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SEA TO SEA

Magazine of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada



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The Person

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EDITORIAL

One of the most common comments I receive from first time visitors to our congregation is “I can’t believe how many young people you have here!” In a time when many churches are sadly witnessing a “lost generation” of young people, we should be so thankful to the Lord for blessing the RPCC with so many children and youth. We sing in Psalm 127 that children are a heritage from the Lord. What a beautiful and bountiful heritage we have! In this issue of *Sea to Sea*, Lily-Rose Grondin reports that the recent Winterlude retreat saw nearly “70 teens from Ontario, Alberta, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Indiana and Florida gather[ed] at the Ottawa RP Church.” May we never take something like that for granted. We are taught to pray for our children and youth, in the words of Psalm 144:12, that “May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars cut for the structure of a palace”. That can only be possible through the gracious work of the One who rescues v. 10. Pray first and foremost that our covenant youth would not just be in Church, but in Christ. Pray that parents and congregations would take seriously, and by God’s grace live out, the vows taken as covenant children are baptized. Pray that our young

men and women would remember their Creator in the days of their youth, Ecclesiastes 12:1. Pray that they would be like arrows in the hand of a warrior (Psalm 127:4), both “sharp” in doctrine and “straight” in life. Pray for good and lasting Gospel friendships. Start praying early for godly spouses. Pray for those who would love to have children of their own, but are, so far, unable. Pray for, and come alongside, those exploring or experiencing foster-care or adoption. Pray for preaching that blesses little ones too. Pray for Sabbath school teachers and youth leaders. Pray for our children as they grow up in a culture that is running hard and fast away from the Lord and His Word. Young ones can be effective witnesses too, 2 Kings 5:2-3. Pray for the Lord’s blessing on our children and our children’s children. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 19:14)



Rev. Matt Kingswood
Minister, Russell RP Church

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Front Cover: Toronto skyline by Arpan Parikh



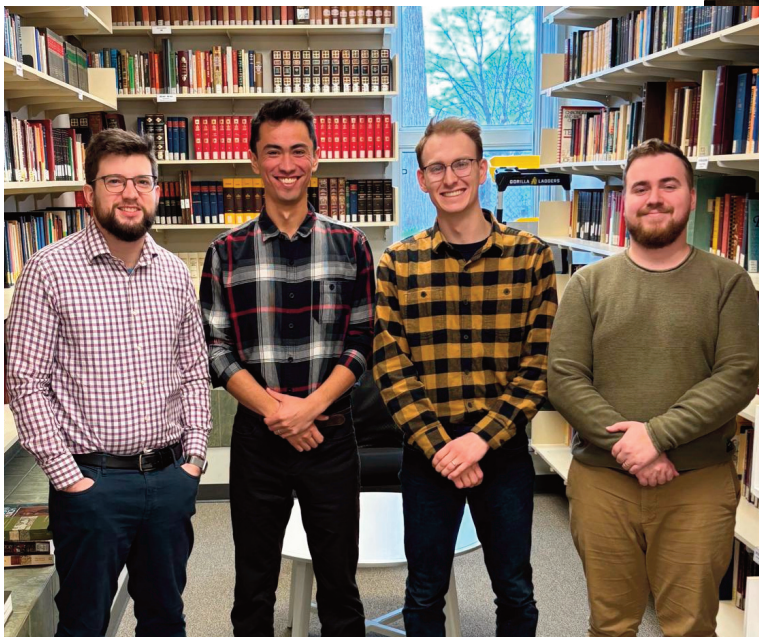
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All Bible quotations are from the ESV

NEWS

SEMINARY UPDATE

The RPCC Seminary students started off 2026 with a two week Greek intensive course taught by Rev. David Matthes, Minister of Vancouver RPC. This was followed by a Systematic Theology course on the Doctrine of God with Rev. Matt Kingswood, Minister of Russell RPC. A second two week intensive course was taught by Rev. Dr. Jeff Stivason, Minister of Grace Gibsonia RPCNA and New Testament professor for the



Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh. Dr. Stivason taught New Testament History and Theology in a compressed six days of lectures. This third term of the first year of Seminary will be rounded out by a Pastoral Theology class being taught by Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley, Minister of Ottawa RPC in the last week of March, as this magazine is being printed.

RP CHURCH OF CANADA

Women's RETREAT

Is being held April 10 & 11 at Camp Iawah in Godfrey Ontario.
Mrs. Catherine Metzger will be speaking on the topic of Discipleship.
Please be in prayer for Catherine as she speaks and for all those attending,
that it will be a time of real encouragement and growth.

KINGDOM LIFE: THE PERSON

Matthew 5:6

Blessed.

Jesus spent most of his time teaching us about the blessing of Kingdom life. His "Sermon on the Mount" describes in a series of parable-like statements (all in the present tense) 'the blessed' life. The kingdom of heaven is accessible here on earth through Him. It's an invitation to 'us ducks' to leave the life of waddling and learn to fly.

3 Steps to the Door

Sitting at the middle of this Kingdom life description is v.6 and its promise of being 'satisfied'. Like a door into the Kingdom is the fulfillment of our hunger and thirst for righteousness can never be satisfied apart from Christ. The path to this door is certainly not instinctive. Jesus describes the gate as "a narrow." (Matthew 7:14)

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

Jesus says your journey into the Kingdom starts when you realize you lack any spiritual competency to merit entrance into this blessed life.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

What depletes us of any spiritual ability is our sin that offends our Creator. Jesus says His Kingdom is filled with divine comfort for those who mourn their sin.

'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.'

This is the Kingdom promise; forfeit all pursuit of your own glory in service of others and the Father will give you the earth as your inheritance.

These are his invitations to the blessed life. A pathway to tasting and seeing the goodness of God (Psalm 34:8), entering the door to the satisfied soul. This is Kingdom life.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote, "I do not know of a better test that anyone can apply to themselves in this whole matter of the Christian profession than a verse like this. If this verse to you is one of the most blessed statements of the whole scripture, you can be quite certain that you are a Christian; if it is not, then you better examine your foundations again."



“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

Hunger and Thirst

It’s a stunning yet obvious conclusion to the first ‘three steps’, a product of coming to the realization and confession that I am incapable of obtaining what I need most in this life. Like the body is built for physical sustenance, so the soul requires nourishment. What the Psalms will speak of as a soul-thirst (Psalms 42, 63) and glory hunger, Paul will describe in Romans 1 as the root of our idolatry, i.e. a soul dehydration, a glory-emptiness. C.S. Lewis wrote, “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy..., the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.”

Jesus teaches that in His kingdom a heart filled with poverty and mourning and meekness should produce a dissatisfaction with the creation and leave us desperate for the Creator. This ever-present unquenched thirst can only be satisfied in His Kingdom.

Righteousness

But what we long for, whether we understand this or not, Jesus says, is ‘righteousness’.

It is so essential in His Kingdom that unless our possession of it exceeds even the most religious efforts we will be disqualified for His Kingdom (Matthew 5:20). There are no degrees of it. We either have it or not.

What is it? It is the only thing that reconciles sinners to God (Romans 5:12-19) and allows God to adopt us as His children. It is what Christ provides uniquely, exclusively and most crucially for life in His Kingdom. It is His beauty and obedience. His loveliness and His perfect record. It is the worship of heaven and the love of the Father. It is what is given to us by God’s grace as we trust in Christ. What we all ultimately long for is a perfect reputation and lasting love and approval.

Righteousness.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21 Paul will describe this “the great exchange” where Christ obtained our record and we His. In this way we come into His kingdom. Wearing what belongs to Christ alone—the perfect commendation of God—righteousness.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. (Philippians 3:8)

So, to hunger and thirst for righteousness is to long for union with Christ. By bringing us into union with Christ, God views Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us. It’s like a poor bride that marries a rich generous King. Not only does he clear her debts, but all the treasures of his kingdom become hers now that she is “one flesh” with him. In union with Christ, God not only clears our debt, he gives us the treasures of his righteousness, all of His accolades and praise. All his worthiness. All of the love of the Father.

In the words of J.I. Packer, “God reckons righteousness to [us], not because he accounts [us] to have kept the law personally...but because he accounts [us] to be united to one who kept it representatively...”

This ever-present unquenched thirst can only be satisfied in His Kingdom

Satisfied

So, the essential question of this Kingdom is this—does this divine approval in Christ satisfy your soul thirst? Do you find He is filling the glory hunger that you have?

Here’s the promise from Jesus to you “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35)

What if the next time you found yourself hungry for someone’s approval or tempted to quench your soul thirst at some cistern of the world, you looked instead at the Living Water thirsting on the cross? (John 19:28)

Could that not quench those deep longings for righteousness?

This is the experience described by John Owen, “We are never nearer Christ than when we find ourselves lost in holy amazement at His unspeakable love”.

That’s Kingdom Life...the blessed Life. It’s all in Jesus.

**Rev. Matt Dyck
Minister, Hillside RPC**



INTERVIEW

Mr. Rob Somers
Ruling Elder in New Creation RPC



Make it your chief and highest aim to serve God, to honour him, and to glorify his name

Give us a brief life history (where were you born, early family life, etc.)

I am the son of Rodger and Dianne Somers, born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on May 23, 1974. My mother has been a Christian for as long as I can remember. For many years my father was not a believer. Though he did not show much interest in the things of God, he did not forbid my mother from attending services, and so she would regularly take me and my sister to church. Despite her effort in this way, it was not until my twenty-first year that I became a Christian.

What is your current situation (church, location, job, family etc.)?

These days I reside in Kitchener, Ontario, where I am a member of New Creation RPC. I also serve as a ruling elder there. I am married to Rachael, and have one daughter, Hannah. I make my living installing and repairing automated lubrication systems.

What has been the biggest challenge in getting where you are today?

I don't view my life as a challenge (or series of challenges) to be overcome. What I see is a gracious God, always with me in every circumstance. From my earliest memories, I recall a long history of the Lord God of Heaven keeping and preserving my life from physical harm, and even death. In time, he saved me from spiritual death. In all of this, I don't see challenge, but a faithful God who has loved me, and lead me (as the

good shepherd). And so my life has been one of waiting on the Lord and looking forward to being in his presence.

What has been the greatest influence in your life for Christ?

Not so much a what, but a who. This would be my mother. She was always taking me to church, and regularly praying for me. Eventually these things bore fruit.

What advice would you give to someone 10 years younger than you?

Make it your chief and highest aim to serve God, to honour him, and to glorify his name. These are worthy of the best part of your time and energy. Therefore, be careful with your time (Ephesians 5:15-17). Be wary of too many hours spent on pursuits not essential for this life, nor beneficial for the one to come. Be mindful and watchful, lest ten years pass by and you hardly notice.

If the Lord continues to bless, what would you like to see happen in the RP Church in Canada?

It would bring me great joy to see an RP congregation established in Huron County (where I grew up). There are many church buildings there, but not many faithful assemblies. It is my regular prayer that the Lord will cause the church to flourish in that place.

MISSION UPDATE

Emerging First Fruits in Central Asia



If someone were to walk the streets of a major city in Central Asia*, they might not immediately notice spiritual hunger. Life appears full—markets are bustling, hospitality is generous, and traditions are deeply rooted. Yet beneath the surface, many quietly search for peace, meaning, and freedom, often without language to express what is missing.

The “B” family* has now lived in Central Asia for over four years. Their calling has been shaped by long-term presence, e.g. language learning, hospitality ministry, and business responsibilities that allow them to remain in the country. Progress has often been slow and unseen, but the Lord has been at work through ordinary faithfulness.



One of the Lord’s clear gifts in this season has been Dr. PB*, who has lived with the family for nearly two years. At 78 years old, she has been a remarkable blessing both to the family and to the local community. In a culture that highly respects the elderly, her warmth and approachability have opened doors of trust. She has become a relational bridge, connecting the team with many locals and creating opportunities for ongoing Gospel conversations.

Language learning remains central to the work. After years of focused study on the heart language of a major unreached people group, the family has increasingly worked in the national language. Though progress comes slowly, it has allowed them to feel more at home and communicate more widely, deepening relationships across the city.

The Lord has also answered long-standing prayers for teammates. A young woman from China spent time with

the team discerning her future calling before committing to ministry elsewhere. More recently, a young couple has committed to serving for at least a year and is expected to arrive soon with their newborn. Their willingness to learn language and culture has been a significant encouragement.

Alongside the ministry, Mr. B oversees a language business that provides a long-term presence. This work has brought both stability and trials. A sudden death and serious injury among employees required an emergency return during furlough. Through hardship, the Lord has impressed again that he alone is our strength and wisdom.

Most encouraging are the first fruits emerging in relationships. Several individuals—refugees, families, and seekers—have shown growing openness to Scripture. In recent months, some have professed faith, while others continue to read God’s Word and ask earnest questions. The Lord is at work.

Please pray for the B family: for wisdom in a season of team changes, for their marriage and children, for additional labourers, and for ongoing discipleship among new believers. May the Lord establish the work of their hands for his glory in Central Asia.

*Since this is a very sensitive field for our workers, we do not publish names or places.

Rev. Vince Ward
Interim Teaching Elder, Beckwith RPC



NEWS

2026 WINTERLUDE

This year again, on February 6-8, the RPCC hosted its eagerly anticipated annual Winterlude Youth Retreat. Attendance was higher than ever, with almost 70 teens from Ontario, Alberta, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Indiana and Florida gathering at the Ottawa RP Church. Time flew by as we engaged in worship, fellowship, and meditation on the Word of God.

The retreat's topic was "What has your heart?" and 1 John 2:15-17, which we studied during three talks led by Rev. Vince Ward of Beckwith RPC. Pastor Ward told us of the need to choose between the love of the world and the love of God, as we cannot have both. Rev. Ward warned us about the world, the flesh and the devil and their three traps: the desires of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life. Finally, Pastor Ward urged us to renounce to what is temporary, and to let the love of God rule our lives.

While the talks produced much thought, prayer, and self-examination, the retreat was not entirely that sober. It was sprinkled with many activities: chaotic group games, a rather loud Kahoots! trivia game, and impromptu wrestling matches. We also had a Psalm sing and attempted to stump the pastor during a Q&A session. Yet the most exciting of all activities was skating on the Rideau Canal on Saturday afternoon.

Despite the cold weather ("cold" being an understatement), Winterlude's highlight activity was as much fun

as ever. The youth enjoyed about two hours of smooth ice, sunshine, and an improvised line dance on ice, with skates on. We must of course thank Beaver Tails, who made it all worth it.

More importantly, we wish to thank all the people who made this retreat possible, among which are: the organizers, the supervisors, the game leaders, the drivers, the cooks, the host families, and Rev. Ward. Thank you for volunteering your time and energy! This retreat is a blessing and we can't wait for next year's, if it is in God's plan.

"One of my favourite things would be the community. All the people there are friends and there isn't anyone left out. The fellowship that we got to have all together was amazing." – *Rebecca van Popta, Ottawa, ON.*

"I loved going out on the ice and learning how to skate but my favourite part was really getting to know people and getting a deeper connection with them. I made a bunch of friends in only a couple days." – *Jonah Bosch, Beaver Falls, PA.*

"My highlights are the fun we all got to share and the talks. I found them very practical for trials we face as teens." – *Charlotte White, Ottawa, ON.*

By Lily-Rose Grondin, Russell RPC





BOOK REVIEW

Upheld: A Widow's Story of Love, Grief, and the Constancy of God by Christine Farenhorst

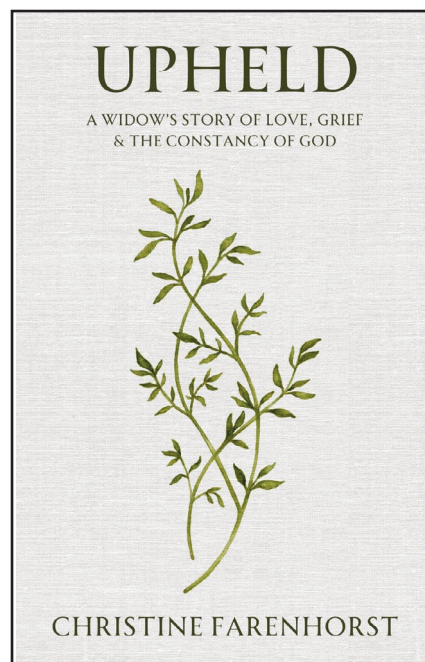
Anyone familiar with Christine Farenhorst's writing will know what to expect from her pen—a thoughtful blend of insight, poignancy, and faithfulness to Scripture. Her most recent book, *Upheld: A Widow's Story of Love, Grief, and the Constancy of God*, does not disappoint. In fact, it deepens her legacy of faithful storytelling with a raw honesty born out of recent sorrow.

Christine's beloved husband, Anco, was called home by the Lord after suffering a massive stroke. The two had been married for nearly 53 years—a lifetime of shared love and labour. In *Upheld*, Christine opens a window into their life together, and into her own journey through grief, anchored by her unshakeable trust in the Lord.

The book is composed of sixty-eight short chapters, each with a meditative tone. Every chapter begins with a verse or short passage from Scripture, followed by a personal story drawn from their life—whether from their courtship, child-rearing years, retirement, or the difficult days leading up to and following Anco's death.

Some of the stories are poignant, some joyful, and some filled with sorrow. Yet in all of them, the constancy of God is evident. The tone is never sentimental or overwrought, but marked instead by a quiet depth. Christine writes with a simplicity that invites readers into her life and grief, not for the sake of self-expression, but as testimony to the God who upholds his children.

Upheld is, probably, a book to be read slowly, perhaps one chapter each day, allowing each reflection to settle, although I could not put it down but read it over a few days since I found it so compelling. It is a rich de-



votional companion for anyone walking through loss, or for anyone who needs a reminder of the faithfulness of God in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life.

Beautifully written, deeply personal, and spiritually nourishing, *Upheld* is a gift to the church. Readers will come away comforted, strengthened, and reminded that even in the deepest valleys, God's promises never fail.

By George van Popta

Minister Emeritus

Jubilee Canadian Reformed Church, Ottawa

(previously published by the *Clarion*, with minor editorial changes)

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Medical Assistance in Dying

On December 30th of last year, Kiano Vafaeian, a 26-year-old Ontarian, was euthanized. He was struggling with depression following the partial loss of his vision. He had previously been denied Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in 2022 since he did not meet the eligibility criteria. Three years later, his loving family was devastated to learn that Kiano's life had been ended in British Columbia by Dr. Ellen Wiebe, one of Canada's leading MAiD advocates. Kiano's family is convinced that safeguards were not properly followed and "believe she [Dr. Wiebe] was coaching him in order to check off her own boxes to approve him" (Global News).

Stories like this will become commonplace if Canadians suffering solely from mental illness become eligible for MAiD in March of 2027. Euthanasia is already the 5th leading cause of death in Canada as of 2024 (Health Canada) and there is growing evidence that the safeguards that Canada currently has in place are insufficient to prevent abuse. In some cases, vulnerable Canadians are being preemptively offered MAiD when seeking support or treatment and, in other cases, euthanasia is performed hastily, sometimes the same day it is requested. It is naive to think that mental illness is the natural stopping point for expansion. Some European countries have slid further down the undeniably slippery slope. Belgium now offers MAiD to minors and the Netherlands has a policy (known as the Groningen Protocol) that allows euthanasia for infants who are seriously ill or disabled, but not necessarily dying. When a society starts

making judgment calls about who deserves to live and who does not, no one is safe.

The unstated message of euthanasia is that some people are simply better off dead. Although branded as compassionate by MAiD advocates, offering death to suffering people represents an utter failure to love them. "We have a responsibility to view the desire for suicide as an opportunity to love that person better", write Alleyne and Van Maren in their Guide to Discussing Assisted Suicide. "Suicidal despair is always the symptom of some other unmet need." It is our duty to seek to meet those needs, both with practical means and with the hope of the gospel.

This spring, Parliament is considering Bill C-218, which seeks to protect Canadians suffering with mental illness from being offered assisted suicide. At time of writing, the vote on this bill is scheduled for April 15th. Even if Bill C-218 does not pass, significant support for it may result in a further delay of the expansion, as in the case of its predecessor (Bill C-314). It is crucial to counter the propaganda that labels assisted death as 'dignified' and 'compassionate' and urge our elected officials to remember their responsibility to love their neighbour. Both at a policy and personal level, we are called to "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

Offering death to suffering people represents an utter failure to love them.

Mrs. Lydia Hrkach
Member, Russell RPC



PRAYER'S PROTOTYPE

Matthew 6:9-13

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus provides a model for prayer that teaches us about both the structure and the scope of true prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). Since much has been written about the Lord's Prayer and many sermons have been preached on each petition in it, it is hard for us to do justice to its depth in a short entry in this series. Calvin, for example, dedicates twenty pages of the Institutes to a discussion of this prayer. Likewise, the Puritan Thomas Watson, wrote a book with over 300 pages on the prayer. Among modern authors, R. C. Sproul dedicated a chapter in his book on prayer's power to change things, to the petitions in this prayer. Therefore, with these esteemed witnesses to the importance of this prayer we can only note a few lessons which it teaches us about how we should pray.

Priorities – The model prayer is structured like the Ten Commandments. It first deals with God's honour and then with man's needs. It puts the things of heaven before those of the earth. In general, our prayers should praise and thank God before they focus on ourselves and our personal needs. In our prayers we remind ourselves that we are creatures dependent on God.

Praise – Within the scope of a few words (Matthew 6:9) Jesus teaches us how we are to offer praise to God by declaring him to be the:

- **Transcendent Creator** – God has chosen to make heaven his dwelling place (Psalm 103:19; Psalm 115:3). Heaven is a created place—and thus neither eternal nor infinite. However, being 'above' or outside of the universe, it stands as a symbol for God's infinity and eternity. God is not just a god of a river, forest, or nation; he is the highest God above all gods who holds together all creation. To our pagan culture we declare that God is the transcendent creator when we call upon him in heaven.

- **Holy One** – God's name stands in the place of God himself. It is holy (Exodus 20:7) because everything associated with him is holy. Thus, we desire that his name be proclaimed throughout the world as holy so that all men will know who he is and reverence him.

- **Personal Saviour** – The word 'father' is not being used in the sense of God being the creator of all people (Acts 17:28). This prayer is for believers. God becomes our Father when he adopts us into his household



through Christ. When we declare God as our Father, it encourages us by reminding us that we belong to an everlasting, perfect family.

We must bow down before the God in heaven with praise and declare him to be the holy creator who saves.

Providence – When we ask God to reveal his sovereign reign among men (Matthew 6:10) we do not ask that he become a king, he is the King! Rather, we confess that no other person's will (whether of man or devil) is to be the measure and motive of mankind. Jesus himself desired that only the will of God would be done (Matthew 26:42). Our desire is to be the same. So, we ask God to make his laws and worship known on this earth until the day they are fully and correctly observed in his heavenly kingdom.

Provision – Jesus teaches (Matthew 6:11) that it is proper to pray for our physical needs as they arise. This is not inferior prayer. If we don't ask for God's provision, we act as if we are independent of him. By asking for his help, we acknowledge that he sustains (Acts 17:28) and cares (Matthew 6:25-34) for us, and we learn to trust him more. But we are to pray that our needs are met—the bread we need from day-to-day—not that our desire for luxuries will be satiated. As God supplied manna on a daily basis in the wilderness, so he will supply what is necessary for us. We are to be content with what he gives us. If we are not, then we deny that he knows what is best for us.

Purification – As we are to ask God to sustain us physically, so we are to ask him to sustain us spiritually (Matthew 6:12). We need, daily, to go before his throne and confess that we have sinned, and he will forgive us (1 John 1:9). However, there is a condition. If we go before him with a bad attitude (for example an unforgiving heart or a pride that holds grudges) he will not hear our petitions. If we cannot forgive others who have hurt and offended us, we have to question if we are truly Christians. It is very sad if we claim to be Christians and are less forgiving than our pagan neighbours. We need to ask God to make us holy, as he is holy.

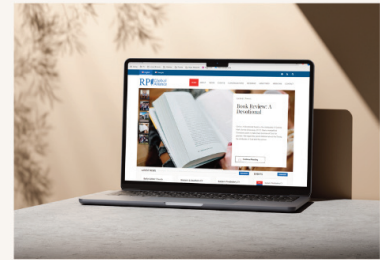
Protection – God himself does not tempt us to sin (James 1:13) but he does put us into difficult situations to test our faithfulness (Matthew 6:13). Satan, his assistants, and the remnants of wickedness in our hearts exploit these situations to pressure us to sin. We need to recognize our weaknesses and ask God to help us avoid temptations and overcome them. When we are confronted by evil, God will protect us if we ask for help (1 Corinthians 10:13; Jude 24). Our challenge is to put aside pride and admit our need of help.

If we can learn to offer God prayers modeled on this prayer, they will go up as the sweet smell of incense (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8) and be pleasing to our Father in heaven. They will declare him worthy of all honour, proclaim his sovereign reign and almighty power into the ages, and assist us to know our place as he provides only good things for us (Romans 8:28; James 1:17).

Mr. Jim Hughes
Ruling Elder, Toronto RPC



RP Global Alliance
FOR THE RP CHURCH AND COVENANT



The RP Global Alliance website
www.rpglobalalliance.org
is the place to find news, information and prayer points about the RP Church around the world.

The RPGA Team also sends out weekly prayer emails and a monthly newsletter directly to your inbox.
Scan the QR Code below to subscribe.



CHURCH UPDATE

Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Toronto

We at EPC are extremely thankful to the Lord for his continued grace, love, and Spirit that he has faithfully given to us over the last couple of years since our congregation was first profiled in “Sea to Sea”.

Our community has continued to be blessed by the preaching ministry of our pastor Allan MacLeod. He is currently preaching through the life of Joseph, the Gospel of Luke, and Psalms for a summer evening. In addition, recent past completed sermon series include, The Christian Warfare, and Freedom in Christ.

The elders of the congregation are Rod Finlayson (clerk), Jim Hughes, and David Finlayson. Jim, and Rod continue to bless the congregation with their preaching ministry when Allan is away. Jim is preaching through Isaiah, and Rod through the gospel of John. David leads various Bible studies and social events meant to encourage and promote evangelism.

Worship services are held on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. We have Sunday school classes for adult and older children at 10 a.m. During the morning service we have a class for young children at 11:30 a.m. We typically have 65 attending the morning service and 15 attend-



ing the evening services. Tea/coffee and snacks are served after the morning service organized by Jacky Finlayson. We continue live-streaming our services and have about 20 join in the morning and 5 in the evening. Our YouTube channel has about 200 subscribers and the posted videos of our services are viewed on average by about 30 people. One of Allan’s sermons has been viewed over 300 times.

On the second Sunday of each month, we have a pot-luck lunch in our Fellowship Hall, organized by Lillian



Hughes and other women. Our social events have become a popular staple in our church community and allow us to grow together in our faith and learn how best we can serve one another.

Other congregational activities include a weekly online meeting, led by Allan, with prayer and Bible readings and study (in 1 Peter) via Teams. There is a bi-weekly Bible study on the gospel of Mark, which meets in the church building and online via Teams, led by David Finlayson. Once a month, on a Saturday evening, we have an encouragement night. It includes a meal or tea/coffee and dessert followed by a time of singing and reading God's word together. This past year we have been going through the attributes of God in our Bible readings and devotionals. Last November, David and his wife Jacky, started the Saturday "EPC family movie day". We are currently going through the Chronicles of Narnia movie series.

Since January 2024 we have seen significant changes in the demographics of our congregation. We have been blessed to have a dramatic addition from the Persian community in Toronto who have left their oppressive life under Islam and have turned to the Lord Jesus. It has been an exciting and moving experience getting to know our new brothers and sisters in Christ who are seeking to live for Jesus. A common testimony that we have heard is that they have been drawn to the Gospel because of the great love of God the Father who sent Jesus to save them and dwell with them. This is in direct contradiction to the god and religious system under Islam, which is cold, harsh, and unloving. During 2024-2025 we have had 47 baptisms. We currently have 67 communicant members and 16 baptized children.

To support our Persian brothers, we introduced real-time translation of the sermon, using Microsoft Trans-

lator. The text in Farsi would stream onto a cell phone. However, a more reliable solution was introduced in August 2024, using Wordly.ai. We have had as many as 20 people connected who have selected caption streaming to their mobile devices in Persian, Spanish, Korean, Romanian, and Mandarin.

The current challenges facing our congregation are helping the new believers in Jesus learn more about Christ and grow in their new faith. We are seeking for new opportunities to help all the members of our congregation grow together.

We would be grateful for prayer in the following matters:

- The Lord would continue to bless the ministry of Allan, so that sinners would be saved, and the believers would be encouraged and built up in their holy faith.
- The peace and unity that our congregation has known of continue.
- The Lord would open up new doors of opportunities and bless the programs already set up to evangelize and serve the community that the Lord has placed us in, with the love and truth of Jesus.
- The Lord would provide us with a few more men who would be willing to serve him and EPC community as elders and deacons.

Mr. David Finlayson, Ruling Elder

[Editor Note: Since the writing of this update, Pastor Allan sustained a fall and is recovering from a hip replacement surgery.]



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