

GOODNEWS

From The Ministry to Seafarers

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Hope 2024

An anchor for the soul, firm and secure, for all seafarers

by Michelle DePooter

In March, the news cycle revolved around the incident of the *M.V. Dali* colliding with the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, causing the collapse of the bridge and the closure of the shipping channel. Usually, incidents involving ships and seafarers do not make headlines, but when they impact major shipping routes or happen close to home, everyone takes notice.

Port ministries in Baltimore quickly mobilized to support the crew of all the ships affected by the bridge collapse. We do not have any regular ships that call between Baltimore and Montreal, so we have not met anyone personally affected, but this disaster prompted conversations with seafarers about the chances of accidents happening and the blame that gets passed to seafarers even before investigations are finished.

Seafarers are often forgotten, and when they are noticed, it is unfortunately in situations when everything has gone wrong. Seafarers deserve to be recognized and noticed for all the positive but unseen ways they contribute to our lives by working on ships, transporting 90% of everything we use and consume.

Like all of us, seafarers have ups and downs. They worry about their families and their jobs. They celebrate holidays and special events on board, and too often mourn losses while they are far away from home and the comfort of their families.



As chaplains, we sit with them and listen as they tell us heart-rending stories about not being able to get off a ship in time to say good-bye before a beloved family member dies. We hear their concerns as they talk about tragedies like Baltimore, and their worries that they will be blamed and arrested if it happens to them. In all these stories, in all these situations, **we seek to be a place of peace and refuge for all seafarers.**

Like a drifting ship, life can feel out of our control when we're not sure of the direction we're taking or forces appear to be working against us. We wonder if God is with us when our surroundings look scary or unfamiliar. Take heart. God keeps his promises. Hebrews 6:19 says, "*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.*" God kept his promises through Jesus, and this hope is what we carry in our hearts and share with seafarers daily.



Events & Fundraisers

SUGAR SHACK FUNDRAISER | MARCH 19

More than 200 people attended the M2S and Mariners' House second annual sugar shack fundraiser. With the help of 33 incredible volunteers, setup day and event day went off without a hitch. The event raised more than \$33,000 for our organizations.



Several donors increased their sponsorships after the event, saying they had a wonderful time. One participant wrote, "Just wanted to say thank you so much again for inviting me to the Mariners House Sugar Shack Lunch! It was a fantastic set-up, a delicious spread and very pleasant company!!" – Julian

EASTER POTLUCK | MARCH 31

We held an Easter Potluck, welcoming 20 people. After lunch some walked through Old Montreal and others made crafts. Great ideas germinate and take root when we spend time together and this group is to be thanked for experimenting with painting bags!

DAY OF THE SEAFARER | JUNE 25

The **International Maritime Organization** designates this day as *Day of the Seafarer*. We will mark the occasion with gifts and a shared meal. Seafarers are asked to share a picture of themselves in their working environment with a top tip for safety at sea with the hashtag #SafetyTipsAtSea. By also using this hashtag, you can **show your appreciation for the work of seafarers and how their safety at sea is in the interest of all us.**

SEAWAY BIKE TOUR FUNDRAISER | SEPTEMBER 14

Keep an eye out for details about our 5th Annual event on our website in June!

Visitors

Spring is a popular time for school groups to visit us. We love educating students about the work we do. We take them on a Port tour in our bus and then they spend time making crafts for the seafarers. Over and over we hear how visiting the Seafarers' Centre is unlike a visit anywhere else.



We welcomed students from **Emmanuel Christian School** (Montreal), **Woodland Christian High School** (Breslau, ON), the **English Montreal School Board Professional Sales** class, and **Centennial Christian School** (Terrace, BC).

Emmanuel students made mini crates which we used on the tables at the Sugar Shack fundraiser. For the *Day of the Seafarer* they'll be filled with goodies for the seafarers.



The other groups livened up plain Christmas parcel bags by painting Christmas or nautical themes on them. The results are stunning and they will make a unique and precious gift for seafarers.

"Thank you very much for organizing this wonderful activity for my new group today. Students sent me messages to express their appreciation for the warm welcome at the seafarers' centre. They enjoyed the bus tour and the professional guide that Michelle offered to them. They really like the craft activities that you provided for them." – Kaimei (EMSB teacher)

Volunteers

Congratulations to volunteer **Wojtek Jakubiec** on the completion of his film, *On the Waterfront*. His documentary presents a portrait of the Montreal Seafarers' Centre during the Christmas season and our mission to support mariners.

In May 2024, his film was chosen for the **Concordia Film Festival** (Montreal) and won the award for *Best Editing*. The film is now being submitted to film festivals, and in the Fall when we launch the Christmas parcel campaign, we hope to hold a private online screening for our community. In the meantime, view the trailer here:



<https://vimeo.com/939093985?share=copy>, and the website here: <https://www.wojteki.com/onthewaterfront>. More details to come!

This spring we received invaluable support from volunteers **Sheila Margerrison, Lan Wei, Gerard Bondt** and **Winston Visser**.

Board Financial Update

We thank **Sandra Penner** (First CRC, Montreal) for serving two terms on our board. We welcome aboard **Vicki Vanderveen** (also First CRC, Montreal). In 2025, we will have two openings for Classis Eastern Canada members. Despite two successful fundraisers, we finished the year with a deficit of \$30,000, so any experience with stewardship or fundraising would be appreciated.

A link to our Annual Report including our (abbreviated) Financial Statements is available in the footer of our website.

You can make a secure, online donation through **CanadaHelps**, the **PayPal Giving Fund**, by **cheque**, or by **e-Transfer** to: donations@ministrytoseafarers.org. For more details, please visit www.ministrytoseafarers.org/support-m2s/#giving.

Have you considered thinking creatively about stewardship? Check out Christian Stewardship Services (www.cssservices.ca). *What would you like your legacy to be?*



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