

CROSSROADS

MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

VOL. 31 ISSUE 1 | SPRING 2021



SIX STORY CATCH UP

Snapshots from the 2020-21
school year

MCI SPRING FUNDRAISING SERIES

Music Videos to
Mark Time

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

Clint Masse ('88)
& Dexter Rempel ('12)

3

From the Executive Director's Desk

4

Six Story Catch Up

7

MCI Spring Fundraising Series

8

The Maze and MCI

9

Empty Cup Collective

10

Christmas in February

11

MCI Receives \$50,000 Grant!

11

Fields for the Future

13

Upcoming Events

14

Alumni News & Updates

On the cover: MCI students participating in the Buffalo Creek Winter Triathlon

CrossRoads thanks the Yearbook Committee for capturing excellent photos featured throughout this issue

Managing Editor: Kayla Giesbrecht

PI FINANCIAL
experience. driven.

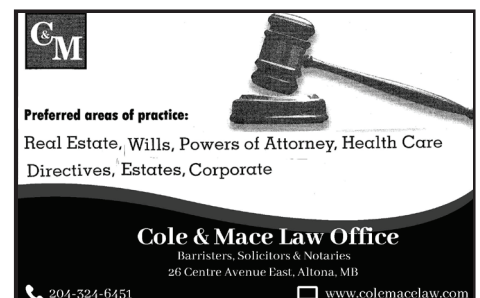
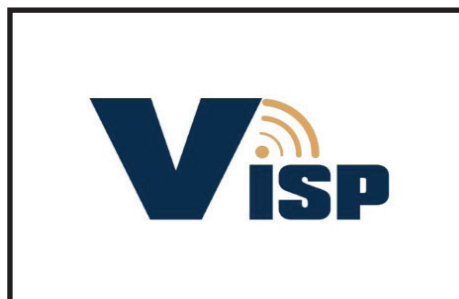




Photo by Kylee Henderson, Grade 10 | Digital Photography Class

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

WHEN GOD GOES UN-NAMED

Core to our purpose at MCI, is the desire to draw young people into a living relationship with God in Jesus Christ. This is a life-long journey marked by deep trust and a willingness to grapple with hard questions.

Recently a group of students confided their struggle as pandemic restrictions drag on. "The world seems so dark. God just seems so far away." Key elements of the school year have not happened this year – the Christian Life retreat, inter-collegiate athletics and (large) choirs have been placed on the shelf. Recently the school musical, an annual tradition for 55 years, was added to that list. The question students and staff ask "where is God in the midst of all this disappointment" is completely understandable.

The sense that God is hidden, if not fully absent, is not unusual for God's people. Honestly admitting that feeling, might even be a crucial aspect of meaningful faith. Jesus himself asked the question 'my God, why have you forsaken me?'

One book of the Bible stands out, in that it never mentions God by name. The book of Esther is filled with darkness, deceit and despair. The very existence of God's

people is threatened. Part of the subtext of the book is the question "where is God in these circumstances?" By the end of the book, the implication is clear. God has never been far away. In the midst of the real mess and moral ambiguity of human history, God continues to accomplish divine purposes.

The book of Esther, while never naming God's presence, pushes us to look at our own lives and consider how God might be actively working behind the scenes, even in the face of great threat or struggle. Like Esther herself, we are called to consider how we might join our efforts with the Holy One to accomplish God's good and perfect purposes.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has now gone on for more than a year. At MCI we are grateful for ways God has been working behind the scenes. Our enrolment is higher than in the past 4 years. We have been able to maintain in-class instruction for all but a few weeks. We have found creative ways to work from our core values, even while needing to do many things differently. Financially, there are encouraging signs. We are grateful for God's abiding presence.

- Harold Schlegel, Executive Director

SIX STORY CATCH UP

In this edition of six story catch up, we highlight a few of the fun activities we've experienced on and off campus as an MCI community.

1



CULTURE DAY

In December, a few members of our International Committee planned a “cultural tour” for the student body. Five countries/ cultures were represented in the experience. Students had the opportunity to experience different foods, learn about cultural norms, and have a little fun along the way. We're incredibly thankful for the cultural diversity within our student body, and our students' willingness to share their cultures with us.

ICE RINK

In January, a few volunteers from the MCI community organized and built an outdoor skating rink for our students and staff to enjoy! Complete with hockey nets and church pews for spectators, it quickly became a favourite spot on campus. The rink was well used by dorm students in the evening, day students at lunch and Phys. Ed. Classes.



2

3



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Throughout this year, our students have participated in many outdoor activities. Phys. Ed. classes have been held primarily outside and students have had the opportunity to cross-country ski and snowshoe, thanks to Camp Koinonia lending us their equipment. In February, the Buffalo Creek Winter Triathlon was hosted just outside of Altona, MB. Over a dozen of our students completed a portion of the event (either the run, skate or bike), with two finishing the full triathlon. Other students were able to participate on the sidelines by cheering on the racers.



Winter soccer in Phys. Ed. Class

4

DEBATES

Our student body is currently in the middle of a debate series, hosted by the International Committee. The debates range anywhere from “pineapple on pizza or no pineapple” to “nap during the school day or no nap”. The intention of this series is for students to practice sharing and articulating their stance on a topic, while learning to be open to hearing from those with differing opinions in a lighthearted environment.



DORM DEVOTIONS

Since the beginning of second semester, students have been invited to participate in weekly Bible Studies on Wednesday evenings. Brady Dick, one of the deans, has been leading the students through the Alpha Youth series. This series follows a wide range of topics that are relevant to life as a Christian in the World today. This video series asks challenging questions to get students thinking and talking about faith, life, and why they believe what they do.

So far the topics that have been covered include:

- Life: Is this it?
- Jesus: Who is He?
- Cross: Why did Jesus die?
- Faith: How can I have faith?



5

BADMINTON

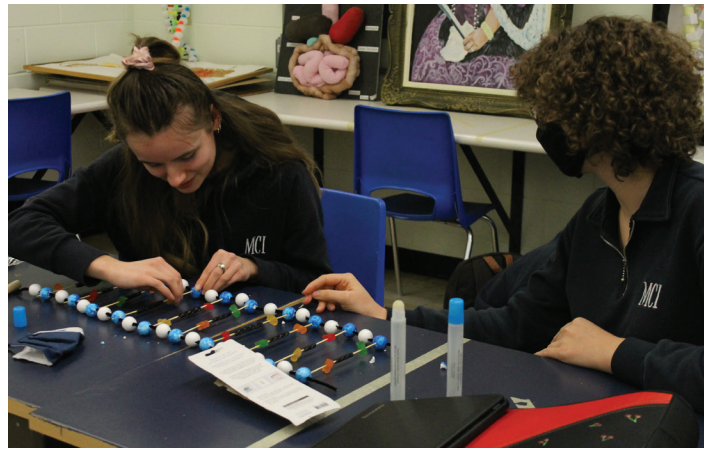
Badminton is back in action at MCI! Since the week before Spring Break, badminton athletes got their chance to hit the court again and compete against their peers, all while in a safe, COVID-19 friendly environment. This year, we have over half of the student population participating in after school badminton!

Athletes are only allowed to practice in small group sizes, however, this has meant more court time for individuals each day, and more one-on-one time for coaches to work on footwork, badminton strategy, and shot making skills.

The buzz in the gym has been amazing. Our student athletes have been craving some friendly competition and sport training since fall, so it is great to be able to offer badminton to them, even if it is adapted due to COVID-19 protocols.



6



PHOTOS
FROM THE 2020-21
SCHOOL YEAR



A LOOK INTO MCI'S SPRING FUNDRAISING SERIES

MCI's 2021 Spring Fundraising Series is going to look a little different. We've developed a 4-part mini-series hosted by current students, Owen Friesen & Jewel Johnson-Audu. Each episode will last no longer than 15 minutes, and have 3 distinct components; music, reflection & an auction.

In the dreaming of this event, we determined we had three main goals; highlight our student talent, raise funds for MCI & support local (mostly alumni) businesses. In the process, we've landed on - 'Owen & Jewel @ 7 - An MCI Fundraising Series'.

Each episode has 3 distinct sections; music, reflection & auction. The music you'll be seeing/hearing is already in the process of being recorded, with a new music video being released each week. The reflections will be readings, prayers, and personal reflection on the topic of lament/hope, taken from our upcoming publication. Lastly, our auction items. We're using this opportunity to support small businesses. Every auction item will go live after Monday nights show and be open for bidding for a specific amount of time.

Of the funds raised by the auction, 50% will go to the small business/artist and 50% will go to MCI. Stay tuned as we begin releasing information on what we'll be auctioning off... We've already secured an experience with Chef Kevin Funk & a handmade leather pack from Earth and Hide.

You're hosts, Owen & Jewel, will keep each night fun and light hearted. You're not going to want to miss this year's fundraising series! Mark your calendars: Monday May 10, 17, 24, 31 @ 7:00pm. Subscribe to our YouTube channel so you don't miss out!



An MCI Fundraising Series

Tune in to MCI's YouTube channel on Monday's at 7pm, starting May 10th

MUSIC VIDEOS TO MARK TIME

We cannot quite begin to express how this year has shaped the music program in a completely new way. We have moved through so many new variations of choir: From learning to sing independent of other voices, in smaller choirs, and spread far apart from one another across the chapel and Buhler Hall; to rehearsing and performing outdoors in the depths of winter, learning to sing with limited to no auditory feedback; to our most recent adjustment back to indoor singing and once again being able to hear the voices around you. It has been a year of invention, creativity, and last-minute flexibility as we adjust to the changing world.

It was our desire to involve students in the process of imagining and filming our Spring Fundraiser videos as much as possible. Students have helped select the songs that we are learning, choosing some of their favourite pieces from years past. They have also helped shape the stories that are told throughout the music videos. As a result, the music videos have become a documentary of sorts, documenting the various ways that we have rehearsed, sung, and performed this year, as well as

telling the story of how students are processing life in the midst of a pandemic.

Once again, we are impressed with the resiliency of our students and their ability to adapt to these new challenges. We look forward to sharing our songs with you and hope that they bring you all of the joy and hope of the spring season.



THE MAZE AND MCI

Back in 1988 it was hot and dry... I might even go as far to say it was the driest year on record. I was graduating with my best friends that I had only met 3 years earlier. Dormitory living is a friendship builder, and a piece of MCI education that is so understated. I have great friends from those days and we still keep in touch.

We were all young students then, with a whole world of opportunities and challenges ahead of us. Some would go back and run the family farm, some would go on to university, some would go out and do missions. I guess you could say there was a Maze out there for us young people to navigate.

It is always quite surreal when you look back in life, you can really see God's plan at work. I think that's how "A Maze in Corn" came to be. It's been said that God gives the Inspiration, as long as we give the perspiration (There's been lots of both around here!)

It started in the spring of 1998, and Angie and I were just married for a year. I was working at Horizon Agro as a Special Crops trader and she was a school teacher. I knew she had summers off and I saw this Corn Maze article and immediately said "we should do this!" ... and Angie said yes to the idea. We had 2,400 customers that year and we were over the moon at our little side business. By 2005, we both quit our day jobs and we were full time Corn Mazers. We had a young business and 2 young boys (Casdon, 4, and Brent, 2). Our customer count was now rising to 20,000 per year, and we were just able to replace our day job wages, but not by much.

Weather has always kept us humble. We were/are very thankful to the good Lord when we had warm sunshine days in fall, when customers would come out in droves. We would pray for strength when weeks of rain, and even floods, would come our way. Angie and I are very thankful for our faith during those tough seasons, not sure how anyone would get through without it.

In 2012, we thought Manitoba would love to ZIP LINE! Wow we were wrong. Manitobans love to Zip Line, but they just like it in Mexico or Costa Rica. We knew we needed to grow our business to be financially sustainable and the Zip Line decision was a catastrophe.

In 2019, ironically another idea came from a news article – World's Largest Snow Maze in Thunderbay. Angie said "yes" to the idea and the cycle is repeating itself.

Back in 1988, when we were graduating, we had a world full of opportunities in front of us. We were full of nervous excitement, with the ever asked question by family and friends, "so what are you going to do?" In essence, what are you going to be? If I could go back and give myself advice way back then, it would be that God's plan for your life looks crystal clear when you look back at it. Just like solving a maze, you have to keep moving to get through it. So have intention, be prepared for perspiration, and keep a clear mind and seek God's Inspiration.

- Clint Masse ('88)

Visit Craig and Angie's "A Maze in Corn" website to see all of the activities they offer.

<https://www.cornmaze.ca/>



Clint & Angie with sons Brent (L) and Casdon (R) and dog Sochi



Altona Mall 324-8348 www.borderrealty.net

EMPTY CUP COLLECTIVE

My name is Dexter Rempel and I attended MCI for four years (Class of 2012). From MCI I continued to the U of M where I studied agriculture and obtained my degree and became an agronomist for a few years. However, during the past 14 months, I have been working with my close friend, Marc, to start a coffee business. Marc had a dream to start a nitro cold brew company and invited me to help him start Empty Cup Collective. To do that we would need a roaster for roasting the coffee, and multiple cafes to give a face to the company. Just prior to the pandemic, we travelled throughout the world learning about coffee, attending coffee shows, touring countries producing coffee and visiting local farms to learn more about where our coffee comes from. We took coffee training courses for roasting, barista techniques, tasting, cafe management and green bean sourcing. Once our travels got limited due to the pandemic, we began to focus more on the construction of our facility and practiced roasting coffee on a small roaster on our driveway. Throughout the past year we have begun building products and a brand for Empty Cup.

Our first location is the heart and soul of the company. Here is where we produce all of our coffee; roasting, packaging and cold brew. The location is very open concept so that our customers can have an experience

while enjoying their coffee. We want to provide a transparent and educational encounter for people wanting to learn more about what they are drinking, where it came from and how it got to their cup. Many micro-breweries are using this concept and we wanted to continue that trend into the coffee world. People are caring more and more about where their food comes from.

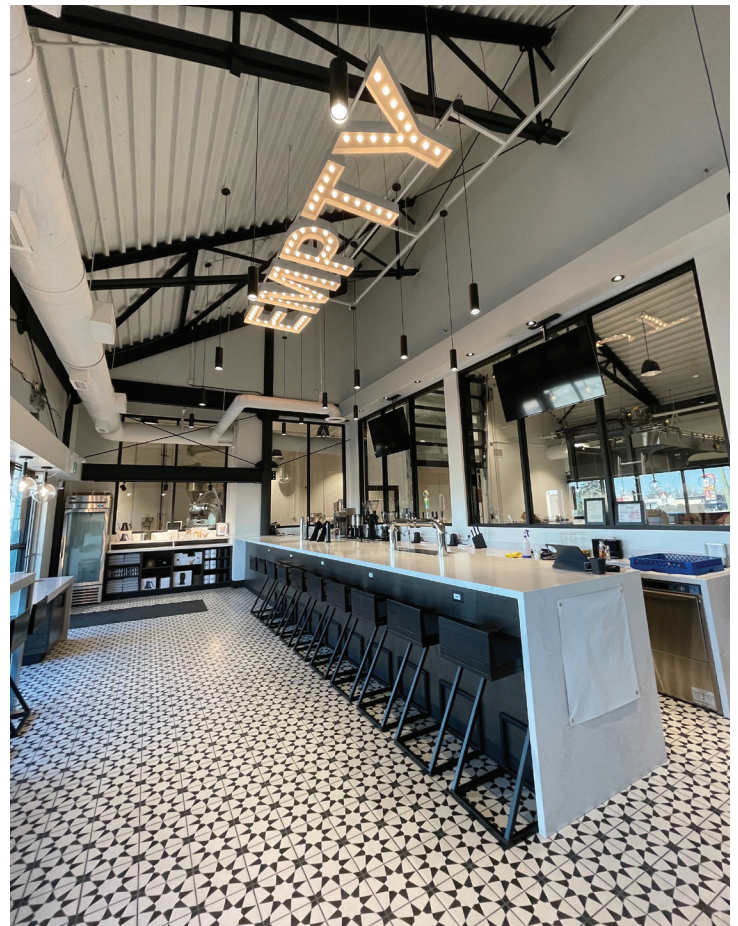
We have also just secured a second location in Sage Creek and plan to have it open in early summer 2021. This cafe will have a bit more seating but without the production going on in the background. We didn't want to be just another cafe so we hope to also reach a bit of the happy hour crowd by offering pizza and alcoholic beverages; including a cold brew stout being produced by a local brewery.

It's been an interesting year and I've truly enjoyed learning about this new industry. The process of roasting coffee can be as simple or as complex as you want it to be, which leaves endless possibilities to learn and develop our product. We will open our doors, on Panet Rd, on April 1 and we will be launching with a variety of hot and cold coffee options. Come enjoy a cold brew this summer with us at Empty Cup.

- Dexter Rempel ('2012)



Check out Empty Cup Collective's website for more information: <https://www.emptycup.co/>



GALLERY
WEALTH MANAGEMENT

CHRISTMAS IN FEBRUARY

We don't get the opportunity to celebrate Christmas in February very often, but this year was the exception. While it was disappointing to postpone the MCI Virtual Christmas Concert in December, we took the unique opportunity and ran with it.

MCI Choir Director Christina Banman, and Band teacher Jody Friesen, have had to get creative this year. Performances look a bit different when there's no audience. Students have been rehearsing outside (rain or shine!) since Code Red was issued in November. Although it's been incredibly hard, Banman says she's inspired by how the students are coping and how they are making it work. Banman recalls the days leading up to filming the Christmas Concert being very cold, so rehearsals had to be kept short. She says "On the day of shooting, there were 80km winds, a little bit of rain, and yet it was quite warm. Essentially everything happened in one take, just like it would have on stage. You see every little part of it. You see mistakes and the inner workings of what was going on, but once we started shooting, what we got, was what we were going to use."

Grade 12 student, JJ Scherr, shared how singing outside, in masks, and distant from each other has made him a

stronger singer. "We've had to project a lot more to hear anything, and rely on Mrs. Banman for timing and cues. I feel fortunate that we were able to create a Christmas concert, as it wasn't a possibility for many other schools. It is great to have a video recording to look back on, and see how much we accomplished with all the challenges." Scherr and grade 11 student, Emily Bergen, arranged the rendition of Silent Night they performed during the concert.

Music is such a huge part of what we do at MCI, so this concert shows what it's like to be in a choir and band during a pandemic. It'll be a powerful timestamp when we're looking back in 10 years. Students have been so happy to be able to do as much as they have and see how lucky they are that we are still singing, playing, and putting music together.

We feel so fortunate to be able to share our concerts virtually, because it allows us to connect with people around the world who wouldn't have been able to attend otherwise.



Scan the QR code to watch the MCI Virtual Christmas Concert.

The concert is also available on our YouTube Channel



MCI RECEIVES \$50,000 GRANT!

In March of this year, MCI was delighted to receive of a \$50,000 grant from the Eve Toews Foundation. These funds will be used to bolster our Tuition Support Fund and provide bursaries for the 2021-2022 school year. Paying for an MCI education is a challenge for many families. This generous grant will help make MCI tuition affordable for them.

Eve Toews (Class of 1964) was deeply grateful for the opportunities MCI provided her. Prior to her death in 2017, she established a foundation to reflect her concern that future generations would also benefit from what MCI has to offer. Her creative estate planning is making a lasting impact and is helping MCI provide life-changing education to young people from many backgrounds.

You too can contribute to help make tuition affordable. Mark your gift *Tuition Support Fund*.



MCI FIELDS FOR THE FUTURE TAKES ROOT

“LET THE FIELD BE JOYFUL, AND ALL THAT IS IN IT...” (PSALM: 96:12)

This spring MCI embarked a new fundraising venture. MCI Fields for the Future has taken root. A local farmer has donated the use of 80 acres of land, on the north side of Highway 14, between Plum Coulee and Winkler. Look for the sign and watch the corn grow. Pray for an abundant harvest that will help fund MCI in years to come.

Most of the inputs, including seed, fertilizer and herbicide have already been donated. If all costs are covered, the full proceeds of the harvest will be turned over to MCI.

You too can be part of MCI Fields for the Future. Why not make a donation to help cover the cost of producing an acre (or more) of corn?

\$25/acre	Keeps the field weed-free
\$115/acre	Provides the seed or the fertilizer
\$405/acre	Covers all the costs, including land
MARK YOUR GIFT <i>FIELDS FOR THE FUTURE</i>	

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

MCI relies heavily on the generous support of many donors. Over a third of our revenue comes from donations. To finish the year without a deficit, we will need to raise an additional \$160,000 before June 30.

Please support one of our upcoming fundraising events: Owen & Jewel @ 7:00 (online), Fields for the Future, or the MCI Golf Classic. Consider joining our growing list of monthly donors, or make your donation whenever you like. ***Be assured your gift is making a real difference in the lives of young people.***

DONATIONS MAY BE MADE BY:

- Giving online: www.mciblues.net/donate-now
- By Mail: Cheques may be sent to MCI, Box 250 Gretna MB, R0G 0V0
- By Credit Card: Call the office at (204)327-5891

(Please indicate which project you would like to support)

For more information on fundraising projects or other ways you might support MCI, please contact Harold Schlegel, Executive Director. haroldschlegel@mciblues.net



UPCOMING EVENTS

Owen & Jewel at 7 - An MCI Fundraising Series

Monday Evenings: May 3rd - June 7th

Tune in to MCI's YouTube channel Monday's @7



Online Söngarfest

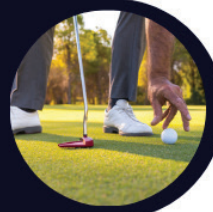
June 6th

Time TBD. Stay tuned for updates

MCI Annual Golf Classic

June 12-20 (tentative)

Follow us on social media for updated info



MCI Graduation

June 27

More information to come

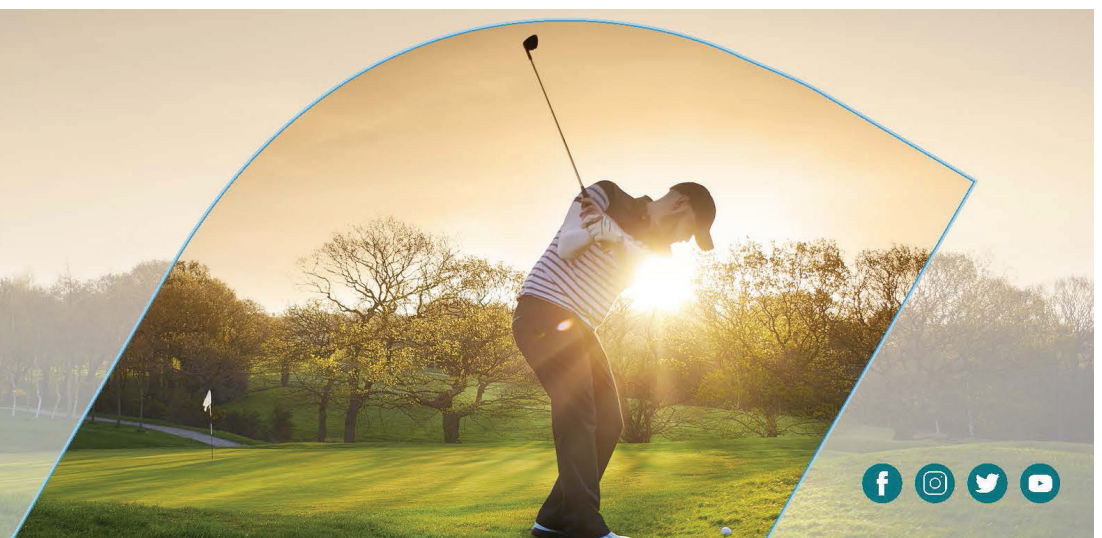


ACCESS
CREDIT UNION

Where you need us to be.

1.800.264.2926

accesscu.ca



ALUMNI NEWS & UPDATES

Do you have news to share? Email alumni@mciblues.net to be featured!

DEATHS



Ernie John Franz ('80)
Nov. 3, 1962 - Dec. 25, 2020

It is with a deep sense of sadness and loss that we announce the unexpected death of Ernie John Franz on Christmas Day, December 25, 2020 at the age of 58. Just that morning he had texted a friend with the words, "It's a great day to be alive." After a short walk with his wife Nancy later that afternoon his heart gave out and he was suddenly gone from our midst. He did have the opportunity to watch the beginning of the World Junior Hockey Series and lunch on an A&W hamburger which Nancy had brought him.

Ernie was born on November 3, 1962 the youngest of four children, to Henry & Lena Franz. He grew up on a dairy and grain farm eleven miles west of the Turtle Town of Boissevain, Manitoba. Already at a young age, he had a passion for sports, particularly hockey. It was not uncommon for him to be found on wintry days shoveling snow off a slough just so he could putz the puck about for a few hours. His schooling all took place in Boissevain, although he attended Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Manitoba for his graduating year.

Ernie dreamt of becoming a gym

teacher. Yet, as is often the case, his life took a different turn. While still helping out on the farm, he got his first job at the Boissevain Coop Grocery Store. From there he moved to Killarney, where he worked at the Tomboy Food Store. His next move took him to Winkler, where he worked for a number of years at Penner Foods located in the Southland Mall. After the store changed ownership, he moved on to Essen Transport and Acrylon Plastics. From there he spent the next fifteen years at Meridian Manufacturing as their Manager, Occupational Health and Safety. He studied many long hours and worked hard to attain all his credentials for this position. He was proud to get things done right. "Get er flippin done," he'd say. He was hoping to retire in another 2 - 3 years.

Ernie loved life. He packed a lot of living into his short 58 years. With an inexhaustible sense of humor no one could tell a tale like Ernie. He had a knack for fun and the sheer joy of life. Ernie was also a great prankster, which prompted one of his cousins who shared the school years with him to comment, "We spent a lot of time in the principal's office but we had a lot of fun." Upon hearing of his death, another cousin stated that the angels in heaven were certainly going to have their hands full once he entered.

Underneath the humor and pranks, there flowed from Ernie a compassionate heart and a tender spirit. He would share his love of hockey, his drive to be active with the many baseball and hockey players whom he coached for so many years. To so many of them he was more than a coach, becoming also a personal friend and mentor. Always striving to see the humanity beneath and behind these players and fellow employees, allowed him to offer encouragement

and hope to so many. His motto always was, "Never give up."

Ernie loved his wife, his sons and his two daughters-in-law immensely. He adored the gift of his grandson and eagerly looked forward to teaching him how to skate. Ernie knew how to love and furthermore, how to receive love. We will miss his presence, his ability to bring life, laughter and love wherever he went.

A childhood diagnosis of diabetes accompanied Ernie throughout his life. Despite being vigilant about his health it eventually took its toll. He had lost the sight of one eye numerous years ago, but in early 2020 began experiencing kidney failure. This past year involved many medical appointments, including getting setup for home dialysis. His family was such a big part of his life and simply kept him going while he spent a week in June at the Seven Oaks General Hospital in Winnipeg after his kidneys shut down. He was on a list for a transplant which we hoped could have taken place in early spring 2021. However, this was not to be.

Ernie leaves to mourn his passing his beloved wife Nancy (married for 32 years), 2 sons Mike (Jessica) and Tyler (Jenny) and grandson Wells. Ernie's nickname for this grandson was Gunner. He usually had a nickname for most people. He also looked forward to welcoming another grandchild in March of 2021. He also leaves behind his mother Lena Franz, brother Rudy, sisters Esther and Adena and their families along with numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. He was predeceased by his father Henry in 2007 and his cousin Brenda in 1972.

A private graveside service was held on December 29, 2020. Special thanks to Wiebe Funeral Home for

all the arrangements; thank you to so many who have brought food, sent cards and called. Your kindness and thoughtfulness is much appreciated.

Ernie leaves an enormous hole in his family's life. There aren't enough words to adequately describe our loss. He will live forever in our hearts.

Ernie's favorite verses were John 14:2-3. "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Ernie, we love you and look forward to seeing you again in the rooms which have been prepared for us.



Erna Reimer ('45)
July 15, 1925 - Jan 2, 2021

It is with deep sadness and fond memories that we announce the passing of Erna Reimer at the Health Science Centre on January 2, 2021 after a brief illness.

Erna was born in the village of Somoljowka, Ukraine on July 15, 1925. Her parents, John and Kaethe (Martens) Reimer along with Erna, immigrated to Canada in November 1925 and settled on a farm at Meadows, Manitoba.

Upon completing her high school, she worked at Winnipeg Supply during the winter months and helped on the family farm in the summers. Her next employment was found at Canadian Red Cross, where she became the driver for blood clinics held throughout Manitoba and Northwest Ontario. From there she moved on and studied and worked in the Microbiology Department at St. Boniface Hospital for 26 years.

After retirement, she enjoyed her many interest including gardening, reading, golf, crossword puzzles, painting in watercolors and travelling – including the three car trips to see the Rocky Mountains at the age of 92, 93 and 94!

She was predeceased by her parents, John 1971, Kaethe 1988 and brother Paul in 2014.

She is survived by her three sisters, Elizabeth Doell, Johanna (Peter) Bergen and Helene, as well as three nephews and three nieces and their families.

At her request, a private family service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made to Siloam Mission, Habitat for Humanity, or a charity of your choice.



Thank you to
PRAIRIEVIEW PORK
for donating pigs to this years
Southern Meats Fundraiser



248 Centre Ave E, Altona, MB
PH: 204-324-6494
Toll Free PH: 877-324-8513
www.westparkgm.com



University
Be part of the difference
CMU | CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY **cmu.ca**

John Thiessen &
Rick Heppner Mueller
Financial Advisors

Altona, MB
(204) 324-9574



ipcplan.com



WWW.MCIBLUES.NET



ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 2021-22



APPLY TODAY



@mciblues



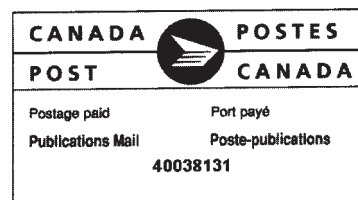
/MennoniteCollegiateInstitute



www.mciblues.net



1-877-MCI-BLUE
204-327-5891



<<First Name>> <<Last Name>>
<<Address>>
<<City>>, <<Country>>
<<Postal Code>>