

"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

# STUDENTS VISIT THE INNER CITY

GEORGE P. NICHOLSON SCHOOL GRADE 6 CLASS

n enthusiastic class of twenty Grade 6 students from George P. Nicholson School in Edmonton, along with their teacher and three parent volunteers, visited ICPM on the afternoon of April 29, 2016. The students came with two objectives: first, to learn something of life in the inner city, and the challenges faced by residents of that community; and, second, to leave a special gift with Pastor Rick to be shared with community members in need.

At the beginning of the afternoon, the group met with Pastor Rick in the boardroom of Bissell Centre West, With the assistance of Jeremiah from the Mustard Seed, Pastor Rick provided the students with a hands-on lesson about the food security issues faced by residents of the inner city. For many living in that community, obtaining a steady, balanced diet of wholesome and nutritious food is a constant challenge, one that is made more difficult by the lack of supermarkets in the inner city. While many agencies and groups come forward to provide food for those in need, their efforts sometimes have unintended consequences. It may happen, for example, that a chosen few receive supplies of food while others go

without. To demonstrate how this affects people on an emotional level, Pastor Rick passed out colourful freezies to a few of the twenty students. Those receiving the freezies smiled in delight as they received their treats, but the faces of the students not getting one quickly showed flashes of dismay, envy and sadness as they realized they were being passed by. The point of Pastor Rick's demonstration had quickly hit home!

Another aspect of food distribution in the inner city is a "one size fits all" approach. Often everyone is served food that is generic and bland, with the result that no one is allowed to enjoy the small pleasure of an appetizing meal that most of us take for granted. Once again, freezies brought the issue to life for the students. Pastor Rick gave everyone a treat this time, but the treats were all the same, and they were all colourless. Although those who





### **STUDENTS VISIT THE INNER CITY (CONT'D)**

had missed out on the first round were now happy to have a treat of their own, no one was doing cartwheels of joy as they received the same "blah" item as everyone else. Lessons were beginning to be learned around the room!

As the final element of his presentation, Pastor Rick brought out bags (and bags!) of brightly coloured, deliciously flavoured freezies. Each student was asked to take a paper bag and put five freezies into the bag. The class was then divided into two groups and given a mission, to go out into the community and share the bounty with anyone and everyone they met as they walked towards their eventual destination at City Hall.

The students made their way out of the Bissell Centre onto the sidewalks of the inner city, not quite sure whom they would encounter, and how they would be received. Tentatively, they went up to the first few people they met. Shyly, they offered them a freezie. Then came

the surprise: "Wow, this is great, thanks!" "This is perfect, thank you so much!" "Hey, great, thanks kids!" and "Could I have another one to give to my friend?"There was warmth; there were bright smiles, and whatever stereotypes of inner city residents these kids from the suburbs had brought with them were quickly washed away. The students were connecting with members of a community, and learning a life lesson about sharing. Soon they were literally running down the streets, from one person to the next, eager to offer a cool treat on a hot afternoon to a stranger—who was in fact a friend they had not yet had an opportunity to meet.

The two groups of students reunited at City Hall and gathered under the glass pyramid, on the steps in the City Room. There, they presented Pastor Rick with \$400.00 in gift cards from McDonald's, and \$250.00 in ETS transit tickets. Over the year ahead, these will be given by ICPM to inner city residents in need. The

funds to pay for the gift cards and tickets were raised by the students themselves, an outcome of the Junior Achievement program in which they had participated during the year. Needless to say, the gifts were gratefully received by Pastor Rick, and will be put to good use over the coming months. Because of these students' efforts and generosity, people in need of a meal out as a treat will enjoy a little luxury, while others, going to a job interview or an appointment, will take a ride on the bus or the LRT in place of a long, exhausting walk.

Mrs. Lorelei Campbell, the class teacher, said that, on the ride back to school on the LRT, the students were excitedly talking among themselves about their experience. "All of the kids were saying how much they enjoyed meeting the people and having a chance to talk to them. More than one student mentioned to me that 'the people we met today were just so nice and friendly." And only a week

#### STUDENTS VISIT THE INNER CITY (CONT'D)

later, when the terrible fire forced the residents of Fort McMurray to evacuate, several of the students came to Mrs. Campbell and said "We just have to do something to help them out!" Perhaps some seeds were planted on that April afternoon at ICPM.

Our thanks go out to Pastor Rick and Jeremiah for providing a fantastic learning experience for the students, to the parent volunteers for coming along on the trip, and to Mrs. Campbell for being willing to extend her classroom beyond the four walls of her school. And most of all, our thanks go out to the students in the Grade 6 class at George P. Nicholson for bringing their joy and enthusiasm to the inner city. Well done students!!

John Campbell Chair, Board of Directors, ICPM (and appreciative spouse of Mrs. Campbell!)



### THE

# **BLANKET EXERCISE & CHURCH COMMUNITIES**

ittle did we know what would transpire when the Oskapew (helper) position was created as part of the Inner City Pastoral Ministry! One of our hopes for the position is that it will build a bridge between the faith communities that support the Ministry, on the one hand, and Indigenous peoples and our story, on the other. This bridge will ultimately be a bridge of reconciliation. Building this bridge involves many steps and many possibilities. One of the steps ICPM is taking is facilitating the Blanket Exercise. This step is imperative for reconciliation, because it creates a foundation for understanding the history of colonization in Canada, and the profound effects this had and continues to have on Indigenous peoples

and communities. The way towards reconciliation starts with shedding light on the dark truths of our Canadian history.

During the last seven months, we have been invited to several church communities that opened their doors and their spirits to hear these dark and hard truths. We are building the bridge of reconciliation with these church communities. Together, we have experienced moments of deep reflection, lamentation, and powerful response, as well as meaningful dialogue. As small as this step may seem in the bigger picture of reconciliation, it is a very important one. It has been an honour to share the Blanket Exercise, but even more, an honour to share tears over the painful

story of our history, and especially to share the hope and vision of a better way forward. Aiy-hay!

> Michelle Nieviadomy Oskapew, ICPM



#### **WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL WELLNESS**



CPM Women's Spiritual Wellness is an ongoing opportunity for women of the inner city community to gather to celebrate their lives and the movement of God's Spirit within. Under the outstanding leadership of Michelle Nieviadomy and Linda Heywood, with assistance from Annie Johnson, the program runs throughout the year, from September to late June. Fifteen to twenty women of varying cultural backgrounds meet monthly for a nutritious lunch, crafts, special events, and spiritual reflection.

The highlight of the year is the annual

three-day Women's Wellness Retreat held at the Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert. The women are referred by a variety of inner city agencies, including Inner City Pastoral Ministry. The purpose of the retreat is to provide, for women who could not otherwise afford to attend. a weekend away from the stresses of their lives. The event provides activities that foster reflection and growth, creative and enjoyable activities to encourage connection and relaxation, workshops to learn new skills, and time to be pampered and have fun. It is made possible by individuals and organizations that provide funding to sponsor the women who attend. Donations—of flowers for the rooms, of transportation, of workshop leadership and supplies—as well as volunteer staff also play a big part in making the weekend happen.

This year, the Star of the North Retreat Centre welcomed fourteen women to the 10th annual "Time Away From the Everyday" Wellness Retreat for Women, held on May 27, 28, and 29. The retreat was once again a great success; in fact, it is one of the events the women from the ICPM community look forward to every year! Our hosts, the wonderful

staff of the Retreat Centre, provided a beautiful escape and time of relaxation for the women who attended. They were engaged in craft activities, teachings, singing, various workshops, yoga, wonderful meals and snacks, and a coffee house. As well, the women had time to rest, read, wander the beautiful grounds of the Centre, or do whatever was good for their spirit.

This retreat is an amazing opportunity to build on the relationships and the community we have created with the Women's Spirituality Group, which meets once a month throughout the year. The women left refreshed, renewed and blessed after their time away from the everyday!

"Thank you! The first thing is – this is a blessing place. When I was here, I had a different feeling in my body. I can't tell you how wonderful it was. My heart is here now."

- A Participant At The Retreat

Michelle Nieviadomy Oskapew, ICPM Rick Chapman + Pastor, ICPM



s the ministry of ICPM flourished within the inner city community, a special direction was suggested some years ago by Doug Krefting, Pastoral Ministry Volunteer. Doug proposed that we open space for men to speak of their life challenges, their joys, and their spirituality. Over time, the Men's Spiritual Wellness Program evolved. Its purpose is to develop a richer understanding of the complex themes of spirituality, and to explore and share together the strengthening aspects of the practice of spirituality when applied to one's personal life.

This year, Pastor Rick, with the assistance of John Helps, United Church Diaconal Student, created a space for sharing ideas that is rooted in respect, thoughtfulness, and creativity. The 15 to 20 men who gathered month by month experienced, through group sharing, a variety of ways of presenting and thinking about ideas. We participated in a process that continually "grew" our skills in the areas of critical thinking and communicating. "Yes," we agreed, "it's okay, in fact it's encouraged, to admit that we don't fully understand something. When we don't

have the complete and final answer, the result should be the need to ask a lot of questions." Our opinions, ideas and ways of seeing the world were varied! Yet respectful disagreements and a deeper discussion of our topics became the expectation.

The culmination of this year-long activity was the annual retreat, held this year at the Star of the North Retreat Centre on May 20 and 21. There, the men were led in reflection and ceremony by Dan Jelinski, Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie, Bob McKeon, John Helps, and Pastor Rick. The reflections offered at the retreat echoed the archetypical themes of a life journey, and envisioned movement across thresholds of change, change that in many cases was made desirable by the chaos and loss created by addictive behaviours. The men were challenged to continue, with God's help, to move through these doorways, advancing into lifestyles of intentional recovery, and rethinking their life choices to ensure that they are spiritually healthy.

As Pastor, I believe this gathering of men, that is, men in various stages of recovery, some still homeless, some in recovery

centres, some independently housed, is a miraculous event, Spirit- led, and blessed by the Creator who loves us unreservedly, not for what we have done, but for who we are.

Rick Chapman + Pastor, ICPM







he earth provides everything we need: food, water, clothing, and shelter. For Indigenous peoples, she provides cultural and spiritual fulfillment as well. The earth is our source, not a resource. Creator gave her as a gift to all humanity to live well, live in harmony, and live in balance with her and all her inhabitants. Yet we are living in a time where our earth is in crisis. As we search for solutions, answers, and justice, the traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples brings great wisdom and teachings in how to care for our earth.

In my office sits a dry and discoloured braid of sweetgrass. (Sweetgrass is one of the medicines harvested from the earth for Cree ceremonies.) An elder came into my office one day, and as she picked up this braid she said, "You took too much." I knew exactly what she meant: I could not use the medicine for ceremony any longer now that it had dried out. Our teachings tell us to take only what we need. This braid of sweetgrass now sits as an ornament of sorts, which was never its intention. It is a reminder that Indigenous teachings show a way of living that respects, honours, and protects the earth.

THE

# **EARTH IS OUR MOTHER**

As strong advocates for climate justice, allies for the earth's livelihood, and protectors of her resources, Indigenous peoples have a deep connection with the earth. Climate change is threatening the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples and communities. So it was no surprise to see Indigenous peoples from around our vast global village at the COP21 climate negotiations. We were hopeful but disheartened to realize that here too we must battle to make our voices heard, especially since Indigenous peoples have so much to contribute and offer around climate change.

As an observer during the negotiations, I realized rather quickly that Indigenous peoples did not have a formal voice at the table of this international summit. What's more, Indigenous rights were on the chopping block from the draft text of the agreement. Fortunately, Canada's position valued Indigenous peoples as Prime Minister Trudeau said during the negotiations:

"I have instructed Canada's chief negotiator for climate change and her team to strongly advocate for the inclusion in the Paris Agreement of language that reflects the importance of respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples. We have also highlighted the importance of considering Indigenous traditional knowledge alongside scientific analysis."

Despite the Prime Minister's appeal, Indigenous rights failed

to stay in the final text of the Paris Agreement. It was a sombre moment. For someone who has invested my mind, body, and soul in Indigenous justice, it was a moment of lamentation. From my Cree perspective, Indigenous and climate justice work together. When those who carry inherent teachings of the earth were not heard, it felt like defeat. It was a stark reminder: there is much work to be done for the sake of justice.

I am just a strand in the web of life. But one strand in such a strong diverse global community! Creator does magnificent work in weaving all the strands of people together to pursue justice for his earth and his people. COP21 gathered people from all walks of life with different worldviews to play their part, to use their voice and to advocate in their way for the sake of the earth and her justice. We all have a part to play.

The Christian Reformed Church is playing a powerful role by lending their voice through the Climate Witness Project. This unique project is stirring church communities and members within the denomination to awareness, advocacy, and action. The synergy in this project is inspiring to say the least. Over 30 church congregations have already signed on.

With vision, partnership, and solidarity it is possible to live well, live in harmony, and live in balance with the gift Creator has given to us: the earth. As she continues to provide for our needs, may we live in such a way that preserves and protects her.

Michelle Nieviadomy Oskapew, ICPM

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted with permission from The Catalyst (vol. 39 no. 1, Spring 2016), the newsletter of Citizens for Public Justice. Michelle Nieviadomy works at the Inner City Pastoral Ministry in Edmonton, where she focuses on Indigenous reconciliation and healing. She was a member of the Christian Reformed Church's delegation to the COP21 climate talks in Paris in December 2015.

John Helps, an active member of Robertson-Wesley United Church, is in preparation for diaconal ministry within the United Church of Canada, studying in the three-year program offered by the Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg. John was a student minister with ICPM from September 2015 to May 2016, fulfilling a program requirement for a practicum on social ministry. Next term he will serve with McClure United Church, Edmonton, fulfilling another of the three practicum requirements of the program, on pastoral care. John's ministry with ICPM was celebrated on May 8, the last

Sunday of his placement, during the morning service of the Community of Emmanuel at Bissell Centre. As part of the celebration, he received the gift of a dream catcher, presented by its maker, Métis Elder Dorothy Delorme.

**Thank you, John**, for your many contributions, especially with the Men's Spirituality Program, which have enriched the ministry of ICPM amongst the inner city community of Edmonton.

Rick Chapman + Pastor, ICPM



# A MESSAGE FROM THE "CHAIR"

ne of my interests when surfing the internet is the websites of organizations committed to social justice and the provision of services to persons in need, organizations both here in Canada and in other countries. One that I follow is Providence Row, a charity in London, England that works with homeless and vulnerably housed people in East London, offering an integrated service of crisis support, advice, recovery, and learning and training programs. The group was founded in 1860 by a Catholic priest who was moved to try to address the extreme poverty that he saw around him. With the help of an order of Catholic nuns known as the Sisters of Mercy, he raised funds and found a facility. The building opened onto a narrow lane called Providence Row, and that became the name of the organization.

While browsing Providence Row's website recently, I came across a wonderful reflection by a volunteer, Emma Mukerjee, who had just begun to work in the early morning breakfast program at the centre. It struck me that Emma's words reflect in a powerful way what is at the core of the ministry of ICPM. She wrote,

"Having volunteers in our centre at 6:30 a.m. to help run this service encourages the beginnings of a relationship. Our volunteers are the welcoming face. They provide the breakfast and spend time just talking to our clients over a cup of coffee. We share jokes, stories, bits of the

morning's news. It allows our clients to feel human again, to feel cared for and respected."

To feel human again, to feel cared for and respected. Such powerful elements of a person's life, yet so often overlooked. God has called us to be present in the lives of the members of the inner city community. The ministry of ICPM is part of that call. The kind words shared at a Sunday lunch by a volunteer with one of the guests, a cup of steaming hot coffee given to

"...to feel human again, to feel cared for and respected."

~ Emma Mukerjee ~

a shivering hand at a meeting of the women's spirituality group, a joke shared by Pastor Rick with a fellow he meets on the sidewalk outside the Bissell Centre—all of these help our brothers and sisters to feel human, to feel cared for, to feel respected. This is our ministry of presence. But these connections, these relationships that are created, start much earlier, far away from the streets of the inner city. These connections and relationships start back in the more than 80 congregations and parishes and groups that provide volunteers and food for our Sunday

lunches. They start in the hearts and minds of those who share their blessings by contributing funds to support our ministry, through loose offering collections in their congregations, or personal donations sent throughout the year. They start in the meeting rooms of the church bodies, in Edmonton and across Canada and even internationally, that provide grants to fund the ministry of ICPM. And these connections and relationships also start in the caring hearts and enthusiastic attitudes of a group of twenty Grade 6 students who come to the inner city on a Friday afternoon to learn about life in the inner city and to share their gifts, and who in turn are enriched by their encounters with members of the community.

Our thanks go out to all of you for your interest, your support and your prayers. Thank you for each and every part that you play in our ministry. God takes our small gestures, our small acts of kindness, our times of simple sharing, and uses them to bring life and hope into the lives of others. May God's peace and blessings be with you as we continue to answer our common calling.

John Campbell Chair, Board of Directors, ICPM

#### An Invitation

# "I came," said Jesus, "that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

—John 10:10

hat does Jesus mean when he talks about abundance? Does he mean that all our wishes can be granted, that all the material comforts of life are ours simply for the asking? Does he mean that all we have to do to have a full life is seek a higher level of material success and a greater abundance of material possessions?

The stories from the Fort McMurray fire—how people helped each other and shared with each other—tell us something else. Weren't you moved when you heard how the citizens of Lac La Biche came forward to welcome Fort McMurray travellers with food and clothing? It's a story that was repeated in Edmonton, and indeed throughout the province and the nation.

My close-to-home example comes from a neighbour across the street, who asked all of us to donate goods for a garage sale to help the people of Fort McMurray. She told me, "I don't have much, but I can do this!"

Countless stories of sharing and helping: what do they tell us? To me, they say that the abundance Jesus talks about is an abundance of relationships, relationships that can be with us throughout our lives. They help us see how Jesus points us towards opportunities for a fuller relationship with God, and opportunities to understand abundance in broader and deeper terms. In fact, these stories tell us who we are meant to be. We are meant to be contagiously generous. We are meant

to be partners with God. We are meant to make real differences in the lives of our fellow citizens.

ICPM does make real differences, differences that are evident in the lives of people who need to know that there is life-giving water and that it is free. That's what the ministry of presence is all about. You can help by supporting this vital ministry right now. When we all give, this ministry can do what it is called to do. You and I may not have much, but together we can help ICPM make differences that change lives.

David Barnum ICPM Board Member



### ICPM PASTORAL ASSOCIATE POSITION AVAILABLE

HIT THE STREETS WITH US...

he Inner City Pastoral Ministry is an ecumenical ministry of presence among Edmonton's inner city community. It is co-sponsored by the Anglican, United, Evangelical Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches. The ICPM seeks to fill a 16-hour/week, part-time salaried position providing ministry to people of the inner city. This position begins on Sept. 1, 2016, provided a suitable candidate is found. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience. The roles and responsibilities of this individual will include Sunday morning activities with the Community of Emmanuel worshipping congregation (including sharing in leading worship,

and offering the homily) and assisting the Ministry Team in the Sunday Lunch Program. Community ministry may include pastoral care of men and women, facilitating men's and/or women's programs, and developing further ministry inroads to community and family care.

Requirements include a background in theology, a desire to work with the inner city community, excellent communication skills, some experience in office work, computer literacy, and a willingness to work as a team with others in the ICPM. Security clearance is required of the successful applicant. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply; however, Canadian citizens

and permanent residents will be given priority.

Review of applications will begin on Aug. 1, 2016, and will continue until the position is filled. Applicants should submit a curriculum vitae, a letter describing their background experience, and why they are interested in this position. If you are contacted for an interview, you will be asked to provide two letters of reference. Please forward your application to: Dr. Nancy Kerr, 302 Human Ecology Building, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2N1, or send it to **nkerr@ualberta.ca**.

# Are you the perfect fit for our team?

### **END POVERTY EDMONTON GOES NATIONAL**

Recently I had the opportunity to attend an excellent conference, "Cities Reducing Poverty: When Mayors Lead." Organized by Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement, it was held April 5 through 7 at the Chateau Lacombe. Mayors and City Councillors from across Canada, St. John to Whitehorse, spoke about End Poverty initiatives in their communities. Fascinating perspectives were offered, as discussions of the Canadian economy and the need to address poverty filled the agenda. It was an enriching experience.

What particularly struck me were comments by Edmonton's own Mayor, Don Iveson. In his keynote address, Mayor Iveson noted that, while many municipalities have strategic plans to end poverty, these same municipalities have limited ability to offer financial support for the building of affordable and supported housing, a key component of any End Poverty venture. Moreover,

he pointed out that communication amongst the three levels of government, municipal, provincial and federal, is difficult, but nevertheless crucial to the provision of adequate financial support. He called for more effective methods of communication, and suggested round table discussions with all parties present. We would do well, he noted, to follow Indigenous styles of governance, which involve intentional listening before action is taken. As our cities grow, at least in part a result of the depopulating of rural areas and the urbanization of Indigenous populations, End Poverty initiatives must become an integral part of city planning in general, and the revitalizing of neighbourhoods in particular.

It is interesting to note, however, that charitable organizations such as the United Way, E4C, ICPM, Bent Arrow, and others that serve persons living in poverty, somehow manage to weave their way through the political maze. As they

offer leadership and advocate for change with respect to End Poverty initiatives, the strength of these agencies is critical.

Rick Chapman + Pastor, ICPM

Tamarack Institute – An Institute for Community Engagement ... a charity that develops and supports learning communities that help people to collaborate, co-generate knowledge and achieve collective impact on complex community issues, building a connected force for community change.









We are pleased to announce that **Pastor Philip Penrod** has joined the Board of Directors of Inner City Pastoral Ministry. He is the Pastor at Our Savior Lutheran, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, located in west Edmonton at 18345 - 62B Avenue. He has an extensive background in outreach work with youth, and we appreciate his willingness to share his gifts and his time to further our ministry in the inner city. Welcome aboard, Pastor Philip!

John Campbell Chair, Board of Directors, ICPM

### **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.

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** 

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