

CONFERENCE OF MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO CLUSTER  
Report to the DUCC Gathering  
June 21 – 25, 2011

Our cluster has met four times since the last DUCC Gathering: in May 2009 a large group gathered over supper at Conference in Winnipeg, in May 2010 twenty-three people got together over lunch at our Conference Annual Meeting in Killarney, ten assembled for a half day event held at Deb Schweyer's place in November 2010, and twenty-two joined the circle at the most recent Conference meeting in Kenora on May 27.

Our conference gatherings take the form of check in with each other, updates on DUCC, honouring those who retire, celebrating with those who are commissioned, and discussing any other news or business that is brought to the agenda. We always make a collection that is used to purchase gifts for our honourees. There isn't anything to report (read: that we remember) about the 2009 meeting. In 2010 we talked about the DUCC local arrangements and what had been done so far. We urged people to pay their dues, announced Kent Gibbons was moving out of the conference and made presentations to Aileen Urquhart who was about to retire and Susan Palmer who was readmitted to diaconal ministry. This year we provided an update on the DUCC Gathering planning, and honoured Elinor Johns on her retirement.

At this May's Conference AGM, a motion was passed requesting "that the General Council of The United Church of Canada change polity so that all diaconal ministers are granted the right to administer the sacraments from the time of their commissioning."

Our November gathering at Deb Schweyer's place began in the morning with a few folk who were part of Lori Stewart's focus group on the CCS Action-Reflection model. The afternoon consisted of an extended check in, worship and reflection involving fabric and the arts. Since May 2010 we have been most active in preparing for the national gathering but have kept in touch with others informally through personal contacts, emails and various committee meetings.

The Centre for Christian Studies is an anchor for us and it has hosted "Mindful Munchings" throughout the year. Various speakers present

interesting and timely topics over a lunch period. Some of these are recorded and podcasts are made available on the CCS website for all to hear. The latest speaker was Lynda Trono on her experience of the Parliament for the World's Religions that she attended in Melbourne, Australia in 2009. Other speakers and topics this year have included Patrick Woodbeck of Rainbow Ministry on the *It Gets Better Campaign*, Amy Crawford of the UCC General Council offices on *Children's Spirituality*, and Stan McKay former UCC Moderator on the *Next Steps after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

As a business item for our gathering in Winnipeg, we would like to revisit the way these national gatherings are planned. It is good to have groups from across the country do different pieces but it is also difficult for decision-making and some local planning.

We have found the opportunity to meet for the local arrangements meetings has been a great way to connect on a regular basis. At our last meeting we decided to make some intentional plans to get everyone together now that our task is completed. We look forward to the coming of Maylanne Maybee to CCS and hope to plan an ecumenical diaconal event after she comes.

That's the news from Winnipeg.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Lori Stewart and Ken Delisle