



# SHORT REPORT

president's message

At the beginning of Advent I heard a reading that I have probably heard at least once per year for most of my life. The words were not new to me, but I was caught anew by the picture they paint. "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." (Is. 11:1)

Most of us have seen tree stumps that have sent out suckers. The tree is gone; the stump appears to be more of a problem than a place of life. But of course the roots that had fed the tree are still in place and still able to gather nutrients from the ground. That energy is channeled into the suckers, which are also usually seen as a problem. Over the years I have spent lots of effort cutting off small poplar suckers that have sprung up around a no longer existent tree, and have probably never celebrated the persistence of those unseen roots.

**"He sees a new thing coming from what appears to be a dead tree, and celebrates hope arising from what appears to be a lost cause."**

Isaiah paints a positive picture of a tree sucker, a picture of hope and persistence. He sees a new thing coming from what appears to be a dead tree, and celebrates hope arising from what appears to be a lost cause. His prophecy refers to Israel, the people of God, which at the time of his vision is in the throes of death, slowly losing life as the Babylonians circle and prepare to chop down the tree of Israel. But Isaiah knows that the roots that feed God's people will continue to do their work. And he reminds his readers not to lose hope despite what

they see on the surface. God's roots will produce a new shoot, a new expression of life. That life will develop into a new tree that will bear much fruit. We read this during Advent with the knowledge that Jesus arose out of the people of Israel, and he continues to "bear much fruit" in our lives and in the world.

Isaiah takes a unique perspective on the events of his world. While others only see devastation and destruction in Israel's demise, he looks to what will come out of that struggle. He sees life springing up from the compost pile. He recognizes that the roots of God are still at work and will produce new life. That life will be beyond people's wildest imagination. What a way to look at struggle and difficulty!

How often do we see problems in life, and miss expecting that God's roots can still produce great things out of those struggles? Like the roots of a tree, God is still working whether we see it or not, and can still grow life out of something that appears to be done and dead. Whether that is in our personal lives, in our churches, or in our country, God continues to work. The miracle of Christmas is that God will grow new life, and it may spring from unexpected sources. But he will grow his life. We can focus on that which we see dying, or look for the life, the new hope, that so often grows up.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus the Christ this year, may we also look for the new expressions of God's life that continue to spring up around us. May we see beyond the problems to what God continues to grow and develop as the shoots of his life continue to grow.

**Wayne Tomalty**



## A CHRISTMAS BLESSING

*May your heart be lifted in praise  
this Christmas  
for the wonderful gift of Jesus  
and the joy He brings to our lives.  
Have a wonderful Christmas  
and a Blessed New Year*



## important dates

**Focus Youth Conference** **Weekend, February 5-7th, 2016**

Focus is our annual senior-high youth conference. This year's conference theme is Blockbuster. Early registration ends on January 19th—register at [mountcarmel.net/focus](http://mountcarmel.net/focus).

**Mount Carmel Open House** **Monday, February 8th, 2016**

Our open house event is an opportunity for prospective students to spend a day (8:30 am – 2:00 pm) with us, get a sense of who we are and what a year at Carmel involves—register at [mountcarmel.net/openhouse](http://mountcarmel.net/openhouse).

**ThunderPong** **Thursday, January 21st, 2016**

Mount Carmel's Annual Table Tennis Tourney is in January this year! Its Free! Come out and connect, watch, and play. 6:30 pm official start. Register at 6:00 pm.

**Refocus Dates** **January 24th, February 28th**

Refocus is a monthly community worship event at Mount Carmel, the fourth Sunday of the month at 7:15 pm.



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## alumni corner

*We asked a couple of alumni to share their experience of moving from Mount Carmel to a bigger university campus. We asked them to share how they stay connected to God and intentionally live for him as a student.*

### **Stephanie Gurnett (Alumni 2012)** **Elementary Education at the University of Alberta**



Coming from an incredibly supportive Christian community, first at Mount Carmel and then YWAM England, transitioning to studying at a 40,000+ student school, with little to no knowledge of Christian activity on campus, little desire to be attending, and very little connection with friends on campus prior to arriving, adjustment to university life was incredibly difficult for me. Its easy to live a life

abandoned to Jesus when everyone around you is encouraging you to this end, but when you are alone, thrown into the middle of a mass of students who seem to be constantly herded through the buildings, pursuing knowledge often tainted with personal opinions which stand against Christianity - this lifestyle becomes increasingly hard to seek after.

But God is at work at university's all across our nation, and was at work at the U of A as I started my Elementary Education degree. God has taught me the importance of intentionally seeking out community, intentionally challenging myself to grow in relationship with him by being in his presence and sharing my faith with my friends, and intentionally engaging in a purpose that is greater than myself - namely, making Him known, that he may be glorified, both in my life, and in the lives of others! There is no greater purpose that will bring fulfillment in any way, than when we are doing that which God created us to do. I thank God daily for the community I have found at university through Power to Change which has encouraged me to this end.



### **Kaden Kopas (Alumni 2014)** **Education at The University of Lethbridge**



It's funny, because I was just discussing this with my friends at Bible study. I believe that God intentionally brought me through Carmel, then through camp (Circle Square Ranch), and now into Lethbridge, in that order, for a specific reason. My first semester at university has been crazy - God's been tearing things down in my life to build on the foundation that he's been laying over the past two

years. Without him, I know I'd be completely lost in this place. He gives me life and passion and keeps me from drowning under a mountain of work and pressures.

I understand that I am not a student chasing after a degree or a grade, but I am a servant who goes wherever God takes him. I feel him showing me how to be a true friend to the people around me in class and out... and how to spend less time worrying about myself and more time using what he's given me for the good of everyone around me.

### **Cassie Anderson (Alumni 2012)** **Nursing at MacEwan University**



I often have to reconcile new ideas, opinions, and facts I'm learning in university with what I have already been taught, and sometimes that can be really stretching to my faith. I guess in those times I bring my questions to people I respect who I know place God first in their lives. I stay connected with God by making church and devotions a priority, even when school is busy.

I'm trying to be a light for Jesus to the friends I have made through my university experience. I intentionally try to show an authentic "peace that passes understanding" to them even within the rigor that post-secondary can require, in order to show them God! I'm also involved in a Campus Alpha club at MacEwan. Through the club I help foster community, promote a safe place for non-believers to question Christianity, and facilitate various evangelistic activities on the campus.



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## student perspectives



*We asked a couple of students from this year's class, Tanner Black and Ally Gowelitz, to reflect on the year.*

### 1. Where are you serving in your impacts, what do you find difficult and/or meaningful?

**Ally:** I am volunteering at a senior home, elementary school, and the youth group at my church. They are different in their own ways and are all equally enjoyable. Serving

at the youth group allows me to watch young kids grow in their faith and have the desire to learn more about God, and I am able to encourage them to partake on this journey. At the senior home, I get to visit with the elderly, it can be hard at times because they are quite sick and are getting close to the end of this part of their life. But I can see how much they value having someone to talk to and just the company of someone there means the world to them. When I see them smile I can see the joy that I am bringing into their lives. At the elementary school I photocopy, mark tests, and help kids with homework. Even though it feels like I'm not doing that much, I know the teacher really appreciates me being there.

**Tanner:** I am serving at Hardisty School as a teacher's aid in a grade three classroom, Steele Heights Baptist Church for their after school drop in and the Hope Mission Tegler Center where I am helping with high school students who come to play basketball and hang out. I have found it difficult to get to know the kids at each impact, partly because it takes me awhile to get comfortable in new situations. These Impacts have been meaningful because I have been able to learn things from them as much as they learn from me.

### 2. How has your view/perspective of God grown this year? How do think of him differently, now than before Carmel?

**Tanner:** Recently I have been learning that Jesus is King, but also my friend; high above, yet right beside me. Before this revelation I just thought as him as my friend, not king.

**Ally:** Before starting school at Carmel, I always thought of God as being this massive being who is full of love and wants to spread that love to others. After a semester of being here, I realized that even though that is true, there is a lot more to God than just that. This year has allowed me to go over stories in the Bible and see the work that God is doing in the world. Sometimes he can be frustrated, upset, and

other times he can be very joyful and happy. It is interesting to see the different ways that he has worked in peoples lives.

### 3. How have you responded to some of the challenges/ disciplines you did as part of the Christian Life course this year?

**Ally:** One of the disciplines we have worked on in Christian life is praying. At first it was very challenging because I decided I would pray first thing in the morning. I was only praying a few times a week and wasn't having the motivation to do it. After a few weeks of that discipline, I have switched to praying in the evenings and have been doing it a lot more. I enjoy praying and it is definitely something that can and is building my relationship with God.

**Tanner:** This semester for Christian Life I chose the discipline of prayer. We had to pick a time and place and position where we prayed each night. I really liked this discipline and I thought it went very well because over the four weeks I was able to try some different positions and actually explore different types of prayer. This helped me process what happened during the day and provide me with words for my prayer.

### 4. Having just finished modular week, where we take a break from regular classes and cover a variety of specific topics, what was one issue that really got your attention?

**Ally:** During modular week, we had a class on media and faith. The main question was; does social media take away from relationships? And the answer is yes. It was interesting just to go over how much of a role that media plays in our lives and how at times it can become too much. It is important to remember that human beings need other human beings, and that social interaction should be at a much higher value than social media. It also takes away from our most important relationship, which is the one we have with God.

**Tanner:** God is the God of electronics and movies and phones. He is above all so we should have him in all aspects, even in how we use the internet.

### 5. What is your favorite meal? and why?

**Tanner:** Baked Spaghetti because it takes spaghetti and mixes it with the amazing power of baking and cheese and tomato sauce.

**Ally:** Breakfast just because I really like the food that I can eat in the morning. And my favorite food to eat at breakfast would probably be bacon. :)

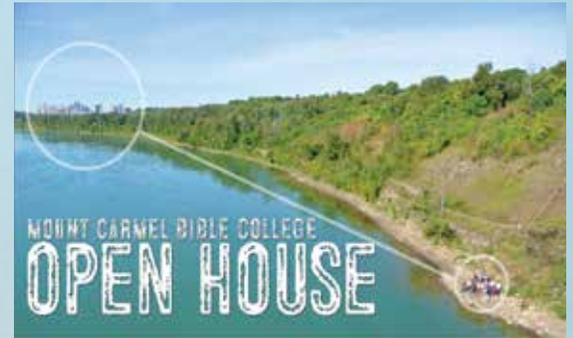




## open house on february 8th

### Here's how you can help grow next year's Mount Carmel student body!

Personally encourage a sibling, cousin, friend, youth group kid, etc. to attend our February open house event. Our day-in-the-life open house event is a great opportunity for potential students to sit in on some classes, experience life in community and get a glimpse of some of the volunteer placements where our students are involved. [mountcarmel.net/openhouse](http://mountcarmel.net/openhouse)



## focus youth conference

FOCUS is a weekend conference annually hosted by Mount Carmel Bible College for senior high students and young adults. Focus is a lively and welcoming weekend where youth experience the new creation life of Jesus. Packed with a lot of excitement and energy, youth can come expecting to experience great food, crazy activities, new connections, a challenging speaker and collective worship. To register go to [mountcarmel.net/focus](http://mountcarmel.net/focus)

## program considerations

Mount Carmel's administration and board are actively considering program changes for the future. Our alumni are consistently very positive about their experience here, and we believe strongly in the program we have. At the same time, we recognize that we are not attracting large numbers of students, so are considering changes to how we package our program in order to increase interest. As decisions are made, we will keep you informed. In the meantime, please pray with us and for us about both the proposed changes and our recruitment of new students.

## financial

Finances are an area of both concern and faith for us. We live with a tension, knowing that we have significant financial needs, and knowing that we have been continually provided for over the past 47 years.

We do want to remind you of our need. Student fees cover about one third of our operating budget, and donations from churches and individuals provide the rest. With smaller student numbers this year, we are even more conscious of the importance of donations.

We also want to acknowledge God's provision for us. Up to this point in our year, we are meeting all of our obligations. We do thank God for that.

Donations can be mailed or made on-line, through our website or through [canadahelps.org](http://canadahelps.org)

