

the **Voyageur**

Voices from Synode de Gitchi Manitou Conference

Uniting Presbyteries of Cochrane, North Bay, Sudbury and Temiskaming

Meet 'ya at Neighbours Praising God!

Manitou Friends, Cochrane Presbytery invites you to respond to the urge to break out, explore and re/connect after a long winter. Come join us, to celebrate our life in Christ at Neighbours Praising God 2004, **May 14-16**. We look forward to welcoming you to a weekend of worship, song, workshops, fun and, of course, good food in the context of the beautiful natural surroundings of **Camp Bickell** on Chapman Lake.

Our theme is "**To make you to shine like the Sun.**" Theme presenter, **Christopher Levan** (at right), presently serving a Fredericton congregation, will help us focus on bearing the light of the gospel in our time in the north, through revival of our unique heritage of hospitality, social compassion and of our sense of God's presence and calling. Music leaders, **Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd** and **Kim Gilliland** (see photos mid and bottom right) will awaken our gospel passion through hymns and songs—new and old.

Cochrane Presbytery invites all people of faith to join in this event. We plan to have separate children's and youth activities, as well as times together as a whole family. Detailed information is available in each pastoral charge. It's not too late to register. Greeters such as Rose Irvine and Gayle Thomas (see bottom) will be ready to offer you warm Cochrane hospitality on your arrival! For more information contact First UC, Timmins, 705-264-5518 or 1stunited@onlink.net.

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(705) 264-5518 or 1stunited@onlink.net.**



Volume 18, Number 2
May 2004

the
Voyageur

Published in

The United Church
Observer

By

Manitou Conference
*Mission Oversight and
Communications Committee*

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Printing Schedule and Deadlines

November 2004 Issue by
September 15, 2004

Material for upcoming editions may be sent to the Manitou Conference Office in North Bay. Short articles and digital or print photographs are invited. Close-ups of one to four people are best. All photos are to be clearly marked with name and address since all are returned after publication.

Back issues of The Voyageur can be found online at www.manitouconference.ca

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Design: Angela Chapeski

Inflamed by the Spirit... *Called to Serve*

Pentecost marks the beginning of the corporate church, the organization through which we proclaim our faith, where we boldly witness the Word. "Speaking in tongues" is a memorable part of the story. That metaphor sends a unifying message telling us the Spirit's work can be proclaimed in many interesting ways. The various tongues we experience in Manitou give us many different issues to address and in many different ways.

There is the tongue of social injustice: poor housing, difficulty in accessing health care, unemployment, ...and United Church people can counteract with the insistence of social justice. There is the tongue of mistreating the earth: clear cutting, waste dumping in our rivers, air pollution, ...and United Church people can speak loudly, actively fulfilling the words of the Creed to "live with respect in Creation." There is the tongue of isolation between different denominations ... and United Church people can communicate and co-operate, achieving effective interdenominational programs in our communities. There is the tongue of pastoral charges concentrating on survival with limited resources ...and United Church people can reach out to one another and create team relationships within the Presbytery and Conference. There is the tongue of self-interest in local

*May we in service to our God
act out the living Word,
and walk the road the saints
have trod till all have seen and
heard. As stewards of the earth
may we give thanks in one
accord to God who calls us all
to be disciples of the Lord.*

(VU #507)

and provincial politics ...and United Church people can recall that the early Church was a community called together for the common good.

We have been called forth and summoned by the Spirit as a body of interdependent parts to participate in the world, not for what we can get, but for what we can give. When other tongues are heard, we find and use an effective tongue in response. Because we share Christ's body, we live His risen life; Because we drink His cup, we bring new life to others.

Because we are inflamed by the Spirit, we give light to the world.

Bill Rogers

Bill Rogers, Conference President

Way to Go, Manitou!



MISSION AND
SERVICE FUND

In 2003, Manitou was one of 5 Conferences who increased our Mission & Service Fund givings over the previous year. We raised \$6,500.00 or 1.66% more than in 2002. Only the Conference of Manitoba NW Ontario increased their givings by more than Manitou and only by 0.05%. Thank you to everyone in MTU for your generosity ... the Church thanks you and the many places around the world that benefit from your generosity, thank you!



A Prayer/Hymn for Renewal of Church and Spirit

Written by S. Diane Trollope, St Andrew's, Sudbury, February 2004

Tune: Londonderry Air, 586 VU ("Danny Boy")

When we are finding numbers are decreasing,
When time is scarce from too much work to do.
When we are stressed and our resources dwindling.
What do we do? Where do we turn for aid?

Refrain: O God, we turn to you, our sole Creator,
With prayer and praise, we seek Your guidance sure.
O hear our joys and meet our needs for healing.
Sustain us in our future, as Your church.

We look for ways to do the work of many,
And there are folks who need our tender care.
We can be strong in friendship and in our love.
Hope is within our hearts to share.

To share our trust is paramount to hopefulness,
Forgiveness is the healing that relieves.
Our faithful action through Your Grace can only bless.
We pray our lives will show what we believe.

O Lord, give us the courage not to be afraid
Of changes that may give new life to all.
We rest in knowledge that You have fully paid,
Our loving answer is to heed Your call.

We open wide our hearts to know Your Spirit.
We give our souls and planning all to You.
So now we seek to share all that which brings about
Wholeness for all, through what we say and do.



Photo: Teresa Jones

A widow collects sticks to make a fire to cook a handful of meal for herself and her son before they die. Margaret Merry, Iroquois Falls played the Widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17 at the Cochrane UCW Presbyterian AGM held at Matheson on April 3. Thirty-nine women attended. The theme "Northern Women: Blessings and Challenges," that included reflection on the 1st Kings passage, was facilitated by Teresa Jones. The Cochrane UCW Fall Retreat will be Sept 18 at Spruce Hill Lodge, South Porcupine. The theme will be "Let No One Be Turned Away," with Brenda Lumsden, Kapuskasing UC, giving leadership.

Mindemoya PC Outreach Project

Ugly quilts?! ... Abundance and challenge



Photo: Marion Seabrook

Women and men of St Paul's-on-the-Hill in Kagawong, Providence Bay and Mindemoya made 36 "friendship" quilt sleeping bags (also known as "ugly" quilts), for distribution to homeless persons in Sudbury through Northern Initiative for Social Action. From their abundance, the Mindemoya PC challenged themselves to recycle used clothing and bedding in order to help someone on the street stay warm. The project has drawn this 3-point PC closer together through friendship, fun and hard work. Four members of "the ugly quilt gang"--Mary White, Willie Munro, Marian Sloss and Eleanor Semeniuk (l to r) take a well-deserved rest in front of the camera. But, they are not finished. The PC intends on making more ugly quilts in the future!

Manitou is not just a word;
it is the essence of life

By Guest contributor, Bob Goulais

The word "Manitou" is more than just a word or a place name. For the Anishinabek, it means very much. Mnidoo is the Ojibwe word for "spirit". Often, it is spelled "Manitou".

The origin of the word, like all other things, comes from the creation story. The Anishinabek Creation Story is beautiful, and is full of teachings, knowledge, prayer and song. To understand where the word mnidoo comes from - is to journey to the time of Creation.

In the beginning, long before "God created heaven and earth" - there was nothing. More precisely, there was only one spirit: G'zhem-mnidoo or the Great Kind Spirit. G'zhem-mnidoo is the Creator of all things. Sometimes, the name of the Creator is sometimes spelled "Gitchi Manitou".

It was during the second fire (or chapter) of creation, that the Spirit World was created. We understand the Spirit World to be one of eight levels of the universe. It is in this place all spirits exist, and originate from.

It is also the home of all our ancestors and relatives that have passed on from the physical world through the process of death. Following the four-day journey following death, a person's spirit will travel through all the levels of the universe, over a "forever-flowing" river, where they are greeted by all their relatives at a beautiful gathering in the Spirit World. G'zhem-mnidoo also created the spirits that dwell in the cosmos, the Star World level of the universe. These spirits include Mishoom Geezis (the sun), D'bik geezis (the moon), and the nine grandfathers that science has subsequently identified as the planets of our solar system.

In the fourth fire of Creation, each of these cosmic spirits gave a piece of themselves to create Shkaa gamikwe, our Mother Earth. The Earth is mother to all living things. Water, which also has a female spirit, was placed on Earth to be the lifeblood of all living things. The water comes directly from the aforementioned "forever-flowing" river.

In the next fire of Creation, all life was created on Earth. All the plant-life, animal-life, bird-life, fish-life, and insect-life was placed on Earth. Each was given an individual spirit, which originates from the Spirit World.

It is said that Human-kind was the last to be placed on the Earth. As in the Christian creation story, humankind was created in the image of the G'zhem-mnidoo. During this time, four brothers were created in the Spirit World, in the four colours of mankind: Yellow, Red, Black, and White. Each brother was given a set of original instructions, a language and culture, and a set of values and beliefs. These brothers were placed on the Earth directly from the hands of the Creator.

In the great spirit of kindness, G'zhem-mnidoo send an intercessor spirit to look after each race. One could argue the intercessor spirit of the white brother is Jesus Christ, and that brother's set of beliefs is Christianity.

For the Anishinabek, that intercessor spirit is Mide Manidoo, or the Midewiwin Spirit. The Midewiwin (way of the heart) is the original spiritual way, and religion of the Anishinabe people.

For the Anishinabek, the everyday awareness of our own spirit, the Spirit World, Mide Spirit and G'zhem-mnidoo is the basis for our relationships with each other and the world around us. The Spirit World has given us great teachings, such as the Seven Grandfather teachings of Love, Respect, Humility, Truth, Honesty, Bravery and Wisdom. The teachings, knowledge, and gifts from the Spirit World

have guided and nurtured our people for thousands and thousands of years.

The explanation of mnidoo may indeed be a spiritual one as it is based in Anishinabek theology. But for the Anishinabe people everything has a purpose. The existence of the Spirit World may explain a mystery that science hasn't been able to explain.

There is something that drives our physical being to "live". There is some "life-force" in all living things that keeps our neurons firing, our brain functioning, and electrical impulses that keep our heart beating. We have a metabolism. We have the ability to grow. We have the ability to love. And the ability to pro-create.

Science provides us with answers to all these physical processes. But science cannot explain the underlying process that starts the fertilized human zygote dividing, or what keeps our neurons and electrical impulses firing?

For the Anishinabek, our teachings have told us the answer to this long before the ancestors of the scientists were coming out of caves. Every plant, animal, or insect - whether they are a complex, multi-systemic animal, or a single-celled microscopic organism - each has its own spirit or mnidoo. It is the mnidoo that is the essence of life. That spirit has always existed, and will always exist.

*Bob Goulais is a journalist and communications professional from Nipissing First Nation. He is the chairperson of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, and member of the Three Fires Midewiwin Lodge.
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Enjoy great music while supporting Camp Lorrain

Musical tour swings through Manitou

James Dundass says, "I consider my voice to be a gift of God. Since I have never had much money, I figure my voice is the most precious possession I have to give back to the Church." This "baritone" tenor, whose home congregation is Centennial United in London, will sing in 5 Manitou churches in late June, accompanied by Mr. Igor Saka-Voivod. James' repertoire will include mostly Broadway show tunes. Funds raised through this tour in MTU will benefit Camp Lorrain on Lake Temiskaming.

The tour will be in these locations, with all concerts starting at 7:30pm:
June 22 - Trinity, North Bay June 25 - St Andrew's, Sudbury
June 23 - St Paul's, New Liskeard June 26 - Little Current United
June 24 - First, Timmins

Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for students and no charge for pre-schoolers. Don't miss this exceptionally talented young professional and the opportunity to support Camp Lorrain!

How to become a 'well-dressed' minister!

Elizabeth Lumbama, wife of the late Rev. Elijah Lumbama, learned to sew in her home country at the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in Zambia. The UCC helped found the Mindolo—a Pan African leadership training centre, and has sent overseas personnel to serve on staff at the request of the Zambian church since the 1960s. While the courses at the Mindolo have changed over the years, Essie Johnson, a UC diaconal minister, set up a course, at the time of Zambia's independence in 1964 "...to train wives of government officials and church ministers in skills which would help them to be both practically competent and a Christian asset to the leadership responsibilities of their spouses." Elizabeth was one of Essie's students. Today, she uses her skills to create tailor-made liturgical stoles among other projects. A number of Sudbury Pres ministry personnel are already "sporting" stoles she has made. If you are interested in having Elizabeth create a stole for yourself or someone else, call her at 522-3627.



Photo: Teresa Jones

What a treat!

Omond Memorial UC hosted the operatic recital of Jennifer Carter, partner of Christopher Ficking, intern at Omond and Mattawa/Rutherglen PC on February 28.

Jennifer is studying at York University with Stephanie Bogle. She will graduate in June with an Honours Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Music (Classical Voice Performance). Christine Saini, Omond's music director, very ably accompanied her on piano.



Photo: Marilyn Buchanan

New Intake for the Manitou Conference Pastoral Care Course for lay volunteers...

Session #1 of the 4-session course is May 28-30.

For more information or to register, contact the Conference Office.

Manitou Youth Forum 2004...

May 28-31 at Camp Lorrain on Lake Temiskaming with Amy Crawford, national UCC staff as theme leader.

For more information contact the Conference Office.

Northern Renovations ... visioning the Church in changing times

By Margaret Reid, St. Andrew's,
North Bay

The 2004 Lenten retreat theme at St. Andrew's, North Bay was "Northern Renovations ... visioning the church in changing times." Monique Beau-doin, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition stressed the importance of partnering with other organizations and claiming our own power. Donna Sinclair introduced Queen Vash-ti who claimed her own power and dared to say "No" to the powers of the Persian Empire (see Esther 1).

In our community, to what do we say "No" or "Yes"? With what groups can we partner for made-in-the-north so-lutions to actualize these goals? In-stead of focusing on the depopula-tion of the North and how our chil-dren leave, we can focus instead on what we do right with our children. Our children carry the message in their hearts because "Once you hear the story, you can never unhear it."

The day concluded around the ta-ble with fresh baked bread, a cup of wine, a bowl of water and the knowl-edge that we are vision-keepers.



Breaking the Ice ... Dreaming Dreams

Ron Purdy, Nipissing UC, Robert Whitford, Emmanuel UC, North Bay and Len Harvey, from Markdale, ON (l to r) are 3 of the 45 men who met at Camp Norland near Verner, for the 5th annual Manitou Men's "Breaking the Ice" Retreat, held in late February. The theme, "Visions and Dreams" animated by Jim Sinclair, General Sec of the UCC, provided an opportunity for sharing and analysis of dreams, of and by those present. In addition to the theme focus, the men say it was a great fo-rum to develop and renew male friendships, to sing, relax and renew their faith.



It's a happening place!

Maxine McVey, MTU Conference's "connector" with **FIVE OAKS**, returned from their AGM recently describing it as a "happenin' place." Program partic-ipant numbers were up in 2003 (MTU's own participation doubled last year) and the quality of guest presenters remains high with an incredible range of programming to meet various needs and interests.

"The new NEOS Program to train people working with Youth is the best thing that has happened for a long time for Youth leaders in our congregations," said one person at the meeting. The Centre has also established an Associ-ate Program, as a way of utilizing volunteers to provide leadership for various programs. One Associate co-ordinates the silent retreats and works with the Prayer Guides and Spiritual Directors in the Common Life Program.

Five Oaks offers wonderful hospitality and a sacred homey atmosphere. To discover more about this UC learning and retreat centre go to info@fiveoaks.on.ca or 519-442-3212.

NEW INTAKE!

Manitou Conference

LICENSED LAY PREACHERS COURSE

A 4-session course held over 2 years

Session 1: June 11-13, 2004
Villa Loyola Retreat Centre
Near Sudbury

Instructors:

Rev. Bill Steadman & Rev. Dawn Vaneyk

Applications available from
Manitou Conference Office or
www.manitouconference.ca

Life Long Learning Funds available

Studying same sex marriage

Groups in Manitou are approaching the study of same sex marriage in differing ways: St Andrew's, North Bay held a series of 4 congrega-tional forums in the fall, using the national UCC study material entitled, "Of Love and Justice." Trinity, Lively Official Board has been studying one section of this same study document each month at their meetings. A planning team from Cochrane Presbytery led their court through a study process in April and the Presbyterial will focus on same sex mari-riage at their retreat in September. North Bay Presbytery has approved the formation of a Resource Team who will be available at the request of congregations to assist them in their study of the issue. Two congrega-tions have already made requests for the Team's leadership.

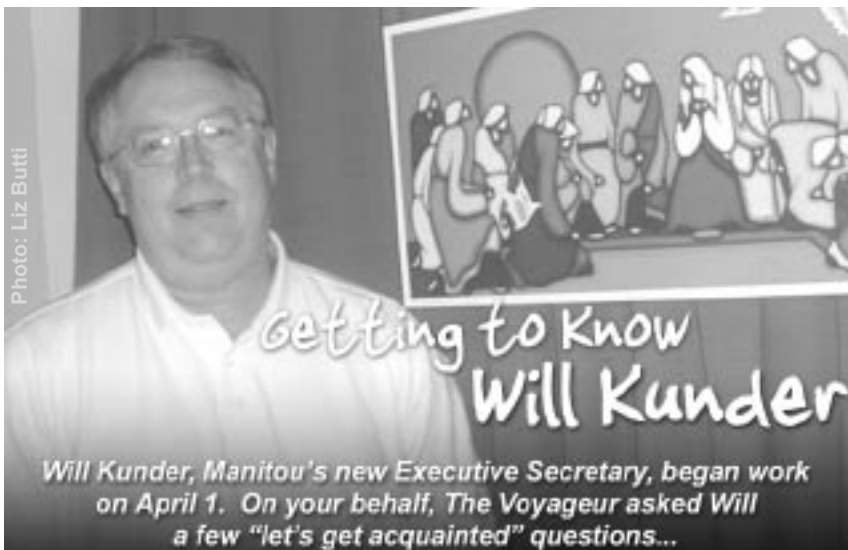


Photo: Liz Butti

Getting to Know Will Kunder

Will Kunder, Manitou's new Executive Secretary, began work on April 1. On your behalf, The Voyager asked Will a few "let's get acquainted" questions...

What drew you to want to serve Manitou Conference?

"Since the summer of 1977, I have had a camp on the West Arm of Lake Nipissing.... a place of sanctuary and retreat; the place to which I make pilgrimage whenever my soul needs refreshing. It was the place I "came south to" during many years as a teacher and school principal in the Northwest Territories.... and the place I now "come home to," any chance I can! ... To minister for this United Church of ours - which I love.... from the place which I love.... what a wonderful opportunity.... who could pass that up!"

What are the gifts and skills you have to offer Manitou at this time?

"I am passionate about teaching and learning. As Principal of the Francis Sandy Theological Centre (a United Church Theological School, near Paris), I've had the rich privilege of walking with First Nations men and women as they prepare for ministry in our church, while sharpening pastoral skills, by serving two small, rural pastoral charges in Hamilton Conference.

What are your hopes and vision for Manitou?

"It would be a tremendous understatement to say that I have much to learn about the reality of ministry here in Manitou. I care deeply about social justice and was encouraged at the recent Conference Executive meeting where, in its time for visioning, it seemed that there are many in our Conference who share this passion. Though an unabashed "introvert," I do value collegiality and feel blessed to have been called to team with Liz, Bob, and Kay! I hope to be able to provide a visible, pastoral presence across the Conference - and urge you to help me, as practicable, to get out of the office to share that ministry.

What do you do to relax and have fun?

"Normally, I would respond to this question by listing things like: playing 'Oldtimers' hockey, golfing, scuba-diving, theatre, reading murder mysteries, and engaging in theological reflection.... but I expect that in the foreseeable future most of my "fun" time will be spent trying to get our island camp winterized, to make it habitable for the next Manitou winter!"

Manitou's Candidates for Ministry

Cindy Laing, a candidate for ordination from North Bay Presbytery, serving the Nipissing-Restoule PC. A graduate of the In Community Program for Ordination, Cindy has combined half-time ministry with academics as well as two-week learning circles twice a year during this 5-year program. The sharing with persons on the Carry the Kettle Reserve in SK was a highlight for her in the fall 2003 learning circle. Cindy will receive an MDiv from the University of Winnipeg and be ordained May 16 by MTU Conference. Cindy is the parent of teenagers, Spencer and Ruth.



Stewart Walker, a candidate for ordination from Sudbury Presbytery, serving on the St. Andrew's UC, Coniston PC leading Sunday services and offering emergency pastoral care. Stew hopes to be a student in the new ministry-based program (successor to the In Community Program for Ordination), when it begins. In the meantime, he's taking courses while being "a stay-at-home-Dad" for James and Emily, until both are in school.



Yvonne Willis, a candidate for ordination from Temiskaming Presbytery, serving the two-point Matilda PC, Seaway Valley Presbytery as student supply and studying part-time at Queen's Theological School, Kingston. Yvonne's area of concentration in her studies is rural ministry. She says, "I have the best of two worlds for I get to practically apply in the congregations the things I am learning at school in a very real way." She and her partner Doug are the parents of three young adults.



Stay tuned! Next issue we will feature some more of our candidates for ministry.



Photo: Kathy Parker

Circle of Friends... Hope for the future

Six children depicting Inuit, Japanese, Scottish, Korean, Mexican and Greek cultures form a circle in the middle of a large felt banner. Created by June Manella, Chalmers United, South River, these children represent the people of the world coming together in peace and good will. She says, "It is a hope for the future." June presented the banner to her congregation in December 2003.



Photo: Gail Gjos

Eating your way toward a good cause!

Little Current UC raised \$3,500. for Beads of Hope through a series of five mid-winter "secret" theme luncheons. Vi Drolet is seen here at one of these events that brought together all ages from the congregation and wider community. One hundred books of 5 tickets for \$25. with a Beads of Hope pin included, sold immediately. Reports say the events were fun and the food delicious! Through all this, people learned about the HIV/AIDS pandemic and how UC people like themselves, are responding compassionately through the Beads of Hope campaign.

Jonah The Musical



The Ancient Mediterranean Tale
of a Travelling Prophet
with a Difficult God

Staring **Bob Jackson** as
"Jonah"

May 28—29 @ 7:30pm
at St Andrew's United Church
399 Cassells St., North Bay

Written by Ralph Johnston
Directed by Jocelyn Bell

Call 472-7680 for tickets



Located on Lake Temiskaming
near Haileybury

**Theme: "Living Together in
God's World: Celebrating and
Caring for God's Creation"**

- Scamp Camp (6-7 yrs)
July 6-8
- Junior Mixed Camp (8-10 yrs)
July 11-16
- Junior Mixed Camp (8-10 yrs)
July 18-23
- Intermediate Mixed Camp (11-13 yrs)
July 25-30

Register by June 16
For more info call 679-5712
or stcluster@onlink.net

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