

April 2009



Daring Discipleship

A HamPack mailing from Lorna MacQueen,
Minister—Faith Formation for Discipleship: 905-659-3343, x223



resources, workshops, and opportunities

Leaning into the wind

In the town of Dominion Nova Scotia, where the salt wind blows powerfully off the sea, only the Balm of Gilead flourishes. The Balm of Gilead is a tree which some folks might consider unattractive but in these circumstances is loved as beautiful.

I suppose the tree is well named, because it is a balm to the heart for those who long for trees where most trees can not survive. Those hearty evergreens that do manage to live are stunted and stand no taller than the woman walking her dog among them. But the Balm of Gilead stands tall - up to 100 feet. It leans into the wind and thrives where others perish.

I live in Dundas now, where we don't need any tough Balm of Gilead. Instead we have an abundance of gorgeous varieties thriving in our landscape.

But the winds of economic hardship that have battered other parts of our country and our world for so long, have now come to this part of the world as well. They blow upon us with a power that frightens and astonishes us. They are laden with the scent of desperation and bring words of false assurance.

The Balm of Gilead demonstrates a kind of toughness,

and a rootedness that is extraordinary. It lines the sides of the streets giving refuge to birds and sheltering houses. I have never seen a Balm of Gilead fall to the wind.

How will we stand? In these cold economic winds, how will we stand?

We will stand by planting our roots deep. We will root ourselves in our faith and in the practices of our faith that cannot be sacrificed to our fear. The love, hope, and justice of God will be both the ground in which we root ourselves, and the fruit we share with the world.

And the tangle of my roots will intertwine with your roots beneath the soil. And we will stand in community.

We will not stand in isolation. The comfortable will not retreat behind strong walls, and those at risk will not face the future alone.. Instead... we will stand in community. Where one tree alone will fall, many trees can stand.

We will not live in denial. We will acknowledge the force of the wind, and lean in. We will stand—leaning into the wind.

Resources:



The Green Church Project (GCP) is a ministry of the United Church of Canada which aims to empower congregations and ministry sites in adopting environmentally aware practices in their community operations as well as promoting a healing relationship with the natural world. Inspired by the New Creed of our denomination which reminds us to “live with respect in Creation,” we are searching for new and more just ways of being the church in light of the ecological crisis that is faced by our planet. See: <http://www.greenchurchproject.org/green/>



Need funding for Youth Ministry? Check out... The Youth and Young Adult Vision Fund: ‘to support innovative, creative, and new congregational youth and young adult ministry in The United Church of Canada.’ Application deadline this spring is May 28th. See General Council website for more information (www.united-church.ca) or contact Rick Garland Program Coordinator, Youth and Young Adults CECM Unit Toll-free: 1-800-268-3781 ext. 4027

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Resources Cont'd:

Looking for something different and engaging? You might want to give a look at Geez magazine (on shelf at Grand River) Its claim:

"Because it's time we untangle the narrative of faith . . . let's do it with holy mischief rather than ideological firepower. . . We've set up camp in the outback of the spiritual commons. A bustling spot for the over-churched, out-churched, un-churched and maybe even the un-churchable. A location just beyond boring bitterness. A place for wannabe contemplatives, front-line world-changers and restless cranks.

Events:

Darling Hope for Gender Justice Lunch and Learn Event on Friday May 22, 2009 at The Hamilton Conference Annual Meeting.

Worship Matters 2009 is in Ottawa this year, June 18-20! A National Symposium on Preaching, Music and Worship Leadership this has been an excellent event through the years. Keynote speakers this year are Dr. Miriam Therese Winter, The Rev. Joan Wyatt and R. Anna Carter Florence.

Programs:

Youth and Young Adult Ministry Training (Y2MT) Diploma program

In depth training in Pastoral care, worship, ethics, spiritual practices, ministry theories, biblical studies with a supervised practicum. In conjunction with denominational standards of employment, completion of this program offers specialization for lay or professional youth and young adult ministry. Deadline for applications is the end of May see- www.anwconf.com and link to Youth/Young Adult ministry

A place where the moon shines quiet, instinct runs mythic and belief rides a bike (or at least sits on the couch entertaining the possibility)." <http://www.geezmagazine.org/issue12/>

EXPLORING YOUR FUTURE: A Youth Bible Study with Jean Vanler

This 8 session Bible Study Kit is intended for young people ages 14-17 For further information on this resource visit www.larche.ca/en/education or phone toll free 1-800-853-1412.

The Church in the 21st Century -

Ken Callahan. June 3-4/09 The Best Western Stoneridge Inn, London Ontario. A London Conference Event. (519-672-1930 or Donna Bowman-Woodall at 519-863-3637) Dr. Callahan is a church consultant, ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and a professor at Emory University. His expertise includes theology of mission, leadership, administration, giving and finance.

Leadership Development Module (LDM)

The LDM is a popular two-week intensive course that brings social justice, pastoral care, education and theology to life in an interactive and practical way. Winnipeg from **June 15-27, 2009** and Vancouver Island (Cowichan Station) from August 10-22, 2009. more info: 1-204-783-4490 or info@ccsonline.ca.

The Centre for Clergy Care and Congregational Health Startling Well program - June 15th-18th, Em-

Sunday School Curriculum Pack

A package of sample Sunday School curricula will soon be available for loan from the Conference Office. It may be borrowed by any Hamilton Conference Pastoral Charge. It will carry samples of currently used Curricula and will be an opportunity for congregations to have a hands-on look at materials before deciding which curriculum best meets their needs. Please call Barbara Hampson at 905-659-3343, x 226 for more information or to borrow the package.

National Camping Sunday, April 26, 2009:

The worship service and activities on this Sunday are designed to increase awareness of camping ministries. Great resources found on the United Church webpage - <http://www.united-church.ca/planning/seasons/camping>

Youth Forum 2009: Don't forget the deadline for Youth Forum Applications is **Monday, April 27, 2009**. Forms are available on the Conference Web site: www.hamconf.org/youthforum.html

manuel College. This is an opportunity for clergy who have been ordained or commissioned within the last three years: 416-978-7799

BUILDING SKILLS IN TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

for interim and other transitional ministries. Applicants must be recommended by their Conference Personnel Minister or Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee Chair. Phase 1: October 25-30, 2009 at Queenswood Retreat Centre Victoria, BC