

Tapestry

Fall 2007

Proclaiming and celebrating the work of the CCS community through the stories of those who are involved in the ministry of diakonia

God Moves in Mysterious Ways

by Edith Shore A58

A special kind of learning comes to us when we "see with the heart." The CCS Leadership Development Module facilitates this kind of learning. Although the LDM is an integral part of the CCS diploma curriculum, others who are interested in this type of experiential learning are also welcome.

Jeff Laforet came to the LDM because his partner, a CCS graduate, encouraged him to, and because he knew a lot about his beliefs but wanted to *feel* his religious faith. He says it was the most unique experience of his life. He connected with a group of strangers on a deeper level than many of his long-time friends. And he connected with himself, and with an experience of spirituality.

"We began to discuss 'Who is God?' We said, 'God is me and God is everyone.'

Suddenly I thought about my hearing impairment and the aid I wear. I could not be God. God is not hearing impaired. We wrote in our journals and went into groups for questions. I went for the break alone, to think. I couldn't be in God's image if I had to wear a hearing aid. We came back to the group and when others asked me about my insights, I felt so lonely that I began to sob. Others had more connection with God than I. It felt



LDM – a life changing experience!

hopeless. The CCS Program staff responded with extraordinary insight and support. They suggested a walk 'on God's time – don't rush back, but maybe do some journaling before you rejoin us.' On my walk, I went into a surplus store to buy a new pair of sandals. My sandals were old and I said to the salesperson, 'I have a crack in my sole' and began to sob again. I returned to the chapel and began journaling. It was rough.

In the end, I had some epiphanies: While I pray, I imagine that God hears with the heart; a hearing aid and ears are not necessary. When I recognized the word 'ear' in the word 'heart,' I felt spectacular. As the leaders pointed out, I had just reached my learning goal. I had *felt* my faith."

James Ravenscroft is currently one of two ministers at

Robertson-Wesley United Church in Edmonton. He came to the LDM to explore his future in ministry and to fulfill a requirement of the Church for a Christian Education credit for his transfer into ministry. Although he had been a Roman Catholic priest in a native community, he was frustrated with structures that were too rigid to include First Nations people's needs and his own. Then, as Director of Liturgy for his diocese, he was sent to a

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Centre for Christian Studies is a theological school
committed to educational, pastoral and social ministry

God Moves in Mysterious Ways...continued

program at Notre Dame University in Indiana. There he worked in an ecumenical context and got a new view of other religious traditions. James said, "I realized that my church no longer reflected me and was becoming even more conservative. I discovered that other faith traditions were okay too. They were not so different from what I felt and believed. I was very attracted to a church polity where everyone participated in decisions."

In the LDM, James wondered what he would learn. He had a full theological education and experience in ministry in a First Nations setting and at the diocesan level. "But," he says, "I learned about myself. I gave a presentation to the group and the feedback amazed me. What *they* saw was a person who dominated the procedure in the style of traditional male power. What I had always thought was that I was an oppressed person. Suddenly I saw myself as others see me. I saw myself through the lens of male power. It was an "aha" moment.

This event is, in a significant way, part of my lifelong learning. I saw that a transition had begun that would take me in a different, but clear, direction. I found an interest in learning more about how I can work with a different polity and explore the lived theology of the United Church. I see an affirmation of myself because the approaches I wanted to take in the past are now open. I can explore collaborative styles, examine issues from my past about the perks of office and the titles. Finding a denomination that reflects those concerns is huge. Now is a great moment.

CCS is accepting applications for the June 2008 LDM, contact Principal Caryn Douglas for more information. A special bursary is available for Anglicans taking the LDM as continuing education.

Edith Shore is a frequent contributor to Tapestry, and an Anglican member of the editorial committee. She lives in Sutton West, Ontario.



Guests at CCS

United Church General Council Executive Secretary, Nora Sanders, receives thank you gift from student, Marilyn Shaw (left)

Anglican Bishop Jackson Matovu and wife, Perusi, of Central Buganda, Uganda visit with CCS staff in June 2007 (below)



Flexibility and Freedom through Joint Diploma Degree Programs

by Heather Sandilands CCS04

One reason I was drawn to diaconal training was the call I felt to social ministry, especially prison chaplaincy. Research into the requirements for prison ministry suggested a Master's level degree would be helpful for long-term work. When I found that CCS had joint diploma-degree programs with St. Stephen's College (SSC) (Edmonton) and the University of Winnipeg, I sensed a clear voice saying "Go for it!". After doing the CCS diploma I am even more convinced of my call to both diaconal ministry and chaplaincy, and I am grateful that these programs are in place.



Lynda Trono enjoying Life Long Learning through the Joint Diploma Degree Program at the University of Winnipeg.

The joint programs recognize the CCS diploma as a core component of the degree. With additional study after CCS graduation, mostly involving a thesis, CCS grads can earn a Bachelor or Master degree. Since I already had a bachelor degree, I was able to enroll in the MTS (Diaconal Ministry) program at SSC. SSC had hosted the Western Field Based Program (WFBP) for Diaconal Ministry training so I felt very comfortable with its mandate as a College, its

outlook on collaborative research and its creativity in responding to the needs of its students. There is flexibility in the joint program. For example, in preparing to write this article, I spoke with **Sharilynn Upsdell** CCS 03, who entered the program without a formal undergraduate degree. The SSC model allowed her to be credited with other work completed. She says, "I appreciated being approved for the Masters program at St. Steve's without a full bachelor's degree. My degree will be based on high grades in my 10 Arts Credits, my full CCS Diploma, and my Master's thesis work."

As in most professions, academic certification is important in ministry and a diploma doesn't always communicate the extent of learning and skill it represents. Some of us would like to see the CCS program eventually recognized as a degree course, but these programs offer the benefits of a degree while enabling CCS to be free of the restrictions degree stance might impose on curriculum, methodology and staff. Sharilynn adds "If CCS had been able to offer the full degree, I would have likely made

that selection. It has taken lots of extra connecting and approval to go "joint"...but since the only way to work towards my Masters was in the joint program, that became my process."

Both SSC and the U of W are endeavouring to offer a wide variety of classes through distance education delivery, including online courses and 5 day intensives. These classes enabled me to complete course work from my home in the corners of Manitoba & Saskatchewan and I felt connected to the community despite being a 12-hour drive away. The flexibility in the CCS program, continued in the degree work, is a positive aspect and enables degree candidates to bring together resources and courses from many different schools as credit.

The Joint Diploma Degree Programs are available to all graduates. **Lynda Trono** CCS88, a student in the University of Winnipeg (UofW) program says, "When I started courses in Conflict Resolution Studies at UofW I was expecting to learn some skills and theory for dealing with conflict in the church. What I wasn't prepared for was how the course would change me! This learning opportunity has renewed my hope not only for the church but for my own ability to work through conflict and understand it from a faith perspective. Shortly after starting the courses, I was encouraged to consider taking them for credit through the Joint Diploma Degree Program and to work towards an MA in Theology. The ongoing learning has given me new life. The most exciting thing has been integrating theology and group process skills (from my diaconal training) with the Conflict Resolution theory and creating new ways to help congregations reflect on their own experience and work towards healthier ways of living out their ministry."

Lynda's CCS program was assessed for equivalency to the current model, and study that she had undertaken since graduation was included in determining what requirements remained for her to earn the degree. **Patricia Lisson** CCS78, graduated from the UofW program in 2006. Many graduates have taken advantage of the SSC program, including, **Alyson Huntly** CCS81, **Eric Tusz-King** CCS78, **Linda Ervin** CCS74 and **Cheryl Kirk** CCS79. CCS graduates interested in pursuing either of these joint programs can be in touch with Caryn Douglas, CCS Principal.

Life-long learning is a way of being, it is important to have a community with whom to learn. Sharilynn adds, "For me, being part of the Joint Diploma Degree program came not so much as a decision to go into the joint program...but rather that it seemed to be the diaconal option to work beyond the diploma and into a degree"

And so the journey of learning continues, with a community that is empowering, creative and responsive to current needs. How much more diaconal can you get?

Heather Sandilands is a Diaconal Minister currently serving in solo ministry with Grasslands Pastoral Charge in Saskatchewan.



Embracing the dance of life long learning

by Edith Shore A58

Venice Guntley McKenzie A66 is the very epitome of dedication to lifelong learning. At the beginning of my interview with her, she launched into a description of how we all need to monitor our environment and ourselves so that we can live healthy lives in both body and soul. She has also taken up formal education in many different places to shape a career that is marked by energy, music and love.



Venice, who earned 5 degrees in 21 years, has a spirit of inquiry and a zest for learning.

As a small child, Venice wanted to be a medical missionary in Africa. "If my patients don't get better," said the 12 year old, "I will pray to God to heal them." She did begin to investigate a medical education but became involved with the Deaconess House in Kingston, Jamaica and took the three-year program there. She was drawn, even in her early years, to the cheerful singing she heard in various churches in the area. She bought a guitar, read the "how-to" book and took two lessons. After that, she taught herself and in about six months she was ready. Music became a very important part of her ministry and she brought lively songs of love and faith to many groups. Venice continued her community and church activities until she left for Canada in 1965 for a year of study at the Anglican Women's Training College, a forerunner of CCS.

Back in Jamaica after that year away, she worked with "Daughters of the King" which taught women and girls leadership skills for the churches. The call of African mission fields came again after four years of work in Jamaica and Venice was off to Selly Oak College in Birmingham,

England to prepare for an overseas appointment. Her work was to be in the parish of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka, Zambia. In Zambia, Venice developed a pilot project for boys who hadn't finished primary school. They learned various trades as well as English, mathematics and health science. Her guitar and singing took her to many schools in the city where her gospel songs were enthusiastically received. At the University of Zambia, Venice did Bible study with students, worked with church choirs and was part of a series called "Songs of Life" for Zambia Television.

In 1976, Venice was back in Canada ready for an educational marathon. She was registered at York University for an honours BA and a B.Ed. In the last year of those two programs, she also began work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education for an M.Ed. At the end of five years, on a memorable weekend, she attended each of her graduation ceremonies and received all three diplomas. Marion Niven, principal of CCS at that time and a dear friend of Venice, attended them all. Not wanting to let any grass grow under her feet, Venice registered at Trinity College the following year and began studies for the M.Div. In the year following the completion of that degree, Venice was ordained and became a military chaplain in the Canadian Forces. She also registered at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, using her holidays to pursue the course one section at a time. When her D.Min. was granted in 1997, she was the only woman and the only black in the graduating class.

Retirement took Venice back to Jamaica. In June 2006, perhaps to keep her hand in with the matter of learning new things, Venice married Dr. Keith McKenzie, a pediatrician who, before retirement, was Director of the Children's Hospital in Jamaica. Other educational things? Well, there was swimming, which she took as an adult. And then there was dancing! Venice never thought she was able to dance but during her time in the military she attended dances and surprised herself by learning how to dance. At the end of each dance, she would direct her partner to a young person needing a partner. "Ask that pretty girl over there," she would say. Lucky thing that she learned to dance because her new husband is an accomplished dancer himself.

Dance on Venice!!

Edith Shore is a frequent contributor to Tapestry and an Anglican representative on the editorial committee. She lives in Sutton West, Ontario.



living a theology of justice

Moving From Hope into Action

by Laura Hunter CCS04

Blueprints and hammers, solar panels and insulation: these are a few of the tools in **Eric Tusz-King's** (CCS78) latest expression of diaconal ministry. When Eric left his position as Outreach, Stewardship and Mission Support Minister at Maritime Conference. He was leaving employment with the church after 28 years to take part in developing a worker-owned co-op that would build affordable, passive-solar homes, and retrofit existing homes for energy conservation.



Eric Tusz-King CCS78 – offering a sense of God's hope

How does such a dramatic shift happen? Well, perhaps it's not so dramatic when you consider that most of Eric's ministry, while always focussed on justice and mission, has had a practical bent to it – from work on the church's role in local community development, to work with global partners, to the economic animation project of the late 80's, and later the Aboriginal Neighbours Project, and recent work in environmental stewardship.

The Faith in Action Committee of Maritime Conference became involved in a Wind Energy project that was developing around Sackville, NB. It was a good idea, in a good place, at a good time for the church to become more active in such initiatives. As staff, Eric was very involved – bringing planning and facilitation skills, critical analysis, and a vision that many voices needed to be at the table for development discussions. His background in adult education also proved helpful as there was a steep learning curve for almost everyone involved.

This work coincided with concerns about the energy demands of church buildings directed to Eric. With literally hundreds of older and large buildings, how do we practice good stewardship? Are there ways to improve the energy efficiency of churches and halls? Attending an international conference on the magnitude of climate change helped Eric to integrate facts and theology and he felt a stirring within that something needed to be done. "I became convinced that we are reaching certain limits to what the Earth can withstand, and without dramatic change quickly we will be facing catastrophic events which we can't even conceive of. I feel there is need to offer a sense of God's hope into the sense of overwhelm that many people feel," Eric says.

For him, the best expressions of that hope are practical, concrete, and visible.

To support this emerging eco-justice ministry, Eric took courses to expand his technical knowledge and skills. He explains, "Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design" (LEED), architectural retrofitting for energy efficiency, and a solar building course were among them." This last course led Eric and his partner, Margaret, to decide that building a passive solar home for themselves would be one practical expression of hope and action.

Eric met others who wanted to be involved, including skilled carpenters and contractors and they decided to form a co-op. Eric's primary role would be to use his skills to give leadership – planning and facilitating meetings, goal-setting, maintaining purpose and vision, and interpreting the experience, learning, and rationale to the wider community.

Not quite a year after leaving his position at the Conference Office, Eric and Margaret are settling into their new passive solar home. Margaret estimates that well over 300 people have toured the house. Both educators at heart, they have become experts at giving easy-to-understand descriptions of such things as "thermal mass" and "heat sinks" and air flow systems.



A cutting edge ministry to build affordable, passive-solar homes for energy sustainability.

When asked, the one disappointment Eric named was the local Presbytery's decision not to formally recognize this ministry and he feels this is a missed opportunity for the church to see how God is calling us to live our faith in these times. But this has not stopped Eric from identifying this work as a ministry. He is clear that his experience of diaconal ministry is, and always has been, to be practical.

Remaining open to learn and be challenged to action has resulted in a cooperative coming together under a common vision where individuals are using their varied skills, perspectives and gifts for positive change.

Laura Hunter CCS04 is serving in her new position as Minister of Justice and Stewardship with Maritime Conference.



Never Too Old

by Nancy Hardy U68

*In the meantime, we embrace the present,
embodying hope, loving our enemies,
caring for the earth,
choosing life.*

("A Song of Faith," The United Church of Canada, 2006)



Turning to a doctoral program after retirement holds the promise of abundant life for Nancy Hardy.

For me, choosing life has most often been about learning and encouraging others to do the same.

In 1968, I graduated from Covenant and Emmanuel Colleges, with a diploma from one, an MRE from the other, and a burning desire to educate the world. A United Church in downtown Fredericton wasn't exactly the world, but the congregation gave me the opportunity to put my skills into practice. Some time later, a position as mission study editor at the national office stretched me even further. In that capacity, I edited, wrote, and worked to connect people of all ages with what was going on in the world. During that time I also travelled throughout Canada working with groups to motivate and educate.

The mission study work convinced me that there is much more to learning than formal studies. Those were exciting times. Former colonies were stirring and flexing their muscles toward independence. Angola, South Africa and other countries were still oppressed, and I became involved with church groups and academics in an effort to raise awareness and help change attitudes and systems. In our Church, feminist voices were heard, and we began to think about issues of inclusiveness,

language, and different ways of talking about God. I learned much, though, I must confess, I was sometimes a slow learner when it came to listening to the wisdom of folks like Shelley Finson (U64) and Gwyn Griffith!

Then came a letter from United Church House written by Ann Naylor (CCS78). I don't remember the content, but the result was that I decided to go back to school and study feminist theology. By this time, my husband, Bob Plant, and I were living in Beamsville, and I discovered that I could commute to Emmanuel College in Toronto by train. I also discovered that since I already had an MRE, two years of course work could lead to a Master of Divinity. Who knew what the future would hold? A Master's would be handy if I ever decided to do more studies.

And so I went. At some point, I decided to make the lateral transfer from Diaconal to Ordained ministry. It was a good decision: even though education continued to be important, I had come in touch with another part of myself. Ordained ministry awakened my passion for liturgy and leading worship. Being in the pulpit for the first time was a real "aha" experience that has never gone away. Even in my darkest days, leading worship has been living water for me.

In pastoral ministry there was constant opportunity for learning and deepening. It was fulfilling in all the usual ways. After that: retirement. At first, retirement was puzzling. What to do? In the process of thinking it through, I decided to move back to Toronto, a city I love and a place of significance throughout my adult life. In the move, I became reacquainted with Emmanuel College and I discovered the possibility of doing advanced degree work in liturgy. Another "aha" moment! I had been taking continuing education courses here and there, but here was an opportunity for a more structured and intentional time of study.

So, this senior citizen is going back to school – again! I have been accepted into the Th.D. program at the Toronto School of Theology and began this fall. My doctoral studies will be in liturgical theology and will focus on worship and mission – how does the way we worship motivate us to become engaged in the world? I'm excited about this challenging new opportunity.

Jesus calls us to love God with our hearts and souls and minds (Matthew 22: 37). He also promises us abundant life (John 10:10). The road to abundant life for me is one where I can serve and always learn.

Nancy, a CCS graduate, is retired from ordained ministry. She is the editor of the 2006 UCC Lenten Book, Singing a Song of Faith.



Giving Life...Shaping Justice Campaign: Nearing Initial Goal!



Thank you! With your support we are almost there!

Contributions already at work

The Endowment Fund is key in sustaining the transformative work of the CCS educational program.

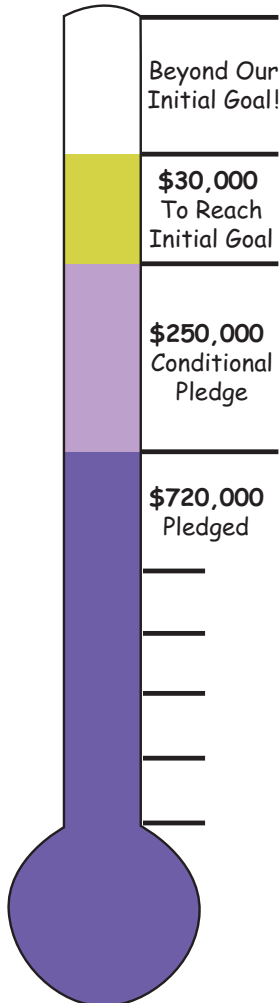


Jim Hatt, Essex, ON is a retired politician and teacher, now preparing to be a staff associate in the United Church. "I was so impressed by the quality of the Leadership Module I'm continuing on...to do ministry effectively I need this education. The program is nurturing my spirituality and enriching my personal journey."

Student, Kimiko Karpoff, Vancouver "I can trace the threads of diakonia through the stories of my grandmother, a spirited and spirit-filled woman, who trained through the school to be a deaconess. Those threads seem to be part of my very being and connect us in a deep place."



INITIAL GOAL: \$1 MILLION



How you can help us meet and surpass our initial goal

- Consider a pledge of cash or a bequest gift (contact CCS for a pledge form).
- Return your pledge form so we can celebrate your commitment with you.
- Encourage your congregation or women's group to make a contribution, many have received a letter asking for their support, if they didn't, let us know and we will send one!
- Hold the CCS community deeply in your prayers, and let us

gwen McAllister, Winnipeg "I'm learning people skills and community building skills and using them in my inner city parish in projects like the Community Garden where people are taking care of each other and are empowered to act."



Community Update

Janet (Harper) Brown U71 recently retired after 20 years in Spiritual Care at Oliver Lodge, a United Church special care home in Saskatoon, and was recognized with a Golden Heart Award for her "exceptional service to seniors." Congratulations, Janet ... **Isabel (Rourke) Buhr U63** ... works part-time at Knox United Church in Saskatoon. Her husband, Gerry, died in March of 2007. She is grateful for family support and the strength given by faith during this time ... **Kirsten Earl McCorrister** (CCS Development staff) and her partner Kevin are proud parents of their second son, Finlay ... **Greta (Avery) Cogger U62** has made a large donation of books, many of them on African countries, to the University of Winnipeg Global College Library. During a recent visit to CCS she shared that ... **June (Rothwell) Lockhart U58** has recovered considerably from meningitis a few years ago, but still suffers some repercussions ... **Brenda Curtis CCS00** is a Saskatchewan provincial NDP candidate, gearing up for an anticipated fall election ... **Dea Hawkins CCS89** still travels to Arizona in the



*Karen Lumley, Marg Scott, Julie Baker, Ross Taylor, Lynn Miller.
A wedding at Woodsworth House!*

winter with her partner, Elaine. She is looking forward to becoming a grandmother again with two babies on the way ... **June Dyer CCS87** was recently involved in hosting the World Day of Prayer meeting, a large international gathering, that was held this year near Toronto ... **Marilyn (Pearan) Evans CCS77** is going to Africa as a volunteer with the Canadian Chaplain's organization ... **Susan Tilleman CCS00** is doing very well and enjoying congregational ministry in rural Quebec but missing western grand daughters, she and ... **Sally Meyers CCS04** are in frequent contact ... **Laura Fousse CCS03** loves her work at McClure United Church in Saskatoon. She is happy working in the congregation in ways she couldn't have expected. Her partner ... **Jordan Cantwell (former CCS staff)** is enjoying her studies

for ordination at St. Andrews College. Prior to leaving overseas personnel position in Jamaica to move to congregational ministry in Winnipeg ... **Lori Stewart CCS87** had tea with **Venice Guntley McKenzie A66, Esmin Peters A61 and Jean Forbes A67** ... **Evie Gilmour WFBP** was recently hospitalized and will be entering a care home ... **Bessie (Julien) Dayfoot U44** now in her 90th year, and her husband Art are living with one of their daughters in Toronto ... **Joyce Ruddock A60** is well and active with ministry to seniors, taking communion and leading services and study in a number of nursing homes in Brandon, which is where ... **Mary (Sagret) Dove A63** and her husband have taken on managing the Diocesan Resource Centre ... **Julie Haubrich CCS89** and ... **Lesley Sutherland CCS89** are now in Outlook, SK. Lesley is teaching yoga and Julie is administrator of the community college office and its programs ... **Ken MacLeod CCS92** is living in Saskatoon, working as a counsellor with student services at the University of Saskatchewan. He and his partner, Karen, have just built a "green" solar house ... **June (Woodworth) Newsham U69** is a social worker in North Battleford, SK, where she is also very active in her church. Her husband died last February ... **Ethel (Cline) Paterson U54** and her husband, Dan, recently celebrated 50 years of marriage ... **Joan (Davies) Sandy U61** is now living in Saskatoon, looking forward to the arrival of her first grandchild ... **Jean (Windsor) Sherwood U59** from Penticton, lost her husband, an ordained United Church minister, last May ... **Kathleen Uyeda A47** wrote that she and her husband Masuo have had a stressful year. After a difficult recovery following open heart surgery, he suffered congestive heard failure, "so all my time has been getting him back to health. We are thankful he is doing better." ... **Elizabeth Lockhart Wilton's CCS87** son, Jim, died in Victoria in July. He was a well-respected AIDS activist and educator ... **June Anderson CCS 93** left food bank ministry after many years at the end of June 2007 and is concentrating on a Spiritual Care program ... **Susan Crowe Connelly** former student, has started a new business as voice teacher ... **Helen Smith McIntyre U67** is well and involved in Refugee work in Saskatoon ... **Cecila Ricker, WFBP** writes that she is retired but busier than ever working with congregations in conflict and loves the work! ... **Edna Russell A47** sends warm greetings and is now "well retired." ... **Clara Lovatt CCS87** and former "77" resident ... **Kathy Horton** were married in Kingston, ON September 22 ... **Marg Scott CCS77** and Lynn Miller were united in marriage on Aug. 4th in the upstairs meeting room at CCS. Officiating at the service ... **Karen Lumley, CCS02**. Congratulations! (See photo above).



living a theology of justice

Passages



Helen Gough

Helen Gough A60 died in Toronto on June 1, 2007 at the age of 76. She was born and grew up in Toronto, graduating from Jarvis Collegiate, the Toronto Teacher's College, the Anglican Women's Training Centre and York University. As an educator, Helen worked with aboriginal people in several contexts, including the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, where she worked with native people moving into the City in the early sixties. She was also employed by the Toronto Board of Education as a School-Community Relations worker, working extensively with immigrant parents. She was an active member of the Church of the Holy Trinity Toronto. A memorial service was held there for her on June 10.

Helen Mack

Helen Mack U50, one of the United Church's most colourful and faithful diaconal ministers died on July 1st, 2007 at the age of 89. Helen attended Moose Jaw Normal School and was a teacher in SK for six years before entering United Church Training School in 1948. Her ministry included new church development outside Sudbury and a long chaplaincy career. Helen was committed to the broader diaconal community and was active in World Diakonia. She received an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity Degree from St. Stephen's College in 1983.



Isabell Surgenor

Nora Isabell (McCauley) Surgenor U53 passed away on Sunday, May 27, at the age of 80 from complications of kidney failure. She was predeceased by her husband, Jim in 1992. Survived by her four children, she was surrounded by love when she died. Her obituary partially read that "her motto was based on the CGIT purpose and faith in God. Through her faith, her nursing career and her family, she exemplified integrity, honour, love courage and strength.

Constance Williston

The Rev. Canon **Constance Williston A46**, a graduate and staff member of AWTC, died in Mississauga on May 23, 2007 in her 90th year. A memorial service took place at St. James the Apostle Anglican Church in Guelph on May 30th, with internment of ashes at St. John's Church, Bay du Vin, NB. She is survived by a chosen son, Kenneth Mo and his wife Loretta of Australia, and a chosen daughter, Naomi and her husband, Joseph Yu of Mississauga.



Our Grads Read

We invited **Elizabeth BrainCCS93** to review a book of her choice.

The God Problem; Alternatives to Fundamentalism by Nigel Leaves

"Whom seekest thou?" This age old question is concisely addressed in a new book by Australian theologian Nigel Leaves. Like Robert Funk, founder of the Jesus Seminar, he believes that once again we are forced to debate the issues as to the existence of "God" and how we might best understand that word. Traditionalists, and especially fundamentalists, fiercely defend a belief in a supernatural God. But there are currently many alternative streams of thought which Leaves presents.

The author consolidates a wealth of thinking from all parts of the world into four main themes entitled respectively; Panentheism typified by John Spong, Non-Realism characterized in the work of Donald Cubitt and Lloyd Geering, the Spirituality Movement consisting of a great variety of spiritual practices, and Religious Naturalism represented by such as physicist Stephen Hawkins, cell biologist Ursula Goodenough and environmental theologian Anne Primavesi but vehemently opposed by atheist and evolutionary scientist Richard Dawkins. Each of the positions carries profound implications for how we are to live our religious lives.

Each section is presented concisely yet somewhat categorically in the interests of clarity. The book grew out

of a series of lectures. Certainly one cannot look to this book for the complete views of the various protagonists. Leaves is clear that he is solely dealing with their views on theism. There is little room for nuance or ambiguity. I find myself having some toes in each pool. However I appreciated the clarity of thinking, his accessible writing, his open mindedness and the immense amount of information presented with such economy and grace of style. The book is short and deceptively easy to read. Ultimately, Leaves agrees with Richard Holloway of the UK that while intellectually and rationally he might tend to agree with the non-realists (God as a human invention), he is "poignantly aware that we, myself included, whose cultural roots are in Western Christianity, find it *emotionally* difficult to throw off the vestige of belief in a being, essence or principle greater than ourselves."

This is indeed heady stuff, but as Karen Armstrong attests, it is "engaging, insightful and illuminating". I would add challenging. "Whom do *you* seek"?

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Editor's Note

No doubt you have noticed that the last two issues of Tapestry looked a bit different. Our hope was a fresher and more readable newsletter, and we have been happy to hear from some of you that you like the change. Whether it be an accolade, a response to an article or a suggestion for improvement, we are always glad to hear from our readers.

Gail Golding, Editor



Staff Update *Lynn Measner, Contract Staff, Development Administrator, during Kirsten Earl McCorrister's maternity leave*



*Are you seeking a quiet time for prayerful discernment?
Connecting justice-making to spiritual practices?
Reflection on faith and action? If so, register NOW for...*

Sturdy Hope: Spirituality and Justice-making

**A week long residential retreat
Monday, February 18 – Friday, February 22, 2008 at
Convent of the Sisters of Saint John the Divine
233 Cummer Avenue, Toronto**

The retreat will endeavour to:

- be safe and respectful
- build community
- engage a variety of spiritual practices
- be still and not frenetic or busy
- move toward depth and renewal

Leadership:

Rev. Dr. Cathy Campbell, rector of St. Matthew's Anglican Parish in the inner-city West Central region of Winnipeg. Cathy's ministry in Winnipeg and Vancouver has included work on issues of affordable housing, congregational change, food justice, sanctuary for sex trade workers, and adult education for transformation. Cathy practices Centering Prayer and regularly takes retreats in Snowmass, Colorado.

Ted Dodd joined the CCS program staff in July of 1998. Ted has worked in new church development, as United Church Conference staff for Worship, Education and Justice, with an amalgamating congregation as interim minister, in a rural four-point charge, and as a staff associate. Ted is certificated in Conflict Mediation and is currently completing a D. Min. program in the area of transformational learning.

Cost: \$550

Includes the cost of accommodation and meals. All meals at the convent are held in silence. Registration is limited. This course may be taken for credit by contacting CCS for more information.

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*We want to hear
from you.
Keep in touch!*

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at jmackinnon-smith@ccsonline.ca
or Aileen Urquhart at standrews@tbaytel.net

This program may be taken for university credit.



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