

Believe

Fall/Winter 2018

ISSUE 7.2

A publication of St. Boniface Hospital Foundation

Speaking up for women's heart health

Generations **of generosity**

Mega Million Choices win
buys time



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Believe

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Sons have big hearts

With a \$100,000 gift in support of cardiac stem cell therapy and tissue engineering, the Order Sons of Italy, Garibaldi Lodge, planted a seed that has grown and grown. Story on page 10.



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Generations of generosity

Matriarch sets an example of giving



Connect with us! St. Boniface Hospital Foundation loves your comments and shares on social media. @STBHF



As the recently-appointed President and CEO of St. Boniface Hospital, I am delighted to work with a great team on the challenges we face in the years ahead to improve our health system.

Our ability to continue our healing mission is due in part to our relationships with many partners, including St. Boniface Hospital Foundation. Powered by a strong philanthropic community, the Foundation and the Hospital work together to support health and healing, and I am committed to continuing to build and maintain relationships within our community and with the staff, physicians, and researchers at St. Boniface Hospital.

For more than 140 years, St. Boniface Hospital has been the destination of choice for high-quality patient care, for its commitment to innovative medical research, and its determination to help every patient who walks through our doors.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

Quoting British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, these words reflect the spirit of Foundation donors.

From a philanthropic perspective, the Foundation fulfills its mission by helping donors support improvements. As in architecture, the base or foundation is what connects elements of the structure to the ground to achieve a vision. I have the pleasure of witnessing how the Foundation team works with people to build excellence at St. Boniface Hospital.

I look forward to meeting our partners, our community, our donors, and our patients. As I said, they are the foundation of our mission and purpose.

Together, we are transforming St. Boniface Hospital.

Martine Bouchard
President & CEO
St. Boniface Hospital



Special places are never about buildings and equipment – they are about people. St. Boniface Hospital is a special place because of our stories, and the people who tell them.

When you work at St. Boniface Hospital Foundation, it is never difficult to find inspiration. A short walk from our office into St. Boniface Hospital Everett Atrium will find you among people from all walks of life who have come to the Hospital. Some are patients here to receive treatment; others are friends and loved ones here to visit; many others are the dedicated doctors, nurses, technicians, support staff and others who turn St. Boniface Hospital into a place of hope and healing every day.

Although much has changed over the years, and change continues around us, some things do not. A spirit of compassion that underlies our work makes the Hospital a special place where people are healed – but it’s also a place where they seek to return the gift of healing, to support others in their times of need.

People like Kim Clermont, whom I have come to know over the past year, as she has told her story of her cardiac care on TV and radio. Read her story on page six.

People like Trieu Vo, whom I met this spring, who overcame terrible adversity and found a new life as part of the Hospital community. Read her story on page nine.

People like Conrad Wyrzykowski, who exemplifies the spiritual side of the hospital, and has repeatedly given his financial support and his own time because he believes, sincerely and with dedication, in the Hospital’s mission. Read his story on page 11.

These stories and others that are featured in this edition of *Believe* help to remind us that many different people, each bringing their own unique skills and abilities, help make a building into a special place. St. Boniface Hospital is one of those places.

By supporting each other we can continue making our Hospital a special place, together.

Vince Barletta
President & CEO
St. Boniface Hospital Foundation

Building the future of St. Boniface

New Hospital President & CEO started in May



Martine Bouchard said her new role feels like a calling.

Martine Bouchard is driven to make St. Boniface Hospital the best it can be, and she knows she can't do it alone.

The Hospital's newly-appointed President and CEO started in May, and it's her responsibility to chart the future course of the tertiary health care facility. "But it's not just my vision, it's the community's – it belongs to everyone. I think extensive consultation is essential," said Bouchard. "I'm stronger if I have everybody with me, contributing their know-how and their way of being. This is not a one-woman show."

Bouchard said she will continue to look to St. Boniface health care providers, researchers, educators, support staff, volunteers, community agencies, donors and her other partners for input. "Together, we can decide how the programs will work to help fulfil the vision of the Hospital. Meanwhile, we'll continue working closely with our doctors and leaders," she said. "All of these people know what the community needs and wants."

She also likes receiving email and letters from patients. "I meet

with them whenever I can; they're my purpose. If I don't have the pulse of the patients and their families, I lose the sense of why I'm doing this."

"I want the honest picture, not Photoshopped. I get that from the patients and the families. I like to ask questions, to drill down to where the problems are and work with staff on finding solutions."

Employee Giving

With over 3,880 health care providers and support staff working at the Hospital, Bouchard is eager to help them engage with their workplace through *St. Boniface Hospital Employee Giving*, the charitable giving program that works through payroll deduction, monthly, or one-time giving.

"I want every employee and every patient to feel like they own a brick of this Hospital. If it's \$10, if it's \$1, whatever their means, I think their generosity will help make St. Boniface Hospital their own." 🙌

A nurse first

Martine Bouchard holds a master's degree in nursing, and she practiced as a nurse and nurse specialist for many years in Montreal; first in a geriatric cardiac unit, and then the operating room, before moving into administrative positions. She served more recently as Director of Quality and Performance for three hospitals in Quebec.

She became a bride for the first time in her life in September 2017, when she and her husband, Jacques – a Montreal-based entrepreneur – were married. Together, they have two daughters who also live in Montreal and two sons pursuing their studies and athletics in Halifax, all between the ages of 16 and 25.

Mega Million Choices win buys more precious time

50/50 Plus draw netted over \$519,000



Mega Million Choices Lottery 50/50 Plus winner Phyllis Main and her family celebrated in April, at the St. Boniface Hospital Foundation offices.

A little hope, a lot of luck, and one lottery ticket changed the lives of Phyllis Main, her husband, and their family members last year.

When Main received a call from Don Barnabé, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, St. Boniface Hospital Foundation, to tell her she had won the Mega Million Choices Lottery 50/50 Plus draw, with prize winnings of more than half a million dollars, she couldn't believe what she was hearing.

After years of purchasing lottery tickets in support of the Hospital, Main had won small prizes here and there. But it never occurred to her that she could strike gold.

The second-largest 50/50 draw the Mega Million Choices Lottery has ever seen, the prize was a godsend for the Main family. It couldn't have come at a better time in their lives.

Main had just found out that her husband was in heart failure, with nothing more to be done other than to enjoy the rest of their time together.

"We hit the bottom of the barrel this year and have shot right up to the top in just a few short weeks," Main said, still in disbelief when receiving her cheque in April. "It still hasn't quite sunk in."

"The other day, we were trying to figure out how we were going

to build a ramp for the house. We have a lot of renovations to do to help my husband, and we weren't sure how we were going to be able to do them."

Supporting the Hospital through the lottery has been a no-brainer for Main. Her husband had all his heart surgeries at St. Boniface, starting in 1999. From requiring multiple stents and needing emergency quadruple bypass surgery, to having a valve replaced, Main's husband is a true "iron man".

Unfortunately, the extent of damage to his heart is irreparable.

"It's been a horrible time. We've just got him at home now and we're going to keep him comfortable. This money is really going to help," said Main, smiling through her tears.

Main explained that she had forgotten about purchasing the lottery ticket. "It was our Christmas present to each other this year," she said.

With her husband being so ill and unable to celebrate birthdays and other gatherings, the family didn't exchange many gifts at Christmas. Main suggested they purchase a lottery ticket as something fun and different, and her husband agreed.

"Thank you for saving my husband's life – quite a few times," she said. 🐾

The St. Boniface Hospital Mega Million Choices Lottery will return in January 2019.



Finding her **voice**

Former patient speaks from the heart

“I see everything
differently now.”

Kim Clermont never expected to see herself in a magazine like *Believe*, much less on its cover.

But a nearly-fatal heart attack last year changed her perspective and gave her the confidence to share her inspiring story.

For Clermont, it was a change that was 55 years (her whole life) in the making.

Clermont, who lives with her husband and their two children in Winnipeg, has always been a kind and quiet soul. But not until she and her family went through a traumatic, life-altering health scare and quadruple bypass surgery at St. Boniface Hospital, did her life seem as short as it does to her now.

In many ways, the shell she had lived in felt secure and enclosed – in a word, safe. But with her new outlook on life, Kim was ready to crack that shell wide open. Indeed, life was too short for Clermont to stay quiet any longer.

“I see everything differently now, relationships with my family, my friends – learning that what I once thought was important is just not important to me anymore,” said Clermont.

During her ambulance ride and in the Hospital, the scariest part for Clermont was wondering if she was truly living her last moments that day in July 2017.

“Did I tell everyone how much they meant to me?” She had always told her kids how much she loved them, “but you just never know when it is going to be the last time.”

Being a grateful patient

St. Boniface Hospital Foundation learned of Clermont’s incredible story when she sent a note through the Foundation’s *Circle of Compassionate Care* program in November 2017, to thank the Hospital staff who saved her life.

Through the program, Clermont met the Foundation staff members who helped her share her story. Speaking up soon became her own way of giving back and saying thanks for the care she received at the Hospital.

Clermont was featured on a television morning show in January 2018, to tell her story. Her mom came along to provide support and calm her first-time jitters.

Once the cameras switched on, she recalls that her fear of public speaking suddenly dissipated. She took in the moment and spoke from her heart. “I felt like I was walking on air; I feel amazing,” she recalled saying to her mother afterward. Clermont

realized she had both spoken out to help other women who have experienced heart issues, and overcome her greatest fear, of public speaking, at the same time.

The shyness she grew up with was crippling; she worried she wasn’t going to have the right words, or that her story wouldn’t come out right. She feared sounding foolish.

Today, she’s lived to share her story, can talk about what she’s gone through, and through the Foundation has the platform to shout it from the rooftops.

New confidence

To those who have been afraid to speak out and express themselves, she says: “it’s just so freeing, it just feels so good – it’s hard to even put it into words.”

More importantly, she wants to help save lives. “Before I had my heart attack, I felt what I thought was heartburn and indigestion, then nausea. I felt about as sick as I ever had in my life, and these symptoms turned out to be warning signs. That scares me, because I had no way of recognizing that fact. That’s why I’m telling others about my experience – so they can learn.”

Clermont’s life changed forever after the Foundation called her, and her relationship of telling her story through broadcast, social, and print media began. “I just felt completely free, and every Foundation staff member involved in helping me tell my story made me feel so comfortable. The Foundation is incredible, working with so many

donors to raise all this money for health care and research at St. Boniface Hospital; it’s amazing.”

“I never could have spoken in public anywhere, I couldn’t even speak at my mom’s husband’s funeral – I just couldn’t do it. I did not have the confidence and I could not get up in front of my family and friends. Now, the Foundation asks me to tell my story, to help those who could be experiencing signs and symptoms of a woman’s heart attack – which is different than that of a man’s, by the way. – My heart, my ‘healed’ heart... skips a beat and I say, yes!”

She is motivated to break barriers that have kept her from speaking out all her life. “If I could just help one woman to understand when she needs to get help,” she said.

Clermont knows, with all her mended heart, she was given a second chance in life for a purpose. “This was it...to have met the Foundation people, to give back by telling my story, and to maybe save a life.” 🙏



Kim with her husband, Tim Clermont, and her mother, Doreen Drewlo.

A \$100,000 gift from a loving heart



Dr. Amir Ravandi, Research Director, Section of Cardiology and Principal Investigator, Cardiovascular Lipidomics, with the Cohens' plaque outside the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory.



Dr. John Ducas, Interventional Cardiology; Director, Cardiac Catheterization Labs.

One good turn deserves another, as the saying goes.

Dr. Harley Cohen, former Dean of Science and a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Manitoba, “paid it forward” last year with his generous donation of \$100,000 to cardiac research at St. Boniface Hospital, made in loving memory of his late wife, Estelle Cohen.

Dr. Cohen himself, and not only his wife, had been a recipient of patient care at the Hospital, explained Dr. Amir Ravandi, Research Director, Section of Cardiology and Principal Investigator, Cardiovascular Lipidomics at the Albrechtsen Research Centre.

Dr. Cohen had received a life-saving heart artery stenting procedure, performed by Dr. John Ducas, the Director of St. Boniface Hospital’s Cardiac Catheterization Labs (where Dr. Ravandi also works as an interventional cardiologist).

The procedure was successful, and it allowed Dr. Cohen to continue caring for his ailing wife in her final years.

“He felt that because Estelle had gotten such great care, he wanted to give back to the place that had taken care of her and, hopefully, to continue the legacy of all the great care and research at St. Boniface,” said Dr. Ravandi.

When Dr. Cohen visited his research lab in June, he was happy to meet the students who study under Dr. Ravandi. “He was elated that the money he had donated was being used not only to find something new, but also towards training future scientists.”

“Having (them) here learning to do basic research, and hopefully continue with this, I think it’s really what got Dr. Cohen excited. To see that physicians are learning not just clinical care, but developing new ideas, being involved in research; coming up with new cures, potentially, in the future,” he said.

Dr. Cohen understood that one never knows what’s to come. “As long as you train people, you give them the tools and they’ll go and find, potentially, the next cure or the next answer for heart disease. He is a famous researcher himself, so he was very excited,” said Dr. Ravandi. 🙌

Fight heart disease. Donate to St. Boniface Hospital’s Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, today.

A welcoming home at St. Boniface Hospital

Trieu Vo fled Vietnam in 1980



It's more than 12,000 kilometres from Vietnam to Winnipeg.

For Trieu (pronounced “True”) Vo, this journey is not measured in distance, but in the safety, friendships, and warm welcomes she’s appreciated since arriving in Canada nearly 40 years ago.

You might find Vo at St. Boniface Hospital’s Patient Registration, where she volunteers one day a week, or in the Hospital’s Staff ‘N Motion fitness centre, where she takes classes to stay healthy, or at one of any number of places in the St. Boniface community she calls home.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, refugees of the former South Vietnam sought to escape harsh living conditions and a worsening human rights situation under a Communist regime.

As a pharmacist – an uncommon role for a woman in that time and place, she notes – Vo found herself subject to questioning from the government. Her family home, her parents’ car, and her pharmacy were seized. Though it would mean separating from her parents and other family members, she resolved to escape.

“It was very hard to leave,” she recalls, her voice quavering. “But even if I died on the seas, it was better than to live under Communist rule.”

Sympathetic to the plight of desperate people risking their lives in overcrowded makeshift boats, Canada opened its arms, filling planes with thousands of refugees from Indochina (including Vietnam).

Vo, together with her niece and one sister, were among those fortunate ones who avoided a more perilous voyage across the Pacific Ocean.

“We came to Winnipeg in September of 1980. My sister and I got jobs in a factory, and then she started working at St. Boniface Hospital,” she said. Vo was admitted to the Hospital to undergo a procedure later that same year, and she became a grateful patient.

After becoming a Canadian citizen in 1983, Vo re-established herself as a pharmacist, later opening Sargent Pharmacy in Winnipeg’s West End.

She’s quick to credit those who’ve helped her along the way. “I didn’t speak any English when I arrived. I studied it two hours a day, five days a week with a teacher.”

“I’ve always tried to ask questions, learn, and improve. So many people were ready to help.”

In 1988 she was reunited with her parents, who came to live in Canada. She’s grateful for the end-of-life care they each received at the Hospital.

With the niece who came to Canada with her now working at the Hospital, Vo counts one more reason to feel a bond with St. Boniface.

“I’ve been a consistent Foundation donor for many years – I give what I can,” she said.

Now retired, Vo has travelled to Europe and other destinations overseas, always returning with a full heart for home.

“I’m lucky all my family is here. I always say that I hope Canada does not regret accepting me. I love Canada.” 🇨🇦

Trieu Vo volunteers at the Hospital and donates through the Foundation. You can, too!



Sons have big hearts

Funding for Canada-Italy collaborative has reached \$2 million

Members of the Order Sons of Italy visited St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre in June, to meet with (at far right) Dr. Sanjiv Dhingra and Dr. Grant Pierce, of the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences.

Winnipeg's Order Sons of Italy, Garibaldi Lodge, planted a seed with their gift of \$100,000 to St. Boniface Hospital Research in 2013; the Canada Italy Tissue Engineering Laboratory (CITEL) was born.

The program focuses on cardiac stem cell therapy and tissue engineering through a relationship between the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences (ICS) and the Università degli studi di Roma Tor Vergata in Rome.

CITEL was a perfect match, said Tat-Liang Fabio Cheam, who was the Garibaldi Lodge president at the time. "It spoke to our organization's mission of expanding our help from our local community to, potentially, people all over the world. The St. Boniface people were extremely helpful and fabulous team players, and they made a strong case," he said.

The Sons' "seed money" has grown over the last five years, having established roots for a stem cell culture facility and the ability to recruit a part-time technician, and two PhD students. Those elements in turn helped attract and secure more than \$2 million in federal and provincial grants, as well as private donations, for the CITEL investigators.

"The idea of cutting-edge technology and trying to grow heart cells appealed to us. We understood how heart attacks and heart disease affect so many people in Manitoba, even personally within our organization. And the Università degli studi di Roma Tor Vergata was in our


wheelhouse, to be sure," added Tom De Nardi, the current Garibaldi Lodge president.

Dr. Sanjiv Dhingra, Principal Investigator, Cardiac Regeneration and Tissue Engineering Laboratory, ICS, heads the program at the Sons of Italy Garibaldi Lodge Laboratory, located in St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre.

He and his colleagues, with their Italian counterparts, have been working with ethical stem cells to create a polymer patch – something like a bandage – that would be applied internally after a heart attack, to help repair damaged heart tissue that does not otherwise heal.

CITEL reached \$2 million in total funding this year. "It's important to note that \$1.27 million of that was received from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), Canada's health research investment agency, in two separate grants," said Dr. Dhingra. The success rate of applications to CIHR is slim (around 12-13%), he added.

First came a \$521,185 grant from CIHR in spring 2015, followed by \$749,700 announced last winter, to continue his work on preserving stem cells in the heart.

Additional CITEL funding was received through the CANUSA (Canada-USA) Research Project St. Boniface-Mayo Clinic collaboration, and from Research Manitoba and the Manitoba Medical Service Foundation. 



Donor gifts of unwavering **hope and healing**

Spiritual leader guided by the legacy and values of the Grey Nuns

What makes a man? And what drives him to give selflessly to his community?

For Conrad Wyrzykowski, the essence of giving is found not only in financial contributions, but also in the devotion of his time and seemingly limitless enthusiasm.

As a friend of St. Boniface Hospital for close to three decades, the local philanthropist and community-builder has volunteered in many facets of the Hospital. As a deacon in his church, he has helped countless patients, spouses, and families through difficult times.

Mr. Wyrzykowski is a man who lives his Catholic faith and embodies the spirit of the Grey Nuns.

“Conrad exemplifies the spiritual side of the Hospital,” said Vince Barletta, President and CEO of St. Boniface Hospital Foundation. “He has repeatedly given his financial support and his own time because he believes, sincerely and with dedication, in St. Boniface Hospital’s mission, and in compassion and caring.”

In July, the Foundation honoured Conrad’s commitment to patient care and research by featuring him as the 2018 Profile Donor on its Leadership Giving Wall in the Hospital.

Over the years, Conrad has held a seat on the Hospital’s Patient and Family Advisory Committee, volunteered with Spiritual Care Services, donated toward a patient comfort room in the name of his beloved late wife, Evelyn, and supported the operating room staff by providing comfortable furniture for them to enjoy while on breaks.

He established four endowment funds through the Foundation, that will continue to give the gift of hope and healing for generations to come. Among them is a fund that has been used to annually support two undergraduate or graduate students in the fields of health care and research.

Furthermore, his great interest and faith in the Cardiac Sciences Program at St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre led to the creation of the Evelyn Wyrzykowski Family Research Chair in Cardiology, held by Dr. Amir Ravandi, Research Director, Section of Cardiology and Principal Investigator, Cardiovascular Lipidomics.

“It’s exciting to help in furthering cardiac research by supporting the work of our researchers,” Conrad has said.

Perhaps most remarkable about the man is that he supports not only St. Boniface Hospital Foundation, but more than 20 charities in Manitoba. These include FortWhyte Alive, the United Way of Winnipeg, the Catholic Women’s League, Knights of Columbus, and St. Paul’s College, among many others. [u](#)



Doreen Guenette (centre) with her children and grandchildren. Missing: Nicole Tweedy and Damian Tweedy-Flett.

What began as a tiny seed has now blossomed into an enduring legacy of giving.

When Doreen Guenette’s husband passed away in 2000, she decided to make a donation in his memory through St. Boniface Hospital Foundation. With modest donations and fun events, she was able to create the George Guenette Endowment Fund in support of cancer research.

“She began having small events here and there, like an art show, a garden party, a craft sale, and a garage sale. Then she would come and bring in her donations,” said her eldest daughter, Michelle Smith.

“She was happy if people gave her as much as \$5 or \$10 – every little bit counted.”

Through Guenette’s events and monthly donations, the George Guenette Endowment Fund bloomed from \$5,000 to \$50,000 in 17 years. When Guenette herself sadly passed away in November 2017, her family honoured her memory by amending the fund to include Doreen’s name.

“Mom set a good example. She sure showed us what it means to be generous,” said her son, Christopher Guenette. “She truly made the world a better place.”

Guenette’s children and grandchildren are dedicated to growing the George and Doreen Guenette Endowment Fund and celebrating their parents’ legacy.

Her grandchildren fondly remember tagging along on Guenette’s trips to the Foundation office to drop off donations. Through their grandmother’s example, giving has become a normal part of their lives.

Her granddaughter, Lauren Yerama, even added an option to donate to her grandparents’ endowment fund for her wedding shower this year.

“It was special to have a piece of her there, even though she wasn’t able to be there,” she said.

After receiving quite a few donations from the wedding shower, Smith said that she and her siblings plan on picking up where their mom left off: by sending an update on the endowment fund to all their friends and family members, to help keep them engaged.

“I think it gave her a little bit of comfort to know that we would continue with it,” said Smith, who has since signed up to become a monthly donor through the Foundation as well.

“We won’t let her down. We’ll keep it going.” 🙏



Doreen and George Guenette.

To create an endowment fund or make a gift in memory, call us at 204-237-2067.



THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

The Cardiac Classic has raised more than \$385,000 thus far in support of cardiac care and research at St. Boniface Hospital

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Tibor Raduy
Dhandai Ramanand
Joseph Reimer
Alma Ristau
Allan Henry Roehl
Antonio Romeo
Shirley Rowat
John Sarna
Allan Raymond Sayak
Gaetano Scerbo
Arnold Schmidtke
Hannah Hope Sheldon
Katherine Sims
Mark & Pat Smerchanski
Rhea-Anne Smith
Alfred Edward Stanton
Maurice Staples
Natalie Stein Love
Donna Arlene Strickland
Franjo Stuka
Kerry Taylor
Edward Thomas
Lillian Turtle
Ronald James Varnes
Esmeraldo Vasquez
Armand Vielfaure
Susan C Ward
Ronald D Wells
Clifford Wiebe
Heinrich Wiebe
Margaret Mary Williams
Beverley Yaworski
Emil Zajic

In celebration

Brenda Badiuk
Earl Barish
Jennifer Beauchamp
Crystal Bennett Lazo
Owen Bennett Lazo
Nolan Karl James Brown
Suzanne Bryner
Edith Cantor
Michelle Carbotte
Jakob Bertrand Cloutier
Jacqueline Edwards
Cebert Emmmons
Michael Erlanger
Angus Ford
Hank Friesen
Hunter Philip Vernon
Hall
Hannah Joan Hall-
Girman
Penny Elizabeth Hall-
Girman
Dr Krista Hardy Vergis
Ryan Hart
Dr Rowland J Hayward
Mandy Kalyniuk
Joe Kowalick
Angela Kuzminski
Pat Lazo
Rubena Ragoonath
Mickey Rosenberg
Pearl Rosenberg
Kaitlyn Schade
Bruno Sledzinski
Lorraine Sledzinski
Erin Thomas
Maria Lucia Transi
Marinelli
Dr Ashley Vergis
Carolyn & Joel Vertone
St Boniface Hospital
UCB St Michael's Parish