

Questions to Ask Jacqueline for March 8th

1. You have been involved in some youth activities this winter – tell us first about Winterlude in Ottawa. How many were at this event?

There were 500 from across Canada – many from Ottawa, and fifty from Manitou Conference, a significant number from a small conference. All of the members of the Manitou 5 were there.

2. What were some of the things that happened at this event?

There was a church service Saturday night at Dominion Chalmers, which is this really big and beautiful church. There were about 600 people there, and there was a lot of great music. Sunday morning, we participated in a service at the church we were staying at, which is called Kitchissippi United Church. A bunch of us acted in the children's story, which was The Sneetches by Dr. Suess, and my mother and I read the scriptures. All of us performed Glory from the movie Selma as the anthem.

3. What was one thing that encouraged you by attending this event?

There are more youth in the United Church than we see week by week and they really are interested in and support the United Church. The United Church is always changing and it really is keeping up with the times.

4. What was the one highlight for you?

I had BeaverTails for the first time, and they were delicious! Honestly, though, spending time in my favourite place in all of Canada, Ottawa, with so many teenagers who love the church as much as I do was really special to me.

5. You recently were at an event at Five Oaks that involved youth from across Canada. How did you get to go to this event?

After church one Sunday, I forget when it was, Rev. Catherine told me and my mom about upcoming youth conferences that she thought we'd be interested in attending. The Youth Forum at Five Oaks, Manitou Conference, the Pilgrimage, and General Council, which is being held in my mom's hometown, Corner Brook, were on that list. So, we filled out a form, and I got to go.

6. Who were the participants?

There were around 60 youth from all of the Conferences. Five of us were from

Manitou Conference: Aiden Legault, Ethan Evans, and I are from Sudbury Presbytery, Carrie Graham is from North Bay Presbytery, and Bella Barbeiro is from Spirit Dancing Presbytery.

7. Who were the leaders?

There was Maya, a minister from London Conference. She lead worship. There were the home group leaders, the design team, the musicians, the staff of Five Oaks, and a Native Elder named Matthew Stevens. They were all very important to our time at Five Oaks, and I wish I could see all of them more often.

8. I understand the Moderator, Gary Paterson, was there for the whole event. What is your impression of our Moderator?

I wish we could elect him again. He is great with an 8 instead of E-A-T. I first met him at the previous General Council when he was elected, and I have loved him ever since.

9. What do you like about the Moderator?

He is positive, energetic, youth-oriented, and he has a lot of great stories to tell about his life, his family, and his experience as Moderator.

10. What did he do at this event?

He led worship with Maya, and he gave sermons. Actually, the funny thing about the sermons was that you didn't even realize they were sermons until they were done. We didn't have bulletins, so, there was nothing saying, "SERMON," or anything like that. He also taught us a song (I forget how it goes), and he read us a Dr. Seuss book.

11. What hope for the United Church did you come away with as you left that event?

Youth of the United Church really, really do love the United Church of Canada, even if they do not show it all of the time.

12. I understand part of the event was to determine the Youth Commissioner from our Conference. Who is that going to be?

The Youth Commissioner is going to be Aiden Legault, who is the most amazing person I have ever met. He goes to St. Peter's United Church in Sudbury. Of the 4 other youth from Manitou Conference, I'm closest to him.

13. Tell us about the pilgrimage that will precede the General Council.

I want to mention that I was part of the group of Youth Forum participants at the last General Council who thought of this idea. On the voting day during General Council, everyone attending GC41 got together in groups and discussed different topics relating to the church. A bunch of the youth got together, including myself, and we started talking about the idea of going across the country. That's how this idea got started. We eventually had to drop the idea, because we simply didn't have the resources needed to plan this sort of event, but, I guess someone picked it back up! In any case, what's happening is that a bunch of youth, who were chosen at Five Oaks, are going on a cross-country tour of Canada, on a mission to spread the Word of God and news about the United Church of Canada.

14. If you had been chosen the Commissioner from Manitou Conference, what one part of being a Commissioner to General Council would you look forward to the most?

I love the learning that happens at General Council, and meeting people, but, I would miss the contact of Youth Forum delegates, because I would be stuck in long, all-day, boring meetings.

15. Is there one message of hope you would offer to the United Church as a whole?

Even though things may look bad when you analyze the statistics of the church, there are still many really good things happening. Maybe, with fewer people, we'll be able to make room for more new ideas, as we're not in competing with each other to be heard.