

Mennonite Publishing Network
Faith & Life Resources Division

Purpose
Stories of Faith and Promise

Monthly themes—January 2010—May 2011

Purpose, a monthly publication of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) through the Faith & Life Resources Division, is intended to nurture adults in their life of Christian discipleship.

Monthly themes for issues of *Purpose* magazine are described in the following listing. These are intended to help writers make informed choices in their submissions for publication in *Purpose* magazine. In addition to the thematic statements Special Days of the month are noted. Such days represent dates and seasons on the church calendar. Specific days observed by Mennonite congregations in the United States and Canada are also noted.

Guidelines for writers are described in the document, “Writer Guidelines *Purpose*.” The writer guidelines provide details as to the needs of the magazine. It is available as a download from the MPN website, www.mpn.net. Writers may also contact the editorial office by email to receive electronically the Word files of the Writer Guidelines and Monthly Themes.—Editor

January 2010 “Money”

Everyone wants to live a productive, meaningful life that honors God and enriches the personal – community settings through which faith and obedience are expressed. Money is one vehicle by which people extend their commitment to faith and values. Through the discernment of practical issues related to earning, spending, and investing as well as through little or no income people find their way as faithful stewards of their daily life.

Special days: 6 Epiphany; 17 Stewardship Sunday; 18 Martin Luther King birthday (USA); 21 Birth of Anabaptism; 24 Mennonite World Fellowship Sunday.
Copy due May 1, 2009.

February 2010 “Family”

The shape of family continues to evolve in church and societal settings. Believers are challenged to understand, love, support, and care about all families whether they are formed or reformed by the typical marriage, singleness, death, divorce, remarriage, cohabitation, multigenerational, blended, co-parent, single parent, communal, and congregational entities.

Special days: Black History Month; 7 Mennonite Education Sunday; 14 Valentines Day; 17 Ash Wednesday; 17 Season of Lent begins
Copy due June 1, 2009

March 2010 "Greening"

During the Lenten season movement toward spiritual renewal is encouraged. At the same time the changing of the dark shadows of winter toward the revitalization of life in springtime unfolds. Believers acknowledge faith in God in the midst of spiritual doubts and in their renewal after the pain of loss. They affirm the victory of faith by their solid hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Special days: 28 Palm Sunday

Copy due July 1, 2009

April 2010 "Friendship"

Friendship is the gift that nurtures wholesome human and divine communities. Through casual and committed friendships we go beyond ourselves and become the people that God intends. Friendships open doors that invite others to participate in God's mission.

Mutual friendship among one's gender stimulates growth and identity. Friendship between genders enhances respect and well being. Since friendships change from time to time, how one finishes them well and how one handles friendships that go awry are important practical issues.

Special days: 1 Maundy Thursday; 2 Good Friday; 4 Easter; 4 Season of Easter to Pentecost begins; 22 Earth Day

Copy due August 1, 2009

May 2010 "Hospitality"

Luke-Acts reflects the power of hospitality to create new, vibrant communities of faith. Believers are bound together as a cross cultural people that welcome others into the community of faith. In welcoming strangers we open ourselves to those who are different from us in age, race, nationality, culture, and abilities.

As love and respect mature the faith community increases its boundary by numbers and in its quality of life. The practice and experience of hospitality enables members to incorporate new friends and neighbors into their kitchens, daily vocations, and in the life of their faith communities.

Special days: 2 Many Peoples Sunday; 2 Cinco de Mayo (Hispanic); 9 Mother's Day; 13 Ascension Day; 23 Pentecost Sunday; 23 Season of Ordinary Time begins.

Copy due September 1, 2009

June 2010 "Leisure"

Leisure time enhances every aspect of one's life. It is the counter balance that adds meaning to the primary focus of one's life. The Sabbath rest, the practice of spiritual disciplines, vacations, reading for entertainment, learning in new arenas, gaining inspiration in retreat settings, hobbies, enjoying God's creation, observing the skills of others, attending sports events, visiting with family, friends, and acquaintances new and old, and meditation represent some of the ways leisure creates and maintains in us the spirit of Shalom.

Special days: 20 Father's Day

Copy due October 1, 2009

July 2010 "Caring for the earth"

Respecting and cooperating with the created world is to dwell within God's shalom where holistic living reigns. Gardening, sharing, and preserving food, cooking with friends and family, giving priority to a diet based on locally available products, maintaining the quality of land, foregoing travel as an alternate to face-to-face events or vacationing at home to reduce one's carbon imprint are ways to enhance and extend the resources that God has provided to the whole human family.

Special days: 1 Canada Day; 4 Independence Day (USA)

Copy due November 1, 2009

August 2010 "Connecting"

Humans were created with a desire to know one another. These relationships allow us to sense the gifts that we bring to enhance the well being of others. There are boundless ways that we stay connected with each other. The electronic age has given us many tools that we may use i.e. facebook, twittering, skypeing, and email.

These tools may overshadow some of the established first hand, face to face ways we connected in the past i.e. telephone calls, visits in homes, potlucks, reunions, snail mail letters and cards. We may focus on the former and not appreciate the latter.

Special days:

Copy due December 1, 2009

September 2010 "Retirement"

After one's productive vocational phase of life has ended new opportunities await retirees. Most men and women reach this milestone with much energy, initiative, and life skills waiting to be directed toward a new focus.

Open to retirees are church and community volunteer and service opportunities, new careers, formal and informal educational programs, and travel possibilities that have been laid aside until a better time. At the same time retirees may face difficulties due to losses of identity, contacts with family members and friends of the past, rhythms, routines, and finances.

Special days: 6 Labor Day (Canada and USA); 12 Grandparents Day; 12 Publishing Sunday; 19 Peace Sunday

Copy due January 1, 2010

October 2010 "Communion"

Worldwide Communion Sunday focuses the central act of Jesus Christ who sacrificed himself for our salvation. It is a time of worship in which our vertical relationship of God and our horizontal relationship with fellow believers is focused. This celebration of an ancient practice, which we share with all Christian communions around the world, also connects the 'saints above' with the 'saints below' thereby connecting us through time and space as well as with all Christian traditions and heritages.

For Mennonites it is a tie with the 200+ bodies that share the Anabaptist spiritual heritage, a common affirmation of faith, and a shared mission to the world.

Special days: 3 World Communion Sunday; 11 Canada Thanksgiving; 31 Reformation Sunday; 31 Mennonite Heritage Sunday

Copy due February 1, 2010

November 2010 "Volunteering"

God has given gifts to every member of the body of Christ. God has granted to each one time to use these gifts to fulfill human needs, to earn ones livelihood, and to share them for the benefit of others. The later comes by volunteering time, money, and energies for the good of ones family, for the welfare of the community, and for the enrichment of the body of Christ.

Volunteers follow their passion by serving in service settings, encouraging their extended families, and mentoring all ages in the church and community.

Special days: 1 All Saints Day; 11 Remembrance Day (Canada); 11 Veteran's Day (USA); 14 Mission Sunday; 14 Peace Sunday (MCC Canada); 26 Thanksgiving Day (USA); 28 Season of Advent begins.

Copy due March 1, 2010

December 2010 "Music"

Through music believers can "sing with the angels" in praising and honoring God. God, who brought salvation to us through Jesus Christ, has given us all that we need for a wholesome, fulfilled life. We dedicate our lives to extend God's presence where we live.

Music allows us to express our faith. It connects us with past memories that continue to inspire us. Music enables us to focus our energies to relieve and lament our life stressors as well as to strengthen our resolve to faithfulness.

Special days: 5, 12, 19 Advent Sundays; 25 Christmas Day

Copy due April 1, 2010

January 2011 "Wisdom"

Insights of life and faith come to us through mentors and sages who provide guidance and direction that move us into the future. Sometimes such wisdom comes from the children and youth who view life afresh. From our diverse world we also receive insights and wisdom from unexpected sources such as aboriginal and other religious movements and bodies not associated with the Christian faith. Also the created world impresses us with its message through plant and animal life, waters, and natural events.

Special days: 6 Epiphany; 16 Stewardship Sunday; 18 Martin Luther King birthday (USA); 21 Birth of Anabaptism; 23 Mennonite World Fellowship Sunday.

Copy due May 1, 2010

February 2011 "Prayer"

In the practice of the spiritual disciplines prayer is universally offered as a key action which leads to the resolution of the issues faced by individuals and groups. Prayers are spoken in a variety of settings and media. Prayers provided in the Scriptures such as the Lord's Prayer and prayers offered by historical and contemporary saints guide ones life of prayer.

Types and kinds of prayer offered by believers include: body prayer, walking prayer, contemplative prayer, liturgical prayers, singing prayers, listening prayers, memorized prayers, bedtime, and mealtime prayers,

Special days: Black History Month; 6 Mennonite Education Sunday; 14 Valentines Day; 9 Ash Wednesday, Season of Lent begins.

Copy due June 1, 2010

March 2011 "Loss"

All experience loss of one kind or another. While all people experience loss human responses vary widely. People face such losses through unemployment, underemployment, declining health, untreatable diseases, broken relationships, death, and more. Some treat loss as an opportunity to grow, to reengage life in a different manner, and some are overwhelmed by it.

Believers gain new life in Christ by losing it and by walking away from nonproductive paths and habits. Believers know that God walks with them through their loss into a new and better way of life.

Special days: 9 Ash Wednesday. Season of Lent begins

Copy due July 1, 2010

April 2011 "Health"

The goal of health is a life of shalom where all aspects of ones experience cooperate together to develop strong, sensitive, balanced, and productive lives. Aligning oneself with God motivates us to treat the body, all relationships, and all activity responsibly and holistically.

Shalom extends to the respect and care one offers to the created order so that it will provide food and resources abundantly for the well being of all peoples.

Special days: 17 Palm Sunday; 21 Maundy Thursday; 22 Earth Day ; 22 Good Friday; 24 Easter; 24 Season of Easter to Pentecost begins

Copy due August 1, 2010

May 2011 "Bible"

The Bible is a sourcebook of stories, knowledge, and wisdom that has infiltrated many cultures. This is reflected in the many allusions and references spoken of it in the public square. The Bible is the record of God's dealing with humanity including a plan to restore the human family to its God intended place. Through the people of Israel God sought to bring all peoples into a divine-human covenant relationship. Its good news is that through Jesus Christ all peoples may be restored to fullness of life in God's kingdom.

People come to the Bible to know its story and message, for spiritual growth, for direction toward living a transformed life, for strength to resist temptation and error and for its message of hope. It can be read with the heart and with the head. The Bible can be read together, studied in small groups, used as the basis for quizzing, and as a basic resource to address the issues of the day. It may also be read devotionally using Lectio or other forms of dwelling personally in the text.

Special days: 1 Many Peoples Sunday; 2 Cinco de Mayo (Hispanic); 10 Mother's Day.

Copy due September 1, 2010