

Bridges of Love Ministry Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

August 1, 2019 - July 31, 2020



“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, **in everything give thanks**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Executive Director's Report

October 20,
2020

Only by His wonderful grace can we see from His perspective, rejoice always, and continually give thanks. Only by His life in us can we walk in humility and live together in the victory of His cross. Only by His Spirit in us can we obey His Word and follow His ways. Therefore we can thank Him – not only for the sunny days and happy moments – but even more for those things that show us our need and draw us closer to Him.

~ Oswald Chambers

**BRIDGES OF LOVE'S
ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING**



INTRODUCTION

With Thanksgiving just celebrated, we are reminded of all the blessings from the past year, we have to be thankful. Firstly, we are so very grateful for our newest Board Member, Judy McMillan who is indeed a gift from the Lord! Thank you Judy for joining our Team and we look forward to building our Board with additional competent people who see the vision and opportunities to serve God and the community.

We are also very thankful for God's healing touch on Tom who continues to work hard both on our technical needs as well as physical labour helping with the move. After suffering a near fatal heart-attack just a year ago, he is doing well and has worked beyond the call of duty!! Thank you Tom.

Much more to share so we will begin with the past year's activities.

- **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST**

Stephen Covey stresses the importance of leading with 'trust' in his book "The Speed of Trust." He says, one of the biggest barriers to creating a caring connection is the crossed wires of communication. We can get past many missed opportunities, Covey shared, by simply declaring our own intention and checking our assumptions.

We put this principle into practice shortly after settling into High River, by inviting the various pastors to meet for coffee. Bridges of Love was relatively unknown in this town and few knew us personally, so gaining trusting relationships was a priority. I met with three churches last fall. These included: The Salvation Army Foothills Church, High River Anglican Church, and the High River Christian Reformed Church. The Pastors of each of these churches listened with interest and there seemed to be a genuine desire to support and become involved. Our Church Contact and Resource Assessment form was shared with each, with their commitment to return the completed information, after speaking with their governing body.

Another sector where we connected, was High River's Emergency Management Agency. Peter Genereux met with me in October and then I was invited to share at their Emergency Management Advisory Council meeting in December, so appreciated this opportunity.

Other individuals whom I met with since moving to High River (2019) include: Randy Tiller, District Officer with AEMA; Shane Schreiber, Municipal Affairs Emergency Manager (Edmonton); Jeremy Nixon, MLA Calgary-Klein; and Shelly Koot, Emergency Social Services. We also extended an invite to Clayton Terletski, Emergency Manager, Foothills County, who unfortunately declined the invitation, saying they were already well connected with the community but encouraged us to support the faith communities in the Foothills Municipality.

Our hope and desire has always been to collaborate with the Public Sector, as we know without their trust and support; community members will not have the confidence to become involved in what we have to offer.

- **CERT "Affiliate Member"**

We were very pleased to welcome Robert (Bob) Davies as the first Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Affiliate serving Edmonton and GEA on December 12, 2019. Bob has many year's experience with Search & Rescue and is involved with training for the Red Cross. We are very thankful to have our first CERT Affiliate, and pray this is only the first of many, to join across Canada.



- **Events**

Unfortunately, events that we normally participated, such as Disaster Alley, were cancelled due to COVID. Before the Pandemic took hold, however, we had an opportunity to attend a few activities.

- **South Centre Mall Emergency Fair – October 12, 2019**

We were happy to have Cameron Nikituik join us again this year to help in our booth. Cam graduated from our CERT basic training a few years ago and continues to help out where needed.



- **AEMA/NAIT Emergency Management Summit – Feb. 19-20, 2020**

The Summit went ahead as planned even though our country was at the beginning stage of a Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). There was little discussion about a pandemic at the Summit, which was unfortunate, except by the Key-note Speaker who was from the US. As always, however, the sessions were excellent with valuable information shared by the many presenters.

- **Pandemic Preparedness**

After spending the first three years of our Emergency work on Pandemic Preparedness, the reality of a COVID-19 Pandemic was in many ways as predicted, but also some aspects were a surprise! As the news of this threat began to spread and fear mounted, the material Dr. Tim Foggin and I produced, *“Of Churches, Pandemics, and Emergency Preparedness – Reconnecting the church with the community in which it is found”* was shared with Calgary and High River churches. We also shared our information with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Council of Churches. I heard from a few who attended our Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response back in 2008, who were grateful for the information they received, during our Pandemic Preparedness awareness activities.

Since our offer to assist CEMA and AHS was turned down early in the Pandemic, they recommended we assist where we could, in our own community. We did share some of our pandemic supplies (gloves/masks) with a few grateful recipients and I am sure our CERT graduates were grateful to have masks in their CERT kits when supplies were hard to come by.

The recommendations for how the church could respond to assist with the community has not been as robust as we hoped, probably due to the strict quarantine measures that have been enforced. From fear of infection for themselves or infecting others, normal volunteer activity that traditionally follows a disaster, has not been forth-coming to the same degree we had anticipated.

- **Revisions to CERT Basic Training and CERT Train-the-Trainer Manuals**



I took advantage of the quieter time during the first few months of the pandemic to work on the US Train-the-Trainer CERT material. With 17 modules involved it was a large under-taking rebranding the US material, taking out American information and substituting with Canadian facts, and inserting the PowerPoint slides into the Instructor’s Manual.

The US made revisions to their CERT basic Training material in 2019. To keep our CERT training up-to-date and coincide with CERT US, the revisions for each of our CERT Canada modules was completed.

The new CERT Train-the-Trainer and revised CERT basic training materials were shared with our Edmonton CERT Canada Affiliate, Bob Davies.



- **New Office/Training facility, a leap of faith!**

With a pandemic nipping at our heels, and lock-down measures a reality in many localities, it was not an ideal time to take a leap of faith and rent an office/operations/training facility. However, with faith this was God’s calling and with Board approval, we signed the lease agreement on May 22, 2020 taking occupancy for July 1, 2020. This 500 sq. ft. space on the second floor owned by Wayne Ell is in a well-cared building on Centre St. in High River.

The next few months were spent gathering what was needed for the office, keeping an eye on “Buy & Sale”, and packing up the home office in preparation for the move. It was a busy time indeed but an exciting adventure as we anticipated having an office dedicated to Bridges of Love’s vision. A new beginning!!



SUMMARY

The past year, concluding our 16th year of operation, has not been without challenges. We have really felt God’s hand upon our decisions, however, as finding a suitable facility went very smoothly. As well, we have wonderful neighbours below, who have been very generous with sharing their internet, saving us costs at a time when funds are limited. The move has been hard work without a doubt, but God has given us the strength and wisdom, to direct our path and energy to do what was necessary to bring it to a reality.

We feel this is a new beginning for building Bridges of Love and our CERT training across Canada. We know only the Lord can broaden our ministry in these difficult times, but due to these challenges, emergency preparedness and training are more important than ever.

We began with thanksgiving blessings from the past year. our new fiscal year with the which will be our sincere and the coming year. Thank you journey.



for the many We will now begin Prayer of Jabez, earnest prayer, for for being part of the

Respectfully Submitted:

Marg Pollon, Executive Director
Bridges of Love Ministry
October 20, 2020