

# in Contact

with Alberta and Northwest Conference

January 2010

## The Dough that Binds: Cookies and Friends Span Four Decades



Pat Shaul, Mable Kidner, Liz Spychka.

In the fall of 1969 in Stony Plain, Alberta three new friends decided that holiday baking would be much more fun if done together. No one imagined that that first “cookie day,” as it came to be known, would become a family tradition that would span more than 40 years and keep our friendship together through all of life’s ups and downs. The United Church here in Stony Plain brought us together when we were all newcomers to this area in the 1960’s.

The tradition began early one Saturday morning in a tiny kitchen with six preschoolers doing their best to “help.” We mixed, rolled, cut

and baked, chased little fingers out of the mixing bowl, then repeated countless times until 58 dozen cookies were sorted and boxed for the holiday season. Of course, in the midst of all this baking we had to stop and serve lunch and dinner to hungry kids and husbands — all of whom were eagerly anticipating their first taste of our cookies. But this baking was for Christmas, we insisted, so the only samples they got were of cookies that happened to break being transferred from oven to cooling rack — a rule that still exists today.

That first foray into group holiday baking was exhausting but we all knew we had to do it again. Over the years our technique improved to the point that what once took us nearly 12 hours to complete can now be done in under six! Of course, it doesn’t hurt that our children are grown and we can get by on just a cheese and cracker snack for lunch.

It wasn’t just our technique that changed over the years though. Our lives and careers brought moves to new communities

(adding not only travel time to our day but the occasional stop for directions); our children grew and ventured out on their own; we overcame broken bones, illness, death and divorce. But through it all we vowed that “cookie day” would continue. And continue it did. In more than 40 years of baking we have never missed this special day.

Today we are all once again living in Stony Plain and within two blocks of each other. We are all still much involved in the Stony Plain United Church. All of us serve on various boards and/or committees as well as being involved in such activities as the annual Fall Supper, catering activities, and study groups. Two of us attend U.C.W. and assist with their activities.

The little hands now belong to our grandchildren, and we suspect that the time it takes to bake 58 dozen cookies will start inching back towards 12 hours with each passing year. What we know will never change is the bond that, like well mixed cookie dough, the ingredients in our friendship have created.

— Mabel Kidner



### In This Issue:

President’s Pen . . . . . 2  
 News from the Edmonton and Area Administrators’ Association . . . 2  
 St. Paul Presbytery Visit to Good Fish Lake/ Saddle Lake Nations . . . . . 3

Elizabeth McKillop — “Mother of Lethbridge” . . . . . 4  
 2009 Banff Men’s Conference . . . . . 5  
 Red Deer Indian Industrial School Cemetery . . . . . 6

Western Women’s Conference . . . . . 7  
 Wetaskiwin United Fire doused by outpouring of love . . . . . 8

---

# President's Pen

## *Endings and Beginnings*

I have been thinking about endings and beginnings. I am writing this on the last Sunday of the Christian year and by the time you read it we will be in a new calendar year. It is a time of year replete with reminders of endings and beginnings. The winter solstice is a big deal north of 60 because we really notice the change in daylight and there is certainly an ending and beginning to be gleaned from that event. Advent, of course, is the beginning of the Christian year, but there is also an ending and beginning with the celebration of birth at Christmas. But now, for you, the New Year's parties are over and all the promise tied up in the calendar that reads 2010 is before us.

Not only am I writing this on the last Sunday of the year, but I am writing it on an plane which is heading towards Vancouver and then eventually to Calgary in preparation for an initial meeting of the planning committee for the next conference meeting in 2011: more beginnings. I am flying from Whitehorse where with some reverence, jubilation and merry-making



*Peter Chynoweth*

we celebrated a covenanted pastoral relationship with God and the people of Whitehorse United Church, Northern Lights Presbytery and Bev Brazier. I was invited to lead a learning time in which we talked about beginnings and endings and turned them into a circle because so often endings turn into beginnings in circles of life, love and relationship. I suggested that God loves circles because there are so many ways in which we see them — the full moon coursing across a clear night time sky, the sun behind an eye-saving haze of clouds, ripples from a stone tossed into a pool or pond, a circle of light from candle or other light source.

God also loves circles of seasons turning an ending of one into the beginning of another. And God also loves circles of community where everyone is gathered side by side, equal distance from each other and equal distance from the centre — the still point of our circle — God, who turns endings into beginnings as a sign of hope and renewal for all of us.  
[anw-northernlight.blogspot.com](http://anw-northernlight.blogspot.com)

— *Peter Chynoweth*

---

# News from the Edmonton and Area Administrators' Association

In October, we had seven Administrators attend First Aid and Safety Training. Our First Aid certificates expire in three years, so we are hoping to do a one training again at that time and that more Administrators can attend. For information on whether or not your United Church requires a First Aider at your church, please check out the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety website.

In November we held a Workshop in Excel. This workshop was an extension of the introduction to Excel we did in 2008.

**Tuesday, January 19 at Sherwood Park UC, 20 Fir Street.**

We have invited Pat Bourque of Alberta and Northwest Conference to come and talk to us on change.

There have been many staff changes over the last few years in the Edmonton and Area UC's and we are hoping to gain some insight on how to make these changes easier all around.

**Tuesday, February 16 at Chalmers-Castledowns UC, 12315 - 132 Avenue — Topic TBA.**

**Tuesday, March 16 at St. Albert UC, 20 Green Grove Drive.**

We have asked Earl Reaburn to come and go over the UCC Pension and Benefits. Any Administrator who has any questions, please email Cathy at the below email address. Earl would appreciate as many questions as possible before hand to give him time to do any necessary research.



**In April we are looking at holding a one day retreat — Topic TBA.**

We are continuing to update "Beyond the Sunday Bulletin" and are looking for suggestions to help make the much needed improvements to our website [www.unitedchurchadministrators.ca](http://www.unitedchurchadministrators.ca).

Please contact Cathy Stapleton at McClure United Church ([mcclureunited@telus.net](mailto:mcclureunited@telus.net)) for more information, suggestions for topics, or to register for any workshop.

— *Cathy Stapleton*

---

## St. Paul Presbytery Visit to Good Fish Lake/ Saddle Lake Nations

St. Paul Presbytery is working to keep the issue of right relationships with our First Nations brothers and sisters on the forefront of our minds. At our April meeting of presbytery we committed time during each of our meetings for the next two years to make positive steps on this issue through education, dialogue and action. Rev. Heather Carlson (formerly of Bonnyville United Church) spoke very passionately and eloquently on the topic during that meeting. Those gathered were so moved that we also committed to meeting the people of Goodfish Lake and Saddle Lake Nations in the near future (GoodFish United Church and Saddle Lake United Church are members of All Tribes Presbytery but in the geographic region of St. Paul Presbytery).

Ten members of St. Paul Presbytery met with members of Goodfish United, Goodfish & Saddle Lake Band Members and Elders, along with other members of All Tribes Presbytery and national staff persons in September. We went to hear the

story of a people who have been through many struggles . . . we went to listen and learn. We heard Melvin Steinhauer speak about Henry Bird Steinhauer, his great-grandfather and original protestant missionary to Goodfish Lake. We learned about Henry Bird's belief that every individual has purpose and his strong values concerning the importance of education and the need to create a strong community. These beliefs and values continue to be upheld in this band, allowing them to move slowly beyond the hurts of the past. This was demonstrated by the sense of pride in the community felt by many of us who were visiting.

As the day progressed, we also heard individuals speak about the abuses and trauma they experienced in residential schools. We learned about how many continue to suffer as they re-live abuses as they go through the process of making claims to receive compensation. We heard about the struggles and oppression of First Nations peoples going back

to the beginning of colonization. Those present learned that the problems between our cultures and the racism present in our country has developed over centuries and so will not be healed overnight. Our visit was an emotional and informative experience that reminds us that we are called as a church and as individuals to go forward with patience, determination and hope that reconciliation and healing are possible. Jesus implores us to reach out our hands of compassion to create lasting change. The people of St. Paul Presbytery thank the people of Goodfish Lake and Saddle Lake who welcomed us onto their beautiful land and bravely shared their stories. Special thanks to Rev. Robert Wright (GoodFish Lake / Saddle Lake United Churches) who helped to organize this opportunity for dialogue. It was an experience none of us will forget and will lead us forward as we continue to strive for right relationships.

— Rev. Natasha Pearen

---

## Sounding the Bamboo VIII Conference Planned

This unique conference occurs every three years. Attendees are racial/ethnic minority women and First Nations women. The Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba will host the conference from May 13 to 16, 2010. Sounding the Bamboo (SB) falls under the aegis of Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry and is part of the Women's Ministries Network. For more information and applications, go to [www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/events/sounding-the-bamboo-2010](http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/events/sounding-the-bamboo-2010).

— Kay Quon



# Elizabeth McKillop — “Mother of Lethbridge”

“The day I arrived there was scarcely a sober man in the place.” Elizabeth McKillop arrived in Lethbridge for the celebration of Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1887. It was quite a welcome for a member of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. We don’t know whether she wanted to take her two small children and head back to Ontario immediately or whether she saw it as a challenge! However, she stayed. Her husband Rev. Charles McKillop had come west a year earlier and she had accompanied him when he returned to Lethbridge from the Presbyterian General Assembly meeting in Winnipeg.

Elizabeth was soon hard at work in the role of missionary wife. Within two months of her arrival, twelve women had formed a Ladies’ Aid. This small group organized bazaars, concerts and suppers to raise money for a church organ. By 1894, a Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society, the first west of Brandon, had been organized in the manse and she served as its first president. Later she also served as first president of the Alberta WMS.

In what was a frontier town, all denominations cooperated. In *Pioneer Mission Work: Presbyterian Church Alberta*, published in 1915 by the Women’s Home Missionary Synodical Conference of Alberta, she recalled that, “Those were union days indeed. Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic worshipping in the same church. The Presbyterian minister buried Protestant and Catholic alike.” Perhaps that cooperation led to her strong support of church union. She was also a strong supporter of women’s rights. While she claimed no credit herself, she wrote that, “Many cultured women are working away quietly and cheerfully, doing

without the necessities, not to mention the luxuries — real heroines.”

Elizabeth McKillop contributed much to the quality of life in Lethbridge. She brought the first piano to the area and was a strong supporter of arts and music festivals. She was also a gifted speaker. At her death, the *Lethbridge Herald* (January 28, 1938) noted that she “was a frequent speaker on church and historical topics relating to the west and a wise counsellor and friend.” The article continued: “She possessed an unfailing interest in life, radiated sunshine and good cheer and spoke well of everyone.” She was called the “Mother of Lethbridge” for “she had made a notable contribution to its spiritual and cultural life.”

McKillop United Church in Lethbridge honours Charles and Elizabeth and their work in southern Alberta. Some of Elizabeth’s story is also told in instalments in the *Journal* published by the ANWC Historical Society (2008,2009). If you have stories to share of the history of the church and its workers, please contact the Journal editor Debbie Marshall at: [parsenippress@interbaun.com](mailto:parsenippress@interbaun.com) or by phone at 780-987-4974.

To support the work of the ANWC Historical Society in preserving the stories of the church in Alberta and to receive the annual issue of the *Journal*, please send your membership fee of \$25 to:

ANWC Historical Society,  
c/o 207 Rhatigan Road  
Edmonton, T6R 1N6

— Gayle Simonson



Elizabeth McKillop  
Photo Credit: Austin Fennel

## Statements of Faith from Duchess United Church

The idea came to me when I was preparing a reflection from Acts 2 where Peter addresses the crowd on the Day of Pentecost. As I was reflecting on the boldness of Peter after all he went through grieving the loss of Jesus, I could not help but admire him for his courage and conviction. My reflection stirred me to question my own faith and I wondered what would my statement be? Then I wondered what would the statements of the congregation be?

*continued on page 5*

# 2009 Banff Men's Conference

The Banff Centre was the scene of the 55th annual men's conference from October 16th to 18th. These conferences have traditionally featured a theme speaker and a musician or group to lead the singing. Plans thus need to be made well in advance and arrangements for 2009 were announced at the October, 2008 conference. But in the summer of 2009 came a planning committee's worst possible nightmare. With just two months to go, the music leader cancelled; a month later the theme speaker cancelled as well.

On short notice, Gord Oaks and Chris Giffen agreed to provide music leadership for the conference. They are members of rEvolve [sic], a group dedicated to bringing new energy and re-evolving the spirit of music in the United Church (see <http://revolve.eaglewingmusic.org>.) Their mix of contemporary tunes and "re-worked" older songs had many men singing their hearts out.

On even shorter notice, Rev. Dr. Darryl Auten took on the assignment of theme speaker. Referring to Jeremiah's visit to the potter's house (ch. 18-19) and demonstrating with a real potter's wheel, he illustrated how a potter's efforts to transform an ordinary ball of clay into a beautiful and functional object can serve as a powerful metaphor in various aspects of the Christian walk. After his last presentation, an appreciative audience gave him a prolonged standing ovation.

The gathering also featured several discussion groups, a variety of workshops led by facilitators with



*Rev. Dr. Darryl Auten at the wheel*

expertise in their respective areas and a choir that served during the Sunday morning communion service. The conference was organized by a planning committee comprised of Bob Thompson, Darryl Auten, Martin Goertzen, Harry Clarke, David Wood, John Burton, Les Ellenor and Ken Proctor. Congratulations on an excellent conference despite the cancellations.

Next year's conference is scheduled for October 15th to 17th with the theme "To Seek Justice and Resist Evil: Making a Straight Path for the Lord". The invited speaker is Brigadier-General (retired) Peter Holt with music leadership to be provided by Laurie Anderson and Alison White. For further information see <http://banffmen.org>.

— *Harold Schroeder*

## **Duchess United Church**

*continued from page 4*

On Sunday morning following I handed each member a piece of paper and asked them to answer the following questions: "What would you passionately profess to people about who God is for you and to you? In other words, what is your statement of faith?"

They were given the opportunity to think about it during the service, and I collected their writings during the offering. I read each one during the "Prayers of the people" and the feedback given from the congregation was that the prayers were very powerful and moving, but most important, they claimed ownership.

### **These are some of the statements of faith from the service.**

- God's love heals me inside and outside.
- Faith is my cornerstone.
- Knowing even though life gets tough and we get caught up in problems and forget about God, God enters our mind and says, "I am still here."
- The 121st Psalm: I will lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

— *Yvonne Terry*

# Red Deer Indian Industrial School Cemetery

The Red Deer Indian Industrial School (RDIS) opened in 1893 and enrolled students until 1919. It drew students from all over Alberta and from Nelson House, Manitoba. Over 300 students ranging in age from 7 to 17 attended the school.

Unfortunately diseases such as scarlet fever, measles, tuberculosis and influenza thrived in crowded and unsanitary conditions. A number of students died while at the school and were buried in a small cemetery on the school property, overlooking Sylvan Creek. Complete records are not available, but it is believed that between twenty and forty children are buried there.

After RDIS closed in 1919, the quarter-section with the school buildings and the cemetery was sold. Access required crossing of private land and the cemetery

was largely forgotten. It was left untended and over the years the grave markers rotted away and the site was overgrown with brush.

In September, members of the Sunnybrook United Church cemetery committee met with thirty Cree, Stoney, and Metis Nation representatives and the General Council Liaison Minister, Residential Schools Steering Committee. This meeting followed months of visiting representatives of First Nations from which children attended RDIS. Our constructive, healing day included a talking circle, lunch with the Mayor of Red Deer in attendance, and then a visit to the cemetery.

We determined ways to honour and remember the children who attended the school and who were buried there. We agreed that our thanks, with

suitable gifts, should be expressed to the landowners for the protection they have afforded the cemetery over the years. Also it was agreed that a pipe ceremony and feast should be held to bring the spirits home. A small working group with representation from the several reserves is planning a ceremony and feast for June 30, 2010. A sweat was held in October to pray for guidance in this endeavour. All these efforts have been funded by the United Church.

This has been an exciting journey of "living into right relations". These little ones have been alone, without their families, for nearly a century. Through the work of all involved they can be with their relations in the right way.

— Linda Ervin, Lyle Keewatin Richards, Don Hepburn

## Forest Lawn United Church 50th Anniversary Celebration



Forest Lawn United Church in Calgary celebrated its 50th anniversary in September. The many months of planning paid off with a memorable weekend for current and returning members alike.

Eileen Denison, long time organist of this church, was the perfect greeter for this event. Her cheery "Happy 50th Anniversary" made everyone feel welcome and ready for a wonderful homecoming.

Festivities started with a traditional Stampede, er, pancake breakfast, put on by the Men's Group. The hall was decorated with photographs and memorabilia. The exhibits triggered memories of those who had worshipped here over the past 50 years.

After a hot dog lunch served by the Sunday School, the choir went to work. A nice note: there were several former Choir Directors and accompanists, but the present Choir Director at age 20 was almost the youngest person in the room. Not at all intimidated by all this musical talent, he kept them all in line with flair and boundless energy. Bravo, Justin Macosky!

# Western Women's Conference



*l to r. Flora McDonald, Emmy Henry, Bev Green and Delores Hanchurak enjoy the sun at Western Women's Conference*

The Western Women's Conference was held in late September in Naramata, BC. The Alberta and Northwest Conference United Church Women, in partnership with Naramata planned the conference. A total of 378 women attended the two sessions. The theme was "Women Together — The Common Walk of Generations". The keynote speakers were Flora McDonald and Kathy Galloway.

Flora McDonald spoke of her travels to Afghanistan. She spoke of her personal charity, which helps with the building of schools, employing

women teachers to teach the girls and the women of the area. She also talked about helping by supplying solar panels and windmills to enable power to be utilized by the people. During the slide show, some of these improvements were shown to us.

Kathy Galloway told us of her life work of being an activist for the rights of the weak and oppressed. She told the group that if you feel strongly about something, you should be prepared to either stand out or stand up. She has traveled to Palestine, Israel and several African countries.

Music and singing were a major part of the conference. Barb Myers led us with her gift of music.

Worship was held each day and set the tone for either the day or the evening sessions. Sally Boyle was the worship leader. She used stories and scripture of women walking together to illustrate and enhance her message.

Participants chose from nineteen "Spiritual Practice Workshops". Some of them were: Nature Writing with Keri Wehlander, Women's Stories: Global Connections with Marion Best, Song of Faith with Lynn Elliott, Introduction to the Labyrinth and Sacred Garden with Bev Church, Rhythmic Art with Angela Roy and Introduction to Healing Pathway with Julie Gerhardt.

— Bev Green

Reverend Linda Hunter has many ties to this church. She is a former member and secretary of Forest Lawn. She is also married to its current minister, Gordon Hunter. Linda shared her feelings about this congregation: "Forest Lawn continues to manifest the very best of Christ's calling in the world. They live it."

We recalled one Christmas Eve service when the manger caught fire. And who could forget the torn-up hot dog buns substituting for forgotten bread for a Christmas Eve communion? (The buns were all the local convenience store could provide.) People tried to look serious as they took communion, but it was hard not to laugh out loud. This is indeed a very special congregation.

About 130 attended the concert. With returning members, the choir swelled to 35 people,

including a Cabbage Patch Kid doll wearing an authentic Forest Lawn choir robe. The robe had been made many years before for the infant daughter of a choir member, so that she would look right as she sat beside her mother in the choir loft on Sunday mornings. The concert was fantastic and showcased the wealth of talent in the congregation, past and present.

Sunday morning was led by Gordon Hunter, ably assisted by a couple of former ministers. This time there was "proper bread" served at communion. It was a wonderful weekend, happy homecoming and a great family reunion. We look forward with faith for the next 50 years.

— Sylvia Terry

## Around our conference

### Upcoming Events

**Late Feb. to May, 2010. Tribute to the UCW** and predecessor groups. Provincial Archives, 8555 Roper Road, Edmonton.

**May 13 – 16. Sounding the Bamboo.** Theme: “Eve, Mary, White Feather and US”. Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.

[www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/events/sounding-the-bamboo](http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/events/sounding-the-bamboo)  
icdc@united-church.ca.

**June 24 to 27. The Journey of Black Peoples** in the United Church of Canada. Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton. Addressing the unique concerns of Black peoples in the United Church. Worship, workshops,

reflection, fellowship and contributing to the church as a whole. Go to [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) and click on “events” in the “get involved” section. Registration deposit by April 15.

**October 22-24. Roots and Wings – Regional Women’s Gathering.** Nisku, Alberta. For further information, contact Francee Kaehn 780-998-7614.

## Wetaskiwin United Fire doused by outpouring of love

We are not alone... familiar words from our United Church Creed. While the words continue to echo through my mind amid the myriad calls, meetings and details of dealing with a fire, their lived reality knocks on our temporary office door with hugs, cookies and compassion. We are truly blessed and moved by the outpouring of support and care from down the street to around the world as people grieve the destruction of a faith home.

The fire at First United Church Wetaskiwin began in the early morning of October 13. Volunteer Fire Crews arrived quickly but by 6:30 am their work was focussed on keeping the fire from spreading and by 8:30 am permission was granted to push the remaining walls in for safety purposes. We are extremely grateful that no injuries or loss of life occurred. The investigation into the cause of the fire is ongoing and may never be determined.

While we grieve the loss of so much, we have been amazed and encouraged by the outpouring of care and support. We had upwards of eight offers for worship space, several for office space and the groups which met in our building

have now found temporary homes. Offers of assistance continue to come in. Thank you to the congregations of Red Deer Presbytery who gifted us with their caring!

Our last service in the building was Thanksgiving, with the sanctuary fully decorated - piano, organ, keyboard, trumpet, flute and choir in full voice. The story of the creatures coming out of the Ark, reminded us that we can worship anywhere but it’s nice to have a roof over your head! Since then we have worshipped at one of the local funeral homes and the Seniors’ Centre. We have worshipped with our community at a neighbouring church and decommissioned the remains of our building. Plans for the next year continue to unfold with many of our usual events taking place in a variety of venues. It seems when one door closes another opens, although sometimes the hallway seems a little long!

Our deepest thanks to everyone who has helped make this difficult time a little easier. The picture on line with the rainbow over the fire damage speaks eloquently of the hope that

comes in the midst of despair. Editor’s note: Google “Wetaskiwin church fire image”.

— Ruth Lumax

### *in* Contact

**Alberta and Northwest Conference insert in the United Church Observer Vol. 29 No. 1**

Editorial Committee Chairperson:  
Gordon Hunter  
Editor: Liz Webster Goddard  
E-mail: [incontact@shaw.ca](mailto:incontact@shaw.ca) or  
[incontactphoto@gmail.com](mailto:incontactphoto@gmail.com)

Photo submissions: please email [incontactphoto@gmail.com](mailto:incontactphoto@gmail.com) or my mailbox overloads. Thanks.

C/O Alberta and Northwest Conference  
9911 48 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5V6  
Phone: 780-433-7827

Advertising rates:  
\$20 per column inch

**Deadlines for 2010 issues:**

**The 20th of January, March, July, September and November.**

The purpose of In Contact is to share news of the Church’s life, work, programs, policies and people with Observer readers across Alberta and Northwest Conference.