


SANCTUARY LONDON

Finding Home. Together.





Sleeping and living down by the river, people who are deprived of adequate housing know what it means to be oppressed. Their old discarded-by-others tents are often covered in layers of tarps and old blankets, and the floors are lined with layers of cardboard. Many of our community members have shared with us that during these cold months, they are faced with the grim reality of having to choose between freezing to death and risking their lives and/or their belongings by lighting a candle or some other heat source inside their shelters at night.

(continued on page 2)




If Jesus was born today, in London, Ontario, he would likely be born in a makeshift shelter down by the river...




Advent is a time when we are reminded of our need for such things as hope, peace, joy, and love. The world needs these things. The world is desperately longing for these things, especially among those who experience oppression.



Two Sundays ago, at Sanctuary, we lit the peace candle. We shared together about how badly the world needs peace. And we spoke about how one of the best ways we could contribute to global peace was by being intentional about being peacemakers right here in our own communities.



Our Sunday evening community has grown recently. We've got our regular crew, but more and more often we have folks from down by the river coming to join us. Perhaps they are just looking for a warm and dry space to be for a couple of hours, often sitting on the periphery of our circle. We are deeply humbled and honoured to have them. We closed our service that week by asking everyone to stand, and to turn to their right and to their left, and greet one another by saying "peace be with you". We call this act Passing the Peace. It is not a practice we have done very often in this space, but it quickly became a sacred moment. For the next 5-10 minutes, community members crossed the circle, some left the circle, and others entered the circle to greet one another with handshakes, fistbumps, and hugs as they passed the peace to one another.



This holiday season, whatever your faith or non-faith background is, regardless of your culture, beliefs, or commitments, we urge you to take the side of hope, of peace, of joy, and of love.

Peace be with us all.



Winter Celebrations



On December 20th, we hosted our annual Christmas Party Celebration. We cooked up 38 large turkeys and put together 450 meals. Leftovers were delivered to our community members who were unable to make it for whatever reason over the next couple of days.

The fun included dinner, hot chocolate served outside, tons of homemade cookies, some games, and singing, and a small gift for all who attended!

A huge, huge shout out to all of our amazing volunteers and donors who helped to make this possible. We love you all!

Thanks River!

River Ytbarek has been on staff at Sanctuary for the past 6 months, fulfilling the role of Community Care Worker - Support & Logistics. In January he will be finishing his contract with us and focusing on completing his studies at King's University College. Thanks River for the incredible work you have done. It has been such a great pleasure to have you on our team, and we wish you all the best with your schooling!





Christmas is not experienced the same by everyone...



What will you do to spread HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE this holiday season?

A Note from our Board Chair:



On behalf of the Board of Directors, we would like to thank you for your care and support of the Sanctuary London community.

My own involvement with the life-giving work of Sanctuary has been profoundly impactful on my own journey, and I couldn't be more humbled and thankful for the opportunity.

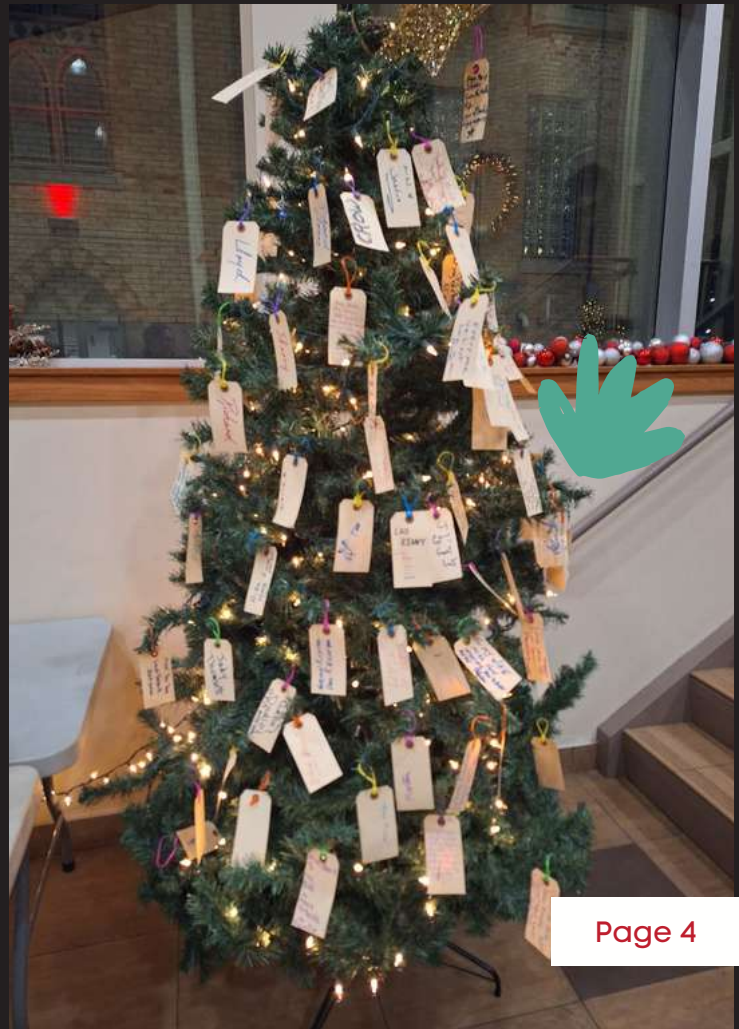
At this time, Sanctuary is seeking highly qualified and impact-driven individuals to join our Board of Directors. We are looking for individuals who share our core-values, but who have a diversity of backgrounds in their faith, culture, giftings, skillsets, and experiences.

Board membership is simply another way of contributing to the life-giving work of Sanctuary. If you are interested in learning and growing with us, please contact me at arleneo@rogers.com

Thanks so much!
-Arlene O'Brien

The Remembrance Tree

At our Christmas party, we set up a "Remembrance Tree" It is an opportunity for all of our community members to write the name of loved ones they have lost over the past year on tags and place them on the tree. Unfortunately there are simply far too many tags on the tree for any one year, and each one represents a beloved community member. As a community of care, we made sure to hold space for one another as we all grieve in different ways.





Connect with us!



Sanctuary is growing. We've got more people joining our community than ever before. This means we've got some big challenges, and some very exciting opportunities in store for 2024. But we can't do it on it our own.

We have both staff and volunteer positions to fill, and we especially need help in raising financial support in order to maintain the growth that is happening.

Would you like to hear more? We would love the opportunity to share more about all of this with you. Please contact us... We want to hear from you!

Please remember Sanctuary with your year-end giving!



All donations must be received or post-dated by December 31, 2023, in order to be receipted for the 2023 tax year. Sanctuary London is a Registered Canadian Charity, and therefore all donations are eligible for charitable receipt for income tax purposes. E-transfers are so easy! Just send to: **giving@sanctuarylondon.ca**

Thank you!

Charitable Registration # 82244 0723 0001



Sanctuary London 531 Talbot St. London, ON N6A 2S5
www.sanctuarylondon.ca 548.688.4663 (HOME)