



Changing of The Seasons

~ Paul Penner

On Tuesday, Sept 2nd, 1997, I began working for Pembina Counselling Centre. It's now 22 years later. This past Tuesday, Sept 17th, I submitted a letter of intent to resign as Executive Director as soon as PCC can find a suitable candidate to fill these shoes.

My first day at PCC was a bold venture into a journey of unknowns. My conviction to move ahead was buoyed up with a strong belief in God's call. We moved from Ontario to Morden after much prayer and a string of providentially confirming indicators that persuaded Sharon and I that God was indeed calling us to PCC in Morden. We needed to follow where He was leading.

What a wonderful journey it has been. So many opportunities to journey with people into their challenges and struggles and experience the power of connecting, encouragement and new found hope. Even shedding tears is profoundly meaningful when tears are shared.

I wished I would have capitalized more on the opportunities I have been given. Less fear and more trust would have been good. My own issues at times got in the way. Opportunity, unrelenting passion to care, discernment and skill are all needed to mediate hope-strengthening presence and wise words. Those are our main tools. 'Presence' is just the freedom to feel with people where they are at in the here and now. Sometimes I was short one or two of these elements, even if my aspirations and prayers were for them to align.

In the face of the call to journey into people's lives, came frequent resource limitations, where the size of our need outweighed the size of the resources we had on hand.

The gap at times was big. Big enough to test my faith many times. Sometimes there wasn't enough money. Sometimes not enough time or not enough energy. Sometimes I didn't want to trust God at the 11th hour. I wanted a big buffer so I wouldn't need to worry about my trust being tested. I imagine the children of Israel felt that way when they wandered in the wilderness. Psalm 81:10 was a promise God gave to me repeatedly in my spirit so I wouldn't forget. Many times I reminded God about His promise. Psalm 81:10 says, "Open wide your mouth and I will fill it."



"Sometimes I wanted a big buffer so I wouldn't need to worry about my trust being tested."

In 22 years, I believe that most of the time, PCC didn't have the resources on hand to meet the next month's needs facing us. You might ask like Darius when Daniel was in the lion's den, "Was your God able to save you Daniel"? God has been faithful to provide every pay period for 22 years in spite of my worrying at times. Did I learn to quit fearing, you ask? Fortunately, God doesn't define faith as not being afraid, but rather, as having the courage to trust Him in the face of our fears because that is what is needed to fulfill the stewardship He has given us. Many times I was troubled, but as many times I reminded God about His promises and waited on Him, He was faithful!

Now as I slide into full time counselling at PCC, I will need to trust Him in a new way, to pass the torch, so to speak, onto new leadership to look after PCC, and myself, and all those who depend on PCC... with God's help for the future yet to unfold.

God promises to provide what we need, to fulfill what He has called us to do, but we will require faith.

We Had A Successful Winkler Grand Opening

September 6th marked the Grand Opening of our Winkler location at 915 Navigator Road. Among those holding the ribbon are volunteers, supporters and staff. (Front page left to right: Alexa Frost, Danita Janzen - Office Manager, Herb Franz - Kroeker Farms, Pastor Mark Sawatzky, Bernie Thiessen - Interim Board Chair, Mayor Martin Harder, Paul Penner Executive Director, MP Candace Bergen, Mark Sawatzky CDO, Bert Warms Contractor)

We are excited to see what this new year brings for our organization and the community. Feel free to stop at our office in Winkler on a Tuesday or Wednesday for a tour of our space.

From The CDO - Mark Sawatzky

What is CDO short for?

Those three letters stand for Community Development Officer.

I have always felt position titles that end with officer should come with a badge.

This one did not.

What does a CDO do?

The role of the CDO is to connect PCC with the community so that 1, people know about us if they or someone they know needs the support we provide, and 2, to let people know of our need for financial partners.

Here's a list of things we help people with: abuse, addictions, anger management, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, grief, lifestyle adjustments, marriage counselling, parenting concerns, separation adjustment, spiritual issues, stress, trauma / post trauma, and other needs.

If you know someone struggling in any of these areas, please connect with our office.

Now for part two... donations.

When you donate, you are directly helping someone pay the full cost of counselling, supporting them on their journey to recovery by helping us be there for them based on what they can afford.

We have a number of regular supporters who annually give to us and to those, I want to say thanks on behalf of the PCC team.

If you do not fall into that group, but would like to be a part of a team that makes a donation towards mental health through an organization that can also discuss faith when that "door" is opened to us by those we are serving, we would love to hear from you.

For more information about us, check us out online or give our office a call.

I hope you have an excellent finish to this year.

Mark... The CDO.



Thank you to the **Plum Coulee Fire Department**. Their boot drive at the Plum Fest parade raised \$1,062.

Thank you to **Winkler Mennonite Church** for their amazing Fish Fry on Sept 20th.



If you'd like to receive this letter as an email or to unsubscribe, please contact reception@pccmb.ca