



GRATITUDE

L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter #76



L'Arche's Christmas Nativity in December

You are invited to join in L'Arche Winnipeg's 4th annual Christmas Nativity which will be held on Monday, December 3rd 2018, at **Covenant Christian Reformed Church**, 653 Knowles Avenue. The evening begins at 7:00 pm.

The narration of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and the events leading to the birth of Jesus will be acted out in tableaux by L'Arche members, accompanied by our own musicians and the singing of traditional Christmas songs - and everyone is invited to sing along.

The last song - *Silent Night* - will be sung in various languages, reflecting the cultural diversity of our assistants in L'Arche who come from different countries. There will be refreshments and desserts (prepared by L'Arche Tova Café) served in the adjoining hall afterwards. Hope to see you there!

There is no admission cost for the Christmas Nativity. A free-will offering will be collected. The money collected will be given to L'Arche International, designated for support to the seven L'Arche communities in Latin America and the Caribbean.



(above) Stacey and Daniel as Mary & Joseph at the 2017 Christmas Nativity
(below) Musicians and singers performing traditional Christmas songs



Pancake Breakfast Raises Funds for Solidarity

An October 27th fund-raising pancake breakfast at Applebee's restaurant on Regent raised \$1,077.00. for Solidarity, L'Arche International's aid program for L'Ar-

che communities in poorer countries where little or no government funding is provided. L'Arche Winnipeg's commitment is to annually raise \$7,500.00 for Solidarity. Money is also raised through one-time monthly donations by L'Arche Winnipeg members and by other friends/donors.

Approximately 90 guests and volunteers were at the breakfast, which also included a silent auction/prize draws. Our thanks goes out to the prize donors, to the people organizing the event, to the volunteers serving the breakfast, and of course to the many guests who came to support L'Arche and were able to enjoy a good breakfast and great company.



See Linda's story on page 4



Pirooska and Rick enjoying the pancakes



Casera Credit Union's Community Enrichment Award presentation in April



Party celebration after the May annual Walk



Tug-of-war game at community BBQ in July



Mayor Bowman at the Café in August



A Google search "Jean Vanier 90" will bring you to a L'Arche Canada page where you can see many photos & greetings to Jean from around the world.

Highlights of the Year 2018

January

- ◆ Main floor accessible shower installed at L'Aine house

February

- ◆ New flooring installed at the L'Arche office
- ◆ Annual Lenten community retreat
- ◆ Solidarity bowling at Academy lanes to raise funds for L'Arche International Solidarity

March

- ◆ Music Night at L'Arche Tova Café
- ◆ L'Arche members attend a Jets hockey game courtesy of The North West Company
- ◆ We mourn the death of Pat Lange at L'Arche Calgary (he was also a founding member of L'Arche Winnipeg)
- ◆ A cheque of \$3,772.16 is presented to L'Arche Winnipeg by **Funding Innovation's Easel Program** (for art displayed/sold at the Café)

April

- ◆ L'Arche Tova Café celebrates its' 6th anniversary
- ◆ Canadian premiere of feature film on Jean Vanier & L'Arche "**Summer in the Forest**" at Cineplex Odeon theatre on McGillivray Blvd
- ◆ Music Night at L'Arche Tova Café
- ◆ L'Arche Tova Café is the 2018 recipient of **Casera Credit Union's Community Enrichment Award**

May

- ◆ Annual Walk with L'Arche event raises \$58,070.00
- ◆ Transcona Rotary presents it's **Paul Harris Fellow Recognition** to L'Arche Winnipeg Community Leader **Jim Lapp**

June

- ◆ Annual day of retreat for assistants
- ◆ Friends of L'Arche are recognized at annual **Volunteer Appreciation** evening
- ◆ Linda Bauch's life-long dream of being a bride is realized when her Elpida house members organize a wedding ceremony for her
- ◆ Annual General Meeting of L'Arche Winnipeg, Inc.
- ◆ L'Arche artists participate in art expo at **Université de Saint-Boniface's** international symposium on people with disabilities

July

- ◆ Community barbecue & party celebration
- ◆ We mourn the death of Sandra Burnett, a member of L'Arche for the last 19 years

August

- ◆ Fresh L'Arche Tova Café baking sold every Thursday at Transcona Biz Market Garden
- ◆ Mayor Brian Bowman visits the Café

September

- ◆ L'Arche founder **Jean Vanier** celebrates his 90th birthday on September 10th
- ◆ L'Arche Winnipeg delegates attend L'Arche Canada General Assembly in Halifax & approve new 5-year Mandate and selection of a new National Leader

October

- ◆ Music Night at L'Arche Tova Café
- ◆ Pancake breakfast at Applebee's to raise funds for L'Arche International's **Solidarity** program
- ◆ **MREA Foundation** (Manitoba Real Estate Foundation) provides a grant for new kitchen cupboards at The Anchor house

November

- ◆ L'Arche Western Region (7 communities) Council meets in Winnipeg
- ◆ **L'Arche Canada** begins a year long celebration of its' 50th anniversary

December

- ◆ Annual public presentation of L'Arche's **Christmas Nativity**
- ◆ The Grace sisters & musicians present **Songs of Christmas** at Blessed Sacrament Parish, to raise funds for L'Arche Solidarity
- ◆ 2nd floor washroom upgrade at our Dayspring house, to allow wheelchair access.

I Know God Exists Because L'Arche Exists

by Jim Lapp
Community Leader

The Presence of God - I am drawn to the communities whose roots are in the poorest neighborhoods, which welcome those who have been deeply wounded, like alcoholics, people just coming out of prison, young people lost in drugs, delinquents or people with mental illnesses. There is not always much joy and fun in these communities, but there is great fidelity and acceptance of woundedness. The faces of the people who work in them are lined with fatigue. But in these communities we feel the presence of God, who is close to the most rejected and wounded people of all.

-Jean Vanier,
Community and Growth, p. 147

This summer I met Kristopher Woods from L'Arche Antigonish and Jocelyn Worster from L'Arche St. John at the L'Arche Tova Café for breakfast. They were on their way to Victoria and stopped in to visit L'Arche Winnipeg and the café. We, of course, talked about L'Arche. Kristopher mentioned that on a retreat with Joe Egan, former International and National Leader of L'Arche, Joe had said that "I know God exists because L'Arche exists." Since hearing that phrase, I have meditated a lot about it.

The older I get the more I am convinced that, if I am going to feel God's presence in the world, I have to follow in His footsteps and serve those

who are often outcasts in our society. Like Jesus in his ministry, this includes the weak, the sick, the disabled, prisoners, and refugees. Or as Thomas Merton says, Jesus is present with all those people for whom there is no room in the inn.

When I first came to L'Arche Winnipeg in September of 1974, I felt right away the presence or Spirit of God. Most of our members with a disability had just come out of the institution in Portage and were struggling to adapt to their new life living with 14 other people. This profound experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit is the reason I am still actively involved in this community.

L'Arche is experiential. Our mission and our beliefs come out of this shared experience. I think most people who spend any length of time at L'Arche come to the same realization that Jean Vanier came to about five years after he started L'Arche in Trosly France. We all realize that the people with a disability are helping us more than we are helping them. For me, I have learned so much from them about God and his love for all humanity. The members with a disability at L'Arche seem to know intuitively that they are loved and accepted by God as they are right now. In turn they accept us the way we are right now. They quickly forgive us for the mistakes we make. For me, they are a sign of God's love in the world. I would highly recommend that you get to know the people of L'Arche so that you too can experience God's love.

"Songs of Christmas" at Blessed Sacrament Church



The Grace Sisters & musicians present an evening of Christmas songs on Thursday, December 13, 2018 at Blessed Sacrament Church, 710 Roanoke St. in Transcona, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Last year's event raised over \$3,700.00 for **L'Arche Solidarity**. Thank you to the musicians and singers who donate their time and talent for this cause!

We hope many of you will join us again for this special & intimate evening with this talented group. Tickets are \$15.00 each and are available at the L'Arche Winnipeg office, 118 Regent Ave. East (open Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm). For more information: 204-237-0300 ext. 0.

Christmas Baking Available at L'Arche Tova Café

L'Arche Tova Café will be busy with Christmas baking for the next few weeks - and you can benefit by purchasing boxes of mixed dainties at the Café! A variety of cakes, dainties, cinnamon buns, scones, and breads (Potato Dill, Hearty Multi-Grain, or Country Rye) can be pre-ordered. Call 204-421-9388 for more information.

Catering

The Café can cater your Company meeting or family gathering. See the Café website for catering menu items, pricing and conditions.

Holiday Closure

The Café will be closed from Sunday, December 23 until Wednesday, January 2nd, and re-opening on Thursday, January 3rd, 2019.



Remembering Sandra

This summer we mourned the loss of our good friend and companion in L'Arche, **Sandra**, who passed away on July 13th. Sandra had been a member of L'Arche for the past 19 years, living at **The Ark** house.

Sandra is fondly remembered as one who brought a lot of joy & life to those around her, especially with her love of music and dancing.

Linda's Life-Long Dream Comes True

by Hubert Pantel

Being a bride: it finally happened for Linda, now in her 70's. Linda has lived at L'Arche Winnipeg for the past 44 years, having arrived in our community at age 28 in 1974. She has always dreamed about being a bride: looking at white dresses while shopping, getting a ring, expressing this deep desire over and over again.

Her friends, especially Rayleen and Petra who support Linda in her Windsor Park home, finally decided to make this dream a reality for her. A lot of work went into organizing the event: renting the hall, sending out the invitations, planning the meal, the program, contacting musicians, and, of course, *the dress* which was donated and tailored to fit Linda.

On June 20, the 98 guests - L'Arche members, along with special friends and relatives of Linda - stood as Linda made her grand entry into the Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens hall, forsaking her wheelchair in order to walk in escorted by Rayleen and Petra. The very wide smile on Linda's face - an expression of pure joy - would last all evening, even if occasionally mixed with tears as the emotions were, at times, overwhelming. Her friend Dennis led the ceremonial part, underlining Linda's qualities - how she is her own person, knowing who she is and what she wants. Linda got to put on her ring, was toasted, and went to the microphone to thank everyone for coming. She even led everyone in singing one of her favourite songs, *"This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine..."* Suffice it to say that not all eyes were dry in the assembly.

During the ceremony, when Linda spontaneously and loudly proclaimed "I do" (not just once, but twice), she was



(above) Rayleen and Petra escort Linda into the hall. (below) Dennis leading the ceremony.



not alone in her proclamation - her "partner" was all of us present, supporting her in who she is, as she is.

That evening, I felt that we were in the presence of a person who has the inner freedom to simply be who she is, no excuses needed. For those of us who may be constrained by concerns of image (*what do I look like, what do people think of me...*), Linda's wedding ceremony was like an invitation to journey with her on this road towards inner freedom, to discover, as she already has, this ultimate and liberating truth: I am loved as I am. May we all proclaim as loudly as Linda did: **I do** choose to be on this journey, to truly believe that God does indeed love me **as I am**.



GRATITUDE FROM WINNIPEG

L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter # 76

EDITOR: HUBERT PANTEL
Published 3 times a year
(February, June, November)

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L'Arche Winnipeg Inc. is a non-profit organization.

Donations are tax-deductible.

Charitable Reg. No.
107597692 RR0001

Music Night at L'Arche Tova Café

The final Music Night of the year will be held at the Café on Thursday, November 22, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

Come enjoy **Songs of the Beatles** as performed by **Rick Prevost**. Advance purchase tickets are \$20 each (includes coffee & dessert) and are available at the L'Arche Winnipeg Office, 118 Regent Ave. East - open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm.

