

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Inner-City Pastoral Ministry,

Advent is a timewhen we are encouraged to feel some urgency as we await the return of Jesus to earth in the fullness of time. “Stay alert!” Jesus says in the Gospel reading for the first Sunday in Advent, “You don’t know what day the Lord is coming.” (Matthew 24:42). This is an invitation to us to be aware of what’s going on in the world around us, and where God is working in it.

There are urgent things to be aware of in Edmonton’s urban core, and among Edmonton’s most vulnerable citizens this year. Inflation is hitting us all, but it strikes the poor hardest. $300 grocery money buys considerably less now than a year ago. With skyrocketing utility rates, many people are being forced to make the decision to be warm or to eat. On the heels of Covid, there is now a devastating shigella outbreak in the inner-city. One young woman described to me her four days in hospital with the infection as the worst days she had ever experienced. Although some efforts are being made to open up a bit more shelter space, the numberof people sleeping rough in tents and under tarps on the wintry streets is far higher than in recent years. All this and more results in stress and feelings of hopelessness among the people ICPM is called to walk with.

As we have for the past 45 years, ICPM is there to respond with grace and compassion. But we need your help. A wonderful ministry team to encourage and listen to people. Inspiring and relevant worship, Bible study, and men’s and women’s groups. All of this and more are provided by ICPM every day. Emergency grocery cards, bus tickets, and warm winter clothing and blankets all make a difference as they support people.

As you prepare for the wondrous celebration of the birth of Jesus and time spent with family and friends, please take a moment to support the work of ICPM this Advent. Cheques may be made out to Inner City Pastoral Ministry and returned to the address at the bottom of this page. Donations arealso welcomeatwww.[canadahelps](http://www.canadahelps.org/).org, or via e-transfer at icpmgiving@gmail.com.

May you have a blessed Advent and a very Merry Christmas!

Pastor Quinn Strikwerda, Advent 2022