



inCONTACT

with Alberta and Northwest Conference

March 2014

Grow-a-Row Proves a Success

Alex and Bonnie Oliver have been involved with the Camrose United Church's Grow-a-Row program for the Food Bank for six years.

The idea originated with John Girvan, member of Camrose United Church, in 2007. The concept centered on local Camrose United Church gardeners simply adding another row to their garden plot and dedicating that row to the local food bank.

Alex and Bonnie have their five grandchildren participate in order for them to be part of the process of gardening and to be part of the process of giving back to the community. The local bank gave the children a tour of the facility so they would have an in-depth understanding of the workings of the resource.

Jo-Anne Tweed, Program Director for Camrose Neighbor Aid said, "Camrose Neighbor Aid Center is a unique 'common sense' volunteer organization designed to help people in need, The Camrose & District Food Bank is only one of the programs under Neighbor Aid. The Food Bank is currently serving approximately 130 families/single person each month."

The first year the Olivers planted one extra row of fifty hills of potatoes. Through the kindness of a local farmer who has dedicated some extra garden area, they have added onions, turnips, and pumpkins for the bank.

The Camrose Food Bank, like many other food banks, appreciates the contributions. In addition to giving pumpkins for pies, etc., it's a pleasure to see the smiles on the little kids' faces when they have a pumpkin for a jack-o-lantern.

Jo-Anne added, "The generosity of our community and surrounding area is amazing. The food drives, money donations, meat and fresh produce donations all make a difference in the lives of those in need. It is comforting to know we live in a community that cares about their neighbors and are willing to go the extra mile and give however they can. Together we are making a difference one person at a time."

— Story by Alex Oliver,
member of Editorial Board.
Photos by Bonnie Oliver.



Thomas, Cassie, and Allie help their Grandpa Alex sow the pumpkin seeds, potatoes, and onions on the May long weekend. They also weed later on in the summer.



Chase and Sheena hand over some of the 133 pumpkins harvested in 2013 for the Camrose District Food Bank to Jo-Anne Tweed, Program Director for Camrose Neighbor Aid.

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Leigh's Laptop

I am a talker (as many of you know) and work hard to solely listen. I like spend my listening time thinking up something to say (a witty retort or story). The Epistle of James is my "reminder" scripture. Its first chapter tells us to be quicker to listen than to speak and to always act on what we hear. We must give our listening muscles of brains and heart the time to focus on their tasks. In this activity we will be changed. What follows change in faith is concrete action to participate in God's actions.

Two processes the United Church is participating in — the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the denomination's Comprehensive Review (CR) — begin with deep listening. Then comes the responsibility to be changed by what we hear so as to act. There the Reign of



Leigh Sinclair

God can be known among us. This sometimes means acting in new ways but also can mean acting with new perspective or responding with less reactivity.

TRC events invite all to hear stories that request not reaction but a deep pause, acts of repentance and new/renewed responses. The CR has come up with different ways to listen to local communities of faith including interactive web conversations and a new process for Presbyteries (and equivalents across the country) to share the wisdom and experience of your current pastoral relations and oversight responsibilities. After listening

deeply to one another we can respond to God's world's needs. For further reflection see James' first chapter, www.unitedfuture.ca and www.trc.ca.

— *Leigh Sinclair,*
President of Alberta/Northwest Conference

The United Church's Residential School Survivor Hospitality Fund

Alberta and Northwest Conference welcomes donations to the Residential School Survivor Hospitality Fund. Monies collected will be donated to the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) National Event planners to assist survivors of IRS to attend the National

Event hosted in Edmonton at the Shaw Conference Centre, March 27 – 30, 2014. Donations can be sent to:

Alberta and Northwest Conference
9911 – 48 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T6E 5V6

For more information about the fund or to receive information about how you can participate in the TRC National Event contact trc@anwconf.com. The TRC's website is www.trc.ca

In Contact and the In Contact blog can be accessed through the conference website at www.anwconf.com.

Corrections re: January issue

- Our Moderator's name is Gary Paterson, not Peterson as printed.
- The author of the Honouring Story was Buffy da Silva of Camrose.
- The choir pictured on page seven is from Red Deer Lake.

Camping Season Approacheth!

United Church Camps are for everyone who loves the outdoors and adventure! Campers enjoy the opportunity our camps provide to enrich lives through a greater appreciation of the natural world. All are welcome!

How can you support United Church Camps?

- Think about the benefits of a camping program
- Volunteer
- Send campers
- Send a donation
- Talk about your camping experiences and how it affected you.
- Lead a “camping song” during church to raise interests and stir memories
- Visit the United Church camp websites and learn more.

Access information about United Church camps at www.anwconf.com.



Special Observations in March

- **Mar. 2:** Transfiguration Sunday
- **Mar. 4:** Shrove Tuesday
- **Mar. 5:** Ash Wednesday
- **Mar. 7:** World Day of Prayer
- **Mar. 8:** International Women's Day
- **Mar. 9:** First Sunday in Lent
- **Mar. 21:** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

World Day of Prayer March 7th

“World Day of Prayer” is a global, ecumenical movement of Christian women joined together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday of March. The motto “Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action” signifies that prayer and action are inseparable. For more information visit www.worlddayofprayer.net. Who or what will you be praying for?

— from the WDP website

Advertising Space Available

If your business or event planning group would like to advertise with In Contact, we would be pleased to help you with that. Reach over 4500 households all over Alberta/Northwest through the section of the Observer “we always read first!”. Contact the Editor, Liz Goddard, at incontactphoto@gmail.com for details.



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The Table is Set...Come all is Ready...TRC National Event March 27 to 30, 2014

Fourth in a Series

As a child I sang many Medical Mission Sister songs... one in particular I remember was The Wedding Banquet. It was based on the parable Jesus told about a man who prepared a banquet and invited his friends. Each of them had an excuse as to why they couldn't come. So, he sent his servants out into the streets to literally invite everyone.

We have an opportunity this month to respond to a similar invitation when Edmonton hosts the final National Event for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The event is open to all and will be held at the Shaw Conference Centre. The interesting difference for me between the National Event and the banquet in the parable is that from day one the TRC has invited all Canadians to the seven National Events. No pre-registration required.

Up to 4,000 people each day will participate. We will hear, perhaps some of us for the first time, stories of pain and anger, of childhoods lost, of relationships and trust broken, of terrible cruelty and abuse, of substandard living conditions. There will be tears shed and angry words spoken. But, we will also hear stories of healing and resiliency. There will be several

forums where stories will be told and statements gathered. Anyone with an experience of residential schools is invited to make a private or a public statement.

There will be statements of apology and acts of reconciliation. There will be films, displays, music and ceremony. On the first day 2000 students will participate in activities geared to help them learn this 150 years of Canadian history — a history that is not required in school curriculum except in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

The opening ceremonies will take place at about 10:30 am on the 27th and activities continue each day from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. You are invited to "come and go" on any day for whatever amount of time you can. The full program of activities is available at www.trc.ca. If you aren't able to participate in person, the event will be live streamed on www.trc.ca.

A young Aboriginal woman recently said to me that it is not only the Aboriginal community that needs healing and reconciliation. I believe she is right. The National Event will be an opportunity for all of us to gather and begin that journey together in a new way. I hope you will join me.

If you have questions about how as a Conference and as a United Church we are supporting the National Event please don't hesitate to contact me at trc@anwconf.com.



Debbie Hubbard

— Debbie Hubbard attends Trinity United Church in Edmonton and is Alberta and Northwest Conference's representative on the Regional Advisory Committee for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's National Event taking place in Edmonton March 27 – 30, 2014.

Visit Our Blog

Send us Photos and Captions!

<http://incontactunitedchurch.blogspot.ca>

Send photos with captions to incontactphoto@gmail.com. Be sure you have permission to share someone's image before sending us a photo. Thanks.

— Liz Goddard

National Truth and Reconciliation — Preparation



Survivors and the children of survivors of the Indian Residential School system gather in a Healing Circle to share their stories.

Gently Whispering the Circle Back (2013/50 min) will be screened at the National Truth and Reconciliation event to be held in Edmonton from March 27 – 30. Here is some background for you.

This documentary was commissioned by Blue Quills First Nations College to be a 'Community Resource for Healing and Reconciliation'. This powerful film explores the journey of healing in a people wounded by the Canadian Indian Residential School system. We become part of a 'circle of healing' as participants confront the trauma of the Residential Schools; come to understand the trauma; release their pain; and speak of transcending the trauma through the recovery of tradition, language, ceremony, and personal dignity. It is a profoundly moving story of human resiliency and generosity.

Gently Whispering the Circle Back had its Premiere screening at Edmonton's Dreamspeakers Film Festival (2013); it has since screened at COMMFEST (Global) Community Film Festival in Toronto, where it received a MADA (Making a Difference Award); and at the American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco, where it received the "Best Documentary Short" award. It is scheduled to screen at the Nordlys and the St. Albert Justice Film Festivals. It continues to be used as a resource at conferences, workshops and various institutions in the conference.

This community resource for healing and reconciliation will soon be available through Blue Quills First Nations College (www.bluequills.ca). It will include a DVD of *Gently Whispering the Circle Back* and a Facilitator's Guide to aid discussion of the video.

"I see films about IRS (Indian Residential Schools) all of the time, I am asked to review films by Legacy of Hope and TRC for education and I was blown away by this film. It is honestly the most powerful, human, insightful piece I've seen yet... You can't watch this film and not GET IT. I was amazed. It is a fantastic approach to bringing people together, to feeling the truth and to be inspired to move forward. It captures the pain and impacts while giving so much hope for ALL members of our society. It gives a role and purpose to every one of us. It is a true treasure and I will be promoting this film to educators, universities, church groups and everyone else that I work with across the country."

— a review by Charlene Bearhead
Education Day Coordinator
for Truth and Reconciliation
Commission events across Canada.

See the trailer for *Gently Whispering the Circle Back* at: <https://vimeo.com/71825389>

— Submitted by Beth Wishart MacKenzie
Producer/Director
Edmonton



Thoughts on Youth Group

A few times a month and most Sunday mornings, youth gather to enjoy each others' company and explore faith and the world together. Three of these awesome people — Krista Hurley, Talia Dewalt and Davis Dewalt shared some of their opinions on youth group, Church and the community with us.

What have been some of your favourite youth group events and why?

KH: Going to the corn maze. First of all, because there was a bunch of different youth groups there, and we got to go out in the dark and run around and it was lots of fun.

TD: The sleepover we attended together with Messiah, because we got to explore another church building and meet some new people. We got to see how other Churches and leaders do youth group, and that was fun.

DD: The bed race! I think it's really fun to run with the decorated beds and raise money for The Open Door. It's nice to see all the other community groups and churches there.

What are some issues that you think the Church and community need to pay attention to?

DD: Homelessness; even though it's not as big of a problem in Camrose, there's still people who are homeless or almost homeless.

KH: There's lots of bullying in our schools and there's a lot of people who just aren't nice! Against homosexuality, and anyone who seems different in any way.

TD: The environment and pollution is a big deal everywhere. We are wrecking our earth, which is where we have to live for generations, and we're changing the weather and destroying the ozone layer. We're not taking responsibility for all that damage; even though Camrose does pretty good, we could still do more things to improve it.

What do you like about Church?

KH: I think it's really good that we put together things like the garbage pickup day, and raise money and awareness for charities and the food bank.

DD: I like youth group!

TD: I think it's really cool that everyone seems to know each other, and everyone is nice to each other. We all have coffee after Church and everyone is welcome and included. There's no bullying, no competition.

— Article and photo by
Tif McNaughton
Camrose United,
Camrose, Alberta.



L – R: Talia Dewalt, Krista Hurley and Davis Dewalt

Special Observations in April

- Apr. 13: Palm/Passion Sunday
- Apr. 17: Maundy Thursday
- Apr. 18: Good Friday
- Apr. 20: Easter Day; Earth Sunday
- Apr. 22: Earth Day
- Apr. 27: Camping Sunday

Camping Sunday April 27

Camping Sunday is traditionally celebrated on the final Sunday in April.

The worship service and activities on this Sunday are designed to increase awareness of the church's ministry of residential camping, give visibility to local United Church camps, and help people recall their memories and experiences of church camping.

— United Church of Canada website

Prayer Shawls to Share and Comfort

Many churches and individuals create prayer shawls to support those who need it (and who does not need a loving touch once in a while?). A call went out for prayer shawls for the National Truth and Reconciliation Event to be held in Edmonton, March 27 to 30. These blankets are to be given to survivors as a sign of our respect and compassion and desire for healing and reconciliation. It was expected that a minimum of 500 shawls/quilts or blankets would be needed. Shawl creators were asked to “centre on why you are doing this and imagine the warmth and good wishes that you are embedding in the prayer shawl or lap blanket for the one who will receive it.” Prayer Shawls can be brought to the Churches Listening to Survivors Area at the Shaw Conference Centre on March 27th.

— from the Alberta/Northwest Conference website



Changes in Editorial Board

Gerry Dyck will complete her term as chair of *In Contact* after the March meeting and will continue on the board as Past Chair. Alex Oliver will assume the chair at the May meeting. We thank Gerry for her leadership, encouragement and continuing contributions to *In Contact*. We thank Alex for his articles, photographs and guidance as a Board member and look forward to working with him in his new position. These thank-you's are extended on behalf of you, our readers.

— the Editorial Board

The Church Mice



Finally, I am all set.
Everything is absolutely perfect.



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Around Our Conference

Upcoming Events — Please save this!

March 27 – 30, 2014. National Truth And Reconciliation Event. Edmonton. Volunteers needed. Increase your understanding and be part of the healing process by supporting and participating in this historic event.

April 29, 2014. The upcoming secretaries' event will take place in Red Deer, Alberta at the Gaetz Memorial United Church, 4758 Ross Street, Please RSVP Linda before April 29th if you are able to attend. 403-347-2244 gaetzuc@telusplanet.net Come and join us for a time of sharing and fellowship.

May 31, 2014. Celebration of Ministry: Banquet — June 1, 2014 — 10 a.m. service at McKillop United Church, Lethbridge AB. For Banquet tickets, or for further information, please contact Melanie at the Conference Office, 780-435-3995, Ext. 222; or melanief@anwconf.com.

October 5 to 8, 2014. The 25th annual Strathcona County Ecumenical Mission, Sherwood Park.

Hey! Where's the Picture from Our Congregation?

I think it might be still in your camera or your head! We need clear photos with simple captions showing United Church people doing things in the conference. This does not have to be “official church business” like a meeting or worship service. We'd love pictures of people doing Highway Cleanup, baking for neighbours, working on a foreign exchange, serving or leading others in the world community. Share the variety of your Christian experience as you “Go and Do Likewise”. Please ensure you have permission to publish the image of anyone whose face is visible in the shot, especially those of children. E-mail submissions to incontactphoto@gmail.com. Pictures may appear in the print edition or on our blog at <http://incontactunitedchurch.blogspot.ca>.

— Liz Goddard

**Alberta and Northwest
Conference
insert in the
United Church Observer
Volume 33. No. 2**

“The purpose of *In Contact* is to share news of the Church's life, work, programs, policies and people with Observer readers across Alberta and Northwest Conference”.

The logo for inCONTACT features a stylized cross icon to the left of the word "inCONTACT" in a bold, sans-serif font.

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**Deadline for the May issue is
March 20.**

**Submissions for our blog
accepted anytime!**