

I am delighted to announce that in October 2021 Bishop Treleven and I plan to take a trip to Thessaloniki in Greece to visit the believers and strengthen our links with them.

Whilst last year and this year has been a challenging one due to the pandemic, we continue as the body of Christ to the well-being and growth of our church community. The pandemic has especially highlighted the important and undeniable role that the church plays in our life and how much it sustains us in times of trouble. As restrictions begin to ease, we look forward to developing and sustaining a church environment of togetherness, collaboration and shared responsibility so that the Church of God Sabbath-Keeping Mitcham continues to be forward in faith, worship and action.

I would like to conclude by offering a vote of thanks to all our beloved brethren, our leader and teacher Brother Sean Nito Harvey for his dedication and commitment week after week and our dear wonderful Bishop and International Overseer; Bishop Treleven who we owe everything to for his continued faithfulness, hard work and support!

In Acts 20:28 it reads, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood". You can be committed to church but not committed to Christ, but you cannot be committed to Christ and not committed to the church. Church attendance is vital to a disciple as a transfusion of rich, healthy blood to a sick man.

The church was created to meet five of our deepest needs: a purpose to live for, people to live with, principles to live by, a profession to live out, and power to live on. There is no other place on earth where you can find all five of these benefits in one place! The Church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent believers, but a school for the education of imperfect ones.

Our personal time with God is huge, our quiet time, our study, prayer, however being around other believers and the church just feeds you. You come away feeling rejuvenated and receive a great message. We know that anyone who is to find Christ must first find the church. How could anyone know where Christ is and what faith is in HIM unless he knew where his believers are? The Church of God Sabbath-Keeping Mitcham provides a vibrant place for the gathering of people who share common beliefs, support and encouragement for each other in faith, a place to find insight into and teaching about God's word, we provide a time and place where people can leave the world behind and focus only on their spiritual relationship with God! Hallelujah!

Gathering with God's people is an integral part of our faith as believers, may we never forsake the gathering together of the saints! Amen!

The Vision

We hope you have enjoyed the current edition of The Vision. Thank you to all of our contributors. We are truly grateful for your ongoing participation in making our news-letter a continued success. Please also consider getting involved in our future publications by making submissions to the Public Relations Officer (PRO) at your local church. Although we may not always be able to accommodate every submission, your support is truly appreciated. Thank you.

~ The Vision Team: *Christene*; Editors: *Alicia, Dianne, Tanesha, Nikki*

Article Submissions:

Due to space constraints, we request your article be kept under 400 words in length, with no more than 500 maximum.

Church Directory

Canada

Brampton
Mississauga
Rexdale (Headquarters)
Scarborough
Montreal
Oshawa
Ottawa

United Kingdom

Mitcham
Wembley

United States

Syracuse



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Rexdale: K.White & S. Brown - pr@cogsabbath.com

Now, therefore, you are ... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord: In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. ~ Ephesians 2:19-22 (NKJV)



The Vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish ..." Proverbs 29:18a (KJV)



Faith and Spirituality in the time of Covid

...continued on page 2

By Robin Levinson-King

BBC News, Toronto January 3, 2021

Just as the anxieties of 2020 have led many to search for greater meaning in their lives, the pandemic has made it easier for people to explore their spirituality, with the move to online religious worship.

Like many, last March the pandemic took Misha Allard by surprise. The 36-year-old from Toronto, Canada, had recently quit her corporate job to pursue an acting career - something she felt was her "calling". With productions halted and no work in sight, Ms. Allard decided to use the spring to explore another calling - her growing interest in spirituality.

"I guess I kind of felt I was being led all along," she says, looking back with hindsight.

Like many millennials, Ms. Allard had not attended church in years. She went every Sunday as a child, but when she hit her teenage years, she lost interest.

Now, with nothing but time on her hands, she decided she would revisit her faith and see if she could find a home. The pandemic had caused most churches to go from in-person worship to online services, which made it easy for her to try out different denominations.

"I could just test different styles and figure out what fit best with me and my belief system and what made me feel the best," she says. One of those churches was the Meeting House, a protestant church that a friend had told her was "a church for people who don't like church".

"I happened to attend their Sunday service, and they were doing a four-part series on basically love, and the fact that Jesus is love, and that so resonated with me, because I really believe that, and now more than ever do we really need love," she says.

Ms. Allard has since become a regular member, attending at least one online service a week. "In a time when a lot of people are feeling alienated and isolated, I feel so grateful to have found this group of people."

...continued on page 8

Inside this issue:

Faith and Spirituality.....	pg. 1
Update from Pakistan.....	pg. 1
Rexdale Rundown.....	pg. 3
Mitcham UK.....	pg. 3
Message From the Board.....	pg. 3
Ottawa Outlook.....	pg.3
Update from Pakistan.....	pg. 4
Recognizing God's Voice.....	pg. 4
Oshawa Overview.....	pg. 4
Brampton Buzz.....	pg. 5
St. Vincent Relief.....	pg. 6

Update from Pakistan

Pastor Zeeashan Jan

A Miraculous Event

Brethren, I am writing to you about a miraculous event that took place on March 7, 2021. It was my birthday. The church family, here in Pakistan, gathered together at our local church to celebrate. This was meant to be a joyous gathering. A time to join together, enjoy a lovely breakfast and fellowship with one another. This all changed when suddenly, without warning the bricks, walls and pillars that made up the sanctuary began to crumble and fall.

Faith and Spirituality in the time of Covid

...continued from page 1

For decades, religious attendance in most parts of the world has been declining. A **2018 survey by the Pew Research Center** has found that globally, adults under 40 are the least likely to consider themselves religious, and **a 2019 survey by the same organisation** found that the number of American adults who consider themselves non-religious is growing.

But the pandemic may just be reversing that trend, leaders from several faiths say, in part because the move to online services has helped make it easier for people to participate

"We've seen not only the numbers grow, but the kind of people, the people who wouldn't typically feel comfortable even going to church, or setting a foot inside a new church," says Bruxy Cavey, the lead pastor at the Meeting House.

"Covid has slowed us down and destabilised our regular routine. It has become an exploratory time. People are developing new habits, new interests, and finding new ways of just being in this world."

Yahya Momla, an Imam at the BC Muslim Association in Richmond, British Columbia, said more people have been connecting with the mosque during the pandemic, and giving to the mosque's charitable causes. "One thing we've been noticing is new donors - first-time donors who are not on our donor list - are donating," he says. "We can only assume they've heard about us online."

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, who leads City Shul, a Reformed Jewish synagogue in Toronto, says she has seen attendance grow, especially among young adults.

"I'm constantly shocked - we have lots of new members. Who would join a synagogue during a pandemic?" Rabbi Goldstein says she's also seen an uptick in young people with no familial connections to Judaism interested in converting, something she finds surprising. More typically, people convert when they're a bit older if they are getting married to a Jewish spouse.

"I think it is an anchor in this world. We are all being tossed on stormy seas, and if you look out on the horizon and see a boat that seems to be sturdy, and steady, you might want to get on. I think people look at Judaism as a very ancient tradition that's very sturdy, very steady in stormy waters."

The pandemic has not only fuelled people's interest in spirituality, but the necessary move to online services has also made it easier for people to explore these feelings, she says.

Ms. Allard agrees: "There's like an anxiety in meeting all these new people, and having all these expectations."

"But if you're online and you're in the comfort of your own home, and you can just hop in and hop out at your leisure, and just explore how you feel about it... one step at a time."

The success of online services has led many religious leaders to ask - what's next?

Rabbi Goldstein's synagogue had never done an online service before the pandemic, and now she says she and the leadership team are discussing how they can continue whenever the world returns to a new normal.

Pastor Bruxy is having the same conversation. While the Meeting House did have a podcast before the pandemic, it did not regularly stream services.

"We have said moving forward, we will be a both/and church, not an either/or church. We will love being together in person - it will be so exciting when we return to that. At the same time, we see the benefit to being online, and I think we will carry the lessons with us into the future.

Adapted from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55419894>

Message from the Board

Pastor Howard Green



Message from the President

It is difficult to imagine that we are heading into almost two years since this dreadful pandemic wreaked havoc on a scale once unimaginable. With almost one hundred and eighty-seven million infections, and well over three million deaths, this has undoubtedly been one of the darkest moments in recent history. The advancement of social media platforms and increased accessibility provide billions of people with the ability to view and hear countless interpretations on the origin, purpose and impact of the Covid-19

virus, and the various vaccines.

It has been a part of the Church's mandate to help its immediate community, and society in general, navigate the challenges that face humanity. This current experience is not an exception to that reality. We consider it a grave responsibility of the Church to help provide direction and comfort in times of challenge and severe uncertainty.

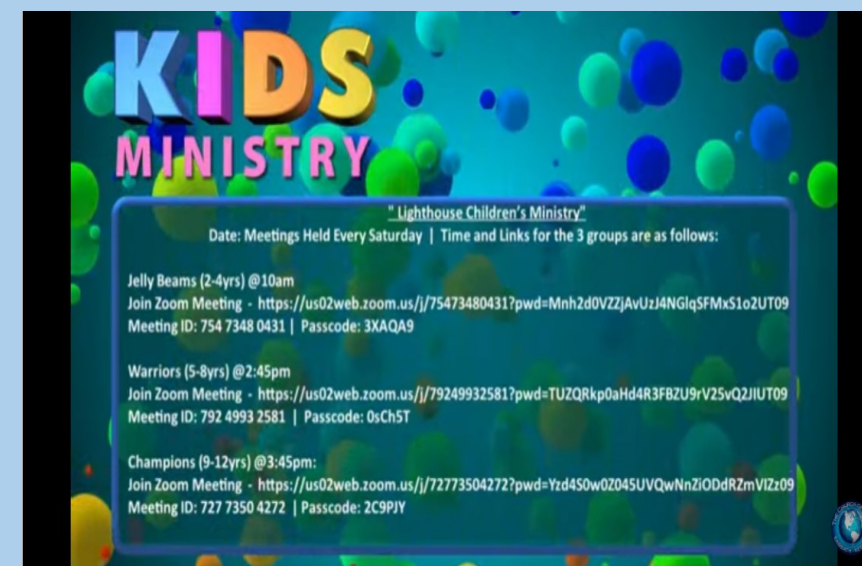
I am pleased that the Church of God Sabbath Keeping has undertaken the task to address the various thoughts that are prevailing through the media. This year we will host our first Virtual Convention, perfectly themed "A World in Crisis". The event has three key objectives as listed below:

- * Responding appropriately to the significant level of misinformation that is in circulation
- * Helping people to understand the current crisis from a biblical perspective
- * Strengthening the faith of the believers during this time of uncertainty

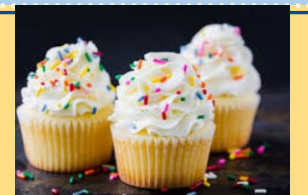
In addition to addressing the immediate crisis, we are excited to share with you several major organizational changes that will positively impact the future of our church. Our key ministries will each be presenting, at dedicated segments throughout the convention, and we anticipate God's richest blessings on all who will participate.

We are excited to host two of God's most prominent servants to be our guest speakers. Pastor Whaid Rose, former President of the Church of God Seventh Day and Pastor Loren Stacy, current President of the Church of God Seventh Day. These illustrious speakers will present the keynote addresses to our global audience on July 3rd and 4th, 2021.

As we continue to navigate the trials and challenges of the 21st century, we crave the prayers and commitment of all our members and partners. Your dedication and ongoing support for the work of the Lord is acknowledged and appreciated.



The Cupcakes JOKE



Our fourth grader celebrated his birthday on crutches, so he couldn't carry the cupcakes into school without help. I asked our sixth-grader, Noah, to help his brother carry them in. "I could," he said, "but I'd prefer not to." Spotting a teaching moment, my husband asked Noah, "What would Jesus do?" Noah answered, "Jesus would heal him so he could carry his own cupcakes." — Rachel Nichols

Praise the Lord, God is so good indeed! We give thanks to God for our church family and life resuming as we recover from the pandemic, and we pray for continued progress and blessing in this area. In spite of the Pandemic, God has remained faithful and we have been able to continue with our church services online every week via the Zoom platform as a worthy offering to God. The pandemic has not stopped or interfered with the spreading of the good news of the Gospel to believers and non-believers! Hallelujah!

We have seen an increase of brethren fellowshiping with us near and far, including from the following countries: The UK, the Caribbean, Canada, Greece, USA and Pakistan. Our divine Sabbath service commences from 12pm-3pm (UK time) and includes; Praise and Worship, Corporate Prayer/Personal Prayers/Opening & Closing Prayers, Testimonies, Teaching (bible study), Announcements, Preaching/Sermon (word of encouragement).

We have had various outreach projects that includes a Community Barbeque which took place in the church building on 31st August 2019 and was well attended by church members from the various branches and visitors. The event was well attended; it included refreshments, spoken word poetry, a praise dance, song, prayer, and evangelism.

We also had a Thanksgiving service/lunch on 23rd November 2019 after our divine Sabbath service which again was positively attended by brethren from numerous branches and visitors. In December 2019, Bishop Treleven (International Overseer), myself and a few other church brethren traveled to Jerusalem in Israel where Bishop performed my baptism ceremony in the River Jordan on Monday 23rd December 2019. This was a glorious, joyous and significant occasion in my journey of faith where I was able to publicly declare my dedication to God and commit fully and wholeheartedly to serving God in Spirit and in truth! Hallelujah!!!

The church has now put plans in place to begin offering a weekly Question and Answer session via the Zoom platform every three Sunday's in a month from 7pm-9pm (UK time) where brethren will have the opportunity to put forward any questions that they may have to a panel of ministers, with a focus geared towards scripture. It will be a requirement that all questions are to be emailed in advance to the Administrator- (Sister Jodie Dore) beforehand. In addition to this there will also be a Testimonial service that will take place every first Sunday of the month via Zoom for one hour from 7pm-8pm (UK time) where brethren will have the opportunity in more detail to testify of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father's unending goodness towards us! These sessions are due to commence from Sunday 1st August 2021. We are excited for this addition to our church life, we anticipate that it will be a success in the mighty name of Jesus and we look forward to this new venture as it will enhance the church for the better!

St. Vincent Relief

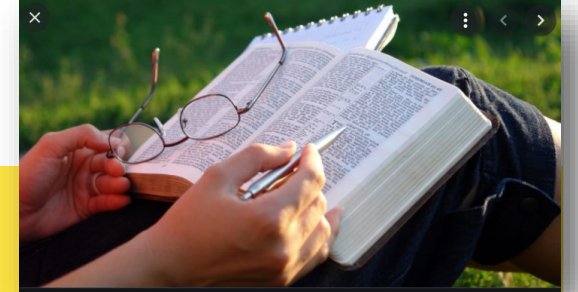
By Sis. Debbie Sargeant

On April 9, 2021, La Soufrière volcano erupted on the main island of St. Vincent. Three days later, a second larger eruption released large amounts of hot ash, lava, and toxic gas. The eruptions led to shortages of essential goods and services including clean drinking water, sanitation, food, electricity, and shelter. The on-going COVID-19 crisis has already left many with thinly spread resources and the natural disaster compounded the struggle and need for support.

As a church, we at Rexdale wanted to respond to the emerging needs of the people affected by this crisis. The Mission's Team activated our brethren and friends, and in two short weeks we collected nineteen barrels of food, personal care items, clothing, and cleaning materials. The support was not just from our local church, but our sister churches and community members as well. One contributor let us know that she was not a member of the church, but when a friend who does attend our church told her what Rexdale was doing she wanted to help; she called all her children and they all purchased food items. That is one of the many stories we heard and witnessed as we collected items.



Rexdale Rundown



The History of our Bible Study

Our regular weekly Wednesday night bible study has been running since July 2010. The first lesson that we reviewed was entitled “Defending the Faith”. This lesson challenged believers to know what they stand for. It taught and encouraged us to study the Word with accuracy so we would be able to share the gospel's truth. The study also provided practical strategies for demonstrating our understanding of the roots of our faith and what we believe. A faithful few would regularly attend the meeting and rich discussions would take place. As the years went by Wednesday night Bible Study would experience challenges with attendance, nevertheless we persisted with an understanding that studying the Word of God is vital to our growth and strength as believers.

In 2018, to increase access to the weekly study, we added remote access to the meeting. We purchased a conference speaker and a Blue Jean subscription for virtual meetings. This allowed participants to log into the study and engage with those who attended in person. Attendance in person remained steady and the participation online fluctuated. Even with the online option available we would still see numbers hovering around 10 participants.

In March 2020, as the world experienced the growing COVID-19 crisis, we began to see many doors to organizations and services close and they began to transition their supports online. Thanks be to God, we were in a position to make a seamless transition to offering Bible Study online. As the pandemic crisis evolved we began seeing more members and friends accessing the study. Attendance rose from 10 to 20, and even 40+ participants. Pre-pandemic our classes would run from 7:00-8:30 p.m. however, as the pandemic continued to evolve we began to see hunger and thirst for the Word and fellowship. We increased the time to 7:00-9:00 p.m. to allow more time for study and fellowship. The Wednesday night Bible Study has truly been a blessing. While we long to see each other and fellowship in person, we are thankful to God for His provision, for the fellowship, learning, and growth that is taking place.

Ottawa Outlook

In the previous issue of *The Vision*, we spoke about our efforts to sustain our evangelical commitment through the use of technology. Recognizing the importance of evangelism and our limited understanding of how to effectively do this in this new “online environment”, we sought help from Pastor Blagrove. Pastor Blagrove delivered a powerful presentation on “Building the

Family Through Community Ties”, which focused on simple but effective ways to evangelize during the pandemic. At the end of his presentation we felt empowered to accomplish our goal! We are happy to report that subsequent to Pastor Blagrove's presentation, a family reached out to us through a technological medium and they have become a wonderful addition to our church family.

They say first impressions last and it's so true. I had been trying to find a place of worship in Ottawa and stumbled upon Rexdale's website. I found Pastor Barker's information who directed me to Pastor George who then put me in contact with Pastor Quarrie. Pastor Quarrie responded promptly and took the time to call and answered all my questions. From a visitor's perspective having people in leadership that you can have a genuine conversation with goes a long way. When I joined the first Saturday service I was welcomed by everyone, and it was heartfelt even though it was on Zoom. I am enjoying my experience so far “J”.

We have also strived to add variety to our services through the means of technology. Here are some of the ways in which we have done so:

- Sis. Endeve enjoys playing instrumentals in the background while singing her favourite songs, whether it is for Praise and Worship sessions, renditions or as part of the regular service.
- Sis. Gooden showed us a Praise and Worship centered YouTube video highlighting the importance of thanking God when He has come through for us.



There was a thunderstorm that day, and the strong winds must have been too much for our small building to withstand. The women and children's side of the church came crashing down on the sisters, youngsters and even some of the brothers. It was such a horrific scene, but thanks to God no lives were lost on site. A young girl, only eight years old received a few scratches on her face and a twelve-year-old boy was injured when bricks fell directly on his head. He was quickly bandaged up and rushed to the hospital in an ambulance with his family.

Upon assessing the scene and realizing that there were no fatalities, we as a church began to praise God for His grace and mercy. After some time of praising and worshiping, we saw one of the young injured boy's family members quickly running up towards the area where the church once stood. We could hear screaming and wailing, as he got closer. On arrival we were informed that the young boy, Joseph, had died in the ambulance. When his body arrived at the hospital, doctors conducted x-rays and concluded that Joseph had died of a serious fracture to his skull.

The congregation's rejoicing quickly turned to great sorrow and mourning. The brethren started to cry out to God. The other leaders and I began to plead with the Lord to raise Joseph from the dead. Without a miracle many who were weak in their faith would doubt and turn from Him. Our church could experience serious persecution from those in authority in our Islamic country. We prayed with conviction, thanking God for what He was going to do. I got on the phone with our leader and founder, Bishop W.B. Treleven. He prayed with us and told me that he had a dream, that very morning of walls collapsing all around him and God working a miracle.

Brethren, at the same moment, as we gave thanks to God for hearing our prayer; we saw a woman running toward the church shouting. She called out **JOSEPH IS ALIVE!** He was resurrected at the hospital. The same doctor that performed the x-rays on the young boy could not understand or explain what had happened before his very eyes. He asked the family if this were some sort of "magic". How could this boy have come back to life? It was medically and scientifically impossible. I later visited the hospital and explained to the doctor that it was not magic that brought Joseph back to life, but the power of the true and living God! He had witnessed a miracle and it all took place in Jesus Christ's Mighty Name.

All glory and honour be to God!

Oshawa Overview

D. Chai Foo

How We Should Live as Christians in the World

The Word of God is clear on what God requires from His people, as we seek to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The world sometimes finds God's Word offensive to their way of living; this was also the case as Jesus walked the earth. He was a target of their animosity as were his disciples.

God instructs His people to never retaliate when the world is hostile toward us. (Matthew 5:38-42). God also requires that His people care for others. We are not to judge according to appearance, but to judge righteous judgment. We must be consistent and clear, as our heavenly father is. As believers we are mandated/ admonished to:

- ◆ Care for the downtrodden. (Matthew 25: 31-46)
- ◆ Address the issues of the day and time we live in (Micah 6:8)
- ◆ Respect the rights of all. (James 2: 1-13)
- ◆ Extend to others the courtesy we desire for ourselves. (Luke 6:31)

As we navigate life in a world of confusion and uncertainty, we need to remind ourselves that our opinions must give way to God's authority on any, and all subjects. The reason why we follow these 4 principles is because we are all created in the image and likeness of God. (Acts 17:26)

Brampton Buzz

Wendy Butler

Children's Education Ministry



The Children's and Young people's Sabbath School, as it was known for years, officially became the Christian Education Ministry (CEM) in 2001. The vision was to have a teaching and learning environment specifically for children and youth who would learn the basics of the Bible to prepare them for higher learning and to combat contrasting worldview perspectives. We started under the leadership of Andrew Wisdom, who oversaw the ministry, which included the development of both the children and teachers. In 2005, Wayne Guthrie became the ministry leader, occupying the role for ten years. Throughout his leadership, improvements to the teaching methods were made, including the institution of a curriculum created by the ministry assistant Natasha James. After the passing of our beloved Wayne Guthrie, in 2015, Sandrae Feare-Raymond accepted the challenge of becoming the new CEM Director alongside Naomi Henry, Graduation Coordinator.

Our curriculum addresses aspects taught in the secular school system as we seek to educate our children from a Godly perspective. We believe the church and family are our children and youth's first educators and are purposeful in making them aware of teachings that do not align with our Christian beliefs. Today, the ministry is led by Wendy Butler, our CEM Director, Brenda Rose, Assistant Director, and Susie Treleven the Graduation Coordinator. Currently, the ministry has twelve volunteer teachers and ministry supply teachers who assist in building up the ministry, children and youth. The ministry consists of 6 classes from the ages of 18 months to 25 years old.

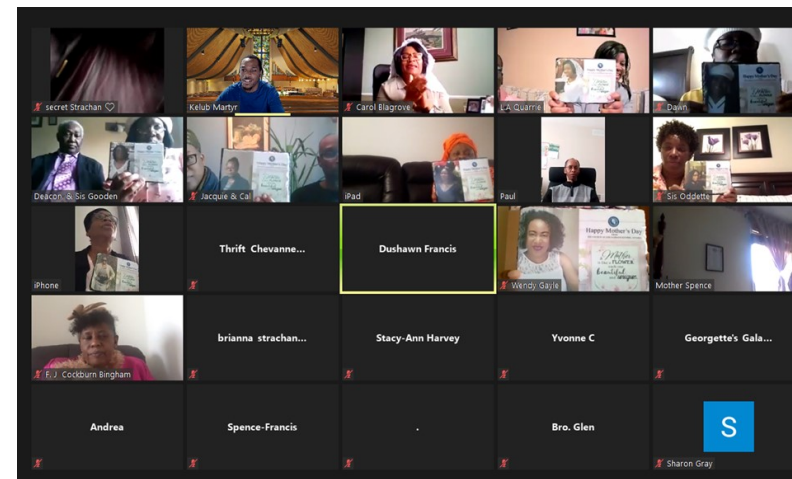
Highlights:

- ◆ Temporary CEM Zoom Classes for all age group during the Pandemic, will resume in-person classes soon.
- ◆ Annual Graduation and Career Day at the end of our school year.
- ◆ In Memory of Wayne Guthrie's commitment and dedication to the Ministry, we offer a Scholarship Award to eligible students at the Secondary Education Level.



Ottawa Outlook

...continued from page 3



- Sis. Dawn enjoys singing while her two sons play the drums and piano in the background. She strives to enhance the service and always encourages us to clap, stand, and dance despite us being limited to the Zoom platform.
- Sis. Jacquie moderated Zoom panel discussions during Family month which focused on strengthening the biological family to ultimately strengthen the family of God.
- We conduct a weekly Zoom Wednesday Bible Study entitled, "Forging Ahead in the Word", and invited speakers from various countries to present. Attendance at these sessions has been steadily increasing.
- In May, the Men's Ministry (with assistance from Sis. Quarrie) hosted a special service to commemorate the mothers among us. Items included a guest speaker appearance by Sis. C. Blagrove, individual addresses and a presentation of gifts to our mothers as a token of appreciation.