

Commissioner

NOVEMBER 2011

LOOKING AHEAD

Nov 27	9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 1 Folk Communion Service
Dec 3	9—1 pm Advent Event "In the Moment"
Dec 4	9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 2 Cherub Choir UCW Cookie Walk 10:30am 6:30 Journey to Bethlehem
Dec 11	9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 3 Communion Service Sunshine Singers 7 pm "Joy to the World" Christmas Concert
Dec 18	9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 4 Baptism Service Chancel Choir & Carillons 2:00pm Worship at Concordia Place 7pm Blue Christmas Service
Dec 24	5 & 7 pm Christmas Eve Family Services 10 pm Communion Service
Dec 25	10 am Worship Service Single worship service at 10 am begins until Feb 12
Jan 1	10 am Worship Around the Breakfast Table
Feb 5	10 am Worship Service 11 am Annual Congregational Meeting and Potluck Lunch
Feb 12	Return to 2 Worship Services 9:30 & 11:15 am

RENOVATION PLANS

by Gail Purcell

Our church building is a busy place and the fall has been no exception regarding discussions to potential renovations to the building. In September, the Council Executive and the Council viewed a set of conceptual renovation drawings that would improve accessibility to our building by installing a larger elevator, improving and increasing the number of washrooms and improving the office area. The renovation would be achieved by broadening the entrance of the Christian Education building and slightly extending it toward Yale Avenue on all three floors.

On October 23rd we held an information session for the Congregation where the drawings were presented by Heather Sarna of Heather Sarna & Associates, a well respected design firm in Winnipeg. We heard some excellent questions and suggestions, some of which Heather was able to incorporate into the drawings she shared at the November 6th Congregational Update meeting.

On November 6th the congregation viewed the conceptual drawings and a ballot vote was held to decide if we supported the Council proceeding with the building renovation project, with an approximate cost of \$1.1 million, which includes approaching Winnipeg Presbytery for approval, finalizing the renovation plans, approaching the City of Winnipeg for required zoning variances and permits, developing and implementing a Capital fundraising campaign which Council will bring back to the Congregation for approval at a future meeting, and proceeding with the renovation when funding is in place. The vote by members was 94 in favour and 15 against proceeding. The vote by adherents was 12 in favour and 1 against proceeding.

The drawings are available for viewing in the office. Stay tuned for next steps as we journey down a path towards a renovated building.

NOTES FROM THE CHOIRS

by Dorothy Ross



By the time you receive this Newsletter it will be almost Advent. The choirs are already into Christmas music and are working hard to prepare for all the services, the Christmas Concert and also singing at Kildonan Place during the busy, exciting season ahead.

Advent I – November 27 – Folk Communion with the Carillon Singers

Advent II – December 4 – The Chancel Choir and the Cherub Choir

Advent III – December 11 – The Chancel Choir with the Sunshine Singers

DECEMBER 11 – 7 P.M. – “Joy to the World” Christmas Concert to honour Transcona’s 100th Birthday. All proceeds will go to the TMUC Building Fund. All four choirs plus several instrumentalists will take part in this exciting event. Tickets \$10 adults; \$5 children under 12 available from the office.

Tuesday, December 13 - 7:30 p.m. – The Carillons at Kildonan Place

Thursday, December 15 – 7:30 p.m. – The Chancel Choir at Kildonan Place

Advent IV – December 18 – The Chancel Choir and The Carillons Singers

Christmas Eve – 5 & 7 p.m. – The Carillons 10 p.m. – The Chancel Choir

Christmas Day – 10 a.m. service

New Year’s Day – 10 a.m. Worship Around the Breakfast Table

As you can see we have a busy schedule for Advent and Christmas. Our best wishes to each and every one of you for a wonderful Christmas season. See you in church!



***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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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.

CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKERS

by Tessa Blaikie

I was a member of a Christian Peacemaker Team that went to Grassy Narrows First Nation (three hours north of Winnipeg),

This community relocated in 1968 to ensure that their children would not be sent to residential schools. In 1972, concerns emerged regarding the community's English-Wabigoon water. The community asked the government to investigate. In 1975, the government reported that the water contained Mercury. The effects of long-term exposure to Mercury poisoning continues to take lives at Grassy Narrows.

The community has been in several struggles with the Ontario Government's Ministry of Natural Resources.



*CPT Team at Grassy Narrows First Nation.
Tessa is second from the right.*

Despite a 2007 declared moratorium against logging, the provincial government continues to issue cut block permits for logging companies to operate on their traditional territory. The Ontario Superior Court concluded in 2011 against the MNR and said that the MNR was logging in ways that interrupted the community's traditional ways of hunting and living. The case is being appealed by the Ontario Government.. J.B. Fobister, one of the plaintiff's for the community, says they are ready to keep fighting to ensure the court decisions results in a change for the Anishinaabe of Grassy Narrows First Nation.

Fobister says they were invited to become a part of the forest management planning, but when the Anishinaabe disagreed with the MNR's plan to clear-cut and over-cut the forest, they were told to write a letter of complaint. They did, and nothing happened. They raised concerns at negotiations about the effects of clear cuts, the use of chemicals, and the disturbances of logging. They protested against MNR in Kenora and marched all the way to Toronto in protest. Nothing changed. In 1999, they took the Ontario Government to court and, in 2002, the community set up a blockade on the main logging road.

Judy Da Silva describes the blockade as the only thing they could do; *"We need to protect this forest for our kids, they left us no options."* Fobister says the blockade was: *"The best thing we ever did."*

It became the longest running blockade in North American history, ending in 2009. The community was, and still is, fighting in various ways against the on-going process of colonialism and asserting their rights guaranteed through the Treaty. They want the Ontario forest industry to improve consultation, for the federal government to negotiate with their community in a nation-to-nation manner, and for MNR to respect their Treaty rights. It was an inspirational act of direct action. The blockade site remains a sacred space today.

The community has used the blockade as an educational tool for their children. During the seven year blockade, daily classes were held at the site to help children understand their community's fight for its rights. Youth also learned about their traditional ways. The beauty and sad irony, is that the Anishinaabe believe that

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the land teaches that, if it is respected and not destroyed, what has been forgotten can be relearned on the land. Being educated at the blockade site reinforced the youths' appreciation of their elders. Blockaders hope the young people are learning about their rights, learning to protest in non-violent ways, and learning to stand up together against the government without fear. The Anishinaabe way of learning is through doing and the youth have been learning leadership and the power of community by being directly involved in protests, organizing letter writing campaigns, and by being present at the blockade.



Butterfly Dance

An important question for me in this process was how do allies fit in? I asked many people in the community this question. They all said that a fight to preserve land is everyone's fight. They also emphasized the need to pressure Weyerhaeuser in whatever way possible until they stop logging without community consent in the Whiskey Jack Forest. Please consider making a donation to CPT and their work on the Aboriginal Justice Team in Canada or perhaps, going on a delegation. I know I really enjoyed this faith-based approach to understanding inequality in Canada, and experiencing this community's fantastic hospitality.

More information can be found at the following sites: www.cpt.org
www.freegrassy.org

With love, determination and hope for the better world we're building together.
-Tessa

Are you reading this newsletter from a printed copy that was mailed or delivered to your mailbox, and you have an email address? If so, please advise the office of your email address so we can add you to our email list and save some printing, paper and postage costs. The newsletter on our website is also in fabulous colour! Thank you.

Spring Thaw Warms TMUC Audience

Bluegrass band 'Spring Thaw' gave an energetic and engaging concert at TMUC – despite being without their banjo player.

The band's banjo player, Kelly Dueck, became ill earlier in the day, so the band performed without him, although Aaron Burnett who played mandolin, commented that they had to drop some songs that were 'banjo driven' from their play list. Throughout the evening, Burnett engaged the audience with stories about the history of Bluegrass music and of some of the tunes they played.

The band consisted of Burnett, Bob Ivany (guitar and vocals), Eric Ross (fiddle and vocals) and Allan Popowich (who was filling in for regular bassist Tim Taves). They played a variety of Bluegrass tunes, including the 'Lord McDonald Reel' and 'I'm Not Broken, But I'm Badly Bent.'

The concert was preceded by a spaghetti supper. Funds raised go to TMUC's general fund.

The United Church Women

by Lynn Measner

Fall is always a busy time for us and we started it off by collecting our Thankoffering for the Mission & Service Fund and hosting a Whist Drive in October.

We recently held our 6th annual Ladies Night Out. The sold out fundraiser proved to be a successful and enjoyable evening once again.

On December 2nd we are hosting a tea for the residents of Park Manor Personal Care Home.

Our annual Cookie Walk takes place between services (10:30 – 11:15) on Sunday, December 4th. \$6.00 buys you a box which will hold 2 dozen cookies of your choice. This year we also pre-sold Christmas Cakes.

We continue to serve the congregation by hosting funeral receptions.

All women of our congregation are invited to join us for our monthly meetings, on the 2nd Monday of the month at 1:30 p.m. in the Boardroom.

We will not be meeting in December as the women are taking a much deserved rest and enjoying the season of Advent and Christmas.

HELP STAMP OUT LEPROSY

Now that Christmas is fast approaching would you please save the postage stamps from your Christmas cards and parcels and hand them into the church office or to Beth Newell on Sundays.

Just rip the envelope leaving at least 1/4 inch of envelope around the stamp.



They don't need to be trimmed neatly. The UCW sells these stamps to a stamp dealer and the money we receive is sent to the Leprosy Mission to help fight leprosy. Perhaps you work in a business that receives mail with stamps? If so, how about asking if your office would collect the stamps for us, we would appreciate it.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT!!

by Melanie Sidorow



Planning for the next Caught in the Act production is well underway, and we're looking forward to presenting Pies, Lies and D'Skies* on April 26th- 29th, 2012.

The enthusiasm and rave reviews that we received for our debut show in May were well appreciated and highly motivating!

We were sad to see Sherri Jennings and Amber Rusnak have to step down as producers, but Melanie Sidorow has signed on as partner to Lynn Measner, who marks her second year as producer.

We are excited to welcome Carol Barry as our Director, and Shelley Schau as Music Director for the coming production!

Auditions were held on November 7th and we are pleased to say we have 3 new actors on board with the return of 7 "veterans".

There are many ways that you can help out before, during and after the event. You don't need to wait to sign up to join a team -- if you are interested in volunteering, please let Lynn or Melanie know soon.

Of course, a great audience is always very important to any production, and tickets for Pies, Lies and D'Skies will be on sale starting Saturday, January 21st, 2012 at 9 a.m. in Yale Hall. Tickets are \$40 each (\$20 tax receipt issued), and tables accommodate 6.

So mark your calendars, come by and get the best seat in the house! Thank you!

* A play written by Sue Rae, produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Service Inc, Englewood, Co

A CORNY ADVENTURE *by Jeff Cook*

A Maze in Corn offered a fun challenge to about 20 youth and adults from TMUC and St. George's Anglican Church on October 21.

Dressed warmly and carrying flashlights, participants found their way amongst the paths in the corn maze located near St. Adolphe. The site also offered a Haunted Forest, a pumpkin barn, petting zoo and 20 foot high bale pyramid.

Participants from the two congregations concluded the evening's adventure by gathering around a campfire to roast marshmallows and wieners.

The event was organized by Brenda LeBeau – TMUC's Youth Point Person – and sponsored by the Learning and Outreach Team.



The Bale Pyramid



MESSY CHURCH

by Jeff Cook

Messy church can be fun!

Sixteen people, youth and adults, participated in TMUC's second Messy Church experience on September 23. Everyone helped prepare the meal of soup and home-made (in this case, church-made) breadsticks. Ingredients had been purchased in advance, but all of the food preparation was done after people arrived. Some people chopped vegetables and stirred soup. Some mixed dough, kneaded it then cut it into strips for the bread sticks.

Laughter and conversation accompanied the cooking. Participants set up the tables and chairs for the meal. Following the meal, while the adults cleaned up, the children enjoyed a craft, painting and decorating picture frames. Brenda LeBeau, TMUC's Youth Point Person, led the craft time.

People then gathered chairs into a semi-circle for a time of worship led by Carol Fletcher and Jeff Cook. The worship invited people to imagine God as an artist who paints portraits of who we are and who we may become.

Another Messy Church was held on October 28th, with over 30 people participating. People prepared a meal of tacos, then joined in a worship in which everyone was asked to think of someone who had helped them see the world 'inside-out, outside-in and upside down.'

Messy church began in the United Kingdom. It combines communal meal preparation, eating, fun activities and worship as a way of allowing people of all ages to experience church in a meaningfully messy way.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DON SCHAU

Winnipeg Presbytery has approved Don Schau as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader in The United Church of Canada.

Don has completed a two-year course of study through the Calling Lakes Centre in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

According to the United Church's, a licensed lay worship leader is a person who has completed the required course of study, who conducts worship when a regularly designated minister is away due to illness, continuing education course work, or vacation, who is in good standing in a congregation, and who has been determined by his or her congregation and Presbytery to have "gifts and a sense of call to ministry of worship leadership and preaching."

During the course, Don studied preaching, New Testament and Hebrew scriptures, and theological questions such as 'Who is God?' and 'What is church?'

Don not only graduated from the course, but he has been invited to help teach the course next year.

Don has regularly preached at TMUC on Conference weekend when the Men's Breakfast Group has led worship, as well as at other times.

TMUC congratulates Don and we look forward to your continuing worship leadership amongst us.



CONFIRMING AND RENEWING

A three week sermon series on The New Creed, as well as sermon 'talk-back', times were part of this September's adult church membership program.

Twelve adults became members of TMUC during the worship service on October 2. Another 11 adults reaffirmed the vows they had previously made during confirmation.

Knowing there was a larger than usual number of people wishing to take the adult church membership classes – titled Exploring Our Faith – Carol and Jeff proposed a new format to the Worship and Welcome Team of the congregation. Normally three or four Exploring Our Faith classes would be held.

This time, the United Church's 'A New Creed' became the basis of three sermons that explored faith in God, the life and significance of Jesus, and the nature of the church. After each of the three services there was a 'talk-back' time, when people could comment and ask questions about the sermon, or the church in general. As well, there was one evening discussion time and information material was also available on the church website and in printed form.

The United Church of Canada makes a distinction between adherents ("a person who is attached to a Congregation and who contributes regularly to its life and work while not being a member thereof) and members (who are entitled to vote at all congregational meetings on all matters including matters pertaining to the calling of an Order of Ministry and property matters requiring the consent of Presbytery). At TMUC, adherents and members all work and worship together.

Gift Giving and Gifts that Give

Once again TMUC will make a few items available for gift giving that support local businesses, and give back to the community.

How about giving an extra 2 cents worth to the church? This year, our fourth annual Morden's fundraiser is making things very simple by including the cost of the taxes with any ordered product, and then rounding things off. Sometimes, the church will get an extra 2 cents, sometimes it will be 10 cents, and for some, we have rounded down the tax, to make the math easier for us! So, if you are planning on giving that Winnipeg favourite of Morden's chocolates or nuts this Christmas, how about ordering through the church and letting us share a few extra cents? Order forms are in the office. Orders can be placed until 3:00 p.m. on Monday, December 5, 2011.

The poinsettias from Hospice and Manitoba Palliative Care Association will also be available to order through us. Throughout Advent and Christmas, we are offering the Stars of Hope in support of the Bernie Wolfe School lunch program.



The 1 Hope Winnipeg Campaign will be making a catalogue available for us this Christmas season, and our congregation has the opportunity to share a gift of 'justice' not 'just us'. The catalogue will feature 'living gifts' to support the Community Ministries of Stella North End, St. Matthew's/ Maryland, Oak Table, West Broadway, and Rainbow. We are working together to make a difference in our world.

Visit their website at 1hopewinnipeg.com or call the church office for further information to give a gift.

SCENT-FREE

Transcona Memorial United Church, as a community that cares about the health and well-being of all individuals, has designated our church building as a scent-free environment. Please refrain from using any fragranced or scented cosmetic products prior to entering the building. Such products include scented perfume, make-up, shampoo, body wash deodorant, hairsprays, colognes, aftershaves, lotions and soaps.

In some people, scented products may induce headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, shortness of breath and skin irritation.

While we realize that we cannot mandate people's personal choices and cannot guarantee a completely fragrance and scent-free environment, we would appreciate everyone's cooperation in trying to make this building a more comfortable and safe place for everyone.

IN THE MOMENT: Birth Stories and their Values

Charlotte Caron will be at Transcona Memorial on Saturday, December 3 to launch the fourth annual In the Moment Event. Charlotte, born and raised in MB, is a United Church Diaconal Minister, who has been ministering in BC and teaching at St. Andrews Theological College in Saskatoon. She recently retired as Acting Principal at the Centre for Christian Studies and now spends her time bird watching, writing and doing volunteer work.

Charlotte will speak from 9 to 10:30, then a fabulous brunch will be provided. Following brunch from 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. there will be two workshops offered, one on music, and one on stories. The cost for the event is just \$10.00 and everyone is welcome.

Please contact the church office (tmuc@shaw.ca or 222-1331) to register. Payment can be made in advance or at the door.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL

by Doug Flanders

In 2012, The United Church of Canada will launch a legacy initiative to encourage bequests and other estate gifts.

The initiative will mean donors will be able to designate estate gifts of any amount to any area of the church's work – to their congregation, to the wider church through the Mission and Service Fund, to a church-related mission or agency, to The United Church Observer, or to The United Church of Canada Foundation. The gifts can go toward current operations or long-term support.

The church is encouraging all types of estate gifts, including bequests, gifts of insurance, annuities, trusts, and bonds. The new initiative is being developed and launched through Mission and Service funding.

Why is the church emphasizing legacies now? "Legacy gifts can enable new opportunities for mission, ministry, and growth," says Doug Flanders, the United Church's Director of Major and Planned Gifts. "Giving is integral to our Christian faith. Planned giving is a way that people can give to the church they love."

For more information, contact Doug Flanders at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 2027 or email dflander@united-church.ca.

(this article is reprinted with permission from Mandate magazine's Mission and Service Special Edition, August 2011)

JAZZ IS BACK

Jazz Vespers returned to TMUC on Sunday evening, October 16. Introducing the service that evening, Jeff Cook said the theme for the service came from a line of poetry by W.S. Merwin: "If you find that your God is too small, expand the sanctuary."

"I understand that to mean," said Cook, "that in the world of religion we must always be cautious when we think we have God figured out, when we think we can explain God, when we can confine God to our own creeds, or denomination or faith. We must expand the sanctuary, be prepared to discover God outside of our own religious comfort zones or beliefs. So, I invite us to expand our sanctuary tonight, to let the music of jazz lead us beyond the familiar and known tunes and music into new sound and new collaboration."

The musicians for the evening were Karl Kohut on bass, Ken Gold on saxophone and Bert Johnson on piano. Some of the tunes played were 'Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love', 'There is No Greater Love' and 'Calm and Collected', which was composed by Bert Johnson and is both the name and the title track of his recently released first CD.

Everyone is welcome to attend a Jazz Vespers service and appreciate the fine musicianship of the jazz trios who provide the music at the services.

WHERE IS THE CHILD?

A Biblical Reflection by
Jeff Cook and Carol Fletcher



“Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we have observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.” -Matthew 2:2

Where is he?

That question is why we gather to worship during the season of Advent. It is why we gather to worship on Christmas Eve. It is why we will gather this year on Christmas morning to worship.

We gather to ask “Where is he? ‘Where is the child who was born king of the Jews? Where is the child whose birth declared that the world was now a different place? “

Living in an occupied land, the Jews had a king, albeit one they did not want to acknowledge. Their king was the Roman Emperor. For a child to be born king of the Jews was to challenge the power of the emperor.

Where is the child who declares an end to the kingship of domination, exploitation, military supremacy and fidelity through fear?

Where is the child who declares a kingship of love, of service, of forgiveness, of healing, of food for all, of peace?

Where is the child whose birth says that what is best and most precious about us is not what we own, or the prestige of our title, or the people we know?

We also have seen his star rising, heard his parables read, shared bread broken in his name.

Where is this child we call Jesus? Like the magi, we ask the question, because, like them, we know that somehow he will show us the way to the heart of God.

This Advent, let us again come to worship. Let us again come to hear the stories. Let us again come to find the child who tells us we are loved. Let us come to our savior.