

Maritime Conference e-newsletter

print version

Volume 2, Number 1

Editor: Norma Mills

Design: Garth Caseley

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From the Editor

"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17) The Maritime Conference Newsletter is one means of sharing our stories of faith through the experience of our conference executive, committees, and congregations.

The newsletter will be sent by email to active, retired and retained ministry personnel, delegates to the annual meeting of Maritime Conference, presbytery secretaries, and members of the conference executive. It will be mailed to those who do not have a current email address, and it will be posted on the Maritime Conference website.

The newsletter is the responsibility of the Computer Use and Education Unit, which is ac-

countable to the Christian Life and Growth Committee. An evaluation will take place after three issues to consider various aspects including content, contributors, recipients, and the number of editions annually.

On behalf of the Computer Use and Education Unit, I would like to thank everyone involved in producing this issue, including Rev. Janice MacLean, editors Dr. Margot Roach and Rev. Wayne Smith, webminder Rev. Garth Caseley, each writer, and most of all, our readers.

Norma Mills DLM

Presidential Ponderings

I knew it was coming. Yet I paused unexpectedly as I noted the comment written on the outside of the large white envelope: "Contents may cause you to celebrate!" My instant reaction: "I hope so!"

This year, we celebrate the 85th anniversary of The United Church of Canada. Of course, my previous refer-

are good resources! And, I really like a party!!

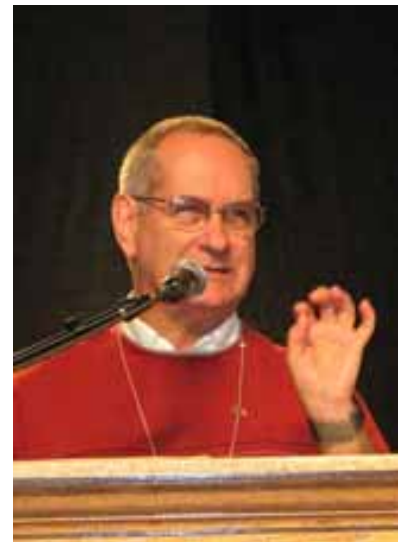
I'm persuaded that we do not celebrate enough in the Church. We let many worthy moments pass by with scarce acknowledgement. Let's not miss this opportunity to remember who we are and Whose we are. And while we acknowledge the road behind

"Our anniversary theme invites us to
"Remember... Renew... Rejoice!"

ence is to the envelope of study, worship, and celebration resources that was recently sent to all pastoral charges offering us help in preparing to celebrate. They

us, let's be sure to look ahead to where the Spirit of God is leading us. And, then, let's rejoice – celebrate – party with thanksgiving for the One Who brought us thus far has yet significant intentions for us in His future.

Though, I do not know



what those intentions are, I am increasingly persuaded of two things: the Church I have served for the past forty years is changing and I don't know what the Church will look like in the future. I'm not

Presidential Ponderings (continued)

sure I need to know. What I think I need to do is remember the constancy of God's presence in the past, renew my personal commitment to continue steadfast in the journey with God and with you, and then celebrate that God knows where God is leading us.

We do well, in the Church, remembering the past. We can tell folks about the losses and the strains and the decreased numbers and the diminishing dollars. It just isn't like it used to be. We know that story well. We tell it often. But what

about the story of the excitement of the beginnings, the renewal and dramatic growth through the fifties and sixties, the worship renewal of the eighties and nineties. We seem not to tell those stories as often or as eagerly.

Our anniversary theme invites us to "Remember... Renew... Rejoice!" I encourage us to remember the "whole" story behind the last 85 or 95 or 125 years of ministry. In fact, in the Church I currently serve, along with our national church anniversary, we will be celebrating the 180th anniversary of con-

tinuous ministry on June 6th. Now, there's a lot there to remember, to rejoice about, to renew our zeal for. In particular, I urge us to celebrate. Let the folks in your community, your town, your neighbourhood know that you are proud of who you've been and how you've served. You are proud of who you are. And you are proud of who you plan to be in the future, with God's help. Genuine joy has never scared people away. Celebrate! It's good for the soul!

Bob Johnson, President,
Maritime Conference.

On the Threshold of Ordination – Catherine Stuart

A Journey Toward Ministry Begins...

When I was 9 years old, I distinctly remember sitting in church in my home congregation of Knox United in Glace Bay, looking up at my minister and thinking, "I want his job someday." This small but significant thought led me on a journey that was and

continues to be beyond my wildest dreams. And now, just weeks away from Ordination, as a 26 year

old female, I sit here pondering this journey--giving thanks for the many who have crossed my path, who have helped shape who I am,

who have offered gentle prayers, earth-shattering challenges, shoulders to cry on, and lots of laughter! These memories and blessings are treasures that I will take with me no matter where I end up in my service to God and to the church.

on over the last few years, and cannot help but be excited and enthusiastic about the adventures yet to come. This journey has led me to many life-altering, soul-searching youth events, has taught me that one of my greatest loves (dance) can in fact find its place in the

"When I was 9 years old, I distinctly remember sitting in church in my home congregation of Knox United in Glace Bay, looking up at my minister and thinking, "I want his job someday."

A Few Wise Ministers once told me that Faith is a Verb...

I am led to think about the adventures that I have been

church, has taken me across this great country of ours to invigorating church meetings (yes, I said it!), to a city church full of love, and to

On the Threshold of Ordination – Catherine Stuart (continued)

prairie churches that have taught me more about who I am as a child of God than I ever thought possible. And yet, some people ask, “Are you crazy?”!

A Radical Love...

Sometimes I wonder, but then sometimes I think I have to be...I have to be crazy (in a faith-filled, enthusiastic, mystery loving, radical kind of way) to believe that a Middle Eastern carpenter can be the Son of God who overturns money tables, heals the afflicted, raises the dead and shows us God's love by dying on a cross and rising again to

new life! But not only do I have to believe in it, but I have to know that sharing it with others changes lives, inspires dreams and plants mysterious seeds that grow into more love than we know what to do with! How can I not be excited about sharing this with everyone I meet, knowing that I can learn so much more of God's love from others who are just as excited, if not more excited, than I am.

Called to Dance...

These, and so many more reasons, are why I am a young woman who is about

to be Ordained to the Ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care in the United Church of Canada. May our boldness, guided by God's love, continue to call us to dance with the Holy Spirit, sharing enthusiasm for our faith with everyone we meet, no matter how young or old we are! Thanks be to God!

Catherine Stuart will be ordained by Maritime Conference at its Annual Meeting in Sackville, New Brunswick, on Sunday, May 30, 2010.

Conference Executive Highlights

Wrestling Faithfully with Tough Decisions – Rev. Janice MacLean

“It was a meeting with three significant issues and the executive dealt with them fairly and deliberately,” Maritime Conference Executive Secretary Rev. Catherine Gaw said.

Comprised of presbytery and conference committee chairs, the executive met on February 12 and 13. The Hospital Chaplaincy Needs Assessment Group, the Committee Structure Review Group and the Archives Planning Task Group reported on Friday, giving members time to hear all issues and discern overnight. Decisions were made on Saturday.

After careful consideration of the context for hospital chap-



laincy, a review of questionnaire responses, and examination of the cost of this ministry, the executive passed a series of

motions guaranteeing funding for positions at the Saint John Regional Hospital and Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Halifax

Conference Executive Highlights (continued)

until the end of 2011. Part-time vacancies at the Victoria General and IWK Hospitals in Halifax will not be filled.

In April, the executive will be discerning how to respond to

conference committees can be examined in a time when stewardship of allocations is a priority.

Conference Archives is out of space. The planning group

in sharing common space. It will report in April.

Ms. Gaw presented notice of her request for a change in covenantal relationship and her intention to leave her position at the end of 2010.

She noted, "The executive worked hard and did not take action without thought and reflections, and wrestled faithfully with the decisions they had to make."

"It was a meeting with three significant issues and the executive dealt with them fairly and deliberately..."

the Conference Structure Review Committee's recommendation to "begin to create a vision for the Conference." It is hoped this will provide a lens by which the ministries of the

was asked to outline a plan for a conference center with increased archival and meeting areas. The group will consult with Sackville United Church to seek a firm indication of interest

Rev. Janice MacLean is Maritime Conference Minister for Christian Nurture and Enrichment.

Conference Committees Rights of Children in Care – Alisa Pothier

"At any given time, there are between 80,000 and 100,000 children in the Canadian child welfare system. They have been removed from their homes because of unsafe conditions, which often include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. While in care, these children experience an average of 3 to 7 placements. They are more

who chairs the Maritime Conference Committee in Action on the Rights of Children.

The committee has convened to work in the area of child welfare and has targeted three specific areas: advocacy, education and service. It has created a powerful and thoughtful service of worship that is found at [Children in Care](#) on the United

- within the child welfare system;
- 3. an overview of child welfare in Canada;
- 4. suggestions for community action: Speak up for Justice; Learn More and Raise Awareness; Reach Out and Serve.

"Political leaders and Canadian citizens need to make children's rights a higher political priority in Canada ..."¹

The committee's ongoing work includes a presentation on the child welfare system that was offered April 5 at United Protestant Church in Sydney River.

Members are working with Denise Peterson-Rafuse, Nova Scotia Minister of Community Services, to open the Children

"At any given time, there are between 80,000 and 100,000 children in the Canadian child welfare system."

likely to develop mental illness, to become involved in criminal activity, and to end up living on the street. All of this points to a system that is failing them."

This information is provided by Delores Feltmate of Sydney,

Church of Canada's website. This document includes:

1. a complete worship service;
2. a dramatic reading about two children joining the community: one within a loving family, and one

Conference Committees (continued)

and Family Services Act for much-needed amendments.

Also, delegates to the annual meeting of Maritime Conference in May will be able to participate in the Child Welfare Focus Group and learn more

about this important and under-reported topic.

¹ “Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children - www.rightsofchildren.ca”
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Alisa Pothier is the Youth and Young Adult Worker and Sunday School Coordinator at Grace United Church in Dartmouth, NS.

Stories of the Church

Building Peace in Moncton – Rev. Ali Smith

“Where is the Spirit leading our Church?” That is the question with which Central United Church in downtown Moncton wrestled. In looking for an answer, the congregation discovered that following the Spirit can lead a church to make drastic changes – both inside and out.

Rev. Dr. Jim MacDonald has been leading Central United through a visioning process for a number of years. The congregation felt called to use its beautiful heritage building to do God's work.

“The congregation held a number of meetings before concluding that they

must turn their buildings inside out for the benefit of the community around them,” Mr. MacDonald said.

While the people of Central United were discerning their future, the Community Peace Centre (CPC) Partners were determining the next step in their own project. The five non-profit organizations shared a common mission of promoting

peace in Southeastern New Brunswick by working collaboratively in a single facility.

Believing that this new opportunity was just what the Spirit had in mind, Central United became a CPC Partner and made its property available to the project. In 2009, Central United partnered with Early Childhood Stimulation, Family Services Moncton, Multicultural Association of Greater Moncton Area (MAGMA), United Way of

which will be connected to the church buildings by a glass atrium. The Church's sanctuary will be converted into a 750-seat auditorium, and the social hall will also become a shared space.

A \$500,000 loan from The United Church of Canada's Congregational Development Fund will help with renovation costs.

“While the announcements of government support of \$4.4 million garnered the Church a great deal of attention,” Mr.

“Where is the Spirit leading our Church?” That is the question with which Central United Church in downtown Moncton wrestled. In looking for an answer...”

MacDonald said, “the greatest and most fulfilling experi-

ence for people at Central United Church has been the gift of renewed meaning and purpose, coupled with the privilege of working alongside those with longstanding records for great local community work.”

Greater Moncton and Southeast New Brunswick, and the Volunteer Centre of Southeastern New Brunswick to build the Peace Centre.

The Centre, at 150 Queen Street, is slated for completion in the spring of 2011 and will serve as a physical symbol of peaceable living. Land given by the City of Moncton will be the site of a new office tower,

Rev. Ali Smith is Ministry Personnel at Milltown Pastoral Charge in the St. Croix Presbytery.

Stories of the Church

The GO Project – Rev. Brett Anningson

What does it take to get young people excited about Mission Work? Well, okay, the real question is how to get them excited about projects that also respond to their experience of what it is to be United Church. After all, there are many organizations that support humanitarian efforts.

The Go Project offers a combination of opportunities in a United Church context: you pray, you learn, you make friends, you help others, and you GO. Begun at Islington United in Toronto, it has spread to become the primary social justice youth experience within the United Church.

"I learned that there are people in need everywhere, even in our own backyard. I was surprised by the kindness that some of the people who we came in contact with showed. The GO project is a program that I would definitely encourage others to go to," said Kristin, a Grade 10 student from London Conference.

So if you find yourself between Grade Nine and 19 years old and wonder how you can get connected to the on-the-

ground mission work of the United Church, you GO. Specifically, you go to some of Canada's most urban centres: Ryerson United in Vancouver, Islington United in Toronto, or St. Andrew's United in Halifax.

All these congregations are involved in street ministry outreach. That means you will encounter young families, poverty, immigrants, and many issues that confront us.

"Although it can be challeng-

ing is community group building, supper, worship, group activities, journaling and bed.

Last year, youth groups from Wolfville NS and Silver Falls United Church in Saint John NB went to Islington.

This year, the Christian Life and Growth and Church in Action Committees will sponsor one youth from each of the 14 presbyteries to be part of a conference team in Halifax. If you are interested in applying, con-

"...you pray, you learn, you make friends, you help others, and you GO."

ing at times, you leave the GO project with new friendships, memories that you will never forget, and a feeling of accomplishment that you have made a difference in someone's life," Kristin said.

Each location has an 11-day program during the summer, with on-site facilitators from the GO project. On a typical day you get up at 8:00 AM, have breakfast, worship, and spend the morning and early afternoon at the mission site. Later, there

is contact your presbytery's Church in Action Committee chair by May 14.

Maritime Conference will subsidize the \$500 registration fee. Each participant will pay \$100 and the cost of transportation.

Through the grace of God, they will go on to change the world.

Rev. Brett Anningson is Ministry Personnel at Mount Royal United Church in Chignecto Presbytery.

Praying the News Haiti Calls – Dorothy MacNeill

Beautiful Haitian paintings in the home of Rev. Betty and Rev. Allen Darby of Truro contrast starkly with the pictures we have seen since the horrific earthquake of January 12.

The Darbys served in Haiti from 1971-1984, and from 1994-1998. They worked in a Methodist Church Circuit that included 41 churches, assisted by volunteer lay ministers. They adapted to different cus-

were sleeping outdoors, in tents, or under anything that would cover them. Families were devastated, there was little food, and many needed medical attention.

Schools and businesses closed, jobs vanished leaving many out of work, and there are no unemployment services.

Here in Canada, the Darbys have been doing what they can to help by speaking to church and community groups. They

churches and organizations, where it will be used effectively.

Donations directed to M&S marked "Haiti" are not subject to administrative fees of 10 % because those are already set up. In addition to emergency relief, contributions will be used for long-term rebuilding.

"Funds are generally much better used when sent to organizations with local experience such as churches, who were there before the disaster and will be there after, and who often function on a smaller, more personal scale than large international organizations can," Ms. Darby said.

Joining with people of faith and good will around the world, we pray that one day the damaged areas of Haiti will return to their normal beauty.

Dorothy MacNeill is a writer who lives in Truro, Nova Scotia.

"When the earthquake hit, they contacted friends as soon as cell phones were operating."

toms and few resources: they travelled by mule, boat, or on foot, but occasionally had use of a Land Rover that was a gift from the United Church.

When the earthquake hit, they contacted friends as soon as cell phones were operating. They were told that people

are able to give their perspective on various organizations that are raising money, and they encourage church members to donate to their denomination's relief programs.

The Haiti Relief Fund of the United Church of Canada is sending money to partner

Original Words**Stepping into Easter – Rev. Jane Doull**

Like those long ago women and men on that shadowed morning,
are you downcast by crucifixions, broken by betrayals?

Is your world shrouded in a night that will not end?

When will you see the sun rising, the water bursting through the ice, the earth greening
with new life?

No matter - you have seven weeks to find Easter or Easter find you.

Like those long ago women and men on that shadowed morning,
are you downcast by crucifixions, broken by betrayals?

Is your world shrouded in a night that will not end?

When will you see the sun rising, the water bursting through the ice, the earth greening
with new life?

No matter - you have seven weeks to find Easter or Easter find you.

No matter what your heart sees, bright or dim, ending or beginning or in-between,
take one step forward, even if it is the only step you know.

Bring what comfort you can to places of sadness.

No matter what or whom you have lost, love whom and what you find.

We know little and we understand less.

But when we see by the light we have,

When we follow where someone else points out signs of new life,

when we gather in the ordinary places,

when we share food and kindness,

when we do the smallest things to mend , restore, and recreate,

then together we, though strangers, become blessed friends.

New Life walks among us and sits at our table,

not as we planned but no less beautiful for that.

See, and believe!

Rev. Jane Doull is Ministry Personnel at Sackville United Church, Chignecto Presbytery.

Happenings

CGIT Looks Back, Dreams Ahead – Rev. Jay Ettinger

When I was a boy, I remember my mother going out once a week to be a leader for a group called Canadian Girls In Training. As I grew older, she shared many stories of how important

with the next generation, which is the tradition of CGIT. Memories such as hers, along with the leadership skills and wisdom of all CGIT women, will be honoured this summer.

alumnae of CGIT to come together as one to remember their past, celebrate their present, and dream for their future.

This momentous day will be filled with many special events, presentations, worship and fellowship. The cost for the day is \$15.00, and an overnight stay is an additional \$10.

"This momentous day will be filled with many special events, presentations, worship and fellowship."

CGIT had been in her own development as a young Christian girl and into womanhood.

As a leader, she shared her memories, skills and wisdom

The CGIT 95th Anniversary Celebration will take place at Camp Wegesegum, Chipman, NB, on Friday, August 20th. It will be a day for friends and

For more information, contact Sandy MacBean at ian-mac@nbnet.nb.ca.

Happenings (continued)

Grace Race proves Amazing! – Rev. Jay Ettinger

It was a combination scavenger hunt and road rally.

The first "Amazing Grace Race" was held throughout Inverness-Guysborough Presbytery on October 3, 2009.

The purpose was to raise money for the Mission and Service Fund, but also to raise aware-

ness of the pastoral charges and their ministries within the presbytery, to enjoy an outdoor activity, and to encourage family and group participation in church events beyond Sunday worship.

Teams of family and friends paid registration fees that went to M&S. They were challenged to visit all participating pastoral charges, have their race "cards" stamped with

their time of arrival, and then take part in challenges designed by the congregations.

Sponsors provided prizes for individual competitions, with the Grand Prize being not

just bragging rights, but also higher donations to M&S.

The presbytery boasted involvement of 50 participants in 18 teams. "Everyone found it rewarding, interesting, enlight-

ening and wants to do it again this year," said organizer Wayne Yorke,

Designated Lay Minister on the West Bay Pastoral Charge.

At the end of the day, the chequered flag went to M&S.

"It was a combination scavenger hunt and road rally."

Happenings (continued)

Racial Justice Workshops Planned – Rev. Jay Ettinger

For many within the Maritime Conference of The United Church of Canada, the predominant racial expression of church has been Caucasian.

As a response to the church's new reality in an increasingly

heighten awareness of race issues in Canada.

Six people from Maritime Conference have been trained as Racial Justice Facilitators, and they have developed a six-hour racial justice training session.

The first will take place at Cornwall United Church in PEI during the first week of May, and others will be held throughout the Maritimes during the coming year.

Laypersons are encouraged to attend on a voluntary basis.

Dates and locations for these thought-provoking workshops can be obtained by emailing pernellb@ns.sympatico.ca.

"For many within the Maritime Conference... the predominant racial expression of church has been Caucasian."

multicultural Canada, the 39th General Council (2006, Thunder Bay, ON) mandated that all ministry personnel shall participate in an opportunity to

Many pastoral Charges, though Ministry & Personnel Committees, have already received information about the workshops.

Rev. Jay Ettinger is Ministry Personnel at Truro: St. Andrew's United Church in Truro Presbytery.

Photo Finish—Berwick Interchurch Youth Group Bake Sale for Haiti

Information: Rev. Linda Winton
Photo: N Kelly,
Transcontinental Media

Young people can certainly make a difference in the world.

Pastoral Charge in Valley Presbytery.

Prayer is always part of the regular meetings of the Berwick Interchurch Youth Group. After the January 12 earthquake, some of its members prayed for the people of Haiti.

The group decided to do something and within less than a week, a sale was organized. Not only did members of the youth group bring in baked items and some crafts, but so did other kids who'd heard about it.

Rev. Linda Winton is Ministry Personnel at West Cornwallis

Nancy Kelly is a reporter in King's County, Nova Scotia.

The sale raised \$470.60 for the Canadian Red Cross, and the Canadian government will match that amount.

