

MENNONITE CHURCH EASTERN CANADA

COURAGEOUS IMAGINATION PODCAST FACILITATION GUIDE



Isaiah 43:19 – "See, I am doing a new thing! Do you not perceive it? I am making a way..."



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PRAYER FOR COURAGEOUS IMAGINATION

Gracious God, we come to you as the One
who is able to do much more than we can ask or imagine.

We confess that our imaginations are so often limited –
limited by our particular circumstances and preoccupations; by our narrow visions.
And yet, we long for more – more vibrant life for our churches,
more contact with our neighbours, more peace in our world.
We know that You can already see those things we long for –
being fulfilled in ways we have not even imagined.
And so we ask to be open to your Spirit's vision
to dream beyond our limitations.

We ask for courageous imagination.
We ask for courage to dream boldly, and not to be limited by fear or tradition
or the way we have always done things.

We do not want to dream only for the sake of doing new things;
we ask to be infused with your Spirit's vision
for the sake of your Kingdom according to your desires
for our congregations, our communities, and for your world.

May this be a time of tending the soil of our hearts
so that we will be ready for the seeds of imagination planted by your Spirit.

We ask for these things through the power that is at work within us,
and throughout all generations in the church,
through Christ Jesus our Lord,

Amen.

WRITTEN BY
ARDITH FREY

Based on Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.



COURAGEOUS IMAGINATION

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INTRODUCTION TO THE JOURNEY

As the people of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, we are on a continual journey of courageous imagination. We dream, imagine and listen to each other's stories of faith as we seek to hear God's voice and discern together where God is calling us.

Many people have invested deeply in MCEC to bring us to where we are today and we continue to build upon their faithfulness. Like a pilgrimage, this journey is a shared experience that will transform us along the way. Our vision is to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope can flow through us to the world.

We dream, imagine and listen to each other's stories of faith as we seek to hear God's voice.

The podcast series was created as part of MCEC's Courageous Imagination discernment process. This was culminated in the Identity, Purpose and Values statement adopted by MCEC delegates at the 2022 Annual Church Gathering (see page 26).

Let's journey together as we sharpen the shared vision and direction of where God is taking us next as the people of MCEC.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is to help facilitate conversation around the questions leading us on our journey.

- How do we listen for God?
- Where have you experienced God working?
- Where is God at work doing new things?
- Who are we together? What is the church that we are becoming?
- How is God calling us as the church together?
- How do you feel God is calling the church to respond and adapt to the changing local and global context?

This guide is created to be used in conjunction with the Courageous Imagination Podcast episodes available on Spotify, Google Podcast, Apple Podcast and online on <https://anchor.fm/courageous-imagination>.

You can also request a CD with the podcast episodes by emailing mcec@mcec.ca or calling 226-476-2500.

This 10-session guide can be used in small group settings, adult Sunday School classes, can be broken into smaller sections or edited to fit your online Zoom services. Each session is centered around a topic and is meant to help us exercise our imagination muscles.

Print this guide and use it to take notes as you listen to the podcast and have conversations with your Bible study group or friends. Begin each group conversation with a time of prayer and centering. Each session will also feature a Bible verse or story. Fit this guide to your context and setting. Choose or edit the questions to help your group journey deeper into the topics and conversations and grow together.

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MCEC Courageous
Imagination Coordinator
with **Marilyn Rudy-Froese**,
MCEC Church Leadership Minister
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EPISODE 1

LISTENING AND EMBRACING WHO GOD IS CALLING US TO BE

with Margaret Nally

READ

Genesis 12:1-8

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will
curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

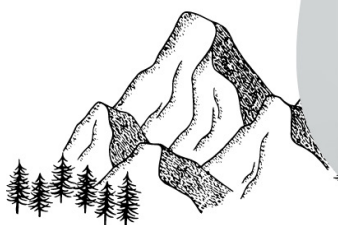
From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

*Courageous
Imagination*
A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 01

Listening and Embracing Who God is Calling Us to Be

MARGARET NALLY



MEET OUR GUEST MARGARET NALLY

Spiritual Director and MCEC Pastor

Margaret Nally, from KW House Church and Erb St. Mennonite Church, speaks of creating hospitality, living a life of service and surrendering ourselves to God's grace and transformation. Margaret is a spiritual director and pastor who ministers in non-traditional settings of human need.

God called Abram to a journey that would transform and change him forever. His journey would also change and transform those around him, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” God continues to call us to a journey that will transform both us, and the world around us. This journey, grounded in God’s love and God’s work to reconcile all of creation to Godself. As we embark on a journey of listening for God and seeking for God’s voice of direction, we need to remember that God created us, God loves us, and when God created us God declared each of us to be the most beautiful beings that God had created. We are beloved.

God is calling us to be courageous to join God in what God is doing. It is out of this compelling force of love that we act to join God in the work of reconciliation. But what is God calling us to do? How do we listen for God?

“

**WE ARE NOT
SPRINTING TOWARDS
TRANSFORMATION,
WE ARE ON A
MARATHON OF
RENEWAL.**

**WE ARE BEING
TRANSFORMED ON
THE JOURNEY.**

**THE TIME IT TAKES
IS THE TIME IT
NEEDS.**

- MARGARET NALLY

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to the podcast to hear Margaret Nally, a trained and practicing spiritual director, reflect on listening for God.

Pause for prayer or silence.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

How do you listen for God? What spiritual practices help you to hear God?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God’s voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey?

Share this with those in your group.

EPISODE 2

WHERE DO WE EXPERIENCE GOD AT WORK

with Betty Pries

READ

Acts 16: 6-15

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

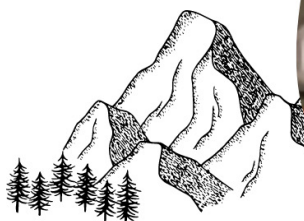
On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

*Courageous
Imagination*
A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 02

Where Do We Experience God At Work

BETTY PRIES



MEET OUR GUEST BETTY PRIES

Conflict, Change, and Leadership Specialist

Dr. Betty Pries, from Waterloo North Mennonite Church, discusses the beauty and transformational power of God through the ups and downs in relationships and community. Join in the conversation about vulnerability, courage, calling and conflict resolution and how we can heal together.

Paul received a vision of a man in Macedonia calling him to preach the gospel to them and so he and his companions got ready at once. Upon their arrival, they sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. The Holy Spirit opened the heart of Lydia to receive Paul's message. What an amazing story of paying attention to the leading of the

Holy Spirit yet also being open to the unexpected opportunities that present themselves. Interestingly, Paul's original vision was that of a man pleading for help but it was Lydia who they met in Macedonia, a woman who opened her heart and home.

God works in mysterious ways. Even when we receive a clear vision or calling from God, plans can get delayed or changed, and

we can find ourselves in a situation where we are unsure of our next move. In the podcast, Betty shares about transformation and being present with our vulnerabilities and pain. Our journey can take unexpected turns. How do we navigate these changes while paying attention to the Holy Spirit's leading?

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to the podcast as Betty Pries shares her journey about navigating and learning to listen and respond to her calling as a conflict, change and leadership specialist.

Pause for prayer or silence.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

Bring to mind a difficult time in your life. How was God present in that moment of pain?

Be present to this day and in this moment in time. Where do you see God at work in your life?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast?

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

“

**HOW DO THESE TOUGH
MOMENTS IN OUR
HUMAN LIVES OPEN US TO
TRANSFORMATION?**

- BETTY PRIES

EPISODE 3 TRUSTING GOD ON OUR JOURNEY

with Linda Thiessen Belch and Craig Frere

READ

Ruth 1:1-21

So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

"Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

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Imagination*

A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 03

Trusting God on Our Journey



LINDA THIESSEN BELCH



CRAIG FRERE



Mennonite
Church
Eastern Canada

MEET OUR GUESTS LINDA THIESSEN BELCH AND CRAIG FRERE

Linda - Minister of Adult Formation
Craig - MCEC Pastor

Linda Thiessen Belch from Faith Mennonite Church ministers in the area of adult faith formation and connection. Craig Frere is an MCEC pastor, ministering most recently at Community Mennonite Fellowship and since moving into a non-traditional faith community in Welland, ON. We first enter into a conversation with Craig about imagining new ways of doing church and then talk to Linda about God's continued faithfulness throughout her journey.

Naomi was living a good life. She was married to Elimelech and they had two sons who were both married and ready to start their own families. The name Naomi is derived from the Hebrew word *Noam* which means “delight, beauty and pleasant.” No one could predict the tragedy that would soon alter her life and ultimately change the trajectory of both her and her daughter-in-law’s future. In her suffering and pain, she no longer wanted to be called Naomi but Mara (which means bitterness).

During this time of pandemic there has been unprecedented loss by all of us: loss of income, loss of loved ones, loss of connections, loss of routines, loss of structure and even loss of taste and smell. Covid has forever changed our future and we can be left feeling pain, suffering and bitterness. As we work to move towards a space of healing and trust, let us first be present with these feelings of loss and lament and be aware of God’s presence.

“

**HEARING GOD'S
VOICE AND PREPARING
TO MOVE IN A
DIFFERENT DIRECTION
HAS THIS ASPECT OF
FRUSTRATION - A
HOLY UNREST.**

- CRAIG FRERE

**WE NEVER ARRIVE,
THERE IS ALWAYS
SOMETHING TO
LEARN, AN AREA TO
DEVELOP OR A GIFT TO
OPEN.**

- LINDA THIESSEN BELCH

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to the podcast to hear two stories about trusting God during times of uncertainty and difficulty. Linda Thiessen-Belch shares how God faithfully walked with her through the ups and downs she has faced in her life. Craig Frere shares how he is trusting in God’s leading as he enters into a new expression of church.

Pause for prayer or silence.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

Reflect on a time when you experienced the presence of God? How did you feel? How were you transformed?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God’s voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

EPISODE 4

WHO ARE WE TOGETHER? WHAT IS THE CHURCH THAT WE ARE BECOMING?

with Kim Penner and Jack Suderman

READ

Ephesians 4:1-6

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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Imagination*

A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 04

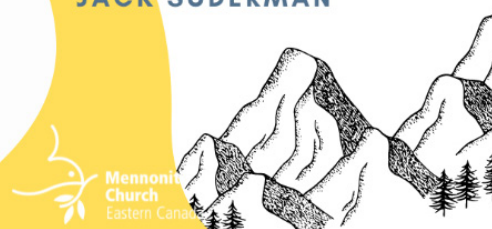
Who are we together?
What is the Church
that we are becoming?



KIM PENNER



JACK SUDERMAN



MEET OUR GUESTS KIM PENNER AND JACK SUDERMAN

Kim - MCEC Pastor, Teacher of Christian Ethics
Jack - Former General Secretary of MC Canada,
50 years of ministry in Mennonite Church

Kim Penner from Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church and Jack Suderman from First Mennonite Church have a conversation around unity, history and diversity in MCEC. Who do we want to become and what holds us together?

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) was the amalgamation of three Ontario Mennonite groups: the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec, the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference and the Conference of United Mennonite Churches in Ontario. MCEC was born out of the desire to seek greater church unity. This movement towards unity was in the cradle of MCEC's creation. Today this vision and movement continues as we seek to become a church that is more inclusive and welcoming.

Who MCEC was in the past, who MCEC is today and who MCEC will be in the future has both continuity and is different. We never completely leave behind our identity, history and core values. Unity remains even while there is much that changes. As we look to the future, we need to also look back to reflect on the parts of our identity and history that are important to bring with us. Who are we today? What is the church that we are becoming?

“

**THE CHURCH IS
DESIGNED TO BE A
SOURCE OF HOPE. WE
SHOULD ALWAYS BE
PREPARED TO DEFEND
THE HOPE THAT IS
WITHIN US.**

- JACK SUDERMAN

**SEVERAL ISSUES
FACING OUR CHURCH
TODAY ARE TIED
TOGETHER BY OUR
UNDERSTANDING OF
POWER AND HOW IT
RELATES TO JUSTICE.**

- KIM PENNER

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to the podcast to hear Kim Penner and Jack Suderman discuss the values and principles that continue to hold us together and reflect on the church that we are becoming.

Pause for prayer or silence.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

What do you believe are three key values or principles that hold us together as a church? Who is God calling us to be/become as a community of congregations?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God's voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

EPISODE 5 BEING AN INTERCULTURAL CHURCH

with Michele Rizoli and Hyejung Jessie Yum

READ

Acts 10:34-36

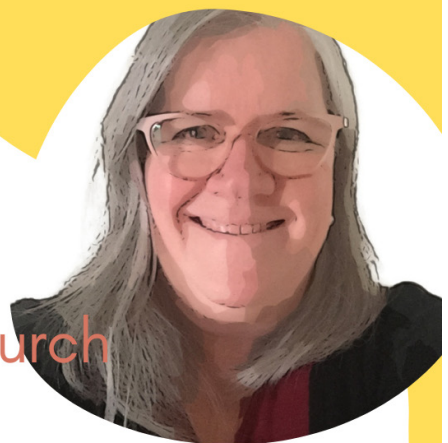
Then Peter began to speak:

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

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Imagination*
A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 05

Being an Intercultural Church



MICHELE RIZOLI



HYEJUNG JESSIE YUM



MEET OUR GUESTS MICHELE RIZOLI AND HYEJUNG JESSIE YUM

Michele - MCEC Pastor

Hyejung Jessie - MCEC Pastor, Sowing for Peace

Michele Rizoli from Toronto United Mennonite Church and Hyejung/Jessie Yum from Danforth Mennonite Church speaks of being an intercultural church. We discuss the importance of defining and living through the lens of interculturalism within our churches. We are challenged to create space for each other and participate actively within our communities.

Earlier in Acts 10, Peter receives a vision from God where something like a sheet descends from the heavens holding all sorts of animals, reptiles and birds. In this vision God tells Peter that what God has made clean, Peter should not call profane. Peter is perplexed by this vision. He later understands when he is visited by Cornelius and sees the Holy Spirit also descend upon the Gentiles. Peter finally realizes

that Jesus is Lord of all – not only the Israelites.

Today in MCEC there are twenty different languages spoken across 105 congregations. We are a multicultural faith community. The next step in our journey towards inclusivity is to become an intercultural church. Interculturalism moves beyond mere acknowledgement of other cultures existing together and promotes dialogue and

interaction between cultures. In order for us to continue to grow we need to work harder to create and maintain deep, respectful relationships that result in mutual transformation.

How do we work towards becoming more intercultural? What structures or ideologies do we need to reconsider to continue to grow into God's vision of both diversity and unity within MCEC? What practices do we need to put in place to become intercultural?

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to Michele Rizoli and Hyejung Jessie Yum discuss the different dimensions and considerations that we need to study as we become more intercultural and develop deeper understandings and respect for all cultures.

Pause for prayer or silence.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

Interculturalism is an ongoing process. Not only does it include different cultures and ethnicities it also includes different genders, sexual orientation, education, social situations and political beliefs, etc. Reflect on a situation in which you were part of the minority group in your congregation. How did you feel? Reflect on a different situation in which you were part of the dominant culture/group in your congregation. How did you feel?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God's voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

“

WE NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALL CULTURES, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SILENCED, BECAUSE WE HAVE TO CELEBRATE THE REIGN OF GOD TOGETHER.

- HYEJUNG JESSIE YUM

WHY DO WE NOT SEE OUR OWN CULTURE THROUGH THE SAME LENS THAT WE SEE OTHER CULTURES? WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO TURN THE LIGHT ON OURSELVES.

- MICHELE RIZOLI

EPISODE 6 MUSIC AND FAITH

with Moses Mugisha

READ

Psalms 150:1-5

Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty
heavens.

Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing
greatness.

Praise him with the sounding of
the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and
lyre,

praise him with timbrel and
dancing,
praise him with the strings and
pipe,

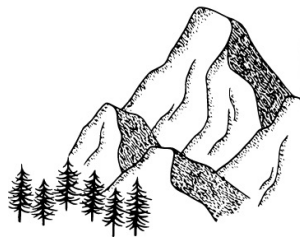
praise him with the clash of
cymbals,
praise him with resounding
cymbals.

*Courageous
Imagination*
A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 06

Music and Faith

MOSES MUGISHA



MEET OUR GUEST MOSES MUGISHA

*Recording Artist, Singer/Songwriter and Worship Leader
Author - Courageous Imagination song*

Moses Mugisha is from Goshen Mennonite Church. He is a young leader and musician in Ottawa. We discuss music, faith and the song he wrote for MCEC entitled, Courageous Imagination.

Music, in a way, is the language of the heart. It allows us to express our inmost feelings of joy, lament, thanksgiving, etc. Music transforms and inspires us. It speaks and connects to us in deeper ways than words and speech can. The Hebrew title of the book of Psalms means “praises” and the Greek word *psalmoi* means “songs,” from which comes “songs of praises” or “praise songs.” It was used as the hymnbook for the Israelites and Christians for many years.

On this courageous imagination journey consider listening to Moses Mugisha’s song titled *Courageous Imagination*. Moses is a young leader and musician from Goshen Mennonite Church in Ottawa. You can listen to the song on the [MCEC YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBCzpwNSe3c) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBCzpwNSe3c> or you can search for “courageous imagination” on YouTube. The lyrics of the song call us to be open to the Spirit’s vision and listen for God’s calling so that we can dream beyond. It moves us from limitation to courage as we step into our calling to bring change and healing to the nations. The end of the song encourages us to build the kingdom together, discern the will of God and bring communities closer to each other and closer to God.

“

GOD DOESN'T CARE HOW OLD OR YOUNG YOU ARE. WHEN GOD PUTS SOMETHING IN YOUR HEART, DON'T LOOK AT MY AGE BUT ONLY AT WHAT GOD HAS PLACED IN ME.

- MOSES MUGISHA

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to Moses Mugisha as he shares about the creative process he undertakes when creating music. He also describes how music provides a safe space for him and how God has been with him throughout all the challenges he and his family have experienced.

Pause for prayer or silence.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

Spend some time listening to the song *Courageous Imagination* and let the melody and lyrics wash over you. How does it make you feel? What is the vision or image that God has planted in your heart?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the song and the podcast episode?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God’s voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

EPISODE 7

CONNECTING YOUTH AND FAITH

with Hanna Negussie, Andi Joseph
and Aidan Morton Ninomiya

READ

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Courageous Imagination

A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 07

Connecting Youth & Faith

HANNA NEGUSSIE



ANDIE JOSEPH



AIDAN MORTON NINOMIYA



MEET OUR GUESTS

HANNA NEGUSSIE, ANDIE JOSEPH AND AIDAN MORTON NINOMIYA

Hanna - Youth Leader, Podcast Engineer

Andie - Youth Leader, Nurse

Aidan - Student, Young Leader

Andie Joseph from Famille Assemblée de la Grâce, Aidan Morton Ninomiya from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church and Hanna Negussie from Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church, discuss their dreams and hopes for the church and the importance of equipping and discipling youth.

Sometimes the title of Deuteronomy in the Hebrew Bible is “these (are) the words” or “words.” This title actually provides a more accurate description of what Deuteronomy is about – the words of Moses. The Israelites had been wandering for 40 years and now their wanderings in the wilderness were about to come to an end. They were finally about to enter into the promised land. The majority of those

in the first generation who had entered into the desert and firsthand experienced the miraculous escape from Egypt were now gone, and the second and third generations were now preparing to take possession of the land. But before they could do so, Moses needed to remind the Israelites of their journey, remind them of who they were, who their God was and what was expected of them.

An important aspect of that was the ten commandments and passing along the knowledge and stories. More importantly, were ways in which they could impart their faith to the next generation. Moses reminded them of the greatest commandment to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” He went on to describe when and how people could discuss and share their faith with the next generation i.e. when we sit at home, walk, lie down.

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to the podcast to hear three young adults reflect on the kind of church they dream of. One young adult shares from Ephesians 4:11-13 and her dream to see the church come together in unity to build and equip each believer so that each person can fully live into their calling. What are the visions and dreams of the church that God is imparting in all of our hearts, both young and old?

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

How would you finish the following sentence, “I dream of a church where...”? Write the complete sentence down for reflection.

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the podcast conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God’s voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

“

I DREAM OF A FULLY EQUIPPED CHURCH AND AN EXCITED CHURCH.

- HANNA NEGUSSIE

I DREAM OF A CHURCH WHERE THE BROKEN-HEARTED CAN FEEL AT HOME, NOT JUDGED, AND SAFE.

- ANDIE JOSEPH

I DREAM OF A CHURCH COMMUNITY THAT PROVIDES A FOUNDATION FOR ME TO TRY NEW THINGS. IT'S EASIER WHEN YOU HAVE A COMMUNITY.

- AIDAN MORTON NINOMIYA

EPISODE 8

ON THE JOURNEY TOWARDS INDIGENOUS AND SETTLER RECONCILIATION

with Lyndsay Mollins Koene,
Herb Sawatzky and Mim Harder

READ

Matthew 5:1, 2, 9

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.

He said:

"Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called
children of God."

*Courageous
Imagination*
A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 08

On the Journey towards Indigenous and Settler Reconciliation



LYNDSAY MOLLINS KOENE



MIM HARDER

HERB SAWATZKY



MEET OUR GUESTS

LYNDSAY MOLLINS KOENE, HERB SAWATZKY AND MIM HARDER

*Lyndsay, MCC Indigenous Neighbours Program Coordinator
Herb - MCEC Pastor, MCEC Truth and Reconciliation Working Group;
Mim Harder, Kairos and MCC Blanket Exercise*

Mim Harder and Lyndsay Mollins Koene from Mennonite Central Committee Indigenous Neighbours Program and Herb Sawatzky from Bethany Mennonite Church talk about how we can work towards Indigenous Settler reconciliation and why this is important for us to pay attention to as followers of Jesus. We are challenged to work together for Indigenous justice, moving forward with listening and being a neighbour.

Alert: This episode was recorded prior to the horrific mass recovery of unmarked graves at Residential Schools in Canada.

The Sermon on the Mount opens with eight beatitudes, which features eight statements that start with the word “blessed.” The seventh beatitude, “blessed are the peacemakers,” calls every follower of Jesus into the work of reconciliation. This does not describe people who live in peace, but rather those who work to bring about peace, overcoming evil with good. One tragedy that requires all of our attention as peace makers who live in Canada is the historical

and ongoing injustice and violence against Indigenous Peoples.

We are all faced with the horror stories of mass recovery of unmarked graves across Canada and what that means to be a people that mourn alongside and work towards justice. We recognize our own hand and responsibility and then move towards right relationship both with the land, the people and Creator.

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to Herb Sawatzky, Mim Harder and Lyndsay Mollins Koene share their insights and experiences around Indigenous and settler reconciliation. Learn about the importance of educating ourselves and other people, to show up, build relationships, and have an attitude of openness to listening and learning.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

How much do you know about Canada’s history with Indigenous Peoples? Consider visiting native-land.ca to discover whose traditional land you inhabit. How might God be speaking as you ponder the history of the land? What might it mean to include a Land Acknowledgement in your worship service or committee meetings?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the podcast conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God’s voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

“

**WORDS ARE IMPORTANT.
ATTITUDE IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.
ACTION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT.**

- MIM HARDER

**WE NEED TO BE PRESENT.
WE NEED TO LISTEN.
WE NEED TO TAKE DIRECTION.**

- LYNDsay MOLLINS KOENE

**OUR WHITE POLITICIANS WILL LISTEN TO THE SETTLERS...
BUT WE CAN'T BE THE LEADING VOICE.**

- HERB SAWATZKY

EPISODE 9

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUTH

with Carrie Lehn

READ

Romans 12:14-18

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

*Courageous
Imagination*
A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 09

Navigating Difficult Conversations with Youth

CARRIE LEHN



MEET OUR GUEST

CARRIE LEHN

MCEC Pastor

Carrie Lehn from Ottawa Mennonite Church talks about the joys and challenges of youth and young adult ministry, being authentic, and having hard conversations in our congregations.

What makes a conversation difficult? Well, first of all, our opinions vary. In any conversation whether between three, six or twenty people, many opinions are present. But what part of the conversation makes it difficult? Often conversations can become difficult when the stakes are high. You may differ with someone on the choice of the best ice cream flavour but when you disagree about sexual orientation, there is much more at stake. Our very personhood, identity and the deep theological truths that we can hold so tightly are affected. We are much more emotionally invested in these crucial conversations.

Throughout Jesus' ministry we can see that he engaged in numerous conversations with others on difficult topics. We see him converse with the women at the well (John 4:1-26) where they talk about worship, with the young rich ruler (Matthew 19:16-22) where Jesus challenged him to sell all his possessions, and even when Jesus rebuked Peter (Mark 8:33). While having difficult conversations can be stressful and uncomfortable, they do not have to be destructive. If handled correctly, they can result in a deeper understanding and provide a better framework for living our lives.

Paul calls us to live in harmony with each other. Some of the practices that Carrie suggests in the podcast are to ensure that difficult conversations are done with grace and love, to create spaces where people feel safe and supported and to apologize when we do not do it well. Tough conversations are messy and we often mess up. When we trust that God is present and choose to walk alongside and commit to each other through the process, we end up with a deeper understanding for the other and a better framework for living our lives.

“

**IT'S NOT ALWAYS
GOING TO BE
COMFORTABLE BUT
PERHAPS WE CAN TRY
AND MAKE IT AS SAFE
AS POSSIBLE.**

- CARRIE LEHN

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to Carrie share about the joys and challenges of youth and young adult ministry. She talks about the importance of authenticity and vulnerability in relationships as well as surrounding your community in love and grace when having difficult conversations.

Pause for prayer or silence.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

Think about a difficult conversation in the past and how you handled it. How did you experience God's presence? What could you have done differently? What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the podcast conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God's voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

EPISODE 10

REFLECTING ON THE PODCAST JOURNEY

with Hanna Negussie, Mollee Moua
and Leah Reesor-Keller

READ

Isaiah 43:16-19

This is what the Lord says—
he who made a way through the
sea,
a path through the mighty waters,
who drew out the chariots and
horses,
the army and reinforcements
together,
and they lay there, never to rise
again,
extinguished, snuffed out
like a wick:
“Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not
perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.”

*Courageous
Imagination*

A Journey Together Listening For God

▶ EP 10

Reflecting on the Podcast Journey



MOLLEE MOUA



HANNA NEGUSSIE



LEAH REESOR-KELLER



MEET OUR GUESTS

HANNA NEGUSSIE, MOLLEE MOUA AND LEAH REESOR-KELLER

Hanna – Podcast Engineer
Mollee – Courageous Imagination Coordinator
Leah, MCEC Executive Minister

Leah Reesor-Keller, Hanna Negussie and Mollee Moua talk about some of the themes, ideas and inspiring stories heard from our conversations with people on the podcast. Listen to this final conversation reminiscing about the journey.

Isaiah is writing to the Israelites who have been living in exile in Babylon for years. They are in a crisis of faith, unsure what the future holds. Verses 16–17 of Isaiah 43 remind the people that Yahweh rescued them from slavery in Egypt. God made a way for the Israelites through the water and led them to victory. The prophet encourages the doubtful group to remember God’s faithfulness in the past. Yet when we get to verse 18, it says ‘Forget about that!’. “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!” The connection between verse 16, where God made a way through

the sea and a path through the mighty waters, and verse 19, where God made a way through the desert and brought streams into the dry land, are inverse of each other. God made a way by providing dry land through water, and then made a way by providing water and a way through dry land. God is faithful and God shows up for God’s beloved people, but it does not look the same each time.

These are ancient words, but they have never been more relevant. In the midst of the pandemic, in the midst of

monumental shifts in the role of church in society and in the midst of contemplating a future for ourselves that is a lot more uncertain than we thought a year ago, these words remind us that God is at work and that it probably will not look like it did before.

What have we heard and learned so far along the Courageous Imagination Journey? How are we looking ahead to what is possible that might require some courage so we can imagine things and dream beyond?

LISTEN

Thoughtful Attention

Listen to Leah, Hanna and Mollee reflect on the stories and themes that have emerged during the Courageous Imagination Podcast journey. What surprised, inspired or challenged them?

Pause for prayer or silence.

REFLECT

Deep Consideration

As you reflect on the previous nine podcasts, what inspired you? What was something new that you learned about yourself, others in the MCEC community, and God? What did you hear that challenged or surprised you?

What words, phrases or ideas stood out for you as you listened to the podcast conversation?

What is God saying to you as you reflect on both the Bible passage and podcast? Use your mind and heart as you engage with God’s voice and direction.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

Courageously Forward

What is the next step that God is calling you to as you continue the journey? Share this with those in your group.

“

**AS ADULTS WE TAME OURSELVES
- WE LOSE THAT CREATIVITY OR
COURAGEOUSNESS TO BE SILLY.**

- MOLLEE MOUA

**WE ARE MORE ALIKE THAN WE
THINK. THERE IS MORE ROOM FOR
UNITY THAN DIVISION.**

- HANNA NEGUSSIE

**GOD SPEAKS TO ALL OF US AND WE RISK MISSING WHAT
GOD MIGHT BE SAYING IF WE AREN'T ABLE TO LISTEN
WELL AND BROADLY.**

- LEAH REESOR-KELLER

MCEC

IDENTITY, PURPOSE, VALUES

IDENTITY

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is a diverse community
Transformed by the love of God
Inspired by the hope we find in Jesus
Called to action by the power of the Holy Spirit.

PURPOSE

We come together as a regional church to:

- Energize congregations in worship, discipleship and mission
- Encourage leaders of hope, vision and transformation
- Embody God's reconciling ministry for all creation

VALUES

- Beloved-ness – All people before God are equal and have dignity, created in God's image.
- Spirituality – Worship and prayer ground us in God's love and connect us to the Spirit's movement.
- Transformation – We are curious to see what God is doing in our lives and in the world. We are open to change.
- Community – We grow, learn and serve best in relationship with others, listening for God together.
- Hospitality – Everyone is welcome at God's table of grace.
- Peace and justice – We are living into God's Shalom for all creation.

Our identity, purpose and values come together in the vision we hold nationwide as Mennonite Church Canada:

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.