



**Bethel Mennonite Church**  
**ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE**  
**2020-2021**

**LYNDA TOEWS (visual arts)**

LYNDA TOEWS

# Table of Contents

Introduction	3
MCC Anniversary Quilt	4
Quilt photo references	13
Hymnal painting	21
Trees project	36
Artists bio	49

## ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE, 2020 – 2021 LYNDA TOEWS

### INTRODUCTION



One day Erwin Warkentin came up to me after church and suggested I might want to submit a proposal for the Artist-in-Residence position at Bethel. Hmmmm – it would be fun to write a proposal and come up with ideas – even though they probably wouldn’t pick me. I knew it would require three art projects. The first thing I did was ask pastor Darrel Toews about upcoming themes and he immediately mentioned the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MCC and the launch of the new Mennonite Church Canada hymnal. I wrote a nine-page proposal which included these themes, and a few ideas for a third project. They liked the idea of using the theme of trees for a third project. And. . . they picked me! It is my honor to serve Bethel Mennonite Church in this way.

Little did we know at the time that a world pandemic was just around the corner! There had been big plans in place for Bethel to be the Mennonite Church Canada host for celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MCC, and for launching the new hymnal. But since we couldn’t fill the sanctuary due to social distancing policies, we found creative ways to celebrate online via live video streaming and zoom presentations. Staff, volunteers and committees worked extra hard to adjust the ways of doing church and continuing to stay connected as a church community.

**ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE**

**Bethel Mennonite Church**  
***MCC 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Quilt***

Art-making process

By Lynda Toews & Cheryl Warkentin

## DESIGNING THE QUILT (for proposal)

I proposed a design for a quilt/tapestry ~ 6 x 6 feet in size to commemorate 100 years of MCC. In its centre would be the MCC 100th anniversary logo, and a total of 24 photos, both color and black and white. They all needed to be found, scanned and cropped to make them square. I chose a variety of time periods, places, and activities in the photos, which are all taken from either *A Common Place* MCC publication, or from [mcccanada.ca/centennial/100-stories](http://mcccanada.ca/centennial/100-stories) web site. MCC gave me permission via e-mail for use of their photos and logos for this potential project.

Using the medium of a quilt makes the “medium part of the message” because quilts represent a huge aspect of MCC’s work over the last 100 years.



I envision this quilt/tapestry being hung in the wall space for 2020 where the huge Christmas wreath usually hangs. It will look nice if there is a large painting on the equivalent white wall on the right side of the stage.

One catch: I don't sew. This project would require some help from sewers/quilters in the church – which is also in and of itself an expression of MCC work – cooperation. I envisioned a quilting bee in which everyone would be stitching the corners of the squares together. When asking around in church, everyone told me that **Cheryl Warkentin** was the pro quilter.

I immediately asked her over for coffee and to bring along her quilting work for me to see. It was AMAZING!!! She analyzed my design and said that it would work best as a one-person job for the sewing/quilting part, and gave me a bit of an education as to what would be required – quite a bit more complicated than I imagined.

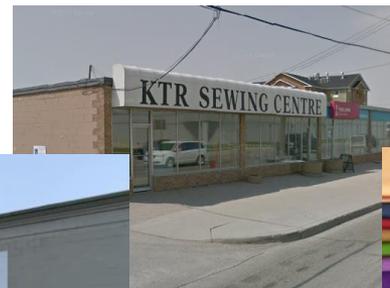
First I had to test out photo transfer methods. I ended up deciding on Avery photo transfers because you can print them from your home inkjet printer and iron them onto cloth. I also looked into digital photo printing at the suggestion of the worship committee, but it was 10x more expensive. I did a sample iron-on to an old cotton pillow case to test the Avery materials..





The colorful strip around the logo was taken from the masthead of *A Common Place* and color choices for the squares were based on these colors.

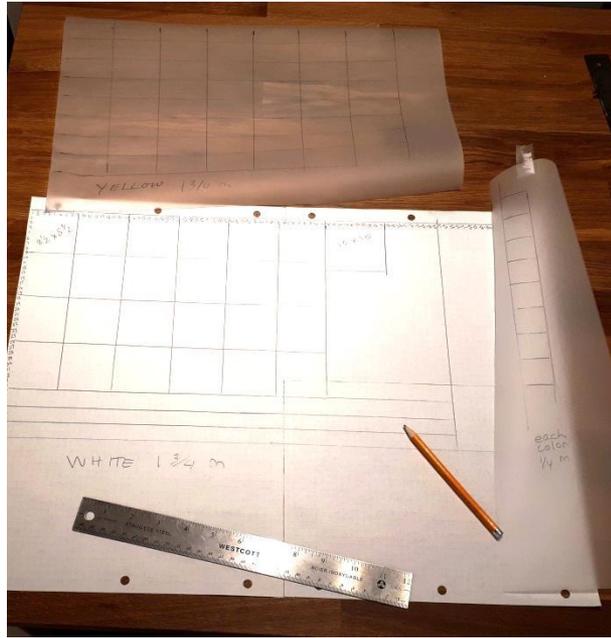
Now I just had to find the equivalent colors in quilting cloth. I compared 3 stores and found the best deal and variety at KTR Sewing Centre. I got a deal on the batting at Design Wall.

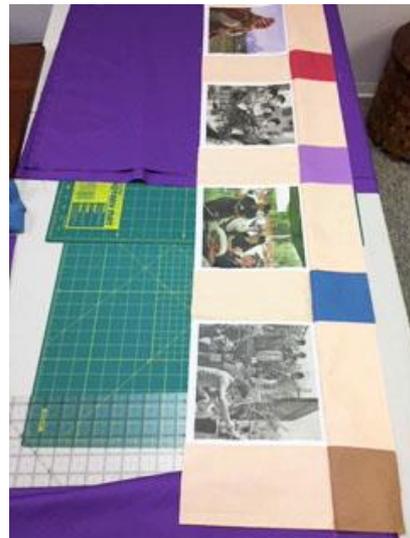


Next – how much cloth to buy? I created material-cutting templates in order to figure how many meters to get of each color.

Next it was Cheryl's job to cut the cloth with her special quilter's cutter, and give the white squares back to me so I could inkjet print and iron- on the photos.

First all the photos had to be laterally reversed in photo shop so that they would be right reading when ironed-on from the back. Once printed, each photo had to be close-cut and then ironed on.





Cheryl took on the huge job of sewing all the pieces together, leaving a ¼ inch white margin around each printed photo, and using only ¼ inch seam allowances – very meticulous work!



Moving right along!



The original design was sew-able, by an expert seamstress/quilter!



Sewing the fancy quilting designs to hold it all together. You may notice the MCC cross/dove logo in the red square.



I went back into the MCC web site to find all the captions that went with the photos I chose, and created a document with thumbnails of each picture with the caption beside it. I had this printed at Lightning Quick printers on a 48 inch wide roll of poster paper. We bought a broom stick at the Dollarstore and my husband Gary cut some lengths of it to use as dowels to create a “scroll” for this poster, which will be hung beside the quilt as a reference guide to the photos.

Then to IKEA to buy a hanging rod and hardware for the quilt



Top: Gerald Warkentin and my husband Gary Brown installing the rod to hang the quilt in the church

Right: Quilt hung in place with photo reference scroll beside it. An enlarged version of these references follows.



# MCC 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary quilt photo references



In 1946, MCC began gathering Christmas bundles, packages for children containing clothing, hygiene supplies, school supplies, a small toy and often a New Testament, to ship to Europe and other locations. From 1946 to 1978, nearly 1 million Christmas bundles were given to children in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.



Over time, MCC has worked to honour the skills, traditions and strengths of local communities. In 1946, Edna Ruth Byler, with her husband Joe on an MCC trip, saw the beauty of needlework Puerto Rican women made but had no place to sell. She took action. The simple act of bringing pieces home to sell to friends and neighbours in Akron, Pennsylvania, sparked a pioneering fair trade enterprise. It grew into Ten Thousand Villages, providing access to sustainable income and life-changing opportunities to artisans in dozens of countries, including Pedro Torres (pictured in 1999) in Walata Grande, Bolivia.



Pax worker Richard Lambright (second from left) of Lagrange, Indiana, teaches canning techniques at the MCC cannery in Tsakones, Greece in 1956 or 1957, helping people preserve meat, fruit and vegetables for winter us.



Buffalo Gals perform at the We Are All Treaty People celebration which MCC Manitoba helped sponsor. It took place at The Forks on September 2018. It was billed as a way of building and celebrating relationships and raising awareness around Treaty 1 using food, storytelling, crafts, music, and dancing.



MCC provided olive tree seedlings to farmers in Lebanon, Jordan and the West Bank (present-day Palestine) in 1979 and 1980, part of a larger response to meet urgent needs after conflict in the region. In addition to the loss of lives and homes, land and water resources were destroyed. Here, children help unload a truckload of olive tree seedlings being distributed by MCC in southern Lebanon in 1980. MCC provided 10,000 seedlings at a reduced cost to more than 300 farmers in nine villages, along with planting instructions and follow-up visits.



Herve Alcina (left), MCC's logistics manager in Haiti, helps with the distribution of relief items in the community of Bingo, in Haiti's Jean Rabel commune (municipality) after an earthquake struck the area on October 6, 2018.



MCC's first relief kitchen in south Russia opened in Khortitsa on March 16, 1922. It was one of 140 MCC-supported feeding centers in southern Russia that distributed 25,000 rations daily at the peak of the relief efforts.



For 100 years Mennonite women have been making quilts for MCC.



In the 1920s, people in southern Russia (present-day Ukraine) were bearing the consequences of years of unrest. The Mennonite community in the U.S. and Canada came together in response and MCC was born. Congregations collected money, gathered food and sewed clothing. Volunteers are shown unpacking a shipment of six railway cars.



In response to the refugee crisis following the end of the Vietnam War in 1979, MCC was the first agency to sign a private sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada, leading hundreds of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Canada to sponsor and resettle thousands of refugees across the country. Victor Neumann, MCC representative in Songkhla, Thailand, stands with the Vietnamese Boat People. Mothers of the children in this picture were abducted by pirates.



For 100 years, volunteers have provided comfort through millions of stitches for MCC, from sewing clothing or other relief items in early years to making comforters such as this one, which was received by a Japanese family sometime around 1950.



In the 1920s MCC sent tractors and seeds to southern Russia (present-day Ukraine), to help with the harvest.



Mennonites load wagons with emergency food, including tins of milk, in Platovka, Russia, in 1923. Several hundred wagons were needed for some of the larger transports. Through MCC, D.R. Hoepfner, who took this photo, oversaw feeding operations at one relief site.



Through MCC's Teachers Abroad Program (TAP), which began in 1962, hundreds of MCC teachers were placed in church-run secondary and teacher training colleges in newly independent African countries including Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe.



Arriving by horse or camel, hundreds of people from surrounding areas flock to Teriturene, a village in central Chad (pictured in 2016), to celebrate a new well that MCC helped to build. Through the decades, thousands of gatherings like this have marked the gains that communities have made through partnering with MCC.



In the U.S., Mennonites in Virginia and in Kansas began experimenting with mobile meat canning, launching efforts that helped families in Europe in the 1940s, and today generate nearly a million pounds of canned meat for families in need worldwide every year.



Men from Hopedale (Illinois) Mennonite Church volunteer with MDS in Illinois, after a tornado struck on April 21, 1967.



Germany 1949 MCC community centre in the Kreuzberg section of Berlin, Germany hosted a sewing circle for local women. They gathered twice a month to sew and knit clothing for people in need in their community.



Following the Korean War in the 1950s, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) was one of the poorest countries in the world. Food, fuel and electricity were scarce, and there was massive unemployment. In addition to MCC feeding programs, the Mennonite Vocational School, established by MCC relief volunteers near Daegu, trained hundreds of orphans in areas such as agriculture, metalwork, carpentry, printing and drafting. In 1959, a student feeds rabbits in the school's agriculture program. 40 rabbits were loaned by Church World Service and Heifer International to the school for their agricultural projects. The school returned one rabbit for each rabbit loaned as the project expanded



By working with partners who are rooted in local communities, MCC harnesses the power of people who know the area deeply. In Iraq's Ninewa plains, for instance, years of economic upheavals and conflict have reduced honey production. But MCC partners knew the quality and taste of honey produced there was once famous and that people were willing to pay a premium for it. After receiving beehives and training, Liza (pictured in 2015) and her husband Benjamin began producing honey that they could sell for five times the cost of imported honey.



2004 - Children in a Sunday school class in Kitchener, Ontario, worked together to sew a comforter. Jan Adams (left) brought the class this picture of Amira Martic (right) shown in a camp for displaced people near Zenica, Bosnia. She is wrapped in the comforter the class made.



School kits are distributed in Kampuchea (present-day Cambodia) circa 1983. The U.S. government had a ban on trade with Kampuchea and Vietnam and initially denied a request to send school kits. Mennonites throughout the U.S., including schoolchildren, wrote to government officials, asking them to allow the kits to be shipped. Permission was granted, and eventually more than 96,000 school kits were shipped.



From the beginning, MCC has invested in the big picture of what families and communities need to thrive — not just for now but for decades and even generations to come. In Bangladesh in the 1970s, when families relied on rice and could afford little else, MCC introduced new, nutritious and sustainable crops and supported job creation programs. Currently, in Indigenous communities where dropout rates are high, MCC supports preschools so that Megha Baski, Prity Murmu and others (pictured in 2017) can begin learning in their own language, helping them to better succeed in school and build a brighter future



One of many MCC thrift stores across the country.

*Photos and captions (abridged) courtesy of MCC. Photos were selected by the quilt designer, Lynda Toews, attempting to cover a variety of MCC endeavors in several times and places. The construction of the quilt was a joint endeavor by Lynda Toews & Cheryl Warkentin of Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

**ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE**

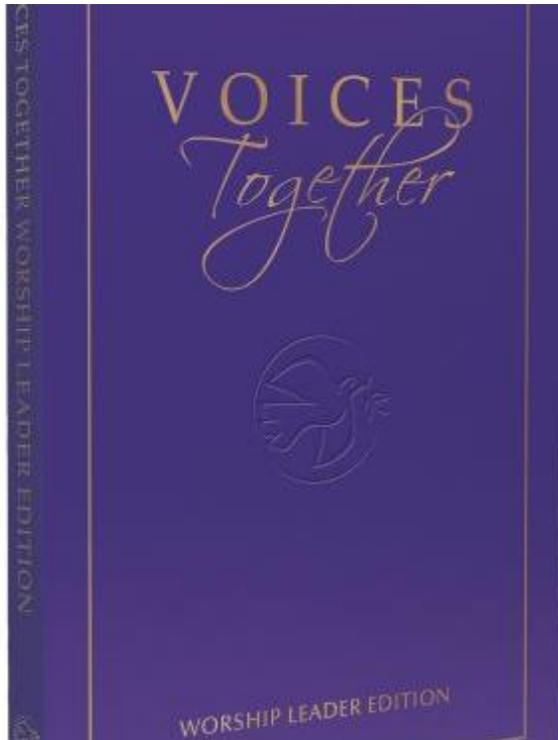
**Bethel Mennonite Church**

***Hymnal abstract painting***

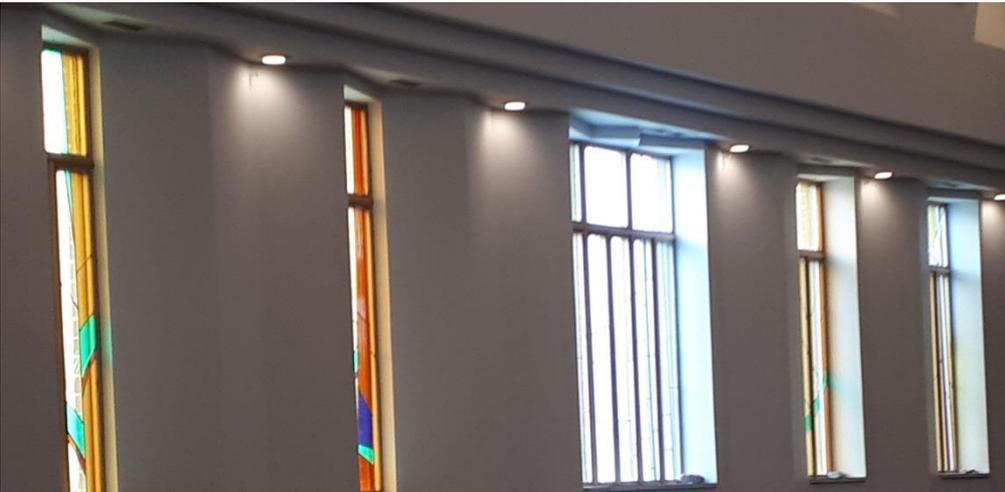
(for new hymnal launch November 2020)

Art-making process

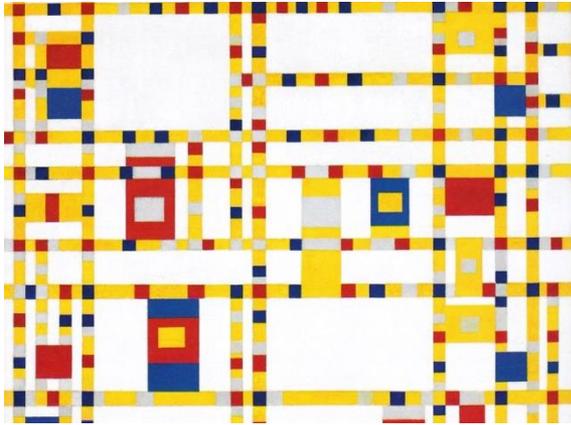
By Lynda Toews



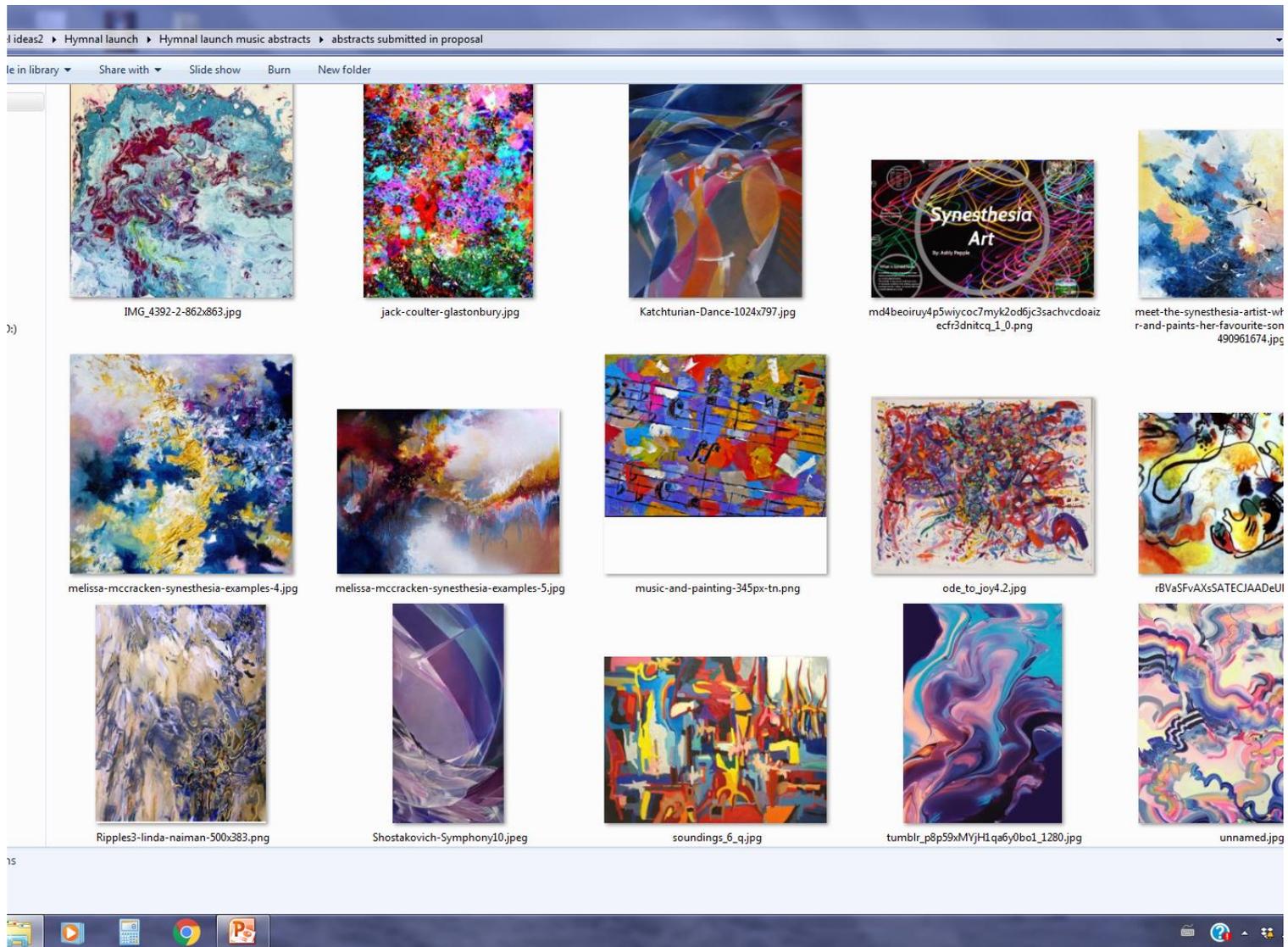
First I had to see what this new hymnal was supposed to look like, and figure out how I could use the Mennonite Church Canada/Manitoba logo in the image somehow. I knew there would have to be purple and gold in the painting, and probably some green.



Looking at the colors in the sanctuary was an important step towards designing the colors in the painting. Artists often use color wheels to decide on color harmonies. I chose a six-color mix that includes every second color in the wheel – and these work well with the stained glass colors on the lower level of the sanctuary.



What to actually paint? I knew of artists that painted abstract images that represented music. Artists like Piet Mondrian (Broadway Boogie Woogie, Wassily Kandinsky – Composition VII, and even Manitoba’s Shirley Elias). Kandinsky believed shades resonated with each other to produce visual “chords”. Synesthesia is a crossover of sensory perception so that a musical sound might produce an image. For example, to composer Alexander Scriabin, F# major appeared violet in color. I decided to play my favorite music and see what kind of images my doodling might produce.



If you google “non-representational music paintings” you will find many examples. The idea is not new.



I envisioned the best space to hang this painting would be the white wall stage right – about 4 x 7 feet in size. It would pick up the purples in the stained glass on the right side and it would look great to have the “faithful” tapestry hung in the large brick area backstage, also picking up the purple. The painting would not work on the brick wall.



How to paint, transport, and hang a 4 x 7 foot canvass? My solution was to create a quadriptych – 4 canvasses in one. Then the idea came to me to use canvas proportions so that they could be hung together with the spaces in-between forming the shape of a cross. I tested the idea digitally using a sample image from the internet. I thought they could each hang separately, but later realized this would be impossible to hang perfectly, and decided we'd go with some 1 x 2 inch boards to form the cross and secure the canvasses to the board for hanging. I would paint the boards white so they could look like the white wall. This would not work on a brick background, plus you would end up with two crosses on the same wall (the stained glass front window/cross).



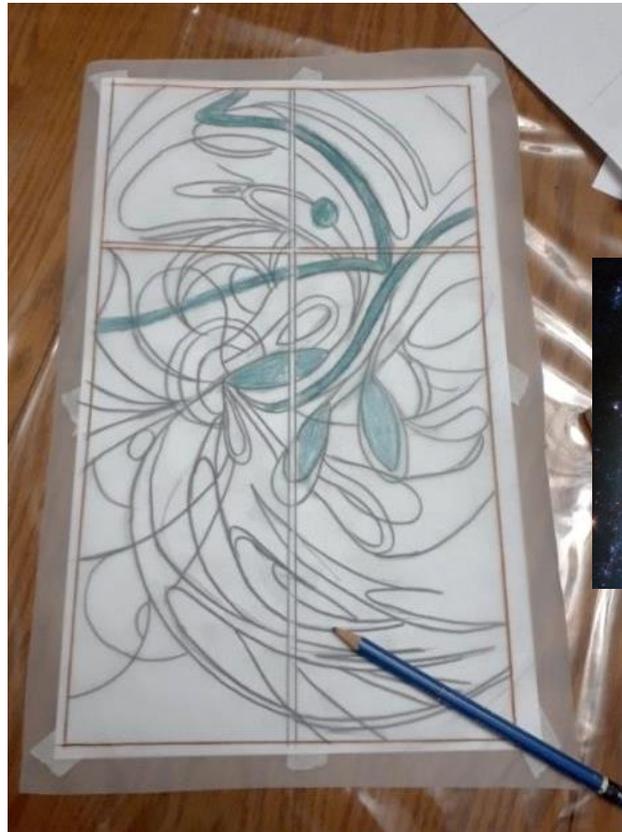
Off to Artists Emporium where canvass is ½ price if you buy a few, and it was a good call to buy 4 smaller canvasses so that they would fit in our little Yaris hatchback! Gary secured all 4 canvasses together for painting, and we found odds + ends at the Re-store for him to build a make-shift easel in our spare room, and covered the wall and floors with drop sheets.





The daunting blank canvass ready to go. I had to paint it on its side because with my arthritis I can't reach or bend very well.

Below – experimenting with paint mixing and transparency



I wanted the design to have the Mennonite church logo embedded in it somehow. The line drawing is the final of several drafts. I wanted a lot of energy and movement in it, almost like that of a galaxy spinning.



Then I added color using pencil crayon, scanned it into my computer and brightened up the colors in photo shop. I had my small design, ready to paint.

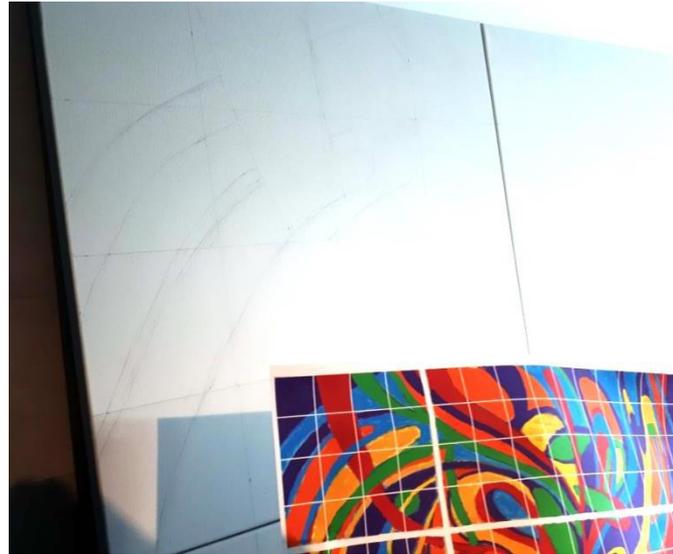
Painting and music are both languages – both are said to have color, shape, pattern, energy, harmony, movement, repetition, composition, resonance, and even voice. Therefore I decided to create an abstract piece intended to be a visual interpretation of music, which makes use of these descriptors at an elemental level.

The painting is meant to be an expression of joy, light, and celebration, all expanding and swirling, but stabilized by the implied cross, which might be seen as fueling the energy around it. (But of course, the arts also embrace mystery and defy any single interpretation and sometimes my paintings know more than me – my husband Gary saw all kinds of things in it, like seeing faces in the clouds.) I'm sure everyone will have their own individual personal response.

I might title the painting ***Psalm 19*** - a hymn extolling the majestic glory of God as displayed in the heavens.



Back to practical reality. How to enlarge an 8 x 14 inch image onto a 49 x 85 inch canvass? An old trick – make a grid on the image you want to enlarge, draw a pencil grid on the canvass in proportion, then draw only each individual square (and now I'm working sideways).





Once I had the purples in, I decided to lighten up the oranges and greens so that everything would harmonize better - it was a little "airless" before and needed to breathe.

Then, to add some iridescent gold (like the text on the new hymnal), I added "stars" in the purple areas, giving the painting a whole new level of spatial depth.

I think I was able to follow my design (bottom left) pretty closely – note that the lighting in the room changes the colors a bit when photographing artwork (below). And, we decided to close the gap and make the cross more covert so that the curved lines flow uninterrupted.



My design



Final painting 49 x 85 inches



Then, when it was finished, we turned it upright and Gary sat and stared at it for quite some time. Then he said, Lynda – do you realize there is an eagle head superimposed on the dove's head? Sure enough – how did that get in there, I asked? Might this be symbolic of the Mennonite relationship with Indigenous people?

Then he said, and look at the suggestion of fish shapes at the bottom

Sure enough – and other people saw butterflies, tuning forks, other creatures – just like seeing faces or creatures in the clouds. The fascinating thing was – none of that was planned.



Gary re-assembling the painting after transporting it to church



Gerald preparing the wall for the painting, Gary checking it out with a level.



On the Sunday that the new hymnal was presented livestream by Bethel's new arts co-ordinator Madeleine Friesen, the stage was decorated with musical notes by Maureen Wilson-Penner and Lorraine Petkau.



Psalm 19 extolls the majestic glory of God as displayed in the heavens.

*<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

*<sup>2</sup> Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they reveal knowledge.*

*<sup>3</sup> There is no speech or language, where their voice is not heard.*

*<sup>4</sup> Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.*

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Waldemar Ens wrote a lovely poem in response to the painting:

**Lynda paints hymnal**

voices sing bright colours into being  
together bring olive branch into swirling focus  
red purple yellow green and blue in centrifugal sky  
centered by inner cross

all in starry harmony  
extended to infinite master of the universe

worthy of praise  
bearer of burdens  
hearer of prayer  
center of meditation  
giver of love and law

so let us sing beneath the eagle's wing  
fishers we

**ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE**  
**Bethel Mennonite Church**  
*The Forest and the Trees*  
**Art-making process**  
**By Lynda Toews**

The following is what I wrote in my proposal:

*“Dorothy Fontaine and I had a wonderful conversation recently about the arts, nature, trees in particular. Trees are amazing creatures who communicate with each other in ways we are only beginning to understand, and they draw clouds together for rain, and grow for 100s, even 1000s of years, etc .*

*Tree analogies are also endless: Christ died on a tree, trees make musical instruments, homes, they shelter animals, provide oxygen, shade, fruit, fuel, etc. There are many tree metaphors used in the bible.*

*Needless to say, trees are a very important part of the environment. But Dorothy and I agreed that we can’t save the environment unless we love it – we have to feel for it from the heart, and that’s where change begins. The arts might be a way to get us there. Think of all the artists who painted the soul of trees from the heart (Emily Carr, Vincent van Gogh, etc). They didn’t paint a literal representation, but rather an expression of the tree’s personality – personhood if you will.”*

Now – how in the world do I figure out how to do a six-week theme on trees? I have to have some idea of what themes the paintings will be intending to express, or else they will be disconnected from the worship services. This matrix of subthemes was a challenge to deal with because there was no clear answer as to whether I should design the themes to paint to, or paint to someone else’s idea of the themes. . . . A chicken-egg problem and one person on the worship committee said I should be both the chicken and the egg, and another person said, be the chicken. . . . .hmmmm..... What does that all mean? Which actually comes first? I decided to just follow my own process.

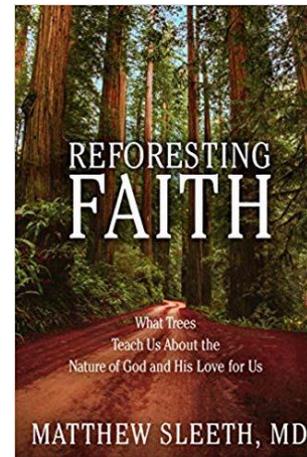
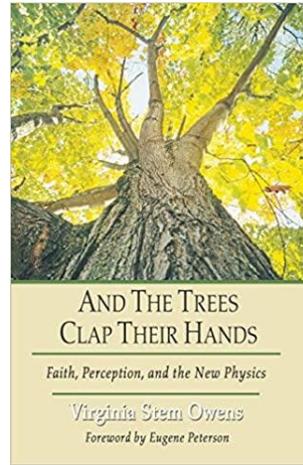
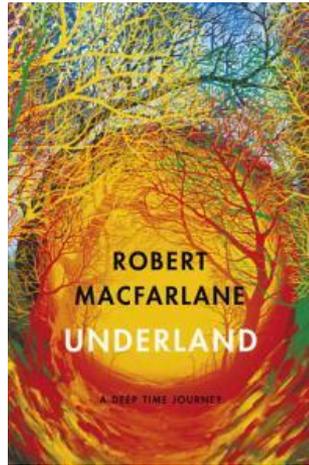
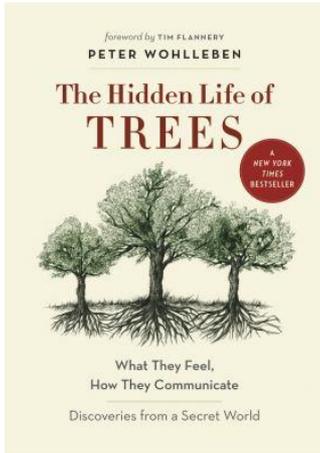


Emily Carr



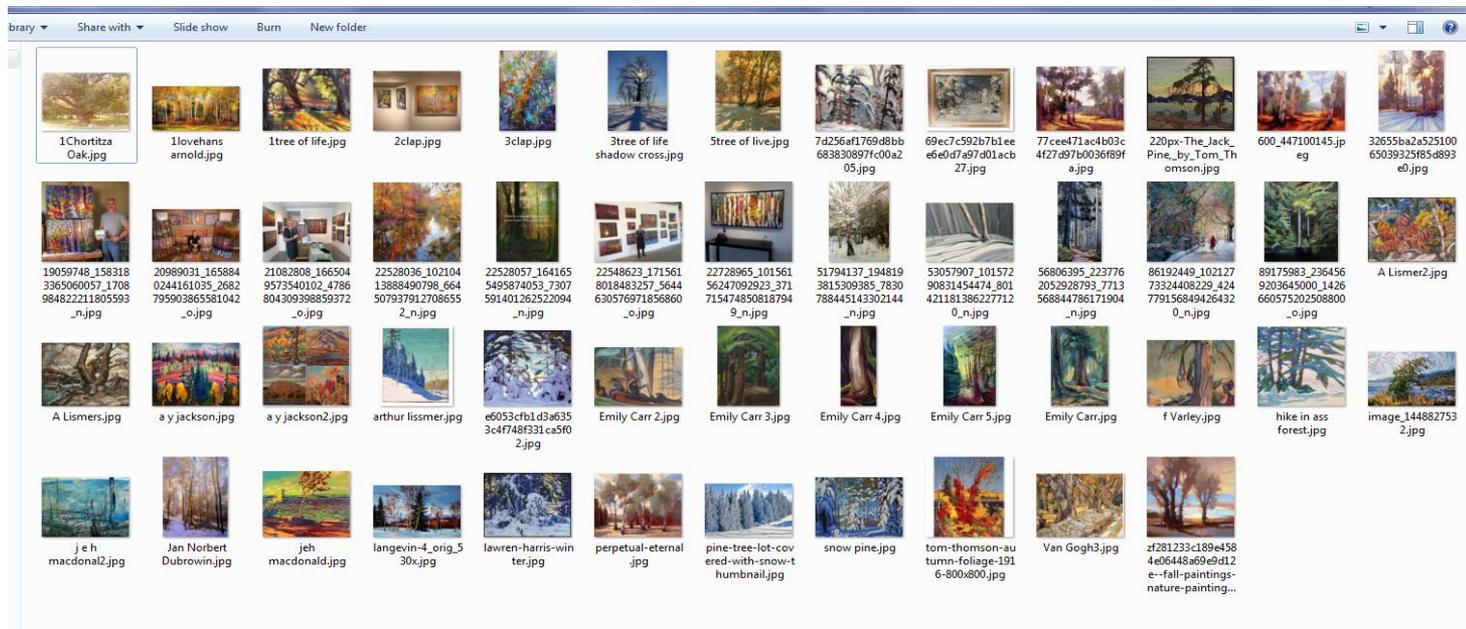
Vincent Van Gogh

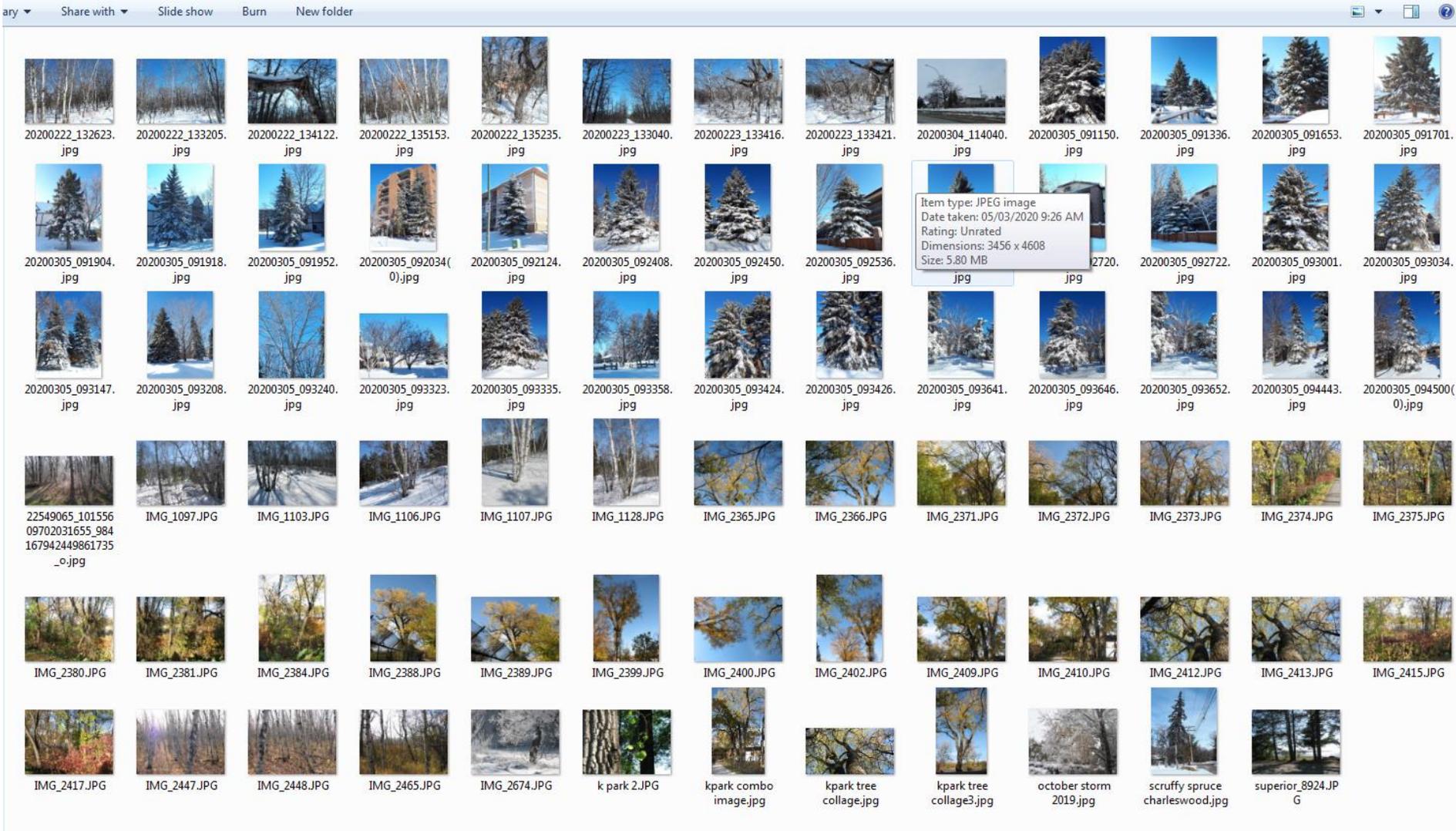
My own process involved doing some research and taking a lot of pictures. I read several books and articles. For example:



Note: I own the above books and they can be used by others. I donated them to the church library.

I did google searches on tree paintings to get ideas.



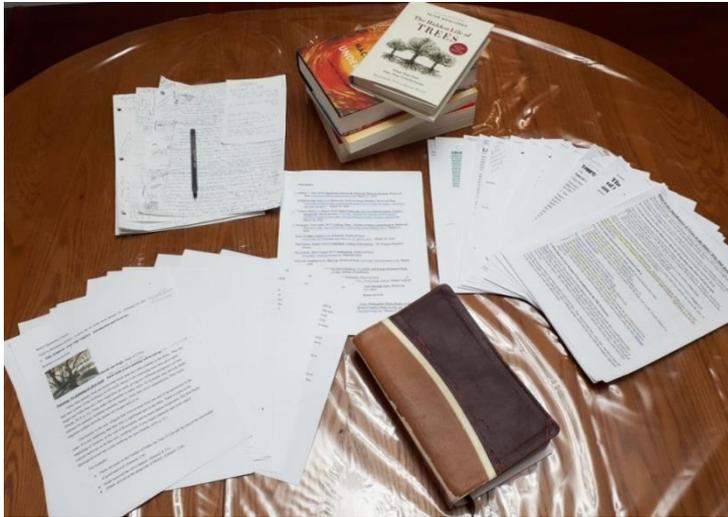


I took hundreds of my own tree photos, and videos walking through forests.



I spent a long time wrestling with what I could come up with for six weeks of topics on trees – between Epiphany and Lent 2021. I couldn't wait until a week before to find out what the topics/sermons might be, before deciding what to paint because painting takes much longer than that. Therefore, I felt I had to create a larger context for the paintings far ahead of time, so that they would make sense and be able to dovetail with the worship services. Chicken or egg??

This involved doing a lot of research about trees in the Bible, trees in other cultures and times, the science of trees, tree poetry, literature and art, and more generally, how we look at nature in Western culture.



In order to organize my ideas, I ended up doing an illustrated essay in six sections (for six weeks) with ideas for bulletin covers, paintings, overhead projector images and video, ideas for adult and children's education, and a Bibliography (a VERY visual series).

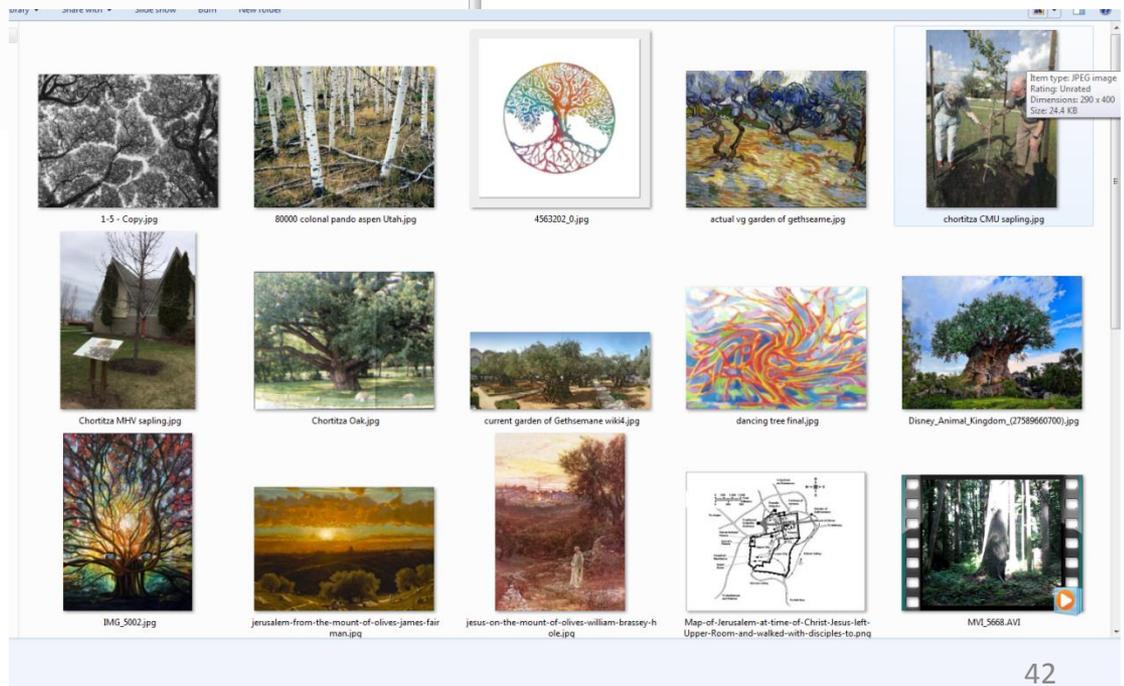
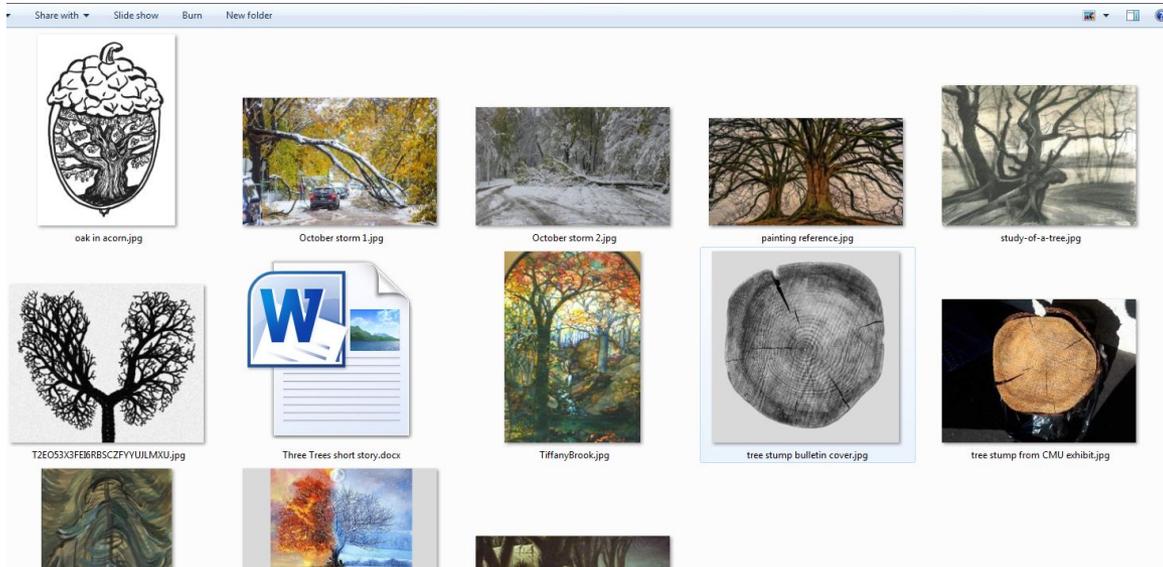
### THE FOREST AND THE TREES

1. Introduction and Overview
2. Trees and Time
3. The Tree of Life
4. Can You See Trees Clapping Their Hands?
5. The Olive Tree Garden at Gethsemane
6. Relationship Lessons from Trees (Feb 14<sup>th</sup>)  
**(see sermons at the end of booklet)**



I realize this was beyond the purview of an artist-in-residence, but it's the way I work. Paintings need to belong to ideas that have been worked through. Hopefully some of the thoughts and suggestions will be usable by the Bethel worship and pastoral committees. They were NOT prescriptive, they were only an offering of suggestions.

I asked for this tree stump at the end of an exhibit at MHC Gallery where it was displayed. I photographed it and turned it into a black and white image, intended as a suggestion for one of the bulletin covers or projector images. I also did a line drawing of an oak inside an acorn for another possible bulletin cover.



I created a folder to store all my drawings, video, photography and other people's art that I found, in one place, intended to be used, if approved, on bulletin covers or on the overhead projector. I envision this tree series to be highly visual.



I pared it down to ideas for three paintings, shown in proposed position above on the brick wall, to be put up for January 10, 2021. The paintings will relate to the sermons as follows:

Week 2: Trees and Time – an old tall conifer, leaning toward the light of the stained glass window

Week 4: Trees Clapping Hands – Trees in the wind with riotous colors and energy

Week 6: Relationship Lessons from Trees – night time image revealing tree communication patterns above and below ground

And it would be nice to have birch branches in the corner too (☺)

***The relevant painting could be pointed out during its “sermon”.***

## The Oldest Tree On Record In Canada



The longest-living tree on record in Canada is a Yellow-cedar that lived in Canada's oldest forest in the [Caren Range](https://vancouverislandbigtrees.blogspot.com/2010/07/oldest-tree-on-record-in-canada.html) on the Sunshine Coast. It was felled in a large clear cut operation in 1980. The tree was 1835 years old. The Friends of Caren discovered the huge stump in 1993. Seen above is a cross section of the ancient tree that the group used to educate Canadians about the importance of the Caren Range ancient forest. (<https://vancouverislandbigtrees.blogspot.com/2010/07/oldest-tree-on-record-in-canada.html>)



Caren Range,  
Sechelt Peninsula, BC



Left: Gary preparing another level to our home made easel to accommodate canvas size for tall conifer.

Right: Lynda working out drawing for tall conifer, to be representative of an old yellow cedar.





Some stages of painting this yellow cedar – 36 x 72 inches to be used for the second week in the series. It is meant to be placed to the right of the front stained glass in the church. It is leaning towards it, and the light of the stained glass is falling in the direction of this tree.



Left: working out a drawing for trees of the fields clapping their hands for week four of the series. I went out and photographed some trees in the neighborhood to use in the composition. I'm so glad I have the software to convert them to black and white, laterally reverse them, change their size, etc.

I'm hoping to make this painting a very richly-coloured back-lit image with energetic movement throughout field and sky, but especially in the leaves.



Trees clapping step 1- roughing in underpainting and establishing sky color gradations. 30 x 48 canvas.



Trees clapping step 2 – bringing in the neighborhood trees.



Trees clapping step 3 – making the ground crawl with energy, and establishing evidence of the wind.



Trees clapping step 4 – Trying to decide if I'm finished. It is meant to be a very loose, expressive style. Yes, I think I'm finished. I can imagine that these trees are "clapping their hands".



Drawing - for trees communicating above and below ground. It had to be two trees because it is about relationship and is planned for the February 14, 2021 service. I plan to make it a night time scene with the moon – Moonlight Sonata? What's that song about? Let's Wiki it . . .

**“Beethoven took Countess Giulietta Guicciardi on as a pupil in around 1801 and soon fell in love with her. His Sonata Op. 27 no. 2, 'Moonlight Sonata' is dedicated to her..**

Sonata Op. 27 no. 2 was published in 1802 under the title Sonata quasi una Fantasia, but is known today as the Moonlight Sonata after the German music critic Ludwig Rellstab wrote that it reminded him of the moon setting over Lake Lucerne.”

To see a short video on the way trees invisibly communicate, see this video. The painting is a stylized way to make this visible.  
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=yWOqeyPIVRo>





“Trees Clapping” 30 x 48 inches



“Moonlight Sonata” 40 x 40 inches



“Old Yellow Cedar”  
36 x 72 inches

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY – LYNDA TOEWS, BFA (hon), B.Ed

Lynda Toews was born in Winnipeg in 1962. While growing up, she spent many summer holidays in the countryside where she developed a love for nature and animals. She completed her university fine arts painting thesis on endangered flower species of the Canadian tall grass prairie. In addition she has also enjoyed painting portraits of people, animals, and many other subjects.

There was a long hiatus in her work during which she focused on other career opportunities and cared for ill family members. Having lived in the country from 2010 – 2017, rural life inspired Toews to paint the surrounding farm animals with a particular interest in capturing their individual personalities, and observing the way the light delineates their forms. Her endeavors include creating a collection of heritage animal-related stories gathered from older people who grew up on farms. This booklet accompanied her solo exhibition *A Place in the Kingdom* at Mennonite Heritage Gallery in 2015. In 2014 she incorporated her focus on farm animals into creating a large Nativity painting titled *The Commiment*, now part of the collection of Canadian Mennonite University.

Toews continues to be attracted to themes that bring apparently unattended, overlooked, or even marginalized subjects “into the Kingdom”.

### art education

- Bachelor of Fine Arts Honours Degree, University of Manitoba
- Bachelor of Education Degree, University of Manitoba
- Graphic Arts Certificate, RRC
- Commercial Art Certificate, High School

### exhibitions

- *Breaking the Silence* juried online group exhibition CMU Gallery, Winnipeg, March 2020
- *Faith in Form* juried group exhibition October 2019
- *The Commiment* painting at Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary group exhibition (October 2018)
- *43 Horses Enduring Spirits* juried group exhibition at the Crebery Gallery, Winnipeg – February 2017
- *The Commiment* painting on loan at Steinbach Credit Union (December 2016)
- *The Commiment* painting on loan at Park Manor, Winnipeg (spring/summer 2016)
- *Mosaic* – Steinbach Arts Council group exhibition – February 2016
- *Manitoba Art Expo* 2015 & 2016 (*The Commiment* painting in Showcase Gallery 2015)
- Solo Exhibition Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery Winnipeg:
  - *A Place in the Kingdom: Paintings and Heritage Stories Celebrating Farm Animals* (Spring 2015) (see <https://www.cmu.ca/gallery/images.php?id=20> and click “view catalogue” for stories)
  - Feature artist at Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra holiday pops concert with *The Commiment* painting (December, 2014)
  - *The Commiment* - Group Exhibition Great West Life Assurance Company, Winnipeg (2014)
  - *Wild Hope* Mennonite Church Canada Assembly group exhibition, CMU (2014)
  - Solo Exhibition Steinbach Arts Council Hall Gallery *Barn Dance* (November 2013)
  - 15th Annual Southeast Judged Exhibition, Steinbach Arts Council (April 2013)
  - Solo Exhibition, Mennonite Heritage Village: *The Silent Contribution* (January 2013) Steinbach
  - 10-foot painting at River East Mennonite Brethren Church, Winnipeg. (2006)
  - Manitoba Society of Artists 71st Annual Juried Exhibition (People’s choice award) (Spring 2003)
  - *Grand Jury 7* – Winnipeg Art Gallery Juried Group Exhibition (Spring 2003)
  - (*Dis/Comfort* – Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery Juried Group Exhibition (October 2002)
  - *Why Art?* – Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery Juried Group Exhibition (June 2001)
  - *Grand Jury 5* – Winnipeg Art Gallery Juried Group Exhibition (April 1999)
  - *Debutant* – Ace Art Group Exhibition (April 1999)
  - *More Refreshing Winds* – Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery Group Exhibition (January 1999)
  - Oil painting accepted for installation at Government House (September 1998)
  - 130-foot mural at the original Winnipeg Airport’s Transborder Lounge (worked with Rand Heidinger) (1997)
  - Artist at Group 3 Artworks, The Bay, Winnipeg (1997)
  - Permanent installation at the University of Winnipeg telecourse studio (1996)

## media/publications

- Showcase article in July 2015 issue of More of Our Canada, a publication of the Reader's Digest.
- Article in AgriPost, May 29, 2015, p 30.
- A Place in the Kingdom: Paintings and Heritage Stories Celebrating Farm Animals exhibit covered in:
  - Winnipeg Free Press (faith page March 21, 2015)
  - The Canadian Mennonite (March 2, 2015)
  - Dawson Trail Dispatch (March & April 2015)
  - Heritage Posting (MB Menn Society March 2015)
  - CANVAAS (March/April, 2014)
  - Gallerieswest online magazine (March, 2015)
- *The Commitment* nativity painting and story published in:
  - The Canadian Mennonite (December 15, 2014 and 2018)
  - The Carillon (November 2014)
  - Dawson Trail Dispatch (November 2014)
- Artworks and bio published in Rhubarb Magazine (Fall 2014)
- Artwork published in The Village Voice, June 2013
- Airport mural article in Winnipeg Free Press supplement, February 14, 1998
- Artworks published in Sophia, Vol 9, No. 4. (Winter 1999)
- Artworks and biography published in Other Voices, Vol 11, No. 2. (Fall, 1998)
- Art criticism published in The Plug In Harold (February 1997)

## selected collections

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Steinbach Credit Union                         | • Dertsens Printers/Carillon News                  |
| • Province of Manitoba (nine pieces)             | • Bethania Personal Care Home                      |
| • Government House (Manitoba)                    | • Benner Dairy Farms                               |
| • Winnipeg International Airport                 | • River East Mennonite Church                      |
| • University of Winnipeg                         | • Die Mennonitische Post                           |
| • University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture | • North American Boulonnais Association (WI)       |
| • Alliance LaBroquerie                           | • GAEC de Tachincourt, France (Boulonnais breeder) |
| • SouthEast Veterinary Clinic                    | • City of Selkirk                                  |
| • Design Type                                    | • Ray St. Germain (Canadian musician)              |
| • Steinbach Arts Council                         | • St. Boniface Hospital                            |
| • Mennonite Heritage Village Museum              | • Canadian Mennonite University – “The Commitment” |
| • Birtle Pasture Pickers                         | • nativity painting                                |

## related activities

- Artist-in-Residence, Bethel Mennonite Church, 2020-2021
- Judge at the 17th annual Southeast Judged Exhibit, Steinbach Arts Council (April 2015)
- CD covers, book covers
- Art teacher at Winnipeg Art Gallery
- Art teacher at Phyx Hill School of Creative Arts
- Writer of Manitoba provincial position paper for arts education curriculum renewal: [https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/arts/draft\\_statement.pdf](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/arts/draft_statement.pdf)
- Writer of the education section of an art Web site for the Winnipeg Art Gallery: <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Holman/english/classroom/index.php3>

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