

February, 2009



Daring Discipleship

A HamPack mailing from Lorna MacQueen,
Minister—Faith Formation for Discipleship

resources, workshops, and opportunities



Grace to you, and peace...

Life is full of change and newness, sometimes sought and sometimes taking us by surprise. We may find ourselves in very unanticipated places, led by the Spirit to new challenges, learning and ministry.

Having only recently celebrated twenty-five years since ordination to pastoral ministry, I am beginning now a new journey in ministry in the context of Hamilton Conference Office as your minister of Faith Formation for Discipleship.

I would like to thank all those of you who have reached out to welcome me and offer words of encouragement and support. I look forward to our journey together, as we seek ways to live discipleship.

Who is this Jesus we follow?... And... what does it mean to be a disciple? The scriptures themselves ask these questions and the Christian life of faith is a journey of discovery

concerned with these questions. Easy answers often do not serve us well. Discernment, struggle and honest willingness to walk in the ambiguities of our faith lead us to a rich adventure in discipleship.

I understand the work as Minister for Discipleship as an opportunity to support leaders in sustaining and nurturing their own spiritual lives and those of their communities. It is my task to help also with the emergence of new leaders in our churches and conference. Together we will foster faith and discipleship through programs and the sharing of information and resources. We will also develop and encourage networks and working groups that will undertake ministries offering experiential and education opportunities for people of all ages within the bounds of Hamilton Conference. Thank you for allowing me to participate in this ministry with you.

LENTEN RESOURCES

Check out the Avel Website for resources for Lent, including:

“Glimpses of the Spirit – Lent Compilations”: Four programs deal with Reconciliation, hope, Eco-Theology” and HIV/AIDS” through reflections from people of faith.

“Lentscape” (7 sessions): The events of Lent and woven with an issue considered implicit in the story and addressed by the host and five panelists.

“Criss-Cross Theology”: A 2004 Spirit connection Lenten Study interviewing Christians from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Canada’s First Nations sharing personal story and theology.

“Experiencing Jesus”: **“Experiencing the Bible Again for the First Time”;**

“Experiencing Ecological Christianity”: Three new adult curriculum kits based on books by Marcus Borg and Bruce Sanguin.

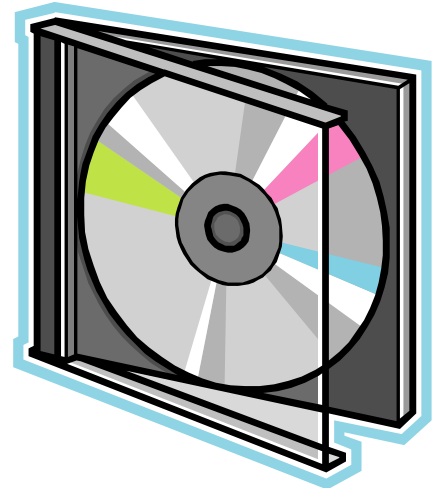
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Other resources for Lent

In Books - *The Last Week*: by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan (Harper-Collins 2006) is a book adaptable for Lenten Study with an interesting perspective of Jesus' final days in Jerusalem.

In DVD/Video - "The Visual Bible": The Gospel of Matthew" with director Regardt Van den Bergh is a portrayal of gospel of Matthew. Using only the scriptural dialogue and narrative from the NIV, the

creators have interpreted the scripture in a way that can bring new reading to the scriptures. Chapter and verse are referenced in the bottom of the screen. Jesus is portrayed as an earthy, humorous, affectionate and passionate man and it makes an interesting Lenten walk through Holy Week to walk the scriptures with him through the video interpretation.



With Children

The more traditional Lenten Wreath (a crown of thorns and candles extinguished through Lent) has been out of fashion for a number of years, but children are not unaware of the darkness in the world. In these days of economic and ecological strife, ongoing wars and violence, our older children, some of whom are also experiencing violence in school, are not served by our

denial of the darkness present in the world. The admission of the power of darkness and encroaching darkness as the candles are extinguished, and the lighting of the Easter Candle, allows children to admit to the darkness of this world, while celebrating the light that was not and cannot be extinguished in our world and in their lives.

And while on the subject of DVDs... some of you may need to be reminded that there are resources available for churches who desire to update your technological capabilities... Check it out: Technology Support Grant for Pastoral Charges: <http://www.united-church.ca/files/forms/ca5.pdf>

Beyond Lent

Five Oaks continues to offer quality programming. Visit their website at www.fiveoaks.on.ca or call them at 519-442-3212 and find more information on a variety of excellent programs for March including a number of Confirmation Weekends, programs to connect our Spiritual Practice with social justice, a March Break Day Camp, and "Christianity and Mysticism" March 20-22 with Matthew Fox.

The Distinguished Speaker Series at Westdale United Church in March is noteworthy- offering sessions with Yvonne Stewart, Rev. Lee Claus, Matthew Fox, Rev. Keith Reynolds and Right Rev. David Guiliano.

Check out their website for more information.

Church School Teachers: Fresh Approaches to Summer Programming is April 29th at Five Oaks with great ideas for

VBS and other summer programming.

Future Quest Youth Program: A Summer Experience for Youth ages 14-17 to explore Community, Theology, and Leadership is offered August 8-22, 2009 through Queen's Theological College. Check it out: http://www.queensu.ca/theology/F_Quest/index.shtml

Please NOTE... it is never too early to begin to talk to your youth about Youth Forum