



Words from Wilmot

April, 2011

Inside this issue:

- Wednesday's Quilters 3
- Wonder Café 4
- Antique Table 5
- Be Our True Vision 6
- Anne Stewart 7

Easter Schedule

Palm Sunday Apr. 17th at 11:00 AM

Maundy Thursday April 21st with St. Paul's at St. Paul's 7:00 PM

Good Friday service April 22nd at Wilmot 11:00 AM

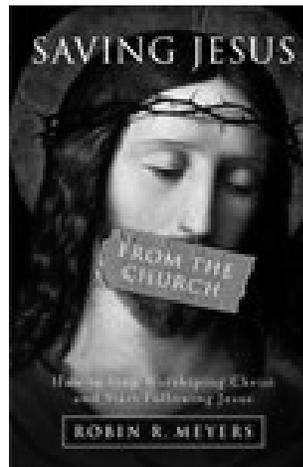
Easter Sunrise service, April 24th with St. Paul's at the riverside at 7:00 AM, followed by breakfast at Wilmot

Easter Sunday service with communion Apr. 24th at 11 AM. (No Sunday School. Nursery care only for ages 3-5. Older children are welcome to join in worship and communion with their families.)

At the annual congregational meeting, the following Vision Statement was adopted:

Wilmot United Church is an open and welcoming presence in downtown Fredericton, putting our Christian faith into action to be a light in God's world.

Wilmot Seekers Group



The Wilmot Seekers Group met together around the fireplace in the parlour for the first time on Thursday afternoon, January 13. About 12 to 15 "Seekers" are attending the gatherings that are held once a month since then. It was the Lectionary Bible Conversation Group, which has met on Sunday mornings before worship for the past fifteen years, that initiated the idea of starting a monthly discussion group based on current books which raise central questions about the Christian journey and fresh ways of thinking about what the teachings of Jesus are about for us today.

(Continued on Page 2)

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the congregation.

(Continued from Page 1)

Members of our newly formed monthly afternoon group are called “Seekers” after first century “God Seekers” (or sometimes translated as “God Fearers”) who were attracted to the Jewish faith and culture which they observed to be anchored in a God that gave great meaning to the “why” of life. Don MacDougall, the facilitator of our group, explained that Christians currently are facing a time in history when issues that the Christian church dealt with in the first, sixth and thirteenth centuries have again come to the fore. During those times drastic changes to fit the evolving social climate were made. The challenge of the Christian church today calls for fundamental changes based on accumulated knowledge, scientific discovery and information technological advances. Emphasis cannot remain on worshipping a “Christ” shaped by medieval dogmas of the early centuries, but the church needs to focus on following “The Way” by understanding Jesus’ teaching for the 21st century.

Don is a spiritual guide and founder of the Atlantic Jubilee Program for Spiritual Deepening and Spiritual Guidance. He retired from pastoral United Church ministry in 1996, but is retired in name only, for his ministry is seated in a life-long focus on

spiritual development. He generously offers his leadership skills in adult spiritual formation at Wilmot with grace and dedication, as well as to spiritual travelers in a private setting.

The Seekers group is a forum for conversation and critique of books by writers of modern theological scholarship, while the on-going weekly Lectionary Group explores the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures designated for Sunday worship. The understanding in both groups, Don says, is that there are no right or wrong comments, questions or observations. Conversation is explorative and respectful of all opinions and attentive to guidelines about how adults learn and grow, and open to all.

The book, *Saving Jesus from the Church: how to stop worshipping Christ and start following Jesus*, by Robin Meyers is the chosen title for Wilmot Seekers for the first few months of 2011. Robin Meyers writes, “The most urgent question of all goes unasked: What kind of God did Jesus reveal? That question has been submerged beneath ‘battles for the Bible’ and bitter disputes over the metaphysics of a Galilean sage.” Meyers devotes a whole chapter to “Faith as Being, Not Belief”. A January article in *The United Church Observer* by Patricia Elliott, *Into a Spiritual Wilderness*, sums up the human quest for faith from the earliest re-telling of our faith stories.

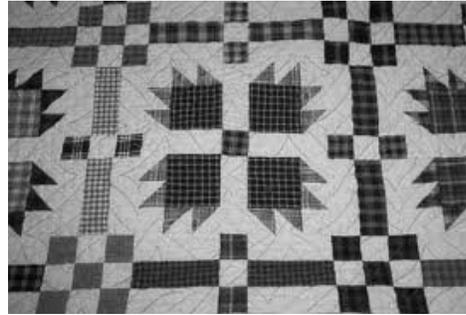
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She says, “The Bible itself dispenses a shocking amount of ink describing belief. In fact, the most hailed biblical heroes like Moses, Abraham and Job wrestle with their faith. We pose our questions but [unlike them] fail to take up the quest for answers.”

In polite casual conversation today when the question of religious affiliation comes up we often hear the statement: “I am not a religious person, but I am spiritual.” Don MacDougall suggests that self-proclaimed spiritual folk have a great hunger for something larger than themselves to give deeper meaning to their lives, but they lack a sacred story of the human quest on which to hinge their longing and belonging.

As Easter approaches we celebrate some of the most profound questions of our Christian faith. Seeking to separate myth from historical truth can lead to new understanding of what the life of the historical man, Jesus, was all about. We do not need to check our intellect at the door before singing the Hallelujah Chorus. We can work through our doubt and our grief by joining other spiritual travelers in a group where it is safe to ask the questions. Wilmot Seekers invite all to join them in the spiritual quest.

© Lucille Caseley



Wednesday's Quilters

They weave
 Their tiny stitches
 Through muted browns
 And greens
 And mustard shades
 Of scraps
 From mothers' aprons
 And some from daughters'
 Cotton dresses,
 Keeping rhythm with
 Their minds'
 Preoccupations
 Speaking only
 When their thoughts
 Can no longer be
 Contained.

© Carolyn Atkinson



Wonder Café, a social network website, is an initiative of the United Church's Emerging Spirit campaign and has taken on a life of its own, still growing and flourishing. In its own words, it is 'the home of open-minded discussion'. Intended especially to reach out to young people in the 25 to 45 age group, it includes people of all ages, from all walks of life, and from as far away as Australia. It boasts 7,000 registered users and 40,000 unique visitor 'hits' per month.

While many people prefer to 'lurk' (reading but not posting) and others only post on rare occasions, some are regulars who check in almost every day, contribute regularly, get to know each other on line, and sometimes arrange to meet in real life as well. One member invited me to visit her ranch, one joined me at a picnic at Five Oaks Training Centre, and one arranged to meet me when traveling through New Brunswick. Yes, we've become a community.

The Café door is always open. The invitation on the home page is to 'pull up a chair and join in.' Visit any one of the many rooms. There is one for parenting. People share heart warming stories about their children or the heartbreak of raising a disabled child. In the Relationships' room young adults discuss the joys

and pitfalls of dating.

In "Popular Culture" people discuss books and movies. "Church Life" deals with the pros and cons of pictorial directories, questions about maintaining a manse, or the safety issues around candles.

By far the busiest room is "Religion and Faith". People ask questions about belief in miracles, or whether the Bible should be taken literally or whether it speaks to us through metaphors. It can get lively at times.

I recently posted the following to a thread discussing the humanity and divinity of Jesus: "All my life, but especially in recent decades, I've been interested in the humanity of Jesus and how he was truly one of us - the word made flesh - fully human, and I find references to his humanity throughout the New Testament - in the first three gospels (but not much in John) and in some of the epistles. I see him sharing in the lives of those around him - laughing and dancing with joy when the occasion was right, telling stories that were sometimes amusing, sometimes puzzling, sometimes somewhat annoying, getting hungry and tired - eating and sleeping, and weeping with sorrow. I see him slipping away from the crowds to go off by himself to renew his energy and to align himself with the Holy."

(Continued on Top of Page 5)

Be Our True Vision

Be our true vision, O God who gives life.
 Show us the path to eliminate strife.
 Open our eyes to the way toward peace.
 Bless with the insight of generous grace.

Be our true vision, O God of all faith.
 Teach us the good in each culture and race.
 Humble our pride in our comfort of place.
 Stretch out our arms in a loving embrace.

Be our true vision, O God of the past.
 Many have turned to you with souls downcast.
 Strengthen our hope for a future that's new.
 When all will be in communion with you.

Be our true vision, O God beyond time.
 Only through visions we glimpse your design.
 Science and art have enriched our world view.
 Deepen our hearts' understanding of you.

Be our true vision, as Easter draws near.
 God whose redeeming love casts out all fear.
 Grant in our visions we see your true face.
 Life in its fullness and filled with your grace.

L. Caseley
 Lent 2011

Tune: SLANE 10 10 10 10
 Irish traditional melody
 Voices United # 642
"Be Thou My Vision"



Anne Stewart

You all know Anne Stewart. You've seen her painting walls and decorating the parlour. How lovely and cosy she has made the room with its fireplace and seating arrangements. Have you noticed that she had the doors and windows framed in wood? Have you noticed that she keeps the small repairs caught up and changes the decorations there and in the halls seasonally and often enough so that they won't become "stale and shabby?" Now Anne has another project. You may have wondered about the quilting going on in the parlour, the tables of fabric, the quilting frame set up. The Morning Out Quilters were approached to see if they could do something with donated fabric being stored and unused. Anne volunteered to head up "my winter project" making quilts from this fabric. These will be sold to bolster our church finances and to aid our Cuba commitment. Anne, Joan Lamrock, and Linda Gough organized the fabric into colour combinations. They were delighted to find vintage quilt tops among the donated pieces of cloth. They have set up a pleasant workshop near the window so that the Morning Out Quilters and other volunteers can make quilts and pillow cases.

Anne is grateful to the quilters of the Morning Out group. After she retired from teaching in 2000, she joined them in order to learn the craft. Why did she want so much to learn to quilt? Here is her poignant story.

☺ Nancy Bauer

MY LOVE FOR QUILTING

My mother, Dorothy Bulmer, sat at the quilt she had pieced from odds and ends of fabric she salvaged from outgrown clothing worn by the seven of us children. It was stretched and tied to a pine frame, supported in each corner by a wooden kitchen chair. Our living area had been transformed for those winter months into a wall to wall sea of color, shapes and sizes. Some of the quilt patches were roughly woven, others as fine

as silk. Until the quilt was stood to the wall each evening, we had to gingerly waltz around the frame, inhaling and holding our tummies tight.

The harvest season was over. The farmers used to claim that it would take two men to keep up with my mom in the fields. She was a hard worker! Whatever she did, she did wholeheartedly. She had the physical stamina for it. From the time we children could walk, the entire family went together, as a crew, to the fields or to the pulp woods

(Continued on Page 8)



<http://www.emergingspirit.ca/>

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WE'RE ON THE
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HAVE YOU CHECKED
LATELY?



whatever the season required of us. We were known in the community as reliable hired help for the farmers and the foresters—that is how we eked out our living.

Quilting was her winter pas-time—a passion. She could stay at home, keep the wood fires burning, and at the same time, feel contented and productive. Quilting was a comfort to her, and she liked to work alone—peaceful—when all of us were out of the house! The tea kettle whispered its readiness on the back of the wood stove. From time to time Mom planted her needle securely into all three layers of fabric and pushed away to pour tea, stoke the stove, prepare a hearty stew for the nine of us for supper, do a bit of housework, or punch down the bread for its second rising. These were her diversions—no phone, and few friends or family casually dropped by on those wintry country roadways. She quilted socially on Wednesdays with the Home League at the Salvation Army—when she could get a drive to town.

Then the hard work took its toll—the retinas in both her eyes detached. She was left with one-quarter vision in one eye.

Enough to see a bit of shadow. Between home visits from the Braille teacher—amazingly—she quilted! I was given her last quilt by my siblings. Her stitches tell her story during those months.

At the age of 47 my mom died in a car accident—along with my dad, my brother, and my brother's 6-month old baby—one survivor, the baby's mom. They had been to visit me in McAdam, during my first year of teaching. On their way home, March 5, 1967, they crashed head on with a huge Meteor automobile on a knoll on the Canterbury Road. The investigators indicated that alcohol was involved—we never heard any more.

This event utterly destroyed our family. Two children were left at home, ages 8 and 12. Devastated—we slowly began to piece our individual lives back together—some more positively than others. I wonder what I have missed out on. The emptiness is always there. As I grew stronger and time worked its magic I worked hard at my other passion—teaching—the desire eventually came back to live a full life. I raised two wonderful children, helped raise my sister and brother, while earning two degrees at UNB.

☺ Anne Stewart