



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – December, 2021

“MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE AS YOU TRUST IN HIM.” Romans 13:5 (NIV)



In the Greek, the meaning of hope is *expectation of what is sure*. Life, people, and outcomes are all unpredictable, whereas God can be trusted.

The Roman church was a diverse community, made up of Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people, rich and poor, strong and weak. Such diversity made it challenging to accept one another.

Accepting means taking people into our homes as well as into our hearts, sharing meals and activities, and avoiding discrimination of any kind. In this way, we are accepting others as Christ has accepted us, with God receiving the glory.

Many individuals and families are especially vulnerable this Christmas, experiencing uncertainty for the future. Their hope grows dim as they look around and feel the despair of this world.

Having our hope in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to experience the peace and joy that comes from knowing and accepting Christ's Love and being filled with His Holy Spirit. As that love overflows into others, it is truly a 'win-win' as we benefit from the same peace and joy, as we serve and love one another. The source of abundant hope is in the God of Hope.

Warmest Christmas Greetings,

What a joyous time of year to celebrate the hope we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. In uncertain times, we can still experience overflowing joy, peace and hope through the power of His Holy Spirit.

This past month has been a busy one as we put the finishing touches on our website. Several months ago we made the decision to combine our CERT website with www.bridgesoflove.net so both our initiatives would be captured in one location. The former Shadow Minister of Public Safety Canada, Glen Motz, suggested we make adjustments to make our initiatives more understandable. To aid in his request, we now have flow-charts for [Bridges of Love's structure](#), the [Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative \(FEPI\)](#), and [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#) training. As well, "[Bridging the Gap](#)", answers forty questions regarding our CERT training. We hope these documents are helpful. It was a good exercise as working through the process, it made sure the proposed structure was sound. I am sure there will be adjustments as we continue to learn best practices, but for now it gives a good over-view, for where we presently stand.

The Alberta Civil Society Fund has offered their grant for another round. It is a very good fit for Bridges of Love's endeavors. We received six excellent letters of affirmation, from people who have been involved in our initiatives, in support of our application. We plan to broaden our territory with a stronger financial base and staff members to assist with the task ahead.

We continue to give thanks for our High River office/training head-quarters and appreciate those who contributed financially over the past year. We are so grateful for your kind generosity enabling us to continue building Bridges of Love.



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – November, 2021

“THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE” 1 John 4:18

THERE IS NO
F E A R in love.

But perfect love drives
out fear, because fear has
to do with punishment.

The one who fears is not
made perfect in love.

1 JOHN
4:18



Over the past two years, living through a pandemic, has brought a dark shadow of fear that envelopes and ultimately imprisons us within ourselves. Overcoming fear is essential for our well-being and ultimately for our mental health and peace of mind. Under our own devices, however, this is not easily accomplished.

If we are to dispel the darkness of fear, we must remind ourselves of God's love. He loves us perfectly and unconditionally. His love will quiet our fears and give us confidence, that He is with us.

There once was this criminal who had committed a crime. He was sent to the king for his punishment. The king told him he had a choice of two punishments. He could be hung by a rope, or take what's behind the mysterious iron door. The criminal quickly decided on the rope. As the noose was being slipped on him, he turned to the king and asked: "By the way, out of curiosity, what's behind that door?"

*The king laughed and said:
"You know, it's funny, I offer everyone the same choice, and nearly everyone picks the rope."
"So," said the criminal, "Tell me. What's behind the door? I mean, obviously, I won't tell anyone," he said, pointing to the noose around his neck. The king paused then answered:
"Freedom, but it seems most people are so afraid of the unknown that they immediately choose the rope!"*

We can conquer our fears, by trusting in the Lord, who casts out all fear!

EARTHQUAKE IMPACTS

An earthquake is the sudden rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock, as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long time. It is usually less than 50 miles below the surface. Earthquakes can trigger other hazards, such as avalanches, fires, floods, landslides, and tsunamis.

Earthquake Preparedness:

- ✓ Practice how to drop, cover, and hold on
- ✓ Conduct earthquake drills with your family or co-workers
- ✓ Develop a family communication plan
- ✓ Keep supplies on hand
- ✓ Keep shoes and a flashlight under the bed
- ✓ Secure bookshelves, water heaters, and tall furniture to wall studs
- ✓ Install latches on all cabinets, and anchor overhead lighting fixtures
- ✓ Secure items that might fall, such as television sets
- ✓ Store heavy and breakable objects on low shelves
- ✓ Move beds away from windows
 - Move or secure hanging objects that hang over beds, couches, and other places where people sit or lie
- ✓ Have a licensed professional install flexible pipes to avoid gas or water leaks

During an earthquake:

- ✓ Drop, cover, and hold on
- ✓ If indoors – stay there until shaking stops
- ✓ If outdoors – find a spot away from buildings, trees, streetlights, overpasses, and power lines
- ✓ In a vehicle – drive to a clear spot and stop
- ✓ If in bed – stay there and cover your head and neck with a pillow
- ✓ Immediately check yourself for injuries and protect yourself from further danger
- ✓ Tune to the Emergency Alert System for instructions and possible after shocks
- ✓ Help neighbours who may require assistance

Mark & Naomi Pollon
October 2, 2021

We are very pleased to share the news of our middle son, Mark's marriage to his lovely bride, Naomi McGregor. The autumn day was picture perfect and despite COVID concerns, everything went very smoothly. The honeymooners spent two weeks vacationing in Croatia where they enjoyed beauty, rest and a little adventure! Congratulations with much love for a life filled with continued joy and fulfillment.



Their first day in Croatia came with a significant magnitude 5.1 earthquake which rocked their hotel. One never knows where emergency knowledge may save a life! We are thankful Mark and Naomi are now safely home.



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – September, 2021

“YOUR LABOUR FOR THE LORD IS NOT IN VAIN” 1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters,

STAND FIRM. LET NOTHING
MOVE YOU. ALWAYS GIVE
YOURSELVES FULLY TO
THE WORK OF THE LORD,
BECAUSE YOU KNOW THAT
YOUR LABOR IN THE
LORD IS NOT IN VAIN.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Paul says that because of the resurrection, everything we do, will have eternal results. Discouragement can set in if we don't see the results we expect from our efforts. If we truly believe, however, that Christ has won the ultimate victory; that fact will determine the way we live and how we accept the results from our labour. We should do the good we have opportunity to do and trust God for the outcome.

Imagine Canada recently released the results from a Survey they conducted entitled, “The uneven impact of the pandemic on Canadian Charities”.

Bruce MacDonald, President & CEO, Imagine Canada shared results from their latest [Sector Monitor Survey](#) that showed:

- The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on most Canadian charities.
- Few are operating as usual
- Some are largely shut down, unable to offer their usual programs and services because of public health measures
- More are trying to cope with demands that are beyond – sometimes far beyond – their capacity to meet

Even though recovery will be slow for Bridges of Love we continue to labour, so when the next disaster strikes, communities are more prepared with a coordinated response from people who have basic CERT training.

PREPARING FOR EXTREME HEAT

Conditions of extreme heat are defined as higher than average temperatures in a particular region for that time of year, often combined with high humidity. The “Heat Index” is a measure of how hot it really feels when meteorologists factor in relative humidity with the actual air temperature. Extreme heat criteria shift by location and time of year.

Most heat-related deaths and illnesses are preventable, but heat stroke can be life threatening. The elderly and the very young are at increased risk from extreme heat. Individuals with medical issues such as heart problems or high blood pressure are more easily impacted. Being confined to bed and living on higher floors of multistory buildings are also associated with increased risk of heat-related death.

Impacts associated with a heat wave can include three main related illnesses: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Extreme Heat Preparedness

- Install additional insulation. Insulation helps to keep heat out in the summer as well as to keep heat in during the winter months.
- Protect windows and glass doors. Consider keeping storm windows installed throughout the year.
- Use attic fans. Because heat rises, attic fans can help clear the hottest air from the home.
- Install window air conditioners snugly and insulate if necessary.
- Inspect air conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
- Install temporary window reflectors (for use between windows and drapes), such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
- Weather-strip doors and window sills to keep in the cool air.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades etc.

BRIDGES OF LOVE'S MEET & GREET

We appreciate Roger Reid, MLA Livingstone Macleod and others for attending our “Meet & Greet” event on August 11.



BEE A CERT



LIFESAVER





BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – August, 2021

“WHOEVER DOES NOT LOVE DOES NOT KNOW GOD, BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE” 1 John 4:8

THE ONE WHO DOES
NOT LOVE DOES NOT
KNOW GOD, FOR **GOD IS
LOVE**

1 John 4:8

Love is a choice and an action. God is the source of our love as he loved enough to sacrifice His Son for us. Jesus is our example of what it means to love. Everything he did in life and death showed supernatural love for us. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to love. He lives in our hearts and makes us more like Christ.

John says, “God is love,” not “Love is God.” The world has turned these words around saying love is what makes a person feel good which is selfish in nature. Real love is like God's love which is perfect and giving. When we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made complete (1John 4:12).

Last month we thought we had lost our 15 year old dog, Buddy as he suddenly came down with a condition that we were not familiar – “Vestibular Syndrome.” We thought it was a stroke and were preparing for the worst, but thankfully, our vet diagnosed the condition. She said in 75% of cases, the animal recovers.



We did not expect Buddy to have a full recovery, due to his age, and the severity of his condition. We are so thankful for Jesus answering our prayers. Dogs

are truly a heavenly gift, offering unconditional love, with no strings attached.

PREPARING FOR A WILDFIRE

Wildfires are a natural part of Alberta's wildland ecosystems. By extending our communities further into forested areas, we become exposed to the danger of wildfire. There are ways, however, to reduce the risk to vulnerable communities.

Before a wildfire...

- ✓ Prepare an emergency kit.
- ✓ Whenever possible, use fire-resistant materials for home construction, renovations, or repairs.
- ✓ Create a non-combustible zone within 1.5 m of your home by removing dry leaves, sticks and debris. Clear your perimeter, roof, gutters and decks.
- ✓ Move wood piles, gas cans, portable propane tanks and lawn mowers at least 10 m from your home and other structures.

During a wildfire...

- ✓ Listen for emergency information.
- ✓ If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- ✓ While your family's safety is most important, if there is time before you leave, prepare your home.
- ✓ Close up your house.
- ✓ Leave lights on for visibility.
- ✓ Move flammable materials to center of home.
- ✓ Leave hoses connected to a water source so they are available for the fire department.

After a wildfire...

- ✓ Use caution when re-entering your home.
- ✓ Inspect the roof.
- ✓ Check stability of trees and poles around the home.
- ✓ Do not attempt to remove heavy debris by yourself.
- ✓ Wear protective clothing during clean up. These will protect you from further injury from broken glass, exposed nails, or other objects.

BRIDGES OF LOVE'S CANADIAN HEAD-QUARTERS MEET & GREET

When: Wednesday August 11

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Where: #6 - 609 Centre St.
High River, Alberta

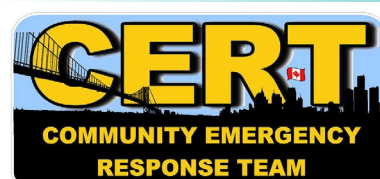
BEE A CERT



LIFESAVER

We would love to see old friends
and meet new neighbours.

Please drop by for
refreshments and learn how
during times of disaster, you
and your family can be better
prepared, to save lives and
protect property. We look
forward to showing you around
our new training facility.





BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – June, 2021

“HAVE I NOT COMMANDED YOU? BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS...” Joshua 1:9



No matter how extreme our difficulties, God is able to break through to help us. This has been proven to us over and over throughout the years of our ministry. Each time, the Lord brings relief from whatever pressure we are experiencing, it increases our faith and trust in Him. Every difficulty we face, in every waiting place He allows us to experience, is an opportunity to see God at work.

Everything in this life is a risk. We are given two options—take the risk and expect results or do not take a risk and expect nothing. God uses people who are willing to get out of their comfort zone. Great things never come out of comfort zones.

Taking risks is indeed “risky business,” however, if we don’t put our trust in the Lord. It takes faith and trust to follow God’s leading so we know we are not stepping out alone. Taking measured and balanced risks is proof of our faith.

Proverbs 3:5 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.”

People from all walks of life are feeling anxiety through the COVID Pandemic. Anxiety is a crippling disease, taking over our minds, and plunging our thoughts into darkness. God does not want us to live a life full of fear, worry, and anxiety. Trust Him for ALL our cares, and He will lead us into victory, through peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability of a system (like a community) to absorb disturbance (like a disaster) and still retain basic function and structure. How can that be accomplished in a community?

This note recently posted on LinkedIn by the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) says the principle of neighbours helping one another can be leveraged to foster resilient communities.



A few weeks ago, I wrote a letter to the Editor of our local Newspaper, asking residents their thoughts on volunteers having basic emergency training to assist themselves, neighbours, and community when first responders are over-whelmed during major disasters. Officials in High River have expressed a concern that the CERT Program has the potential to put people at risk. I wanted to hear if local residents have the same reservations. Here is one comment received:

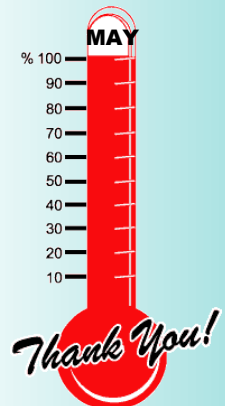
“I agree with the philosophy of having locally trained emergency responders in case of a disaster. Not only are trained individuals “boots on the ground” right at our doorstep but they can gather and pass on pertinent information to first responses once they arrive.”

What is the risk of doing nothing?

ANSWER TO PRAYER

Last month, we shared our challenges, and asked for help to meet our financial commitments for the month of May. Shortly after sending out our monthly Newsletter with an appeal, we received this email.

“You have put your whole heart and dedication into this ministry. Please allow Manor Village Life Centers Inc. to meet your \$1,000 mark for the month with a contribution of \$650.”



Soon another email came from our Landlord, Wayne.

“How about we do a rent holiday for the months of June, July and August. Then you can start paying rent again Sept 1 when hopefully Covid has left us.”

We are so very grateful to have this generous support during this critical time. God has provided once again which gives us assurance that we are to continue with the work, He has given us. Thank you!



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – March, 2021

“ARISE AND EAT” 1 Kings 19:5 (NIV)

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

1 Kings 19:5

The angel in this passage did not give Elijah a vision, or explain the Scriptures to him, or do anything remarkable. He simply told Elijah to do a very ordinary thing, that is, to get up and eat!

Elijah had just gone through discouragement and fatigue after two spiritual victories. Often discouragement sets in after great spiritual experiences, especially those requiring physical effort or involving great emotion. Elijah was depressed so God let him rest and eat.

He then instructed Elijah to get back to his mission as his battles were not over. He had work to do and God's purpose for his life were not yet done.

Depression tends to turn us away from the everyday activities of God's purposes. When the spirit of God steps in, He directs us to do the most natural, simple things—things we may not have imagined God was in. As we do them, the inspiration that comes to us, is an initiative against depression.

When the Spirit of God leads us instinctively to do something, the moment we do it, the depression is gone. As soon as we arise and obey, we enter a higher plane of life.

Oswald Chambers, “My Utmost for His Highest”

On hard days, you are still loved.
On unproductive days, you are still
purposed.
On imperfect days, you still belong.
On anxious days, you're still His.

@Christianmentalhealth

MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID

We all experience times when we are discouraged, stressed or anxious. This could be due to a multitude of circumstances such as: financial pressures, family difficulties, unemployment, or stressful situations that we have little control, like our current outbreak of COVID-19.

The Coronavirus Pandemic and the resulting economic recession have negatively affected many people's mental health and created new barriers for people who are already suffering from mental illness/substance use disorders.

From April 24 to May 11, 2020, approximately 46,000 Canadians participated in Statistics Canada online questionnaire “Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians: Your mental health.” 24% reported fair or poor mental health. Over half of participants reported that their mental health had worsened since the onset of COVID's physical distancing and most participants experience at least one symptom of anxiety.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic can be exhibited in many different ways, including feelings of depression, grief, fear, panic, and anxiety. These can be normal responses to situations where day-to-day routines are disrupted and circumstances are uncertain and perceived as potentially risky.¹

Perhaps we have family members or close friends who are struggling with mental health issues. How can we help bring comfort during challenging times?

¹Statistics Canada, “Canadians' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020

PSYCHOLOGY OF TRAUMA

The CERT Psychology of Trauma module is covered in our CERT Canada training. How do we help those traumatized by a disaster? In this unit, participants learn about:

- **Disaster Psychology:**
The psychological impact a disaster has on rescuers and survivors, and lessons on providing components of “psychological first-aid.”
- **Caring for yourself and Survivors:**
Steps volunteers can take individually and as part of CERT Team before, and following a disaster.

At the conclusion of this unit, participants will be able to:

1. Understand disaster trauma for survivors and rescuers, including CERT volunteers.
2. Lists steps to take for personal and team well-being.
3. Demonstrate key steps to apply when aiding someone with survivor's trauma.

Psychological first-aid is not therapy; rather, it is a set of techniques providing emotional intervention. During a disaster, victims as well as CERT volunteers may encounter unpleasant circumstances. This module helps with understanding and simple coping mechanisms.



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – February, 2021

“BUT THE WISDOM THAT COMES FROM HEAVEN IS FIRST OF ALL PURE” James 3:17 (NIV)

But the wisdom that comes
from heaven is first of all pure;
then peace-loving,
considerate, submissive, full
of mercy and good fruit,
impartial and sincere.
James 3:17 NIV

James 3:17-18 gives seven marks of God's wisdom: “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”

James makes it clear that “wisdom from above” cannot be known apart from a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

There has been much discourse as of late, with the election and the recent inauguration of the US President. Mix this together with a Pandemic, and we are poised for stress, anxiety, and frustration. It is easy to slip into despair and discouragement when the path is dim and unclear!

Please pray for wisdom for these uncertain, disturbing, and turbulent times.

Heavenly Father, only in you, do we find true rest when weary. When feeling burdened, in You, we find relief. We seek your wisdom and await Your guidance for direction. Teach us to be calm and patient, especially when things are not turning out as planned or expected. In times of setbacks and failures help us hold on to Your promise of guidance and blessings. Still our anxious hearts to keep trusting and loving you. Amen.

An intelligent person may have profound ideas, but a wise person puts profound ideas into ACTION!

Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI)

Bridges of Love recognized the requirement for a coordinated approach, when major catastrophic events cause a significant impact on communities. FEPI is a collaborative of local churches, who see the benefits and necessity for a “One Call” approach to community care.

Before disaster strikes, information is catalogued for church 24 hr. contact information, facility, resources, and volunteer capacity. This information proves invaluable for a quick response.

A testimonial from a thankful recipient:

“During the Alberta flood of June 2013 we were privileged to make the acquaintance of Marg and Tom Pollon of Bridges of Love. Our church (Church of God in Christ, Mennonite) was looking for accommodation for volunteers who came from BC, AB, SK and MB to help with the flood restoration and cleanup in the Calgary area. After many attempts to locate accommodation in Calgary we contacted Samaritan's Purse. We were excited to hear they knew of a ministry, Bridges of Love that they thought could help. We contacted Marg and she immediately went to work finding a church (building) where the volunteers could sleep and be served meals and also arranged for cots to be brought in. From then on they also arranged for numerous meals to be served to the volunteers.

After a few days that group of volunteers went home, but within a short time we had another group arrive, also looking for accommodation. Marg again went to work and located another church for us which filled our needs. We were blessed to work with such compassionate and caring people.”

Ray & Verda, Christian Disaster Services

CHURCHES HELPING NEIGHBOURS



COVID-19 has radically changed the fund-raising landscape and challenged many charities, non-profits and NGOs to seek new and sustainable revenue opportunities. The **ihiveLIVE** Sharing Platform has recently been launched to help charities adapt and grow sustainable revenue sources by taking advantage of changes within the digital economy.

Their concept is simple:
Invite supporters to shop on-line through **ihiveLIVE** and automatically receive a portion of their cashback generated each time they shop. In fact, supporters could gift all of their cashback to their chosen charity.

There is no cost to the charity or the supporter when the **ihiveLIVE** platform is used.

Please check out this short video to see how you can support Bridges of Love while you shop!

Watch a 1-Minute Video

Overview Video

Please join and start on-line shopping through **ihive** and help your favourite charity!





BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – January, 2021

“KEEP ME SAFE, O GOD, FOR IN YOU I TAKE REFUGE” Psalm 16:1 (NIV)



The book of Psalms is a wonderful collection of songs and prayers, which express a whole range of human emotions, from the heart and soul of humanity. David and other writers were open and vulnerable with their true feelings, reflecting a dynamic, powerful, and life-changing friendship with God. They were not afraid to confess their sins, express their doubts and fears, ask God for help in times of doubt, and praise and worship Him. In other words, they were real, sharing their honest experiences and feelings.

David begins Psalm 16 with a request to God -- “Keep me safe.” David trusts God as his refuge, strengthening his hope and faith in Him. For many, the past year has been indeed a turbulent one! Much fear and anxiety has gripped the hearts of believers and non-believers alike, as a novel virus became the focus of our lives.

God instructs us to give thanks in all circumstances. When we purposefully and consciously take the time to give the Lord genuine gratefulness, we are able to put life into the proper perspective. When we are praising God and offering thanksgiving, there is no room left for complaining and negative thinking.

Put on the new self... Ephesians 4:24

REFLECTION

Bridge of Love’s mantra,
“LOVE IS ACTION” demonstrates...
“Living Proof of a Loving Saviour”



We know it doesn’t matter our speed or age - forward is forward, and it really does not matter how slow we go...as long as we do not stop! We are truly grateful for steady growth with many lessons learned along the way.



1. God is our refuge; faithful and trustworthy.
2. We can turn our problems and anxiety into wisdom and opportunities.
3. God provides ALL our needs.
4. Only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing where our eternal destiny lies, can we truly be free from fear.
5. After many years of planning and pandemic preparedness, the reality of COVID – 19 is as expected.
6. God brings angels into our lives, often for only a season.
7. Obedience to God is the key to success and fulfillment.
8. Gratefulness brings victory over fear and anxiety.
9. Common sense is not so common!
10. As always...



2021

We can make resolutions and develop strategic plans but ultimately the agenda is Gods.

This has been the case during 2020 when our lives changed so drastically. Three years of our beginning were spent planning for an Influenza Pandemic. The outcomes from COVID-19, have been much as anticipated but the fear that has gripped hearts was indeed unexpected.

We appreciated the opportunity to facilitate the Regional Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response back in 2008. Please click to hear from our excellent presenters.

Many of the speakers were captured on video.

Planning a response for another disaster that might occur in 2021, especially when we are still experiencing the back-lash of a pandemic, is not an easy task! Bridges of Love continues to provide resources and basic emergency training for church and community.

