



A sign stating 'Fences Ain't Gonna Fix Homelessness' stands next to a space where makeshift homes are banned.

God's children die on the street

It was a crisp autumn morning when I arrived for work one Friday. As I parked my car at the Bissell Centre, I noticed the Indigenous Cultural Support Worker was out front on the sidewalk drumming and singing beside a sleeping bag.

Smudge had been lit and several other people had gathered around. My heart sank as I approached and noticed a police car parked discreetly nearby. Under the sleeping bag was the body of a young man who had died alone, the victim of another drug poisoning.

A statistic. One of the 421 Edmontonians of "no fixed address" who died on the streets in 2023. Someone's son. A child of God.

So many societal shortcomings coalesced to place that young man on that sidewalk: lack of understanding about addiction as an illness and not a moral failure; lack of safe, affordable housing; lack of safe

Society failing the test of basic humanity, writes **Pastor Quinn Strikwerda**

settings for drug use that reduces the risk of injury or fatal harm; racism; indifference; the criminalization of poverty.

"The test of a civilization is the way that it cares for its helpless members," wrote the Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Pearl S. Buck. Working in the urban core of Edmonton, I am often struck by how far we as a society have to go to pass that test.

The God we worship, whose fullest expression is seen in Jesus Christ, is always calling us to consider how we care for the vulnerable among us, how we strive for justice, how we stand in solidarity with the oppressed, the homeless and precariously housed, the food

insecure, the lonely.

At ICPM our core mission is to create community where all people are honoured and cherished as equals. We speak the good news of resurrection hope into the hearts of people who so often feel hopeless. We strive to lift our voices and place our bodies to call individuals, governments and institutions to justice.

In the first book of Samuel, we hear a vision of the society we long for, "(God) raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honour" (2:8).

Join us as we work for a city in which young people never die alone

'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?' (Micah 6.8)

ICPM calls out for your involvement

In May, the board of directors of Inner City Pastoral Ministry named me as its chair, replacing Andrea Wilhelm who has given exceptional service in that role for the past three years.

Andrea led ICPM through the troubled times of Covid and kept a steady hand on the wheel of our little boat which is susceptible to the large waves churned up by post-industrial society. She has been a more-than-able steward, and she has mentored me gently and clearly during my brief time on the board. (See Andrea's article on Page 4.)

My own background is as a journalist, mainly in the Catholic press, but also with mainstream media. I will strive to serve ICPM to the best of my ability.

The waves affecting ICPM include the housing crisis which is pushing more and more people onto the street. Many congregate near ICPM's Bissell Centre home on 96th Street.

Loving presence

Our belief is that the ministry's contribution to dealing with this crisis is first, one of being a loving presence to those without homes. From our beginnings 46 years ago, that has been our primary goal.

Second, we are to advocate for lasting solutions which serve the poorest of the poor, especially for more supportive housing. All people

Ministry strives to be the face of Jesus in time of crisis, says Glen Argan



Glen Argan

are created in God's image have great dignity which ought to be respected.

My priorities as chair are the priorities of the board. Over the last two years, the board has developed strategies for fundraising and risk implementation. Now, we must implement those plans. Fortunately, we have a dedicated and wise board who are members of United, Lutheran, Anglican and Catholic churches. We also have a fine staff, led by Pastor Quinn Strikwerda, and volunteers

who serve regularly at our Sunday services.

Further, we have an army of volunteers from churches and other organizations throughout the Edmonton region. Without those volunteers who prepare and serve the lunches every Sunday, our ministry would be greatly diminished.

It is cliché to say we need more. But it is true. We need more money and more volunteers. We also need more board members. Financially, ICPM scrapes by. An increased level of donations would be of immense help.

Also, some who prepare and serve Sunday lunches have been doing so for many years. We are always in search of groups to take responsibility for those lunches once or twice a year. Feeding the hungry is a time-honoured act of serving Christ present in the poor. Face-to-face contact with marginalized people is the first step toward advocating for and with them. If your group would like to help with the lunches, please contact Maria Kruszewski whose article appears on Page 3.

ICPM is a small boat, but it depends on the service of many. Please help us in whatever ways you can.



Our Mission: Inner City Pastoral Ministry is an interdenominational Christian Ministry of Presence. In partnership with the community, and guided by the Spirit of God, we walk with the people of the inner city of Edmonton.

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ICPM Board Members

Glen Argan: Roman Catholic, Board Chair
Victoria Wynn: United Church, Secretary
Cathy Armstrong: Anglican, Treasurer
Maria Kruszewski: Roman Catholic, Lunch Coordinator
Ann Matheson: Anglican, Director
Colin Millang: Lutheran, Director

ICPM Ministry Team

Quinn Strikwerda: Pastor
Jim Gurnett: Pastoral Associate
Verna Fisher: Indigenous Knowledge Keeper
Farley Magee: Musician in Residence
Maria Kruszewski: Lunch Coordinator
Annie Johnson: Food Coordinator



Sunday lunch program needs help

A common sentiment expressed by those who volunteer to bring snack bag lunches for the Community of Emmanuel at Inner City Pastoral Ministry is that “we get so much more than we give.”

Faith communities that serve with us on Sunday mornings find our inner-city community welcoming and the experience of meeting and praying with them, inspiring. We want to share the joy.

We are always looking for more assistance when it comes to providing lunches on Sunday mornings. If you have any connections with service organizations or groups

Share in the joy of serving the Community of Emmanuel, urges Maria Kruszewski

who are community-minded, we would be delighted to invite them to serve with us.

The thanks of those who receive food and coffee on Sunday mornings is genuine and heart-expanding, a treasure that we want to offer to as many people as we can.

I am ICPM’s lunch coordinator. You can reach me at (780) 440-6711 (phone or text) or icpmlunch@gmail.com.

If you know of groups such as an art cooperative, a yoga class or a faith group that is justice-



minded and hasn’t heard them to contact me. about ICPM, please invite The more, the merrier!

Outgoing board chair offers thanks

Dear friends and members of the community of Emmanuel and ICPM. At the May board meeting, I handed in my resignation from the board.

The reason is that I have accepted a full-time position an hour away from Edmonton.

I joined the board in 2019 and became chair in 2021. Serving ICPM and getting to know the community of Emmanuel has been a wonderful experience. Here is an organization with a big heart for people from any walk of life and comprised of a diversity of supporters from several denominations and faiths.

What a beautiful ministry rooted in the Gospel that through Jesus Christ Emmanuel, God has shown that God is with us, each of us and us together, no matter the circumstances, and probably even more so when we have messed up, feel worthless, ashamed, hopeless, afraid, alone.

God does not abandon us. God is here. In the name of this wonderful God, we walk with the people of Boyle-McCauley-Downtown, one of the poorest areas in Edmonton.

As I leave the board, I have some thoughts. First, thank you to my fellow board members for being such a passionate and collaborative group.

It has been an absolute pleasure. I loved the ecumenical composition of the board. What better way to get to

In the name of this wonderful God, we walk with the people of Boyle-McCauley-Downtown, one of the poorest areas in Edmonton.

know other denominations than by working with people. A special thanks to Glen Argan who is taking over as chair.

Dear readers, we have some vacancies on the board, as well as on some committees (Communication,

ICPM is an ecumenical organization with a big heart, says **Andrea Wilhelm**



Andrea Wilhelm

Ministry and Personnel, Finance). Please consider applying.

Time commitment is about three hours per month plus some extra events per year. In particular, if you are good with finances or governance or human resources, we would love to hear from you.

Next, remember that we are happy to come speak to your congregation or adult education or youth group (or other group).

We have stories to share, we have solid facts that the media don't always convey, and we can connect the dots about the causes of homelessness and poverty so they do

Besides your regular support, I encourage you to consider arranging a legacy gift.

not seem like such mysterious, insurmountable problems.

Alright, back to my thanks. A huge thanks to Pastor Quinn Strikwerda, Pastoral Associate Jim Gurnett, Knowledge Keeper Verna, Admin Support Misha, Musician Farley, Lunch Coordinator Maria, Coffee Coordinator Annie with Linda and Mary-Lou, the other Linda, Fabian, and all who devote time pretty much every Sunday.

Plus of course all those who support with lunches and donations, monetary and in-kind. Thank you all and bless you.

I'd like to make a final suggestion. Besides your regular support, I encourage you to consider arranging a legacy gift, for example, by putting ICPM in your will. It's a way of making a difference in an even more lasting way.

If you would like to get more information on any of the above, please contact Pastor Quinn at icpmedmonton@gmail.com or our new chair, Glen Argan at glenargan@shaw.ca.



Flo's work vital to ICPM

Many volunteers with caring hearts are vital to the work of ICPM. One volunteer who has given much time, energy and prayer to ICPM over the years is Flo Reducka. She jokingly calls herself "Flo the Sock Lady" because of her work to gather socks (and much more) in Annunciation Parish. Every couple of months she calls to say the trunk of her car is full of donations to be shared. Her dedication to the work of ICPM has meant resources have been available to support many in the Community of Emmanuel over the years. Flo is facing a serious health challenge now and is supported by the love and prayers — and deep gratitude — of ICPM.

You are invited

Homeless Memorial Service

1:00 PM Thursday June 6 2024

Homeless Memorial Plaza (103A Avenue & 100 Street)



Everyone Welcome

Remember - Grieve - Honour

Edmonton Coalition on Housing & Homelessness - ecohh.ca

INNER CITY PASTORAL MINISTRY

Straight From The Street

10527 96 St. NW

Edmonton, AB T5H 2H6

**ICPM:
Help Us
Walk
with
the
People**

ICPM Needs Your Support:

- **Donate Online:** www.canadahelps.org. Search for “Inner City Pastoral Ministry”
- **By cheque:** Inner City Pastoral Ministry, 10527-96 St NW, Edmonton, AB T5H 2H6
- **Etransfer to icpmgiving@gmail.com** through your banking app. Please put your name and address in the message to receive a charitable receipt.

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