

MANITOU CONFERENCE GENERAL MEETING
held at St. Andrew's United Church, North Bay, ON
May 22-24, 2015

The Manitou Conference General Meeting met from 2:00 p.m. on Friday May 22nd, 2015 concluding with the Celebration of Ministry Service on Sunday May 24th, 2015 at 1:15 p.m. in North Bay, Ontario. The President, Maxine McVey, presided.

FRIDAY, May 22, 2015 – 2:00 p.m.

- Music for Gathering Ted Harrison introduced the theme song for the weekend – *People Get Ready There's a Train A-comin'*
- Constitution of the Court Maxine McVey, President, constituted the court with the following words: "In the name of Jesus, the Christ, Sovereign Head of the Church, this General Meeting of Manitou Conference is open for all business that shall come before it to the glory of God." Maxine lit the Christ candle.
- Recognition of Traditional Territory Maxine McVey welcomed everyone and acknowledged our presence on the traditional territory of Nipissing First Nation. Chief Marianna Couchie was presented with a gift of tobacco. She welcomed delegates and thanked the Creator for the many gifts of nature – including blackflies. Kim Robertson offered a drum song to honour all the generations.
- Greetings Mayor MacDonald brought greetings from the City of North Bay.
- Introductions The President introduced the following guests:
- Moderator, the Right Reverend Dr. Gary Patterson – Theological Reflector
 - Theme Speaker – Rev. Bruce Gregersen (Report Packet pg. 7)
 - Music Leader – Brenda McLay, Program Director of Music United <http://musicunited.ca/>
 - Michael Shewburg, The GO Project and theme speaker for MYF <http://www.thegoproject.ca/>
- Will Kunder introduced the following guests:
- Jackie Childerhose – Grand River Bookstore and AVEL Ontario <http://www.avelgrandriver.com/>
 - Kristine Greenaway – General Council Office Representative (Ministries in French)
- Will then acknowledged the following people who will provide support for the meeting: Karen Gooch (recording secretary), Tim Robertson (technical support), John Bok Kim (chaplain)
- The following former Presidents of Conference were present and introduced to the Court:
- Ron Holotuk (2005-2007)
 - Elizabeth Frazer (2007-09)

- Judith Visser (2009-2011)
- Ted Harrison (2011-2013)

The former Executive Secretary of Manitou Conference, Rev. Stewart Bell was acknowledged.

Members of the Manitou Youth Forum (MYF) were acknowledged.

Kathie Smith, the Chair of the Local Arrangements, introduced the members of the committee: Janice Brownlee, Tracy Davis, Lisa Blais, and Linda Craig. She also thanked the Conference Office staff for their help.

Table Groups Table groups took time to introduce themselves and share something of how the conference theme speaks to them.

President's Worship Worship was led by Conference President, Maxine McVey, focusing on her experience of travelling by train.

Routine Motions
(Report Packet p. 14) **MOTION GM 2015-1: Will Kunder/John Fraser**
That the following routine motions be adopted for information and action:

1. **Reports for Information**

- Review of 2014 Mission and Service Givings (10)
- Financial Development Officer (11)
- Summary of Actions taken by Manitou Conference Executive (32)
(with correction on pg. 37 – date should be April 16-17, 2015)
- North Bay Presbytery (42)
- Sudbury Presbytery (43)
- Spirit Dancing Presbytery (44)
- Nominations (47)
- Music United (50)
- Camp Lorrain Board of Directors (51)
- History of Camp Lorrain (53)
- Camp Lorrain Directors (55)
- Manitou Youth Forum (58)
- Manitou Conference Review Engagement (ending December 2014) (74)
- The Centre for Christian Studies (92)
- Emmanuel College (94)
- Five Oaks (95)
- Grand River Spiritual and Educational Resources (AVEL ON) (97)

2. **Roll of Conference** - That the roll of Conference be the lists of Ministry Personnel on the Presbytery rolls, corrected by the Lists of Transfers and the Lay Delegates as authorized by the Presbyteries through their respective Secretaries.

3. **Bounds of Conference** – That the bounds of the 2015 General Meeting of Manitou Conference be St. Andrew's United Church (for Friday May 22nd, 2015 – Sunday May 24th, 2015) and Trinity United Church (for the Celebration of Ministry Service on Sunday, May 24th, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.)
4. **Agenda** - That the agenda as printed and circulated be the order of business subject to those changes that are recommended by the Business and Agenda Committee and approved by the Conference or as recommended by the Conference itself.
5. **Adjournment of Sessions** - That the President have the authority to recess the Conference when business, as ordered, is completed until the next Order of the Day.
6. **Election of Scrutineers** - That those selected from each Presbytery (Paul Allard, Susan Peverley, and Lynda Todd) and Linda Craig appointed as Chief Scrutineer, be declared elected.
7. **Corresponding Members** - That the following be made corresponding members: the participants in the Conference program, participants in Manitou Youth Forum, guests and dignitaries and that their names be added to the record.
8. **Meeting of Presbyteries During the General Meeting** - That Presbyteries or Presbytery Executives that need to meet during the General Meeting arrange to do so after the adjournment of regular sessions.
9. **Need to Leave the General Meeting Session** - The hope is that delegates are present for the entire meeting and that travel allowance is not paid otherwise. Please let the Business and Agenda Committee know if you have to leave early, particularly if it is an emergency situation. Any delegate who wishes to leave this meeting before the rise of Conference, must present a written request, (Permission to Retire Form) stating the reason(s) to the Business and Agenda Committee who will present the request to Conference.
10. **New Business** - Members of the Court who wish to bring new business items before this General Meeting should advise the Business and Agenda Committee, no later than 5:15 p.m. on Saturday, May 23rd, 2015.
11. **Distribution of Printed Material** - Any person or group wishing to distribute printed material(s) to the delegates during the sessions of the General Meeting must do so through the Business and Agenda Table.
12. **Minutes Secretary** - For this General Meeting, the Minutes

**Secretaries will be Karen Gooch.
CARRIED**

Minutes of the 2013
Conference GM
(Report Packet p. 15-27)

**MOTION GM 2015-2: Will Kunder/Joan MacGillivray
That the minutes from the 2013 Manitou Conference General
Meeting be approved as presented. CARRIED**

Business Arising

None

Accountability Report of
Conference Executive
(Report Packet p. 28-29)

The Past President, Ted Harrison, assumed the chair for the
Accountability Report of the Conference Executive.

Maxine McVey presented the report on behalf of Conference Executive
and gave an opportunity for questions and comments.

**MOTION GM 2015-3: Maxine McVey/Lynda Todd
That the Accountability Report of the Conference Executive be
approved as presented. CARRIED**

Accountability Report of
the Executive Secretary
(Report Packet p. 30-31)

The President resumed the chair.

Will Kunder presented his Accountability Report and highlighted the
following points:

Manitou Conference faced a year of funding cuts but ended 2014 with a
small surplus. Several conferences accepted reduced operating grants in
order that those funds could be redistributed to Manitou Conference. The
other conferences have expressed a strong desire for Manitou
Conference to continue until such time as changes to the structures of
The United Church of Canada are made.

The closure of St. Paul's-Sudbury resulted in some of the proceeds being
directed to Manitou Conference.

The Conference Personnel Minister position was left vacant from June to
October 2014. This further helped the conference budget. CPM
Catherine Somerville left in June and is now serving in ministry at St.
Andrew's-Larch Street. We welcomed Lillian Roberts to the position in
November.

A cut to the 2014 Operating Grant resulted in a 20% reduction to the
Conference Minister for Mission and Stewardship Animation position. At
the same time, Melody Duncanson Hales was appointed as Manitou's
Financial Development Officer, returning her to a full-time equivalency.

The conference has been notified that all Conference Operating Grants
will be further reduced in 2016 and eliminated in 2018.

Manitou is unique in that there are 19 churches without ministry
personnel and this had led to some challenges for supervision and

oversight. Sudbury Presbytery has been involved in the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relations (ELHPR) pilot project this has led to more mission-focused work at the presbytery level.

There has been a lot of support for the TRC Walkers, Conference-wide.

**MOTION GM 2015-4: Will Kunder/Stuart Taggart
That the Accountability Report of the Executive Secretary be
approved as presented. CARRIED**

Theme Presentation #1
*"Is This My Train?
or Why Would I Want to
Get on This One?"*

Bruce Gregerson began by talking about travelling by train in Northern Ontario, a transportation system that has been dramatically diminished in recent years. Maybe there needs to be a new model for travel in the north, just as the United Church needs a new model for membership.

First we need to define what it means to be a member of The United Church of Canada. Should membership be about discipleship and faith, or should it be about governance? Are formal rites such as baptism and confirmation necessary to be a member of a faith community? Historically membership has been about believing, behaving and belonging. Perhaps a shift needs to happen so that belonging, behaving and then believing becomes the norm. The desire to belong is of primary concern. A *Ted Talk* from Simon Sinek entitled *How Great Leaders Inspire Action* was played.

http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

Table groups were asked to discuss the following question: Why would I want to belong to your church?

It's not that the church of God has a mission, but that the God of mission has a church! We need to remember why we are here and see what happens if we make mission the entry point membership.

A 3 tiered membership model was outlined:

- Associate Member – would journey with a congregation but have no vote
- Members – would vote and be involved in governance in the local community
- Professing Members – would be baptized and make a public profession of faith and could serve beyond the local church.

The challenge for us is whether we want to adopt a stance of radical welcome and hospitality to a new generation of seekers or focus on high expectations of discipleship and significant preparation for membership in the church. Should we place emphasis on God's mission as the starting point of membership and belonging or focus on linking leadership and decision making in a community of faith to a full profession of faith and baptism?

Table groups discussed whether baptism is a requirement for

membership in local communities of faith and other ideas about membership.

Some of these new ideas about membership, where belonging is the priority are already being practiced in local communities as evidenced by the proposal that will be introduced later in this meeting.

An important proposal relating to the issue of membership will be considered this summer at GC42.

Dinner Break

The Trinity A.T.O.S hosted a barbeque at Trinity United.

Called to be the Church

Melody Duncanson-Hales provided the following information:

\$376,378 was given to the M&S Fund from Manitou Conference.

Called to Be the Church is a new congregational giving program designed by the United Church. It integrates congregational and M&S giving while providing a variety of program options to choose from. There is instruction about how to inspire action, ask for donations, and give thanks.

The package will be available in the fall, but there are workshops scheduled for: June 13th in Porcupine, June 17th in Copper Cliff, and June 18th at St. Andrew's-North Bay. Contact Melody for details.

<http://www.stewardshiptoolkit.ca/>

Right Relations Home
Group
(Report Packet p. 48-49)

Elizabeth Frazer introduced members of the Right Relations Home Group (RRHG) and provided an overview of the Memory Project, which is a joint initiative of the RRHG and Huntington University. It involves recording the memories of those who were in attendance at the 1986 Apology in Sudbury.

Dr. Hoi Cheu spoke about his work on a documentary based on interviews and archival material from that event. A short selection from the film was shown. Written stories can still be offered for inclusion in the archive.

**MOTION GM 2015-5: Elizabeth Frazer/Teresa Jones
That the Accountability Report of the Right Relations Home Group
be approved as presented. CARRIED**

Comprehensive Review

Will Kunder read a letter from Gary Patterson and then spoke about the Comprehensive Review recommendations.

This conference has been actively engaged in the review process. The full report can be found at <http://www.gc42.ca/comprehensive-review-report>,

but the main recommendations of the report are as follows:

- Invest in new ministries and new forms of ministry.
- Continue to build a relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples based on mutuality, respect and equity.
- Govern the church with three councils: communities of faith, regional councils and a denominational council.
- Establish a College of Ministers to accredit, oversee and discipline ministers.
- Explore whether to set up an Association of Ministers for collegiality and mutual support.
- Fund governance and support services through an assessment, and ministry and mission activities from the Mission and Service Fund.

The main principles of the new model include:

- Simplify structures and processes
- Focus on resources on Communities of Faith.
- Value being united.
- Join together to witness to the gospel locally, regionally and denominationally.
- Embrace diversity.
- Continue to live into right relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.
- Support ministry and lay leaders.
- Separate oversight and discipline from collegial support.
- Make funding simpler, sustainable and transparent.

Membership has been declining since the 1970's. Since 1980, M&S donations have remained remarkably stable.

These proposals are feasible but will require significant changes to the present structure. There will need to be at least \$11 million in spending cuts. This will be accomplished by increased assessments, replacing presbyteries and conferences with regional councils, along with significant staff cuts. This reduction in spending will begin in 2016, whether or not the Comprehensive Review recommendations are adopted.

Table groups were asked to consider the following:

- "What excites you about the recommendations?"
- "Is there something you can't live with?"

It was noted that there is misunderstanding about how the present M&S Funds are distributed. The M&S Fund is the primary source of funding for the national church. A major concern is that M&S donations will not be able to be sustained at recent levels.

This proposal differs from past attempts at restructuring, which failed during remits to the congregations. This model is expected to reduce costs. Governance will be situated in regional councils.

There are concerns about financial implications for smaller churches. Likely there will be subsidies to assist with establishment of clusters and networks, and assist churches to send representatives to future General Council meetings.

Will Manitou Conference exist? It was created out of a regional need and is appreciated for its contributions. The Conference Finance Committee has done a lot of work to help ensure our work continues.

The Comprehensive Review, if approved at General Council, will require the development of an implementation plan, which will include remits to presbyteries and congregations. Whatever happens at GC42, there will be major cost reductions beginning in 2016.

Theological Reflection

Gary Patterson offered a theological reflection based on the poems *The Invisible String*, by William Stafford and *Decisions* by Boris Novak. This is an exciting time to be church. We have survived and we need to celebrate our history, but we can't get caught in the past.

The future is not clear and discernment is difficult, however we will continue to survive. We must remember that God is at the center and we are not alone.

Adjournment

Maxine McVey adjourned the meeting for the evening at 9:05.

SATURDAY May 23rd, 2015 – 9:00 a.m.

Music for Gathering

Brenda McLay lead the delegates in music before the morning session began 9:00 a.m.

Worship

Ethan Evans, who is part of the MYF, led a short worship service and shared some of his personal faith journey with the delegates.

MYF

Five youth from Manitou attended the GC42 Youth Forum Winter Retreat at Five Oaks: Bella Barbeiro (Spirit Dancing), Ethan Evans (Sudbury), Carrie Graham North Bay), Aidan Legault (Sudbury), and Jacqueline Warner-Smith (Sudbury). <http://www.gc42.ca/youth-council>

Bella and Carrie shared a video about the Five Oaks retreat and talked about the upcoming GC42 Youth Forum in Corner Brook. They shared their feelings about the application process, which involved a series of questions that encouraged reflection about their faith. At the retreat, they discussed church politics, the Comprehensive Review, and spent time discerning who would best represent them at GC42.

The Youth Commissioners from this region are Ethan Evans and Carrie Graham. Aidan Legault will take part in the cross-country pilgrimage to GC42.

- Announcements Will Kunder provided a nominations update and news on the progress of the TRC Walkers and encouraged delegates to pray for the walkers.
<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=26>
- Staff Committee Report (Report Packet p. 60) Janice Brownlee presented the Staff Committee Report.
MOTION GM 2015-6: Janice Brownlee/Cory Vermeer-Cuthbert That the Staff Committee Report be approved as presented. CARRIED
- CPM Covenanting Janice Brownlee and Maxine McVey presided over a covenanting service with Rev. Lillian Roberts, who was appointed the Conference Personnel Minister in November 2014.
- Finance Committee Report (Report Packet p. 70-71) Bill Rowe highlighted the following from the Finance Committee Report:
A \$27,000 deficit was expected in 2014, but ended with small surplus due to staffing decisions and gift from the St. Paul's-Sudbury closure.
A \$13,000 deficit is projected for 2015, requiring conference draw from reserves to maintain the current staffing level.
Most other conferences have switched from a per member assessment to an assessment based on a percentage of congregational expenses. The committee recommends that Manitou switch to an assessment model based on congregations revenues or expenses. (Two proposals to determine the method of assessment will be dealt with later).
Table groups discussed the Finance Committee report.
Some of the comments and questions from the discussion include:
 - What is included in expenses? – Excludes capital spending and designated M&S donations.
 - There was discussion about the differences between an expense based model and a revenue based model.
 - Will there be allowances for equalization across the regions? There is a fear that northern issues may be lost if conferences are merged.**MOTION GM 2015-7: Bill Rowe/Stuart Taggart That the Finance Committee Report be approved as presented. CARRIED**
- Mission Support Grant Committee Report (Report Packet p. 57) Bea Webb presented the Mission Support Grant report.
MOTION GM 2015-8: Bea Webb/Laura Hutchison That the Mission Support Grant Committee Report be approved, as corrected. CARRIED

MPESI Committee Report
(Report Packet p. 61-69)

Mary-Jo Eckert Tracy highlighted the following from the MPESI Committee Report:

Effective Leadership Pilot Project (ELPP) is ongoing in Sudbury. M&P issues are dealt with by the conference MPESI Committee and this has led to an expedited process.

Candidacy Pathways Pilot currently has 3 applicants.

There were two corrections on page 65: Emmanuel United-North Bay is vacant as of September 1st, 2015 (not Magnetawan); under the heading, *Transfers out of Manitou Conference*, the 'To' and 'From' column heading should be reversed.

**MOTION GM 2015-9: Mary-Jo Eckert Tracy/Joan MacGillivray
That the MPESI Committee Report be approved as corrected.
CARRIED**

General Council
Executive Report
(Report Packet p. 39-41)

Janice Brownlee and Erin Todd presented the following from their General Council Executive (GCE) report:

The Comprehensive Review is just one issue the church is dealing with:

- Finances are a concern across the church and are a reflection of faith.
- There are exciting youth activities going on.
- 11 conferences are involved with the ELPP with the intent of leading the church to a more mission-based focus.
- There is an ongoing exploration of different membership models.
- There is a review of orders of ministry and new training methods.
- The church continues to deal with gender issues.
- There are some apparent successes in the *Unsettling Goods Campaign* and it has been extended by 3 years.
<http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/unsettling-goods>
- Manitou has shown great leadership on *Right Relations*.

Gary Patterson spoke about the plans for the GC42. The theme of the meeting comes from Revelation 21:5 – 'Behold, I make all things new.' He also explained the meaning behind the logo of the meeting.
<http://www.gc42.ca/>

Kristine Greenaway reported about French language opportunities within the United Church. She also spoke about the French language equivalent of the *Observer* which is called *Aujourd'hui Credo*. <http://egliseunie.ca/>

**MOTION GM 2015-10: Bill Steadman/Lynda Todd
That the General Council Executive Report be approved as presented. CARRIED**

Theme Presentation #2
*"What kind of Train is
this? or
Who are these People?"*

Bruce Gregerson started by recalling his experience of travelling by train in India. Indians trust their rail system that has room for all. Members of The United Church of Canada desire to follow the compassionate example of Jesus, to live and act in hope for God's world and to grow in faith. In order to move forward, we need to resurrect our fading ecumenical vision and find new ways of working together.

We have been talking with the United Church of Christ-USA, with which we have much in common. We both have a strong desire for inclusiveness. The expected outcome of our discussions is not union but a new way of living in relationship together. We are a large church in a small country and they are a small church in a large country.

What they see in us:

- Our journey towards Right Relationships with Aboriginal peoples
- Our theological depth
- Our interfaith relationships

What we see in them:

- Their work on identity
- Their continuing testament
- Extravagant welcome
- Transforming lives
- How to stay together in a highly congregational church (churches can leave and take their property with them)

The marks of full communion include:

- Common confession of Christ
- Mutual recognition of members
- Common celebration of the Lord's Supper
- Mutual recognition of ministry
- Common commitment to mission

We have already begun to open new doors by recognizing ministers from other denominations by accepting each other's credentials, authorizing ministers to accept calls and be employed in each other's churches and if possible allow for the continuation of pension, group insurance, and other benefits in the home denomination. We currently recognize ministers from Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and United Church of Christ in the Philippines. We have also developed Associate Relationships with several immigrant churches with the hope being to avoid assimilation and to value differences. We also have several Ecumenical Shared Ministries with other Canadian churches.

Table groups were invited to consider the following questions:

- How do you feel about these new ways of relating to other churches?
- What are we risking?
- How much can we change and still be the church we know?

Camp Lorrain Corporation (Report Packet p. 51-56) President McVey recessed the meeting of the court in order to enable the Camp Lorrain Corporation biennial meeting.

Bob Jackson, chairperson of the Camp Lorrain Corporation, assumed the chair and reminded the court that conference delegates are also members of the Camp Lorrain Corporation.

Bob offered the following about the current state of Camp Lorrain:

Bob has been involved with the camp for 43 years and has seen a lot of changes. Under the current board, the camp has improved the quality and accountability of their programs.

There have also been property improvements, including a \$50,000 water upgrade, which costs \$5,000 a year to operate. The camp had a small surplus in 2014 and will end 2015 in the black – due in part to outside rentals.

In spite of every effort, registrations continue to diminish – there are only 14 campers registered thus far – for this reason, the board feels the camp is no longer viable.

Attempts to establish a Camping Ministry Task Group will begin again this summer to assist in determining the best way to use the camp in the long term.

Rental use of the camp has provided a new stream of revenue. Outside rentals should be encouraged in the short term.

For the coming season, volunteers and donations are still needed. Canadian Tire money is always helpful.

There are plans for an event on July 25th -26th to celebrate the past of Camp Lorrain and the Camping Ministry in Manitou.

<http://www.camplorrain.com/>

**MOTION CLC 2015-1: Barbara Cunnington/Bill Jones
That the child and youth camping programs be discontinued following the 2015 camping season, allowing for the Camp Lorrain property to be available for such purposes as the Conference Executive sees fit. CARRIED**

**MOTION CLC 2015-2: Barbara Cunnington/Bill Jones
That the present members of the Camp Lorrain Board of Directors continue to serve until December 31st, 2015.**

***Members of the Camp Lorrain Board:
Barbara Cunnington
Caroline Harrison***

**Bob Jackson
Bill Jones
Sue Jones
Eleanor Katona
Jerry Katona
Jeff Mailloux
Brenda McLay
Jim Runnalls
Stephanie Sheeler-Armstrong
CARRIED**

**MOTION CLC 2015-3: Barbara Cunnington/Bill Jones
That the present Trustees of the Camp Lorrain Corporation (Barbara Cunnington, Bob Jackson, and Bill Jones) continue to serve until the Conference Executive replaces them or they resign.
CARRIED**

**MOTION CLC 2015-4: Barbara Cunnington/Bill Jones
That as of January 1st, 2016, the Conference Executive become the Camp Lorrain Board of Directors and that the President of Conference or his appointee act as chair. CARRIED**

Delegates were given the opportunity to discuss the future of Camping Ministry in Manitou Conference.

**MOTION CLC 2015-5: Carol Dobbs/Stuart Taggart
That the Camp Lorrain Corporation meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED**

Proposals

Camp Lorrain
(Report Packet p. 88)

Maxine McVey resumed the chair and the general meeting.

The following proposals were presented to the delegates:

**MOTION GM 2015-11: Barbara Cunnington/Bill Jones
That the 2015 be the final year for a Manitou children's camping program provided on-site at Camp Lorrain. CARRIED**

Affirming Conference
(Report Packet p. 90)

Table groups considered questions relating to an Affirming Conference (*Appendix I, II*).

**MOTION GM 2015-12: Stewart Walker/John Fraser
That Manitou Conference enter into the process to seek recognition as an Affirming Conference.**

It was requested the vote be taken by secret ballot. Ballots were distributed.

CARRIED

Ballots were distributed for the election of the GC42 commissioners and the scrutineers adjourned to count the ballots.

Theme Presentation #3
*"Where is the Train
Headed? or Does
Anybody Have Any Idea
Where we are Going?"*

Bruce Gregerson began by showing pictures of the unused rail line in the Korean Demilitarized Zone leading to North Korea. It is a symbol of hope that the two countries will one day be reunited. Sometimes it seems as if Christianity is coming to the end of the line, but studies indicate it is not clear that religion is dying.

Christianity shows evidence of decline in North America, but other religions are thriving. We need to ignite passion for our church. How would you answer if someone asked: Why would I want to belong to your church? Can you name the core values of the United Church? To determine the future we should consider our humanity and what we need to live, and our world and what it needs to survive.

There are two main spiritual crises: the need for spirituality and the recovery of ritual, and climate change and end of a consumer (church) culture. Over the years there have been a number of statements and studies that deal with these crises, but there is still much to be done. We can look to other faith communities for help. Hinduism is far more about spiritual practice than belief whereas Christians tend to be locked in faith and written tradition. Hindus commonly ask: What is your practice? What ritual beyond Sunday worship brings meaning to your life? There is a desire for a spirituality that nurtures life within and blesses and heals the world.

Divestment is an important moral issue if we have any hope of controlling climate change. There are 3 important numbers to remember: we need to stay below 2°C of warming, we can emit no more than 565 gigatons of carbon dioxide and if we burn the fossil fuel corporations now have reserve we would emit 2,795 gigatons of carbon dioxide - five times the safe amount.

A combination of divestment and investment in only 'best practice' companies seems to be the best action to take. Theological questions include: What place do non-human creatures occupy in God's plan for creation and salvation? Is there an eternal hope for creation apart from humanity? And What does it mean to say that God loves the world? Climate change is telling us that consumerism is over. Climate change presents a spiritual crisis, a theological crisis and an ecclesiological crisis. Is now a confessional time?

We must find our voice and speak clearly. Jewish scholars believe the *crown of creation* is Sabbath rest. What would it look like to recover this idea?

Table groups were invited to discuss *Where is the Train Headed?* and think about what it would look like to rediscover ritual in home life and at church.

Election Results

Will Kunder introduced the GC42 Commissioners from Manitou Conference:

- Elected Lay Commissioners:
Kathie Smith
Jeff Mailloux
Joan McGillivray
Martha Cunningham-Closs
Bella Barbeiro
Laura Hutchison (1st alternate)
- Elected Ministry Commissioners:
Ted Harrison
Cindy Desilets
Jong Bok Kim
Janice Frame
Kathy Dahmer
Maxine McVey
Peter Wyatt (1st alternate)
- Other Commissioners:
Stewart Walker Conference President
Janice Brownlee Conference Executive
Erin Todd Conference Executive
Aidan Legault GC42 Youth Pilgrim
- GC Youth Forum Delegates:
Ethan Evans
Carrie Graham

**MOTION GM 2015-16: Lillian Roberts/John Fraser
That the election ballots be destroyed. CARRIED**

Commissioner
Covenanting Service

There was a covenanting service for the Commissioners attending GC42.

Proposals Cont'd...

Divestment
(Report Packet p. 87)

Elizabeth Frazer introduced the North Bay Presbytery Mission Committee proposal. She read a poem by Brian Doyle and spoke about how now is the time to hear the voices from the edge, the voices of the First Peoples, and the voices of the artists and poets. She said that this is a confessional proposal and we need to say *no* fossil fuel use for our children.

**MOTION GM 2015-17: Elizabeth Frazer/Jane Howe
That the 42nd General Council (2015) direct the United Church of
Canada Foundation and the United Church of Canada Treasury to
sell their holdings in fossil fuel companies and reinvest funds in
companies producing clean renewable energy. CARRIED**

Assessment Funding
(Report Packet p. 89-90)

Will Kunder outlined the two options for funding the Conference in the coming years (*Appendix III*). Time was allotted for Table Group

discussion followed by a plenary time for further discussion and questions:

- The option of basing the Conference assessment on “expenses” was chosen by our Finance Committee because it is the formula currently used by most other conferences and it is the model recommended by the Comprehensive Review.
- Under the “revenue” proposal from Sudbury, the total assessment would be the same. It is felt that revenue is more stable (for example higher fuel costs may be unanticipated). The “revenue” model is better for smaller or financially vulnerable churches (conferences). A church that spends more than 2/3 of revenue each year comes out better under the “revenue” model.
- Gary Patterson commented on the interesting debate and encouraged Manitou to forward this proposal to CG42.

MOTION GM 2015-18: Will Kunder/Bert McCallum
That Manitou Conference implement an assessment model based on “2.5% of line 40” (a congregation’s total expenses) for 2016, “3.5% of line 40” for 2017 and “4.75% of line 40” for 2018.
NO ACTION

MOTION GM 2015-19: Dave Clarke/Martha Cunningham-Closs
That Manitou Conference adopt a new funding formula based on a % of a congregation’s total revenue received (line 32d of the annual statistical report). CARRIED

MOTION GM 2015-20: Bill Steadman/Ted Harrison
That Manitou Conference proposes to the 42nd General Council that the “revenue” model for funding the work of the wider church be based on congregational revenues (line 32d of annual statistic forms) rather than on expenses (line 40) and that background material prepared for Manitou Conference 2015 GM be forwarded to GC42. CARRIED

UCW
(Report Packet p. 91)

The following proposal comes from North Bay Presbytery Executive and has been approved by the National UCW and the 3 Manitou UCW Presbyterials.

MOTION GM 2015-21: Judy Biondi/Frances Reid
That the 42nd General Council (2015) ensure that in the three court council model proposed by “United in God’s Work,” provision be made for the full voting participation of a representative of the United Church Women on the Regional and Denominational Councils and their Executives. CARRIED

Priorities

There was general agreement that the main Conference priorities for 2015-2017 be the ongoing Right Relations/Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, Affirming Ministry, and transiting to any directions approved at GC42 around Comprehensive Review.

Conference Executive will be accountable for these initiatives.

Theological Reflection

Gary Patterson offered a reflection on a one line poem by a Bengali poet. We should greet the dawn that has yet to arrive with a song of hope. He offered the life of slain Cardinal Oscar Romero as an example of hope. We need to look beyond our own churches to the wider world and realize that we can only accomplish a fraction of God's work in our lifetime.

This is OK because the seeds we plant will grow. We need to take a step towards liberation. We are the workers not master builders of a future that does not belong to us.

Courtesies

Kathie Smith acknowledged the following for their work during the GM:

- The St. Andrew's Fundraising Committee, Conference UCW's, and the Trinity AOTS, whose members provided food for the weekend.
- Jackie Childerhose and The Grand River Bookstore
- Tim Robertson and Karen Gooch
- Judi Thorne who raised \$120 for the M&S Fund from her tie-died t-shirt sales
- Gord Roberts and Kathie Smith who provided shuttle service between St. Andrew's and Trinity
- The Local Arrangements Team members
- The Heavenly Hosts
- Susan Whitehead for support to Local Arrangements and projection for the GM

Maxine McVey presented gifts to Gary Patterson, Bruce Gregersen and Kristine Greenway as thanks for their contributions.

Will Kunder thanked Maxine McVey for her service as Conference President and her work during this meeting.

Adjournment

The business of the court concluded at 12.35 p.m. and the Manitou Conference adjourned following the Celebration of Ministry Service at Trinity United Church.

President, Maxine McVey

Recording Secretary, Karen Gooch

Executive Secretary, Rev. Will Kunder

Appendix I

Questions and Answers about the implications of becoming an Affirming Ministry

If Manitou Conference becomes an Affirming Ministry does that mean our congregation must also become an Affirming Ministry?

No. Each ministry makes its own discernment and decision whether to become an Affirming Ministry or not. A decision by the Conference to become an Affirming Ministry is a decision about how the Conference will live out its own vision of inclusivity in the work that is directly its own.

If Manitou becomes an Affirming Ministry, will our congregation have to adopt a marriage policy that is open to same gender marriage?

No. A decision by the conference does not impose decisions on the local congregation that rightly belong to the congregation. Each congregation will still be free to set its own marriage policy.

What difference will becoming an Affirming Ministry make to how Conference does it work?

Each committee of conference will be asked to consider how the vision statement about inclusivity might impact their work. A decision to be an Affirming Ministry is a commitment to creating safe space for people, to offer hospitality that embraces all people and to be intentional in welcoming all people. This kind of intentional hospitality will ask the conference to be conscious in its policies, its meeting and gatherings of the kind of language, life experience and space that is utilized. A commitment to be an Affirming Ministry asks conference and General Meeting delegates to be accountable to a vision of inclusivity.

In the work of Pastoral Relations and Education and Students, the committees are already conscious that the United Church context is one that is inclusive and of the appropriate boundaries that are observed in interviews and considerations that provide safe conversations for all.

How will the vote be taken? Will those who don't support the decision to be an Affirming Ministry be ostracized?

Conference might choose to take the vote by secret ballot. The discernment to be an Affirming Ministry has tried to be open to all points of view. If the commitment that is being considered is one that is about inclusivity, hospitality and welcome, it would seem strange that a community embraces those values would conduct itself in a way that would make some feel like outsiders. The hope is that all will continue to experience Conference as a safe and welcoming community of faith.

My congregation does not support the idea of the Manitou Conference becoming an Affirming Ministry, how do I explain to them why Conference would do something that might be viewed as divisive?

As a presbyter and General Meeting delegate, one of your main responsibilities is the communication between the courts and your home congregation. How your congregation enters into the conversation will be influenced by the way in which you share information. The Conference Executive has worked to try to communicate why the conference is considering

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being an Affirming Ministry, you are invited to use those resources in talking with your congregation.

Why are we doing this?

Because the conference understands itself to be called to discern together how God is calling us to live into the vision of The United Church of Canada of radical hospitality and inclusivity. In taking the decision to enter into formal discernment the conference acknowledges that there is value in the conversation and that whatever the decision, we will have deepened our life together by asking ourselves what kind of community we believe we are called to be.

Affirming Ministries - Church Courts

Saskatchewan Conference

Bay of Quinte Conference

The Conference of Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario

Truro Presbytery, Maritime Conference

Ottawa Presbytery, Montreal & Ottawa Conference

River Bend Presbytery, Saskatchewan Conference

Shining Waters Presbytery, Bay of Quinte Conference

Upper Valley Presbytery, Bay of Quinte Conference

Rainbow Ministry, Winnipeg Presbytery

Cambrian Presbytery, The Conference of Manitoba & NW Ontario

Appendix II



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Affirming Ministries Program in The United Church of Canada

Anne Hebb ahebbeastlink.ca (east of Ontario)
Affirming Ministry Linda Hutchinson hutchinikingston.net (Ontario)
Coordinators: Brian Mitchell-Walker brimitchsasktel.net (west of Ontario)

Before you embark on your journey - please initiate contact with the Affirming Ministry Coordinators (a contact form is online at www.affirmunited.ca).

Requirements to declare your Ministry an Affirming Ministry

In order to become an Affirming Ministry, your ministry (congregation, presbytery, conference, educational institution, outreach ministry, chaplaincy, retreat centre, camp) must go through an **educational/discernment process** that reflects on what it means to be inclusive and evaluates your ministry's openness to the ongoing work of being intentional about how it includes others within the life and work of your ministry. We expect that you will look at a variety of areas that may be barriers to those coming to your community - age, gender, race, ability, class, economic status and, in particular to the Affirming Ministry, sexual orientation and gender identity. The advice we have received from many Affirming Ministries is that this discussion should include as many groups within your ministry as possible - choir, UCW, spirituality groups, youth, children, outreach, etc.

Components of the Educational/Discernment Process should include:

- a) Hearing Personal Stories from within your ministry and the community in order to understand the need for this action
- b) Hearing about and discussing the modern theological understanding of scriptures which, for years and still today, are used to discriminate
- c) Hearing from Affirming ministries what impact that decision has had on their ministry. Discussing what it might mean for your ministry.
- d) Hearing about and discussing the social justice aspects of why becoming Affirming is important.

Resources - films, books, seminars - for this process can be found in *Open Hearts*, our resource book on the website.

This educational/discernment process could take up to two years depending on the "culture" of the ministry involved. When the ministry feels that it is ready to make a public declaration of its work to be inclusive, there are several actions to be put in place by your ministry as outlined below. All documents should be communicated to your Affirming Ministry Program Coordinator for approval.

Documentation

A. A Vision Statement concerning the inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life and work of the Ministry

Guidelines for writing your statement are listed in *Open Hearts* on the Affirm United web site www.affirmunited.ca. It is a useful process for your Ministry to write its own statement reflecting the particular community you are a part of, the gifts and commitments you bring to the church and world.

Your statement might include inclusivity in a variety of areas (class, race, sex, age, ability). **A requirement of the statement is that it should specifically include the full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, in the life and work of the Ministry.** This Vision Statement (or revised mission statement) is often agreed upon within the board and taken to a

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congregational meeting to be voted on by all members of the congregation. *However, it should be sent to the coordinators of the Affirming Ministry Program first beforehand so that it can be preapproved.*

B. A continuing Plan of Action for the Ministry

This Plan, shared widely during the process with the ministry, might include:

- Ongoing work of your committee to reflect on what areas of inclusion can be further worked on.
 - Cooperation between this committee and other groups in the ministry to continue the education with new members.
- Ongoing educational events for your Ministry, presbytery, community or other ministries,
- Exploring issues of mission and ministry with people of all sexual orientations and gender identities who live in your community,
- Developing workshops for other ministries within your Presbytery and Conference
- Getting involved with the local AIDS Committee, PFLAG, hospice, etc.

C. An Inclusive Marriage Policy (for Affirming Ministries that offer marriage services)

A Marriage Policy in which couples of all gender combinations are treated equitably.

D. A Ministry Voting Requirement

Once you have sent in your Inclusive Marriage Policy, received approval of your Vision Statement and Plan of Action from your Affirming Ministry Program Coordinator, you must seek approval of your ministry to become an Affirming Ministry through a vote in which we strongly advise a minimum of 75% approval. Remember the goal is to have everybody intentionally inclusive. So we encourage all who are actively involved in your ministry to participate in the vote (for example in a congregation both official members and adherents).

E. A commitment to the Affirming Ministry Program nationally by becoming a member of Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble

Contact the Affirming Ministry Coordinator/s via email to:

- Provide a contact name (with e-mail) to be added to our network list. This contact would receive information and report annually the ongoing work of your Ministry. They also may participate in ongoing discussions between Affirming Ministries.
- Give an annual financial contribution to Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble. There is an annual institutional membership fee of \$100 to assist in advocacy and support (i.e. the Affirming Ministry Program, workshops, conferences, working in partnership with United Church courts), communications (i.e. website, email, conference calls, news releases), and providing resources for the national program (i.e. Open Hearts, Consensus blog). We recognize that some Ministries will be able to contribute more and others less. We ask that you notify our membership coordinator if you are unable to contribute in any given year with a short explanation of circumstances that prevents a contribution.

You are encouraged to visit the Affirm United web site to view "**Consensus**", an online blog by Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble. You are also encouraged to send members to Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble's Annual Conference and General Meeting each summer (information available on website www.affirmunited.ca).

F. A Public Celebration

Once requirements A-E are complete, we expect you to hold a public service of celebration for your ministry, your community and the wider United Church (congregations, presbytery members etc.). Some ministries choose to have their service at an alternate time that allows for wider participation, and some will have it at their regular time with an invitation for other congregations to

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come and worship with them. It is at this service that you would receive a certificate from Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble to mark this step within your ongoing commitment. Following this celebration, you join the growing list of Affirming Ministries throughout Canada and will be listed on the Affirm United web site, www.affirmunited.ca

Appendix III

Recommendation

- Based on the 2013 Year Book (2012 National Statistics) the proposal to assess based on Line 40 - the Cost to Run a Church - at 4.75% would mean a total assessment of \$12.5 million.
- There were several items that could have been used as the base to get the \$12.5 million required e.g. # of members, value of church land, congregational giving, total revenues, costs etc.
- The question we asked is "What is the most fair and most equitable method"?
- We feel "generally speaking" that basing fees on revenues is the fairest method and the better indicator of a church's "ability to pay".
- Our recommendation is to use Line 32D - Total Revenues. A 3.15% rate will equal the total required assessment of \$12.5 million.

Why a Fee Based on Cost is Harmful

- **Example using Churches** - Two Pastoral Charges each have revenues of \$150,000. One is a three point charge with 3 hydro bills, 3 heating bills, 3 snow removal bills and there is very high mileage associated with travel around the three point charge. Total costs are \$140,000.
- The 2nd Pastoral Charge is a single church. It has utility bills for only one property and is in an area with very little snow and mileage. Costs are \$120,000.
- Based on 4.75% of costs the three point charge would pay \$6,650 in fees while the single church would pay \$5,700 or 17% less. Does that seem Fair and Just? Just because the three point charge has higher costs it is assumed under Recommendation Six to have a greater ability to pay? It is actually the opposite.
- Under the revenue base proposal (3.15%) each church would pay \$4,725.

Why a Fee Based on Cost is Harmful

- **Example 2** - Two churches each have revenues of \$150,000. One is struggling. It actually used a GIC to meet costs of \$170,000. The church is slowly going under and will close when its investments run out a few years down the road. The second church is fortunate and spends only \$100,000. It is able to buy a GIC for \$20,000.
- Under the cost method the church that is struggling is assessed a fee of \$8,075 (4.75% of \$170,000). The second church is assessed a fee of \$4,750 and therefore pays \$3,325 or 40% less. Who has the greater ability to pay - the church that is spending more from the weakest financial position, or the church which is spending less from a much stronger financial position?

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Impact on Current Conferences
 Data from 2013 Year Book - 2012 Statistics

Conference	Line 32 D Revenues	Line 40	Fees Based on Revenues	Fees Based on Costs	Test of Difference
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$11,858,516	\$8,916,906	\$373,492	\$423,553	-\$50,061
Maritime	\$40,149,867	\$29,128,338	\$1,264,548	\$1,383,596	-\$119,048
Montreal and Ottawa	\$30,185,903	\$20,340,825	\$950,726	\$966,189	-\$15,463
Bay of Qunite	\$34,122,559	\$23,216,506	\$1,074,714	\$1,102,784	-\$28,070
Toronto	\$69,045,068	\$40,043,628	\$2,174,623	\$1,902,072	\$272,551
Hamilton	\$49,145,654	\$32,038,501	\$1,547,877	\$1,521,829	\$26,048
London	\$37,945,750	\$23,909,355	\$1,195,128	\$1,135,694	\$59,434
Manitou	\$5,300,626	\$4,052,349	\$166,947	\$192,487	-\$25,540
Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario	\$20,714,571	\$14,965,028	\$652,420	\$710,839	-\$58,419
Saskatchewan	\$22,073,404	\$14,627,308	\$695,217	\$694,797	\$420
Alberta and Northwest	\$38,828,908	\$25,750,188	\$1,222,944	\$1,223,134	-\$190
British Columbia	\$39,631,586	\$26,531,157	\$1,248,225	\$1,260,230	-\$12,005
All Native Circle	<u>\$266,028</u>	<u>\$1,221,813</u>	<u>\$8,379</u>	<u>\$58,036</u>	-\$49,657
Total	\$399,268,440	\$264,741,900	<u>\$12,575,240</u>	<u>\$12,575,240</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
% to Use	<u>3.15%</u>	<u>4.75%</u>			
Total Fees	<u>\$12,575,240</u>	<u>\$12,575,240</u>			

Used this Data to determine % so total fees are equal on revenues and Line 40
 Used 2013 Year Book, with Statistics from 2012, as this was likely the base when the 4.75%
 was determined and 2014 book is not available to me at this point.