



STRAIGHT

FROM THE STREET

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF INNER CITY PASTORAL MINISTRY

Fall 2011

A WALK ON THE OTHER SIDE: A Taste of Homeless Life



“Hand over all of your valuables: keys, purses, identification, phones”. That was the first thing I heard as I strolled up to the front of the Bissell East on a cool and windy Thursday in September. In my mind I was saying, “that guy could not mean me, I am an ICPM pastoral ministry volunteer.” “Put them right here, and line up NOW”. I handed it all over reluctantly, and they were dropped into a cardboard box with *Free Bread* written on it in large letters. I soon discovered the ‘he’ who was speaking rather officiously and without eye contact was Rev. Travis. My next thought was, “Why are we standing outside and where is the coffee? I’m freezing”. I felt weird standing on 96 street in an orderly line with about 20 others, most of them looked more or less like me, middle class, thirty five tending to fifty five plus years old, and wide eyed and bushy tailed. At that point we far outnumbered the local community members with whom Rev. Travis and Rev. Trussell were chatting.

Next stop the Community Clothes Closet in the basement where we were instructed to pick a shirt off the rack and put it on over our clothes. Pickings were slim and to be honest I would not have chosen to wear much of it. One of the local community members reflected on her time as a disabled person on the street and the fact that while the Clothes Closet was a resource, with a voucher you could only get one piece of clothing every three months. I thought of how many shirts I had in my closet. The manager of the Closet said there were exceptions to this in emergencies but you needed identification and special paper work—which reminded me I had none. I was getting the idea. Pastor Rick led us upstairs and told us to take a baseball hat and wear it. As I put it on, I could not quite banish the words “head lice” from entering my mind.

As a group we trooped over to the Bissell Center where some of us signed in and had our hands stamped. I looked around for Doug only to find he was outside standing in a line. I soon learned there was a limit to the number of people allowed in the building at any one time. What made it challenging, local community members told us that there was no time limit on how long one could stay inside once you get in. Great, when it is minus 25 degrees and I am at the end of the line outside.

As we walked to the Boyle Street Health Center to see the needle exchange program people stopped to greet Pastor Rick and he asked a few of them to speak with us. We heard from JD about his brother’s death and people dying on the street from pneumonia. Another woman from Cold Lake talked about the problems faced when newly arrived in Edmonton and another the frustration of not getting mental health care. Our next destination was the Friendship Center,

continued...

A Taste of Homeless Life...continued

a drop in and housing center for those over 55. I did not actually get in the door as one of the community members accompanying us wanted to share his journey with post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction. He told us about being discharged from an



addiction program because of mental health needs and ending up “back again” in the Herb Jamieson Center “where all the old friends and temptations waited for him”. Our last stop was the bottle depot where we learned about the redevelopment plans for area and heard about the issue of poor quality of construction of a new senior’s apartment. Less than three years old, cracks and steps heaving were already there with the residents. Barry shared his gratitude about the opportunity to live in this new building but frustration with its quality.

Once we got back to the Bissell Center we were told to wait in the activity room while more community members arrived. Waiting is not always my long suit and I was getting lots of practice. There were two rows of chairs and finally we were told in

which to sit. Interestingly, there were far more chairs than community members and not enough for us and when I tried to sit in one of the empty chairs reserved for community members I was promptly told to move on and find one for myself on the other side of the room. Rev. Travis was busy chatting with the community members, talking about the lunch menu and offering them muffins and coffee. Not a word to us non-community members. I have to admit I was getting a tad irritated and hungry. Then he handed out cards bearing pictures of different kinds of houses and announced that the local community members were landlords and the rest of us needed housing and, by the way, we should be setting up the tables and chairs for our landlords for the lunch. That done, our next job was to find our landlord by matching cards and asking permission to move in by joining one of the landlords at their table. Sounded easy, but before I could bolt up and start the search, Rev. Travis, invited the ‘landlords’ to the roast beef lunch. We, the newly homeless were once again waiting and watching and hoping that there would be enough food left for us. Finally, we were allowed to look for our landlord. It took me a while to realize that I had chosen the card of the permanently homeless and needed to fast-talk my way in to some landlord’s table before I could eat. My new landlord surveyed me coolly and made me stand there and wait while he took another bite. “Did you have references? Been in jail lately”? Looking back, I realized by then I had completely lost my usual sense of humor. Finally in the food line I was told I had missed a step and needed a



signature from the landlord to get my food. OK, so now I was the second last person in line and several dishes were already empty. I was downright crabby.

Once I had a place to sit and some food in me I could actually tune into what our ‘landlord’, Alf, was saying about his life as a local community member. This was punctuated with some of us ‘newly housed’ being pulled away from the table because of infractions such as lying and stealing. The landlords pronounced penalties such as 100 hours of community service. Pastor Rick, one of rule breakers, demonstrated his ability to write lines as his punishment.

Earlier on we had been asked to pick up a memento from the street to



remind us of a thought that we could share. Doug picked up a crushed Styrofoam cup and shared that it was to remind him of experiencing shame at wandering around looking at places

A Taste of Homeless Life ...cont.

and people like we were tourists in a strange place. He continued by reminding us that this was ‘our’ community and that all shared in responsibility for what was happening here. Our experience ended with Revs. Enright and Trussell commenting on the nature of powerlessness as experienced by the homeless. I have to admit I did not really need any



words—I had already had a taste of it.

The “Homeless to Housing to a Home” experience was sponsored by the Social Justice and Advocacy Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton and led by Rev Travis Enright and Rev. Nick Trussell. Approximately thirty people participated, 12 of who have or are experiencing homelessness. It was part of a six month educational program of the Social Justice and Advocacy Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton. In addition, it was ICPM’s kick off awareness event of the need of persons who have experienced homelessness anticipating the city’s Welcome Home Program of the Interfaith Housing Group.

Photos by Margaret Marschall, of the Anglican Messenger. Reflection by Laura Krefting, pastoral ministry volunteer with Doug Krefting.

After the Lunch is Over Gathering...

“I’ve attended three of these sessions and this one was the BEST!”

“Really appreciated all the ideas and the sharing.”

“This event always helps me remember that we are doing this together and we are not alone.”

These were among the evaluation comments received from the participants in ICPM’s annual *After the Lunch is Over* event which took place on Saturday, Oct. 1. Nearly 30 people from 19 different churches gathered in the basement of Bissell east for a morning of praying, sharing and learning. This event brings together contact people and volunteers from the various churches that prepare and serve the ICPM lunch after the worship service 52 weeks of the year. These are the folks without whom ICPM would not be able to do the ministry on Sunday as we do it and the community among whom we serve would suffer.

All participants were welcomed by current Board Chair, Bob McKeon after which Sr. Marion opened the day with prayer and song. Our past chairperson, Nancy Kerr then facilitated the introductions around the circle. There was so much enthusiasm about doing the ICPM lunch and sharing what works in each church, that this segment yielded a lot of ideas that others found helpful. The conversation was rich.

Pastor Rick then offered some glimpses of the nature of the community and the people who come on Sunday. They are seniors who may live in Operation Friendship, those who live with chronic addictions and are cared for and housed at Urban Manor, young men looking for work or having found work but not yet having received a pay cheque. There are women fleeing abusive relationships, and young mothers and sometimes fathers with young children trying to make a new start for themselves and their children.

Each and all live with challenges that many of us may never have been exposed to and therefore don’t understand, yet each and all are embraced as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Farley, a member of the community of Emmanuel, shared a bit of his story which touched the hearts of a number of participants.

Sharon Webb, the Sunday lunch coordinator, reviewed some of the changes that are being made to the new ‘Guidelines’ brochure, changes that are directed toward making it easier for churches to know what to bring and easier for ICPM in terms of storage. Copies of the new brochure will soon be available. Again, the conversation was engaging and the questions and suggestions resulted in important clarification of the information.

Pastor Rick spoke to the importance of the churches in assisting ICPM to broaden its circle of friends in the greater Edmonton church community and offered various suggestions from the TIPS brochure. This was followed by an education session by Sr. Mary Clare about the developing “Welcome Home” initiative which will soon offer yet another way to respond to the gospel call to ‘love our neighbour’.

The morning ended with fellowship and the sharing of a meal including homemade soup and a sandwich. Thanks to all who contributed in any way to the success of this gathering.

Shepherds for the Forgotten Ones

It's Sunday morning and, as usual, the Bissell Centre's drop-in centre is full of people attending the ecumenical worship service. They sit at round tables, which they will later use to eat lunch.

At the front is the altar, which had been wheeled in just before the service. Dressed in white clergy gear, Pastor Rick Chapman, the Anglican pastor of the Community of Emmanuel for the past five years, opens the service by announcing the stabbing death of a young member of the congregation.

Tina looks nervous and shift during the service, looking everywhere as if she was desperately trying to find somebody in the crowd. Suddenly, she leaves the premises only to reappear 20 minutes later when lunch was being served. The 100 or so attending the

meal throughout the year. Some come once a year; some two or three times a year.

Tina didn't eat right away. She wanted to go outside for a smoke.

The bubbly middle-age woman is a regular at the drop-in centre and is well known by the staff of the Inner City Pastoral Centre (ICPM), the ecumenical ministry that puts on the worship service and lunch every Sunday at 11 a.m.

AT HOME

"I feel at home here, very at home," says Tina, who didn't want to give her last name. "I've been coming here probably about 15 years. I come to supplement my groceries during the week and (on Sundays) I come to pray for my daughter.

"I haven't seen her in six years. She



months at a time, Tina hasn't worked for years and is on social assistance.

"I'm nothing; I don't work anymore," she says puffing nervously on her cigarette.

Tina says "Pastor Rick" is helping her to locate her daughter, who she thinks might be somewhere in B.C.

"He is a very nice man," she says. "He is very helpful to all the community and people that are down and out, eh? He's helped me very much to pick myself back up, get myself on the right track."

Chapman is totally at ease with his congregation, touching people on the shoulder, asking them how their day is going. During the sign of peace segment of the service he shook hands with virtually everybody.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

"I love it," Chapman says of the Sunday service. "It's what keeps me going; like through the week you get to talk to people about their pastoral needs and you are building relationships.

"But on Sunday it all comes together, right? And there are the people that you met through the week coming to a service of worship, the Gospel is being preached, the poor are being fed. It's just like a highlight of the week and I believe in the ministry; everything feeds back into the Community of Emmanuel.



service were called first to line up for the lunch.

Outside there was another line and they were allowed in in small groups. A total of 300 enjoyed a nutritious lunch consisting of sandwiches, fresh vegetables and fruits and dessert. New socks were distributed to everybody.

Volunteers from about 90 parishes and churches of various denominations take turns to prepare and serve the

works the streets so I look for her. I'm hoping I'll run into her one day."

In many ways, Tina is typical of the Sunday congregation here; namely people who may be unemployed, homeless or battling mental issues and addictions. Some live in rooming houses in the immediate area.

Suffering with bipolar disorder and agoraphobia, an anxiety disease that can keep her confined to her home for

Shepherds for the Forgotten Ones...continued

“What you do during the week is celebrated on the Sunday morning.”

Chapman, a father of two, is still amazed at how volunteers transform the drop-in centre into a church every Sunday for the past 33 years.

“During the week the space over here is used as a drop-in for people who are homeless or who are transient or who live in the supported housing in the area or seniors who are low income,” he explains.

“So the drop-in offers food everyday in the mornings and all kinds of employment services, etc. But on Sunday we open that space as sacred space from 11 a.m. until noon for the worship service and then we provide a Sunday lunch afterwards.”

People don’t have to come to the service to be at the meal. “But many come to the service because you don’t have to dress up to come to the service,” the pastor points out.

A SAFE PLACE

“They are comfortable here because this is their community base. It’s the place where they relax within the community and it’s a safe place and so they use the Community of Emmanuel as their church.”

There is a fairly consistent group of people that attend the service on a weekly basis, around 60 per cent. The other 40 per cent are transient “because the community does have a certain transient nature to it.”

A high number of Chapman’s congregation is aboriginal, many of them from rural areas, Metis settlements or reserves around Edmonton.

“So we honour the aboriginal people,” the pastor says, noting there are certain prayers in the community’s worship book that speak of the “four directions” and honour the Creator.

Apart from the Sunday service and the meal, the ICPM provides a ministry of presence for folks in the inner city throughout the week. It has an office in the Bissell Centre. But the staff spends little time at the office.

Bob McKeon, chair of the ICPM board for the past two years, says, “The ICPM is almost like a chaplaincy in the inner city of being present at the drop-in centres, on the street, the shelters, visits to the courthouse or hospitals.



“It’s just a spiritual presence for folks in the inner city.”

Members of the United Church launched the Inner City Pastoral Ministry in 1978 as they recognized the need for a church in the inner city — a place where those who lived in the community and on the streets would feel welcome.

Soon the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches joined in and the ministry became ecumenical. All four churches are represented on the ICPM board.

“This ministry is important because there is a ghetto in this city of Edmonton called the inner city, a ghetto area where all sorts of supports have been created and therefore where disenfranchised people gather,” Chapman says.

FULL-TIME PRESENCE

“You need a full-time presence amongst those people, not a transient presence. One, to assist the people that you minister amongst and, two, to bring the message to the wider community of churches of the needs that are present there; otherwise, they are simply blocked out.”

In philosophical terms, the ICPM “is a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the people on the street come together in word and deed,” McKeon says. “It’s a wonderful way we can speak of churches being present to the people of the inner city in a respectful way and biblical way.”

Being so close to the Bissell Centre creates a bit of branding problem but overall it’s has been a fruitful partnership, Chapman says. “So we honour the partnership. We have all the benefits of the partnership and then we offer the pastoral care of the people.”

The ecumenical board sets policy, takes care of fundraising and appoints ICPM staff, which includes Chapman and two pastoral associates: Linda Winski, formerly of the archdiocesan Social Justice Commission, and Sister Marion Garneau, a Sister of Charity of the Immaculate Conception.

Once a week Winski and Garneau go down to the Women’s Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC) to visit the women, and maybe do a gathering or a prayer service with them.

They might stop by Operation Friendship or just be on the street; especially when the weather is good there are a lot of folks outside.

ANNUAL RETREAT

Garneau and Winski, with the assistance of a social worker, also run

Shepherds for the Forgotten Ones...continued

a monthly women's program in the community, which culminates in an annual retreat at the Star of the North in St. Albert.

The ICPM also has an aboriginal focus and lately it has been organizing and leading gatherings for reconciliation and healing in the inner city and citywide.

"Basically it's to be in conversation; it is more keeping relationships, supporting people who are struggling with addictions, mental illness, homelessness, unemployment and helping as it is appropriate because there are social agencies so they are not social workers in that sense but they are a pastoral ministry presence," explained McKeon, who has volunteered with the ICPM for over a decade.

Garneau, who has been active with the ICPM for 15 years or so, was eventually hired by the Edmonton

Archdiocese to work 20 hours a week for the ministry.



Sister Marion & Linda Winski

PARTIAL PANTRY

Her inner city residence serves as a partial pantry for the ICPM so she has to be at the drop-in centre at

7:30 a.m. on Sundays. She stays at the drop-in all morning helping.

During the service, she leads the community in song. Then she heads to the Women's Federal Prison for a religious service and to visit the inmates.

Winski is paid for 16 hours a week. On Sundays she is at the drop-in centre for at least five hours, basically receiving the food brought in by the various churches and then setting up the hall for lunch. During the service she assists Chapman and then helps serve the lunch and clean up. "I'm here on Mondays as well. I'm basically available to people who drop in to have a conversation or need something or I go visit the drop-in centre," Winski says.

Sometimes she and Garneau attend funerals of congregation members. They are available and present to anybody who wants to talk.

"I think this ministry is important because it really gives witness to the fact that we believe that we meet Christ in the marginalized, in those who are invisible and pushed aside and not really included in mainstream society or Church," Winski said.

Reprinted from the Western Catholic Reporter, July 18, 2011 with permission



CHRISTMAS SACKS

Looking ahead, we are thinking about the 2011 Christmas celebrations within the inner city. Once again ICPM anticipates distributing the Emmanuel Christmas Gift Sacks amongst the homeless and those in need within the inner city. As you may be aware, many churches and caring individuals support the annual Emmanuel Christmas Gift Sack appeal.

The gift bags are stuffed with useful and festively seasonal items. The gift bags most effectively used in the past are Ziploc 33mm x 39mm. The Emmanuel Christmas Gift Sacks are filled with the following:

STANDARD:

- ski gloves (waterproof)
- toque and scarf
- cotton socks
- comb and/or brush
- small shampoo
- hand lotion (small)
- hand sanitizer (small)
- Kleenex (small)
- deodorant
- toothpaste (small)
- toothbrush
- washcloth (white in color as color bleaches into clothing upon washing)

Also ... Christmas treat and small gift, such as ...

- candy cane and / or chocolate bar
- crossword / Sudoku booklet
- little Bible and/or card of hope...

OPTIONAL:

- dental floss
- halls cough drops
- animal treat, chew toy for pets
- nail clippers and / or nail file
- lip balm
- make up (female)
- note pad and pencil
- hot shots (hand warmers)
- pkg hot chocolate , cup of soup

Other items needed – not included in the Christmas Sacks

- underwear (male and female all sizes)
- long johns (male and female all sizes)
- bus tickets
- hoodies

"No one gets gifts around here, I look forward to getting one, they're a real surprise!" - Rose

Delivery December 19– 22 – Inner City Pastoral Ministry, Bissell Centre East 10527 96 St

Contact : Pastor Rick Chapman+, 780 424 7652 or 780 934 7144

Sue – Christmas Sack Coordinator 780 417 3906

Pastor's Reflection – Christ in the Margins

Over the past 35 years of ministry, I have found my call has often led me to a ministry of presence amongst marginalized communities. I have noted that many Outreach Ministries established by the Church some 20 or 30 years ago have developed into large and self defined entities. For various reasons the Ecclesiastical body that gave the ministry birth becomes less and less of a presence within the agencies governance and life. As the mainline churches struggle due to aging populations and the need to reduce overall costs, sustaining outreach ministry becomes a burden. The tension is dramatic as the Church wrestles with its call to mission while at the same time experiencing diminishing resources of time, talent and treasure.

Looking to the future, I have a question, “As the Church looks ahead, what will be the role of the Faith Community in regards to sustaining, developing, and implementing ministry with marginalized communities?”

I believe that one answer to this question is found right on the doorstep of the very churches that are even now visioning to the future. This answer is found within the model of ministry offered by the Inner City Pastoral Ministry. ICPM offers a model of ministry that includes a long list of positives in regards to ongoing mission...

- An Ecumenical partnership demonstrated within the ministry's governance structure, ministry staff complement, volunteers assistance and financial support.
- Located centrally within the heart of the inner city community

- Consistent, weekly, interdenominational worship offered, followed by a Sunday Lunch Program offered with the entire community in mind
- An ongoing Pastoral presence within the inner city for over 30 years that presently includes the Pastor and the Pastoral Associates and the mid week Pastoral Ministry Volunteers offering a relational ministry of pastoral care, a listening ear and prayer
- Pastoral care with continued relevance linked to changing inner city demographics ... the growing aboriginal community, women's wellness and the care of the homeless and persons recently housed
- Partnering with local agencies in regards to worship and office space needs with multiple referral opportunities to assist people in a wide variety of need
- Opportunity for advocacy and education within the City wide – Mayor's Ten Year Plan to end homelessness through supported housing
- Present as a voice of persons who have experienced homelessness
- Taking opportunity to educate the wider church regarding the needs of people experiencing marginalization within our community

God's call to mission and ministry with the marginalized continues. The Church's response to God's call requires the cooperation of the whole body of Christ partnering together to develop ministries of compassion and care. No one Church is able to do the work of ministry on their own. As the Church discerns its response to Christ

call to minister amongst the many in the margins, Inner City Pastoral Ministry is modeling a vision of ecumenical partnering in response to future ministry.

– *Pastor Rick Chapman*+

ICPM Board Update

Members of the ICPM board and pastoral team met for a day long retreat on September 10 at Pigeon Lake. This retreat day has become an important part of the annual schedule.

Part of the morning was spent in worship and prayer. We had an educational session led by Sr. Mary Clare Stack UJ of Catholic Social Services where we learned more about recent developments in planning for the Welcome Home program where volunteers from local congregations will build welcoming relationships and befriend formerly homeless women and men moving into local neighborhoods all across the Capital region. Rev. Nancy Steeves, pastor of Southminster-Steinhauer United Church, spoke of the experience of a local congregation which has actively reached out to those in need of food and shelter for many years.

In the afternoon, we started a board conversation about planning for the long term sustainability of the ICPM ministry. ICPM has grown and developed a far-reaching ministry over its history that now extends over thirty years. ICPM is approaching a time of generational change as some long-serving members of the pastoral team and the board are approaching retirement and the conclusion of their time with ICPM. Some congregations that have long supported ICPM report

Board Update...cont'd.

that many of their members are aging and have a reduced capacity to prepare food and serve meals after the Sunday morning service held in the drop-in centre at the Bissell.

Some of our financial supporters are indicating that they may not be able to continue supporting ICPM at present funding levels in the future. These future changes pose both significant challenges and incredible opportunities for ICPM. At the retreat, the ICPM board and ministry team committed to reach out to our supporting churches, congregations, families and individuals in the months ahead and invite them to join with us in a transformative process of re-energizing and rebuilding for the future.

—Bob McKeon, Chair
ICPM Board of Directors

On Being Counted...

We humans like to be counted in, rather than counted out. We like to be looked upon by particularly our families as having value and meaning, *to be counted*. In fact, for many of us, being valued is one of the driving forces within our lives. But what happens when we are not valued, when who we are is looked upon is being not wanted or simply endured, when we are not counted, but ignored. What happens to us then? Do we then look upon ourselves as others look upon us, as being less? And, if we do, do we not lose our inner sense of being human?

At such times in our lives we often forget we are not alone. We forget there is a creator who deeply and forever loves us. We need at such times to be told, reminded, touched by a Presence beyond ourselves. That's what ICPM's Ministry of Presence really means: it is a ministry of saying God is loving...always.

Your help to keep ICPM's ministry active and alive is very much appreciated.

—David Barnum, Stewardship

Now you can **donate to ICPM quickly and easily** online! Go to CanadaHelps.org. Search for "Inner City Pastoral Ministry" All donations are much appreciated and all who donate \$10 or more receive a tax receipt.

Enclosed is my gift for Inner City Pastoral Ministry

Amount of gift: \$ _____

Name _____
(Mr., Mrs., Ms, Dr. etc.)

Address _____

City/Town _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Phone No.: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

Send to: Inner City Pastoral Ministry
c/o Bissell Centre
10527 96 St NW, Edmonton AB T5H 2H6

Charitable Registration: BN107507378 RR001



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Sister Marion Garneau.....Pastoral
Associate

Linda Winski.....Pastoral Associate

MISSION STATEMENT

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