

The Church Mouse

The Newsletter of Oxford Presbytery in the United Church of Canada

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Dear Friends in Oxford Presbytery

This is one of the few times when we can write you having had the blessing of seeing you recently in person. It was a great pleasure for us to take part in the Presbytery meeting at Brooksdale UC last month, to tell you something about our work with the Christian Council of Mozambique, to see Don Hilborn's slides of his recent trip there and to thank you for your generous support of CCM. Mozambique this year is listed as the 7th-poorest country in the world per capita, and the needs are very great. CCM is working on a wide range of projects, some of which you can read about in the London Conference Gift Catalogue for 2009 which has just been released. Among other items there is great need for bicycles for pastors and midwives, bicycle ambulances, bursaries for rural girls, food supplements for people starting to take life-saving but potent anti-retro-viral medicines, and equipment for the medicinal plant gardens that produce local medicines to help people infected with HIV. In our city of Quelimane, that means 1 person in 3 over the age of 14 and in our province - 1 in 5. So we and CCM will be busy, until we meet again.

Thanks again, Oxford Presbytery, for your love and support, which helps to keep us going

In faith, Karen and Bill Butt

M & S givings to date across the Conference is 100.3%. Across Oxford Presbytery 97.39%

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Our Moderator visits Oxford Presbytery

The Rt. Rev. David Giuliano was at St. David's Saturday early evening and met with the youth of Oxford and had pizza with them. At seven pm he met with the adults. He told us about a huge cathedral church in Montreal, the congregation is now gone. The building houses and showcases the work of Quebec artists.

In the final prayer he thanked God for all the children baptized in the large green marble baptism font. All the people who were fed and nourished at the communion table. All the preachers and preaching from the huge pulpit. Then those attending (about 35 in a space to hold 2,000), prayed the Lord's Prayer together, which would be the last time in that space. When he walked outside and on the sidewalk a voice in his head said "You are walking on holy ground". He realized that out in the world is where we meet Jesus and are called to be servants.

A question was asked about this huge ad campaign, was it successful and worth the money that was spent? He explained there are two parts, the ads were to get people interested enough to go to Wonder Café on the internet and that has been very successful. It will take sometime before we know whether it brings more people into the pews. The other half of project was the emerging spirit workshops which bring people together and give them training to be a welcoming and hospitable people. He himself having visited many United Churches over the last few years, find many are not welcoming or friendly. If people become interested after visiting the Wonder Café, come, what do they find, will they be back again? Instead of wondering who the newcomer is and how much money he will give, we should ask who is God sending us to-day, what can we learn from him, what blessings may we experience. It was good to have the Rt. Rev. David Giuliano here. *Ruth*

OXFORD PRESBYTERIAL UNITED CHURCH WOMEN HOLD FALL EVENT

About 60 members attended the Fall Event held at Sweaburg United Church on Monday October 27, 2008. Foldens UCW handled the Registration Table and welcomed each member as they arrived. Rev. Liz Lemon, minister of Sweaburg United Church and Sweaburg's UCW President, Betty Karn brought greetings to everyone present. Rev. Liz Lemon led in prayer and a bountiful potluck lunch was enjoyed.

The afternoon meeting opened with singing in the sanctuary lead by Nancy Cockle accompanied by Linda Jakeman on the organ. The theme for the day was, Habitat for Humanity, with Don Campbell as the guest speaker.

President Jean Manning welcomed everyone, rang the bell from the Christian women of Korea to call us together, lit the candle to symbolizes Christ's presence among us and placed the open Bible to remind us to study faithfully.

Jean read a short story about a woman, pumpkins and acorns. ***God does have a master plan.***

The UCW Purpose was repeated in unison.

Dorothy Arnold gave a very interesting report from her attendance at Westminster Weekend held at Stoneridge Inn at Lambeth on April 11th to 13th. The theme was, "Roots to Grow, Wings to Fly", with Diane Walker as speaker. Carol Tabor read Judy Crane's report from the Summer Event at Siloam United Church in London. The theme was, "Come and Find the Quiet Centre", with Rev. Kristianne Charlton as speaker.

The secretary's report was read by Ellen Town. The treasurer's report was read and explained by Louise Baird. Sheila Greason, Chairperson at Camp Tanner, placed a Kitchen Thank You in the envelopes of the various groups and individuals who had cooked at the camp during the summer of 2008.

The annual Camp Tanner dinner and auction will be held on February 14, 2009 at the Embro Community Centre.

Reports were given by Nancy Cockle on Stewardship, by Marion Harrington on Church in Society, by Carol Tabor on Leadership and Christian Development, by Ruth Skillings on Rural Life. Linda Fishleigh gave the report of the committee on nominations.

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The Right Reverend David Giuliano, Moderator of

the United Church of Canada will be at St. David's United Church, Woodstock on November 8, from 4:30 - 6:30 with the youth and from 7 - 9 p.m. for a town Hall Discussion on, "The Merging Church". Everyone is welcome.

The Annual meeting will be held Jan. 28, 2009 at St. Pauls United Church, Tillsonburg. The theme is "The Peace Within, the Power Without", with guest speaker Cheryl Buchner, Lay Worship Leader. Registration is at 8:45 a.m.

Linda Fishleigh introduced the guest speaker for the afternoon, Don Campbell for Habitat for Humanity. Don is a resident of Ingersoll and with a committee of people he hopes to build a Habitat for Humanity home in Ingersoll. A Town Hall Meeting was held in Ingersoll in May 2008. The committee represented 15 different community groups interested in building a HFH home. They established a working agreement with HFH London and received seed money from them. A project leadership team of about 20 - 25 people is needed to carry out the key steps. They have \$20,000 now but by February they would need ½ of the costs in pledges. Their ultimate goal would be to have a family in the HFH home by fall of 2009 or spring of 2010.

The first HFH home was built in 1976 by Lynn & Millard Fuller and by 2005, 200,000 HFH homes have been built around the world.

HFH has a vision of a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. Their mission is to mobilize volunteer and community partners to build affordable homes and promote home ownership.

The community, faith groups, business and professional people need to volunteer their time and give gifts in kind so that the HFH house can be sold to the family for a fair market value with HFH holding the mortgage with payments geared to the family income. Don said that rents in Ingersoll are about \$1000 - \$1200/month, but a HFH home mortgage would be about \$250 /month.

The five major steps to building a HFH home are: Family Selection; Property Acquisition - near schools and services; Raising Support - the typical cost is \$70,000 plus the land cost; Designing and Building the House - it is designed for a specific family, usually it is a 1,000 - 1200 sq. ft. bungalow with a basement, it must meet the building codes and local bylaw requirements, licensed trades-

persons do the electrical, plumbing and heating work; Ongoing Family Support - to insure successful, long term ownership, this support is given through the life of the mortgage, many HFH families will need budgeting, home maintenance and community resources knowledge supplied. Miracles Do Happen

The HFH family must donate 500 hours of labour in the building of the house. Help must be given for them to get new jobs or keep their existing job.

The challenge for the committee is to turn "interest" into "support and commitment"

Building Homes is Building Hope

Onalee Bye, Delmer UCW, thanked Don Campbell for his excellent presentation. She also gave the courtesies to everyone who helped in any way to make this day so successful.

The ladies of Mount Elgin United Church lead in a very meaningful worship. The scripture reading was from Psalm 116: 12. Thanksgiving and service to others should happen every day of the year not just on Thanksgiving Day. "Thanksgiving" should be "Thanksgiving". We are living in God's Wondrous World. Our cup is running over and we must count our blessings. Prayer and the singing of # 236, "Now Thank We All Our God", completed the worship.

Jean Manning read, "The More You Give", and everyone repeated the UCW Prayer.

By *Sandra Stock*

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To the Prime Minister of Canada  
The Ottawa Presbytery of the United Church of Canada wishes to express its concern regarding the government's continuing decision to not support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Ottawa Presbytery has been working intentionally over the past year to build better relationships with the aboriginal communities and organizations in our city. We have been active organizers and participants in "Remembering the Children" church leaders tour in preparation for Truth and Reconciliation in March 2008, and in events surrounding the Apology of June 2008.

As Canadian citizens we want to take the word of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission seriously and to heart. It is in the spirit of that work, that we

are moved to write and articulate our disappointment

in Canada's continuing non-support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Not only did Canada choose to be one of the four countries who voted against the declaration in September 2007, but it continues despite the motion adopted on April 8, 2008, in Canada's House of Commons calling on the government to endorse and fully implement the standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to refuse to endorse this key international human rights instrument, the first to recognize Indigenous rights as human rights.

The reasons for nonsupport of the declaration from your government have been vague while the harm caused to building right relationship with our aboriginal and Inuit peoples is real. As long as there continues to be nonsupport of the declaration, the building of new relationship of trust will be compromised and difficult.

The Ottawa Presbytery of the United Church of Canada urges the Canadian government to take action to both endorse and support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We believe that so doing would create a much stronger foundation upon which to build right relationships with our aboriginal and Inuit peoples. We know that as members of a church community who bears responsibility in the Residential School legacy, we would be helped to move towards healing the brokenness in our relationship with our own indigenous peoples if the UN Declaration was supported. We both ask for and are praying for your decision to move forward in new ways.

Sincerely,

Can we in Oxford support this position of the Ottawa Presbytery? If so what are we doing about it? What should we do about it? When will we do something about it?

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Jeffrey Sachs, American economist and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University "Wall Street paid itself more in bonuses every year in recent years than the whole world gave in aid to Africa," Sachs told a news conference. "So let's be clear that it's preposterous to claim that now is not the time" to help bring hundreds of millions out of poverty and create a safer world.

