



The Lutheran Urban Ministry
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January 2021 News from your Ministry Manager Happy New Year!!

The weather reports are predicting a polar vortex on the way. This unseasonably warm weather respite is almost over!!

- Good news that vaccines are being rolled out in Manitoba.
- Winnipeg's homeless population is especially vulnerable to this virus. Also, many people who struggle in poverty have underlying health conditions that increase the possibility of more severe illness from Covid-19.
- We are grateful to the health care professionals, grocery store workers and truckers, as well as all of the other essential workers who are caring for the daily needs of Manitobans during this pandemic time.

It is our commitment to ensure that health and safety at the Urban remains the primary focus. We all long for the day when it is safe for our worship services, coffee hours and sharing circles to resume. I hear so many comments about missing the fellowship and conversation in the circles. We'll sure all have a lot to talk about when we are sitting together once again.

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 and 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!

- Mid-week devotionals and Sunday devotionals, emailed to me from Pastor Barry Bence, are 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) on a chosen random day each week during the distribution of bagged lunches. Toques, mitts, etc. (and bi-weekly bread/pastries) are also distributed outside.

Mandatory Masks as of September 2, 2020: *Masks (cloth or disposable) for everyone entering the church property (sidewalk and parking lot) to pick up bagged lunches. We provide a disposable mask if needed. 2 m social distancing is enforced. We are limiting the gathering size for bagged lunch distribution to five people at any time on the church sidewalk and parking lot (including Urban volunteers). Additional people arriving are forming a line on the city sidewalk.*

Bagged Lunches (sandwich, dessert, juice box, etc.) to take home are given outside the door in place of sit-down meals at our four regularly scheduled weekly mealtimes (Wednesday men's lunches, Wednesday and Thursday suppers, and Sunday lunches). **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