



The newsletter
of the

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada

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Summer 2004

Spring Council report

Old & new: programs vital to WICC vision

The agenda at the recent Spring Council may have been packed, but members of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC), who had gathered from across the country, still found time to fit worship in with their work.

Prayer and song were intermingled with strategic planning during WICC's annual spring meeting, held at St. Joseph's College in Toronto May 28-30. This was the first meeting of the council under the leadership of acting executive director Pat Allinson. The meeting also reviewed the programs that WICC provides to the ecumenical community.

Council members heard of the positive feedback from across Canada regarding the 2004 World Day of Prayer, which was written by the women of Panama. WICC anticipates another successful celebration on March 4, 2005, when people in more than 170 countries around the world will participate in the World Day of Prayer service prepared by the women of Poland.

During the council meeting, WICC members celebrated the launch of

Healing Waters: Churches Working to End Violence Against Women, which is being distributed to churches and others in ministry across Canada. *Healing Waters*, which completely updates the popular *Hands to End Violence Against Women*, has been written by Carol Penner, a freelance writer and chaplain with a doctorate in theology. For copies, please contact the WICC office.

Plans are underway for the summer issue of WICC's magazine, *Making Waves*, which will provide analysis, background, stories and other resources on anti-racism. The fall issue will focus attention on violence against women as part of WICC's contribution to "On the Wings of a Dove", a World Council of Churches' campaign to overcome violence against women and children, a key part of its Decade to Overcome Violence. This issue of *Making Waves* will also include important resources such as the December 6 service, and encourage Canadian women to learn about and participate in the Sisters in Spirit campaign organized by the Native Women's Association of Canada.



Healing Waters: Author Carol Penner was on hand at WICC's Spring Council to help celebrate the launch of our new resource *Healing Waters: Churches Working to End Violence Against Women*. Read about this new resource on page 8.

We're moving!

The office of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada will be moving a few blocks from its current address to a newly renovated space on **August 31**. The new location, in the Toronto School of Theology building, gives WICC an opportunity to share space with other ecumenical groups, including the Canadian Council of Churches. Our phone number will stay the same, but please note our new address:

**47 Queen's Park Crescent East
Toronto, ON M5S 2C3**

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WICC NEWS

is brought to you by

WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL OF CANADA

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Letter from the President

Connecting with our neighbours

Greetings! We have recently experienced another World Day of Prayer with good participation across Canada. Listed in this newsletter are the recipients of the WDP 2003 grants. Because of your generosity, many women and projects in the two-thirds world will thrive – thank you for your prayers and financial support.

The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada provides women throughout our country with an opportunity to share spirituality and to gather together in prayer. For some of us who live "in the boonies", this is one way we can connect with women concerned about issues nationally and internationally. Every year we enter into the spirit and needs of the WDP writing country. Suggestions are given to us so that we might reach out to these women in solidarity.

If you haven't seen a copy of *Healing Waters*, I urge you to order a copy today. There are many situations and ministries that will benefit from this user-friendly guide. Become acquainted with the information in the guide so that you can be a proponent of its use. This work is direct follow-up to the World March of Women; you may remember that acknowledging and working to end violence against women was one of the World March's main platforms. We are indebted to the author, Carol Penner, for her insights and skills in writing a thorough and helpful guide.

WICC is on the move in the fall. Our new location will be at the Toronto School of Theology. We are excited to be moving into this shared ecumenical space. How fitting! We believe the perspective brought by the women of Canada through WICC will be an important contribution to this church work setting. Please note our change of address.

Happy summer. May the pause be refreshing.

- Claire Heron

WICC NEWS

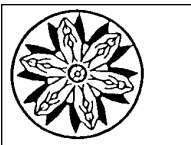
is published and distributed by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. Established in 1918, WICC is a national council of representatives from 11 church partners.

The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is a national Christian women's council encouraging women to grow in ecumenism, to share their spirituality and prayer, to engage in dialogue about women's concerns, to respond to national and international issues affecting women, and to take action together for justice.

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**New address effective August 31:
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Fellowship of the Least Coin

Persevere in the small things

As Christians we know there is value in small things. Jesus taught that, just as tree grows from a tiny seed and a small amount of yeast can leaven a whole batch of bread, so every prayer made, every action taken, every wrong righted, can help to bring peace, justice and reconciliation to our hurting world. Many such prayers and actions make up the amazing movement which is the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

I was reminded of the effectiveness of many small actions the other day when I went to the storage shed to look for my daughter's old dolls' cradle, with the intention of cleaning it up and giving it to my granddaughter for her birthday. I had also stored a big bag of tissue paper in the shed. Imagine my surprise when I

opened up the box containing the cradle and found the whole empty space full of a squirrel's nest made of hundreds of torn off pieces of coloured tissue paper! That squirrel must have spent hours and hours tearing off the pieces and carrying them out of the bag and into the box in order to make a beautiful, functional nest for its little ones. Are we as persistent in our commitment to FLC? Do we return to our place of prayer again and again, faithfully giving our least coin each time?

In Matthew Fox's *Original Blessing*, he talks about the importance of creativity, of making something "with the simplest of materials and out of the nothingness of one's existence". He quotes many holy and wise men and women who have found that the way to God is

within us. The way to God is in our perseverance in the little things.

Our call is to see Christ in every person we meet, and to glory in creation as a new bud on a tree or a raindrop on the window – all little things, but they each contribute as the yeast does to leaven the loaf, or as a tiny piece of tissue paper does to make a squirrel's nest.

So we must not give up. Even though the world seems to be far from peace and justice we must continue to be faithful, persistent, forgiving and creative. We must continue to contribute our prayers and our least coins, playing our part in this seemingly small but far-reaching movement, the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

- Jocelyn Rait
ICFLC vice-president

The
WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL OF CANADA
invites you to

Give your community a helping hand ~
take part
in the

Great Canadian COFFEE Party

SUPPORT INITIATIVES TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

what?

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when?

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where?

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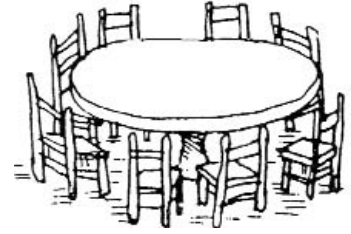


Host a Great Canadian Coffee Party!

SUPPORT INITIATIVES TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

When?

The weekend of October 2 & 3, 2004, or choose another fall date.
Then decide on a time and place.



What?

Invite your church group, book club, sewing circle, or faithful friends to meet together over a cup of coffee and talk about how you are affected by violence in your community, in Canada and around the world. Advertise this event by photocopying the poster on the other side of this sheet and filling in the details. By asking those who attend to make a donation of the price of a cup of coffee (or more!), you can use this event to raise money for a local women's shelter or national initiative against violence against women, or organize your own community non-violence activity.

You don't have to drink coffee to take part in this Canada-wide event. Feel free to come up with your own ideas to suit you and your community. You could raise \$2 or \$200 ~ it doesn't matter how much money you raise, but only that you find a way to make a difference.

And while you're gathered together, take the time to learn more about the issue of violence against women. We encourage you to use our new resource, *Healing Waters: Churches Working to End Violence Against Women*. Or you might like to invite someone from the group you're raising money for to talk about their organization, or use the time you spend together to organize a service in memory of the young women who died in Montreal on December 6, 15 years ago (a free liturgy is available from the WICC office). You can also find a wide range of information on the internet.

A note about coffee...

Some of you will have heard about Fair Trade coffee. Coffee companies which import and roast Fair Trade coffee guarantee farmers a fair price and access to credit. In turn, the farmers work their land in environmentally friendly ways. With Fair Trade, everybody benefits. Look for Fair Trade coffee in a coffee supplier or health food store in your community.



Why?

One of the priorities for the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is to work on issues of violence against women. One of the ways we do this is by supporting the efforts of church and community groups, creating resources and helping to connect people who are working on similar issues. The World Council of Churches has declared 2001 - 2010 the Decade to Overcome Violence; this fall the "On the Wings of a Dove" campaign focuses on overcoming violence against women and children. We encourage you to help overcome violence against women by taking part in the Great Canadian Coffee Party.

What next?

We are not asking for any money ~ all we are asking is that you let us know what step you took to help overcome violence against women. Last year, groups from across Canada raised nearly \$1,100 for local women's shelters and other organizations. Call our office at 416-929-5184 or visit our website at www.wicc.org to let us know how much money you raised and what group(s) you supported. That's it.

Thank you for participating in the Great Canadian Coffee Party!



The **Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada** is a national council of representatives from 11 partner churches, focusing on four main concerns of social justice, women's issues, ecumenism, and the growth of women's spirituality. Our work includes coordination of the World Day of Prayer and Fellowship of the Least Coin movements in Canada. For more information: Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, 394 Bloor Street West, Suite 201, Toronto, ON M5S 1X4 Tel: 416-929-5184 Fax: 416-929-4064 E-mail: wicc@wicc.org Website: www.wicc.org

A wonderful WICC weekend!



Old and new friends gathered at Spring Council, which started off with the launch of our new resource *Healing Waters* and continued with a presentation by Gail Allan, who recently received her ThD for her thesis on the ongoing work of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. Clockwise from top left: Lola Murphy and guest Janet MacPherson; guest Jeanne Rowles and Jocelyn Rait; Megumi Matsuo Saunders; Roma Paul; guest and speaker Gail Allan; President Claire Heron; and Judith Snowdon.

WICC active in anti-racism work

At its recent Spring Council meeting, WICC adopted an anti-racism policy statement that articulates the Council's commitment to work for racial justice both within its own structures and in the broader church.

As Canadian women of faith, we want to educate ourselves and identify ways to eliminate racism and white privilege wherever they exist in our churches and our communities. One way WICC is doing this is through participation in the steering committee of the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network – a network that supports those

working to create an anti-racist church. This network is housed with the Canadian Council of Churches.

The next issue of *Making Waves* will be dedicated to resources to help groups address the issue of racism. Articles will include a look at the history of racism in Canadian churches, Bible study and workshop resources, stories about the experience of racism, as well as women's efforts to build bridges across racial differences. We invite our readers to use these materials in their groups and congregations.

- Norah McMurtry

Briefly

Creating Justice

A planning committee has been busy organizing the second **Women Doing Theology in Canada / Des femmes font de la théologie au Canada** event, to be held at Jean-de-Brébeuf College in Montreal on June 9 - 12, 2005. This bilingual, interspiritual, feminist and womanist gathering will focus on the theme "Creating Justice, Affirming Difference". More information will be available on our website soon, or e-mail WICC's Program Coordinator Norah McMurtry at mcmurtry@wicc.org.

Grant recipients 2004

The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is pleased to announce that offerings received during the World Day of Prayer in 2004 assisted with the following projects:

INTERNATIONAL

Distressed Women's Training (Society for Training & Rehabilitation - STAR), Kotalipara of Gopalganj district, Bangladesh: \$1,500. Goal: to provide training on health-care, hygiene, environmental and human rights and homestead poultry/vegetable farming methods poor women.

Rehabilitation for Girls & Women (Sree Madhava Vidya Peetham), Ongole, Prakasam District, Andhra Pradesh, India: \$2,000. Goal: to provide training and education, promote leadership and human rights, and encourage self-reliance among the disabled, destitute and disadvantaged.

Outreach to the Arab Community Project (Haifa Battered Women's Hotline), Haifa and the North of Israel: \$2,000. Goal: to raise awareness of violence against women, develop relations with Arab and Roman Catholic women, and accompany those leaving the cycle of violence.

St. Anne's Women's Domestic Production Project (Jamaican Self-Help Organization), Hannah Town, Kingston, Jamaica: \$2,000. Goal: to provide training in sewing skills, marketing & production to help inner-city women struggling with poverty to become self-sufficient.

Female Human Rights Training Project (Mwito Self Help Group), Kisii, Kenya: \$1,500. Goal: to provide counselling and support for victims of Female Genital Mutilation and other forms of gender violence, educate women about their rights, and network with other rights' groups.

Retraining of Female Circumcisers (Nyansakia Wise Women Group), Kisii, Kenya: \$1,500. Goal: to educate about the dangers of Female Circumcision and Female Genital Mutilation, train women on alternative ways of making a living, and help them start small income projects.

Inter-African Committee (Match International), West Pokot District, Kenya: \$1,500. Goal: to provide affordable health care and essential drugs, counselling services to victims of Female Genital Mutilation, and to train traditional birth attendants willing to abandon the FGM practice.

Regional Women's Seminar (World Student Christian Federation), Beirut, Lebanon: \$2,500. Goal: to provide an opportunity for open discussion on sensitive subjects concerning Arab women, such as: domestic violence, lack of educational opportunities and health issues.

Women's Voice (Match International), Malawi: \$1,500. Goal: to promote human rights, conduct HIV/AIDS awareness among young girls in schools, and provide community education programs on HIV/AIDS.

TDD (Nepal) Drinking Water Systems (World Neighbours Canada Society), Ramechhap District, Nepal: \$3,000. Goal: to provide technical assistance and engineering for communities which build their own gravity-flow drinking water systems.

Gender Program (Universidad Politecnica de Nicaragua - UPOLI), Managua, Nicaragua: \$2,500. Goal: to develop sensitization around gender inequalities, train faculty, develop curriculum, and organize activities with women students to encourage their empowerment.

Intervention Against Domestic Violence (Asociacion Evangelica de Asesoramiento Familiar - AEDAF), Managua, Nicaragua: \$1,500. Goal: to provide counselling to victims of violence, training to church leaders, and build awareness in Protestant churches of domestic violence issues.

Rice Treading, Vegetable & Hog Raising Project (People's Organization for Social Transformation - POST), Cayapa, Lagangilang, Abra, Philippines: \$3,000. Goal: to provide women access to affordable credit, and increase their income and business management skills.

Home Based Care Network (Tabitha Ministries), Sweetwaters, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: \$2,500. Goal: to provide preventative AIDS education, caregivers' training, and home-care for AIDS patients.

Tamar Campaign in Africa (World Council of Churches), Geneva, Switzerland: \$2,500. Goal: to train educators to raise awareness around issues of violence against women and children in their own communities.

Girl Child Education Convention (Nyasura Women Group), Bunda Township, Mara District, Tanzania: \$2,000. Goal: to organize a convention to address barriers to formal education for girls, and to produce and distribute a leaflet on the benefit of educating girls.

Exchanging Knowledge and Experience (World March of Women), Brazil, Burkina Faso, Rwanda: \$3,000. Goal: to facilitate information-sharing about actions against poverty and violence against women.

From Victims of Armed Conflict to Agents for Change: Women's Struggle for Justice (Inter Pares), Mexico, Guatemala & El Salvador: \$3,000. Goal: to promote healing and empowerment of women survivors of armed conflict through legal and other support.

CANADA

A Micah Project - Doing Justice With Refugees (Action Refugies Montreal), Montreal, Quebec: \$1,000. Goal: to promote awareness of refugee issues in churches through use of Bible studies and activities.

Bridge Funding for Settlement Services (FCJ Hamilton House Refugee Project), Toronto, Ontario: \$2,500. Goal: to provide temporary shelter to refugee women and children and help refugees and other uprooted people adjust to Canadian society.

Survivors of Violence Support Group (North York Women's Centre), North York, Ontario: \$2,500. Goal: to provide support to women who have experienced abuse and help them reduce their risk of future violence.

Just Work! WSCF North America Region Pilgrimage (Student Christian Movement), New York, Washington, Toronto and Ottawa: \$2,000. Goal: to educate students about the economic impact of globalization, build their awareness to faith networks and commitment to justice.

Peace Building Through Training (YWCA of Peterborough, Victoria and Haliburton), Peterborough, Ontario: \$3,000. Goal: to develop and facilitate anti-racism/anti-oppression and conflict resolution workshops.

Women Accessing Conflict Resolution Services (Conflict Mediation Services of Downsview), Jane-Finch area, Toronto, Ontario: \$2,000. Goal: to reduce women's vulnerability to community conflict and involvement in the criminal justice system through leadership in mediation.

Participation, Acknowledgement, Commitment and Transformation (PACT) (The Canadian Centre for Women's Education and Development), Scarborough, Ontario: \$3,000. Goal: to help young women to stop re-offending by improving their communication and life-skills, and gaining education or employment.

History Project (Centre for Christian Studies), Winnipeg, Manitoba: \$3,000. Goal: to research and write the history of the Centre.

Women's Program (The Global Gathering Place), Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: \$3,000. Goal: to assist refugee and immigrant women.

Learning Centre Literacy Project (WISH Drop In Centre Society), Vancouver, British Columbia: \$3,000. Goal: to provide literacy skills and empowerment to marginalized women.

Proceeds from the World Day of Prayer also support the international organization, cover the costs of printing and distributing WDP services and resources throughout Canada and support the ongoing work of WICC.



Top left: These participants at the WDP service hosted by Holy Family Roman Catholic church in Regina, Saskatchewan, wore Panamanian dress.

Above: the altar at the WDP service in Viking, Alberta, was decorated with food, baskets, pottery and other items.

Left: Panamanian food was served at Toronto's Festival Day, held in November 2003.



World Day of Prayer report

Shaping our future in faith

On March 5, 2004, I was one of four leaders who conducted our local World Day of Prayer service at St. James United Church in St. John's, Newfoundland. This year's service was written by the women of Panama on the theme "In Faith, Women Shape the Future". Our service was well attended; more than 400 people came together from different denominations to worship. Organizing a service is quite rewarding, especially as we had a great deal of positive feedback.

The service brought back memories of August 2003 when I was among 229 women from 101 different countries who attended the Quadrennial Meeting of the WDP International Committee in Swanwick, England (I was one of the four delegates from North America). We gathered together to discuss and decide the focus countries and themes for upcoming years. Meeting and sharing with this multi-faceted group from so many countries and diverse cultures

cemented my belief that Christian values are alive and strong in women throughout the world.

At that meeting, it was by faith that I met Inez Proverbs of Panama. Inez was my Bible Study partner for the week. While sharing and praying with Inez, I became aware of the many issues and concerns of the women of Panama.

Panamanian women have struggled socially for economic and political recognition for years. They still seek equal opportunities for education and voting rights. Inez and I shared common experiences, as she told me of the many fishermen and farmers in her country. However, Inez, coming from a tropical climate, found it difficult to relate to the cold climate that our Canadian fishermen have to overcome; especially on the East Coast!

The women of Panama work hard and are making great strides for equality among the sexes. Panama's former President was a woman, and she advo-

cated for the concerns of her people, especially the woman and children.

As WDP participants, let us continue to pray for the people of Panama, as we, like them, continue to move forward in faith to shape our futures.

*Roma Paul
Acting Chair
Ecumenical Celebrations
and Liturgies Committee*

WDP 2005

The 2005 World Day of Prayer service has been written by the women of Poland. The theme is "Let Our Light Shine" and the Bible readings are Matthew 5:13-16; 6:22-23; Ephesians 5:8-14; and 2 Kings 5:1-15a. WDP resources, which include the worship booklet, Leadership Guide, and video, will be available at the end of October. Please contact the WICC office at 416-929-5184 for more information.

Council news

WICC has welcomed two new members:

Lola Murphy, an elected council member from Warton, Ontario, is a Roman Catholic, a mom, a mental health therapist, and is also studying for her Doctorate in Ministry (her thesis topic: "Spirituality of Women in Pre-Menopause").



Marilyn Fortin is our new appointee from the United Church of Canada. Marilyn lives in Stirling, Ontario, and is also the Bay of Quinte conference ICW President.



Sylvia Lisk Vanhaverbeke, a former WICC council member, was elected chair of the World Day of Prayer International Committee during the WDPIC Quadrennial meeting held in Swanwick, England, last summer.



WICC's **Fall Council** and Annual General Meeting will be held November 19 - 21. Look for a report in the winter issue of WICC NEWS.

Justice & Peace report

Resource a team effort

Why should we address violence against women? This was our first question when we met at WICC's Fall Council in 2000. At this Social Justice committee meeting, the shared experiences of 11 Council members poured out. This issue is important because of: "my daughter", "my sister", "my friends", "my work in a shelter", "my involvement in a Montreal memorial service every year", "my being on-call for women in abusive relationships", and so on.

Council members from across Canada and a variety of denominations recognize the importance of WICC's work for violence against women from an ecumenical Christian perspective. We see how this work connects to the World Council of Churches' "Wings of a Dove" campaign against violence against women (part of its Decade to Overcome Violence), the Sisters in Spirit campaign (see below), and this year's 15th anniversary of the Montreal massacre. These campaigns and events show how our prayers and actions are part of the global struggle to end violence against women. This is how the dream of *Healing Waters* was born.

Now this dream has become reality,

thanks to the patient work of Program Coordinator Norah McMurtry, Carol Penner's research and writing, and input from council members and many others.

This new resource is designed to be useful and accessible; it includes theological and Bible study material, worship ideas and workshops, practical advice and handouts.

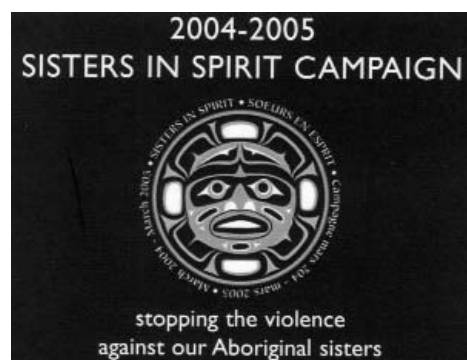
Although it may have taken us more than three years to prepare, our dream is that every church in Canada will have a copy of *Healing Waters* in the next three years! Many women's groups are purchasing this resource to donate to their church libraries or pastors. We invite you to participate in our campaign by telling people about *Healing Waters*. You, too, can be part of God's healing river that is bringing love and justice to our world.

- Megumi Matsuo Saunders
Chair, Justice & Peace Committee

Churches join Sisters in Spirit

Over the past 20 years, about 500 Aboriginal women have gone missing in communities across Canada. In Vancouver, more than 50 women have gone missing in that city's Downtown Eastside. Sixty percent were Aboriginal, and most were young. No bodies of those missing women have been found. In Canada, many deaths and disappearances of Aboriginal women go unreported.

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has started a Sisters in Spirit campaign to bring honour and respect back to our sisters who have gone missing and been brutally murdered.



In support, the Anglican and United churches have developed liturgies and workshops along with a beautiful poster with campaign details on the back. Order by e-mail: lstott@united-church.ca or sistersinspirit@national.anglican.ca, or contact Lynne Stott at 416-231-7680 (x4046).

Honour the spirit of our sisters, and take action for justice!

WICC Resources

- ✓ **Healing Waters: Churches Working to End Violence Against Women** (164 pgs) \$25
This practical handbook written by Carol Penner includes: advice on responding to a woman who has been abused; handouts on abuse, myths and shelters; workshop, Bible study, and worship resources; an historical overview of violence against women; theological and biblical background; and church and community action ideas. (English only)
- ✓ **Starting with Women's Lives, Changing Today's Economy** (94 pgs) \$15
An illustrated hands-on manual by Bev Burke & Suzanne Doerge for facilitating "The Wall": a tool that helps women do a gender analysis of today's economy. (English & French)
- ✓ **Some Women Amazed Us** (114 pgs) \$27
This book, written by former council member Bernice Santor, features 12 Bible study sessions with named and unnamed Biblical women, and also includes colour prints of five quilts of Biblical women and accompanying monologues. (English only)
- ✓ **December 6 Liturgy** (4 pgs) **Free**
This is the 15th anniversary of the massacre of 14 women in Montreal. WICC prepares an annual liturgy of remembrance and hope. Available October 1. (English & French)