

Augustine this fall

Sing a tune: The choir at Augustine is gearing up, or warming up, for another year filled with good music and fun fellowship. This small but mighty group will begin meeting on Thursday evenings on Sept. 9 at 7:30 and has a few extras lined up for the coming year. The choir is planning a fund raising concert of secular music with emphasis on show tunes and Broadway numbers, date TBA. There will also be a special Good Friday service featuring the beautiful Duruflé Requiem. If you are interested in joining the choir, please contact Music Director, Stuart McVey. Hope everyone has had a great summer. We're looking forward to seeing you soon.

Sunday school: Sunday school begins Sept. 12 for children age 3 and up. An unstaffed nursery is available at the back of the church for younger children and their parents.

100-mile lunch: Augustine's Social Justice team invites everyone to stay after church on Sept. 12 for a lunch made from ingredients within 100 miles of Winnipeg. Donations of \$5 are appreciated to cover costs.

New Members group: For anyone wishing to becoming a member of Augustine, a new members group will be held once a week over eight weeks to explore different types of prayer, the origins of the Bible, the history of the United Church and of Augustine, faith statements from the early church through until today, our own beliefs and spiritual gifts. If you are interested, please contact Loraine.

Please join us for any or all of these events. For more information on these or other upcoming events, services or celebrations, check out the church web site at www.augustineunitedchurch.org.

Singer-songwriter takes the stage at Augustine

You saw him at Pride, now you can see him at Augustine. Jeff Straker, the Canadian pop-folk musician who took to the stage at the Forks on Pride Day, is coming to do a special one-night only fund raising performance at Augustine. Straker, who has been compared to k.d. lang and Rufus Wainwright by the Chicago Free Press has had a Top 10 video on Much More Music. He was a national finalist in the Canadian Radiostar Songwriting Competition and as a top 20 finalist in the global 2009 Unisong Competition.

The Saskatchewan-raised performer, who recently launched his first full-length CD "Step Right Up," will perform Sept. 26 at 7 p.m. at the church. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door, and are available through the church office. Come check out one of Canada's best new voices and support Augustine's good works in the community.



The *AugustZine* is published by Augustine United Church. The next issue of *AugustZine* will be published in November. If you have ideas or would like to write an article, please contact augustzine@mts.net. Augustine United Church is located at 444 River Ave., Winnipeg, MB, and can be contacted at (204) 284-2250, augustine.uc@mts.net or on-line at www.augustineunitedchurch.org.

AugustZine

The Zine of Augustine United Church, September 2010

Interfaith Solidarity

Augustine United Church's interest in interfaith work was piqued on a fateful Sunday morning when we arrived at church to discover boulders and glass shards spread across our Oak Table room and nursery. Large holes gaped through century-old stained glass windows. Graffiti adorned the front doors and memorial stone in the front garden. We were stunned in grief, incredulous that someone would destroy our beloved heritage of the saints. We felt violated; our holy place had been desecrated. As we stood around the glass shards, people began to offer prayers. One remembered our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters, whose holy places of worship and burial are frequently desecrated.

When we later informed others of this travesty, some of the first to respond were the Jewish and Muslim communities. They sent their condolences and prayers, standing in solidarity with our pain and fear.

There was permanent loss, as we discovered that the fine art of stained glass painting has been lost in North America. However, we wished to dedicate what we were able to restore. Because of the immediate support from interfaith communities, we asked representatives from the Muslim, Jewish and Aboriginal communities to take part in our service of dedication. Rabbi Neil Rose sounded the hauntingly beautiful shofar, a ram's horn, Shahina Siddiqui offered prayers of peace and comfort and Elder Barbara Shoomski offered a Cree prayer after smudging the restored stained glass windows. This unfortunate incident opened new doors of interfaith relations.

The following year, we held an interfaith Lenten study on Judaism and Islam. We invited speakers from each community to come and teach a group of



One of the windows at Augustine, rebuilt after being damaged.

about twenty people about the basic tenets of Judaism and Islam. We then attended a synagogue service and observed prayers in a mosque. We were more comfortable in the synagogue, surprised by the familiarity of so many traditions in which our Christian faith is rooted. Of less comfort, though, was our Jewish speaker's reference to the land of Israel, central to their faith. We realized that we needed to walk a very careful path with both our Jewish and Muslim friends as we listened to the needs and fears of each group. Solidarity is a dif-

difficult task when positions are polarized and the United Church has a history of swinging to the polarities of the “most oppressed.” It is dangerous and easily misleading when one set of oppressions is measured against another.

As we have walked carefully with each other, we have begun to establish relationships between our different faith communities. We have held interfaith prayers for peace at the Central Mosque, Temple Shalom and Augustine United Church. Because we have involved entire faith communities, rather than meetings with only the leaders of these communities, we are finding more opportunities for members to connect beyond these interfaith prayer gatherings. One member of Temple Shalom has invited Augustinians to her bat mitzvah. Temple Shalom has invited Augustine to

share a table at the Pride celebrations. Augustine will be extending an invitation to Temple Shalom to join in an interfaith study of the Hebrew scriptures.

All is not smooth or easy in our interfaith work. Islamic Social Services is asking us for support for women who choose to wear the niqab and burka. This is a difficult topic for us, but we are learning how to have these difficult conversations. As trust continues to develop, we are better able to listen compassionately even to that with which we disagree. We will continue to learn about our own blinders and biases as we offer advocacy for each other. As we listen from the heart, we are slowly learning how to walk in solidarity with our interfaith partners for the healing of this world.

- Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd

A Proud Day for Augustine



Augustine participated in the annual Winnipeg Pride parade, alongside members of Temple Shalom.

Summertime fun at Augustine



Members of Augustine participated in the church's annual summer fund raisers. Above left, Rose Scott finds her first geocache, the first of the day, during the geocaching expedition. Above right, Christine Coltart and Bev Ridd at a tea.

A church partnership providing housing to the community

There's a housing shortage in Winnipeg these days. It's not a new issue.

About forty years ago, members of Augustine & Crescent Fort Rouge United Churches and St. Luke's Anglican Church recognized there was a need for seniors housing in this area and decided to do something about it. The three churches were already partnering on a number of other community initiatives, many of which are still in operation today. In 1970 land and financing from the Manitoba Housing and Community Renewal Corporation became available.

The three churches, with support from Trinity Baptist, started working to build community by building housing. In 1973, the Fort Rouge Ecumenical Apartments, at 400 Stradbrook were officially opened. The

apartment, commonly referred to by its address as “400”, stands 15 stories above street level and has 145 suites, most studio or bachelor suites.

Today FREA is still meeting an important need in the community, with a few vacancies, but as soon as the suites have been prepared, they will be filled. There's a waiting list to get in. The complex has a new roof, windows and boilers and looks fine as it's going on 40. Currently, Bill Morris is serving on the board as Augustine's rep and a second board member would be welcome.

Manitoba's Age & Opportunity, a group that provides programs and services to older adults 55 and older, operates out of the building. They provide a variety of programs for both tenants and area residents.