

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

Saturday, May 7th at 1:00pm
Session 3

Emma Seamone, Chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, welcomed folks back after lunch. She thanked those who are participating in this afternoon's worship service. She opened the worship service with a call to worship and a prayer of approach. The gathered then sang *Bless Now O God the Journey VU#633*. Emma continued with a reading from Ephesians 2:19-22.

Members of the Community of Faith Support committee, Chair Heather Lea, Cheryl McKittrick, Silas Lee and Pat Bird, joined with representatives from some of the Communities of Faith covenanting with the Regional Council today - Jeanne Bryan from Ignace, Emmanuel Anglican United Church, Julian Read, from Winnipeg: St. Mary's Road, Lisa Clouston and Debra Young from Cypress River Community of Faith, part of the Prairie Vision Pastoral Charge, as well as Shannon McCarthy, Diane Dwarka and Pat Bird on behalf of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council to conduct the Covenant Service. The communities of faith covenanting with Prairie to Pine Regional Council were: Atlantic - Garden City United Church; Anola United Church; Boissevain: St. Paul's United Church; Broadway Disciples United Church; Hillsvie Pastoral Charge, including Bowsman United Church and Minitonas: Knox United Church; Holland United Church; Ignace, Emmanuel Anglican United Church, Kenton-Shiloh Pastoral Charge; Newdale-Cardale Pastoral Charge; Oak River United Church; Pine Falls United Church; Strathclair United Church, Prairie Vision Pastoral Charge, including Baldur United Church and Cypress River United Church, Winnipeg: St. Mary's Road United Church; Tilston United Church, part of Deloraine, Melita, Tilston Pastoral Charge; Wallace United Church; and both congregations of Stony Mountain – Lilyfield Pastoral Charge. Following the Confession of Faith (from A Song of Faith) and the Covenanting Promises, the service closed with a Prayer of Commitment and Concern. Emma welcomed the churches that had just covenanted with the Regional Council.

Lesley Harrison joined with Julia Antonyshyn to introduce the next installment of the Prairie to Pine fundraiser for M&S, The Masked Singer. Lesley pointed out that doing this fundraiser re-connected her with people around the community, and, it was also an opportunity to have some fun!! Julia announced a new total for donations to M&S - \$3,698.

The 3rd video was a duo who sang *Jesus Loves Me*. Lesley told the assembled these contestants knew nothing of the fundraiser or the Masked Singer, but still participated and had fun! Clue #1 was: last name of one is the same as a US President (not the most recent) and the other is what is now just appearing on the trees. Clue #2 was: the singers are members and leaders of the only Indigenous Church Community in Winnipeg. Clue #3 was: with the YAAY and the church they are in, they created a Healing Park with traditional healing plants. They were revealed to be

Donna Kennedy and Connie Budd. Julia announced that \$4,558 had been raised in donations and pledges.

The 4th video of The Masked Singer was a group of 10. They sang *Go Now in Peace*. Clue #1 was: they began practicing 7 weeks ago, and first performed two weeks ago. Clue #2 was: the members of the group range in age from 4 to 16 years old. Clue #3 was: they are learning instrumental skills and collaborating with three different teachers in three different regional councils – Pacific Mountain, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters and Prairie to Pine. They were revealed to be 10 members of the Ukulele Church at Winnipeg: St. Mary's Road United Church. Lesley thanked them for their hard work.

Emma Seamone, Chair of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, then introduced the questions for consideration in the breakout rooms: How could the region better support your community of faith? Once again, recorders were asked to add the comments to the google doc for sharing later.

Sara Lough introduced a video of Lydia Smith talking about *Then Let us Sing!* This new online hymnal and music resource from United Church Publishing House and GIA Publications will contain most of the pieces you've come to love from Voices United, More Voices, and Nos voix unies, plus a growing collection of NEW music. This digital platform will provide copyright cleared music to all available hymns for print, projection and streaming. In 2023 a sampler will be out for feedback, in 2024, the *Then Let Us Sing* digital platform will be ready and in 2025, in time for the church's 100 Anniversary, a print book will be available. Emma thanked Sara for her presentation.

Emma then introduced the third theme word – *Re-vision*. She summarized that we have remember and reconnected, but now we need to seek a new vision, and remember who we are. She asked the gathered - What grounds you?? and What made you choose your object? The video of the Youth of Prairie to Pine singing *Like a Rock* was shown. Emma continued that it is tempting to fill time with words, but to seek a new vision, we need a time of silence. She read Psalm 85: 8, then posed the question; how often do we listen for God to talk to us? Do we have a time of silence to hear from God, to seek a new vision? She held for a few moments of silence, while inspirational quotes were shown on the screen.

After Emma invited folks back, she shared that the work the regional council had done on the Land Acknowledgement this past year, is the beginning of work for first people and settlers. She introduced Dr. Stewart Hill, who had participated in the crafting of Prairie to Pine's Land Acknowledgement. You can view Dr Hill's presentation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rb0uUSvEa94> at 2:36:00

Dr. Hill introduced himself by sharing he received his doctorate in 1991, he comes from God's Lake First Nation and speaks Cree. He has 30 years experience in natural resources and land management. In Swampy Cree, Ininiw means human being. He refers to himself as Ininiw, not Cree, Indigenous, etc. In his thesis, he discussed what land means and what land

acknowledgements mean. He said reiterated *We are all Treaty people*. In August of 1909, his people at Johnson Bay signed the treaty with the British Crown. Each interpreted the treaty differently, the crown believed that first nations had ceded the land. But, when First Nations people took their case to the United Nations decades later, they didn't believe that was so.

Stewart went on to say that the crown sent a representative to Johnson Bay, shook hands with the elders and promised the crown would take care of the people. They hadn't said anything about taking the land. He was told by his uncle, a few years ago (who was 92 at the time), that a similar conversation had taken place at Oxford House and, the people believed that they were told the truth. At the time, one of the commissioners told a story of 2 blades of grass – both put in the ground. One was broken, and the commissioner told them that represented the “half-breeds” (Metis) who won't grow because they don't have a treaty, but the full blade, will grow because of the treaty. What does that mean? The crown promised prosperity, but instead, the first nations peoples were made wards of the state. And the people have discovered that in order to be prosperous, they had to leave their communities. He continued that treaties are central to our relationship – we are **all** treaty people, our ancestors signed them. We may not like it, but we have to live with it. The only way to come to terms with it is reconciliation.

Stewart then shared some first nations knowledge about what land means to the Ininiw. In the medicine wheel, the circle has 4 quadrants. Each related with a direction: East is associated with the spirit and infancy; the South is associated with the physical body and childhood; the West is associated with emotions and the heart and with adulthood; and the North is associated with the mind and elderhood. The corresponds to the Bible – mind, body and soul - parts of the medicine wheel. The Land is in the physical and emotional part of the wheel. All parts are inseparable, there is only one word for creation and that is Earth. An acknowledgement of the land, acknowledges the spirit of people, the mental part of people as well. When settlers came, peoples already here helped them to survive. To move forward, we must reconcile in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. People can not be separated from the land. And land acknowledgements are a good start. We are seeing some evolving. He says our young people are rising up, returning to traditions, and language. This will lead to self-determination. Foundations are being built so relationships can grow in positive ways. We must do the best we can, because generations that follow depend on us.

Dr. Hill asked the gathered to reflect and think about land acknowledgements. Start to de-colonize your thinking, settlers need to start to Indigenize your mind. The root of the word ininiw is 4 – four parts, four directions, four parts of the human body, four stages of life. When you acknowledge the land, you acknowledge Indigenous people.

In response to a question following his presentation, Dr. Hill suggested two books that could be read to learn more. The first book was *No Surrender: The Land Remains Indigenous* by Sheldon Krasowski. The second suggestion was *Omushkego Legends and Histories from Hudson Bay* by Louis Bird. Emma Seamone thanked Dr. Hill for his presentation and asked for a time of silence to reflect on what we heard and what God might be saying to us. During the silence, more inspirational verses were displayed.

Emma then showed a picture of a boat and lighthouse as the object that grounds her. The boat is made from a piece of driftwood and is incorporated into a picture with a lighthouse that resembles the lighthouse from her home town. For years, that lighthouse has guided many boats to shore. Her time closed with the video of the YAAY of Prairie to Pine singing *My Lighthouse* being shared with everyone.

Once again, participants were sent to breakout rooms to reflect upon two questions – what relationships in Prairie to Pine could be re-visioned? And, what do we dare to dream for our region's future? Once again, recorders were asked to put notes on the google document.

Lesley Harrison and Julia Antonyshyn returned for the final installment of The Masked Singer. Julia announced that we ended with a total of \$4500 earlier this afternoon, and now the grand total was \$5213. Last year's final total was close to \$9000.

The last Masked Singer group was a duet with a male and female voice singing *Turn Around (Total Eclipse of the Heart)*. Clue #1 was: between the 2 of them, they had been on the Youth Planning Team 9 times. Julia broke in to announce a donation total of \$6,188. Clue #2 was: they are both in the Western Manitoba Youth Choir. Clue #3 was: one has red curly hair and the other has black curly hair. They were revealed to be George Meggison and Selina Santos. The new total for donations/pledges was \$6,788. The team that put together The Masked Singer was thanked – Julia Antonyshyn, Lesley Harrison, Twila MacNair and the tech team of Jillia Meggison and Matt Kenyon.

Pat Bird Co-chair of Prairie to Pine Regional Council Executive then offered the courtesies for the weekend: She started with Diane Dwarka for being her co-chair for the past year, then Andee Nikolaisen for creating the Logo for the meeting; Brenda Shodin for the worship service on Friday night, Jamie Miller from the Equity and Diversity Committee; the M&S team that provided us with *The Masked Singer*; the Chaplains; all the participants and attendees for the weekend, our special guests – Michael Blair, General Secretary; Dr. Stewart Hill, Michael Simmons, the UCRD representative; and Vicki Nelson, our Philanthropy Unit representative. Pat also thanked the people who created the videos for the youth, the In Memoriums, David Howell who did the retirees video, the Committee for Community of Faith Support for the Covenant video, and Don Schau and those participating in the upcoming LLWL video and each of the Prairie to Pine staff members for their work over the last year. She also thanked the members of the Regional Gathering Planning Team – Chair Emma Seamone, who was new to the regional council, but took on the job anyway and did a great job and Brenda Shodin, Julia Antonyshyn, Cherry Abad, Julie Graham, Graeme Leachman and Chelsea Zacharius.

Emma then invited everyone to center themselves for the closing worship in which our Licenced Lay Worship Leaders would be recognized for their service. She led the Call to Worship with Don Schau, who responded on behalf of the gathered. She then said an opening prayer, followed by the scripture reading of I Corinthians 12:4-7. Emma then presented the 6 names and locations of the Licenced Lay Worship Leaders that are being recognized as the result of actions by the Executive of Prairie to Pine Regional Council since January 1, 2019: Allison

Abbott-Wiebe from St. Paul's United Church in Graysville; Julie Hutton from Minnedosa United Church; Nora Lavery from St. Andrew's United Church at Sioux Lookout; Millie Lewis from Cloverdale United Church, Jamie Miller from Dryden: First United Church and Phyllis VerBeek from Winnipeg Beach UC. Then Don Schau, chair of the Lay Ministry/Lay Leadership Support Committee covenanted with the new Licensed Lay Worship Leaders. Then the list of Licenced Lay Worship Leaders trained before the restructuring re-affirmed their covenant with the new Regional Council; Linda Buchanan from Westminster United Church in The Pas; Rita Friesen from Neepawa United Anglican Ecumenical Shared Ministry; Hope Mattus from the United Church in Meadowood in Winnipeg, Daniel Schwartz from Bird's Hill United Church; Wilma Shirriff from Mckenzie United Church in Portage la Prairie; Susan Spindler from Beausejour: St. Paul's United Church; Ila Swain from Roland United Church; Jim Warburton from Warren-Meadow Lea Pastoral Charge and Nona Ward from Oakbank United Church. The covenant question was then asked of Regional Council members.

The closing hymn was *Creator God, You Gave Us Life MV#27*. Emma lead the closing prayer and gave the Benediction. Before closing, Diane Dwarka lead the installation of the new Co-chairs, Pat Bird and Erica Wiebe, of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council. As her last act, Diane Dwarka declared the meeting adjourned at 3:50pm.

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/>