

Greetings Merging Waters,

July 8th, 2021

This week's worship service continues to lift up the faithful ways that the United Church of Canada has contributed to the social and cultural mosaic of Canada and the world in times of faithful living. This week we look at the church's work toward gender equality and inclusion.

In 1918, women in Canada were granted the federal franchise. It would be another 10 years before the Famous Five won the Persons Case Victory, and it was not until 1940 that Quebec women won the right to vote in provincial elections. In 1960 First Nations were allowed to vote without giving up treaty rights. Thanks to the work of United Church Members like Nellie McClung, and Louise McKinney – the only woman to sign the Basis of Union in 1925 – and other Canadians the rights of women and all Canadians have been recognized and grown closer to where they are meant to be.

Amid this work the United Church was called/inspired, faithful to the message of love, equality, and inclusion of Jesus, the Rev. Dr. Lydia Emelie Gruchy felt the call to ministry. In answering her call, she became a teacher and then the first woman in Canada to graduate theological college, at the Presbyterian College in Saskatoon in 1920. She was also the first woman in Canada to earn a Doctorate of Divinity. And the good people of The United Church in Saskatchewan agreed that her call from the Divine to serve alongside the rest of the church was as valid as all those who hear the Spirit's call to ministry. She was ordained in 1936.

The United Church continues to celebrate the ministry and leadership of women and gender inclusion throughout the church and our society. This time of celebration can help us to ask of ourselves:

- What are the places in our lives and church where gender inclusion and equity have enhanced our understanding of God's love for all people?
- Seeing the benefits and blessings we experience through learning from one another, with all we've gained by expanding inclusion to gender equity, what other kinds of inclusion can enhance our faithful expressions of love?
- The church and society have found that respecting the rights and contribution of women has been a great blessing: how can we continue to lift up and enhance the status of women in the world?
- Where is there still work to be done to ensure full gender equity in the UCC? In Canada? In the World?
 - o What can we contribute to this on-going journey?

I look forward to our time of celebration together this week as we embrace the struggle and the achievements in gender equality and its many dividends now and into the future.

Peace and hope,

Rev. Ryan Fea

MDiv

ryanfea.mergingwaters@gmail.com