

# Raising the roof, letting the sun shine in

One of the many, wonderful things about worshipping at Augustine is the magnificent building. There is, however, a very real cost to maintaining and preserving the church.

A dedicated group has been working to get grants to help with the cost of major repairs to the Augustine's roof and windows. So far they have raised \$66,500 for window restoration from the Blennerhassett, Winnipeg and Sir Thomas Crope foundations, and the Government of Manitoba Community Places program. The group is now preparing applications for roof repairs.

The grants are supplemented by donations from the congregation and community. In September the Winnipeg Free Press ran a full-page article about the work that is needed, and is being done, to the building.

As a result of the article, we received donations including some from people who are not part of the congregation. Many of them wrote that they had previous contact with Augustine through family members, weddings or other special occasions. In some cases they

simply said they value the work and presence of Augustine in the community.

Donations received in 2010 up to the end of October from members and non-members for building renovations totalled \$4,130. The portion of this received after the Free Press article was \$2,305. We now have enough money available to begin work on the most urgent repairs to the windows, and therefore Council has asked the Property Manager to start discussions with potential contractors so that work can begin as soon as possible.

Of course large projects such as the complete restoration of Augustine's roof and windows take time to fund and execute. We are very grateful to all our donors and granting agencies, who are helping to ensure that our beautiful landmark building can continue to play a valued role not only as a place of worship but as a home for many activities and organisations that serve its surrounding community.

- David Viggars, Finance team leader

## Services of the season

Join us for worship this holiday season. We will be having Sunday services at our regular time, 10:30 a.m., leading up to Christmas Eve. On Friday, December 24, there are two special services.

**December 24:** Augustine is hosting two Christmas Eve services. The first is at 7:00 and is a family service. The second service is at 10:30 p.m. and will feature carols, communion and candlelight with our choir in full voice.

**December 26:** Join us for an intergenerational service of carols and their stories.

For more information on these or other upcoming events, services or celebrations, check out the church website at [www.augustineunitedchurch.org](http://www.augustineunitedchurch.org).



The *AugustZine* is published by Augustine United Church. Writing for this issue by: Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, Kim Holgate, David Viggars and N.J. Renwick, photographs by Charlie McDougall and N. J. Renwick. The next issue of *AugustZine* will be published in February with a deadline of Jan 30. If you have ideas or would like to write, please contact [augustzine@mts.net](mailto: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](mailto:augustine.uc@mts.net) or on-line at [www.augustineunitedchurch.org](http://www.augustineunitedchurch.org).

# AugustZine

The Zine of Augustine United Church, November 2010

## A challenge and a change

In the 1960s, Bob Dylan sang that the times they are a' changing. Dylan's words echo at Augustine today. In the coming year, the church will go through changes and challenges and has an opportunity to be renewed as a community of faith.

On October 31, Augustine's minister, Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, announced that after seven years of serving the congregation, she will be leaving Augustine next July and moving on to new opportunities.

Augustine, she said, is in a strong position. There's a good team of leaders; growing Sunday school; dedicated choir; a new website, and the church is coming closer to a balanced budget. There are strengthened ties with Osborne Village, the Faculty of Theology at the University of Winnipeg, other faith communities and government representatives.

"With God's grace," she said, "We are moving into a place of stability, engaging in vibrant ministry that will take you well into your future. I say "you" and not "we" because the Spirit of God has been guiding me in a new direction."

That direction may take Loraine and her partner Nancy to study Spanish in Latin America and possibly volunteer as United Church Overseas Personnel. It's something they had been exploring before coming to Augustine but was not an option at the time. The opportunity is there now and this, she said, is the time to go. Loraine will be working with the church over the next few months to make the change as seamless as possible. Anyone wanting to know more about the process are welcome to talk to Loraine or members of Council.

The sermon Loraine preached the day she announced she was stepping down presented a challenge to Augustine as a community, and to each of us as individuals. She reflected on Reformation Sunday, the



*Loraine will be moving on to new challenges after seven years at Augustine.*

day that honours the work of Christian reformer Martin Luther, who nailed 95 concerns about the church to a cathedral door. She then asked us to look at what we hold essential in our faith. "What really matters to your understanding of the gospel? How does the church measure up to this? Are there essentials that we are missing here? At the risk of inviting holes in our front door, are there things that you think essential to the Christian faith to which our church needs to better attend?"

As Augustine moves into the new year, this is a time for us to reflect, renew and to build on the church's work as we continue our mission to worship God, care for each other, seek justice, and deepen our faith, in an inclusive, Affirming, Christian community.

*N.J. Renwick*

## Stewardship: How might I best fulfill our mission through my gifts of money or service?

“Stewardship is how we live out being followers or disciples of Jesus, as individuals and as churches. It is an ongoing conversion process of daily decisions that both reflect and affect our relationship with God and all others, including the earth. It relates to all that we are, do, and have, both individually and in community.”

- *Stewardship Development: Connecting To All Aspects Of Church Life*

What keeps me at Augustine? I love the sanctuary - there is just something about this space. However, over time, it has been the conversations and learning opportunities at Augustine which keep me here. One of the really nice things about Augustine, and the United Church as a whole, is that you can explore, talk openly, ask questions, and “think,” and you are always met with respect for doing so.

So when I asked myself the question this year “How might I use my gifts of money or service to help Augustine fulfill its mission?” I found myself reflecting on my own conversations and process of decision making up until now. Why have I accepted a leadership position and chosen to serve on the Finance Team and help with grant writing? It’s not that I find grant writing especially fun or life giving - really there is nothing fun about grant writ-

ing. It’s time consuming, tedious work, and leadership is kind of a thankless job.

I offer my service because I have found Augustine to be a life-giving and transformative place, where I have found the strength to heal, move forward, and grow. So for me it seems that one of the best acts of stewardship will be to continue to use my time and abilities to do the things that “need” to be done. I want to help ensure

Augustine’s financial viability, so it will always be here to ask the tough questions, and lead those conversations that have made the church a better, safer place, for all people to worship...

It is not too late to get your stewardship package in. Regardless of how much you give - your support, of time, money, or skills is valued and appreciated by all.

- *Kim Holgate*



*Canadian pop folk musician Jeff Straker performed a fundraising concert at Augustine on September 26. Events such as this concert and the church supper supplement regular givings to Augustine.*

- *photo: Charlie McDougall*

## Music and theology internationally

*As part of her work at Augustine Loraine has been, and will be, participating in activities and events far beyond the walls of the church. Here are her reflections on two of those activities.*

As a member of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission of the World Council of Churches, I have attended a few meetings in different parts of the world to help draft theological statements for the WCC.

My last meeting was in Crete, one year ago, where they were suddenly without a pianist (the scheduled pianist died just before the meeting). I offered to fill in to provide accompaniment for the worship services and lead a choir. In so doing, I came out as a musician! Apparently, they were looking for people with both music and theology backgrounds to form the Worship Planning Committee for the next assembly of the World Council of Churches in South Korea in 2013. They sent in my name for consideration and a few months later, I received a request to join this Worship Planning Committee. It will consist of one meeting per year over the next three years, in addition to attending the WCC assembly. It is an incredible honour to be on this planning committee, and gives the United Church of Canada additional voice in the leadership of the WCC.

I also serve on the Theology and Interchurch, Interfaith Committee of the General Council. This



committee prepares theological documents for the United Church. I have been asked, along with Jordan Cantwell who is also a member of this committee, to accompany an official United Church delegation to Israel and Palestine at the end of February, 2011.

We have been asked to provide theological background on the theology of land and the Jewish identity of the Israeli state. You can imagine the reading stack on my desk as I prepare for this! I will be using my continuing education weeks to prepare for this trip and for the trip itself.

Upon return, I will be offering a Lenten Study on the theology of land, with reflections on both our Canadian context and Israel/Palestine. We will also be practicing the art of Compassionate Listening during this study—a tool that is very helpful in dealing with day-to-day conflicts here at home, as well as in

conflicted international settings.

As I write these descriptions of my wider-church work, I am keenly feeling a sense of grief. While these opportunities above are filled with excitement and promise, I am also aware that this will be my last year with Augustine. I hope that my involvement with the wider church will continue to help Augustinians understand their ministry to be world-wide in scope and impact. We have all grown and changed together over the past few years. I will carry your teachings and formation with me to these wider church gatherings and into the future. I hope that you can also carry with you a vision of communion with the wider body of Christ and a commitment to the work of interfaith partnerships as we all work towards the peaceable kin-dom of God here on earth

-*Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd*