



October Newsletter United Church Women of Western Ontario Waterways

As I sit in front of my computer, I am feeling both thankful and frustrated. Thankful for the technology that links us together. Frustrated by that same technology that just won't cooperate when I want to try something new. Grateful that I can reach out to various people for help and support. Very thankful for four virtual gatherings I have experienced over the past month.

Firstly, a belated Happy Thanksgiving. Was your thanks-giving in a different format? I hosted a virtual dinner with my friends. We ate turkey and all the trimmings in separate houses, but we linked up with Zoom and were together visually and in conversation as we shared a thanksgiving meal. Apart, but together.

National UCW Executive Meeting

During the last week of September, 40 women from across Canada met daily by Zoom for approximately 2 hours daily as the National UCW Executive. We missed the in-person contacts, of course, but Zoom meant we were able to come together to do the work of the NUCW. One of the real highlights was the closing worship led by Rev. Michael Blair on Friday when women from across Canada were invited to join us. 128 women came together for that event to share in communion. Without Zoom, the larger community would not have been able to gather virtually.

I hope you will take time to read Marnie's report on the National UCW Executive Meeting. There is information on our national UCW 60th anniversary project, Women for Change, Zambia, and on the upcoming 60th Anniversary Celebration in Sydney, Nova Scotia, July 11-15, 2022. Please plan to attend. The NUCW executive is putting aside money to help subsidize travel to that event. It is not too late to start making your plans. Also, please note that

the NUCW newsletter, *Keeping in Touch*, will be taking on a new format.

Tri-Regional Gathering

On October 3, 2020, United Church Women of Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls, and Western Ontario Waterways met together by Zoom in a Tri-Regional Gathering. Over a hundred women came together for that event. Kathy Douglas, Faith Formation Minister for WOW Region, has been very supportive and helpful in encouraging our three regions to try new ways of meeting. The event is available on <https://vimeo.com/47114227> and Youtube. Check it out.

It includes a 13 minute presentation by Rev. Japhet Ndhlovu on **Women for Change, Zambia** which gives an update on the project and the money United Church Women have raised to date. Check out Eleanor Firth's report on this Gathering as well. The Transitional Leadership Team has made a \$1000 donation on your behalf to this project from our regional budget. Please continue to support this special project over and above your usual givings.

Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

I am pleased to report that our WOW UCW covenanted with the Region in the opening worship service on Thursday as a Community of Faith. As a result, we are eligible for a place on the Regional Council. We presented symbols of who we are and the gifts we bring. They included a copy of the UCW purpose, a well-used Bible, a globe and a symbol of Mission and Service, as well as a mug and plate to represent each of the four pillars of Christian witness, study, fellowship, and service.

Edith Coyle is our representative and will be our voice on the Faith and Discipleship Commission which is where we felt the UCW could make the strongest contribution. Please read her report on the Regional Council meeting. It is another way we can be connected.

As well, we still have two presbyterials in our WOW region. Please read the attached reports, and hold the women of Grand River and Huron-Perth presbyterials in your prayers.

You may have noticed that the focus of this message has been on virtual gatherings. We are all having to look to new ways to be United Church Women who can find their strength and support in each other.

The pandemic may be turning our world upside down. Our Thanksgiving celebrations may have had to change. But though we mourn for what is past, as a community of faith, we continue to look for the Holy Presence in our lives.

May you continue to be surprised by the God whose promise is that we are not alone. May you continue to seek out new ways to carry out the commitments we made to each other and the world as we recite our UCW purpose. Perhaps you might recite the UCW purpose to yourself out loud, remembering that you are not alone. Together, we can make a bigger difference to our world.

Nora Sanders, retiring General Secretary of the United Church of Canada, in her closing words to the National UCW Executive meeting, said she "loved "the United Church of Canada for what it allows us to do for the world." Her words encapsulate why I belong to the National Church and specifically, to the UCW. These organizations make my world larger and are worthy of our individual and collective support.

May you continue to express your gratitude for all that you have been given. Let us say with the psalmist, "Make a joyous noise to the Lord, all the earth....For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations." (Ps. 100: 1, 5)