



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA  
L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

## November 9, 2016

I have run in the intense heat of Ontario summers and the deep cold of Arctic winters, but if I am ever asked about the perfect day for running, what will come to mind is this past weekend in Toronto. Cool but not cold, with the sky deep blue and yellow and orange leaves on the ground and still clinging to tree branches.

On these glorious late fall days, the words from Isaiah 65 in this week's lectionary passage feel so right.

*.... Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.*



As I write this, it is election day in the United States, after many painful and nasty months of campaigning. By the time you receive this note, it will all be over, and some people will be filled with joy and some will be

hurt or angry or afraid. I find myself grieving for the disillusionment and cynicism that has infected a nation that seeks to exemplify the high ideals of equality, human rights, and democracy that are expressed in its founding documents.

In the midst of a tumultuous time, it can be harder to receive Isaiah's prophecies.

*.... I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.*

With Remembrance Day coming up on Friday, we are remembering other tumultuous times in human history, and the war-torn places in today's world. We think of young men (and more recently, women), going off to situations they could never be prepared for, believing in the need to protect the people and values they held dear at home. We think of families, especially of children, whose lives are thrown into chaos as war destroys the world they have known. We think of the lives that are lost and those that can never be repaired.

As we pray for peace in our world, it can be hard to put our faith in the words about, "*new heavens and a new Earth,*" and "*former things (that) shall not be remembered or come to mind.*"

It can be harder to put our faith in those promises in the midst of times of turmoil and pain, and yet surely it is for those struggling in the worst of times that those words are meant.

*They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

*They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD — and their descendants as well.*

*Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like  
the ox.*

If faith is easy in the good times of life, it is most needed in the trying  
times that are part of every life.

Peace be with you,

Nora

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*This message has been sent to subscribers to the General Secretary's Letter, "Note from Nora." To subscribe,  
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