



# the Connector

*Newfoundland & Labrador Conference*

East & West Districts

May 2015, Volume 24, No. 3

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## V O W R

### The Voice of Wesley Radio

BY DOREEN WHALEN

The only radio station owned by The United Church of Canada and Newfoundland's pioneer radio station, VOWR made its debut 91 years ago on July 18, 1924, under the call letters 8WMC.

The radical idea was conceived by Rev. Dr. Joseph G. Joyce who had the foresight to realize the impact radio would have on the sick, aged and shut-in.

The first church services were broadcast on July 20, 1924 – one from Wesley by Rev. Joyce and the other from St. Thomas' Anglican Church.

We celebrate the vision of Rev. Joyce who raised on his own enough money to install a 100 watt transmitter. In 1930, he requested that Wesley take over the radio station and appoint a Board of Directors to continue broadcasting. In 1932, the call letters were changed to VOWR and operated under its motto "We Serve".

VOWR's own words, printed in a 1951 newspaper (see next page), express the station's mantra best of all.

VOWR now has a 10,000 watt transmitter and a team of more than 70 volunteers to bring listening pleasure to the people of Newfoundland & Labrador and around the world via the internet 24 hours a day.

From a small room in the basement of Wesley, VOWR now operates from its own studio adjoining Wesley.

Our motto is the same – "We Serve".

We continue to rely on contributions from our listeners as our main source of funding to support the operations and help keep VOWR on the air. Our operating expenses are very high.

As we celebrate the vision of Rev. Joyce and continue to live into our 91<sup>st</sup> year, we thank you, our many listeners, for your on-going support.



**Long-serving volunteer Henry Pike, who has been at the station for 55 years, taking open-house visitors on a tour of the main studio at VOWR.**

*Continued on page 2*

# the Connector

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Deadline for July issue is:  
**May 15, 2015**

The Spring Meetings  
of the Newfoundland  
and Labrador  
Conference, East and  
West Districts:

**May 29-31, 2015**

**Memorial United  
Church &  
Joe Byrne Memorial  
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**Grand Falls-Windsor**



**CGIT**  
is celebrating  
100 years!

Plans  
are underway for  
an event to be held in  
October in Gander.  
Let's bring together CGIT of  
all generations.

## V.O.W.R. Calling 1951

“This is Radio Station VOWR, calling from St. John's, to the people of Newfoundland.

Twenty-seven years have passed since I embarked upon my career of love and good will. My first broadcast was a religious service, and took place on July 24, 1924. The service was conducted by Rev. J.G. Joyce, to whose vision and enterprise I owe my existence.

Newfoundland did not have many receiving sets in 1924, so my audience was small. Perhaps some of you who read this can remember the event. Others who listened to my airborne voice on that day in the long ago have gone to their eternal rest. The years between have witnessed many changes.

Serving you has been a grand experience. On the dark side, I recall the terrible tidal wave that devastated the Burin area in 1929, and the tragedy of the S.S. Viking two years later. Hour after hour, day after day, my voice went out to you, endeavouring to impart information and comfort in your time of trial and sorrow.

In the quiet moments of your life, when Sabbath calm replaced the noises and strain of the week's striving, I seek you across lakes and forests, over mountains and seas. I find my way into your homes; into your lighthouses where you live lonely lives that others may pursue their course in safety; into your logging camps; into your ships as you sail along your rugged coast or hunt the seal on the ice floes. I seek you everywhere, regardless of class or creed. I remind you of a love that is deeper than the deepest ocean. I sing you the songs of the spirit.

Time marches on and we must move with it. In 1932 my name was changed to VOWR. As such you have known me ever since. Radio has outgrown the infant stage, and is now a powerful, compelling force that encircles the globe. I, too, have grown in stature. My voice is stronger. You, my supporters, have helped to make it so. In your hundreds, you have given of your substance so that the men who control my destiny may provide me with new equipment to maintain and increase my usefulness. Without your help, my voice would fade and die from the airwaves. I want to live and talk to you far, far into the future. I want to talk to your children and to generations yet unborn.

My own income is what you choose to give. My services are as free as the gospel that comes to you through my voice.

The story I tell you now is the one I told you in 1924 – the wonderful story of everlasting life. It will be the same always.

I shall continue to serve you as long as you make it possible for me to do so.

I am VOWR – your station!”



Rev. Dr. J.G. Joyce

*Ms. Doreen Whalen is a member of  
Wesley United Church and the VOWR Board.*



Mrs. Louise Pelley, along with her minister Mr. Ray Case, with letter of congratulations from Moderator Rt. Rev. Gary Paterson.

## Service - A Way of Life

Louise Pelley celebrates her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday and 83 years of service as organist to the United Church

BY CAROL HALL

Members of her extended family and her church family gathered at Harcourt on January 31 to honour Mrs. Louise Pelley on the occasion of her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Variouly known as Mrs. Pelley, Aunt Louie and Cousin Louie, she has dedicated her life to Bethany United Church, Harcourt.

While she has served in all offices of the church, her principal role for the past 83 years has been as organist and choir director; first playing in church at age 12.

Mrs. Pelley still has her copy of *Roots Pleasant Hours* piano book which she acquired at age 8 and from which she learned to play. She also has in her home her original organ which continues to provide her with many hours of pleasure.

Choir members and United Church Women organized an evening meal and an opportunity to present birthday wishes and expressions of appreciation to Mrs. Pelley; including messages from the Moderator, Rt. Rev. Gary Paterson, and Conference Executive Secretary, Rev. Faith March-MacCuish.

Harcourt congregation presented a certificate of appreciation and floral tributes were presented from the United Church Women and choir members and from the Shoal Harbour congregation.

Mrs. Pelley is always ready and willing to extend her gift of music to other congregations in the area and has, over her lifetime, played for over 500 funerals.

She is a founding member of the Harcourt Branch of Women's Institute and still active after 68 years.

Mrs. Pelley's community service was recently recognized by

the presentation of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award.

Of course, no birthday would be complete without a birthday cake.

The Harcourt congregation presented Mrs. Pelley with a cake which depicted her, in her choir gown, sitting at the organ at Bethany United.



Louise Pelley assisted in cake cutting by Ray Case and her good friend Rev. Walter Biles.

Sunday, February 1, being Mrs. Pelley's actual birthday, found her playing the organ and leading her choir at Bethany United as usual.

*Ms. Carol Hall is the Official Board Chair, Shoal Harbour Pastoral Charge.*

*Photo credit: Ed Vincent.*

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# Youth Forum Winter Gathering

by Miriam Bowlby

**M**y journey to General Council Youth Forum Winter Gathering began with an email tap on the shoulder asking me to consider submitting an expression of interest to be the Co-ordinator for General Council Youth Forum. Working with the members of the Youth Forum Design Team is both a joy and privilege.

At the request of General Council Executive, General Council Youth Forum is doing something that's never been done before! It has three phases. The Winter Gathering which took place at Five Oaks in Ontario in February; the pilgrimage that will start in British Columbia in July and Youth Forum at General Council, August 8-15, 2015 right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Those who travelled to the Winter Gathering from Newfoundland

and Labrador were Olivia Sharpe, Regina Madimbu, Ryan Burton, Katie Vardy and Kathleen Conran.

We began with a welcome to the land, worship and building a covenant. Regina Madimbu said, "It was amazing meeting new people.



**The ministry of music was shared.**

The whole idea of how we had to build a covenant of what we wanted our experience to be like and how we wanted to act around each other."

With that, we spent four days worshipping, having fun and learning from one another.

Woven through all we did was worship led by the worship team made up of our Moderator Gary Paterson and May Landell.



**Group photo of the pilgrims that will be travelling across Canada this summer starting in British Columbia and ending in Corner Brook.**

Music was led by Andrew Aitchison and Sarah Grady. Worship helped us start each day and set the tone for our home group time each night.

One of the most challenging parts of our time was selecting who would be our pilgrims, commissioners and pilgrim partners. This was done in Conference groups and each group prayerfully discerned who was being called to each role.

Newfoundland and Labrador selected Ryan Burton and Kathleen Conran as pilgrim partners, Regina Madimbu as commissioner, Olivia Sharpe as a youth forum delegate and Katie Vardy as pilgrim/commissioner.

Some highlights for me included vespers led by the participants where Regina Madimbu taught us how to sing *Jesus Loves Me* in Shona, texting prayers to friends during worship, having the opportunity to sit in worship hearing the words, "To be seen is to be known. To be known is to be loved. To be loved is to be known".



**United Church youth gathered for four days of learning, fun and worship at the Five Oaks Winter Gathering.**

  
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All too often I hear laments about our church. That pews aren't full like they were one time. We used to ... fill blanks with all the things we used to do.

Not very often do we pause to give thanks for all that we do have in our church.

Not one of the participants was raised in that church of full pews but the congregations of today both large and small.

As I worshipped, prayed, learned, questioned, played, sang

with the amazing people that are the church today, I didn't long for what once was, I gave thanks.

Thanks that we have commit-

**"It was literally the best experience of my life. I would do it again in a heartbeat."**

~ Katie Vardy, NL Conference Pilgrim/Commissioner

ted, passionate, interesting, faithful people who love our church and are committed to its future in whatever form it takes.

Thanks that our church is not afraid to try new things. Thanks

for the people who make up the church we have today who make it a place of hope and belonging.

The Winter Gathering is only

just the beginning.

Watch for details about how you can support our pilgrims as they travel across

Canada listening and learning in preparation for General Council 42.

*Rev. Miriam Bowlby is a member of the Youth Forum Design Team as representative on the General Council Planning Team and the minister at Cochrane Street United.*

## Brady helps dig a well and support women

"I'm going to do that but only by myself," exclaimed 11-year-old Brady Lawrence.

This was Brady's response to a story his grandmother Ruth Francis showed him in the Mission and Service edition of Mandate magazine (2014-15).

The article was about children at Trinity United, Bobcaygeon, Ontario who made rainbow loom bracelets and sold them to raise money for *Gifts With Vision*.

Brady, also a maker of rainbow loom bracelets, decided to follow the example of the children at Trinity United and sell his bracelets for a project in *Gifts With Vision*.

*Gifts with Vision* projects support the work of United Church partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and across Canada.

Brady decided he wanted to help with clean water and he wanted to get a goat!

Brady set up a table at the Gower UCW fall sale where he proudly sat with his bracelets. People came, chatted with Brady and bought his bracelets.

As a result, Brady donated \$100 to the *Dig a Well, Protect a Spring* project and \$50 to the *Support Women, Strengthening Women* project for the purchase of two goats.

Brady initiated the project himself. His caring spirit was contagious and his creative hands reached

across the globe to give a "hand up". In doing so, he taught his Gower church family that they can do the same.

Brady is in grade six at St. Edward's school, Kelligrews and is a baptized and active member of Gower Street United, St. John's.

*Submitted by the Very Rev. Dr. Marion Parry, 37<sup>th</sup> Moderator, The United Church of Canada (2000-2003).*



**Brady Lawrence**

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## Together in Praise

### Lenten Ecumenical Music Event held in Grand Falls-Windsor

On March 18, over 300 people gathered in Grand Falls-Windsor at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for the culmination of a three-month ecumenical music project, the presentation "Where Have They Taken My Lord", an Easter Cantata composed by Brian Stevens.

The combined choir of 65 members, directed by Joann Ralph, was comprised of singers from Voices United from Memorial United Church, Immaculate Conception Cathedral Choir and St. Joseph's Parish Choir.



It was also an intergenerational project as ages of the singers ranged from 15-85 years.

Laura Race played piano and conducted the orchestra which featured seven members of the Grand Falls-Windsor Concert Band.

The project was organized by Laura Race, choir director at St. Joseph's, Joann Ralph, choir director at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and Glenn Moulund, choir director at Memorial United.

Choir members had a great experience rehearsing the 11 pieces, which were intertwined with readings from the Easter Story.

The audience delighted in the music and readings as they shared in this unique presentation of the Easter Story.

Many commented that were unsure of

what to expect, then thrilled with the experience and enjoyed it very much. The concert also raised over \$2,000 for the local food bank.

Many people will be familiar with the composer Brian Stevens and his music through the "Tapestry of Love" concerts which have toured Newfoundland twice and will be returning in November of 2015.

A final comment from Joann Ralph:

"What a rewarding experience! I met people I never would have known because of the ecumenical nature of the Cantata collaboration.

In that collaboration, I discovered that what we have in common as Christians, far transcends the differences we perceive in our separate denominations. When we stood together in praise, we were a collection of friends."



The full ensemble along with composer Brian Stevens.



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## GC42



**T**ime is flying and General Council will be upon us before we know it!

The various Committee Chairs are busy contacting those who have volunteered to help with the work of their committees.

While some areas have sufficient volunteers, others are still needed.

If you have not yet committed some time to help out, but are considering it, please contact Inez Penney ([inez@mail2cancer.com](mailto:inez@mail2cancer.com)) or Joan Brinston ([joanbrinston@eastlink.ca](mailto:joanbrinston@eastlink.ca)).

Though the General Council meets from August 8-15, preparations will start on site the week before, so people will be needed starting August 4<sup>th</sup> to help prepare for registration and to set up the meeting area and generally get things organized.

Twenty two Stewards, 5 of those from the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference, have been selected from the more than 80 people who applied from across the country.

It is amazing to think that people from as far away as British Columbia are willing to volunteer their time, as well as pay their own travel and accommodations, to be a part of this great event. Thank you to all who showed a willingness to serve.

The Local Arrangements Committee looks after all those things that a good host looks after: food, accommodation, comfort of participants, entertainment, etc.

UCW groups in all pastoral charges have been contacted and asked for everything from cookies and tea buns to registration bags and things to stuff those bags.

While it is the UCW groups who have been contacted, we hope that all members of the congrega-

tions will get involved with helping provide the things requested as well as in volunteering.

This 42<sup>nd</sup> General Council is especially important since decisions as to the future structure of our church will be made. History will be made in Corner Brook!

If you are unable to volunteer, but are in the Corner Brook area during that week, please make time to drop by the Corner Brook Civic Centre just to sit in on some of the proceedings and watch the Spirit at work as Commissioners struggle with the decisions that need to be made.

It is a once in a lifetime chance to experience the work of the national church and to be a part of it as a volunteer or observer.

This is YOUR General Council, YOUR church. Get involved in some way!

*Submitted by Ms. Linda Stonehouse, Co-Chair, GC42 Local Arrangements Committee.*



Dr. Stella Burry was recognized as a Distinguished Nominee for the 2014 Ron Wiebe Restorative Justice Award. The award is presented to an individual who models restorative justice principles in the service of justice and peace and who has demonstrated ways of transforming human relationships, by enabling and promoting communication and healing between people in conflict. Dr. Burry is the first person to receive the award posthumously. *Photo: Robert Smith of the Citizen Advisory Committee presents the certificate to Denise Hillier of Stella's Circle in recognition of the work of Dr. Stella Burry.*

Award

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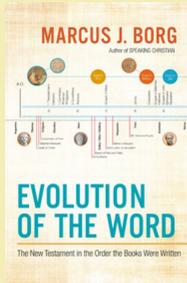
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## EVOLUTION OF THE WORD

by Marcus J. Borg

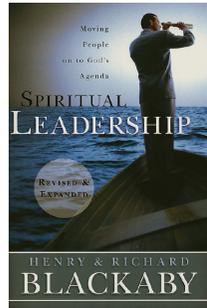
Marcus J. Borg, esteemed Bible scholar and bestselling author, shakes up the order of the New Testament as we know it by putting the books in a completely new order—the order in which they were written. By doing so, *Evolution of the Word* allows us to read these documents in their historical context.

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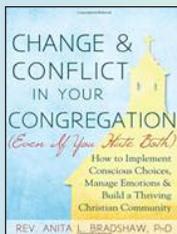
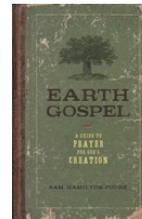
John Shelby Spong, bestselling author and popular proponent of a modern and scholarly Christianity, argues that this last gospel was misinterpreted by the framers of the fourth-century creeds to be a literal account of the life of Jesus when in fact it is a literacy, interpretive retelling of the events in Jesus' life. The result of this intriguing study not only recaptures the original message of this gospel, but also provides us today with a radical new dimension to the claim that in the humanity of Jesus, the reality of God has been met and engaged.

## Earth Gospel: A Guide To Prayer For God's Creation

by Sam Hamilton-Poore

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