

Reflections of My Time With the Mission on Mission



My tenure at what was still the Parkhill Church on Mission Road began on Halloween 1980. I remember the date because I thought it might have been somewhat ironic, as I still ponder whether I was a trick or a treat, or maybe some of both. In retrospect, maybe I should have waited until April Fool's Day and that would have settled the mystery. I moved into Calgary from Nanton, just an hour to the south and moved into the 'grannie suite' at George and Eileen Chapman's. Single, idealistic and a bit bookish, I settled into a new challenge somewhat unsure of what awaited me in this new adventure. I unloaded my library into my new office, which was an ATCO trailer affectionately dubbed 'the Annex' and settled in for the next few years.

There was a lot of maturing to do, at the ripe old age of 24, and by the time I left for further schooling a few years later I was married, somewhat wiser (probably due to the fact I had married 'up'), and full of ideas of how I might do things differently if given another chance. I still refer to some of my experiences (i.e. blunders) in my

classes on pastoral theology just to break the ice so my students don't feel completely overwhelmed by the challenges of vocational ministry. When they stop laughing, they seem to feel better – mission accomplished. More than forty years have elapsed and as I look backward through the looking glass and wish I knew then what I know now. But the reality of the situation is what I know now is only because of what I learned by not knowing it then – you know?

Part of that time was spent finding my way, my true calling as it were. There were so many directions I could take, and I wasn't sure which one I should choose, so I dabbled in all of them. There was a certain restlessness in those years, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. I tried developing my practice of pastoral care, largely because that was the tradition left by George Chapman in all his years at the church, but I felt a bit like David in Saul's armour. It didn't seem to have the same effects, partly because I was way too antsy to listen to anyone for any length of time. (Cont'd on page 3)



Good Friday Service

April 2, 10:00 am

**in-person
&
livestreamed**

Registration required for in-person attendance. Space is limited.
Livestream will be recorded and available after the service is complete.



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 emailed to all voting members.*

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

(Cont'd from page 1) I tried my hand at being a church growth advocate, took a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and took classes in philosophy. I traded off my car three times, each time buying a more offbeat vehicle than the one before. All this almost seems humorous to me now, but those were growing years for me and I had to learn for myself. Would it have been better if I had a bit more mentoring? Probably, but by God's grace I survived and so did the church. I lived into the reality of finding my calling and experiencing firsthand the insight of Frederick Buechner who writes, *"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."*

Lessons I learned while at Parkhill include the importance of timing. The church had started to grow, and we were feeling the pinch of not having enough room to carry on our ministry. We laid plans for either an addition which would have been ill-considered given our location or relocating which was a far more expensive and demanding choice. Plans were starting to take shape when the rug was pulled out from underneath us through several events including the heart attack of Lloyd Free who was leading the committee. I recall being disappointed, but now realize the time was not right, but it soon would be and a few years later the relocation took place to Oak Park, and the rest, as they say, is history. Another valuable lesson was to appreciate the culture of the church before trying to change it. In my haste to initiate change I had overlooked the heritage of faithfulness already present in the way the church went about its mission. Another time I would have enjoyed more and fussed less.

However, what I remember most were the many formative and life-changing experiences of worship services together, raucous potluck dinners in the church basement, God-moments with many of the saints there who are now with Jesus (and some who are still around!), crazy wedding experiences (like when I had to go to the crack house next door to the church to recruit someone to be a witness at a private wedding), and lifelong experiences and relationships I still hold dear. What a joy it has been to be connected to a living, breathing manifestation of God's Kingdom in action, and I for one, congratulate you all for reaching this important historical milestone on your seventy-fifth anniversary.

Grace and peace to you all.

By Blayne Banting



Eat Well. Spend Less.

 **Oak Park**
CHURCH OF CHRIST

2021

**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 |

ORDER BY

January 18
February 15
March 8
April 12
May 3
May 31
September 6
September 27
October 25
November 29

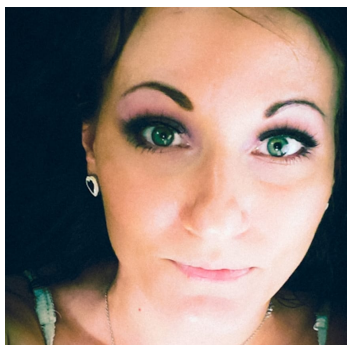
DELIVERY DATE

January 27
February 24
March 17
April 21
May 12
June 9
September 15
October 6
November 3
December 8

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



Fleeting Gifts



One summer night God taught me an amazing lesson. It was 9pm and I was taking the garbage outside when I looked up. The sunlight was slowly beginning to fade, thin lines of steel grey clouds crept steadily across the horizon, their billowy folds lavished in pale pink with fine dabs of white. I watched the clouds roll lazily across the darkening sky for a moment, thinking of how much the

spectacular scene reminded me of an oil painting and was struck with the desire to describe it to some of my artsy friends. I pulled out my phone and typed a brief message about how beautiful God made the world and described the sunset. Hitting send, I put my phone in my pocket and looked up again. The blushing pink lined with dabs of white was gone, only the steel grey clouds continued their steady march across the horizon, backed by dull greyish blue sky. I had paused for only a moment, and the beauty had moved on. In my spirit I felt a deep gratitude for that brief glimpse of such beauty, but I also felt that God had spoken to me.

How many times has He revealed breath taking glimpses of His beauty, only to have us so encumbered by our worldly lives that we have not seen them? How many times have we kept our gaze on our phones, computers or televisions, our attention on our job, school or friends – so much so that we have been oblivious to something magical placed by God directly in our path? So many fleeting gifts, when our kids glance up at us from their toys and smile, when our spouse hears something that touches their heart and their eyes soften, when the sun casts a shadow in just the right way to light up the world. Have we become so entirely immersed in paying the bills, getting our children the things we never had, scrambling toward a hefty retirement savings that we are missing those simple beautiful glimpses of God that He gives us daily?

In that brief moment as I stared at the sky, my thoughts of work, money and stress evaporated, and I had only one thought. “God, You make beautiful things.” We live in a fast-paced, egocentric world. Yet we know we are made for so much more. The world is Satan’s domain, but God reminds us in even the smallest things that we belong not to the god of this world, but to the God of creation.

I began thinking that perhaps if I just slow down, if I forget what the world says is so important, or maybe if I leave the world in its rightful place and focus instead on its Creator, maybe then I will catch more of those glimpses of His glory. It seems unbelievable, that one moment staring up at the summer sky could render such revelation. But God uses all of His creation to speak to our hearts and remind us that we exist to reflect His glory. That night God showed me how a collection of steel grey clouds could become a masterpiece when the sun's light reflects on them at just the right angle.

How much more beautiful could the Church become if we all reflected the Son's light at just the right angle?

By Kristie Buckingham



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prayer

JUST DO IT!

Oak Park Women! Gather to pray & worship the Lord!

10:00 - 11:30am

March 27th & May 1st

Registration Required

Bring your own water bottle, tea or coffee, and please wear a mask.

Social distancing and Covid-19 protocols in place. Contact the church office for more information.



We are back in-person!

Oak Park Youth Group

Fridays
7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
@ Oak Park Church of Christ

*Masks will be required to attend in compliance with Calgary Bylaw 26M2020



VOLUNTEER

VIDEOGRAPHY & EDITING

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR VIDEOGRAPHY/EDITING
PLEASE CONTACT SHELLEY@OAKPARK.CA

No experience necessary, training provided!

New Prayer Room

We have a brand new prayer room for use in the sanctuary! As part of our summer renovations we converted our old storage room into a designated prayer room. It is a quiet space for prayer, counselling/pastoral care, reflection, reading the word and spending time with the Lord.



New Wifi Access

We have updated our public wifi access. Below is the login information:

Network: OP-Public
Password: publicpark

Oak Park Missions Update

Vienna Moilliet and the Refuge of Hope - Urgent Need for Prayer

Refuge of Hope is a partner with a local church and their pastor, Rod, has recently become very ill rather suddenly. Hospitalization and early test results have not found a cause and further results are pending. Please pray a cause can be found and that he will be restored to health. The \$3000 bill for his medical care so far is way more than the family can pay and someone



has set up a GoFundMe account if anyone would like to help. Please search Karen Moilliet on Facebook to find the link to the GoFundMe account.

Life has been extra busy for Vienna as all schools in the Philippines are closed due to Covid. Staff must ensure students complete their lessons and help provide them with extra learning experiences as they can.

Vienna is enjoying being able to do one shift per week at the nearby midwifery



clinic. She's had a difficult spell with feeling very 'down', feeling the enemy is attacking her faith. After extra time with the Lord in her daily devotions, listening to podcasts, etc, and prayer support she is feeling better now and she wants to thank those who have been praying for her. She depends on it.

They are very anxious to move ahead with the purchase of a nearby 7.5-acre piece of land to provide a much better space for their growing number of residents. The cost is \$90,000 CAD. If you feel led to donate to this cause this is the link <https://www.msccanada.org/projects/refuge-of-hope-land-building-fund/>

Oak Park Missions Update

Pine Lake Christian Camp

Wow! Have you heard about the amazing amount of work Freek and Jessie have accomplished in the last year?

The Lord blessed the camp with some unexpected funds when the Delburne church closed and sold their property. With this financial help, Freek has been able to build a new cabin, a new gazebo, a new greenhouse structure, and a new large outdoor banquet table, plus many small improvements. Would you believe he is planning lots more? So exciting! The camp has hired a summer program director and is now looking for a cook. Please pray for God's direction as they try to plan for a summer camp program despite not knowing what the Covid restrictions might be.





NOW HIRING

HEAD COOK
MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT
KITCHEN HELPER
CAMP COUNSELLOR

PLCC

Contact

INFO@PINELAKECHRISTIANCAMP.COM

Art in the Park

Are you artistic?
Musical? Creatively
inclined? Oak Park is
having a virtual art
show called "Art in the
Park" and we need
artists of all kind to
submit! Submissions
are due by April 14th.
If you are interested
please send an email
to shelley@oakpark.ca
for details.



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