

December 2020 Newsletter

"May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us."

Saint Terese of Liseaux

From the President

Dear Friends of Concilio,

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our day-to-day lives, from the way we interact with others to how we take care of ourselves and others. For Concilio Prison Ministry, the increased restrictions have suspended Kairos Circles at Springhill institution and in Wolfville, and closed St. Luke's Renewal Centre since mid-March. No Advent programs are taking place this year either. In addition, prison family visits have been reduced, resulting in inmates feeling more isolated and disconnected. What a significant time of change!

People have contacted me stating they deeply miss being part of the Kairos Circles. It informs me of the emotional places people are currently in. There seems to be a heightened desire to be connected and a desire to belong. These are challenging times. There is turmoil because of COVID-19 for many.

Fortunately, since November, access to space for inward reflection and some programming have been re-introduced at St. Luke's. We are deeply grateful for this opportunity to support the mental and spiritual wellbeing of those in prison – especially as Canada experiences the second wave of the pandemic.

In this time of Advent, I encourage you to extend your love and care by lighting a candle, spending time in silence, and praying for *hope, peace, joy and love* for inmates, their families and friends, and the staff at correctional facilities. Pray and encourage one another as we continue to endure this pandemic.

Peace be with you during Advent.

Clarence DeSchiffart

President, Concilio Prison Ministry
Facilitator, Kairos Marathons

Reflections on the Kairos Marathon Experience

I met Sheila MacCrimmon at an education conference. During her introduction she humbly spoke of her passion for prison ministry. Through Sheila I was invited to attend a Kairos Marathon 'circle'. The 'circle' centred around Charlie Taylor's quote of "We are more alike than we are different." I have found the time I have spent in the 'circle' to be very valuable. I have witnessed a comradery of sharing, kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Through my own listening and sharing I have gained a deeper understanding of what it takes to be a compassionate, caring person. I have the faces of those I have met, and the stories shared, engrained in my mind. It is those faces and stories that make me want to become a better person. I wrote this verse to go along with Kate Wolf's song, Across the Great Divide.

"I have listened to your stories, stories of a troubled time. As the wind blows through the circle it will ease the troubled mind."

Forever grateful to the leadership of Kairos marathon,

Paul (a volunteer for 10+ years)

Kairos Marathon Volunteer, Rev. Wilma Jansen Receives Recognition!



Congratulations **Rev. Wilma Jansen** from your friends at Concilio Prison Ministry!

Wilma was recognized by the Acadia Divinity College with the **Alumni Distinguished Service Award** in August. She is a long-time Kairos Marathon volunteer, former facilitator of St. Luke's Renewal Centre, and currently a chaplain with a Nova Scotia correctional facility.

For a full article on this special occasion and to view a recording of the presentation, go to:

<https://acadiadiv.ca/janzen-2020-alumni-award/>

Concilio Prison Ministry '50 for 50' Campaign

Last year, we announced the **50 for 50 Campaign** – with the goal of raising \$50,000 as we celebrate 50 years of Kairos prison marathons. We are grateful to those who made donations and those who made three-year commitments. You will soon receive a separate letter from the Board.

In March 2020, the Board decided to suspend the **50 for 50 Campaign** activities because of the global pandemic. However, contributions are still welcome. A tax receipt will be issued for all gifts over \$20. (For ways to donate, see final page of this newsletter.)

For Sale! Commissioned Artwork “The 50 Years of Kairos Marathons”

The Board of Concilio is selling prints of the commissioned artwork for celebrating 50 years of Kairos Marathons. If you wish to order a **print** of the artwork, **email** concilio.ed@gmail.com

Cost is \$65 (*includes shipping*).



Artist

The artwork is a quilt designed and created by textile artist, Lorraine Roy of Dundas Ontario, whose background in agriculture and ornamental horticulture inspired her to create textile art pieces inspired by the biology, mythology and symbolism of trees. The original artwork hangs in the lobby of Acadia Divinity College.

Symbolism in the Artwork

In this work, commissioned specifically to celebrate the Kairos Marathon, Lorraine has incorporated five rings in strong colours, representing the five decades of the Marathon’s life and the vibrancy of its nature; the tree of life, with a wounded heart at its own heart; the connected canopies and interlocking roots of trees of different shapes and colours evoking Kairos Marathon participants’ relationships and individual growth; a ring of silver offering a nod to the well of the unconscious mind, which participants touch and enter; and a delicately inscribed Celtic symbol of the Trinity at the very centre of the piece, honouring the Christian roots and source of the Kairos Marathon’s inspiration.

Celebration of 50 Years – Words from a Former Inmate – Boyd Mackay

In November 2019, Concilio Prison Ministry held a very special celebration at the Acadia Divinity College. A group of wonderful volunteers created a full-day event to acknowledge 50 years of Kairos Marathons, founded in 1969 by Dr. Charles Taylor, former professor of Acadia Divinity College.



Boyd MacKay was one of the guest speakers. He spoke about his time in prison and the impact of the Kairos Marathons and the chaplains on his life.

Below is an excerpt from Boyd's speech:

"There was a lot of talk about the inner child and active imaginations [in the Kairos Marathons] that were hard for me to understand, but after attending several Marathons the seeds that were planted were starting to get water.

I remember sitting in my cell one night reflecting on all the things that I was learning and all of a sudden, I had a light-bulb moment. I figured out what the answer to the Twisted Sister [nickname for Sr. Teresa Currie, the chaplain] question was! So, I ran down to the chapel that night and called the Twisted Sister into the office. I said to her I know who I am- I am a child of God! She gave me a great big hug and with tears running down her face she said to me it has been worth all the hell that you put me through to hear you say that. It wasn't long after that moment that I became a believer in God!

For an audio recording of Boyd's inspiring talk during the 50th celebration event, go to, <https://acadiadiv.ca/celebrating-kairos-marathons/>. Boyd's sharing starts at 1:02:30 of the audio recording. You can listen to recordings of the morning workshops as well.

"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend."
Martin Luther King Jr.

The Board of Concilio Prison Ministry Welcomes New Board Members

Cindy Walker – Parrsboro, Nova Scotia - Director at Large

I have often viewed life through an artist's lens, and so, a creative process. After having a family, I had the opportunity to go to university and complete my graduate degree in Art Education as a mature student. Soon afterward, the opportunity to teach art education to inmates in federal prison was offered. The experience changed my life. Working with prisoners opened my eyes to see life in new ways, just as I offered new sight to them through art. Upon moving to the small community of Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, in 2018, I connected with those marginalized at Springhill Institution – Correction Services Canada. Being part of the Concilio Board of Directors provides another opportunity to participate in, and forward, the Love that heals. I also work a few days a week at the local library. Otherwise, I am brainstorming how to share the process of art as I joyfully discover God in the every day.



Rev. Leon Teal – Trenton, Nova Scotia - Director at Large



Leon Teal is presently approaching 24 years in Pastoral Ministry, the past fifteen years as Pastor of the Trenton Church of the Nazarene in Trenton, Nova Scotia. In addition to his full-time duties as Pastor, Leon is employed with Bridges of Canada as a Part-Time Chaplain serving in Springhill and Truro. In 2019, Leon became the first individual to graduate from Acadia Divinity College with a Master of Arts (Theology) with Specialization in Prison Chaplaincy.

“My belief is that by caring for the incarcerated, we create the best opportunity to see individuals break a cycle of hopelessness, and improve the chances of people finding a place to live well both inside and outside of a prison's walls.”

Leon is married to Diane, has two daughters and eight grandchildren (unfortunately all of whom reside outside the Atlantic Canada bubble).

FYI - Current Board of Directors, Concilio Prison Ministry

Clarence DeSchiffart
Melanson NS

Rev. Leon Teal ← **New!**
Trenton NS

Lorraine Higgins
Centreville NS

Earle Illsley
Kentville NS

Vicki Patton
Kentville NS

Cindy Walker ← **New!**
Parrsboro NS

The board give thanks to Sandra Weldon & Stuart Carson for their contributions to this ministry.

Save the Date: Concilio Prison Ministry AGM

The Concilio Prison Ministry AGM is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 13, 2021**, from **6:45 – 8:15 p.m.** The AGM will be held through **Zoom** video conferencing. Come and hear about this past year and hopes for future engagements. All are welcome. Please register by sending an email to Concilio.ed@gmail.com by **January 8, 2021**.

January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	XXX	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

St. Luke's Renewal Centre - Update

Good News! St. Luke's has re-opened its doors!

Both facilitators, Rev. John Tonks and Rev. Lorraine Street have written a document outlining how to conform to be compliant with COVID-19 requirements, guidelines, and measures expected by Correction Services Canada (CSC).



All activities at St. Luke's Renewal Centre will be designed to conform to and comply with the risk mitigation guidelines and measures in effect at any given time at Springhill Institution, per the most current version of **Shaping the New Normal, the Integrated Risk Management Framework** (IRMF) issued by CSC.

This news will be welcomed by inmates and staff who are hoping to create a space for quiet and re-connecting with one another.

We Continue to Give Thanks

Concilio is thankful for the generous support and encouragement from many **individuals** – those who help through volunteering, purchasing food, and making donations. We deeply appreciate the **Law Foundation of Nova Scotia** who continues to contribute to the financial sustainability of St. Luke's Renewal Centre. We are also grateful for the growing collaboration with the **Charles J. Taylor Centre for Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care** at **Acadia Divinity College**.



Support Concilio Prison Ministry

1. Please pray for ...

- Inmates: those inside and those being released into the community and their families and loved ones who are supporting them and the challenges of COVID-19.
- Correction Service Canada officers and managers of federal and provincial institutions.
- Volunteers who desire to be engaged but cannot serve due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- The gifts of time and service by those who desire healing and change for inmates.
- The Board of Directors of Concilio Prison Ministry as they continue to examine long-term sustainability and growth of the current ministries of St. Luke's Renewal Centre, Kairos Marathons, and Advent programs.

2. Please share Concilio Newsletters with others and invite them to join 'Friends of Concilio' by emailing concilio.ed@gmail.com

3. Consider joining [Pray for Prisons Gathering](#) ...

Rev. Lorraine Street, one of the facilitators of St. Luke's Renewal Centre, has been hosting through Zoom [PrayForPrisons Gathering](#) each Tuesday late afternoon. This is a quiet and meditative 30 minutes of prayer for those who are incarcerated. If interested in participating, contact Lorraine Street by emailing her at prayforprisons@gmail.com.

The following is the outline of the 30 minutes:

- At 5 p.m., music is played as people gather.
- Opening prayer
- Reading of the poem / blessing "*Tonight I Will Burn a Candle*" written in 2008 by, it appears, a prisoner at Springhill in memory of another prisoner who had recently died.
- Five minutes of Silent Prayer for Prisons. The word "*prisons*" is intended to signify and include prisoners, former prisoners, and their families and communities; correctional officers and other institutional staff and their families, and the institutions themselves; volunteers and community organizations that support prisoners and former prisoners; lawmakers and policy-makers, and everyone else involved with prisons.
- Intercessory prayer. Please feel free to pray aloud or remain silent. If you would like to pray for an individual, please mention only that person's first name. If you would like people to respond to your prayer, please end your prayer with a phrase like "Lord, in your mercy ..." to which people are invited to respond with "Hear our prayer."
- Final reading
- Final prayer
- At 5:30 p.m., music is played as people depart.

4. Learn More



concilioprisonministry.org



Concilio Prison Ministry



For more information on Concilio Prison Ministry or to become a Friend of Concilio, email concilio.ed@gmail.com

5. Make a Gift

We gratefully accept your donation. All gifts \$20 or more will receive a tax receipt.

Mail a cheque:

Concilio Prison Ministry P.O. Box 2382, Wolfville, NS B4P 2N5 ←New!

Give online:

Canada Helps <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/5921>

E-transfer

Concilio Prison Ministry Concilio.ed@gmail.com