

# Renewal News!

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## The Renewal Fellowship within The Presbyterian Church in Canada

is a means to contact and encourage those concerned about the evangelical renewal of the PCC.

### Our mission:

To lead each other and The Presbyterian Church in Canada to authentic Biblical thinking, powerful Spirit-led prayer and effective Gospel witness.

**Our executive director is available to speak to congregations and groups IN PERSON or ONLINE.**

Contact info Page 8.

The Renewal News is a quarterly publication of Renewal Fellowship.

We welcome your stories

## ‘Recover your life’

### PCC Pastor Retreat planned for November

**D**ear fellow pastors,  
“Are you tired? Worn out?  
Burned out . . .?”

Eugene Peterson’s translation of Matthew 11:28-30 speaks to many of us these days, especially those who adhere to traditional theology.

The Lord says:  
“Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

That’s the invitation that went out on Aug. 31 for PCC ministers and pastors

to take part in a retreat at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga from Nov. 7-9. The gathering will be presented at no cost to participants. Generous travel subsidies will be available for those coming from a distance. Costs will be covered by Vaughan Community Church, Renewal Fellowship and a special fundraising campaign.

The retreat comes at a time when many pastors are feeling the weight of ministry like never before. It’s more than just pandemic weariness. A survey of ministers last summer found widespread fatigue, anxiety and burnout.



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## A time of transition

**By Deb Stimphil**  
**RF Board Chairperson**

In Psalm 40 David says “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire. He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear and put their trust

in the Lord.” (vs 1-3)

Many of us are waiting patiently for the Lord. Some of us may have experienced God hearing their cry, and they have a new direction; they are standing on a firm place.

Others are in a place of transition. We feel like we are being lifted out of the pit but are not just yet on the rock.

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# Help support this retreat

Vaughan Community Church and Renewal Fellowship are covering the bulk of the retreat costs — but we'll need a bit more to ensure that no pastor is left behind. Travel costs can be prohibitive for outside Ontario and Quebec.

We'll be using a formula to subsidize a good portion of the cost of flights and possible hotel accommodation — but ideally we'd like to cover 100 per cent of it.

Please pray for this campaign.

We're approaching RF members and supporting congregations with a special request for an additional gift this year.

If you are feeling the nudge to support this much-needed retreat, reach out at [renewalfellowshipcc@gmail.com](mailto:renewalfellowshipcc@gmail.com).

See giving options at [renewalfellowship.ca](http://renewalfellowship.ca) or call/text Andy Cornell at 226-229-1695.

Poster design

by Jinsil Park

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When asked what pastors need, this is what we were told:

*"I am emotionally broken and I need people who will come and sit with me in the dust. I do not think I am alone."*

*"It does seem a little lonesome out here. Encouragement/inspiration would be high on my list, networking/sharing would be important as well."*

*"I would greatly appreciate time to 'fellowship' with other pastors. It has been a long singular journey through COVID."*

*"Personal renewal would be on my list of current needs...maybe be-*

*cause of feeling that my tank is close to empty..."*

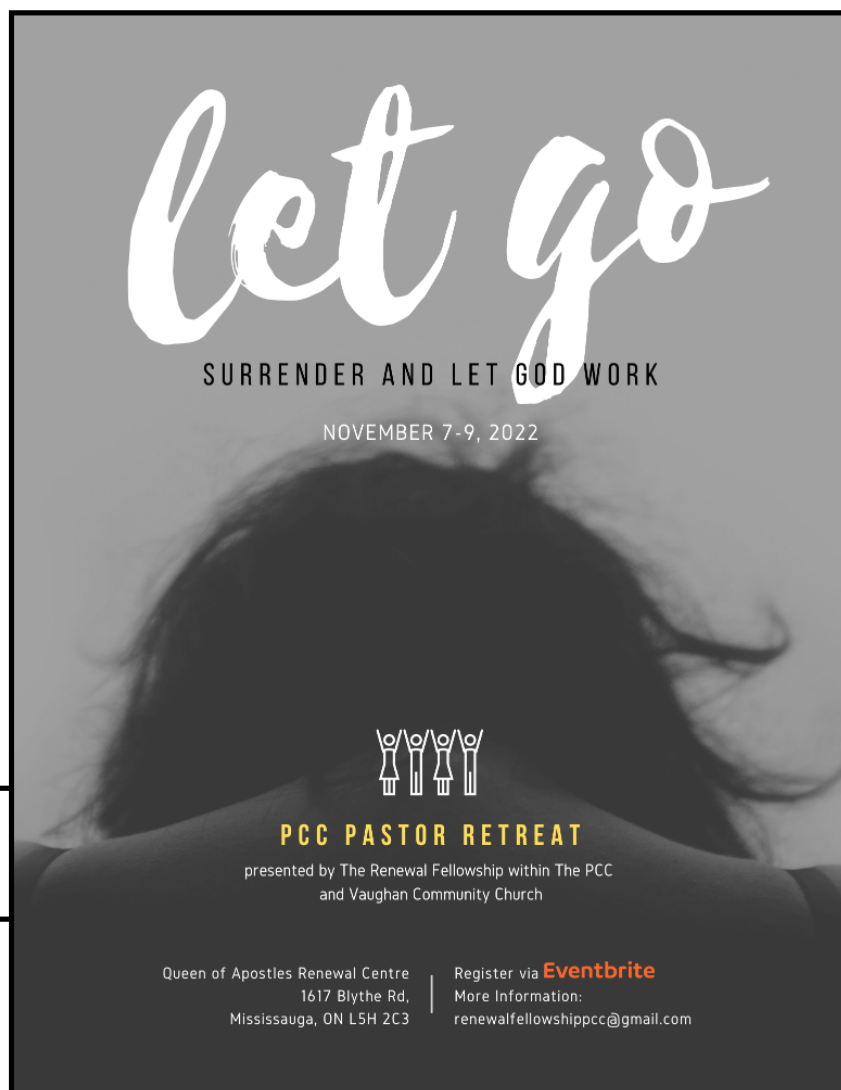
There is a clear desire/need for fellowship and sharing/inspiration. The retreat won't be a time of heavy teaching or workshops. The planning team is hoping to provide a place where pastors can share their burdens with kindred souls — those who adhere to evangelical/conservative/orthodox/traditional theology. It will be an opportunity to grieve and lament, to talk face to face with colleagues outside their immediate circles for the first time since COVID and to be in touch with the Holiness of God.

Expect worship, prayer, words

of encouragement, discussion, times of silence and listening ears. All of this will have a solid scriptural foundation. The goal is to open the door for renewal, peace and shalom.

Space will be limited to 45. Participation will be open to anyone called as a PCC minister or employed as a pastor in a PCC congregation and ministry.

Registration was to begin in mid September. For more information, search PCC go to [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and search "PCC Pastor Retreat."



# The minister as intercessor

An excerpt from A. Donald MacLeod's latest book

**A**n explanation for this book. My wonderful 21-year-old grandson, Cal-lum, asked me two questions as we were discussing his future:

*“What is it like to be a minister, Gramps? How has the ministry changed since you were ordained back in 1963?”*

*It is to respond to these questions that I have set out my answer, in hopes that it will clarify both his understanding, and share what I've learned during my years of service.*

— ADH

## Chapter 5 Ministry to a New Generation

Writing about the prayer life of a minister, I must start with a disclaimer. There is no subject that makes me feel more inadequate, more prone to the complaint that I am a hypocrite, but I know of no minister who feels that his or her prayer life is totally adequate, as the sheer pressures and time constraints of our profession make it very difficult to find the time we need to spend on our knees. It is also one of the most subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) temptations of the Evil One to keep us from this essential ingredient of a fulfilling and life-changing ministry. In eternity, the question will be asked of each of us, as to how faithful we have been in our prayer life, and I can speak only for myself when I admit that I have been sadly deficient in this regard. With this caveat, I proceed to the Scriptural teaching about the minister as intercessor, and turn to the life of our Lord. I have always found helpful a marvellous book, Our Lord Prays for His Own, by

Marcus Rainsford, who pastored first in Dundalk, Ireland, and later at St. John's Church in Belgrade Square in London. His classic treatment of John 17 provides soul-searching explanations of our Lord's high-priestly prayers for His followers as He was on His way to the cross. Jesus is our example and there is no better illustration of this than His prayer for Peter as He and the disciples gathered at the Last Supper, and he indicated that he was praying for Peter that his faith not fail. As I have asked the Lord to strengthen the commitment of a faltering parishioner, I have often thought of His prayer and recognized that although there may not be an immediate answer, we can be sure of one at the end, in His will, because He is faithful.

Our Lord prays that His disciples will be one, even as He and His Father are one, and that He would, in His time and good pleasure, fulfill His purposes in our lives, as His intercession combines with our prayers to keep those who are under our charge faithful and fruitful. My own praying for my congregants started early in my ministry as I found myself in conflict with the woman who provided a student minister with room and board in her guesthouse. For some reason she took an immediate dislike to me, and did everything she could to thwart my ministry. One day I picked up the party line at our house to call a parishioner, only to hear her lambasting the new stu-

dent, and advising her friend not to return to church the next Sunday. She was also the organist at this small country church, and one Sunday, minutes before worship was to begin, she decided she would not turn up to play. Fortunately, we had an alternative, and a replacement was quickly arranged, but it was a shattering experience, and I barely got through the service. I prayed urgently that the Lord would remove this trial, but she stayed on and remained as organist, though I was able to make alternative boarding arrangements the next summer.

A second challenge occurred the night I learned, at

“The whole incident was a powerful reminder to me . . . that God was in control of my life, and how essential both my devotional life and my dependence on Him would be for an effective prosecution of a gospel ministry.”

the very end of my posting, that a family in my congregation, returning from a holiday in Saskatchewan, had had a serious car accident and three parishioners had been killed. I remember standing outside the home of the family I

was visiting at the

time, and prayed earnestly to the Lord that I would be given strength as I went to visit the bereaved family that dark night. The sad thing was that I had neglected my own personal devotional life for several days previously, and had to be re-connected with Jesus, but the Master came and healed me and used me in turn to bring healing in that terrible situation. Four days later, as mourners crowded the packed church to pay their last respects, Dr. Reid supported me as he preached a magnificent sermon.

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# The Minister as Intercessor

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The whole incident was a powerful reminder to me, as I started my final year in university, that God was in control of my life, and how essential both my devotional life and my dependence on Him would be for an effective prosecution of a Gospel ministry.

One of the powerful resources for my prayer life throughout my years of ministry has been a diligent study of Paul's great prayers for his correspondents in his epistles, as he lists the requests he makes for the congregations in Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, as well as in the letters to Timothy and Titus. We can connect with him and I have often turned to his words in specific intercessions during my prayer times, naming people and situations. It means that I do not deal in generalities, but focus on particular needs and individual requests.

When I came to start a new church in Scarborough, suburban Toronto, I found the pressures of beginning a church from scratch very demanding, but also very exhilarating. Things were going well, and the congregation was growing as we approached the building of a new edifice, but then a problem occurred, and everything seemed to fall apart. Two prominent families in the church were caught up in a moral crisis, and I blundered in where angels would have feared to tread. Both families left our church, along with several others, and I poured out my heart to the Lord in desperation. The Rev. Gerald and Kitty Griffiths, who had had a connection with one of the families called me to say they were en route to catch a plane at Pearson and would stop by to see us. They came in and prayed with me and I shall never forget their intercession

which sustained me in a dark moment, and gave me strength for the journey.

I also received reassurance from a denominational official, the Reverend Howard Doig. We clergy need each other's support as no one else can fully understand the challenges we face. As I was thrown upon the Lord, blessing and growth came that summer as they had never done previously. Once again, challenges in the ministry brought me back to the Source of my strength, and I was grateful to the Lord for His presence and peace. While I was in ministry at Knox Church, Toronto, I discovered the benefits of a "monthly prayer day." I would go off to our denominational retreat centre in Crieff, where a cottage was made available for me in beautiful woodland surroundings. There I would shut the door, take out my Bible, and furiously write out my prayer needs in longhand as I cited all the situations in my ministry that needed intercession. Then I would commit them to the Lord in prayer. I never returned from those days apart without peace restored and calm gained. I have kept those pages and as I look over them I see how faithful God has been in His presence and grace.

I remember John Allison, a beloved minister in the PCC now gone to glory, who would list his prayer requests with a blank column on the right side of the page to record when an answer was given or how it was resolved. John, who had been a fellow student at Westminster Seminary, experienced challenges in his years as pastor in British Columbia and Ontario. He

was known as a great person of prayer, and whose premature death saddened us all. As his former roommate, I can still see him at 6 a.m. every morning, kneeling beside our bunk bed where he had the lower level with his feet turned outward in prayer, as he would spend more than an hour each day in intercession. No wonder God powerfully used him through the years of suffering and challenge.

In subsequent years, when I moved to the city of Boston, I was able to make use of a Roman Catholic retreat centre, where I found consolation and courage in my times of solitude and prayer. I did

“ “ We clergy need each other's support as no one else can fully understand the challenges we face.

not need a rosary to systematize my intercession, but found again that systematic writing out of prayer needs kept me on target and disciplined a mind that could easily be distracted

during those times.

Confidentiality and discretion are essential in group prayer, particularly clergy group prayer. Gossip must be avoided. Some years ago, while I was in Boston, there were a number of evangelical young PC-USA pastors who gathered in a small New Hampshire village every month for support and prayer. All went well at first, and I was grateful that my assistant, fresh out of seminary, had found courage and strength there, but then I started to hear reports that she had requested prayer for her relationship with her "difficult senior pastor." The complaint was that I had not allowed her equal time in the pulpit with me, and that I had been overbearing.

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# The Minister as Intercessor

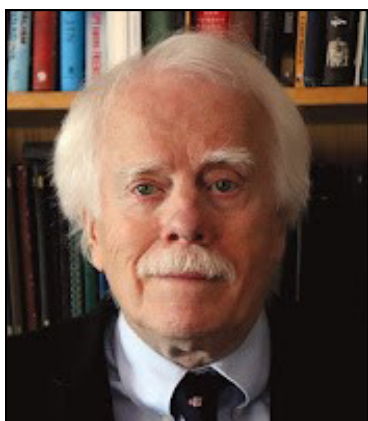
## Continued from Page 4

It compromised my relationship with several of those pastors, which was awkward.

One of the greatest helps in my devotional life has been my use of certain classic books on prayer.

As a teenager I was introduced to Hallesby's book, Prayer, and subsequently Augustine's Confessions and books written by Oswald Chambers, Amy Carmichael, and A.W. Tozer.

Books of prayers were also useful. When I was a child, my father would conduct our daily devotions from A Chain Of Prayer Across The Ages: Forty Centuries Of Prayer, 2000 B.C.-A.D. 1912, compiled by Selina Fitzherbert Fox and published in 1913, which incorporated prayers from many sources. Dad used to say that this kept us from wandering and was helpful in focusing both our language and our content. He also would bring us regularly to Anglican Evensong which was a beautiful worship ex-



perience based on the magnificent Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. We attended memorable worship services in St Andrews Church on Nathan Road in Kowloon. Some of those prayers still illumine my own language in prayer and intensify my understanding of talking with God, so

that my thoughts do not wander. Our family worship had been a very powerful experience growing up, and I attempted to recreate it for my own family worship. We made prayer a family experience which we hope provided inspiration for our children and grandchildren. On a

memorable trip to the UK in 1966, a friend from Harvard Graduate School days, the Rev'd Michael Higgins, who was then a curate in an Anglican Church, introduced me to The Minister's Prayer-book. It became a vade mecum for me over the following decades.

The practice of intercession is the greatest instrument the Holy Spirit can use in our ministry, and we neglect it at our peril. God is

waiting to bring blessing to us as we wait on Him. The power of our public praying as we lead a congregation in worship is determined by our personal prayer. "You have not because you do not ask."

- Christian Ministry Today is the working title for this book. Publication arrangements to be finalized.

*A. Donald MacLeod is a former research professor of church history at Tyndale University College and Seminary in Toronto. He was born in Philadelphia and studied at McGill, Harvard and Westminster Theological Seminary. He was ordained as a minister in the PCC and served as a pastor and church planter. He was president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada from 1973 to 1975 and General Director of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada from 1975 to 1980. He helped establish The Renewal Fellowship within The Presbyterian Church in Canada and served as its Chairman from 1980 to 1985. He also served as Senior Minister of Newton Presbyterian Church in Boston. He is on the Appendix to Roll of the Presbytery of Kingston.*

## Transition

### Continued from Page 1

Others are still waiting patiently on the Lord. They haven't yet heard from God. But they know He hears them and will answer their prayers.

We at St. Andrew's Welland are in a time of transition. Our pastor retired and a new chapter is opening for us. We are on a journey. I

am sure that if this church is faithful to God's Word, He will set our feet on a rock and give us a firm place to stand.

Many of us who are holding fast to orthodoxy are still waiting patiently for the Lord. Renewal Fellowship, along with Vaughan Community Church, are holding a Pastor Retreat in November. This will be a time where pastors can get together, share fellowship with one

another, share burdens with one another and wait patiently on God.

We are tired and worn down from many things. This retreat will be a time to recharge in the Spirit of God. Fellowship is so important to the body of Christ and all of us have missed the fellowship during the last couple of years. So, plan to attend this event. It can be a time of renewal for all of us.

# Our focus: Prayer and Care

Renewal Fellowship's mission is "to lead each other and The Presbyterian Church in Canada to authentic Biblical thinking, powerful Spirit-led prayer, and effective Gospel witness."

In practical terms, we're carrying that out two ways: leading/facilitating prayer and providing strategic pastoral care.

## CARE

By "strategic care" we mean initiatives that target specific needs.

First is the **PCC Pastor Retreat**, as detailed on pages 1-2 of this edition.

Second is our semi-regular **Renewal Café**. These are small-group gatherings held via Zoom which are typically centred on a specific question or theme. On July 20, we discussed the question: "Is the evangelical revival of The Presbyterian Church in Canada a lost dream?" In May, we explored the troubling truth that while the church in the West is crumbling, it's thriving in the Global South and East. In April, as we emerged from the pandemic shutdowns and saw each other's faces in grocery stores and in churches for the first time in two years, we acknowledged that there is no feeling of liberation or great cry of joy. Why? The March Café explored "the spirit of the times" — what's going on in our world right now is a generational shift not seen since the 1960s. Stressful? Absolutely. In February we talked about Seasonal Affective Disorder. And in January, it was a bit of a new year's kickoff as we talked about what's going on in our lives, churches and the world in general.

Each Café is based on a specific scripture, begins with a time of

devotion and has opportunities for sharing, discussion and prayer.

Café's guiding verse is Hebrews 10:25 — "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."

Our latest initiative is **Listening Ear Here**, which consists of a pool of mature believers who meet



online (or in person if logistics allow) with individuals who need a listening ear. It's not therapy, counseling or mentorship. It's an effort to facilitate a community and encourage believers. It's a ministry for the listener as well as the speaker. If you need to talk about where you're at in your walk of faith, if you have questions or if you just need to "unpack," we can pair you with a listener. This ministry is for adults of all ages and stages of life, wherever you may be in your faith journey. This includes students and young adults, who often find themselves alone. We will do our best to link you with someone of the same gender.

Your listener may make suggestions as to additional initiatives you might consider, including the possibility of further listening times. Our listeners are committed to the ministry of hearing and being open to the promptings of the Spirit.

We're also available to **speak to congregations and groups** either online or in person. More info about this is found at the bottom of Page 7.

## PRAYER

Our daily **prayer calendar** (published as a whole quarterly) under the leadership of Linda Shaw continues to find its way into the hands of believers who need encouragement and support.

**Pray for GA** is a dedicated campaign in the four weeks leading up to General Assembly which includes online prayer rooms praying prior to and during each session. We started this in 2021 and it was repeated for this year's gathering. It picks up from all the in-person prayer rooms we organized when General Assembly was held in person. We pray that General 2023 will mark a return to that.

We have two local monthly prayer groups which meet in person in the Ottawa and Hamilton areas. Our prayer is for this to expand — especially at our three theological colleges.

In May and June, Rev. Glynis Faith led a six-week **online book study** of Philip Yancey's book, 'Prayer: does it make any difference?'

*Can we provide pastoral care or pray for/with you?*

— email us at [renewalfellowshipcc@gmail.com](mailto:renewalfellowshipcc@gmail.com)

# Living the Name

Renewal Fellowship's Living the Name prize has been awarded annually since 2010 to Knox College students who show interest and promise in evangelism and mission. Congrats to this year's recipient, Sonia Brulé. We invited her to share her testimony as she begins her call to ministry.

My name is Sonia Brulé and I am the Children & Family Ministries Coordinator at Oakridge Presbyterian Church (OPC) as well as a Volunteer Prison Chaplain at Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre both in London, Ont., where I live with my husband Chris, and our children Connor (17) and Giuliana (14).

For over 13 years, I have had the privilege of being the Children & Family Ministries coordinator at OPC. Jesus spent his time on earth teaching others to follow God's way. It was clear through his teachings that spiritual education was important not only for his disciples but for people of all ages in order to develop a deep desire for God. I believe when we equip people to encourage one another in the love of Christ, reaching out in service, just as we have been commanded to do, we are doing God's will.

Prison Ministry has been extremely fulfilling for me as I get to go and share the Gospel to those who



cannot enter a church. To see the inmates open their hearts to Christ at the lowest points of their lives is incredible. I truly believe that God can transform lives by touching even the most hardened heart renewing their spirit. My vision for ministry has really been shaped by Matthew 25:35-40 — "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then

the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'

## On the road again . . .

**By Andy Cornell**  
**Executive Director**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, speaking to congregations and holding encouragement road trips was a major part of my job.

My first road trip was to British Columbia in May of 2018, followed by New Brunswick in September 2019 and Alberta and Saskatchewan a few weeks later.

The numbers tell the story.

In 2019, I logged 16,755 kilometres (by land, sea and air) to meet with ministers and congregations. In 2020, it was 222 km. In 2021 — zero.

As we emerge from the distancing, the trend thankfully appears to be reversing. As of deadline, I'm booked to speak at St. Andrew's Parry Sound on their annual Missions Sunday on Oct. 16.

The day prior, I'm planning to attend the annual Dunamis Fellowship Canada fall gathering at

Kortright Presbyterian Church in Guelph. I joined the DFC board of directors earlier this year. (More on DFC in a future edition of Renewal News.) There's a natural connection between RF and Dunamis as we are all united in reformed orthodoxy. For that matter, I'm also a paid member of Presbyterians Standing for Apostolic Love and Truth (PSALT) — another natural synergy — and I along with others in RF leadership take in their annual general meetings.

## Board profiles

Sandy started life with missionary parents in Angola. She attended a missionary boarding school before returning to Canada. Her Mom was a faithful Sunday School teacher who taught her own kids and the local children the good news of Jesus. Her own kids got Sunday School in the local language as well as in English and as a result, Sandy received the gift of new life with Jesus at a young age. The boarding school got all their students started on daily Bible reading and prayer, a habit that has continued throughout her life. Sandy was involved with the Inter-school Christian Fellowship in high school and InterVarsity during university years. Following graduation, she travelled



**Sandy Copland Dufour**

Ontario with the InterVarsity student team visiting rural area high school fellowships and as InterVarsity staff in the Toronto area. She spent several years teaching and then was able to work with humanitarian aid agencies in various places as a volunteer and then on a contract basis in east Africa. Meanwhile Sandy was studying part time at the Toronto School of Theology. She was eventually ordained and has been working in churches in the Niagara Peninsula and more recently in Hamilton. She is currently the Associate Minister at Cheyne Church in Stoney Creek. She is delighted to support the Renewal Fellowship and to continue praying for God's work throughout Canada.

By the grace of God, Ronda has had many and varied opportunities to serve her Saviour and Christian communities, almost from coast to coast. Her life and faith began in Sunny Corner, N.B. where in home and church she was instructed, influenced and molded to know Jesus, to love Him and to want to serve Him. Other significant influences on her faith journey were camps and retreats and most significantly Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship during her university years. The IVCF influence directed her to Regent College in 1979, the same year that Dr. J.I. Packer arrived there to teach theology. She thoroughly enjoyed her Regent and West Coast experiences – both in academics and in opportunities to serve in ministry positions. At one time being a youth leader in three Presbyterian and one United Church congregation all at the same time! She eventually settled into one ministry position at a time – serving on staff with IVCF; youth leader at Grace, West Hill; ministry & educational leader for youth & adults at St. Andrew's



**Ronda Bosch**

Guelph; then 10 years of student development work within the Christian universities of Kings (Edmonton) and Crandall (then ABU) in Moncton. The hand of God guided and strengthened her through all the opportunities which brought her back to congregational ministry when she accepted a position in ministry partnership at Westwood in Winnipeg and then was called in 2007 to serve as a Lay Missionary for the congregation of Norman Kennedy Presbyterian in Regina. The most exciting and enriching component to the ministry she has been privileged to lead has been the integration of other cultures in forming a loving, caring & Spirit-filled worshipping community. Ronda longs to see The Presbyterian Church in Canada as a whole to be more intentional to value the Christian life, study and passion of Christian sisters and brothers from other countries. Her prayer is for revival and renewal of the church, locally and nationally. She is married to and supported by her husband of 34 years Arend, and they have two adult sons.



### Board of Directors

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Members normally serve for two terms of three years each (six years total). Board members are elected at the spring annual general meeting. The board meets at least three times a year.

### Staff

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[www.renewal-fellowship.ca](http://www.renewal-fellowship.ca)

### RF's mission

To lead each other  
 &  
 The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
 to  
 authentic Biblical thinking,  
 powerful Spirit-led prayer, and  
 effective Gospel witness.