

# Highlights from the Annual Meeting in Sault Ste. Marie

Those riding the buses up to the Soo had a wonderful time of sharing and singing and even learning to knit!!!

With our children at conference plus their leaders, our youth, young adults, lay people and clergy, plus visitors, we were 395 United Church people strong.

The Spirit led us in "Wonder and Joy" under President Maya Landell's leadership.

Our new President Gary Clark and his installation service was a first! We had live streaming for Blyth United Church. In Blyth their youth read the scripture lessons and the entire congregation sang an anthem as we watched. It was a wonderful new way to worship together through technology.

The Rev. Melanie Kirk [Kent], Rev. Mark Marshall [Oxford], and the Rev. Wendy Noble [Elgin] were ordained, while the Rev. Eun-Joo Park [Algoma] and the Rev. John Porter [Algoma] were admitted into the United Church Order of Ministry from other denominations, and Sandy Morris was recognized as a Designated Lay Minister.

We made decisions that:

- the annual meeting shall be in the central location of London for 2012-2014
- the 2012 meeting shall focus upon business in light of it being a General Council year
- alternate formats are to be presented for the 2013-2014 meetings, like including a faith festival day when non-delegates can join us.
- the cost of funding the ministry of conference was changed. Now it cannot exceed 3% of Column 40 of the Yearbook, which means conference will work within its income rather than seeking income to do what it wants to do. [it will only cost 3 cents out of each dollar it costs to do ministry to fund conference ministries]. Ask your minister or presbytery delegate to tell you more.
- Paul Browning of Middlesex Presbytery is the new President-Elect
- Conference will start and search for a new executive secretary to begin work in early 2012

We were graced by the Very Rev. David Giuliano, former Moderator of the United Church as our theological reflector. We laughed and laughed with him and then we prayed for the Spirit to lead us.

The children and youth and their leaders celebrated the importance of Jesus and our faith community. We celebrated with those folks retiring and then they spoke from their hearts about ministry within this United Church of ours.

All in all, we had a meaningful and Spirit-led experience in the midst of Algoma's generous hospitality! Then we boarded buses and cars with our bag lunches and headed for home, sharing even more stories as God's faithful people.

Heather McLean