

# TAKE FIVE WITH FIVE OAKS

## NOVEMBER 2011 EDITION

Five Oaks is a United Church Education and Retreat Centre located on a beautiful piece of property near Paris, Ontario

### Identity and Meaning of the Church in Changing Times

In the beginning...there was community. In our most basic understanding of the Christian faith, there is community. We believe in a triune God, the persons of God being in community. We believe that worshipping this God together is integral to how we grow in faith. For much of history, our faith communities (churches) held a high place of significance within our society.

But now it is 2011. I don't need the church for community. My significant communities may be my place of work, my gym buddies, my Facebook friends.. So as communities of faith, we are left wondering what is the "Identity and Meaning of the Church in Changing Times?"

Andrew Root led a group of us through this question at Five Oaks from November. 1 - 3. As we grappled with trying to understand the culture around us, we always returned to this question. Perhaps God needs us to be a community where people can be "real", where broken people build relationships, where we wrestle with God. My Facebook friends may be an entertaining community for me, but who is going to be there to hold my hand when my sister dies suddenly at the age of 42, or I lose my job, or I am burned by someone I love? Who will dare to enter the ring with me as I wrestle with the God of the universe over my questions of "why"?

Can we be that community for people? Can we go and be "real" in the grit of life. Perhaps that is where we will encounter God.

- Written by Barb Smith-Young

### J2B Update

With the holidays just around the corner the CYFM office is a buzz with the 15th and final Journey to Bethlehem (J2B). This year's theme is "A New Beginning." Through this fantastic journey you will experience the joys and challenges of a new beginning just as those did the night Jesus was born.

You and your family can come experience this wondrous event on Tuesday, December 6 and Wednesday, December 7th, from 6pm to 8pm. During the event we ask that those attending help support the local food banks by bringing a non-perishable food item when they come to the journey. Any and all donations are welcome and we look forward to having you join us this season.

Families, individuals and youth groups are invited to take a break from the busyness and join us for an afternoon of community building games, inspiring worship, and helping to set up Journey to Bethlehem's props. Preparing for the journey will take place on Sunday, December 4th from 3pm to 7pm, dinner provided. We ask the participants bring a small donation for dinner. If you would like more information, or can help with the journey in other ways please contact Marybeth Kigar at [cyfm@fiveoaks.on.ca](mailto:cyfm@fiveoaks.on.ca).



November comes  
And November goes,  
With the last red berries  
And the first white snows.

With night coming early,  
And dawn coming late,  
And ice in the bucket  
And frost by the gate.

The fires burn  
And the kettles sing,  
And earth sinks to rest  
Until next spring.

- Elizabeth Coatsworth

### Upcoming Programs

#### Adult

- A Word for All Seasons: Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Program, Nov 18, tuition: \$300. Check the website for details.
- Silent Retreat, January 27-29, Cost; \$295

#### Children, Youth, Families

- Rethinking Youth Ministry, January 27-29, Cost; \$250
- Confirmation Retreats, Feb 24-26, March 23-25, Cost: \$150

### Other Five Oaks Services

Did you know Five Oaks provides these other services?

#### Self Directed Retreats

You are more than welcome to come to Five Oaks for a personal retreat of your design or simply stay at Five Oaks before or after any one of our programs to deepen the experience. As a part of a self-directed retreat you may want to meet with a spiritual guide. We can make arrangements for you to meet with a Five Oaks spiritual guide if you wish.

#### Bed and Breakfast

Consider staying at Five Oaks before or after a program for bed and breakfast.