

January 12th, 2009
Kootenay Presbytery NewsLetter

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Deadline for submissions to next edition: February 10th.

Website: www.bc.united-church.ca/kootenay/

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Please share this information with your presbyters who do not have access to the internet and with your congregation as you see fit.

Please note the News from the United Church section below. Our Moderator is reading a letter this coming Sunday, January 17th, and there are instructions about how we can read the letter in our churches. Please also note the information about Remit #3.

1. Epiphany Greetings from Moderator Mardi Tindal

I trust that like me you have been "overwhelmed with joy" during the season of Advent and Christmas. My heart was stirred by stories of people gathered in inspiring worship and work, including congregations ringing bells for climate justice from coast to coast to coast on December 13. Here are just a few comments I received on my blog:

My 7 year old daughter and I rang jingle bells at a downtown intersection in London on Sunday-in response to the suggestion from our minister.... I felt quite alone there on the curb, but she was quite comfortable. You see, I was raised to not make a fuss-she is being raised to raise a fuss. (This message was sent to me from a United Church mother in London.)

A small, determined bunch of people carried signs and a banner and rang church bells and hand bells down Newmarket's Main Street on Sunday afternoon as our act of solidarity.... No press, no crowds. A few passing motorists honked in response to our signs-very gratifying. We thought of how foolish we must look on a wet, dreary Sunday afternoon, and the size of the challenge facing those who know and care, and re-committed ourselves to action. (From Robin Wardlaw in Newmarket.)

And so we arrive at Epiphany, the manifestation of the Divine, when the wise ones were overwhelmed with joy under Bethlehem's bright star. Then

they were "warned in a dream not to return to Herod, [so] they left for their own country by another road" (Matthew 2:12). We too have been overwhelmed with the joy of the Christ child, and we cannot return to Herod. We must leave for God's own country-by another road.

Many accounts of this century's first decade have noted increasing levels of fear, anxiety, and, as Robert Sibley recently wrote in the *Ottawa Citizen*, "moral panic." Sibley suggests, in his December 26 column, that as citizens we have become anxious and uncertain to the point that panic is overtaking our moral courage.

Some of you have expressed surprise at the strong note of hope within my song of lament about the disappointing results of the climate change talks in Copenhagen. Yet our choice is clear: to return to a familiar way of fear, anxiety, and lack of imaginative faith-or to understand that Spirit calls us to leave by another road for a country marked by the hope with which Christ has blessed us, a hope that enables us to participate in God's abundant healing of soul, community, and creation.

A choice, in short, between moral panic and moral courage.

In concert with you and others of our extraordinary community in The United Church of Canada, I intend to leave by another road, to nourish imaginative faith and courageous action with you, by God's grace. Our church is well known for moral courage, and I know that we will travel this road together.

What will it mean for you to bring the Christ child's message of joyful freedom and moral courage into this year? How will you live the Christian story of life over death, hope over fear, abundance over scarcity? How will you travel by another road to God's realm of peace, justice, and the integrity of creation?

For my part, as you know, I view the ecological crisis represented by climate and ocean change as the greatest moral challenge of our age. The time has come, I believe, for all of us in the United Church, with other faith communities, to demonstrate transformative leadership on this issue. And in the next few weeks, I will be inviting your participation in this leadership. Watch for suggestions and materials about wholeness and healing of soul, community, and creation.

But for now, Christ is born! We are overwhelmed with joy. We cannot return to business as usual. I look forward to hearing your stories.

Perhaps you'd like to join me in conversation on my regular blog, found through www.united-church.ca/moderator.

We are overwhelmed by joy-and will travel together by another road.
Epiphany Blessings, Moderator Mardi Tindal.

2. What's happening in our Pastoral Charges: Our article this month features **Nelson United Church** and it is written by Leah Gray, Peter Busby, Alie Jonker, Christine Dudley and David Boyd. Next month is Creston.

After celebrating 100 years of worship and Christian life in the current church building, Nelson United Church is building for the future with hope and optimism. The corner stone for Trinity Methodist Church was laid in 1908 and the church was dedicated to the glory of God in March of 1909. On our centennial weekend in March, we had tours of the church building all day Saturday during which people looked at the wonderful and comprehensive time-line we had around our church hall, enjoyed a catered dinner and remembrances on Saturday night, worshipped Sunday morning with our Presbytery Chair, Hilary Bitten presiding, and re-covenanted Sunday evening with Hilde Seal, Conference President, presiding. Guests and members alike enjoyed a wonderful weekend. Our centennial celebrations were bookended by an organ recital in the fall of 2008 and the re-dedication of our church bell, which hadn't been used since the fire of 1915.

Like many other congregations in the United Church, we have been discerning God's call to us as we live in a post-modern age. What does it mean to proclaim the gospel to a new generation of un-churched people? What does it mean to be a post-modern Christian? Our Conference Minister, George Meier, led a fruitful Council retreat at the end of November and has left our Church Council with some further discernment work and purpose-statement clarification.

This past year we have celebrated a renewed Sunday School, two new contemplative prayer groups, our continued Taizé and alternative worship experiences, continuing education opportunities, family fun nights, outreach projects, and times for community building. Our Pastoral Care Committee shares in ministry with its visiting program and by coordinating a new pictorial directory.

As we look ahead to 2010, we are exploring the possibility of sponsoring a Palestinian refugee family, partnering with other community groups in Nelson, creating a new purpose statement, and looking at youth group leadership.

3. Ministry Team Reports.

Please be sure to send me any information you'd like to disseminate to the presbytery.

4. Naramata Centre News

Program Team Changes At Naramata Centre!

As many of you know, it is a time of change for the Program Team at Naramata Centre. We are preparing to say good-bye to Julie Gerhardt (Healing Pathway Director) in February and Chris Burns (Program Director) in June of 2010.

At the same time we are preparing to welcome back from leave **Allison Rennie**. After more than ten years of service as full time Program Director at the Centre, Allison will move to working half-time. She will continue to offer her gifts and skills in the program life of the Centre while also allowing her time for other life and work interests.

Cindy Davenport who starts in June 2009 as an interim Program Director with a term to end in May 2010 will now stay for an additional year until May 2011.

We are grateful for **Barb McFadyen-Smuin** who will continue in her half-time *Program Assistant* role.

Please note that we expect to add one more full-time Program Director to the Program Team - look for an announcement in the coming weeks.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of the following people who will bring their gifts to the Program Team in 2010 and beyond:

- **Mary-Ann Reid**, the new *Program Director - Healing Pathway* (part-time)

- **Lois Huey-Heck**, the new *Program Director - Spiritual Nurture and Summer Adult* (part-time)

2010 Program.

The 2010 calendar of offerings is ready, so please check out the Centre's website: www.naramatacentre.net/ and check out the many wonderful programs available to us.

5. United Church News (Get more details at the United Church website: www.united-church.ca.)

1. Copenhagen Climate Change Talks: Moderator Mardi Tindal returned from Copenhagen last month, where she participated with other

leaders in the World Council of Churches in the events of the climate change conference. You can find a number of short videos about our involvement at COP15 on the church's YouTube channel:

www.youtube.ca/unitedchurchofcanada

Moderator, Mardi Tindal joined with other leaders of churches and international church organizations in sending a message to climate change negotiators in Copenhagen, imploring them to "not be afraid."

The letter, which was signed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the incoming and outgoing general secretaries of the World Council of Churches, as well as church leaders from Europe, North America, and the Pacific, says the negotiations are at a crucial stage and negotiators need to be steadfast to "act now."

The message also called on the negotiators to keep in mind the historical responsibility of the industrialized countries in climate justice. "At this crucial stage in the negotiations we would like to reiterate our firm conviction that there is an undeniable historical responsibility on the part of the industrialized countries for the climate change crisis that we currently face."

Commenting on the church leaders' call for initiatives to be taken by both developed and developing countries, Tindal said. "We are, as Tutu said in the city square at noon on Sunday, all members of the same family-and the whole family is feeling the effects of climate change-though some more dramatically than others."

The complete text of the church leaders' letter can be found at: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/justice-diakonia-and-responsibility-for-creation/climate-change-water/message-to-unfccc-cop-15-negotiators.html>

2. Moderator to Deliver Climate Change Message to Canadians

Toronto: On Sunday, January 17, 2010, Mardi Tindal, the Moderator of The United Church of Canada, will be issuing an open letter to all Canadians regarding the issue of climate change.

As such, she says she feels a compelling obligation to bear witness to what she describes as "one of the most urgent moral challenges in human history."

Tindal will first read her letter, "Where Is the Hope after Copenhagen," during the Sunday morning worship service at Sydenham Street United Church in Brantford, Ontario, on January 17. Sydenham Street is Tindal's home congregation, and the place she

sought comfort immediately following her return to Canada from Denmark.

"The day after I returned home from the climate change talks, I needed a place to go where I could safely cry tears of lament," says Tindal. "I needed somewhere where I would be supported as I wrestled with the bitter disappointment I felt with the result of the Copenhagen talks."

In addition, the Moderator will also be inviting former Moderators and many others to read her open letter in United Church congregations in communities from coast to coast to coast.

On Monday, January 18, 2010, Tindal will travel to Ottawa to personally deliver the letter to the Governor General, the Prime Minister, and other party leaders. The letter will also be mailed to all Parliamentarians.

Tindal will be accompanied in Ottawa by the Hon. David MacDonald. MacDonald is a United Church minister and a former Member of Parliament who chaired the House of Commons Committee on the Environment from 1989 to 1993. He also travelled to Copenhagen as part of the World Council of Churches delegation.

The timing for the release of the Moderator's letter was chosen for two reasons. First, January 18 is the one-month anniversary of the conclusion of the Copenhagen talks, and secondly, it is also Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in the United States.

Tindal explains that King served as a primary source of inspiration for her when she was writing this letter, which is addressed not only to the people of the United Church, but to all Canadians. In particular, King's 1963 letter from a Birmingham jail galvanized Tindal's sense of purpose when she returned to Canada from Copenhagen.

The Moderator says her motivation for writing the letter also arises from her long-standing involvement in addressing environmental issues from the perspective of faith. This initiative is also in keeping with the commitment Tindal made when she was elected Moderator in August 2009 to focus much of her time and energy on matters related to the care of creation.

The text of Tindal's letter will be posted on The United Church of Canada's website (www.united-church.ca) on Sunday, January 17, 2010.

The Moderator's letter from Copenhagen is approximately 1400 words in length. The text is embargoed until Sunday, January 17,

2010. This means that the content of the letter cannot be used or shared until that time. You can, however, use the backgrounder that is supplied below to describe the nature of the letter.

* For those who wish to read, distribute or post the letter during worship on Sunday January 17, 2010, you can receive an embargoed copy of the letter by e-mailing your request to copenhagen@united-church.ca. The deadline for processing these requests is 12:00 noon on Friday, January 15, 2010. A copy of the letter will be e-mailed to you with the understanding that it cannot be used or shared until Sunday, January 17, 2010.

* While the public release of the Moderator's letter is timed to January 17-18, the content is not. The letter can be used at any time after January 17.

* The Moderator's letter will be posted on The United Church of Canada's website (www.united-church.ca) on Sunday, January 17, 2010. It will also be available on the website as a PDF document, with the letter printed on UCC letterhead.

* Printed copies of the letter will be mailed to all pastoral charges, community ministries, chaplaincies, presbyteries, conferences, members of the General Council Executive, and commissioners to the 40th General Council, on or after Friday, January 15, 2010.

* A video of the Moderator reading the letter at Sydenham Street United Church will be posted on YouTube as soon as possible after January 17, 2010.

3. Remit 3, Settlement and Transfer, due by April 30th, 2010

As a presbytery we will be dealing with this important remit in the near future. Please watch for details from Hilary or Tess regarding how we will take action on this remit by the deadline date.

The background to this remit, which everyone needs to read, can be found at gc40.united-church.ca/files/remit03_report.pdf and the remit itself can be found at gc40.united-church.ca/files/remit03_2009.pdf. Also, there are study questions if you'd like to look at those also, or have a study session with other presbyters: gc40.united-church.ca/files/remit03_questions.pdf.

If anyone has any difficulty opening these files, please email me and I'll send you the text files directly.

4. Help with UCC Planning for the Next Three Years:

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

If you are a member of the Executive of the General Council, if you serve on the executive of a conference or presbytery, if you are an ordered or designated lay minister in The United Church of Canada, if you are a staff member anywhere in the United Church, if you are a General Council commissioner, or if you are a member or adherent who cares about the United Church, this letter is for you.

I am filled with hope as we prepare this year to mark the 85th anniversary of our church. We are engaging in dynamic ministries, exploring new ways of being church together, and grappling courageously with contemporary issues of faith and justice. At the same time, we continue to rejoice and find community in the eternal mystery that is God. We have much to celebrate and much to look forward to as we discern and live out God's mission in the world.

In the midst of this abundance, we are also facing challenges. Membership in the United Church is declining as church participation moves out of the mainstream in our society. Our financial resources, while rich, are not keeping pace with our costs.

It is in this context that the Sub-Executive of the General Council has directed me to develop a planning document that will shape the work of the United Church from 2011 to 2013.

This document will be informed by the five themes for this triennium that were named in August by the 40th General Council:

- emerging church
- authentic relations with youth and young adults
- outreach, social justice, and care of creation
- faith formation
- becoming a whole people

It will also be guided by the *Call to Purpose* [PDF: www.united-church.ca/files/organization/governance/calltopurpose.pdf] from the 39th General Council, and priorities named by the Executive at its May 2007 meeting (see *Triennium Planning 2011–13 — Background* [PDF: www.united-church.ca/files/communications/news/generalsecretary/100104_background.pdf]).

The planning document will respect financial projections provided by the Permanent Committee on Finance that anticipate a shortfall of approximately \$6.5 million for the 2011–13 period. The Executive has also asked me to prepare a three-year revenue

generation plan, but we cannot spend the hoped-for new money before it is raised.

Specifically, what I have been asked to develop is a document setting out three distinct options for the period 2011–13, giving rationale as well as cost, program, and structural implications for each. One option would entail keeping our current configuration, with reductions to be shared broadly and equitably. The second option would involve radically reimagining the roles and relationships among the General Council Office and the courts of the church to achieve reductions and lift up work in new ways. The third option would be to make deeper cuts than are required to balance the budget, with savings and additional draws from reserves being used to fund innovative work. These options are broadly described here, and the details are not yet filled in. That work will be done over the winter, and your ideas and advice will be gratefully received.

The Executive of the General Council will consider this document at its next meeting in May 2010, and I anticipate that at that time it will choose one of the options as the basis of our work for the next three years.

I welcome your input and suggestions, and may share them in various ways and quote from them as this planning process unfolds. Some of the questions you may wish to consider are: How can the United Church best use its resources to live into the themes named by the 40th General Council? Which of these themes should be given the most prominence? How can we do our work more effectively, and in what court of the church should specific work be lodged? What stands in the way? What can we let go of? What shouldn't we let go of? What innovative ways can we be church in our time and place?

Please send your comments by **Friday, February 19, 2010**, to:

- Ann Perry
Program Coordinator
Office of the Moderator and General Secretary
The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4
Fax: 416-231-3103, Attn: Ann Perry

Thank you for your wisdom and insight as we plan prayerfully and faithfully the future directions of our church.

Blessings, Nora Sanders
General Secretary, General Council

5. Residential School Update: October 2009: Truth and Reconciliation Commission begins national process of truth telling and healing with a “Witnessing the Future” ceremony led by Governor General Michaëlle Jean; “Voicing the Past” event in Kamloops provides opportunities for truth telling and listening circles; survivors of Indian Residential Schools speak at GC 40; “Equipping Ambassadors of Reconciliation” training sessions begin; workshops on the legacy of Residential Schools hold second series in Saskatchewan; further steps taken to recover Red Deer Industrial School cemetery. You can see more information at www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/residentialschools.

6. BC Conference News

You should have received a note from Ruth Stebbing, Assistant the Executive Secretary, regarding the minutes and roll of the last General Meeting.

7. Continuing Education Opportunity:

1. The Festival of Preaching Northwest:

Sponsor: Congregational Leadership Northwest, Anthony B. Robinson, President

Location: Plymouth Church (UCC), downtown Seattle, Washington

Dates: April 19- 21, 2010

Featured Preachers: Martin Copenhaver, Lillian Daniel, Ayanna Johnson, Heidi Neumark, Kenneth Samuels, William

Website: www.festivalofpreachingnw.org

Early bird registration (before Feb. 1) \$255.

8. May the light of this Epiphany season shine in and through you to the world around us.

If you have anything you'd like to share in this newsletter, please let me know; February 10th is the deadline for the second edition of 2010. Also, if there are any mistakes in email

addresses, etc. please let me know.

Blessings to all,
David