

Singing The Change: Music Ministry That Transforms Lives

Crieff Hills was pleased to host the annual Interdenominational Music Conference for Pastors, Directors, Organists, Choirs and Praise Teams. A lively day with over 60 participants who listened, shared and learned from Fred Graham and Bev Foster. The following are thoughts from the day as shared by a participant.

Fred Graham spoke on **Music Ministry That Deepens Faith**, and reminded us that *the church has been and will continue to undergo change*. Music is transformative and can move us in the direction of change. For example, changing some words in hymns may reflect where we are at in the world today. As well, in our multi-cultural world, Christians of other cultures will be familiar with different types of religious music. Fred reminded us that *perfectionism in music is not always transformative*, "We all make mistakes, forgiveness is part of our culture ... forgive 70 x7". There is excitement and great hope as churches move toward change however, a prayer for patience may go a long way, as churches struggle with change.

Bev Foster led **Integrating Music Care into Ministry**. Bev's involvement in the Room 217 Foundation (www.room217.ca) is the result of using music care during her father's time in palliative care where he spent his last days in Room 217. Bev turned this experience into a program of music care called, *Pathways*. Through *Pathways*, lives of those with Dementia or those in palliative care are enriched. Bev stated, "Research has shown that people who sing in a group go through a molecular change."

Ideas came forward from the group for ways to establish a **Church Music Care Ministry**:

- *Include a musician on hospital visits; Train for personal preferences in music (music genres can affect in positive or adverse ways); Hold a Music Memory Café; Musical visits for shut-ins; Develop a song care playlist; Host a Music Spa for wellness; Add therapeutic music to gift baskets*

Both the morning and afternoon sessions included participants taking part in singing which positively added to the whole event.

Joan Gardhouse



This Conference was made possible with support of the grant from the Presbytery of Waterloo – Wellington; volunteers from RCCO (Waterloo-Wellington Centre of the Royal Canadian College of Organists) and publicity support from the Summer Institute of Church Music. Thanks to Chris Fischer for his vision and support of this Conference.

Ministry Development Conference Canadian Ministries

Understanding that congregations and missions are of vital importance, Canadian Ministries invited ministries from across Canada to participate in a conference exploring growth, renewal and health that would equip them for transformational ministry. Ministries included new congregational developments, renewing ministries, specialized ministries (including the National Native Ministry Council) and sustaining ministries - over 30 ministries were represented.

"So the churches were strengthened in faith and increased in numbers daily." Acts 16:5

The keynote speakers were The Rev. Dr. Stan Ott and The Rev. Dr. Steve Ebling of Vital Churches Institute. Over 60 participants enjoyed the tranquil and gentle backdrop of Crieff while they explored questions for transformational ministry, technical and adaptive thinking, learning to lead with humility, generosity development, and accountability as a form of stewardship. Rest and renewal were also part of the program so trails were explored, birds identified, and fellowship enjoyed all in the freshness of spring.

The event was supported in part by gifts to Presbyterians Sharing. Jen Bell

Rangers Plant Native Trees at Crieff Hills ...

and dig up 'Puslinch Potatoes'



The 1st Dundas Rockton Rangers, of the Girl Guides of Canada along with leaders Jan Bignell and Silva Zyba, planted native trees at Crieff Hills.

Pictured here are (from L to R) Silva, Sarah Coker, Jessica

Cook, Jan, Violet Gould, Chloe Matesa and Krista Daniels. *A big thank you to all of you!*

Jan explains "A large part of our program is giving community service. We have done a few environmental projects: planting native trees at Westfield, shoreline cleanup along a Dundas creek and now helping Crieff. Giving 30 hours of service over a three year period earns each girl the Chief Commissioners Gold award."

On a warm Monday evening at Crieff, the group joined the Robertson family to plant Ohio buckeye trees, mulberry

trees and Dutchman's pipevine. Trees were grown from seed by Marion Robertson at her local nursery. Native species are important providers of valuable food and shelter for native pollinators and other wildlife. Many species of birds will feast on mulberries. Pipevine, with its beautiful heart-shaped leaves, is a host plant to many swallowtail butterflies.

Digging the holes for the trees was a challenge, but the group worked with great determination. The girls quickly discovered that Crieff soil is full of stones - locally called "Puslinch Potatoes"!

Thankfully the mosquitos did not appear that evening until the work was done, the trees were planted and the rocks carted away. The Rangers hope to return in October to hike the trails and plant more trees at Crieff.

If you know a group who would be interested in a fall tree planting event in the fall please contact Crieff.

Crieff Hills is grateful for the support of TD Friends of the Environment. A grant received from TD FEF will enable Crieff to plant over 100 native trees in 2016.

Delighting in God's Garden ... *What is eco-theology?*

For 24 hours on a June weekend, Crieff Hills was the host to **Delighting in God's Garden**, a conference organized through Justice Ministries of the PCC.

The purpose of this conference was to examine questions such as:

- *What is eco-theology?*
- *How can we green our spiritual practices?*
- *How can we care for creation in light of today's major environmental challenges?*

The key note speaker was Stephen Bede Scharper, author of *For Earth's Sake: Toward a Compassionate Ecology*. Leadership was shared as participants learned, worshiped, enjoyed the outdoors, heard about Watershed Discipleship, enjoyed a 'Star Party' and in celebration of time together, planted a Native Carolinian tree, an Ohio Buckeye.



Nursing Reunion - *Class 61 Hamilton General Hospital*

Twenty nurses who trained together at Hamilton General hospital 1958-61 (in the dark ages when we wore caps, white nylons with seams, & stiffly starched uniforms!) gathered at Crieff Hills for their 55th reunion.

We have reunited every year since we graduated and it never ceases to amaze me how such a diverse group can stay so connected after 55 years! We remembered when our director of nursing education used to ask us "Where have we failed?". I hope she knows that HGH nursing school succeeded beyond its wildest dreams with our class, judging by longevity of our annual reunions and the many close friendships that endure. Its quite special and we're all lucky to be part of it.

Arriving, finding our rooms, having noisy reunions and hugathons with classmates, we then headed to the dining room for lunch. The Crieff Director welcomed us and gave history about Crieff. We found out that the property (250 acres) was the Maclean's summer estate. It has several century buildings, including a beautiful stone main house. In 1950 Col John Maclean, founder of Maclean's magazine, willed this 250 acres to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Since 1975, additional accommodation called "lodges" have been built and it is now run as a successful Retreat and Conference Centre.

We had one of the lodges all to ourselves with a large comfortable lounge where we gathered. Laughter could be heard emanating from early am to evening. When we were taught about endorphins being released by laughter, we never knew we'd become masters of it.

Someone was always recruiting someone to go walking on one of the many Crieff trails they hadn't yet tried or to go up to the Labyrinth. One trail even led to a bluebird's nest & some of us saw the inhabitants. I haven't seen a bluebird since I was a kid. When not searching for bluebirds, hiking, playing bocce ball, dominoes or discussing books, we drifted into natural talking circles either inside or out to catch up with what's new since last reunion and to reminisce about our together.

The dining room was a great experience, not only for the excellent homemade & homegrown fare, but also for the friendly staff. Crieff grows many of their own veggies and herbs. We were treated to what was in season - freshly picked asparagus & homemade rhubarb jam. Crieff also has local maple syrup and have an apiary for their honey. Many bought jars of these to take home.

No reunion is complete without singing our class song "May You Always" - so before leave-taking started on Thurs after breakfast, Judy led us in song. I still can't get through it without tears and looking around I sure wasn't alone. In conclusion, its very safe to say that "a very good time was had by all." Thank you Crieff.
Penny Preston



Journalled Thoughts ...

*The following is from a participant who attended the **Delighting in God's Garden** Conference at Crieff Hills.*

I had the recent privilege of attending a 2-day workshop at Crieff, *Delighting in God's Garden*, offered by the Justice Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. During the Friday evening portion of the program, Awe and Wonder were on the agenda. The following are thoughts from my journal reflections.

Lights in the darkness

After the sun disappears from sight we head out into the night, to the slight rise behind Maclean Hall with telescopes and binoculars. I look up with awe and the moon comes alive with stunning detail. I see the planets for the first time: the rings around Saturn, the faint rusty hue of Mars and four pinpoint moons seemingly frozen in orbit around Jupiter.

I look out with wonder at the whimsical fireflies winking on and off in the bushes and among the raised beds of the garden. A city-dweller, I have seen these magical creatures only once since I was a child.

I look around me with gratitude at the illuminated faces of my learning companions: local activists and dedicated lovers of Creation who have chosen to spend their weekend in service of this passion.



Simone Weil once wrote that attention is prayer. As I focus my gaze on these lights in the darkness, heart full of awe, and wonder and thanks, I can only whisper, "Amen."

Where are all the Song Birds?

We were not expecting to see many birds (or people either) at Crieff Hills on the cold wet morning of **International Migratory Bird Day** in May. We were pleasantly surprised and the day turned out much better than anticipated!

On Saturday May 14th we woke early to the sound of rain, which eventually lightened enough so we could open the large mist nets already set up in the fields. When we ventured out on our first trip to check the nets near the amphitheatre, we found two bright yellow male American goldfinches, one female goldfinch (not as brightly coloured as the males and without a black cap), and a feisty little black-capped chickadee!

Our professional bird bander, Brian Pomfret, gently calmed the birds, chatting to them as he carefully untangled wings and legs from the very fine mesh nets. Each bird was carefully placed in a drawstring cloth bag and given to one of the eager children to carry back to our temporary banding station at the picnic shelter.

Once back in the picnic shelter, birds were weighed (gently placed head first inside a cardboard tube), measured, and their fat stores examined by gently blowing on the feathers on their throat. The presence of a brood patch on some birds indicated they were females.

Each bird was fitted with an appropriate size of metal band carefully placed around their leg. The unique number on each band allows for identification if the bird is caught again. Banding is an important tool in studying migration patterns and bird populations, especially in recent years when songbird populations have been declining around the world.

When it was time to release the birds, Brian asked one of the children to carefully hold the bird. All eyes focussed on the tiny bird as it lay motionless on its back with its feet sticking up. When the bird was carefully turned over there was a sudden flutter of wings and the bird was off!

Later that morning, Crieff volunteer Marion Robertson took a group for a bluebird trail walk to check the nesting

boxes and observe the differences in the tree swallow and bluebird nests. (Tree swallows line their nests with feathers.) Rev. Bob Geddes took another group out on the forest trails for a wildflower and birding hike. Bob also talked about the geological history of Crieff and bird song identification using the iBird app.



Thanks very much to Brian Pomfret and family, Marion and Sara Robertson, Bob Geddes and everyone who joined us on May 14th.

*Crieff Hills is excited to be hosting a Fall Bird Banding event on **Saturday October 1st**! Bring the family to see the birds and you can also help Crieff plant 100 native trees thanks to a grant from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. Drop by anytime between 8:30 am and noon. There is no charge for this event, but donations are welcome. **Hope to see you October 1st!***

Fiona van Wissen

2016 Upcoming at Crieff Hills

- Oct 1st 2016: Bird Banding, Tree Planting & Fall Hikes (8:30 until noon) - drop in*
- Oct 13 2016: Manna Day - Rob Shropshire - PWS&D Refugee Sponsorship - call to attend*
- Oct 23- 25: Retirement: Living with the Spirit of Adventure - call to attend*
- Nov 11-13 2016: Women's Fall Retreat - Tori Smit - call to attend*
- Dec 6 - 8; Dec 13 - 15; Dec 20 - 21 2016 : Christmas Luncheon Buffet - call to reserve*
- Dec 10th 2016: Christmas Turkey Dinner - call to reserve*

For more information on these and other programs at Crieff, visit our web site at www.crieffhills.com

If you would prefer to receive newsletters & updates from Crieff Hills online, please go to the Crieff web site to sign up.

www.crieffhills.com

Crieff Hills Retreat & Conference Centre

7098 Concession 1

Puslinch ON N0B 2J0

519.824.7898

1.800.884.1525

info@crieffhills.com

www.crieffhills.com

We continue to gather older photos & stories for the Crieff Archives.

If you have any memories to share, please send them to Crieff Hills Attention, Marylu Pentelow