



Elders' Institute NEWSLETTER

FALL
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Kathleen Bolton, Communications Administrator of the Elders' Institute, presents Orland Harrison with a gift certificate at PAW 2009.

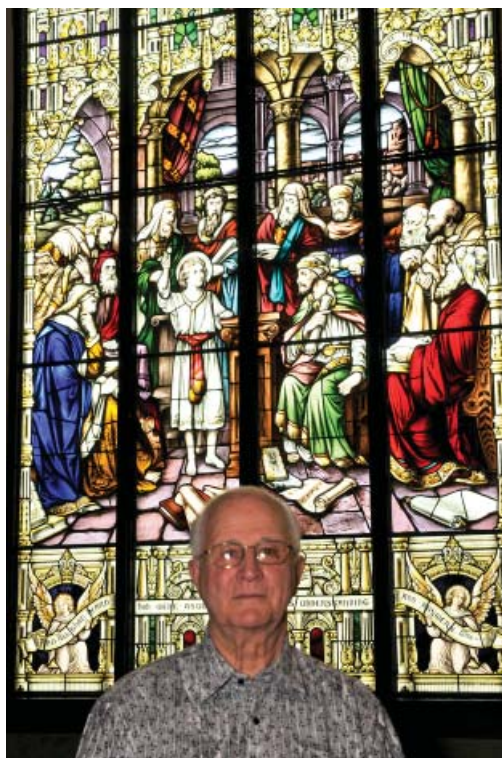
Elder Profile based on interview by Pat White

Orland Harrison has served as a ruling elder at Alexandra Presbyterian Church, Brantford, Ontario, since he was ordained on May 3, 1959. At this year's Pre-Assembly Workshops (PAW) Orland was recognized as the longest serving elder at PAW, having served as a ruling elder for 50 years.

Until the late sixties, Orland was the youngest man on the session. When asked about major changes he has seen in the role of ruling elders, he said, "Women now play a major role in the work of session and the life of the church."

Paul Kormos, clerk of session at Alexandra Church said:

We are very proud of the dedicated service Orland has given to our church and community. He has fulfilled his duties as an elder through his commitment to the congregation and to the church. He communicates extremely well to his district through his regular visits and telephone contacts regarding session decisions, communion and other special church activities. He has shown competent leadership as chairperson of our investment



Orland Harrison with restored window Photo: R. Bayley

and endowment funds. Orland belongs to a group of senior men who perform regular maintenance of the church building (cleaning, painting and minor repairs). He is also a member of the church choir. In our regular session meetings, Orland is an active contributor and also serves as a church historian regarding past events and family histories.

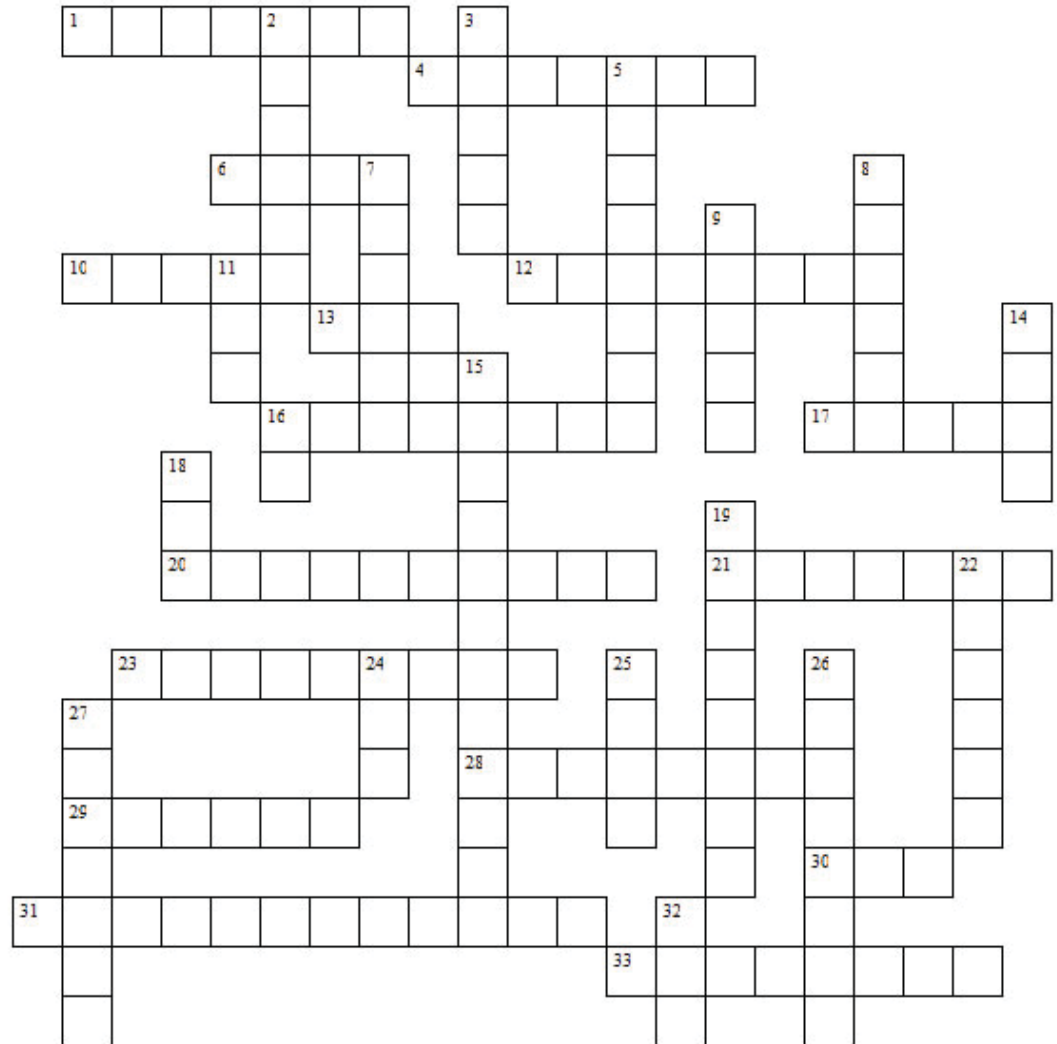
Orland offers the following advice: "New elders should ask more questions, read more and take every opportunity to learn more of the history of our church in Canada."

Orland's volunteer activities and accomplishments—including being nominated for Citizen of the Year (2008) for Brantford—are more than space permits to list here. The complete interview of Orland by co-elder Pat White and more comments from others from Alexandra Presbyterian Church can be read on the Elders' Institute website—www.eldersinstitute.ca—in the Special Projects section: Honouring Ruling Elders for Long-Time Service.

Elders' Institute Website Puzzle

The answers to this crossword puzzle can be found throughout the Elders' Institute's website: www.eldersinstitute.ca, so become familiar with the website and have some fun with this puzzle. Send your completed puzzle to the Elders' Institute for your chance to win a \$25 Elders' Institute gift certificate.

Joyce Yanishewski (Knox, Wanham) and **Alvin Smith** (Chalmers) won the last prize for being the first to submit the correct answer for the Presbyterian Word Search puzzle from the spring 2009 Elders' Institute newsletter. The hidden Presbyterian word was **ELDERSHIP**.



ACROSS

1. Helpful one-page documents for ruling elders
4. Frequency of e-News distribution
6. River near Union Presbyterian Church
10. Discerned in a workshop
12. Workshop schedule website location
13. L. E. Sivers
16. Communications administrator
17. Host church for PAW 2010
20. Presbytery of PAW 2010
21. Emailed workbook for workshop facilitators
23. Type of mentoring explored in a workshop
28. Roberta Clare
29. Teaching elder
30. Duration of online courses (weeks)
31. Instructor for fall course on elder basics
33. Type of visiting explored in Jean Morris' new course

DOWN

2. Clerks "bone up" on this during new online course.
3. Author of two e-sources
5. Location of PAW 2009
7. Bridge near Union Presbyterian Church
8. Language (other than English) for print publication
9. Emailed Elders' Institute update
11. Cost of Print Publications while supplies last (\$)
14. Elders' Institute street
15. 102-year-old elder profiled in spring newsletter
16. IT support staff
18. Location of the Elders' Institute
19. What to do if you want to take an online course or attend PAW
22. Author of newest e-source
24. Number of newsletter issues mailed out per year
25. Cost of Elders' Tool Box resources
26. On-the-road course
27. Presbyterian camp in Cape Breton
32. Annual, national workshops for elders

Calvin's influence is still felt by elders today.

Since churches in the reformed tradition are celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of the great reformer John Calvin this year, we asked **Richard Topping**, St. Andrew's Hall's new Professor of Studies in the Reformed Tradition, to describe a current practice of ruling elders that reflects Calvin's vision for the church. He discusses below the relationship between spiritual gifts and the ordination of ruling elders.



“Am I able or qualified to serve?”

Such questions of adequacy almost always emerge when congregations verge on electing ruling elders.

One of the helpful features in Calvin's work on eldership is that he not only discusses eldership as an office for church oversight (1 Timothy 5:17), but he also discusses the gifts of the Spirit appropriate to the one who would serve in that office. Calvin features two texts, which are both about the diversity of abilities that the Holy Spirit gives for the overall health and vitality of church life. Calvin believed that in 1 Corinthians 12:8 and Romans 12:8 the Apostle Paul identified the gift that would equip a Christian to serve as an elder of the church—the gift of ruling, governing, or in some versions, administration. Calvin helps us to appreciate that the question of adequacy to serve as ruling elder of the church is answered by the gifts that God gives to certain individuals in the church.

When we ordain elders, we're not endowing any gift on them. Ordination is the church's public recognition of the gifts God has already given and so the recognition of suitability to serve. Gifts can be refined and nourished through education for edifying eldership, but this training presupposes that God has already given the basic inclination and ability to serve the church of Christ in this capacity.

Calvin teaches us to remember that the One who calls people to serve also equips people to perform such service. Living Faith echoes this theological sentiment when it speaks of the church: “As his body on earth we all have gifts to use”—some in the office of ruling elder.

Leslie Walker, one of the ministers at Grace Presbyterian Church, Calgary, describes how her session lives out Calvin's vision today: *The gifts of new elders were clearly evident prior to their ordination to the eldership. Since ordination, they have used their gifts creatively for the building up of the church and as a witness to the world of the good news of the gospel. One is a professor whose life passion is the sociology of compassion. The story of one of his students, a Sudanese refugee, has led Grace to develop a partnership with The Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan Association. Child refugees who are now adults living in Canada have a church home, a place to worship, a meeting place and new Christian friends who assist in the challenges and joys of integrating into a new country with their families. Another has many years of administrative experience and is an excellent communicator. She has helped the congregation to communicate through media and other avenues what Grace Church is doing, why and how it makes a difference in the world. Still another has a deep spirituality and a gentle pastoral heart. He is currently in his final year of studies at seminary. Finally, one new elder has much clarity and insight into the functioning and purpose of session and session committees. He has provided invaluable wisdom and common sense as the session of Grace considers a new committee structure.*

Keeping in Touch

Join the Elders' Institute new **Facebook** group to chat with elders from across Canada, ask questions, share insights and keep up to date with Elders' Institute news. Visit <http://www.facebook.com/groups> and look for the group Elders' Institute, St. Andrew's Hall. Then the fun begins!



Elders' Corner

The Elders' Corner is a regular feature of our newsletter that gives you, the ruling elders across Canada, an opportunity to field questions you've come across as an elder. Mail your questions to the Elders' Institute, St. Andrew's Hall, 6040 Iona Drive, Vancouver, BC V6T 2E8, email them to elders@standrews.edu or post them on the Elders' Institute Facebook discussion board marked "Elders' Corner."

An elder asks: *Does our church allow the ordination of newly elected elders in absentia?*

Don Muir, a clerk of the General Assembly, gave the following response:

Ordination is a sacred and deeply significant act that is the culmination of prayerful discernment by the session, congregation and the elder candidate. The service of ordination ought, therefore, to be a wonderful celebration for a congregation and an important moment in the life of the new elder. The service itself includes a public declaration of the elder's "faith in God and integrity of purpose" (Book of Forms 449) before God and the congregation as well as the "laying on of hands" when the ordination prayer is offered. All this points to the logical conclusion that elders to be ordained must be present at the ordination service.

The General Assembly has not passed legislation that allows for the ordination of elders in absentia.



Pre-Assembly Workshops (PAW) 2010

100,000 Welcomes!

CIAD mite fàilte

Join with other elders and lay leaders of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for a day of learning with experienced facilitators.



Union Presbyterian Church

Mira Ferry aka Albert Bridge
Cape Breton, Nova Scotia
Saturday, June 5, 2010



Camp MacLeod

Uplifting Presbyterian Worship

- Worship led by Margaret MacLeod
- Featuring members of Cape Breton Lay Worship Team
- Reflections by Glen Davis and Lara Scholey
- Special music by John and Patti Fukala

Workshops Options

> CIAD mite fàilte:

Extending Hospitality to Strangers
Cameron Brett on leadership skills for hospitality ministry

> Spiritual Mentoring Tools for Hospitality Ministry

Roberta Clare on spiritual mentoring and pastoral care tools for hospitality ministry

> Hospitality: A Christian Welcome

Stephen Farris on Matthew 25 as a guide for hospitality ministry

Seat cushions will be provided by the Atlantic Mission Society. Donations to AMS will be gratefully received.

For more information and to register, visit our website: www.eldersinstitute.ca.

Pastoral Visiting for the Presbyterian Elder

Basic pastoral care is good pastoral care. Discover new skills and renew your commitment to the art of pastoral care in congregations.

This course will provide an introduction for Presbyterian ruling elders and lay leaders who meet, visit and support all "ages and stages" of the church family.

Start Date: Monday, February 8, 2010

End Date: Friday, March 19, 2010

For more information and registration, visit our website: www.eldersinstitute.ca.



Instructor:
Jean Morris

