

Prairie to Pine Regional Council Annual Meeting
May 6th and 7th, 2022

Friday, May 6th at 7:00pm
Session 1

Diane Dwarka, co-chair of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council Executive welcomed one and all to this meeting. She called the meeting to order at 7:00pm for a time of worship, study, companionship and business. Emma Seamone, chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee invited the approximately 160 participants on Zoom to join in the opening worship.

Brenda Shodin, of Knox United Church in Kenora Ontario, lead the worship, opening with an acknowledgement of land treaties within the Prairie to Pine Regional Council and those who are not signatories to any treaty. She welcomed everyone to the weekend, that was crafted around the three R's - *Remembering, Reconnecting and Re-visioning*. After Brenda lit the Christ Candle, everyone sang – *Worship the Lord VU#401*. Following a gathering prayer, Brenda read the names of the members of the regional council who had died since the last meeting. Those who served as ministry personnel were: Gary Robert Carruthers, Kathryn Thornton, George Davidson, Douglas Paul Flint, Thomas Delgaty, Robert (Bob) Burton, Denis Thornton and William (Bill) B. F. Corkum. Lay members were: Audre “June” McPherson, Linda Firman, Jean Hutchings, Neita J. Avery, Lorna Barclay, Bob Rae Robert and Morgan Hildebrand. Brenda lit a candle in memory of those we lost then read the scripture reading - Hebrews 10:23-25.

Diane Dwarka and Pat Bird, Co-chairs of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council, along with Shannon McCarthy lead in the opening of the business portion of the evening. Shannon explained there are very few motions to vote on and reviewed how delegates could raise their hand virtually to vote. She reminded folks that “within these opening motions, we are approving the minutes of last year’s annual meeting minutes and accepting the reports for this meeting”. Donna Kennedy asked about whether Indigenous delegates could vote. Shannon explained that if they were attending this meeting, they could vote. The motions were passed.

Jamie Miller, Chair of the Equity and Diversity Committee reviewed the Whole People of God Covenant from page 4 of the [2022 Regional Meeting Workbook Vol.1](#) to create a safe space for learning and sharing to create as respectful place as possible. She then announced the Chaplains for this meeting – Deborah Vitt and Susie McPherson Derendy and their contact information. Diane Dwarka, then introduced the special guests to this meeting: Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary of The United Church of Canada; UCC Bookstore/UCRD Rep. Rebecka Hornburg; Stewardship Animator, Vicki Nelson; Office of Vocation Minister, Karen Medland; and Sarah Lough from Music United.

The gathered then went into breakout rooms for about 30 minutes to discuss: How has the feeling of loss manifested for your Community of Faith? What have you found to be essential about church? and What learning or innovations have happened during this time? Participants were asked to appoint a recorder and add responses from their breakout room onto a Google

document for sharing later. After about 25 minutes of discussion time, Emma Seamone, chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee welcomed folks back to the larger group and invited participants to sing –*Where Two or Three Are Gathered MV#14*.

It was then time for the famous Prairie to Pine M&S fundraiser – the Masked Singer, led by co-hosts Lesley Harrison and Julia Antonyshyn. Lesley then acknowledged the technical team helping out – Jillia Meggison, Julie Hutton and Matt Kenyon. Lesley then explained how the Masked Singer worked: each performer would be represented by a puppet and delegates would have a chance to make a pledge and guess at the identity of each ‘masked singer’. Three clues would be shared through out the video and following the final clue, the artist(s) would be revealed.

The first video was a single person singing *Angels Among Us by Alabama*. Clue #1 was: this person was a member of the band *Euphoria* in theological college. Clue #2 was: other than his internship in Saskatchewan, he has only served in Manitoba (4 pastoral charges and in Winnipeg Presbytery). Clue #3 was: he is not just a good singer, but a brilliant singer. Other clues were: he was the best chat box heckler in 2021 and he was given the nickname “The Boy” at St. Andrew’s College. Following several guesses, the artist was revealed to be Cole Grambo.

As we neared the end of the evening, Diane Dwarka called the delegate to a time of honouring our two retirees: Lynda Trono and Laird Russell-Yearwood. Lynda’s video opened with her asking how do you cram 30+ years into a 5 minute video. There is a life time of work; tears, laughter, frustration and wonder at the world we live in to acknowledge. She spoke of her time in Manitoba beginning in 1995, coming from Bay of Quinte to be the Education and Justice Minister for Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference. In 2010, she moved to St. Mary’s Road, and then in 2013 on to West Broadway Community Ministry (both in Winnipeg) where she served until her retirement. She felt the years have been a blur, but the prevalent feeling is of gratitude. She felt she fell down on evil, not violence – but systemic issues like poverty and the love of money. She pointed out that we must not be daunted by the world. Her time closed with the first verse of her chosen hymn –*My Soul Cries Out MV#120*.

Laird began his video by telling of his ordination in 1990 and was then settled in Meadow Lake Pastoral Charge in Saskatchewan Conference. He stayed there for 9 years where they taught him how to be a minister, how to be an active minister and how to preach. He then moved to Brandon: Central United Church where he worked with Gordon E. Stevenson and Colleen Gareau. Then came Joan Jarvis who led a youth group on a mission trip to Cuba and David Howell, who came as an intern from the east coast for a year. Then Shannon McCarthy came with her gifts and she soon moved on to the Conference Office and Lydia Klassen came for 6 months. As he retires, Laird told everyone he is grateful for his ministry vocation, because he didn’t know what else he would have done. Laird closed his time with the first verse of *I, the Lord of Sea and Sky VU#509*. Diane Dwarka, Co-Chair of the Regional Council Executive thanked the retirees for their service and offered good wishes for their retirement.

Brenda Shodin offered a short prayer before the ministerial anniversaries were read. Ministers celebrating significant anniversaries of their admission, ordination, commissioning or

recognition this year are: **5 years** – Joshua Ward (DM); **10 years** – Melanie Kauppila (OM), Agnes Spence (OM), and Rolanda Taylor (OM); **15 years** - Peggy Mason (R-DLM) and Barbara Roberts (OM); **20 years** – Patricia Baker (DM), Noelle Bowles (OM), Leslie Clark (OM) and Karen Lumley (DM); **25 years** – George Feenstra (RO), Frances Flook (OM), Scott MacAuley (OM), Shannon McCarthy (OM), and Melody McKellar (DM); **30 years** – Elizabeth Brown (OM), Brent Denham (RO), Cole Grambo (OM), Sherri McConnell (DM) and Solomon Meekis (OM), **35 years** – David Fielder (OM), Lesley Fox (OM), Meg Illman-White (OM), and Grant Queskekapow (OM); **40 years** – Robert Johannson (RO) and Robert Stark (RO); **45 years** - Marilyn Anderson Corkum (RD), Don McIntyre (RO), Margaret Scott (RD), Beverly Simpson (RO) and Laurence Simpson (RO); **55 years** – Peter Douglas (RO); **60 years** – Joe Redpath (RO), Eleanor Geib (RO) and Atze Veldhuis (RO) and **75 years** – Gordon Toombs (RO).

(**Key:** DM – Diaconal Minister, OM – Ordained Minister, R-DLM – Retired Designated Lay Minister, RO – Retired Ordained Minister and RD - Retired Diaconal Minister).

Brenda Shodin continued with the worship service by lighting a candle in the name of the ministers celebrating significant anniversaries this year. She then offered gratitude for those that have served the wider community and whose terms are over as well as offered support to those who are continuing their work. She then lit a candle for those members of our community. She then read the list of pastoral charges that have closed over the last year – Coultervale Pastoral Charge, Ochre River Pastoral Charge, Knox: Belmont Pastoral Charge, Altamont Pastoral Charge, Whitemouth: Ross Pastoral Charge, and Kelwood Pastoral Charge and then lit a candle of gratitude for them. She then said a short prayer for the world and lit a candle asking for inspiration for our work, here and around the world. With the lighting of each candle, the gathered responded with “*We remember, we cherish and give thanks*”. The commissioning hymn *In Loving Partnership VU#603* was sung. The gathered were then reminded that the Zoom room will open at 8:30am tomorrow and the meeting will begin at 9:00am.

Following the end of the meeting, a slide was presented on the screen acknowledging: the Musicians:

- Hymn Leadership: Ruth Girard, Pianist / Organist and the members of Knox United Church - Kenora Ontario's Senior Choir
- Violin & Piano: Carrie Thompson and Jolene Syroteuk from “Glory to God” – recorded at Kenora, Ontario
- “The Lone Wild Bird” Les Filles, D’Esprit, Kenora, Ontario (Brenda Shodin, Suzanne McIntosh, Pauline Martin, Lindsay Koch, Marg Collins, Heather Newman, Jillian Lowe, Laura Cotton)
- Liturgy & Videography: Brenda Shodin – Knox United Church, Kenora, Ontario
- Land acknowledgement: led by M. Chorney

Recorded pieces from this session can be found on and through:

<https://prairietopinerc.ca/regional-council-meeting/>