



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

January 2022 News from your Ministry Manager – Happy New Year from the Urban!

2022 begins with prayers and fresh hopes of an end to the pandemic this year. Lockdowns, city restrictions and limited services available in the city have a huge impact on those who struggle with life circumstances such as poverty, food and housing insecurity, physical and/or mental health issues. On top of that for families are the stresses related to off and on again online learning for their children. The individuals and families of the West End of Winnipeg are people of strength and resilience in the midst of adversities. We'll all have a lot to catch up on when our sharing circles start up again!

This ongoing pandemic continues to have an impact on our ability to feel connected to each other, and for many, has increased feelings of loneliness and sadness. For those who have lost loved ones during the past two years, it has been impossible to mourn and gather in the old ways.

This extreme cold weather makes it so difficult for individuals and families living with uncertainty:

- insecure housing situations, drafty rooms, high heat costs;
- for those living in inner city apartment blocks, the worry that a fire might break out in one of the units in the building - with homelessness possibly for everyone in the block as a result;
- high cost of city transit when having to count every loonie and toonie. Consequences:
 - having to walk to the nearest convenience store for groceries at high cost in cold weather or not having the opportunity to price shop at more than one larger grocery store.
 - cancellations of rides from a friend or relative due to vehicle breakdowns of older cars in cold weather and no alternative transportation.

Gratitude for all the people who helped to make our Urban Christmas turkey sandwich lunch and gift bags for kids/youth, women and men such a tremendous success on December 19th. This is the second pandemic year that it was all distributed outside the side door - but wonderful!

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, 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