



EL SLAVDOR A Youth Perspective

Over the past March break, I had the privilege of going on a second trip to El Salvador with Bay of Quinte Conference. While the first trip I made to El Salvador (in 2017) was truly eye opening; this second trip allowed me to further understand the culture and politics, as well as reconnect with people I had met the previous year. This trip was truly amazing and wonderful; and now let me share a part of the journey with you. Please note more about this trip can be found on the blog: <http://salvador2018.com/>

The Journey Begins: March 7th and 8th

After a six hour flight from Montreal we landed in El Salvador! People immediately shed layers after being exposed the beautiful, green and vibrant El Salvador scenery. From there all 37 of us piled onto buses and drove to Centro Gabriel para la Paz. This place was once used as an orphanage during the civil war, and is now used to host Sunday services and missionaries in the safe space it provides. Once settled, Pastor Miguel Tomas Castro, along with his wife and some people from our sister church Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel, joined us; they welcomed us to their country and their community, told part of

their story, and presented all of the ladies with roses in honour of La dia de la mujer (Day of the Woman).

Understanding the Past in the Present: March 9th

We headed to Colegio Bautista Emmanuel, the school supported by the church. There we were greeted and welcomed to the school, and each of us received a small gift made and presented by the kindergarten class. We then left to visit a chapel. The chapel we visited was the chapel in which Archbishop Oscar Romero lead his last Mass and where he was assassinated.

Oscar Romero was appointed as Archbishop of San Salvador as he was not outspoken against the injustice being in the country

during the civil war. Just before being made Archbishop, close friends of his were murdered. This changed Oscar Romero, and during his first speech as Archbishop, spoke against the injustice. He spoke for the people, he gave them a voice, a voice that was heard. A voice that those in power did not want to hear. Those people in power took action, and on March 24th, 1980, Oscar Romero was assassinated whilst leading Mass.

After hearing this story, we visited what had been Oscar Romero's quarters, and then went to the San Salvador Cathedral where his crypt is. A nun spoke of Oscar Romero, and we sang songs of how Oscar Romero's spirit lives on in the people of El Salvador. It was beautiful, hearing the sorrow of the past and how it brings hope for the future.



The day finished by visiting a modern, industrial church, El Rosario, then heading home to The Center for dinner and discussion.

The Present Youth: March 10th

We went to the youth center, Cal Pipil. At Cal Pipil, we learned about programmes offered, their welcoming of children from as far as two hours away, as well as the devotion by both the center and the church to provide a safe place for kids to go and be happy. The violin teacher spoke to us about the teaching she does, within the limits of not having many instruments, and upon talking to her later, discovered she is merely 16 years old! She is very inspiring.



After a wonderful visit, we dropped in to the church to see a bit of the conference that was being held in regards to the Dia de la mujer. Then we drove to the University where we visited their chapel and heard the story of the Jesuit Priests who had been murdered. Along with them the gardener's wife and his daughter were murdered, simply because they were witness to the crime. We saw the painting in honour of them, as well as the paintings depicting Oscar Romero's life, work and death. We proceeded to the museum, honouring martyrs and their efforts to stop the civil war. The morning was emotionally heavy and tiring, but well worth it.

After lunch our wonderful translator/guide, Esther, had received a call. Her mother-in-law,

Berlany, was hit by a bus crossing the road in the hectic traffic of capital city San Salvador.

A Day of Pause: March 11th

There was a joyful Sunday service, filled with singing and presentations. One presentation was for our leader, Rev. Dr. Bill Smith. He was awarded the inaugural Maria Cristina Gomez medal, a medal of merit, as well as many gifts and diplomas for his 32 years of work for and with the El Salvadorian people. He is truly a blessing.

Sadly the joy did not last. At the end of the service, Miguel announced the death of Berlany Valencia De Avalos, a founding member of the church. After this there was a benediction, done by

my Dad, Rev. Warren Vollmer. This was followed by all the leaders of our group conferring to decide what next to do, as our plans would now need to change.

A Combination of Things to Do: March 12th

Off we headed to visit a school. We listened to the kindergarteners sing, we sang too, we gave out candy, and we listened to the kindergarten teachers speak. They spoke of the troubles they face with little monetary support available, and a limited space for a growing group of children. They also spoke of the difference they can see in the children's attitude compared to that of children at other schools. A positive attitude encouraged by the culture of peace the school encourages. We piled onto the bus for a fun ride up to a volcano, El Boquerón. There we took the fifteen-minute climb

up the volcano to be greeted by a stunning view. We went back down the mountain to lunch, and headed off to see an El Salvadorian grocery store.

A Place Unlike Any Other: March 13th

Today we headed to the town of Alegria which is the Spanish word for Joy. Once there, we visited the local coffee plantation, which included a menagerie, the big coffee mill, as well as a stunning view of the countryside. From there we proceeded to lunch, walking through part of the community and witnessing the reality of their lives, the poverty, the sense of tiredness, and a feeling of hope. Lunch proved a filling meal, complete with the traditional corn tortillas. In afternoon we divided into two groups to run vacation bible schools in both Alegria and Gualinac.

A Rest In A Country Akin To Home, And Farwell: March 14th

Breakfast started our day of rest. We celebrated our journey, and enjoyed each other's company whilst still in El Salvador. A day at the beach proved agreeable. We played in the sun, waves and sand. We talked, had lunch, and talked some more.

The Journey Physically Ends in Canada: March 15th

The day began with more goodbyes with promises of love, we piled our luggage and ourselves into vehicles, and drove to the airport. From there the transition back to a first world country began, and though we arrived in snow, we were happy to be home and went our separate ways, leaving the

journey physically done, but still alive in our hearts.

Thank you to our fearless leaders, Bill, Wanda, Cathy, Jean, and (my Dad) Warren. Particularly Bill, who started this relationship with El Salvador, and has

continued it for 32 years. As well, thank you to all the people we met in El Salvador, especially Miguel, who has carried out this ministry for years on end, despite the many trials and difficulties, thank you.

Submitted by Rachel Vollmer



Canada Day!

At the suggestion of their minister, Rev. Barbara Mahood, members of the Newburgh-Centreville Pastoral Charge dressed in red and white for the combined July 1st, 2018 Service at Centreville United to commemorate Canada Day.

Submitted by Freda Burns, photo by Barry Lovegrove





Greenwood United Church: First Bee City Faith Community!



We are very happy to welcome Greenwood United Church, located in Peterborough, Ontario, to our fast-growing and diverse Bee City family. Greenwood has shown they are committed to taking actions which align with Bee City's vision of creating healthy habitats, educating the community and celebrating pollinators. For this, we are excited to welcome them as the first Bee City Faith Community in Canada!

The Greenwood congregation started focusing on pollinator conservation in 2016 by establishing a new garden on the large church property. The garden area was prepared and planted with seeds purchased from Peterborough Pollinators and seedlings started by students at a nearby high school. The garden was also equipped with a rain barrel and compost containers, highlighting the community's desire to adopt more eco-friendly ways. The vision was to create a welcoming place where children can play, neighbours are welcome to walk their dogs and pollinators can thrive.

Members of the church community have also been tending to a small number of hives. These were recently located on church grounds and

have become a focal point for educational activities for the congregation and neighbourhood. The Greenwood community enjoys having neighbours and other community members visit and learn about pollinators. This year's "Blessing of the Bees" event, which was held on Earth Day, drew an enthusiastic crowd. Another event is planned for the fall to celebrate the opening of the hives.

Future plans include the creation of a sanctuary garden, which will provide more food and shelter for pollinators. The Greenwood community also understands that pesticides are harmful to pollinators and have committed to being pesticide-free. Furthermore, members of the congregation



have canvassed the area around the church, going door-to-door to encourage neighbours to skip the chemicals.

We are grateful to Greenwood United Church for their positive actions to help our precious pollinators and spread the word about their importance! We also hope that their work will inspire their home city to join the Bee City movement and become an example that many other faith communities will choose to follow.

Find out how your faith community, business or organization can join the Bee City family: Email – trchilds@hotmail.com

*Submitted by Tom Childs,
Lead Beekeeper Greenwood UC*



80th Annual Christmas Fayre

This year marks the 80th Annual Christmas Fayre at Port Hope United Church. Our Fayre has proudly carried a legacy of commitment to values, innovation, and outreach which has transcended throughout our community over several generations.

Why not treat yourself, or those on your Christmas list to our vast selection of unique, home spun gifts and goodies to suit every age. Take a break from your browsing by experiencing the delectable delights of homemade soups, sandwiches and squares from 11-2 in our relaxing tea room.

Come and celebrate the season by being a part of PHUC's spirited tradition! It is on November 21st at the church from 11 to 3p.m.



Deadlines for 2018

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photos for

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– or send as soon as possible to
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circuitrider@bayofquinteconference.ca

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