



Pastor's Corner

Chris
Marchand,
Lead Pastor

Keeping a jar full of jelly-beans in one's office can be both an occupational hazard and a great opportunity for building relationships. Over the past few months, I've forged a rather unexpected friendship with Dylan, a 3-year-old who comes by to visit me weekly. When I first met Dylan and his family in their home, he looked at me from across the room with furrowed brow. We've come a long way. Last week we had the first snowfall of the year. Dylan walked into my office, went straight to my window and without missing a beat he said, "It's Christmas time, but the snow is broken." Dylan had discovered that the snow wasn't wet enough to make a snow ball, so he had come to the rather obvious conclusion that it was 'broken'. Writers wait for years to come across lines like this and there it was, dropped right into my lap; a metaphor I will never forget. Today we will begin our Advent journey to the manger and all I can think of are the words of a 3-year-old, "It's Christmas time, but the snow is broken." The Advent journey reminds us that we need a Saviour, because something is broken. Our journey to the manger is not unlike our journey through Lent to the cross. As we move through Advent together as a faith community, it is my prayer that we will experience the presence of Jesus who comes to each of us, in the midst of our brokenness.



Advent

Are you tired of how consumerism has stolen the soul of Christmas? This year, take a stand! Join the groundswell of Christ-followers who are choosing to make Christmas what it should be – a joyous celebration of Jesus' birth that enriches our hearts and the world around us, not a retail circus that depletes our pocketbooks and defeats our spirits.

Advent Conspiracy shows you how to substitute consumption with compassion by practicing four simple, but powerful, countercultural concepts:

- **Worship Fully** - because Christmas begins and ends with Jesus!
- **Spend Less** - and free your resources for things that truly matter.
- **Give More** - of your presence: your hands, your words, your time, your heart.
- **Love all** - the poor, the forgotten, the marginalized, the sick, in ways that make a difference.

Find out how to have a Christmas worth remembering, not dreading. Christmas can still change the world when you, like Jesus, give what matters most - your *presence*.

Adult eXplore & More Video Series
November 29 to December 20 - 9:30 am

advent conspiracy

CHRISTMAS CAN STILL CHANGE THE WORLD



WORSHIP FULLY
SPEND LESS
GIVE MORE
LOVE ALL

TURN YOUR CHRISTMAS UPSIDE-DOWN

We've Been Here Before:

A Mennonite Perspective on the Syrian Refugee Crisis

by Daniel Rempel

Living in Canada, you probably have an opinion on refugees. You have likely heard arguments from both camps: either we welcome refugees because it is our duty as good citizens, or we close our doors out of fear that these refugees may be somehow associated with ISIS. Whichever camp you find yourself in, I feel like there is something which I need to declare: my family came to Canada as refugees. I think it is safe to say that I would not be alive had Canada turned their back on my family when they fled the dangers of the Soviets years ago.

For as far back as I have traced, my family has been part of the Mennonite tradition. After facing persecution in Europe, many Mennonites settled in the territory now known as Russia and Ukraine. However, persecution arose in these territories and my great-grandparents were forced to flee. At the time my ancestors fled, Russia and Ukraine were not pleasant places for them to live. My ancestors were persecuted because of their faith, and they all ended up on the run. One of my great-grandmothers fled from a

house only hours before the Russians came and killed the rest of her family. One of my great-grandfathers had his land taken from him and was forced into a life of poverty. All were forced to make the difficult decision to leave everything they had behind and make the terrifying journey into a new country.

At the time of their fleeing, Russians ran around pillaging Mennonite communities and killing anyone who would stand in opposition to their nationalist values. They had a vision, and they would not let the Mennonites object to this vision any longer. Does this sound familiar to our current context in any way?

Russia was to my great-grandparents what ISIS is to many Muslims in the Middle East right now. ISIS is forcing people out of their homes and killing anyone who stands in their way, much in the same way that the Russians did to my great-grandparents a hundred years ago.

For my great-grandparents, fleeing was a matter of life or death. Stay, and

risk being killed, or flee, and hope that you can give your family a better life.

When my ancestors fled, the Canadian government could have shut their doors. Thankfully, they didn't. The Canadian government recognized that my ancestors were a people in need, and they welcomed us into Canada with open arms.

As we approach the season of Advent, we approach it with anticipation and hope. We anticipate the baby Jesus who will be born to rescue all of humanity from our sinful ways, and we hope for a glorious future where there will be no more mourning, crying or pain. May we use this hope of the Advent season to extend the love of Christ to all those in need, no matter their race or religion.

Daniel graduated this past spring from Providence University College with a BA (advanced) in Biblical & Theological Studies. He will be continuing his studies at Canadian Mennonite University this winter, working towards his MA in Theological Studies.



"A Tree Lot Christmas - *Joining Jesus' Family Tree*" is a celebration that will fill all with the everlasting hope of the Lord. This musical is filled with vibrant songs that deliver the truth of God's Word and a script that follows a group of kids selling trees outside of Mr. Carmichael's toy store to raise money for children in need. Join the adventure as these compassionate and fun loving kids demonstrate the powerful love of Christ to the greedy store owner and invite him into the family of God.

**December 24th - 6:00 pm
at NCF**



Notes from the Elder Board

Over the past number of years, our church has undergone many changes, from the merger of the two church bodies, to the recent completion of an expanded building, which was the final major step of that transition. We find ourselves at a crossroads now to determine where God is leading us as we take the next steps in our faith and growth as a body.

While we have undertaken annual strategic planning meetings to determine our priorities for the coming year, we have realized that in order to be truly effective and to be consistent in what we do, a longer-term strategic plan is important. To do this, we have engaged the assistance of facilitator Garry Koop, an individual who has a background in helping teams with strategic planning from his work in business prior to becoming the Lead Pastor of Steinbach EMC church. Garry is meeting with us monthly to walk us through this process. As part of this process, we are examining our Vision Statement and the priorities laid out in it, in order to confirm that we have a proper foundation from which to develop a long-term plan for how we believe God wants to use us and to shape our annual decision making.

Over the next number of months through prayer and discussion, we will be working to develop a framework from which we can then create specific, measurable goals as a church. We ask for your prayers as we go through this process that we may follow God's leading. There are many needs and areas of ministry we could become involved in, but we cannot do them all well, so we desire to focus on a few opportunities and to serve as best we can within them.

We will continue to update the congregation as we go through this process and once again, please remember to pray for us that we would be able to discern the path that God wants us on.

The NCF Elder Board

Sharing Hope:

Helping Hands Christmas Drive

Niverville Helping Hands
is in need of

New Unwrapped Toys

for their 2015 toy drive

Donation boxes are
located at:

Anya's, Chicken Chef,
Growing Minds Daycare
(NHC), Niverville Credit
Union, & Wm Dycks

Sponsor a Christmas Hamper!

Can't find a gift for
someone who has
everything? Sponsor
a Christmas Hamper!
Monetary donations
are gratefully accepted.

**For more information
call 204-392-5699**

**Deadline: Dec. 10th
Hampers will be delivered
December 15, 6-8 pm**



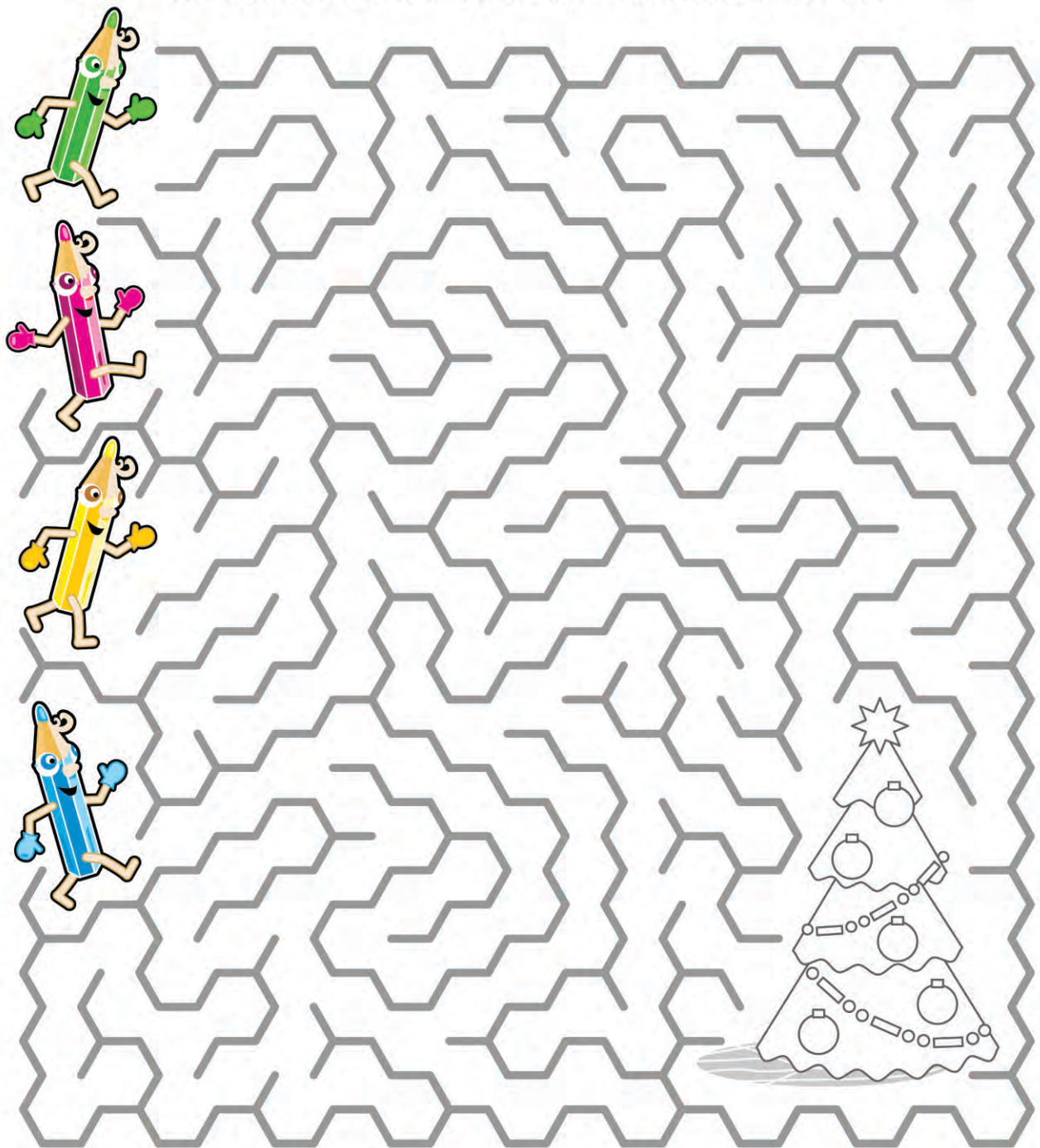
Church Retreat at



Pinawa, MB
www.wildernessedge.com



Help the pencils to get to the christmas tree drawing
and color the tree, the star and the baubles!



ANSWER:

