



The Lutheran Urban Ministry  
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## December 2020 News from your Ministry Manager Merry Christmas – in the Time of the Pandemic!!

- The Board of Directors and I wish a Merry Christmas as well as a safe and healthy New Year for our Urban community and their extended families and friends.
- Merry Christmas and heartfelt thanks to our volunteers, meal teams, church congregations, and individuals who have a warm spot for the Urban. Thanks so much also to those who donate toward Urban operating expenses as well as those who donate grocery items and other needed items.

**225 Christmas gift bags were distributed with the Christmas bagged lunch on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>.** Seventy-five (75) children/youth from twenty-five families received personalized gift bags. Gift bags were also given to adults (75 women's and 75 men's gift bags). This was made possible from donated items and we are so grateful. The Sobeys reusable shopping bags were sold to the Urban at cost and became part of the gift!

**Every week I see the strength and resilience of our Urban community** in these days of pandemic worries, financial stress, housing insecurity, loneliness, physical/mental health issues - along with the regular struggles of life.

### Pandemic Notes:

**Until Further Notice:** the Urban is continuing the suspension of all regular programming (sit-down community meals, coffee hours, sharing circles, men's group, worship services, etc.) in the lower level of Lutheran Church of the Cross, due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

*Struggling and vulnerable single people and families (in the same numbers as pre-pandemic times when we were open downstairs) are continuing to come to the Urban - but now for bagged lunches 4x/week distributed outside (Wednesday men's lunch, Wednesday and Thursday supper times and Sunday lunch). Our meal teams are happy to help us in this way and we are so very grateful for this. Our website calendar shows available dates for meal teams. Fellowship is happening briefly in the parking lot as long as weather permits!*

- Mid-week devotionals and Sunday devotionals, emailed to me from Pastor Barry Bence, are tucked into lunch bags.
- We have changed our pre-pandemic emergency food bags to an equitable "one food item" (if enough in our pantry) per person (two items if a family) on a chosen random day each week during the distribution of bagged lunches. Toques, mitts, etc. (and bi-weekly bread/pastries) are also distributed outside.

**Mandatory Masks** *as of September 2, 2020: Masks (cloth or disposable) for everyone entering the church property (sidewalk and parking lot) to pick up bagged lunches. We provide a disposable mask if needed. **2 m social distancing** is enforced. We are limiting the gathering size for bagged lunch distribution to five people at any time on the church sidewalk and parking lot (including Urban volunteers). Additional people arriving are forming a line on the city sidewalk.*

**Bagged Lunches** (sandwich, dessert, juice box, etc.) to take home are given outside the door in place of sit-down meals at our four regularly scheduled weekly mealtimes (Wednesday men's lunches, Wednesday and Thursday suppers, and Sunday lunches).

**The Lutheran Urban Ministry has so much gratitude** for our volunteers and the meal teams; for the pantry donations, for the mitt/toque knitters/quilt makers; for the prayers; and for all those who donate financial support toward our operating expenses.

**Our website will be updated (by month end) with photos from Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>** ([www.theurban.ca](http://www.theurban.ca)). Please keep our vulnerable Lutheran Urban Ministry community in your prayers.

Please contact me: [rhonda@theurban.ca](mailto:rhonda@theurban.ca) for additional information, or to have your meal team added to the calendar.

Kind regards,  
Rhonda Gorham, Ministry Manager, Lutheran Urban Ministry

We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of age, ability, health, ethnicity, gender identity, language, sexual orientation, life circumstances, marital status, race, or anything else which sometimes divides us. We welcome diversity and uniqueness. Our unity is in Christ, whose grace is freely given to all. All are welcome. The Lutheran Urban Ministry Corp. is a member of Reconciling Works – Lutherans for Full Participation [www.reconcilingworks.org](http://www.reconcilingworks.org)