



Christmas Blessings

CONNEXIONS

December 2023 - January 2024



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Letter from Rev. Peter Couatts

Our Candidate for the Lead Minister Position - Rev. Laurie McKay



Laurie McKay is a prairie girl (born in Edmonton) and was raised in the Presbyterian Church. She graduated from Vancouver School of Theology, now single, and has 4 grown children, 3 grandchildren. Laurie has experience in congregational ministry (ecumenical and Presbyterian in ON and BC), chaplaincy (university, nursing home), child protection social work, counselling, and as a realtor. Laurie is currently the minister of an amalgamation of 3 congregations in New Westminster/Burnaby BC as of Jan. 1, 2023. She initiated a food support program in response to the Covid-19 pandemic that currently feeds over 500 households on 4 sites every Saturday with over 150 community volunteers. Laurie is energetic and creative. She enjoys connecting with people in many capacities as a Christian called to live with compassion, justice, and fullness of joy. Laurie recharges by spending time in nature and connecting with family.

As I write this in mid-November, I am assuming that the congregation will vote on December 3rd to call Rev. McKay as our Lead Minister and we will soon be underway collecting signatures on the Call document. Why do this? Our candidate, our Presbytery and our candidate's Presbytery will all want to know the "strength" of the Call: that is, the percentage of our members who have endorsed the call by signing it. Our candidate and these Presbyteries will be looking for a number greater than 80% (and higher is better). Adherents can sign the Call as well, as can the children of our church.

If you are not at the Congregational meeting, you will be contacted by your Care Connector in the coming days and invited to sign the Call. You have three ways to sign. You can ask your Care Connector to come to your home so you can sign in person. You can ask your

Connector over the phone to place your name on the call on your behalf. You can do the same by email. All ways are acceptable. If there is more than one St. Andrew's person in your household, please let your Connector know who they are and if they wish to have their names on the Call as well. If all goes well, we will complete all of the stages of the Call process by the latter part of January, opening the way for our candidate to begin to organize a move to Calgary. Our vacancy has been long, for sure. But the attitude of the Session and the Search Team has been that it is better to wait for the right person instead of taking the earliest person. I thank you for your patience and support over these many months, and I join with you in the happy expectation that our next minister is coming. I can't think of a better Christmas present than this for St. Andrew's! Indeed, we have much to be grateful to God for.



Understanding the Call Process

Since a Call is not a process that happens very often in a church, we thought we would provide a few details to let you know what the process will look like, and what you can expect.

First, some important dates

- On **Saturday, December 2, 2023**, you are invited to come and meet the candidate at an open house gathering in Trinity Hall between 2 PM and 4 PM.
- On **Sunday, December 3, 2023**, you are urged to attend and experience the candidate leading worship.
- Following worship on **Sunday December 3, 2023**, there will be a congregational meeting to vote to Call the candidate or not.

What is Preaching for a Call?

Preaching for the Call is a formal opportunity for the congregation to hear and see the candidate lead a worship service. **It is very important for you to be present at worship on December 3rd** for this important moment in our congregation's history. If you can't be here in person, you will be able to view worship live online. Go to www.standrewscalgary.ca and click on "Join Us For Worship." A recording of the service will remain available on the website for the following weeks.

Does this mean we are getting a new minister?

Short answer? Maybe. Inviting a candidate to preach is just one of a few steps that need to happen:

- After the worship service on Sunday, December 3, 2023, a congregational meeting will be held for the congregation to decide whether we wish to extend a Call or not. If the con



votes "yes!", then members and adherents will be asked to add your signature in support of the Call.

- When we have gathered as many signatures on the Call as we can, the Call document will go to our Presbytery of Calgary-MacLeod on January 9th, then on to the candidate's Presbytery a week or so after that. The candidate has up to ten days after the second presbytery's approval to accept the Call.

How does the voting process work at the congregational meeting?

The congregation will meet at 11:15 on December 3rd, after worship, to consider whether we will extend a Call to our candidate. There will be a "yes" or "no" vote. We will also vote on how much the minister will be paid. Only those persons who are official members of the congregation can vote at that time. If the answer is "yes!", then everyone at the meeting (members and adherents (non-members)) will be invited to show their personal support of the Call by signing a page that will be included among the Call documents. Children who are not members may sign the Call as adherents.

It is very important for you to be present for the worship service and for the following congregational meeting. We need your voice to be heard and your vote to be counted.

How does the voting process work after the congregational meeting?

Not everyone, of course, will be able to attend on December 3rd. Assuming a successful vote, in the following days our Care Connectors will be contacting people in their districts to invite them to sign the Call as well. You can do this personally by asking your Care Connector to come by your home. You can also ask your Care Connector to place your name on the Call on your behalf. This can be done by phone or email. If there is more than one St. Andrew's person in your household, please provide the names of each family member whose names should appear on the Call. **This is important.** Our candidate and two Presbyteries will want to know how "strong" the Call is, which is indicated by the percentage of our total membership who signed the Call. They will look for a number greater than 80%, minimum.

What is in this Call?

The Call document is composed of:

- The required formal wording that extends the official invitation to the candidate to become the minister of our congregation, as well as the "stipend" (the pay) and "Allowances" (including what will be provided for housing) that person will receive.
- We provide for the Presbyteries the reasons why we want the candidate to be our minister.
- A record of what happened at the congregational meeting, and the decisions made.
- All the pages containing the signatures of members and adherents.

Further questions?

We hope this answers your questions about the upcoming process. If you have any questions, you can contact our Interim Moderator, the Rev. Peter Coutts (pcoutts@standrewscalgary.ca).





Highlights from November 21, 2023 Session Meeting:

- The Finance Team presented a preliminary 2024 budget for discussion.
- One of the things we have been noticing lately at St. Andrew's is that people are excited to have someone come to preach for the call.
- There was lots of energy at the Christmas Bazaar. So nice to see lots of youth involved.
- The Edge program is happy to have had 10 participants last week.
- We are hoping that **AS MANY CONGREGATION MEMBERS AS POSSIBLE** will attend the **December 3rd** morning worship service when **THE CANDIDATE COMES TO PREACH FOR THE CALL AND** will stay for the **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** at ~ 11:15.



Advent & Christmas 2023

ALL are welcome

Dec 3 **Morning Worship** **10:00 am**
Candidate is Preaching for the Call!

Dec 10 **Morning Worship** **10:00 am**
Intergenerational Musical ~ The Amazing Christmas Maze

Dec 17 **Morning Worship** **10:00 am**
Worship Leader: Rev. Fiona Swanson

Dec 24 **Morning Worship** **10:00 am**
Lessons & Carols
Worship Leader: Rev. Peter Coutts

Dec 24 **Christmas Eve Services** **4:00 & 7:00 pm**
Worship Leader: Rev. Peter Coutts

Children/Family Service **4:00 pm**
Fun Mission Project, Carol Sing, Children choose costumes and musical instruments for the service, Family Christmas Pageant Service

Christmas Eve – Candlelight Service **7:00 pm**
Guest Musicians: Sara Far, violin;
Jasmine Long, cello; Andrew Leitch, trumpet

Dec 25 **Christmas Day Service (YouTube - anytime):**
Rev. Peter and Evan have created a shorter Christmas Day service you can view ANYTIME on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@StACalgary>

Dec 31 **Morning Worship** **10:00 am**



The Christmas Bazaar – A Report from the Ladies Guild

Our St. Andrew's Annual Christmas Bazaar was once again a resounding success, thanks to all those of you who supported it in one way or another. From your donations of baking, books, art, treats, treasures, and crafts to the cookie decorating, crafts and games for our little ones, more than 120 wonderful volunteers came together to make sure everyone had fun, and everything went smoothly. Of course, we couldn't have done it without the generous support of the community and our own church members who came from far and wide to shop for our goods and stayed to socialize over refreshments in the tearoom where 254 meals and 219 desserts were served. In the days leading up to the bazaar our team of bakers made just over 1,800 tarts, 64 pies, and 44 Christmas puddings in our beautifully refurbished kitchen. A special thank you to all of you who helped with set-up, take-down, and everything in between. It was truly a blessing to see us all come together as the family of God, working in harmony to create a day which will be recalled with smiles and happy memories.

Margaret Bates, President





The Edge

– Our faith is based on God’s Time, not ours!

We are most grateful for the interest and continued support from our St. Andrew’s church family since the idea of offering an After School Outreach for youth was initially announced and has since come into being.

We are grateful to the St. Andrew’s Legacy Fund for the generous donation. These funds have given us the opportunity to purchase four lap-tops for homework purposes (adult restricted sites), a Nintendo gaming system, and monies for advertising with signage, ads in the local neighborhood newsletters, and custom-made personalized name lanyards. We have also arranged for an important partnership with the Calgary Food Bank for donations of snack items.

September 20th was the launch of “The Edge,” St. Andrew’s After School Youth Drop-In outreach program. For four Wednesday afternoons, our wonderful, dedicated sub-group lovingly prepared the area on the upper level of the church building to welcome young boys and girls. Our designated area is such a perfect location. It’s welcoming, bright and spacious with ample room to set out tables for the various activities.

The Edge’s sub-group (comprised of Ted Cantlon, Lauren Cantlon, Peter Coutts, Delisa Dhanpaul, Audrey Cole, Karen Mcleod, and her daughter Kya) all waited in anticipation for our first guests. When guests didn’t arrive, we were never disheartened over that time period. Spending time together we formed a strong bond, knowing that each of us had been called by God for wanting to help “make a difference in the lives of young people!”

Excitement ensued when three girls originally from China along with their parents arrived October 18th to see what the program offered. The following Wednesday a young boy attended and spoke with Peter that he “was commissioned to scout out The Edge, and if he liked it he would bring his friends!”

We now have ten enthusiastic youth who are participating each week. We are confident that more youth will attend as the word spreads. We also have a roster of names from the congregation who are most interested in assisting us as our numbers grow.

The Parent Council at Woodman School has received permission from their principal to post information on their bulletin board regarding "The Edge." This was a positive step as the Calgary Board of Education is unable to endorse any outside program.

I met recently with Constable Tyerman, who is the Community Resource Officer at Police Station 6. After highlighting St. Andrew's youth program, he strongly agreed for the need of such a program in the community and will pass on the information in his jurisdiction. He also mentioned that he would like to pop in on a Wednesday afternoon!

"The Edge" is a fine prototype that is ready to pass on to other churches in Calgary. Youth all over the city "are at risk" in not going home right after school. This program offers a safe haven for them to unwind with their current and new friends after a busy school day and participate in varied activities while enjoying a nutritious snack.

To be welcomed and wanted are two of the most important aspects of reaching out to others, and St. Andrew's profound belief of being "Woven Into The Neighborhood" enhances that God-directed Mission.

We appreciate your ongoing prayers for "The Edge".

God's Blessings
Judy McKearney



Faith Formation Update

On Friday October 27th, Take 150 celebrated Halloween in style!! As you will see from the pictures below, the kids had a blast! You can see more on our Bulletin Board at St. Andrew's. Our thanks to organizers and helpers Inge, Craig, Pat, Duane, Lynn, Shona, Carl, Rhonda, Annika, Braeden, Kaitlyn, Josh and Willa. We are blessed with organizers and helpers at St. Andrew's!! Thank you all!!!





On Sunday, November 5th the Church School children sold cookies after the morning worship service to raise funds to buy a couple of special gifts for our 6-year-old sponsor child, Joud, who is from Haiti. We do 2 extra gifts a year so that Joud receives something for her birthday, and something for Christmas. We heard from Joud that last year her mother used her birthday money from us to buy fabric to make her a new dress. Well...because of your generosity, we have money for birthday and Christmas gifts for more than one year, plus the Faith Formation Team will be making a decision about how else to use some of the money for other mission projects. Thanks to ALL OF YOU, we raised \$495. Apparently, the way to a Presbyterian's heart is partly through cookies! |



HEALTH MATTERS - Information related to an EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN and an EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

Extreme weather is becoming more common with devastating fires obliterating homes and in some cases whole communities; add severe flooding, tornadoes and illness outbreaks, all of which translates into emergency situations that might require a speedy exit from your home.

A little planning and preparedness can help protect you and your family in an emergency and make the situation less stressful knowing that you have the necessary items ready to take with you.

EVACUATION PLAN: divided into 4 sections – HEALTH, FAMILY, PERSONAL, and PETS. The following are a few suggestions that you might consider when thinking of your own plan.

HEALTH: Medication prescriptions, inhalers, epi pens, pain medications, contacts with solutions and cases, glasses and basic toiletries such as feminine products. Other possibilities include toothbrush/paste, band aids, disposable razors (rather than electric), hair products, hearing aids or any other medical equipment needed.

FAMILY: Pack clothing that will keep everyone comfortable and safe depending on the season. This might include long pants/shorts, long sleeved shirts/tee shirts, socks and underwear, jackets, hats, gloves, scarves, and sturdy footwear for the season. Blankets, sleeping bags and pillows, flashlight, candles with matches and AM/FM radio with batteries could also be useful.

PERSONAL: Passport, credit cards, cash, driver's license, cell phone, laptop and chargers. Don't forget important keys to your vehicles and home, significant photos, insurance, wills and all legal documents.

PETS: Food, medications, leashes and carriers. Preparing and storing some of these items in storage containers of your choice will make a speedy exit from your home less stressful.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT FOR HOME AND VEHICLE - in case of a CITY-WIDE DISASTER.

HOME: Initial facts to consider – safe exits from home and neighbourhood, meeting places to meet family, contact persons and designated persons to pick up children if parents not available.

Location of water valve, electrical box, gas valve and floor drain.

SUGGESTED ITEMS TO HAVE READY IN A STORAGE CONTAINER –

Two litres of water per person per day (small containers for easy travel); replace once a year.

Canned food, energy bars and dried foods; replace once a year.

Manual can opener

Flashlight and batteries

Battery powered radio

Thermal or space blankets

First aid kit

Small fuel operated stove and fuel

Garbage bags, duct tape

Water purifying tablets

Plus|all the items previously mentioned in the Evacuation plan.

Make sure that your vehicle has a full tank of gas, and that it is in good working order.

The above information is just that. When it comes to buying the perfect emergency kit items that can only be done by personalizing every item in it and tailoring it to your own unique preparedness needs.

Submitted on behalf of the Wellness Team by Alice Williams



Communications Teamwork 2023

A dedicated group of St. Andrew's people are engaged every week in making sure that members of our Congregation are always made aware of the events, opportunities and news items which occur as we "Grow Life Together with God". The information that we pass on to you originates from members of Session, the various Ministry Teams (and their sub-groups), as well as groups that serve the church like Ladies Guild, Men's Club, and Heritage Seniors. This communication reaches you in one or more of the following forms:

- [Weekly LinX E-mail](#)
- [Facebook Posts](#)
- [Instagram Posts](#)
- Karl English Lounge Bulletin Board
- [Website Events Pages and Calendar](#)
- Sunday PowerPoint Announcement Slides
- [Online ConnXions Magazine](#) and Printed copies for the Vision Impaired

Debby Dorcas prepares the text for material to go in the Weekly LinX E-mail and maintains the Lounge Bulletin Board. Kevin MacFarlane uploads Facebook and Instagram Posts, primarily using the Graphics that he and Barbara MacFarlane have developed for the LinX E-mail, Sunday Announcement Slides and Website Events Pages. Alice Post often posts biblical quotes with beautiful pictures. Prior to this edition, the Online and Printed ConnXions Magazine (6 per year) have been prepared by a team consisting of Lorna Andronikou, Judie Coleman and Lauren Nolette (graphics), proofread by Barb English, printed by Dolly Forcade, and delivered by a dedicated team overseen by Flemming Nielsen.

It is our intent that LinX focus on the delivery of current news and ConnXions provides a more in-depth look at our congregation's "Growing Life Together with God". Following a recent meeting of those involved, some responsibility changes were considered and, commencing with this edition, will be implemented on a trial basis for the next six months.



Kevin and Barbara MacFarlane will assume responsibility for graphic design of the next three ConnXions Magazines. The printed versions will be supplemented by a “ConnXions to LinX” section which will allow recipients to read some items that they may have missed in LinX due to visual or technological challenges. Lauren and Matt Nolette will be posting content to St. Andrew’s Instagram. The team hopes this will be of interest to our younger faith community.

If any of you have any thoughts on this plan or its implementation over the next 6 months, please send a note to office@standrewscalgary.ca. If you would like to join us in this work, you can also advise the office at this same email address.

The biggest support we would like from all of you is to provide articles for ConnXions and information for all the other forms of communication that we implement. Without you, we may have a variety of communication methods, but no message to communicate!

CONNXIONS

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ConnXions@standrewscalgary.ca

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