

A Piece of Oak Park's History

It's hard to believe that Oak Park Church of Christ is 75 years old. Though celebrations are on hold, this is a milestone well worth hosting a HUGE PARTY for when the right moment arrives!

In August of 1984, my wife Karen and I responded to the call to minister at Parkhill Church of Christ. 27 years old, full of vim and vigor! The congregation held a deep desire to expand the ministry by relocating and constructing a new building. The Mission Road location held a small land footprint and insufficient parking. These had become barriers to growth.

The existing Parkhill building had served incredibly well for over 40 years. Exceptional ministry had taken place in and around that facility. The church had been a piece of the core of the very community, yet the demographics of Calgary had changed significantly. The question now was "How do we continue to stay focused on our mission to 'Glorify and honour God through making more and better disciples?'" A building can be a phenomenal tool. If we build wisely and efficiently, the Kingdom

grows, and God's purposes are accomplished. And so, armed with strong and willing leadership, committed church members, and visionary youthful enthusiasm, we launched into an all-out property search and relocation plan.

Prior to our arrival, the previous minister, Blayne Banting, had helped lay some excellent groundwork. The leadership had committed to some primary foundational concepts. Three in particular stand out: (1) Always seek to maintain harmony and consensus in decision making, (2) Continue effective ministry all along the way, and (3) Remain fiscally responsible. By doing so, we believed we could arrive together, intact, and with freedom to serve without undue constraint or debt.

After three years of land searching, including a last-minute bail out of a site that had undisclosed major development and financial commitments, we were able to secure the 1.2-acre site at 11263 Oakfield Drive SW. This spot represented excellent transportation (cont'd on page 3)



Lenten Sermon Series Begins February 21, 2021

FAMOUS LAST WORDS



oak park
CHURCH OF CHRIST

JUST DO IT!

**Join us for this time of special prayer and
worship, designed just for you.**

Saturday, February 20th 10-11:30am

Pre-Registration Required

Please wear a mask, bring your Bible,
journal, pen, markers. Also water, tea or
coffee, a pillow or blanket.. just to be
comfortable. (No perfume please.)

JUST
worship
DO men
men
prayer
IT!



(cont'd from page 1) access points in a thriving newer community surrounded by other growing communities, and in an area that was grossly under-churched with only two other church buildings within a three mile radius.

It is hard to describe the combined feelings of enthusiasm, trepidation, thrill, fear, fervour, impatience, and uncertainty that accompanies the unknown. A project like this is much bigger than any one person or even a strong leadership group. Frankly, God must ALWAYS remain at the center. United in purpose and finding ways to agree together bring about excitement and joy in the process. Providentially, fears were subjected to having confidence that this was a good and right thing to do.

The elders, leaders, and planning team poured incredibly long hours into the planning and details. Yet, strangely enough, it was energizing, thrilling even! Professional architectural drawings were produced. We hired Keith Callbeck, an 'in-house' experienced project manager. And God's incredible provision came in the form of a glorious gift. A self-titled volunteer 'Church Builders' group out of Georgia, USA, who agreed to partner with us. Long story short, 50 men arrived in Calgary 'armed and un-dangerous' to construct the complete building structure 'from slab to steeple' in three weeks! Our project manager had organized all of the pre-work and initial construction up to the slab stage, along with building materials, tools, cutting plans, etc.... A massive tent was erected on site as our dining facility. Everyone in the congregation volunteered from children right through to our seniors. An ARMY of volunteers! And in three weeks the main structure was completed.

From my personal viewpoint it is one of the major highlights of my lifetime. Unforgettable! I am not alone in that sentiment. It was a wonderfully shared enterprise. A glorious endeavour! It is an awesome privilege to work arm-in-arm with fellow believers all focused on being a partner in God's Kingdom work. Helping to construct a church building can be one aspect of that. Praise God for so many dedicated, sacrificial, willing servants. Too many to name.

The final touches of the building took place over an additional three-month period. September of 1988 was the Dedication Service. The whole community was invited. Many had been observing the beehive of activity and seemed excited alongside of us. And here is a capstone comment. Within one month we experienced the first baptism of a woman from the community, who is still with the congregation today!

And guess what? Within three years the mortgage was paid off. Hard to imagine. This building, a tool for God's work has been most valuable. (cont'd on page 4)

(cont'd from page 3) This has been a home for: worship, preaching, teaching, prayer, fellowship, youth work, children's ministry, counseling, countless meals, senior's gatherings, childcare, housing the homeless, marriages, funerals, celebrations, meeting space for community events, etcetera. 11263 Oakfield Drive has been a home for hope and healing and happiness for over 32 years.

The expansion in 1996 opened up an additional 100 seats, upstairs youth space, a large fireside meeting area, along with baptism changing areas. Once again, the mortgage was paid off in three years. That too was a highlight.

For Karen and I, our 20-year ministry represents our 'raising a family' years. We lived, loved, laughed, cried, and worshipped alongside a wonderful band of brothers and sisters committed to Jesus. The wrestles and struggles were well worth it. They are overshadowed by the meaning and purpose of joining God in His Kingdom work.

May the era ahead be full of the same!

By John Nicholson (pictured with wife Karen).



Save Your Empties! Bottle Drive Fundraiser



Drop your cans and bottles at the church,
Proceeds go to Youth Short Term Missions Fund

Intern Spotlight



My name is Victoir Moise, I am from Decision Christian Church Haiti. I was sponsored by Oak Park Church of Christ to come to Canada to pursue my Bachelor Degree of Theology. I am excited to do my internship here at Oak Park.

Oak Park is my home church in Canada. I remember when I attended for the first time, I felt welcomed, and loved by the congregation. As part of my internship I will be planning a kids Christmas party for my home church in Haiti. The reason behind this is that growing up I struggled a lot, especially during Christmas, when I would see most of my friends with toys given to them by their parents. Meanwhile, my parents could not afford to buy me any. I remember crying, and wondering to myself, "Why am I alive?" It was hard for me to understand that my parents were poor and they could not afford to buy me a gift. All I wanted was to receive something for Christmas like my friends.

Every Christmas there are thousands of kids wondering to themselves the same questions, and this is why I would like to organize a Christmas party with these kids. I would like to provide them a gift and a dish which will help them celebrate Christmas together.



Lifeline Adventure 2021

Lifeline's Adventure Challenge begins March 1st!
Pick your adventure. "Fun"raise your goal. Track your miles.
Impact the world.

Description:

From March 1st - April 30th, 2021, we will hike, bike, swim, run, or walk, logging our miles to make a difference. We are one team, on one adventure, and together we will make one local and global impact.

Lifeline Adventure allows participants from all over the world to gather virtually, setting team or individual mileage goals to empower youth, provide health and nutrition, and create paths for struggling communities to be self-sustaining.

You can hike, bike, swim, run, or walk to make a difference.

Engage with us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/LifelineCM>) or on your own pages using #LifelineAdventure when sharing your progress from this journey.

Course:

Virtually, we will start off in Ohio, our Lifeline home base ministry center. From there, we will travel around the world, visit different Lifeline locations, and learn about the impact you're making. Our goal is to travel 25,000 miles, raise \$25,000, and make a difference locally and globally in people's lives, both physically and spiritually.

Visit <https://lifeline.org/lifeline-adventure> to register today!



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, March 21st
12:45 PM

Our AGM will be held on March 21st both in-person at the church and via Zoom. AGM materials will be distributed by email in early March to Oak Park's voting members.*

A Pre-AGM "Q&A Session" will be held on March 14th via Zoom at 12:45pm.

Zoom links will be email to all voting members.*

* Not sure if you are a voting member? Please contact the church office.



Drama Ministry!

Do you love theatre?
Do you love telling the stories of the Bible?
Do you love being creative?

We are looking for people to be a part of a Drama Ministry

Actors • Set/Prop Designers & Builders • Costume Creators • Tech Help



Eat Well. Spend Less.



**Any one can order one or more
Good Food Boxes.**

Boxes must be pre-ordered and paid for in cash (exact change) on or before the order by date. You can pre-purchase your next box when you pick up your order. Boxes must be picked up, before 6pm. (Note: Boxes not picked up will be donated - no refunds will be given.)

Good Food Boxes come in the following sizes:

LARGE	40 lbs	\$35.00
MEDIUM	30 lbs	\$30.00
SMALL	20 lbs	\$25.00

2021

ORDER BY	DELIVERY DATE
January 18	January 27
February 15	February 24
March 8	March 17
April 12	April 21
May 3	May 12
May 31	June 9
September 6	September 15
September 27	October 6
October 25	November 3
November 29	December 8

For information call Oak Park Church office at (403) 251-5150 or email office@oakpark.ca

The Oak Park Book Club

In the book “One Blood” author John Perkins, living the last quarter of his life, felt compelled to tackle one of the most controversial subjects of the 21st century. He titled it, “Parting Words To The Church On Race And Love.”

The subject of race (ethnicity) should not be so controversial considering we are all from one race, the ‘human race.’ But as the book points out, ‘In almost all cultures, we are naturally taught to distrust what is different. We’re tribal, and we feel most comfortable with people like ourselves.” Through vivid, personal stories, John grants us access to experience eighty-seven years of his life’s journey. Being born black in America paved his life’s path to experience hatred, abuse, and extreme racial injustices by his own countrymen. Most would have crippled under such oppression. But despite John’s reality and meagre third grade education, he decided that the past would not define his future. Instead of living a life of bitterness, hatred, and accepting the fate of being an angry black man, he instead chose the path to reconciliation and recognized that his oppressors were themselves hurting and were in need of help.

His parting words to the church were, “the problem of reconciliation that we struggle with is a God-sized problem and it is much too big to be wrestled to the ground by plans that begin in the minds of men. It is one that only the Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can heal. It requires the quality of love that only our Saviour can provide.” There is so much to learn from John’s journey and teaching, but as he stated, the best place to start is to “listen, look, learn, and laugh with others, then we will learn to love.” As we marathon our way through this book, let us keep in mind 1 John 4:7-8 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

By Pastor Ricot Leon

A December to Remember

No doubt we will always remember 2020 as the year when the whole world seemed to grind to a halt because of a tiny but highly infectious and menacing virus. As the magnitude of the situation sunk in, every one of us had to make adjustments to our lifestyle to accommodate the ever-evolving safety measures and restrictions being recommended by our health officials and government. For some, these measures brought serious consequences such as job loss and economic hardship, while others had to cancel travel plans or make changes to events such as weddings, funerals, birthday parties, Thanksgiving and Christmas. The end result being that we just couldn't do many of the things we wanted to do.



Yet in the midst of all these things that we couldn't do (especially as Christmas time approached) the Lord stirred something wonderful in the hearts of his people at Oak Park that we could do – and that was to give. And I don't mean give in our usual way but give in an extraordinary way with overabundance to people we don't know and may never receive thanks from!



It's astounding really, to think that in a year when we had every reason to be consumed with our own needs and disheartened by ongoing disappointments, the congregation of Oak Park felt compelled to give, give, and give even more to twenty-one families who would otherwise have faced a very meager Christmas indeed! The magnitude of this giving was amazing as it included close to \$10,000 in new gifts and gift cards along with 175 bags of groceries and 45 boxes of clothing and household items from the used clothing ministry!

Now you would have thought achieving something of that magnitude during a pandemic would have been enough by itself, with all of the gift purchasing, wrapping, grocery shopping, sorting, delivery, etc. But there's more! Together, the congregation of Oak Park also purchased and filled twenty-three backpacks with essentials and goodies for the homeless youth in our city!

Undeniably 2020 will be an unforgettable year at Oak Park for many reasons. So, it is fitting that it should come to a close in such a wonderful way with a December to Remember.

Well done church!
By Pastor Martin



Your Giving Matters!

2020 Financial Update



Current year's actual compared to prior year's actual

	Jan - Dec 2020	Jan - Dec 2019
Funds Received:		
- General Fund	337,873	330,907
- Telus Tower	14,000	14,000
- Other Revenue	50,344	52,802
	402,217	397,709
Disbursements:	-410,269	-394,523
Subtotal before Gov't programs	-8,052	3,186
Temporary Wage Subsidy	6,797	-
Cdn Emergency Business Loan	10,000	-
Surplus	8,745	3,186

Current year's actual compared to budget

	Actual Jan - Dec 2020	Budget Jan - Dec 2020
Funds Received:		
- General Fund	337,873	324,789
- Telus Tower	14,000	14,000
- Other Revenue	50,344	39,344
	402,217	378,133
Disbursements:	-410,269	380,666
Subtotal before Gov't programs	-8,052	-2,533
Temporary Wage Subsidy	6,797	-
Cdn Emergency Business Loan	10,000	-
Surplus/Deficit	8,745	-2,533



Did you know Oak Park has an app? Download to your smartphone to access online sermons & event information. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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oak park
CHURCH OF CHRIST