Signs of an Innovation Revolution
are showing themselves in our rural communities.
Will this Revolution be a threat or an opportunity for the rural church?
What gives us resiliency?
Are we using the full scope of our spiritual resources?

Canadian Rural Church Network (CRCN)
Box 92 - Pincher Creek, AB Canada TOK 1W0
http://www.circle-m.ca/crcn   Email: southbuxtonpc@gmail.com

The CRCN is an organization of persons (lay and clergy) who have a passion for enhancing the quality of life in rural communities. Their vision is to be a supporting network for rural church and rural community development in Canada.

Centre for Rural Community Leadership & Ministry (CiRCLe M)
114 Seminary Crescent - Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X3
http://www.circle-m.ca   Email: circle.m.ministries@gmail.com

CiRCLe M is a non-profit charity created by the seminaries of the Saskatoon Theological Union. The Centre’s mission is to equip clergy and lay leaders in rural and remote places to help their churches be catalysts for the development of healthy Canadian communities.
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FAITH MATTERS

So Much Pain

A terrible highway crash involving the bus of the Humboldt (Saskatchewan) Hockey Team, has resulted in multiple deaths and injuries. So much pain ...

By Joyce Sasse

A terrible highway crash involving the bus of the Humboldt Hockey Team, has resulted in multiple deaths and injuries. So much pain has emerged with that disaster – like a primordial cry!

But we also have been able to witness immediate response from across the country and around the world. Prayers ... texting ... hockey alumnus ... funding campaigns being established ... support mechanisms put in place ...

Disasters invite this kind of response. Each time, we hope there will never be another. Each time, we try to learn how to be better prepared. Each time, when incidents like wild fires and flood, accidents, catastrophes and the like happen in rural areas, we know volunteers will be among the first responders. We know, too, that community members are the ones who will remain there for the long run. All of us contribute, and all of us need the support of each other.

Oft time, these days, church folk sigh in despair because of dwindling numbers in the Sunday pews. But we have so much to offer. It is the Christ-like love let loose in the world that lies at the base of all the out-pouring of compassion and support.

Barb Glen, an agricultural reporter and editorial writer for the Western Producer, has written our featured column “Rural Revolution Upon Us”. In it she makes note of innovative happenings that are transforming the business of agriculture. While innovative thinking is evident in rural economics and technology, what about the spiritual lives of the people?

This is a significant reminder that our churches, one of the vital corner-posts of the community, needs to keep abreast of what’s happening in each community. How can we address these generational changes while helping folks express traditional values?

Can we invite our young people to share stories about impacts occurring in their lives? Florida High School students are not the only ones who have a lot to say.

Can we invite parents to talk about how important their community is to them – and how they are organizing fund-raisers and building campaigns and are trying to initiate changes in legislation ...? They are trying to “give back” for the good of the whole.

Can we find opportunity to discover how Christ has been “let loose in the world”, beyond church walls? The Church is not irrelevant. Evidence shows us the church, and the need for it, is more relevant than ever.
“Be not afraid!” As we come together to share our pain we discover meaningful ways to be there for each other. Giving hugs, leaving the porch light on, putting a hockey stick on the step, offering our prayers ... All are expressions of HOPE. Beyond the pain, life does go on!

**Gifts the Church has to Offer**

*Start by thinking local when you take stock of the gifts the Church has to offer communities impacted by change...*

By Joyce Sasse

Start by thinking local when you take stock of the gifts the Church has to offer communities impacted by change. We start with a composite of professional leadership and seekers from the every-day world – and are fueled by that God-given power that connects us with the Spirit of Jesus.

By working together, combining the best of our intellect, praying together and supporting each other, local members can serve as a vital resource, especially in the face of change.

**Local Churches**

An *Aura of Innovation* evident in a community will also be present in local congregations that are open to change. There are many things such congregations have to offer:

- Identifying needs and caring for the spiritual health and well-being of the community and its people;

- Offering resources like membership lists, space and facilities, links with multiple organizations, and a practiced degree of flexibility;

- Local members who already know the turf, can find ways to adapt to include local customs and patterns, and are there for the long-run;

- A primary mandate of local churches is to help people move from pain to hope by reflecting on how God is with us through difficult times;

- Being sensitive to difficult situations is a great asset;

- Being underpinned by understandings based on the practice of Scripture reading and prayer, tradition and ritual.

Beyond the Local Church, there are at least three primary networks of support local communities can seek help from if they want to engage in broadening their understanding of how to be relevant.

**International Rural Church Association (IRCA)**

IRCA is an ecumenical network of rural church persons from around the world who regularly exchange questions, insights and experiences about how to best function in rural
and indigenous communities. It is from this resource pool we have been able to identify an essential understanding of rural spiritual values.

**Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry (CiRCLe M)**

CiRCLe M is a Saskatoon-based network of persons who seek to better understand and advocate on behalf of rural ministry in Canada. They have a training component for both professional and non-professional leaders in the local church. Their “*Church and Community Crises Response Training Webinar*” ([http://www.circle-m.ca/](http://www.circle-m.ca/)) is a timely resource for rural communities where pending crises events may occur (including flood, fire, accident, trauma and economic upsets ... and the **Innovation Revolution**).

**Denominational Centres**

Denominational Centres are also equipped to facilitate small local churches as they respond to increasing demands for involvement both within and beyond their stained-glass windows.

> Throughout this Newsletter we are trying to underscore ways by which churches can become more aware of the many roles they can play in the life of the total community. Their vitality is found as they discover how to be God’s servants in the world.

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**RURAL LIFE ISSUES**

**Rural Revolution Upon Us**

*Innovation as a great opportunity...*

By Barb Glen

We do not have to look very hard to find innovation in agriculture. It shows in the equipment we see working in the fields. It’s there in the livestock grazing in pastures. It is represented in the variety of food products on our shelves. It’s there in the labels affixed to those products.

Agriculture is a changing industry but as the number of farmers shrinks and the number of urban dwellers grows, the gap widens between those who make their living from the land and those who don’t fully understand how that is done.

Speakers at agricultural conferences often remark that while the general public wants the latest technology applied to their smart phones, vehicles, home décor and even clothing, they somehow also believe farming and food production should eschew technological and scientific advances and instead use methods mired in the past.

But farmers and ranchers have embraced innovation and continue to do so. Some recent and not-so-recent examples: use of drones; auto-steering in tractors; genetically modified crops and DNA testing to aid livestock breeding. All of these have resulted in higher levels of production, continued food affordability and made our food safer than it has ever been.
Though it seems consumers constantly seek food that is free — free of gluten, free of transfats, free of antibiotics, free of pesticides, free of added hormones, etc. — meeting those desires is not free for those tasked with providing that food.

In fact, it requires innovation to maintain food production in an economical way, so it is affordable to consumers while sustaining those who grow it. Advances in genetics, agronomy, chemistry and biology are necessary to achieve that.

Methods of producing grain, oilseeds, pulse crops, beef, pork, chicken and milk continue to change as we learn more about the ways of nature and the ways of the world.

But the values behind innovation are more static; little changed from those embraced by farmers for decades, and we can be glad of that. Among those values are love and care for family and the responsibility and desire to support rural communities. Other values include caring for the land so it can sustain future generations and respect livestock and for nature.

Innovation that improves crop yield improves farmers’ ability to support family and community.

Innovation to improve livestock production by definition involves attention to animal health and welfare.

Conservation of water and soil — yes, there are innovations there too — are part of overall land stewardship and protection of the biodiversity that the Creator put upon this earth.

We do not know if agricultural innovation is always considered with these values top of mind, but they are there as a base.

Change is often uncomfortable, and not every innovation is an improvement. But surely we must see innovation as a greater opportunity than a threat. The test is to see how or whether it supports and sustains our values.

Barb Glen is an agricultural reporter and editorial writer for the Western Producer

Resiliency & The Healing Power of Culture

Resilience in times of crisis...
Notes collected by Joyce Sasse

Community Resiliency

At a webinar on The Church & Community Response in Times of Crises, sponsored by Circle M, Dr. Judith Kulig spoke about her research on “rural health issues and how community resilience can be achieved”, which she had learned through working with rural communities who survived crisis situations.
Dr. Kulig defines “Community Resiliency” as “the ability of a community to deal with adversity and move forward, and in so doing reach a higher level of functioning”. Furthermore, “stronger rural communities mean a stronger Canadian society as a whole.”

Leaders need to initiate a process before, not during, a crisis. In that process community members can be helped to recognize the need for change, acknowledge strengths, make improvements and help each other see how they can make a difference.

“Leadership is both from the top and from within, and local knowledge should be used.” The warning is to not depend too heavily on outside groups who “might be well-meaning but are not well-informed (and often have short-term commitments).”

“Expect a grieving period following the crisis event. Notice, also, how the experience becomes part of the community’s story. Be prepared to “acknowledge this story and integrate it into the community’s public history.”

Indigenous People’s Resiliency and the Healing Power of Culture

“As human beings, we require a lot of guidance to try to live a good life” Walter Linklater said at a Treaty Elders Conference in Saskatoon. A residential school survivor whose life was scarred by many negative impacts told how he was counseled to forgive the hurt inflicted and turn to a Higher Power – the one God, the Creator, the Great Spirit.

“Our elders kept trying to teach us “how to live, how to respect, how to be honest, how to be kind, how to be loving, how to be helpful.”

“We start with ourselves” and understand “the land is our mother”. It’s about respect for ourselves, each other, our Mother (the earth) and our Creator. (Prairie Messenger, Feb 29/18)

Indigenous people have now started the “We Matter” Campaign, which delivers positive support messages to indigenous youth going through tough times.

At the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, John Ralston Saul pointed to the degree of resiliency evident in a culture that survived seven generations of threatened extinction.

He spoke about the remarkable resurgence of Indigenous peoples, not only in terms of numbers, but to positions of increasing power, creativity and influence.

These are exciting times, when resiliency and the healing power of culture are much in evidence.

The Making of an Elder

Where is your land? Where are your stories? What sustains you? If you have ever stopped long enough to ask yourself any of these questions, you may find it helpful to look on YouTube for “The Making of an Elder” series of short video episodes that talk about finding meaning and balance in life. *Elder in the Making: Episode 1* - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYgFLTG0TE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYgFLTG0TE)
“Canada’s rural communities should be viewed as a reservoir of untapped potential” Al Lauzon (University of Guelph) told the audience at the Rural Talk to Rural (2016) Conference at Blyth, Ontario. The conference is sponsored by the Canadian Centre for Rural Creativity (CCRC).

Lauzon wrote The State of Rural Canada report (2015) in which he says “Rural Canada has, is and will continue to be viable and vital to Canada ... The bulk of the dollar value of our international trade is for the export of natural resources (which are) almost entirely produced in non-metropolitan Canada.”

Much of today’s urban population is unaware of the diverse nature of rural Canada and how it has evolved.

“We need to talk less about what we are losing and more about what we can do.” To that end, Lauzon makes several recommendations:

- Develop a long-term vision for rural Canada
- Support investments in innovation for small and medium-sized businesses
- Maintain and invest in rural services and infrastructure
- Encourage a culture of collaboration among rural communities, including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities
- Encourage new immigrants to Canada to consider rural communities as a place to build their lives.

R2R 2018 will be held in Blyth, Ontario October 17 – 20, 2018.

From a report in the Western Producer, October 27, 2016.

**DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS**

**The Ways**
by John Oxaham, early 20th century poet & hymn-writer

To every man there openeth
A Way, and Ways, and a Way.
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A High Way, and a Low,
And every man decideth
The Way his soul will go.
Revitalizing the Church
By Joyce Sasse

Joan Chittister, a Benedictine abbess, spiritual mentor and writer, spoke to the world-wide congress of Benedictine followers on the theme “Let the Call be Heard”.

For a comparison between “what has been” and “what might become” in the Church, Joan Chittister draws a comparison between di Vinci’s 15th century painting of the Last Supper, and Polish painter Leszek Piasecki’s 20th century painting of the of the same subject.

De Vinci depicts an “all-male, apostolic, privatized version of Jesus and his disciples”. Piasecki shows “men, women and children all sharing the same meal, all called to the same cup. And all are participants in the logical development of the early Christian community.”

Chittister’s wisdom is to be treasured as she invites us to consider many gems of insight. I have tried to translate some of her thoughts, delivered in a language comprehensible to members of a more Ordered audience, in ways that might be more easily understood by the people and church-folk I know.

Give Love Away
Do you remember the song “Love is something if you give it away”? We sing “It’s just like a magic penny. Lend it, spend it and you’ll have so many they will roll all over the floor.”

The life and work of the Church is likened to that magic penny imagery. Revitalizing any of our Christian communities is possible only when we “give love away”.

What we have been entrusted with are “gifts given to us by the spirit in order to maintain the spirit of Jesus in the church today”. But the understandings we receive cannot be hoarded for ourselves (either as individuals or in community). “They exist only when they are shared and given away.” Our responsibility as faith-filled communities is to look for fresh and vibrant ways to live out our undertakings.

Full Partnership Required
For the Church (and our churches) to remain vital to its essential purpose, it must stay committed to a 3-fold partnership of

1. Leaders & Academics – bringing the traditions and rituals
2. Seekers – bringing the voices of the world
3. The Power / Spirit – that enables the spirit of Jesus to fuel us.

To understand the implications of this partnership, Chittister directs our attention to two Biblical stories.
Ruth, the foreign widow from Moab, offered to accompany Naomi (her wise but grieving mother-in-law) back to her home in Bethlehem. Naomi, in turn, helped the younger woman find spiritual refuge with the Jewish people. Who could have foreseen how, out of this partnership Ruth (the outsider) would become Great Grandmother to King David (Israel’s Messiah)?

Again, we see the power of partnership develop when Paul (the first Christian missionary) met Timothy. Paul recognized how Timothy's youth and Greek Ancestry could form connecting bridges for him. The spirit fueled the flame by which Timothy helped Paul bring his message to new frontiers.

When the three partners enlighten, energize and empower each other, the Church is revitalized. Failure happens when one partner tries to out-do the other, or when the Church tries to hoard its “achievements” for itself.

**Change is a Constant**

As with anything that is living, a living Church constantly changes. “Always ripe” Joan Chittister says, “but always in bloom again.”

The image of the bare-footed Moses in front of the flaming bush comes to mind, and the voice that identified itself with the words “I am” … Always being and always becoming.

In the novel *Jaber Crow*, written by Wendell Berry, the church janitor imagined the congregation as “imperfect and incomplete, yet held together by various bonds of affection”. But they were “somehow perfected beyond time by one another's love, compassion and forgiveness ... We may say perfected by grace.”

Thirty-five years ago, when I was invited to serve as the Saddle Bag Minister, visionaries of that project challenged the Church’s practice of being dominated by Denominational authority and attitudes. Throughout the 4-year project the visionary-seekers worked hard to try to restore a sense of balanced partnership between leaders, seekers and the spirit of Jesus that Chittister so eloquently speaks about. It was an exciting time for those involved but threatening to those challenged to re-consider their leadership styles.

“Through one stage of life after another” there is an “electricity that powers every good in us”, the abbess says. The dynamism “takes the shape of seed, branch, tree, flower and fruit of the spiritual life”. Imagine how it is “we ride on a river of grace that is (both) still and deep, raging and new”.

Chittister offers spiritual guidance to all of us. “We are companions on the way, and keepers of great spiritual traditions.” While we have been “born in times of stress and discord”, we have the potential to be “healers of spiritual poverty and physical pain, rampant oppression and great human need”.

Hope becomes reality! As we re-affirm our partnership commitments and give love away, our churches revitalize themselves again and again.
Let’s Talk About Rural Spiritual Values

As pastors, we are privileged when we can share moments that reflect parishioners’ rural spiritual values...

By Joyce Sasse

It’s a great privilege as a pastor to enter some of the most meaningful moments of another person’s life. Through these opportunities, I’ve come to better understand the spiritual values rural parishioners hold dear.

Land, Landscape and Produce of the Land

The hailstorm on my first Student Ministry Field happened the night before our July First weekend celebration. Within moments, the air was ripe with fermenting crushed gardens and grain fields. Buildings and vehicles had deep hailstone dents. Every window on the north side of the Church was broken. But by eleven AM Sunday morning the broken glass was swept, pews were wiped dry, sheets of plastic covered the windows, and we bowed our heads to lament and give thanks for the blessings we had.

When mad-cow disease forced the closing of our beef sales to the world, we listened as a young rancher told how much it hurt to be reminded of the immensity of the problem when she looked at the herd that had brought her such pride. We ate heaps of hamburgers that year to show our faith in and solidarity with the beef industry, and we attended multiple gatherings where producers were encouraged to talk about their pain.

Community: Its Centrality and Its Pain

During wildfire season last fall, following months of extreme drought and when we were faced with incredible bursts of wind, some of my most meaningful conversations where around the grocery store checkout counter. “I’ve been thinking about you out there … isolated … sparks from a downed line … flames in the night!”

How best do we “townies” express our care? And the care of the community?

Local volunteers gather to build the new rink – workers get organized, provision for food is planned, a medical and safety committee is struck. The offering of prayers of acknowledgement for the visioning, supporting, and volunteering of community members in the spirit of our earlier pioneers is part of the ritual! All aspects are life-giving for the health of the community.

The stories are endless … but they need to be told and retold. It is in the telling that we make sense of who we are and how we have come to these times. It is in the telling, too, that we prepare those who are younger to find their place in the unfolding journey.
If church leaders use theological language to talk about spiritual values, people shrug because they don’t know how to respond. But if we can talk in terms of values associated with landscape, community, pain, diversity, dependence ... and give opportunity for story-telling, memories flow of joys and sorrows, fears and regrets, grief and helplessness, and of the sense of trying to understand the partnership one has with the Creator... as if we are connected by an umbilical chord with our Mother, the Earth.

The Spiritual Values of Rural People Include the Following

While rural people would not readily be able to enumerate the following, my studies in the Rural Church Movement have lead me to believe the following values are held in common by rural people around the world.

**Awareness of the Presence of God**
Creation is recognized as a gift from God by those who feel they work as co-partners with God. This is so integral to their lives, “God-talk” for many grassroots people is not seen to be necessary.

**Respect for land and landscape**
It is as if one is connected to the Creation by an umbilical cord. When the land suffers from drought or pollution (or some other degradation), the pain is felt in the people. When the brilliant colors of an autumn sky burst forth, the beauty is contagious. In the face of nature’s destructive powers, the inclination is to look for glimmers of hope.

**Centrality of Community**
“(The rural church’s) strength is in knowing we exist for the community, and the community values our existence.” In the extended community beyond church buildings and denominational labels, many community members try to tend the needs of each-other. Given insightful leadership, they have the capacity to reach across what were once religious, age, gender, sex and ethnic biases.

**Paradox: Being Independent, but Aware of the Need for Interdependence**
The request is to respect my privacy, but when there is a major emergency everyone gives of what they can to help the people in crisis. When a home burns or a farmer is injured at harvest time, the amount of support offered is incredible.

**Awareness of the Prevalence of Pain in Our Midst**
“Be kinder than usual for everyone is fighting some kind of battle.” Laments and ways of acknowledging and expressing grief, prayer support and funding are much appreciated. Letting others know about pain experienced by members of the community is a delicate but important matter.

**Diversity is Essential** (socially as in agriculture)
It is recognized that the input of “others” is necessary if the community is to garner fresh vitality. Consider finding a place for the new daughter-in-law, the new-comer from the city or
from another country. Great generosity is extended to the “new minister” as the community finds a place for him/her in their midst.

**Believe in a Strong Work Ethic**
In the past it was often noted that urban leaders came from a rural background where they had learned leadership within the community. Through programs such as 4-H, leadership skills are taught at an early age. A heritage-gift for children in small communities is helping instill in them the desire to “do well”.

**Story-telling is the Primary Means of Communication**
“Telling our story helps us make sense of our lives.” As one gains fluency in expressing their stories, these cultural values are more easily passed on to succeeding generations and to newcomers. In the rural church context a budget presentation that tells the story of the congregation’s values and aspirations trumps any presentation made via charts and graphs. Story-telling is the means by which traditional knowledge is shared.

If clergy members work primarily according to their own “professional” authoritarian agenda, members of the local congregation often lose interest and become docile or non-supportive. If they feel the practices of the formal church are irrelevant and their frustrations are ignored, they back away from “paying the bills” and “serving coffee”.

But when clergy understand the contribution they can make as pastors and resource persons in a context where faith-filled people long to live Christ-like lives, celebrate their gifts, find rainbows in their tears and overcome their short-comings – a sense of vitality and purpose becomes pervasive.

**RURAL MINISTRY STORIES**

**Dry Bones Can Come Alive**
The almost forgotten story of Annora Brown, a significant Canadian artist, is being re-claimed by rural-based amateur historians.

By Joyce Sasse

The almost forgotten story of Annora Brown, a significant Canadian artist, is being re-claimed by rural-based amateur historians.

Just as the Biblical Ezekiel witnessed an array of dry bones coming back to life and rising up as “an exceeding great army”, something similar is becoming a reality in Southern Alberta. All of this thanks to a number of amateur historians, conservationists, artists and educators from the region.
Annora Brown, a quiet introverted single woman, grew up in the frontier community of Fort Macleod. Soon after attending the Ontario Art School, she was called back home (1931) to care for her invalid mother. In spite of the demanding rigors of care-giving, she responded to her inner calling as artist and writer. Her focus was on the landscape and culture of her home region. Her unfolding story can be found on the website www.annorabrown.ca.

What is most noteworthy, seventy-five years later, is that identifying her legacy is now recognized to be significant by the likes of Parks Canada, programs in the regional college and university, through efforts being made to have her work published (and re-published), and by the sharing of her story through various forms of media.

How many stories are buried in our rural communities? Stories that could give new perspective and new depth to what it means to be rural! Stories that say "We Matter"!

These stories are like good tonic for building spiritual resilience in local communities.

**Remembering the Fifty-Dollar Bride**

*Diversity is an important aspect of a rural community's spiritual wellness.*

By Joyce Sasse

Diversity is an important aspect of a rural community's spiritual wellness.

Fifty Dollars was what the Norwegian fur trader Charlie Smith offered her family so the teenaged Marie Rose Delorme would become his bride in 1877. It was a substantial offer!

Marie Rose had received a formal education from the Nuns at St. Boniface and was well taught in Metis-traditions by her mom. Theirs was a well-to-do family.

Who would guess that she would give birth to 17 children, most of them while she managed their Jug-Handle Ranch near Pincher Creek, Alberta? In addition, she had her own business side-line making gloves and tents for CPR workmen. She ran a Boarding House in town, was a mid-wife and knew her healing herbs. She was also a folk historian / storyteller and correspondent for newspapers in the district. “While she made no pretentions of being a historian, her work contains ‘authentic history’ ... a simple record of other days in our Western land.” This most colourful person died at 98 years of age (1980).

To have her story told by her own Metis people (Metis Local 1880) at our Multicultural Friendship Group meeting was much appreciated. We felt privileged, too, to have her Great Grandson make a special effort to be present.

The multicultural connections we have in our community are amazing. Our group enjoys gathering over a rich variety of foods six times a year to share traditions and interests and celebrate our diversity. Initially we became organized because new immigrants were arriving and we didn’t want to leave them feeling isolated. What we found was that many “locals” who had
raised their families in the community hadn’t, until now, been able to talk about the traditions they held dear. There is much we want to share as we learn from each other.

The interest shown through participation in the *Multicultural Friendship Group* seems to be an important way to contribute toward building a healthy community.

**CIRCLE-M NEWS**

**Doctor of Ministry (DMin) Program - 2018**

Are you currently in ministry and wanting to take your ministry further? Do you have a project you’re interested in carrying out in your community? Are you looking for additional theological and theoretical foundations for your ministry? A Doctor of Ministry degree can help you respond to these questions!

The DMin Program at the Saskatoon Theological Union will be accepting applications to the program until **June 1, 2018**. (Our next intake beyond 2018 will be in 2020).

The DMin program at the Saskatoon Theological Union (STU) is a 3-year, in-community/in-ministry program that helps you engage with theological and theoretical foundations for qualitative research in your ministry or community. Together with a cohort of peers, you will engage in practical, reflective, engaged learning, in intensive and online courses. The courses provide the base to deepen your practice of ministry and to engage your ministry site and community in a project that will enhance their overall ministry.

For more information, please contact the DMin Director, Rev. Dr. Jennifer Janzen-Ball at dmin.director@usask.ca or 306.966.8943. You can also find more information at [www.standrews.ca](http://www.standrews.ca) and [www.usask.ca/stu/luther](http://www.usask.ca/stu/luther)

**Working for Rural Communities**

*Canadian Rural Church Network (CRCN)* is an organization of persons who have a passion for enhancing the quality of life in rural communities ... We believe that feelings of isolation and despair can be overcome when people of the land gather to share stories about positive possibilities... Our vision is to be a supporting network for rural church and rural community development in Canada. Through the internet and modern communication, ecumenical partners are able to:

- Support each other
- Help articulate the rural story and spiritual values
- Affirm the Church’s role at the heart of small communities.
- Exchange information and resources across Canada and around the world.
- Advocate on behalf of the rural perspective
• Reflect the importance of community values in a global society.

Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry (CiRCLe M) equips rural clergy and congregations for a deeper and more vital engagement with their communities. (CRCN & CiRCLe M share this newsletter and a common love for rural churches.)

International Rural Churches Association (IRCA) is a network of rural Christians from around the world. Members seek to support one another as they connect the gospel and rural life in their various contexts. (CRCN & CiRCLe-M work in association with the IRCA.)

LINKS

1. Reaching Out Through a Blog
   A weekly spiritual reflections blog called “Country Preacher’s Notes”
   By Joyce Sasse

   Found online at http://circle-m.ca/blog

   It can be delivered to your e-mail box if you let Joyce know your address. Email jsasse@telusplanet.net.

2. TIPS ON HOW TO LIVE WITH RESPECT IN CREATION
   By Angie Bug

   Conducting a Home Electricity Audit – Phantom Load

   Phantom load is the power something uses when it’s turned off. Things that have a light, clock, program, or are Wi-Fi connected, or are instant-on, will have a phantom load.

   Let’s look at electricity use in our houses. Our goal will be to find out how many electrical devices we have and how many of them have phantom load. Then we’ll work on reducing.

   To start, get a pencil and paper and make a list of everything you have that plugs in. (For now, we’ll skip things that are wired-in like ceiling lights, and furnace fans). Then, note beside each item if you think it might have a phantom load.

   Once you have that list, try to estimate how many hours/day you use it. For example, one light in our living room is on from when the living room starts to get dark until 10pm. In the winter, that is
five hours but in summer it’s about two. So, on average, it would be three and a half hours/day. We watch more TV on the weekend but almost none throughout the week, so we average about one hour per day. The chart for our living room is below.

If you want to take it a step further, you can use a Watt meter (also called a Power or Energy meter) to measure the phantom load and the energy consumed when something is running. SES has a couple of Watt meters we can loan out, as does Saskatoon Light and Power. Contact me if you want to get your hands on one.

Now, the important part. What have you found out and what will you do about it?

Phantom load can be up to 1/10th of the energy consumed in our homes. I read an article recently about someone who discovered that his TV, with all its attachments, was using 7% of his household electricity. You can use a power bar, or a smart or timed power bar to cut off the phantom load.

Should some electrical items be replaced with more efficient versions? If there are things on your list that you never, or rarely use, maybe you could unplug them to get rid of the phantom load. Maybe you could give some of them away to get rid of the clutter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Phantom Load</th>
<th>Hours/day</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lamp in corner (LED)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Ensure program matches sunset time. Or replace with a smarter timer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamp on piano (LED)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Remember to turn off when done reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital picture frame</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Normally unplugged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speakers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>On Smart Power bar, so when TV turns off, power is cut to other items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable Box</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Android box</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD /VCR</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unplug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you learn something you want to share, or if you have questions, you can always contact me at angieb@environmentalsociety.ca. I’d love to hear about your successes and challenges.

_For thoughts, facts and practical suggestions for living sustainably, visit http://www.circle-m.ca/rural-issues/social-concerns/index.php#environment._