

*Mennonite Church Canada
For immediate release
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-Deborah Froese*

2009 Youth Assembly: “Living Inside Out”

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Planners of “Living Inside Out,” Mennonite Church Canada’s 2009 Youth Assembly, promise it will be about more than wearing your heart on your sleeve. It will be an opportunity for youth to figure out just how God is working in their lives – and embolden them to tell about it as well as live it.

From July 6-10, 2009 in Caronport, Sask. youth participants will gather to discover tools for “Living Inside Out.” The theme is based upon Colossians 3: 12-17 which calls God’s chosen people to cloth themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience as they live according to the Word – characteristics that shape the “inside” and inform the “outside.”



“What we put in, we pour out,” says Anna Rehan, MC Canada’s Youth Ministries Facilitator.

“Living Inside Out” will be held at Briercrest Bible College and Seminary in Caronport, Saskatchewan. It offers residence and dining facilities, a chapel, a gymnasium and lots of space for participants to interact.

To see the full ethnic and cultural diversity of MC Canada reflected at the Youth Assembly, Rehan says that Area Church Reps are making an effort to connect with

all of the churches under their respective umbrellas. “We’re making a more concerted effort to be inclusive and invitational.”

Rehan, who is also the MC Saskatchewan Area Church Youth Minister and has been involved in the planning of several Youth Assemblies, appreciates the effect these events can have on high school students. “It’s exciting to see youth from across Canada relate to each other, connecting with new people, building their friendships and strengthening their faith.”

The previous Youth Assembly “Built to Last” was held in Abbotsford in 2007 alongside the Adult Delegate Assembly. From a Starfield concert to worship services, service opportunities and a seminar about S-E-X, the Youth event nurtured approximately 430 young people from across Canada.

As a pastor’s daughter, Rebecca Letkeman from Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach, MB has attended a number of child and junior youth programs at the Adult Delegate Assembly over the

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11

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years. The Abbotsford event was her first Youth Assembly. “Conferences are really good for letting you feel that you are part of a bigger group...and [for] interacting with other people who are part of the same faith,” she said.

Connecting with others during assembly has made her realize the importance of walking a faith journey with other people rather than on her own. “We’re challenged and enriched when we’re with other people.”

Chris Fowler from Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon also attended his first Youth Assembly in 2007. He found it rewarding to worship and fellowship with so many other youth. “It made me feel more in touch with God.”

Further details about “Living Inside Out” will be released as they become available.

Sidebar: Schedule change for adult assembly

For 2009 only, the Youth Assembly will not be held in conjunction with the Adult Delegate Assembly. Pam Peters-Pries, Executive Secretary of MC Canada Support Services says it’s a matter of timing. “The Mennonite World Conference will be holding an assembly in Asunción, Paraguay at the time we would normally schedule our delegate assembly. We believe a large number of our constituents with connections to Paraguay may wish to attend the World Conference. To avoid scheduling conflicts, we felt it was prudent to schedule our Canadian delegate assembly for an earlier date.”

The 2009 Adult Assembly will share the “Living Inside Out” theme of the Youth Assembly and will be scheduled to take place in Saskatoon, Sask. on a weekend in late May or early June – a date when most youth will still be in school.

Peters-Pries says staff and other planners struggled with the decision to hold the assemblies separately but felt that this was ultimately the most appropriate way to accommodate everyone.

Children’s and junior youth activities and/or child care will be made available during the Adult Delegate Assembly. More details will be released as they become available.

Photo cutline: Planning Committee for “Living Inside Out.” Back row, from left to right: Teresa Warkentin (Youth Pastor, Wildwood, MC Sask), Wendy Harder (Youth pastor, Nutana Park, MC Sask), Nancy Winder (youth from Nutana Park, MC Sask), Carmen Braun (youth from Foothills Mennonite, MCA), Anna Rehan (MC Canada Youth Ministries Facilitator), Coby Friesen (youth from Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, MC Sask). Front row, left to right: Craig Thiessen (Youth Pastor, Peace Mennonite, MCBC), Kyle Penner (Youth Pastor, Springfield Heights Mennonite, MCM) Missing: Randall Schwartzentruber (Youth Pastor, The Gathering Church, MCEC)

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Mennonite Church Canada is made up of over 33,000 baptized members, 225 congregations and 5 area churches. For more information, contact Dan Dyck, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, (204) 888-6781, ddyck@mennonitechurch.ca.