



November, 2025 Newsletter
Immanuel United Church
755 Golspie Street
Wpg MB R2K 2V4
Phone #: 204-669-0220

Minister's Message

Reason for the Season – Rev Oluwajimi Dairo

As we enter the season of Advent, we are reminded again of the simple but powerful truth behind Christmas. It could have been an ordinary day, but the birth of Jesus in a small manger changed the whole story of the world. His birth is the real reason for the season.

Today, many people prefer to say, “*Happy Holidays.*” When someone says that to me, I gently reply, “*Merry Christmas.*” Sometimes I even ask, “What is this holiday really about? Why do we put Santa figures in our homes? What story are we celebrating?” Even when people try to push aside the story of Jesus or downplay it, the love of God as expressed in Jesus is too great to be hidden.

I hope we continue to enjoy our Christmas traditions—lighting candles, singing carols, sharing gifts, telling Christmas stories, and gathering as a community. These are small but beautiful reminders of God’s gift of love among us.

As we welcome a new Christian year, I wish you a Merry Christmas in advance. We know that the world around us is unsettled—snowless November, conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, and painful violence in Nigeria and many other places. Still, we pray that the Prince of Peace will bring healing and peace to our world.

This Advent is also special for Immanuel and John Black as we enter a season of “New Life” together. I believe our collaboration is part of God’s plan and will serve God’s purpose. When we bring our gifts, our experience, and our resources together, the result can only be stronger. We truly are better together, and we look forward to what God will do in the days ahead.

We may not have all the answers, and the road may not always be clear, but let’s place our hands in the hand of God, **one step at a time**, discerning the will of the One who says, “*I know the plans I have for you... plans to give you a future with hope.*”

Blessed Advent to you all.

A Room with a View

It's been a busy start since September!
We welcomed Rev. Oluwajimi Dairo
to Immanuel and John Black.

Please feel free to call the church office or email me if you need anything.
I am in the office Tuesday to Thursday mornings.
Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas!

Sharon Vandenberg, Office Administrator

Advent and Christmas 2025 **Theme: "Seeking New Life"**

November 30 First Advent at John Black ~ Hope ~ Communion 10:45am

December 7 Second Advent at Immanuel ~ Peace ~ Amnesty Letter Writing 10:45am

December 14 Third Advent at John Black ~ Joy ~ White Gift Sunday 10:45am

December 14 Blue Christmas Service at John Black 1:30pm

December 21 Fourth Advent at Immanuel ~ Love ~ Round Table discussion (Seeking New Life as Kindred Spirits of John Black and Immanuel) After worship, snacks and a fun Christmas trivia game 10:45am

Immanuel's Christmas Eve Service, December 24 4pm

John Black's Christmas Eve Service, December 24 6pm

December 28 ~ Invitation to Birds Hill for Cookies and Carols Worship and Transcona Memorial for Worship around the breakfast table. Both services begin at 10am.

January 4 ~ Immanuel ~ Communion 10:45am



A WORD FROM YOUR KINDRED SPIRITS WORSHIP TEAM

Leslie Donnelly, Edith Treller, Lynne Strome, Peggy Aitchison, Oluwajimi Dairo

Advent begins November 30 this year at John Black and together we will be “Seeking New Life” which is our Advent theme. On this journey we welcome our new minister, Rev Oluwajimi Dairo, who will guide us forward with hope over new terrain.

Part of this newness is a change in our choir leadership since our beloved Eileen Metcalfe has retired. We cannot possibly express well enough our deep gratitude for her years of selfless service to the worship team the choir, and congregation. Eileen, your many gifts as music director will be greatly missed.

While the new music director search team is busy finding a replacement, we are blessed that Debbie Crump will serve as liaison to Michael Dunbar who has generously agreed to direct the music program over the next weeks. Our sincere thanks and great relief that the music that binds us all together will continue as we “Seek New Life”.



A New Candle for Advent

November 30th is the first Sunday of Advent and you will see a new candle with the Christ and Rainbow candles. The seven TBJIGGN churches of our north east Winnipeg corner sought and found a tangible way of connecting through this holy season.

Each church representatives brought various candle remnants from our churches and homes to John Black where we melted them all together. Seven vessels were donated and etched TBJIGGN into which was poured the communal wax. Et voila!

Each week as we gaze upon these symbolic candles and think of Christ, and of being affirming people we can include our TBJIGGN friends in prayer.

As we did last year, there will be two Christmas Eve services: Immanuel at 4 pm, John Black at 6 pm. Please refer to the weekly announcements for timely information.



IMMANUEL FOOD BANK

We serve approximately 40 households, split between two Mondays each month. This is made up of about 100 clients (60% adults, 40% children). The children range in age from babies to age 18).

Volunteers unload and sort out the groceries (received in bulk) so we are ready for each household to pick up their groceries between 10am and 12noon.

Harvest Manitoba delivers for the number of clients for that day. Thanks to the congregation for donations that we use to supplement what has been delivered.

River Elm Breakfast Program/Harvest Crossover

Currently, River Elm School has 226 students. Approximately, 90 children participate in the government sponsored breakfast program every morning and enjoy a hearty and healthy meal. Milk and a variety of fruits are served every day along with the main course. Main courses are rotated and include bacon and eggs, wraps, waffles, pancakes, French toast, grilled cheese sandwiches and cereals. Extra sides are yogurt, veggies and dip, humus and muffins, just to name a few.

If children are having breakfast at school, what happens on the weekends? That's a question asked and answered by Harvest Manitoba. On Fridays, they deliver Breakfast Bags to the school for every child. The picture is of a typical bag containing milk, a muffin, an apple, cheese, cheddar bites, yogurt, carrots, grapes, a granola bar and a card.



On behalf of Leslie Donnelly, Marlene McNabb, Cathy & Rich Sokolowski,
Connie Kryschuk

WRITE FOR RIGHTS

This Amnesty Letter Writing Campaign for 2025 will be held after Worship on December 7th at Immanuel. We hope you will be able to participate.

SHARING CHRISTMAS

Sharing Christmas happened this year on Sunday, November 23rd. Your gifts of money will be shared by 1 Just City, Agape Table, LITE, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre and Interfaith Immigration.

Thank you for your giving and kindness.



NEIGHBOURHOOD COFFEE TIME

On Wednesday Mornings from 10-12 a small group of our neighbours and Immanuel people are meeting here for coffee, conversation and carpet bowling. Everyone is welcome.

SARAH'S HOUSE

Sarah's House is a safe home for women and children are one of our connections where we share gently used clothing, toiletries, etc.

We have many folks who work in these programs. I am grateful for their dedication and commitment to those they work with. Ruth Campbell, Guiding Elder



A History of Giving

When I was a small child I learned about the importance and beauty of giving. Through the church I belonged to what was called “Mission Band” where the children learned of far away places that needed our help. We were encouraged to find ways to raise money to send to support strangers. And all that we learned was connected directly to the teachings of Jesus.

In my teens I belonged to CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training) where Mission Study educated me further on how different other peoples' lives could be from my own place in society.

Now, being a United Church of Canada Mission and Service (M & S) enthusiast allows me to encourage you to be a faithful and generous supporter of our local, national and global mission work. Your regular donations, via your envelope number, are what keep the United Church of Canada M & S Fund working in our world.

For example, the first Sunday of each month we have the opportunity to add to much needed monies for the Canadian Food Grains Bank. They supply emergency food but also train people how to grow food within the confines of their various countries. They dig wells and teach about water safety and health.

In our part of the world, 1 Just City is supported by M & S to help address homelessness and poverty in our midst. The Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre is also supported by M & S as is the Healing Fund.

At Immanuel we have made a pledge to learn Truth and work for peace and reconciliation with our Indigenous relatives. Mission and Service is a way to live out your pledge on a regular basis.

These are only a few of the places you can support. Check out United Church of Canada Mission and Service online for all kinds of details, including how your money is spent.

Over the years we have lost many generous contributors to M & S, as have so many congregations. Over the years the costs of everything continue to go up. The needs and works still go on, however. Therefore, as best as you are able, please give accordingly. Let us continue our history of giving.

I am at your service as your M & S enthusiast. Lynne Strome

Kindred Spirits Transition Team Report

On October 26 we hosted an event at Immanuel after worship called, **Who Are We and Where Are We Going?**

We enjoyed a tasty soup lunch followed by a meeting facilitated in part by Jordan Cantwell, Growth Animator for the United Church of Canada. One of our goals for the meeting was to provide an opportunity for our faith communities to learn more about our histories, and identify the significant events that have helped to shape who we are and what we bring to these collaborative efforts. We wanted to provide participants with an opportunity to learn about the faith journeys of some members of each community of faith. To that end, we talked about and added to timelines of each community of faith. The timelines will continue to be placed on the walls after worship for the next couple of weeks to give you a chance to read details if you want to.

Another goal was to begin to determine how we can respond to the needs of the neighbourhoods in which our communities of faith are located in ways which reflect God's call to be a presence of love, justice, compassion, and dignity. We were led through a process of writing 6-word stories to help us express our thoughts. The prompt for the story was, "Tell the story of the impact we want our collaboration to have on our community."

There were several themes that arose from the stories that we collected. You can see a diagram of those themes on the next page. As you may have heard at the event, we are working to answer the question of why we are collaborating (what do we want to offer to the community) before we can make appropriate decisions regarding what we will do will do and how we will do it.

Your Kindred Spirits Transition Team members are Art Bridges, Ian Donnelly, Anne Duncan, Judy Gierys, Liz Janzen-Drewitt, Ann Naylor, Cathy Sokolowski, Brenda Wedlake and Oluwajimi Dairo. We will continue to provide opportunities for you to help discern what the next steps are for our collaboration.

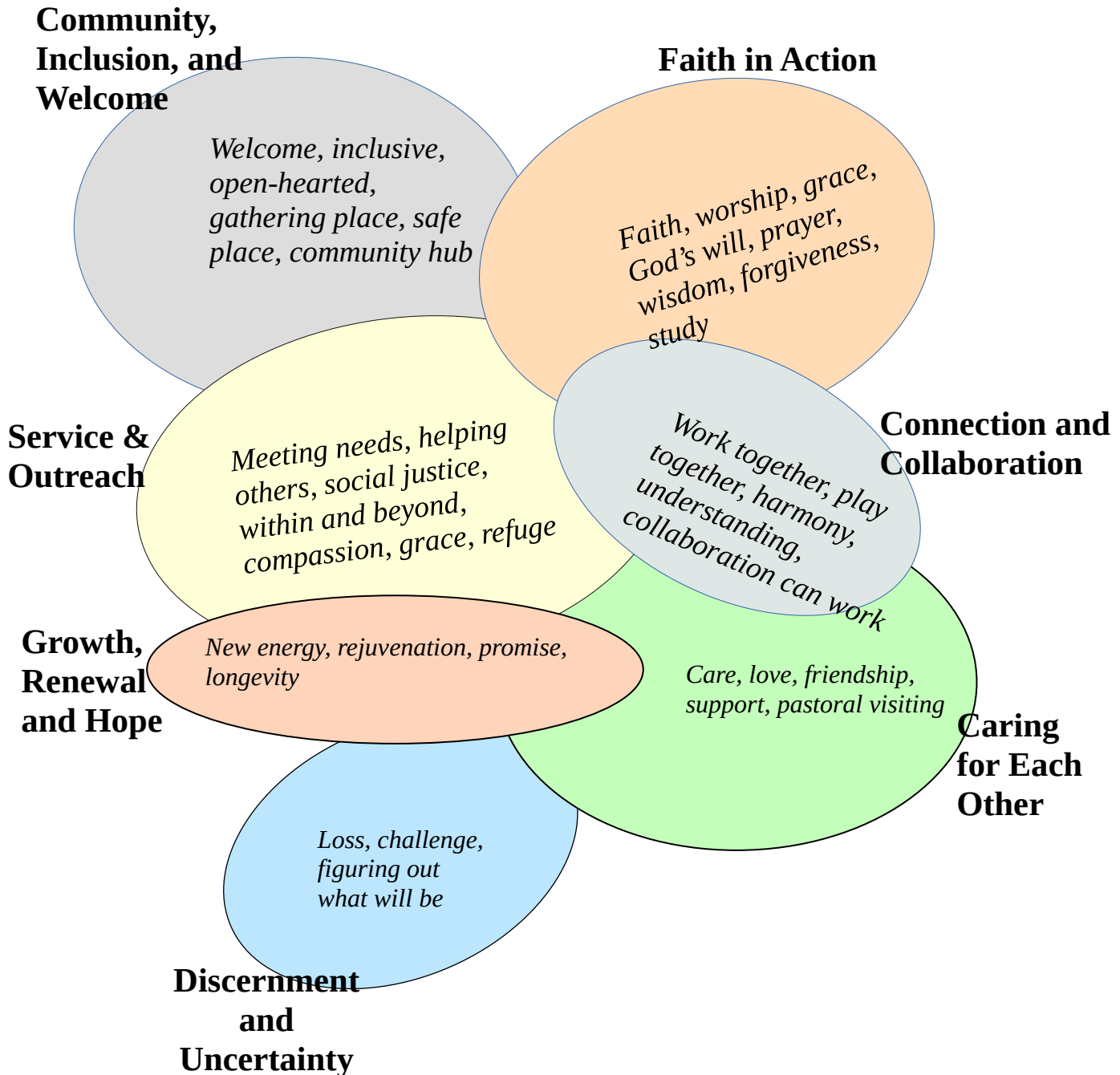
Who Are We and Where Are We Going?

Immanuel and John Black after-worship session on Oct 26, 2025

The prompt for the six-word stories was,

Tell the story of the impact we want our collaboration to have on our community.

Themes that arose from the Six-Word Stories



Finance Report

It is hard to believe that we are now in the second last month of the year. Where did the time go? This is the first full year that Immanuel is operating on a January to December fiscal year. The following year to date (YTD) numbers are for the period January 1 to October 31, 2025.

YTD Income	\$108,681.57	October Income	\$7138.75
YTD Expenses	\$114,677.92	October Expenses	\$8213.17
YTD Deficit	-\$5,996.35	October Deficit	- \$1074.42

Our income is \$1565.45 greater than in October 2024. This includes an increase of \$1571.00 in donations to local operations.

Our expenses were lower than last year but last year we were paying full minister's salary and this year we are paying half.

Mission and Service and Special Relief Donations to October 31, 2025

M&S	\$11,909.00
Special Relief	\$327.15
Total	\$12,236.15

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.

As we near the end of the year, it is important to remember that if you want your donation to be reflected on your 2025 tax receipt, it needs to be received at the church by the end of the year. We will be doing our final deposit for 2025 on December 31st so please ensure your donation is received before then. Earlier is better than later!

Should you 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.

Ministry and Personnel Committee

Change is the new normal, but some things stay the same. The regular meetings of Immanuel's Ministry and Personnel Committee continue, with meetings typically being held the first Wednesday of the month. Each committee member liaises with a different member of the staff, seeking to offer support in this time of transition. Big changes have occurred this fall, with the hiring of a new minister, Oluwajimi Dairo. The ever-positive and faithful choir director, Eileen Metcalfe, is stepping back from her duties this fall. Michael Dunbar, a member of the John Black congregation, has volunteered to lead the choir for the next while. We are grateful for Eileen's many years of service and for Michael's willingness to step in at this time. Other staff members who continue to serve faithfully are Sharon Vandenberg, office administrator; Peter Fyne, accompanist; and Fahima Fazely, caretaker.

The M and P committee is made up of Dianne Tucker, Bob Tate, Anne Duncan and Sharon Doerksen. Because Oluwajimi is serving as ministry personnel to both Immanuel and John Black, a Kindred Spirits joint M and P committee has been formed. Anne from Immanuel's M and P and David McBride from John Black serve on this committee.

The M and P committee works to build positive relationships between staff and members of the community of faith. If members of the community of faith have praise or concern about staff, these can be shared in signed correspondence with the committee. The work of the committee is confidential and every effort is made to find a positive resolution.

