

# The Church Mouse

The Newsletter of Oxford Presbytery in the United Church of Canada

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## Greetings from London Conference

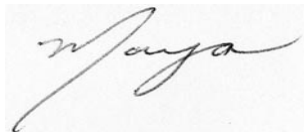
### President – Rev. Maya Landell

On this week of joyous celebration, I send Greetings on behalf of London Conference. This week started with my attending my husband's first communion service as an ordained minister at his home congregation - Kingsview United in Oshawa, Ontario. We are celebrating the 85th anniversary of our church. Many of you celebrated on this past Sunday, including Burgessville, who had a special event Sunday afternoon, including the cake!! We in Eastwood and Innerkip will be celebrating this coming Sunday.

It is my privilege to serve you this year as president, and to explore the theme of our call to "Wonder & Joy" as we follow in the way of Christ. May there be lots of room to Wonder about the way things have been, and the way things are moving into the future - not with fear or concern - but with anticipation and Joy.

The Psalmist reminds us in a Psalm of praise, Psalm 16 - "You show us the path of life, in your presence there is fullness of Joy." As you remember, renew and rejoice - may you hear the Spirit of surprises calling us to celebrate and move forward.

God Bless,



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## Dear Friends in Oxford,

This will be the last Church Mouse until September, and our last letter to the Mouse before we return to Canada on home assignment from this August to next March or so. We're hoping to have a chance to come visit with you all at a Presbytery meeting sometime in the fall. In the meantime we're putting finishing touches on various projects and preparing to leave our programs in safe Mozambican hands until our return.

The PEDRA program for girls' education has about 420 girls this year in 10 different centres in 4 districts (what you'd call counties) of our Zambezia province, and over 90 girls receiving bursaries to enable them to stay in school.

The Medicinal Plants project has over 200 gardens whose gardeners grow the plants and produce the medicines from them for their communities, for people with HIV infection and related chronic diseases.

The Video and Music studio is doing final edits on its fourth 1-hour television drama, a CD of music by rural church choirs across Zambezia province, 18 music videos, and 2 short dramas. All of this is by, for, and about young people in Mozambique, and addressing issues that matter most to their lives, like HIV/AIDS, crime, drugs, gangs, corruption in schools, and Christian faith in the midst of all these troubles.

We've been blessed to work in such stimulating projects with such talented and energetic people, and will miss them while we're in Canada. But we're also looking forward to our months in churches - including some in Oxford Presbytery.

Yours in Christ, *Bill and Karen Butt*

**Curries's Anniversary, Sept. 12/10 at 2 pm special speakers, Bill & Karen Butt, everyone welcome!!**

**Annual meeting May 28-30, 2010, London  
Conference Highlights**

Outgoing President Doug Wright cited examples of wonderful things happening across the conference which illustrate that we are the hope book for ministry in London Conference. He also reinforced the theme The Church in Exile: singing the Lord's song in a strange land.

We were challenged to go home and tell the stories... so here are some of them.

- \* Planning for a future grounded in faith and action was stressed. This is a time of pruning to encourage congregational renewal and a growing awareness of being Christ in the world.
- \* There were several reminders that relationships and inter-connections are more important than structures.
- \* From the national office we heard about the New Ministries Fund, one million dollars set aside for new and innovative ideas.
- \* The M&S Challenge was very simple: encourage more individuals to donate to M&S.
- \* Proposals dealing with poverty, climate change and peace, raising social assistance rates, alleviating homelessness and re-imagining conference work were discussed, amended, voted upon and carried.

Dramas, written by Doug, music lead by Jim and Jean Strathdee, videos prepared by talented young folks and wonderful food helped to ensure a successful Annual Meeting.

Retirees were honoured on Friday evening. Saturday night was devoted; to the ordination of four candidates, including Adam Hanley and Lynne Allin and Sunday morning included the installation of Maya Landell as President.

Three youthful speakers stood up Sunday morning to proclaim what they stand for in a clear voice. This was a great challenge for the rest of us to consider in light of a main goal of London Conference: to encourage people to dare to explore new frontiers of faith, witness and caring in terms of the evangelism and stewardship of the whole of life.

For more reading, refer to Jeremiah 38: 1-13, Jeremiah 29: 4-7 and Micah 6:8 as well as the

London Conference website.

Mary Lou Ross, Innerkip United Church, representing Eastwood.  
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A highlight of Conference for me was the tribute paid to the retiring Conference staff, Carole Hockey and Bev Robinson, for their work with our children and youth. The appreciation voiced in word and song by children, youth, and adults spoke of the love and respect that these two people have earned through the dedication, enthusiasm, support and love that they have given via camping, youth forum, Children at Conference, and Young Adults in Transition. Our presbyteries, our congregations and our families all reap the benefit of the love and energy that these children and youth have for God's world and God's work. *Lynne Dunlop*  
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Five people from Eastwood and two from Innerkip attended the Saturday Evening Ordination Service. A skit "On the Call" was written by Doug Wright, President of Conference and performed by three Innerkip people: Laureen Harcourt, Adam Van Winden and Vicky Noels-Cornish, they did a great job. Of course the highlight of that service was the ordination of Adam Hanley and Lynne Allin from Oxford. It was evenly divided this year with 2 men and 2 women ordained. Rev. Lynne is staying at Mount Elgin. Rev. Adam is going to Hamilton Conference, Erie Presbytery, 3/4 time, KTV United, one point which is an amalgamation of Kelvin, Teeterville, Vanessa. We wish them all the best and know they will be a blessing in the churches and communities to which they are called.

Another highlight for me was I stayed over night with Eric and Annette visiting also with Revs David and Cheryl Steadman. Was interesting to sit back and listen to them comparing notes on their respective charges and communities.

Sunday morning started with singing with the Strathdees. Then discussion on the one remaining Proposal, which was carried with an amendment.

The morning service started with the Youth and as usual was most amazing, so much energy, enthusiasm and JOY!! After the Children at Conference came the YATs and they were awesome as well. As well as music they had made a video from their gathering in April which showed what they did then. Obviously they did have a great time. Other events have been covered. Then to service installing Rev Maya as chair of London Conference. Rev Doug Wright had Rev. Heather McLean, Rev Maya and Rev. Gary V. Clark  
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(President Elect) twisting together many coloured balloons, which when finished represented the Mission and Service Fund.

Bev Slater, Treasurer of London Conference, provided a thorough review of the previous year's budgetary figures, a detailed consideration of the rationale for the projections for 2011 and outlined the services that Conference provides Presbyteries and Pastoral Charges (see [www.londonconference.ca](http://www.londonconference.ca)), assisting delegates in understanding the financial report. Following lengthy discussion and suggested changes, the Proposed Budget as printed on page 18 in the Report book establishing the assessment for 2011 at \$15.10 per resident member based on a membership of 41,374 was approved.

Long-serving and recently retired overseas personnel, Mary Collins, spoke passionately about her experience in the Republic of Korea and the Christian commitment to resisting the forces of domination and oppression. Mary's insights offered substance to the church's role with overseas partners.

Rev. Gary Clark of Blyth United Church in Huron-Perth Presbytery was elected President of London Conference, 2011/2012.

Maya Landell was installed as President of London Conference on Sunday, May 30. She used storytelling to call the church on its journey out of exile. With creche figures she illustrated how 'the story' of Jesus' birth, life, death and rising might have been interpreted differently, and how Christian perceptions might have been different as a result. Delegates are invited to celebrate 'the story' and engage the question, "How might the church now be different?" based on 'the story' throughout the coming year. Ruth & Carol Hockey

**CAMP TANNER OPEN HOUSE**

**Sunday, June 13/10 2 – 4 pm**

Tours, visual presentation

Crafts, games & snacks

Everyone welcome

**HABITANT FOR HUMANITY**

The meeting held May 17 was fairly well attended. Graham Hart chaired the meeting. Presentations from groups in London and Ingersoll outlined what is necessary to get a project started. It is a big project and a large group of organizations and individuals are needed, first need to be filled. An appropriate family must be found. The family needs \$500. and be prepared to put in 500 hours of volunteer labour in their own house, or another

project. A piece of land on which to build the house. There needs to be at least \$80,000 needs to be raised to pay for everything that isn't donated. There seemed to be some interest. Anyone interested in helping, either an individual, family or group should contact Graham Hart at 519-475-4892 or e-mail [woodstockhabitat@hotmail.com](mailto:woodstockhabitat@hotmail.com) Information from Bill McLeish.

**SUMMER AT FIVE OAKS**

Labyrinth Retreat – Finding Our Way  
July 23 at 7 pm to July 25 at 12:30 pm

Woman's Wisdom: The Heart of the Matter  
Aug. 11 at 7 pm to Aug. 13 at 12:30 pm cost \$380

Writers in Residence  
Aug. 09 at 10 am to Aug. 13 at 12:30 pm Cost \$695

Family Camp Aug 01 at 5:30 (don't come before 4 pm) until Aug. 06

Register & info (519) 442-3212,  
[registrar@fiveoaks.on.ca](mailto:registrar@fiveoaks.on.ca)

**TRACTOR AND TOGO**

The tractor and equipment that Rev. Dr. Eloi Gunn had gathered and sent to Togo has arrived safely. When it got there the government felt they had a real prize and seized it. It took another \$3,000 to get it back again. This was a real setback, but Eloi is glad it is back, locked in the container until he gets there. He plans to leave the later part of August and into September. He has been learning how to drive a tractor and operated the equipment that was sent with the tractor. While there will teach the people who are on the farm, how to use and care for it. He will be glad to accept articles to take with him. School supplies are especially needed, as one requirement is that the children go to school. Schooling is not free in Togo. He will be allowed a couple of suitcases to carry things in.

Prayer: Ever compassionate God, help us to see ourselves as others see us. Help us to let loose of our crutches, our hang-ups, our excuses...that we may discover the wonderful potential you have given us. Free our arms and our hearts, that we might reach out in love. Amen.

Prayer: You who come to us as Parent and Friend, help us to see ourselves in the broader context of your world. Help us act with wisdom as we understand more about Your care and Your intent. Amen 'Country Preacher's Notebook' Joyce Sasse Page 3.

**UCW JUNE RETREAT**  
 Monday, June 14, 2010  
 Theme—Journey of Faith  
 Speaker – Nancy Vandenberghe  
 9:30 am – 3 pm  
 Ingersoll Seniors Centre  
 250 Ingersoll St., Ingersoll

Many years ago most rural churches had a ball team and there was a fair amount of good natured rivalry. Oxford Presbytery Chairperson, Rev. Dr. Eloi Gunn is working to re-establish the custom and is finding some support and enthusiasm. Five churches have expressed a willingness to participate. We need six Churches taking part, it is hoped the four churches in Woodstock could put together one team. The tournament will be held September 11 at Innerkip starting at 9 am.

"On Sunday June 13th at 10:00 a.m. Mount Elgin United Church is celebrating the 85th anniversary of the United Church of Canada, 110th anniversary of its current building and 150th anniversary of the Methodist/United Church in Mount Elgin. Special speaker for this event will be Eleanor Wood with special music provided by Marlene Koot. Everyone is welcome to come to this inspirational service."

Editor: Ruth Skillings 519-467-0187 [rtskillings@aol.com](mailto:rtskillings@aol.com)  
 Web Master: John Ross, [webboxfordpucc@look.ca](mailto:webboxfordpucc@look.ca) 519-469-3320  
 Web Page: <http://www.oxfordpresucca>  
 London Conference: [www.londonconference.ca](http://www.londonconference.ca) 519-672-1930

Also celebrating Anniversaries are Washington at 11 am, June 13, their 150 year with Rev. Doug Kaufman speaking. A 7pm evening service with the Drumbo Men's Choir and many other musicians.

Drumbo United had Rev. Stephen Shantz as their speaker for June 6 Anniversary. Special music the Drumbo & District Men's Choir and the Children's Choir. They are holding a Chicken BBQ, June 19.

Chesterfield United celebrating 155 years, June 20 with Rev. Richard Hall at 11 am.

**M&S** supports the work of the United Church by seeking justice and addressing causes of conflict.

Hickson & Hebron United Churches have decided to end their partnership of over 100 years. They received Presbytery approval.

Zion 7<sup>th</sup> Line United is closing as of June 30. Avondale Zion, Brownsville and Delmar are joining together and will be known as Trinity (T or south to distinguish from Trinity in Ingersoll?).

Also on the move is Plattsville, Chesterfield, Bright and Washington who are joining into Peace as of June 30. Maggie Plant is on the move and is not yet for sure where she is going, has a number of options she is looking at. We will miss her cheery smile and good humour, we wish her well in whatever or wherever she ends up going and doing.

Rev. Jan Aylward is appointed to the new Peace Pastoral Charge.

Eastwood United Church are holding their Famous Chicken BBQ June 19/10, 4:30 to 7 pm at the little white Church at the meeting of Towerline Rd and Oxford 53. Adult \$12, Children \$6. 5& under Free  
 Tickets: Chris 469-3838, Ethel 467-5218

Innerkip is holding their Annual Golf Day, Sat. June 19, 3pm at Woodstock Meadows. Pot Luck supper afterwards.

Sept. 17 5-7pm Woodstock Project CFGB, Pork BBQ & Bean Supper, Knox Presbyterian Church Woodstock  
 Adults \$12 Children \$6 Tickets 519-467-0187

**OXFORD PRESBYTERY 2010-2011 OFFICERS**  
 Past Chairperson – Rev Eloi Gunn  
 Chairperson – Mary Anne Silverthorn  
 Chair elect -- Wendy Brown  
 Secretary – Marianne Riach  
 Treasurer – Michelle Van Wyk  
 Administration and Finance – Linda Hammond & Lynne Dunlop

Communications – Brent Hutchinson  
 M & P – Rev. Bonnie Pilkey  
 Faith Formation – Ian Clark  
 UCW – Ilene Chesterman  
 Christian Studies - Peter McKellar  
 Social Issues – Celia Orth

**M&S** supports emergency relief in response to disasters in Canada and overseas.

**M&S** supports development of respect for all peoples.

**M&S** supports faith development with children, youth and adults.