

## INVITATION TO FNMI LENTEN TALKING CIRCLES 2026

In her book **MEDICINE WHEEL FOR THE PLANET: A JOURNEY TOWARD PERSONAL AND ECOLOGICAL HEALING (Afred K. Knopf Canada, 2024)**, Jennifer Grenz recounts her journey over the years in ecological restoration, dealing with invasive species on the lands, in the waters, and in the forests of British Columbia. As a member of Lytton First Nation, she is Nlaka'pamux, cousins to the Coastal Salish Peoples living in the interior where the Fraser and the Thompson Rivers meet. The community of Kumsheen has been a centre of these traditional territories for over 10,000 years. Her great-grandparents were Secwepemc (Shuswap), speaking their Interior Salish language fluently and living on their ranch. Her great-grandmother introduced the author to gardening as a child. Dr. Grenz grew up watching her grandparents and extended family members care for animals on the land and for fish in the waters flowing westward into the Pacific Ocean. Her father took her out in rubber boots along the creeks and among the shrubs. The sounds of moving water and the smells of cottonwood filled her senses. It was not surprising to anyone in her extended family that she would attend university and study ecological restoration. For two decades, she uprooted invasive species and then replanted with Indigenous vegetation, becoming a respected environmentalist whom people sought for her knowledge and her expertise. With others, she also devoted time and energy in protecting salmon habitats. Her persistence in twenty years of battling with invasive species drew others into remote areas of British Columbia to work with her. As an educator and social activist, she inspired others to participate in projects to restore natural habitats for plants, fish, and birds. With a concern about integrating her scientific knowledge with her Indigenous teachings and ceremonies, Jennifer Grenz was challenged by an Elder to sit, watch, and listen at the edge of a field where invasive species were making their presence known. This challenge provided direction for further post-graduate work. In seeking treatments for daughter, the author was challenged consider the healing properties derived from weeds. When she contracted Lymes Disease, her doctor challenged her to consider the benefits of using a treatment based on the invasive plant which she had spent decades removing from hectares of forests. Further experimentation in her garden nourished her understanding about her Indigenous understanding of the universe as well as her understanding of the role which scientific knowledge plays in caring for this planet. As part of her graduate studies work in establishing and maintaining food security, Jennifer Genz went to live among the Hul'qumi'num People (Cowichan) on the south central part of Vancouver Island, her Coastal Salish cousins. Ye'yumnuts was their ancestral home for over 4,500 years. This archeological dig reveals that a very large community thrived at this site prior to the arrival of Europeans. Jennifer Grenz was challenged to consider how such a large population fed themselves over thousands of years. In her ponderings, Jennifer Grenz applied the teachings and ceremonies to the work of understanding how this Indigenous community flourished and to the work of healing our planet for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

Gii-wedinokwe (North Spirit Woman) Vivian Roy from Wikwemikong First Nation on Manitoulin Island has agreed to share her knowledge and experience with participants during our Lenten Talking Circles 2026. In talking about a dream to involve more Indigenous participants in our Talking Circles, Gii-wedinokwe agreed to speak with those she knows, including those from her extended family.

In working our way through **MEDICINE WHEEL FOR THE PLANET: A JOURNEY TOWARD PERSONAL AND ECOLOGICAL HEALING (Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2024)**, let us use the four sections set out by Jennifer Grenz and add a fifth section for a general review.

**A SPARK IN THE NORTH pp 17 to 73 on February 26**

**SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TO THE EAST pp. 77 to 121 on March 5**

**PREPARING FOR CHANGE IN THE SOUTH pp. 125 to 189 on March 12**

**HEAD MEETS HEART IN THE WEST pp 193 to 259 on March 19**

**CREATION STORIES AND JOURNEYING FORWARD on March 26**

In each Talking Circle, we learn to listen to each other in ways that are deeper and more complex than we do through ordinary conversation. We also learn to speak from our own experiences and from our heart about caring for the planet. Whether a participant is just beginning the journey to understand Indigenous people or have been on this journey for some time, each of us is equal in our times together. We usually begin introducing ourselves by identifying one piece of the author's writing which caught our attention and talking about how this piece impacts our own journey in caring for this planet. Sometimes, we also expand our time together by using some of the questions provided in the summary sent for preparation. When life gets in the way of reading a section, opportunities are available to share reflections about what other participants are learning.

During this coming Lent 2026, let us gather and share what we are learning from Jennifer Grenz and our experiences in the work of healing this planet. **Set aside Thursday evenings on February 26, March 5, 12, 19, and 26 from 7:30 to 9 pm to gather using a ZOOM format.** To register, contact the Trinity Office Administrator Kelly Clark at 905-727-6101. Some information and a few questions will sent to you to help in preparation along with the Trinity ZOOM link in the week prior to each Talking Circle. This book is available at Chapters/Indigo in paperback or from GOODMINDS for \$23.