



GENERAL COUNCIL NEWS

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The United Church of Canada

Mardi Tindal

NEW MODERATOR PASSIONATE ABOUT CREATION

by Jim Cairney

She tweets. She's green. She's media savvy. She's animated. That's Mardi Tindal, the 56-year-old newly elected Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

Speaking to reporters shortly after her election on August 14, it was obvious she will bring to her position as Moderator a visible passion for creation, for people, for the diversity of the United Church, and for living in the abundance of God's grace.

During her time with reporters she was effusive and warm, speaking in an evenly modulated voice well-honed through years of media work. She was at times lively and passionate about her ongoing convictions and deep sense of call to offer herself to the church in its highest elected office. The new Moderator is also an avid user of communication technology, posting a "tweet" (a short online comment) just minutes after she was elected.

"Let me say how excited I am to have this opportunity to serve the church in this way," said Tindal, who is the fourth lay Moderator. "I have a passion for continuing the work that has been done so well."

Tindal's hope is to support the church in its desire to live in covenant relationship with God and with each other.

"I am committed to encouraging young leaders," said Tindal, who is the Executive Director of the Five Oaks Centre, near Paris, Ontario, a United Church education centre.

"I am deeply committed to [a] right relationship with creation, in and beyond our faith community," she said.

"I will be inviting the church to imagine new ways of caring for creation," says Tindal, noting that this calls for "small actions and very significant large actions. It's bigger than us, but we are called to portray the integrity of creation.

"When I talk with youth and young adults in the church, it's their

passion as well,” says Tindal, an adult educator, author, and video producer who has served in several roles at all levels of the church.

In conversation, she passes on stories of people undertaking changes in their own lifestyles, or other actions, that will offset the carbon emissions of someone else. In fact, she may invite others in the church to take actions that will offset the carbon emissions related to her travel across the church as Moderator.

Raised in the rural community of Victoria Square, Ontario, and now living in Brantford, Ontario, she has an M.A. in psychology from the University of Toronto.

To a church struggling at times with the perception of inadequate resources, she would say, “What’s most important is to discern what’s faithful, set a course, trust in God’s abundance, and invite people into it.”

One of her spiritual disciplines is to begin each day with 20 to 30 minutes of silence—the practice of Christian meditation—to be silent, still, and simple. “In those times I’m reminded of God’s abundance, and things are put in their proper perspective, and the day is different as a result,” she said.

Tindal noted that she has been shaped profoundly by Parker Palmer and the Centre for Courage & Renewal in Bainbridge Island, Washington. It is there she learned about the concept of circles of trust. “I am committed to creating safe space,” said Tindal, “for souls to show up completely.”

In 2008, the United Church’s Francis Sandy Theological Centre honoured Tindal as a Companion of the centre. Her work as a video producer and presenter has been seen on TVO, affiliated CTV stations, Anglican Video, and on VisionTV, where she was co-host of the United Church television show *Spirit Connection*.

Tindal’s international church experience includes leading pilgrimages to Iona (Scotland), continuing education in Jamaica, and giving leadership within the global ecumenical network of retreat centres.

Her active involvement in the life of the church continues as a member of Sydenham Street United Church in Brantford, Ontario, and as a member of Erie Presbytery.



CHANGES PROPOSED FOR TRANSFER, SETTLEMENT

by Jeff Cook

Presbyteries/districts will be asked by remit to change the existing transfer and settlement process that places ordinands and commissionands in pastoral charges. Commissioners to the 40th General Council approved a motion to add more flexibility to this process.

The proposed changes would no longer require individuals to agree to accept the transfer and settlement system at the time they become candidates. Instead, by February 1 of the year of anticipated ordination or commissioning, they must choose transfer and settlement or call/appointment. This choice would be final for that year.

The transfer committee would no longer use the formal term “limiting conditions” to describe circumstances restricting where a candidate could be placed, but would “continue to honour reasonable accommodation, especially, but not exclusively, related to human rights concerns.”

Several commissioners expressed concern that the changes might adversely affect smaller pastoral charges and congregations.



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Charlotte Griffith

“I fear that if this is accepted or passed we shall not, or may not, receive order of ministry persons in our charge,” said Charlotte Griffith, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference.

David Hewitt, from Maritime Conference, said he worried that pastoral charges with “some attractiveness” and “a little more money” would be able to call students and the perceived “less attractive, marginal pastoral charges will become even more marginalized.”

Other commissioners said the change was needed.

Caryn Douglas, from the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, said the current

CHURCH STRUCTURES TO BE ANALYZED USING EMPIRE TOOLS

by Derek Carlisle

process “has not bred a desire to stay.” She said people who are settled can leave their first charge with “an attitude that I did my time.”

Retaining the current process unchanged would be “acting as if we still have a hundred people wanting to get into ministry,” said Bruce Hutchinson, from Bay of Quinte Conference. “We don’t.”



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Sarah Bruer

“It is hell,” said Sarah Bruer, from Alberta and Northwest Conference, referring to the settlement process. “I can’t encourage anyone in good faith to go into ministry because I have been harmed by this process.”

The proposed changes would be evaluated after five and 10 years of implementation. If adopted, financial incentives for those choosing transfer and settlement would be established by the Executive of the General Council.

The proposed changes will be voted on in a remit going to presbyteries/districts and pastoral charges. The changed policy will come into effect on July 1, 2010, provided that the remit is approved by two-thirds of the presbyteries of the United Church.

Commissioners also approved a motion directing the Executive of the General Council to review the requirements for the discernment committee process, particularly the requirements that presbytery representatives must be in place and call the first meeting in order for the process to begin, and the length of the process.



The United Church’s 40th General Council has directed the Executive of the General Council to analyze the structures and processes of the church using the principles and tools of the “Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire” resource materials.

Such an analysis would consider factors such as the degree to which structures and practices exhibit networking and are non-hierarchical with respect to power sharing. Another factor would be considering whether decision making is promoting distributive justice, inclusivity, and is based within the principles of global and local sustainability.

The Council considered three proposals relating to the report “Covenanting to Live Faithfully in the Midst of Empire.” Discussion on the report led the commissioners to combine elements of three different proposals through the work of an ad-hoc writing group.

Roy West, from Newfoundland and Labrador Conference, said he was concerned with the way language is often used in church reports. “If I told people in Newfoundland and Labrador about this report on living in the midst of empire, they wouldn’t have a clue what I was talking about,” he said. “A lot of the language in the report would not clear the Grade 8 reading test.”

One of the original proposals asked that the analysis of church structures be undertaken by a task group, however, the motion adopted eliminated the reference to forming a task group. The Rev. Brian Cornelius, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference, informed delegates on cost estimates for a potential task group that placed it in the range of \$10,000 to \$50,000.

The Rev. Vicki Obedkoff, from Toronto Conference, said that an independent task group was important. “The General Council Executive, in all due respect, is one of the organizations that needs to be looked at through the lens of empire... With respect to the cost of obtaining expertise, we could put up some limitations,” said Obedkoff.

Feedback from the analysis and recommendations on areas requiring change will be brought forward to the 41st General Council in 2012.

OTHER DECISIONS

In other decisions taken by the Council

- six members from the Aboriginal Ministries Council will become voting members of the Executive of the General Council
- future proposals coming before the General Council and its Executive will contain statements on the expected outcomes and program cost projections
- the United Church will maintain two-way contact with commissioners in the period from the rise of the General Council until the beginning of the next one
- congregations with active websites will be encouraged to post minutes of session, board, and council meetings online
- the inactive position of chief archivist will be removed as a corresponding member of the General Council Executive

These decisions were made by commissioners meeting in one of three decision-making commissions of the Council.



POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR GENERAL COUNCIL OFFICE

by Jeff Cook

It's nice to be wanted. That's what Nora Sanders, General Secretary of The United Church of Canada, told commissioners to the 40th General Council.

Sanders was asking commissioners to receive requests from the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario and from Montreal and Ottawa Conference to relocate the General Council Office to either Winnipeg or Ottawa.

"We're thrilled that there are two locations already vying for the location of the General Council Office," Sanders said.

She said there is currently a task group "looking at all the range of possibilities" for potential locations.

The commissioners agreed to pass the two requests to the task group.



PRESERVE EMERGING SPIRIT WEBSITE, LEARNINGS

by Jim Cairney

With great joy and thanksgiving for the Emerging Spirit campaign, the United Church's 40th General Council directed the Executive of the General Council to

- find ways and means to promote and preserve the WonderCafe website
- consult further with Conferences and presbyteries across Canada and Bermuda to determine continued application of Emerging Spirit learnings for church growth and development in all areas
- invite the Emerging Spirit leadership team to provide advice and consultation to the wider church in recognition of the wisdom and insights gained through their experiences
- incorporate emerging church principles into all areas of leadership development, including needs assessment, search practices, and through intentional curriculum development sponsored by the United Church



YOUTH FORUM: HERE AND NOW

by Ruth Denton

Ruth Denton, from Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference, shares her reflections on being a participant of General Council Youth Forum.

“We can’t vote, but we sure can party!” Life is short, but summer is shorter. Eighty-three youth felt called to spend 10 days away from home to learn about their church. From the tip of Labrador, to the edge of Vancouver Island, we gathered together in song and faith. For about 90 percent of the group, it was their first time to General Council, but the majority have attended their own local Conference meetings before.



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Ruth Denton

A strong sense of community developed within 24 hours of our arrival here. The leaders were so welcoming and compassionate to all of us. The best part was that the youth were all so open-hearted, and we began to grow relationships instantly.

We each belonged to a “Home Group” of approximately eight youth of similar age. In these smaller groups, we took the time each evening to bond with each other and reflect on our day. These were times of spiritual reflection, emotion, of praise, and a time of deep listening.

Every day we worshipped together with Christine Ciona, from Saskatchewan Conference, our fantabulous music director. Our group was filled with talented people, as a number of the commissioners witnessed at our coffee house early in the Council. Daniel MacDonald, from Bay of Quinte Conference, improvised on the fiddle for 15 minutes in the Council one day, as slides were shown for prayerful reflection. We spread our energy through music, song, and dance throughout the week.

In the two days before General Council began,

the youth had presentations from a variety of people preparing us for the seriousness of the meeting. We were honoured by the General Secretary Nora Sanders, and our Moderator David Giuliano, who gave us the opportunity to ask our curious questions. They showed us how much they really appreciated our interest in the church and supported us in our curiosity about the church.

Each day, our friend the Rev. Matthew Stevens taught us life lessons. He taught us the seven grandfather teachings: love, truth, respect, humility, honesty, courage, and wisdom. These are gifts to be used each day, he said, and it begins with you; only then can you offer them to others. He presented us with short lessons (like “be a disciple for Jesus through my actions, and not my words”) on a little piece of yellow paper each day, challenging us to follow through with the insight that day at General Council.

Our youth have so much to offer older generations. We bring fresh minds with new ideas and perspectives to consider, and voice our opinions so that others will listen. At our youth ministry learning option at Council, the adults who attended were bursting with curious questions.

The youth provided a number of contributions to the General Council meeting. The most important one was The Legacy Project. The Green Team started spinning the project in their presentation to us, and after their presentation, we took the project into our own hands.

“We are in debt to our environment,” declared Magdalena Jennings, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference.

Inspired and feeling the need to give back to the environment, we created our own Green Team. The Green Team began campaigning for commissioners to support buying a solar water heater for the Naramata Centre, British Columbia, with a total cost of \$35,000! Within three years, we would make up for the toll we have put on the environment to have this Council meeting. The large dollar amount did not deter our team; it only encouraged us to find new ways to get support. From table group competitions, to competing between the stewards, the Green Team found creative ways for people to donate. Currently we have not reached our goal, but we still aspire to reach it by the end of the meeting!

“We’re not just saying that we’re called to live

with respect in creation, but we're taking responsibility, and acting on it," said Spencer Frost, from Hamilton Conference, a member of the Green Team.

All of the youth from Youth Forum are extremely grateful for everyone's support of us, and are excited that our voice is finally getting heard. Bless you all on your journey, and we encourage and recommend all youth to get involved in the life of the church.



PLUIE ET VIE NOUVELLE

Par Darla Sloan

« Où avez-vous vu des signes de la résurrection cette semaine ? » Voilà la question que nous ont posée les membres du *listening team* pour guider notre période de discernement vendredi matin. Spontanément, j'ai répondu que, pour certains d'entre nous, il n'était pas encore dimanche matin. Rendus perplexes par le travail qui avait été fait ou qui restait à faire, préoccupés par des situations dans nos familles - ou dans le monde - que nous avons laissées derrière nous pour venir au Conseil Général, ou tout simplement toujours endormis (les délégué-es de la résidence Similkameen avaient été tiré-es du lit à trois reprises au cours de la nuit par une fausse alarme !) plusieurs avaient sûrement l'impression d'être le samedi saint plutôt que le dimanche de la résurrection. Après un temps de silence, une autre personne à ma table a ajouté : « Mais il y a la pluie ». Effectivement, même ceux et celles qui avaient dû attendre de longues minutes dehors aux petites heures du matin rendaient grâce pour ce don du ciel dans une région ravagée par des feux de forêt depuis des semaines. Un nouveau matin s'était levé sur Kelowna... et sur le Conseil Général.

Sous la pluie, l'argile de nos cœurs est devenue plus malléable. Lors de la première session plénière, nous n'avions adopté que l'ordre du jour. Vendredi,

nous avons mis la main à la pâte pour collaborer avec le Maître-Potier à la transformation de notre Église. Nous avons élu une nouvelle modératrice, Mardi Tindal. Le document *The Candidacy Pathway*, sur la transformation du processus menant vers le ministère ordonné, a été renvoyé à l'Exécutif pour que le travail puisse continuer. Les délégué-es ont adopté une proposition autorisant un « renvoi » (c'est-à-dire une étude pour toute l'Église) sur le processus de placement. Si les deux tiers des consistoires votent en faveur des changements proposés, le placement ne sera plus obligatoire et les candidats au ministère ordonné auront la possibilité de chercher un appel. De plus, nous avons adopté des propositions visant à reconnaître la présence et la spiritualité des Premières Nations dans les Bases de l'Union et l'écusson de l'Église Unie. Après le souper, les *Young Teens in Council* nous ont présenté le fruit de leur réflexion dramatique sur notre Église. Avec simplicité, profondeur et humour ces jeunes nous ont révélé leur vision et notre aveuglement aux possibilités devant nous.

Cette journée passionnante s'est terminée par un autre exercice de discernement. Avec les gens autour de notre table, il fallait, en six mots seulement, écrire une histoire racontant qui nous sommes et où nous en sommes comme communauté. En ces histoires, tout comme dans les sourires, les fous-rires, l'énergie et l'esprit qui circulaient j'ai discerné ce message : non, nous ne partageons pas tous et toutes le même point de vue, mais nos voix diverses sont unies. Nous nous réjouissons d'être entre les mains du Potier en pleine transformation. Que notre œuvre collective se déploie et que des signes de résurrection et de vie nouvelle continuent de se dessiner à l'horizon !



MINISTRY DESIGNATIONS, TERMINOLOGY DEBATED

by Jeff Cook

Former Moderator Marion Best added some levity to debates at the 40th General Council about ministry designations, terminology, and the requirements for ministry.

Best reminded commissioners that “you can become Moderator as a layperson without ever having to go through a Conference interview committee.”

Commissioners expressed frustration as they tried to understand the relatively new terminology of designated lay minister (DLM) and congregational designated minister (CDM) that have replaced former terms such as staff associate and lay pastoral minister.

“There is a huge amount of frustration and confusion over what we are trying to do as a denomination in changing a process that was clearly understood in the past,” said the Rev. Steve Berube, from Maritime Conference.

“I think that the church, in these designations, has created a problem for all of us,” said Darleen Stewart, from Saskatchewan Conference.

“We are far from an understanding of what we mean by all these terms,” said the Rev. Darla Sloan, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference.

Commissioners decided to take no action on several of the proposals they were considering regarding aspects of ministry. One of those motions asked that presbytery become the court of accountability for congregational designated ministers.

The Rev. Joe Ramsay, who is the United Church’s Manager, Ministry Personnel Policy and Programs, explained that if a CDM became accountable to presbytery, he or she would officially be considered as ministry personnel, which would require that they receive a housing allowance and be paid by minimum salary categories.

The Rev. James Farrell, from Alberta and Northwest Conference, said that factoring in a housing allowance would “defeat the whole purpose of having the freedom” for congregations to determine conditions of the ministry.

Commissioners approved a motion that defined CDMs as “laypeople employed by a pastoral

charge in a specified ministry position. They are accountable to the congregation and recognized by presbytery/district.”

Commissioners also decided that the discernment process for designated lay ministry should “be fully integrated within the discernment process for other forms of ministry.”

They decided that not all DLMs would be required to fulfill the requirements to be a licensed lay worship leader.

Commissioners did not approve a motion to recognize the ministry of music as a CDM, since congregations already have the option to do this if they wish.



ABORIGINAL INCLUSION IN BASIS OF UNION, CREST TO BE STUDIED

by Derek Carlisle

The United Church of Canada’s Basis of Union and crest will be the subject of study by two separate task groups with the aim of including references to Canada’s First Peoples.

The proposals for the task groups were adopted by commissioners at the 40th General Council in Kelowna, British Columbia.

General Secretary Nora Sanders outlined that the proposals were sponsored by the Executive of the General Council at the request of the Aboriginal Ministries Steering Committee. Sanders added that the intention of the motions was for the task groups to return with their recommendations at the next General Council in 2012.

The proposals offer great opportunities for both the church and for all Canadians, said the Rev. Maggie McLeod, of Hamilton Conference.

“Perhaps we’ll gain some understanding and have a deeper appreciation of the history of

Indigenous people in this land and the contribution that they have made to the development of Canada and of our church,” added McLeod.

“When I first heard about this and I first saw it, I thought ‘hooray, hooray.’ Finally, perhaps we’ll have the presence of my ancestors,” said the Rev. Evelyn Broadfoot from the All Native Circle Conference.

Broadfoot described herself as a third generation member of The United Church of Canada. Her grandparents and parents had assisted the ministers sent by the United Church over the years. Now Broadfoot herself is a minister.

“Maybe now we will have a word or two or even a colour that will represent us as the First Peoples of this land,” added Broadfoot.

The Rev. Graeme Carruth, of Montreal and Ottawa Conference, said he had several unresolved questions at this point in the process, including which First Peoples may become signatories to the Basis of Union. The Moderator said this was the type of question that the task group would examine. As for the crest, Carruth used the example of a recent change in the Canadian Forces crest for military chaplains. He recommended not letting go of the old United Church crest without taking time as a broader church to explore its deep meanings and history.

The Rev. Janis Campbell, from Maritime Conference, asked for information on what occurred with the Basis of Union and the crest at the time of the United Church’s union with the Evangelical United Brethren in 1968. Sanders said it was hard to use this as a comparison because a distinct denomination joined with the United Church at the time.

Former Moderator Dr. Marion Best recalled that the issue of incorporating the Evangelical United Brethren into the crest was still outstanding. The Rev. Karen Hamilton, from Toronto Conference, said she understood that there was “great pain” over the non-inclusion of the Evangelical United Brethren in the United Church crest. Best said she remembered that a request had been made by the Evangelical United Brethren at that time to incorporate them in some way.

“The compromise was that a banner was made which now hangs at Church House,” said Best. She suggested to the Council that there be an examination of including the Evangelical United Brethren in some way in the work of the task group.

CÉLÉBRER DIEU... ET EN FRANÇAIS EN PLUS !

par David Lefneski

Quel privilège m’a été accordé d’être sur le comité des cultes et célébrations durant le Conseil général de l’Église unie à Kelowna ! L’Église unie est reconnue pour la richesse de ses cultes, pour la variété des formes qu’ils peuvent prendre et pour l’étendue et la diversité des ressources liturgiques disponibles.

Bien avant la tenue du Conseil, nous nous sommes rencontrés pour partager nos idées et notre vision des liturgies quotidiennes. L’équipe avec laquelle j’ai travaillé était des plus dynamiques, prête à puiser à toutes les sources d’inspiration possibles, et il n’y a guère eu de difficulté à inclure du français dans chacun des cultes. Et merci au groupe rEvolue formé de quatre jeunes musiciens extrêmement talentueux pour son leadership musical remarquable !

Et qui a déjà dit que les membres de l’Église unie n’aient pas prier ? Non seulement une célébration et une période de chants ouvraient chaque session plénière, mais aussi chaque matin, ceux et celles qui le voulaient pouvaient prendre part à un moment de méditation tôt le matin ou à un culte du soir à la toute fin de la journée ; sans oublier les chants rythmés ou au contraire les moments de prière silencieuse qui ont ponctué toute la durée du Conseil. Nous avons eu droit à un culte animé par les enfants du Conseil et un autre par les jeunes ; et il reste encore le culte de clôture avec communion à venir ce soir.

Par ailleurs, il y avait tant de travail à accomplir durant le Conseil général que ce soit dans les débats en plénière, dans les commissions ou les conversations informelles. Certes, il y a eu parfois des tensions quant aux décisions à prendre qui ont des impacts majeurs sur la vie de l’Église, comme par exemple sur les ministères en français, mais aussi de nombreux moments de joies, de surprises ou de questionnement devant les défis à venir.

Au milieu de tout ça, un atelier sur le recueil « Nos voix unies » où trente personnes sont venues pour chanter en français et connaître de nouveaux chants en français. Nous avons eu droit à une

prière d'alliance initialement unilingue et ensuite distribuée en anglais et en français, et à nombre de chants avec des paroles en français.

Nombreuses sont les personnes qui affirment que le français a une place dans la vie et les célébrations de l'Église unie, et affirment que les francophones aussi ont leur place. Pour cela, je suis dans la joie et je rends grâce à Dieu.

L'Église unie peut bien chanter : Chacun, chacune a sa place (Bruce Harding/David Fines).



REPORT ON CANDIDACY SENT TO EXECUTIVE FOR FURTHER WORK

by Jim Cairney

After considerable debate, the report "The Candidacy Pathway" has been sent back to the Executive of the General Council for further work.

The report had identified, delineated, and explained a new seven-step process for candidacy for ministry:

1. Call forth: God calls persons to lead and serve.
2. Identify: The church tests the person's giftedness for ministry and identifies candidates for the order of ministry.
3. Accompany: The church accompanies candidates on the pathway.
4. Equip: The church provides opportunities for candidates to be educated for ordered ministry.
5. Assess: The church ensures candidates are gifted and prepared for ordered ministry.
6. Authorize: The church affirms the readiness of candidates for ordered ministry.
7. Celebrate: The church gives thanks to God for those offering to serve in ordered ministry.

The report

- removes membership as a requirement to beginning the process
- envisions a two-year candidate supply em-

ployment, rather than an internship

- envisions a greater role for the Conferences
- envisions an accompaniment role for the local presbytery
- sees discernment as an ongoing process, rather than a one-year step in the journey

In its deliberations, the Council declined to approve the report "in principle."

The Rev. Stéphane Vermette, of Ottawa, Ontario, said the consultation behind the report intended "to improve the process in the hope that it would engage more young people, recognize a diversity of contexts and candidates."

He said it is a process "where discernment is an integrated process and not just a stage to be accomplished." He said he hopes it would serve "a new generation of people called to ministry in The United Church of Canada."

The Rev. Ross Smillie, of Lacombe, Alberta, suggested the circle of accompaniment should provide pastoral support to the family members where appropriate and desired.

"Is this just another bus wreck waiting to happen

and wreck the lives of the people involved?" asked the Rev. Mark Ferrier, of Mount Forest, Ontario, commenting on the report as a whole.

The Rev. Brian Cornelius, of Ottawa, Ontario, said, "There are lots of specifics that need much more work."

Vic Weibe, of Weyburn, Saskatchewan, said

the report appears to "download the costs of internship to the local congregation." Said Weibe, "Nothing brings it together like an internship does."

The Rev. Matt Gallinger, of Ottawa, Ontario, said peer group learning is a good idea, except when interns are not close to each other.

The Rev. Warren Vollmer, of Lakefield, Ontario, suggested that professing one's faith (membership) should be an essential step for beginning the process.



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Mark Ferrier



NEW VISION FOR MINISTRIES IN FRENCH

by Derek Carlisle

A vision for new United Church ministries in French has been adopted by commissioners at the 40th General Council in Kelowna, British Columbia. The Council declared that francophone ministries “are an integral part of the identity, mission, and vision for the future of The United Church of Canada.”

Commissioners referred a detailed proposal from the Ministries in French Unit to the Executive of the General Council for implementation over the next three years, with a progress report to the 41st General Council in 2012.

The proposal stemmed from the unit’s report “A Vision for French Ministries in The United Church of Canada,” which was included with the briefing materials for commissioners. In order to commit the church to the expansion of ministries in French, the proposal calls for funding of \$3.25 million over 13 years, integrating the work into the current staff complement. The core of the funding commitment will be dedicated towards the creation of five full-time ministries in French to respond to identified potential for development in Montreal and Ottawa, Maritime, and Manitou Conferences, as well as Winnipeg Presbytery.

The Rev. Thierry Delay, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference, recommended that the proposal be referred to the Executive. Delay said that while the recommendations were an important part of the vision for strengthening ministries in French, he recognized that they needed to be addressed with care over the next three years.

“We really hope that you can share all the excitement and enthusiasm about the development and renewal of ministry in French, which is part of the ministry of the whole church,” said Delay.

Earlier in the week, the Ministries in French Unit made a presentation to commissioners on new francophone congregations forming in Quebec as well as interest from other communities across the country.

The Rev. Darla Sloan, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference, said she had been inspired by the

words of Moderator-elect Mardi Tindal. In these comments, Sloan said she was struck by the phrase that if the church lives in the fear of scarcity, then scarcity is what will be created. She added that the proposal was striving towards new and innovative ministries formed as a response to needs at the grassroots level.

“This proposal offers us a realizable possibility for reaching out to the more than 25 percent of the population of this country who are francophone or francophile. This is the work...for the good and the building up of the whole church.”



The United Church of Canada

Lloyd Henderson

Before coming to the General Council, Lloyd Henderson, from Alberta and Northwest Conference, had read the proposal and wondered how the church could afford to do this work.

“Since I’ve come here, I’ve looked around and seen what a wonderful, vibrant French ministry we’ve got,” he said. “I’ve turned 180 degrees and I can say ‘how can we not afford to proceed with this proposal?’”

As the church looks at the implementation of the vision for ministries in French, the Rev. Janis Campbell, from Maritime Conference, asked that there be consideration for the use of funds from any potential sales of property belonging to English-language congregations in Montreal and Ottawa Conference to help support the work of ministries in French.



LE RAPPORT DE L'UMIF SUR LES MINISTÈRES EN FRANÇAIS

par David Fines

Parmi les principaux rapports présentés au Conseil général de l'Église unie, l'assemblée s'est penchée sur celui l'Unité des ministères en français intitulé « Une Vision pour les Ministères en français dans l'Église Unie du Canada », avec en sous-titre « Les Temps sont favorables ». C'est le premier rapport d'importance exposant la situation des ministères en français et proposant des avenues de développement depuis celui présenté lors du Conseil général de 1982 à Montréal.

Le rapport, que les délégué-es ont reçu en versions française et anglaise avant le Conseil général, se divise en trois parties. Une première partie historique retrace l'origine des ministères en français de l'Église unie depuis l'arrivée, au 17^e siècle, des premiers explorateurs huguenots venus de France et la colonisation qui a suivi, ainsi que la rencontre pacifique et fructueuse avec les peuples autochtones ; cet historique décrit aussi le nouvel essor des franco-protestants causé par la venue de missionnaires européens et les colporteurs au 19^e siècle. Enfin elle se termine par la longue période de crise et la décroissance de la communauté francophone qui a suivi la formation de l'Église unie en 1925, suivie à son tour par une période d'espoir et de renouveau aux causes multiples, ces trente dernières années.

La deuxième partie expose le contexte actuel qui est celui des paroisses francophones de l'Église unie qui se retrouve principalement le long de la vallée du Saint-Laurent. Les leaders de cette communauté résiliente se savent devant une situation des plus favorables. Le rapport souligne, en effet, les pourcentages des francophones en recherche spirituelle à travers tout le pays. On constate notamment un intérêt nouveau pour le développement de nouvelles communautés de foi, en plus du Québec, dans les Maritimes, en Acadie, au Nord de l'Ontario et à Winnipeg. Tout en étant conscient des défis qui sont les leurs, notamment la quasi-absence et la méconnaissance de l'Église unie en milieux francophones, les responsables des ministères francophones comptent sur leurs atouts pour rejoindre ces personnes en recherche, du caractère prophétique des prises

de positions de l'Église unie et de son engagement pour la justice sociale au nouvel esprit de partenariat qui se voit autant au niveau local que national en passant par la décision de l'Église unie de devenir interculturelle, c'est-à-dire une Église inclusive et ouverte à tous les groupes.

La troisième partie de rapport, enfin, propose une stratégie intégrée et multiforme pour un développement optimal des ministères en français. L'emphase y est mise sur la réflexion théologique, la vision d'implantation et un approfondissement de l'analyse contextuelle. Il est aisé de se rendre compte qu'actuellement l'Église unie, étant donné le trop petit nombre de paroisses francophones, ne peut absorber le nombre croissant de vocations au ministère surgies de la pépinière qu'est devenu, par son pouvoir d'attraction, le Consistoire Laurentien (consistoire qui regroupe la majorité des paroisses francophones de l'Église unie). Il est tout aisé de voir que de nombreuses paroisses anglophones et des pasteurs individuellement s'ouvrent et cherchent à s'ouvrir à la population francophone environnante et que de nombreuses initiatives en ce sens émergent ici et là dans l'Église.

Plusieurs propositions contenues dans ce rapport suggèrent donc des améliorations aux programmes d'éducation et de formation offerts aux futurs pasteurs, au processus de placement en milieu francophone, à celui de discernement pastoral, à celui d'évaluation des compétences linguistiques et culturelles ; il propose aussi l'établissement de cours de français offerts à tout le personnel de l'Église ainsi qu'une certaine francisation des bureaux nationaux.

Enfin la proposition principale est celle de créer l'équivalent de cinq nouveaux postes à temps plein en français à travers l'Église et ce durant les cinq prochaines années. Selon une estimation d'un montant de 100 000 \$ par année pour soutenir pleinement un ministère, le budget total est évalué à 3,5 millions répartis sur les treize prochaines années.

C'est à un véritable et durable déploiement de sa mission en français qu'est appelée à adhérer toute l'Église unie par ce rapport.



VOTE SUR LE RAPPORT DES MINISTÈRES EN FRANÇAIS : UN APPUI SANS ÉQUIVOQUE

par David Fines

C'est un appui sans équivoque aux ministères en français qu'a manifesté l'assemblée du Conseil général en votant massivement les recommandations du rapport de l'UMiF (Unité des ministères en français), samedi le 15 août 2009, « Une Vision pour les Ministères en français dans l'Église Unie du Canada ». Il était clair que les membres du Conseil général avaient conscience de l'importance du vote. Ce rapport appelait l'Église unie à un tournant historique en ce que son but ultime est que toute l'Église dans son ensemble, en toutes ses composantes, s'approprie sa mission en français, la porte, la fasse vivre, et la considère comme une part de son identité.

Le rapport comme tel avait été présenté plus tôt durant la semaine par le pasteur Stéphane Vermette, président du Conseil d'unité de l'UMiF, accompagné de plusieurs francophones et de représentants des ministères interculturels et des ministères autochtones.

Au moment de la présentation des propositions en plénière, en ce samedi matin, le dernier jour de ce 40^e Conseil général, le pasteur Thierry Delay, président du Consistoire Laurentien, est venu au micro proposer quelques modifications au libellé afin de permettre une meilleure compréhension et une meilleure mise en place des nombreuses recommandations.

Au-delà de quelques demandes de précisions sémantiques, tous les commentaires au micro qui ont suivi, de la part de délégué-es tant anglophones que francophones, étaient tous favorables à ces propositions. Des interventions tout aussi positives les unes que les autres ont été entendues, du genre :

« C'est nouveau ! Il faut l'essayer ! » « Nous devons le faire et y mettre les moyens. »

Selon Neil Wallace, du synode Montréal et Ottawa, un partenaire de toujours de ministères en français : « C'est une excellente chose pour toute l'Église. Avec ce projet, nous avançons dans la bonne direction. »

Mais le témoignage le plus émouvant est sans aucun doute venu de la bouche de Lloyd Henderson, délégué du Synode Alberta et Territoires du Nord-Ouest.

« Lorsque j'ai lu ce rapport et que j'ai comparé le pourcentage de nos membres francophones et les coûts que ce projet entraînerait pour notre Église, je me suis dit : Comment pouvons-nous nous le permettre ? Mais je suis venu à ce Conseil général et j'ai vu présenter le travail remarquable des ministères en français, alors j'ai effectué un virage à 180 degrés et maintenant je me dis : Comment pouvons-nous ne *pas* nous le permettre ? »

Il était demandé aux délégué-es que le Conseil général « reçoive le rapport « Une Vision pour les Ministères en français dans l'Église Unie du Canada », et confie ce rapport et ses recommandations à l'Exécutif du Conseil général afin qu'il les intègre à sa planification pour la prochaine période triennale » et de déclarer « que les ministères en français font partie intégrante de l'identité, de la mission et de la vision d'avenir de l'Église Unie du Canada », ainsi que d'appuyer la proposition majeure du rapport qui est de créer l'équivalent de cinq nouveaux postes à temps plein en français à travers l'Église et ce durant les cinq prochaines années. Ce qui a été fait sans hésitation et avec grand enthousiasme.

Cette expression sans équivoque de soutien au développement des ministères en français par les quelque 350 délégué-es, pasteurs et laïcs, au Conseil général de l'Église unie marque indéniablement un moment charnière dans son histoire et un nouveau départ historique pour les ministères en français.

La communauté francophone présente au Conseil général a reçu avec beaucoup de joie et de reconnaissance cet appui sans équivoque aux ministères en français.



COUNCIL SHARES SIX-WORD STORIES

by Jeff Cook

Hurt, hope, and humour were expressed in “six-word stories” as commissioners described their experience at the United Church’s 40th General Council.

During the closing evening portion of the agenda on August 14, commissioners were invited to spend time in their table groups to create a story six words long.

Representatives from each table, as well as from the stewards and the visitors watching from the gallery, lined up at microphones to share their stories, many of which referred to the Council’s theme “down to the potter’s house.” Here are some examples:

- Hearts dancing through brokenness to welcome.
- Gospel told. People bold. Buildings sold.



The United Church of Canada

David Giuliano receiving stories from the Council.

- Church feels like mud—the potter approves.
- More franchises than Timmy’s—better bread.
- Followers of Jesus making the world better.

As commissioners spoke, Moderator David Giuliano stood on the front platform with his hands held out in blessing while the band rEvolve played to the side of the stage.

After commissioners had read their table’s story, they brought the papers on which the stories were written to the front and placed them in a clay pot. After all the stories had been gathered, Giuliano held the pot above his head.

“This pot has a hole in the bottom,” he said. “It’s cracked, but it’s strong enough to carry our stories. Amen. Thank you for them.”

Commissioners were invited to conclude their evening by praying together in their table groups. They left the gym clapping and dancing to the music of rEvolve.

The Young Teens in Council participated in the first part of the evening, inviting commissioners to join them in skits examining life in the church.

After the evening adjourned, Giuliano admitted that much of what had happened during the liturgy portion was “just made up as we went along.”

“I really felt that the Spirit was moving,” he said. He said the table responses showed a church that was ready to move forward and do something and “do it together with a sense of fun.”



CONCERN EXPRESSED FOR PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY

by Jeff Cook

The United Church's 40th General Council expressed concern for a West Bank Palestinian community engaged in non-violent protests.

Commissioners approved a motion "to support a KAIROS urgent action and direct the General Secretary, General Council, to communicate our solidarity to the village of Bil'in as they continue non-violent protests of settlement construction, and the barrier wall on their lands and in the face of arrests of community leaders, including Mohammed Khatib, and the escalating violence they face."

The Rev. Vicki Obedkoff, from Toronto Conference, said the motion gave General Council the opportunity to "send a message of solidarity to people who are scared." She said the army is closing in on the village.

Information posted on the KAIROS website (www.kairoscanada.org) says that Israeli military forces have arrested Khatib, a key Palestinian organizer in the West Bank village of Bil'in. Khatib travelled to Canada in June on an 11-city speaking tour to raise awareness of the situation in the village.

The website notes that the people of Bil'in have accused two Canadian-based companies "of being involved in constructing illegal Israeli-only settlements on Bil'in lands."

KAIROS is an ecumenical church-based social justice movement. The United Church of Canada is a one of KAIROS' ecumenical partners.



CALL TO PURPOSE AFFIRMED BY COUNCIL

by Jim Cairney

Near the end of the business of the 40th General Council, commissioners affirmed the "Call to Purpose" statement from the previous General Council.

That statement says:

- We long for a deeper relationship with God.
- We long for deeper connections with one another.
- We acknowledge the brokenness, pain, and fear we carry.
- We believe that our spirituality and our prophetic voice spring from one source and are lived in one body.

The Council also asked that "current and future priority setting, planning, and programs of The United Church of Canada be clearly informed by the statements in the Call to Purpose, with appropriate allocation of resources and calling, training, and equipping of leaders for the work of a more holistic United Church of Canada."

The original motion, from Hamilton Conference, asked that the Council focus upon and affirm the first motion in the call to purpose. However, the Council reaffirmed the other three points.

"It's hoping we will become a more spiritual church than we are now," said Walter Sowa of Hamilton Conference.

The Rev. Darla Sloan, of Quebec City, said the first statement is lived out through all facets of the other statements.

The Rev. Orrville James, of Burlington, Ontario, said, "It is from the 39th General Council. It would be great if we simply reaffirm it now at the 40th General Council."



FIVE THEMES SET TO GUIDE THE CHURCH

by Jeff Cook

On its last day of meeting, the United Church's 40th General Council affirmed five themes to guide the church during the next three years.

Representatives from the Council's Listening Team led commissioners in a process of setting directions.

The purpose of setting directions "is to identify directions for the church to guide the work of the General Council Executive and General Council staff during the next triennium," said Larissa Kanhai, a member of the Listening Team.

The five themes the Council affirmed were:

- emerging church (radical transformation, hope in the struggle)
- authentic relations with youth and young adults (camps, campus)
- outreach, social justice, and the care of creation (honouring relationships, peace initiatives, refugees, resisting empire)
- faith formation (empowering congregations)
- becoming a whole people (intercultural engagement, language, anti-discrimination work)

Kanhai reminded commissioners that the five themes should direct the whole church, not just the General Council Executive and staff. "These are also for us," she said. "We are the church."

She asked commissioners to consider how they would "live these out" in the context of their own congregations and community.

"How do you want to be the church in the world?" Kanhai asked.

Commissioners were given time in their table groups to discuss the ways they would share and live out the themes when they returned home.



COUNCIL STRUGGLES OVER BUDGET CUTS

by Jim Cairney

"It is clear that the Mission and Service Fund on which we rely for our work is dysfunctional, and has been dysfunctional for 20 years," said the Rev. Jim Christie, from the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario.

"I would hope that this General Council through the General Council Executive would begin the extremely sensitive and difficult process of developing new strategies of funding partnerships among the national, regional, and local expressions of The United Church of Canada," said Christie, who was one of eight candidates for Moderator in an election process earlier in the General Council meeting.

Christie spoke following a tussle on the floor of the General Council over priorities and funding—particularly whether the church could maintain its mission and social justice work without any further funding cuts.

The original motion sought an assurance that there would be no further reductions in mission support grants to congregations and community ministries in Canada, grants to global partners, the work of overseas personnel, and the staffing and program budget of the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit of the General Council.

Instead, as one of its last acts of business, the Council ended up asking that the Executive of the General Council give high priority to these areas of its work.

The final version of the proposal asked that the Council "affirm as a mission priority our engagement in seeking justice in Canada and with our global partners."

The Rev. Wendy Rankin of Morden, Manitoba, speaking for Don Hunter, the Chairperson of the General Council Permanent Committee on Finance, said the church understands the pain and frustration of budget cuts to justice and global work.

"We have to resist the temptation to fall into a protectionist approach to the work of the church," said Rankin, thereby creating "sacred cows" or "silos."

The Rev. Faye Wakeling of Verdun, Quebec, said,

“It’s not a silo approach but about long-term commitments. The repercussions of the cuts in 2007 were very, very serious.”

Bruce Hutchison, of Kingston, Ontario, said, “This sets up one special area for no reductions. I don’t think we want to hamstring the Executive on this.”

Speaking in support of protecting these areas, the Rev. Susan Eagle, of London, Ontario, said, “This is where the rubber hits the road. It’s part of our identity as The United Church of Canada.”



COUNCIL THANKS OUTGOING MODERATOR

by Derek Carlisle

The travel satchel is packed with loving United Church hands and awaiting its first destination.

During closing proceedings of the 40th General Council in Kelowna, British Columbia, the Children in Council presented outgoing Moderator, the Rt. Rev. David Giuliano, with a backpack in recognition of his love of travel and service in Central America before he entered the ministry.

The children sang a verse in Spanish of “Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore” before presenting the Moderator with his satchel stuffed with coloured cut-outs of hands. Each hand contained prayers, thoughts, and words of appreciation collected from commissioners at the Council. Giuliano was encouraged to read these words whenever he needed inspiration, with the additional knowledge that he represented God’s hands.

The Rev. Nancy Ferguson, Chair of the Moderator’s Advisory Committee, introduced a slide presentation showing images of Giuliano’s term of office. Quotes were also interspersed from the Moderator’s first media interview with *General Council News* writer Jeff Cook in August 2006. The

first visual showed a split screen image of Giuliano in 2006 with full hair and then one in 2009 showing a more follically challenged Moderator.

“Don’t worry,” the Moderator said to his successor, Mardi Tindal. “It doesn’t happen to everybody.”

Ferguson said that despite the “unwelcome blessing” of a cancer diagnosis in the Moderator’s first few months, the Moderator had “embraced its unfolding and invited us to walk” with him.

“None of us, let alone you, could have imagined how your term would unfold,” said Ferguson. “Yet there you were in the midst of the valley of the shadow, boldly speaking the language of authenticity and vulnerability.”

Throughout his medical procedures, the Moderator continued to post blogs and compiled journal entries.

“You offered your body as vessel and your cancer as lens inviting us to embrace what the world considers weakness as a very place where one encounters God’s power. You reminded us time and time again to heed the counsel of the angels to ‘be not afraid,’” said Ferguson.

Following sustained applause, the Moderator thanked the members of his Advisory Committee and his wife, Pearl, who “has been a wonderful companion who has grounded me in the world beyond my role as Moderator.”

Giuliano said it had been a great privilege and profound experience to serve the church. He added that he looked forward to returning to a “simpler life” and said he felt “peaceful” passing on the torch to the next Moderator.

Sustained applause was also offered for the hundreds of volunteers from the Kelowna area and the entire British Columbia Conference who assisted in making the Council proceedings run smoothly throughout the week. Those responsible for providing the Council with cookie, muffin, fruit, and vegetable refreshments received a separate standing ovation.

The Rev. Susan Eagle, from London Conference, received agreement from the Council after suggesting that the local drought-resistant plants on the tables throughout the Council be transferred to local volunteers.

A delegation from Montreal and Ottawa Conference and Ottawa Presbytery extended a warm

invitation to all those who will be attending the United Church's 41st General Council in Ottawa in 2012. A t-shirt from the delegation was presented to Moderator-elect Mardi Tindal. Outgoing Moderator Giuliano thanked the delegation for its enthusiastic presentation and gracious invitation.

In his closing prayer to conclude formal Council business, Giuliano said that commissioners had gone down to the potter's house as faithfully as they could.

"Now we come up from that place with new insight and understanding about our community, about ourselves, about the world around us and about your dream for it all," he said. "Help us to be agents of that dream and help us to walk in a good way with one another in discipleship to Jesus. May your spirit enliven our hearts and guide our way and give us the strength to what you call us to. Fill us with joy for the journey. Amen."



LE CULTE DE CLÔTURE : L'UN DES MOMENTS FORTS DU CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL

par David Fines

Le 40^e Conseil de l'Église Unie du Canada s'est terminé samedi soir le 15 août par un très émouvant culte de clôture réunissant près de 1 000 personnes dans le grand gymnase du Campus Okanagan de l'Université de Colombie-Britannique dans la ville de Kelowna.

Le culte de clôture est toujours l'un des moments culminants d'un Conseil général. Ne serait-ce que parce qu'il s'agit de l'envoi des délégués et des membres de l'Exécutif dans tous les coins de l'Église afin de partager dans leurs communautés

locales – consistoires et synodes – ce qu'ils et elles ont vécu durant le Conseil général et les débats qui s'y sont tenus, et afin de poursuivre le travail qui y a commencé et de mettre en œuvre les décisions qui ont été prises.

Mais ce dernier culte est aussi un moment attendu parce qu'il comprend une cérémonie qui a toujours quelque chose de solennel : l'installation de la nouvelle modératrice, en l'occurrence Mardi Tindal. Après un dialogue d'engagement mutuel avec l'assistance, elle a reçu une étole des mains de son prédécesseur David Giuliano et d'une ancienne, représentant le Premières Nations, le bâton de commandement. Soulignons que plus tôt dans la journée ce dernier avait reçu un vibrant et touchant hommage de reconnaissance de la part du Conseil général, tant pour son courage que (il a dû faire face à un cancer) pour la qualité de son leadership.

Le comité responsable des cultes du Conseil général a proposé une célébration à l'image de bien cérémonies dans l'Église unie, soutenue par une liturgie diversifiée et festive, aux divers éléments à la fois variés et intenses. Il a aussi pris soin d'y inclure du français autant dans la lecture de la Bible, que celle de la Confession de foi, et la prière de communion ou encore dans les chants choisis.

L'animation musicale était assurée bien sûr de façon on ne peut plus dynamique par le groupe rEvolve. Quels talents possèdent ces quatre jeunes hommes pour faire chanter et danser les gens et pour les faire « bouger » (selon le thème de l'une de leur composition) !

Dans le déroulement de la cérémonie se sont succédés : les carillons mélodieux d'un ensemble de cloches ; la prière d'ouverture toute colorée des enfants ; la prière d'action des grâces mi-mimée mi-parlée des jeunes ; la prédication de la nouvelle modératrice qui a insisté sur notre obligation de prendre soin de la Création de toutes les façons possibles ; une chorale formée de membres du Conseil général et de membres des églises unies de Kelowna ; la communion distribuée par des paires formées d'une personne âgée et d'un enfant avec du pain que les enfants du Conseil avait cuisiné la journée même. À la toute fin, les bougies des quatre directions qui avaient allumées le premier jour du Conseil général ont été éteintes et emportées hors de la salle pour précéder les participants sur leurs chemins de retour jusqu'au prochain rendez-vous.

Ce rendez-vous se fera dans trois ans. C'est en effet au mois d'août 2009, dans la ville d'Ottawa, qu'aura lieu le 41^e Conseil général de l'Église unie. Plus tôt en après-midi, toute la délégation du synode Montréal-Ottawa, menée par Barbara Reynolds, responsable du Comité organisateur, avait lancé l'invitation... en français et en anglais, puis avait terminé par un enthousiaste :

« Chers frères et sœurs, c'est votre tour de vous laisser parler d'amour ! »

Ça promet !



MODERATOR INSTALLED AT CLOSING WORSHIP

by Jeff Cook

Mardi Tindal was installed as the 40th Moderator of The United Church of Canada during a worship service in which this General Council's theme, "down to the potter's house," was interpreted through words, music, and movement.

Nine family members and friends placed their hands on Tindal's head as she knelt, and the previous Moderator, the Very Rev. David Giuliano, asked God to "send your Spirit upon your servant, Mardi... that she may serve faithfully in this office."

Tindal received several gifts, symbolic of the office of Moderator—a stole, a talking stick, and a necklace. Potter Darryl Auten, from Salmon Arm, British Columbia, presented Tindal with a large bowl and a small bowl, both of which had been created during the opening worship service a week ago. The smaller of the two bowls had not yet been glazed. As Auten gave the bowl to Tindal, he said it was to remind her that all beautiful things "are not yet finished."

Sarah Wyatt, from the General Council Worship Committee, presented Tindal with a clay pot "holding the prayers and dreams of our church." The



The United Church of Canada

Mardi Tindal

Children in Council gave Tindal a traveller's satchel containing a reusable water bottle, indicative of Tindal's concern for the environment, and an Intelligence Manual with advice from the children.

"As a church, we will keep on striving to discern God's call to us," Tindal said during her sermon.

Tindal asked commissioners to return to their communities and continue the work of the General Council. She told them not to wait for the General Council to develop programs. "Together, we are the program," Tindal explained.

Tindal also asked commissioners to do what they could to help offset the carbon footprint she would create as she travelled as Moderator on their behalf. "I promise to pray for you and this church daily," she said.

Throughout the service, children, youth, and young teens used physical movements and poses to interpret scripture readings, prayers, and reflections.

Early in the service, Auten, wearing a potter's apron, reminded commissioners of the Council's

theme, based on Jeremiah 18:1. “On occasion the potter has to make decisions about what is holy and what is right and what is beautiful about their creation,” he said.

He explained that sometimes potters will destroy a piece of their work in order to reuse the material. Using a hammer, he broke several bowls he had made. Some of the pieces he broke were flawed, but some had been finished pieces.

“Sometimes it is a thing of beauty,” he said. Sometimes potters break “something very close to their hearts.”

He said that what Jeremiah learned in the potter’s house was that one’s connection with God is not limited to the temple, but is found “in the hearts and minds of the people of God wherever they were.”

In addition to the bowls presented to Tindal, Auten also presented a large and small bowl to Giuliano in appreciation of his service to the church as Moderator.

The Okanagan Mass Bell Choir and a 70-voice choir consisting of commissioners and visitors to Council offered music during the service.

The Children in Council had baked the small loaves of bread that were served during communion. Everyone received a small clay cup in which to receive the communion juice. Communion was served at several stations by children and some of the yellow-shirted volunteers who had been part of the week’s meeting.

The candles that had been lit during the opening worship were extinguished and carried from the worship area. The candles symbolized the four directions, which are honoured in First Nations traditions.

“Christ, you are before us as what gives us courage to keep moving,” Tindal said in benediction. “We dedicate ourselves to you now.”



Welcome To *General Council News*

General Council News is being posted daily on The United Church of Canada’s 40th General Council website gc40.united-church.ca, and sent as an e-newsletter to individuals, congregations, and news media that have requested it.

Each day a single printed copy will also be delivered to all table groups for commissioners to share. The final edition of *General Council News* will be available online within 24 hours of the closing of General Council on Saturday, August 15.

General Council News reporters will be covering the highlights and significant happenings of the 40th General Council, rather than recording everything that happens each day. All General Council News stories may be reproduced freely.

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