

REV. SHAUN E. FRYDAY**Nominating Body**

Montreal Presbytery (Montreal & Ottawa Conference)

Biographical Sketch

Shaun believes that The United Church of Canada is uniquely positioned to have a clear, unequivocal and distinctive voice on religious, justice, moral, and ethical issues within Canadian society and around the world. He believes the church has a strong and vibrant future. His forthright manner calls us to activism, and his passion and dedication propels us into action. Out of his extensive and diverse experience, he feels called to offer leadership as Moderator to The United Church of Canada.

Steeped in the traditions and ethos of the United Church from his childhood in St. Margaret's Bay in Nova Scotia, through his education at Mount Allison University and the Atlantic School of Theology, and throughout over 30 years of service across the country, Shaun's spiritual home has always been in The United Church of Canada. He has served congregations in Roblin, Manitoba; Burlington, Ontario; Montreal, Quebec; and, for the past 15 years, Beaconsfield, Quebec. He brings to pastoral ministry particular skills in church leadership, conflict management, mediation, congregational renewal, and mission strategies, including congregational visioning of a new way forward in the 21st century with the EDGE Network. He has experience at all levels of the church, having chaired Montreal Presbytery three times and having served on a number of committees at presbytery, Conference and General Council. Shaun's excellence in pastoral ministry has most recently been recognized by the Atlantic School of Theology, when he was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2014 convocation ceremonies.

With a deep understanding of the spirituality, history, traditions, and polity of the United Church, Shaun has encouraged and challenged the church to intentionally engage with current issues. Shaun is particularly sensitive to minority issues, egalitarian concerns, justice, dignity, and human rights. As part of his conviction that congregations embody their core values in ministry, he was instrumental in Beaconsfield United's unique formation of Montreal's West Island LGBTQ Youth Centre and expansion of its ministry to LGBTQ adults and the West Island Rainbow Seniors. Shaun's work with the LGBTQ community includes addressing homophobia and helping move others into healthier relationships. He has spoken at two international conferences on LGBTQ rights. For these and other initiatives, The United Theological College at their 2013 convocation conferred upon him the Craig Chaplin Award.

Shaun has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to environmental and justice issues. He has been a voice calling for regulation of Canadian mining practices abroad, and in 2012 led the Beaconsfield Initiative to the Philippines, which resulted in the presbytery, Conference, and General Council 41 passing motions for action. In his role as an advocate, he names human rights violations occurring in the Philippines and actively engages parliamentary committees and members. His particular interest in human rights advocacy in the Philippines has involved

travelling there on four separate occasions to meet with church leaders and address government officials. In May 2010, he served there as an international election observer.

Shaun does these things with compassion, hope, and humour. He is undaunted by the demands before the church and is able to speak to them faithfully and thoughtfully.

For more information please visit Beaconsfieldunitedchurch.com.

Statement

A pickle jar full of water, hastily filled at a borrowed Anglican church hall (our church having no plumbing of any sort) was my official launch into The United Church of Canada. The little country church had been put up by the Methodists in the previous century and still had the communion rail that ran out of the table on either side and across the front of the church. Four of us gathered around what could be described as a candy dish on the table as the minister, Mr. Miller, poured the water from the pickle jar into the dish. We didn't stand on formality. He was dressed in a pink clerical shirt with black buttons, which was enormously controversial at the time. We loved Mr. Miller; he was kind and funny, could outsize the congregation, and looked in on us regularly after our father died at a very young age, leaving my mother to fend for a brood of six children. The four of us in the church that afternoon, my two sisters closest in age, Mr. Miller, and I had arrived in haste. About 20 minutes earlier and the day before our confirmation, he discovered that we had not been baptized as infants. My dad had come from several centuries of dissenters and saw no good reason to give his children over to a non-confessing mode of discipleship. He only believed in adult baptism, and we had reached the age of discretion—I was 15. When the reverend discovered the oversight during a conversation at the church supper we had been enjoying, he promptly filled the pickle jar from the kitchen tap, loaded us into his car, and took us to our church.

Without much ceremony, we knelt down and I watched the water refract in the early evening light as it went from the jar into the “font”—although that sounds like putting on the dog. The church was full of pews, not people. It was still, and there was a presence in the place. Standing up with water running down my forehead (Mr. Miller followed the injunction use your hand, use water, and use lots of it), there was an awkward silence between us as we blinked our eyes dry. I could not really detect any difference in my sisters, and no doubt them in me, as the newest disciples along the south coast of Nova Scotia. Perhaps that would come with confirmation the next morning, I thought to myself. So far it seemed to be what might be considered a “rushed job.” About 10 minutes later, we were returned to our ham and scalloped potatoes dinner that had been left waiting and cooling on the table.

Forty years have passed since that drenching and watching the baptismal water, prismatic in quality, broken and ordered, rain-bowed in hue and in hope, with promise and restoration that flowed down on me. I have long loved The United Church of Canada and have lived out of its brokenness and hope. The church has cradled and formed me; its colleges and schools have educated me; its history and witness give me courage to speak both to the church and on behalf of the church; and the church's people comfort, challenge, and encourage me.

In my heart, the vision I hold for the church is to be a place where hope and hurt meet and mingle and discover life-giving reconciliation, diversity, and wholeness. We no longer need carry the old taboos and false notions of nation-building. Our Aboriginal people, who have experienced such profound pain and harm, await our action with a full embrace of the TRC recommendations directed toward the churches. We will be joined by our global church partners, who will be listening to hear that their voices are heard and responded to with absolute solidarity. The youth of the world will lead us, and we need to follow them, be present to them as they call and clamour for a new way of being in the world. Even the climate is restless with us, demanding our attention. Those in the LGBTQ community in the country and in our global family will wonder about our authenticity in acknowledging the spiritual damage that has been caused by the church's attitudes and inaction.

We are financially endowed with billions of dollars of assets, unimagined at the time of union by the founders, that need to be reimagined for mission and ministry. Church governance structures that create difficulty in discerning power over from power with people need to be set aside. We have the capacity, opportunity, and desire to be remade into a more responsive, fearless, and faithful witness of the Creator by whom we are called.

In Corner Brook, at the 42nd General Council, the people will gather. From the tundra of the north, the cities of the south, the coastal communities of the east, the farms of the prairies, and the mountains of the west we come to be church. We are a creative people, a tenacious people, a Spirit people, and I am more than confident that we can meet the day with resourcefulness, energy, and hope.

My prayer is that we intentionally engage one another to feel and experience the richness and the abundance of our tradition. There are a myriad of creative ways the Spirit is speaking in the church, and when we come with our sacred stories let us not miss the occasion to hear them, lift them, and speak them. With open hearts, minds, bodies, and souls, let the One who gave us the promise "Behold I make all things new/Voici je fais toutes choses nouvelles," will live, transform, and move within us in our time and generation.

With a profound sense of gratitude I offer myself to the Office of Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

Faithfully,
Shaun E. Fryday

P.S.: Thanks to the Anglican Church of Canada for their pickle jar and plumbing.