



CONNEXIONS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL NEWSLETTER



BRIGHTENING OUR
Doorway



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BRIGHTENING OUR DOORWAY

On Light:

**A Message for Epiphany from the Coordinator Growth and Care
by Lori-ann Esser**

The word alone connotes brightness and expectation and brings welcoming images to mind in these darker days of winter. We begin Epiphany remembering the Magi, who followed the light of a brilliant star to find, honour and worship the Christ child. This light brings promise and hope.

In these past few weeks of Advent and Christmas, I have seen light in so many different ways: lamps glowing from the windows of houses as evening falls; a brilliant sunrise leading to a sun-lit day; colourful Christmas lights tracing rooflines or draped on frosty trees; a flickering match lighting a cozy fire; starlight and moonlight against a black sky on a clear, cold night; candles lit by children on Christmas Eve, glowing at the front of the sanctuary and twinkling through icy outdoor luminaries. These lights bring joy and comfort.

Growing up in Nova Scotia, lighthouses were a common sight, distinctive structures on points of land facing out to sea. I often think about what it might have been like to be a fisherman, coming back from hard days of work on the ocean, perhaps arriving at night or in the gathering darkness of a storm, the welcome sight of a beam from a lighthouse guiding the boat safely around rocky shoals to home. This light brings peace and safety.

As a child, I remember the feeling I got when, after a day of playing in the snow, knitted mittens frozen solid and daylight fading, my mother would open the door for my brother and me to come into the warm, bright kitchen. Dry clothes and supper waited. This light brings warmth and belonging.

I recently spoke with a woman at the Haysboro Parade of Holiday Lights. She told me a bit of her story and said that to her, church should feel like "home": a place of welcome, comfort and acceptance. She was searching for that place.

**Light can bring so much to us and to those around us. People need it.
People are seeking it.**

In **Ephesians 6:8** we are reminded to "walk as children of light" and in **Matthew 5: 14-16**, to be a light to others. We all have a role to play to be a welcoming people in a welcoming place: To help others to Grow Life Together With God. To be Woven Into our Neighbourhood, Growing Disciples Who Love Like Jesus. **My hope is that St. Andrew's can be all of these kinds of light:** that our doorway will be joyfully illuminated and open, a beacon to those who wish to find guidance and comfort, hope and peace, acceptance and belonging in an isolating and turbulent time.

Will you brighten our doorway?



BRIGHTENING OUR
Doorway

01.09	Epiphany 1 Magi Joy	Matthew 2: 1-12	Dr. Tim Lori-ann
01.16	Epiphany 2 So Many Gifts	1 Corinthians 12: 1-11	Dr. Tim
01.23	Epiphany 3 Life-Giving Unity	1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a	Dr. Tim Lori-ann
01.30	Epiphany 4 Love That Never Gives Up	1 Corinthians 13: 1-13	Dr. Geoffrey
02.06	Epiphany 5 Deep-Water Miracles	Luke 5: 1-11	Dr. Tim Lori-ann
02.13	Epiphany 6 Fruitfulness in Parched Places	Jeremiah 17: 5-10	Dr. Tim Dr. Geoffrey
02.20	Epiphany 7 All Things Worked for Good	Genesis 45: 3-11; Romans 8:28, 35, 37-39	Dr. Tim Lori-ann
02.27	Transfiguration Glory	Luke 9: 28-36	Dr. Tim

MISSION TEAM UPDATE

by Lori-ann Esser

Coordinator of Growth and Care

Small but mighty, the Mission Team, under our new, enthusiastic, and faithful leader, Judy McKearney, planned successful events for this past Advent season.

Living out St. Andrew's vision and mission, the Team made plans to attend the Haysboro Parade of Holiday Lights on December 18, 2021, providing hot chocolate (compliments of Tim Horton's Braeside) and candy canes for people coming to skate and enjoy the fire pit at the Community Centre. Rev. Fiona and Lori-ann handed out treats and our "Come Home for Christmas" postcards to happy revelers. It was a fun evening and a great way for St. Andrew's to be involved in the community and for us to make connections with families in the neighbourhood.

The popular postcards not only went home with people at the Haysboro Parade of Holiday Lights, but Lori-ann also delivered many to mailboxes of homes located near the church in both Haysboro and Kingsland. Thank you to our Communications Coordinator, Mikael, for the beautiful design. We hope to continue this outreach with our new Epiphany postcards. People are invited to "brighten our doorway," from longstanding church members extending a warm welcome, to the newcomer visiting St. Andrew's for the first time, and everyone in between.

The Mission Team campaigned throughout December to raise funds for Claire House. Claire House is located in Kingsland and is an apartment complex providing housing for singles and small families who might otherwise be homeless. Thanks to the generosity of our St. Andrew's family, we raised \$3,000 that enabled us to buy sixty \$50 gift cards for Claire House residents to brighten their Christmas. Thank you to Bill Judd who purchased and delivered the gift cards on behalf of the Mission Team and St. Andrew's.

Looking ahead, St. Andrew's continues its work into 2022 through the Food Bank's Heritage Depot, now into its fifth year of delivering food hampers every Saturday. We are always happy to have volunteers. If you are interested in helping, please contact Bill Judd (juddb@shaw.ca) for more information.

A warm thank you is extended to Jayne and Amelia Martin who, after years of dedication and leadership with the Heritage Depot, finished their service at the end of December. We express our appreciation to Lucy Aburto, Sheri Coutts and Joan Rowe who have generously stepped into Team Captain roles so that the Heritage Depot can continue to serve clients during these times of uncertainty and food insecurity. We also thank Bill Judd for his continuing leadership and the many volunteers who faithfully work to ensure that this mission is fulfilled each week.

The Mission Team also is starting off 2022 by planning a follow-up to the testimony we heard on October 13, 2021, from our Indigenous brothers and elders about their Residential School experiences. This article will appear in the February / March issue, but for your information we propose to gather as a congregation in January to discuss what we heard in October and determine what steps we might take to work towards reconciliation. Mission Team member Brian Hawco is arranging for us to meet as a church with Indigenous Elders in a Healing Circle in February. We hope for your participation as we continue to identify wrongs, ask for forgiveness and move forward on a journey of peace and reconciliation.

We also would like to highlight the continuing need in 2022 for donated items to support Afghan refugees in our city. Thank you to Lynn Judd for her efforts in this mission. As noted in LinX, people can help by doing the following:

- 1) Donate household, furniture, baby and clothing items to any WIN (Women In Need) store in clearly marked boxes labeled HOUSE TO HOME AFGHAN REFUGEE PROGRAM.

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Youth Group by Lauren Cole

When I was younger growing up in the church, Youth Group was so important to me. I remember my mum used to use it as a “reward/punishment” if my sister and I were misbehaving or fighting. We were more upset on missing Youth Group than we were losing phone privileges (not that we were ever THAT bad, right Mum?). It was such a fun experience to come out on a Friday night with the older kids (I was the youngest in our church group of friends by a couple of years) and to do a study, whether it was a video series, Bible Study or even just reading a book and sharing our thoughts.

We would have “Hot Seats” with the ministers; and had Revs. Peter and Jan come in and let us ask them all the hard-hitting questions. I would spend weeks researching the most obscure questions just to see if I could stump them. We would do cook-offs and our poor leaders would have to eat whatever we cooked for them, bless their souls. I just remember Youth Group nights being so full of fun, but we never forgot to bring Christ into the conversation. Our nights always started and ended with prayer, and we would do prayer requests and our group would follow up and everyone felt cared about.

When my fiancé and I were asked to be leaders, I knew how important our leaders were to us when I was growing up, and want to make sure our group knows how important to us they are. Matt and I had different faith upbringings, as he was raised in the Catholic Church and I was obviously raised Presbyterian. I think that helps us as leaders as we have different perspectives and different histories so we aren't just repeating ourselves.

Our first and most important thing in the Youth Group is that we want the kids to feel safe, not just because of Covid and the policies around that, but that they feel safe to be themselves in each other's company. We want each youth to walk in feeling like this is their space and they are welcome no matter where they come from.



Growing up being the only “Christian” in my friend group was hard. No one related to me, and it could feel very isolating when I was made fun of for my faith. However, as soon as I walked in the church on a Friday night, and I saw my friends who shared my values and were like-minded, it made every other worry or concern go away.

We are so grateful for the trust placed in us to guide our youth on their faith journeys on Friday nights. As we move out of the season of Advent and into the season of Lent, we have so many cool evenings planned for our time together. **Stay tuned for the excitement!**



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 04)

2) Donate \$25 gift certificates for the Canadian Superstore. Gift cards will be distributed to families as needed. Please bring any gift cards to the church office identified for Afghan refugees.

As we further explore ways to be a true missional church, and to live out St. Andrew's vision and mission, we invite people of all ages to join our Mission Team. We look forward to your ideas and your energy as we continue to let our light shine from St. Andrew's out into our neighbourhoods and beyond.



Spiritual Moments
by Garry Hennan
God's Amazing Grace



*"Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound,
That Saved a Wretch Like Me, I Once Was
Lost, But Now Am Found, Was Blind but
Now I See."*

This wretch has been gobsmacked by God's Amazing Grace. I have looked death in the face and survived. Several doctors suggested my chances of returning to a normal life after Covid-19 were slim to none. I stand before you as testament to our Lord and Saviour's redeeming power.

On September 1st, 2021, I was admitted to Foothills Medical Centre with an advanced case of Covid. Both my wife, Gaylene, and I had opted to face this pandemic with natural remedies and supplements. We are not anti-vaxxers, just very cautious what we put into our bodies. (We now have both our shots.)

Unfortunately, we had attended a public market without masks and subsequently both tested positive for this nasty virus the last week of August. Gaylene was able to beat Covid-19 on her own in under three weeks. My immunity to this disease must have been less than hers but I believed I'd be discharged in a few days.

A hundred thousand SARS-Cov-2 spike proteins coursing through my body at that time had a different idea. By September 9th the medical staff was prepping me for a transfer into the Intensive Care Unit. A doctor spoke to Gaylene and said I had Covid all through me. A CT scan showed my lungs were filling with mucus and it was his opinion that my chances of survival were just 50/50. I knew I was in trouble and had Gaylene contact Sheila Kirkland for her prayers. Sheila is a godly person and I felt confident she could pray on my behalf.

She went a step further and asked if she could put both of us on her church's Prayer Chain at St. Andrew's Presbyterian. We had over thirty men and women praying for us.

Breathing was the issue. Even pumping high concentrations of oxygen into me didn't improve my situation. On the 11th, I was put into a coma and intubated with a mechanical ventilator. Over that weekend and into Tuesday the doctors and nurses tried to wean me off the ventilator but later was told I struggled to breathe. My heart started to act up and went into long periods of atrial fibrillation, an irregular heartbeat that varied between 80 to 160 beats per minute. My usual heart rate is in the 50s.

I have no memory at all of that week or the next. Under heavy sedation, they tried to coax me to breathe on my own without success. On September 21st, I stopped breathing. At that point a decision had to be made and quickly. I believe God's grace then intervened on my behalf. The ICU doctor said, "Get him back on the ventilator." He could easily have said "Let him go" but something, someone, and perhaps his oath influenced him to continue working with me.

The second three-day session on mechanical ventilation in a coma would be my last. If I stopped breathing one more time, it would truly be game over. Three further days passed after the machine was turned off and, I believe with the help of now several dozen family members, relatives and friends praying for my recovery, my natural breathing resumed without interruption. The praise belongs to God.

A tracheostomy was performed to further assist my breathing. The insertion of ventilator tubes at one point paralyzed my vocal cords leaving me without a voice. (Now only throat vibrations allow me to communicate.)

My belief is that God has plans for me and would not let me go - and He wouldn't let anyone else let me go. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 07)

A Busy Christmas Season
by Your Faith Formation Team
By Rhonda Wishart, Convenor

Faith FORMATION

Thanks to the adaptability of church school leaders Inge Murray, Lorna Andronikou, Bart & Jennifer Stolee, Rhonda Wishart and Stephanie Werle, Bible Buddies on Zoom on Sunday mornings was created in September and continued bi-weekly through the holiday season. The leaders felt strongly about wanting more direct connection with the children, and this transition has led to our children and leaders happily interacting with each other again. We plan to offer Bible Buddies for our three-13-year-old demographic until in-person church school can resume safely.

Thanks to Lori-ann Esser, we have also enhanced the online content on our church website to be accessed by children at any time during the week. To ensure every child and teen was reached with love over the Christmas season, Advent bags were prepared by the FF Team, surprising our young people with homemade cookies made by the Ladies Guild, candy arranged by Kathy and Kerrie Slimmon, chocolate energy balls made by Barbara Kearnes, a family advent craft created by Inge Murray and a special treat - a personalized written letter for Christmas morning from devoted members of the congregation.

A highlight for many at St. Andrew's, was the Family Christmas Eve Service planned by the FF Team with the assistance of Lori-ann Esser and Rev. Fiona Swanson. This was an indoor/outdoor experience where many families gathered to share in the joy of a live manger scene, beautiful icy luminaries, the making of Christmas crafts celebrating love, joy, and peace, all culminating in a worship service of story-telling and lively Christmas carols.

We want to thank Inge and Craig Murray, Debby Dorcas, and Lori-ann Esser for their planning and execution of the fine details of this service; and Matt Nolette and Lauren Cole for playing the parts of Mary and Joseph for our outdoor manger.



It was such a blessing to see the joy on the faces of those attending; happy to be reunited, if only briefly.

The Advent season provided the opportunity for the FF Team to educate the congregation during the Sunday children's story. With the help of many of our little ones, members of the FF Team told stories of the mission projects sponsored by the congregation on behalf of the children. Adults had the opportunity to participate in a seasonal book study during Advent, a study of Celebrating Abundance, kindly and ably led by Bill Judd & Ken Burrill.



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On September 29th after eighteen days of mechanical and oxygen-rich ventilation, the tube was removed from my throat. The damage to my vocal cords had been done, but day by day I began to improve. My recovery progressed through October until I was discharged on November 8th into CareWest's Glenmore Rehabilitation Centre for eleven days and then home at last. A journey that beat long odds with the help of our Lord and Saviour, and the power of prayer from many Christians like Sheila Kirkland. Thanks be to God.



Sexuality And Faith Explored Together with God

The SAFE team – Lynn Judd, Christine Pepper, Deanne Barrett, Kim McLachlan

In June of 2021 the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) passed two resolutions: one, to ordain LGBTQ+ ministers and ruling elders and two, to adopt two parallel definitions of marriage, “a covenant between a man and a woman” and a “covenant relationship between two adult persons”.

What does this mean for St. Andrew’s?

There are no immediate changes for us since each session is required to work through these decisions and discern how it will respond to the definitions. These decisions for us have been delayed by Covid. However, in the context of these changes and in the spirit of Growing Life Together with God, it is important that we have an opportunity as a congregation to explore together the intersections of sexuality, diversity, and faith and how they fit into life here at St. Andrew’s.

Throughout Lent, the SAFE team (Human Sexuality Task Force) is planning a four- week series of evening workshops with expert guest speakers who will lead us in discussion around a variety of topics. These sessions will enhance our understanding and facilitate discernment of the ways in which we will live out our Vision and Mission. Not only in relation to the PCC resolutions around marriage and ordination of LGBTQ+ ministers and elders; but in all of our life and work as a community of faith.

The workshops will be held Wednesday evenings from 7– 9pm in Trinity Hall. We hope that you can make a commitment to attend all four sessions since the sessions build on each other.

March 16 – Why do we want to talk about sexuality at church?

March 23 – Who is welcome at church?
Am I safe here?

March 30 – What does the bible say about diversity and inclusion?

April 6 – Where do we go from here?
What does this mean going forward?

We can provide generous space a St. Andrew’s to engage as individuals and a community of faith in discussion and prayerful discernment in the coming months. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you!



TheCreek.Life
by Alice Post - for theCreek Team

We pray that 2022 is off to a good start for you, and that this year will bring many deep blessings that will fill your heart with thanksgiving!

This article includes updates on recent events and initiatives that theCreek, plans for the near future, and ways you can help support the work of theCreek.

Food and Faith

theCreek kicked off Advent 2021 with a Food and Faith gathering on Zoom. We were delighted to welcome a dozen fellow home chefs. Desiree Henrichsen led us through the steps of creating a pasta dish with a delicious curry cream sauce and seafood. Then everyone settled down to eat together while chatting on screen. We watched part of a video about the life of St. Francis, and then talked about how the events of his early life prepared him to be receptive to God’s action in his life. We discussed ways that struggles and challenges we face prepare us and strengthen us, and how divinely-guided decisions change our path in significant ways.

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Vaccinating Children Ages Five To Twelve by Deanne Barrett

As parents, what we all want is to keep our kids safe and healthy, and sometimes it can be difficult to know how to do that, especially around the issue of vaccinating our children against COVID-19. We have access to so much information; and so many different opinions, that it can be difficult for parents to decide if they will vaccinate their children against COVID-19.

My work at St. Mary's University as a Practicum Advisor takes me into many different classrooms to observe the teaching of my Education students. This experience has shown me how diligently teachers have been working to follow the Alberta Health protocols of masking, hand sanitizing and keeping students in cohort groups to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Travelling from school to school, it has been incredibly important for me to wear my mask, sanitize my hands and limit direct contact with students to prevent the spread of this disease.

When it comes to understanding COVID-19 and what it means to be vaccinated, I don't know enough about immunology to determine if the information online or from the media is accurate. I am relying on the expertise of medical professionals to do their work to the best of their ability. As an educator who teaches critical thinking skills, the best I can do is to ask myself the same set of questions that I ask my students to consider when they're reading, watching, or consuming any form of content: Who is saying this? What are they saying? Why are they saying this? Does this person have the expertise that makes them an authority on this subject?

When it was time for me to get my own vaccination, I trusted that the medical experts were doing their work, and understood the importance of thinking beyond myself, and as part of an entire community. When it became possible to have our kids vaccinated, my husband and I decided that we would have them vaccinated to give us all one more layer of protection against the spread of COVID-19.

A few weeks before Christmas, I took our two children, aged eight and ten to the South Calgary Health Centre at Sunpark Plaza to get their COVID-19 vaccinations. There was a lot of support in place to help kids through the experience. We were met by a child support worker who chatted with us and showed a video to distract my daughter when she had her shot. After they were vaccinated, while we waited the required 15 minutes to ensure that they didn't have any adverse reactions, we were able to visit with two dogs and their owners from PALS. The kids walked away knowing that they had one more layer of protection against COVID-19. After they were vaccinated, we felt more confident to attend our first in-person worship service on Christmas Eve, and as we traveled out of town to visit their grandparents.

What this global pandemic has taught me is that each of us has to make wise choices about where we get our information, we have to be honest with the limits of our own knowledge and trust the expertise of others, and that each of us has to consider how our individual choices has an impact on our broader communities. I pray that as we venture into 2022 and continue to live through this global pandemic we can move forward together in a good way.

Deanne Barrett is a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Calgary, sessional instructor at St. Mary's University, International Parent Coach and host of the podcast Radiant Mom. You can connect with **Deanne online** at radiantmom.ca or on **instagram** at [@radiantmompodcast](https://www.instagram.com/radiantmompodcast).



Care Share as part of Ministries of Care by Joan Rowe, Coordinator

Support - Our Care Share works to respond to individual needs identified by ministerial staff, elders, office staff and the congregation by providing short term support in crisis situations requiring food preparation, and/or other specific needs that can be met by a volunteer. How can you help? Sign up as a Care Share volunteer. If you are interested, please contact the church office at 403-255-0001, or by email at office@standrewscalgary.ca.

Meal Train - Meal Train (www.mealtrain.com) is an easy way to let Care Share volunteers know when meals or individual needs are identified for someone in our faith family.

Here's how it works: When a need is identified, volunteers who have signed up for this ministry will receive an email with all the details (who is receiving the meals, allergies, delivery instructions, and dates that meals are needed).

As a volunteer, when you receive the email, you decide if you can help, and select a date that works for you. It is an easy and effective way to organize meal delivery and it is convenient for volunteers to sign up to deliver meals. **During Covid**, volunteers leave their meal on the recipient's porch in a cooler, so that there is very limited contact. Besides making meals, volunteers can also choose to give restaurant gift cards, Skip-the-Dishes, or ATCO Blue Flame meals.

Confidentiality - All needs requests are kept confidential within the office and the volunteers on Meal Train. The meal request may be added to the weekly StAC newsletter if verbally agreed upon with the recipient.

Leading with Care - All Care Share visitors follow The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Leading with Care Policy.

Why we help - Since the earliest days of the church, compassionate practical service has been a central component of the Christian faith community. The Gospels have stories of Jesus feeding hungry people, helping the sick, comforting the struggling. The book of Acts describes devout believers being consecrated to the task of overseeing food distribution to those who need it. Our Care Share and Family Ministry teams at St. Andrew's provide a means of continuing this same practical, caring service. Food is provided, support is given, immediate needs are met, relationships enhanced, and some concerns eased. Givers and receivers are both blessed in the sharing.

Let us help - If you or someone you know would benefit from a meal or short-term support in crisis situations requiring food preparation, and / or other specific needs that can be met by a volunteer, please contact the church office at office@standrewscalgary.ca

"Thank you to the St. Andrew's Care Share team for sending some welcome meals to this busy family. **Welcome Landyn!**"



*Thank
you!*

Thank You!

On behalf of Dr. Tim, Dr. Geoffrey and the Worship Team, I would like to thank the many people who offered to help with ushering, greeting and reading at our many services over the Advent and Christmas season. Your ministry in these roles was a blessing to others and is greatly and sincerely appreciated!

Lori-ann, Coordinator Growth and Care

GIFTS DIFFERING

By Lori-ann Esser,
Coordinator of Growth and Care

In our small family growing up, I can think of the different gifts each of us had according to our personalities, passions, skills, training, and interests. My mother is an artist and teacher and gives of her time in both hospitality and service to others; my father was a minister and a teacher who enjoyed people and pastoral care and counselling. He also was a great sports enthusiast and dabbled in cooking. My brother is an athlete, a teacher and coach, and a leader in his church. Occasionally he was good at practical jokes. I was involved in art, theatre, and music, with tennis and swimming thrown in. I also happen to love puppets, not to mention a good argument from time to time. (Ask my brother. Or my husband.) Maybe that's why I ended up training as a trial lawyer. (The arguments, not the puppets. Wait. Hmmm.)

Just as in my family, the members of our St. Andrew's family have many gifts to offer, no matter what age or background and no matter how long the connection with St. Andrew's. Children can be just as involved as seniors. Newcomers can be included as much as founding members. There are people who have musical abilities, and people who are gifted cooks and bakers. There are those who garden. Still others have artistic and crafting skills, carpentry skills, maintenance skills, financial skills, speaking skills, and writing skills. Do you have gifts that can be used with children and youth or families? Do you like games and sports? What about gifts of service? Maybe you have gifts of leadership, advocacy, or teaching? How about gifts of prayer and study? Or perhaps you have gifts relating to fellowship and hospitality? Do you have a passion for environmental concerns or matters related to homelessness or food insecurity?

You get my drift.

As we enter 2022, I invite you to prayerfully consider your talents, passions, and gifts and how they might be used not only in the continuing tried and true ways, but also in creative, new and exciting ways. How can we best serve people in both St. Andrew's and our neighbourhood?

There are so many opportunities, from Faith Formation to Family Ministry, from the Worship Team to the Welcome Team, from the Communications Team to the Mission Team, from the Ladies Guild to theCreek and so many others. **What gifts do you bring?**

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All the participants who shared feedback said they enjoyed the evening and found it meaningful. Comments on what they liked best were the casual format, the new experience of cooking together and then sharing in discussion, and the relaxing approach, with no pressure to speak if they didn't feel like it.

All in all, we felt blessed by a wonderful evening, and it was a great way to start the new church year, as we entered a season of preparation for Christmas!

Mitten Trees 2021

Throughout the month of December, well over 700 items were given and received through the Free Little Mitten Trees. Gifts included various warm winter-wear items, like hats, scarves, and mittens, as well as hand warmers, masks, gift cards, bus tickets, tissue packs, and lip balm.

Many thanks to all who brought gifts for the Free Little Mitten Trees. Your care and generosity brought warmth and joy to neighbours in need. These practical gifts of warmth are added to prayers for those in our communities who received each item.

Much gratitude to everyone who helped set up the trees and the signs that went beside them, checked on the trees regularly, and sorted, prepared, and placed donation items on the trees. Appreciation to the office staff for receiving donations and to everyone who helped get the word out!

Plans

During Lent, theCreek will host a book study for members of communities south of Fish Creek, in preparation for Easter. Over seven Saturday afternoons, we will study a portion of "We Make the Road by Walking" by Brian McLaren.

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THE STORY BEHIND CLAIRE HOUSE by Bill Judd, Mission Team Member

We recently raised funds for Claire House residents through the generosity of our congregation. While some of you are very familiar with Claire House and its history, there are those who are not.

The Claire House story dates back several years. St. Andrew's involvement with Claire House can be traced back to the "Ten-year plan to end homelessness in Calgary", which officially kicked off in 2008 with a focus on "housing first." Early on, a network of Calgary churches, under the umbrella of Kairos, partnered with what became known as the Calgary Homeless Foundation, to help raise funds for subsidized, community housing. Some of our congregation also will remember efforts with yard cleanup, a fence being built, and household donations to new families at Acadia Place (located at Heritage Drive near Fairmount Drive SE).

Acadia Place was the very first of the four apartment-style community housing projects that now includes Claire House, Bankview, and Longbow. Claire House was the second location in the group, being added in 2010. At Claire House there are 42 one- and two-bedroom apartments for singles and small families.

Residents at the four community housing projects come from various agencies, including the Drop-in Centre, Immigration Services, and Inn From the Cold. Without these agencies and these housing opportunities, residents otherwise might be homeless.

As the project developed, a hope of adding some sense of community for residents of the four buildings, through the involvement of local church members, began to take shape. Over the years, in partnership with CUPS (formerly Calgary Urban Project Society), which provides a community development worker at each building, Kairos has fashioned an informal layer of community support at each of the buildings. St. Andrew's has maintained an overall involvement with fundraising, mainly through the annual Coldest Night of the Year walks.

St. Andrew's also has taken on the primary community volunteer role at Claire House since it is the closest to us, located just north of us in Kingsland at 7375 - 4A St SW.

Our involvement has included a fence being built, setting up a vegetable garden, yard beautification, weekly coffee hour friendship time, periodic community dinners, Christmas celebrations (gifts, dinner, crafts), and support with household furnishings as available and as needed. (Note: clean mattresses have been a special blessing that has been provided to residents at all four buildings.) St. Andrew's also has provided a "listening-ear" friendship. While we have had a variety of volunteers helping to move furniture, arrange meals, prepare gifts, prepare and plant gardens, build and repair fences, etc., I'd like to make special mention of Ralph Morris who has been a regular at the weekly coffee time and became a friend to a number of the residents.

There is no doubt that the generosity of St. Andrew's, through fundraising, gifts, community connection, and friendship, has had a valuable impact on the lives of the residents at Claire House and the other community housing locations at Acadia Place, Longbow, and Bankview. Of course, the Covid-19 pandemic has put a serious damper on our involvements. However, we have stayed in touch, helping where we can - most notably gifts cards at Christmas time for every Claire household and an extra card for every child at Claire House. Thank you St. Andrew's. Hopefully we can find a way to resume some sort of community connection in 2022 - for example, outside coffee time, a vegetable garden, a front flower bed and more.

Whatever we can find to do, it starts with showing up and being neighbourly.

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Help support the work of theCreek

- Pray for the Session of St. Andrew's, theCreek leadership team, and for the communities south of Fish Creek.
- Watch for news of theCreek on St. Andrew's website and social media accounts.
- Consider hosting a Food and Faith gathering!

Search Team Update by Lorna Andronikou, Convener

Have you ever wondered what the process is to call a new minister? St. Andrew's has been anticipating a call to a new minister for the position of Associate Minister, Growth and Care for some time now and we know the congregation is anxiously awaiting the results of the Search Team's ongoing work. Below are answers to a couple of questions you may be thinking of while patiently waiting for God to call someone to **Grow.LIFE.Together.With God** – with us here at St. Andrew's.

Will St. Andrew's have a new Associate Minister: Growth and Care, soon?

The Search Team has been busy since we have regathered in the fall of 2021 and we have certainly been doing lots of work to search for a new Associate Minister. We are currently in the interview phase of the process and we hope to be in a position to recommend a candidate in the first part of 2022, once interviews are complete. At that point, we will require the Session to invite this person to preach for the call. That will be an opportunity for the people of St. Andrew's to meet, interact with the candidate, and for her/him to lead worship. Following the preaching for the call experience, the congregation will meet to decide whether or not to extend a call to this person, and then the presbytery of Calgary – Macleod will consider the congregation's decision. This whole process relies of persistent discernment of God's will for St. Andrew's and the gifts of the candidate. Once the Presbytery has approved the call, we will welcome our new minister with open arms! In the days ahead, we will provide detailed information about the call process and how you can participate.

Why does the process to call a minister take so long?

The last time I went through the interview process for a new job, the entire process took a couple of weeks. I saw the advertised position, worked on my resume and cover letter, received an invitation for an interview, had the interview and then....well, I didn't get the job, but I digress.

What I have learned throughout this process is that calling a minister to a new congregation is quite a different process and takes more than just a couple of weeks.

The entire process is not about just answering an advertised position, applying and then interviewing. The process for calling a minister in The Presbyterian Church in Canada is much more complex. The Presbyterian Church in Canada states, "Christ provides "pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry . . ." (Ephesians 4:11-12 NRSV). Following the biblical model, ministry of word and sacraments involves working within a congregation to support its ministry to its people, the community, and the world. The blending of congregational ministry and a particular minister's pastoral skills and interests is complex. Interim moderators, sessions, search committees, congregations, candidates and presbyteries all have a role in this discernment." The Presbyterian Church in Canada (2019). Calling a Minister: Guidelines for Presbyteries, Interim Moderators and Search Committees, p. 1.

Following the resignation of our previous Interim Moderator, the Rev. Fiona Swanson, our work was put "on hiatus" for a couple of months until Session gave us the approval to continue and at that time, our Terms of Reference required updating and we had to update our Congregational Profile, as well. You can see the final version of our Congregational Profile on St. Andrew's website here or on The Presbyterian Church in Canada's website here.

Although the resignation of the Rev. Jared Miller means that there are now two vacancies at St. Andrew's, our task is to search for the Associate Minister, Growth and Care. In due course, the Session and Presbytery will consider the process for beginning a search for the Associate Minister, Together in Mission. The Search Team wants to thank the congregation of St. Andrew's for their patience and continued prayers throughout our journey of seeking to call a new minister to our church family. We will keep you updated as our process unfolds.

THANK YOU DEAR FRIENDS, FOR...

BRIGHTENING OUR
Doorway



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St. Andrew's COVID-19 Task Force Report
Mark Rowe - Convenor

The COVID-19 Task Force was formed for the duration of COVID-19 to provide guidance in safely conducting St. Andrew's re-opening during COVID-19. The St. Andrew's congregation has been following safe COVID-19 practices and this has allowed our most vulnerable members to safely worship with us.
Thank you!

The Calgary COVID-19 count, as of November 2021, has dropped to one-quarter of what it was in mid-September. The Covid Task Force, based upon updated AHS guidelines and consultations with the medical community, will increase the congregational seating capacity from 60 worshippers to 120 worshippers and up to 30 choir members and ministers, effective immediately. This will be in addition to the present choir and ministers.

We will continue to follow AHS directives and The City of Calgary's guidelines and restrictions.

- Vaccination verification and using sanitizer is required for all worshippers for entry into the church.
- Masking is required while in the building, including during worship.
- Congregational singing is allowed, but masks must be worn.
- No food or beverage consumption.

Please follow the updates.