



Minister's Reflection - Loving Our Neighbours

Recently, the provincial government announced a policy that puts children facing gender identity realities at risk by imposing parental permission for any name or pronoun change at school. Schools need to be safe spaces, especially when a home may not be. Kacey Colibaba wrote a reflection earlier this year about transphobia that you will find in this newsletter. As an Affirming Ministry committed to loving our neighbour and neighbourhoods, we need to be concerned about these kinds of decisions, especially when they are made without any consultation of those who work with children, the parents, or the children themselves. Jesus tells us to love our neighbour. They are no exceptions. That love is unconditional and grace-filled.

As we seek to love our neighbour, it also involves getting to know our neighbours and learning what God is up to in the neighbourhood. This can be done by inviting folk to sit at our tables at home, or come to our ministries we offer, such as the Community Dinner, Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Books group, Film and Faith, and INI Café. We are also having an Entrepreneurs' Fair for home and small businesses in the neighbourhood, October 17. See our promo in this newsletter for more information.

As we move into this new season, it is my hope that we will engage in what is offered and the opportunities to serve, as we seek to love our neighbour, which includes one another! May we continue to support those most vulnerable in our communities, and work for justice as the gospel calls us to.

Blessings,

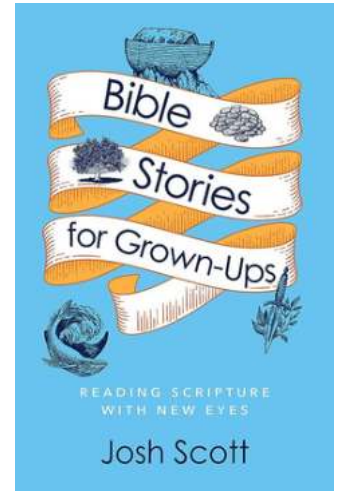
Russell Mitchell-Walker, Diaconal Minister

Kick-Off Sunday

Eastside will be holding an outdoor Kick-Off Sunday on Sunday, September 17 following Worship (official start time: 12:30 pm). There will be games, bouncy house for young ones, other activities, and an opportunity to build relationship with those from JMCM, a Philipino Congregation that Worships out of the LSC. **This event will be a potluck! Please feel free to bring a dish with you! Please bring your own lawn chair or blanket with you. We hope to see you there!**

Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Books

September 14	Intro	October 12	Chapter 4
September 21	Chapter 1	October 19	Chapter 5
September 28	Chapter 2	October 26	Chapter 6
October 5	Chapter 3	November 2	Chapter 7



Join us for this session of Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Books beginning September 14! Books are now available in the office for \$30 a copy, which can be paid via e-transfer, cheque, or cash. Please let us know if you will need a book by September 6 so that we can get copies ordered (if we run out!). This session's book is "Bible Stories for Grown Ups" by Josh Scott. We gather on Thursday afternoons at 1:30 pm in the East Sanctuary.

Anti-Trans and LGBTQ+ Hate in Canada

by Kacey Colibaba

A lot of the media we consume in Canada comes from the States. We have been seeing an increase in discrimination against LGBTQ+ folks, especially trans folks. Bills hoping to ban trans people from sports and bathrooms, propositions to have LGBTQ+ books and lessons removed from classrooms, and news personalities and celebrities being vocal about their hate for LGBTQ+ people. However, Canada is not immune to this way of thinking. We have anti LGBTQ+ media in Canada and to add to that, US News media often picks up anti LGBTQ+ stories from Canada. Here are some examples of misinformation being spread through media here at home.

Trans bathroom rules are being discussed in Canadian schools. A student in Ontario was suspended for protesting the school's trans friendly bathroom rules. A U.S. Catholic news outlet picked up this story and claimed the school was in the wrong. They used the dangerous language of saying that trans women are "men identifying as women." This is problematic because it denies that trans people are who they say they are. It also builds the fear of "men" being in women's spaces, when this is not the case. The student was in the wrong as he was protesting a rule meant to keep trans students safe and feeling seen and respected. Canada has also seen adults protesting trans friendly bathroom rules in schools. In Ottawa hundreds gathered at a school board meeting, some to protest and some to defend the bathroom policy. In Saskatchewan people threatened a politician over his support of inclusive bathrooms. A story circulated about a trans woman changing in a public change room with the problematic language of a "man who identifies as a woman." Having access to a bathroom or change room of choice not only affirms trans people's identity but also keeps them safe.

Trans women participating in sports is another hot topic. Canadian sports organizations often are in favour of rules that open sports to more, but not all, trans women. Canada voted in favour of a world swimming body's rule allowing a few trans women compete. The rule states that trans women must have transitioned before the age of 12. The assumption here is that they would have never experienced male puberty. An article on CTV's website seems to support trans women in sports, but uses problematic language, such as supporting rules that are only baby steps and still exclude a lot of trans women. The International Cycling Union has lowered the amount of testosterone women can have to compete. The Olympics has a similar rule that actually excluded some cis women (women who are not trans) because all women have some level of testosterone and women athletes, especially women of colour, often have naturally high testosterone and in cases have been banned from sports because of anti trans rules. Trans girls often feel like sports are not even an option for them. For all kids sports are known to increase physical and mental health. Letting trans students play would be beneficial and there is no proof that all trans women and girls have an advantage.

Banning books, the study of racism, and LGBTQ+ issues is in debate in Canada as well as the United States. "We think of it as a U.S. thing, but if you go back to the controversies about sex education during [2014 to 2018] in Ontario, it was very much framed as a problem with parental rights," said Gilbert, of York University. Be wary of groups with names like Moms for Liberty, Parents Defending Education, One Million Moms and in Canada, Parents for Choice in Education, and the Regina Civic Awareness and Action Network (RCAAN). These are groups that spread hate and want to "protect" kids from inclusive and harmless LGBTQ+ lessons and media.

One of the biggest and most recent controversies was about a Canadian trans teacher. This teacher was photographed by students during class. She wore a wig, as many trans women do as they grow out their hair, and had large prosthetic breast. The media focused on the breast, but this was just a smoke screen to openly criticize a school for having a trans teacher. This story was covered by Canadian news media, but then picked up by the US media. All of the stories covering this used problematic language claiming the teacher was a man who identifies as a woman instead of saying trans woman. The story was not picked up by any supportive media, as it was a non-story. The only reason it was picked up by media with an anti trans bias is because it was a trans teacher. The most recent development is that now students are being told they are not allowed to take pictures or video of the teacher. The biased media claims this is unfair, however, most schools have a policy about not taking pictures or video of anyone without their consent.

Even in Canadian governments are making troubling decisions when it comes to LGBTQ+ support. The Quebec government is helping to fund PDF Quebec, a hate group that attacked a trans advocate on Twitter. In general our political parties have not attacked LGBTQ+ rights, like we are seeing in the States. However, some conservative MP's voted against the law to ban the harmful act of conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is when LGBTQ+ are told they are not who they say they are and believes LGBTQ+ people can change with the help of therapy. LGBTQ+ people are who they say they are and the practice of conversion therapy is demoralizing and dangerous to people who were born LGBTQ+.

Pride parades extend offers to politicians to attend the annual parade. It says a lot when the politicians turn down this request. In municipal governments in small towns and cities in Saskatchewan there is some backwards steps being taken. Communities that once flew Pride flags and painted rainbows on crosswalks are now stepping back from those traditions. With this upsurge in trans hate, it is more often that we see people backing away from their support of the LGBTQ+ community.

Navigating the media can be tricky. Thankfully in Canada most of our major media coverage, CBC, Global, and CTV, are opened minded and inclusive. However, not every news source is inclusive and

accepting. On top of that we have rumours and stories floating around social media. Be cautious of any story with the words “identifies as,” trans women are women, trans men are men, and non binary people are non binary. They don’t “identify” they just are. In southern Saskatchewan there are rumours about student who identify as animals having litter boxes in the school bathrooms. This is not true and it is trying to draw a parallel between trans people and furies by using the word “identifies.” Also, both trans people and furies are harmless, and neither group uses litter boxes. The media is drumming up fear of trans people claiming trans women are men in women’s spaces, claiming that trans children do not know themselves and don’t understand their gender, and claiming that LGBTQ+ people are predators and pedophiles. People are afraid of things they don’t understand. All trans people, including trans children, understand their gender, just as cis gender adults and children do. Trust trans people that they are who they say they are. Trust that trans people are not dangerous. Trust that trans people just want to use public bathrooms to pee. And be careful about what media, stories, and rumours you believe.

Our first fall Community Dinner will be taking place on September 21st at 6:00 pm, with guest speaker Adam Hicks, Vice Chair of the Regina Public School Board.

Community Dinner Schedule: September 21, October 19, November 16, and December 7

Community Dinner

Courageous Faith

Courageous Faith resumes this fall on September 28th! If you are interested in more details, please contact Russell. This group gathers on Thursdays at 7:00 pm.

September 28: Brian McLaren - Can the Church Change?

October 5: Gerardo Marti - Future of Spirituality

October 12: Stephen Lewis - Centering the Silenced

October 19: Andry Root - Future of Spirituality

October 26: Brandon Robertson - Can the Church Change?

Messy Church will be taking place on the second Thursday of each month from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. These events are in partner with Sunset, Wesley, Westminster, and Bread of Life Lutheran Church. Our first gathering will be **at Sunset United Church on September 14**. Christ Lutheran Church will also be offering gatherings: September 28, October 26, November 23, and December 21.

Messy Church

Eastside Updates: Cluster Information

Looking to Our Future – What is the Status? The Regina Cluster of United Churches has talked for several years about the need to consolidate our 9 Regina United Church congregations in a proactive manner rather than waiting for individual congregations to become insolvent and close. This inspires both excitement and worry as we wonder what opportunities might exist for our congregation to grow and whether we will be one of the congregations that closes.

First, to address the worry: Other Regina United Churches recognize the good stewardship and ecumenical witness that the Living Spirit Centre represents. They are also aware that the Living Spirit Centre is in good shape when it comes to environmental impact. We also have the most recently built building and flexible facility, which also will be easier to adapt for environmental retrofits. There seems to be a general desire for the United Church to maintain a presence in this space. Eastside members shouldn't worry that initiating conversations with other congregations will lead to pressure to close Eastside.

As for opportunities – what is taking so long? The pandemic interrupted the work of the Regina Cluster for about 3 years. In person meetings started again in 2023, with a focus on identifying opportunities to share programs, outreach, and social justice work. There has been two events held which have focused on getting to understand our congregations together better, and explore possibilities of sharing ministries. This is part of the process of getting to know one another better so that we can find affinity across our congregations.

Recently the Cluster lost its meeting initiator when Cam Fraser left Knox-Metropolitan United Church to accept a position with the national church. Russell will be offering to take on that role and is in the process of setting up a Cluster planning meeting.

In the meantime, Wesley United, concerned about repairs needed to their building and already having a relationship with Sunset United, decided to sell their building and worship jointly with Sunset full time, starting in September. They have a Joint Amalgamation Team and presently call themselves the South Regina United Community.

Where does that leave us? When the Anglicans announced they were pulling out of the Living Spirit partnership, the Living Spirit Council sent a letter to many parties indicating that we are interested in a new partner or partners, and advertising rental space. The LSC is currently in conversation with 5 worshipping communities about the feasibility of sharing space – whether as renters, partners, or renters with an option to become partners in the future. These conversations are at various stages.

Some are more promising than others. All take time, as congregations need to prayerfully consider their options.

Eastside will also continue conversations with other United Churches at Regina Cluster meetings. I look forward to the next Cluster meeting to see where these conversations go. Anyone interested are welcome to join us at the Cluster gatherings.

~ Janet Bjorndahl, Eastside Leadership Team Chair



Community Entrepreneur Fair

Do you have your own small or home based business in the Arcola East neighbourhoods? Are you looking for an opportunity to showcase your goods and services?

Join Eastside United as we host small and home based business fair on Saturday October 14 from 1:00-4:00 at 3018 Doan Drive (Living Spirit Centre). Artisans, crafters, home and personal service providers and other small businesses in Arcola East are welcome. Tables (6'x3') are available for \$10. There will also be a bake sale, and refreshments available.

To register a table, please contact eastsideunited@sasktel.net

Eastside United is an Affirming ministry of the United Church of Canada. Open minds. Open hearts. Open doors. A progressive spiritual community, celebrating God's goodness as expressed through diversity.



This home based and small business fair is part of our belief in community. All are welcome! For more information contact Delia or Sam Baidoo or Leanne Sudom at leanne.sudom@gmail.com.

Minister Sabbatical

Russell will be taking a three month sabbatical from December 7, 2023 to March 11, 2024. This period will include the last part of Advent, Christmas, as well as the first four Sundays of Lent.

Ministers are encouraged, when they plan their sabbatical, to include one of the busy church seasons, such as Christmas. This gives them a break from the planning and hard work these special seasons often entail, as well as the opportunity to spend the time with their families.

Ministers are entitled to a sabbatical every five years, and Russell's last sabbatical was in the spring of 2018, which included Easter.

Russell has approached a retired minister to offer supply preaching coverage, and possibly pastoral care, for some of the time he is off. This will most likely be during Advent and Christmas, which is good news for the congregation, since we will have continuity and regular services at Eastside. Faith Formation will be organizing coverage for the other Sundays. They will attempt to have as many services as possible at Eastside, so that the congregation can stay connected during the time Russell is away.

There are many mid-week programs at Eastside, and the hope is that some of these will continue with lay leadership during Russell's absence.

If you would be interested in serving as a leader for a mid-week program, or even on Sunday morning during Russell's sabbatical, please consider it. We will be reaching out for volunteers over the coming months.

Also, there is always an increase in costs during the minister's sabbatical, as we need to pay for supply ministers, or other guest speakers. Please consider whether you are able to increase your giving during this time.

Although we will miss Russell when he is away, we understand the importance of sabbaticals as an opportunity for education, rest and renewal.

~ Cathie Henderson, Ministry and Personnel Committee



INI Cafe will be resuming this fall! Stay tuned in to our weekly email for more event information as it becomes available.

Treaty 4 Powwow

Join us for the Treaty Four Powwow in Fort Qu'Appelle on Saturday, September 16th. We will be gathering at Indigenous Christian Fellowship (3131 Dewdney Ave.) at 12:00 pm.

City Camp Volunteer seeking Prison letter writing support:

One of the volunteers at the City Hall encampment, was called to Ottawa shortly after the camp was dismantled to face charges from earlier in his life when he was houseless himself. He is now in prison and would welcome letters from community members to help him through this time. He is taking responsibility for his past and has working to improve his life and others. He was working at a shelter and was housed while in Regina. Going to Ottawa put him back in a houseless situation after the court dates kept getting postponed. If you are interested in communicating with this person, please let Russell (Russell.eastside@gmail.com) or the office know and we will provide you with the information.

An ecumenical crafting group gathers on every second and fourth Wednesday of the month, with come an go times between 1:00 and 9:00 pm at the LSC! "Any age, any gender, any denomination – or none is invited to join in quilting! We're people of good will having a good time and doing good work. We have some 20 folks already involved, but we hope to see YOU!" For more information, contact Deacon Christine Burton at christinemburton1@gmail.com or phone/text 306-540-7903.

Caring
Crafters

Join us for a Film and Discussion on the last Friday of each month! Stay tuned in to our weekly emails for movie selection and gathering announcements. Text "Film" to 306-517-6797 to stay in the loop! Dates for fall are as follows:

September 29, October 27, and November 24


Film &
Faith



A Note from the Office

You may notice some changes in the coming weeks with our office communications - In January, I officially became the Office Personnel for both Eastside and Bread of Life Lutheran Church. As we now have a more centralized office process, we will be changing the format of our weekly email newsletter. Please join us in celebrating these changes as we continue walking together in our ecumenical setting - we hope you enjoy getting to see ALL that is happening at the LSC! You are always welcome to join in all ministries that are offered. Please stay tuned for upcoming weekly emails that feature more information from all of our partners here at the LSC, and local community information!

~ Becca Anderson, Office Personnel



Financial Update - July 2023

"As is typical, July was a very tough month financially. PAR was unchanged, but envelope and loose offerings were only \$727 for the month. The budget for PAR and loose offerings is about \$1,000 per week, so the result was a deficit of \$3,778 for the month. For the year to date, the deficit is \$14,046. Eastside's cash position remains solid at \$31,252, although \$17,757 of this amount is community dinners as a result of grants received in previous years. **If deficits of \$2,000 per month continue, Eastside's cash position will be significantly weakened by the end of 2023.**"

Donating to Eastside couldn't be easier with our range of options:

- Sign up for PAR with Becca at the office! Completing a simple form can get you signed up for easy automatic monthly remittances!
- Send in your cheque or cash offering by mail
- We accept e-transfers! Send your offering to our email address: eastsideunited@sasktel.net
- We also have options online with CanadaHelps, through our website, or by using the offering plate on Sundays.