



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

April 2022 News from your Ministry Manager

Our Winnipeg winter doesn't seem to be ending! As I write this, a winter storm is moving toward the city for mid-week with a prediction a lot of snow and impassable roads and sidewalks! For the past six months, our Urban community have done their best to soldier on through icy sidewalks and a lot of windy. An elderly lady with a walker came by the Urban yesterday to pick up the Sunday bagged meal and I mentioned that I hadn't seen her for a while. She replied, “I've hardly been out”!

Food insecurity is increasing because of the rising cost of groceries. Families and individuals existing on minimum wage incomes, social assistance or disability, find it difficult to stretch their food budgets even further. The Urban is currently providing approximately 1,000 bagged meals per month (4 times per week). We are so very grateful to the meal teams who put together many of these bagged meals. During our distribution of bagged meals, we are fortunate to augment this with:

- bread, buns and packages of pastries every Wednesday afternoon donated to the Urban from the Southeast Helping Hands foodbank and brought by van to our parking lot by wonderful volunteer drivers from St. Paul's Lutheran in Steinbach;
- canned goods and food items donated from many MNO congregations;
- and every two weeks I am fortunate to have an appointment at Harvest Manitoba for their Thursday Surplus and the Urban is the recipient of some additional food items as extras to include during our bagged meal distributions.

Fellowship is routinely happening while waiting on the church sidewalk for us to bring everything outdoors to the step! Lots of sidewalk hello's, conversations, and weather jokes – especially between many of the guys who routinely arrive early and have conversed outside during our cold and windy weather! When our men's group lunch and sharing circles begin again, faces will be familiar and new friendships will form 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. Check out our new video on our website, “Urban Gratitude”!

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 Corp.

We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of age, ability, health, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expressions, language, sexual orientation, life circumstances, marital status, race, or anything else which sometimes divides us. The Urban is committed to racial equity. 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