

NOVEMBER 2021

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Straight from the street

A newsletter for friends of Inner City Pastoral Ministry

"WITH WHAT SHALL I COME BEFORE THE LORD?...HE HAS TOLD YOU, O MORTAL, WHAT IS GOOD; AND WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU BUT TO DO JUSTICE, AND TO LOVE KINDNESS, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD?"

~ MICAH 6:6-8 ~

LIFE IN COVID TIMES

As the beginning of an effort to include the voices of more of our community members with lived street experience, I spent an afternoon walking around Boyle-McCauley and asking some of my friends what, for them, is different on the streets now (October 2021) than it was a year and a half ago. The last eighteen months of Covid reality has affected everyone, but perhaps none more than the people who call Boyle-McCauley home and rely on an array of services and supports to survive.

I was surprised at some of the answers I received. Judith, an Inuit woman who has called Edmonton home for many years, told me, "I don't know where so many people are. They left and I don't see them anymore." In further conversation she said that many of her friends and relatives left Edmonton at the beginning of the pandemic, and many haven't returned. I don't believe Judith is alone in this experience. The displacement of people due to Covid has had a profound effect on many people's natural support systems. Judith's friend Marlene told me, "There's way more drugs around and it's way more open now. It used to be the cops would bust people and take away their drug stuff and say, 'This isn't

good to have out in the open.' Now they don't do anything." The openness and proliferation of drug use is something that I too have noticed in the last year and a half as pastor of ICPM.

James is a long-time resident who relies on the temporary jobs offered through programs like those at the Bissell Centre and Boyle Street Community Services. When I asked him about what's different these days he said, "There's less work now. You go to the job programs and there's nothing."

Finally, when I asked Rosie, an Inuit Elder, what she's noticed of late, she said, "I don't go out at night anymore. The Elders get robbed all the time. There's no respect for the Elders anymore."

The loss of support systems, the proliferation of drugs (particularly deadly opiates), the scarcity of jobs, the disappearance of expected respect for Elders—all of these and so much more are part of the daily reality of so many of the people that ICPM serves in the community. While we can't respond to all the need that's out there, we can and do offer worship, community, food, coffee, and supplies, with a smile

of compassion, prayer, and a pointing hand towards beneficial resources and programs. The work of ICPM is needed now more than ever.

*Quinn Strikwerda +
Pastor, ICPM*



For six months through the winter, Pastor Quinn and Jim Gurnett spent time at the Tipinaway shelter at Edmonton Convention Centre. At the end of April they joined with colleagues from Bent Arrow and other organizations that had been active there for a thank you and give-away with the people using the facility.

INNER CITY PASTORAL MINISTRY - ADVENT 2021

Dear Friends and Supporters of ICPM!

Greetings from the Community of Emmanuel and the Inner City Pastoral Ministry as we approach Advent 2021! During Advent we anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus into poverty, and remember that there was no room at the Inn for him in Bethlehem. In this year of continuing global pandemic it is clear that there is less and less space for our dearly beloved brothers and sisters who struggle in our city with poverty, homelessness, addiction, and mental

and physical illness. Their numbers are growing every day. We at ICPM continue to make space for people through our prayerful ministry of presence, our Sunday services with lunch, the "Our Common Ground" reconciliation ministry, our men's and women's ministries, and so much more.

At this time of year we reach out to the goodwill of our many friends and supporters. We pray that you will again reflect on your ability to contribute from your financial resources to

help keep our ministry active and engaged in our urban core. The most significant part of our budget comes from individual donors and faith communities.

Many thanks for your prayerful consideration!

God's Peace,

*Quinn Strikwerda +
Pastor, ICPM*



You can donate to ICPM quickly and easily online! Go to www.CanadaHelps.org
Search for "Inner City Pastoral Ministry". All who donate \$10 or more receive a tax receipt.

ENCLOSED IS MY GIFT FOR INNER CITY PASTORAL MINISTRY

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Gift Amount \$ _____



EMMANUEL CHRISTMAS GIFTS 2021



The support of Edmonton's faith communities has long been important to helping us make Christmas a better time for those who worship at Community of Emmanuel, and for other members of the inner city community. 2021 has been particularly stressful for that marginalized and vulnerable population, making it all the more important for ICPM to be able to distribute Emmanuel Christmas Gifts this December. So, while we recognize that it has been a difficult year for faith communities as well, we hope that you will nevertheless be able to support our needs this Christmas, as described in this article.

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions associated both with working in groups, and with gathering items to create a meaningful gift bag, ICPM is asking that all contributions towards Christmas gifts this year be in one of two forms, either gift cards, or cash in the form of a cheque payable to Inner City Pastoral Ministry.

- We would greatly appreciate \$25 Gift Cards from Superstore or Walmart. These are stores that are recommended by local recipients, and that are accessible by public transit. Each Emmanuel Christmas Gift will include a gift card, as long as funds are available. The cards will enable individuals to purchase what they feel they *really* need.
- If you wish to contribute cash, please do so by a cheque payable to Inner City Pastoral Ministry, and mail it or bring it by early December to our office in Bissell East: Main Floor, 10527 96 St NW, Edmonton AB T5H 2H6. Please note on the cheque that the donation is for Christmas Gift Cards. We will purchase gift cards or other needed items on your behalf.

Any gift cards not distributed prior to Christmas will be held in the ICPM

office to help those in need through the cold winter months. If you have any questions, please call Sue at 780-974-2525, or Pastor Quinn at 780-719-1548. We hope that you will also help us restock our Community Cupboard, so that again this winter we are able to assist community members who are in need of warm clothing. We are asking for donations of the following items, which can be brought to Bissell Centre East on the delivery dates listed below:

- Waterproof ski gloves (M, L, XL)
- Toques
- Scarves
- Cotton Socks
- Underwear for Men and Women (M, L, XL)
- Long underwear for Men and Women (M, L, XL)
- Toothbrushes and Toothpaste
- Bus Tickets
- Tim Hortons Cards
- McDonald's Cards

DELIVERY OF ITEMS FOR THE COMMUNITY CUPBOARD

Please plan to deliver your donations during the first three weeks of December.

For Delivery Instructions:

Please phone ahead to Pastor Quinn Strikwerda
780-719-1548.

Questions:

Contact Sue
780-974-2525

Please mark all deliveries clearly:

- For ICPM
- Church, group, or individual donating
- Contact person
- Address or email contact
(so that ICPM can send a thank-you note)

Thank you for helping us support members of the inner city community during the Christmas season and through the winter months!

GATHERING SAGE – AND RECIPROACITY

Sage is an important medicine at Inner City Pastoral Ministry because it is used to begin every Sunday morning service for members of the Community of Emmanuel who gather to pray. Michelle, our Oskapewis/helper, lights a bit of sage and invites us all to come forward to smudge, or “pray with smoke.” It’s a deeply meaningful ceremony for all of us who are present, and it’s not often we begin a Sunday at ICPM without it.

Which means that gathering a fair bit of sage is necessary before winter comes. So, on September 7th, seven of us travelled to Sacred Ground on Alexander First Nation’s land to pick medicine. Michelle donned her ribbon skirt and lit her smudge, and we all prayed. Then we each took a handful of tobacco to offer to the earth in exchange for the sage we gathered.



Michelle Nieviadomy at the Alexander First Nation on September 7

We spent about 40 minutes in silence as we moved through the long grasses, scattering tobacco and meditatively picking sage above the ground, trying to leave the roots undisturbed so the plants could grow again next year. My only companions were the grasshoppers who bounced around my feet as I moved.

The sage-gathering reminded me of Indigenous peoples’ understanding of the value of reciprocity, of giving even as we receive gifts from the land, and it has given me pause as I walk into my own garden. North Americans like me don’t often think about how we treat our garden plots. Too many of us think about yield over how we can return benefit to the land and its creatures, using herbicides and pesticides to “keep things under control,” forgetting the tiny life forms that are destroyed by those chemicals.

True, I’ve stopped using weed and pest controls, and conduct a little garden blessing every spring. I ask for blessings on its growth for the season, and give thanks for the nourishment it provides through an abundance of fresh vegetables and preserves that I share with friends and neighbours. I also give the soil a healthy amount of compost every autumn.

But on that Tuesday, I realized that perhaps I need to change the focus of my garden blessings, and spread them around throughout the year. Perhaps it’s time to go out and get some tobacco too, to offer a little in thanksgiving and reciprocity each time I harvest, to return a little something

to creation and Creator for the many benefits that come to me out of the earth’s generosity.

And there are probably other ways that I can give back to my Indigenous sisters, brothers and others, in reciprocity for the fact that I have lived and grown on lands that were wrongfully taken from them over centuries. Being present with them at ICPM on Sunday morning and serving snacks is just a small beginning.

Perhaps small beginnings in reciprocity could help us all to notice more often how it can overflow into the rest of our interactions with the world as well. A smile for a smile. A compliment for a compliment. A full birdbath or bird feeder for the delight of birdsong. The beauty of a spider’s web in return for the willingness to live and let live. And a sharing of my produce, somehow, with my inner city friends, though I’m not sure how to do that in these Covid times. There must be a way. Maybe next year I can grow more cucumbers and cherry tomatoes for them!

One thing is certain: it’s possible to incorporate more awareness of where we can practice reciprocity in our lives. And as one of my favourite sayings goes, “Start small, but make a start.”

*Maria Kruszewski
Sunday Lunch Coordinator, ICPM*



*Maria’s blog:
www.simplemoodlings.blogspot.ca*

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Editor's Note: After serving faithfully for almost two years, Mary-Lou Cleveland stepped down as ICPM Board Chair.

Andrea Wilhelm was elected by the Board to serve as Chair until the 2022 AGM.

Dear ICPM Friends:

I came to ICPM through the *Our Common Ground* ministry, in which I have participated for perhaps three years, and I joined the board in 2019. My background is in linguistics, more specifically in Indigenous language documentation; I have spent quite a bit of time on reserves, with Elders, and so on. I study the Dēnesųłíné language, which is absolutely amazing, and am passionate about Indigenous languages in general. And through my interest in the languages, I have learned a lot about the people and communities that speak them, including the tragic displacement, forced assimilation and structural inequity imposed by Europeans and then Canadians. (If you are interested in Indigenous matters, I recommend the free online course "Indigenous Canada" offered by the University of Alberta. For information about the course, and to register, visit the web page below.)

<https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>

I recently joined Pastor Quinn one morning as he was handing out socks etc. and connecting with people in front of the Bissell Centre. One of the women we talked to, let's call her Pat, was someone with whose aunt I have worked quite closely on their language. This is a family of strong women; their grandmother was the first female band councillor in her community, the aunt and her sisters all have university degrees and are economically secure, they have raised their own children and in some cases grandchildren, and they are proficient in their language despite years in residential school. And yet, Pat is currently on the street in Edmonton. I met her years ago; she is a vibrant, intelligent, strong person with the great sense of humour that her mom and aunts also have. I



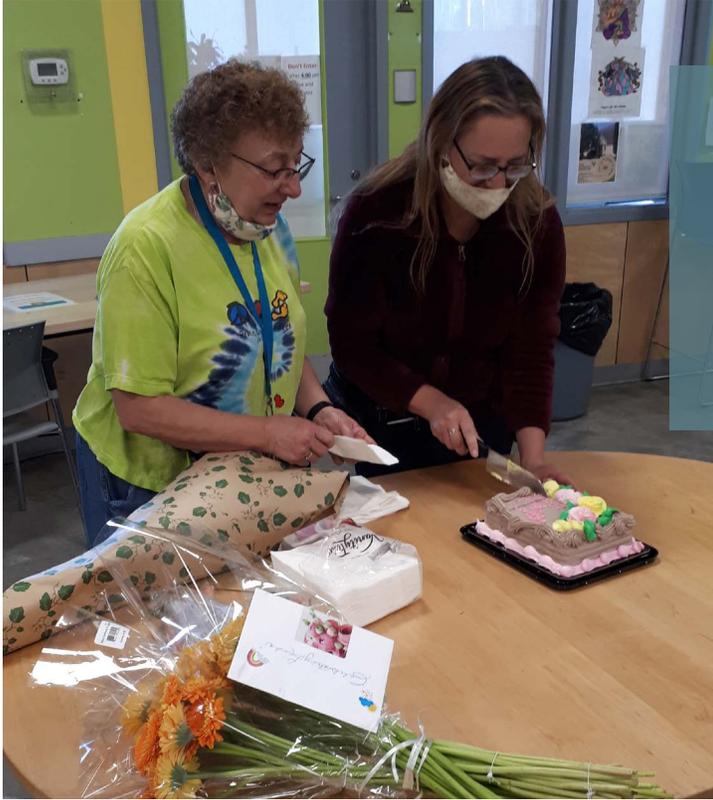
A four-legged neighbour making friends with Andrea

think we were both a little shocked to meet again now under very different circumstances. But the awkwardness quickly made way for gladness, a hug and conversation. Pat told me about her kids, who are all in university, about the bike-building she is into, about how she is helping people, and that coming to inner-city Edmonton was part of her destiny. When she joked, I could see the family resemblance. Indeed, when I looked at Pat I saw a beautiful person, the same vibrant, intelligent, strong and funny woman I had met so many years ago. I don't know how she has come to be in Edmonton now, and without fixed address. The intergenerational trauma caused by the residential schools and the appallingly inadequate support for families on reserves (due to lack of funding from Ottawa) may have something to do with it.

I also don't know what kind of experiences Pat has had with the church. But I am glad that ICPM offers a non-judgmental ministry of presence, a ministry that values Indigeneity and every person, that will start with practical help and respect rather than moralistic preaching. I believe this is how church should be, if we are to embody God's love. I don't know how God impacted Pat through our encounter—I hope she experienced acceptance at least. But the funny thing is, the encounter impacted me: Seeing Pat was the highlight of my morning. It also makes me ask how I, church, society and politics need to change so Pat, and all, can thrive.

*Andrea Wilhelm
Interim Chair, Board of Directors, ICPM*

SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE AT ICPM



In August the Community of Emmanuel thanked ICPM Sunday Food Coordinator Linda Heywood (pictured left with daughter Karena). Linda stepped down as Food Coordinator, but of course remains a faithful member of the community!

In July the Community of Emmanuel bid farewell to beloved long-time friend and volunteer Barb Johnson, who passed away suddenly in Fort McMurray.

Pictured: Barb's daughter Annie Johnson, during the funeral in Giovanni Caboto Park.



Oskapewis Michelle Nieviadomy's group "Healing Her Homefire" has been sharing delicious monthly meals for the Boyle-McCauley community after Sunday worship at Community of Emmanuel.



ICPM Mission Statement

Inner City Pastoral Ministry is an interdenominational Christian Ministry of Presence. In partnership with the community, and guided by the Spirit of God, we walk with the people of the inner city of Edmonton.

ICPM Board Members

Andrea Wilhelm.....	Lutheran - Board Chair
Victoria Wynn.....	United - Secretary
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Sharon Webb.....	Anglican
Ann Matheson	Anglican
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Julie Lloyd	Roman Catholic
Fred Matthews.....	Anglican

ICPM Ministry Team

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Jim Gurnett.....	Anglican - Pastoral Associate
Michelle Nieviadomy	Indigenous Oskapewis-Iskwew
Farley Magee and Julie Lloyd.....	Musicians in Residence
Maria Kruszewski	Roman Catholic - Food Coordinator
Annie Johnson.....	Food Coordinator
Nicole Wiebe	Evangelical Free - Graphic Design
Jim Whittle	Anglican - Newsletter Copy Editor

INNER CITY PASTORAL MINISTRY

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