

Easter Blessings

April / May
2025



SA **ST. ANDREW'S**
GROWING. LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD

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Isaiah 11:6-9 – A Vision of Peace

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Unexpected Teachers!

On March 9th, the children of St. Andrew's led the "Adults' Time". We were blessed to play charades to remember some of our common fears: the dark, heights, dogs, and needles. The Bible story acted out by the children was David and Goliath. How timely! The story highlights overcoming our fear with faith, standing up to arrogant power, and wearing armor that fits.

Do you ever feel like a David? Who are the Goliaths that need to be challenged? Who are the young Davids who inspire confidence in the Lord?

During Lent, we are urged to "stand up" rather than "give up". The children have reminded us of the Biblical witness of overcoming our fear. The children lead us! They remind us to take our faith seriously – that God's promises and power can be trusted. How are we inspired to change how we think or the direction of our conversations and actions in this season of Lent?



Ideas of “standing up” in Lent may include:

1. Connect with God through spiritual practices
2. Attend a PIE (Public. Intentional. Explicit.) event to support the 2SLGBTQI community.
3. Learn to play in a new way (Ukelele, Take 150, cooperative games)
4. Write a letter to your MP to speak up for peace in the Middle East.
GO TO: [CLICK HERE](#)
5. Volunteer or donate to a positive initiative that amplifies community.
6. Shift the conversation with your neighbor away from despair toward positive community action.
7. Sign up for the Kairos Conference June 13-15 in Calgary. The theme is “Turn Debt into Hope”.
8. Consider nature and marvel at what the creatures and the land teach us about living in harmony.

God sends us unexpected teachers to inspire and encourage us to act and to make a difference. Sometimes from Scripture. Sometimes living! How is God getting your attention in surprising ways? Share your experience with others! You may be their unexpected teacher!

With prayers for just and deep peace,

Rev. Laurie



Session Highlights - March 2025

- A request from Rev. Clayton (Clay) Kuhn to become a Minister in Association at St. Andrew's was approved. This request will be sent to the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod for decision.
- The Mission Incubator team, consisting of Judy Bridgemohan and Peter Coutts, have developed a workflow and project management template. This template is intended to be used to support congregants who have an idea they want to pursue in mission to provide guidance in the absence of projects being supported by a specific team. See Judy or Peter for a copy of the template if you need it.

Submitted by Lynn Judd (as Acting Clerk) and Jean Morris (as Convener)



Join us for Holy Week:

*April 13 - Palm Sunday
April 17 - Maundy Thursday 7pm
April 18 - Good Friday 10am
April 20 - Easter Sunday*

Elder Profile: Audrey Cole

Audrey is one interesting and energetic lady! Her Presbyterian background goes back to her Scottish parents who attended Grace Presbyterian after emigrating from Scotland. She fondly remembers her Mom and Dad's church friends the Barclays, Adams and the Youngs. Audrey started attending St. Andrew's about 1981 as (in her words) a "surly teenager". Karl English was the minister.

She was nursery coordinator in her early years at St. Andrew's and became a Session member in 2010. Always involved in Christian education and congregational life, she sees those as important priorities going forward. One of the founding members of Side by Side, she is still involved in this program. Audrey is currently President of the Ladies Guild and a key organizer of the famous St. Andrew's Christmas Bazaar. She is also involved in the after-school Edge program and organizes the servers for the monthly communion. She is everywhere!



Serving the Presbyterian Church beyond the local level, Audrey was previously Presbytery rep and is now the alternate. She was also moderator of Presbytery in 2018. She currently serves on a Synod committee and is the current Moderator. She also sits on the Assembly Council for the National Church.

Audrey has fond memories of St. Andrew's 100th anniversary event and the church expansion in 2001. She also speaks proudly of her daughters Lauren and Shelby and of their talents and contributions to the church, much appreciated by all. Audrey remembers her daughters and Shona Murray (now Vandrasco) as teenagers, singing at St. Andrew's in front of a full sanctuary.

As advice for new elders, Audrey offers that it is more than just a vote at Session. It is a commitment, and you should be prepared to show leadership.

Audrey sees opportunities but also challenges in areas like stewarding young people and coordinating and organizing the many church activities. She likes that St. Andrew's is welcoming and willing to change, but we also want to draw on the experience of long-time members and preserve our history. Audrey feels that St. Andrew's is a "wonderful church family" and she is grateful for the love and support from her "family" in both happy and difficult times.

Audrey lives in the Lakeview house where she grew up and still has the same telephone number. She plans to be in St. Andrew's, Scotland to celebrate her next birthday in August!

Thanks, Audrey, for all your good work!

Submitted by David Townsend



Finance Team Report

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Screaming, cheering, laughing - you'd have thought it was the recent annual congregational meeting! But no- it was a very successful Take 150 hosted by enthusiastic leaders and even more enthusiastic kids!

So the Finance Team "adapted" their tag line to reflect the recent announcement of a congregational appeal (the first since 2018) to raise \$150,000 to finance two unexpected capital projects for 2025 - the repair of the flicker damage to our exterior and the drainage and parking project. Until a winning name is chosen for the campaign (with \$100 up for grabs for the successful winner), the Finance Team, with tongue in cheek calls it *Give 150!*



If you were unable to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting on March 9 where further details were provided, the Annual Report mentions these and the reasons for the compressed timing on pages 21-23 and can be accessed on the St. Andrew's website or at www.standrewscalgary.ca under Online Resources

Cathy Millar, Dave Townsend, Mark Rowe and Dolly Forcade have graciously agreed to serve on the Fun(d)raising Team and they or any member of the Finance Team would be happy to answer any questions you might wish to pose.

Our congregation has an enviable record of meeting challenges and we believe this one will also be met. One example of how this is achievable is if our 200 core donors each gave an extra \$1 per week for 2 years. For some, this is very doable and you might, in fact, be able to increase your gift to help out those who may find this too challenging.

In the meantime, the Ladies Guild has been first off the mark with a generous donation of \$4000 to the campaign as well as an additional \$5000 to the General Fund and \$1000 towards the St. Andrew's Scholarship fund. Thank you Ladies Guild! You're awesome!

Also during the ACM, the congregation adopted the 2025 financial plan that calls for a flat budget (i.e. no deficit but no surplus either). Copies of this, plus the 2024 Financial Statements and Notes can also be found in the hard copies that have been distributed or at the link above.

Thanks to everyone for your generosity in 2024!
Submitted by John Cuthbertson



HERITAGE SENIORS

Strawberry
TEA SOCIAL

Saturday May 3rd

Call Maureen Pelz
@ 403-256-5937
to volunteer

Heritage 50+ Seniors will be hosting their annual Strawberry Tea on Saturday, May 3 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm in Trinity Hall.

Tickets are \$8.00 each and will be available for sale after worship on Sunday April 27 or at the door on the day of the Tea. In addition to strawberry cake, there will be a book sale and a Marketplace with outside vendors.

† CHURCH HISTORY

History Bites

Part 3 of a Trinity History Series

Easter at Trinity Presbyterian Church

The Easter-themed cover of this issue was inspired by an image in a scrapbook of memories from Trinity Presbyterian Church. The scrapbook was created by Kathy Slimmon and her daughter, Kerri, and was donated to St. Andrew's after the vibrant community our congregation helped establish over 40 years ago closed its doors in 2011. The building is still located in the community of Lake Midnapore and is now home to the Netherland Reformed Congregation. Since Trinity's merger with St. Andrew's, Kathy Slimmon along with several other worshipers from the Trinity congregation automatically became members of St. Andrew's.

The photo to the right is the original "Cross of Flowers" that inspired our cover, which towered at the front of the sanctuary at Trinity on Easter Sunday. This striking arrangement was enhanced by the lovely stained glass window at the front of the building, which are now proudly displayed above the entrance to the sanctuary at St. Andrew's. Kathy tells me this work of art was designed for the congregation by an artisan in their midst named Faye Lippett. Faye's works of art are featured at the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, which is where she now calls home. According to the gallery's website, Faye's art is inspired by humour, family, friends and nature, so it is fitting that this window, which is called "Burning Bush," was once a cornerstone of the faith community that gathered at Trinity for 20 years. In addition to painting and ceramics, Faye is also an author and journalist. If you're interested to check out how her style has evolved since her early endeavors at Trinity, please check out her website at <https://16chickens.com/>.



On another page of history, Kathy's scrapbook also records a special evening when the young congregation anxiously awaited the arrival of Faye's artwork. The following is a picture of a memorable night at youth group, where the young people at Trinity were challenged to create a cardboard version of the window before the real one was installed. Kathy Slimmon and Judy Roberts both remember working with Faye to coordinate the event as the anticipation grew for the upcoming delivery of the stained glass window.



Former worshippers at Trinity also fondly recall joint services with nearby All Saints Lutheran Church. Both churches held regular youth group events in those days, as the nearby communities were growing steadily. Trinity was established on land that was originally purchased from All Saints and the buildings are so close that members recall hauling chairs back and forth in order to set up for big events. Due to their proximity and the cohesion between the two congregations, joint services were typically held at Easter and sometimes Good Friday. There was even a shared Easter sunrise service held in nearby Fish Creek Park.

This long-standing history of "ecumenical endeavours" certainly piqued my interest since, as some of you may know, my son-in-law, Bart Stolee, has attended All Saints Lutheran Church for some time. He was an active leader in the youth group at its peak, and has worshiped as part of the All Saints community since his family moved to Calgary when he was 10 years old. In fact, Bart and Jennifer along with their three children Adam, Sarah and Andrew continue to attend worship at both St. Andrew's and All Saints on a regular basis by alternating between churches each Sunday.

Bart's father, Joe Stolee, also recalls a friendly relationship between Trinity and All Saints. In addition to the joint services on Good Friday and Easter, he recalled a time when the All Saints Men's breakfast group used Trinity's kitchen when their own facilities were unavailable. This event was notable, not just because of the shared fellowship between the two faith communities, but because as it turns out, the men were quite jealous that Trinity's kitchen was much better than All Saints'. And according to Bart, it probably still is today! Joe shared his sentiments that, in many ways, he wishes the Trinity congregation still met in that location; not just for the chance to use their enviable facilities, but more so to share in the regular fellowship and camaraderie that is still fondly recalled by members of both churches to this day.

Kevin MacFarlane, St. Andrew's Church Historian





Faith Formation Update

Children Lead First Ever “Adults’ Time”

On Sunday, March 9th, the church school children led our very first “Adults’ Time.” The children had so much fun rehearsing and getting ready to show the congregation how to be brave in the face of uncertainty. Did you know the script was written by Adam Stolee? Adam was inspired to write the script (with the help of his younger brother and sister, Andrew and Sarah) after Rev. Laurie visited church school on February 16th.

Here is one photo of the children leading this time in worship – they are our brave leaders of tomorrow!



TAKE 150 on March 15th

We had 14 children attend TAKE 150 on Saturday, March 15th! The kids had so much fun making slime, playing games, and sharing a meal. We would like to thank the volunteers who made this possible: Annika, Ceana, Josh, and Rennie were our youth helpers. Shona, Rhonda, and Craig were also helpers. Debbie and Paul made the meal and ensured the kids and helpers got fed. Thanks to Inge for organizing another wonderful event!





Update from Joud, our foster child

The children received correspondence from Joud, our foster child from Haiti. See the photo of Joud on the right with her family. An ox is pictured with the family as Joud's mother purchased the ox with the money Joud was sent by the children of our congregation. The photo came with a letter of thanks. All are welcome to come to the church school class and see all the photos of Joud, and her family proudly displayed on our wall for the children to continue to be reminded of what a gift it is to have this relationship with Joud.

Submitted by the Faith Formation Team,

**Rhonda Wishart, Inge Murray,
Debby Dorcas, and Lorna Andronikou**



Celebrating Judie Coleman: Retiring Presbytery Minute Secretary

As Judie prepares to retire from her role as the Presbytery Minute Secretary after an impressive 30 years, we take a moment to reflect on her journey and contributions to the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod. The Presbytery consists of ministers and elders from churches across Southern Alberta, including Calgary, Banff, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, and oversees the churches and ministers, ensuring that their needs are met and that they are supported in their missions.



The position of Presbytery Minute Secretary was established by Rev. Karl English when he was Clerk of Presbytery in the mid-1990s. At that time copies of reports were left on the back pew of the sanctuary for presbyters to pick up on their way into the meeting. Judie's job was to re-type all the reports to create the minutes and mail hard copies to all presbyters. In the early 2000s reports began arriving by email so they didn't have to be re-typed and the minutes were emailed to Presbyters which reduced the workload. As a non-voting member, Judie's role has been one of support to eight different Presbytery Clerks.

Judie's current responsibilities as Minute Secretary include compiling the convenors' committee reports a week before the meeting, recording motions etc. during meetings, and creating the minutes after the meeting which are then distributed by the Clerk. In the early days, meetings were held every two months, but recently they transitioned to monthly gatherings often held at various churches to foster face-to-face connections. Today, some meetings are conducted via Zoom, especially during winter months. Judie has found her work to be both satisfying and meaningful, gaining a deeper understanding of the Presbytery's structure and decisions.

Judie has captured the joys and challenges of the Presbytery over 30 years, participated in changes in technology, and worked with ever-changing moderators, ministers, representative elders, and congregations. The Presbytery has benefited from her faithful presence and her clarity in communication.

As we bid farewell to Judie in her role as Presbytery Minute Secretary, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for her lengthy dedication and service to the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod. Her contributions have been noteworthy, and she will be greatly missed. Judie's final meeting as Minute Secretary will be May 6, 2025. Well done, Judie!

Submitted by Joan Rowe

Thank You

The Rainbow Team: The Bible and Homosexuality

Introduction

St. Andrew's is an affirming congregation which publicly, intentionally and explicitly welcomes all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community ("the Rainbow Community") to full participation in the life of our church.

The primary goal of the recently formed StAC Rainbow Team is to facilitate, encourage and support the congregation's commitment to diversity and inclusion in an intentional way. One such way is to provide clarification and education relating to topics that some may find confusing or challenging.

A question that arises for some is "How do we explain the Bible passages that appear to criticize or condemn homosexuality?"

A thorough examination and reference to the many scholarly and theological interpretations of these Biblical passages is beyond the scope of this article. I apologize in advance for the over-simplification of this challenging subject matter and encourage further reading for those interested. In the meantime, may this article serve as a starter for thoughtful consideration.

An excellent starting place for those wishing further clarification and guidance on the subject can be found in our own Presbyterian Church in Canada's guide *Body, Mind and Soul – Thinking Together About Human Sexuality and Sexual Orientation in the PCC, 2015* ("Body, Mind & Soul") which can be found on the national church website and on our own library shelves. One of our former ministers, the Reverend Marion Barclay MacKay was involved in the project.

The Challenging Passages as a Whole

There are 7 key texts in the Bible which mention same-gender sexual activity, namely Genesis 19:4-8, Judges 19, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6-9, 1 Timothy 1:9-10 and Romans 1:26-27. These passages have been the focus of interpretations over the years by both "traditionalist" and "progressive" thinkers who either argue against or for the full acceptance of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community ("the Rainbow Community") in our Christian faith communities. These passages can be troubling to traditionalists who find it hard to get past the passages, and to progressives who want to be able to adequately explain why these passages lack relevance in today's world.

When one attempts to interpret Biblical passages, *Body, Mind & Soul* provides some important tools to keep in mind. The key tool is a reminder that there is always distance between the original context and culture in which the Bible was written and our own. This distance includes time (at least 1800 years for the New Testament and much more for the Old), language (none of the Bible was written in English), geographic location (the writers did not know North America even existed), culture (shifts significantly over time) and historical (social, economic, intellectual, technological and other experience available at the relevant time).



- The Old Testament Passages

There appears to be consensus among respected theologians and scholars on both sides of the debate, that the passages from Genesis and Judges are ones that speak only of sexual acts that are abusive and violent, such as gang rape. It is easy to conclude that these passages have nothing to do with the morality of a loving consensual relationship between two persons of the same gender as we now know it.

In terms of the passages from Leviticus, *Body, Mind & Soul* explains that the same-sex sexual activity referred to in these two passages are in reference to the Holiness Code – a comprehensive set of laws regarding every aspect of life that was intended to set Israel apart from other nations, particularly those nations practicing pagan worship and lifestyles. All behaviours were divided into two groups of what was holy and what was profane. It is important to note that the references to sexual activity fall alongside other purity laws that are no longer relevant or followed in our times, such as prohibitions against use of mixing fabrics, consuming the blood of animals, cursing parents, being a medium and touching the skin of a dead pig, all of which demanded the death penalty.

The question clearly arises if it is rational or appropriate today, to rely on the Leviticus passages to condemn the Rainbow Community's lifestyle, when such a position means selectively choosing which principles of the Holiness code are to be followed and which are not?

The highly respected evangelical scholar, David P. Gushee, in his book *Changing Our Minds* (one of the Rainbow Team's purchases for the StAC library) asks the question – does the kind of holiness emphasized in Leviticus, fit with the character of God as taught and embodied by Jesus Christ?

It may be helpful when reading these Old Testament passages, to know that when Jesus speaks of the early books of the Hebrew Bible, Jesus never mentions homosexuality. In the only place that Jesus speaks of the whole of the law, he is asked which is the greatest commandment and he chooses two – “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and with all your mind... and You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

- The New Testament Passages

In Corinthians and Timothy, the debate essentially arises from the interpretation of two Greek words which are found in a list of vices - the words *arsenokoites* and *malakos*. Although there is apparently great difficulty in translating *arsenokites* into English, a rare word not found elsewhere in the Bible, many English translations of the Bible have the word appearing as “homosexual”, leading to the conclusion by some that Paul is condemning homosexuality. However, the actual meaning and translation of the word *arsenokoites* are heavily contested by scholars, some indicating that the translation of the word to sex traffickers, sexual exploiters, rapists, predators or pimps are all equally plausible. *Malakos* apparently refers to a broad category of behaviours including laziness, lack of courage and weakness but finds itself in some English translations of the Bible as “men having sex with men”. Suffice it to say there is considerable disagreement about the meaning of these particular words, with many scholars agreeing that the words cannot be directly applied to committed same-sex relationships as we know them today.

Romans 1 is the most widely cited passage in the entire 2SLGBTQIA+ debate. In it is found Paul's long argument that human beings are sinful in the eyes of God. *Body, Mind & Soul* explains that the first group that Paul condemns are those who worship multiple gods, “the idolators” with the consequence of these actions being that God “gave them up ... to shameful lusts, impurity, and degrading passions.” It is here that Paul refers to same-sex activity.

Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another.

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David Gushee states that the massive scholarly literature about this verse flows in a number of directions including what background textual or cultural influences shaped Paul's claims and an emphasis on what "natural" and "unnatural" meant at that time. *Body, Mind & Soul* outlines the wide spectrum of views on the interpretation of this passage, from the traditionalist to the progressive. I am over-simplifying due to the scope of this article, but progressives emphasize that the context of Paul's writing is the worship of idols and graven images such that the sin referred to is more about excessive self-centered lust and lack of self-control rather than on loving same-sex relationships. I refer anyone who desires a deeper exploration of the passage in Romans, to read chapter 14 of Gushee's *Changing Our Mind*. Gushee concludes the chapter with the comment that it is highly questionable that what Paul is referring to in his harsh condemnations in Romans 1, has anything to do with devout same-sex loving couples.

The Interpretive Principle of Love

The most meaningful part of *Body Mind & Soul* for me was a short paragraph entitled "The Interpretive Principle of Love". It speaks of the many episodes in the Bible of violence, harm, tyranny and unjust judgement and, as well, of the many social practices which are no longer practices of Christian living, such as slavery. In answer to the question of how to read such texts without endorsing violence or unjust practices, one is referred to the over-riding interpretive principle of love. Essentially, we are told that, as Christians, "any interpretation of the Bible that does not lead to love and the building up of the body of Christ should be critically re-evaluated". As offered to us by Jesus Christ and written in Mark 12:30-31:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this - You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

Closing

A reading of these seven passages in the Bible and even a few of the many articles directed at their interpretation, indicates to me, at a minimum, that any opposition of same-sex relationships and 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, cannot be based solely on these Biblical texts.

In the words of Brandan Robertson, a Christian pastor and theologian who spent 10 years in critical study of what the Bible says about sexuality and gender, "LGBTQ people and relationships should be celebrated as a unique expression and reflection of God's creativity and ever-expansive love."

With love for all as our guiding principle, the Rainbow Team welcomes the entirety of the Rainbow Community to be our neighbour and to join us fully in StAC's community of faith.

Submitted by Rainbow Team Member, Rhonda Wishart





Preamble:

On Friday, October 18, 2024 the Rainbow Team hosted a film and conversation evening at St. Andrew's in order to provide ongoing discussion about how to understand what it means to be followers of Christ and hear more about the experiences of 2SLGBTQ folks. Those who gathered that night expressed a desire to learn more about being faithful followers of Christ and to understand the needs and perspectives of 2SLGBTQIA people. One of the requests was that we hear from people within our congregation who may have shifted in their understanding of 2SLGBTQ people and their inclusion in the church. We are so blessed to have such an account from a long-time St. Andrew's member, Lois Kerslake. The following letter from Lois Kerslake was written around 2014 and given to me with permission for it to be shared.

Lois was a power house member of St. Andrew's for many years and a force to be reckoned with!! She taught Sunday school; was a member of WMS (Women's Missionary Society); was convenor of the Nursing Health Ministry team; organized cookie plates every Christmas for members who were homebound; and was a member of the Search team for Rev. Peter. Every Sunday Lois would greet new people and she made sure to introduce them to someone else in the congregation. Lois currently lives in AgeCare Seton, her husband passed away a number of years ago. ~Lynn Judd

A letter from Lois Kerslake

I don't know if this is any help or not – but cathartic for me to write.

Hello, my name is Lois Kerslake and I am 87 year of age. I would like to share my story of how my objection to gays and lesbians being ordained in the United Church of Canada (UCC) prompted me to leave the UCC in 1988 and arrived at my current acceptance, understanding and support for their ordination in The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) today.

1. My Background

- grew up on a farm with 3 siblings
- graduated as a Registered Nurse in 1953
- participation in UCC included helping in Sunday School as a teenager; Young Peoples; WMS; Teenage Bible Study and UCW.

2. Some Social Influences

- awareness that another High School student seemed 'different' – but I don't remember ever wondering why
- early 1950's psychiatry textbook stated that homosexuality activity was deviant behavior
- rumors about one of the orderlies being homosexual
- living in nurses' residence after graduation where I was warned not to get too friendly with another nurse who 'has a special friend'
- looking back, I don't ever remember being repelled or unwilling to work with anyone

3. In 1988 the UCC (United Church of Canada) approved the ordination of gays and lesbians....

-prior to this event, I had discussed the topic with my mom (teacher) – she expressed her concern about them being role-models for the young children and youth in the church – a reinforcement of my own opinion.

-my absolute distress when watching the TV news announcing that the UCC had approved the ordination of gays and lesbians. I remember being on my knees asking God what I was going to do, how could I continue to support a church that was willing to allow a practicing gay or lesbian in the pulpit?

-to this day, I shall never forget the calmness and peace I experienced as it came to me that I could leave the UCC and go to The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), the choice of denomination because my parents had been Presbyterian before union

-two discussions with the UCC minister followed – then the trek to the PCC proceeded.

4. Lastly, my association with St. Andrew's PC

-visit from Rev. Karl English – he wanted to make sure that I had discussed my decision to leave the UCC with that minister

-my involvement in St. Andrew's – teaching Sunday School; WMS; Bible Study; co-leader of preparation for church membership class

-the PCC congregational study on Human Sexuality a few years ago – each session at a different PCC church in Calgary was a presentation by a minister followed by round table discussions on specific questions

-at the round table discussions at Varsity Acres PC, Rev. Jan Hazlett was at my table

– a question arose and for some reason it left me questioning my opinion. I spoke with Rev. Jan about this later and, forgive my recall, I cannot recall the subject of the questions but I do remember the uneasiness I felt about my opinion at that time.

-at the [round table] session at St. Andrew's, it was during Rev. Kevin Lee's presentation and interpretation of scripture that struck a chord within me. I remember that I had no idea that I was going to stand up and give testimony to the fact that I now understood that there is no 'we and they' - that I could now accept and understand that anyone called to become a minister having completed their formal training, should and shall be ordained. I remember the peace I felt as I made my statement, and ironically, I remembered the UCC motto "That all shall (or may) Be One".

Finally, as I was leaving that evening, a young man and his mother approached me. He was so grateful for my words – today I would like him to know how grateful I am for this feeling of peace within me for the change in my acceptance, understanding and attitude towards the LGBTQ community.

Thanks be to God and for Christian Education.

Lois Kerslake



Oki (hello in Siksika) from the Indigenous Relations Team

One of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church's ministries is to be committed to establishing positive, meaningful relationships with our Indigenous neighbours and continue towards reconciliation. Following our very successful September 28, 2024 Indigenous Friendship Day, it was apparent we needed to harness the energy from this event and continue building these meaningful relationships.



Subsequently the "Indigenous Relations Team" (IRT) was formed to guide and support this ministry. A team mandate for IRT was formulated and approved by Sessions on January 21, 2025.

[CLICK HERE TO READ OUR COMPLETE MANDATE](#)

Our mandate (summary) is as follows;

In partnership with Indigenous neighbours, the Indigenous Relations Team (IRT) guides and supports activities, programs and learning opportunities that promote Indigenous relationships based on mutual trust and respect

Various members and groups of St. Andrew's have spearheaded initiatives that have already made some very important partnerships, connections and met specific needs of our Indigenous neighbours. Below are summaries of some recent activities.

Winter clothing for Aboriginal Friendship Centre (AFC): submitted by Derek Wilkinson



The Men's Group found out about the AFC's need for warm winter clothing early in January, and immediately ran a clothing drive in February to this need. Two very large collection boxes were set up at the church, and over the four weeks of February we collected and delivered nearly 10 washing machine sized box loads of clothes, with everything from winter boots to warm headgear. The collection program was a huge success; thanks to the contributions from the congregation, this helped fill a huge need for the AFC.

Soup for Aboriginal Friendship Centre (AFC): submitted by Terry Basaraba

St. Andrew's started making soup for AFC as of November 2024. We are currently making soup for 150 once per month. There are three teams led by Margaret Bates, Lynn Judd and Terry Basaraba. Each team has four or more members of St. Andrew's helping. The team lead is responsible for purchasing the groceries and organizing dates and connecting with team members. A budget for 2025 was approved in the amount of \$ 3,000.00, funded from the Legacy Fund. At AFC the soup is reheated on Thursday of each week, usually enough for three weeks. We are pleased to be able to fill a need of feeding the hungry.



Neechi Mart: submitted by Randy Szott and Margaret Bruhjell-Holmes

Since mid-February, St. Andrew's has been offering space to an Indigenous led initiative called Neechi Mart, sponsored by the Iksooksippaitapii group or Iksook. Each Wednesdays from 11:00AM to 2:00PM the Iksook group prepares soup and bannock in the church kitchen to feed for free about 50 + people either from their community or anyone who is hungry. At the same time several crates full of an assortment of foods and dry staples supplied by the Food Bank specifically for Iksook are brought to Neechi Mart by Iksook volunteers. Our own Randy Szott volunteers his time each Wednesday morning to help set up tables to display all the food and sundry products, as well as a lunch and craft area. Prior to the guests arriving a blessing and prayer with the burning of Sweetgrass is offered to the volunteers. By noon the guests are welcomed in. Randy along with Loran McVittie greet and register the guests. Then they go along helping to fill each of the food hampers. Randy, in his words tells us, "This opportunity to serve for those in need makes my heart feel so good. The group is very well organized and very little food is left over. What our church does for people in need is amazing."



Aboriginal Friendship Centre (AFC) presentation: submitted by Terry Basaraba

On Saturday March 8, Krista White Pup and Ethel Medicine Traveller did a one-hour presentation, in the Karl English Lounge, on the workings of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre. It is quite unique all the services provided for the less fortunate at the AFC downtown branch. Krista emphasized that partnerships such as what St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church has offered is so important. "Everyone benefits."

I think the key words that I feel have come out of this ministry so far are: feeding, hospitality, partnership and relations.

**Thank you St. Andrew's
for all your support.**

Margaret Bruhjell-Holmes for IRT





Aging in Place: Questions to Think About

By 2030, almost a quarter of the Canadian population will be over 65 years of age. Where they will live out the rest of their lives will be a question they will all be faced with.

Dealing with the reality of the escalating cost of retirement homes and the decline in staffing models for long term care facilities, seniors may well choose to continue to live in their own home with community supports in place.

According to a 2016 Canadian census over 85% of aging seniors expressed a desire to continue living in their present home and pay for support services.

Here are a few things to consider when planning to stay in your own home.

Your home:

- What modifications would I have to make to my current home to keep me safe?
- Do I have the finances to pay for care services or home upgrades if needed?
- What home care services are available from AHS and could I supplement with a private care provider?
- Would AHS home care services cover additional equipment for my home?

Your community:

- Is my community age friendly – do they encourage and support active senior's events and activities?
- Am I close to support services that I may need now or in the future?

Finances:

- What income will I need to maintain my current standard of living?
- What government assistance and benefits would I qualify for?

Connections:

- Do I have family and friends I can rely on for support if needed?
- What volunteer opportunities are available near my home?



Submitted on behalf of the Wellness Team by Alice Williams

Please join the Wellness Team in partnership with the Heritage Seniors for our annual health information session on Monday May 5, 2025 when the guest speaker will be Jill Chambers from Aging in Place Supports.



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