



The Lutheran Urban Ministry
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March 2021 News from your Ministry Manager

Spring is around the corner!!

It was a year ago that all of our programs at the Urban were suspended due to the pandemic. At that time we thought “it will only be for a month or two”.

Last spring, summer and fall there was fellowship happening in the church parking lot as many people in our Urban community stayed to chat a bit when they came by to pick up a bagged lunch. We were able to keep in touch with the life happenings but outdoor gathering restrictions and cold weather have really impaired the social connection at the Urban. One evening when I handed a bagged lunch to a gentleman he said that he had just come from a small wake for his father who had passed away. All I had time to do was to extend my condolences to him because there was a line-up behind him and the opportunity for a longer conversation just wasn't possible. This is a typical example of how spiritual care has been impacted at the Urban because of the pandemic. All congregations, in every denomination and in every faith, have been impacted so much by the limitations of personal connection.

“When will there be church?” “When will there be sharing circles again?” These are the two questions that I hear most often and the two main things longed for again at the Urban. The Lutheran Urban Ministry is dedicated to providing spiritual care, fellowship and community. During this pandemic we're doing what we can with our bagged lunch program - but those two questions emphasize the importance of the fellowship, friendship, conversation, connection and the spiritual care that are so important to those for whom the Urban is part of their week, and for those who call the Urban their church.

When this pandemic is over we'll all have so much to catch up on when our men's, women's and co-ed sharing circles resume!!

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. Gloves, socks, seasonal jackets 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 prayers; and for all those who donate financial support toward our operating expenses.

Our website: 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