



CONNEXIONS

APRIL/MAY EDITION 2023



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



ST. ANDREW'S

GROWING. LIFE. TOGETHER. WITH GOD

Holy Week Services	Page 3
A Letter From the Minister	Page 4
Our Pulpit Supply	Page 5
A Spring Prayer	Page 7
Elder Profile	Page 8
Spiritual Moments	Page 9
Dr. Wolfelt's Companionship Philosophy	Page 10
It Hurts to Lose Someone	Page 11
Changing Our Mind	Page 11
Our New Candle Cart	Page 13
Mindfulness/Contemplative Prayer	Page 14
History Bites	Page 15
Interview with the Legacy Team	Page 16
TAKE150	Page 17
What We Heard	Page 18
Letter from the Finance Team	Page 20
Heritage Seniors Strawberry Tea	Page 21
Baking Needed	Page 21
Activity Sheet	Page 22
COVID-19 Update	Page 23



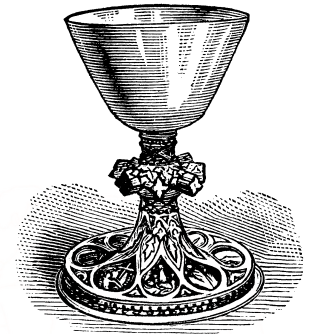
HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Jesus Faith
Love Hope

April 6- Maundy Thursday
Communion Service

7:00pm

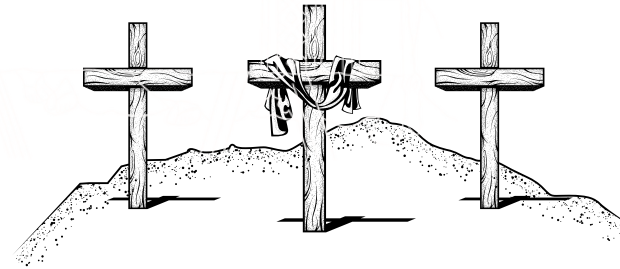
Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper. The night before he was crucified, Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples and showed what humble, servant-focused love looks like.



April 7- Good Friday

10:00am

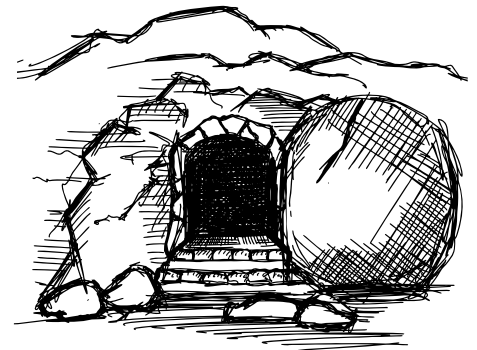
This service features Scriptures and dramatic monologues that will invite us to experience the impact of Jesus' suffering and death.



April 9- Easter Sunday

10:00am

Join us for a joyful Easter service—this year, with a special format of Lessons and Carols. Carols are not just for Christmas. They connect us with a rich tradition of music that allows us to experience Easter in a new way. Guest Musicians: Andrew Leitch, Heather Wootton, Tayte Mitchell, Laura Brandt



A Letter from the Minister - Easter Season 2023

From Rev. Geoffrey Simmins



Ford Madox Brown, Jesus Washing Peter's Feet, 1852-1856

In Rev. Peter's most recent sermon on March 19—the one I delivered because of Peter's broken ankle—Peter asked us to consider times when we believed that God has been at work in our lives. God doesn't always "sign his best work," we might say, so there are times when we are left wondering.

Events leading up to my writing this minister's letter is one of those times when I have been left wondering. God's touch in my life? Coincidence? I am going to say the former.

On a day when I was musing about the Maundy Thursday service, I went to one of our hospitals to see a member who had been in hospital for a couple of weeks, although we hadn't known about it. (A friend of hers let us know.) I felt so glad to see her and I would like to think that the visit cheered her up somewhat (the visit made me more cheerful too!). I thought about hospital visiting, and about the fact that St. Andrew's used to be the only church in the Presbytery that provided this service to members, when I came across this memorable depiction of what it might have looked like when Jesus washed Peter's feet. In notes on this painting available online we read this analysis: "Ford Madox Brown was a British painter known for his works on historical and moral subjects. In this painting of the events just before the Last Supper scene, Brown depicts the disciples' faces with a level of stunning detail. Some appear merely disconcerted while others are absolutely horrified and humiliated at Jesus' act of loving service. Peter sits awkwardly in an embarrassed posture as Jesus kneels before him to wash his feet. The unusually low viewpoint allows spectators to place themselves in a vulnerable position alongside Jesus." I thought once again about Jesus' words to the disciples at the Last Supper—"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (John 13:34, NRSVUE.) Maundy, as many people know, is a contraction of the Latin word *mandatum*, or commandment (also the same root as mandate). Jesus' commandment is to love each other and to serve each other, just as Jesus served others.

So...how is God at work for me here? I experienced God at work when I thought about what serving each other might look like going forward at St. Andrew's. As we all realize, the ministry picture is going to be quite different next year than this. A sole minister will be challenged to keep on top of all that is required. How can we help? We are already doing a great deal, and I celebrate all that people offer.

A Letter from the Minister - Cont'd

I nonetheless wonder: are there people in the congregation who feel called to offer their gifts as hospital visitors? I plan on offering an orientation session this spring (date still being considered). When you look at this picture, do you see yourself in some way? Foot washing is a symbol of care and love. Visitors in hospitals do not offer physical care. We offer a ministry of presence, listening without judgment and helping people feel connected with the congregation and with God's love. Was it a coincidence or God's nudging that I was asked to do this message on the same day that I went for a hospital visit then read again Jesus' commandment about serving each other on Maundy Thursday? You be the judge. However, if you experience a tug in your heart as you consider this invitation to become a hospital visitor on behalf of the congregation, perhaps that is God asking you whether you are called to this special kind of ministry. I close by offering thanks to my colleagues in ministry, Revs. Fiona Swanson and Clay Kuhn, who have so generously stepped forward to lead worship while Rev. Peter transitions from being our Interim Minister to being "only" our Interim Moderator. In this role, he continues to serve on the Search Team, which is hard at work on the congregation's behalf looking for someone who will love this congregation and serve it as Jesus commands us to do on Maundy Thursday.

Blessings and peace and deep wonder in the Easter season.

Geoffrey



Our Pulpit Supply

REV. FIONA SWANSON

I live in Haysboro, with my darling husband, Garry, and our two cats - Hallow and Finn. We live in the home that he grew up in, but did a few upgrades, like put in a theatre to satisfy Garry's love of movies!

We have been blessed with opportunities to travel and see a few parts of the world (not on a double decker bus!!). We have been to England 4 times including a trip to Wimbledon where we sat front row while Djokovic won the opening match on Center Court. We have been on an Alaskan Cruise and witnessed wildlife in their natural habitat. We have been to Disneyland twice and hope to go again. While there we went to the Hollywood Bowl, and listened to a terrific assortment of Classical music - ending with the 1812 overture, with drummers from local universities playing, and fireworks as the cannons went off!! Hopefully there will be more adventures; if not, there is still the theatre to see the world from.

I like doing pulpit supply because you see the church at its best - engaged in worship and working in community. I am blessed that I have the ability to still preach and thankful for the encouragement I receive. It never fails to uplift me when someone comments that a service/sermon touched them - I know I am a vehicle for sharing the good news - but aren't we all? Blessings to you and yours.



Our Pulpit Supply - Cont'd

REV. PETER COUTTS



For over 36 years Rev. Peter has served 4 congregations (including St. Andrew's for 14 years), and the congregations of southern Alberta as General Presbyter. As he moves into semi-retirement, he plans to return to being a consultant, workshop leader and speaker within the wider Church.

Since his departure from St. Andrew's in 2013 he has worked within 9 different denominations in North America, from the congregational level up to the national level. He is a coach in our denomination's congregational renewal programme called New Beginnings. The next congregation he will be coaching is in Charlottetown! He is also a board member for Knox College, where he is involved in implementing the school's strategic plan. In his down time he enjoys travel with his wife Sheri, baking bread, and photography. He also hopes to rediscover the guitar.

REV. GEOFFREY SIMMINS



Rev. Geoffrey Simmins is happy to serve as one of the four worship leaders during St. Andrew's vacancy.

He enjoys team ministry, and looks forward to hearing from his ministry colleagues. Geoffrey will continue to serve the pastoral care needs of the congregation, which he has done since January 2020. He has a strong interest in how faith affects our lives positively. "Being prepared" is not just a motto for the Scouts; it also applies to our own lives. Are we thinking about how we can live as fully and as faithfully as we can? What spiritual practices do we follow? Can we look at our past with acceptance? Can we look at the future with hope? These are the kinds of questions that Geoffrey likes to consider and will likely be addressing during his sermons.

In the meantime, he continues to offer an open door and welcomes anyone to come and chat. He will not be able to solve every issue that people present, but he does promise to listen with an open mind and heart, while encouraging people to find their own way towards healing and peace and wholeness. He is also happy to meet for coffee or tea or a walk.

Geoffrey is married to Joan, who recently retired from her 42-year career as a professional engineer. They are the besotted grandparents of Ayla, who will be 2 in June.

He can be reached at gsimmins@standrewscalgary.ca

Our Pulpit Supply - Cont'd

REV. CLAY KUHN

Rev. Clay Kuhn has served smaller congregations from coast to coast. He retired from St. Paul's, Banff last year and moved to Calgary. He grew up in Southern California, and continues to visit family and Dodger games. He attended the University of Idaho, Fuller Seminary (Pasadena, Calif.), and St. Andrew's Hall (Vancouver). He came to Canada after marrying his late wife Kathy, who he met at a North American Presbyterian Youth conference. Clay says when he met Kathy "It was love at first giggle."

They were married for 34 years and were partners in ministry together. He is enjoying spending time with his daughter and son-in-law who live in Calgary, and with his son who lives in Canmore. He has reconnected with Knox Presbyterian Church (where he was married and ordained) and is supporting Knox's ministry. He plays music regularly at Knox and with the band "Out on Good Behaviour" with his good friend, Tom Brownlee.

In addition to playing the guitar, banjo, and ukulele, he is learning to play the bass guitar. Clay says there is always a song and a song lyric for every occasion.

He still manages to pick up a carving knife and carve a caricature, an animal, a spoon, or a face into a golf ball core. He is loving retirement with the opportunities to invest his time, talent, and treasure into the people and projects near and dear to his heart.



A Spring Prayer

by Lauren Nolette

Dear Heavenly Father,
Thank you for your continued renewal,
and giving new life to the world. You have
designed the seasons to each hold a
special lesson for us. You created
everything so wonderfully and
orchestrated everything to work in
harmony together.

Amen

Elder Profile - Debby Dorcas

By Barb English

Debby grew up in Cross Creek, a village in New Brunswick. She was part of a close-knit family, including her three sisters and a large extended family. Church was important to all of them, and Debby was involved in youth groups and teaching, and her special joy was music. In 1979 Debby and her sister, Catherine came to Calgary for a two-year stay. It was a huge change, and very hard for both of them. They came to St. Andrew's and felt welcome, especially after making some close friendships, which she still cherishes. Catherine left after a year to pursue ministry studies. Thankfully for St. Andrew's, Debby stayed!

Shortly after her arrival at St. Andrew's, there was an initiative to have more contemporary music as part of the service. This evolved into Musical Friends, which was a big part of St. Andrew's for at least 15 years, and has always been a treasured time for Debby. The group grew to 15-20 young people, and they presented an ambitious musical/drama program every year, as well as leading the music service monthly, and participating in special services. Over the years many young people were led to participate in St. Andrew's life because of Debby's leadership, the music and the friendships.

In conjunction with Musical Friends, many of the same young people were part of the College and Careers program for young adults. The fun and friendships in these groups, and the joy in teaching youth and leading children's choirs are highlights of Debby's time at St. Andrew's. Debby became an elder in 1988, and Clerk of Session in 2016. Much of her work has been on the Worship team and the Faith Formation team, using her talents in music, and her experience with youth.

Debby worked downtown for 30 years at Cenovus Energy, first as an Administrative Assistant. After earning a certificate in General Management at U of C, she worked for many years as a Human Resource Analyst. She brought this expertise and experience to St. Andrew's when she began work in the office in May, 2018 as Executive Assistant to the Minister.

During the Covid shut-down of in-person worship and activities, Debby was vital in keeping congregational communication alive within St. Andrew's. She was involved in initiating the weekly newsletters, improving the live-streaming of services, answering and directing countless phone and email questions, and supporting the minister during this time of uncertainty. "Support" could be Debby's middle name, given that she has supported the ministers, people, and work of the church since her first step into St. Andrew's.



Spiritual Moments - An Unexpected Journey

By Donna Harrison

Every one of us is on a journey. Sometimes it is calm. Sometimes it is rugged. Then, without warning, a huge tree falls in front of you, and you need to ask for help. Well, that is what happened to my husband and to me.

In November, my husband went to shave and discovered that his Adam's apple was pushed to the left of his neck, and he also felt a large lump beside it as well. He went to the doctor the next day. The doctor said he had never seen that before, and immediately sent for an ultrasound. When the results came back, the doctor ordered a biopsy. The results confirmed **CANCER**. He had cancer of the thyroid. In December I was booked for a surgery that I had been waiting months for. I thought the surgery would be easy, but I woke up with extreme pain that followed me home. We had no family to help because they lived in Ontario and one daughter in Australia. My husband did his best to help me, but he was troubled about his own health issues and his appointments with different specialists.

It was the Christmas season and I was feeling very weak and tired. Someone from the church asked if they could bring us some dinner. Normally I would have said, no, that's okay, I can manage; but this time I said yes. I knew that I needed help. My emotional health was getting very fragile. I had trouble sleeping, and would wake up feeling so afraid for my husband. I could feel his anxiety and fears. I knew he was preparing for the worst. Still in my recovery stage, I found myself not knowing what to say to him or even how to pray. I was numb. I was afraid that if my husband didn't make it, what would I do? We were sent to see a reconstructive surgeon. He told us that David had a complicated case. He said that his team was studying his case to determine the best procedure. Unfortunately the surgeon was unable to tell us exactly how the surgery would go until he was operating. He didn't know if David would have a voice or if he would be able to eat normally. He also told us that his surgery date would be early January. We both left the office in silence, not knowing what to say.

The day of David's surgery was very emotional. We didn't know what was going to happen. That day the hospital experienced a glitch in their technologies, thus there was no communication incoming or sending. David was able to have his surgery and 13 hours later he was brought to his hospital room. I was feeling nervous about seeing him; not knowing what I would find or see. When I saw him, he had a voice and was able to speak. There were no tubes in his throat and they had been able to remove the cancer from his thyroid, the large growth and his lymph nodes. By God's grace and mercy **ALL** cancer was removed. The surgeon said that the surgery went better than he expected. He didn't know that there was a group of Prayer Warriors praying for him, my husband and myself.

James 5:16 says "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has **GREAT POWER** and produces wonderful results." We should never doubt the **POWER** of prayers. God has shown me His love in a very new way through my church family. You brought us meals when I was weak. You prayed for us even though many didn't know us. A beautiful prayer shawl was made and given to me by a lovely Christian friend. A card came from my Side by Side family, and several phone calls from concerned church family friends. We praise God for showing **HIS LOVE** to us through your kindness. May God bless you and keep you, my wonderful church family.



Dr. Wolfelt shares his “Companioning Philosophy” in Calgary

Submitted by Rev. Geoffrey and Judie Coleman

McInnis and Holloway Funeral Homes and Heritage Funeral Services have been sponsoring Dr. Wolfelt to Calgary to share his “Companioning Philosophy” for many years. Dr. Wolfelt’s compassionate approach of “companioning” versus “treating” mourners helps people to mourn well so they can live well and love well. His time with us will begin with an evening session for individuals and families who are grieving a loss. Dr. Wolfelt will help all of us understand how loss influences our lives, through storytelling and delicately expressed humour and hope. The following morning Dr. Wolfelt will teach a workshop for our caregiving community. It will help anyone who wants to learn more about how to support those who have experienced loss.

Please join us for these complimentary seminars. For more information about Dr. Wolfelt’s companioning philosophy, and to learn about courses and seminars, see his website: <https://www.centerforloss.com/trainings/#companioning>

Understanding Your Grief: Touchstones for Hope and Healing

Tuesday, May 9 from 7 to 9 pm

This program will help all of us understand how loss influences our lives.

Mourning Misconceptions: Helping Mourners Replace Harmful Norms with Healing Truths

Wednesday, May 10 from 9 to 12 noon.

For more information, and to register, please click on this link: <https://mhfh.com/special-events/> Both events will be held at McInnis and Holloway’s Deerfoot South Location - 12281 - 40th Street SE at the Deerfoot South Campus - First Alliance in the Main Auditorium.

Seminars to be held at
DEERFOOT SOUTH CAMPUS -
First Alliance Church
12345 – 40th Street
South East,
Calgary, Alberta

[Click Here For Directions](#)

Located next door to
McInnis & Holloway’s
Deerfoot South Location.

Ample Free Parking Available



It hurts to lose someone. Find help at GriefShare.

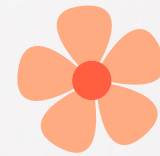
By Alice Williams, Kathleen Tomie, Judie Coleman, Facilitators

GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. You don't have to go through the grieving process alone. We have completed our first 13-week session of GriefShare. Below are a few responses from the people who attended:

- Recognition of the profound impact of God on my journey.
- You gave me a safe place to land and some foundation to connect with when I needed it.
- I really appreciated the structure of settling in/ice breaker/prayer - video - discussion and closing prayer.
- A comfortable space for sharing of information (non-intimidating).
- Some very interesting insights about feelings and safe space to mull them over with others who understand.
- I'm gentler on myself and it has prompted some open easy dialogue at home.
- I felt seen, understood and supported.
- I liked the group discussion following the videos and the comradery of the group.
- I very much appreciated the journal which was supplied. I am quite surprised how I gravitated to it ... and how quickly I am filling it up.
- Would have appreciated more personal sharing of stories.
- The three facilitators are a team worthy of 10/10 with each sharing their different gifts for this ministry.
- Strange how God helps us through one problem or another, eh!

We begin a new 13-week session starting on **Tuesday, April 4** and continuing each Tuesday until **June 27** from 1:15 to 3:15 pm in the lower fireside room. If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, please consider joining us. This is an open group and people are invited to join at any time during the 13-week program.

Please contact Judie at pastoralcare@standrewscalgary.ca if you want more information.



Changing Our Mind - A Book Study

In Christ' love, Margaret Bruhjell-Holmes and Jari-Lynn Eckert

The purpose for both Jari-Lynn Eckert and myself offering a five-week study on the book, *Changing our Mind* by David Gushee was to continue the discussion which St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church began a year ago with the Sexuality and Faith Explored (SAFE) program. The program certainly provided some exceptional education, as well as some very helpful tools to put into our tool kit. However, it's amazing when a real life situation presents itself how suddenly we are grasping for deeper understanding and how to be supportive. There were so many emotions and questions, not just from ourselves but from families and friends, that came up when the topic of LGBTQ+ became a real-life situation. We thought the book study would help those kinds of discussions within the Christian faith.

Changing Our Mind - Cont'd

As Jari-Lynn had written in last August's ConnXions newsletter, her daughter reached out to Jari-Lynn after her own son had revealed that he was gay. Loving that person is the forefront in our minds, but to be a true ally for any person who identifies as LGBTQ+2S, it became apparent that deeper personal understanding was essential in order to be a support.

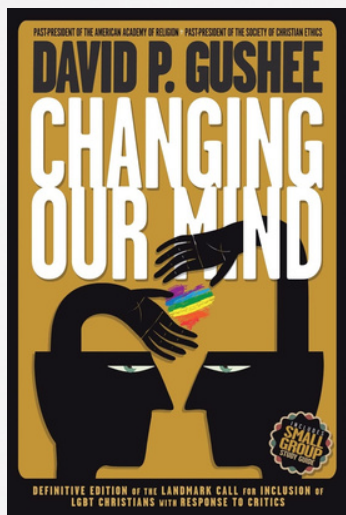
I did not know anyone personally who identified as LGBTQ+. I felt I had been given the "Reader's Digest" version, but wondered if that would be enough to translate to a caring relationship for someone who identified as LGBTQ+ who wanted to come to our church? I knew I needed to go deeper.

This book and the small group of individuals who joined us in the study discussions truly helped each of us learn how to be intentionally affirming people of faith for those people who identified as LGBTQ+. We spent a lot of time studying various Bible verses and learned that Gushee states in his book "all biblical texts must be read in terms of their historical, theological, literary, social and applicative contexts—some of which can only be guessed at or, at best, provisionally reconstructed." We were able to learn from each other's real-life experience, as many stories were being shared in a safe and supportive space. We shared many additional resources which David Gushee himself encouraged; "As the Church seeks to discern the nature of faithful thinking and living, it can and should draw on as many relevant sources of insight as are helpful."

This book study has finished, but already it doesn't look like that will be the end of our gathering and learning together. We are following up on a resource presented to us by one of our participants called SOGIE; Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression, a program offered by Alberta Health Services. A representative of SOGIE has offered to have a Zoom call with us to tell us about their program and how it can be of value to anyone else.

To conclude, let me share with you an experience that happened during the last week of our book study with one of our participants, as she was having a visit with a friend. In casual conversation she mentioned that she was enjoying being involved with a small group from St. Andrew's Church reading and discussing a book called *Changing Our Mind* by David Gushee. She described how the author took the reader along his personal and theological journey, as he changes his mind about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender inclusion in the Church. Well, her friend blurted out "I'm gay" and started crying. This was the first time her friend had told anyone that they were gay. Our participant reflected on how she had reacted with this unexpected announcement from her friend. She found nothing had changed about how she felt about her friend. She found herself to be utterly supportive and caring. Her conviction to understand and accept people of LGBTQ+2S was put to the test. She had learned enough to be authentic and caring support for her friend.

What a beautiful testimony and demonstration of the value of continuing the conversation of being fully accepting of all people, and especially of those persons of faith who are people of the LGBTQ+2S, and so desperately need to know they are not only welcome in our faith community, but can become their best selves as Jesus wants all of us to be. As a result, we continue the work to be in alignment with the Presbyterian direction to accept all people, including those people who are of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (can be attracted to male or female), Transgender, Queer, Questioning and 2 Spirit.



Our New Candle Cart

By Lynn Judd on behalf of the Worship Team



In 2018, the Worship Team was approached by the Life after Loss Team about the possibility of creating space and time at the end of service for people to come forward to light candles in remembrance, thanksgiving, and prayer. The Worship Team was supportive of this idea, and we mutually decided that the responsibility for organizing and setting out the candles and supervising/monitoring the experience would be shared between the two teams. As a beginning practice, we agreed that we would have the candles available several times a year on the months with 5 Sundays and for special services. The Worship Team purchased votive candles and other supplies, and this was our routine until Covid.

As we began to re-gather after Covid, we became aware that there was perhaps a greater need to support individuals in acts of reflection. We also were finding that the process of setting out the candles and moving the table in and out was cumbersome (and potentially dangerous should a lit candle fall off of the table). After some reflection, the Worship Team decided to investigate getting a dedicated candle cart or table which could be easily moved about, but which could also safely hold the candles and store any other supplies we needed. We then did some field trips to other churches to see what they did for this type of worship before agreeing upon a table design we all liked.

The Worship Team then agreed to request some money from the Worship portion of the Legacy Fund to acquire a Candle Cart. Instead of spending a huge amount on the purchase of a commercially built unit, Derek Wilkinson of the Worship Team sketched up a design based on the carts we had viewed at other churches, and then connected with Lorne Kelly, a master wood and cabinet maker in our midst, to see if he would be interested in making something for us. Lorne had previously made the sound cabinet at the back of the Sanctuary for us, and had graciously participated in a number of creative projects around the church. To our delight Lorne agreed to make the Candle Cart for us at cost only - a huge savings! Lorne promised our new cart would be ready by the end of March, and then had it built two months early - just in time for our January 29 candle lighting. We had a dedication for this beautiful piece at that service, and put it into use for the first time that morning.

Our new Candle Cart is a stained oak cabinet with six rows of candles, each row raised a little bit above the previous row. There is a storage drawer at the back of the cart to hold extra candles, taper sticks and other supplies, and the cart is mounted on castors making it easy to move. The candles are securely set in glass candle holders, which are recessed into each shelf. It is a lovely addition to our Sanctuary, and the Worship Team is looking forward to seeing it in use for many years to come.

Mindfulness / Contemplative Prayer

By Ken and Sharon Burrill

In this article submitted for the Wellness Team we consider the health and well-being benefits of a contemplative, mindful approach to daily living with a Christian perspective.

Perhaps you remember the mindfulness boom of the 70s / 80s. Jon Kabat-Zinn's best-seller *Full Catastrophe Living* popularized mindfulness based, stress-reduction practice. He saw mindfulness as an awareness of self that arises through paying attention in the present, without judgement, seeking understanding, wisdom, reduced stress, enhanced wellness, improved insight and awareness.

An entire industry of mindfulness based on self-help and counselor-guided practices developed following the publication of Kabat-Zinn's work. Most failed to credit centuries old Christian traditions of contemplative prayer as a base for health-enhancing mindfulness practices. It seemed that other religious traditions had fully occupied the mindfulness space.

A contemporary view offering a Christian perspective is provided by AJ Sherrill's recent book *Being With God*, sub-titled *The Absurdity, Necessity and Neurology of Contemplative Prayer*.

In Sherrill's view, many of us "long for a quieter life with God, a soul of peace and freedom from pervasive inner chatter, but feel these longings remain elusive. We are tired, longing for respite." We acknowledge our need and desire for more meaningful prayer, but understand it in the forms of talking at God, speaking to God or listening for God, not in the simplicity of being with God.

Drawing from the story of Mary and Martha, Sherrill reasons that in a healthy spirituality *being* always precedes and empowers doing. Yet in a society where "time is money" and the aim is to "stay busy," the pursuit of stillness, silence and solitude before God can appear ridiculous, even as our culture and its distracting values are grinding us down, one absurd stressor at a time -- noise, hustle, technology, media, marketing, money. Our attentions are often so divided that we cannot be present to any one thing. We know what actions are not good for us, yet we persist in them.

As a contemplative alternative, Sherrill uses a definition presented by theologian Robert Mulholland. Contemplation is "stilling ourselves before God, moving ever deeper into the core of our being and simply offering ourselves to God in totally vulnerable love." This implies a relational connection between us and God. Our part is consent, surrender and stillness. God's part is meeting us there. We seek not something, but Someone, the God who never stops loving us!

Sherrill considers the absence of contemplative focus a major contributor to declining personal health. Adverse physiological impacts of stress and anxiety are well known, but often neglected as we run the treadmill of busy lives. Chronic stress is brain-changing, in a negative way! The body keeps score through anxiety, arrhythmia, fear, memory loss, depression. Conversely, regular contemplative practice is brain-changing, in a positive, life-balancing way! These changes are noticed as fruits of the Spirit that gradually become more apparent in our daily living: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22)

Jesus makes it clear that we need still, silent, contemplative time, for our own well-being. (Matthew 6:6) As confirmation of that necessity, Sherrill discusses the neurological benefits of contemplative prayer, all of which fall within what we might term a transformational renewing of the mind. (Romans 12:2) Consider the impact of a period of silent, prayerful stillness on our breathing. As we embrace calm, we naturally relax into a deeper, stress and anxiety-lowering breathing rhythm, with a more complete exchange of the air in our lungs. Better oxygen exchange leads to better brain and cardio-vascular function, towards physiological renewal.

Mindfulness / Contemplative Prayer Cont'd

We are a temple for God's indwelling presence (1 Corinthians 6:19). In the stillness of contemplative practice we encounter, hear and steward that presence within, where the Spirit longs to speak peace to our anxieties, fears and worries, benefiting health, well-being and bringing an increased understanding of God's eternal will for us.

One of the ways St. Andrew's supports the contemplative way is through the practice of Christian Meditation. A group of meditators meet online weekly, and in-person occasionally, following the teaching and traditions of the World Community for Christian Meditation (wccm.org). For further information, contact skmeditates@gmail.com.

St. Andrew's "History Bites"

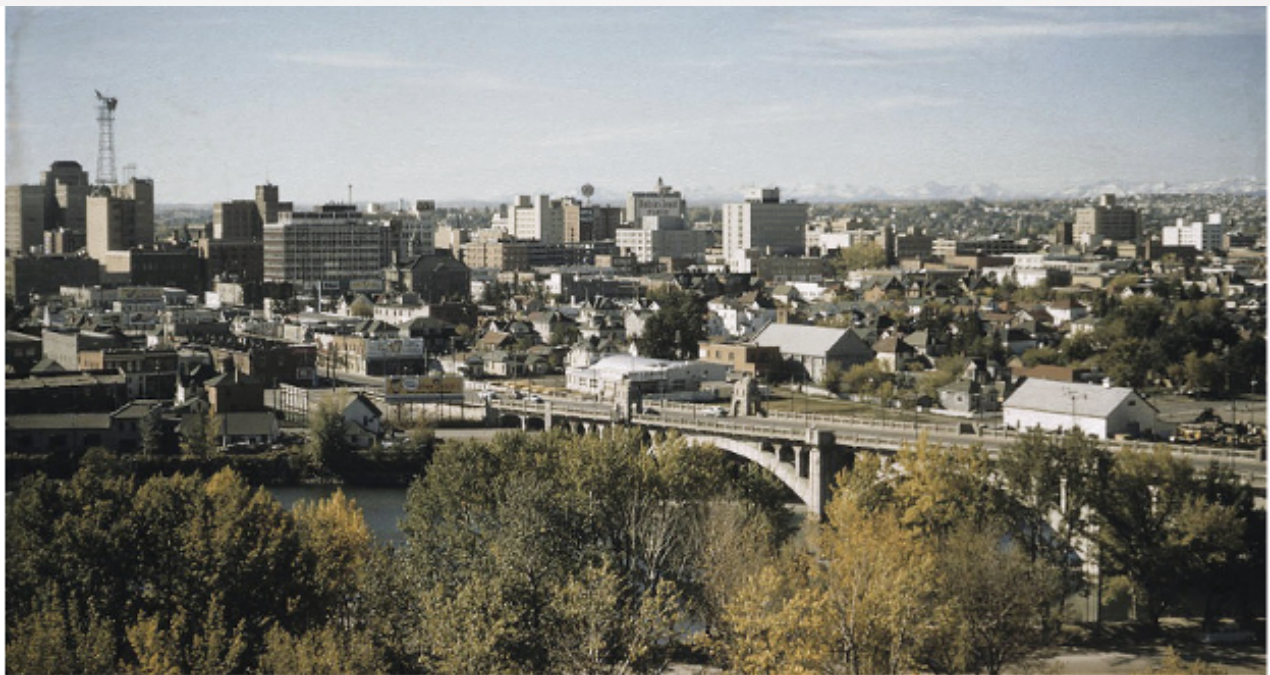
by Kevin MacFarlane, Church Historian

Bite 7 - from Volume A of our Historical Albums
"Film Records Church History" - by Blair McKenzie*

"Not only has St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church just celebrated its 50th anniversary, it possesses a film which outlines the parish history from humble beginnings to the present time.

A novel and ambitious feat for any church.

Oliver Goodfellow of Carstairs did the filming, David Boyd Jr. of Calgary, the recording, and the commentary is by the minister, Rev. John MacLeod. First shown last fall, Mr. MacLeod says that the work on the venturesome project began a year ago last Easter and took about six months to complete."



*Excerpt from the Calgary "Albertan" Newspaper - April 28, 1956

Unfortunately the St. Andrew's History Team was unable to locate the film for showing at the 100th Anniversary celebrations in 2006.

Anyone having any idea about the probable location of the film should contact our historian through the church office.



Interview with the Legacy Team

By Derek Wilkinson and the Donor

The Legacy Fund recently received a very generous donation from one of our St. Andrew's families. Here is a bit of the story behind that donation.

There are lots of worthy causes out there: the Food Bank, the Women's Shelter, Refuge Support, etc. Why the Legacy Fund?

Our family also supports the United Way which is our secular charity of choice, but we really feel called to primarily support St. Andrew's as it is our spiritual home. We also feel called to ensure that in the long term, there will always be a solid financial base for St. Andrew's (much like the Heritage fund started by the Provincial government of Alberta).

The Legacy Fund is different from our other designated funds in that any donations are invested, not spent, and we only use the interest from those investments. So 20 years from now, your donation will still be supporting St. Andrew's. Was this long-term ongoing support a factor in your donation?

We recognize and value that there is a preservation of capital with the Legacy Fund, and that it really is a way to provide year after year of support. In addition, we sensed there had been a stalling of donations to the Legacy Fund over the past couple of years so hopefully this will inspire others to also contribute.

Monies from the Legacy Fund go to support our church activities in three designated areas: Facilities, Worship, and Mission. Were any of the 3 support areas in the Legacy Fund especially important to you?

Although the Facilities portion of the Legacy Fund has merit and value, the Ministry and Worship and Mission portions are especially vital to always ensure there is funding to share the good news of the Gospel and the message of God's love, thus helping others who may not yet be part of St. Andrew's.

With the help of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, there are a whole host of ways to donate including bequests, insurance, annuities, and stocks. You chose to make a donation of common stock. How easy was it to make your donation?

Very easy - just a form to fill in from the PCC in Toronto and they took care of everything else. Maggie Leung who runs the department for the PCC was very helpful and great to deal with, so it really is a simple and pleasurable way of making donations.

How did this donation impact your regular weekly tithes?

It has not - these continue as usual. The important aspect was the biblical principle of us sharing our good fortune (capital appreciation of the stocks) and God's blessings with St. Andrew's who, in turn, will use it to Grow Life Together with God.

Faith Formation Thank You

By the Faith Formation Team

What a fun night of pizza, hiding in the dark, making the stretchiest slime ever, eating donuts blindfolded and earning tokens for prizes! The Faith Formation Team is so grateful for our chefs - Duane and Pat, for the leprechaun catchers - Carl and Shona, for the energetic youth helpers - Braeden, Kaitlyn and Janet, for the organizers - Craig and Inge, and for all the enthusiastic children who made the St. Patrick's Day TAKE 150 such a great success! What the parents and kids had to say:

- Thank you so much TAKE 150 team for the wonderful event. The kids came home so happy!!!
- We are so grateful for your hospitality, your care and spirit of fun!
- What is most valuable about TAKE 150 is that the children get to love the church more and more and associate it with good fellowship and fun. We really appreciate it.
- Thank you for the tireless work that goes into making for such an awesome evening - We truly appreciate it!!
- So much fun was had - thank you!
- We had so much fun, when is the next TAKE 150?
- The green cake was so yummy!



What We Heard

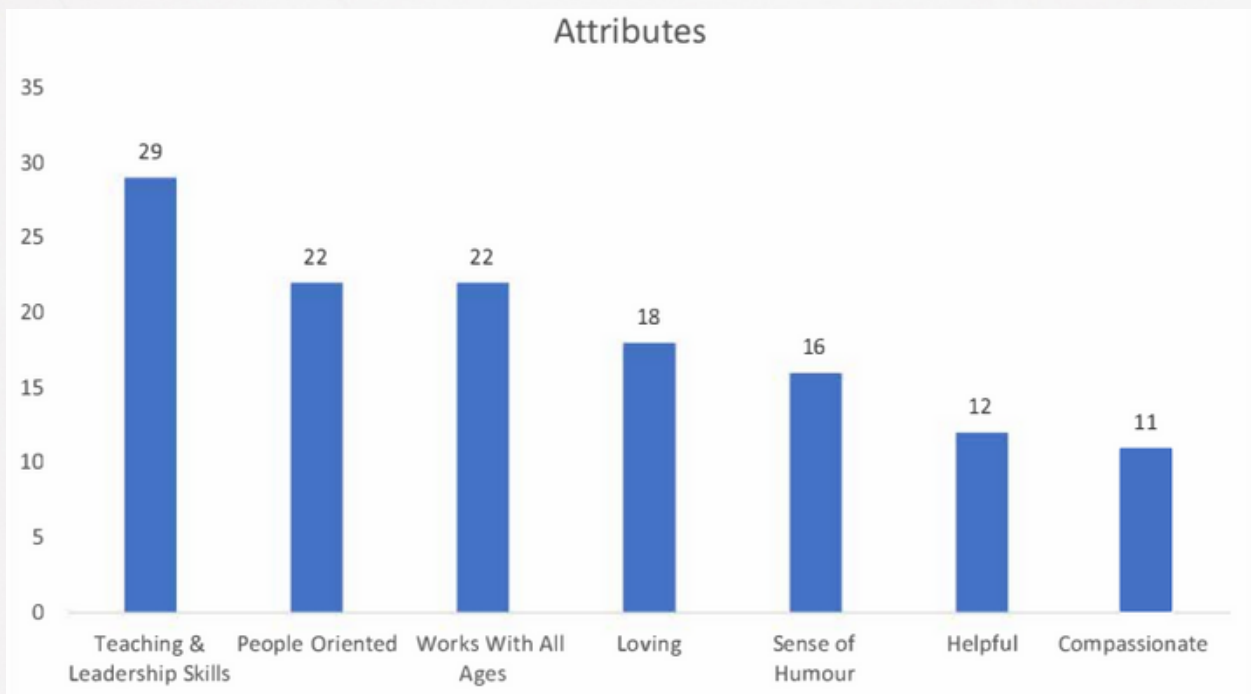
Feedback for Search Team

Date of Report: 2023 March 15

The Search Team reached out to the congregation in the latter part of 2022 to gather feedback on what attributes you would like to see in a new minister. We received 76 responses to date, which represents 12% participation rate by the congregation. Of the 76 responses, nine of the responses were from the children during church school class on September 18, 2022, 62 of the responses were obtained during the service on December 18, 2022, and five of the responses were provided directly to a Search Team member verbally or in written form. For the purposes of this report, all responses will remain anonymous.

As feedback from children can be unique, their insight is often honest, simple, and straight-forward. We have included which responses were directly from a child where we can. Appendix "A" to this document includes all written feedback from the children.

Not surprisingly, there were a variety of differing opinions regarding what you would like to see in a new minister, making it difficult to compile significant percentages of data. The following analysis outlines the most significant data captured:



The majority of the responses described specific character traits you wanted to see in a new minister. For example, the ability to teach and have good leadership skills were an obvious strength you would like to see; this was mentioned in 29% of the responses received. These skills were also outlined during all feedback sessions convened.

People skills were another obvious strength as this represented 22% of the responses received. This includes everything from being "people oriented" to "support for LGBTQ2S+ people" to "help when people are suffering" and "make sure people are safe" (child's response).

Related to the ability to work well with people, many of you outlined that you would like the new minister to work well with all age groups. Once again 22% of the responses reflected the need for the new minister to work well with children, youth, adults, and seniors. Some of the feedback includes, "able to interact with all age groups," "ability to reach & touch all ages," "can spare some time to share with our youth & children," "recognizing the need for seniors," and "likes kids" (child's response).

The word "love" was outlined several times (18%) such as: "genuine love for all people," "make the message simple, filled with love and assurance of God's love," "full of love for community," "love for many & all," "help me know God loves me" (child's response).

Other character traits you would like to see include: "have a sense of humour" (16%), "helpful" (12%), and "compassionate" (11%).

Some responses did not elicit significant percentages of data, but were outlined by several responses, including the following character traits and/or skills: caring, empathetic, flexible, good listener, approachable, humble, honest, good organizational skills, pastoral, and faithful.

Given the varied responses we received from you, it may make it difficult to accommodate every request in our search efforts. With God's help and your prayers, we will find a new minister to serve St. Andrew's. We want to thank the congregation for taking the time to provide this feedback to us. It helps us throughout the discernment process as we search for our new minister.

This report is respectfully submitted by the Search Team,

Lorna Andronikou, convener

Rev. Peter Coutts, Interim Moderator

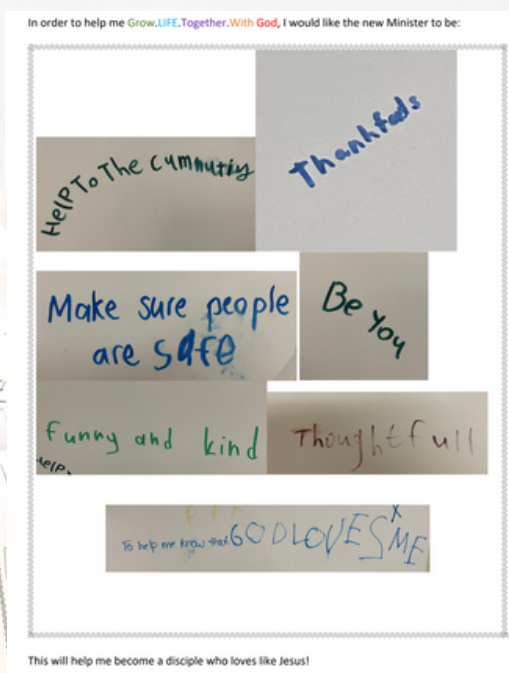
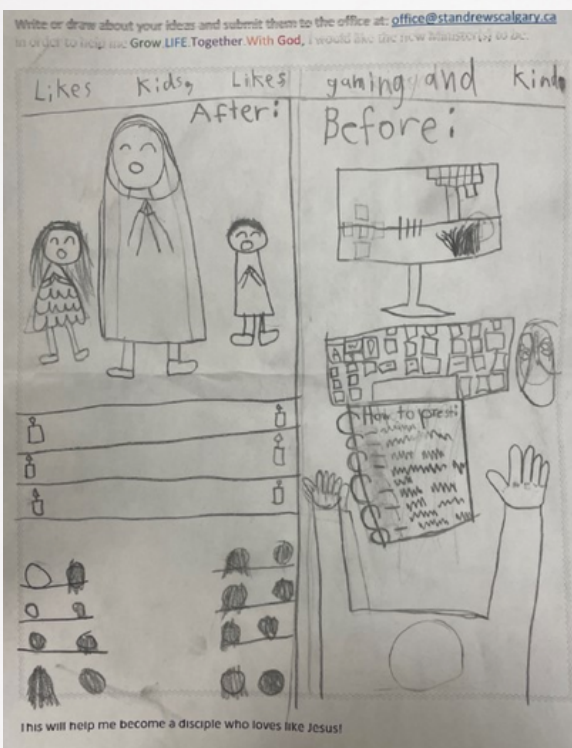
Judie Coleman

Bill Judd

Inge Murray

Bart Stolee

Thelma Wagner



Letter from the Finance Team

Thanks to everyone who supported St. Andrew's in such a significant way in December. Your generosity meant that our budgeted deficit was halved by year end! And thanks to everyone who attended the Annual Congregational Meeting! Your confirmation of the 2023 budget was a welcome endorsement of the direction of St. Andrew's over the next year.

So where are we so far in 2023? For the first two months of the year, we are running a deficit of \$10,934. The good news--this is 50% smaller than the same time last year! One of the exciting things we've seen is a meaningful uptick in people who choose to make their gifts by automatic debit from their bank account. In our nomenclature, this is PAR or Pre-Authorized Remittance. This source of church receipts is absolutely foundational for our church. Its general predictability enables us to manage our cash flow and pay our bills in a timely fashion.

Two stalwart groups in our Congregation have made early undesignated donations. The Ladies Guild gifted \$5000, and the Heritage Seniors added another \$1000. Kudos to all of the members of those two groups. Your generosity is very much appreciated, particularly in the beginning of our new year. If you know any of these group members, please thank them.

On the expense side, our utilities are trending well above the predicted twelve month average, but that may be a function of increased costs in those areas generally incurred in the wintertime. We will be watching to see if these begin to abate with the onset of spring and warmer weather.

In case it was helpful, we have included a copy of the same short summary report that we sent to Session for their March meeting.

As always, if you have questions, please reach out to any member of the Finance Team (Dolly Forcade, David Townsend, Cathy Millar, Shona Vandrascio or John Cuthbertson).
Happy Easter!

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Summary of Results to February 28, 2023	
Receipts	
Church Support (PAR, Envelope, Electronic)	54,172
Pledges	1,200
Other donations and income*	11,653
Subsidies & grants**	0
Fundraising	0
Total Receipts	67,025
Expenses	
Music & Choir expenses	1,087
Congregational teams	0
St Andrew's People & Education	47,209
Administrative expenses	4,411
Maintenance & Operations	17,604
We Reach Out	7,648
Total expenses	77,959
Surplus(Deficiency)	(10,934)
Surplus (Deficiency)	(10,934)
<small>* Includes other donations, open plate, use of space</small>	
<small>** Forgivable portion of government loan to be received in 2023</small>	

Heritage 50+ Seniors
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
703 Hertiage Drive SW

Strawberry Tea

Saturday, May 6

1:00-3:00pm

\$7.00 each



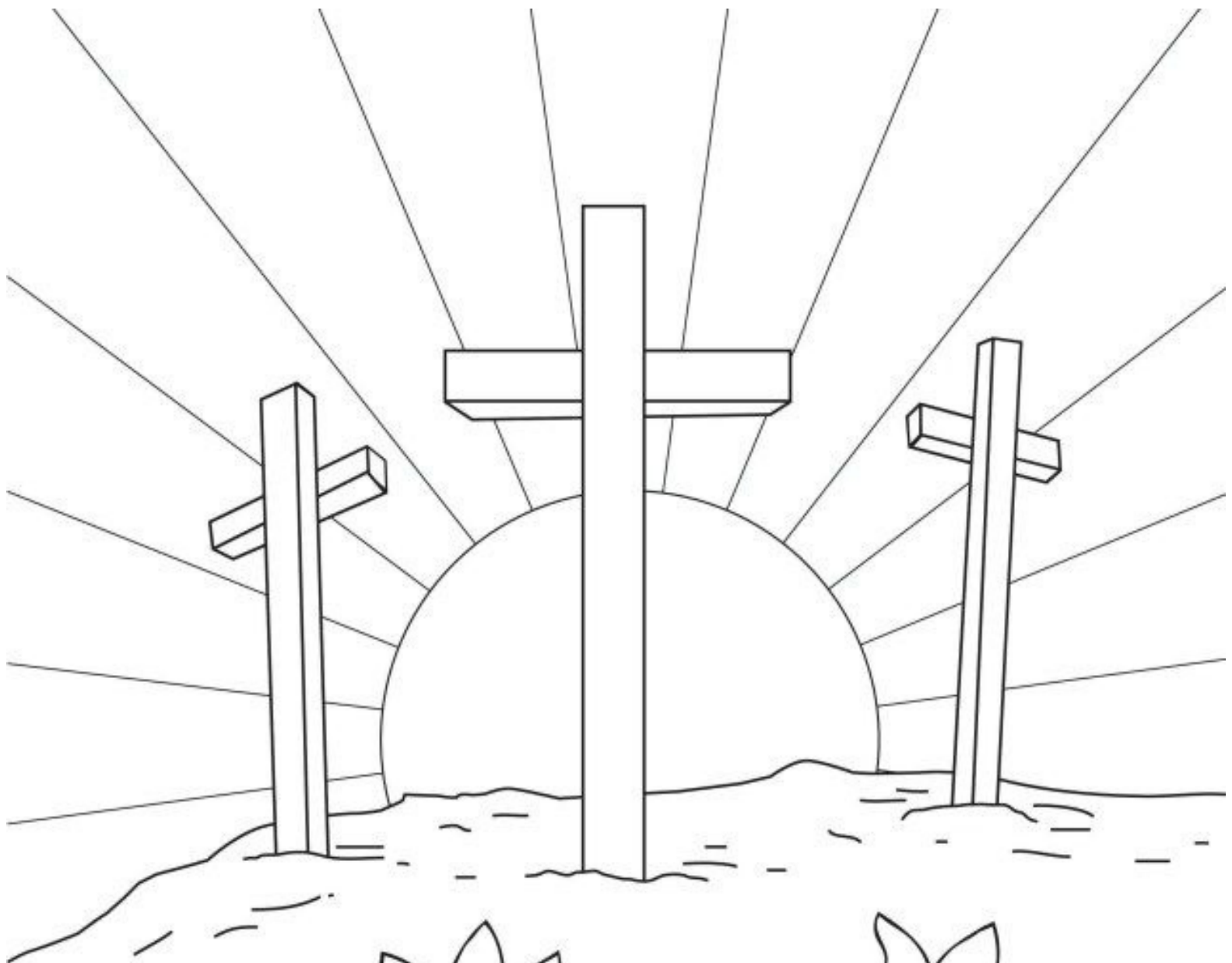
Come to our
Art display, sale of
crafts, books, jewelry,
puzzles, games and Bake
Table



Baking Needed – Can you help us?

Heritage Seniors are asking for donations of any kind of baking for our Strawberry Tea.
If you can help, please bring your 'goodies' to St. Andrew's on Friday, May 5, 2023.
MUCH APPRECIATED!





Jesus
Is Risen

COVID-19 UPDATE

The congregation has been following safe COVID-19 practices which have allowed our most vulnerable members to safely worship with us. The province has relaxed its COVID-19 restrictions, and the Calgary COVID-19 count has dropped but COVID-19 is still with us.

To maintain a COVID-19 safe place for worship, we suggest the following:

- If you are not feeling well, please follow AHS protocols and do not come to church
- The use of hand sanitizer is encouraged upon entry into the church
- Masking is not required at worship, but feel free to wear one if that is more comfortable for you
- Vaccination is strongly encouraged but not required

It is our desire to create a welcoming environment that is helpful and encouraging for all. In this small way, we express Christ's care. Thank you!



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
703 Heritage Drive SW
Calgary, AB T2V 2W4
(403) 255-0001

ConnXions@standrewscalgary.ca

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Coordinator: Lorna Andronikou
Team Member: Judie Coleman
Team Member: Barb English
Team Member: Lauren Nolette

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT ISSUE: Wednesday May 15, 2023