

inCONTACT

with Alberta and Northwest Conference

MAY 2014

EYE OF THE STORM at Knox United Church, Calgary

Eye of the Storm is an initiative of the Justice Ministry at Knox United Church in Calgary, AB. This group draws people together to discuss environmental and economic issues pertaining to the oil and gas industry. It formed in response to General Council 41's vote to oppose further development of the Northern Gateway Pipeline. When Moderator Gary Paterson met with Calgarians later, he received frustration from some who work in oil companies. Since Knox United is downtown, our first meetings were lunch-hour discussions that encouraged equal voice. Later we moved to evening meetings to allow more thorough discussion.

Eye of the Storm has a core group of twelve people.

Our email list is twice that and we maintain an on-line discussion site through knox-united-eye-of-the-storm@google-groups.com. We meet monthly to increase education through respectful dialogue. Some members work in the oil and gas industry. Other members are environmentalists who work toward a sustainable future. We question how Albertans, Calgarians, and oil companies function. We follow exercises in Ganz Storytelling to share personal experience and expertise, and focus on values. Through this

"In dialogue you speak expecting to be heard; in listening you expect to be changed."

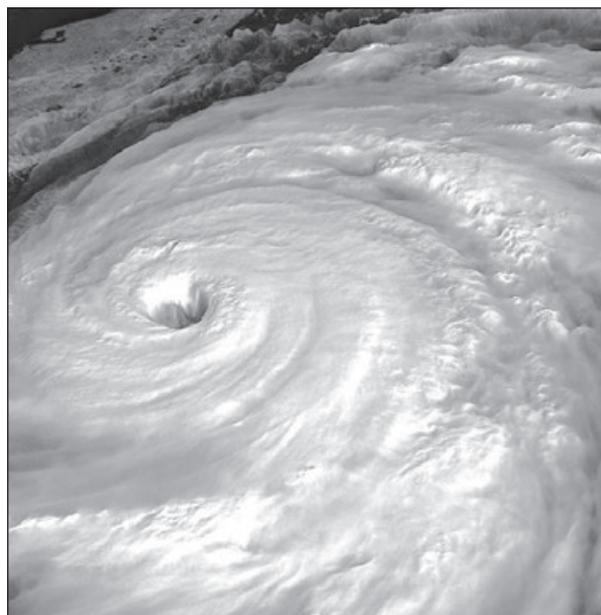
method we are building trust and a greater capacity for honest dialogue.

Recently some members of the group decided to take a road trip to Kitimat and Prince Rupert in August 2014. This trip will be led by Paul Armstong, who is a long-time United Church member and also a tour guide. If you are interested in learning more about this, contact him at tourab@telus.net.

We are truly diverse. We have discussed common actions and considered ways to increase engagement. Most important is our eagerness to talk, listen and learn. As a blogger recently commented to our group, "In dialogue you speak expecting to be heard; in listening you expect to be changed." The process is becoming more

important than the outcome. We are becoming a people who care about each other. Our assumptions have been challenged as we are called forth to learn. We are an evolving group of activists, philosophers, and concerned citizens choosing to engage. We are a dynamic, diverse group that chooses to grow – individually and together. All of us have made it a priority to understand climate change and our immediate priority is to listen, support and engage with each other.

— Sharon Montgomery & Mary Nokleby, Knox United, Calgary, Alberta



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Leigh's Laptop

In one model of pastoral care we are invited to imagine opening our eyes one morning to find that God has worked a great miracle. We awake to a life where anything that hindered our journey of growth and faith had disappeared. Set aside the "How?" "What?" queries for a moment to truly dream: what remains? How will you fill those spaces of time and energy? This is one way to approach the questions that the Comprehensive Review is now asking us as a church. (www.united-church.ca/communications/news/general/140303-0)

The task group is asking us to imagine that at our next Board/Presbytery meetings the agenda is free of paperwork related to Joint Needs Assessments, oversight reports,



Leigh Sinclair

pastoral relationship paperwork. What would happen if church communities of all sizes had unencumbered permission to change your church assets (staff, property, mission) to better do your mission as a church. What would happen if church communities of all sizes had unencumbered permission to use our time to learn, worship, serve others and resist evil in our particular time and places! I pray that this imagining will give us the courage to take the bold steps needed to find new way to be United Church in our Conference and country.

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

What would happen if...?

High River Counselling Centre Opens

The High River Counseling Centre officially opened its doors to the Town of High River and the Foothills area in January. If you can read the writing on the wall in the photo, you will see that the United Church of Canada and the Alberta and Northwest Conference and All Native Circle Conference of the United Church are listed as funding partners. We are thrilled to see UCC Flood Relief and Mission and Service support on the ground here in High River as we continue to recover emotionally and spiritually from the impact of the June 20th flooding. Local residents receive free counselling support by contacting the High River Counselling Centre at 403-691-5991 or emailing contactus@calgarycounselling.com.

— *David Robertson, High River*



Photo left to right, is Kate Tymstra (High River FCSS), Rev. David Robertson (High River United Church) and Shelley Koot (High River FCSS) celebrate the opening of the High River Counseling Centre.

Fracking Opposed by The Black Spots

The prospect of oil exploration FRACKING within Lethbridge city limits prompted a group of women friends from McKillop United Church to form a protest group. As a statement of their indignation and frustration they called themselves the BLACK SPOTS, the colour of oil and death.

Goldenkey Oil Inc. has the option to activate a provincial licence to carry out hydraulic fracturing, as a method of seeking oil deposits on 10 sections of city land. The Black Spots are not opposed to drilling in general, only to the city location and method proposed to drill three wells on the west side of Lethbridge across the Oldman River.

Wearing Black clothing, the group and supporters have rallied at four busy intersections during January and February, carrying placards stating, "Don't Frack with our Water"; "Honk for Safe Water and Clean Air"; and "No Drilling in City Limits". Opposition to drilling in Lethbridge continues to grow with over 11,000 petition signatures collected by "No Drilling Lethbridge".

The group is calling on the provincial government for a permanent moratorium on drilling within municipal boundaries. This call is supported by Lethbridge city council; school districts; NGO's; city realtors; the Chamber of Commerce and faculty members of the University of Lethbridge.



Photo: Geraldine Dyck, Past Chair, Editorial Board

McKillop United Church "Black Spots" demonstrate against proposed fracking within Lethbridge, Alberta town limits.

In addition to collecting signatures for the petition, the Black Spots facilitated two letter writing campaigns at McKillop United Church addressed to government officials, MLAs, the government appointed AER (Alberta Energy Regulator) and Goldenkey Oil Inc. Oil and gas development are given a higher priority by our government than municipal planning or environmental protection.

The Black Spots used Raging Granny tactics while wearing placards to sing "Tip Toe Through the Oil Wells" and the "Black Spot Lament", at well attended public forums on Feb 20 and 24th complete with critics and experts. No Goldenkey or Conservative

government members were part of the dialogue.

The Black Spots stand for what they value, clean air, clean water and safe communities.

A Cree prophecy best describes what is happening in our community and across the province. "When all the trees have been cut down; when all the animals have been hunted; when all the waters are polluted; when all the air is unsafe to breathe; only then will you discover you cannot eat money."

We also need to acknowledge that the aboriginal community needs our support for their perspective.

— Geraldine Dyck, Past Chair, Editorial Board

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

Settlement or Call?

Until a couple of years ago, almost all of those newly ordained or commissioned ministers were “settled” in pastoral charges without ministers. The “Settlement Committee” of Conference attempted to place these ministers where they would fit well with the needs of churches and ministers. The “settlement” of ministers was a heritage bequeathed to us by the Methodist church. The “call” system, a legacy from the Presbyterian Church, allowed churches without a minister to find one whom they would invite to become their minister. Newly ordained or commissioned ministers were not eligible for a “call” — available only for “settlement” somewhere in Canada.

This last rule has changed. Newly ordained or commissioned ministers are now free to choose to be “settled” or “called”. Churches without a minister are now free to seek a minister from those about to be ordained or commissioned. The number of those choosing to be “settled” has dropped dramatically. Most of the new ministers have been open to a “call”, even though they may be in their last year of studies and internships.

Among the consequences of this change is a very much reduced role for “Settlement Committees”. There are many fewer personnel available to be settled, and a valuable resource of new clergy is lost to the Committee. Most new ministers have chosen to use the “call” system. Churches that once could turn to the Settlement Committee find there is little help for them, and they have to look to whoever might be available in the pool of retired, Designated Lay ministers, and including those willing to work only part-time, and to other more experienced



Austin Fennell

ministers who may be willing to move from their current positions.

Various factors influence the choice of those who choose either to be “settled” or “called”. Those who choose to be called believe they have more personal control over where one might go, the opportunity of finding a position where one’s skills match the needs of the chosen church, choice of the kind of church to work in, the job-description, the power to negotiate the position and benefits, the needs of one’s spouse or family — all these play a role with an accompanying freedom; less worry about what a settlement might offer, the certainty of job at the end of preparation for ministry. The majority of new ministers have chosen the “call” route.

Fewer are choosing to avail themselves of a Settlement Committee placement. Those who do so use some of the reasons of those seeking a call (the Settlement Committee tries to give them some suitable choices), but also because it seems like a greater adventure, allows the church to send them where the need is, because they did not feel ready to enter into the process and dynamics of the “call”, or because their internships inclined them to want to repeat the supportive

experience of being a “newbie”. -i.e. the keenness of the receiving church to help them to be a minister in the very early years of their ministry.

Ministers in both streams speak, gratefully, of God having an important role in the outcome of their choice. Both choices have been rewarding, and a blessing to all concerned. At the same time, some settlements and calls have proved quite unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons. Settlements may contain surprises very difficult, even impossible, to cope with. Interviews proved to have revealed a lack of preparedness. Processes have not been clear, or awkward, or unhelpful. “Calling” churches reveal unready pastoral charges. Characteristics of the receiving churches may have been quite unknown, coming as a shock, to the new minister, whether “called” or “settled”. For some of the new ministers, their families have fitted in very well with the new church and new community, but not for all.

Settlement was a very valuable tool for the church in a time when the church was dominantly rural, and the west was being settled. Times have changed, as we all know. The frontier for the church today is in the urban setting, and the church finds it difficult to place new ministers in locations where the emphasis should be on growth and new congregations. In the past, we found ways to place new ministers where there were new communities, and their mandate was to form new congregations. The present systems of “settlement” and “call” do not allow for as much new visioning as they might. SOMEONE is going to break the mold pretty soon.

Austin Fennell is a member of the In Contact Board.

Go and Do Likewise: United Church people in the community



Gordon and Marilyn Smythe of St. Andrew's United in Spruce Grove, Alberta volunteer as a "Wayfinder" in the University of Alberta Hospitals and as a helper in "The Beach" play area in the Stollery Children's Hospital, respectively. They are also extraordinary raffle ticket sellers. As a Wayfinder Gordon delivers just about everything but babies! (they no longer have a maternity ward). As a helper in "The Beach" Marilyn

plays and talks with children and youth who are patients at the Stollery.

We'd like to tell the story of other United Church folk who volunteer in the community, either formally or informally. Send photos and captions to incontactphoto@gmail.com with "Go and Do Likewise" in the subject line.

— Liz Webster Goddard, Editor.

When providing photos...

When you are taking photos to send In Contact for our print or blog publication, **please use a camera**, not a phone. The quality and clarity are better and are much more likely to be used. We would also appreciate if you gather the names of the people in the photo and provide a suggestion for the caption. Thanks — The Editor. incontactphoto@gmail.com



The Heart has no clock or calendar

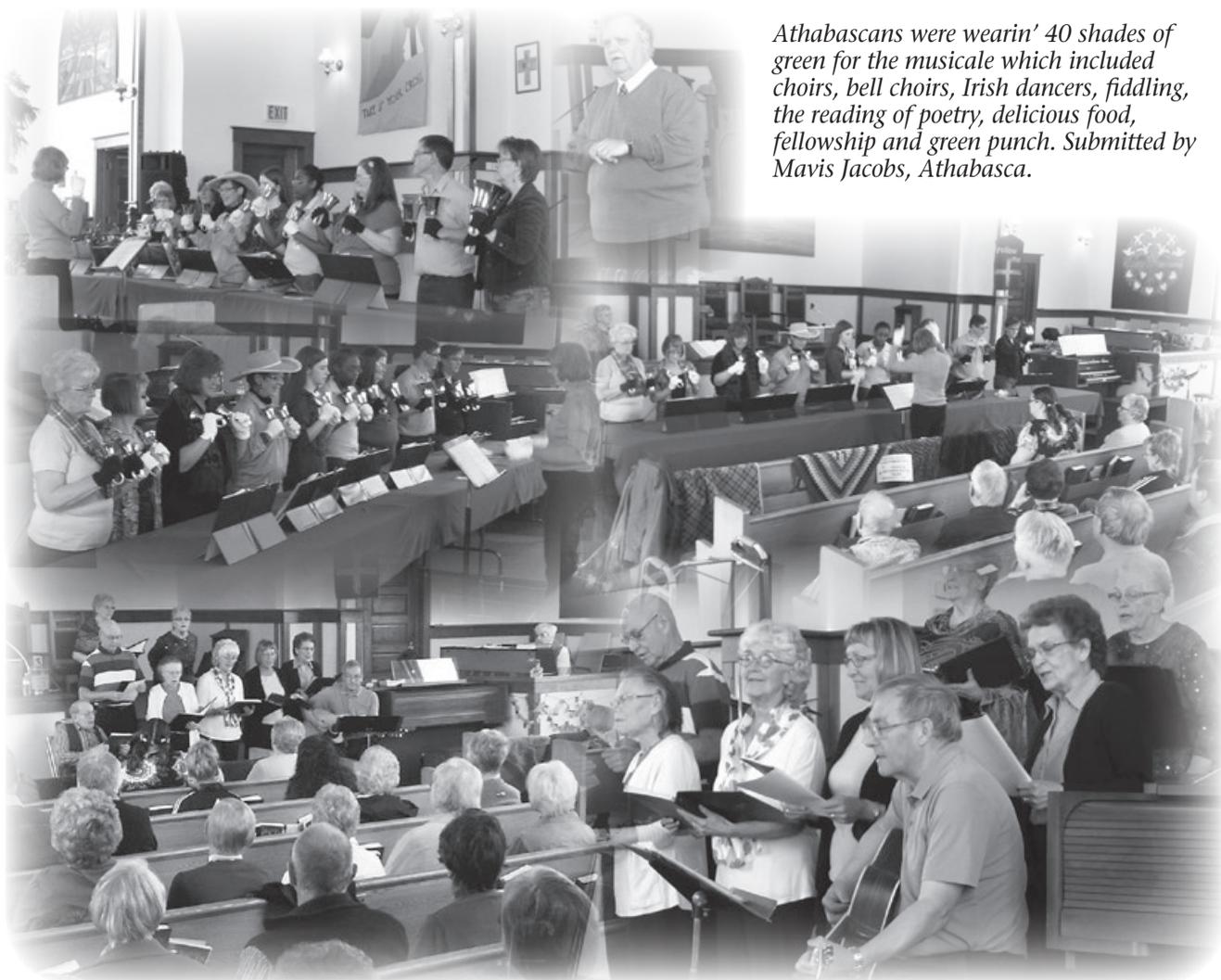
The Heart has no clock or calendar
Its memories linger, strong.
Each pang of loss a reminder
When my evenings stretch out long.

The footprint of love surprising
A force that knows no age.
My heart holds no clock or calendar
And I cannot turn the page.

— Elizabeth Webster Goddard 2014

Celebration of Irish Heritage at Athabasca United Church

Athabascans were wearin' 40 shades of green for the musicale which included choirs, bell choirs, Irish dancers, fiddling, the reading of poetry, delicious food, fellowship and green punch. Submitted by Mavis Jacobs, Athabasca.



Special Observations

May 2014

- May is Asian Heritage Month.
- May 11: Christian Family Sunday; Mother's Day
- May 17: International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia
- May 19: Victoria Day
- May 25: Rural Life (Rogation) Sunday
- May 26: National Day of Healing and Reconciliation
- May 29: Ascension Day

June 2014

- June 1: Environment Sunday
- June 8: Day of Pentecost; Union Sunday
- June 10: 89th Anniversary of Church Union
- June 15: Trinity Sunday; Father's Day
- June 21: National Aboriginal Day
- June 22: Aboriginal Sunday
- June 27: Canadian Multiculturalism Day

September 2014

- Sept. 1: Labour Day
- Sept. 14-Oct. 12: Creation Time
- Sept. 21: UN International Day of Peace

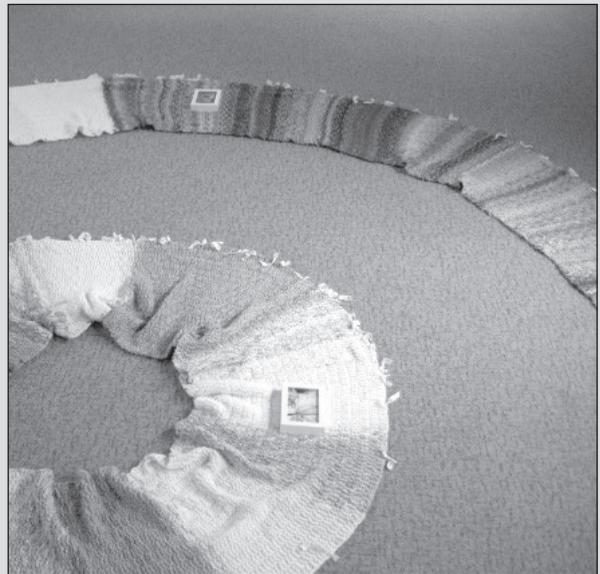
“Measuring a Year” by Margie Davidson.

“Davidson has created this 200 foot long knitted installation as a study of time and colour; it contains one stitch for every minute of a calendar year and uses color to mark the changing seasons of the artist’s surroundings.” – Tyler Sherard, Gallery and Collections Administrator for the Friends/ McMullen Gallery, University of Alberta Hospital.

Although not designed as a labyrinth, this installation evokes many thoughts and feelings typical of a labyrinth experience. When I first saw it, it struck me as a massive prayer shawl. How timely that it is on display as the same time as the Truth and Reconciliation event in Edmonton.

The art is cleverly displayed so viewers can appreciate the light, texture and colours without touching the exhibit, much of which spirals across the carpet. The “Measuring a Year” exhibit will continue until May 11 at the McMullen, 8440 – 112 St WMC 1G1.02, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2B7, 780-407-7152. Call for gallery hours. Admission is free.

– Liz Webster Goddard, Editor



“The “Measuring a Year” installation by Margie Davidson at the McMullen Gallery, U of A Hospitals, Edmonton suggested a massive prayer shawl.

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

The Church Mice



If it had been the broccoli of knowledge of good and evil, we'd still be in the garden of Eden.



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Around Our Conference

Upcoming Events — Please save this!

May 31, 2014. Celebration of Ministry: Banquet — June 1, 2014 — 10 am 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.

August 13, 2014 – August 16. Rendez-vous 2014 University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada

Rendez-vous 2014, August 13 – 16 in Winnipeg, is a national United Church gathering for youth, young adults, and leaders.

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

Thank you to Kelsey Stasiuk

Kelsey Stasiuk has been our graphic artist for In Contact for many issues. She has recently moved from Paragraphics to work for Alberta Health Services in a design position. We thank Kelsey for her creative and helpful work over the past years and wish her all the best at Alberta Health Services. Thanks, Kelsey! Paragraphics will continue to provide excellent graphic design for In Contact.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The event in Edmonton, March 27 to 30 was underway as this issue went to print. We expect an article on the topic and “what’s next” in our September issue. Did you attend? How did it affect you? How will this affect your future? We’d love to hear from you. Submitted articles should be no longer than 400 words. E-mail your comments or photos with captions to incontactphoto@gmail.com.



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Editorial Chairperson:
Alex Oliver

Editor: Liz Goddard
780-436-3801

c/o ANW Conference
9911 – 48 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6E 5V6

Guidelines for
Submission available at
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email or mail. Maximum
submissions of 400 words.
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Deadline for the September
issue is May 20.

Submissions for our blog
accepted anytime!