



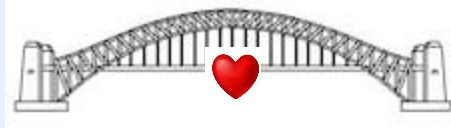
# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – January, 2019

**“FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU.” Jeremiah 29:11a**



## CHURCH...A BRIDGE OF LOVE...COMMUNITY



Dr. Robert Lewis, author and church leader gives a fitting description for the church in his book, “The Church of Irresistible Influence.” His definition is this: *a community of people who...present living proof of a loving God to a watching world.*

“*Living Proof of a Loving Saviour*” has been Bridges of Love’s mantra since our inception over 15 years ago. Our mission has been to open windows, assisting churches in serving their communities, in relevant ways. As we provide an open window, we create a door of opportunity.

Dr. Lewis’ book written 18 years ago, shares that the church looks across a terrifying and ever widening chasm. At the bottom of the chasm rages the white water of popular sentiment, which increasingly views the church as inconsequential, a sideshow along the interstate of the world’s *real traffic*. Does this sense of isolation and powerlessness still pervade much of the contemporary church today?

Often as “engineers of churches,” pastors and lay leaders desperately desire to bridge the gap, but when measuring the gorge with the world’s mathematics, they come to believe the span is simply too vast. The sheer size of the great chasm is not only intimidating, but it also scares many church leaders into believing that the task is impossible.

Speaking to a pastor about his churches connections with the community; he said it scared him to look out into his community, as the needs were just too great, that he felt paralyzed.

### The question is simple:

### What impact is the church having on the community?

Jesus Christ was a daring bridge builder of another kind. Against his own overwhelming odds, he imagined a bridge of unprecedented spiritual influence—one that could span a chasm roaring with skepticism, indifference, hostility, even persecution. He imagined a bridge able to connect his people—“my church,” he called them—to a disbelieving, disinterested world.

## BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY

Fifteen years ago, God gave me a vision...to connect the church with the community in which it was found. The bridge to make that connection was unknown, but God opened a window with the invitation from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada to join their National Evangelism Roundtables. That invitation created a door of opportunity, which has blossomed over the years into two very valuable bridges. The Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.



We can no longer simply afford to stand on one side of the great chasm and shout to those on the other side. We must connect! Otherwise, the greatest unbridged chasm will remain the gap between the stunning vision of Jesus Christ and the ever-receding influence of the church in the world. We cannot exist for ourselves, but must embrace our highest calling: to bridge the great chasm being salt and light in a needy and searching world.

What do the words “plans to prosper” mean by today’s standards? According to Webster’s Dictionary, “prosperity” means “the condition of being successful or thriving; especially economic well-being.”

For 40 years, Jeremiah passionately and faithfully served as God’s spokesman to Judah. Consistently, he urged them to act, but nobody listened or were moved to action. Jeremiah did not achieve material wealth as he underwent extreme deprivation to deliver God’s message. Throughout his life, Jeremiah was poor and stood alone. In the eyes of the world, he was not a success.

In God’s eyes, however, Jeremiah was one of the most successful people in all of history. Success, as measured by God, involves obedience and faithfulness. Regardless of opposition and personal cost, Jeremiah courageously proclaimed the word of God. He was obedient to his calling.

These words were spoken to a displaced, defeated, depressed group of exiles. They had hung their harps on the willow trees and had lost their song. But with the Lord, things are never hopeless. For I know the plans I have for you...

This life is to be lived and enjoyed as far as we are able, but it is not the future that Jeremiah spoke about. The future God has planned for those who listen and believe is a future beyond death, where there is no pain, no sickness, no suffering, no sorrow, and no more dying. It is that life to which Jesus invites us, and for which He died, that we might live. The plan of God about Jeremiah spoke came to full fruition in Jesus Christ.



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – February, 2019

**“AND AT MIDNIGHT A CRY RANG OUT: HERE’S THE BRIDEGROOM! COME OUT TO MEET HIM” Matthew 25:6**

And at midnight there  
was a cry made, Behold,  
the bridegroom comes; go  
you out to meet him.

—Matthew 25:6



Jesus told parables to clarify what it means to be ready for His return and how to live until he comes. The story of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 verses 14-30 teaches that every person is responsible for his or her own spiritual condition.

The parable is about a wedding. On the wedding day the bridegroom went to the bride’s house for the ceremony; then the bride and groom, along with a great procession, returned to the groom’s house where a feast took place.

The ten virgins were waiting to join the procession, as they hoped to take part in the wedding banquet. But when the groom didn’t come on schedule, five of them were out of lamp oil. By the time they purchased extra oil, it was too late to join the festivities.

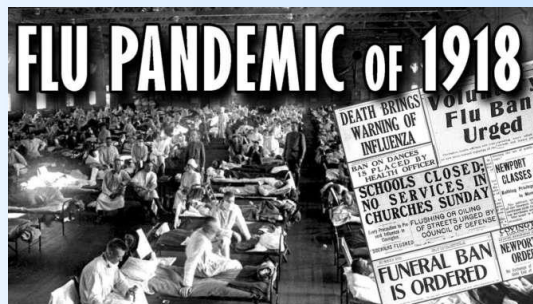
Five of the virgins, were foolish, and five were wise. All ten had a job to do. They had lamps. The lamps were supposed to be ready, ignited when He comes. Light. “Prepare the way of the Lord.”

When Jesus returns to take His people to heaven, we must be ready. Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed at the last minute. Our relationship with the Lord must be our own.

What do we want to be found doing when the Lord returns? Jesus is going to come back someday. The cry goes out...Let our lamps burn brightly until His return.

## INFLUENZA PANDEMIC...READY OR NOT

On October 8, 1918, military officials hastily moved fifteen ill Canadian soldiers travelling through Calgary on a Canadian Pacific transport train into isolation unit at a nearby army base. A thoroughly nineteenth-century approach to disease containment. The quarantine didn’t work, and Calgary was soon inundated with infected civilians.



Over one hundred years has passed since the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic which felled nearly as many Canadians as the preceding war. Indeed, perhaps the most important legacy of the 1918 pandemic is that it marked the waning of the thinking that had dominated Canadian public-health practice for generations: that the vector of infectious diseases could be halted using isolation, exclusion, and sanitary reform. The federal department of health, laid the basis for a new ideology of public health governance, one that saw disease as a community problem, not only an individual hardship or a plague brought on by outsiders. By John Lorinc - Canada’s History

We have learned a lot over the past 100 years and are better prepared because of it. But make no mistake, outbreaks of sudden, unexpected, and localized eruptions of infection are inevitable. [Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Chief Medical Correspondent.](#)

“Unseen Enemy”, a documentary written and directed by Janet Tobias was released in 2017. Tobias collaborated with some of the world’s top pathogen hunters and medical professionals for more than three years, tracking outbreaks of Zika, Ebola and influenza worldwide.

Tobias’ film makes the case that successful containment can be achieved with coordinated efforts of medical professionals, researchers, governments, communicators, and the public.

## THE STORY OF AN EARTHQUAKE AND THE CHRISTIANS WHO STAYED

Immediately following the 2011 disaster, a great number of local and overseas volunteers came to the tsunami-ravaged Tohoku seacoast. However, a few months later—when evacuation centers began to close, water and food distribution became unnecessary, and the work of removing tsunami mud from houses largely came to an end—most volunteers and support organizations stopped coming; but not Christian volunteers.

They worked through local churches and continued to support people affected by the disaster, even after people had moved from evacuation centers into temporary housing. Christians were aware that those suffering were dealing not just with physical needs such as clothing, food, and housing—they were also dealing with spiritual needs, as they wrestled with the loss of loved ones and possessions that had been dear to them.



As Christians continue visiting the affected people, they are known as Mr/Ms Christ with respect and appreciation.

[HTTPS://WWW.LAUSANNE.ORG/LGA](https://www.lausanne.org/LGA)



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – March, 2019

**“THOUGH THE MORE ABUNDANTLY I LOVE YOU, THE LESS I BE LOVED” 2 Corinthians 12:15**

*“And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.”*

~Corinthians 12:15

Natural human love expects something in return. But Paul is saying, “It doesn’t really matter to me whether you love me or not. I am willing to be completely destitute anyway; willing to be poverty-stricken, not just for your sakes, but also that I may be able to get you to God.” And Paul’s idea of service was the same as our Lord’s. He did not care how high the cost was to himself— he would gladly pay it.

Christ’s idea is that we serve Him by being the servants of others. Jesus Christ actually “out-socialized” the socialists. He said that in His kingdom the greatest one would be the servant of all (see Matthew 23:11). The real test of a saint is not one’s willingness to preach the gospel, but one’s willingness to do something like washing the disciples’ feet— that is, being

willing to do these things that seem unimportant in human estimation but count as everything to God. It was Paul’s delight to spend his life for God’s interests in other people, and he did not care what it cost. Before we



are willing to serve, we stop to ponder our personal and financial concerns, indicating we have reservations about serving God.

But the apostle Paul had no conditions or reservations. Paul focused his life on Jesus Christ’s idea of a New Testament saint; that is, not one who merely proclaims the gospel, but one who becomes broken bread and poured-out wine in the hands of Jesus Christ for the sake of others.

*Excerpt ~ Oswald Chambers  
My Utmost for His Highest*

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL AID ACT

### Province of Alberta

#### Protection from action

2 If, in respect of a person who is ill, injured or unconscious as the result of an accident or other emergency,

- (a) a physician, registered health discipline member, or registered nurse voluntarily and without expectation of compensation or reward renders emergency medical services or first aid assistance and the services or assistance are not rendered at a hospital or other place having adequate medical facilities and equipment, or
- (b) a person other than a person mentioned in clause (a) voluntarily renders emergency first aid assistance and that assistance is rendered at the immediate scene of the accident or emergency, the physician, registered health discipline member, registered nurse or other person is not liable for damages for injuries to or the death of that person alleged to have been caused by an act or omission on his or her part in rendering the medical services or first aid assistance, unless it is established that the injuries or death were caused by gross negligence on his or her part. RSA 1980 cE-9 s2;RSA 1980 cH-5.1 s34;1984 c53 s27

There are liability concerns serving others during times of disaster? We addressed **Volunteerism and Liability** during the Key-note Session at a Calgary CERT Summit. Heather Mack, former Government Relations Manager with the Insurance Bureau of Canada displayed this slide, which speaks to this issue.



Willow Creek 26  
CERT Summit  
TBA Soon, 2019



#### WHY CERT?

#### Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

training educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks. Through CERT, the capabilities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters, is built and enhanced.

#### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Disaster Alley occurs during Emergency Preparedness Week ~ A national event in May that aims to build a culture of preparedness in Canada, coordinated by Public Safety Canada.

#### DISASTER ALLEY

Saturday, May 4, 2019  
from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at  
McMahon Stadium

**Free Family Event**



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – April, 2019

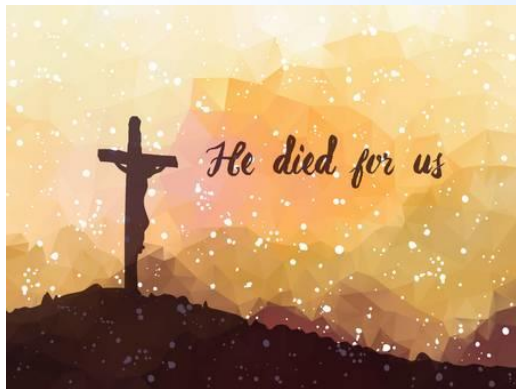
**"I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE..." John 14:6**

*"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"*  
John 14:6

Jesus says He is the **only** way to God, the Father. This is one of the most basic and important passages in Scripture. How do we know the way to God? Only through Jesus. Jesus is the way because He is both God and man. By uniting our lives with His, we are united with God.

As the way, Jesus is our path to the Father. As the truth, He is the reality of all God's promises. As the life, he joins His divine life to ours, both now and eternally. Jesus is, in truth, the only living way to the Father. To know Jesus is to know God. The search for God, for truth and reality, ends in Christ.

Love -- and the unity it attests to -- is the mark Christ gave Christians to wear before the world. Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and that Jesus was sent by the Father. Love is an attitude that reveals itself in action.



Christians worship a Triune God: a Father who loves unconditionally, an incarnate Son who is willing to die for us so that we may be forgiven, and an immanent Holy Spirit who lives in us.

## RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST

A leader's greatest hurdle today is to win the trust of stakeholders. The leaders who win are those who communicate openly and often, have a clear and committed communications policy, initiate formal and informal programs, and assess their own performance.

How do we build trust and acceptance when introducing a new endeavor to a new community? We cannot just talk about having trust, we have to build trust by earning it. Building trust requires a personal effort on the part of the leaders themselves.

Communications is fundamental to building trust. Trust is a powerful force that build loyalty, increases credibility, and supports effective communications.

## COUNTER TERRORISM INFORMATION OFFICER WORKSHOP

### What is terrorism?

Political, religious & ideological purpose objective or cause with the intention of intimidating the public, with regards to its security, including economic security or competing person, a government or a domestic or international organization.

### R.C.M.P. INSET's Role:

- ✓ Increase the capacity to collect, share and analyze intelligence among partners, with respect to targets (individuals) that are a threat to national security.
- ✓ To create an enhanced enforcement capacity to bring such targets to justice.
- ✓ Enhance partner agencies' collective ability to combat national security threats and meet specific mandate responsibilities.

### Current Threat:

Home grown radicalized individuals. This is about ideas, a social movement and process that occurs over time.

### What can we do?

- ✓ Power in knowledge
- ✓ Increase vigilance
- ✓ Collaboration, unity of mission

## LOVE BEE...ING PREPARED

As relative new comers to this community, we would love to connect with our neighbours, as we introduce **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training**. Each Wednesday join Tom & Marg for coffee and a muffin. What we have on hand, or what we are trained to do when a disaster or an emergency strikes, can vastly improve comfort and safety in the initial hours and days of a catastrophic event.



Every Wednesday, 10:00 am - 4 Skyline Mews W Claresholm  
R.S.V.P. [margpollon@bridgesoflove.net](mailto:margpollon@bridgesoflove.net) - 403.468.5683



**NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS**

Bridges of Love invites residents of Southern Alberta to enjoy coffee and a muffin every Wednesday morning. Please join us!



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – May, 2019

**“THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION...” 2 Corinthians 5:17**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,  
the new creation has come:

**The old has gone,  
the new is here!**

2 Corinthians 5:17

Just as spring brings new life, we too become a new creation, when we accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. When Jesus Christ comes to us he says, *“It is time for something new.”* He does not say it is time to shed certain practices or to add religion to our life. He says it is time for a totally new beginning, a new life, a new hope, a new strength, and a new vision. It is time to be made a new creation.

Christians become brand new people on the inside, and are not the same people. The Life Application Bible says... *“We are not reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated—we are re-created (new creation), living in vital union with Christ.”* We are not merely turning over a new leaf, we are beginning a new life, under a new Master.

The by-products of living our lives as a new creation through the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit produces character traits that are found in the nature of Christ. We must know Him, love Him, remember Him, and imitate Him.

As a result, we will fulfill the intended purpose to love God and our neighbour; serving one another in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, & self-control. Galatians 6:22

## RISKS THAT COULD HIT CALGARY

The Calgary Emergency Management Agency has created an interactive [Disaster Risk Explorer website](#) to help Calgarians understand what disasters could hit the city and how to prepare.

The 13 disasters ranked as highest risk are:

- Catastrophic flooding of the Bow River.
- Catastrophic flooding of the Elbow River.
- Extreme cold.
- Major critical infrastructure failure or disruption.
- Major dam breach on the Bow River.
- Major drought.
- Major hostage incident.
- Mass casualty attack.
- Major rail incident.
- Blizzard.
- Heavy rainstorm.
- Winter storm.
- Tornado.

The site shares that these are the 13 highest risk disasters Calgary could face, out of 65 natural and man-made crises reviewed and ranked by the city's emergency management agency.

The website outlines just how likely each disaster is, what the consequences could be to the city, and how people can prepare for the worst.

*“This is an absolutely foundational piece of work,”* said Sue Henry, Deputy Chief of the Calgary Emergency Management Agency.

*“Because it's a shared responsibility, we need citizens to be ready to take care of themselves and their families, we need them to have a kit for 72 hours, so we can focus resources on those people that are truly in life threatening condition.”*

## CEMA'S DISASTER ALLEY

Meet real-life heroes; including the Calgary Fire Department, Calgary Search and Rescue Association, NAWCS, along with more than 40 exhibitors who provide assistance in emergencies and disasters.

**Don't miss Calgary's  
largest emergency event!**

May 4, McMahon Stadium  
11:00 am – 3:00 pm



Please drop by Bridges of Love's booth and test your emergency/disaster knowledge. **“CERT” Wheel of Fortune**



**NEIGHBOURS HELPING  
NEIGHBOURS**



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – June, 2019

***“THEY SHALL RUN AND NOT GROW WEARY, THEY WILL WALK AND NOT BE FAINT.” Isaiah 40:30***



The Old Testament has many examples of God's people placing their trust in the Lord and finding that He is a faithful God, finding that He does, indeed, give strength to those that wait upon Him.

Even the young and strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. His strength is our source of strength so those who look to the Lord will have their strength renewed. He is the One we should turn to. When we see our weaknesses, when we are growing discouraged, when we see how bad things are, we should not look at ourselves and grope around in darkness, but we should look to the Lord.

Hope in the Lord is expecting that His promise of strength will help us to rise above life's distractions and difficulties. God loves us and wants His best for us. Those who run shall not be weary, and they that walk shall not faint. We learn that God will strengthen us so that, in our running and in our walking, we will not grow weary.

## CEMA's DISASTER ALLEY

May 4, 2019

A note of appreciation to the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), who hosted another successful Disaster Alley, at McMahon Stadium. You'll see from the photo, the event was larger than ever, with over 41 agencies participating.

It was a very cold, wet, and snowy day, but the turn-out was surprisingly good, considering the inclement weather. We shared with many visitors to our booth including children galore who were eager to spin the CERT Wheel of Fortune and receive a candy or toy. The heart marks our booth.

As in past events, we appreciated the help of one of our CERT grads, Cameron Nikitiuk who is volunteer extraordinaire!



## South Centre Mall Emergency Fair

May 11, 2019

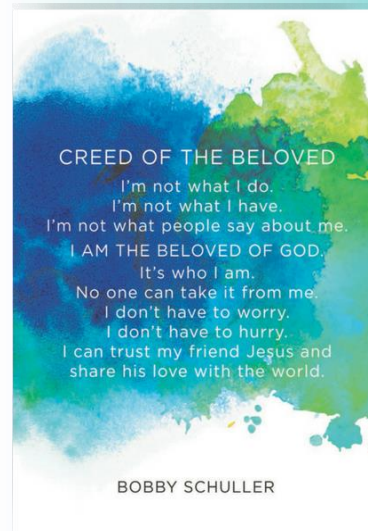
South Centre Mall holds their Emergency Fair twice a year. We always feel warmly welcomed at their event. Our CERT Wheel of Fortune was again a hit with young and old alike, educating visitors with questions taken from our CERT manuals.



## CREED OF THE BELOVED

After two years trying to sell our condo in Calgary, with great anticipation, we took up residence in Claresholm. After praying the Prayer of Jabez, many month prior to our relocation; we really felt God directing our steps, to this new location. We continued to strive to fulfill Public Safety's challenge, to build a template that could be duplicated across Canada. We were on our way!

However, after a year sharing our mandate; seeking support from Town/s, Municipalities, Claresholm Church Ministerial, Foundations, FCSS, CAO's, and with anyone who would listen, the door has seemingly closed. We are indeed feeling weary and discouraged, but each day, God encourages us to walk and not faint. We are His beloved.





# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – July, 2019

***“IF YOU TAKE THE LEFT, THEN I WILL GO TO THE RIGHT.” Genesis 13:9***

## THE GOOD OR THE BEST?

*If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left. GENESIS 13:9*

As soon as you begin to live the life of faith in God, fascinating and physically gratifying possibilities will open up before you. These things are yours by right, but if you are living the life of faith you will exercise your right to waive your rights, and let God make your choice for you. God sometimes allows you to get into a place of testing where your own welfare would be the appropriate thing to consider, if you were not living the life of faith. But if you are, you will joyfully waive your right and allow God to make your choice for you. This is the discipline God uses to transform the natural into the spiritual through obedience to His voice.

Whenever our *right* becomes the guiding factor of our lives, it dulls our spiritual insight. The greatest enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but good choices which are not quite good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best. In this passage, it would seem that the wisest thing in the world for Abram to do would be to choose. It was his right, and the people around him would consider him to be a fool for not choosing.

Many of us do not continue to grow spiritually because we prefer to choose on the basis of our rights, instead of relying on God to make the choice for us. We have to learn to walk according to the standard which has its eyes focused on God. And God says to us, as He did to Abram, “...walk before Me...” Genesis 17:1.

Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest

## MOVING ON... Matthew 10:14

A letter from the Willow Creek Ministerial helped Bridges of Love make a difficult decision and also aided in understanding.

***“We see the proactive emergency training (CERT) that Bridges of Love would provide as good, but it might be a hindrance to current emergency structures. What we mean by hindrance is that CERT trained individuals are not recognized by local or provincial authorities -- this could create liability issues.***

***Additionally, we need to have a clear communication network, as you mention in your Bridges of Love document, regarding the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative. The intentions of the (FEPI) is to operate separately yet in conjunction with the Town of Claresholm Emergency Preparedness Policy. We don't see how effective the CERT training or FEPI could be if training is not recognized by the Town of Claresholm. As well-intentioned as these emergency training options may be, the end result could create confusion rather than the care originally intended.***

***After much conversation and prayer, the Willow Creek Ministerial has decided to be under the direction of the Town of Claresholm Emergency policies.”***

When we first began our work with the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (2006), Public Safety Canada was solidly behind this initiative as were many sectors of both health and emergency management. We did truly work together through our FEPI Advisory Council. Collaboration was key!

Somewhere along the line, however, we lost this critical structure to give credibility and strength to our efforts. After our experiences trying to broaden our efforts to Southern Alberta, it has become clear that without support from government, community and church leaders; our efforts would be mediocre at best. Cheer-leaders are indeed critical to encourage community members to engage.

Public Safety Canada's award and continued support affirms we must press on.

## EMERGENCY READY IN CANADA

This past week, while browsing Facebook, I was pleasantly surprised to come across a photo taken in 2018 by Public Safety Canada, while accepting their *Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award*. “Emergency Ready in Canada” high-lites on-line emergency preparedness news & tools.

Margaret Pollon founded the Bridges of Love Ministry in 2004, which provides Community Emergency Response Team training for volunteers who want the capacity to positively respond in times of disaster. Following the 2013 Alberta floods, the Bridges of Love Ministry coordinated a virtual donation website connecting donors, flood victims and volunteers. Mrs. Pollon's work to develop an integrated network of local churches has also enhanced community resilience. [LINK](https://www.bridgesoflove.net)





# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – August, 2019

## “THE TEACHING OF ADVERSITY”

*“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

*John 16:33*

Being a follower of Christ does not mean we are free from adversity. On the contrary, it actually means being delivered in adversity. As a follower of Christ for many years, I can say with certainty that we will encounter adversities, but Jesus says we should not be surprised when they come.

God does not give us overcoming life—He gives us life as we overcome. The challenges of life are what builds our strength. If there is no stress, there will be no strength. Once we accept and face life as it comes, God will give us the strength for each moment.

Last month, I shared in our July Newsletter that we were moving from Claresholm after a year of residency. Our decision was based on lack of support for Bridges of Love's initiatives from the town and church community. We loved our home but more importantly was our desire to continue to serve through Bridges of Love.

Our decision has taken a toll, however, as on June 30, a week before our scheduled move date, my husband Tom suffered a major heart attack. His life could have ended on that fitful day, but we believe God still has work for us to accomplish. A miracle was sent in just 4 minutes by a Calgary Ambulance that just happened to be in Claresholm and was about ready to head back when our call came in. That quick response probably saved my husband Tom's life or prevented severe heart damage.

Tom was taken to the Foothills Cardiac ICU where he remained until July 5; waiting for triple by-pass surgery. With a house to pack for the move, I remained at home while Tom was in the hospital, leaving visitation to our children and other family members.

It was indeed a very chaotic and confusing time for us both, as we struggled with feelings of doubt, over our pending move. Our house was sold, however, and we had purchased a condo in High River so there was no turning back. We had to trust God for our lives, for His purposes to unfold, and for His strength to get us through.

Thankfully, all went smoothly with the surgery and Tom was released Tuesday morning, three days after open heart surgery and four days before our move to High River. Leaving the hospital, we stopped by our Lawyer's office in Calgary, to sign the papers for our new residence, did a walk-through of our condo in High River, and then headed back to Claresholm.

We thank the many who prayed for us and the kind cards of support. We also thank our children who helped with packing and spent time with their Dad while he waited for surgery. Another answer to prayer came through our neighbour, Sharon. Sharon brought food, helped pack, and welcomed Tom into their home on moving day, so he wouldn't have to be in the midst of the chaos. In addition, Sharon and neighbour Cathy came over after the move was completed, and insured the duplex was ready for the new owners. At 79 and 75 years old they certainly were an answer to prayer and will be missed.

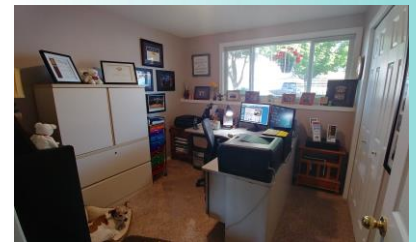
After three weeks in High River, we are settling in to our new surroundings and our tranquil setting is healthy for both heart and soul. We are so very thankful to call 109 Fairway View NW High River, AB T1V 1C9 our forever earthly home (We assure people, God willing, they can write our new address in permanent ink!!).



## BRIDGES OF LOVE'S HIGH RIVER OFFICE

Much time was spent in High River during the 2013 Alberta Flood. Our virtual ALBERTA RECOVERS.org web site proved invaluable for identifying donations that were matched with the needs of flood victims.

Many Calgary Churches assisted with deliveries of hundreds of donations and yet we did not stock pile a single item. Such an out-pouring of generosity and kindness with people working together for the good of the community.



Our neighbours have been most welcoming, having conversations with a few, who were personally impacted by the flood. They recall the great outpouring of love shown to their community during this difficult time.

Our condo is located in an area that was devastated by the flood and yet today: structures and lives are rebuilt, with the community once again thriving. Buddy and I love our new office space, complete with a window!!



Happy in High River!



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – September, 2019

## “LABOURING TOGETHER WITH GOD”

*“What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have only purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers, you are God’s field, God’s building.”*  
1 Corinthians 3:6-9

The word labor in Greek is kopiaw kopiao kop-ee-ah'-o It means to 1) to grow weary, tired, exhausted (with toil or burdens or grief) 2) to labour with wearisome effort, to toil.

Laboring for the Lord requires *strength of desire*. God’s work involves many different individuals with a variety of gifts and abilities. As team members performing our own special roles, we are useful members of God’s team by setting aside our own desire to receive glory for what we accomplish, and seek approval from God alone. Do we use our abilities and spiritual gifts to build up others or do we keep them tied to ourselves?

God allows us to be co-labourers with Him in His great work on this earth. Working together with the Lord allows for *diversity* in our service but in the end it is God who gives the increase.

As co-labourers we have *unity* in our purpose as we are all part of God’s great plan. We must have the same view as we are merely servants and Jesus is the Lord of the harvest.

As co-labourers, we must also reflect *humility* of spirit. It is only through our sovereign God that saved us and commanded us to labour with Him. Only He can bless our human efforts so lives are saved.

Not only does God want us to be co-labourers in saving souls but He wants us to exhibit the fruits of the spirit produced in our individual lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

## LABOUR DAY— WHY DO WE CELEBRATE?

Although Labour Day has evolved into just another long week-end marking the end of summer holidays, its origin celebrates the achievements of works. Its origins can be traced to the labour union movement, specifically the 8 hour day movement, which advocated eight hours of work, eight hours of recreation, and eight hours of rest each day. Labour Day is observed around the world by countries on various dates.

In Canada, it began as a massive working-class demonstration in Toronto triggered by the rapidly and dramatically changing economic and industrialized landscape. Automated machinery began to replace manual labour and the special skills offered by workers were no longer as valuable or efficient. Complaints about long working hours, unsafe working conditions and low working wages generally resulted in job loss or demotion. Unions were illegal in Canada, as archaic British labour laws were still in effect at the time, so workers were subject to the authority of their employers or forced to find work elsewhere.



No matter where you find yourself this Labour Day, please take a moment to reflect upon Canada’s labour pioneers. Their actions laid the foundations for future labour movements and helped works secure the rights and benefits enjoyed today.

## BRIDGES OF LOVE'S HIGH RIVER OFFICE LANDLINE PHONE



**403.649.0087**

Bridges of Love’s office and resources are now unpacked and organized. As well, hubby Tom is recuperating nicely from his triple by-pass surgery. We are ready and set to serve our communities through our Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

It is indeed an adventure to labour together with God as we continue to build Bridges of Love. It really is like putting on an old and comfortable shoe as High River truly feels like home after six short weeks of residence. We are so very grateful that God brought us here, so we now pray and look forward to whatever He has planned, as we serve Him.



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – October, 2019

***“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances...” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18***

***“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”***

***1 Thessalonians 5:16-18***

Being thankful is not just for the Thanksgiving holiday. Scripture tells us to be thankful in everything, in all circumstances. Paul gives practical advice for Christian living and to strengthen the Thessalonian Christians in their faith.

What if we prayed as the Apostle Paul instructs us...to pray continually! How would that change our lives?

I would like to share an answer to prayer that happened recently in our family. Six months ago, my sister was diagnosed with kidney cancer. The surgery was scheduled for August 23, four months after she was told this devastating news. We wanted to remain optimistic, but it weighed heavy on each of our hearts, as we anticipated the day of her surgery.

The operation went smoothly, the tumor being removed along with half of one kidney. She was sent home to recover and wait for the pathology results. Many prayed for Marilyn through this ordeal. I don't think anyone anticipated what the surgeon would tell her, however, when she met with him a month later to get the results.

**The tumor was benign!** ☺ Even though we prayed for healing, we did not anticipate this result and answer to our prayers. We indeed thank the Lord for removing the cancer that initially was diagnosed with 95% certainty.

Rejoicing in all circumstances reminds us that God is always in control, so if we put our trust in Jesus, joy will prevail. If we pray without ceasing, God works in our hearts filling us with His joy. Giving thanks in all circumstances can only be accomplished when we look to God and truly believe He will right the wrongs, restoring the most broken of hearts, through the toughest times.

Paul ends with... “For this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” We are called to consistent joy, to unceasing prayer, and to continual thanksgiving.

## CULTIVATING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM AND ENTERPRISE

Last December 2018, I was fortunate to participate in “Canada’s Volunteer Awards” discussion on Cultivating Social Responsibility through Volunteerism and Enterprise. The Government report was recently shared with the participants, (past CVA recipients and stakeholders) sharing our thoughts and ideas on how various sectors can join forces to leverage and encourage volunteerism through social innovation; addressing the needs of individuals, families, and communities. The goal was to inspire and empower Canadians to get involved and volunteer, helping people find new ways of making a difference, in their communities.

Social innovation can be broadly defined as developing new solutions to social or economic challenges. It can improve people’s quality of life through collaborating with new partners, testing creative ideas and measuring their impact. Social innovation often involves collaboration across different levels of government, charities, the not-for-profit and private sectors to act on a common social issue.

On the business side, corporate social responsibility means going beyond compliance with legal requirements by voluntarily taking responsibility for a business’s impact on society by integrating social and environmental concerns into their everyday operations.

TransCanada Energy has been a positive force for Bridges of Love for many years; since they began an employee incentive and company match program. It has indeed made a difference! Our son Mark, was asked for TC Energy’s 2019 Empower campaign, **“What’s your Why?”** ❤️



## MARG'S WHY!

Fueled by passion to serve the Lord; along with a desire to make a difference in this world, Bridges of Love Ministry was birthed in 2004. Nothing brings greater rewards or joy than pursuing an activity that is divinely appointed. It has not been an easy journey but as Paul encourages; be joyful in all circumstances, knowing God is in control of all that we are and do.

Genuine connections are at the heart of resilience. Community is not just where we live, it's what we're a part of, what we join, and what we create. In resilient communities, people don't fall through the cracks, because they take care of each other. Resilience means that support networks are in place to handle both day-to-day challenges and extraordinary ones.

Resilience makes a significant difference when disaster strikes.

Building community resilience through our Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) are goals, when executed in love, will change and even save lives.

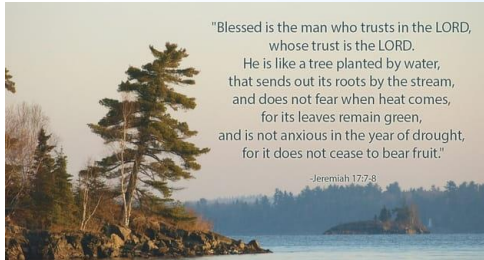
As we begin a new chapter in High River, we look forward to creating opportunities for volunteers to get involved. Building broader community resilience means investing in people's skills and knowledge while building personal resilience; which in turn will increase community care with all parties involved experiencing the benefits.



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – November, 2019

**“BUT BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD, WHOSE CONFIDENCE IS IN HIM.” Jeremiah 17:7**



"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,  
whose trust is the LORD.  
He is like a tree planted by water,  
that sends out its roots by the stream,  
and does not fear when heat comes,  
for its leaves remain green,  
and is not anxious in the year of drought,  
for it does not cease to bear fruit."

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Jeremiah was a prophet sent by God to deliver a message to the people of Judah. They had turned their backs on God to worship man, other gods, and created things.

It is especially in times of trouble we need a loving God to prop us up. The deeper we are in the Lord and the more we trust Him, the greater is our confidence in who He is, and who we are, in Christ.

This morning as I walked our dog Buddy, a young neighbour was also out for her morning stroll. We stopped to let our dogs say hello and struck up a conversation. We were both lamenting on the state of our country. She surprised me by saying she did not want to live in this world as it was just too dismal. As a younger person, this was indeed a sad proclamation. Does she have a faith to draw on?

I hope we can pick our conversation up the next time we meet. Yes, life is difficult with many struggles, but trusting God to carry us through the ups and downs, gives renewed hope and joy despite our circumstances.

Jeremiah is saying, place our faith in the one and only sovereign Saviour, so when the heat and drought comes our roots go deep into the stream. By studying His Word, prayer, and repentance our roots go deep, and anchor us when the storms hit. Roots instinctively grow towards their source of life so the longer they are planted by the water, the stronger they become, and the more roots they send out.

We are like a tree. When we are firmly planted and seeking God, we draw closer to Him, growing stronger driving our roots deeper in Him; trusting and depending more on Jesus.

## THE SPEED OF TRUST

Stephen M.R. Covey

Collaboration does indeed require a high level of trust to be successful and trust is the glue that holds stakeholders together.

Stephen M.R. Covey covers this topic well in "The Speed of Trust." He establishes the essence of what trust is and how it can be developed and kept. He teaches that only organizations with a sterling level of trust garner a culture of true commitment. When an organization trusts its leaders, and everyone becomes trustworthy, then people can operate synergistically and non-defensively, which get the best results with greater speed.

Trust is the foundation of relationships. Without trust there can be no loyalty—and without loyalty there can be no true growth. Investing in integrity and strength of character can only heighten solid relationships.

*"While corporate scandals, terrorist threats, office politics, and broken relationships have created low trust on almost every front, I contend that the ability to establish, grow, extend, and restore trust is not only vital to our personal and interpersonal well-being; it is a key leadership competency of the new global economy."*

Stephen Covey

Simply put, trust means confidence. When you trust people, you have confidence in them—in their integrity and in their abilities. When we distrust people, we are suspicious of them—of their integrity, their agenda, their capabilities, or their track record.

Can we increase trust? Mr. Covey says we can certainly increase trust—much faster than we might think—and doing so will have a huge impact, both in the quality of our lives and in the results we're able to achieve.

Why is trust an important element for Bridges of Love? As we embark our ministry in a new locality, it is critical to have the trust with those whom we serve and collaborate. Low trust slows every decision, every communication, and every relationship. Our desire is to build a culture of TRUST that will produce results, confidence, and loyalty.

## TRUSTING GOD

Once in a faraway place lived a man who had faith in God. One night, while sleeping soundly, a sound woke him and a light filled his room. God appeared telling him to push a large rock outside his house, with all his might.

The next morning he went outside and pushed the rock but was not able to move it an inch. He didn't give up, however, as from that day forward he made it his routine to push that rock daily.

For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the large rock. Each night he returned to his cabin sore and worn out.

Not seeing any progress, the man started to get discouraged. The man prayed to God asking, why after laboring hard and long, he was unable to move the rock? What was he doing wrong, and why was he failing?

God appeared saying "I asked you to serve me and you accepted. I asked you to push that rock but I never said that I expected you to move it! Look at yourself! Your arms are strong and muscled - your back sinewy and brown. Facing opposition you have grown and your abilities surpass what they were. You have not moved the rock but your calling was to be obedient, to exercise your faith, and TRUST in My Wisdom."