
Advent Worship at Immanuel 2017

Our Advent season begins with the Pre-Advent Potluck Dinner

*Inspired by the story-telling of the birth of Jesus through the lens of the First People,
by Deb Anderson-Pratt, a graduate of the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre.*

Saturday, December 2nd, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

(Please sign up on the bulletin board inside the sanctuary)

Advent and Christmas Eve Worship Schedule ***“Mary in the World(s)”***

All of our Advent and Christmas Eve services
will include special seasonal music offered by
Eileen Metcalfe, Peter Fyne and the Choir

Sunday, December 3rd at 11:00 a.m.

Advent One Worship

Revelation – Asian feminist perspective

Lighting of the First Advent candle

Sacrament of Communion

Sunday, December 10th at 11:00 a.m.

Advent Two Worship

Reflection – Indigenous perspective

Amnesty International Write for Rights

Lighting of the Second Advent candle

Sunday, December 17th at 11:00 a.m.

Advent Three Worship

Rejoice – Latin American perspective

Lighting of the Third Advent candle

Please bring 1 lemon to share at worship

Sunday, December 24th – Christmas Eve

There will be no 11:00 a.m. service

7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Worship

Lighting of the Christ candle

9:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Worship

Lighting of the Christ candle

Sacrament of Communion

On Being Prepared
Advent Message from Ha Na

In late October, I got a text message from the Rainbow Resource Centre with a request: A counsellor at an elementary school in the North End was looking for someone “who speaks Korean and has knowledge about gender expression/LGBT2SQ+ that would be able to talk to a 10-year-old trans kid.”

The message continued, “The school does have translators but the guidance counsellor wants an LGBT2SQ+ ally or part of the community, for obvious reasons.” I said I would like to help with this. A week later, the counsellor reached me and we exchanged a few emails and phone calls. She explained that L is Korean and one year ago when L transferred to his new school, he began to express himself as a boy, by wearing boy’s clothes only and using the Boy’s Washroom and changing room. All of his friends are boys. The school wants to support L. The counsellor met with L, and introduced the concept of “transgender” because she really wanted to know what L thought of his gender. She became frustrated because L didn’t seem to understand what she was talking about, and concluded that L had a language barrier. As result, she really wanted to find someone who could speak Korean so that she could understand L better and support him; she was eager to know “what he thinks” (about his gender.) My email and phone conversations with the counsellor made me wonder about two things: L’s name didn’t sound Korean. I assumed she pronounced L’s Korean name the English way. Second, I asked myself: Is defining L as either transgender or another category necessary to support him?

Yesterday, one month after the first text message, (Nov 21), I visited the school to meet with the counsellor and L. Before L came, I was given the chance to see his family’s profile on the computer.

The written names were not Korean! In addition, the paper document as well as the computer file reported that the family’s first language was Karen. Until this moment, the counsellor and the entire school thought Karen was Korean, and had been even providing a Korean translator for the family, because L’s parents had very limited English skills and couldn’t read English at all. (In fact, I can say that there’s no young parents in Korea who can’t read English. It’s impossible in highly competitive Korean educational system!) I was amazed! In the language selection section of the electronic file, just under 4 other languages below Karen, there is Korean option.)

As soon as that surprise passed, I met with L. He was a shy kid, yet understood all of what I said and answered my questions. Many times, he would answer by nodding or shaking his head to say yes or no, but did clearly express himself to the questions which made sense to him or interest him. For example, he expressed he’s scared and feels bad when he gets bullied and so on. The siblings who attend the same school do not protect him and when they tell their parents about how L is doing at school, the parents “get mad”. But over all, he understands that the school is on his side, and he feels safe and included at school most of the time, and finds that a gender-neutral bathroom is comfortable (not boy’s or girls.) Through the conversation, I learned that what L really needs is not someone defining him, or helping him to define himself as one category or another, but helps him feel comfortable, safe and understood and cares for his every day situation, as any other kid would need it.

On the way home, I was a bit sad because I could be better prepared to support him, if I had known that we would speak in English (not Korean.) I could have prepared for the meeting with some visual method or activity at a children’s level to share the gender understanding with him that we don’t need to be pink or blue but all of us are in between the two - on the open-ended, beautiful rainbow spectrum. We all show our unique, beautiful colour; it is okay just to be ourselves. My regret came

from the fact that I was only asking L the questions which the school wanted me to ask, to find “What he thinks”, and I had thought I would be able to engage with him easily through our common Korean language. *In fact, L had no language barrier. If there was a barrier, it was our unpreparedness.* At home, I searched out the Karen people on Google, and found out L’s people’s inspiring and interesting history, in which they fought for their independence and against the military dictatorship of the Myanmar government. In the present, 400,000 Karen people are without housing, and 128,000 are living in camps on the Thailand-Burma border. Beginning in 2000, the Karen started resettling in Canada. Most of them are Christians through British colonial era.

I still feel sad, and want to ponder on the meaning of ‘preparedness’ especially as I have been planning Advent services and messages. Advent is the season for us, Christians, to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christ.

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make [God’s] paths straight.” (Matthew 3:3)

I am also grateful. Through the experience of being present for L, I learned that preparing ourselves means being prepared with the right knowledge, seeking understanding for others, God, and ourselves. For example, our study groups in Immanuel have been exploring together to understand the damaging role of the Doctrine of Discovery through the colonization era, Truth and Reconciliation, and the natural environment. I also believe that L, the child I met, is **Mary in the world**, part of an ethnic diaspora as well as a person who teaches us the real meaning of social acceptance around gender and gender expression. In the Bible and in tradition, Mary, the Mother of God, is depicted as an “image” (or “being seen”) more often than as a prophet/disciple who speaks her/his/their truth. I hope that through the season of Advent we may learn together humbly and with love and curiosity what it means to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ, who comes to us in the most vulnerable human form.

*White Gift
November 26th*

This United Church Tradition brings an annual advent opportunity to prepare the way for Christmas and reach out to our community.

Your Donations might include:

money
dry goods
holiday cookies, chocolates/treats
personal hygiene products
baby food
diapers especially larger sizes
gifts for children
(see St Matthews Maryland list)
blankets, mitts, hats, scarves

Your Donations will be shared with:

Winnipeg Harvest
North End Stella Community Ministry
Raymond Flett Memorial UC feast
LITE (inner city employment opportunities)
Agape Table
(inner city kids breakfast/family hot lunch)
Interfaith Immigration (refugee needs)
Canadian Food Grains Bank
(global farming)

Please bring, as you are able, Sunday November 26th to share with our neighbours the abundance and joy in our lives. Lynne Strome is happy to answer any questions. If you can help set up before service and, or, pack up after thanks a lot.

A Room with a View

The office continues to be busy and I always look forward to seeing and hearing from people.

As the holiday season approaches, I look forward to spending time with my family and friends.

Wishing all of you a peaceful, joyous Christmas and best wishes for the New Year!

Sharon Vandenberg, Office Administrator



Many THANKS to Irene Puttenham for suggesting to her friends, Jean and Bill Forrester, that Immanuel could make use of a wheelchair. And many, many thanks to them for donating it to us! It replaces one that has seen better days and this one is in terrific shape! Thanks to all!

Finance Team Report

Here is an update of our financial picture as of October 31, 2017 compared to the same time last year.

| | October 2016 | October 2017 | Difference |
|----------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| Income | \$52,907.86 | \$49,537.80 | Down \$3370.06 |
| Expenses | \$57,426.42 | \$43,766.56 | Down \$13,659.56 |
| Deficit | -\$4518.56 | +\$5770.94 | Down \$10,289.50 |

Our overall income is down from the same time last year. Our envelope givings are down \$4239.71 but this has been partially offset by an increase in our Rental income and our open givings. Our expenses are also down which has greatly contributed to our positive financial picture. Your donations to the Mission and Service fund are also up slightly with a total of \$10,814.56 plus an additional \$730.00 in designated gifts for disaster relief being sent to the national church for their work across Canada and the world. Thank you to everyone for their gifts.

The Fowl Supper was very successful again this year and has raised over \$4500 to date. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this success.

Giving Envelopes will be distributed in November. Please pick up yours. Please contact a member of the Finance Team if you want envelopes or if there is a problem with your envelopes. Remember, you don't need official envelopes to make a donation. A plain envelope with your name and or envelope number along with clear direction as to where you want to designate your gift is all that is required. There are blank envelopes in the Amen Corner, if you ever need one.

Income Tax Receipts for 2017 will be issued in January 2018. If you want to increase the amount of your 2017 Charitable Tax Deduction, please ensure your donations are received prior to December 31, 2017. Our last bank deposit of 2017 will be done after our worship service on December 31, 2017.

Yours in Faithful Stewardship

Your Finance Team: Pat Schulz, Connie Kryschuk, Debbie Bilous

**WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS**

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



#WRITEFORRIGHTS ON DECEMBER 10

Every year around December 10, Amnesty supporters send letters on behalf of people they've never met. Our messages help convince government officials to release people imprisoned for expressing their opinion, stop the use of torture, and end other human rights abuses. Letter writing has always been at the heart of Amnesty International's work, and 54 years of activism shows us that words have power. Last year we sent over 4.6 million messages from 200 countries -- and changed lives!

Immanuel United Church has a long history of participating in the Annual Write for Rights letter writing campaign. This year December 10th International Human Rights day coincides with the 2nd Sunday in Advent. Please plan to stay after worship on December 10, 2017 as we will have the 2017 Write for Rights Action information and writing materials available. WRITE A LETTER. CHANGE A LIFE

If you have any questions or need more information please contact Karen Turk at 2046692768 or www.writeathon.ca or www.amnesty.ca

The Golspie Club

The Golspie Club Carpet Bowlers has disbanded for lack of members. This was a long standing Social Club that started out with crafts, games and carpet bowling. Those who were members always had a fun afternoon ending with tea, dainties and conversation.

Thank you to Sharon and Nancy, Bob Kenyon and others who helped set up and to the choir members who put away for us.

Marlene McNabb

LIVING OUR FAITH IN THE WORLD CLUSTER

We had our first gathering of the Cluster for this calendar year on September 26th. Beginning with a shared meal, we followed this time of fellowship by welcoming Ha Na to our time together. We then proceeded with a report from each of the Cluster Members on their particular portion of our work together.

Following the general part of the reports we discussed an important part of our work, that of connection with our First Nations brothers and sisters. With NorthEnd Stella's move to Selkirk Avenue, we have found it difficult to find a way to renew our covenant with the folk of NECM.

It was decided to form a small group to discuss some ways that we can learn more as a congregation and become more actively involved.

A small group made up of Lorraine Kakegamic, Norah McMurtry, Kerry LaRocque, Dianne Tucker (unable to attend this first meeting), and Ruth Campbell met together September 29th. We had several ideas about some Educational Events which, after our next planning meeting we will announce.

I find it such a privilege to work with each of the members of this Cluster. They are a committed and hardworking group of wonderful people. So, many thanks to you all.

Ruth Campbell Guiding Elder.

The definition of GUIDING ELDER at Immanuel United Church;

Shall have responsibility for supporting, encouraging and challenging the participants in their respective Mission Clusters, as well as communicating and consulting with those participants and facilitating ongoing theological reflection on the church's mission.

Guiding Elders for Discernment of Gifts, Margaret Smith and Cindy Smyth have put out the call for the following openings for Guiding Elders;

Stewardship

LifeLong Learning and Faith Formation

Living Our Faith in the World

Ministry and Personnel

There is great appreciation for those folks who have taken time to discern their own gifts and the gifts they see in others. There has been a wonderful response to the call and we have now been able to recommend persons for the following clusters: Stewardship, Living our Faith in the World and most of the need within Ministry and Personnel and Life Long Learning and Faith Formation. We have a deep appreciation for those persons who have agreed to share their gifts with all of us. We are still asking persons to continue discerning about one more person to be considered within the Ministry and Personnel and a co-Guiding Elder in Life Long Learning and Faith Formation.

Blessings from Margaret and Cindy

AFFIRM TALKS

November 29th, 7-9, 2017 @ Transcona United Church, 209 Yale Ave, W.

An Educational opportunity, for anyone with questions or are seeking information in overcoming marginalization in our community focusing on LGBTQ persons. The evening features:

*David Matas, a distinguished immigration, refugee and international human rights lawyer based in Winnipeg. He is the author of 11 books addressed to the public on legal matters.

*Levi Foy from Sunshine House Inc, whose primary focus is harm reduction of homeless individuals.

*Lauren Checkly from the Rainbow Resource Centre.

*Jackie Swirsky from BLINK, a play group for gender-creative and trans kids under 12.

This is a free event and all are Welcome!

Immanuel's Story

Immanuel became an Affirming Congregation in 2006.

Many of us will remember the process, but some of you may have come to Immanuel since that time. After an approximate two year period of study, discussion, new learning, prayer and commitment led by an Immanuel Committee, we voted to become an Affirming Community.

My recollection of our commitment is that we would welcome LGBTQ as partners in faith and friends on our Christian journey and provide for them as much as possible, a safe place to worship and live in community.

We attempt to live out our commitment. Each year a small but committed group of people march in the Pride Parade. Two years ago an elderly man with limited vision asked us who we were. We read him our banner and he said, "A church, eh. Thanks." Our leadership and people in the community have offered support to folks in the LGBTQ community. And now a new opportunity is available.

The Affirming Ministries in Winnipeg, Presbytery have been meeting together over the past year. This group under the leadership of Stephanie Whyte from Transcona, are organizing this workshop. This will be the first of yearly or bi-yearly events. Immanuel has committed to one in the future.

HaNa, first from Meadowood and now Immanuel, and I have been attending these meetings. We encourage you to come to this event and to pass the word to people who may be interested.

Respectfully Submitted, Muriel Kenyon



JIGG UNITED NEWS

John Black+Immanuel+Grey St +Gordon King Memorial

JIGG United has met to share Advent and Christmas planning in order to give some flexibility to our collective members. Each church had members attend at JUST Christmas and celebrated the fellowship we enjoyed.

Here is the outlay of special plans for the coming weeks:

Sat Dec 2 – John Black Christmas Tea 10-3

Wed Dec 6 John Black, Blue Christmas – 7 pm

Sun Dec 17 – Jolly Holly Christmas lunch Gordon King following worship, all welcome, no admission. Please let Betty know numbers attending by Dec 11

Sun Dec 17 – Grey St Blue Christmas 7 pm.

Sun Dec 24

John Black – 10:30 am 5:30 pm

Gordon King- 10:00 am 7:00 pm

Grey St – 10:30 am 7:00 pm

Immanuel United - 7:00 pm and 9:00 pm

Mon Dec 25 no services at any of the churches

Christmas Blessings to one and all

STAFF

Ha Na Park, Minister
Sharon Vandenberg, Office Administrator
Jim Goldrup, Caretaker
Eileen Metcalfe, Choir Director
Peter Fyne, Organist
William Hickerson, Minister Emeritus