

Commissioner

APRIL 2011

LOOKING AHEAD

Apr 10	Service of Communion 9:30 & 11:15 a.m.
Apr 17	Palm Sunday Services 9:30 & 11:15 a.m. Jazz Vespers 7:30 p.m.
Apr 21	Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 p.m. in Upper Room
Apr 22	Good Friday Service 10am "Messy Church" 5 p.m.
Apr 24	Easter Sunday Communion Services 9:30 & 11:15 a.m. Worship at: Concordia Place 2 pm; Park Manor 3:15 p.m.
Apr 30	Time & Talent Auction; Breakfast & Silent Auction 9 a.m. Bidding Auction 10 a.m.
May 1	One Worship Service at 10 a.m. Congregational Update Meeting follows service
May 8	Worship Services 9:30 & 11:15; Service of Confirmation at 11:15 a.m.
May 12 13, 14, & 15	Dinner Theatre Production "Males Order Brides"
May 22	Single Summer Worship Services begin—10 a.m.
May 26—29	Conference Weekend for Ministers Sunday worship led by Men's Breakfast Group
June 5	Folk Communion Service
June 19	Men's Choir; Pork BBQ

Renovation Plan

by Gail Purcell, Chair of the TMUC Council

At the Annual Meeting in February 2011 the Congregation heard about the high level plan to renovate our existing facility.

The first step was to gather input from the congregation via a survey to set priorities for a step by step renovation. Using the survey data and the information previously gathered by the Facilities Task Force and the Building Committee a design of a renovated TMUC building will be created. The Congregation's approval for the new design will be sought at an information meeting. Once the new design has been approved, the first project(s) will be defined based on the priorities set by the congregation and will be tendered for costs.

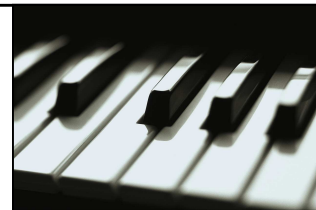
A capital fundraising campaign will be critical to the success of the renovation plan, therefore prior to and during the cost finalization process we will start capital fundraising for the defined project(s). Once sufficient funds have been raised, we will undertake the project. The same process will be followed for each project.

The Executive of the Council will take the lead role in coordinating the renovation and will seek Council and Congregation approval as required. The Building and Property Team will be involved along with individuals and teams to undertake tenders, get necessary permits and supervise activities.

The nice thing about this approach is that the speed of the renovation is controlled by the congregation based on their ability to commit funds. Our congregation has proven this approach successful in the past when we have launched fundraising campaigns for specific capital purchases or repairs. In addition, we can continue to remain open to other opportunities or buildings if they arise.

CHOIR NOTES

by Dorothy Ross



The Choir Show “Be Our Guest” is over and was well received by those who attended.

Easter is fast approaching and the choirs are busy rehearsing Lent, Holy Week, and Easter music.

The Carillons sang “O Canada” at the Moose Game on March 30th. The group was quite excited about this and enjoyed the experience.

The Sunshine Singers will be singing on April 3rd. The Chancel Choir will sing on Palm Sunday and the Chancel Choir and the Carillons will help us celebrate on Easter Sunday.

The Cherubs were part of “Be Our Guest” and it would be a bit much for them to carry on rehearsals and sing again at Easter so we will wait until Advent to hear them again. I’m sure we all look forward to that!

From all of Us to all of You

We wish you a Blessed Easter!



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Touchdown!!!

Over 1,000 cans of soup were donated by members of Transcona Memorial United and St. George’s Anglican churches as part of this year’s Souper Bowl of Caring project.

When laid end to end the collected cans would have extended about 120 yards in length. The hope was to collect enough cans to score a touchdown by extending the length of a football field of 100 yards.

The Souper Bowl of Caring was a joint ministry of youth from both congregations who are participating in Youth LAB (a mid-week youth group).

The concept of Souper Bowl of Caring originated in a Presbyterian congregation in South Carolina in 1990. Since then congregations throughout North America have participated, using Super Bowl weekend as a time to invite people to contribute money or food to assist food banks, soup kitchens and other charities.

All the soup collected by TMUC and ST. George’s has been donated to the Transcona Food Bank. (note: monetary donations received were also used to buy soup included in these totals).

***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.

Transcona Memorial United Church

209 Yale Ave. West
Winnipeg, MB R2C 1T9
Phone: (204) 222-1331
Email: tmuc@shaw.ca
Web: www.tmuc.ca

This edition of the *Commissioner* has been sent via email to those who have shared their address with us. We still hand deliver and mail many copies, so if you can help us reduce our costs and our footprint on the earth by sharing your email address with us, we would appreciate it. Contact the church office at 222-1331 or tmuc@shaw.ca Thank you.



Caught In The Act Co. Dinner Theatre

May is quickly approaching and so is our production of "Males Order Brides"* (May 12 – 15).

Lines have been rehearsed, music practised, costumes made, scenery constructed and painted, props obtained, food selected, decorations created, chairs and tables counted, tickets sold and volunteers recruited.

To all those who have signed up for the various volunteer positions for this production, we **THANK YOU!** There are still several positions that need to be filled (especially kitchen help and food servers), so if you are able to help for one or more evenings, please leave your name with the office.

To those who wish they were able to help but are unable due to physical ability or prior commitments, you can still be part of this event by donating food for our Hospitality Room. This is an area where the approximately 50 volunteers per evening can go to rest between their shifts and have a snack and a beverage. For some volunteers their task begins in the afternoon, and for others (especially on Thursday and Friday) arriving straight from work means not being able to have dinner. Your food donations – whether baked or store bought – would be greatly appreciated. Watch for the food listing to be circulated through the congregation on a Sunday close to Easter or you can contact Alma Jennings at 222-0383 or almajenn@shaw.ca.

Tickets are still available – contact Amber Rusnak 663-6620 or alrusnak@shaw.ca \$40 per ticket (\$20 tax receipt issued) cheques made payable to Caught In The Act Co.; dinner at 6:30 p.m. Thursday – Saturday; 4:30 p.m. Sunday; tables accommodate 6; optional vegetarian meal.

Together, we can make this a successful fundraiser for TMUC - four enjoyable evenings with great food, fellowship and entertainment.

CITAC Producers
Sherri Jennings, Amber Rusnak, Lynn Measner

*Play written by Billy St. John
Produced by special arrangement with PIONEER DRAMA SERVICE INC. ENGLEWOOD, CO.



TRANSCONA MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

At the General UCW meeting held on March 15, 2011, the UCW voted to combine the Monday and Saturday units into one unit. The UCW will now meet on the second Monday of the month at 1:30 pm. The next meeting of the UCW will be held on April 11, 2011. Elections of a new executive for the new group will be held at that time.

UCW CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2011

APRIL 11, 2011	UCW Meeting, 1:30 pm, Knox Lounge
MAY 7, 2011	UCW Wind-up Luncheon
OCTOBER 9, 2011	Thanksgiving Display
OCTOBER 17, 2011	Whist Drive
OCTOBER 23, 2011	Thankoffering Service
NOVEMBER 4, 2011	Ladies Night Out
DECEMBER 4, 2011	Cookie Walk
DECEMBER 10, 2011	UCW Christmas Luncheon
Regular Meetings are held each month on the Second Monday at 1:30 pm.	

House Groups

by Gail Purcell

We are now a few months into our new Governance Structure and it's still taking me some time to remember to say "Teams" instead of "Committees" and "Council" instead of "Official Board". When something has been a certain way for a very long time, it is sometimes hard to change what we say and how we do things. This is true throughout our lives as we embark on our educational journey, then our career journey, our retirement and all that we do in between.

One of the changes under our new structure is our move to what we are calling House Groups. I'm excited to say that our first House Group was launched in February. Doug Jentsch and Lucille Eustache are the House Group Facilitators for House Group "K" and one of the things that House Group will be doing is coming up with a name for themselves so we won't be calling them House Group K forever. We may not even keep calling this concept House Groups forever since they really have nothing to do with your "house".

What is a House Group and how were they set up? The Congregation is divided in eleven groups and each group is made up of people who attend both 9:30 services and 11:15 services, those who serve on Council and Teams, those who regularly volunteer to read, usher and serve communion, single people, married people and families with children. Our goal is to create groups that are diverse with a representation of the entire congregation in each.

Another goal is to create an environment where people will be able to get to know each other, connect with each other, and share on the journey of faith together outside of Sunday worship services. Each group will have its own identity and make its own plans, so it is difficult to say what they will end up looking like in the end. Each House Group will choose a month in which they will be responsible for the Sunday morning worship tasks of reading, ushering, serving communion etc.

At the launch for House Group "K" Doug Jentsch shared the following thoughts about the House Group concept:

"When asked if Lucy & I would be willing to consider serving as House Group Facilitators, my first thought was 'but I haven't been to a Sunday morning worship service for over 2 years!' My second thought was 'maybe that's the point'. I attend Men's Breakfast regularly, enjoy Jazz Vespers when I remember to go, and I work on the sound system from time-to-time.

Almost every time I'm in the building for whatever reason, even during the day mid-week, I meet someone I know and who knows me.

I feel connected to TMUC, I want to stay connected to TMUC, but maybe there's more to belonging to a congregation like TMUC than sitting in a pew on Sunday morning. And maybe there are others who feel the same way. Maybe the House Group concept can be another way to build new and continue old connections within our congregation - between the faithful regulars and the intermittent irregulars and everybody

(Continued on page 5)

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.

(Continued from page 4)

in between and all around. That's a lot of maybe's, but the older I get the more I realize that certainty is for the young.

It's my hope that our house group will become 'inclusive without being intrusive'. A safe and welcoming place, somewhere to come for fun, comfort, support and friendship. Somewhere to be normal, whatever your normal is, and that's alright.

We are at the beginning. We don't know where we're going, or how we're going to get there. This is our opportunity to create something 'in our own image'. What do you want this group to be and do?"

Plans are underway for the launch of the next few House Groups. When your House Group is being launched you will receive an invitation via letter or email to come and meet your fellow members and have some fun.

As we continue on our journey of change remembering what to say and how to do things, creating new communities within our faith community is only one of the many endless possibilities that we have available to us.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

We are held in God's love!

One way by which TMUC shares the good news of God's presence is through our prayer shawl ministry.

Prayer shawls are knit by members of the congregation, blessed and given to people facing a variety of life experiences – illness, recovery from illness, stress, bereavement, a new birth, a marriage, a time of prayer...

Recipients receive the shawls as a physical reminder of God's love which enfolds us, comforts us, hugs us, shelters us, is always with us.

Each shawl is accompanied by a card which says:

Prayer shawls connect us to a community that cares. This shawl was made at TMUC and is given to you. If and when you want to pass it on, feel free to do so – just tie a knot in the fringe, add a kind thought, a prayer and connection and let the blessing flow.

TMUC has given about 60 prayer shawls as gifts during the past couple of years.

WHO LIVES HERE?

by Delsie Cousineau

The Transcona Memorial United Church (TMUC) building at 209 Yale Avenue West is bustling with activity, morning, afternoon and evening on most days of the week. Who are all those people? What are they doing? What do we get for the thousand dollars a day that the church struggles to raise to operate this place?

Although no one actually lives in the building in the true sense of the word because no one sleeps there, it is home to three categories of occupants: church related groups, renters, and guests.

CHURCH-RELATED GROUPS:

- Eleven church employees— ministers, office staff, organists, the choir director, and cleaning staff.
- Volunteers, including the church Council and Teams and United Church Women, who come for all kinds of meetings, volunteer jobs and fundraising events that help to keep the church and its building operating
- People taking part in faith-related activities.
- Worship services, Sunday school, weddings, funerals, Bible Study, Book Group, Men's Breakfast Club, Theatre Group

RENTER:

- The nursery school that has occupied most of the second floor for years. It serves the community by providing much needed nursery care.

GUESTS: (some of whom give the church an honorarium)

- The Transcona Food Bank. The food bank, a part of Winnipeg Harvest is now in its twenty-third year at TMUC. Members of TMUC and other Transcona churches, volunteer there to distribute free food and sell clothing at token prices twice a month. They also use storage space in the building.
- The Transcona Council for Seniors. TCS operates a meal program for seniors on Monday, Wednesday and Friday every week year-round. All the food is cooked in the TMUC kitchen and they have use of the dishes, appliances and storage space.
 - Steppin' Up exercise program. Every Friday morning, the Steppin' Up exercise program offers a peer led exercises at no charge that can be done while seated.
 - Wii Bowling for Seniors
 - Alzheimer's Support Group
- Special occasion meals and parties
- Feed My Lambs. An organization that delivers food to people in need in the inner city. Food is prepared weekly in the TMUC kitchen. Baking is done biweekly. They also use storage space in the building.
- Families Connecting. A healthy baby community program assisting new parents in connecting with other parents and health professionals.
- Transcona Division Cubs & Scouts.

OCCASIONAL RENTALS:

- Showers, birthday parties, anniversaries, teas and bazaars, recitals, music exams .

Who lives here?

Scores of caring workers and volunteers who work for the betterment of our church and community.

What do we get for our money?

A variety of ongoing programs that: offer faith-related activities; feed the hungry in Transcona and the downtown area; provide healthy meals and social activity for seniors; help young mothers and their babies.

We are blessed to be a part of it. Thanks be to God.

Time and Talent Auction

Did you know that the 2010 Time and Talent auction raised over \$4,000? And, did you know that the same auction was a lot of fun, and a great way for people to spend a Saturday morning? And, did you know that there is a place prepared for you at this year's event?

So, bring out your calendar, and make the date of Saturday, April 30 from 9 until noon. Breakfast is served at 9:00 for \$5.00. A silent auction also begins at 9:00 with the bidding auction beginning at 10:00.

And, to make things really fun, offer a time or talent to be auctioned off – maybe you might make up a gift basket, or promise to make a cake; maybe you might ...? The possibilities are endless and always appreciated.

And, if you want to be on the team, there's always the blue folder, waiting for you to sign on.

Going once, going twice; Come join the fun!



Meaning

by Marcel Van Eerd

I've heard of
energy flow and
transcendental
meditation

Mind over matter
astral projections
one-ness and
self-observation

Aren't they all
a way to explain
we really don't
understand

How our lives
have been created
by God's own
hand

Is it so difficult
to accept we
are more than a
scientific fact

And true meaning lies
with faith hope
and love being our
biggest act

Blue Folders

Okay now, so the shift from committees to teams has meant a big change. There are all kinds of 'traditions' in our congregation that can best be described as Special Events that we do not want to lose in the transition. These are things like the Pancake Supper, the Time and Talent Auction, the Spring Bar-b-que, the Community Clean-up and, the list goes on.

There are so many ways to participate in the life and work of the congregation, that we can hardly list them all. To help people identify ways in which you might like to participate, we have created Blue Folders to link people and events.

Blue Folders are in the office, and in the church on Sundays. Each Blue Folder is for a different event – so you can sign up in more than one!

The Worship Team thought the Blue Folders were a great way to invite people to sign up for Sunday Worship Support (things like ushering, and serving communion), so you can find ones for those things too.

Keep your eyes open for a Blue Folder – and sign on to share Christ's ministry in the world through all we do together!

JAZZ VESPERS

- Sunday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m. featuring the Simon Christie Trio.
- Reflecting on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, music will be in the tradition of a New Orleans street parade. Next Jazz Vespers in October.

The Uganda Connection

by Merlin Shoesmith

Some TMUC senior choir members may remember a young woman named Christine Dranzoa who joined us as a “guest soprano” one late October night in 2004. She was fresh out of a snowstorm in Saskatoon where she had been visiting with an old friend, a veterinarian who has done much research on wildlife diseases in her home country, Uganda. When Joan and I picked her up at Winnipeg International on the night before, we found this tall, slender African with a hairdo to die for. We learned later that, in fact, it was a wig because she had just been in a serious car accident before her plane left Kampala. She had her head shaven in order to treat the cuts from broken glass on her head. Her driver was the cause of the accident and he left the scene without helping her or any of the other injured.

Fast forward to February 26, 2011, when the Harbourview Mountain Boys entertained for a “fun”d raiser for the children of Uganda at the Anglican church in Grand Marais. A priest and two young men from Uganda were there to promote the need for helping the young, orphaned children of adults killed during the Idi Amin era in Uganda. There were over 50 local people of all denominations attending the event and nearly \$500

was thrown into the guitar case. The Ugandans got out their drums and joined us on the old gospel tune, Will the Circle be Unbroken? And for me, the Circle was unbroken and connected to Uganda in one more, unexpected way.



Since we first met Christine in 2004, Joan and I have remained in contact with her and have become good friends. When we first met her, she was the Chair of the Wildlife and Resource Management Department at Makerere University in Kampala, no small feat for her in a male-dominated society. She was visiting Canada as part of a Global Involvement Task Force to promote professional resource management and conservation

of biodiversity. While in Winnipeg, she expressed an interest in pursuing a cooperative training program for women to help women in Uganda. One thing led to another and a 5-year CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) project was developed to encourage and train women to promote cultural tourism in Uganda. The project began in 2006 and I had the privilege of traveling to Uganda to assist in finding several demonstration projects near their western national parks. Then in the summer of 2007, Christine returned to Canada with some associates from Makerere University to view Canadian approaches and models of cultural tourism from Banff to Riding Mountain National Parks. Presently, the CIDA project is nearly finished. A number of women have been trained to work with other women in communities in western Uganda and to help bring meaningful employment and economic opportunity to that region. During the project, Christine was promoted to Chair of Graduate Studies at Makerere. Presently, she is Vice Chancellor Designate of a New University that is being built by the Ugandan government in the West Nile Region.

The rest of the story is about her home in an old house on top of a hill in the middle of Makerere University. There she has lived with 15-20 nephews and nieces of all ages of her extended family as well as some unrelated children whose parents were killed. They have been well-cared for and have received schooling that they would have had much difficulty receiving without the helping hand of Christine. We received an email from her in January and she says her “children” are big, and more keep coming in. Now the youngest is going to Primary two and some of the older girls have completed their first degree. As a final note, Christine is leading a tree planting project near her hometown of Moyo in northwest Uganda. This project provides employment for a number of women in the community and to date 40 acres of trees, some native with medicinal value, have been planted.

Somebody once said, Life is what it is, it only becomes what you make of it. Certainly that can be said about Christine Dranzoa. And it has been a pleasure to count her as our Uganda Connection.

PLANNED GIVING

People can contribute financially to the church both now and in the future in many ways. The United Church of Canada website (www.unitedchurch.ca/getinvolved/donate/howto/planned) outlines several options. Two of the options are:

1. Gifts of Proceeds from RRSPs and RRIFs: Naming the church as a beneficiary of the proceeds of your registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) or your registered retirement income fund (RRIF) can provide a significant future gift to the church.

RRSPs and RRIFs can be a large portion of your accumulated assets left at your death. Your estate will have to pay taxes on the full amount of your RRSP or RRIF.

The church can be made the beneficiary of the proceeds of registered funds by designation in your RRSP/RRIF or through a clause in your will. If you do so, the church can issue a charitable donation receipt for the full amount of the distribution, with significant tax credits for your estate.

If you designate the church as the beneficiary of your registered funds, your gift will flow to the church immediately. If you leave the proceeds to the church in your will, there will be a delay while your estate is settled and there will also be probate fees to be paid.

2. A United Church Gift Annuity is a planned gift that appeals to donors who want the security of ongoing, guaranteed income payments. A gift annuity is an agreement whereby you make an irrevocable payment to the United Church. In return, you receive a guaranteed income for your lifetime. To create an annuity, you must be 60 years of age or over. You may create a joint annuity with your spouse or sibling, which will continue to pay the survivor an annual income. The amount of income you receive depends on your age and long-term interest rates at the time you arrange your annuity. For individuals, anywhere from 45 to 100 percent of the income from your annuity is non-taxable, depending on your age. After your lifetime, the portion of the original amount remaining (the residue) becomes available for any area of church work that you choose.

FAITH UNCORKED

Before you can enjoy the contents of a bottle of wine, you have to remove the bottle's cork – then the 'spirits' can emerge.

Faith Uncorked is an attempt to experience the Spirit of God in a place removed from the building we usually call 'church'.

Faith Uncorked is a joint exploration of Christian faith between Transcona Memorial and ST. Georges Anglican Church. Two sessions of Faith Uncorked have been held in 2011.

On both occasions, a magazine or on-line article was chosen as the focus of the discussion time. The first article discussed the ways the Christian church is often viewed by people who are not members of churches. The second article explored the relationship between faith and the arts.

People interested in discussing an article met in the evening at Dal's Restaurant. Some ordered a meal, or a snack, or a drink, and we talked about the article and our own experiences. We discussed God and the Bible and life and...whatever! We raised questions and shared stories. We 'did' church in a non-church setting.

We hope to offer Faith Uncorked monthly. The article for discussion will be available through the church website or church news, or paper copies can be made available to anyone interested. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion.

Sunday Night Live/Youth LAB

Do you like Chinese food? Apparently our youth do. We had another very successful youth event at Shabusen restaurant on March 20, 2011, with 27 youth and some of their family members in attendance. We discussed how lucky we are to have clean drinking water in our part of the world, and touched on how we could help with some other issues in the world, both close to home and far away. We agreed on two upcoming events; community clean up on Earth day and the 30 Hour Famine.

Another outing will be coming up in May, so listen for announcements in church, or contact Brenda LeBeau if you would like more information on youth programming.

30 Hour Famine

In a world where there are so many things happening that are beyond our control, the youth of TMUC and St George's Anglican are going to do something about what is in humanity's control... Hunger. Although the 30 Hour Famine is usually held in early April, due to the busy lives of the youth in our congregation, we will be having ours in early May. They will be collecting pledges beginning mid April, with all proceeds going to world hunger relief. We will be spending about 18 hours together at the church during the famine, playing games, doing crafts, and sharing time with one another.

Anyone who wishes to contribute to, or participate in this event, please contact Brenda LeBeau.

Community Cleanup

TMUC will be joining St. George's Anglican for the community cleanup in April. Watch the announcements for the date when we will do our part to care for our earth, beginning in our own community. Everyone is invited to take part in this event.

Sidewalk VBS

Hi Neighbour! Soon the festival will be here, and we are keen to share the news of the Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs with the children of our community. We are planning on a Sidewalk VBS, or a Sidewalk Sunday School spot at the Hi Neighbour Festival where children can come, hear a story, and do a craft. We will have information available for families about Vacation Bible School for those who might like to sign up.

We are making this possible through generous donations to the 'Pocket a Penny for Lent' bags. If you would like to help at this event, or would like to make a donation of craft supplies, please speak to Brenda.

Vacation Bible School

Mark you calendars and get set for an Island Odyssey! Transcona Memorial United Church is partnering with St. George's Anglican Church for Vacation Bible School again this summer!

Studying some of Paul's travels, and other Bible stories, we will connect with some of the islands of our world, and look at how God is present. With a program that is rich in story, music, and art, we are sure to have a good time.

Vacation Bible School will be held July 25 – 29 at St. George's, from 9 am to noon. There will be a celebration service at 11 am on Friday, followed by a lunch.

If you would like to be part of the leadership team, there is a planning meeting at TMUC on Tuesday, May 10 at 7 pm. For more information, please speak to our Youth Point Person, Brenda LeBeau, or our ministry staff of Carol and Jeff.

TESSA IN OTTAWA SPRING 2011

by Tessa Blaikie

A Faith Community, A Church, with no building by that name.

The Carlington Community Ministry has been the focus of my stay in Ottawa, while working with Miiram Illman-White. We have talked about what it means to be church, and what it means to be poor. Poverty is talked about a lot within the Bible - we are to leave that which has fallen while we harvest for the poor (Leviticus), those who have two shirts are to give to those who don't have one (Luke), and just like some churches may have funds for new building some may have no building.

Sharing is a lesson we learn at a young age, but we learn to share with our classmates, friends on our block, friends at Sunday school, we learn to share with our equals. How then do we take a biblical approach of sharing with those who are poor, when we are not? That may be poor in hugs for that day, money for the rent, or food for bellies. They may also be poor in all the other facets of poverty that put them at a disadvantage compared to those with money. I have no clear answer; but would welcome discussions about sharing as equals in times of gross inequality. We can think of what we need more in our life, and where we might get it, and what we might give in return.

The Carlington Community Chaplaincy is a ministry of presence, and is a place for people living in poverty and isolation to come together, warm up with coffee and laughter, be fed and serve one another, learn and grow. It is a safe and inclusive space for all. Winnipeg has great community ministries, one I'm familiar with is St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry. Through the 1HopeWinnipeg campaign we can support them in ways that promote dignity, respect and equality. And perhaps we can go there, and learn something of ourselves, or find something we've been searching for to bring back to TMUC, or our wider Faith family.

WE COLLECT STUFF

There are containers and collection spots in the TMUC building for a whole bunch of things of seemingly little or no value that can be cashed in to support special needs or passed on to people who can use them. What are they? Where do we put them? What are they used for?

What	Where	Why
Travel-sized toiletries	Church office	Feed My Lambs recipients need them
New or gently used socks	Office	Feed My Lambs distribution
Used eyeglasses	Office	For people overseas
Canadian Tire money	Narthex	Buys supplies for the building
Photos 4" x 6"	Office	To make greeting cards for sale
Campbell's Soup labels	Bin in CE entrance	Exchanged for Youth Ministry supplies
Plastic containers with lids	Kitchen	Meal Program/Feed My Lambs use
Medium-size gift bags	Office	For gifting prayer shawls
Drink can tabs	Container CE entrance	Pays for wheelchair repairs
Used postage stamps	Office	UCW sells to raise funds to fight leprosy (Trim to ¼ in of paper around stamp)

LENT

*I cry aloud to the Lord;
I lift up my voice to God for mercy.
I pour out my complaint before God;
before God I tell my trouble
-Psalm 142*

On January 12, 2010, Haiti was devastated by an earthquake, the epicenter of which lay 24 kilometers west of the capital city of Port-au-Prince.

William Metzger, director of church relations for World Vision, was in Port-au-Prince on that day. The hotel in which he was staying was one of the few buildings in the area that remained standing. Soon, hundreds of injured people came or were brought there to have torn hotel linens applied as bandages.

There was a stone wall surrounding the hotel courtyard. After awhile, Metzger could hear the people on the other side of the wall 'chanting'. He asked someone to translate what was being said. The person told him, "They are saying, 'God, forgive us' ...and then they are saying, 'God, we forgive you.'"

GOD, FORGIVE US.....GOD, WE FORGIVE YOU!

What a soul-wrenching prayer. What a wrenched-from-the-soul prayer.

We feel numbed by the 'God questions' implied by these prayers.

God, forgive us! Surely God does not send an earthquake as punishment.

God, we forgive you! Surely God did not send the earthquake as some careless act.

Yet, this is a very human prayer. God, forgive us. God, we forgive you. In essence, the prayer says, "This is not the time for laying blame. This is not the time for explanations or statistical analysis. This is not the time for guilt or shame. This is the time for grief. This is the time to 'cry aloud' to God. This is the time for us to reach for the God who reaches for us.

Lent is a time for such soul wrenched, soul drenched prayers. Lent is a time of accompanying Jesus towards Jerusalem and the cross, the death, which awaited him.

On that cross Jesus would pray, "Father, forgive them..."

Lent is not a time for blame or explanations or guilt, but it is always a time for forgiveness cried aloud. It is a time for issuing forth a cry that both echoes through the skies and reverberates deep within us.

Lent is a time to be with God...to just BE WITH GOD: no words, no theological treatises, no-thing, just a profound, silent, being in God. Lent is a time to remember that we are held in the heart of God, in a heart that both grieves and resurrects the one who is grieved.

Lent is a time to prepare for the amazing surprise of Easter morn.

May God bless our Lenten journeys.

- Jeff Cook and Carol Fletcher