
Note from Nora - May 4, 2018



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

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It is fun to walk into a big church that is so full that people have to stand at the back. That was just one of the great experiences about the [Bay of Quinte Conference](#) Annual Meeting last weekend. The meeting was held at Trinity United in Napanee, with nearby Grace United pitching in to provide some of the meals. Although we have become accustomed to sitting in table groups at church meetings, I kind of liked the feeling of meeting in a church, and sitting in pews did not seem to limit the ability for neighbours to converse.

This was the first of this spring's Conference meetings, held early so that the Bay of Quinte people can turn their minds to co-hosting (with the [All Native Circle Conference](#)) the [43rd General Council](#) in July. All the meetings this year will have a bittersweet element, as those who have met and worshipped and worked together over the years prepare for the likelihood of meetings that will be configured differently, along new regional lines, in the future.



The musically gifted president of this Conference, Wanda Stride, had invited each of the presbyteries, as well as the UCW and the staff, to write songs. Throughout the meeting, the different groups were called up to perform their songs. The character and hopes of each part of the Conference came through in the music and lyrics chosen. The task of creating the songs invited the creativity of the participants to shine through, and brought a very positive mood to the meeting.

I drove home from Napanee on Sunday afternoon with my head full of the conversations, the music, the questions and the wisdom of the youth, the deep insights of the theological reflector, the animated discussions about topics for networks, the inspiring words of both retirees and those entering ministry, the energy around doing new things, and the deep sense of relationship with one another that the people of this Conference enjoy.

I arrived home to find forsythia suddenly blooming, and tulips and rhubarb unfurling in our yard, which just two weeks ago had been completely buried in snow.

With most of the other Conference meetings scheduled for late May or even early June, each will meet, grieve, and celebrate in their own way. These are sad times, and hopeful times, and I give thanks to God for all who are part of these changing times in our beloved church.

Nora

[Photo: Nora Sanders]
