

The Forming of the U.C.W. and How the Harmony Unit was Organized.

Before U.C.W. (United Church Women) was organized, St. Paul's had four women's groups. The Friendship which was the Senior Ladies. The Young Ladies, a group that helped with Social Functions. The W. A. - Women's Association - a young group of women that worked very hard to raise money by putting on bazaars, serving meals, annual fall suppers, making and selling quilts and lots of rummage sales and teas. I was in this group. W. M. S. - Women's Missionary Society - a group of women that studied the Missionaries, packed bales for overseas and made quilts for the needy.

It was recommended in May 1959, that all women's groups be united at all levels for more adequate support of the general work of the church. It took awhile to organize. This study was Canada wide - all United Churches. Some of our women were on this committee and I'm sure spent a great deal of time going to meetings figuring out the best solutions. Mrs. Les Petterson was our representative. Mrs. Emily Lyon was Moose Jaw's representative. She gave a talk about her involvement on the 20th anniversary a couple of years ago.

Finally, in January, 1962, an inaugural meeting of the St. Paul's women was held in the church. The Friendship Circle, Young Ladies, W. M. S. and W. A. united to form one group. Mrs. Babe Bannatyne was our first president and Mrs. Lillian Simpson the first Secretary of the General Executive. There were 170 women on the roll and the membership list was divided into nine units. There were 3 Afternoon Units, 4 Evening Units, 1 Business Women, and one Morning Unit. After the members were divided into Units - each Unit was given an area in the church to set up and executive and form a name for the Unit. Most Units took president's name until a suitable name was thought out.

A few years passed on. The congregation continued to grow. Sunday School facilities in church basement weren't adequate. Part of the school moved over to the Legion Hall. Two services (9:30 and 11:00 a.m.) were necessary to accommodate all the people. Plans began for a new Christian Education Building and Nov. 3rd, 1963, the new Centre became a reality. Also this same year, a new manse was built. The U.C.W. always worked very hard. The new building program needed lots of money and help, and the women were always ready to do their part.

Florence Johnson and Adella Wellock were the convenors for all suppers and banquets for a number of years. They were very busy. Adella grew tired and stepped down. I believe they looked after getting their own help as well as asking people to bake cakes and make casseroles.

1963 the Paulettes Unit formed. This was a group of younger women with small families.

As time went on, two Units folded - the morning group and one afternoon group. Also, members dropped out and for what reason I do not know except for myself. I was in the Citizenship and SocialAction Unit and liked the afternoon Unit but I decided to go to work in an office up town. My family were older and I felt the urge to go back to work. I had intended joining another Unit but hadn't decided which one.

Christmas meeting, Dec. 3, 1967, I was asked to play the piano for the program. This was the reason I was there but there were a lot that weren't there because they weren't in a Unit. The president, Lil Remko, read a list of names of those people she considered very active people and felt something should be done about it. This bothered me. I knew most of these people and knew how active they had been in the ladies groups. Since I wasn't in a Unit either, I decided to get in touch with these people which I did first part of January, 1968. Everyone was anxious to get into a Unit. A meeting was called the evening of January 15. An executive was formed. I was the lucky one - to be president - Kathy Jennings was secretary. I can't remember who filled the other offices. When asked what type of a Unit we wanted to be the members wanted to study the Adult Study Pac, to visit shut ins, make layettes for needy babies, pack bales, knit and make quilts for Live Love projects. Made the quilt and sold it - then sending the money to help missionary work.

Read - report - April 1970

Our first year was named Muma Unit, second Kennedy Unit and then we decided to give ourselves a permanent name. Anne Kostiuk came up with Harmony Unit and that's exactly what we've been - a Harmony Unit and I'm sure we'll continue to be just that.

Written by Thelma Muma