



**L'ARCHE®**  
**saskatoon**

[www.larchesaskatoon.org](http://www.larchesaskatoon.org)

## GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

by: Wyndham Thiessen  
Community Leader

“Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” So spoke an angel to a collection of shepherds, announcing the birth of Jesus. And then, in a flash, the sky teemed with angels, all praising God and celebrating the dawn of peace: the “Prince of Peace” prophesied by Isaiah was finally here!

But Jesus was not the only one being spoken of in this way—as a Saviour bringing peace, whose coming was good news for the world. These names and descriptions were also applied to Caesar Augustus, the ruler of the powerful and brutal Roman Empire into which Jesus was born. The angel Gabriel told Mary that her child would be called “Son of God”—but Caesar Augustus had already claimed this title for himself decades earlier. After Caesar Augustus won the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, ushering in the Pax

Romana, he was hailed by many as “The Saviour of the Universe” and “The Saviour of the World.” Inscriptions from that time describe him as the “Lord” who brought “peace on earth.” A message chiseled on a building in 6 BC announced that “the most divine Caesar” was “sent to us and our descendants as Saviour”; he had “made war to cease . . . with the result that the birthday of our God [i.e. Augustus] signaled the beginning of Good News for the world because of him.”

Caesar was hailed as divine, as a saviour, as the creator of a longed for peace. His reign was lauded for bringing the salvation that the world has always desired and so clearly needs.

But the Roman Empire wrought its peace through the sword. Opposition was crushed by overwhelming force. Caesar’s “peace” was not the longed for peace; his “salvation” was no salvation.

Then Jesus was born. And in Jesus, God said, this is how the world will be saved. Not through might and

oppression and the vanquishing of enemies, but through love—even love of enemies—and forgiveness, and service, and vulnerability. Here is where peace can be found, here is good news of great joy. In this manger lies the true Son of God.

Caesars abound in our world today, accosting us with promises of what only God can truly give. They promise peace and salvation, which can be found, we are told, in strength, or in wealth, or in achievement, or in success. But God continues to say no—that is not where peace is found. There is no salvation there.

This Christmas, we celebrate the coming of the true Prince of Peace! We give thanks for the kingdom that Jesus inaugurated: a kingdom where the small, the weak, the poor, and the vulnerable have a place. And we, in L’Arche Saskatoon, give thanks to everyone who is helping us in our mission to create an outpost of the Kingdom in our world. Thank you!

# Bridges

## December 2012



*Jinah, Cody, and Carina on summer holidays at Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta*

## MEET MELANIE HARRIMAN

Melanie Harriman was born in Saskatoon and has been in the Supported Independent Living Program at Trinity Home, with her good friend Charlotte, and with Bertha for the past 13 years. Melanie has 3 sisters, 5 brothers and her mother, Delta, living in Saskatchewan. She also has lots of friends at the three places she works each week: Cosmopolitan Industries, Elmwood Lodge and Al Anderson's Source for Sports. She likes all three work places and especially appreciates the times when she works with her special friend Greg Peters. At Cosmopolitan Industries Melanie works upstairs preparing tags and wire ties for labeling items for sale. She also does cleaning one day a week at Cosmopolitan Industries and at Al Anderson's Source for Sports.

Melanie enjoys attending the monthly Friends of L'Arche Gatherings and never misses unless she is sick or away from Trinity. She is a great friend to others who come to the monthly Gatherings. Everyone misses her if she is away at the time of a Wednesday evening Gathering. In her spare time, Melanie enjoys sleeping in on weekends, watching detective and adventure stories on television, watching Titanic, and spending time with Bertha and her other friends. Melanie is a lot of fun to hangout with at Friends of L'Arche Gatherings!



### STM COLLEGE AWARDS MEDAL TO L'ARCHE SASKATOON

On November 3, 2012, Saint Thomas More College awarded L'Arche Saskatoon the Saint Thomas More Medal, which was established "to recognize and honour persons, groups of persons, and organizations which have combined personal qualities of care, integrity and faith with significant contributions to community and public life."



*On November 16, the Newman Centre students at Saint Thomas More College hosted a coffee house to raise money for L'Arche Solidarity (a program that supports L'Arche communities in Central and South America). They raised \$700!*

### L'ARCHE IDENTITY STATEMENT

We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities belonging to an international federation.

Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together.

We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognise our need of one another.

## MY TIME IN TROSLY

by Andrea Schmidt



For ten days this past fall, I had the privilege, along with Margaret and Robert Sanche and about 30 other people who are also involved in L'Arche, of attending a retreat led by Jean Vanier in Trosly-Breuil, France. The time spent there felt surreal, from being in the town where L'Arche was started to walking past the very first L'Arche home, or seeing and meeting Jean Vanier on the street while he was out for his daily walk. The retreat was based on the gospel of John. Each morning was spent with Jean Vanier, hearing his interpretation of the gospel, and then finished with a question and answer time with him. The afternoons were spent with two guest speakers: Jean-Claude Mallet, the advisor to the Minister

of Defense for France, and Ruth Patterson, a Presbyterian minister who is the founder of Peace and Reconciliation Ministries in Northern Ireland. Both spoke about peace and how individually we are a trickle of peace in our respective communities. All three, Jean Vanier, Jean-Claude, and Ruth challenged us to live out the gospel of John in our daily lives.

In L'Arche we often use the terms "mutuality" or "mutual relationships." We believe that in the relationships we build with others in community, whether with assistants or with core members, we are giving of ourselves but also equally receiving the gifts of others. We were challenged to deepen the relationships we have in our lives, to treat others with tenderness, and to reveal the beauty of others around us.

I was struck at Jean Vanier's grace with words as he opened up the gospel for us, and how relatable it is to my life. One verse that sticks out to me and that I chose to reflect on more is John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." Jesus came to earth to be present to us – how can I be present to those around me? My role as house leader at Christopher House is busy. I am often occupied with paper work, appointments, meetings, phone calls, etc. After some reflection, I saw that what was often missing was me being busy with the people of Christopher House. I sometimes feel like I never have time to just sit and be, or as Jean Vanier would say, "waste time with others." Since being back from France, I make more of a conscious effort while I am at Christopher House to just "waste time" being together. Most things that keep me busy can wait, like the scheduling or answering emails, but being present to those around me sometimes can't.

In February of next year, we return to France for another ten days of retreat. I look forward to hearing more about the gospel and the challenges it brings me. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to go to Trosly and I am very grateful to the community for sending me. I look forward to sharing more of what I learned with you in the spring!



Are you inspired by Jean Vanier's vision of a world in which all people can find a place of belonging? Are you interested in using your gifts to support the mission of L'Arche? L'Arche Saskatoon is currently seeking new people to serve on our board and committees. For more information please contact Myron Rogal, Board Chair, at [mprogal@yahoo.ca](mailto:mprogal@yahoo.ca) or 258-4505.



*Gisela, Billy, Lindsay, and Sheyla at the zoo*

## WAYS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN L'ARCHE SASKATOON

- Attend a Friends of L'Arche Gathering (once a month).
- Come to a Prayer Night (Wednesday evenings).
- Become a prayer partner for L'Arche Saskatoon.
- Volunteer to work on a L'Arche Committee: Gatherings, Communications, Newsletter, House and Garden, Development and Fundraising, Finance, Special Events Planning (coffeehouse, garage sale).
- Assist with ongoing financial support for the special programs of L'Arche. Many thanks, if you have already donated -- and please continue to keep L'Arche Saskatoon on your list of worthy charities to support.
- Donate goods or services.
- Learn more about Jean Vanier and L'Arche around the world by reading books by and about Jean Vanier, Henri Nouwen, Sue Mosteller and others.
- Check out: L'Arche Canada: [www.larche.ca](http://www.larche.ca); L'Arche International: [www.larche.org](http://www.larche.org); L'Arche Saskatoon: [www.larchesaskatoon.org](http://www.larchesaskatoon.org).
- Add your e-mail address to our Friends of L'Arche e-mail list to receive notices of events and copies of the newsletter by e-mail. (Your e-mail information is only for the use of L'Arche Saskatoon and will not be shared with anyone else.) Send your request to: [wthiessen@larchesaskatoon.org](mailto:wthiessen@larchesaskatoon.org).

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY

By cheque to:

L'Arche Saskatoon  
c/o Wyndham Thiessen  
P.O. Box 23006  
Saskatoon, SK S7J 5H3

- You will receive a charitable receipt for income tax purposes. Be sure to include your full name and mailing address so we can prepare the receipt.

For more information or to be removed from our newsletter mailing list, please send a message to Wyndham Thiessen, Community Leader, at: [wthiessen@larchesaskatoon.org](mailto:wthiessen@larchesaskatoon.org) or by phone at (306) 262-7243.

## ABOUT L'ARCHE SASKATOON COMMUNITY

L'Arche Saskatoon is one of 29 L'Arche communities across Canada. At the present time we have one home, Christopher House, and an extended community called Friends of L'Arche, which has a monthly Gathering. Ecumenical prayer nights are held weekly at Christopher House, and our Collective Kitchen members meet one Sunday a month. In these and other settings, we are working to build community and strengthen friendships as we live, work, play and pray together.

## ABOUT L'ARCHE SASKATOON INC.

- We are a non-profit organization and a registered charity (#86345-4872 RR0001), able to provide charitable receipts for tax purposes.
- We have an Executive Director/Community Leader (Wyndham Thiessen) and a volunteer board of directors.
- We receive core funding support from the Government of Saskatchewan for the operation of Christopher House and we rely on donations from individuals and groups to cover additional expenses and special programs.
- Financial contributions are received with gratitude and used with great care to support our mission and our work.