

London Conference
of The United Church of Canada

*A Service of Celebration
and Remembering*

Friday, May 25, 2007

7:30 p.m.

The Rudy Brown Centre, Ridgetown College
Ridgetown, Ontario

PARTICIPANTS

The Rev. E. Bruce Cook
President

The Rev. David J. Woodall
Executive Secretary

The Rev. Gordon A. Duncan
*Chairperson, Conference
Pensions Committee*

rEvolve
Music Leaders

Ms. Carolyn Wilson Wynne
Diaconal Minister

Mrs. Celia Orth
Mrs. Margaret Wonfor
Ms. Katherine Wonfor

The Rev. Bonnie Pilkey
Liturgy Writer

The Rev. Heather A. Scott
Chairperson, Worship Committee

Youth Forum Delegates and
Young Adults in Transition

Lost Treasure: An Apology to Women in Ministry Affected by the Disjoining Rule

When Ina Cavers graduated from Winnipeg's Knox College in 1929, she already knew she was getting married, so she never went through the ceremony that 'set apart' many of her classmates as deaconesses. The 97-year-old, now in London, Ont., looks back on it without a tinge of regret. She 'just accepted' the rule that you could not be both married and a deaconess. "If I had married someone other than a minister," she says, "I would have felt badly. But I felt I was still carrying on the work. They needed both of us."

Now, however, the United Church plans to apologize to women like Cavers and others who, until the mid-1950s and beyond, were not permitted to serve in paid and accountable positions in the church.

◆Please stand as you are able

The Kingdom of Heaven is Like . . . Planting, Harvesting and Proclaiming Good News

We Gather To Worship God

MUSIC: Ploughin' In Hope

rEvolve

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Matthew 13:31 & 32)

- One: Jesus said: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the field:
Two: it is the smallest of all the seeds but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air can come and make nests in its branches."
All: **Tonight we give thanks to God for all the tiny mustard seeds that have been planted with faith and watered in grace!**

(Tubs of soil are rolled in on carts with one Youth and one YAT per cart; they proceed to prepare the soil - there are seeds as well as tiny trees, fertilizer and watering cans on these carts.)

- One: Year after year, our brothers and sisters in Christ have worked this soil!
Two: Year after year, they have planted the Word and rejoiced in the harvest!
All: **Thanks be to God for these faithful gardeners!**

(Trees are planted in honour of the Retirees, Jubilands by a Youth and a YAT)

- One: The faith and courage of our grandmothers and grandfathers have nourished this soil!
Two: They have inspired new generations to come forward and plant their seeds of love and service
All: **Thanks be to God for this joy of new beginnings!**

(Youth and YAT plant seeds in honour of the candidates.)

One: Tonight we will also water God's soil with tears as we remember
Two: sisters and brothers in Christ who have died, yet have left us with memories of lives filled with service, proclamation and grace.
All: **Thanks be to God for the gift of these remarkable servants!**

(Youth and YAT water the tubs in honour of those who have died.)

One: In order to replenish God's soil, there are some that grow, bloom and then eventually die.
Two: In their living, and in their letting go, they nourish new beginnings in God's holy garden.
All: **Thanks be to God for this gift of letting go and new life!**

(Youth and YAT work compost into the soil in honour of congregations that have closed.)

One: The kingdom of heaven is filled with the joys and sorrows of planting, nurturing and harvesting the Word.
Two: Tonight we acknowledge the sorrow of past mistakes and welcome the gift of God's grace.
All: **Thanks be to God for this kingdom of heaven that is planted deep within our hearts!**

(Youth and YAT place ashes on the soil in the tubs.)

One: Come sisters and brothers, let us now proclaim this kingdom
Two: Let us proclaim this community that is within us and beyond us!
All: **Let us worship together as a community of God!**

◆HYMN: In the Bulb There Is a Flower

1. In the bulb there is a flow-er; in the seed, an ap-ple tree;
2. There's a song in ev-ery si-lence, seek-ing word and mel-o-dy;
3. In our end is our be-gin-ning; in our time, in-fin-i-ty;
in co-coons, a hid-den prom-ise: but-ter-flies will soon be free!
there's a dawn in ev-ery dark-ness, bring-ing hope to you and me.
in our doubt there is be-liev-ing; in our life, e-ter-ni-ty.
In the cold and snow of win-ter there's a spring that waits to be,
From the past will come the fu-ture; what it holds, a mys-ter-y,
In our death, a res-ur-rec-tion; at the last, a vic-to-ry,
un-re-vealed un-til its sea-son, some-thing God a-lone can see.

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PRAYER OF APPROACH

God of Beginnings and Endings,
We come to you tonight as fertile soil. We come to you O God, longing to hear your words of grace and new beginnings. We come with hearts filled with both laughter and tears. We come as your people, with all our joys and sorrows. Move within this place, O God. Touch us now as only you can do. Plant new seeds of faith in our lives. Give us courage to blossom and to share your Good News with all those we meet. Renew us this night. Renew us and send us out to proclaim your Word, in all we say and do. In the name of the Christ, we pray. Amen.

RESPONSE: Let the Word of Christ

Michael Brooks



Let the word of Christ dwell in you



rich - ly, giv - ing thanks to God al - ways.

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION (based on Romans 10:12-15)

One: Paul reminds the church in ancient Rome that, "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek,

Two: the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him.

One: For, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Two: But Paul's question to the Roman church is one that echoes in our hearts as well . . .

Left Side: "But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed?"

Right Side: "And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?"

Retirees: "And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?"

Candidates: "And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?"

One: Gracious God, we confess that at times we have been reluctant to proclaim your Word.

Two: We have too often ventured into the world, leaving your seeds of faith and grace behind.

All: Forgive us.

One: Strengthen us this night; plant seeds of courage deep within our hearts.

Two: Rejoice with us, as our voices slowly blossom and bear fruit.

All: Voices of new life; seeds of new beginning through Jesus Christ! Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (Romans 10:15)

One: Paul encourages the congregation in his letter, when he says: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Sisters and brothers in Christ, let us revel this evening in the beauty of God's forgiveness! Let us rejoice that we have been called to share this beauty with all those we meet along life's way!

All: Thanks be to God for this gift of forgiveness and new life through the Christ!

HYMN: Come, Touch and Bless



1. Come touch our hearts that we may know com - pas - sion,
2. Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,



from fail - ing em - bers build a blaz - ing fire; love strong e -
your qui - et pre - sence all our fears dis - pel; cre - ate a



nough to o - ver - turn in - jus - tice, to seek a world more
space for spir - it to grow in us, let life and beau - ty



gra - cious, come touch and bless our hearts.
fill us, come touch and bless our souls.

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We Listen For God's Word

EPISTLE READING: Colossians 3:1-4; 12-17

Service of Recognition for Retirees

The Rev. Janess I. Binns-Landell, BA, MDiv
The Rev. William G. Gallagher, BA, MDiv
Ms. Janet P. Laughren, BA, MRE
The Rev. Dr. Henry Marissen, BA, MDiv, DMin
The Rev. Diane E. Pratt, BA, MDiv, MRE
The Rev. Dr. Robert Roberts, DMin
The Rev. Kenneth N. Taylor, CIM, BTh
The Rev. Dr. David A. Williamson, BA, MDiv, DMin

After each retiree is introduced the leader will conclude with the words, "Let us give thanks". The congregation is then invited to respond.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORD

Leader: Let us give thanks.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:

We give thanks for your ministry and pray for God's continuing presence in your life.

CHORAL RESPONSE: *(after groups of two retirees have been introduced)*

**Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love,
the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.**

CHORAL RESPONSE: *(after all retirees have been introduced)*

**Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.**

**This glorious hope revives our courage on the way;
that we shall live in perfect love in God's eternal day.**

Words and music: In the Public Domain

Service of Recognition for Jubilands

The Rev. John E. Davies, BA, BD - 60 years
The Rev. Donald E. Hansford, BA, MDiv - 50 years
The Rev. Donald S. Mannell - 50 years
The Rev. John F. McKay, BA, MDiv, STM - 50 years
The Rev. Gordon G. Pickell, BA, BD - 60 years
The Rev. Dr. Douglas H. Ross, BA, MDiv, MTh, PhD, DD - 50 years

After each jubiland is introduced the leader will conclude with the words, "Let us give thanks." The Congregation is then invited to respond.

Leader: . . . Let us give thanks.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:

We give thanks for your ministry and pray for God's continuing presence in your life.

CHORAL RESPONSE: *(after all the jubilands have been introduced)*

**Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.**

**This glorious hope revives our courage on the way;
that we shall live in perfect love in God's eternal day.**

Words and music: In the Public Domain

In Memoriam

The Rev. Norman F. Morton
The Rev. James E. Forsythe

The congregation is invited to respond.

**We give thanks for the lives of Norman Morton and James Forsythe
and we light these candles in their memory.**

PRAYER

Lost Treasure

An Apology to Women In Ministry Affected by the Disjoining Rule

(based on Matthew 13:33, 44 & 45 - paraphrased)

(Carolyn Wilson Wynne will make bread)

One: Jesus told them another parable: "the kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with 3 measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Two: "The community of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone found and covered up; then in joy goes and sells all to buy that field."

One: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls . . .

Two: The kingdom of heaven Jesus describes is surely a community - a space where all people are welcomed.

All: **Christ invites each one of us to share in the treasure of such community.**

One: Community that invites all to leadership.

Two: Community that calls all to service and proclamation.

All: **A community that excludes no one!**

One: Like yeast, community needs each one of us in order to rise with energy and new life!

Two: But this yeast was discarded in our United Church of Canada by the Disjoining Rule.

One: And so God's pearl - God's precious treasure was lost . . .

Two: Ordained women and Deaconesses - women called by God to proclaim and live out of God's Word, were pushed to the margins in our United Church of Canada community.

All: **And God wept. . . And we as a community suffered the loss of this treasure.**

One: We repent this night.

Two: We grieve over lost treasure, missed opportunities, misguided policies, and lack of courage.

All: **We recant the sexism that diminishes women in ministry; that threatens to destroy this community of faith. Amen.**

(Katherine Wonfor, daughter of Margaret Wonfor, comes forward and places yeast on bread dough.)

All: **Thanks be to God for the forgiveness and new life that marks this community of Christ.**

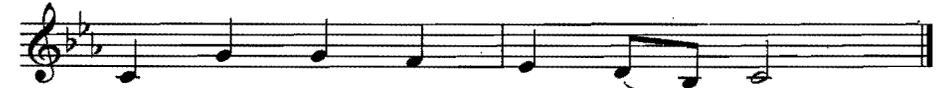
◆HYMN: Sisters Let us Walk Together



1. Sis - ters let us walk to - geth - er, shar - ing sad - ness,
2. Broth - ers let us work to - geth - er, seek - ing jus - tice,
3. Peo - ple let us love to - geth - er, join - ing spir - its,



loss and grief, we will move through pain to whole - ness,
heal - ing shame, filled with hope, em - bued with cour - age,
link - ing hands, we are God's un - ique cre - a - tion,



brok - en - ness trans - formed to peace.
ev' - ry viol - ence we will name.
clothed with dig - ni - ty we'll stand.

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THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

WE ARE ALL INVITED TO CHRIST'S TABLE

One: We have rejoiced as a community of Christ. We have grieved together. We have comforted one another. We have done all of this in the name of the Christ, who calls us to love and care for all of God's people.

Two: Now it is time to gather at Christ's table. To share in the bread and wine that nourishes us. To share in a meal that is a gift of pure grace.

All: Let us come to this table with open and willing hearts!
 Let us call out to friends and strangers alike!
 Let us welcome all people to this table of community and new beginnings!

◆HYMN: Put Peace Into Each Other's Hands



1. Put peace in - to each oth - er's hands and like a
2. Put peace in - to each oth - er's hands with lov - ing
- ◆ 3. Put peace in - to each oth - er's hands like bread we
4. As at com - mun - ion, shape your hands in - to a
5. Put Christ in - to each oth - er's hands, he is love's



- trea - sure hold it, pro - tect it like a can - dle
 ex - pec - ta - tion; be gen - tle in your words and
 ◆ break for shar - ing; look peo - ple warm - ly in the
 wait - ing cra - dle; the gift of Christ re - ceive, re -
 deep - est mea - sure; in love make peace, give peace a



- flame, with ten - der - ness en - fold it.
 ways, in touch with God's cre - a - tion.
 ◆ eye: our life is meant for car - ing.
 vere, un - it - ed round the ta - ble.
 chance, and share it like a

trea - sure.

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PASSING THE PEACE

One: May the peace of Christ uphold and sustain each one of us!
All: May Christ's peace surround and renew this community of faith!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: Holy One, we give thanks this day for your gift of creation; for your gift of a world that was once just a tiny mustard seed. We give thanks for the yeast of your love which nurtures and inspires all living things. We give thanks, O God, for the gift of the Christ; a treasure that was hidden from many of us, because his love was so simple and yet so true.

Two: We give thanks that your love is stronger than any doubt or short sightedness we may have. We give thanks that this treasure we call the Christ was buried, and then raised on the third day. We give thanks that the Christ lives on in our hearts and in our lives, holding us close and sustaining us forever and a day.

One: We give thanks for the gift of this community; for this meal of bread and wine that welcomes us home and calls us to remember...

Two: We remember the night before Jesus was arrested and how he gathered around table with his community . . .

One: Jesus took bread and gave thanks and broke it; then he offered it to his friends saying: "This is my body given to you; whenever you gather around table and share bread, remember me."

Two: And after the meal was finished, Jesus took a cup of wine, and gave thanks and then offered it to his friends saying: "This is the new covenant poured out for you; whenever you gather around table and share this cup, remember me."

One: As a community of Christ, we prepare now to share in this bread and cup.

Two: As a community of Christ, we proclaim Jesus crucified and risen!

All: **Send O God, your Holy Spirit upon this community of faith, that all who share in your bread and cup, will be united in love and called to proclaim this love to all those we meet along life's way. Amen.**

**BREAKING OF THE BREAD
POURING OF THE CUP**

One: Christ's table is ready.
Two: Let us share in this meal together!

**Sharing the Bread: the Bread of Hope!
Sharing the Cup: the Cup of Blessing!**

MUSIC

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (UNISON)

Christ, you have called us together, you have fed us and you have renewed us. May this bread and this wine strengthen our faith and encourage us to proclaim your Word, in all we say and do. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

◆**HYMN: Sent Forth By God's Blessing**
Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended, O now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching,
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
God's grace did invite us, God's love shall unite us
to work for the kingdom and answer its call.

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,
the tasks of our every day life we will face.
Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing God's children of each tribe and race.

**With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving
give honour to Christ and the name that we bear.**

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COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

One: We are the community of Christ! Let us go with joy to proclaim the Word!
Two: We are the community of Christ! Let us go now in peace and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, rest upon us, and remain with us always.
Three: We are the community of Christ! Let us go now in hope and may the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.
All: **Amen and Amen!**

POSTLUDE