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# COUNTRY Matters



Village Missions of Canada



# A View From the Country

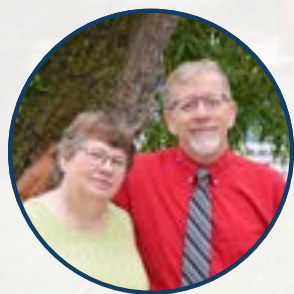
with Murray Graham, Executive Director

Sometimes we move missionaries from one church to another for various reasons, but we're grateful when a missionary couple can stay at the same church for many years. Obviously, this provides stable leadership to the church. It also allows the pastor to grow with the church. As he teaches God's Word faithfully over time and lives it out day by day and in many different situations, the church will see that God's Word is living and active.

**THE PASTOR CAN GROW  
WITH THE CHURCH.**

Similarly, discipleship and mentoring take time. Oh, the joy of watching a child who loves God grow into a teen who seeks God and an adult who follows God into ministry!

Another reason is the missionary couple's role in the community. As Ed and Ruth Peters' experience in Garrington illustrates, a missionary couple may not be accepted and respected in a small town or rural community until they have lived there for several years.



It takes time to prove themselves trustworthy. It takes hours and hours of visiting and listening and caring before he becomes known as the community pastor. It takes personal investment in the life of the community.

Once they are known and respected and trusted, the doors to ministry swing wide open. The key is to being where the people are and ready when they are.

Serving our Savior together,

*Murray Graham*

Murray Graham, Executive Director



Pastor Ed Peters was mowing the yard of Garrington Community Church when Bonnie drove up and asked to talk. Ed knew her from community events. He knew that she had cancer because the church family was praying for her. In his office, Bonnie handed him a sheet of paper with information about herself and said, "I'm dying. I want you to do my funeral service."

Then she said, "There's one other thing. I feel I need to be baptized so that I can go to heaven." Pastor Ed gently explained that baptism is a proclamation that a person knows Jesus. Knowing Jesus is the way to heaven.

When Bonnie left Pastor Ed's office, she was a child of God and had peace that she would go to heaven when she died. Soon afterward, she was baptized in front of a few people.

Bonnie didn't attend Garrington Community Church. Why did she choose to talk with Pastor Ed? Because he is regarded as the community pastor. But that role didn't come quickly or easily.

## NEWCOMERS AND NOT YET TRUSTED



Ed and Ruth Peters arrived in Garrington in 1994. They were eager to preach God's Word and love the people of this part of Alberta.

*"I befriended the store manager of the local co-op store. He was willing to tell me about the community. But*

*when I went into the coffee shop at the back of the store, it would clean out within minutes. It seemed people were afraid of me."*

For several years Ed felt like a stranger in this tight-knit

community. But as he visited people in their homes or on their farms, they realized he wouldn't push them into something like a forceful salesperson.

Then people started calling on him to do funerals and weddings.

As Ed participated in community events and sang with a local group called "Fred and Friends," he was accepted as a friend.

I WAS FINALLY  
WELCOMED

*"I was finally welcomed into the men's circle at the coffee shop," he said.*



## READY WHEN THEY ARE

Ed is always ready to share the Gospel and God's Word.

One day, he heard that a man who occasionally came to church functions had cancer. After a long visit with Carl, Ed asked him, *"When you die, do you know that you'll go to be with the Lord?"*

Carl replied curtly, *"Of course, I've had that settled for years and years."*

Nine months later, he was in hospital and nearing the end. Ed received a call one night around 10 pm. Carl had been asking for him.

At Carl's bedside, Ed took his hand. Carl could no longer speak, but he responded to Ed's questions by squeezing his hand.

*"Carl, do you know Jesus?"*

There was no response.

*"Would you like to know for sure you're going to heaven when you die?"*

Carl squeezed hard.

After sharing the Gospel, Ed offered to lead Carl in a prayer of repentance.

DO YOU  
KNOW JESUS?



*"Carl, did you pray that?"*

He squeezed Ed's hand again.

Around the same time, Ed was called to another hospital room. This was for Carl's neighbor, Evan, who didn't attend church. After talking with Ed, Evan placed his faith in Jesus Christ.

Ed performed their funerals one day after the other.

*"Leading them to know Jesus was such a special privilege," Ed said. "I had the opportunity because I had been here long enough that they trusted me."*

*I HAD BEEN HERE  
LONG ENOUGH  
THAT THEY  
TRUSTED ME*

## PASSION FOR GOD'S WORD



*The Garrington church family in 1958, top. Ed Peters preaches the Word of God, bottom.*



*did the wedding ceremonies for our sons, and he did my husband's memorial service."*

Ann Corbett has been part of Garrington Community Church since 1958. She remembers their first pastors, who came to Garrington on Sundays and for the mid-week prayer meeting. She also recalls when the church voted to join Village Missions in 1985 and welcomed their first VM couple, Ken and Marlene Shields.

*"I love that Garrington Community Church has always been a Bible-teaching church," she said.*

She appreciates Pastor Ed's passion for God's Word and the way he and Ruth love and care for people. *"When I lost my husband in a car accident, Pastor Ed and Ruth were right here for us. He*

District Representative Gordon Rowland has known Ed and Ruth Peters since they joined VM in 1986. He described them as

consistent, steady and committed. Over the 29 years they have served in Garrington, God has used them to help the church grow and thrive.



CONSISTENT  
STEADY  
COMMITTED

Ann said, *"We are so encouraged and blessed to have young families with children."* The church has an active youth group. One Saturday morning a month, you'll find Pastor Ed at the men's breakfast. Ruth coordinates Bible studies for women.

Garrington Community Church has sent out missionaries to India and Romania as well as to the first nations of Canada and the Sikh community in Edmonton. They partner with missionaries in Indonesia, Nepal and the Congo. And they helped train and send two Village Missionary couples. One is Ed and Ruth's son and daughter-in-law, Brenden and Helena, who serve in Boyle, AB.



*The Garrington church family in 2008*

## PASSING ON THE HEART OF A PASTOR



*A dedication service for pastoral residents Joel & Laura Brooks*

Ed enjoys mentoring younger men and passing on the heart of a pastor.

On October 1st, a young couple started a year-long VM pastoral residency at Garrington Community Church. When Joel and Laura Brooks moved to Garrington in 2022, they were new believers. They took baptism classes and were baptized at GCC. Joel felt God leading him into pastoral ministry,

so he enrolled in Contenders Discipleship Initiative (CDI) and started meeting weekly with Ed. After losing his job, Joel focused full-time on CDI and finished the program in record time. Now he and Laura are VM pastoral residents.

*"Pastor Ed has a deep knowledge of Scripture and how to apply it*

*to everyday life," Joel said. "He loves the Lord. He's also humorous. I look forward to learning from him."*

When Ed reflects on the past 29 years, he says he has grown with the church. *"As a young pastor, I felt that everything in the church hinged on me. I've grown to understand that God calls me to lean on his resources and do the best I can. I've learned to let God work moment by moment and to allow the Holy Spirit to give me the words to say."*

I'VE LEARNED  
TO LET GOD  
WORK

## FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

By looking at the ministry of Ed and Ruth Peters, we see two foundational principles:

1. Village Missions is dedicated to sending full-time missionaries to serve long term in their community.
2. Village Missions is dedicated to training the next generation of church leaders and missionaries.

We are very grateful for the ministry partners who help make these priorities a reality!




Ed and Ruth Peters have pastored one rural church for 29 years. That represents over 10,000 days of faithful, committed service. Many hours of study to teach the Bible accurately and with passion. Hours in prayer for their church and community. Countless conversations and acts of love and care. In these 29 years, the Peters

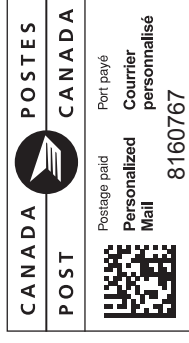
have seen God at work, drawing people to himself, growing them to spiritual maturity and sending some out into ministry elsewhere. Would you like to stand with Village Missions and our missionaries? Your monthly partnership helps keep a Gospel presence in rural areas and strengthen rural churches.



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