



The Lutheran Urban Ministry
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February 2021 News from your Ministry Manager

Manitoba has been experiencing brutally cold days and nights in this first part of February. This is especially difficult for those who are homeless, or live in drafty accommodations, and for all those who must always walk to their destinations in terribly cold weather.

A huge thank you to all the knitters who have donated mitts, scarves and toques. These warm woollies were added to almost all of the 75 men's, 75 women's and 75 children's/youth Christmas gift bags; and they are being given to many who arrive to pick up bagged lunches and need extra warmth.

We are so grateful for this abundance of generosity and busy hands because we were able to give excess toques and scarves to *Greenway School, John. M. King School, and the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council – Welcome Place*. There are many West End children and refugee/new immigrant children who have warm heads and necks because of you. We are so happy to share this abundance with these inner-city schools and newcomers.

To all who have donated warm winter jackets and boots: We have often noticed that some in our Urban community are inadequately dressed - and our observation "you need a warmer jacket - hold on - and we'll go and get one for you right now" is met with happiness.

We look forward to the day that the pandemic is over and that we are safe to gather again for worship services, sharing circles and fellowship over coffee and tea. It is our commitment to ensure that health and safety at the Urban remains the primary focus.

Pandemic Notes:

Until Further Notice: the Urban is continuing the suspension of all regular programming (sit-down community meals, coffee hours, sharing circles, men's group, worship services, etc.) in the lower level of Lutheran Church of the Cross, due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Struggling and vulnerable single people and families (in the same numbers as pre-pandemic times when we were open downstairs) are continuing to come to the Urban - but for now bagged lunches 4x/week are distributed outside (Wednesday men's lunch, Wednesday & Thursday supper times and Sunday lunch). Our meal teams are happy to help us in this way and we are so very grateful for this. Our website calendar shows available dates for meal teams. Fellowship is happening briefly in the parking lot as long as weather permits! Worship services and sharing circles will resume when the pandemic is over.

- Mid-week and Sunday devotionals are emailed to me from Pastor Barry Bence, printed and tucked into lunch bags.
- We have changed our pre-pandemic emergency food bags to an equitable "one food item" (if enough in our pantry) per person (two items if a family) once or twice each week during the distribution of bagged lunches. Toques, mitts, etc. (and bi-weekly bread/pastries) are also distributed outside.
- Masks and 2 m social distancing are mandatory on the church sidewalk and parking lot. The line sometimes overflows to the city sidewalk if necessary. The Urban provides a disposable mask if needed.

The Lutheran Urban Ministry has so much gratitude for our volunteers and the meal teams; for the pantry donations, for the mitt/toque knitters/quilt makers; for the prayers; and for all those who donate financial support toward our operating expenses.

Our website has been updated with photos from Sunday, December 20th (www.theurban.ca). Please keep our vulnerable Lutheran Urban Ministry community in your prayers.

Please contact me: rhonda@theurban.ca for additional information, or to have your meal team added to the calendar.

Kind regards,
Rhonda Gorham, Ministry Manager, Lutheran Urban Ministry

We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of age, ability, health, ethnicity, gender identity, language, sexual orientation, life circumstances, marital status, race, or anything else which sometimes divides us. We welcome diversity and uniqueness. Our unity is in Christ, whose grace is freely given to all. All are welcome. The Lutheran Urban Ministry Corp. is a member of Reconciling Works – Lutherans for Full Participation www.reconcilingworks.org