



The Word Guild Is Pleased to Announce  
**The 2023 Word Awards Winners List**  
Honouring the Best of Canadian Christian Writing from 2022

September 19, 2023

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MARKHAM, ON – The Word Guild was pleased to host our 35th annual awards event on Saturday, Sept. 16, in honour of our incredibly talented Canadian writers who are Christian. Co-hosted by Heather Stuart and Bill Fledderus, the event celebrated the power of the written word and excellence in Christian writing. The event, which took place online for the fourth consecutive year, recognized unpublished work by new writers as well as work published in 2022 for both Christian and mainstream audiences.

Winners received awards in over 60 genres and categories including books, articles, novellas, short stories, song lyrics and more. In addition, winners were also announced for several specialty awards, including for Indigenous Writers, Writers of Colour, The Harvey/Mackey New Journalism Award, The Debra Fieguth Social Justice Award, and the Leslie K. Tarr Lifetime Achievement Award.

This year we chose two Best books: *In Good Time: 8 Habits for Reimagining Productivity, Resisting Hurry, and Practicing Peace* by Jen Pollock Michel: took the honours as Best Non-Fiction book and *Lilly's Promise* by Terrie Todd Best Fiction book.

A highlight of the evening included the formal recognition of Flyn Ritchie, as the recipient of this year's Leslie K. Tarr Lifetime Achievement Award. We were pleased to welcome new winners as well as a number of returning writers.

"There are so many wonderful Christian writers in our country and we need to celebrate them," said David Kitz, Chair of the Board of The Word Guild.

**Congratulations to The Word Award winners for 2023.**

*The Word Awards were established by The Word Guild to encourage the pursuit of excellence in the art, craft, practice and ministry of writing and help raise the profile of Canadian writers who are Christian. For more information about The Word Guild please visit [www.thewordguild.com](http://www.thewordguild.com).*

You can see the complete list of winners for The 2023 Word Awards below and at [www.thewordguild.com/media](http://www.thewordguild.com/media).

## UNPUBLISHED WORK CLASSES

### FRESH INK – Student Writing Awards, *sponsored by Redeemer University*

**Winner for Short Story, Highschool:** Daragon Keith: Mascouche, QC “The Green Serenity”

**Winner for Short Story, University:** Sarah VanZandbeek: Edmonton, AB “I Am Thomas”

**Winner for Manuscript First 3 Chapters, High School:** Jamie Birtch: Smiths Falls, ON “Phobia: Reign of Fear”

### IN THE BEGINNING – Unpublished Author Awards, *sponsored by Redeemer University*

**Winner for Short Story:** Daniel Lewczuk: Burlington, ON “The Beckoning”

**Winner for Non-Fiction Piece:** Melissa Myers: Geary NB “The Muslim Father”

**Winner for Poetry:** Maureen Hafso: Edmonton AB “An Ode for Father's Day”

**Winner for Manuscript First 3 Chapters:** Willy Kotiuga: Pointe-Claire, QC “Theology Breakfast Club

### CASTLE QUAY BEST NEW CANADIAN MANUSCRIPT, *sponsored by Castle Quay*

**Winner:** Larry McCloskey: Ottawa, ON “*The University of Lost Causes*”

## DIGITAL ENTRY CLASSES

### BEST BLOG OF THE YEAR AWARD

**Winner:** Leah Marizan: Port Dover ON “Leah Grey” ([LeahGrey.com/blog](http://LeahGrey.com/blog))

### BEST SONG LYRICS AWARD

**Winner:** Jonathan Maracle: Tyendinaga Territory, ON “I See Beauty”

### ARTICLES / SHORT PIECES (ASP) – CHRISTIAN

BLOG – PERSONAL, *sponsored by by testimony/Enrich*

**Winner:** Rachel Baarda: Ottawa ON “Walk about Zion: What the Jerusalem ramparts walk taught me about the Eternal City

COLUMN SERIES, *sponsored by Engage Magazine*

**Winner:** Bruce Clemenger: Perth, ON “The Gathering Place (“The priority for health care” Sep/Oct and “Advocating for human dignity” Nov/Dec)” (Faith Today)

COLUMN SINGLE, *sponsored by Engage Magazine*

**Winner:** David Guretzki: Ottawa ON “Is the Church divided? What Ephesians says about unity and division” (Faith Today)

INSPIRATIONAL / DEVOTIONAL, *sponsored by Faith Today*

**Winner:** Karen deBlieck: Brantford, ON "Fractured Rainbows" (Sisters Ignited Media & Publishing)

LONG FEATURE, *sponsored by Light Magazine*

**Winner:** John Redekop: Abbotsford, BC "UBC Reflections" (Fraser River Books)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, *sponsored by Carol Ford*

**Winner:** Karen Stiller: Ottawa ON "Christians at the convoy: How ordinary Christians ended up at Canada's noisiest protest and what it reveals about clashing views on freedom" (Faith Today)

PERSONAL OPINION, *sponsored by Engage Magazine*

**Winner:** John Redekop: Abbotsford, BC "Transgenderism" (Clearbrook Golden Age Society)

POETRY

**Winner:** Maureen Hafso: Edmonton AB "MY MOM" (Calvary Crosswinds)

PROFILE / HUMAN INTEREST, *sponsored by Light Magazine*

**Winner:** Patricia Paddey: Winnipeg MB "Recovering the voices of women long silenced: Inside the work of Canadian academic Marion Taylor" (Faith Today)

SHORT STORY, *sponsored by testimony/Enrich*

**Winner:** John Van Rys: Dunnville, ON "The Homely Dreams of a Silly Soul" (Solum Literary Journal)

**ARTICLES / SHORT PIECES (ASP) – GENERAL MARKET, *sponsored by That's Life! Communications***

BLOG

**Winner:** Lynn Dove: Cochrane AB "Dragonfly Dance"

COLUMN SERIES

**Winner:** Terrie Todd: Portage la Prairie MB "Through the Valley of Shadows"

LONG FEATURE - GENERAL MARKET

**Winner:** John Redekop: Abbotsford, BC "UBC Reflections" (Fraser River Books)

STAND ALONE ARTICLE – GENERAL MARKET

**Winner:** David Kitz: Orleans, ON "David Kilgour, a non-partisan MP who staunchly defended human rights" (The Ottawa Citizen/Post Media)

SHORT STORY

**Winner:** Deb Elkind: Cypress County, AB "Taste Budding"

## PUBLISHED BOOKS CLASSES

### BOOKS – CHRISTIAN FICTION

CHILDREN, *sponsored by Claudia Loopstra*

**Winner:** Tim J. Huff: Aurora ON and Margie Timpson : Pickering ON "*The Jellybean Kid*" (Castle Quay Books)  
Illustrated by: Tim Huff

CONTEMPORARY

**Winner:** Terrie Todd: Portage la Prairie, MB "*Lilly's Promise*" (Terrie Todd)

HISTORICAL, *sponsored by Rose McCormick Brandon*

**Winner:** Susan A. Mason: Brampton, ON "*A Feeling of Home*" (Bethany House Publishing/Baker Publishing Group)

ROMANCE

**Winner:** Blossom Turner: Lake Country BC "*Jeanette's Gift*" (Wild Heart Books)

NOVELLA, *sponsored by Stonebridge Enterprises*

**Winner:** Laura Thomas: Kelowna BC "*The Christmas Cabin*" (Anaiah Press)

SPECULATIVE, *sponsored by That's Life! Communications*

**Winner:** Johanna Frank: "*Jophiel's Secret*"

MYSTERY, *sponsored by Murder Will Out*

**Winner:** Beverly Hopwood: Durham, ON "*Fear in the Forest*"

YOUNG ADULT, *sponsored by Blossom Turner*

**Winner:** : Heidi M. Richardson: Olds, AB "*Tower of the Deep Vol 1: The Prisoner and the Traitor*"

### BOOKS – CHRISTIAN NON-FICTION

ACADEMIC

**Award of merit:** Michael W. Goheen & Timothy Sheridan: Surrey, BC, "*Becoming a Missionary Church:*" (Baker Academic)

**Winner:** Bruce J. Clemenger: Perth ON "*The New Orthodoxy: Canada's Emerging 'Civil Religion'*" (Castle Quay Books)

APOLOGETICS

**Winner:** Bruce J. Clemenger: Perth ON "*The New Orthodoxy: Canada's Emerging 'Civil Religion'*" (Castle Quay Books)

BIBLICAL STUDIES, *sponsored by Heather Rodin*

**Winner:** : John Bernier: Toronto, ON "*Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament: The Evidence for Early Composition*" (Regis College)

CHILDREN, sponsored by Claudia Loopstra

**Winner:** Tim J. Huff: Aurora ON and Margie Timpson: Pickering ON "*The Jellybean Kid*" (Castle Quay Books)  
Illustrated by: Tim Huff

CHRISTIAN LIVING – PERSONAL GROWTH, sponsored by Eleanor Shepherd

**Awards of merit:**

- Ann Griffiths: Abbotsford, BC "*Reignite Your Leadership Heart*" (Redemption Press)
- Jen Pollock Michel: Cincinnati, OH "*In Good Time: 8 Habits for Reimagining Productivity, Resisting Hurry, and Practicing Peace*" (Baker Academic)
- Terry Posthumus: Thamesford, ON "*Acquainted with Sorrow: When Your Life Feels Like the Worst is Yet to Come*" (Castle Quay Books)
- Gladys Thompson: Whitby ON "*Rebuild, Restore, Renew: Growing in Christ While Going Through Divorce*" (Word Alive Press)
- Rod Wilson: Vancouver BC "*Thank You. I'm Sorry. Tell Me More. How to Change the World with 3 Sacred Sayings*" (NavPress)

**Winner:** Lisa Elliott: Ottawa, On "*A Ministry Survival Guide: Straight from the Heart*" (Word Alive Press)

CHRISTIAN LIVING – SPIRITUAL FORMATION, sponsored by Eleanor Shepherd

**Winner:** Marva Tyndale: Mississauga, ON "*Ready. Set. Not Yet! Secrets for Teens about Sex*" (FriesenPress)

CULTURE, sponsored by KISI Publishing (Eddie Chu)

**Winner:** Belma Vardy: Burlington, ON "*Because the Spirit was There. Windows into First Nations Communities*" (Castle Quay Books)

DEVOTIONAL sponsored by Mary Haskett

**Winner:** Gladys Thompson: Whitby ON "*Rebuild, Restore, Renew: Growing in Christ While Going Through Divorce*" (Word Alive Press)

INSPIRATIONAL

**Award of merit:** Sterling A. Penney: Moncton, NB "*My Father's House*" (Word Alive Press Canada)

**Winner:** Lisa Elliott: Ottawa, On "*A Ministry Survival Guide: Straight from the Heart*" (Word Alive Press)

INSTRUCTIONAL, sponsored by Carol Ford

**Winner:** Rod Wilson: Vancouver BC "*Thank You. I'm Sorry. Tell Me More. How to Change the World with 3 Sacred Sayings*" (NavPress)

LIFE STORIES - BIOGRAPHY, sponsored by KISI Publishing (Eddie Chu)

**Winner:** Terry Posthumus: Thamesford, ON "*Acquainted with Sorrow: When Your Life Feels Like the Worst is Yet to Come*" (Castle Quay Books)

LIFE STORIES - MEMOIR, sponsored by KISI Publishing (Eddie Chu)

**Awards of merit:**

- Shelly Calcagno: Beamsville On "*The Longest Goodbye*" (Ambassador International)
- Leah Marizan: Port Dover, ON "*No One Brings You a Casserole When Your Husband Goes to Rehab*" (Word Alive Press)

**Winner:** Janet Williamson: Vernon BC "*God of the Valleys, Mysteries Along Life's Journey*" (Word Alive Press)

**BOOKS – GENERAL MARKET FICTION, sponsored by That's Life! Communications****CHILDREN****Winner:** Karen Autio: Kelowna, BC "*I Can, Too!*" (Scholastic)**ROMANCE****Winner:** Leslie Ruth Damude: London, ON "*Hearts Of Wax*"**SUSPENSE****Winner:** Johanna Frank: Kitchener, ON "*Jophiel's Secret*"**YOUNG ADULT****Winner:** Susan Cullen: Chatham, ON "*The World Collective*" (Chicken House Press)**BOOKS – GENERAL MARKET NON-FICTION, sponsored by Drew Keith, Edward Jones Investments****CULTURE****Winner:** Elizabeth Shepherd: Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides, QC "*Montreal*"**LIFE STORIES****Winner:** Ashley and Brenda Tindall: Guelph, ON "*The Way I See Things: A Mother and Daughter Offer Hope Through Tragedy*"**BOOKS – SPECIALTY BOOKS, sponsored by Drew Keith, Edward Jones Investments****Winner:** Sally Ito: Winnipeg MB "*Heart's Hydrography*" (Turnstone Press)**INDIGENOUS WRITER, sponsored by Janis Cox****Winner:** Jonathan Maracle: Tyendinaga Territory, ON "*I See Beauty*"**WRITER OF COLOUR****Winner:** Bukola (Bookie) Adekanye: Oshawa ON "*Happily Whenever After*" (Oasis International Publishing)**Winner:** Sally Ito: Winnipeg MB "*Heart's Hydrography*" (Turnstone Press)**HARVEY/MACKEY NEW JOURNALISM AWARD, sponsored by The Mackey Family****Winner:** Sterling A. Penney: Moncton, NB "*My Father's House*" (Word Alive Press)**BEST BOOK COVER AWARD, sponsored by Living Books Inc.****Winner:** Jennifer Willcock: Kitchener, ON "*Into the Forest*" Cover design by Jenneth Dyck



**DEBRA FIEGUTH SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD**

**Winner:** Elizabeth Shepherd: Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides, QC "*Montreal*"

**BEST BOOK PRIZE**

**FICTION**

**Winner:** Terrie Todd: Portage la Prairie MB "*Lilly's Promise*" (Word Alive)

**NON-FICTION**

**Winner:** Jen Pollock Michel: Cincinnati, OH "*In Good Time: 8 Habits for Reimagining Productivity, Resisting Hurry, and Practicing Peace*" (Baker Academic)

**LESLIE K. TARR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, sponsored by Castle Quay Books**

**Winner:** Flyn Ritchie

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS**

Copies of the Media Release will be posted on our [Media page](#) and [Finalists page](#)

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR AWARDS SPONSORS**

Special thanks to our sponsors for their generous support.

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