

Presbytery Prattle

Reporting on the Yellowhead Presbytery meeting of February 21-22, 2006 at Josephbury Pastoral Charge

Worship: **Deborah Hoekstra**, ministry personnel at Josephburg, led our opening worship based on the theme of water. Deborah claims that she slept through her morning alarm, but she did not display any foginess when she led us in a reflection on what water means to our lives and our world.

Welcome: After worship we were welcomed to Josephburg by **Earl Mohn**, vice-chair of the Board. He gave some of the history of Josephburg United Church of Christ, from its beginning in the late 1890s to its decision to join the United Church of Canada in 2001.

Congregational Development Co-Ordinator: This is the title for **Pat Bourque** our Conference staff person and Renaissance woman! She had good news to bring us since the 2005 M & S givings were up over \$30 million. Pat also brought news of possible visitors from an M & S supported seminary in Zambia in 2007. If you want to know more about the M & S fund in Zambia please contact **Debbie Hubbard** of St. Albert. We received warm greetings from the FaithLift University Chaplaincy at the University of Alberta, through Pat. Don't forget to let your university bound members know about **Denise Davis-Taylor** and this chaplaincy specifically for them. We also heard about the Emerging Spirit project, aimed at welcoming 30 to 40 year olds into the United Church. Welcoming resources are being produced now. There is also the possibility of a multi-million dollar media campaign aimed at this group. General Council 2006 in Thunder Bay will make this decision.

President Wayne Flewelling: After a hearty lunch the conference president brought official greetings to our presbytery. He is no stranger, since he has attended Yellowhead presbytery before, even though he is in Edmonton presbytery. Wayne spoke on a theme of partnership between the different regions and courts within Alberta and Northwest Conference. This year's conference meeting will be in Calgary with the theme of "A Question of Leadership." Wayne left us with the question: what do you need from ANW Conference to do your ministry?

Pastoral Oversight workshop: After the presbytery committees had a chance to meet, we gathered together to hear from pastoral oversight convenors, **Wayne Shortt** and **Marj Steele**. **Earl Raeburn**, personnel minister for our conference led the presbytery in a rousing reading from the Manual—the United Church by-laws. The presbytery had a chance to go through the new presbytery visitation manual and offer feedback.

Guests from the Nechi Institute and Poundmaker's Lodge: After a wonderful supper supplied by the Ladies Aid of Josephburg we had several guests talk to us about Indian Residential Schools. The Church in the World committee spoke to the Nechi Institute (a training centre for addiction counsellors) to invite the following guests: **Peggy Lafleur** (training staff at Nechi), **Jordan and Susan Head** (Jordan is CEO of the Nechi Institute), **Maggie Hodgson** (former director of Nechi and current Advisor to the federal department of Indian Residential Schools Resolution), **George Brereton** (former student of the Edmonton Indian Residential School and elder from the Saddle Lake reserve and Nechi) and **Peggy Cardinal** (former student at a Roman Catholic residential school and elder from Saddle Lake and Nechi). Our guests spoke about their experiences at residential schools and the healing programs at Nechi and Poundmaker's Lodge. It was difficult to hear those experiences, but it was an incredible experience to see the courage of those women and men as they shared their stories.

Worship – Day 2: **Cecile Fausak** and **Bruce Jackson** from the Church in the World committee led worship on the second day focussing on the theme of right relations with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Arnprior Report: Yellowhead presbytery was well represented at the Arnprior gathering with **Tammy Allen**, **Bruce Jackson** and **Leslie Penny** receiving invitations. Moderator Peter Short convened this gathering of 106 from across our church to consider the question: what is God calling the United Church of Canada to in our third generation? Eight former moderators were also in attendance. Tammy and Bruce found the experience challenging, frustrating, enlightening and somewhat difficult to put into words. **Wayne Flewelling** was also at

the conference and he found it exhausting, but all of the participants found that they were confirmed and strengthened in their ministry. It will be interesting to see what will emerge from this one-of-a-kind gathering!

Finance Report: Convenor **Stephen Sparks** had four quick motions for presbytery dealing with a new Sunday school trailer for Onoway, the lease of mineral rights under Calmar United Church, and the usage of building funds by Hinton and Thorhild.

Communication: Convenor **Darren Wooff** discussed plans for a survey of the communications needs of congregations and delegates to come in April. We'll be ordering more coffee mugs with logos on them and will look at different Yellowhead "wear". Concerns were raised about the accessibility of communication to those who don't have email.

Stewardship: Convenor **Timothy Thomas** celebrated the increase in givings to the Mission and Service fund and highlighted the workshop on Asset Mapping at the April presbytery meeting (all are invited to this workshop at Leduc on April 22). Past convenor **Karen Gusek** also contributed by bringing up the wide variety of resources on the theme of water.

United Church Women: We heard from the UCW presbyterial president **Marilyn Morse**. She informed us about past and future meetings of the UCW and about the study on Sharia law that brought the UCW much closer in understanding with their Muslim sisters. Marilyn is willing to receive invitations to any Yellowhead presbytery UCWs to speak or just visit.

Christians Development: Convenor **Natalka Dreichel** spoke about a number of youth and young adult events taking place, including the Youth and Children at Conference. The deadline for applications has been extended to March 16. There has been one application for the Life Long Learning grants. Remember—there is money available for education events for clergy and lay people! Contact **Jane Kreiner** for more information. Camping season is coming and Surprise Lake camp

needs board members. Camp Mackinicholea distributed pamphlets at the meeting. Each camp can use your donations—cash and otherwise!

Treasurer's Report: **Tom Sawyer** gave a short report. He had no financial report as cheques were flying in and out of the account just before the meeting. He reminded us that there is a deficit budget for this year to reduce assessment costs.

Church in the World: **Bruce Jackson** represented this committee. Bruce advised that congregations share ideas with other denominations on how best to raise awareness about water issues. A motion was carried to have next presbytery have two meatless meals—one lunch and one supper—for the purpose of water conservation. Presbytery chair **Lilley Glebe** was overheard earlier talking about how she had to pump water for cattle when she was younger. Apparently it was a big job! If only cows weren't as thirsty as they are...

Ministry, Personnel and Education: Convenor **Phyllis Greenslade** is in conversation with the General Council to update the maternity policy manual because we have two ministry personnel, **Nicole Imgrund** and **Sharon Foster**, who are currently both on maternity leave. Phyllis Greenslade asked for a change in pastoral relations so she could retire. We wish her the very best! **Judy Stretch** informed us that currently there are vacancies in Jasper and Drayton Valley. **Earl Raeburn** received and fielded many questions on the new United Church sabbatical policy. Every minister who has served 5 or more years in one place is eligible for a three month paid sabbatical. Your presbytery delegate should have more details about the policy. **Murray Speer**, a student from our presbytery, is going out on internship in 2006. **Marj Steele** reported that eight pastoral oversight visits are currently scheduled.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of presbytery is on April 21 & 22 at St. David's United Church in Leduc.

Covenanting Service: Sunday March 12 is the day for the covenanting service between **Elizabeth (Liz) Richards** and Onoway Pastoral Charge. The service will take place at Bethel United Church in Onoway at 3 p.m.