

Prairie to Pine Regional Gathering

May 28, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Constitution of the Court

Kwang Beom Cho, co-chair of the Regional Meeting declared the meeting open for worship, study, companionship and business to the approximately 200 participants. He then opened the meeting with prayer and lit a candle for those who have passed. Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, was introduced. Kwang Beom announced that at the end of the meeting there would be a 'Coffee Time' for folks wanting to participate.

Diane Dwarka, the other co-chair of the Regional Meeting, gave the land acknowledgement. She then introduced Murray Pruden, Executive Minister for the Indigenous Church at General Council Offices; Karen Medland, the Office of Vocation Minister; Vicki Nelson, the Stewardship Animator for Prairie to Pine Regional Council, as well as the other staff attending this meeting.

Opening Worship / In Memoriam

Worship planning team composed of Brenda Shodin, Jamie Miller, Frances Flook, Damber Khadka presented their pre-recorded service. The worship service began with an acknowledgement of the land and the peoples of these lands. Jamie Miller welcomed everyone to the gathering that will include work, reflection, celebration, and sharing as a community under the theme of *Our Place in the Rainbow*. Participants were invited to join in the first hymn, *God Whose Love is Ever with Us* (Voices United #399), followed by a Gathering Prayer. She then introduced the In Memoriam as we remembered those who had died over the last year: Al Earis, Alistair Riddell, Elvin Rydberg, Frances Dickinson, Frank Evans, Gordon Ivan Fulford, Isobel Lee, John Robertson and Thomas Little. Folks were invited to join in singing *Those Hearts That We Have Treasured* (VU#494).

The Scripture passage, I Corinthians 12 4-11 about the variety of spiritual gifts, was read by Naomi Dunn, Kyle Kellar and Maddy Graham. People were invited to respond to the Prayer of Intention using VU #202, *O Breath of Life*. The worship was closed with a commission to work and worship, followed by the hymn, *And on This Path* (MV#8). For this opening worship, the musicians were Ruth Girard, pianist and the choristers of Knox United Church Kenora, ON.

Business

Kwang Beom, co-chair of the Regional Meeting explained the process for voting for those using computers, phones and Ipads and telephones. The gathered did a test vote with the question: "Did you eat dinner tonight?" Happily, the vote was carried.

Diane Dwarka, co-chair of the Regional Meeting, introduced the Enabling Motions. They were moved and seconded by Elizabeth Brown and Marg West. This motion was carried.

Kwang Beom introduced Betty Kelly, Chair of the Nominations Committee to bring forth the slate of nominees for General Council 44 from Prairie to Pine Regional Council. The committee worked hard to balance lay and ordered, new and experience, rural and urban and gender diversity, along with racialized, Indigenous, deaf and those of different ages. Betty expressed her appreciation for those who expressed interest and for their commitment to the task.

The nominees were: Elizabeth Brown, Christopher St. George Davis, Ken DeLisle, Diane Dwarka, Lesley Harrison, Donna Kennedy, Hope Mattus, Cyndi Price, Heather Sandilands, Anna Stewart, Karen Tjaden, Erica Wiebe, Taeil Yang. The four alternates are Ila Swan, Linda Buchanan, Betty Kelly and Tessa Blaikie-

Whitecloud. One more spot has been saved for a youth delegate. After all the regional councils have named their commissioners, there will be another opportunity to fine tune the balance of Commissioners to General Council 44. The vote was then taken on the presented slate. The vote was an overwhelming yes. Kwang Beom thanked the Nominations Committee for their work.

Presentation of Vicki Nelson

Kwang Beom invited Vicki Nelson, Stewardship Animator for Prairie to Pine Regional Council to give her presentation. She shared her stewardship ideas: INSPIRE: What inspires you and your community of faith? Is it its mission, what you are doing in worship, how are you changing lives? What keeps you involved or involves new folks when they find you. What are your aspirations and dreams. Vicki offered participation in a new program, *Called to be the Church: The Journey*. It is for communities of faith to intentionally focus on and plan for stewardship. It includes small-group trainings, coaching and ongoing support. Use the Mission & Service resources to inspire your community of faith. INVITE: When do you ask your congregation to give? Do you talk about M&S as a spiritual practice? Do you invite, welcome and engage curious people? Do you offer multiple ways to donate? THANK: How do you lift up generosity in your own life or in your community of faith? How do you feel when you are appropriately seen, acknowledged and thanked? Do it today and pay it forward. Develop a gratitude practice today, thank the people who financially support your community of faith right away and pat yourself on the back. She then introduced a short M&S video. The video included short vignettes of recipients using their M&S gifts shown along with the RT Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, Moderator, Sarah Charters, Interim Executive Minister, Philanthropy and President of The United Church of Canada Foundation, and Michael Blair, General Secretary, thanking donors and encouraging everyone to donate to this ministry that can change people's lives. Vicki thanked folks for giving her time and then passed the meeting over to Lesley Harrison who was in charge of the M&S Fundraiser.

M&S Fundraiser

Lesley introduced *The Masked Singers for M&S* fundraiser. There were 10 Celebrities, duos or groups who competed. Those attending the meeting were asked to guess at their identities as well as pledge gifts to M&S. The first group of 24 puppets, including three musicians sang *Filled with the Glory of the Lord*. The clues were: you have heard them several times before; they are between 56 and 3 months; there are 4 sisters and their partners, 15 children and 1 grandbaby. It was revealed that the MacNair family raised \$1,700. More Masked Singers for M&S will appear during tomorrow's meeting. Diane Dwarka thanked Lesley and her team for the fundraiser.

St. Andrew's College presentation

Diane introduced a video from St. Andrew's College. Richard Manley-Tannis brought greetings from St. Andrew's and told folks to watch for exciting new announcements over the summer. He then introduced Shawn Sanford Beck, St. Andrew's College's new recruitment officer. Shawn then thanked everyone for his welcome to the St. Andrew's community and asked that people watch for people those who are being called into ministry and to let him know how St. Andrew's can help them fulfill their calling. He asked people to keep the college, its students, faculty and staff in their prayers.

Honouring Retirees 1

Diane introduced the Retirees Planning Team of Irene Greenwood, Gloria Cook and Joan Jarvis for the tributes to the three retirees. First video shown was Susan Tilleman, who served in Saskatchewan, Quebec and Manitoba. The hymn chosen by Susan to symbolize her ministry was *Called by Earth and Sky* (MV #135).

Closing Worship

Kwang Beom called on the Worship Team composed of Brenda Shodin, Jamie Miller, Frances Flook and Damber Khadka, for the closing worship. It opened with the singing of VU# 401, *We are One*. The scripture page I Corinthians 12:12, 14-20 was read. The reflection was the reading of the story *Come with Me*, by Holly M. McGhee. It is the story of a little girl who discovers that you can make a better place in the world through friendship.

Kwang Beom Cho reminded folks that tomorrow's meeting will continue at 9:00am with the Zoom room opening at 8:30am.

At 9:00 pm, the meeting portion was closed with prayer and the singing of verse 4 of *We Are One* (VU#402). Participants were then invited to stay and participate in some time of fellowship.

Prairie to Pine Regional Gathering

May 29, 2021

9:00am

At 9:05 am, Diane Dwarka welcomed folks to the meeting. She invited participants to write in the chat box their treaty area. She then read the land acknowledgement. Folks were reminded that the meeting is being recorded.

Opening Worship / Covenanting with Communities of Faith

The Committee of Community of Faith Support, chaired by Heather Lea with Jamie Miller and Frances Flook, prepared a pre-recorded the opening worship service with the Communities of Faith being covenanted with. This service began with the youth of Prairie to Pine singing the song *Praise*. Min Goo Kang welcomed everyone and introduced the gathering hymn, *God Is Here* (VU#389 verse 1).

Linda Rodgers, Kyle Kellar, Schalk Naudé, Brenda Shodin and Lynne Sanderson read the scripture passages and gave short reflections on these readings. Don Schau lead a prayer before the singing of *Bless Now, O God, the Journey* (VU#633).

Pat Bird and Nancy Dzeoba-Macklem read the call to covenant. Buddha joined them in a unison prayer including part of the United Church Creed in both Nepali and English. Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, then introduced the covenanting. Those Communities of Faith being covenanted with are: Cadurcis Community United Church; Chinese United Church, Winnipeg; Circle Marsh Pastoral Charge, including St. Andrew's Glenella, Langruth, and Plumas; Knox United Church, Winnipeg, Dugald United Church, Korean United Church, Minto United Church, Red Lake District Chukuni United - Anglican Church; Ste. Rose United Church (Lakeside Pastoral Charge); Vermilion Bay United Church and Young United Church, Winnipeg. Cheryl McKitrick, Silas Lee, Irene Chabluk gave the Confession of Faith. Shannon McCarthy, Cheryl McKitrick, Diane Dwarka and Kwang Beom Cho led the covenanting promises. Madison Teichroeb and her family, from Langruth UC of Circle Marsh PC, replied on behalf of the covenanting congregations. Shirley McLaren and Madison led the gathered in a unison Prayer of Commitment and Concern, with Buddha, Silas Lee, and Irene Chabluk joining.

The gathered were then invited to join in singing *Spirit God, Be Our Breath* (MV#150). This was followed by a Prayer of Thanksgiving and recitation of the alternate version of the Lord's Prayer. Lynne Sanderson gave the benediction. Closing hymn was *Spirit, Open My Heart* (MV #79).

Diane thanked the worship planners: Heather Lea and members of committee of Community & Faith Support; Jamie Miller and Frances Flook, Leaders: Min Goo Kan, Abbey Smirl, Linda Rodgers Kyle Kellar, Schaik Naude, Brenda Shodin, Don Schau, Lynne Sanderson. Musician members of the YAAY Committee, Smirl family, Knox-Kenora Choristers and Ruth Girard organist / piano.

Honouring Retirees 2

Judy Hare brought forward the name Nelson Hart for a tribute on his retirement. Nelson served Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (Nelson House), a graduate of the former Jessie Saulteaux Training Center. He served most of his time ministering to the people of Nelson House. The hymn that Nelson chose to symbolize himself was Amazing Grace (VU#266).

Our Journey as an Indigenous People

Judy then introduced Gloria Cook, from the Indigenous Ministries and Justice Unit. Gloria spoke on the presentation that was recorded by the Prairie to Pine Committee on Ministry Personnel Support. She went on to describe her presentation as Our Journey as an Indigenous People, that is based on the Medicine Wheel. The first quadrant is for self – we need to take care of our self before we can take care of others; the second quadrant is for family – we are a role model to and for our family; the third quadrant is for community and the fourth is for the world. The four quadrants are also about Indigenous peoples – 1st quadrant is who we were before contact; the 2nd is what happened when contact was made; 3rd quadrant is what is now and the 4th quadrant is who are we – where are we now and moving forward. Through the four quadrants she explained what life was like before contact, what happened as a result of the contact and the destructive consequences of those actions. She concluded with the hope for empowering Indigenous Peoples to reclaim their identity, self-governance, and their spirituality and traditions. Diane Dwarka then gave the 187 participants 15 minutes to discuss two questions to discuss in breakout rooms. There were 1) What new learning did you gain from the teaching? 2) How can this teaching build on your past experience?

Grace before lunch

Once folks were back in the main room, Kwang Beom invited Abbey Smirl to lead us in Grace. She sang two verses of Jonnie Appleseed. The meeting was closed for a 2-hour lunch break.

M&S Fundraiser

Before delegates and guests were formally called back to the meeting, Lesley Harrison gave an update on the M&S donations. As of last evening, \$1,850 had been pledged. She then introduced the next Masked Singer for M&S. This was a single performer who sang *Because I Knew You Loved Me*. Clues were 1) A co-convenor of YAAY and a 12-year member of the committee; 2) Sat on the Executive for 3 years; 3) volunteered as a pianist in a congregation for 14 years throughout high school and university. A new total of \$5,100 was announced just before the singer was revealed to be Erica Wiebe.

Afternoon Session

Christopher Davis (Admittand)

Diane Dwarka thanked Lesley for the fundraising fun and then introduced the video that introduced our admittand Christopher Davis. In the video, Christopher read from Mark 8:27-30, who do people say Jesus is and who do you say Jesus is. His reflection included who people thought Jesus was, who the disciples thought Jesus was and he added the context of who Jesus is under Our Place in the Rainbow. Diane thanked Christopher for his presentation and for having a chance to meet him.

Accountability Reports

Diane moved on to the reports. She was grateful everyone had survived the first virtual meeting and that the second one seemed to be going along well. She thanked the many people who are journeying to make our church more intercultural and more anti-racist. She thanked those who are moving from active roles in the church and welcomed those coming into more active roles. Diane also thanked Staff and the Executive, and expressed her pleasure working with Kwang Beom. Kwang shared his thoughts on his work as a co-chair and thanked the Executive for their work and patience. He looked at the new pursuit of anti-racism and justice change as putting new wine into new skins, not the same old skins.

Shannon thanked Diane and Kwang Beom for their work over the last two years. She indicated her report can be found in the Workbook, but wanted to offer thanks to Diane and Kwang Beom, as well as the Executive, the committee and commissions for their work. She added a particular thanks to the Nominations Committee. She added that lots of folks from the Conference structure have stepped back, but they are being encouraged to come back. New people were encouraged to offer their gifts and skills. Shannon also thanked the staff team, and announced that since writing her report, they have decided not to renew the office lease at St. Mary's Road because it is no longer financially viable. The Region will be looking at space in churches in Winnipeg.

Kwang Beom invited Valerie Beckingham, Regional Council, Treasurer and Heather Dootoff, Financial Administrator to present the financial report. Valerie thanked the folks she has worked with on the Regional Council Executive and will miss those retiring, but looks forward to working with new folks. She indicated there was an expectation of a surplus going into 2021, or at least not a deficit. Once we are back having in person meeting, we will again have difficulty working within our means. A couple questions were asked about allocations. Heather wasn't sure when they would be coming out, as several communities of faith (almost a quarter), still haven't submitted their 2020 statistics. Assessment notifications go to the email address that the statistics forms are sent to. Soon, treasurers will be able to go to ChurchHub to fill this out. In response to the next question, Heather clarified that grants due to the pandemic are counted as income, but they are not counted as income for assessment purposes. There is a recording available about this on United in Learning. Another question was around cuts to the M&S grant. For 2021, we will be able to use our surplus (from transition and COVID) to offset those reductions. We will have to see in the future. Currently, the governance level is being held at its current rate. Diane thanked Valerie, Heather and Shannon.

Letter of Murray Pruden

Shannon McCarthy, Regional Council Executive Minister then read a letter on behalf of Murray Pruden regarding the discovery of 215 children's remains at the site of a former Residential School in Kamloops, BC that was announced on the news yesterday. She asked that we hold the Indigenous Ministry Circle in our prayers. Diane thanked Shannon and then sked for a moment of silence.

Moderator's video

Diane introduced the Moderator's video. In his video, Moderator, Rt Reverend Richard Bott, brought greetings to each of the 16 regions. He thanked each disciple for their work in such interesting times. He expressed his gratitude for being a part of the United Church and that God is with us. He told folks discerning and planning will happen over the next year. The next General Council will be online, with the opening session happening in February of 2022 and the closing in August of 2022. It is hoped that more than just the commissioners will attend and that conversations that occur at GC will carry over in to local churches and communities of faith. He assured the faithful that we are in his thoughts and prayers.

Celebrating anniversaries

Diane moved the gathering on to celebrations. To a recorded version of VU 701, *What Does the Lord Require of You*, names of ministers celebrating significant anniversaries of their admission, commissioning or recognition were shown. Celebrating 10 years were: Marianne Olfrey (R-DLM), Sandra Rex (R-DLM), Maureen McCartney (R-DLM), Craig Miller (Admittand from Presbyterian Church, USA); 20 years were: Milo Spooner Craig (RO); Mona Denton and Peter Denton (both Admittands from the Presbyterian Church of Canada), Kathy Platt (DM), Allan Sinclair (OM), Olive Flett (R-OM); Mary Folster (R-DLM); 25 years were: Anne Duncan (RD), Sue Everton (RD), Beth Elaine Gardner (RO), Muriel Gray (RO), Harold Kenyon (OM), Gloria Muskego (RO), Beth McLean (RD), Lynn Stevens, (RO); 30 years were: Evelyn Broadfoot (OM), Mary Best (OM), Marc Whitehead (OM); 35 years were: Allan Doerksen (OM), Carol Fletcher (ON), Elgin Hall (R-DLM), Nelson Hart (RO), Judy Hear (OM), Margret Kristjansson (OM), Gary Loewen (RO), Patricia Wotton (RO); 40 years were: Irene Greenwood (OM), Kathy Highmoor (RO), Eric Matheson (RO), Bill Millar (OM), Denis Thornton (OM), 50 years were: Bob Haverluck (RO), Ross Taylor (RO), John Lea (RO), Stan McKay (RO), Joh Thompson (RO); 55 years were: Paul Campbell (OM); 60 years were: George Davidson (RO), Oriole Veldhius (RD), Russell Yong (RO) and 65 years were: Fraser Muldrew (RO).

Honouring Retirees 3

The third retiree was honoured. Jenny Sprong was Ordained in the Methodist Church in South Africa and was later admitted into the ministry of The United Church of Canada where she served in Manitoba. The hymn chosen by Jenny that is significant to her is *Draw the Circle Wide* (VU145).

M&S Fundraiser

As an opportunity to have folks move and stretch, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Coordinator, Twila MacNair introduced a video by the Youth of Prairie to Pine Choir who sang Praise to the Mother. She then turned the meeting over to Lesley Harrison, who brought the M&S fundraiser back. This Masked Singer was a solo act who sang *Big Train from Memphis, Gone, Gone, Gone*. The clues eventually given were 1) made their own puppet, 2) grew up with belugas and polar bears, 3) loves to go around in circles, 4) tells song lyrics meaningful to where they grew up and 5) on of the most recent ordinand in Prairie to Pine. Several guesses were made from the gathered, and Lesley updated the M&S pledge amount to be over \$6,000. The singer was revealed to be Susie McPherson-Derendy. The next Masked Singer act was a pair of minions who sang Natalie Merchant's Kind and Generous. The clues eventually given were 1) one works in Living Skies Regional Council and other works in Shining Water Regional Council, 2) one is new to the P2P Team and one is always encouraging folks to be generous. After the new M&S pledge total was announced to be over \$7060, the singers were revealed to be Sarah Charters and Vicki Nelson. As a wind up to the fundraiser, Lesley Harrison and Abbey Smirl invited participants to join the evening session for a Games Night and the final Masked Singer.

GC 44 Commissioners and Alternates

Shannon then presented the Prairie to Pine slate of elected Commissions for the 44th General Councils as well as the alternates who were elected on this first day. She then led the covenant with the commissioners and alternates.

Closing Worship

Leadership Liturgists: Jamie Miller, Rev. Frances Flook, Kaden Lewis; Scripture readers: Ken Delisle, Louise Marston, Frances Flook, Nancy Flook, Min-Goo Kang

The closing worship began with Jamie Miller (First United Dryden) leading a centering pray followed by the hymn *Come Let us Sing* (VU#222), after which I Corinthians 13 was read. The first verse was signed by Ken DeLisle; verses 2-3 was read by Louise Marston in French; verses 4-10 were read by Karen Lewis and Nancy Flook in English and verses 11-13 were read in Korean by Min-Goo Kang. Rev. Frances Flook gave a short reflection on this reading. She spoke on how this passage always brings up thoughts of weddings – these are words of action and of funerals, how much love is out there. She explained how this was originally penned due to a misunderstanding of spirits for different gifts. Corinthians believed in status, some gifts were given more status and sides were formed. She continued saying how all gifts come from the Spirit and all are valuable to God. Like the whole body create a sum that is more than just its parts. Each side prepares to be named as best, but Paul says each is great, but without, love you are nothing. In the body of Christ, everyone belongs. Frances shared how Prairie to Pine Regional Council was sharing and acknowledging the gifts of each body; how they were making the Regional Council better. When we continue to work on including everyone, then we discover new gifts. To quote, Dr. Cornel West, “*Justice is what love looks like in public*”. She summed up her reflection with: “We are the body of Christ and members of it. Let us celebrate that.” The gathered then celebrated by singing *There is a Time* (MV#164). This was followed by a prayer of intention to become an example to the people of Prairie to Pine Regional Council to be: **R**estorative, **A**ttentive, **I**nclusive, **N**urturing, **B**old, **O**bservant, **W**elcoming. Jamie Miller closed the service with prayer. The choral blessing was, *May the Peace of God Be your Peace* (MV#222).

Adjournment

Diane Dwarka thanked the Worship team, Jamie and the Sparkly Worship Team, Ken, Allen and the Diversity Team, the folks who brought us the retirement videos, the tech team, the staff, the youth for all their work putting this meeting together. She thanked the M&S Fundraising team for their efforts and all the delegates and visitors for their attention. She also thanked cellist Johnathan Wong who granted permission for the use of his music during our Regional Council Meeting. For information about him, please see jonathanwong.bandcamp.com.

Kwang Beom closed the meeting with a prayer and as folks left the meeting, the video of the youth of Prairie to Pine singing “*Go Make a Difference*” was played.