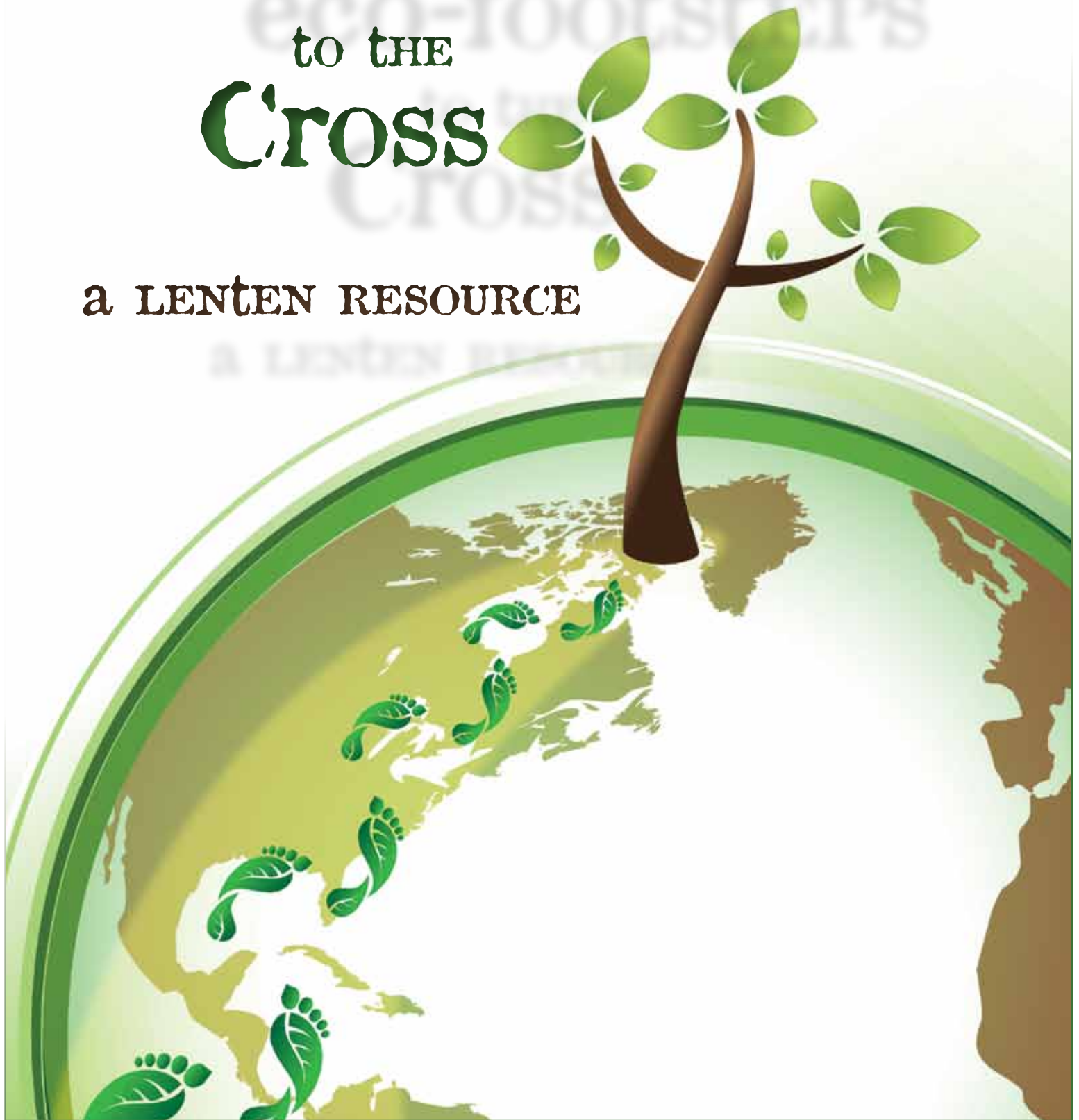


IAN MACDONALD AND BARBARA TUNNICLIFFE

eco-footsteps to the Cross

a LENTEN RESOURCE



All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, except for the right of each purchaser to print one hard copy of the publication for their personal use, and to print copies of the music and activity sheet(s) contained therein, only to the extent and for the purposes specified in the publication. This publication – including MP3 files – may not be stored in a retrieval system, except for the right of each purchaser to store one digital copy on a computer, and to burn one backup disk. In the case of MP3 files, one additional copy may be stored on a portable MP3 player. This publication may not be transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher or copyright holder.

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|--|----|--|----|
| Introduction | 9 | Prayers | 66 |
| How to Use This Resource | 11 | Study Group Material | 68 |
| Lent 1..... | 13 | <i>Community building activities</i> | 68 |
| Lent 2..... | 16 | <i>Study session suggestions</i> | 69 |
| Lent 3..... | 19 | Retreats..... | 72 |
| Lent 4..... | 22 | <i>Hints</i> | 72 |
| Lent 5..... | 25 | <i>Weekend retreat plan</i> | 74 |
| Palm Sunday Intergenerational Service and Drama | 28 | Reflections..... | 76 |
| Good Friday Walk of the Cross..... | 39 | <i>A Borrowed Grave</i> | 76 |
| Easter | 46 | <i>The Rich Man and the Chasm</i> | 78 |
| Sunday School Lesson Plans | 49 | <i>Common Creation Story</i> | 80 |
| <i>Lent 1</i> | 51 | <i>Ice</i> | 82 |
| <i>Lent 2</i> | 55 | <i>Movement for Change</i> | 84 |
| <i>Lent 3</i> | 57 | <i>There Are Two Seas</i> | 86 |
| <i>Lent 4</i> | 59 | <i>The Starfish Story</i> | 88 |
| <i>Lent 5</i> | 62 | <i>Two Degrees, One Chance</i> | 89 |
| <i>Palm Sunday – see Intergenerational Service and Drama (p. 28)</i> | | <i>David Hallman</i> | 92 |
| <i>Easter Sunday</i> | 64 | Church Signs | 94 |
| | | ECOrner Bulletin Inserts..... | 95 |
| | | Music Resources | 97 |

Introduction

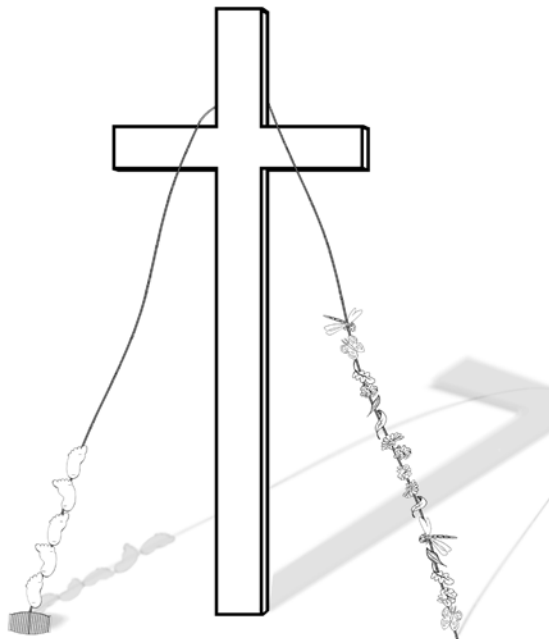
This resource began as a way to bring awareness to living with respect in creation and our interconnection with the earth and each other. South Burnaby United Church in British Columbia used this program during Lent 2007. Throughout Lent, the theme of Eco-Footsteps was incorporated into every area of the church. All our life and work and worship focused on faith and the environment.

We created a path of paper footprints that moved through the church towards the twenty-foot high cross at the front of the sanctuary. Each week the footsteps got closer to the cross. On Easter Sunday large tissue paper flowers and other symbols of new life were draped over

the cross and into the chancel. We also created other visuals, used drama to tell the story during worship, and put related messages up on our sign outside.

To live with respect in creation is the latest addition to the United Church creed. At first, it was a mouthful to say. It stuck out and we stumbled over it. But it provided a focal point from which churches could explore what living with respect in creation might mean. We needed it when it first was added. We still do.

The energy given to climate change issues and the battles over the Kyoto Accord keep our interdependence with all of creation on the agenda of the church. How can we bring this issue into our worship life? If the central task for human beings is to respect and care for the earth and each other, how do we make our worship “earthy” and inclusive. And when do we do it? One Sunday a year? That didn’t seem very respectful. What if we took over a whole season like Lent? Six Sundays of considering our footprints on the planet sounded like at least a start. We could think together about being good stewards, and reflect on the denial, greed, guilt, and despair we need to let go. We might even see what we are crucifying in this world and what needs to die in order that Earth might live: Resurrection.





Our basic symbol became the “eco-footsteps.” Tiny brown feet led us on a journey to the cross week by week. They were small and seemed humble against the high front cross-bearing wall. But as with many small things – prayers, helpful deeds, kindnesses – they carried us on our Lenten journey one good step at a time. They turned the trampling footprints of disrespect into ways of walking softly.

Let us introduce you to *Eco-Footsteps to the Cross*, a resource for Lent and Easter containing worship liturgies and prayers for each Sunday in Lent and Easter, along with other study and music resources.

- Children’s time messages
- Chancel dramas
- Sunday school lessons
- Material for church signs and bulletin inserts
- Visual ideas for “Worship with the Eye”
- A large choice of activities, reflections, and study ideas for retreats, study groups, and congregational learning events.
- Music suggestions. Songs from *Common Cup Company* available for use in your congregation.

Eco-Footsteps to the Cross morphed into the *More Franchises than Tim Hortons* workshop in the spring of 2008. Now we are grateful for all those at Wood Lake Publishing Inc. for making this work available as an online resource. Thanks to all!

Ian Macdonald

Minister, South Burnaby United Church and Member, Common Cup Company

Barbara Tunncliffe

Designated Lay Minister and Christian Educator, South Burnaby United Church

For more information on this resource or the workshop, please e-mail ministrystaff@sbuc.ca

South Burnaby United Church is located on the Kaymar Creek Watershed, much of which was paved over in the 1950s.



How to Use This Resource

E*co-Footsteps to the Cross* is a Lenten resource covering the first five Sundays of Lent, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter. Resources for church use, including children's time and Sunday school, are provided along with material for smaller group and congregational learning use. The focus of the program is to link our faith with our call to care for creation and reduce our ecological footprint. We have chosen Lent as a time to reflect on what are we crucifying in our world and the impact we have on creation. Each week addresses a particular challenge: denial, convenience,

greed, guilt, despair, and fear. Each theme is carried through the material for the week – children's story, chancel drama, Sunday school, commissioning, assurance, prayers, and music.

The material is written with a United Church order of service in mind. Each week also incorporates the lighting and snuffing of a Tenebrae candle. The Tenebrae candles are symbolic in the same way that Advent candles are. However, during Advent the light grows each week as we approach the birth of Christ. During Lent, the light dims as the Light of the World is under attack. One

Tenebrae Candles



Lent 1



Lent 2



Lent 3



Lent 4



Lent 5



Palm Sunday



Good Friday



Easter



candle is extinguished each week; the last candle is extinguished on Good Friday.

Each week of this Lenten resource contains all the material for that week, apart from the Sunday school lessons which are

grouped separately. Other material (study group sessions) is listed on its own.

This is the order of service we used. Items included in this resource are marked *.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| * 1. Call to Worship | 9. Scripture Readings |
| 2. Opening/Processional hymn | 10. Sermon |
| * 3. Opening/Prayer of Approach | 11. Offering |
| * 4. Eco-Footsteps: Chancel Drama,** Tenebrae Candle and Prayer (replaces Confession) | 12. Prayers of the People |
| * 5. Assurance of Pardon | 13. Closing/Recessional hymn |
| 6. Passing of the Peace | * 14. Commissioning |
| * 7. Time with the children: story | 15. Benediction |
| 8. Song or Hymn | 16. Sung Blessing |

***These dramas set the theme and need to take place near the beginning of the service while the children are present. Each drama is written for two actors and each drama includes the snuffing of the Tenebrae candle, which has been lit at the start of the service. A short rehearsal is recommended. Note: If your church does not light a Tenebrae candle at the start of the Lent service, you could simply light a candle at the start of the drama, to be snuffed out symbolically at the end.*

We hope you will find this resource useful and inspirational. We offer it as a guideline. Please feel free to adapt the material to your needs and situation. You might also consider adapting it for

use at other times of the year. The aim of the program is to bring awareness to the plight of our planet and to have positive and effective actions result.

Ian Macdonald and Barb Tunnicliffe



Lent 1

LENT 1

Words in bold are congregational responses.

Call for Lent

Lent begins. Can you hear the call of God? Can you hear the cries of Christ?

With eyes open to the glory of God and with the power of the Holy Spirit alive in Jesus Christ, our hearts will follow where he leads.

Opening Prayer

O just and loving God, bless the Season of Lent.

Be with us in whatever we give up
Or take on in your name.

Strengthen faith and build hope that we may find in you and one another resources strong enough to withstand temptation and flexible enough to flow through us like a river. Through Jesus, our saving grace. Amen.

CHANCEL DRAMA

Denial

MARY: Hi Joe. Good to see you at church today.

JOE: Well Mary, it's Lent and I've made a decision.

MARY: What have you decided to give up?

JOE: I've decided to give up staying away from church.

MARY: I'm glad, Joe. Lent is my favourite church season. The mood changes, the service changes. Things seem more, well, more real.

JOE: Change? What do you mean, "The service changes"?

MARY: Like this year there's an emphasis on global warming!

JOE: Get out!

MARY: No, really. There's even a program called Eco-Footsteps to the Cross.

JOE: I think I'll go home.

MARY: What?!

JOE: Look. Everywhere you turn there's global warming this, global warming that. I've had it up to here with global warming.

MARY: But it's happening. It's real. We all know it.

JOE: Oh, they're making a mountain out of a molehill. I'm tired of hearing



about it. Now even churches are talking about it.

MARY: And why not?

JOE: Global warming has nothing to do with religion! Religion is about sin and guilt. We all know that.

MARY: Joe, listen to me. You're in denial. Global warming is happening in God's world. God loves the world, and you and I are called to love this world too. Get with the program.

JOE: Okay, okay. I'll keep coming to church, but it's not going to change me.

MARY: We all have to change. Why don't you begin by promising God you'll be giving up denial for Lent?! You aren't alone. We all have to give up denial. Let's snuff out the candle of denial.

Snuff out the candle of denial.

Prayer

God of every undeniable truth, confront us when we deny the truths that affect the life of creation.

**You turn the world in your hands;
every moment comes to us as fresh as
creation's first breath.**

**Help us to love all you create and live
as signs of hope for change.**

Amen.

Assurance

It is precisely because Jesus was tempted to deny the truth, just as we are at times, that we know that God hears our confessions with gracious understanding. God confronts us and accepts us.

Be assured that God is with us now and always, accepting, guiding, and forgiving.

God calls us to the path of the cross. Jesus waits for us there.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Story

Look at everything new in the sanctuary today (twig clusters, footsteps, the colour purple).

The footsteps are here to make us think of how we "step" on this earth, and how well we either care for or damage it, or waste its resources. When we use up or damage the environment, we leave a very big footprint. Let's call it an eco-footprint.

The twig decorations are here to remind us that many things in this world are dying – trees, crops, lakes, rivers, fish, and animals. We hurt them with our garbage and litter, the chemicals we use to clean, the gas we burn in cars and planes, the way we use more water and food than we really need, the lights and machines we leave on. All these things are killing many parts of creation. We need to help all the earth thrive.

The footsteps that lead to the cross are also here to remind us to follow in Jesus' footsteps, to live as Jesus taught



us. Jesus showed us how to live in the way God dreams for us, a way that steps lightly on the earth.

Today is the first week of Lent, the time when we wait for Easter. It is a special season of the church year; a serious time that takes 40 days. It takes a long time to prepare for the mystery of Easter. The colour of Lent in the church is purple. Lent is a time in which to remember what Jesus gave us and what he gave up for us.

We can think about what we can give to others and give up ourselves so we can follow the footsteps of Jesus and come closer to God. Part of following the footsteps of Jesus is thinking about how to change the eco-footsteps that hurt God's world and people into helpful, non-harmful steps. Let's hear a story about someone else who learned to follow Jesus.

Read

Simon Gets a New Job from Ralph Milton's *Family Story Bible* (Matthew 4:18–22, Mark 1:16–20, Luke 5:1–11)

Ask

- I wonder what part of the story you liked best?
- I wonder how Simon felt?
- I wonder how we can follow Jesus today? How can we be disciples too?

Allow quiet for a few seconds after each question for children and adults to wonder.

Thank you for listening and wondering.
Now let's remember the story in a song.

Song

Simon Simon – Voices United

Commissioning

Your Lenten journey has begun.

Let the Holy Spirit that accompanied Jesus in the wilderness be with you in the wilderness times of your life.

Go and face the hard truths.

Go and reflect on your steps to the cross.

Go with honesty and hope.

Alternative:

We are the first generation to realize that everything that exists in the universe has a common origin.

We are the first humans to look into the night sky knowing that by God's love we are bound together with all living things.

This is both an amazing gift and an awesome responsibility.

Go to face the hard truths. Search for justice and healing for all creation.

