



TRINITY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

August 16, 2019

To the Board at Emmanuel Home,

As a pastor next door at Trinity CRC, I want to start by thanking you for the great environment, staff, facilities and more that make up Emmanuel Home (EH). Every week almost, I tell people who are thinking about senior living residences to check out EH. I see staff going over and above what most places provide, I see seniors enjoying fellowship together in a loving environment. And I see your commitment to providing a comfortable building for our elderly saints. I know EH is a good place, a strong Christian retirement residence where seniors can thrive, a place of shalom/peace.

At my last count, EH had about 130 occupied units with almost 170 resident and 75 of those residents attend Trinity. Most who attend Trinity are official members, but the number includes a group of people who moved into EH and now attend Trinity out of convenience—usually because these people do not drive (anymore) and can simply walk to church on Sundays. Several are Christians from other denominations. Many of the members include 'transfers' from other churches who moved into EH and see no need to drive to church elsewhere when there is one so close by. No matter how they come to us, we are happy to have them worshipping with us at Trinity and to serve and love them as best we can.

Trinity decided many years ago now that EH is our neighbour and we are called to reach out and serve there. I don't recall the timeline, but approximately 12 to 15 years ago, Classis Alberta North of the CRCNA churches helped provide a chaplain to serve the spiritual needs of the EH residents. I have heard anecdotal reasons why that position failed but nothing official. After classis decided to stop funding that position, Trinity took up the challenge on our own and hired Pastor Russ Graff to serve as our minister to seniors which included serving residents at EH. Since Pastor Russ retired in 2017, I have taken his previously part-time job on to my full-time role as co-pastor at Trinity. And I have enjoyed it immensely.

We have about 120 members at Trinity who are over 80 years old, the majority at EH, with several in nursing homes (many of whom used to live at EH) and some who live elsewhere. In addition, I provide pastoral care to Trinity members and attenders in the hospital. Due to my workload with just Trinity members and attenders, I have very little time to reach out to the people at EH who are not part of Trinity.

I see many pastoral needs or opportunities that go unaddressed among the residents at Emmanuel Home. I see seniors that may or may not be connected to a church but have little to no pastoral care. Abilio Cassiano, for example, passed away last April. He sat alone in the front foyer almost every day but didn't connect to other residents from what I could see. This was probably due, in part at least, to a language/cultural barrier. From my brief conversations with him, he gave no indication of being served by his home church. He's just one example. There are many lonely people in their apartments who would benefit from pastoral visits. A conversation, a Bible reading and prayer can do so much to improve the life of the lonely. The lonely include those who are just shy, some who find it hard to make friends at EH for various reasons but can be encouraged or helped to do so, and others who are increasingly immobile. You have residents who do not know the Lord as their Saviour and who are coming closer to the end of life and could therefore use some spiritual guidance/encouragement. There are residents who are going through a time of physical challenge due to illnesses or falls, people who are coming to grips with decreased mobility or diminishing mental strength. Some are grieving the loss of a marriage partner, a child or simply the loss of

TRINITY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

13427 – 57 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5A 2G1

Ph: (780) 475-2662
trinitychurchedmonton@gmail.com
www.trinitycrcedmonton.org



TRINITY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

their former abilities or freedom (like driving). The list of needs is large. Additional pastoral care at EH would be a blessing for these and more reasons.

EH has good things happening which also would be enhanced with additional pastoral staffing. You have Wednesday worship services twice a month which Aria arranges very ably. I don't know if more is needed in that area. An on-staff pastor could certainly be available to fill in gaps, if not help arrange/plan the services and expand the offerings for spiritual growth opportunities and fellowship.

I see budding romances at EH from time to time. Elderly people can be just like teenagers when it comes to romance. They are sometimes very lonely so they jump into the first relationship that looks promising. Sometimes pastoral care can help them to slow things down and ensure that this is a good thing for them before they commit to something that could be more difficult than they expected. And when marriage is a good fit for a couple, pastoral care can help ensure that the couple goes into the marriage with their eyes wide open and that the marriage, therefore, gets off to a good start.

From time to time, the growing EH staff and volunteers might also benefit from the presence of a pastor on staff to support folks through their personal struggles and help the community celebrate joys. I have heard of businesses in Edmonton who actually contract a pastor to provide spiritual care to their staff because it helps people be more productive and satisfied in their work.

The interdenominational make up of EH residents is a blessing and can be enhanced with the right person in the pastoral care role at EH. I celebrate the fact that the EH worship service are attended by people from various denominations represented in the building. While residents travel to different churches on Sundays, they freely and joyfully gather together in the EH basement on Wednesdays for worship, a sign of worship in the life to come. It's good that pastors from various denominations are invited to lead the worship at EH.

A dedicated EH pastor can further enhance the connection between the area churches and EH and, I suspect, can increase the support of those churches for the mission and work of EH. An EH pastor could build connections with the local church pastors by liaising and cooperating with them in the care of their church members, thus alleviating some of the workload of those pastors which would benefit the pastors, their churches and residents of EH. In conjunction and cooperation with the local churches, an EH pastor could officiate at the funerals and provide pastoral care to residents who have gone to the hospital or who are going through hardships of various kinds—all in cooperation with the resident's home-church.

As EH completes the latest addition, you are expecting roughly 75 to 100 new residents! I believe the time has come for EH to seriously consider hiring your own pastor/chaplain for some of the reasons I've outlined above. Your ministry is expanding! Trinity CRC wants to continue to be a good neighbour to EH—residents and staff. We will continue to do our best to love and serve our neighbours. However, I personally encourage you as the board of EH to support your leadership team as they look into the pros and cons of hiring your own pastor to enhance your desire to bring the love of Christ to bear in your work and ministry to the residence and staff you serve.

Respectfully yours,

Rev. Rich deLange

TRINITY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

13427 – 57 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5A 2G1

Ph: (780) 475-2662
trinitychurchedmonton@gmail.com
www.trinitycrchedmonton.org