



Signs of the Spirit

Canadian Forces Protestant Chapel Guild

October 2009

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of the Protestant Chapel Guild newsletter, "*Signs of the Spirit*"! This newsletter is intended to be a forum for sharing, celebrating, supporting, and encouraging one another. It is also hoped that the newsletter will be a vehicle for spreading God's word and sharing information about our Guild to the military communities we live in and our broader communities as well. You are encouraged to distribute this newsletter by email and hard copy as widely as you are able.

Good News from our Guilds

Send us your Guild's good news, big or small and you will encourage others. Perhaps you have already implemented some of the ideas discussed at April's Conference. Other Guilds would love to hear about this.

Trenton Guild's Creative 'Problem' Solving

In the Trenton Guild a number of members are away throughout the year, making it difficult for them to commit to an executive position.

During a brainstorming session at this year's conference we thought of an 'outside-the-box' solution. Why not have two members share one executive position? When we arrived home from conference we discussed this with all the members of the Guild and everyone agreed that shared jobs would work well for our group.

So, for 2009/10 Gay Gray and I (Nancy Larkin) are sharing the role of president; Judith Hill and Bev Ferguson are sharing the role of secretary. We look at this as a God given opportunity for sharing our faith walk together.



The Trenton Guild

Submitted by Nancy Larkin, Co-President

Great idea Trenton! Thank you for sharing it with us.

Excitement in Edmonton!



September is an exciting time with the start up of all the church programs after a summer hiatus. We are looking forward to a productive, fun-filled year in our guild. There have been several new Padres come to our chapel this year and most of the wives are joining the guild. A couple of the things we are doing that have us excited are our 14th annual retreat the first weekend of October and providing lunch & coffee one morning for the Chaplain's conference being held here the end of October. Our sisters in the CWL will be joining us for that. What a wonderful opportunity for service

and to meet the chaplains from across the country.

We will be working very hard this year to incorporate the themes from the past two year's National Conferences of Building up our Guild and Fanning the Flame. God's blessing to all of our sister guilds.

Submitted by Marty Paris, President

Sounds like Edmonton is in for a great year!

Go Gagetown!

Gagetown's Guild has started the new year with a "kick", having already been part of the Fall Expo on base on Saturday September 12 to promote their group as well as their "delicious apple pies"! They have already added two new members to their Guild this year.



Submitted by Sylvie Jobin, President

From Our Chaplain Advisor – Padre Bonnie Mason

“I tell you the truth, where ever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” Mark 14:9

Greg Mortenson, the US humanitarian who has become renowned for building more than fifty-five schools, especially for girls in the most forbidding terrain in Pakistan and Afghanistan – birth place of the Taliban - had this to say in an interview in *Pride* magazine; “If we try to resolve terrorism with military might and nothing else then we will be no safer than we were before 9/11. If we truly want a legacy of peace for our children, we need to understand that this is a war that will ultimately be won with books, not with bombs.” In a *New York Times* Bestseller, “Three Cups of Tea” Mortenson explains why he has focused on the education of girls; “Once you educate the boys, they tend to leave the villages and go search for work in the cities... but the girls stay home, become leaders in the community, and pass on what they've learned. If you really want to change the culture, to empower women, improve basic hygiene and health care, and fight high rates of infant mortality, the answer is to educate girls.”



For centuries unnamed women around the world have been influencing and teaching communities of people what healthful and loving relationships are to look like and how it is to be reflected in the

larger context of society. If Greg Mortenson is right then terrorism too will be eliminated with the education of thousands of unnamed women inhabiting the over run Taliban land.

There are unnamed women throughout history and the scriptures that, in their strengths and vulnerabilities have changed the course of how we understand and experience God's grace through Jesus Christ. Some of the more significant gospel characters include: the Samaritan woman at the well who was being treated as a social outcast therefore forced to draw water from the well in the noon day heat; the Greek born Syrian Phoenician woman who begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter; and the woman who could not stop haemorrhaging – a symbolic figure for any of us who have physical or emotional ailments that will not go away try as we might.

In the gospel passage of Mark 14:1-9 we have the anointing of Jesus by an unnamed woman. This particular passage does not say anything of who this woman is, but what we do know is that where



ever the gospel is preached throughout the world what she has done will be told in memory of her. Some scholars believe she is Mary, the sister of Lazarus, others feel she is the prostitute that Jesus saved from being stoned. What is amazing about this account of the anointing is that it doesn't matter who she is because she represents all the unnamed women throughout the world who have been touched by the grace of God and respond in love.

In its purest form, the anointing of Jesus at Bethany is simply about love – abundant, uninhibited, unashamed love. This unnamed woman breaks all the social taboos of her time and anoints Jesus head with expensive perfume. Her overt and extravagant act of love that she poured on Jesus is so incredible because she demonstrated in her action how much she loved and trusted Jesus. She trusted that he would recognize immediately the gift that she was bestowing on him and could therefore face the ridicule she would receive from his disciples. Her faith and love for Jesus was so strong that she

was unafraid of the intimacy of their relationship. She could do this, because God first loved her. She could do this because at some point in her life story she had an encounter with Jesus the Christ which gave her the wisdom, the strength, the courage and the love to face all ridicule, open an expensive bottle of perfume and anoint her Saviour.

The Rev. Dr. Ellen M. Sloan writes: "We, too, are part of the great multitude of unnamed women like those in the Bible who live and grow and struggle...through the help of God's grace. We are the unnamed women of the present and future who seek Christ, who search for deeper connections with our God and with one another, and who reach out and grasp God's grace to heal us. For God's grace eases the struggle."

There is no monetary value that we can put on the gift of love – love in its truest form is unfathomable, abundant and extravagant. All that Jesus seeks in return is that we love him back, entering into a relationship with him as deep and as intimate and with as much faith and trust in Him as this unnamed woman showed in anointing Jesus.



Prayer Focus

"We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers." 1 Thessalonians 1:2

Later in this same chapter Paul reminds all Christians to pray continually. I'm sure we would all agree, with Paul, that praying for one another is extremely important,

but it can be difficult to pray for people when we don't really know what their needs are. In order to encourage and facilitate mutual prayer support, each issue of our Guild Newsletter will have a prayer focus on one or two Guilds. In this way Guilds will have the opportunity to share, with other Guilds across the country, their particular blessings and their particular challenges. At our Guild meetings, then, we will be able to pray in an informed manner for the Guild(s) featured that month.

This month we would encourage you to pray for our Guilds as they prepare for and celebrate Guild Sunday in various Chapels across the country. Pray for courage and the leading of the Holy Spirit for those Guild members who will be taking part and that the service will be a blessing and an encouragement to both those who participate and to the various congregations. Pray also for our National Executive as they prepare for their October meeting (Oct 16-18), where among other business, the 2010 conference will be planned. Pray for guidance, insight and openness to God's leading.

A Prayer Request from the Protestant Chaplain at RMC.

"This week, I have been helping a young cadet through a difficult time. He is as young as our youngest daughter and his circumstances are made more trying because he is far away from his family. There are about 300 first year cadets like him: bright, energetic, committed men and women and very young. I would like to ask our Guilds to support these young men and women by praying for them. Pray for courage and determination and that God will guide them. Today they are young people, far from home and family, but tomorrow they will be our leaders."

Submitted by Padre Patrick Lublink



You are encouraged to submit your Guild's information to be included in future Prayer Focus articles.

Devotional Corner

After a wonderful visit, complete with cake and a present, mum says to her seven year old son, "Come on, Jimmy, say thank you to Aunt Josephine!" Jimmy rolls his eyes and says, "Thank you Aunty Josephine." I'm sure you have all experienced a scenario something like this. Why do we *make* children say thank you? Shouldn't thankfulness come from the heart? As we approach Thanksgiving Day, this year, this is a question worth considering.

Thankfulness should come from the heart, it's true, but like so many other things, saying thank you is also a learned behavior. When we tell little 'Jimmy' to say thank you to Aunt Josephine, we are teaching him to make thanksgiving a habit. Soon he will remember to say thank you without being told and after that, he will find he is saying thank you, because he actually *feels* thankful. The same is true for us. As we begin to say thank you more often, as it becomes a habit, we actually begin to feel more thankful. We begin to recognize how much cause we have to be thankful. It's like the old song: "Count your blessings, name them one by one and it will surprise you what the Lord has done."



As we celebrate Thanksgiving this year, let's teach ourselves to be more thankful, simply by saying thank you more often. Thank God for His goodness, for His provision of food and shelter, for His many blessings. Even when times are really tough, we still have reason to thank God, because we can thank Him for His unchanging love, His grace and for His gift of salvation and eternal life. Try counting your blessings this Thanksgiving and be happily surprised by just how much the Lord has done for you.



Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" I Thessalonians 5:18

Submitted by Valerie Lublink

Conference Echoes

Are you still fanning the flame? In the previous *Signs of the Spirit* we included the ideas you suggested during this year's conference, regarding how to PRAY FREQUENTLY and STUDY SCRIPTURE DILIGENTLY, the first two of our seven faith practices.

This month we'll look at the third: WORSHIP REGULARLY. Here's what you wrote, starting with the most frequent suggestions. Try some of these ideas in your Guild or Chapel worship times! These are great ways to fan the flame.

A large, stylized flame graphic with a brown outline and a gradient of orange and yellow colors. The flame is composed of several pointed shapes, giving it a dynamic, flickering appearance. Inside the flame, the following text is written in a black, serif font:

Go to church.
Pray every night.
Join the choir.
Play in the church band.
Listen to Christian music.
Attend church even when
you don't feel like it. Share combined
worship services with other churches.
Worship anytime, anywhere. Be part of a
worship community. Prepare your attitude for
worship. Express your love for God. Sing hymns and
praise songs. Celebrate with music, clapping, singing
etc. Include worship at any type of meeting. Have
music prior to devotions. Ask the congregation for
favourite hymns. Speak often of God's Word.
Give freely of your time for worship. Lead
praise and worship. Teach Sunday School
or youth.

A Sense of Thanksgiving

Richard McCullen, in his book "From Deep Down Things" (New York, 1995) tells how a group of young nuns in Latin America asked him if he had any advice for them. After considering the many options that came to his mind, he said to them; "Cultivate, my dear Sisters, a sense of thanksgiving."

A *sense of thanksgiving* – thoughts of turkey, pilgrims gathering crops, corn, cranberries, and pumpkin pie?

A *sense of thanksgiving* – memories of family gatherings, football games, too much turkey, naps after dinner, and a long weekend?

A *sense of thanksgiving* – a harvest festival (according to Wikipedia)
.....or as one source suggests:

T for time to be together, turkey, talk, and tangy weather.
H for harvest stored away, home, and hearth, and holiday.
A for autumn's frosty art, and abundance in the heart.
N for neighbours, and October, nice things, new things to remember.
K for kitchen, kettles' croon, kith and kin expected soon.
S for sizzles, sights, and sounds, and something special that abounds.?

While these are all lovely things – should they be the framework for our *sense of thanksgiving*? For us as Christians a *sense of thanksgiving* should be this and so much more. We are meant to consciously cultivate thanksgiving, not one day a year, but every day, for everything, for all things, great and small. It is a relatively easy task to be thankful on Thanksgiving Day – after all, who doesn't love all those things mentioned above – including too much turkey! It's a very different task to consciously cultivate thanksgiving every day, for everything, for all things, great and small. This means being thankful when the going gets tough, when life presents us with problems and struggles, disappointments and grief. This means remembering to share our bounty with those less fortunate every day, not just on Thanksgiving Day when we are taking time to notice our bounty. I have always been amazed that our society actually created a week for "Acts of Random Kindness" – the ultimate oxymoron. How sad that we need to create such a week to remind people to be kind to each other all the time.

If we cultivate a *sense of thanksgiving*, we will be people of joy. And that joy will generate energy and enthusiasm.

In Budapest, a man goes to the rabbi and complains, "Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. What can I do?" The rabbi answers, "Take your goat into the room with you." The man is incredulous, but the rabbi insists. "Do as I say and come back in a week." A week later the man comes back looking more distraught than before. "We cannot stand it," he tells the rabbi. "The goat is filthy." The rabbi then tells him, "Go home and let the goat out. And come back in a week." A radiant man returns to the rabbi a week later, exclaiming, "Life is beautiful. We enjoy every minute of it now that there's no goat -- only the nine of us."

At Conference this year I shared with the delegates some thoughts about An Attitude of Gratitude. These thoughts are included here now – as gratitude and thankfulness are synonymous.

An Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude is simply an attitude. The one thing we can always choose each day, in any situation, is our attitude. Therefore, we always have the ability to choose an attitude of gratitude.

Every day that begins with a thank you creates an attitude of gratitude – creates a day of hopeful receptivity. Gratitude is a choice to be thankful and count life’s blessings rather than to dwell on troubles and hardships.

Your life is better when you feel blessed, when you can look around and say “Thank you, God.” When you see life as a wonderful gift, your experience is a richer one. Imagine going through life like you’re a child and every morning is Christmas.



Of course, it is easy to think that gratitude comes from having what we want. We might imagine ourselves giving thanks if we had money, a loving family, and maybe a house on the beach. But we know there are ungrateful, unhappy people with these things. We also know that there are poor people full of gratitude for what little they have, so where does this feeling come from?

An attitude of gratitude arises from how you look at things. It is the natural feeling that comes when you recognize the real value of the people and things in your life. Focus on the good and you cannot help but have a better attitude and experience of life.



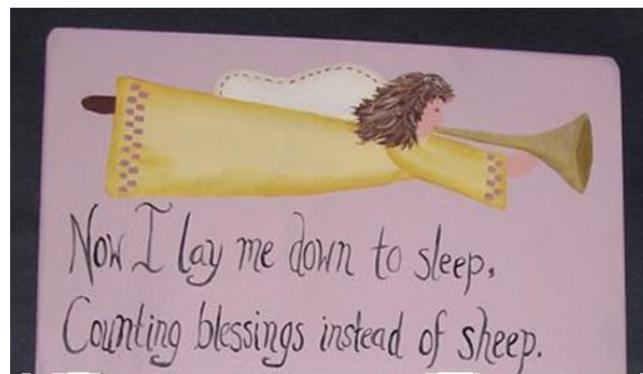
Gratitude, then, is something you can encourage, something you can learn. The first step is to stop and smell the roses. How can you be thankful for something you don’t notice or enjoy?

The second step is to make this appreciative approach to roses and life a habit. You don’t need to ignore the ugliness in the world. Just consciously choose to see the good and beautiful things, until doing so becomes automatic.

Contentment has nothing to do with what’s going on in our lives – and everything to do with what’s going on in our minds. The apostle Paul understood this when he said, “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or want”. (Phil. 4:12)

One way to encourage an attitude of gratitude is to start writing down every positive thing that happens to you – and all the things you like. Continue this until you start automatically seeing the good things in life. If you’ve ever bought a white car, and started seeing white cars all over, you know how awareness and focus can alter your perception of reality. In the same way, once you are aware of the good, and start looking for it, you’ll start to see wonderful things all over.

Simple exercises like that can train your mind over time. When you are in the habit of “counting your blessings” – gratitude, and a much richer experience of life is the natural result. You will have an attitude of gratitude. Taking the time, each night, to think about the things for which you feel grateful is extremely beneficial. You are reminding yourself about what is good, and ending your day on a positive note. This positive attitude seems to carry over from one day to the next. Over time, you may notice that you feel happier, in general – that you feel down or depressed less often.



You may observe a sense of calm within yourself. You may realize that “little annoyances” that would have disturbed you in the past, no longer bother you. The more you practice, the more you will notice, throughout the day, so many things for which you feel grateful.

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more.”

Melodie Beatty

Let us pray.....Gracious God – it is so easy to fall into the rut of approaching life in a cool and indifferent manner - of viewing life in a less than positive way. Instead of being grateful for those things that enrich our lives – we spend far too much of life mired in negative navel gazing. Forgive us for being so blind and ungrateful Lord.

Help us rather to stop and smell the roses – to focus on counting rather than discounting our many blessings. Help us to be as conscious of the many good things that are going on in our lives and our world that build us up and make us feel good about ourselves, as those things that make us feel badly and have the capacity to diminish us.

We need an attitude of gratitude Lord. Open our eyes and our hearts to those things that really matter in our lives. Help us to discipline ourselves to start our days focused on the many good things in our lives and to hold fast to this positive disposition throughout the day.

Help us to be truly grateful Lord in all that we say and do. We ask all this in the name of He who personified an attitude of gratitude – even Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Submitted by Karen Kettle, Past President

A Reminder – Membership Dues Were Due Last Month



If you haven't already submitted your Guild membership dues, please do this as soon as possible.

Conference 2010

Mark your calendars!! Conference 2010 will be held at Galilee Centre, Arnprior, Ontario starting the evening of Wednesday, April 21, 2010 and concluding the morning of Sunday, April 25, 2010.

Your National Executive is hard at work planning for this conference and look forward to sharing the plans with you in a few months time!



The evaluations from Conference 2009 were very positive and the executive will be incorporating some of your ideas and building on our past successes.



Wouldn't it be wonderful to see every Guild represented in 2010? You are encouraged to start planning now to make this a reality!

Contact Us

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Deadline for submissions for November edition, October 20th

Your questions, comments, and concerns are always welcome and encouraged.