

## CAMBRIAN CALLS - February 2016 in Thunder Bay

Some 60 Presbyters, 19 youth and 11 youth leaders gathered from Feb. 26-28 at Broadway UC in Thunder Bay. This Presbytery meeting's theme were the eight Category 2 and 3 Remits (proposals for changes to the Basis of the Union of the United Church of Canada) that will have to be voted on. We would also be sharing some "good news stories" about positive initiatives that are taking place in various congregations.

Opening worship was provided by the Rev. Barb Miller, with Susan Marrier providing musical accompaniment, focussing on making ourselves present in body and soul, and expressing our faith in God as our only foundation.

Chair Kyle Kellar opened the meeting welcoming all, acknowledging that we had gathered on traditional land, and encouraging all present to embrace the challenges (and Remits) ahead of us and "to plunge into this time of great change" to make sense of it and make it work.

Past Broadway Chair Jean Riddell welcomed us on behalf of the hosting congregation Broadway. After roll call, Conference Executive Secretary Shannon McCarthy updated the court on some of what has been happening on Conference level regarding cut backs, staff changes and work on the remits.

It was established that this meeting had a quorum; after some housekeeping motions it was time for a break. The youth left to start their own program, with a focus on poverty, and for the Presbyters joined their respective committees for the work ahead of them.

After lunch, the Rev. Doreen Lankshear-Smith in her "Kudos for Kairos" time spoke of the tender hope that seems to be present in areas of right relations with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, and climate justice. However, there are still many, many barriers to overcome. Please visit [www.KairosCanada.org](http://www.KairosCanada.org) and go to "Winds of Change" for more information.

Terry Lynn Jewell introduced a petition to make education for reconciliation mandatory in all forms of education, as is strongly encouraged by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report. Watch a good (and short) YouTube video about this, named "Teach Our Children: Call to Action #62: Education for Reconciliation".

Much of the afternoon was dedicated to introducing and discussing the eight Remits that are coming this way: five Category 2 Remits (to be voted on by pastoral charges and Presbyteries), and three Category 3 Remits (to be voted on by Presbyteries only). Please visit [www.gc42.ca/remits](http://www.gc42.ca/remits) to familiarize yourselves with these Remits; they will fundamentally change the face of our denomination; it is imperative for all to be aware of them and understand them.

It is vitally important that the governing body of every pastoral charge and presbytery cast a vote on all applicable remits. An absolute majority is needed for the remits to pass, not just a majority of those that vote. If passed by an absolute majority, each remit will go to the 43rd General Council 2018 for approval. *Note that if a governing body of a pastoral charge or presbytery does not vote, that is considered a vote AGAINST the remit question.*

Another theme was pastoral charges sharing their good news stories. Some seven congregations took the opportunity to report positive stories, from innovating use of AV technologies and thorough renovations and redesigning the use of their property, to refugee sponsorship and creative ways of practicing holy hospitality to the community - and much more. The Spirit is certainly moving and a lot of exciting things are happening!

Some highlights of Committee Reports presented:

**Policy and Planning:** the Constitution of First United Church Dryden was approved.

**Christian Development:** Camp Duncan is looking for reps from Broadway, Pinegrove and Current River UCs. Rev. Warner Bloomfield called for new faith formation projects as there is a modest budget to support those. Proposal must be submitted by August 31 and have a budget included. Financial and practical help is also available for any youth initiative within this Presbytery. Presbytery can also financially support any youth attending any Presbytery or Conference event. A new page listing all financial resources will be added to the Cambrian website soon ([www.cambrianpresbytery.org](http://www.cambrianpresbytery.org)). Warner also reminded all to keep sending Jacomyn Gerbrandy and Hubert Den Draak any updates, changes and useful information for both the Cambrian website and specific website for the joint Thunder Bay churches ([www.TBayFaith.org](http://www.TBayFaith.org)).

**Ministry Personnel & Education:** Pastoral charges are asked to fill out the annual Financial Viability form. It is not compulsory, but strongly recommended as it provides indispensable insight whether a congregation is "living within their means" and can actually afford a minister for at least 3 years, and whether there are some (financial) clouds on the horizon to be aware of and prepare for.

- A vacancy for Pinegrove UC was declared for a half-time minister. Incidentally, Pinegrove is one the pastoral charges that, with help from Joy Bott and some limited preliminary prep work, was able to work through their Joint Needs Assessment Process in one afternoon. This effective model is being adopted by more and churches. It does not always need to be onerous.
- Retirement request for Ren Amell as of June 2016 was approved.
- Lori Cress was relicensed as Sacraments Elder for Stratton UC.
- Susan Girard from Atikokan was recognized as a candidate for ordained ministry.
- Norma-Jean Johnston was relicensed as Sacraments Elder for Knox UC, Rainy River.
- Six Licensed Lay Worship Leaders were relicensed for another two years: George Bott, Ray Lake, Nancy Vernon, Carol Watson, Alice Bloomfield and Bruce Graham.
- Candidates for ministry Laura Rousseau and Kaye Jones are doing and progressing well.
- We were informed of exiting plans to redesign the Licensed Lay Worship Leader program to an online course to make accessible to all within this vast area and make it more cost-effective.
- Hubert Den Draak will be commissioned as Diaconal Minister in Kenora on May 29, 2016.

**Stewardship Report:** Closed pastoral charges: the Knox Pruden property on Pruden St., Thunder Bay has been sold. The property of Central UC, Kakabeka, has been donated to the township of Oliver-Paipoung which assumed all expenses of the transaction.

Trinity UC is increasing their capabilities to service other congregations through the use of multi-site and Skype technologies, offering live-streamed workshops, joint worship, special events, etc.

Also a reminder of the Educational Fund with a \$2,000 annual budget to fund new educational initiatives (e.g. for guest speakers, a Sacraments elders course, workshops, etc.).

**COSA** (Christian Outreach and social Action): Pastoral charges are urged to study and reflect theologically on the reports and pastoral letters written by moderators Gary Paterson and Jordan Cantwell on assisted dying.

- Presbytery resolved to write a letter to the provincial government to express their deep concern re: the systematic underfunding of health care for people of the Nishinabe Aski nation.
- All pastoral charges are urged to educate themselves on the significant recommendations made in the final report of the TRC (Truth and reconciliation Commission).

The Rev. Joyce and Peter Fergus-Moore gave a presentation on the Unsettling Good campaign, calling to not purchase Israeli goods manufactures in the illegally occupied Palestinian territories, mostly on the West Bank. Some very informative videos and resources are available on the UCC website on this issue under the umbrella "Let's Keep Talking". Also read Peter's blog [www.WalkingInBethlehem.blogspot.ca](http://www.WalkingInBethlehem.blogspot.ca) about their experiences there.

**Technology Tid Bits:** George Bott posted a helpful 6-minute video on how to quickly and easily arrange a traditional letter-sized document into a typical Sunday bulletin or Annual Report: <https://youtu.be/-EblBPRGGho>.

**Oversight Pastoral Charges:** there are currently no less than 11 pastoral charge supervisors for those congregations that are currently without ministry personnel.

- Pinegrove UC received an \$11,000 Mission Support Grant for their Café del Soul outreach initiative.

Closing worship that Saturday was organized by the youth, who offered personal reflections on how they experienced the very real challenges and injustice of poverty; their experiences were expressed through song, prayer, and Holy Communion.

Hubert Den Draak connected this to his theological reflection on the (false) choices we sometimes think we have to make regarding the future of the church, and called to seek strength in our weakness as a church now that it's no longer at the centre of society, but finds itself drifting toward the margins.

This was followed by supper (and what a supper it was!). As always, Dave McMaster's hat was passed around, generating \$615.00 for the Mission & Service Fund. Thank you to all who contributed!

On Sunday morning Presbytery members joined in (eclectic) worship together with the Broadway congregation, who had done just a marvellous job at hosting us. The service was also live-streamed live to anyone who wanted to participate from different times and/or places. After closing motions, this Presbytery meeting was formally adjourned.

The location for the Fall 2016 Presbytery meeting has not yet been determined, and will be announced as soon as possible.

Hubert Den Draak