

INNER CITY PASTORAL MINISTRY
c/o Bissell Centre
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Edmonton, AB T5H 2H6



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February 2015

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Straight from the street

A newsletter for friends of Inner City Pastoral Ministry

AMAZING GIFT, AMAZING GRACE

Notre Dame's Gr. 6 Class Kindness

Many gifts arrive at the Inner City Pastoral Ministry Office during the Christmas Season. One gift in particular is held within my heart; the gift of thirty five back packs donated by the students of the Grade Six class of Notre Dame School Leduc. I attended the pre-Christmas assembly of Notre Dame School to receive this offering and was greeted by 500 children massed for assembly. What a wonderful and exciting day.

One young woman of the Grade Six class, having served lunch at the ICPM Lunch at

the Bissell with St Pauls' Anglican Church Leduc, asked her mother if she might be able to donate a back pack to a child of her age in the inner city. Her mother suggested she not only offer the back pack but to present to her class the idea and excite her friends. A Christmas miracle was born. The entire class and school became involved in this project.

More than fifteen young people presented thirty-five back packs to me during the assembly! I asked to shake the hand of the leader of the campaign.

A very tiny young woman emerged from the midst of the group and offered a shy smile. We shook hands and I thanked her for the inspiration of her idea and the gifts received. I was humbled and moved with the concern of the youth for the less fortunate. We all prayed for the inner city of Edmonton and all who experience difficulty. Hope for the future...YES! May God bless this young woman, her class and the school of Notre Dame!

*Rick Chapman+
Pastor, ICPM*

Notre Dame's Grade 6 Class Packs Snack Packs for those in need.



"As faith Leaders we have this unique opportunity to preach, teach, and speak about justice, compassion and healing to a cross-section of society—to politicians, students, bus drivers, lawyers, even people who are homeless themselves. If we stand together as faith leaders and communities, I don't think anything can stand in our way of ending homelessness."

Bishop Jane Alexander, Diocese of Edmonton.



Faith Leaders at City Hall renewing their commitment to take the effective actions needed to end chronic homelessness.

FAITH LEADERS RENEW COMMITMENT

A Call to Action

On 13 November 2014, leaders from 25 different faith communities came together at City Hall to renew their public commitment to end homelessness in Edmonton. This historic event came at the halfway point of Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. That Plan was approved by Edmonton City Council in January 2009. Soon after, as a means of mobilizing and coordinating the support of faith communities for the 10 Year Plan, the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative was organized. On 17 March 2011, the Capital Region Interfaith Statement on Homelessness & Affordable Housing was signed by 23 faith leaders. The text of the Statement is available at http://www.caedm.ca/Portals/0/documents/housing_initiative/interfaith%20statement_ENDORSERS.pdf.

There have been successes to date in achieving the ambitious goal of the 10 Year Plan. Over 3,200 formerly homeless men and women have moved into homes. Over 84% have been successful in keeping their accommodations. Yet there are still challenges: shelters in Edmonton are overflowing this winter to the point where the gym in the old Remand Centre is being used as emergency overflow shelter space.

So, while there was much to celebrate last November 13 as faith leaders met to renew the commitment made in 2011, there was also a recognition that much remains to be done. Anglican Bishop Jane Alexander challenged the other faith leaders present not to sign the statement of commitment unless they were serious about putting their words into action. She emphasized the need to stand strong in their commitment, even in the midst of public debate and controversy. A consistent theme throughout

the event was overcoming NIMBY: "Ending homelessness? Yes! But not in my backyard or neighbourhood." Increasingly it is becoming clear that ending homelessness in Edmonton means that residents in neighbourhoods throughout the city must work together to become welcoming, inclusive communities for those transitioning from "homeless to homes." Local faith congregations can play a major role in initiating and participating in these community conversations.

Representatives of ICPM, and of its worshipping community, the Community of Emmanuel, were among the 150 people present at City Hall last November 13. ICPM plays a key role in implementing the support of faith communities for the 10 Year Plan. Reaching out directly to those experiencing homelessness on 96th Street, ICPM is a "bridge" between that population and the dozens of its supporting congregations located throughout the Edmonton region. These sustaining church partnerships, which have supported ICPM for over 30 years, serve as a model, showing how faith communities can work together to take the actions needed, both in the inner city and in local neighbourhoods, to end chronic homelessness in our time.

*Bob McKeon
Past Board Chair, ICPM*

UNITED WE SPOKE:

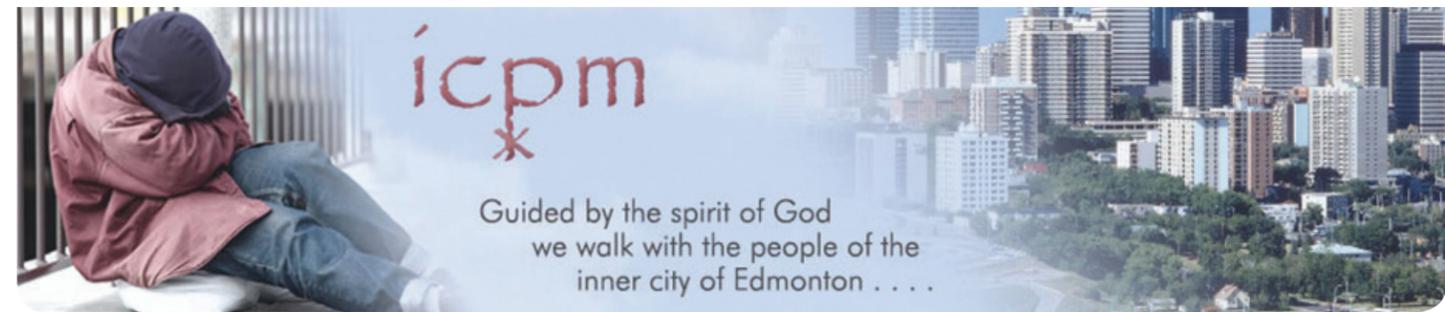
"We faith leaders of different religious and spiritual communities in Edmonton and area, come together to express our shared commitment to eliminate homelessness in our community"

*Bishop Larry Kochendorfer,
ELCIC Synod of Alberta and the Territories*

WELCOME HOME Easing the Transition

Two of the greatest challenges facing our newly housed sisters and brothers are loneliness and social isolation. While they are living on the streets, they often become part of a community that provides a place of belonging, someone "to hang out with." But when they finally experience the joy of having "A Place to Call Home," many of their buddies are no longer around. There is a lot that is unfamiliar, and connections are not easy to come by: generally we are not a society that readily greets one's neighbour, or makes an effort to knock on the door of a newcomer and say, "Hi! Welcome! I live in the apartment next door."

Welcome Home was created to bridge that gap, to provide some companionship for those who are trying to adjust to new surroundings, to help them feel more at home in a totally unknown neighbourhood. The newly housed, the "participants," are matched with two volunteers who—after completing their training and receiving their clearances—connect with them and arrange to go for coffee (a favourite "hang out" is Tim Horton's), to a movie, for a walk in the park, maybe even to a hockey game. As you can see, these gatherings always take place in a safe, public space. The activities are simple, down-to-earth. What matters is that relationships are being built, friendships established. Both participants and volunteers gain a stronger sense of their own dignity and self-worth. Building relationships takes time: trust isn't easy to come by. Often our volunteers need to wait patiently until their participants feel secure enough in themselves to risk meeting on a regular basis. But we know our volunteers have made a difference in the lives of those whom they have befriended when we hear our participants saying, "I wouldn't be alive today if it weren't for my two volunteers who have stood by me through some very rough times." or "Never before in my life have I had a cake for my birthday. Around the time of my birthday my volunteers surprised me by giving me a really neat birthday card and a cake, complete with candles. I felt so special."



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 _____ Prov _____ Postal Code _____
 Ph _____ Email _____
 Gift Amount \$ _____



"We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty."

Mother Teresa



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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

“The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them.”

Thomas Merton

Standing Stones Community of Emmanuel

Feb 22, Mar 22, May 31 (11:00 AM – Noon)
Sunday Lunch Noon – 1:00 PM
Bissell Centre West – Drop In

Men's Spirituality Group

(1st and 3rd Tuesday of Month)
Feb 17, March 3, 17 (7:30 – 9:00 PM)
Marian Centre (Lower Hall)

Women's Spiritual Wellness

3rd Friday of the Month
Feb 20, March 20 (10:30 AM – Noon)
Bissell Centre East (lower Activity Hall)

Women's Spiritual Wellness Retreat

May 1st – 3rd
Star of the North Retreat Centre
(St Albert)

Homeless Connect

Sunday April 12 (10 AM – 3:00 PM)
Shaw Conference Centre

Men's Spirituality Retreat “Wild Men to Wise Men”

Friday May 15 & 16
Star of the North Retreat Centre
(St Albert)

ICPM Annual General Meeting

Thursday March 19
St Faith's Anglican Church
(PrayerWorks Hall)
11725 - 93 St

Details:
5:30 Gathering
6:00 Light Supper
6:30 Key Note Speaker – Lynn Maki
(Executive Secretary, Alberta + Northwest
Conference, United Church of Canada)
7:00 – 8:00 Annual General Meeting

Save
the date

“The theological virtue of hope is the patient and trustful willingness to live without closure, without resolution, and still be content and even happy because our Satisfaction is now at another level, and our Source is beyond ourselves.”

Richard Rohr

National Conference on Ending Homelessness

Pastor Rick's Reflection

As Pastor of Inner City Pastoral Ministry, I often meet and minister amongst people who experience poverty and homelessness, and many more who are transitioning from homelessness to affordable supported housing. The City of Edmonton continues to make great strides, settling many chronically homeless individuals with complex challenges in affordable supported housing through “Housing First.”

In November of 2014, as a member of the **National Anglican Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice**, I attended the **National Conference on Ending Homelessness** held in Vancouver BC. The theme of this conference related to the ongoing discussion of implementing Housing First policy and program across Canada and internationally.

Here are descriptions of the workshops I attended:

Engaging people with “lived experience” of homelessness in ending homelessness.

Many persons who have a lived experience of homelessness were present at the conference. They were represented by their presence, telling their story through video vignettes and workshops. Men and women discussed their transition from homelessness to affordable and / or supported housing. Here is the question that arose from this workshop: How do persons of lived experience, who are now present in caring for those transitioning, evolve to being people who influence city policy and decision-making about ending homelessness?

Advocacy for leaders in ending homelessness.

Led by a facilitator skilled in the field of “branding” for campaigns generating public awareness of complex and often controversial issues, assumptions about and approaches to advocacy were unpacked. Regarding advocating for an end to homelessness, our guide described the thinking that goes into the creation of an appropriate “voice” when advocating about divisive public issues. Such ideas would include speaking to the assumptions of the audience, versus arguing for what you want them to hear. The importance of social media was highlighted. “Voice” or “brand,” including logo, colour, font, media bites, and the appropriate personality to represent any given topic—which, by the way, might not always be the CEO of the cause—were discussed. I would like to have heard more on this topic!

Housing First – Expert Round Table.

This workshop was offered by a select group of “experts” who manage city-wide or regional Housing First endeavours. For me, attending this workshop offered an introduction to the language and assessment tools utilized by Housing First assessment teams, terms like SPADAT, triage orientation, service orientation, social return, and trajectory. These all describe complementary tools used in assessing risk and evaluating individual progress and program value.

Housing First – Expert Round Table 2.

Following the workshop just described, attendees engaged in round-table discussion with city-wide and regional managers about the challenges of implementing Housing First in various locations, such as larger and smaller cities. These challenges seemed to be linked mainly to access to information on individuals requiring services, and the coordination of services between various agencies and service providers. Further, a central challenge for Housing First is the unavailability of affordable supported housing for high-needs clients.

Adapting Housing First for Aboriginal peoples.

Presenters included Edmonton's Homeward Trust Aboriginal Managers. They described the need to implement First Nations tradition, beliefs and community-gathering styles within Housing First initiatives that are directly related to the care of Aboriginal peoples. Homeward Trust of Edmonton has a pilot project underway that houses Aboriginal people in a 14-unit apartment building. A Housing First manager and an onsite Aboriginal helper have begun to build community within the complex, with a very clear orientation to Aboriginal “ways.”

Housing First: Key lessons from Europe.

Researcher Nicholas Pleace (from the European Observatory on Homelessness, University of York, UK) spoke of Europe's response and challenges with regard to implementing Housing First. It seems that, in Europe, or particularly the UK, housing and social service support is well established for seniors and single parents. Thus the Housing First programs centre on individuals experiencing homelessness in their 30s, 40s and 50s.

Plenary Sessions.

Inspiring keynote speakers included:

- Becky Kanis, Director of the 100,000 Homes Campaign and Co-founder of The Social Change Agency in the United States;
- Craig Kielburger, Co-founder of Free the Children;
- Chief Willie Littlechild, a Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



Welcome Home cont'd

There are many women and men in our city who are newly housed and are experiencing the loneliness associated with being in a new community, where everything is strange and unfamiliar, where they know no one. There are just as many women and men who have the heart to volunteer with Welcome Home, who want to befriend those making the transition from homelessness to home.

If you are homeless now or have recently been housed, and if you think you might like to be a **participant**, contact Jacqueline Bass, our Welcome Home program coordinator, so she can arrange an interview with you. Jackie can be reached at jacqueline.bass@catholicsocialservices.ab.ca or (780) 378-2544.

If this story resonates in your heart and you hear yourself saying, “This sounds like an exciting **volunteer** possibility,” contact Gerald Sseguya at Gerald.sseguya@catholicsocialservices.ab.ca or (780) 378-2482.

Sister Marie Clare

Keynote speaker themes: Don't be afraid to face the big questions! Think big! Through their actions, these speakers have encouraged others to find solutions to the problems of homelessness and poverty. For example, the success of the 100,000 Homes Campaign in the United States has inspired the 20,000 Homes Campaign, to be launched in June 2015 by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

You may ask, "So what does all this have to do with the church and the broader faith community of Edmonton?" Faith leadership has determined that the religious community best addresses the subject of homelessness and affordable supported housing through ecumenical and interfaith alliances, all the while creating

solid friendship and cooperation with groups such as Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, and national groups such as the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. In response to Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative and the Welcome Home Program were created to link faith community support and action to solutions for homelessness and the provision of affordable supported housing. See articles in this newsletter by Bob McKeon (page 2) and Sister Mary Clare (pages 2-3) for information about these programs.

What is asked of the inter-religious community when aligning with the City of Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End

Homelessness? The priority action is the strengthening of church and neighbourhood support through advocacy, to combat NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) and promote YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) in city-wide affordable supported housing builds.

"I was hungry and you fed me...I was thirsty and you gave me to drink...I was sick and you cared for me...I was a homeless stranger and you welcomed me!"

Matthew 25

*Rick Chapman+
Pastor, ICPM*



ICPM and Glory Lutheran Church volunteers sorting Emmanuel Christmas Sacks

Thank-You!

EMMANUEL CHRISTMAS SACKS (2014)

This past December the Emmanuel Christmas Gift Sack Ministry was blessed to receive 658 Christmas sacks and many gifts of hoodies, long johns, underwear, bus tickets, pet food, socks, toques, scarves, and McDonald's cards. A special financial gift was also received. These items will continue to offer help in the winter months.

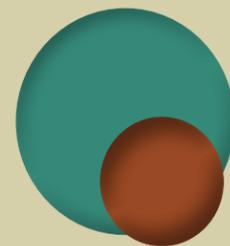
Rev. Rick Chapman and the Inner City Pastoral Ministry Board wish to thank everyone for their contributions: Annunciation Roman Catholic Parish, Assumption Parish & CWL, Augustana Lutheran, Dr. Cathy Flood, Donna Foerster, First United Church, Glory Lutheran, Hope Lutheran, Cheryl Lawren, Lions Breakfast Club for

Mount Olivet Lutheran and Strathcona Child Development Centre, Muir Lake Ladies Group, Notre Dame School, St. Columba Anglican, St. George's Anglican, St. Mary's Anglican, St. Philip's Anglican, Stollery Hospital, Seventh Day Adventist, and Terry Wittkopf.

We also give thanks to the Bissell Centre for their assistance and for offering storage space, and to Glory Lutheran Church and ICPM volunteers for helping with sorting.

We join with the many people who receive these gifts to thank all the participating groups, individuals, churches, and organizers. May God continue this good work in your lives throughout 2015.

*Sue Pasker
Inner City Pastoral Ministry Board*



Advent Appeal

Advent is the season of the Christian calendar that marks the beginning of a new year. The word Advent is derived from the Latin word Adventus, which means "arrival" or "coming". And that is exactly what happened with the responses to our Advent Appeal letters—the generous responses just kept arriving at the ICPM office day after day during December! Thank you to everyone who shared with us the gifts that they have in their lives. We could not carry on our ministry in the manner we do without your support of this annual appeal. The ministry of presence that ICPM brings to those who live in the inner city reaches people every day of the week. Thank you for helping to make God's kingdom come alive on the streets of Edmonton. And if you were unable to provide a donation in December, don't think you need to wait until next December rolls around to provide your support. Donations are gratefully accepted throughout the year!

With thanks and blessings to all of you.

*John Campbell
Stewardship Committee*

A MESSAGE FROM THE "CHAIR"

The Injustice of Homelessness

I have never personally experienced being homeless. The closest I came was on a couple of occasions when I was a student at university and was scrambling in the spring to line up an apartment for the fall semester. Those experiences are insignificant of course in the scale of lifestyle disruptions that can come a person's way during their lifetime. I can only imagine the stress and anguish that being homeless causes someone who literally has had to hit the streets. I have however had the experience of receiving the love and care of others during times in my life when the disruptions I suffered were of a serious variety. For those times, when others reached out to walk with me and to provide care for me and my family, I have been forever grateful, and I have been humbled by the generosity of those involved.

If we are ever in doubt about our calling as Christians in this world, we need only turn to the words of the prophet Micah for a reminder:

And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

The extent of homelessness in Edmonton is truly an injustice. Certainly there have been positive steps forward in recent years towards addressing this issue, and many committed individuals and organizations are working hard to alleviate the problem. But there remains much, much more to be done before we as a community can say that "we have done justice" when it comes to our brothers and sisters who are experiencing homelessness. We are called to reach out to provide care and love to those who are suffering from the effects of living without a home to call their own.

In this edition of the Newsletter we are exploring different aspects of poverty and homelessness in Edmonton. My hope is that you will gain new information about these critical issues, that you will be moved and inspired to commit yourself to greater efforts to help others where you can, and that you will keep all those who are experiencing homelessness in your prayers

*John Campbell
Chair of the Board of Directors of ICPM*

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