

Moderator's Green Initiative Heads East to Ottawa

Travelling by Train Helps United Church Leader Reduce Her Carbon Footprint

Toronto: When Mardi Tindal was elected Moderator of The United Church of Canada in August 2009, she says she knew that managing her carbon footprint would be difficult during a three-year term where she would be expected to travel extensively. So she challenged the church to help her reduce the impact of that travel by taking actions that offset the carbon emissions she knew would accumulate as a result of fulfilling her role as Moderator.

But she also wanted to do more, so she pledged to limit her travel by air, and to do as much travel as possible using “green-friendly” transportation. She kept that promise last fall by scheduling her regional visits to northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta as a month-long journey—travelling much of the time by train.

Now Tindal's Spirit Express train journey is heading east—travelling between Toronto and Ottawa with stops along the way in Cobourg, Belleville, Kingston, and Smiths Falls.

During this leg of her journey, Tindal will host three town hall meetings focused on environmental concerns and the care of creation. These town hall meetings will take place in Cobourg, Smiths Falls and Ottawa. Later in May, she will travel by train to Halifax to visit the church's Maritime Conference and in October 2011, she'll board the train once again connecting her visits to Hamilton and London Conferences.

Tindal says that while she's been travelling she has met many amazing people who are anxious to talk about how faith communities can respond to the challenge of climate change.

For instance, there's Elliot, a university student, who said churches are in the best position to inspire hopeful action on climate and ocean change because churches know how to build community, and when people feel a strong sense of community, they take more responsible environmental action.

And then there's Rosie, a civil engineer and Christian who has travelled only by train since 2006 in order to reduce her carbon footprint.

Or Paul, an engineer working in sustainability studies, who said “Science isn't enough to change minds. We need people of faith to change hearts.”

Tindal sees the town hall meetings as opportunities for soulful conversations about how we can find ways to live abundantly within the natural limits of God's creation.

“We need to be able to celebrate people's stories of hope—their green achievements—as well as hear their stories of suffering and concern about climate and ocean change,” says Tindal.

People interested in tracking the Moderator's travels on the Spirit Express can do so by visiting www.wondercafe.ca/spiritexpress.

NOTE TO PHOTO EDITORS: High resolution photos are available at:
<http://photos.newswire.ca> – Keyword search: Mardi Tindal
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/31483287@N05/sets/72157624976055493/>

For information about her itinerary or to arrange a media interview, please contact:

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