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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

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When I was growing up, our family did not have a summer cottage, but we spent part of many summers at the cottage of our good friends, the Fosters. That cottage was on a beautiful lake in Muskoka, and although I haven't been there for years, I have many clear images in my mind of the times there, swimming in the cold clear water, hiking over the rocks to pick blueberries, and reading by flashlight in the little bunkhouse down by the shore.



For years, if I was asked to name my favourite church, I would name the island on Muldrew Lake where cottagers gathered for outdoor worship on Sunday mornings over the summer. I can't remember anything that was actually said during those church services of my childhood, but I remember vividly the experience of going to church by boat, and sitting on the rocks under the trees and feeling that God's presence was in that place.

On a recent visit with former Moderator Bruce McLeod, I learned that those church services still continue on an island in Muldrew Lake. The services are ecumenical, but there is a long history of United Church cottagers on that lake, starting with our first Moderator George Pidgeon, and including our family's hosts, the Fosters.

When I first heard the hymn "Spirit of Gentleness," back in the 80s when the little "green hymnbook" came out, the outdoor worship of those childhood summers came to mind. Over the years those memories have blended with many encounters with the holy that I have experienced in outdoor settings.

Where are you experiencing the sacred this summer?

Nora

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