

Commissioner

NOVEMBER 2013

LOOKING AHEAD

Nov 30	12-2:30 Messy Church Special Event "Smooth Start to Christmas"
Dec 1	9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 1 10:30am UCW Cookie Walk 6:30 Journey to Bethlehem with St. George's Anglican Church
Dec 8	9:30 am Advent 2 with Service of Communion and Joyful Noise Singers 11:15 am Advent 2
Dec 14	7 pm Christmas Concert
Dec 15	9:30 am Advent 3 with Service of Baptism 11:15 am Advent 3 4:30 pm Messy Church Hamper Packing
Dec 22	9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 4 7 pm Blue Christmas Service
Dec 24	5 & 7 pm Christmas Eve Family Services 10 pm Communion Service
Dec 29	10 am Worship Around Breakfast Tables Service
Jan 5 – Jan 26	9:30 traditional service 11:15 cultural service
Feb 2	10 am Worship Service 11 am Annual Congregational Meeting and Potluck Lunch
Feb 2— Mar 2	Single 10 am services

CONGREGATIONAL UPDATE

by Jeff Cook

A congregational update meeting was held following the worship service on Nov. 3. Some of the items from that meeting were:

Adrian Measner, co-chair of TMUC's Administration and Sharing Team, reported on our current financial situation. He said that as of the end of September we were running a deficit of about \$30,000. Measner reminded people that November and December are traditionally our best revenue months, but we will need a significantly larger than normal November and December to overcome this deficit. It is likely we will end the year in a deficit situation but hopefully together our remaining contributions can reduce the amount of the deficit.' Measner said it is "really important" that people fill in their stewardship commitment forms.

Melanie Sidorow reported that this year's Dinner Theatre play will be "The Pony Express" (or "The Villain Came to a Grinding Halt"). The Dinner Theatre runs April 24-27. Tickets go on sale on January 18, 2014 and the Dinner Theatre still needs a pianist.

Deanna Howard, chair of the TMUC Council, reported that St. George's Anglican Church has asked us to consider the possibility of their congregation sharing our building, and of us partnering in ministries together (we currently partner with St. Georges with the Food Bank, Vacation Bible School and Journey to Bethlehem). Howard said that we need some volunteers to be on a committee to explore the possibilities with St. George's.

Deanna Howard and Harvey Hochkievich, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council, reported on the renovation project. To date, we have \$540,707.05 in pledges. We have been approved for a \$100,000 Winnipeg Community Infrastructure grant, provided work is completed by the spring of 2016. Applications have been submitted for two other grants totaling \$145,000. Hochkievich said TMUC will be applying for other grants, as well as approaching corporate sponsors. He said the Executive will continue to explore renovation options if we do not obtain enough funding to complete the project as currently envisioned. Hochkievich also announced that Don Schau has been accepted as a candidate for ordained ministry.

NEWS FLASH!!

Actually, this is a newsletter flash! Some of you are reading this newsletter on a computer screen. Some of you are holding a paper copy in your hands and reading it. Those paper copies have been delivered by numerous volunteers who had to sort them, put them into distribution packages, and then get those packages to other volunteers who deliver them to your house.

We think it is important that people 'get the news' about what TMUC is up to and future events. However, we also know that getting the news out requires a lot of work and volunteer hours.

So, we are asking your help to reduce some of that work and the cost of distributing our newsletter. Beginning with the Spring newsletter, we hope to reduce the number of paper copies we distribute. So, if you are able to access the newsletter by email, please let us know. Contact the office at tmuc@shaw.ca or by phone at 204-222-1331 and let us know. If you do not want to receive the email, please let us know that as well.

We will be making paper copies available in the office and the sanctuary narthex for people who do not have Internet access. While we will continue to deliver some copies, we hope to reduce that number by encouraging more people to stop by the church office and pick up a copy.

If you can help to deliver newsletters we would also appreciate hearing from you.



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

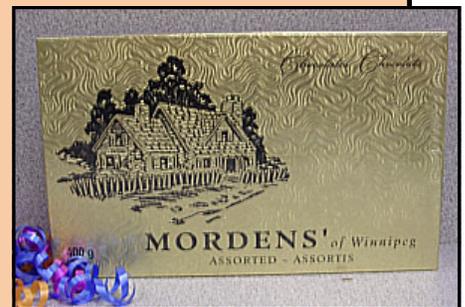
Submissions, news, and other items of interest are welcome. Contributions may be edited for length. To submit articles, please contact the church.

Transcona Memorial United Church

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

Morden's Chocolates

Once again we are selling Morden's chocolates as a fundraiser. These delicious chocolates make wonderful gifts to send to those out of town, as a hostess gift or to keep for yourself for Christmas.



Order forms are available in the office. Completed forms with payment (cheques payable to TMUC) should be returned to the office.

By the time you read this, we will have already placed our first order in November. Our second and final order deadline is December 9th. Delivery date will be sometime that week—you will be contacted.

Thank you for your support.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

In the summer of 1988, two 'young' ministers moved from Esterhazy, Saskatchewan to Winnipeg's community of Transcona.

On September 22, 2013 over 200 people gathered to celebrate the 25 years of ministry that followed the arrival of Rev. Carol Fletcher and Rev. Jeff Cook.

Following the morning worship service, a 25th anniversary celebration was hosted in Yale Hall by the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

Colleen Thompson, chair of TMUC's Ministry and Personnel emceed the celebration. She began by reading Romans 12:1-8, which she introduced as describing 'life in God's service.'

Thompson read a letter of greeting and congratulations from the Rt. Rev. Gary Patterson, Moderator of the United Church of Canada.

Several people spoke about Carol's and Jeff's ministries within the church and community. Those who spoke were:

Rev. Irene Greenwood, chair of Winnipeg Presbytery,

Rev. Shannon McCarthy, Executive Secretary of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario,

Colleen Tackaberry (Transcona Council for Seniors),

Brenda LeBeau (TMUC's Youth Point Person) who made a presentation on behalf of the Sunday School,

Sylvia Jansen, who humorously reported comments 'overheard' at the ministers' house,

A letter of congratulations from Jeff's sister, Liz Mason and her family, was read,

The Chancel and Carillons choirs sang "Celebrate and Sing for Praise",

Audrey Lumsden, past chair of the M&P Committee, presented Carol and Jeff with gift certificates for purchasing a tree and books.



A visual remembrance of the past 25 years was presented in the form of a power point presentation of photos, prepared by Joy Chand, Vice-Chair of the M&P Committee.

Carol and Jeff then spoke, expressing their appreciation for the celebration and their gratitude for the faith of the TMUC congregation.

AN AMAZING TIME

Some clichés are true! It was ‘A Mazing’.

TMUC’s annual trip to A Maze in Corn took place on Friday evening, October 18. Over 30 people trekked out to the corn maze which is located south of the perimeter on St. Mary’s Road.

A Maze in Corn features a maze through a cornfield, as well as a ‘haunted forest’, a petting zoo and a pyramid of hay bales.

The TMUCers who attended had an evening of clear weather in which to wander through the maze. Those who brave the haunted forest said it was a great experience.

The evening concluded with everyone gathering around a campfire to roast marshmallows, snack on chips and sip hot chocolate.

The event was organized by Brenda LeBeau, TMUC’s Youth Point Person.

**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.

POSTAGE STAMPS

With the Christmas season fast approaching, we will be receiving cards and parcels.

*Please save your stamps.
They can be left at the church office or give them to Beth Newell.*

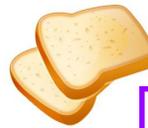
If you are cutting out the stamp please leave at least 1/4 inch around the stamp or you may turn in the entire envelope and leave the cutting for Beth.



Radisson School Breakfast Program

Did you know that TMUC has a group of women from our church who help with the breakfast program at Radisson School? This program is offered to any student who wishes to attend, as long as the parents sign a consent form. The sponsorship of this program is partly by grant and partly by the financial assistance of two churches, our church being one of them! Many schools within Transcona have similar programs.

Breakfast is served three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, by various church members. Our group does the Friday mornings, and will sub occasionally for the other days if needed. We arrive at 7:45 am and begin the preparations. Boiling water for hot chocolate, sanitizing all the tables, and then setting up all the food. Cereal, juices, fruit, yogurt tubes, cheese strings, toast and hot or cold chocolate milk are the main staples. For special occasions we have provided waffles and syrup. We do the clean up afterwards and load the dishwasher before we leave. We are usually out of the school just before 9:00.



Last year was our first year in this program, but we all got to enjoy it so much that we decided to continue for another year. The children are friendly, well-behaved and full of energy! There are usually anywhere between 9 and 15 students attending these breakfasts. They always appreciate our help, and enjoy the socialness of this breakfast time! We often are looking for someone to fill in—when people are away, and would welcome others who might be interested.

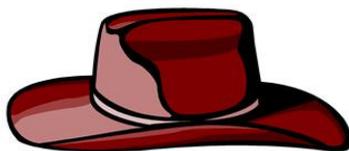
The school staff, also, are very warm, friendly and interested in how we are doing. I'm pleased that our church is helping in this way, as you never know what impact we are making on a child's life!

Respectfully submitted by Bonnie Scott
Other group members are Vicky Low, Bev Corbett, Darlene Wingate and Judy Wegner (Wed group).



Caught In the Act Co. DINNER THEATRE

Mark your calendars for April 24–27, 2014 as we present our 4th annual production— “The Pony Express” by Rachel Davidson (Pioneer Drama Service). This hot melodrama is sure to perk you up! Love brews, the beans are spilled and things boil over—all with the ultimate blend of fun characters from the wild west.



Tickets for a fabulous meal and an evening of great entertainment go on sale Saturday, January 18th from 9—noon in Yale Hall. Cost is \$40 per ticket (a \$20 tax receipt is issued at the time of purchase).

A couple of new actors have joined us this year and we also have booked a new caterer —Lewis Catering. But we are in desperate need of a pianist—if you can play the piano or know of someone who can, please contact the Producers.



Producers Melanie Sidorow and Lynn Measner appreciate the support of the congregation for this fundraiser, so please consider volunteering for the various duties when the sign up poster goes up in the new year. Together we can make this another successful event!

BECOMING AN AFFIRMING CONGREGATION



TMUC will host an Affirming Fair on Saturday, January 25, 2014, from 10 a.m. – noon in Yale Hall. The Fair will consist of a variety of displays, speakers, resources, and video/You Tube presentations about what it would mean for Transcona Memorial to be recognized as an Affirming congregation of The United Church of Canada.

According to the document “Open Hearts”, Affirming Ministries are:

“congregations, presbyteries, Conferences, educational institutions and other ministries within the United Church that publically declare their commitment to inclusion and justice for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Although Affirming Ministries make an explicit statement about issues of sexuality and gender, their commitment to justice is far broader. They continually grow and change as they seek to live more fully into God’s way of welcome, love, and justice for all creation. Just as God rejoices in the goodness and diversity of creation, so too Affirming Ministries honour and celebrate diversity.”

TMUC already has a marriage policy (approved at a congregational meeting a few years ago) that states that our ministers may preside at marriages for anyone. Becoming an Affirming Congregation would require our marriage policy to be more specific in saying that TMUC’s ministers may preside at same-sex marriages.

A special Interest group of the congregation is organizing the Fair. Initial plans are for the Fair to include displays and information about scriptural references to same sex relationships, messages and attitudes found in music, literature and movies, bullying and ministry with marginalized persons. The hope is to have representatives from AFFIRM and Rainbow Ministry of Winnipeg Presbytery, as well as from the Transcona community.

The special interest group hopes to offer some workshops and studies at later dates. At some time in the future, the congregation would decide at a congregational meeting whether to become affirming.

Affirming congregations are recognized as such by Affirm United, an organization within the United Church that provides resources, support and encouragement to people who are LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) and to their families and friends; as well as encouraging the United Church to become more welcoming and inclusive.

Affirming congregations pay an annual fee of \$100 to Affirm United. The question of why TMUC should become officially affirming if we are already a welcoming congregation has been discussed within the special interest group. The analogy the group has used is that of Block Parents – households that are registered and may display a sign that they are a safe haven for endangered children. Becoming officially affirming is a way of ensuring the LGBT community that when we say ‘all are welcome’, the ‘all’ includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

The special interest group hopes many members of TMUC will attend the Fair and studies. Further information will be made available as events are scheduled.

The Return to 11:15

A couple of months ago the Worship and Welcome Team wrestled with how to meet the needs of the people who want a later service, and those who want an earlier service, and those who wanted things the same, and those who wanted something different. So, for the weeks between November 17 and the end of January, we are experimenting with the return to 2 services, 9:30 and 11:15. The experimenting part comes with the nature of the 11:15 service. With smaller numbers in worship, we wondered about trying to build a community in a different way. So, we are planning for the services to have a different look and feel than those at 9:30.

On November 17, the service engages our reflections with hymns played by a Jazz Trio.

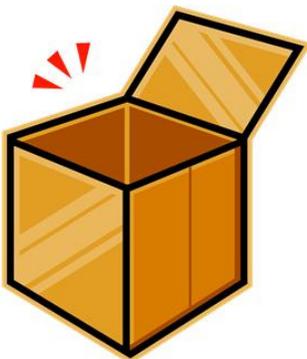
On November 24, the Carillons will help us to sing 'camp songs', and 'folk songs', and to have some fun singing and reflecting on the message of faith.

In Advent, we will keep some essential parts of the service - the lighting of the Advent Candles, and the choir will sing an anthem, for example, but the 11:15 experience will also allow for some interaction between the Gospel story and us. (another new thing: the choir will be in our midst, and sing the anthem at the start).

Of course, on the Sunday following Christmas, there is just 1 service at 10 when we have Worship Around Breakfast Tables.

In January, we will really stretch ourselves, as we explore a series on Faith and Culture, and consider how things in current popular culture interact with church and faith. Christian writers are talking about vampires, zombies, science, and detectives, as a way of using the language of 'out there' with the faith that is in us. We remember that much of the Christian story and our traditions were once associated with other 'out there' popular festivals and events (Why is Christmas in December....??? there is a place to find out in this newsletter if you do not know), so how do those things 'trending' today engage with our faith.

As Mary said to the disciples as she discovered the empty tomb, 'Come and See'.



A TMUC Advent Calendar

All those shoe boxes that got collected in the church office are becoming an Advent Calendar. The scriptures are chosen, and boxes are available for people to decorate and interpret the scripture - it is sort of the style of Diorama's for Adults and Children alike. Each day in Advent we will open a box and see what is inside. For those who use the internet, we will share the news on Twitter, and maybe even a blog (we'll see how that goes!!!), and the boxes will be open for people to see at the church. So, we start on December 1 -- watch for us, follow us, and share!

STORIES AND QUESTIONS

Stories of poverty and questions of justice were shared by Patricia Baker at the UCW's Thank-offering service on October 20.

Baker, the Oak Table Community Minister, was the guest preacher for the annual UCW service.

Oak Table is located at Augustine United Church in Osborne Village. From Monday-Thursday (1:30-3:30 p.m.) it is a drop-in center where people can access resources such as income assistance, nutrition information, public health referrals, pastoral care and counseling. People can get a haircut, take art classes, meet with a chiropractor, receive assistance in completing forms and applications, read a newspaper or use a phone or computer.

Baker shared stories of some people who have come to Oak Table. She told of Barry, who camped in Assiniboine Park until someone in a community across the river complained and he was evacuated. He left taking only his art portfolio. Baker asked the congregation to consider what are the challenges and opportunities for ministry in that story.

She also told the story of Randy, a Residential School survivor facing life's challenges with many questions.

"How do we begin to understand the roadblocks he is facing?" Baker asked.

Baker told the story of Cindy, a person who struggles with mental illness and insecurity. Baker said that Cindy's first comment whenever she comes to Oak Table is to say thanks that she is living.

A list of items needed at Oak Table as well as volunteer opportunities is posted in the CE entrance of TMUC (or visit augustineunitedchurch.org and click Justice).

Baker wrote to TMUC following the Sunday service. Part of her letter is included here:

"Thank you again for the opportunity to share some of the social justice ministry of Oak Table Community Ministry as part of your UCW Thankoffering Service on October 20. It was an added blessing of the day that I could spend a few minutes with the YUCH. It was affirming to hear comments from many folks about what they learned as a result of what I shared, as well as some strong passion for social justice from several congregation members.

Oak Table now has over 90 volunteers and 80 to 100 guests each day we are open (Monday to Thursday, 1:30 – 3:30). Many days this past summer we greeted over 100 guests at Oak Table; we estimate 1600 guest contacts per month over the summer months.

To put these numbers in perspective, at this time last year, 40 volunteers were serving between 50 and 60 guests daily. We believe this large increase in numbers is related to the gap between income and the cost of inadequate housing in this city, which requires people to pay rent from money budgeted for food and other essentials. *(continued on page 9)*

(continued from page 8)

We are seeing more people who are working at less than sustainable wages, who are seniors with inadequate pensions, who are being forced to leave their homes by landlords wishing to upgrade and increase the rent, and more people who are choosing to live outside or with short, intermittent prison sentences rather than in the conditions imposed by the few night shelters in Winnipeg.

We are blessed by volunteers, health workers, and community animators who have seen opportunity in the challenges presented.

We plan to strengthen our communication and fundraising efforts. We are hopeful that 1Hope Winnipeg gains momentum and our own efforts yield increased support to counter the decrease in Mission Support funding.

Many current concerns relate to intense, immediate needs expressed by our guests. Increased awareness of residential school settlements and their impact is quite prevalent in the community. Anxiety increases as winter faces us. We engage in advocacy that will end homelessness or add value to life for individuals. The funding we have for volunteer co-ordination and training helps us to broaden the group of folks at Oak Table who can listen to and respond to some of these challenges. We are grateful and hopeful in all the relationships and associations we are making and growing.”

CHOIR NOTES
by Dorothy Ross

The choirs and our musicians are busily preparing music for the Advent and Christmas Season.

Our Christmas Concert “Caroling ‘Round the Christmas Tree” will take place on Saturday, December 14th at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The concert will include familiar and new selections by The Carillon Singers, The Chancel Choir and our childrens’ choir, The Joyful Noise Singers.

Along with the choral numbers, we also will hear solos, duets and trios. We hope you will plan to attend. Tickets are \$10.00 for adults and \$7.00 for children under 12 and available from choir members or the church office.

The Joyful Noise Singers will sing in church on December 8th. The Carillons and Chancel Choir will both be in attendance on December 22nd.

Our Christmas Eve services at 5 & 7 p.m. will have The Carillon Singers and at 10 p.m. for the communion service, The Chancel Choir.

We wish each one of you a Blessed Christmas Season!

SHARED BUILDING? SHARED MINISTRY? SHARED....?

by Deanna Howard

In 2010 we brought forward the idea of exploring the possibility of a shared building and shared ministry with St. Georges Anglican Church. Since then, we have started to share in ministry through the Food Bank, Vacation Bible School, and Journey to Bethlehem, and we have found out that we work very well together. Now the question has come up again, "Do we want to share a building?" It is too early to know what this would look like.

Both congregations are active and solid, this is about opportunity and a shared vision of ministry in Transcona. So now we would like to establish a working group to explore what the future may hold. We are hoping to get some volunteers to be part of this working group.

The future is full of opportunities, let's explore this one.

Why is Christmas in December?

The answer to the question we asked in 'The Return to 11:15':

The idea of celebrating the birth of Jesus did not come about until hundreds of years after his death. The choice of December 25 was made in the late 200's, and was made because December 25 already hosted two other festivals with celebrated birth and the sun. The church took the date and introduced a new festival as the other festivals had a parallel to the message the church wanted to share. This was the birth of God's son. For more details, it is worth a google or a trip to the encyclopedia or library.

Gifts of Grace Street Mission *by Bonnie Scott*

As there are many folks from our congregation working for this mission, and many others asking about it; it was thought that a short description of the mission and its' work should be shared with all.

This mission is sponsored by St. Saviour's Anglican Church in East Kildonan. This means all the food to be distributed to our homeless friends is made there, and all the food needed to make the hot meals is stored there. The church will also issue receipts for income tax purposes for those wishing to donate.

Our group, mainly people from Transcona churches, go twice a month to make casseroles for 200 people per outing. At that same time another group is there making sandwiches. Four teams take the meals out every Thursday evening, with the Transcona group being one of the teams. Breakfast and a Movie is offered on Sunday mornings at Red Road Lodge, located on Main Street, for the colder months. In the summer months, breakfast is served outside every Sunday. Again, different teams help with these outings.

Our church has already been helping by donating toiletry items, new and gently used socks. We thank all those who have donated in the past as all items are very gratefully received by our street friends! Our church has also very willingly allowed us to use the church for baking, which was done on Tuesday mornings once a month. For the present time we are not baking, as many stores and bakeries are now giving us their baked goods.

If you would like more information about this Mission and how you might help, we would love to hear from you! Other group members from our church: Carol and Bob Kirkhope, Anne Hruda, Terry Cousins, Bob and Louise Buchanan

ADVENT WAITING

by Carol Fletcher & Jeff Cook

“Wait for it.....”

We have heard that phrase used by comedians and occasionally in conversation when someone has wanted to add dramatic flair to the moment.

But we didn't know (until we googled it) that the Urban Dictionary describes “wait for it...” as “a sentence-enhancing phrase, used to illustrate the **epicness** of an object/situation/event.”

Urban Dictionary doesn't bold the word ‘epicness’, and our spell check doesn't acknowledge it as a real word, but we think it should be a word if it isn't one already.

“Wait for it.....because it will be **epic.**”

Advent is an epic time of waiting.

Advent is the season leading into Christmas (the four Sundays preceding Christmas are the Sundays of Advent). Advent is typically thought of as a season of ‘waiting’ – waiting for the birth of Jesus.

So, what if we adapt the urban dictionary definition to create this definition of Advent: “Advent is a faith-enhancing season, illustrating and anticipating the epicness of Jesus' birth”?

Advent is a time for getting ready for God! We wait, but not like we wait in a long line at the grocery store. We wait like we wait for the arrival home of family members, like we wait for a new season of our favourite show, like we wait for the announcement of our child's name to go forward and receive their graduation diploma.

Advent is waiting for the door to open, the lights to be turned on, the music to start, the child to be born!

We remember the familiar stories of Jesus being born, but we know that what we remember is not just a moment in time. We remember the significance of the life that followed that birth – the epicness of Jesus healing, teaching, sharing meals and declaring God's amazing love. We remember that God's love is continually being born anew in acts of compassion, generosity and forgiveness.

So, perhaps, during each day of Advent we might find time to whisper the words “wait for it..” – whisper them as an Advent prayer.

Advent draws near!

So....

“Wait for it...

Wait for the birth of Jesus...

In all its epicness!