

Commissioner

MARCH 2014

LOOKING AHEAD

March 23	9:30 & 11:15 services Lent 3
March 30	9:30 & 11:15 services Folk Communion, Lent 4
April 6	9:30 & 11:15 services, Lent 5
April 12	Time & Talent Auction 9 a.m. breakfast; 10 a.m. auction
April 13	9:30 & 11:15 services; Palm Sunday with Joyful Noise Singers
April 17	7 p.m. Maundy Thursday service in Upper Room
April 18	10 a.m. Good Friday Service; Office Closed 4:30 Messy Church
April 20	9:30 & 11:15 services Easter Sunday, Communion and Cantata with Choirs
April 24-27	Dinner Theatre "The Pony Express"
Apr 27 to mid Nov	Single worship service at 10 a.m.
May 4	Celebration Sunday 11 am Congregational Meeting & Potluck Lunch

ANNUAL MEETING "SURPRISE"

by Jeff Cook

TMUC's annual congregational meeting contained at least one surprise.

The congregation ended 2013 with a surplus of \$3,112.28!

This was the third consecutive year in which TMUC had a surplus at year end.

Adrian Measner, co-chair of the Administration and Sharing Team, said that the surplus was achieved despite the congregation having lost its charitable tax status for a brief period early in the year. He said the surplus was achieved even with many people having also made pledges to the Capital campaign for the building renovations.

Deanna Howard, Chair of TMUC's Council, reported that the capital campaign had so far raised about \$650,000 in pledges and grants. She said the Council Executive would be applying for more grants as well as approaching some corporate sponsors for the congregation. The Annual Meeting approved placing a plaque of appreciation for all who financially contributed to the renovation.

Stephanie Wright spoke on behalf of the Affirming Congregation Special Interest Group, who are helping TMUC consider becoming an officially designated Affirming congregation (welcoming of all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity). She said there will be some workshops/information sessions offered before the congregation is asked to make a decision.

A cake auction held during the meeting, raised over \$600 for the CGIT camp that is planned for this summer.

NEW CHURCH BUILT MESSY CHURCH ACTIVITY

TMUC has built a new church – albeit a temporary one. When the weather finally warms up, the new structure will melt away.

The new church, is actually an ‘ice’ church, constructed of ice blocks. The ‘church’ is in the church courtyard in front of the sanctuary windows.

About 30 people helped build the ice church on January 11. People were asked to fill empty milk and juice cartons with water, then to freeze them. Peeling off the carton left us with ice blocks. Over 100 blocks were used to build the three-sided church, and a path was shoveled through the snow, allowing people to walk ‘into’ the ice church, whose walls are about three feet high.

While snow has drifted around the ice church, its shining walls are a testament to TMUC’s creativity and sense of community.



The Messy Church ice church construction crew

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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Upcoming Messy Church events—everyone welcome

Good Friday, April 18 from 4:30-6:00 pm

Biblical Theme: The Easter Story Food Plan: Pita Pockets

Saturday, May 10 from 10-11:30 am

Biblical Theme: 1 John 4 Food Plan: Brunch

This edition of the *Commissioner* has been sent via email to those who have shared their address with us. Hard copies are available for pick up in the church for those without internet access, however we still hand deliver and mail many copies. So if you can help us reduce our costs (postage is going up!) and our footprint on the earth by sharing your email address with us, we would appreciate it. Contact the church office at 204-222-1331 or tmuc@shaw.ca Thank you.

PEOPLE, PANCAKES AND PURPLE

It was a tongue-twister's delight:

“People appareled in purple partaking of pancakes!”

About 60 people enjoyed the pancakes at TMUC's annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper on March 4. Shrove Tuesday precedes the beginning of Lent, a traditional time of fasting and abstaining from some foods.

Purple is the colour for the liturgical season of Lent, so many of the people came wearing purple.

People could get pancakes from one of four of the pancake grill stations in Yale Hall, and choose from plain, blueberry, chocolate chip or carrot pancakes. Sausages and grapes were also served.

There was a craft table and face-painting station for younger participants. Following the meal, several children joined Carol Fletcher for an engaging telling of the stories of Lydia and Dorcas, who were both prominent members of the early church communities described in the book of Acts.

The pancake supper was a Messy Church event organized by the Learning Team.



Soup, Sandwiches and Superheroes

Superheroes have become movie stars!! During Lent, TMUC and ST. George's Anglican Church invite people to a conversation about the popularity of superheroes and how superheroes compare to Jesus.



We will specifically discuss Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Spider Man and the Avengers. The conversation will take place on Thursday evenings (March 13, 20, 27 & April 3 and 10th) from 5-7 p.m. at TMUC. There is no cost for the study, but participants may contribute towards the cost of the food. Everyone is welcome to join us for a fun and faith-filled discussion.

Legacy Giving

People can make decisions now that will benefit their churches after they have died, Kathryn Hofley said during a presentation on legacy giving at Transcona Memorial on March 1. Hofley is the Prairie Region Financial Development Officer for The United Church of Canada. Currently a member of Young United Church in Winnipeg, Hofley's childhood congregation was TMUC.

Kathryn helps United Church folk discover how to create bequests and other legacy gifts that will financially benefit their congregation, the Mission and Service fund, or any charitable organization they want passionately to support.

Legacy giving is creating a financial gift that usually comes to the Church in the future and usually through your estate. Hence it does not come from income but from a donor's accumulated assets. Legacy giving is an opportunity for us to give thanks for the past (the legacy) and build into the future.

You do not have to be extremely wealthy to leave a legacy gift. Hofley said that at least 50 per cent of bequests come from estates that are "average or less", and that 99 per cent of legacy gifts are future deferred, coming after a person dies.

"Almost everyone has some estate when they die," she said. "The question is not 'Can you do this?' but 'Do you want to do this?'"

Some types of Legacy giving discussed at the session included:

1. Bequests in wills where some of your estate is willed to your Church or Mission and Service or other institution. A tax credit is given on the final income tax return based on the full value of the bequest. If it is designated to Transcona Memorial United Church be sure and say "Transcona Memorial United Church or its successor" in case further amalgamation or changes occur. In the Manitoba and North Western Ontario conference during the 15 year period from 1998 to 2012, 782 bequests were received to 131 congregations totalling \$10.6 million. In Winnipeg Presbytery 31 congregations received 204 bequests totalling \$4.4 million, with six of those for TMUC totalling \$60,000.
2. Annual or immediate legacy gifts of non-registered shares and mutual funds listed on a public stock exchange. The donor receives an in-kind charitable donation tax receipt for the value of the security and pays no tax on any capital gains.
3. Making the Church a beneficiary of Registered Retirement Savings Plans or Registered Retirement Income Funds with Charitable donation tax receipt for the full amount of the gift.
4. The United Church of Canada issues and self-insures its own annuities (one of 16 organizations other than insurance companies authorized to do so). The annuity pays a guaranteed income for life, and at death the Church (not the insurance company) receives the residue –what is left. The donor receives an one-time tax receipt for a portion of the principal and a tax receipt for some of each income payment.
5. Making the Church a beneficiary of new or existing Life Insurance policies. Receive tax credits for annual premiums and a tax receipt for proceeds of the policy issued.
6. Take out a gift in perpetuity with an endowment fund with the United Church of Canada Foundation. Receive an immediate tax receipt for all contributions to your endowed fund. Add to the fund through a bequest, insurance policy or other legacy gift. Fund will pay out annually to your Church usually 3.5 to 4.5 per cent a year with the goal that principle continues in perpetuity.

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Hofley said that scripture invites us to love God with all our heart, soul and mind. "Gratitude is one of the ways we express our love of God and love of our neighbour," she said, "Generosity is how we do that".

Should you require additional information from Kathryn her email address is khofley@united-church.ca and phone number 204-943-4844.

SHARING MINISTRY, BUT NOT A BUILDING

TMUC and St. George's Anglican Church will not be sharing a building.

A working group consisting of members from both congregations met to consider the possibility of St. George's sharing our building for worship and ministry. The working group reported to TMUC's Annual Congregational meeting. The congregation indicated a willingness to continue the conversation.

St. George's Annual Meeting also discussed the working group's report. St. George's held a ballot vote to decide whether to continue pursuing the possibility of sharing a building. The result of the vote was that St. George's decided NOT to continue the conversation.

Some of the concerns (in no particular order) that led to this decision were:

- ⇒ concern for maintaining St. George's distinct congregational identity
- ⇒ hesitations about sharing a building with another denomination due to past experiences of doing so
- ⇒ St. George's has been in their current building for 13 years and are still coming to appreciate the blessings of being there
- ⇒ concerns about the lack of an ample parking lot at TMUC

St. George's and TMUC are still interested in cooperating in joint ministry in the community. Currently, the congregations jointly offer Vacation Bible School, the Journey to Bethlehem Advent caroling service, Lenten study series, and several people from St. George's volunteer at the Food Bank. The congregations will continue to seek other ways of also witnessing in and serving the community together.

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.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT CO. DINNER THEATRE 2014



As we write this we are six weeks away from the performances of April 24 - 27 of "The Pony Expresso". What seemed so far away is now closing in for our actors, who have been hard at work since the beginning of January, under the direction of Cody Smith. Cody answered our plea for a director and came on board for the first read through of the script in early January, for which we were very grateful. Also hard at work have been our set designer, costume makers, music director, props/decorations team, script assistant and ticket sales team. Soon to be called into action are the sound & lighting and makeup teams. That's just the "theatre" side of this event.

On the "dinner" side comes the recruiting of volunteers for the various areas of greeters/elevator, table servers, kitchen help, soft drink sales, hospitality room, evening cleanup, resetting the tables, and Yale Hall setup and takedown. It takes approximately 50 volunteers each evening to have this event run smoothly so we really need the help from our congregation to fill these positions. Why not bring a relative, friend or neighbour with you to help out too - we welcome all volunteers! Sign up sheets are posted on the board in the CE entrance or call the office to sign up.

Once again we are inviting our volunteers to attend our Open Dress Rehearsal on Monday, April 21 at 7 pm for a sneak preview of the play. Volunteers will be contacted in early April to see if they



wish to attend this rehearsal. Also in early April the food donation list for the hospitality room will be available - watch the announcements for further information.

Ticket sales are at 84%. If you have not yet purchased a ticket contact Frank and Carol Favoni at 204-222-1475. Tickets are \$40 (with a \$20 tax receipt).

As we reported at the annual meeting, this is the year for "new" - 3 new actors, a new director, a new script assistant, a new music director, and a new caterer - Lewis Catering. We also reported that we had recruited a new pianist in early February, however, since there had been much work and planning done for the music based on not being able to recruit a pianist at that time, we decided that we would stay with our original plans and not use a pianist this year. We have a commitment from this pianist for our 2015 production and look forward to working with her at that time.

As much as we are thrilled to have all the new volunteers, we must mention the many volunteers who are returning to be coordinators of the various areas, part of the production crew or helping in any volunteer capacity - many of you have helped out for each of the last 3 productions and again for this current one. Your faithful support for this major fundraiser makes our job so much easier and we thank you for your commitment.

If you have any questions about this event please contact us by leaving a message in the office. We look forward to another successful dinner theatre!

Melanie Moroz & Lynn Measner, Producers

THE MODERATOR WRITES TO TMUC by Jeff Cook

The Rt. Rev. Gary Paterson, Moderator of The United Church of Canada, sent written blessings to TMUC's Affirming Fair, that was held on January 25.

The Affirming Fair was the first event in TMUC's consideration of becoming an Affirming congregation. Affirming congregations publically declare their commitment to inclusion and justice for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. They are committed to working on many justice issues, including racism, accessibility and poverty.

While TMUC voted to welcome same-sex marriages, we have never become an 'official' Affirming congregation. In order to become one, we must be approved by Affirm United, undergo a process of study and create a vision statement and marriage policy that are specific in their wording regarding inclusion of LGBT people.

The Affirming Fair brought human, print and video resources together in one place. Those who attended could visit numerous booths. There were booths from the Rainbow Resource Centre, Rainbow Ministry, as well as ones on the Bible and Homosexuality, justice issues, research, etc... About 50 people attended the Fair.

The planning group had invited the Moderator to attend. Paterson sent his regrets. In his letter he wrote:

"I am sorry that I am not able to be with you in person as you begin the process for becoming an Affirming Ministry. However, I do want to send personal words of recognition and congratulation.

It can be a long journey, this move to becoming ever more inclusive...a time of study, an opportunity for serious self-reflection, a pondering of mission and ministry. In truth, the work you have been doing is a response to the invitation to follow in the Way of Jesus – because any reading of the Gospels reveals a Jesus who reached out to everyone, rich and poor, traditional and rebel, young and old, Jew and Samaritan, proper citizen and on-the-margin types. Through and in your ministry Jesus is continuing to reach out!

I find your way of beginning this process with an "Affirming Fair" to be particularly exciting and apt, as you partner with the broader community, sharing the resources and commitment of the church, and acknowledging and celebrating what is being done in the world around you. Too often the Christian church has been experienced as "the enemy" of LGBT people, or at least a voice of rejection and condemnation. The United Church has a special ministry, I believe, in presenting a different voice, a different theology and understanding of the faith, a community of acceptance and inclusion, a community of love.

So Celebrate well!!! And know that in becoming an Affirming Ministry you are taking another step in your journey of faithful witness and service."

TMUC will have other opportunities to discuss and study the possibility of being officially designated as affirming, with the intention of a congregational meeting being asked to vote on requesting the designation.



NOTES from the CHOIRS

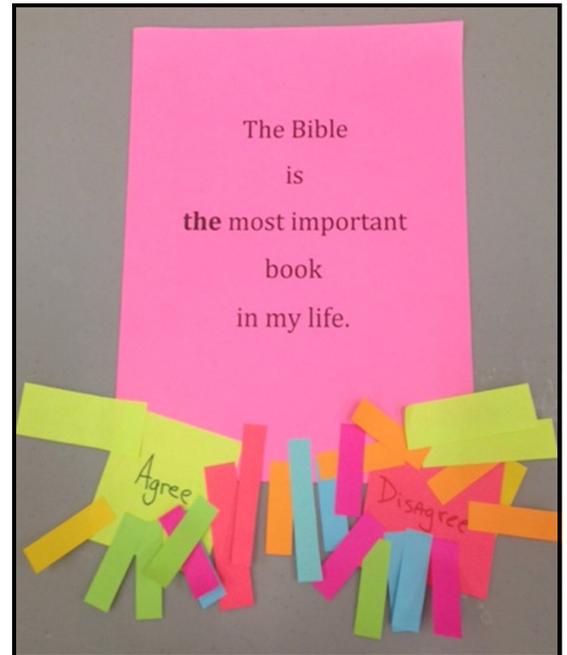
by Dorothy Ross

"NO STONE COULD HOLD HIM" an exciting new Easter Cantata by Lloyd Larson will be presented on Easter Sunday by the Chancel Choir and the Carillon Singers. Christ has been called a Rock in a weary land, the Solid rock, the Rock of our Salvation, and the Cornerstone of our faith, to name just a few such references. These and other similar citations are woven into the fabric of this work for choir and narrators. The choirs are busy rehearsing this cantata and look forward to presenting it for you on Easter Sunday at both services.

The Joyful Noise Singers are also busy with rehearsals and will be singing in church on Palm Sunday.

Also, please note the interesting services planned for the Lenten services at 11:15. They are all based on different forms of music: ie. Celtic, Organ, Gospel and Jazz. Come and see how these services take shape and enjoy the different types of music.

We look forward to seeing you!



Where do you stand?

Time and Talent Auction

Did you know that the 2013 Time and Talent auction raised over \$6000? 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 mark the date of Saturday, April 12 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!

GETTING READY....

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen!” –Luke 24:5b

A significant number of Manitobans adjusted the alarm settings on their clocks when they went to bed on Saturday, February 22, 2014. They did so because they wanted to get up early on Sunday. They wanted to get up early enough to be watching a television screen when the puck dropped to begin the Olympic Games gold-and-silver medal men’s hockey game between Canada and Sweden.

It wasn’t just that people wanted to watch the game. They wanted to watch Canada win the game. That was their hope and their expectation. They wanted to be watching because they thought they already knew how it would turn out.

Some Christians begin Easter Sunday with a sunrise service. They set their clocks and get up early. They want to be there, even though they know the outcome of the story.

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary and the other women who went to Jesus’ tomb in Luke’s gospel, were met by a messenger and told that Jesus had been raised from death. This was not what they had expected. This was new! This was wondrous, amazing, good news! They had prepared spices for a corpse. They now had to prepare for resurrection.

Christians will spend time getting prepared for Easter. We call that preparation time ‘Lent.’ Lent is a period of 40 days (Sundays are not counted in the 40 days) prior to Easter Sunday.

Canadians prepared for the Olympic hockey game by getting out hockey jerseys, Canadian flags, anything red and white they could wear while watching.

Christians’ preparation for Lent is less about what we shall wear than about who we are. Lent is a time for followers of Jesus to intentionally reflect upon actions and attitudes that lead us away from Jesus and actions and attitudes that lead us to Jesus.

We will reflect upon the busy-ness of our lives, about not scheduling time for prayer, time to be quiet with God; we will reflect upon grudges we nurture and resentments we dwell upon; we will reflect upon opportunities to help others, to serve others, to bring some compassion and hope and friendship to others. We will reflect on being people in whom others may catch a glimpse of Christ.

Jesus is no longer in the tomb. He has risen. We prepare for Easter, already knowing the outcome. We doubt that even knowing the outcome prepares us for this wondrous, amazing, good news. Christ is amongst us! Violence and death do not have the last word. The last word is God’s word of resurrecting love. God’s last word is the first word of new life and new beginnings.

This Lent, let us prayerfully prepare for Easter. Let us prepare for a celebration. Let us prepare for a victory over death. Let us get ready to awaken to resurrection.

- Jeff Cook and Carol Fletcher