

**Presbytery Prattle**  
**Reporting on the Yellowhead Presbytery meeting of**  
**October 17 & 18, 2007**  
**at First United Church, Fort Saskatchewan**

***Worship:*** Jackie St. Goddard, Donna Scalesci, Fern Klassen and Curtis Tufts led the opening worship service on the theme of change and renewal. It was fitting to have three newly Licensed Lay Worship Leaders leading the service! During the service we took some time to remember **Rev. Ken De Man**, previous minister of the Fort Saskatchewan Pastoral Charge, who recently passed away.

***Introductions:*** After chair **Curtis Tufts** called our meeting to order, we were introduced to new members of presbytery, among them: **Wendy Molnar** Designated Lay Minister at Sturgeon Valley pastoral charge, **Sid Allen** lay delegate, **Leila Currie** minister at Telfordville pastoral charge, **Debbie Brill** minister at Jasper Pastoral Charge and **George Takashima** Designated Lay Minister at Lamont Pastoral Charge.

***Chairperson's report:*** Curtis reported that he has been very busy with the duties of the chair. Out of 35 pastoral charges in our presbytery almost half are in some kind of transition situation. We need someone to help out Pastoral Relations chair **Judy Stretch** in co-ordinating guidance to our changing church. Curtis also reported on the work he has done with the Conference Executive committee—work which could fill its own newsletter!

***Conference Development Co-ordinator Report:*** Greetings from the Conference were brought to us from **Pat Bourque**. She brought us news of the great Yellowhead representation at the Spirit Fest event in Edmonton and of newly settled ministers **Leila Currie** and **Debbie Brill** at the Newcomer's Event. She highlighted some of the changes and improvements to the Emerging Spirit website and encouraged us to talk to our General Council representatives **Don Koots** and **Louise Rodgers** if we have questions about recent changes to the General Council offices. Pat has recently been doing work with the Namao pastoral charge, Drayton Valley and Fort MacMurray.

***New Possibilities:*** This Edmonton presbytery initiative includes the Yellowhead communities surrounding Edmonton and has implications for other Yellowhead churches. The committee has received the report and recommendations and is putting a focus on developing new ministries in the Edmonton area, strengthening existing congregations and giving care to congregations that are struggling or may not survive. **Britt Jesson** is our representative on the committee. She made us aware of an event, taking place in Edmonton on November 16 & 17 which focuses on looking at our context and re-imagining our churches in that context. You can contact Britt or Edmonton presbytery for more information.

***Alberta and Northwest Conference President : Rev. Tom Sawyer,*** the President of Conference, shared some of his roots in Yellowhead Presbytery as well as his time at First United. He has been doing more listening than talking during his term as president but he shared some of the things he has learned. We are living in a post-Christendom age and we have to admit there are major structural problems in our church. However there are emerging stories of hope that stay true to the original vision of the United Church, that we are called to be together in Christ.

***Licensed Lay Worship Leaders:*** We recognized 11 (eleven) Lay Worship Leaders who have been licensed through their work in the program put forth by St. Stephen's College and Alberta and Northwest Conference. Congratulations to those who persisted in that program and now officiate at pulpits across our Presbytery!

***Mission Support Grants:*** The General Council forwards money from the Mission and Service fund for Mission Support Grants to congregations and other ministries that need extra support. At Presbytery we approved \$69,000 of grants to go to the Alberta & NW Mission Support meeting. Congregations receiving Mission Support will be under additional pressure in 2009 when General Council has planned a radical reduction in these grants.

***Treasurer's Report:*** Good news was brought to the meeting by **Erin White** when he projected a \$6,000 surplus for 2007. Erin presented a deficit 2008 budget with a 5% reduction in Presbytery Assessments

(the amount that each congregation pays to Presbytery to keep it going). With such a rosy financial picture talk came around to how we might be good stewards of the Presbytery Assessments. One suggestion was that we hire a consultant to do some planning for the future for the congregations in our Presbytery.

***Make Your Own Worship:*** For the worship service on the second day we were invited by **Bruce Jackson** of the Church in the World division to create our own worship on this year's Mission theme of "Challenging Empire". Much singing, marching, praying and reading followed as we got the creative juices flowing. Look out in your churches next Palm Sunday!

***Designated Lay Ministers:*** Conference Personnel Minister **Earl Reaburn** guided us through the tricky shoals of the Designated Lay Minister. Lay ministers in the church used to be known by many names: Staff Associates, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Youth Ministers and others. We are putting the names together into one category—the Designated Lay Minister and consolidating the rules so that they might be one standard applied to all. Earl gave us a handout that explains many of the changes and when the changes will be made. Right now the only change is a change in name. If you have a lay person in your congregation being paid to do ministry it might be a good idea to look at this handout before the changes take place.

***Education and Students:*** **Florence Briggs** and **Rev. Liz Richards** reported on the students in our presbytery. **Murray Speers** is continuing his education with a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. **Val Ellis** is in Coronation Presbytery doing on the job training as a Designated Minister. **Derrick DeLuca** who was briefly the minister in Telfordville is being encouraged to be settled again since the first time didn't count.

***Christian Development:*** The Alberta and NW Conference meeting will be taking place in Sherwood Park in 2008. Starting looking around for youth or children who might enjoy attending Children or Youth at Conference. **Sharon Foster** and **Natalka Dreichel** let us know again about the Life Long Learning funds available through Presbytery to help pay for Christian Education events.

***Camping:*** Camp Mackinochlea has received their funding from presbytery but Camp Surprise has not. It seems that there have been a number of irregularities at the camp this summer and at the Board level that are a cause for concern. A pastoral oversight visit is scheduled for Camp Surprise as soon as possible.

***United Church Women:*** Presbyterian President **Marilyn Morse** introduced us to the Alberta UCW project on Taking Action on Child Poverty. All UCW units are taking part and all congregations are invited to join them in the Well Being of Alberta Children Initiative. This initiative includes interviewing those who work with children to get their views on child poverty and communicating that situation to MLAs. One in five (!) children in Alberta live in poverty. Let's work together for change!

***Pastoral Relations:*** **Judy Stretch** is staffing this Division alone at this time. **Cecile Fausak** and **David Pype** were named Honorary Associate ministers who are empowered to perform marriages in Athabasca and Barrhead, respectively. **Rev. Thomas Leepile** has covenanted with Partridge Hill United Church. Evergreen Pastoral Charge is looking at creative ways to join with other congregations in the area for ministry. **Rev. Lilley Glebe** is retiring from Rainbow Pastoral Charge. Blessings to you, Lilley! **Rev. Britt Jesson** is going from half time to 0.6 time in Beaumont. Fort McMurray United Church is experiencing great changes as long time members retire and leave town. Presbytery is paying for a report on the future of ministry in Fort McMurray to be received by the Presbyter Executive at their next meeting.

***Church in the World:*** **Bruce Jackson** let us through the long list of concerns that came before the Church in the World division. He highlighted the United for Peace Campaign and **Cecile Fausak** made a motion that an ad hoc committee on Energy be created by Alberta and NW conference to address the many energy issues that Alberta is facing.

***Next Meeting:*** Our February meeting will include a workshop/retreat on regaining our souls and spiritual practices.

