

# Keeping in Touch

January 2016

NEWS FOR  
UCW GROUPS



## The National United Church Women

### Roots and Wings

Greetings to my sisters in faith! As we moved through Advent and Christmas we had the opportunity to reflect on beginnings and the amazing grace of God. Now, as we step into this new year full of hope and anticipation, we are thankful for those tenacious and sometimes tender roots that have been nurtured in the past year.



During this church season I invite you to reflect on the magic and mystery of the magi, of their adventure—a journey of expectation and definitely of wonderment. We believe we know the story; we have heard it often in the past, but the more times we hear it, the more we realize how little we actually know.

Did you know it is said poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow named the three wise men? He identified them, those men who travelled by night and slept by day—he labelled them for all eternity as Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar. Naming them and hearing the story makes them real to us and causes us to question: Were they kings? How many were they actually—three or ten, or twelve or more? Where did they travel from? Was there a star, or was it a planet? And why did they take the trip? What prompted them out of their comfortable lives to follow the star to an unknown destination?

We too, as United Church Women, are called to continually look to the future, to be open to new possibilities, to honour our roots, and to spread our wings following an unknown path guided by the ever-present Light.

### National Executive Meeting

Your National United Church Women's Executive met September 14–18, 2015, in Mississauga, Ontario. Each day began with breakfast at 8:00 a.m. and ended with vespers at 8:00 p.m. During an information-packed week we had the opportunity to spend one day at Church House and meet with staff members. We are thankful for the good and faithful folks who share their gifts and expertise and support the church through their various portfolios. This year, we had 100 percent attendance—that is, all Conference/District UCW presidents and vice presidents were able to set time away from home and family and obligations to attend. In turn, that offered us the opportunity to discuss what worked/didn't work and share ideas and plans for the future.

Here are a few highlights of the gathering:

### With Appreciation and Many Thanks

National United Church Women received a certificate of appreciation for the \$1,462,840.00 that was given to Mission & Service. Sisters, sometimes we say we can do so little, but as the saying goes, together we can do much. Congratulations.



President Beverley Green presented a special NUCW table/wall hanging that will be a part of each national gathering.

### Mark the Date: 55th Anniversary

The British Columbia president and vice president made a presentation on the upcoming 55th anniversary of UCW. We look forward to “Celebrating Spirit,” July 10–14, 2017, in Vancouver.

### Updates on Projects

The draft of the new *Handbook* was presented, and the draft of the new brochure was circulated and critiqued.

The Child Well-Being Initiative has rolled out across Canada and is being embraced in a variety of ways. Each Conference/District had the opportunity to share with the group how this project is being lifted up in their particular geographic area.

The Dorothy Amos Fund description and terms were finalized. The fund may be used to support greater connection of members of UCW with other church women in Canada and around the world. The Agatha Kaasa Fund committee has been

### Correction to October 2015 *Keeping in Touch*

In the October 2015 edition, page 2, “Thank You, Bev!” the middle paragraph mentioned Beverley Green’s parting gift to us. The gift was a wall hanging/table cover, not a communion cloth. We apologize for the error.

renamed and will look after both funds. Details of the application process and criteria for the Dorothy Amos Fund is to be developed by the committee.

We were updated on our 2012 Morogoro project. Three more trainings were scheduled for 2015, and if money is left over it may be used to include a fetal scope in the birthing kits.

The new United Church of Canada website will launch in 2016 and the UCW page is being revamped, so send your stories and pictures (with permission, of course).

After much sharing and discussion, it was agreed to strike a Communications Committee. It seems that some pastoral charges do not list UCW on their websites—no names of the executive, meeting dates, or events. We agreed we should check our home church websites to see if UCW is listed.



### Presentations

- Rob Dalgleish, Executive Director of EDGE: A Network for Ministry Development, shared with us what UCW already knows: we do mission better when we work together.
- Jordan Sullivan of the Discipleship and Witness Cluster spoke on the topic of poverty and our responses to it, emphasizing that all poverty work must lift up the voices of those with lived experience in poverty.
- The Philanthropy staff made three presentations: Inspire, Ask, Thank; an update on the United Church Foundation; and Mission & Service funding.

- The Rev. Maggie McLeod, Executive Minister of Aboriginal Ministries, shared information on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action and touched on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

- Eric Mathiesen, Executive Officer of Finance, focused on the overall financial picture: the church needs to reduce costs, no matter what. Many options are being looked at.

- The Rev. Michael Blair, Executive Minister of the Church in Mission Unit, spoke about the present United Church of Canada and the opportunities change may offer to the church and the UCW.

### Moving Forward

As we look at all that is to come, I am reminded of a woman who was going through much emotional brokenness. She said the words that kept her going were “We are not alone.” Sisters in faith, we are not alone—we rise up to continue the work before us. And for that we say thanks be to God.

To my sisters in faith I offer you this scripture passage from Hebrews 12:1:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

As we move forward in the coming year, let us always remember that we are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Shalom,

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*National President,  
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