



Downtown Thorold

“Working for the peace of the city” Jer. 29:7

## **The Table Newsletter: Spring 2020**

### **Thank You!**

First of all, thank you for your partnership in the gospel! As The Table missional expression has taken root in downtown Thorold, we have been so blessed to receive the gift of your prayers, encouragement and support. We have felt the love and kindness of so many who have offered their prayers and encouragement. We have also been blessed by financial partnerships which have helped The Table develop sustainability both presently and for future ministry.



### **What’s Been Happening with our Family?**

After much prayer and searching, God provided a home for us (The Schilstra family) in downtown Thorold (picture left). Our family moved into an urban area just a stone’s throw away from the inner-city school where The Table normally gathers. We’re thankful that God provided a place for us in the heart of the area we serve.

On May 20th, we were pleased to host an online ordination service via Zoom to formally commission The Table and install me (Terence) as the Pastor of The Table. We’re thankful for all those who were able to attend, including family, partner churches, the mayor of Thorold and community partners.

### **What’s Been Happening at The Table?**

Early this year (2020), The Table hosted a teaching series entitled “The Life of Jesus” in an inner-city school in downtown Thorold School (picture, above). Each of these gatherings centered around a message from one of the Gospels over a meal together where the love of God was shared both with words and embodied in hospitality.



After COVID-19 hit, our gatherings at the school were temporarily suspended. While we cannot meet in person at this time, The Table Core Team has been doing our best to stay connected with the individuals and families that we have connected with via a visit from a distance, phone call, letter, or technology.

The diversity of neighbours that we have connected with has been amazing! Some examples include, connecting with a single woman who has been shut-in for years; An Iranian couple who is exploring faith; We have connected with a married couple who are “professed atheists” who come with their four young children. We engage with a former convict who considers The Table his “home” because he loves the place of belonging and appreciates prayer. In each case, we feel our neighbours have experienced belonging and the love of Christ, regardless of who they are, their past, or where they come from.



### **Looking Forward**

As The Table Leadership Team has been meeting weekly via Zoom, we have taken time each week to share stories of how we are staying connected with the individuals and neighbours we have connected with. We have also been praying and planning about how we can deepen these relationships and develop our gatherings (post COVID-19). In particular, we have been praying and dreaming about how we could double our gatherings from 20 people to 40 by spring next year (2021)

by promoting our gatherings more broadly and inviting more of our neighbours and friends from the downtown Thorold community. As we prayerfully desire growth in the coming years, there are new opportunities and challenges that emerge. Specifically, there is much work to be done to develop our gatherings, discipleship pathway, and children's ministry; we hope to offer more faith formation opportunities and resources; and we plan to increase the rental frequency of the space at the inner-city school. In brief, as we look into the future, our prayer is that we would continue to grow as a unique and contextual Christ-centered faith community in downtown Thorold.

### Ladies Table

One of the ministries that has been growing at The Table is a ladies ministry. The following story is from Karen Schilstra who co-leads this group in the community:

"Friday mornings have become a highlight in my week. Since September 2019, we have been gathering weekly (now online) with 6-10 women in the Downtown community. This group consists of women from all stages and ages of life, single, married, new to Canada, first time moms and grandmas. The majority of these ladies do not have a relationship with Jesus. As we have met together each week, we have grown to love and care for each other and relationships have been deepened. The Ladies Table has become a place to belong, a place where these ladies can find community and a place to be loved. As the months have moved on, as we got to know each other better, we started connecting more. We started a Facebook messenger group to connect throughout the week to share concerns, questions, and highlights of each other's lives. In January we started "gratitude journals" together, focusing on things that we were thankful for throughout our week. These journals opened the door to having more conversations about life and being thankful to God our creator for our many gifts. With trust forming along the way, ladies were also becoming more vulnerable and open about the struggles of life, allowing conversations to turn into prayers. Accordingly, relationships have deepened even more. Even amid Covid-19, Ladies Table has remained strong, gathering weekly via zoom. This has been such a blessing because for some of the ladies, this is the only connection they have in their weeks. Please pray that we would continue to deepen relationships and that God would open hearts to the love of Jesus. Thank you!" -- Karen Schilstra. Ladies Table Leader

### Partnerships

As we continue to engage in our neighbourhood with the gospel, there are challenges ahead. Including doing ministry in the midst of a community gripped by poverty, social isolation and addiction, all of which are compounded by COVID-19. Due to these tough realities, we acknowledge the need to form strong partnerships with community agencies, organizations, and most importantly people like you.

Accordingly, as we seek to further engage and grow the ministries, we have launched a 40/40 campaign. The goal of the 40/40 campaign is to ask God to provide 40 people who are willing to commit to praying for The Table and becoming financial partners who give \$40.00 per month for 40 months. If you sense God leading you to partner with us, please contact us and request a donation form at [thetable.downtown@gmail.com](mailto:thetable.downtown@gmail.com)



Thank you for your partnership in the gospel!  
On behalf of The Table Leadership Team,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Schilstra'.

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Pastor Terence Schilstra is the author of *Peace of the City; A Handbook for Missional Communities* -- ISBN 978-1-7771266-0-5. For more information about the book, go to [peaceofthecity.ca](http://peaceofthecity.ca) or [Kindle.com](http://Kindle.com). All the profits of the book go directly to support the ministry of The Table, Downtown Thorold, a CRC missional expression.

