



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – December, 2012

"If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing." John 8:54

***I am only one; but still I am one.
I cannot do everything, but still I can do
something. I will not refuse to do the
something I can do.***

Helen Keller

Our world is filled with tragedies so we don't have to look very far to hear stories from wars, floods, earthquakes, divorce, death, loneliness, poverty and sickness. When we open our eyes to the opportunities to bless others with Christ's love in a hurting world, we may be over-whelmed with the reality of the many situations that will be waiting as an open door to serve others.

The Greatness Principle, written by Nelson Searcy says to *initiate action as God guides*. We can't walk through every open door we come across; we can't seize every opportunity we see to serve. Thankfully, as we start becoming aware of the needs and opportunities around us, we can heed the instruction of our knowledgeable guide, who will tell us where to direct our energy.

Nelson goes on to stress the importance of living and serving in a way that makes the gospel of Jesus appealing to those who don't believe in Him. In to-days world, where faith is a buzzword and moral relativism reigns, how do we let people know that our inherent joy and the good things we do are a reflection of God's love and excellence, and not just a result of us being nice people?

As Christ's representatives in the world—our call is to live with His attitude and then to intentionally reflect any credit or praise that comes our way back to God.

Jesus, the greatest example of a servant ever to walk the earth, blessed people in a multitude of ways— in bigger and more extravagant ways than we will ever be able to do. But throughout his early ministry and even in His crucifixion, Jesus made it very clear that the motive behind every single thing He did was to bring glory to His Father in heaven.

Jesus replied, *"If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me."*

John 8:54

Nelson Searcy, The Greatness Principle; 2012

Faithful Action

*Working with Religious Groups in Disaster
Planning, Response and Recovery*

*Center for Religion and Civic Culture
University of Southern California
November 2012*

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) and faith leaders serve as focal points for people seeking physical, social, emotional, and spiritual care when disasters strike, as evidenced by responses to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, the 2009 California wildfires, the 2010 earthquake in Imperial County, California, and other events such as heat waves and blackouts.

In fact, FBOs represented around two thirds of the social service agencies involved in recovery efforts following the 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina. A recent study determined that over 60 percent of Americans turn first to their religious leaders for advice and direction in times of crisis; this percentage has been found to be even higher in low-income and immigrant communities.

From tiny storefront congregations to deep pocketed denominations, the communities of faith arrived first. In the harrowing hours and days after Hurricane Katrina, when survivors roamed the desolate streets in search of water, food and medicine, (religious) groups—not FEMA, not the Red Cross, not the National Guard—provided dazed residents with their first hot meal, their first clean water, their first aspirin...

Roles of Congregations

Polls show that during times of crisis, nearly 60 percent of Americans say they turn first to a religious leader for comfort and guidance.

In the wake of crisis or disaster, it is often assumed that the government and first-responders have the largest and most important roles to play. While structural mitigation often rests squarely on the shoulders of the public domain, the role of local primary social institutions cannot be underestimated in response to a community crisis.

LOVE BEE...ING PREPARED ~ That none be left behind

Calgary Churches are invited to participate in an activity to connect church and community.

In the New Year, small postcard sized magnets will be distributed to residents in the community with a simply yet powerful message that could save lives.

"Please place this magnet on your fridge and if you need assistance during a disaster, you will find the city emergency numbers as well as contact information for the FEPI Coordination Centre. This is an alternate number to contact when emergency agencies are over-whelmed and unable to cope with the many demands for their services."

We are very grateful to [Alberta Health Services](#) who have kindly given permission to share their Personal and Family Disaster Preparedness Guide.



How can your church participate?

- ✓ Complete Bridges of Love's FEPI Contact and Resource Assessment Form

As Staples says..."That was easy!" Your churches information will be added to our FEPI data base so when a need arises we are able to access the help as quick as possible. Please see a simulation on Bridges of Love's web site.
www.bridgesoflove.net



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – November, 2012

"If you have faith as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible for you" Matthew 17:20

He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move.

Nothing will be impossible for you."

Matthew 17:20-21

Oswald Chamber says that faith in active opposition to common sense is mistaken enthusiasm and narrow-mindedness, and common sense in opposition to faith demonstrates a mistaken reliance on reason as the basis for truth.

The life of faith brings the two into the proper relationship. Common sense and faith are as different from each other as the natural life is from the spiritual, and as impulsiveness is from inspiration.

Building Bridges of Love has taken a leap of faith which says, "Lord, You have said it, it appears to be irrational, but I'm going to step out boldly, trusting in Your Word." Turning intellectual faith into our personal possession is always a fight, but it is well worth the battle.

This past week we celebrated the vision with our first fund raising event, "Love Bee...ing Prepared – That none be left behind." The past eight years of following Christ on this narrow path has taught me perseverance to remain true to God's character whatever He may do or wherever He may take me. It has indeed been a journey of faith believing in the one who called me to build Bridges of Love.

Closing our evening, we invited a couple to share who I met briefly when helping with the Huntington Hills condo evacuation. Our FEPI churches had been called to assist with the move of 24 residents. Upon arrive to survey the need, CUPS make introduction to a family who were confused by the request for a quick evacuation. They could not accept the situation when asked to relocate due to health issues in their apartment complex.

I asked this special couple what caused the turning point that made them decide it was time to accept CUPS help. With tears in their eyes they answered, "When you offered your home to our family as a temporary place to stay, we knew it was for real..." They felt the love of Christ and knew someone cared for them in a tangible way.

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." John 15:13

"LOVE BEE...ING PREPARED – THAT NONE BE LEFT BEHIND"

We were so fortunate having Jeff Lehrmann, President of Chevron Canada Ltd. as our main speaker at our first fund raising banquet, "LOVE BEE...ING PREPARED – That none be left behind."

Please allow me to share a little of his message where he reflects on the questions that he and his family had during the 911 crisis, while living in Indonesia, and during the after math of Hurricane Ike. They came to understand that people involved in an emergency or crisis have similar concerns and questions with the letter "C" as a common element.

The first question that came to mind during their experiences was, "What's going on?" So the first "C" is **COMMUNICATION**. People in crisis want information about the situation. How will it impact one's family?

The next question was, "Who is in charge of the situation and coordinating the communication and response?" "Who do I go to for help?" The morning after Hurricane Ike, they wanted to know who was working on getting the electricity restored, clearing the roads, responding to the damage areas or injured people. So the 2nd "C" is **COORDINATION**. Or in Crisis Management terms, **COMMAND**. Jeff's family wanted to be assured that someone was in charge and coordinating the response in the most effective and efficient manner.

Once they knew what was going on and who was in charge, they wanted to know, does anyone know about them? So the 3rd "C" is **CARE**. Does anyone care and who will help?

Jeff affirmed Chevron's Emergency Response and Crisis Management protocols and organization is focused on these 3 set of C's and is confident this is also true for Calgary's Emergency response organizations. Establishing clear and effective **COMMAND** of the response, clear **COMMUNICATIONS** across the organizations and the impacted, and a **CARING** response to help the impacted are all essential elements for an effective response.

Jeff Lehrmann is thankful that in Calgary, there is an organization such as Bridges of Love, which is focused on supplementing that "CARE" element for not only the physical care and concern, but providing the truly needed element of CARE – the spiritual.

High Fidelity Wraparound

Is a process to better help families, children and youth with complex needs. Families are empowered to work collaboratively with professional and natural supports to develop a plan that will help them realize their vision of a better life. The core belief is that all families and youth are experts of their own lives and should be the ones making decisions on issues directly affecting them.

A focus is placed on the power of the natural family and leveraging natural supports including family, friends and community rather than formal and paid professional supports.

Families that access High Fidelity Wraparound often need help to be connected to their community and this can often be in the form of a nearby church, community resource center, library, recreation facility and so on...

Many families need the support from members of the community as they often have been afraid to seek out help and support. The church community could be a valuable asset to this relationship by providing that natural or informal support that some of these families so desperately need.

If you require more information on how you can help, please contact Darcie Gage @403 508-6296 or darcie.gage@mcm.ca

It was indeed an honour to be the recipient of the **Queen Elizabeth11 Diamond Jubilee Medal** presented by the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Donald S. Ethell in the presence of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and my MP, Devinder Shory.





BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – October, 2012

"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it..." Daniel 3:17

HOW TO FIGHT FIRE

*He has his hand on the nozzle
and he is in control*

The Bible doesn't guarantee freedom from the fires and storms of life. It does give valuable perspectives, however, regarding trials. The apostle Paul labored for the Lord while fighting the fire of an afflicting thorn in the flesh—a thorn God refused to remove.

Why me Lord?? Often, God takes the cream of the crop into the fire to change one's perspective on life and teach valuable lessons. When we realize God "is able" to do anything that needs to be done, we can rest and have peace despite the storms of life.

As fires or trials confront us, God has his hand on the nozzle and he is in control. In fact, if the fire comes into our life, it first passed through the filter of God's perfect plan for you. Remember when the fire is raging in your life that **"in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).**

Unfortunately, when fires come they are often accompanied by the temptation to quit on God. If you're so tempted, remember that God promises his help. **He promises not to allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).**

The hour of temptation and trial is when the sincerity of your profession of faith is proved. When the tough times come, that is when we get to honour the commitments we have made to the Lord.

Prayer:

Fires and trials! Often I don't understand, but help me grow from them and stand firm in my faith. For you are able, and you will be with me in the fires of life.

Chaplain Robert Osbourn, Sylacauga, AL, Fire Department taken from Stories of Faith and Courage from Firefighters and First Responders by G. Reynolds & S. Reynolds

PREPARING FOR A STORM

Without a pre-determined plan:

- Operational response breaks down.
- Staff, volunteers, members, attendees and affiliate churches are left wondering what's happening, which can lead to confusion, anger, inaccurate assumptions and negative reactions.
- The church or organization could be perceived as inept, negligent, deceived or even heretical. /creating a strategic crisis communication plan for your church can help you and your leaders take immediate steps to minimize the damage.

Seven steps to crisis communication planning for your church

1. **Be proactive** – Don't wait for a crisis to take action.
2. **Establish a Crisis Communication Team** comprised of your key leaders: senior pastor, executive pastor, or one or more elders, communications director, operations director, IT, and legal counsel. The team must include your key decision-makers.
3. **Create a contact information sheet** for the team with phone numbers (home, office, cell), email and Skype addresses.
4. **Determine in advance what initial steps must be taken.** Generally, these first steps are consistent regardless of the crisis and form a framework for crafting your crisis response.
5. **Decide who your key spokesperson should be.** By sharing information with your staff and key volunteers, you turn them into a well-equipped arm of ambassadors armed with accurate information.
6. **Determine what outside resources are necessary.** In the event where your church building is compromised, you'll need alternate arrangements. Check out availability of outside facilities and determine how you'll communicate your plans to the congregation—web, email from the church, phone calls, etc.
7. **When controversy accompanies a crisis, don't ignore it,** hoping and praying it will go away.

Getting in front of a crisis, your church will be well-positioned to continue to carry out the work God has called you to.

Excerpts from Ministry Today, Sept./Oct. 2012

LOVE BEE...ING PREPARED

~ That none be left behind

**Please attend Bridges of Love's
Fund-raising Banquet**

TICKETS: On-line

www.bridgesoflove.net

or email

margpollon@bridgesoflove.net

or call

403.263.5683/403.616.0536

**Please consider sponsoring a table of
eight to treat family, friends and
colleagues to a very special evening.**



**CALGARY FIRE DEPARTMENT
CAPPY SMART BAND**



**SPECIAL GUEST
JEFF LEHRMANN**
PRESIDENT, CHEVRON
CANADA LIMITED



BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY – FUND RAISING BANQUET
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2012 (5:30 PM – 9:00 PM)
PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN VILLAGE
16 Ave. East & Garden Road (3 min. east of Calgary) - Community Centre
\$25.00 EACH - SPONSOR A TABLE (8) \$250.00
Tickets: Marg Pollon - 403.263.5683 or margpollon@bridgesoflove.net
www.bridgesoflove.net

**PRINCE OF PEACE
LUTHERAN VILLAGE
COMMUNITY CENTRE**





BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – September, 2012

“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

CALGARY CHAMBER OF VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS (CCVO)

CALGARY NONPROFIT INNOVATION AWARD

Bridges of Love is very pleased and honoured to be one of four recipients of the Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Award from the Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations.



Warmest Appreciation to our FEPI Advisory Council and to the Calgary Emergency Management Agency for the CEMA/Bridges of Love Service Agreement

Chaplain Jim Ansing, Calgary Police
Kelly Wiens/Krista Berzowski, Alberta Health and Wellness
Pastor Troy Collett, Edmonton Centre Victory
Mike Cook, City of Edmonton
Dr. Wayne Elford, U of C Prof. Emeritus
Pastor Lori Glass – Bonavista EM Church
Janna Hart – Public Health Agency of Canada
Debbie Williams/Cheryl Humphries – CEMA/ESS
Major Roy Langer – Salvation Army
Dr. John Lucas – Maranatha Evangelistic
John MacDonald – Retired - Catholic Archdiocese, Edmonton
Jack MacDonald – City of Red Deer
Bruce MacKenzie – AEMA
Karen Mann – City of Red Deer
Chaplain Kevin McInnes – Calgary Police
Chris McKiernan – Alberta Health Services
Matthew Pretto – Red Cross
Marg Pollon – Bridges of Love Ministry
Pastor Jordan Polson – CrossRoads Church
Major Stephen Sears – Berkshire Church
Randy Tiller – AEMA
Dr. Wayne Whitbourne – Action International Ministries

Resource Partners

Brent Davies – Samaritan's Purse
Walter Twiddy – NeighbourLink Calgary
Deanna Schroeder – Alberta Funeral Services Association

Advisor

Michel Sigouin – Public Safety Canada

*“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”
Ephesians 4:4*

Special Appreciation to our FEPI Churches

NW

Advent Lutheran Church
Bow Valley Christian Church
Brentview Baptist Church
Dalhousie Community Church
Good Shepherd Community Church
Harvest Hills Alliance Church
Maranatha Christian Church
Northmount Baptist Church
North West Family Church – Lead
Salvation Army, Berkshire Community Church
St. Bernard's Parish
RockPointe Church (Bears paw/BowRidge)
Thornhill Baptist Church
Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church
Westbourne Baptist Church

SW

Bethany Chapel
Covenant Christian Reformed Church
First Evangelical Free Church
Knox United Church
Lighthouse Church
Living Spirit United Church
Red Deer Lake United Church – Lead
South Calgary Community Church

NE

Calgary Word of Faith
Crossroads Community Church - Lead
Prince of Faith Lutheran Church
Renfrew Baptist Church
St. John Lutheran Church
St. Thomas Moore Parish

SE

All Saints Lutheran Church
Bonavista Evangelical Missionary Church – Lead
Calgary World Harvest
Canyon Creek Christian Fellowship
Emmanuel Community Church
First Alliance Church
Midpark Christian Assembly
New Hope Community Church
New Life Community Church
St. Luke's Anglican Church
St. Paul's Anglican Church

A SPECIAL RACE

A few years ago in Seattle, Washington, nine finalists were poised at the starting line of a 400 meter race, each planning to do his best and hoping to win the medal for first place.

As the gun went off, the racers sprinted toward the finish line. But one of the runners fell down. He quickly got up and gave his all to catch up with the others. But once again, he fell. His frustration totally overcame him, and he burst into tears and began to sob loudly.

Then a strange thing happened. The rest of the field heard his cries, and they turned to see that he was lying on the track. The runners began to slow down, and then one by one, they stopped, turned around, and went back to him. They picked him up, consoled him, and then together; all nine of them finished the race. In a race made for individual glory, the racers had made themselves into a team.

Where in the world could something like this happen?
At the Special Olympics.
Perhaps that is why they are called **“SPECIAL!”**

Excerpt from
Teamwork Makes the Dream Work
By John C. Maxwell



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – August, 2012

“GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS” John 15:13a

***“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”
John 15:13***

Recently we heard the devastating reports from the shootings in a Colorado movie theatre. Four men who were shot that fateful night didn't hesitate to lay down their lives for the ones they loved. Each of the boyfriends used their bodies to deliberately take the bullets that would have been received by their beloved girlfriends. They will be eternally remembered as heroes and are a shining example of God's words in John 15:13.

We can each ask ourselves the question: if we had an incident where our life would be put on the line to save another, would we take the chance? Most will not have the opportunity to put our love into action where it may be necessary to lay down our life for another, but there are other ways to practice sacrificial love: listening, helping, encouraging, giving.

In his recently published book, **“Love Does”** Bob Goff says he used to think he had to be somebody important to accomplish things, but now he knows Jesus uses ordinary people more.

As a college student Bob spent sixteen days in the Pacific Ocean with five guys and a crate of canned meat. As a father he took his kids on a world tour to eat ice cream with heads of state. He made friends in Uganda, and they like him so much he became the Ugandan consul. He pursued his wife for three years before she agreed to date him. His grades weren't good enough to get into law school, so he sat on a bench outside the dean's office for seven days until they finally let him enroll.

When 'Love Does', life gets interesting. Building Bridges of Love has been an adventure I would not have missed for anything. Nine years ago, I prayed the Lord would use my life for his Glory. Little did I know He had connecting the church with the community through Emergency Preparedness as my assignment. Only God could create such a scenario, choosing an ordinary person, to accomplish His purposes.

There is no doubt Jesus invites us to have some very exciting experiences. The secret to a fulfilled life, is saying 'yes' to our loving Father, accepting His invitation to do life with Him. We're all invited so don't miss out...

“Let not one be left behind”

CALGARY NONPROFIT INNOVATION AWARD

The Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) was established in 2004 after an extensive grassroots collaborative process with nonprofit and voluntary sector members to fill a gap. Their mission statement is to promote and strengthen the nonprofit and voluntary sector by developing and sharing resources and knowledge, building connections, leading collaborative work, and give voice to critical issues affecting the sector. To that end, the vision is to see a vital, dynamic nonprofit and voluntary sector that is recognized and respected as an integral partner in building strong, healthy communities.

Bridges of Love Ministry was one recipient of the CCVO Nonprofit Innovation Award gratefully receiving a cheque for \$2500.

Dear Marg,

*It is our pleasure to honour Bridges of Love Ministry as one of the recipients of a **Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Award**. We were overwhelmed with the creativity, passion and openness of the organizations that applied for these awards and are pleased to recognize Bridges of Love Ministry as a leader in the incredible array of innovative work being carried out by the nonprofit sector in this city.*

It is our hope that this award will provide a measure of encouragement to your organization to push the boundaries of innovative practice.

*Sincerely, Katherine van Kooy
President & CEO
Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations*



***Thank you to each one who has believed in,
encouraged, assisted and supported Bridges of Love.
It has indeed been an exciting journey,
trusting God one day at a time.***

Two Horses *Author Unknown*

Just up the road from my home is a field, with two horses in it. From a distance, each horse looks like any other horse. But if you stop your car, or are walking by, you will notice something quite amazing....

Looking into the eyes of one horse will disclose that he is blind. His owner has chosen not to have him put down, but has made a good home for him.

This alone is amazing. If you stand nearby and listen, you will hear the sound of a bell. Looking around for the source of the sound, you will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field. Attached to the horse's halter is a small bell. It lets the blind friend know where the other horse is, so he can follow.

As you stand and watch these two friends, you'll see that the horse with the bell is always checking on the blind horse, and that the blind horse will listen for the bell and then slowly walk to where the other horse is, trusting that he will not be led astray.

When the horse with the bell returns to the shelter of the barn each evening, it stops occasionally and looks back, making sure that the blind friend isn't too far behind.

Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by the little ringing bell. Other times we are the guide horse, helping others to find their way....



***“A friend doesn't just say things; a friend does.”
Bob Goff***



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – July, 2012

“KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP, BUT LOVE BUILDS UP” 1 Corinthians 8:1b

Love is more important than knowledge. People do not care how much (or what) we know until they know how much we care!

Life is often tough and when one is going through difficult times, it is an opportunity to express God's love through serving and caring. These opportunities are often arranged by God Himself. A helping hand and a sympathetic, listening spirit give one's beliefs validity and impact.

Ten years ago, our family experienced a devastating time which tested our faith. We didn't understand why God was allowing such tragedy in our lives but as we look back, we know He has given us additional strength, perseverance and a radical faith for the task at hand. If we had not experienced such trials and tribulations in our own lives, how could we be equipped to help others through their difficult times?

Joseph Aldrich emphasized in his book “Life-Style Evangelism, Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World,” an oratorical skill without a caring heart adds up to zero! Eloquence without love gives a failing grade no matter what the circumstance.

The watching world is looking for a demonstration, a visual aid which reveals that the gospel really is good news, that it really does address itself to the deepest needs and motives of the human heart. Such exposure to “incarnate truth” helps one prepare to hear the ‘words’ of the gospel

Christ's purpose in coming to earth was to declare His Father's glory. His strategy was to become flesh. His methodology was to be “full of grace and truth.” We, therefore, must adopt Christ's purpose, accept His strategy, and develop His qualities. Going through valleys of despair are not something we strive for, but are often necessary experiences in order to refine and purify, helping us to become more like Christ.

“LOVE BEE...ING PREPARED!”

When Michael O'Malley first took up bee-keeping, he thought it would be a nice hobby to share with his ten-year-old son. But as he started to observe these industrious insects, he noticed that they do a lot more than just make honey. Bees not only work together to achieve a common goal but, in the process, create a highly coordinated, efficient, and remarkably productive organization.

“The Wisdom of Bees” by Michael O'Malley, Ph.D shares what the hive can teach about leadership, efficiency and growth. Much can be learned from these industrious little insects.

Each has a role to play, including the natural leadership role of the queen-mother of the hive. Free of personal agendas, each individual bee works closely and smoothly without cult of personality, jealousy, or infighting.



Bees have developed a system that rivals ours in complexity and surpasses it in efficiency. To be successful, honey-bees, like us, have to be able to deviate from prescribed behaviours in order to meet environmental trials and unpredictable challenges.

Bees never deviate from their primary mission. They responsibly deliver their good while sticking to what they do best—harvesting nectar and pollen.

As we display the universals of God's character—His love, His righteousness, His justice, and His faithfulness—through the activities of everyday life, we too can “Love Bee...ing Prepared.”

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Each month, Crossroads Community Church serves dinner to many neighbours in their community and the numbers who enjoy a delicious meal are steadily growing (150). This past month my husband and I had an opportunity to experience why this event is growing by leaps and bounds. There was a buzz of conversation around the room and it was very obvious that relationships were being built and friends made.

Pastors Doug Schroeder and John Estabrooks kindly gave an opportunity to share our mission. We handed out fridge magnets with City Emergency Numbers along with our FEPI Coordination Centre information.

Crossroads Community Church is FEPI's NE Quadrant Lead. Their monthly dinners are breaking down barriers and building bridges of love.

Across the city, Bonavista Evangelical Missionary Church is FEPI's SE Quadrant Lead. Pastor Lori Glass recently shared at our Table Top Exercise that they use their Stampede Breakfast as a venue to offer information and resources on emergency preparedness. As part of the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative they are ready and prepared to assist their communities.

Sharing a magnet with emergency information gives community members a heads up and reminder where additional help can be found during a major disaster. Each of our FEPI members is a “Muster Station” site.

We would love to offer this little resource for your Stampede Breakfast or any other community event?



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – June, 2012

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” Philippians 2:4

JOY IN SERVING Imitating Christ's Humility

Paul never urges Christians to seek suffering, as if there were virtue in pain. But we should not forget those who suffer.

Natural disasters cause us to pause, they cause us to ask hard questions, and if we care about the world, they drive us to tears. We should not approach disasters with an accusatory finger or a detached attitude. Grieving hearts can only be touched by other grieving hearts—sharing pain and mingling tears.¹

Any response to a tragedy must begin with personal compassion and a broken heart for the situation.

Jesus Christ was humble, willing to give up his rights in order to obey God and serve people. Are we willing to take a share of someone else's pain, and so tell the world that the gospel is true?

Our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:6-8

The call of God upon us is an invitation to share His mission in the world. God's love is the catalyst which makes a pilgrimage displaying God's character—His love, His righteousness, His justice, and His faithfulness, through everyday life; a human possibility. The world listens when Christians love.

In the final analysis, the church is both message and medium, exemplifying and proclaiming the kingdom of God.²

1 Erwin W. Lutzer, "WHERE WAS GOD?", Tyndale House Pub. 2006

2 Baily E. Smith, REAL EVANGELISM, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978

“GET READY, GET SET, GO...!”

An Influenza Pandemic scenario is not a topic we traditionally discuss in a church setting. On May 11, however, at Emmanuel Community Church, a group of 20 individuals from various denominations, ministries and the public sector gathered for an open forum discussion where a hypothetical emergency situation was presented.

Emergency Response Management (ERMC) consultant, Bruno Cornejo, lead us through a series of questions where participants considered the churches role in a H5N1 (Avian Flu) out-break that escalated into a full blown pandemic. Discussion focused on how a coordinated approach to an emergency adds effectiveness to response and recovery efforts and opens the door for local churches to connect and care for their neighbours.



Chris McKiernan, Director of Provincial Strategies and Performance, Emergency Disaster Preparedness Team, Alberta Health Services joined us for the morning and affirmed the practicality of this type of exercise as paramount for our Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative.

The general consensus from those who attended Bridges of Love's first Table Top Exercise was affirming. Comments indicated further follow-up discussions and more involved and intense exercises.

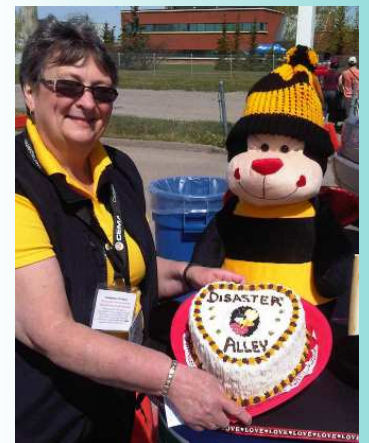
DISASTER ALLEY

We had a wonderful day setting up a display at the Calgary Emergency Management Agency's, Disaster Alley “We're Prepared - Are You?”

It indeed was a busy day with thousands in attendance coming to learn more from CEMA and their partner agencies on the importance of emergency planning.

Bridges of Love shared heart suckers to the many children, “Love Bee...ing Prepared” toques to adults and children alike, and 100 magnets with emergency numbers including Bridges of Love's Coordination Centre as an alternative number, during a disaster.

We were very pleased with the positive response we received, as individuals from all walks of life were so appreciative to hear local FEPI churches in Calgary were integrated into the cities emergency structure, and coordinated to assist their communities during an emergency.



It affirmed the importance of connecting with our neighbours and those in the community before a disaster occurs.



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – May, 2012

“BE IMITATORS OF GOD...AND LIVE A LIFE OF LOVE” Ephesians 5:1-2

*“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
Ephesians 5:1-2*

As Christ's ambassadors on earth, do we love others, as Jesus loves us? It is a challenge for most, so the first step is to recognize we don't have the power on our own. The only way to accomplish this level of love is through the power only Jesus can give.

Jesus set the bar high so the only way we can reach this seemingly unattainable goal is by a change in perspective, living and thinking in an entirely new way. It is not a passive trust, waiting for God to act; it's a real trust, involving our whole heart, soul, mind and strength.

Accompanying my husband on a recent business trip, attending the National Association of Broadcasters convention in Las Vegas, was indeed an adventure. Awed by the lights and excitement, I witnessed an unfamiliar culture and landscape.



This photo, taken in Venice...not the real Italian city, but a very beautiful and realistic setting in the Venetian Hotel, was breathtaking and a thrill, for someone who had not experienced the European location. A singing gondolier swept guests down the Grand Canal, beneath bridges, beside cafes, under balconies and through the vibrant Venetian streetscape.

Even though this hotel provided a very lovely setting, it was still not Venice, Italy. Just as this was an imitation environment; our love, if not motivated by God's supernatural power, will also be artificial.

In obedience to our Lord, He asks us to act with His authentic supernatural love.

CONNECTING CHURCH & COMMUNITY

“With the effects of global warming being felt around the world the predicted is becoming the predictable. Sea ice in the Arctic is thinning and disappearing; Glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates; and rising seas are flooding low-lying areas such as in the Pacific Islands of Tuvalu and the Maldives. Additionally, extreme weather events such as increased rainfall, droughts and floods are becoming more frequent.” J. David Durrant

Innovative solutions to care for our communities during an emergency will stand the local church in a prepared position to assist most effectively.

Working collectively in a community, sharing knowledge and taking joint action, are all good practices for emergency preparedness.



EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police, Fire, Ambulance.....9-1-1
City of Calgary.....3-1-1
Poison Centre.....403.944.1414
Calgary Health Link.....403.943.5465
Canadian Red Cross.....403.541.6100
Alberta Children's Hospital.....403.955.7211
Disaster Services.....1-800-272-9600
NeighbourLink.....403.264.5976

BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY

Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative

204 - 6A St. NE

Calgary, AB T2E 4A5

403.263.5683

emergency@bridgesoflove.net

CHURCHES HELPING THEIR COMMUNITY

Bridges of Love's magnetic business card is a practical resource to distribute to vulnerable neighbours who might need assistance. Having emergency numbers close at hand (fridge) for easy access with an alternate number to contact, if first responders are overwhelmed by a disaster, is one viable solution.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK ACTIVITIES

“GET READY, GET SET, GO...”
BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY'S
Pandemic Tabletop Exercise

*A table top exercise is a very effective way to introduce participants to the requirements of managing an emergency operation.
Emergency Response
Management Consulting (ERMC)*

SPECIAL GUESTS

Pastor Dennis Aicken - Emmanuel
Lutheran Church

Chris McKiernan - Alberta Health
Services

Bruno Cornejo, ERMC

Major Roy Langer - Salvation Army

Walter Twiddy - NeighbourLink
Calgary

PLEASE REGISTER

When: May 11, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Where: Emmanuel Lutheran Church
3003 - 28 St. SE

Cost: Free (Lunch, love offering)
R.S.V.P. 403.263.5683

We'd love to see you at Calgary
Emergency Management Agency's

DISASTER ALLEY

When: Saturday, May 12,
11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Where: Fire Training Academy
(5727 - 23 Ave. SE)

Disaster Alley is a FREE family fun event where guests can learn all about how to be prepared for an emergency, and get up close to first responders and other agencies who work together in a disaster or emergency.



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – April, 2012

“SIMPLY LET YOUR ‘YES’ BE ‘YES,’ AND YOUR ‘NO,’ ‘NO’;...” Matthew 5:37

“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. Matthew 5:37

THE FOUNDATION IS TRUST

The foundation of communication is TRUST. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, we must say what we mean and mean what we say. You cannot have high-quality communication without high-level trust. With great trust there can be great communication. With little trust there is little communication, and with no trust there is no communication. If I cannot trust what you say, it really doesn't matter how great the words or how fervent the plea. Whether we're working at establishing a relationship or rebuilding channels of communication, *it has to begin with trust.*

“Catch Me If You Can” is a movie based on the life of Frank Abagnale Jr., a sixteen year old boy living in New York City. Life changed dramatically when his family fell apart with his parent's divorce. Running away, he suddenly found himself alone, having to grow up very quickly resorting to creativity in order to survive. What started out as survival, however, became more and more of a game. As an opportunist, if Frank saw an opening to deceive and lie his way into a better situation, he asked the question, “Could I get away with the deception?” He found great satisfaction succeeding with his clever schemes of misrepresentation. The more Frank got away with, the more of a game it became—a game he knew he would ultimately lose, but a game he had fun playing until he did...

Frank's game prompted the question: “How many lies does it take to stop trusting someone?” Tom Hollady's answer, “One lie is all that it takes. Introduce one lie into a relationship, and trust is eroded. We cannot have high-quality communication without high-level trust.”

Jesus speaks to us about the center of this trust with this simple statement: “Let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes,’ and your ‘no,’ ‘no.’” Trust is centered on two little words—YES and NO. How we choose to use these words becomes the foundation where trust is built.

Often without even intending to, we use words in ways that erode trust in our relationships. Just think of the trust that will be built or rebuilt if we get better at using these two simple words...

Community Disaster Resiliency: Flourishing Through Change

An article recently submitted for the “Cumberland Now” Special Edition – Bridging the gap between disaster research and practice, by Dr. Brenda Murphy, Wilfrid Laurier University, challenges “How can we enhance our community's disaster resiliency?”

Change is inevitable in any community. Regardless of whether the changes are intended or unplanned, short or long term, incremental or transformational, positive or negative, welcomed or resisted, change will happen! What is your community doing to flourish through change? Community disaster resiliency is more than being prepared for the next snow storm or plane crash. It's about having the capacities to persist and prosper through all kinds of change including perilous events: it's about thriving, vigorous growth, health and well-being. This is not to say that disasters don't happen even in well prepared communities and that those impacts are not devastating. However, one thing we know for sure, disasters are more likely and the impacts are more debilitating in a community that is not thinking about and working pro-actively to manage the changes that will allow it to flourish.

Developing the capacity to flourish through change is an achievable goal that can, with some foresight and planning, be embedded into regular decision making activities and daily routines. Many dimensions of community life can be mustered to improve community disaster resiliency. Ultimately, the possibilities that are right for you should be shaped by your community's preference, resources and creativity.

Developing Social Net-works is one recommendation well suited to the local church.

Social Net-works: Communities with strong networks – at home, work and play – are healthier and happier and tap into these relationships to prevail during emergencies and disasters. Investing in festivals and special events and supporting neighbourhood associations, churches, hobby groups and sports teams improves resiliency and quality of life.

The opportunities to be involved in your community, building relationships of trust, are many and varied.

GET READY, GET SET, GO...

Emergency Preparedness Week

Bridges of Love's Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative structure tested through Pandemic Table Top Exercise. We are most appreciative to the Calgary Foundation Grant providing resources for the Emergency Response Management Consulting Agency to conduct our exercise.

A Tabletop exercise is a focused practice activity that places the participants in a simulated situation requiring them to function in the capacity expected in a real disaster event.

BENEFITS OF A TABLETOP EXERCISE INCLUDE:

- Identify weaknesses, gaps, oversights, or flaws to enhance the plan.
- Verify plan viability (will it work as intended?)
- Validate the processes – an unexercised plan could create additional problems during a disaster.
- Provide opportunities to practice key procedures before a disaster.
- Provide for stakeholder confidence.
- Provide input to maintain the plan.
- Practice does not make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect.

John Vamniuk, Director Telus Corporate Business Continuity.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 11, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (Lunch)
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
3003 – 28 St. SE

20 FEPI Church Participants
Observers welcome
R.S.V.P. 403.263.5683



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – March, 2012

“MY COMMAND IS THIS: LOVE EACH OTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.” John 15:12

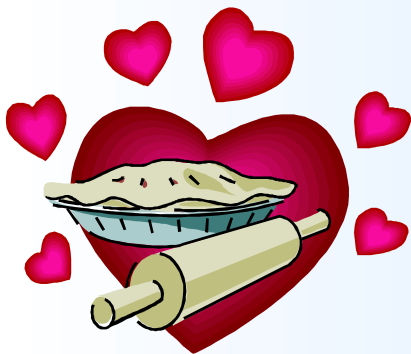
*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”
John 15:12-13*

JESUS VALUES RELATIONSHIPS

Jesus places a high value on His relationship with us. We know He died on the cross to make a relationship with Him possible.

The way in which Jesus values His relationship with us is one of the greatest motivations for pursuing stronger relationships with each other.

I am not sure how this activity got started but for the past few years I have been baking pies to share with others. I was not always a great pie maker in the past, but now that I have become proficient making pies at break-neck speed, it is fun to surprise colleagues with a little treat. It is my way of building relationships of love and saying I care for you.



It brings a little joy to the recipient and I have received some very warm hugs in return so it is truly a ‘win-win’...

Jesus gave us a seemingly impossible challenge but he has given directions to find the power to love others; in Him. If we are going to love as Jesus loved, we need the power that only Jesus can give.

Jesus set the bar so high so that the only way it could be reached is to live and think in an entirely new way. Tom Holladay states in his book ‘The Relationship Principles of Jesus’; “Christianity is not trying harder; Christianity is trusting Jesus.”

Jesus is saying we need an external source of love. We need the power of Jesus Christ to love one another: “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

Joint Efforts: BUILDING COLLABORATION By Susan Gilbert, “Cumberland Now” Comox Valley, ECHO

The [Emergency Management Framework for Canada](#), a document which outlines a common approach for emergency management initiatives at all levels of Canadian government, calls for partnerships at all levels of society – individual citizens, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academia and others – to foster an inclusive, collaborative emergency management network nation-wide.

But as the saying goes, the proof is in the pudding. However agreeable we may be on the notion of collaboration as integral to emergency planning efforts, stakeholders may not be actually using this strategy. In a cross-country research project, (Gilbert, S. 2009, *Planning Collaboratively with People at-risk using a Functional Needs Framework*. Victoria, B.C. Royal Roads University) emergency managers and planners were asked whether they were planning collaboratively with people in their communities who are considered to be at-risk in emergencies, including people with disabilities, non-English speakers, frail seniors, and others.

Approximately 68% of emergency social services (ESS) managers surveyed reported that they do plan collaboratively, using such strategies as inviting agencies who support people-at-risk to participate in emergency training workshops and exercises, requesting their participation on emergency management committees, and inviting input on operational issues such as what type of supplies and equipment should be purchased for reception centers and emergency lodging sites. While an encouraging finding, the results of this study do raise a pressing question: what are the other 32% of planners doing?

A do-it-yourself approach to emergency planning is not an effective methodology for building a disaster-resilient community. The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is adopting a “Whole Community” philosophy in its catastrophic preparedness planning, shifting from a “government-centric” approach to an approach which considers citizens as collaborators and partners, and as assets rather than liabilities.

Using a collaboration emergency planning approach leverages the rich resources available in our communities and shares the responsibility for creating safe and disaster-resilient communities with local partners. It’s a path worth taking. [More](#)

A VALUABLE LESSON

On the first day of school, Martha Cothren, a social studies teacher, did something not to be forgotten. With the permission of the school she removed all of the desks in her class. You can imagine the surprise when her students found no seats!

“Ms. Cothren, where are our desks?”

She replied, “You can’t have your desks until you tell me how to earn the right to sit at a desk.”

They pondered. “Perhaps it is our grades.” “No”, she said. “Maybe it’s our behavior.” “No, it’s not even your behavior”, she stated.

The final period of the day came and as the puzzled students found a place to sit on the floor, Martha Cothren explained. “Throughout the day no one has been able to tell me just what he/she has done to earn the right to sit at a desk. Now I am going to help you understand.”

Martha Cothren went over to the door of her classroom and opened it. Twenty-seven War Veterans, all in uniforms walked in; each carrying a school desk. The Vets placed the desks in rows but the students were still puzzled.

Martha explained, “You didn’t earn the right to sit at these desks. These heroes did it for you. They fought for our right to have an education. It is now your responsibility to learn, to be good students, to be good citizens. They paid the price so we could have the freedom to receive an education.”

+++++

Jesus paid the price for our ‘seat.’



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – February, 2012

“BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS...” Joshua 1:9

“Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

THE COURAGE TO GET GOING

“Courageous Living, Dare to Take a Stand” by Michael Catt challenges men and women to be all God saved them to be. Don’t settle; soar! This inspiring book calls people from every generation and every tribe and tongue to be courageous and to do it now!

“If God is your partner, make your plans big”

“We need to become a force for positive peer pressure – break out of the box and drop the baggage”

“Believe that with Christ nothing is impossible”

“God longs to find a man or woman He can trust with a great opportunity”

“We each have a choice: we can be average or exceptional. We can play at church, or we can be radical for Christ”

“Faith obeys, walks, and builds”

“Courage demands a decision. It demands we separate from the pack. It demands we lay aside secondary things and travel light”

“We are to be in the world but not of it”

“Courage doesn’t mean the absence of fear, but responding in spite of fear”

“The only way to maintain courage is through prayer”



Every journey begins with a step. As we put “rubber to the road” what legacy will be left behind and how will we be remembered?

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY

As we build bridges of spiritual influence in our communities, we often draw up plans based on our interests and our instincts, and launching ministries on guesswork rather than on facts. In Little Rock, AR. Fellowship Bible Church did a church survey and the results were surprising.¹

Phase One: **Community Research** – To identify the *real needs* of their community.

Phase Two: **Focus Group Feedback** – Focus group participants asked how they would personally prioritize the needs of their community and what needs they would suggest the church community give primary attention.

Phase Three: **Survey of Churches** – Request membership demographics, facility data, and most important, detailed information concerning the kinds of ministry programs each church offers to its members and the community.

SOME SURPRISING RESULTS:

Fellowship Bible Church could look at their community in a way they never could before—with the facts. Five facts stood out:

1. The popular perception that Arkansas is a highly “churched” community is wrong.
2. Race and education are still dominant issues in the community.
3. There is presently a wide gap between the major needs of the community and the availability of programs in churches to meet those needs.
4. Central Arkansas churches invest very little money in local ministry programs.
5. **The community welcomes church involvement.** Rather than being antagonistic to church involvement, research demonstrated that the community was actually looking to churches for more involvement and wondering why they weren’t there. In other words, the lack of bridges between the church and community was due, not to lack of interest or even desire on the community’s part, but to a lack of interest and initiative on the church’s part. Churches were perceived by the community to be under-utilized resources that offer important possibilities for social and community progress.

¹Dr. Robert Lewis with Rob Wilkins “The Church of Irresistible Influence.” Zondervan Publishers. 2001

INNER PEACE

If you can start the day without caffeine,

If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,

If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,

If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it,

If you can understand when you’re loved ones are too busy to give you any time,

If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,

If you can conquer tension without medical help,

If you can relax without alcohol,

If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,

Then You Are Probably.....

The Family Dog
(Marg’s Grand-dog “Pluto”)



Happy Valentine’s Day!



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – January, 2012

“DEAR CHILDREN, LET US NOT LOVE WITH WORDS OR TONGUE BUT WITH ACTIONS AND IN TRUTH.” 1 John 3:18

“This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us.” —1 John 3:19

Authentic love is an action, not a feeling. It produces selfless, sacrificial giving where there is no thought of receiving anything in return. God expects generosity with our time, expertise, talents, possessions and finances.

God is the source of our love and Jesus is our example of what it means to love. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to love when he lives in our heart and makes us more like Christ. God's love always involves a choice and an action, and our love should be like His.

Before Christmas, Bridges of Love experienced what it means to serve with Christ's love. We were invited to assist with the relocation of the Huntington Hills Condo residents due to mold in the building.

When I arrived at the condo, CUPS who was the lead agency in this endeavor, said all the residents had been taken care of except one family. They were still without a new residence and they were not having much success in finding suitable accommodation. They had one night left to find a place to live so time was running out...

After hearing the situation, I offered to take this family into our home, until they were able to secure suitable accommodation in the area. CUPS was unsure of this arrangement but offered to make introductions to the family. The moment I met the couple I indeed felt a love for them. There was no hesitation confirming my previous offer to have their family of five temporarily move into our home.

After further discussion, however, the family decided to accept the kind assistance from CUPS taking an apartment not far from their present residence.

We had an opportunity to connect with this family again, once they were settled, when we took over a little dinner one evening. Welcoming them to their new home; they insisted we join them for the meal. After a lovely visit over dinner we returned home with a few treats they generously shared with us.

Helping others might mean taking a risk but if we trust God to look after the circumstances we have the opportunity, to not only love others, but also to be truly blessed in return.

DEFINING SUCCESS

Over the holidays, I enjoyed reading a recently purchased book, “A Guide to Governing Charities” by Ted Hull. Ted a Winnipeg resident, is President of Ted Hull Consulting. He has a passion to serve churches and charities and for over twenty-five years has shared his expertise and experience for good governance.

A chapter I found especially interesting was, “**How Does a Charity Define Success?**” He stressed the importance of measuring the right results.

So how does a Charity define success? Hull states success is a journey, not a destination but we should be conscientious about measuring success. He says success is less about a one-time goal to be reached and more about reaching incremental markers indicating movement in the right direction.

Beginning a New Year seemed like a good time to reflect on the role of this ministry set by the Canada Revenue Agency. Bridges of Love Ministry Society was registered as a charity in 2007 because it:

- Benefits the community by educating and instructing religious leaders and their parishioners on emergency preparedness and the churches role in pandemic situations; and
- Advances religion by preaching and advancing the teachings of the Christian faith and the religious tenets, doctrines, observances and culture associated with that faith.

It is not an easy task to measure progress but I feel we have kept sight of the purpose for which the Charity exists. What parameters do we now measure for our success?

We could measure success by the number of trusting relationships built across the various sectors brought together by the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative Advisory Council, the number of churches who have signed to partner with the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative, or how many have become ‘FEPI Bridge’ Partners.

These are all valid parameters for success. I am sure the Lord, however, will be counting how many lives were touched and perhaps changed by Bridges of Love and FEPI Churches who made a tangible difference in the lives of those impacted by an emergency or disaster.

We may never know what difference a kind gesture of compassion may have had on a life but those involved will feel the warm satisfaction.

BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Reflecting God's Glory

Why does Bridges of Love Exist?

To provide opportunities for the local church to be a catalyst for change and engines of influence, reaching out with a greater concern for, and an irresistible influence on those in their community.

What is Bridges of Love's Purpose?

To unleash people of faith to identify the needs of their community and be willing to respond in relevant ways reconnecting the church as a vital part of community care demonstrating Christ's Love is ACTION.

What is Bridges of Love's Strategy?

To facilitate the development of an integrated network of churches to complement and enhance performance during a disaster with existing secular emergency management agencies.

What is Bridges of Love's Value Statement?

To display the Lordship of Christ having the heart of servant hood as the integral part of our mandate as we care for the needs of others in our community through compassion, respect, confidentiality, sensitivity, responsibility, honesty, open communication, and above all, love for one another.

“LIVING PROOF OF A LOVING GOD”

