

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

CHAPLAINCIES:

NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. ~Hebrews 11:8

I will always have special stories of medical miracles and innovation and stories from emergency or trauma. But most of the folks I visit are in a place of waiting. Most of my patients don't know how long their hospital stay will be or if they can go home. They don't always know how all their belongings will get sorted for the move or which care home will have a place. Couples don't know if they can live together anymore. In hospital, many learn they will set out, and not know where they are going. In 2023, my heart is with all the faithful saints who, like Abraham, set out not knowing where they are going. It is my honour to know them, to learn from them, and to be humbled by their courage and hope in God who guides us all from this place to the next.

Partners I am not alone, I live in God's world. I want to honour everyone who helps with the work of the Northern Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincy, the board of directors, Rev. Lindsay and Rev. Kent Mohn who offer holiday coverage, Rev. Lorna King and the South Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincy, and the team of denominational chaplains I serve alongside in the health authority. I want to extend a special thank you to the prayer shawl ministers in churches throughout the province. Your prayers and gifts are deeply appreciated.

Projects This year was able to participate in some special projects to uplift the work of our chaplaincy. I wrote an article for Touchstone Theology Journal and began visiting churches to speak about the work of the chaplaincy. Our biggest project has been the launch of our lay pastoral care visitor support group, "Equipping the Saints." We are meeting quarterly over Zoom with the incredible support of Tracy Murton and Bev Diebert and in partnership with Rev. Lorna King and the South Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincy. Special speakers this year included Rev. Michelle Rowe who taught about trauma informed care, and Rev. Brian Walton who taught pastoral care basics. Thank you!

Visits Each week, I am able to make approximately 15 visits. As need increases with the closure of churches, and with increased calls from trauma and emergency and referrals from the Health Authority, I must prioritize patients in greatest need. I see patients at Royal University Hospital, Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, The Dube Centre, Saskatoon City Hospital, St. Paul's Hospital, and Parkridge Centre.

Saskatchewan Health Authority Referrals for Spiritual and Religious Care from Royal University Hospital alone exceeded 400 in 2023. These referrals come by fax to our office and represent patient and family requests throughout the hospital. In the absence of a Spiritual Care department at RUH, we denominational chaplains respond to these calls in addition to caring for patients on our own lists. As the number of requests continues to grow, it is increasingly difficult for us to respond to all the calls. We are still not able to bring our spiritual care volunteers back to work as this program is under review

I officiated the funerals of Lorne Kingston, Bruce Taras, Leith Shearer, Beatrice Cockle, Eugene Brass, Jeffrey Thomas, Karla Crilly, Sandra Brown, and Jean Langly. May they rest in peace and love.

Thank you again to all the people of Living Skies who support me and this ministry. It is my great joy to be in ministry together with you all.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Emily Carr,
Phone: 306-220-9964
Email: rev.emilycarr@outlook.com

SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY

Lorna King continues as Hospital Chaplain for Regina, with a provisional appointment in place for another year, this time as Ordained Retired Supply.

Thanks to a joint letter sent by the two hospital chaplaincy board chairpersons, we received a reply from the Minister of Health, Paul Merriman that in 2018 the SHA was formally advised that religious preference lists must be maintained. Work is currently underway to restore those lists and to make them available to Spiritual Care providers. While the work is progressing slowly, we recognize that many of people doing the work have a strong passion for providing spiritual care support to patients, residents and their families.

In October 2023, working with support from RC staff Tracy Murton, Lorna and Emily Carr the NSHC chaplain began a new program for support for individuals providing spiritual care for people from their community of faith – either in their homes or in health care or long-term care facilities. “Equipping the Saints” is a Zoom-based program offered 3 times a year with presentations by the chaplains or other spiritual care providers, an opportunity for questions and answers and conversations with others. This program is meeting some needs for ministers and lay people offering spiritual care and is very well-attended. Several pastoral care groups have joined the Zoom sessions as a team. Speakers have been the two chaplains as well as Michele Rowe and Brian Walton.

Register for “Equipping the Saints” by sending an email to Bev Diebert bdiebert@united-church.ca

Lorna was aware of the continuing over-crowding in Emergency Rooms in Regina, seeing overflow of beds and gurneys in hallways, sometimes with no privacy barriers for patients waiting for care. A complaint to the fire department led to the SHA making a decision to move Emergency equipment and supplies to another space on the main floor at the Pasqua Hospital. A decision was made to convert the space that had been the Pasqua Hospital Chapel into a storage space for that equipment. An interim multifaith room is on the 3rd floor and renovations are underway to convert part of the Library space into a Multifaith Centre. Spiritual Care continues to have access to an office space and quiet room on the main floor.

Meanwhile at Wascana Rehab Centre, a portion of a long-term care unit has been renovated to provide 7 additional rooms for Palliative Care. Designated units for Palliative Care are also at Pasqua Hospital and the Wascana Grace Hospice at the William Booth Special Care Home.

The South Sask Hospital Chaplaincy deeply appreciates the donations provided by individuals and by communities of faith. A significant contribution to our funding for the chaplaincy comes from donations made by communities of faith as they are doing the sad and difficult work of closing their churches. We acknowledge the generosity of those gifts and the pain that

surrounds the closing of a church.

We encourage you to check out the Spiritual Care display in the display space where you can pick up posters with contact info for the two hospital chaplains, info about “Equipping the Saints” and contact info for donations to the two chaplaincies,

Lorna King, Hospital Chaplain in Regina
South Sask Hospital Chaplaincy Board

LKing1255@yahoo.com

1(306) 551-7755

Lorna King cell: (306) 551-7755 LKing1255@yahoo.com

Treasurer Margaret: mtcooper@sasktel.net

webpage: <https://uccskhospitalchaplaincy.com>

JUSTICE MINISTRIES

REGINA ANTI-POVERTY MINISTRY (RAPM)



Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry

The Existence of Poverty is Shameful - To be Poor is Not

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kate Berringer (Chair)
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Mathias Ross - United Church

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Donnie Wood - Volunteer

Anti-Poverty Ministry

2330 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK S4P 0S6
TEL: (306) 352-6386

Website: www.antipovertyministry.ca

Mission Statement:

**Rooted in God’s radical love,
expressed through
compassion and action,
the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry
advocates and educates
with and for those seeking
social and economic justice.**

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

I have been privileged to chair the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry for the last six years. My time on the Board is coming to an end in June. It’s been an amazing nine years of learning for me. I’ve been so blessed to be able to serve as an encouragement and support of our staff as they deliver poverty advocacy services to thousands of clients. 2023 has been another year of blessings. This past year, we have worked on ways to collect stories from clients with a view to better educating the community about poverty. We are also in the process of becoming an Affirming ministry. I am grateful to our Affirming ministry committee who have been doing the work to educate us and work through this process on our behalf.

Peter Gilmer continues to offer his expertise in a full-time role on our staff. Colleen Taylor has now been with us for two years, also working in a full-time role. These two are the backbone of this ministry. This past year, we were also blessed by the assistance of our practicum students: Cara Focht and Rashad Haque and our summer student Konnor Shannon.

As always, we greatly appreciate all the support we receive from Knox-Metropolitan United Church here in Regina, as well as from our other support partners, The United Church of Canada, the Living Skies region, the G. Murray and Edna Forbes Foundation and our monthly givers, whom I like to call our RAPM heroes, without whom we would not be able to provide these services. Working towards the end of poverty requires patience and determination but it also requires the support of our community.

We are always looking for more RAPM volunteers and donors. If you would like to become part of this work, please visit our website at www.antipovertyministry.ca, to find out how you can help. If you would like to be considered for a spot of our Board, please contact me or either of our staff members at the RAPM office.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Berringer, Chair

STAFF REPORT

The work of the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry (RAPM) is done in three areas: individual advocacy, public education and social justice. Here are some of our activities in each of these areas for 2023.

Individual Advocacy

Individual advocacy involves providing support for low-income people and households to ensure that they are receiving those benefits that they are eligible for and that they are being treated fairly by the institutions that they are engaging with. RAPM attempts to mediate conflict between individuals and institutions so that there are mutually agreed upon resolutions, but we represent people through the appeal processes which are in place to resolve conflicts.

Most of our casework involves responding to decisions made by provincial income security programs due to the loss of other welfare rights services around the province.

Our income security advocacy includes handling income assistance cut-offs and denials, shelter and utility coverage, underpayments and overpayments, as well as income and asset verification and exemption cases. We help people with the eligibility process for the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) as well as accessing special needs.

In 2023, RAPM continued to handle a high number of cases related to problems with and inadequacies of the Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) program. This included a large number of cases regarding utility arrears and cut-offs as SIS, unlike previous programs, and SAID does not cover the cost of basic utilities. The inadequate shelter allowance also meant that we were dealing with many cases of rental arrears and evictions. We also helped many people unable to access SIS benefits.

In total, RAPM handled 2394 cases in 2023. We successfully resolved a significant majority of these cases. This does not mean that persons necessarily received everything that they would have liked but that their situation was made better after having made contact with our office.

RAPM also acts as a referral agency and intervenes to help meet immediate needs such as

food, shelter and clothing. We navigate systems and refer people to appropriate services.

Furthermore, RAPM provides pastoral care for persons who are dealing with issues or crises that are not advocacy or charity related. In all of our casework we follow a client driven process and seek to uphold the dignity of those requesting our help. We also maintain strict confidentiality.

During the past year, the RAPM staff conducted four advocacy training workshops for volunteers, clients, service providers and practicum students. These workshops develop advocacy skills in the province and help us keep up with the demand for this service. We present a recognized certificate to those who take the workshop and then provide 30 hours of advocacy service.

Public Education

RAPM's public education work involves providing educational workshops and producing educational resources on anti-poverty issues. Our public education campaign is aimed at the provincial public, with a focus on faith-based, community and educational groups and institutions as well as interested individuals.

Within the faith community, RAPM conducted eight anti-poverty services of worship in the past year. We also gave presentations to congregational, ecumenical and multi-faith groups and gatherings.

In the wider community, RAPM provided many workshops and presentations on a range of poverty issues to community and labour groups as well as a broad cross section of high school and post-secondary classes. We presented to multiple conferences including on income security to a provincial housing and homelessness conference hosted by the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan.

RAPM facilitated two practicum placements through the Faculty of Social Work in 2023. We have now supervised 75 placements as the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry. We also supervised a summer work placement and were a site for high school community service days.

RAPM continues to be a media resource on poverty issues and was quoted on 45 occasions in 2023 through interviews and press events.

A key educational activity continues to be RAPM's monthly study circles with low-income volunteers and activists. These study circles offer low-income people the opportunity to discuss poverty concerns that impact their lives. While our staff may provide resource materials or line up speakers, the topics are decided upon and often led by members of the group. In 2023 our circles included discussions regarding concerns with the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) legislation, mental health in the workplace and problems with the SIS program. These study circles influence RAPM's policy and tactical direction. They are also a meaningful way for low-income people to connect with and empower each other.

Social Justice

Social justice work involves anti-poverty lobbying and activism as well as community consensus building around key issues. It also includes joint projects and campaigns with community partners.

RAPM frequently makes presentations to politicians and other government representatives. We know that there are many powerful interests which carry considerable influence in policy making circles. The concerns of low-income people and the issues of the anti-poverty

movement must also be heard by decision makers. In the past year, RAPM has met with the Minister and senior officials of Social Services. We also met with Opposition Caucus members and the Critic for Social Services. We gave a presentation to the Campaign 2000 consultations for the UN Social Development Goals in Canada and multiple presentations to Regina City Council.

RAPM chairs End Poverty Regina and is on the Steering Committee of Poverty Free Saskatchewan. These are networks of organizations and individuals working on poverty issues. In the past year they have been focused on affordable housing and homelessness concerns as well as problems with the SIS program. We were also a part of the Warm Welcome Coalition which pushed for supports for a warming centre in Regina to operate during the winter months.

RAPM continues to be active with the Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC) which worked with the Government of Saskatchewan on the development of the SAID program. We are working with DISC on greater adequacy measures for SAID benefits and exemptions.

In March 2023, RAPM filed a charter challenge against the Government of Saskatchewan for forcing SAID beneficiaries to take out their CPP at age 60 as this discriminates on the basis of disability. Early withdrawal of CPP is of no benefit to those receiving SAID in the short term as it is clawed back and means less CPP income after the age of 65. This challenge will be heard and decided by the Court of King's Bench in 2024.

Since 1997, RAPM has identified its anti-poverty proposals through extensive consultation with low-income people and community groups dealing with poverty issues. These proposals have been passed through the courts of The United Church of Canada. They fall under the categories of adequate income security benefits, a living wage, quality and affordable housing and childcare, equity initiatives and fair taxation. We continue to promote these proposals along with our call for an Act to End Poverty in Saskatchewan which would ensure basic social and economic rights committed to under international law.

RAPM Staff

Peter Gilmer – Designated Lay Minister

Bachelor of Arts (Sociology), Master of Theological Studies, Doctorate of Divinity (honoris causa), 35 years advocacy experience, 2005 Saskatchewan Centennial Medal and QEII Platinum Jubilee Medal Recipient.

Colleen Taylor - Anti-Poverty Support Worker

Bachelor of Arts (Sociology), Bachelor of Social Work, 35 years of experience in advocacy, social justice and human services.

From the 2023 RAPM Annual Report

REGINA NATIVE OUTREACH MINISTRY (RNOM)

Minister: Rev. Deb Anderson-Pratt

Board Members:

Cindy Dorr – Co-chair

Jayne Kruger – Secretary

Jaselyn Cote – Co-Treasurer

Bonnie Rushowick – member at large

Kimberly Perrault – Co-chair

Jackie Lukey – Co-Treasurer

Lee Stubbe – member at large

Tannis Marks - member at large

RNOM Mission: To reach First Nations people, empower them to realize and share their gifts, nurture their connection to community and Creator God, and unite Indigenous ministries with the larger United Church of Canada.

RNOM Vision: We see a future where First Peoples of this Land and settler peoples are repairing relationships, encouraging the voices of the voiceless, and walking the paths of our spiritualities together.

RNOM Values:

- Decolonizing our Ministry, our attitudes and our actions while encouraging all around us to do so too.
- Acknowledging the sovereignty of First Nations/Metis/Inuit people to live out their own cultural and spiritual ways, broadly and within the Ministry.
- Upholding and implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.
- Honouring and sharing Ancestral wisdom.

Regina Native Outreach Minister 

Our minister, Deb Anderson-Pratt was placed on medical leave in June 2023. Without a minister, the board was unable to continue most of our projects and programming.

We have continued the Mother & Baby Welcome Bags project and the Knitting Circle program in support of the Welcome Bag project.

Mother & Baby Welcome Bag Project

Since March 2022 RNOM has been gifting Indigenous new mothers with a Welcome Bag containing essential items for their newborn baby and themselves. These welcome bags provide a tangible and loving start to breaking the cycles of shame passed down from residential schools, government and church.

The Welcome Bags are distributed by First Nations and Metis Services at Regina General Hospital. This hospital serves not only Regina but many communities in rural Saskatchewan so the Mother & Baby Welcome Bag project extends beyond Regina.

In March 2023, RNOM applied for and received a Healing Fund Grant to assist with funding the items for the baby bags. The contents of each Mother and Baby Welcome bag cost approximately \$150. Our goal is to assemble 120 bags per year (30 each quarter). The total cost of the project for one year is \$18,000. We received \$9,000 from the Healing Fund grant. The grant was the first one to be awarded as part of the UCW's five year project with the Healing Fund to support projects that help Indigenous women. The RNOM board was honored to receive the grant.

Because of the grant and donations, we were able to fulfill our goal and we assembled 120 Mother and Baby Welcome Bags (30 each in August 2023, November 2023, February 2024 and May 2024).

RNOM extends a huge thank you to the Regina United Church members who have very generously donated items for the bags. A few UCW groups across Canada, reached out to RNOM donated to the project. As more and more people hear about the Mother & Baby Welcome Bag project, RNOM is starting to receive some donations from individuals and

groups outside the United Churches.

Going forward, RNOM is unsure how we will be able to sustain the Mother & Baby Bag Project. Although the donations have been generous, they fall short of the amount needed to continue to assemble the bags. RNOM's board asks United Churches and/or UCW groups in Saskatchewan to consider donating to this important project. The Mother and Baby Welcome Bag project is reconciliation in action.

Knitting Circle Program

Out of all the essential items for baby and mom in the Welcome bags, RNOM board members believe the hand knit/crochet baby blankets are the nicest item, allowing the new mom to wrap her baby in a handmade blanket to travel home in. To make sure we keep the donations of blankets coming in, RNOM holds a Knitting Circle in the Community Commons at Central Branch Regina Library on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month from 2 to 4pm. The program is on a break for the summer and will resume September 12, 2024. Attendees can supply their own yarn or use yarn, needles and patterns RNOM supplies. Yarn donations are welcomed. RNOM's hope is that while we knit together, we can discuss ways to advance reproductive justice for Indigenous women in Saskatchewan. All are welcome.

Regina Native Outreach Ministry's Contact Information

Email - reginanativeoutreachministry@gmail.com

Phone – (306) 510-RNOM

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Report Submitted by Cindy Dorr on behalf of Regina Native Outreach Ministry