



CONNECTOR

#80 January 2026



Welcome to 2026. For some of us, we welcome a new year for some good things to come. As we look over the **CONNECTORS** of 2025, there are many of us (including myself) who lost a spouse. There were the tough times leading up to God calling them home. We have gone through the many firsts of this new season of our lives, the first birthday without her/him, the first Valentines Day (Lorne Fredlund suffered the loss of Peggy Valentine's Day 2025), the first anniversary (my Betty entered her eternal home on our 59th Engagement Anniversary, shortly before our 58th Anniversary), the first Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve without the one God chose to partner with us in Ministry.

For all of us who have had this loss or other losses on our lives, that was last year, 2025. We are still faced with the traffic jams of our emotions as to, what now? What has God got up His sleeve in how we can make a kingdom impact in this new season of our life? In fact, was this past season and oneness we had in ministry a mystery, really real? Many of us like C.S. Lewis' writings. I felt a little better after reading in his book "A Grief Observed", when his wife died... "Already, less than a month after her death, I can feel the slow, insidious beginning of a process that will make my "wife", more and more an imaginary woman."

For those of you who have not experienced what these fellow **POWER Team** members have or are experiencing (discovering that no matter how theologically sound and how proficient we are in the Scriptures, we are never prepared for this season), take the time to reach out to them if possible. This link may be of help for you to remember those who are on this journey. <https://thealliancecanada.ca/power-team> -see list of **CONNECTORS**

This **CONNECTOR**, again, lists those of our family who have more recently celebrated the entrance of a loved one who is experiencing the eternal life promised us, and those who have entered a new season in their walk with God without a partner.

Last issue of **CONNECTOR** we inserted excerpts from chapters 1-2 of **A Grace Disguised: How the soul grows through loss** By Jerry Sittser. Following here are statements from chapter 3, which could be helpful, even though you may not have the context of the paragraph from which they came.

https://thealliancecanada.ca/Content/ExternalSite/Documents/Power%20Team/CONNECTOR_79_November_2025.pdf

Chapter 3 Darkness Closes In

“The defining moment can be our response to the loss. It is not what happens **to** us that matters as much as what happens **in** us.”

“I did not go through pain and come out the other side; instead, I lived in it and found within that pain, **the grace** to survive and eventually grow. I learned gradually that the deeper we plunge into suffering, the deeper we can enter into a new, and different life – – a life no worse than before, and sometimes better. A willingness to face the loss and enter into the darkness is the **first step we must take**, like all first steps, it is probably the most difficult and takes the most time.”

“There’s much we can do, however, to determine how to respond. We do not always have the freedom to choose the roles we must play in life, but **we can choose** how we’re going to play the roles we have been given.”

“It is the **power to choose** that adds dignity to our humanity, and gives us the ability to transcend our circumstances, thus releasing us from living as mere victims.”

“Refuse to yield ultimate power to our captors and circumstances, though the world may be horrible.”

“We need to find meaning in our suffering, if there is meaning in life at all. Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Tragedy can increase the soul’s capacity for darkness and light, for pleasure as well as pain, for **hope** as well as for dejection.”

“Only when we choose to pay attention to our souls will we learn how much more there is to life than the external world around us. However wonderful or horrible that world is.”

“We must mourn, but we also must go on living. I learned to live and mourn simultaneously.”

“The sorrow I feel has not disappeared, but it has been integrated into my life as a painful part of a larger, healthy whole. Initially, my loss was so overwhelming to me that it was the dominant emotion...sometimes the only emotion I had.”

POWER Team members ministering

Klassens



Quick update on us. This year has been wonderful for us. We were able to make three trips to Peru (March 7 – 30, May 23 – June 16, October 1 to November 2) to work with our NGO (www.communitiesforlife.com). During those trips we were able to have several (44) speaking engagements.

We moved into our new location in southern Calgary in April and have finally settled in.

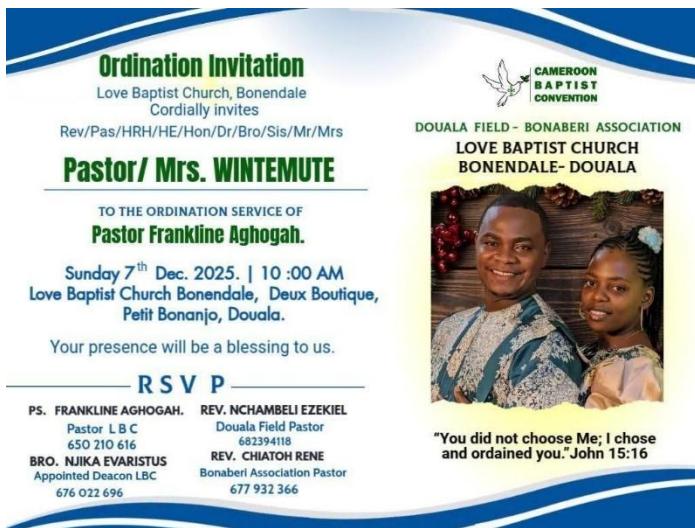
We celebrate our 50th on Feb. 13 (engagement) and in June Wedding.

Again, Blessed Christmas. Enjoy the season! Ernie & Marilyn

Wintemutes

Busy days ahead. The VISA is in. Dave and Donna have traveled to Douala, Cameroon to serve alongside Pastor Franklin and his wife Sharon January 8th to 22nd/24th.

We will be developing Marriage ministries in several churches.



Joy & Lulu Tira

Joy Writes: My ways are not your ways," says the Lord, and in these past weeks, we have lived this truth deeply.

On October 16, I (Joy) was rushed to the University of Alberta Hospital due to a severe and unexpected blood infection. The medical team could not determine the source, and for 14 days, I remained in the hospital under close monitoring and continuous antibiotics.

By God's mercy, on November 5, after being cleared at the U of A Hospital, I was transferred to the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital here in Edmonton. I am now under the care of a CCC medical team (compassionate, caring, and competent). The Head of the Geriatric Unit has advised that I will need to remain here for 4–6 weeks of therapy and recovery.

Despite this unexpected detour, the Lord continues to strengthen me. I have a gentle and patient pair of occupational and physical therapists, and today they even allowed me to walk on a treadmill for the first time. My progress is slow but sure, and my heart is full of gratitude.

While God gave me these medical people to minister to, **Lulu had ministry in Japan.**

Earlier in the summer, Lulu received invitations from several Filipino congregations in Japan to minister among them. These communities are composed largely of Filipino women migrant workers and women married to Japanese men, many raising "Japino" (Japanese-Filipino) children.

With my sudden hospitalization, she wasn't sure whether she should still go. After much prayer, and with the full support of our children and grandchildren (and knowing I am well cared for here at Glenrose) we agreed that she should continue with this Kingdom assignment.

She has returned from Tokyo after ministering in the Tokyo and Yokohama areas.

Joy (and Lulu) Tira

Remembering those who graduated to their eternal home the last part of 2025



Jean Houghton

August 28, 1935 – November 30, 2025

A celebration of Jean's life was held Saturday, December 13, 2025, in Salmon Arm, BC.

Jean passed away peacefully into the arms of Jesus on November 30, 2025, at the age of 90. Born in the

hamlet of Edgerton, Alberta, Jean lived a life marked by compassion, faith, and deep devotion to her family and to the Lord.

Jean graduated as a Registered Nurse from the Misericordia School of Nursing in Edmonton in 1958 and went on to serve faithfully in her profession for more than 40 years. Her gentle spirit, skilled hands, and heart for helping others touched countless lives throughout her career.

On May 9, 1959, Jean married her best friend and the love of her life, Jesse L. Houghton. Together, they were blessed with four wonderful children and shared more than four decades of faithful Christian ministry. Their partnership—rooted in love, service, and steadfast commitment to God—remained a shining example to all who knew them.

Jean found joy in praying for others, reading, playing piano, cooking and baking, tending her garden, and sharing laughter during game nights with friends. Above all, she delighted in serving God and others. She had a special gift for creating meaningful experiences—whether planning fun activities or organizing women's retreats—always seeking to bless those around her.

Jean's life was a beautiful reflection of her faith, kindness, and unwavering love. She will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered.

You may connect with Jesse through their son at bhoughton.tx@gmail.com





Mark Francisco

DECEMBER 16, 1959 – DECEMBER 19, 2025

Mark Allan Francisco, a devoted pastor, loving husband, father, and grandfather, passed away peacefully on Friday, December 19, 2025 in Canmore, Alberta, leaving his earthly journey to be with Jesus in Heaven. Born on December 16, 1959, in Vermilion, Alberta, Mark was a man whose life was steeped in faith and dedicated service, touching countless lives through his ministry.

Early on Mark was dedicated to academics and throughout his life earned a Bachelor of Arts, followed by a Masters of Theology, and culminating in a Doctor of Ministry by the age of 33. This foundation propelled him into a distinguished career as a pastor, where he served with grace and passion at various churches. From 1980 to 1988, he nurtured the congregants of Sherwood Park Alliance Church, followed by a fruitful tenure at St. Albert Alliance Church from 1988 to 2001. His diligent commitment to faith culminated at Coquitlam Alliance Church, where he served from 2001 until his retirement in 2022.

Beyond the pulpit, Mark's heart overflowed with a passion to specifically learn in the Holy Land, where he lead tours to Israel sharing his profound understanding of the Bible, inviting others to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and walk in the dust of the Rabbi.

Mark's passion for life extended beyond his pastoral duties; he embraced the joy of outdoor adventures—immersed in football, water skiing, and golf, embodying the spirit of enthusiasm. He cherished moments spent in nature, allowing him to connect deeply with God's creation.

The fabric of his life was richly woven with love from his family. He leaves behind his beloved wife Diane, with whom he shared 45 wonderful years of marriage. Together, they raised four remarkable children:—each a testament to his legacy and love.

As we reflect on Mark Allan Francisco's life, we celebrate his unwavering faith, his commitment to enriching the lives of others, and the profound love he shared with his family. He was a beacon of hope and an ambassador of God's love, whose legacy will endure in the hearts of many. His journey has not ended; it continues through each life touched by his words and actions, carried on by those he loved and who love him still. Funeral Service, officiated by his dear friend and colleague Chris Throness, was held at RockPointe Church-Bearspaw January 16, 2026.

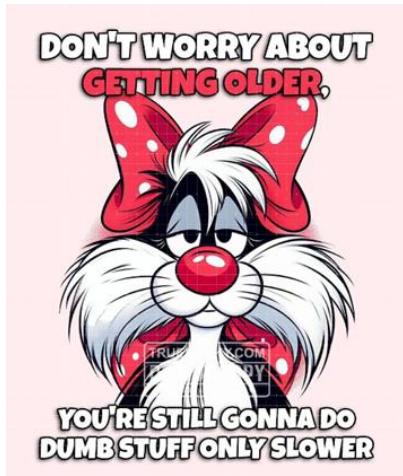
[Mark Allan Francisco Obituary December 19, 2025 - Cochrane Country Funeral Home](#)

Could any of these bring a Smile?

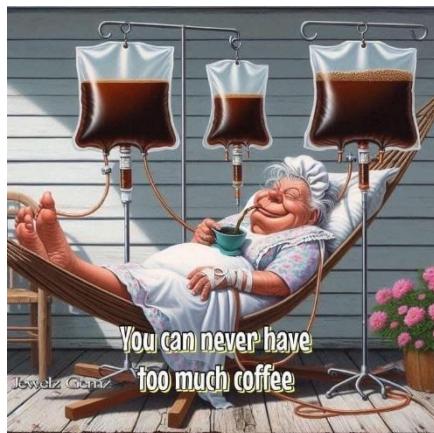
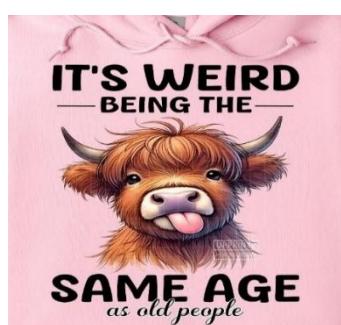


I am old and I just realized I still have so many unanswered questions!!!! I never found out who let the Dogs Out...where's the beef...how to get to Sesame Street... why Dora doesn't just use Google Maps...why eggs are packaged in a flimsy paper carton, but batteries are secured in plastic that's tough as nails...why women can't put on mascara with their mouth closed... why "abbreviated" is such a long word... why lemon juice is made with artificial flavor yet dish-washing liquid is made with real lemons... why they sterilize the needle for lethal injections... and, why do you have to "put your two cents in" but it's only a "penny for your thoughts" where's that extra penny going to... why do "The Alphabet Song" and "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" have the same tune... why did you just try to sing those two previous songs... and just what is Victoria's secret? ...and do you

really think I am this witty?? ... I actually got this from a friend, who stole it from her brother's girlfriend's, uncle's cousin's, baby'.



Every time I eat healthy, along comes Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years, Easter, summer and birthdays, and it ruins it



Consider attending
General Assembly June 8-12 in Calgary

CONNECTOR #80 Wayne Kerr waynebettyk@rogers.com 647-408-4204