU. This year’s verse was Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8. “For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven,” begins the passage.

Valedictorians Anna Schwartz (BA, Four-Year, Music) and Freda Tong (MA, Peacebuilding and Collaborative Development) each spoke on how their peers have guided,

supported, and helped them grow as individuals within a Christian community.

“Looking back on the last few years of our shared time here at CMU, I must admit it feels like just yesterday we were all nervously awaiting the start of our first opening convocation,” said Schwartz, reflecting on the theme of time in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. “We have had times to cry, laugh, grieve, and dance in our community in the past few years.”

Tong said, “As I look back at our time here at CMU, one word stands out above all others. That word is gift.” Reflecting on the generosity of CMU’s community, attentive instructors, and literal gifts of squash during one class, Tong said, “Thank you for sharing your passion, dreams, faith, and valuable experiences.” As graduates, Tong encouraged her peers to pass on the gift “to make the world a better and more peaceful place.”

César García, General Secretary for Mennonite World Conference, was honored with this year’s CMU PAX Award

As I look back at our time here at CMU, one word stands out above all others. That word is gift.

“Hope is the belief that if we work hard enough together, we can achieve things,” said Garcia. “Listen, take responsibility, be agents of hope, and build a new reality.”

Pauls also awarded this year’s President’s Medals to Anna Schwartz and Jubilee Dueck Thiessen (BA, Four-Year, English).

Earlier in the day, CMU held its With Gratitude service at the Loewen Athletic Centre. Seven students shared stories, talents, or reflections on their studies.

and provided the graduating class with the convocation address. He encouraged the graduates to imagine a new future for a broken world and work towards it.

Nicholas Pauls Harder (BA, Four-Year, Interdisciplinary, Public Policy)

Nicholas Pauls Harder spoke on his experience conducting a research assignment looking at income inequality and studying the stories of people affected by unjust economic systems. “Narratives are embedded in all that we do, in all that we make, and in all that we are,” said Pauls Harder. He thanked CMU for encouraging him to act justly and work towards what is good and what is responsible.

Kaitlyn Janzen (BA, Four-Year, History)

Kaitlyn Janzen reflected on the value of stories. She said that by studying history, she found a tangible way to read the “longest, most cohesive story” ever told. Janzen said of her time at CMU, “I have found my people, friends who truly care for me and help me be the best person I can.” Ending with, “Thank you for making my four years [at CMU] overflow with stories.”

Anne Kelm (BMus, Four-Year, Performance- Piano)

Anne Kelm performed a dynamic and emotive arrangement of Etude in D# Min, Op. 8 No. 12 by Alexander Scriabin. She introduced the piece by saying, "It represents a commitment to facing a challenge and overcoming it—not giving up."

Ana Tereza Dos Santos (BA, Four-Year, Psychology)

Ana Tereza Dos Santos spoke on her experience at CMU as an immigrant from Brazil. She mentioned that while searching for her identity in this new place, she discovered the intersection of spirituality and psychology. Conducting an independent research study through CMU, she found that most people feel a strong sense of well-being, meaning, and purpose when participating in spiritual acts. "Even if the path seems to be uncertain, I know that God will lead the way towards where I need to be."

Thalia Neufeld (BA, Four-Year, Mathematics)

Thalia Neufeld said that the CMU community gave her the confidence to grow and learn in new and exciting ways. Neufeld said in the math courses, "What we are learning is not only useful to us in class, but what we are learning allows us to grow in our understanding of everything around us and the possibilities of what the world holds."

Carrie Schulz (BA, Three-Year, Music)

Carrie Schulz sang a performance of "Times are Hard for Dreamers" from the musical Amélie. Accompanied by Anna Schwartz on piano, Schulz's joyful and uplifting performance reflected a university experience she said was challenging but ultimately provided undefinable rewards. "I love the message of relentless hope and optimism that [the song] portrays," said Schulz.

Qaisar Ahmed (MA, Peacebuilding and Collaborative Development)

Qaisar Ahmed spoke on how the devastating floods in his home country of Pakistan in 2022 motivated him to create a project that defined his time at CMU. With colleagues at a non-profit, he also raised over \$45,000 to build homes that provided shelter to those affected by the flood. "None of this would have been possible without the support of the CMU community, who stood behind me every step of the way," said Ahmed.

Hope is the belief that if we work hard enough together, we can achieve things.



Faculty in their own words: research and personal highlights

Recently, faculty reflected on time spent engaging with students and their research work. Here is a selection of their submissions, showcasing the wide range of accomplishments, discoveries, and experiences to be celebrated.



Delmar Epp, Associate Professor of Psychology

The opportunity to teach Positive Psychology for a second time, and to read the thoughtful personal reflections of students in that class was a highlight. Though the class occurred during very trying times, with stresses and challenges at every turn, it was

clear that students were actively finding “the good” in their daily experiences and sharing that good with others. I often saved my reading of their reports for times when I needed a little inspiration of my own.



Christine Longhurst, Assistant Professor of Music and Worship

I’ve been thrilled to see the continued (and growing) popularity of my re:Worship blog, a centralized hub for worship-leading resources on the web. The pandemic made the desire for easy access to these resources even greater, as evidenced by the number

of views (now over 40,000,000). Even more exciting are the numerous pastors and worship leaders who submit their own prayers and liturgical resources to the blog, making it a truly collaborative effort.



Candice Viddal, Associate Professor of Chemistry and Physics

I began a new research project on the protein GSAM (key chlorophyll-synthesis enzyme that is a good candidate to be targeted for use as a green herbicide). GSAM has two gating loops, one on each active site, that open and

close perfectly out of phase with each other. The specific investigation is into the specific gating loop motion and the energetic cost of its motion. Knowledge of these properties will be useful for herbicide development.

Paul Doerksen Associate Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies

I was granted a half sabbatical that lasted from January 2022 to the end of June 2022. I spent three months of that time in Edinburgh, where I took up a Visiting Fellow spot at New College, the Divinity School of the University of Edinburgh, where I continued to work on a project on Christian patience, as well as developing a new course (What is a Human?). The Visiting Fellow position provided opportunity to attend numerous lectures (eg. Gifford Lectures), to be in conversation with a number of scholars from New College, visit various churches and significant historical sites, and spend a week along with Julie (my wife) participating in a retreat with the Iona Community on the beautiful Isle of Iona. Our time in Edinburgh was rich and rewarding; I’m grateful for CMU, and how it supports sabbaticals.



Lee-Anne Dowsett, Assistant Professor of Music Therapy

It was a highlight to see the success of our music therapy students—several of our students won competitive internship placements, selected over other graduate-level applicants. Also, a recent grad landed a sought-after music therapy position in Winnipeg.

It is very rewarding to see the hard work we have put into the music therapy program is paying off for our graduates.

Neil Weisensel, Adjunct Professor of Music

CMU student composers and arrangers were given the opportunity to hear their works in a reading session while I conducted the Mennonite Community Orchestra. This was a powerful learning experience for these students, as the sounds produced by a typical computer music notation program leave much to be desired. To hear the timbre, expression, and range of live instruments is an invaluable learning opportunity for students. As a direct outcome of this reading session, two student composers’ works were identified as performance-ready and were performed in fall 2022 with the Mennonite Community Orchestra and the Winnipeg Pops Orchestra.



National exhibition showcases resilience of Southeast Asian refugees

By Myles Tiessen

There are currently over 103 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This statistic highlights the pressing need for more solutions, including resettlement programs for refugees. Dr. Stephanie Stobbe, Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution Studies with CMU’s Menno Simons College program, has made it her mission to bring attention to the plight of refugees and address the refugee crisis by sharing their stories of resilience and bravery.

Stobbe’s latest project is the Hearts of Freedom: Stories of Southeast Asian Refugees Travelling Exhibition, which launched in February 2023 and will run until December 2024. This travelling museum exhibition aims to show the real people behind the statistics, showcasing the stories of Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees who came to Canada between 1975 and 1985. The exhibition is an expansion of a larger research project, which includes a film documentary, book, website, and school curriculum. By adding the museum exhibition and QR codes to connect it to the digital exhibition on the website, the research can reach a wider audience across Canada and around the world.

The exhibition started at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau/Ottawa in February 2023 and visit The Pacific Canada Heritage Centre – Museum of Migration in Vancouver, the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax and the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg. Other venues will be announced in the future.

Stobbe hopes to showcase the challenges faced by Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees while also highlighting the Canadian political and social breakthroughs that endorsed such a monumental resettlement movement. Canada was even recognized by the UNHCR with the Nansen Refugee Award in 1986 for its role in assisting refugees.

Stobbe is thrilled to share these stories because they are not only essential to Canadian history but globally. The Southeast Asian (Indochinese) Refugee Movement was the largest refugee resettlement movement to Canada since the post-WW2 emptying of displaced person camps in Europe. It was also the first mass refugee movement that resettled visible minority populations.

“This was a mass movement, and a large group of people was resettled in Canada, and they have been highly successful.” Stobbe says many have been able to gain consistent employment, grow families, and now as a community, help others who are going through similar experiences, including sponsoring and raising money for Ukrainian refugees this year. Those who came as children and second generations now occupy many professional jobs, including entrepreneurs, medical doctors, and the High Commissioner of Canada.

Stobbe also emphasizes the crucial role that Mennonites played during this period of history. “Mennonite Central Committee Canada actually signed the first master agreement with the federal government to privately sponsor refugees. Soon after that, different organizations and churches began to sign similar agreements.” The Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program still exists to this day and has become a model for other countries.

More information about the exhibition can be found at heartsoffreedom.org.



People and Events



CMU welcomed acclaimed author, professor Francis Su as Scientist in Residence

"How can mathematics connect to our deepest human longings, such as for beauty and for truth? What can we do to move towards making STEM spaces more just, where the dignity of each human being is valued?" These are some of the questions Professor Francis Su explored as CMU's Scientist in Residence on February 2–3, 2023.



"I'm excited to be spending time with the CMU community, whose core commitments to peace and justice and hospitality match my own, as natural and necessary consequences of one's faith," Su said.

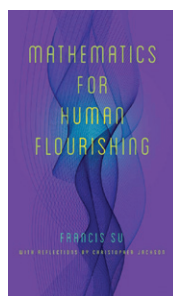
Su is the Benediktsson-Karwa Professor of Mathematics at Harvey Mudd College in California. He has a PhD from Harvard University and is former president of the Mathematical Association of America.

His book *Mathematics for Human Flourishing* (2020) won the 2021 Euler Book Prize. It offers an inclusive vision of what math is, who it's for, and why anyone should learn it.

"Dr. Su's book is a beautiful argument that math is about beauty and justice. It's how I've been trying to inspire students in my own classes over the years," said Tim Rogalsky, CMU Associate Professor of Mathematics.

Su spoke at a student forum on equity, diversity, and inclusion in mathematics and sciences; he gave a public lecture about mathematics for human flourishing; and he shared in chapel about the spirituality of mathematics. The events were

recorded and are available to watch online at cmu.ca/sir. "I'm thrilled we are welcoming Dr. Francis Su into the CMU community as the very first IBPOC Scientist in Residence," said Katrina Lengsavath, third-year student and co-leader of the Science Students' Association. Su is also the first mathematician to participate in the residency.



Friesen lectures reveal Mennonite contributions to Dutch society in 16th, 17th centuries

Professor Gary K. Waite challenged centuries-old stereotypes of Mennonites at the John and Margaret Friesen Lectures at CMU on March 9, 2023.

He gave two lectures addressing, "The Neglected Role of Dutch Mennonite Innovators in the Scientific Revolution and Early Enlightenment." He spoke about the contributions of Mennonites to Dutch society in the 16th and 17th centuries, a time when Mennonites were prosperous. They contributed to technological advancement, such as windmill technology and submarine engineering, and philosophical thought, like promoting religious toleration and forming ideas that laid the groundwork for notable philosophers like Descartes and Spinoza.

Waite examined "Dutch Mennonites, not just as recipients or passive participants in society or as separated from society, but rather as active agents in it," said Paul Doerksen, CMU Associate Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies.

Waite is Professor Emeritus in the Department of History at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. He has written numerous books, including his most well-known, *Eradicating the Devil's Minions: Anabaptists and Witches in Reformation Europe* (2009).

Doerksen said the Dutch Mennonite story offers a lot for people to consider, even today. "I think there are some interesting things to learn, not only about the opportunities that come to us when involved in those areas of society, but also the cautions." It's a question that's always relevant: "Is this a faithful way to be in the society in which we find ourselves?"

The events were recorded and are available to watch online at cmu.ca/friesenlectures. The lectures are co-sponsored by CMU, the Mennonite Heritage Centre, and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies.

Retreat hosts students exploring futures in ministry

In the midst of CMU's winter semester, 15 students and several faculty and staff members gathered at Camp Assiniboia near Headingley, MB for the ministry inquiry retreat. Amidst times of worship, prayer, and individual silent reflection, students had the chance to hear from each other and from experienced pastors and leaders in ministry. They ate together, spent time outside at the camp, and closed the weekend by sharing communion.



"It had a brightness and joyfulness that was especially noticeable this year," said Andrew Dyck, Assistant Professor of Christian Spirituality and Pastoral Ministry. He organized the retreat on January 27–28, which hosted a higher number of students than recent years, with Sunder John Boopalan, Assistant Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies.

"I think my prayer would be that students would find freedom in serving Jesus in the way they're wired, with whatever abilities and interests they have," Dyck said, emphasizing that's different than saying everyone should become pastors.

The students came from a myriad of backgrounds—some in their early 20s and others in their 50s, studying music and psychology or already working in churches, ranging from Anglican to Mennonite to Baptist.

"I actually found it was the most profound experience and easily the most spiritual conference I've ever been to," said Janice Gibson, a mature student in her final year of a Bachelor of Arts in social sciences with a counselling focus.

Gibson feels called to ministry, but has faced many obstacles, having spent decades in what she labels as an oppressive and misogynistic church context. Reflecting on the retreat, Gibson becomes emotional. "To feel accepted by a community of believers, and that they believed in me to invite me. . . I felt so positive, so powerful, and so valued by the Holy Spirit," she says. "Not that I know now what my calling is supposed to look like. . . but just that energy to take a step, find out."

Polarization: Get over it! Stories that lead the way

Polarization—let's just get over it! It's easier said than done, but if CMU's recent Face2Face taught us anything, it's that building trust, taking responsibility, and honouring human dignity are all good places to start.

The event, titled "Polarization: Get Over It! Stories that lead the way," took place on February 27 in Marpeck Commons and featured a panel of provincial MLAs and policy analysts exploring their unique experiences with polarization. Each panelist had time to share stories on overcoming polarization, how identity plays into crossing the divide, and how they are searching to solve this complicated issue.



The panel featured Hon. Kelvin Goertzen MLA (Progressive Conservative), Dougald Lamont MLA (Liberal), Jamie Moses MLA (NDP) and Jaymie Menzies, Policy Analyst (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs) and Athletics Coach (CMU).

Dr. Jodi Dueck-Read, Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution Studies at Menno Simons College,

a program of CMU, was the events' host. She opened by saying, "Our society has come to accept polarization as the way we relate. We would like to anchor our orientation tonight toward hope and a possibility of relating across differences."

With the panelists from across the political spectrum representing various ideologies and lived experiences, the conversations, questions, and answers were undoubtedly compelling.

Menzies mentioned how overcoming polarization is an often messy and uncomfortable process. "I'm encouraged by this space because we can approach differences in a critical way and have it be hopeful," she said.

When Goertzen asked Moses about his experience as a black man in the provincial legislature, Moses responded, saying that the building's security detail stopped him every day asking for his identification until his third year as an MLA.

"For me, this was a sign that the people who are running this building, who are set to control this area and this space, were not prepared for someone like me to work here as an MLA," said Moses.

The thought-provoking event caused attendees and panelists to consider tangible ways to build relationships, work through differences, and reconcile with one another.

The Kay and Lorne Dick Teaching Excellence Awards

In 2021 a generous gift was made to CMU from the Estate of Kay and Lorne Dick to celebrate and honour excellence in teaching, part of which is earmarked for the awarding of two annual "Teaching Excellence" Awards.

Successful candidates are chosen using the following criteria:

1. Fosters constructive connections with students in the classroom
2. Mentors students and colleagues
3. Generates an attitude of mutuality, with openness to learning alongside students
4. Challenges students, supporting student growth, insight, and discovery
5. Shows passion for the material and is excited about student learning
6. Demonstrates commitment to innovation, flexibility, and willingness to grow and change as a teacher

7. Contributes to learning in our communities
8. Embodies the identity of "Teacher-Scholar," "Teacher-Artist," or "Teacher-Change Agent"

This award honours outstanding teaching, recognizing faculty members who are models in the profession via their dedication to learning and its connection to the flourishing of our communities. The winners will have demonstrated a passion for supporting student growth, insight, and discovery, and a commitment to growth and ongoing development as teachers.

Award recipients receive a course release the following year and a cash prize of \$1,500.

Candice Viddal and Jodi Dueck-Read received the award at this year's With Gratitude service. In 2022, it was awarded to David Balzer and Karen Ridd.



Dignifying Story Angles: The Ethics of Representation Dilemma

How do agencies choose their stories and camera angles in light of a commitment to dignify

everyone involved?

CMU's Canadian School of Peacebuilding will host a professional development event for communicators and journalists on June 14, featuring Monika Maria Kalcscics. Kalcscics is a journalist with more than 20 years of experience in public service media, print, TV, and film as a reporter, producer, and commissioning editor of award-winning documentaries and reports. Currently employed by the science, education, and society department at Austria 1, the national information radio channel of ORF (Austrian Public Broadcasting Corporation), she is also an emergency aid worker with several aid missions under her belt.

Kalcscics' combined career as a journalist and emergency aid worker has allowed her to understand the challenges we face when confronted with a humanitarian disaster and the need to report it. She was granted a fellowship at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University to research the relationship between aid organizations and the media in a "competitive compassion market".

For more information and to register for the workshop, visit cmu.ca/storyangles.

Alumni News



Richard Janzen (CMBC '86), Rosthern, SK, received the 2022 PRO MUSICA AWARD from the Saskatchewan Choral Federation in recognition of exemplary service to choral music in Saskatchewan. Richard recently retired from teaching music and performing arts at Rosthern Junior College. He continues to bring local church choirs together for Christmas and Easter programs and recently prepared a newly-formed choir, North Sky Chorale, for a concert this spring.



Michelle Stoesz (Warren, CMBC '93), Winnipeg, MB, is the Associate Pastor of Children, Youth, and Young Adult Ministries at Steinbach Mennonite Church. Prior to starting at the congregation in August 2022, she worked in daycare as a childhood educator for 26 years. Over half of those years were in a Christian setting, where she walked with children and parents on their faith journeys. Michelle enjoys volunteering at church, reading, and making greeting cards to bless people's lives.

Rowan Woodmass (formerly Rebecca, CMU '09), Montreal, QC, works in the equine industry, training in horse/human trauma recovery with EQUUSOMA®. They graduated from the McGill University Schulich School of Music in 2013 with a Master of Music and Artist Diploma in Opera Performance, and they sing professionally in the choirs of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the Church of St. Andrew & St. Paul. They also consult on and advocate for 2SLGBTQIA+ rights within institutional systems. Rowan came out as non-binary, started using



they/them pronouns, and published their poetry chapbook, *Tiny World*, in 2018. They live with their partner, Ariadne MacGillivray, in Montreal.



Zach Peters (CMU '10), Winnipeg, MB, recently changed jobs. After working for almost eight years for the Winnipeg Jets + True North Sports +

Entertainment, Zach transitioned in December 2022 to become the new Communications and Marketing Manager at The Forks. As a born and raised Winnipegger, Zach takes pride in promoting the city's "meeting place." Zach oversees all media and external relations for The Forks North Portage Partnership.

Madeleine Wichert (CMU '17), Winnipeg, MB, is teaching early years at Beaver Creek Academy, an independent nature-based school in Winnipeg's Charleswood neighbourhood. The school is forest school-inspired, using a combination of structured and unstructured play-based learning methods and strategies tailored to each child's learning style and interests. Madeleine graduated from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto, ON with a Master of Teaching, focusing on social justice and eco-justice education. She began teaching at Beaver Creek Academy in September 2022.



Ben Shantz (CMU '17), Kitchener, ON, is a Senior Business Advisor in the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade for the Province of Ontario. He supports Ontario businesses as they navigate funding programs, pursue opportunities to create jobs, export to new markets, and innovate and grow their operations. Shantz completed a Master of

Economic Development and Innovation at the University of Waterloo in 2020. He also completed The Real Estate Salesperson Program through Humber College and works evenings and weekends as a licensed Realtor® with Trillium West Real Estate Brokerage, serving the Kitchener-Waterloo region and surrounding areas. Ben chose to pursue both jobs because of his passions for business, housing, and community; he plans to give back to the communities he serves by donating \$500 to local charity on behalf of anyone who buys or sells a house with him.



Hadiya Huijer (CMU '21), Carp, ON, is a full-time research assistant with the University of Alberta's Translating Research in Elder Care program. She graduated in October 2022 with a Master of Science in Aging and Health from Queen's University in Kingston, ON, for which she conducted a project looking at social isolation and social media use in older adults. Hadiya began working on research projects with the University of Saskatchewan's BetterLTC (long-term care) program during her studies and continues to do that work at present. Pending confirmation, she will soon be published as first author of a paper examining contributing factors to recurrent falls in older adults living in Saskatoon during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Norlan Page (CMU '21), Winnipeg, MB, was recently named Chair of Global Access, English Language Programming for Academic Advancement in the School of Education, Arts & Sciences at Red River College (RRC) Polytech. He has worked at RRC Polytech since 2010 as a Student Integration Coordinator, International Student Support Coordinator, and Program Manager. Norlan earned a Master of Business Administration with a focus on Leadership for the Common Good at CMU. Prior to working at RRC Polytech, Norlan taught English for 10 years in Canada, China, and South Korea.



Marriages

Tegan Willick (OT '13, CMU '19) and **April Klassen** (OT '13, CMU '18), Winnipeg, MB, July 31, 2022

Mitchell DeFehr (CMU '21) and Lauren DeFehr (Zarrillo), Winnipeg, MB, August 6, 2022

Simon Dueck (CMU '16) and Clare Martens, Boissevain, MB, September 24, 2022

Rachel MacEwan (CMU '15) and Caleb Jonker, Toronto, ON, October 8, 2022

Natalie Johnson (OT '15, CMU '19) and Jared Button, Winnipeg, MB, October 8, 2022

Births and Adoptions

Jesse Epp-Fransen (CMU '07) and Christina Warner, Toronto, ON, a child, Mary Autumn Katherine Warner, October 1, 2022



Alyssa Berger (Lord, OT '12, CMU '18) and Jordan Berger, Winnipeg, MB, a daughter, Elizabeth Rose Berger, October 3, 2022



Katie Klassen (Reeves, CMU 2016–18) and Ben Klassen, Winnipeg, MB, a son, Josiah Walter Klassen, October 12, 2022



Mae Wincott (OT '06, CMU '10) and **Mike Neufeldt** (CMU 2007–09), Winnipeg, MB, a son, Arlo Kofi Neufeldt Wincott, October 15, 2022



Lynette Ens (CMU '16) and **Matthew Peters** (CMU 2013–15), Winnipeg, MB, a daughter, Norah Katherine Peters Ens, October 23, 2022



Kathleen Stoesz (Bergen, CMU '16) and Justin Stoesz, Edmonton, AB, a son, Arlo Bergen Stoesz, November 19, 2022



Lacey Friesen (Siemens, CMU '19) and **Jason Friesen** (CMU '18), Winnipeg, MB, a son, Emerson Jase Friesen, January 22, 2023



Julia Neufeldt (Epp, CMU '15) and **Brett Neufeldt**, Saskatoon, SK, a daughter, Emerson Erica Neufeldt, February 9, 2023



Samantha Fehr (Klassen, CMU '19) and Tyson Fehr, Altona, MB, a son, Brooks Mackenzie Fehr, February 12, 2023



Josh Ewert (CMU '12, CMU staff) and Rhema Ewert, Winnipeg, MB, a daughter, Lily Aksah Ewert, February 24, 2023

Erika Dueck (Krahn, OT '03) and Gordon Dueck, St. Pierre-Jolys, MB, a daughter, Kira Beth Amara Dueck, April 3, 2023



Passages

Yaroslav Schur (CMBC '75), Winnipeg, MB, October 4, 2022

Robert Enns (CMBC '73), Calgary, AB, October 10, 2022

Victor Janzen (CMBC '55), Steinbach, MB, October 24, 2022

Ed Klassen (MBBC '68), Abbotsford, BC, October 28, 2022

Robert J. Neufeld (MBBC '86), Winnipeg, MB, November 1, 2022

Lorlie Barkman (MBBC '90), Winkler, MB, November 11, 2022

Martin Penner (MBBC 1963–64), New Hazelton, BC, November 12, 2022

Louise Mulcaster (Driedger, CMBC '59), Leamington, ON, November 22, 2022

Elfrieda Budarick (Wiebe, MBBC '63), St. Catharines, ON, November 28, 2022

Kenneth Braun (CMBC 1960–66), Altona, MB, November 28, 2022

John P. Friesen (CMBC '53), Winnipeg, MB, November 29, 2022

John Kroeker (CMBC '57), Kelowna, BC, December 3, 2022

Colin Clay (CMU '12), Steinbach, MB, December 9, 2022

Jacob Pauls (CMBC '66), Winnipeg, MB, December 31, 2022

Victor Klippenstein (CMBC '50), Swift Current, SK, January 3, 2023

Miriam Jantzen (MBBC 1950–55), Saskatoon, SK, January 13, 2023

Erna Froese (Heinrichs, CMBC '55), St. Catharines, ON, January 15, 2023

John Lenzmann (MBBC '51), Abbotsford, BC, January 17, 2023

Peter H. Janzen (MBBC '72), Winnipeg, MB, January 21, 2023

Esther Wiebe (Hiebert, CMBC '50), Winnipeg, MB, January 26, 2023

Laurel Klassen (CMBC '76), Niverville, MB, February 12, 2023

Carl Epp (CMBC 1959–60), Winnipeg, MB, March 6, 2023

Shirley Neufeld (Sawatsky, CMBC 1961–62), Virgil, ON, April 2, 2023

Alumni are invited to submit recent news—marriage, job change, addition of a child, award, promotion, graduate school, retirement, and so on—to the **Alumni Relations Office. Mail to 500 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2, email to alumni@cmu.ca.** Please model your information after the current listings above, beginning with name, graduation year, city, and province or state.

Alumnus reflects on the heart of generosity

By Myles Tiessen

“I have always been a storyteller,” says Ben Borne over a Zoom call from his home in Saskatoon, SK. “And what I’m really good at is bringing people together.”

Since graduating from CMU with a Bachelor of Arts in 2013, Borne’s various endeavors and accomplishments—which are innumerable, but include podcast host and founding his own public relations firm—all share that similar theme: storytelling.

Conversations with Borne hold as much hearty laughter as they do deep introspective thought. While describing his work, there is a clear intention behind his actions, and it’s evident he strives to find new and electrifying ways to connect with the people he works with.

Aside from working as a sessional lecturer at the First Nations University of Canada or serving as a managing partner for Eagle Feather News, Borne’s pride and joy has been Symmetry PR. As the founder, president, and chief operating officer, Borne’s energy and passion for sharing ideas, meeting new people, and learning from one another are unequivocal.

Started three years ago with his friend and business partner Melody Lynch, Symmetry PR is a communications and public relations firm that works to strengthen communities, primarily through supporting and engaging with Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses.

... relationships, community, and intentionality are the most valuable lessons from CMU that he still carries with him.

“At the heart of generosity, and at the heart of dialogue is communication and relationship building,” says Borne, reflecting on the coupling of public relations professionals as storytellers. “When we work with clients, we push them to be hospitable and to welcome difference audiences ... We ask organizations to ‘set the table’ and have a discussion with the public.”

Borne says that Symmetry PR tries to do everything socially responsibly. The company’s website states, “more engaged, responsible, and connected communities working together to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.” As a member of Yellow Quill First Nation, Borne’s work demonstrates his desire to engage and support his communities by bringing folks together to advance reconciliation and increase trust between settlers and Indigenous peoples.



Borne says that an emphasis on meaningful dialogue ought to be the standard for an industry dominated by detached metrics. “When I think about marketing, it’s very focused on audiences—using passive and low interactive media formats. Public relations is very highly interactive. It’s where you’re going out and asking about public opinion, asking how organizations can align with public need,” says Borne. “I think it’s kind of radical in some sense—we are asking these organizations to enter into a relationship with the public.”

Borne graduated from CMU with a major in Biblical and Theological Studies with a heart set on pastoral ministry. As he became increasingly drawn to the world of communication, Borne says his skills transferred far more smoothly than expected. “It’s still writing, storytelling, constructing a narrative, and calling people to action. The core tenants of preaching are still the same when it comes to communication,” says Borne.

After 10 years in the workforce, Borne says the importance of relationships, community, and intentionality are the most valuable lessons from CMU that he still carries with him. “I’m really proud of the times that I’ve had at CMU.”

Between profiles like this in *The Blazer* and hiring a CMU student as a paid intern at Symmetry PR, Borne still likes to keep in contact with the university. He says connections with people and places in our lives are more important than we might think; “it’s part of the way we work together to make the world a better place.”

For more alumni stories, visit CMU’s Community & Alumni Blog at cmu.ca/alumniblog.

CMU CALENDAR

June 13	Public Lecture Going Local with International Crises: The Storytelling Dilemma with Monika Maria Kalcsics
June 14	CMU Golf Classic
June 14	Professional Development Event Dignifying Story Angles: The Ethics of Representation Dilemma
June 22	Alumni Open Gym Night
July 17 – August 25	Blazers Sports Camps
August 25	Application deadline for fall term
September 6	First day of classes
September 23	Fall at CMU

For more information on upcoming CMU events please visit: cmu.ca/events



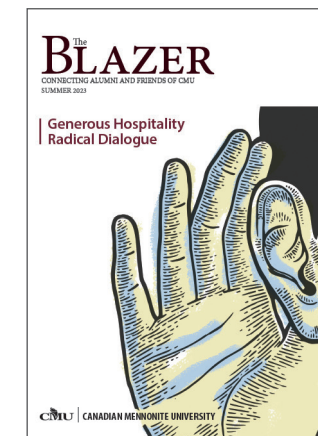
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