



Dear friend of **renew**,

Since ancient times, God's people have acknowledged their anxieties, and turned to God with hope.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you disquieted within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my help and my God (Psalm 42:11).

Today, God continues filling Jesus' followers with joy and peace so that they "overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13b). The theme for the 2024 **renew** conference for pastors and church leaders will be "Leading with Hope in Anxious Times."

These are disquieting times. Society and the church seem unable to adequately right wrongs of the past. This can leave us—pastors, church leaders, and congregations—with a vague sense of guilt over our sins of commission and omission against Indigenous peoples, the planet, our neighbours, each other, and God.

We are also disquieted by apprehension that we won't adequately address problems ahead of us. We lack answers to questions like these: Will congregations survive? How should pastors be formed? What about the polarizations among and around us? Will churches be drowned by tides of secularism? How can we share the gospel without being colonizers?

In response to these anxieties, church leaders can withdraw or work harder, issue platitudes or overpromise success. But these responses do not serve Christ or offer hope to the church and the world.

Instead, we learn hope-filled responses when we probe the sources of our anxieties, and allow ourselves to be re-formed by the biblical witnesses to the God of hope. Because God is faithful, patient, joyful, and forgiving, we can respond to the disquiet of our age with hope instead of anxiety.

Mark February 5-6 on your calendar for **renew** 2024, which will help pastors and church leaders lead with hope in these anxious times. The conference will provide theological thinking about what the scriptures show about God's ways of hope. As well, the conference will invite leaders of diverse Christian ministries to tell how they address complex issues with hopeful reliance on God, instead of with drivenness fuelled by guilt and fear. Worship, theological reflection, storytelling, and fellowship will also be part of **renew** 2024.

In the coming months, stay tuned for more details about **renew** 2024 in your email inbox and at <https://www.cmu.ca/community/resources/renew>. If you have topics or speakers to recommend to the planning committee, contact Andrew Dyck, at [adyck@cmu.ca](mailto:adyck@cmu.ca).

May God strengthen all of us for nonanxious ministries of hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Dyck".

Andrew Dyck

Assistant professor of Christian spirituality and pastoral ministry