



October, 2014

Newsletter

Immanuel United Church

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Sabbatical Reflections



It seems appropriate to me that I should stop for a moment, at this time of Thanksgiving, to express my gratitude for the Sabbatical leave that I was granted from April 22 to July 22 of this year. The main focus of my study time was the Narrative Lectionary, which I address in another section of this newsletter. The purpose of my leave, however, was to enjoy a time of Sabbath—of rest and reflection and reorientation toward The Holy and toward the things that really matter. On my first Sunday back leading worship in early August, I described my sabbatical time as one of various homecomings:

... to Portage, where I was born, to Beausejour, where I grew up, to the west coast, near the place where I studied Theology, to the homes of old friends and classmates, to the new homes of my nephews, to Deloraine, where I first was in ministry, to a reunion of the nine female first cousins on the Sanders side, to my Dad's hometown of Manitou, to the beautiful cemetery beside the river in La Riviere where my grandparents are buried for the burial of my aunt and uncle's ashes, to family celebrations of birthdays and other occasions, to the classroom, where I've always loved to learn, to books on biblical interpretation, where, admittedly quite quirkily, I've always felt I belonged, to the Folk Festival, where I've gone most summers for the last forty years, to a tent at Rushing River, where we camped when I was a kid, to my kayak on lakes in the Whiteshell and northwestern Ontario (and my favourite pastime of chasing loons around the lake with my camera), to the softball diamond as a fan and to the golf course to play, to my bicycle, the freedom of which has me almost convinced I'm fifteen again, and to the shores of Lake Erie to be a guest in the home of Great Blue Herons, gulls, Canada geese and egrets.

These homecomings, I noted, accomplished for me the kinds of things I had sought in those three precious months of rest:

Eventually I came to a place at which I recognized myself in the mirror again, and at which I became clearer about that to which I'm called, not so much in terms of the specifics of ministry, but in terms of my call as a human being and a person of faith to a life of gratitude, compassion, courage and hope. (I must stress that this is a place of starting again, not of ultimate arrival.)

I returned from this Sabbath time ready to engage fully in ministry again. On my first Sunday back at worship, I heard enthusiastic reports of the worship services that had taken place in my absence, the Annual Meeting that had followed such a different format this year, the care that had been offered and received, the fun that had been had, the ministry that had continued. Clearly, this is not a congregation that simply *manages* while the ministry staff is on leave. This is a congregation that rises to the occasion, provides strong leadership and continues on in the work to which it is called. I am most grateful to all who took the initiative to ensure that Immanuel's ministry carried on so smoothly during my Sabbatical leave, and to all who supported those in leadership and continued to participate fully in the life and work of the church. Thankful for the leave that I was granted and for the congregation I have returned to serve, I wish you a Thanksgiving that even in some small way is Sabbath for you, and grounds you once again in the things that matter.

Nancy

Telling the Old Stories in a New Way: The Narrative Lectionary at Immanuel

On any given Sunday morning, how does a preacher decide which texts to preach on? For many years, preachers at Immanuel have relied upon the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)—a list of readings first developed by a committee of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. This Lectionary has served Protestant churches very well, and, especially since the advent of resource-sharing on the Internet, it has been possible to work together with preachers all over the continent, and indeed all over the world, to prepare for Sunday worship. However, as a preacher who has made her way through many cycles of the RCL, I've found myself growing tired of preaching on the same passages every three years. I've also been hearing from congregation members that they wish they were more knowledgeable about biblical content, and about the various stories within the Bible. When I read about the Narrative Lectionary, then, I snapped to attention and began to wonder how a choice to follow it might affect Immanuel's worship and education life. And so I spent time on my sabbatical investigating the Narrative Lectionary, and planning an experimental foray into it.

The Narrative Lectionary was developed by the biblical faculty of Luther Seminary, located in St. Paul, Minnesota. It's designed to take congregations through the broad sweep of the Bible each year for four years. This means, for example, that there would be a few stories each year from the Book of Genesis, but one year might tell stories of Jacob, and another might emphasize Joseph (as was the case this year).

Part of what I envisioned for implementing this new lectionary at Immanuel was a stronger connection between our worship life and the life of the Sunday School. What would it look like, I wondered, if the Sunday School explored the same stories we were considering in our worship services? Then the Guiding Elders for Faith Formation and Life Long Learning discovered *The Story Bible*, a relatively new publication that tells the stories in a contemporary style and is quite theologically open. The children have readily jumped into the stories in their Sunday School sessions. We're hopeful that this practice will ground the children more firmly in the biblical story, and that such a grounding will serve as a resource for them all their lives.

And so, since my return from my sabbatical time, we've jumped into the Narrative Lectionary with both feet. Hopefully, the stories are being brought to life in a new way for members of the congregation. If you would like to read ahead and consider the stories, I've included the list of readings from now until Advent on the next page. Also, for those who would like to explore the Narrative Lectionary resources online, I'll supply the link to Luther Seminary's *Working Preacher* website.

If you would like to become more involved in telling the stories in worship, please speak to me, or to our Guiding Elders for Worship, Leslie Donnelly and Lynne Strome.

Nancy

Narrative Lectionary Themes and Readings October 19 to November 23, 2014

*(Please Note: The Lectionary serves as a guideline only.
The preacher reserves the right to alter the specific readings and themes
on any given Sunday!)*

SUNDAY	THEME & READING	SYNOPSIS
October 19 Pentecost +20	David and Bathsheba 2 Samuel 12:1-9	Nathan's parable indicts David after his passions have got the better of him and his self-centred trickery has led to tragedy
October 26 Pentecost +21	Solomon's Wisdom 1 Kings 3:4-9,(10-15)16-28	Solomon prays for wisdom; the famous story of two women arguing over a child
November 2 Pentecost +22	Elisha Heals Naaman 2 Kings 5:1-14	Elisha the prophet heals Naaman, a "foreigner" struck with leprosy
November 9 Pentecost +23	The Prophet Micah Micah 5:2-4,6:6-8	Micah speaks God's promise that a ruler will rise out of Bethlehem, and communicates God's desire for justice, kindness and humble-walking
November 16 Pentecost +24	Swords into Ploughshares Isaiah 36:1-3,13-20;37:1-7; then 2:1-4	Assyria threatens Jerusalem and King Hezekiah despairs. Isaiah says the city will be saved, and speaks God's promises that Jerusalem will be a centre for teaching and nations will beat swords into ploughshares
November 23 Reign of Christ Sunday	Jeremiah's Temple Sermon Jeremiah 1:4-10;7:1-11	Jeremiah is called by God to a tough life of speaking the Word; later, he indicts the "robbers" who have taken over the life of the Temple <i>(Does this sound familiar?)</i>

Information about the Narrative Lectionary is found online at

http://www.workingpreacher.org/narrative_faqs.aspx

I invite you to follow the various links on this page.

Also, I highly recommend your listening to the weekly podcasts found under "I Love to Tell the Story", which are recorded conversations among biblical scholars from Luther Seminary.

The direct link to the podcast page is http://www.workingpreacher.org/narrative_podcast.aspx



Update: The Immanuel “Back Forty”

No doubt Immanuel folks have been wondering where things are with the potential development of the land behind the church building, fondly referred to as “The Back Forty.” Well, as the newsletter goes to press, things are beginning to

happen! On October 7, we received word from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) that the congregation has been awarded a \$10,000 Seed Funding grant! This grant will be put to use to engage the EDGE Real Estate Planning Team from The United Church of Canada to conduct a feasibility study in relation to the land. Once the process has begun, we will be eligible for an additional \$10,000 in the form of a forgivable loan. The agreement form will be filled out immediately and sent back to CMHC, and things will really begin to roll.

Lesley Harrison, who works for EDGE out of the Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference Office, will come soon to meet with representatives of the congregation and conduct an “Intake Assessment,” which will assist us in ensuring that our Mission has been clearly stated and is reflected in any considerations related to the potential development of the land.

Meanwhile, suggestions for the use of the land still are coming in from the surrounding neighbourhood. All of these suggestions are worth considering, and some of them seem particularly appropriate to our congregation and its mission. These suggestions have been sparked by the sign located along Kimberly Avenue and/or the article that appeared in *The Herald* in the late spring.

As we move more and more deeply into this process, we will continue to need your dreams and your prayers. Questions, concerns, ideas, and gestures of moral and spiritual support all are most welcome. We will report to you at each significant juncture, and consult the congregation when larger decisions are to be made, but please remember that you can ask for updates at any time.

A Room with a View



As I am sitting in my office today I am reflecting on when I began my Office Administrator job here at Immanuel in 2001. My children were only 3, 8 and 11. My time seems to be measured a lot as they are growing older and I always remember my mom saying, "Time goes very quickly and someday you will miss today". Of course being a busy mother, just went ok and went on with my day, not giving it much thought. Well, of course, she was right. My daughter is now in grade 12 and that will end all the years of my children being in the school system. She has a part time job and recently got her driver's license. My middle son has now moved out and is learning all the realities of being a homeowner (you mean this tax bill comes every year!) and is training his new lab puppy. My oldest has finished his B.A. Geography at the University of Wpg and is now looking for a full time job after a summer of hiking and camping which is one of his passions in life.

At Immanuel I have experienced many changes over the years as well and can say this journey has been and continues to be very rewarding. I appreciate all the cooperation I receive from people when I have deadlines to meet and just the day to day interaction. It makes my job a lot easier. Looking forward to continuing as your Office Administrator.

Sharon Vandenberg

LIVING OUR FAITH IN THE WORLD



We often get asked about what the United Church is involved in on our behalf both here in Manitoba and North West Ontario and with our Global partners. In the recent MANDATE the whole issue is about what our United Church is doing in the world, so we recommend you borrow a copy of the Mandate to take home and read and then bring it back to share with others.

The regular activities of our Cluster have begun again this fall, and you will have an opportunity to see our work 'in action' in later this fall.

This spring, it was agreed within our Cluster that we send a \$1000 from our Refugee fund to both Hospitality House and The Interfaith Immigration Council towards their work with Refugee folk. There are two letters from these groups, and some information on the table in the AMEN corner.

October, 2014.

Immanuel United Church Congregation,

Within the past 11 months our family has experienced two sudden and very unexpected deaths. Kirk passed away almost a year ago – your concern and support expressed in phone calls, notes, gifts of food, cards and donations was overwhelming and so much appreciated. Three months ago Jamie's partner, Jeff Toomer, passed away at a time when our minister was away on sabbatical and holidays and there was nothing much happening at the Church. When Jamie asked if a Service for Jeff could be held at Immanuel, I wasn't sure what might be possible, if anything. I phoned the Church and on the answering machine was a number to call for 'pastoral emergencies'. I called the number and left a message. I received a return call, explained our dilemma and asked what might be possible. Within a very short time I received a call saying that the Church could be available, the caretaker would set up for the service, the organist would be present and then I received another call offering me books and materials that might help me in preparing the service. Again we were overwhelmed by the help and support of so many.

Jeff's family also expressed their appreciation for the hospitality offered to them at this very difficult time by the Immanuel Congregation.

I am not sure how we can ever thank you, but I want you to know how grateful we are for the compassion and care you offered so sensitively at a very sad time. I also know that these things don't just happen – there are many people involved from the person who receives the first phone call right through until the last chair and table are put away – and all the people in between these two points who do the numerous other tasks that require doing. This is ministry, dear friends, and we are all in this together.

And I want you to know how very much our families appreciated your gracious and sensitive support and help.

Meegwetch - Thank you

Verna McKay



Fowl Supper

**Saturday, October 25, 2014
4:00 to 7:00 pm**

**\$15.00 per person
\$8.00/children 14 years of age and under
Children age 7 and under Free**

**\$40.00/Family
Includes 2 Adults with children (under 14 years of age)**

**Immanuel United Church
755 Golspie Street
669-0220**

Retirees Luncheon

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

Noon – 2pm



These luncheons are an opportunity to visit with one another, share lunch and enjoy some entertainment. There is a sign up sheet in the AMEN corner. A basket is provided at the luncheon for donations to cover expenses of the lunch and an honorarium for the entertainers.

All retirees and wanna-be retirees are invited.

Finance Team Report

The last church year that ended on April 30, 2014 was a tough one financially. Our Operations budget that covers our day-to-day costs of being the church ended the year with a large deficit which was covered by money from the congregational events, shortfall and other funds. With this as a backdrop, it was with some trepidation that your finance team approached the summer months. However, we are pleased to report that as of the end of August 2014, our Operations deficit stood at \$557.77 which is considerably less than the \$8100.00 shortfall we had at the same time last year. Many thanks to those of you who are on PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance), those who gave post dated cheques and those were in church with their financial gifts over the summer. Your generosity and support are most needed and most appreciated.

Thanks also to those who support the work of Immanuel by using our Co-Op number 193228 when making gas purchases. It is our understanding is that the number can also be used at the new Co-Op grocery stores. Although there aren't any of the stores located near the church, if you happen to be shopping in one of them, please keep our number handy.

Your Finance team, Debbie Bilous, Connie Kryschuk and Pat Schulz along with the Guiding Elders Judy Gierys and Bob Kenyon, are responsible for the finances of Immanuel. We count the offering each week (with the assistance of congregational members) and ensures it is deposited in the bank, keep track of individual donations and issue tax receipts, prepare the monthly financial statements, as well as paying the bills and payroll for the church staff. We also do the required government reporting.

Please don't hesitate to talk to any of the members of the Finance team, if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours in faithful stewardship
Pat Schulz
For the Finance Team.

Sunday School September 2014

We have been engaging the stories from the Narrative Lectionary with various congregational members telling the story using various modes.

E.g.

Godly play

Acting out stories ... Have had the children act out the story... We have used giant drawings as props, plus whatever we can find in the Sunday School room

Use of music to tell the story

Nancy has been introducing the background to the story in church, usually before the children go to Sunday school. Timing of this has varied, depending on the appropriateness of the story for children. There have also been times when the story in church was different than the story in Sunday School. The timing of Sunday school has been adjusted accordingly, as has the placement of the story in the service.

Respectfully submitted

Jane Nicholls and Ann Naylor

Guiding Elders for Faith Formation and Lifelong Learning

God's Mission – Our Gifts

United Church of Canada Mission & Service report by Lynne Strome

Many changes are happening throughout the United Church of Canada, which include declining numbers in our congregations and increased needs in our world. It is, therefore, more important than ever we review what the Mission and Service Fund (M & S) does with our generous contributions.

Millions of dollars are needed and used to fulfill our United Church of Canada mandate to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God”. Please consider the following work ,locally, nationally and globally, made possible by our givings in 2014:

This is an itemized list, which is available in detail in the AMEN Corner in the form of MANDATE Magazine and other M & S brochures.

Justice Witness and Reconciliation - \$9.7 million = 32.1% of M & S funds

Developing Leadership - \$10.6 million = 35.1% of M & S funds

Support to Local Ministries - \$6 million = 20% of M & S funds

Conference Leadership - \$3.8 million = 12.8% of M & S funds

General Council Leadership and Government - \$6.7million = 0% of M & S

NB Emergency Relief donations for crisis in our world may be donated as “supra gift”, over and above regular M & S donations. **100% of emergency relief gifts go to the designated cause.** Example: Ebola in Africa

Please use your offering envelope and designate M & S under “other”

On behalf of the United Church of Canada, and the recipients of your generous Mission and Service donations, many thanks.



**" JUST" CHRISTMAS
NOV 30th, 1:30-3:30 PM
Immanuel United Church, 755 Golspie Street**

“Just” Christmas is a cooperative justice project of the 6 United Churches in this northeast corner of Winnipeg. This is our 7th annual event. We alternate location of the event among the churches. We hosted five years ago and now it is again our turn. So-o-o Mark the date on your calendar.

The event provides an opportunity for people to experience an alternative to “Consumerism Christmas Shopping”, by bringing together vendors and organizations who support a more just, sustainable, compassionate and healing economic system.

Our Goals are:

- 1. To plan an event where the United Churches of the area can work together.**
- 2. To raise awareness of alternate shopping opportunities at Christmas.**
- 3. To give individuals and organizations involved in social and economic development a place to sell their products.**

A wide variety of gift items will be available for sale. A complete list of vendors will be available closer to the sale.

You may be saying “It’s Grey Cup game day”. And you are correct! The game is late in the day and the event is well worth attending.

Any questions or if you’d like to be involved in helping, call Muriel at 204-663-2504.

Staff

Nancy Sanders, Minister

Sharon Vandenberg, Office Administrator

Jim Goldrup, Caretaker

Peter Fyne, Organist

J. Douglas McMurtry, Minister Emeritus

William Hickerson, Minister Emeritus

