

Keeping in Touch

October 2017

NEWS FOR
UCW GROUPS



“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep step with the Spirit.” Galatians 5:25 (NIV)



The National United Church Women

Here I Am, Lord

Photos of UCW 55th anniversary gathering
courtesy of Bruce Holuick, Surrey, B.C.



Celebrating Spirit, we called our 55th anniversary gathering—and did we ever! From July 10 to 14, 320 women were in Vancouver to show their spirit. They came by plane, train, boat, bus, car, and motorcycle from all across Canada and Bermuda.

We were inspired by our plenary speaker Ann Mortifee to be “located” and examine the future, past, and present. We must change and evolve, stay present, and watch what’s going on. Jesus is our path—just follow along.

Linnea Good, backed up by The Spirit Sisters, not only led us in music but also displayed her skill in storytelling with her moving scripture presentations. “This is a winding beautiful road. The ground is hard in places, rutted and worn. Countless the footsteps thro’ woodland and thorn. Beside the still waters, yet bound for the sea, we follow the One who says ‘Come, trust in me.’” “This is a Winding, Beautiful Road”—Linnea’s own composition especially for the UCW 55th Anniversary Celebration reflected the life of UCW beautifully. We sang it many times during the week, and you can download a copy from www.united-church.ca (search the song title).

We thank our gifted worship team leaders Barb Tunncliffe, LeAnn Blackert, and Allison Rennie, as they guided us through each day.

We were pleased to welcome our special guests—the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, United Church of Christ (USA); Morogoro training facilitators Jesca Sydney Mkuchu and Neema Joel Mlula, from Tanzania; and from South Korea, Lee Mi-Ja, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, and its General Secretary, the Rev. In Kum Lan.



Music director Linnea Good with back-up singers (l to r) Sharon Lauze, Dianne Nichols, Jane Harding, and Ivy Thomas (drum)

The ten enrichment sessions were well attended and enjoyed by all, as were the seven tours, which offered us a chance to visit sites in and around Vancouver.

We were honoured to have The Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell, Moderator of The United Church of Canada, as our guest speaker at the closing banquet. Jordan shared the story about her amazing hand-beaded medicine bag and its contents.

And now, what's next? We have come away inspired for the work ahead as we face the changes in our beloved United Church of Canada. Ann Mortifee said "women are essential" and we will continue to live out our purpose and provide leadership for the future. As Michael Blair said at our AGM last year, "We need to be like a tree planted by water with deep roots. We need to not only be rooted in church, the ministry of God in the world, but also in a deeper relationship with God. A rootedness that will help us get through our anxious times." Remits 1-4 were approved by a large majority and now, it remains for these results to be ratified by General Council at GC 43 in July 2018. The 42nd General Council met September 30, 2017, to put plans in motion for determining the boundaries of the regional councils and a nominations process for the next General Council Executive, pending the final step in the remit process.

We are now in year five of our Five-year Initiative to End Child Poverty in Canada. This project has been embraced by UCW groups all across Canada, and I thank you. Linda Woods of London Conference has announced that the Bread Not Stones project has received official confirmation that they will be hosted on Parliament Hill in Ottawa by the All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus on November 21, 2017. Joined by their partners, Citizens for Public Justice and Campaign 2000, they will be guests at a breakfast/panel discussion; 338 Dolls of Hope will accompany Linda to Ottawa for distribution. Good work, Linda. Please keep this hard-working group in your prayers as they travel to Ottawa.



*Jesca Sydney Mkuchu and Neema Joel Mlula
— Morogoro training facilitators*



Plenary speaker Ann Mortifee



*The Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell
with her medicine bag*

In May, I was privileged to attend the Presbyterian International Women's three-day event in Richmond Hill, Ontario. There were over 600 women present and I had the honour of sitting at a table with international

and ecumenical guests. The theme was "Rooted in Love," Ephesians 3:16-21. We had an exciting evening of Aboriginal cultural dance and learning and were entertained by Tribal Vision, an Aboriginal organization that performs and teaches about

Aboriginal dance and music. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, was our speaker. I also attended a very moving workshop/video entitled "Half the Sky" facilitated by the Rev. Sarah Kim. The keynote address was presented by Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese, an internationally recognized expert in women's health and is a member of the Order of Canada and founding

executive director of Save the Mothers, an organization dedicated to saving some of the 287,000 women who die in childbirth every year.

The lovely long warm days of summer have melted into autumn. The cooler days are a welcome change. The world is alive with glorious colour, and soon we will be into Advent and the journey to Bethlehem. "And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7, RSV).

As you go into Christmas, take note of the children around you and see the celebrations and the world through their eyes.

And now join me in saying "Here I Am, Lord."

Blessings

—**Nancy Sutherland** President,
National United Church Women

