

Commissioner

MARCH 2009

Looking Ahead

- April 5 9:30 & 11:15 am
- April 9 7 pm Maundy Thursday service
- April 10 10 am Good Friday service
- April 12 9:30 & 11:15 am
Easter Sunday services
- April 14 7 pm Pastoral Oversight
Visit to Harrow United
- April 18 Time and Talent Auction
9 am Breakfast;
10 am Auction
- April 19 10 am Worship service
Cherubs Singing, UCW
Thankoffering and
Earth Day;
11 am Congregational
Meeting; Potluck Lunch
- May 10 Confirmation Sunday
- May 17 10 am Worship service
(start of one service
during the summer)

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These Hands Make Our Church

By Jeff Cook

Melanie Sidorow has become the youngest person to be elected as Vice-Chair of TMUC's Official Board. Sidorow was elected at TMUC's Annual Congregational meeting held on Feb. 8.

Sidorow, 28, is a member of the Carillon Singers, serves on the Facilities Task Group and has been a CGIT leader. She will become Chair of the Board when the current chair, Adrian Measner, completes his term at next year's Annual meeting.

Several reports and updates were presented during the meeting. Cynthia Ostapyk, Stewardship Chair, reported that TMUC had an operating surplus of \$8,696.93 in 2008. The congregation approved a 2009 budget of \$369,108.

As well, Steve McKendry-Smith provided an update from the Facilities Task Group, describing four options or building renovations currently being considered.

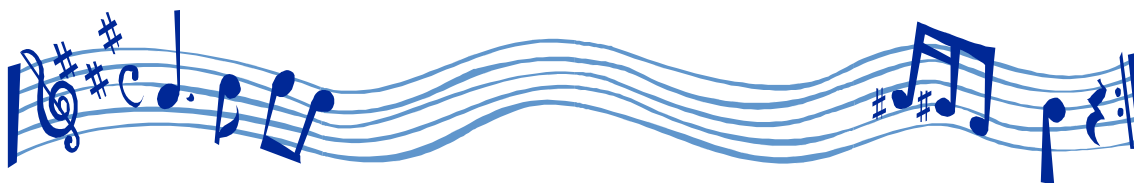
The Men's Breakfast Group invited people to join them in a lively adaptation of the song YMCA, substituting the letters TMUC.

About 130 people participated in the meeting following the morning worship service. People gathered in Yale Hall to share a potluck lunch prior to the business portion of the meeting.

The Annual Meeting concluded with the traditional cake auction. After some spirited bidding, the CGIT sold 13 cakes for about \$400.

"Hands" table centerpieces made by the Sunday School children.





NOTES FROM THE CHOIRS

By Dorothy Ross

The choirs are busy rehearsing music for the Lent, Holy Week and Easter services. On Easter Sunday, the Chancel Choir and the Carillons will combine for three Easter anthems. The Sunshine Choir will be singing on Palm Sunday.

The Chancel Choir will be dedicating new choir gowns on Easter Sunday. The financing of the gowns has been donated by the Grapentine family, in loving memory of Phyllis Grapentine. Our grateful thanks to Blaine and family for this generous gift.

The Sunshine Choir will be singing on Palm Sunday and the Cherub Choir will be singing on April 19th.

All four choirs will be taking part in the "Sounds of Music" concert on May 1st.

Don't forget our traditional Father's Day Men's Choir in June. All interested men are welcome to join with the Chancel Choir men and "make a joyful noise to the Lord".

New members are always welcome in all choirs. We are especially in need of altos in the Chancel Choir. Please consider joining us. We'd love to have you!

Friday May 1, 2009,

TMUC's Building & Property Promotions INK is sponsoring "**The Sounds of Music**" which will be hosted by the Harbourview Mountain Boys. There will be World Class Tap Dancing included in the numerous acts represented as well as the Three Legged Man and numbers by the four choirs. Tickets are \$10 and are available in the office.

The UCW will host a **WHIST DRIVE** on **Friday, April 17th at 7:30 p.m.** Tickets are \$5.00 and refreshments will be served. Call the office for tickets.

Commissioner is the newsletter of Transcona Memorial United Church. It is published two times annually.

Submissions, news, and other items of interest are welcome. Contributions may be edited for length. To submit articles, please contact the church.

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INTRODUCTION TO BEHIND THE SCENES

Behind the Scenes is a new regular column in the Commissioner. The initial column was written for the fall issue but it was cut due to lack of space.

TMUC is enhanced by the many tasks that are taken on by individuals. They notice a need then quietly go about filling it. Some are regular duties, others are one-time jobs, but all make a difference in our church. Sometimes the work is not even noticed by the congregation and other times it is noticed, but most people don't know who carried out the task. The purpose of this column is to inform the congregation of the unsigned jobs being done and to recognize and show appreciation to the volunteers. It is intended to be an ongoing column. There are far too many volunteers to cite in one issue. If you know of someone you would like mentioned in the column, please let the office know.

BEHIND THE SCENES

By Delsie Cousineau



Flower gardens: Did you notice the beautiful flowers in the planter by the Christian Education (CE) entrance last summer? They were planted by Susan Norris. For many years Susan planted and cared for the flower gardens surrounding the foundation of the church as well as those in the planter.

Laurie Desautels regularly helps with the watering of the plants and originally placed and planted the containers with the geraniums along the side of the sanctuary.

Tending the door: The Christian Education door is kept locked during the week so every time there is a funeral either Lionel Merrick or Jack Senior is at the door letting people in, greeting them, giving directions and taking those who can't do stairs down or up in the elevator. They also ensure that there are glasses of water placed in the sanctuary for the minister(s) and organist; they post any hymn numbers if needed and even place some of the flower arrangements. At weddings, they come and remove the railing on the sanctuary steps so that the bridal party may exit the church and pose for photographs on the stairs. They then come back to replace the railing so it is in place for Sunday services.



Painting the Toddlers' Room: Brenda Wood submitted an article in the fall issue of the newsletter about the Toddlers' Room, but she didn't mention that she provided that bright green paint and painted the room herself.

Recording services: Joan Garner has been attending both services almost every Sunday in order to audio tape both services and make them available for people to listen to at home.

Choir room improvements: A water fountain has been installed in the choir room and there are sturdy wooden coat hangers in the closet to replace the flimsy, crooked ones, courtesy of Elaine Drewry.

Knox Lounge and Yale Hall have also been upgraded to wooden hangers by Harry Craig.

Changing time: For several years, Edgar Cox has been turning up as regularly as clockwork to change the church clocks and thermostat programs to and from Daylight Savings Time.



Special events: Special events need special equipment. Leslie and Steve McKendry-Smith are usually there to set up sound and computer equipment, Dennis Hruda builds and remodels stages while Anne Hruda does the painting, and Sylvia Jansen sets up and operates Power Point Presentations.

Snow removal: Snow removal is contracted out but that doesn't happen soon enough for many church events. Jack Senior, Terry Cousins and Lionel Merrick are often out there with shovels clearing the sidewalk

The annual **Time and Talent auction** will be held Saturday, April 18 beginning at 9:00 with a silent auction and breakfast and then at 10:00 the bidding begins. Breakfast tickets are only \$5.00. We also need you to make donations of items suitable for the silent auction (a basket for the garden or the patio? a cake or a pie? or maybe something unique?) and we need you to make donations of items suitable for the bidding auction (cabbage rolls to be made for a specific date? a batch of jam?) and we need you to help us find the support of our community partners who would like to make a donation (rounds of golf? gift baskets? promises of services like window cleaning?). If you would like to have a letter asking for a donation, please contact the office. On our website in the 'Latest News' you will find the form for donations www.tmuc.ca (it is also available in the office).

Message from Adrian Measner, Chair of the Official Board

On February 8, 2009 we held the 56th annual congregational meeting with over 100 people attending. The attendance reflects the strong interest many members of the congregation have in the well being of our church. Those in attendance were told that operations for 2008 ended with a \$8700 financial surplus even after accounting for a \$3300 deficit from the year before. 2008 was indeed a very good year and one we can build on as we move forward.

I attended a Pastoral Oversight seminar in January that was put on by Presbytery. I had the opportunity to sit down with 5 representatives from Harrow United Church for about 30 minutes during the course of the evening. Harrow is the Church that we will be visiting this year as part of pastoral oversight. I was impressed with the level of knowledge this group had about our church and in fact one individual commented that she knew our church was doing quite well while their church has perhaps a few more challenges. A little later in the discussion the Minister from Harrow indicated that she sometimes uses our church as an example to her congregation as she knows we have recently put together a new vision and mission and strategic plan for our church. This is the same exercise that their church is now going through. It was nice to get that feedback and certainly we should be pleased with the progress we are making.

At our annual meeting I referred to 2008 as a foundation building year as we operated with a financial surplus, we formed a youth and an environment committee - both key to our future direction - we established a fundraising committee and formed a facilities task force to determine options for our building and property. However a strong base does not ensure continued progress or even progress in the right direction. Our strategic plan should provide the guidance we need on the direction side and we must all ensure that we continue to move ahead.

There are three key decisions we will be asked to make in 2009 that will ensure we position ourselves for the future. The most significant will be the recommendation from the Facilities Task Force. We will have a special meeting of the congregation to deal with that recommendation and members of the congregation will receive enough information well in advance of the meeting to be able to make an informed decision. The second group of decisions will flow from the Youth Committee who will continue to bring ideas forward that will make our church more appealing to the younger generation. And the third will be the governance review to be completed by the Long Range Planning Committee that will likely provide a new operating structure for the church. These last two decisions will likely test how willing we are to embrace change but I remain confident that there is a good understanding at TMUC of the need to evolve so that we have a strong church for many years to come. If you agree with me that 2008 was a foundation building year then 2009 will determine the structure we will be building and at what pace.

It seems like TMUC is the place to be.

TRANSCONA MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH

OUR MISSION:

As a Church we seek justice, foster and nurture growth by teaching, worshiping, through music, sharing and being welcoming to all. We value and share our gifts, protect the earth and walk humbly with our God.

OUR VISION:

TMUC is an evolving, welcoming, sharing and inclusive community church serving Christ.

FEED MY LAMBS STREET MISSION

By Jeff Cook

(with notes from Bob Buchanan)

Feed My Lambs Street Mission is a ministry of feeding people in the inner city. The ministry was approved by the Outreach Committee as part of its responsibilities.

The ministry did not begin with TMUC. Bob Buchanan, Chair of the Food Bank Committee, learned of this ministry last September when he received a call from Transcona resident Hilde Purdy. Purdy said that for the previous year she had been self-financing the feeding of homeless and street people in the inner city.

Every week on Tuesday and Friday evenings (except during the summer when she made only one weekly trip) Purdy made and delivered hot meals and sandwiches to the homeless. By the time Purdy contacted Buchanan, she was giving away 250 sandwiches per outing. She realized that she needed help to continue this ministry.

Bob and Louise Buchanan, and Jeff Cook met with Purdy and were impressed and moved by the ministry and by the extent of the need existing in this city. Reporting to the Outreach Committee about Feed My Lambs, Buchanan wrote:

There are many disadvantaged people out there, people who are down on their luck, displaced or ignored by our society; and people who have slipped and fallen into the cracks, people who don't know the ropes as well as others about how to survive and 'get ahead' in today's often indifferent world. There are those who, due to behavioural issues, have actually been banned or turned away due to capacity from some or all of the homeless Missions in the city. Who helps those people and tries to give them hope? When you're out there and see the gratitude in their faces for a hot meal and sandwich given freely right on the street, you begin to realize that we're all the same, that we are all decent people, God's creatures, and that we're here to help one another.



Since that initial meeting, the ministry has experienced exciting support:

- ⇒ People now meet in TMUC's kitchen on Thursday evenings to prepare 500 sandwiches.
- ⇒ A neighbourhood grocery store now supplies the bread free of charge (and the 'baker' from the store helps make the sandwiches).
- ⇒ Members of TMUC helped move another freezer to Purdy's house for storage of the food.
- ⇒ The Winnipeg Blue Bombers donated a 7 gallon and 10 gallon beverage container which are used to transport hot drinks and foods.
- ⇒ Two folding tables were made to use in dispensing the food (it is served from the vehicles of those who transport it).
- ⇒ Louise Page, the cook for the Seniors Meal Program, helps with the food preparation and serving.
- ⇒ Two Open Houses have been held at the Graffiti Gallery, the second of which attracted about 300 people. At the Open Houses food was served and winter clothes and personal hygiene items were given away. On Valentines Day 125 people were served a meal at Norquay Community Centre.
- ⇒ The ministry adopted the name "Feed My Lambs Street Ministry"
- ⇒ Several members of TMUC have participated in making sandwiches and in distributing the food.



Church Banners

By Alma Jennings

This past spring seven banners were placed in the sanctuary.

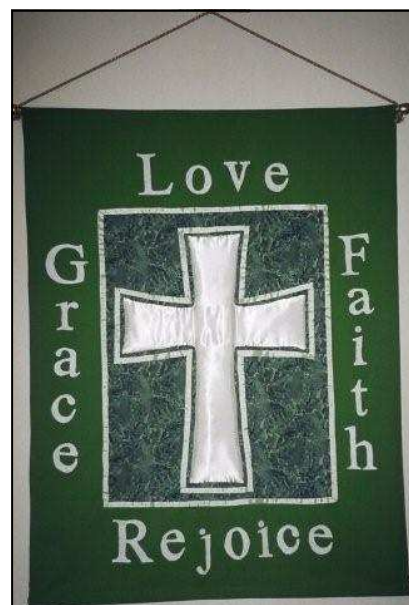
Recycled materials from previous banners were used as well as materials from the hoards of fabrics that either Carol Favoni or I had stashed away. Adhesive backing, felt, glue, curtain rods, cording, flat wooden dowels for the hem and trimmings were purchased. Each banner is 57 inches long by 45 inches wide.

The Favoni Rumpas room was in banner mode every Monday throughout all of February, March and April.

After the first banner of 'God Loves the World', we got more of a handle on what we were doing and by the time we had completed the seventh banner we knew which glues worked better than others, which material was easier to work with and which material was unforgiving.

Behind the scene was Frank Favoni, helping with curtain rods and dowelling; Candy Hanstead to do computer-lettering and Sherri Jennings serving as our in house artist.

Watch for the new Easter banner this year!!!



OUTSIDE THE BOX

By Carol Kirkhope

"Think or act 'Outside the Box'-- this is a new catchphrase of the last few years. I've heard it mentioned many times in meetings; speakers trying to persuade the masses to revolutionize or alter their way of thinking.

After leaving a meeting recently with that phrase still echoing in the recesses of my brain, I started to think that I should act on my impulse. It is so easy for me to write a cheque, send a card, donate food to the food bank and then continue on my way to a warm and loving home. What about those who have no homes? How can I REALLY make a difference and extend myself out of my comfort zone?

As I passed the exit that day I chose not to go home, but I continued downstairs instead to see if I could meet with Louise, who is the cook for the community meal program that is held in the building. I had heard she was one of the people involved with a project of preparing sandwiches and soups for delivery

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to an area of the city where the food would be well received. I asked if I could be of any assistance with the Program. She welcomed me with open arms. She explained to me that sandwiches are made every Thursday evening and delivered Tuesdays and Fridays. She said they also try to make something hot to accompany the sandwiches (ie soups, stews which are kept warm in large insulated containers.) I made arrangements for my husband and me to go out with her and another volunteer on Tuesday evening.

The windchill was -34C that night. I rummaged through my closet and found an old parka that I hadn't worn for years. I also found a pair of long johns, two bulky sweaters that I struggled with over my torso, a pair of corduroy pants, earmuffs, scarf and warm gloves. I laughed at my husband as he searched for the same wearing apparel. We both were determined not to be cold. Bob and I were excited but apprehensive not knowing what to expect. This was a part of volunteering that we had never undertaken. We were to meet at the church, pick up the huge container of very chunky pea soup and boxes of sandwiches then follow Louise's car to an alley at the corner of Henry and Princess.

Upon our arrival we parked and immediately got out of the car, set up a table, and unloaded the sandwiches. It was dark, but I could see groups of individuals slowly coming towards the table. There were the young, the old, the able and disabled, men, women, and children, all hungry with no homes to which they could go. Some hands shook with the cold or from various afflictions, others trembled with anticipation. I ladled the hot, thick soup into Styrofoam cups which included a small plastic spoon. The cups were received with thanks and both hands immediately clutched the cup for warmth. Sandwiches were distributed to all who wanted them. Some of the men that were in the cold, shivering line told us they hadn't eaten all day. Some said they had jobs and needed more sandwiches for lunch the next day.

There were never any questions asked of them or judgements made. Everyone was treated with respect. The soup flowed continuously for an hour, getting chunkier and thicker as I neared the bottom. The handle of the ladle was covered in soup along with my gloves. As it spilled over on the table, it froze immediately. The insulated container kept the aroma of the soup wafting towards the hungry line. Some came back for seconds.

It was getting close to 7:00 pm and my left foot felt like it was frozen right to the ground. It tingled like I had just walked through hot coals. The wind had got up and we had to hold down the few remaining supplies. The food line had dwindled down to almost no one. However, the crowd around the back door to The Gospel Mission was growing bigger. They were waiting for the doors to open so they could straggle in to find warmth and a place to lay their heads for the night. The doors opened at 7:00 pm which seemed to be the signal for us to start packing our empty boxes away and folding up the table for another day.

When Bob and I were back in our warm car we sat for a few minutes without speaking; each of us thinking of what had just taken place. Bob broke the silence with a comment, "I never thought that many people would come to us for food." Where did they come from? It just seemed like they appeared from the darkness. I am so glad I came and I look forward to trying to do this on a regular basis. If we find we can't make it on the distribution nights, we should try to make it to the church on "Sandwich making night."

I had tears streaming down my cheeks when I replied that I'd also love to volunteer again. It was a life changing experience for me as I felt I made more of a contribution by "working with the people" than just sending something to someone else "out there" to take on that responsibility. I've climbed back into my "comfortable box" but not for long.

WINDS OF CHANGE

by Ben Thiessen

The winds of change have been blowing around TMUC for some time now. Many questions have been raised and many opinions voiced.

In a time of fluctuating or almost stagnant membership, the congregation is challenged to find a faith-based financial solution.

Back in 1945 or so, when Transcona United began to seriously look at expanding due to the huge increase of members during and after the Second World War. A Search Committee, Fund-Raising Committee and Building and Property Committee were established.

In 1952 a new church building was constructed at 209 Yale Avenue West. The new church was named Transcona Memorial United Church to honour the four amalgamated congregations. The names of those congregations –Yale, Springfield, Suthwyn and Knox – now designate halls and rooms within the building.

Today's needs are not the same as those of 1945. The congregation faces many new challenges, starting with the oft-expressed desire to be able to accommodate everyone in one worship service, rather than two, on Sunday mornings. Although the services are 99% similar, it still leaves a sense of there being two congregations rather than one.

Further to this, is the oft-voiced desire to initiate some form of service that would be more appealing to youth and younger families. A contemporary alternative music format could be initiated. Those wishing to continue a traditional worship style would be accommodated at one of the services offered. A choice of services could be implemented now at the regular Sunday hours by using one of the large halls for a worship setting.

This brings us to the subject of the present sanctuary and Christian Education building. Although we have considerable amount of floor space, it is not fully functional for today's ever-expanding needs. Those needs include:

access to worship	a modern kitchen
updated washroom	proper ministerial offices
counseling space	a user-friendly library
adequate storage	adequate parking
more efficient office space for the Administrative Assistants	

These needs invite questions:

Do we renovate?

Do we relocate with the possibility of partnering with another entity such as seniors housing?

Do we demolish the present structure and rebuild on the present site?

Do we demolish the CE building and reconstruct for today's needs?

Do we expand the sanctuary to accommodate more people so one service could be held on Sundays?

Do we expand Suthwyn Hall to provide a new kitchen, up-to-date washrooms and a new, larger elevator?

Do we actively pursue the purchase of several properties thereby allowing for other options?

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These are but a few of the thoughts and ideas that bounce around in my head (believe me, there is a lot of space for them to bounce).

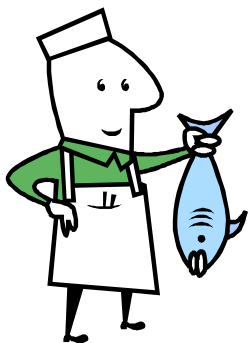
Please let your voice be heard as TMUC strives for another 55 years of Ministerial and community service.

Contact your Official Board members, talk to Rev. Carol or Rev. Jeff, or contact any of the members of the Facilities Task Group.

The names of all the Board and committee members are in the annual report or are easily obtained from the church office.

Think renewal, think finances, think future and may we all be part of the Spiritual and Faith-based future of TMUC.

Note: The estimated cost of the church building in 1952 was \$52,000, which does not include the value of the volunteer labor which was estimated at \$20,000. The total cost was \$105,000.00 The Christian Education building (added in 1963) cost approximately \$20,000.00 (which was paid off by 1971)



TMUC'S FIRST EVER FISH FRY

By Frank Favoni

It seems like almost a year has gone by since I first talked to Adrian Measner about the possibility of holding a fish fry as a fundraiser. I am so happy that it became a reality and I can only describe it with one word – WOW!! For an event of this magnitude to be successful, many hands had to be involved. It was truly a congregational event. I would like to extend a big THANK YOU to the following:

- more than 150+ people who purchased tickets (a sell-out)
- committee members – Carol and Bob Kirkhope, Julia and Barrie Brooks, Peggy and Jim Lawrence, Joan Knisley, Mary Thiessen, Frank and Carol Favoni.
- fish fryers: Dorothy Fife, Bob Kirkhope, Harvey Hochkievich, and Frank Favoni.
- fish breeder: Rod White.
- Perry Favoni for making and donating the delicious tartar sauce and procuring the three warming chafers.
- volunteers who provided roasted potatoes, coleslaw, buns, apple crisp, and ice cream.
- everyone who helped with the massive clean up.
- Louise Page for donating apples and coffee.
- Carol Fletcher for her opening welcome, saying grace, and cautioning the guests about "dem fish bones."
- last but certainly not least –the Harbour View Mountain Boys for providing their unique entertainment.

THE STATISTICAL STORY—

We consumed: over 60 lbs of fish (approx. 300 fillets), 60 lbs of potatoes, 24 lbs of coleslaw, 16 litres of ice cream, and 15 apple crisps.

GREAT NEWS— After expenses are paid, we have a profit of just over \$1400.00. Congratulations everyone!

EASTER FEAR, EASTER JOY

By Jeff Cook and Carol Fletcher

"The women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' he said." - Matthew 28:1,9

They are afraid, yet they are filled with joy!

Resurrection calls forth both fear and joy.

Joy seems like the more appropriate response. Jesus was dead. Now he is alive. We rejoice as sorrow gives way to surprised gratitude.

But the fear sits there, in the shadows, taking the edge off our joy.

Why is the fear present? Perhaps we realize that if the dead are no longer entombed, then our world has changed. What we thought we understood has morphed into mystery. Life and death have been redefined.

Perhaps we realize that if we dare believe Jesus is alive, then the kingdom of God really is in our midst, and we really are expected to start healing and feeding and loving others.

Perhaps we realize that if Jesus is alive, this will not be the last attempt to crucify God's representatives.

We know something of the joy and the fear experienced by those women running from the tomb. Then they were met by Jesus (note: he meets them. He is coming to where they are), and notice what he says:

"Greetings", which means he said "Hi", "Hello", "How are you?" "Good to see you again."

He just greeted them, greeted them in the normal everyday fashion people of the day greeted each other. Today, Jesus still greets us. Jesus is present in the ordinary which now hints of wonders beyond imagining.

Resurrection does mean the world has changed. Resurrection means God is at play in our world, changing definitions, transforming death, and making every simple greeting into a reminder of Christ's presence in this world.

The world is changed....and we rejoice. The world is changed...and we are afraid. The world is God's. This Easter, let us listen for Jesus' words of greeting, welcoming us to God's new world.

