



OPEN MINDS. OPEN HEARTS. OPEN DOORS.

Wishing You a Happy Christmas

by Suzanne Joyce

The sheer quantity of hits resulting from the google search "how to avoid holiday stress" is a telltale sign that there's something not quite right about the way North Americans do Christmas. Whether you're following the controversy around the [Starbucks cup](#) or [Operation Christmas Child](#), or you pine for a [Buy Nothing Christmas](#), you can't help but notice there is a disconnect for many of us between what Christmas is and what we'd like it to be.

Results of a recent [Ipsos Reid survey](#) conducted for [World Vision Canada](#) paint a picture of the Christmas many Canadians are seeking: nine in ten agree Christmas is becoming too commercial while only one in ten would best describe the spirit of the season as giving gifts to those they care about. For most Canadians (53%), Christmas is about bringing family together, while others see it primarily as an opportunity to celebrate the birth of Christ, demonstrate love and caring, and help those less fortunate. In the spirit of helping others, three quarters agree that they would prefer to receive a meaningful gift that would help someone else, rather than another traditional gift like clothes or electronics.

A study in the [Journal of Happiness](#) (2002) found that certain Christmas experiences and activities are associated with holiday well-being. Not surprisingly, these are the same experiences and activities Canadians rate so highly. In a study of 117 individuals ranging in age from 18 to 80, more happiness was reported when family and religious experiences were significant, and lower well-being occurred when spending money and receiving gifts predominated. Engaging in environmentally conscious consumption practices also predicted a happier holiday. Overall, the materialistic aspects of modern Christmas celebrations were found likely to undermine well-being, while family and spiritual activities were likely to help people feel more satisfied.

While we seem very clear on what constitutes a meaningful and happy Christmas, for a variety of reasons, we don't always manage to achieve one. This holiday season, we're hoping you'll let us help. Starting right before Advent and extending up until Christmas Eve, Eastside United Church and the Living Spirit Centre have lots of opportunities for you to reclaim the peace, joy and love integral to Christmas.

Horizons

Newsletter of Eastside United Church



Nov/Dec 2015

Christmas Eve Worship Services

3 pm

**Shared Family Service
with Bread of Life
Lutheran and St. Philip
Anglican Churches**

7 pm

Eastside All Ages Service

9 pm

**Eastside Candlelight and
Communion Service**



**At the
Living Spirit Centre**

On **Sunday, November 29** and **Sunday, December 6** you will find the Christmas tree in the East Sanctuary decorated with candy canes as part of our Advent campaign in support of [Rainbow Youth Centre](#). Each candy cane will be labeled with the name of a small item you can purchase for donation. Return donations to the church before **December 8**, and these items will be placed in stockings given out to individuals who attend Rainbow Youth Centre's Christmas Party. The Rainbow Youth Centre involves youth 11-25 years old in creating a safe, caring, healthy and adaptive community of support by sharing responsibility for recognizing, accepting, and developing personal skills.

Sunday, December 6, the LSC Meditation Group will be holding its last class until the new year at 7 pm in the East Sanctuary, a guided meditation from Sharon Moon's "The Healing Oasis." Find retreat from the bustle of Christmas festivities and leave feeling grounded and ready to tackle another week.

Wednesday, December 2 and 9 join us for a quiet time of music, reflection and peace at our shared Advent services. We hope these short services beginning at 7 pm will give you time to recharge and reconnect with the true meaning of Christmas. December 2 is a candle-lighting service reflecting on the Old Testament origins of the hymn: O Come, O Come Emmanuel. December 9 is a Blue Christmas Service, particularly for those dealing with the added emotional burden of loss of a loved one.

If you feel overwhelmed by a long list of Christmas tasks and would like to fret less and enjoy more, opt to have Eastside volunteers do your holiday baking for you! **Saturday, December 12** is our 5th Annual Holiday Cookie Walk. Come to the lower hall of the Living Spirit Centre between 10 am and 1 pm and purchase your holiday baking from a wide selection of treats, for the price of \$8/lb.

See Russell's reflection for an Advent challenge to help us reflect on how we celebrate this season and work toward more sharing.

When it comes to your Christmas shopping, the [United Church of Canada](#) has developed the Gifts with Vision catalogue in response to requests to be able to give gifts to relatives, friends, and loved ones that are in direct support of the church's Mission & Service partners across Canada and around the world. If you are seeking inspiring new gift ideas that can help change people's lives, pick up a copy from the shelves in the narthex or the Eastside office. You can also download the Gifts with Vision catalogue [here](#).

Once your Christmas preparations are done and your family is all together for the holidays, join us for one of three **Christmas Eve** services: 3 pm in the West Sanctuary our family worship service shared with Bread of Life and St. Philip Anglican; 7 pm in the East Sanctuary the Eastside all ages service; and 9 pm our Candlelight Communion service.

It is our hope that this season of Advent and these offerings, bring you the hope and joy, reflection and expectation that will lead to a meaningful Christmas for you and your family.



Join us for our
Holiday Cookie Walk
Saturday, December 12
From 10 am to 1 pm
(or until the cookies are all gone!)

Plates of the best Christmas baking fill the tables of the LSC Lower Hall.

You "walk" along and fill a supplied cookie box at the price of \$8/lb.

Come early to get the best selection!

Merry Christmas



Please join us for
Advent Worship

...recharge and reconnect with the true meaning of Christmas.

Wed. Dec. 2, 7 pm
 Candle-lighting service reflecting on O Come, O Come Emmanuel.

Wed. Dec. 9, 7 pm
 Blue Christmas for those who find the season difficult.

Advent Reflection

by Russell Mitchell-Walker

Welcome to Advent!

This time of year, we hear a lot about Christmas but the season of Christmas does not actually start until Christmas Day and continues until Epiphany on December 6. Advent is the time of expectant waiting for Christmas to come, the anticipation of the birth of the Christ-Child, and a reflective time of what we need to do, what we need to change in our lives in preparation for the celebration.

It is a challenging time in our society as stores put up Christmas decorations, preparing for Christmas sales right after Halloween, and the pressure starts for the focus on buying. There is the increasing craziness around a so called 'war on Christmas' which this year started with one person being upset that [Starbucks seasonal cup](#) did not have any 'Christmas' symbols on it (previous years it has had only winter type symbols so it was never a 'Christmas' cup. As we welcome more refugees (and make the connection that Jesus was a refugee and calls us to befriend and welcome strangers) it will be continually important to respect the diversity of our celebrations in our community. It is a busy season of



concerts, and parties, and purchasing that can be overwhelming. That is why it is important for us to offer opportunities for some quiet reflection through our Advent services.

As we discern how to best engage in the season and what is reasonable with regard to gift giving, I invite you to consider a challenge which I am borrowing from [One Church](#), in Chandler Arizona and their *Simple Christmas* program:

Imagine for a moment...

What if Christmas looked a lot more like Jesus?

This Christmas, what if you bought less stuff and used that money to bless someone in need? What if you carved out quality, unhurried, uninterrupted time to truly celebrate with the people in your life? What if worship was more important than a perfect Christmas?

Because, let's be honest...

Consumerism does not equal happiness, memories, contentment, fulfillment, or meaning. When Christmas begins with worship, it all becomes meaningful.

This Christmas can be different. This Christmas, less means more. Less spending. Less hurry. Less me.

The challenge is this: What if this year, you were to donate to the church, the same amount you spend on Christmas gifts? Or maybe consider donating half to the church and half to an organization that works with helping others and doing justice in the community or world. Perhaps it will cause you to consider spending less on gifts, in order to share more. Isn't that what preparing for the Coming of Christ is all about? May we consider what it means to be people of faith in this time, focusing on the birth of the one who challenges us to care for the poor and oppressed, who speaks up for justice and peace, who comes as the Prince of Peace. Something we really need in our time. May you have a meaningful, wonderful Advent and Christmas, filled with the Peace of Christ, and the blessings of the season!

Russell Mitchell-Walker

Diaconal Minister

An Excerpt from *This Year Will Be Different* in Kneeling in Bethlehem by Ann Weems:

This year we intend to follow the Star
Instead of the crowd.
But, of course, we always do
Intend the best. ...
This year, when we find ourselves off the path again
(and invariably we will!)
let's not add yet another stress to our Advent days,
That of "trying to do Christmas correctly!"
Instead, let's approach the birth of our Lord
With joyful abandon!
And this year,
let's do what Mary did and rejoice in God,
let's do what Joseph did and listen to our dreams,
let's do what the shepherds did and praise and glorify God
For all we've seen and heard!
As for the Advent frantic pace, we don't have time for that.
We'll be too busy singing!
This year will be different!





Tinsel Tidings from Christian Ed!

by Amanda Tessier

This advent season we will celebrate Jesus and the Christmas story from the book, 'Truth in the Tinsel' written by Amanda White. This resource provides a meaningful advent experience for little hands. Each week we will create Christmas ornaments that help us to follow and enjoy the advent story. On Sunday December 20, we will celebrate Jesus' birthday with cake, carols, gifts, and holiday cheer! **Please join us, all are welcome!**

Sunday School will break for the rest of December and early January, resuming January 10.

Seasons greetings and tinsel tidings from your Christian Education Committee!

The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear! ~Elf

IMCF Breakfast

Eastside continues its involvement with Indian Metis Christian Fellowship by preparing and serving breakfast the third Saturday of each month, from 9 am to 12 noon.

Six volunteers are needed to help make this happen. If you are able to spare any time at all, as your schedule allows, you are more than welcome. Volunteers typically help with setting up tables and chairs; laying place settings at the tables; preparing and cooking breakfast; clean up including washing dishes and putting away tables and chairs. All volunteers are invited to join in for breakfast and conversation, the emphasis is on fellowship. IMCF is a very family oriented facility; please talk to me if your children would like to be involved.

There will be no scheduled breakfast in December. Our next breakfast is Saturday, January 23 and the one following is Saturday, February 27. Please contact Peter Braun if you are interested in helping on one of these, or a future, date.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you would like to volunteer with the IMCF Breakfast please contact:

PETER BRAUN

peterbraun@myaccess.ca

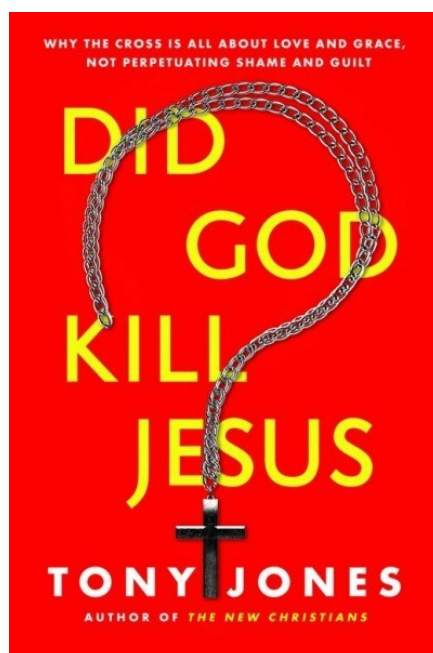
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Craft Group: New Year, New Book

For over a year now, a group of Eastsiders has been gathering Thursday afternoons at the Living Spirit Centre for a Book Study and Craft Group, and coffee fellowship following. The group has just finished reading "We Make the Road by Walking" by Brian McLaren and will share Christmas stories until breaking for the holidays on December 10. In the new year, they will begin reading the much-anticipated book by Tony Jones entitled "Did God Kill Jesus?"

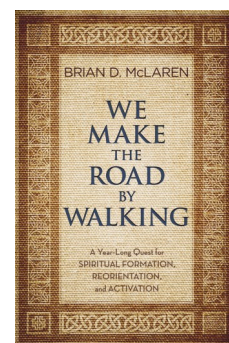
"Did God Kill Jesus? is the one and only book I have ever seen on the Atonement that I can wholeheartedly recommend without reservation and with devout enthusiasm. Even-handed, historically complete, accessible to any reader who chooses to approach it, this is a masterful piece of work." ~ Phyllis Tickle

We will be ordering these books shortly! Please let [Russell](#) or the [office](#) know if you'd like to join in this fun and thought-provoking group and we will order a book on your behalf.



FREE BOOKS!

Now that we're finished our last book, we have copies available to give away! See Russell.



Christmas Project helps community youth

This Advent, Eastside is collecting items in support of Rainbow Youth Centre.

RYC is a multi-cultural, community-based organization providing support services for young people aged 11 to 25 years in the City of Regina. Programming at the Centre includes: educational, social, and recreational activities for youth 11 – 19 years; and employment preparation, and parenting programs for youth up to 25 years.

On December 16, Rainbow Youth Centre will be holding its Annual Christmas Celebration for participants. The celebration includes a traditional Christmas supper and the distribution of Christmas Stockings to the youth and the young adults (including their infants and toddlers) who are regularly involved with

programming. It is anticipated that there will be approximately 300 Christmas stockings given to participants this year.

On Sunday, November 29 and Sunday, December 6, the Christmas tree in the East Sanctuary will be decorated with candy canes. Each of these will be labeled with the name of an item to be donated for the RYC stockings. Items include things like toques and mittens, toothbrushes, toothpaste and shampoo, as well as children's books, colouring books and crayons.

All donations need to be returned to the LSC by Tuesday, December 8.

Thank you for supporting this project in keeping with the true meaning of Christmas!



Celebrating the life and work of artist Ovide Bighetty

On Friday, November 13, over 100 people were in attendance at a ceremony commemorating the life and work of artist Ovide Bighetty at the Living Spirit Centre. The evening's activities were capably provided by our partners at Indian Metis Christian Fellowship and included a shared meal of stew and bannock, a pipe ceremony, and the blessing of Bighetty's paintings on display in the East and West Sanctuaries.

Ovide Bighetty was a Cree self-taught artist originally from Pukatawagan First Nation in north western Manitoba. In 2002, Indian Metis Christian Fellowship commissioned Bighetty to create 'Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin – The Creator's Sacrifice'. This series of 17 images in acrylic on canvas presented the Easter story in Ovide's unique Woodland Cree style. These are the paintings on display at LSC.

In 2006, Ovide completed his second commission for IMCF, 'Steps Along the Red Road Following Christ the Creator'. In 2007, Ovide created a third commission for IMCF, 'Kisê-manitow Omiyikowiswin. This series of 17 images depicting the Christmas story.

Ovide Bighetty passed away in Winnipeg on March 20, 2014 at the age of 44.

It is an honour for the Living Spirit Centre to be the Regina home of Ovide's paintings, and equally heartening to have been blessed with an evening of community building with IMCF in celebration and admiration of these works.





Worship at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre

On the third Sunday of every other month, Eastside United Church volunteers hold a worship service for residents at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre. The service takes place at 1:30 pm and volunteers arrive at the Centre a half-hour ahead of time to usher worshippers from their rooms to the chapel.

Our next service will be a Christmas service and is scheduled for Sunday, December 20. If you are able to assist, please contact [Shelly Williams](#).

This important outreach ministry provides one of the only opportunities for patients at the Centre to attend a worship service. Thanks for your support!

Tired of buying the same old fad gift for that person who has everything? This year, give a gift that can change lives with the United Church of Canada's Gifts with Vision catalogue. All gifts are in support of programs by Mission and Service partners.

gifts
with
vision

LSC Women nourished by Saturday breakfasts

The second Saturday of each month, a group of LSC women get together to share breakfast and conversation. Known as the Women's Spirituality Breakfast, this volunteer-led initiative has proven to be a popular opportunity for women to find fun, support, and fellowship.

At breakfasts that took place this fall, women were invited to bring something that represented where they experienced God this past summer; bring and share their hobbies; and to hear guest speaker U of R Nursing Student Allie Beechy present on her experiences in Mexico providing physical, mental and spiritual relief for those in need.

Saturday, December 12 from 8 to 10 am, Brian Mitchell-Walker and Wanda Barr will be talking about Approaches and Principles of Healing.

Brian and Wanda are both part of the Healing Team at Eastside which is a ministry of prayer and anointing with oil. Brian is a Reiki Practitioner and a Life Coach. Wanda, a former R.N., has studied Therapeutic Touch, Healing Pathways, Sacred Touch and Reiki.



All women are welcome to come for an informative and relaxing morning. Please bring a toonie to cover breakfast costs!

Organizers are always interested to learn about other topics and ideas women may have for themes for the coming year and are also in need of volunteers to help prepare and serve a simple breakfast.

Skylight Festival

a festival for people of diverse backgrounds to
explore justice, arts and faith

July 29-31, '16
Paris Fairgrounds
Paris, Ontario

www.skylightfestival.ca

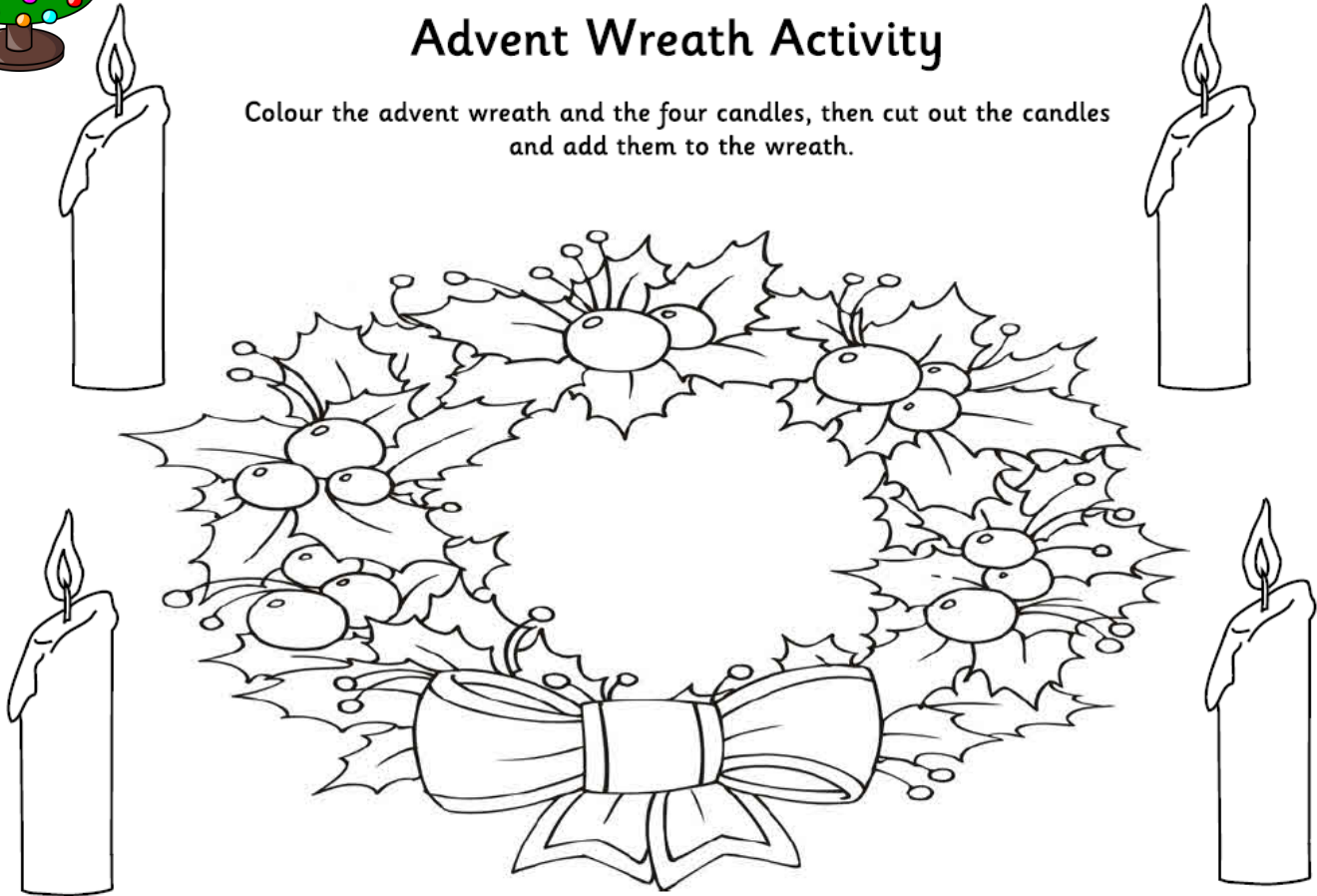
**Buy your tickets
NOW to take
advantage of
early bird rates
and join a group
attending from
Eastside!**



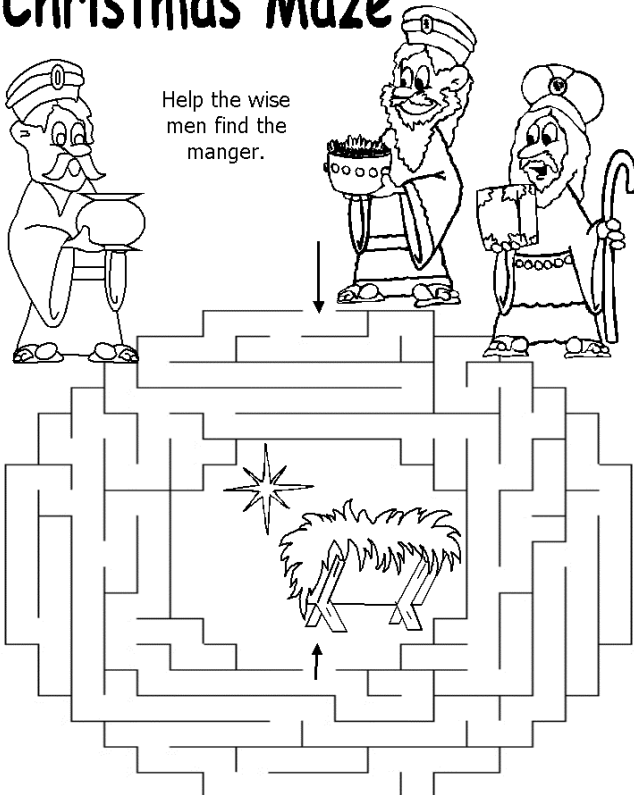
Happy Christmas Eastside Kids!

Advent Wreath Activity

Colour the advent wreath and the four candles, then cut out the candles and add them to the wreath.



Christmas Maze



A B C D E G H I J L
 ▼ ♥ ♣ ♦ ☆ ○ ✕ ☆
 N O P R S T V W Y
 ■ * ♣ ♠ ▲ † ◆ □ *

I bring you
 of great that will be for

 Today in the
 town of David a has
 been to you; he is
 the ...

Quarterly Financial Update:

January 1 - September 30, 2015

by Jim Fallows

Eastside incurred a substantial deficit of \$6,271 during the first nine months of 2015 (see below). This deficit consisted of an operating surplus of \$4,754 less mortgage payments of \$11,025.

The deficit resulted from very low revenue during the first three months of 2015. At March 31, 2015, Eastside had a deficit of \$8,062, so Eastside has achieved a small surplus in the subsequent six months to narrow the deficit to the present figure of \$6,271.

Although the deficit has narrowed in recent months, it remains a problem, because Eastside has no cash reserves. This means that deficits can only be met by delaying

payments on obligations such as our Presbytery assessment.

On a positive note, costs are running slightly below budget, both at Eastside and the LSC, which has partly offset the impact of the decline in giving that occurred in the first quarter of 2015. Also, Eastside's 30% share of the LSC mortgage debt continues to decline, and will be down to \$62,650 at December 31, a reduction of \$55,054 since December 2010.

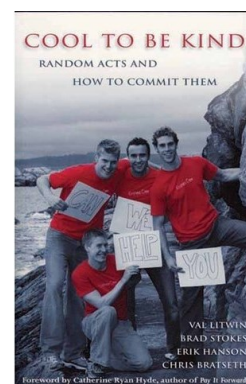
Members of the congregation are respectfully asked to continue their effort to help Eastside meet its financial obligations.

Russell is taking a coaching course from the [Deep Coaching Institute](#) which also incorporates the [Enneagram](#). As part of the course he needs coaching clients including two for his fieldwork of 12 hours each as well as others who would like to explore what Enneagram Type they may be. If you are interested please contact [Russell](#).

NEW to the LSC Library!

Cool to Be Kind: Random Acts and How to Commit them.

"In August of 2002 four 20-something friends from Victoria packed a motor home and embarked upon a three-month non-profit marathon known coast to coast as The Extreme Kindness Tour. Their mission: to commit as many random acts of kindness in as many Canadian communities as possible."



Eastside United Church				
Statement of Surplus (Deficit) for January 1 - September 30				
	2015 Actual	2014 Actual	2013 Actual	2012 Actual
Revenue to Support Eastside United Church	\$ 104,288	\$ 113,059	\$ 104,328	\$ 112,526
Revenue to Support Mission & Service Fund	9,994	10,640	10,035	9,901
Total Revenue	114,282	123,699	114,363	122,427
Eastside's Operating Expenses	99,534	106,541	106,855	90,323
Contribution to Mission & Service Fund	9,994	10,640	9,823	9,901
Total Operating Expenses	109,528	117,181	116,678	100,224
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 4,754	\$ 6,518	\$ (2,315)	\$ 22,203
Less: Mortgage Payments (principal & interest)	11,025	9,150	12,000	12,375
Equals: Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (6,271)	\$ (2,632)	\$ (14,315)	\$ 9,828

Horizons: The Newsletter of Eastside United Church

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