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## Advent Worship at Immanuel 2020

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Immanuel, God-With-Us

In early November, eight members of our church gathered on Zoom to plan our 2020 Advent season. As the Code Red stage of the pandemic struck us, we moved our original plan to meet at church, in person, to be on-line. At the end of our deep conversation and planning, one of us shared, “Immanuel – God with us. Even though we are separated, we are still Immanuel. God is with us. That’s what gives us hope, as I am listening to everybody talking...” Indeed, she captured our sharing and reflections during the meeting so beautifully well. We shared our desire for being “rooted in the tradition of hope” during Advent in this unprecedented time. We asked, together, “Where do we meet generosity in the midst of chaos?”. It was clearly expressed that these are troubling times, and people look for hope, comfort, familiarity and tradition to combat the isolation we are living in.

“Staying in the familiar in our tradition and yet with courage to have hope, peace, joy and love”... this can be the star-like preparation illuminating Advent, as we await the good news of the birth of Christ. One of us added, “When the little bird landed on my hand so gently and softly, telling me that



everything would be ok, that was Christmas for me.”

“Tradition is important to me. I use Advent candles at home. This year will be different for me, and for us, having Christmas with our small bubbles.”

“How will we reach out to people in times like this? How can we get in touch with each other, connected between Sundays, not just on Advent Sundays? Tradition seems to be the way to go this year... To have something comforting when everything else is in turmoil.”

“What would you like to see on Christmas Eve, other than lighting candles?”

At this time, due to the critical situation related to Covid-19 in our region, our worship plans, so far, include a **Pre-Advent Zoom Gathering**, (Saturday, 6-7 pm, Nov 28<sup>th</sup>) four Advent Sunday services and a **Christmas Eve service on zoom** (7 pm). However, **we do hope that we can do something to connect one another in spirit and prayers in the physical space of our beloved sanctuary on Christmas Eve day, through Walking the Labyrinth of Hope (Please see the Program information, below)**. One of us shared, “To me, our sanctuary is an inspiring place to go to and to be; for example, when light from the skylights illumines the beauty.” Thanks to such generous leaders in our midst, our Advent Banners are already up. Advent Wreath candles are decorated and set up on the communion table. **It will be wonderful to light them all on Christmas Eve day, while Peter plays Advent and Christmas Hymns, like my favourite, O Come, O Come Emmanuel. Immanuel households, who have made an appointment, can quietly take their turn and walk the labyrinth of the journey of Advent to Christmas, while using all safety protocols.**

Friends of Immanuel, God is with us. Even though we are separated, we are still Immanuel.

Concluding this letter, I hope to share four questions with you which our Advent planning team have asked four reflectors to answer, as the descriptions of hope, peace, joy and love, in “just three lines” before they light the Advent candle(s) each week during zoom services:

**Where did you find hope in the past during difficult times and where do you find hope now?**

**Where did you find peace in the past during difficult times and where do you find peace now?**

**Where did you find joy in the past during difficult times and where do you find joy now?**

**Where did you find love in the past during difficult times and where do you find love now?**

### **The Program of Advent gatherings and services**

#### **Pre Advent Dinner (Snack) on Zoom**

**On SATURDAY NOVEMBER 28<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 7 pm**, to start off the Advent season, we are having a Zoom Pre Advent Dinner, without the dinner. Please bring a drink and a snack to our zoom gathering where each household will each make an Advent Log with 5 tea lights and have a short worship. Glen Smyth will be making up kits with wood with pre drilled holes for the 5 tea lights (see picture ). **Deadline to order an advent log is Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>, either email the church or call the office.** One will be delivered to you. (Option: there are battery tea lights for you to buy if safety is a concern.) We encourage you to gather items to decorate your log during the zoom gathering with things like crayons, paints, greenery and flowers, fabric, or anything else you can think of. If you already have an advent wreath, please join us for conversation and a snack. Our hope is for you and your family to share in worship each week lighting your advent log. If you would like to participate in the zoom



pre advent dinner, call the church office and leave your name. This helps us organize the zoom call and send you a link. If you have questions please call Leslie Donnelly @204-669-0078.

1 <sup>st</sup> Advent	<b>Hope</b>	Worship package & Zoom Mark 13:24-37	Sunday, 11 am, Nov 29 <sup>th</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Advent	<b>Peace</b>	Worship package & Zoom Isaiah 40:1-11	Sunday, 11 am, Dec 6 <sup>th</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Advent	<b>Joy</b>	Worship package & Zoom Isaiah 40:1-11	Sunday, 11 am, Dec 13 <sup>th</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup> Advent	<b>Love</b>	Worship package & Zoom 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Sunday, 11 am, Dec 20 <sup>th</sup>

### Christmas Eve Day:

- 1pm – 4 pm:**                    **Walking the Labyrinth of Hope** (Five standing murals on Mary's journey)
- Location: in our church sanctuary
  - **Advance registration** required for admission (through staggered entry). Please contact Sharon Vandenberg in the office.
  - **Immanuel households, who have made an appointment, can quietly take their turn and walk the labyrinth of the journey of Advent to Christmas, while using all safety protocols.**
  - Murals by our artists, Luba Olesky, Jennifer Antymis, Eileen Metcalfe

**7 pm service:**                    Worship package & zoom  
**Please feel free to share the zoom link and join us with your friends, families and relatives from across Canada and beyond.**

And this.

From the pews:

Ha Na, the quote I read at the Advent planning meeting was by Democratic Congressman John Lewis, an Ordained Baptist minister and long time activist for racial justice who died a few months ago. He became active in the civil rights movement as a teenager and was arrested forty times between 1960 and 1966. I find hope in the work and witness of people like John Lewis. They help me find hope when I feel weary or discouraged. I find myself thinking that if folks like John Lewis could do the work they did and keep on getting up in the morning filled with determination and courage, I can face what I need to face. "I got arrested 40 times during the '60s," Lewis reminded the audience Saturday, speaking from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. "Beaten and left bloody and unconscious. But I'm not tired. I'm not weary. I'm not prepared to sit down and give up. I am ready to fight and continue to fight, and you must fight."

Shalom, Ha Na

### **A Room with a View**

This year continues to bring its challenges! I have been back to work since September. Please feel free to call the church office (will be listening to messages daily) or email me if you need anything.

Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas as we continue to journey through this pandemic.



Sharon Vandenberg, Office Administrator

### **Ministry and Personnel Committee**

The Ministry and Personnel Committee has continued to meet monthly (via Zoom) during the pandemic, and committee members have maintained contact with members of staff. M and P acts as a liaison between the staff and congregation and works to build positive and trusting relationships. Congregational members who have concerns regarding staff should contact a member of M and P.

Concerns are heard and every effort is made to find a resolution. Praise is also welcome.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee consists of  
Jennifer Antymis, Sharon Doerksen, Anne Duncan and Dianne Tucker

## **Mission & Service**

The three goals of Mission & Service are to help transform and save lives, inspire meaning and purpose, and to build a better world.

Mission & Service helps people in need locally by supporting homeless shelters, food banks, soup kitchens and refugee programs. Globally our contributions help people access clean water, food and medical care.

Mission & Service inspires people to live with meaning and purpose with opportunities to grow spiritually in all kinds of amazing ways. Locally, Mission & Service supports theological schools, education/retreat centres, and events that promote spiritual development and personal reflection. Globally Mission & Service supports theological schools and church organizations.

When we help transform and save lives and inspire people to live with meaning and purpose, we build a better world!

Together with Mission & Service we can join together to share what we can with people and places that need it most.

I invite you all to consider Mission & Service giving as a way of supporting people in need and programs that transform lives. I also invite you all to review the details of where the money goes and why giving is crucial at [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) You can also watch for the ever changing opportunities to give to Emergency Response funds.

Thank You to all who are already making gifts to Mission & Service a regular part of giving!

Making a commitment to both Immanuel and Mission & Service is part of our Stewardship journey.

Respectfully, Judy Gierys, Mission & Service Enthusiast

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## **Living our Faith in the World Cluster**

Harvest is doing very well with a new format that is working very efficiently. Our goal in this new format is to protect both our Clients and our Workers.

Amnesty International plans are being worked out so that we can have some response from our congregation for some of the many folk in our world that are incarcerated unjustly. Karen Turk and I have been talking about possibilities.

Our Cluster is involved in a sandwich making project with St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry. Apparently there are about 120 people showing up each day asking for food. We have offered to help on the fourth Thursday of each month to supply sandwiches. Anyone interested in helping with this please contact Muriel Kenyon or Ruth.

We are missing meeting in person! A big thank you to everyone involved in these programs.

*Ruth Campbell*

**Immanuel Food Bank Update**



At present we are operating with 2 separate client lists. We are helping a total of 75 adults and children. Continue to save egg cartons. We can use food staples such as pasta, pasta sauce, canned protein meat/fish, canned fruit and vegetables as well as feminine hygiene products.

Thanks to everyone for their donations.

**River Elm Breakfast Program**

I was talking with Carissa Campbell, the co-ordinator of the River Elm Breakfast Program in September to see how things were going at the school. Last year, the school population was close to 300 students and this year she said enrollment was down by approximately 40 students.

Pre covid-19, students sat at 4 large picnic style tables that were set up in the hallway. These tables were capable of seating 64 students. Since this arrangement does not allow for social distancing, breakfasts are now served in the classrooms.

Volunteers are not allowed in the school this year to help prepare and serve the food. Last year, an average of 200 breakfasts were served per week, but this year that number has more than tripled. The second week of September, 617 breakfasts were consumed.

The children get a fruit bar or cereal, milk and a piece of fresh fruit.

Carissa is extremely grateful for the financial support the school receives. Immanuel's commitment is \$100.00 per month and we are paid up to the end of December. We currently have \$541.00 in the fund and your ongoing support will allow us to continue with our financial commitment.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Kryschuk

## **"JUST" CHRISTMAS**

The United Church congregations in the Northeast corner of Winnipeg, who have for the past twelve years, hosted the event "Just" Christmas, regrets to cancel the event planned for Nov 29th this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It featured Vendors who promoted and fundraised for non-profit local and global projects. Below is information regarding four of the projects. We would encourage you check out their information and products.

### **MARG'S HONEY INC and JOANNE'S CANDLES**

Yes, we the Smith's have both HONEY and CANDLES available just in time for Christmas! Go to our website: <https://www.margshoney.com> and click the word PRODUCTS. This will give you prices and you can see what the products look like. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and you can download the candle order page to print off the order. How to contact us:

MARG: 204-794-9763 or email [margshoney@gmail.com](mailto:margshoney@gmail.com)

JOANNE: 204-612-9700 or email [smithsternom@live.com](mailto:smithsternom@live.com)

SUPPORTING both L.I.T.E. and HARVEST

### **THE CUTTING EDGE**

The Cutting Edge is a social Enterprise that gives Refugee and Immigrant women the opportunity to learn valuable job skills in a comfortable, cultural appropriate setting, interact with other people to avoid isolation and enhance their confidence as newcomers to Winnipeg.

The profits benefit the women and ensures the program continues. To check out their merchandise (including face masks, toques, placemats, aprons etc.), see their website at:

<https://thecuttingedgesigns.ca/our-products/>

BULK ORDERS CAN BE PLACED FOR FACE MASKS

### **GRANDS 'N MORE**

Grands 'N More is a part of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign to support Grandmother's in Africa as they care for millions of children orphaned by Aids. They sell bags, bibs, and balloon balls, pendants and more. See their products on their website: <https://grands-n-more-winnipeg.square.site/>

### **L.I.T.E. ( LOCAL INVESTMENT TOWARD EMPLOYMENT)**

L.I.T.E. works with partners to shatter the barriers preventing individuals from gaining skills, connections, and experience needed to become employed. Among plans for fund raising are:

COOKBOOKS-featuring familiar Winnipeg faces sharing recipes and memories.

L.I.T.E. Pancake Breakfast-gone Virtual

Watch for further developments and opportunities at website: <https://www.shop.lite.mb.ca>

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## **Write for Rights 2020**

Every year around International Human Rights Day on December 10, hundreds of thousands of people around the world send a letter or e-mail on behalf of someone they've never met.

Our messages help convince government officials to release people imprisoned for expressing their opinion (called "prisoners of conscience" by Amnesty), stop the use of torture, commute death sentences and end other human rights abuses

Our letters do make a difference.

**Due to COVID we will change the format this year.**

**We will plan to have a virtual Write for Rights event on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

**We will provide more information on this year's cases and how the new format will work over the next few weeks. Please watch your bulletins.**





## NARGES MOHAMMADI HAS **FINALLY** BEEN RELEASED FROM PRISON IN IRAN



**Wonderful news – Iranian women human rights defender Narges Mohammadi has been released after eight and a half years in prison!**

Narges was facing a 16-year sentence for her peaceful activism, most notably in support of women's rights and gender equality, and against the death penalty. Her health had been declining since June, and she had demonstrated some COVID-19 symptoms, but was denied adequate health care.

Thanks to support from you and others around the world, including during Amnesty's Write for Rights 2016 campaign, Narges has finally been released, reunited with her family, and can now access the medical treatment she needs.

**Now is the time to re-double our efforts on behalf of other women human rights defenders who remain in prison in Iran. Please take action in support of Nasrin Sotoudeh, Yasaman Aryani, and Atena Daemi.**

Thank you so much for your generous support and for speaking out in solidarity with unjustly imprisoned human rights defenders like Narges.

In solidarity,

Jackie Hansen  
Gender Rights Campaigner  
Amnesty International Canada

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### **More about Narges:**

Narges Mohammadi is an Iranian women human rights defender who campaigns for women's rights and against the death penalty. Narges has suffered years of harassment by authorities, punctuated by intermittent periods in detention, which have inflicted a devastating toll on Narges' health and family.

Most recently, in May 2015, she was arrested and taken to Tehran's notorious Evin prison. The next year, the Iranian government sentenced Narges to 16 years in prison after an unfair trial.

Narges has consistently received degrading and inhumane treatment from prison officials. Suffering from a blood clot in her lungs and a neurological disorder, she requires specialized medical care that cannot be provided in prison. Earlier this year, she started showing COVID-19 symptoms, adding further urgency to the call for her release.

Authorities have consistently used access to her children as a tool to punish her, denying her telephone contact. She undertook a hunger strike to protest the authority's refusal to let her speak with her children, which triggered global outrage and thousands of people, including more than 100,000 Iranians, posted messages in solidarity through a Twitter campaign. After 20 days and extensive global campaigning, Narges was able to speak with her children.

This cruel punishment for her "crimes" reflects the Iranian authorities' recently intensified repression of women's rights activists in the country.

On Thursday, October 8, Narges was finally released from prison.

Thank you for supporting the call for her freedom, and for continuing to speak out in solidarity with other women human rights defenders who remain in prison, like **Nasrin Sotoudeh, Yasaman Aryani, and Atena Daemi.**

## Finance Report

### Comparison to October 31, 2019

	October 2019	October 2020	Difference
Income	\$47,410.32	\$54,835.83	Up \$7425.51
Expenses	\$57,422.40	\$48,524.56	Down \$8894.84
Deficit	-\$10,012.08	+\$6311.27	Down \$16,323.35

Our operational income is up compared to the same time last year. Our local givings are up \$2002.59. However our rental income is down \$2650.00. We have also received \$7817 in federal wage subsidy which has helped our bottom line.

Our operational expenses are down \$8897.84 compared to last year at this time. Other than pastoral ministry and clusters, the expenses are down in all areas. The biggest drop is in support staff expenses.

Last year at this time we were looking at a deficit of over \$10,000. This year we have a surplus of \$6000.00. This is good news.

Our M&S givings are down slightly but givings to Special Relief are up:

	October 2019	October 2020	Difference
M&S	\$9329.80	\$9083.80	Down \$246.00
Special Relief	\$120.00	\$820.00	Up \$700.00
Total	\$9449.80	\$9903.80	Up \$454.00

We are grateful for the gifts of the people of Immanuel towards the local operations of the congregation. We also offer a thank you to everyone who supports the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church.

When you designate an offering under the "Other" section on your envelope, please try to be as specific as possible about where you want the donation to be allocated. Sometimes the designation can be unclear. Just to confirm: Sharing Christmas is to be used for the annual advent appeal; Sharing Basket will be kept at Immanuel for use by our Winnipeg Harvest team; Winnipeg Harvest designations will be sent to Winnipeg Harvest for their use.

Just a reminder that Immanuel's Red River Co-Op number is 193228 and can be used at any Red River Co-Op gas bar or grocery store.

The offering envelopes are ready for pick up.

Sharon is in the office Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. If you can't make it to the church during one of these times, please call Connie (204-669-3129) to arrange an alternative pick up time.

Should you require envelopes or have any questions regarding your offerings or the financial reports, they can be directed to a member of your finance team of Pat Schulz and Connie Kryschuk .

*Yours in Faithful Stewardship   Your Finance Team: Pat Schulz, Connie Kryschuk*

## Sharing Christmas 2020



The Spirit of Christmas is needed more than ever this year. Living Our Faith in the World cluster invites you to help make this happen **by November 29** in the following ways:

- Designate a special gift to Sharing Christmas **via your offering**, which will be divided among:
  - Agape Table (inner city meals service),
  - LITE (inner city employment),
  - Manitoba Interfaith and Immigration (refugee support),
  - One Just City (support for inner city ministries) and
  - Winnipeg Harvest (also appreciates non perishable food items)
- Donate **new, unwrapped** gifts for the St Matthews Maryland Christmas Store:
  - toys, games, stuffed animals, books, craft supplies for children and teens
  - **new** winter wear, socks and underwear for people of **all ages**
  - chocolate, candies, jewellery, tooth brushes, cookies
  - wrapping paper, tissue, gift bags, tape, tags

Contact Lynne Strome for pick up or questions about your Sharing Christmas donations.

[lynne.strome@gmail.com](mailto:lynne.strome@gmail.com) 204-667-0828.



AGAPE TABLE





| Loving the Underloved  
| Working Towards Reconciliation  
| Growing Individual's Capacity  
| Building Inclusive Communities

# HEART BEAT

YOUR LOVE CHANGING LIVES



## YOUR Support helped Janine CHANGE HER LIFE!

Janine is a 37-year-old Indigenous mother, sister and daughter who accessed a 1JustCity site that your donations make possible.

Janine's first contact with us was when she was actively using drugs and experiencing homelessness. She came to us for a hygiene care kit and a warm meal. She was glad to have also found a safe place to think, be and talk to someone. She talked about experiencing profound abuse, about not feeling like she was enough. Your gift meant that our staff were there to believe in Janine, your gift meant people loved her where she was at and helped her realise she was worth fighting for.  
(continued inside)

## WHAT'S INSIDE

### JANINE'S STORY

Hear more about Janine's journey. (Pg. 1-2)

### YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We couldn't share our 2019 Annual Report in person; Read what you helped us do in 2019. (Pg. 3)

### YOU'RE THE HEARTBEAT

Your generosity is needed now and tomorrow! (Pg. 3-4)

### YOUR GIFT YOUR IMPACT

Pick a gift that your heart says is the impact you want on the community. (Pg. 4)



@1justcity



1JustCity



@1justcity





## YOUR Support helped Janine CHANGE HER LIFE! (con.)

It wasn't long before that sanctuary you offered Janine through 1JustCity helped her feel **empowered and supported to heal**. Janine entered a treatment program for her addictions. Your belief in people like Janine gave her this chance!

She started taking training to grow her resume. She's found safe housing. The stability she has in sobriety, thanks to the supportive community you've created, means she'd started to get visits with her children just before the pandemic hit. During COVID 19 those were taken away, and though she understood it was for everyone's safety, it broke her heart to not see them. She came by regularly to smudge and sit with a team member and talk about those feelings. **It helped to keep her sober through the hardship of losing the connection to her kids again.**

Janine finds belonging and identity in our Indigenous Cultural Programming by attending weekly sharing circles and beading and sewing programs. **That program is only available because of your generosity and it is helping Janine find her inner strength, grow into her power and feel pride in her identity.** She speaks with more confidence, smiles with more joy and walks with pride. She is currently working with Child and Family Services towards reunification with her children.

**You are a part of Janine's healing journey, and the healing of so many community members at 1JustCity like Janine. People who need someone who believes in them enough to try - that someone is you!**

Thank you for the donations that make life changing connections possible at our drop-ins!

## COMING UP:

1JUSTCITY  
**BEAT  
THE  
COLD**  
WINTER TRIATHLON  
**2021  
THE FORKS**



