

# LIFE TOGETHER



St. Jacobs Mennonite Church

[www.sjmc.on.ca](http://www.sjmc.on.ca)

Winter 2024

## Pastor's Pen

### Don Penner

I try to begin my day with a 40 minute walk, getting out the door sometime between 6:15 – 6:45 am. I go the same route each time so I don't have to think about it. It's my time to be alone with my thoughts, "talking" them out with God, sharing whatever comes to mind. Trying to minimize distractions, I don't even take the dog on account of all his frequent stops to sniff and mark lampposts (not that he would want to go anyway - he's not an early riser 😊).

Because my walk fits a certain regular window of time, I tend to meet the same people over the course of the week – about a dozen in total. Some are walking their dog. Some are going to their bus stop for work or school. Some are jogging. One goes to Tims first thing for a coffee. We (this dozen) usually wave to each other and/or say "good morning."

As you know, in winter, it's pretty dark out, hard to see faces, read moods. Sometimes I'm in a mood. I say "Good Morning" but don't really feel it. I may have had a restless night, a perplexing dream, or just carrying something that has me doubting my being loved/appreciated. Honestly, sometimes I just want to be left alone – feeling all peopled out.

One person I meet/see every couple of weeks tends to make for an awkward moment. A few years ago (before COVID), Tim (not his real name) used to pause and want to chat with me. He's a person who has no filter, and would tell me bluntly what he thinks about God, government, and climate change. He often speaks in "I'm-right-everybody-else-is-wrong" language.

In these brief 30-second "visits," I would just listen, nod, and try to leave him feeling heard. I'll admit I'm keen to get back to my walk, but in my defense, he rarely has seemed interested in hearing a different opinion, so, might as well move on.

When we moved to our home 22 years ago, we were at first cautious around Tim, unsure of his behavior. Over time, we learned from him that he had some brain

damage due to abusing alcohol earlier in life. In his late 40s, he lives with his parents, and is on disability support.

There have been stretches where Tim didn't stop to talk, or wave, but would actually cross the street to the other sidewalk when he saw me coming. (It's hard to know what all is going on there – is it about me, or something else?).

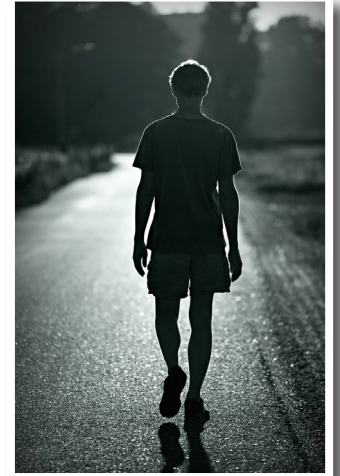
When COVID hit, and people started giving wide berths around oncoming walkers, Tim was offended. Did it feel like most of his life people had been doing that – putting extra space in between on account of him being different? When I see him, I say a prayer asking God's blessing on him. But sometimes it feels like I don't really mean it. What's that about?

In the past year, I've crossed paths 3-4 times with a woman walking her small dog by the neighborhood Catholic elementary school. Let me say here that I'm really conscious in the morning darkness about how my size and gender might be perceived by another. I don't want to make anyone feel unsafe, so, I typically veer off the sidewalk on to the edge of the street. If the dog is big, I may even cross over to the other side so the dog doesn't lunge and throw the owner off balance.

Each time we've "met," this person has surprised me. She beams a bright smile and makes some positive comment about the day, and then wishes me a blessing! She doesn't observe the "don't-talk-to-strangers-especially-in-the-dark" rule!!

Her greeting takes me aback each time. Her kindness leaves me to wonder if she might actually be an angel sent in human form to nudge me out of a frequent focus on life's wrongs and worries. How is it that she shines so brightly with hope and joy? Does she see God present and active even in winter's darkness?

Another regular I meet on my walk is Sabrina (not her real name). She always greets me with a warm hello and



...continued on Page 3

# Writers & Contributors



Don Penner



Chip Bender



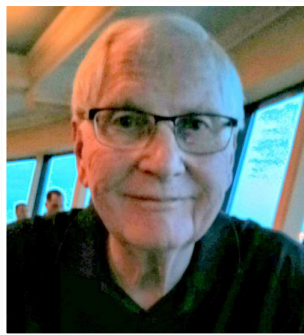
Ashlinn O'Marra



Peter Carter



Linda Kruger



Nelson Scheifele

## Editorial

As we look back, Ashlinn and Peter reflect on the Baroque and Beyond concert held at church in November. Nelson writes about the impactful drama done by Theatre of the Beat last November. I hope you enjoy the look back at 2023 in the crossword puzzle this issue. Linda updates us on our past and future support of the Benin Bible Institute Faculty fund. Chip helps us to get to know recent new member, Chris. Don shares his thoughts in the Pastor's Pen.

Sometimes trying to fill 12 pages of this newsletter can be a bit daunting. I usually start soon after the last issue is published with a blank slate. For this reason, I share a piece of writing of mine called *The Blank Page: Friend or Foe*. It's really not that bad creating an issue of LT and with all the writers willing to add their gifts to these pages, it usually comes together fairly quickly. If you have writings that you would be willing to share with your faith community, please send them to me. Why not take the blank page challenge and create something you want to share.

I love being part of our faith community and look forward to more Life Together in the upcoming year! Each new year is sort of like a blank page too. As always, if you have ideas or contributions to this newsletter, let me know.

2024, what do you have in store?

Blessings, *Brent*



Brent Horst • Editor

## Thank You!

- Article and Picture Contributors
- St. Jacobs Printery
- Pauline Martin - Distribution

[www.sjmc.on.ca](http://www.sjmc.on.ca)  
[lifetogether@sjmc.on.ca](mailto:lifetogether@sjmc.on.ca)

"how are you, Don?" Her two large dogs (we're talking a Newfoundlander and something akin to a St. Bernard) are very protective. They always offer a warning bark, looking at me like I deliver the mail.

Sabrina has told me that she works at Grand River Hospital in the cancer center, working with patients that require radiation. She loves her job, but she says it's hard. "Sometimes you are treating people who are losing the battle. It's saying goodbye to them, at their last session, that's toughest."

Such compassion and kindness! I told Sabrina she is such a gift to everyone who comes in feeling anxious. She reflects this same light and joy the previous person I spoke of did, this hope and certainty that God is here, even and especially in life's dark moments.

There's one more person I'll mention, an older gentleman that I meet about halfway into my walk. He looks exactly like the actor who played Santa Claus in the 1994 movie "Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street." I've also wondered if he could be an angel.

Long before I see his face, I can recognize it's him by the way he walks, so straight and upright, with confidence and certainty. He usually gets his spirited "Good morning!" out before I do. We never say more to each other – but so much is conveyed.

What strengthens his back, and at his age (mid to late 70s?)? Is he reflecting to me his confidence in the power of God that raised Christ from the dead? That maybe raised him too?

My conclusion is this: "God knows what I need to start my day."

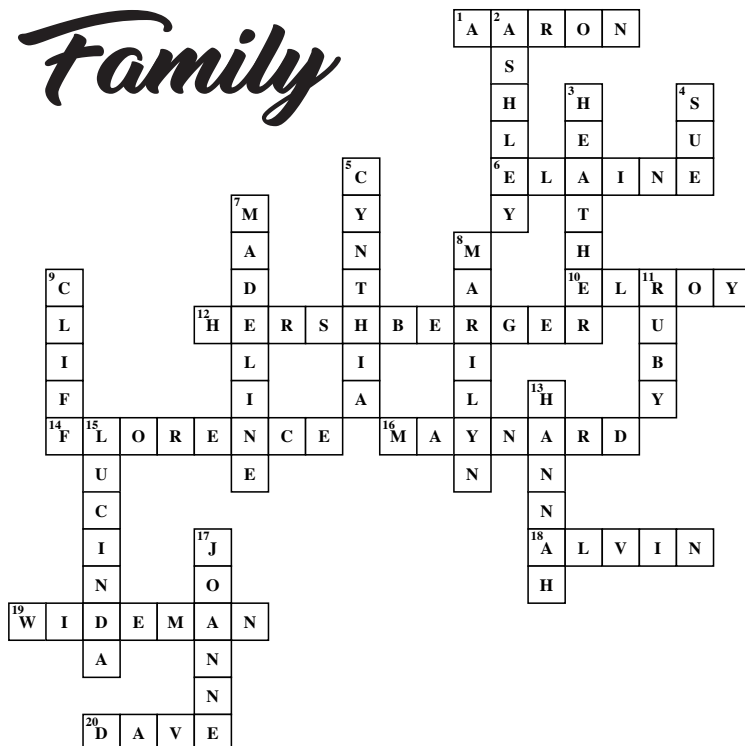
Let me start with confessing that I need someone like Tim who reminds me to be honest about the hard things – things that likely won't get fixed in our lifetime. In all his imperfection and brokenness, Tim still wants to be seen, valued, **as is**. Can I do that for him? Can I also believe God still sees me and values me **as is**?

It touches me deep in the heart that the Holy Spirit also knows I need a few friendly faces and words of kindness in the morning. I need assurance that God is actually here now, present and at work, moving mountains, warming souls, even and especially in the cold and dark of winter.

Dear friends, may God continue to break in upon us with experiences that touch our hurts and contribute to our healing. Breathe over us, Lord, the breath of Your deep love. Thank You, Creator, for all the ways You invite us to be real before You. Thank You for each Tim and Sabrina, for angels and humans who meet us on our journey. All things can indeed work together for good to those who call on Your name. AMEN.

# Wideman CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

## Family



### Across

- [1] Patriarch of the family
- [6] Full sister of Elroy
- [10] Eldest son of Aaron and Lucinda
- [12] Surname of Elaine and Alvin
- [14] Mother of Cliff, Maynard, Stewart and Marilyn
- [16] Late son of Aaron and Florence
- [18] Spouse of Elaine
- [19] Last name of Crossword family
- [20] Spouse of Heather

### Down

- [2] Youngest daughter of Mark and Cynthia
- [3] Niece of Elaine
- [4] Spouse of the late Maynard
- [5] Eldest daughter of Elaine and Alvin
- [7] Eldest daughter of Dave and Heather
- [8] Youngest daughter of Aaron and Florence
- [9] Full brother of Maynard and Marilyn
- [11] Spouse of Elroy with a jewel of a name
- [13] Youngest daughter of Dave and Heather
- [15] Mother of Elroy, Elaine and 3 other children
- [17] The late spouse of Cliff



# Life & Times

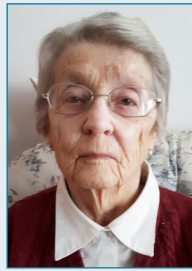


**Cheryl Anne Cassidy-Frey, 84**

*Retired from MTD order desk (outdoor products)*

Maiden Name: Cassidy

Childhood Home: Walkerton, Ontario  
Present Home: St. Jacobs



**Mary Martin, 89**

*Now retired. Worked as waitress at Stone Crock and volunteered at Elmira Thrift. Make bags for MCC*

Maiden Name: Metzger

Childhood Home: Farm on Hessen Strasse  
Present Home: St. Jacobs



**Jim (James) Carr, 80**

*Retired from 20 years as Maintenance Supervisor at House of Friendship, still barbering at home*

Childhood Home: Sarnia, Ontario  
Present Home: The Meadows, St. Jacobs

## Some of my favourite smells, sounds, tastes:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baking</li> <li>• Piano music • Guitar</li> <li>• Children's giggles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh cut hay • Softly falling rain</li> <li>• Strawberries • Gravy beef • Vanilla Pie</li> <li>• Harmony Lunch burgers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haven't been able to smell for years</li> <li>• The rumble of an old car</li> <li>• Hamburger Casserole</li> <li>• Lemon Pie</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

## Some things you may not know about me:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High scorer on High School basketball team</li> <li>• Bell Operator when people asked by name, not number</li> <li>• Bank Teller</li> <li>• Canadian coach of the ladies fastball team asked me to join</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Had twin brothers</li> <li>• Did service with MDS in Kentucky after a tornado</li> <li>• Helped husband with chicken BBQ at Relief Sale for 40+ years</li> <li>• Picked strawberries and sold them for 25 cents a quart</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Went drag racing in Grand Bend</li> <li>• Been a barber for almost 60 years</li> <li>• Volunteer Fireman for 37 years</li> <li>• I have a 1966 Chevlele</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

## Personality traits others would say I have:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Humour • Upbeat • Inquisitive</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet • Helpful • Caring • Hard Woker</li> <li>• Reliable • Loyal to friends and family</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative • Perfectionist • Helpful • Generous</li> <li>• Motivated • Energetic</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

## My interests include:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Painting</li> <li>• Anything artistic</li> <li>• Word games</li> <li>• Reading</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy fall colours</li> <li>• Like working in my flowerbeds</li> <li>• Wordfind puzzles • Reading</li> <li>• Listening to Gospel music</li> <li>• Keeping in touch with extended family</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traveling</li> <li>• Rangers Hockey</li> <li>• Spending time with our grandchildren</li> <li>• Coffee at Tim's</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

## Some favourite lifetime memories:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming at the headgates</li> <li>• Ice skating</li> <li>• Sledding</li> <li>• Watching my mom sew my PJs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I got married and had children</li> <li>• Watching sun rise and set</li> <li>• Trip to the Holy Land</li> <li>• Camping with family and friends</li> <li>• Growing up on the farm; driving tractor and a team of horses</li> <li>• Trip to Jamaica</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going on a 6-week trip out west with friends</li> <li>• Special birthday trips with my son</li> <li>• Traveling to Newfoundland with my son and daughter for my 80th</li> <li>• Going to England in 2023 to watch grandson play for Canada in World Ultimate Frisbee Championship</li> <li>• Married to Carolyn for 57 years</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

## Where I like to play or ponder:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the dock at Lake Temagami</li> <li>• Shore of Lake Huron at Inverhuron</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sitting on the deck at cottage</li> <li>• At my kitchen table • In my Lazyboy chair</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sitting on a Muskoka chair by the lake</li> <li>• Sitting around a campfire</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

## Some items on my "Bucket List":

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See statues in Italy and art in France</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay Healthy</li> <li>• Watch great-grandchildren grow up</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay healthy enough to be able to keep traveling</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

# The Blank Page: Friend or Foe?

## Brent Horst

The blank page stares back at me, begging me for my ink. Sometimes it feels impatient, frustrated and even a bit like a bully! “Come on, write something, anything. I’m waiting here” it taunts. It can appear to be a large barren expanse that will never be filled with anything new, anything meaningful, anything at all. Sometimes words are placed on the blank page only to be deleted forever. Select all – Delete. Then the blank page appears once again, now even blanker! Oh, the angst of a writer.

I am a writer. I won’t say author because so much of my writing remains unpublished, away from prying eyes of others. I am a writer because that’s how I best express myself. Eventually my thoughts do appear on the blank page and as they flow, my mind clears and things become less jumbled and confused for me. For me. Most of my writing is for me. It’s just me and the blank page.

So, the blank page is also a friend. A friend that greets me without judgement, even if a little impatient at times! A friend that allows me to say what’s on my mind and what’s in my heart. A friend that understands my writing is a process that needs to happen, even if the page gets thrown away, erased or burned. It still served a purpose for me, and it is often so very helpful. Others can just “talk it out” but I prefer to write, at least initially.

For some reason, I often meet my friend the blank page at five in the morning. Especially when my thoughts wake me up early and echo in my head so loudly that sleep evades me. Eventually I get up and greet the dawn with a blank

page. Hello friend. At those times the words usually flow quickly and tumble almost involuntarily onto the page. Sometimes when I dump my thoughts onto the page, I am done, and I never return to it. Having written down the words, my mind quiets and at times I even go back to bed for some much-needed sleep. Other times this raw writing gets a second, third or more looks, edits, and additions. Actually, often deletions as I find a more concise way to express my thoughts more clearly. This results in something that not only helps me to understand myself and grow as a person, but also something that I am proud of and at times willing to share with others. Writing is a very personal action for me. It takes a lot of courage to expose my writing to the world, but occasionally it feels like the right thing to do.

If my writing relates to an event, person, or a recent discussion, often sharing it with the one or more people involved is adequate. It allows me to better explain where

my thoughts and feelings have taken me, and I can test those opinions with others I care about and respect.

Yes, the blank page can be intimidating and challenging but I see the blank page as more friend than foe. Most times I am eager to meet it, fill it and share it as seems appropriate. When completed, the blank page (or two or fifty) has transformed into a thought, a speech, a story or even a book. The blank page is like a blank canvas to a painter, a bag of various materials to a quilter, or a pile of lumber to a woodworker.

Thank you, blank page for what you do for me. See you tomorrow or another day, likely at five! If your creative juices wake you at five too, send me a text or email!





# Getting to Know...



## Chip Bender

On a cold winter night in January, Wendy and I had the privilege of hosting Chris Kloestra for a delicious fried chicken dinner. Although Chris and I had engaged in another in-depth conversation in the lead up to him becoming a member at SJMC, this conversation was more autobiographical in nature, as opposed to theological. Some of what is included here is information Chris has conveyed beyond our dinner conversation.

Chris's father is a first-generation Canadian of Dutch descent, whose parents immigrated to Canada shortly before he was born post World War II. Chris's mother grew up in the New Dundee area and is the descendent of a number of different families who immigrated to Ontario in the 18th and 19th century, one of which was the Bretz family who had German Mennonite heritage and who moved from Pennsylvania in the early 1800's.

Chris is the oldest of three children in his family, with whom he moved to several places across Ontario due to his father's employment as a pastor in different congregations. By the time he was in grade 3 he had lived in four different towns and finally settled in a small community on Manitoulin Island. As a child, he was immersed in faith and made a decision to follow Jesus at a young age at a backyard Bible camp.

Manitoulin Island was where he lived out of the rest of his childhood and adolescence and where his parents continued to live until his father's retirement. The island was a great place for someone who enjoys the outdoors. Chris



also named his appreciation for the close connection and integration of the indigenous community with settlers on the island.

In his teenage years, Chris became proficient at working a sound board for his father's congregation. He also took that skill on the road as he accompanied the quartet his father was in whenever they had a concert. Chris continued to utilize this skill

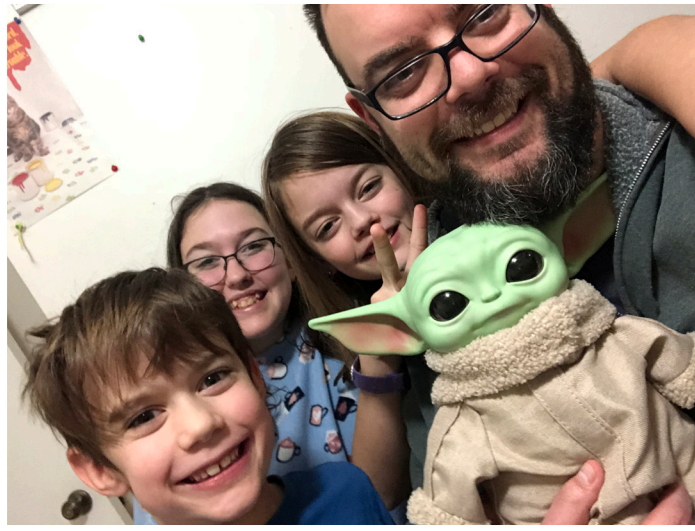
in the church he attended prior to SJMC, though being too heavily relied on, was burnt out and is currently taking a break and exploring other areas of musical expression.

After high school graduation Chris made the decision to study Radio & Television Broadcast Communications at Moody Bible College in Chicago because he wanted to go somewhere he could study what he was interested in that also had a good theological base. At Moody he played the trombone in the concert band with whom he got to travel across Europe. It was during his first year at Moody that he met his future wife with whom they had three children Linda (17), Maggie (14), and Noah (10).

Chris's separation three years ago led him to seek out support through a program called Divorce Care offered by another local congregation. Through the program he has found support from other people who are going through a similar situation. As a bonus he met Laura Wallace through a mutual friend who was also in the program, and subsequently found his way to SJMC. He has found a home at SJMC, where he has been able to offer his gift of playing the guitar.



Chris is employed by Hendrix Genetics (Hybrid Turkeys), a local animal genetics company, where he provides technical and database application support for their breeding division. Coincidentally, Hybrid is a common thread for Chris and me, even though my employment stint was more 30+ years ago in a much lower-skilled role of collecting eggs to be shipped around the world.



raise tropical aquarium fish. Prior to his separation he had an entire room in his basement devoted to fish. As he described the endeavour, I could picture the countless aquariums with a variety of freshwater and saltwater fish gliding around. Unfortunately, he needed to sell almost all of his equipment and is now slowly getting back into that hobby on a much smaller scale.

In addition to his employment, parenting, and musical interests, there were two other areas to which Chris devotes some time, effort, and passion that caught Wendy's and my attention. Wendy has noticed Facebook posts about his cooking adventures. It turns out, Chris loves to be creative in the kitchen by experimenting with different recipes and combinations of ingredients and foods. We also learned he loves to

even though it did not come up in our conversation, is Chris is an avid boardgame player, which I know from my experience at last year's winter retreat. It has been enjoyable to spend time with Chris and to get to know him in several different contexts. Certainly, there are many other facets to Chris I have not yet discovered. Hopefully, this begins to offer an emerging picture of who Chris Kloestra is.

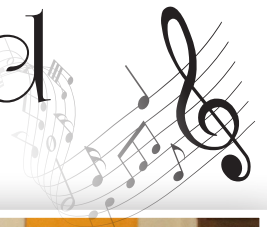
## Fun Times @ SJMC





# Baroque and Beyond

Ashlinn O'Marra and Peter Carter



With the help, support and encouragement of several SJMC members, a musical dream of ours came true November 12 when members of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and additional musicians performed a concert in the church's sanctuary as a fundraiser for the symphony. Yet, the event that nudged this dream along seemed to come out of nowhere.

The second weekend in September, Peter received an email saying the symphony, where he worked as a violinist for the past 36 years, would not be starting its season. When we first saw this email, we wondered if it was spam, or perhaps a joke. Peter was supposed to start work in four days. The following night, another email came saying the season had been canceled. Peter would not be returning to his job, a job he deeply loved. In what ways would he be able to make music? We received many emails that night and the next week and one of the very first emails was from Pastor Mark Diller-Harder, asking us how we were doing. His email couldn't have come at a better time.

Fast forward a few weeks when the symphony's season did not start and the organization was insolvent (not bankrupt like previously thought) and musicians were working to make music, in new forms, groups and places.

For several years Peter and I had admired the space of the church sanctuary and, after seeing other concerts and events, had dreamed of one day organizing a classical concert there.

Once again, it was Pastor Mark who encouraged us to think about how to make this dream a reality. His help and guidance were invaluable, as well as every single person who we asked for help. Bethany Horst was the first

soloist we approached and quickly got back to us with her enthusiastic support to perform in a fundraising concert at SJMC. This support was so encouraging and we were humbled at how readily people offered to help.

One of the setbacks in planning was the symphony's library was no longer accessible, so we had to use the website "International Music Score Library Project" to find sheet music for the concert. Our choice of music was limited to music on this site, along with pieces that individuals owned or that some musicians had taken out from the symphony library before the start of September, such as the parts for "The Messiah" that Brandon Leis had borrowed that Peter could borrow.

Usually a KW Symphony concert would be planned between nine and eighteen months in advance and a committee would decide music selections. After November 12 was chosen as the date, Peter and I had about 5 weeks to put the concert together, including figuring out how to send music electronically. Music had to go out through email attachments to all principal string players to put in bowing markings, then return to us, to then send out to the other section string players. Usually a process that takes place months before the concert, was now being done in about a week's turnover.

Along the way, I overlooked a few details on the full scores of each piece to see the exact wind instruments needed for each piece. About a week before the concert, I realized I forgot to assign the flutist the piccolo part and then another piece needed not one but two bassoonists! Fortunately, the musicians were all going to be at the concert and were willing to learn another piece!



Pauline made advertising easy and smooth. Other musicians took paper posters and put them up in Elmira, St. Jacobs, Waterloo, and Kitchener.

On the evening of the concert, we were overcome with the support from both people from church and the community. It was so heartwarming to receive this support. Several musicians from the symphony shed happy tears being able to play together once again.

It has now been several months since the symphony went on hiatus (yes, we're optimists) and our family has settled into a new routine, with Peter playing in other orchestras, like London and Windsor and freelance work around the

area. The network of classical musicians is strong and long-standing with Peter getting calls to work from friends from when he played with them in the National Youth Orchestra decades ago. When Peter doesn't have a concert to practise for and play on weekends, he is finding enjoyment in his new and different routine. We've had more Friday and Saturday nights to play board games, relaxed family dinners and get together with others.

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."*

- Proverbs 3:5-6



## Special Events @ SJMC





# Benin Bible Institute Faculty Development Fund



**Linda Kruger**

Founded in 1983 out of a partnership between Beninese African Independent Churches and Mennonite Board of Missions, Benin Bible Institute (BBI) is an interdenominational Bible school that provides leadership training for Beninese church leaders. Located in Cotonou, Benin, BBI offers biblical and theological training programs for those feeling called to the ministry and for those wanting to better understand their faith.

BBI and SJMC became connected in 1994 through Nancy Frey. Since officially partnering in 2007, mutual visits have been central to strengthening our partnership. Our visits to Benin have provided us with a great appreciation for the ways in which many in Benin and beyond have benefited from services and ministries for which BBI faculty and graduates have planted seeds, including the Bethesda Health Centre, La Casa Grande (children's home), a recycling program and a microenterprise bank.

A major transition is in process at BBI. Three founding teaching and administrative faculty will retire by 2026. Known for its internationally accredited teachers, BBI is working diligently to hire additional qualified teachers and assist current faculty with obtaining masters and doctoral degrees. SJMC supports this training through our BBI Faculty Development Fund and has committed to funding doctoral studies for Professor Francois Bangbade. An integral part of BBI's faculty for 18 years, Francois has been a gracious host and guide for SJMC members visiting BBI and a visitor here as well.

Francois has completed the first 6-week session of his doctoral studies at Bangui Seminary in Yaounde, Cameroon. The cost of his three-year doctoral program is estimated to be \$30,500. This includes tuition, books and expenses related to some travels to Cameroon for in-person studies. Beginning in 2023, our goal is to raise \$10,000 per year for three years. We are extremely grateful to the congregation, including the children, for your generosity and support of the BBI Faculty Development Fund. Including \$1,045 received from the SouthWest BBQ Lunch, \$1,160 raised through the Poinsettia Plant Fundraiser, \$488.40 collected by the children for their fall offering project and designated donations, we surpassed our fundraising goal of \$10,000 for 2023 and received \$1700 toward our fundraising goal of \$10,000 for 2024.



There will be additional fundraising events over the next two years, beginning with the GST Auction on April 13. Donations to SJMC, designated to the BBI Faculty Development Fund, would also be gratefully received at any time.

Please continue to pray for the BBI faculty, staff, board, and students as they prepare to provide leadership in their churches and communities.





## visits SJMC!



### Nelson Scheifele

On November 10, during Family Violence Prevention Month, Theatre of the Beat presented three short plays, by three different writers, at SJMC under the title *"I Love You and It Hurts"*. The plays reflect lived experiences of elder abuse, unhealthy masculinity, and intimate partner violence in youth relationships. Edgy and uncomfortable, the focus of each play was on how to recognize the signs of abuse. The topics were identified by experts at the Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region and the Assaulted Women's Helpline as topics needing to be addressed.

Throughout fall, 2023, Theatre of the Beat toured *"I Love You and It Hurts"* to high schools, universities, churches, community centres, and long-term care homes. The cast of seven, travelling by van and trailer, provided twelve productions in the four western provinces during October and seventeen productions in Ontario during November and early December. The intensity of the subject matter, the stress of daily setups and take-downs of the staging, constantly adjusting to new venues and working with new people in each setting was exhausting and created significant challenges for the group.

The plays were done in a forum theatre style, meaning after the initial performance each play was re-played and the audience was encouraged to yell STOP! if they felt uncomfortable or thought some change in dialogue might make for a better outcome. This allowed for an active exploration with the audience of how conflict, abuse or violence might be avoided or short circuited. The first play, *"The Walkover"*, set in a hockey locker room, discussed the contemporary destructive masculinity too common in many sports. The second play, *"Mother"* explored elder abuse related to financial misappropriation by a daughter. The third play *"Be a Friend"* dealt with the friendships and passive aggressive abusive violence that can occur in teen and young adult relationships, particularly in a campus

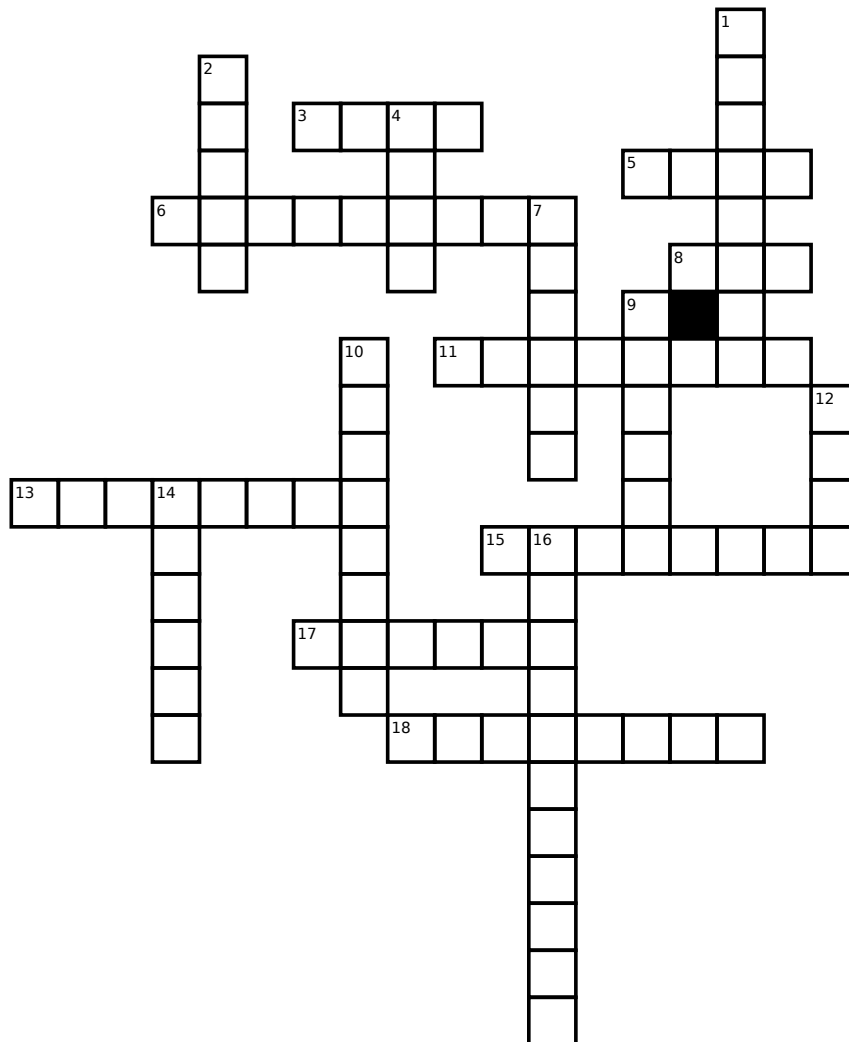


setting. More details on each of these dramas can be found at [I Love You and It Hurts — Theatre of the Beat](#).

The evening with Theatre of the Beat was jointly sponsored by SJMC and Waterloo North Mennonite Church, a collaboration which has occurred on numerous occasions, usually at Waterloo North. The actors were provided with a wonderful dinner before the production by the SJMC Social Committee. Each congregation contributed \$600, and the remainder of the fee was collected from audience donations - \$865. Readers may recall viewing other productions such as *Selah's Song*, *This Will Lead to Dancing*, *Yellow Bellies*, *Gadfly* – Sam Steiner *Dodges the Draft*, or *Forgiven/Forgotten*. All were written, produced, and performed by members of Theatre of the Beat, a touring theatre company established in 2011 in conjunction with Community Mennonite Church in Stouffville. Its mission is to catalyze conversations on social justice and its intersection with the beliefs of the communities in which we find ourselves. This charitable organization, supervised by a volunteer board, has produced more than ten different plays, and performed more than 300 times in nine provinces, in the US and recently in the Netherlands.

# 2023 Year in Review

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### Down:

1. province that is now home to Pam and Kevin Derksen family
2. Country of Bible Institute we partner with in Africa
4. last name of new members Janet and Frank
7. type of sale held at SJMC this past May
9. last name of interim pastor filling in for Kevin
10. city where the youth toured CMU and Human Rights Museum
12. last name of the person who showed pictures of cold travels
14. last name of new members Lydia and Gary
16. location of SJMC camping weekend and joint worship with GLMC

### Across:

3. last name of new member Veronika
5. last name of new members, Sarah and Mathieu
6. format of Senior musical event in June
8. last name of new members Christina and Steve
11. location of MDS project where members volunteered
13. denomination of church used for Easter sunrise
15. day of the week for summer ball hockey
17. concert name Baroque and \_\_\_\_\_
18. last name of new member Chris