

Keeping in Touch

NEWS FOR
UCW GROUPS

May 2016



The National United Church Women

Roots and Wings

God can bless you with everything you need, and you will always have more than enough to do all kinds of good things for others.—2 Corinthians 9:8 (CEV)

Welcome spring, welcome new beginnings, and welcome sisters to this marvellous journey we are on. In this issue we look back—our ROOTS—and look forward—our WINGS.



Looking Back

First Conference UCW presidents, 1962, Mrs. Luscombe (Newfoundland), Mrs. McIvory (Alberta), Mrs. Weatherhead (Bay of Quinte)

Photo: 92.185P/710. United Church of Canada Archives

Let's begin with our roots. In 1962 the UCW (United Church Women) was created as the successor to the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS), a world mission-oriented service and study group. This organization supported 97 active missionaries around the world. With the formation of UCW these women turned over \$1,850,000 to the church.

The WMS calculated they represented 270,000 women and youth in adult and affiliated auxiliaries. The Woman's Association (WA) focused on work at home, in the local church and community. Guilds and Ladies' Aids were the forerunners of WA. In the early years, most of these units went unrecorded. They just were, and they just did what needed to be done, spiritually, financially, and socially. WA in 1961 had 215,387 members and that final year raised an amazing \$5,527,470 for church purposes.

This tremendous volume of work is the roots that have been passed on to us. Those choices, values, and ideals that were nurtured in the past give us confidence to spread our wings and to rejoice as we offer our hands and hearts to others.

Looking Forward

"Poverty dolls" on the communion table at Wesley Knox United Church, in London.

Photo: Brian Dalton



Today, that spirit of generosity continues from coast to coast to coast.

Our Bread Not Stones campaign continues to bring awareness to local units, to congregations and Conferences, and to those in positions of authority. These actions across the country may not always hit the local publications, but they are indeed making an impact. Thanks to each and every one of you for persistently lifting up this topic in conversation and in worship. In addition to resources on the United Church website, Wesley Knox United Church in London has set up www.endchildpoverty.ca.

In changing times, we can focus on transformation, renewal, and lively discussions of what is possible. There is a story of a man walking in the hill country. He encountered an enormous snake, three inches thick and four feet long, stretched out in the sun. The man had no weapon, no stick, no axe with which to attack the creature. He stood so still he could hear his heart beating. And then before his eyes, he saw a miracle: new birth. The snake shed its

skin, left it lying in the sun, and moved on as a new and beautiful creature. Sometimes we see only the negatives and miss the opportunity to be blessed with the positives.

We continue to be a vital part of this United Church of ours. We prepare bereavement teas, host baby showers, meet with politicians, teach Sunday school and vacation Bible school, sing and praise and lead worship, and so much more. Sisters, if you struggle with filling offices in your groups, I encourage you to be inventive. Perhaps the president's position, for example, can rotate from meeting to meeting. Stay involved in your church and the wider church and in the mission of the church. Your reward will be greater than you can imagine.



55th Anniversary Update

Come and be part of our celebration!

Begin by facing west. Leave behind the Atlantic Coast and Bermuda, the bustling cities of Montreal, Toronto, and Hamilton, venture through the trees and past the lakes of Northern Ontario, be awed by the vastness of the Prairies, and experience the majesty of the Rocky Mountains. Come to the Pacific Coast. A wonderful scenic drive along the Trans-Canada Highway will bring you to the city of Vancouver—or if you prefer, a plane ride is much quicker!

Join us for **Celebrating Spirit**, as BC Conference UCW hosts our 55th anniversary gathering **July 10 to 14, 2017**, on the **University of British Columbia campus**. UBC is a 20-minute drive from the Vancouver International Airport, on the scenic Point Grey Peninsula, Vancouver.

The Totem Ballroom, where our main sessions will take place, our dining area, and the residence are in close proximity. The residence has elevators; the rooms are semi-private, each two guests sharing a washroom.

Sisters, let us plan for 2017.

Canada will celebrate 150 years with red and white. Let us add our gold, blue, and white to the revelry. Invite past members' families, worship leaders, charter members, life members, invite the folks from other denominations.

Invite the Spirit to move and rejoice among you.

*Spirit divine, attend our prayers:
make a lost world your home;
descend with all your gracious powers:
O come, great Spirit, come! (VU 385)*

Remember and honour those women who have given us this legacy of food, fun, fellowship, study, witness, and service. Our mission as United Church Women is

- to love God
- to foster Christian faithfulness, spirituality, commitment, and devotion
- to promote love and respect by living generously and giving joyfully to all God's people
- to affirm and strengthen ourselves creatively

We pray, may God be with us on our journey.

Historical stats from *Voices of United Church Women, 1962–2002*, ed. E.G. Muir (The United Church of Canada, 2002.)

We have arranged for limited rooms pre- and post-gathering at conference rates.

We will honour traditions of these national anniversary gatherings. There will be an opening night Parade of Banners. Music will be led by our very own Linnea Good. Our plenary speaker, Anne Mortifee, will bring alive our theme, *Celebrating Spirit*. There will be a day of enrichment sessions, a day to tour some lower mainland treasures, and a bookroom to browse. And for the banquet, we are pleased to announce an evening of fine dining with our Moderator, the Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell, as guest speaker. Extra tickets are available for this Gala Evening.

All this, but we have not forgotten how important it is to have time to meet and visit with friends from across the nation! On behalf of the Planning Committee for the 55th anniversary, we bid you welcome. Come and experience the West!

—Sandra Dunning and the 55th committee

Our work continues in the midst of love and laughter, of joy and renewal. Spread your wings and rejoice.

Your sister in faith,

Phyllis Buchner,
National President, UCW

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