



ONE ANOTHER

February March 2025



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Letter from the Minister

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger, and I have promised,
Promised to be always near."**

This song may be our theme as we listen to threats of tariffs imposed by the empire to the south, the shift in our own country's leadership, and our neighbours' opinions of what the future might bring. One certainty that we proclaim as gospel people is that God's love is stronger than fear and confusion.

God's love hovers over chaos and creates a beautiful world in the Creation story. God gives a promise of a rainbow with a vow never to destroy the earth again. God's love overpowers death in resurrection! We can't see it coming but we can anticipate God "showing up".

In the book [The Art of Racing in the Rain](#), a race car driver teaches his beloved dog this important lesson: When your car is in a skid or out of control, keep your eyes on where you want to go. ***The car goes where your eyes are.*** Where do we keep our eyes?

We celebrate the birth of a child and join in moments of laughter. We encourage others with words of hope. No one knows the future, but we know the direction we intend to go and invite others to act in a counter-culture, bold, and confident way. We can choose not to let others dim our light. We don't need to give others power over us.

We can choose to walk a good path – or skid into it! We get to choose where we look because that is where we will end up. And God will get us there.



I remember one time visiting an aunt and uncle who lived in the country outside of Camrose. I had

only been driven there as a child, so as a direction-challenged adult, I was amazed to find the place. When I told them how I had come, my aunt and uncle kept correcting me. I was going north, not east. I turned south not west. I had NO IDEA how I found their place. No map. No GPS. Just a desire to visit family and the memory of a little girl driving over dirt roads. I still marvel how that happened!

So I encourage you to keep your eyes open for where God wants us to go.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Deep Peace - Laurie



Rev. Laurie makes “Children’s Time” so special for both children and adults. Here is Laurie during Advent “Preparing the path for the Lord”. This is her interpretation of “Road under Construction”. Thanks Laurie, for giving us this visual takeaway.



Session Highlights for January 2025

- Everyone is invited to the **Caregivers Seminar Saturday, Feb 8th** from 9:30 – 12:00, followed by lunch. If you care for someone in your family (‘care’ meaning everything from helping with physical care to helping with financial decisions and/or property, to emotional support), or if you know of a friend in the same boat, this seminar may be very helpful to you.
- Get to know some new people by participating in our **Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner** event on **February 23**. Details can be found in LinX, call the church office, or speak with Rev. Fiona.
- On Wednesday, **March 5th** the Men’s Group will be serving **dessert crepes in Trinity Hall** from 6:00 pm – 6:50 pm in Trinity Hall. Have your dinner at home, and then come to the church to have a delicious dessert!
- **Wednesday, March 5th** we will have an **Ash Wednesday Service** in the Sanctuary at 7:00 pm. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season.
- Save the Date: the **Annual Congregational Meeting** will be held **March 9th** immediately following the worship service.
- This month we celebrated and thanked the following elders for their service on session over the years, as we look forward to their continued participation in new ways: Dolly Forcade, Loran McVittie, Cathy Millar, Inge Murray, Christine Pepper, and Rhonda Wishart.

If you are a contributor of information to our Website and you know of updates that need to be made, please be in touch with Kevin MacFarlane so that our website has correct and current information!.

Debby Dorcas - Clerk of Session

Elder Profile - Craig Murray

In 1998, a year before emigrating from South Africa with his young family, Craig visited Calgary for a few days to check out the available opportunities. He happened to walk by St. Andrew's while looking for a physiotherapy clinic as possible employment for Inge. Craig and his family had worshipped at a Presbyterian church in South Africa, so he decided to stop in and visit. Rev. Karl English happened to be there that day and greeted Craig warmly. They visited and Karl invited Craig to come back if his family decided to settle in Calgary. In Craig's words, "here we are, 25 years later: it was clearly meant to be!"



As most of us know (but do not appreciate as much as we should), Craig works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that things run smoothly at St. Andrew's. In addition to scheduling the Shepherd's roster, you can find him on the sound board most Sundays.

Craig became an elder in 2010. He has served on the Board of Managers, the Personnel Team, and the Worship Team. He also was one of the main organizers for the Men's Breakfast for many years. As well as being on session, he is presently serving on the Family Ministry Team, MRA (Minister's Resource and Accountability) Team and is convening the Legacy Fund Team. Whew...one busy guy!

Craig remembers many good things happening during his time on session, but nothing quite as exciting as the current buzz, lively atmosphere and inspiring new life that Rev. Laurie has brought to St. Andrew's.

As advice for new elders, Craig emphasized the importance of committing to St. Andrew's beyond weekly worship. He also offers that there are many ways to serve and that there will be lots of support available.

As for the future, Craig is enthusiastic about making mission our focus. He sees this as an "opportunity to be a presence in our neighbourhood and provide a means for people to serve." Like other mainstream churches, we are challenged to maintain membership growth. Change is inevitable and we need to adapt to attract young people and families.

Craig works as Plant Manager for a Data Communications company. He enjoys the outdoors including camping, mountain and road cycling; and has been known to tackle 100 km rides on weekends. He and wife Inge have two children and one grandchild (soon to be two!).

Asked for a little-known fact about himself, Craig offered that his brother is the 12th Duke of Atholl. This means that Craig is officially Lord Craig Murray!

Thanks Craig for all you do!

Submitted by David Townsend



Faith Formation Update

Intergenerational Musical:

A huge thank you to Debby Dorcas who spearheaded the Intergenerational Musical on December 15, 2024. Everyone could feel the joy in the room and in everyone's heart as we heard the story of "Uncertain Poor Shepherds" and how God uses regular, ordinary people -like you and me- to be a part of HIS story.



This service also saw the successful execution of the yearly Mitten Tree initiative. Thanks to the entire congregation in the support for this project.



Family Christmas Eve Service:

The Faith Formation Team supported the 4:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service again this year. The kids filled 75-80 bags for children which were delivered to the Women in Need Society (WINS), where staff were delighted to receive them. Thanks to Inge and Craig for sorting and organizing the mission project in advance. Thanks also go out to the Worship Team for supporting the service through music. The carol singing in the foyer and the ukulele group were integral to the success of this service.





TAKE 150:

Save the date! Saturday, March 15, 2025 is the next TAKE 150 event complete with a St. Patrick's Day theme. Parents and caregivers can leave their children at the church for 150 minutes, where the children will enjoy a meal and some engaging activities. More details to follow leading up to the event.



Book Study for Parents of Young Children:



More information will follow in the next few weeks, but we are organizing a book study for parents of young children and teens. Stay tuned for further details and reach out to the office if you would like to participate – we will make sure to include you!



ONE ANOTHER

Celtic Cross Inspiration

The cover for this issue's ConnXions was inspired by the family Christmas Eve service. This service in particular is one of my favorites. It is a wonderful time to greet people and wish them Merry Christmas; to sit, relax, sing and pray. For me, this special time of worship is a symbol of our congregation's love, joy, hope and prayer for peace in the world.

For years now, the moment I sit down in the pew on Christmas Eve, I experience relief. I relish in the thought that everything has been prepared. My mindset becomes present and free, and I am flooded with the feeling that Christmas starts NOW! I can't think of a better way to begin such a special evening than by worshiping our Lord, Jesus Christ.

This year, the theme of the service was "we are all part of the Christmas story." I played the role of an angel and participated with many others at the front of the sanctuary. As I gazed out across the pews in front of me, I was moved by the beauty of the Celtic cross at the back of the church. I loved the juxtaposition of the bold magenta light against the dull, reddish-brown brick. The color was stunning! Power and majesty radiated from the cross. I was filled with emotion and amazed at the beautiful radiant light.

That evening, I could feel Christ's love emanating from the cross. It was a bold reminder that our Lord offers His warm, comforting presence to each and every one of us when we look for it in our lives. In that moment, I felt truly blessed. And I knew I had my graphic for the next issue of ConnXions!

When choosing graphics for our covers, I am usually drawn to a pretty landscape or seasonal picture, however it often takes a while to match a sentiment to the graphic. This month's cover is quite different and very near to my heart. Since Valentine's Day falls within the time frame of this issue, I knew almost immediately that I wanted the title to read "Love One Another." Based on that inspiration, Kevin and I worked together to design the text so that the circle in the middle of the cross became the "O" in love.



I love to use the many beautiful features around St. Andrew's and bring them to life in our graphics. To me, they each contain unique beauty, memories, and reflections of our faith. For example, the Celtic cross that graces this cover had a prominent place at the front of the sanctuary for decades. In its place, we have been blessed with the beautiful stained-glass cross streaming across the Alberta landscape, which was designed by members of St. Andrew's. There is nothing more captivating than watching the sun flicker and reflect through the colourful panes, especially in winter when the sun is low. Even the soaring foyer we enter each week was architecturally designed to uplift, us over and over again. On the cover of our next issue, I hope to incorporate the beautiful Trinity stained-glass that graces the doorway above the entrance to the sanctuary.

Whenever we're designing an eye-catching cover, we often play with placement of various elements. Our latest trick is to create a "sticker" to add to our photos. On the cover of this issue, for example, we added a book to the base of the cross. Whether it's content for ConnXions, LinX, or Sunday morning worship slides, this graphics ministry has been deeply rewarding, creative, and uplifting. I believe the images we create add depth to the messages they are designed to complement.

As you know, each Sunday worship service reflects a theme based on our scripture readings. As "graphics girl" at St. Andrew's, one of my favorite roles is to search for pictures and arrange them into colorful, flowing visuals. Kevin, our "computer guy", customizes the pictures; he sharpens, colours, brightens and adjusts until they work for our needs. Currently, we hold thousands of images in an iCloud. This is where my photographic memory comes in handy. For me, it is a God-given gift that allows me to recall images we've used in the past and reuse them whenever we need. It often takes divine inspiration to find just the right shot, especially to highlight the sermon message.

As Kevin and I continue to learn and grow in our roles preparing PowerPoint worship slides, LinX and ConnXions, we wish to thank Peter Coutts for asking us to consider this role, and to the many others who have encouraged us along the way. Over time, this has become a rewarding ministry that has deepened our faith. We are blessed to serve together in such a creative way.

Blessings from Barbara MacFarlane

Did You Know?



Meet Daniel Cullen, one of our many shepherds watching over the flock every week. This is just one part of an initiative from The Presbyterian Church in Canada called "Leading with Care".

The shepherds are a dedicated group of about 18 volunteers organized by Craig Murray. They discreetly patrol and monitor the building to ensure that there are no unexpected visitors or issues during church services. Volunteers give up their church time two or three times a year to provide these services.

If you're interested in helping here, please contact Craig at murraycraigjohn@gmail.com



Star light. Star bright. Stars for Epiphany

Members of the congregation came together on Saturday, January 4 to decorate the sanctuary for Epiphany by crating ALL kinds of stars! After the 'star making workshop' everyone enjoyed a bowl of soup and a bun together.





GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

This event will be held on **Sunday, Feb 23/25, from approximately 5:00 to 8:00 pm** (realizing some people may need to leave earlier)

- This is a way to get to know people you maybe don't usually socialize with
- Includes people making a meal for their guests **OR** being a guest and bringing dessert

CHECK THE ST. ANDREWS [EVENT PAGE](#) FOR REGISTRATION

As an Example:

Those who are interested in joining will fill out a [form](#) -- and return it to the office by **Fri, Feb 14** so you can be matched, and to find out if there are any allergies or dietary restrictions.

HOSTS: Betty and Bill decide they would like to host... up to 4 people. So they will fill out the form --and will be told (closer to the event) if there are allergies or dislikes by their guests and how many guests they have coming.

GUESTS: Mike & Susie and Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Stepford signed up to be guests and to provide dessert. So they individually (one form per individual/family) filled out the form by Friday, Feb 14.

HOSTS: will be notified on Wed, Feb 19th of how many guests they will be having. Betty and Bill do not know who is coming for dinner (just the number of people ~ and that one gets a headache from eating onions)!

GUESTS: On the 19 of February the guests are given the address they are to go to on Sunday night -- but not the name of their host(ess).

THE MEAL: On the event day -- February 23 -- HOSTS cook the meal for their guests -- to eat at around 5:30 pm. GUESTS will be bringing the dessert when they come for dinner.

When the doorbell rings at 5:00 pm, hosts discover that Mike & Susie, Mrs. Walker, and Mrs. Stepford are their guests for dinner. Betty and Bill and their 4 guests have dinner together, enjoying the meal as well as the dessert that the guests brought.

Are you willing to be EITHER a host OR a guest? If you sign up that you can be EITHER, that will help us if we need more hosts... or more guests.

Singles, doubles, families, ALL are welcome to participate!!!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER](#)

Questions or more information -- contact Fiona at swankinson@gmail.com



We give so little but receive so much more in return! That is how Peter Coutts, Audrey Cole, Ted and Lauren Cantlon, Karen Seetaram-Mcleod and I feel as we head into the New Year.

St. Andrew's offers an after school drop-in program, The Edge each Wednesday from 3:45 - 5:30 pm in the spacious room on the upper level of the church. Incredible young people come bounding in the door each week looking forward to their time together at The Edge. It brings such joy to our hearts. Personally, it's one of the highlights of my week.

We have had as many as 19 kids aged 14 - 15 years attend this important outreach program. Surprisingly, it's mainly boys who attend. Two of the fellows have come with their younger brothers who they are responsible for looking after them after school. Why not, the more the merrier!

The gift we receive is getting to know these wonderful kids on a deeper personal level. Being able to share in their lives is truly a privilege. We have touching moments that will not be soon forgotten. A couple of us attended their school Christmas Band concerts. They were "blown away" that we would have liked to attend.

We've been told "that this is their favorite time of the day!" How heart-warming to hear those words! It's worth mentioning that when a new person arrives they are welcomed to join an organized group. This positive attitude has persisted since we initiated The Edge. Their favorite activities, of course, are eating, playing "Dungeons and Dragons" on paper, practicing ping-pong and playing games on the Switch Electronic Console.

The Oak Park church has arranged for me to pick up a food box on Wednesdays at noon, the box is filled with a variety of snacks for the kids. Young people at this age have an insatiable appetite and they arrive famished after a long day at school. There are also delicious baked goods left from Side By Side that Audrey Cole offers for the Snack table.

We are indebted to St. Andrew's for sharing and supporting this God directed vision, our wonderful, gifted sub group who generously volunteer their valuable time each week and the generosity from the Legacy Fund.

I feel we are helping to make an important difference in these incredible kids' lives. Although The Edge is not a religious program, God moments are stronger than words. Who knows where that spark may lead!

God's Blessings,
Judy McKearney

GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.

**“Guidelines on How to Give” (abbreviated version) by Karen Plater,
Associate Secretary, Stewardship & Planned Giving, Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC)**

What does the Bible teach us about how much a person should give to be a generous disciple of Christ? Should we tithe (give 10% of income)? If so, should the tithe be based on net or gross income? Before taxes or after taxes? Should we take all sources of income into account? Do we include inheritances? What if someone is on a fixed income and expenses keep growing? These are questions I’m often asked when talking about stewardship.

There isn’t one correct answer, except maybe “it depends.” However, scripture does give us some clues about how to give that, with prayer and reflection, can guide our discernment.

What is considered generous today?

Here are three scripture passages I like to consider.

The first is Matthew 23:23: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.” This passage reminds me that what I give is important, but so too is what I do with all the rest of my resources, time and money. If I am generous to the church, but take advantage of the vulnerable, oppress people and am mean-spirited, I’m missing the point.

In 2 Corinthians 9:7, we are told to “give as you have made up your mind.” This passage encourages me to be intentional, thoughtful and prayerful about what I give and that my attitude matters, as we are to give “not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” I can remember times when I have given—and been given—a gift reluctantly versus cheerfully. It makes a difference.

Finally, even as Paul praises sacrificial giving in 2 Corinthians 8, he also writes “that if the heart is in it, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.” In other words, God isn’t calling us to keep up with our neighbours. God calls us to look at what we have been given and decide what we can give back.

If we are barely meeting our basic needs or falling behind in our expenses each month, we will rightly give less than at other times. We can give financially when we have the ability. There are other ways to give now: time, skills, prayer and encouragement.

Reviewing our expenses and determining which costs are “wants” and which are “needs” can help us see what we have to cover our basic needs (including building up savings), and decide how much we can give to God, and then use what is left to cover non-essentials. The result: we are intentionally deciding what we will give to God, considering all we have been given.

It is important for us to think broadly when we consider giving. Sometimes we can give out of our assets in addition to, or instead of, our regular income. Some people have found that they can give more than they thought by giving gifts of securities. (When securities are given as a gift-in-kind, rather than giving the cash from selling the stocks, the donor doesn’t have to pay any capital gains taxes.) Others have given when they have received an inheritance or sold a piece of property. Some include a bequest to a charity in their will, allowing them to give a gift when they no longer need the income to live. The taxes saved by giving a gift in your will, means people can be generous to their congregation and/or favourite charities and still leave an inheritance for family and friends.

God continually surprises and inspires us. We are enough. We have enough. We can cheerfully give out of what we have been given. And that is what is acceptable to God.

How does one give to God?

A GIVING GUIDE

As Christians, we are encouraged to follow the spirit of the tithe and consider giving to God as an act of worship and thanksgiving. The foundation of generous giving is found in the Bible.

GIVE GRATEFULLY

Giving grows out of the joyous recognition that all we have comes from God. It is a response to God's grace.
(2 Chronicles 29:14; 2 Corinthians 9:12)

GIVE CHEERFULLY

Give, not until it hurts, but until it feels good. Giving is a joyful act.
(2 Corinthians 9:7)

GIVE FREELY

We give, not because we have to but because we want to.
(2 Corinthians 9:7)

GIVE INTENTIONALLY AND PROPORTIONALLY

We give a percentage of what we have according to what we have been given.
(2 Corinthians 8:12)

GIVE OFF THE TOP

As an expression of trust in God, we give off the top of our income instead of what is left.
(Proverbs 3:9)

GIVE REGULARLY

We grow in generosity when we develop the habit of regular giving.
(1 Corinthians 16:2)

God's grace touches our hearts and lives – and those around us – as we grow into the image of the greatest giver of all.

The following giving chart shows weekly offerings as a percentage of income. This may help you decide what you want to give to the church as a proportion of your income.

WEEKLY PERCENTAGE GIVING GUIDE

Income		Weekly giving					
Annual	Weekly	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%	15%
12,000	231	5	9	14	18	23	35
16,000	308	6	12	18	25	31	46
20,000	385	8	15	23	31	39	58
25,000	481	10	19	29	38	48	72
30,000	577	12	23	35	46	58	87
35,000	673	13	27	40	54	67	101
40,000	769	15	31	46	62	77	115
45,000	865	17	35	52	69	87	130
50,000	962	19	38	58	77	96	144
60,000	1,154	23	46	69	92	115	173
75,000	1,442	29	58	87	115	144	216
100,000	1,923	38	77	115	154	192	288
125,000	2,404	48	96	144	192	240	361
150,000	2,885	58	115	173	231	289	433

For those giving on a monthly basis – by Pre-Authorized Remittance or by post-dated cheques – simply multiply the weekly giving in this chart by 4.33 (there are 4.33 weeks in a month).



50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7
416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301
presbyterian.ca



Fraud is the number one crime against older Canadians and although people of all ages can be victims, older adults are targeted more often.

Common scams include but not limited to the following :

- Imposters who phone pretending to be family or friends requesting money / favours
- Debt collectors phoning demanding money and threatening legal action if not paid
- Sweepstake / prizes / inheritances where taxes must be paid on time prior to receiving
- Mailed cheques received, must phone and give personal information to verify correct recipient
- Online romance scams – requiring money for visas, travel expenses, debts etc.
- Fraudulent charities asking for money, gift cards
- Investment swindles -pyramid schemes, make easy money
- Home improvement scams – best deal, money up front for future work

SOME SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO AVOID SCAMS :

- Do not answer unknown phone numbers, legitimate callers will leave a message
- Block telemarketers phone numbers
- Do not act impulsively, always check with family members before committing to money requests
- Never hand out personal information over the phone
- Never click on links in email / texts from unknown sources
- Avoid saying “ yes “ to scammers as they can manipulate recordings
- No legitimate business will accept gift cards as payment

REPORTING A SCAM :

City of Calgary police nonemergency number – 403 -266 -1234

Canadian anti fraudanti-fraud centre -toll free 1- 888-495-8501

Consumer contact centre toll free Alberta – 1 – 877- 427 -4088

Sign up for the National Do Not Call List to cut down on Scam Calls

Thank you all and God bless you!

- Submitted by Anne Greco on behalf of The Wellness Team

Who We Are

- A vibrant community of women of various ages and stages in life who connect, share, learn, pray and serve together to glorify God
- We work together as a team through a variety of activities, forming caring relationships with each other and with those whom we serve
- We contribute our gifts and talents for the work of the church, the community and the world

Serving Together

- **The Annual Christmas Bazaar:** This is our largest intergenerational fundraiser. The greater church community comes together to participate in this event
- **Funerals:** The funeral refreshments that are provided by the Guild is a ministry that supports many families during times of grief
- **Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids (BB4CK):** Lunches are prepared weekly for students in a local elementary and junior high school
- **Ronald McDonald House:** A meal is prepared for Ronald McDonald house once a month
- **Special Events:** Guest speakers are invited to provide education on mission and other initiatives. On occasion, Presbytery lunches are provided on request.

Fundraising Support and Mission

- Funds raised throughout the year support, but are not limited to, the following:
 - ◊ St Andrew's Presbyterian Church
 - ◊ Ronald McDonald House
 - ◊ Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids (BB4CK)
 - ◊ Camp Kannawin
 - ◊ Local High School Student Emergency Funds
 - ◊ Presbyterian World Service and Development

Enriching Friendships

- We come together monthly to share as a community of women who have our foundation in Christ
- We support and encourage each other as we build bonds that help us stay energized and strong together
- We join together for luncheons a couple of times each year.

Joining the Group

- We welcome all who wish to join this active group of women who serve the congregation and community with dedication and caring
- The Guild meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 1:30 p.m. (excluding July, August and November)





is published every 2 months. We welcome articles to be submitted on or before March 15, 2025 to: ConnXions@StAndrewsCalgary.ca

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