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**“Reconciliation is getting to know one another”, Mary Simon, Governor General: National Post, July 26, 2021**

## December 2021 News from your Ministry Manager - *Christmas is in the air at the Urban!*

**Please check out our new video on our website, “Urban Gratitude” (many thanks to Rick Scherger).**

This video represents a microcosm of the caring hearts of those who stop by. I love it because it demonstrates the reality of pandemic challenges of having our Urban interactions outside our door – traffic noise and having to speak a little louder; and brief times for conversation because of the lineup on the sidewalk. We recognize the smiling eyes above the masks of all of our regular attendees!

**There are sure a lot of elves knitting up a storm!** The doorbell at the side door of Lutheran Church of the Cross has been ringing on Wednesdays more than usual - with kindly folk laden with winter jackets, quilts, pantry items, and wonderful things to tuck into the Urban Christmas gift bags.

**This pandemic has created challenges in the lives of everyone worldwide.** In Manitoba, our MNO congregations have responded with new ways of worship and connection. In the same way, our Lutheran Urban Ministry community has also responded to this pandemic with perseverance and faith that “this too will pass”. Our Urban connections have been on the church sidewalk and parking lot for the past 20 months!

**We are so very grateful for the so many different ways that the Urban is supported.** I always worry that I’m forgetting to thank someone.

**To our Urban community from all of us who are “the boots on the ground” outside at the Urban:** We are blessed to have your fellowship and kindness. We are fed by you in other ways than with food – our hearts are full. We look forward to the time when we can sit together in worship and in our sharing circles once again.

**Pandemic Notes: Pandemic worries are not yet over in Winnipeg and the Urban continues with the following:**

**Until Further Notice:** the Urban is continuing the suspension of all regular programming (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 - **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.*

- 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. Gloves, socks, seasonal jackets etc. (and weekly bread/pastries) are also distributed outside.
- **Masks and 2 m social distancing continue to be mandatory on the church sidewalk and parking lot.** The line sometimes overflows to the city sidewalk if necessary and all current gathering sizes are enforced as per provincial regulations. 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 prayers; and for all those who donate financial support toward our operating expenses.

**Our website:** [www.theurban.ca](http://www.theurban.ca). Please keep our vulnerable Lutheran Urban Ministry community in your prayers.

Please contact me: [rhonda@theurban.ca](mailto: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 Corp.

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. The Urban is committed to racial equality. 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](http://www.reconcilingworks.org)