

Keeping in Touch

January 2017

NEWS FOR
UCW GROUPS



The National United Church Women

Here I Am, Lord

As your new National UCW President, I bring you greetings for a Happy New Year 2017. As we celebrate Epiphany, we have a shiny new year to work with and lots to do in the name of United Church Women to the glory of God. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" and the UCW will continue to spread his light through our devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship, and service.

Methodist World Conference Report

On August 29, 2016, Phyllis Buchner and I flew to Houston, Texas, for the 13th World Assembly of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. This 2016 gathering was the largest ever.

In addition to Phyllis and me, the Canadian delegation included the Rev. John Young (GCO staff and group leader), Teresa Burnett-Cole (Theology, Interchurch and Interfaith Committee), Natasha Walton (YAYA), and Sheldon Dugas (YAYA). Betty Turcott and Sandra Dunning were also in attendance.

World President Ann Connan, from Australia, was the event leader, assisted by World Vice President Regula Stotz, from Basel, Switzerland. "We are here from all the corners of the world; from the nine geographical Areas of the Federation; from both large and small United Methodist and United Church Women. We are here as one family united in our aim, 'To know Christ and to make Him known'; to share and learn from each other; to prepare ourselves for service in the next quinquennium under a new theme: God's Chosen People: Chosen to Proclaim," said Ann.

On the Thursday of the Assembly, black T-shirts were worn to speak out against violence against women. Why wear black on Thursdays? It is a way to show that you are tired of putting up with rape and violence in your community. It shows your

desire for a community where we can all walk safely without fear of being beaten up, verbally abused, or discriminated against due to sexual orientation, political affiliation, gender, or ethnicity. Enough is enough! The Thursdays in Black movement began in the 1980s through the World Council of Churches.

At the opening worship there was a procession of banners. The Rev. Teresa Burnett-Cole and Natasha Walton carried The United Church of Canada banner. A moving Creation Story was presented in music by the Festival Choir of Christ Church Sugar Land, UMC, with narration by the Rev. Valencia Edner.

Mission & Service Global Pilgrimage: Kenya

The National Council of Churches of Kenya will bring together 26 churches and 10 related organizations, March 25-April 4, 2017. The council has responded to socio-political, economic, and cultural issues for almost 100 years. One spot was reserved for the UCW on this Mission & Service pilgrimage. I pray God's blessings on these pilgrims as they travel to Kenya, and look forward to hearing their stories when they come home. Please join me in saying, "Here I am, Lord."

—*Nancy Sutherland*

President, National United Church Women

National AGM

Our National UCW annual meeting was held September 19–23, 2016, at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, ON. Twenty-eight Conference Presidents or their representatives attended. It was a wonderful time of renewal with old friends and making new ones. Music leadership was provided by Judy Biondi of Manitou Conference, with Margery Wright of Alberta and Northwest Conference at the piano.

Guest speakers included the Rev. Jim Cairney, on Israel and Korea, and the Rev. Sarah R. Chapman on the Peace Seminar in Korea. We heard from Pat Elson, People in Partnership; Melody Medonca, Canadian Foodgrains Bank; Erik Mathiesen, Chief Financial Officer of the United Church; and General Secretary Nora Sanders. Amy Crawford led us in Bible study using Exodus 1:6 and 2:10; and the Rev. Michael Blair brought the message at our final Worship Service of Communion and Installation of the new National UCW President, Nancy Sutherland of Bay of Quinte Conference.

A motion was passed to make the Treasurer's position a permanent one with an honorarium. A committee will proceed with the necessary steps. I look forward to receiving your applications for this very important job.

The updated UCW Handbook is available online: search www.united-church.ca for "UCW Guidelines."

The NUCW has an Endowment Fund, which can be a good idea for memorial gifts honouring loved ones, anniversaries, people leaving an office, and so on. A special thank you to all the UCWs across Canada for your \$1.00 per lady donation to the National UCW—and we encourage you to continue your support.

55th Anniversary—"Celebrating Spirit"

We're heading west and the excitement is building! BC Conference UCW is hosting the 55th Anniversary of National UCW. **July 10–14, 2017**, is the date and



UBC Totem Residence is the place. Registration forms are out and available online, and 55th anniversary pins are available from your local presidents. Three anniversary worship services are in the works, and we are anticipating a spectacular parade of Conference banners.

The Anniversary Committee has been working hard to make this a wonderful gathering of fellowship for all the UCW from coast to coast to coast. There are 7 tours and 10 enrichment sessions—something for everyone. Financial assistance is available through the Agatha Kaasa and Dorothy Amos funds.

The plenary speaker will be **Ann Mortiffee**, an Order of Canada recipient and a YWCA Woman of Distinction for her contribution to the healing and performing arts. Music will be under the leadership of **Linnea Good**, whose primary work is to help individuals and churches express their souls through music. The Moderator, **the Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell**, will be our guest speaker at the closing banquet.



Child Poverty Initiative

We are now in year four of our five-year Initiative to End Child Poverty in Canada. The UCW can be proud of the work we have done to bring awareness to the one in six children who live in poverty in Canada. Congratulations to those of you who wrote letters to the

government on behalf of the less fortunate, made dolls to share with members of Parliament, spoke at our gatherings and local churches, and presented programs with suggestions from *Bread Not Stones*. We are making progress. Well done!

We are presently open for ideas for a new Extra Measures project.

For all UCW matters, e-mail: ucw@united-church.ca.