

# CITY OF REFUGE

FALL 2022 VOL 25



## Radical Gratitude

By Rachel Tulloch

I write this as we enter the “Thanksgiving” season, which has left me pondering the meaning of gratitude in my own life and in our community. Many books and blogs point to the practice of gratitude as a means to improve mental health and to live a happier life—and with good reason.

Gratitude is a difficult posture to acquire in our culture which trains us towards dissatisfaction no matter how many possessions or how much privilege we attain. However, practicing gratitude simply as a means toward individual fulfillment falls short of the radical reorientation of our lives—both individual and collective—that happens when gratitude becomes the air we breathe.

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While we often think we need to choose between changing the world or working on our own souls, Mary Jo Leddy speaks of gratitude as a radical way of being that overcomes this divide: "Gratitude arises in that in-between space where the inner and outer worlds meet and touch and encompass each other. Authentic spirituality, genuine politics, and good economics arise from a spirit of radical gratitude." By embracing gratitude, we release our constant striving to manage our lives and the world and focus instead on delighting in what we have been given—our very lives, our connectedness to each other, the beautiful and life-sustaining gifts of the earth. And what we delight in, we will naturally care for, seek to protect and preserve. However, I often feel conflicted when it comes to my own practice of gratitude. It is not that I don't have enough to be thankful for. Rather, I fear I have too much to be thankful for—three great kids, good health, supportive family and friends, meaningful work in a community I love. How can I delight in what I have been given when life's good gifts are distributed so unequally? We all experience joys and sorrows in this life, and I have known both. However, whether by injustice or by happenstance, some lives are loaded with pain past their breaking point. How do I give thanks for what others have been denied? How much of what I love in my own life is in some way

dependent on the suffering of others, globally or closer to home? I have no answer to these questions, but I have experienced the grace of relationships with others who take joy in my joys and feel sad for my sorrows, even when those joys are denied them in their own life or those sorrows seem small compared to their own. One dear friend who deeply misses her own children hardly ever misses a chance to ask after mine and send them thoughtful gifts. Another friend with significant health challenges is always fussing over me and giving me advice about my health. Another friend who has not had access to housing for most of their adult life is always offering to help me repair my car. In these encounters, I feel like I am being touched by the deep graciousness at the heart of the world, a grace that cannot be erased by sorrow or pain, a promise of joy that persists even despite the bleakest of circumstances. Relationships that cross what can seem to be impassable barriers of power, ability, privilege, and life circumstances have something to teach us about where hope for this broken world lies, in love freely given and received. And when we experience that love, we hear its call towards the hard work of healing, justice, and liberation that love asks of us. For the grace of these relationships, and the glimpse of God's heart they reveal, I am truly thankful.



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**"Gratitude arises in that in-between space where the inner and outer worlds meet and touch and encompass each other."**

# Ribs, Ribs, Ribs!

## Praise God for Family Dinners!

Every October around the Thanksgiving holiday, Donald, our kitchen manager, loves to dream up a hearty feast that nourishes our bodies and inspires a spirit of celebration. This year, he caught us all by surprise. It wasn't turkey, nor roast beef, but it was delicious pork ribs!

The kitchen crew worked hard all day preparing a delicious meal—and it was a hit. The tasty ribs were served with seasoned rice and our ever-popular spinach salad. During the evening we saw new faces and some old friends who stopped by to reconnect. People lined up down the street for the meal, and there was plenty of conversation and laughter as people sat eating—as well as a lot of clothing stained with rib sauce! Donald loves this time of year and always has a plan to make the meal extra special for us. The finishing touch was a slice of pumpkin or apple pie. And as always, the highlight of it all was the chance to be together.

May God's spirit guide us and surprise us everyday.  
*Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.*  
*Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing.*  
*Know that the Lord Himself is God;*  
*it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;*  
*We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*  
*Enter his gates with thanksgiving*  
*And His courts with praise.*  
*Give thanks to Him, bless His name.*  
*For the Lord is good;*  
*His lovingkindness is everlasting*  
*And His faithfulness to all generations.*

—Psalm 100



# Field Trip?

On a beautiful sunny day in early October, a bus load of our community members traveled to the Woodbine beach to have a barbecue together. Simon and Luis grilled burgers and hot dogs while the rest of us enjoyed chatting, sitting in the sunshine, and taking walks along the beach. There was even some dancing! Many people commented how nice it was to be together in a different location, closer to nature. While meeting immediate needs is important, we all have deeper needs as well—for connection, beauty, rest, and celebration. To be honest, it is sometimes easier for us to connect in a deeper or more playful way precisely when we gather away from the Sanctuary building. Since at the beach we do not have access to any physical resources (hygiene supplies, clothing, sleeping bags, medical supplies), the staff are free from the role of being "providers"; likewise, community members can hang out without being in the role of "receivers." Sitting at tables or on the grass, we are simply friends enjoying a picnic under the end-of-summer sun.

Here's a favourite joke from the day:

"Why does barbecue sauce always win the race?"

"Because the other competitors are always plain ketchup."



# Count Me In!



# "So, How'd You End Up Here?"

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By Simon Beck

Most of my conversations at drop-ins really take off when I ask, "So, how'd you end up at Sanctuary?" For some people it's a short, simple answer as they try to suss out if they trust me. But for others, the response starts with a nostalgic chuckle and, "How much time do you got?"

For me, that story begins over sixteen years ago attending the occasional drop-in while I was in high school. It was at those earliest drop-ins and getting to know members of our community that I began to encounter the two things that have kept me tethered to Sanctuary. Firstly, it is the place where the "foolishness of the cross" comes to life, and where perhaps God has truly *chosen* those the world views as the "foolish," the "weak," the "despised" to shame the "wise, strong and powerful." Not necessarily as a condemning shame, but rather where God has demonstrated that in his unyielding faithfulness, goodness and power for abundant redemption a more beautiful world is possible. And that deep down in our common humanity, both the wise, strong and powerful alongside the foolish and the weak long to see this world.

Secondly, Sanctuary has also shown me that the path to this "other world" might be found in the power of reciprocity and mutuality in a community that challenges our conventional dynamics of power. A place where everyone has the power to bear with each other, to carry, serve, and minister to each other—regardless of how the world would try to marginalize them. Indeed, ministry, service, "doing good," loses some (perhaps most) of its potency to be a radical act of redemption if it is made to be one-sided. To help illustrate what this has looked like for me, let me tell you about Iggy. Iggy was a gifted Indigenous artist who bestowed some of our community's most treasured possessions upon us.

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I got to know Iggy when I was attending Wycliffe College and I was living in a small intentional community. By the time it was one of our first Christmases together, Iggy had spent enough time hanging around the house to have gotten to know us pretty well. As we busied ourselves decorating the Christmas tree, Iggy realized we were missing a decoration for the top of the tree. He quietly fashioned an angel from a used Tim's cup (for the body), an old Coke box (for the wings) and a ball of tinfoil (for the head) and proudly placed his angel on top of the tree. I don't exactly remember when, but it was a bit later that he thanked us and told us that it was the first tree he had decorated that felt like it was his own. And that angel was his contribution.

That angel reminds me that our God is a God that takes that which is overlooked, discarded, and considered worthless to be the foundations of his kingdom, and to be of infinite worth. In this case, an old Tim's cup, a Coke box and some tinfoil made by the worn hands of a man that was robbed of so much have become some of my most valuable possessions and a prophetic symbol of the pattern of God's redemption. It has been relationships like this, that have shown me what "could be," that sustained me through my time studying in the UK and working as a management consultant focused on social impact. And it is relationships like these that have called me to take on this new role within our community.



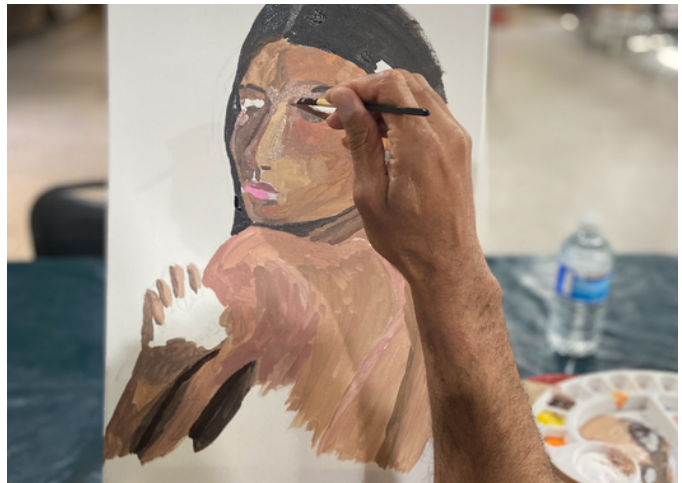
# Don't Blame It On Us



By Alejandra Adarve

Greg Cook introduced me to Farrah Miranda over the phone and, after a few virtual meetings, she came to spend a Thursday drop-in at Sanctuary. We chatted about affordable housing and social justice as Farrah took photos of the crowd gathered around the building from the top floor of the parking garage across the street. Last August, she invited our community to read *A New Kind of Community*, a collection of twenty poems where she *navigates the anger, loss, absurdity and greed at the heart of a widespread housing crisis in Toronto—a city in a bubble*. A Thursday drop-in was going on outside when Adrianna, Ana, Norm and I sat in an office full of harm reduction supplies to read the poems. We then decided to turn our reactions into new poems and Greg and I wrote an article about it. You can read the article here: <https://www.artworxto.ca/on-demand/dont-blame-it-on-us>

From left to right: Adrianna & Jay; Norman painting; a teddy bear



## Bulldozing the Homeless

That hit me like a ton  
This is about people who have a middle to  
upper middle class lifestyle—if not rich—  
and they give no thought to the homeless  
That last line. Six lines  
It was really nice until the last line  
The last line really has me feeling upset  
It ruined the whole mood  
But maybe that's a good thing  
The last line makes you think about the  
homeless. Sure—to the point  
Dinner in a Bubble  
That describes, I'd say, a lot of society  
They don't give the homeless a moment's  
thought. Most of society, I would say  
Certainly the elite don't give them any  
thought. In my opinion

—Norman Graham

## I Like the Sound of That

The lion is, obviously, learning  
The person themself—maybe  
Their spirit animal  
  
Who cracks as he roars  
  
Sounds like they are confused  
Maybe they are screaming out for help  
—hurt  
But, learn from the lion  
Maybe they are in a house fire  
And learn a valuable lesson  
From having their house burnt down  
Maybe their house is their life  
  
What do you do after you crack?  
I'd roar

—Adrianna Sutherland



# Financial Update

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By Simon Beck

As I step into my new role, I am filled with an immense sense of gratitude for the generous support that you—our supporters, our donors, our friends, and our families—continue to provide for our community. While donations have slowed since their record highs in the darkest days of the pandemic, Sanctuary remains in a strong and stable financial position. This has been a true blessing which has enabled us to continue to faithfully support, break bread and deepen relationships with our folks—both old friends and many new faces.

After the last few years of isolation and challenge, 2022 has been filled with its own set of challenges. The rapidly rising cost of living has made finding a post-pandemic “normal” even more challenging, and I know that all of you are faced with the reality of this. And yet, despite all that, you have remained steadfast in your generosity to our community. This is deeply humbling and a constant reminder of the faithfulness of God. Thank you.



## Ways to Help

### How to donate

By credit card: [donate.sanctuarytoronto.ca](https://donate.sanctuarytoronto.ca)

By automatic monthly debit: [tinyurl.com/sanctuaryPAG](https://tinyurl.com/sanctuaryPAG)

By cheque or money order payable to Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto

### For U.S. donors

By cheque or money order payable to First Church of the Nazarene

Mail to Sanctuary c/o Radical Mission. Attn. Leighanne Guthrie

150 Richview Rd. Clarksville, TN 37043

Tax receipts for all eligible gifts will be sent at year end  
(charitable # 890379340 RR0001)

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