



Lent 4

2 Corinthians
5:16-21



A New Reconciling Creation

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus (the cross) opens up a new way of knowing. Old categories, norms, priorities, and judgments become obsolete. The new community must discover a new way of being in the world and live by a new order. Living in a broken and distorted world, they receive a call to be agents of that way and agents of reconciliation.

V. Resource: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hGSqghokE>
Or http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=952HNF_FSU4

How is the church still struggling to participate fully in this new creation? Where are we challenged today to find a different way of being in the world? What does the new order look like and how can we be ambassadors for Christ and agents of reconciliation in concrete ways in this broken and distorted world? How will we turn the theological rational and discussion into courageous action toward reconciliation?

The United Church of Canada is in the midst of exciting and challenging times: changing forms of church, changing contexts for ministry, changing human and financial resources, and changing generations of members and leaders. How do we articulate and live our call to be the church in these changing times?

<http://www.united-church.ca/communications/news/general/121101>

In the midst of all the pressures and challenges of this age, how will be that new creation? How will we live out our call to be agents of reconciliation in this hurting world in concrete ways?

Images in TDD Feb/13 are available for use from-
http://www.mscperu.org/grafic/graficoslit/cuaresma_pascua/indexgraf_cuarpasc.htm

Lent 5

Isaiah 43:16-21



God WILL do a new thing

God will always do a new thing. The question is not if God is prepared to bring newness, but if the people of God will let go of the old in order to receive the new. Will they stop clinging to perceived past glory, comfort and the things that once worked but do no longer? Will they be open to perceiving the new thing God brings and will they then, choose to be a part of it?

Video resource: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddlD0QRf7Vg>

What worked in the past but no longer serves us as church? What are we having trouble letting go of? How can we help one another stop clinging in order to receive the new things God offers? How can we help one other to open to new, radical, crazy experiments and failures as we allow the Spirit access to our sacred cows?

The 41st General Council 2012 mandated the task group to examine the vision and circumstances of the church and recommend alternate models that will enable the church to sustain its faithful leadership in God's world

<http://www.united-church.ca/communications/news/general/121101>

Do we trust that God will bring rivers to refresh and sustain us in our wilderness journey?

Palm/Passion Sunday

Ps 118:1-2, 19-21

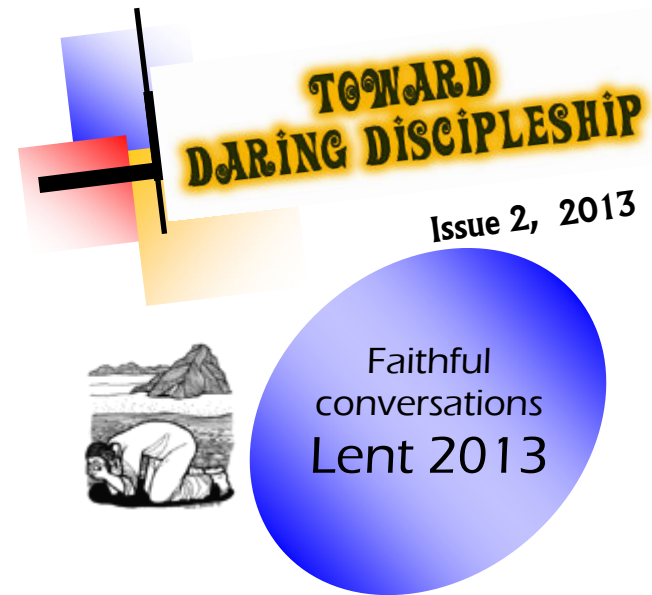


Give thanks to God for God is good,
God's faithful love lasts forever.
Let us proclaim it:

"God's faithful love lasts forever!"

Revised from Ps 118

Lent 2013



The 41st General Council in 2012, directed that a task group be established to examine the vision and circumstances of The United Church of Canada and recommend alternate models that will enable the church to sustain its faithful leadership in God's world.

The Task group has begun its work and there will be an opportunity at congregational levels and also at the 89th Hamilton Conference meeting to engage in conversations that will assist the task group in its important work.

This issue of Toward Daring Discipleship is an invitation for your congregation (and Presbytery?) to begin those important conversations during the season of Lent. In order to make it available early to those who do advanced planning it is included in the Jan. as well as the Feb. hampack.

Hint: video links are only a click away using an electronic version of the brochure



The desk of Lorna MacQueen



Lent 1
Luke 4:1-13



Who are you Jesus? And who are we?

Jesus is led by the Spirit into a wilderness retreat of prayer and discernment. Who is he? How will he engage in God's hope for the world? What will be his identity in ministry and what will his ministry look like? What will be the major temptations he will face in the difficult ministry ahead, and how can he prepare?

Video resource: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-6a25Yo2wE>
Or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntnvr5sbl04>

Who are we as Jesus Community?

We are being led by the Spirit into the wilderness in prayer and discernment to discover once again who we are.

How will we engage in God's hope for the world? What will be our identity in ministry and what will our ministry look like? What are our major temptations as communities and church and how will we respond?

The 41st General Council ... 2012, directed that the task group be established to examine the vision and circumstances of The United Church of Canada and recommend alternate models that will enable the church to sustain its faithful leadership in God's world.

The immediate impetus for our work is the pressure our church is experiencing: declining membership, diminishing resources, and changing priorities and patterns of behaviour that mean many Canadians choose not to participate regularly in a faith community. Many people express a deep spiritual hunger but do not feel nourished by the church. Our structures were designed for a church that no longer exists and sometimes impede our ability to serve faithfully. <http://www.united-church.ca/communications/news/general/121213>

How might the Spirit of God be calling this church community into wilderness examination?



Lent 2
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Do not be afraid ... I am your shield (15:1)

To Abram and Sarai, in the fear and the reality of barrenness - of no future, no hope - comes a promise of new life, future and hope. With this promise is given a call to set aside fear and wait upon God with faithfulness. Abram and Sarai struggle as they wait out their barrenness with a promise that delays in its fulfillment. Eventually it is easier to laugh at such painful hope than to plan a future on it.

Video resource: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6lpz67j8Ps> or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDz4d5uOMjA>

Do not be afraid, is often the word from God.

What are the fears that trouble us most as Christ community? What is the nature of the barrenness that threatens our future and hope? What is our struggle to keep hope in the promises that seem delayed in their fulfillment? How do we handle the temptation to laugh because hope has become too painful for us?

While the challenges we face are daunting, we see opportunity. We are called to examine the effectiveness of existing church structures and processes and explore new models that are better suited to our vision and context. During our first two meetings in November and December, we spent considerable time describing the characteristics of vital faith communities; what is being birthed or rebirthed in our church? Church structures exist to enable those communities of faith to participate effectively in God's mission in the world. We believe our work is not about restructuring "head office," but about enabling ministry and mission. Most of all, it is about hope.

<http://www.united-church.ca/communications/news/general/121213>

What expectations about how the promises of God should be fulfilled must we let go of in order to receive the fulfillment of the promises of God?



Lent 3
Luke 13:1-9

Looking for fruit

The theme of barrenness returns, but is the barrenness of a tree that bears no fruit. It seems it is not about who is a sinner, or how bad a sinner we are ... but about our common alienation from God's purposes and the mercy of God. It is about the need for communal as well as personal repentance and bearing fruit in the world. The parable contains an urgency. This barrenness must be addressed. The tree is not left to work on its fruitfulness alone, however... the gardener comes with concern and commitment to help the tree toward fruitfulness.

Video resource: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fLL85IEdZE> or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iMpmuTttow>

Why was the tree planted in the garden? Does the parable communicate the urgency of the tree's purpose? What is the fruit that our community is called to bear? What is the barrenness and what is the fruitfulness of the church in this time and place? How can we celebrate and work with the gardener so as not to waste the opportunity given us to become more fruitful participants in God's hope for the world?

"Everything is on the table," General Secretary Nora Sanders said in her introductory remarks on August 13, 2012, before the 41st General Council approved a proposal to undertake a comprehensive review of how the United Church lives faithfully in God's world.

<http://www.gc41.ca/news/task-group-review-how-church-works>

Prophets continually remind the people of the Covenant that with privilege comes responsibility.

They ask how do the Covenant people live compassion? Relationship with God is not simply a place of refuge, but a place of great trust and accountability. What might the prophetic word be to the people of the New Covenant (to us) today?