

DECEMBER 2022

*"for my house
will be called a
house of prayer
for all nations."*

-Isaiah 56:7

*Some of our cohort
taking time to connect*



*with Bishop Cliff
during our last session
together.*

LOOKING FOR WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH YOUTH?

Naomi McEwen, a FMCiC teen, did a video project collecting stories of answers to prayer in the history of her church family. The video was shared at the church's annual meeting with the entire congregation, age five to ninety-five.



NATIONAL PRAYER TEAM: COHORT PROGRAM UPDATE

Let Us Pray: Growing Together

Throughout 2022, people of prayer from a number of our local congregations committed to coming together once a month for 6 months to learn with and from each other about the foundational blocks for building houses of prayer in our church communities. As we wondered together about listening to God, discerning His call on our churches, imagining the possibilities for future prayer ministries, and connecting intergenerationally, we were encouraged to share our challenges and take part in each other's joys. Inside, you will find the testimonials of those who took part in this initiative. Let this be an invitation to join in this community as this cohort program will be offered again in 2023. Let us be a people who use the technological resources available to us as a gift to interconnect in prayer.

Sharing Our Stories: Empowering Past

In our session on Intergenerational Prayer, Pastor Ron Bartolo from Charlemont FMC shared, "about a wonderful saint who was part of our church family for many years: Laura McKaig. She went to be with the Lord in 2020. She was a gracious and passionate intercessor, and when our prayer cabinet would meet at her house for a time of prayer, you would see, on the opposite wall of the kitchen, pictures upon pictures of people whom she was praying for, specific issues, and dates when those prayers were answered. When I think of an

IHOP, take a look at these pictures on the wall: they demonstrate varying abilities, perspectives and age ranges, but they are all proudly displayed by the owner of the house ... Well, in God's House, I believe that the Father desires to proudly display the prayers of his children, regardless of how long or recent they have been adopted into His family through Christ Jesus!"

Who are the prayer warriors in your church? How are they being encouraged? How is your congregation sharing the stories of what God has done within your community?

Shaping Our Strategies: Engaging Present

One of the goals of the cohort program is to bring prayer leaders together to think about the current realities of their churches: how can they play to their strengths while addressing their silences? Here are some insights as cohort members discussed ongoing and new initiatives:



**Gail Kerr from
Barrie FMC shared
that their church has
a rotating team of
people who pray
through the Sunday
worship service for
different areas of
the church, as the
Holy Spirit leads.**

"I just kicked off a new season of prayer with a meeting...encouraged by the Vimeo you, Sarah and Bishop Cliff posted a year ago. The conversation you had was really helpful in starting the conversation with my local church here in Moose Jaw! So thank you!

We have always had a prayer meeting once a month and I started a neighbourhood prayer walk and clean up this past Spring which will become an annual event and was a great success (success being great turn out, neighbours noticing, feeling the Spirit in and throughout the day through conversations and observations).“ - *Lynn Zantingh*

“Most Sundays since mid-June, we have had someone give a 2 minute testimony to answered prayer. The ages of the witnesses range from their mid 80's to 7! It is well received by the congregation. We have also started having two people (my partner Angela & I) at the side of the sanctuary near the end of the service, so that people can come over to us for prayer- either right there or we move across the hall to the prayer room. On Nov 5 with much prayer and great help and encouragement from the pastor and board, there will be the Prayer Recharge Day. So far 51 people have registered and there was no trouble at all to get people to lead a workshop or do the worship music or take charge of the kitchen.” - *Sue Niblock, Smiths Falls*

“We have started the last two fall terms with a prayer breakfast of around 12- 15 people. We have also done a prayer walk around the community. Since Covid, the Tuesday prayer time group has met on Zoom. The last two years we have added a commitment to pray for our congregation by families. We made a list of those attending our church and pray for five or so households every week. We contact them ahead of time to let them know we will be praying for them and to ask if they have specific requests. This has been well received. Word is getting around that we pray for people and sometimes we get requests from other Christian sisters to pray for their families and friends. We also have a telephone texting prayer chain in our church which is used often to send out prayer requests to our prayer warriors.” - *Betty Lewis, Hampton FMC*

Engaging Children and Families

Many of our cohort members expressed a desire to engage children, youth, and families in prayer. Pastor Jon Grant and Elizabeth Gunther at Trulls Road FMC discussed, “the reality that the younger generation may not be as strong in the practice of prayer and how we would like to inspire this habit in all people, including our young children and youth.” Out of that, Elizabeth developed a 6 Day take home study on The Lord's Prayer for families to do together. That resource is available on the Intergenerational Ministry Facebook page or you can email intergen.fmcic@gmail.com for a copy of the PDF.



Sighting Our Signposts: Envisioning Future

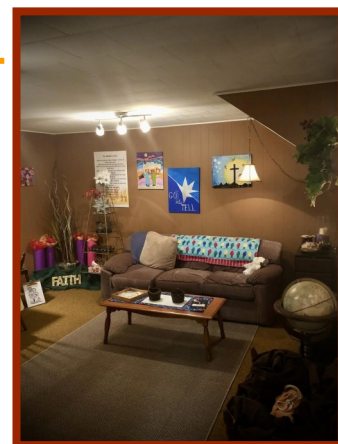
One of the chief encouragements of the cohort program is to empower prayer leaders to work with their pastors and boards to develop a strategic prayer plan for their congregations. How do churches develop a sanctified imagination for what God can do in and through the congregation as they are intentional about making space to meet with Him?

A strategy can help frame the conversation and make sure no group of age, stage, or experience is left out of the house of prayer. For example, Alfred Arman from Northview Community (Regina) shared that part of his church's strategy addresses how to incorporate those who are new to prayer and "may need help with prayer during times of crisis. At these times of crisis, groups like the staff, the care team, and the prayer team should come alongside these folks and teach them short, simple prayers." For Holt FMC their plan includes the aspiration "to engage as a whole congregation— from youngest to oldest— to practice prayer in different ways, in different seasons, and with different groupings of our church, but with one heart turned always towards seeking God in all things at every opportunity." A plan embrace who you are as a congregation and who God has called your church to be. As Peterborough FMC's plan states so well: "most importantly, we need to pray and ask God for strategies that are unique to our church. As we all recognize, prayer undergirds all activities and decisions in our personal and corporate Christian walk ." Amen.

Ideas for the Journey:

Your church might just be starting on the road to a more intentional prayer experience. That's okay. Here are some dreams shared by our cohort to get you started:

- To have a once a week, publicly advertised 2 hour window when people can call in for prayer
- To restart prayer walks and drives in our town
- To host specific prayer meetings, possibly some family-friendly ones as well
- To continue to use our prayer room for seasonal 24/7 prayer weekends where different members of the congregation— young and old commit to signing up for an hour to pray for our church and community
- To see a mentoring prayer system encouraging younger people to pray with those more experienced or older in the faith
- To involve more children and kids in praying and leading and to encourage that to continue as they grow into the future
- To see through the plans for an upcoming prayer conference
- To have a prayer team that teaches and models prayer at specific times to those at different points in their walk with Jesus



What are you imagining for the future of your church as you gather to pray? What practices might work best in your congregation? What is the strength of your history and how can you lean in to that?



Ken Roth
Team Coordinator



Cliff Fletcher
Bishop



Andrew Dexter
Pastor of Genesis House in Okotoks, AB

THE NATIONAL PRAYER TEAM



Bernie McGale
Team Member



Linda Dixon
Team Member



Ron Bartolo
Charlemont FMC, ON

The National Prayer team sees its mandate as: *Equipping the churches of the FMCiC to become functioning houses of prayer. We believe a church is becoming a “house of prayer” when a significant number of God’s people pray privately and corporately, seeking the kingdom of God in such an intimate way that the Lord’s Presence, unity, power and gifts operate effectively, leading to peace, divine healing, deliverance, wisdom, guidance, provision, and ultimately, spiritual growth through conversion and ongoing sanctification.*

If you would like to connect with our prayer team for more information about future prayer cohort programs or prayer ministry in the FMCiC, contact Pastor Ken Roth: ken@chapelridge.ca.

Visit: www.fmcic.ca/prayer

Stretching Our Strengths: Engaging Community

In the FMCiC, our churches come in many shapes and sizes and our corporate prayer lives will be unique to us as we shape them to engage our communities. No matter how big or small, our churches can all stretch our strength in the area of prayer— a resource available to each of us no matter our budgets or resources. We can look at two of our churches— Holt FMC and Barrie FMC, very different congregations, that both launched prayer initiatives unique to their contexts.



Barrie Free Methodist Church
November 29 at 12:02 PM · 🌐

This year for Advent we are encouraging you to pray for the different streets in Barrie. Here are some prayer prompts to help you start:

- Pray for the people who live on that street
- Pray for the people who work, go to school, or walk on that street
- Pray for the businesses on that street... See more

You, Matthew McEwen and 9 others · 1 Comment · 1 Share

For Holt, it was a Bristol board prayer chart in their foyer where congregants would mark off with magic marker hours prayed towards a goal of 1000 for the year! This goal was met and it was an encouragement to the body life of the church.

For Barrie, it was a social media post suggesting different streets to pray for in their city on each day of the Advent season. We know that only good will come from ‘decking the halls’ of their neighborhoods in prayer!