

GENERAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE REPRESENTATIVES

The 40th General Council met in August 2009 in Kelowna, B.C. and produced five broad directions for the national church to focus on during the next triennium. These are emerging church, faith formation, social justice and care of creation, authentic relationship with youth and young adults, and becoming a whole people. The meeting also affirmed the Call to Purpose of GC39. Since then, the General Council Staff, headed by General Secretary Nora Sanders, and Moderator Mardi Tindal, have been working on streamlining the work to fit these directions.

A continuing reality that faces the national church is another large shortfall in money for the next budgeting cycle of 2011-2013. The shortfall, caused by decreasing support of the Mission & Service Fund, is expected to be approximately \$6.5 million over the three year budget period. Senior staff developed proposals for how to best use resources to fit this reality. These were affirmed as suitable talking points at a sub-Executive meeting and distributed to all Commissioners for GC 40 for reflection and feedback. Decisions on the strategy and a budget for 2011-2013 were made at the General Council Executive meeting in May.

In spite of the difficult news there is much to celebrate across The United Church of Canada. New life is emerging in a number of places, even as the life of some ministries appears to be coming to an end. This is the dynamic described as “emerging church”. The challenge is to put these two realities together so that what is dying can contribute to what is emerging. The general secretary has been charged with the responsibility for engaging the whole church in a broad consultation to see how this might best happen.

The General Council office is experiencing a lot of change as the staff lives into new configurations. There is now an Aboriginal Ministries Council to give First Nations people full access to the decision-making processes of the national church. Another change sees several former units combined to form the Communities in Mission Unit. This new Unit pulls together the Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry Unit (IDCM), the Congregational, Educational and Community Ministries Unit (CECM), and Ministries in French Unit (MiF).

Moderator Mardi Tindal has developed a “Plan for Participating in God’s Abundant Healing of Creation” to be the focus for her three year term. She attended the climate change talks in Copenhagen as part of this initiative and she is planning a train trip across Canada next year to highlight the need for all Canadians to be part of the solution of our climate change woes.

“Better communication” is a main theme of General Council work as we try to link more intentionally with work in the other three Courts of the church. To this end, Commissioners receive regular emails asking for feedback on different areas of work. Your two representatives are attending each Presbytery in our Conference twice in the church year to bring news of General Council and hear feedback. You can reach us by email at: revbarbwhite@yahoo.ca and Lynella Reid-James at lzrjames@rogers.com.

It is a privilege to represent you on the Executive.

Lynella Reid-James and Barbara White